

# Who Saved the Parthenon?

A New History of the Acropolis  
Before, During and After the  
Greek Revolution



WILLIAM ST CLAIR



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Cover image: Figure 2.7. 'View of the Acropolis from the banks of the Illysus, Sep<sup>r</sup> 1824.' Chromolithograph from a contemporary amateur picture. From: William Black, L.R.C.S.E., Surgeon, H.M.S. Chanticleer, *Narrative of Cruises in the Mediterranean in H.M.S. "Euryalus" and "Chanticleer" during the Greek War of Independence (1822–1826)* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1900), frontispiece. The chromolithograph was made by McLagan and Cumming of Edinburgh c.1900. Public domain.

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## 4. The Encounter

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### Classically-Educated Visitors

There was another community in pre-Revolutionary Athens whose influence, both locally and among constituencies in western Europe, was disproportionate to its numbers: the ancient Athenians. Since the 1670s, an almost continuous succession of classically-educated men, and a few women, had visited Athens and its acropolis, not as traders or soldiers like most of their predecessors, but as aristocrats and scholars, usually privileged persons of wealth and leisure, among whose principal aims in going on the expensive and hazardous journey was to improve their knowledge of ancient Greece.<sup>1</sup>

In Figure 4.1, an image of the pioneers inserted at the front of the Dutch edition of a book, equivalent to an expectation-setting frontispiece, invites stay-at-home readers to accompany the real-life explorers in their imagination.

The image at 4.2, from the same book, shows the pioneers at work. More an allegorical presentation of new ways of seeing as explorations among landscapes than an attempt to turn the words of the book into realistic images, it too conveys something of the sense of excitement they felt at seeing the actual physical remains of a civilization that they had hitherto only known from its literatures.

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1 Among the few women were Lady Craven, who visited in 1786, as described in Craven, *A Journey through the Crimea to Constantinople. In a Series of Letters from the Right Honourable Elizabeth Lady Craven to His Serene Highness the Margrave of Brandebourg, Anspach, and Bareith. Written in the Year MDCCCLXXXVI* (London: G.G.J. & J. Robinson, 1789) and Queen Caroline in 1816, see Adolphus, John, *Voyages and Travels of her Majesty, Caroline Queen of Great Britain ... by One of her Majesty's Suite* (London: Jones, 1822), and Demont, Louise, *Journal of the Visit of Her Majesty the Queen to Tunis, Greece, and Palestine ... translated by Edgar Garston* (London: T. and J. Allan, 1821).





Figure 4.1. Untitled picture inserted at the front of the abridged Dutch edition of the book by Jacob Spon.<sup>2</sup>



Figure 4.2. 'Athenen'. Copper engraving from 1689 by Jan Luyken, inserted in the same book.<sup>3</sup>

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- 2 Spon, Jacob, *Voyagie door Italien, Dalmatien, Griekenland, en de Levant. Gedaan in de Jaren 1675 en 1676* (Amsterdam: Jan ten Hoorn, 1689). Spon's visit is discussed in Chapter 7.
  - 3 Engraving in *Voyagie door Italien, Dalmatien, Griekenland*, 1689, a translation into Dutch from the work of Jacob Spon written in French whose full title is noted in the Bibliography, with subsequent editions.

## Recovering the Ancient World through Meursius and Pausanius

Neither Jacob Spon nor any of the other early students of the monuments would have been able to advance far in their work if they had had to rely on their own observations or on the few books that were then available locally. They were the beneficiaries of what was the single most decisive event in the recovery of a reliable knowledge of the topography and customs of ancient Athens, without which none of the on-the-spot research results could have occurred so soon, so successfully, or so comprehensively.

In *Cecropia* ['Things relating to Kekrops'], a short book first printed in 1622, the Leiden scholar, Johannes van Meurs, known throughout Europe by the Latinised version of his name, Meursius, collected all the references to the Acropolis of Athens he could find in the ancient texts that he knew, an astonishingly full corpus that included extracts from ancient annotations which commentators had added to manuscripts ('scholia') and other texts only available in editions that were not then easily accessible. For the quotations from Greek-language authors, Meursius provided Latin translations, so opening his work to educated men, and to some women, across Europe. Named after Kekrops, the first king of Athens, from whom the Acropolis of Athens received its ancient poetic name, *Cecropia* at once became indispensable to anyone who wished to cross the border between the world of ancient Greek texts and the world of material survivals. Meursius later published a succession of other books, in which he brought together references to other aspects of ancient Athens, including some, such as his collection of ancient texts that discuss the festivals, whose importance in the life of the ancient city he was among the first to appreciate.<sup>4</sup> Meursius, who presented himself to his patron as never having been south of the Alps, is the unsung founding scholar of the recovery of knowledge of ancient Hellas, and of Athens in particular. His works, referred to with respect

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4 The titles are noted in full in the Bibliography. It is not always clear which of his many works is being referred to. Even among stay-at-home scholars and travellers who wrote up their experiences on their return with the help of a library, only a few would have had access to the full corpus. *Cecropia*, a slim volume that could be carried in a knapsack, although not designed for the purpose, seems to have made its way physically to Athens more often than Meursius's other works.

until at least the late nineteenth century, are an unseen presence in the whole modern scientific, Enlightenment, and scholarly traditions to the present day.<sup>5</sup>

As far as the ancient authors that Meursius filleted for his compilations, by far the fullest account of the monuments of ancient Greece to have survived from the ancient world was that of Pausanias, whose long description of the Greece of his day was probably composed in the second century CE, more than half a millennium after the classical Parthenon.<sup>6</sup> First printed in 1516 in Italy from the single known manuscript, of which many manuscript copies were made soon after it was first re-discovered, Pausanias is a reminder of how tenuous were the threads of contingency that permitted an ancient Greek body of work to have survived across the divide between the end of antiquity and modern times, the 'long millennium'.<sup>7</sup> Frequently reprinted and much read in Latin translations in the eighteenth century, Pausanias's text later made its way into European vernacular languages, especially French and English, thus becoming available to even wider readerships, including women. The process of diffusion was presented visually, as shown in Figure 4.3.

The reader/viewer is invited to accompany Pausanias on a time-travelling, imagined journey into ancient Greece. Pausanias, led by Athena, will help him or her, with the help of Fancy, to overcome the discomforts, the dangers, and the expense of real travel, to reach the goal, a temple of fame on a distant hill. That convention, already hinted at in Figure 4.2, had been

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- 5 He is quoted by, for example, Giraud, Jean and Collignon, Maxime, 'Le Consul Giraud et sa Relation de L'Attique au XVIIe. Siècle', an article in *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*, vol. xxxix (Paris: 1913), 56; Watkins, Thomas, *Travels through Swisserland, Italy, Sicily, the Greek Islands, to Constantinople ... in the Years 1787, 1788, 1789* (London: Cadell, 1792), ii, 319; Chateaubriand, *Travels to Jerusalem and the Holy Land through Egypt, translated by Frederic Shoberl* (London: Colburn, third edition, 1835), i, 213; and Francis, Sir Philip, K.B., *A letter missive to Lord Holland, dated 10th June. Published 1st July 1816* (London: Ridgway, 1816), 65.
  - 6 The history and influence of its publication are discussed by Georgiopolou, Maria; Guilmet, Céline; Pikoulas, Yannis A.; Staikos, Konstantinos Sp.; and Tolia, George, eds, *Following Pausanias, The Quest for Greek Antiquity* (Kotinos: Oak Knoll, 2007).
  - 7 The 'long millennium' is discussed in *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>.



Figure 4.3. Minerva (Athena) urges Pausanias to describe the monuments of Greece. Frontispiece to the first translation into French, 1731.<sup>8</sup>

in the story of the valiant pilgrim undeterred by hardships and setbacks. As was not generally known at the time, one of the earliest and finest surviving examples was in an epigram by Simonides of Ceos, a classical author, who had applied the ‘long-and-hard journey’ metaphor to the effort needed to understand and internalise the lessons offered by looking at the Acropolis of Athens, and he was inserting his work into a tradition that was already ancient in his day.<sup>9</sup>

In Figure 4.3, the ancient buildings being pointed out are shown with untidy foliage as if they were ruins in the landscape in a northern country, and the ground is strewn with broken antiquities. The map that the *putti* display is of Europe, not of Greece. The words on the obelisk tomb are not readable, but confirm that the aim of the translation was part of the Renaissance (‘rebirth’) quest to revive what had been dead and recover

<sup>8</sup> Humblot designed, Scotin engraved, Pausanias translated, by Louis Gedoyn and Francois Didot, *Pausanias, ou, Voyage historique de la Grèce traduit en françois avec des remarques par M. l'Abbé Gedoyn, Chanoine de la Sainte Chapelle, & Abbé de Baugenci, de l'Académie Française, & de l'Académie Royale des Inscriptions & belles-Lettres* (Paris: Quillot, 1731).

<sup>9</sup> Discussed, with other examples of the classical Acropolis as an instrument of civic education, in *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>. The tradition drawn on by Simonides included the poems of Tyrtaeus.

what had been lost. As the Preface declares, the book presents not the Greece of the day, as it was being described by modern topographers such as Spon, but the Greece that 'flourished as the dwelling place of the Muses, the home of the Sciences, the centre of good taste, the theatre of an infinitude of marvels, the most renowned land in the Universe.'

The image, as is the convention of many frontispieces of the period, ignores the constraints of time and space, and mixes presentations of actual seeing with the flow of ideas and mental images that seeing them can encourage in the viewer/reader.<sup>10</sup> In this respect, the picture is an example of the rhetorical device known to the ancients and their early modern successors as 'enargeia', as it was applied to visual presentations as well as to speeches and writings.<sup>11</sup> However, although Gedoy's translation is a celebration of antiquity, the editor knows that he must take care not to overdo his praise of pre-Christian 'pagans.' Although the editor was a churchman, itself a reassurance to some readers and a claim frequently adopted in later printed books, he was using another device common at the time in several western European countries to ensure that books about the ancients did not run into difficulties with state or ecclesiastical censors.<sup>12</sup>

It became the custom for real visitors from the west to explore Athens by following the route that Pausanias had taken with a version of his book in their hands, a practice that continued far into the nineteenth century.<sup>13</sup> If, even allowing for all the many discoveries that modern archaeology has made, we only had what has survived in physical form, our modern understanding of the ancient city of Athens would still be

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10 For my suggestion that ancient viewers read the stories of stone presented on the Parthenon and on other civic buildings as dynamic, see *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>.

11 Examples of my experiment in reviving the convention are given in *ibid*.

12 Pausanias, Gedoy's 'Avec Approbation' [that is, passed by the political and ecclesiastical censorship] 'et Privilège du Roy' [that is, given copyright protection against local piracy]. See also Gedoy's *Preface*, ix.

13 Thomas Henry Dyer, for example, as late as 1873, still arranges his description of ancient Athens according to the routes taken by Pausanias. Dyer, Thomas Henry, *Ancient Athens: Its History, Topography and Remains* (London: Bell and Daldry, 1873). It is likely that most of the travellers who note that they carried Pausanias used abridged versions.



badly incomplete. From the internal evidence of his work, Pausanias evidently wrote from personal experience, although he also drew on writings by ancient authors now lost, and on oral traditions that he picked up from conversations with local people, including tour guides. But as Pausanias had written nearly half a millennium after the classical Parthenon had been built, to him it was already a piece of built heritage.<sup>14</sup>

Until not long ago, it was customary to scold Pausanias for not answering the questions that modern readers (especially art historians) were interested in, regarded as normal, and projected back to the very different world of antiquity.<sup>15</sup> As Jaś Elsner has remarked, understanding the paradox that Pausanias is both indispensable and strange: he ‘has the temerity to be our single greatest surviving source.’<sup>16</sup> Pausanias is a rare, but not unique, example of an ancient viewer of the Parthenon who reported his experience in a surviving text—a text that, when read

14 To be discussed in *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>

15 For example: ‘like the tourist of today, he devotes his attention to superficial details rather than to truly artistic qualities’: When describing a statue, he ‘rarely gives a critical appreciation of it.’ Pausanias and Jones, William Henry Samuel, *Description of Greece. English & Greek, with an English Translation by W.H.S. Jones, Loeb edition* (London: W. Heinemann; New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1918–1935), i, xiv; ‘in his description of the temple at Delphi, which is even worse arranged than is usual with him.’ Euripides, and Verrall, Arthur Woollgar, *Ion with a Translation into English Verse and an Introduction and Notes by A.W. Verrall* (Cambridge: CUP, 1890), xlvii; ‘Pausanias ... was infected with all the superstition and credulity of an ardent votary of polytheism ... He often disappoints us by some absurd discussion, in the place of those circumstances which it would be interesting to know ... To say that it is “worth looking at” is the strongest expression of admiration which he bestows upon the inimitable performances of the great masters of Grecian sculpture ...’. Leake, William Martin, Lieut-Col. R.A., L.L.D., F.R.S., Member of the Royal Academy of Sciences of Berlin, *The Topography of Athens with Some Remarks on its Antiquities* (London: Murray, 1821), xxxii.

16 Jaś Elsner, ‘Introduction’, *Classical Receptions Journal*, 2 (2), 2010, special issue: ‘Receptions of Pausanias from Winckelmann to Frazer.’ For what was presented on the west pediment of the Parthenon, the story in stone most frequently encountered by viewers, we do however have the explanation given by Marcus Terentius Varro, a more authoritative source than Pausanias, whose work has unaccountably slipped from the scholarly tradition in recent times, as discussed in *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>.

alongside others, may enable the ancient ways of seeing practised in antiquity to be recovered with greater confidence.<sup>17</sup>

## Visitors to Athens in the Long Eighteenth Century

Before the Revolution, visitors were supported in their travels by the foreign consuls, who were mostly born locally, and their staff, and latterly by a few long-term resident expatriates including Giovanni Batista Lusieri, Lord Elgin's resident artist and agent who lived in Athens with brief interruptions, for over twenty years, from 1799 until his death on the eve of the Revolution. Georg Gropius, the consul of Austria, lived in Athens before and throughout the Revolution, during which he not only wrote many eye-witness accounts, mostly unprinted, but also played an active role in saving lives, and who was still in his post after the Revolution came to an end.<sup>18</sup> Louis-François-Sébastien Fauvel, an artist and draftsman, who also acted as the agent for buying antiquities and who stayed on in Athens as consul of France, came and went in various capacities from pre-Revolutionary days.<sup>19</sup> Another familiar long-term resident was Padre Paulo, the head of a small community of Roman Catholic Capuchins, who had been settled in Athens since the seventeenth century, when the French Government had, by agreement, bought the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates, still commonly known as the 'lantern of Demosthenes' or 'the lantern of Diogenes'.<sup>20</sup>

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17 This topic is examined further in the discussion of how to find ways of recovering the strangeness of classical Athens in my companion volume *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>

18 His life summarized by Callmer, Christian, *Georg Christian Gropius als Agent, Konsul und Archäologe in Griechenland 1803–1850* (Lund: Gleerup, 1982).

19 Summarized by Zambon, Alessia, *Aux origines de l'archéologie en Grèce — Fauvel et sa méthode, préface d'Alain Schnapp* (Paris: INHA, 2014) drawing on a huge archive of papers, many previously published, noted in the Bibliography.

20 What was then known of him was collected by Eliot, C.W.J., 'Gennadeion Notes, IV: Lord Byron, Father Paul, and the Artist William Page', *Hesperia*, vol. 44, no. 4, 1975, 409–25. To which other contemporary mentions can be added, such as Grellet, Stephen, *Memoirs of the Life and Gospel Labours of Stephen Grellet, edited by Benjamin Seebohm* (London: Bennett, 1861), ii, 26.

