

**PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION**

Cultural Preservation
Aspendos, Turkey
11/18/99

**Remarks on Cultural Preservation
By First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton**

**Aspendos, Turkey
November 18, 1999**

Thank you very much. I'm honored and delighted to be here with our daughter and some of the distinguished representatives of the Turkish government and the Turkish speaker, as well as Americans who are by me. It is always a pleasure for me to come to Turkey, and the visit that my husband and I have made in the last several days has deepened my appreciation and affection for the Turkish people. And we want to thank you for the extraordinary warmth and gracious hospitality that has been extended to us.

And Mr. Minister, I wish to thank the governor. I wish to thank also the wife of our ambassador, the wife of the Turkish ambassador, the mayor and other distinguished representatives of both Turkey and the United States.

Ataturk once said that if he had not been the head of state, he would have chosen to be the minister of Culture. Today, having visited some additional monuments and museums as well as what I saw yesterday in Ephesus, I understand very well why Ataturk would have wanted your job, Mr. Minister.

To travel through Turkey is truly to travel through the history of the human experience on earth. So many great civilizations rose and fell on this land. So many of the heroes and legends of the ancient world walked along these shores, over these mountain ranges, and through these valleys. This is where, we are told, Noah landed his Arc and Abraham set forth for the Promised Land. Where King Midas reigned and prospered. Where Alexander the Great pushed eastward toward India and where the nomadic tribes of Central Asia pushed westward and stayed for centuries. Where Saint Paul of Tarsus first spread the gospel, and where Islam won new believers, and where Jews found refuge from their expulsion from Spain.

During my two extended visits to Turkey, I have been privileged to see some of the monuments and artifacts of this layered heritage. I have inspected the Mother Goddess figurines and cuneiform tablets at the Museum of Anatolian Civilization in Ankara. I have walked along the marble streets of Ephesus, first with my daughter and yesterday with my husband and daughter. I have stood in awe inside the Hagia Sophia, marveled at the beautiful tiles of the Blue Mosque, and explored the endless rooms of Topkapi Palace.

Like so many visitors to these sites, I was overcome by the richness, the diversity and legacy of these achievements, by all that had sprung from the mind and muscle of the varied people who shared, fought or succeeded each other on this land.

The world owes a tremendous debt to the people of Turkey for the care with which you have protected your cultural inheritance. It is a tradition that began—like so much of the progress of Turkey—with the vision and spirit of Ataturk. In 1920, just two weeks after the opening of the

First Grand National Assembly, and with independence far from certain, Ataturk took the time to create a Department of Antiquities. He toured Ephesus, he came here to Aspendos, he encouraged excavations of Hittite ruins and took steps to protect them all.

And even though he faced many challenges in those first years of the Republic, he had the wisdom to make what so many other leaders might have considered a luxury, a national priority.

Ataturk knew—and we must never forget—that culture is the soul of life. It is what gives us roots, gives our lives meaning and binds us to each other.

The American writer William Faulkner once said, “The past is never dead. It is not even past.” Well certainly as you stand here, we can see it is not past. It is around us, it is part of our present, and if we pay attention and listen to its lessons, it can also be part of our future.

After all, not only the blood, but the experiences and hopes of our ancestors course through our veins. And only through their still-living monuments and still-living traditions can we understand who we are, where we came from, and what we wish to be.

We look at the finely drawn paintings on caves or on walls, the intricate patterns on vases and bowls and delicately wrought jewelry, and we can marvel at the sophistication and creativity of ancient men and women. We look to the great mosques and early churches that dot this country, and we can see the power of religion and the pull of faith in the lives of our ancestors.

And when we look at this magnificent theater, with its still-perfect acoustics and accommodation for an audience of 20,000, we can see so vividly the important role the performing arts played in this outpost of the Roman Empire.

