

Athens Journal of Mediterranean Studies



Quarterly Academic Periodical, Volume 9, Issue 2, April 2023
URL: <https://www.athensjournals.gr/ajms> Email: journals@atiner.gr
e-ISSN: 2407-9480 DOI: 10.30958/ajms



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The Athens Journal of Mediterranean Studies

ISSN NUMBER: 2241-794X- DOI: 10.30958/ajms

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The current issue is the second of the ninth volume of the *Athens Journal of Mediterranean Studies* (AJMS), published by the [Athens Institute for Education and Research](#).

Gregory T. Papanikos
President
ATINER



Athens Institute for Education and Research

A World Association of Academics and Researchers

17th Annual International Conference on Mediterranean Studies

25-28 March 2024, Athens, Greece

The [Center for European & Mediterranean Affairs](https://www.atiner.gr/2024/FORM-MDT.doc) organizes the 17th Annual International Conference on Mediterranean Studies, 25-28 March 2024, Athens, Greece sponsored by the [Athens Journal of Mediterranean Studies](https://www.atiner.gr/2024/FORM-MDT.doc). The aim of the conference is to bring together academics and researchers from all areas of Mediterranean Studies, such as history, arts, archaeology, philosophy, culture, sociology, politics, international relations, economics, business, sports, environment and ecology, etc. You may participate as stream leader, presenter of one paper, chair a session or observer. Please submit a proposal using the form available (<https://www.atiner.gr/2024/FORM-MDT.doc>).

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Important Dates

- Abstract Submission: **31 August 2023**
- Submission of Paper: **26 February 2024**

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- Exploration of the Aegean Islands
- Delphi Visit
- Ancient Corinth and Cape Sounion

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- Abstract Submission: **2 May 2023**
- Acceptance of Abstract: 4 Weeks after Submission
- Submission of Paper: **15 May 2023**

Academic Member Responsible for the Conference

- **Dr. Yannis Stivachtis**, Director, [Center for European & Mediterranean Affairs](#) and Associate Professor, Jean Monnet Chair & Director of International Studies Program, Virginia Tech – Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, USA.

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Some Striking Indications that the Mythical Elysian Fields Were in Polynesia

By Felice Vinci & Arduino Maiuri[±]*

As strange as it may seem at first sight, in Polynesia there is no shortage of clues that seem to attest to ancient contacts with Caucasian populations, such as the presence of megaliths and the physical appearance of some of the natives encountered by the first European explorers, not to mention myths, legends, customs, characteristics and names of deities, even traditional tales curiously reminiscent of the Iliad and Odyssey. In this framework, which seems to delineate a prehistoric seafaring civilization spread everywhere in very ancient times, certain peculiar characteristics that the Greek poets attribute to the Islands of the Blessed and to the Elysian Fields seem to be typical of the Island of Hawaii, to the point of suggesting a precise localization of these mythical places, bizarre as this may seem, right there.

Keywords: *Elysian Fields, Islands of the Blessed, Hawaii, Polynesia, Rhadamanthus, Cronos*

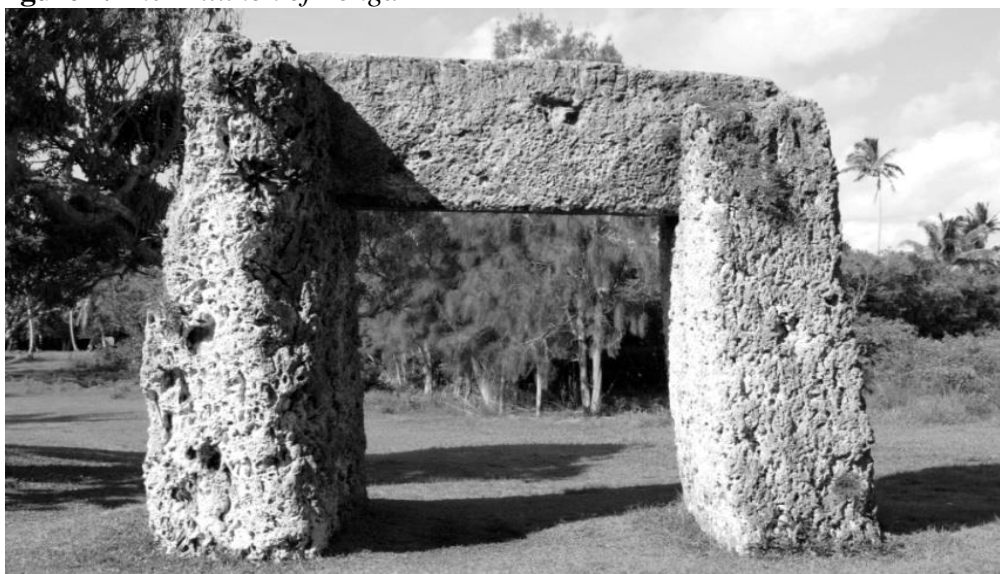
In this article, we will first review various clues, of different nature, which seem to attest to the reality of ancient contacts between the cultures of the Old World and the Polynesian ones, on which a large literature is available, based on the testimonies of both explorers (starting since the end of the 16th century) and ethnologists who have collected an enormous amount of evidence on myths, legends, customs and folklore of native cultures in the various archipelagos scattered in the immensity of the Pacific Ocean. Subsequently we will try to highlight some surprising indications that the mythical Elysian Fields were located in a precise island of Polynesia, using a methodology consisting of a new critical examination of the classical sources and in particular of the testimonies contained in the works of authors such as Homer, Hesiod and Pindar.

Let us first observe that impressive megalithic remains are scattered throughout the islands of Polynesia, whose affinities with similar monuments scattered in other parts of the world are often surprising. Let us think, for example, of the enormous constructions, made with large blocks of basalt, of Nan Madol in the Caroline Islands, where the archaeological area extends for 18 km² on a hundred artificial islets connected to each other by a dense network of canals. Moreover, among the most striking Polynesian monuments there is also the imposing trilithon of Tonga (Figure 1), which has even been compared to Stonehenge.

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Figure 1. *The Trilithon of Tonga*



No less surprising is a sentence from the account of one of the first meetings of Europeans with Polynesians, which took place in 1595 in one of the Marquesas islands: at a certain point there appeared “about four hundred tall, strong, almost white-skinned Indians [...] Many of them are blond” (Surdich 2015, p. 50). We find a confirmation of these unexpected European characteristics of some native Polynesians in the notes of Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, the French navigator who landed in Tahiti in 1768: “Men six feet tall and even more. I have never met such well-built and proportionate men [...] Nothing distinguishes their features from those of Europeans” (Surdich 2015, p. 171). This is in line with the fact that among the Marquesans, 7.2% of men and 9.5% of women had blue eyes (Polinesiani 1935).

Stories, customs and social structures are to be added to the megalithic remains and people’s features: in Polynesia we find the myths of the Tower of Babel and the Flood (Caillot 1914, p. 10), but what is also striking is the name of the *Ari’i* (or *Ali’i*), the nobles, who were considered descendants of the Polynesian gods (Guiart 1962, p. 145). In each clan there was a chief called *Ari’i rahi*, “chief (*rahi*) of the nobles (*Ari’i*)”, a term composed of two well-known roots: the first indicates the “superiority”, or the “strength”¹, while the second corresponds to the Latin *rex* and the Gaelic *rígh*, “king”. Similarly, in a Polynesian myth very similar to that of Orpheus, the name of Kura (a dead girl that her husband manages to bring back from the afterlife: Eliade 1983, p. 394) closely resembles the Greek *kourē*, “girl”. But also the *kavu*, the “priest” (Guiart 1962, p. 46), is almost homonymous with the *koes* (*kaves* in the Lydian language), the Greek priest of the Kabiric rites (Kerényi 1979, p. 161: a name which can also be compared to the Hebrew *cohen* and the Norse *godhi*), not to mention the well-known greeting formula *aloha*, which is very similar to Nordic *alu* and Latin *vale*.

¹Cf., only as an example, the comparative *areĩōn*, “better”, and the superlative *aristos*, “best”.

In this framework, it is also striking that the name of the Polynesian dance called *hula*, or *hura*, closely resembles the Greek *choros*, “dance”, not to mention the fact that in Tahiti the name of the typical local dance is ‘*Ori Tahiti*, where ‘*Ori* is identical to *choros*. But what leaves us even more amazed is that the *hula* is accompanied by traditional songs called *mele*, a name that almost identical to the Greek word *melos*, “song” (hence “melody”).

And what about the *Holua*, traditional races down hillsides on wooden sleds? It is presumably the memory of an era in which the ancestors of the Polynesians lived in regions where there were long snowy slopes.

The case of Hina, the great Polynesian goddess linked to the sea and the moon, which in many respects corresponds to Ino Leucothea, the marine goddess who in the *Odyssey* saves Odysseus from a storm, also gives us a lot to think about. For example, just as Ino appears to Odysseus in the form of a bird (*Od.* V, 337), Hina also “descends to earth in the form of a bird” (Prampolini 1954, p. 424). Furthermore, Hina corresponds to Ino also for the fact that *hina-hina* in the Polynesian language means “white” (Martin 1817, p. 364)², which recalls Leucothea, the “white goddess”. Also, in the Hawaiian Islands the goddess of fire and volcanoes is called Pele, a name identical to that of the Pelée volcano in Martinique (whose catastrophic eruption of 1902 has remained famous).

We also note that the Polynesian god of agriculture, fertility and peace, but also warrior, was called Rono, Lono or Rongo (depending on the dialect). He was the son of Vatea, the god of the sky, and Papa, the earth mother. His figure corresponds to that of Saturn, the god who according to the myth introduced agriculture in primitive Lazio and was the king of the peaceful golden age; but gladiator games and even human sacrifices were also connected to him. Saturn’s correspondent in Greek mythology is Cronos, who also had an original agricultural dimension and was the son of the sky (the god Uranus) and of the earth (Gaia), just like Rono.

One should also note the oceanic dimension of Cronos, who gave his name to the Cronian Sea, i.e., the northern Atlantic; on the other hand, Cronos was relegated by Zeus “to the bounds of earth and sea” (*Il.* VIII, 479). At this point, it is natural to wonder if the assonance between Cronos and Rono–Lono is only coincidental.

All this would seem to indicate the possibility of ancient oceanic navigations, to which the Polynesians were accustomed since times prior to the arrival of the Europeans; on the other hand, this was also considered possible by Enrico Turolla, on the basis of a controversial passage by Plato, which makes an explicit reference to maritime contacts with a continent located on the other side of the Atlantic, “which truly, correctly, with absolute certainty can be called a continent” (*Plat., Tim.* 25a). Here what is very striking are those three consecutive adverbs with which Plato proclaims with great emphasis the existence of a continent beyond the Atlantic which was unknown in his time: this led Turolla to suppose that what the philosopher had written in the dialogues *Timaeus* and *Critias* on an Atlantic island which in very ancient times would have been mistress of the seas could be worthy of faith (Turolla 1964, p. 142).

²In the dialect of Tahiti the word *hinahina* means “white hair”.

Moreover, a recent work on the European megalithism argues for “advanced maritime technology and seafaring in the megalithic Age” (Schulz Paulsson 2019). It was favoured by a warmer climate than the current one: we are referring to the “post-glacial climatic optimum”, between the 6th and 3rd millennium BC, when the Arctic Sea was navigable during the summer. This made travel between the Atlantic and the Pacific much easier than now, through a polar route that avoided rounding the very distant and insidious Cape Horn, located at the southern end of the American continent and considered a real “ship graveyard” due to raging winds, huge waves, currents, icebergs, rocky shoals and freezing waters.

But now let us focus our attention on a type of monument typical of the Polynesians: we are referring to the *marae*, or *malae*, sacred places in an open space facing the sea, with a rectangular platform paved in stone and a perimeter marked by higher stones, while in the center or on one side there is a standing stone, also considered sacred. Here the ancient cults of the Polynesian society before the arrival of the Europeans took place, associated with religious, social and political ceremonies: meetings, enthronement of leaders, reception of guests, rites and ritual meals.

All these characteristics of the *marae* seem to reflect the description of the meeting place where the Phaeacians, called by Homer *nausiklytoi*, “famed for their ships” (*Od.* VII, 39), gathered in assembly: “There is their place of assembly about the fair temple of Poseidon, fitted with huge stones set deep in the earth” (*Od.* VI, 266–267). Indeed, on the occasion of the meeting to celebrate the arrival of Ulysses, their king Alcinous “led the way to the place of assembly of the Phaeacians, which was built for them near the ships. Thither they came and sat down on the polished stones close by one another” (*Od.* VIII, 4–7). During this assembly, which precisely took place next to the sea – as we can deduce from the indication “near the ships” – a dance of young people took place (*Od.* VIII, 262), accompanied by the song of the bard with the cithara. But even now the Polynesians perform their traditional dances during the welcoming ceremony which takes place in the *marae*, also characterized by refined speeches and traditional songs (i.e. the *mele* mentioned earlier), exactly as the Homeric Phaeacians did with Odysseus.

Let us now examine the figure of Longopoa, or Longapoa, a mythical Polynesian navigator whose adventures to return to his island (Gifford 1924, pp. 139–152) are singularly reminiscent of those of Odysseus: there is the great abyss at the end of the world that swallows boats (corresponding to Charybdis, which makes no sense in the Polynesian context, while the description of the *Odyssey* recalls the Maelstrom, i.e., the notorious whirlpool that the Atlantic tide periodically triggers in front of the Lofoten Islands: Vinci (2013, 2017), the monster “so big as to fish for whales and sharks” (the Homeric Scylla), the arrival at the house of Sinilau (Calypso), the tears of the shipwrecked man who yearns to return to his island without having a boat, even the *tapa* cloth (a traditional Polynesian fabric produced from the bark of certain trees, of whose workmanship the goddess Hina was the patroness) which must be returned to the sea and which recalls the veil of Ino (which is identical to Hina, as we said earlier). Incidentally,

the root of the name of the *tapa* can be found in Homer (*tapēs*), in Latin (*tapetum*), in Italian (*tappeto*), in German (*Teppich*), in Norwegian (*teppe*) and so on.

No less surprising is the fact that among the legends concerning Hina there is one, in which she has the name of “Hina of Hilo”³, which portrays her as a sort of Helen of Troy, kidnapped from her legitimate husband by one of her suitors, with the consequent outbreak of a war that has so many convergences with the events of the *Iliad* to be published by the Hawaiian king Kalakaua under the title of “*Hina, the Helen of Hawaii*”. Going into more detail, Hina of Hilo was the most beautiful woman in Hawaii. She married a powerful king, but was kidnapped by the son of another king, who had reached Hilo (a city on Hawaii, the largest island of the archipelago of the same name) in a canoe, then took Hina to a fortress. This caused a war: the supporters of her husband arrived with a fleet of 1200 boats and occupied the shore for several miles with their ships and tents, until after many dramatic and bloody events they conquered the fortress and brought Hina back home, from where she had been absent for almost eighteen years (Kalakaua 1888, p. 14). The parallels with the events of the Trojan War are amazing, even in the reference to those eighteen years: indeed, according to the *Odyssey*, Helen and Menelaus returned to Sparta only “in the eighth year” after the end of the war (*Od.* IV, 82), which had lasted ten years.

The analogy between the spears of the Homeric heroes and those of the Polynesian warriors is also striking: the latter, called *ihe*, could be of two types, one of which was very long, 16 to 20 feet, i.e., about 5 to 6 metres (Kalakaua 1888, p. 69). Similarly, in the Homeric world the spear was called *egkhos* (name similar to *ihe*) and here too there was a very large type, called “long-shadow spear”. The poet indicates the length of Hector’s: eleven cubits, that is more than 5 metres (*Il.* VI, 319).

Let us examine now a passage from Hesiod, where, immediately after naming the heroes who fell fighting in Troy, the poet states that “to the others Zeus, the son of Cronos, gave a living and an abode apart from men, and made them dwell at the bounds of the earth. And they live untouched by sorrow in the Islands of the Blessed along the shore of deep-swirling Ocean, happy heroes for whom the grain-giving earth bears honey-sweet fruit flourishing thrice a year, far from the deathless gods, and Cronos rules over them” (*Hes., Op.* 168–174).

Cronos is also found “at the bounds of the earth” (*Il.* VIII, 478) for Homer, who in the *Odyssey* reports a prophecy made to Menelaus: “It is not your destiny to die in Argos [...] but the immortals will take you to the Elysian plain and the bounds of the earth, where dwells fair-haired Rhadamanthus and for men life is much easier: there is never snow, nor winter, nor storm, but the ocean always sends the gusts of the shrill-blowing Zephyr to refresh men” (*Od.* IV, 561–569). In short, the legendary Elysian Fields, the pagan paradise reserved for virtuous men, were located at the bounds of the earth, in the Islands of the Blessed, which since ancient times people have tried in vain to locate.

As regards the name of Rhadamanthus, *Rhadamanthys* in Greek, it corresponds to the Icelandic term *ráðamanður*, “leader”, “eminent person”, and to the Danish

³Hilo is a city overlooking the beautiful bay of the same name on the Island of Hawaii (which is the largest of the archipelago: in fact it is also called the “Big Island”).

rådmand, “adviser”, which is well suited to the image of the judge in the afterlife, outlined by Plato in the *Apology of Socrates* and in the *Gorgias*. Incidentally, this Nordic name, attributed to a character from Greek mythology mentioned by Homer, would seem to refer to an extremely archaic context, prior to the descent of the ancestors of the Hellenes into the Mediterranean⁴.

It can be seen right away that in that apparently idealized picture of the Elysian plain, where “fair-haired Rhadamanthus” is placed, a fresh “shrill-blowing” wind appears: it is a very concrete and realistic note, which seems to indicate a precise place on earth, certainly not the afterlife. At this point, considering that the Polynesian tale corresponding to the story of Helen and Menelaus takes place in the Hawaiian Islands, where the climate offers the most pleasant conditions for man, it is natural to wonder if the Elysian plain could be located in one of those islands.

Indeed, the climate of the Hawaiian Islands is characterized precisely by the trade winds, that come down from the colder northern regions of North America. They are considered the “natural air conditioner” of those islands, where they are perceived as a pleasant, crisp and refreshing breeze, blowing for most of the year. What’s more they purify the air, sweeping away any traces of volcanic emissions or industrial pollution. They blow especially in summer, even more than 90% of the time, pleasantly cooling the islands when the temperature tends to warm up.

