

SERBIAN STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF GREEK CULTURAL TOURISM

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Abstract: *Cultural Tourism is the subset of tourism concerned with a country or region's culture, specifically the lifestyle of the people in those geographical areas, the history of those people, their art, architecture, religion(s), etc. Tourism of Athens traces its roots to the ancient times. Purpose of this paper is to represent cultural landmarks of Athens.*

Key words: *Greece, Athens, tourism, culture*

1. INTRODUCTION

Cultural tourism has a long history, and with its roots in the Grand Tour is arguably the original form of tourism, and it's also one of the forms of tourism that most policy makers seem to be betting on for the future.

Greece has been a major tourist destination and attraction in Europe since antiquity, for its rich culture and history, which is reflected in large part by its 18 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, among the most in Europe and the world as well as for its long coastline, many islands and beaches. Tourism in Greece traces its roots to the ancient times. Cultural exchange took place between the Greek colonies of Magna Graeca and the young Roman Republic before Rome's rise to dominance of the Western Mediterranean.

The heritage of the classical era is still evident in Athens, represented by ancient monuments and works of art, the most famous of all being the Parthenon, considered a key landmark of early Western civilization. The city also retains Roman and Byzantine monuments, as well as a smaller number of Ottoman monuments.

2. CULTURAL TOURISM

Cultural Tourism (or **culture tourism**) is the subset of tourism concerned with a country or region's culture, specifically the lifestyle of the people in those geographical areas, the history of those people, their art, architecture, religion(s), and other elements that helped shape their way of life. Cultural tourism includes tourism in urban areas, particularly historic or large cities and their cultural facilities such as museums and theatres. It can also include tourism in rural areas showcasing the traditions of indigenous cultural communities (i.e. festivals, rituals), and their values and lifestyle, as well as niches like industrial tourism and creative tourism. It is generally agreed that cultural tourists spend substantially more than standard tourists do. This form of tourism is also becoming generally more popular throughout the world, and a recent OECD report has highlighted the role that cultural tourism can play in regional development in different world regions.

A recent study of the cultural consumption habits of Europeans (European Commission 2002) indicated that people visited museums and galleries abroad almost as frequently as they did at home. This underlines the growing importance of cultural

tourism as a source of cultural consumption. The generalisation of cultural consumption on holiday, however, points to one of the main problems of defining cultural tourism. What is the difference between cultural visits on holiday (cultural tourism) and cultural visits undertaken during leisure time at home? Much of the research undertaken by the Association for Leisure and Tourism Education (ATLAS) on the international cultural tourism market (Richards 1996; 2001) has in fact underlined the high degree of continuity between consumption of culture at home and on holiday.

In spite of these problems, policy makers, tourist boards and cultural attraction managers around the world continue to view cultural tourism as an important potential source of tourism growth. There is a general perception that cultural tourism is 'good' tourism that attracts high spending visitors and does little damage to the environment or local culture while contributing a great deal to the economy and support of culture. Other commentators, however, have suggested that cultural tourism may do more harm than good, allowing the cultural tourist to penetrate sensitive cultural environments as the advance guard of the mass tourist.

3. TOURISM IN GREECE

Tourism in Greece has been a key element of the economic activity in the country, and is one of the country's most important sectors. Greece has been a major tourist destination and attraction in Europe since antiquity, for its rich culture and history, which is reflected in large part by its 18 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, among the most in Europe and the world as well as for its long coastline, many islands and beaches. (Hellander P, Armstrong K, Clark M, Hannigan D, 2006).

Greece has attracted 26.5 million visitors in 2015 and is projected to attract 30 million visitors more each year, 6 contributing 18% to the nation's Gross Domestic Product, with its capital city Athens, as well as Santorini, Mykonos, Rhodes, Corfu, Crete and Chalkidice being some of the country's major tourist destinations.

In recent years, Greece has also promoted the religious tourism and pilgrimages to regions with a significant historical religious presence, such as the monasteries in Meteora and Mount Athos, in cooperation with other countries.

