

## **ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE ACADEMY OF ATHENS**

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### **Resumo**

Neste texto nossa intenção é apresentar as fases primárias que contribuíram para a fundação da Academia na Grécia, antes de sua inauguração oficial em 1926. A Academia Platônica foi a primeira instituição de seu tipo que, junto com o Museu de Alexandria, se tornou o modelo para a pesquisa e difusão de conhecimento durante o período do Renascimento na Europa Ocidental. Além disso, a Academia Jônia de Corfu tornou-se século XIX, sob soberania francesa e britânica, um notável centro intelectual da era mediterrânea tendo o grego como idioma oficial. Paralela a esta evolução, a fundação da Universidade de Atenas e da Escola de Artes no começo do reinado Otomano em 1837, foram oferecidas grandes oportunidades para o progresso de cultura na Grécia. A poderosa família de G. Sinas demonstrou sua generosidade oferecendo ao Estado heleno recentemente estabelecido um edifício neoclássico que foi destinado para sediar a Academia de Atenas. No entanto este edifício de luxo permaneceu inativo devido às disputas ocorridas durante a eleição de seus sócios. Um grupo de professores universitários criou a Sociedade Científica em 1888 como uma forma de compensar a falta da Academia que, finalmente, abriu seus portões em 1926, depois de tantos anos de instabilidade política.

**Palabras-claves:** Academia de Atenas, Academia Platônica, Museu, Academia Jônia, Sociedade Científica

### **Abstract**

In this paper we attempt to present the primary stages which served to contribute to the foundation of the Academy in Greece before its official inauguration in 1926. The Platonic Academy was the first institution of its kind which together with the Museum of Alexandria became the archetypes for the research and diffusion of knowledge during the Renaissance period in Western Europe. Moreover the Ionian Academy of Corfu became in the 19th century under French and British sovereignty a remarkable intellectual center of the Mediterranean era with Greek as official language. Parallel to this evolution the foundation of the University of Athens and the School of Arts at the commencement of Othon's reign in 1837 offered great opportunities for the progress of culture in Greece. The opulent family

of G. Sinas demonstrated their extreme generosity by offering to the newly established Hellenic State an impressive neoclassical building which was destined to house the Academy of Athens. Nevertheless this luxury edifice remained inactive due to the disputes concerning the election of its members. A group of university professors created the Scientific Society in 1888 as a substitute to compensate for the lack of the Academy which finally opened its gates in 1926 after so many years of political instability.

**Keywords:** Academy of Athens, Platonic Academy, Museum, Ionian Academy, Scientific Society.

## I. The Prehistory

The first organized school was created where at first flourished the Hellenic spirit, in the Ionic coasts. From this point of view we can consider the School of Thales of Miletus<sup>1</sup> as its first kernel. Years later Pythagoras<sup>2</sup> found its own School in Southern Italy, in Croton and its model became the base for the foundation of the most famous school of Athens, this in the gardens of the Attic hero, Academus, the Academy of Plato<sup>3,4</sup>. However we must stress that at that period ends the oral tradition and started the written one.

In the Hellenistic period Ptolemy Soter found in Alexandria<sup>5</sup>, a center dedicated to the Muses, the Museum, which housed the most eminent philosophers, scientists, poets, artists of the Alexandrian era.

After the conquest of Constantinople, some Greek scholars<sup>6</sup> fled to the West and managed the first Academies in Italy. When Cosmas of Medicis founded in Florence the Academia Platonica in 1440, were invited to teach G. Plethon<sup>7</sup>, I. Argyropoulos<sup>8</sup>, Th. Gazis<sup>9</sup>, and D. Chalcocondylis<sup>10</sup> while Bessarion<sup>11</sup> taught<sup>12</sup> in the Academy of Rome (1450).

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<sup>1</sup> J. Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*. London 1930; see also E. Zeller und W. Nestle, *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*. Leipzig Vol. I. 1 (1923); see also E. Zeller and R. Montolfo, *La filosofia dei Greci nel suo sviluppo storico*. Florence Vol. I (1932); Vol II, 1 (1938); Vol. VI, 3 (1961).

<sup>2</sup> J. A. Philip, *Pythagoras and early Pythagorism*. University of Toronto Press 1966.

<sup>3</sup> See H. Cherniss, *The Riddle of the Early Academy*. Univ. of California – Cambridge Univ. Press 1945.

<sup>4</sup> The function of the Academy was interrupted by the Byzantine emperor Justinian in 529 A.D.

<sup>5</sup> J. Marlowe, *The Golden Age of Alexandria: From its foundation by Alexander the Great in 331 B.C. to its capture by the Arabs in 642 A.D.* London. 1971.

<sup>6</sup> N.G. Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium*. Oxford 1991.

<sup>7</sup> Georges Plethon (1355-1450-52) Byzantine philosopher and humanist scholar. During the Council of Florence he influenced Cosimo de Medici to found a new Platonic Academy. See F. Masai, *Pléthon et le Platonisme de Mistra*. Paris 1956. For more details see K. M. Setton, The Byzantine background to the Italian Renaissance. *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*. Vol. 100, 1956, pp. 1-76.

<sup>8</sup> Ioannis Argyropoulos (1400-1486) from Constantinople was philosopher and orator. Invited in 1434 in Italy, he continued his studies in Padova and years later became the rector of the University of Padova. After the fall of Byzance, invited by Cosmas of Medicis taught Greek philosophy for 15 years. At that period Florence was named "New Athens".

<sup>9</sup> Theodore Gazis from Thessaloniki, taught for 33 years in Italy. For more details see J. Geanakoplos, *Constantinople and the West: Essays of the late Byzantine and Italian Renaissance...* Univ. of Wisconsin 1989 see also my paper, L. B. Alberti, Theodore Gazis and the Elementi di Pittura. *Proceedings of the international Congress culture and Diversity*. Aegean Univ. Rhodes 2005, (to appear).

