

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I am very honored, thank you very much.

THANK YOU very much, first of all, to Elisenda Malaret, to Bernard Pacteau and to Mario Chiti, dear colleagues, witnesses of a very old friendship, whose kind and generous words I appreciate very much.

Thank you to the European Public Law Organization for choosing me for this award.

And, of course, I am very grateful to you all.

On this important occasion, I would like to tell you something in appreciation of your gesture and also to pay homage to Greece, this beautiful land where democracy was first a reality, the land that receives us cordially every year. I will read for you a wonderful literary passage.

In the meeting last year we discussed about change: our concepts are changing and we must adapt to the new circumstances. Public Law is changing also because of the changing in our lifestyle and ways of life.

How many people visit the Acropolis every day? Five thousand, ten thousand?

A hundred years ago, a scholar, preparing his doctoral thesis, - just as many of our younger colleagues are doing now -, in his way to Palestine, came across Greece, and he wrote:

“Just as we entered the Piraeus ... was the Acropolis from a distance: - a mixture of all the reds and yellows you can think of with white for the high-lights and brown-gold in the shadows. (...) Before you reach Athens you pass through green fields and over small streams, that effectually wash away the taste and smell of the sea. (...) It was above all things quiet, the quietest town imaginable, with few trams, and those slow ones, no motors or bicycles and very few carts. (...) Every

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where were palm trees and mimosa, with green lawns. The quiet was really almost uncanny, as I walked up the shallow valley below Mars hill, and along the processional way to the gateway of the citadel. There were no boy to bother one, no loud bellows'd leather sellers, only a misty sunlight in which all Attica, and the distant Peloponnese lay motionless, 'drowned in deep peace', below the rock platform of the Wingless Victory. To get there I had to climb up the white marble staircase of the Propylea within the entrance gate. There were no porters, no guides, no visitors, and so I walked through the doorway of the Parthenon, and on into the inner part of it, without really remembering where or who I was. A heaviness in the air made my eyes swim, and wrapped up my senses: I only knew that I, a stranger, was walking on the floor of the place I had most desired to see, the greatest temple of Athene, the palace of art, and that I was counting her columns, and finding them what I already knew. The building was familiar, not cold as in the drawings, but complex, irregular, alive with curve and subtlety and perfectly preserved. Every line in the mouldings, every minutest refinement in the sculptures were evident in that light, and inevitable in their place. The Parthenon is the protocathedral of the Hellenes. I believe I saw the Erechtheum, and I remember coming back to look again at the Propylea, and to stand again beside the Niké Apteros: but then I came down again into the town, and found it modern and a little different. It was as though one had turned from the shades of the ancestors, to mix in the daily vocations of their sons: and so only this about Athens, that there is an intoxication, a power of possession in its ruins, and the memories that inhabit them, which entirely prevents anyone attempting to describe or to estimate them. (...) I am coming back by Athens I think next year to stay a little time. For the present I am only confused with it: I do not know how much was Athens, and how much the colouring of my imagination upon it".

End of the quotation.

From a letter of T. E. Lawrence - Lawrence of Arabia - to his mother, December 1910¹.

That is all, thank you for your attention.

¹ *The Letters of T. E. Lawrence*, Oxford University Press, 1991, 26-27.