4. HISTORY

Tourism in Greece traces its roots to the ancient times. Cultural exchange took place between the Greek colonies of Magna Graeca and the young Roman Republic before Rome's rise to dominance of the Western Mediterranean. When Greece was annexed by the Roman Empire centuries later, the cultural exchange that started between the two civilization triggered as a result a large number of Romans visiting the famous centers of Greek philosophy and science, such as Athens, Corinth and Thebes, partly because Greece had become a province of the Roman Empire and Greeks were granted Roman citizenship.

Tourism in modern-day Greece started to flourish in the 1960s and 1970s, in what became known as mass tourism. During that time, large-scale construction projects for hotels and other such facilities were undertaken and the country saw an increase in international tourists over the years. International events such as the 2004 Summer Olympic Games and the Eurovision Song Contest 2006, both held in Athens, greatly helped to boost tourism in the country, while large-scale nationally-funded cultural infrastructure such as the New Acropolis Museum also contributed to the flow of tourists in the country.

5. ATHENS

Athens is the capital and largest city of Greece. Athens dominates the Attica region and is one of the world's oldest cities, with its recorded history spanning over 3,400 years, and its earliest human presence starting somewhere between the 11th and 7th millennia BC. Classical Athens was a powerful city-state that emerged in conjunction with the seagoing development of the port of Piraeus, which had been a distinct city prior to its 5th century BC incorporation with Athens. A centre for the arts, learning and philosophy, home of Plato's Academy and Aristotle's Lyceum, it is widely referred to as the cradle of Western civilization and the birthplace of democracy, largely because of its cultural and political impact on the European continent, and in particular the Romans. In modern times, Athens is a large cosmopolitan metropolis and central to economic, financial, industrial, maritime, political and cultural life in Greece. In 2015, Athens was ranked the world's 29th richest city by purchasing power and the 67th most expensive in a UBS study.

Athens is recognised as a global city because of its location and its importance in shipping, finance, commerce, media, entertainment, arts, international trade, culture, education and tourism. It is one of the biggest economic centres in southeastern Europe, with a large financial sector, and its port Piraeus is both the largest passenger port in Europe and the second largest in the world. The municipality (city) of Athens had a population of 664,046 (in 2011, 796,442 in 2004) within its administrative limits, and a land area of 39 km². The urban area of Athens (Greater Athens and Greater Piraeus) extends beyond its administrative municipal city limits, with a population of 3,090,508 (in 2011) over an area of 412 km². According to Eurostat in 2011, the Functional urban areas (FUA) of Athens was the 9th most populous FUA in the European Union (the 6th most populous capital city of the EU), with a population of 3,828,000, having lost almost 300.000 inhabitants, probably due to the serious economic crisis that affected Greece in recent years. Athens is also the southernmost capital on the European mainland.

The heritage of the classical era is still evident in the city, represented by ancient monuments and works of art, the most famous of all being the Parthenon, considered a key landmark of early Western civilization. The city also retains Roman and Byzantine monuments, as well as a smaller number of Ottoman monuments.

Athens is home to two UNESCO World Heritage Sites, the Acropolis of Athens and the medieval Daphni Monastery. Landmarks of the modern era, dating back to the establishment of Athens as the capital of the independent Greek state in 1834, include the Hellenic Parliament and the so-called "architectural trilogy of Athens", consisting of the National Library of Greece, the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and the Academy of Athens. Athens was the host city of the first modern-day Olympic Games in 1896, and 108 years later it welcomed home the 2004 Summer Olympics. Athens is also home to several large museums, such as the National Archeological Museum, featuring the world's largest collection of ancient Greek antiquities, the Byzantine and Christian Museum and the new Acropolis Museum.

