

Grzegorz Olesiak

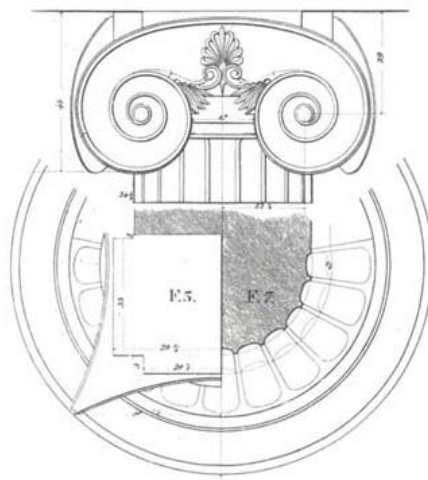
# Maps of memory

Essays on Greece



Metamorfosi Press

Litochoro 2020



Cover photos:  
Glistrokoumaria (Greek strawberry tree) shedding skin after rain and  
enlarged cicada wings..

Drawings of architectural details:  
James Stuart and Nicholas Revett, *Antiques of Athens* (1762)  
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Essays on Greece

*for Monika and Grigoris*



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### ***Technical Note***

*This publication is prepared just like a real paper book and the reader can print it if they so desire. To make each chapter begin on the right, there are several empty pages in the body. The pdf version retains the advantages of the electronic version: the table of contents is interactive - you can go directly to the appropriate chapter, footnotes are also active, and drawings of ancient architectures fragments, placed at the end of each chapter, redirect you to the table of contents.*



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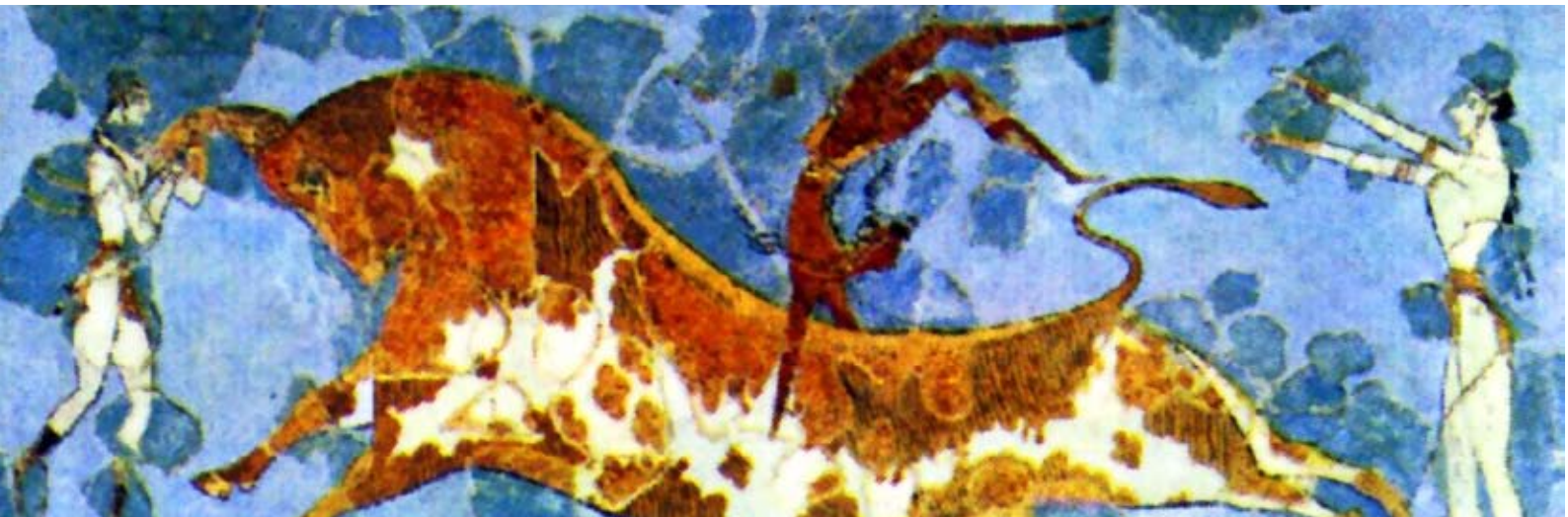
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# Greece

## - the beginning of adventure

It all started in Crete. A small, quiet village of Maroulas, a few kilometers from Rethymno. I was riding a bike on the south part of the island and was enchanted with the mountainous landscape of interior, the coast of the Libyan Sea and small villages lost among olive groves. But also with amazing Minoan art at the Heraklion museum. I have always had the impression that museums are dead places, but this one in Heraklion showed me a piece of the world



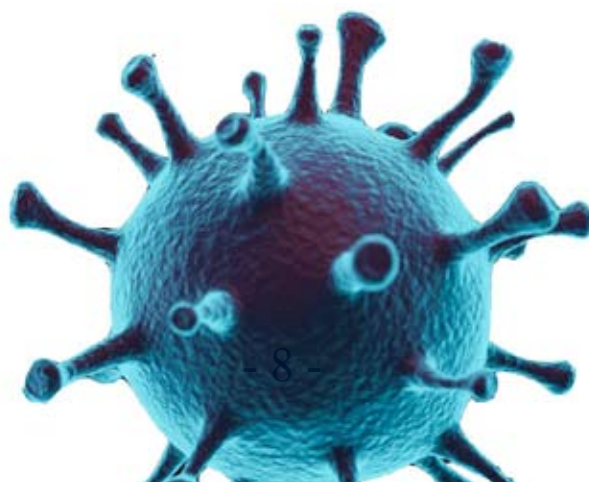
completely impossible, but still existing once. And then there were other islands, Peloponnese, Athens and the mountains. Greece has provided me with impressions of almost religious intensity many



times. Small Aegean islands during a short trip from Mykonos to Delos, the temple of Poseidon at Cape Sounion at the end of Attica, which so suddenly emerges from the surrounding hills, Delphi rising up with endless terraces of wonders of the ancient imagination on the slopes of the Parnassus mountain or the Acropolis, which should be the pinnacle of textbook banality, and it makes a stunning live impression! Finally mountains - ubiquitous in Greece. First of all, Olympus and the Pindus Mountains, but also all smaller or larger hills, visible here from anywhere, which satisfy my vertically sensitive imagination.

Essays collected in this booklet are about Greece. More precisely, they are about my experience of what I met and I meet all the time on the Aegean Sea. I did not plan any of the presented topics - they came to me: during a hike through the mountains, an urban tramp, a visit to the museum or searching vast stock of internet. The book given to the reader is therefore by no means a description of what is most beautiful in Greece, the most important or worth seeing for any reason. It is a rather loose set of texts on various topics - testimony of my fascination of Greek civilization.

However, as scattered texts, created at different times, the micro-essays presented here for the needs of this edition were reviewed, corrected and stylistically unified, and in a few cases definitely expanded or rewritten, so that the reader had the impression of





a whole, and the reading process he did not cause him unnecessary difficulties.

At the same time, this work is to a large extent a child of its time, and if it were not the COVID-19 pandemic, which took over the world in early 2020, it probably would never have arisen in this shape. So if the reader will feel kind of insufficiency after reading these dozens of pages, some solace may be the promise that further part is planned. Probably much more thought-out, systematic and diverse. Every day Greece rediscovers its fascinating face before me...





# Road to paradise

Whenever I start thinking about traveling, an image comes to my mind: it is 1622, the famous painter Pieter Brueghel is riding a horse from Flanders to Italy. Through Burgundy, Alsace, Lorraine, the cantons of Switzerland, the Italian Alps and Lombardy. He immerses himself in the shapes and colors of the lands he passes along the way, absorbs customs, looks, gestures, details of costumes, tools and architecture.



Has time. He is passing no more than 30 km a day. He slowly leaves his homeland and goes to the unknown. The road from Flanders to Italy is about 1000 km long, so he travels at least a month. Today, we cover the same distance by plane in less than an hour.

How much world do we lose along the way?<sup>1</sup>

No, I never intended to go to Greece on horseback; even on the bike I managed to cover at most half of this distance. However, I drove the road from Warsaw to Athens several times by car. Just over 2,000 kilometers, much less to the Greek border. And although the whole should not take much more than 24 hours, the difference with traveling by plane is huge. Just such a journey and the opportunity to save a piece of the world passed on the way, often excited me almost as much as its final destination - a large, sunny peninsula on the Aegean Sea.

Generally, there are two ways to choose: one through the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Serbia and North Macedonia, roughly repeating the first part of the route of the heroes of Andrzej Stasiuk book "Taksim". Google also suggests this route, because it is theoretically the fastest, it runs mostly on highways, but it is of course less interesting. I went there a few years ago. I remembered the wonderful picture of the mountain landscape of Northern Macedonia in the deep ochre color (it was the end of August) and Muslim rock music in local radio stations. But also a somewhat mystical landscape of the Hungarian plains, in the southern part of the country (probably emphasized by the time of day, a few moments before sunset) and quite large hills on the Danube north of Budapest. However, huge tracts of almost perfectly flat Serbia near Novi Sad, tired me unbearably.

But you can also choose the road on the eastern side of the continent. Through Sandomierz and the Low Beskids, other regions of Slovakia and Hungary, and then through Romania and Bulgaria. Theoretically, it is even a shorter route (although it takes more time). Its biggest advantage is Romania - a real Eldorado of wild,

gentle, landscape and everyday beauty. Initially, through the plains of Pannonia and the small hills of Transylvania, then through the Carpathians, a deep valley between the Retezat Mountains (with Europe's largest bear population) and the Semenic range, to finally reach the Iron Gate - a large gorge through which the Danube squeezes, separating the Dinaric Mountains from Carpathian Mountains and a beautiful, new hanging bridge, between Calafat and Vidin, on the Romanian-Bulgarian border. Sofia can be bypassed with the highway, having on the left the Vitosha National Park with the mountains with a height of almost 2,300 m, to which a city bus commutes. The heavily forested and wild Bulgarian-



Greek borderland, with a similarly tragic history as our Bieszczady, invariably reminds me of the dark side of nature, as if just for a moment before the blinding glow of the sun you should feel the touch of a dark night. Finally palms, cypresses and olives trees and I'm on the Mediterranean.

6 countries in 24 hours. The pace significantly faster than Brueghl's, but when driving a car I have no problem distinguishing the country I am in. Admittedly in many places border crossings have completely disappeared, and the places are overgrowing with grass,



but after crossing the magic lines almost everything changes. First of all, languages and road signs. Also the shape of the sides, road signs and electric poles. Houses, churches, type and use of arable fields. I am always surprised at how much the type of music and the narration of local radio stations are changing. Aggression and a massive ad attack in Poland and Serbia, some shades of mildness in Slovakia, to strongly locally rooted media in Romania and Greece (in Greece many radio stations play Greek music only, and in Romania almost every type of music has some easily recognizable Romanian idiom).

However, the most fascinating is a certain manifestation of mentality, easily visible from the perspective of traveling by car: in Slovakia after 4 p.m. life almost dies, in Hungary it is generally always empty, and immediately after entering Romania, life spills onto the streets - people walk along the side, pull some carts with various things, standing by the road and talking, they are always going somewhere, and the traffic on the road never actually dies. However, the biggest benefit of such a "long" trip lies elsewhere. For 24 hours you can slowly get rid of everyday life, and the landscapes passed along the way effectively blur the appearance of blocks in Ursynów (Warsaw) and the image of the Palace of Culture. Such a journey clears the mind and prepares for a lot of new experiences round Olympus. But because the power of memory is enormous, the expectations are even greater. How will it be this time? What will surprise me with the aegean blue? What new places can I discover in the country with the longest coastline in the world?