During the long eighteenth century,<sup>21</sup> most western travellers to what is now Greece made the first part of their journey by sea. As in earlier times, Athens visually projected its presence far out among the gulfs, islands, peninsulas, and capes of what was then known in most languages as 'The Archipelago.'<sup>22</sup> By a linguistic backformation, the strait between the island of Cerigo (modern and ancient Cythera) and Crete, through which all ships going to or from the western Mediterranean had to pass, was known as 'The Arches.'<sup>23</sup> In the age of sail, and before that, in the age of oarsmen, this was probably the most dangerous of the Archipelago straits, hiding rocks, shoals, and strange

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- 21 The notion of a 'long eighteenth century', a category that has proved helpful in understanding and explaining the history of western Europe, can be applied in some respects, although not in others, to what was occurring in south-eastern Europe (including Athens) and in the Ottoman lands generally. For example, throughout the period, the technologies of travel and warcraft by land and by sea were not only much the same across the whole extended region but remained remarkably stable, with occasional improvements, some of which were made by the Ottoman forces. By contrast, however, during the long eighteenth century, whereas in the countries of western Europe the reproduction of words and images by printing and engraving, the two main technologies of inscription for the transfer of complex ideas across time and distance, had been well established and had remained stable for centuries, they were scarcely used until far into the calendar nineteenth century in all the territories to the east of the Adriatic, including Athens, as a result of religious restrictions.
  - 22 The name at that time in both the languages of the region and those of the western European maritime countries, including the Venetians, the Dutch, the French, the British, and others. Discussed in Sphyroeras, Vasilis, Anna Arramea and Spyros Asdrahas; translated from the Greek by G. Cox and J. Solman, *Maps and Map-Makers of the Aegean* (Athens: Oikos, 1985).
  - 23 The phrase 'the Arches' is used by Rapelje, George, *A Narrative of excursions, voyages, and travels ... in America, Europe, Asia, and Africa* (New York: Printed for the author, 1834), 231. He provides much first-hand information about life at sea in small sailing ships. The word is used in the title page of Randolph, Bernard, *The present state of the islands in the archipelago, or Arches, seas of Constantinople and gulph of Smyrna with the islands of Candia and Rhodes Faithfully Describ'd by Ber. Randolph* (Oxford: Printed at the Theater, 1687), that describes some of the services, including repairs available when he visited. Lord Baltimore in his book, Baltimore, Lord, *A tour to the East, in the years 1763 and 1764, with remarks on the city of Constantinople and the Turks; also select pieces of Oriental wit, poetry and wisdom* (London: printed by Richardson and Clark, 1767), describes his tour as 'from Naples through the Arches to Constantinople in the Year 1763'.

and treacherous currents.<sup>24</sup> Sudden storms, whose force intensified as they rushed through the channels between the islands, made even the most experienced mariners pay great respect to the elements.

The harbour at Melos, where in 1822 George Rapelje spent eighteen days as part of a voyage from Malta to Greece, was described by a predecessor in 1796 as 'one of the finest and most capacious in the world,' with an entrance 'large enough to admit a vessel of any burden,' and 'from whatever quarter the wind may blow, the shipping is secure.'<sup>25</sup> When the wind was from the north, however, sailing ships, and, presumably, also the oared ships that preceded them, could not leave, and delays were normal. To Robert Richardson, voyaging with a noble party in their own chartered ship, it was, with the shelter and facilities it offered, 'pre-eminent' among all the harbours of the Archipelago.<sup>26</sup> As was noted by Edgar Garson, a former philhellene who visited in 1840, at the end of the age of sail: 'There is great depth of water, and space enough for the united navies of Europe to ride in safety, so that the possession of the island would be of infinite vale for a maritime power desirous of controlling the navigation of the Archipelago.'<sup>27</sup> In the long eighteenth century, vessels sailing from west or east faced another risk. In the western Mediterranean, ships were at risk from 'Barbary pirates' who operated from Algiers and other ports in North Africa. Despite the efforts of the Ottoman and other navies, the sea pirates of the Mani continued to make a living by capturing unarmed or lightly

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24 The perils of the Cerigo/Cythera passage in the age of sail were frequently described, notably by the experienced yachtsman Knight, William, *Oriental Outlines or a Rambler's Recollections of a Tour in Turkey, Greece, & Tuscany in 1838* (London: Sampson Low, 1839), 3–10.

25 Hunter, William, *Travels in the year 1792 through France, Turkey and Hungary ...* (London: second edition, Bensley, 1798), i, 166.

26 Richardson, Robert, M.D., Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians of London, *Travels along the Mediterranean and parts adjacent. with the Earl of Belmore, during 1816–17–18, extending as far as the second cataract of the Nile, Jerusalem, Damascus, Balbec, &c &c. illustrated by plans and other engravings* (London: Cadell; Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1822), ii, 534.

27 Garson, *Greece Revisited*, i, 161. He reports that the Knights of Malta, a Christian military organization, that dated from the Crusades, offered to help the Greek Revolutionaries with forces and money in return for their ceding the island, which would have become a new Malta.

armed ships as they passed through the Arches, and ‘the wretched crew [was] irrevocably condemned to perpetual bondage or instant death.’<sup>28</sup> The buyers in the slave markets of Algiers, Cairo, Alexandria, Smyrna (modern Izmir), and in Constantinople, probably the biggest in terms of turnover, were not usually concerned about the sources of their supplies, and fair-skinned people commanded higher prices than dark.<sup>29</sup>

A map prepared towards the end of the Greek Revolution, before the advent of steamships, is reproduced, unedited as it was encountered by its users, as Figure 4.4.



Figure 4.4. Contemporary map illustrating the places principally involved in the Greek Revolution Folded engraving.<sup>30</sup>

The map, chosen from many candidates, gives a sense of how the land and the sea were rightly experienced and envisaged as complementary

28 ‘the terror of unprotected merchant ships’ Walsh, *Residence*, i, 106. Hunter, *Travels in the year 1792*, i, 148, describes a near encounter with the famous Lambro, romanticized by Byron as *The Corsair*.

29 The slave markets and their role in the Greek Revolution are discussed in Chapter 14.

30 Inserted in Volume 1 of Emerson, James, *Letters from the Aegean* (London: Colburn 1829).



during the Revolution. It brings out the limiting, almost determining, power of geography, including the sea routes and the mountains passes, for the movement of ships, men, and supplies, and in the physical transportation of information, including the opportunities to intercept couriers. It also preserves some of the names that were used at the time.

Travelling by land where, with few exceptions, there were no roads capable of taking wheeled vehicles, meant riding on saddled horses or donkeys. Travellers were normally accompanied by interpreters and servants, who walked alongside leading spare horses and pack animals, and by armed guards provided by the Ottoman Government or by local Ottoman officials.<sup>31</sup> Without a change of horses, a traveller and his party could travel about twenty to twenty-five English miles a day, but if he could afford to pay for frequent changes at the main towns ('post-horses'), they could exceed sixty.<sup>32</sup> Sometimes in Greece there was no alternative to riding bare-back.<sup>33</sup> Even the least ambitious expedition was an elaborate and expensive affair that required careful planning and management. William Gell, travelling unaccompanied except by his servants, bought three horses that he had carefully selected for their sure-footedness, and on occasion he hired two more.<sup>34</sup> Figure 4.5 shows what was required for a modest tour.

In 1836, William J. Hamilton, with fellow researcher Hugh E. Strickland, travelled over two thousand two hundred English miles in twenty-two weeks through the wilder parts of Asia Minor, employing seven or eight horses, occasionally nine, full time. He calculated the cost at 230 British pounds, including the pay of servants and messengers,

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31 According to Hunter, *Travels in the year 1792*, i, 246, who also gives a list, the pack horses were 'worn out steeds'.

32 Estimates were given by Urquhart, David, *The Spirit of the East* (London: Colburn, 1839), i, 7, from direct experience, and his book may be the source of later compilations.

33 As, when, for example, George Wheler noted: 'But, as my Companion [Spon] observeth, I learned afterwards in Greece to be less nice: For there we were sometimes mounted like Marcus Aurelius in the Capitol, without Bridle or Saddle.' Wheler, *Journey*, 224. The small mountain horses are described in Chapter 15.

34 Gell, Sir William, MA, FRS, FSA, *Narrative of a Journey in the Morea* (London: Longman, 1823), 135. Although published during the Revolution, the book discusses his expeditions of almost twenty years before.



Figure 4.5. Travelling in Ottoman territories, c.1815 Coloured aquatint.<sup>35</sup>

that is, about 0.25 pounds a mile for two.<sup>36</sup> Land travel was slow, uncomfortable, and sometimes dangerous, but for foreigners with foreign currency it was cheap.

Another picture (reproduced as Figure 4.6) that illustrates a journey made later but still before the building of modern roads, bridges, and railways, picks up the difficulties of travelling through a mountainous terrain. It also shows the skeletons of executed criminals, including political rebels and suspected dissidents, that were a feature of the passes in Ottoman Europe and Asia, part of a theatre of deterrence and punishment presented by the Ottoman Government, and by its local provincial governors, whose ability to provide security on land or sea was always limited.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Hamilton, William J., Secretary to the Geological Society, *Researches in Asia Minor, Pontus, and Armenia, with some account of their Antiquities and Geology* (London: Murray, 1842), i, 544.

<sup>37</sup> Some eyewitness examples from 1795 in Morritt, *The Letters of John B.S. Morritt of Rokeby* (London: Murray, 1914), 78. The frequency of judicial executions of men of all ranks from pashas to soldiers, as well as of others, is noted by, for example Wittman, William, M.D., of the Royal Artillery, *Travels in Turkey, Asia Minor, Syria, and across the desert into Egypt during the years 1799, 1800, and 1801, in company with the Turkish army and the British military mission. To which are annexed, observations on the plague, and on the diseases prevalent in Turkey, and a meteorological journal* (London: Phillips, 1803).

<sup>35</sup> From Turner, William, *Journal of a Tour in the Levant* (London: Murray, 1820), frontispiece to volume 1. The image is reproduced in Dupré, Louis, *Voyage à Athènes et à Constantinople, ou Collection de portraits, de vues et de costumes grecs et ottomans, peints sur les lieux* (Paris: Dondey-Dupré, 1825), adapted edition in Greek with much additional information, and pictures of Greece by other artists, edited by Manoles Vlachos (Athens: Folio, 1994), 204.



Figure 4.6. 'Eastern Travel'. Folded lithograph of an image coloured by hand, inserted as a folding-out illustration in a printed book, 1845.<sup>38</sup>

In order to travel in the Ottoman territories, it was necessary for the visitor to have a firman issued in the name of the sultan, with his calligraphic insignia ['tougra'].<sup>39</sup> This normally had to be obtained from one of the dragomans, who acted as interpreters, and who had much influence over policy making. An illustration of a dragoman handling a painted document is given as Figure 4.7.

38 Frontispiece to Kinglake, Alexander, *Eothen*, 3rd edition (London: John Ollivier, 1845). The image made by J.R. Jobbins who was not part of the expedition. Some copies are uncoloured.

39 The actual travelling firman, with the tougra of Mahmoud II, issued to Robert Master in 1818, is inserted in BL Add MS 51313. A facsimile of his imperial firman with a translation into French is included in Sonnini, *Travels in Greece and Turkey, undertaken by order of Louis XVI, and with the authority of the Ottoman court by C.S. Sonnini; illustrated by engravings and a map of those countries; translated from the French* (London: Longman, 1801) from which it was translated into English. A full-size folded facsimile of another imperial travelling firman is included in Wittman, opposite 463.



Figure 4.7. 'The First Dragoman of the Porte', c.1800, engraving.<sup>40</sup>

A firman was, in essentials, an internal passport issued by the central Government in Constantinople, requesting, in the name of the sultan, that all subordinate governors afford protection and hospitality to the named guest. Those firmans needed for long journeys were personal documents that could only be obtained by a western ambassador at Constantinople, and any visitor who travelled without one had to obtain permission from each of the local Ottoman governors, through whose territory they passed, with a local firman known as a 'teskeré'.<sup>41</sup>

40 Dalvimart, Octavian, *Picturesque Representations of the Dress and Manners of the Turks Illustrated in Sixty Coloured Engravings. With Descriptions* (London: Thomas M<sup>c</sup>Lean, [n.d.], c.1824), Plate 11. The book was a reissue, dated from the watermark, of one first published in France before the Revolution.

41 For half a century after American independence, when the United States had no diplomatic representation, Americans relied on the courtesy of the British Ambassador to obtain their travelling firmans. Rapelje, George, *A Narrative of excursions, voyages, and travels ... in America, Europe, Asia, and Africa* (New York: Printed for the author, 1834), 261. 'Almost invariably under English protection.' Brewer, Josiah, *Missionary to the Mediterranean, A Residence at Constantinople, in the year 1827. With notes to the present time, Second edition* (New Haven: Durrie & Peck, 1830), 376.

A facsimile of the imperial travelling firman given to C.S. Sonnini, who had been sent by the French government on a long fact-finding mission to the Ottoman territories and had been accorded a status almost equal to that of an ambassador, is reproduced as Figure 4.8, with the caption:

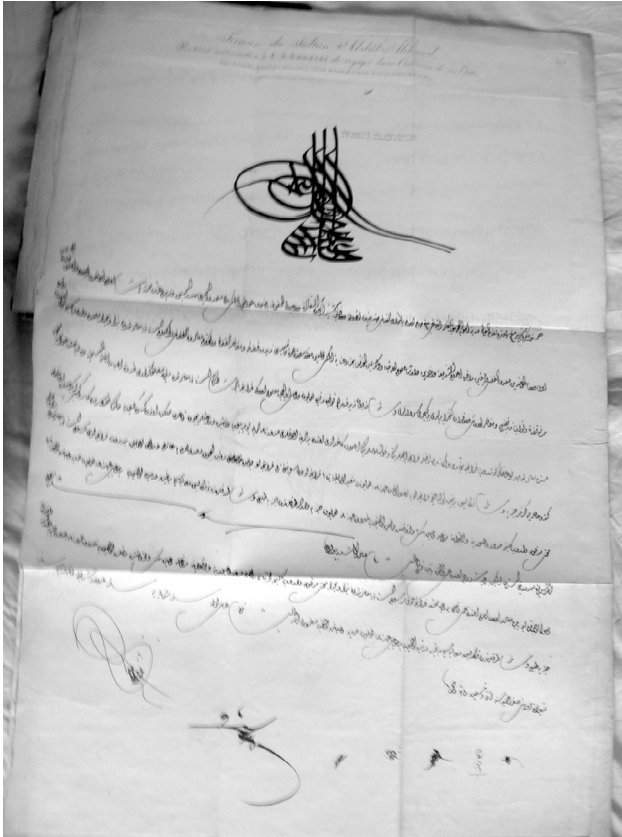


Figure 4.8. Facsimile of Sonnini's travelling firman. Engraving in the book of plates that accompanied Sonnini's book in its French version, 1801.<sup>42</sup>

42 A facsimile of his imperial firman with a translation into French is included in Sonnini, *Travels in Greece and Turkey*, from which it was translated into English. A full-size folded facsimile of another imperial travelling firman is included in Wittman, opposite 463.



TRANSLATION OF THE FIRMAN.<sup>43</sup>

(Here is the Sultan's cypher)

Most just, most noble, most great, most glorious, most respectable governor, who knows how to manage the most important affairs of this world, with intelligence and discernment, and whose superior solicitude extends with wisdom and benignity over the poor of the state; pillar of the glorious empire, illustrious governor of Egypt, empire, our fortunate vizir Mohammed pacha: may God increase his glory! Most just of the cadis of Ismaelism, treasure of virtues and truths, deeply read in the laws and in religion, heir of the science of the prophets and apostles, specially loaded with/the favours of the most high, learned cadi of Cairo in Egypt, may God increase his virtues!

Happy successors of the cadis and princes, abundant mines of nobleness and virtues, who, in our fortunate name, govern the empire of the lands and seas of Egypt, may God increase their merits!

Lieutenants, leaders of troops, janizaries, and other commandants, may God increase their power, and raise them in dignity.

When this noble firman shall have reached you, know that: The ambassador and the consuls of the King of France, our powerful friend, the support of the great of this world, the model of Christian princes (may his end be happy!) having caused to be represented to us that it would be expedient to grant to the merchants who wish to travel in the state? (well-guarded) of our glorious empire, supreme orders for them to be treated with safety and protection, conformably to the treaties:

And a Frenchman, named *Sonnini*, who has the intention of repairing to Cairo in Egypt, having made known to us that he begs us to cause to be delivered an order issued by our sublime Porte to all those who exercise our authority over the lands or over the seas of *Egypt*, to the end that he may reside there, or travel there freely, without fear or hindrance whatever:

And being desirous that, agreeably to our intentions and our express commendations, he should be protected by our sovereign orders, stamped with our noble seal,

We direct that:

When this order, issued by our sublime *Porte*, shall have reached you, the aforesaid Frenchman may travel freely over the lands and seas above-mentioned, dependent on our glorious empire; that he may at pleasure enter them, leave them, or reside in them, conforming himself

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43 I use the English translation from the French, printed in the English edition published in London soon afterwards.

in all things to our sovereign orders, and that there shall be everywhere granted to him aid, succour, and protection.

And to the end that the contents of these orders may leave you no doubt, we have graced them with our noble and eminent signature, to which you will give credit; we recommend it to you. Understand it thus.

Given in the beginning of Sefier, in the year of the hegira 1192 (February 1778, O[ld]. S[tyle].)

At CONSTANTINOPLE the well-guarded.