It is also very important to underline that the Hawaiian trade winds bring rain to the windward slopes of the islands, where the tropical vegetation is most luxuriant. This explains why Homer calls the good wind, that refreshes Rhadamanthus and the other lucky men living in the Elysian Plain, with the name of Zephyr: indeed, in another passage of the *Odyssey* the poet is keen to point out that Zephyr is the wind “that always brings rain” (*Od.* XIV, 458).

After noting that the trade winds received their English name from the “traders” who were the first to sail around the world in the modern age, using them for travel related to their trades, let us now observe that a sailing ship, propelled by these fresh trade winds, the first port it encounters when setting sail from North America is precisely Hilo Bay on the Island of Hawaii, the one where the “Helen of Hilo” returned after 18 years (Kalakaua 1888, p. 67)! Could the Elysian plain

⁴Moreover, according to a controversial hypothesis, exposed and debated in a conference held at the Sapienza University of Rome in 2012, the Homeric world itself would be previous, and not subsequent, to the descent of the ancestors of the Hellenes in the Aegean Sea and to the origin of the Mycenaean civilization. In this case, it would go back to at least the first half of the second millennium BC, and it would have had as its original set the Baltic-Scandinavian area, whose geographical, morphological and climatic characteristics could be able to explain all the contradictions found in the traditional Mediterranean location (Vinci 2013). This is corroborated by the astonishing affinity of the Mycenaean civilization with the Nordic Bronze Age, to the point of having led an archaeologist to define the latter as “a specific and selective Nordic variety of Mycenaean high culture” (Kristiansen and Suchowska-Ducke 2015, p. 371). All of this is also consistent with the fact, noted by all scholars, that the civilization described in the Homeric poems is more rustic and more archaic than the Mycenaean civilization. In a word, this hypothesis would seem capable of explaining all the innumerable absurdities of the Homeric world in the traditional Mediterranean context, as well as the difficulties both in inserting the Homeric world into a defined historical context and in clarifying its relationship with the Mycenaean civilization.

“at the bounds of the earth” be found here, where Menelaus, according to that *Odyssey* prophecy, was destined to go?

A confirmation might be found in Pindar’s *Olympian* II, in which Rhadamanthus appears next to Cronos “where the ocean breezes blow around the Isle of the Blessed, and golden flowers shine from beautiful trees” (Pind., *Ol.* II, 70–73). Indeed, those “golden flowers” that bloom on the trees could allude to Hawaiian hibiscus (*Hibiscus Brackenridgei*: Roberts Hawaii 2023), a shrub that produces a large, beautiful, golden flower with a diameter of 10–15 cm, selected as the official state flower of Hawaii in 1988 (Figure 2).

Figure 2. *The Hawaiian Yellow Hibiscus*



Also known as *pua aloalo* in Hawaiian, the yellow hibiscus is native to the Hawaiian Islands. These striking shrubs can be found in clusters or growing singularly on branches with some plants rising from 3 to 15 feet tall.

Not only that: in the following verses, Pindar underlines that those golden flowers are “for those who entwine their hands with wreaths and garlands according to the righteous counsels of Rhadamanthus” (Pind., *Ol.* II, 74-75), thus offering us a delightfully “Hawaiian” image, in which Rhadamanthus is even presented in the guise of a dance master.

On the other hand, in Hawaiian folklore there is a male patron of the hula-dance, Ku-ka-ohia-Laka (Beckwith 1940, p. 40), the god of Hula dancing and canoe building. He is associated with *ohia lehua* tree, whose flowers are used for decorations on altars during performances. Also the goddess of Hula is called Laka: she is said to be what causes the movement of the dancer (as for the name *Laka*, in some Polynesian dialects it is also found as *Lata* or *Rata*, which seems to be comparable to the root of the name of Rhadamanthus).

At this point we propose to add Rhadamanthus to the scientific name of the yellow Hawaiian hibiscus: the natural outcome of such a juxtaposition would be *Hibiscus Brackenridgei Rhadamanthi*.

Also worth thinking about is that the name of the “Islands of the Blessed”, *Makarōn nēsoi*, which is common in Greek literature from Hesiod onwards, is almost identical to *Makali’i*, the name by which the Pleiades are called in the

islands of Hawaii. In fact, considering that in the Polynesian dialects the liquid consonants, *L* and *R*, are often interchangeable, *Makali'i* appears almost identical to the Greek *makaroi* (“the Blessed”), which is the nominative case of *makarōn*.

Furthermore, also considering that the Pleiades are central to the Polynesian calendar just as they were in the calendar of ancient Mesopotamia (here is yet another point of contact with the ancient cultures of the Old World), one could assume that the Hawaiian Islands as a whole were considered a projection of the Pleiades onto earth, similar to what we have verified in some earlier works relating to the Seven Hills of Rome and other ancient cities (Vinci and Maiuri 2017, 2019, 2021, Nissan et al. 2019, pp. 104–124; on this specific point, Maiuri and Vinci 2022). One should also consider that the archipelago of Hawaii is made up of 137 islands, of which the inhabited ones are only the seven largest (namely Oahu, Maui, Hawaii, Kauai, Molokai, Lanai, and Niihau).

It should also be underlined that the traditional Hawaiian New Year’s holiday, *Makahiki* – a name derived from *Makali'i hiki*, the rising of the Pleiades – is dedicated to Lono–Rono: this corresponds to the relationship between Cronos and the Pleiades mentioned by Plutarch, when he recalls that, in the oceanic world where Cronos was relegated, every thirty years a great feast was celebrated, on the occasion of the entry of the Star of Cronos (i.e., the planet Saturn) into the constellation of Taurus (Plut., *De fac. orb. lun.* 941c), that is, when the conjunction between Saturn and the Pleiades occurs (the latter being considered the stars most important of the Taurus, to the point that it was also called “the month of the Pleiades”: Verderame (2016, p. 110). As for the planet Saturn, it has a thirty-year cycle: in this regard, we recall that in the Egyptian world “Ptah from the very beginning bears the title of Lord of the Thirty-year Cycle, i.e., of the period of Saturn”, and that “in China Saturn was the Imperial Star” (de Santillana and von Dechend 2003, p. 239).

In short, there is no lack of reasons to suppose that the Isle of the Blessed mentioned by Pindar was the island of Hawaii (over which Rono, i.e., Cronos “at the bounds of the earth” reigns), where the plain overlooking the Hilo Bay (Figure 3) is identifiable with the Elysian Fields.

Figure 3. *Hilo Bay on the Island of Hawaii*



The plain of Hilo could also correspond to the Fields of Rushes, or Fields of Reeds (*sekhet-iaru*), the Egyptian paradise where Osiris reigns. It is here that, according to Egyptian mythology, after a long and risky journey by ship the souls of virtuous men arrive who have passed the “weighing of the heart” test. In this regard, it must be borne in mind that two of the most important Polynesian deities, Horo (who was the main deity and the god of war in Tahiti) and Raa (the god of the Sun), have identical names to the gods Horus (one of the most significant deities in ancient Egypt) and Ra (the Egyptian god of Sun), not to mention that “mummification was practiced, in some cases, also in Polynesia” (Guiart 1962, p. 13). Nor less surprising is the fact that the Polynesian calendar, based on 12 months of 30 days plus 5 additional days (Kalakaua 1888, pp. 156–157), is identical to the Egyptian one (Clagett 2004), and that the Polynesians called the soul of man and the spirit of the ancestors *ko* and *bao* (Guiart 1962, pp. 80–81), almost identical to the *ka* and *ba* of the ancient Egyptians.

Still on the Egyptian Fields of Rushes, it can also be noted that the woods of the island of Hawaii, favored by the volcanic soil and the perennially mild climate, are very rich in vegetation of all types, including the giant reed (*Arundo donax*), which grows up to 10 cm a day, reaching a height of several meters; it thrives in coastal areas, in wetlands, along streams, ditches and rivers, even forming impenetrable thickets; but there are also other varieties of rods, such as bamboo (incidentally, by a strange coincidence, right near the bay of Hilo there is a particularly pleasant locality, called Reed’s Island, where according to a legend the ancient Ari’i had their playground and a local king lived).

All of this also seems to correspond to the inscription on a stele handed down to us by Diodorus Siculus and dedicated to Osiris: “My father is Cronos, the youngest of all the gods, and I am King Osiris, who made expeditions throughout the earth [...] There is no place in the inhabited world where I have not arrived” (Diod. Sic. I, 27, 5). All of this could be the last memory of facts attributable to an era prior to the first Egyptian dynasty, therefore corresponding to the megalithic age, which has left impressive traces almost everywhere on our planet (here we are not referring only to material remains, but also to myths, legends and folklore, such as the myth of the Flood and the idea of building cities on seven hills, which are scattered almost everywhere). Anyway, this passage from Plutarch directly connects Cronos and Osiris, which makes the connection between the Elysian Fields of Greek mythology and the Egyptian Fields of Rushes even more evident.

In conclusion, after having verified the importance of megalithism in Polynesia and the presence of European-looking men (already attested by the first explorers) – not to speak of the striking analogies of folklore, traditions, customs, myths, legends and features of local divinities with similar (if not identical) circumstances and situations in the classical world and in the Homeric poems – what emerged upon the character of Radhamanthus and the god Cronos (who, in addition to having many characteristics in common with the Polynesian Rono–Lono–Rongo, in mythology has an oceanic dimension and is often connected to the “ends of the earth” and to the Islands of the Blessed) seems to indicate that these islands can be identified in the Polynesian world and precisely in the archipelago of Hawaii.

In fact, the Elysian Fields seem to correspond to the beautiful plain extending around Hilo Bay on the island of Hawaii, refreshed by the typical trade winds of these places and embellished by the golden flowers of the Hawaiian hibiscus. It is the latter that still adorns the hair of the descendants of the girls who in ancient times entwined “their hands with wreaths and garlands according to the righteous counsels of Rhadamanthus”.

It is also clear that this fascinating topic requires further corroboration, research and insights from future scholars.

In any case, it is in Polynesia that after many years it seems possible to find fair-haired Rhadamanthus, perhaps turned a little gray, on his windy island “at the bounds of the earth”.

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English Brutal Colonisation of the Seven Islands: The Poems of Ossian by James Macpherson

By Kathleen Ann O'Donnell*

After the failure of the first strike of the 1821 Greek Revolution against the Ottoman Empire, which began in Moldavia in February, it continued in the Peloponnese one month later. The uprising resulted in victory with the formation of the Modern Greek state; its President was Jiannis Capodistria, a Corfiot. Greece was a state born mutilated in 1828 as it excluded: Epiros, Thessalia, Chios Mytilene, Samos, Crete and the Dodecanese Islands under Ottoman rule. The Ionian Islands were under English control, ostensibly known as the 'British Protectorate'. The second expansion of the Greek state in the nineteenth century was engendered by Radical Ionian Greeks who rebelled against the English who had tyrannised the Seven Islands for almost fifty years until 1864 when they united with Greece. The influence of Celtic literature through the works of The Poems of Ossian by the Scottish antiquarian James Macpherson and Irish Melodies and 'Imitation of Ossian' by the Irish scholar Thomas Moore inspired the works of Seven Islands radical intellectuals, which provide a hidden code that coincided with political events at the time to unite the oppressed. The main translator of The Poems of Ossian was Panayiotis Panas, a Kephalonian scholar. He was the successor to Rhigas Velestinlis, the protomartyr of the Greek Revolution and follower of the national poet, the Zakynthian Dionysius Solomos. Panas aimed to unite and spiritually uplift the people by conveying the hope of living under freedom, equality, and fraternity; to live under democracy, without a monarchy. Neglected by the Greek Academy in the twentieth century do these translations of this Celtic literature and its influence remain in obscurity in this century? To what extent did the English have the right legally to gift the Seven Islands to Modern Greece in 1864? Has the sacrifice and patriotism of those who fought for the union of the Seven Islands with Greece been included in the school curriculum.

Keywords: *Irish melodies, translation, nineteenth century, history, The Mediterranean, The Poems of Ossian and British Colonialism*

Introduction

The Greek independence revolt against Ottoman rule erupted in February 1821 in Moldavia, where it would fail, but spread a month later to the Peloponnese and central Greece, leading ultimately to the formation of the modern Greek state in 1828. The new state (under President Ioannis Capodistira, from Corfu) was born in mutilated form, as still excluded were Epirus, Macedonia, Thessaly and Thrace, Crete and other Aegean islands – under Ottoman rule – the Ionian Islands 'a British Protectorate' since 1815. Phase two of the Greek state's genesis occurred in

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midC19 when pressure from radical Ionian Greeks led to British withdrawal and incorporation of the Seven Islands in 1864. Throughout half a century of British rule, an enduring inspiration to the independence intellectuals in the Ionian Islands were the works of Scottish antiquarian James Macpherson (notably his *Poems of Ossian*) and Irish scholar and poet Thomas Moore (his *Irish Melodie and 'Imitation of Ossian'*). The literature of the subject Celtic peoples served as a code for those chaffing under British tyranny elsewhere. Principal translator of Macpherson into Greek was Panayiotis Panas, a scholar from Kephalonian. He was following in the footsteps of Rigas Velestinlis (Pheraios) protomartyr of the Greek Revolution and himself a successor to the national poet, Zakynthian Dionysius Scoloms. Panas's purpose in translating Ossian was to further pro-freedom, anti-monarchical sentiment in line with French Revolution ideals.

Seemingly neglected by the Greek academy, what is the standing of these historic Ionian translations today? Do they, and the story of those who successfully pursued the independence of the Ionian Islands, feature in the school curricula? And what is the background story to Britain's 'gift' of the Ionian Islands to the nascent Greek state?

To understand how *The Poems of Ossian* by James Macpherson appealed to networks of people desiring to live under liberty, fraternity and equality, without monarchy, which was instigated by the French Revolution in 1789, a brief description is given of uprisings in Scotland, Ireland and the Seven Islands to show their similarities.

Revolution

The Scottish Highlanders were crushed by the English monarchy at the Battle of Culloden in 1745. To preserve the Celtic legacy to those Highlander Scots who had been deposed and exiled, James Macpherson gathered oral material as well as manuscripts and wrote *The Poems of Ossian* in English to retain their spirit after having suffered such atrocious outrages (O'Donnell 2019a). Written in poetic prose, the tales contain Celtic values in the art of unity and defensive combat against tyranny. *The Poems of Ossian* are anticlerical; they are not commercial (De Lucia 2008). They draw on the universal love of Nature instead of specific religious tenets. There is no class distinction. The Warriors are just and magnanimous. They show respect to women and heed their words. Ossian was a warrior and bard, son of Fionn or Fingal, the leader of a famous group of Celtic warriors known as the Fianna (Fenians). *The Poems of Ossian* projected an appeal to socialist movements in the nineteenth century; the work was translated into Italian, German, Russian, Hungarian, Rumanian and Greek among other languages.

In 1797, the Irish lyricist and scholar Thomas Moore, influenced by Macpherson's Ossian wrote 'Imitation of Ossian;' as an attack on English suppression after almost half a millennium, imploring the inhabitants to rise, break their chains and sing the bravery of their ancestors. It was published just before the Irish revolution in 1798. Moore changes the name of Macpherson's 'Evirallina,' Ossian's wife and mother of Oscar, to that of 'Elvira' (O'Donnell 2020):

‘Tyranny strides o’er our land dreadful as the gloom on his brow; ...’tis therefore that I am driven from thy side, O! Elvira, of love; and ‘tis therefore I wander the midnight snows and sigh forth my woes to the wind! Thy beams, O, moon! Fall in vain on my frame; they illumine not the breast of the wretched! ... Oh! That *Ossian* now flourished and was here; he would tell us the deeds of our Sires, and swell up our souls to be brave! – for his Harp flow’d a torrent around, and incitement enforc’d as the stream!’ (Clifford 1984).

‘Imitation of Ossian’ first appeared in the ‘Northern Star’, Belfast, a United Irish paper, edited by the scholar Thomas Addis Emmet. After this press was blown up by English soldiers this article was then published in ‘The Press’ in Dublin in October 1797, also edited by Thomas Emmet (O’Donnell 2017). It was republished in ‘The Celt’ in Dublin in 1857 sent by a Mr Tone (O’Donnell 2020). A friend of Thomas Emmet’s was Wolf Tone.

At this time, the revolutionary leader of the Society of the Irish Brotherhood was Wolfe Tone, a Protestant, who detested tyranny. The United Irishmen included people of all religious persuasion. For example, the Scottish Presbyterians in Northern Ireland favoured French Republican principles. Tone served for a time as a chef de brigade under Napoleon in the French Republic. He planned to bring the support of French soldiers to aid the Irish Uprising but foul weather prevented this from occurring. He was captured by the English and was either executed or committed suicide in 1798, which is open to dispute (Tone 2009). Thomas Emmet, who was also captured, went into exile in the United States (Emmet 2009b). After the revolution, under the 1801 Act of Union ‘dissolved the Irish legislature in Dublin and failed to emancipate Catholics who had been systematically disenfranchised for centuries...; ‘the experience of British oppression served as the impetus of Moore’s work’ (O’Donnell 2020).

Robert Emmet, brother of Thomas Emmet, attempted another uprising. In 1802 he met Napoleon who promised to liberate the Irish and make Ireland independent. While both studying law at Trinity College, Dublin, Robert Emmet and Thomas Moore became close friends. Emmet was expelled for expressing the ideas of Wolfe Tone, leader of the United Irishmen. In 1803, the rebellion, led by Robert Emmet, failed. He was caught trying to bid farewell to his fiancée Sarah Curran. Emmet was hanged, drawn and quartered and beheaded by the English in 1803, aged twenty-four. Thomas Moore memorialises Emmet and Curran in his *Irish Melodies* entitled ‘Breathe not his Name’ and ‘She is Far From the land’. *Irish Melodies* was translated into Hungarian, Polish, Russian and Rumanian, countries that all underwent revolution (Emmet 2009a). Moore’s *Irish Melodies* were greatly inspired by Macpherson’s *Ossian* and it was Moore’s *Imitation* that promoted the propagation of *Ossian* (O’Donnell 2020).