However the Ottoman conquerors recognizing a kind of Independence considered the education as an ecclesiastical function, thus it was related to the Orthodox Church. During the Ottoman occupation some “Academies”<sup>13</sup> were found, having a most extent curriculum, three of them won a wide spread reputation: the Patriarchal Academy of Constantinople, the Athonian Academy (in mount Athos) and the Academy of Patmos<sup>14, 15</sup>.

## II. The Ionian Academy: “Predecessor” of the Academy of Athens.

In the Ionian islands which had a turbulent history marked by numerous conquerors who left their marks, both politically and culturally, was established the first Academy in Corfu, chief – town of the Ionian islands in 1695 during the Venetian occupation called *Assured*, it survived until 1716. At almost the same time another Academy was founded under the name of *Fertiles* with a third *Errants* following in 1732. Unfortunately, none of these institutions has left any written traces.

The treaty of Tilsit (1807) changed the political status of the Ionian islands; from 1800 to 1807 they constituted the Republic of Heptanesos which was created by the Russians under Turkish sovereignty. The French returned in 1807 and stayed until 1811<sup>16</sup>. They founded an association of cultured persons under the name of Ionian Academy in 1808 that aimed to combat the ignorance so prevalent on the island. According to the statutes drawn up by Charles Dupin<sup>17</sup> (1784-1873) the Academy<sup>18</sup> was to consist of regular and corresponding members. Public courses, competitions and presentations of communications were all defining parts of its mission. Divided into three sections (Sciences, Ethics, Humanities), the Academy offered a wide spread “curriculum” (botany,

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<sup>10</sup> Dimitris Chalcocondylis (1413-1510) from Athens. The Ottoman occupation obliged him to flee in Italy, where he became the student of Th. Gazis, which later introduced him to Laurent of Medicis, who later inviting him to teach as Argyropoulos’ successor.

<sup>11</sup> Cardinal Jean Bessarion (1395-1472). See J. Monfasani, *Byzantine Scholars in Renaissance Italy. Cardinal Bessarion and other Emigrés*. Aldershot U.K 1995 see also J. Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion als Theologe, Humanist und Staatsmann* Aalen Scientia Verlag 3 Bd. 1923-1943.

<sup>12</sup> For more details, see P. Poulistsas, What did they repay to us? Official speech of October 28, 1957. In: The 28 of October 1940. *Panegyric Speeches of Academicians*. Athens. Academy of Athens. Foundation Kostas and Heleni Ourani 1978. p. 213-254.

<sup>13</sup> On the meaning of the word Academy we must note that three types of school were founded during the Ottoman rule: the schools (equivalent to primary schools); at the beginning of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century the Gymnasium which were also called Mouseion and finally the Academies which were considered superior institutions as they had an advanced programme. For more details see Chrysostomos Papadopoulos, Archbishop of Athens, “About the Greek Academies after the fall of Constantinople”. *Proceedings of the Academy of Athens*. Vol. 2. Athens. 1927 p. 200-206.

<sup>14</sup> See Archbishop of Samos, Iossif, *A description of the present State of Samos, Nicaria, Patmos and Mount Athos* (transl. by Henry Denton). London 1678.

<sup>15</sup> See G. Chassiotis, *L’instruction publique chez les Grecs depuis la prise de Constantinople par les Turcs jusqu’ à nos jours*. Paris 1881.

<sup>16</sup> For more details, see R. Milliex, Les îles ionniennes et la France. *Revue France – Grèce*. 1953-54, pp. 12-23; la France dans les îles ionniennes. *Kypriaka Chronika* Fév. 1965 pp. 45-50; Mars – Avril 1966 pp. 89-93.

<sup>17</sup> For more details see the thesis of F. Perrin, *La vie et l’oeuvre de Charles Dupin (1784-1873), mathématicien, ingénieur et éducateur*. Paris 1983. (under the supervision of R. Taton).

<sup>18</sup> See the book of G. P. Henderson, *The Revival of Greek Thought (1620-1830)*. New York 1970.

physiology, political economy, penal and civil law etc) and served to exemplify the methodical organization of useful teaching for the future of the island's residents.

It seems that Dupin's aim was to mark his sojourn in Corfu by creating an institution<sup>19</sup>. Not only he was one of the founders of the Ionian Academy<sup>20</sup>, he also served as its secretary. This Academy had the same status as the *Institut d' Egypte*. Thus it is possible that he tried to follow, or imitate Monge's creation, since Monge had been his teacher.

When the Ionian islands became a British protectorate in 1815, Frederic North, fifth Earl of Guilford (1766-1827) was nominate Chancellor. He was the British representative on matters of education. A great admirer of ancient Greece he served as the official representative of the British crown beginning in 1820 and immediately set about to realize his dream of reviving the Academy. In 1823 he succeeded in doing so when a new Ionian Academy was founded on Corfu (University teaching officially begun in 1824 and the official language was the Greek). Many students from Corfu also studied in Western Europe on scholarships from lord Guilford; Carandinos<sup>21</sup> from instance, so impressed him with his enthusiasm for the sciences that the Earl sent him to study in the prestigious Ecole Polytechnique in Paris. Returning to Corfu in 1823, Carandinos resolved to teach what he had learned and to organize the Academy as he served as the Academy rector until 1832.

In 1837 the Ionian Senate published the new regulation of the Academy<sup>22</sup>, nevertheless the Ionian institution never acquired its former brilliancy and éclat. After the union of the Ionian islands with Greece, in 1864 the Academy closed definitively its doors<sup>23</sup>. The University of Athens created in 1837, will exclusively offer the superior education in the country.

### III. The Greek National State

After the re-establishment of the Greek State institutions to support the scientific research were found: The University of Athens<sup>24</sup> (1837) and the school of Arts (1837), which later became the National Technical University of Athens.

However during the Independence war, was conceived the first idea concerning the foundation of an Academy<sup>25,26</sup>. Thus this first attempt, in the middle of Greek

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<sup>19</sup> See Hubert Pernot, *Nos anciens à Corfou* (Ap. II éd de Souvenirs de l' Aide Major L. Piquot (1807-1814). Paris 1918.

