

HISTORY OF MEDICINE ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΙΑΤΡΙΚΗΣ

Samuel Gridley Howe, MD (1801–1876) Physician, activist, hero of the Greek War of Independence

The struggle for independence of the Greeks from almost four centuries of Ottoman rule and oppression prevailed among the elite of Europe and North America in the early 19th century. Among the young volunteers coming to fight with the Greeks, offering their fortunes and even their lives for the liberation of Greece were Lord Byron, the son of Lucien Bonaparte and many other prominent Europeans and North Americans. One of them was Dr Samuel Gridley Howe of Boston, a Harvard Medical School graduate of 1824. Howe remained in Greece from early 1825 until 1828. He was appointed as a medical/surgeon of the Greek Army and a Chief Medical Officer of the modern man-of-war “Karteria”. He performed his medical duties with enthusiasm and little or no payment, in addition to fighting against the enemy. During this period, he was also responsible for the distribution of materials and supplies, food etc., sent by philhellenic committees of Boston and New York. Among his war and philanthropic activities, Howe was able to offer his own personal account of the Greek War of Independence in a book he authored in 1828. Upon his return to the United States of America (USA) he embarked on additional activities, developing a school for blind children (the Perkins School) and another for the mentally retarded (Walter Fernald School). Howe was an abolitionist, writing against slavery as early as 1833. He was a prolific activist and writer. He was married to Julia Ward, the significant American poet and author, best known for “*The Battle Hymn of the Republic*”. She also was an abolitionist, a social activist and a suffragist.

1. INTRODUCTION

The 19th century was an extremely active period for the establishment of new independent states in Europe and the foundation of democratic regimes in many nations. The American War of Independence in 1776 and the French Revolution in 1789 were the examples for awakening suppressed peoples for freedom all over Europe. The Treaty of Vienna (1815) tried to “calm down” the efforts and revolts for independence by establishing alliances and peace treaties among the large nations.

There was an extensive correspondence between Americans and prominent Greeks living in enslaved Greece or residing overseas. Thomas Jefferson, United States (US) Ambassador in Paris, and Richard Russ, Ambassador in London, showed a keen interest in assisting the Greeks to gain independence, but the US Administration was reluctant to impose sanctions on Turkish cruelty to Greeks, since

it would risk the US of going to war with Turkey. Daniel Webster from Massachusetts, who was prominently known for his philhellenic sentiments, raised the Greek cause for debate in Congress. Important committees to support Greek independence were established by Thomas Winthrop and Edward Everett in Boston, and by others in New York, Philadelphia and elsewhere.^{1,2}

The Greek cause became manifest by the end of 1822 and was featured repeatedly in the annual messages of President James Monroe (1822–1824). His policy was continued by the next President, John Quincy Adams.^{1,2}

While the government and the people of the United States of America (USA) were supporting the Greek struggle for independence, the Great Powers of Europe had a negative attitude towards Greece.

Early in 1821, Prince Metternich had extended informal talks with Lord Londonderry (Castlereagh) about Greece.

ARCHIVES OF HELLENIC MEDICINE 2021, 38(6):806–816
ΑΡΧΕΙΑ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗΣ ΙΑΤΡΙΚΗΣ 2021, 38(6):806–816

C.S. Bartsocas

*National and Kapodistrian University
of Athens, Athens, Greece*

Ο Samuel Gridley Howe (1801–1876):
Ιατρός, αγωνιστής, ήρωας
του Αγώνα της Ελληνικής
Ανεξαρτησίας

Περίληψη στο τέλος του άρθρου

Key words

Anagnos, Michael
Greek War of Independence
Howe, Samuel G
Philhellenes

Submitted 15.3.2021

Accepted 31.3.2021

The two Ministers were concerned about the implications of a revolt against Turkish rule, which would be a major issue in European diplomacy, complicating relations among the great powers. Both sides in the revolt behaved with extreme brutality, massacring large numbers of civilians. Turkish reprisals extended to the Greek population in Constantinople, where the Patriarch, his bishops and the congregation were slaughtered, and to the island of Chios, where the men and the elderly of both sexes were slaughtered, and the women and children were abducted and sold in the slave markets of the Middle East and Egypt. British policy was divided between traditional fears of Russian expansion and liberal support for the Greek revolt.

By 1826, however, the Foreign Secretary of Great Britain, George Canning, had given way to pressure from Russia and France for intervention in the Greek Revolt. Disregarding the Duke of Wellington's objections, Canning, as Prime Minister, proceeded with the negotiations which resulted in the Treaty of London (July 6, 1827), which led to the independence of Greece. Canning was, in effect, the archenemy of the Concert of Europe System set up by the Congress of Vienna in 1815.³

A large philhellenic movement, sympathetic to the Greek cause, the struggle for Independence from the almost 400 years of Ottoman rule and oppression, prevailed among the elite of Europe and North America. Young volunteers came to fight with the Greeks, offering their fortunes and even their lives. Lord Byron, the Italian Count Santarosa, the son of Lucien Bonaparte, and Frank Abney Hastings were among many others who sacrificed their lives fighting for the liberation of Greece.

2. SAMUEL GRIDLEY HOWE, THE HERO

Samuel Gridley Howe was born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1801, the son of Joseph Neals Howe, a ship-owner and a cordage manufacturer, and of Patty Gridley (Howe), who was considered to be one of the most beautiful women of her day. Howe received his elementary education at the famous Boston Latin School, where, according to his daughter, he was treated with cruelty and even beaten. As Laura (Howe) Richards has written: *"So far as I can remember, my father had no pleasant memories of his school days"*. As Howe's father, a Democrat, considered Harvard University a den of Federalists and refused to allow his son to study there, Samuel was enrolled at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. Howe did not apply himself seriously to his studies; according to a classmate of his at Brown, Dr Caswell, who eventually became President of

Brown: *"Samuel G. Howe showed mental capabilities which would naturally fit him for fine scholarship. His mind was quick, versatile, and inventive. I do not think he was deficient in logical power, but the severer studies did not seem to be congenial to him"*. In spite of this, following his graduation from Brown in 1821, Howe enrolled to Harvard Medical School, receiving his MD degree in 1824.³

Shortly after graduation and certification to practice medicine, he became enthusiastic about the Greek Revolution against the 400 years of Turkish rule. His was influenced by his idol, Lord Byron, who had given his fortune and even his life at Messolonghi in Greece, aiding the Greek cause (fig. 1).

