

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^r 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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10. The Choices

The outbreak of the Greek Revolution caught most of the people of Athens by surprise. Or rather, the local leaders thought that they knew what was happening and were prepared. When, shortly before the Orthodox Easter festival of 1821, a band of men were reported to be encamped on the hills to the north, and the authorities called upon the people of Athens to man the town wall, they were responding to the precise situation against which Voivode Haseki had arranged for the wall to be hurriedly built nearly half a century before.¹

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- 1 The Greeks of Athens 'believed that a numerous gang of robbers had started up but that tranquility would soon be restored.' 'The Siege of the Acropolis of Athens in the Years 1821–1822. By An Eye-Witness', in *The London Magazine*, IV, January to April 1826, 193. Thanks to the careful work of Christian Gonsa, who has kindly shared his findings with me, the authorship of this article can now be confidently attributed to the Swiss philhellene Andreas Stähele, sometimes called Stähelin (1794–1864), as I had speculated in *That Greece Might Still Be Free*, 363. When Stähele arrived in Greece in early 1822, he was already one of the most highly educated, multilingual, and socially well connected of all the philhellenes of that time and many details can be corroborated. He acted as Secretary to the Austrian Consul, Georg Gropius, already mentioned in Chapters 3 and 4, the only consular official from the powers not to have left, and who played at active part right through the Revolution and beyond. Stähele's 1826 article was published in German in *Das Ausland* (Nr. 174, 176, 177: 23, 25 and 26 June 1829), and it now seems certain that Stähele was also the author of 'A journey from Athens to Missolonghi in the autumn of 1822', in *London Magazine*, vol. 3, May 1829, 481–495, where, again, many details, such as his correct naming of villages, can be corroborated. He moved to London after his time in Greece, met and corresponded with famous people, including Hobhouse, applied unsuccessfully to be professor of German at the newly established University College, London, and later pursued a long career in scholarship and journalism. Although, since his 1826 article was published a few years after the events described, it necessarily contains elements of hindsight, there is no reason to doubt its authenticity or veracity. The author describes his account as 'from the Journal of one who passed above a year in Greece, shortly after the beginning of the war; who had an adequate knowledge of the language to carry on a familiar intercourse with all classes, and was therefore enabled to collect information whenever it was wanted, from different quarters'. Stähele, 193. As an example that tends to confirm that he maintained a journal, the local names he gives of the numerous villages in Boeotia that he passed through,

With its gates and towers, Haseki's wall could keep out marauders or even an armed force for a time, but only if the majority of the population co-operated. The sixty lightly-armed soldiers, the gendarmerie of the garrison in the Acropolis, were not numerous enough defend the wall on their own, but when joined by local men and women, they could reasonably expect to hold out until help arrived or the marauders moved to softer targets elsewhere. People were needed to serve as lookouts and messengers, and, if an attack happened, to carry stores and weapons, and to be able to ensure that any breaches in the wall were quickly filled in with stones. If a state of war or internal revolt was officially declared by the Ottoman political and religious authorities, the young men of the local Muslim community, in effect military reservists, of whom there were about three hundred in Athens, could be given firearms if any were available—but at first that was not done.²

So decisive and complete was the eventual triumph of Greek nationalism, however, that within a few years of the arrival of the Revolution in Athens, it was already becoming difficult to imagine how the many other possible futures had appeared to those caught up in the crisis. The English churchman, Rev. George Waddington, for example, who visited Athens in 1824 and collected information about what had happened in 1821 and 1822, was already applying nationalist hindsight when, in his account published in 1825, he wrote of the decision of the Ottoman authorities to call on the town to help in its own defence: 'For this purpose, (shall I be believed?) they posted Greeks upon various parts of the walls, with orders to inform them, should the rebels approach; while themselves reposed in stupid security round the fires which they had lighted within the gates.'³ Soon it was being said that the 'Hellenes' had tricked the Turks into believing that the situation was a civil disturbance and that the threat from the gang of robbers on the hill could be dealt with in the normal way.⁴ In the event, sympathizers inside the town cooperated with the outsiders, breaches were opened in

which are now confirmed as accurate by Christian Gonsa, to whom I record my thanks, could not have been compiled from any map.

- 2 I use the figures given by Gordon *History*, i, 174. He describes the Albanians as 'good soldiers'.
- 3 Waddington, Rev. George, *A Visit to Greece in 1823 and 1824* (London: Murray, 1825), 47. His book on the history of Christianity is mentioned in Chapter 22.
- 4 'with artful dissimulation.' Staehelin, 'Eye-witness of 1821', 194.

the wall, men were killed on both sides, the gates were opened, and the Revolutionaries took over the town. How far those who fired the first lethal shots knew they were starting a revolution, or had even planned to do so as members of the secret society, the Philiki Etairia, which had organised the first stages of the revolt from Russia, is not known.

In the autumn of 1817, passing through Athens, the socially well-connected Thomas Jolliffe met a local family of whom he wrote: 'Our host at Athens was a personage of great worth and integrity, enthusiastically attached to the ancient institutions of his country, and professing a most profound contempt for the degenerate follies of her present inhabitants. His house, which was situated near the foot of the Areopagus, commanded a most delightful view of the magnificent scenery that surrounds the plain, including the outlets which lead to Thebes and Marathon. He has three sons, who are named Themistocles, Pericles, and Alcibiades. On the night of our arrival, his family received an addition by the birth of a daughter, since called Aspasia.' Among the songs that were sung by the teenage boys was the composition of Rhigas, which included the lines: 'Sons of Greece, arise! to arms! That the blood of our oppressors may flow in torrents beneath our feet.'⁵ It seems certain that the Revolutionaries knew enough about Ottoman laws and customs to appreciate that by killing Ottoman soldiers, representatives of the Ottoman state, they were forcing whole communities to choose whether to join actively or to face Ottoman justice. Since, in Athens, it was hard to regard the Orthodox community as oppressed, the decision to commit themselves and their families to a future of unknowable horror was, in effect taken for them by men committed to violence

In Athens there had been little visible build-up of pre-Revolutionary unrest, nor signs that preparations were being made to meet a crisis. The British architect John Lewis Wolfe, who visited Athens several times in 1820 and 1821, including during a week in March 1821, went about

5 Jolliffe, T. R., *Letters from Palestine: descriptive of a tour through Gallilee and Judaea, with some account of the Dead Sea, and of the present state of Jerusalem* (London: Black, third edition, 1821), i, 251. The first edition, dated 1819, omits the name of the author and the passage about his visit to Athens. The violent philhellenism of Rhigas is discussed elsewhere. It was probably the same family that Joseph Woods, who was in Athens a few months later, heard singing songs that 'lamented the lost glory of the nation and called upon their countrymen to remember and imitate the deeds of their ancestors.' Woods, ii, 285.