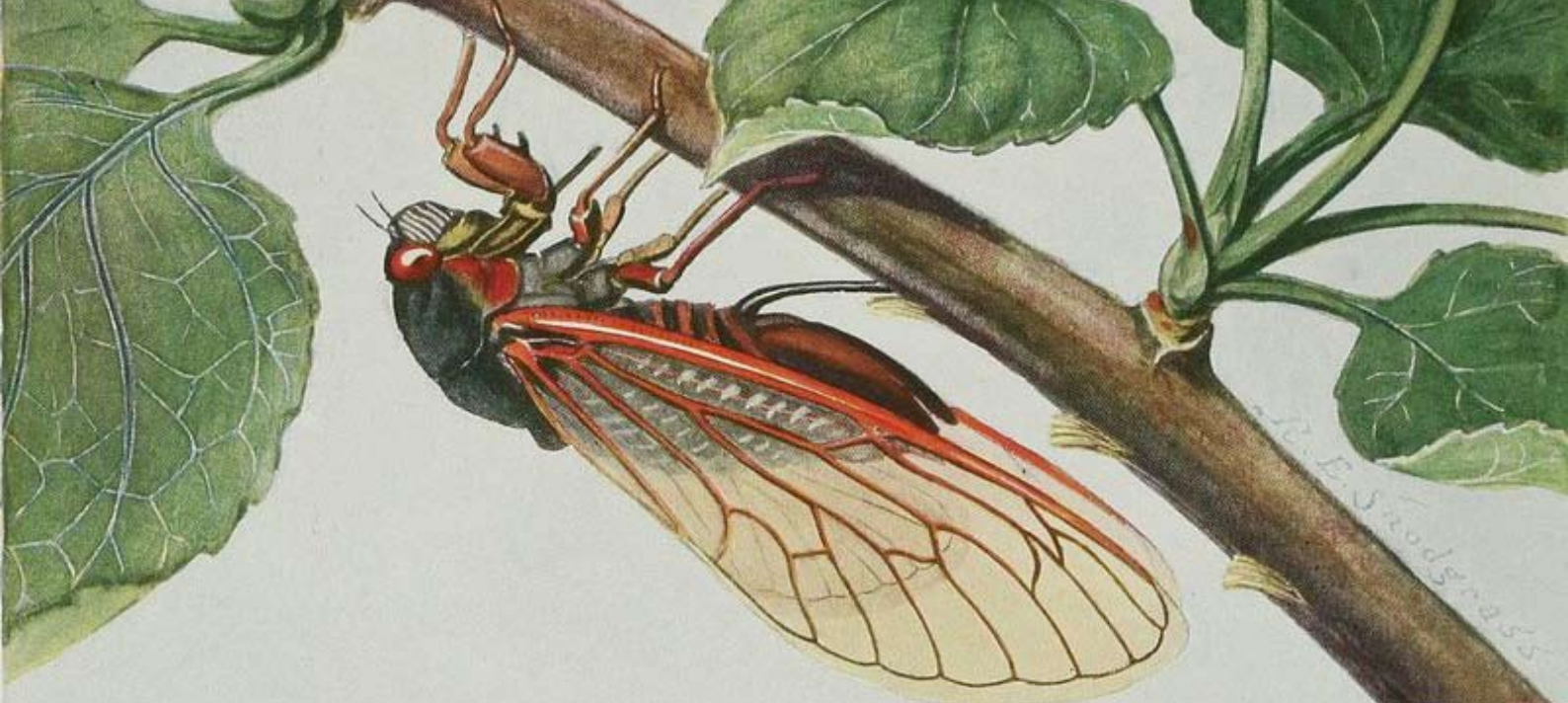


## Cicadas - about the unpredictable

It was in the middle of hot summer, the peak of the holiday season. I stood in front of the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion in Crete, among the crowd of tourists. I was delighted by amazing sun of July, the lush nature on the square around and the aesthetic madness of the interior of King Minos's palace that was about to follow soon.<sup>2</sup> It was my first time in Greece, everything was new, interesting and exciting. Only this loud sawing, as if some metal against metal, did not match with the sublimity of the moment. Is this another protracted renovation and permanent reconstruction? A certain regularity of the phrase and rhythm of sawing, however, rai-







sed suspicions that even in the country of southern freedom and an innate sense of the heximeter, construction workers may not have so much fantasy. After some time, I realized that “sawing” does not come from the machine. It’s a cicada - a small inconspicuous insect, a close cousin of our grasshopper.

After that, I heard (rarely saw) cicadas in many places in Crete, mainland Greece and in many other parts of the Mediterranean. Equally loud and slightly muted, playing in the morning, at noon and before evening; singing solo, in various chamber ensembles and in huge choirs of thousands of vocalists. Or rather violinists or cellists, because the instrument of the cicada is specially transformed parts of the outer skeleton, stretch and released, while the whole body is a soundboard.

The sound of cicadas is ubiquitous on the Inner Sea, but was a complete surprise to me<sup>3</sup>. In guidebooks they write about dolphins in Knossos, theater in Epidaurus or frescoes of the church of Panagia Kontariotissa near Katerini; even about the weather on Olympus and the ferries running between Amorgos and Astypalaia. However, no one warned me about the madness of the cicadas!

You can prepare for each trip, read literature, ask friends, view maps. But, everything cannot be predicted. Even more, each journey carries a tremendous amount of completely unexpected and surprising experiences, and these are often the most exciting and lasting. And the cicadas do not cease to fascinate me. They spend many years<sup>4</sup> in the larval stage underground, buried at a depth of 30 to



250 cm. At the end of May, they come to the surface as a nymphs, shed their skins, which can hang on the tree for a long time and start to sing. Adults live only a few weeks, feeding mainly on plant juices. They have transparent, veined wings, but they fly quite awkwardly. However, these wings are real masterpieces of biotechnology. Their surface is super hydrophobic, that is, built of very small conical elements, “repelling” the water that flows down the wings. Dew condenses on their surface, so the cicadas wash their movement apparatus even if there is no rain.

But that’s not all: the conical nano-spikes from which the wings are made of, also have the property, that the bacteria that settle on them are mechanically torn to shreds. Cicada wings are the only biomate-

rial known to us, that destroys bacteria! Is it any wonder then, that in ancient times the cicada was a symbol of reviving life, eternal youth and immortality?

Above all, however, cicada is made of singing. Ok, maybe this music is nice mostly for the ear of a female of the partner who makes these sounds, but it is certainly difficult to refuse him perseverance and the power of sound. I won't undertake to describe the details of the construction of the cicada musical instrument. I'll just say - it's complicated. To this, the cicada approaches the phrase as a whole. Has an apparatus for producing sounds, then a kind of resonance box to strengthen it (half of the male's body is a resonance box), finally uses the surfaces on which he sits and the relative positioning of his body, for modulation and additional melody enhancement. Like any real musician, the cicada can also listen; has a special apparatus for receiving sounds (both male and his partner), however the male turns it off when he plays. And it's hardly surprising as the sound level he can produce reaches 120 dB, which would effectively destroy not only his own hearing aid, but also the adult man hearing organ, if he wanted to listen to a concert at a very short distance.

I feel a certain spiritual kinship with the cicada. First of all, love of music;<sup>5</sup> but also a penchant for high temperatures. The value from which my noisy artist starts to feel good is 29° C. Then also his instrument is the most effective and the music sounds really powerful. This is why cicadas can be heard best on hot days, in the afternoon, hot hours. Not only that, for better efficiency, cicadas can raise their body temperature by 4-5° C, and some species by up to 20° C above environment temperature, which in heat-variable animals is a real feat!

Cicada is made of singing and was born from singing. The ancient Greeks knew at least two myths about the origin of the cicadas. The first cites Plato in Phaedrus - one of his most beautiful and mysterious dialogues. In Benjamin Jowett's translation, the fragment reads as follows<sup>6</sup>:

*grasshoppers [...] are said to have been human beings in an age before the Muses. And when the Muses came and song appeared they were ravished with delight; and singing always, never thought of eating and drinking, until at last in their forgetfulness they died.*

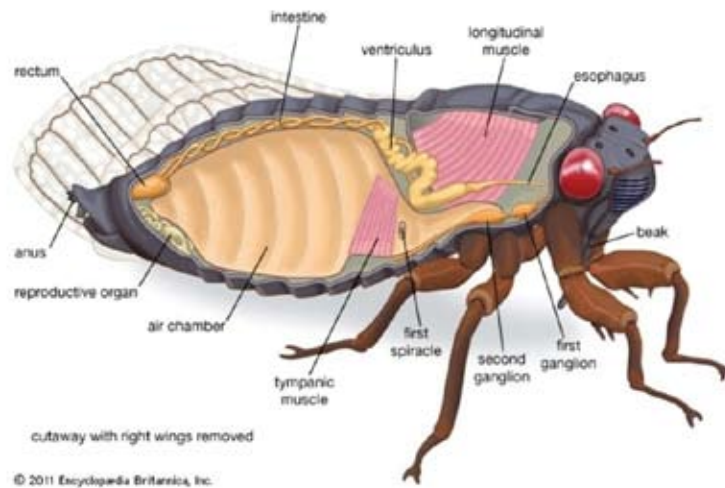
So we have madness of singing to the grave. And this is human madness, only secondarily transferred to the animal kingdom. As Muses, moved by such devotion for their invention, turned avid singers into cicadas so that they could indulge in their passion without interruption. And indeed, there is something amazing about the way cicadas exist. First, many years underground in total darkness. Then, an amazing, magical transformation (see the video below), a body built like a musical instrument and four weeks of almost continuous singing in the blinding midday sun - the cicadas play several hours a day, eating almost nothing!

But what exactly is all this for? It is quite obvious to note that the cicada singing is in essence, an extreme ecstatic hymn of love. The male is after all playing a flirtatious song. Here we come to the second myth about the origin of insect-musicians.

In the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite from the 6th century BC we find the story of a young man named Tithonus, who was a rapsod (singer, poet) and lover of Eos - the goddess of dawn. In thanks for his love, the goddess offered him immortality. However, nothing is



perfect (especially in the world of Homeric myths). Tithonus was immortal, but he was not forever young. He was getting older, he was shrinking, he was getting smaller and smaller, and finally Eos



turned him into a cicada, so that she could at least hear the voice of her beloved. So love as a salvation? Or rather salvation as proof of love in spite of everything. It must be remembered that love between god and mortal was something rare and dangerous in the Homeric world, because it broke the natural, always established order of things. In the triad, the gods-humans-animals the cicadas had a unique position, being in fact each of these entities in part.

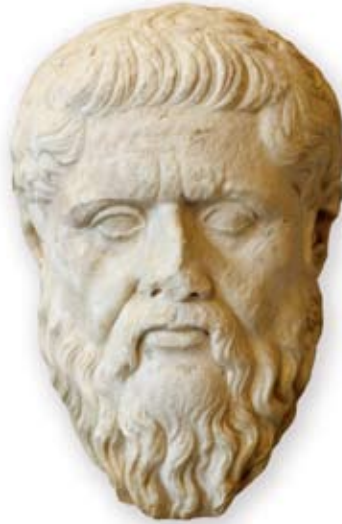
Finally, a linguistic remark. In many languages, the word cicada is a classic sonic name trying to convey the characteristic song of a tireless insect. We have cicada in English, zikade in German, cigale in French and tzitzika in Greek [Τζίτζικα]. In the ancient Greek language of Homer, however, the cicada is tettix [τέτιξ]. So, did the ancient Greeks hear a little differently? Or maybe it was the divine insects that changed the way of playing?

\* \* \*

In Litochoro, the cicadas have a special liking for the path from Lakkos to Lambada, along the Enipeas stream. On summer days the whole valley is filling with their singing, I am grateful to them that they are not like their American cousins - who appear once in 17 years - and at the end of May they will come out of the ground, spread their wings, dry them in the sun and start playing. I can not wait...



*A beautiful movie about the transformation of a cicada on Vimeo.  
Samuel Orr "Return of the Cicadas"*



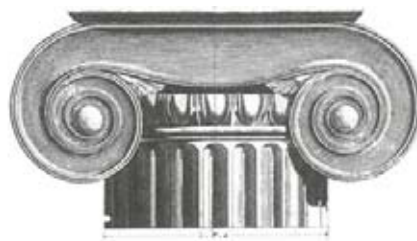
### **Appendix for readers who do not shun philosophy.**

Seemingly cicadas do not play a very significant role in *Phaedrus*<sup>7</sup>. It is true that this is the only dialogue of Plato that takes place outside the city, on a meadow under a large plane tree and is accompanied by tirelessly playing insects, but in addition, they are directly mentioned only once in the story of Muses and the birth of music. However, this story is a bit longer than the fragment quoted above and it also shows that the cicadas are intermediaries between the world of mortals and the world of gods, interceding before the Muses for people who worship them. It also means that the cicadas, as a result of the metamorphosis that occurs due to the divine intervention of the Muses, represent souls who have reached a higher level of consciousness than the presence of their physical bodies allows.

However, it seems that the cicadas are also present in *Phaedrus* at a much deeper level, as if at the root of Plato's imagination, at the level of depicting the most important metaphors. *Phaedrus* is a dialogue about love and the soul. In this order, because for Plato



the highest level of love is spiritual love. At the same time, the soul, which thanks to feeling ascends to a higher level, is winged. Soul wings play an important role in many dialogues, but they are particularly important in Phaedrus. And these wings are always described as cicadas wings! But even more than that. The basic transformation of the soul under the influence of love is describe as the transformation of the cicada from the larva to the adult form. With many details, showing careful observation and knowledge of things that astonishes even modern entomologists<sup>8</sup>. Socrates describes to Phaedrus what happens to the soul and it looks like he describes the details of the emergence of the cicada from the old shell to the form of a music virtuoso. With key moments: heart palpitations, fluid secretion (one entomologists state that “the whole [cicadas] body temporarily becomes a large secreting gland”), cracking the outer shell, developing wings, and even drying them in the sun. You can read the 31 or 36 chapter of Phaedrus, or you can look at the beautiful video above. The similarity of contemporary film frames and Plato’s descriptions is striking!





