

GEORGE JARVIS

AN AMERICAN FIGHTER FOR GREEK INDEPENDENCE

presented by

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INTRODUCTION

I thought it would be fitting to commemorate Greek Independence Day by examining the brief but eventful life of George Jarvis, the first American volunteer in the Greek war of independence.

We know regrettably few details about Jarvis. He reached Greece nearly three years before the better-known American Philhellenes, Samuel Gridley Howe and Jonathan P. Miller. He died young, near the end of the conflict. So almost nothing is known of Jarvis apart from what is contained in his own handwritten record of events and in occasional references to him by others.

Jarvis did not live long enough to see the invention of the camera, so we have no photo of him; and there is no known painting. His co-Philhellenes gave us glimpses, however. Miller said that “[Jarvis] possessed an uncommonly strong constitution and great energy of character,” and that “He has probably seen more fighting and undergone more hardships than any foreigner who has taken part in this contest, having been frequently sick and wounded.” Howe described Jarvis as having “become a complete Greek in dress, manners, and language.”

Jarvis was born in Germany in 1798 and was educated there as well. His father, Benjamin Jarvis of New York, had a position with the U.S. government at The Hague. Jarvis was fluent in English, German, and French. By the time he died of “natural causes” (presumably disease) on August 11, 1828, he had also learned to speak, read, and write Greek. He is buried in Argos.

THE JOURNAL

Most of what we know of George Jarvis is from his two-volume manuscript *Journal*, which is today kept among the Finlay Papers in the Library of the British School of Archæology at Athens. It was edited and published by Professor George Arnakis of the University of Texas in 1965. The *Journal* covers a period of slightly more than three years spanning Jarvis's departure for Greece in November 1821 at the age of 24 until December 1824 when Jarvis disbanded his men at Missolonghi due to his inability to provide for their upkeep. We therefore have few details of Jarvis's activity in Greece for the years 1826 through his death in 1828 at age 30. Sections of the *Journal* are written in English, French, and German.

Jarvis's journey to Greece began November 6, 1821, from Danish-administered Altona (on the Elbe) in the Duchy of Schleswig-Holstein. The Greek Revolution had been in progress about seven months. The struggle for Greek independence was gathering interest in Europe and America, particularly among young people and intellectuals, whose education stressed the cultural achievements of classical Greece. Philhellenism was gaining ground as more and more people shared the hope that Greece, the cradle of Western civilization, would again be free after four centuries of Ottoman domination.

When Jarvis started out, Greek forces were enjoying initial successes. They had captured Monemvasia, Navarino, Tripolitza, and Acro-Corinth. They were unable to dislodge the Ottomans, however, from Patras, Coron, Modon (Methoni), the two fortresses of Nafplio (and the town itself), Nafpaktos, and the Athenian Acropolis. Greek naval forces from Hydra, Spetses, and Psara successfully harried the Ottomans and prevented them from recovering their positions during the early phase of the struggle.

Rumors of Greek victories at sea reached Denmark and inspired Jarvis to pick Hydra, the most powerful of the three nautical islands, as his destination.

The first group of Philhellene volunteers arrived at Corinth early in 1822. Jarvis was not among them. He had lingered behind in France for two months in order to see Bordeaux. After 126 days of travel from Altona – across Germany, Switzerland, and southern France – mostly on foot, he departed Marseilles on March 12, 1822, aboard a Norwegian ship bound for Greece.

He reached Hydra April 3, 1822, and left six days later for Corinth to report at government headquarters. He arrived there April 11 after walking across the isthmus. His *Journal* records the existing devastation:

“This poor country has suffered in a very visible manner; and instead of a town, only heaps of stones and remnants of huts are seen. Now, since the Turks have been killed, even nothing remains to indicate their former possession, save several of their churchyards, where the tombs have been knocked to pieces, and the moskees broken down. Corinth affords a truly melancholy picture and everything grand before is fallen into oblivion here.”

