

(Re) defining a nation

The example of the Acropolis of Athens at 1834 A.D.

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Abstract

The Acropolis of Athens is the ultimate symbol of the Greek state and is synonymous with the history of the Greek nation. Despite the lack of information about its early history, it is clear that the transformation of the site and its buildings played a significant role in the socio-political actions that took place during each period. The aim of this research was to shed light on the changes that have occurred to the site and its buildings, and to assess their impact. Through an analysis of some of the extensive literature and archival research, it was possible to discover the changes that took place and their significance or reflection on society. What emerged was a cultural osmosis that happened to the site and a massive rehabilitation of the site. History is constantly being transformed along with the ambitions of the victors. This is reflected in the buildings that are chosen to represent the change, and this leads to many distortions that, after some time, seem almost natural. When these changes are taking place, a clear dichotomy emerges: that of cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation. In the chosen case study, we saw both present, in different percentages at different times. However, the most interesting part was understanding the reasons that shaped the percentages.

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The example of the Acropolis of Athens at 1834 A.D.

R.Q.: What does renovating buildings of national importance imply, and how does it complicate matters? Why was it crucial for von Klenze to choose the reuse of the Acropolis of Athens in 1834 to represent the new born Greek state? How much did that move influence the transformation and reset of the Greek nation?

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i_ Introduction

Today, more than ever, the return of the Elgin Marbles, or rather the Parthenon Marbles, is a hot topic. A growing number of voices are calling for them to be repatriated to complete "one of the finest examples of classical Greek art", the Parthenon. Many activists' actions have taken place in the special room at the British Museum. The recurring theme is the great diplomatic conflict between Greece and Great Britain for many ages, still unresolved. But Greece has not remained with the Parthenon stripped. The Parthenon is a representation filled with replicas that replace the missing parts. Also, during the various reconstructions of the Acropolis site, many changes have been made to create the representation that we know today. As an image is so well known, it is the first thing that pops up in anyone's mind when they want to make an absolute reference to Greece. It may be called the Parthenon Marbles but this title refers to all the antiquities that were taken from the Acropolis site from lord Elgin, and there were a lot. So, the same tactic that Greece applied to the Parthenon building was applied to all the buildings in the Acropolis site. Paradoxically, the history of the Marbles is well known, but we are missing crucial points in the history of the monument itself. Is the image that everyone can see now the image of the monument during its lifetime?

The answer is partially positive but mostly negative. Before presenting the chronic change, it is essential to describe the Acropolis site as it was in its early stages. The following illustration ([figure 2](#)) will help to orientate us. The Propylaea was the main entrance to the Acropolis site and was located at number 2 on the map. A large symmetrical construction that was axially parallel to the Parthenon. Upon entering the Acropolis site, the Erechtheion temple, number 3, dedicated to Athena and Erechtheus (Poseidon), the two protectors of Athens, can be seen on the left-hand side. The temple is adorned with six world-famous caryatids, statues in the shape of young ladies. On the right-hand side, the Parthenon, with the number 1 on the map, can be admired at its best angle. The Parthenon was the ultimate ornament of the city, depicting the Golden Age of Athens (460-430 BC) in vivid colors. So, the location of the monument has not changed. The interior of the buildings has also remained the same. What about the buildings themselves? Their appearance today is not the same as it was during their lifetime. The Parthenon was used as a temple, an Orthodox church, a mosque, before it was designated a monument. The Propylaea was turned into a palace and the Erechtheion was badly damaged with its pieces buried around the site. The main changes took place during the Byzantine and Ottoman periods as a result of the reuse of the space, but the radical transformation of the image of the site began in 1834. It was the time when the entire Acropolis site ceased to be just something in the cityscape and became the monument that represented the new nation, the almost liberated Greece.

We must begin to identify exactly what characteristics of the buildings led to this powerful meaning. But who exactly benefited from this transformation? Who was behind the major shift in the use of the Acropolis site? Who was pulling the strings and what were his inner motives? What exactly did he do to achieve his goals? Spoiler alert: the person who led the reinterpretation of the Acropolis site from a fortress, as it had been in Ottoman times, to a national monument or official representation of the newborn state was not a Greek citizen, had no Greek nationality, and he had even visited Greece so many times that he became attached to the site. He was a German architect named Leon von Klenze, one of the most important figures associated with neoclassicism in Germany (Britannica), and the court architect of Ludwig I of Bavaria. And to

make things a little clearer, Ludwig was the father of Otto, the first king of Greece after its liberation from Ottoman rule. Ludwig was also well known for the admiration and love that he showed for the ancient Greek legacy leading to the countless efforts of the Greek elite and helping them to get rid of the eastern ruler and adopt more western policies. How exactly this swift could be settled and what that may mean for the new state? What was the role of the Acropolis in that? Why does it stand up at the center of attention all the time?

The following pages will attempt to shed some light on the situation and history of the period of transformation. To understand the moment of the change, it is crucial to clarify the circumstances, the appearance, and the use of the site before the moment of change. Afterwards, the actual moment of change in 1834 will be analyzed, as well as all the switches that have taken place in socio-political aspects. They will also depict the effects that the reuse had on the site and its meaning. If it was altered or if it has remained the same. Many historical facts will be presented, a large majority of them unique and not widely known for the history of the Acropolis. We will also use sketches and photographs to support the arguments, and some maps and drawings will try to clarify the situation along with the text. At the end of each chapter, a small summary of what was discussed will identify the essential key points and the core, before we will jump into the next phase. Broader theories as cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation will be discussed with examples of their actions, announcing their inner motifs and their ambitions. Or even exploring the differences between thinking and acting. Finally, we will consider what it means to be entitled as the ultimate national symbol and how this translates for the site itself. There is a power embedded in these buildings that mesmerizes everyone. It is as if they were meant to be the symbol of the nation from the very beginning. Perhaps that is the main reason why they have survived over the years. Or was it something else?

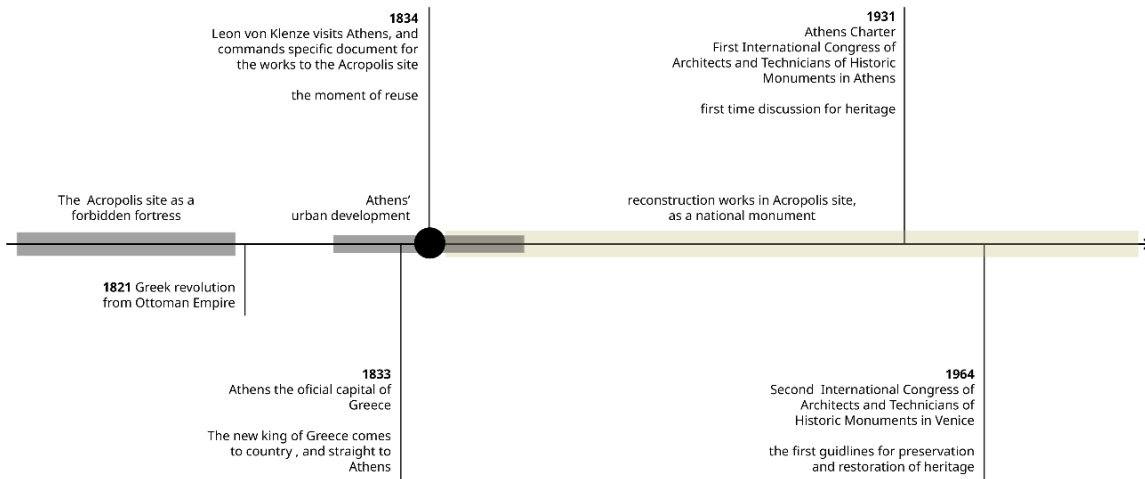


Fig.1 Timeline made by the author to highlight some events that happened during the reuse of the Acropolis. The grey color symbolizes the use of the fortress and the yellow the transition to a monumental site

