

THE GREEK-AMERICAN THEATRE WAS BORN IN CHICAGO

The Greek-American theatre was born at the end of the 19th century in Chicago and still continues its existence tightly interwoven with the activities of the Greek-American community. Through a process of great efforts, the Greek Diaspora theatre flourished in the United States particularly in the decade before World War II, as evidenced by the rich performances, the major dramatic productions and the creation of professional troupes. This article covers the theatrical activity of the Greek immigrants in Chicago from 1895 until the first decade of the twentieth century.

The first performance of Greek immigrants in the USA¹ was staged on March 25, 1895,² a milestone date for the Greek-American theatre. The «Lykourgos» Society of Chicago took the initiative in staging the four-act Greek comedy *Babylonia*,³ written by Dimitrios Byzantios and performed by amateur actors who lived in the city.⁴ The performance,⁵ which took place in the North Side Turner Hall,⁶ was successful and the audience was so enthusiastic that in the afternoon of the same day the play was repeated. The main contributors of the performance were Yiannis Palamaras, the president of the «Lykourgos» Society, and Nikos Bekropoulos. The main theme of *Babylonia* is the celebration of the victory in the Battle of Navarino (1827) by the Greeks. As the male characters in the play come from many different parts of Greece which use different local idioms, the misunderstandings between them create comical situations. The play survived in the Greek-American stages throughout the period of the first half of the 20th century. The success of the play was probably due to the fact that the Greek

¹ Katerina Diakoumopoulou, «The Greek Theatre in the United States from the end of the 19th century to the 21st century», *Hellenic studies* 16 (2008), no. 2, p. 125-142.

² On March 25 (O.S.) / April 6 (N.S.) of 1821, Greece declares its liberation from the Ottoman Empire, declaring the Greek War of Independence. The Revolution is celebrated by the Modern Greek state on March 25, which is a national day (see indicatively: David Brewer, *Greek War of Independence: The Struggle for Freedom from Ottoman Oppression and the Birth of the Modern Greek Nation*, Overlook Press, 2003; Philips Alison, *The war of Greek Independence: 1821-1933*, 2009; George Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, vol. 1, Adamant Media Corporation, 2001).

³ The play takes place in Nafplio. This is a story of eight Greeks from different parts of Greece, who celebrate the victory of allied forces in the Battle of Navarino (1827) (see Katerina Diakoumopoulou, *The theater of Greek immigrants in New York from the end of nineteenth century until 1940*, vol. 1-3, Thesis, Panteion University, Athens, 2007).

⁴ «Their day to shout. Greeks celebrate an anniversary in their history», *Daily Inter Ocean* (Chicago, Ill.), 7 April 1895, p. 4.

⁵ «25th March in Chicago» / («Η 25η Μαρτίου εν Σικάγω»), *Atlantis* (New York) / (*Ατλαντίς*) 13 April 1895, p. 3.

⁶ Greeks of Chicago in a parade: Natives of the little nation celebrate the anniversary of their

immigrants faced the same problems of misunderstanding with the dramatic characters of the comedy in the American multilingual environment. In addition, the presence of heroes in jail was also relevant to the Greek-American audience. The overnight in jail was often due to the ignorance of the American English language and the American law. *Babylonia* turned out to be the most favorite and popular play on the stages of Greek amateurs.

The success of the first Greek-American performance spread quickly through the Greek-American press and sparked the creation of the first Greek-amateur troupes in all the American States. Chicago's contribution to the Greek-American theatre is not only related to the birth of amateur dramatics at the Greek clubs, but also to the birth of the first professional Greek-American theatrical troupe of Chicago in 1899.

Jane Addams (1860- 1935)⁷ won worldwide recognition in the first third of the twentieth century as a pioneer social worker in America, a feminist, and an internationalist. In 1899 Addams decided to establish an amateur theatre in the Hull-House,⁸ which started its activities as a place of cultural education for the

freedom. *Chicago Daily Tribune* (Chicago), 7 April 1895, p. 4.

