

# PHILOSOPHICAL TRANSACTIONS.

April 24. 1676.

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*Mr. Francis Vernon's Letter, giving a short Account of some of his Observations in his Travels from Venice through Istria, Dalmatia, Greece, and the Archipelago, to Smyrna. Advertisements on the Vinetum Britannicum, (mentioned in the last fore-going Tract) which were made and sent to the Publisher by Dr. John Beale of Yeovil in Somersetsshire. Monsieur Hevelius's Observations of the Lunar Eclipse of the First of January last, æ. st. at Dantzick. An Account of three Books: I, and II. in one Volume, viz Memoires pour servir à l'Histoire Naturelle des ANIMAUX; and, La MESURE de la TERRE. III. BRITANNIA ANTIQUA Illustrata, or, The ANTIQUITIES of ANCIENT BRITAIN, derived from the Phœnicians; the First Volume: By Aylett Sammes of the Inner Temple, &c.*

*Mr. Francis Vernons Letter, written to the Publisher Januar. 10th. 1676, giving a short account of some of his Observations in his Travels from Venice through Istria, Dalmatia, Greece, and the Archipelago, to Smyrna, where this Letter was written.*

S I R,

I Must beg your excuse for not having written to you in so long a space: The little rest I have had, and the great unsettledness of my condition is the reason. Neither have I now any great Curiosities to impart to you; only some small circumstances of my Journey I will run over.

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From

From *Venice* I fet out with thofe Gallies which carried their Ambaffadour that went for the Port. We touch't at moft of the confiderable Towns of *Iſtria* and *Dalmatia* by the way. In *Iſtria* we ſaw *Pola*, an ancient Republick. There remains yet an Amphitheatre entire: It is of two orders of *Tuſcan* Pillars, placed one over another, and the lower Pillars ſtand on pedeſtals, which is not ordinary; for, commonly they have nothing but their *Baſes* to ſupport them. There is, beſides a Temple dedicated to *Rome* and *Auguſtus*, a Triumphal Arch, built by a Lady of the family of the *Sergii*, in honour of ſome of her kindred, which commanded in theſe Countries; beſides ſeveral Inſcriptions and ancient Monuments, which are in divers parts of the Town.

In *Dalmatia* I ſaw *Zahara*, which is now the Metropolis of the Country. It was anciently called *Fadera*. It's now very well fortified, being encompaſs'd on three ſides with the Sea, and that part which is toward the land extreamly advantaged by all the contrivances of Art, having a Caſtle and a Rampart of very lofty baſtions to guard it. I found here ſeveral ancient Inſcriptions, by me copied, which will not find room in the compaſs of a Letter. We paſt in ſight of *Zebenico*, and ſaw three Forts, which belong to the Town, *St. Nicolo*, *St. Gioanni*, and *la Fortezza Vecchia*; but we went not a ſhore. That which is moſt worth ſeeing in *Dalmatia*, is *Spatatro*; where is *Diocleſian's* Palace, a vaſt and ſtupendous fabrick, in which he made his reſidence, when he retreated from the Empire. It is as big as the whole town; for the whole town indeed is patch't up out of its ruins, and is ſaid by ſome to take its name from it. The building is maſſive; there is within it an entire Temple of *Jupiter*, eight-square, with noble Porphyrie pillars, and Cornice, worth any bodies admiration. There is a Court before it, adorned with *Egyptian* pillars of that ſtone called *Pyropoicilos*, and a Temple under it, now dedicated to *St. Lucia*; and up and down the Town ſeveral fragments of Antiquity, with Inſcriptions and other things, worth taking notice of.

Four miles from *Spatatro* is *Salona*, which ſhews the ruins of a great Town. About as much farther from *Salona* ſtands *Cliffa* upon a rocky Hill, an eminent Fortrefs of the *Venetians*, which is here the frontier againſt the Turk; from whence they repuſt him in their late wars with great honour. I was at *Leſina*, where is nothing

nothing very remarkable ; but *Biondi*, that hath written our English History, was of it. *Trau* is ancient, and hath good marks of its being so. Here I spoke with Doctor *Stafleo*, who put out that fragment of *Petronium Arbitr* ; and I saw his Manuscript.

I was in the harbour of *Ragusi*, but not in the town, because we made no stay there. From hence we past the gulf of *Ludua*, and saw the Mountains of *Antivari*, the Plain of *Durazzo* and *Apollonia*, and came to *Sassino* a small Island, from whence we could see the town of *Valona*, and the mountains *Icroceranii*, which are very near, and are now called Mountains of *Chimera*.