6. THE ACROPOLIS

The Acropolis of Athens and its monuments are universal symbols of the classical spirit and civilization and form the greatest architectural and artistic complex bequeathed by Greek Antiquity to the world. In the second half of the fifth century bc, Athens, following the victory against the Persians and the establishment of democracy, took a leading position amongst the other city-states of the ancient world. In the age that followed, as thought and art flourished, an exceptional group of artists put into effect the ambitious plans of Athenian statesman Pericles and, under the inspired guidance of the sculptor Pheidias, transformed the rocky hill into a unique monument of thought and the arts. The most important monuments were built during that time: the Parthenon, built by Ictinus, the Erechtheon, the Propylaea, the monumental entrance to the Acropolis, designed by Mnesicles and the small temple Athena Nike.

While there is evidence that the hill was inhabited as far back as the fourth millennium BC, it was Pericles (c. 495 – 429 BC) in the fifth century BC who coordinated the construction of the site's most important buildings including the Parthenon, the Propylaea, the Erechtheon and the Temple of Athena Nike. The Parthenon and the other buildings were seriously damaged during the 1687 siege by the Venetians in the Morean War when the Parthenon was being used for gunpowder storage and was hit by a cannonball (Reeves N, Williams D, 2012).

6.1. Early settlement

The Acropolis is located on a flat-topped rock that rises 150 m (490 ft) above sea level in the city of Athens, with a surface area of about 3 hectares (7.4 acres). It was also known as **Cecropia**, after the legendary serpent-man, Cecrops, the first Athenian king. While the earliest artifacts date to the Middle Neolithic era, there have been documented habitations in Attica from the Early Neolithic (6th millennium BC). There is little doubt that a Mycenaean megaron stood upon the hill during the late Bronze Age. Nothing of this megaron survives except, probably, a single limestone column-base and pieces of several sandstone steps. Soon after the palace was constructed, a Cyclopean massive circuit wall was built, 760 meters long, up to 10 meters high, and ranging from 3.5 to 6 meters thick. This wall would serve as the main defense for the acropolis until the 5th century. The wall consisted of two parapets built with large stone blocks and cemented with an earth mortar called *emplekton* (Greek: ἐμπλεκτον). The wall follows typical Mycenaean convention in that it followed the natural contour of the terrain and its gate was arranged obliquely, with a parapet and tower overhanging the incomers' right-hand side, thus facilitating defense. There were two lesser approaches up the hill on its north side, consisting of steep, narrow flights of steps cut in the rock. Homer is assumed to refer to this fortification when he mentions the "strong-built House of Erechtheus" (*Odyssey* 7.81). At some point before the 13th century BC, an earthquake caused a fissure near the northeastern edge of the Acropolis. This fissure extended some 35 meters to a bed of soft marl in which a well was dug. An

elaborate set of stairs was built and the well served as an invaluable, protected source of drinking water during times of siege for some portion of the Mycenaean period. There is no conclusive evidence for the existence of a Mycenaean palace on top of the Athenian Acropolis. However, if there was such a palace, it seems to have been supplanted by later building activity (Hurwit, 2000).

6.2. Archaic Acropolis

Not much is known about the architectural appearance of the Acropolis until the Archaic era. In the 7th and the 6th centuries BC, the site was taken over by Kylon during the failed Kylonian revolt, and twice by Peisistratos: all attempts directed at seizing political power by *coups d'état*. Peisistratos built an entry gate or Propylaea and perhaps embarked on the construction of an earlier temple on the site of the Parthenon where fragments of sculptured limestone have been found as well as the foundations of a large unfinished temple. Nevertheless, it seems that a nine-gate wall, the Enneapylon, had been built around the biggest water spring, the "Clepsydra", at the northwestern foot.

A temple to Athena Polias, the tutelary deity of the city, was erected around 570–550 BC. This Doric limestone building, from which many relics survive, is referred to as the Hekatompedon (Greek for "hundred-footed"), Ur-Parthenon (German for "original Parthenon" or "primitive Parthenon"), H-Architecture or Bluebeard temple, after the pedimental three-bodied man-serpent sculpture, whose beards were painted dark blue. Whether this temple replaced an older one, or just a sacred precinct or altar, is not known. Probably, the Hekatompedon was built where the Parthenon now stands.

