





Greece.

Did anyone ever travel through Greece with a clear head and a critical judgment? That was the question I often asked myself when after climbing to the top of the Acropolis at Athens with the full intention of studying the unrivalled detail of the Greek temple or judging of the effect of the frieze of Greek architecture in the Parthenon, I found myself sitting on a block of marble picturing Iktinos and Kallikrates quarrelling over some working drawings, Phidias and Perikles discussing the safety of introducing the portrait of a favorite race horse into the frieze of the Parthenon, or perhaps saw in fancy the Panathenian Procession coming up over that slope from the Propylea. I believe that is what we all do, and what else can we do when only the grinning skeleton remains - shattered by earthquakes, disfigured by cannon balls, stripped by museum makers, and fairly scraped to nothingness by antiquarians? The truth of the matter is I honestly believe that we do not see Greek art in the existing remains, it is in our imagination built on the results of careful examination and skilful restorations such as exist in the works of Stuart and Revett, Pearson and others. Perhaps I should go too far to say we see nothing, for in the Thesaurion, and I might add the west end of the Parthenon, by closing our eyes to the discoloration it is possible to form some idea of the Greek temple as it was conceived by the Greek architect.

It is this lack of the material that makes the visit to Greece a sentimental journey and accounts for our raving over what we did not see. In one small point I think I can be critical, not of the Greeks but of writers on Greek culture. That is the "remarkable judgement displayed in the selection of the sites of their temples". I think there is no doubt whatever that the selection of site had nothing whatever to do with aesthetic judgement, but was influenced first by the ancient tradition, second by the advantages or difficulties presented in the surface of the site thus fixed.

That the Parthenon stands on the Acropolis and in its excellent position on that limited space I think is not at all due to the high culture of primitive Greece when he hid himself behind his rude wall on the top of the precipitous rock, nor even to the cultured judgement of Iktinos; for where else on the rock of the Acropolis could a building the size of the Parthenon have been placed without much more labor in preparing the site?

It is so also at Bassae where we are struck by the fine contrast between the polished of the highest art and nature in its most rugged and primitive form. I think no one who has visited that lonely and almost inaccessible spot can help feeling that some ancient and important legend was connected with the place that would induce the people of Phigalea to erect a temple of such extent and beauty so far from their city and in a location where at most it would only be seen by the periodic festival

visitor or occasional pilgrim. Then the temple violates the rules of orientalism to accommodate itself to the narrow ridge on which it stands, when by being placed but a short distance to the south would not only have been had sufficient space but would have occupied a much more prominent and striking position. In Samos there is not the least doubt but that the temple where it stands is unrivalled in position. Not only is the small temple made an imposing and prominent object in the landscape, but shall I presume to say that the building of the temple on that particular point makes Cape Colonna one of the most striking sights in Greece. Yet for all that this bold promontory, standing out like a bastion from a fortress, is the very point a Druid would have selected for his sanctuary, or even a south-sea islander ~~not~~ might choose to perform his incantations over the waves to protect his corkle shell craft from the fury of an offended spirit of the sea.

These are the temples that call for the praise of the book visitor, they usually say nothing about the scores of temples that were built on low ground like the Thesion which ~~it~~ is completely dwarfed by the great masses of rock beyond in the Serapeum and Hill of the Nymphs, nor Corinth nor the scores of other temples that must have existed in every town in the land. But there is no use in being hypercritical, whether the Greeks were directly responsible or were forced to be artistic by physical laws does not alter the fact that at every turn we are met by an unrivalled picture, heightened by the remains of the work of this nation who in a comparatively few years rose from the dead level of a half civilized culture to a height of artistic excellence that even after the lapse of two thousand years appears unapproachable.

In my six weeks experience in Greece I visited nearly all of the Ionian Islands, on the deck of a steamer, then landed at Katakolon from whence I went to Olympia to spend a couple of days. From the latter point I went on horseback to Subotena, Bassae, & Melizida where I stopped to visit the monastery of Vourkani, Mt. Ithome and the remains of Messene, and then on to Kalamata. Here I took horse over Mt. Taygetos and through the Gorge of Langada - of Alpine grandeur - to Tripi and from this picturesque village on foot to Sparta and Mistra. From Sparta I took a carriage to Tripolitza and rail to Nauplia. I spent several days making excursions to the Heiron of Epidaurus, Tiryns and points nearer Nauplia, then went on to Mycenae where I spent the part of two days in examining the unique and highly interesting remains of the famous city. Farther on I stopped at Corinth and ascended the Acro. Corinth where I fortunately had an excellent day for the unrivalled view, then on to Athens. With this city as a centre I visited Eleusis, ascended Pentelikon for a view of Marathon & in fact the whole of Attica not to mention the half of Greece - Cape Colonna, Samos, Thouron and a number of the points in the immediate vicinity of Athens.