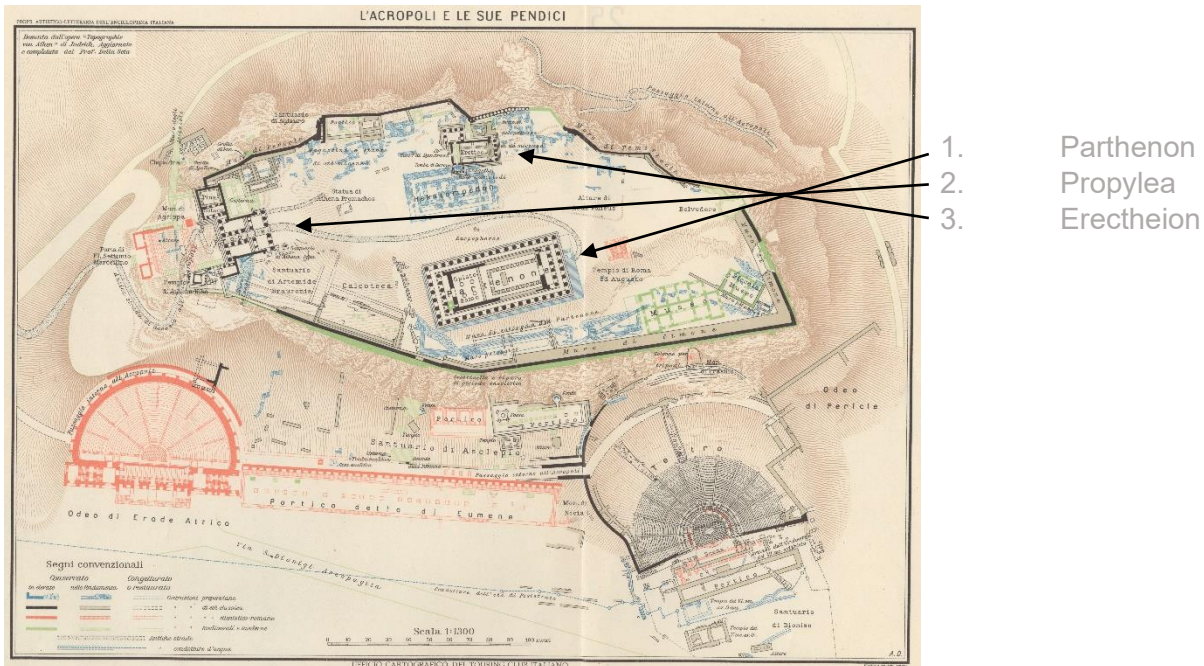


Fig.2 Map of the Acropolis of Athens and its slopes 1928-1940, Touring Club Italiano. With the additional comments, anyone can gain an idea of the Acropolis site and have a clearer idea of the position of the buildings when we refer to them later.

ii_ Additions and absences

Parthenon, or Acropolis site in general never stopped being in the center of attention either way. Not only as a matter of artefact or appearance, but also for strategic reasons. Before the Greek War of Independence and during the years under the Ottoman empire the province of Athens seemed to be a place of strategic importance under the possession of the rulers. It is not well known that the site of the Acropolis, since it was reused as a fortress, was a restricted place to be, and if anyone wanted to enter it needed an official permission directly from the Sultan in Constantinople, the center of the whole empire. It was not allowed any form of change or intervention on it, and it is said that the sultan Mehmet II himself showed much passion to visit the place as soon as they conquered Athens. When he actually visited it he spoke with admiration words and ordered no-one to distort in any form its existing image (Clair, 2022). And that is so, nothing changed until the dropping of the bomb of Morosini at 1638 AD. A very strategic move to take the possession of Athens, only for few months though until Ottomans claimed it back. Although the appearance remained pretty much the same, the use had to change due to new circumstances as it was mentioned before. Not only the site needed to change its character, from a high valued religious place into a fortress, but also, some of the buildings were reused in order to adapt the new circumstances.

The Parthenon changed many times, but most of the times kept its sacred character. From a temple for the protector of the city, Athena, to an Orthodox church and then twice to a mosque.

But it is impressive that all this adaptation took place with the bare minimum change, in order to keep the building's appearance intact, as far as the Parthenon is concerned. Propylaea, on the other hand, were used as a palace during medieval times, which led to many changes to its appearance. Masonry walls fulfilled the gap of the columns and they embedded all the parts of the ancient Greek building in order to resemble what the commanders of the palace were familiar to (figures 5,6). Moreover, a tower during the position of the Franks was added to the place that was used also as prison (Casanaki, Mallouchou-Tufano, 1985). In addition, through the years many residential buildings were erected in the site of Acropolis which belonged to the high-powered people of the city and during the possession of the Ottomans the families of the commanders of the fortress lived there. Those buildings created a very tight residential character to the area, making a camouflage for the Parthenon and the other buildings. Although through some incredible few figures that survived through the years, it is obvious that the Parthenon even reused was standing tall, in the center of attention of the European elite during the Romantic era.



Fig.3 The Acropolis site during Ottoman empire. The distinction between the ancient buildings and the residential ones is obvious. Coloured aquatint from a drawing by Edward Dodwell. Wikimedia Commons, public domain, (p. 37 (Clair, 2022))

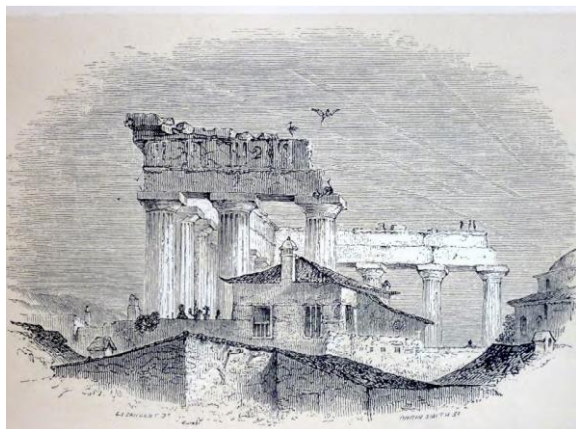


Fig.4 The ruins of the Parthenon in the midst of the dense urban fabric. The Parthenon dominates the Athenian sky. Woodcut c.1831, Sargent del. Darin Smith sc. From a sketch by Cockerell, 1810. (p.59 (Clair, 2022))

Fig.5 The filled areas with masonry between the columns. A tactic used during the Frankish period to transform the Propylaea into a western-style palace continued under the Ottomans. Copper engraving. Stuart and Revett, *Antiquities of Athens*, 4 vols (London: printed by J. Haberkorn, 1762–1816) (p.64 (Clair, 2022))



Fig.6 Entrance to the Acropolis, 1835. When the medieval parts still existed and made the place more like a fortress. Painting by Karl Heideck. From a modern reproduction not further identified. (p. 368 (Clair, 2022))

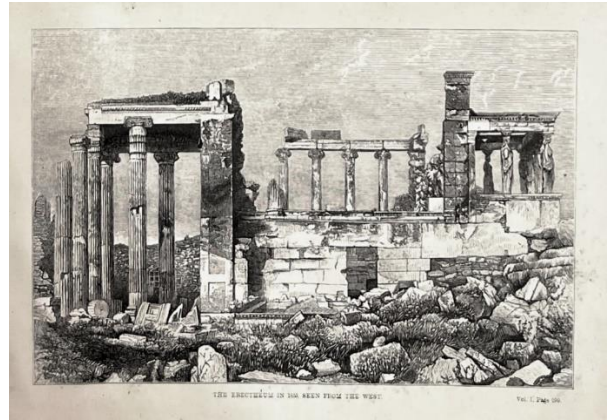


Fig.7 The Erechtheion during the Ottoman times. A normal every day scene around the ultimate monument of Greece. A harmonious osmosis of two opposite cultures. Pencil sketch, Gennadius, I. (1844-1932), [Scrapbook of the Acropolis]. Private collection (F41, p. 63), American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Gennadius Library, <https://www3.ascsa.edu.gr/gennadius/Scrapbooks.html>

Fig.8 The Erechtheion not long after the Ottoman period. A ruined and abandoned site with a bittersweet romantic appearance. A clear contrast to its past. Pencil sketch, Gennadius, I. (1844-1932), [Scrapbook of the Acropolis]. Private collection (F41, p. 65), American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Gennadius Library, <https://www3.ascsa.edu.gr/gennadius/Scrapbooks.html>

The mid-18th century was very crucial but yet important for the future of the Greek nation in general. In that exact time a great love and admiration for the Greek ancient times started to arise and so the systematic study and documentation of ancient Greek monuments, including the Acropolis, gained momentum. Many young wealthy boys traveled across the countries approaching Italy and Greece to see with their own eyes the things that read in their books. It was part of what they called Grand tour and they could not consider themselves knowledgeable enough if they have not accomplished to see with their own eyes the remaining traces of the past glorious eras of Roman and Greek times. Even more sometimes they tried to bring back something from the ruins as a souvenir. In order to keep their memory alive and study in deep what they saw they created plenty sketches that meant to be very precious legacy. They managed

to present the images that they witnessed and highlight the things that they counted as important. Unfortunately, there are only few images depicting the Acropolis site during the Ottoman period from an eastern perspective because of the religious reasons and the cultural gap that may have influenced the interest or motivation of Ottoman artists or travelers to depict Greek monuments such as the Acropolis. The majority of the historical resources that we have belong to western travelers and that might not be very objective, but this is all we have.

