





CHAPTER **XI**

*From the 19th to  
the 21st Century:  
Metamorphoses  
of the Archaeological  
Landscape in Athens*

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2. *The Kerameikos today.* (Photo: S. Mavromatis, 2000)

1. *The Kerameikos, 1889-1892.* (Athens, National Historical Museum)



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## *From the 19th to the 21st Century: Metamorphoses of the Archaeological Landscape in Athens*

The aura of the ancient Athenian world, with all its cultural and symbolic implications as well as what remained of its magnificent physical presence, was the underlying reason for designating Athens – then in ruins after the War of Independence – as the capital of the newly independent Greek state in 1833. This parameter was strongly emphasized in the first city plans drawn up for the new capital, which included proposals for rediscovering the ancient monuments and, more particularly, for their enhancement.

In the first plan, by Stamatios Kleanthis and Eduard Schaubert, the new city was not superimposed on the old: it occupied hitherto unbuilt land north of the Acropolis and north of the medieval town, where much of the ancient heritage was preserved underground and, to a lesser extent, on the surface. In the realms of ideology and symbolism, however, the old city and the new were closely intertwined. The Acropolis (Fig. 3), the ancient monument with the greatest ideological import for the modern Greeks and the symbol of the nation's existence in the modern civilized world, was linked both visually and on the ground (by means of Athinás Street) with the royal palace, the centre of absolute earthly power and the source of all progress and development in the newly-founded state. Wide, straight roads skirting what was left of the medieval town connected the new city with the existing ancient monuments and were planned to connect it later with the whole of the ancient city – the 'city of Hadrian' as well as the 'city of Theseus'. The ancient city occupied most of the area covered by the medieval town, from the 'Theseion' to Hadrian's Library and from there to the Monument of Lysikrates: building construction was banned in the whole of this area and provision was made for compulsory purchases of properties and subsequent excavation. The antiquities thus brought to light would, after landscaping, constitute 'a museum of ancient architecture', which would be 'displayed in all its splendour to the eyes of the admirer of ancient art, to the artist and the scholar'. By walking and meditating in this archaeological park – 'a museum the like of which is not to be found anywhere else in the world' – modern Athenians, and by implication all modern Greeks, would renew the mystical bonds linking them with their glorious past; they would look up to the example of their ancestors and draw from it the self-confidence, strength and faith necessary to create an equally glorious present and future.



The emblematic significance of the Acropolis to the newly-independent state comes out even more strongly in the proposals for the enhancement of the ancient monuments which Leo von Klenze submitted to the Regency in 1834. In Klenze's view, the best way to enlist civilized Europe's interest in and sympathy for modern Greece and, in the last analysis, to secure the European countries' recognition of Greece as a full and equal member of their fraternity, was by designating the Acropolis as an archaeological site pure and simple, wiping out all trace of the other purposes for which it had been used since antiquity, clearing away the relics of centuries of barbarism, carrying out excavations and restoring the monuments, especially the Parthenon. As far as the other antiquities were concerned, Klenze's new master plan retained the zone reserved for archaeological excavations in Kleanthis and Schaubert's plan, but he adapted it slightly to make allowances for nineteenth-century reality: the site of Hadrian's Library was excluded, as it was by this time being used as the town's marketplace.

Kleanthis and Schaubert's dream of turning Athens into a modern European capital to match the ancient city's glory and beauty and uncovering the city of Theseus and Hadrian was



3. The Olympieion, the Acropolis and Athens from the south-east. G. Rumine, 1859. (ELIA)

dashed immediately and irrevocably by the intrusion of harsh reality; the infant Greek state had neither the funds nor the administrative machinery to put their ambitious plan into effect; the hasty and unpremeditated decision to move the capital from Náfplion to Athens in 1834 created an urgent demand for new housing; and the Athenians, motivated either by the necessity of making ends meet or by speculative greed, were far from supportive. The new city was built all over the ruins of ancient Athens, following the street plan already in existence, and in this way the ancient buildings and monuments – whether still standing and visible or buried beneath the earth – were directly involved in the process of urban development. The same factors that had led to the

abandonment of the Kleanthis-Schaubert plan also prevented it from being replaced by another which proposed the construction of the new city directly on top of the city of Theseus. If this latter plan had been adopted, in all probability the antiquities would have featured prominently as focal points for holistic or partial monumental urban planning, as was being done at that time in other European cities with a long history and age-old stratification. In Athens, however, the excavation of ancient monuments and the creation of archaeological sites had perforce to proceed in the piecemeal and often haphazard fashion that had come to be the norm in the development of the city itself. Subject to these limitations, some of Kleanthis and Schaubert's



ideas were retained in one form or another. One of those was the idea of excavating and laying bare the whole of ancient Athens, a dream on which generations of architects were to be nurtured and which was to surface from time to time before being partially fulfilled in the twentieth century.

The reign of King Otho was punctuated by outbursts of patriotic ardour and dreams of national regeneration and the expansion of the modern Greek state to the limits of what had once been the Byzantine Empire. Constant efforts were made to forge a national identity, in which the ancient

***The first visions:  
1833-1853***

Greek roots were strongly emphasized. In this context great importance was attached to the clearance and enhancement of the Acropolis, the symbol of the Greek nation. Here Klenze's guidelines were followed to the letter. Throughout this period huge quantities of earth and debris were removed and buildings were demolished to clear the Acropolis of most of the Byzantine, Frankish and later ruins that covered it. At the same time the materials from the demolished buildings were used to restore and reconstruct the ancient monuments. The rebuilding of the Temple of Athena Nike in 1835-1836 was hailed in Greece and the rest of Europe as the first tangible evidence of the revival of the Greek nation. Next, in 1837-1840 and 1845-1846, the walls of the Erechtheion were largely rebuilt and its porticoes were partially restored. In 1841-1844 large sections of the Parthenon's sekos walls and some of its peristyle columns were rebuilt. In 1843-1844 the restoration of the Temple of Athena Nike was completed and in 1850 the steps up to the Propylaia were repaired to provide easier access to the Acropolis.

As a result of all this restoration work, which was done in an extempore and empirical fashion dictated by the financial resources available and the current level of archaeological expertise, the Acropolis began to take on the appearance under which it came to be recognizable all over the world. In May 1835, when an entrance charge was first imposed, it became the first archaeological site officially open to the public. The repair and restoration work was supervised by the first enthusiastic officers of the Greek Archaeological Service and the Athens Archaeological Society, Ludwig Ross, Kyriakos Pittakis and Alexandros Rizos-Rangavis. Of these, Ross was outstanding for his scientific method and Pittakis, a native of Athens, for his unflagging and wholehearted dedication to the cause of preserving the antiquities of his birthplace – a quality that made him the emblematic figure of this period.



