

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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22. Still a Dark Heritage

Nowadays, as visitors approach the entrance to the Acropolis from the north, they pass the bare, rocky hill known as the Areopagus, the 'Hill of Ares.' A bronze plaque records, in Greek, that it was here that, according to the biblical Acts of the Apostles, Paul of Tarsus, (St Paul), presented a set of ideas to two of the Athenian philosophical schools, the Epicureans and the Stoics; the passage from the Acts is transcribed. The plaque is shown at the bottom right of Figure 22.1.



Figure 22.1. The Areopagus and the plaque. Photograph by C. Messier, 1 February 2016, CC BY-SA, Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%CE%86%CF%81%CE%B5%CE%B9%CE%BF%CF%82_%CE%A0%CE%AC%CE%B3%CE%BF%CF%82_6217.jpg

This small physical reminder of Paul's visit, which lasted for a few weeks at most at some time around the year 60 CE, overlays and subverts the associations of the hill during the centuries before and after classical Athens, a period of more than a thousand years.¹ According to Christian

1 When the plaque was first fixed I have not discovered, but there is a nineteenth century reference that may be to a predecessor. 'On the hill of Areopagus an

traditions, it was Paul's speech at the Areopagus in which he condemned the beliefs and practices of the people of ancient Athens as 'superstitions', that helped to bring the civilization that built the Parthenon to an end. The text in the Acts that claimed to report some of the actual words spoken by Paul had, possibly soon after the speech was delivered, been remediated from the performed oral to the fixed, and potentially more durable, written. Even if, as is likely, Paul had prepared a draft in written form, the text was at some stage edited to accord with the conventions of the time.² When the leaders of the various local communities were unifying themselves into an organized church in the early centuries CE, their decision to include the Acts of the Apostles as well as some of the letters of Paul in the canonical Christian Bible, a process finalized by the third century, ensured that the account of Paul's visit to Athens was frequently repeated from that time down to the present day. In terms of potential effects, insofar as that can be measured by the number of acts of consumption, the reported speech of Paul of Tarsus has been, over the centuries, by orders of magnitude, the most frequently encountered of all the texts that have given advice to viewers on how to look at the classical Parthenon, a building that was in active use at the time of Paul's visit and had already stood for around half a millennium.

iron plate marks the spot where, in A.D. 54, St. Paul delivered his address to the Athenians.' in Wilson, James T., *Our Cruise in the Mediterranean* (Baltimore: Lord Baltimore Press, 1899), 64.

- 2 A study of the forms of address that compared the variations in the phrase 'Men of Athens' and the version with the vocative adverb 'O men of Athens' reveals that the version with the vocative 'O men ...' was almost always used by Plato in the dialogues and there over a thousand examples in the Attic orators in the classical period. However, by Hellenistic times, the use of that version implied a deliberate archaizing, never found in Philo or Josephus, and in Lucian it is satirical, with elements of parody, implying pretentiousness. Paul, as his words were reported, by omitting the vocative 'O', reveals himself as a competent user of contemporary educated Greek. Dickey, Eleanor, *Greek Forms of Address from Herodotus to Lucian* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 177. The norms of the day included the conventions of the Thucydidean speech and of the rhetorical discourse or exercise, in whose conventions both Paul and Luke, thought to be the compiler of the Acts, were likely, from what is reported of their actual lives and education, to have been well versed. These conventions are discussed, with two experiments, in *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>. A fuller discussion of what Paul may have actually said, of how his words, allusions, gestures, and external appearance, might have been received by its audiences in Athens, will be included in the forthcoming second volume. The effects of a chain of translation from Greek to Latin to modern languages are summarized later in this chapter.

A photograph of the Areopagus hill as seen from the Acropolis summit is reproduced as Figure 22.2. As Plato had speculated, probably correctly, in some remote geological age the Acropolis and the Areopagus had been part of the same geological formation.³



Figure 22.2. The Areopagus as seen from the Acropolis. Photograph (2015).⁴

The Areopagus overlooks the plain seen to the viewer's right, where Theseus, one of the ancient city's mythic founding heroes, had defeated the invading Amazons, as well as the classical-era temple known until recently as the Theseion. The Areopagus, although never recorded as a site of a cult of Ares, the god of war, had, like the Acropolis, visually connected the people of ancient Athens with its historic and pre-historic past.⁵ The date of the foundation of the court, which authors of classical Athens dated to a thousand calendar years or more before their own time, was almost coterminous with the founding of the city itself.⁶

In ancient Athens, the court was formally responsible for the enforcement of some laws and customs, especially in cases of assault

3 Plat. Criti. 111e–112a.

4 Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Areopagus_hill_Saint_Paul_from_Acropolis_Athens.jpg

5 I am grateful to Alex Millington for his advice on this point.

6 In modern calendar terms, as translated from the calculations of ancient authors, the trial occurred in 1531 BCE. Dates taken from Harding, Phillip, editor and translator, *The Story of Athens: The Fragments of the Local Chronicles of Attika* (London: Routledge, 2008).

and homicide, but it also had responsibility for deciding on which cults should be allowed to practise. It had the power to impose heavy summary punishments without right of appeal, and during the classical period, the court also had the unique privilege of being allowed to spend civic funds without having to explain in their accounts the purposes for which the expenditure had been incurred. Whether the court met at or near the hill or in a building or succession of buildings elsewhere is uncertain, nor is it clear to what extent we can accept the remark by Paul's near contemporary, Lucian, that the court met at night so as to minimize the risks of being swayed by displays of emotion—but the association of the court with the hill, even if nominal, was never lost. In ancient Athens, a society in which the men, and many women, mostly lived and worked outdoors, the smaller hill and its larger neighbour presented complementary statements of the approved social memory and the official public values of the classical-era city ('polis') of Athens, which were celebrated in words and song, notably in the final choruses of Aeschylus's tragedy, the *Eumenides*.⁷

In classical times, the Areopagus was one the 'famous hills of the Athenians', as a character in the play by Sophocles, *The Men of Camicus*, had called them, which fashioned the cityscape into a network of reciprocal views that together made a storyscape within whose discursive conventions ancient Athenians celebrated their ancestors, their city, and themselves.⁸

7 Aesch. Eum. 1044, and other passages in other authors that constituted what I call the discursive environment to be discussed in *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>.

8 Fragment 323. Lloyd-Jones edition, 181. The others included the Acropolis, the Pnyx, the Hill of the Muses, and the Hill of Colonus but perhaps not Lycabettos, that, being without water, was mainly useful as a military look out place, and to the puzzlement of western topographers is seldom mentioned in the corpus of the surviving ancient authors, although Theophrastus, Aristotle's successor as head of the philosophical school he founded, mentions that Pheinos of Athens observed solstices from Lycabettos. Theophrastus, 'On weather signs', 63. In a long scene-setting passage about imagined sightlines and their relationships with one another from various imagined viewing stations at the beginning of the Panathenaic oration of Aelius Aristides, he offers numerous metaphors and comparisons. The totality of Athens, Attica, and its near islands, including sea and sky, in a series of words beginning with P as 'like a festival procession.' ὥστε καὶ παραπλεῖν καὶ περιπλεῖν καὶ πεζεῦειν καὶ ἐτι πελαγίους εἶναι διὰ τῆς Ἀττικῆς ὥσπερ ἐν πομπῇ κατ' ἐξουσίαν τὸ πρὸς ἡδονὴν αἰρουμένους. Ael. Ar. Orat. 13 96. My suggestions on how the classical Athenians integrated the actual cityscape into the fictive storyscape that they wished to present and commend to themselves and others are offered in *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>.

Lucian, who also came from an Asian province of the Roman Empire, in his satire on the philosophical schools, has the character of 'Philosophy' say: 'let us go to the Areopagus, or rather to the Acropolis itself, so that we can see everything in the city at the same time'.⁹ Both places appear to have been easily accessible in Lucian's day and offered opportunities for a *tour d'horizon* of the topography of the city and its institutions.

A visit to the Areopagus is now mostly regarded as an optional extra to a tour of the Acropolis. A modern marked path silently leads visitors to what they are expected to wish to do, namely to climb the sixteen ancient steps, one of the few visible man-made survivals from ancient times. Cut into the grey native rock, and polished smooth by modern feet, the steps are slippery when wet, and in recent times the authorities have discreetly provided a safer metal staircase with handrails, as can be glimpsed to the left of the picture already shown as Figure 22.1.

The Areopagus was among the few places in Athens for which the local oral and ecclesiastical tradition may have been continuous back to antiquity. The hill, and its association with Paul, is mentioned in the handful of locally-prepared accounts of Athens composed before the arrival of the classically educated western visitors that enable the main features of local Byzantine and post-Byzantine ways of looking at the ancient monuments to be recovered.¹⁰ The early topographers, from their knowledge of the ancient texts as collected by Meursius, had quickly been able to confirm the identification.¹¹ However, a hundred years later, as one late-eighteenth-century visitor wrote, the people of Athens at that time regarded 'their' Areopagus, as they did the ancient ruins, without emotion.¹² For the local Orthodox population at the time of the Greek Revolution, the hill was a site of memory but not one of heritage.

9 Φιλοσοφία ἀπίωμεν εἰς Ἄρειον πάγον, μᾶλλον δὲ εἰς τὴν ἀκρόπολιν αὐτήν, ὡς ἂν ἐκ περιωπῆς ἅμα καταφανείη. 'The Fisherman, or Dead Come to Life', Luc. Pisc. 15. My translation avoiding the translation 'bird's eye view' that may imply an imagined viewing station looking down from the sky rather than the panoramic view obtained by turning the head while standing on the ground.

10 To be discussed in the forthcoming second volume that will also print, for the first time, a pre-encounter local account, not previously known.

11 As discussed in Chapter 7.

12 The inhabitants of Athens 'contemplant sans émotion les ruines de ses temples & de son aréopage.' Ferrières-Sauvebœuf, Cte de, *Mémoires historiques, politiques et géographiques des voyages du comte de Ferrières-Sauveboeuf* (Paris: Buisson, 1790), ii, 258.

Nor, until shortly after the end of the Greek Revolution, did visitors from the west see the hill primarily as a Christian site. The verses in praise of the Areopagus composed by Adolf Ellissen in 1837, among the first books printed in Greece after independence, do not mention Paul's visit.¹³ The Rev. Robert Master, an English churchman who climbed the hill in 1819, accepted the story that Paul had spoken there but his interest was only that of a topographer.¹⁴ The Rev. Robert Wilson, whose journal of a visit in the previous year teems with information about the other ancient sites, does not even mention the hill.¹⁵ But then, quite suddenly from around 1840, a time that coincides with the introduction of commercial steamships and a broadening of the constituencies able to afford a visit to Athens, an increasing number of visitors from western countries not only visited 'Mars' Hill', as they called it from its Latinized form, but began to perform their own rituals there.¹⁶

13 Ellissen, A. *Spaziergang durch das Alte Athen, Sonnette und Bilder aus dem 19. Jahrhundert*, edited by Alexander Sideras and Paraskevi Sidera-Lystra (Athens: Verlag der Griechenland Zeitung, 2010), 30. This is a reprint of Ellissen's *Athen*, published in 1838 at the time when a neo-Hellenic court called the Areopagus was being established.

14 Master, Rev. Robert, manuscript journal. British Library.

15 Wilson, manuscript journal, Aberdeen University Library.

16 I mention some of the printed works, now mostly forgotten and their ideas, that were once mainstream, lost from the history of Athens and its monuments, on which the account in this chapter is founded. They are listed alphabetically by author, all of which are noted with fuller information, usually with the long titles in which the authors identified themselves and claimed authority, in the Bibliography. Although the Areopagus debates was a phenomenon in which churchmen from many Christian communities of the Protestant tradition participated, only a few of the many books in languages other than English are mentioned here. Allen, Richard; Allen, William; Andrews; Aiton; Argyll, Duke of; Arundell; Ashworth; Ayling; Azaïs; Bartlett; Bartmess; Barton; Baynes; Beldam; Benjamin; Berry; Black, Anna Robinson; Black, Archibald; Black, Hoosier; Blanc; Bonar and McCheyne; Borrer; Burgon; Brooks; Brewer; Brewer and Barber; Brown; Browne, J. Ross; Buckley; Burnfield; Burr; Bush; Bute; Camus; Carra and others; Castanier; Centerwall; Charley; Charles; Christmas; Clark; Clark and Clark; Conybeare and Howson; Couronne; Cox and Cox; Crawford, A.; Crawford, L.S.; Cuthbertson; Davies; Dawson; de Gasparin; de Hass; Didon; Dorr, Benjamin; Dorr, David; Duncan; Dyrness; Earle; Eddy; Ellerbeck; Faber; Fawthrop; Felton; Field; Fish; Fout; Gadsby; Glasgow; Godbey; Goddard; Gore; Granger; Gray; Green, Lenamay; Green, Samuel G.; Greene, Rev. and Mrs. Oliver B. Grellet; Gringras; Gunsaulus; Haight; Hardy, E.J.; Harris, Helen B.; Hartley; Hartshorn and Klopsch; Hawes; Hill; [Hill] *Service*; Hoppin; Hott; Howe, Fisher; Howell; Howson; Honeyman; Horne and the Findens; Hughes, Hugh Price; Hunter, James; Jannaway; Johnson; Johnston; Jowett; Kendall; King, Jonas; Koeppen; Krayenbelt; Lee, J.S.; Lee, Joseph; Lobry; McColester; McGarvey; McLean; Madden; Mandat-Grancey; Marmier; Marvin;

‘[L]ike a cannon ball fired from the Areopagus against
the Acropolis’: Paul and Classical Heritage

The eighteen-year-old Lenamay Green, daughter of a prominent churchman from the American south, was typical of many when, as she noted in the printed diary: ‘we climbed to the top, and one of our party read aloud the 17th chapter of Acts’.¹⁷ Cornelius Felton, the president of Harvard University, on a day’s visit in 1853 read the passage in its entirety five times, on two occasions aloud.¹⁸ We hear of ‘an elderly Methodist, too rheumatic to walk’, who was carried up the hill so that he could read the chapter on the spot.¹⁹ We read of a British sea captain who visited the Areopagus where he read the chapter, but declined to visit the Acropolis. As he is reported to have said: ‘seeing anything else might distract his feelings from the impressions he had just received’.²⁰

Miller, D.L.; Miller, Mrs; Miller, Joseph William; Morton; Nichols, James; Nichols, William Ford; Ninck; Newton, Richard; Nugent; Oehler; Oliver; Olin; Paine; Patterson; Pègus; the author of *Photograms*; Pierson; Pitman; Portmans: Pressensé; Puntón; [Religious Tract Society] *The History of Greece: from the earliest times to A.D. 1833*; Renan; Robinson and Smith; Rodwell; the author of *Ruins of Sacred and Historic Lands*; Sayce; Schaff; Scheuerman; Schmidt; Scott; Serette; Smith, Agnes; Smith, F.G.; Smith, Lee S.; Smith, Samuel; Spencer; Stephens; Stine; Stoppani; Sumner; Talmage; Tischendorff; Turk and Vincent; Twain, Waddington; Waldenström; Warburton; Wenger; Whittle; Wilson, James T.; Wilson, W.R.; Wilson, S.S.; Winger; Yeardeley; York; Young, Cuthbert; Young, James Foster; and Zerbe. The indefatigable Stratford Canning, who had spent most of his life outside geographical England promoting an imagined ‘England’, in a little book, *Why am I a Christian?* written in defence of the English church, reveals some of the general anxiety of Victorian times about the slipping away of an identity that he had assumed was secure. Speaking for a large constituency, he blamed the spirit of inquiry that had invaded the talk of dinner tables and the columns of newspapers to the extent that the future of ecclesiastical authority and religious belief was now hanging in the balance as a result of ideas such as ‘Mr Darwin’s theory that men were originally monkeys.’

- 17 [Green, Lenamay], *A Girl’s Journey through Europe, Egypt, and the Holy Land* (Nashville: Publishing House of the M.E. Church, South. 1889), 178. The date of the journey is not noted but since she was aged 18 it must have been 1887 or 1888.
- 18 Felton, Cornelius Conway, *Familiar Letters from Europe* (Boston MA: Ticknor and Fields, 1865), 219. His removal of a piece of the Parthenon was noted in Chapter 21.
- 19 Hughes, Hugh Price, Rev., MA, author of ‘Social Christianity’, ‘The philanthropy of God’, ‘Ethical Christianity’, Etc., *The Morning Lands of History, A Visit to Greece, Palestine and Egypt* (London: Horace Marshall, 1901). Much of the book had been previously published in the *Methodist Times*.
- 20 Grosvenor, Lady, *A Narrative of a Yacht Voyage in the Mediterranean during the Years 1840–41* (London: Murray, 1842), ii, 157. The story was also told by Lady Londonderry [Londonderry, Lady] *A narrative of travels to Vienna, Constantinople, Athens, Naples, &c* (London: Colburn, 1842), 185. ‘Will you not visit some of the

Some wrongly assumed that Mars' Hill had been a place of pilgrimage for centuries.²¹

The visitors, in their accounts of their experiences, frequently turned to the language of violence and victory. 'Every sentence of that magnificent discourse' [Paul's], declared James Hunter, 'seems to us like a 'like a cannon ball fired from the Areopagus against the Acropolis', and its foundations 'did begin to totter' from 'the dynamite of God.'²² According to James Nichols, Paul 'smashed their pet idols into smithereens.'²³ According to Rev. T.W. Aveling, a Doctor of Divinity from England, who visited in 1854: 'Winged words were his, fire-pointed and potent; words that shall be heard in all lands, and before which paganism, with its follies, atrocities, and wretchedness, shall ultimately and for ever fall.'²⁴ For almost a century, we hear variations, not only from casual visitors but from professional scholars. In the words of Constantin von Tischendorff, famous for having obtained one of the oldest manuscripts of the Greek New Testament from the isolated monastery in Sinai: 'Once that man stood there, like whom no other held, in the spirit of the Holy Ghost, the sword which conquers the world'.²⁵ Occasionally Paul's speech was called a thunderbolt, recalling one of the ways that ancient Zeus, 'the holder of the earth', had been presented in pre-Christian times as striking at individuals and cities who, for whatever reason, had offended him.²⁶

Figure 22.3 shows the view of the Acropolis as it is now seen from the top of the Areopagus.

Harris assured her readers that 'the artistic liberties taken were of the very smallest'. In the picture, although not immediately visible on the foreground, she included a local young man to whom she had given a copy of the New Testament, who was 'busily engaged in reading it

temples on the hill?' said the [British] minister [Ambassador]. 'Oh no, sir,' replied the captain, 'I came to see this place [the Areopagus], and have no desire to approach those profane buildings.'

21 For example: 'Steps are cut in the stone and they have been trodden by thousands of people, and for hundreds of years.' Stine, Rev. Milton H., *A Winter Jaunt Through Historic Lands* (Philadelphia: Lutheran publication society, 1890), 303.