Similarly, Rigas Velestinlis (Pheraios) the first Greek-Wallachian protomartyr of the Greek Revolution also detested tyranny. A scholar and lyricist, he wrote the Constitution and Declaration of Rights (O’Donnell 2016). In article 22, he stressed the need for co-education; he recommended that education comprised of the teaching of Italian and French (Clogg 1976). By 1790 a tri-lingual dictionary – French–Italian–Greek – was published in Bucharest (Lascu-Pop 1994). Rigas believed in the unity of people, no matter what religion, who must live under democracy in

a republican confederation, without a monarchy. He urged people to break their chains and fight against the tyranny of the Sultan, including both Egyptians and the Ottomans themselves. He set up an Anatolian Confederation in Bucharest in 1780 (O'Donnell 2019b). His famous 'Battle Cry' was sung all over the Greek-speaking world:

'Sons of Greeks, arise! The glorious hour's gone forth, and worthy of such ties,
Display who gave us birth...' (O'Donnell 2020)

And:

'Bulgarians, Albanians, Armenians, Romaics, Arabs, Africans and white people...
Montenegrins... With one united leap, Gird your sword for Freedom against the
tyranny of the Ottomans.' (O'Donnell 2017)

Rigas Velistinlis was also one of the first scholars to write a novel in the vernacular which is a translation from the works of the French author Restif de la Bretonne. One of his works comprises translations from *The Poems of Ossian* (O'Donnell 2020).

In the Danube principalities (Wallachia and Moldavia) there was a class division among the Phanariots, educated Greeks, claiming Byzantine aristocracy, who worked as interpreters for the Ottomans and the poor who lived under feudalism, subject to the Sultan. The Byzantines were hostile towards Hellenism scorning their philosophical, religious and moral teachings. Their education establishments were closed by Emperor Justinian in the sixth century (Campbell and Sherrard 1969). It was only when the contact of students with the work of Rigas as well as the introduction of French democracy in Corfu did they contribute to the creation of a movement aspiring to re-establish enslaved Hellenism with a socially restructuring which sprung from the spirit of the 1789 French Revolution (Hitiri 1961). The news that the Ionian Island citizens had the same rights as the French relit enthusiasm in the Greek world of Bucharest (Pompiliu 1809). Students from all over the Balkans and Anatolia attended Bucharest Academy (Camariano-Cioran 1974).

Anyone reading Rigas Velestinlis' works risked being excommunicated. On December 1, 1798, the Patriarch of Constantinople, Gregory, rigorously opposed the Political Statute, which included the Declaration of Rights and the Constitution as well as the proclamation, described it as:

'full of rot because of its fraudulent ideas and is opposed to the dogma of our orthodox spirit.' (Stavrianos 2000)

Rigas was to have met Napoleon in Preveza in the Seven Islands in 1797 to be assured of the support of French troops. He was, however, betrayed, captured in Trieste and handed over to the Ottomans who transported him to Belgrade where he was tortured, half-drawn and quartered and his body dumped in the Danube (Legrand 1892) in the same year as Wolfe Tone.

In 1797, Napoleon liberated the Seven Islands, (Septinsular Islands or the Ionian Islands), under the Treaty of Campo Formio. He united them horizontally

into three cantons known as ‘Corfu’ (Corfu, Paxos, Antipaxos, Othonos (an islet), Vouthrotos and Parga on the mainland in Epirus); ‘Ithaca’ (Lefkada, Kephallonia, Little Kephallonia (Ithaca), and Preveza in Epirus and Vonitsa in Akarnanika on the mainland in Epirus) and the Aegean Peninsula’ (Zakinthos, the Strophades (Plotas Island in Ancient Greek), Kythera and Dragameston (Astakos) on the mainland in the Peloponnese) to remind the French of Homer. His aide was the playwright A. V. Arnault (Mavroyiannis 1889). Arnault wrote ‘Oscar, fils d’Ossian’ which was performed by Talma, a leading actor of the day, at the Theatre de la Republic in Paris in 1796. The music was composed by Etienne Mehul (Van Tieghem 2017). Arnault writes in his preface:

‘Son and father of heroes, a hero himself, Ossian, celebrated the exploits of Fingal, Oscar and his family members. It is to Malvina, Oscar’s widow, that the old and blind Ossian, the prince of poets, this other Homer, addresses his plaintive songs and gratefulness.’ (Arnault 1796)

Arnault was the favourite poet of the Rumania-Greek revolutionary leader Alexander Ipsilantis, who translated Arnault’s poem ‘The Leaf’ into Modern Greek (Kordatos 1983b). Napoleon ordered Arnault to instal a printing press on Corfu immediately so that revolutionary material would be made available. ‘The Songs of Rigas’, the second edition was published (Alison 1897). When Napoleon sailed for Egypt he read ‘Temora’ aloud to Arnault (Van Tieghem 1917).

The Ionian Islands had been subjugated by the Venetian Republic for more than four hundred years. The lower-class Greek-speaking inhabitants had no rights and were ruled by Italian-speaking nobles. There were no schools. Tertiary education only existed in Italy. Napoleon replaced the official Italian language with Modern Greek and democrats took control from aristocratic leaders. Rigas’ ‘Battle Cry’ was sung on Zakynthos, the then capital of the Seven Islands to celebrate Napoleon’s victory (O’Donnell 2019a); Corfu became the capital under Napoleon (Coutelle 1977). Napoleon freed all marginalised people of different religious persuasion enabling them to celebrate in public. Adonis Martelaos and his nephew Dimitris Gouzelis, both scholars, helped burn the Librod’oro, a book listing names of nobles and planted the tree of liberty in the main square of Zakynthos. The tree was also planted in squares on other islands. Martelaos, a spiritual adherent of Rigas, taught Greek to the poor. He translated *The Last Letters of Jacopo Ortis*, published in 1798, into Greek (De Viazis 1886). Written by his pupil Nicolas Hugo Foscolo, who wrote in Italian, it contains excerpts from the translation of *The Poems of Ossian*, by the abbot Melchior Cesarotti, professor of Ancient Greek and Hebrew at Padua University. Similar to Capodistria, Foscolo also studied under Cesarotti. Foscolo, praising Cesarotti, stated: ‘To the man of genius, to the poet of the nation, finally the translator of Ossian, I set about paying a tribute that my heart made from the first instant that I started to read your verses’ (Foscolo n.d.). In his dissertation on Ossian, Cesarotti observes, after quoting the merits of Fingal in Blair’s dissertation:

Valour reigns; but it is a generous valour, void of cruelty, actuated by honour, not by hatred. We behold no debasing passions among Fingal’s warriors; no spirit of avarice

or insult; but a perpetual contention for fame; a desire of being distinguished and remembered for gallant actions; a love of justice; and a zealous attachment to their friends and their country. Such is the strain of sentiment in the works of Ossian (St. Clair 1805).

As Seven Islander scholars studied in Italy the influence of his works, particularly, *The Poems of Ossian* was enormous and infiltrated the islands by 1800. In 1800, a Russo-Ottoman alliance took over the Seven Islands under the Treaty of Constantinople, transforming them into the United States of the Ionian Islands, the first free Greek state in 1803. Italian was again the official language and aristocrats were returned to power. Martelaos and Gouzelis were arrested and, in chains, they were imprisoned in Bagnia jail in Constantinople but freed a year later; they were then persecuted by the Zakynthian aristocracy (De Viazis 1886). In 1808, under the Treaty of Tilsit, the Ionian Islands became part of the French Empire and Modern Greek was official once again. After centuries of no schools under Venetian Rule, the French opened demotic schools and education was expanded (Prifti 1961). They also inaugurated what would later be known as the Ionian Academy (Mylonas 1961). Napoleon wrote that all the communes of the Seven Islands and its people, with the protection of the great nation, will recover the science, art and commerce that they have lost under the tyranny of the oligarchs (Pauthier 1863).

The Congress of Vienna

In the dividing of the spoils after the Battle of Waterloo, England claimed its desire to annex the Seven Islands as a colony of its powerful empire. But the diplomatic mastery and the Greek spirit of Corfiot Jiannis Capodistria, the Russian Foreign Minister, a member of one of the four powers including Prussia, Austria and England, known as the Holy Alliance, thwarted the English intention of colonisation of the Seven Islands (Vounas 1966). Capodistria affirmed that the Treaty of Vienna provided 'political independence' to the Ionian Islands (Monck and Miles 2004). In the end, it was decided that the Ionian Islands and the adjoining towns, since Venetian times, on the mainland would constitute a united free and independent state under its name the United States of the Ionian Islands, of which the guarding and protection, the above powers allocated to England (Vounas 1966).

The first High Commissioner was Thomas Maitland. In 1817 Maitland changed many articles in the Constitution. One of these that Maitland quashed was related to certain privileges that supported the elevation of the ordinary people which, instead, expended the omnipotence of the long-standing gentry (Romas 1983). Article 4 of the Treaty deemed that the Modern Greek demotic language should be the only language and must be introduced as soon as possible to be used in all government transactions, ministries and the judiciary in the islands (Mylonas 1961). There was no press except that censored by Maitland. How Maitland interpreted the Treaty revealed the dictatorial nature of English reign and 'constituted an abuse of the Treaty' (Monck and Miles 2004).

The Greek Revolution

The Greek uprising began on 24 February 1821 at Dragatsani in the principality of Moldavia. It was led by Alexander Ipsilantis, a Greek-Romanian Revolutionary and a supporter of Rigas Velestinlis. He was head of the Philiki Etairia (the Friendly Society) which was a secret organisation in which Greeks enrolled under oath all over the Greek-speaking world, including the Seven Islands. He was also head of the Sacred Band, which fought with three hundred volunteers, some from Kephallonia and Zakynthos, at Dragatsani in the principality of Moldavia, now present-day Romania. On March 25th his brother, Dimitris Ipsilantis led his army to fight in the Peloponnese. By June the Sacred Band was almost routed and Ipsilantis was captured and imprisoned under the Austrian-Hungarian dynasty for six years. Similar to Napoleon, Alexander Ipsilantis always retained a copy of *The Poems of Ossian* nearby and he requested a copy of this poetry while in prison (Enepekidis 1965).

Tyranny in the Seven Islands

Thomas Maitland sold Parga to the tyrant Ali Pasha of Epiros for 150 thousand gold sovereigns, which provoked worldwide revulsion and indignation in 1819. This crime forced the inhabitants of that small paradise to abandon forever their patriotic land, bringing with them the bones of their ancestors, to avoid their desecration by the Ottomans. Many fled to Lefkada (Valaoritis 1981).

By the measures taken by the English immediately in 1817, the first uprising resulted in Lefkada two years later. The villagers refused to pay the exorbitant taxes imposed by the English and revolted (Maxaira 1940). The English sent troops in a frigate with cannons (Mylonas 1961) ordered by Adam, the High Commissioner's deputy. The ringleaders were hanged, then tarred, feathered and put in cages shaking in the wind; others suffered whippings; homes were burnt to the ground (Valaoritis 1981).

More tyranny was imposed by the regime. In June 1821, Maitland made it official that the Seven Islands would remain neutral in the Greek War of Independence (Pagratis 2007). When five Zakynthians attacked a Turkish vessel on the coast on 30 September 1821, they were hanged, tarred and feathered then put in cages up on a hill for the birds to feed on, as a lesson to anyone that did not adhere to English policy (Mylona 1963). One of the captured was a young boy who was similarly executed and his body hanged outside his home, an atrocity that resulted in his mother turning insane (O'Donnell 2020). Gouzelis was exiled and his property confiscated when he joined the Revolution (Gouzelis 1997). The liberation of Greece with the help of France and the re-organisation of a new Greece according to the slogan 'liberty, equality and fraternity' was an ideal which had lit up around Rigas and the secret society, the Philiki Etairia (Lascu-Pop 1997), which many Seven Islanders had joined (Vounas 1966). For example, Calvo (Gouzelis 1997) and Gouzelis (Gouzelis 1997) were members. In 1827, Gouzelis wrote 'The Trumpet of War', a battle cry and in the preface mentions Rigas,

founder of the Secret Society, who urged Greeks to fight and died working for the love of his people (Kordatos 1983a). Gouzelis donated his sword to Sir Richard Church, an Irish philhellene who fought in the War of Independence. In 1824, after the death of Byron, Gouzelis delivered a funeral oration to him in St. Dimitris Church in Tripoli, in the Peloponnese on 5 May 1824, which was translated and in 1973 became part of the archives of the Philhellene Committee, London (Gouzelis 1997).

The Zakynthian poet, Dionysius Solomos, would compose one of his most famous poems dedicated to Lord Byron. Solomos was born when Napoleon conquered the Seven Islands in 1798. His mother was a fourteen-year-old servant while his father, who was already married and had two offspring aged twenty-seven and thirty, was a sixty-two-year-old Count. His parents married when Solomos was about eight or nine, one day before his father's demise (Coutelle 1977). Solomos studied under Martelaos, a spiritual adherent of Rigas. Other students included Martelaos' nephew Dimitris Gouzelis, playwright, scholar and revolutionary soldier, the scholars: Andrea Calvo; Adonis Matesi and his cousin George Tertsetis and sometimes the Souliot Revolutionary soldier Kolokotroni would attend (De Viazis 1886). Many times Martelaos, the scholar, would visit Kolokotroni in his home. The latter greeted him thus: 'I bow to Greece; I kiss the hand of her Freedom' (Vlakoyianni 2022). Children sang Martelaos' translation of the Greek Marseillaise, including his pupils Matesi and Calvo (Luntzis 1856).

Interestingly, at the bicentenary Congress celebrating two hundred years since the death of Rigas, held in Athens in 1998, organised by the National and Capodistria University, in a session devoted to music entitled 'The Passion of Freedom in the songs and articles about Rigas', the name of Martelaos is omitted from his translation of the Greek Marseillaise, presented in the list on the programme which is referred to in 'J. C. Hobhouse: A journey through Albania and other provinces, London 1812'. Marteleos' contribution to Rigas is excluded altogether (Veletinlis 1998). This diverts any connection of the effect that the poetry of Marteleos, influenced by Rigas, had on Solomos and his followers (Mylonas 1961). Aged ten, Solomos went to study in Italy until his return to Zakynthos in 1818.

In 1773, Dimitris Gouzelis was born. Similar to Irish rebels, he had fought as a captain in the French army under Napoleon in Europe. He was one of the first Greeks to write a satiric play in demotic entitled *O Chasis* in 1795. It describes the Zakynthian aristocracy and is written in rhyming couplets. He exploited the Zakynthian idiom abundantly. Its caustic spirit sought democracy and freedom. Extracts of it were performed in squares and at carnival time. Recuperating after being injured in battle, he wrote *Judgment of Paris*:

'Trying to make my melancholic clouds have fun I created a poetic composition written by me, a new Iliad ... *Judgment of Paris*.' (Gouzelis 1997)

At one point in this work, Gouzelis feels inadequate to describe Aphrodite's beauty and so refers the reader to the works of famous poets including Ossian. In a footnote he states:

‘Ossian, a great old Celtic poet: His poems were discovered a short time ago and translated into English prose by James Macpherson and then into wonderful Italian verse by the Abbot Melchior Cesarotti, the superb translator of Homer. Long live The Poems of Ossian.’ (Vagenas 1966)

A thousand copies of this work were published in Trieste and circulated in the Greek-speaking world including Constantinople and Odessa. A copy was sent to Anthony Matesi, a fellow playwright and scholar (Gouzelis 1817).

Anthony Matesi spent his whole life translating, writing a play, poems and articles in prose to enrich the demotic language, absorbing the Greek he heard around him. His translations included Ossian (Matesi n.d.a) and ‘The Sepulchres’ by Foscolo, which is influenced by Cesarotti’s Ossian (Mattioda 2004). It was published in 1872 (De Viazis 1881). Similar to Solomos, he ideologically abandoned his aristocratic class and moved with the progressive ideas of the time (Matesi n.d.a).

The first ten years of Solomos on Zakynthos were important ones for the political and social situation of the Ionian Islands. Writing to his Italian friend, Giuseppe Montani, who he had met as a student in Italy, and who, similarly, like Solomos, was living in Italy under Austrian despotism, Solomos revealed to him in 1818 on his return to Zakynthos: ‘How can a country be a real country when it is under foreign protection which is tantamount to nothing less than a cover for slavery?’ (Solomos 1991). In 1822, Matesi wrote ‘Ode to a Friend’ inviting Solomos to sing about the war of liberation. Influenced by Moore, Matesi wrote: ‘Until when, friend, will your lyre remain silent? Listen, the noise of war challenges it.’ This fragment of twenty-one verses comprises images and impressions which Solomos uses in turn in his poems ‘Ode to Byron’ and ‘Hymn to Liberty’, the first two verses of which are the national anthem. In verse XVIII, Solomos includes the name of Rigas:

‘Seen thee rise, than brighter gleams
Made our sunny plains rejoice –
Only heard before in dreams,
Came, like Rhigas’s hymns, thy voice.’ (Sheridan 1825)

Several verses by Matesi are patriotic in style drawn from ‘Fingal’:

‘Liberty in this sacred voice In all of Greece poured out A roar.
Like when the winds Strike the waves which Foaming with mists fight the rocks.!’ (De Viazis 1881)

And

‘As waves white-bubbling over the deep come swelling roaring on: as rocks of ooze meet roaring waves.’ (Macpherson 1996)
‘The shadows of the heroes on land and seawalking in the air increasing the ardour.’ (De Viazis 1881)

And:

[Peace said Cuchullin] to the souls of the heroes: their deeds were great in danger.
Let them ride around me on clouds, and show their features of war. (Macpherson
1996)

And in the last verse:

'I cannot see anything anywhere, I do not hear anything Except the noise of arms of
War unsung.' (De Viazis 1881)

In 1822 Solomos published thirty odes in Italian entitled 'Rime Improvvise' (Solomos 1979). Matesi translated eight of these including Ode XXX, entitled 'The Moon', which is influenced by the Italian translation of 'Dar-thula' by Cesarotti (Vagenas 1966). Matesi changes the meaning somewhat in his translation of the first verse:

XXX La Luna by Solomos
'Ecco pei regni candidi sidere Incoronata il crin di bianche rose
Appar la luna, e per quei spazi aerei Le stele inanzi a lei restano ascose.' (Solomos
1979)

'See how through brilliant, starry realms – her tresses with white roses strewn – the
moon ascends, and there on high constellations vanish where she goes.'
(Translate by Donal Gordon)

'Να η Σελήη του ουρανού εις πλατία προβαινει με
Λευκά ρόδα τα μαλλιιά σεμνά στεφανομέ όλα
τ'[α] άστρα λυμυρά τραβιούνται εις άλλο μέρος και
μόνη βασιλεύει αυτή του έρημου αιθέρος'. (DeViazis 1881)

'There the Moon of the Heavens in the squares proceeds, and her hair crowned in
white roses and all sorrowful the stars withdraw to another place and only she rules
over the celestial sky.' (My translation)
(All translations are by the author unless otherwise stated.)