4. *The Acropolis and Athens from the west. P. Sebah, 1872-1875. (CCAM Archives)*



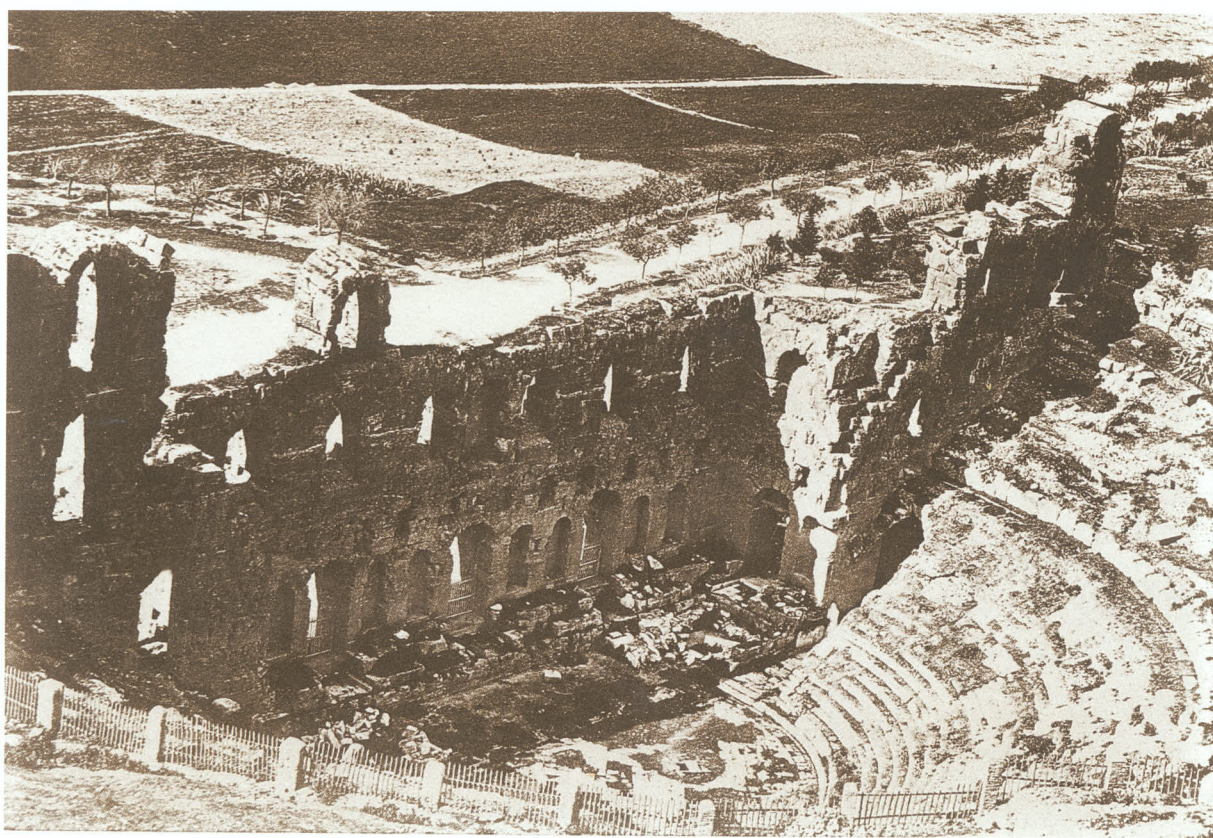








In the lower town there was a great spate of building construction in the first twenty years after the refounding of Athens, especially in the area designated as an archaeological zone in the Kleanthis-Schaubert plan. To deal with the situation, in November 1836 the Architecture Department of the Ministry of the Interior scheduled five areas as archaeological zones, all of them containing ancient monuments that were still standing or still partly visible: the area round the 'Theseion', the area round the Monument of Lysikrates, the site of the Roman Agora, the area round the 'Prytaneion' (now identified as the so-called Diogeneion) and the part of the Agora containing the visible remains of the Stoa of Attalos and the 'Stoa of the Giants'. In these zones local modifications were made to the city plan and schedules were prepared for compulsory purchases of properties and for excavations. Even so, the ancient remains were swamped by the living city: the bazaar was re-established in the eastern half of Hadrian's Library (then known as Hadrian's Gymnasium) and in 1834-1835 an army barracks was built on top of its western half. The Roman Agora, of which the west gate and some columns of the interior peristyle were visible, was full of houses as well as the Hill School and the army bakery. The ruins of the Stoa of Attalos (then known as Ptolemy's Gymnasium) were surrounded by buildings, while the Giants and Tritons that had once adorned the façade of the Odeion of Agrippa now occupied the basements



6. *The Odeion of Herodes from the north. P. Sebah, 1872-1875. (CCAM Archives)*

5. *The Theatre of Dionysos from the south-west. P. Sebah, 1872-1875. (CCAM Archives)*



of private houses. Apart from the Acropolis, the only sites where ancient monuments were recognizable as such were the Olympieion and the Hill of the Muses, the Pnyx and the Hill of the Nymphs on the desolate and uninhabited western and southern outskirts of the city.

In those early years of Greek independence archaeologists in Greece and elsewhere were keen to clarify the topography of ancient Athens, about which very little was then known. The bodies entrusted with the country's archaeological heritage dreamed of extensive digs to locate the ancient city's civic and cultural centre, mentioned so often in the literary sources. However, the time was not ripe for systematic excavations. Occasional digs were organized by the Archaeological Society in search of the ancient Bouleuterion (near the building now identified as the Eleusinion) and the Prytaneion (near the Church of Hagios Dhimítrios Katifóris). Pittakis carried on with his small-scale excavations in search of specific buildings and monuments in various parts of the town, which he had started during the War of Independence, and he succeeded in locating the Klepsydra, the inscription carved in the rock on the Hill of the Nymphs marking the limit of the Precinct of Zeus, and the Sacred Gate in the Kerameikos district (identified at the time as the Dipylon Gate). In practice, excavations were carried out not so much by the archaeologist's spade as by the pickaxes used in the development of the modern city. When the Royal Gardens (now the National Gardens) were being laid out, a large part of the Roman extension to the ancient city was brought to light. In 1837 construction work on a private house was held up when the builders unearthed the inscribed base of the Euboulides ex-voto, still in its original position. This was an extremely important discovery which, taken in conjunction with Pausanias's description, made it possible to establish the path of the road running from the Dipylon Gate to the Agora and thus to pinpoint their exact positions. Ross was fully aware of the significance of the find and published it internationally. However, the losses far outweighed the gains. Most of the ancient ruins unearthed during the construction of the new city were destroyed, and the ancient materials were usually reused in the new buildings. All the archaeologists could do was to take the movable finds into safe keeping, either in the 'Theseion' – which was used as the Central Museum of Antiquities from 1834 onwards – or in storerooms at some of the archaeological sites. Large-scale cleaning and clearance work on other monuments outside the Acropolis did not start until the 1850s, but thereafter it continued systematically.

In the sixty years or so from the accession of George I until 1922, Athens developed at a spectacular pace in every way. The centre was densely built-up and the city started spreading out in all directions, especially from the 1880s onwards. It had its fair share of private mansions, government office buildings, public utilities and big new churches. The local railway between Athens and Piraeus was built as early as the 1860s and the main line railway to the rest of Greece in the 1880s. Great progress was made with the urban infrastructure: roads, public transport, electricity supplies, telephones. By the time of the Asia Minor disaster in 1922 Athens had grown into a proper European city with a rich artistic and intellectual life, a cultural capital for all the Greeks living in the East and the West. One of the highlights in its history occurred in 1896, when the Olympic Games were held there and

*Topographical exploration  
and discoveries, 1864-1885*



the eyes of the world were turned upon it. The gradual headway made with the organization and physical and social urbanization of Athens was matched by similar progress with the archaeological sites and monuments.

