

Welcome to our first newsletter. HEC was founded in the Spring of 1996 and incorporated as a nonprofit organization in 1997. It is headquartered in the state of Delaware, USA, but our members are from around the world, as is our Executive Council.

HEC is dedicated to the promotion of Hellenic culture and civilization through the Internet. HEC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that took advantage of the Internet before the Internet became part of the public psyche.

In addition to producing major projects, we have launched a book publishing service, and provide Internet service to various Hellenic organizations—*independent of HEC*—which allows them to publish their projects, free of charge.

Our objectives include:

- Store and distribute information regarding all aspects of Hellenic civilization around the world via the Internet.
- Support projects promoting Hellenic Civilization.
- Provide computer services to nonprofit organizations associated with Greece.
- Serve as a communication center for the Greek Diaspora.
- Educate and expose Greek society, including the Diaspora, to the Internet culture and technology.

Our most recent project and most successful to date is the WWI German Reparations Petition, which has gathered over 150,000 signatures to date. The petition is crafted around the monetary damages incurred when the Germans occupied Greece and to seek payment for these damages from Germany.

FUNDING AND OPERATIONS

Volunteers are the sole basis of our operations. The HEC operations budget, however, relies on donations from groups and individuals to maintain two servers and cover publishing expenses, and miscellaneous costs associated with maintaining an operation of our scale.

(More here...)

OPERATING BUDGET

(More here...)

GERMAN OCCUPATION LOAN NOW VALUED IN BILLIONS

The Hellenic Electronic Center and its Professor's and PhDs Forum is running a petition, requesting the German government to honor its long-overdue obligations to Greece by repaying the forcibly obtained occupation loan, and by paying war reparations proportional to the material damages, atrocities and plundering committed by the German war machine during World War II.

PETITION EXCERPTS

Greece was looted and devastated by the Germans as no other country under their occupation. The International Red Cross has estimated that between 1941 and 1943 at least 300,000 Greeks died from starvation – the direct result of the plundering of Greece by the Germans. Mussolini complained to his minister of foreign affairs Count Ciano “The Germans have taken from the Greeks even their shoelaces”.

Germany and Italy, in addition to charging Greece exorbitant sums as occupation expenses, obtained forcibly from Greece a loan (occupation loan) of \$ 3.5 billion. Hitler himself had recognized the legal character of this loan and had given orders to start the process of its repayment. After the end



of the war, at the Paris Conference of 1946 Greece was awarded \$ 7.1 billion, out of \$ 14.0 billion requested, for war reparations.

Italy repaid to Greece its share of the occupation loan. Italy and Bulgaria paid war reparations to Greece, and Germany paid war reparations to Poland in 1956 and to former Yugoslavia in 1971. Greece demanded from Germany payment of the occupation loan in 1945, 1946, 1947, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1974, 1987, and in 1995. However, Germany is consistently refusing to pay its obligations to Greece arising from the occupation loan and war reparations. In 1964, German chancellor Erhard pledged repayment of the loan after the reunification of Germany, which occurred in 1990.

Indicative of the current value of the German obligations to Greece are the following: using as interest rate the average interest rate of U.S. Treasury Bonds since 1944, which is about 6%, it is estimated that the current value of

the occupation loan is \$163.8 billion and that of the war reparations is \$332 billion. The French economist and consultant to the French government Jacques Delpla stated on July 2, 2011, that Germany owes to Greece 575 billion euros from Second World War obligations (Les Echos, Saturday, July 2, 2011). The German economic historian Dr. Albrecht Ritschl warned Germany to take a more chaste approach in the euro crisis of 2008-2011, as it could face renewed and justified demands for WWII reparations (Der Spiegel, June 21, 2011, guardian.co.uk, June 21, 2011).

The Germans did not just take “even their shoelaces” from the Greeks. During WWII Greece lost 13% of its population, some of it in battle, but mostly from the famine and from German war crimes. The Germans murdered the population of 89 Greek villages and towns, burned to the ground over 1,700 villages and many of their inhabitants were also executed—they reduced the country to rubble, and looted its archeological treasures.

PETITION SIGNATURES

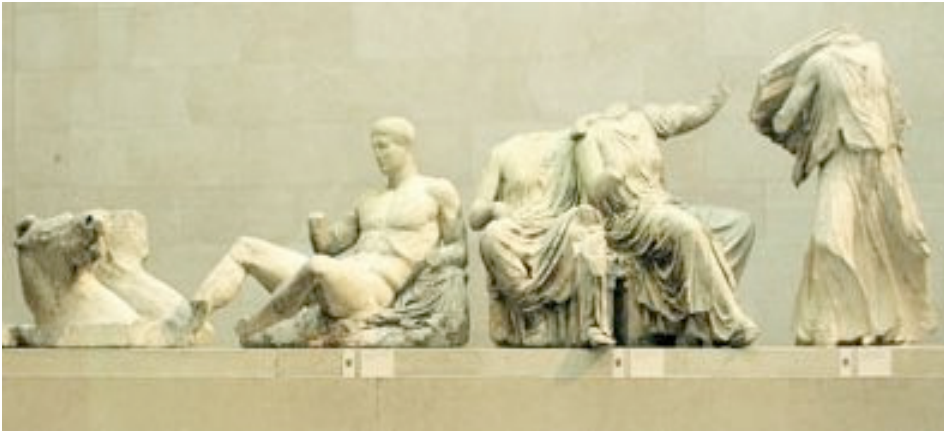
The petition went online on August 4, 2011. Translated into 12 languages, the petition has gathered close to 200,000 signatures, including that of the former Greek Prime Minister, George Papandreou.

