

GENNADEION NOTES, IV

LORD BYRON, FATHER PAUL, AND THE ARTIST WILLIAM PAGE

(PLATE 90)

ON August 23, 1810, Lord Byron wrote to John Cam Hobhouse another in the series of letters that describe the former's stay in Greece after the return of his companion to England a month before. The letter is headed "The Convent. Athens," wherein he had established himself a few days before on returning from a "giration" of the Morea. Byron portrayed his new situation in most lively and detailed fashion.

I am most auspiciously settled in the Convent, which is more commodious than any tenement I have yet occupied, with rooms for my *suite*, and it is by no means solitary, seeing there is not only "il Padre Abbate" but his "schuola" consisting of six "Regazzi" all my most particular allies.—These Gentlemen being almost (saving Fauvel and Lusieri) my only associates it is but proper their character religion and morals should be described.—Of this goodly company three are Catholics and three are Greeks, which Schismatics I have already set a boxing to the great amusement of the Father who rejoices to see the Catholics conquer.—Their names are, Barthelemy, Giuseppe, Nicolo, Yani, and two anonymous at least in my memory.—Of these Barthelemy is a "simplice Fanciullo" according to the account of the Father, whose favourite is Giuseppe who sleeps in the lantern of Demosthenes.—We have nothing but riot from Noon till night.¹

Hobhouse will have had no difficulty recalling the scene, though hardly the spirit, of his friend's spacious quarters, for he had visited them earlier that same year.

The Roman Catholic service is performed for the Franks in the Capuchin convent. The present Padre is an intelligent man, who, besides the duties of his holy office, is occupied in instructing from twenty to twenty-five or thirty of the sons belonging to the Frank families; he has fitted up the circular chamber formed by the monument of Lysicrates, with shelves that contain a few volumes of choice books² The good Padre has divided it into two stories; and the upper one, just capable of holding one student at his desk, serves as a small circular recess to a chamber at the left wing of the convent, from which it is separated by a curtain of green cloth.³

¹ *Byron's Letters and Journals*, II ('Famous In My Time,' 1810-1812), edited by L. A. Marchand, London, 1973, pp. 11-12. I am grateful to John Murray (Publishers) Ltd. for permission to quote from this edition.

² J. C. Hobhouse, *A Journey Through Albania, and Other Provinces of Turkey in Europe and Asia . . .*, London, 1813, p. 301. One of the books was Horace's *De Arte Poetica*, as Byron noted in a letter to Hobhouse of March 5, 1811: "Since my last letter 27 Ult. I have begun an Imitation of the "De Arte Poetica" The Horace I found in the convent where I have sojourned some months" (*op. cit.* [above, note 1], p. 42).

³ Hobhouse, *op. cit.*, pp. 327-328. As Byron's description of the domestic arrangements in the lantern makes clear, the upper space was used not only for study but also for sleep. Although there

The convent was to be Byron's home in Athens until his departure for England in late April, 1811. Of his life there he wrote a second description on November 14, 1810, to Francis Hodgson.

I am living alone in the Franciscan monastery with one *Friar* (a Capuchin of course) and one *Frier* (a bandy legged Turkish Cook) two Albanian savages, a Tartar, and a Dragoman, my only Englishman departs with this and other letters.—The day before yesterday, the Waywode (or Governor of Athens) with the Mufti of Thebes (a sort of Mussulman Bishop) supped here and made themselves beastly with raw Rum, and the Padre of the convent being as drunk as we, my *Attic* feast went off with great *eclat*.⁴

Two months later, on January 20, 1811, also in a letter to Francis Hodgson, it was the location, rather than the inmates, of the monastery that engaged Byron's wit.

I am living in the Capuchin convent, Hymettus before me, the Acropolis behind, the temple of Jove to my right, the Stadium in front, the town to my left, eh, Sir, there's a situation, there's your picturesque! nothing like that, Sir, in Lunnon, no not even the Mansion House.⁵

Apart from these three colorful passages, Byron wrote little else about the particulars of his stay at the convent.

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Beyond Byron's words, there is a striking anecdote about his relations with "il Padre Abbate," whom we can identify from other sources as Father Paul, or Paolo, from Ivrea in Piedmont, told by the Capuchin himself to several foreign travelers in the years after Byron's visit when first-hand recollections of so famous a man and of his foibles were much in demand. The account was originally published in 1826 by Hubert Lauvergne, a French doctor from Toulon who in 1825 served

is nothing in Byron's letters to suggest that he too slept in this confined place, W. Brockedon has preserved just such an anecdote: "yet, in this strange uncomfortable place only, would Lord Byron sleep. This was related to an English artist, on his visit to Athens, by Lusieri, with some amusing jokes upon the illustrious poet, as to the direction of his head or his heels, for one or other must have extended beyond the entrance to the cell" (*Finden's Landscape and Portrait Illustrations, to the Life and Works of Lord Byron*, I, London, 1833, from the text accompanying the engraving "Franciscan Convent, Athens"). Given Byron's statement that Giuseppe slept in the monument, Lusieri's story, if correctly reported, is at best an exaggeration, at worst an invention.

⁴ *Op. cit.* (above, note 1), p. 27. The same, or a similar, party is described by Byron in "Additional Note on the Turks" appended to *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto II: "On one occasion of his supping at the convent, his friend and visitor, the Cadi of Thebes, was carried from table perfectly qualified for any club in Christendom; while the worthy Waywode himself triumphed in his fall" (*The Works of Lord Byron. Poetry*, II, edited by E. H. Coleridge, London, 1899, p. 205). J. Galt also remarked on the drinking habits of Byron's Waywode, "who is really a good man, and gets tipsey every night, which, father Paul jocularly observes, is the cause of his goodness." (*Letters from the Levant . . . ,* London, 1813, p. 228).

⁵ *Op. cit.* (above, note 1), p. 37.

with his navy in the eastern Mediterranean.⁶ One of the places he visited was the island of Chios, where he met Father Paul.

C'est sur les décombres de Scio que je connus l'estimable Paul d'Ivrée, chef des missions du levant; il avait quitté les murs d'Athènes et s'était réfugié dans la maison consulaire de cette île. Biron avait été son hôte dans le couvent des franciscains, et il en conservait de profonds souvenirs.⁷

One of the elderly monk's memories Lauvergne added as a note at the end of his book, and I reproduce it below, translated from the French.