⁷ Selected Bibliography: Jane Addams, *An extensive collection of Miss Addams' papers is deposited in the Swarthmore College Peace Collection*, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania; eadem, *Democracy and Social Ethics*, Macmillan, New York 1902. Republished with an introductory life of Jane Addams by A. F. Scott, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1964; eadem, *Newer Ideals of Peace*, Macmillan, New York 1907; eadem, *Twenty Years at Hull-House: With Autobiographical Notes*, Macmillan, New York 1910; eadem, *The Long Road of Woman's Memory*, Macmillan, New York 1916; eadem, *Peace and Bread in Time of War*, Macmillan, New York 1922; eadem, *The Second Twenty Years at Hull-House: September 1909 to September 1929*, Macmillan, New York 1930; eadem, *The Excellent Becomes the Permanent*, Macmillan, New York 1932; James W. Linn, *Jane Addams: A Biography*, Appleton-Century, New York 1935; E. C. Johnson (ed.), *Jane Addams, A Centennial Reader*, with a prefatory note on Jane Addams' life by W. L. Neumann and an introduction by William O. Douglas, Macmillan, New York 1960; Merle Curti, «Jane Addams on Human Nature», *Journal of the History of Ideas* 22 (1961), p. 240-253; Margaret Tims, *Jane Addams of Hull House, 1860-1935*, Allen & Unwin,

London 1961; Christopher Lasch, *The New Radicalism in America, 1889-1963: The Intellectual as a Social Type*, Chatto & Windus, London 1966; John C. Farrell, *Beloved Lady: A History of Jane Addams' Ideas on Reform and Peace* Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore 1967.

⁸ Library University of Illinois at Chicago. Main Library, special collection. Archive: *Lou Huszar Hull-House Theatre Collection*. See also: Stuart Joel Hecht, *Dissertation: Hull-House Theatre: An Analytical and Evaluative history*, Thesis, Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1983 and Jan Charles Czechowski, *Dissertation: Art and Commerce: Chicago Theatre: 1900-1920*, Thesis, University of Michigan, 1982 and «Miss Jane Addams, of Hull House, Chicago, spoke upon the subject [...] One of the most successful of the plays presented was an adaptation of a Greek play. The actors were drawn from the street vendors and tenement-house population of the neighborhood. Those in charge of the production were greatly surprised to find that some of these seemingly ignorant people already knew the lines which were assigned to them, having studied the classics as a part of their early education in Greece. Three days after the parts were assigned, the first rehearsal was held, and everyone was able to repeat his lines without mistake. The Greeks took great pride in the play which

immigrant groups of the city (Italians, Greeks and others).⁹ Addams strongly believed that the immigrants would become better American citizens if they did not reject the art of their past experiences. «The different immigrant groups could come to a better understanding and respect each other».¹⁰

At the beginning of December 1899 the newspapers of Chicago published recommendatory articles regarding the city's Hellenism.¹¹ The reason was the performance of the play *Odysseus' return to Ithaca*, a play in six acts, which was staged at the Hull-House Theater for three consecutive evenings in front of a

had a long run. After deducting the expenses for mounting the play, which were heavy, a clear profit of \$300 remained. This, it was suggested, should be divided, a part to go to the Greek Church in the vicinity, and a part to Hull House. The players, however, would not agree to this, saying that they had been amply repaid by the opportunity, as they said, of "upholding the honor of Greece", and insisted upon devoting the entire profits to Hull House» (See: «The Third Monthly Conference», *Charities* 8 (1902), no. 13, p. 284-286).

⁹ «The neighborhood Greeks performed the classic plays of antiquity in their own language and the children of European immigrants produced Shakespeare as well as others» (see Marcet Haldeman-Julius, *Jane Addams As I Knew Her*, Grand Rapids, Kessinger, LLC 1999, p. 4).