To sign the petition, go to:

<http://www.greece.org/blogs/wwii/>



THE PARTHENON MARBLES



Photograph: David Sillitoe for the Guardian

The Parthenon Marbles project is an awareness campaign, organized to educate the public about the sculptures and glyphs removed from the Parthenon by Thomas Bruce, 7th Earl of Elgin, between 1801 and 1805. These Marbles are housed in the British Museum and our goal is to have these sculptures returned to Greece, and placed in The New Acropolis Museum.

ELGINISM

Elginism is defined as *an act of cultural vandalism*. Elginism, of course, has been going on for thousands of years, as cultural artefacts have been torn out of their cultural and spacial context, and ended up in museums or galleries. But it wasn't defined as such until 20th Century architect, Matthew Taylor, composed its current definition.

This act has primarily been perpetrated by richer nations, which generally loot poorer nations. In the instance of the Marbles, Greece was under Ottoman Occupation when the Marbles were torn from their original context and shipped to England, and therefore unable to protect its cultural treasures. The Parthenon Marbles are now considered to be the classic case of Elginism.

The British have repeatedly refused to return the Marbles to Greece, despite several demands to do so. But as more and more people become aware of this crime, the pressure is steadily increasing, and support for their return has grown.

Today, several organizations have been formed that support the return of the Parthenon Marbles to the country of their origin.

This year, the British Committee for the Reunification of the Parthenon Marbles, along with its counterparts in America and Australia, will hold a conference in London on June 19 - 20, 2012.

Themes will include legal issues relating to the reunification of the marbles and the concept of the "universal museum." Day 2 of the conference will include an organized visit to the British Museum.

The British Committee for the Reunification of the Parthenon Marbles is one of the oldest organizations actively involved in the return of the Marbles.

If you are interested in attending this conference, contact Eddie O'Hara at eddieohara@hotmail.co.uk.

THE NEMEAN GAMES

The Nemean Games were part of a cycle of ancient games, including the Olympic Games, held at Nemea, Greece, and celebrated religious and athletic festivals in honor of Zeus. Like the Olympic games, wars were suspended for a brief period to celebrate the games at Nemea.

Their revival at Nemea attracts athletes whose range of skill varies, and is not exclusive only to top athletes, like the Olympics. Organized by gender and age, ordinary citizens may participate in these games.

The Fifth Nemead will take place on June 23, 2012. HEC promotes this event, and encourages persons to participate in these games as athletes and spectators. Membership to The Society for the Revival of the Nemean Games is also encouraged.

To join the Society, go to:

<http://www.nemeangames.org>

THE HEC BOOKSTORE

(more here about the bookstore and publishing of books)

HEC DONORS HELP MYKI LIBRARY DOORS STAY OPEN



THE PANHELLENIC CULTURAL GATHERING IN THRAKI

(more here about the project....)

This project included a petition protesting the Greek Government’s closing of the libraries for children and youth, and particularly the closing of the only Greek library in the village of Myki, in Thraki, which serves primarily the children of Greek-Pomakoi (“Pomakopoula”). Although the petition of 1,665 signatures failed to produce a response, HEC gathered donations which helped keep the Myki Library open.

Donations in the amount of \$3,432, plus sponsorship from third parties, were allocated to enrich the library in

Myki, which now has new furniture, two new computers, and an internet connection (via which-SKYPE-the Pomakopoula communicate with students from Odyssey Charter School in Delaware!)

This project demonstrates that a modest amount of money can go a long way — in this instance keeping the doors of the Myki library open!

Thanks to all HEC members who contributed time and energy to this project.

Executive Council Members

- Eleni Bomis (Canada)
- Fotimi Eleftheriadou (Greece)
- Bill Gatzoulis (CT, USA)
- Thomae Kakouli-Duarte (Ireland)
- Kostas Karakostas (MA, USA)
- Anna Lawless – Director (UK)
- Stelios Maniass (FL, USA)
- Nico Michael (South Africa)
- Tom Papadopoulos (Canada)
- Evangelos Rigos – Director (Greece)
- Thanos Voudouris – Director (MD, USA)

Send us an email!

hec@greece.org

Help us by making a tax-deductible contribution.

To contribute, please follow this link:

www.greece.org



www.greece.org