his sketching and measuring on the Acropolis without noticing, or at least not noting in writing, any pre-tremors of the convulsion that would occur only a week later.⁶ The British army officer, Charles Napier, who was in Athens from 7 to 11 March 1821, visited all the usual sites, spent time in the Turkish baths, and cast his military eye over the harbours, apparently without sensing that anything was abnormal.⁷ A visitor in 1818 tells of a pleasing party at the house of a consul in which the songs the Greeks sang were of the lost glory of the nation and the need to imitate their ancient ancestors, but the visitor also met a local poet who wrote Greek verses in praise of the Pasha of Negropont (modern Chalcis) in whose jurisdiction Athens lay.⁸ The Orthodox people of Athens, except for a number who were members of the Philiki Etairia, were unlikely to have fully appreciated that their town stood exactly on the fault line between various geo-political forces—religious and national, ‘Europe’ and ‘the East’, ancient Hellas and modern Greece—that had been moving towards one another for decades and were now about to collide.⁹

At the time of writing, a few physical traces of the fighting during the Revolution can still be seen on the Acropolis. For example, the broken remains of a small metal cannon, and of a few metal and marble balls, lie on the summit near the east end of the Parthenon, along with what may be the remains of a Second World War concrete pillbox, as shown in Figure 10.1.

6 Sketchbooks of John Lewis Wolfe, especially SKB/376/3 and SKB /376/5 RIBA.

7 Napier notebook, BL. As another example: ‘I visited Pentelicon, shot over Hymettus, and almost lived in the Parthenon—enjoyed the drawings of Lusieri—the museum of M. Fauvel, and the hospitality of Logotheti — read Pausanias, and amused myself by sketching, and thus passed some of the most grateful days of my life.’ Henniker, Sir Frederick, Bart., *Notes during a Visit to Egypt, Nubia, The Oasis, Mount Sinai, and Jerusalem* (London: Murray, 1823), 322. His visit was in 1820.

8 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, 285 and 283.

9 Alexandros Soutsos, a volunteer from the Ionian Islands, and author of one of the earliest histories, believed correctly that members of the Philomuse Society were also members of the conspiracy as ‘invisible motors’. Soutsos, Alexandros, *Histoire de la révolution grecque, par Alexandre Soutzo, témoin oculaire d’une grande partie des faits qu’il expose* (Paris: Didot, 1829), 13. In his list of the principal places where the Philiki Etairia conspiracy had branches at page 22, however, Athens was not mentioned.



Figure 10.1. Broken cannon with metal and marble cannon balls found on the Acropolis.¹⁰

Since the conflict in and around Athens was fought with old as well as with newly imported weapons, and the Acropolis had been bombarded by a western army in 1687 using much the same range of military technology, it is hard to know when these weapons were first made and by which army they were first used. But, except for the invention of howitzers that could lob more accurately than mortars, and of techniques for making shells red-hot before they were fired, technologies that had been developed by the Ottoman forces and adopted by European armies, the weaponry had not much altered in the meantime.¹¹ Metal, whether the lead used for making musket bullets or the iron used in the bombs and shells, was always in short supply and worth collecting for recycling into objects designed for other purposes.

Since the cannon shown in Figure 10.1 still has a metal ball lodged in its barrel, it may have exploded from overuse and overheating, or for lack of a gun carriage to absorb the ricochet, a constant hazard. Given

¹⁰ Author's photograph, 2018. Other marble balls, some of much larger size, some broken, can be glimpsed through the wires in the netted pens of assorted marble fragments near the Acropolis entrance.

¹¹ For the capabilities of Ottoman artillery, in addition to the numerous remarks in contemporary accounts and in standard military manuals, I have drawn on modern essays by William E. Johnson and others available at: <http://magweb.n1uro.com/sample/sdra/sdr12gsi.htm>

how few cannons the Greeks in the Acropolis had at their disposal when they took control in 1822, it may be the very weapon that, according to the manuscript account of a Greek fighter not yet published, during the later siege of 1826/27, caused Ioannes Makriyannis, one of the Greek leaders, to be wounded in the head 'from stones thrown by the explosion of a cannon.'¹² Two round balls made from Pentelic marble, the material from which the Parthenon and other monuments were constructed, were sent to London later in the Revolution to encourage the philhellenic effort.¹³ Made by the chained Muslim prisoners whom the Greek Revolutionaries employed in gathering antiquities, they are likely to have been cut from fractured pieces lying on the Acropolis.¹⁴

Broken metal cannon balls and shells, then known as 'bombs', lay scattered on the summit for much of the first half of the nineteenth century.¹⁵ Visitors also saw larger marble balls designed for mortars of large calibre known as bombards, as well as broken grenades and lead bullets.¹⁶ In May 1840, Aubrey de Vere noted that: 'All around lay

12 Manuscript account by a Greek fighter, not yet identified, dated 7 October 1826. The presence of the document in the exhibition is noted in Makriyannis, Georgopoulou, *Ioannis Makriyannis, Vital Expressions*, English-language version of the catalogue of an exhibition held at the Gennadius Library, Athens, 2018, edited by Maria Georgopoulou and others (Athens: Kapon, 2018), 18. The quotation is transcribed from the label.

13 Blaquiere, Edward, *Narrative of a Second Visit to Greece, Including Facts Connected with The Last Days of Lord Byron, Extracts from Correspondence, Official Documents, &c.* (London: Geo. B. Whittaker, 1825), 95.

14 The fact that the prisoners were 'ironed' was noted by Black, 166.

15 Still noticed, for example, at the time of the visit of Benjamin Dorr in April 1854. Dorr, Benjamin, *Notes of Travel in Egypt, the Holy Land, Turkey, and Greece* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1856), 137.

16 Noted by, for example, Baird, Henry M., *Modern Greece: A Narrative of a Residence and Travels in that Country* (New York: Harper, 1856), 33, who says they were made from fallen columns of the Parthenon and Propylaea. Emerson, *Greece in 1825*, i, 282, remarked that 'Numbers of the fallen but lately perfect columns have been broken up, as a substitute for balls to supply the cannon of the fortress.' The cannon balls were also noticed as having been made 'from the elegant white marble of the Parthenon' by Wilson, Rev. S.S., Member of the Literary Society of Athens, *A Narrative of the Greek Mission or, Sixteen years in Malta and Greece; including Tours in the Peloponnesus, in the Aegean and Ionian Isles; with remarks on the religious opinions, moral state, social habits, politics, language, history, and lazarettos of Malta and Greece* (London: John Snow, 1839), 426. 'Cannonballs, bombs, and grenades' Predl, F.M.X.A. von, *Erinnerungen aus Griechenland in den Jahren 1832, 1833, 1834, und 1835* (Würzburg: Hellmuth, 1836, and another edition, 1841), translated, 78. 'delle palle e delle mitraglie' De'Virgilii, P., *Lettere Sull'Oriente Dirette da P. De' Virgilii A. F. Lattari (Estratte dal Poliorama Pittresco e dal Progresso)* (Naples: Reiggiobba, 1846), 50. For the use of larger shells, relevant to the questions surrounding the lack of damage to the monuments discussed in Chapter 13, 'a mixture of soil, stones, bricks, fragments

triglyphs and metopes, trunks of centaurs, heads of horses, manes of lions, and among them the workers of the ruin — flattened cannon-balls, and splinters of Turkish shells.¹⁷ Like others he assumed that the human remains that were coming to light in the clearances of the summit at the time of his visit were those of the Greek defenders and that the bombs were those fired by Turkish attackers.¹⁸

At the time of writing, an iron cover of indeterminate date was to be seen lying among the fragments of marble laid out alongside the Parthenon, as shown in Figure 10.2. The cover, which dates from before a time when fresh water could be pumped up to the summit by steam or electrical power, is a reminder of what, for millennia, was the single most important fact about the Acropolis as a military fortress: the limitations on the extent to which its defenders could collect and store drinkable water.