Early in 1825 Dr Samuel G. Howe, who eventually became Chief Surgeon of the Greek Navy, arrived in Tripolis, travelling via Monemvasia. Together with his traveling mate, Jonathan Miller, he bore letters of recommendation from Professor Edward Everett of Harvard University addressed to Alexander Mavrokordatos, Secretary of State of the newly established Greek Administration.⁵

Howe, without much money in his pockets, apart from what he could obtain as loans from friends, and without

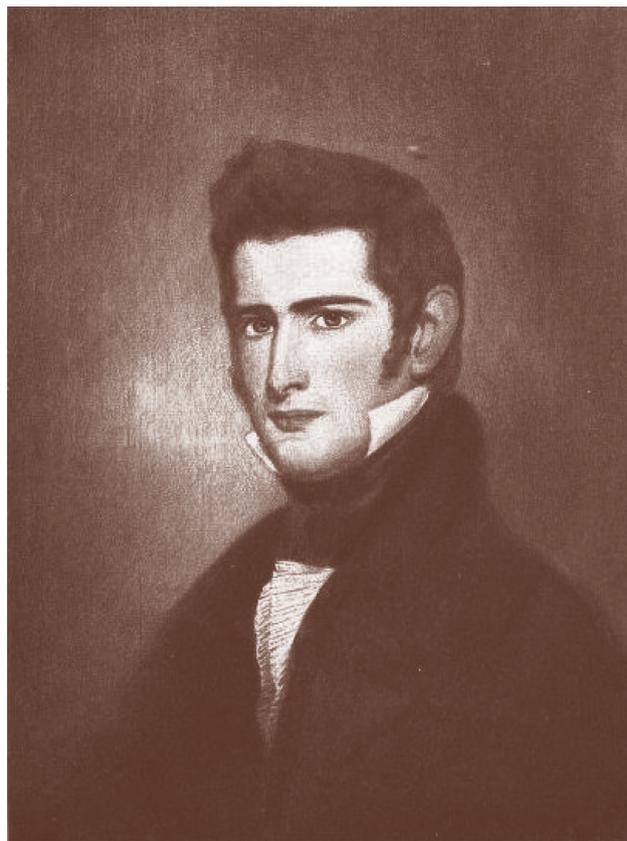


Figure 1. Samuel Gridley Howe as a young man.

his parents' consent, applied to the Philhellenic Committee of Boston, headed by Harvard Professor Edward Everett, requesting to be sent to Greece.

He embarked a brig for the Mediterranean Sea, which brought him to Malta in December 1824. On December 20 of the same year, he wrote to his friend William S. Sampson saying that he was sad at not having reached Greece yet; he hoped, however, that Greece would soon be liberated from the tyrants and wished every success to the Greeks. He added in his letter that he will soon be in Greece and that he will sign up either with the Greek Army or Navy, planning to stay for a long time in that country.⁴

His first appointment in the Greek Army came on March 14, 1825, stating the following (translated from the Greek text): *"Mr Samuel Howe, an American, is being appointed medicosurgeon in the camp of Patra, where he should follow his Excellency the President. His salary is estimated to be 250 grossia per month. The Order of the Executive, 14 March 1825."*

2.1. Letter to his father (25th March 1825)

Once in Tripolis, Howe sent a letter on March 25th to his father saying that he was glad to be in Greece. His intent was to offer his services to this country and at the same time to gain ample medical experience, which would otherwise have required several years, if he had practiced surgery in Boston.

In his letter to his father he writes that he now speaks French, converses in Greek and is about to learn Italian. As he stated in his letter, he enrolled as an army doctor with little pay, since the country was poor, although he was able to make a living by offering his services privately.

"I do not ask for fees, but accept whatever they give me. My knowledge in human anatomy, as well as the fact that I have a steady hand, allow me to perform surgical procedures. I have sufficient clothing to wear for a whole year and after that I shall be dressed in the national (Greek) attire; I am fond of the Greeks, they are clever and brave people.

I made the acquaintance of three Americans, Lieutenant-General Jarvis, Captain Miller and a certain Mr Allen. Lt-Gen. Jarvis serves in the Greek Army and has participated in a great number of battles. As a result of this he was nominated General, in spite of his young age; he is only 25 years old but he is a man of sound judgment; he enjoys the full confidence of the Greek Administration and offers great services to the nation. I am proud to be his fellow-countryman.

Captain Miller, who is known to you, is a brave soldier, entirely devoted to the struggle for Independence. He dresses like the Greeks and carries arms like them.

Mr Allen says he is a second lieutenant of the US Navy; I hardly know him, but I do not believe him.

I feel sorry for the loss of Lord Byron and of Lord Murray. I also understand that Colonel Leicester Stanhope was recalled to England".

Howe continues in his letter that he was about to set off on 18th April for Tripolis together with Jarvis; however, they only reached Andravida.

"On the 19th I make the acquaintance of President George Kountouriotis. A number of battles take place with the Turks; their armed forces are under the command of some wicked Italians and Austrians. My friends Kallerghis and Santarosa are fighting bravely; Count Santarosa, who is fighting the enemy at Neocastro, sent me a letter. I fight and at the same time offer my medical services.

I met Demetri Ypsilantis who is facing great difficulties with his work.

