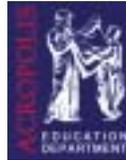


Let's Go to the Acropolis



MINISTRY OF CULTURE - ACROPOLIS RESTORATION SERVICE
FIRST EPHORATE OF PREHISTORIC & CLASSICAL ANTIQUITIES - DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION & EDUCATION



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This booklet is not just one more guide to the Acropolis. Rather it is intended to provide a first step in familiarizing the visitor with its topography and monuments. The booklet aims to help in training both teachers and students to understand the plans and drawings, exhibited at The Centre for Acropolis Studies, which set forth the results of recent discoveries and research made by specialists in the field. Manolis Korres has written the texts for the models of the neolithic, archaic and classical Acropolis.

All of the models and drawings presented here are on show in The Centre for Acropolis Studies with the exception of the Parthenon model on page 15 which is in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, U.S.A.

The little pathfinder also titled “Let’s Go to the Acropolis” is meant to show the way to students visiting the Acropolis and may be used in tandem with the present booklet. Both booklets are part of the educational material of the Museum Kit “Let’s Go to the Acropolis” but may also be used independently.

Cornelia Hadziaslani

The Acropolis in the 4th Millennium B.C.

For thousands of years Athens developed step by step around the same fixed centre, the Acropolis. Although we take this for granted as a self-evident fact, in reality this development depends on the age-old selection of a site made by the first permanent settlers and kept unchanged by all future generations.

The Acropolis was chosen not only because it is a natural stronghold –so is the hill of Lykabettos– nor because of its even plateau on top which the nearby Hill of the Muses and Hill of the Nymphs also have. Although the combination of these two assets was certainly a good reason for selecting the Acropolis it was by no means the only or even the most compelling reason. The presence of springs on the Acropolis slopes was the most important reason, given that the first settlers did not yet have the technique of digging wells. Although the water supply was not abundant, it was still far superior to that of

the other hills. Fluctuations in rainfall, as well as the vegetation growing on top of the hill were factors affecting the seasonal supply of water from the three springs. Wild figtrees, shrubs and wild berry bushes growing along the veins of water at the base of the rock provided a kind of large natural garden in front of the caves so hospitable for man and beast. All of these elements were of inestimable value for the first inhabitants who settled around the Acropolis 6000 years ago.

The huts constructed on top of the hill and on the slopes were clustered around the stopping places of the paths leading up to the top of the hill.

These were the only places where improvised defences were put up. Every where else the top of the hill was inaccessible and thus required no fortifications.



The Acropolis in the 4th Millenium B.C. View from the south • Model at a scale of 1:500 • Design: M. Korres • Construction: P. Dimitriades

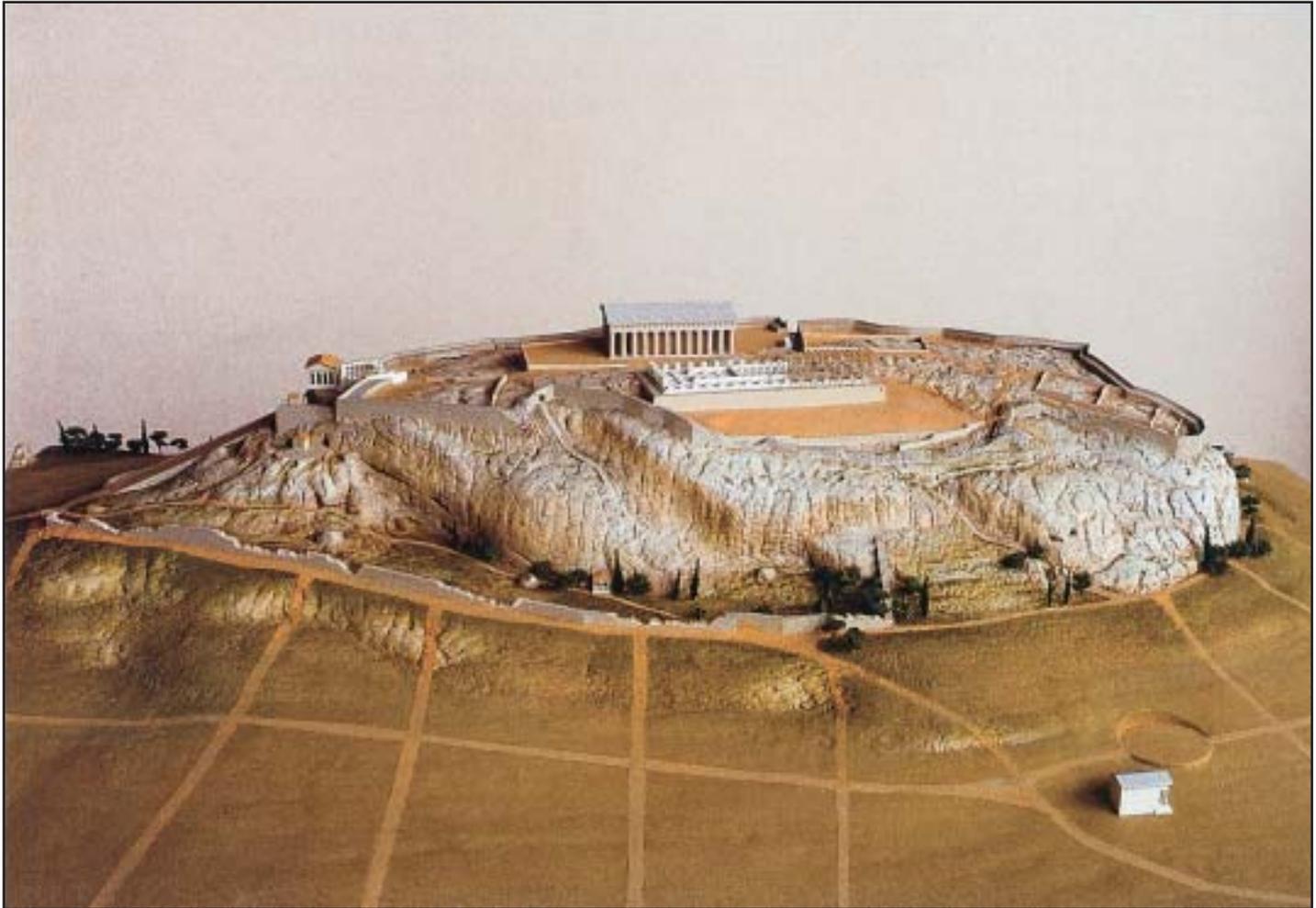
The Acropolis in 480 B.C.