¹⁰ Rima Lunin Schultz, *Hull-House Maps and Papers: A Presentation of Nationalities and Wages in a Congested District of Chicago, Together with Comments and Essays on Problems Growing Out of the Social Conditions*, University of Illinois Press, 2007, p. 32.

¹¹ «The Greek play, given in the Hull-House Auditorium early in December by natives of Greece, attracted wide attention and received favorable comment from papers published in Chicago and elsewhere. One of the most sympathetic accounts, entitled "Odysseus in Chicago", was written by Mr. Lorado Taft, and appeared in the Chicago Record of Wednesday, December 13th, from which we quote the following: "I went over to Hull-House the other evening to see the return of Odysseus. It was his third and last return. It was well worth the trouble, though the hall was packed too closely for comfort with the most cosmopolitan crowd I have even [sic] seen.

Everybody that I know was there or had been on the previous evenings, and there were several hundred present variously from the Lake Shore drive and the 19th Ward whom I did not know. For a couple of hours all distinctions were forgotten – the millennium was here. The primitive little play had brought back primitive conditions; we were all brothers and sisters again. There was more than gaiety and good cheer, however, in the eager audience – there was rapt attention, and every now and then a thrill of emotion to which blasé theater-goers are little accustomed". "The thought which came over and over again into every mind was: These are real sons of Hellas chanting the songs of their ancestors enacting the life of thousands of years ago. There is a background for you! How noble it made these fruit merchants for the nonce; what distinction it gave them! They seemed to feel that they had come into their own. They were set right at last in our eyes. The sons of princes, they had known their heritage all the time; it was our ignorance which had belittled them. And they had waited". "The feeling which these humbly proud fellow-citizens of ours put into that play was at the same time their tribute to a noble ancestry and a plea for our respect. Those who saw them on that stage will never think of them again in quite the same way as before. They interpreted, as no group of college boys can hope to interpret, the spirit of these tales of the youth of the world. They have kept younger than we [...] I said that the powerful appeal of the primitive play was due in no measure to elaborate stage equipments. May it not be that, on the other hand, it was greatly enhanced by this very bareness? The group made by Athene, Telemachus and the attendant was

crowded audience.¹² The play was composed of excerpts from the *Odyssey*¹³ and written in Ancient Greek by Mabel Hay Barrows. As for the characters, the central dramatic figure of the play is Penelope, who narrates her life during the 20-year absence of Odysseus.¹⁴ The drama was presented as an interesting reproduction of the Homeric Greek life, including athletic contests and other musical and dancing spectacular features. The inspirer and head of the performance was only the young American Mabel Hay Barrows. The twenty Greek actors performing in the play were drawn from the street vendors and tenement-house population of the neighborhood,¹⁵ while the chorus was formed by American and Greek women who also had the responsibility of designing the scenery and the costumes. Dimitrios Manousopoulos was the one to perform the leading role while Georgios Matalas was his co-star,¹⁶ both of whom came from villages of

as beautiful as any scene shown. Two chairs and a table furnished the stage. Two figures may fill it as impressively as an army. Constantly the thought recurred to me, How much the people count for; what a chance they have". The last sentence quoted from Mr. Taft expresses succinctly the value of the play—it "gave a chance" which was used with earnestness and patriotism for the best results. Miss Barrows testifies that, although she has trained many college students to give this same play, none ever worked with more zeal or thoroughness. The play will be repeated with the same cast in Studebaker Hall, under the auspices of the Vassar Students' Aid Society, next May». (See: «Hull-House Retrospect», *Hull-House Bulletin* 4 (1900), no 1, p. 3).

¹² «Greeks to enact Homer: Will present the story of Odysseus at Hull House», *Chicago Daily Tribune* (Chicago, Ill.), 3 Dec. 1899, p. 8.

¹³ Mabel Hay Barrows, [*The Return of Odysseus* Prelude and Synopsis] in JAMC (reel 51-0759-0760), Special Collections, The University Library, The University of Illinois at Chicago. See also: «In College Halls», *Daily Mail and Empire* (Toronto, Canada), 1 Dec. 1900, p. 20).