Between 529–520 BC yet another temple was built by the Peisistratids, the Old Temple of Athena, usually referred to as the Arkhaios Neōs (ἀρχαῖος νεώς, "ancient temple"). This temple of Athena Polias was built upon the Doerpfeld foundations, between the Erechtheion and the still-standing Parthenon. Arkhaios Neōs was destroyed by the Persian invasion in 480 BC, however, the temple probably was reconstructed since in 454 BC the treasury of the Delian League was transferred in its opisthodomos. The temple may have been burnt down in 406/405 BC as Xenophon mentions that the old temple of Athena was set on fire. Pausanias does not mention it in his 2nd century AD Description of Greece (Hurwit, 2000).

Around 500 BC the Ur-Parthenon was dismantled to make place for a newer and grander building, the "Older Parthenon" (often called Pre-Parthenon, "early Parthenon"). Athenians decided to stop the construction of the Olympieion which was related with the tyrant Peisistratos and his sons and instead used the Piraeus limestone destined for the Olympieion to build the Older Parthenon. To accommodate it, the south part of the summit was cleared, made level by adding some 8,000 two-ton blocks of limestone, a foundation 11 m (36 ft) deep at some points, and the rest filled with earth kept in place by the retaining wall. However, after the victorious Battle of Marathon in 490 BC, the plan was revised and marble was used instead. The limestone phase of the building is referred to as Pre-Parthenon I, the marble phase as Pre-Parthenon II. In 485 BC, construction stalled to save resources as Xerxes took the throne. The Older Parthenon was still under construction when the Persians sacked the city in 480 BC. The building was burned and looted, along with the Ancient Temple and practically everything else on the rock. After the Persian crisis had subsided, the Athenians incorporated many of the unfinished temple's architectural members (unfluted column drums, triglyphs, metopes, etc.) into the newly built northern curtain wall of the Acropolis, where they serve as a prominent "war memorial" and can still be seen today. The devastated site was cleared of debris. Statuary, cult objects, religious offerings and unsalvageable architectural members were buried ceremoniously in several deeply dug pits on the hill, serving conveniently as a fill for the artificial plateau created around the classic Parthenon. This "Persian debris" is the richest archaeological deposit excavated on the Acropolis and is well known throughout Greece.

6.3. The Periclean building program

After winning at Eurymedon in 468 BC, Cimon and Themistocles ordered the reconstruction of the southern and northern walls of the Acropolis. Most of the major temples, including the Parthenon, were rebuilt under the leadership of Pericles during the Golden Age of Athens (460–430 BC). Phid The heritage of the classical era is still evident in the city, represented by ancient monuments and works of art, the most famous of all being the Parthenon, considered a key landmark of early Western civilization. The city also retains Roman and Byzantine monuments, as well as a smaller number of Ottoman monuments.

In 437 BC, Mnesicles started building the Propylaea, a monumental gate at the western end of the Acropolis with Doric columns of Pentelic marble, partly built upon the old propylaea of Peisistratos. These colonnades were almost finished in 432 BC and had two wings, the northern one decorated with paintings by Polygnotus. Around the same time,

south of the Propylaea, building started on the small Ionic Temple of Athena Nike in Pentelic marble with tetrastyle porches, preserving the essentials of Greek temple design. After an interruption caused by the Peloponnesian War, the temple was finished in the time of Nicias' peace, between 421 BC and 409 BC (Mark, Ira S. (1993).

Construction of the elegant temple of Erechtheion in Pentelic marble (421–406 BC) was in accordance with a complex plan which took account of the extremely uneven ground and the need to circumvent several shrines in the area. The entrance, facing east, is lined with six Ionic columns. Unusually, the temple has two porches, one on the northwest corner borne by Ionic columns, the other, to the southwest, supported by huge female figures or Caryatids. The eastern part of the temple was dedicated to Athena Polias, while the western part, serving the cult of the archaic king Poseidon-Erechtheus, housed the altars of Hephaestus and Voutos, brother of Erechtheus. Little is known about the original plan of the interior which was destroyed by fire in the first century BC and has been rebuilt several times.