A NOTE ON LORD BYRON

Lord Byron had selected the convent of the Franciscans at Athens for his residence by choice, when, tortured by the demon of his heart, he came escorted by his *Childe Harold* and called forth the ghost of extinct generations and bemoaned the fate of the children of Greece. Father Paul of Ivrea had found favor with the mysterious poet; his age, ministry, and gentleness had so conquered his lordship's affection that the latter, ordinarily enigmatic in all his social relations, gave way with him to all the peculiarities of his character. Eager for everything related to Byron, I used to take great delight in hearing Father Paul give me an account of the smallest details of which he had been a witness during his lordship's stay at the Franciscans. The reader will be thankful to me, perhaps, for transcribing one of these conversations. The superior of the convent speaks. "Byron was living in the town of Athens, and he had several times wandered round its monuments, when over-gratification, which arose in him from everything striking him too deeply, took hold of his heart, and from that time he became more than ever silent and sad. It was on one of those days of profound melancholy that he came at midday and knocked at the convent; he asked to speak to the superior; he was led to the door of my room, he entered, and we were face to face. The sight of him aroused in me a sort of pity mixed with terror: I recalled unwillingly the last words of a conversation which he had had with me: 'You cannot convince me, I remain an atheist.' At the appearance of his lordship, I rose, he flew towards me, and in a tone of keenest emotion, he begged me to let him live in one of our cells, to eat with us, and to draw from him the weariness which infected the few days still remaining to him. He clasped my hands as he called me Father; the locks of his hair dripping with sweat covered his forehead, his face was pale, his lips shook, and his glance, difficult to endure, seemed to say: 'Have pity on my fate.' It was agreed that he would live in the convent. This response touched him little, a pained memory controlled him entirely. Even though I knew from experience how little effect consoling words had on him, I dared to ask him the cause of his sadness.

"'Father, all your days,' he said, 'are alike; but I will not cease to be a traveller.'—'Have you no native land? If the consciousness of its absence causes your griefs, their end is within you: leave Athens, my prayers and wishes will follow you in England.'—'Never speak to me of England; I would yet prefer to drag the chain of my misfortunes on the sands of Libya, rather than see again the places stamped with the curse of my memories. The injustice of men has rendered England hateful to me: meanwhile, if it is true that after man's death the essence of his life, which one calls

⁶ For biographical details I have frequently used the entries in *Nouvelle biographie générale depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu'à 1850-60 . . .*, Paris, 1852-1866, and *Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by L. Stephen and S. Lee, London, 1908-1909.

⁷ H. Lauvergne, *Souvenirs de la Grèce, pendant la campagne de 1825 . . .*, Paris, 1826, pp. 125-126.

the soul, survives his passions, I take an anticipated joy in living like a pure spirit. This mystery is known only to God.'—'I do not wish to pierce the secret which banishes you forever from your country; however confirmed, as I understand it, your intention of never seeing it again, build up habits which, while busying your mind without exciting it, bring it back gradually to the things of the earth. God has created man to enjoy happiness, it is on earth that he must seek it, and the intelligence with which He has endowed him is the instrument he must bring into play to find it. Is it the fault of the Creator if men, led astray by false doctrines, fail to recognize the goal of creation in applying their minds to the pursuit of mysteries for which God has not predestined their intelligence? Do you think that the peace of the heart and the health of the body can be the portion of him whose life is perpetually at variance with the generality of men? In doubting the infinite power of God, the only foundation for happiness in this world, one distorts reason, and the man inscribed on the list of the atheists must be necessarily unhappy.'—'Atheist, atheist! That then is the purpose of your comfort . . . it is thus that you welcome him whom you call your son; it is to convince him that there is no more happiness for him. Minister of God who reads the heart of men, learn at last that it is beyond your faculties to recognize an atheist, even though his mouth makes you a hypocritical confession of it. No, an atheist in the whole range of the word is impossible to find; to admit his existence is to insult the prince of the universe who, in the perfection of His most beautiful work, has not forgotten to engrave on it the name of its immortal author. The passions which carry the souls outside of themselves can possibly for a moment arouse in them some doubts; but when in the depths of his conscience the atheist questions himself sincerely, the evidence of a God confounds his incredulity, and the truth of the feeling which fills his thought absolves him in his eyes from the crime of atheism. O Father! It is easy for you never to complain against the author of your being, you who in the gentle quiet of a life free from storms have for all future acquired the conviction that all the suns of your old age will illuminate for your eyes the same waking scenes. For me, thrown on the earth like a disinherited child, created like all men to feel bliss and being destined never to find it, I wander from region to region, brooding in my soul the germs of my eternal misfortune. Fed on the hatred of men, betrayed by those same people whose gentleness I compared to that of angels; attacked by an incurable ill which has cut off my fathers; tell me, man of truth, whether some complaints, having escaped the bosom of despair, can mark an atheist, and draw on him all the beams of the anger of heaven. Oh! unhappy Byron, if after so many mortal trials you are robbed of your last hope of salvation . . . , oh well . . .' Here his lordship's voice came to an end, an idea suddenly took hold of him and this idea was related to the state of his health, of which he was despairing since his body had put on weight. He had observed that all the members of his family, on arrival at that time of life when the human forms are the center of a more active nutrition, died of apoplexy, and this fatal oracle proceeding from his painful mind agitated him unceasingly.

"The frequent exercises to which he devoted himself with a kind of fury had no other purpose except that of consuming an excess of health, the spectacle of which startled his imagination. Horse riding, swimming, running often filled his days; but vainly did he seek to destroy his good constitution. Seeing all his efforts useless, he adopted the habit of vinegar, of which he drank frightening doses.

