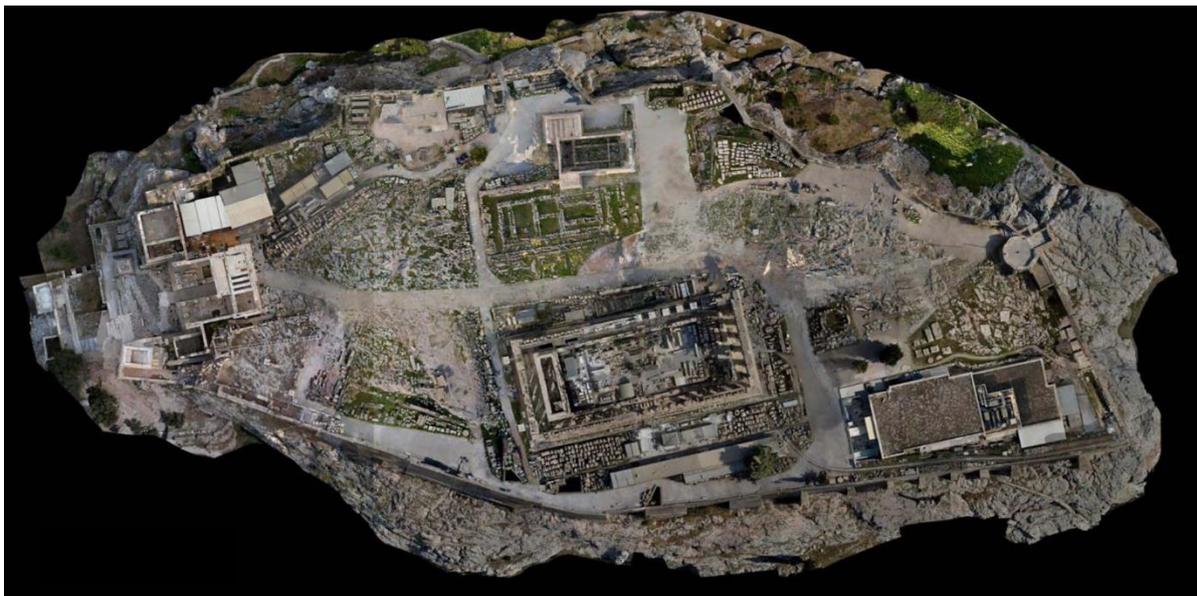


Report on the joint World Heritage Centre / ICOMOS Advisory Mission to “ACROPOLIS, ATHENS”,
GREECE FROM 26 TO 29 APRIL 2022



Source: Hellenic Republic Ministry of Culture and Sports (June 2021), Acropolis of Athens, PPT.

PROPOSED TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
MISSION EXPERTS	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS	6
Mission Conclusions:	6
Mission Recommendations:.....	11
1. THE PROPERTY.....	14
2. SUMMARY OF THE NATIONAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR THE PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY	16
3. THE MISSION	17
4. ASSESSMENT OF THE OVERALL STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE PROPERTY	18
5. ASSESSMENT OF SPECIFIC ISSUES	19
ISSUE 1: Assessment of the recently realized projects	19
Mission Findings:.....	19
The Renovation and Enlargement of Pathways.....	19
The Elevator	25
The Lightning project.....	27
ISSUE 2: Accessibility and visitation flows, principles and practices and impact of interventions with respect to user satisfaction.	29
Mission Findings:.....	29
Planning of Visitor Management and Visitor Flows and Access to the Site.....	30
The services for interpretation of the site	33
Connections with other archaeological sites and tickets.....	33
The tourism management plan and the participation	34
ISSUE 3: Current management system and creation of a management plan for the property, taking into account risk mitigation measures.	36
General Findings on the management system	36

ISSUE 4: Existing conservation and restoration approaches with respect to international norms and standards, and their decision-making processes and overall long-term conservation and management procedures.....	39
General Findings on the conservation history of the Acropolis:.....	39
Various works of anastylosis have been ongoing at the Acropolis since the time of its	40
Findings on the conservation and restoration approach and its documentation.....	40
Proposed Western Access Project:.....	44
Proposed covering of the Acropolis Rock	47
Mission Recommendations:	48
6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	49
Mission Conclusions:.....	49
Mission Recommendations:.....	53
7. ANNEXES	56

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The UNESCO World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory Mission team expresses its deep gratitude to the Government of Greece and to the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports for their kind hospitality and for the excellent arrangements put in place to ensure the smooth running of the Mission including preparation of the briefing pack, facilitation of site inspections, informative presentations and access to documentation. We would like especially to thank the representatives of the Ministry of Culture and Sports, the Ephorate of Antiquities of the City of Athens, the Committee for the Conservation of the Monuments of the Acropolis (ESMA), and the Acropolis Restoration Service (YSMA) for their welcome and their availability, as well as for the quality of the organization of the Mission and for the richness of the documentation.

In particular, we would like to sincerely thank:

Elena Kountouri, Archaeologist, Director of Prehistorical and Classical Antiquities of the Ministry of Culture and Sports, Acting Director of the Ephorate of Antiquities of the City of Athens, Member of ESMA; Vasiliki Eleftheriou, Architect Engineer, Director of YSMA; Eugenia Gerousi-Bendemacher, Archaeologist, Director Emeritus of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; Constantina Benissi, Archaeologist, Focal Point for WH Properties, Head of the Department for the Supervision of Greek & Foreign Scientific Institutions & Coordination of International Cooperation & Organizations, Directorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities; Vasiliki Dimitropoulou, Deputy National Focal Point for the World Heritage Convention, Directorate of Byzantine and Post-byzantine Antiquities; Nikoletta Divari-Vallakou, President of the Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Member of ESMA; Michalis Lefantzis, Head of Department for Archaeological works and studies, Ephorate of Antiquities of the city of Athens; Sofia Spyropoulou, Archaeologist, Directorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; Rosalia Christodouloupoulou, Architect Engineer, Head of the Parthenon worksite, YSMA; Eleni Aggelakopoulou, Dr.Chemical Engineer, Head of the Surface Conservation worksite, YSMA; Dionysia Mavromati, Rural and Surveying Engineer, Head of the Programme of Topographic and Photogrammetric Plotting of the Acropolis, YSMA; Eirini Kaimara, Archaeologist, Head of the Information & Education Department, YSMA; Manolis Korres, Architect, Professor of the NTUA, Chairman of the ESMA; Fani Mallouchou - Tufano, Archaeologist, Professor Emeritus of the University of Crete, Deputy Chairman; Petros Koufopoulos, Architect, Professor of the University of Patras; Charalampos Mouzakis, Civil Engineer, Associate Professor of the NTUA; Maria Mertzani, Director of Conservation of Ancient and Modern Monuments of the Ministry of Culture and Sports; Petros Themelis, Archaeologist, Professor Emeritus of the University of Crete; Vassilis Lambrinoudakis, Professor Emeritus of the University of Athens; Asterios Bakolas, Chemical Engineer, Associate Professor of the NTUA.

The Mission also acknowledges the contribution of institutions and individuals from civil society (as listed within Annex B of this report) for the time, information and viewpoints that contributed to the Mission's understanding of the "Acropolis, Athens" site, and the complex issues surrounding the current projects.

MISSION EXPERTS

Jyoti Hosagrahar

Deputy Director

World Heritage Center

CLT/WHC

Pierre-Antoine Gatier

Chief Architect of Historic Monuments ACMH

General Inspector of Historic Monuments IGMH

ICOMOS expert

Francesca Cominelli

Associate Professor, University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

Specialist in the Economics of Cultural Heritage and Tourism

ICOMOS expert

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The joint WHC/ICOMOS Advisory Mission to the Acropolis, Athens, a site inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1987, which took place from 27 to 29 April 2022, was carried out by a multidisciplinary team comprised of three experts specialized in the field of architecture, heritage, tourism and management practices, one representing UNESCO World Heritage Centre and two representing ICOMOS.

The purpose of the joint WHC/ICOMOS Advisory Mission was to carry out an on-site examination and discussion with the competent representatives of the State Party on the recent interventions on the Acropolis of Athens and the future planning for the conservation, enhancement and overall management of the site.

The mission started on Wednesday 27 April with the presentation of the key actors of the site's management and planification, the competent Greek authorities and the overall system of administration and management of the property. This first day also included the visit of the Acropolis site and the presentation of the basic aspects of the property's function.

The second day of the mission was devoted to the presentation of the works carried out on the site the last three years and the major future projects. Half of the presentation was held in the conference room of the Acropolis Museum while the other half was on site. A meeting with Civil Society representatives was organized in the afternoon.

Finally, the last day of the mission was dedicated to in-depth presentations of the past and future projects and to the overall management of the site, discussion, and reflection with key members of the responsible authorities and the Mission.

Mission Conclusions:

The overall status of the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property of the 'Acropolis, Athens' (Acropolis) is excellent and very well protected. The property and its buffer zone is well protected by laws and regulations.

The decision-making system ensures that thorough and detailed studies are carried out prior to the approval of any new interventions.

The property is managed by the State and the main restoration services are also carried out by the State, including the restoration works by anastylosis¹ techniques. Hence, there is a close supervision to ensure that each step of the restoration conservation efforts are systematically carried out.

The decision-making process for all major restoration and conservation works includes highly qualified experts and academics with a process of documentation, dissemination, and dialogue with experts nationally, and internationally, built into the system.

The renovation and enlargement of the pathways, the elevator, and the lighting project were all implemented following studies, examination, and documentation of the Committee for the Conservation of the Acropolis Monuments (ESMA) or the Ephorate. The proposals were subsequently elaborated by the Acropolis Restoration Service (YSMA) employees or external researchers and the studies eventually approved by ESMA and brought before the Central Archaeological Council for their approval. All the competent authorities of the Ministry of Culture and Sports (different directorates and the Ephorate of Antiquities) also provided their comments on the studies and proposals. The studies for the

¹ The documents in English of the State Party including ESMA and YSMA use the spelling, 'anastelosis', however, this report uses the standard international spelling 'anastylosis.'

restoration of the monuments were also presented and debated at the Acropolis International Meetings prior to their implementation.² Hence, these interventions have been implemented after detailed investigations according to the established national processes for interventions in the Acropolis. .

Recent upgrading interventions including the renovation of pathways, elevator, and lighting project

Renovation of pathways: The renovation and enlargement of the existing pathways do not have a negative impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the Acropolis. The ancient rock on which the monuments of the Acropolis sit (the Rock), is well protected as the paving is cushioned and not directly attached to the Rock surface. Furthermore, the intervention seems to be fully reversible. The width of the pathways has been enlarged in the repaving. This is functionally useful for the volume of visitors, for the movement of wheelchairs and construction materials and vehicles (carrying the heavy marble blocks). The appearance (texture, colour) of the paving material and the width of the pathways could have been designed to better adapt to the setting of the Acropolis. Special attention should be paid as far as the drainage system is concerned.

Elevator Access: The new elevator, that replaces the 2004 elevator, does not have a negative impact on the OUV of the Acropolis. The intervention seems to be fully reversible and its location is well justified. The necessity for comfortable accessibility for everyone is undeniable for a World Heritage property today. The new elevator greatly facilitates the disabled in wheelchairs but also the elderly, pregnant women, and small children in strollers.

Lightning Project: The new lighting project does not have a negative impact on the OUV of the Acropolis and serves to articulate and enhance the legibility of its form well at night. They are carefully set to protect the monuments and marble from any damage due to the equipment. However, the lighting devices and equipment need to be better integrated in the monuments and landscape as currently the cables and lamps are very visible throughout within the Acropolis. Nevertheless, the system is reversible.

Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA): On the advice of the World Heritage Centre, a Heritage Impact Assessment has been commissioned by the State Party for the recent interventions at the Acropolis. The report was due in December 2021 but is still awaited from the consultant. The Mission would like to await the report to provide further advice on these recent interventions.

Considerations of the recent upgrading interventions towards improvement of overall visitor management

Access for Visitors with disabilities: The efforts accomplished by the State Party in terms of accessibility address the main objectives of Article 9 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The physical accessibility of the site is achieved for different categories of visitors, including people with disabilities. While further efforts are needed to develop services, trainings for the employees, applications, and other physical or digital tools that could fully permit to people with different disabilities to access and enjoy the World Heritage Site of the Acropolis.

Visitor Flows: Today, the management of visitor flows is a crucial issue and can be easily supported by the available data collected by the Ephorate and the Hellenic Cultural Resources Development Organisation and by some additional qualitative data. Thus, it will be important to use this data to propose management solutions for visitors flows that take into account all the sites included in the buffer zone, to reduce the pressure on the Acropolis site and to better manage the distribution of visitors during opening hours. Furthermore, given the importance of the Acropolis site and the high number of visitors the site receives each year, it seems essential to develop a tourism management plan for the site, integrated into the overall Management Plan.

² Communication with the State Party in June 2022.

Stakeholder involvement: Following the principles of ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter, the local community, who also lives outside the buffer zone but has a strong connection to the Acropolis site, and all stakeholders, especially tourism actors, could be actively involved in the conception and implementation of a management plan for the site, including a session dedicated to tourism management.

Visitation and Communication Strategy: Considerable efforts have also been made by the State Party to ensure the understanding of the site by different categories of visitors. Greater use of new technologies could be considered to diversify communication and content for different audiences, including hosting communities, and needs. A more integrated visit including the museum and the archaeological site could be developed in order to make the museum function as an interpretation centre and better prepare the visitors to the site visit.

Management Plan

So far, no Management Plan for the Acropolis in line with Operational Guidelines to the World Heritage Convention nor with the guidance of the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies has been prepared. The State Party informed the Mission that a management plan including a risk mitigation plans for the Acropolis is ongoing through a European Union funded project. This work is expected to be completed by 2023.

The absence of a management plan has not had a negative impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property as many issues such as tourism, traffic and parking, infrastructure, emergency evacuation etc., have been addressed. These have happened in a fragmented ways from time to time as specific needs have arisen. The responsibilities too are with different bodies. With the establishment of ESMA in 1975, all the restoration works including anastylosis are carried out by YSMA after thorough and detailed studies as well as a series of approvals by different expert bodies including ESMA and the Central Archaeological Council. More general interventions such as the elevator or the lighting project, or the configuration of ticketing systems and security, are the responsibility of the Ephorate.

Threats to the protection of the OUV of an archaeological World Heritage property can be from many causes including factors outside the property boundaries. Similarly, the opportunities to enhance its OUV can also come from many actions some of which may be outside the property boundaries and the buffer zone.

A comprehensive Management Plan would enable the integration of a tourism management plan, and a disaster risk management plan among others. The Management Plan, anchored in the Master Plan or City Development Plan for Athens would enable traffic, infrastructure development, and building regulations to be better managed for the protection and enhancement of the OUV of the property. The Management Plan would need to be reviewed every few years. The programmes of restoration works including anastylosis would be part of this Masterplan. Such an approach would also allow an overview of the priorities and impacts of actions in one area over others.

Conservation and restoration approaches and proposed projects

The conservation and restoration of the Acropolis has been ongoing since 1833. Since 1975, it has been continuous and has never ceased, even during the most difficult periods of the new Greek state and the restoration works on the Acropolis represent the peak of scholarship and technology of Greece.

With the establishment of ESMA in 1975, all the conservation and restoration works since 1975, in particular, the anastylosis, have meticulously followed the principles of interventions at the Acropolis that fully align with the 1964 ICOMOS Venice Charter.

Many of the interventions undertaken at the Acropolis since 1975 were to address damage due to causes such as breakage and damage to the blocks from iron reinforcements added during previous conservation efforts, damage due to the earthquake etc. In the process, correction of previous errors including disassembling and reassembling of ancient blocks have been carried out.

With regard to the overall long-term conservation of the structures and buildings with respect to all international standards including minimum conservation approaches, the Mission was impressed by the thoroughness, rigor, and extraordinary high quality of work with meticulous attention to detail. Systematic documentation and publication of research and studies prior to and following implementation are undertaken and disseminated. The highest academic research on the Acropolis and archaeology are woven closely together with modern archaeological techniques and exemplary innovative practices including the use of digitization and computers. Many of these practices would serve as models for other heritage conservation efforts globally.

The Mission was informed that the scope of the initial anastylosis work that was undertaken after 1975 had become somewhat broadened in scope on discovering the breakage and deterioration of monuments due to poor conservation work and that the conservation work of Balanos that needed to be corrected was more extensive than initially known as well as identification of a numbers of members and fragments lying scattered around.

The Mission concluded from the information provided by the State Party that the restoration approach includes stone block fillings to be restricted to those absolutely necessary for the stability of the ancient members and for morphological continuity and so also that the disassembling and reassembling of ancient blocks are only those absolutely necessary.

The Mission would nevertheless recall article 3.16 and 3.17 of the 2003 ICOMOS Charter on the Principles for Analysis, Conservation and Structural Restoration of Architectural Heritage. Imperfections and alterations, when they have become part of the history of the structure, should be maintained so far so they do not compromise the safety requirements (Art. 3.16) Dismantling and reassembly should only be undertaken as an optional measure required by the very nature of the materials and structure when conservation by other means impossible, or harmful (Art. 3.17).

Therefore, the management plan that should be elaborated by the State Party as well as all future projects to come should incorporate a special reflection regarding authenticity and integrity issues in order to preserve the OUV of the Property.

Based on the definition provided in the Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage in 2021, the concept of **authenticity** can be defined as the capability of the property to transmit the cultural significance of a place. **Integrity** is a measure of the wholeness and intactness of the cultural heritage and its attributes.

Proposed Western Access project

The State Party has carried out studies for a number of years regarding the Western Access and ascent of the Acropolis hill to the Propylaea. The studies have concluded that the present form of the ascent is the result of successive incorrect interventions mainly from 1957-1960 based on different interpretations and techniques reflecting different perspectives on archaeological interventions. Detailed documentation and archaeological analysis provide evidence for the ascent to its early Roman form as a flight of steps across the width of entrance court that is at the moment only visible in small parts. The initial study was considered by the International Conference of 2002 but was put aside at the time as the priority was on the monuments. The study was put forward by ESMA to the 6th International Conference in 2013 and met with a positive response (Korres, ESMA and approved by the 7th International Conference).

Given the level of academic excellence demonstrated by ESMA and YSMA and given also that studies have been shared with the relevant international community of scholars and approved by the Central Archaeological Council and the international conference of experts, the Mission finds no reason to doubt the archaeological and historical accuracy and validity of the study and proposed intervention at this preliminary stage.