# Glistrokoumaria

## - Greek strawberry tree

Γλιστροκουμαριά (*Arbutus andrachne*)

For the first time I saw it on the road from Litochoro to the Stavros Refuge. Branches fancifully twisted, color difficult to determine, and above all this skin (because it is not bark) - smooth as velvet, covered as if with a soft fluff, once a little greener, more often turning into pink, red and burgundy. The real show begins after the rain: the thin skin wrinkles, peels and begins to fall off; it's then dark bur-



gundy, and from below a new, intense pistachio color is emerging. I never thought that such color combinations are possible in nature,

after all, in the countries of the cold north, dim green dominates ... Glistrokoumaria - a Greek strawberry tree, was for me the first revelation of Greek floristic exoticism. It's true - there are, for example, a dozen species of pine trees and infinite amounts of cedars on Olympus, but all the pines are somehow similar and do not cause me much emotion, and cedars, despite the biblical past, quickly become prosaic. Greek koumaria does not create dense forests, it always appears one at a time and it is easy to distinguish it from all other rough and dark brown trees even from afar.



Glistrokoumaria is a small tree, usually several meters high, with evergreen, thick and slightly elongated leaves. It blooms now (in April), has small white flowers gathered in conchs. Fruits ripen in autumn. They don't actually resemble strawberries, they are small, round and red, and not very tasty for me.

However, Glistrokoumaria is actually a variety of the much more widespread in the Mediterranean koumaria (*Arbutus unedo*),



which is simply a strawberry tree. Koumaria has larger fruit, really reminiscent of strawberries, apparently sensational in taste. This koumaria has been known since ancient times. For example, Roman writer Pliny the Elder mentions it, and the Latin name also comes from him, which means more or less “I eat only one” - it is not clear whether it is so tasty or just the opposite ...

Koumaria also has some heraldic significance. The coat of arms of Madrid is a bear eating strawberry tree fruit.

The most interesting, however, is that koumaria is the main theme of the famous painting by Hieronim Bosch “The Garden of Earthly Delights”. Painted around 1500, the triptych continues to amaze both art historians and ordinary viewers. It is not even sure what is depicted on it - hundreds of nude characters are crowded in an imaginary landscape, together with real and fantastic animals. But



is it a reward and a picture of eternal happiness or a vision of seven deadly sins, condemnation of vices and human weaknesses? Anyway, the fruit of the strawberry tree is depicted in the picture in an infinite number of incarnations, both as food, a means of transport and as a tool of torture. Its presence is so obvious that in the Prado Museum catalog the triptych was recorded as “Picture with fruit of the strawberry tree”. But why North-Burgundy Bosch has so big love for Mediterranean koumaria? Against this background, it is no longer surprising, that the picture painted in Flanders finally found its way to Madrid - a city with a koumaria in its coat of arms. The circle seems to close...

The Greek Glistrokoumaria has one more amazing feature. Not all is greenish-burgundy. These intense colors are reserved for living



parts; like many Mediterranean trees, glistrokoumaria has many dry branches: dead, damaged, maybe sick. But these dead branches look completely different: they are dark brown, classically cracked, far from velvet and fresh pistachio. The madness of colors and the change of skin after rain only for alive are reserved. The life of glistrokoumaria is precisely defined, entire branches are always dead, from the root at the trunk, as if the internal security system discon-



nected exactly entire regions, so as not to waste energy.



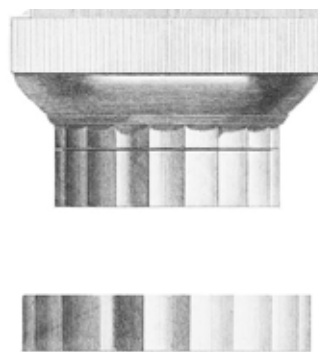
I once found a felled glistrokoumaria tree on the river, near Litocho-ro. I thought so anyway. Large patches of wood, with fancy grain patterns, in the color of burning ocher. The wood was wet after the rain, the colors probably more intense. I was enchanted - since they make smoking pipes out of it, maybe it can be used as a cutting board for my new kitchen? I wanted it to be as natural as possible. I smoothed the piece only slightly, it still has a very irregular shape and a porous structure. After drying, it lost much of the original red, but after impregnating with olives oil I received from Apostolis, it regained it again. Every time I cut Kefalograviera cheese on it, I get the impression that my glistrokoumaria is not completely died.

\* \* \*

Yet this color has lead me astray! My cutting board cannot be made of glistrokoumaria tree, it is too big for it; the trunk of koumaria is at most a dozen or so centimeters in diameter, and my board is cut out perhaps from a half-meter trunk. In addition, glistrokouma-



ria does not grow in river valleys, prefers drier, sunny slopes. My board is made rather of *Platanus Orientalis*, another species that likes to shed skin, although not in so spectacular way, and its wood when wet actually turns dark burgundy. Desires sometimes almost change reality...



## Seal of Pylos

It's May 2015. Archaeological site in the area of Nestor's Palace, in the southwestern part of Peloponnese, 15 km from the modern town of Pylos on the bay of Navarino. The rocky island of Sfakteria and several smaller ones, the site of naval battles from the Peloponnesian War in the 5th century BC and the Greek Revolutionary War in the early nineteenth century, great Italian influence in the area.



Nestor's Palace a bit inland, discovered in 1939, thanks to the guidelines taken from Homer's Iliad, because Nestor is a literary character (but it is possible also real). The palace is one of the classic examples of Mycenaean architecture (15th-12th century BC), currently a tourist attraction open to visitors.

Two American archaeologists - Jack Davis and Sharon Stocker - do not get permission to excavate on the slopes of the Palace, so they decide to explore a bit further. They choose an olive grove, although at first glance it does not promise anything particularly interesting<sup>9</sup>. Three stones arranged quite regularly may point to the Mykene tomb, but not necessarily. Already one meter below the surface, the pickaxe hits something hard. A characteristic clink of metal, the green color so bronze<sup>10</sup> - bingo, we have a discovery! It turns out that it is entirely perfectly preserved, never plundered by robbers, the Mycenaean tomb from around 1450 BC, later called the Tomb of the Griffin Warrior.



And inside among others: 4 gold rings of intricate work, a gold necklace, a chain with pearls, a bronze sword with a handle set with ivory and gold, two daggers, spear points, plaques and six ivory combs, 1000 beads of gold, carnelian, amethyst, agate and jasper and a bronze mirror whose handle was carved from ivory... together over 2,000 artifacts, items of Minoan and Mykene culture

mixed up together! The biggest archaeological discovery in Greece for over half a century, the need to revise our ideas about this distant era, articles in professional and popular press, fame and “discovery of life” for a pair of archaeologists. However, our history has not even started yet...



A year later, a real masterpiece appears to researchers eyes! Something that fades all previously found treasures put together! It appears in a literal sense, only then it is cleaned of impurities and leaves the box in which all the less interesting, as it seemed at the beginning, finds were collected - normal thing for archaeological discoveries. Yet, the jewels made of gold, ivory and semi-precious stones lay next to it.

This something, it's a small, yellow-brown agate seal, 3.6 x 2 cm in size (!) But a genius of it is not in size, but in what is depicted, or rather how it is depicted. We have a scene of fight ahead. Three characters: a warrior with a sword is dealing a lethal blow to an opponent armed with a large shield, spears and helmet. At their



feet a third, already dead unfortunate fighter with unnaturally bent body. Mastery of performance is completely unbelievable. You can see at first glance that we are dealing with a masterpiece. First of all, it is difficult to understand how the author managed to give such small details, since today we can not see them without a magnifying glass? (it was invented in the Middle Ages). Secondly, the quality of the representation of the human body - expression, musculature, perfection of proportions - reaches at least the level of classical Greece, that is, it exceeds its time by 1000 years!

The most important, however, is the absolute mastery of composing this scene and putting it into a rhomboidal shape, capturing a unique moment and the amazing dynamics of the arrangement of three entwined characters. The aggression and bravado of a warrior with



a sword are so suggestive that they cause a thrill of terror to anyone who watches this scene. Timeless and completely perfect. It can't be more, better or more accurately. A finished and closed work of art. But why does this amaze us? Are we still rooted in the belief that once man was less developed, perhaps even more primitive, and

with time he just learned, developed skills and enriched artistic imagination, producing ever more perfect works of art? But, after all, the works of Phidias are not less perfect than the works of Michelangelo or Rodin. Maybe the question is wrong? Maybe we should be surprised how it happens that we are still delighted with some small seal made 3500 years ago? That the feelings that guided



the author are still close to us and we can easily recognize them; especially the most basic feelings: triumph and tragedy, fear and pain, a sense of strength and fame of victory. But also the mastery of artistic workshop, with all its diversity of means of expression. So art as a universal, timeless language?

In narrations of our agate seal<sup>11</sup>, one motif repeats: the need to revise our ideas about the history of culture, Mycenaean and two neighboring, i.e. Minoan and Greek culture in particular. The need to rewrite history.

But is it for sure? Is this really possible and will be done? Will Mycenaean Leonardo really have such power of influence? Although the comparison to the Italian genius is not properly justified. Leonardo had artists related to him, both predecessors and successors. The

author of the Griffin Warrior seal has nothing. Apart from this famous item, more than 40 other seals were found in this tomb. None of them contain even the shadow of the agate warrior's mastery (although they often depict the same scene). The seal of Pylos stands alone as a unique object and extremely difficult to understand in the context of its era (as far we can know it). To say that it is 1000 years ahead of its time is to say nothing. Because why not 3000 years?



Michelangelo could make such an object (it contains some related features - accuracy of observation of the human body, some “mannerism” of the fighting poses), but he did not. Personally, I think he would lack some simplicity, strength and brutality. The Seal of the Griffin Warrior is so unique that an attempt to understand and explain it actually offers two possibilities: either it is a fake or a work of aliens! Although, after a brief reflection, these possibilities should also be rejected. For what is this counterfeit if the features of genius are visible at first glance? And how could aliens know the nature of earthly artistic creation and our expectations so well?

It seems, therefore, that the Seal of the Griffin Warrior will remain too unique and too inexplicable to change anything in our perceptions about distant eras. Researchers and archivists have too much evidence that, in general, it was just like in Crete at Knossos, at Nestor's Palace at Pylos, or in times of Pericles in Athens. And the



Warrior from agate seals will remain proof that true artistic genius can always be revealed, in any era, even without preparation, announcements of predecessors and related currents.

And what is most admirable: we still have enough sensitivity to see such real beauty.



*And that's how the Griffin Warrior looked like.*

*Computer reconstruction of course.*





## Corfu – tale of cars

Inherent part of Corfu landscape are abandoned cars<sup>12</sup>. Although “abandoned” is actually not the best word. It suggests that someone carelessly left the car in a random place - and this is certainly not the point. In Corfu, old cars are ubiquitous, but they do not stand at random places. Of course, I’m thinking about vehicles that will never go anywhere. The owners left them on the side of the road, in an olive grove, or in an old garage or at the top of the mountain letting them fall apart and return to where they belong, i.e. to mother nature. They always stand so to not disturb anyone. These cars are really old. If I know a bit about motorization, these models are at least 30-40 years old. They have served their owners faithfully for a long time, their seats are wiped through, the steering wheels are lean because of continuous turning, and rust has settled in them long before the inevitable retirement. They are always somehow neat: if they stand on the side of a steep road, they have large stones under the wheels so that they do not roll into the abyss; if the front flap no

longer closes, a large stone lies on the hood so that the wind does not blow it away. The sporty Lancia from the early 1970s is covered with a cover, even though the first bushes are already growing out of its crumbling seats.

The residents of Corfu have the extraordinary ability to set their demobilized vehicles in charming places. Or maybe these places become charming thanks to the skillful composition of the whole scene? The larger ones, with goods space, often stand in olive groves, among 300-year-old trees, if they used to bring olives to the pressing plant, their eternal rest in this place seems more natural. A passenger Ford from the late 1960s stands in a large meadow, regularly mown. But not in the middle or on the edge, but slightly from the side, in a place that once selected for him seems ideal, according to the eternal principles of proportion. The meadow is mowed, but not quite, where the car stands, the brushwood grows around without any obstacles, as if they wanted to absorb a once mechanical vehicle into the vegetable world.





Cars in Corfu age beautifully. Humid climate, salty wind and a lot of sun make that the rust is clean, has a deep brown color and eat through the solid frames of small trucks, with the efficiency of sea waves drilling underwater caves on the north coast of the island. The tires are bursting at the earliest - as if they wanted to solemnly declare that they would not go anywhere. The car sits down slightly lower on the rims, trying to bite into the ground more and slowly



disappear. In these places, even on asphalt, some soil collects and grass immediately grows there, and the once very busy vehicle gains its final rooting. Plants start to grow out from its other places: from bumpers, from gutters in front of the windshield, from seats or trunk, if there is no backscreen in it. The old car is slowly becoming part of nature.