¹⁴ «A Greek play upon any stage in this country not so long ago was a rarity. Those of us who can recall the days of the giving of the *Oedipus Tyrannus* by Harvard students will remember standing in line long, weary hours for the chance to buy entrance tickets at fabulous prices, as though that were to be the one and only chance of a lifetime to hear classic Greek upon the stage. Now one

must live very remote from the college centres not to have such a chance, now and then. The names of the old Greek tragedians are coming to have a familiar look in the modern newspaper. Harvard, Vassar, Beloit, the Universities of Toronto, Pennsylvania, California, Leland Stanford and others have given Greek plays, while several have produced *The Return of Odysseus*, a series of studies and pictures arranged from the *Odyssey* by Miss Barrows. The last mentioned has been twice given by the Greeks of Chicago, once at Hull House and once at the Studebaker Theatre, seven performances in all. As *The Return of Odysseus* affords an opportunity to show the domestic life of Homeric time – the games, the dances, the religious processions – it is extremely popular, especially with those who were born under the fair skies of Greece and who love the atmosphere of that charmed land» (see: Elizabeth Barrows, «The Greek Play at Hull House», *Commons* 9 (1904), p. 6-10).

¹⁵ «The presentation to crowded houses on three successive evenings last week at Hull House of *The return of Odysseus* with genuine Greeks for the cast, and these drawn not from university hall but from the everyday life of Chicago, marks a departure in this country in preparation of Greek plays». (See: «Chicago Greeks: Their play at Hull House», *Hartford Courant* (Hartford, Conn.), 16 Dec. 1899, p. 16).

¹⁶ Georgios Matalas was one of the founder members of «Sparti» Society at Chicago. Dimitrios Manousopoulos was contributor of the

Parnonas in Sparta.¹⁷ Penelope's role was interpreted by Mabel Hay Barrows. The young director was greatly surprised to find that some of these seemingly ignorant people already knew the lines which were assigned to them, having studied the classics as a part of their early education in Greece. After deducting the expenses for mounting the play, a clear profit of \$300 was left. This profit had to be divided into two parts; the Greek Church and the Hull House. The Greeks, however, would not agree to this, as they claimed that they had been amply repaid by the opportunity. Instead, they insisted upon devoting the entire profits to the Hull-House. On May 1900 «The Return of Odysseus» was repeated for three evenings at the Studebaker Theater with the same cast under the auspices of the Vassar Students' Aid Society.¹⁸ The same drama was performed for the next two years in many educational institutes like the University of Minnesota or the University of Toronto.¹⁹

For the American society of the late 19th century Barrows' initiative was highly avant-garde. This was due to the fact that it was not the University of Chicago that presented the story of Odysseus, but the Hull House, the famous social settlement in the centre of one of the worst regions of Chicago, not to mention that the initiators of this project were women. At the end of the 19th century the American newspapers reprinted articles praising Mabel Barrows: «...for all the distinguished professions filled by women, the most unusual is that occupied Miss Mabel Hay Barrows, since she can safely be said to reign without a rival in her particular field. From the beginning of the college year in October to its end in June, Miss Barrows is in constant demand from universities and preparatory schools of the country...».²⁰ At this point it is worth to mention the unknown Mabel Hay Barrows. Born in 1873 in Boston, her father, Samuel June Barrows, was a U.S. Representative from Massachusetts²¹ and a passionate scholar of the classics.²² Her mother, Isabel Chapin Barrows, was the first woman employed by

newspaper Atlantis (Ατλαντίς) at Chicago. [See: «Greeks in America» («Ἕλληνες ἐν Ἀμερικῇ»), *Atlantis* / (Ατλαντίς) 5 February 1897, p. 6].