However, the Mission considers that some clarifications regarding the implementation of the Western Access project are necessary before proceeding further with the development of its implementation

plans. First, from the perspective of Articles 3.16 and 3.17 of the 2003 Charter on the Principles for the Analysis, Conservation, and Structural Restoration of Architectural Heritage the imperfections and alterations over time have become part of the history of the monument and contribute essentially to the Acropolis being an authentic legacy of different historic periods. Through archaeological studies, the State Party has identified what they believe were incorrect conservation interventions undertaken in relatively recent years – many of them in the last 40 years. However, a clarification of this is necessary to justify the extensive restoration works proposed and to ensure that they are fully in line with the current restoration approach that is considered a remarkable example for the application of the Venice Charter. It is also important to ensure that it integrates anastylosis focused on the repair and exchange of damaged blocks vital for the structural integrity of the monument. The State Party's approach to treat the fragments of the original structures also as valuable artifacts whose protection could be best ensured through anastylosis was also well-noted by the mission.

Though the Mission was assured of the extensive studies and analysis that have been carried out for a number of years to inform the proposed intervention, the proposal for the Western access project should include explanations of how the intervention would preserve and guarantee the authenticity of the Property, the historical value of which is not only in its appearance, but also in the integrity of all its components and historical stratifications. Therefore, any intervention on the property such as the proposed Western Access project requires thorough justification and discussion. As indicated so far the Western Access project is supposed to ease tourist visitor flows. This needs to be more fully investigated and proven by scenarios and calculations that compare the status of today with simulation of the situation according to the preliminary design of the new Western Access to understand the impact of such an intervention.

Furthermore, any planning regarding the Western Access project needs to be integrated into an overall Management Plan for the Acropolis that also integrates planning for tourism, for vehicular traffic and parking, security, disaster and evacuation plans, water supply and sanitation, etc. as well as the relationship with other monuments and sites. This would provide clarity on the overall prioritization of actions as well as the impacts on these other aspects.

The State Party has all the digital competencies and technology on hand to create digital visualizations and virtual experiences for tourists without the extensive physical interventions necessary. Without such an overall Management Plan in place, the Mission was not able to assess the prioritization of the conservation and restoration actions proposed including the proposed Western Access project.

Proposed covering of the Acropolis Rock

A proposed project was briefly presented to the Mission as consisting of the coverage of specific places, either for the needs of visiting and implementing the works undertaken on the rock or for the rehabilitation of the soil of the Acropolis, using, as applicable, materials of different endurance. This project is not yet approved by the State Party, a mere planning exists at the moment (Minutes of the Meeting of ESMA no. 11/24.07.2020). The project, if implemented, entails the raising of the level of the ground so that it reaches a level believed to replicate the ancient terraces in the 5th century B.C.

According to the site management authorities the coverage of the Rock may contribute to protecting the original surface from the impacts of the high volume of tourists. However, if the Rock and the ancient remains will be covered, the would result in changing the current visual presentation of the Acropolis. The mission also points out, that raising the level of the ground while creating retaining walls could implicate important structural works.

Hence such a project would need to be thoroughly studied and an HIA conducted. Detailed documentation of the proposed project including plans and drawings should also be shared with the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, prior to commencing implementation.

Impact of the proposed plans on the authenticity of the property

Although this intervention is still in a planning phase, the mission points out, that the OUV of the property encompasses all historical phases until the 5th century BC and considers the existing archaeological

remains to be an authentic expression of this period. Hence, it is important to ensure that there is not an excessive focus on the state of property exclusively during the 5th century for the sake of “unity of style” but rather on the historical remains as they have been handed down to us through history - this would also be in line with the Venice Charter and the principles of minimal conservation and restoration approaches.

Mission Recommendations:

The Mission commends the State Party on the overall excellent state of conservation of the property and the thorough studies and investigations carried out for each archaeological intervention as well as the thoroughness of documentation.

Recent Interventions

- As the Acropolis Rock needs to be protected from stagnant water and high levels of humidity that can cause mould growth and surface embrittlement, a geotechnical study regarding the drainage system of the renovated pathways is in process by the State Party. The Mission requests that this study be shared with the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;
- The restoration and conservation works should pay as much heed to the weight of the vehicles carrying materials that should be taken into consideration in protecting the fragile ancient Rock. Alternative ways of organizing the contemporary restoration site should be considered in order to minimize the movement of heavy machinery and equipment on the Acropolis Rock.
- Design strategies to visually evoke the ancient construction site’s organization using the existing pathways could be a valuable alternative to improve its visual appearance for visitors;
- As an HIA of the renewed pathways and the elevator project has been commissioned, the Mission would like to wait for the report of the detailed HIA before proposing additional recommendations;
- Greater attention to design and enhanced detailing of the lighting project installations are encouraged with a view to better integrating the installations in the monuments and landscape and making them less visible during the day time;
- In developing future interventions, the State Party is encouraged to consider more carefully the design of details in installing modern amenities to be better integrated/fitted within the setting of the archaeological site so as to minimize visual distraction;
- HIA in line with the UNESCO/ICCROM/ICOMOS/IUCN guidance (2022) should be carried out prior to undertaking major interventions in and around the property that are not part of the programmes of restoration and conservation approved by the Central Archaeological Council;

Tourism management and Visitor flows

- If the physical accessibility of the site is achieved for different categories of visitors, the Mission suggests to take into consideration the possibility of developing services, trainings for the employees, applications, and other physical or digital tools that could fully permit to people with different disabilities to access and enjoy the Acropolis World Heritage site.
- Since one of the main problems of the site is the congestion during peak hours, it seems important to assess the possibilities for a better distribution of visitors and a more balanced distribution of groups during the opening hours, through the year and between the Western and the Southern entrances.
- Considerable efforts have been made by the State Party to ensure understanding of the site by different categories of visitors. Greater use of interpretation tools, including new technologies,

could be considered to diversify communication and content for different audiences, including hosting communities, and needs. A more integrated visit including the museum and the archaeological site could be developed in order to make the museum function as an interpretation centre and better prepare the visitors to the site visit.

- The Mission encourages the State Party to propose management solutions for visitors flows that take into account all the sites included in the buffer zone, to reduce the pressure on the Acropolis site and to better manage the distribution of visitors during opening hours. Furthermore, it seems important to include in this process a dialogue with the tourism industry, in order to make its actors more aware of the fragile nature of the Acropolis site and to involve them in the definition and implementation of solutions to improve site attendance and visitor distribution during opening hours.
- Given the importance of the Acropolis site and the high number of visitors the site receives each year, it seems essential to develop a tourism management plan for the site, as a part of the overall site Management Plan. Following the principles of ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter, the local community, who also lives outside the buffer zone but has a strong connection to the Acropolis site, and all stakeholders, especially tourism actors, could be actively involved in the conception and implementation of a management plan for the site, including a session dedicated to tourism management.

Management Plan

- Comprehensive Management Plan for the Acropolis is urgent and essential. It should include tourism planning, infrastructure development in and around the property including, drainage, lighting, water, and sanitation; pavement and paths; traffic, access, and parking (including for tour buses); integration of a sustainable development perspective; plans for the valorisation of other archaeological sites and monuments in Athens, including in the buffer zone – and their relationship to the Acropolis; this plan needs to be reviewed every few years;
- The programme for the conservation and restoration of the Acropolis should be integrated into this larger Management Plan.
- The Management Plan should be anchored in and integrated with the Masterplan or City Development Plan for the City of Athens and inform its urban development and building regulations and should inform the priorities for the interventions for protecting and managing the OUV of the property;

Conservation and restoration approaches and proposed projects

- The ongoing archaeological programme of interventions needs to be reviewed in light of recent pressures on the property (urban, environmental, tourism, traffic, etc.) to identify and adjust priorities as well as to align with recent developments in international standards and approaches, as for instance, Articles 3.16 and 3.17 of the 2003 ICOMOS Charter on the Principles for the Analysis, Conservation, and Structural Restoration of Architectural Heritage;
- Recalling Articles 3.16 and 3.17 of the 2003 ICOMOS Charter the justification and purpose of any ongoing and proposed interventions, including anastylosis, should be clarified;

Proposed Western Access project

- The proposal, drawings, and documentation available for the proposed Western Access project even at this preliminary stage should be shared with the World Heritage Centre for review by the relevant Advisory Bodies, and the full plans, drawings and documentation shared prior to commencing implementation;
- The Management Plan as well as the larger programme for restoration and conservation should be completed and shared with the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies prior to moving forward with the Western Access project implementation;

- As the ESMA note on the Western Access preliminary study indicates one justification for the intervention to be a response to ease tourist flows, a study of tourist flows and access to the Acropolis, as well as the potential impact on the management of tourists on site, is necessary to ensure an accurate and effective response including taking into account the more fragile categories and people with disabilities;
- The detailed intervention plans of the Western Access project should also include an analysis of the impacts of the substantial earthworks and excavation on the archaeological remains as well as the Acropolis Rock;

Proposed covering of the Acropolis Rock

- In order to realize such an important intervention as the covering of the whole of the Acropolis Rock with earth, preliminary, final and implementation studies are required. An HIA is necessary to be carried out for such a project. Detailed documentation of the proposed project including plans and drawings should also be shared with the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, prior to commencing implementation.

1. THE PROPERTY

The cultural World Heritage property of “Acropolis, Athens” was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1987. The Acropolis monuments were inscribed under criterion (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (vi), recognizing that:

Criterion (i): The Athenian Acropolis is the supreme expression of the adaptation of architecture to a natural site. This grand composition of perfectly balanced massive structures creates a monumental landscape of unique beauty, consisting of a complete series of architectural masterpieces of the 5th century BC: the Parthenon by Iktinos and Kallikrates with the collaboration of the sculptor Pheidias (447-432); the Propylaia by Mnesikles (437-432); the Temple of Athena Nike by Mnesikles and Kallikrates (427-424); and Erechtheion (421-406).

Criterion (ii): The monuments of the Athenian Acropolis have exerted an exceptional influence, not only in Greco-Roman antiquity, during which they were considered exemplary models, but also in contemporary times. Throughout the world, Neo-Classical monuments have been inspired by all the Acropolis monuments.

Criterion (iii): From myth to institutionalized cult, the Athenian Acropolis, by its precision and diversity, bears a unique testimony to the religions of ancient Greece. It is the sacred temple from which sprung fundamental legends about the city. Beginning in the 6th century BC, myths and beliefs gave rise to temples, altars and votives corresponding to an extreme diversity of cults, which have brought us the Athenian religion in all its richness and complexity. Athena was venerated as the goddess of the city (Athena Polias); as the goddess of war (Athena Promachos); as the goddess of victory (Athena Nike); as the protective goddess of crafts (Athena Ergane), etc. Most of her identities are glorified at the main temple dedicated to her, the Parthenon, the temple of the patron-goddess.

Criterion (iv): The Athenian Acropolis is an outstanding example of an architectural ensemble illustrating significant historical phases since the 16th century BC. Firstly, it was the Mycenaean Acropolis (Late Helladic civilization, 1600-1100 BC) which included the royal residence and was protected by the characteristic Mycenaean fortification. The monuments of the Acropolis are distinctly unique structures that evoke the ideals of the Classical 5th century BC and represent the apex of ancient Greek architectural development.

Criterion (vi): The Acropolis is directly and tangibly associated with events and ideas that have never faded over the course of history. Its monuments are still living testimonies of the achievements of Classical Greek politicians (e.g. Themistokles, Perikles) who lead the city to the establishment of Democracy; the thought of Athenian philosophers (e.g. Socrates, Plato, Demosthenes); and the works of architects (e.g. Iktinos, Kallikrates, Mnesikles) and artists (e.g. Pheidias, Agorakritus, Alkamenes). These monuments are the testimony of a precious part of the cultural heritage of humanity.

The Statement of the Outstanding Universal Value can be found in Annex E of this report.

The State party has been reminded in Decisions 26 COM 21B.49 (Budapest, 2002), 27 COM 7B.67 (Paris, 2003) and 28 COM 15B.71 (Suzhou, 2004) to “provide information on any development projects, which may impact on the visual integrity of the World Heritage property” and “prevent any activity which would cause irreversible damage to the outstanding universal value of the property”

During the 33rd Session of the World Heritage Committee (Sevilla, 2009), clarifications of the property boundaries and size in response to the Retrospective Inventory have been accepted.

At its 39th session (Bonn, 2015), the World Heritage Committee adopted the retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of the property. All Decisions can be found via the following link: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/419/documents/>.

Since 2020, the World Heritage Centre receives third party information on the renovation of the existing pathway that has been implemented on the UNESCO World Heritage property “Acropolis, Athens” as the main route for visitors within the site. The State Party responded to these requests for clarification by justifying the interventions as making the site more accessible to persons with disabilities. These works appear to constitute a first stage before more extensive works should take place in the Western part of the site, with the objective of building a new access to the monument on its Western facade.

On 17 February 2022, the Ministry of Culture and Sports of the Hellenic Republic has invited a joint Advisory Mission of WHC and ICOMOS to discuss the overall state of conservation of the site. No state of conservation report has been requested of the State Party for the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee.

The site of “Acropolis, Athens” (Acropolis) does not have a management plan in place.

2. SUMMARY OF THE NATIONAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR THE PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY

The Acropolis has been operating as an archaeological site since 1833, shortly after the establishment of the modern Greek State. Nowadays, the property is strongly protected under the provisions of Law No 3028/2002 on the "Protection of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage in general". Moreover, the Acropolis and its surroundings, which constitute monuments per se, are protected by legislative decrees (Ministerial Decrees F01/12970/503/25.2.82 concerning the designation of its buffer zone; and F43/7027/425/29.1.2004 concerning the designation of the peripheral zone of the city of Athens and imposing obligatory control before issuing any building or development permit within its boundaries).

The fact that the property's buffer zone is a protected archaeological area itself, along with the implementation of the strict legal framework – especially for the urban tissue in the historical centre of Athens since 2002 – and the intense monitoring by the competent Ephorate, ensure that urban development pressures are adequately addressed. Special protection is provided by the Presidential Decree No 24/2007, which declares the Acropolis area a no-fly zone.

The property is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture and Sports, through the Ephorate of Antiquities of the City of Athens, the competent Regional Service, which is responsible for the site's security and protection, as well as the implementation of an efficient site and visitors' management system. Moreover, the Ministry of Culture and Sports implements the legislative decrees concerning the safeguarding of the property and its peripheral zone (which corresponds to the boundaries of the ancient city of Athens and its surroundings) and ensures the visual integrity of the site. Especially for the restoration, protection and monitoring of the property, an advisory body, the Committee for the Conservation of the Monuments of the Acropolis (ESMA), was founded in 1975 and is responsible for planning, directing and supervising the interventions. In 1999, the establishment of the Acropolis Restoration Service (YSMA) allowed to increase the academic and technical personnel and made the immense development of the restoration works possible, under the supervision of the aforementioned Committee and in cooperation with the competent Ephorate. The extensive research programme and the methodology implemented are innovative in this field and act as a reference point for other restoration projects globally. The financial resources for the works on the site are mostly derived from the State budget as well as from European Union funds.

The New Acropolis Museum (inaugurated in 2009), in which most of the original sculptural and/or architectural pieces of the monuments are conserved, the on-going project "Unification of the Archaeological Sites of Athens", as well as the long-term conservation works are meant to enhance the protection and the presentation of the property.

The organizational chart of the different authorities and their roles and responsibilities as well as the process of decision-making for each of the archaeological interventions (studies) as provided by the State Party is in Annex D. The management system is extensive and thorough and ensures the protection and conservation of the Acropolis site.

As the property was inscribed in 1987, a management plan was not required at the time of inscription. No overall management plan giving a general overview of the State Party's vision for the safeguarding of the site and details of the actors involved in the management of the property, their roles, the works planned, including the means implemented to control the tourist pressure, currently exists. A project funded by the European Union is currently ongoing for the preparation of the management plans for all the World Heritage property in Greece including the Acropolis. (The management plan is discussed in further detail under "Issue 3" of this report).

3. THE MISSION

Although it has been established that no State of Conservation report will be presented at the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee, an Advisory Mission to the “Acropolis, Athens” site has been deemed necessary since the implementation of recent projects was accomplished.

The Mission has been invited by the Ministry of Culture and Sports on the 17th February 2022 to take place on the 27-29 April 2022. It has brought together several actors engaged in the conservation of the World Heritage site such as members of the Committee for the Conservation of the Monuments of the Acropolis (ESMA), members of the Acropolis Restoration Service (YSMA), as well as competent representatives of the Ministry of Culture and Sports.

Jyoti Hosagrahar, Deputy Director of the World Heritage Centre with ICOMOS International experts Francesca Cominelli (Italy) and Pierre-Antoine Gatier (France).

According to the Terms of Reference (Annex A), the purpose of the Mission has been to undertake an on-site examination and discussion with the competent representatives of the State Party on the recent interventions on the Acropolis of Athens and the future planning for the conservation, enhancement, monitoring processes and overall management of the site.

An emphasis has been put on the overall current state of conservation of the site, the existing administrative scheme as well as its future management strategy. Issues of accessibility, tourist flows and conservation lie at the heart of the past and present interventions and needed to be discussed in a complementary approach. The principles and approaches to conservation, restoration, and anastylosis was also a key remit of the Mission. Lastly, the elaboration of a management plan for the property was discussed.

The experts followed the Terms of Reference which were developed by the State Party, the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS and provide additional details regarding the objectives of the Mission. The detailed programme of the Mission (Annex C), and the list of the key individuals who met with the Mission are also included (Annex B).

4. ASSESSMENT OF THE OVERALL STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE PROPERTY

Overall, the Mission assessed the state of conservation of the property to be excellent. The implementation of the recent projects inside the “Acropolis, Athens” site cannot be examined without taking into consideration the general context of its restoration since the nineteenth century, and the philosophical principles underlying them. The Mission was especially informed of this context through the documentation provided and through the in situ presentations.

It is since the founding of the Greek State indeed, after the end of Ottoman occupation in 1821, that the Acropolis has become the symbol of Greek identity. Restoration works have been ongoing on the site since 1834. Unlike almost any other World Heritage site, the Acropolis has had generations of archaeologists and scholars who have studied and carried out restoration works for close to two centuries. Scholars have identified different eras or phases of restoration works from 1834-2022. Every intervention reflects the science, the technological capability, the scholarly level of the period, and the prevailing approaches to conservation and restoration. All the restorations carried out so far together, have achieved the Acropolis as we know it today. Damage and destruction to the Acropolis was due to catastrophic wars during the 17th century and violent explosions, rather than any natural causes, that left the Acropolis in partial ruins. Many structures were left unstable, and architectural elements in fragments. However, most of the original fragments have survived intact in the vicinity of their original location within the Acropolis. Important works of anastylosis have been therefore undertaken (this is discussed in further detail under Issue 4 of this report). Since 1975, after the dictatorship of the colonels and the return of the democracy in Greece, a new era of interventions and anastylosis works has been inspiring the Greek State. Important decisions have been made during this period that gave birth to the first programme of interventions meant to coordinate various interventions. It is this programme of interventions that has been implemented since then, including major works of conservation and anastylosis. Urban interventions to connect the archaeological sites around Acropolis, in the buffer zone, were also carried out.