During the same period, a combination of sacred precincts including the temples of *Athena Polias*, Poseidon, Erechtheus, Cecrops, Herse, Pandrosos and Aglauros, with its *Kore Porch* (Porch of the Maidens) or *Caryatids' balcony* was begun. Between the temple of Athena Nike and the Parthenon, there was the Sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia (or the Brauroneion), the goddess represented as a bear and worshipped in the deme of Brauron. According to Pausanias, a wooden statue or xoanon of the goddess and a statue of Artemis made by Praxiteles in the 4th century BC were both in the sanctuary.

Behind the Propylaea, Phidias' gigantic bronze statue of Athena Promachos ("Athena who fights in the front line"), built between 450 BC and 448 BC, dominated. The base was 1.50 m (4 ft 11 in) high, while the total height of the statue was 9 m (30 ft). The goddess held a lance whose gilt tip could be seen as a reflection by crews on ships rounding Cape Sounion, and a giant shield on the left side, decorated by Mys with images of the fight between the Centaurs and the Lapiths. Other monuments that have left almost nothing visible to the present day are the Chalkotheke, the Pandroseion, Pandion's sanctuary, Athena's altar, Zeus Polieus's sanctuary and, from Roman times, the circular temple of Augustus and Rome (Maria S, 1997).

6.4. Hellenistic and Roman period

During the Hellenistic and Roman periods, many of the existing buildings in the area of the Acropolis were repaired, due to damage from age, and occasionally, war. Monuments to foreign kings were erected, notably those of the Attalid kings of Pergamon Attalos II (in front of the NW corner of the Parthenon), and Eumenes II, in front of the Propylaea. These were rededicated during the early Roman Empire to Augustus or Claudius (uncertain), and Agrippa, respectively. Eumenes was also responsible for constructing a stoa on the South slope, not unlike that of Attalos in the Agora below.

During the Julio-Claudian period, the Temple of Rome and Augustus, a small, round edifice, about 23 meters from the Parthenon, was to be the last significant ancient construction on the summit of the rock. Around the same time, on the North slope, in a cave next to the one dedicated to Pan since the classical period, a sanctuary was founded where the archons dedicated to Apollo on taking office. In 161 AD, on the South slope, the Roman Herodes Atticus built his grand amphitheatre or Odeon. It was destroyed by the invading Herulians a century later but was reconstructed in the 1950s (Steves, R, 2011).

During the 3rd century, under threat from a Herulian invasion, repairs were made to the Acropolis walls, and the "Beulé Gate" was constructed to restrict entrance in front of the Propylaea, thus returning the Acropolis to use as a fortress.

6.5. Byzantine, Latin and Ottoman period

In the Byzantine period, the Parthenon was turned into a church, dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Under the Latin Duchy of Athens, the Acropolis functioned as the city's administrative center, with the Parthenon as its cathedral, and the Propylaea as part of the Ducal Palace. A large tower was added, the "Frankopyrgos", demolished in the 19th century (Neils, J, 2005).

After the Ottoman conquest of Greece, the Parthenon was used as the garrison headquarters of the Turkish army, and the Erechtheum was turned into the Governor's private Harem. The buildings of the Acropolis suffered significant damage during the 1687 siege by the Venetians in the Morean War. The Parthenon, which was being used as a gunpowder magazine, was hit by artillery fire and severely damaged.

In subsequent years, the Acropolis was a site of bustling human activity with many Byzantine, Frankish, and Ottoman structures. The dominant feature during the Ottoman period was a mosque inside the Parthenon, complete with a minaret. Following the Greek War of Independence, most features that dated from the Byzantine, Frankish and Ottoman periods

were cleared from the site in an attempt to restore the monument to its original form, "cleansed" of all later additions (Reeves N, Williams D, 2007).