In the first two decades after the abdication of King Otho (1862) a start was made with systematic archaeological excavations – systematic in terms of continuity, if not of method. They were carried out by the Archaeological Society, which, with Stephanos Kumanudes as its Secretary, now settled down to fulfil its primary function and became, in effect, the principal institution responsible for the protection of the country's archaeological heritage. Restoration and rebuilding work was abandoned, in keeping with the more pragmatic spirit of those years. On the Acropolis, in 'Hadrian's Gymnasium', the 'Agoranomeion', the 'Stoa of the Giants' and elsewhere, the Archaeological Society and the General Ephorate of Antiquities (headed by Panayotis Efstratiades) concentrated on small-scale consolidation work using traditional methods and materials such as iron hoops and tie-rods, shores and brickwork buttresses. By this time the Greek public was more interested in the safety of the ancient monuments (especially those on the Acropolis) and the visual impression they made (especially to foreign visitors) (Fig. 4). Construction work was started on the Acropolis Museum and railings were put up in the sites with archaeological collections, the Temple of Athena Nike, the Pinakotheke in the Propylaia and some medieval cisterns on the Acropolis. The Monument of Lysikrates was tidied up in preparation for the visit of Empress Eugénie of France in 1868/69: its base was patched up and reintegrated, the grounds around it – now earmarked for redevelopment as an open square – were cleared of the ruins of the Capuchin friary and excavated, and a low wall was built round the monument (Fig. 7). A wall was also built round the Tower of the Winds, and the piece of land in front of Hadrian's Library, where there was an archaeological collection, was enclosed by a stone wall and a wooden fence. Further measures were taken to protect the antiquities by putting up temporary fences round the newly-excavated ruins on the south slope of the Acropolis and wooden sheds (to be used as watchmen's premises and storerooms) in the orchestra of the Theatre of Dionysos, in front of the Odeion of Herodes Atticus, next to the Monument of Lysikrates and in front of Hadrian's Library.

Most of the effort, however, was concentrated on topographical exploration and the rediscovery of the ancient city. Organized excavation started on the unbuilt south slope of the Acropolis. There Pittakis had already cleared the Herodeion (Fig. 6) between 1848 and 1857. From 1857 to 1867 Efstratiades, in collaboration with Stack and Ziller, removed all the accumulated earth and debris to reveal the ruins of the Theatre of Dionysos (Fig. 5) and part of the adjacent sanctuary. But it was in 1876-1879 that this area was drastically transformed, when Kumanudes conducted systematic excavations and unearthed the ruins of the Stoa of Eumenes, the Asklepieion and the nearby temples and choregic monuments. In the city centre, interest was focused on the ruins of 'Ptolemy's Gymnasium' and the 'Stoa of the Giants', where most of the later accretions were removed and the archaeological remains were extended in a rapid succession of clearance and excavation projects. Little by little, new additions were made to the

7. *The Monument of Lysikrates from the south-west. P. Sebah, 1872-1875. (CCAM Archives)*







Athens archaeological landscape: the Panathenaic Stadium, excavated by Ernst Ziller and Spyridon Lampros in 1868-1869; the meeting-place of the Ekklesia of the Demos (Citizens' Assembly) on the Pnyx, first explored in 1862 by Ernst Curtius; and the Kerameikos (Fig. 1), where the large number of antiquities discovered during the construction of Piraiás Street prompted the Archaeological Society to initiate systematic excavations in 1869-1870. In 1885-1886, after the destruction by fire of the central bazaar, Kumanudes excavated the site of Hadrian's Library and unearthed its eastern half; and in 1890-1891 he excavated near the Tower of the Winds, where he demolished the later buildings and so opened up much of the south-east courtyard and the east gate of the Roman Agora.

Every new excavation did a little more to fill the gaps in the archaeologists' knowledge of the topography and monuments of the ancient city. In 1862 Kumanudes found the dedicatory inscription that enabled him to identify the Stoa of Attalos. Hadrian's Library was identified in 1885, the Roman Agora (Fig. 10) in 1890. The discovery of the funerary relief of Dexileos in 1863 suggested that the area where it was found was probably the Kerameikos, and this hypothesis was confirmed in 1870 when one of the boundary stones was found *in situ*. In 1874, when Curtius correctly identified the Sacred Gate and the Dipylon, the topography of the area became much clearer.

Unfortunately, the discovery of ancient Athens proceeded at the expense of the medieval and post-medieval town. In the first decades after independence redevelopment had already led to the disappearance of many Byzantine and Post-Byzantine buildings, churches being among the first to go. Kumanudes, the last adherent of the Enlightenment, ignored the radical change of attitude towards the constant evolution of Hellenism through the ages: when he excavated an ancient monument, he deliberately removed all trace of what he saw as the centuries of decline and barbarization. He was responsible for the destruction of a large part of the Late Roman wall with its towers, the Rizókastro and Serpendzés walls and the Middle Byzantine Church of the Megáli Panagia (in Hadrian's Library) with its magnificent interior decoration.

By the end of the 1870s, as we know from contemporary photographs, the appearance of the ancient monuments in Athens had changed considerably, but the picture they presented was still idyllic, unorganized and in complete harmony with the still unspoilt natural environment. The built-up area now extended almost as far as the Olympieion and Hadrian's Arch, but those two monuments were still just beyond the edge of the city, standing on their own in a basically rural setting. Amalías Avenue ran in front of them and the Zápion Gardens were being laid out to the north (Fig. 12). Between them, a country lane led to the cafés recently built along the River Ilissos. The columns of the Olympieion, now stripped of the medieval cubicle perched on the architrave, looked as if they were growing straight out of the ground, because the krepidoma of the temple had been covered with earth when Amalías Avenue was being built in 1861-1862. The Hill of the Muses, the Pnyx and the Hill of the Nymphs were still bare of trees and houses (Fig. 8), but the Acropolis Boulevard (the modern Dhionisióu Areopayítou and Apostólou Pávlou Streets) now ran between them and the Acropolis: its construction in

8. *The Hill of the Nymphs viewed from the Acropolis*. P. Sebah, 1872-1875. (CCAM Archives)

9. *Panoramic view of Athens from the Hill of the Nymphs, 1869-1875*. (Athens, National Historical Museum)





*Panorama d'Albi  
de la Colline des Nymphes*



the early 1860s had caused considerable damage to the ancient remains unearthed by the road-builders. The public gardens to the west of the 'Theseion' had already been planted, while to the south of the temple was a rectangular terrace used for the storage of antiquities waiting to be moved to the new Archaeological Museum. In the north-west of the city the Kerameikos cemetery was beginning to be revealed: already a few early factories had sprung up nearby, but the flourishing, age-old olive-groves of the Attic plain were still only a stone's throw away (Fig. 9). Dominating the whole landscape was the Acropolis, drastically transformed by the demolition in 1875 of the 'Frankish Tower' in the Propylaia.



10. The Roman Agora in 1891. (German Archaeological Institute)

archaeology and a huge quantity of archaeological work, in keeping with the prevailing national trend towards modernization, technological progress and economic growth. It was in this period that Athens grew into a proper city with a modern, European 'feel' to it. The archaeological sites and ancient monuments were directly involved in the drive to beautify and improve the city, which was sometimes prompted by decisions to hold major international events in Athens – most notably the Olympic Games in 1896, but also the 1st International Archaeological Conference in 1905. A wide-ranging, concerted programme of excavation, restoration and general tidying-up altered the appearance of the ancient ruins almost beyond recognition, making them more presentable, better organized attractions that were fitting ornaments of the urban scene.