This and so many other treasures have survived the ages, but we know that many other clues to our shared past are in danger, unless we take action today. Now more than ever, we must rise to the challenge of protecting and enlarging our cultural heritage. I truly believe that as we end this century and begin a new one, we are living in one of the most exciting times of human history. Technological progress, the Internet, faxes, satellites, jet travel have indeed brought our world closer together.

But we also see what globalization does to obscure our unique cultures and traditions. From Topkapi Palace to the Taj Mahal, I have seen young people dressed in the same brand name t-shirts and talking about the same TV shows or movie characters. It is when I see globalized popular culture juxtaposed against some of our world's most unique cultural treasures that I am particularly reminded of the urgency that we must give to preserving that which is permanent in what often appears to be a throwaway world.

That is why on the eve of a third millennium, we must work together to respect, preserve and unearth the rich treasures of Turkey.

We know that despite all of the extraordinary work of the Turkish government and Turkish people, along with partners like Dr. Toni Cross and others who are here with us today, that there

has been wonderful work done, but we have just scratched the surface of Turkey's cultural treasury. Who knows how many paintings of long extinct animals or intricate mosaics of still-revered saints lie untouched under years of dirt; how many primitive clay pots or bejeweled chalices of gold; how many keys to the past remain buried deep in the Anatolian soil.

I am very proud that my country, the United States, and Turkey have been partners in this preservation endeavor for more than a century. Of the 100 archeological digs this year in Turkey, 19 of them were led by Americans, including those in Classical Troy, Gordion and Sardis. Where once the goal of this partnership was to unearth antiquities and ship them to museums back in the U.S., today American archeologists seek only knowledge from these digs. Since 1970, the United States has been proud to join Turkey as members of the World Heritage Convention and the 1970 Convention to reduce pillage and illicit trade of archeological and ethnological materials, and we will continue to ensure that Turkey's vast cultural inheritance remains in Turkey.

The exchange of information, discoveries and ideas between American and Turkish researchers and scientists has been invaluable to the growth of knowledge about the antiquities over the years. But that knowledge might grow even faster if Turkish and Greek archaeologists could find more opportunities to share their knowledge about their shared classical heritage.

That is why I am pleased to announce that the United States, through our Embassy in Ankara, will award grants to the American Research Institute in Turkey, and to the American Schools of Classical Studies in Athens, to support Turkish and Greek scholars who want to pursue research in their counterpart countries. It is our hope that through these scholarships, we can foster not only greater knowledge and appreciation of a common history, but new friendships between old rivals.

And we must find ways to link cultural preservation to progress and economic development throughout Turkey. All around the world, we have seen what can happen when culture is considered last or not at all in plans for economic development. For the sake of progress, we have seen cultural treasures degraded by poorly managed tourism and historic buildings knocked down and replaced with parking lots. I applaud Turkey for the steps you are taking to balance tourism and preservation around the country, and particularly at Pamukkale.

I am very pleased that the World Bank and the government of Turkey are currently discussing a project to preserve great cultural monuments and promote economic development throughout the nation. We all hope that this project becomes a reality in the months to come.

I also believe there is a wonderful opportunity to enlist citizens, young and old alike, in the task of preserving cultural heritage. Government alone cannot be left that responsibility. We in the United States have been fortunate to rely on a strong partnership between the public and private sectors to preserve our treasures—as young as they are. Two years ago, my husband and I created a White House Millennium Council to lead us in a celebration of the coming millennium by helping American citizens to “honor the past and imagine the future.” I have traveled around the country bringing attention to historic sites and encouraging NGOs, private sector leaders, and

local communities to come together to save America's treasures. Well certainly there are far more treasures to be preserved and saved here in Turkey.

In 1935, Ataturk said that, and I quote, "It is necessary that the people themselves who are the real owners of our historical and national monuments become the protectors of antiquities."

I know that there are already NGOs and private citizens throughout Turkey who are answering the call in ways large and small to become, in Ataturk's words, the "protectors of antiquities." They are identifying the towns and sites where they can make a difference, and are stepping forward to ensure that their treasures can tell the story of their heritage well into the next century.