<sup>20</sup> G. P. Henderson, *The Ionian Academy* transl. in Greek by F. C. Voros, Corfou 1980. See also, G. Typaldos – Iacovatos, *History of the Ionian Academy*. Pref. by S. Asdrachas. Athens 1982 (in Greek).

<sup>21</sup> See my paper: "La reconstruction des Mathématiques en Grèce: l' apport de Ioannis Carandinos (1784-1834)", in *L' Europe Mathématique* Paris 1996 p. 305-319. See also, Ioannis Carandinos (1784-1834). L' initiateur des mathématiques françaises en Grèce. *Archives Internationales d' Histoire des Sciences* Vol. 56, No 156-157, 2006, pp. 79-124.

<sup>22</sup> See Legrand, *op. cit.*

<sup>23</sup> In 1973 a research center was founded as well as a school of interpreters. In our days it became the Ionian University.

<sup>24</sup> For more details see my paper: Mathematics and mathematical education in the University of Athens from its foundation to the beginning of the XX<sup>th</sup> century. *Archives Internationales d' Histoire des Sciences*. No 146. Vol 51. 2001 p. 74-98.

Revolution, demonstrates the esteem which Greek scholars had for a superior institution. In the 10<sup>th</sup> of April 1824 thirty one erudits (among them was Ioannis Carandinos, rector of the Ionian Academy) and combatants wrote and signed “a project for an Academy” (which named it Institut<sup>27</sup>), approximately similar to the French model of the Academy of Sciences<sup>28</sup>. This project was submitted to be vote in the “Parliamentary corpus” and every founding member will support it, offering<sup>29</sup> no less than 1000 piasters, an important amount of that period. However all these efforts were stopped when Ibrahim pasha invaded Peloponesus<sup>30</sup>, and put in great danger the acquired “independence”.

A few years later, the first governor of Greece, Ioannis Kapodistrias<sup>31</sup> (1776-1831), was the first explicitly declared against the establishment of an University or an Academy<sup>32</sup>, as the priority for the reorganization of the country was the foundation of primary and high schools. Thus, in the 31th of October 1829 in Aegina, first capitale of the newly established state, Alexander Sturza from Russia, Kapodistrias’ close friend, presented a project for the public education where there is no mention for superior institution and especially to confirm the correctness of his proposed system, he emphasized the Russian example, where «*the genius reformator of Russia, [Peter the Great], violating the fruits of the education’s tree, he established the Academy of Sciences neglecting the preliminary schools. He had his own reasons to act in this way, which Greece does not have... Russia until now tests the consequences of this political contradiction*»<sup>33</sup>.

The second “attempt”<sup>34</sup> to found an Academy is this of Friedrich Thiersch<sup>35</sup> a Bavarian professor and philhellene who in 1831 proposes it for Greece’s<sup>36</sup> cultural revival.

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<sup>25</sup> *Archives of the Greek Regeneration* t. II. Athens 1862 p. 359, 360, 365, 367, 371; see also Emerson et Pechio, *Tableau de la Grèce en 1825*. Paris 1826 p. 416; See also S. Kougeas, On the Academy conceived during the Revolution. *Proceedings of the Academy of Athens*. Vol. 9 Athens 1934 p. 15-22 (in Greek).

<sup>26</sup> We must stress that many distinguished. Greeks were against this idea as for example S. Trikoupis, Th. Farmakidis and others.

<sup>27</sup> In French in the manuscript. See S. Kougeas op. cit. p. 16.

<sup>28</sup> S. Kougeas, idem.

<sup>29</sup> This contribution was obligatory by its regulation see S. Kougeas op. cit. p. 17.

<sup>30</sup> In August 1824.

<sup>31</sup> Jean Antoine, count of Kapodistria, Greek Statesman, was the secretary of the Ionian islands in 1803, minister of the Foreign Affairs in Russia (1816-1822), he was elected in 1827, first governor of Greece. For more details see Arliotti Demetrio, *La vita di Giovanni conte Capodistria, scritta nel 1833. Corfu 1859; see also Bulgari Stamati, Notice sur le comte Jean Capodistrias président de la Grèce, suivie d’ un extrait de sa correspondance*, 2e éd. Paris 1835.

<sup>32</sup> The Academy of Sciences of St – Petersburg elected him as an honorary member in the 17/29 July of 1818.

<sup>33</sup> Project of Alexander Sturza in D. Antoniou’s book, *The beginnings of the educational plan in the new Hellenic State. The project of the committee in 1833*. Athens 1992 (in Greek) p. 193.

<sup>34</sup> The foundation of Filomoussos Etairia (Society of the Muses’ Friends) in 1813 in Athens had the same target too: the return of the Sciences to ancient Academy and to the Lyceum. However this association which had its branch in Vienna, was Kapodistrias’ cultural wooden horse. Its apparent purpose was “the recollection and the protection of antiquities”, but its inner one was the preparation and the enlightenment and the secret collaboration of Greeks, under this anodyne cover, to shake off the Ottoman joke. See comtesse Edling, *Mémoires*. Moscow. 1888. p. 211-213. See also Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, Capodistrias and a “New Order”, for restoration Europe: The “Liberal Ideas” of a Russian foreign Minister, 1814-1822. *The Journal of Modern History*. Chicago Vol. 40. 1968, p. 166-192.

After the arrival in 1832 of the King Othon, who at that time was minor, a committee<sup>37</sup> was formed in 1833, to prepare a project for the educational system of the country. The members of this committee mainly studied in Germany and none among them had a scientific formation. Nevertheless the main purpose of this committee was to organize a complete project for the educational development in the three levels and each one among them had to present its own contribution. Thus A. Polyzoides was charged<sup>38</sup> to prepare his plan on the foundation of the Academy. His project was discussed in the next sessions<sup>39</sup>.