Many sketches from Athens had as key theme the Acropolis and the Parthenon, and most of the remaining sketches are black and white and only few of them were in color. In these few examples the essence that we get is that Greece during those times was purely a middle eastern province, with a well-hidden glory evident every now and then through the dense and chaotic urban tissue (figures 3,4). But still the past era was present. Most of the time the ruins of the Parthenon are presented without color and not as colorful as it used to be during the early stages of their life, and what they had in their minds about the appearance of those buildings based on what they knew about them. The colors that it used to have had been washed out, as we can observe in the paintings with great contrast to the brownish humble buildings. Moreover, sometimes mud and dust, either from the site, the materials or their surroundings covered the ancient ruins. In the extended research of William St Clair (Clair, 2022) about the Parthenon, and the acropolis site in general, it is mentioned that:

“According to Hugh William Williams, an artist whose account of his visit in 1817 four years before the Revolution reports no pre-rumblings of the imminent shock, the buildings and houses on the Acropolis summit were constructed with clay and marble, ‘the marble looking doleful through the mud’”.

The high contrast between the materials of the different buildings created a very specific appearance to the site, making it look like a derelict. The feeling of abandonment created an idea that, together with the romantic feeling, forced the Western powers to start thinking and taking action. The hypnotic appearance of the Parthenon in the sketches at times stimulated their imagination, perhaps taking them back to the glorious moments of its construction. In the most extravagant forms of admiration and arrogance, again some of them tried to take pieces of the ruins back to their hometowns. The most famous of these was Lord Elgin, who in the early 19th century collected a large number of pieces from the Parthenon and the Acropolis. He was so determined to succeed and fulfil his ambition that he wrote directly to Constantinople asking for permission to enter and study the site. As we know, he was granted permission for diplomatic reasons, but he seemed to be overstepping his bounds. Accompanied by some other craftsmen, he brutally cut up parts of the buildings of the site and he distorted the site forever. It is said that during his action he managed to transfer 128 crates full of antiquities, which were subsequently sold to the British State, with the full acceptance of all the members of Parliament, in order to pay his debts (Clair, 2022). His action came to an end with the beginning of the Greek Revolution in 1821. Thus, on the one hand, all this admiration contributed to the documentation and the creation of a friendly environment for the protection of the ruins, but on the other hand, it benefited the transportation of the ancient relics and to the serious degradation of the Parthenon and the Acropolis site.

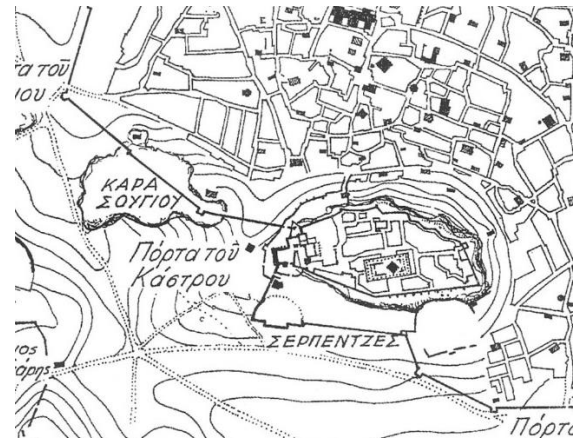
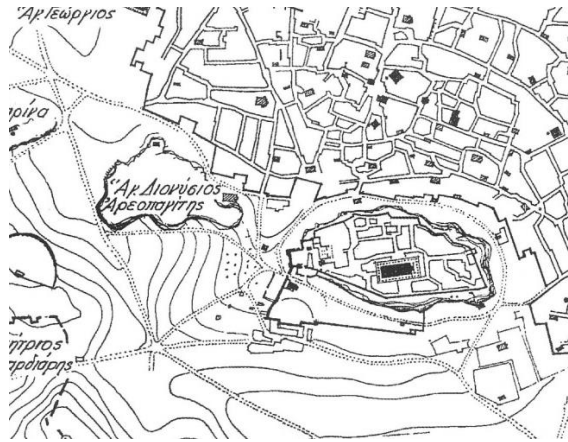


Fig.9 Acropolis of Athens from 1456-1687 depicting the dense urban fabric in between the ancient temples, an eastern like model of living. The Parthenon was still intact from heavy damages (p. 192 (Travlos. 1993))

Fig.10 Acropolis of Athens, 1687-1833, illustrating the dense urban fabric between the ancient temples, but this time something had changed. The Parthenon has been partially demolished by the bombing, and a new mosque is clearly established in the center of the temple. (p. 232 (Travlos. 1993))

Synopsis of the chapter

A second level of analysis of the Ottomans' tactics is their need to dominate the place. Their transformation of the Christian Church into a Muslim Mosque, complete with a minaret, demonstrates their willingness to impose their Eastern standards with practical and strategic significance. The location at the top of the Acropolis surpasses even the Frankish tower and everything else in the Athenian skyline (figure 11). Its use as a fortress added another layer of enclosure, restricting access to only the elite inhabitants. As a fortress, it served as a seat of power and symbol of authority, in line with Islamic architectural standards of making the most important location a fortress. Palaces such as the Alhambra in Spain and the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul are common examples. The ruler, as the commander-in-chief of the armed forces of their realm, and his companions were the most important people. This emphasizes the power and importance of the ruler in the nation. The most precious place in the palace was reserved for the potentate to give lessons to the people. It is worth noting that dynasts who possess such palaces are considered unstoppable.

The Ottomans were in control of access to the site and the regulation of information and knowledge. As it is already mentioned in order to enter the place, a special order was needed, and Lord Elgin managed to have one. Of course, he never followed his word but that strict order gave him the power and the tools to act unstoppable and achieve one of the greatest thefts in the history of cultural heritage. An order so powerful that he was able to cut into pieces, smash, and brutally eradicate antiquities. The only thing that stopped him was the loss of the power of the people which provided him access to the place. So, it is not subjective to say that the Ottomans acted with complete articulation, thinking that they should change the world and make it fit to their standards. Even if that means living in the Acropolis.

On the other hand, because of that strict policy, most of the buildings remained standing tall under their possession. All this security prevented many thefts of antiquities during the years. Elgin was not the first who thought how nice it would be to bring home some "classical pieces", he was just

among the very few that he achieved his ambition. Because of the fortification system, we have today various sketches illustrating the appearance of the constructions during those times and their atmosphere. These fortification walls acted as a buffer zone keeping the Acropolis as far away from the outside world as possible. Moreover, as was mentioned before one of the greatest sultans for the Ottomans, Mehmet II, ordered the high protection of the Acropolis and what it presented. He was well-informed about its value, and its power. That cultural appreciation made him strict with the permissions and access to the place. In addition, he ordered the place to be preserved exactly as it was. If we compare this tactic with their efforts to promote the Islamic culture, we can say that is something very odd. It would be more natural for them to remove any sculpture and human-looking vision and keep only any nature-like shapes. Instead, they lived among the ancient ruins resulting in a cultural osmosis. Traces of the past were present, and the site was a living archive. All the layers remained on the site, despite their opposition to Islamic beliefs. They paid attention not only to protecting the remaining of the Ancient Period or the Roman period. They kept intact even the Byzantine and the Frankish remains, which means they valued the place and its history as highly important, exactly as it transformed through the years of its existence. It is like the Acropolis, in the end, triumphed over the forces and kept its original character and appearance.



