

## Appendix I

### *The Firman*

The authority under which Lord Elgin and his agents removed antiquities from the monuments of Athens derived from a series of official letters giving permissions, known as firmans, sent by the Ottoman government in Constantinople to the local Ottoman authorities in Athens over a period of years. As described in Chapters 9 and 10, Lord Elgin's agents by a mixture of cajolery, threats, and bribes, persuaded and bullied the Ottoman authorities in Athens to exceed the terms of the key second firman and to permit removals from the Parthenon and other buildings. Subsequently, using similar means, as described in Chapters 12 and 14, official representatives of the British government obtained firmans to allow the export of the Parthenon sculptures and other antiquities outside Ottoman jurisdiction. Although the extent of Elgin's legal authority from the Ottoman authorities is by no means the only, or even the most important question which arises, it does appear that all the activities of Elgin's agents which took place over many years in Athens and elsewhere, including the many abuses, were thus officially legitimated after the event by the government that held the responsibility at the time.

The second firman, given in July 1801 is the only one of which a text is known to have survived. All accounts of this firman derive from a document containing an official Ottoman translation into Italian which was given to a representative of Lord Elgin in Constantinople at the time when the permissions were granted. The document, which is now in my possession, has not previously been published, although a translation into English has been available since 1816.<sup>1</sup> A full transcript, made with the help of Italian scholars, is published here for the first time along with a new literal translation.

The document consists of a single folded sheet of laid paper, watermarked with a watermark of three hats, with an unidentified symbol between them, and a V G countermark. This watermark identifies the papermaker as Valentino Galvani, who is known to have possessed paper mills in the Veneto and in northern Italy in the 1790s and to have exported to the Levant.<sup>2</sup> The text is written in a single, clear, careful hand, each line closely justified at each end against a margin and the edge of the paper, presumably as a precaution to prevent interpolations. In the case of some words it is difficult to judge whether an initial capital is intended or not. The handwriting appears to be that of Pisani, the official British dragoman. A file note on the outside of the document in the hand of Philip Hunt notes 'Kaimacam's Letter N<sup>o</sup>. 2. To the Governor of Athens.'

At the time of the first edition of *Lord Elgin and the Marbles*, a search for the original Turkish version was made among the Ottoman archives at Istanbul, unfortunately without success. When the Ottoman archives are more fully catalogued and made accessible, the original version may yet come to light, along with the texts of the other firmans, and perhaps some indications of Ottoman thinking.

### The Text

Traduzione d'una lettera di S. E.<sup>a</sup> il Kaimecam Pascià, diretta al Giudice, ed Anche al voivoda d'Athene—.

Dop' il saluto, vi si fà sapere qualm.<sup>te</sup> il nostro amico sincero S. E. Lord Elgin, Ambasc.<sup>o</sup> della corte d'Inghilterra presso la porta della felicità, avendo esposto esser notorio che la maggior parte delli corti franche, ansiosa di legger ed investigar i libri, le pitture, ed altre scienze delli filosofi Greci, e particolarmente i Ministri, filosofi, primati, ed altri individui d'Inghilterra essendo portati alle pitture rimaste dalli tempi delli d.<sup>i</sup> Greci, le quali si trovano nelle spiagge dell' Arcipelago, ed in altri climi, abbiamo di temp' in tempo mandati degli uomini e fatto esplorare l' antiche fabbriche, e pitture, e che di questo modo li abili dilettranti della Corte d'Inghilterra essendo desiderosi di vedere l' antiche fabbriche e le curiose pitture della Città d' Athene, e della vecchia muraglia rimasta dalli Greci, e ch' esistono nella part' interiore del d.<sup>o</sup> luogo, egli abbia commesso ed ordinato a cinque Pittori Inglesi, già esistenti nella d.<sup>a</sup> Città, che abbian a vedere, contemplar, ed anche a disegnare [*following two words inserted*] le pitture rimaste 'ab antiquo', ed avendo questa volta espressamente suplicato acciò

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acciò sia scritto ed ordinato che ai d.<sup>i</sup> pittori, mentre saran' occupati col' intrar e sortire dalla porta del Castello della d.<sup>a</sup> Città, che é il luogo d'osservazione, col formare delle scalinate attorno l' antico tempio dégl' Idoli, coll' estrarre sulla calcina /osia sul gesso/ gl' istessi ornamenti, e figure visibili, col misurare gli avvanzi d' altre fabbriche diroccate, e coll' intraprendere di scavare secondo il bisogno, le fondamenta per trovar i matton' inscritti, che fossero restati dentro le ghiaja, non sia recata molestia, nè apportato impedim.<sup>o</sup> dalla parte del Castelano, nè di verun' Altro, e che non si s' ingerisca nelle loro scalinate, ed instrumenti, che vi avranno formati; e quando volessero portar via qualche pezzi di pietra con vecchie iscrizioni, e figure, non sia fatta lor' opposizione, vi s' è scritta e spedita col N N la presente lettera, afn che dopo compreso il soggetto della med.<sup>a</sup> essendo chiaro l' impegno dell' Excelso Impero dotato d' esimie qualità, acciò vengano favorite simil istanze, conforme richiedono l' amicizia, sincerità, Alleanza, e benevolenza ab antiquo esistenti, e colla vicendevol accettazione d' ambe le parti, manifestam.<sup>e</sup> crescenti frà la Sub.<sup>e</sup> sempre durevole Corte Ottomana, e frà quella d' Inghilterra, e già

che non vi è alcun male che le Sud.<sup>e</sup> pitture e fabbriche siano vedute, contemplate