The foundation of the Committee for the Conservation of the Monuments of the Acropolis (ESMA) and of the Central Archaeological Council attests to the efforts made by the Greek State for an open, democratic dialogue about the national monument’s conservation and enhancement - an approach that has continued to the present.

As stated by the **Criterion vi** of the RSOUV: “The Athenian Acropolis is directly and tangibly associated with events and ideas that have never faded over the course of history. Its monuments are still living testimonies of the achievements of Classical Greek politicians (e.g. Themistokles, Perikles) who lead the city to the establishment of Democracy”. For the Greek State, the Acropolis is perceived as the symbol of democracy, a symbol that needs to give the impression of being as close as possible to the conception of the Classical times. A powerful link has been therefore developed between democracy and anastylosis through the exemplary works at the Acropolis.

The major works undertaken for the conservation, restoration, anastylosis of the monuments of the Acropolis, were proposed and approved by ESMA and the Central Archaeological Council in the first programme of interventions (Study of 1983 done by C. Bouras and M. Korres and many other studies for the restoration of each monument). Other interventions have been undertaken in response to needs that have arisen from time to time such as the construction of pathways to connect the archaeological sites in the buffer zone of the Acropolis, as well as some of the recent works. These interventions include: the renovation and extension of the existing pathways, the construction of one elevator to replace the old one, and the recent lighting project. These interventions are mostly answers to contemporary necessities and challenges relating to the tourism pressures and to the accessibility issues. In addition, two major projects are currently under study: the partial covering of the slope of the Acropolis with a stamped sole and the restoration of the western entrance.

Special attention has been paid to the accessibility of the site, to pathways and to visitor facilities, especially for disabled people. Furthermore, emergency plans for visitor security and scientific studies for the protection of the site, such as monitoring of earthquake activity, are being carried out.

5. ASSESSMENT OF SPECIFIC ISSUES

The mission had the task to inspect the entire property and buffer zone, with particular attention to the following issues:

1. Assess of all recent projects implemented on the monuments and the monitoring process
2. Accessibility and visitation flows, principles and practices and impact of interventions with respect to user satisfaction.
3. Current management system and creation of a management plan for the property, taking into account risk mitigation measures.
4. Conservation approaches and principles

The complete Terms of Reference are given in Annex A. In the following, the findings related to these issues are discussed in detail and specific recommendations are given.

ISSUE 1: Assessment of the recently realized projects

Mission Findings:

The Renovation and enlargement of the Pathways, the elevator, and the lighting project were all implemented following studies, examination, and documentation of the Committee for the Conservation of the Acropolis Monuments (ESMA). The proposals were subsequently elaborated by the Acropolis Restoration Service (YSMA) employees or external researchers and the studies eventually approved by ESMA and brought before the Central Archaeological Council for their approval. All the competent authorities of the Ministry of Culture and Sports (different Directorates and the Ephorate of Antiquities) also provided their comments on the studies and proposals. The studies for the restoration of the monuments were also presented and debated at the Acropolis International Meetings prior to their implementation.³ Hence, they have all been implemented after thorough investigation.

The Renovation and Enlargement of Pathways

While a first concrete pathway was implemented in 1976-78 by J. Travlos, its deterioration as well as the slippery surface of the ancient rock have obviously urged the recent reparations and extensions, implemented in 2020. With the high volume of tourists visiting the Acropolis, visitors slipping and falling had become common place. Furthermore, the uneven surface made it difficult for those with movement impairments, including the elderly, and impossible for wheel chair users.

This renovation of the old pathway with concrete has been implemented on the property as the main pathways for visitors within the site. This renovated pathway is said to follow the Panathenaic Road's trace while offering two punctual deviations in order to connect with the new elevator as well as to provide a platform in front of the North facade of the Parthenon, to allow observation. These works appear to constitute a first stage before more extensive works proposed: first, the covering of specific places of the rock, either for the needs of visitation and implementation of the works undertaken on the rock or for the rehabilitation of the soil of the Acropolis, using, as applicable, materials of different endurance, second, the rearrangement of the Western Access to the Acropolis (discussed below).

The main arguments of the State Party for the implementation of the renovation and enlarging of the pathways have been:

- Safety of all at the Acropolis as the deterioration of the pathways had resulted in people commonly slipping and falling;

³ Communication with the State Party in June 2022.

- Protection of the Acropolis Rock that is itself considered as a monument since the new programme of interventions in 1975;
- Improvement of the site's accessibility offering an ease of movement with dimensions that allow the safe movement/crossing of disabled people using wheelchairs (including the elderly) while coping with the high volume of visitors.

It seems that facilities for all forms of disabilities are not yet incorporated to the recent project such as those with visual impairments. However, further studies seem to have been already undertaken in order to permit to the freshly implemented structure of the pathway to be used by everyone;

The facilitation of the transportation of heavy blocks of marble for the ongoing restoration projects;

- Constant and accelerating damage to the low durability stones of the foundations of the monuments and the Acropolis wall;
- Problematic drainage of rainwater causing significant damage to the bedrock and the foundations of the monument;
- Unsatisfactory movement and standing options for visitors, hindering proper viewing and understanding of the monuments.

The selected materials and design had therefore to respond to the following **technical constraints**:

- Mechanical strength and bearing capacity in order to allow the circulation of the vehicle transporting the marbles from the depot next to the Propylaea to the Parthenon in order to continue the anastylosis works;
- Durability (wear resistance related to the volume of estimated visitors to the site);
- Thickness of the pavement regarding the different constraints and ensuring matching of levels;
- Protection capacity of the Acropolis Rock;
- Reversibility;
- Ease of repair and replacement with minimum disturbance to the visitors or the Rock.



Figure 1 Renovated pathway facilitating the circulation of visitors and the transport of heavy materials from the North-West working site.

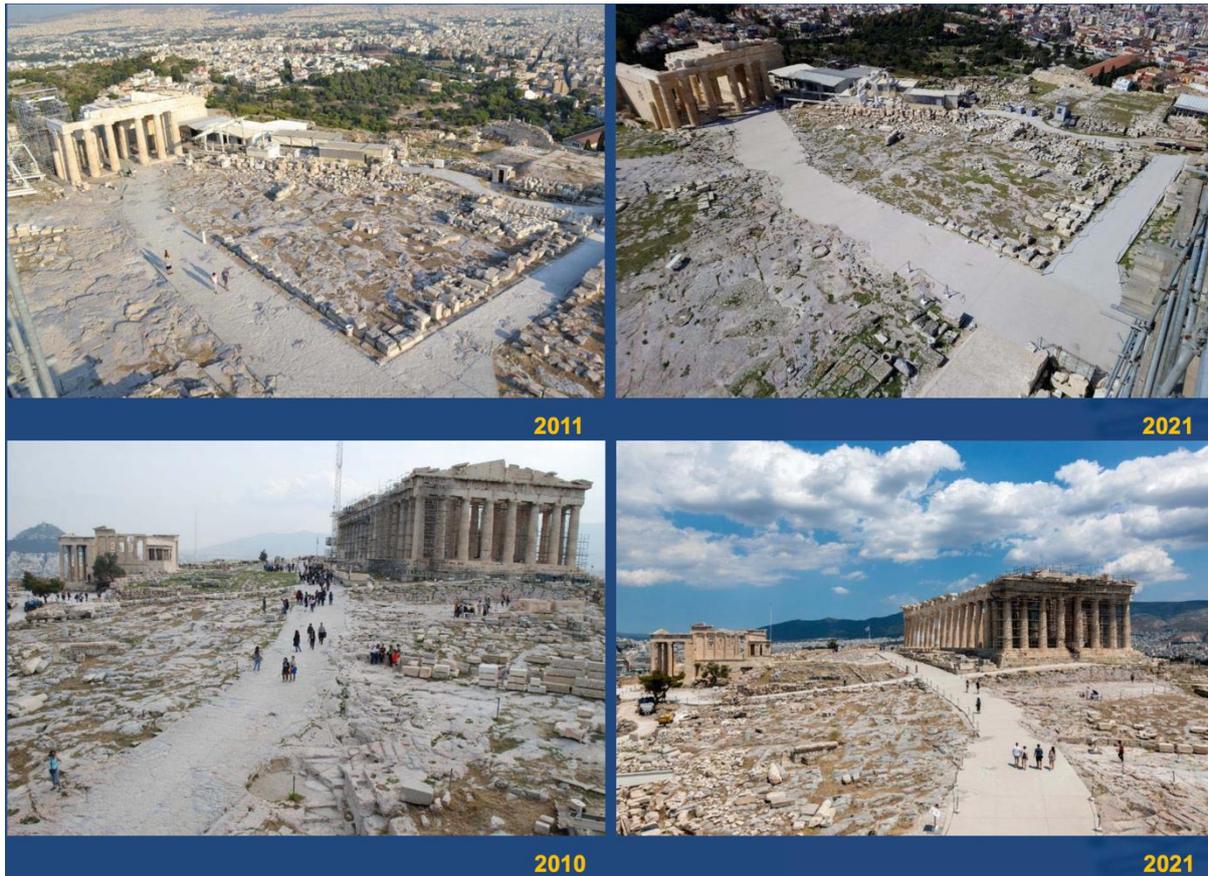


Figure 2 Acropolis walkways – Before and after the intervention. Source: Hellenic Republic Ministry of Culture and Sports (June 2021), Acropolis of Athens, PPT.

In terms of architectural choices in relation with cultural heritage aspects, the project wishes to recall the Panathenaic Road by its colour and its trace. The choice has been made in order to preserve the continuity with the section of the Panathenaic Road outside Acropolis (still to be excavated). Regarding the enlargement and the renovation of the pathways, the composition is quite simple. The main axis begins from Propylaea and follows the existing pathway of Travlos of 1976-78 until the rear façade of Parthenon where a larger platform has been created allowing the circulation and the necessary retreat for visitors to admire the Parthenon's architecture. Another deviation has also been created leading to the elevator implemented on the North side of the site. In order to mark the trace of the Panathenaic Road, the two deviations, North and South are presented differently with an ochre colour.

The Acropolis Restoration Service (YSMA) carried out much research on the materials and their composition prior to finalizing the choices. Two types of materials have been tested: Lafarge cement (Artevia stone) and a lighter solution of reinforced earth. These tests and results were presented to the Mission. The parameters indicated in preceding paragraphs of this report have led to the choice of concrete screed for this pathway. The concrete screed (Artevia stone), locally reinforced with polypropylene fibers lays on a PCV protection film or on a clay layer. It seems that the reinforcement has been regularly interrupted in order to facilitate future dismantling. The ease of removing sections of the new paving on the pathways was demonstrated to the Mission.

The pathways profiles are treated either by straight edges or by a more flexible profile integrating with the surface of the rock. Archaeological windows have been created where the Rock surface is too uneven, or in order to reveal archaeological details.



Figure 3 Different treatments of the pathway profiles

As far as the drainage system is concerned, the renewed pathways would not have interfered with the existing natural slope of the rock from the axis to the edges. A geo-technical study is in process and that may likely result in the creation of additional drainage. The Mission was informed that a drainage trench is easily plumbed to the South. In the North-West side, the drainage of the technical area is plumbed to the exterior downspout next to the elevator. Investigations are ongoing on the North-East zone that is more challenging to drain or plumb.

The State Party's explanations let us identify three major criteria in order to evaluate the pathway intervention:

Functionality

In terms of accessibility, the improvement is clear:

- Pathways are safe and more comfortable for all visitors with diverse abilities.
- Accessibility for people with physical disabilities has been established.
- Movement of the monumental marble blocks during the restoration works can be assured without damage to the Rock or the monuments.
- Reversibility of the intervention is assured.
- Durability, repairs, and maintenance with minimal interference to the site's functioning are assured.

However, the following question is yet emerging: How can the archaeological windows as well as the level differences in the concrete screed be treated in order to allow the circulation of wheelchairs and prevent accidents especially of people with vision problems? It is important that the State Party pursue further studies in order to include an overall reflection regarding all types of disabilities. Furthermore,

some of the archaeological windows could be responsible for water stagnation issues that can deteriorate the ancient rock.

Reversibility

The concrete screed and the rock are separated by a PVC layer. The reversibility of the new layer seems to have been tested by punctual removals during the works. Documentation on these tests has been presented to the Mission. The mission raised the question, if a report has been published after the realization of these tests as part of monitoring process.



Figure 4 North-West side drainage plumbed to the exterior downspout next to the elevator



Figure 5 PVC layer isolating the surface of the rocks from the paving of the path and ensuring reversibility.

Heritage justification

The existing traces have been enlarged in order to evoke the size of Panathenaic Road. This proposition is based on some archaeological traces visible on the surface of the rock. It is said that we can presume the width of the ancient road on the basis of these ancient traces showing that the road was striped in order to avoid slippage. In order to better appreciate the archaeological importance of these findings and the enlargement of the pathway, it would be interesting to present to the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS the archaeological studies that justify the limits of the enlargement of the pathway.

The World Heritage Centre requested the State Party to carry out a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) on this initiative. The State Party contracted an independent international consultant to carry out an HIA. The final report of the expert was to have been delivered in December 2021. However, the report has still not been delivered – despite follow up by the State Party. The widening of the pathways makes them more visible than previously. However, as the renovation of the pathways fully meets all the functional parameters, and as the intervention is fully reversible, and aims to evoke the ancient Panathenaic Road, the Mission does not consider that the repaving has any negative impact on the OUV of the property. However, the design of the paving's appearance could be enhanced.



Figure 6 The design of the pathway appearance could be enhanced and a more coherent result among different interventions achieved

Recommendations

- The Acropolis Rock needs to be protected from stagnant water and high levels of humidity that can cause mold growth and surface embrittlement. A geotechnical study regarding the drainage system of the renovated pathways is in process by the State Party. The Mission requests that this study be shared with the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies.
- The restoration and conservation works should pay as much heed to the weight of the vehicles carrying materials that should be taken into consideration in protecting the fragile ancient Rock. Alternative ways of organizing the contemporary restoration site should be considered in order to avoid the alteration of the Ancient Rock's surface.
- Design strategies to evoke the ancient construction site's organization using the existing pathways could be a valuable alternative to improve its visual appearance for visitors.
- As an HIA of the renovated and enlarged pathways has been commissioned, the Mission would like to wait for the report of the detailed HIA before proposing additional recommendations.

The objectives, methodology and mitigation measures taken on this issue should be published in order to inform the public and the heritage community.

The Elevator

A first elevator was implemented for the 2004 Olympic Games held in Athens that was developed as a provisional solution. The new elevator, one that is much more comfortable according to people with disabilities that the Mission met in their meetings with Civil Society representatives, has been installed in the same place since 2021. It is located in North flank of Acropolis walls with an entry/exist from the Peripatos, a promenade that girds the Acropolis and intersects with the Panathenaic way on the north slope. The location of the elevator has been chosen according to the historical value of the surface of the Acropolis rock and walls. Indeed, the elevator is hung on a 1930s masonry surface.

The architectural vocabulary of the elevator and its installation is quite modern with the use of steel and glass. The State Party is advised to continue monitoring and documenting the impact of the execution to better understand the impact of the fixing methods on the underlying rock. The cabin's dimensions allow several wheelchairs to be on board simultaneously and this quality seems to be extremely appreciated by the disabled people who shared their impressions with the Mission.



Figure 7 Departure/arriving of the elevator at the level of “Peripatos” and on the top of the slope. A person is permanently present to guide the visitors with disabilities.



Figure 8 Fix iron-glass cabin where visitors land exiting the elevator.

Functionality

In terms of accessibility, the improvement is clear:

- The elevator is easily accessible by the “Peripatos” path. The entry/exist of the elevator is designed to have comfortable access for those in wheelchairs.
- It is more comfortable permitting the access to more than one wheelchair at once.
- The great view of the city that the elevator offers is highly appreciated by the users.
- The elevator has greatly improved the access of the Acropolis not only for disabled people but also for the elderly, pregnant women, and for families with children in strollers.

Reversibility

The transmission of further documentation regarding the impact of the execution as a way of monitoring to the World Heritage Centre will be appreciated in order to better understand the impact of the fixing methods on the underlying rock.

Heritage justification

The implementation of the elevator is well justified as it is located on the least historic part of the walls dating from 1930. Further intervention on the elevator could take into consideration solutions, especially for the landing of visitors on the top of the slop, making it more discreet. However, the contemporary treatment of the elevator is easily recognizable and follows the guidelines of the 1964 Venice Charter. As previously explained, on the World Heritage Centre's request, the State Party has commissioned an HIA from an independent international expert. Thus, the reversibility and heritage impact could be properly assessed only with the HIA.

Recommendation

- As an HIA of the elevator project has been commissioned, the Mission would like to wait for the report of the detailed HIA before proposing additional recommendations.
- The overall strategy for the use of heavy weight anchors should be published in order to inform the public and the heritage community.

The Lighting project

The Lighting project of the Acropolis serves to articulate the property by visually demarcating three levels of lighting - the Rock, the fortification, and finally the architectural monuments -. The project has been funded by the Onassis Foundation and conceived by the lighting designer Eleftheria Deko. Previous old spotlights have been replaced with LED lighting fixtures.

The Mission was convinced that the Lighting project has made the nocturnal highlighting of the Acropolis a success. However, during the daytime, within the Acropolis site, the presence of the lighting installations, presents an array of metal lamp boxes and cables to the visitors. The design of the lighting installations needs to be better integrated in the architecture and landscape to be more discreet during the day time. The installation seems to be fully reversible, and hence has no negative impact on the OUV of the property. However, greater attention to the design of the installations would serve to enhance the environment of the Acropolis.

Recommendation

Greater attention to design and enhanced detailing of the Lighting project installations are encouraged with a view to better integrating the installations in the monuments and landscape and making them less visible during the day time.



Figure 9 Light projectors for the lighting of the Acropolis, located within the site.



Figure 10 Light projectors for the lighting of the Acropolis, located within the Propyleae.



Figure 11 Light projectors for the lighting of the Acropolis, located around the Parthenon.

ISSUE 2: Accessibility and visitation flows, principles and practices and impact of interventions with respect to user satisfaction.

The Terms of References are given in Annex A.

Mission Findings:

The Acropolis has been functioning as an archaeological site since 1833, shortly after the establishment of the modern Greek state. Since that time, the issue of accessibility of the site was taken into consideration and Acropolis was opened to visitors on payment of an entrance fee. Thus, accessibility and protection of the site have been two prerogatives of the Acropolis, since the beginning of the 19th century.

The natural and physical conformation of the site makes it accessible through two main entrances: the first one is located on the Western side and corresponds to the historical access to the Acropolis, while the second one, opened in 2004, is located on the Southern side of the slope, near the "Akropoli" metro station.

