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Education through the Athenian Acropolis

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The art and architecture of the Athenian Acropolis is part of the curriculum in most schools throughout the world. The interest of pupils, teachers and the general public together with the conviction that the best form of conservation is preventive conservation, beginning with education, formed the impetus for the Committee for the Conservation of the Acropolis Monuments (ESMA) in collaboration with the 1st Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, to launch educational programmes as early as 1987. Today the Department of Information and Education of the Acropolis Restoration Service (YSMA) in collaboration with the 1st Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, provides information about the activities of ESMA and YSMA in keeping with modern international practice of informing the public about important public enterprises. It also exposes pupils to the art and architecture of classical antiquity, familiarising them with the great projects of conservation and restoration being carried out on the Sacred Rock.

The Work of the Department

The Department: organises educational programmes for specific groups and in particular for school classes (of around 25 pupils each) on the subject of the Acropolis and its monuments; conducts seminars for educators and students on classical architecture and art, as well as on the restoration of classical monuments; produces educational resources on the subjects of classical art and architecture and also on the Acropolis restoration project, which are lent or donated to schools; organises special symposia for educators under the general heading "Educators and programmes about the Acropolis", the proceedings of which are published; designs exhibitions in cooperation with the personnel of the YSMA and other institutions.

Educational Programmes

The educational programmes are addressed to school-children whose schools include the thematic unit about the Acropolis in their curriculum. The visit is organised each time around a specific subject and is determined by the age and knowledge of the children. The programmes are accompanied by special "path-finders" and visual material that is relevant each time. They take place on the Acropolis and at the Centre for the Acropolis Studies. The design of a programme is always connected with the design and aesthetics of the booklet for it. Thus each programme is represented by the booklet, which has evidently a greater potential, since many more people will use it. Over the years many programmes have been developed and carried out. Special projects have been devoted to the Acropolis and its monuments such as the ancient "Peripatos", the path around the Acropolis, the topography of the Sacred Rock through the texts of Plutarch and Pausanias, as well as through the cult of the goddess Athena, the Parthenon Frieze, the construction of ancient temples and the restoration of the ancient monuments.

Educational Resources

The Department's publications cover more than 20 different subjects and have been circulated in more than 250,000 offprints in both Greek and English. These comprise educational publications, museum kits, teachers' packs, books, special itinerary booklets accompanying the programmes, films, CD-Roms, posters and games. The resource material aims to help educators prepare themselves better both for the lesson at school and for the class visit to the archaeological site and the Museum. Particular care is taken to achieve the best quality in scholarship, educational value and aesthetic appearance of the publications. The Department believes that the publications are of special importance because they are distributed to so many educators and students. Through the diffusion of these resources, the educational potential of the Athenian Acropolis and the era it symbolises, becomes available at a crucial level of education. Particular emphasis is placed on the distribution of material to educational institutions. Every school applying receives for its library a pack containing educational booklets and posters, to maintain contact of the class with the monuments.

Museum Kits

Over the years it has become apparent that in addition to the training of each teacher through the material supplied, the seminars and the special symposia, in order to meet the great demand for participation in the programmes, it was necessary to enlarge the Loan Section, which is now growing continuously and is based primarily on the museum kits. The museum kits are the most composite paedagogic material we provide. They contain a diversity of relevantly designed materials that can be activated through the personal way of each teacher. Each one contains books, transparencies, games, models of monuments and copies of ancient objects. In their entirety they provide a specially designed educational resource of alternative teaching for use either in the classroom or in some other place of cultural reference. The old-fashioned idea of a closed box full of gifts for the child to open is associated with modern technologies. Books, photographs, CD-Roms and artifacts complement each other to provide learning and fun. The Department's museum kits comprise several subjects. Although the themes are separate, they can comprise an assemblage through which the culture of ancient Greece can be approached in a different way. The picture of a glamorous ancient sanctuary (museum kit "Let's go to the Acropolis") where the gods are worshipped (museum kit "The Twelve Olympian Gods"), in splendid temples (museum kit "A Greek Temple") made of marble (museum kit "The Art of Stone-Sculpture") decorated by sculptures of unique artistic quality (museum kit "The Parthenon Frieze"), brings the sanctuaries to life before the eyes of the pupils. Worshippers dressed in beautiful clothes (museum kit "Ancient Greek Dress") participated in the Festivals with music everywhere (museum kit "Ancient Greek Musical Instruments"). In this way children can approach the world of antiquity with pleasure, their intellect, imagination and creativity activated. Concurrently, they

approach a contemporary extensive research programme and a major technical project carried out on the Acropolis (museum kit "Restoration in Action: The Athenian Acropolis Project").