22 Hunter, 23.

23 Nichols, *Bible Lands*, 197.

24 Aveling, 402.

25 Tischendorff, as translated, 287.

26 For example Baynes, 212.



Figure 22.3. The Acropolis from the top of the Areopagus (2010).²⁷

Figure 22.4 shows the view as it appeared in the nineteenth century before the planting of the trees.

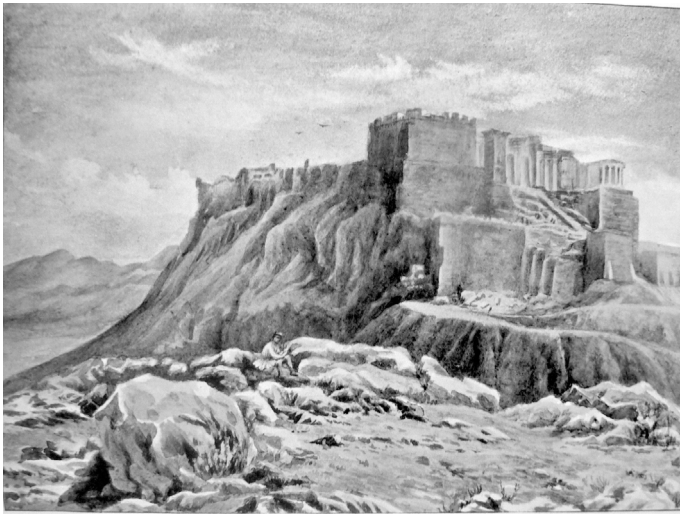


Figure 22.4. '1. Acropolis 2. Mars' Hill. Reputed scene of St. Paul's Preaching'. Lithograph of a drawing made on the spot in 1892 by Helen B. Harris.²⁸

27 Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Acropolis_from_Areopagus.jpg

28 Harris no XXXVI opposite 75.

and so remained for long unconscious of our presence'.²⁹ Her visit was part of a tour made with her husband, J. Rendel Harris, an academic, who with her help had much success in bringing to the attention of the modern scholarly world the existence of ancient Christian texts, some in Syriac, that threw light on the processes of selection and canonization of the Christian bible in the early centuries CE. Agnes Smith, another scholar of Syriac, who, with her twin sister, recovered the text of the Syriac version of the Gospels in the monastery at Sinai, so enabling the early history of Christianity in the lands where it originated to be more fully recovered, wrote in what was already almost a ritualized pronouncement: 'His [Paul's] words fell upon scornful ears; yet their echo has caused the Parthenon to crumble'.³⁰

Agnes and Margaret, with a friend referred to only as Violet, who, between them, knew twelve modern and ancient languages, were formidable scholars, especially latterly in Syriac. Unusually for women, the sisters were awarded DDs, among other honours, and, to judge from her printed works, Agnes never wavered from the Scottish Presbyterianism on which she had been brought up.³¹

To the constituency of western viewers who regarded the Acropolis as a dark heritage, the Parthenon was 'the very citadel of Grecian paganism'.³² The ancient buildings were 'magnificent monuments to by-gone idolatry'.³³ A few visitors who knew the history of their religion and of the translation of its languages repeated the association of 'idolatry' with the worship of 'demons', picking up a theme in the attitudes to ancient visual images that had been strong in Orthodox Christianity back through the Ottoman and Byzantine centuries to the

29 Harris, 76. Harris was amongst those who understood that Paul's speech as reported in the Acts conformed with the conventions of polite rhetoric, as discussed below and was inclined to see ancient Athens as having almost attained the 'purity' of Christianity, but, like others, she was undisturbed, in her book at least, by the evidence of ruination of Tyre and many other once prospering cities, that her Judaeo-Christian god had imposed the harshest of collective punishments on men, women and children, in fulfilment of the prophecies of Ezekiel.

30 Smith, *Glimpses*, 33.

31 Summarized from the two works by Agnes Smith and modern accounts of their lives.

32 Hott. 221.

33 Borrer, Dawson, *A journey from Naples to Jerusalem: by way of Athens, Egypt and the peninsula of Sinai, including a trip to the Valley of Fayoum, together with a translation of M. Linant de Bellefonds' 'Mémoire sur le lac Moeris'* (London: J. Madden, 1845), 34.

reported speech of Paul himself.³⁴ And those who, contrary to their inclinations, were impressed with the magnificence of the ancient ruins, felt a need to remind themselves and their readerships that it was 'all rank idolatry'.³⁵

Even if, as the narrator in the received text of the Acts of the Apostles had himself reported,³⁶ Paul made little impression on his audience at the time, it was projected back that he 'not only shook to its foundations the worship of the goddess Athena, and all the other innumerable deities of the Greek mythology, and he was the means of their complete and final overthrow'; but that 'he with one stroke, by one strong sentence, dispelled the enchantment'.³⁷ Typical was the comment of Harriet Clark who declared that: '[the] speech [...] did more for mankind and for the perpetuation of the memory of Athens, than all the works of Pheidias and the conquests of Hadrian, and the orations of Demosthenes, which also made the city memorable.'³⁸ Or as Daniel Eddy, an American bishop, wrote:

Amazed, awe-struck, they gazed,
Bowed down by stripes and suffering, prison-worn;
'Twas Phidias' hand gave Pallas her expression;
GREATER THAN PHIDIAS, Paul!³⁹

Although from the top of the Areopagus the Propylaia and the Nike temple were within sight, the Parthenon was not, nor had it been either in Paul's day or in the classical period.⁴⁰ Even the west pediment, by far the most frequently seen part of the building, was not visible. J. Frederic Wickenden, an artist who explored the whole site in 1852, declared that 'from no part of it [the Areopagus] can the Parthenon be seen, nor yet

34 Black, Archibald Pollok, M.A., F.R.S.A.E., *A hundred days in the East: A diary of a journey to Egypt, Palestine, Turkey in Europe, Greece, the isles of the Archipelago, and Italy* (London: Shaw, 1855), 517.

35 Author of *Photograms*, 126. As another example 'There was not, perhaps, in all the world, another spot where idolatry made such a display.' Marvin, 530.

36 This narrator is plausibly regarded by many modern scholars to be the same as the narrator and compiler of the biblical *Gospel according to Luke*.

37 Harris, Helen B., 68 and 73.

38 Clark and Clark, 570.

39 Verse 7 of a long poem in Eddy pp. 79–81, capitalization as printed perhaps to help with public recitation.

40 As shown in Figure 4.6.

the temple of Erechtheus.⁴¹ Many visitors, however, were careless about the sightlines. Ellen Bosanquet, a long term resident of Athens, wife of a famous archaeologist, invited readers of her book to picture: 'a little Jew standing on the Areopagus and waving aside with one gesture of his hand the Parthenon, the Erechtheum, and all the accumulated tradition of splendour on that overshadowing hill'.⁴² Talmage, the American preacher who had been allowed to take away a piece of the Parthenon, declared unequivocally that the Parthenon was in sight, and even that people standing on its steps could have heard what Paul was saying.⁴³ The author of *From Mayfair to Marathon* assumed that when Paul declared that God 'dwelleth not in temples made with hands', he was referring specifically to the Parthenon, and Paul's local Athenian audience may have thought so too, although at the time of his visit there was scarcely a city in the whole Romanized world that did not contain sacred buildings built in a classical style, and Athens, which already in Paul's day had many large buildings, was soon to have another that was even bigger than the Parthenon.⁴⁴

Could there be any place in the world, some wondered, from which a frontal attack on ancient Athenian civilization could have been more appropriately launched than from Mars' Hill? In the histories of Greece published by the Religious Tract Society, the country's long past was presented as having been ordained by Divine Providence, and since the religious practices of the ancient Greeks had been local, sensual, and superstitious, they had had to be swept away.⁴⁵ A huge readership of

41 Wickenden, J. Frederic, *Seven Days in Attica in the Summer of 1852* (London: Harrison, 1857), 25.

42 Bosanquet, *Days in Attica*, 114. A similar remark about a Jew of short height 'en face du Parthénon' that derived from a non-biblical tradition that contrasted Paul's alleged courage and vulnerability with those of the men he addressed, in Portmans, 335. Nor need we detect anti-semitism in the remark. In Paul's day, insofar as Christianity existed, it was as a movement within Judaism.

43 Talmage, 280 and 281, noting anachronistically that Paul was 'a man without any ecclesiastical title, neither a D.D., nor even a reverend.' As an example by an American bishop, who did not visit: 'on whose Mars' Hill, with the Parthenon before him. [Paul] preached Jesus and the Resurrection,' [Hill] *Service*, 25.

44 [Murray, E. Clare Grenville] *From Mayfair to Marathon* (London: Bentley, 1853), 421: Eddy, 81; Gardner, William Amory, *In Greece with the Classics* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1908), 7. His attacks on Stratford Canning were discussed in Chapter 19. The temple to Olympian Zeus, one of the largest buildings ever constructed in antiquity was completed in the time of Hadrian.

45 [Religious Tract Society] *The History of Greece: from the earliest times to A.D. 1833. For schools and families* (London: RTS, [n.d.], 1848), 366. The stated aim of every book in

anglophone families and young people was told that the Greek Church throughout the thousand years of the Byzantine Empire had 'exhibited a revolting scene of bigotry, intolerance, childish superstition, and general debasement'.⁴⁶

Bishop Wordsworth, as the Rev. Christopher had now become, wrote, in a magnificently-produced illustrated book intended for the education of the most privileged boys and young men of England, that the ancient ruins were 'an Apology in behalf for Christianity and a Refutation of Paganism'. A modern spectator of Athens', he went on, 'enjoys great advantages for a contemplation of this city, which were never known to its ancient inhabitants'.⁴⁷ Even those who were not especially religious, but who thought their own version was true and all others were not, found themselves more impressed by their encounter with the Areopagus steps than they had expected. The Earl of Carlisle, for example, who had held many of the high offices in the British state, who was introduced to prominent men and women in Constantinople, Athens, and elsewhere, and who was an ancient Greek scholar in his own right, offered a new and determinist version of the story. 'It could not have been without providential agency [that Paul was able] to annul the false sanctities of the place, to extinguish every altar, strip every shrine, dethrone every idol' in the presence of the Propylaia and the Parthenon, the most perfect buildings 'that the hands of man have ever reared'.⁴⁸ The works on Paul by the English biblical scholar Frederick Conybeare, who knew Armenian and who married a daughter of Max Müller, then a famous German scholar of eastern languages who had first identified the common origin of Indo-European (Aryan), were to

the history series was 'carefully to exclude those details which are objectionable and to view all events as under the control of Divine Providence.' Advertisement leaf.

46 *Ibid.*, 344

47 Wordsworth, *Greece*, first edition of 1839, page 196, and repeated in the many subsequent editions right through to 1882, reprinted with updates when Athens was a pleasing and thriving European city that devoted much of its effort to preserving the ancient monuments, and to presenting them as part of the philhellenic continuity narrative of the imagined community of the nation. The extraordinarily long life in print and influence of Wordsworth's *Greece*, that owed much to the technological innovations of the late 1820s and 1830s was noted in Chapter 8. If, as is possible, given his social position, Wordsworth later knew about the secret bargain discussed in Chapters 17 to 20, neither he nor the revisers of his book mentioned it.

48 Carlisle, Earl of, *Diary in Turkish and Greek Waters*, 189 and 301, the quotations from his accounts of two visits brought together for the sake of brevity.

be much quoted by visitors to the Areopagus. The classical Parthenon, he wrote, had been saved during the first half millennium after it was built in order to provide a suitable visual backdrop to Paul's speech. Although battered, the building had been providentially saved for almost two millennia after Paul's visit so that it could be denounced again by himself and other successors to Paul in the nineteenth century.⁴⁹ Carlisle and Conybeare, we can now see, were offering a Christian variant of the 'future-has-need-of-them' story to which Edgar Quinet and others had turned to explain the lack of damage done to the monuments in the Greek Revolution.

As for the pieces of the Parthenon held and still displayed in London, although most writers and lecturers in the nineteenth century presented them as 'works of art' in accordance with western romantic aesthetics, we find books intended for children that claim that they 'confirm the Truth of Scripture History.'⁵⁰ The Parthenon frieze, which at the time was commonly thought to show a ceremony involving the handing over of a piece of cloth, was said by some visitors to have been the inspiration of similar ceremonies among the Roman Catholics, which the children of English Christians were also taught to condemn as 'superstitious.'⁵¹ To F.G. Jannaway, the only interest of the slabs of the Parthenon frieze in London was that they had been gazed at by Paul as examples of 'a city wholly given to idolatry', and that had 'caused his spirit to stir within

49 'And it can hardly be deemed profane, if we trace to the same Divine Providence the preservation of the very imagery which surrounded the speaker—not only the sea, and the mountains, and the sky, which change not with the decay of nations—but even the very temples, which remain, after wars and revolutions, on their ancient pedestals in astonishing perfection. We are thus provided with a poetic and yet a truthful commentary on the words that were spoken once for all at Athens; and Art and Nature have been commissioned from above to enframe the portrait of that Apostle, who stands forever on the Areopagus as the teacher of the Gentiles.' Morris, 819, quoting Conybeare, *Life and Letters of St Paul*, 296. A similar point was made by others without the providentialism. For example; 'One can realize here, as nowhere else, the obstacles which lay in the way of the triumph of Christianity over the old faiths of the Pagan world.' Gray, 12. My suggestion that the temple was deliberately designed and over-engineered in the hope that it would be able to carry its visual rhetoric into the future 'for ever' is discussed in *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>

50 Preface initialed E.W.P, in *Pleasant Mornings at the British Museum* By the author of "Business and Pleasure," etc. (E.W.P.) (London: Religious Tract Society, [n.d.], [1856]).

51 *Ibid.* My discussion of what is presented on the frieze, including especially the central scene with the cloth, is in *The Classical Parthenon*.

him.⁵² Many thousands of children of members of the English official church were told that to Paul, the monuments of Athens were 'symbols, unutterably hateful, of a dark and evil power [...] a living all-pervading, all corrupting idolatry'.⁵³

As with the admiring visitors to the Parthenon, so too with the anti-Parthenon visitors to the Areopagus, the viewer's body was invoked as proof of the genuineness of the moment of rapture.⁵⁴ Defying western constructions of masculinity, grown men openly wept.⁵⁵ A French abbé, importing a practice from his Roman Catholic religion, kissed the ground.⁵⁶ An American churchman, who had memorized the passage from the Acts in order to re-perform Paul's speech without having to hold a book, found that his 'heart was too deeply stirred for utterance'.⁵⁷ Others claimed to be so deeply moved that they were no longer masters of their own opinions.⁵⁸ As with other cultures of display and performance, including the ancient, it is of course impossible to separate the genuine from the conventional, or know how far genuineness was internalized as well as demonstrated.

With scarcely an exception, the visitors wrote of the physicality of touching the sixteen steps with their own feet. Typical was the wish of James Hunter and his party 'to tread that sacred soil, to place our foot in the steps of Paul.'⁵⁹ James Foster Young wrote of the exhilaration he

52 Jannaway, F.G., *The British Museum with Bible in Hand, being An interesting and intelligent survey of all the exhibits on view at the British Museum which confirm the absolute accuracy of the Holy Scriptures* London: Maran-atha Press, [n.d.], c.1921), 17. Jannaway a leader of the Christadelphians, was an indefatigable campaigner for Zionist settlement of Palestine that he presented not only as prophesized in the biblical texts but as providentially favoured by the Christian god.

53 Green, Rev. Samuel. G., D.D., Editor, *Pictures from Bible lands: drawn with pen and pencil, The Illustrations by Edward Whymper and other artists; principally from photographs. New edition revised* (London: The Religious Tract Society, c.1891), 186. The illustration of the Parthenon is from a photograph made by James Robertson before 1855. The book was frequently given as a school prize. As other example: 'evidences of gross spiritual darkness' Leathes, Rev. Professor Stanley, M.A., King's College, London, *The Cities Visited by St Paul* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1873), 71.

54 The rhetoric of rapture is discussed in Chapter 6.

55 For example Hott, James W., D.D., *Journeyings in The Old World* (Dayton, Ohio: United Brethren Publishing House, 1884), 221, 'I wept as a child.'

56 Berry, 52. The role of mutual display in festivals and processions as a form of community-building in classical Athens is discussed in Chapter 24.

57 McGarvey, 604.

58 For example, L., l'Abbé, *Voyage en Orient* (Limoges: Barbou, 1844), 36.

59 Hunter, James, 23.

felt at being able to stand 'on the same rough-hewn steps from which St. Paul addressed the men of Athens'.⁶⁰ 'For once in my life, I have trodden in the footsteps of St. Paul', wrote Sarah Haight of New York.⁶¹ 'I stood upon this rock, which the apostle's feet had pressed', wrote the American churchman Benjamin Dorr.⁶² And, although we can be confident that most accounts of these experiences were composed later, in a hotel or a cruise-ship cabin, some claimed the immediacy of having written down their accounts on the spot. The Rev. D.L. Miller assured his readers that he was not only 'standing on the very ground', but that he was 'using a stone for a desk'.⁶³ In these ways, the visitors hoped to persuade their readers that nothing had been lost in the translation of their own real experience into words to be read by others. In accordance with the rhetorics of romanticism, they too wished to cut out the mediating middleman, even when they were inescapably forced to play that role themselves.

The Areopagus as a New Place of Pilgrimage

To judge by the sheer numbers of visitors from overseas who are recorded as having taken part in ceremonies on the Areopagus, by the vast amount of printed writings and visual images that they produced and disseminated, by the special tours that they organized, and by the lectures and sermons that they delivered and listened to, those who looked at the Parthenon through hostile eyes were at least as numerous as the admirers. By the end the nineteenth century, the visitors to Athens from the west could be divided, in the words of Ellen Bosanquet, into 'those who follow the footsteps of Paul and those who follow the footsteps of Pausanias'.⁶⁴ Soon the foreign interest produced a local response: fruit and drinks for sale, a rank of horse-drawn taxi carriages

60 Young, 29.

61 Haight, *Over the Ocean*, 113.

62 Dorr, Benjamin, 357. Other examples include: 'But more subdued and holier feelings [than those aroused by looking at the Acropolis] possessed my heart, when I planted my feet on the rocky summit of Mars' Hill, and heard the echo of that voice that once there proclaimed to the superstitious Athenians ...' in York, Sarah Emily, 263. He was on the hill 'made sacred by the feet of the apostle', in Rev. J.W. Garvey, a professor of sacred history from Kentucky, McGarvey, 607.

63 Miller, D.L., 165, 164.

64 Bosanquet, *Days in Attica*, 114.

for hire, guides, postcards, and boys standing by to help visitors to climb the slippery steps.