Fig.11 Part of a large painting of Athens in 1674. It is evident that the minaret dominates the Athenian sky, but the Parthenon is still the main attraction. Athens also appears to be a small medieval city. Jacques Carrey (1649-1726). The return of Charles-Marie-François Olier, Marquis de Nointel to Athens, 1674. Oil on canvas, 260 × 520 cm. From the permanent exhibition of Athens City Museum

iii_ The moment of the change

After the Greek War of Independence in 1821 and the years under the Ottoman rule, the Greeks needed to unite and rebuild their new state. They had shown great strength and unity while fighting against their rulers, so the politicians wanted to keep this spirit alive. At the same time, the admiration and supporting idea from Western allies, known as Philhellenes, wanted to help them create their free nation and start living carelessly enjoying their freedom. So, they started to think about what could be their role model. It seemed more appropriate than ever to start protecting all their remaining things, one of them being the ancient ruins. It is known that the Greek politicians started to protect the sites where the antiquities were located. However, some people started to sell different pieces to make a fortune. It is said that many war leaders tried to persuade them to stop selling and destroying the sites, telling them that these very items were the reason they were fighting for, meaning that they reflected the Greek spirit. But the Greeks were unable to find this union, so the Great Powers, or else known as "Concert of Europe", took the lead and installed a monarch to unite and establish the Greek nation. So, it is very interesting to point out that the independence of Greece did not last long. They just changed rulers, from an eastern one to a western one, more friendly to the Great Powers.

The years 1833 and especially 1834 meant to be very crucial for the history of the Greek nation. We can say that it was the moment that happened one of the most significant epistemological sections in the history of Athens and Greece in general. In 29th of June of 1833 the capital of Greece was transferred from Nauplio to Athens, the first King of Greece arrived in the capital and the first works for the representation of the Acropolis took place. The city in order to fit to the European models of those times had already started being reconstructed, but the least well-known restoration was the one of the Acropolis site. Due to all this notion of the revival of the Greek spirit the new kingdom of Greece wanted to base its existence on something very powerful to create an immediate and obvious bond. In order to achieve this, they wanted a monument that embodied the whole history of the Greeks and the connection of the new leaders with that should be instantaneous. That monument would be the Parthenon and the Acropolis site in general.

As for the selection of the site it makes absolutely sense cause this specific area remained in the top interest of everyone who wanted to be the dynast of Greece. It is placed at the top of the hill and being visible throughout the whole Athens. It used to be the greatest landmark of the Ancient Athens and it meant to be the greatest landmark of the new nation. Its reputation was known worldwide and made absolutely sense to choose it for the representation of the rebirth of Athens. As we know its former use as a fortress created many distortions of the appearance of the buildings so in order to be reused properly some work should be done. The leader of this venture was the famous architect of the Bavarian court at Munich, Leon von Klenze accompanied from the Greek archeologist Kyriakos Pittakis. A very interesting and not very famous fact is that during the reconstruction of the capital some foreign architect proposed the placement of the palace of the new king in the Acropolis, with the Parthenon in between or in a less extravagance form of arrogance at the base of the hill, creating a direct and tangible comparison between them. It is said that the architect Karl-Friedrich Schinkel with his proposal published, again, in 1834, depicts the new palace in and around the remaining buildings. In these drawings he proposed to re-color them with their original bright colors and be partially restored, and of courses his new buildings would be in the same classical appearance as the Parthenon and the Acropolis used to be. His

proposal got rejected from the father of the new king of Greece (figures 12,13), king Ludwig of Bavaria with the official reasons being that they could not afford its construction and that location would not be ideal for the new palace. It can be considered as a wise choice because something like that will cause plenty of disappointment to the residences of the capital, which they wanted to persuade that the new kingdom would bring unity to their nation.



Fig.12 Views of the royal palace to be built on the Acropolis, as proposed by Karl-Friedrich Schinkel (1834). A clear delirium of the revival of the "classical" appearance of the site. Although the ruins are still ruins, they are only re-coloured.. Watercolour. Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, Munich.10 (p.440 (Clair, 2022))

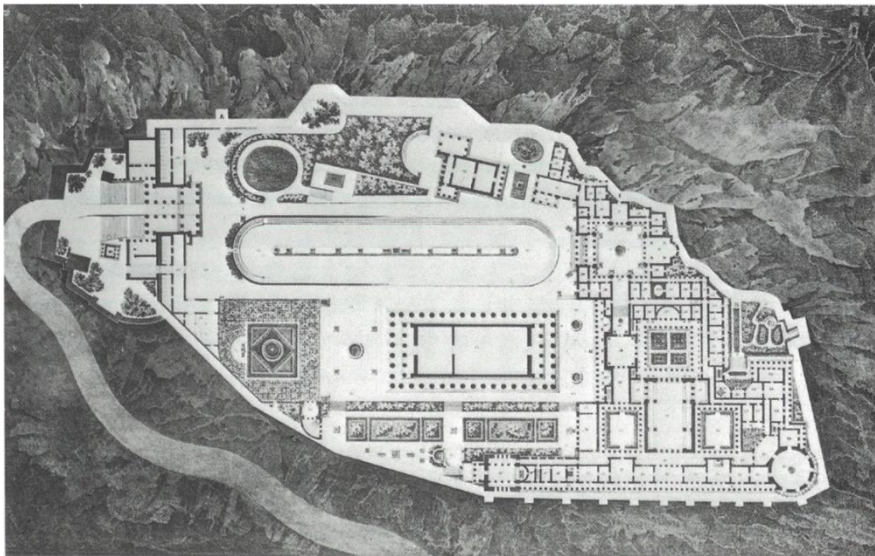


Fig.13 Plan of the Acropolis with the royal palace, designed by Karl-Friedrich Schinkel (1834). An obvious osmosis of the neoclassical style with the older baroque style in western royal architecture. (p.243 (Travlos, 1993))

From analyzing the maps of the expansion of the new capital and the construction of new public buildings, we can understand that the placement of the new palaces was a key topic of discussion. The initial official proposal from Kleanthis and Schaubert (figure 14) (Travlos, 1993) suggested that the palace should be located where Omonoia Square is now. This would have meant that the king's residence would have been far away from the Acropolis, but a long straight boulevard would have created an optical connection between the two. In Von Klenze's proposal it was located in the area of Keramikos, and in Friedrich von Gartner's its final position was decided at the beginning of Ermou Street, where it still is today. What we can gather from this is that the Acropolis was always at the center of discussions and served as the starting point for everything. It stood above everything else, and everyone could relate to it. It was a wise decision of the new rulers of "independent" Greece to establish the Acropolis as a national monument and leave it accessible to the people. If the palaces had been built there, the area would have been restricted again, and only a select few would have access, making it another type of fortress reminiscent of the former rulers that the new ones wanted to differentiate themselves from. Furthermore, the monarchs understood that for a monarchy to be successful and for the people to be happy, the landmark they chose had to be accessible to all. Thus, reusing something as important as a monument was a strategic move.

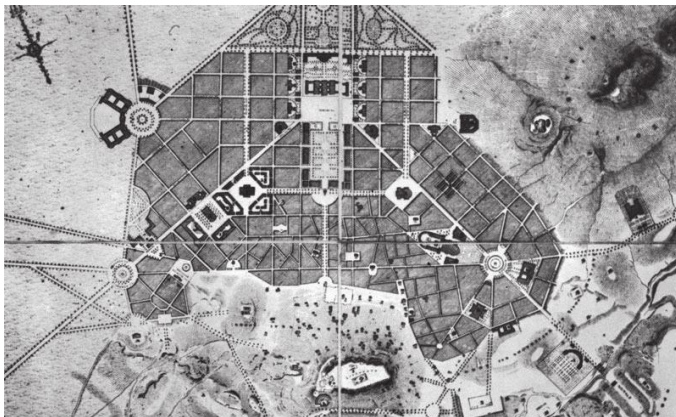


Fig.14 Plan of Athens by Kleanthis and Schaubert, 1831-1832. The palace is located at the top of the axis connecting the Acropolis with the palace. The palace and the Acropolis are the central points of attention, highlighting the notion of the period. (p.36 (Biris, 1966))