At Corinth he found present about 200 German and French officers and other European volunteers (36 more arrived while he was there). Each received from the government 28 paras per day and a loaf-and-a-half of bread, fuel, and lodging. The provisional government consisted of an executive (comprising eight ministers and headed by Prince Mavrocordatos) and a thirty-seven-member legislative body (presided over by Prince Demetrios Ypsilantis).

Jarvis attended Easter services on April 14. The next evening he was invited to pay his respects to Marvrocordatos and had a long conversation with him, which turned out to be the beginning of a long friendship and association between the two men: “[H]e was particularly kind to me and liked me the more, as he said, for being an American.”

Jarvis left Corinth on April 16, reached Piraeus next day by boat, and walked to Athens on the 18th, where he joined the Greeks besieging the garrison of Turks in the Acropolis. He met various French and German officers “and was for the first time introduced into the company of some pretty Grecian women.”

He saw his first action the next day, April 19:

“[A]fter having the day before reconnoitred the enemy in the Castle [Acropolis], we cannonaded him and exchanged about [a] thousand shot out of our small arms. We were very near, at pistol-shot, and several balls passed very near me and sang around my ears; . . . The Greeks had three men killed this day, by a house being thrown in by the Turks. The garrison of Turks in the Citadel are very brave and every praise is due to

their defense. The Greeks, however, have in astonishing manner approached them and are perpendicularly under the walls of the Castle and not above 25 feet distant from each other. . . . In daytime the Turks sleep; in the night they are very well on their guard, and a hideous cry is heard round the Fortress, which, together with the watchword of the Greeks, with their horrible laugh and the report of small arms in the depth of night, join to play around the fancy in no agreeable manner. Commandant Voutier [the commander of the Frenchmen] had every evening, when the Turks sing to Allah, a bomb thrown into their Castle.”

Having been assigned by Mavrocordatos to Hydra, and uncertain when the Acropolis siege would end, he left Athens for Hydra on April 22. At Hydra he joined a small group of mostly French volunteers who were assigned to a small Hydriote naval squadron, Jarvis’s vessel being the *Themistocles*, a corvette¹ under the command of Capt. Antonio Raphael.

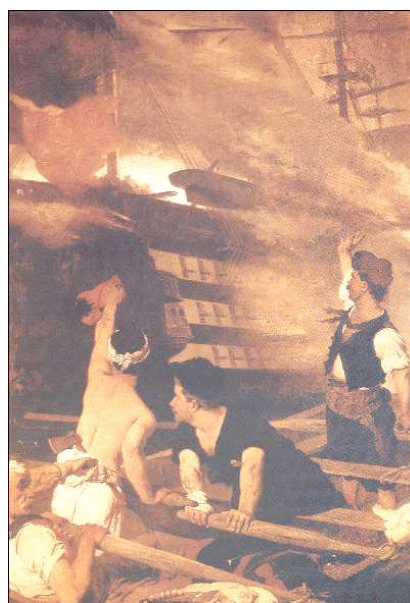
Aviso, a French corvette of the Napoleonic era

The squadron arrived at Chios in early May to witness the ghastly aftermath of the Turkish slaughter there, which had taken place the previous month while Jarvis was at Corinth. The Chios massacres lasted seven days. According to the Greek historian Trikoupis about 23,000 persons were killed; about 47,000 were enslaved. Jarvis’s report of what he saw (which is in the German section of his *Journal*) is probably the oldest description of the Chios tragedy.

¹

A sailing warship, smaller than a frigate, usually armed with one tier of guns.

On the night of June 18-19, Jarvis witnessed the Chians' revenge on the Ottomans at the hands of Constantine Canaris, a captain of Psara, who came to be known as "*o bourlotieris*" for his skill in the use of fire-ships (in French, *brûlots*). Canaris steered his fire-ship into the Turkish fleet, fastened it to the side of the flagship of the Ottoman high admiral (*Kapudan Pasha*) Kara Ali, and set it ablaze. Canaris and his men then rowed away leaving the combustibles in the fire-ship to explode. The Ottoman flagship caught fire trapping about 1,200 Turks who were aboard feasting for the Moslem holiday of Bayram and celebrating the recent destruction of Chios. Among the casualties was the *Kapudan Pasha* himself. Jarvis was near enough to see the flames and hear the explosions. He also described the return of the Greek ships to Psara and the celebrations that followed.