These entrances are accessible by public transport using three main stations: "Akropoli" (line 2), "Monastiraki" (line 3), located near the Hadrian's Library, and "Thissio" (line 1). Line 3 provides direct access to the site from the airport and line 1 from the port of Piraeus. From all these metro stations, it is possible to reach the slope of the Acropolis through pedestrian streets.

The tourist buses, especially those coming from the port of Piraeus and bringing daily cruise passengers, stop at the Acropolis car park located at the street corner Róvrou Galli and Garivaldi. The car park can accommodate a limited number of buses; thus an important organization is in place in order to coordinate the arrival and departures of groups and their access to the site. From the car park, there is a short walk to reach the main entrance of the site.

The available data shows an increasing number of visitors in the past years: from 1,138,597 in 2006, up 1,390,057 in 2013 (national Periodic Reporting Exercise on the 1972 Convention, 2014). Visits are concentrated from April to October and in the morning hours. For a broader understanding of the frequentation of the site and visitor flows it would be important to integrate this available data with more detailed data about the number of visitors reaching the site on peak hours, the density of frequentation in different time slots, the average duration of visits, the distribution of visitors across the days and periods, etc.

The Mission has been informed that a study of the University of Thessaloniki has estimated the maximum number of people that can be at one time on the Acropolis slope being 2000-3000. One of the main critical factor determining this number is the size of the exit at the Beulé Gate. Two other studies were mentioned during the presentations dealing with visitor management. The main features of these studies were presented but not shared with the Mission, although they contain sensitive information and procedures. One study concerns the procedures for evacuating the site in case of a terrorist attack, and the second concerns fire management and the related evacuation procedures.

Since 2004, on the occasion of the Olympic Games, major works have been carried out to improve the accessibility of the site to visitors and in particular to people with disabilities. Two major interventions, discussed in Issue 1, have been achieved: the construction of an elevator on the North side in 2004, then replaced since 2020, and the renovation and partial enlargement of the pathways. These interventions meet the needs expressed by Article 26 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and Article 30 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) "to ensure that persons with disabilities: (...) Enjoy access to places for cultural performances or services, such as theatres, museums, cinemas, libraries and tourism services, and, as far as possible, enjoy access to monuments and sites of national cultural importance."

The Acropolis site has an extent of 3,04 ha, the buffer zone is 116,71 ha, nevertheless there is a significant problem of concentration of visitor flows on the Acropolis slope and around its main monuments. It is evident that the natural features of the slope of the Acropolis strongly affect the flows of visitors. The State Party shared with the Mission several measures that are adopted daily in order to regulate the visitor flows and to respond to specific problems (accidents, number of tourists exceeding the carrying capacity of the site, etc.). The Mission considers that a site management plan with a section specifically dedicated to tourism and addressing accessibility and evacuation (in case of a catastrophe as storm, earthquake, etc.) issues in a detailed and coherent way and with a clear vision for the site, would greatly help to address some of the issues discussed by this Report. The accessibility and evacuation issues should include measures specifically designed for disabled people.

The main actor in charge of visitor management is the Ephorate of Antiquities of the City of Athens, while the educational programmes are designed by the Department of Information and Education of the YSMA. Ticket sales are handled by a service of the Ministry of Culture, the Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development (H.O.C.R.E.D.). The Society of Friends of the Acropolis helps the promotion of the site and of the museum, including through publications. All these actors can play a crucial role in jointly collaborating in the implementation of a Management plan for the site.

Planning of Visitor Management and Visitor Flows and Access to the Site

As mentioned above, the site is easily accessible by public transport. Nevertheless, a significant number of private buses approach the site every day, especially from the port of Piraeus and from cruise ships. The high flow of tourists coming by bus creates congestion problems at the main entrance of the site and along the whole path from the entrance to the Propylaea.

In order to face this congestion problems and to respond to the needs of different categories of visitors, a second entrance has been opened in 2004, located on the Southern slope. This access is less affected nowadays by congestion problems as it is further away from the slope and the bus park. This entrance is mainly used by individual tourists, who wish to visit the site in its entirety and who usually organize a longer and more comprehensive visit.

The access issue specifically takes into consideration people with disabilities. In 2004, the construction of the elevator was intended to improve access and circulation for disabled people on the site. A new elevator, replacing the previous one, was installed in 2021. The Mission had the pleasure of meeting several organisations representing people with disabilities (reduced mobility and blind people). They all expressed positive opinions about these interventions, which enable them to enjoy the unique experience of visiting a World Heritage Site. The new elevator has a friendly design, allows access for several wheelchairs at a time, is quite fast and allows quick ascent for groups of disabled people. It also has a large window to enjoy the city view. These details, which may seem of secondary importance, are crucial to the visiting experience of people with disabilities. In fact, they improve the comfort of the visit and strengthen its social dimension. The lift is accessible from the main entrance of the Acropolis via a pathway or by using two electric vehicles. The entrance for disabled people is located nearby the Western exit of the site.

As far as circulation on the site is concerned, the pathway renewed in 2021 is considered functional by people with mobility problems who use wheelchairs. The steepness of the path and the presence of irregular archaeological windows were not highlighted as problems by the interviewees.

Concerning blind people, their accessibility to the site still meets some difficulties, but some projects are going to be implemented in the near future. A handrail specifically designed for the Acropolis site should be installed in the next months all along the pathway. This will guide blind people from the Propylaea to the Parthenon and will be engraved with Braille words to guide the person and indicate where they are. A first installation has been accomplished on the path right after the Propylaea. The design of this handrail seems functional, while we wonder if the archaeological windows on the path could represent a difficulty for the flow of people with visual deficiencies or other categories of people needing this support. A scale-model of the site for the blind people should also be placed at the main entrance.



Figure 12 Handrail specifically designed for the Acropolis site to guide blind people. The handrail integrates information for visitors in Braille. At the moment, the handrail crosses several archaeological windows that could become a danger for certain categories of visitors, and especially for blind people.



Figure 13 Connections from one handrail to the other will be accomplished once the handrail for bling people is installed all over the site. At the moment there is a lack of continuity and a diversity of materials that can make the accessibility of the site difficult for people with deficiencies

The Mission could note that all these interventions have greatly improved physical access to the Acropolis site for people with disabilities. Nevertheless, as also emphasised by the representatives of people with disabilities met, it seems important to continue these efforts by ensuring the training of site staff and guides to assist people with disabilities during their visit, by developing new technologies and tools creating additional services, and designed for people with different disabilities.

Concerning the management of visitors flows, the main limitation to visitor access to the Acropolis slope is related to the exit from the site, located to the West, at the level of the Beulé Gate. This exit allows one, or two people at the most, to exit at the same time. Just after the exit door, there are some steps which add difficulty to the exit of the site under normal conditions and to its evacuation during exceptional events. Considering the difficulty that these steps represent, it seems important to address the question of access and exit of the site and the difficulties that stairs represent for some categories of people in the study for the reconfiguration of the Western access.



Figure 14 Western exit of the site at the Beulé Gate, which is one of the architectural elements affecting the carrying capacity of the site because of the limited size of the Gate and the risk of slipping on marble stairs

The efforts accomplished by the State Party in terms of accessibility address the main objectives of Article 9 of the UN CRPD: “To enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas.”

Recommendations:

- If the physical accessibility of the site is achieved for different categories of visitors, the Mission suggests to take into consideration the possibility of developing services, trainings for the employees, applications, and other physical or digital tools that could fully permit to people with different disabilities to access and enjoy the Acropolis World Heritage site.
- Since one of the main problems of the site is the congestion during peak hours, it seems important to implement a closer monitoring of visitor's numbers and to carry out a study on carrying capacity, visitor flows, impacts on the site, and mitigation measures. This data and study may support the elaboration and implementation of the Management Plan and the regular

updating of mechanisms for access control along specific time slots and for evacuation measures for visitors, including specific measures for disabled visitors.

The services for interpretation of the site

This issue could not be developed extensively during the mission due to the lack of time and the multiplicity of topics covered. However, the State Party presented some of the measures and tools developed in order to make the understanding of the site and its OUV accessible to different audiences. In particular, the opening of the new Acropolis Museum in 2009 has created the conditions for a wider understanding of the site and for more in-depth visits and educational programmes. Some specific tools are developed by the Department of Information and Education of the YSMA, such as workshops, thematic tours, museum kits for schools, teacher packs and family bags. All these tools are mainly addressed to children, schools and families and allow them to discover different aspects of the history and cultural significance of the Acropolis, as well as the work undertaken to maintain its OUV.

Guides and books on the Acropolis are also available in the museum bookshop and some specialized guides in different languages are published by the Society of Friends of the Acropolis. A service of guided tours is also available at the entrance of the site. Descriptive panels are located on the site, their placement in congested spots can make them difficult to read.

In addition, the pandemic has increased the need for digital content to access the site. A number of online applications for different audiences have been developed by the Department of Information and Education of the YSMA. These important achievements in terms of new technologies could also be extended for accompanying the visit of the Acropolis, and eventually as a tool to visualize future anastylosis or digital anastylosis that will not be physically realized. These technologies can also be used as tools to support visits of people with special needs.

Recommendations:

- Considerable efforts have been made by the State Party to ensure understanding of the site by different categories of visitors.
- Greater use interpretation tools, including new technologies, could be considered to diversify communication and content for different audiences, including hosting communities, and needs.
- A more integrated visit including the museum and the archaeological site could be developed in order to make the museum function as an interpretation centre and better prepare the visitors to the site visit.

Connections with other archaeological sites and tickets

The problems of the access and visit of the Acropolis seems to be very much related to the type of public and the habits of visitors, especially those arriving in groups. The State Party has made important efforts to address visitors' needs and intends to undertake important works to improve access to the site and circulation on the slope of the Acropolis. To address this issue, the Mission suggests to take into consideration the study of visitors flows and attitudes and of the possible connection between the different archaeological sites within the buffer zone and the Acropolis museum. A broader understanding of the Acropolis slope, in relation to these other sites, could allow the development of alternative paths and narratives, improving the circulation in the entire buffer zone.

A common ticket for the museum, the site and other archaeological sites exists. Ticket sales are handled by the Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development (H.O.C.RE.D.), which is responsible for all national archaeological sites in Greece and museum shops. Tickets can be booked online or purchased on site at the Southern or Western entrance. Online, there is strong competition from unofficial websites that sell more expensive tickets, with the promise of extra services. The common tickets does not include the Acropolis Museum.

Regarding groups, the Ephorate of Antiquities of the City of Athens explained that group sales are managed to avoid congestion on the site and groups arriving all at the same time. However, it appears that heavy pressure is put on the site during the morning hours and at the main entrance of the site. In case of very high attendance, which leads to reaching the site's carrying capacity, groups are invited to visit other archaeological sites, located within the buffer zone. While this practice helps to manage exceptional and critical situation, the Mission considers that a comprehensive strategy involving tour operators and tourist actors could be designed to achieve a better distribution of visitors to all archaeological sites in the area.

The ticket sales system allows for an accurate tracking of visitor flows, yet this data was only orally communicated to the Mission. This data represents a great source of information to achieve a better and adaptable to specific circumstances management of visitors. This data could also be integrated with information concerning the quality of the visit, visitor satisfaction and visitor understanding in terms of OUV of the site.

The State Party has made significant efforts to ensure accessibility and circulation at the Acropolis site. Today, the management of visitor flows is a crucial issue and can be easily supported by the available data collected by the Ephorate and the Hellenic Cultural Resources Development Organisation and some additional qualitative data.

Recommendations:

- The Mission encourages the State Party to propose management solutions for visitors flows that take into account all the sites included in the buffer zone, to reduce the pressure on the Acropolis site and to better manage the distribution of visitors during opening hours.
- Furthermore, it seems important to include in this process a dialogue with the tourism industry, in order to make its actors more aware of the fragile nature of the Acropolis site and to involve them in the definition and implementation of solutions to improve site attendance and visitor distribution during opening hours. Visitor studies should also be realized in order to capture the needs and interests of different visitor types (e.g. individual, groups, "fast track" visitors and "slow tourism" ...).

The tourism management plan and the participation

All the aspects mentioned affect the accessibility of the site and the circulation of visitors. They are known to the authorities in charge of the site and in particular to the Ephorate of Antiquities of the City of Athens that undertakes various actions in order to address the problems mentioned. Thus, several measures exist, but they would probably be more effective if included and coherently articulated in an overall management plan of the site. This point will be further developed by Issue 3.

As stated by ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter: "A primary objective for managing heritage is to communicate its significance and need for its conservation to its host community and to visitors. Reasonable and well managed physical, intellectual and/or emotive access to heritage and cultural development is both a right and a privilege. It brings with it a duty of respect for the heritage values, interests and equity of the present-day host community, indigenous custodians or owners of historic property and for the landscapes and cultures from which that heritage evolved".

Moreover, "Tourism should bring benefits to host communities and provide an important means and motivation for them to care for and maintain their heritage and cultural practices. The involvement and co-operation of local and/or indigenous community representatives, conservationists, tourism operators, property owners, policy makers, those preparing national development plans and site managers is necessary to achieve a sustainable tourism industry and enhance the protection of heritage resources for future generations."

Recommendations:

- Given the importance of the Acropolis site and the high number of visitors the site receives each year, it seems essential to develop a Tourism Management Plan for the site, as a part of the overall site Management Plan.
- Following the principles of ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter and the Salalah Guidelines for the Management of Public Archaeological Sites, the local community, who also lives outside the buffer zone but has a strong connection to the Acropolis site, and all stakeholders, especially tourism and cultural actors, could be actively involved in the conception and implementation of a management plan for the site, including a session dedicated to tourism management.

ISSUE 3: Current management system and creation of a management plan for the property, taking into account risk mitigation measures.

The Terms of References are given in Annex A.

General Findings on the management system

As the Acropolis was inscribed in 1987, Management Plans had not yet become an integral part of the application process and therefore the nomination file was not accompanied by a Management Plan.

So far, no Management Plan for the Acropolis in line with the guidance of the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies has been prepared. However, with the establishment of ESMA in 1975, after a thorough archaeological study and analysis, a programme of conservation and restoration intervention was established and approved by the Central Archaeological Council. The programme for the Parthenon, that was in place prior to the inscription of the property on the World Heritage List and has been ongoing on the site since 1983. This broad programme of works has functioned as the basis for the prioritization of restoration and conservation interventions have been identified and included in this programme. The Mission was informed that each of the major interventions that have been undertaken since 1975 have been articulated in this programme.

For those interventions that have been previously approved in this programme, the State Party follows specific procedures for the approval of studies and the performing of works at the Acropolis, which comprises the following:

- Programming the work, dividing it into programs and allotting the work to the YSMA personnel, following proposal by the Director of the YSMA and approval by the ESMA
- Writing of the Study by the researcher responsible
- Approval of the Study by the ESMA
- Presentation and review of the Study to the Central Archaeological Council, to which it is proposed by the President of the ESMA
- Decision by the Minister on approval of the Study, based on the opinion given by the Central Archaeological Council
- Implementation of the Study

The responsibilities of the ESMA also include the sequencing of the various interventions needed within the framework of the broader programme of restoration, the approval of expenditure proposed by the work sections of the YSMA and the approval of the employment of personnel according to the requirements of the work.

However, the programme has never been reviewed by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies as a Management Plan.

While ESMA and YSMA are responsible for programming and implementing conservation and restoration interventions accompanied by extensive and detailed studies before, during, and after interventions. Plans for managing tourists, ticketing, and tourist flows, the organization of the security of the property, analysing and ensuring the carrying capacity of the Acropolis property at times of heaviest visitation, ensuring the evacuation plans, parking, roads, lighting, and all other matters have been carried out by the Ephorate as part of their responsibility. All the other archaeological and sites and monuments in the buffer zone of the Acropolis as well as in and around Athens, is also the responsibility of the Ephorate and not related to ESMA and YSMA.

Need for Management Plan

The planning of land-use, building regulations including heights, traffic management, and the regulation of any new construction including tourist infrastructure, in the buffer zone and beyond, are managed by

the urban development authorities of the City of Athens with the approval of the Ephorate. The UNESCO publication, "Managing Cultural World Heritage" (2013), a resource manual, describes a Management Plan as essential guidance document for strategic long term planning for protection of the OUV and managing change in and around the site that may impact the protection of the OUV of the property.

"A management plan is a relatively new tool which determines and establishes the appropriate strategy, objectives, actions and implementation structures to manage and, where appropriate, develop cultural heritage in a effective and sustainable way so that its values are retained for present and future use and appreciation. It balances and coordinates the cultural heritage needs with the needs of the 'users' of the heritage and the responsible governmental and/or private/community bodies.

The context and nature of a management plan vary considerably, depending on the type of property. For example, a management plan for an archaeological site or an urban centre would be more complex than that for a single building."

(Managing Cultural World Heritage, UNESCO, p. 123)

For cultural World Heritage sites in urban areas in particular, comprehensive Management Plans are encouraged to include a tourism management plan, and a disaster risk management plan among others. Furthermore, the World Heritage Committee encourages the Management Plan of World Heritage properties to be anchored in the Master Plans or City Development Plans in urban areas (Decision 43 COM 7.3). Such an approach enables traffic management, infrastructure development, and building regulations to be better managed for the protection and enhancement of the OUV of the property. Management plans need to be reviewed every few years – for example, every five years. At the moment, while each of the conservation and restoration interventions are part of a larger programme of archaeological works, most of these are interventions that were identified and prioritized in 1975 and 1983. This programme of archaeological interventions is not integrated into a larger Management Plan for the Acropolis that also includes planning for tourism, for vehicular traffic and parking, security, disaster and evacuation plans, water supply and sanitation, addressing climate change and its impacts etc. as well as the relationship with other monuments and sites.

Thus, there is no overview of the impact of some proposed interventions, such as the proposed Western Access project on these other aspects of managing the property, nor is there a clarity on the overall prioritization of actions and impacts. While, a great deal of emphasis has been placed on an interdisciplinary approach to the conservation, restoration, and anastylosis work, such a broader, more widely interdisciplinary, and intersectoral approach is essential for the long term protection of the OUV of the property in a changing world.

The State Party informed the Mission that the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports has set a priority in drafting and implementing management and risk mitigation plans for all World Heritage properties of Greece, including the Acropolis through a EU funded project titled "Integrated Management of Archaeological Sites and Monuments – Management Plans for the Inscribed Monuments in the UNESCO World Heritage List".

The preparation of the Management Plan for the Acropolis (as well as 14 other properties in Greece), is ongoing under this project and includes guidelines for risk management strategies. The Management Plan is expected to be completed in 2023. A consultative process is foreseen with "legislative updates and social engagement, thus facilitating the coordination between government authorities, various stakeholders and community groups."

With regard to fire safety plan, the State Party informed the Mission that the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports has signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Ministry of Climate Crisis and Civil Protection in order to assess risks that threaten the cultural properties and to draft and implement proactive measures against them. Within this framework systematic efforts are undertaken to shield the

Acropolis and its buffer zone from other natural or manmade disasters including fires, especially during the summer season (information from Ephorate).