¹⁷ «According to the sources, they had civic education, both had studied at the middle school of the community capital Vamvakou and at the secondary school of Sparta, in contrast to the large number of the Greek immigrants that came from the mountainous Greece and did not have any kind of elementary education. Manousopoulos and Matalas were among the first amateur actors of the Greek theatrical stage at Chicago and exhortators in the spread and establishment of theatre groups throughout America» (see: *Hellenic studies*, op.cit., p. 127).

¹⁸ «Greek plays for Vassar Aid», *Chicago Daily Tribune* (Chicago, Ill.), 13 May 1900, p. 3 and see

also «In the society world», *Chicago Daily Tribune* (Chicago, Ill.), 20 May 1900, p. 5.

¹⁹ «In College Halls», *Daily Mail and Empire* (Toronto, Canada), 10 Nov. 1900, p. 14.

²⁰ Delia Davis, «Her Greek and Latin plays: Miss Barrows producing *The return of Odysseus*», *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles, Cal.), 3 Dec. 1899, p. 23 and the same article, see: «Boston girl's classical triumph», *Boston Daily Globe* (Boston, Mass.), 3 Dec., 1899, p. 29.

²¹ Isabel Barrows, *A sunny life: The biography of Samuel June Barrows*, Gale, Making of Modern Law, 2010, (first edition 1913) and *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress: 1774-2005*, Joint Committee on printing Congress U.S., 2006.

²² Samuel June Barrows, *The isles and shrines of Greece*, Roberts Bros, Boston, 1898.

the State Department, one of the first women to attend the University of Vienna to study ophthalmology and the first woman to have a private practice in medicine in Washington, D.C.²³ Mabel Hay Barrows attended Girls' Latin School of Boston. After having graduated, she travelled to Greece and when she returned to the US she went on studying Ancient Greek and Latin at Radcliffe College. In 1894, Barrows' daughter established a school in the worst neighborhood²⁴ of Boston and took her first directorial steps four years later in the Hotchkiss School, where, in the summer of 1898, she adapted and directed the first four books of Virgil's *Aeneid*.²⁵ Barrows became a dancer and a dramatic director, coaching Latin and Greek plays at many universities and schools in all the States and in Canada. Her husband, Henry Raymond Mussey (1875-1940),²⁶ was a professor of economics at the Columbia University and her son, June Barrows Mussey, better known as Henry Hay, became a journalist and a translator who was notable for his writing about magic. Mabel Hay Barrows Mussey was a scholar of the classics for almost ten years who not only had written the plays in ancient Greek and Latin, some of which are still performed by students in various colleges, but she also coached the actors in every part in addition to being an all-round stage manager.²⁷ Mabel Barrows died in December 1931 in Germany.²⁸

The theatrical collaboration of Mabel May Barrows²⁹ with the Greek immigrants of Chicago did not end in 1899.³⁰ In the beginning of October 1903, Barrows and about thirty «trained» Greeks met at the theatre of Hull House to rehearse the forthcoming performance of Sophocles' tragedy *Ajax*. We know that the preparations for the performance of *Ajax* were almost completed at the

²³ Edward James – Janet Wilson James – Paul Boyer, *Notable American Women, 1607-1950: A biographical dictionary*, vol. 3, Radcliffe College, 1971, p. 100 and also: Madeleine Stem, *We the women: Career firsts of Nineteenth-Century America*, Bison Books, 1994, p. 178, 354 and *So much in a lifetime: The story of Dr. Isabel Barrows*, Messner 1964.

²⁴ «Woman's World», *Star* (Boston, Mass.), 15 Sept. 1894, p. 3.

²⁵ «A latin play: *The flight of Aeneas* was presented by the students of the Hotchkiss School in Roberts Opera House. Saturday evening before one of the largest audiences that has over assembled in Lakeville. The play has been arranged by Miss Mabel Barrows of Boston...» (see: «News of the stage: At Hotchkiss School: A Latin Play. Exercises and presentation», *Hartford Courant* (Hartford, Conn.), 28 June 1898, p. 11).