On 24th April, I met Mavrokordatos who is fighting the enemy as well; he is well composed and he does not show cowardice, which they blame him of. We are waiting for the enemy to come forward".

Howe continues by telling his father that Miller left for Messolonghi on 28th April and describes the difference between the characters of Miller, who was noble, high minded and full of enthusiasm, and Whitecombe, an Englishman, who was brave, but lacked good manners. He then narrates the battles in Neocastro, where he met Giacomowski from Poland. He tells his father of the discord between the Greek commanders, and pays tribute to Mavrokordatos.

On 10th May he was in Kalamata, where he was told that Santarosa, that great figure, was killed in a dreadful battle. When Mavrokordatos saw the great losses he called Santarosa to go away with him; the latter replied: *"Never; we have enough men and we will continue to fight"*. And Howe continues in his letter, *"Santarosa flung himself into the battle in which he was killed. He fought with a handful of men against thousands of the enemy. He died like a hero. May he rest in peace. In that battle Allen fought and showed great bravery"*.

Howe continues: *"My friend Jarvis was taken prisoner by Ibrahim; the latter offered him money to fight on his side; they spoke for one hour in French, but Jarvis did not yield to Ibrahim's offer and escaped unharmed having lost everything, money, ammunition, horses, etc."* He describes in his letter the battles of Sfaktiria and Neocastro. He refers with grief to the conflicts between the Greek commanders.

"On 22nd May I met Demetri Kallerghis, the Commander of Artillery, who described the great courage of the Greeks. During the battle of Navarino, Kallerghis lost half of his men; among

the captured by the enemy was Millingham, an English doctor, who finally came to terms with Ibrahim; I am pleased that he is not an American. Cavalier Coleno arrived and confirmed the loss of our common friend Santarosa. I feel sorrow when I think of the widow and the children of this noble Knight, Santarosa.

It is end of May and I am in Kalamata, at a camp for the wounded, escorted by a young Swiss Sub-Lieutenant of Kallerghis' Corps; he fought with Napoleon's army and was injured during a battle. I have another assistant, a young Greek student.

In June I went to the island of Hydra where I stayed with my friend Ed Masson; I spent time with Miller and another Englishman named Hayden. I have good news from Messolonghi, which resists the siege; the Greeks fight bravely.

I left Hydra on 25th June for Nafplion, where I made the acquaintance of Andreas Metaxas, the Minister of War, who appointed me as Medical Officer to Demetri Ypsilanti's Corps, engaged in the battle at Molous; here I came across Emmerson Tennent, an Irishman, friend of Jarvis".

Then Howe recounts the French General Roche's activities and refers to a certain friend named Washington, who was a distant nephew of President Washington. Howe portrays the latter as a fortune seeker of unscrupulous character. According to Howe, he sent a letter to Russell, the President of the Philhellenic Committee in Boston, regarding Sub-lieutenant Washington's behavior.

Howe continues: *"At the end of August I was instructed to go to Crete as Medical Officer to Kallerghi's Corps; I thus found myself at Gramvoussa"*⁴

Howe's formal appointment document was as follows (translation from the Greek):⁷

*"No 12331 The Temporary Administration of Greece
The Ministry of War*

To the Medicosurgeon Mister Howe

This Ministry for your ability and experience appoints you Medicosurgeon of the Gramvoussa camp in Crete and designates a salary of 300 grossia monthly, an additional 100 only monthly, for as many persons you might need to assist your work. It is certain that this will excite your soul zeal and eagerness for the exact execution of your task, which it is expected from your worthiness.

Nafplion 7 October 1825

*The Committee
of the Military*

The Secretary General"

Crete revolted once more. Howe stayed in Crete for two months and during that time he got to know the Cretans well; there, he met General Costas Botsaris. At the beginning of November, Howe returned to Nafplion.

On 25th November Howe left for Athens, where he stayed with Dr Kaizer Vitali, a doctor. He was amazed at the ancient ruins of Athens.

From there he sent a letter to his friend Sampson in which he describes the events of the uprising.

Howe returned to Nafplion, from where he sent another letter to his father on December 29, reporting recent events. Most of his friends were sick. He gives additional news with his friend (Estwick) Evans, an American. The latter was a devout supporter of the Greeks, a distinguished jurist and member of the House of Representatives. He describes the hardships and privations they face and speaks of the siege of Messolonghi and of Lord Byron. *"I now speak the language like a Greek, and think like Greeks do"*.⁶

Unfortunately, Messolonghi was finally taken by the enemy on April 22, 1826. Howe sent a letter to Sampson on April 30, in which he describes in heartbreaking words the fall of the town, the brave exodus of the besieged and their slaughter by the enemy.

"I am afraid that among the dead is Jarvis, the brave. He fought for the freedom of Greece and his death crowned a life dedicated to this country". He describes in horrendous words the acts of violence committed by the enemy over the non-combatant civilians, and the great courage of the Greek defenders.

"Everybody believes that the struggle is over, but nothing is lost. We shall wage war and recapture whatever we lost". He looks forward to the arrival of Admiral Cochran and hopes that the plunderer Pasha is driven out of the country or leaves his bones in this soil. *"I shall stay here; I will not die from the enemy's arms; one day, I shall return to America and Greece will triumph"* (fig. 2).

In a new letter to Sampson on 8th July 1826, Howe discloses that he wrote to Professor Everett and continues saying: *"Those romantic ideas I had are gone. The only idea I still nurture is how to make my father and my friends proud of me, the idea of self-respect and good reputation"*. He further refers to George Gennadios, an eminent scholar of outstanding character and a patriot who, in a collection to raise money for the cause of freedom, gave his purse saying that he had nothing more to give for his country, but his life. During the same collection, Prince Demetrios Ypsilantis handed over the golden sheath of his sword. The Greeks started recovering steadily.⁶

November 1826

Howe, having been nominated Chief Medical Officer, was serving on board the modern steam-driven man-of-war



Figure 2. Elliott's painting of Samuel Gridley Howe wearing a Greek warrior's dress (John Hay Library, Brown University).

