

STROLLING THROUGH THE AGES ONE AFTERNOON...

It has been said that Alexandria looks like an old and impressive noblewoman, once powerful, cosmopolitan, dynamic and rich, but who has lost her grandeur through time that conquers all... However, she remains the illustrious noblewoman, with the refined gentle, but deeply troubled face, through her age, still adorned in her now-worn gowns and her dull, crumpled, but elaborate jewels. But always celebrated, always admirable and therefore respected!

These things were going through my mind this afternoon, when I went out for a walk without a specific destination. I was walking and trying to listen to the history of this city, to feel its pulse with observation, with imagination, with my relatively little knowledge, with the mind, especially with the soul.

Without realizing it, I almost drew a circle through the historic center of the bustling Great City (as it was historically established, corresponding to the City i.e. Constantinople) starting from the Patriarchate, going down the promenade, moving east towards the Library of Alexandria – where I also entered the spiritual jurisdiction of the Metropolis of Naucratis on foot – and returned crossing right through the center.

It was already evening. The voices of the Sikhs (literally sheikhs), mixed with music, honking, laughter and shouting, blared in unison – through the loudspeakers that occupied the tops of the minarets, permanently pinning the Sikh inside the mosque, kneeling in front of the microphone – above the city of 10+ million inhabitants, to glorify “at the setting sun” the Great God. “Allah u akbar”... God is the greatest!

Then I realized that this afternoon walk was essentially a walk through time, a walk through centuries past, lasting almost two hours, through vivid images of elaborate buildings of different architectural rhythms, but always exquisitely neat, sometimes competing in glamor and in a de facto display of economic, professional, social, intellectual power, even national sentiment I think...

A magical walk in the Great City, in the city where I have been walking for a total of 8 years, on the same streets walked by Alexander the Great, Cleopatra, Julius Caesar, Hypatia...

The Teachers of the Universal Church, Holy Archbishops of Alexandria Athanasios and Cyril...on the corner of the street on which with love and humility Holy Patriarch John the Merciful bent to give help to the poor beggar, the “least brother” of Christ...

Where the glittering Patriarchal carriage with six horses passed, officially transporting Patriarch of Alexandria Photios Peroglou who was from Tinos and the pro-Venizelos, charismatic and insightful Patriarch Meletios Metaxakis...

Where Tositsas, Averof, Benakis, Rallis, Penelope Delta, Cavafy walked... next to the curbs of the streets where the blood of fearless believers flowed from the Arab sword...

Where the Italian, English, Greek architects silently competed to conquer time with their architectural creations...

They say that if you drink water from the Nile even once, the heart is enchanted and you leave this land with difficulty, since you will want to return again!

+Panteleimon of Naucratis