The excavations carried out during these years exemplify the progress that had been made in the science of archaeology. Digs on the Acropolis, in the Kerameikos and at the centres of the Mycenaean world significantly enlarged the scope of archaeologists' knowledge and gave them a better appreciation of the creative evolution of the Greeks over the centuries. While the

Between the late 1880s and the Asia Minor disaster of 1922 some administrative changes were made in the country's archaeological institutions. From 1885 to 1909 Panayotis Kavvadias was the leading figure on the Greek archaeological scene in his dual capacity as General Ephor of Antiquities and Secretary of the Archaeological Society. After the coup d'état of 1909 the responsibility for all archaeological administration was placed in the hands of the state-run Archaeological Service, while the function of the Archaeological Society was strictly limited to matters of scholarship and research. Kavvadias presided over an administrative and scientific reorganization of Greek

### *Urban beautification, 1885-1909*



excavators of Athens – especially those in the Greek archaeological services – were still keenly interested in the local topography, we begin to find stratigraphical researches, especially by members of the foreign archaeological schools and institutes that had sprung up in Greece, to shed light on the evolution of the ancient city and its monuments through the ages. Foremost among the latter group was Wilhelm Dörpfeld, the Director of the German Archaeological Institute and closest associate of the Greek Archaeological Service, whose members were predominantly royalist and pro-German. In the first decade of the twentieth century a number of younger scholars with fresh ideas and methods, including Gorham Stevens, B.H. (Bert) Hill and William B. Dinsmoor, prepared the way for the influx of American archaeologists that followed soon afterwards. The achievements of archaeological research during these years were recorded in Walter Judeich's *Topographie von Athen* (1905), reissued in a revised edition in 1931, which was used as the basis for every topographical study of ancient Athens until the Second World War.

Similarly, the number of ancient monuments restored during this period reflects the Greeks' acceptance of modern technology, to which they had been converted in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. We now find qualified engineers taking an active part in restoration projects – including Nikolaos Balanos and Anastasios Orlandos, who were later to win renown as the principal restorers of ancient Greek monuments – and efforts being made to ensure that the work was done under the best possible conditions.

Ideologically, Greek archaeologists still remained deeply committed to the old classicistic tradition, even in these changing times. In excavations, the primary object was to discover and give prominence to the Classical phase of the monuments; in restorations, it was to restore them as far as possible as they were thought to have been in Classical times. As so often before and since, the thinking behind the excavation and preservation of ancient monuments in Athens at that time was closely bound up with the whole matter of Greek national aspirations. The restoration of the Acropolis monuments, begun as an emergency operation after the 1894 earthquake, developed into a campaign for the restoration of national archetypes. In 1920-1921, when Greece – after emerging victorious in the Balkans – was setting out to conquer Asia Minor, the other 'great idea' of excavating and laying bare the whole of ancient Athens resurfaced in a more ambitious form than ever.

The first step towards giving the archaeological sites an organized urban character in accordance with European standards was to remove the sheds and makeshift fences put up during the previous decade and replace them with proper gatehouses and iron railings (most of them designed by the French engineer Désiré Matton) on trim stone walls. This work was put in hand in 1889, starting with the Kerameikos and the Monument of Lysikrates, and was stepped up in preparation for the Olympic Games in 1895-1896, when railings were erected round the 'Stoa of the Giants', the façade and the excavated section of Hadrian's Library and the east side of the Theatre of Dionysos. Plans were drawn up for other monuments and the whole of the Acropolis to be railed off, and accordingly stone walls were built in 1898 round the Stoa of Attalos and in 1908-1909 round the 'Theseion' and along the stretch of the Acropolis Boulevard from the Herodeion to the Areopagus.



At the same time systematic excavation, restoration and general refurbishment projects were put in hand on all the ancient monuments in Athens with the main object of restructuring them and adapting them to the new urban environment. From the early 1880s large-scale urban development work was done in the vicinity of the Olympieion: the Záppion building was completed and its public gardens laid out and planted, and Vassilíssis Ólgas Avenue was built. The area was completely transformed between 1895 and 1905, when Anastasios Metaxas restored the gleaming marble of the Panathenaic Stadium (Fig. 13). While all this was in progress, the Archaeological Society initiated the first excavations in the Olympieion (1883-1909, with some interruptions): most of the precinct wall was laid bare and reconstructed, the propylon was discovered, the whole site was cleared of earth and debris and the architraves and krepidoma of the temple were reinforced. Even more important than the change in the temple's appearance was the transformation of the old, everyday character of the site, which was now properly organized – but also railed off – in accordance with the dictates and psychology of the modern era.

Changes were also noticeable on the hills to the south-west of the Acropolis, which were now under siege from the expanding city: some houses had already been built on the Hill of the Nymphs (Fig. 15). These and other hills in Athens, as well as the slopes of the Acropolis, were planted with trees by the Woodland Conservation Society (Filodasiki Enosis) at the turn of the century. Afforestation proved to be their salvation because, if nothing else, it prevented the extension of the built-up area to the Pnyx and the Hill of the Muses in the following years. Meanwhile excavations were begun on all the hills, and the consolidation and partial restoration of the Monument of Philopappos in 1898-1900 left it with its now familiar silhouette.

It was in this period that a new organized archaeological site came into being: the Kerameikos. Successive excavations by the Archaeological Society since the late 1860s had brought to light the Sacred Gate, the Dipylon, the Pompeion, the Themistoklean wall, numerous Classical funerary monuments and earlier burials. The interpretation of their significance was painful enough, their excavation even more so. In 1908 the Society managed to buy up the whole of the excavated area, whereupon it put a wall round the site, drained the land and built a storehouse for the finds. A major step forward was taken in 1910 when the burial precincts along the Street of the Tombs were restored as far as possible to their original state by Alfred Brückner and Balanos (Fig. 11).

On the Acropolis, work started on projects that were to transform its interior layout and appearance completely and highlight its national importance even more strongly. From 1885 to 1890 Kavvadias excavated the whole summit right down to the bedrock. The ground was then brought up to what was thought to have been the surface level in Classical times and the architectural members scattered all over were gathered into piles. In 1898 Balanos started restoring the Acropolis monuments. By 1902 he had consolidated the opisthodomos and the west front of the Parthenon. The Erechtheion was restored between 1902 and 1909, the Propylaia between 1909 and 1917. The appearance of the Erechtheion and the plateau of the Acropolis then remained unchanged for the next seventy years.







These arduous labours covered the whole summit of the Acropolis, its lower slopes and even some of the ground at its foot. Between 1896 and 1909 Kavvadias extended his clearance digs to the caves on the north slope and the saddle of the Areopagus. All along the south slope, from the Theatre of Dionysos to the Herodeion, minor interventions were carried out at regular intervals between 1886 and 1922 on the maintenance of the ancient ruins and the clearance of their surroundings, at first by the Archaeological Society and later by the Archaeological Service. Meanwhile excavation was started on new sites. In 1912 the Society acquired a number of houses north-east of the Theatre of Dionysos by compulsory purchase, and excavations conducted there by Panayotis Kastrites from 1914 to 1922 revealed the ruins of the Odeion of Perikles. Between 1891 and 1897 the German Archaeological Institute under Dörpfeld excavated the west slope of the Acropolis and the south-west slope of the Areopagus, uncovering a whole residential district of the ancient city with houses, a main street, shrines, the Peisistratid aqueduct and a monumental water fountain (Fig. 15). In 1894 this area was expropriated and brought into the archaeological zone.

The archaeological activity during this period did much to restore the archetypical character of the Acropolis. At the same time, various plans were being hatched to turn the whole of the Acropolis into an emblem of the city. One aim they all had in common was to isolate it from the rest of the city and make it stand out even more conspicuously by building a grand ring road round it: construction of the road started in 1901, but it came up against an immov-



12. *The Olympieion and its surroundings in 1875. (Athens, National Historical Museum)*



able obstacle in the form of the Anafiótika, a district above the Pláka inhabited mainly by migrants from the Aegean islands.

In the lower town, drastic changes were made in the appearance of the Monument of Lysikrates: the area around it was cleared of houses and turned into an open square in 1889, and the monument itself was restored in 1892 by the French School of Archaeology. More important than this, however, were the extensive excavations carried out, especially in the Agora, which prepared the way for later developments.