Up until the time of the Persian Wars the contours of the Acropolis were very different to what they are today. The walled area on top was much smaller and irregular in shape. By the early 5th century B.C. the Acropolis fortification walls, built in the Mycenaean period with Cyclopean masonry, were already eight or nine hundred years old and they were not in good condition, not so much because of natural decay but rather because of human intervention. Athens apparently had a strong wall around the lower town as early as the time of Solon (600 B.C.); in consequence the old Acropolis walls were no longer so indispensable. With the successive changes in types of government (kingship, tyranny, democracy) the original strategic importance of the Acropolis as a self-sufficient fort would no doubt have become undesirable. The royal palace itself, similar to the Mycenaean palaces of the Peloponnesos, seems to have been destroyed a long time before. But in regard to local historical and religious traditions, the Acropolis with its remains of a glorious past was the site of age-old legendary and sacred figures and events. In 566 B.C. when the Greater Panathenaic Festival was founded by Peisistratos, the Acropolis lost its military character to a great degree and became more and more significant as a sanctuary. That time saw the beginning of monumental temple building on the Acropolis, starting with a temple known today as the Hekatompedon. A great many fragments of its architecture and pedimental sculpture made of porous limestone has been preserved. The subsequent developments are well known. The next temple built around 525 B.C., "The Old Temple" was still larger and had marble pediment sculpture. Its foundations are preserved between the Erechtheion and the

Parthenon and the reconstruction is shown in the model on page 7. After the Battle of Marathon in 490 B.C. the Athenians began building a much larger temple (named the Older Parthenon by the archaeologists) to express their gratitude to the goddess Athena for the great victory. This temple, the first marble temple, was never completed. In 480 B.C. when the Persians burnt down and destroyed the city, a great deal of the Older Parthenon architectural material was rendered unuseable.

During this highly significant historical period the Athenians built not only the great temples but also many other structures. The model presents only those for which there is solid evidence.

When the Persians besieged the Acropolis in 480 B.C. the Athenians constructed makeshift wooden palisades to strengthen the ruinous Mycenaean fortification wall. The temples and the other supplementary buildings (known conventionally as buildings B, C, D, E etc. in the scholarly literature) were set up in flames along with the Older Parthenon which was enclosed in wooden scaffolding or defensive barriers. The monumental Old Propylon suffered a like fate. In spite of the splendid success of the Athenians and the allied Greeks at the naval Battle of Salamis (480 B.C.) and the Battle of Plataia (479 B.C.) and elsewhere, there was no important rebuilding on the Acropolis for three decades with the exception of minor repairs, such as the Old Propylon, and the rebuilding of the fortification walls with extensive reuse of the stones from the destroyed temples, artfully displayed perhaps as memorials of the Persian destruction, meant to be seen especially from the Agora, the political centre of the town.



The Acropolis in 480 B.C. View from the south • Model at a scale of 1:500 • Design: M. Korres • Construction: P. Dimitriades

1. **The Straight Ascent.** A ramp made of packed earth between two retaining walls. Sections of the northern retaining wall are preserved both outside and inside the Roman gate of the Acropolis. This ascent replaced the earlier zigzag approach of Mycenaean times and was especially useful for hoisting blocks during temple construction, raising the new walls after the Persian Wars and transporting the earth fill needed for the creation of level terraces in the classical period.
2. **The so-called Building B.** Much of its architecture has been reused in the foundations of the Propylaia north wing.
3. Bastion like projection of the **Mycenaean Wall**. Its masonry has been incorporated in the interior of the classical Nike Bastion.
4. Older **Temple and Altar of Athena Nike**, preserved exactly beneath the classical temple and altar of Athena Nike.
5. **Mycenaean Wall** which the ancients called the Pelargikon. The circuit measures 760 m, the width 3-5 m and the height up to about 8 metres. Many sections of the Cyclopean Mycenaean Wall are no longer visible today because they were covered over following archaeological excavations. Today the following sections are visible.
 - South of the Propylaia.
 - South of the southwest corner of the Parthenon where the Mycenaean Wall was found at a great depth in the excavations of 1885-1890. In order to keep the remains visible, the site has been enclosed by modern retaining walls.
 - Behind the Acropolis Museum.
6. **Old Propylon.** This gateway occupied the site of the main entrance gate of the Mycenaean fortifications. Construction began

on both the Old Propylon and the Older Parthenon after the battle of Marathon and both were still under construction up until the time of the Persian destruction in 480 B.C. The Old Propylon was at first repaired and patched up, then dismantled in order to build the Propylaia on the same site. Only one corner survived because it did not interfere with the new construction; it is preserved at the south side of the Propylaia.

7. **The Old Temple of Athena** (around 525 B.C. at the time of the Peisistratids). A Doric peripteral temple with 6x12 columns and with the interior divided in two parts. The age-old wooden statue of the goddess stood in the eastern cella, the temple proper. The state treasury was in the western section. The foundations made of hard Acropolis limestone are all that remain in place on the site itself. But column drums and capitals made of poros limestone and marble pediment cornice blocks were found scattered around. The entire entablature of one long side of the temple was built into the Acropolis North Wall with the epistyles, triglyph-metope course and cornices set in their original architectural order. The pediment sculpture was made of marble. One of the pediments pictured the Battle of the Gods and the Giants, the best preserved figures of which are displayed in the Acropolis Museum.
8. **The Older Parthenon.** An unfinished Doric peripteral temple with 6x16 columns. It was about as long as the Parthenon but considerably narrower. The great solid foundations are all that remain on the site itself; they were incorporated in the foundations of the new (Periklean) Parthenon. Just as in the case of the Old Temple of Athena, marble column drums have been built

into the Acropolis North Wall. The model shows the massive wooden scaffolding by means of which the column drums were hoisted into place and also the huge artificial earth fills to the south and east of the temple. These dumped fills which conceal the actual depth of the foundations (about 11 metres on the south side) facilitated construction operations. They

were subsequently buried in yet greater fillings in the classical period.

9. The so-called **Pelargikon Wall**. An outer line of defence on the slopes of the hill designed to protect the western half where the only sources of water, the springs (still active today) were to be found.



The Acropolis in 480 B.C. • Model at a scale of 1:500 • Design: M. Korres • Construction: P. Dimitriades

The Acropolis Through the 2nd Century A.C.