Fig.15 The final urban plan of the reconstruction of the city of Athens in 1862, after the liberation of Greece from the Ottoman Empire by Strantz. We can see that the new part of the city extends further from the previous boundaries of the city. The Acropolis remains the center of attention. McIntosh, M. (2017, June 19). Athens in the 19th century: The Neighbourhood of Metaxourgeion. Brewminate: A Bold Blend of News and Ideas. <https://brewminate.com/athens-in-the-19th-century-the-neighbourhood-of-metaxourgeion/>

But what exactly happened to the site in order to be transformed into a monument by von Klenze, who has been described as one of the leading figures of Romantic Classicism (Maria Casanaki 1985)? He first visited Athens in 1834 and after that he submitted three memoranda to the Regency and to the first king of Greece Otto, setting out for the first time the guidelines for the reconstruction and excavation of the Acropolis, which briefly included (Casanaki, Mallouchou-Tufano, 1985):

1. The aim is to remove fortifications that lack archaeological, structural, or artistic interest, particularly those that are at risk of imminent collapse. This includes the fortifications in front of the Propylaea. It is important to note that any removals will be based solely on objective evaluations.
2. Plans call for the Parthenon to be cleared and rebuilt, for excavations to be continued within a twenty-foot radius of the building, and for the dismembered parts to be put in order. The sculpture will be placed in either the mosque in the Parthenon or the Theiseion. Required architectural blocks for rebuilding will be stored nearby. Blocks with intrinsic value not needed for rebuilding will be grouped in marble piles on the Acropolis to maintain its picturesque ruin appearance. Other architectural material on the ground will be removed from the Acropolis and sold as building material.
3. The reconstruction of the Parthenon starts on the more visible north side, facing the town and palace. Only original column drums are to be used, with the exception of one or two missing drums which may be replaced with new marble drums. It is important to note that if it is found that one or two column drums are missing, they can be replaced with new marble drums, but no attempt should be made to make the new additions look old. The surviving architraves, triglyphs, metopes, and cornices should be placed above the columns in a manner that preserves the picturesque character of the ruin. This approach should be maintained throughout the building, with the cella walls being re-erected using the available ancient blocks. On the south side, the whole can remain intact even if the missing columns are not replaced. If access to the superstructure is required, the spiral stair belonging to the Christian church should be removed and replaced by a light staircase inside the building.
4. When rebuilding the Parthenon in the west area of the museum, it is necessary to clear the ruins and re-erect the Erechtheion and the Propylaea in the same manner as the Parthenon. The ancient ground level, along with its remains of retaining walls, bases, and foundations, should be preserved.



Fig.16 The Parthenon after the disappearance. It has the look of a ruin, and all the pieces of marbles lying around add to the feeling. At the same time, the site looks like an open archive. Gennadius, I. (1844-1932), [Scrapbook of the Acropolis]. Private collection (F41, p. 59), American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Gennadius Library, <https://www3.ascsa.edu.gr/gennadius/Scrapbooks.htm>

It is evident from the above that von Klenze not only prepared the groundwork for the reconstruction of the Acropolis, but also oversaw the removal of all traces of the medieval and eastern periods of the site, as if they had never existed. On one hand, he laid the foundations for transforming it into a national monument. On the other hand, he destroyed a significant part of the history of the city and the Greek nation without leaving any documentation of that era as archival material. It is paradoxical that a person so enamored with romanticism would take such a destructive and aggressive approach to erasing part of history while reviving the early stages of its life. We can understand the Klenze's motives for drawing a parallel between King Otto and the glorious ancient and Roman times. However, it is important to maintain objectivity and avoid subjective evaluations unless clearly marked as such. He may also be influenced by the dislike that Greek people have shown towards their recent past and their desire to distance themselves from that era.

It is quite controversial also though that he went further to erase such a huge part of the history of the place and at the same time he did not want to finish the image of it in its initial form, with rebuilding all the missing parts or adding color to the existing construction. He wanted to present a very certain image of it, as he says in his memoranda, a picturesque appearance. Perhaps again he wanted to use the blank image of the marbles as a blank canvas to rewrite the history of Greek nation. Moreover, if we went through further distortion of the buildings by adding colors, the citizens of Athens may protest against it since they were very protective with their identity, especially after the revolution. We can say that all his moves were in one hand to give back to Greek people what they missing or what it was destroyed from the former rulers. He wanted in that way to create a very tangible reference to the present history of the state and project the new king as something very beneficial for the people, and quite approachable. He also made sure that this exactly will be the message of his actions, and so he organized to celebrate the restoration works with a glorious ceremony placing the king Otto in a throne in the Parthenon and made him set the foundation stone of the reconstruction as an action of pure symbolism (Casanaki, Mallouchou-Tufano, 1985). He had a very certain idea what a monument of the state should be and what power the Parthenon and the acropolis had to the people of the newborn Greek state. Casanaki and Mallouchou – Tufano clearly addressed that: “The peroration of von Klenze's address to Otto reflects the spirit of admiration for antiquity and purism which was to characterize all of the operations undertaken on the Acropolis in the 19th century; *“All of the vestiges of barbarism must be eradicated from the Acropolis and all of Greece and the remains of the glorious past shall shine with new splendor as a firm base for a glorious present and a glorious future.”*” (Casanaki, Mallouchou-Tufano 1985) p.13



Fig.17 The entry of King Otto of Greece into Athens by Peter von Hess (1834). The clear intention is to create a link between the new ruler and the ancient glory of Athens. The new king arrives and the Acropolis welcomes him in the background. Oil on canvas. Neue Pinakothek, München
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Peter_v_Hess_Empfang_K%C3%B6nig_Otto_\(1\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Peter_v_Hess_Empfang_K%C3%B6nig_Otto_(1).jpg)



Fig.18 The new King of Greece, Otto by Gottlieb Bodmer (1804–1837). He is dressed in the traditional Greek military costume and, of course, he is standing in front of ancient ruins.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otto_of_Greece#/media/File:King_Otto_of_Greece.jpg

Synopsis of the chapter

To briefly summarise all the above, we can clearly say that the Bavarian court wanted to make gentrification of the newborn Greek state. The ruling class wanted to create a false sense of liberation from the Eastern rulers, when in fact the Greek people had only gained another dynast. They wanted to dominate the Athenian terrain, which still had plenty of room for development. Under the orders of von Klenze, the Acropolis returned to a “purer” appearance from its eastern appearance. The Germans generally loved and admired the buildings and achievements of Ancient Greece. Neoclassicism was at its peak and they wanted their actions to be the direct continuation of an era that they admired. However, they had to erase everything that stood in the way of their ambitions. They did not just want to dominate the place, they wanted to vanish everything remarks of the former rulers of the area. The thought of such a motive gives us a vision of why they ordered the removal of not only Ottoman but also Frankish and Christian traces. The new monarchy intended to take the lead in this game of power. To accomplish this, they wanted to erase everything except the ancient ruins. It is essential to point out that they also wanted to preserve the picturesque, ruin-like image of the site and restore the buildings with the materials and pieces found on site, rather than using new ones. In this manner, the image of the Greek state can be paralleled as a damaged remnant of war, still standing tall, but not without the vital help of the Bavarians. And they want to show off their achievements. The Acropolis was a fertile archive, and they wanted to study it in depth and extract all the information they could. For the pieces that were found on the site but did not fit into the architect's vision, the erection of a small museum was proposed to freeze all these elements in time. Yet their love of antiquity destroyed the vast, fruitful archive of the intermediate periods, distorting the truth and presenting only a specific part of history from their point of view and their ideas of what was proper and what was inappropriate.

However, their strong desire to study all antiquities sparked an interest in excavation and conservation techniques as we know them today. As a result of all this attention, many scientists, architects and archaeologists became involved in the reconstruction work, and they laid the corner-stone for the conservation theories that were to emerge later. Moreover, von Klenze's ambition to use the materials as they were found proved beneficial to the monument, as the original pieces remained intact, carefully placed to await a better future. It is impossible to determine how the appearance of the area would be affected by a more radical approach to restoration, or what damage might be caused. And, of course, all of this work put the Acropolis at the center of attention, strengthening the Greek spirit and beginning to act as a landmark for the newborn state. The Greeks, meanwhile, were getting a little closer to their identity. It is as if the Acropolis was once again revealing its inner power and giving its ruler a sense of awe for the place. While some historical elements were erased, the persons involved demonstrated a kind and gentle approach to the remaining ancient structures. Prior to any reconstruction, excavation work was carried out. The team had the ability to restore the original colour and make everything look new again, but they did not do so. The Acropolis demanded a kind of respect, and as we can say, this kind of work could be described as respectful in a way.