*(Translated by Citizen JAUBERT, Turkish professor in the special school of Oriental languages, near the national library, fifth interpreter to the government.)*

In this document, the Ottoman court affirms its sovereignty over Egypt, which was at the time largely nominal. The country was restored to its Ottoman jurisdiction as a result of the British naval and military intervention including battle of the Nile, a state of affairs that once again became nominal shortly afterwards. The obtaining of this (ultimately temporary) jurisdiction resulted in the extraordinarily high respect accorded to the British Ambassador of the time, Lord Elgin, enabling him to arrange for a more important type of firman to be sent to the Governor and Judge of Athens. Consequently, Elgin's agents were able to remove many pieces of the Parthenon and of the other ancient buildings of Athens.<sup>44</sup>

The price to the visitor of obtaining a travelling firman shortly before the Revolution was equivalent to two or three British pounds, not negligible even to gentlemen, for whom the annual expense of a visit to Ottoman territories was estimated at 500 pounds in the money of the day.<sup>45</sup>

The translator of Sonnini's travelling firman, referred to here as Jaubert, may be the same man as Chabert or Chaubert mentioned earlier in this chapter, who during the Greek Revolution was to translate into French many of the Ottoman published documents and notices, including the formal firmans by which the Empire was governed, for the benefit of the ambassadors in Constantinople—giving them a view of the situation that may have been more comprehensive than that of either the Greek Revolutionaries or the Ottoman Government itself.

<sup>44</sup> The vizieral letter is discussed and transcribed in Appendix A.

<sup>45</sup> Carne, John, *Letters 1813–1837* (London: privately printed in 100 copies, 1885), 25.

Nonetheless, in much of the Ottoman Empire, including in the territories that make up present-day Greece, a document from the central government was little more than an invitation to negotiate, assisted by gifts, with the leaders who held local power. In the Peloponnese, according to Lord Byron who was there in 1810, the local Ottoman governor acted so independently of his nominal masters in Constantinople that a personal passport was more useful than an imperial firman.<sup>46</sup> Sometimes, such letters between Ottoman governors in what is now Greece were written in Greek, often their first language, with some key words inserted in Turkish.<sup>47</sup>

Many travellers mistakenly believed that an imperial firman allowed access to military fortresses such as the Acropolis of Athens, unaware that they were not under the jurisdiction of the local pashas and voivodes but were directly controlled by the imperial authorities in Constantinople, in practice the grand vizier, acting in the name of the sultan. In 1800, one of Elgin's private secretaries, Philip Hunt, was advised that 'Your imperial Firman will not open to you the gates of one Turkish fortress; it will be necessary therefore, to procure admission to the Acropolis [of Athens] by a present of ten piastres or its equivalent in Coffee and Sugar.'<sup>48</sup>

Warnings not to expect too much from their imperial travelling firmans made the rounds among the European community settled at Constantinople. It was said that a traveller who presented his firman at the imperial castle at Bodrum (ancient Halicarnassus) was told that the firman would allow him to come in but it said nothing about allowing

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46 In Byron and Hodgson. 'When, also, he [Gell] remarks that "the first article of necessity 'in Greece' is a firman, or order from the sultan, permitting the traveller to pass unmolested," we are much misinformed if he be right. On the contrary, we believe this to be almost the only part of the Turkish dominions in which a firman is not necessary; since the passport of the Pacha is absolute within his territory (according to Mr. G.'s own admission), and much more effectual than a firman.' A facsimile of the local passport written in Greek given by Ali Pasha to Byron and Hobhouse in 1809 is given in Hobhouse, 1858 edition, ii, 413.

47 An example with translation in Dodwell, *Classical Tour*, i, 276. A transcription of a travelling firman, issued by Ali Pasha, written in Greek with some Turkish words, is given by Jolliffe, T. R., *Letters from Palestine*, 189.

48 Hunt papers. That a 'direct firman from the Sultan for that purpose' was needed in order to enter the imperial fortress of the Acrocorinth was noted by Laurent, Peter Edmund, *Recollections of a Classical Tour through Various Parts of Greece, Turkey, and Italy, made in the years 1818 and 1819* (London: Whitaker, second edition, 1822), i, 290.

him to leave.<sup>49</sup> The same drollery was offered to John Cam Hobhouse when in 1810 he presented his at the gate of the fortress of Negropont (modern and ancient Chalcis) and the Ottoman commander reminded him that in the fortress of Canea in Crete, an Englishman who went in with the authority of a firman had then been put to death.<sup>50</sup>

Most of the western visitors who travelled with an imperial firman were delighted and charmed by the courteous welcome they received from the senior Ottoman officials whom they encountered. Although some had a sentimental philhellenic attitude towards the Greeks, as they called the Greek-speaking Orthodox, few realized the extent to which their privileged detachment from the lives of the population affected the opinions that they confidently offered to the readers of their books. One exception was Julius Griffiths, a medical doctor from Edinburgh, who, in the 1780s, hoped to observe without preconceptions and who travelled without the usual panoply of protections. As he wrote, anticipating that his book would be criticized for upsetting the common view: 'If the animadversions upon the Turks should be thought to savour of petulance, unfavorable prejudices, or exaggeration; or if they should appear contradictory to those authors of eminence who praise their urbanity, their wit, their talents, and their hospitality — let me be allowed to state, that I travelled through great part of the Ottoman dominions in the humble disguise of a poor Greek; not under the protection of Janissaries, the influence of ambassadors, or the authority of a Firman.'<sup>51</sup>

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49 Newton, C.T., M.A., Keeper of the Greek and Roman Antiquities, British Museum, *Travels & Discoveries in the Levant* (London: Day, 1865), i, 334. He may have been repeating what he had read as having occurred in 1817 as noted in Didot, Ambroise Firmin, *Notes d'un Voyage fait dans le Levant en 1816 et 1817* (Paris: Didot, [n.d.], 1826), 358.

50 Hobhouse manuscript journal for 9 February 1810.

51 Griffiths, J[ulian], *Travels in Europe, Asia Minor and Arabia*, by J. Griffiths. M.D., Member of the Royal Medical Society of Edinburgh, and of several foreign literary societies (London: Printed for T. Cadell and W. Davies; and Peter Hill, Edinburgh, 1805), ix. Although books on the travellers to Greece during the long eighteenth century are plentiful, including Augustinos, Olga, *French Odysseys, Greece in French Travel Literature from the Renaissance to the Romantic Era* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1994); Constantine, David, *Early Greek Travellers and the Hellenic Ideal* (Cambridge: OUP, 1984); Stoneman, Richard, ed., *A Luminous Land, Artists Discover Greece* (Los Angeles: Getty, 1998) and others, Griffiths is seldom discussed. He is mentioned by the pioneering work, Spencer, Terence, *Fair Greece, Sad Relic* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1954), 240, but only from his having been referred to disparagingly by Thornton, Thomas, Esq., *The present state of Turkey; or, A description of the political, civil, and religious constitution, government, and laws, of the Ottoman empire: the finances,*

Having seen for himself the arbitrariness of Ottoman Government as it impinged on the lives of the unprivileged, Griffiths was sure that, in the Morea at least, a violent revolution was on the way and that it would be successful.<sup>52</sup> His only regret was that it was likely to be France that would deliver the Greeks 'from the galling chains of Turkish tyranny.'<sup>53</sup> And there were others who, speaking from their experience, protested at the accounts of visitors who only saw the country with a 'distant view', that is, from their immersion in the texts of a selection of the ancient classics, or with a 'transient glance', that is, without much knowledge of the main languages then spoken in the country, demotic Greek, Turkish, and the two main mutually-incomprehensible dialects of Albanian.<sup>54</sup>

For the classically educated visitors from the west, every feature of the landscape had a familiar name, and each offered a story, often a succession of stories from mythic to historic ancient times. As Edward Dodwell wrote, repeating a point that occurred to many: 'Almost every rock, every promontory, every view, is haunted by the shadows of the mighty dead. Every portion of the soil appears to teem with historical recollections; or it borrows some potent but invisible charm from the inspiration of poetry, the effects of genius, or the energies of liberty or patriotism.'<sup>55</sup> As the visitors cast their eyes towards Mount Cithaeron in the far distance, they knew it was there that Actaeon had been changed into a stag, that Pentheus was torn into pieces by the women Bacchae, and that the infant Oedipus had been exposed and left to die.<sup>56</sup> It was easy to imagine the bonfire that, according to Clytemnestra's speech in

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*military and naval establishments; the state of learning, and of the liberal and mechanical arts; the manners and domestic economy of the Turks and other subjects of the grand signor, &c. &c. together with the geographical, political, and civil, state of the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia. From observations made, during a residence of fifteen years in Constantinople and the Turkish provinces* (London: Mawman, 1807).

52 Griffiths, 122.

53 'The philanthropist will rejoice to see the descendants of Socrates and Solon, of Apelles and Phidias, again under the auspices of a christian government. But the politician of England will feel infinite regret ...' Griffiths, 124.

54 Thornton, iv.

55 Dodwell, *Classical Tour*, i, iv.

56 According to the version given by the character of Jocasta and by the Chorus in Euripides's *Phoenician Women*, his father Laius had given the baby, marked with a golden brooch, to shepherds to be exposed on Cithaeron, after piercing his ankle with iron spikes, but had been found alive by passing horsemen. Eur. *Phoen.* 1; Eur. *Phoen.* 801. The practice of exposing children in classical Athens is discussed in *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>.



Aeschylus's *Agamemnon*, was among those lit in succession across the acropolises of the Archipelago, that brought the news of the fall of Troy. As they looked up at the Acropolis of Athens, immediately visible was the cave where, in the *Ion*, Euripides had dramatized the story of the rape of Creusa, daughter of the mythical Athenian king Erechtheus, a version of which, *Creusa, Queen of Athens*, composed by William Whitehead, was played on stage and read from printed versions in England from 1750.

The visitors saw, too, the hill of the Pnyx where political debates had taken place in classical times, with the Acropolis and the west pediment of the Parthenon in direct view. Also in front of the Acropolis entrance was the hill of the Areopagus, the 'hill of Ares', the ancient god of war, near which a great battle was said to have taken place in mythic times between Theseus and the Amazon warrior women, and where in historic times Paul of Tarsus had, it was plausibly thought, debated his ideas with the intellectuals of two of the philosophical schools of Athens around the year 60 CE.<sup>57</sup>

The visitors from Europe were familiar with 'storied landscapes' in their own countries, where myth also coalesced with recorded history, orally-transmitted tales with written literature, and the official supernatural of organised Christianity co-existed with fluid stories ('magic' and 'folklore') that were inconsistent with the official tales. But seldom, if ever, had visitors encountered such an intense concentration. Greece, and Athens in particular, was 'a country, of which almost every mountain, and river, and valley is celebrated in History or Song.'<sup>58</sup> To visitors from North America, by contrast, and to those such as Chateaubriand and Galt, who had visited the 'New World', including the wildernesses of what was then beginning to be called Canada, the difference was startling. As John Galt wrote of the boyhood of the artist Benjamin West, who was brought up in colonial Philadelphia:

the forests though interminable, were but composed of trees; the mountains and rivers, though on a larger scale, were not associated in the mind with the exertions of patriotic valour, and the achievements [sic] of individual enterprize, like the Alps or the Danube, the Grampians or

<sup>57</sup> To be discussed in Chapter 22.

<sup>58</sup> Haygarth, William, Esq., A. M., *Greece, A Poem in Three Parts; with Notes, Classical Illustrations, and Sketches of the Scenery* (London: Printed by W. Bulwer ... sold by Nicol, 1814), vi.

the Tweed. It is impossible to tread the depopulated and exhausted soil of Greece without meeting with innumerable relics and objects, which like magic talismans, call up the genius of departed ages with the long-enriched roll of those great transactions, that, in their moral effect, have raised the nature of man, occasioning trains of reflection which want only the rhythm of language to be poetry. But in the unstoried solitudes of America, the traveller meets with nothing to awaken the sympathy of his recollective feelings.<sup>59</sup>

The stories that the western visitors recognised and received from the landscape and cityscape of Athens were all from ancient times. And it was 'Nature', meaning the landscape, as much as the ruined buildings that prompted images to emerge from their memories in their own acts of viewing. By contrast, as the visitors soon discovered, the stories that the landscape told to the local Greek-speaking people of Athens derived, with only a few exceptions, not from ancient Hellas but from Christian Byzantium and its continuing aftermath.<sup>60</sup>

Many were inclined to see the landscape, including the ancient ruins, as accompanying notes to the texts of the ancient authors. And indeed, a visit to Athens could illuminate passages, including political speeches and those delivered in the law courts, and especially the plays, both comic and tragic, whose actions were set in and around Athens, and which had in some cases used the local sightlines to increase the audiences' sense of 'being actually present' (what the ancient writers on rhetoric called 'enargeia').<sup>61</sup> Some travel books, notably those by William Gell, while purporting to be guides to actual travellers, were in practice aimed at armchair travellers in Europe.<sup>62</sup>

It was only when, in 1810, a book appeared written by a French artist who had lived in the region and who, exceptionally, chose to present the landscape as he encountered it in his own time, with scarcely a mention

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59 Galt, John, *The life, studies, and works of Benjamin West, Esq. President of the Royal Academy of London* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1820), 79.

60 The Christianization of the landscape throughout the Byzantine territories will be considered in *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>. The arrival after the Greek Revolution of a constituency of western Christians who shared many of the anti-Hellenic and anti-Parthenon attitudes of their Byzantine and early Christian predecessors, is discussed in Chapter 22.

61 Discussed more fully in *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>.

62 As was pointed out by Byron and Hodgson in their review, 'Article IV. Gell's Geography of Ithaca and Itinerary of Greece', *Monthly Review*, August 1811, 371.

of the ancient monuments, that the weight of the conventions of the 'classic tourists' could be pointed out, even if seldom acted upon. As one reviewer noted, they had: 'in some instances too much neglected to furnish us with a picture of things in their present state [and] described these districts not as if they carried their eyes but their libraries in their heads.'<sup>63</sup>

Many travellers had planned from the beginning to publish printed accounts of their experiences and discoveries. Some of the resulting books were compiled from the 'journal letters' that were sent back occasionally from places *en route*, composed and intended from the beginning as notes and drafts for later publication.<sup>64</sup> A few aimed to produce what would be, in effect, a comprehensive book of geographical descriptions, maps, and visualisations of places, peoples, and customs, that would be indispensable to European governments, to military and naval planners, and to merchants and exporters, as well as to those interested in the lands and antiquities of the ancient world. At the end of the eighteenth century, Edward Daniel Clarke is said to have netted over £6,000, a colossal sum, for his extensively illustrated, multi-volume account of his travels, in addition to the money he made from the sale of antiquities and manuscripts bought along the way. In 1809–1811, when Lord Byron spent time in Athens along with dozens of other men from western Europe, it would have been hard to find even one who was not writing a description or drawing in a sketch book. As early as 1740, two British travellers conducting research for their books were in Athens during the same week.<sup>65</sup>

The largest expeditions of the eighteenth century, which usually visited Athens as part of an extensive tour of the lands of the eastern Mediterranean, carried western clothes, tents, bedding, cooking and

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63 Review of Castellan's *Lettres sur la Grèce* in *Monthly Review*, 66, 1811, 460. The reviewer was repeating a point made by Byron and Hodgson in their review of Gell's books.

64 The phrase is used on the title page of *Photograms of an Eastern Tour. ... By Σ. With original illustrations* (London: [Bungay printed], 1859).

65 Pococke, Edward, *A Description of the East and Some other Countries* (London: Bowyer, 1743 and 1745) and Perry, Charles, *A View of the Levant Particularly of Constantinople, Syria, Egypt, and Greece* (London: Woodward and Davis, printers to the Royal Society and Shuckburgh, 1752). Pococke was accused in print of having plagiarised from his book by Perry, a charge also made by Shaw, author of a large book on the North African Ottoman territories.

eating utensils, magnetic compasses, telescopes, and watches.<sup>66</sup> Some noblemen brought private secretaries, tutors, and artists, as well as personal servants. To enable the members of their staff to do their work, they brought surveying instruments, art paper, portfolios, pencils, brushes, and paints. None of these things was available locally in Athens, and only some could be sent for and bought in Constantinople or Smyrna (modern Izmir). The Comte de Choiseul Gouffier, a French Ambassador in Constantinople, whose ambitious project was copied on a lesser scale by Lord Elgin soon afterwards, made two visits to Greek lands, including Athens. For his second, he took, in effect, his own travelling academy: a chaplain, the Abbé Martin, who also acted as private secretary; Jacques Delille, a poet already famous for his translations of Virgil, whose task was to celebrate his employer's achievements; Louis-François Cassas, an academy-trained painter; Tondué, an astronomer; Fauvel, artist, draftsman, antiquities agent and French consul; plus J.B.G. d'Ansse de Villoison, a 'Hellenist', whose task was to help with the understanding of the Greek language in its many forms, modern and ancient, as well as the reading and transcribing of ancient inscriptions and of any manuscripts that they were able to access and to buy. Other members of Choiseul Gouffier's professional team, Barbié de Bocage and Foucherot, the surveyors who had been on the first expedition, remained in France working up the drawings and maps they had already made into engravings to be published in the first volume.<sup>67</sup>

The larger expeditions also brought goods not available locally for use as gifts, or rather as gift-exchanges, as local custom required. The

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66 A full list of what was required in 1819 is included Wilson, William Rae, *Travels in Egypt and the Holy Land, the second edition, with a Journey through Turkey, Greece, the Ionian Islands, Sicily, Spain &c* (London: Longman, 1824), 450–51. As another piece of advice: 'The most necessary article for a traveller is a bed, which should of course be as portable as possible. A piece of oil-cloth to cover it, when rolled up in the day, and to place under it at night, would be useful. A carpet about eight feet square is of service to sit upon. A knife, fork, spoon, plate, drinking cup and some kind of vessel for boiling water seem the only necessary additions. A light umbrella as a shade from the sun would always be found very agreeable, and would be more serviceable if it were fitted to an iron spike, by which it might be stuck into the ground, Curtains suspended to the sides of the room by cords, are very useful to exclude insects while the traveller sleeps. If these be made of silk, and tucked under the bed as soon as it is made, the night's rest will not be disturbed; many will prefer mosquito curtains, but they are not to be depended upon.' Gell, *Argolis*, ix.