Figure 10.2. Iron cover on the Acropolis summit.¹⁹

Compared with the Acropolis of Corinth, with its gushing fresh-water springs, which was visible on the horizon to a lookout standing on

of earthenware, cement, and sculptured marble, among which are interspersed human bones, and shot and shells of enormous size', Garston, Edgar, *Greece Revisited and Sketches in Lower Egypt in 1840, with Thirty-Six Hours of a Campaign in Greece in 1825* (London: Saunders and Ottley, 1842), i, 128. According to Cusani, Francesco, *La Dalmazia Le Isole Jonie e La Grecia (Visitate nel 1840)* (Milan: Pirota, 1846 and 1847), ii, 260, the summit was covered 'di ossa, di scheggie, di bombe, di pezzi di marmo d'ogni grandezza'.

17 De Vere, *Picturesque Sketches*, i, 77. The date of his visit is noted in his *Search after Proserpine* vi. 'Recorded also by Morot, Jean-Baptiste, *Journal De Voyage: Paris a Jérusalem, 1839 Et 1840* (Paris: J. Claye, second edition 1873), 45: 'Le sommet de l'Acropole est jonché de boulets'.

18 Discussed further in Chapter 12.

19 Author's photograph, October 2014.

the top of the Parthenon, the Acropolis of Athens was dependent on whatever water it could bring up from the town and store in cisterns or jars.²⁰ The water that bubbles up on the Acropolis summit at some seasons of the year is so permeated with lime and other salts from having flowed through the Acropolis rock that it cannot be tolerated by humans or animals.²¹ In an emergency, when mixed with fresher water, it can postpone death, although only by causing great suffering.²²

When the town fell to the Revolutionaries, most of the Muslims took refuge in the Acropolis, taking hostages and of their most useful moveable goods with them, to await help from outside, as the contingency plan implied by the design of the town wall dictated.²³ And, as had been normal since time immemorial, as in the Persian invasion in 480 BCE, when it was reported that an Ottoman force led by Omer Vryonis was on its way from the north, the Orthodox population, who were now regarded as Revolutionaries whatever they may have individually thought about the wisdom of revolt, left Athens for the greater security of the island of Salamis, enabling Omer to retake the town, kill the few Greeks who had remained—mostly old men—destroy houses and churches, and restock the Acropolis with food and water. He also sent his troops into the country to try to terrorize the inhabitants into subjection by conspicuous acts of cruelty. Some of the hostages from amongst the leaders of the Orthodox in Athens, a few of whom had volunteered themselves out of a sense that it was their duty if that could avert a catastrophe, were put to death.

By the autumn of 1821, with the Ottoman army having come and gone, taking with it members of the former military garrison, and the

20 A vignette showing the view from the Parthenon towards the Acropolis of Corinth, at the time of the Revolution sketched by the author, is in Clarke, *Travels, part the second, section the second*, (1814), 569.

21 Geologically the Acropolis is composed of layers of limestone resting on harder and less permeable schist, with the result that rain water falling on the summit percolates through the sandstone only to be stopped by the harder layer below and to bubble back up. Discussed by Hurwit, Jeffrey M., *The Acropolis in the Age of Pericles* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004), 9.

22 This natural phenomenon was presented on the west pediment of the classical Parthenon in mythological form, as Poseidon, the sea god, striking the rock with his trident and bringing forth sea water, as will be discussed in the companion volume *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>

23 According to French archives, five hundred of the eight hundred Muslims besieged in the Acropolis were ethnic Albanians. Noted by Ilicak, 'Revolutionary Athens', first page.

townspeople having returned, the two communities who had shared in the government and in the social life of the Athens, had become physically divided: the Muslims immured in the Acropolis, the Revolutionary Greeks again in control in the town. Anyone who attempted to cross the line was liable to be summarily killed, as some were.

At first the Greek insurgents used artillery and mortars against the Acropolis, mounting their guns on the Pnyx, but they did not make much difference. Soon, however, philhellene advisers, some of whom had brought modern artillery with them as part of their contribution to the cause, recommended that the Greeks should rely instead on the effects of starvation and thirst forcing a capitulation, as indeed happened. The Greeks knew too that bombardment put at risk the Parthenon and other ancient monuments that had already become symbolic of the nationalist struggle, and the French artilleryman Colonel Voutier, who was acting as military adviser, was specifically instructed to try to avoid damaging them.²⁴ For a time, thirty mortar bombs were lobbed into the Acropolis every day, including one timed to coincide with Muslim evening prayers.²⁵

The number of people immured in the Acropolis when the siege began was reckoned at the time to be one thousand six hundred and sixty two.²⁶ They consisted of some men, of whom only one hundred and eighty were fighters or capable of becoming fighters, the rest being old men, women, and children. The besieged had food and animals, but when the Greeks seized control of the enclosed area of the slopes known as the Serpenji described in Chapter 2, they had no drinking water other than what had been stored on the summit. In normal years, the winter

24 Voutier, 1823 edition, 230, 239; Raybaud, i, 80. Every half hour, thirty a day. Gordon, i, 408.

25 Jarvis, George, *His journal and related documents, Edited with Introduction, sequel and notes by Georgios Georgiades Arnakes, Americans in the Greek Revolution* (Thessaloniki: Institute of Balkan Studies, 1965), 33. Another account: 'I had taken a part in an unsuccessful assault on the fortress. I had watched with anxiety a bombardment which threatened to destroy the beautiful monuments of the place'. Staehelin, 'Eyewitness of 1822', 'A journey from Athens to Missolonghi in the autumn of 1822', *London Magazine*, vol. 3, May 1829, 483.