Some visitors who searched without success for the 'altar to the unknown god' mentioned in the Acts blamed the incompetence of the local guides, one of many examples of western visitors assuming that nothing much had happened between their own time and that of the ancients.⁶⁵ But, by the later nineteenth century, some local guides had picked out a ruin near Monasteraki to which the visitors were led.⁶⁶ The story that the Parthenon had been dedicated by the early Christians to the 'unknown god', whose historicity had been exploded since the time of Spon's dispute with Guillet, was however occasionally repeated.⁶⁷ And just as the early Christians had gradually Christianized the landscape, so too their modern successors did the same.⁶⁸ As was noted by the Rev. John Hartley in his vivid account of Greece immediately after the Revolution, his first sight of Parnassus, in ancient times the abode of the ancient Muses, left him cold, and he looked with indifference on their other haunts on Helicon and Cithaeron. But then he remembered that 'the eye of St Paul had once rested upon' Parnassus and that 'he could hold a species of distant communication with him by means of this classical mountain'.⁶⁹

A proposal to build an American 'Mars' Hill College' on the hill itself proved impossible to realize, but several colleges of that name were established in the United States.⁷⁰ And those who reviled the Parthenon also followed the practice of those who loved it by taking home pieces of the stone. Talmage, for example, was permitted to cut a slab from the grey marble of the Areopagus so that it could be built into a memorial wall of his church in Brooklyn, New York.⁷¹ John Gadsby carried a hammer to break off pieces to take away, and before long he

65 For example Godbey searched for the altar on three visits to Athens. Godbey *Around the World*, 62.

66 Miller, D.L., 163.

67 For example by Léon Gingras, a priest of the Roman Catholic religion, from Canada. Gingras, Léon, *L'Orient: ou, Voyage en en Égypte, en Arabie, en Terre-Sainte, en Turquie et en Grèce* (Quebec: Fréchette, 1847), 493.

68 As discussed in Chapter 6.

69 Hartley, pp. 4–5.

70 Larrabee, *Hellas Observed*, 195, 198–99.

71 Talmage, 279. The building in New York no longer exists although there are photographs.

had established a business selling biblical souvenirs, including olive leaves from Sinai and sand from 'that great and terrible wilderness', all advertised by Gadsby as available at modest prices, as being genuine, and sent without postal charge from his London address, besides pictures of the places themselves that were suitable for framing and hanging on the walls of churches, schoolrooms, and homes.⁷² In Mark Twain's first book, he described how he and a few companions travelling with a party of Quakers, who conducted a learned debate on Mars' Hill, left the ship at night, stole large quantities of grapes from the fields, climbed into the Acropolis when it was closed after failing to break down the gate, bribed the guards when they were caught, and took away 'some holy rocks from Mars Hill'.⁷³ When the ship sailed, every pilgrim was given a pebble allegedly from Mars' Hill, but actually collected in advance from elsewhere before the ship reached Athens.

Other visitors wrote poems on the spot to be printed and distributed when they returned home.⁷⁴ Pliny Earle sent flowers that he had plucked on Mars' Hill to 'the literary ladies of America, Miss H.F. Gould, Mrs. Sigourney, Mrs. S.J. Hale, Mrs. Amelia Welby of Kentucky, and others, who acknowledged the graceful attention in pleasant notes and sometimes in poems.'⁷⁵

The men and women of Mars' Hill were not a fringe group. On the contrary, they were representative of a section of the most highly educated and privileged classes of the western world. Of the anglophones, many held high ecclesiastical office, as bishops (and at least one became an archbishop), deans, archdeacons, prebendaries, and canons. The title pages of their books bristle with conferred honours and university degrees, such as D.D. ['Doctor of Divinity'] and LL.B ['Doctor of Civil Law'].⁷⁶ Although some might now be regarded as

72 For example: 'Having, with the aid of a hammer, helped myself to a piece of the rock, which I still have by me.' Gadsby, *Wanderings*, 74. The advertisements, with prices, are printed in later impressions of *My Wanderings*.

73 Twain, *Innocents Abroad*, 352.

74 For example, Miller, Joseph William, *Mars Hill: and other poems* (Philadelphia: Collins, Printer, 1879).

75 [Earle] Sanborn, F.B., ed., *Memoirs of Pliny Earle, M.D.: with extracts from his diary and letters (1830-1892) and selections from his professional writings (1839-1891)* (Boston: Damrell & Upham, 1898), 128.

76 Rev. Dr. Talmage D.D. one of five brothers with D.Ds, noted that Paul was 'a man without any ecclesiastical title, neither a D.D., nor even a reverend.' *From the Pyramids to the Acropolis*, 280.

fundamentalist in their literalist reading of the seventeenth-century English translation of the Bible, in their time they were the mainstream with many regarded as the intellectual leaders.⁷⁷ And besides the books written by churchmen, we have personal accounts by a wide range of others, including a British duke, a British marquis with a particular interest in Byzantine ecclesiology who was one of the richest men in the world, and a British judge who was also a Member of Parliament. Some visitors were eminent in both theology and in science. Henry Stebbing, for example, was D.D. and F.R.S (Fellow of the Royal Society of London).⁷⁸ The American medical doctor John Howell introduced himself as the personal friend of former President Theodore Roosevelt, to whom he said he would report on his visit immediately on his return to New York.⁷⁹

On the title pages of their books, many visitors defined themselves by their religious affiliation ('a Baptist Abroad').⁸⁰ Other Americans emphasized their skin colour ('A Colored Man Round the World. By a Quadroon') presented as the main constituent of their identity.⁸¹ Some authors claimed a special authority from seeing the monuments 'through a woman's eyes'.⁸² The visitors from North America, who

77 Some of the debates are discussed in relation to other ancient sites apart from Athens by Gange, David and Ledger-Lomas, Michael, eds, *Cities of God: The Bible and Archaeology in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Cambridge: CUP, 2013), although the editors are inclined to exaggerate the extent to which the debates were conducted by British 'Protestants' and 'Evangelicals' rather than, as this chapter shows, by mainstream members and leaders of the whole spectrum of churches and educated opinion in the western tradition.

78 Stebbing, Henry, *The Christian in Palestine; or, Scenes of Sacred History, historical and descriptive. By Henry Stebbing, D.D. F.R.S. Illustrated from sketches taken on the spot, by W. H. Bartlett* (London, Paris and New York: Virtue, [n.d.], 1847). Although Stebbing writes confidently about the religious emotions that a visitor should feel, he relies on the accounts of others, and on the picture made by Bartlett, and he appears not to have himself visited the lands about which he writes.

79 Howell, 61.

80 Whittle.

81 For example Whittle, W. Andrew, Rev., *A Baptist abroad: or, Travels and adventures in Europe and all Bible lands* (New York: Hill, 1890).

82 For example: Clark, Rev. Francis E., D.D., President of the United Society of Christian Endeavor, and Clark, Mrs Harriet E., *Our Journey around the World, An illustrated record of a year's travel of forty thousand miles through India, China, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Egypt, Palestine, Greece, Turkey, Italy, France, Spain, etc. With Glimpses of Life in Far Off Lands As Seen Through a Woman's Eyes, Superbly Illustrated with ... upwards of two hundred choice engravings, mainly from instantaneous photographs taken from life ...* (Hartford: Worthington, sold only by subscription, 1895).

included many from the mid-western states, were mostly members of the Protestant churches that their families had, in the past, brought with them from the British Isles, from northern Germany, and from the Nordic countries.⁸³

Some churchmen who could not have afforded the trip on their normal salaries were financed by their parishioners, or by a patron, often with the specific aim of bringing back news of their experiences. Some, partly as a result, devoted much effort to disseminating their accounts, as ways of discharging the bargain, but also of binding together their own communities and attracting new recruits. The visitors also exploited the new media of the age. Talmage's sermons, delivered orally to thousands in 'tabernacles', for example, as a technology of display and performance, reached even larger numbers when translated into technologies of inscription, words and pictures, through newspaper syndication. One of Gadsby's long works was reprinted from stereotype plates over several decades, with cumulative print runs of at least 26,000 copies, around fifty times more than those of most learned monographs about the ancient monuments.⁸⁴

Some visitors drafted their books in the form of letters so that they could be read aloud from the pulpit week by week, enabling the stay-at-homes to participate by proxy, often at pre-set intervals.⁸⁵ Others prepared what were in effect visual virtual tours of sites associated with early Christianity, linking each place with a photograph. Around 1900, for example, the Bible Educational Society, an American mid-western group, obtained four hundred and forty-eight photographs, including some of the Areopagus, to be shown to pupils at the rate of fifty a month.⁸⁶ *Bible lands illustrated. A complete handbook of the antiquities and modern life of all the sacred countries, by the Rev. Henry C. Fish D.D.*, included 'six hundred engravings and maps, one thousand elucidated scripture texts, and two thousand indexed subjects'.⁸⁷ By these means, news of the ceremonies performed on Mars' Hill were taken to innumerable stay-

83 A few books were published in the American mid-west in non-English languages, for example Dyrness, C.T., *Fra Bibelens Lande* (Chicago: Utgiverens Forlag, 1930).

84 Gadsby, *My Wanderings*, title page of a copy in the author's collection, dated 1894.

85 For example the English country parson the Rev. Samuel Smith who included 'from the pulpit' in his title.

86 For example, Turk and Vincent.

87 Fish, title page.

at-homes. The written accounts were often then summarized in books written by Christian scholars and theologians of the time, and their ideas carried back to Athens to influence the ways of seeing there in a self-reinforcing feedback circuit.⁸⁸

Among the visitors from France and Italy, most were members of the Roman Catholic religion, and the title pages of their books also claim ecclesiastical authority for their authors, for example as RP ('reverend father'), abbé, don, and other ranks in the hierarchies of their priesthoods. Compared with the anglophones, they were latecomers. As late as 1839, for example, Jean-Baptiste Morot, on a Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem, described his visit to the Areopagus without mentioning the association with Paul.⁸⁹ The Roman Catholics too wrote primarily for their co-religionists at home and, like some of the others, what they wrote was sometimes so predictable that their books could have been written without leaving the library. Although living in reasonably open societies, they had willingly subordinated their critical faculties, at least in what made its way into print, to the ecclesiastical hierarchy. When, for example, in 1899 a party of five French abbés visited the sites of Athens, including the Areopagus, accompanied by five guides, and their account of their experiences, officially approved as 'edifying' by their episcopal superior, was published by the Roman Catholic bookshop at Lyon, modern readers could not have expected to find, nor did they receive, any thoughts at variance with the mainstream propositions of their religion as taught by the hierarchies at the time.⁹⁰ The abbés of Lyon evidently knew little, if anything, of Jacob Spon, proud fellow-citizen, nor of the *scientia* he had championed and for which he had suffered two centuries before. Some Roman Catholics hoped that members of the Orthodox Church could be persuaded to change their allegiance, but they were no more successful than the other Christian denominations.⁹¹

88 Notably the works by Conybeare and Farrar.

89 'Il ne reste de l'Aréopage, sanctuaire de la justice, que deux escaliers parallèles situés sur une légère éminence.' Morot, Jean-Baptiste, *Journal De Voyage: Paris a Jérusalem, 1839 Et 1840* (Paris: J. Claye, second edition, 1873), 50.

90 Their visit is related by Castanier.

91 Noted by, for example, Mandat-Grancey, 55. Like many prominent Frenchmen at the end of the nineteenth century who visited and wrote about Greece, Edmond, Baron de Mandat-Grancey, sometimes known as 'the good', favoured the policies of the movement known as Action française, that wanted to reverse the achievements of the French Revolution in favour of a collection of proto-fascist authoritarian ideas.

But by the end of the century, the parties of Roman Catholic pilgrims, mostly churchmen, had caught up and now included the Areopagus among the Christian sights.⁹²

Soon after Greek independence, a few western-type schools were established in Athens with American and British money that opened their doors to girls as well as boys. A huge effort was made, as one practitioner wrote, in 'educating them in Biblical knowledge, as well as in the usual useful branches of education.'⁹³ Visitors to Mars' Hill were, as a result, often accompanied by expatriate missionaries settled in Athens, co-religionists of their numerous religious denominations. The local Orthodox churchmen looked on but did not participate, and the hostility was mutual.⁹⁴ To the western missionaries, and to the women who accompanied them, Greece was only nominally a Christian country, its Orthodox church, like its Roman Catholic rival that had split off from it many centuries before, in the grip of 'idolatry'.⁹⁵ When challenged on the point, the Orthodox claimed that their practices could not be so regarded as 'idolatrous' because on the icons the human and divine figures depicted were two-dimensional and had 'flat faces' as one defender noted, a reference to the compromise of the Second Council of Nicaea of 787 CE.⁹⁶

If Paul were to return to Athens, one missionary said, remembering the King James English language version of the Acts of the Apostles, he would find that 'the men of Athens' were still 'too superstitious'.⁹⁷ When

92 Noted by Couronne, 258. At formal meetings of welcome by the leaders of their co-religionist, Greece was claimed as the site of the martyrdoms of St Andrew and of St Luke.

93 Allen, 62.

94 For example: 'Some of the English-speaking travelers and residents desired to hold a religious service upon Mars' Hill, which was done about 4 p.m. on Sunday. When the time came a small and select audience assembled, representing England, Scotland, five States of the Union, Canada, and seven religious denominations. Three Christian bodies were represented in the conduct of the services. Dr. Bancroft, a minister of the Congregational communion, read the Scriptures and offered prayer; the sermon was delivered by the writer; and the closing prayer was made by Mr. Mills, of the Society of Friends, President of Earlham College in Indiana. Not far away stood several priests of the Greek Church closely watching the proceedings.' Buckley, 521.

95 For example: 'Much of this [religious practice] seems to us formality and idolatry' Wenger, 128.

96 Noted by the author of *Photograms*, 86.

97 For example York, 264, Pitman, 52, 53.

leaders of the Greek church asked the missionaries to stop spreading foreign ideas that contradicted their own church's teachings, the expatriates reminded them that Paul too had been a foreigner, and, they might have added, had also been a apostate from the Jewish religion into which he had been born.⁹⁸ In their determination to save souls, some felt that they were losing a race against time. If the new apostles did not 'put on the sandals of alacrity', wrote an American spokesman for the missions, Satan and his demons would subvert the plans of Providence and poison the world with scepticism 'before we have got our Christian books and tracts ready'.⁹⁹ Because, for the most part, the authors were writing for their own constituencies, with little risk that their words would ever be read by those people about whom they wrote, we find frankness and probably sincerity. The Rev. Joel Hawes, for example, advising his congregation that missionaries were making no progress, described the Greeks as 'a vain, proud, superstitious, bigoted people; extremely jealous of the influence of foreigners, and very much under the control of a corrupt and ignorant priesthood'.¹⁰⁰

In these texts, which mostly share a rhetoric that theism is a natural and universal human characteristic despite the fact that their own experience showed that this was not the case, we hear expressions of an imperializing attitude that came easily to the nineteenth-century west—not only an assumption that their own versions of religion were superior to those prevalent in the lands where that religion had first been invented and institutionalized, but that the others were false.¹⁰¹ However, as was admitted by Jean Hippolyte, the Abbé de St Michon, who wrote a long report on his efforts in Athens and elsewhere, both the Roman and the Orthodox churches were confronted by a different and, in his view, even greater threat. Greece, he reported, with the coming of political independence, had experienced its own eighteenth century. As in Enlightenment Europe, the 'spirits of men were lulled by the illusions of philosophy'.¹⁰² The people were no longer interested in the inter-ecclesiastical disputes of the past, but 'infidelity, which

98 For example Pease, 644.

99 Pierson, 409.

100 Hawes, *Prosperous Journey*, 18.

101 For example 'branching ever into new lands and opening the way to new conquests.' Howson, 243.

102 Michon, 6,

distinctly denies the restoration of the world by Christianity has penetrated into all ranks of society. More to be dreaded than heresy [...] unbelief has gone so far, that it has called forth against it the zeal of the bishops and ministers of the separated communions [...] They have loudly declared that the tendency of unaided human reason is to shake off the yoke of faith, and have trembled like ourselves for that Gospel whose divine words they venerate'.¹⁰³ The missionaries were in favour of 'education', but only on their own counter-Enlightenment terms. As William Allen wrote in 1819 on his journey to a brief stay in Athens, before the Revolution, having seen the libraries at Odessa in the Crimea: 'we were particularly struck with the importance of a judicious selection of books. We deem the writings of Voltaire and the French philosophers, extremely dangerous in the hands of inexperienced youth, and even some of the classical authors contain sentiments, and excite ideas, calculated to favour the natural corruption of the human heart. With respect to the classics, we think that those editions only should be used, wherein care has been taken to leave out objectionable passages'.¹⁰⁴

Whereas, to the admirers of the Parthenon, the success of the Greek Revolution marked the dawn of a new Hellenic nation with an ideology that jumped back across the Middle Ages to ancient times, to the arriving missionaries it was the opportunities to change the local religious practices that was most welcomed. As the Irish-American journalist and self-appointed modern crusader wrote of his visit to Athens in the early 1850s: 'The population is about seventeen thousand, principally degenerate Greeks'.¹⁰⁵ Like Paul, many wanted to bring about revolutionary change, an idea caught by an image from a book for children shown as Figure 22.5. As the final words declare: 'May the same doctrine which Paul preached among the ancient, be expounded to the modern Greeks and the religion of the Bible be exchanged for the heartless forms and unmeaning prayers taught them by an unenlightened priesthood'.

103 Michon, 12. As another example, 'that tendency to unbelief or half-belief ... by which we are surrounded.' Howson, v.

104 Allen, ii, 94. Like his companion Stephen Grellet, he knew that the Areopagus was thought to be the site of Paul's speech, but he did not give it special attention.

105 Browne, J. Ross, 89.



Figure 22.5. An image of a new Christian dawn breaking over the Acropolis. Steel engraving.¹⁰⁶

But although, partly as a result of the work of the foreign mission schools, the general literacy and educational levels in Greece soared, the western Christians had little success in ‘purifying’ the neo-Hellenes ‘from the follies, absurdities, and abominations of the Greek faith.’¹⁰⁷ A fact-finding mission sent to Athens in 1849 reported that the rapidly rising levels of education had not led to more Bible-based Christianity but to a withdrawal into purely nominal adherence to Orthodoxy ‘verging towards Infidelity’.¹⁰⁸ The ancient ruins that were now being promoted locally as symbols of nationhood and of educational and social improvement should, the mission recommended, adapting the ‘venerable monitors’ discourse of the philosophical viewers of the long

106 Frontispiece and title page of Taylor, Emily, *Historical prints, representing some of the most memorable events in the history of ancient and modern Greece, ... By the author of "Charlie's discoveries"* (London: Harvey and Darton, [n.d.], c.1840).

107 Stephens, 67.

108 Crawford, ii, 763.

eighteenth century, be regarded as warnings of what calamities were in store for the Greeks if they did not change their customs and beliefs.¹⁰⁹

Well-financed, the missionaries of the western Christian churches, large and small, the 'knight-errants of Christianity' as another sympathizer called them in the language of the crusades, worked hard for many decades in many countries of the Ottoman and formerly Ottoman territories besides Greece. And when we read of the schools, the hospitals, and the orphanages that they established, of the slaves they redeemed, and of the illnesses and miseries that they and their families suffered, it is hard to withhold a measure of admiration for their single-mindedness. However, in terms of their main aims, they had little success, with almost no converts, whether from amongst the Orthodox Christians, the Muslims, the Jews, or from other communities.¹¹⁰ The peoples they attempted to change remained, in their terms, 'unsaved'. It was a result so disappointingly different from the success in Africa and some other parts of the world, that as one report noted, with a hint of the sin of despair: 'The human heart is every where essentially the same; and never is it more violent in its hostility to the truth, than when that truth disturbs its repose behind the mass of superstition and folly, which constitutes the remains of the ancient Christian churches in the eastern world'.¹¹¹

109 'May not the ancient monuments found standing in the midst of such localities, justly be considered as splendid beacons, warning the present and all future generations of the awful calamities that inevitably follow the worship of any gods but the Triune God of salvation, revealed in the Holy Scriptures.' Crawford, ii, 767. For the philosophical viewer and 'venerable monitors' see Chapter 13.