This is the first example of the encoding of Ossian that relates to the contemporary political situation under English tyranny. Matesi influences Solomos and his followers when using apostrophes from *The Poems of Ossian* to expose injustice. A plea to the moon, shining her sad beams on the squares is to remind people of the tree of freedom. It acts as a witness. The word 'squares' is to remind people of the Tree of Liberty planted in public squares all over the Seven Islands which the aristocrats had tried to uproot (Mylonas 1961); the sorrow of the stars connotes the lack of democracy, introduced by the French, that was non-existent under English despotism. Influenced by Matesi, Solomos instigated clandestinely, an apostrophe to the Moon for political reasons which his followers will use. The moon is a witness to tyranny; Ossian represents Justice

Anyone who went against the tyrannous regime of the English was in Danger; so Solomos had to find a way to inspire the people with the hope to break free, which he did through concealment citing Ossian. In his 'Ode to the Moon', written at the time of the atrocities on Zakynthos, the illiterate inhabitants sang this song to

a guitar (Koulouphakos 1984) as they gazed upon the corpses hanging in cages in full view on Mount Skopos:

‘Ode to the Moon’

Sweetest song brought forth by the guitar and to this ineffable harmony of my heart
Responds yearning.

Sweet friend, it is you with your divine Ecstasy of Ossian, on the seashore of the night
who inspires tranquillity.

Pray stay that we may sing the beauty of the moon.
Of her often sang the blind poet.

It seems I see him leaning on a willow while the moon shimmered in his sacred beard.

From Mount Skopos you proceed
O how you delightfully console in the night!
O Goddess to you this languorous hymn I raise.

Languorous as you when you shine round at your zenith and you lull to sleep your
light on white tombstones.’ (Vagenas 1966).

This song no doubt gave consolation and hope during oppressive rule under the English. The moon rises above Mount Skopos, which is 483 meters high; it does not quite qualify as a mountain (Konstantinidos 1994). Acting like a balm the moon instils the feeling of injustice. Solomos also wrote ‘The Mad Mother’ as a tribute to the atrocious death of Jiannis Klaudianos; the manuscript was together with ‘Ode to the Moon’ (O’Donnell 2020).

The poem ‘Ode to the Moon’ by Solomos was only published in Athens one hundred and thirty years later when it appeared in the school syllabus (O’Donnell 2020). Another reference to the influence of Ossian on Solomos is found in ‘The Woman of Zakynthos’ which is written in demotic prose. It will be remembered that Solomos only wrote in demotic. Zakynthos received many refugees from the Siege of Misolonghi who needed help and support from the people. In contrast, however, the feudalistic thinking of the Zakynthian aristocratic women despised the women and children of the revolution. The line ‘and a certain murmuring which appeared in a breath of wind through the reeds’ relates to ‘Dar-thula’ (Vagenas 1966). The noxious odours of Lake Lano in Scandinavia and that of disease in Lake Lego in Connaught were equated with tyrants in *The Poems of Ossian* ‘... the sable fleet of Swaran [Danish foe]. His masts are as numerous on our coast as reeds in the lake of Lego.’ (Macpherson 1996). The ‘Woman of Zakynthos’ expresses this disdain and hatred of the aristocracy against the revolution and its refugees (Mylonas 1963).

In 1821, George de Rossi, a judge and close friend of Solomos, as a result of efforts of Capodistria in England, and his friend Foscolo and the Public Prosecutor, Anastasio Flampouriari, sent a petition to King George IV of England requesting a re-examination of the 1817 Constitution to introduce liberal reforms. The petition was signed by Solomos who had added the last paragraph. On learning this fact,

the police arrested de Rossi and tied him up, where he was detained. Fortunately, he managed to escape to England so that he could protest against the High Commissioner to the English government (Solomos 1991). Solomos wrote a poem entitled 'To George de Rossi Located in England' (on the death of his father) (Solomos 1979) in which the first line is 'When you return you will only see your father in his grave.' After the demise of Maitland three years later, de Rossi returned to the Seven Islands (Solomos 1979).

Tertiary education was available at the Ionian Academy on Corfu, which officially opened in 1824. It was headed by Lord Guilford. When Solomos published his 'Hymn to Liberty' Lord Guilford forced Solomos to excise three verses that show his displeasure at being subjected to a foreign power:

'To the starry heavens above, Islands of the Ionian main,
Raise their song of joy and love (i.e. to Liberty).
Raise their hands. Alas in vain!

They are bound in fetters now
Branded every servile brow with the words
'False Liberty'...

And towards the Aegean sea
The Lion rolls his fiery eye,
Spreads his talons hugely
Menacing his hapless prey.' (Jenkins 1981)

A century after the death of Solomos, the bard of Freedom, the British lion squirmed convulsively against the national freedom movement of the people (Mylonas 1961). Cyprus was to have been a part of the Democratic Eastern Federation (Stavropoulou 1987).

In 1828, Solomos moved permanently to Corfu. He befriended revolutionaries. In his eulogy on Foscolo in the same year, he refers to Thomas Moore. Both Moore and Foscolo, exiles in England, were participants in gatherings under Lord Holland, head of the Whig Party where they shared their beliefs in their 'liberal ideology and political Privations' (Hamilton 2019). Both *The Last Letters of Jacopo Ortis* and *Irish Melodies* are patriotic in spirit (Hamilton 2019). Solomos was also a friend of Pavlos Costis who had studied under Cesarotti. He moved in exile to Corfu in 1831 as Costis was involved with an Italian revolutionary movement which inspired a love of freedom. He not only taught literature but also political and social virtues at the Ionian Academy (Solomos 1991). Solomos let his house, now the Solomos Museum, to the Italian Revolutionary scholar Flaminio Lolli whose brothers had been hanged under the Ducal State (O'Donnell 2019a). Solomos collaborated with Lolli in the writing of his famous poem 'On the Death of Emelia Rodostamo' (Solomos 1991). Lolli translated and published 'Paradise and the Peri' from *Lalla Rookh* by Thomas Moore. *Lalla Rookh* was written to cryptically expose the English cruel despotism of the Irish. It is regarded as 'a dramatization of Irish patriotism in an Eastern parable.' It was published in Corfu in Italian in 1843 (O'Donnell 2019). Similarly, Matesi wrote the play 'The Basil

Plant'. In this play, set in a previous century, Matesi refers to the mental despair of the Jews, alluding to the treatment by the English, unlike the French, who banned all their public ceremonies and even dismissed them from public service, which was a pretext as they were the most economically progressive elements of the islands (Kaloudis 1961). It was performed on Zakynthos in 1832. Napoleon had given the freedom to all marginalised Seven Islanders of different religious persuasion (De Viazis 1881).

In 1953, 'The Basil Plant' by Matesi was prefaced in a publication in Athens with 'Ode XXX' by Matesi (Matesi 1953), translated from Solomos (see above), which is influenced by Ossian. The reference to the omission of Matesi's translation of Ossian by De Viazis, referred to in 'Ossian in Greece' (Vagenas 1967), proves gross neglect by the Greek Academy: it is as follows:

Tears and pleas do not arouse destiny,
Be silent and sing to my old age.
There where you see the stream
till the flowers gathering dew,
There till my repose let the stone be raised (...)
I wander with my harp to create secret havens.
Oh! When the day becomes dark
In the black heavens,
Then you dressed
In your white robe
Come my dearest Elvira,
Come to that recollection
and lean your soft bosom on the harp. (...)
(1820)
(Matesi n.d.b)

The name 'Elvira' reveals that Matesi must have been aware of 'Imitation of Ossian' by Thomas Moore, published in 1797, the title of which was prefaced in one of his many editions of *Irish Melodies*, a best seller (O'Donnell 2020).

Solomos donated money to the 'cat', which his editor, Lino Politis, is unable to identify (Solomos 1991). This was a pseudonym for Dimitris Panagis Davis-Lourentsatos, Doctor of Philosophy, a Kephalonian radical (Vounas 1965) known as 'the cunning cat'. Davis fled to Bucharest with Panayiotis Panas in 1857. Before being exiled by the English, Panas had been imprisoned, tortured and maimed in the hand.

Another revolutionary who Solomos met was the Polish scholar, Juliusz Slowacki (1809-1849). Slowacki translated *Irish Melodies* which he wrote in Paris in 1832. He met Solomos on a boat trip from Corfu to Zakynthos in September 1836. Slowacki translated 'Hymn to Liberty' by Solomos; the first two verses are the Greek National Anthem. One of the passengers on the boat was Andreas Moustoxidis, a Corfiot scholar (O'Donnell 2019b).

It is noteworthy that in my research on Thomas Moore in the Greek-speaking world in the nineteenth century, there is no translation available in Athens, although *Irish Melodies* is listed as being translated in 1835 there are no details (O'Donnell 2020). Had I done further research on the Seven Islands, I might have

been more successful, though I did search and inquire via the Internet to no avail. Solomos was living in Italy, obtaining an education there at the height of the influence of *The Poems of Ossian* on Italian poets through the renowned Italian translation by Cesarotti. Yet few Modern Greek critics make any connection of this work with that of Solomos or that of Thomas Moore, which he would have learnt about through his contacts with exiled European revolutionary scholars and his close friend Matesi. In his book on Solomos, a certain British scholar celebrated for his Modern Greek scholarship sees it as an unkind suggestion by a French literary critic that Solomos was referring to Ossian (Mackridge 1989) in his poem 'In the Shade of Homer' (Vagenas 1966); the title was added posthumously although both poems were found in the same manuscript. Another Seven Islander writer that has been given scant attention if any, and who may have shown interest in Ossian, is Andreas Moustoxidis (Dimaras 1994).

The Greek scholar, historian, philologist, archaeologist and politician, Andreas Moustoxidis, was born on Corfu in 1785. He studied at Padua University where he completed his doctorate in law. He met Capodistria in Switzerland, where they became close friends. On returning to the Seven Islands when Maitland discovered that Moustoxidis had published 'Essays on the facts which led up to and followed the cession of Parga,' anonymously in Paris, Maitland forced him into exile. Moustoxidis founded a Greek school in Ancona, Italy, and when Capodistria became President of Greece in 1828, he invited Moustoxidis to be the Minister of Education. The English High Commissioner Adam was incensed to discover that Capodistria had twenty-four Seven Islanders working in his government (Pratt 1978). After Capodistria's murder in 1831, Moustoxidis returned to the Seven Islands to work for the union of the islands with Greece. In 1832, he was elected into the Ionian Senate. He published many erudite works on Greek history, Hellenism, translations of foreign historians, and poetical works. It would be interesting to learn about the poetical works that interested him.

Moustoxidis, founder of the Reformist Party and in opposition to the Diabolical Party, who were the Italian-speaking supporters of the English (see below), and against union with Greece, went to visit the Colonial Office in London in 1839 to complain about the irregularities of the articles of the Constitution under British rule (Konidari 1964).

The Minister for the Colonies was the Earl of Mulgrave, Constantine Henry Phipps. He had been governor of Ireland and would become Ambassador to Paris during the 1848 Revolution. In 1834, he delivered a speech at the Freemason's Hall in celebration of anti-slavery. He spoke of his visit to Jamaica and of how he took complaints from Negroes. He asked them if they thought thirty-nine lashes were too many (Mulgrave 1834)! One might ask if this was the standard number of lashes distributed to anyone who opposed English policy under British Colonial rule and if this number of lashes was given to the Seven Islanders.

Moustoxidis complained about 206 articles. He stated that it was not allowed for anyone to discuss the interpretation of the Constitution as it would offend Great Britain and the agreement of the Powers despite the expectations and provisions. He spoke of how the intentions of the politicians were calumniated futilely. No foreign boost was employed. The sufferings of the inhabitants were the only

reason for the grievances (Konidari 1964). A Seven Islands advocate, Lord Charles Fitzroy, gave Moustoxidis great support expressed in an article that was printed in the English press entitled 'Letters and documents showing the anomalous political and financial position of the Ionian Islands'. The radical highly educated Kephalonian, Gerassimos Livathas, together with S. S. Pylarinos, succeeded in gathering five thousand signatures which they petitioned, written in French, and sent to the English government directly rather than to the High Commissioner (Livathas and Pylarinos 1851). During this period (1841) the first movement of the people began to emerge for constitutional liberty (Giannopoulou 1950).

An example of how the English treated the land is in the following poem by Matesi entitled 'The Departure of Lord Douglas':

'Like insatiable profiteers because of his loss and they desire hunger in their country to sell those many kinds of which they have gathered and they gain a hundred more in each and they see with fair wind boats to set sail in the direction of their port and their sterns to reverse and they are afraid lest anything happens to the load...' (De Viazis 1881).

As the land was used to grow crops to export to the English while the inhabitants were almost starving, another poem is ascribed to Andrea Calvo entitled 'Ode to the Olive Tree', although its author is disputed:

The following is the third verse of this poem, which was published in Athens in 1938:

'You are the wealth of the Corfiots Even though the madness of the times Barbarically forgives your destruction I have hope in you.' (Calvo 1997)

Following the introduction of a law under the English Protectorate, which began in 1825 and lasted until 1833, all olive trees were cut down to plant a more lucrative product (Valetta 1962).

Similar to the Irish, the people of the Seven Islands underwent a shortage of food, while their crops were exported for profit under English colonialism leaving the indigenous inhabitants on the verge of starvation.

At this time, Calvo, after having obtained his Doctorate at the Ionian Academy in 1826, taught the philosophy of Thomas Reid, the Scottish philosopher in 1841. For more than a decade he instilled into his students at the Ionian Academy the teaching of Reid's works including that of 'An Inquiry into the Human Mind to the Principles of Common Sense'. Through the manner in which Ossian manipulates, causes the act of memorising and associating to accord with the tenets of literature. At the same time, it concurs with the precepts of the 'commonsense philosophy' which Thomas Reid hoped to highlight in the importance of connecting memory to the joining of ideas and for ethical judgement. Remembering not only contributes to 'knowledge' but it also internalises ethical values (Dwyer 1990). Calvo wrote two books of poetry which are influenced by *The Poems of Ossian*, published in Paris during the Greek Revolution (Vagenas 1966). One of the poems 'Ode to the Sacred Band' is reminiscent of Armin in the 'The Songs of Selma' when all of his offspring died in battle. Calvo implores the wind and the rain not to 'profane the

happy tomb of heroes who died for their country' (Andreomenos 1992). One hundred Kephalonians and fifty Zakynthians volunteered to fight in Ipsilantis's Sacred Band (Vounas 1962), which fell to the Ottomans in June 1821:

'Greeks, worthy of your country and your ancestors
 You Greeks, would you rather want a tomb without glory?' (Calvo 1997)
 'Pursue the glory of our fathers, and be what they have been:'
 (Fingal III)
 'No bard shall be wanting at thy tomb, when thou art lowly laid. The sons of song
 love the valiant.' (Temora Book IV).

The Cretan-Romanian revolutionary Constantine Kyriakos-Aristeas was an actor with the Philiki Etairia. He studied under Talma in Paris. After surviving in the Sacred Band, Aristeas studied at the Corfu Academy where he performed in Alfieri's plays including 'Saul' and 'Orestes' (Zoithis 1964). He translated Calvo's 'Ode to the Sacred Band' into Romanian in 1840. At this time, Aristeas resided in Athens producing patriotic plays. As an example, one play that displayed patriotic precepts was the tragedy 'Rigas the Thessalian', written by the Seven Islander Spiros Zambellios and first published in Corfu in 1833. Zambellios wrote an apostrophe to the moon entitled 'The Last Morning':

'The day is coming. The star of the dawn signalsthe sun rising. It is doubtful that it
 will rise for usto find the two of us united. The beautiful moongoes pale where
 yourpure face, one night and your tear...'

Many of Zambellios's plays were performed in Bucharest and Odessa, which were inspired by Alfieri, and greatly influenced by Ossian (Van Tiegem 1917), including 'Rigas Pheraios', which has an apostrophe to the moon (Zoras 1953).

The play was banned on 25 March, the National day, 1842, in Athens, as the impact of its ideas was considered menacing to the Bavarian regime. In 1833, the Klepht Kolokotronis was accused of inciting civil war. The Zakynthian George Tertsetis was the defence lawyer on the case who refused to sign the paper sentencing him to death. He in turn was also tried. Alexander Mavrokordatos, a Phanariot Greek, and his government did the utmost to sentence Tertsetis. In this way, the Prime Minister believed he would hold greater power and would suppress the voice of bondsmen and veterans (Mylonas 1963). Tertsetis wrote the following apostrophe in 1833 entitled 'The Kiss':

How many times, wretched moon in the night you beseech the clouds to come to veil
 youso that you do not see the open mouthsof men and their deep wounds in their
 bosom? (Valetta 1966)

Kolokotronis was found guilty through false witnesses. When defending himself Tertsetis uttered:

'With my body do what you will but my thought, my conscience never can you
 violate them.'

His stance challenged the obsequious of the Regent under political corruption. As a result, Kolokotronis was saved from execution (Melas 1969). In his letter from Solomosto Tertetsis, written in 1842, Solomos states:

‘What can I say of the present state of Greece? Corruption is so universal; its roots go so deep, that one can feel nothing but amazement at it. Only when those responsible are deracinated, can a moral renaissance ensue. Only then can our future be great, when everything is founded on morality, where justice is triumphant, when literature is cultivated not for idle display but for the benefit of the people, which requires nurture and education divorced from pedantry.’ (Solomos 1991)

The Poems of Ossian, through translations, depicting the magnanimity of the heroes who fight against usurpation and tyranny were selected by Solomos and his followers to further the ‘moral renaissance’ outlined in the above letter. The main translator of Ossian, Panas followed Solomos’ belief in that he believed that translated works could contribute to the edification of society, not for profit but for the ethical rejuvenation of spiritual life (Stavropoulou 1987).