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Consequently I think I may be pardoned in boasting of having seen nearly all the architecture - of nature as well as of man - that Greece itself has to offer. At Athens only three columns are standing, besides I expect to see next spring on my return from the far East. Of the nine ruins of temples in Greece that still show upright columns - to my knowledge there are only nine such of Greek workmanship - four, by far the best preserved, are in Athens, and in the Theseion we have the most perfect example of a Greek temple of the best period existing. It is incomprehensible to me that more has not been written and said about this beautiful example so excellently preserved. Perhaps it is too well preserved and leaves no room for vivid fancies, but for all that to an everyday observer it fills a blank that is needed to a due appreciation of the isolated columns at Sunium, the more columnades at Bassae or even of the painfully disfigured walls of the Parthenon itself. To the visitor fresh from the west - especially from America where we are accustomed to six, eight, not to mention twenty-seven story buildings, the Theseion must appear insignificant, yet here nearly all the qualities that have stamped the Parthenon as the acme of the builder's art are ~~here~~ present and almost in their perfection. For with the exception of a few stones from the side of the east pediment and the dislocation of a few drums in the columns by earthquakes the Theseion stands as a perfectly preserved Greek temple. Like the Serropolis I fell in love with the Erechtheion - the Parthenon is too masculine for that - yet after repeated visits & like in the case of the main Hermes at Olympia - I was brought to a sense of the superior height of beauty when combined with strength and vitality. After several days were wandering around and enjoying the general impression produced by the famous group of buildings I recovered my normal state sufficiently to notice several small points and decide in my own mind several theories I had held from reading descriptions. These were especially in regard to the niceties in the design of the Parthenon. In regard to the upward curve of the steps of the stylobate that is easily seen now that the observer is always so much lower than the stylobate owing to the removal of the soil from the rock. In fact I think this curve has lost its importance when it has been raised above the level of the eye, but that it adds greatly to the effect when seen from above is very evident on comparison with the Erechtheion where the steps are hard and straight. This curving of the line is not universal by any means, so I said those of the Erechtheion are straight, and I think the steps of the Propylea are also, although the edges are so broken it is hard to determine by eye. Mike Apteros shows the curve at the east end - considerably exaggerated - but not on the sides. In this case however where the building is really a restoration with old materials such niceties are of no value in determining the intention of the original builder. The curving of the lines of the pediment I could not detect - they are too broken. I had formerly thought that perhaps the inward sloping of the

columns was intended to overcome, in a way at least, ~~the~~ the disagreeable effects of the lines enclosing the passage between cella and column not being parallel. I think I must give up that theory, for although the effect is disagreeable the columns do not slope inward enough to destroy it, so to the accepted theory that it is to add strength to the appearance of the exterior, I think that was the intention, for it gives a decidedly pyramidal effect to the building when aided by the approaching lines of the pediment. This is decidedly noticeable at the more perfect west end, and - shall I be like the rest of them? - if it were not the Parthenon I should say that the effect of ^{the} obtuse angle formed by the sloping column and the perfectly perpendicular face of the entablature was to me not altogether satisfactory and pleasant. I do not say that here anybody would wish it otherwise, but I think that in noticing the approach here in this perfect building to a straining for effect I have learned a lesson in the danger of imitating such a degree of fineness without a due consideration of the numberless details of location, material, scale and above all genuine artistic genius that ^{is necessary to} feel where such variations are required, and has the power of placing them where they are needed. Beyond the limits of the Acropolis and the immediate neighborhood I might say that the architecture of Greece is only of antiquarian interest, and such is nearly the case if we except the value of studying ground plans and the few remaining details that lie in the rubbish heaps around the ruins. That the study of these plans and fragments is interesting I am ready to say. Olympia is of course the pride of modern antiquarians and of supreme professional as well as historical interest. Here side by side the student can compare building methods from the point where stone architecture was only half emancipated from its wooden prototype - as shown in the Heraion - to the latest examples of Roman "opus reticulatum" in Nero's house, or even a step further, for there are considerable remains of a Christian Byzantine church. Besides the theatre of Dionysos at Athens I had the opportunity of examining two other Greek theatres in good preservation I will say nothing of the mere outlines at Sparta and other places. These were the one at the Hieron of Epidaurus - a magnificent structure where the beautiful marble seats are preserved intact and there is a unique circular orchestra, and that at Thorikon elliptical in outline and evidently very ancient or built by provincials which means about the same thing. In the latter building the rear wall is standing and of a method of masonry ^{used} that might be removed to Mycenae without destroying the harmony of that almost prehistoric city. I should like to describe all the details of ^{the} rugged walls of Tiryns with their interesting galleries and store-chambers, and the foundations of the prehistoric palace on the top of this ancient acropolis that indicate a much higher degree of culture than we are accustomed to associate with the Homeric epoch.

of the Treasury of Strenus, the so-called Mrs. Schkeiman's Treasury, the prehistoric tower in the acropolis and above all the famous Lion Gate, a marvel in preservation as well as of historical importance, all of Mycenae - of the massive walls and towers, the imposing Arcadian Gate and the Ithome acropolis at Messene - of the extensive ruins of Epidaurus and Eleusis - the Sacred Way to the latter sanctuary which I followed for twelve miles from Athens to the very temple where the mysteries were observed, but as volumes have been written on each it seems folly to attempt it.