"His lordship's gloomy silence lasted almost a quarter of an hour; suddenly he rose energetically from his seat and went around my room stopping in front of the religious engravings which decorated it. A moment later he came to me and said: 'Do you remember that you promised me a month ago to give me something that you possess?'—'I possess very little, and that little contains nothing that would tempt you; nevertheless if I am fortunate enough to have in my power

something which assures me a place in your memory, speak . . .’—‘I have kept all the words of your reply,’ he cried in haste, ‘and you can no longer refuse me.’ Then he moved towards a corner of my room, and taking down a beautiful crucifix which I had brought from Rome, he put it in my hands. I offered it to Byron, saying to him: ‘Here is the comforter of the unfortunate.’ He took it with rapture and kissing it several times he added with his eyes bathed in tears: ‘My hands will not desecrate it for long, and my mother will soon be the guardian of your precious memento.’”⁸

François Pouqueville, long time French consul general at the court of Ali Pacha in Ioanina, on reading Lauvergne’s note on Byron made almost immediate use of it in the fifth volume of *Voyage de la Grèce*, reissued in a second edition, “revue, corrigée et augmentée,” in 1827. The first edition, published in 1820-1821, contained no reference to Byron in his description of Athens, which he visited in the autumn of 1815. As for Father Paul, he enjoyed a warm, but brief, notice.

Le père Paul d’Yvrée honorait alors cette retraite [i. e. the Capuchin convent] par ses vertus, sa douceur, et la plus touchante hospitalité.⁹

To this the author added a footnote.

Le vénérable père Paul est maintenant chef des missions du Levant. Puisse sa sagesse remédier aux maux qui leur ont été causés par le faux zèle d’un prosélytisme mal entendu.¹⁰

But with Lauvergne’s anecdote in front of him, Pouqueville was reminded of a dinner given by the French consul, Louis F. S. Fauvel, his host, apparently on the day of his arrival at Athens.

Je n’avais jeté qu’un coup d’œil sur tant d’objets, lorsqu’on nous invita à descendre au salon où le dîner était servi. La vieille amitié qui nous liait présida à la fête, où se trouvaient le P. Paul d’Yvrée, M. Minciaki, consul général de Russie, et son chancelier, M. Mustoxidi.¹¹

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 233-240, “Note sur Lord Byron.” This conversation, and with it Walsh’s variant (see below, p. 415), has been largely ignored by the standard authorities. For example, L. A. Marchand has no references to Father Paul, or Paolo, in *Byron: A Biography*, New York, 1957, or *Byron A Portrait*, London, 1971, nor does he identify him in his edition of Byron’s letters. On the other hand, A. Maurois (*Byron*, New York, 1930, p. 143) described the essence of Lauvergne’s note: “One day he asked one of the Capucins, Father Paul d’Yvrée, if he could be allowed to inhabit one of the cells. Perhaps a monastic life would save him from his boredom and melancholy. He said that he was no atheist, and asked the father for a crucifix, which he kissed with tears. Religion, like everything, had to be a strong sensation for Byron.” Maurois did not, however, indicate his source, whether Lauvergne or Pouqueville, nor make any mention of Walsh.

⁹ F. C. H. L. Pouqueville, *Voyage dans la Grèce*, Paris, 1820-1821, IV, p. 86.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, IV, p. 86, note 2. At the time when Pouqueville’s travels were first published, Father Paul was in fact still in Athens, and it was not until 1825 that he took up the post of “chef des missions du Levant.” There is probably some connection between Pouqueville’s erroneous statement and Laurent’s description of Father Paul about to leave Athens in September, 1818, a departure that did not take place for another three years. These contrary accounts lead to the hypothesis that in 1818 Paul was recalled to Constantinople to be head of the Capuchin eastern missions but that the order was canceled even before he could leave Athens.

¹¹ *Voyage de la Grèce*, Second Edition, Paris, 1826-1827, V, p. 48.

On being questioned by Pouqueville on the details of Byron's stay at the convent, Father Paul responded with the story later recounted by Lauvergne.¹² At its finish there was general discussion on the theme of Athens as a “*réfuge des grands hommes poursuivis par l'adversité*,” ending with the question: “*Que n'a-t-on pu accorder à Napoléon d'y venir terminer en paix sa carrière mortelle!*”¹³ The meal ended with the consul of France turning the conversation to what he may have considered a safer, though no less interesting, subject: Lady Hester Stanhope.

Between the two accounts of Father Paul's reminiscences by Pouqueville and Lauvergne, except that the former's is shorter, there are no major differences, and only a few minor,¹⁴ a coincidence disarmingly explained by Pouqueville.

C'est d'après la note d'un ouvrage intitulé *Souvenirs de la Grèce*, par H. Lauvergne . . . , que je rapporte cette anecdote. Je regrette de ne pouvoir en insérer en entier le récit qui est aussi bien raconté que bien écrit par l'excellent jeune homme auquel j'aime à en faire hommage, quoique l'ayant entendu en partie de la bouche du P. Paul, pendant mon séjour à Athènes.¹⁵

Pouqueville's clear statement that, despite his reliance on the text of Lauvergne's account, he could have told some of the story in his own words from personal experience, leads to the inevitable assumption that on the occasion of the dinner described by Pouqueville Father Paul did not relate his anecdote in its entirety. Moreover, this conclusion tells us something about Pouqueville's attitude to the niceties of historical truth, though nothing about Lauvergne's.

The third traveler to record anecdotes of Byron told by Father Paul was himself a minister, the Reverend Robert Walsh, who visited Athens in January, 1821, in the company of Lord and Lady Strangford. They were on their way to Constantinople, the cleric to serve as chaplain to the British Embassy, the peer as ambassador. Fifteen years later, Walsh published an account of his “residence” at Constantinople, in which he included the details of his journey from England to the Ottoman Porte, drawing for his material chiefly on a series of letters that he

¹² *Ibid.*, V, pp. 48-51.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 52. The reply to this question (“*Nous avons vu ici son geolier, reprit un Athénien; quel homme que ce Hudson Lowe, quelle figure! il sera le vautour du nouveau Prométhée. . . .*”) is interesting, for it gives proof either of the accuracy of Pouqueville's memory, or of his care to avoid anachronisms. By the time of the dinner with Fauvel, either October or November, 1815—Pouqueville records that he set out for Athens from Patras in October (*ibid.*, IV, pp. 397-398)—Sir Hudson Lowe had been appointed Governor of St. Helena and thus Napoleon's warden, but he was not to arrive at his post until the next year. Pouqueville's use of the future tense (“*il sera*”) is fully justified. As for Lowe's visit to Athens, for which I have come across no other evidence, it presumably occurred in the years 1810-1811 when Lowe was stationed principally on Leukas.