26 Gordon, *History*, i, 276. Jurien, who had access to records made by the French consuls and navy gave a figure of eleven hundred and fifty that looks like a rounding. Jurien de La Gravière, le vice-amiral, *La station du Levant* (Paris: Plon, 1876), i, 213. Jurien had access to records made by the French consuls and navy. Other contemporary documents are published in Fauvel, *Clairmont*.

would have brought the seasonable rains and an opportunity to catch it, and every day both sides in the now-polarized conflict looked anxiously at the sky.²⁷ According to one account, before the first assault on the Acropolis by the Greeks on 29 April 1821, the archbishop of Athens, in leading prayers for their success, claimed to see the sign of the cross in the clouds.²⁸ He was recalling the story of Constantine's vision at the battle of Milvian Bridge, one of the foundation myths of all the Christian churches. And indeed, for those who took portents seriously, during the winter of 1821/22 the Christian God did seem to be favouring the insurgent. Weeks passed and although there were a few showers in the town, not a single drop fell on the Acropolis. It was said that, in their desperation, the besieged Muslims hung out cloths at night in hopes of catching the morning dews. Some licked the marble.

At last in June 1822, when the summer heat had returned and the besieged were at the final stages of distress, a surrender agreement was made, negotiated by the foreign consuls. Under its terms, the Muslims would surrender the Acropolis as it stood, keeping half of their moveable possessions, with individuals offered the choice of either staying on in Athens or being taken at the expense of the provisional Greek Government to Asia.²⁹ It was a formal agreement to implement what would now be regarded as ethnic cleansing and seizure of property.

The number of persons who came out of the Acropolis under the terms of the agreement was put at one thousand one hundred and fifty, most of whom were severely ill, and sixty of whom died within a few days.³⁰ The bodies of their five hundred and twelve co-religionists who had died in the siege were left behind.³¹

27 The micro-climate of Athens at this time, including the normal patterns of rainfall, is described in Chapter 24.

28 Staehelin, 'Eye-witness of 1826', 202.

29 The text in Greek and English translation, but without the names of the signatories in Waddington, 235 and 62. As he wrote: 'having, in my possession, the names of the Archbishop, of the two Commissioners of the central government, of the ten Ephori, and the eleven Capitani, who signed this Convention, I shall not publish them. Because I am not aware, to which of them, or whether to any of them individually, belongs the guilt of its violation; and I should be sorry that any innocent person should be involved in the infamy which must ever attend on all who were concerned in this execrable transaction'. The names are printed in the version given by Staehelin, 'Eyewitness of 1821'.

30 Gordon, *History*, i, 411.

31 The uncovering of the dead in the post-independence clearance of the site is discussed in Chapter 15.

What happened next is recorded in a number of letters from Gropius, mostly only known from manuscript copies at Kew. In a letter of 3 July 1822 to Fauvel, the consul of France who was temporarily away from Athens, he alludes to the critical situation of the Turkish families that they have 'saved'. He begs Consul Fauvel, who was then at Syra, an island that had escaped the Revolution, to try to arrange for a French warship to come and take the necessary measures to ensure that their status as consuls was respected and 'save us from the fury of the people'.³² In a letter dated 25 July 1822, which was circulated amongst the ambassadors, Gropius gave a compressed report on what had happened next: 'I am very sorry to inform your lordship that the Capitulation on the faith of which the Turkish garrison in the Acropolis of Athens had surrendered has been violated in the most barbarous and disgraceful manner. For some days after the Capitulation (which was signed in the House of the Austrian Consul, under the guarantee of that gentleman and of M Fauvel, the French Consul) the Greeks treated their prisoners with indulgence and humanity. But on the eleventh ultimo [July] a report having reached Athens that a corps of fifteen thousand Turks was marching against their city from Negropont the Greeks came to the atrocious resolution of butchering their captives without distinction of age or sex. Eight hundred of these unhappy wretches were accordingly put to death. The remainder took refuge in the Houses of the foreign consuls. The Greeks were on the point of forcing them when fortunately two French corvettes arrived, the commanders of which Messrs. Reverseau and Argous (who appears to have acted with the most heroic resolution and to have exposed their Crews to the utmost peril) succeeded in saving the remainder of the Turks, amounting to about four hundred, and in embarking them on board their vessels. The French ships have since landed them safely at Smyrna.'³³ The number of survivors landed in Smyrna was reported as exactly three hundred, mostly women and children.³⁴

32 Fauvel, *Clairmont*, 63. The editor of Clairmont's uncompleted work, an archaeologist, transcribes 'fouilles Turques' [Turkish excavations] but I suggest that the author is more likely to have written 'familles Turques' [Turkish families].

33 Part of the fuller letter in Kew FO 78/109.

34 Noted by Ilicak, 'Revolutionary Athens', 4, from Ottoman archives.

Most of the other survivors of the siege left later, with the result that, with the exception of a few high-status individuals with a significant exchange value, and an unknown number who were enslaved, the Muslim community of Athens ceased to exist. According to Andreas Stähelin, the Swiss philhellene who was then living as a member of the consul's household, Gropius ransomed a number of individuals, some of whom Stähelin conversed with and heard singing together in lamentation. They included 'several Turkish ladies of distinction, as the wife of Hassan Aga and her daughter and two sisters of Mehmet Aga, the wife of the waiwode, with two Circassian slaves, the wife of the disdar, or the Turkish governor of the castle, and the cadi and his wife. Born at Athens, they all spoke Greek as well as Turkish, and some knew the Arabic language.'³⁵ They knew that family members had been put to death and wondered about the fate of the children who had been enslaved. According to Stähelin's chilling phrase, most 'behaved with that dignity which becomes deep and silent grief'. Among the women was the widow of the young bey (deputy) of the elderly voivode who had received Ambassador Strangford in January 1821 with elaborate courtesies, described at that time as 'just married to the daughter of the Vayvode of Athens.'³⁶

As far as is I have been able to ascertain, Stähelin is the only author to have given even scraps of information about the women who lived on the Ottoman Acropolis, veiled and segregated, in some respects privileged but not in practice much more free than their slaves. What happened to them after they were evacuated from Athens is not known, nor is there any record of whether it was the Ottoman state, or Gropius with Austrian funds or credit who put up the ransom money. What we do know is that, four years later, the British Ambassador redeemed another group of survivors of high exchange value, including at least one woman and two children, as part of a plan to persuade the Ottoman commander not to destroy the Parthenon.³⁷ A British naval captain, noted for the thoroughness of his observations, in 1823 visited the territory from where Circassian slave women were obtained. Some were captured

³⁵ Stähelin, 208.

³⁶ Walsh, i, 120.