Threats to the protection of the OUV of an archaeological World Heritage property can be from many causes including factors outside the property boundaries. Similarly, the opportunities to enhance its OUV can also come from many actions some of which may be outside the property boundaries and the buffer zone.

Recommendations:

- A comprehensive Management Plan for the Acropolis is urgent and essential. The Mission advises that it should include tourism planning, infrastructure development in and around the property including, draining, lighting, water, and sanitation; pavement and paths; traffic, access, and parking (including for tour buses); integration of a sustainable development perspective; plans for the valorization of other archaeological sites and monuments in Athens, including in the buffer zone – and their relationship to the Acropolis.
- The archaeological programme for the conservation and restoration of the Acropolis should be integrated into this larger Management Plan.
- The Management Plan should be anchored in and integrated with the Masterplan or City Development Plan for the City of Athens and inform its building regulations;
- The ongoing archaeological programme of interventions needs to be reviewed in light of recent pressures on the property (urban, environmental, tourism, traffic, etc.) as well as to align with recent developments in international standards and approaches;
- The priorities identified and established in the archaeological programme of interventions needs to be reviewed every few years in the framework of the larger Management Plan to adjust priorities;

ISSUE 4: Existing conservation and restoration approaches with respect to international norms and standards, and their decision-making processes and overall long-term conservation and management procedures.

The Terms of References are given in Annex A.

General Findings on the conservation history of the Acropolis:

The Acropolis has been functioning as an archaeological site since 1833, shortly after the establishment of the modern Greek state and restoration works have been ongoing since then. The site continues to be an active archaeological site where excavation and restoration works continue and several major interventions have been undertaken since the inscription of the property. The current restoration strategy places particular focus on anastylosis. Such an approach has particular bearing for proposed major new interventions such as the planned rearrangement of the main entry to the Acropolis, the Western entrance. Today, international norms and standards, generally advise minimal restoration and conservation approaches demanding a clear understanding of the prevailing Greek approach to the long term conservation of buildings and structures.

The archaeological site of the Acropolis was of national importance in the modern Greek State and functioned as a ticketed site for visitation since 1835. Restoration works have been ongoing on the site since 1834. Unlike almost any other World Heritage site, the Acropolis has had generations of archaeologists and scholars who have studied and carried out restoration works for close to two centuries. Scholars have identified different eras or phases of restoration works from 1834-2022. Every intervention reflects the science, the technological capability, the scholarly level of the period, and the prevailing approaches to conservation and restoration. All the restorations carried out so far together, have achieved the Acropolis as we know it today.

Damage and destruction to the Acropolis was due to catastrophic wars during the 17th century and violent explosions, rather than any natural causes, that left the Acropolis in partial ruins. Many structures were left unstable, and architectural elements in fragments. However, most of the original fragments have survived intact in the vicinity of their original location within the Acropolis. Anastylosis to rebuild, from as much of the original materials as possible, placing components back into their original positions, has been an intrinsic part of the restoration and conservation efforts at the Acropolis from the nineteenth century. Anastylosis of the monuments of the Acropolis, symbol of the most elevated spiritual creation of ancient Greece, and at the same time, the point of recognition par excellence of the new Greece by Europe, it assumed national importance (<https://www.yisma.gr/en/restoration/history-of-older-interventions/>).

The conservation and restoration of the Acropolis is continuous and has never ceased, even during the most difficult periods of the new Greek state. During more fortunate times, the restoration works on the Acropolis represent the peak of scholarship and technology of the land. Under the prism of the works on the Acropolis, the Greek approach to the question of the anastylosis of ancient monuments is developing, in both practice and in theory. The chief characteristics are a special emphasis on the aesthetic result of the interventions, a tendency to recover the supposed classical appearance of the monuments and an emphasis on their archetypical character (<https://www.yisma.gr/en/restoration/history-of-older-interventions/>).

Anastylosis was carried out in 1836 at the Acropolis in Athens, where the temple of Athena Nike was re-erected from remaining parts. During the 19th century, the remains of later, non-classical period structures were removed from the Acropolis Rock and a great excavation was undertaken. Subsequently, one of the pillars of the restoration and conservation efforts on the Acropolis, Nikolaos Balanos, a civil engineer, directed anastylosis work from 1898 to 1939 including to restore a collapsed portion of the Parthenon. As Charlampos Bouras, another pillar of the restoration and conservation of the Acropolis who became the Chair of ESMA has observed:

“Immediately following the Revolution interventions began on nearly all the monuments of the Rock, for the purpose of removing all the later elements that had changed their appearance and also, to an extent, in order to strengthen them. During the final years of the 19th century, an exhaustive excavation followed and the big anastylosis programme of Balanos, with which the image of the Acropolis was completed. This situation remained until 1975, when the works that are in progress today were programmed and initiated.” (Bouras, 2007)

However, the work of Balanos used the technology available at the time, but the use of iron plugs and clamps, among others, caused significant damage resulting in breakage and disintegration of the monuments making new anastylosis inevitable (Mallouchou-Tufano 2005). A new programme of intervention and a new project of anastylosis was launched in 1975 with the Committee for the Conservation of Acropolis Monuments (ESMA) within the Hellenic Ministry of Culture. Following a thorough survey, study, and establishment of principles for the interventions, work was launched on the Erechtheion in 1979 and subsequently expanded to include all monuments on the Acropolis (Mallouchou-Tufano 2005). The anastylosis of the Erechtheion was completed in 1987 and the one for the Parthenon was begun in 1986. An earthquake in 1981 caused further damage, especially on the East façade, that made the work of stabilizing the standing elements to become urgent and anastylosis necessary. The scale of the Parthenon required the interventions to be undertaken in different programmes or phases so that some phases are still ongoing.

In 2000, new anastylosis of sections of the Propylaea were commenced as well as a new anastylosis project of the Temple of Athena Nike. As Mallouchou-Tufano (2005) has noted, in the years following World War II, the breakage and disintegration of the monuments made new anastylosis inevitable due to faulty conservation efforts that were further compounded by environmental pollution and the increasing numbers of visitors as well as the recognition of the Acropolis Rock itself as a monument not immune to destruction. However, during the course of the interventions, unforeseen circumstances broadened the scope of the anastylosis including factors such as the discovery of fractures in architectural members that had never undergone anastylosis, discovery of the broad extent of Balanos’ faulty interventions that required correction, and the identification of a number of members and fragments lying scattered around. All of these factors have resulted in broadening the initial scope of the anastylosis work.

Various works of anastylosis have been ongoing at the Acropolis since the time of its inscription on the World Heritage List in 1987. As the State Party informed the Mission, the restoration and site enhancement works that have been taking place and still ongoing, are part of a broader programme that has been implemented for 40 years (The State Party sees the programme as an intrinsic part of the monument’s identity and linked to its contemporary history. As is the practice of the State Party for works relating to the Acropolis, this programme of works was put in place following the approval of ESMA and the Central Archaeological Council and wide publication. Prior to its implementation, each specific intervention is further studied in detail and the actions detailed out and presented to ESMA for its approval. Following its approval to the Central Archaeological Council review and wide publication. The proposed project, the preliminary study for the Western access was not part of this programme of works but was a later study that was approved by ESMA and put forward to the Central Archaeological Council for approval and was also presented to the 7th International Meeting for the Restoration of the Acropolis monuments. The State Party informed the World Heritage Centre via a letter dated 17 February 2022 in conformance with para 172 of the Operational Guidelines. They also informed the Mission of the positive comments and responses received and finally also confirmed to the World Heritage Centre this point via email dated 13. 10.2022 explaining also the process. They confirmed that the comments and responses to the presentation of the Western Access study are in the proceedings of the conference that are under preparation for publication.

Findings on the conservation and restoration approach and its documentation

According to the international ICOMOS Venice Charter of 1964:

“[...]All reconstruction work should however be ruled out "a priori". Only anastylosis, that is to say, the reassembling of existing but dismembered parts can be permitted. The material used for integration should always be recognizable and its use should

be the least that will ensure the conservation of a monument and the reinstatement of its form.” (Article 15, Venice Charter)

With the establishment of ESMA in 1975, all the conservation and restoration works realized, in particular the anastylosis, have meticulously followed the principles of the ICOMOS Venice Charter of 1964.

As stated on their webpage:

“A most significant aim of the Committee is always the carrying out of the works on the basis of the Charter of Venice (1964). The securing of transparency in each stage of the intervention, by publicizing and by making the works available for criticism by the international scholarly world, reduces the possibility of error and ensures the high quality of both programming and execution of the Acropolis works.” (<https://www.ysma.gr/en/the-service/organizational-structure/esma>)

Bouras, as Chair of the ESMA for a number years, explained in an article how the theoretical principles followed for the interventions at the Acropolis aligned fully with the 1964 Venice Charter, especially with reference to certain key articles of the Charter. For instance:

“Articles 9 and 15 refer to restoration with the help of fillings and to the anastylosis of archaeological finds. The use of fillings that are not precisely correct morphologically or have not been preceded by an archaeological study is forbidden. In the Acropolis works, the systematic research that had already been carried out has revealed every formal detail of the monuments and it has led to new discoveries by M. Korres on the Parthenon, by A. Papanikolaou on the Erechtheion and on the Propylaia by T. Tanoulas. Research in depth, indeed, made possible the removal of architectural members that had been placed incorrectly in the anastylosis of N. Balanos.” (*Acropolis Restoration News, No.7, July 2007*)

Fillings are thus restricted to the absolutely necessary for ensuring the stability of the ancient members and to ensure morphological continuity (Bouras, 2007). No fillings are simply undertaken to fill lacunae. Two principles in addition to the 1964 Venice Charter followed by ESMA include:

“The principle of reversibility of the interventions, the possibility of reconsidering errors in the future, is based on ultimate respect for the architectural members that are never to be recut, and on detailed documentation of the interventions in all phases. The second principle concerns the preservation of the structural self-sufficiency of the architectural members with the restoration of each one separately to its original structural function, and employing the ancient technology for their final cutting and filling.” (Bouras, 2007).

For the anastylosis, an interdisciplinary approach has been adopted. Interventions are based on scholarly research, previous publication and meticulous documentation. (*Article 2 of the 1964 Venice Charter: “the cooperation of every art and science capable of contributing to the study and preservation of the monuments being part of the cultural heritage”*). Innovative applications are being developed, such as the structural restoration of the in situ columns, through injection and filling of the interior cracks and gaps with a hydraulic grout, specially designed for the purpose.

The use of Pentelic marble, same type as the original building, seems to be a well-rooted tradition in Greece. The new material is worked with traditional methods and tools (Article 10 of the 1964 Venice Charter). Furthermore, the new materials selected have an established and reversible behaviour through time. The original articulated structural system of the monuments is respected and followed. That is joining autonomous architectural members by means of metal clamps and dowels in dry masonry, without mortar. Interventions on the architectural members are reversible and non-destructive. This is achieved by retaining the break surface in the member for joining and infilling with new marble.

Furthermore, ESMA's approach has also been to consider the Acropolis Rock itself as an invaluable monument that should be protected, and not just the monuments on the Rock. This is particularly evident in the approach to the construction of the new pathways.

When structures or elements are at risk of collapse, anastylosis may include careful disassembly and reassembly of its parts with new materials introduced as required for structural stability including plaster, cement or synthetic resins.

The State Party informed the Mission of the following key motivations and approach to anastylosis:

- In order to provide structural stability to the elements that are standing or standing in a precarious condition;
- In order to protect the original fragments from weathering and further destruction as the fragments are best protected in their original place;
- In order to correct errors in conservation techniques or in assembly from previous restoration efforts;
- In order to protect important sculptural elements by transporting them to the Acropolis Museum as marble is easily damaged by pollution and acid rain. In such cases, copies of artificial stone have been implemented in order to substitute for the originals.

ESMA principles identify three main causes of damage that necessitate intervention. First mechanical causes such as damage due to explosions, bombardment, earthquakes, fires, etc, as well as due to the swelling of iron reinforcements from recent interventions. The second is chemical due to erosion from acid rain and depositions from pollution, as well as the disintegration and damage from rusting of iron. And finally, damage from biological elements including corrosion from lichen, mould, bird droppings, and plant roots.

Each intervention is subject to much debate and introspection among Greek archaeologists as well as international ones. Such lively engagement has resulted in extensive and detailed studies and documentation being carried out prior to undertaking any interventions. Such a critical approach has enabled criticism of restoration techniques and the correction of errors, where possible, of past restoration works. Sometimes errors identified in the assembling of ancient blocks in past restoration efforts, have demanded dismantling and reassembly of the blocks when they have been found to have an impact on the other structures.

Furthermore, in line with the 1964 Venice Charter ESMA and YSMA follow very rigorously, systematic documentation and publication of research and studies prior to and following implementation. In recent years this has been done with help of computers employing modern techniques for digitization, photography, cinematography, photogrammetry and other techniques for preparing, analysing and documenting with meticulous drawings and images, every minute detail. Systematic and detailed studies and documentation are undertaken including with the help of new technologies like drone surveys, photogrammetry, and lidar scanning. Every stage of an intervention is very thoroughly documented to ensure reversibility and identification of conservation errors. Implementation is methodically tested in a small area before applying over any larger area. Studies are also published as books and each year an Acropolis News Letter for the general public is published in Greek and in English.

Furthermore, the proposed interventions are brought for the review of the Central Archaeological Council and the international conferences organized in order to obtaining wider review. Together these steps assure complete transparency of the work of both the ESMA and the YSMA (This was also articulated in Bouras, 2007).

With the application of the principles and approaches outlined above, the interventions at the Acropolis are fully in line with the 1990 ICOMOS Charter for the Protection and Management of Archaeological Heritage that builds on the 1964 Venice Charter. For instance, the 1990 Charter calls for 'high academic standards in many different disciplines are essential for the management of archaeological heritage.'

The high academic qualifications, the scientific papers and publications, and the intricate relationship between academic research and the implementation of archaeological works of ESMA and YSMA, address this principle of the 1990 Charter in an exemplary manner.

Similarly, the principles and approaches of the interventions of ESMA demonstrate alignment with the 2003 ICOMOS Charter on the Principles for the Analysis, Conservation, and Structural Restoration of Architectural Heritage. For instance,

“The peculiarity of heritage structures, with their complex history, requires the organisation of studies and proposals in precise steps that are similar to those used in medicine. Anamnesis, diagnosis, therapy and controls, corresponding respectively to the searches for significant data and information, individuation of the causes of damage and decay, choice of the remedial measures and control of the efficiency of the interventions... No action should be undertaken without having ascertained the achievable benefit and harm to the architectural heritage, except in cases where urgent safeguard measures are necessary to avoid the imminent collapse of the structures (e.g. after seismic damages); those urgent measures, however, should when possible avoid modifying the fabric in an irreversible way.”
(Article 1.6 - ICOMOS Charter Principles for the Analysis, conservation and Structural Restoration of Architectural Heritage)

These articles of the 2003 ICOMOS Charter are fully aligned with the practices, principles and approaches of the ESMA and YSMA as described above. Other principles of the 2003 Charter such as reversibility, and preventive maintenance are also fully followed in the Acropolis interventions.

From the materials presented to the Mission, there is no doubt with regard to the thoroughness, extent, depth, and rigor of the detailed drawings, measurements, archaeological studies, and documentation carried out prior to, and during anastylosis or any other interventions. The major interventions implemented at the Acropolis since its inscription on the World Heritage List strictly adhere to the 1964 Venice Charter and follow closely the 1990 Charter and 2003 Charters. Moreover, many of these important restoration projects have been carried out and received international recognition and awards.

With regard to the overall long-term conservation of the structures and buildings with respect to all international standards including minimum conservation approaches, the Mission was impressed by the thoroughness, rigor, and extraordinary high quality of work with meticulous attention to detail. The highest academic research endeavours on the Acropolis and archaeology are woven closely together with modern archaeological techniques and practices.

Two principles included in the 2003 Charter, however, are worth recalling:

- Article 3.16 - *Imperfections and alterations, when they have become part of the history of the structure, should be maintained so far so they do not compromise the safety requirement.*
- Article 3.17 - *Dismantling and reassembly should only be undertaken as an optional measure required by the very nature of the materials and structure when conservation by other means impossible, or harmful.*

Many of the interventions undertaken at the Acropolis since 1975 have sought to correct erroneous anastylosis and conservation practices of previous years. However, it is the understanding of the Mission, that the interventions to correct previous errors including disassembling and reassembling of ancient blocks were made in addressing damage due to other causes such as breakage and damage to the blocks due to iron reinforcements added during previous conservation efforts, damage due to the earthquake etc. As explained by Mallouchou-Tufano in her article (2005), the scope of the anastylosis work has expanded during the works with the discovery of the breakage and deterioration of the monuments due to unforeseen faulty conservation efforts that were further compounded by environmental pollution and the discovery of the broad extent of Balanos' faulty interventions that required correction.

In line with the principle of reversibility of interventions that has been at the core of ESMA's work since its establishment, the Mission was assured of the reversibility of all the recent interventions examined. The Mission would like to commend the State Party to continue ensuring reversibility for all interventions including all anastylosis projects.

Proposed Western Access Project:

The State Party has carried out studies for a number of years regarding the accurate restoration of the Western Access and ascent of the Acropolis hill to the Propylaea. The studies have concluded that the present form of the ascent is the result of successive interventions from 1957-1960 based on different techniques and interpretations of archaeological interventions.

Detailed documentation and archaeological analysis carried out using modern technology including photogrammetry have helped to provide evidence and clarity to enable restoration of the ascent to its early Roman form as a flight of steps across the width of entrance court that is at the moment only visible in small parts. The initial study was considered by the International Conference of 2002 but was put aside at the time as the priority was on the monuments. The study was put forward by ESMA to the 6th International Conference in 2013 and met with a positive response (Korres, ESMA, 2021). The study has subsequently received the approval of the Central Archaeological Council for implementation.

The State Party informed the World Heritage Centre via a letter dated 17 February 2022 in conformance with para 172 of the Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention (Operational Guidelines), 2021. They informed that the preliminary study for the Western Access had gone through the State Party's approval process and presented to the 7th International Conference. And that a final study was in progress and would go through the rigorous approval process of the State Party. Subsequently, the State Party invited the the joint Advisory mission of WHC and ICOMOS that forms the basis of this report.

However, in order for the Advisory Bodies to review such a project, it has not yet received the proposal together with complete drawings and details for the proposed intervention necessary for such a review. The World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS had also received a letter from a Civil Society representative opposing the proposed project.