Let's Go to the Acropolis

The kit "Let's Go to the Acropolis" aims to help pupils recreate and imagine the glamorous sanctuary where faithful Athenians worshipped their patron goddess during the antiquity. It consists of a 1:800 scaled model of the Acropolis Hill, the models of the monuments, the educational booklets "Let's Go to the Acropolis" and "Let's Go to the Acropolis Peripatos" and four posters of the Acropolis illustrating the history of the sanctuary. Children position the temples on the model thus realizing the orientation, the use and form of each building, their comparative dimensions, their exact place and the pathways on the Hill.

A Greek Temple

Greece is a country filled with ancient monuments and neoclassical buildings bearing Doric, Ionian and Corinthian morphological elements. The kit "A Greek Temple" helps teachers and pupils enhance their understanding of ancient and neoclassical buildings. It contains the model of an ancient Greek temple, a set of sixteen rubber stamps with which the pupils can compose facades, plastic moulds of Ionian and Lesbian cymatia and three small copies of a Doric, an Ionian and a Corinthian column. A specially written book describing the temples, the use and function, the typology, the morphology, the sculpted and painted decoration, and the construction methods, illustrated with lots of photographs and drawings as well as sixteen plates with ancient temples all around Greece, provide opportunities for playing and learning.

The Parthenon Frieze

The Parthenon Frieze illustrating the great Panathenaic procession to the Acropolis in honour of patron goddess Athena is a very low relief continuous band, 160 meters long and one meter high. It ran along the top part of the main temple, within the outer colonnade. Participants in the composition were 360 divine and human figures and more than 250 animals, most of them horses. The kit "The Parthenon Frieze" contains a small model of the Parthenon, sixteen 1:20 scaled moulds of the west frieze blocks, that can be painted, as well as a photographic reconstruction of the whole Frieze at the same scale. A set of 10 plates of select blocks, a mould of the head of goddess Iris, together with the book "Parthenon Promenades" and the CD-ROM "The Parthenon Frieze" help pupils make casts, play and proceed to the analysis of the Frieze. In the Photographic Reconstruction of the Parthenon Frieze photographs of all the frieze blocks preserved today have been gathered together in a scale 1:20 and, in order to present the whole synthesis have been combined with the drawings of J. Carrey (1674) and J. Stewart (1751). The Parthenon Frieze Reconstruction Game consists of a photographic reconstruction of all four sides of the sculpture in a scale 1:60. Pupils try to form the cycle on the temple and to recreate the procession as it once wound its way up to the Acropolis. The CD-ROM "The Parthenon Frieze" comprises a general Introduction to the Frieze, a Tour of the Frieze, which presents to the users the Frieze as a whole and a stone-by-stone Description of the Frieze, which presents each stone separately, enlarged, each with an analytical text.

Museum Kits Donation Programme

The first museum kits were designed in 1990, to be lent out to schools and other educational institutions. Until 2001, the Department was providing around 200 schools per year with 15 museum kits on 7 different subjects. In 2001, an extensive special programme was completed, with the designing and reproduction of four museum

kits in multiple copies "Let's Go to the Acropolis", "A Greek Temple", "The Parthenon Frieze" and the "The Twelve Olympian Gods"). The new museum kits have evolved from the original form of 1990-1993. They are now more flexible, easier to use and can be reproduced in numbers. Most of this material has been a standing donation of the Ministry of Culture to a network of selected schools and educational institutions throughout Greece and abroad. The choice was based on a specific evaluation procedure and most of the institutions received the kits after a special seminar on the contents and use of the museum kits in the educational process. Funding by the Stavros S. Niarchos Foundation enabled the Service to produce the museum kit "Let's Go to the Acropolis" with 100 copies in Greek and 100 in English. Additional funding from the Bodosakis Foundation provided 100 copies of the kit "A Greek Temple". The assistance of the "Association of the Friends of the Acropolis" has been valuable throughout. These two kits were distributed to educational institutions in 2001-2002, in 47 provinces of Greece. In May 2003, a special symposium was held to evaluate the results of the use of the two museum kits by the various institutions. The museum kit "The Parthenon Frieze" was given to 95 institutions in Greece after an in-depth seminar organised in the framework of the special programme "The Panathenaia through the Parthenon Frieze". In May 2004 another special symposium was held to evaluate the results of the use of this museum kit by the various institutions. Distribution was spread over primary and secondary schools in both large and small cities and in the islands as well, over Universities, Museums and Libraries. Approximately 200 museum kits have been donated abroad, to schools with special Classics Department, to large Museums and Universities.