³⁷ Discussed in Chapter 17.

by the Cossacks in the wars with the Russians who treated them with contempt. Girls who were thought beautiful were, however, sold by their parents to the Turks 'and other rigid Mahometans' who paid high prices, and treated them with greater kindness in their seraglios than did local families.³⁸

Roughly a third of the Muslim population of Athens had been killed, another third had died from deprivation, and the final third were consigned to the charity of co-religionists across the sea whose language they did not share and who were already overwhelmed with refugees. In October 1914, at another moment when geopolitical plates were again clashing, a donor gave the Epigraphic and Numismatic Museum in Athens a cache of forty-seven Ottoman coins. Dated to the reign of Sultan Mahmoud II (1807–1839) and in value equivalent to the price of about two days' food, they had been found hidden near the entrance of the Acropolis. The coins may have belonged to a family who had hoped to retrieve them later but never returned.³⁹

Whether the actions of the Greek Revolutionaries and their opponents would now be regarded as genocide under the United Nations legal definition can be debated, and if the killings and expulsions were to be officially renamed, that decision would affect both the historical presentation of the Revolution and the politics of today, including how the anniversary was commemorated in 2021. Most observers from western Europe who, at the time, attempted to make sense of the violence, saw it through the lens of their experience of the international wars that had occurred in Europe between 1793 and 1815, with their elaborate codes for truces, parleys, surrenders, treatment of prisoners, protections for civilians, and discourses of 'natural rights', and they saw the Greek Revolution as an aberration from those norms. Those who were most sympathetic to the Greek Revolutionaries, and to the philhellenic, national continuity, mythic narrative imported from 'Europe', discovered that the theories suggested by the philosophers of history could not explain what was happening before their eyes all over

38 Jones, George Mathew, Captain, R.N., *Travels in Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia, and Turkey; and on the coasts of the sea of Azof and of the Black Sea; with a review of the trade in those seas, and of the systems adopted to man the fleets of the different powers of Europe, compared with that of England* (London: Murray 1827), ii, 165–74.

39 Summarised from the label explaining the coins when they were exhibited at the Gennadius Library, Athens, in 2015.

Greece. The learned Swiss Andreas Stähelin, for example, who tried to relate the events he witnessed to geo-determinism, found himself drawn into contradictions. Deeply educated in the ancient classical Athenian authors, he knew that they themselves claimed that the clear air of Attica, the pleasant climate, the healthy diet, and the outdoor life, had made them sharp-witted, poetic, artistic, and brave in war.⁴⁰ But in the centuries before the Greek Revolution, the same environment had supposedly made the once-vigorous and warlike Turks of Athens lethargic, lazy, and cowardly.⁴¹ It was left to the Prussian general Baron von Valentini, the author of a professional military manual, to point out the similarities with ancient practice.⁴² Thucydides recounts, without comment, that the Athenians killed the men of military age and enslaved the women and children of the island of Melos in 416 BCE when, after a siege, the Melians surrendered on terms, and that the Athenians then resettled the island with their own colonists.⁴³

What occurred was, in modern terms a case of an outbreak of violence that, once started, created its own momentum. We hear, for example, that it was survivors from places where revolts had been put down forcibly by the counter-Revolutionary Ottoman forces who regarded the conflict as a religious war of mutual extermination, and who were most insistent that none of the Athenian Muslims should be left alive.⁴⁴ By all the directly participating parties, the violence was regarded and treated as an existential struggle, but also an episode in a divinely guided destiny.

As the reports poured in from all over the eastern Mediterranean region of the killings, gratuitous tortures, and enslavements of men,

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

41 'The conduct of the Turks evidently betrayed pusillanimity and cowardice. But the Turks of Athens had a long time ago ceased to be warlike; the mildness of the climate, and a life spent in luxury and pleasure, without exertion or labour, had subdued and broken the original vigour of their character; they fed upon the produce of a country, in the conquest of which their blood had not been spilt. Women, and good fare, were all they cared about'. Stähelin, 'Eyewitness of 1826', 195.

42 Valentini, *Traité sur la guerre contre les Turcs. Traduit de l'Allemand du Lieutenant-Général Prussien Baron de Valentini par L. Blesson* (Berlin: Finke [and named agents in Paris, London, St Petersburg, Warsaw, Leipzig, and Brussels], 1830), 205. Valentini is not being ironic in speaking of the revolutionaries as 'the Hellenes of our days'.

43 Thuc. 5.116.

44 Gordon, *History*, i, 414, referring to refugees from Chios and Aivalik.

women, and children, it is hard not to disagree with Ambassador Strangford's comment that, for those caught up in the swirl of events, it was less a matter of choice than of situation whether they became the perpetrators or the victims.⁴⁵ However, although from a modern perspective the events may appear as a breakdown of order, there are traces of conventions dating back to the Crusades and counter-Crusades that continued into the early modern period. It is striking, for example, and at first sight puzzling, that in 1688, when the Ottoman forces in the Acropolis agreed to surrender on terms after a prolonged bombardment by the western army led by the Venetian general Morosini, one of the four articles declared that if it turned out later that the defendants still had ammunition, water, and provisions, that is, an ability to continue to resist, the agreement was null and void and those who surrendered lost all rights and put themselves entirely at the mercy of the besiegers.⁴⁶ The leaders of all parties, whether perpetrators or victims, categories that could rapidly be reversed, were prisoners of sets of ideas, mostly abstract, some theistic or metaphysical, of which some were recent imports and others inventions of many hundreds of years before. All concerned were caught up in a situation that at one level was a Darwinian struggle for physical survival, but at another was driven by notions of saving a community, its identity, and its institutions, outside which they had no future as individuals.⁴⁷

Because the contemporary accounts of what happened are so plentiful and detailed, we can recover some knowledge of how individuals who found themselves caught up in the crisis made the choices that determined whether they and others lived or died. A

45 'They are both, and perhaps equally as circumstances present the occasion the authors or its victims.' Strangford to Foreign Secretary 5 August 1821. Kew FO 78/97 44.

46 'IV. That in case there shall be at present found any want of Water, or any scarcity of Ammunition or Provisions, then these Articles are to be void and of no effect, and that the Defendants shall run the risc of being compell'd to surrender at Discretion'. *A Journal of the Venetian campagne, A.D. 1687, under the conduct of the Capt. General Morosini, General Coningsmark, Providitor Gen. Cornaro, General Venieri, &c. Translated from the Italian original, sent from Venice, and printed by order of the most Serene Republic. Licensed, Decemb. 16. 1687, R. L'Estrange* (London: Printed by H.C. and sold by R. Taylor, near Stationers-Hall 1688), 40.

47 For the priests of the Orthodox Church giving absolution to those who had taken part in the killings, see Chapter 11. For stories that for turned the events into a chivalric nationalist romance, see Chapter 18.

memoir written by Angelos Sotirianos Gerondas, a member of one of the prominent Athenian families who governed the internal affairs of the town, described the moment of crisis as he remembered it. The Muslim population of Athens, seeing that an armed rebellion was afoot, and that they had weapons and the Orthodox majority had not, were only restrained from killing them by the *cadi* who urged them to obey the law and await the formal *fatwa*. Gerondas, along with other local leaders offered their guarantee that the Muslims would not be attacked, and they were imprisoned in the Acropolis as hostages. When in the summer the Revolutionaries took over the town, some of the hostages were put to death, and when the Ottoman army of Omar Vryoni recaptured the town, the others were put on trial. The *cadi* pleaded that they were personally innocent and some, including Gerondas, escaped, but there could be no return to the *status quo ante*.⁴⁸