¹⁴ For example, instead of Lauvergne's “*le mystérieux poète*” Pouqueville has written “*cet inexplicable génie*”; he has changed “*vos facultés*” to “*votre pouvoir*,” and “*échappés au sein du désespoir*” to “*excités par le désespoir*”; and he has adjusted “*en couvant dans mon âme les germes de mon éternelle infortune*” to “*avec le sentiment de mon éternelle infortune*.”

¹⁵ *Ibid.* (above, note 11), V, p. 49, note 1.

had written a dozen or more years before to his friends. Thus, as he wrote in his preface, "the narrative is a mere transcript of my correspondence, with some additions."¹⁶ As for the account of his visit to the Capuchin monastery, it would seem to represent the conflation of two letters that in part at least had covered the same subject, though in one instance with conflicting detail, to which the author has appended a final comment based on later intelligence.

Among the objects of curiosity which particularly interested me from description, were the Lantern of Demosthenes and the Temple of the Winds, and we now went to visit them. We were kindly received in the first by the Padre Paolo, an Italian ecclesiastic, who has a small chapel adjoining it, for a congregation of about forty Catholic residents in Athens. The Lantern stood at one angle of his own apartment, and formed his little library We found its occupant a very amiable and intelligent old man, and full of local anecdote. He was the Padre Paolo, a friar of the Franciscan order, and the pastor of a small congregation of eighteen or twenty residents of the Latin Church. He had a chapel and dormitory attached to the edifice, and had converted the temple into a library, and composed his orations there, if Demosthenes did not. When Lord Byron was at Athens, he paid him an almost daily visit, and took pleasure in passing his time in the lantern, looking over such books as the Padre had collected there. When he was departing, he requested some little gift which he said would keep as a memorial of him and his library. The Padre bade him take from among his few moveables what he liked best. Lord Byron fixed upon a small crucifix, which the good Padre presented to him with great pleasure; and as they often talked of Greece and its then hopeless prospects, he said, on giving it to him, he hoped that the cross would be a pledge between them, that his Lordship, if ever an opportunity occurred, would assist in liberating his fellow-Christians from the yoke of the infidels. This cross Lord Byron prized as a keepsake of an amiable old man. A friend informed me, he afterwards displayed it at Missolonghi, and mentioned the circumstances under which he had received it.¹⁷

These two accounts, though they originate from the same man and are based on the same culminating incident, namely, the giving and receiving of a crucifix, are very different in point of view. The French version, that of Pouqueville and Lauvergne, concentrates on the destructive passions warring inside Byron's mind: the struggle of the romantic poet to free himself. None of this appears in the English version; instead, Walsh links Byron, priest, and crucifix with the fight for Greece's freedom; the poet needs no spiritual comfort, he has become a Philhellene. It is hard to believe that Father Paul is solely responsible for so radical a change in the details and focus of his anecdote, notwithstanding the difference in time and audience between the tellings. Rather, one should probably assume that Lauvergne has faithfully reported Father Paul's recollections, the details of which were obviously consistent with Pouqueville's memory of the padre's table-talk, but that Walsh has allowed his later knowledge of Byron's role and death in the Greek War of Independence to affect his recital of a narrative heard two months before that war began. Yet, however much Lauvergne and Walsh be compared and the one

¹⁶ R. Walsh, *A Residence at Constantinople . . .*, London, 1836, I, p. xii.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 128-129.

or other found wanting, both were equally dependant on the witness of Father Paul. And concerning his reliability, there is little known of him on which to base an opinion, except his reputation as a humble man of God.

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At the time of his acquaintance with Byron, Father Paul was in his early forties. He had been a member of the Capuchin order for more than twenty years, first in his native Piedmont; then in 1802 he had transferred to the order's mission at Constantinople, under whose rule he was to remain until his death in 1854.¹⁸ Among the mission's responsibilities was the convent built around the ancient Monument of Lysicrates. Thither Father Paul was sent in 1806 to replace Father Urban of Genoa, who to the crime of being thought anti-French had added the less subtle crime of an apprehended liaison "*avec la femme d'un serviteur grec.*"¹⁹ Such events were not easily forgotten, and still retained a freshness in late August of that same year, when M. le Vicomte de Chateaubriand, on his way from Paris to Jerusalem, dined with Fauvel. Among the topics of conversation at the table, Chateaubriand records discussion both of Fauvel's role in the departure of Urban and of the good impression made by his successor.

... Au reste, M. Fauvel avoit bien fait de renvoyer le religieux italien qui demeuroit dans la Lanterne de Démosthènes . . . , et d'appeller à sa place un capucin françois. Celui-ci avoit de bonnes mœurs, étoit affable, intelligent, et recevoit très-bien les étrangers qui, selon la coutume, alloient descendre au couvent françois. . . .²⁰

An anecdote from the very end of 1806 shows that Father Paul was quite capable of force, if the occasion demanded.

... the Turks . . . even think old frail Athens herself capable of assuming a warlike attitude. At the proclamation of the present war against the Russians [December 27, 1806], they closed her paralytic gates in a most energetic manner. The following morning, father Paul of the convent went at day-break to take the air among the pillars of the temple of Olympian Jove, and arriving at the

¹⁸ For information about Father Paul contained in the archives of the Istituto Storico dei Cappuccini in Rome, I am most grateful to the Director, Servus Gieben, and the Chief Archivist, Isidoro Agudo. From these records it is clear that Father Paul died on December 23, 1854. When his death was officially reported to the order, he was said to be 87, having been a Capuchin for 68 years and in the mission at Constantinople for 53. Since he joined the mission in 1802, the figure "53" should probably be understood as "in his 53rd year"; similarly with 68 and 87. With such reckoning his birth will have occurred in 1768.

¹⁹ P. E. Legrand, "Biographie de Louis-François-Sébastien Fauvel Antiquaire et Consul (1753-1838)," *Revue archéologique*, XXX (3rd Series), 1897, p. 387. For a view of Father Urban sitting at a desk in the Monument of Lysicrates, see the engraving by S. Pomardi published in E. Dodwell, *A Classical and Topographical Tour Through Greece . . .*, London, 1819, I, opposite p. 289.