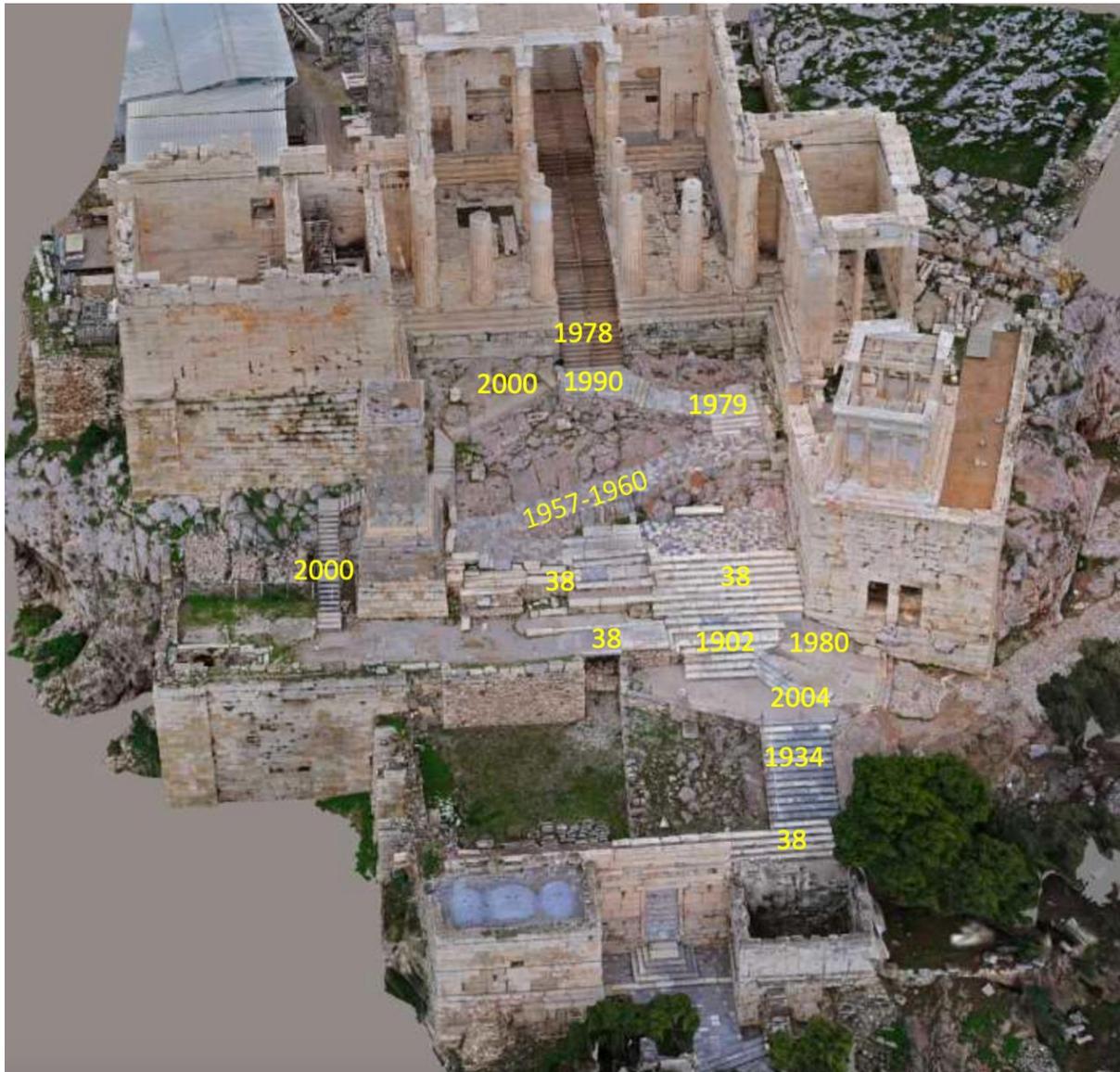


Figure 15 Source: YSMA Archives in Korres M. (with the collaboration of Malkakis V. and Takos Chr., 2021), Study for the Restoration of the Acropolis West Ascent.

As explained to the Mission, and as put forward in the note prepared by the Chair of ESMA, Manolis Korres, during the 1st century CE, a marble stairway of was constructed leading up to the Propylaea in place of the inclined straight ramp of the classical period. Large parts of this stairway were revealed after the excavations between 1835-1850 (Korres, ESMA, 2021).

“In 1850, using the relevant archaeological evidence they restored one seventh of the width of the marble stairway. In 1890 and 1934 the stairway was filled from the middle to the gate damaging as such its marbles and its original appearance. In 1957, within a broader programme, the damaged part of the stairway was left intact, while the restored area was dismantled to construct the present zig zag ramp of a 2.3m width. From 1977 to 2004 many interventions were conducted on specific areas, totally opposing any archaeological evidence, yet they are accepted as temporary and necessary for practical reasons and on condition that the future interventions will adhere to existing archaeological evidence.” (Korres, ESMA, 2021).

The proposed intervention to restore the 1st CE marble staircase and levels removing the current zig zag access ramp, includes the following:

1. “all the faulty areas of older interventions (that have already been documented with drawings, photographs, and observation notes) will be dismantled and their blocks will be used in the most effective way in the next interventions.
2. the large landing, whose considerable part of its surface has been saved, will be restored in its entirety.
3. its surface towards the N terrace will be restored (paving it with materials that will have been tested) and connected to the landing with a slight outwards incline ranging from 1:80 to 1:64.
4. the ascending way coming from the south will be restored and levelled with the landing. This will also give the chance to correct one more fault of the 1957 works. The dismantling of part of the base of the old fencing on the south of the tower, where we see a skilful use of a heap of rocks imitating cyclopean masonry, and which (in some people’s opinion) is so successfully done that it can deceive even archaeologists.
5. the upper part of the stairway, which in its middle includes a row of slightly inclined landings will be entirely restored in accordance with archaeological evidence.
6. the landing located inside the west gate will be restored to its original level and the foreign to the monument marbles found underneath and which belong to the restoration of 1934 will be dismantled. This will reveal that in this area the front of the archaic ramp continues.
7. only half of the width of the stairway and up to the large landing will be restored, so from the remaining gaps we will be able to see large parts of the retaining walls of the archaic and classical period ramp and the archaic shrine between them.
8. the present south entrance will be either closed or reduced in size in order to restore the level of the carved surface of the temenos of Aphrodite and reveal its temple by drawing attention to its decorated with doves entablature (which now remains unnoticed as very few people pass this area on the south of the west gate).
9. because of the west gate, the increase in the number of visitors passing through the large stairway depends on the accessibility of its two wider landings from the only possible route that comes from the south. From these two the largest landing will become more easily accessible when the south way will be open; this benefit though will be compromised by the proposed (according to the plan but not really necessary) closure of the south entrance.”

(Korres, ESMA, 2021)

The next step the State Party proposes is to develop detailed drawings and project implementation documents that will again be reviewed by the different decision-making bodies including ESMA and the Central Archaeological Council.

Given the level of academic excellence demonstrated by ESMA and YSMA, as well as their rigorous research, study, and documentation processes relating to the interventions on the Acropolis site, and given also that studies have been ongoing and shared with the relevant international community of scholars and approved by the Central Archaeological Council, the Mission finds no reason to doubt the archaeological and historical accuracy and validity of the studies and the proposed intervention at this preliminary stage.

However, the Mission considers that some clarifications regarding the implementation of the Western Access project are necessary before proceeding further with the development of its implementation plans. First, from the perspective of Articles 3.16 and 3.17 of the 2003 Charter (quoted above), the justification and purpose of the physical intervention needs to be clarified in relations to the overall Management Plan of the Acropolis. The artistic justification to be able to present and support a more accurate interpretation of the Acropolis and the Propylaea is clear. Some details on significance of correct levels for reducing the wear and tear on the Acropolis rock and the marble stairs is also provided.

Links to the ancient road network connecting the Western Access to the ancient Agora and the Dionysos Theater in the buffer zone is also proposed (Korres, ESMA, 2021).

The note on the Western Access preliminary study indicates one justification for the intervention as a response to ease tourist flows while also calling for the closure of the Southern Access. Then again, the need to provide tourists, regardless of their number, of the experience that is historically accurate. Clarification on the tourist flows and access to the Acropolis is necessary to ensure an accurate and effective response in this regard. Normally, the Management Plan should integrate a Tourism management plan with such analyses as a part of it. The Western Access project needs to be integrated into a larger Management Plan for the Acropolis that also integrates planning for tourism, for vehicular traffic and parking, security, disaster and evacuation plans, water supply and sanitation, etc. as well as the relationship with other monuments and sites. This would provide clarity on the overall prioritization of actions as well as the impacts on these other aspects. This is especially significant in a situation where the State Party has all the digital competencies and technology on hand to create digital visualizations and virtual experiences for tourists without the extensive physical interventions necessary. Without such an overall Management Plan in place, the Mission was not able to assess the prioritization of the conservation and restoration actions proposed including the proposed Western Access project.

The Mission considers it important to study precisely the behaviour of visitors accessing the site in order to assess the impacts that these interventions may have on tourist flows. Tourist access, from the main entrance to the Propylaea, currently face various problems: waiting lines, slippery ground materials, alternating ramps and stairs. It seems important to study all these problems in detail and to ensure that the project envisaged offers appropriate solutions. For example, it may be asked whether a long, wide staircase at the Western entrance can facilitate access to the slope for visitors or whether it will force certain categories of tourists to use the lift more systematically. Similarly, the material used may or may not facilitate access and slipperiness problems.

Proposed covering of the Acropolis Rock

Since the periodic report of 2006 (2006 Periodic Reporting Cycle 1, Section II), the visitor and tourism pressure has been identified as a threat to the site's conservation. Indeed, the ancient rock presents alterations, such as erosion due to the great number of tourists walking freely on it.

The general coverage of the archaeological site of Acropolis has therefore been studied to follow the image of what it is believed to have been in the 5th century B.C.E. It is during the great excavation of 1885-1890 that the entire Acropolis plateau, as we know it today, was discovered reaching the natural bedrock. The present situation on the Acropolis is therefore a historic phase on its own, the findings of these excavations have permitted and initiated the later anastylosis works. This phase, responsible for the actual aspect of the rock's surface, has introduced indeed the huge and long restoration project of Acropolis monuments. The same project still continues today and the historical period marking its departure should be therefore appreciated and incorporated in the current narration of the Acropolis' restoration.

A proposed project was briefly presented to the Mission as consisting of the coverage of specific places, either for the needs of visiting and implementing the works undertaken on the rock or for the rehabilitation of the soil of the Acropolis, using, as applicable, materials of different endurance. This project is not yet approved, a mere planning exists at the moment (Minutes of the Meeting of ESMA no. 11/24.07.2020). The project, if implemented, could permit the raising of the level of the ground so that it reaches a level believed to replicate the ancient terraces in the 5th century B.C.

As stated by Criterion I of the SOUV: "The Athenian Acropolis is the supreme expression of the adaptation of architecture to a natural site".

The partial coverage of the rock may contribute to protect it from the alteration due to high touristic presence. However, the Rock and the ancient remains that will be covered, will change the current visual presentation of the Acropolis. The impact on the OUV of the property, in particular to the authenticity of the property has to be reflected in detail.

Raising the level of the ground while creating retaining walls could implicate important structural works. Hence such a project would need to be thoroughly studied and an HIA conducted. Detailed documentation of the proposed project including plans and drawings should also be shared with the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, prior to commencing implementation.

Mission Recommendations:

- Recalling Articles 3.16 and 3.17 of the 2003 ICOMOS Charter on the Principles for the Analysis, Conservation, and Structural Restoration of Architectural Heritage, the justification and purpose of any ongoing and proposed interventions, including anastylosis , should be clarified;
- A review of current anastylosis or restoration works regarding the application of the principles of minimal intervention should be undertaken; A review of the larger programme of intervention (ongoing since 1977) should be undertaken with respect to recent changes and pressures in and around the World Heritage property as well as the recent developments in international standards and approaches to interventions;
- The proposal, drawings, and documentation available for the proposed Western Access project even at this preliminary stage should be shared with the World Heritage Centre for review by the relevant Advisory Bodies;
- The Management Plan should be completed and integrate the larger programme for restoration and conservation including the Western Access project clarifying priorities for each of the interventions; the completed Management Plan shared with the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies prior to moving forward with the Western Access project implementation;
- As the ESMA note on the Western Access preliminary study indicates one justification for the intervention to be a response to ease tourist flows a study of tourist flows and access to the Acropolis is necessary to ensure an accurate and effective response.
- In order to better manage the access to the site it seems crucial to analyze visitor flows to the site and systematically assess the impact that the Western Access project may have on visitor access, also taking into account the more fragile categories and people with disabilities.
- The detailed intervention plans of the Western Access project should also include an analysis of the impacts of the substantial earthworks and excavation on the archaeological remains as well as the Acropolis Rock.
- In order to realize such an important intervention as the covering of the whole of the Acropolis Rock with earth, preliminary, final and implementation studies are required. An HIA is necessary to be carried out for such a project. Detailed documentation of the proposed project including plans and drawings should also be shared with the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, prior to commencing implementation.
- The Mission encourages the State Party to continue to pursue the presentation of the archaeological evidence and the derived interpretations on the appearance of the site across different periods as an integral part of the communication and visitation strategy within the management Plan following the recommendation of the ICOMOS ENAME Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Mission Conclusions:

The overall status of the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property of the 'Acropolis, Athens' (Acropolis) is excellent and very well protected. The property and its buffer zone is well protected by laws and regulations.

The decision-making system ensures that thorough and detailed studies are carried out prior to the approval of any new interventions.

The property is managed by the State and the main restoration services are also carried out by the State, including the restoration works by anastylosis⁴ techniques. Hence, there is a close supervision to ensure that each step of the restoration conservation efforts are systematically carried out.

The decision-making process for all major restoration and conservation works includes highly qualified experts and academics with a process of documentation, dissemination, and dialogue with experts nationally, and internationally, built into the system.

The renovation and enlargement of the pathways, the elevator, and the lighting project were all implemented following studies, examination, and documentation of the Committee for the Conservation of the Acropolis Monuments (ESMA) or the Ephorate. The proposals were subsequently elaborated by the Acropolis Restoration Service (YSMA) employees or external researchers and the studies eventually approved by ESMA and brought before the Central Archaeological Council for their approval. All the competent authorities of the Ministry of Culture and Sports (different Directorates and the Ephorate of Antiquities) also provided their comments on the studies and proposals. The studies for the restoration of the monuments were also presented and debated at the Acropolis International Meetings prior to their implementation.⁵ Hence, these interventions have been implemented after detailed investigations according to the established national processes for interventions in the Acropolis.

Recent upgrading interventions including the renovation of pathways, elevator, and lighting project

Renovation of pathways: The renovation and enlargement of the existing pathways do not have a negative impact on the OUV of Acropolis. The ancient rock on which the monuments of the Acropolis sit (the Rock), is well protected as the paving is cushioned and not directly attached to the Rock surface. Furthermore, the intervention seems to be fully reversible. The width of the pathways has been enlarged in the repaving. This is functionally useful for the volume of visitors, for the movement of wheelchairs and construction materials and vehicles (carrying the heavy marble blocks). The appearance (texture, colour) of the paving material and the width of the pathways could have been designed to better adapt to the setting of the Acropolis. Special attention should be paid as far as the drainage system is concerned.

Elevator Access: The new elevator, that replaces the 2004 elevator, does not have a negative impact on the OUV of the Acropolis. The intervention seems to be fully reversible and its location is well justified. The necessity for comfortable accessibility for everyone is undeniable for a World Heritage property today. The new elevator greatly facilitates the disabled in wheelchairs but also the elderly, pregnant women, and small children in strollers.

⁴ The documents in English of the State Party including ESMA and YSMA use the spelling, 'anastelosis', however, this report uses the standard international spelling 'anastylosis.'

⁵ Communication with the State Party in June 2022.

Lightning Project: The new lighting project does not have a negative impact on the OUV of the Acropolis and serves to articulate and enhance the legibility of its form well at night. They are carefully set to protect the monuments and marble from any damage due to the equipment. However, the lighting devices and equipment need to be better integrated in the monuments and landscape as currently the cables and lamps are very visible throughout within the Acropolis. Nevertheless, the system is reversible.

Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA): On the advice of the World Heritage Centre, a Heritage Impact Assessment has been commissioned by the State Party for the recent interventions at the Acropolis. The report was due in December 2021 but is still awaited from the consultant. The Mission would like to await the report to provide further advice on these recent interventions.

Considerations of the recent upgrading interventions towards improvement of overall visitor management

Access for Visitors with disabilities: The efforts accomplished by the State Party in terms of accessibility address the main objectives of Article 9 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The physical accessibility of the site is achieved for different categories of visitors, including people with disabilities. While further efforts are needed to develop services, trainings for the employees, applications, and other physical or digital tools that could fully permit to people with different disabilities to access and enjoy the World Heritage Site of the Acropolis.

Visitor Flows: Today, the management of visitor flows is a crucial issue and can be easily supported by the available data collected by the Ephorate and the Hellenic Cultural Resources Development Organisation and by some additional qualitative data. Thus, it will be important to use this data to propose management solutions for visitors flows that take into account all the sites included in the buffer zone, to reduce the pressure on the Acropolis site and to better manage the distribution of visitors during opening hours. Furthermore, given the importance of the Acropolis site and the high number of visitors the site receives each year, it seems essential to develop a tourism management plan for the site, integrated into the overall Management Plan.

Stakeholder involvement: Following the principles of ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter, the local community, who also lives outside the buffer zone but has a strong connection to the Acropolis site, and all stakeholders, especially tourism actors, could be actively involved in the conception and implementation of a management plan for the site, including a session dedicated to tourism management.

Visitation and Communication Strategy: Considerable efforts have also been made by the State Party to ensure the understanding of the site by different categories of visitors. Greater use of new technologies could be considered to diversify communication and content for different audiences, including hosting communities, and needs. A more integrated visit including the museum and the archaeological site could be developed in order to make the museum function as an interpretation centre and better prepare the visitors to the site visit.

Management Plan

So far, no Management Plan for the Acropolis in line with Operational Guidelines to the World Heritage Convention nor with the guidance of the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies has been prepared. The State Party informed the Mission that a management plan including a risk mitigation plans for the Acropolis is ongoing through a European Union funded project. This work is expected to be completed by 2023.

The absence of a management plan has not had a negative impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property as many issues such as tourism, traffic and parking, infrastructure, emergency evacuation etc., have been addressed. These have happened in a fragmented ways from time to time as specific needs have arisen. The responsibilities too are with different bodies. With the establishment of ESMA in 1975, all the restoration works including anastylosis are carried out by YSMA after thorough and detailed studies as well as a series of approvals by different expert bodies including ESMA and the

Central Archaeological Council. More general interventions such as the elevator or the lighting project, or the configuration of ticketing systems and security, are the responsibility of the Ephorate.

Threats to the protection of the OUV of an archaeological World Heritage property can be from many causes including factors outside the property boundaries. Similarly, the opportunities to enhance its OUV can also come from many actions some of which may be outside the property boundaries and the buffer zone.