110 Noted by, for example, Madden, ii, 234, from whose book the phrase is taken. Among those who sent money for the Rev. Hill's school was Lady Byron. 'Lady Byron has just sent us one hundred pounds toward enlarging our house with this view, and we have commenced the erection of three additional dormitories with the money.' Remark attributed to Hill by Stephens, 69. An exception was Joannes Lazarides, a convert, who carried on Hartley's work in the Peloponnese, and whose journal reports conversations with local clergy that draw attention to the biblical texts that prohibit all images.

111 *Twenty Fourth Annual Report of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (Boston: September 1833), 12. For the disgust of Samuel Gridley Howe at the competing denominations of Christian missionaries, which contributed to his decision to become a Unitarian, see Trent, James W. Jr., "Vulgar Appearing Little Bodies": Samuel G. Howe and American Missionaries in Greece, 1827–1830. A paper presented at the annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians, Atlanta, April 2014.

The leaderships of the Roman Catholic Church in the west also sent missions aimed at bringing, or as they would say, bringing back, the Orthodox Church of Greece as an institution within its own ecclesiastical jurisdiction, seeing it and its Ottoman-era and Byzantine predecessor as 'schismatic' organizations that had seceded from the original 'true' church allegedly established in Rome by Peter and Paul. Fastening on the period of time between the collapse of the ancient world and modern times, they dreamed of re-establishing the dominance that their version of Christianity had exercised over Syria and Palestine, as well as in Greece and elsewhere, during the crusading centuries. But like the missionaries of Protestant versions of Christianity, they had little success.¹¹²

Before its appropriation by the western Christians in the 1840s, the Areopagus hill was seldom pictured, apart from a few imagined reconstructions of how the ancient court might have appeared. As with the Acropolis, so with the Areopagus, however; from the time the encounter began we can dig down through the expectation-setting and iconizing images, both as a layered archaeology and as a two-way interplay of ecphrasis and counter-ecphrasis. Most engravings, by focussing on the sixteen steps, reinforced the loop between recommended ways of seeing and actual on-the-spot experiences as they were reported. Going to Mars' Hill, or looking at an engraving of Mars' Hill would, the producers of these visual images hoped, confirm viewers in the professed beliefs of their community. Since, because of the visit of Paul, Athens was regarded as situated in a 'biblical land', the Areopagus earned a place in 'The Footsteps of Jesus'¹¹³ and among the 'Earthly Footsteps of the Man of Galilee [...] and His Apostles.'¹¹⁴

A fuller version of the same view, which adds features, such as goats and shepherds, that emphasized the picturesque contrast between the magnificent ancient buildings and what Greece had become, is shown as Figure 22.6.

112 St Michon, Abbé de, [Jean Hippolyte] *Narrative of a Religious Journey in the East in 1850 and 1851* (London: Bentley, 1853).

113 For example, Godbey, Bartlett, Morton.

114 Vincent.



Figure 22.6. 'Mars-hill, at Athens.' Steel engraving, designed by W.H. Bartlett, engraved by J. Couson.¹¹⁵

And just as classicists looked at the Greeks of their time through the lens of the ancient authors, so too the western Christians were pre-conditioned by their reading of their bible. When the Rev. John Hartley, already mentioned as having seen the desolation in the post-Revolution Peloponnese, saw a Greek woman carrying a bundle of straw, he immediately thought of Ruth the Gleaner. When he saw shepherds counting their sheep into a pen, he remembered that Jeremiah had described the ancient Jews as doing the same.¹¹⁶ When the visitors saw men gathering in cafés or eagerly conversing in the streets, they were reminded of the remark of the narrator of the Acts of the Apostles, that Athenians were always chasing after something new.¹¹⁷ The narrator of the Acts, who was repeating a piece of Athenian self-fashioning, an

¹¹⁵ From *Footsteps*, 1847.

¹¹⁶ Hartley, 364. Numerous examples in Yeardley, J. and M., *Eastern Customs; Illustrative of Scripture Passages; with some observations on the Character, Manners, &c of the Greeks* (London: Harvey and Darton, 1842).

¹¹⁷ As one of many examples 'The Athenians of St. Paul's day were inquisitive and newsy, they are so still, spending much time in the cafes, either to hear or to tell some new thing.' Goddard, 148. The narrator of the Acts, who was repeating a piece of Athenian self-fashioning, an openness to new ideas, that was already common at the time when Thucydides composed the funeral oration of Pericle may not have intended the remark as a sneer, but as an explanation of why the Athenian schools agreed to give him a platform.

openness to new ideas, that was already common in classical Athens when Thucydides composed the funeral oration that he put into the mouth of Pericles, may not have intended the remark as a sneer, but as an explanation of why the Athenian schools of philosophy agreed to give a platform to Paul, one of many wandering sophists who visited Athens at the time.

And the apparent continuity of modern Athens with the descriptions and metaphors of the world described in the biblical texts could itself be fitted into another overarching worldview, providing confirmation and reinforcement. As one visitor noted, picking up an orientalizing cliché that lumped together all non-European-derived societies, and assumed that it was mainly for western viewers that Providence had laid on miracles: 'Surely it was an unerring Providence which laid the scene of man's redemption in the unchanging East'.¹¹⁸ The Rev. Joseph Lee hoped that it would remain unchanged till the end of time, another observation that did not fit with the ambition to convert but that provided an excuse for failure.¹¹⁹

Like the eighteenth-century searchers after a philosophy of history, the Mars' Hill visitors liked to put themselves into a dream-like state to help them throw off the constraints of time and place, inducing themselves into semi-consciousness in order to intensify the experience. They too hoped to make the past become the present, and perhaps to receive messages from outside their own minds and memories. 'I surrender myself to meditation', wrote Archibald Black, a senior Presbyterian churchman from Edinburgh in Scotland, adopting the archaic style that had also been favoured by those who half-shut their eyes in wonderment at the buildings on the Hellenic Acropolis, 'methinks I behold St Paul on this very platform'. Black claimed that he felt 'his devotion quickened into fervour, his faith rise higher, his prayer

118 Fawthrop, 5. Other examples. 'Manners and customs are so stationary in the East, that you are transferred by magic to the age of the apostles, the prophets, and the patriarchs.' Schaff, 14. 'Immutability is the most striking characteristic of the East from the ancient strife of Cain and Abel, to the present struggle between the Crescent and the Cross, its people remain in their habits of thought and action less changed than the countries they inhabit ...' Warburton, opening sentence of the main text of the first edition.

119 'I was greatly impressed with the striking agreement between the sacred narrative and the present features of the scene ... and it ought to be allowed to remain so till time shall be no more.' Lee, Joseph, 6.

become more earnest, his soul and spirit, so to speak sublimated and spiritualised'. Black reports too that his reveries brought on a sense of revulsion: 'The temple-crowned rock, crowded with shrines and fanes dedicated to strange gods and goddesses, ornamented with all the adornments that wealth could purchase or genius achieve — the whole designed to gratify a voluptuous, yet a religious taste'.¹²⁰

Mrs George Sumner, wife of a senior English churchman, remarked that: 'it was easy by day-dreaming to re-people the beautiful old ruins' almost as if she had remembered being at a magic lantern show and hearing the commentary. In her mind's eye she saw 'worshippers crowded into the Erechtheum and the Parthenon in their long robes, amidst all the brilliancy of a splendid though corrupt ritual'.¹²¹ Since her erroneous assumption that ancient religious ceremonies were conducted inside the ancient buildings—just as she herself attended religious ceremonies inside her husband's church—slipped through the editorial processes as her expensive book was prepared for publication, we may guess that her misunderstanding may have been widespread, probably even shared by her husband who had advised her on her book.

Pliny Earle, when he returned home to the United States, transported himself into a semi-conscious state by contemplating an anemone he picked on the Areopagus. He imagined Paul preaching to the philosophers of the main schools assembled there to listen to him: Aristotle, Zeno, Plato, Socrates, and even Diogenes. In his vision the philosophers are awed, immediately convinced, admit they were wrong, change their teaching, and posthumously become Christians.¹²² The image at Figure 22.7, a composite of photograph and drawing was made for communal showing with a magic lantern in a darkened room. It catches a moment—part actual seeing, part self-induced dreaming—that Archibald Black and other visitors, as well as the visitors by proxy, were invited to conjure up in their minds as a starting point for a stream

¹²⁰ Black, Archibald, 516.

¹²¹ Sumner, Mrs George, *Our Holiday in the East*, edited by the Rev. George Henry Sumner, Hon. Canon of Winchester, and Rector of Old Alresford, Hants. (London: Hurst and Blackett 1881), 326. Published in large octavo format with unusually large type and woodcut engravings, and priced at fifteen shillings, around the weekly income of a skilled manual worker, this book was only likely to have been available to a small readership from the upper middle classes, including family friends.

¹²² Earle 'Lines to a flower brought from Mars' Hill, Athens' in *Marathon*, 104–07.

of mental events that were partly chosen, partly scripted, but also partly free-floating meditation. As with many images that show the viewers within the picture, the viewers of the image are offered a range of presented, responses, including admiration and assent, indifference, and one prominent participant presented as directly facing the viewer of the picture, partly as self-reflexivity, partly as an appeal.¹²³



Figure 22.7. Paul visualized as standing on the steps of the Areopagus. Magic lantern glass slide, c.1900.¹²⁴

What we see occurring on the Areopagus during the nineteenth century is the establishment of a religious cult imported into Athens at a specific time in the 1830s, which grew rapidly to an apogee around 1905, and then tailed off in the twentieth century, but that still has some adherents.¹²⁵ We see a process driven by spoken, ritually performed, written, copied, and printed words, by mutual display, by visual images reproduced, iconized, and their rhetoric reinforced by words and by tokens, both individual and collective, that carried some potential

¹²³ Discussed in *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>.

¹²⁴ Private collection.

¹²⁵ By 1931, Brentano's substantial guidebook to Athens aimed at American and European tourists, described the Areopagus and its history, including the speech by Paul, but recommended: 'TIME to visit Areiopagus [sic] 5 minutes.' [Brentano's] *Athens, How to see it, including Greece and Crete* (New York and Paris: Brentano, 1931/32), 66.

for reawakening memory. All was supported by an economic and commercial infrastructure that soon developed from a niche to a mature international industry with its own aims and interests, including a wish to protect and enhance its investments, mental, physical, economic, and rhetorical. We see a repetition in modern times, using the then modern technologies of mass communication, of how in the early Christian centuries and almost certainly in antiquity too, sites were sacralized and endowed with stories that emphasized their difference from the stories of previous regimes, and how they were then used to help sacralize other sites far away in colonizing hops.

We have a historical example, richly documentable with contemporaneous evidence to a degree of detail seldom encountered in history, of how clusters of real communities, whose members knew one another by sight and personal acquaintance, were formed and then held together as geographically widely separated imagined communities. Within their memberships and practitioners, any question of whether sincerity could be separated from performance was not only impossible to answer but, for the most part, scarcely worth asking.

When we put all this writing and picturing together, we have a vast corpus of books, articles, and images created by men and women from many western countries, with different languages, and from different backgrounds, who were conscious that they would never visit Athens again, and who, in their first, and often their only, venture into authorship or picture-making, tried to record their experiences, thoughts, and meditations for others, including but not confined to co-religionists, family, and friends at home. We therefore know an astonishingly large amount about the attitudes of mind that were professed by an extraordinarily wide range of men, women, and young people who were temporarily thrown together, often for months on end, including scholars, archaeologists, businessmen, university professors and lecturers, students, tour guides, and young women who scarcely bothered to conceal that they hoped to find suitable husbands, as well as many churchmen and their family members. We also have full and detailed reports of the conversations that took place on board ship and at other places on the tours, a corpus of texts, both verbal and visual, in which the cultural producers were not separated from the consumers but which record what was co-produced, co-consumed, co-performed, and co-debated within a set of mental conventions that were broadly

shared. Now mostly forgotten, the men and women of Mars' Hill deserve to be accorded their place without condescension in the long history of looking at the Parthenon. Because of the sheer quantity, variety, and social reach of the primary records that they composed, we are also given a privileged seat at a debate where we can silently listen to the contemporary voices in one of the most far-reaching intellectual shifts of the nineteenth century.

Christian Providentialism and the Ancient Monuments

When the Areopagus first became a place of western pilgrimage, ritual, and practice, most members of the constituency assumed that modern archaeology would confirm the historical reliability of the accounts given in their Bible, just as scholarly and archaeological work since the 1670s had tended to confirm the accounts of events given by the ancient Hellenic historians. To the testimony of their Bible, many visitors thought, would now be added the testimony of the spade.¹²⁶ The physical remains still visible on the ground, either recently or soon to be dug up, would be a 'Fifth Gospel'.¹²⁷ It was the same phrase that, in earlier centuries,

126 For example, Burnfield, Rev. George, M.A., B.D., Ex-examiner in Oriental Languages and Literature in the University of Toronto, *Voices from the Orient; or, The Testimony of the Monuments, of the recent historical and topographical discoveries: and of the customs and traditions of the people in the Orient to the veracity of the sacred record* (Toronto: Blackett, 1884); Morris, Herbert W., D.D., Author of "Science and the Bible: or, The Work Days of God," 'Present conflict of Science with the Christian Religion,' etc., *Testimony of the ages; or, Confirmations of the Scriptures, from modern science and recent discoveries; ancient records and monuments; the ruins of cities and relics of tombs; The Greek and Latin Classics; Assyrian Inscriptions and Egyptian Hieroglyphics; Antique Sculptures, Coins, Gems and Medals; The Ordnance Survey of Sinai; The Late Exploration of Palestine; The Literal Fulfillment of Prophecies, as Attested by the Writings of Heathen Nations; etc., etc.: EVIDENCES Which the PLAIN READER can understand, which the SCHOLAR will appreciate, and which the SKEPTIC cannot refute* (Philadelphia: Bradley, 1883); 'De Hass, Frank S., D.D., *Buried cities recovered, or, Explorations in Bible lands, giving the results of recent researches in the Orient, and recovery of many places in sacred and profane history long considered lost. With appendix* (Philadelphia, Bradley, 5th edition 1884). 'Much has been brought to light in the past fifty years to confirm the Divine Word.' Lee, Joseph, 6. A modern discussion of the relationship between the historical veracity and credibility of the texts included in the Christian bibles and the findings of archaeology is offered by Whitlam, Keith, in 'The Archaeological study of the Bible' in *New Cambridge History of the Bible* vol 4, pp. 139–48.

127 Hartshorn and Klopsch, 14. Travelling to the places 'gives us, if not a Fifth Gospel, certainly a setting of the four we have, in newer and more clearly cut type.' Hardy, Rev. E.J., 15. That modern Palestine was itself a 'fifth gospel' was suggested by Schaff, 14.

had been applied to the writings attributed to Dionysios the Areopagite, long (wrongly) thought to have been the work of the Dionysios who is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles as one of Paul's first converts, and a set of texts that therefore carried near-biblical authority.¹²⁸

The discovering of new information by archaeology was itself, many claimed, part of an unfolding Christian providentialism. Typical was the remark of Daniel Kauffman, an American Mennonite: 'That God has preserved many of these ancient landmarks (some of them hidden away for centuries) to serve as a living testimony to the truths of the Bible, is strikingly evident'.¹²⁹ Or, as was noted in his book by the English churchman, Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, incidentally revealing that his method of inquiry assumed the answers: 'no opportunity has been lost of showing how these eastern lands illustrate and confirm the Bible'.¹³⁰ But not all were reassured. John Laird Patterson, visiting in 1849, was determined not to have his 'faith' undermined by 'philosophy'. But he admitted to being shaken by his first sight of Athens. He called his experience 'that mastery of our souls which sways them with a rod so strong and yet so gentle, that to escape it is at once beyond our power and beside our will'.¹³¹ Conscious that his Christian predecessors had contributed to the destruction of ancient civilization, he wanted to be simultaneously sorry and glad: 'How I wish I could wish her greatness restored; but that is as impossible as it is to a Christian undesirable. Whatever attempts have been made in that direction, have been so plainly "philosophic"—that is in the French sense of anti-Christian,—that it seems manifest that we must look back of the times of pagan Greek intellectual sway as passed away (and happily so) for ever'.¹³² Wide-ranging though the debate was, there were also gaps. By the time the it had assumed its main shape in the 1850s, the Muslim cemetery had been cleansed from the built memory, and, by many of those who established the cult on Mars' Hill, Muslims were presented not as enemies, but as potential candidates to be converted. To the western Christians, almost without exception,

128 Discussed in Chapter 7.

129 Wenger, Introduction by Daniel Kauffman, v.

130 Hughes viii. 'Surely it was an unerring Providence which laid the scene of man's redemption in the unchanging East.' Fawthrop, 5.

131 Patterson, 349.

132 Patterson, 351.

the religion against which they posited themselves was that of the ancient Athenians whose monuments had not only been saved from destruction during the Revolution but were now growing in stature both physically and as objects of esteem.

And what if the long-prepared-for visit to the hill did not produce the expected rapturous renewal of belief in the historical validity of Christianity? As was admitted by the Rev. Frederick William Faber, a friend and neighbour of the English poet William Wordsworth: 'Here, as in some other very famous localities, faith and sight forego their usual offices. Sight brings doubt, and destroys faith with a very trouble on unbelief [...] I demand a sign. Those sixteen stone steps on Mars' Hill — has the sandal of the wonder-working Paul left no trace behind?'¹³³ Faber, who visited in 1841 and saw the effects of the religious cleansings of the Greek Revolution, acknowledged that he felt the onset of doubts. To him, his journey to and from Mars' Hill had been what he called a 'spiritual' exercise in interpreting what he saw as the workings of a providentialism that he believed was still unfolding and that he hoped to help along.¹³⁴ His book, much of which is in dialogue form, is one of the most thoughtful and learned contributions to the debates on Mars' Hill as it stood in the 1840s.

Near the hill itself can still be seen a complex of three caves, set into the rock, long known as 'The Prison of Socrates', that, like the Areopagus itself, became part of the photographic and postcard canon of famous sights in Athens that developed in the nineteenth century. It was here, so it was said, that Socrates had been imprisoned before he took the fatal hemlock, as recounted by Plato and Xenophon. At some time in the remoter past, the site had been stripped, but as nineteenth-century photographs, such as that at Figure 22.8, shows, the line of beam-holes implied instead that a substantial house of two or three stories had once stood here. The caves are cellars with a water cistern.

¹³³ Faber *Sights*, 409.