"Karteria". In his letters he speaks highly of two Englishmen, Captain Hamilton and Commander (Frank Abney) Hastings, the latter being an intrepid warrior. The warship "Karteria", which he was commanding, was built by him, with funds he had contributed. He was injured at the battle of Aetolikon; his wounds were infected and he died in 1828 at the age of 34 years in Zante.

Howe often said that many died of unattended light injuries due to lack of medicines. Hamilton once said about Hastings: *"I envy Hastings, but his post is desperately perilous and he has a wife and kids"*.

"We recruited an Englishman named Derby; the lieutenant commander on board the ship was a Greek named Josef Falangas. We sailed round the Aegean Sea going to the islands of Samos, Chios, Patmos, Syros, Amorgos".

Howe continues: *"Half of the peninsula of Moreas was devastated by Ibrahim; Athens is besieged by the enemy; things are bad; there is distress, poverty and famine everywhere. In spite of that, Greeks are optimistic for the future; there are*

*people going around with ears or noses cut off by the enemy, their eyes picked out or their limbs amputated; they are still hopeful for the future. (Denis) Bourbahi (a Frenchman of Greek origin and officer of Napoleon), Gordon and Fabvier, are preparing the defense of Athens. Fabvier, with 500 men, is in town covering the districts of Phaliron, Salamis, Elefsis. We stopped at Ambelakia of Salamis, where a war council was convened with (Lord Thomas) Gordon, Aidek (Frank Abney) Hastings, Count Patzo, and Makriyannis. Generals Vassos and Bourbahi are fighting. We sailed for Phaliro where we disembarked armed forces. In the meantime, we engaged in battles with the enemy during which even I had to use my rifle"*⁶

At this point, Howe describes the fight against Kioutahi (better known as "the battle of Athens") and describes Bourbahi's arrest, (General) Vasso's bravery and the boldness of Fabvier and Karaiskaki. *"I myself was engaged in battle, but at the same time performed surgery; we returned to Aegina where I was handed government letters for Finley and we continued our journey to Nafplion"*.

Starting from July 1827, Howe kept a diary in which he gives a picture of the terrible internal situation of the country with Grivas-Kolokotroni's disputes and Cochran's arrival, with whom he became acquainted. During this period, he was responsible for the distribution of materials and supplies, food etc., sent by committees from abroad and, in particular, from the USA.

On August 20, 1827 he received letters from his father and Mr Everett. Asked by Cochran, Howe tends to the injuries accidentally inflicted with a pistol on the son of Lucien Bonaparte (Napoleon's second brother). Young Bonaparte had little chances of surviving his injuries and Cochran was crying like a child, feeling affection for the youth for his kind attitude towards the cause of Greece.

On November 2, 1827, while on the island of Paros, he wrote a letter to his friend Sampson, describing the naval battle at Navarino and the partial liberation of Greece.

On the 13th of the same month Howe set sail for USA aboard the brig "Ioanna" as envoy of the Greek Government to raise money from the Greek Committees there. He went ashore in New York in February 1828. His mission was difficult; he described to the Americans the tragedy which befell the Greek nation. He kept asking for money to build hospitals and insisted that he should not be appointed administrator, but that Mavrokordatos and Miaoulis, who were people of integrity be appointed. *"Doubting their devotion and their integrity is tantamount to considering Bruno, Washington or Lafayette as crooks and impostors"*⁶

Leaving New York, Howe went to Boston, where, with his philanthropic character, he deeply moved many Ameri-

cans, who offered a lot of supplies. Thus, with a ship full of provisions he returned to Greece and went ashore on the island of Aegina on 12 March 1828.

It is amazing that in spite of all these activities he had the time to write a very informative book entitled: "*An historical sketch of the Greek Revolution*" (Boston, 1828) (fig. 3).

Howe's enthusiasm was not restricted to war actions. Confronted with a devastated and poor new nation, he offered his advice, opinion and ideas for development and assistance to the Greeks. An example was a report to the Regency Committee of Greece with a contribution for organizing hospital and medical care of the Greek troops. The translation in English from the Greek is as follows:

"April 21, 1827 To the Respected Regency
Committee of Greece

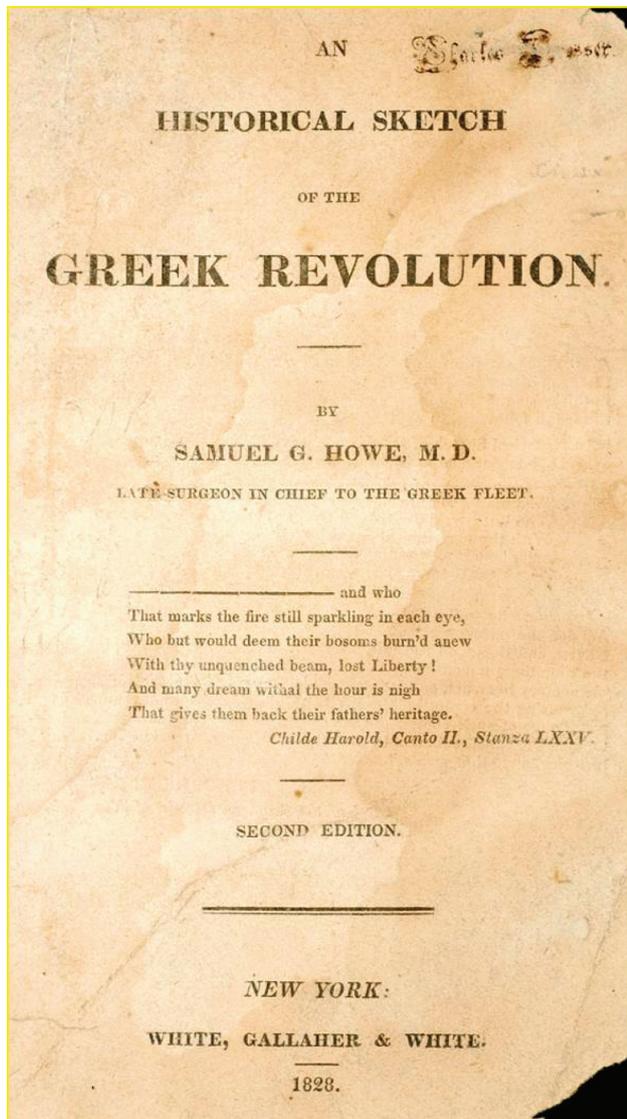


Figure 3. Frontispiece of Howe's book on the Greek War of Independence.