Even in this political instability it was wide accepted that the newly established state need an Academy as the indispensable complement of the University and as the top of the scientific organization of the country. Polyzoides' project<sup>40</sup> was well formulated and mainly based on former organization of others Academies. Although for nine months this committee was in session and worked intensively, it was broken<sup>41</sup> without any concrete result. Nevertheless it is not quite clear if the three members of the Regency remained entirely neutral and did not undermine its work. Obviously they wished to have the complete control of the country and to present their own project as he did Mauer very soon.

G. L. Maurer, an erudite German professor of law in Munich, member of the Regency and probably more philhellene than the other two regents, describes in his book *Das griechische Volk*<sup>42</sup> the idea behind the creation of higher level institutions: a University and an Academy. Specifically he stated:

Having already designed the project for the education of the public school teachers, I undertook the task of organizing higher institutions. While the Minister of Education and Religions Affairs, Mr Schinas<sup>43</sup>, at my suggestion offered information on foreign and Greek erudites who could teach at such an institution, I had already prepared the appropriate projects for such educational degrees. I intended to establish ... one University and one Academy at the top of this

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<sup>35</sup> For more details see H. M. Kirchner, *Friedrich Thiersch. Ein Kulturoolitiker und Philhellene in Bayern*. München 1990; see also The Proceedings of the Symposium which took place in Athens from 15 to 17 October 1990 intitled: *Friedrich Thiersch and the genesis of Hellenic State...* Athens 1991.

<sup>36</sup> F. Thiersch, *De l' état actuel de la Grèce*. Vol. II. 1833. p. 175.

<sup>37</sup> The members were: K. Schinas (1801-1857), who studied law in Germany, A. Polyzoidis (1802-1873), with studies of law in Germany and France, I. Kokkonis (1795-1864), who attended pedagogical studies in Paris, under the pedagog Ch. Sarasin, Al. Soutzos (1803-1863), who studied in France and in Italy, author of the *History of Greek Revolution* published in 1829 in Paris, which contributed to the expansion of a philhellenic movement in France, J. Venthylas (1804-1854), who studied philology in Berlin's University and Joahann Franz (1804-1851), a German Hellenist. For more details see the book of D. Antonion, *The beginnings of the educational plan in the new Hellenic State. The project of the committee in 1833*. Athens 1992 (in Greek).

<sup>38</sup> Session of 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 1833.

<sup>39</sup> In the 22th of May his plan has reading and discussed and in the 23th of May 1833 was its continuation and its copying.

<sup>40</sup> See D. Antoniou, *op. cit.*, p. 120-124.

<sup>41</sup> T. Evvangelidis, *A History of Othon, King of Greece (1832-1862)*. Athens 1893 p. 61 (in Greek).

<sup>42</sup> Vol I. Heidelberg 1835.

<sup>43</sup> K. Schinas was an erudite Greek with German culture, who became Rector of the University. From the first day of Othon's arrival he was invited to present to the King his opinion about the intellectual situation in Greece. For more details see K. Th. Demaras, *In the third of May 1837*, Athens. 1987. See also Heinz Gollwitzer, "Konstantin Demetrius Schinas und die ottonische Ära Griechenlands" *Festschrift für Max Spindler zum 75 Geburtstag*. München 1969.

educational pyramid... At the beginning of August 1834, I intended to submit the project of the University ... According to this plan... in November the Academy of Sciences would have been inaugurated. Nevertheless all these intentions remained unfulfilled and the celebrated day of the inauguration was never realized because the thirty first of July was drawing<sup>44</sup>.

Unfortunately for Greece, the president of the Regency, Count Armansperg, more familiar and effective with the camarilla's games took all power into his own hands on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July 1834. Mauer was dismissed and returned to Munich. However his lack of confidence in and low esteem for Armansperg led him to take with him to Bavaria all these projects for higher education.

When I left Greece I had left nothing to the Regency, because I did not have any guarantee that it would be approved... From my experience, I knew that they would either own benefit or use them against me. History has proved that I was right ... they were severely criticized in count Armansperg's new-paper National as ineffective, but if they ineffective why did they follow them<sup>45</sup>.

Mauerer's fears were confirmed. Count Armansperg, to show evidence of his efficiency, formulated a complete plan for the University's foundation<sup>46</sup> but not for the Academy. However, when Othon returned from Munich, he cancelled Armansperg's decrees and dismissed him, probably to mark the beginning of the period of his free reign, free from the Regency.

#### **IV. Baron Simon von Sina (1870-1876): a modern Mycene and donor of the Academy**

The family of Sinas, originated from Moshopolis of Nord Epirus, region well known for its florescent trade and its cultural development in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, became one of the most prominent family of the Austro-Hungarian empire. Sinas' family was installed in Vienna in 1785-86<sup>47</sup>, where they established their commercial enterprise which did not delay to win a wide spread reputation and considerable profit, as importers of cotton, leather, wool and tobacco from Turkey.

Simon Sinas was born in 1810 in Vienna and took an excellent education<sup>48</sup> having the most distinguished pedagogs<sup>49</sup> of the epoch. Graduated from a classical Gymnasium, he studied Philosophy<sup>50</sup> History and Political Economy in Vienna's University<sup>51</sup>. Noble and well educated he participated in Vienna's cultural life attending Beethoven's and Schubert's concerts.

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<sup>44</sup> G. Mauer, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

<sup>45</sup> G. Mauer, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

<sup>46</sup> In two decrees published on December 31, 1836 and January 15, 1837 during King's Othon's long absence at the Bavarian Court (23 April 1836 – 2 February 1837).

<sup>47</sup> *Hofkammerarchiv. Ober und Niederösterreich* Fz. 53 (rot 115).

<sup>48</sup> Besides the Greek, he spoke fluently Hungarian, German, Italian, French and English.

<sup>49</sup> See L. Tóth, *Báró Sina Simon* Budapest 1876; G. Laïos, *Simon Sina*. Athens 1972 (in Greek).

<sup>50</sup> Mainly he attended the lectures of Ludwig Rembold (1785-1844) which lost his chair as a propagandist of liberal ideas during Metternich's omnipotence. A few years later Rembold died prematurely and Sinas desiring to honorate his professor's memory established a funeral monument on his tomb.