6.6. Archaeological remains

The entrance to the Acropolis was a monumental gateway called the Propylaea. To the south of the entrance is the tiny Temple of Athena Nike. At the centre of the Acropolis is the Parthenon or Temple of Athena Parthenos (Athena the Virgin). East of the entrance and north of the Parthenon is the temple known as the Erechtheum. South of the platform that forms the top of the Acropolis there are also the remains of an outdoor theatre called Theatre of Dionysus. A few hundred metres away, there is the now partially reconstructed Odeon of Herodes Atticus (Haddingham, E, 2008).

All the valuable ancient artifacts are situated in the Acropolis Museum, which resides on the southern slope of the same rock, 280 metres from the Parthenon.

7. THE MUSEUM OF ACROPOLIS

The **Acropolis Museum** is an archaeological museum focused on the findings of the archaeological site of the Acropolis of Athens. The museum was built to house every artifact found on the rock and on the surrounding slopes, from the Greek Bronze Age to Roman and Byzantine Greece. It also lies over the ruins of a part of Roman and early Byzantine Athens.

8. TEMPLE OF OLYMPIAN ZEUS

The Olympieion's foundations were laid (on the site of an earlier temple) by the tyrant Pisistratus in **515 BC**, but the work was abandoned when Pisistratus's son, Hippias, was overthrown in 510 BC.

During the years of **Greek democracy**, the temple was left unfinished, apparently because the Greeks of the classical period thought it anti-democratic to build on such a scale. Aristotle cited the temple as an example of how tyrannies engaged the populace in great works for the state and left them no time, energy or means to rebel.

The **graceful ruins** of the Temple of the Olympian Zeus can be clearly seen from the Acropolis and are floodlit at night. The temple is made of fine marble brought from Mount Pentelus and originally measured 96 meters long and 40 meters wide.

Hadrian had erected a giant gold and ivory status of Zeus in the cella, and placed an equally large one of himself next to it. Unfortunately, however, nothing remains of these or anything else from the **interior** of the temple.

There were originally 104 Corinthian columns, each 17 meters high; 48 of these stood in triple rows under the pediments and 56 in double rows at the sides. Only **15 columns** remain standing today, with lovely Corinthian capitals still in place. A 16th column blew over in 1852 and is still lying where it fell.

9. HADRIAN'S LIBRARY

The large complex known as the Library of Hadrian was built in the second century AD by the Roman emperor Hadrian. Emperor Hadrian, who ruled the Roman Empire from 117 to 138 AD was an ardent admirer of Greek culture and regularly visited Athens. Hadrian wanted to make Athens the cultural capital of the Roman Empire, and during his visits he initiated several building projects, including the construction of a large library.

Located just outside the northern corner of the Roman Agora, the library was built on the site of Late Hellenistic and Early Roman housing. Becoming the largest library in Athens it was built to house not only books but also as a repository for the official state archives. Several important schools of learning and philosophy also occupied the building.

The library was built between 125 and 132 AD on a rectangular plan. It wasn't a library as we know today, but more a cultural complex, with lecture halls, a transcription room, a library hall - known as the Bibliostasio - and possibly even a theater.

The complex - which measured about 120 meters long and 78 meters wide (400 x 260ft) - was built around a large rectangular inner garden with a pond. The garden was adorned with large marble statues of Athena and Hadrian. The floors of the halls were decorated with mosaic marble tiles. Papyrus rolls were stored in forty niches in the library, which held an approximate 16 800 'books'.

Like many ancient buildings the library complex saw an eventful and chequered history in the last 1000 years. The large 7th century CE basilica at the site was destroyed by fire in the 11th century CE and so was replaced by another basilica, the Megali Panagia, in the 12th century CE, only this time on a smaller scale with only a single aisle. Contemporary with this new cathedral was a smaller church, the Agios Asomatos sta Skalia dedicated to the Archangel Michael which was built near the entrance.