In 1890-1891, when the Piraeus railway was being extended from Thissío station to Monastiráki, the Archaeological Society under Dörpfeld excavated the north side of the Agora all along the trench being dug for the railway. In 1895-1897 the excavations were extended to the east slope of the hill of Kolonos Agoraios, the north slope of the Areopagus and sections of Adhriano\_ Street: these brought to light the Temple of Apollo Patroös and the Metroön (both of which were misidentified), ancient Greek and Roman houses and a stretch of the Panathenaic Way. Meanwhile, between 1895 and 1903, the rest of the Stoa of Attalos was excavated and the fabric was reinforced (Fig. 14). In 1910 Konstantinos Kourouniotes re-excavated the site of what was then thought to be the Bouleuterion, but only some sections of the Late Roman wall and the Panathenaic Way were found there. In the same year the Archaeological Society bought up and demolished some more houses in the southern half of the Roman Agora; and the excavations that followed, under Kastriotes and Alexander Philadelphus, brought to light a good deal more of the Roman Agora near the west gate.



13. *The Olympieion viewed from the Acropolis in 1910. (German Archaeological Institute)*



During this period, in the prevailing mood of national pride, the ever-latent idea of excavating and laying bare the whole of ancient Athens resurfaced once again. During the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) there seemed no reason why it should not be possible to uncover the whole of the Roman Agora and Hadrian's Library and to join them both up with the Stoa of Attalos, following the example of what had been done in the Forum Romanum in Rome. Steps were taken to move the eighty-year-old barracks and the army bakery, and the Turkish *medresseh* (theological college) was demolished in 1914. The idea gathered momentum and was presented in ever more ambitious form in the successive master plans for Athens drawn up at about this time. In 1920, when national jubilation and expansionism were at their height, the Supreme Technical Council – on which Orlandos (recently returned from an educational visit to Italy) sat



14. *The Stoa of Attalos and the Acropolis in 1902. (German Archaeological Institute)*

underwent sweeping changes. Now, for the first time, Athens could truly be called the capital of the Greek world – but now the Greek world was confined within the frontiers of Greece. Between the two World Wars we find the first evidence of the phenomena that were to become rampant after the Second World War and have a decisive bearing on the city's future: the population explosion, leading to the rapid expansion of Athens and the beginning of multi-storey building construction in the centre; the deterioration of the natural environment as the first factories went into operation in the plain of Athens; and the disappearance of prominent features of the historical landscape under the plans for the first large-scale urban development projects.

15. *The west slope of the Acropolis during the excavations of 1891-1897. (German Archaeological Institute)*

as adviser on archaeological matters – prepared a new plan in which provision was made for a 'Monumental Zone' reserved for excavations (modelled on the new Zona Monumentale in Rome), covering a very large area stretching from the Kerameikos to the Acropolis Boulevard and from Hadrian's Library to the east slopes of the Hill of the Muses and the Pnyx. In 1921, the centenary year of the Greek War of Independence, Philadelpheus submitted a paper to Parliament containing specific proposals for the progressive expropriation and excavation of the site of ancient Athens within three years. This dream was shattered in 1922 by the catastrophic defeat of the Greek expeditionary force in Asia Minor.

After the Asia Minor disaster of 1922 the character and appearance of Athens







This process of environmental degradation directly affected the archaeological sites and ancient monuments.

One result of the severe economic recession afflicting the whole country, especially in the first ten years after the Asia Minor disaster, was that few resources were available for work on any ancient monuments except those on the Acropolis. In these hard times the 'Sacred Rock'

***Between the wars:  
The first disfigurements***

was ideologically recharged to become a symbol of the nation's survival and recovery. The rebuilding of the north colonnade of the Parthenon started in 1923 under Balanos, and the finished project was officially opened to the public on 17th May 1930 at

the celebrations held on the Acropolis to mark the centenary of the rebirth of the Greek nation. Balanos completed his restoration work on the Parthenon in 1933, leaving it in the state in which, with improved communications, it became a familiar image all over the world after the Second World War. Between 1935 and 1940 the bastion and temple of Athena Nike were restored (the latter for the second time). Meanwhile, in 1934-1935, Balanos reinforced the crumbling walls on the north slope of the Acropolis by building massive buttresses which totally altered its appearance from that side.

The same circumstances made the Greek archaeological services realize that they would have to give up their cherished dream of excavating the Agora themselves. In 1929 a law was passed designating the area between the Tower of the Winds and the 'Theseion' as an archaeological site reserved for excavations. The excavation rights for the western part of this zone, from the Stoa of Attalos to the 'Theseion' and from the railway line to the north-west slopes of the Acropolis and the Areopagus, were awarded to the American School of Classical Studies (Fig. 16), while the rest of it remained under the jurisdiction of the Greek archaeological authorities. In 1931 the Americans made a start on the wholesale expropriation and excavation of the Agora (Fig. 17), a process which continued until the outbreak of the war and was completed after the war, radically altering the appearance of the area. All it was possible to do in the Greek zone was to extend the site clearance and excavation work in the middle and the south-west corner of the Roman Agora and (in 1931-1932) to demolish the Othonian barracks in the south-west corner of Hadrian's Library.

Altogether a great deal of excavation was done between the wars, some of it by the Greeks but most by foreign archaeological schools, bringing to light more and more new evidence concerning the stratigraphy of the city and its monuments. On the south-east slopes of the Acropolis the remains of the Odeion of Perikles were partially uncovered between 1924 and 1932, first under Kastriotis and then under Orlandos. In the same area the Archaeological Society conducted excavations of the Theatre of Dionysos from 1923 to 1929 under Dörpfeld, Heinrich Bulle and Ernst Fiechter, which did much to clarify its successive building phases. Systematic excavation and site clearance work on the north slope of the Acropolis and at its foot, carried out in the 1930s by the American School under Oscar Broneer, revealed the Sanctuary of Aphrodite and Eros, the

16. *The Agora viewed from the Hill of the Nymphs in 1931. (American School of Classical Studies)*

17. *The Agora excavations in 1935. (American School of Classical Studies)*















Mycenaean gateway in the Acropolis wall and the underground spring, as well as the remains of dwelling-houses dating from the Neolithic to the Mycenaean period. Concurrent excavations on the Pnyx from 1930 to 1937, under Kourouniotes, Homer Thompson and Robert Scranton, shed new light on the progressive development of the meeting-place of the ancient Citizens' Assembly and uncovered the remains of other buildings and fortification works on the historic hill. And from 1927 to 1943 the Kerameikos was systematically re-excavated and re-examined, this time by the German Archaeological Institute: new discoveries included the cemeteries of the Sub-Mycenaean and Geometric periods and part of the road from the Dipylon Gate to the Academy, lined with funerary monuments. The finds were so numerous that a museum was needed to house them all, and it was built in 1936-1938. Lastly, the gymnasium of the Academy was excavated for the first time from 1930 to 1939 on the initiative of Panayotis Aristofron, a Greek of the diaspora, and some properties thereabouts were expropriated. Aristofron's dream of setting up a worldwide League of Academies and Universities and joining up the Academy site with the Kerameikos had to be postponed because of the unstable political situation.