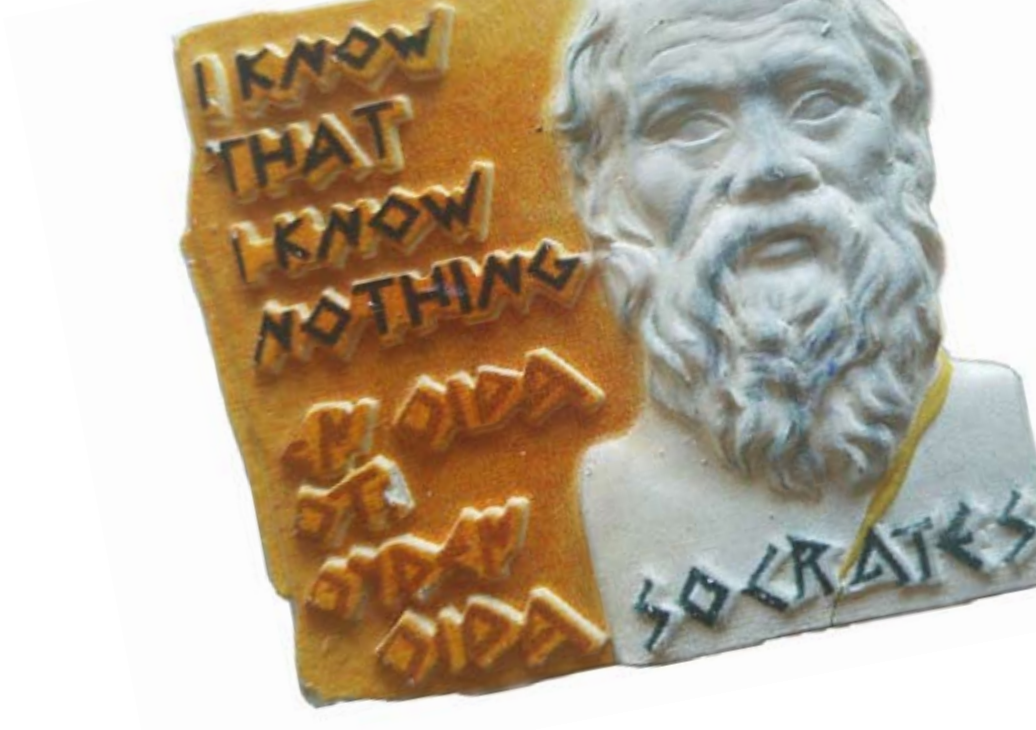
The motorization in Corfu is probably too young to be able to observe the total destruction of a mechanical vehicle. Those cars are rat-



her at the beginning of the journey into the afterlife. However, they are far from the durability of ancient temples or statues. Their half-life should be counted in dozens rather than hundreds of years. But there are many more of them, so they are more conspicuous.

Dying cars surprised me the most, the day I was climbing at the top of the mountain for several hours - one of the highest in the southern part of the island. It turned out that at the very summit, in the most remote and inaccessible place, there is a real cemetery of old vehicles. Arranged in equal rows as a platoon of troops, they flexed their masks to the sun. Maybe from the top of the mountain it is closer to the underground kingdom of Hades?





## The secret of magnetic inscription

One time I bought myself a fridge magnet. Such a small, plaster, pressed with the stamp - a traditional souvenir from holiday travels. There are no sea, no windmills or a Greek donkey on it. There is Socrates and his most famous formula: "I know that I know nothing." In the small grocery store in Litochoro - right next to the 55 Peaks Outdoor Store - there were olive oil and olives of its own production, some real fruit and vegetables - fancifully twisted, many other varieties and not knowing why, some unusual magnets. Maybe the owner read Plato in the evenings and hence this Socrates? In any case, he was teaching me how to pronounce the famous ancient sentence in the original. I was repeating and repeating and after a few days... I forgot. We have internet, though. I typed in

“I know, that I know nothing” and I got a quick answer that in Greek it will be: “ξέρω, ότι δεν ξέρω τίποτα” [Xéro óti den xéro típota]. Now I was more diligent, I thought it would be good to start learning Greek with such a clever formula and I learned it by heart.. After some time, however, I realized that my magnet has a different inscription. Socrates said rather: “ἐν οἶδα ὅτι οὐδὲν οἶδα” [en oida oti ouden oida]. After translating into English, I got the sentence from magnet „I know that I know nothing” again. Hmm ... that’s right, but it’s quite distant from the original “Xero oti den xero ...” So what did this Socrates actually say? And putting this question in a more general way: what can we learn about Greek culture by analyzing different versions of the famous ancient sentence? Greek is the oldest of the languages spoken today. Approximate



estimates it is about 3,000 years old. I understand the age of language here as the age of the oldest documents written in alphabet, which we can define as Greek. Two older cultures, which we recognize as proto-Greek - Minoan in Crete and Mycenaean in the



Peloponnese - used the Linear A and B, which were not actually an alphabets, and certainly not Greek. Nevertheless, it is not decided what language people spoke at that time (XXV-XII century BC). The fact that Linear B was read only means that we understand the meaning of the texts written in it (in its entirety properly bookkeeping notes, lack of fiction), but we do not know nothing about the sound



of words, and we can not determine whether it was some historical version of Greek or a completely different language<sup>13</sup>.

If the language is 3 thousand years old, it is obvious that it underwent many changes during this period. Most Poles have great problems with understanding the language of Juliusz Słowacki, which lived 200 years ago, no wonder that modern Greeks do not understand, without special preparation, the language of Homer, which lived 2,800 years ago! Nevertheless, it is the same language that has retained some of the grammatical structures and very many archaic words and awareness of this archaic is present among Gre-

eks. Many times during a conversation I heard someone from my Greek friends say: this is an ancient word.

It is also worth realizing that this language continuity of Greek culture is something quite unique. The Latin of classical Rome is much younger than Greek, but today Italian is spoken on the Tiber, French on the Seine, and Romanian on the Wallachian Lowland. Not only that, historical Greece has experienced many more fundamental cultural (and state) changes since Pericles than France or Spain since Julius Caesar. Classical Athens, the empire of Alexander the Great and Hellenism, the reign of Rome, Byzantium and the Turkish occupation - just to mention the most important ones. These changes should wash Greek off the face of the earth and replace it with a dozen other languages, but that did not happen. In addition, for many hundreds of years of existence, Greece did not create a single state organism, conducive to unification, linguistic unification as well. The same with geographical conditions: a huge number of islands creating separate worlds and the mountains which are everywhere, should contribute to disintegration rather than unity. It's all true, but I still don't know what Socrates really said? Or rather, how did he say it? The Greek language has 3,000 years of continuous history, but during its development it underwent several significantly different stages. In a simplification, this cycle can be represented as the following sequence: archaic Greek - classical Greek - hellenistic Greek (koine) - folk Greek (demotics) - purified Greek (katharewusa) - modern Greek. And until recently there was a lively discussion on the Aegean Sea, which version of the language should be used by modern residents of Hellas. The dispute was between the followers of the katharewusa - a classical language cleared of later accretions, and the supporters of demotics, i.e. the simplified



“folk” Greek, which began to develop in the Middle Ages. For some time, representatives of the classical school were the top, only in 1974 the option of demotics finally won, and now it is the official language in Greece.



Nevertheless, the Greeks have ‘extraordinary linguistic wealth’ on their daily basis. First of all, for six years of basic school education, they learn everyday (!) the classic language of Plato and Aristotle. On television and in the newspaper they have a demotic, but if they go to the church, they listen to the liturgy and fragments of the gospel in koine, which is the language of Hellenistic Greece, in which New Testament is written (partly). If they have books published before 1974 on the shelf, they are probably in catharewus, but when they buy Homer’s *Iliad* or Plato’s *Symposium* today they receive a bilingual edition in which the original text is on the left and the modern text on the right. And what fascinates me very much, the original text is always a third shorter than the modern one.

I live in Greece too shortly to decide how all this affects the collective mentality, but I think the Greeks like their language. They like to use it, they talk a lot and willingly, I also get the impression that they have more care about the word, as if a greater celebration of the language than in other countries.

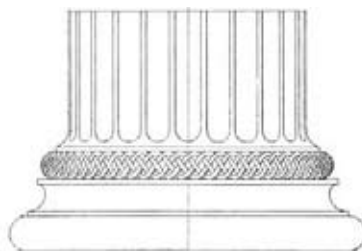
I remember my first contact with “live” classic Greek language. It was not on the Aegean Sea only in a small village near Lublin. Performance of the Antique Orchestra of the Gardzienice Theater. Hymns to Dionysus, fragments of the Orphic mysteries, prayers to Zeus. Music, singing and dancing. I came there with a rather stereotypical image of sunny, bright Greek culture, and thus also music, and here suddenly wild, ecstatic sounds, on the verge of dissonance. Dark, slightly hard but melodious language. I was in shock. Like a few times later, breaking off layers of stereotypical images and learning that classic temples were not white at all, but painted



in many colors, Greek myths are not the equivalent of holy books of the Bible or Koran type and therefore it is difficult to create an image of ancient religion based on them and Greece has the longest coastline in the world. Still, listening to the recordings of the song *Iliad* in the original (many examples on YouTube) I can't get over how much Homer's speech is different from the language used every day by my friends in Litochoro.

So in which version of the Greek language is Socrates's sentence on my magnet written ? Paradoxically, virtually in none! It turns out that Socrates never uttered that most famous sentence associated with him. It was attributed to him in late antiquity or even in the Middle Ages. Nay. This is probably a translation from the Latin original. But if someone did it in the Middle Ages, i.e. in the era of koine (Hellenistic Greek), he did it in accordance with the rules of classical Greek, that is, as Socrates would say. It was not that difficult, because according to the accounts of Plato or Diogenes Laertius, Socrates actually said very similar sentences.

So you can see that language paths are sometimes very tangled. But isn't that a greater pleasure to follow them?







# Maps of my world

*Mt OLYMPUS, scale 1: 25,000, Topo 25 series, Anavasi Maps & Guides, Athens., Macedonia 6.11, GPS Compatible, Hiking Map, O2, E4, EGSA 87 + WGS84. Release date: 2014. Several non-existent paths drawn.*

*There are no two lower segments on the right, dissolved by the great downpour in Ano Pigadi.*

*All bends are taped.*

The first and most important stage of planning my every trip is buying a map. Such a traditional, paper, folded many times, which after unfolding almost never fits on the table, and the bends quickly make holes and you can see the lining of the world. Of course, I also read guidebooks, look at photos and ask friends. But the map always comes first. I choose it carefully, check different versions, projections and contour lines, tourist content and scales. It does not necessarily cover the entire area that interests me - I often prefer to have only a fragment, but one that inspires and promises.



Sometimes I already have a map and all I have to do is pull it out of the big cardboard box in which I keep my treasures. Because I also buy maps on the spot - because they are nicer, more accurate, cover a more interesting region or simply have a greater attraction - and then treat them as the most valuable souvenir from which perhaps the next trip will sprout. Studying paper bays and passes had more than once a beginning of a new challenge. I know I'm not very original, treasure hunters of the southern seas also usually started with a map ...

But why does the map, not a beautiful picture, travel story, novel or documentary encourage me to leave the house and look for the unknown? Is it because it offers access to a huge piece of space in a single flash of glance? Unlike a photo that is always single, detailed and local.

And completely different from any time narration, like a movie, story or guide. The map starts from what is well known, uses universal "blocks" - fixed colors and obvious symbols, contour lines, schemes and projections, but presents the unknown world and leaves a huge space for the imagination.

The map is a constant mystery. Even as it presents a somewhat tame part of my world, that is after returning home, when I unfold it on the table and float away in memories, I still see much more places I have not been to than those more familiar.

And I am delighted with my map also because it contains the names: Litoro, Mytikas, Athens, Metsovo, Corfu. He gathers them on one surface and arranges them into a mosaic of mutual neighborhood and spatial relationships, but frees them from the dictatorship of time. The names of the mountains, passes, islands, villages and cities are all equally easily accessible and inviting. They easily form





virtual, and sometimes real, travel routes. The map opens the future.

But the map also closes the past. In my memories, all the places I've been in are arranged next to each other, in a certain timelessness and I quickly forget what happened earlier and what later. The task of their organization is taken over by a map, to which they are attached in various significant places and stuck there as raisins in the dough, forever.

And I love my map because it gives me almost unlimited choice. I discover a region as interesting as a whole, and then I decide what I want to see. Maybe the imagination needs general rooting to be able to discover the details. The map organizes space and introduces sense into my understanding of the world. As if I were repeating in my mind the famous words of Bruno Schulz<sup>14</sup>: "Every fragment



of reality lives thanks to its participation in some universal sense."