²⁰ Chateaubriand, *Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem*, edited by E. Malakis, Baltimore, 1946, I, p. 282.

arch of Hadrian, found them still shut; whereupon he gave them a kick, and the gates of Athens flew open at the first touch of his reverence's toe.²¹

The recorder of this incident is John Galt, who stayed in the convent from late February to March 26, 1810, and from there wrote a series of letters to his boyhood friend James Park.

I have taken up my lodgings in the Capuchin Convent, belonging to the Propaganda of Rome. The choragic monument of Lysicrates . . . is attached to it, and serves as a closet to the friar who has charge of the house. He has given me the use of it, and I have no less a pleasure, at this moment, than writing in one of the oldest and most elegant buildings in Europe.²²

Both on his first visit and a second one in the autumn of 1810, when Father Paul welcomed him back "as an old friend,"²³ Galt's attention was mainly fixed on the commercial possibilities to be developed in Greece, not on its antiquities. But because he had the habits of a writer as well as those of a merchant, he was also very much aware of the people among whom he traveled, and he noted their dress, manners, and opinions with color and humor. Of his knowledge of the Athenians, whether Greek or Albanian, he gathered much from Father Paul.

To this worthy man, who, though a friar, is really liberal-minded, pious, and charitable, I am indebted for many curious and laughable anecdotes of the practice of his brethren to gain popularity with the old women of their neighbourhood. Women are the pillars of the church in all countries. I am also obliged to him for some information relative to the superstitions of the modern Athenians that I think will interest you.²⁴

Thus Galt learned how young ladies make offerings at new moon beside the Ilissus in hope to gain a husband; that there is danger in praising babies; how washed clothes must be guarded from moonshine; "that it is quite in vain to attempt to obtain a light or any fire from the houses of the Albanians after sun-set, if the husband or head of the house be still a-field"; that a child's fortune is determined a few days after birth by its Miri, the test being whether this invisible creature enjoys or spurns a choice feast prepared for it by the midwife; and how the same midwife, when summoned to the birth, conducts mysterious rites involving not only the opening of "every lock and lid in the house," but also a "three-footed stool." This last item the friar could not well explain, and to enlarge both his and Galt's knowledge of Albanian practices, they "sent for an old woman, who is famous in the neighbourhood for her knowledge of simples, and the prognostications of disease." She did not disappoint, and introduced her eager listeners to the Albanian world of the spirits, to the Voorthoolakas, Collyvillory, Maissi, and Maissa, translated by

²¹ J. Galt, *Letters from the Levant . . .*, London, 1813, p. 113.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 104.

²³ J. Galt, *Voyages and Travels, in the Years 1809, 1810, and 1811 . . .*, London, 1812, p. 183.

²⁴ Galt, *op. cit.* (above, note 21), pp. 171-172.

Galt as country-ghosts, pucks, witches, and warlocks, and to the claims made by some Albanians to the possession of "second hearing," a national peculiarity that Galt with his unfailing parochiality compared to "the second sight of the Highlanders."²⁵

Father Paul was not always so dependent upon others for information, however arcane. Thus when Galt told him that he had watched a display of snake-charming, the friar was able to expound its mysteries on the basis of his own youth in Piedmont. As he recalled, one of his brothers as a boy had been "very dextrous" at "the art of the serpent-charmers"; he himself had experienced not only the exceeding coldness of a viper's saliva "on his own hand," but also "the efficacy of viper broth" in removing a violent itch which he had contracted at college; and he had "frequently enjoyed the pleasure of being a spectator" at the annual 'round-up' of the vipers by the "professed charmers . . . with a pair of wooden tongs."²⁶

The picture of Father Paul that emerges from these snatches of Galt's reminiscences is of special interest for two reasons. First, it is different from that found elsewhere. While other travelers recall the solitary Capuchin in his convent, a kindly host, minister to the Franks, and teacher of Italian, Galt also tells of the man brought up in Piedmont, who knew the valley of Soana and its surrounding hills, and whose friend was the Jesuit Charles Emmanuel, one-time king of Sardinia.²⁷ And second, the date of Galt's picture is 1810, the very year when Byron took up residence at the convent and became an intimate of Father Paul and his "schuola," a familiarity that led, as we have seen, to a surfeit of rum on November 12.

Though there were other travelers not so famous as Byron or so graphic as Galt, they were nonetheless appreciative of Father Paul and his hospitality; and some of them published recollections that add interesting details to the story of his mission in Athens. Such a one was Peter Edmund Laurent, a young, versatile teacher of modern languages at Oxford, who with two friends visited Athens in September 1818. They found Father Paul 'packing.'

This monument [the Lanthorn of Demosthenes] is converted into one of the rooms of a monastery belonging to the Capuchin missionaries: the society of those useful men is established at Constantinople; and one of the members, who is recalled every ten years, dwells constantly at Athens. . . . Padre Paolo was the name of the venerable monk who was here in 1818: he was preparing himself for departure, and was about to return to Constantinople, carrying with him the commissions of the principal Athenian merchants, their esteem and their regret.²⁸

At this moment, Father Paul was in his earliest fifties and had been in Athens a dozen years, somewhat longer than the normal length of service, to judge from Laurent's remark. But despite this, his plans must have been changed, for he was

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 172-178.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 168-171.

²⁷ J. Galt, *The Autobiography of John Galt*, Philadelphia, 1833, I, p. 106.

²⁸ P. E. Laurent, *Recollections of a Classical Tour . . .*, London, 1821, p. 95.

still at the same post in 1820 when the young, aristocratic secretary of the French embassy at Constantinople, Marie-Louis, le Comte de Marcellus, arrived in September. He was near the end of an official tour of the ports of the Levant as well as of the religious institutions in Palestine; one of his earlier stops was Melos, where he had acquired for his country a marble statue of Aphrodite. The meeting between him and Father Paul was an emotional one, full of the memories of Jerusalem, which the priest must have visited between 1802 and 1806, and the diplomat's account catches the tenderness of the occasion.