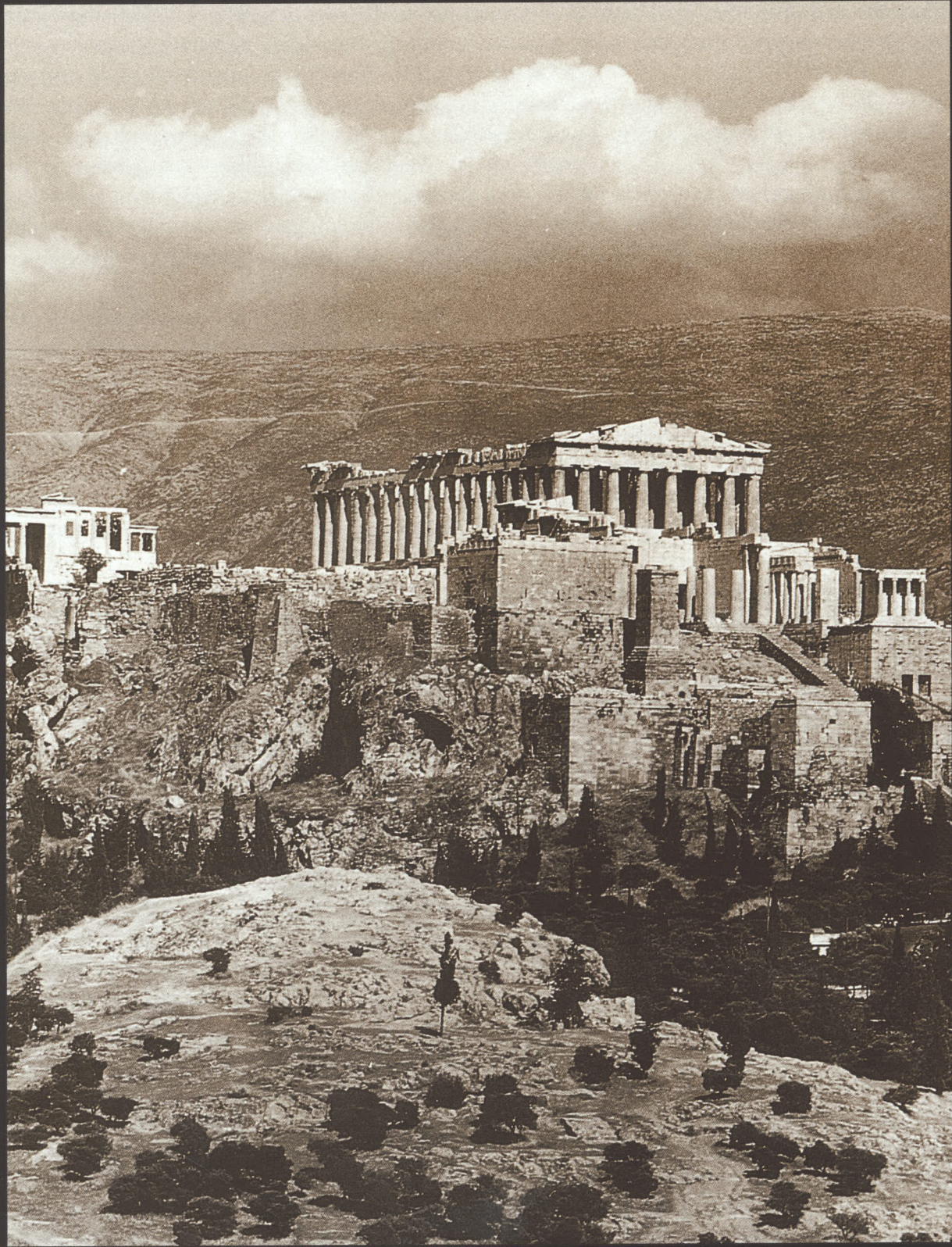
It was in the inter-war period, when organized tourism made its first appearance in Greece, that the archaeological authorities first had to address the issues arising from the development of the ancient monuments as tourist attractions able to deal with visitors *en masse*. At the beginning of the 1930s the Archaeological Service and the newly-founded National Tourist Organization started giving urgent attention to improving the appearance of the archaeological sites in Athens, which had long been neglected and in many cases were being used as encampments for the refugees from Asia Minor. The refugee shanties on the north slope of the Acropolis and the east slope of Kolonos Agoraios were cleared away in the next few years to make way for the excavations of the American School. Between 1933 and 1937 the Greek authorities set about tidying up the Roman Agora: the refugee encampments were pulled down, the army bakery was demolished, the whole area was fenced in and the Fethiye Mosque was repaired. In 1930 and 1934-1935 fences were put up round the 'Theseion', the Monument of Philopappos and the Temple of Olympian Zeus. For the first performances of ancient Greek drama in the Odeion of Herodes Atticus, in 1936, Balanos erected tiers of wooden seats in the cavea and repaired and reinforced the arches of the façade.

These same years saw the appearance of the first eyesores to be built in and near the archaeological sites. The humble churches of Hagia Marina and Hagia Triádha on the Hill of the Nymphs and in the Kerameikos were replaced, in 1927 and 1931 respectively, by massive new churches completely out of scale with their surroundings. In 1924 the Parthenis house was built between the Acropolis and the Hill of the Muses and in 1939 construction started on the Bastias Theatre in the Koile district (west of Filopáppou Hill). In 1934 the threat to the view of the Acropolis posed by multi-storey buildings, which were springing up all over the city, prompted the government to impose height limits on buildings in the immediate vicinity of the Acropolis. The start of work on covering the River Ilissos, in 1939-1941, gave a foretaste of what was to come.

18. The Agora viewed from the Hill of the Nymphs in 1964. (American School of Classical Studies)

19. The Acropolis from the south-west in 1955. (Photo: Alison Frantz. American School of Classical Studies)

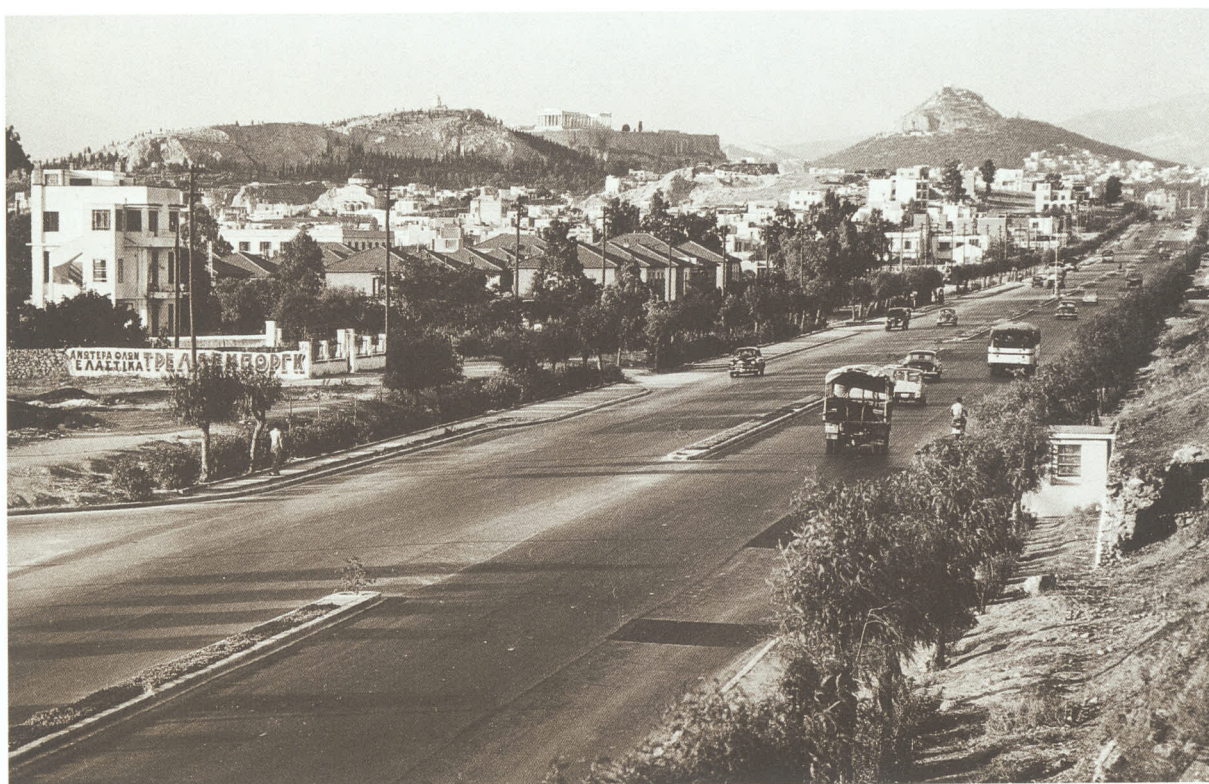






Since the end of the Second World War Athens has undergone a greater transformation than at any other period in modern times, as it has gradually developed into the great metropolis of Greece (Fig. 20). The changes have been rapid and are noticeable in every domain of life: the size and social composition of the population; the appearance of the city, with nearly all the Neoclassical buildings being replaced by impersonal apartment and office blocks; and the natural environment, which has practically disappeared beneath the chaotic and unsightly clutter of buildings of all kinds that now cover the whole plain of Attica. Once again, the archaeological sites and monuments have been drastically affected by these developments.

