

# THE PARTHENON: Icon or Epitaph for the Humanities?

Professor Michael John Osborne gave a lecture on the Parthenon and the Hellenic Studies at the University of Notre Dame earlier this month. Almost 400 people attended the lecture that was organized by the Hellenic Studies department of the University under the coordination of mr Savvas Papasavvas & mr Emmanuel Petrelis.



and many centuries of service as a temple, church, cathedral and mosque, it none the less provided inspiration for the foreign supporters of Greek

independence, such as Lord Byron – and, of course, acted as an irresistible magnet to archaïokapeloi, such as Lord Elgin. After independence the

Parthenon swiftly became a national icon and a unique visual reminder of the debt of western society to Ancient Greece, especially Athens. And so it remains, now accompanied by a fine new museum, still impatiently awaiting the return from Britain of the so-called “Elgin Marbles”.

By unhappy contrast in twenty-first century Australia the future of Hellenic Studies, indeed of Humanities in general, is being rendered precarious as more and more universities either through choice or through (real or imagined) constraint marginalize, or even abandon, such fields of study in favour of ‘demand driven’ programs of an essentially vocational nature. This lurch towards a predominantly functional university sector, in which the Humanities are increasingly (dis)regarded as ir-

relevant, can only impoverish our society markedly and, if not arrested, it will cause monuments such as the Parthenon to survive not as icons attesting the civilized and educated nature of our society but as epitaphs certifying only too clearly its emptiness.

Professor Michael John Osborne is currently Emeritus Professor of Classical Studies at the University of Melbourne and Guest Professor in Hellenic Studies at Peking University and at Beijing Foreign Studies University. He served as Vice-Chancellor and President of La Trobe University from 1990 until 2006.

He graduated from Oxford University and holds a Doctorate of Philosophy and Letters from the Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven (Belgium). He has been awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Letters by the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, and is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities, the Academy of Athens, and the Hungarian Academy of Engineering.

He is a recipient of the Aristotle Award (Greece), the Niki Award and Centenary Medal (Australia), the Gold Crown of the Greeks of the Diaspora and an Honorary Distinction (Hellenic Republic of Cyprus) for contributions to Hellenic Studies.

He has written extensively on Greek History and Epigraphy and in recent times has played a leading role in the promotion of Hellenic Studies in Chinese Universities.

## THE PARTHENON – ICON OR EPITAPH FOR THE HUMANITIES?

The Parthenon was completed in the later fifth century BC as a celebration of Athenian democracy. More than two thousand years later, despite disfigurement by time, conflict

## Greek Taekwondo Team Participates in Argentina World Championship

The Greek National team of Taekwon-do travels to Argentina to participate in the X Junior World Championship and the XVI Senior World Championship that will take place in Mar del Plata (Buenos Aires) Argentina, on the 26th to the 29th of November.



The Competition will be held in the Stadium Islas Malvinas, with capacity for 10.000 spectators. The Greek team is consisted of eight athletes and the coach.

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