Revenus dans la ville, après avoir pénétré dans la grotte de Pan, nous visitons le temple d'Auguste, la rue des Trépieds, et, comme pour me purifier de tant de souillures païennes, je vais m'asseoir sur l'escabelle du père Paul, le plus humble des religieux de Saint-François. Celui-ci écoute avec émotion mes récits de Jérusalem, il m'interroge sur ses frères, sur la misère des couvents, sur les persécutions accoutumées. "Je suis allé moi-même me prosterner aux pieds du saint sépulcre, me dit-il; puis on m'a envoyé en Grèce. Et là, bien souvent, comme l'apôtre dont je porte le nom, je me désole, *et mon esprit se révolte en lui-même quand je vois l'idolâtrie régner par toute la ville.*" A l'ombre de ce petit couvent qu'habitait le père Paul, j'aurais pu me croire encore en Palestine, si, pour me remercier des consolations que je lui avais apportées, le bon capucin ne m'eût fait admirer en détail la Lanterne de Démosthène où se cache sa pauvre cellule.²⁹

Father Paul had probably yielded to similar questions and memories the summer before when William Rae Wilson stopped in Athens a few days on his return from a pious visit to the Holy Land.

. . . I crossed over in a small boat to Athens, the principal city in the Grecian empire, and put up in a small convent at the extremity of it, inhabited by a solitary monk, where, from the crowd of names of Englishmen written and cut out on the walls, seems to be a kind of head-quarters for British travellers.³⁰

Rae Wilson was a Scot, a one-time solicitor who on inheriting a fortune became a gentleman of travel. His intense devotion to Scripture led him to see the Christian places, particularly to Jerusalem, where, though a Protestant "not of a specially tolerant spirit,"³¹ he stayed at the Franciscan convent. Although he records no conversations with Father Paul—indeed, he omits his name—talk there must have been between them, not only because of their common interests and experience, but

²⁹ Comte de Marcellus, *Souvenirs de l'Orient*, Paris, 1839, II, pp. 362-363.

³⁰ W. R. Wilson, *Travels in Egypt and The Holy Land . . .*, Second Edition, London, 1824, pp. 375-376. On p. 2 the text states that Rae Wilson "left London in September 1819." However, it is certain from some of the documents printed in the Appendix (pp. 445-448) that the author was already in the Levant at the beginning of 1819. His departure from London must have occurred in 1818. Another indication of the need to correct the date to 1818 is the description of "A band of music" which in Smyrna "performed several loyal airs, in honor of the approaching birth-day of George the 3d" (p. 351). Since the last such occasion celebrated by George was June 3, 1819, Rae Wilson must have left England the previous year.

³¹ *Dictionary of National Biography*, XXI, London, 1909, p. 621: *s. v.* Wilson, William Rae.

also the traveler's letters of recommendation, one from the office of the Congregation of the Propaganda, another from Chateaubriand.³² Moreover, to judge from Rae Wilson's description of their parting, their relationship seems to have quickly developed strong bonds.

On departing from the convent, the monk, who was distinguished by great humility, presented to me several earthen vessels of a red colour, in the form of small bottles, recently found in excavations, where tears had been put as a mark of affection on the part of surviving friends.³³

1821 was the last year of Father Paul's ministry at Athens. In January, with his customary hospitality he received Lord and Lady Strangford and their chaplain, the Reverend Walsh, and entertained them with many an anecdote. The one about Lord Byron I have already quoted. The outbreak of the struggle for independence two months later, however, brought such civilities to an end. At first, the Turks kept control over the town, despite the fewness of their number and the meagerness of its defences. But the Athenians soon realized how vulnerable the Turks were and on April 26 (O. S.) drove them into the citadel. This success notwithstanding, the Athenians remained pusillanimous, more ready to flee than to fight, and on one occasion it was the timely interference of Father Paul that saved the day. The incident is narrated by the Reverend Walsh, who "learned from eye-witnesses" some "local details."

3000 men were well armed, and had their enemies shut up in the fortress, round which they formed a blockade, but at a considerable distance. Between them and the gates was a field of green corn, and a few of the negro slaves of the garrison were sent out, under the protection of the guns, to cut it down as fodder for some cattle they had shut up in the citadel. As soon as ever the negroes appeared at the gate, a rumour was spread that the Turks were about to make a sortie, when instantly the besiegers, terrified at this sound, were running off and dispersing in all directions. The Padre Paolo was passing by at the moment, and, seeing the cause, he immediately called to the fugitives and reproached them for their cowardice. He represented to them that they were now equally armed, and much more numerous than their enemies. It was with difficulty he could persuade them to trust to the evidence of their own senses, that they were not a host of armed Turks, but a few defenceless blacks; and at length the panic-struck crowd, with anxious looks, were induced to resume their former position. From hence they fired on the negroes, and, after wounding many of them, compelled them to return to the Acropolis. The commander of the division thanked the Padre for his interference, and assured him it was the first time he ever saw them brought back, when they were once seized with terror.³⁴

The effects of Father Paul's encouragement were short-lived. Early in July the Athenians learned that Turkish armies were marching against them, and so they began to leave. On July 20, Omer Brion entered an empty Athens. His soldiers

³² Wilson, *op. cit.* (above, note 30), p. 2.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 376-377.

³⁴ Walsh, *op. cit.* (above, note 16), pp. 138-139.

pillaged widely, some of it in reprisal for the way the Athenians had treated the mosques. Hardly a house was spared, except those belonging to the foreign consuls; churches were assaulted; and, according to a contemporary account,

L'église même des catholiques, dans le couvent des capucins, fut brûlée jusqu'aux fondemens, et le feu détérira le beau monument de Lysicrates, appelé la Lanterne.³⁵

With almost all his congregation fled, his chapel destroyed, and the rest of his convent in ruins, Father Paul's mission in Athens had come to an end.

The details of Father Paul's life after leaving Athens, as before his coming, are beyond this study. It is enough to remember that he took refuge in Chios and was there in 1825 when Lauvergne elicited from him his memories of Byron. That same year he returned to Constantinople and on December 4 was installed as chief of the Capuchin mission in the Levant, retiring from the post in 1836. Eighteen years later, still in Constantinople, he died on December 23, 1854, at the age of eighty-six after more than sixty years a monk, and more than half a century of service in the east.