*Plan of the Antiquities of Athens. William Mackenzie. London, Edinburgh & Glasgow 1863. Scan from the 1880 edition. Unknown scale (approx. 1: 10,000). Electronic version available in the public domain. The Acropolis is visible, the defensive walls of Athens in the classical times and the temple of Artemis Agrotera on the Ilisos River, where Socrates talked with Phaedrus.*

Maps have gained in importance since I lived in Litochoro. First of all, I can't stop thinking about this number: 13,676 km<sup>15</sup> of the Greek coastline (Poland has 440 km)! Countless bays and peninsulas. The most fragmented land area on the world map, thousands of islands and islets, each with its own bays; isthmus, straits, almost closed water bodies and the edge of land and sea with a fractal structure: the closer I get, the more confused the line. Greece reveals what is most important for the map - a shape! Precisely defined, separating the two basic elements. Because the shape of the sea sometimes becomes as important as the shape of the land. It is easy to crash into the rocks, the point is how to sail passing through between Skiathos and Skopelos. And even if my imagination does not





feed on dreams of traveling in Odysseus' boat, I constantly make the plans of travels along the edge of the land. I check where the road runs along the very coast, which path leads almost along the beach and whether you can round the island of Samatratka without losing sight of the sea. I also remember the elongated loop that you can drive around the Mani Peninsula, at the end of the Peloponnese or the path along the southern coast of Crete, which you can walk a few days, having the Libyan Sea at your fingertips, knowing that the southern edge of Europe is right here.

But while living in Litochoro I also have a "live" map almost every day. Olimp from the east does not start gently, like the Tatra Mountains in Zakopane. When I come back even from a small trip, from the Gkolna glade or from the Zilnia cliff, I see the world like from



a plane. The red roofs of Litochoro, the nearest larger city of Katerini, the outline of the shoreline of the Thermaic Gulf, the Halkidiki Peninsula on the other side, and above all other mountains: the slopes of the Small Olympus, the sharp cone of Kissavos, and when the visibility is good - Mount Athos far on the horizon. On this live map

I can easily recognize the places where I have already been, and from where I had to turn back and now these unfinished spots call to me reproachfully, like a half-interrupted dream.

With some surprise I watch the map of my imagination starts to anchorage more and more near Olympus. This is the place where I begin in my mind and this is where I conclude.. From the Litocho-ro perspective, I place what is far and near in my imaginary space.



Kraków, Ustrzyki Górne, Babadag, Athens - everything changed suddenly its position. Thessaloniki, Ohrid Lake or Parnass Mountain are within reach, no more than two or three days of cycling, while the Białowieża Forests or Muczne suddenly went almost to the end of the world. It's unbelievable that from here it's closer to Africa than to Warsaw.

From what above it can be seen that my love of maps is not limited to paper versions. Google Maps and all similar applications<sup>16</sup> offer features completely unavailable in the analog versions. Of course,

each region looks roughly similar on them, but this inconvenience is largely compensated by the possibility of “zooming”. I am delighted by the ease of passing in a few seconds from the view of the entire continent, to the details of the Navarino Bay on the southern shores of the Peloponnese, or the arrangement of houses in the abandoned Skoteina village on the slopes of the Pieria Mountains. In addition, the ability to switch to satellite view has saved me more than once from being completely lost in the vast brushwoods of Greek wilderness. Even a slight change in the shade of trees in such a view gives hope for finding a way back to civilization. And when the imagination becomes too lazy, I start previewing photos on the map or street view and I have the world in 3D. An almost perfect tool.



I must admit, however, that I much less likely use maps outside than at home. Accuracy and perfect compatibility with reality are of secondary importance to me. To be true I even like to get lost. After all, this is often an integral part of the adventure. And if the sense of reality is born on a map, what the topographic inaccuracy of its implementation really is? And the archetype of the map will always remain those old engravings with the famous inscription “Here be dragons” on the edge of the known world and with various unlikely, emerging and disappearing islands, called phanthom islands. They exist or not, but they certainly mark the end of the world avai-

lable to us. Or maybe they already are on the other side?



### Appendix for running readers

In the space of my imagination the maps have gained in importance a few years ago, when I started running in the mountains, in competitions at ultra distances (from 40 km to 170 km). Sport recently very popular in many countries. These competitions usually last for many hours or even days. Organizers almost always provide a map with the drawn route in advance. As advertising the attractiveness of a given region on the one hand, and on the other, as a completely practical tool that minimizes the chances of getting lost. I always study these maps with great interest and treat them as one of the basic arguments for choosing this race before others.

I prefer “magical” routes, establishing a special relationship with space: route around the entire Mont Blanc massif (UTMB - one from the most famous ultra races in the world, 170 km on the border of France, Italy and Switzerland) or competition with a path running around the entire Mediterranean island of Hydra near the coast of Peloponnese (Hydra Trail Event 40 km). The islands can also be run through, from the beach on one side, to the beach on the other, through the middle, necessarily reaching the highest peak



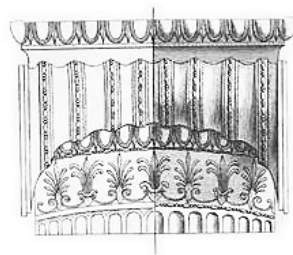
(Transgrancanaria, a 125-kilometer run through one of the Canary Islands or from the beach to the top and back (Spike during Amor-gos Trail Challenge). Routes with cultural heritage in the background can also be easily found. Olympus Mythical Trail (106 km) leads runners to the holy mountain of the ancient Greeks, English The Wall (112 km) leads along the Hadrian's Wall, and the French Grand Trail des Templiers (76 km) through sites related to the history of the Knights Templar.



The ultra race map makes it easier to accept such challenge. Even experienced competitors are aware that the 170 km distance is completely absurd. Far above all training attempts (no one runs more than 35 km on training), quite different from - much more popular - distances 70-100 km. Such an extreme 100-mile race scares with

almost endless time of effort.. The popular statement “anything can happen” is nowhere else more true. Rodopi Ultra Trail in the north of Greece has everything: the darkness of the long October night, the cool of the morning, the heat of the noon, often thunderstorms with heavy rain. At the foot of Olympus on the OMT100 at the start is still 30 degrees C, but at sunrise on the summit only 5. The second night without sleep is a key factor. There is extreme fatigue and discouragement, sometimes hallucinations, orientation problems, sleep on the march...

The route of the run, so “easily” drawn on the map, possible to grasp with one short look, tames the problem. It suggests that it is possible. It adds a whole set of its own signs and symbols - nutrition and control points, kilometer distances, time limits and medical points, standardized difficulty assessment and information on the number of ITRA points that each competitor will receive if they complete the race. In the vastness of the chaotic space, the map introduces one true and friendly line that, like Ariadne’s thread, leads contemporary Theseus to a safe finish.



# Olympus Mythical Trail

Out of many Greek inventions, sport probably made the biggest career. Almost nobody practices philosophy anymore, almost nobody values science, but sport is on top. Of course, this and that have changed since the first Olympic Games<sup>17</sup>, but the main principles have remained the same: noble competition, „swifter, higher, stronger“, cross your own limits. This last slogan probably best characterizes amateur sport, and already perfectly suits mass runs held in the mountains. Not only though. It seems that the entire contemporary culture is geared to crossing borders in various areas. In any



case, many people like to describe their activity in this way. And it is hardly surprising since so much emotion is caused by such a prosaic activity as running. I also say this from personal experience. Every time I stand at the start of the competition I ask myself: what makes all these people make such a huge effort? What makes me follow them? I am talking now about ultra runs that are 100, 170 or even more kilometers long and last 24 hours or even several days.

So if to cross own limits, why not on Olympus, the highest mountain in Greece, which by definition is the border, between the world of gods and people of course. And best in July, when the chances of really extreme temperatures are greatest. There are at least 10 different competitions organize in the whole massif of the mountain of gods, I competed in several myself, but the 2017 Olympus Mythical





Trail was a border-line experience, not comparable with anything else, neither before nor after.

Olympus Mythical Trail is considered the most difficult mountain race in Greece<sup>18</sup>. Of course, this cannot be measured with precision, but when during other competitions I mention that I was running OMT 100 I see a flash in eyes and I hear words of admiration. The route leads around the entire massif, partly along old, forgotten paths, brought back to life by the organizers. There are no villages or permanent human settlements along the way. The impression that I am on the edge of the inhabited world, and even beyond it, is very strong. In any other race I didn't have so intensive feeling - only me and the Mountain.

The race starts on Friday at 17.00 from Agios Ioannis, a small clearing among forests, 4 km from Litochoro<sup>19</sup>. It is very warm, forecasts for that day promise 42 degrees C in the shade, but I want to believe that at an altitude of 600 m a.s.l. will be a bit cooler. This beginning is beautiful. A high mixed forest that gives shade, a narrow but comfortable and wonderfully laid path. I am here for the second time, and I still can't get over how diverse this forest can be. Trees everywhere, but many more species than in Poland. Every now and then the undergrowth is changing, once it is dense and full of bushes, again intensely green grass dominate. And everywhere a lot more colors, everything blooms as if it was the beginning of spring, not the high summer. Sometimes, in the open air, there are more sounds: cicadas and various other insects are playing. Litochoro can be seen somewhere below, the clear shape of the coastline besides, the blue of the sea and the Halkidiki peninsula on the other side of the bay.

The OMT 100 route is clearly divided into two sections. The first

- “small loop” is 32 km and leads from Agios Ioanis to Litchoro. It runs quite gently up to 2000 meters above sea level to later run to 300. The second, large loop is actually one great uphill to the main dome of Olympus and an equally great downhill. In detail, the route is much more diverse, and the downhills and ascents are intertwined much more often.

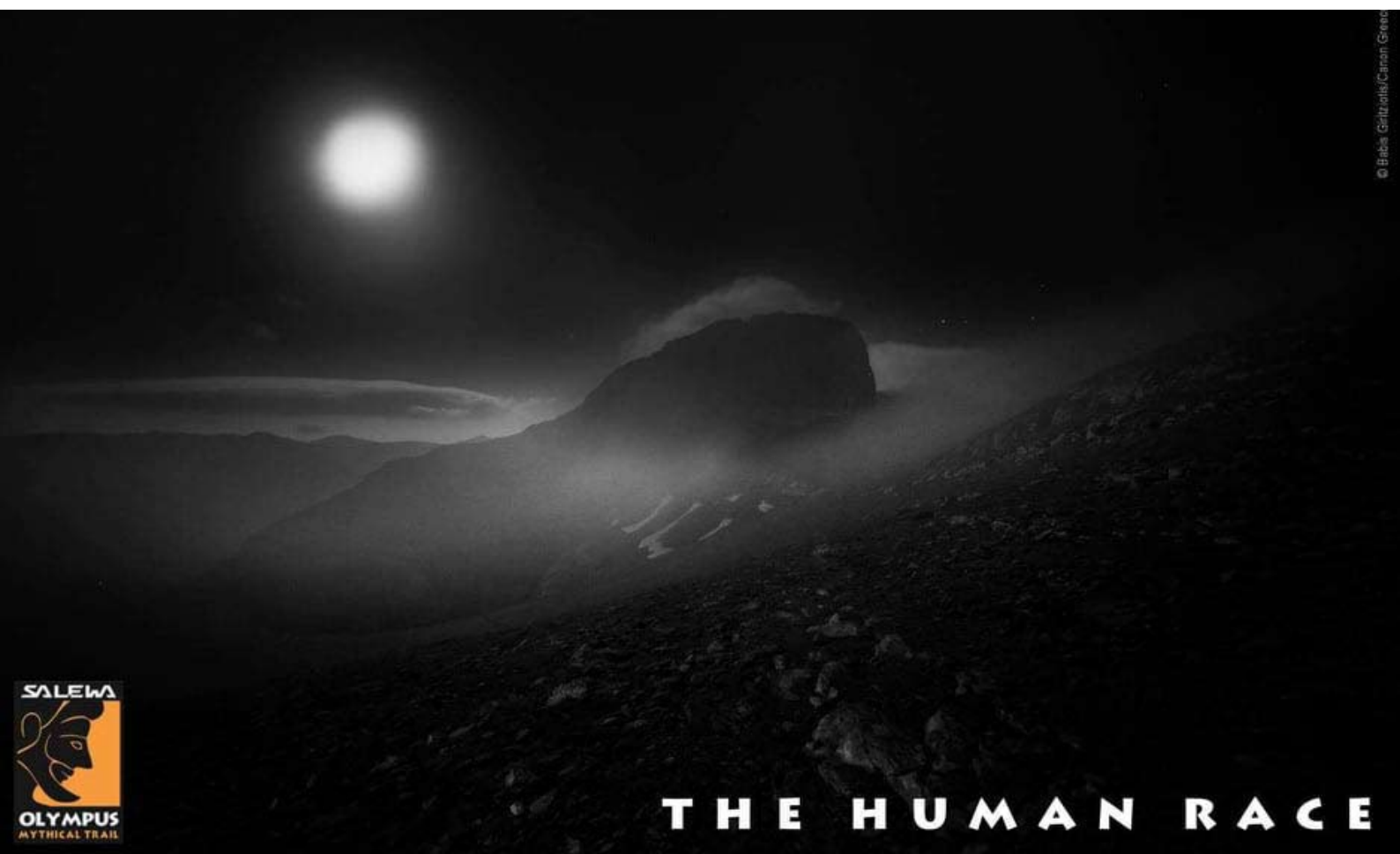


We are running higher, it is getting later, but I do not feel that's getting colder, like last year. Livadaki hut at a height of 2,000 m. On downhill the path is equally narrow and beautiful, but the way down doubles the pleasure. I accelerate, carried by the euphoria of the beginning, and deep down I explain to myself that I should run as many kilometers as possible in the light of day. In Enipeas Gorge gets warmer: stuffy, stagnant air, so thick that it can almost be cut with a knife. I don't slow down, however, I run past known places: Agios Dionizios Monastery - an oasis of peace and quiet in the mid-

dle of the mountains and a hermit's shrine in a rock with steep stairs. I run out of the ravine to return to it in a moment, in complete darkness, right next to the small pond Lambada. From here it is less than a kilometer to the food point in Litochoro. This first episode I should run in about 5h 30 min, last year it took me 5:12, now I'm under 5 hours. Too fast, of course, but who said madness is rational.