It is two and a half years, since I departed from America, with the purpose to work for Greece through my profession. I brought with me letters of recommendation from the Hellenic Committee in America. All travel and other expenses were carried out through me. Upon arriving in Greece, I offered my services to the then Temporary Administration by which I was entrusted to follow along with the Greek Army to Messenia, which I followed with pleasure. I stayed two months in Calamata, visiting the wounded and others referred to the camp there. Subsequently, I was sent to Gramvoussa, where I worked five months inside and outside other lands. Upon return from Gramvoussa, I was entrusted to work in the National Hospital for sick people and wounded in Nafplion. I executed this duty as I could, for almost one year. After that by the request of Mister Hastings, I entered the steamboat "Karteria", where I reside until now. For all these above services of mine in Greece, I received almost nothing as my salary. Because I desired to work as I could, always without pay. Nevertheless, I am not satisfied with all these small favors. But I wish to prove a cause of greater benefits to the Greek nation. And letters, which I received these days from America provide me with useful hopes. My plan is to found a standard hospital in an appropriate location, for the needs of the armed forces of Crete, which could accommodate approximately one hundred wounded. After this to found moving hospitals, that is to say to appoint to all military camps supervisor surgeons, who would have with them a few servants, and all necessary medical and the rest, so that they would have to admit the wounded in battles, to visit them temporarily and then to take care of them and refer to the standard hospital. I know from experience that the Greek soldiers are afraid to be wounded during the battle anticipating the lack of a doctor to visit them.

This is the reason that I desire to found the mobile hospitals, which are known throughout the world. The hospitals must possess separately everything needed, as animals, servants etc. Their servants must be dressed in the same uniform, so that the soldiers would recognize that when wounded, they would be accepted by them, taken care and referred to the standard hospital to be visited and treated without any personal expenses. I promise to succeed in this, without any expenses of the Greek Government. I ask for its part an only and only letter to the Greek Committees in America, testifying that I did my debt for a sufficient time in Greece, that I have been working and took care to the full extent the General Hospital, and that I desire that the Government will place in action my plan.

In Poros, April 21/May 3, 1827

Samuel G. Howe

Σ.Γ. Χάου
No 419
The Greek State
The Regency Committee"

The document bears Howe's signature in Greek and English!

Among his war and philanthropic activities, Howe was able to offer his own personal account of the Greek War of Independence, his important book which appeared in several editions. A prolific author, he published his ideas on slavery, justice, legislature and the protection of mentally handicapped and blind.

The diaries that he kept, paint images of severe poverty, near total lack of organization of the armed forces, rations of snails and weeds, desperation at every turn and, yet, surprising defeat of the Turks in the Islands. Fortunately, the allied fleet of England, France and Russia, defeated the Turkish-Egyptians at Navarino, October 1827. However, by that time, the entire country had been ravaged, was apparently hopeless and could not function.

2.2. A second trip to Greece

Howe returned to the US and worked with the Boston American Greek Committee to raise funds for post-war relief and then sailed back to Greece, beginning the restoration of the country on the island of Aegina, in the Saronic Gulf. He had arrived with about \$ 60,000 and a brig loaded with clothing and food, and began to direct the restoration project by rebuilding the quay at Aegina, named the "American wharf", still serving today. Rather than distribute food, he gave the people seeds. He estimated that \$ 100 worth of seeds would, in less than a year, generate about \$ 4,000 worth of grain and required that the peasants allocate one-third of that for schools. He then shifted his attention to the Isthmus of Corinth where he found a site of about 2,000 stremmata (about 10 square miles), received approval from the Greek government to build there and proceeded to found the town of "Washingtonia".

2.3. New adventures

Following his return to Boston, after suffering the loss of all his valuables, which were pilfered in transit through Malta, he explored further endeavors, evaluating the possibility of editing a newspaper in Philadelphia. Having rejected that idea, he was walking along Boylston Street one day when he met a fellow Brown and Harvard Medical School classmate, 1821 and 1824, respectively, by the name

of John Dix Fisher. Fisher described his dream of developing a school for blind children and immediately captured Howe's imagination. Within days, Howe left for Europe in order to visit such a school in Paris. He had also been deployed by the American Polish Committee on behalf of the Marquis de Lafayette to take provisions to Poles made destitute by their conflict with Prussia. Many of them had sought refuge in Prussia. Howe travelled to Berlin where he followed the appropriate diplomatic guidelines for carrying out such a delicate task. While in the act of distributing food to these Poles he was arrested by the Prussian police and placed in solitary confinement where he was held for five weeks. By luck, the day that he arrived in Berlin, he had met a fellow American who came looking for him at his hotel and was told that no such person existed. Eventually, through diplomatic channels, Howe was found, released and was sent a letter signed by J. Fenimore Cooper and S.F.B. Morse on behalf of the American Polish Committee that negotiated his release. Howe also received a very complimentary letter from General Lafayette thanking him for his valuable services. This occurred soon after the visit of the Marquis to Boston for the 50th year commemoration of the American Revolution.