* * * * *

Among the many items of special interest in the collection of Mr. R. G. Searight of London is a delicate study in water-color, some of the outline and detail in pencil, of a middle-aged Capuchin monk (Plate 90).³⁶ The subject is dressed in a brown, long-sleeved cassock, belted at the waist with a girdle of white rope, and over his shoulders wears the eponymous hooded cowl. On his head is a skull-cap, and a sock covers the one visible foot, both articles of clothing apparently black and more likely reflective of the season of the year than of the age of the wearer. He holds in his hands a black-bound missal, fingers tucked in to keep it open and mark the place. Behind his left arm and partly hidden is a rosary—a chaplet of beads with a cross—hanging from the girdle.

The monk sits on the end of a bench, his right leg, its line visible beneath the cassock, perhaps crossed over the left. He ignores his missal and looks directly at the viewer, his finely shaped head turned to the right, thus revealing its left side

³⁵ "Siège de l'acropolis d'Athènes en 1821 et 1822, par un témoin oculaire," *Revue britannique*, V, 1826, p. 64. This article, which I know only in its French version, first appeared in English as "The Siege of the Acropolis of Athens in the years 1821-1822 By an Eye-Witness," *London Magazine*, 1826. I have quoted this reference from the bibliography of W. St. Clair, *That Greece Might Still Be Free*, London, 1972, p. 364, where he suggests that the author may have been J. A. Staehelin.

³⁶ I am indebted to Mr. Searight for permission to study, photograph, and publish this water-color, which measures 0.318 m. by 0.225 m. It was exhibited at the Benaki Museum, Athens, April 19-September 15, 1974: see the catalogue *Lord Byron in Greece . . .*, edited by I. S. Scott-Kilvert, [London, 1974], No. 8. 4. The legend noted by the editor "that this priest . . . introduced Byron to the Philike Etareia" is of course historically impossible.

with the ear outlined between the rising hood and the lower edge of the cap. The latter covers his hair, except for a gray-black fringe lying along the top of his clear forehead. While a hint of the original dark color still lingers in the unobtrusive eyebrows, it has almost entirely gone from the mustache and full beard, both white, touched here and there with gray. His skin, taut over the bones, is equally light, as if faded, a brush of tan still remaining in the cheeks. By contrast the eyes are striking, bright and alert, two shades of brown, the iris lighter, the pupil darker, white around. From between them descends a long nose, flat ridged, aquiline, a facial landmark probably even more distinguished in profile. And below, partly hidden by whiskers, is his mouth, the lips closed, a warm, unexpected note of red.

Above the seated figure, to the right, is a penciled legend in two lines: the upper reads Padre Paulo, the lower Athens. The subject of the study is thus identified. The artist has not thought to add his own name. Yet its lack is no barrier to his identification, for he can be recognized with as much certainty as the sitter through a consideration of the style and quality of the artistry, the subject-matter and the approximate date, and the character of the letters. He is the Londoner William Page, an attribution first made by the sketch's owner.

The facts about Page's life and works have been assiduously collected in a pioneer essay by J. H. Money, published in 1972.³⁷ The artist was born in 1794, attended the Royal Academy Schools, and first exhibited in 1816. His next appearance was in 1824, when he successfully submitted a water-color of a scene in Constantinople, followed in 1825 and 1826 with another view from Constantinople and two from Athens. After a gap of twelve years, he resumed exhibiting in the Academy of 1838, and was shown annually until 1843. Of the dozen works he presented during this last phase of his active career as an artist, eight were large water-colors of Athenian monuments. After 1843 he seems to have been content with the role of a man of family, a "landholder" who died comfortably established at Surbiton in 1872.

What did Page do in those early years when he was not exhibiting, from 1817 to 1823, and from 1827 to 1837? In the first period, according to Money, he traveled to Italy, Greece, and Turkey, making sketches, some of which survive "on paper variously watermarked between 1810 and 1822," and gathering material later used for the Academy water-colors. Except for the watermarks, however, Money presents no other firm evidence for the dates of Page's first journey abroad. A second period of travel seems to have lasted from 1827 to 1831. One water-color dated 1839 shows that his itinerary included Italy.³⁸ Money argues that, because on his return to London

³⁷ J. H. Money, "The Life and Work of William Page (1794-1872)," *The Old Water-Colour Society's Club Annual*, XLVII, 1972, pp. 9-30.

³⁸ The water-color in question is "inscribed (on the mount) *Guntrip, April 1830*," and Money says of it: "That this drawing is of an Italian scene is clear from the costumes and architecture"

Page provided 30 sketches to *Finden's Landscape and Portrait Illustrations to the Life and Works of Lord Byron* and *Landscape Illustrations of the Bible* (both published by John Murray, 1833-4, and 1836), this second "tour also embraced Greece and Turkey," as well as various places in Western Europe. A third period of travel may have occurred between 1835 and 1838, when Page seems once again to have been absent from London, but there is no evidence to show where he went.

The study of Father Paul proves not only Money's general thesis that Page was in Greece (and Turkey) at some time between 1816 and 1824, but also that he had visited Athens at the very latest by July 1821. Moreover, it is equally certain that most, if not all, of the Athenian scenes selected by Finden were done during this same trip, and not on a later one towards the end of the Greek War of Independence as suggested by Money. In Volume I the two views of the "Temple of Jupiter Olympus" were sketched before the second siege of the Acropolis (August 1826-June 1827), during which the façade of the choragic monument of Thrasyllus was destroyed; and the interesting study of the dilapidated "Franciscan Convent," like that of Father Paul, was made before its destruction in the summer of 1821. "A Street in Athens" probably also dates from before the outbreak of the war as later views of Athens do not show minarets still standing.

Volume II contains only one illustration of Athens by Page, but it is a long-distance view from Phyle, and there is thus no detail to judge its date of execution. Volume III has two of his studies of Athenian monuments: the southeast corner of the Parthenon, and the "Temple of Theseus." The former resembles other studies of this part of the building made before 1821, and some of the figures on the right are Turkish; in the background of the latter the houses of the town seem unharmed, again as if drawn before 1821. In all likelihood, therefore, the originals of these two engravings were also made during the first period of Page's travels. All Finden's Athenian scenes, as well as the study of Father Paul, seem thus to be contemporary, belonging to a stay in Athens made by Page before the middle of 1821.

Regarding the remaining scenes from Greece chosen by Finden, the majority seem to illustrate a country still occupied by the Turks. It is, for example, hard to believe that the three sketches of Corinth (one in each volume) date after 1821; and it is perhaps even harder to accept that the view of the Turkish fountain in Chios (Volume II) with its placid surroundings was made after 1822. Of the rest, none seem demonstrably late enough to belong to Page's presumed second trip to Greece, while all would fit his first.