In the first twenty years or so after the war the changes in the archaeological landscape were a direct consequence of the large-scale infrastructure projects carried out to ease traffic congestion and improve the tourist facilities. Broad new boulevards – Vassiléos Konstantínou, Ardhitoú and Kalliróis Avenues – were built along the course of the Ilissos, and Vassilísis Ólgas Avenue became a main thoroughfare linking that area with the city centre, and the archaeological site of the Olympieion was altered accordingly. Extensive excavations carried out round its perimeter between 1949 and 1962, with some interruptions, yielded evidence of the land uses in this neighbourhood from the Late Helladic to the Byzantine period. The excavated areas to



20. Singrou Avenue with the Hill of the Muses, the Acropolis and Likavítos in the background, in the 1950s. (Photo: Spyros Meledzis. CCAM Archives)



north and south were planted with trees and fenced in so that they were integrated with the archaeological site. Meanwhile the propylon of the sanctuary was partly restored in 1957 and parts of the temple were consolidated in 1959-1960.

The policy of encouraging and developing tourism in Greece, which was given high priority during these years, necessitated substantial alterations to the environs of the Acropolis (Fig. 19) and the monuments situated there, so as to capitalize on their money-making potential and adapt them to meet the now pressing demands of mass cultural tourism. Between 1953 and 1958 Dimitrios Pikionis landscaped the west slopes of the Acropolis and the slopes of the Hill of the Muses and the Pnyx. His remit was to provide improved facilities for mass access to the Acropolis: what he actually accomplished was to encourage a personal, peripatetic approach to the 'Sacred Rock' by re-creating the ancient paths leading up to it and providing belvederes on the nearby hills for visual and mental contemplation (Fig. 22). His work, which embodies memories of the age-old Greek tradition, defers to the monumental scale of the site and is at the same time a modern creative intervention of high quality and deep spirituality. In the course of this work the hillsides were planted with additional varieties of trees and shrubs native to Attica. Between 1948 and 1967, with some interruptions, the whole of the Herodeion was fitted with new marble seating by the Department of Restoration. In 1960 Sound and Light shows were inaugurated on the Pnyx, for which minimal alterations were required to create the seating area.



21. *The Hill of the Nymphs viewed from the Acropolis. (Photo: S. Mavromatis, 2000)*



At the same time the Dora Stratou Theatre was built on the Hill of the Muses. Throughout the 1960s the local Ephorate of Antiquities carried on with the work of site preparation, excavation, structural consolidation and new boundary walls and fences on the slopes of the Acropolis, with the object of enhancing the sites and making them more presentable. Among other things, a paved path up from the Agora to the Acropolis was built in 1965, following the course of the Panathenaic Way, and part of the Peripatos (the ancient promenade running round the Acropolis) was brought back into use in 1969.

But it was in the historical centre of the city that the most drastic changes took place. From 1931 to 1956, with a gap during the war, more and more properties were expropriated, over 350 households were moved elsewhere, churches were demolished and systematic excavations were carried out by the American School of Classical Studies, laying bare most of the ancient Agora. The digs went down to the level of the Classical and Hellenistic periods, exemplary records were kept at every stage of the work and the results, published systematically, shed a great deal of light on the changing layout and architectural development of the city's civic, administrative and commercial centre from the time when the Agora was first established in the Archaic period until it was destroyed in the third century A.D.

The transformation in the appearance of the Agora was completed with the reconstruction of the Stoa of Attalos for use as the Agora Museum (opened in 1956) and the landscaping of the whole site, which was planted with native Mediterranean plants (Fig. 18). The reconstruction of the Hellenistic stoa, using modern building materials and methods but incorporating the ancient remains and replicating the original design and dimensions with such modifications to the floor plan and the positioning of the doors and windows as were necessary for its new function, lasted from 1953 to 1956 and was the biggest restoration project carried out in Athens during this period. It met with a mixed response. Its critics argued that the rebuilding of the Stoa was not only a contravention of the accepted code of restoration practice but also aesthetically unpleasing, mainly because its huge bulk overwhelmed the scant remains of the other ancient buildings round about and its gleaming white walls contrasted too glaringly with those of the Hephaisteion. With the passage of time, however, the Stoa now fits in better with the rest of the Agora – thanks largely to the prolific growth of the vegetation – and visitors have become so accustomed to the sight of it that it is now an integral part of the overall picture.

The rapid transformation of Athens, the disappearance of historic features of its landscape, the progressive degradation of the environment and the declining quality of life have led to a reappraisal of the aesthetic and environmental values of the Pláka. The necessity of preserving the Pláka as the historic centre of modern Athens – which has been high on the list of priorities since the mid 1960s and is, moreover, in line with international trends – rules out the possibility of extending the archaeological zone any further. The last systematic excavations in the Pláka were carried out by the American School in the early 1970s, south-east of the Stoa of Attalos, where a few more houses were expropriated and the excavators found part of the road

22. *The Hill of the Muses after being landscaped by D. Pikionis in 1953-1958, with the Acropolis in the background.* (Photo: S. Mavromatis, 2000)







linking the Roman Agora with the ancient Agora. Since then the Americans have continued digging without a break, but only in the existing archaeological zone. Because of the designation of the Pláka as a listed area, the Greek Archaeological Service has been unable to extend its systematic excavations so as to uncover the whole of Hadrian's Library and the Roman Agora and to link both of them with the ancient Agora. At these sites the Archaeological Service was busy throughout the 1960s, excavating, clearing the sites, tidying up scattered architectural and sculptural fragments, doing structural consolidation work and some small-scale restoration. In the last thirty years these sites have remained more or less unchanged. Elsewhere in the Pláka the Service has concentrated on monitoring building construction to ensure conformity with the archaeological regulations.

In other parts of Athens, systematic excavation and landscaping work in the Kerameikos (Fig. 2), followed up by excellent publications, was resumed by the German Archaeological Institute in 1956. And from 1955 to 1963 the Archaeological Service excavated Plato's Academy, where more and more land was expropriated and the site was gradually opened to the public as an archaeological grove.

During this period the Archaeological Service was heavily involved in rescue excavations all over Athens. These operations are generally carried out in conditions of the utmost urgency, with very little manpower and limited resources. The excavators do their best to keep up with the hectic pace of building construction and large-scale public infrastructure works, taking the movable antiquities into safe keeping and trying to examine, record and sometimes actually to preserve the remains of the ancient city that keep coming to light. Most of the antiquities are left where they are to be buried all over again, many are demolished and a few are left visible – but only when it is possible for the land to be expropriated. In this respect, therefore, rescue excavations do not make much difference to the archaeological landscape, but they are extremely important – even though in most cases they are incompletely published – because they provide invaluable information relating to the archaeology of ancient Athens.