¹³⁴ 'to wander up and down the broad Continent, whose very countenance is seamed and furrowed by the lines of God's past Providences and the potent action of His already accomplished decrees, to take up here and there the links of some tremendous chain of mysterious arrangements, to gaze on the fair faces of old cities, whose character and fortunes have been distinct, peculiar, and each subserving, in this or that age, and in this or that manner, the cause of the Catholic Church of Christ.' Faber, *Sights*, 122.



Figure 22.8. 'The Prison of Socrates'. Photograph, middle of the nineteenth century.¹³⁵

Of all the famous men of classical Athens, Socrates occupied a special place for western Christians, being regarded by many as a precursor to the early Christian martyrs in having gone willingly to his death.¹³⁶ The visitors could imagine Socrates's circle of close friends who, in the days before the sentence of death was carried out, waited for the prison doors to open and passed the day with him; and how he had been calm, almost unconcerned, and had urged them not to mourn;¹³⁷ and how he had apparently believed that he would meet good men in an afterlife.¹³⁸ Some imagined Paul himself looking at the prison and being reminded that he too, like Socrates, faced death for proposing the introduction of foreign deities and corrupting the young.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ Unidentified. Private collection from Albiker.

¹³⁶ For example: Ashworth, 49. [Socrates] 'made to drink hemlock because 'he had dared to speak of the one true God, whom the Athenians absolutely refused to acknowledge, preferring either to remain in the darkness of ignorance, and the worship of their false deities' Demont, 23. Beldam, 316–17.

¹³⁷ As described in Plato's dialogue the *Phaedo* at Plat. *Phaedo* 59d. Plato was not himself present.

¹³⁸ Plat. *Phaedo* 63c.

¹³⁹ For example Baynes, 211, and Felton, *Familiar Letters*, 216: 'I thought] of Socrates, discoursing to—his weeping friends on the immortality of the soul, in the dungeon

At some point, the caves were given barred gates, making them appear more like prisons, but also changing the visitor experience. As the photograph reproduced as Figure 22.9 implies, the change enabled some to imagine themselves as locked inside, awaiting the hemlock cup.

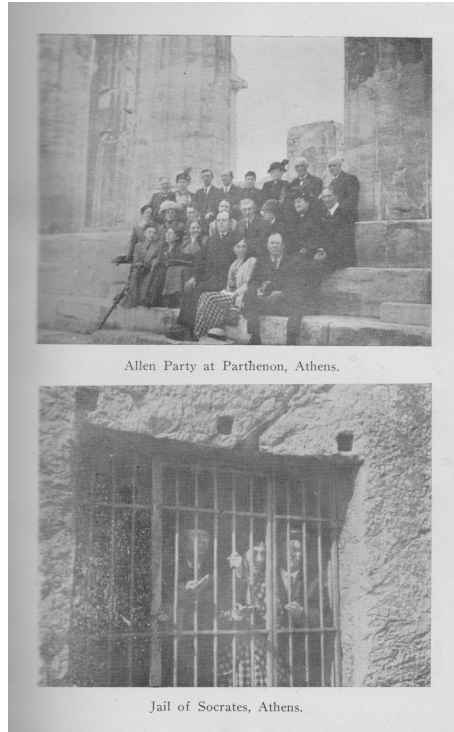


Figure 22.9. A party of American Christians visiting the Parthenon and 'The Jail of Socrates'. Photograph 1914.¹⁴⁰

Constructing Socrates as a Christian *avant la lettre* appeared to offer a way through an old puzzle.¹⁴¹ 'For surely the Spirit who spoke to Paul, spoke also, though less clearly to Socrates', wrote Agnes Smith in 1882.¹⁴² According to Frederika Bremer, a Swedish writer, in a comment on the

almost within a stone's throw, so near that I could see the mortises in the living rock where the beams of the wooden front were inserted.'

140 Oliver, George F., D.D., *A trip through Bible lands and Europe; a journalistic record of a tour made in the summer of 1914, just before the world-wide war* (Champaign: Loudon, 1915), 24. The 'Allen Party' was named after the tour leader, Dr. Ray Allen, of Rochester, New York.

141 Willis, *Pencillings*, ii, 143.

142 Smith, Agnes *Glimpses of Greek Life and Scenery*, 15.

Parthenon and the other ancient temples: 'Neither are they fitted for the dwelling of the Supreme God. Socrates saw this, and dug deep in order to find a better foundation'.¹⁴³ 'I stood in the dungeon of the man who came nearest to Christ's character in all the attributes of natural religion of any mere man who ever lived in the world', wrote John Aiton D.D., of his visit in 1851.¹⁴⁴ A visitor from Brazil conjured up a vision of Socrates as the 'Christ of paganism'.¹⁴⁵

In the Mars' Hill debates, we can also see the continuation of old attempts to amalgamate the history of the ancient Jews with that of the ancient Greeks that had been attempted by Isaac Newton and by many other predecessors. It was repeated, notably by John Gadsby, that the ancient Greeks were the children of Japhet, who according to the Jewish biblical book of Genesis had divided amongst themselves the 'isles of the Gentiles'.¹⁴⁶ According to this account, the Phoenicians and Canaanites who escaped the cleansing by the ancient Jews when they seized the territory where they had lived, as was recorded in the Old Testament, had fled to Greece.¹⁴⁷ The continuities of identity that Gadsby and others postulated, and that they sometimes thought they could see, were mainly of genetic race, regarded as carrying some essence across the millennia through all the contingencies of history and opportunities for mixing genes that slave-based societies provided. And however cruel and unfair that ancient Jewish biblical history proclaimed itself to be in its own texts, its stories had somehow to be squeezed into a grand unifying narrative of a benevolent Providence.

Only a few of the visitors to Mars' Hill knew that the problem of the 'good pagans' had exercised their pre-modern predecessors, the schoolmen of the western European Middle Ages, who had attempted to discern a coherence in the texts and statements of belief of what constituted the indispensable essentials of Christianity that they had inherited from late antiquity.¹⁴⁸ Since, despite much searching, it had

143 Bremer, *Greece and the Greeks*, i, 54.

144 Aiton, 464. 'the first dawning of pure truth.' Christmas, ii, 268.

145 Je m'approchai de cette ouverture avec une profonde vénération, et assise sur une pierre isolée, je me figurais voir le Christ du paganisme. Augusta, N. Floresta Brasileira, *Trois ans en Italie suivis d'un voyage en Grèce par une brésilienne* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1864), 163.

146 Gadsby, *My Wanderings*, 59, discussing Genesis x, 2–50.

147 Gadsby, *My Wanderings*, 61.

148 Discussed, using the language and the discourses of that time, by Marenbon, John, *Pagans and philosophers: the problem of paganism from Augustine to Leibniz* (Princeton:

proved impossible to find any evidence that the classical Athenians could have had any substantial knowledge of the texts or customs of the ancient Jews, and since in classical Athens the birth of Jesus of Nazareth lay centuries in the future, it seemed unfair for their god to have consigned Socrates and millions more, indeed the majority of human beings who had ever lived until that time, to the torments of eternal damnation under the same rules that applied to post-Revelation voluntary disbelievers, although some churchmen had not shrunk from that conclusion.

Nor did many, at any rate in their recorded words, associate Socrates with 'l'amour socratique' the ancient Hellenic practice of young men and boys of high status becoming sexual lovers of older male teachers, as Alcibiades had been educated by Socrates, such pederasty being part of the classical Athenian education ('paideia'), at any rate within some privileged circles.¹⁴⁹ Indeed it is likely that Paul's condemnation of homoerotic practices that he said were encouraged by looking at the visual presentations of gods and mortals to be seen in Athens and elsewhere may have featured in his speech on the Areopagus as it did in his writings. It was left to John Addington Symonds, who was learned in ancient Greek literature, to note during his visit in 1873 that same-sex relationships were regarded as normal, admirable even, in classical Athens, and that it had been Paul who had been responsible, among others, for the fierce homophobia that was to become a feature of Christianity through to his own day and later.¹⁵⁰

Princeton UP, 2015).

149 The phrase used by Fougeret de Monbron, *Le Cosmopolite, ou, le Citoyen du Monde* (London, or perhaps Paris: at the Author's expense, 1753), 25, when he came across the custom in the Ottoman Empire in his philosophical travels. Although Fougeret did not himself visit Athens, his book was known to some who did, notably Byron, who used a quotation from the book as the expectation setting epigraph on the title page of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, A Romaunt*, 1812. The custom of pederasty as part of the approved education of privileged boys coexisted in classical Athens with measures that carried severe penalties against casual exploitation and prostitution. For example: 'He [the law-giver] forbids the teacher to open the school-room, or the gymnastic trainer the wrestling school, before sunrise, and he commands them to close the doors before sunset; for he is exceeding suspicious of their being alone with a boy, or in the dark with him.' Aeschin. 1. 9, with a verbatim extract from the law at 1. 12.

150 In the chapter 'Athens' in Symonds, John Addington, *Sketches in Italy and Greece* (London: Smith, Elder, 1874) and much expanded in Symonds, John Addington, *A Problem In Greek Ethics: Being an Inquiry Into the Phenomenon of Sexual Inversion, Addressed Especially to Medical Psychologists And Jurists* (London: 1901).

Modern, even liberal though many were, some of the visitors to Mars' Hill clung to other ideas that had long since been rejected in the judicial systems of most of the western countries where they lived. Like the Ottoman sultans of the *millet* era, they were not discomfited by notions of collective guilt and collective punishment, nor of living people having to carry a hereditary responsibility for the actions of long-dead ancestors. But unlike Sultan Mahmoud II and his Grand Vizier Reschid, who in 1827 had used the monuments of Athens as a lever to help put such ideas into the past, the men and women of Mars' Hill seldom questioned the precepts and explanations of their sacred texts. Frederick William Faber, for example, in considering the question of the eternal damnation of 'good pagans', accepted Paul's explanation that his god had patiently 'winked', that is, had turned a blind eye for a while, until the god had been obliged to act against 'heathen' shapes and forms in order to defeat the devil.¹⁵¹ Later in his life, after long study and reflection, Faber concluded that since 'the church cannot err', he had to 'acknowledge and adore' the Providence that through all the massacres and miseries that he had seen with his own eyes in Greece had preserved the Orthodox Church. He was later to join a procession of English churchmen who, in their attempts to find certainty, transferred their allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church. In the writings of men such as Faber and Patterson, we not only glimpse the inner struggles of individuals, but see examples of the growth of a more general realization that the answers that 'faith' had provided were not only increasingly hard to accept intellectually but were becoming morally repugnant.

The idea was carried forward by Frank W. Gunsaulus, a prominent professional Christian pastor, author, lecturer, and civic leader and philanthropist in Chicago during the later nineteenth century, who did not visit Athens but relied on scholarly debates about which he was evidently well informed. In 1891, Gunsaulus published a long poem in which he attempted to redirect the fame of Pheidias as the supreme artist and prophet of romanticism onto a Christian agenda. In his imitation of a Greek play, composed in unrhymed verse, Gunsaulus presented Pheidias in prison awaiting execution being visited by Aspasia and

¹⁵¹ Faber, *Sighs*, 493. The 'God winking' argument is discussed further in *The Classical Parthenon*.

by Socrates.¹⁵² Pheidias reveals that the charges against him, of having broken the conventions against showing current political leaders and of having embezzled money, were just a pretext.¹⁵³ The real reason why he was beset by enemies, he declares, is that had come to realize that the ancient gods did not deserve his respect:

Nay! Greece besotted by her rabble gods,
Fond of the Bacchic dance, and fonder still
Or Dionysiac orgies, shameless crimes

In this imagining, Pheidias, at the end of his life, partly as a result of having read the works of Anaxagoras, a speculative pre-Socratic philosopher referred to by Plato, renounces his early work. His experience as a sculptor has now convinced him that Zeus was the only divinity, and one whom readers of the poem would recognize as much the same being as the Judaeo-Christian god to whom they bowed before in their own time.

Oh, I have lived and wrought and wept and prayed
In every chisel course, in every scratch
Left by my file's burr through those lucent hours
My Zeus Olympian found Him human form.
I have compressed His thunder, felt His heart.
There is One God.

By the end of the poem, Zeus had not only become good and caring and had abandoned his Hellenic ways, but had become 'flesh and blood' and was ready to welcome his adherents to an afterlife.

During the nineteenth century, a huge scholarly effort led by German philologists, notably Eduard Norden, had attempted to show that ideas of what would later be regarded as monotheism and divine providentialism had existed in the ancient world, in a semi-secret cult, referred to as Orphism.¹⁵⁴ And it is possible that Gunsaulus knew of this

¹⁵² Gunsaulus, Frank W., *Phidias and other Poems* (Chicago: McClurg, 1891)

¹⁵³ These attacks, as reported in ancient authors, are discussed in *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>.

¹⁵⁴ Norden, Eduard, *Agnostos Theos: Untersuchungen zur Formengeschichte religiöser Rede* (Leipzig, Berlin: B.G. Teubner, 1913). I am grateful to the late Professor Donald Russell, my tutor when I was an undergraduate, for drawing the existence of this book to my attention and for presenting me with his own copy as a token of our friendship.

body of work. In 2006 came a unique contribution to the understanding of Orphism with the publication of substantial fragments of a text of the fourth century BCE now known as the Derveni Papyrus, which had been found in a tomb in Macedonia in 1962 and had, most unusually, survived the damp of the soil as a result of having been scorched and carbonized.¹⁵⁵ Had the text's invocation of 'Zeus from whose mind all things are made', and its myths of origin ('aetologies'), which reached back to ages before Jesus of Nazareth, been known to those who debated on Mars' Hill, they would, we can be confident, have eagerly grasped it as a lifeline for their own theism. Other parts, such as its vivid sexual stories, would not have been so eagerly received.¹⁵⁶ The episode is a reminder of the fact that all of the classical Athenian papyrus records of the decision to build the Parthenon are lost, a systemic bias in the materials available to be brought to bear as evidence.¹⁵⁷

For those visiting Athens and Mars' Hill by ship from the west, a visit to the excavated ruins of Pompeii was frequently part of the itinerary on either the inward or the outward leg. At Pompeii, many were sure that they saw the vengeance that their god had exacted on the people who had lived there in ancient times. It would seem, James Hunter suggested in 1927, in a book given as a prize to children at Sunday schools, that it was 'the will of God in overwhelming Pompeii to give to the world a second example of His judgement on an impure, rebellious town.'¹⁵⁸ The first warning had been Sodom and Gomorrah 'destroyed by God on account of their abominations'.¹⁵⁹ By 'rebellious', Hunter explained, since Pompeii was only a few hundred miles from Rome, by 79 CE, the year of the eruption, the Pompeians had had plenty of time to learn about and to adopt Christianity and therefore had only themselves to blame. When, in 1912, on his way to Athens and the other biblical lands, William Ford Nichols, the head of the Episcopalian church in California, soon to be the archbishop, saw the moulds of the bodies of

155 Tsantsanoglou, K., with G.M. Parássoglou, and T. Kouremenos (editors), 2006. "The Derveni Papyrus" (Leo. S. Olschki Editore, Florence [series *Studi e testi per il "Corpus dei papiri filosofici greci e latini*, vol. 13]).

156 I paraphrase from the English translation provided by Tsantsanoglou, as part of the display of the document in the National Archaeological Museum, Thessaloniki.

157 The problem is discussed at greater length in *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>, with my suggested contributions to developing offsets in *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>.

158 Hunter, 19.

159 *Ibid.*, 19.

the Pompeii victims 'distorted and writhing in extremis', he reported feeling 'quickened thanks' that the San Francisco earthquake of 1906, had not destroyed the whole of his city.¹⁶⁰ In a published account of what he had personally done during that disaster, in which three thousand people were killed and thousands more injured by falling buildings and fires, Nichols reveals himself as being mostly concerned for the fate of church buildings—he was puzzled to find that the Jewish synagogue remained standing—and he congratulated himself on remaining unshaken in his beliefs: 'all the time with a calming subconsciousness of the good Providence of Almighty God as our "Refuge, though the earth be moved."' ¹⁶¹

Another high-ranking American churchman, visiting Pompeii in 1895, wrote: '...this ruined city which was overwhelmed by the wrath of God in a single night: its polluted streets and houses, which even now indicate depths of depravity that have seldom been witnessed in the history of the world, ruined and utterly destroyed as habitations for the living. Surely the moralist will be excused for drawing his lesson from the destruction of this comparatively modern Sodom and Gomorrah'.¹⁶² Dr Buckley, a Methodist, did not believe that Pompeii was so unusual in the extent of its wickedness that it had been singled out for divine punishment. As he wrote: The voice of Him who never misinterpreted natural events may be heard saying: "I tell you, Nay."¹⁶³ But Buckley had no difficulty with the doctrine of collective punishment as such. When he saw the Dead Sea, he declared that he believed 'all that the Bible affirms concerning the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah'.¹⁶⁴ To Wenger, another churchman, the destruction of Pompeii was 'a strong outside proof of the authenticity of the Gospel of Christ'.¹⁶⁵ A generation earlier, William Rae Wilson, a Fellow of the (British) Society of Antiquaries, had remarked when at Pompeii: 'how beneficial, too, even in its temporal effects, has been

160 Nichols, 10.

161 <http://www.sfmuseum.net/1906.2/nichols.html>

162 Clark and Clark, 572. The story goes back at least to the second century Christian apologist Tertullian who mentions Pompeii along with Sodom and Gomorrah and other ruined places in *De Pallio* 2.4. In Pompeii itself a large graffito 'sodoma gomora', almost certainly a fake, a plant or a prank, was reportedly found scrawled 1.8 m above the floor on a wall in House IX.1.26, although it has since disappeared. (*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* IV, 4976).

163 Buckley, 199.

164 *Ibid.*, 409.

165 Wenger, 119.

that Divine and Heaven-revealed Religion, to which, among its other blessings, we are indebted for the extirpation of enormities that make us shudder'.¹⁶⁶ Wilson had previously visited the site of Sodom and Gomorrah in Palestine, which he regarded as 'strikingly monumental of the tremendous wrath of God', the lifeless desert confirming the truth of the Bible story.¹⁶⁷

Discussing the erotic objects in the Naples museum, the leader of a group from California remarked: 'Many of these are of such a character as to reveal to us the true character of the inhabitants; convincing us beyond all doubt that God has as purposely, righteously and justly destroyed the inhabitants of Pompeii as ever He did those of Sodom and Gomorrah'.¹⁶⁸ At Pompeii as in Athens, some could scarcely look at a piece of broken marble without conjuring up mental pictures of sexual orgies, as is caught by a photograph of a party from Seattle on their way to Mars' Hill and the other biblical lands reproduced as Figure 22.10.



Figure 22.10. Kate Bunting Scheuerman of Seattle, with a friend and their tour guide at Pompeii, 14 September 1908. Photograph.

They are, as they reported, hearing the 'thrilling story of sin and debauchery' and contemplating how God used the power of Vesuvius 'to wipe out the sin of Pompeii'.¹⁶⁹

If the destruction of Pompeii was providentially ordained, the discovery of the site in the eighteenth century also had to be explained

¹⁶⁶ *Records*, 228.