Canaris and the work of his fire-ship at Chios

Jarvis spent much of July 1822 uneventfully patrolling the northern Aegean with a 7-ship squadron (2 corvettes, 3 brigs, and 2 fires-ships). On returning to Hydra on July 20, he learned that Corinth had been abandoned to the army of Mahmud Dramali, and the Greek government had retreated south to Nafplio, chased by Dramali's cavalry. From the ruins of the Venetian fortress at Argos, however, Ypsilantis and about 300 Greeks kept the Ottoman cavalry at bay sufficiently long for a larger force of Greeks to be gathered for a major fight in the neighborhood of Nafplio.

Jarvis arrived at Nafplio on July 25 and found the remains of the Greek

government aboard ships blockading the town, among them Bouboulina's brig. Jarvis and seven other "Franks" were assigned to the guns of St. Theodore, the island fortress facing Nafplio (now known as Bourtzi), joining a force of about 20 Greeks. According to Jarvis, the armament of St. Theodore consisted of "thirteen guns and one mortar, of which first five are good for nothing." The plan was to bombard the two Ottoman fortresses on the mainland behind Nafplio (Acro-Nafplio and Palamidi). But the effort was unsuccessful. Experimental combustible shells produced by a Frenchman named Jourdain produced more smoke than fire; and the Turkish guns outranged St. Theodore's, making Jarvis and his companions on St. Theodore easy targets.

After five days without success, and lacking adequate food and water, Jarvis crossed to the mainland on July 30 and presented himself to Ypsilantis near Argos. During these days he also had occasion to meet Colocotronis and Petros Bey. He describes them this way:

"Today I introduced myself to Prince Ypsilanti, who, lying on the floor between the ruins of a house, was surrounded by a number of common Greeks. No Europeans were in his suite. Dressed in black, with two large gold epaulets, his head bald, he appeared . . . a very different man from what I imagined and by no means seems destined to free Greece or reign therein. I asked his permission (which, by the by, was not necessary) to serve under his colours. He acknowledged the present want of order but was glad to see me join the cause. . . ."

"Petro Bey has more the appearance of a warrior and pleased me most. Colocotroni distinguished himself in nothing from his men except perhaps in being more dirty. He has the appearance of a complete highwayman, and I have perceived no qualities in him that constitute a good general or captain. He is not known to be brave, neither knows to read or write (which might, however, very well be excused to the poor Greeks) and what is worse, he fulfills not the duties which a commander owes to his troops. No order exists and nothing is provided for the troops, who [do] without bread . . ."

The next day, August 1, advancing from the coast, Jarvis and a force of about 1,000 Greeks joined battle with the Ottoman army in the plain of Argos. In what became known as the Battle of the Mills, the Greek force soundly defeated 5,000 Ottoman cavalry and 2,000 infantry, dislodged the Ottoman troops from Argos, and

forced their general retreat to Corinth without baggage. In Corinth, the Turkish army suffered through the fall and winter from shortage of provisions and pestilence.

Here's how Jarvis described the advance toward battle:

“With pleasure I saw our little army advance; and before this took place the priest addressed the soldiers; and these then crucifying themselves, we left, the colours . . . in the van and the soldiers following in mixed lines, sometimes as geese one behind another. At a distance, however, our warriors had in the whole a pleasing aspect: in the van the blue colours flying with the white cross and the soldiers all in white – the dress of the Moreotes in general . . .

“If I had not loved their common cause with all my heart, I should this moment not have been able to resist joining them, nor do I believe anyone else who was yet able to feel for freedom and humanity. To see these poor Greeks, many without shoes, all without or with the worst of bread, joined, climbing up hills and down dales, to attack the tyrannical aggressor, in defence of their country – never has an object interested me more, never did I feel more sincerely for my own family, than I did and do for the poor Greeks. . .