2.4. Philanthropy of Howe

When Howe returned to Boston in April 1832, he was appointed the first Director of the Perkins School for the Blind. In a sense, the Institute had three founders – John D. Fisher, MD who generated the concept, Thomas H. Perkins, who paid the State for Incorporation and provided a building, and Dr Samuel Gridley Howe, who served as the first Director (fig. 4).

Since there were no schools for the blind in America, Samuel Howe was directed by the trustees to visit schools for the blind in Europe to observe their programs and to obtain educational aids and appliances. He was also instructed to hire two teachers to assist him.

He opened the school in his father's home, with two young sisters, Sophia and Abigail Carter from Andover, Massachusetts. Within a month the enrollment had reached six students, ranging in age from six to twenty years. Since he needed a larger place, Thomas H. Perkins, a wealthy Bostonian and one of the School's trustees, offered his house. The school moved again in 1839 to the Mt. Washington House Hotel in South Boston and changed its name to the Perkins Institution for the Blind.^{3,4}

During those early years, Samuel Howe developed his philosophy of education of the blind. He believed they

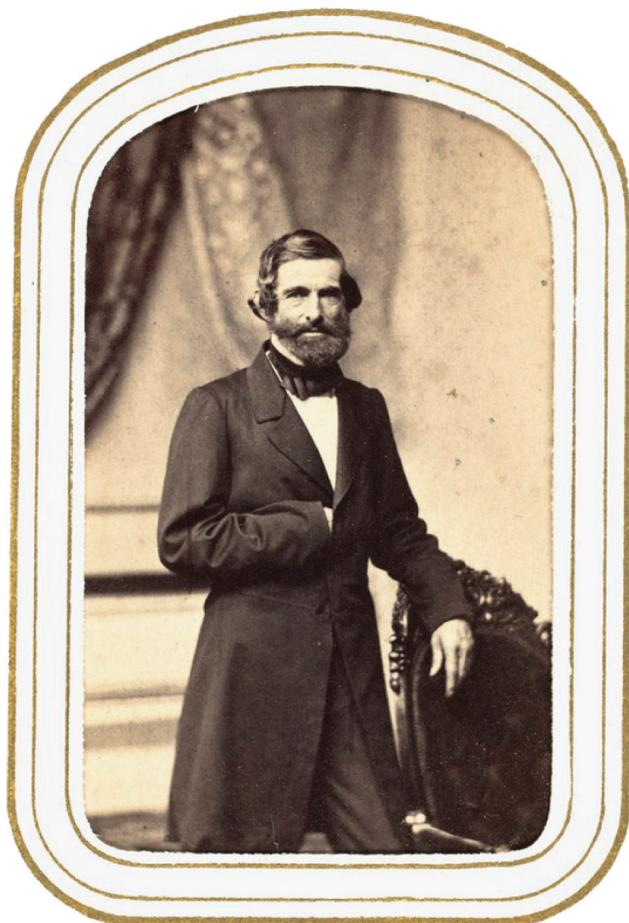


Figure 4. Samuel Gridley Howe – middle aged doctor.

should no longer be “doomed to inequality”, to becoming only “mere objects of pity” and he believed that blind children could learn as much as other children. During his first years as director he visited 15 states, getting schools started in Ohio, Tennessee, Kentucky and Virginia.

In 1837, Samuel Howe began an experiment in education that would bring him to the attention of the world. His success in educating Laura Bridgman, a girl who became deaf-blind from scarlet fever at the age of two, proved it was possible. His interest in promoting the education of children with disabilities went beyond the blind and deaf-blind. He also helped to initiate schools for mentally retarded children (1848) and deaf children (1867). Howe has rightly been called the most significant and foresighted figure in the American history of special education.^{3,4}

Howe soon developed raised-type books (similar to those he had seen in Paris) that, for the first time, permitted blind children to read. He also developed a program to teach verbal communication through palm-writing. Laura Bridgman, a blind and deaf girl, was enrolled at the school

and quickly learned to read and communicate using these methods. Charles Dickens heralded her success and Howe’s work in “*American Notes*”.^{3,4}

In 1843, Howe, while serving as a member of the Massachusetts State Legislature, joined Dorothy Dix (“*Memorial to the Legislature*”) calling attention to the inhumane conditions of the State’s alms-houses (the main alms-house in Boston was located behind the newly built Massachusetts General Hospital), especially in dealing with the mentally ill. Also in that year, he married Julia Ward of New York City and they joined Horace Mann and his bride for a dual honeymoon in Europe.

Julia Ward Howe (1819–1910) was a significant American poet and author. She was best known for the writing of “*The Battle Hymn of the Republic*”. She was also an abolitionist, a social activist and a suffragist.

Impressed by the fact that mentally retarded individuals were detained with chains in asylums, Howe also founded the Massachusetts School for Idiotic and Feeble-minded Youth. This venture was incorporated as another public/private partnership, with Perkins paying the \$ 2,500 incorporation fee. Initially, the Trustees of the Perkins School also administered this school. The latter embodied the beginning of mental retardation services in the US and soon became the Walter E. Fernald State School, named after its first Director, who served from 1887–1924. In 1961, it became the Eunice Kennedy Shriver Center, supported by the National Institute of Child Health and Development.

3. HOWE’S DAUGHTERS

Laura Howe was named after Laura Bridgman, Howe’s favorite patient. Julia Romana Howe married Michael Anagnos (1888), a Greek scholar who succeeded Samuel as Director at Perkins. Laura Howe married Henry Howe Richards (1907) whose family owned a paper mill in Gardiner, Maine. Laura and Maud Howe collaborated on “*The life of Julia Ward Howe*” for which they won the Pulitzer Prize in 1917. Maud, a founding member of the Newport Art Association, married John Elliott (1899), an immigrant from Lincolnshire, England, a painter, muralist, who, in 1878, studied at the Academie Julian and with Carolus Doran. Elliott’s work is in the National Museum of Art in Washington and in the Elliott Room, Boston Public Library, where he executed a two-panel ceiling mural, “*Triumph of time*”. He also painted a portrait of Samuel Howe titled “*Chevalier*” that hangs in the John Hay Library at Brown University, his and Howe’s alma mater. This painting commemorates his

role as Surgeon General in the Greek War for Independence that resulted in expulsion of the Turks (fig. 2).