Fig. 19 Klenze's vision of the Greek state in 1846. This fictional drawing reveals the artist's inner thoughts. He imagined the new Greek state (the palace in the background) and the ancient Athens of the "Golden Age" (with the Acropolis restored) fully revived by the reign of Otto. Neue Pinakothek, München. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Athens#/media/File:Akropolis_by_Leo_von_Klenze.jpg

iv_ The after math

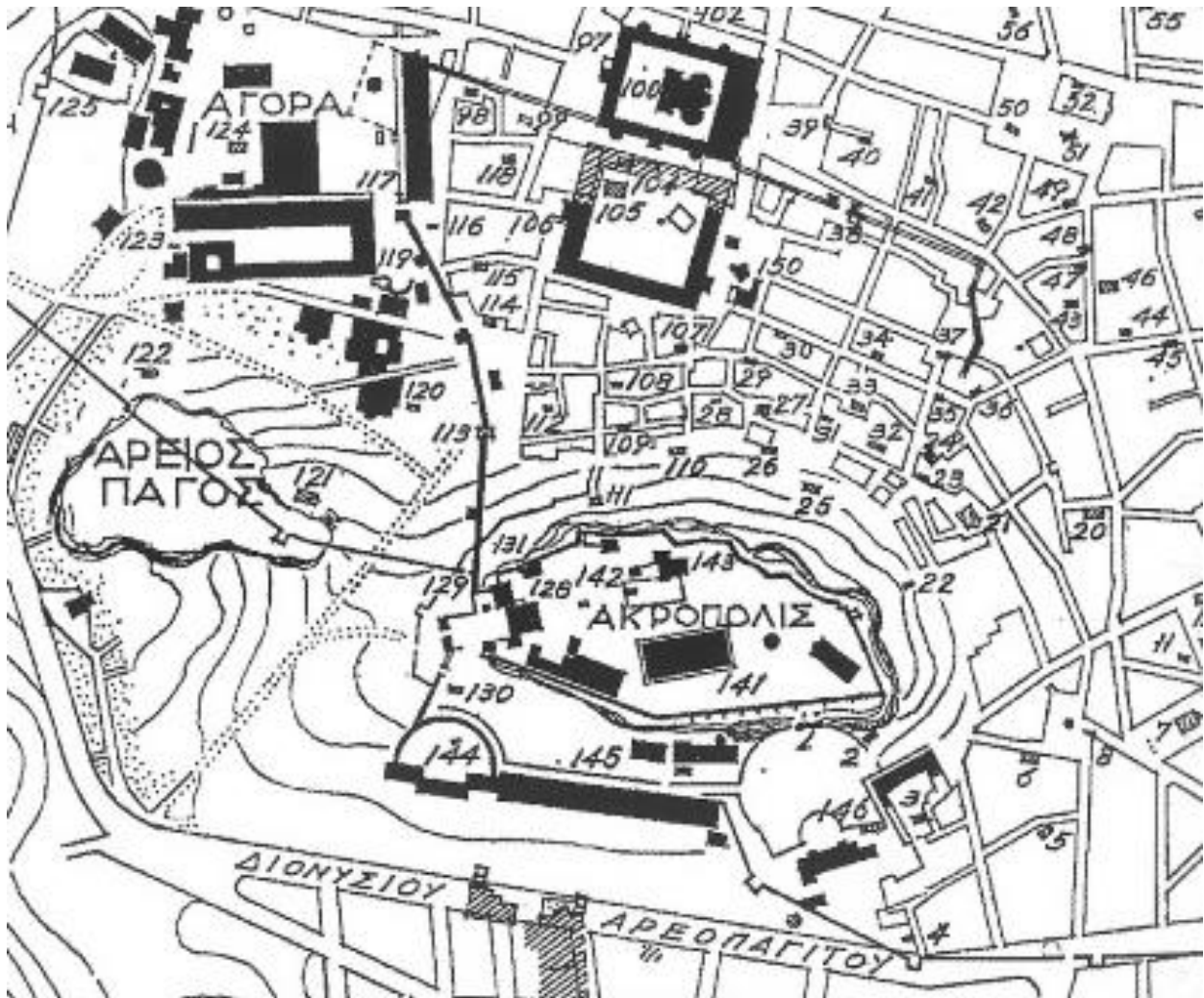


Fig.20 Acropolis of Athens, 1833-1959, the site is now rehabilitated as an official monument belonging to the city. The disappearance is obvious, and now only the antiquities dominate. (p. 285 (Travlos. 1993))

Klenze appears to have had a significant impact on the restoration of the Acropolis that followed his tenure. His restoration plan proved highly advantageous, as many lost parts of the temples were discovered during excavation and demolition works. Over the years, due to wars and other activities in the area, these parts had either fallen into the ground or been used as building materials for other constructions. The use of so-called "spolia", parts of ancient Greek and Roman temples, for the construction of Christian temples or other buildings was common. Restoration activities have made it possible to find this type of material, which can be used to rebuild the temples, served as study material for archaeologists, or be exhibited in the museum that was built on the site specifically to house these antiquities in 1865. This was almost 30 years after the first restoration works in the Acropolis. In 1875, ten years after the construction of the humble Acropolis Museum on the site, Heinrich Schliemann, another German amateur archaeologist, funded the

demolition of the Frankish tower, one of the last symbols of the medieval times on the site. Again, the reason for this clearance was that the existence of the tower "*was concealing part of the Propylaea west wing and marring the harmonious lines of the entire Acropolis.*" (Casanaki, Mallouchou-Tufano, 1985) p.16. The aim of this approach was to create once again a "purer" image of the site with a touch of extravagance, rather than the picturesque ruin-like image that Klenze had created. So, we can observe the first deviance of the initial orders, perhaps because Schliemann had a different idea what picturesque means.

Although Klenze played an important and leading role in the restoration of the Acropolis site, it was not solely influenced by him. Kyriakos Pittakis, a pioneer, if not the first, Greek archeologist, also played a significant role in the restoration, providing access to the necessary knowledge about the materials and the construction techniques, and accomplishing the first small-scale excavation of the Parthenon. Pittakis worked in the same vein of restoration as Klenze, showing passion and dedication to his work. He attempted to represent the new identity of the Greeks objectively while preserving as much of the past as possible. It is noteworthy that during his career, Greece was still recognized as a kingdom ruled by the Bavarian court and the Great Powers. This made him not only a pioneer in archaeology but also in the protection of Greek heritage from a native perspective. His work was dedicated to the preservation of Greece's legacy rather than any political agenda. However, he only focused on a specific period of the site's history. His work inadvertently resulted in the erasure of some historical information. It is now known that he preserved certain aspects of the site's history, while others have distorted it with the ideas of the rehabilitation team on how the national monument should be treated.



Fig. 21 Before and after figures from Parthenon and Erechtheion from Balanos personal archival documentation (p.447 (Clair, 2022))

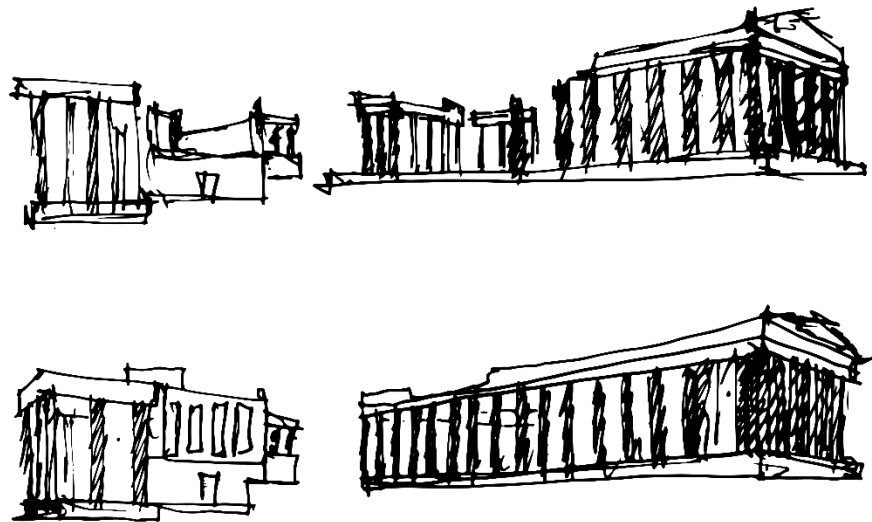


Fig. 22 The previous photo has been retraced by the author. The aim of this action was to give a clearer impression of what Balanos has done. He has partially restored many pieces and the monumental site looks both more complete and more like a ruin at the same time.