“As for arms, etc., our soldiers had, everyone, a gun and most of them swords or long knives and one pistol. . . . Cartridges had been sufficiently distributed. The number of men every captain has is very different. The engagement of a captain, in general, is to assure bread to his soldiers, but sometimes . . . [the captains'] valour constitutes them so. Officers don't exist. Every captain had his colours, which are with trifling difference all alike, except that of Colocotroni, who chose a yellow colour.”

From Argos, Jarvis headed back to Hydra, arriving August 3, and stayed there awhile before departing for Tripolitza, where he arrived at the end of August. At Tripolitza he learned from six Philhellenes recently returned from Missolonghi of Mavrocordatos's defeat on July 16 at the Battle of Peta (near Arta) where more than 52 fellow Philhellenes, trying to fight in Napoleonic military order, died on the spot, including one of Jarvis's close friends. Jarvis records that “[f]our of them were taken by the Turks alive and obliged to carry the heads of their poor fellow companions, but

soon were butchered.”

From Tripolitza Jarvis went back to Mylos on the coast near Nafplio and then returned to Hydra, arriving September 1. He left on September 4 on the Spezziote brig *Diomedes* and in a few days was back aboard Captain Antonio Raphael’s *Themistocles*. This interlude gave him the chance to compare ships from Spetses and Hydra:

“The difference I remarked between the Spezziotes and Hydriotes is, not mentioning the by far greater devotement of the latter to the Grecian general cause, that the Hydriotes have a better order existing on board their ships. In general, the ropes, sails, etc. are in a better state and they are supplied with more provisions. . . . On board the Hydriote ships the crew in general all consist of Hydriotes, and even their dress bears somewhat a resemblance, the blue predominating. On board of Captn Theodosi (*i.e.*, the Spezziote *Diomedes*) we had men of all Greece, of Asia and Africa. Several Arabs, who did not talk the Greek, and amongst others, had one man whose both legs were cut away, one man with one hand, two men blind of one eye each, *etc.* Still these, particularly the poor cripple without legs, worked almost better than the rest. He even climbed into the mast. . . .”

Mid-September 1822 found Jarvis participating in the naval defense of Nafplio. The Ottoman fleet was sighted coming north along the Peloponnesos. Seeing the Greek fleet under the Hydriote admiral Andreas Vokos (better known as Miaoulis) outnumbered and out-gunned,² Jarvis at first thought Greece was doomed. The firing began late in the morning of September 20. Jarvis’s part of the fleet (30 ships including Miaoulis) were off the southeastern cape of Spetses. They encountered 74 Turkish ships plus 6 ships of the line:

“We were now near enough and answered the enemy. The ships of the line poured their whole broadsides upon us, and among the immense number of guns fired against us, a great number of balls passed our ship between our sails and covered us with the foam of the sea. The Turks fired all in succession upon us as they passed, and then, wheeling round,

² On September 19, Jarvis counted 45 Greek ships (mostly small) and 72 Turkish ships, including 6 ships of the line “and many other stout ships.”

gave us the other broadside. Their intention to enter the channel of Spezzia was to my utter astonishment, however, completely baffled; but a good deal was contributed to the success of the day by a battery of guns at the eastern entrance of Spezzia, for these guns, being of larger caliber, carried farther and made the ships of the line wheel round, and these kept off for the remainder of the day. The fire of the frigates and smaller ships was however by far better executed against us but without any effect for no material damage was done to any of our ships."

Jarvis's fears of defeat were unfounded. After more skirmishing in the vicinity of Spetses over the next eight days, the Turkish fleet retreated north. Maioulis wanted to pursue the Turkish fleet, which he knew to be demoralized and nearly out of water. But the Greek seamen refused, even with the promise of a half month's pay in advance and the necessary provisions. According to Jarvis, "[t]he men wished to see their families."

Jarvis returned to Hydra and spent a pleasant October and the first half of November seeing the local sights and reacquainting himself with friends at various social functions. These included the St. Demetrios feastday celebrations, during which "several very pretty women and girls made their appearance."