Early in the US Civil War, Howe was assigned to the USSC, the Sanitary Commission, headed by Frederick Law Olmsted (1880) throughout the War. This organization evolved into the American Red Cross.^{3,4}

Howe was an abolitionist; he had written against slavery as early as 1833 and became actively involved, along with his best friend, Charles Sumner, in the founding of the Boston Vigilance Committee in 1846. Because of their concern over the abduction and return transport of slaves by so-called slave-catchers, they were called Conscience Whigs. Howe's anti-slavery activities increased after the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 and he broke from Daniel Webster and other Whigs who were sympathetic with Southern slavery. In 1854, Howe joined the New England Emigrant Aid Co founded by Eli Thayer, with major support from Alexander Bullock (1880). He shipped a howitzer from the New York arsenal to aid the fight. Their primary purpose was to develop funding in support of New Englanders, especially Irish immigrants, to move to the Kansas Territory and shift the balance of power in favor of Kansas becoming a free state. Unfortunately, only about 2,000 immigrants pursued this course. Through these efforts, Howe became a member of the Secret Six, providing arms and support to John Brown for use at Harper's Ferry.^{3,8}

Before his death in January 1876, Howe had designated Michael Anagnos to succeed him as the Director of the Perkins School. In 1866, Howe had first met him as Michalis Anagnostopoulos in Crete when both were aiding the Cretans to escape Turkish domination. Anagnostopoulos was writing as editor of the Greek newspaper, the "National Guard", and Howe was supporting relief efforts. Anagnostopoulos was born in 1837, in Epirus (North-western Greece), into a farming family. By the early 1850s, he had studied law and was a newspaper editor. He and Howe became fast friends and Howe hired him to be his assistant at the Perkins School to teach Greek and Latin to the blind children. He accepted and shortened his name to Anagnos. He gained not only the respect of Julia Romana but also her love, and they married in 1870. Anagnos then became the guiding force for the next thirty years that made the Perkins School the best in the US. He generated major funding, developed books for the blind and placed them in all Massachusetts libraries, and developed vocational training programs. When Alexander Graham Bell sent Helen Keller to him, Anagnos paired her with Annie Sullivan, securing the future of the School through their advocacy of the programs.

4. CRETAN UPRISING

In July 1866 a revolution broke out in Crete as a result of the infringement by the Supreme Commander of the island, Ishmael Pasha, of the privileges granted by the Sublime Porte (the Ottoman court at Constantinople) to the Cretans. The revolutionaries appealed to the General Consuls at Chania and to the President of the United States, explaining the reasons for the uprising; the public opinion in the US was favorably disposed to their cause.

It was then that Samuel Gridley Howe reappeared on the scene. Now elderly and mature, he recollected many memories from the past, when, as a young surgeon, he came to Greece and contributed, to the best of his ability, to the liberation of this country. In spite of his advanced age, he decided to offer his assistance once again to this nation. He got in touch with Morris, the American envoy in Constantinople, who, having been carried away by the passion of Howe's letter, declared his own position in favor of the struggle; the latter wrote to Mr Finlay, the English Press and "Times" correspondent in Athens, making an appeal for this noble cause.

Howe arrived in Greece accompanied by his spouse and two daughters, bringing with him the proceeds raised in Boston. He wished to engage an escort for Crete, and Anagnostopoulos gave him Elias Stekouli, a member of Joseph Garibaldi's 1,000 combatants; the latter on being offered payment, said to Howe: "Since you are not paid by your Country to serve Freedom, how dare you offer to pay me for work to save my Nation?". Howe embraced the Greek patriot and accepted his offer. Although the Turks had set a price on Howe's head, he went to Crete and accomplished his mission.^{4,7}

5. EPILOGUE

Samuel Gridley Howe died in January 1876 and his remains are resting in Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The memory of his achievements and his philanthropic activities and contributions have remained strong for almost two centuries. The Perkins School for the Blind and the Walter E. Fernald State School were pioneer institutions that cared for thousands of individuals in need for over 150 years! Greece expressed its great appreciation with strong grateful letters to his wife and daughters, and official participation in the celebrations for the 100th anniversary of his birth. His name has been given to streets in various Greek cities, his bust has been erected in Tripolis (fig. 5) and his face has been carved on the marble monument of the Philhellenes in Athens (fig. 6).

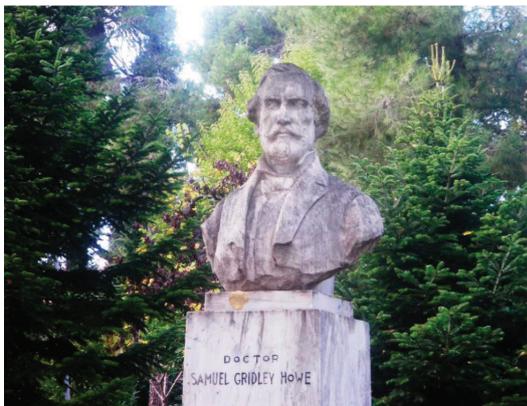


Figure 5. Bust of Samuel Gridley Howe in Tripolis, Greece.

Samuel Gridley Howe was a pioneer and abolitionist, fighting for freedom in Greece, and against slavery in the USA, and establishing and organizing special schools for the blind and the mentally handicapped. His philanthropic mind guided him where and when to offer his generous contribution. He possessed a unique activist’s mind, far ahead of his contemporaries, offering and contributing when and where needed, during and throughout his lifetime. He was “the real man for all seasons” (figures 7–9).