²⁶ «The marriage of Miss Mabel Barrows and Henry Raymond Mussey, an instructor in Co-

lumbia College, will take place on Wednesday at the family's summer camp, Cedar Lodge, Georgetown, Que. Miss Barrows is the daughter of Rev. Samuel J. Barrows, one time editor of the *Cristian Register*, and is a young woman of great literary ability» (see: *Boston Evening Transcript* (Boston, Mass.), 26 Jun., 1905, p. 16).

²⁷ *Woman's World. Star* (Boston), 21 March, 1903, p. 3 και *Women in Business. Clinton Mirror* (Clinton, Iowa), 21 Feb. 1903, p. 6.

²⁸ *New York Times* (New York), 3 Nov. 1931, p. 24.

²⁹ A study about Mabel Hay Barrows is written in Greek, see: Katerina Diakoumopoulou, «Mabel Hay Barrows: The American Pioneer director and her relationship with the Greek-American theater». Announcement in the International Conference of Theater. University of Athens, Department of Theater Studies, January 2011.

³⁰ Jane Addams to Mabel Hay Barrows, [1903 June ?], Chicago, Illinois, Harvard University,

end of November 1903. The various people who participated in this production had learned their part under the instructions of the young woman Hellenist.³¹ The cast was composed by Georgios Matalas, who played the character of Ajax and Michael Loris, who performed the one of Tekmissa's, while the chorus was formed by thirty people with Paraskevas Iliopoulos as the chorus leader. The performances were staged at the Hull-House, from the 6th until the 11th December 1903. The performance was staged in Ancient Greek and attended by many professors of the Ancient Greek, as well as journalists. Georgios Matalas and Dimitrios Manoussopoulos were the ones to receive the most praises.³² The performance of *Ajax* in the Hull-House under the direction of Mabel Hay Barrows in collaboration with the Greeks of the local colony, reproduced the scenic environment of the classic tradition. Barrows, while speaking of her experiences during the period of the rehearsals, said: «It has seldom been my good fortune to meet a more dignified or intelligent set of men. They are receptive to an unusual degree... There have been no bickering(s) as to parts and no jealousies as to the center of the stage...».³³ The music for *Ajax* had been specially composed

Houghton Library, Barrows Family Papers, bMS Am 1807.2(3), in JAMC (reel 4-0618), Special Collections, The University Library, The University of Illinois at Chicago. Elizabeth C. Barrows, «The Greek Play at Hull House», *Commons*, no. 9, January 1904, p. 6-10).

³¹ CHARACTERS OF THE DRAMA.

Athena ... Liverios Manoussopoulos
Odysseus ... Panagiotis Lambros
Aias (Ajax) ... Georgios Matalas
Tekmessas ... Michael Loris
Eurysakes ... Demetrios Mazarakas
Messenger ... Spiros Manoussopoulos
Teucer ... Demetrios Manoussopoulos
Menelaos ... Iason Korologos
Agamemnon ... Konstantinos Boukydis
Chorus of Salaminian Sailors, Comrades of Ajax
Paraskevas Eliopoulos...Leader

³² «For the first time since it was presented by students of the English University of Cambridge, the *Ajax* of Sophocles has been staged in an English-speaking country, and Chicago has the honor of its production, on six successive nights, to crowded houses. It was not, however, the great University of Chicago that presented it, but Hull house, the famous social settlement in the center of one of the worst regions of Chicago. Few things would ordinarily be less associated in the public mind than a social settlement and Sophocles, yet we

have come to know that at Hull house and under the guidance of Miss Jane Addams all things seem possible. And this phenomenon of a Greek play, acted not by academically trained students, but by more or less uneducated modern Greeks, with no training but a natural enthusiasm [...] The pronunciation was modern, not classical, and purists probably cringed at the sounds, but the fire and fluency of the actors are said to have compensated adequately for delivering a play in a tongue that would have confused the author [...] There was music specially composed and scenery specially painted; the play was well staged at Hull house, and from first to last, so far as possible, it was a "home-made" production. Surely it would have been worth going miles to see and hear [...] An interest among these 7,000 Greeks of Chicago that would lead their representatives to give up seven nights a week for ten weeks to rehearsals can well be recalled in the account of the play an example of "almost religious zeal." And there were not lacking the "distinguished scholars" at the performances, who declared that for fire and intelligence no other people in the world could have surpassed these people of Hull house» (See: «Hull House and Sophocles: A Chicago Social Settlement's Really Remarkable Achievement», *Kansas City Star* (Kansas City, Missouri, 14 Jan. 1904, p. 4).