Another worth noting technique to the re-erection of the site, reminding the Violet Le Duc's approach, was carried out by Nikolaos Balanos, a Greek civil engineer. This is evident in the archival documentation of his work, including photographs of the site. He began working on the site after a major earthquake in 1898, using iron and concrete to reinforce and connect missing parts. Not only did he repair the parts damaged by the earthquake, but he also recreated the site according to his own vision of how it should be look. He added some parts that were missing from the previous restoration works and his greater admission was to reproduce the image if the site as it used to be in its moments of glory. Although, he again stopped in a more ruin like representation of the building (figures 21,22). It is known that together with Anastasios Orlandos, Greek architect and archeologist, wanted to demolish every remaining trace of the Christian or mediaeval times, according to their willing to demolish the Christian spiral stairs inside the Parthenon, which willing was never completed. Their work was continuous with some in-between stops until 1970 and they are responsible for the image that we see today on the site. As is clearly visible, Balanos and Orlandos continued with the romantic vision of von Klenze and Pittakis regarding the representation of the monument, which embodies the history of the country's civilization, but in a more drastic and interventionist way.

Balanos was influenced by the Industrial Revolution and the new materials in architecture, such as concrete and steel. He believed that these materials would be the best solution to extend the lifespan of monuments. His re-erection works on the site began slightly at the end of the Bavarian monarchy, and it continued when the new government was led by politicians who envisioned and promoted a new, liberated, and powerful Greek state. This notion allowed for the development of modernistic ideas, moving away from the traditional approach of the monarchy. This was also reflected in the work of Balanos, who aimed to integrate new techniques with Greece's historical

legacy. Although the regime changed again after twelve years, in 1936 a new dictatorship took control of the Greek nation and began to steer the reconstruction of the Acropolis in a more conservative direction. Despite the new regime promoting itself as a means of advancing the country, it was clear that a more traditional approach was being taken. The re-erection's team approaches, and more specifically Balanos's approaches, caused confusion among the architectural community in his country and throughout Europe, as evidenced by the special mention of his work at the 1931 ICOMOS conference in Athens (ICOMOS, 1931). At the conference, they approved his proposal and work as a positive development. It is worth noting that this conference was one of the first to address issues related to national heritage and introducing ways on how to treat them, almost a century after the initial restoration works at the Acropolis site.

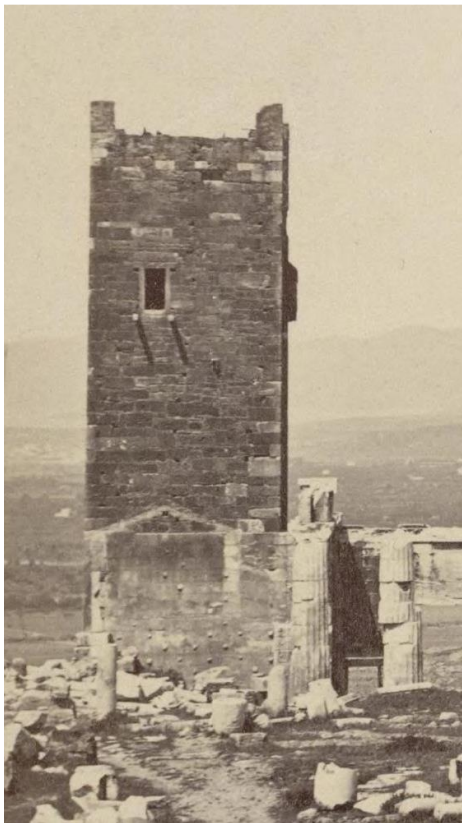


Fig. 23 The Frankish Tower in 1872 before its final demolition. The traces of the ancient temples are evident in this last remnant of a bygone era that will soon be gone forever. Detail from a photograph by William Stillman. Wikimedia. (p.492(Clair, 2022))

Although Balanos's work approaches and techniques were validated by the various professionals who attended the conference, history proved him wrong. Less than 10 years after the conference, in 1940, the disastrous consequences of the ill-considered use of iron in Balanos restorations became apparent. Since then, the monument's image has been in great jeopardy, it has begun to suffer from the effects of the weather, which led to the creation of the National Committee for the Preservation of the Acropolis Monument in 1975. A committee has been established with the sole purpose of preserving the sacred rock in its original state and reversing any damage caused by years of neglect and improper use of materials. One year after the actual liberation of Greece and the establishment of the Third Hellenic Republic, a democratic regime that remains in being until

today. The creation of a committee while only scoping the protection of the Acropolis, gives us the indication that the Acropolis was recognized as the archetype of a classical monument, a reminder of the return to a democratic era. Nevertheless, what was considered a national heritage and how to deal with it was not only a problem for Greece. In 1964, the Venice Charter was established to address this issue. It provided clear guidelines for architects, archaeologists, and other experts involved in heritage protection to follow. The focus shifted towards preserving the authenticity of the original construction and taking great care with interventions that could be reversible. The scientific community acknowledged the benefits of dealing with heritage, but found it extremely important to lower the ego and add words like cultural appreciation more proactively to their vocabulary. They were determined to think more about innovations that would not damage the overall value, and to count things like weathering, which turned out to be more dangerous than they thought.

Synopsis of the chapter

This chapter explored, from a political point of view, the transition from a monarchy to a democratic regime, to a dictatorship, to the final liberation of the country and the democratic regime in 1974. The professionals involved in the reconstruction of the Acropolis were predominantly native, indicating that their involvement was more for cultural representation rather than as a mere accomplishment. So, this chapter highlights the Greeks' desire control of the situation. There was a shift from Klense and foreignness leading the rebuilding work to locals taking initiatives and becoming more actively involved with the site. The work of Pittakis, even if it was rather amateurish and based purely on the preservation of antiquity, was very important for archival purposes. This archival documentation was continued by Balanos, the later leading figure of the Acropolis, who created even more conflict within the scientific community.

In Balanos' work, the notion of modernist ideas and the power to change the world is obvious. He acted in fragile moments between the world wars, when ideas were more radical. He also worked in years when the use of concrete and steel was very popular and prominent. Notwithstanding this, he chose to use these materials, causing considerable damage to the monument. The reaction of the weathering of the iron and its rust caused damage to the valuable marbles. Additionally, the use of concrete mortar to combine the marble pieces resulted in significant distortion to the monument, but the most important thing was the irreversible nature of his working methods. On the other hand, this type of work caused many conflicts in the scientific community, pointing to the need to discuss the treatment of cultural heritage. International conferences were established and guidelines were settled to address conflicts and facilitate discussions. Moreover, the image of the Acropolis created by Balanos in particular is known throughout the world and is still present today. Again, a ruin-like structure, but more rounded and united. This image is associated with the democratic eras of the state, neglecting anything foreign.