After Kimon's victory in the Battle of Eurymedon in 460 B.C. the Athenians used the Persian booty to build a new circuit wall around the Acropolis. On the south side, the old line of the Mycenaean wall was abandoned and a new line was planned far outside the old Mycenaean circuit wall, extending the Acropolis precinct to the south. In order to create a level terrace extending from the original bedrock at its highest point to the line of the new wall on the steep south slope, 18 meters lower than the top, huge masses of dumped earth fill had to be brought in. At that time over 100,000 tons of stone blocks weighing between 1/2 and 13 tons and around 200,000 tons of earth were brought up to the Acropolis. By means of this project the usable area of the Acropolis was enlarged by 9000 square metres bringing the total area to 34,000 square metres. The peace treaties concluded with Persia in 449 B.C. and with Sparta in 451 and 446/5 B.C. must surely have created the necessary pre-conditions for resuming extensive building programmes with Pericles as the leading spirit. The transfer of the treasury of the Delian League to the Acropolis in 454 B.C. and a Panhellenic conference summoned by Pericles in the same year or a little later gave the Athenians not only the economic but also the ideological basis for exacting contributions for their awe-inspiring works; the annual taxes from the allies amounted to 1.66% of the total tribute. The number of skilled stone masons and other artisans working on the Acropolis

is estimated at 200-250. About one third of those were foreigners, freedmen and slaves. They were all paid at the same rate, one drachma per day.

Amidst a ferment of unprecedented ideas the sanctuary assumed a new form. The contours of the Acropolis itself were altered with the creation of a series of terraces by levelling off the bedrock in some places and bringing up the level with dumped earth fillings in other places. The terraces made of packed earth were kept in place by retaining walls built no higher than the terraces. The Parthenon terrace was the largest and highest.

The splendour and artistic grandeur of the whole area was enhanced by votive offerings ranging from small stelai to large sculptural ensembles, many of which were of bronze, resulting in a display of inestimable value.

The city around the Acropolis was bursting with vitality, but the area of private enterprise stopped at some considerable distance from the Sacred Rock. At the base of the Acropolis was another group of sanctuaries and public establishments, forming a suitable intermediary district between the Acropolis and the town. The Peripatos, a circular road, went right round the Acropolis slopes. All of the Periclean buildings were preserved on the Acropolis until the late Roman period.



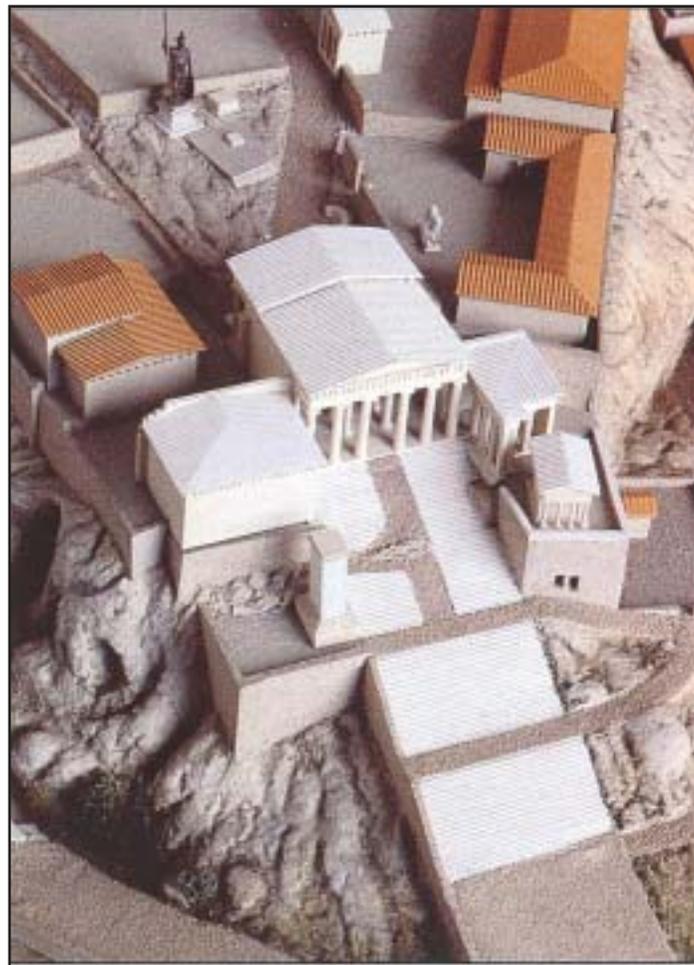
*The Acropolis Through the 2nd Century A.C. View from the south.
Model at a scale of 1:500 • Design: M. Korres • Construction: P. Dimitriades*

The Entrance to the Acropolis

The Propylaia, a work of the architect Mnesicles, was one of the greatest masterpieces of classical architecture. It had the splendour of a great temple, although it was only the entrance building, that is to say a propylon, but with an unprecedented architectural design. Construction started in 437 B.C. immediately after the Parthenon and was halted by the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War in 431 B.C. The central and largest section has the form of a hexastyle Doric temple with columns only at the east and west, and walls along the two sides. A cross-wall with five monumental doorways separates the two chambers. The outer larger chamber, the Propylaia par excellence, has six interior Ionic columns, necessitated by the great span of the monumental ceiling which they had to support. The famous ceilings of the Propylaia were entirely of marble. In the north wing was a chamber now called Pinakothek (Picture Gallery) since paintings were hung there during the Roman period.

The approach to the Acropolis was on a ramp twice the width of the earlier ramp. At a later time the ramp was replaced by a monumental stairway.

To the northwest of the Propylaia is the tower-like base of the Monument of Agrippa (27 B.C.), which supported the bronze group of Agrippa in a four-horse chariot. The base itself, however, actually was constructed at around 180 B.C. in honour of a king of Pergamon, probably Attalos. Consequently, when the Athenians decided to honour Agrippa, they economically reused the pre-existing base, replacing both the original inscription and sculpture with new ones.



*The Entrance to the Acropolis Through the 2nd Century A.C.
Model at a scale of 1:500 • Design: M. Korres • Construction: P. Dimitriades*

The Temple of Athena Nike

In 427-423 B.C. the temple of Athena Nike was built, perhaps by the architect Kallikrates, on the bastion southwest of the Propylaea, to replace an earlier little temple on the same site. An exquisitely proportioned temple in the Ionic order, tetrastyle amphiprostyle, namely with four monolithic columns at the east and west fronts. As the epithet Nike (victory) implies, here Athena was worshipped as the goddess who stands by the Athenians in time of war. The temple housed a statue of Athena and had sculpture on the

pediments and the frieze. Only a few fragments of the pediment sculptures are preserved. The east frieze represents the Olympian gods and the other three sides of the frieze picture battle scenes. Since the temple was high up on top of a bastion it was surrounded on three sides by a protective marble parapet constructed around 410 B.C., adorned with reliefs of Athena and Victories. Sculptures of the frieze and fragments of the parapet are displayed in the Acropolis Museum.