¹⁶⁷ On a wall in House IX.1.26. (*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* IV, 4976).

¹⁶⁸ Paine, 75.

¹⁶⁹ Scheuerman, 17 and 18.

as providential, as indeed was the logical conclusion offered by another high-ranking churchman: 'God is now causing [the ruins] to be uncovered in order to publish to the world the cause of the city's sudden destruction by revealing the wickedness of the private life of the Roman citizens before that awful November night more than eighteen centuries ago'.¹⁷⁰ Talmage too, in an article that was printed in numerous newspapers in the United States, suggested that Providence had arranged for the archaeological remains of Pompeii to be buried for seventeen hundred years before they were 'fit to be uncovered', unlike those of Sodom and Gomorrah that had been kept underground for thousands of years.¹⁷¹ Providence, that some in the 1830s had thought was a romantic philhellene, had now become not only an Old Testament destroyer of whole communities but a Victorian-era orientalist.

It was another visitor to Mars' Hill, the renowned geologist Sir William Dawson, C.M.G., LL.D., F.G.S, and Fellow of the Royal Society of London, who described the region of the eastern Mediterranean and its littoral that suffered most from earthquakes and volcanic eruptions as 'the firebelt'. The Areopagus itself had been smashed by an earthquake, not just the archbishop's palace, which had stood on the house of Dionysios the Areopagite, but the rock itself. As can be seen from the photographic image at Figure 23.11, before the planting of trees at the end of the century the destruction caused by the earthquake was exposed in all its starkness—even to the gulf into which the house of Paul's convert, Dionysius the Areopagite, onto which the early Christian bishops had built their palace, had suddenly tumbled.¹⁷² Surely it was

170 Fout, 118.

171 A lecture given by the Rev. Dr Talmage of Brooklyn. 'Pompeii and Its Lessons: 'Thou hast made of a defended city a ruin'' (Isaiah xxv, 2). 'See in our walk today through uncovered Pompeii what sin will do for a city. ... But the greatest calamity of history came upon Pompeii not to improve its future condition, for it was completely obliterated and will never be rebuilt. It was so bad that it needed to be buried 1,700 years before even its ruins were fit to be uncovered. So Sodom and Gomorrah were filled with such turpitude that they were not only turned under, but have for thousands of years been kept under.' *Democratic Northwest* (Napoleon, Ohio), 12 October 1893. Reprinted, perhaps by syndication, in many other newspapers, e.g. *The Middleburgh Post*, Pennsylvania, 12 October 1893, and *Highland Recorder*, 20 October 1893. Monterey, Virginia; *Essex County Herald*, Vermont, 20 October 1893, *Juniata Sentinel and Republican*, Pennsylvania, 25 October 1893; *The Abbeville Press and Banner*, 25 October 1893, South Carolina. I am grateful to Annika Bautz for finding and sharing these references.

172 A severe earthquake in 1694, whose effects were felt as far away as Sicily and Euboea, was thought to have had its epicentre at the Areopagus. [Philadelphus] Ἱστορία των Αθηνων ἐπὶ Τουρκοκρατίας ἀπο τοῦ 1400 μέχρι τοῦ 1800 ὑπο

the ‘heathen’ Acropolis with its naked erotic ‘idols’ that ought to have been destroyed—not the most Christian site in Athens? It was a modern version of a question that had puzzled the ancient Hellenes, whose religions had regarded events such as earthquakes, lightning strikes, and destructive storms as messages from the gods but that showed no discernible consistency or fairness.¹⁷³

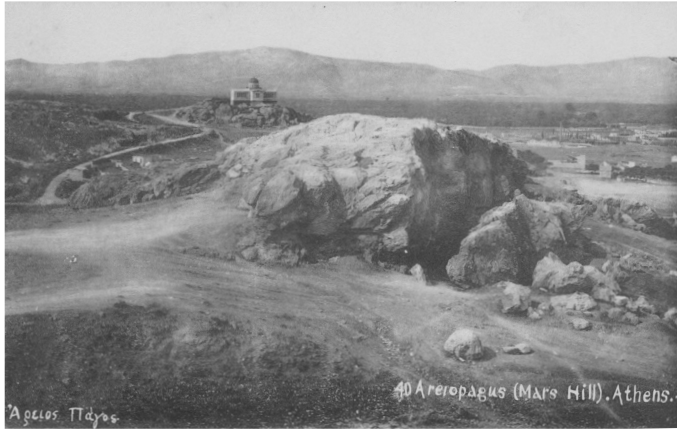


Figure 22.11. The Areopagus rock smashed by an earthquake. Postcard, with caption in English as well as in Greek, date uncertain, c.1900.¹⁷⁴

Visible in this image, as it was to visitors during the debates if they had ever turned their backs to the Acropolis, is the Astronomical Observatory built on the nearby Hill of the Muses in 1842. It was a symbol that the newly established nation intended to participate in European modernity, including the scientific study of earthquakes. The visitors to Mars’ Hill, however, operating within a paradigm that defined itself as immune to falsifiability, felt forced to try to defend everything that they saw as reinforcement, however implausible. As a British missionary Rev. Samuel Sheridan Wilson suggested, in a version of an emerging idea that ‘heritage’ is more truthful than ‘history’, the fact that that the Areopagus hill was still there to be walked upon, despite having been struck and destroyed, ‘attests the facts of the apostolic record’.¹⁷⁵

Θ.Ν. Φιλαδέλφειας. (Athens: 1902), ii, 95. According to Philadelphus, there were numerous earthquakes in Athens between 1650 and 1750.

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

174 Private collection.

175 Wilson, S.S., 197. The practice of invoking the built heritage in classical times is discussed in *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>.

By including Athens amongst bible lands, viewers, and viewers of images, were encouraged to compare it not only with Rome (and Pompeii) to the west but with the ancient sites to the south and east. Here, too, was plentiful evidence of the divine wrath described in both the Old Testament and the New. To many, the ruination of Corinth, where Paul had lived for some years after his visit to Athens, and whose temples and statues had in ancient times been as magnificent as those of Athens, was another sign of 'a retributive Providence'.¹⁷⁶ Of the 'Seven Churches of Asia' where Christianity had begun, only Smyrna, now mainly Muslim, was prospering. The other six, such as Ephesus, once a huge city to whose Christian community Paul had written epistles, were now in ruins, populated if at all by peasants scratching an uncertain living. An example from *Landscape Illustrations of the Bible*, one of the most ambitious books of the age of steel engraving, with its references to the passages in the Bible in which it was mentioned, is given as Figure 22.12.



Figure 22.12. 'Ephesus/(Ruins of the Temple of Diana)/Eph. I. 1. Rev. II. 1. 7.'
Steel engraving.¹⁷⁷

176 Howe, Fisher, 27. [Corinth] 'its riches produced pride, ostentation, effeminacy, and all vices, the consequences of plenty. Lasciviousness was not only tolerated, but was in some sort consecrated there by the worship of Venus, and the public prostitution of numerous attendants devoted to her.' Ainslie, 1833 edition, printed advice to viewers of the landscape image.

177 Noted as (Drawn by J.D. Harding from a sketch by W. Page; engraved by E. Finden), in *Landscape Illustrations of the Bible* (London: Published by J. Murray, & Sold also by C. Tilt, 86 Fleet Street: London, 1834), ii, 42.

The virtual tour of 'bible lands' was designed to provide examples of 'those particularly mentioned in the prophecies, which in their present ruined and desolate condition exemplify, to the most minute particular, every thing that was foretold concerning them in the height of their prosperity. Egypt, Edom, Babylon, Nineveh, Tyre, Jerusalem, and the Apocalyptic Churches, may especially be adduced in illustration of this remark; so that in these instances the fulfilment of prophecy is actually set before the eye, while the understanding is assisted and confirmed by the sight'.¹⁷⁸ Everywhere the visitors went they saw evidence of the working out of their god's prophecies, the wickedness of the ancients and the justice of his punishments. As the Rev. Thomas Milner wrote of Paul's visit to Ephesus, quoting Paul's speech on the Areopagus: 'If the apostle's "spirit" had been "stirred" within him when gazing upon the temples, groves, and statues of Athens, similar feelings of indignation and pity, we may conceive, would animate his mind, as he drew nigh to Ephesus, and beheld the beautiful architecture of Ionia employed to recommend superstitions and libertinism equally as dark and revolting'.¹⁷⁹ Nor did Christian divine punishment only occur in biblical times. To John Galt, who was in Athens shortly before the Revolution at the same time as Byron, the destruction of Athens by Alaric the Goth in the third century CE was a collective retribution on the philosophers of Athens for having failed to be convinced by Paul's speech.¹⁸⁰ It was an aspect of Christianity that was common to both its western and eastern churches. In July 1756, as a local chronicle had recorded, the tiny cathedral of Orthodox Athens ('the little metropolitan') had been struck by lightning, with the archbishop's brother among those killed. Two years earlier, almost to the day, there had been riots against the voivode that had been punished by the Ottoman authorities with a

178 Finden, *Landscape Illustrations of the Bible*, Introduction.

179 Milner, Rev. Thomas, *History of the seven churches of Asia; their rise, progress, and decline; with notices of the churches of Tralles, Magnesia, Colosse, Hierapolis, Lyons and Vienne; designed to show the fulfilment of Scripture prophecy* (London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1833), 110. Milner depended on travel literature notably Chandler and the *Ionian Antiquities* published by the Dilettanti, but as the title of his book indicates that enabled him to add other ancient cities to the traditional seven of the New Testament Apocalypse. Discussed, with respect to British visitors and authors, with many illustrations, by Ledger-Lomas, Michael, 'Ephesus', in Gange, David and Ledger-Lomas, Michael, eds, *Cities of God: The Bible and Archaeology in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Cambridge: CUP, 2013), 254–284.

180 Galt *Travels*, 192.

heavy fine on the people of Athens, and it was easy to connect the two events.¹⁸¹

The notion of Providence helped to solve lesser historical puzzles. It could explain, for example, how Paul had come to be a citizen of Rome, and so escaped being scourged at various times on his travels, at a time when Tarsus as a city did not enjoy this privilege.¹⁸² But Providence mostly operated at the level of communities rather than individuals. Antioch, one of the cities where a Christian church had first been established, had been struck six times in less than two hundred years, with the earthquake of 526 CE killing around a quarter of a million people, and the date for the retribution has evidently been chosen to coincide with the Christian Festival of the Ascension when the city was full of visitors.¹⁸³ Indeed anyone looking at a map of the eastern Mediterranean could see that Sir William Dawson's 'fire-belt' coincided with the lands where Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and several other religions had begun and from where they had expanded. As for the 'Holy Land', as was noted by George Waddington, one of the most travelled and most learned of the churchmen, already mentioned as having been in Athens in 1824 during the Revolution: 'It would appear to any one contemplating the present condition of Palestine, that it has been selected as a perpetual scene of the temporal retribution of Providence. In every feature of that desolate country, we read awful records of God's justice: like an afflicted and unrepentant sinner, it presents a sullen and scattered brow, expressing the eternal alliance between guilt and misery'.¹⁸⁴ To anyone attempting to reconcile on-the-ground topographical observations with Christian

181 Philadelphus, ii, 277.

182 'We can only discern an instance of the Providence of God in permitting them [personal hereditary rights to citizenship acquired for services to the Roman imperium] to operate in the life of one who was chosen to be so marked an instrument of His Glory, so that, doubtless, in many ways his usefulness was increased and his safety guaranteed.' Leathes, Rev. Professor Stanley, M.A., King's College, London, *The Cities Visited by St Paul* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1873), 31.

183 Leathes, 41.

184 Waddington, George, *The Present Condition and Prospects of the Greek or Oriental Church, with some Letters written from the Convent of the Strophades* (London: Murray, 1829), 71. As the author of a three volume history of the Christian Church from the earliest times to the Reformation, Waddington, Rev. George, *A History of the Church from the Earliest Ages to the Reformation* (London: Baldwin and Cradock, 1833), he was amongst the first to use the phrase 'in the footsteps of Jesus' to describe his extensive travels.

providentialism, it would seem that the god of the Jews, the Christians, and the Muslims hated all three of his largest religions, at any rate in the region of the world where they had originated. Indeed, Sir William Dawson, as a scientist of geology, did not shrink from that conclusion. Of all the Christian churches, he concluded, only the tiny Waldensians might save Italy from the divine vengeance.¹⁸⁵

Only occasionally do we hear the voice of a resisting, as distinct from a puzzled or dubious, viewer. A.L. Koeppen, the professor of classics at Franklin and Marshall College in the United States, who had lived in Greece with one absence between 1832 and 1844, and who had seen and described the new ruins of Athens and the miseries of the people in the aftermath of the Revolution, was formally instructed by the Trustees of his college to present his lessons as showing 'the true meaning of history as the development of God in the world'. In response, Koeppen occasionally paused in the course of his lectures, to say 'the Board of Trustees wants religion in my lectures. Here is a good place to put in a little. Consider it put'.¹⁸⁶

The debate about providentialism put the most learned at a disadvantage. They knew that, if they abandoned the Christian explanations of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions as collective punishments, they were also undermining the authority of their sacralized texts, both New and Old Testaments, in which providentialism, prophecy, and punishment were plainly set out.¹⁸⁷ As the century advanced, the visitors to the other hill, whose predecessors just two generations before had thought that their religion would find new intellectual allies in the modern sciences and in archaeology, found themselves increasingly having to rely on 'faith'. Faced with the slow but apparently relentless

185 'The Waldensian Church of to-day is the true and uninterrupted successor of the Church of the Catacombs; and its evangelical congregations and schools, scattered over Italy and daily growing in numbers, constitute the true Italian Church, and, without detracting from other Christian missions, the best guarantee for the exemption of Italy from Divine judgment, and for its advance in true religion and Christian civilization.' Dawson, 44.

186 [Koeppen] *Professor Koeppen: the adventures of a Danish scholar in Athens and America* (Franklin and Marshall College Studies No. One) By H.M.J. Klein and Richard D. Altick (Lancaster, Pa: 1938), 26. Koeppen, who adhered to the Lutheran branch of Christianity had found himself in trouble earlier in his career when invited to lecture at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island.

187 For example, Exodus 19:18; Isaiah 2:19; Matthew 24: 7–8. Noted by Karamanolis, 180, in discussing the arguments deployed in early Christian apologetics.

advance of modern evidence-based knowledge, some retreated to a more general set of ideas that downplayed Christianity except as an example of a manifestation of a sense of 'the divine' that it was claimed was, in the language of the time, 'immanent in the consciousness of mankind'.¹⁸⁸ Some found support in the work of the German philologist and anthropologist Max Müller, whose work on non-Christian religious texts earned him authority. Few of the debaters of Mars' Hill, however, were attracted to such ideas. And if the argument was to move to the level of essentialist psychology, it was already obvious to many, as it had been to the contemporaries of the early Christians, that the notion that everyone is 'religious' was not only condescending but inconsistent with the observation.

John Addington Symonds, whose writings helped to promote the romantic sacralization of great art and literature, as an alternative to organized Christianity advocated a philosophy of man in nature that he suggested was already becoming mainstream ('we are all Pantheists now'), but that sounded more like a defence of ancient Hellenic thinking than a way through for Christianity.¹⁸⁹ The Duke of Argyll, a nobleman whose family ancestors may have wrestled with the literature of the philosophy of history from the eighteenth century, also thought he could 'reconcile modern science with religion and philosophy in poetic form'. How, he asked, could an educated man cope with 'the large amount of truth in the agnostic aspects of the world', among which he mentions the discoveries of Darwin, the collapse of the argument from design, and the 'newer criticism'?¹⁹⁰ Argyll thought he had answers but his pre-emptive cry that it was 'not to be admitted even for a moment that those relations are antagonistic' shows he was wavering. As his mention of the 'newer criticism' brings out, what was most threatening to educated Christians at the time of the Mars' hill debates was not archaeology, geology, comparative anthropology, psychology, Darwinism, Frazer's *Golden Bough*, nor the discoveries of Boucher de Perthes that human beings had existed for hundreds of thousands of years before the Flood or even the Creation on which their understanding of the deep past

188 Quoted from Farrar's Preface to Shakspeare, ix.

189 Much of his much-reprinted book, *Sketches and Studies in Italy and Greece*, is devoted to the theme. Symonds noted that 'I have stood on the crest of Mars' Hill' among his experiences in Athens in May 1873. *Letters*, ii, 298.

190 Argyll, *Burdens* 112, and especially the discussions in the Notes.

continued to be founded. Nor was it any of the other branches of modern science and social science—but an intellectual discipline that itself owed much to the northern European tradition of biblical study, namely, the critical scrutiny of texts.¹⁹¹

Millions had died in the European wars of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, one of whose points at issue was the nature of the authority that Christian churches claimed for saying that their stories were true. In that struggle, the Protestant churches of the north had asserted the authority of ‘Scripture’ over the ‘tradition’ as curated by the priesthoods of the south. But what if the Bible itself had no particular authority? What if it was just a collection of texts written at different moments over a long period that had no unity or historical consistency? On whose say-so had the early leaders of Christianity decided what was true and sacred and what was not? Some moderns argued that the books of the Bible that ‘disgust the intelligent reader’ could be safely ignored, calling in aid the words of F.W. Farrar a senior English ecclesiastic: ‘Happily’, says Farrar, ‘these theological romances of Apocalyptic commentary have had their day. Like a thousand other phantoms of exegesis, they have vanished into the limbo of the obsolete. They may linger on for a time, like spectres not yet exorcised, but they are doomed to disappear forever in the broadening light of a sounder knowledge.’¹⁹²

But if modern church leaders were now themselves discarding the parts of the New Testament, as well as much of the Old, that they found embarrassing, where would the unravelling stop? And who would decide? Much scholarly work had been devoted to establishing a text

191 Although the great age of the earth as confirmed by geology was reported in the encyclopaedic book by Morris, that can be regarded as a handbook for preachers, defenders, and doubters, it made no reference to the discoveries of Boucher de Perthes, although by the time that work was compiled the discoveries had been extensively reported and confirmed by discoveries elsewhere. Whether the omission derived from lack of knowledge or from self-censorship adopted for rhetorical purposes cannot as yet be ascertained. However it is notable that this work, that purported to be comprehensive in its presentations of testimonies, also omitted to discuss Lucian’s *On the Syrian Goddess*, and Lucian’s direct reference to the putting to death of Jesus of Nazareth noted above. The visit of Boucher de Perthes to Athens is mentioned in Chapter 21.

192 Quoted by Du Hass, 377 from F.W. Farrar in Shakspeare, Charles, *St. Paul at Athens. Spiritual Christianity in relation to some aspects of modern thoughts. Nine sermons ... With a preface by ... Canon Farrar, etc* (Kegan Paul 1878).

and interpreting the lexical meaning of the words, 'the lower criticism'. But the most disturbing topic for the educated visitors to Mars' Hill was its successor, 'the higher criticism', a continuation of the approach pioneered and carried forward with great success in classical studies.¹⁹³ Unpicking the historicity of the Old Testament and exposing its internal contradictions had a long tradition that F.G. Jannaway attempted to reverse in his 1926 book *The British Museum with Bible in Hand, being An interesting and intelligent survey of all the exhibits on view at the British Museum which confirm the absolute accuracy of the Holy Scriptures*, of which the title itself betrays a sense of desperation.