The man responsible for all of this is Lazaros Rigos - a man whose contribution to the development of mountain running in Greece is hard to overestimate. One of the originators of the first competition<sup>20</sup> held here in 1986, organizer or consultant of almost all the most important competitions on the Aegean Sea, mountain runners community animator, one of the co-founders of the Hellenic Adventure Running & Trail Association<sup>21</sup> - a man-institution. An active and very good runner.

At the nutrition point, it turns out I'm 8th! The call "Keep it up"





I treat as an impossible spell, as reality can be deceived, but usually for a short time. I'm slowing down. Objectively very clearly, because there is a steep approach, but also proportionally, because I am overtaken by several players. I save my strength for the rest, because the real run is just beginning. Again, I realize one of the basic features of ultra races - loneliness. At the forefront, the breaks



between competitors are relatively large and I run alone to the very end. Even if someone overtakes me, he does it very quickly and soon disappears from my sight. It's night. I do not mind. It is good that it is night on this great 5-hour climb, when you overcome some 2,500 meters of elevation. The night brings great peace and quiet, although I am not sleepy at all. The moon is shining, but through the dense foliage of the trees I don't get much of this shine. I even darken the headlamps, not to disturb this night's peace. I run slowly



so minimal light is enough for me. There is monotony and a slight exhaustion, but I try to celebrate them, they are such an important part of ultra run. Changes will inevitably come and I know that I am getting closer and closer to them with every step.

In Mediterranean countries, the night is longer than in the north. At 5 a.m. it is still completely dark, but uphill is finishing. Some time ago the forest ended. I run to the Muses Plateau and the sky begins to shine. Almost everything is still black and dark blue and densely set with stars, but in the east there is already a clearly brighter, reddish glow and the world comes alive. You can see the outlines of the peaks around and although the space still has only two dimensions, I have no doubt where I am. The plateau itself also starts to light up, or rather the Apostolidis Refuge which is located on the right and the headlights of other competitors who are approaching it. I know that the sun will rise soon and time will accelerate. At Olympus we are lucky that the downhill begins exactly with the sunrise. And the light is important, because the narrow path Zonaria, slightly descending and traverse the peaks of Stefani and Mytikas, encourages more madness. Right next to it is a cliff or very steep scree, so a bit of prudence is also useful.

I run in ecstasy. The new day gives the runner new strength, almost does not feel that it is the 60th kilometer. At least until the next ascent. The large, sloping wall of Skolio, with 500-meter elevation and loose stones escaping from under the feet. This time I deal with it much better than last year, although I still remember it as the most difficult part of the whole route. I still run alone, sometimes stop and take pictures but without much faith that the uniqueness of the moment can be preserved.

After Skolio, the meadows of Olympus begin, the grassy fields co-



vering all the peaks in the area of Agios Antonios, the highest place where the ancients sacrificed to Zeus. Easy ascent and much more difficult descent. The path almost does not exist, there are only clumps of grass, fragile, moving stones and a tiny shelter, visible somewhere ... far, far below. There is also no path for the next few kilometers of almost flat section, which is why the route markers painted on stones visible everywhere looks somewhat absurd. I am undoubtedly in a wild corner of the mountains, but gentle shapes and fresh shades of green grass at an altitude of over 2,600 m give a little heavenly impression. Somewhere in this region I am overwhelmed by this strange feeling sometimes referred to as “runners high”. As if I was running completely effortlessly and had the impression that I could do it forever...

The world of gentleness ends quite abruptly and decisively. Behind the pass between the Kakavrakas and Metamorfosi peaks everything changes. A huge wall, with the largest downhill on the

route, with bends stretching almost indefinitely. Right to the south. It's a few minutes past 9.00 but in a moment it gets really warm. The biggest hero of this competition enters the stage - the heat! It's just hot at the downhill, but I'm getting the impression as if the African mass of air that was supposed to be here on Friday was a bit late and arriving right now. The downhill takes the last of strength, and then there are two almost flat sections separated by an aid station, together no more than 24 km. The route leads through meadows and wide forest roads, near which trees grow rarely and give no shade at all. I do not know what is the objective temperature, but it seems to me that I have never felt so hot air on me. And I don't even want to drink much, I start saving water to pour it on my head. I feel the greatest need to cool a hot body. It helps only for a moment, but it works. I'm not suffering, I don't fall faint, it doesn't dry in my throat, I move quite well. The unique heat from heaven does not frighten me. I just miss water more and more radically. I'm starting to understand what water is in Greece. Not some big rain or sea, but those little springs and streams that flow here and there, and I am not surprised that they are considered sacred. I run into a food point, right on the road, in the middle of the forest. In front of it the stream flows out of the rock and a channel for watering animals and people. . There is plenty of water. I enter almost whole, I pour my head and I'm in the seventh heaven. I'm starting to celebrate the heat. I am getting closer and closer to the finish line, I am getting more and more tired and on the one hand I want to be in place, but on the other I do not want something so special to end. Warmth is life, dynamics and movement, and now I feel more than usual that I am part of it. Actually, I don't care if I finish in 20 hours, like last year, I also realistically assess that





I don't have much chance because I'm not able to accelerate anymore. On the last 12 km section from Pigadi to Agios Ioanis there are three small streams. I jump into each of them and immerse myself almost completely. I remember it as the most beautiful running section in my life.

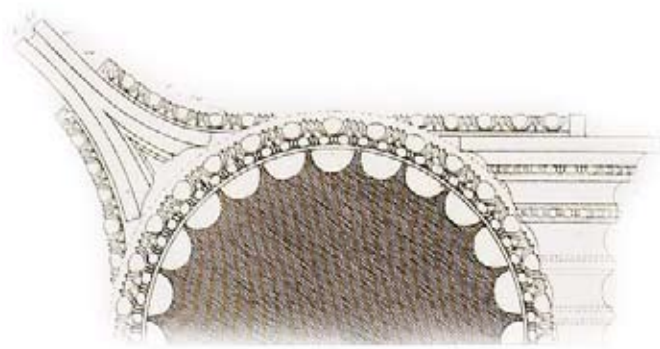
I'm at the finish line after 20 hours and 18 minutes. It's still hot, barely a few minutes after 1 p.m. Euphoria drops down very slowly, in hot air I move as if slower, I have time to get used to the normal world. Only which is normal? Maybe real life is just on the run, and everything in between is just a necessary fulfillment?

Out of 174 people who started, only 86 reached the finish line (in the extended time limit by one hour due to the heat). This is the smal-



lest percentage of finishers in the entire history of the race.

However, I would like to reassure running readers who would like to take part in these or other competitions in Greece: out of my 20 starts on the Aegean Sea, it has never and nowhere been so hot as during OMT 2017.



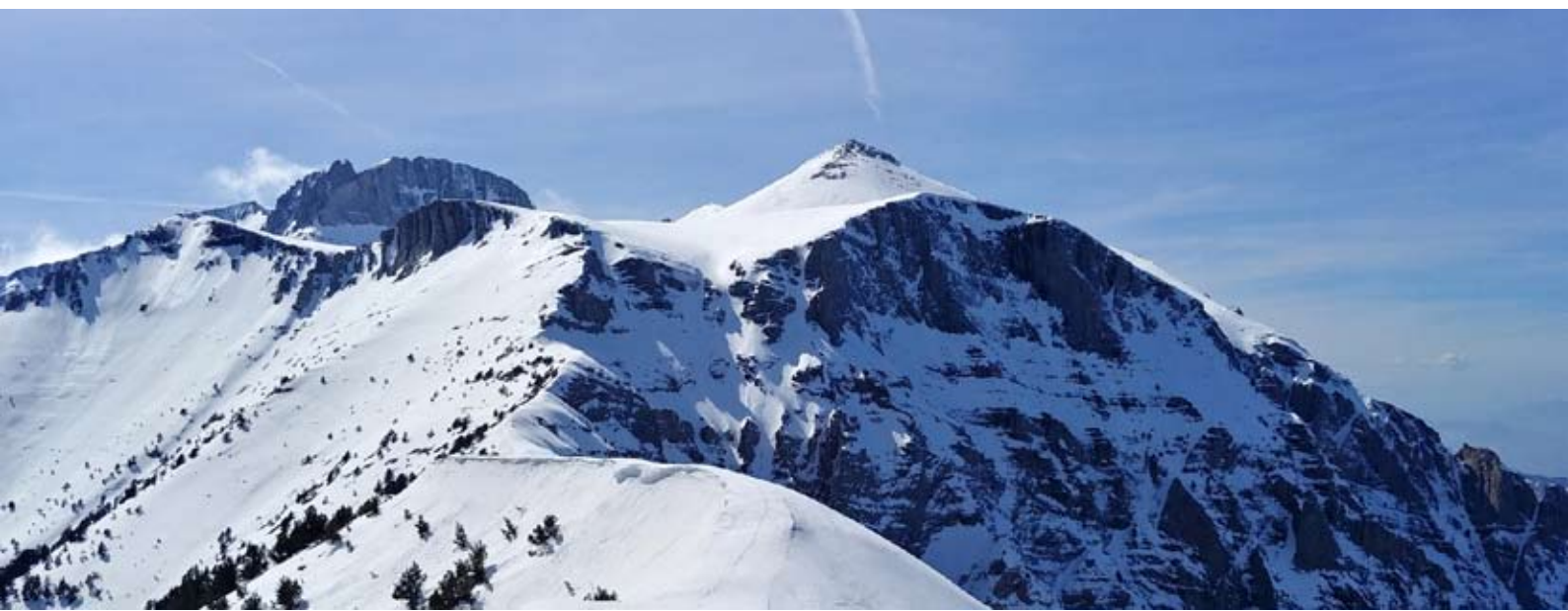


# My life in Litochoro

Litochoro is attached to the edge of the cliff. The Enipeas Gorge, which is cutting the Olympus massif in half, falls almost vertically next to the last houses in the city. It is true that the buildings with taverns are even at the bottom of the gorge, but no one lives there permanently. Litochoro also has an amazingly unique layout. The main street, rising gently upwards, is located completely on the



side, and the rest is a labyrinth of nooks and streets, that even Google Maps can't cope with. The city has the shape of a very elongated rectangle and although it looks like a flat strawberry cake from above, from the perspective of a resident or a leisurely wanderer, it is clearly divided into two parts: the lower, to the roundabout with a fountain, at the end of the main street and the upper part rising up in terraces, a bit older. The expression "upper part" may, however, surprise the residents of more flat areas, when the shortest way I go for a walk to the forest, I easily do over 120 m elevation within the city!



Litochoro is located between the mountains and the sea. No more than 15 km is from the town to the top of Olympus, 5 km to the Aegean Sea. The A1 motorway connecting us with the world also runs by the sea. Going north, in an hour I can get to Thessaloniki, in three and a half hours to Athens in the south. Not far away is the intersection with the second most important Greek road Egnatia Odos, which leads to Meteora (3 hours), Pindos Mountains (3 ho-





urs to Metsovo) and the coast of the Ionian Sea (4 hours). However, there should be no illusion that since Greece is three times smaller than Poland, everything is close. The distance between Alexandroupoli, at the border with Turkey, and Cape Metapan at the end of the Peloponnese is 1100 km, which is much more than from Przemyśl to Szczecin! The Aegean Islands are of course even further in every sense.

Olympus is the main sense of the city's existence, although this has not always been the case, and the Maritime Museum located on the main street is the best proof of this. To have some idea of the scale of the mountain of the gods, it is better to think about the massif of Olympus rather than of a single mountain. Comparison to the highest mountains of Poland and Slovakia can be useful. The asphalt road around the Tatras is about 230 km, the analogous road around Olympus is at least 160 km, while Olympus - unlike the Tatra Mountains surrounded by wide valleys - quite smoothly changes into the massif of Little Olympus in the south and the Pieria Mountains in the north.