In addition to considering Page's contributions to *Finden's Illustrations*, Money should have also noted that the same artist had supplied a view of Bassae for the chapter on the temple of Apollo by T. L. Donaldson, which appeared in the so-called

(*ibid.*, p. 13). Likely as Money's explanation is, caution in accepting it is justified as long as the name (?) "Guntrip" remains enigmatic.

"Fifth" volume of Stuart and Revett's *Antiquities of Athens*, published in 1830.³⁹ Donaldson made his studies of the temple in a brief stay in 1820,⁴⁰ when he was accompanied, and assisted, by W. Jenkins and a "fellow-traveller," both of whom he thanked for their strenuous exertions. While it is most unlikely that Page took the part of the unnamed architectural assistant, his sketch is entirely appropriate for a date about 1820. Moreover, if Page made this sketch on his supposed second trip, one must throw away any notion of "economy of hypothesis" in order to explain how Donaldson got hold of the view in time for his publication, yet at a moment when the artist was still abroad. It is thus not only simpler but more compelling on the basis of the published evidence to conclude that Page visited Greece (and Turkey) once, and that all his sketches, water-colors, and engravings of eastern scenes derive from this one journey, made in the years about 1820. There is no gain in supposing, without explicit testimony, that he came to Greece a second time.

There is one piece of evidence unknown to Money that bears on the chronology of Page's visit to Greece in a most direct way. The Gennadius Library possesses two large water-colors, one of the Erechtheion from the southwest, the other of the west side of the Parthenon, both signed by Page. They are illustrated in Money's article (figs. 3 and 9), and he rightly points out the possibility that the study of the Erechtheion is the same as that exhibited by Page in the Academy of 1825, the Parthenon in that of 1841. Whether these identifications are right or not, there is no doubt that the Gennadius Parthenon was in fact 'worked up,' or finished, in 1841, for that is the date that appears alongside of Page's signature. What has not been properly recognized is that the Erechtheion is also dated.⁴¹ Just above the lower edge of the large block that lines the upper right-hand corner of the partly filled doorway below the western façade, Page has written in small, neatly penciled letters: W. Page. 1818 Athens. In other words, Page finished this study of the Erechtheion in 1818, in Athens. Moreover, it is a reasonable conclusion from the handsome size of the finished water-color to assume that his stay in Athens was a leisurely one.

What of Page's other Athenian studies? Should they all be dated to the same

³⁹ *Antiquities of Athens and Other Places in Greece, Sicily etc. Supplementary to the Antiquities of Athens by James Stuart . . . and Nicholas Revett . . .*, London, 1830, "The Temple of Apollo Epicurius, at Bassae, near Phigalia . . .," pl. I.

⁴⁰ W. B. Dinsmoor, "The Temple of Apollo at Bassae," *Metropolitan Museum Studies*, IV, 1932-1933, p. 206, wrote of Donaldson: "An English party spent portions of two days at the temple in 1820." I do not know Dinsmoor's source for the duration of the stay.

⁴¹ J. M. Paton included Page's water-color in his collection of sources for the Erechtheion: J. M. Paton, G. P. Stevens, *et al.*, *The Erechtheum . . .*, Cambridge (Mass.), 1927, p. 621 (no. 53) and pl. LII, 3. Paton also associated this work with the one exhibited by Page in 1825; however, he described it as an oil painting. He made no mention of the signature and date, though he probably assumed that their existence would be taken for granted, since he had catalogued the picture under the year 1818 and by Page.

time as the Erechtheion, that is, about 1818? Some of them, probably; perhaps all of them, since there is nothing in the published works to contradict this general date. But it would be foolish, on the basis of so slight a knowledge of the details of Page's travels, to deny the possibility that he may have made another visit to Athens before the summer of 1821.

* * * * *

In June 1818, Athens was inspected by the Reverend William Jowett, Representative of the Church Missionary Society, who was gathering "Information relative to the state of Religion and of Society, with the best Means of its Melioration," to enable the Society to adopt "the most efficient plans for the diffusion and increase of Christian Knowledge."⁴² In the published volume of his researches, Jowett relates almost everything to this theme, even the sight of his fellow-countrymen.

There are Nine Englishmen visiting Athens, besides ourselves; three of whom are Artists, sitting beneath umbrellas, taking plans and drawings. They have already been one year from England; and they will be another year out, exploring Greece and Italy. Do not such men shame Missionaries; or, rather, some who remain at home, but should become Missionaries?⁴³

Was one of the three William Page? We do not know, and in truth, the answer matters little.⁴⁴ But the year is right, and the description cannot help but remind one of the artist who painted not only the Erechtheion but also Father Paul, the humble Capuchin who gave comfort and a crucifix to Lord Byron.

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⁴² W. Jowett, *Christian Researches in the Mediterranean . . .*, London, 1822, pp. v-vi.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁴⁴ If Jowett's description of the artists be taken to represent a group, then the three might be identified as Charles Barry, Charles Eastlake, and William Kinnard, who, along with a Mr. Johnstone, traveled together according to *Dictionary of National Biography*, I, London, 1908, p. 1230: *s. v.* Barry, Sir Charles; and VI, London, 1908, p. 331: *s. v.* Eastlake, Sir Charles Lock. By contrast, the entry for Eastlake in Thieme-Becker's *Allegemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler . . .*, Leipzig, 1970, X, p. 287, records that Eastlake traveled to Greece with Barry and William Brockedon. I know of no other evidence to show that Brockedon visited Greece, nor does he display first-hand experience of the country in his texts for *Finden's Illustrations*. I suspect that the author of the article in Thieme-Becker was confused by an ambiguous remark in Bryan's *Dictionary of Painters and Engravers*,⁴ Port Washington, 1964, II, p. 116: "In some of his journeys he [Eastlake] was accompanied by Brockedon, the painter, and Sir Charles Barry, the architect." The journeys referred to, however, included Italy and Paris as well as Greece.

PLATE 90



C. W. J. ELIOT: GENNADEION NOTES, IV: LORD BYRON, FATHER PAUL, AND THE ARTIST
WILLIAM PAGE