<sup>51</sup> *Archiv der Universität*. Wien Matricula, Band XI (1799-1833).

During the famous Vienna congress was established the Polytechnic School and Sinas' father, George, became its first donor<sup>52</sup> offering their residence *Lose* with its garden plus an important amount of 20.000 florins<sup>53</sup>. With this granting Sinas House won the admiration of the Austrian upper class as well as this of the European representatives<sup>54</sup>, who attended Vienna's Congress. George Sinas (Simon's father) did not delay to become the greatest landowner<sup>55</sup> and banker<sup>56</sup> in Austria – Hungary and the greatest donor<sup>57</sup> of the Empire<sup>58</sup>.

Although during the war of Independence Sina's family remained neutral, after the establishment of the Greek State, tried to contribute to the development<sup>59</sup> of their fatherland. Considerable grantings sent by George Sinas (Simon's father), general consul<sup>60</sup> of Greece in Vienna, for the foundation of the University, the Archeological Society, the Ophtalmological Clinic. However his most important granting concerns the foundation and the equipment<sup>61</sup> of the first Observatory in Athens which finished in December 1845.

After the death of his father, Simon Sinas, heir of a colossal fortune continued the philanthropic activities<sup>62</sup> of his family and became the new general consul<sup>63</sup> of Greece in

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<sup>52</sup> Emperor Franz I expressed his great satisfaction in his imperial act (24.4.1815). *Archiv für Niederösterreich Wien*, Stiftbrief 9165 a file 17. In 1818 Franz I awarded to Sinas' family the Hungarian title of baron of Hodos and Kisdia. In this imperial act, the sovereign stressed Sinas' generosity to the army (2.000 florins), to the invalids (5.000 florins), to the inhabitants of his lands as well as his fidelity to the crown. See Füres Ödön, Die bekanntesten geadelten Griechen in Ungarn, in *Balkan Studies* 5, 1964 p. 307. In 1826 Sinas' family awarded the title of Austrian baron too. In this act, it was emphasized his contribution to the economic development of his regions in Low Austria see *Allgemeines Vernaltungsarchiv Wien Adelsakt 17005/1660 ex. 1832 f. 38*.

<sup>53</sup> Exner Wilhelm Franz, *Das K. K. Polytechnische Institut in Wien*, Wien 1861 p. 23; see also *Wiener Zeitung* Nr. 311 / 7.11.1815.

<sup>54</sup> We can quote also, Ioannis Capodistrias, Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, prince Alexander Ipsilanti, the erudit Anthimos Gazis etc. for more details see J. G. Eynard, *Journal du Congrès de Vienne* 3e éd. Paris Genève 1914.

<sup>55</sup> We must also stress that to Sinas' family belonged too Palais Palavacini (close to emperor's palace), the residence of the Austrian Archiduke Charles, residences in: Low Austria, Slovakia, Pest, Arad and the Palazzo Grassi in Venice. In Vienna, their residence in Fleischmarkt n° 689-653 for a long period housed the Bourse.

<sup>56</sup> Their House was considered superior of this of the well known bankers Fugger and Rotschild. He was a creditor and financed many commercial and industrial enterprise as well as a creditor of governments and empires. See F. Dölger, *Wien und Neugriechenland*. Wien 1943 p. 15.

<sup>57</sup> For example he supported in Pest, the blinds' Foundation, the Association of the Hungarian coal mines, he helped Budapest's inhabitants after the inundations of 1838 etc. see: Ein Cypressblatt auf das Grab des Herrn Georg Freiherr von Sina, Gedicht von M.G. Saphir, *Morgenpost* Wien 1856 Nr 137 and 138 *Bohemia Prag* 1856 p. 362; *Wanderer Wien* 1856 Nr 235; *Wiener Courier* Wien 1856 Nr. 121.

<sup>58</sup> We must also ephasize some others activities in the Empire: textile factory in Pottendorf, paper-will in Klein – Neusiedl, railroad company (for the South Railway, Südbahn) the first Shipping company of Danube and the construction (1849) of the famous bridge of Budapest (Kettenbrücke).

<sup>59</sup> As he considered Othon's – reign instable, avoided to establish the National Bank of Greece.

<sup>60</sup> King Othon named him in the 24<sup>th</sup> of August 5<sup>th</sup> September 1833. *Archives of the Minister of Foreign Affairs* 1833. file 37/3.

<sup>61</sup> He offered meteorological and astronomic instruments and the first telescope in Greece, constructed in 1844 in Vienna.

<sup>62</sup> Mainly in cultural and educational institutions and in hospitals in Austro-Hungary and in Greece too. In Vienna, after his death a street was named Sinagasse, while the street near to the Academy of Athens has its name.

<sup>63</sup> 17 / 29 May 1786.



Vienna. As we have already present the foundation of an Academy became a national demand and an imperative need. Simon Sinas offers<sup>64, 65</sup> the possibility of its creation.

Sinas' announcement was not only restricted to his granting but he demanded the support of appropriate specialists: first of all the advises of the distinguished professor and academician in Munich, Friedrich Thiersch<sup>66</sup> and the participation of the imperial architect Theophile Hansen<sup>67</sup>, while the Greek government searched a suitable terrain. Finally a terrain of 9.900 m<sup>2</sup> was found close to the University and King Othon, after Sinas' granting<sup>68</sup>, put the first stone in the 2<sup>th</sup> of August 1859. Sinas's daughter decease prevent him to attend this ceremony.

In 1861 Hansen accompanied by E. Ziller arrived in Athens and named him plenipotentiary for the Academy's construction. E. Ziller, who later ornament Athens with many magnificent edifices, worked intensively<sup>69</sup> to accomplish his mission. The construction of the building which going "to house the Greek wisdom"<sup>70</sup> will reanimate the expectations for the new established State, while some erudits proposed University professors to be named academicians. M. Papadopoulos – Vretos, well known historian in his book *New Athens*<sup>71</sup> indicates professors<sup>72</sup> of the Ionian Academy to man the Academy of Athens.