According to Nikos Nezis book, popular in Litochoro, there are 55 peaks higher than 2,000 m on Olympus, supposedly exactly the

same as in the Tatra Mountains. The main summit - Mytikas - rises much higher than Gerlach and reaches 2918 m. There are far fewer granites on the mountain of the gods than in the Tatras, and therefore fewer vertical walls. However, it is difficult to decide whether the massif is more easily accessible. Relative heights are often twice as big as between Zakopane and Poprad, paths are much more natural, and there are plenty of uneven stones, even if they are not granites. However, the gorges are the most characteristic. Deep valleys with steep, almost vertical walls, very rightly called gorges, descend



from all sides of Olympus. If there is no path, crossing such a gorge is practically impossible, both along and across (I tried several times). The difficulty is also associated with much more expansive nature than in Poland. Unused pathways overgrow in the blink of an eye, and the vast majority of plants in lower locations have spikes or sharp, dry branches. The Alpine zone, with quite green grass, begins at a height of about 2,400 m, and its greatest attraction is the



Muses Plateau, a huge, almost flat piece of land at an altitude of 2,600 m, close to the two main peaks of Stefani and Mytikas. Muses Plateau, Mytikas and Stefani are, however, the purpose of a longer, all day trip, Olympus in the Litochoro area is primarily wooded. It is a very diverse forest, rich in species of both deciduous and coniferous trees, with an unusual for Greece amount of moisture, and what is especially important from my perspective, a forest that gives shadow and offers quite a lot of beautiful and quite comfortable running paths. I can easily find routes for short, fast trainings (loop to Stavros Rf. or to Gkolna glade, each about 10 km long and 700 m high), medium routes of the type 20 km + and about 1500 m up (trip to the old monastery, on both slopes of the Enipeas Gorge) and serious, all-day running expeditions (cross the entire massif from Kokkinopilos to Litochoro, i.e. from west to east, is about 40 km and +3000 m). And all this (almost) only in the forest zone to a height of 1000-1300 m a.s.l. in the nearest vicinity of Litochoro. Around the whole massif there are at least several towns - Dion, Vrontou, Petra, Kokkinopilos, Karya - which can be a starting point for the Mountain and each offers its own, slightly different, "piece" of Olympus. In general, the northern and eastern slopes are much more forested than the southern and western ones. On the south side it is also slightly warmer, and on the west slightly cooler (than in the east).

One of the biggest advantages of living in Litochoro is very aptly described by the simplest sentence: Olympus is a very high mountain located in the Mediterranean climate. It also shows the possibility of being in several worlds at the same time. In mid-November, the first snow fell high in the mountains and remains there until now (mid-May). This is not symbolic snow in any way, a month ago

I saw a shelter covered up to the roof, so the snow cover was at least 2.5 m. At the same time up to a height of 1000 meters there was no snow at all, the paths were dry almost all the time, and the temperature in January in Litochoro reached plus 15 degrees C. Therefore, it was often the case that one day I walked in big mountain boots, laden like an Olympic mule, in a heavy backpack with crampons, ice ax and a set of warm clothes to the Muses Plateau or Kalogeros (2701 m), and the next I ran in sports shoes and shorts to the old monastery of St. Dionysius at an altitude of 900 m, in a completely spring weather, with lots of blooming flowers along the way. For the full picture it is worth mentioning that in the Aegean Sea near Litochoro I was swimming at the end of November, and much more determined swimmer, the owner of one of the taverns in town, has been doing it every day for 20 years!

However, the biggest climatic difference I've experienced here is not connected with temperature but with sun and wind. The number of sunny days during all winter months was simply stunning! The first



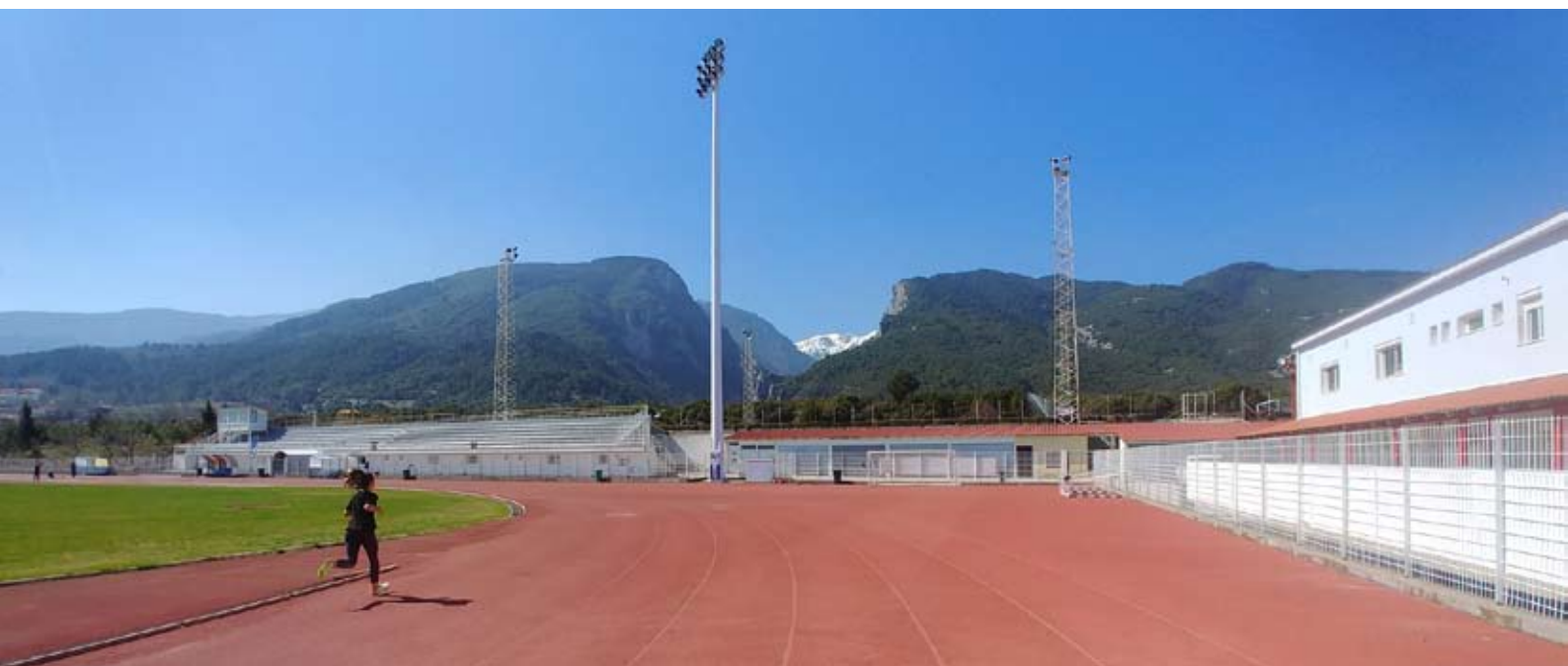




image I see almost every day after waking up is the clear blue sky. And the wind does not blow in Litochoro at all! It is easy to forget about the grayness that lasts for months in the cold lands of the north and the gale that blows your head almost every day. As you can see from this initial fragment, I am not trying to describe here what Litochoro “really” is. I have neither qualifications nor sufficient knowledge and experience. This is my picture of the City and I am fully aware that every time I try to see and understand something, I start from what I know well, namely Poland, Warsaw and Polish mountains. This allows me to notice differences, but also highlights the advantages, if in the old country I saw mainly disadvantages in a given field. For example, if I write that the paths on Olympus are completely empty, I remember the nightmare of the crowd of tourists in the Polish Tatras and Zakopane. To make the background of my considerations more complete, I would like to

mention that I was born and raised in a medium-sized city (about 100,000 inhabitants), I lived in the countryside for 10 years, and in Warsaw for over 20 years.

At the same time, my attempt to describe life in Litochoro stems from the desire to capture this extraordinary moment, when I am no longer a tourist, I am starting to get to know the place where I live - I know the paths on Olympus probably better than most local peo-



ple - I'm no longer a stranger, but I'm not insider. I still get to know more things in a week than in Poland in a year! I am delighted with the changes of the seasons, flowers in January, trees with evergreen leaves, hundreds of salamanders on the path to the hermit cave, new houses two streets around the corner, the opportunity to play basketball outside the school at the beginning of February, local customs, new people I meet every now and then, new words and extraordinary melody of the Greek language that I hear every day. From this perspective, it is very easy to see that Litochoro is com-



pletely differently organized than similar places in Poland. More friendly to life, open to people and their needs, conducive to meetings and conversation. There are countless taverns and cafes in the city. Only on the main street I counted over 20! In a quite large (although half the size of Litochoro) tourist village in southern Poland, where I once organized competitions, there is only... one restaurant (equivalent of a Greek tavern). There are no cafes at all!

Litochoro also has an amazingly large number of public places.

A sports stadium is absolutely sensational, with a football field of course, but also with a real 8-track athletics track, long jump place, high jump and pole vault places. With an obstacle ditch and additional football field. And with a wonderful view around, because on one side I have the peaks of Olympus, and on the other Aegean Sea. There is no such stadium not only in cities of similar size in Poland, but probably in many cities in much richer Europe.

There are many more similar socially active places in the city. In the very center is the City Park, with several alleys, a pond and a large fountain, amphitheater and a bit more wild part. What happens in this park on warm summer evenings (in Poland it would be late





at night, because in the country on the Vistula River people as we know go to sleep with chickens) passes my imagination: the old sit on benches and talk, young people walk somewhere in the alleys, children ride bikes, buzz, constant movement, friendly, open atmosphere - a real human hive. At first I was wondering - and where are the dressing suit's, which hanging out constantly in front of my block in Warsaw, maybe there is no hoodies here and wearing it isn't obligatory? Where are these meneles, drinking some liquids every day in front of the store in my neighborhood - ran out of cheap wine? Now I stopped thinking - maybe this is the real world, and that's how people live, and what I had before was some kind of matrix.

It's still not all. There are many more smaller public parks in Litochoro. Such squares with alleys, trees and benches, squeezed somewhere between the houses, so that the local residents did not have



to go downstairs, and the children had somewhere to play with their peers. I don't even ask myself why these children are outside all the time, they have so much movement, they probably haven't invented computer games here yet ...

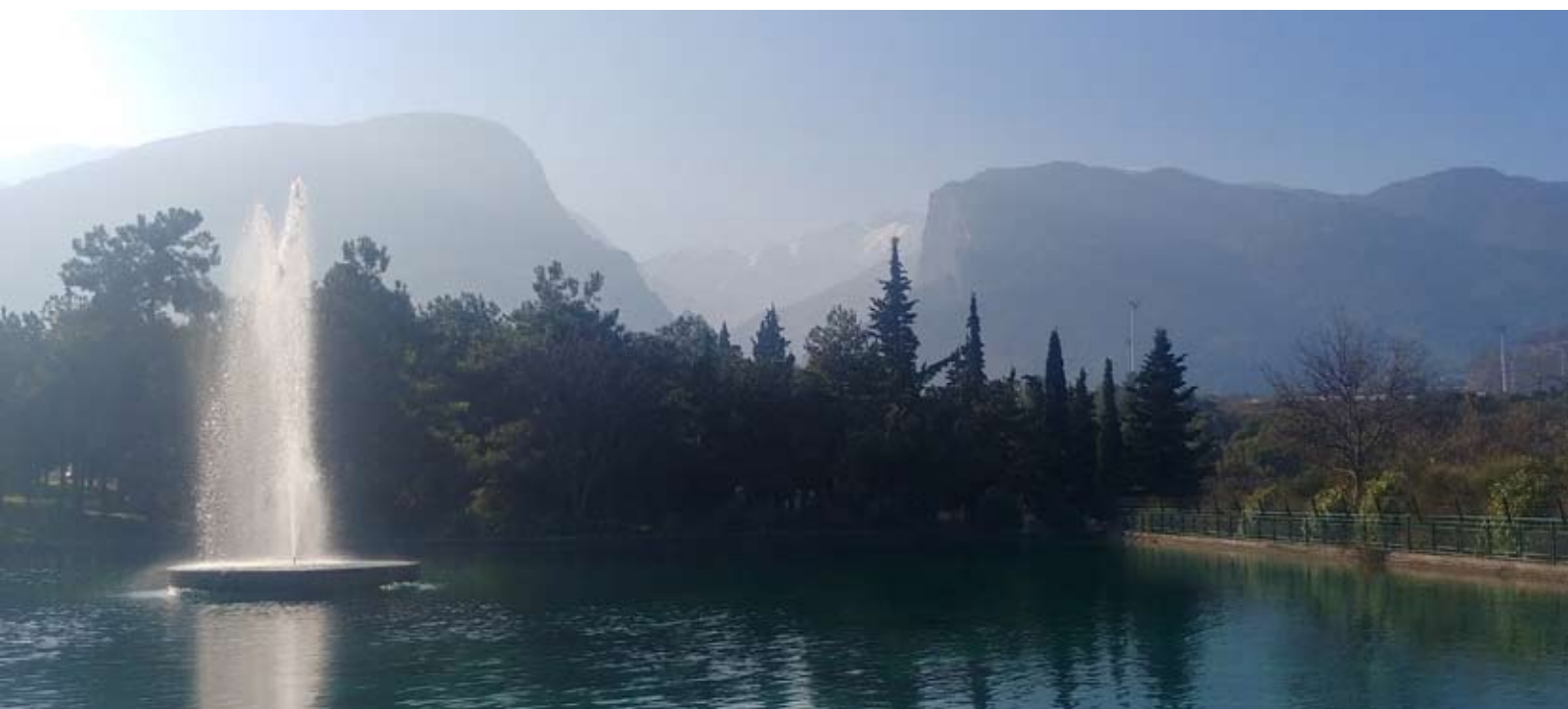
Meetings are a different reality in Litochoro. Of course, taverns and cafes are places by definition intended for meetings. Because dinner in a tavern is not just food, it's feasting, which often consists of a dozen or so dishes, lasts several hours and I always get the impression that its main purpose is not filling the belly, but meeting and talking. Not only with the other friends ... One time we sat down at the table and started to talk. A man from the next table cut in on the conversation and Lazaros talked to him for ... 15 min (!) - Is that your friend? I asked. No, just man ... I still can't get over it. But not only that. I live in Litochoro for only a few months, but every time I move somewhere I meet friends. Not some great friends, but just people I know. And I know someone in Litochoro, because I did shopping in his store twice. And such a man recognizes me from a distance, shouting Hello and asking „how are you today?“ And if he accidentally meets me in a cafe, he gives me coffee or beer. People meet here constantly. And nothing can stop such a meeting: the main crossroad of the city, two cars stop in the middle, because the owners have to exchange a few words. And others wait calmly, because they understand that nothing is more important than meeting two people.

