

ΜΕΛΙ ΝΥΚΕΣΚΕ

A newsletter for Classics at the University of Dallas

Parthenon Sculptures to be Moved Down the Hill

Article quoted from the *Economic Times*

http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/News/News_By_Industry/Greeks_move_Acropolis_after_2500_years/articleshow/2458892.cms

ATHENS: Dozens of Greek archaeologists and engineers stood atop the Acropolis watching three cranes slowly relay a massive test marble slab ahead of moving day for some of the ancient world's greatest treasures. The cranes have been put in place to transport hundreds of antiquities related to the

Parthenon, and currently crammed into a small 130-year-old museum atop the Acropolis, to a new museum at the foot of the hill.

The new museum is set to open in early 2008 and it will take the cranes two and a half hours to transfer each object, some weighing about 2.5 tonnes, in steel boxes the 400 metres (yards) to their new home. The move is expected to last six weeks.

"This will be their first move from their home in 2,500 years," culture minister Michael Liapis told reporters.



Photo from the BBC: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_pictures/7044576.stm

"This is a unique attempt even for international standards." Greece has taken out a 400 million euro (\$568.6 million) insurance policy for this move. Space has also been reserved for the Parthenon Marbles, now displayed at the British Museum in London and known widely as the Elgin Marbles after the British aristocrat who removed them in the early 19th century when Greece was under Ottoman rule.

"We wanted to show what is missing," said Dimitris

Pandermalis, head of the state body overseeing the museum's construction. "We wanted to make it dramatically clear they are not here."

Greece hopes the new museum will give impetus to its fight to get the Classical Age treasures back. Athens has long demanded their repatriation and the third floor of the new steel-glass museum will be reserved for the Parthenon marbles.

15 Oct, 2007

The Debate over the Elgin Marbles

The removal of the statues of the Acropolis to a new museum has sparked conversation about whether the art of the Parthenon ought to be reunited. Future Romans ought to have the highest of interests in the issue, as it will determine whether they will have to continue converting their currency to the pound in order to see the Elgin marbles. Here is some of the debate through the centuries regarding the Parthenon sculptures.

"We are gilding and beautifying our city like a wanton woman, wrapping it in precious stones and statues and temples costing millions."

-*The enemies of Pericles, ruler of Athens and patron of its massive building projects, quoted by Plutarch c 100 AD*

"[The visitor to Athens] marks the pediments which Lord Elgin wrecked and left stripped of their figures, he sees long bare slices of torn marble, where the frieze was gutted out..."

-*Frederic Harrison, 1890*

"In 1937 and 1938 the British Museum's stone mason and his team of unskilled labourers scraped some of the surfaces of the Elgin marbles with metal tools and with harsh abrasives. These crude attempts to make the Marbles appear more white were intended to

meet the known wishes of Lord Duveen, a millionaire art dealer, who had donated money to build a new gallery to house the sculptures."

-*William St Clair, in The Elgin Marbles, Questions of Stewardship and Accountability*

"We say to the British government: you have kept those sculptures for almost two centuries. You have cared for them as well as you could, for which we thank you. But now in the name of fairness and morality, please give them back. I sincerely believe that such a gesture from Great Britain would ever honour your name."

-*Greek Culture Minister Melina Mercouri at the Oxford Union, 1986*

(Of the conversion of the Parthenon into a church in the 5th century AD) "At this time the sculptures suffered their worst calamity. The whole of the middle section of the east pediment was removed, causing the destruction of a dozen statues; part of the east frieze was taken down to enable the apse to be built and the heads vandalized; and almost all the metopes on the east, north and west sides of the temple were deliberately defaced.

"Compared to this, only minimal damage was inflicted by Elgin's agents in removing some of the remaining sculptures from further risk."

-*British Museum, evidence to Parliamentary committee, 2000*

Quotes selected from the BBC: news.bbc.co.uk

Words of Wisdom from Woodcock's *A New Latin Syntax*

Subjective vs. Objective Genitive

Subjective: With a verbal noun or a noun implying activity, the genitive may denote the author of the activity, who would be expressed as the nominative subject of the active verb or would be denoted by *ab* with the ablative with the passive verb.

Objective: The genitive may also denote the object of the activity implied by a noun or adjective.

Thus *metus hostium* may, according to the context, mean either "fear of the enemy" (objective, cf. *metuimus hostem*), or "the enemy's fear" (subjective, cf. *hostes metuunt*).

Both uses have aspects of the possessive genitive. In addition, the possessive adjectives *meus, tuus, suus, noster, vester*, are used instead of the genitive forms in the *subjective* sense. On the other hand, the genitives *mei, tui, sui, nostri, vestri*, are regularly used in the *objective* sense. Thus the Latin for "my love for you" is *meus amor tui*.

δε/and ἄρα: Don't "Or Whatever" Them If You Can Help It

Sometimes one need not translate δε or ἄρα, but we whippersnappers almost always ignore them as if they're filler. Here's a few basic functions of these two most ubiquitous and neglected particles.