67 Augustinos, 161.

most aristocratic brought telescopes, pieces of jewellery, and rolls of fine western cloth. By the end of the period, by which time the social background of the travellers had widened, travellers from a little lower down the income scale were recommended to bring 'pistols, knives, needles, pocket-telescopes, penknives, scissors, pencils, India rubber, well bound blank books, ink-stands, toys for children and ornaments for ladies.'<sup>68</sup> Presents in cash were made to local persons of low social status. However, in order to maintain the fiction that the Franks were guests, and did not therefore have to pay for the favours they received from their hosts, the visitors often made their gifts in the form of bags of coffee or sugar, or of bottles of 'brandy' (probably ouzo or raki) that could be bought locally and constituted a kind of near-cash for payment for small services.<sup>69</sup> By the latter part of the eighteenth century, the expenditure of foreigners was a vital part of the local economy of Athens.

### The 'Franks' of Athens and Elgin's Acquisitions

The 'Franks' of Athens were a real community who had read the same books, shared in the same traditions, ambitions, and aspirations, and who spent time together despite national and language differences. They behaved as a community even during the years between 1793 and 1815, when the western European countries from which they came were engaged in the longest, most destructive, and most global conflict that had ever occurred until that time. But they were also an imagined community who linked themselves through their writings and the pictures that they commissioned to a broader, western-Europe-wide, republic of letters. Indeed, so important to 'Europe' was the research into ancient Greece planned by John Spencer Stanhope that when he was arrested in France under the Napoleonic policy of detaining enemy

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68 Murray's *Handbook*, 1840 edition, ix.

69 A full itemised account of the costs of the Fourmont expedition of 1729–1730, that totalled 11,000 piastres, with the payments for travel, living expenses, wages of workers for digging, and gifts to local political and religious officials, including the expenses he incurred at Athens, is transcribed in Omont, *Missions*, ii, 1126–1143. The far greater expenses incurred by Choiseul-Gouffier for his two journeys and for the publication of the *Voyage Pittoresque* are discussed from scattered references by Barbier.

nationals, a policy that also caught Lord Elgin, he was released by intervention of the French Academy.<sup>70</sup>

To western eyes, the Ottoman lands were extraordinarily exotic and foreign. However, in every large town and a few smaller towns, including Athens, there were local Frank merchants who were permanently linked into the western banking, credit, and payments system, who would discount letters of credit into local currencies.<sup>71</sup> There was therefore usually no need for travellers to carry much actual cash, as the local brigands knew. Ambassadors such as Choiseul-Gouffier and Elgin were able to borrow almost unlimited amounts on a well-founded understanding that the loans, and the high interest rates that they were offered at, were guaranteed by their governments. Along with the official firmans secured by political influence in Constantinople, Elgin was thus able to take into his private ownership pieces of the Parthenon and other antiquities that were only acquired and shipped because he and his agents were able to engage the prestige and credit of the British Government and to deploy the resources of the British Royal Navy, as well as the network of official consulates. The majority of antiquities that were taken into the collections of western Europe from Greece during the long eighteenth century were acquired under such arrangements, either directly or indirectly through intermediaries.<sup>72</sup> In modern terms, one effect of these arrangements was therefore to permit the privatization of assets that, if the full costs of obtaining them had been charged, would in modern circumstances be regarded as already belonging in large measure to the state that had arranged for them to be acquired and that had financed their transportation.<sup>73</sup>

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70 The circumstances are set out, with transcribed documents, in Stanhope, John Spencer, *Topography Illustrative of the Battle of Plataea with engravings* (London: Murray, 1817).

71 Many of the transactions arranged through the local Frank families settled in Athens are described in the notebook of Thomas Burgon who conducted large scale excavations in and around Athens in 1813 are reported in his notebook held in King's College, London, Archives.

72 Discussed for the nineteenth century, with many official documents quoted, by, for example, Gunning, Lucia Patrizio, *The British Consular Service in the Aegean and the Collection of Antiquities for the British Museum* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

73 The wider links between the collecting of antiquities and European, mainly British, imperialism in its high noon from the mid eighteenth to mid nineteenth centuries are discussed by Hoock, Holger, *Empires of the Imagination* (London: Profile, 2010).

It was formerly customary for authors to present the activities of the foreign colony in Athens as steps in a progressive narrative of increasing professionalization, from dilettantism to science, from antiquarianism to archaeology.<sup>74</sup> And the many members of the colony and the visitors who were genuinely interested in discovering as much as they could about ancient Hellas, and about Athens in particular, found a ready reception among the local people whom they met.

In the years immediately before the Greek Revolution, the house of the French consul Fauvel was the main resource in Athens where scholars and visitors could, with his permission, access some of the standard printed works, see the antiquities and plaster casts that he and his workmen had collected or made, hear about the results of his own research, and obtain specialist advice about their own purchases.<sup>75</sup> Although sometimes called a 'museum', Fauvel's house was also an emporium where collectors of antiquities, their agents, and visiting dealers could inspect what was on offer and place their orders. For those with good credit, it was possible to send a letter from abroad with a list of objects the buyer wanted.<sup>76</sup> Lusieri, Elgin's agent, seems also to have been an occasional dealer, in defiance of his contract with Elgin, it being noted among the items that were stolen or lost 'a specially fine Etruscan vase which Lusieri had bought on his own account.'<sup>77</sup>

74 For example, Clairmont, Christoph W. ed., *Fauvel; The First Archaeologist in Athens and His Philhellenic Correspondents* (Zürich: Akanthus, 2007). Legrand, who published a selection of Fauvel's papers in the late nineteenth century, called him 'antiquaire'.

75 An account of the role of Fauvel as a guide to the town, as well as a description of his antiquities and his numerous books in 1820 is given by Marcellus, Vicomte de, ancien Ministre Plenipotentiaire, *Souvenirs de l'Orient* (Paris: Debecourt, 1839), ii, 352, with another description by Pouqueville, F.C.H.L., *Voyage dans la Grèce* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1820), iv, 73. 'Vast unarranged masses of collections in antiquity; he has an immense quantity of vases, casts of the sculptures of most monuments in Greece, several drawings of the buildings in Athens of his own and others, Mr. Cockerell's pencil drawing of the beautifully ornamented door of the temple of Erechtheus and several sketches of Constantinople curiously done in burnt cork, together with lots of fragments of mouldings, tombs, &c.' Taylor, G. Ledwell, *The auto-biography of an octogenarian architect: being a record of his studies at home and abroad, during 65 years, comprising among the subjects the cathedrals of England, France, and Italy, the temples of Rome Greece, and Sicily ... also incidents of travel* (London: Longman, 1870-1872), 121. Taylor was there in June 1818. A description of the antiquities, made at the start of the Revolution, is given by Raybaud, ii, 85-87.

76 For example, in the letter from Dodwell to Fauvel from Rome in 1811, Clairmont, document numbers 46 and 47.

77 Noted by Smith, *Lord Elgin*, 278.

## The Treatment of Ancient Objects Before the Revolution

For many decades before the Revolution, ancient objects were routinely removed, literally ungrounded, from the geographical, cultural, and commemorative contexts of their creation and use. For at least a millennium and a half, despite knowing that objects of value could be found there, the Orthodox or the Ottoman authorities had mostly left ancient burial sites undisturbed, but they nonetheless did not seem to have cared much about the opening of ancient tombs, the removal and export of their contents, or the casual junking of the remains of the ancient dead who were not yet generally regarded by the Orthodox Greeks as their ancestors. Thomas Burgon, who spent some weeks in 1813 opening tombs in and around Athens, found fragments of gold leaf, mirrors, pieces of ivory, and other objects of monetary value. The results of these diggings were separated out into modern western object-centred descriptive categories, such as sculptures, vases, and jewellery. Bundled together in accordance with the imported western category of 'works of art', anachronistically applied to ancient times, the objects were categorised, and often later displayed, in accordance with their characteristics as manufactured objects.

Richard Burdon, remembering the mythic story of Charon, who ferried the dead across the Styx to the underworld, hoped to find an obol coin in the mouths of skeletons, but with only doubtful results. As was reported when he came to sell his collection: '[Burdon] employed not less than twenty men at Athens in constantly digging for curiosities, and the coins he has collected are considered rare and of great value. The impressions of some are as fresh as if just come from the mint.'<sup>78</sup> What those who commissioned the digging up of graves called 'coins' had not, however, been primarily used in ancient times as pieces of 'money' intended to circulate in the economy or as 'works of art' that gave 'aesthetic' and other satisfactions to live viewers, but as grave goods that performed their main function at the funeral and commemorative ceremony for the dead person.

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<sup>78</sup> Goulburn, Edward Meyrick, *John William Burgon late dean of Chichester: a biography, with extracts from his letters and early journals* (London: Murray, 1892), i, 14.



It was a commonplace of the visitors to say that the local people thought, in their ignorance, that they were digging for gold, and much gold was indeed found, usually in the form of grave goods such as wreaths and jewellery, but antiquities could also be turned into money by those who able to sell them up the market chain operated by the foreigners. In modern terms, we can say that the foreign colony, by digging, removing, and reclassifying objects, was destroying those objects' provenance, as well as evidence of how they had been used, and was therefore also limiting, and in many cases, denying the possibility of gaining knowledge of the actual lives and customs of the ancient men and women who had created and used them.

The foreign colony was not to know that a papyrus of the fourth century BCE found in 1962 near Thessaloniki, known as the Derveni papyrus, owed its survival to having been partly burned on a funeral pyre.<sup>79</sup> Nor could they know that in 1981, in a tomb excavated near Athens, the remains of a papyrus scroll would be discovered, along with other artifacts, including wax tablets, a stylus, and an ink stand, that indicated that the deceased had been a professional scribe or author.<sup>80</sup> Since the end of the nineteenth century, vast quantities of papyrus fragments have been discovered, mainly in Egypt, and are gradually been published. Although almost all are from later epochs of the ancient world, they show how widespread writing on papyrus was, for how many different purposes it was used, and how broad was the spectrum of society who treated writing and reading as a normal part of daily life. To attempt to recover a knowledge of the ancient Parthenon without taking account of the use of now lost documents on perishable materials is therefore liable to produce a misleading account.<sup>81</sup>

Even at the time, however, it was well understood that the casual digging and removal was irreversibly damaging the prospects of

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79 'Derveni Papyrus Inducted Into UNESCO's "Memory of the World" Programme', *Archaeology News Network*, 14 October 2015, [http://archaeologynewsnetwork.blogspot.dk/2015/10/derveni-papyrus-inducted-into-unescos.html?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed:+TheArchaeologyNewsNetwork+\(The+Archaeology+News+Network\)#.VmPqVSi4Ldk](http://archaeologynewsnetwork.blogspot.dk/2015/10/derveni-papyrus-inducted-into-unescos.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed:+TheArchaeologyNewsNetwork+(The+Archaeology+News+Network)#.VmPqVSi4Ldk)

80 Described by Pöhlmann, Egert and West, Martin L., 'The Oldest Greek Papyrus and Writing Tablets Fifth-Century Documents from the "Tomb of the Musician" in Attica', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, Bd. 180, 2012, 1–16.

81 The practice of joining the evidential dots with my suggestions of how its limitations might be offset is discussed in Chapter 24.

learning more about ancient societies and their customs and beliefs, their minds, and motivations. For example, in a book published in 1800, the Swedish diplomat Johan David Åkerblad, an accomplished linguist and scholar, noted that: 'No one has destroyed more grave mounds than the French painter *Fauvel*. He has excavated almost all in the vicinity of Athens, Marathon and other areas ... The worst thing about it is that *Fauvel* has not given us the slightest notice about the remarkable items found in these venerable monuments, and that one does not even know what has become of the objects.'<sup>82</sup> As more visitors employed men to dig for a few days here and there, and picked out anything that caught their fancy, throwing the rest away, and keeping minimal records of what they had found and where, and of the customers to whom they were sold, we see a growing reliance on justifications based on an invented distinction between 'artistic' or 'aesthetic' value, on the one hand, and the value of objects as documentary evidence for the societies that had brought them into existence and used them for their own cultural purposes, on the other. However, as became increasingly clear at the time, and even more so today, when a largely illegal antiquities trade is sustained at the top of a shady international market by employing the rhetoric of 'works of art', huge, often irreversible damage is done to these items' value as documents and therefore to knowledge. Writing in 2002, Sian Lewis estimated that of the tens of thousands of pieces of painted pottery known to have survived in the museums and private collections of the world, about eighty percent are 'unprovenanced' and of those about half were funerary objects manufactured in order to be used in performance contexts of which little is knowable.<sup>83</sup> Then as now, those who presented themselves as lovers of 'art' were destroyers of potential knowledge about the societies that had brought the objects into being. In the past, as now, they also encouraged a trade in fakes.<sup>84</sup>

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82 Discussed with plentiful citations, including some from writers in Swedish seldom quoted, by Thomasson, Fredrik, 'Justifying and Criticizing the Removals of Antiquities in Ottoman Lands: Tracking the Sigeion Inscription', *International Journal of Cultural Property*, 17 (3), August 2010, 493–517.

83 Lewis, Sian, *The Athenian Woman: An Iconographic Handbook* (London: Routledge, 2002), 4 and 5.

84 A terracotta plaque, one of several bought by various museums, that appeared to provide information about the central slab of the east frieze of the Parthenon, discussed in *The Classical Parthenon*, fouled the wells of truth for some decades in

In 1812, Lord Byron, who had a keen nose for hypocrisy ('humbug'), writing in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, A Romaunt*, his own account of what he had seen in Athens in 1809 and 1810, mocked the practices of those who claimed to be admirers of ancient Hellas, who broke off pieces of ancient buildings, dug up ancient tombs in search of grave goods, and exported whatever they could to western Europe. He also noted that the 'artists' of the expatriate community were deeply involved in the trade in antiquities. When news reached Athens that Byron referred to the Austrian Consul Gropius as 'Lord ---'s collector', Gropius wrote to Lord Aberdeen, who was evidently the lord referred to, demanding that the slur on their reputations be withdrawn. A member of Lord Aberdeen's staff visited Byron in London, and read him the complaint. But if Lord Aberdeen thought that his distant cousin in the Gordon family could be pressurized out of some sense of national or lordly solidarity ('affinity bias') he mistook his man. The excuse that was offered, that Gropius had exceeded his formal authority as a painter, Byron saw was a device for shifting blame, at best a mere legalism. And the correction that Byron made to the third edition, published later in 1812, although in form an apology, is, in substance, the exposure of another layer of hypocrisy.<sup>85</sup>

The recent publication of many financial documents that refer to the removal of the sculptures of both the Aegina and the Bassae (Phigaleia) temples in the years 1810–1813, shows how lucrative the

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the nineteenth century until it, with the others, was patiently exposed as forgeries. Discussed in Waldstein, Charles, *Essays on the Art of Pheidias*, 191–266.