When Athens came under Turkish control the library was once again used as a centre of administration and became the residence of the Turkish Administrator of Athens. From the 15th century CE it was also the site of two important bazaars and some residential buildings. During the 18th century CE the building served both as a mosque and as a fortress. A tower was built in 1814 CE which would later carry a clock given by Lord Elgin and in the 19th century CE the library saw service as an army barracks and then as a prison.

Excavations at the site began in the late 19th century CE but it was not until the second half of the 20th century CE that the later buildings were cleared from the site and an attempt was made to restore parts of the library to its original form. Today the entrance façade survives in sufficient form (including restorations) to give an idea of the scale of the building and part of the interior wall of the east wing still stands where one can see some of the original niches for documents.

10. THE ANCIENT AGORA

The Agora was the heart of ancient Athens, the focus of political, commercial, administrative and social activity, the religious and cultural centre, and the seat of justice. The site was occupied without interruption in all periods of the city's history. It was used as a residential and burial area as early as the Late Neolithic period (3000 B.C.). Early in the 6th century, in the time of Solon, the Agora became a public area. After a series of repairs and remodellings, it reached its final rectangular form in the 2nd century B.C. Extensive building activity occurred after the serious damage made by the Persians in 480/79 B.C., by the Romans in 89 B.C. and by the Herulae in A.D. 267 while, after the Slavic invasion in A.D. 580, it was gradually abandoned. From the Byzantine period until after 1834, when Athens became the capital of the independent Greek state, the Agora was again developed as a residential area.

The first excavation campaigns were carried out by the Greek Archaeological Society in 1859-1912, and by the German Archaeological Institute in 1896-97. In 1890-91, a deep trench cut for the Athens-Peiraeus Railway brought to light extensive remains of ancient buildings. In 1931 the American School of Classical Studies started the systematic excavations with the financial support of J. Rockefeller and continued until 1941. Work was resumed in 1945 and is still continuing. In order to uncover the whole area of the Agora it was necessary to demolish around 400 modern buildings covering a total area of ca. 12 hectares.

In the 19th century the four colossal figures of Giants and Tritons at the facade of the Gymnasium were restored by the Greek Archaeological Society. In the years 1953-56, the Stoa of Attalos was reconstructed to become a museum and in the same period the Byzantine church of Aghioi Apostoloi, built around A.D. 1000, was restored by the American School. Between 1972 and 1975, restoration and preservation work was carried out at the Hephaisteion; the area was cleared of the vegetation, and the roof of the temple was repaired in 1978 by the Archaeological Service.

It was built between 19 and 11 B.C. with a donation of Julius Caesar and Augustus. During the reign of Hadrian the court was paved with slabs. After the invasion of the Herulae in A.D. 267 the city of Athens was restricted to the area within the Late Roman fortification wall, and the administrative and commercial centre of the city was transferred from the Ancient Agora to the Roman Agora and the Library of Hadrian.

During the Byzantine period and the Turkish occupation the area was covered with houses, workshops and churches along with the Fethiye Mosque.

11. SYNTAGMA SQUARE

Syntagma Square ("Constitution Square"), is the central square of Athens. The Square is named after the Constitution that the first King of Greece Otto was obliged to grant, after a popular and military uprising on September 3, 1843. It is located in front of the 19th century Old Royal Palace, housing the Greek Parliament since 1934. Syntagma Square is the most

important square of modern Athens from both a historical and social point of view, at the epicentre of commercial activity and Greek politics.

The street bordering the square to the west, connecting Stadiou Street with Fililelinon Street, is simply named "Syntagma Square" (*Plateia Syntágmatos*). The eastern side of the square is higher than the western, and dominated by a set of marble steps leading to Amalias Avenue; beneath these lies the Syntagma metro station. The stairs emerge below between a pair of outdoor cafes, and are a popular city-centre gathering place. Syntagma also includes two green areas to the north and south, planted with shade trees, while in the centre of the square there is a large mid-19th century water fountain.