As another local example, Pietro Ravelaki, a native of Athens who had been employed by the British consulate, and who had acted as a guide for visitors, personified the change in identity.⁴⁹ One of a growing number in pre-Revolution times who had adopted the attitudes to antiquity and its remains of the local European community, he was among the first local scholars to make a contribution to the recovery of the topography of ancient Hellas.⁵⁰ Before the Revolution, he was also among those many who were affronted by Elgin's removals from the Acropolis, especially the loss of the Caryatid. As was reported by Rev. Robert Walsh, one of the entourage of Lord Strangford who was welcomed in Athens in January 1821 on his way to take up his position as British Ambassador in Constantinople: 'even my mild companion could not contain the bitterness of his gall.'⁵¹ Walsh was surprised to be told by Pietro Ravelaki, who acted as his guide, that revolution was imminent. The conversation, he noted, took place when they visited the ancient cemetery of the Cerameikos, where Pericles had delivered the 431 BCE

48 Summarised from the translation into English given by Sicilianos, Demetrios, *Old and New Athens* (London: Putnam, 1960), 156–57. Gerondas's memoir is summarised by Dimaras, 277.

49 He is mentioned in this role in the manuscript journal of Thomas Burgon.

50 He is said to have discovered the battlefield of the Second Archidamian War. 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. Con varie osservazioni delle antichità greche* (Padua: 1826), 66.

51 Walsh *Residence*, i, 124.

funeral oration over the dead of the previous year's wars, the occasion for one of the most celebrated of the Thucydidean speeches.⁵² When the Revolution arrived a few weeks later, Ravelaki joined the insurgents but was struck by a musket ball when trying to climb the Acropolis walls and was fatally injured from his fall. As he lay dying on the island of Zea (ancient Ceos), to which he had been evacuated, he asked to change his name to Miltiades, the victor at Marathon.⁵³

Drawn by the symbolic power of the Parthenon and the Acropolis, men from elsewhere joined in the siege, including contingents from Aegina, Zea, and Cephalonia, one of the British protectorate of the Ionian Islands. Athens also attracted a number of philhellenes, some with experience of siege warfare, and some who were able to bring guns and artillery. As one of them remarked, the foreign volunteers 'burned to contribute to the conquest of the Parthenon'.⁵⁴ A French cartoon of the time catches the motley nature of the men from many western European countries who, for a variety of individual as well as political and economic motives, decided to go to Greece to fight for the Revolution.

An inscription formerly to be seen on the wall of the Theseion, shown as Figure 10.4, appears to mark the grave of Marius Wohlgemuth of Strasburg, who took part, with the traditional western symbols of an artilleryman.⁵⁵

52 He 'made an oration over his fallen countrymen as if it was an event of yesterday, at which he himself had been present. As we walked over the plain afterwards, he surprised me by sentiments, which I thought it impossible he could entertain. He said that the time was near at hand when his countrymen would no longer crouch under the dominion of the Turks, no more than his ancestors under that of the Persians, and their object was to establish a free constitution, similar to that of the Ionian Islands, and if possible, under the protection of England. At this time the most distant rumour of such an event had not transpired; I supposed what he said was the chimera of a heated imagination, excited by the place in which we stood, and I little thought that a few weeks would realize it'. Walsh, *Residence*, i, 134. The Thucydidean speech on which Ravelaki's speech was modelled is discussed in *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>.

53 Walsh *Residence*, i, 139.

54 'Un grand nombre d'étrangers brûlaient de contribuer à la conquête du Parthénon', Raybaud, ii, 231.

55 If other reports that record him as dying of illness in Poros are correct, his body may have been moved to Athens. Among the names of philhellenes who participated in the siege recorded by Jarvis, who was present, in his *Journal*, 33, and by others, are Voutier, Bourdon, Blondel, van Deyck, Count Strahlendorff, Wohlgemuth, and Raybaud. Blondel was also among the philhellenes who, as part of Fabvier's force,



Figure 10.3. 'An assembly of European Officers, going to the help of Greece in 1822.' Lithograph.⁵⁶

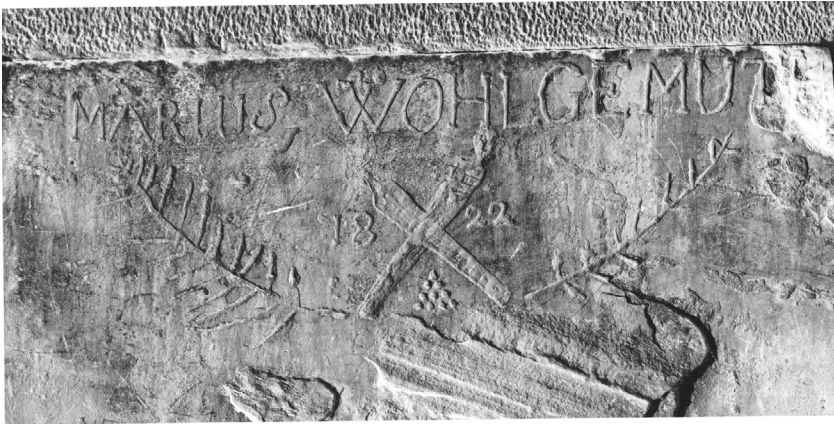


Figure 10.4. Inscription on wall of the Theseion.⁵⁷

took part in the defence of the Acropolis in 1826. Killed by a musket shot, his name was formerly to be seen carved on a column of the Parthenon, presumably as a memorial. See Bryer, Anthony, 'The Acropolis in October 1838: The Evidence of William James Muller', in Marouli-Zilemenou, 97–102.

56 Lithographie de A. Cheyère, rue de l'Epron, n°3. Private collection. Frequently reproduced.

57 Author's photograph, 1960s.

Without implying that the testimony of the Austrian consul, Georg Gropius, written on the spot in Athens immediately as the events of the Revolution unfolded, is more trustworthy than that of others simply because he was a representative of a western country, his letters are especially valuable, particularly for recovering the course of events. In addition to those that made their way into the British archives at Kew, others from the French archives in Paris have recently been published.⁵⁸

Some commentators attempted to explain the tumble of incidents by presenting the speeches allegedly made by participants, adopting the convention that had been perfected by Thucydides of providing a text of what speakers should, or could, have said. As a historiographical genre, seldom now used, in some circumstances this can offer readers a fuller understanding of the openness of the future and of the unevenness of the survival of documents than traditional narrative composed by an outside observer.⁵⁹ Andreas Stähelin, who understood the situation and its competing discourses, put a Thucydidean speech into the mouths of the two senior Ottoman officials in Athens who came down from the Acropolis and attempted to defuse the situation. As Stähelin suggested:

They declared to the Greek magistrates, that the Turks were grown weary of this bloody warfare, and although they were enabled to hold out at least a month longer, (there being plenty of provisions in the citadel, and water enough for that time,) still they felt disposed to put an end to this war, which they had not begun, which, in the midst of tranquillity and peace, had come unawares upon them, and the cause and origin of which they had always been at a loss to find out. Have we not lived (continued Hassan Aga) for centuries together in friendship and peace? Why, then, this sudden rebellion, this dreadful, sanguinary war? If you have suffered wrongs, why did you not complain? have we never given redress? We have heard that you have taken up arms for your faith. Who molested you for it? have we ever forced you to embrace ours, and was it not in our power for centuries to have done it? Have we not all one God, and are we not all his children? Is it for his glory that you have murdered so many of us, that our houses are burnt, and that you take the fruit of our trees? We have conquered this country, it is true, but not

58 Clairmont, 180–87.

59 My own experiment in reviving the genre as a means of offsetting the unrepresentative quality of the sources that we have for classical Athens is discussed and presented in *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>.

from you, from the Franks: and were they better masters than we? You have had some success; but have you heard that Turkey has perished? Let us make a fair agreement. These words flowed from the lips of the venerable-looking old man with much dignity and animation.⁶⁰

It seems likely that one of the two speakers to whom the words were attributed was the *cadi*; according to Thomas Gordon, the actual *cadi* of Athens had, at an earlier stage, twice rejected a proposal to kill the Christians as rebels as Ottoman law allowed, insisting that the authorities wait for a formal fatwa from the religious authorities. For his well-intentioned delay, which was to prove fatal to his religious community, he was judicially put to death by decapitation in Constantinople.⁶¹ As for Gordon, to whose printed history, published later, we owe much of our knowledge of the events of the Revolution, his unpublished papers show that when he returned temporarily to Britain, he spent money dissuading returning philhellenes from publishing eye-witness accounts of what they had actually seen, on the grounds that the truth would undermine support for the cause and therefore the flow of arms and money.⁶²

60 Staehelin, 'The Siege of the Acropolis of Athens in the Years 1821–1822. By An Eye-Witness', in *The London Magazine*, IV, January to April 1826, 203. Other Thucydidean speeches were provided by Soutsos, Alexandros, *Histoire de la révolution grecque, par Alexandre Soutzo, témoin oculaire d'une grande partie des faits qu'il expose* (Paris: Didot, 1829) from where they made their way into other accounts printed in western countries such as Keightley, Thomas, *History of the War of Independence in Greece* (Edinburgh: Constable, 1830). The general validity of Staehelin's composition has increasingly been supported by documentary evidence found later. For a discussion of the conventions of the Thucydidean speech in ancient times and my suggestion for how it could be adapted to solve a problem of presentation of the arguments about the ancient Parthenon, see *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>.

61 Gordon, *History*, i, 174.

62 Commandant Persat, an experienced Napoleonic officer who had taken part in almost every military conflict since 1815, and was to participate in many others after the Greek Revolution, had witnessed the massacres in 1821 and 1822, and had taken into his care a young Muslim woman survivor whom he later married. He was amongst those whose silence was purchased by Thomas Gordon to prevent eye-witness information from being published and damaging the reputation of the revolutionaries and of the revolutionary cause. Gordon's successful efforts to suppress the memoirs of Persat are known from manuscripts in Gordon archive, Aberdeen University Library, MS 1160/160 and 163, with others relating to the philhellenes Voutier and Justin in the same file.

Safe Against Siege: Finding the Water Fountain

The discovery of the tunnel to the klepsydra fresh water fountain was the most practical gift the ancient Hellenes of Athens gave to the modern during the Revolution. As the British Major Bacon, who saw the Acropolis later in the war remarked: 'The total want of water from the failure of the tanks compelled the Turkish garrison to surrender this otherwise impregnable fortress to the Greeks at the commencement of the Revolution; the spot where this treasure, a copious supply of water, lay concealed, and unknown.'⁶³ When, as was arranged shortly afterwards, the Acropolis was stocked with food and ammunition, and the cisterns filled with fresh water that could be replenished from time to time through the tunnel, it became a fortress that could potentially hold out for months, including over a winter when campaigning was usually suspended and seasonal rainwater could be collected. It provided the Greek Revolutionaries who occupied the Acropolis from 1822 to 1827 with the confidence that, even with modest forces, they were safe against siege.

More than one person later claimed the credit for the discovery, including Kyriakos Pittakis, who was to be the first Greek warden ('ephor') of the Acropolis as a heritage site after the Revolution.⁶⁴ However, the initial discovery, as distinct from the realisation of the value of the discovery, appears to have been accidental. In the sporadic fighting on the south slope in 1821, the entrance to a tunnel was discovered which turned out to have become blocked with stones that had fallen probably as a result of earthquakes long ago. Again, destiny was invoked as having intervened. When Waddington declared that the discovery 'could never have been predestined to any Mussulman', he was not only noting that the discovery had required a knowledge of the ancient authors, he was invoking a Christian providentialism as an explanation that he and many others believed in.⁶⁵ The Christian God who, according to Bartholdy, had providentially saved the monuments

⁶³ *Journals and Travels of Major d'Arcy Bacon, in Greece in 1826*, Bodleian Library, 161.

⁶⁴ Discussed by Parsons, 195. Odysseus was credited with finding it by applying his skill at finding water even in the most arid mountains. *Journals and Travels of Major d'Arcy Bacon*, 161. Staehelin claimed the credit for the discovery, saying that he used his copy of Pausanias.

⁶⁵ Quotation from Waddington, *Visit*, 91.

of Athens, was again showing a newly found philhellenism towards the ancient peoples whose religions he and his followers had providentially destroyed.⁶⁶

In 1822 a bastion was built to protect the tunnel that gave access to the Klepsydra. It contained an inscription giving Odysseus Androutsos credit for its construction. The complex structure was sketched by the French archaeologist Emile Burnouf shortly before the bastion collapsed in an earthquake and was later removed, as shown in Figure 10.5.

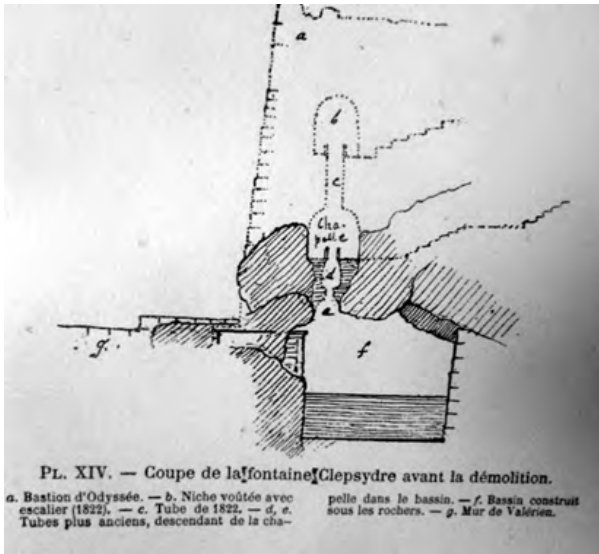


Figure 10.5. Cross-section of the bastion built by Odysseus in 1822 to protect access to the Klepsydra. Woodcut engraving.⁶⁷

Christopher Wordsworth, the poet's nephew, who was in Athens in 1832 when the Acropolis was still in Ottoman hands, copied and later published the inscription, with a translation into English. It was the first public inscription composed in classical Greek to be erected on the Acropolis for at least fifteen hundred years. It is also the first inscription

66 The other tunnel, built in the late Mycenaean age, and not continuously in use, was not discovered until the twentieth century. Hurwit, Jeffrey M., *The Athenian Acropolis, History, Mythology, and Archaeology, from the Neolithic Era to the Present* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), 78–79. For the use of this tunnel in 1941, see Chapter 23.