- 85 'This Sr. Gropius was employed by a noble Lord for the sole purpose of sketching, in which he excels: but I am sorry to say, that he has, through the abused sanction of that most respectable name, been treading at humble distance in the steps of Sr. Lusieri.—A shipful of his trophies was detained, and I believe confiscated, at Constantinople in 1810. I am most happy to be now enabled to state, that "this was not in his bond;" that he was employed solely as a painter, and that his noble patron disavows all connection with him, except as an artist. If the error in the first and second edition of this poem has given the noble Lord a moment's pain, I am very sorry for it: Sr. Gropius has assumed for years the name of his agent; and though I cannot much condemn myself for sharing in the mistake of so many, I am happy in being one of the first to be undeceived. Indeed, I have as much pleasure in contradicting this as I felt regret in stating it.' Since the notes to the second edition were set up with generous spacing, it was easy to insert the addition, and it was carried through to all the later editions in Byron's lifetime. For Gropius's subsequent attempt to rewrite the past, see Chapter 12. His role in the crisis of 1821 is discussed in Chapter 9.

business was. Leaders of the local communities at Aegina, known to the westerners as ‘the primates’, represented the interests of the local people on whose land they stood and when they demanded that removals be stopped, their protests were dismissed as superstitious excuses to ask for money. A payment equivalent to forty British pounds was made but the final price obtained by those who ‘discovered’ and removed them was 6,000 pounds. At Bassae, the local authorities tried to stop the removals until the joint owners obtained a firman and the pieces were hurriedly removed, fetching a final price of 19,000 pounds. Gropius contracted for two per cent of the final price for both sets of antiquities, in effect taking a share of the equity in the investment, plus reimbursement of all his heavy expenses on which he declined to give an account. Charles Robert Cockerell, who played a leading role in the removal of the sculptures from both temples, and who obtained a piece from the Parthenon, reports that he was called ‘a tomb breaker and sacrilegious wretch’ by locals, and his group ‘marble stealers and dealers.’<sup>86</sup>

### Travelling to Athens and Viewing the Acropolis: Representations of the Experience

At the provincial border on the road to Athens from the Peloponnese, an officer with a party of around six soldiers stopped all travellers, and any foreigners without proper passports were not permitted to proceed to Athens.<sup>87</sup> John Spencer Stanhope and his party were turned back at the border in 1814, but evaded the controls by going to Athens by sea.<sup>88</sup> The architect Joseph Woods reports in 1818 that no-one was allowed to pass the Isthmus of Corinth without an order from the Pasha of Tripolizza which would have taken eight days of negotiation to obtain, so he too went by sea.<sup>89</sup> As was noted by several travellers, the ‘derveni’, where

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86 Charles Robert Cockerell in *the Mediterranean, Letters and Travels 1810–1817*, edited by Susan Pearce and Theresa Ormrod (London: Boydell, 2017), 39 and 44, retaining the spelling of the manuscript.

87 Bramsen, John, *Travels in Egypt, Syria, Cyprus, The Morea, Greece, Italy &c* (London: Colburn, second edition, 1820), ii, 58.

88 Spencer Stanhope, 36.

89 Woods, Joseph, *Letters of an Architect, from France, Italy, and Greece* (London: John and Arthur Arch, 1828), ii, 228

the frontier guards were stationed, and the 'khans', where all travellers and merchants were usually obliged to stay overnight, had probably existed in the same locations since ancient times.<sup>90</sup> Many ancient sites had been largely determined by the local geography, combining military features such as the narrowness of the mountain passes with the presence of fast-running rivers that could provide drinking water for humans and animals in all seasons and also deliver enough power to turn a mill wheel, a piece of equipment indispensable for grinding or crushing edible crops. This was especially true of the ancient mountain pass between Argos and Corinth, where the recently rediscovered city of Tenea was situated.<sup>91</sup>

For the men and women from the west whose main aim was to see Athens, their first distant sight of the Acropolis was an experience to be mentally anticipated and physically prepared for. As Chateaubriand neared the place where he knew he would experience his first sight of the Acropolis, he reports that he ordered that his horses be washed down and that his guard should put on a clean turban. He himself changed into his 'gala clothes', and walked in silence towards the viewing station, aware that he was repeating a practice of the ancient Athenians.<sup>92</sup> Thomas Watkins kissed the ground. 'I stopped and gazed,' he wrote, 'but was too full to speak, yet thankful to the Supreme Being that he had permitted me to visit the place, which of all others I most desired, but least expected, to behold.'<sup>93</sup>

That first view of the Acropolis, which was seen by Chateaubriand and by many others since ancient times, was caught in 1828 by an amateur artist, William Mure, as reproduced in Figure 4.9.

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90 An example noted in *Charles Robert Cockerell in the Mediterranean, Letters and Travels 1810–1817*, edited by Susan Pearce and Theresa Ormrod (London: Boydell, 2017), 165.

91 To be discussed in my contribution to a forthcoming publication by the archaeological team.

92 Chateaubriand, *Travels to Jerusalem and the Holy Land through Egypt*, translated by Frederic Shoberl (London: Colburn, third edition, 1835), ii, 158: 'Never did the most devout of the initiated experience transports equal to mine'.

93 Watkins, Thomas, *Travels through Swisserland, Italy, Sicily, the Greek Islands, to Constantinople ... in the Years 1787, 1788, 1789* (London: Cadell, 1792), ii, 281.

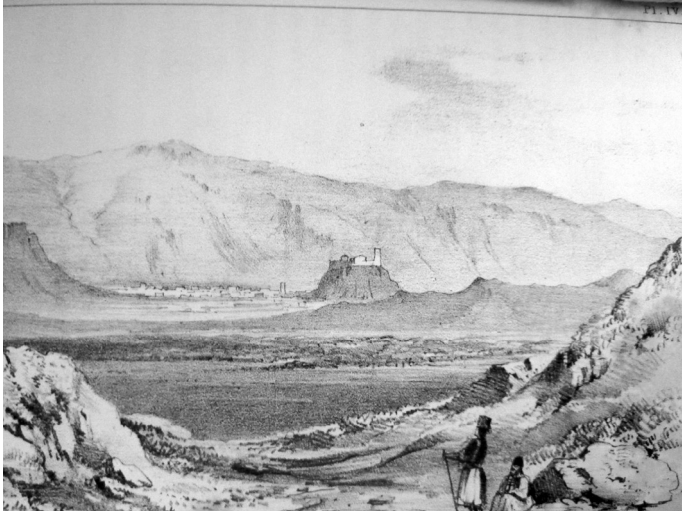


Figure 4.9. 'Athens from the Pass of Daphne'. Lithograph of a drawing made in 1838 by William Mure of Caldwell, travelling as Colonel Caldwell.<sup>94</sup>

As Mure wrote perceptively: 'It possessed, to myself, the additional advantage of novelty, as I do not recollect having seen any view of Athens from this spot in the published collection.'<sup>95</sup> The view that he captured, we can be confident from what is known about the ancient routes, was amongst those that were most frequently encountered in ancient times both by Athenians and by visitors. Charles Ernest Beulé, who after Greek independence used explosives to destroy some of the mediaeval buildings on the Acropolis, also appreciated that the sudden view from the pass of Daphne was not only intensely dramatic but had probably also been similarly experienced in ancient times. As he wrote of his years in Athens, he grew to appreciate the ancient Athenians better every day, not because, as an archaeologist, he put his hands on their marble, but because he lived in the open air in constant contact with the

<sup>94</sup> Mure, William, of Caldwell, *Journal of a Tour in Greece and the Ionian Islands, with remarks on the recent history — present state — and classical antiquities of those countries* (Edinburgh and London: Blackwood, 1842), opposite ii, 44, 'J[oseph]. Netherclift lithog.' The partly illegible inscription I have completed from those on other lithographs in the book. Netherclift, one of the pioneers of lithography in Britain, evidently made lithographs from drawings made by Mure or by a member of his party on the spot: he is not known to have visited Greece.

<sup>95</sup> Mure, ii, 43.

natural world in the incomparable light that clothed the nakedness of Attica in delightful colours.<sup>96</sup>

Mure also appreciated that the landscape that he pictured matched the conventions of the northern picturesque, mountains in the background, the Acropolis in the middle drawing the eye, and the foreground 'forming, as it were, a frame to the picture.'<sup>97</sup> The human figures gave scale, and they directed the eyes of the viewer. Since the view would have been the same in ancient times, we may guess that the commissioning authorities and the makers of the classical-era Acropolis may have consciously taken account of the implied viewing station caught by this picture.<sup>98</sup>

The visitors struggled to turn into words their intense personal happiness at seeing Athens that was matched by a general sadness, 'a mixed sensation of affection and sorrow.'<sup>99</sup> As a French officer proclaimed in 1830: 'Oh! Que de bonheur et de tristesse.'<sup>100</sup> For many, that bittersweet moment of experience demanded to be lingered over, written up in a journal, described in a letter home, celebrated in a piece of verse, sketched in a notebook, or otherwise held fixed.<sup>101</sup> An event of inner mental experience was arranged and tidied, turned into words, written down or pictured in a fixed material form, made portable, and carried home, with the expectation that the reader of the words or the viewer of the picture would go through that process in reverse.

Some likened their first sight of the Acropolis to the drawing back of the curtains at the commencement of a play when the audiences catch their first sight of the set.<sup>102</sup> Following the conventions of the English and

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96 Beulé, *Mes Fouilles*, 13. There is no evidence that he remembered that Chateaubriand had put on his 'gala clothes' at the same spot. Beulé's operations on the Acropolis are summarized in Chapter 22.

97 Mure ii, 44.

98 Discussed further in *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>

99 Watkins, ii, 313.

100 Lacour, M. J-L., *Excursions en Grèce* (Paris: Bertrand, 1834), 170.

101 Among the women are Lady Craven, who visited in 1786 and Queen Caroline in 1816, see Demont and Queen's *Travels*. Soon after the Revolution we have Plumley, Miss, *Days and Nights in the East; from the original notes of a recent traveller through Egypt, Arabia-Petra, Syria, Turkey and Greece* (London: Newby 1845) and Damer, the Hon. Mrs. G.L. Dawson, *Diary of a Tour in Greece, Turkey, Egypt, and the Holy Land* (London: Colburn, 1841).

102 'The Acropolis of Athens is soon afterwards discovered on which the eye of the traveller rests with avidity.' Galt, *Travels*, 183. Galt, *Letters*, 104. 'Mount Hymettus spread his curtain.' Bramsen, ii, 88.

French novel of sensibility, they claimed the uncontrollable human body as evidence of a direct, immediate, sincere, authentic, and unmediated expression of their inner self. Cries were uttered.<sup>103</sup> Eyes filled with tears.<sup>104</sup> Pulses raced.<sup>105</sup> Hearts throbbed wildly, palpitated violently, and stopped beating.<sup>106</sup> Count Forbin was 'rivetted to the spot' and 'unable to utter a coherent sentence.'<sup>107</sup> John Gadsby was so overcome that he had to turn away. As he wrote: 'it was almost too much for my nervous system. I ceased to gaze upon it, for I felt my knees giving way under the sensation.'<sup>108</sup> Enoch Wines had an out-of-body experience.<sup>109</sup> And just as writers of words sometimes declared themselves 'speechless', the makers of visual images offered failure as evidence of authenticity. Francis Hervé 'took out his pencil when he saw the Acropolis for the first time, but 'soon renounced the thought, perceiving the presumption of the attempt.'<sup>110</sup>

We see too the champions of the conventional attempting to shame the doubters into conformity. Walter Colton, an American naval chaplain, later a newspaperman, wrote that the sight of the Parthenon made his whole previous life seem like 'an anxious pilgrimage', and now that he had reached the object of his deferred hopes: 'I could now willingly yield up my breath.'<sup>111</sup> But admitting that his highfalutin style might be read as 'the language of affected reverence, or the confession of a morbid enthusiasm', dismisses anyone who declines to be co-opted. When someone with the right qualities, he writes, 'comes into the overpowering presence of the Parthenon! And though it may be a weakness, yet he will kneel and weep.'<sup>112</sup> 'He who could behold such a

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103 For the custom of emitting a cry of recognition, Holland, 406.

104 Williams, *Travels*, i, 288.

105 'The pulse goes quicker, and the tears fill the eye, but not with those of delight.' Williams, *Travels*, i, 299.

106 For example: 'My heart beats as I date my letter from the venerable presence of the mistress of the world,' Biddle, 217; Cox and Cox, 193; Romain, 233; Forbin, 3.

107 Forbin, 3.

108 Gadsby, *My Wanderings*, 66.

109 The visitor's sentiments ... 'as he continues to gaze, increase in purity and depth, till, lost in one delicious glow of enthusiasm, he scarcely knows "whether he is in the body or out of it." This is not exaggeration.' Wines, 297.

110 Hervé, i, 126.

111 Colton, 271.

112 Colton, Rev. Walter, late of the United States Navy, *Land and Lee in the Bosphorus and Aegean; or Views of Constantinople and Athens, edited from the notes and manuscripts of the author, by Rev. Henry T. Cheever* (New York: Barnes, 1851), 271.



scene unmoved, must indeed deserve pity,' wrote John Bramsen of his non-conforming fellow-travellers.<sup>113</sup> Or as Nicholas Michell, a poet of the mainstream, wrote, repeating the romantic cliché that mute stones can speak to a man of taste and sensibility:

There are, whose earth-born thoughts can ne'er  
aspire,  
Who feel not taste's fine glow, or fancy's fire;  
Who view with unmov'd heart, and frigid gaze,  
The pleading wrecks of bright departed days;  
Who grasp at petty pelf, or present power,  
And ask no joy beyond the passing hour -  
Oh! let not such approach this land of fame;  
For them no magic breathes in Graecia's name;  
For them her ruins seem but silent stone.<sup>114</sup>

Some writers, perhaps sensing that the rhetoric of rapture was overused and already losing its power to persuade, resorted instead to the 'came to scoff, stayed to worship' conversion narrative, emphasising their initial indifference or hostility in order to sharpen the contrast of the sudden reversal.<sup>115</sup> Bayard Taylor, for example, a professional writer, assured his readers that 'I am hardened against conventional sentiment ... I can resist the magic of ancient memories, no matter how classic,' but, as he wrote of his first sight of the west front of the Parthenon, 'all my fine resolves were forgotten. I was seized with an overpowering mixture of that purest and loftiest admiration, which is almost the same as love ... and had I been alone, I should have cast myself prone upon the marble pavement and exhausted in some hysterical way, the violence of this

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113 Bramsen, John, *Travels in Egypt, Syria, Cyprus, The Morea, Greece, Italy &c* (London: Colburn, second edition, 1820), ii, 61.

114 Michell, Nicolas, *Ruins of Many Lands, A Descriptive Poem, with Illustrations* (London: Tegg, 1849), 107. The verse echoes the then famous lines of Walter Scott in praise of nationalism that begin: 'Breathes there the man with soul so dead Who never to himself hath said, This is my own, my native land!' Another example on first setting foot in Greece set out at length in Swan, *Journal*, i, 105–06.

115 'Let it suffice for me to say that, notwithstanding all I had heard and read of the immaculate purity of conception, and the almost celestial harmony of proportions exhibited in Minerva's shrine, I came here a skeptic; but, the moment I found myself within the sphere of its influence, I became a convert. Haight, Sarah, *Letters from the old world by a Lady of New York* (New York: Harper, 1840), ii, 292.

unexpected passion.<sup>116</sup> Edward Hutton kissed the marble: 'all golden, all white ... as warm to the lips as a woman's body.'<sup>117</sup>

Even those who only pretended to have been to Athens knew what was expected. Alexander Thomson, a medical man who reported in 1798 on 'the variety of emotions that agitated my mind' was probably a publisher's hack, recycling the clichés of printed books.<sup>118</sup> Charles Thompson, his near namesake, who was probably also a stay-at-home compiler, felt the same in 1810.<sup>119</sup> As the publisher of the English translation of the genuine book by the French academician Pierre-Augustin Guys, who had lived in Constantinople and who did go to Athens, felt obliged to affirm in 1782: 'The number of travels through Italy and Greece, daily manufactured in the closet, and obtruded for originals upon the world, renders it necessary to authenticate a work of this nature, in the most public manner.'<sup>120</sup> And there were the real travellers 'who write their journals in their studies, and can tell more about what they have read than what they see.'<sup>121</sup>

From the earliest days of the encounter, it was therefore possible to write convincingly about the emotions aroused by looking at the Acropolis without having left home. As the French stay-at-home compiler Guillet wrote in 1674 of the experience of his pretended

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116 Taylor, Bayard, *Travels in Greece and Russia with an excursion to Crete* (New York: Putnam, 1859), 37; 40.

117 Hutton, Edward, *A Glimpse of Greece* (London: Medici Society, 1928), 17.

118 Thomson, Alexander, M.D., ed., *Letters of a Traveller, on the Various Countries of Europe, Asia, and Africa; containing Sketches of their present state, Government, Religion, Manners, and Customs; with some original pieces of poetry* (London: Wallis, Wynn, and Scholly, 1798), 326.

119 Thompson, Charles, Esq., *Travels through Turkey in Asia, the Holy Land, Arabia, Egypt, and Other Parts of the World; giving a particular and faithful account of what is most remarkable in the Manners, Religion, Polity, Antiquities, and Natural History of those Countries; with a curious description of Jerusalem as it now appears, and other places mentioned in the Holy Scriptures ... Interspersed with the REMARKS of several other modern Travellers, illustrated with NOTES Historical, Geographical, and Miscellaneous* (Glasgow: printed by Napier, for Fullarton, Somerville, and Blackie, 1810). Probably a compilation. A printed prospectus calling for subscriptions in which the author was described as 'the late' was circulated by Robinson in London in 1743.