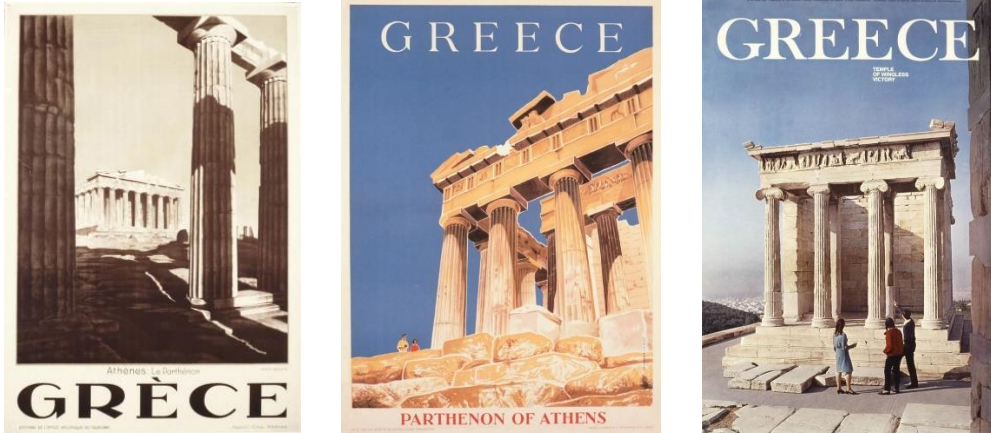


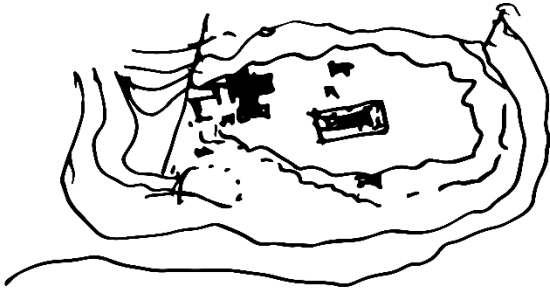
Fig. 24-26 Posters of the National Organisation of Tourism (1929, 1952, 1967), in which the Acropolis is chosen several times as a theme that represents the Greek spirit. The dates when the Acropolis is used as a theme are crucial for the Greek nation because they are dates when something changed in the socio-political system, but all the time the Acropolis is selected to represent the Greek people and also to operate as a reference point. Retrieved by <https://gnto.gov.gr/apothetirio/afises/>

v_ Conclusions

Examining the role of the Parthenon, and the Acropolis site, as the national symbol of Greece, one may wonder what are the characteristics that determine the ultimate national monument. This text aimed to provide an objective view of the transformation of the site into something beyond a simple ancient temple at crucial moments in modern Greek history. It would not make sense though to present the after image without the before. If the situation before a change was not examined then the situation after might be characterized as subjective and biased. The connection between the socio-political aspect and a reuse it is very determine when we are discussing about buildings of national importance. The Parthenon is widely recognized as a symbol of the Greek identity and a monument of Greece. Also, it is frequently used as an official representation of the state and a prominent feature in advertising Greece to the world (figures 24-26). The Acropolis site is the foremost symbol that comes to mind when thinking of Greece and is used as the ultimate landmark. This recognition has been advantageous for the Greek state whenever it wants to project something globally, as well as for others. It is the primary association that comes to mind when describing Greece almost automatically. Therefore, it is accurate to state that the Parthenon and Acropolis site in general serve as the official representation of Greece.

The restoration of this site is a topic of great interest among the academic community and beyond. However, there is little discussion of the loss of historical evidence. The Parthenon and the site, in general, are often described as a palimpsest, carrying the history of Greece throughout its existence. Is it appropriate to describe the monument as such, given the significant distortion it has undergone? Much of its history has been erased, and what was remained before the erasure was not properly documented. It was beneficial for the site to represent the absolute monument, but the distortion and vanish that took place erased a very important part of its history and precious resources with scientific value for the architectural and archeological society. Von Klenze's actions

and decisions, based on a single visit to Greece and the monument's reputation as the quintessential classical ruin, have resulted in a narrow focus on only one aspect of its complex historical evolution. It is difficult to determine the extent to which the image we perceive today would be transformed if all the layers were present. It might be different or it might be the same. All in all, the significance of the Acropolis is more connected with a deeper idea of perfection and ultimate symmetry, that was untouched through the years or it has aged gracefully. But this image is mostly manmade in order to fulfill the ambitions of some architects and engineers, the perfect imperfection.



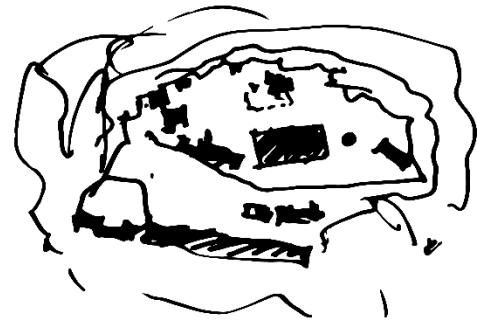
Franks 1205-1456 AD



Ottomans 1687-1833 AD



Ottomans 1456-1687 AD



The new state of Greece 1833-1959 AD

Fig. 27 Sketches by the author to illustrate the transformation of the plan of the Acropolis in each period presented.

Although, it is difficult to provide an objective evaluation of the representation of a country in a fragile moment such as political instability was undergone, given the significant gap in thinking and acting in the 21st century. However, von Klenze's ambition to make the Acropolis the national monument of Greece was successful. It is worth noting that his attempt to connect the reign of Otto with the monument was unsuccessful. Currently, the monument is not associated with the former kings of Greece, but rather with the ideals of liberty and democracy. Again, it is notable that the first reconstruction works began during the Otto regime, a foreign monarchy. Perhaps it would be more appropriate for the national monument to represent the nation as a whole, rather

than just a small part of its history. In Greece, the monarchy no longer exists, and the country is now represented by a democratic regime. It might be important to mention at this point that the Acropolis was built during the “Golden Age” of Ancient Greece when democracy was born. That might explain why the monument is embodied with this value and could not really be reused in favor of regimes different than that. Despite the many tries over the years the Acropolis never lost its power to manipulate the masses, and after all anyone who visited the place could only feel awe for this construction.

The examination of the periods revealed a dichotomy between cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation through the reuse of significant sites, such as the Acropolis. The Ottomans had a more conservative approach, while the Bavarians were more radical. The Greek state initially adopted a radical approach but eventually shifted to a more conservative attitude, which is still maintained today. Recently, a major transformation of the site has taken place, raising many questions. Concrete paths have been constructed within the sacred rock to provide a suggested route for visitors to walk around the monumental site. Despite previous concerns about its suitability for the site, a non-reversible material, concrete, has been used in the landscape surrounding the buildings. The scientific community is currently debating whether the use of the same material by architect Emmanouil Korres, who has a close connection to the site, was a beneficial tactic. The major conflict arises from the fact that he was aware of the history and even more inside parts unknown to the common people due to his role. Is it acceptable as long as he does not use it in the buildings? Is the landscape of the site less valuable than the buildings? Furthermore, what were the architect's motives? Perhaps he wished to leave a lasting imprint on the Acropolis (as long as the concrete lasts), or perhaps he was captivated by the power of the site and felt himself to be the lord of Athens. The further exploration of these questions could be a nice start for expanding, even more, the appliance of this study. As long as the Acropolis serves its role as the ultimate national symbol, there would be room for debate.

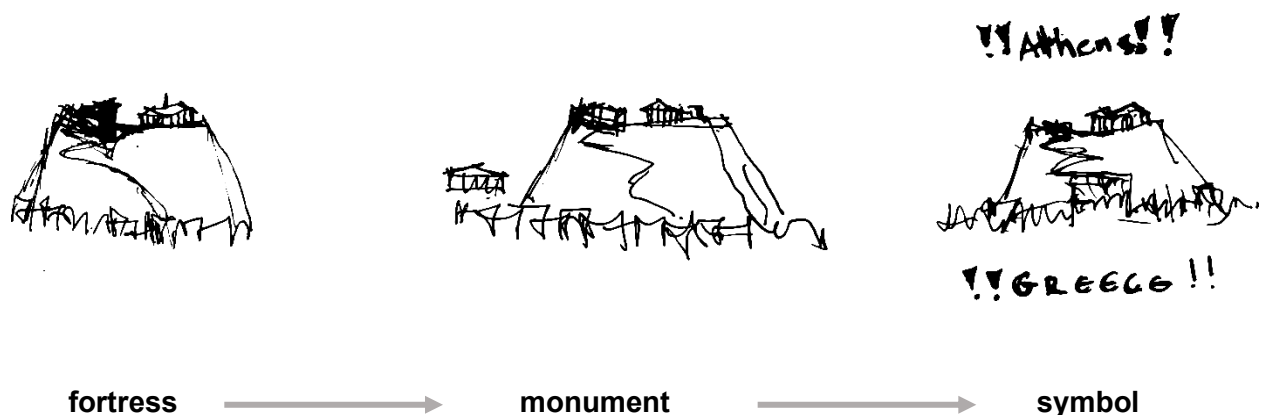


Fig. 28 The author's sketches attempt to show the transformation of the Acropolis site from a fortress/forbidden place to a monument/public space and finally to the ultimate symbol of the nation's splendor.

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