From mid-century, those looking at the Acropolis from the Areopagus could not escape the influence of the French writer, Ernest Renan, and Renan himself spent several weeks in Athens in 1865. When in 1904, some years after Renan's death, the letters he had written about his visits to biblical lands from the 1840s to the 1860s were translated into English, the translator compared his influence to the conquests of Napoleon and Alexander, noting that, unlike theirs, the intellectual empire of Renan would go on expanding.¹⁹⁴ And it was true that, during a writing life of half a century that showed jagged development rather than consistency, nobody was better qualified than Renan to bring modern knowledge to the questions and answers being discussed on Mars' Hill.¹⁹⁵

In exploring the lands of the eastern Mediterranean, Renan saw the monuments as texts, to be read critically and historically alongside the texts of inscriptions and other writings, as products of ancient societies and of their official religions. In Palestine, unlike in Phoenicia, Greece,

193 Discussed notably by Sayce, Rev. A.H., *The "higher criticism" and the verdict of the monuments* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1894). For any reader who wishes to follow what was for its time a highly learned discussion, in which the British literalist readers of the biblical texts claimed victory over the German higher critics, we have an extraordinarily full account in the book by Sir William Charley, Charley, Sir William T., Knt., One of His Majesty's Counsel; D.C.L Oxon; formerly M.P. for Salford; author of "The New System of Practice and Pleading under the Judicature Acts"; "An Historical Vindication of the House of Lords; etc. etc. *The Holy City Athens and Egypt Founded on Personal Observation and the Researches of Modern Explorers* (London: Marshall Brothers, 1902). The final chapter leaves two of the participants, Miss Gordon and Stanton, who seem to have been real people, although with altered names, now engaged to be married, standing hand-in-hand, 'waving adieux with their disengaged hands.'

194 *Renan's letters from the Holy Land; the correspondence of Ernest Renan with M. Berthelot while gathering material in Italy and the Orient for "The life of Jesus"*; translated by Lorenzo o'Rourke (New York: Doubleday, 1904), Preface.

195 Discussed specifically by, for example Portmans, 338.

and most of the ancient Greco-Roman world, he noted that the ancient monuments were 'few and miserable'. The ancient Jewish leaders, as was made clear in the ancient Jewish writings collected in the Old Testament, had found it a constant struggle to prevent their people from adopting the plastic arts, with frequent examples of 'idolatry' suppressed with violence. To Renan, Palestine revealed 'the ancient theocratic spirit in all its brutal simplicity'.¹⁹⁶ And knowing from his experience as well as from his reading how easily traditions can be invented, he concluded that not a single biblical tomb in Palestine 'whose identity is established by tradition alone has any serious claim to authenticity'.¹⁹⁷

Trained in a famous Roman Catholic seminary, Renan's prodigious knowledge of the philology of Semitic languages later led to his being selected to join an expedition to collect inscriptions from ancient Phoenicia.¹⁹⁸ Although, as a philologist, he knew that language itself predisposes its speakers to ways of thinking, and, like many others of his time, he saw an opposition between Aryan Indo-Germanic and Semitic, the differences he detected he attributed to ethno-cultural conditions, not to biological race.¹⁹⁹ But although in 1855 he concluded from his study of the languages that so many cultural and historical qualifications had to be factored in that the influence of 'blood' on character was mostly negated, many preferred to take the earlier alternative of essential racism.²⁰⁰

In 1863 Renan published his *Vie de Jésus* ('Life of Jesus') a retelling of the biblical narratives but with the theism removed. In its first five months, 60,000 copies were sold and, as recent studies on the numerous letters Renan received from members of the public have shown, the book transformed many lives.²⁰¹ There may have been many like Armand Heurtel who told Renan in a fan letter that he felt 'profoundly religious',

196 Quoted in translation by Laurens, 221, from a letter to Hippolyte Taine dated 12 March 1861.

197 Quoted by Laurens, 227, from Renan, *Mission de Phénicie* (Paris: Imprimerie Imperiale, 1864), 600.

198 Discussed by Laurens, Henry, 'Ernest Renan's Expedition to Phoenicia' in Bahrani, Zeynep and Eldem, pp. 213–31.

199 Laurens, 217.

200 Laurens, 216.

201 The profound impact of Renan's *Vie de Jésus* especially in France is discussed by Priest, Robert D., *The Gospel according to Renan: reading, writing, and religion in nineteenth-century France* (Oxford: OUP, 2015).

but could not bring himself to adhere to any religion.²⁰² In the previous year Renan had been elected a member of the Collège de France, a high honour, but when in his inaugural lecture he referred to Jesus as 'an incomparable man', he was dismissed from his appointment, an example both of stable-door-bolting and of the limitations on free speech in the France of that time.²⁰³

In his autobiography, *Souvenirs*, first published in 1883, Renan told how, while on his tour of the biblical lands, he had come to write his *Life of Jesus*. In the tradition of Jean-Jacques Rousseau in the previous century, who had followed the example of Augustine of Hippo, the *Souvenirs* put personal sincerity above generic convention, recounting, for example the lies that Renan had himself told during his education at the seminary in order to maintain external conformity with the expectations of his teachers and peer-groups. Renan illustrated yet again that no inner life can be known to anyone but the individual concerned, and that all attempts by outsiders to deduce mental states from external behaviour, including public statements of belief, however sincerely offered, cannot be trusted to offer more than, at best, a selection of actual lived experience turned into speech acts, as much a rhetoric and a social performance as the kissing of the ground. Gods, Renan declared, repeating a thought that had occurred to many in ancient Athens, were constructions of the human mind, personifications of a sense of the transcendental. The gods lived only as long as the men and women who invented and maintained them. Gods are a potentially useful symbolic system, Renan suggested, and he himself used religious language, notably 'miracle,' as a metaphor, but his account was hard to rebut. When Lord Bute, already mentioned as among the most sympathetic to Orthodox Christianity, commented in a review that Renan's critique of the ancient biblical texts was 'all philological and critical', he was fair, but his comment that 'a mind of deeper thoughtfulness would have been led by this to the contemplation of the Divine Khachmoth' is unlikely to have provided doubters with much reassurance.²⁰⁴

202 Quoted by Priest, *Gospel*, 190.

203 Laurens, 221.

204 Bute, *Essays*, 322 and 304. Bute also employed the polemicist's device of attempting to undermine the main argument by chipping away at details, to the extent of writing to senior ecclesiastics and obtaining letters in defence of individuals who

Renan's *Souvenirs* presented itself as an account of his inner development, but whereas that genre, *apologia pro vita sua*, had traditionally told a story of a conversion to Christianity, Renan's journey was in the opposite direction.²⁰⁵ On his biblical tour Renan had visited the place on the road to Damascus where Paul had suddenly seen the light. And although Renan had long been moving towards the view that the Christian religion was founded on error, his own damascene conversion took place in 1865 when he first looked at the Acropolis of Athens. As he wrote of that moment: 'The sight of the Acropolis was like a revelation of the Divine, such as that which I experienced when, gazing down upon the valley of the Jordan from the heights of Casyoun, I first felt the living reality of the Gospel. The whole world then appeared to me barbarian'.²⁰⁶ As he wrote in a personal letter that picked up the same Pauline metaphor, it was then that the darkness fell away: 'Oh, what a blessing that this light from another world should have come to us! And when one thinks that all this has hung by a thread! That during all these centuries the caprice of a Turkish aga might have deprived us of it!'²⁰⁷ That moment of release, imagined as a conversation with the

had been mildly criticised in the *Souvenirs*. For example, pp. 299–301, 316. Bute's description of the 'Golden Cave' on the Acropolis slope was noted in Chapter 17.

205 That Renan's book was in the tradition of apologetics was noted by Bute in a review, 'M. Renan's *Souvenirs*', reprinted in *Essays*, 297.

206 Ce fut à Athènes, en 1865, que j'éprouvai pour la première fois un vif sentiment de retour en arrière, un effet comme celui d'une brise fraîche, pénétrante, venant de très loin. L'impression que me fit Athènes est de beaucoup la plus forte que j'aie jamais ressentie. Il y a un lieu où la perfection existe ; il n'y en a pas deux : c'est celui-là. Je n'avais jamais rien imaginé de pareil. C'était l'idéal cristallisé en marbre pentélique qui se montrait à moi. Jusque-là, j'avais cru que la perfection n'est pas de ce monde ; une seule révélation me paraissait se rapprocher de l'absolu. Depuis longtemps, je ne croyais plus au miracle, dans le sens propre du mot ; cependant la destinée unique du peuple juif, aboutissant à Jésus et au christianisme, m'apparaissait comme quelque chose de tout à fait à part. Or voici qu'à côté du miracle juif venait se placer pour moi le miracle grec, une chose qui n'a existé qu'une fois, qui ne s'était jamais vue, qui ne se reverra plus, mais dont l'effet durera éternellement, je veux dire un type de beauté éternelle, sans nulle tache locale ou nationale. Je savais bien, avant mon voyage, que la Grèce avait créé la science, l'art, la philosophie, la civilisation ; mais l'échelle me manquait. Quand je vis l'acropole, j'eus la révélation du divin, comme je l'avais eue la première fois que je sentis vivre l'évangile, en apercevant la vallée du Jourdain des hauteurs de Casyoun. Le monde entier alors me parut barbare.

207 [Renan *Letters*] *Renan's letters from the Holy Land; the correspondence of Ernest Renan with M. Berthelot while gathering material in Italy and the Orient for "The life of Jesus"*; tr. by Lorenzo o'Rourke (New York: Doubleday, 1904), 197.

goddess Athena, was captured in visual form when the *Prayer* began to be published as a separate book, as in the example at Figure 22.13.



Figure 22.13. Ernest Renan, on the Acropolis in 1865, imagined as in conversation with the imagined Athena. Frontispiece by Serge de Solomko to an edition of *Prière sur l'Acropole*.²⁰⁸

Renan's critique was more than the patching up of a crumbling structure of belief, or the substitution of a new kind of transcendentalism, 'Beauty', for theism, although he did embrace and, to an extent, champion the claims to universalism of the western romantic aesthetic. Renan, in putting into the mouth of Thenoe, a character in the *Helen* of Euripides, the observation that priests have a personal financial interest in maintaining the public's assent, picked up for his own time one of the roles of Athenian tragedy as a forum where, because it took place in the enclosed world of myth, the normally unsayable could be said and debated.²⁰⁹ Come and join us, Renan's books called out to the men and women on Mars' Hill. Stop tying yourself up in intellectual knots attempting to reconcile the irreconcilable. You too can feel what I felt

²⁰⁸ Renan, Ernest, *Prière sur l'Acropole, Illustrations en couleur de Serge de Solomko* (Paris: A. Ferroud — F. Ferroud, successeur, librairie des amateurs, 1920).

²⁰⁹ Discussed in Chapter 24.

in Athens in 1865, 'a fresh and bracing breeze coming from afar'.²¹⁰ The shift from theism to atheism was not to be feared or fretted over, let alone regarded as a defeat or a retreat, but welcomed as an exhilarating liberation from the enslavement of the mind.

The Debates on Mars' Hill: Christianity in Flux

By 1900, after six decades of visitor growth, the Areopagus had become an unofficial outdoor church for parties of churchmen and church members, mainly from the anglophone world, who could afford the falling prices of foreign travel. Around five hundred sailed from America in a chartered German liner in 1900.²¹¹ In 1904, eight hundred Americans in another German liner met with around five hundred arriving from London in their own ship. Although their predecessors had rejoiced in and boasted of the dirt, the fleas, and the bed bugs as evidence of their zeal, the new pilgrims travelled in luxury. The 1904 liner served six meals a day, and provided three German stewards for each passenger.²¹² Since almost everyone was teetotal, the barman was bored by the lack of business.²¹³ Unlike those who sailed on board the ships that carried admirers of ancient Greece, nobody wanted to play deck sports.²¹⁴ 'For once in a lifetime', a participant in the 1904 British expedition remarked, 'the plague of light literature disappeared'—within which category he included magazines and newspapers such as the *Illustrated London News*.²¹⁵ Instead, the members, of whose names and hometowns we have comprehensive lists, shared in an almost unbroken round of lectures, discussions, and group prayers, the texts of many of which are recorded in print. And the time at sea gave them opportunities to perform, to display, and to rehearse their public commitment to the counter-Parthenon ideology. We read, for example, of parties singing Cowper's hymn 'God moves in mysterious ways' on board their tourist ship.

210 Preface to *Prière*.

211 Described by Pout.

212 The meals are described by Scott, 28.

213 Scott, 29.

214 Johnson, 7.

215 Johnson, 8.

These deep blue seas in other days
 heard hero lays and idol songs
 but higher notes and loftier days
 now sweep its waves from Christian tongues.²¹⁶

What was probably the largest gathering of western Christians on Mars' Hill, which took place in 1904, is recorded by a photograph reproduced as Figure 22.14.



Figure 22.14. The Areopagus, 27 March 1904. A Christian service for over a thousand activists, mainly North American and British. Photograph.²¹⁷

At this meeting, a large banner that had been hanging in the public state-room of the ship during the crossing, overshadowing all the sermons and debates, was unfurled on the Areopagus. It can be seen in Figure 22.15.

As the Rev. William Sampson Brooks, the leader of an African-American contingent, wrote: 'Never shall I forget the inspiration of that hour! Under the shadow of the Acropolis we sang America and the Christian Conquest banner, bearing the Cross the words "In this sign conquer," floated aloft in the azure sky'.²¹⁹ The banner, as the caption notes, celebrated the triumph of the Christian Church from the time when it had first become a unified organisation with political power. According to the Christian story, at the battle of the Milvian bridge at Rome, the

²¹⁶ Ashworth, 5.

²¹⁷ Cruise, 54. Also reproduced in Scott opposite 94. A similarly large crowd is shown in the photograph in Serette, 19.

²¹⁹ Brooks, 73.



Figure 22.15. The banner raised on the Areopagus and at other sites, 1904. Photograph of the state-room of the ship bringing the North-American delegates.²¹⁸

Christian god had sent the invading army a sign in the form of a cross in the sky, with the message, in Latin, 'by this sign you will conquer'. According to tradition, much repeated and frequently illustrated, the phrase was altered from a prediction to a command: 'Under this sign, go out and conquer'.

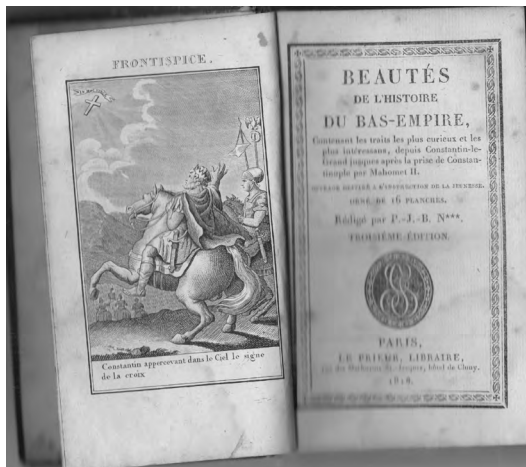


Figure 22.16. Title page and frontispiece of an educational book for French children, 1819. Copper engraving.²²⁰

²¹⁸ *Cruise*, opposite 25.

²²⁰ Nougaret.

On the Areopagus in 1904, to those considering possible futures, an aspiration to convert the countries of the Near and Middle East to their western versions of Christianity, despite nearly a century of failure, may not have seemed beyond reach. Riding on the justificatory narratives of Christian expansionism and of imperialism, with its hierarchies of racial and national difference, and a strong sense of destinarianism, as well as on its superior military and economic power, the celebrants may have thought they were following an inexorably upward trajectory. But if, when the debate began, the new Areopagites had set out thinking that the new knowledge of archaeology and anthropology would halt and reverse the withdrawal of assent to the claims of Christianity that had begun in the west some centuries before, by the end of the century the weight of argument had changed.

In 1904, a date that can be regarded as an apogee, the organizers proclaimed that their Christianity was 'stronger today than ever before', and that it would soon 'triumph all round the world'.²²¹ But the culminating talk given by the Rev. Dr. John Potts, bishop of Toronto, identified the central question around which all the lesser questions now circled. As he declared: 'One says, "I want a gospel without miracle; I want a gospel without the supernatural". My brethren, you cannot have it'.²²² The same conclusion, namely that all the theological eggs were now clustered in one frail basket, had already been reached by some of the most learned and most honoured of the senior churchmen. The Rev. Professor Stanley Leathes, for example, whose appointment at King's College, London, required him to study such matters, and for which he was professionally well qualified, concluded that the whole edifice depended upon accepting that Jesus of Nazareth had literally become alive again after he had been judicially put to death. Opponents from the Epicureans and Stoics onward, Leathes wrote, had only arguments, but in Athens Paul had '*fact*' [so italicized]. 'Here' he wrote, adopting a Victorian discourse of the factual as speaking for itself, with its hint of bullying, 'was an historic fact [...] not to be questioned'.²²³

221 Reported by Jennie Scott, 23.

222 Quoted by Scott, 51 and others.

223 Leathes, Rev. Professor Stanley, M.A., King's College, London, *The Cities Visited by St Paul* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1873), 74. The discourse of the unquestionable 'fact' was common at the time, deployed for example, by Robert Knox in his book on essential racial differences. See Chapter 15.

As a result of a unique conjuncture of circumstances, the records of the debates on Mars' Hill give us access to conversations among a wide range of people of the kind that were occurring all over Europe and North America and that, outside most circles, were only occasionally written down. Although those who participated were mostly from the professional and business classes of the time, they came from a wider band of the spectrum than is normally taken into account in the tidied-up *ex-post-facto* narratives in traditional histories of ideas. They are therefore a unique resource for building an understanding of the dynamics of the slow withdrawal of assent to Christianity in the nineteenth century in human terms, by providing an extraordinarily wide spectrum of contemporary sources, involving readers as well as authors, listeners as well as speakers, consumers as well as producers, and especially people who did not normally bother about such matters as well as those who spoke to them from privileged positions. And, we can see too that, although the Mars' Hill debate was extraordinarily wide-ranging, thorough, socially democratic, inclusive, and learned, almost everyone professed admiration for Paul, shared his abhorrence at certain customs and sexual practices, and accepted that his recorded words had a special authority. There were also silences, matters that it was then taboo to mention, but that demand to be discussed.