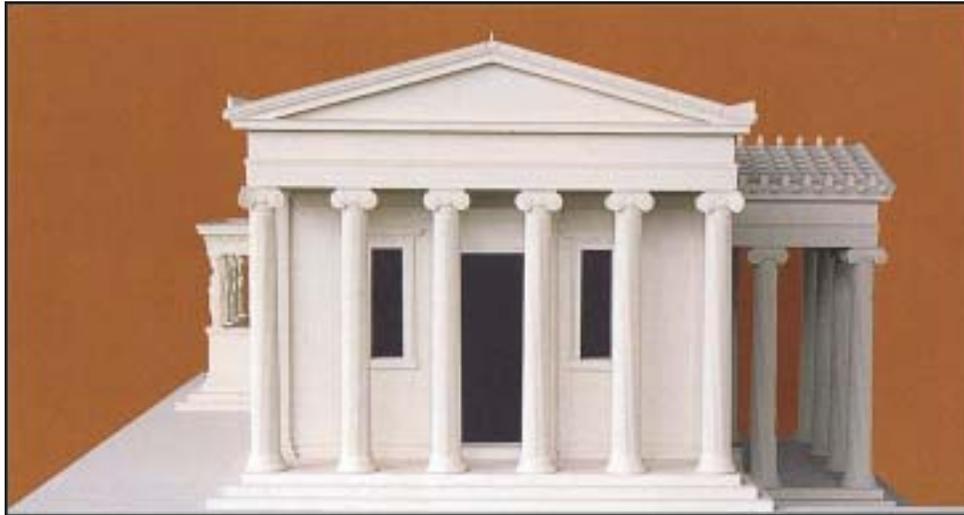


*The Temple of Athena Nike at the end of the 5th Century B.C. View from the northeast.
Model at a scale of 1:20 • Made by the Skulpturhalle, Basel, Switzerland*

The Erechtheion

The last of the Periclean buildings. Construction began during the Peace of Nicias (421–415 B.C.) and ended after 410 B.C. A complex marble building in the Ionic order, an exceptional artwork. The Erechtheion was a temple with multiple functions housing older and newer cults, such as the cults of Athena, Poseidon, Erechtheus, Boutes, and others: the site of the “Sacred Tokens”, the marks made by the Poseidon’s trident and the olive tree of Athena. The Erechtheion and its immediate surroundings had to accommodate earlier monuments on the site, such as the Pandroseum, the grave of Kekrops and a little temple in the interior. Each of the four sides of the Erechtheion has its own architectural composition. The east front takes the form of a hexastyle prostyle temple. The north side has a

large projecting tetrastyle porch with a monumental doorway to the western chamber. The opening in the roof and another opening in the floor which extends down to bedrock belong to the original construction; the hollows in the bedrock thus left open to view have been interpreted as marks made either by Poseidon’s trident or by Zeus’ thunderbolt. The south side has a smaller porch where the columns are replaced by female figures, the Caryatids. The west façade has two storeys. The Erechtheion friezes had mythological themes; some of the figures are on display in the Acropolis Museum.



East of the Erechtheion was the Great Altar, where the great sacrifices during the religious ceremonies of the Panathenaic Festival were performed.

*The Erechtheion in the 5th Century B.C. View from the east • Model at a scale of 1:20
Based on studies by G. P. Stevens and A. Papanikolaou • Made by the Skulpturhalle, Basel, Switzerland*

The Parthenon

The foremost, largest and most important classical building on the Acropolis. A double temple of Pentelic marble, Doric with Ionic features, surrounded by a colonnade (8 columns east and west and 17 columns to a side) with six columns in the pronaos and opisthodomos. The Parthenon was built from 447 to 438 B.C. by the architects Ictinus and Callicrates. The famous sculptor Phidias, a personal friend of Pericles, had general responsibility for supervising the entire project. The Parthenon is unsurpassed not only in regard to its architecture and sculpture but also to the speed of construction. It was built on the site of the unfinished Older Parthenon. The plans for the new temple were designed in such a way so as to reuse the marble from the older temple as much as possible. The wealth of sculptural adornment is

unique. In the cella the great gold and ivory statue of the Athena Parthenos, 13.5 metres high, was considered a masterpiece; the statue was framed by a two-tiered colonnade of Doric columns supporting the roof with its marble tiles.

The unprecedented sculptural ensembles of the unique temple comprised: the east pediment with the birth of Athena; the west pediment with the “contest” between Athena and Poseidon for the

privilege of being the guardian divinity of the city; the 92 metope reliefs with the Battle of the Giants, the Sack of Troy, the Amazonomachy and the Centauromachy on the east, north, west and south sides; and the Ionic frieze around the walls and the inner porches, 160 m long, representing the Panathenaic procession to the Acropolis.



*The Parthenon in the 5th Century B.C. View from the east.
Model at a scale of 1:20 • Metropolitan Museum of New York, U.S.A.*

We have little information about the other buildings on the Acropolis, given that only foundations are preserved and scholars differ about the identifications.

1. **The Sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia** was founded by the tyrant Peisistratos who brought the cult to the Acropolis from his home county of Brauron. In the classical period it had a stoa in the shape of the greek letter Π housing a statue of Artemis by the sculptor Praxiteles.
2. **The Chalkotheke** (literally: bronzes-container), a large rectangular structure for storing various bronze implements and votive offerings made of bronze. A large gateway led into the precinct between the Brauroneion and the Parthenon.
3. **Monumental stairway** leading from the lower level of the courtyard to the higher level of the Parthenon terrace, serving also and mainly as a place to set up votive offerings. The lower rock-cut steps are preserved and also a few of the upper steps built of limestone; the rock-steps have many beddings for votive stelai.
4. **The Sanctuary of Athena Ergane** is reported by Pausanias.
5. **House of the Arrhephoroi**. Building for the Arrhephoroi, the little girls chosen each year to weave Athena's peplos and to carry the "unutterables" during a mystic rite which they carried out in full secrecy.
6. **Sanctuary of Zeus Polieus** on the highest point of the Acropolis northwest of the Parthenon. Nothing is preserved today.
7. **The Sanctuary of Pandion**, the legendary king of Athens, at the southeastern end of the Acropolis. Part of the walls are preserved in the Museum basement.