The political events against King Othon, which finally led to his expulsion<sup>73</sup>, delayed the rhythm of the building as Sinas reduced his granting<sup>74</sup>. He preserved his officio of the Greek ambassador but his enthusiasm and his generosity were restrict. Ziller disappointed wrote to Hansen that he "never believed that King's expulsion could had such a sad consequence to the building"<sup>75</sup>.

The arrival of the new King George I' (Danish prince Christian) could not modify this staynation which became worse, as Sinas interrupted his financial support in 1864. However the accomplishment of the edifice remains a firm idea for the Greek Mycene who in his codicil of the 23th March 1865 obliged his heirs to finish "the building of the Academy founded by me, according to the projects and the instructions of the architect Mr.

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<sup>64</sup> Journal *Ilios*, no 24/ 13.7.1856.

<sup>65</sup> Maybe this offer for a such an institution recalled in his memory the Academy of Moschopolis (founded in 1744).

<sup>66</sup> Fr. Thiersch, Verhältnis der Akademie zur Schule. *Sitzung, der Münchner Akademie der Wissenschaften* am 27.3.1858 p. 8.

<sup>67</sup> Th. Hansen, Die freiherrlich von Sina's che Sternwarte in Athen. *Allgemeine Bauzeitung*. Wien 1846 p. 126-131.

<sup>68</sup> In 1858 Sinas became the Greek ambassador in Vienna, Munich and Berlin and acquaired the Greek citizenship. In this same year he offered a considerable amount of 80.000 florins for the building of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, establishes in 1825 by the famous writer and politician István Széchenyi.

<sup>69</sup> *Th. Hansen's Nachclass Kopenhagen*. Ziller an Hansen, 18.5.1861.

<sup>70</sup> *Speech of the Rector of the University* Al. Pallis 1.10.1861 p. 1.

<sup>71</sup> Bilingual French – Greek. Paris 1861.

<sup>72</sup> As Farmakidis, Piccolo, A. Monstoxydi.

<sup>73</sup> Sinas related to the King intervened to protect his compensation.

<sup>74</sup> However in this same year he offered to the Austrian emperess Elisabeth 5.000 florins for his charitable works see. *Haus Hof and Staatsarchiv Wien*. Kabinettskautzlei, Vorträge Nr. 2647 / 1862.

<sup>75</sup> *Hansens' Nachclass (Kopenhagen)* Ziller an Hansen 22.1.1863.

Hansen, ... for that I order, my heirs to give an amount of one million Austrian florins, for the expenses”<sup>76</sup>.

In this same period the attempts for the realization of this institution did not stop. The Minister of Education Ch. Christopoulos in the 17<sup>th</sup> of November 1867, submitted to the Parliament two bills concerning the University and the Academy. Unfortunately these bills were not discussed and voted in the Greek Parliament as the political instability and the Cretan Revolution<sup>77</sup> did not permit. Nevertheless we must stress that the building remained half finished. The next year Sinas wrote a new codicil (23.2.1868) charging exclusively his wife Iphigenia to accomplish and realize his dream<sup>78</sup>. From that period began the second period for the construction of the Academy.

Hansen sent again Ziller in Athens, who started enthusiastically to work on the initial neoclassical project<sup>79</sup>. And in the Greek press did not delay to appear laudations for the building in construction which is «*the most illustrious and most sumptuous building among the new ones in Greece*» and «*it recalls in our memory the ancient Academy of Plato and also the loving beauty, very rich and generous Herodus of Atticus*»<sup>80, 81</sup>.

The construction of the Academy going to the end and it provoked the admiration of many distinguished visitors as f. ex. the king of Danmark, the archduke of Austria Iohann, who visited Athens in 1872<sup>82</sup>. Finally the construction was complete<sup>83</sup> in 1875.

After this ending arises the foundational problem. How to man this new institution, «*which is the proof of the high Greek civilization*» as pointed out the Greek ambassador in Berlin and ardent defender of its establishment, Alexander Rizos – Raguavis in his letter 13/25 August 1875 to the Prime Minister Alex. Koumoundouros and he propositions for the first members<sup>84</sup>, noticing that in Bavaria, when the Academy was establish, the Government appointed its first members<sup>85</sup>.

However while Raguavis expressed his conceptions for the Academy, Hansen and Drosch, worked on its decoration and accomplished his sculptures respectively, the donor of the Academy died in the 15<sup>th</sup> of April 1876, without having the opportunity to visit and admire his temple for the Greek Science.

Sina's widow Iphigenia desiring to realize the dream of her husband formed a special committee in Vienna under the presidency of Ch. Ioannovits, former Sina's advisor, Dr. Josef Holy and baron Guido Sommaruga which from now will collaborate with Hansen and coordinate the works. The death of Iphigenia Sina in 1884 ending the serie of Sina's family benefactors.

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<sup>76</sup> *Bezirksgericht der Inneren Stadt Wien. Archiv, Sina's Testamente. Doc. 85.*

<sup>77</sup> Cretan Revolution of 1866 was an important historical event to which Jules Verne referred in his book *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*.

<sup>78</sup> *Bezirksgericht der Inneren Stadt Wien. Archiv. Sina's Testamente doc. 86.*

<sup>79</sup> The neoclassical Parliament in Vienna is also Hansen's work.

<sup>80</sup> *Journal Century (ΑΙΩΝ) N° 2558 2.5.1870.*

<sup>81</sup> A few years later, The Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna named him honorary member (Kunstfreud) and as one of the prominent personalities of the Empire, he succeeded S. Rotschild in the Senat.

<sup>82</sup> See F. Krogh, *Erinnerungen aus Griechenland*, Kopenhagen 1874 p. 68-69.

<sup>83</sup> The sculptures and the fresques were accomplished later.