I am very pleased that an American NGO, the World Monuments Fund, is working with Turkish NGOs to preserve Turkey's heritage—from the prehistoric to the Ottoman. And I am pleased to announce that they will soon begin a project here in Antalya to restore the portal of the Corinthian Temple at Patara.

But I also ask you to look to your children as potential leaders in cultural preservation. Anyone who has ever seen the concentration a child can bring to a hobby or a sports event or a story knows that children have a tremendous capacity for soaking up knowledge and history. They are innate curators and preservationists. So why not, in this age of globalization, remind them early of their unique and diverse heritages and help them learn to take responsibility for preservation, to teach them to respect culture and recognize the stake they have in preservation and maintenance for future generations?

I have seen many such efforts around the world that are enlisting children in this important task of historic preservation. In Italy, I visited with children from the "Adopt-a-Monument" program that encourages school children to choose a historic monument and take responsibility for its care. In both Palermo and Naples, I saw how children had worked hard to revive long-neglected, centuries-old churches. They studied the church's history, they cleaned up and picked up the refuse, they developed guided tours of their monument. And then they were eager to tell me and others about the story of their church. I could hear the pride in their voices as they recounted the historic events that had taken place within those walls.

In my country I have seen similar actions taken by children and heard the delight in their voices as well. Through a new effort called "Pennies for Preservation," school children are literally raising pennies to save historic places. For example, they helped to save the home of Harriet Tubman, the famous ex-slave who led many other slaves to freedom in the nineteenth century. Though the children's monetary contributions were modest, their interest in the fate of this historic place and the woman for whom it was named was priceless.

Enlisting children can also have benefits beyond cultural preservation. I have worked with so-called "at-risk" children—those at risk of dropping out of school or becoming violent or criminals. And we have learned time and time again, that when children are given the opportunity to participate in arts and culture, they will seize that as something positive to do. Studies in our own country have shown that arts programs, more than anything else, are effective in bringing out the intellectual and creative potential of such children. And I have met many

young men and women who have told me that had it not been for a writing or art or performance class, they very well could have been on the street or in jail. So those who run museums and schools can be called on to reach out to these children as well.

Standing in this finely preserved Roman theater reminds us that Turks and Americans are committed to the cause of historic preservation not only for what it teaches us about the past, but what it can say to us in the future. As we look around this magnificent structure, it is not difficult to imagine these seats filled as they were 1,800 years ago, with citizens gathered for a day's entertainment, holding tickets carved out of bone and ivory, with judges, senators, and other dignitaries watching from the front row, and women from the gallery.

We can hear the echoes of audiences, but what do they tell us about today and our future? Well I think certainly they tell us that we have a lot to learn. I learned today about the contributions of the Anatolian people towards the drafting of our own Constitution, because of their commitment to proportional representation. We also can be reminded of how the theater is a common experience and that despite our increasing reliance on the Internet and the work we do in cyberspace, it is doubtful we will ever replace that common experience of being together for an event of some sort.

So I hope that Americans and Europeans and literally people from all over the world will come to Turkey, will be tourists here, respectful visitors who will appreciate the glorious past and the present, as well as the future of this dynamic country. By coming here, we Americans pay homage not only to Turkey's past, but with Ataturk, we proclaim that acknowledging and respecting that past is one of the ways for us to build a future together. And that after all, is, I think, the highest goal we share.

As my husband said in Parliament, we believe that Turkey has as glorious a future in the 21st century as this theater represents from the past. But the only way any of us can build the kind of future we imagine for our children and for generations to come is by being respectful of one another. Respectful of our different heritage, our faiths, our beliefs, our pasts and experiences, and then taking from the best of those so that we can build our common future together. So someday, perhaps in the 22nd or 23rd century, there might be a meeting in cyberspace with archeologists and preservationists and ministers who will look back and will say, "The Turkish citizens at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century, along with their friends the Americans, kept faith with their pasts and built a future worthy of both of them."

Thank you very much.