δε is a postpositive and can be 1) a weak "and" and is not always translated (similar to *autem*), or 2) a weak adversative "but", weaker than ἄλλα (which indicates a strong contrast), often implying a change of subject (but not usually a contrast).

ἄρα, a postpositive, implies connection and consequence and is very frequent in epic, drama, and dialogue (which is also drama!). It can usually be translated as "then" or even "next". In a question it can express anxiety ("What, then, are we supposed to do?!"). With the circumflex (which comes from η̄ + ἄρα) it stands at the beginning of the sentence and is interrogative, expecting a "no" like *num* in Latin (in English we often stick a "really" into such questions).

These are, in fact, a little more complicated. For more shades and for examples, see Denniston's *The Greek Particles*, Tyler Travillian's "Lexicon of Greek Particles" handout, and the little *Short Treatise on Greek Particles* by Paley (which unfortunately is missing two important pages on ἄρα); all three are in the audio-visual center

South American Creole Language a Goldmine for Linguists, Influenced by Spanish, Portuguese and Kikongo

Excerpted from the *New York Times*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/18/world/americas/18colombia.html>

San Basilio de Palenque, Colombia – The residents of this village, founded centuries ago by runaway slaves in the jungle of northern Colombia, eke out their survival from plots of manioc. Pigs wander through dirt roads. The occasional soldier on patrol peeks into houses made of straw, mud and cow dung.

A student wrote an assignment on the board during a language class. The classes are part of an effort to preserve the unique local language, called Palenquero.

On the surface it resembles any other impoverished Colombian village. But when adults here speak with one another, their language draws inspiration from as far away as the Congo River Basin in Africa. This peculiar speech has astonished linguists since they began studying it several decades ago.

The language is known up and down Colombia's Caribbean coast as Palenquero and here simply as "lengua" – tongue. Theories about its origins vary, but one thing is certain: it survived for centuries in this small community, which is now struggling to keep it from perishing.

Today, fewer than half of the community's 3,000 residents actively speak Palenquero, though many children and young adults can understand it and pronounce some phrases.

"Palenge a senda tielan ngombe ri nduse i betuaya," Sebastian Salgado, 37, a teacher at the public school here, said before a classroom of teenage students on a recent Tuesday morning. (The sentence roughly translates as, "Palenque is the land of cattle, sweets and basic staples.")

Palenquero is thought to be the only Spanish-based Creole language in Latin America. But its grammar is so different that Spanish speakers can understand almost nothing of it. Its closest relative may be Papiamentu, spoken on the Caribbean islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao, which draws largely from Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch, linguists say. It is spoken only in this village and a handful of neighborhoods in cities where workers have migrated.

The survival of Palenquero points to the extraordinary

resilience of San Basilio de Palenque, part of whose very name – Palenque – is the Spanish word for a fortified village of runaway slaves. Different from dozens of other palenques that were vanquished, this community has successfully fended off threats to its existence to this day.

Colonial references to its origins are scarce, but historians say that San Basilio de Palenque was probably settled sometime after revolts led by Benkos Bioho, a 17th-century African resistance leader who organized guerrilla attacks on the nearby port of Cartagena with fighters armed with stolen blunderbusses.

And while English-, French- and Dutch-based Creole languages are found in the Caribbean, the survival of one in the interior of Colombia has led some scholars to theorize that Palenquero may be the last remnant of a Spanish-based lingua franca once used widely by slaves throughout Latin America.

Palenquero was strongly influenced by the Kikongo language of Congo and Angola, and by Portuguese, the language of traders who brought African slaves to Cartagena in the 17th century. Kikongo-derived words like ngombe (cattle) and nguba (peanut) remain in use here today.

Palenqueros, as the community's residents call themselves, say the biggest threat to their language's survival comes from direct contact with outsiders. Many here have had to venture to nearby banana plantations or cities for work, and then found themselves ostracized because of the way they spoke.

"We were subject to scorn because of our tongue," said Concepcion Hernandez Navarro, 72, who survives by farming yams, peanuts and corn.

Undaunted by the prospect of Palenquero's disappearing after centuries of use, Rutsely Simarra Obseso, a linguist who was born here and lives in Cartagena, is compiling a lexicon. Others are assembling a dictionary of Palenquero to be used in the school.

The defenders of Palenquero view their struggle as a continuation of other battles. "Our ancestors survived capture in Africa, the passage by ship to Cartagena and were strong enough to escape and live on their own for centuries," said Mr. Salgado, the schoolteacher.

"We are the strongest of the strongest," he continued. "No matter what happens, our language will live on within us."

Is there anything you'd like to see in the Classics newsletter?

Email mfergus@udallas.edu, call 972-721-4108, or stop by the Classics department between 12:30 and 2:30.

I'd love to print riddles, study hints, mnemonic devices, news articles, announcements of campus events, Maurer quotes, or anything else you think would be interesting!