But his *Journal* during this time also records severe criticism of the Greeks for failing to consolidate their recent victories on land and sea. He was provoked to make these criticisms by the success of a small Turkish column, which had gotten through with provisions to the nearly starved Turkish garrisons still holding the fortresses of Nafplio. This success he deemed to be the result of the Greeks' "scandalous negligence in not blockading [Nafplio] properly, [by which] our naval victory has hardly proved of any great advantage." His harshest criticism, however, he directed against the Moreote captains:

"The Greeks during this month had undertaken nothing, neither by sea nor land, and the affairs were rather worse than a month before. The Moreotes remained in their usual indolent inactivity, and neither the good nor the bad turn events have taken has had any effect on these headstrong cowards; for neither the retreat of the enemy from Argos, nor the exertions of the three islands, and the memorable victory obtained by the latter, have been able to spur on the rascalous captains of the Moreotes, who, without the least shame, indifferently treat a matter most sacred, and

lost the moment of saving themselves.”

On November 14 Jarvis re-embarked aboard the *Themistocles* in a squadron of 6 brigs and a fire-ship, which bore around the Peloponnesos and reached Missolonghi a week later (November 21) after a stale-mated 6-hour battle near Ithaca with a Turkish 16-gun ship. At Missolonghi, the squadron’s arrival gave new hope to Mavrocordatos’s beleaguered Greek defenders, as Jarvis’s Hydriote squadron, together with a 4-ship squadron from Spetses, brought fresh troops (close to 1,500) from the west coast of the Peloponnesos. The *Themistocles* remained for about ten weeks patrolling in the vicinity of Missolonghi and Patras through severe winter gales before returning to Hydra on February 8, 1823.

Volume I of the *Journal* breaks off here. Volume II picks up in April 1823, which finds Jarvis aboard the brig of war *Leonidas* patrolling the Aegean archipelago in a 12-ship squadron. His squadron had sundry encounters with the Turkish fleet, which had re-emerged from the Dardanelles Straits to re-supply various Turkish garrisons in Greece.

On June 14, 1823, the squadron landed at Hydra and Jarvis took a much-deserved two-week vacation on the nearby Peloponnesian coast. He spent hot days tramping the countryside, shooting game, and examining old Venetian ruins. One day, leaving the town of Hermione (which he also calls Castri), he was accosted by a group of 12 men:

“[T]hey jumped round and seized my double fowling-piece and brought me to the Kanchelaria [town hall], declaring me to be a Turk and a spy. All people of the place ran together. Most curious were the women; and cried out against me. I expected every moment to be torn in pieces. No words of mine availed. They wanted my passport. After a consultation, at last, having been obliged to lower my breeches for examination, I was at liberty.”³

The story continues. The next day, he says:

“[I] arrived with a Castriote at the garden [*i.e.*, farm] of Mr. Demetrios, where he informed himself of the truth of my relations. Everyone all at

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The Turks, as a rule, were circumcised.

once professed now to know me and to be my friend. When I was in distress, *none*.”

When he returned to Hydra about a week later:

“[I] was congratulated by all, having taken me to be killed by the Castriotes, which report had spread all over.”

Jarvis’s next assignment, beginning August 31, 1823, was aboard the *Alexander I*, Miaoulis’s flagship. Here Jarvis’s *Journal* continues until January 1824 in French. Miaoulis’s squadron consisted of 16 Hydriote ships and 4 fire-ships. They patrolled the northern Aegean uneventfully until September 15, when Jarvis’s sub-group of seven ships encountered 11 much larger Turkish warships near Mount Athos. The Greeks joined battle, which lasted nearly four hours, and conducted themselves ably despite their disadvantages in numbers, size, and shorter range of guns. The engagement ended when the Turks withdrew. Jarvis’s squadron continued patrolling until October 3 when disputes between various ship captains and related crew mutinies temporarily grounded Jarvis at Skiathos.