Figure 6. Carving of Dr Howe’s face on the Philhellenes’ Monument in Athens, Greece.



Figure 8. Samuel Gridley Howe’s house in Boston.



Figure 7. Samuel Gridley Howe’s grave at Mt. Auburn cemetery.

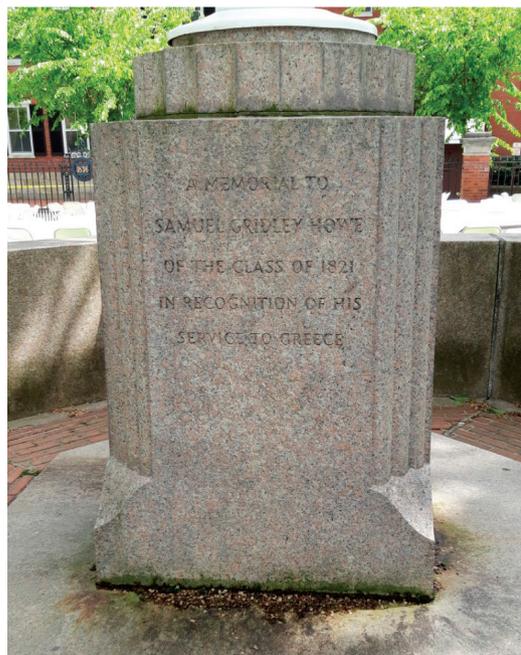


Figure 9. Howe’s memorial in the Brown University Campus.

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

**Ο Samuel Gridley Howe (1801–1876): Ιατρός, αγωνιστής,
ήρωας του Αγώνα της Ελληνικής Ανεξαρτησίας**

Χ.Σ. ΜΠΑΡΤΣΟΚΑΣ

Εθνικό και Καποδιστριακό Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών, Αθήνα

Αρχεία Ελληνικής Ιατρικής 2021, 38(6):806–816

Ένας μεγάλος αριθμός σημαντικών Ευρωπαίων και Βορειοαμερικανών είχαν εντυπωσιαστεί από τον Αγώνα των Ελλήνων να αποτινάξουν τον οθωμανικό ζυγό και την καταπίεση στις αρχές του 19ου αιώνα. Ενθουσιώδεις εθελοντές θυσίαζαν και πρόσφεραν στην Ελλάδα τις περιουσίες τους, αλλά και τη ζωή τους ακόμη. Παραδείγματα υπήρξαν ο Λόρδος Βύρων, ο γιος του Λουκιανού Βοναπάρτη, ο κόμης Σανταρόζα και πολλοί άλλοι. Ένας από αυτούς ήταν και ο ιατρός Samuel Gridley Howe, από τη Βοστώνη, απόφοιτος της Ιατρικής Σχολής του Harvard. Ο Howe παρέμεινε στη χώρα μας κατά το χρονικό διάστημα από 1825–1828. Διορίστηκε ιατροχειρουργός των Ελληνικών Στρατευμάτων και Αρχίατρος στο πλοίο «Καρτερία». Με ενθουσιασμό επιτελούσε τα ιατρικά καθήκοντα, με ελάχιστη ή και καθόλου αμοιβή, ενώ συγχρόνως πολέμησε κατά των Τούρκων. Συγχρόνως, ως υπεύθυνος διένειμε τρόφιμα, υλικά και προμήθειες που έστελναν τα Φιλελληνικά Κομιτάτα της Βοστώνης και της Νέας Υόρκης. Τις προσωπικές του εντυπώσεις για τον Πόλεμο Ανεξαρτησίας της Ελλάδος εξέδωσε σε βιβλίο το 1828. Επιστρέφοντας στις Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες της Αμερικής συνέχισε το έργο του με φιλανθρωπικές δραστηριότητες, την ίδρυση ενός σχολείου για τυφλά παιδιά και ενός ιδρύματος για τους νοητικώς υστερούντες. Επανήλθε μάλιστα στην Ελλάδα σε μεγάλη ηλικία για να ενισχύσει την Κρητική Επανάσταση.

Λέξεις ευρητηρίου: Ανάγνος Μ, Επανάσταση 1821, Howe Samuel G, Φιλέλληνες

References

1. PAPPAS FD. *Portraits of historic American Philhellenes*. 3rd ed. Hellenic Republic, Athens, 2008
2. VAGENAST, DIMITRAKOPOULOU E. *American Philhellenes: Volunteers in "21"* (in Greek). [Βαγενάς Θ, Δημητρακοπούλου Ε. «Αμερικανοί φιλέλληνες: Εθελοντές στο είκοσι ένα»], Mati Publications, Katerini, 2017
3. RICHARDS LE. *Two noble lives: Samuel Gridley Howe, Julia Ward Howe*. L.C. Page & Co, Boston, MA, 1911
4. MUIR R. *Wellington: Waterloo and the fortunes of peace 1814–1852*. Yale University Press, New Haven, CT & London, 2015:180–181, 233–237, 296–298, 313–314, 357–358, 361
5. LEOPOLD CLASSIC LIBRARY. *Proceedings at the celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Dr Samuel Gridley Howe, November 11, 1901*. Wright & Potter Printing Co, Boston, 1902
6. NATIONAL (GREEK) STATE ARCHIVES. Vlahogiannis collection 388–406
7. RICHARDS LE. *Letters and journals of Samuel Gridley Howe*. Dana Estes & Co, Boston, 1909
8. HOWE SG. *An historical sketch of the Greek revolution*. 2nd ed. White, Gallaher & White, New York, 1828
9. HOWE SG. *The Cretan refugees and their American helpers*. Nabu Public Domain Reprints

Corresponding author:

C.S. Bartsocas, 47 Vassillisis Sofias Ave., 106 76 Athens, Greece
e-mail: cbartsocas@nurs.uoa.gr