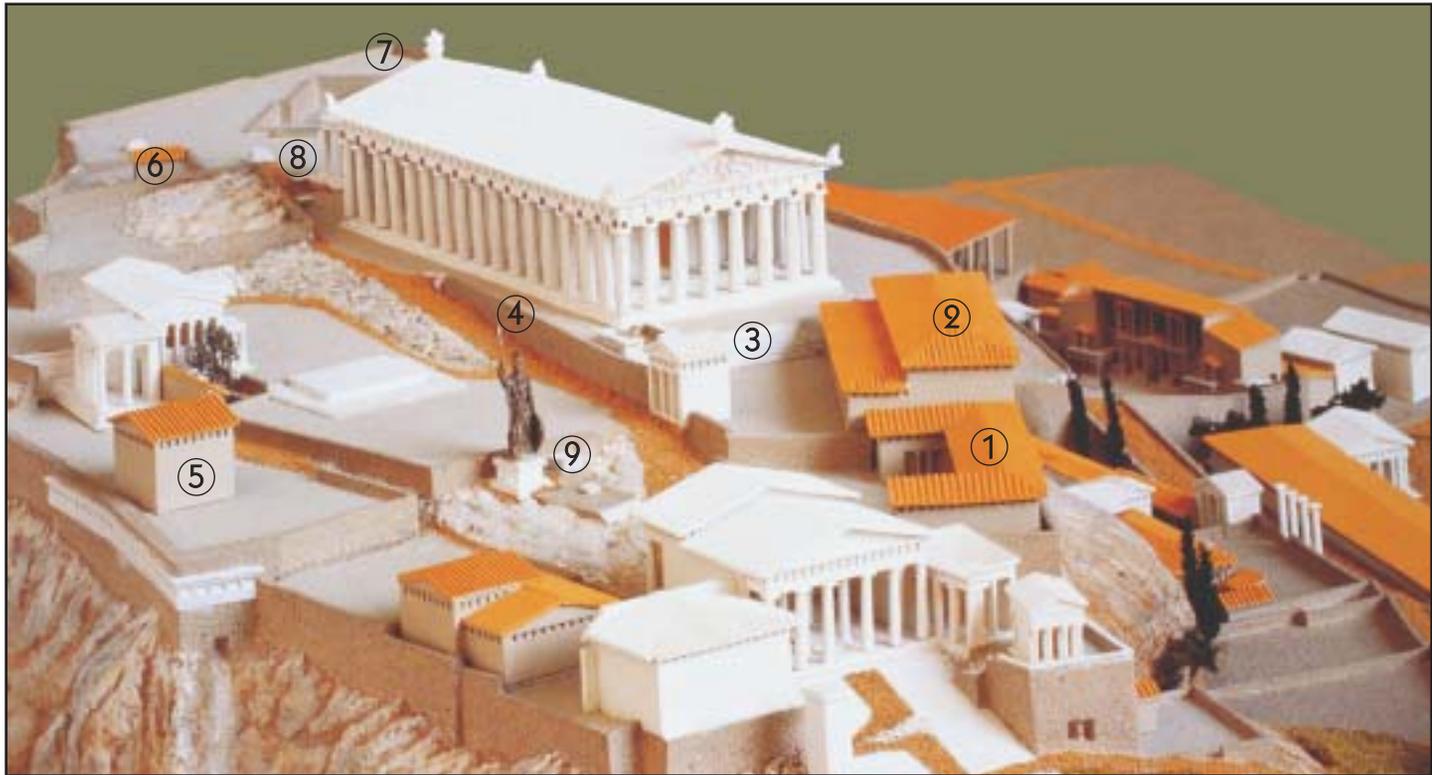
8. **Temple of Roma and Augustus**. A small circular temple in the Ionic order, with no cella, dedicated to the city goddess of Rome and Augustus, built around 18 B.C., east of the Parthenon. Much of the architecture is preserved.

Votive offerings

One of the fundamental ways in which ancient Greeks honoured the divine powers was the custom of making offerings to the gods in their sanctuaries. Hundreds of votive offerings were set up all over the Acropolis. Splendid statue groups of varying sizes, subject matter and materials, made by the most important sculptors in the history of art, turned the Acropolis into a veritable outdoor sculpture museum. The bronze statue of Athena Promachos (9), 12 metres high, a work of Phidias, was the largest and most imposing of all. There were many other statues of Athena, such as the Athena Lemnia by Phidias, the Athena Hygieia by Pyrrhos, the group of Athena and Marsyas by Myron. There were also statues of other gods, such as the Apollo Parnopios (who drives out locusts) by Phidias, Hermes Propylaios by Alcamenes, the Aphrodite by Kalamis, and the statue of Zeus by Leochares. Still other artworks pictured the famous heroes and myths of antiquity: Herakles strangling the snakes; Theseus slaying the Minotaur by Myron; Perseus holding the head of Medusa, also by Myron (a picture with the same content was in the "Picture Gallery" of the Propylaea); Phrixos sacrificing the ram with the golden fleece. A colossal bronze Trojan horse, by the sculptor Strongylion, stood in the Brauroneion.

Statues of famous statesmen, historical figures and great writers and artists were also set up on the Acropolis. For example we know of a portrait of Pericles and a statue of the famous poet Anakreon. There

was a dazzling variety of beautiful offerings: gods, heroes, men and women, animals, precious armour, booty from wars, replicas of ships, relief representations, tripods were to be admired in the sanctuary.



*The Acropolis Through the 2nd Century A.C. View from the northwest.
Model at a scale of 1:500 • Design: M. Korres • Construction: P. Dimitriades*

The sanctuaries and public establishments on the Acropolis south slope formed a splendid centre for the arts, theatre and music in ancient Athens.

- 1. The Odeion of Herodes Atticus.** The semicircular auditorium seating 5000 people was used for musical performances. This magnificent structure, sufficiently well preserved to be in use today, originally had a huge cedarwood roof. The walls built of imposingly large blocks of Peiræus limestone, were sheathed with multi-coloured marbles; the three-storey stage building had an extremely elaborate marble façade. The orchestra was paved with marble slabs, and the rows of seats were also of marble. In addition, a great many pieces of sculpture adorned both the interior and the exterior of the building. The mosaic floors, much of which have been preserved, have had to be covered up again in order to preserve them.
- 2. Stoa of Eumenes** (around 180 B.C.). This large two-storey stoa is very similar to the Stoa of Attalos in the ancient Agora built by Eumenes' brother Attalos II, but its length (160 metres) is greater than that of the Stoa of Attalos and it does not have rooms. When it rained the spectators in the theatre could take shelter in the stoa. Nowadays we see nothing of the stoa itself, we see only the

strong terrace retaining wall with arched buttresses which stood directly behind the back wall of the stoa.

- 3. Asklepieion,** the sanctuary of Asklepios, the healing god, founded in 420 B.C. by Telemachos of Acharnai. The precinct had a number of important structures, such as the ancient spring house, another spring further east, as well as sacred monuments mentioned in the written sources the exact locations of which are not certain.
 - Propylon of the Asklepieion (Roman period).
 - The western stoa (420 B.C.) in the Ionic order, with large rooms in the back.
 - Temple of Asklepios.
 - East stoa. The oldest known two-storey stoa, built in the Doric order. This is probably the building where patients were given treatment or advice concerning their illnesses.
 - An enclosure with the sacred pit, where the snakes sacred to Asklepios dwelt.
- 4. The Odeion of Pericles.** A huge square structure for musical performances. The columns and the roof were made of the wood from the Persian ships captured in the Battle of Salamis in 480 B.C. Nothing has been preserved.