By the beginning of the 1970s, twenty years of excavation in postwar Athens had built up a copious store of information about the topography, urban planning and architecture of the ancient city. This was analysed and presented in book form in *Πολεοδομική Εξέλιξις των Αθηνών* [*Urban Evolution of Athens*] (1960) and *Bildlexikon zur Topographie des antiken Athen* (1971), both by John Travlos, the architectural consultant of the Agora excavations who worked closely with the Archaeological Service during those years. These two books have been the main reference works for archaeologists from the time of their publication up to the present day.

Having survived so many vicissitudes, from visions to rediscovery, urban beautification, development and destruction, by the last quarter of the twentieth century the Athens archaeological landscape had reached the stage of physical and aesthetic degradation and social alienation. Those of the monuments that survived were still standing on the sites where they had been built, but now they were unrecognizable. Pollution of the ground on which they stood was rotting their foundations, the polluted atmosphere around them was eroding and blackening their outer surfaces. More to the point, the ancient monuments represented ideas and values of no



relevance – and sometimes quite incomprehensible – to a generation brought up on the world theory now prevailing. Nevertheless they were, as they had been for so long, inseparably associated with the world's image of modern Athens and had a special place in the sentiments of the modern Athenians; and they offered some of the few breathing-spaces in the concrete jungle and a ray of hope for the city's cultural and environmental rehabilitation.

*After the Colonels:  
The challenge of the new era*

This was the position at the time of the fall of the military junta in 1974, which marked the beginning of a new phase of transformation whose outcome would determine the state of the Athens archaeological landscape in the twenty-first century. In 1975 a huge new programme of conservation and restoration was put in hand on the Acropolis, together with a burst of scientific and scholarly activity unprecedented in a project of this type. The mistakes made in earlier restoration and more recent conservation work are being corrected (Fig. 24): architectural members are being repositioned in their proper places and many of the blocks of stone lying scattered on the ground are being identified and put where they belonged. These operations have a direct impact on the appearance of the Acropolis monuments and are creating a new image (Fig. 23). At the same time pedestrian walkways are being built on the Acropolis and the scattered fragments of stone are being sorted and rearranged.

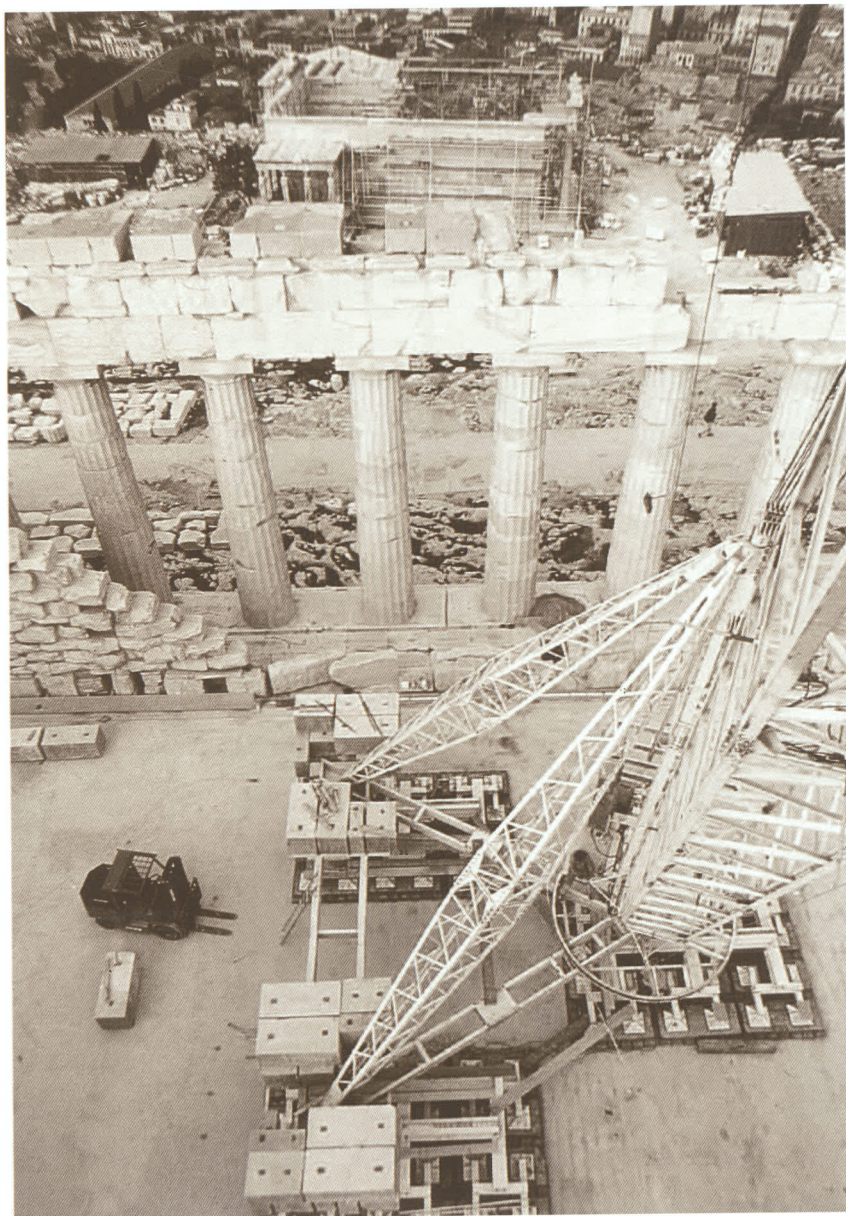


23. *The Erechtheion from the east, after its restoration in 1979-1987. (Photo: S. Mavromatis, 2000)*



For the large-scale rescue excavations necessitated by major urban development projects in recent years, manpower and funds have been made available on a scale previously undreamed of. Previously undiscovered ancient monuments have been found, including the gymnasium of the Lykeion (Lyceum) and the polyandrion (mass grave of soldiers killed in action) in the Demosion Sema (state cemetery), providing scholars with an ever-growing body of evidence concerning the burial grounds, roads, workshops, bath-houses, ordinary homes and luxury mansions of ancient Greek and Roman Athens. Plans drawn up for keeping certain monuments visible, sometimes in creative conjunction with modern buildings, suggest that the future expansion of the archaeological landscape will bring new experiences. Another ambitious plan conceived at the end of the century, the unification of all the main archaeological sites in Athens, though hardly more than a dream as yet, does offer the hope of a fruitful symbiosis of the ancient and modern worlds, to their mutual benefit.

While the remains of ancient buildings – those scientifically recorded and reburied as well as those still standing – now give us a satisfactory picture of the exterior of ancient Athens, the movable finds from over 150 years of excavation provide the most authentic and direct evidence concerning its inner world, its social structure and everyday life, the beliefs and artistic achievements of its people. Hidden away in archaeological store-rooms, the artefacts wait patiently for that inner world to be revealed and re-created in a Museum of Ancient Athens, and the resources of modern museology are particularly well suited to that purpose. Let us hope that the new century, which some have labelled ‘the century of museums, information technology and virtual reality’, will rise to the challenge – a challenge which is at the same time a great necessity. Then the archaeological scene in Athens will go on being transformed, as in the past, in accordance with current trends and ideas.



24. Restoration work in progress on the Acropolis in 1985. (CCAM Archives)



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## ABBREVIATIONS

CCAM: Committee for the Conservation of the Acropolis Monuments  
ELIA: Hellenic Literary and Historical Archives Society