120 Guys, *A Sentimental Journey Through Greece in a Series of Letters 1772 written from Constantinople by M. de Guys of the Academy of Marseilles, to M. Bourlat de Montredon, at Paris. Translated from the French. 'Natura Graecos docuit, ui ipsi caeteros'* In *Three Volumes* (London: Cadell, 3 volumes, 1772) Preface, i, ix. By calling the translation a 'sentimental' journey, and publishing it as a three-volume work as if it were a novel, the publisher was presenting the book as suitable not only for learned scholars but for female readers who borrowed from circulating libraries.

121 Galt, *Voyages and Travels*, 62.

brother: 'at the first sight of this Famous Town (struck as it were with a sentiment of Veneration for those Miracles of Antiquity which were Recorded of it) I started immediately, and was taken with an universal shivering all over my Body.'<sup>122</sup> Guillet did not disguise the fact that he was repeating sentiments that had been expressed by Cicero, who had studied at Athens eighteen hundred years before, and that had been rhetorical clichés even then.<sup>123</sup>

Readers, however, especially those who might themselves have liked to have had the opportunity to see the Parthenon but had no realistic prospect of doing so, can have too much of this kind of writing, at once boastful, excluding, and condescending. And we find occasional instances of the resisting viewer. As Lord Byron wrote to his friend Francis Hodgson, a Cambridge classical scholar, with whom he had collaborated in reviewing two travel books on Greece, reporting the plain man's opinion at his first sight of the Parthenon: 'Sir, there's a situation, there's your picturesque! nothing like that, Sir, in Lunnun, not even the Mansion House.'<sup>124</sup>

The writers who competed to out-gush, to out-weep and to out-shiver their rivals were addressing a reading audience in their home countries, without any expectation that their words would ever be read by the people of Athens. Just occasionally, however, we hear a local voice and a local reaction. In 1816 Gian-Dionisio Avramiotti, who as a native of Zante (modern and ancient Zakynthos, one of the Ionian Islands, at the time of his birth an overseas territory of Venice) was able to look both eastwards into the Ottoman territories and westwards to Italy, published a critique of Chateaubriand's book, drawing attention to topographical errors, and casting doubt on the autobiographical passages.<sup>125</sup> How was Chateaubriand able to change into his 'gala clothes'

122 Guillet and his dispute with Spon are discussed in Chapter 7.

123 'I could not contain my self, but cryed out, Adsunt Athenae, unde Humanitas, Doctrina, Religio, Fruges, Jura, Leges ortae, atque in omnes Terras distributae putantur, de quarum possessione proper pulchritudinem, etiam inter Deos certamen proditum est. Urbi (inquam) quae vetustate eâ est, ut ipsa ex sese suos Cives genuisse dicatur: Autoritate autem tantâ, ut jam fractum prope & dehilitatum Graeciae Nomen, hujus Urbis laude nitatur: You may remember it in Tully.' Guillet English version 124.

124 Byron to Hodgson, 20 January 1811, *Letters and Journals*, ii, 37.

125 Avramiotti, Giovanni Dionisio, *Alcuni cenni critici ... sul viaggio in Grecia che compone la prima parte dell'itinerario da Parigi a Gerusalemme del Signor F. R. de Chateaubriand*.

like an Eleusinian votary, he asked, when elsewhere in his book he was playing the part of the hardship-enduring pilgrim, travelling with only one coat? Avramiotti, with his personal knowledge, questioned whether Chateaubriand had spent even as much as a tenth of the vast sum that he claimed, alleging that Chateaubriand was insincere, but also undermining his pretensions to be an aristocratic successor to the grand travelling-academy-type expeditions of Choiseul-Gouffier and Elgin. To Avramiotti, Chateaubriand was just another travel writer among many, who had a foreign servant and a local guard, who followed and reinforced the conventions of the Franks, and who took home a piece of the Parthenon as a souvenir. A good travel book does not consist of elegies, Avramiotti proclaimed in his last sentence, but the truth, 'and the truth inhabits an unknown land not yet visited by our traveller.'<sup>126</sup>

It is, of course, hard to separate the culturally-conditioned from the spontaneous, the sincere from the pretended, the public professions of belief from actually-experienced inner states, especially when the fleeting experience of a seeing moment is always written up and fixed in words or pictorial images after an interval. Indeed, modern neuroscience suggests that even to try is inconsistent with what occurs in perception and cognition. The romantic quest for a pure and unmediated response was as impossible in the long eighteenth century as it was to be in the so-called romantic period. Rather than attempting to disentangle degrees of sincerity, I suggest it is preferable to understand the gushing and the shivering as the social construction of a ritual in which participants simultaneously help to invent, build, and fix its conventions, who vie in ostentatious displays of their commitment, who try to shame, to evince a hostility to, and to expel insiders who decline to conform, and who internalize the whole process as the only one that is legitimate or 'natural'.

When the eighteenth-century western travellers reached the town gate of Athens, they were invited by the guard to share coffee and tobacco, and as was customary, to offer him a gift.<sup>127</sup> Then came

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*Con varie osservazioni delle antichità greche* (Padua: Tipografia Bettoni, 1816).

126 Avramiotti, final sentence, my translation. Discussed by Malakis, Emile, 'Chateaubriand se méprend-il sur Avramiotti?', *Modern Language Notes*, 50 (4), April 1935, 249–51, drawing on the work of a Mille Poirier, not identified.

127 Trant, 259.

the ceremonial presentation of the visitor's imperial passport to the voivode.<sup>128</sup> Lord Charlemont, who visited Athens in 1749, described the ceremony: 'We presented our firman, which the Voivode received upon the back of his hands, and bowing down his head, touched it with his forehead. It was then opened and read with the greatest solemnity, and with every mark of the most profound respect.'<sup>129</sup> Coffee and tobacco again followed, and the visitor often made a gift, sometimes a watch, a telescope, a snuffbox, or a roll of fine cloth, which, although a gift-exchange, also proclaimed the wealth of the visitor, and, by implication, the military, technological, and cultural superiority of his country. With the help of the western consuls, accommodation was secured and introductions made to the other leading men of Athens, including the Orthodox archbishop, the Muslim mufti, the local expatriate Franks, the other travellers, antiquarians, and artists who might be visiting Athens or residing there.<sup>130</sup>

## Recording the Visit

So narrow was the social circle to which most western visitors to Athens belonged that by the turn of the eighteenth/nineteenth centuries, it was possible to run into an old friend in Greece just as one might occasionally do in parts of Paris or London, as, for example, when Lord Byron met Lord Sligo when they were touring the Peloponnese. As a reviewer wrote in 1814, commenting on the recent surge of travel books on Greece: 'it is an introduction to the best company ... to have scratched one's name upon a fragment of the Parthenon.'<sup>131</sup> By the end of the period, the ancient monuments of Athens were covered with the names of western travellers, colonising the site.<sup>132</sup> The temple at Sounion, often

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128 I know of no consolidated list of the voivodes of Athens, but many are mentioned by name with dates of their time in office, and some lists, by Philadelphus.

129 Charlemont, *The Travels of Lord Charlemont in Greece and Turkey 1749*, edited by W.B. Stanford and E.J. Finopoulos (London: Tregraph for Leventis Foundation, 1984), 129.

130 The ceremonies of sending a present, calling on the voivode, presenting his imperial and other firmans and letters, and then calling on the archbishop, are also described by Pococke in a letter to his mother from Athens, 29 September/10 October 1740, Pococke, *Letters*, 3, 281.

131 Quoted by Spencer, Terence, *Fair Greece, Sad Relic* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1954), 229, from *Quarterly Review*, July 1814, xi, 458.

132 Pouqueville, *Voyage*, iv, 73.

visited by sea as well as land, long remained a palimpsest of graffiti as shown in Figure 4.10.

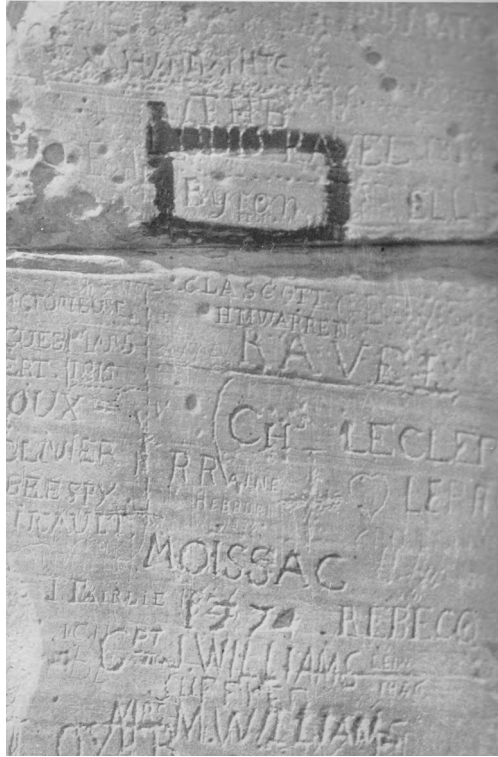


Figure 4.10. Byron's name carved at Sounion Photograph, 1931.<sup>133</sup>

The English artist J.M.W. Turner had produced so many expectation-setting paintings and engravings of Greece and its ruins that visitors expected to find his name carved there too, although he had never been to Greece nor anywhere nearer than Italy.<sup>134</sup> Charles Swan, the chaplain of the British frigate the *Cambrian*, who saw the graffiti in 1824 during the Revolutionary War, could scarcely believe that Byron and Tweddell

133 Holme, C. Geoffrey, and William Gaunt, *Touring the Ancient World with a Camera* (London and New York: The Studio, 1932), 34.

134 For example, Hichens, Robert, *The Near East, Dalmatia, Greece, and Constantinople*, illustrated By Jules Guérin and with photographs (London and New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1913), 131: 'I looked in vain for the name of Turner.' Most pictures of Greece were worked up in the studio even if the artist had visited the places and made sketches on the spot.

had indulged in such 'childish vanity.'<sup>135</sup> But he was unusual. Francis Vernon, who had been in Athens in 1678 as one of the pioneers, had inscribed his name on the wall of the Theseion.<sup>136</sup> The names of both Spon and Wheler, who had been his companions, had also once been there.<sup>137</sup> On the monument of Philopappos, on the Hill of the Muses, one of the favourite viewing stations from which to look at the Acropolis for visitors from the present day back to Xerxes in 480 and no doubt even earlier, was carved the name of Foucherot, who had drafted the standard map of Athens which many were at that very moment holding in their hands as they looked.<sup>138</sup> William Rae Wilson, lodging at the Capuchin convent in 1819, judged it from the 'crowd of names of Englishmen written and cut out on the walls, to be a kind of head-quarters for British travellers.'<sup>139</sup> The walls of the Makri family lodging house were 'covered with memorials of their visits.'<sup>140</sup>

It became the custom to seek out the names of famous predecessors. The names of authors could be read at the Castalian spring near Delphi, where they had sought inspiration from the Muses who in ancient times were said to live on Parnassus.<sup>141</sup> Pouqueville found that of Delille,

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135 Swan, Rev. Charles, late of Catharine Hall, Cambridge; Chaplain to H.M.S. Cambrian; author of *Sermons on Several Subjects*, and Translator of *Gesta Romanorum*, *Journal of a voyage up the Mediterranean: principally among the islands of the Archipelago, and in Asia Minor: including many interesting particulars relative to the Greek revolution, especially a journey through Maina to the camp of Ibrahim Pacha, together with observations on the antiquities, opinions, and usages of Greece, as they now exist: to which is added, an essay on the Fanariotes*, translated from the French of Mark Philip Zallony, a Greek (London: Rivington, 1826), i, 117. It was noticed in print by Colton, Rev. Walter, *Ship and shore: or, Leaves from the journal of a cruise to the Levant. By an officer of the United States' navy* (New York: Leavitt, Lord & Co., 1835), 269. His visit, the date of which is not recorded, took place c.1833.

136 Vernon's name is noted on the Theseum, Chandler D.D., *A new edition with corrections and remarks by Nicholas Revett to which is prefixed an introductory account of the author by Ralph Churton* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1825), ii, 90.

137 Clarke, *Travels*, part the second, section the second, 1814, 587.

138 For the inscription see St Clair, *Lord Elgin*, 63, 354. It was still possible to make out much of the writing that I noted in the 1960s.

139 Wilson, William Rae, *Travels in Egypt and the Holy Land, the second edition, with a Journey through Turkey, Greece, the Ionian Islands, Sicily, Spain &c* (London: Longman, 1824), 276. The building was destroyed in the Revolution.

140 Bramsen, ii. 64.

141 Marchebeus, *Voyage de Paris à Constantinople par bateau à vapeur: nouvel itinéraire orné de vues et vignettes sur acier, avec tableaux indiquant les lieux desservis par les paquebots à vapeur, sur la Méditerranée, l'Adriatique et le Danube, le prix des places et des marchandises, les distances et la valeur des monnaies: par Marchebeus, architecte du gouvernement* (Paris: Artus, 1839), 47. He also saw the name of Fauvel.

Choiseul-Gouffier's poet, dated 1784, on which a later visitor had sculpted a garland of roses, but he looked in vain for that of Chateaubriand.<sup>142</sup> In 1833, when the Erechtheion was in a collapsed state, and one of the Caryatids still lay headless on the ground, Kyriakos Pittakis, one of the first locally born students of the monuments, pointed out to visitors how; 'on the inside of the capital of one of the columns, the place where the poet had written his name. It was simply "Byron" in small letters, and would not be noticed by an ordinary observer.'<sup>143</sup> Since there is no reason to doubt the story, it must have been written during Byron's single recorded visit to the Acropolis summit on 29 January 1810.<sup>144</sup>

The French consul Fauvel told a visitor that he had been present when Byron, with his own hand, carved his curse on Elgin on a column of the Parthenon. 'What indignation burned in his eyes that at other times were always melancholic,' the visitor liked to recall, but since Byron had not yet published, or even composed, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* in which he assumed that literary persona, we may suspect that Fauvel's memory had been colonised by what he knew later. Fauvel recalled too how Delille had written some of his own not-yet-print-published melancholic verses on the Parthenon in a neat and regular hand, although they soon ceased to be readable.<sup>145</sup>

One traveller, unidentified except by his initials, wrote a comment on the practice:

Fair Albion smiling sees her sons depart  
To trace the birth and nursery of art,  
Noble his object, glorious is his aim,  
He comes to Athens and he writes his name.

R.A.

142 Pouqueville, *Voyage*, iv, 78. Delille's name, dated 1784, carved on one of the columns of the Theseum was also noted by Marcellus, ii, 358, and in 1822 by the French philhellene Maxime Raybaud, who recognised the name of 'the French Virgil.' Raybaud, ii, 83. Delille's name carved on the Theseion, 'almost an antiquity,' was also noticed by D'Estournel, i, 146.

143 Willis, ii, 138. Byron's name in his own hand 'on one of the Ionic capitals in the north portico of the Pandrosium' was also noticed by Sir Grenville Temple who was there in March 1834. Temple i, 81. A large number of graffiti on the Erechtheion are noted by Lesk, Appendix E.

144 Beaton, *Byron's War*, 13.

145 Marcellus ii, 354. Delille's verses were from *L'Imagination* chant vii, beginning 'Partout ...'



To which Byron composed a 'counterpoise':

This modest bard, like many a bard unknown,  
Rhymes on our names, but wisely hides his own;  
But yet, whoe'er he be, to say no worse,  
His name would bring more credit than his verse.<sup>146</sup>

By the nineteenth century, visitors not only felt the presence of the shades of Pericles, Pheidias, and the other great men of ancient times, but that of their own famous forebears, especially of Chateaubriand and Byron, increasingly seen as prophets as much as writers.<sup>147</sup> They followed the routes taken by these luminaries just as their predecessors, the topographers, had followed the routes taken by Pausanias.<sup>148</sup> They read their works on the spot. And they re-enacted the customs. We hear, for example, of parties of French visitors arriving at Athens by sea, changing into their best clothes in preparation for catching their first glimpse of the Acropolis as the mist cleared, as Chateaubriand claimed to have done. By such repetitions and rituals, the visitors not only reaffirmed their membership of an exclusive club, but inducted themselves into an imagined community.<sup>149</sup>

In some ways, the arrival of the first book-educated western Europeans in Athens was typical of encounters that were occurring at many places near the sea elsewhere in the world. As in Asia, Africa, or the Americas, many were expeditions commissioned and financed by governments or societies with agendas that went beyond intellectual curiosity, on the lookout, for example, for raw materials, timber, minerals, local produce, and useful medicinal plants that could be traded for western manufactures. Some were disappointed to find that there had been commercial and other contacts for centuries, and that it was only in their ways of seeing that they were pioneers. In 1675, Francis Vernon noticed that the voivode wore fine stockings made by the London firm of Shakespeare and that the Venetian consul too had 'satin Shakespeare's waistcoats.'<sup>150</sup>

<sup>146</sup> Williams, *Travels*, i, 290.