*The Acropolis Through the 2nd Century A.C. View from the south.
Model at a scale of 1:500 • Design: M. Korres • Construction: P. Dimitriades*

The **Theatre of Dionysos (5)** is known to have been an extremely plain and simple affair at first; the invaluable works of the great dramatists were performed in a setting consisting of earth embankments and wooden constructions. When a permanent theatre was established on the south slope of the Acropolis, adjoining the sanctuary of Dionysos, the pre-existing orchestra was adapted for new uses. In the 4th century B.C. in the time of Lycurgus, the auditorium was completely of stone with seating for 17.000 people, of which only 20% is preserved. The stage building had a complicated development. At first it was only a long wall in back of the 4th century B.C. stoa in the sanctuary of Dionysos. Later on a stage building was erected in the form of a stoa, with projecting wings at the sides. In the 1st century B.C. the wings were contracted and a proscenium was attached to the stage the full width of the space between the wings. In 61-62 A.C. during the reign of Nero the stage building was given a monumental architectural form.

Old Temple of Dionysos. Repaired after it had been destroyed by the Persians.

New Temple of Dionysos. A Doric tetrastyle prostyle temple of the 4th century B.C. The statue of the god was the work of Alcámenes.

Choregic Monuments. The cultural complex of the theatre, the concert halls (odeia), stoas and temples was further embellished by elaborate choregic monuments, set up by the men who sponsored the prize-winning contests for choral lyric held in the theatre. The prizes consisted of great bronze cauldrons on three-legged supports. (In English a tripod is merely any three-legged support, whereas the Greek word tripod means the prize bronze cauldron in

one piece with its three-legged support.) These tripods were set up around the theatre of Dionysos and all along the Street of The Tripods in order to show off the glorious victories of the performers. There were hundreds of choregic monuments of all different types, ranging from simple inscribed stones to structures resembling temples and stoas. Only the Lysikrates monument is preserved out of all the many choregic monuments lining the processional road, the Street of the Tripods, which curved around the north and east slopes of the Acropolis, ending at the theatre.

The **Choregic Monument of Thrasyllos (6)** (319 B.C.) A cave high up above the Theatre of Dionysos was given a beautiful marble façade imitating the Propylaea south wing, to serve as a base for the tripods themselves, first the tripod of Thrasyllos, then two tripods of Thrasikles; at a much later time a statue of Dionysos, now in the British Museum, was set up on the tripod base.

The **Choregic Monument of Nicias (7)** (319 B.C.) The largest known choregic monument. Only the foundations remain on the site. In the 3rd century A.C. a great part of its architecture along with the choregic inscription was built into the Beulé Gate and towers, belonging to a second line of defence for the Acropolis western approach. The monument (i.e. the tripod base) had the form of a Doric prostyle hexastyle temple.

Choregic Columns (8). Originally there were more of them. The tripods were placed high up on the column capitals which therefore were triangular, unlike the usual rectangular form.

The numbers refer to the photograph on page 19.



The Theatre of Dionysos towards the end of the 4th Century B.C. View from the south • Design: M. Korres • Construction: N. Gerasimov

Athens in the 3rd Century A.C.

In this period Athens still kept to its irregular city plan. Athens never adopted the Hippodameion city-planning design involving standardized city blocks with streets running parallel or at right angles to each other, as other towns laid out in the Hellenistic and Roman periods. The old classical city wall still circumscribed the town and the old city gates were also preserved.

Ancient Athens and Peiraeus were linked by the Long Walls which ended on the hill of Philopappos and the hill of the Phyx where the Assembly of the People convened.

The city developed around the Acropolis, the religious centre of ancient Athens. The ancient Agora, the administrative and commercial centre, grew up in the area north of the Acropolis and the Areopagus. Installations devoted to the arts clustered on the Acropolis south slope, the area with the theatres and concert halls. The Street of the Tripods ended on the Acropolis south slope, the street with the choregic monuments that began at the Prytaneion on the Acropolis north slope. Towards the east was Hadrian's Arch and the temple of Zeus Olympios, and the extension of the city built in the 2nd century during the reign of Hadrian when a new aqueduct was constructed, increasing the water supply and making it possible to build public baths, mainly in the eastern part of town. At this time

the Panathenaic Stadium on the Ilissos left bank was completely sheathed in marble.

Two roads linked the Old Agora to the Roman Agora and the Library of Hadrian.

The three great gymnasia, so famous in ancient times, were open spaces with groves, where the young men received athletic and military training, and also instruction in philosophy and rhetoric. The Lyceum where Aristotle taught must have been somewhere in the region of the present National Garden. The gymnasium of Kynosarges was further to the south on the left bank of the Ilissos river. The Academy where Plato taught was linked to the Kerameikos, the large graveyard, by an arterial road lined by the monuments of the State Burial Ground, the "Demosion Sema" where distinguished men and the war casualties were buried, for whom Pericles delivered his famous funeral oration in 429 B.C. The road ended at the Dipylon, the largest city gate in all of Greece. The Panathenaic Way the largest processional route in Athens started at the Dipylon Gate, crossed the ancient Agora and ended at the Acropolis. During the celebration of the Eleusinian Mysteries, the procession from the Eleusinion on the Acropolis north slope to the sanctuary of Demeter in Eleusis proceeded along the Panathenaic Way as far as the Sacred Gate (just to the south of the Dipylon Gate) whence it continued on the Sacred Way to Eleusis.



*Athens in the 3rd Century A.C. View from the northwest.
Model at a scale of 1:2000 • Design: J. Travlos and D. Ziro • Construction: N. & P. Gerasimov*

The Acropolis in the mid-15th Century

In the mid-15th century the Acropolis was again a strong fortress. The great classical buildings were still almost intact, but the smaller buildings had disappeared from the 3rd and 4th centuries onward. As in ancient times the Acropolis was well-fortified thanks to its natural advantages and stout walls which were again erected, so that the Acropolis looked like a castle with towers and crenellated walls. The walls, in spite of the fact that they appear to be new construction, are in fact the ancient walls sheathed in rough masonry. The many new structures around the ancient buildings, mainly houses, have not been included in the model.

From the end of the 3rd century onward the Propylaia was tied into the fortifications of the west slope, the only accessible vulnerable side of the fortress. By the end of the 12th century the Propylaia had become the seat of the Orthodox Metropolitan of Athens and in the 13th century had been transformed into a self-contained fortified dwelling of the ruling Franks. The Middle Byzantine chapel adjoining the north wall of the Propylaia central building continued to exist during the Frankish Occupation. A new floor was added to the central building and the north wing and extended to the east above the Late Roman reservoir. The "Frankish" Tower, 26 metres high, was built in the Propylaia south wing. Walls blocked up the intercolumniations

of the Doric colonnade of the central building, thus abolishing the entrance to the fortress through the Propylaia. The new entrance to the Acropolis was now between the Frankish Tower and the south fortification wall. In order to reach the gate at this point the visitor had to pass through four other gates in the defences below. The new entrance to the palace was at the east.