<sup>84</sup> *Academy of Athens, Raguavi code p. 105-107 doc. No 91.*

<sup>85</sup> *Idem.*

In 1886 this committee sent to Ziller the protocol delivery and receipt of the Academy and in 1887 Sinas heirs named Ziller plenipotentiary to deliver the building to the Prime Minister Ch. Trikoupis by a contract signed in the 20<sup>th</sup> of March 1887. Unfortunately this ceremony passed in silence as none among them pronounced a speech. “Trikoupis did not address any word, as me too. Thus the Academy passed in silence”, wrote Ziller to Hansen. Unfortunately, the financial situation of Sinas’ heirs could not any more cover Academy’s expenses. Thus, this neoclassic magnificent building asyle for the Sciences and Arts remained inactive.

#### **V. The Scientific Society**

The acquisition of such splendid edifice reanimates the hopes of the scientific community that the function of the Academy is a matter of time. However time went by and the expectations decreased.

So, with the initiative of the University milieu, who couldn’t accept the lack of a higher institution, after many meetings and discussions, professor Ioannis Hadjidakis, his brother George, professor of linguistics, Kyparissos Stephanos and a few other professors<sup>86</sup> established in the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 1888 a scientific association, under the name of the *Scientific Society*, based on the model of the Academies and with the purpose of cultivating the literacy, physical and mathematical science and strengthening their studies in Greece.

The very first objective of the scientific society was the creation of a journal in which they could present the fruits of their research in their mother tongue and in their own country. So in a parallel direction with the foundation of the Scientific Society, they established its annual journal *Athena* (from the name of the goddess of wisdom in Greek mythology) to which each member was obliged by the regulations (14/4/1888) to contribute at least with one paper every year. A unique exception was Kyparissos Stephanos who, although he was one of the founders of the Society, never presented a paper in *Athena*.

The members of the Society were divided into corresponding and regular members and its board was composed of 12 members (all regular): a president<sup>87</sup>, two vice presidents, a secretary and eight councilors with a biennial mandate.

With extremely great care the founders of the Scientific Society tried to ensure the participation of the European elite as foreign members. Thus each member, according to his field of research invited the most eminent scientists. The mathematicians invited Jordan\* and Picard from Paris, whose names continued to appear on the list of foreign members even posthumously. As for L. Kronecker, he announced to the Society that he had received his letter of acceptance; nevertheless Kronecker’s name appeared once<sup>88</sup> on the list. As for the other disciplines we believe that only the names of E. Zeller, H. Helmholtz, H. Diels, H. Taine, E. du Bois – Reymond are sufficient and significant for the prestige of the newly established society.

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<sup>86</sup> K. Kontos and S. Vassis, professors of philology, T. Argyropoulos, professor of physics, and L. Papaioannou professor of anatomy.

<sup>87</sup> For more details see my paper, Some aspects of the Scientific Society in Athens at the end of the XIXth century: Mathematics and Mathematicians. *Archives Internationales d’Histoire des Sciences*. No 145. Vol. 50, 2000. Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, pp. 302-320.

<sup>88</sup> *Athena*, n° 4 (1890), p. 657.

The Society comprised the sections of Greek and Latin literature, history, physics and mathematics<sup>89</sup>. In the Society's Charter, the founders explain why they chose physics and mathematics "because Greece, like the other civilized nations, must turn to the study of physical and mathematical sciences not only for the knowledge of scientific truth but also for human needs"<sup>90</sup>.

The first sessions of the Scientific Society were held alternately at the residences of the founder but later the University Senate decided that the sessions should be held in the building of the Academy.

The Scientific Society, the first of its kind established in Greece<sup>91</sup>, with its sessions twice a month<sup>92</sup>, its proceedings and the regular scientific meetings of its members, will be a substitute for almost 33 years for the lack of an Academy. In reality this Society will function as a kind of Academy without using this name<sup>93</sup>. The Scientific Society failed to give birth to the Athenian Academy and to accelerate its function. None of its founders, except George Hadjidakis, professor of linguistics, became academicians, they could only compensate for the lack of this institution and have an independent board to express their own concepts, to intervene in matters of education<sup>94</sup> and publish their work in Greek.

## VI. The inactive period 1887-1926

Some erudits as K. Papanigopoulos, the distinguished Greek historian, or Alexander Rizos – Raguavis tried to give birth to this institution, while others attempted to hinder its function. The Rector of the University of Athens N. Damalas in his annual report stressed that "the fury of luxurious building which mainly served personal motive and purposes, retrograde the true progress and the development of the Nation, whose the unique right basis is the education of special persons for each branch...Away for us these expensive and luxurious buildings!"<sup>95</sup>

Aggelos Vlachos in his article "Past and present Athens" declared: "It will be better if we had Academicians without Academy, in spite of Academy empty of academicians"<sup>96</sup>. The well known writer Em. Roidis defended this same conception in his essay *Academy without Academicians*<sup>97</sup>.

However the complicate problem concerning the establishment of the Academy of Athens did not find a solution, Sinas' dream remained unaccomplished and consequently that

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<sup>89</sup> The same disciplines were also covered in the journal *Athena*.

<sup>90</sup> *Athena*, n° 1 1889, p. 8. \*see the page at the end of this paper.

<sup>91</sup> Some years earlier, in 1837, the Archeological Society was created having naturally different objectives.

<sup>92</sup> See the regulations of the Society in *Athena* n° 8, 1895 p. 492-495.

<sup>93</sup> Many Academics started their function as private Societies. For example in Turin, in the middle of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century another group of intellectuals started to work under almost the same name. The Private Scientific Society was founded in 1757 on the initiative of J. C. Lagrange, Angelo Saluzzo di Monesiglio and G. F. Cigna, having as primary objective to work for science and for its progress. From this private Society the Academy of Sciences of Turin was born in 1783. For more details see. T. Vallauri, *Delle Società letterarie del Piemonte* Torino 1844 p. 156-215; Cf. Also C. Calcaterra, *Il nostro imminente Risorgimento*. Torino 1935.

<sup>94</sup> See their report to the Ministry of Education.

<sup>95</sup> *Rectoral report* 14/10/1879. Athens 1880. p. 26.

<sup>96</sup> See in the review *Varied passage* 1884 p. 46.