In Athens, there was a coup d’état. The leaders of the revolution demanded that the King formed a ‘Greek Ministry’ and ‘to grant the people a Constitution’ (Tskokopoulos 2002). Also in 1843, Tertsetis published the newspaper ‘Rigas’ in the vernacular language in Athens (Bouboulidos 1950). When Aristetas returned to Bucharest he helped to organize the radical group ‘Fratre’ that included Romanian translators of *The Poems of Ossian* including Heliade Radulesco and Cezare Bolliac (O’Donnell 2013). This radical group collaborated with a similar one on Kefhalonia (Moscopolou 1988).

There were three political groups on the Seven Islands. The first was the ‘Conservatives’ or ‘Diabolicals’ who believed that with cooperation and obedience to the English, they would be compelled to change tactics and in time they would implement the terms of the Treaty of Vienna. In this category of the ‘Diabolicals’ belonged the land-owning oligarchy, all the civil servants in their employment, and those who sought to profit from the English. The second group was made up of the so-called ‘Reformists’ who had a logical base seeing that Great Britain was then the most powerful on land and sea in the world they could not even speculate how it was possible to confront them. That is why they pursued gentle measures. They hoped to attain liberal reforms that would stop the current of cruel tyranny trying to ease the despotic measures of the British without excluding the union of the Seven Islands with Greece.

The third category comprised the Unyielding or the ‘Radicals’. A word which means how they aimed to cut down with their axes the tree of English tyranny from its root; for the Protector to leave the Seven Islands and its Greek majority to unite with the recently established Greek state. The radicals refused to acknowledge constitutional reforms which they regarded as illegal because British Protection had been approved without the people’s participation (Pagratis 2007). Kefhalonian radicals did not perceive Panhellenism as that restructured on the old Byzantine oligarchical Empire but as a political liberating and uniting of the Greek race into one great and powerful state. Its basis would be the right of self-determination of the people ‘in liberty, equality and fraternity’; with its regeneration politically and

culturally democratic. It differed from the philosophical ideology of the Great Idea expounded by King Othon.

To instil this quest these networks of democratic scholars use apostrophes to the moon and a star beautifully described in 'Dar-thula' and the 'The Songs of Selma'. A great deal of poems includes pleas to the moon, which symbolically veiled a political message in that they coincide with events that harm any unity and the aims of democratic equality.

Gerassimus Mavroyiannis, a Kephalonian scholar, lyricist and journalist, wrote the lyrics to the 'The Radical Enthusiast' with music composed by Nicolas Tzannis Metaxas. The latter was persecuted for his patriotic convictions by the Special Police (Tzouganatou 1961). This song was sung when the Seven Islands united with Greece and is still sung today (O'Donnell 2020). It was also chanted with a slight change to the lyrics when other parts of the Ottoman Empire united with Modern Greece (O'Donnell 2019a). In 1850, Mavroyiannis published the poem 'Stateless' in the Kephalonian newspaper 'Horikos' (Mavroyiannis 1850). As Mavroyiannis included part of Thomas Moore's history in his dissertation on Ossian, he was inspired by the power of song through Moore (Mavroyiannis 1863).

Mavroyiannis self-exiled himself to Athens after the revolt of supporters of the 1848 Paris Revolution in Kephallonia, the exile of radical leaders and the fraudulent ballot. The English hanged forty rebels and publicly whipped three hundred inhabitants; their relatives were forced to attend. Their property was confiscated, (Mylonas 1963). The Kephalonian radical leaders and editors of the media included Gerassimus Livathas, Ilias Iakovatos Zervas and Joseph Mompheratos, who after having been allowed the freedom of the press for a short time were then exiled and their newspapers closed down, leaving the majority leaderless. They were exiled to nearby barren islands for six years living in appalling conditions (Loukatos 1964a). Forced to live in a hovel without windows, one radical leader was promised freedom if he refrained from seeking union by the English High Commissioner but he refused (Melas 1964).

English tyranny did not respect even the religious feeling of the people. They hanged, tortured, tarred, feathered and imprisoned clergymen, including those who fought together with the people for national restoration and unity. The Kephalonian priest Gregory Nodarou was hanged in Lixouri together with one of the leaders of the Revolution Theodore Vlachos in 1849 (Loukatos 1964b).

In Mavroyiannis's poem 'Stateless' there is an Ossianic apostrophe to the moon with patriotic connotations, written in ten-syllable stanzas, in seven verses of 'Stateless':

'In a wood when the pale mysterious little moon sheds her light over it, someone sings
a plaintive chant in time and the voice of his Country's pain shows.

'The pale star sheds her last glance
On the mountain in vain ... And there she pauses!
Will you still listen to her lament in secret?

In the woody forest with inarticulate lamentation
Of her ode it is, my friend, the end!

Yes, the versifier sings the echo with this.
 “Oh! But how much melody they sing.
 And I myself want to have a Country”.’ (Mavroyiannis 1850)

Working as a journalist in Athens, Mavroyiannis would have to use Katharevousa as King Othon made Purist the official language in 1849. At this time, the demotic language became official in the Seven Islands.

The main translator of *The Poems of Ossian*, the successor to Rigas, follower of Solomos, mentor of Mompherratos and the founder of the Democratic Eastern Federation is the Kephalonian scholar and journalist Panayiotis Panas. In 1855, he dedicated his first book of Ossianic-inspired poetry to Mavroyiannis. An excerpt, which shows the influence of Moore’s ‘Imitation’, from one of the poems is as follows:

‘From the rocks, where it rains the waves of the ocean, has come a nation in our land,
 from frozen mountains.
 They changed the lovely valleys into black ravines.
 The land moans under their tyrannical stride.’ (De Viazis 1886)

Panas’s early works of Ossianic-inspired poetry written in the late 1850s are unavailable in public libraries (Stavropoulou 1987).

In 1856, the leading Kephalonian judge and poet Julius Typaldos published his book of poetry on Zakynthos dedicated to Dionysus Solomos. It includes translations from Ossian and begins with an epic Ossianic-inspired poem entitled ‘Rigas the Inspirer’. His song ‘Escape’ was sung all over the Greek-speaking world (O’Donnell 2019a):

Only the hazy moon, who like me is awake in the sky and wanders across the silent wilderness...
 It looks at the earth as it leaves (9th verse) like a misty cloud: and bids farewell with a sigh. (Konomos 1953)

Typaldos had worked for the political freedom of the Seven Islands and the quashing of the restrictive measures of the constitution of Maitland. He published many legal documents in Italian. Unfortunately, Typaldos was forced to leave the Seven Islands because of false rumours, persistently spread by the English, stating that Typaldos was in favour of indefinitely ceding Corfu and Paxos to Britain which he vehemently denied (O’Donnell 2019a). This insidious machination by the English rid anyone in authority of questioning their legal right in gifting the Seven Islands to Modern Greece.

The poet Panayiotis Synodinos, whose father was a Kephalonian, was imprisoned by the English in 1857 and two years later, he was imprisoned in Athens for his antimonarchical views. He wrote this poem:

With my friend the Moon (from my prison – Evening 1859)
 O my beautiful moon, tell me, do I not move you? Who because of a stupid king am I awake in my jail?

You who enlivened the mind of Tasso and of Pellico secretly, let us say, behold,
Messenger of the skies...

O Liberal Moon did you see in the skies people bowing their head to the mighty?

Whether the so-called ministers adore traitors like the earth adores the stars,
And whether Ministers plunder nations?

First of all did you not tell me whether they work like us to nurture two vultures who
are called kings? ... (Synodinos 1859)

Panas published his poem 'Daughter of Lykavitos' which comprises an apostrophe to the moon. Panas believed that *The Poems of Ossian* resembled demotic poetry while the influence of demotic poetry was introduced in his work it is indiscernibly linked to this Celtic literature. This long poem of 148 lines in blank verse was published several times, first in 'Alithinos' in Kephallonia in 1861 and in Egypt in 1865 (Stavropoulou 1987). The beginning resembles his translation of 'Dar-thula' in that he uses similar vocabulary and takes the moon and personifies it:

My moon, why do you tilt your sad face? Did the one you love forget you, and
withered and deserted you as you turn in the sky: come and sit with
Me and weep together so that the pain in our hearts might be relieved. Sadness is
lightened when it feels another's grief.

And:

Pale face little moon then, like now, on high you shine your shimmering rays.
Suddenly you shelter yourself with a discarded cover, so as not to see the ignoble
crime...' (Panas 1865)

In 1862, Panas inspired by Moore (O'Donnell 2020), translated from the Italian version of *The Poems of Ossian*, published 'Dar-thula-Lathmon' in Kephallonia in 1862. This work was dedicated to three Republican heroes who were murdered in cold blood by Greek Royalists Catholic soldiers in the Cycladic Revolution on Kythnos, officially declared as a bloodless coup:

'To the sacred memory of the vile and craven murder of the Heroes, Leotsakos,
Moraitinis and Skarvelis' (O'Donnell 2017).

They are compared to Ossianic Warriors (O'Donnell 2014). The Cycladic Revolution was named as leaders of this Revolution sailed to rescue Greeks including intellectuals who had been arrested and sent into exile on the Cycladic Islands for their antimonarchical beliefs. The revolution then continued on the mainland in the hope of forming a republic. It is described as 'the June events' (Mavroyiannis 1863). The connection of further translations of *The Poems of Ossian* with their political influence on the Democratic Eastern Federation (Rigas

Society) at moments of historical significance in the nineteenth-century Greek-speaking world can be found in my work at academia.edu and Researchgate.com.

King Othon had no heir and his next in line were Catholics. As demanded in the 1844 Constitution, the King was to have converted to the Orthodox religion (Jelovich 1961).

The English gifted the Seven Islands to Greece with yet another crowning of a foreign monarch - the Dane, George Gluxbourg - whose impending marriage to one of Queen Victoria's daughters would make a perfect choice from an English perspective. The proviso was that the Greek state would not seek to enlarge its territory (Korthatos 1973). The Kephalonian radical party had not sacrificed their lives to endure yet another foreign monarch when they were united in 1864, which is why they opted out of union at the last moment. Panas believed this tactic was sheer blasphemy when the people had undergone the sacrifice of so many exiles, imprisonment, whippings, the burning down of homes, the confiscation of inheritance and hangings in their struggle for freedom, led by the Radicals (Theodoratos 1964). He saw that it was merely a move of the High Commissioner from Corfu to Athens (Stavopoulou 1987). Indeed Athens was named a Protectorate (O'Donnell 2014). On May 21 1864 the Seven Islands officially united with Greece. The National Anthem became 'Hymn to Liberty' by Solomos who was chosen as the National Poet of Greece in 1864. His national anthem replaced 'God save the King' sung in Greek and German. The English closed the Ionian Academy in Corfu (O'Donnell 2019a).

How much did the Seven Islanders pay to keep themselves protected? They were obliged to pay heavy taxes for this protection. They paid 35 thousand pounds sterling every year. Twenty thousand pounds was paid to the High Commissioner for nearly twenty years and another thirteen thousand pounds for the remaining years. Calculations have been made that the 'Protection' amounted to two million, seven hundred and forty-five thousand, nine hundred and fifty-seven pounds sterling (Pagratis 2007).

Conclusion

Through networks of like-minded scholars in downtrodden countries such as Ireland, Poland and Italy subject to foreign rule, anxious to instil freedom, unity and fraternity living under social democracy, without monarchy, Greek intellectuals used this Celtic literature to expose injustice and to inspire the people to rise and fight despotism. This is seen in Solomos's 'Ode to the Moon' and later poets who used Ossianic apostrophes to celestial beings. The Kephalonians, in particular, sacrificed a great deal in their struggle for freedom. 'Dar-thula' translated by Panas exposes the cowardly murder by Greek Catholics soldiers of their fellow Orthodox brethren. The availability of this literature is presented through research of a secondary source as Greek academia has neglected to include the contribution of *The Poems of Ossian* by James Macpherson and *Irish Melodie* by Thomas Moore. There is an absence of any connection between the early educational influence that Martelaos had on his pupils who would become renowned scholars and

revolutionaries fighting for the tenets of the French Revolution that Napoleon had generated in the Seven Islands including the national poet of Greece, Solomos. Greek academics have ignored the fact that Celtic literature through the resurfacing of above Ossianic poetry shows how it cryptically encodes the patriotic endeavours of these scholars. Celtic literature was used to generate a 'moral renaissance' that Solomos engendered, together with his followers. From a legal standpoint, Seven Island scholars were well-educated in the law. They attempted to rectify the anomalous way in which the Treaty of Vienna was implemented by the English High Commissioners, which was, to say the least, most dubious, attempting to do so through direct contact with the government in London, but to little avail. Kephalonian radical scholars regarded the 'English Protectorate' as illegal as there was no representation of the Heptanesian people in the writing of the Treaty in Vienna. Considering the financial cost that the Seven Islanders had to pay in maintaining the 'English Protectorate' and the devastation of the land plus the barbaric cruelty to the inhabitants, England had no legal or moral right to 'gift' the Seven Islands to the Greek State, especially as it included the enthroning of yet another foreign monarch, which the majority of Seven Islanders were against. The sacrifice of the people in the 1821 War of Independence and their fight to free themselves from the yoke of English brutality sufficiently merited their right to the union. The history of the Seven Islands is not included in the Greek school curriculum so the Greek youth of today are unaware of the great sacrifice and patriotism that was demonstrated by Ionian Greeks in freeing the Seven Islands from the despotism of nearly fifty years under English rule to become part of Modern Greece.

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A New Decipherment of the Pyrgi Tablets with Reliance on Astronomy

By Milorad Ivanković*

*The three golden tablets from Pyrgi, an ancient site on the coast of the Tyrrhenian Sea, in Lazio, Italy, known as *Laminae Pyrgienses* discovered in 1964 is the only bilingual Etruscan text of which one tablet is inscribed in Phoenician and the other two in Etruscan. Hoped to be a kind of Etruscan 'Rosetta Stone' with identical texts in two languages, the initial enthusiasm turned into disappointment when the researchers realized that the texts were incongruent with each other, the Etruscan being rather paraphrased from the Phoenician, or vice versa. Since then a number of attempts at its deciphering were undertaken but with moderate success. Despite some progress achieved in recent years, there still remain some portions of the Etruscan text that defy sound interpretation of its content. The present paper takes quite a different approach, relying on the astronomical data already alluded to by the texts of the Pyrgi tablets themselves for more promising results.*

Keywords: *Pyrgi tablets, Phoenician, Etruscan, goddesses, astronomy*

Introduction

As the most prominent Etruscologist the late Helmut Rix declared “We are, of course, still far from a complete understanding of the Etruscan language, so that much still needs to be stated more precisely, amended, and corrected” (Rix 2004, p. 944). The Pyrgi tablets are among those Etruscan artifacts which are only partly decipherable. Despite many efforts by numerous researchers recently to break its code Etruscan seems to be a very tough matter to cope with. Consequently, there is no consensus reached among scholars as to what actually is inscribed in the tablets. In other words, there are many different interpretations that are quite contradictory and irreconcilable with each other.

Recent Attempts at Proper Deciphering of the Pyrgi Tablets

Since the discovery of the bilingual Pyrgi tablets many researchers tried to decode their content, among the first Pallotino (1964), but with little success. Of the earlier attempts the work by Rix (1981) remains indispensable, as the main breakthrough in proper deciphering of the Etruscan text. During the last two decades a considerable number of new attempts were made in order to cracking the code of the tablets (see Agostini and Zavaroni 2000, Semeraro 2003, Wikander 2008, Adiego 2016, Zavaroni 2017, and Woudhuizen 2019).

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The Pyrgi Dedicatory Texts

Notwithstanding numerous imperfect translations of the Pyrgi tablets, both texts unquestionably commemorate the dedication of a temple built by Thefarie Velianas, the ruler of the city of Caere, as a donation to the cult of the Phoenician goddess Astart, equated with the Etruscan goddess Uni in the Etruscan version of the texts, one apparently aimed at the speakers of Phoenician, the other to the domestic Etruscan audience. Probably the king of Caere wanted to get into the good graces of his powerful maritime allies against the Greeks, viz. the Carthaginians (of Phoenician origin), or he was in a subordinate position to Carthage. Most likely the town of Pyrgi was partly inhabited by Punic (viz. Phoenician) traders whence the Latin name *Punicum* of the neighboring place (present-day Santa Marinella), situated near ancient Pyrgi (present-day Santa Severa). The dedication of a temple to the goddess was made in the best ancient Near Eastern religious traditions, with the emphasis on the close relationship between the ruler and his divine protectress who elected him personally to build her temple, thus legitimizing his divine status among his subjects on earth as the chosen one by the goddess herself.

Two Goddesses: Two Different Texts for Two Different Audiences

The Pyrgi tablets apparently represent two different versions of an initial dedicatory text, the one version authentically aimed at Phoenician audience, and the other at Etruscan audience. As Wikander (2008) correctly observed:

“it has become increasingly obvious that the methodological problems associated with the study of bilinguals and pseudobilinguals are immense, entailing as they do a need to differentiate what is translated from what is merely paraphrased ... another methodological obstacle is posed by the fact that the “parallel” Etruscan and Phoenician texts must be considered as being aimed at different and probably separate audiences, differing not only in language but also in cultural and religious outlook” (Wikander 2008, p. 79).

Hence naturally, the names of the goddesses which the dedication is addressed to differ from each other in the Phoenician and Etruscan versions of the texts.

The Proper Decoding of Unialastres

Until Helmut Rix’s insightful breakthrough in 1981, all the earlier interpretations of the Etruscan version of the Pyrgi tablets erred in assuming that the Etruscan expression Unialastres denoted both the names of the Etruscan goddess Uni + the Phoenician goddess Astart (in Phoenician consonantal script written ‘štrt).

However, it becomes perfectly clear at a first glance on the presumably Etruscan compound form Unial-astres that second part of the compound, viz. -astres, can by no means match the name of the Phoenician goddess ‘štrt = Astart.

The correct form in Etruscan would read either -Astartes or in its syncopated form as -Astrtes, but not -Astres.

Moreover, such an artificial compound of double named goddess would have been unacceptable from the cultural and religious point of view since the Etruscans were not worshippers of Astart, but of their own goddess Uni, and vice versa considering the Phoenician side. The divine name Astart in the Phoenician version of the text undoubtedly was used as the equivalent to the Etruscan Uni, the goddess Astart being considered as the Phoenician counterpart of the Etruscan goddess.