A comprehensive Management Plan would enable the integration of a tourism management plan, and a disaster risk management plan among others. The Management Plan, anchored in the Master Plan or City Development Plan for Athens would enable traffic, infrastructure development, and building regulations to be better managed for the protection and enhancement of the OUV of the property. The Management Plan would need to be reviewed every few years. The programmes of restoration works including anastylosis would be part of this Masterplan. Such an approach would also allow an overview of the priorities and impacts of actions in one area over others.

Conservation and restoration approaches and proposed projects

The conservation and restoration of the Acropolis has been ongoing since 1833. Since 1975, it has been continuous and has never ceased, even during the most difficult periods of the new Greek state and the restoration works on the Acropolis represent the peak of scholarship and technology of Greece.

With the establishment of ESMA in 1975, all the conservation and restoration works since 1975, in particular, the anastylosis, have meticulously followed the principles of interventions at the Acropolis that fully align with the 1964 ICOMOS Venice Charter.

Many of the interventions undertaken at the Acropolis since 1975 were to address damage due to causes such as breakage and damage to the blocks from iron reinforcements added during previous conservation efforts, damage due to the earthquake etc. In the process, correction of previous errors including disassembling and reassembling of ancient blocks have been carried out.

With regard to the overall long-term conservation of the structures and buildings with respect to all international standards including minimum conservation approaches, the Mission was impressed by the thoroughness, rigor, and extraordinary high quality of work with meticulous attention to detail. Systematic documentation and publication of research and studies prior to and following implementation are undertaken and disseminated. The highest academic research on the Acropolis and archaeology are woven closely together with modern archaeological techniques and exemplary innovative practices including the use of digitization and computers. Many of these practices would serve as models for other heritage conservation efforts globally.

The Mission was informed that the scope of the initial anastylosis work that was undertaken after 1975 had become somewhat broadened in scope on discovering the breakage and deterioration of monuments due to poor conservation work and that the conservation work of Balanos that needed to be corrected was more extensive than initially known as well as identification of a numbers of members and fragments lying scattered around.

The Mission concluded from the information provided by the State Party that the restoration approach includes stone block fillings to be restricted to those absolutely necessary for the stability of the ancient members and for morphological continuity and so also that the disassembling and reassembling of ancient blocks are only those absolutely necessary.

The Mission would nevertheless recall article 3.16 and 3.17 of the 2003 ICOMOS Charter on the Principles for Analysis, Conservation and Structural Restoration of Architectural Heritage. Imperfections and alterations, when they have become part of the history of the structure, should be maintained so far so they do not compromise the safety requirements (Art. 3.16) Dismantling and reassembly should only be undertaken as an optional measure required by the very nature of the materials and structure when conservation by other means impossible, or harmful (Art. 3.17).

Therefore, the management plan that should be elaborated by the State Party as well as all future projects to come should incorporate a special reflection regarding authenticity and integrity issues in order to preserve the OUV of the Property.

Based on the definition provided in the Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage in 2021, the concept of **authenticity** can be defined as the capability of the property to transmit the cultural significance of a place. **Integrity** is a measure of the wholeness and intactness of the cultural heritage and its attributes.

Proposed Western Access project

The State Party has carried out studies for a number of years regarding the accurate restoration of the Western Access and ascent of the Acropolis hill to the Propylaea. The studies have concluded that the present form of the ascent is the result of successive incorrect interventions from 1957-1960 based on different interpretations and techniques reflecting different perspectives on archaeological interventions. Detailed documentation and archaeological analysis carried out provide evidence for restoration of the ascent to its early Roman form as a flight of steps across the width of entrance court that is at the moment only visible in small parts. The initial study was considered by the International Conference of 2002 but was put aside at the time as the priority was on the monuments. The proposal was put forward by ESMA to the 6th International Conference in 2013 and met with a positive response (Korres, ESMA and approved by the 7th International Conference).

Given the level of academic excellence demonstrated by ESMA and YSMA and given also that studies have been shared with the relevant international community of scholars and approved by the Central Archaeological Council and the international conference of experts, the Mission finds no reason to doubt the archaeological and historical accuracy and validity of the study and proposed intervention at this preliminary stage.

However, the Mission considers that some clarifications regarding the implementation of the Western Access project are necessary before proceeding further with the development of its implementation plans. First, from the perspective of Articles 3.16 and 3.17 of the 2003 Charter on the Principles for the Analysis, Conservation, and Structural Restoration of Architectural Heritage the imperfections and alterations over time have become part of the history of the monument and contribute essentially to the Acropolis being an authentic legacy of different historic periods. The State Party explained to the Mission that incorrect conservation interventions undertaken over the last 45 or so years were recent going back to conservation efforts since the early 20th Century with much of it since 1978 (ESMA, Korres, 2021). Hence, a thorough clarification of this is necessary to justify the extensive restoration works proposed for them to be fully in line with the existing restoration approach that is considered a remarkable example for the application of the Venice Charter and that integrates anastylosis focused on the repair and exchange of damaged blocks vital for the structural integrity of the monument.

Though the Mission was assured of the extensive studies and analysis that have been carried out for a number of years to inform the proposed intervention, the proposal for the Western access project should include explanations of how the intervention would preserve and guarantee the authenticity of the Property, the historical value of which is not only in its appearance, but also in the integrity of all its components and historical stratifications. Therefore, any intervention on the property such as the proposed Western Access project requires thorough justification and discussion. As indicated so far the Western Access project is supposed to ease tourist visitor flows. This needs to be more fully investigated and proven by scenarios and calculations that compare the status of today with simulation of the situation according to the preliminary design of the new Western Access to understand the impact of such an intervention.

Furthermore, any planning regarding the Western Access project needs to be integrated into an overall Management Plan for the Acropolis that also integrates planning for tourism, for vehicular traffic and parking, security, disaster and evacuation plans, water supply and sanitation, etc. as well as the relationship with other monuments and sites. This would provide clarity on the overall prioritization of actions as well as the impacts on these other aspects.

The State Party has all the digital competencies and technology on hand to create digital visualizations and virtual experiences for tourists without the extensive physical interventions necessary. Without such an overall Management Plan in place, the Mission was not able to assess the prioritization of the conservation and restoration actions proposed including the proposed Western Access project.

Proposed covering of the Acropolis Rock

A proposed project was briefly presented to the Mission as consisting of the coverage of specific places, either for the needs of visiting and implementing the works undertaken on the rock or for the rehabilitation of the soil of the Acropolis, using, as applicable, materials of different endurance. This project is not yet approved by the State Party, a mere planning exists at the moment (Minutes of the Meeting of ESMA no. 11/24.07.2020). The project, if implemented, entails the raising of the level of the ground so that it reaches a level believed to replicate the ancient terraces in the 5th century B.C.

According to the site management authorities the coverage of the Rock may contribute to protecting the original surface from the impacts of the high volume of tourists. However, if the Rock and the ancient remains will be covered, the would result in changing the current visual presentation of the Acropolis. The mission also points out, that raising the level of the ground while creating retaining walls could implicate important structural works.

Hence such a project would need to be thoroughly studied and an HIA conducted. Detailed documentation of the proposed project including plans and drawings should also be shared with the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, prior to commencing implementation.

Impact of the proposed plans on the authenticity of the property

Although this intervention is still in a planning phase, the Mission points out, that the OUV of the property encompasses all historical phases until the 5th century BC and considers the existing archaeological remains to be an authentic expression of these periods. It is therefore important to ensure that the conservation efforts of the property includes the 5th century BC as well as the historic remains of different epochs through history. This would also be in line with the Venice Charter and the principles and approach of minimum conservation and restoration.

Mission Recommendations:

The Mission commends the State Party on the overall excellent state of conservation of the property and the thorough studies and investigations carried out for each archaeological intervention as well as the thoroughness of documentation.

Recent Interventions

- As the Acropolis Rock needs to be protected from stagnant water and high levels of humidity that can cause mould growth and surface embrittlement, a geotechnical study regarding the drainage system of the renovated pathways is in process by the State Party. The Mission requests that this study be shared with the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;
- The restoration and conservation works should pay as much heed to the weight of the vehicles carrying materials that should be taken into consideration in protecting the fragile ancient Rock. Alternative ways of organizing the contemporary restoration site should be considered in order to minimize the movement of heavy machinery and equipment on the Acropolis Rock.
- Design strategies to visually evoke the ancient construction site's organization using the existing pathways could be a valuable alternative to improve its visual appearance for visitors;
- As an HIA of the renewed pathways and the elevator project has been commissioned, the Mission would like to wait for the report of the detailed HIA before proposing additional recommendations;

- Greater attention to design and enhanced detailing of the lighting project installations are encouraged with a view to better integrating the installations in the monuments and landscape and making them less visible during the day time;
- In developing future interventions, the State Party is encouraged to consider more carefully the design of details in installing modern amenities to be better integrated/fitted within the setting of the archaeological site so as to minimize visual distraction;
- HIA in line with the UNESCO/ICCROM/ICOMOS/IUCN guidance (2022) should be carried out prior to undertaking major interventions in and around the property that are not part of the programmes of restoration and conservation approved by the Central Archaeological Council;

Tourism management and Visitor flows

- If the physical accessibility of the site is achieved for different categories of visitors, the Mission suggests to take into consideration the possibility of developing services, trainings for the employees, applications, and other physical or digital tools that could fully permit to people with different disabilities to access and enjoy the Acropolis World Heritage site.
- Since one of the main problems of the site is the congestion during peak hours, it seems important to assess the possibilities for a better distribution of visitors and a more balanced distribution of groups during the opening hours, through the year and between the Western and the Southern entrances.
- Considerable efforts have been made by the State Party to ensure understanding of the site by different categories of visitors. Greater use of interpretation tools, including new technologies, could be considered to diversify communication and content for different audiences, including hosting communities, and needs. A more integrated visit including the museum and the archaeological site could be developed in order to make the museum function as an interpretation centre and better prepare the visitors to the site visit.
- The Mission encourages the State Party to propose management solutions for visitors flows that take into account all the sites included in the buffer zone, to reduce the pressure on the Acropolis site and to better manage the distribution of visitors during opening hours. Furthermore, it seems important to include in this process a dialogue with the tourism industry, in order to make its actors more aware of the fragile nature of the Acropolis site and to involve them in the definition and implementation of solutions to improve site attendance and visitor distribution during opening hours.
- Given the importance of the Acropolis site and the high number of visitors the site receives each year, it seems essential to develop a tourism management plan for the site, as a part of the overall site Management Plan. Following the principles of ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter, the local community, who also lives outside the buffer zone but has a strong connection to the Acropolis site, and all stakeholders, especially tourism actors, could be actively involved in the conception and implementation of a management plan for the site, including a session dedicated to tourism management.

Management Plan

- Comprehensive Management Plan for the Acropolis is urgent and essential. It should include tourism planning, infrastructure development in and around the property including, drainage, lighting, water, and sanitation; pavement and paths; traffic, access, and parking (including for tour buses); integration of a sustainable development perspective; plans for the valorisation of other archaeological sites and monuments in Athens, including in the buffer zone – and their relationship to the Acropolis; this plan needs to be reviewed every few years;
- The programme for the conservation and restoration of the Acropolis should be integrated into this larger Management Plan.
- The Management Plan should be anchored in and integrated with the Masterplan or City Development Plan for the City of Athens and inform its urban development and building

regulations and should inform the priorities for the interventions for protecting and managing the OUV of the property;

Conservation and restoration approaches and proposed projects

- The ongoing archaeological programme of interventions needs to be reviewed in light of recent pressures on the property (urban, environmental, tourism, traffic, etc.) to identify and adjust priorities as well as to align with recent developments in international standards and approaches, as for instance, Articles 3.16 and 3.17 of the 2003 ICOMOS Charter on the Principles for the Analysis, Conservation, and Structural Restoration of Architectural Heritage;
- Recalling Articles 3.16 and 3.17 of the 2003 ICOMOS Charter the justification and purpose of any ongoing and proposed interventions, including anastylosis, should be clarified;

Proposed Western Access project

- The proposal, drawings, and documentation available for the proposed Western Access project even at this preliminary stage should be shared with the World Heritage Centre for review by the relevant Advisory Bodies, and the full plans, drawings and documentation shared prior to commencing implementation;
- The Management Plan as well as the larger programme for restoration and conservation should be completed and shared with the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies prior to moving forward with the Western Access project implementation;
- As the ESMA note on the Western Access preliminary study indicates one justification for the intervention to be a response to ease tourist flows, a study of tourist flows and access to the Acropolis, as well as the potential impact on the management of tourists on site, is necessary to ensure an accurate and effective response including taking into account the more fragile categories and people with disabilities;
- The detailed intervention plans of the Western Access project should also include an analysis of the impacts of the substantial earthworks and excavation on the archaeological remains as well as the Acropolis Rock;

Proposed covering of the Acropolis Rock

- In order to realize such an important intervention as the covering of the whole of the Acropolis Rock with earth, preliminary, final and implementation studies are required. An HIA is necessary to be carried out for such a project. Detailed documentation of the proposed project including plans and drawings should also be shared with the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, prior to commencing implementation.

7. ANNEXES

Annex A Terms of Reference (ToR) of the mission, including the Committee decision(s) requesting the mission to be carried out

Annex B List of participants

Annex C Detailed programme of the Mission

Annex D The organizational chart of the National Management System for the conservation and management of the World Heritage property

Annex E SOUV of the property

Annex F: List of key documents which have informed the mission

Annex A Terms of Reference (ToR) of the mission, including the Committee decision(s) requesting the mission to be carried out

Terms of Reference

Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission to the World Heritage property 'Acropolis, Athens' (Greece)

27-29 April 2022

The World Heritage property 'Acropolis, Athens' was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1987 on the basis of criteria (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (vi).

The purpose of the joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission is to undertake an on-site examination and discussion with the competent representatives of the State Party on the recent interventions on the Acropolis of Athens and the future planning for the conservation, enhancement and overall management of the site.

In particular, the Advisory mission is expected to have an insight into:

1. The overall state of conservation of the property in relation to its Outstanding Universal Value.
2. The existing administrative scheme for the protection, restoration, conservation and management of the Acropolis site.
3. The processes for the assessing, prioritising, an
4. d planning conservation and restoration interventions.
5. The existing and future planning for the management, restoration and enhancement related interventions in and around the property, including the proposal for the western access, the renovation of the old museum, etc.

The Advisory mission will carry out the following tasks:

- Hold consultations in Athens with the relevant Greek authorities including the representatives of the Ministry of Culture and Sports, the Acropolis Restoration Service and other relevant stakeholder groups such as the Scientific Committee for the Restoration of the Acropolis Monuments.
- Visit the entire property and the buffer zone, with particular attention to:
 - Visitation principles and practices:
 - The executed pavement renovation works and the upgrade of the elevator in terms of its impact on the OUV of the property, technical reversibility, and user satisfaction;
 - Review the State Party's needs assessment to facilitate the circulation of wheelchair users, elderly citizens and other disability groups in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and Article 26 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights;
 - Assess the mechanism of visitor management and planning of visitor flows in general within the overall management system of the property.
 - State of conservation of the property:
 - Overview of all recent projects implemented on the monuments of the site as well as the monitoring processes.

- Management plan and Management systems:
 - Reviewing the current management system of the property, also in light of preventive measures taken regarding risk mitigation (flooding/fires);
 - Discuss the importance of a management plan for the property and the processes for its creation, also in light of key priorities and issues identified.
- Conservation approaches and principles:
 - Assess and review the existing conservation and restoration approaches applied at the property with respect to global norms, standards, and best practices;
 - Discuss with the State Party in particular the ICOMOS Principles for the analysis, conservation and Structural Restoration of Architectural Heritage and the ICOMOS Charter for the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage;
 - Examining priorities and decision-making processes for design and planning of physical interventions in the site;
 - Examining overall management procedures in effect at the property and have an insight on the methodologies for assessment and documentation including: the documentation system of the site and the procedure for the drafting and approval of new studies, the methodology for the dissemination of information regarding the interventions on the Acropolis within the scientific community and the general public and the studies themselves and their in situ implementation focusing on points of special interest;
 - Comment on the overall long-term conservation of the structures and buildings with respect to all international standards including minimum conservation approaches, in particular for the planned rearrangement of the main entrance to the Acropolis.

The State Party will facilitate necessary consultation with personnel, agencies and key stakeholders and will arrange site visits and local transportation.

The State Party shall provide the appointed experts with all required documentation and information necessary for the successful effectuation of their tasks.

The Advisory mission should prepare a report (in electronic format) which will be submitted to the State Party within eight weeks following the completion of the mission at the latest.

In line with policies of both UNESCO and ICOMOS, their experts will not engage with the media, nor discuss the mission findings and recommendations, which should only be presented in the final mission report.

Annex B List of participants

The World Heritage Centre

Jyoti Hosagrahar, Deputy Director

ICOMOS International experts

Francesca Cominelli (Italy) and Pierre-Antoine Gatier (France)

The Committee for the Conservation of the Acropolis Monuments (ESMA)

- Manolis Korres, Architect, Professor of the NTUA, Chairman of the ESMA
- Fani Mallouchou – Tufano, Archaeologist, Professor Emeritus of the University of Crete, Deputy Chairman
- Petros Themelis, Archaeologist, Professor Emeritus of the University of Crete
- Vassilis Lambrinoudakis, Professor Emeritus of the University of Athens
- Nikoletta Valakou, Archaeologist, Honorary Director of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports
- Petros Koufopoulos, Architect, Professor of the University of Patras
- Charalampos Mouzakis, Civil Engineer, Associate Professor of the NTUA
- Asterios Bakolas, Chemical Engineer, Associate Professor of the NTUA
- Elena Kountouri, Archaeologist, Deputy Director of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Athens, Director of Prehistorical and Classical Antiquities of the Ministry of Culture and Sports
- Themistoklis Vlachoulis, Architect, Deputy Director of Restoration of Ancient Monuments of the Ministry of Culture and Sports
- Maria Mertzani, Director of Conservation of Ancient and Modern Monuments of the Ministry of Culture and Sports

The Acropolis Restoration Service (YSMA)

- Vasiliki Eleftheriou, Architect Engineer, Director of YSMA
- Rosalia Christodouloupoulou, Architect Engineer, Head of the Parthenon worksite,
- Dionysia Michalopoulou, Civil Engineer, Head of the Circuit wall worksite,
- Eleni Aggelakopoulou, Dr.Chemical Engineer, Head of the Surface Conservation worksite
- Elisa Sioumpara, Dr.Archaeologist, Head of the project of Scattered Architectural members of the Acropolis
- Evgenia Lempidaki, Dr.Archaeologist, Head of the Documentation Office

- Dionysia Mavromati, Rural and Surveying Engineer, Head of the Programme of Topographic and Photogrammetric Plotting of the Acropolis,
- Eirini Kaimara, Archaeologist, Head of the Information & Education Department

Civil Society representatives met during the Mission:

Hellenic ICOMOS

Sofia Avgerinou-Kolonias, Professor Emeritus of Architecture

Dr Anastasios Tanoulas, Architect

Friends of Acropolis Society

Hellenic Wheelchair Basketball Federation- HWBF

National Confederation of Disabled People -NCDP

Paralympian's sport club

Miranda-Maria Skiniti, Tourist Guide

Nikolaos Stampolidis, Director General of the Acropolis Museum

Annex C Detailed programme of the Mission

Draft programme of the Joint WHC/ICOMOS Advisory Mission at the Acropolis, Athens

Tuesday 26.04.22

Arrival. Transfer to the Hotel

Wednesday 27.04.22

11.00: Amphitheatre of the Acropolis Museum

Meeting with the key actors (Ephorate of Antiquities, Acropolis Restoration Service, Committee for the Restoration of the Acropolis Monuments, Directorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities)

Presentation of the overall administrative and management system.