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contemplate, e dissignate, e dop' essere state accompite le convenevoli accoglienze d' ospitalità verso li suriferiti pittori, in considerazione anche dell' amichevol istanza sù questo particolar avenuta, dal prefato Amb.<sup>te</sup> e per esser' incombenente che non si faccia opposizione al caminare, vedere e contemplare delli inedemi le pittur, è fabbriche che vorranno disegnare, nè alle loro scalinate, ed instrumenti, all' arrivo della presente lettera usiate Attenzione perchè conformem.<sup>e</sup> all' istanza del d.<sup>o</sup> Amb.<sup>te</sup> mentre li soprad.<sup>i</sup> cinque pittori esistenti in codesta parte, sarann' occupati coll' entrare e sortire dalla porta del Castello d' Athene, che è il luogo d' osservazione; col formare delle scalinate attorn il tempio antico degl' Idoli; col estrarre sulla calcina /osia sul Gesso/ gl' istessi ornamenti, e figure visibili; col misurare i rimasugli d' altre fabbriche diroccate; e coll' intraprendere di scavare second' il bisogno le fondamenta per trovare i matton' inscritti che fossero restati dentro la ghiaja, non vengano molestati nè dal Castellano, nè da altri, e neppure da voi sovraccennati, non vi singerisca nelle loro scalinate, ed instrumenti e non si faccia opposizione al portar via qualche pezzi di pietra con iscrizioni, e figure, e nella sufferita maniera operate, e vi comportiate.

/ Sotto<sup>no</sup> / Sejid Abdullah  
Kaimecam.

### Translation

Translation of a letter from His Excellency the Kaymacam Pasha, addressed to the Justice and also to the Governor of Athens—.

After the greeting, you are informed our sincere Friend, His Excellency Lord Elgin Ambassador Extraordinary from the Court of England to the Porte of Happiness, having explained that it is well known that the greater part of the Frankish courts are anxious to read and investigate the books, pictures, and other sciences of the ancient Greek philosophers, and in particular, the Ministers, philosophers, leading men, and other individuals of England being inclined to the pictures remaining since the time of the said Greeks, which are to be found on the shores of the Archipelago, and in other climes, have from time to time mandated men to explore the ancient buildings, and pictures, and that in this way the skilled dilettranti of the Court of England being desirous to examine the ancient buildings and the curious pictures in the City of Athens, and of the old walls of the Greeks, and which now exist in the interior part of the said place, he has therefore commissioned and ordered five English Painters, already dwelling in the said City, to examine, contemplate, and also to draw the pictures remaining 'ab antiquo' [*a Latin phrase meaning 'from ancient times'*], and he has

at this time expressly asked us that it may be written and ordered that the said painters while they are employed in going in and out of the gate of the Castle of the said City, which is the place of observation, with moulding from the ladders round the ancient temple of the Idols, and with copying [*literally 'extracting'*] with mortar (chalk or plaster) the same ornaments, and visible figures, and with measuring the remains of other ruined buildings there, and with undertaking to dig, according to need, the foundations to find inscribed blocks [*more literally 'bricks'*], which may have been preserved in the rubbish, that no interruption may be given them, nor any obstacle thrown in their way by the Governor of the Castle or any other person, and that no one may meddle with their ladders, and implements, which they use for moulding; and when they wish to take away some pieces of stone with old inscriptions, and figures [*this phrase in ungrammatical Italian*], that no opposition be made; the present letter has been written and sent it by N. N. [*conventional way of showing that the name of an individual is to be inserted later; in the translation given by Hunt to the Select Committee in 1816, Hunt rendered the passage as 'by Mr. Philip Hunt, an English gentleman, Secretary of the Aforesaid Ambassador' and it is possible that the name was included in the original Turkish version to which Hunt had access*] in order that as soon as the subject of the mediation is clear that it is the explicit desire and engagement of this Excellent Empire endowed with eminent qualities to favour such requests as the above mentioned, in conformity with what is due to friendship, sincerity, Alliance, and good will subsisting ab antiquo between the Sublime and ever durable Ottoman Court and that of England and which is on the side of both those Courts manifestly increasing, particularly as there is no harm in the said pictures, and buildings being examined, contemplated, and drawn, and after having fulfilled the duties of hospitality, and given a proper reception to the aforesaid painters in compliance with the urgent request of the said Ambassador to that effect, and because it is incumbent on us to provide that they meet no opposition in walking, examining or studying the pictures and buildings they may wish to draw, and in any of their works of fixing scaffolding, or using their various instruments, and on the arrival of this letter you use your Attention to act conformably to the request of the said Ambassador while the said five painters dwelling in that place shall be employed in going in and out of the gate of the Castle of Athens which is the place of observation; with making moulds from their ladders around the ancient temple of the Idols; with copying with mortar (chalk or plaster) in modelling (with chalk or plaster) the same ornaments, and visible figures; with measuring the fragments and vestiges of other ruined buildings; and with undertaking to dig according to need the foundations to find inscribed blocks among the rubbish; that they be not molested by the Governor of the castle nor by any one else, nor even by you the above mentioned, and that no one meddle with their scaffolding or instruments,