The *Journal* picks up again in the opening days of 1824 with Jarvis back in Hydra. By this time a civil war was raging among the Greeks, who were split into the Coundouriotis/Mavrocordatos faction (which was backed by the wealthy shipowners of the Aegean islands) and the Colocotronis faction (which had the support of wealthy Peloponnesian landholders). Jarvis, with his Hydriote friendships, backed Coundouriotis/Mavrocordatos.

By January 1824, Jarvis was on his way across the Peloponnesos on his way to Missolonghi. He tried to obtain free passage through Colocotronis territory from Colocotronis’s son Panos, but was rebuffed, Panos probably thinking Jarvis was on a spy mission for Coundouriotis. Passing through Tripolitza, he met up with an unnamed friend with whom he discussed what was going on between what he called the “Government party” (*i.e.*, Coundouriotis/Mavrocordatos) and the “factionists” (*i.e.*, Colocotronis). His *Journal* entry gives us a glimpse of how insidious the Greek division had become:

“[A]nd as I was with the Government party and against all factions and usurpers, I tried to inform myself of what was going on. As this friend was in the same party, he told me many things[,] but being suspected by

the factionists, and as it was risking a great deal even to talk together, we were consequently obliged to walk an hour out of town and among the rocks to talk over our affairs.”

Unfortunately, Jarvis did not record the specifics of what they discussed.

Jarvis reached Missolonghi on February 26, 1824. There, Mavrocordatos introduced him to Lord Byron, who by that time had been there about seven weeks. Jarvis soon became a member of Byron’s colorful band of Philhellenes and adventurers and remained closely associated with Byron for the last two months of Byron’s life. Professor Arnakis’s edition of the *Journal* here makes an intriguing reference. It says that Jarvis was the only American in Byron’s immediate surroundings, “besides the Negro servant.” Who was the Negro servant?

At Missolonghi, Jarvis commanded the artillery of Byron’s battalion, composed mostly of Souliotes. He divided his time between training the battalion and overseeing a workshop that Byron set up under the command of his colorful friend, Capt. William Parry, to manufacture guns and other weapons.

Byron died on April 19, and Parry left soon after. This left Jarvis in sole charge of the military workshop. By this time he had the title “Adjutant General and Commissary of Fortifications.”

Through the spring, summer, and early fall of 1824, Jarvis served under Mavrocordatos at Missolonghi as Commissary General. During that time Jarvis participated in the plot to assassinate Odysseas Androutsos. Androutsos had won distinction in the early part of the struggle as guardian of the mountain passes of central Greece. He was brave but also unscrupulous, and the Greek government eventually had cause to relieve him of his command. Androutsos responded by killing the official government messenger who brought the news of his relief from command, as well as the man designated to succeed him. This led to his being banished by the government and excommunicated by the bishop in charge of the Greek government’s ministry of religious affairs.

Androutsos then took hold of the Athenian Acropolis, where he governed as a virtual dictator, and joined the competition for Byron’s friendship and money. To get closer to Byron, Androutsos came out of the Acropolis and made his headquarters in a large, impregnable cave on Mt. Parnassos. Jarvis saw Androutsos as a threat to

Mavrocordatos, so Jarvis schemed with others to checkmate Androutsos. While Jarvis appears to have participated in formulating the assassination plot, he was not present when it was carried out the following summer.⁴

By the end of 1824, the Coundouriotis government, which Jarvis supported, had won the civil war and attention re-focused on defeating the Turks. In September 1824, Jarvis was in western Greece heading a band of about 50 warriors who were skirmishing against enemy outposts north of Missolonghi. His entries continue through December 5, 1824, at which point his *Journal* stops.

His entries in the last months of 1824 shed light on the military organization of the Greeks. The officer (like Jarvis) collected his men, paid them for their services, and undertook to provide them with rations from government stores. If the leader ran out of funds or otherwise failed to provide for his men, they might desert him for someone else, or riot, or kidnap him in the hope he would be ransomed by the government. Here is Jarvis's entry for November 20, 1824, which gives an idea of what he had to deal with:

“Assembled all my men in the open square before the Serai, where I heard their claims and harrangued them. Two or three . . . behaved very noisy, the rest pretty well; disputed about two hours – had a warm affair of it. I disapproved of their having all come to town without my orders. Costa, who had been treated so well by me and dined at my own table, made off with one of my pistols; with him went Nicolo.”