From the beginning, the visitors not only silently read the account of Paul's visit given in the Acts, but performed the opening words in the official English King James version as they were reported, apparently verbatim, by the narrator of that work. As the American travel writer John Lloyd Stephens, one of the first to record the new customs, wrote of his visit in 1835: 'We ascended this celebrated hill, and stood on the precise spot where St. Paul, pointing to the temples which rose from every section of the city and towered proudly on the Acropolis, made his celebrated address: "Ye men of Athens, I see that in all things ye are too superstitious."'224 The American preacher Talmage, who spent much time on and around the Areopagus hill, says that the Parthenon was in sight, and even that people standing on the steps of the Parthenon could have heard what Paul was saying. His misremembering, whether careless or intentional, was necessary to his agenda of presenting the

224 Stephens, 75.

Acropolis and the Areopagus as 'in conversation', the one, in Talmage's terms, representing the past, the other the future.²²⁵

In the text of the Acts as we have it there is no suggestion that Paul's words caused any offence nor that he was put to any kind of inconvenience, let alone tried for his life, imprisoned, tortured, or forced to hide in a well as some later traditions say.²²⁶ On the contrary, some members of the audience are reported to have disputed the argument and given feedback in the tradition of the dialogic practices of Plato's Academy and the other schools of which they were the successors. It seems to have been politely suggested that Paul might address them again. Nor was the Tarsus of which Paul was a citizen a small or remote provincial city whose people did not know about these intellectual traditions. On the contrary, Dio, in urging his fellow citizens of Prusa to be more ambitious, suggested in a speech delivered there around 100 CE that they should look to Smyrna, Ephesus, Tarsus, and Antioch for examples.²²⁷ The geographer Strabo, who notes the enthusiasm for education displayed by Tarsus in his day, ranks the city above Athens and Alexandria, a 'new Athens' in that respect, but he adds that Tarsus did not attract foreign scholars to the extent of its two larger rivals.²²⁸ Indeed it may have been at least partly because Paul was from Tarsus, a rising rival, rather than for the substance of what he was reported as saying in the synagogue and the Agora, that the invitation to address the two schools was made.

During the nineteenth century, as has already been noticed, many western Christian churchmen, and others who followed the tradition as it then stood, admired and repeated what they saw as Paul's aggressive and belligerent tone. The Franciscan Padre Paulo, a familiar figure in Athens for many years before the Greek Revolution, was known for repeating the insulting Latin words.²²⁹ By the mid-nineteenth century, however, there were scholars who thought it unlikely that Paul could

225 Talmage, 334. For a comment on 'in conversation with' a phrase used in defence of pick-and-mix exhibitions of 'works of art', see Chapter 25.

226 The local traditions will be discussed, with references to the primary evidence, in the forthcoming volume.

227 Dio, *Fortieth Discourse*, 11.

228 Strabo 14.5.13.

229 'Paulus autem quum Athenis eos expectaret, incitabatur spiritus eius in ipso, videns idololatriae deditam civitatem' quoted by the traveller Marcellus, ii, 363.

have been so gross in his manners as the tradition implied and looked more carefully at the Greek text and especially at the key word that can be transliterated as 'deisidaimonesterōi'. It is a word that in its comparative form, used as an intensifier, as here, occurs in only one other place in the whole corpus of surviving ancient Greek writings. And that very rarity may be evidence that the word was actually used by Paul and was remembered as having been used, and that, as a result, it made its way across the transfer from the remembered oral to the fixed written. Even in its normal forms, the word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. According to scholars of ancient and of New Testament Greek who have collected numerous instances, the word, a compound of 'deisi-' meaning fear, and 'daimon', was used in ancient Hellas in both a commending and a condemning sense, to mean either 'reverencing god or the gods, pious, religious' or antagonistically, 'superstitious'.²³⁰ An official inscription of Ephesus of c.39 BCE uses the noun 'deisidaimonia' to refer to a sacralized enclosure, evidently using the word in a positive Hellenic sense.²³¹ In 1881, and again in the twentieth century, as a result of these critiques of the philology, the official translation used by the Church of England was revised so as to avoid the element of insult.²³² The 'Revised Standard Version', for example, offers: 'So Paul, standing in the middle of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious."'

For invited speakers, such as Paul, a compliment to Athens and its reputation was expected. A bow in the direction of the public self-fashioning discourse of Athens as a god-fearing city would show that the speaker knew the conventions of the great Attic masters.²³³ Polemo of

230 Definitions from *The KJV New Testament Greek Lexicon*, and from Dawson, John, *A Greek -English Dictionary of the New Testament: Translated from the Greek-Latin Lexicon* (London: Rivington and others, 1831). The 1929 book by Peter John Koets, *Δεισιδαιμονία [deisidaimonia]: a contribution to the knowledge of the religious terminology in Greek* (Purmerend: J. Muusses, 1929) that collects instances and usages of the words and its cognates, remains indispensable. I am grateful to the late Professor Donald Russell for drawing it to my attention and for much other help.

231 Moulton, J.H., Milligan, G., *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (Peabody MA: Hendrikson, 1997), 1175.

232 Notably by the professor of Greek, J.P. Mahaffy, author of many books, whose views on the point were summarized in *Greek Pictures*, 82.

233 Discussed, with an experiment in reconstructing a polite speech, in *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>.

Smyrna, who taught the son of the emperor Hadrian, was remembered as having caused surprise when he omitted this courtesy.²³⁴ And we have the example of Aelios Aristides who begins his Panathenaic oration with the argument ('logos') and then momentarily interrupts himself to reassure his anxious audience that he will be coming to the gods in due course.²³⁵

Nobody whose voice is recorded in the vast body of records of the debates on and around Mars' Hill in the nineteenth century queried or debated the implications that Paul drew, such as his injunction to put gay people to death. Paul's conclusions and prescriptions were neither rejected nor accepted, just left undiscussed, or possibly by some silently condoned, within a general policy of selective ignoring and forgetting. It also now seems likely that the visitors were mistaken about the meaning of some of the words which Paul, as an educated man, is recorded as having used and of the rhetorical conventions within which they were deployed. They did not appreciate that, as Paul's speech moved from a spoken to a written text, in the course of editing it probably incorporated at least some elements of a Thucydidean speech or Thucydidean letter, that is, reporting what was thought appropriate for a historic figure to have said or written on the occasion, rather than transcribing a verbatim record.²³⁶

Another of the 'famous hills of Athens', as celebrated by Sophocles in the *Men of Camicus* was the Hill of Colonus. Until the rapid expansion of Athens into a large conurbation in the late nineteenth century, it stood in isolation and its reciprocating sightlines too were still the same as they had appeared to the peoples of classical Athens as they moved about outdoors, especially at festival times. It is pictured as Figure 22.17.

The hill was well known to everyone in classical Athens, and later to those in Greece and elsewhere who had even the rudiments of a classical education, as the place where, in his play, *Oedipus at Colonus*, Sophocles had set the scene in which Antigone, leading the blind Oedipus, is able to tell him that they are in the vicinity of Athens.²³⁷ In a tantalising

234 Noted by Winter, *Philo*, 150 from Philostratos, *Lives of the Sophists*, 535.

235 Aristides, Panathenaic, 11.

236 See *ibid.*

237 'Oedipus: Child of a blind old man, Antigone, to what region have we come, or to what city of men? Who will entertain the wandering Oedipus today with scanty gifts? Little do I crave, and obtain still less than that little, and with that I am content.

fragment from the lost *Oedipus* of Euripides, we may have a celebration of the clear atmosphere as a marker that even the blinded *Oedipus* is able to interpret as proof that he is in the vicinity of the Acropolis of Athens: 'O citadel of the land of Cecrops, O outstretched divine ether'.²³⁸

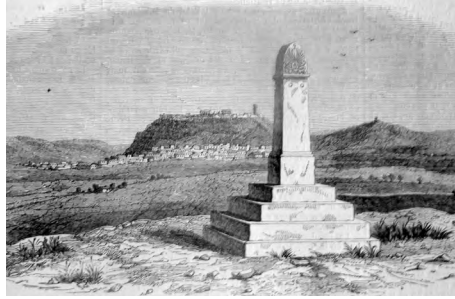


Figure 22.17. 'Tombeau d'Ottfried Müller à Athènes' [Tomb of Ottfried Müller at Athens]. From an engraving made before 1854.²³⁹

But from the 1850s it had another claim to fame. In 1840, the German scholar Karl Ottfried Müller died unexpectedly in Athens of what was called at the time a malarial fever, and that may have had a lingering effect on the aftermath of the Revolution. The book by the Marquis de Laborde, who also visited Greece after the Revolution, was dedicated to Müller's memory, as a 'model and victim of science'.²⁴⁰ And it seems to have been Laborde who arranged for a fine neoclassical marble tomb to

For patience is the lesson of suffering, and of the long years upon me, and lastly of a noble mind. My child, if you see any resting-place, either on profane ground or by groves of the gods, stop me and set me down, so that we may inquire where we are. We have come to learn as foreigners from the townsmen, and to bring to completion whatever we hear.

Antigone: Father, toil-worn Oedipus, the towers that ring the city, to judge by sight, are far off; and this place is sacred, to judge from its appearance: laurel, olive, and vine grow thick-set; and a feathered crowd of nightingales makes music within. So sit here on this unshaped stone; you have travelled a long way for an old man.' Jebb's translation.

238 *Euripides, Selected Fragmentary Plays Volume II*, edited ... by C. Collard, M.J. Cropp and J. Gibert (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 2004), *Oedipus* fragment 554b, 122. 'ὦ πολισμα Κεκροπίας χθονός, ὧ ταναός αἰθήρ ...' I have slightly altered the editors' translation to bring out that in many poetic Greek texts, the 'ether' is the pure air where the gods live.

239 Copied in an unidentified newspaper from the tinted version in Laborde, *Athènes*, two volume edition, frontispiece to volume 2, 1854, where the inscription gives the date of Müller's death as 26 August 1840.

240 'modèle et victime de la science.'

be erected over Müller's remains on the hill of Colonus, where it can still be seen alongside that of a French archaeologist, Charles Lenormant, who was to die in Greece a generation later.

With his 1825 book, *Prolegomena zu einer wissenschaftlichen Mythologie* ('Prolegomena to a scientific mythology'), translated into English in 1840 as *Introduction to a Scientific System of Mythology*, Müller had carried the notion of a scientific and critical detachment to create a science ('*wissenschaft*') of the ancient world. As the titles indicate, Müller had hoped to discover 'laws' or, in modern terms, unifying theories, of ancient art and of mythology, attempting to understand the ancients within their own discursive terms. His theories and historical judgements were to be used in support of German racial theories in the twentieth century.²⁴¹

Few of the western Christians who debated on Mars' Hill appear to have heard of Müller or his printed works, although most were known to scholars of ancient Greece and most were translated into English and other languages. An exception was Lord Nugent, who thought it was a vulgar error to think of the sophisticated ancient Athenians as worshipping gods, let alone 'idols'. The gods, he suggested, anticipating a view popularized by Freud, were personifications of attributes invented by poets and priests.²⁴² As in the ancient tragic drama, he might have said, and as the ancient myths had been in western Europe since the Renaissance, they were a set of useful shared stories in whose truthfulness it was not necessary to believe.²⁴³

In 1644, at a time when western European countries were stumbling towards a cessation of almost two centuries of inter-Christian religious wars and population cleansings, such as that of which Jacob Spon had been a victim, the English poet and politician John Milton turned to ancient Athens as an authority for one of his most influential writings:

241 As noted in Chapter 23.

242 For example [Polytheism] 'in its origin was, and continued among the teachers of the Academy to be, a system of attributes. These attributes became personified, to aid the imaginative purposes of the poets, or the corrupt purposes of the priests who served at the several altars, or the ambitious purposes of the conquerors.' Nugent, i, 23. Nugent, incidentally was among those who asserted that the Parthenon was in sight from the Areopagus Hill. His picture of the Muslim cemetery that had been removed as part of the policy of monument cleansing was reproduced as Figure 16.2.

243 My suggestion that, at least some of the most educated classical Athenians, shared this view, and of how it impinged on the decisions to build the temple is discussed in *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>

Areopagitica, of which the title page of the first edition is reproduced as Figure 22.18.

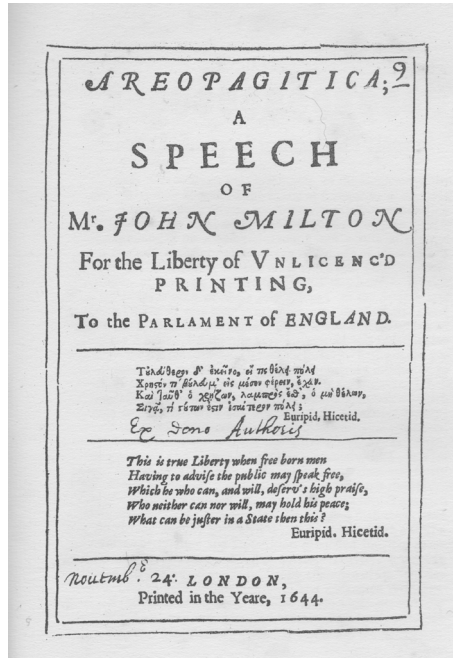


Figure 22.18. Title page of *Areopagitica*, 1644.²⁴⁴

One of the most influential later attempts to co-opt Milton's pamphlet as an ally, the dissenting opinion offered by the American jurist Oliver Wendell Holmes in 1917, in time of war, has been especially influential.²⁴⁵ In advising that, in the United States, only an immediate danger could justify restrictions on freedom of speech, Holmes quoted John Stuart Mill, who had declared that 'the beliefs which we have most warrant for have no safeguard to rest on but a standing invitation to the whole world to prove them wrong'. Holmes went on: 'In other words, the confidence

²⁴⁴ From a photograph facsimile of an author's presentation copy in the British Library published in 1917. Another copy is reproduced, with full discussion, by Mark Rose in an open access article, 'The Public Sphere and the Emergence of Copyright: *Areopagitica*, the Stationers' Company, and the Statute of Anne' in *Property and Privilege: Essays on the History of Copyright*, edited by Ronan Deazley, Martin Kretschmer and Lionel Bently (Cambridge: Open Book, 2010). <http://www.openbookpublishers.com/product/26/privilege-and-property--essays-on-the-history-of-copyright>

²⁴⁵ In the case of *Abrams v. United States*.

in the rightness of any particular position can only be found when it has been open to challenge and emerged on the other side. Milton understood this as well. In his *Areopagitica* he had written, “Let her and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?”

In the tragedy by Euripides known as the *Suppliants*, from which the phrase on Milton’s title page is taken, the character of Theseus, speaking as the embodiment of the official values of the classical Athenian polis, encourages citizens to speak out if they have something ‘useful’ to say. It is not a celebration of free speech as such, and the word ‘liberty’ does not occur.²⁴⁶ The long debate that took place among the nineteenth-century visitors to Mars’ Hill and their books was conducted more in accordance with the protocols of Holmes and Mill than with those of Milton or Theseus. It was an intellectual exchange, but also a festival in which the pressures to display and perform within a wider community without breaking ranks, at least in public, were at their most powerful. At the time it began, it was reasonable to think that science, including evidence-based history and the Christian religion, were mutually reinforcing, or at least were alternative ways of making sense of the world that were not inconsistent with one another. But, as one pillar after another was shaken and then tumbled, and the ecclesiastical leaderships attempted to build new structures from the debris of the old, no-one was able to

246 Euripides *Suppliants* lines 439–40. Τίς θέλει πόλει χρηστόν τι βούλευμ’ ἐς μέσον φέρειν ἔχων; καὶ ταῦθ’ ὁ χρήζων λαμπρὸς ἐσθ’, ὁ μὴ θέλων σιγᾷ. The utilitarian sentiment is repeated shortly afterwards where in offering a response to the common saying that mortals are more good than bad, Theseus offers an opposing view that there is more that is useful than is bad: πλείω τὰ χρηστὰ τῶν κακῶν εἶναι βροτοῖς; πλείω τὰ χρηστὰ τῶν κακῶν εἶναι βροτοῖς; Eur. Supp.199, a more precise translation in my view than the usual ‘more good than bad.’ I am grateful to William Poole, editor of a modern edition of the *Areopagitica*, for pointing me to an article in which the mistranslation on the title page had been noticed earlier. Davies, David and Paul Dowling, ‘Shrewd books, with dangerous Frontispices: Areopagitica’s Motto’, in *Milton Quarterly* 20 (1986), pp. 33–37. In Milton’s day translation followed different conventions from those adopted later, and Milton’s contemporary readers able to read Greek could have checked his version if they chose. However, the suggestion by Davies and Dowling that Milton’s mistranslation was ‘playful’ may be overgenerous. The misunderstandings that, in my view, continue to occur when the cognate ‘chremata’ is translated as ‘money’ are discussed in *The Classical Parthenon: Recovering the Strangeness of the Ancient World*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>. A discussion of the classical Athenian aim of making men ‘useful [χρηστός] to the city’, using cognates of the word employed by Euripides three times in this short passage are also discussed there.

offer a clear or consistent idea of what form Christianity might take in the twentieth century and beyond. Another aspect that gives the Mars' Hill debate much of its unique value is that it was conducted almost exclusively by people who defined themselves as Christians. What we see is not an encounter with ideological opponents, but an intellectual collapse from within. Even at its apparent zenith in 1904, most of the thousand delegates who stood on the hill probably knew that their only answer to the questions posed by modern knowledge was to demand more 'faith' and, by implication, less reliance on 'evidence'. In common with Galileo, who had been put on trial in 1633 in a courtroom adapted from an ancient temple to Minerva/Athena in Rome, for, among other charges, having claimed to have observed moons of Jupiter through his telescope, the choice they faced was no longer between one belief system and another but between social conformity and personal integrity, between keeping silent and speaking out. For, if Christianity abandoned the claims to historicity on which it had been founded, what was left? Could it continue as a useful symbolic system for the telling and retelling of stories, and as a paradigm within which current moral issues could be discussed, as the ancient Athenians had used the ancient myths in ancient tragedy?²⁴⁷

Or should the new century gracefully accept that, whatever benefits the Christian tradition may have brought in the past, and might continue to provide, the whole edifice on which they and their community had invested so much of their identity had been built on sand. Thanks to a unique conjuncture of factors, Mars' Hill has enabled an extraordinarily comprehensive account of an episode in the long story of de-Christianization, and of the complex, non-linear, long-drawn-out, and non-providential processes by which a major social and intellectual change occurred. The visitors to Mars' Hill could not easily have imagined that some of their successors would claim that their religion had never been primarily about historicity or statements of belief; that others would say that their Bible was just a collection of literary texts written in ancient times that are still worth reading; and that yet others would say that the claim that Jesus was the son of God and rose from the dead as a 'Saviour' were only metaphors. Indeed, if they had known that

²⁴⁷ To be discussed in Chapter 24.

some of these futures included a defence of the usefulness of religion in a post-religious society, the most learned of the Mars' Hill debaters would have dismissed and deplored them as inconsistent with the history of the invention, definition and institutionalization of Christianity, to the understanding of which many had conscientiously devoted their lives. What few, if any, of the participants noticed was that the generation of ancient Athenians who had commissioned the building of the classical Parthenon had themselves faced questions about the extent to which the stories about their gods were true, or, if untrue or contested, whether they were still worth maintaining as a useful symbolic system that lay outside the tumble of day-to-day politics broadly defined.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁸ Discussed further in the companion volume *The Classical Parthenon*, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0279>

