On 7 April 1995, the Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation announced its prestigious awards. One out of the four award-winning people was Varotsos. The ceremony was to take place on 11 July on Pnyx Hill.

The next day (8 April 1995), almost all of the press addressed the issue with comprehensive articles. I present here the leaders from some of the newspapers. As an example, I present the newspaper *Kathimerini* with a report entitled “With courage the awards” and subtitled “Support and consideration for International Relations, Culture and the Environment”, in which we read:

There is an invisible thread that connects the people who were honoured this year with Onassis International Prizes. All four still work and are active members of society by promoting basic considerations of humanity. According to Stelios Papadimitriou, the president of the Onassis Foundation, and member of the committee for International Awards, Boutros Boutros Ghali [General Secretary of United Nations], Jacqueline de Romilly, Yorg Imperger and Panayiotis Varotsos, are personalities who unequivocally offer so much to International Relations, Culture and Environment, sectors that make up the essentials of life and thought...

The last paragraph of this publication read:

“Onassis Prizes should not lag behind,” said Mr. Papadimitriou during yesterday’s official announcement to the press ...“to reward a posteriori, after the prior “decorations” of other organizations and institutions. They must be innovative and rush to take the risk and responsibility.” The selection of the prize winners from 400 proposed candidates was the result of the painstaking and laborious work of the committee comprising fifteen members (among them, Hel. Glykatzi Ahrweiler, N. Goulandris A. Delivorrias, G. Vlachos, G. Babiniotis, John Brademas, etc.) ...

Also on 8 April 1995, *Kathimerini*’s “Notebook” column, under the heading “announcement of the Onassis Awards – for the publicity and the complimentarity of Greece internationally”, began as follows:
Aristotle Onassis would have been very happy to know who had been awarded the Onassis International Prizes and why they received them, and especially for the heat of the applause from the representatives of the press and the media on yesterday’s announcement … An Egyptian, a French woman, an Australian and a Greek, whose names are already known around the world for what they have given to humanity…

The newspaper *Eleftherotypia* of 8 April 1995 carried statements from the winners. Varotsos’ full text is as follows:

I thank deeply the Committee of International Awards and the Board of the Onassis Foundation for their decision, which honours greatly my country, my colleagues and me.

To believe that man can tame natural forces, such as those caused by earthquakes, constitutes arrogance. The effort, however, at specifying when and where the devastating effects will occur is not an exaggeration, given that these forces must obey the laws of nature. With this knowledge, we can reduce as much as possible, adverse influences on environment and cultural heritage, primarily to safeguard the supreme good, namely human life.

Finally, it is my duty to point out that the Onassis Foundation was the first which supported the scientific evaluation of our research efforts in their most difficult turning point, by organizing an International Conference in 1990, inviting 30 distinguished experts from various countries. Similar initiatives have been taken, but later, by other institutions and international organizations such as the National Science Foundation (NSF) of the USA in 1992, the United Nations Scientific Committee for Natural Disaster Reduction in 1994 and the Royal Society of London in 1995.

The awards ceremony was held on 11 July 1995 on Pnyx Hill in the presence of the President of the Republic, Kostis Stephanopoulos, the Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou and many other dignitaries (Figure 16.1).

The ceremony began in the shadow of the Acropolis (Figure 16.2) with the following address by Stelios Papadimitriou, the President of the Foundation:

**Excellency Mr. President of the Republic**

**Mr. Prime Minister**

**Ambassadors of foreign countries**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

Consistent with the will of its founder, Aristotle Onassis, the Foundation continues for the 15th time the award of the International Onassis Prize for International Understanding and Social Achievement, Culture and Environment, Awards that inextricably link each other.

You accepted with pleasure, Mr. President of the Republic, in continuing the tradition of your predecessors, to personally deliver the awards to the winners. Nevertheless, the biggest prize and the greatest value is the ceremony itself, which is now taking place in the shadow of the Acropolis. In particular in the same location, where for the first time in history met “City Church” and arose “Republic” with all that it implies for freedom, culture, isonomy, social solidarity and humanity and responsibility, but also for sacrifice, meritocracy, yearning for truth and self-esteem, things that are the essence of the Onassis International Prizes.