Taking all this into consideration, Rix (1981) quite justifiably disproved the widely but erroneously adopted interpretation of Unialastres as an artificial Etruscan compound formed by both names Uni + Astart. Rix (1981) argued that the phrase Unialastres should be analyzed as a purely Etruscan expression consisting of Unialas an archaic genitive *Uniala from the goddess' name Uni, extended with regular ablative termination -s + postpositional suffix tres, on the basis of already attested in similar Etruscan forms like *špureś + treś*, whereby the first segment represents the ablative of a noun, viz. *špura* "city", followed by *treś* a sort of postposition in the ablative case too.

Despite sound disapproval of the interpretation Unialastres as a compound of unial + Astres by Rix (1981), some scholars continue to adhere to it, like Woudhuizen (2019, pp. 125, 586) who interpreted it to mean "lady Astarte", assuming Etruscan uni to be a cognate with Cuneiform Luvian *wanatt(i)* "woman" whence the title "lady" of the goddess Astarte. However, the supreme goddess Uni in Etruscan tradition is clearly identified with Roman goddess Iuno, and Greek goddess Hera (Thomson de Grummond 2006, p. 78ff).

Interpretations of the Phoenician Text (P)

In order to get an insight into the problems of translation, it is necessary to make a comparison between different interpretations of the same text:

1-P): *"To Lady 'Astart. This is the holy place which was made and which was given by TBRY' WLNŠ, king over KYŠRY' in the month of ZBHŠŠM donated in the temple and in its fenced place because Astart elevated me with her hand in her kingdom for three years in the month of KRR in the day divinity is buried. And the years of the statue of the divinity in her temple [are as many] years as these stars"* (Vlad Borelli in: Scavi 1964).

2-P): *"To Lady 'Astart. This is the sanctuary (holy place) which was made and donated by TBRY' · WLNŠ king of KYŠRY' in the month of Zeba ḥŠŠM (ŠMŠ corruptum) in MTN in the temple of WBNTW because Astart choose through him in the year III of his reign in the month of KRR in the day of the burial of the divinity and in the year of the statue of the divinity in her temple [and] in the year of these stars"* (Levi della Vida in: Scavi 1964).

3-P): *"To [our] Lady 'Astart. This holy place was made and donated by Thefarie(i) Velianas, who reigns over KYŠRY', in the month of the Sacrifice to the Sun, as a donation to the House [temple]; and he made [this] effigy place because Astart elevated me with her hand in her kingdom for three years in the month of KRR in the*

day divinity is buried. And the years of the statue of the divinity in her temple [are as many] years as these stars” (Agostini and Zavaroni 2000).

4-P): “To [our] Lady Ishtar. This is the holy place // which was made and donated // by TBRY WLNSH [= Thefaries Velianas] who reigns on // Caere [or: on the Caerites], during the month of the sacrifice // to the Sun, as a gift in the temple. He b//uilt an aedicula [?] because Ishtar gave in his hand [or: raised him with her hand] // to reign for three years in the m//onth of KRR [=Kerer], in the day of the burying // of the divinity. And the years of the statue of the divinity // in his temple [might be ? are ?] as many years as these stars” (Moscatti 2003).

5-P): “To the Lady Asthart, this sacred place, which Thefarie Velianas, king over Caere, made and dedicated in the month of the offering to the sun, as a gift in the house. And he built a chamber, because Ashtart asked this of him in the third year of his reign, in the month of krr, on the day of the funeral of the god. And may the years for the gift of the divinity in its house be as [many as] these stars” (Wikander 2008).

6-P): “To the Lady Astarte (is dedicated) this is the holy place, which Thefarie Velianas the king of Caere, has made and has given in the month of sacrifice(s) to the sun-god, as a gift in the temple. And he has built the niche, because Astarte has granted (a victory) by his hand: in the third year of his reign, in the month of the dances, on the day of the burial of the god(dess). And the years for the statue of the goddess in her temple be (numerous) like these stars” (Woudhuizen 2019).

Regardless of some nuances in translations of the Phoenician consonantal script, there are invariably specified astronomically significant data as BYRH ZBH ŠMS “the month of the Sacrifice to the Sun”, BYRH KRR “the month of KRR” and BYM QBR ’LM “the day of the burial of the divinity”.

Agostini and Zavaroni (2000, pp. 9–10) related the *burial of the divinity* to the Sumerian myth of *Innin* also called *Inanna* [= Akkadian *Ištar* or *Aštar*] goddess of fertility and *Dumuzi* her consort, who complemented her as he personified the fertility of sheep. In the course of centuries he turned into the god of vegetation and later became a god of fertility like Innin herself.

The myths about the gods of vegetation and fertility as a rule culminate with their death, which corresponds to the new yearly vegetation cycle in nature.

According to the Sumerian myth about Innin’s voyage to the netherworld, the goddess could be set free to leave the Inferno only under condition that someone else takes her place below. Though Innin firstly did not want to part from her consort, she eventually decided to send Dumuzi as her substitute for the remaining six months of the year in the netherworld, due to his unfaithfulness while she was away.

There was also a Phoenician version of the myth known from the Greek sources, whereby the goddess Aphrodite [= Phoenician Aštar by interpretatio graeca] fell in love with Adōnis [< Phoenician ’Adon equated with Dumuzi] but her husband Ares incited by jealousy killed him. Aphrodite descended into the Inferno to rescue Adonis, but Persephone the goddess of vegetation, allowed him to return above the earth for six months only every year.

Interpretations of the Etruscan Text

As Schmitz (1995, pp. 559–560) rightly pointed out, “30 years after their discovery, the Etruscan and Semitic texts from Pyrgi remain enigmatic... Etruscologists continued to dispute nearly every word in the Etruscan texts”.

Unlike the above interpretations of the Phoenician version of the dedicatory text that are fairly similar, the translations of the Etruscan version of the text differ considerably and seem hardly reconcilable with each other. ETRUSCAN A & B (= EA & EB) TEXTS:

A) First tablet written in Etruscan: *ita tmia icac heramaśva vatieḡe unialastres ḡemiasa meḡ ḡuta Ḳefariei Velianas sal cluvenias turuce munistas ḡuvas tameresca ilacve tulerase nac ci avil ḡurvar teśiameitale ilacve alśase nac atranes zilacal seleitala acnaśvers itanim heramve avil eniaca pulumḡya.*

B) Second tablet written in Etruscan: *nac Ḳefarie Veliunas ḡamuce cleva etanal masan tiurunias śelace vacal tmial avilḡyal amuce pulumḡya snuiaḡ.*

Translations:

1-EA): “*This holy place and this statue have been consecrated to Uni-Astarte. The community (of Caere?) with Thefarie Veliana dedicated (them) [... unknown words ...] And for the statue the years (ought to be?) as (many as?) the stars(?)*” (Pallotino 1964).

2-EA): “*This holy place and this simulacrum (?these two simulacra) was/were solemnly promised to Uni (?the Junones) having built a large (fencing) wall Thefarie Velianas priest-king (rex sacrorum) of Cluvenia donated this protected place (?cell) for the sepulchral ark in the month of Tuler three years after the bestowing of powers upon him in the month of Alś(a) after the burial of the ?illuminated Ruler (divinity) the simulacrum for the temple he carved (or: portrayed) [may its] years [be] as many as this (set of) stars*” (Agostini and Zavaroni 2000).

3-EA): “*Attached to the sanctuary, this shrine (to it) joined, he erected in honor of Uni Astarte, after having ruled the city as ruler, Thefarie Vel-ianas, Lord of the community. It was an offering to the giver of good, provident: and the deity preferred him, here, for three years high priest, he was appointed Prince. And the divinity promoted him, here, of the high institution the Sovereign, Prince of this land. Of this nearby shrine, the years are like (how many) these nails.*”

3-EB): “*Here, Thefarie Vel-Junias, made an offering (holocaust) of thanksgiving, at the time of the constellation of twins, in the month of Juni, he elevated superintendent of the sanctuary. The years of such authority, were (how many) the nails of this inscription.*” (Semerano 2003).

Apparently Semerano connected the variant spelling of the donor’s name *Ḳefarie Veliunas* from the second Etruscan tablet to the goddess *Iuni* and her month of June, viz. from 21 May to 20 June, whence he inferred that the event occurred *al tempo della costellazione dei gemelli* (at the time of the constellation of Gemini = Twins). He supported the above assumption by the Etruscan term *masan* (*costellazione dei gemelli* = Constellation Gemini) è *forma di duale* (dual form) – presumably derived from Assyrian *māshu* “*costellazione gemelli*”

(constellation Gemini) *tempo consacrato a Iuni (time consecrated to Iuni):21 maggio/ May - 20 giugno/June (Semerano 2003, p. 134).*

4-EA): “This sanctuary and these houses [?] were dedicated to Uni; Thefarie Velianas gave (them) for his own money, as an offering for ... for this place, this chamber, at the festival-time [?] of tuler. For [at the time of] three years, in [the month] *χurvar*, at the festival time [?] of *alsā* ... of the *zilaθ*-ship ... And in the temple [?] may the years of the ... be as [many as] these stars [nails?].” (Wikander 2008).

4-EB): As for the second tablet in Etruscan, Wikander was of the opinion that “It is not possible to offer a real running translation of this shorter text” (Wikander 2008). Wikander (2008) also noted that “It has been the custom to see the equivalent of the Phoenician expression meaning “in the month of *krr*” either in the word *χurvar* or in the expression *ilacve alsase* (based on the double expressions with *ilacve*). It is, however, quite possible to regard both as parts of the date—one month and one “time of sacrifice”, just as in the Phoenician version” (Wikander 2008, p. 80).

5-EA): “This *tmia*- and the *herama*, which were ...-ed from the part of Uni, *Θefarie Velianas*, ...-ing the *mex θuta*, gave to her, the *cluvenia*- (or: to his *cluvenia*-), to/of the *muni- θuva*-, that from the chamber (?) in the day- *ilacv tuleras*-, when three years *χurvar*. In the day-*ilacv* the *tešiam(a)- alōas*-, when of the *zilaθ*-magistracy *atrane*-, that *sele acnaōvers*, and this(?)/thus ...-ed the year *eniaca* the *pulum-s*.”

5-EB): “When *Θefarie Veliiunas* ...-ed a *cleva*-offering *etanal masan* the month *unias* ...-ed, vacal the *pulum-s* of years of the *tmia*- were *snuiαφ*” (Adiego 2016).

Adiego (2016, pp. 144–145,155) offered “a very tentative and necessarily incomplete translations of both tablets” and admitted that the function and meanings of the words *χurvar* and *acnaōvers* are unknown. In his opinion, all the words in his translations printed in italics belong to the uncertainties. As for *Θefarie Velianas*’ act of giving “when/after three years *χurvar*” and the event explained in *itanim heramve avil eniaca pulumχva* happened, happens, or will happen “after *atrane*- magistracy *sele acnaōver*” Adiego concluded that “the latter main event is impossible to ascertain on the basis of our present knowledge of Etruscan”.

In 2017 Zavaroni came with a new modified interpretation of the earlier translation by Agostini and Zavaroni (2000):

6—EA): “This (holy) house and these two-statues were pledged to the (two) Junones. After building a big protective-wall Thefariei Velianas, minister of the Purifying (goddess), offered the construction of the protected residence in the month of Tuler. After three years the works were approved in the month of July, when - the underworld Rectress being interred - an artisan carved (her) statue for the temple. Its years pass together with the stars.”

6-EB): “After Thefarie Veliiunas had ordered the oracle of the (holy) house, the prophet of Lucina disposed, the augural art of the temple. (It) will run everlasting together with the stars.” (Zavaroni 2017).

According to Zavaroni (2017), “The formulae *ilacve tulerase* and *ilacve alsase*, owing to their position in the text, match the months quoted in the Punic text, that is BYRH ZBH ŠMŠ “in the month Zabhaḥ Šemeš (= ‘Sacrifice to the Sun’)” and BYRH KRR “in the month KRR”... The month name of **alš(a) = als(a)* appears in the Tile of Capua in the sentence *par alši ilucve* “during the

month of **alš(a)*”... Owing to the fact that the Tile of Capua lists the monthly offerings starting from the month of March, it is possible to infer that **alš(a)* = *alša* corresponds to July. ... *atranes zilacal seleitala* is an interposed clause... which corresponds to the Punic sequence BYM QBR 'LM “in the day the divinity is buried”... it might be interpreted as “...the infernal ruler buried...”, where the ruler is presumably the goddess *Uni* in her infernal chthonian function and aspect. Like *Astarte* and *Ishtar*, the Etruscan archaic *Uni* too was believed to descend into the underworld.” In his opinion, “*χurvar* is a plural form as the -*ar* ending shows ... it could be cognate with *χuru*... Oscan *kúru* (neuter singular) “work” and derive from the Indo-European **k^uer-* “make, form”...hence he interpreted *χurvar tešiametale* as “the works were approved”.

Woudhuizen (2019) viewed it quite differently:

7-EA): “This holy place and these altars belonging to it, Thefarie Velianas, legislator of the senate (and) people, has built (them) for the lady Astarte, (and) has given (them) as holy gifts on the first of (the feast) cluvenia- on account of two obligations: because she favored (him) on land: in year three (of his reign), (during) the month of the dances, on the day of the burial of the god(dess); because she favored (him) at sea: during the praetorship of Artanès (and) the sultanate of Xerxes. And may what (ever number of) stars yield to (whatever number of) years for these altars.”

7-EB): “Thefarie Velianas has built the precinct for the goddess Athena (and) has offered (it) as a sacrifice during the month of offering(s) to the sun-god. And may what(ever number) of stars be sporadic as compared to what(ever number of) years for this holy place.”

Woudhuizen (2019) related the Etruscan *χurvar*, *χurve*, *χuru* to Phoenician *krr* “the month of dances” and to Greek χορός “dance, chorus, quire”. Besides, he interpreted *Unialastres* quite peculiarly as *unial-Astres* “Lady Astarte”, and *Etanal* completely out of context as the name of the Greek goddess “Athena”.

The Pyrgi Texts from Astronomical Perspective

Despite the obvious differences in translation of the Etruscan version of the Pyrgi tablets, there exist clear parallels with the Phoenician version as far as the astronomical events are concerned. Thus, the Phoenician BYRḤ ZBḤ ŠMŠ “the month of the Sacrifice to the Sun”, BYRḤ KRR “the month of KRR” and BYM QBR 'LM “the day of the burial of the divinity” have Etruscan parallels specified as *the festival-time or month of Tuler*, *the month of Alša*, and *the day of the burial of the divinity*. The main problem is to decode the exact time of each event within their yearly cycle.

As the Sumerian-Phoenician myth of Dumuzi and its Greek interpretation of Adonis the god of vegetation/fertility is allowed to appear on earth for six months only during the year, while the other six months he abide in the netherworld. This twofold division of the yearly cycle in nature corresponds to the well-known concept found in all ancient cultures, viz. the division of the year time-span into “Northern or ascending path of the Sun” from the Winter Solstice to the Summer

Solstice, versus “Southern or descending path of the Sun”, when the Sun seemingly returns back from the highest point at the Summer Solstice to the lowest point on the horizon at the Winter Solstice.

Thus, the day of the burial of the divinity might be defined as occurring at the Summer Solstice, when the Sun begins its descending path towards South for the next six months, till the Winter Solstice. However, the same event might be defined as rather occurring at the Fall Equinox, the time of the beginning of Sun’s progress South (viz. below) of the Equator (viz. the winter-half of the year), counting six months in advance till the Spring Equinox.

Accordingly, the “month of Tuler (sacrifice or offering to the Sun)” might have well denoted “March – the month of Spring Equinox”, the “month of Alsa (or the month of the dances)” denoting “June – the month of Summer Solstice”, whereas “the day of the burial of the divinity” likely denoted the “Fall Equinox”, the exact time of the beginning of Sun’s progress South of the Equator (viz. the beginning of the dark half of the year, and the end of the yearly vegetation cycle). In ancient times, the time around Summer Solstice coincided with the harvest of crops, accompanied by great celebrations of the heathen people, whence likely came the term “month of the dances”.

Yet, there is another possibility, as the Celtic tradition in the story of the *sun-hero* Diarmait shows. The ancient Celts divided the year into two distinct polarized periods. As explained by Rhys (1892, p. 514) “the Celts were in the habit formerly of counting winters, and of giving precedence in their reckoning to Night and Winter over Day and Summer... the last day of the year in the Irish story of the *sun-hero* Diarmait ... Diarmait’s death meant the Eve of November or All-Halloween, the night before the Irish *Samhain* and known in Welsh as *Nos Galan-gaeaf* or the Night of the Winter Calends... In Ireland it was also the time for another custom: it was then that fire was lighted at a place called after Mog Ruith’s daughter Tlachtga. From Tlachtga all the hearths in Ireland are said to have been annually supplied...”

Rhys (1892, p. 515) then made comparison with the analogous custom of the Lemnians, (from the island Lemnos in the northeast of the Aegean), the ancient speakers of the Lemnian language, along with Rhaetic in the Alps, closest to Etruscan (Rix 2004, p. 943): “...just as the Lemnians had once a year to put their fires out and light them anew from that brought in the sacred ship from Delos. The habit of celebrating *Nos Galan-gaeaf* in Wales by lighting bonfires on the hills is possibly not yet quite extinct; and within the memory of men some of whom are still living, those who assisted at the bonfires used to wait till the last spark was out...”

Naturally, the opposite time of Samhain or the Winter Calends were the Calends of May or Beltaine. As Rhys (1892, pp. 409, 418-419, 421, 519, 563) pointed out “... the other two great feasts of the ancient Celts at the beginning of the months of August and May... to the widely spread cult of which he was the object in all Celtic lands. In Ireland there were great meetings, which constituted fairs and feasts, associated with Lug, and called *Lugnassad* after him. The chief day for these was Lammas-day, or the First of August...”

The Lugnassad was the great event of the summer half of the year, which extended from the Calends of May to the Calends of Winter... the Lammas fairs

and meetings forming the Lugnassad in ancient Ireland, marked the victorious close of the sun's contest with the powers of darkness and death...The Celtic year was more thermometric than astronomical, and the Lugnassad was, so to say, its summer solstice, whereas the longest day was, so far as I have been able to discover, of no special account... the term Lug-nassad originally meant Lug's wedding or marriage, and that this was one of the chief things the festivities on that day...

...The First of May must, according to Celtic ideas, have been the right season for the birth of the summer Sun-god..." as confirmed by the story of Gwyn and Gwythur: "They were to fight for her on the Calends of May every year thenceforth till the Day of Doom, and he who should prove victorious on the Day of Doom was to take the damsel to wife...the act of fighting on the Calends of May meant victory for Gwythur... Gwyn's victory would be found to happen at the beginning of winter. In other words, the Sun-god should recover his bride at the beginning of summer after his antagonist had gained possession of her at the beginning of winter..."