I stay'd a fortnight in *Corfu*, and had time to view all that was considerable in the Island, particularly the Gardens of *Alcinous*, that is, the place where they are supposed to have been, now called *Chryside* ; a most delicious situation : The ancient Port, now called *Ναυπηγία*, and several foundations of ancient fabricks. In *Zante* I was likewise a fortnight, where I saw but little of Antiquity : What is Modern, is very flourishing, and the Island rich and plentiful.

I went from *Zante* to *Patras*, a town in *Achaia*, of good note among the Ancients. Near it is a great Mountain, mention'd by *Homer* by the name of *Petra Olenia*. In the town are several massive ruins, which few there know how to give any account of. There are the remains of a large Church, dedicated to *St. Andrea*, who, they say, was Martyr'd there. This is the first town I saw on the Continent of *Greece*. The Plain about it is very fruitful, full of springs and rivolets ; finely wooded with Olive-trees, Cypresses, Orange and Lemon-trees. The Citrons here are counted among the best of the *Turkish* Empire, and are sent for Presents to *Constantinople*. So are all their Fruits in very good esteem.

In *Athens* I have spent two months. Next to *Rome* I judge it the most worthy to be seen for Antiquities of any I have yet been at. The Temple of *Minerva* is as entire as the *Rotunda*. I was three times in it, and took all the dimensions, with what exactness I could ; but it is difficult, because the Castle of *Athens*, in which it stands, is a garrison, and the *Turks* are jealous, and brutishly barbarous, if they take notice that any measures it. The

length of the *Cella* or Body of the Temple without side, is ————— 168 } Feet } These measures you may rely  
 The breadth — 71 } English. } on, as exact to  $\frac{1}{2}$  a foot.

The *Portico*, of the *Dorique* Order, which runs round it, hath 8 Pillars in front, 17 on the sides; the length of the *Portico* is 230 feet English. I have taken all the dimensions within, with those of the *propylæads* and *Portico's*; but they are too long for a Letter. The *fuste* or shaft of the Pillars is  $19\frac{1}{2}$  feet in circumference: The *Intercolumnium*,  $1\frac{1}{4}$  of the diameter of the pillars.

The Temple of *Theseus* is likewise entire, but 'tis much less, though built after the same model: The length of its *cella* is but 73 feet, the breadth, 26. The whole length of the *Portico*, which goes round it, 123 feet. 'Tis a *Dorique* building, as is that of the *Minerva*. Both of them are of white Marble.

About the Cornice on the outside of the Temple of *Minerva* is a *basso relievo* of men on horseback, others in Chariots; and a whole procession of people going to a sacrifice of very curious sculpture. On the Front is the history of the Birth of *Minerva*.

In the Temple of *Theseus* on the Front within-side the *Portico*, at the West-end, is the battle of the *Centauri*; and at the East-end seems to be a Continuation of that history: But there are several figures of Women, which seem to be *Pirithous's* Bride, and those other Ladies which were at the wedding. On the outside the *Portico*, in the spaces between the *Triglyphi*, are several of the prowesses of *Theseus*, most in Wrestling with several persons, in which he excelled: All his postures and locks are express'd with great art. Others are Monsters, which he is made encountering with, as the Bull of *Marathon*, the Bear of *Calydon*, &c.

There is a Temple of *Hercules*, a round fabrick, only of six feet diameter, but neat architecture. The Pillars are of the *Corinthian* order, which support an *Archi-trave*, and *Frise*, wherein are done in *relievo* the Labours of *Hercules*. The top is but one stone, wrought like a Shield, with a flower on the outside, which riseth like a plume of Feathers.

There is yet standing the Tower of *Andronicus Cirrhestes*, which is an *Octogone*, with the figures of 8 Winds, which are large, and of good workmanship; and the names of the Winds remain legible

gible in fair Greek characters, (where a House, which is built against it on one side, does not hinder;) as ἀπλιωτης, Δεξε, βορειε, σιμερον, ζεφουε. Each Wind placed against its quarter in the heavens; and the roof is made of little planks of Marble, broad at bottom, and which meet all in a point at top, and make an obtuse pyramid of some 32 or 36 sides.

There is a delicate Temple of the *Conique* order in the Castle, whether of *Pandrosos*, or whom, I cannot tell; but the work was most fine, and all the ornaments most accurately engraven: The Length of this Temple was 67 }  
The Breadth ————— 38 } Feet.