I wonder if this obviousness and everyday meeting, openness of people to others is not even manifested in architecture. After all, the most important element of every home in Litochoro is ... a terrace. A balcony, veranda, loggia, or some other place outside where there is a table and chairs. Houses in the city are very different, but this

element is in everyone, in countless implementations. Sometimes such a place is located on the roof, because above there is a greater chance of air movement during the summer heat. Life in Litochoro goes primarily outside, and homes isolate man from the outside world to a much lesser extent. They do not have intermediate spaces, corridors, hallways or vestibules, very often you enter directly into the room or kitchen.

Litochoro architecture does not enchant you at first sight. The city does not look like Paleo Panteleimonas or villages in Zagori that could do as an open-air museum. It is certainly a vibrant town, rich with inventiveness of residents, their various needs and changeable taste. However, all houses in the city have red tile roofs. Not most of them - all of them! This creates a style and urbanistic unity. From above, the city really looks like a strawberry pie, the phrase at the beginning of the text was not a floral metaphor. Nevertheless, the houses are very different. Some retain the features of a traditional style, i.e. stone walls with decorative wooden slats, arranged in semi random places; although the presence of these elements does not necessarily means that the building is old, because many new





houses are also built this way. There are white plastered houses in Litochoro, there are quite a few blocks of flats, although they do not resemble those in Ursynów, they are much smaller and so integrated into the urban environment that it is difficult to recognize them. All these houses have one feature: they are incredibly fragmented, they have countless elements of different heights, outbuildings, roofs and eaves. The eyesight has something to catch on and with constant pleasure I wander sometimes on narrow alleys, discovering new pearls.

Home gardens are a separate topic. The inventiveness and aesthetic sense of residents is best manifested in these ephemeral elements that require constant care. The gardens are small, but all the vegetation just explodes from them, with lots of flowers, trees and bushes, exotic to me. Sometimes pots of various sizes are dominant, as if casually arranged, and some are like a reminiscent of pitos from the Palace of Minos in Knossos.

Litochoro is a base for Olympus, but it is not actually a tourist city, i.e. it is not live mainly because of tourism, such as Zakopane. The comparison seems the most legitimate since both cities are at the foot of the highest mountains in their country. However, such a comparison shows much more differences than similarities. First of all, numbers. There are 7,000 permanent residents in Litochoro and 30,000 in Zakopane. According to estimated data, on avera-



ge 150,000 tourists staying in the city near the Tatra Mountains, in town near Olympus number of tourists staying in the same time is for sure lower than number of permanent residents. There are no attractions for the mass tourist in Litochoro: cable car, ski lifts, thermal pools, large hotels or horse carriages transporting people on the asphalt road. There is only one sports shop, although excellent! Thus, comparing tourist traffic seems breakneck, because setting each number next to zero (or almost zero) gives the impression of great value. From my personal perspective, I describe it in such



a way, that I have not been able to go to Zakopane for many years, and in Litochoro I can work on developing tourism and I do not feel any discomfort because of it.

In this way I come to a crucial moment in an attempt to explain what I am doing here and why Litochoro stole my heart. The most important feature of every trip, every change of whereabouts all the more, is the opportunity to learn new things. It is not just that there are objectively more of these new things around us than at home, more importantly that our sense of perception shifts to reception mode, becomes more open to newness, more sensitive, and sometimes even more greedy and seeking. Hungry for impressions and new discoveries. Can there be a better place to explore than Greece? Theoretically, I live here like everywhere, between home, coffee bar, mountains for training and other places of daily activity. But, after all, I am so excited that Orpheus was born 4 km north of the city (of course, I went to see where it was), Alexander the Great set off to conquer the world from the palace, which is located only 30 km away, and the viper bitten Eurydice in the Tempe Valley, which is two hours away by bike from Litochoro. I live in a world of my dreams, only now I can go and see what this world really looks like. And it seems, such a confrontation is only good for it.

But it is not only the distant antiques that move my imagination. In Litochoro there are a lot of different remains: abandoned or unfinished houses, empty commercial premises, strange constructions, the sense and meaning of which is not clear anymore, there are even closed taverns and hotels. It all proves the former splendor. Even more about the splendor of plans and great investment optimism of the residents, but still about the fact that the past was full of hope. It is similar with the paths in the mountains. The main tourist trail E-4



through the Enipeas Gorge, built in the second half of the 80s of the previous century, 30 years ago provided much easier access deeper into the mountains than now, when it is so damaged that it resembles a natural path. Even worse (i.e. better) is with all other routes in the massif. I used to think that there are very few paths on Olympus, now I know there are plenty of them! Of course, most of them are not visible because they were shepherd's paths, and more than 40 years ago, sheep and goats disappeared from Olympus, and the tourist traffic was too small to sustain their existence. You can't see them, but they are there. They are waiting patiently for rediscovery. Isn't that a beautiful challenge? Many times checking the next variants of barely visible trails that disappear suddenly in the middle of the forest or above the cliff, I felt like the first tourists haunting the Polish mountains at the end of the 19th century or pioneers of the American West a little earlier. Only me and wild nature. With the only difference that in Greece it is never entirely clear whether it is primordial savagery or in the time of Pericles or Constantine the Great this world was full of human traces, and only now it has gone wild again. Anyway, living in a place where I can play the role of a discoverer and seeker of ancient traces constantly excites me a lot.

For now I will stay here ...

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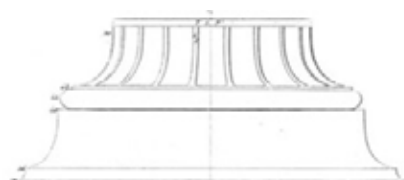
As I write these words, Litchoro and all of Greece are slowly shaking off the shock of coronavirus and trying to return to normal life. Taverns are still closed, but almost in every one you can see preparations for the new season: renovations, repairs, general cleaning. People are on the streets again, walking, talking, meeting friends. The city park came alive, stray dogs returned to Lakkos, because more and more often there are people there and Papys - the best gyros bar in town - is working again. My favorite sports store 55 Peaks Outdoor Store was also opened yesterday. After renovation,



it has twice the surface, friendly design and, as before, an excellent selection of top-class hiking and running equipment. I am very lucky that my favorite company Salwa is the leading brand there. 55 Peaks is not only a sports shop and tourist information point, but also the most important meeting place for various mountain freaks.

So many stories and beautiful relationships began there. If you ever visit Litochoro, drop by, Monika will certainly welcome you with a good word and a cup of coffee...

*Litochoro - Lakkos, May 2020*





## Footnotes

1. The presented picture of Pieter Brueghel's journey to Italy is taken from the preface by Czesław Miłosz to the collection of essays by Stanisław Vincenz - *Po stronie dialogu*, Warszawa 1983.
2. Of course, King Minos Palace is not in Heraklion only in Knossos, but most of the palace equipment is in the museum, in Knossos there are only copies.
3. Omnipresent, of course only in the summer season, in winter or spring the cicadas can not be heard. However, from the perspective of the summer tourist, cicadas are everywhere.
4. Some American species live underground for 13 or 17 years, while those 17-years cicadas have a harmonized life cycle within the species in a given area, so they appear all at once, every 17 years. The next brood is expected in the east coast States in 2029. Greek cicadas are not so long-lived, they spend 2 to 5 years in the ground.
5. It is worth adding that, each genre of cicadas creates a slightly different type of music, specific only to it, and that within the same genre of cicadas play together, but try not to interfere with the music of their further cousins, whether by choosing slightly different times of the day to play, other heights they occupy in trees or other areas.
6. Quote from Plato for the electronic edition of *Phaedrus*, available at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org)
7. One might say that cicadas do not appear in *Phaedrus* at all. The most popular English translator Benjamin Jowett translate the ancient Greek "tettix" as "grasshopper", not understanding probably their role in dialogue and in Greek culture. Unfortunately, a similar mistake is made by translators of other languages (Polish translation by W. Witwicki).
8. Compare: [Rory B. Egan, Cicadas in Ancient Greece: Ventures in Classical Tettigology](#)
9. If such term can be used in relation to Greece, where a shovel stuck in virtually anywhere announces some artifacts. When the road from Katerini to Larisa was being built, the remains of over 300 ancient settlements were found over a distance of 90 km!

10. For archaeologists, green is an obvious signal for bronze tools, i.e. an alloy of copper and tin, which was the basic material for making tools and weapons in the Mycenaean period. Brown is of course dark brown in color, but over time, under the influence of air and water, it covers with a layer of basic calcium carbonate, which is green.
11. The expression 'seal' may be somewhat misleading. Some of these items were actually used to seal something, but most of them served as an amulet, i.e. they had magical and religious significance. This also applies to our Griffin Warrior stone.
12. I use the English name *Corfu*, although the original Greek version is Kerkyra. Word Corfu is not in Greek, and is of Italian origin. Kerkyra is probably the most international of the Greek islands, there are a lot of Italian, English and French influences. It is estimated that 10 percent of the island's population are foreigners.
13. Some researchers treat Linear B as part of the Greek language. Under this assumption, Greek would be at least 500 years older.
14. Bruno Schulz, *Mityzacja rzeczywistości*, in: same, *Proza*, Kraków 1973
15. Some sources indicate even 14,880 or 16,000 km. It all depends on the method of measurement, primarily on the length of the measurement unit, the definition of the island, the adopted shape of the earth's surface and many other factors..
16. I usually use the Komoot application, which is generally intended for cyclists and offers a very large amount of details absent elsewhere, above all paths not existing on other maps. Komoot also has a well-functioning navigational tool, it can lead you to a selected destination by various routes, depending on whether you choose a road bike, gravel or mountain bike, or even hiking or mountainiering. Nevertheless, I quite often follow paths around the Olympus about which even Komoot knows nothing and stubbornly advises me to turn back, because this road does not exist..
17. The first Olympic Games were held in 776 B.C.E. This is the first confirmed and fairly accurate date in the history of Greece - which in itself is quite unique, as history usually prefers to remember the dates of battles, emancipations or the reign of rulers. The ancient games were sports and religious events in honor of Zeus. Nevertheless, sports competition was already the most important at that time.

18. According to the latest measurements, the Olympus Mythical Trail is 106 km long and the accumulated gain is 6840 m. The riders have 30 hours to cover the entire route. There are no human residences along the way, the only traces of civilization are mountain huts..
19. This report applies to the 2017 edition. Starting from 2019, the place of start and finish was moved to Litochoro, so the order of the loops changed: now big loop is at the beginning and a small one at the end. The starting time has been also changed (now the start is at midnight), so runners are roughly in the same places at the same time as in previous configuration..
20. Orivetiko Olympos Marathon has been organized continuously since 1986. The route runs through the Muses Plateau, reaching heights point of over 2,600 m. This is one of the oldest mountain races in Europe.
21. It is very interesting that the mountain runner community in Greece has reached the level of integration that allows the creation of such an association.. HARTA - [Hellenic Adventure Running and Trail Association](#) already has its own page on Facebook. In addition, the idea arised in this community to create your own runner performance evaluation system, similar to the ITRA system, but with more variables. Both the association and the evaluation system are almost ready and will be implemented in the coming weeks.

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University of Cincinnati: 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37.



I am a cultural anthropologist, Mediterranean lover and ultra runner. For some years I organized Gorce Ultra-Trail competitions in southern Poland.

I run several websites about running and Greece:  
[www.mojwielkibieg.pl](http://www.mojwielkibieg.pl), [www.nietylkoobieganiu.pl](http://www.nietylkoobieganiu.pl),  
[www.forgottenolympus.com](http://www.forgottenolympus.com),  
[www.facebook.com/trailrunninggreece](https://www.facebook.com/trailrunninggreece).

I have lived in Litorchiro for several months.

[greg@forgottenolympus.com](mailto:greg@forgottenolympus.com)