At last, Rhys justifiably concluded that "the story lends itself the more readily to comparison with that, among others, of Persephone, daughter of Zeus, carried away by Pluto, who was, however, able to retain her at his side only for six months in the year."

Conclusion

The astronomical events specified by both the Phoenician version as well as the Etruscan version of the dedicatory text inscribed on the Pyrgi tablets designate, as the analogous examples from the Celtic tradition reveal, the three crucial events in the yearly cycle of the divinity: its birth, the central feast at the yearly pinnacle of its power, and at last its burial at the end of the bright half of the year, and the beginning of the dark half or the winter-half of the year, viz.:

- 1) Phoenician BYRH ZBH ŠMŠ "*the month of the Sacrifice to the Sun*" and Etruscan *ilacve tulerase* "the month of Tuler" designate either March (Spring Equinox) or 1st of May;
- 2) Phoenician BYRH KRR "*the month of KRR*" and Etruscan *ilacve alsase* "the month of Alsa" designate either June (Summer solstice) or 1st of August;
- 3) Phoenician BYM QBR 'LM "*the day of the burial of the divinity*" and Etruscan *atranes zilacal seleitala* designate either Fall Equinox (September) or 1st of November.

Thus, it appears from the terms found in both the Phoenician and the Etruscan versions of the bilingual inscription on the Pyrgi Golden tablets specifying three important events of the yearly cycle in nature, that they might have been applied appropriately whether they originally intended to designate the three astronomical cardinal points in the yearly course of the Sun, viz. Spring Equinox – Summer

Solstice – Fall Equinox, or rather opted to designate “thermometric” medium, peak, and lowest characteristic of the year, viz. the beginning of the Warm season or the Calends of May - the peak of the Summer half of the year in August – the Day of Doom or the Winter Calends in November.

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Explaining the Electoral Success of the Turkish President: Is it the Economy Again?

By Gregory T. Papanikos^{*}

The current president of the Turkish Republic has dominated domestic politics since 2003. For the first time in this two-decade period, the political opposition appears to be a serious threat and according to polls, they run neck-and-neck. This paper assesses to what extent the economy has played a role once again in determining the electoral results of the last twenty years in Turkey. This issue is addressed by comparing the performance of the Turkish economy of the twenty-year period before and after the critical year of 2003 when the current Turkish leader emerged to power. The descriptive analysis of the data is unable to reject the main hypothesis of this paper that it is the economy which plays an important role--albeit not the only one--in determining electoral success.

Keywords: *Turkey, elections, economy, per capita GDP, unemployment, inflation, military spending, education enrollment, foreign exchange rate*

Introduction

Turkey is going to elect a new leader on the 14th of April 2023 and if needed, elections will be repeated on the 28th of April 2023. Since 2003, the current president of the Turkish Republic has been its undisputed leader. The purpose of this paper is to test the hypothesis as to whether it is again the economy which can explain his undisputed political dominance over the past two decades, and whether it is again the economy which may explain his downfall in the polls--at least over the last few months.

Of course, this is not an argument that other factors such as ideology does not play a role, but for those voters who may determine whether the current president can win or not, the economy counts more than the ideology. I am not going to discuss Turkish politics and ideologies even though some remarks are made in the concluding section of the paper. I will only concentrate on the macroeconomic performance of the Turkish economy in the last 20 years (2003-2023) and compare it with corresponding performance of the 20 years prior to this period (1983-2002).¹

The paper is organized into six sections including this short introduction. The next section provides a selective brief overview of the relation between national economic performance and election outcomes. The third section uses data from the World Bank and other sources to compare the macroeconomic performance of the

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¹In a series of articles, both in English and Greek language, I have examined many aspects of the Turkish society and politics with emphasis on the Turkish-Greek relations and the Mediterranean in general; see Papanikos (2008, 2011, 2015, 2016, 2017b, 2020b, 2021, 2022d, 2022e).

Turkish economy during the period of 1983-2023. Multiple indicators are used: per-capita income in current US dollars; economic growth; the unemployment rate and the inflation rate. The fourth section provides two additional interesting indicators of population and military spending. The fifth section looks at the most recent developments of the Turkish economy by examining the Turkish lira's foreign exchange rate which has been a headache for the current president of the Turkish Republic. The final section concludes.

Election Outcomes and the Economy

This section provides a very brief overview of the relation between macroeconomic indicators and electoral outcomes. The classical work by Antony Downs (1957) on *An Economic Theory of Democracy* spearheaded a burgeoning literature in explaining electoral processes using economic analyses and models. In democratic² societies, it is through elections that decides who is going to undertake the responsibility of running the country for a given maximum period of time, i.e., normally four or five years. Down's Median Voter Model predicts that political parties (at least two) would adopt such policies in order to satisfy the preferences of the median voter. In such a convergence of policies, voters would be indifferent to which political party wins because all will implement the same policies. Under such circumstances, the model predicts that people have no incentive to turn out to vote and instead absenteeism will dominate the electoral process. The hearsay that voters believe that all political parties and politicians are the same may be interpreted that all those who run for office adopt (economic) policies to lure the median voter and in doing so, win the elections.

Economic policies, though important, are not all that is in an election battle. Apart from policies, voters may be tempted by ideology. Citizens may vote for a political party (leader) which is closer to their own worldview, even despite the policy similarities of the different political parties and candidates.

In addition to ideology, voters may want to elect someone who has personal charisma to lead and represent the nation in the international fora. This charisma may correlate with other characteristics of political parties and their leaders such as credibility, honesty, courage, stamina, etc. In many cases, the best rhetorician wins the election. One may substitute the word rhetorician for populist.

In the entire literature on elections, determining electoral success may be a function of two categories of variables: economic and noneconomic. However, what is important are the swing votes. Usually, variables like ideology does not change. There has always been a left and a right division of the electorate or progressive and conservative. The great majority of the people stand alongside

²In a number of papers and books I have thoroughly discussed the issue of democracy using five criteria to evaluate the democratic performances of different countries; see Papanikos (2011, 2016, 2017a, 2020a, 2022a, 2022b, 2022c, 2023). On these see the comments by Meydani (2022) and Petratos (2022). On the issue of democracy and elections in general see also Carrera (2022), Çelik et al. (2022), Coulter and Herman (2020), de Caria Patrício (2022), Fruncillo (2017), Gilby (2021), Igwe (2021a, 2021b), Marchetti (2020), Obot (2019), Parziale and Vatrella (2019), Rafapa (2018), Reid (2019) and Verharen (2020).

with their beliefs all their life. However, there is a critical mass of voters who swing between parties and leaders according to non-ideological characteristics. One such characteristic is how the economy performs. They associate this with the effectiveness of a leader which can be measured only when this leader is elected and is called upon to deliver what they promised. In normal circumstances (e.g., there is no war), the economy is something that is used to measure the effectiveness of a leader. It is also an area that is well-measured by quantitative indicators and an area where the opposition leader—the challenger—can attack the ruler because they have not been tested yet. The difference between the two leaders then becomes the performance of the economy³ and personal charisma. These two characteristics are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. *Election Results, the Economy and Leaders*

The sitting leader is	more charismatic than the Challenger	less charismatic than the challenger
Economy		
The economy is perceived by voters as performing well	The leader is reelected	?
The economy is perceived by voters as not performing well	?	The leader is not reelected

In a democracy, leaders alternate more frequently than in non-democracy countries and in some countries, this is embedded in their constitution, e.g., the leader cannot run for more than two terms as is the case in the US. The difference is that in a democracy, who runs the country is decided by elections.

One could also argue that how frequently leadership changes may be used as a good measurement of the quality of democracy. Russia and Turkey have elections as well as many other countries, but what distinguishes them from others is that their leaders in one way or another have ruled their countries for almost two decades. Many have questioned their electoral practices, accusing them of using fraud and threats against voters and/or other politicians. Others have emphasized that leaders of both these countries have personal charisma as is shown in Table 1 which explains their electoral success. Germany also has elections and a democracy. It had a female leader who ruled Germany from 2005 to 2021. It is of interest to note that she did not lose an election but she decided that time had come to step down. In the longer-term, personal charisma cannot win elections if the economy is doing badly.

What does Table 1 tell us? First, if a leader's popularity (charisma) remains intact and the economy is booming, then this leader has a great chance to be reelected. A leader may lose their charisma (popularity) for other reasons that

³Of course, this relates to how voters perceive the existing economic conditions. It is a subjective evaluation. Huberman et al. (2018) have interpreted this as follows (p. 597): "What does this question about economic conditions capture? First, what are people thinking about when they give an answer regarding economic conditions "as a whole": are they thinking about themselves (i.e., pocketbook) or national economic indicators (i.e., sociotropic)? Second, are respondents shifting their answers to signal something about their party (i.e., partisan cheerleading) and/or do they shift their economic decision-making due to these beliefs?"

relate to ethics and integrity, e.g., sexual encounters or drug use which are considered unacceptable by the majority of voters. In many such cases, the leaders (presidents, prime ministers, etc.) were forced to resign because of public outcry despite the performance of the economy.

Second, even if the economy is booming a challenger may appear who is considered more attractive to voters. The outcome of an election in this case is uncertain marked in the table by a question mark—this is the case of effectiveness versus attractiveness. In many cases, people may have nothing against a leader but they vote against them because they want a new face.⁴

Third, if the economy is perceived as not doing very well and the leader is popular—most probably for other reasons such as nationalist pride—then a reelection is uncertain; it very much depends upon voters' concerns about the economy.

Fourth, if voters see the economy is performing below than what they would consider as acceptable and the leader is unpopular for other reasons besides the economic performance of the country, then most probably their reelection is at stake.

The above discussion is relevant of the current president of the Turkish Republic who has dominated Turkish politics since 2003. The economy has been very kind to him throughout this period with the exception of the last couple of years. This has been correlated with a dramatic drop in his popularity and for the first time, he is facing a serious threat to be overthrown by the opposition leader in the forthcoming May elections. The economic performance of Turkey is examined in the next section of this paper.

The Turkish Macroeconomy, 1983-2023

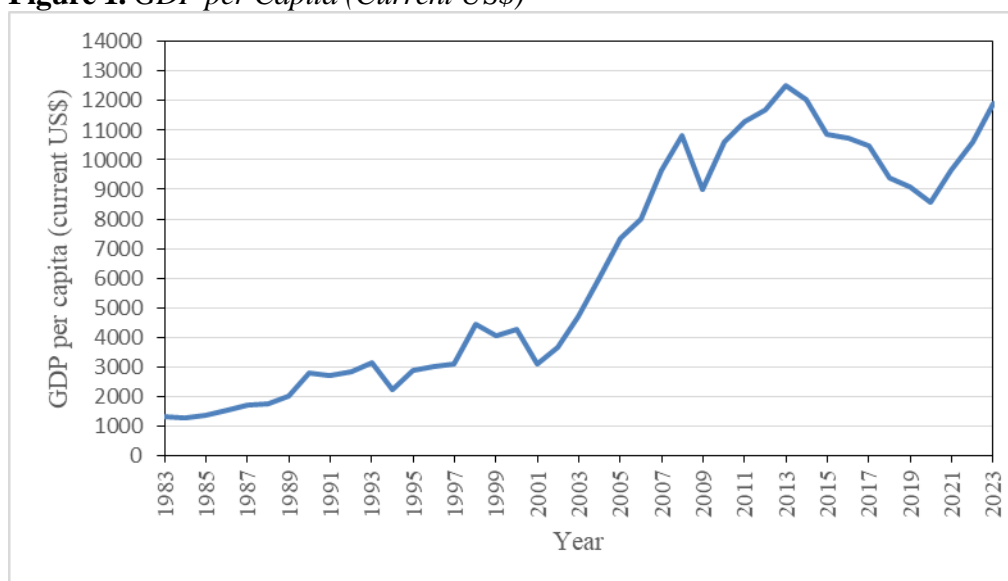
This section looks at the macroeconomic performance of the Turkish economy for a period of forty years. This period was selected to compare the twenty years of rule by the sitting president with the twenty years preceding his rise to power. In particular, the aim is to show that the last twenty years have been much better for the Turkish economy, relative to the twenty years period which preceded it.

⁴In ancient Athens, as reported by Plutarch in his *Parallel Lives (Aristides)*, when there was a referendum to ostracize Aristides (540–468 BCE), who had built a reputation of being a fair man-politician, a voter approached on the day of the vote without recognizing him and asked to put down the name of Aristides because he did not know how to write it on the ballot. When he asked what had Aristides done to him, he responded 'nothing, I do not know the man, but I am disturbed to hear everywhere that he is fair'. Plutarch describes the story as follows: γραφομένων οὖν τότε τῶν ὀστράκων λέγεται τινα τῶν ἀγραμμάτων καὶ παντελῶς ἀγροίκων ἀναδόντα τῷ Ἀριστείδῃ τὸ ὀστράκον ὡς ἐνὶ τῶν τυχόντων παρακαλεῖν, ὅπως Ἀριστείδην ἐγγράψει. τοῦ δὲ θαυμάσαντος καὶ πυθομένου, μή τι κακὸν αὐτὸν Ἀριστείδης πεποίηκεν, “οὐδέν,” εἶπεν, “οὐδὲ γινώσκω τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ἀλλ’ ἐνοχλοῦμαι πανταχοῦ τὸν Δίκαιον ἀκούων.” ταῦτα ἀκούσαντα τὸν Ἀριστείδην ἀποκρίνασθαι μὲν οὐδέν, ἐγγράφει δὲ τοῦνομα τῷ ὀστράκῳ καὶ ἀποδοῦναι. τῆς δὲ πόλεως ἀπαλλαττόμενος ἤδη, τὰς χεῖρας ἀνατείνας πρὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν εὐξάτο τὴν ἐναντίαν, ὡς εἴοικεν, εὐχὴν τῷ Ἀχιλλεῖ, μηδένα καιρὸν Ἀθηναίους καταλαβεῖν, ὃς ἀναγκάσει τὸν δῆμον Ἀριστείδου μνησθῆναι. (Plutarch, *Parallel Lives: Aristides*, 7).

Using descriptive data analyses, the objective is to show that the economy once again may explain why the current leader has been so successful in maintaining power for so long. A note of caution is needed at this point. Usually, a strong assumption is made that the political leader who is responsible for running the national affairs of a country somehow, with a magic stick I guess, can run the entire economy as well. This is far from the truth. This issue is not examined here. In other words, I do not imply any cause-effect relation between a political leader and the economic performance of the country, although I do imply correlation, i.e., good economic conditions favor reelections. Thus, the sitting president of the Turkish Republic, most probably, was fortunate to be associated with a good overall economic performance. This is best demonstrated by per capita GDP (in current USD) as is depicted in Figure 1.

I use GDP per capita in current USD because many Turks use this currency for precautionary purposes to protect themselves from the volatility of the Turkish lira's exchange rate value as is shown below in section five. Other indicators such as the Gross National Income (GNI) per capita in Purchasing Power Parity Units (PPP) of current international dollars (see Table 2 below) do not change the main message portrayed in Figure 1, i.e., since 2003 GDP per capita has been increasing at a very high rate. From less than \$5,000 USD in the period before 2003, it reached \$12,508 USD in 2013. Today, Turkey's per capita GDP has reached its highest during the entire forty-year period examined here.

Figure 1. *GDP per Capita (Current US\$)*



This by itself could explain why the current leader has been so successful. This fact by itself makes him a leader with a “special charisma”. His popularity is strongly correlated with the unprecedented economic performance of the country. However, recent polls show that this image has been shattered. He is not as popular as he used to be. Figure 1 offers an explanation why this might be the case. Since the peak year of 2013, per capita GDP had been declining until 2020 when it dropped to \$8,561 USD. This is primarily due to the dramatic fall in the

Turkish lira as shown below. In Figure 1, predicted values of years 2022 and 2023 are also shown. It appears that the economy is recovering but it remains to be seen if this will still be true when the actual data is reported.

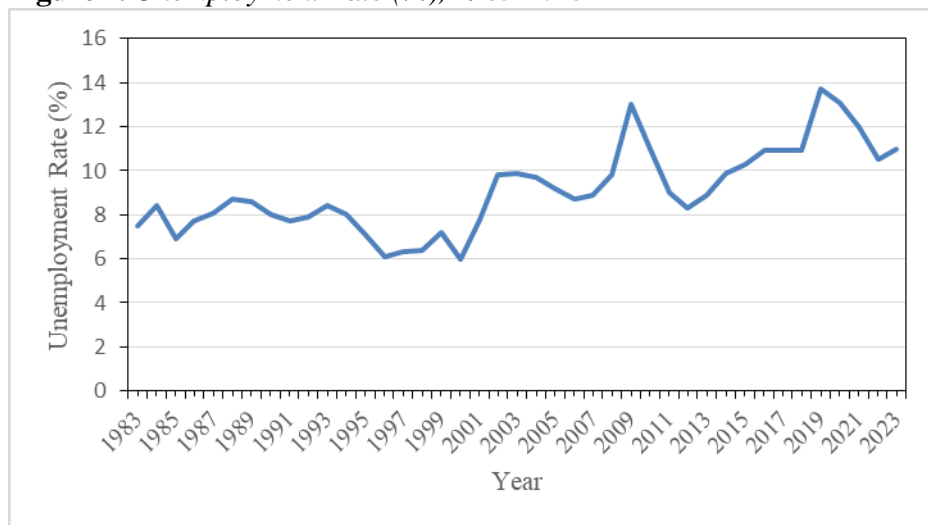
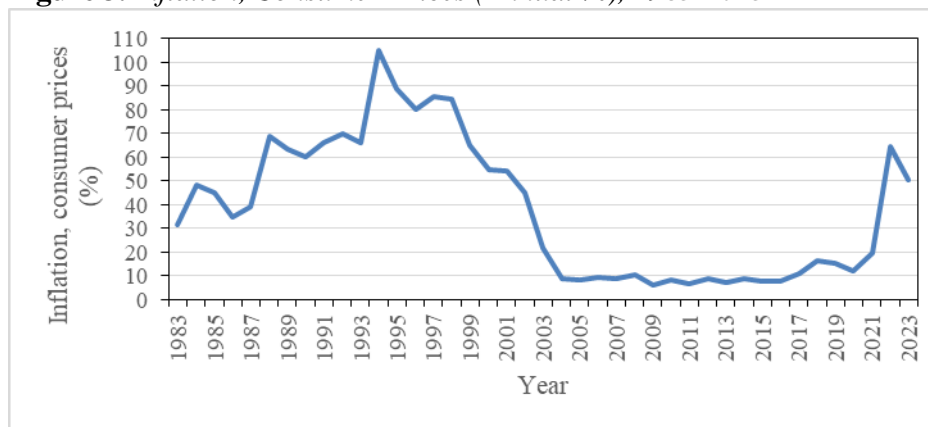
If the economy and polls have shown that they matter, then the sitting president of the Turkish Republic will have tough time winning the next elections scheduled for the 14th of May 2023. To return to the previous discussion of cause-effect, one may argue that the Turkish economy has many reasons to justify its sluggish macroeconomic performance such as the Great Recession of 2008 and the pandemic of 2020, and more recently the earthquake of 2023. Therefore, one may consider the current leader as being unlucky that he had to cope with these issues. But, one may inverse the argument and say that he was very lucky to rule the country in period of favorable international economic conditions as those were during the post 2003 period until the Great Recession of 2008.