67 Detail from Burnouf, Émile, *La Ville et l'Acropole d'Athènes aux diverses époques* (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1877), plate XIV.

to refer to the Revolutionaries as ‘Hellenes’. Since Odysseus Androutsos, who was more warlord than nationalist, had later intended to change sides, and was assassinated by his former lieutenant Gouras in 1824, it had been hard to place him among the heroes of the Revolution, and it is understandable that the inscription that honoured him would have become an embarrassment to the neo-Hellenizing project. Since, as far as I can discover, the engraving is the only record of a key moment in this changing identity, I show it, with Wordsworth’s translation, in Figure 10.6. The wall collapsed for a final time in an earthquake in 1894, was removed and the inscription lost.

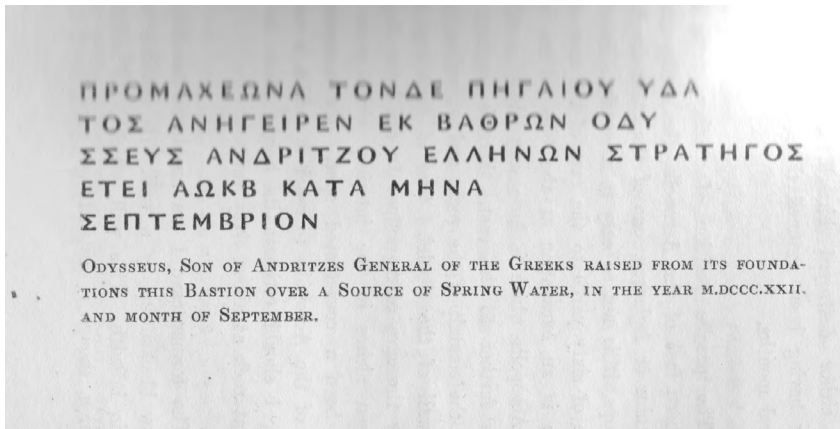


Figure 10.6. Inscription erected by Odysseus Androutsos in 1822, now lost. Copper engraving.⁶⁸

The discovery of the elaborate water systems also helps to answer a question that ought to have caused more puzzlement than it has. Why did the institutions of the Athenian polis of the classical era choose to display the contest between Athena and Poseidon on the west pediment of the Parthenon, the most prominent and most often seen of all the stories in stone presented by the Periclean Acropolis? Was there an element of bravado in making a virtue of what everyone knew was the

68 From Wordsworth *Athens*, second edition, 84. Who composed the inscription is not known. The finding of the tunnel and the building and subsequent fate of the bastion are described by Parsons, Arthur W., ‘Klepsydra and the Paved Court of the Pythion’, in *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, 12 (3). The American Excavations in the Athenian Agora: Twenty-Fourth Report, July–September 1943, 191–267.

greatest weakness the Acropolis possessed? Even an assertion that the water problem had been solved? Can we use what may at first sight appear to be a puzzle or a paradox to help recover more of the attitudes to the built heritage, and the ways of seeing and using it, prevalent among the classical Athenians themselves?⁶⁹

Meanwhile in Constantinople, Lord Strangford, the recently arrived British ambassador, who was receiving daily reports of the inter-religious violence raging in many places in the Empire, including Constantinople, and of the many attacks on mosques, synagogues, and churches, decided, on his personal initiative, to do what he could to save the ancient monuments of Athens.⁷⁰ In August 1821, perhaps partly as a result of the huge gift of money that he had asked approval to make to Reis Efendi Hamet, he arranged for the Ottoman court to send an imperial vizierial letter (firman) instructing the Ottoman military commander in Greece and the cadi of Athens to preserve the ancient monuments, of which the text is now first published.⁷¹ Strikingly, the document makes no reference to the rapidly growing symbolic value of the monuments to the Revolutionary cause. Instead, the reason given is that the monuments are valued in 'Europe'.⁷²

The copy that was sent to Mehmet Ali, the governor of the Morea, in the autumn of 1821 evidently arrived and was acted upon. In his report to Constantinople of how his forces had recaptured Athens and restocked the Acropolis, he noted that he had done so without damaging

69 Discussed in *The Classical Parthenon*.

70 When in March 1823, members of the Jewish community of Salonica (modern Thessaloniki) were detected in conveying letters from the revolutionaries in the Morea [Peloponnese] to the Orthodox community in Salonica, the community, fearing reprisals and confiscations, offered to rebuild three Ottoman army barracks, and other buildings destroyed in a recent fire, at the expense of the community. Reported in a letter from Stratford Canning to his cousin George Canning, 25 January 1823 in Kew FO 78 114, 213.

71 The primary documents on the obtaining of the 1821 firman, an episode not hitherto noticed in the history of the Parthenon and the other monuments, are transcribed in Appendix C.

72 '... as the antiquities and the ancient monuments of Athens have always deserved the attention of Europe as a whole, it behoves the dignity of the Sublime Porte to take the measures necessary for these ancient monuments to survive and be preserved in their present state, in order to give pleasure to the said Sovereign'. Full text in Appendix C translated from the French version in Kew FO 78/100, 164.

the monuments.⁷³ The copy sent to Athens could not have survived the events of 1821/1822, from which no local documents are known to have escaped. Hamet was disgraced, then summarily put to death by order of the sultan, and his head exposed, at the end of 1822.⁷⁴ His downfall was publicly attributed not to political failure but to personal extravagance, including heavy drinking, encouraging the sultan to travel in a carriage, and paying eight thousand piastres for a Circassian slave, although it was thought that his real crime was to have quarreled over the ownership of a farm that yielded seven thousand piastres a year.⁷⁵ A copy of the firman was however preserved among the British Embassy files, from where it was fished out by Stratford Canning, a later ambassador in 1826, with decisive consequences for the survival of the Parthenon.⁷⁶

73 Noted by Ilicak, 'Revolutionary Athens', 2, from a letter dated 17 November 1821 in the Ottoman archives.

74 A full report by Terrick Hamilton, the Chargé d'Affaires at the embassy, on the circumstances transcribed from documents at Kew in Prousis, ii, 325–29.

75 Strangford to Foreign Secretary, 10 November 1821, in Kew FO 78/102.

76 Discussed in Chapters 9, 14 and 15, drawing on another set of primary documents transcribed in Appendices D and E.