The temple of Athena Nike was still intact on the ancient bastion which was now made higher and took on the form of a tower. The fortification wall erected to fill up the space between the Monument of Agrippa and the tower was so high that it incorporated the west façade of the temple.

In the early Christian period a drastic alteration had turned the Erechtheion into a three-aisled basilica dedicated to Christ the Saviour. It seems to have had a secular function during the Frankish Occupation. A large underground reservoir was constructed at the west and a dwelling was expanded onto the North Porch where the intercolumniations were walled in. East of the North Porch, along the length of the classical building, a three-storey wing of the dwelling with a shed roof was constructed. The Caryatid Porch was almost intact, although walls were built between the Korai.



*The Acropolis in the mid-15th Century A.C. View from the northwest.
Model at a scale of 1:500 • Design: T. Tanoulas • Construction: P. Dimitriades*

The Entrance to the Acropolis in the mid-15th Century



*The Entrance to
the Acropolis in
the mid-15th Century A.C.
View from the southwest.
Model at a scale of 1:500
Design: T. Tanoulas
Construction: P. Dimitriades*

The Parthenon as a Church

At some time in the 6th century the Parthenon was converted into a church dedicated to the Panagia Atheniotissa (The Virgin Mary of Athens).

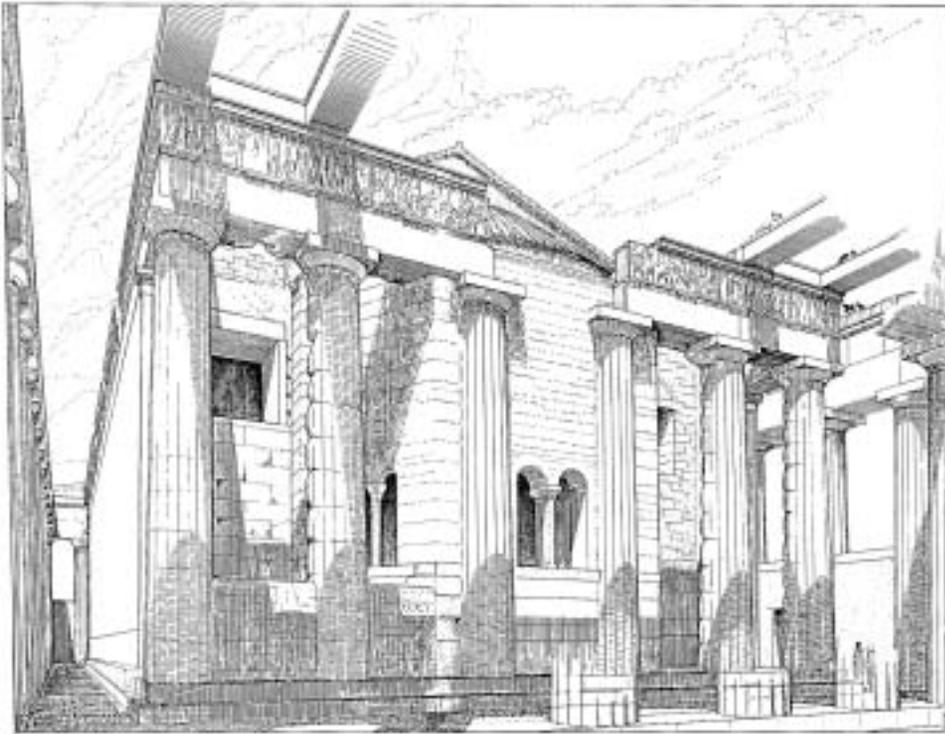
The eastern door of the temple was closed up in order to create the sanctuary for the altar according to the orientation of the Christian churches.

The existing western door became the main entrance. The square western chamber became the narthex. The outer colonnade was closed up with walls about 5 metres high. At the various places where side entrances to the church were opened up additional steps were hacked out of the ancient flooring. A fire in the 3rd century after Christ destroyed the

ancient roof and almost the entire interior of the Parthenon. The new roofing of wood with terracotta tiles, a work of a period of decline, covered only the main building; the colonnade remained unroofed ever after. The windows opened up by the Christians in the side walls were so high up that they interrupted the frieze and

their top sections formed little gables above the level of the roof (see the drawing on page 28). In the 13th century a watch-tower was built in the SW corner of the opisthodomos, rising higher than the roof. Most of it still stands today.

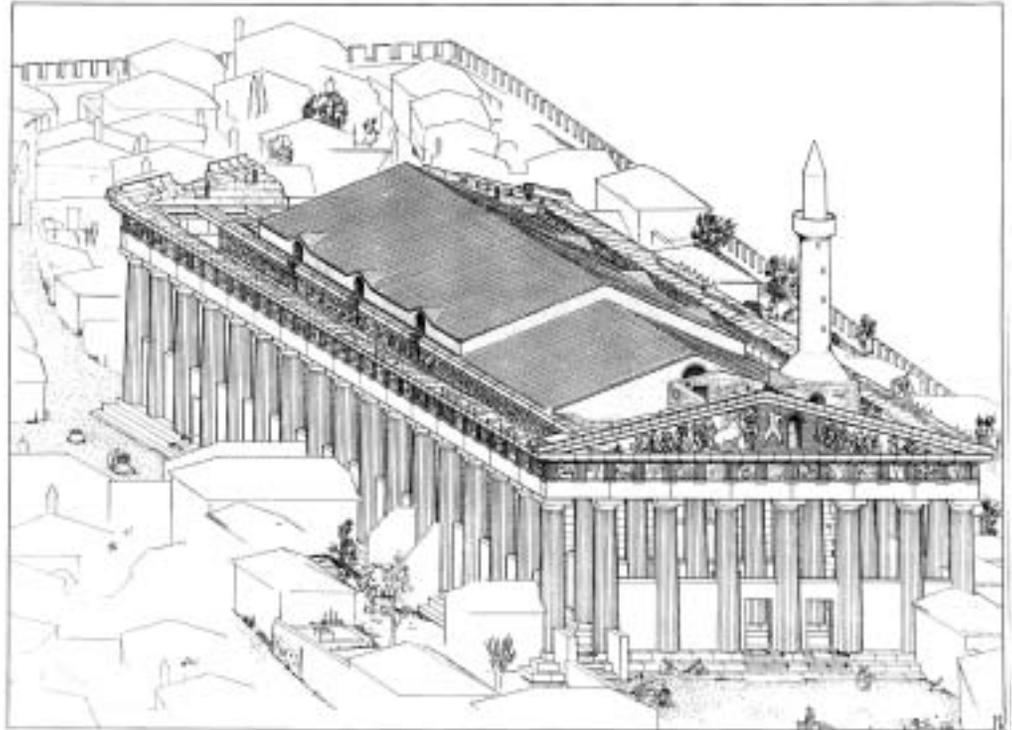
In 1204 the church became the cathedral of the Roman Catholic Church, still dedicated to Mary, the Mother of God.