These Pillars which remain of a Portico of the Emperour *Adrian*, are very stately and noble: They are of the *Corinthian* order, and above 52 feet in height, and  $19\frac{1}{2}$  in circumference: They are canellate; and there are now standing seventeen of them, with part of their Cornice on the top. The building, to which they belonged, I measured the Area of, as near as I could conjecture; and found it near a *thousand* feet in length, and about *six hundred and eighty* in breadth.

Without the Town, the Bridge over the *Eliffus* hath three arches, of solid stone-work: The middlemost is near 20 feet broad. There is the *stadium* yet to be seen, whose length I measured, and found it 630 feet, near to what the precise measure of a *stadium* ought to be, *viz.* 625.

Towards the Southern wall of the Castle there are the remains of the Theater of *Bacchus*, with the Portico of *Eumenes*, which is near it; the semi-diameter, which is the right Sine of the demi-circle which makes the Theatre, is about 150 feet. The whole Body of the Scene, 256. Monsieur *de la Guillotiere* in that Book he hath written of *Athens*, hath made a Cut of a Theatre, which he calls that of *Bacchus*, which is a meer fancy and invention of his own, nothing like the Natural one, which by the Plan, he has drawn of the Town, I judge he did not know. I give you this one hint, that you may not be deceived by that Book, which is wide from truth; as will appear to any body who sees the reality, though to one who hath not seen it, it seems plausibly written. I have dwelt long on *Athens*, but yet have said nothing. This Town alone deserves a whole Book to discourse of it well, which now I have neither time nor room to do; but I have Memorials

by me of all I saw ; which one day, if it please God, I may shew you.

*Thebes* is a large Town, but I found few Antiquities in it, excepting some Inscriptions and Fragments of the Old Wall, and one Gate, which, they say, was left by *Alexander*, when he demolish't the rest. It is about some fifty miles distant from *Athens*, as I judge.

*Corinth* is two daies journey distant : the Castle or *Acropolis* is standing, which is very large. The main of the Town is demolish't, and the houses, which now are scatter'd, and a great distance from one another. So is *Argos*, which to go round would be some four or five miles, as the houses now stand ; but if they stood together, they would scarce exceed a good Village. *Napolo della Rumilia* is a large town, and full of Inhabitants, and the Basha of the *Morea* resides there : It is but very few leagues distant from *Argos*.

*Sparta* is quite forsaken ; and *Mestra* is the Town which is inhabited, four miles distant from it. But one sees great ruines thereabout ; almost all the Walls, several towers and foundations of Temples with pillars and chapitres demolish't : A Theatre pretty entire. It might have been anciently some five miles in compass ; and about a quarter of a mile distant from the River *Eurotus*. The Plain of *Sparta* and of *Laconia* is very fruitful, and long, and well watered. It will be about eighty miles in length, as I judge. The Mountains on the West-side of it very high, the highest I have yet seen in *Greece* ; the *Maniotes* inhabit them. But the Plain of *Calamatta*, which anciently was that of *Messene*, seems rather richer. *Corone* is very abundant in Olives. *Navarino*, which is esteem'd the ancient *Pylos*, hath a very strong Castle, fortified by the *Turks*, and is the best Port in all the *Morea*. *Alpheus* is much the best River, and the deepest, and with great reason extolled by all the ancient Poets, and chosen for the seat of the Olympick Games ; for its very pleasant. The Plains of *Elis* are very goodly and large, fit to breed Horses in, and for hunting ; but not so fruitful as that of *Argos* and *Messene*, which are all riches. The best Woods I saw in *Peloponnesus* are those of *Achaia*, abounding with *Pines* and wild *Pear*, the *Ilex* and *Esculus*-trees, and, where there runs water, with *Plane*-trees.

*Arcadia* is a very goodly Champain, and full of Cattle, but is all encompass'd with Hills, which are very rough and unhewn. *Lepanto* is very pleasantly seated on the Gulf, which runs up as far as *Corinth*; and without the Town is one of the finest Fountains I saw in *Greece*, very rich in veins of Water, and shaded with huge Plane-trees; not inferiour in any thing to the Spring of *Castalia* on Mount *Parnassus*, which runs through *Delphos*, except in this, that one was chosen by the Muses, and the other not; and Poetical fancies have given immortality to the one, and never mentioned the other.