³³ Heroes of Trojan War on stage at east side

by Willys Peck Kent from New York. It was modeled on the Greek rhythmic scheme, and an effort was made to retain the spirit of the text throughout.³⁴ The American newspapers praised the performance itself and the fact that it was the first time that the great tragedy *Ajax* had been staged in U.S.A.

A few months later, the great success of *Ajax* was repeated in New York's Clinton Hall. *Ajax* didn't use to be a popular text and the truth is that after the Barrows' productions this tragedy was staged only 83 years later by Peter Sellars in 1986.³⁵ However, while *Ajax* wasn't popular, in 1949 it was spread in the strangest way, when James Forrestal, the first U.S. Secretary of Defense, was found dead – more specifically, he committed suicide – and his last written statement was a part from the first choral of *Ajax*.³⁶

stage: With Greeks as the actors, «The Ajax of Sophocles»: Will be portrayed in Clinton Hall: «Goddesses, Warriors and Weird Music of ancient Hellas», *New York Times* (New York), 6 March 1904, p. 9).

³⁴ «THE MUSIC AND SCENERY The music for “The Ajax” was composed by Willys Peck Kent of New York. It is closely wedded to the words and so akin to the musical ideas of the Greeks that they learned it by rote without difficulty, all singing in unison, accompanied only by a clarinet, though the music is also arranged for the oboe, clarinet and flute. The sad and tender strains are like the poetry, full of sombre beauty. The scenery was painted especially for this play by Chicago scene painters, touched up and vastly improved by artists among the Hull House residents. It made a beautiful picture – the low-lying sea, blue in the distance, the ships from Salamis and the harmonious coloring of the varied costumes of the stalwart men, some of whom had much of the traditional beauty of the Greek face. There were six performances of the play, each better than its predecessor, with larger and larger audiences and warmer enthusiasm on their part. The editor takes the liberty to add this word of simple justice: The dramatic feeling, the sympathetic voice, the power to act, were all there, but it was only through diligent and patient training that they were evoked, a training that developed sensitiveness to better things in many ways. The power to evoke the best in another is a great gift. It is the noble endowment of Miss Barrows.

“There is no other enthusiasm of humanity than the one which has traveled the common highway of reason – the life of the good neighbor and honest citizen.” – From Thomas Hill Green, at the entrance of Mansfield House». (See: «Hull House and Sophocles: A Chicago Social Settlement's Really Remarkable Achievement», *Kansas City Star* (Kansas City, Missouri, 14 Jan. 1904, p. 4).

³⁵ Karelisa Hartigan, *Greek tragedy on the American Stage: Ancient drama in the commercial theater, 1882-1994*, Greenwood Press, 1995, p. 112-118.

³⁶ «Fair Salamis, the billows' roar,
Wander around thee yet,
And sailors gaze upon thy shore
Firm in the Ocean set.
Thy son is in a foreign clime
Where Ida feeds her countless flocks,
Far from thy dear, remembered rocks,
Worn by the waste of time –
Comfortless, nameless, hopeless save
In the dark prospect of the yawning grave....
Woe to the mother in her close of day,
Woe to her desolate heart and temples gray,
When she shall hear
Her loved one's story whispered in her ear!
“Woe, woe!” will be the cry –
No quiet murmur like the tremulous wail
Of the lone bird, the querulous nightingale»
(See Townsend Hooper – Douglas Brinkley, *Driven patriot: The life and times of James Forrestal*, U.S. Naval Institute Press, 2000, p. 464-469).