<sup>97</sup> Em. Roidis, *Works* t. II p. 200-207.

cost to the country. It was obvious that the kernel of the problem was focused on the election of its first members. We must also stress that in that period was wide spread the opinion that primarily Greece must acquire distinguished academicians and then establish the Academy. This erroneous conception was a disaster for the expansion and the progress of the Greek science which already in the last quarter of the 19th century won a great reputation in European countries. Distinguished mathematicians<sup>98</sup> as for example Kyparissos Stephanos<sup>99</sup> and Ioannis Hadjidakis<sup>100</sup> presented the results of their research in the Proceedings of the French Academy or in other famous scientific journals and acquired the deep esteem of their foreign colleagues. But for all their life worked out of the Academy and could not prepare their successors, in it. It was not generally accepted that the Academies were not establish for the sake of academicians but for the sake of the country.

Nevertheless the postponement of its establishment was due mainly to the lack of courage. The Greek government having other priorities had not the boldness to confront this problem inviting foreign distinguished academicians as had done many centuries ago, the French King Louis XIV, who invited Cassini and Huyghens, or the Russian empress Catherine the Great, who man the newly establish Academy with foreign professors, as L. Euler.

Thus the stagnation of this problem confirmed to occupy the mind of many erudits but all these attempts ending unsuccessfully. Especially, Prof. D. Aeginitis, minister of Education, in his speech during the opening of the Academy recalled that Alexander Raguavis, ardent supporter of the establishment, of Athens Academy, tried to convinced King George the First, that the National Academy is an imperative need, but the sovereign replied to this demand that “*where are the academicians to man it*”. Thus Raguavis named many died distinguished erudits and then, the king remarked “*but all these are died*” and the clever old man indicated “*but you let them die Your Majesty*”<sup>101</sup>.

Nevertheless the disaster Turkish – Greek war of 1897<sup>102</sup> put an provisional end to the voices of partisans and opponents, as this brief war plunged the country in an extreme difficult financial situation.

In 1900, during G. Theotokis’ government appeared again our unsuccessful movement for the establishment of the Academy. G. Vokos wrote: “*The news concerning the foundation of the Academy fortunately lived only 24 hours, but this interval was sufficient enough to demand divining way the names of the Greek wisemen which will win the academic immortality*”<sup>103</sup>. At the end of his paper, he demanded the well known

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<sup>98</sup> As my speciality is the history of mathematics I restrict my self to this field of research, but in that period Greece had an important kernel of distinguished professors and erudits worthy representative of every discipline.

<sup>99</sup> See my paper, Kyparissos Stephanos and his paper on quaternions. *Acta historiae rerum naturalium necnon technicarum*. New series. Vol. 3, 1990, pp. 35-46.

<sup>100</sup> See my paper, sur le développement des mathématiques en Grèce durant la période 1850-1950. Les fondateurs. *Istor. Math. Issled*. Special issue 2<sup>e</sup> série. Moscow, 1997, pp. 80-102.

<sup>101</sup> D. Aeginitis, official speech of the Minister of Education in 26th of March 1926. *Proceedings Academy of Athens* Vol. 1. 1926 p. 38.

<sup>102</sup> This war was finish (armistice of the 8th of May 1897, thanks to the interventim of Tzar Nicolas II, nephew of the King George of Greece.

<sup>103</sup> *Our Periodical*, Athens 1.3.1900 p. 19-20.

writer Pavlos Nirvanas (who later became academician) to indicate the Greek academicians.

It seems that this conception did not abandon quickly the government. Professor D. Vernardakis was inviting to undertake preliminary discussions on the foundation of the Academy and to accept the post of the perpetual secretary but he denied it.

In 1904 the same question arises again, thus a committee was formed by some philologists to prepare its regulation. Professor and former Rector of the University S. Lambrou prepared its statute, which remained unpublished.

D. Kalogeropoulos in his review *Pinacothèque*<sup>104</sup>, wrote that the arrival of Raguavis' son, from Berlin provoked the formation of this committee, Kleon Raguavis firmly derived to realize the old dream of his father. Kalogeropoulos addressed to his readers a kind of "referendum" with the following question "Indicate the names of academicians which are able to be elected". 102 answers were sent and nine distinguished erudits and professors were indicated. Among them none was a mathematician.

When in 1919 was created in Paris the National Union of Academies, in its first meeting in Brussels, Greece failed to be absent, as the Greek Academy did not function yet. The glorious past save one more time the country, and Greece was admitted, taking the engagement that the Academy will be function in the near future. E. Venizelos' government charged prof. D. Aiginitis to prepare its regulation. But the destructing of the Greek army in the Ionian coasts in 1922 and the disaster which follows did not permit the realization of this engagement.

A few years later, the same professor, under General Pagalos' dictature became the Minister of Education. So in 18th of March 1926 by a constituent decision was established the Academy of Athens. In the 25th of March, in the Greek National Day, opened the gates of Sinaias Academy.

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<sup>104</sup> Vol. III. 1903 – 1904 p. 241.

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Jordan in his application form to join the *Circolo Mathematico di Palermo* presents as professional title: *honorary member of the Scientific Society of Athens*:

Modificazioni ed aggiunte da appostarsi nei titoli professionali ed accademici del Socio (\*):

*membro honorario de la Société scientifique d' Athènes*

Lugar di nascita: *Lepoa*

Anno, mese, giorno di nascita: *5 gennaio 1838*

Indirizzo (\*\*): *48 rue de Valenciennes Paris*

Firma del Socio: *C Jordan*

(\*) Veggansi gli Elencchi di Soci pubblicati a pp. XI-XXIV, 202-203 del tomo IV (1890) e nella copertina del fasc. VI (novembre-dicembre) del tomo V (1891) del *RENDICONTI*.

(\*\*) A fine di evitare possibili emarricanti postali nella spedizione dei *RENDICONTI*, in conseguenza dei frequenti cambiamenti di domicilio, è preferibile, ove ne sia il caso, che il Socio scriva l'indirizzo dell'Istituto d'istruzione al quale appartiene.

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