*Delphos* it self is very strangely situated on a rugged hill, to which you have an ascent of some two or three leagues; and yet that is not a quarter of the way to come up to the Pique of *Parnassus*, on the side of which hill it stands. It seems very barren to the eye; but the Fruits are very good, where there are any. The Wines are excellent, and the Plants and Simples, which are found there, very fragrant and of great efficacy.

About *Lebadia*, and all through *Baotia*, the Plains are very fertile, and make amends for the barrenness of the Hills which encompass them: But in Winter they are apt to be overflow'd for that reason, and to be turn'd into Lakes; which renders the *Baotian* Air very thick, and so were their Skulls too, if the Ancients may be believed concerning them; though *Pindar*, who was one that sublimated Poetry to its highest exaltation, and is much fancied and imitated in our Age, as he was admired in his own, was born there: And *Amphion*, who was said to be so divine in his Musick, that he ravish'd the very stones, had skill enough to entice them to make up the Walls of *Thebes*: So that not every thing that's born in a dull Air, is dull. These Vales I found much planted with *Cotton*, and *Sesamum*, and *Cummin*, of which they make great profit and a great trade at *Thebes* and *Lebadia*.

I went from *Thebes* into the Island of *Eubæa* or *Negropont*, and saw the *Euripus*, which ebbs and flows much after the nature of our Tides; only the Moon, and sometimes Winds, make it irregular. The Channel, which runs between the Town, and a Castle, which stands in an Island over against it, is some fifty feet broad; and there are three Mills on it, which shew all the changes and varieties that happen in the Current. Near the *Euripus* and opposite to the Town, they shew a Porr, which they say was *Aulis*, and it is not improbable;

bable; for it must be thereabouts. Between *Negropont* and *Athens* is a high Hill, called *Αγιομαρκῆ*, formerly very dangerous, but now guarded by *Albaneses*: It is part of Mount *Parnasse*; and near it on the left hand lies Mount *Pentelicus*, from whence the *Athenians* anciently fetcht their Stone, and now there is a Convent of *Caloieri's* there, one of the richest of all *Greece*.

In going from *Athens* by Sea, I embarked in a Port, which lies just by *Munichia*: That which they call *Porto Pyrao* lies behind it a mile distant, which is a large Port, able to contain 500 Vessels. There are the ruins of the Town yet remaining, and of the walls, which joyn'd it to the City of *Athens*. I sail'd by *Porto Phalero*, the ancient Haven of *Athens*, which is rather a Road than a Port. I saw an Island called *Φαλαίρα*, where the *Athenians* had anciently Mines. I went a shore on the Promontory of *Sunium*, to view the remains of the Temple of *Minerve*, which stood on it. Hence I sail'd among the Isles of the *Archipelago*, *Macronesia*, *Thermea*, *Serphanto*, *Siphanto*, till I came to *Melo*. From *Melo* I sail'd through the *Cyclades* to come hither. I pass'd by *Andros*, *Tenos*, *Mycone*, *Delos*; *Naxia* and *Paros* I saw at a distance. We sail'd near the Northern Cape of *Sio*, and the Southern of *Mytilene* or *Lesbos*, and so came into the Gulf of *Smyrna*. Within this Gulf stands *Burla* near some small Islands, which is judged to be the ancient *Clazomenæ*; *Foja*, which is the same with the ancient *Phocæa*: Near this the River *Hermus* discharges it self into this Gulf.

In this my Journey I had some misadventures: My Companion, Sir *Giles Eastcourt*, dyed by the way. At Sea I was plunder'd by the *Serphiotes*, where I lost all my Letters, and Yours among the rest, which you sent to My Lord Ambassadour at *Constantinople*, and *Consul Rycant*, whom I find here a very civil and knowing Gentleman, and am much obliged to him for his favours.

I have been as curious as I could in taking the latitudes of some remarkable places: As I find them, I shall give them you:

	Gr. m.		Gr.	
<i>Athens</i> —	38. 5.	} {	<i>Patras</i> —	38. 40.
<i>Corinth</i> —	38. 14.		<i>Delphos</i> —	38. 50.
<i>Sparta</i> —	37. 10.		<i>Thebes</i> —	38. 22.
<i>Corone</i> —	37. 2.		<i>Negropont</i> or <i>Chalcis</i> —	38. 31

I desire you to present my humble Services to the Gentlemen of the *Royal Society*. I am, &c.

*Adverti-*