The Committee of Arrangements for the performances of *Ajax* in New York included among others³⁷ Nicholas Murray Butler,³⁸ who was the 12th President of Columbia University and the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931, which he shared with Jane Addams, the supporter and instigator of the Greek-American theatre in Chicago.

The successful direction of *Ajax* was subsequently adopted by historic American Universities which used to recruit and enthusiastically welcome the young director to prepare performances of ancient drama with the participation of graduate students. Notable were the performances of *Ajax* in California, at the University of Berkeley in November 1904.³⁹

The performances in the Hull-House gave rise to the spread and establishment of Greek-American troupes. In the first decade of the 20th century, in all the Greek communities from the eastern to the western coasts of the United States, more than thirty Greek theater companies were formed having the ideological motive of cultivating the Greek language through the theater and teaching indirectly the Greek history and tradition.

The theater of American Hellenism has played a central role in the formation of Greek culture in the U.S.A. and has contributed to the enrichment of the Greek Modern Theater and the American Theater. The dynamic theatrical Greek-

³⁷ John LaFarge, James H. Hyde, Able Leach of Vassar, Charlotte Perkins Stetson, Felix Adler, Edward A. McDowell, James Loeb, Hamilton Mable, Henry Mitchell Mac Cracken, Nicholas Murray Butler, Dimitris Botassis, Lillian Wald, Daniel French, Richard Watson Gilder, William Dean Howells, Mrs. Richard Mansfield, John Millburn, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, J.G. Phelps Stokes – see «Greeks art stage pupils», *New York Times* (New York), 6 March 1904, p. 9.

³⁸ Selected Bibliography: Nicholas Murray Butler. The Butler papers are deposited in the library of Columbia University; Nicholas Murray Butler, *Across the Busy Years: Recollections and Reflections*, 2 vols. Scribner, New York 1939-1940. Contains a bibliography; idem, *Between Two Worlds: Interpretations of the Age in Which We Live*, Scribner, New York 1934; idem, *Building the American Nation: An Essay of Interpretation*, Scribner, New York 1923; idem, *The Faith of a Liberal: Essays and Addresses on Political Principles and Public Policies*, Scribner, New York 1924; idem, *The Family of Nations: Its Need and its Problems. Essays and Addresses*, Scribner, New York 1938; idem, *The International Mind: An*

Argument for the Judicial Settlement of International Disputes, Scribner, New York, 1912; idem, *Is America Worth Saving? Addresses on National Problems and Party Policies*, Scribner, New York 1920; idem, *Liberty-Equality-Fraternity: Essays and Addresses on the Problems of Today and Tomorrow*, Scribner, New York 1942; Milton H. Thomas, *Bibliography of Nicholas Murray Butler, 1872-1932*, Columbia University Press, New York 1934.

³⁹ «...the University will present the Ajax of Sophocles. The Ajax will be under the direction of Mabel Hay Barrows, who was so successful...». See: *The evening news* (San Jose, Cal.), 24 Sept, 1904, p. 3. See also: University of Berkeley, California. Collection title: «Finding aid to views taken in the Greek Theatre». Collection number: UARC PIC 01. a) item 1:334, *Ajax* by Sophocles, 25 Oct. 1904 b) item 1: 036 *Ajax* two copies, 15/10/1904 c) item 1: 060 Postcard views of *Ajax* (two copies, one colored), 15 Oct. 1904. And also: Steel Little and Evelyn Agnes, *California Play and Pageant*, California, University of California, English Club, 1914, p. 20-21.

American activity has been projected via two channels: the Greek Societies of Chicago and the action of the Hull-House. The performances in Chicago greatly encouraged the immigrant amateur artists, inspiring them to create new theatre companies and to write plays. In addition, the Hull House led the Greek immigrants to erect native, amateur and professional, companies which formed their own theatrical tradition and left their mark in the multinational environment for more than hundred years.