Figure 2 shows another important economic indicator: the unemployment rate. Even though the picture looks about the same as with per capita GDP, nevertheless it is not as clear. In 2002 the unemployment rate reached its highest value of the first twenty year under examination. It dropped after the current leader was first elected in 2003 but it jumped to 11% in 2009 due to the Great Recession; an economic turning of the events that nobody would claim was bad domestic economic policy. Following the Great Recession, the unemployment rate dropped to 8.3% in 2012 and started rising ever since until 2019 when it hit 13.7%. It has dropped since then to 12% in 2021 and is expected to be 10.5% in 2022 and 11% in 2023.

Both per capita GDP and the unemployment rate were not so bad for the president of the Turkish Republic. He could persuasively argue that the bad years of economic performance were not his fault given that he had to cope with the Great Recession of 2008 and the pandemic of 2020. Inflation, however, is a completely different story. This was an entire domestic affair⁵ and recently has been affecting all Turks, especially those with fixed incomes such as pensioners and wage-earners. Figure 3 shows the inflation rate from 1983 to 2023. Relative to the first twenty years of the period being examined, inflation during the 2003-2020 period was kept stable at about 10% per year. However, in 2021 it jumped to 20% and in 2022 to 64%. It is expected to slightly drop in 2023 to about 50%.

The above indicators are summarized in Table 2, adding also the growth rate of GDP and the per capita GNI in PPP. The last two were not shown in the figures above. The data are reported as averages of periods of ten years. What counts most is per capita GNI in PPP. During the twenty years of ruling Turkey's current leader was fortunate enough to be associated with almost tripling per capita GNI; from 9,672 international dollars in the period of 1993-2002 to 26,202 in the last decade (2013-2022).

⁵One possible cause was his intervention with the monetary policy of the country and setting the Turkish interest rates too low. The details of his mingling with the monetary policy are not examined here. From a political point of view, what counts is the fact that he failed to deliver what he promised, i.e., a lower inflation rate.

Figure 2. *Unemployment Rate (%), 1983-2023***Figure 3.** *Inflation, Consumer Prices (Annual %), 1983-2023***Table 2.** *Turkish Macroeconomic Indicators, 1983-2022*

	GDP growth (%)	Unemployment rate (%)	Inflation Rate (%)	Per Capita GDP (Current US\$)	GNI per capita, PPP (current international \$)
1983-1992	5.01	7.95	52.67	1918	8690*
1993-2002	3.26	7.31	73.03	3386	9672
2003-2012	5.70	9.75	9.74	8919	14807
2013-2022	5.27	11.11	17.06	10327	26202

*Average 1990-1992.

Source: World Bank.

The last indicator presented in this section (see Figure 4) is not a macroeconomic variable per se even though it is quite often used to show the

economic development (as opposed to economic growth) of a country. This is an indicator which shows the transformation of a country from an agricultural to an industrial economy. This sectoral decomposition of GDP shows the level of economic development. A lower share of agricultural output implies higher levels of industrialization and therefore higher per capita income.

Figure 4. *Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing, Value Added (% of GDP), 1983-2021*

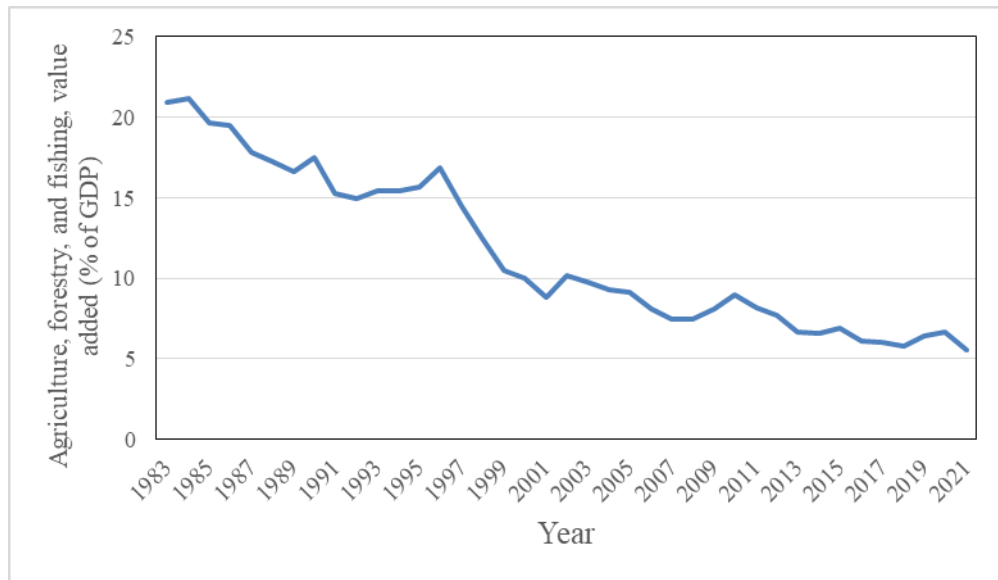


Figure 4 demonstrates that this was the case for Turkey over the last 40 years. In the early 1980s, the share of agriculture, forestry and fishing accounted for over 20% of GDP. In the early 2020s, this share has dropped to almost 5%. This structural transformation of Turkish GDP explains the unprecedented increase in the country's standard of living as demonstrated by per capita output as shown above in Figure 1 and Table 2.

In concluding this section, the Turkish economy reached unparalleled increases in per capita income, lower inflation and relative manageable rates of unemployment. However, this bright picture has been blurred in the last couple of years which has been associated with a decrease in the popularity of the Turkish president. Whether this will materialize as a loss in the elections of the 14th of May is something still to be seen because he still retains some of his personal charisma relative to the leader of the opposition. The next section looks at two more noneconomic indicators before we examine the volatility of the Turkish lira.

Two More Indicators

Turkey is an important country in the international and regional political arena but faces certain restrictions as were analyzed in Papanikos (2021). Two indicators are important which testifies their importance: population (and therefore a large army) and military spending. Apart from its growing economy shown in the

previous section of the paper, Turkey almost doubled its population over the last forty years as shown in Figure 5—from 47 million in 1983, it increased to 85 million in 2021. Turkey ranks number 17 on the list of countries with the highest population in the world. Its population accounts for 1.08% of the total world population. The population of Turkey is young with a median age of 31.5 years.

Figure 5. *Turkey's Population, 1983-2021*

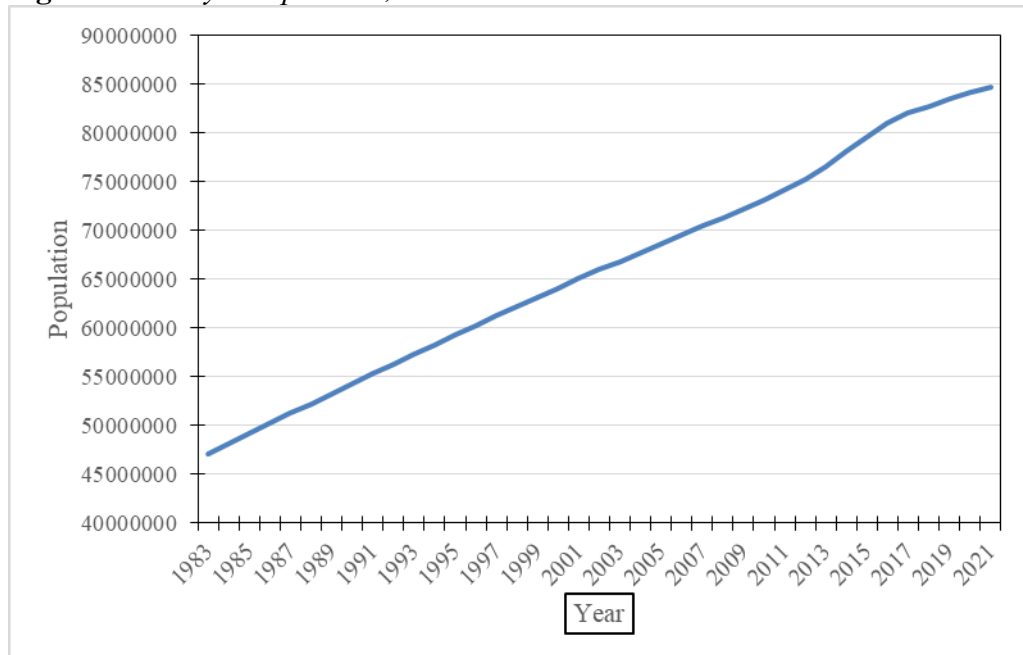
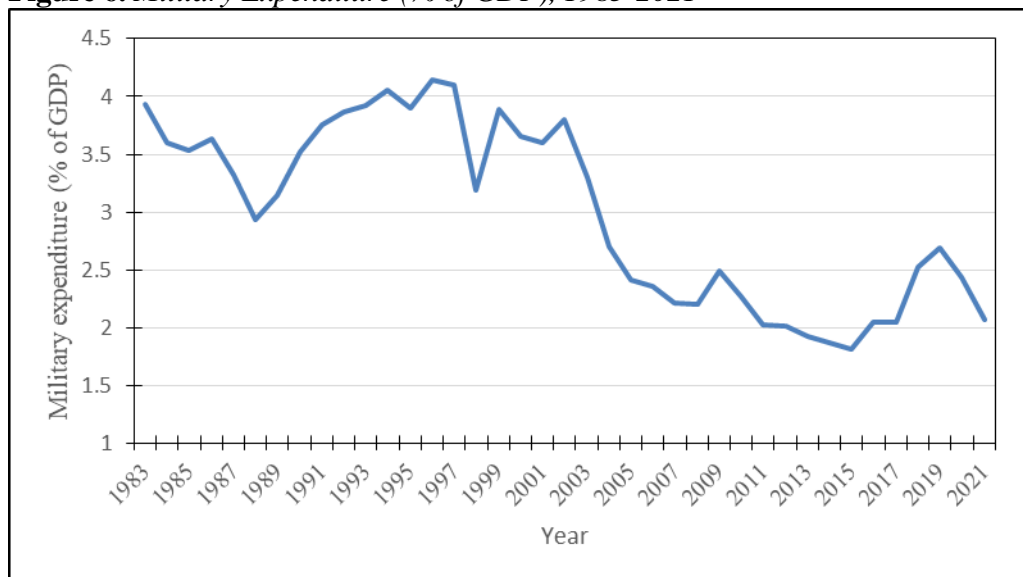


Figure 6. *Military Expenditure (% of GDP), 1983-2021*



A large population, especially a young population, implies that Turkey has the potential to form a huge army which currently stands second among the NATO

countries. According to one measurement of military strength,⁶ Turkey ranks 11th on the list of the strongest armies in the world today. To support this strong army, Turkey spends a considerable percentage of its GDP on military. However, as shown in Figure 6, as a percentage of GDP military spending, it has decreased in the last twenty years relative to the preceding twenty years—from about 4% in the 1983-2003 period, it fell to about 2% in the last two decades.

The Foreign Exchange Volatility

In the last 2-3 years, the bad economic news has come from the devaluation of the Turkish lira. Apart from the apparent economic effects there has also been political effects. The national currency is part of the national identity and pride of any country. A devaluation shatters the image of the political leader responsible for governing the country. Figure 7 shows the historical value of the Turkish lira per USD, i.e., how many Turkish liras are needed to buy one USD.

When the current leader of Turkey came to power in 2003, Turks needed only 1.5 liras to buy one USD. In 2016 this amount doubled to 3 liras. Six years later, in 2022, one US\$ costed 16.6 Turkish liras. This downfall is expected to continue well into 2023. As shown in Table 3, up to mid-April 2023 the Turkish lira was traded between 18.7 and 19.3 USD.

Figure 7. Official Exchange Rate of the Turkish Lira per US\$ (Period Average)

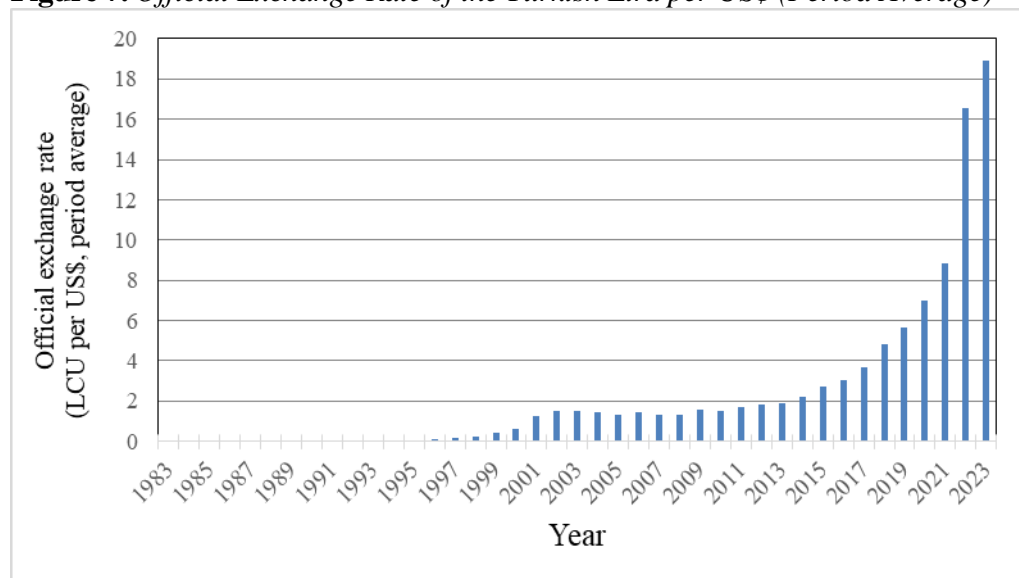


Table 3 also shows the volatility of the Turkish lira in the last five years. 2021 was a very bad year for the lira. The range of values was 9.7 US\$ which was the highest in the last five years. 2022 followed with a range of 5.6 liras per one US\$.

Against this adverse economic environment, Turkey is having elections on the 14th of May 2023. For the first time, the sitting leader will campaign for reelection

⁶See <https://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing.php>.

against the worst economic conditions that the country has ever faced. It was the bad economic conditions which existed prior to 2003 which may be interpreted as having been conducive to his electoral win. It was also the good economic conditions that kept him in power for so long. Now, the economic conditions are different. One may expect that he will have a hard time getting reelected. Based on recent polls, the race seems to be very close.

Table 3. *Foreign Exchange Volatility, 2019-2023*

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Average	18.9216	16.5754	8.8922	7.0194	5.6828
Best for the Turkish Lira	18.7017	13.0955	6.962	5.8566	5.1809
Worst for the Turkish Lira	19.3189	18.7138	16.6687	8.5253	6.1661
Range	0.6172	5.6183	9.7067	2.6687	0.9852

Source: <https://www.exchangerates.org.uk/USD-TRY-spot-exchange-rates-history-2023.html>.

Conclusions

Good economic conditions are not the only determinants of an electoral success of a sitting leader. Other variables are important as well. However, a healthy economy can be used by a sitting president to achieve political success. A leader can run for reelection based on the good performance of the economy. Of course, the opposition will emphasize other noneconomic issues.

Since 2003 all political campaigns in Turkey were run according to this dichotomy between economic and noneconomic issues. The next elections of 2023 will be different. The current president must apologize for the bad economic conditions. Also, he faces an additional criticism of handling the effects of the earthquake that hit Turkey early this year.

He has two choices. First, he can argue that international and national developments were beyond his control. And he will be right because he had to face a global Great Recession that started in 2008, a world pandemic that started in 2020 and recently, in 2023, a catastrophic earthquake that killed more than fifty thousand people and affected about ten million people. Second, he may opt to change the agenda and emphasize other issues such terrorism and religion.

It seems that he has decided to use both. On one hand, to blame the bad economic conditions that were the result not of his policies, but also of adverse and unpredicted exogenous factors. On the other hand, he uses nationalist and religious arguments such as blaming the US government for intervening in domestic political affairs including the failed *coup de etat* in 2016.

At the international level Turkey seems to search an independent role; one that is independent from the western alliance of NATO. Its role in the Russia-Ukraine war have been interpreted by many as being part of this new dogma of what some have called neo-Ottomanism. But here also there appears to be some failures. Turkey's foreign policy of minimum troubles with its neighbors turned out to become exactly the opposite. The support for the Islamic brotherhood was a complete failure undermining Turkey's relation with another big country in the area, namely Egypt. The religious card is also played and the change of the status

of Hagia Sophia is a characteristic example of shifting the political agenda from economic to noneconomic issues. One only wonders why he did not do that in 2003 and waited for almost twenty years. His performance in the polls might be one explanation. The issue of Hagia Sophia was examined in Papanikos (2020b).

All of the above noneconomic issues were not examined in this paper, which emphasized only the economic conditions. The economy was very good for the sitting leader of Turkey ever since his first election win in 2003, but the last few years the economic performance of Turkey has been problematic to say the least. This turn of economic events has forced him to change the agenda. Whether this shift is sufficient to win the next elections we must wait until after the elections.

Acknowledgments

This paper was accepted to be presented at the 21st Annual International Conference on Mass Media and Communication organized by the Athens Institute for Education and Research (ATINER), 8-9 May 2023. I would like to thank two anonymous referees for constructive comments and suggestions.

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