The Old Royal Palace neoclassical building, housing the Greek Parliament since 1934, is immediately across Amalias Avenue to the east, and surrounded by the extensive National Gardens, which are open to the public; the Parliament itself is not open to the public, even when not in session. Every hour, the changing of the guard ceremony, performed by the Presidential Guard, is conducted in front of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on the area between the Syntagma Square and Parliament building.

11.1. Kerameikos

The archaeological site of the Kerameikos, between Ermou, Peireos, and Asomaton Streets, is a small part of the ancient Attic Deme of Kerameon, one of the largest demes of ancient Athens, located on the northwest edge of the city. As suggested by its name, the Kerameikos (from the Greek word for pottery) was a settlement of potters and vase painters, and the main production centre of the famous Attic vases. Those parts of the Kerameikos that were located near the riverbank suffered continuously from the overflowing river, and so the area was converted into a burial ground, which gradually developed into the most important cemetery of ancient Athens.

11.2. Plaka

The area of Plaka is one of the most attractive districts of Athens. Under the slopes of the Acropolis Plaka attracts all the visitors of Athens with its neoclassical mansions and houses with roofs from red tiles, its small winding roads with their steps, balconies with bougainvilleas, geraniums and jasmines. Plaka is called many times in the Greek literature as the neighbourhood of the Gods and that because over Plaka dominates the sacred rock of the Acropolis "the sacred rock of the gods" who made the modern Athenians with the same humour like their Ancient ancestors, to personalise the Olympian gods having fun like them in Plaka with lots of Retsina wine and Dance.

Plaka has its special place in the memories of the older generation of Athens. It used to be the area of the working class and many Greek films of the early 50's and 60's have been filmed there when the houses were not renovated as they are today and most of the winding roads were just earth. One of the most famous Greek film "Stella" with Melina Mercouri and Georgios Fountas was filmed there at the house opposite the bath of the winds which today hosts a branch of an American university.

Today Plaka has gained back its old idyllic face. It becomes busy on sunny weekends and of course during the summer when tourists arrive there to explore its attractions, and Plaka has a lot of things to see. Museums like the children's museum in Kydathineon street and the Kanellopoulos museum just under the north slope of the Acropolis in Theorias street and the museum of Greek popular instruments near by. Monuments like the Lysicrates monument a monument that was built from the rich Athenian Lysicrates in 334 BC after he won the prize of the best performance that he had sponsored in the Dionysus theatre. Archaeological areas like the Greek and the Roman agora, the Hadrian's Library and the bath of the winds and other Roman monuments built mostly by the Roman emperor Hadrian, the Atallos Stoa that hosts a great collection of several artefacts that have been founded in the Area of the ancient Agora. Under the north east slope of the Acropolis located the first university of Athens the Kapodistrian university named after the first governor of Greece Ioannis Kapodistrias on the extension of Tholou street. It was built in 1837 right after the Greek independence. If you walk up the steps from the south slope of the Acropolis you will find Anafiotika, an amazing place with small whitewashed houses all built with Cyclades island architecture from the builders that arrived here from Anafi to build the Palace of King Otto in the 19th century. Walking through the small winding streets you feel that you are rather in a Greek island of the Cyclades like Mykonos with its white houses or Paros another wonderful island of the Aegean, instead of being in the centre of the busy Greek capital.

CONCLUSION

Greece has been a major tourist destination and attraction in Europe since antiquity, for its rich culture and history, which is reflected in large part by its 18 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, among the most in Europe and the world as well as for its long coastline, many islands and beaches.

Traces of a centuries-old and important **history** is etched in every corner of Greek land: findings from the Prehistoric and Archaic Periods, unique works from Classical, Hellenistic, Medieval and Byzantine monuments, creations from folk art cultures, traces from the passing eons of other civilizations and different religions, that coexist with current creations, constructions and modern works of art.

Athens is a true paradise for cultural tourism, a large journey into history and art. Educational excursions, theatrical productions, festivals, pilgrimages, visits to archaeological sites, monuments and museums, excursions to study the natural environment, folk art and culture – these are just a few of the many things that Greece has to offer in the cultural tourism sector.

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