13.30: Lunch break

15.00: 1st Visit at the Acropolis site.

Presentation of the WH site and its boundaries, basic aspects of the property's function

Thursday, April 28, 2022

10.00. Meeting at the Acropolis Museum

Presentation of the documentation system and the recent (last three years) works implemented on the site.

Presentation of the future planning, including the west access project

13.00 Lunch break

15.00: 2nd Visit at the Acropolis site.

In situ presentation and discussion on the future projects

Friday, April 29, 2022

10.00. Visit at the surrounding archaeological sites (buffer zone)-Guided tour

13.30 Lunch break

15.00: Meeting at the Acropolis Museum

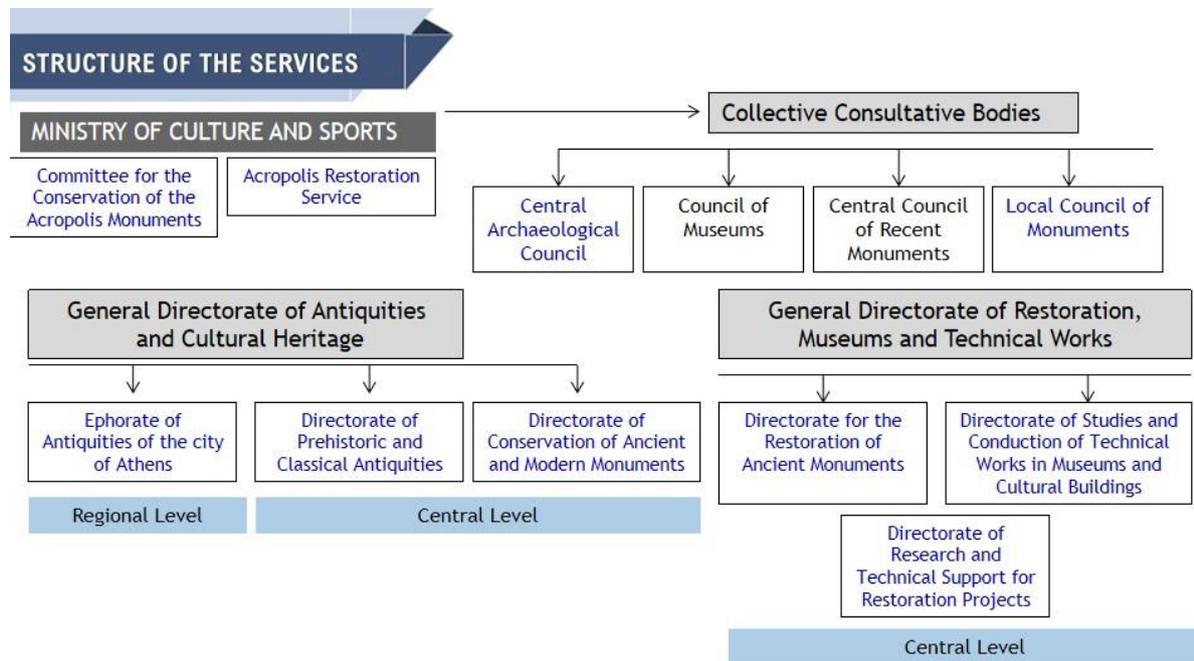
Conclusions-Final remarks

Guided tour at the Acropolis Museum

Saturday, April 30, 2022

Departure

Annex D The organizational chart of the National Management System for the conservation and management of the World Heritage property



Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

The Acropolis of Athens is the most striking and complete ancient Greek monumental complex still existing in our times. It is situated on a hill of average height (156m) that rises in the basin of Athens. Its overall dimensions are approximately 170 by 350m. The hill is rocky and steep on all sides except for the western side, and has an extensive, nearly flat top. Strong fortification walls have surrounded the summit of the Acropolis for more than 3,300 years. The first fortification wall was built during the 13th century BC, and surrounded the residence of the local Mycenaean ruler. In the 8th century BC, the Acropolis gradually acquired a religious character with the establishment of the cult of Athena, the city's patron goddess. The sanctuary reached its peak in the archaic period (mid-6th century to early 5th century BC). In the 5th century BC, the Athenians, empowered from their victory over the Persians, carried out an ambitious building programme under the leadership of the great statesman Perikles, comprising a large number of monuments including the Parthenon, the Erechtheion, the Propylaia and the temple of Athena Nike. The monuments were developed by an exceptional group of architects (such as Iktinos, Kallikrates, Mnesikles) and sculptors (such as Pheidias, Alkamenes, Agorakritos), who transformed the rocky hill into a unique complex, which heralded the emergence of classical Greek thought and art. On this hill were born Democracy, Philosophy, Theatre, Freedom of Expression and Speech, which provide to this day the intellectual and spiritual foundation for the contemporary world and its values. The Acropolis' monuments, having survived for almost twenty-five centuries through wars, explosions, bombardments, fires, earthquakes, sackings, interventions and alterations, have adapted to different uses and the civilizations, myths and religions that flourished in Greece through time.

Criterion (i): The Athenian Acropolis is the supreme expression of the adaptation of architecture to a natural site. This grand composition of perfectly balanced massive structures creates a monumental landscape of unique beauty, consisting of a complete series of architectural masterpieces of the 5th century BC: the Parthenon by Iktinos and Kallikrates with the collaboration of the sculptor Pheidias (447-432); the Propylaia by Mnesikles (437-432); the Temple of Athena Nike by Mnesikles and Kallikrates (427-424); and Erechtheion (421-406).

Criterion (ii): The monuments of the Athenian Acropolis have exerted an exceptional influence, not only in Greco-Roman antiquity, during which they were considered exemplary models, but also in contemporary times. Throughout the world, Neo-Classical monuments have been inspired by all the Acropolis monuments.

Criterion (iii): From myth to institutionalized cult, the Athenian Acropolis, by its precision and diversity, bears a unique testimony to the religions of ancient Greece. It is the sacred temple from which sprung fundamental legends about the city. Beginning in the 6th century BC, myths and beliefs gave rise to temples, altars and votives corresponding to an extreme diversity of cults, which have brought us the Athenian religion in all its richness and complexity. Athena was venerated as the goddess of the city (Athena Polias); as the goddess of war (Athena Promachos); as the goddess of victory (Athena Nike);

as the protective goddess of crafts (Athena Ergane), etc. Most of her identities are glorified at the main temple dedicated to her, the Parthenon, the temple of the patron-goddess.

Criterion (iv): The Athenian Acropolis is an outstanding example of an architectural ensemble illustrating significant historical phases since the 16th century BC. Firstly, it was the Mycenaean Acropolis (Late Helladic civilization, 1600-1100 BC) which included the royal residence and was protected by the characteristic Mycenaean fortification. The monuments of the Acropolis are distinctly unique structures that evoke the ideals of the Classical 5th century BC and represent the apex of ancient Greek architectural development.

Criterion (vi): The Acropolis is directly and tangibly associated with events and ideas that have never faded over the course of history. Its monuments are still living testimonies of the achievements of Classical Greek politicians (e.g. Themistokles, Perikles) who lead the city to the establishment of Democracy; the thought of Athenian philosophers (e.g. Socrates, Plato, Demosthenes); and the works of architects (e.g. Iktinos, Kallikrates, Mnesikles) and artists (e.g. Pheidias, Agorakritus, Alkamenes). These monuments are the testimony of a precious part of the cultural heritage of humanity.

Integrity

The Acropolis of Athens contains within its boundaries all the key attributes that convey the property's Outstanding Universal Value, as an ensemble of unique splendor in excellent condition. The perfection of ancient building techniques ensured the resistance of the monuments to natural forces through time. Despite the unavoidable damage of time, they still display their beauty and convey their inestimable artistic and historic value, preserving all the features that directly and tangibly associate them with the events and ideas of Democracy and Philosophy. Inevitably, the vicissitudes of history between the 5th century BC and our days have caused extensive damage that is being successfully addressed with the ongoing restoration and conservation works, which increase both the stability and the legibility of the monuments.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the Acropolis hill, crowned with the masterpieces of Greek Classical art and architecture, is well preserved. In order to maintain the authenticity and structural integrity of the monuments, an integrated intervention begun in 1975 and continues today. The works are based on clear theoretical and scholarly foundations, and follow the principles of the Venice Charter. The interventions are limited to the absolutely necessary and respect the ancient structural system, while remaining consistent with the principle of reversibility. Moreover, the techniques and the tools used for the restoration works are similar to those of the ancient craftspeople, while the white marble used for completing the eroded architectural elements is quarried from the same mountain as in antiquity (Mt. Penteli). Therefore, the restorations are fully compatible with the original parts of the monuments.

Protection and management requirements

The Acropolis has been operating as an archaeological site since 1833, shortly after the establishment of the modern Greek State. Nowadays, the property is strongly protected under the provisions of Law No 3028/2002 on the "Protection of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage in general". Moreover, the Acropolis and its surroundings, which constitute monuments per se, are protected by legislative decrees (Ministerial Decrees F01/12970/503/25.2.82 concerning the designation of its buffer zone; and F43/7027/425/29.1.2004 concerning the designation of the peripheral zone of the city of Athens and imposing obligatory control before issuing any building or development permit within its boundaries). The fact that the property's buffer zone is a protected archaeological area itself, along with the implementation of the strict legal framework – especially for the urban tissue in the historical centre of Athens since 2002 – and the intense monitoring by the competent Ephorate, ensure that urban development pressures are adequately addressed. Special protection is provided by the Presidential Decree No 24/2007, which declares the Acropolis area a no-fly zone.

The property is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture, Education and Religious Affairs, through the Ephorate of Antiquities of Athens, its competent Regional Service, which is responsible for the site's security and protection, as well as the implementation of an efficient site and visitors' management system. Moreover, the Ministry of Culture, Education and Religious Affairs implements the legislative decrees concerning the safeguarding of the property and its peripheral zone (which corresponds to the boundaries of the ancient city of Athens and its surroundings) and ensures the visual integrity of the site. Especially for the restoration, protection and monitoring of the property, an advisory body, the Committee for the Restoration and Conservation of the Acropolis Monuments, was founded in 1975 and is responsible for planning, directing and supervising the interventions. In 1999, the establishment of the Acropolis Restoration Service allowed to increase the academic and technical personnel and made the immense development of the restoration works possible, under the supervision of the aforementioned Committee and in cooperation with the competent Ephorate. The extensive research programme and the methodology implemented are innovative in this field and act as a reference point for other restoration projects. The financial resources for the works on the site are derived from the State budget as well as from European Union funds.

Special attention has been paid to the accessibility of the site, to pathways and to visitor facilities, especially for disabled people. Furthermore, emergency plans for visitor security and scientific studies for the protection of the site, such as monitoring of earthquake activity, are being carried out.

The New Acropolis Museum (inaugurated in 2009), in which most of the original sculptural and/or architectural pieces of the monuments are conserved, the on-going project "Unification of the Archaeological Sites of Athens", as well as the long-term conservation works will enhance the protection and the presentation of the property.

Annex F: List of key documents which have informed the mission

Documents consulted before the Mission

Exchanges between the World Heritage Centre, the State Party and the civil society about accessibility issues:

1. 6 November 2020 - third party information
2. 16 November 2020 - State Party response
3. 9 March 2021 - third party information
4. 2 April 2021 - State Party response
- 9 March 2021 - Third party information
5. May 2021 - WHC letter + State Party response, list of 100 published studies and reports of ESMA-Y SMA (some documents received in English, one in French, others in different languages and some are in Greek providing English summaries)
6. June 2021 - State Party letter
7. July 2021 - presentation and Third Party information. State Party provided 3 published (also in English) and 12 unpublished studies of ongoing restoration programs (in Greek only).
8. November 2021 - State Party studies following meeting
9. February 2022 - third party information
10. February 2022 - study for Acropolis west entrance and questionnaire

These exchanges, include the following documents (received in Greek):

- Study for the Restoration of the South Wall of the Parthenon, Vol. 6, C. Paraschi, N. Toganidis, 2002, (English summary pages 119-125)
- Study for the Restoration of the North Wall of the Parthenon, Matala & N. Toganidis, 2002
- Study for the restoration of the west side of the Parthenon: General programming of the project and proposals for intervention on the two corners of the monument. Vol.8, V. Eleftheriou, V. Manidaki, A.Vrouva, 2015. (English summary pages 220-239)
- Program 7: New study for the Restoration of the North Wall of the Parthenon, K. Skaris, A. Vrouva, 2016.
- Structural study. Solutions of seismic scenarios for the restoration of the north wall of the Parthenon, A. Vrouva, 2018.
- Study for the restoration of the west pediment of the Parthenon (sub-programs 4 & 5 of the west side), V. Manidaki, L.Palaiologos, K.Skaris, 2016.

- Updated study for the restoration of the tympanum backing wall of the western pediment, based on new pathology data and results of static investigation, K.Skaris, A.Vrouva, J.Dourakopoulos, E.Pasiou, 2019.
- Study for the restoration of the horizontal cornice of the west side of the Parthenon, V.Manidaki, J.Dourakopoulos, 2019.
- Study for the conservation of the south wall of the north wing of the Propylaea, P.Vlachouli, 2018.
- Study for the stabilization of the Acropolis southwestern slopes, D. Egglezos, 2014.
- Preliminary study of rainwater management on the surface of the Acropolis, A. Hadjipapa, 2014.
- The Acropolis walls: Documentation - Studies - Projects 1980-2010 - Preservation status - Proposals for intervention, M.Ioannidou, 2012.
- Studies for the restoration of the areas B12, B13 and B17 of the northern wall of the Acropolis, D.Michalopoulou, K. Mamalougas, A. Hadjipapa, 2016.
- Geotechnical- static study of the Acropolis walls and their rocky foundations on specific areas of priority, Geo. & DOMOS Consulting Engineers SA, 2019
- Study for the conservation and enhancement of the walkways in the archaeological site of the Acropolis for people with mobility impairments, NAMA Consulting Engineers SA 2020.

Tanoulas T., Critical Evaluation of the Recent and Forthcoming Works on the Acropolis, ppt, 2022.

An updated version of the plea against the interventions on the Acropolis, by the initiative Acropolis SOS, counting 688 signatures, June 2021.

Descriptive notes submitted by the third party regarding the ongoing interventions, 23 January 2022.

Background documents from WHC website

1987 Advisory Body Evaluation (ICOMOS)

1987 Nomination File

2009 Map

2006 Periodic Reporting Cycle 1, Section II (Summary)

2014 Periodic Reporting Cycle 2, Section II

Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

State of Conservation Reports, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004

General documents

Korres M., The Restoration of the west access to the Acropolis, The Committee For The Conservation Of The Acropolis Monuments, 2021 (short version, bilingual in Greek and English).

Bourras. Ch., International Meeting on the Restoration of the Erechtheion, 1977.

Bourras Ch., Theoretical principles of the interventions on the monuments of the Acropolis, The Acropolis News, 2007.

Eleftheriou V., Lembidaki E., Kaimara I., Forty-five Years in Engaging the Public with the Restoration of the Acropolis of Athens, in Christophilopoulou A., Material Cultures in Public Engagement, re-inventing public archaeology within museum collection, Oxford and Philadelphia, Oxbow books, 2020.

ESMA, "European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage Europa Nostra Award 2013", Nomination File, 2012.

Eleftheriou V., Athens World-famous Landmark: The Acropolis, its cultural context and their protection, 2019, Athens.

Briefing document, Acropolis of Athens.

Mallouchou-Tufano F., "Thirty years of anastylosis works on the Athenian Acropolis, 1975-2005", Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites, Vol. 8, 2006.

Documents sent after the mission

Articles

Aggelakopoulou E., Adami C.E., Tsimereki A., Vintzileou E., Eleftheriou V., Adhesive materials for the conservation interventions in the acropolis monuments, in: I. Vayas, F.M. Mazzolani (Eds.), Protection of Historical Constructions. PRO- HITECH 2021 eds, Lecture Notes in Civil Engineering, vol 209 Springer, Cham, 2022.

Aggelakopoulou E., Ksinopoulou E., Eleftheriou V., Evaluation of mortar mix designs for the conservation of the Acropolis monuments, Journal of Cultural Heritage, 2022.

Aggelakopoulou E., Bakolasa A., What were the colors of the Parthenon? Investigation of entablature's cornice blocks, Paper, 2021.

Ministry of Culture and Sports, "Acropolis of Athens, infrastructure and accessibility upgrade: Overhaul of visitor walkways – Technical documentation brief", June 2021.

Pitilakis K., Karafagka S., Ntinoudi O., Kalogeras I., Eleftheriou V., Seismic Hazard Analysis Of The Acropolis Of Athens And Seismic Analysis Of Propylaea Colonnade, Earthquake Thessaloniki Engineering, 2018.

Psarropoulosa P., Kapogiannia E., Kalogeras I., Michalopoulou D., Eleftherio V., Dimopoulou G., Sakellariou M., Seismic response of the Circuit Wall of the Acropolis of Athens: Recordings versus numerical simulations, Soil Dynamics and Earthquake Engineering, 2018.

Vrouva A., Psycharis I., Eleftheriou V., Parametric investigation of the seismic response of ancient isodomic masonry walls.

Study

Korres M., with the collaboration of V. Malkakis and Chr. Takos, Study for the Restoration of the Acropolis West Ascent, Ministry of Culture and Sports Committee for the Conservation of the Acropolis Monuments, Athens, 2021.

PPT

Mallouchou, ESMA1_Acropolis works 1834-2022_Mallouchou, April 2022, PPT.

Eleftheriou, YSMA1_AcropolisRestorationProject_Eleftheriou, April 2022, PPT.

Mavromati, YSMA2_Orthophoto_3Dmodels_Mavromati, April 2022, PPT.

Aggelakopoulou, YSMA3_Conservation project_Aggelakopoulou, April 2022, PPT.

Kaimara, YSMA4_Educational program_Kaimara, April 2022, PPT.