<sup>147</sup> For example, 'The dreams of Chateaubriand have been realised'. Marcellus, ii, 338.

<sup>148</sup> For example, Reynaud 33. Giraudeau 264 noted Byron and Chateaubriand among the many names he saw at Sounion in 1833.

<sup>149</sup> For example, Chateaubriand, Byron, Renan, Leconte, De Lisle 'faisaient une rumeur de foule dans les parties subconscientes de mon être'. Barrès, 44.

<sup>150</sup> Vernon journal, unpublished. The firm of Shakespeare is recorded as supplying the luxury fabrics that were traded for slaves from forts along west Africa at this time.

But whereas such encounters elsewhere in the world were with places and peoples that were all strange and in different ways, Athens was different. The vast Ottoman Empire was one of the most exotic, puzzling, and mysterious societies, or rather sets of societies, western Europeans had ever encountered, with customs, attitudes, and systems of thought and government deeply at variance with the traditions within which they themselves had been brought up. But, paradoxically, to many of the visitors, Athens was already familiar. The air of Athens was as clear as it had been in ancient times when it had been described and celebrated by ancient authors. Mariners were amazed at how clearly they could see 'the smallest cordage' of other ships even by moonlight.<sup>151</sup> As Alessandro Bisani noted in 1788, he was enveloped in, and enchanted by, the same air as had been breathed by Demosthenes, Pericles, and Socrates.<sup>152</sup> At some times of year, the scents from the wild flowers and herbs that grew in profusion on the surrounding mountains, especially thyme, were carried across the Attic plain, and out to mariners on the nearby seas.<sup>153</sup> To the classically educated visitors from the west, the aura of association with the ancient world was an immediate, palpable bodily experience.<sup>154</sup>

Even those travellers whose education was confined to the classics of their own languages felt that they had already been here. As Milton, who never saw Athens, described it in *Paradise Lost*:

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See William St Clair, *The Grand Slave Emporium: Cape Coast Castle and the British Slave Trade* (London: Profile Books, 2006).

151 Schroeder, Francis, Secretary to the Commodore Commanding the United States Squadron in that Sea, 1843–1845, *Shores of the Mediterranean, with sketches of Travel* (New York: Harper, 1846), i, 95.

152 Bisani, 59.

153 Among many examples 'perfumed air from Hymettus', Jolliffe, T.R., *Narrative of an Excursion from Corfu to Smyrna* (London: Black, Young, and Black, 1827), 142. 'fragrant with odours' Cuthbertson, Rev. James, *Sacred and Historic lands: Being a record of travels in Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Greece, Constantinople, &c.* (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1885), 200. For the thyme Napier, Lt. Colonel E., *Excursions along the Shores of the Mediterranean* (London: Colburn, 1842), ii, 372.

154 A point made explicitly, for example, by, for example, Linton, William, *Corresponding Member of the Archaeological Society of Athens, Author of "Ancient and Modern Colours" &c., Scenery of Greece and its Islands, Illustrated by Fifty Views, Sketched from Nature, Executed on steel, and described en route, with map of the Country* (London: published privately by the artist, 1856), vi, referring to other authors, including St. John, J. Augustus, *The History of the Manners and Customs of Ancient Greece* (London: Bentley, 1842).

Where on the Aegean shore a city stands,  
 Built nobly, pure the air and light the soil--  
 Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of arts  
 And Eloquence, native to famous wits  
 Or hospitable, in her sweet recess,  
 City or suburban, studious walks and shades.  
 See there the olive-grove of Academe,  
 Plato's retirement, where the Attic bird  
 Trills her thick-warbled notes the summer long;  
 There, flowery hill, Hymettus, with the sound  
 Of bees' industrious murmur, oft invites  
 To studious musing; there Ilissus rowls  
 His whispering stream.<sup>155</sup>

At Colonos, where Sophocles, in one of his most famous plays, had set the arrival in Athens of the blind Oedipus accompanied by Antigone, the nightingales still sang.<sup>156</sup> In the surrounding and enclosing mountains, wild boars, lynxes, and chamois were still hunted for their meat and their pelts. On the road to Marathon, the descendants of the wolves that Pausanias had heard still howled.<sup>157</sup> One was seen from the beach by Byron and Hobhouse on their visit in 1810.<sup>158</sup> Meeting a venomous snake on a mountain path could still cause a whole cavalcade to halt.<sup>159</sup>

The bee-eater, celebrated in ancient literature, still arrived at the end of summer to feed on the famous bees of Hymettos that still produced the famous honey from the famous thyme.<sup>160</sup> As Christopher Wordsworth, the poet's nephew, wrote of the Athenian bees in one of

155 Quoted by, for example Williams, *Travels*, ii, 288; Anderson, James, 30; Linton, *Preface*, and Marjoribanks, Thomas S., *Travel Sketches, Letters from Egypt, Greece, and Southern Italy* (Haddington: Printed by D. and J. Croal, 1902), 26.

156 Suksi, Aara, 'Nightingales in Sophocles', in *Mnemosyne*, vol. 54, no. 6, 2001, 646–58, 13. The role of the Hill of Colonos in the ancient cityscape and storyscape is discussed in Chapter 22. The role of the story told in the play in the discursive environment and public debate in classical Athens is discussed in *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>.

157 Wilson, 189; Sibthorp 73: Joy, i, 106.

158 Hobhouse MS diary 24 January 1810. They knew the story from Pausanias.

159 For example, Scollard, Clinton, *On sunny shores, with illustrations by Margaret Landers Randolph* (New York: Webster 1893), 184. On Pentelikon: 'a snake contested the right of way with us, and caused a temporary stoppage of our cavalcade. Paulos seized the muleteer's staff and speedily put his serpentship to rout'.

160 Almost everyone who visited or wrote about Greece from antiquity to the present day mentioned the honey of Hymettus. Chateaubriand is one of the few to have disliked it.

the most influential books on Greece of the nineteenth century: 'Their race remains immortal, ever stands, Their house unmoved, and sires of sires are born.'<sup>161</sup> Whatever the opinions of visitors about the genetic ancestry of the people they encountered, few doubted that they were the lineal descendants of the ancient.<sup>162</sup>

Byron, who lived in Athens in spells during 1809, 1810 and 1811, picked up the sense of instant recognition of the ancient environment surviving unchanged, refraining on the two English words, 'yet' and 'still':

Yet are thy skies as blue, thy crags as wild;  
Sweet are thy groves, and verdant are thy fields,  
Thine olive ripe as when Minerva smiled,  
And still his honied wealth Hymettus yields;  
There the blythe bee his fragrant fortress builds,  
The free-born tenant of thy mountain-air;  
Apollo still thy long, long, summer gilds,  
Still in his beam Mendéli's marbles glare;  
Art, glory, freedom fail, but nature still is fair.<sup>163</sup>

Even the food was the same. As Byron recalled of his happy months in Athens:

The simple olives, best allies of wine,  
Must I pass over in my bill of fare?  
I must, although a favourite *plat* of mine  
In Spain, and Lucca, Athens, every where:  
On them and bread 't was oft my luck to dine,  
The grass my table-cloth, in open-air,  
On Sunium or Hymettus, like Diogenes,  
Of whom half my philosophy the progeny is.

161 Quoted by Wordsworth, *Greece*, 172. No source given, nor have I been able to trace it. The book was a favourite for prizes given to boys at British 'public' schools.

162 A point also considered explicitly by, for example, Dorr, Benjamin, 359.

163 *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, canto ii, 89. Some writers, e.g. Tweddell, 277, amended 'Mendeli' to the more familiar 'Pendeli', an example of the pull of the ancient language on the modern. For a more prosaic example, Biddle, 1, declares that the sod, the air, and the hills are still the same. Although, when comparing their own time with what the visitors knew or surmised about ancient times, 'Nature' appeared to have been constant, an observation built into the explanations offered by visitors, as discussed in Chapter 8; the landscape had been changed drastically in the classical period and before as discussed in *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>.

The local micro-climate in Athens had apparently remained much the same for hundreds of years, indeed it appeared to have been unchanged since ancient times, when its unusual characteristics had been celebrated by the authors of the classical era.<sup>164</sup> The rainfall measurements taken by Consul Fauvel in 1812 and 1813 appeared to confirm that the local seasons followed a precise, regular, and predictable pattern.<sup>165</sup> In 1913, when Athens was still largely free of air pollution and scientists had access to daily records kept for half a century, the apparent constancy could still be experienced. It was then reckoned that on only about forty days in the year was there no sun, on only about a dozen days was the sky completely overcast. Rainfall was light, at only about sixteen inches a year, but much of that fell in terrifying thunderstorms, marked by dramatic bolts of lightning, for which there was no adequate explanation, but many theories, including some that saw them as interventions by, or messages from, supernatural powers.<sup>166</sup> For most of the year, except in the early morning when there was some cloud that soon dispersed, the clarity of the air made the horizons of the mountains appear like sharp, almost architectural, lines.<sup>167</sup> To visitors from the west with knowledge of the visual arts of their own times, this was a landscape of sculpture rather than of painting, of stark lines that reproduced well in engravings as well of rapidly changing colours.<sup>168</sup> Questions about the extent to which the people were different were open to be disentangled and debated, but the climate, the weather, the air, the changing colours, the flora and fauna, the natural landscape, the seascape, the skyscape, the soundscape, even the smellscape and the tastescape, were evidently little changed.

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164 Discussed in *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>.

165 Holland, Henry, *Travels in the Ionian Islands, Albania, Thessaly, Macedonia, &c. During the Years 1812 and 1813* (London: Longman, 1815), 411.

166 The statistics were noted by Weller, Charles Heald, *Athens and its Monuments* (New York: Macmillan, 1913), 20.

167 A point made explicitly by, for example, D'Ideville, 200.

168 Line engraving in black ink on white paper monochrome, the main distance medium until the late nineteenth century will be discussed in Chapter 8. The 'colour window' that enabled distant viewers to experience something of the ancient classical experience before the arrival in the region of air pollution, and how it helps us to understand the strangeness of the classical era, and to keep at bay the omnipresent perils of presentism, is discussed and illustrated in my companion volume *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>.

The clean dry air had preserved the marble surfaces of the ancient buildings to an astonishing extent, with the carved edges as sharp and crisp as they had evidently been in ancient times, as was noticed by Stuart and Revett in the 1750s when they examined the soon-to-be demolished classical era Ionic temple on the Illysos.<sup>169</sup> As they wrote: 'It should be observed, that most of the ancient Structures in Athens, of which there are any Remains, were entirely built of an excellent white Marble, on which the Weather has very little Effect; whatever Part therefore of these Antiquities, has not been impaired by Violence, is by no means in that mouldering State of Decay, to which the dissolvent Quality of the Air, reduces the ordinary Buildings of common Stone: from which Cause it is, that, notwithstanding great Part of this Temple has long since been thrown down, and destroyed, whatever remains of it is still in good Preservation.'<sup>170</sup> The exactitude and resultant durability was noted by Charles Robert Cockerell, one of the few on-the-spot observers who understood that the effect on the viewer was among the primary considerations of those who had commissioned and built the classical Parthenon. Modern architects, he wrote in 1855, as one who had by then successfully practised as an architect responsible for designing and building monumental buildings in the neo-Hellenic style before the advent of electric power and heavy machinery, only very rarely employed a stone weighing more than two or three tons. By contrast, the ancient builders had frequently used marble blocks weighing five to one hundred tons, and at Athens they had placed them so precisely 'that a pin could hardly be introduced into the joints.'<sup>171</sup> In May 1814, when a party of the western

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169 As shown in Figure 2.13.

170 Stuart and Revett, *Antiquities of Athens*, ii, 2. 'perfection of masonry ... horizontal joints so close that after a lapse of 2000 years you cannot introduce the finest edge, or even follow them everywhere by the eye'. Woods, Joseph, F.A.S. F.L.G. F.G.S., and Corresponding Fellow of the Society of Georgofili at Florence, *Letters of an Architect, from France, Italy, and Greece* (London: John and Arthur Arch, 1828), ii, 241.

171 Letter from Cockerell to Hobhouse dated 17 May 1855, printed in Hobhouse, *Journey*, 1855 edition, ii, pp. 449–556, recalling their on-the spot explorations in 1809 before the Revolution. As with the Cyclopean architecture, parts of which the classical builders had apparently been careful to preserve, they conveyed to him ideas of the sublime 'by the association of superhuman power and by the promise of perennial duration.' Many others made the same observation over the following two centuries and later. For example, 'blocks ... so beautifully fitted together that at the distance of two thousand years you very often cannot find the joints, except where the marble is chipped'. Hughes, Thomas, Q.C., ('Vacuus Viator') Author of 'Tom Brown's

community in Athens, including Cockerell, examined pieces on the ground, including those thrown from the building by Elgin's agents and were 'lost in admiration' at the 'incredible precision' with which the columns of the Parthenon had been constructed, they concluded from their specialist knowledge, that 'the marble was first reduced to its proper shape with the chisel after which the two pieces were rubbed one upon the other, and sand and water thrown into the centre of friction' so that, even at ground level, the joins presented 'a mark no thicker than a thread.'<sup>172</sup> Even those who loathed what they called the 'idolatry' of the marble images displayed on the Parthenon admitted that 'many of the carvings appear as if they were but a few years old.'<sup>173</sup> William J. Hamilton, a geologist much interested in the properties of different types of stone, who saw the joins in October 1835, just two and a half years after the last units of the Ottoman army left, eight since the Acropolis had been subjected to months of bombardment by mortars and artillery, was also amazed to see the precision of the joins ('as highly finished as the most elaborately worked ornament or figure') even in places where they were out of sight. This degree of care, he suggested, was needed 'to ensure an equal pressure on all points of the stone, that the enormous weight above might not cause the edges to exfoliate; an accident to which ancient buildings were particularly exposed, in consequence of the stones not being bedded in cement.'<sup>174</sup>

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Schooldays', *Vacation Rambles* (London: Macmillan, 1895), 58. The implications of these observations for helping to understand why the ancient Athenian authorities decided to build the Parthenon and other monuments in the form that they did are discussed in *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>.

172 Hanson, John Oliver, 'Private Journal of a Voyage from Smyrna to Venice', edited by Anghelou, Alkis, *Annual of the British School at Athens*, 1 January 1971, vol. 66, 22. As another example, of the Parthenon, 'struck at the immense size of the blocks, and at the fine preservation of the marble, which appears to be nearly in the same state as when first hewn'. Of the Ionic columns of the Athena Polias, 'of so astonishing a delicacy, that it seems incredible marble could be so finely sculptured'. Laurent, Peter Edmund, *Recollections of a Classical Tour through Various Parts of Greece, Turkey, and Italy, made in the years 1818 and 1819* (London: Whitaker, second edition, 1822), i, 203 and 204.

173 Grellet, *Memoirs of the life and gospel labours of Stephen Grellet*, edited by Benjamin Seeborn, volume 2 (London: Bennett, 1861), 19. He was there in 1819. The renewal of this discourse among western Christians after the Revolution is discussed in Chapter 22.

174 Hamilton, William J., Secretary to the Geological Society, *Researches in Asia Minor, Pontus, and Armenia, with some account of their Antiquities and Geology* (London:

Hamilton had foreseen the danger of the whole remaining structure collapsing, as came within a week or two of happening following a series of earthquakes in the later nineteenth century.<sup>175</sup> His observation helps us to understand the question of why the building had been over-engineered by the designers and builders of the classical era.<sup>176</sup> Especially when put alongside the explanation offered by William Martin Leake, a British artillery officer whose expertise was in knocking buildings down: '[T]he total annihilation of massy buildings constructed of stone, is a work of great difficulty.'<sup>177</sup>

Although only a few traces of ancient paint were still visible, the surface of the marble itself was unchanged except in colour. As John Oliver Hanson, who visited Athens in March 1814, wrote in his journal: 'In our [British] climate, in an atmosphere overcharged with smoke and rain, stone of the purest white soon turns black or of a greenish tone. The serene sky and the brilliant sun of Greece merely communicate to the marble of Paros and Pentelicus a golden tint resembling that of ripe corn or the autumnal foliage.'<sup>178</sup>

One of the most conspicuous examples of a heavy stone that still remained in place was the lintel over the Propylaia, which was pictured by Edward Dodwell around 1805, as shown in Figure 4.11.