Seminars

The collaboration of the Department with teachers takes a more specific form in the special seminars that take place regularly at the Centre for the Acropolis Studies, throughout Greece and abroad as well. Seminars are held for groups of educators by request. In the seminars, the educational resources are presented, with data from the architecture, the art and history of the classical period, to be included in the lessons so as to enrich the course being taught. Seminars have been held for archaeologists, undergraduate and graduate students, for librarians throughout Greece and especially for many Greek and foreign educators in collaboration with various institutions. A special network has been created with the Foreign Archaeological Schools in Greece, as well as with various specialised Institutions. Groups of teachers of ancient Greek from England, Denmark, France, Germany, Holland, Ireland and many other countries have participated in the seminars. Seminars have likewise been organised, in collaboration with local authorities at Brussels, Kiev, Odessa, Leukosia and London. All participants at the seminars or at the special symposia organised by the Department receive educational resources in Greek or in English.

Exhibitions

The museum kits and the Department's publications more generally, have been exhibited in many cities around Greece and abroad, inside many Museums, Universities and Libraries. Exhibitions have been held at Museums in many cities abroad such as Alexandria, Amsterdam, Belgrade, Bucharest, Boston, Kiev, Leukosia, London, Odessa, Osaka, Rome, Skopje and Zagreb. They have also been shown at international book exhibitions, such as at the international children's book exhibition in Bologna and at the international book exhibition in Frankfurt in 2000 when Greece was the featured country. An exhibition of all the educational material was held in Brussels under the title "Let's Go to the Acropolis; Ancient Culture in Modern Education", by invitation of the European Parliament. In

conjunction with the above exhibitions, special seminars were held for teachers, at which the educational material and its potential in the teaching process were demonstrated.

Special Symposia

The Department holds symposia on the general subject "Educators and Programmes about the Acropolis". These provide a platform for dialogue between educators with common interests in teaching through our cultural environment. The Athenian Acropolis because of its importance in the curriculum provides the impetus and incitement for educators to proceed with their projects and to develop their own ideas. Thus far eight symposia have been organised (1991, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2004). Proceedings or summaries of the reports given at the symposia have been published. Participants in these symposia are 150-200 educators and some 15-20 papers are presented each time. The value of the meetings is evident in the multi-disciplinary character of the reports. The 150 reports and proceedings comprise today an important and rich aggregate of projects related to the Acropolis that have been applied by teachers. Over the years reports on some 120 applied projects have been added to the departmental archive. These definitive results of teaching illustrate and describe in the best possible way the process itself of teaching that has been followed each time. The interested educator is able to find original programmes about the Acropolis and its epoch, which contain new ideas, methods and applications that have been created by colleagues with the same background, the same possibilities and the same goals.

As the greatest achievement of the Classical world, the Athenian Acropolis represents an architectural, artistic and cultural prototype for Western Civilization. The Education Department feels that it is necessary to find ways to activate what is surely a huge educational potential. Our goal is to make the Acropolis render the maximum in educational proceedings and programmes that can have a general application to the methods of learning about humanity through the brilliant spectrum of the Classical world.

[If you would like to find out more on the work of the Centre for Acropolis Studies, please visit their website: <http://ysma.culture.gr/english/index.html>]

Materials from the Centre for Acropolis Studies in Athens available in UK

The Centre for Acropolis Studies has generously donating some of the Museum Kits to the Hellenic Society and these Museum Kits (Let's Got to the Acropolis, A Greek Temple, The Parthenon Frieze) will be made available on loan to UK schools in 2005 through a special scheme of the Hellenic Society. We intend to use local ACTs and CA branches as a vehicle for local schools to enjoy these materials. Also, copies of various teaching resources have been made available to UK teachers through the generosity of the Centre for Acropolis Studies and the Hellenic Society hopes to be able to award some of these materials free of charge to schools. If you would like to register your interest to borrow a Museum Kit or to receive materials, please contact the Hellenic Society (you can see pictures of some of these materials.)