Here is his very last *Journal* entry, from Missolonghi, for December 3-5, 1824:

“Nothing of consequence occurred. Things, however, bearing a very bad prospect. No bread – no money – for the soldiers. The Peloponnesus in anarchy. The poor defenders of the country and the frontiers, without bread, and no notice taken of them.”

He left Missolonghi in January 1825, accompanying Mavrocordatos and

⁴ Androutsos was captured and brought back to Athens, where he was imprisoned in the Frankish tower (a medieval structure on the Acropolis near the Propylaea, removed in the 1830s). Androutsos was found dead one June morning at the foot of the Propylaea. The official verdict was that he had fallen while trying to escape during the night. In fact, he was strangled while held in chains and thrown down from the tower.

others to Nafplio.⁵

From other sources, Professor Arnakis tells us that Jarvis was taken prisoner around April 1825 near Navarino. He was offered an attractive salary by his captors if he would abandon the Greeks and serve the Egyptians, but he refused. He fought again near Nafplio at a second Battle of the Mills in June 1825 and in still more engagements in 1825 and 1826. He also served with General George Karaiskakis in the disastrous battle of Athens in May 1827, in which the Acropolis was surrendered to the Turks and Karaiskakis was mortally wounded.

After the loss of Athens, Jarvis devoted himself to the organization of American relief work for the resulting refugee problem. Through Jarvis's work, food, clothing, and medical supplies were carefully distributed to the needy in devastated areas.

Jarvis initially disliked Colocotronis for his selfish and dictatorial ways. But at a later stage not recorded in the *Journal*, he joined Colocotronis and served as his multi-lingual secretary. In July 1826, Jarvis helped Colocotronis write a letter to the American relief committee, headed from Boston by Edward Everett, a devoted American Philhellene and also President of Harvard and professor of Greek. Jarvis joined his own letter to Colocotronis's and sent them together to Everett, who had them published in major U.S. newspapers to raise enthusiasm for the Greek cause.

CONCLUSION

Jarvis brought youthful enthusiasm to the cause of Greek independence. At times his judgments were hasty, perhaps reflecting the immaturity of youth. I do not think it was just youthful enthusiasm, however, that inclined him to adopt, with such gusto, Greek customs, language, and dress. I prefer to think it was the reflection of a thoroughly American characteristic: openness to others. The European Philhellenes did not share this characteristic, and Jarvis's ways therefore made them uncomfortable.

The *Journal* and pieces of Jarvis's correspondence published with it are

⁵ Jarvis was not present more than a year later when Missolonghi eventually fell to the Turks in April 1826 after a siege of well more than a year. In Missolonghi's fall, many of Jarvis's friends were killed.

ample evidence of just how well he understood the Greeks. You can sense his understanding in the portion of a letter he wrote in May 1824 from Missolonghi to Byron's associate, Capt. William Parry:

"The Greeks are men of great genius and know their wants better than any stranger; they want but three things – that is *money, money, money!* and then government, gaining power, will choose and employ such strangers as are of real use to the country! As for Anglifying Greece, it won't do. I have been honoured by an Englishman yesterday with the title of *a Greek*; they meant to hurt my feelings by thinking me *too much of a Greek*. I have no other desire here than to pass for one and to take all their good qualities; I am sure the Greeks shall be grateful for all the good they are to receive from England; the tender feelings they showed towards Lord Byron leave this disposition out of doubt. However, as for turning English, or being gained over to the English interest, this they will never agree to, and they will either be free Greeks, or fall with the honour of their country."

That sums up as well as anything how well Jarvis came to know the Greeks. As Americans, we can be proud that one of our own understood the Greeks so well and was so quick to come to their aid.

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