Cockerell and other visiting modern architects were astonished at the feats of the ancient quarrymen, architects, and engineers who had evidently devoted great efforts to finding the seams from which such large flawless blocks could be extracted, cut, transported, carved, and lifted into place. By the time of Pausanias's visit, when the classical-era buildings were still in much the same architectural state as when they had first been erected, the decoration and size still caused astonishment, but the reasons why the Propylaia had been so constructed had been forgotten even by the temple staff available to answer his questions.<sup>179</sup>

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Murray, 1842), i, 39.

175 As discussed in Chapter 22.

176 Discussed in *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>.

177 Leake, *Topography of Athens*, second edition, 12. Leake was among the topographers who were most learned in the ancient authors as well as in the contemporary situation in Greek lands.

178 *Ibid.*, 17. Hanson's remarks are likely have included the results of conversations with the foreign community in Athens that when he was there, that included Cockerell and about a dozen others.

179 Paus. 1.22.4 τὰ δὲ προπύλαια λίθου λευκοῦ τὴν ὀροφὴν ἔχει καὶ κόσμῳ καὶ μεγέθει τῶν λίθων μέχρι γε καὶ ἐμοῦ προεῖχε. The role of the staff, who were



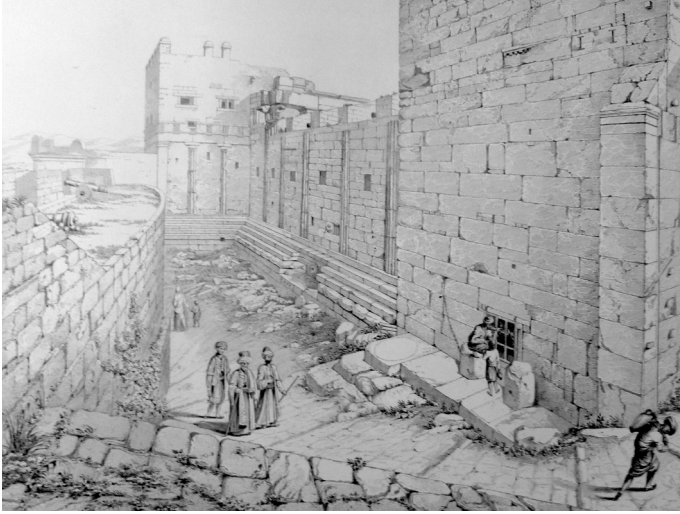


Figure 4.11. 'West front of the Great Gate of the Propylaea at Athens'. Lithograph from a drawing by Edward Dodwell made c.1805.<sup>180</sup>

The same clear and dry air that had preserved the marble also permitted extraordinarily long sightlines, to the extent that the columns of the Parthenon could be seen from long distances in several directions, although not from close up except from the west. At night, too, the sky over the Acropolis was normally unusually clear, and the ever-changing moon, the planets, and the rotating constellations of stars offered

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knowledgeable even about memorials that were no longer there, is mentioned in the immediately preceding passage. My suggestion for the possible reasons, based on the discursive environment of the classical era, is in *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>.

- 180 Dodwell, Edward, *Views and Descriptions of Cyclopean, or Pelasgic Remains, in Greece and Italy, with Constructions of a Later Period, Intended as a Supplement to his Classical and Topographical Tour through Greece during the Years 1801, 1805 and 1806* (London: Rodwell and Martin, 1834), Plate 70. 'The lintel over the middle gate is one of the largest masses of marble I have seen, being twenty-two feet and a half in length, four feet in thickness, and three feet three inches in breadth. It must accordingly weigh at least twenty-two tons.' Dodwell, *Classical Tour*, i, 319. Measurements of length are given in Dinsmoor, William B. and Dinsmoor, William B. Jr, *The Propylaea to the Athenian Akropolis* (Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1980 and 2004), *passim*. In Dodwell's time the lintel may already have cracked, as it was when it was first formally surveyed, but despite its having apparently received no maintenance or repairs for hundreds of years, it was still in place and performing adequately.

a mobile tapestry of ancient mythology.<sup>181</sup> On some nights, as a later visitor witnessed, it was possible, using a mirror, to see the moons of Jupiter with the naked eye, an experience thought until recently to be impossible anywhere in the world.<sup>182</sup> What they saw, the visitors from the west could be confident, was the same nightscape that ancient Hellenic astronomers and mathematicians had come to understand, to the extent that they were able to predict its changes, including eclipses, in proto-scientific terms.<sup>183</sup> The relevance of these eighteenth-century observations to answering the question of why the Parthenon and the other buildings on the Acropolis were designed and built in the form that they took is discussed later.<sup>184</sup>

To an extent that was at least as great as even visitors of the present day, the westerners felt, from the time of their first encounters, that they had been here before. To be physically present in Athens was to make actual an experience that they had been taught about, had read about, had internalized, and had taken into their imaginations and their memories from childhood. When Virginia Woolf wrote in 1932 'my own ghost met me, the girl of twenty-three with all her life to come', she was following a tradition that went back to the earliest days of the Encounter.<sup>185</sup> That sense of childhood re-emerging unbidden from the unconscious mind to the conscious body was caught by young Compton Mackenzie, in tears at glimpsing Sounion from a ship at the sea in 1915 during the First World War, who felt that 'all my youth was in my eyes.'<sup>186</sup> Or as Sir George Wheler remarked when he arrived in 1675: 'I may without Vanity say, I went to school in Athens.'<sup>187</sup>

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181 Noted, for example, by Rawlinson, George, *Selections from my Journal during a Residence in the Mediterranean* (London: privately printed, 1836), 80.

182 *Photograms of an Eastern Tour. ... By Σ. With original illustrations* (London: [Bungay printed], 1859), 143. The unidentified author, a socially well-connected visitor from Ireland, who had already been in Greece twenty years before, made his observation in Athens in January 1858. For other well-attested reports of naked-eye observations of the moons of Jupiter, including in Siberia, where the atmosphere was also clear, see Dutton, Denis, 'Naked-Eye Observations of Jupiter's Moons', in *Sky and Telescope*, December, 1976, 482–84. [http://www.denisdutton.com/jupiter\\_moons.htm](http://www.denisdutton.com/jupiter_moons.htm)

183 Discussed in Chapter 24.

184 In *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>.

185 Diary of Virginia Woolf, 21 April 1932 quoted by Connolly, *Parthenon Enigma*, 329.

186 Mackenzie, *Gallipoli Memories*, 400.

187 Wheler, *Journey*, 353.

For the visitors, every feature of the landscape had a familiar name. And each held a story, often a succession of stories, from mythic to historic ancient times, as Dodwell had observed. The stories that the visitors heard told by the mute landscape and ancient stones of Athens were all from ancient times. Only a few looked for the grove where Shakespeare had set *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, whose story he had adapted from the ancient author, Lucian of Samosata.<sup>188</sup>

## Providentialism and the Ancient Monuments of Athens

Until the later eighteenth century, the people who lived in Athens played almost no part in these research projects except to welcome and assist the visitors. Identifying themselves primarily as Orthodox Christians, they were largely indifferent to the ruins of ancient buildings that survived in Athens, and knew almost nothing about what they had been used for in ancient times.<sup>189</sup> There was, however, one puzzle that confronted those who took a long view. In most of the lands that bordered the eastern Mediterranean, the physical remains of Greco-Roman antiquity were plentiful. Ancient temples, some in ruins, some adapted to later purposes, were standing reminders of the civilizations of the former Roman Empire and also of the sharp disjuncture with those of its theocratic successors, Christian, Muslim and others. In mainland Greece, by contrast, in Corinth, Argos, Olympia, and Delphi, the heartlands of the ancient Hellenism that even the conquering Romans had regarded as part of their own artistic and literary culture, there was little to be seen. Although almost every village had something ancient above ground and workers in the fields sometimes uncovered and destroyed broken statues, the huge pan-Hellenic sites of Olympia, Delphi, and Epidauros that now enable modern visitors to imagine ancient life had to wait until the later nineteenth century for their buildings, statues, theatres, and stadia to be uncovered and, in many cases, partially rebuilt.

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<sup>188</sup> For example, de Moüy, Cte Charles de, Ambassadeur de France à Rome, *Lettres Athéniennes* (Paris: Plon, 1887), 285. 'Timons's Tower' appears in at least one of the maps prepared at the time of the Venetian-led invasion of 1687.

<sup>189</sup> To be discussed in Chapter 7.

In the landscape of Ottoman Greece, Athens was a conspicuous exception. Joseph Woods, the main purpose of whose visit in 1818 was to study the remains of ancient Greek architecture, was disappointed at how little was to be seen. As he wrote when he reached Athens after having found nothing in the Ionian Islands or in western Greece: 'At Patras they shew a single Corinthian capital of indifferent workmanship; and in the road thence to Corinth, there is nothing to be met with but one or two insignificant scraps of wall.'<sup>190</sup> Why had so many monuments survived in Athens when so little could be seen in the other cities which, the works of ancient authors showed, had once been equally rich in monuments? To some from the west contemplating the puzzle at a time when the Enlightenment project of developing a philosophical theory of history still looked feasible, the only explanation they could offer involved notions of Divine Providence. To J.B.S. Bartholdy, for example, a well-informed German proto-anthropologist whose aim was to follow up current theories by observation on the ground, Athens may have been watched over by a 'mysterious providence.' And anticipating thoughts and explanations that were to occur to the puzzled visitors in the post-Revolution years, the artist Hugh William 'Grecian' Williams, suggested his own artistic version of providentialism: 'The Temple of Minerva [an alternative name for the Parthenon] was spared as a beacon to the world, to direct it to the knowledge of purity of taste.'<sup>191</sup>

Did the unexplained survival of the monuments of Athens imply that the Christian God was changing his all-seeing mind? Was He morphing into a neo-Hellene as many of his Orthodox adherents did during the eighteenth century? In retrospect, the Revolution's own wish to return to the glories of the ancient past was often presented as predestined, implying that God had become a nationalist. To providentialists, such questions were to arise even more starkly just twenty years later when, to almost universal astonishment, the monuments of Athens turned out to have again escaped destruction.

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190 Woods, Joseph, *Letters of an Architect, from France, Italy, and Greece* (London: John and Arthur Arch, 1828), ii, 229. 'After we left Venice, the first place in Greece, where we found any remains of ancient buildings worth our notice, was at Corinth'. Stuart and Revett, *Antiquities of Athens*, iii, 41.

191 Williams, *Travels*, ii, 323. Examples of a resort to the same providentialism to explain the unexpected survival of the monuments after the Revolution are given in Chapter 16.

In Europe, in both the eastern and western Christian traditions, the notion that the hand of their god intervened in the human world to push it along in a particular direction had mostly been employed in narratives of the triumph of Christianity over the ways of thinking that the Christians lumped together as 'superstition' or 'paganism.' Any events that contradicted the overarching providentialist narrative, as developed by Augustine of Hippo, by his pupil and collaborator Orosius, and by many others, had had to be squeezed in, and their implications faced, while avoiding, although with incomplete success, the circularity implicit in the whole notion. Among almost all living parties who participated in the Greek Revolution, providentialism was not just a figure of speech or a matter only of theological interest: on the contrary, it was the proposition that, since events showed that the Christian god had willed the Ottoman conquest of Byzantium, Orthodox Christians had a duty to obey the sultan. This duty was among the foundations of the millet settlement, whose overthrow was amongst the aims of the Greek Revolutionaries, and why their cause was condemned by the Patriarchate even when the war was almost won.<sup>192</sup>

Already, by the late seventeenth century, Christian providentialism, with its need for explanations for the misery inflicted on men, women, and children as collective punishment, gave rise to discomfort, even among churchmen. To Sir George Wheler, for example, the survival of the monuments of Athens was less important than the fact that they had been ruined. Acknowledging that his providentialism was no longer universally accepted, Wheler attributed what he saw as the reduced state of the Athens in his day to 'Divine Providence, for our Sins'.<sup>193</sup>

In modern times, since the development and progress of evidence-led archaeology and a filling out of more reliable knowledge based on contemporary sources of what had occurred in the centuries since the end of antiquity, Athens no longer seems so unique, and explanations that do not depend on providentialism are available. The history of each site was different, as were the patterns of invasion, natural disaster, environmental change, poor governance, and other factors.

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<sup>192</sup> See examples in Appendix 4.

<sup>193</sup> Wheler, George, *A Journey into Greece, by George Wheler Esq; In Company of Dr Spon of Lyons* (London: W. Cademan, 1682), 345.

But it is established too that the survival of many of the monuments of Athens had resulted, more than those in most other localities, from specific political decisions, including, in the case of the Parthenon, its construction to a far greater degree of durability than was required to meet its then contemporary purpose.<sup>194</sup> Since the Ottoman conquest of Byzantium and the takeover of the Acropolis in the fifteenth century, those ancient buildings that had been adapted as churches or mosques, including the Parthenon, the Erechtheion, the Theseion, the Tower of the Winds, and the temple on the Illysos, had all benefited from the millet system that gave Ottoman protection to the buildings of the officially recognised religious communities.

The ancient buildings of Athens had survived official Byzantine imperial policies that had destroyed many other such buildings before being changed. In the early centuries of the Christian theocracy which can be said to have begun with the victory of co-emperor Constantine over an imperial rival at the battle of the Milvian Bridge in Rome in 312 CE, the Hellenic cities had been subjected to a slow, step-by-step, top-down, centrally imposed, 'imperial Christianization', as has been recovered from the archaeological record, notably in Corinth.<sup>195</sup>

In this long and, we may guess, contested process, the authorities of the city of Athens, which retained, in name at least, many of the institutions of the classical period, and whose prosperity depended upon the continuation of the famous philosophical schools founded by Plato, Aristotle, and others many hundreds of years before, appear to have stood out against the central government longer than most. The Parthenon and the other buildings were still standing in the fourth century CE. As has recently been noted by Jaqueline P. Sturm, many of the monuments of Athens, including especially the 'Theseion', for which the evidence is particularly full, but also the Parthenon, and the others still standing at that time, had benefitted from a change in imperial policy that permitted the buildings of their defeated opponents to be adapted for Christian use provided certain conditions were adhered to.

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<sup>194</sup> To be discussed in Chapter 24.

<sup>195</sup> Summarised by Maloney, Ashley E., 'Imperial Christianization in Corinth: 300–600 AD', A Senior Honors Thesis, Ohio State University, June 2010, <https://kb.osu.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/1811/45737/honors-thesis-final.pdf?sequence=1>

It was enough that ancient 'pagan' rites should no longer be celebrated.<sup>196</sup> This 'minimally invasive' policy of 'gentle transformation', to use Sturm's phrases, also required that only the most visible of the stories in stone presented on the buildings need be mutilated, usually by losing their heads.<sup>197</sup> This was accompanied by a newly devised doctrine, the *Interpretatio Christiana*, which gave theological cover for abandoning the absolute prohibition of visual images as 'idolatrous' that Paul of Tarsus, Augustine of Hippo, Tertullian of Carthage, and many other predecessors had appropriated from the ancient Jewish religion and its sacralized texts.

The change of Byzantine imperial policy saved the leaders in provincial cities such as Athens from having to incur the vast expenditure that knocking down and rebuilding would have involved. It also saved the imperial centre from having to deal with the opposition that they might have provoked had they tried to insist on and impose the older policy. In modern terms, the policy reversal turned the rhetoric of the buildings from active competitors in a continuing intellectual contest for the allegiance of minds into a dead and defeated piece of built heritage.

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196 Sturm, Jaqueline P., 'The Afterlife of the Hephaisteion, The *Interpretatio Christiana* of an Ancient Athenian Monument', in *Hesperia*, vol. 85, no. 4, October-December 2016, 795–825. Local attitudes are also discussed by Bazzechi, Elisa, 'Athenian Identity in Late Antiquity: An Investigation of the Urban Elite and their Connection with the Monumental Aspect of the City', in L. Bombardieri-A., D'Agostino-G., Guarducci-V., Orsi-S., Valentini (Hrsg.), *SOMA 2012, Identity and Connectivity. Proceedings of the 16th Symposium on Mediterranean Archaeology, Florence, Italy 1–3 March 2012, BAR International Series 2581* (Oxford, 2013), 467–74. Sturm quotes from *The Theodosian code and novels*; and, *The Sirmondian Constitutions / a translation with commentary, glossary, and bibliography by Clyde Pharr in collaboration with Theresa Sherrer Davidson and Mary Brown Pharr; with an introduction by C. Dickerman Williams* (Union NJ: Lawbook, 2001). For the Latin text see *Theodosiani libri XVI cum constitutionibus Sirmondianis et leges novellae ad Theodosianum pertinentes / consilio et auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Regiae Borussicae ediderunt Th. Mommsen et Paulus M. Meyer* (Berlin: Apud Weidmannos, 1905).

197 The mutilation of the central slab of the Parthenon frieze, and how an understanding of the aims and practices of Christian mutilation of images can contribute to recovering what had been presented before the mutilation is discussed in *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>.