The Parthenon as a Church, east side • Drawing by M. Korres

The Parthenon as a Mosque

Following the capture of Athens by the Turks in 1456, the Parthenon was used as a mosque. The Acropolis again was a fortress and it was difficult for foreigners to gain access. The Turks did not make any basic changes in the great temple, keeping the same western entrance that the Christian church had. The wall-paintings were concealed with lime plaster; height was added to the spiral stairway in the tower to make a minaret, and several windows were abolished.



*The Parthenon as a Mosque in the 17th Century. Axonometric bimetric reconstruction from the northwest.
Drawing by M. Korres*

The Blowing Up of the Parthenon in 1687

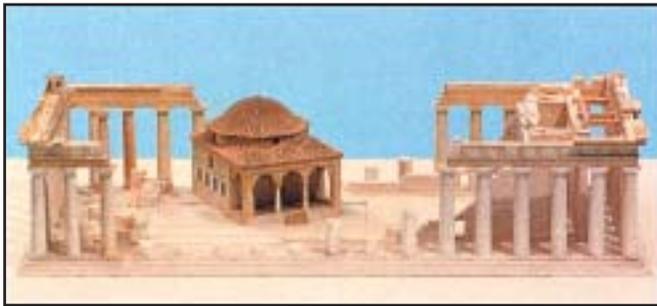
During the second Turko-Venetian War when the Venetians under Francesco Morosini were besieging the Acropolis, there was a terrible explosion in the temple which was being temporarily used by the Turks as a powder magazine. Summing up the damage: three of the four walls were overturned; three fifths of the frieze reliefs were brought down; absolutely nothing of the roof seems to have remained; six columns of the south side collapsed and eight on the north side; only one column on the east porch remained standing. In their fall the columns brought down huge marble epistyle blocks, triglyphs and metopes. The whole building underwent a terrible shock. The fire ignited by the explosion burned on the Acropolis for an entire day. The explosion paved the way for the seizure of the most important sculptures of the temples, to be found today in the British Museum.



*The Explosion of the Parthenon on September 26, 1687.
Axonometric bimetric reconstruction seen from the northwest • Drawing by M. Korres*

After the explosion of 1687 the Turks built a small mosque in the ruins of the Parthenon, most probably in 1708, to serve the needs of the garrison. It was of a simple design, with a square chamber 6.80x6.80 metres, covered with a hemispherical dome, the orientation being towards Mecca. The façade had a porch with two columns and two piers, roofed with three hemispherical domes.

In 1843 the mosque crumbled and fell into ruin.



*The Parthenon before the War of Independence (1821-1831)
with the little mosque in the interior. View from the north.*

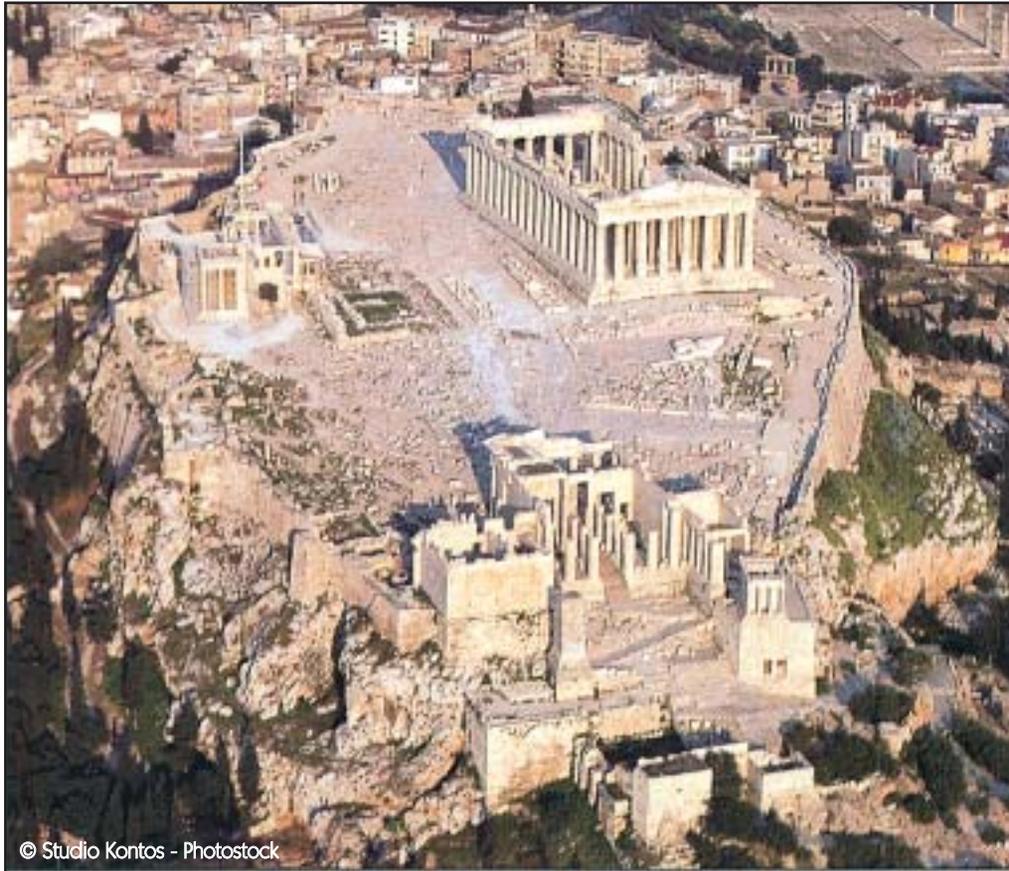
Model at a scale of 1:200 • Design: J. Travlos

Construction: Chr. Mamelis

Today the Acropolis is an archaeological precinct. The excavations conducted by the Greek authorities have reached bedrock which has many beddings and cuttings for foundations of older buildings and for the bases of votive offerings.

None of the roofs of the buildings are preserved. But a great number of architectural blocks have been preserved, scattered all over the Acropolis and on its slopes. Beginning in 1830 restorations on a limited scale have been made.

The Acropolis Museum exhibits sculpture from the earlier temples, from the Parthenon, the Erechtheion and the temple of Athena Nike, along with archaic offerings found in the pits where they had been buried after the Persian destruction in 480 B.C.



Air view of the Acropolis.