There is one phase of architecture in Greece that is seldom touched on. Perhaps it is because it is of no great importance, perhaps because travellers in Greece are nearly all of a classical turn of mind and look with contempt on the productions of the Dark Ages. But for all that there ~~do~~ exist and in no inconsiderable number fortresses, mostly erected by Venice, at least one magnificent castle - Khlemoutoi - and a multitude of Byzantine churches. The visitor to Athens cannot avoid seeing many of the latter. They are in all cases quite small and to a careless observer all look alike. There is the usual Greek cross from the three apses, three sided outside, semicircular inside - and the characteristic polygonal dome over the crossing, which shows an arch over each face of the high drum, rising as a sort of dormer into the hemispherical ~~work~~ ^{work} and all forming a continuous arcade around the dome. The ornament is rude Byzantine or as is often the case fragments taken from classical buildings - There is a curious example of the latter in the small Metropolis Church at Athens where the whole building is made up of antique fragments of the most diverse character, often with comical ingenuity. The interiors are usually uninteresting, and where the modern Greek has been at work, nearly always tawdry and ugly.

St. Tristra, that ruined city once of great importance and now one of the most interesting and picturesque spots in Greece that lies near Sparta - I found a church of this period that was to me very interesting. In a way it resembled St. Mark's at Venice, it had that semicircle crowned porch and the domes behind, although it differed in having a very Byzantine looking campanile at one corner. The interior had the appearance of hoary age. In arrangement it reminded me much of the Cathedral at Kiev, Russia, and like it was covered with ancient Byzantine frescoes, but lacked the mosaics. At the deserted coast of Herphira about five miles out from Athens, too, on the Sacred Way to Eleusis, I saw an old and highly interesting church of this same Byzantine epoch. It had apparently suffered from fire, but at the time of my visit was being restored. This principal interest here centers in the magnificent Byzantine mosaics that cover the dome, apses and other parts - evidently they formerly covered the entire interior. In design and workmanship, as far as I was able to judge they equalled any of a similar style that I have seen. It is a subject - this of the Byzantine architecture of Greece - that deserves more careful study, and would perhaps

receive more attention were it not overshadowed by the famous and much studied
classical art. Perhaps I should say something about the ancient sculpture still
left on Grecian soil. For the best of it was intended as architectural decoration.
There are several of the metopes and some 22 slabs of the frieze of the Parthenon
in the Acropolis museum, among them the well preserved and beautiful group
of gods. On the Parthenon itself are a few metopes and the frieze at the west
end still in position - and when we see these peerless works wet by rains
and scorched by the sun we almost wish for another Elgin to come and
remove "a few stones with inscriptions and carvings" to a place of safety.
In the same Acropolis museum and the larger National museum is the peerless
collection of archaic statues and sculptures that seem to give us an in-
sight into the true path by which art came to the Greeks - by their remark-
able resemblance to the sculptures of Cyprus, of which we possess so
excellent a collection in the Metropolitan museum at New York, and
through them ^{to} the older art of Phoenicia. The collection of Mycenaean
antiquities, too, interested me much with their singular and beautifully execu-
ted ornament apparently so superior to the Greek art proper that followed that
we cannot help thinking the objects of foreign manufacture - of the mother
country Phoenicia itself. In regard to the painting of the buildings and statuary
the opportunities ^{for study} in Greece are unequalled - In nearly every building, at least
every marble building the traces are most distinct, and the best preserved
statues especially the archaic work still show rustic color on the hair,
eyes and drapery. But of one thing I am firmly convinced - the Greeks did
not paint the flesh in the marbles, Terra cotta figures were made white
but the pure white of the marble was untouched. What can I say of the
peerless Hermes? Only that it is as superior to the casts we know as a living
face is to a death-mask. There is a delicacy of expression, a shade of mel-
ancholy in the face that is entirely lost in the cast, and the beautiful trans-
lucent marble adds a life that nothing can imitate. Before I close I should
say something about the modern architecture of Greece. It goes without saying that
it is Greek classic - I can add of the German Kleuze - Semper type. What native
architects do I was unable to find out, for all the principal buildings seem
to have been designed by foreigners. As to change or progress that seems im-
possible. Poor Greece! she of all nations has the millstone of antiquity about
her neck. To progress to be something other than a reflection, a shadow
of that greater Greece would be heresy and bring the whips of ~~the~~ all
the world on her devoted back. I hope that my apparent opposition to the influence
of this ancient art will not be misconstrued. I went into Greece fully determined to travel with
open eyes - as if I had never read a word about her peerless position in history
and art, so that the journey might be a training in critical judgment. In a way I was
successful, But for all that I could not prevent the thrill that went through me when
I first saw that shape rise above the Attic plain and outline itself against the sky that
first found being in the brain of Iktinos, and was thought worthy to bear the work of the
master hand of Phidias, nor the feeling of profound regret with which I saw sink
below the horizon the hills that shadowed the homes of Plato and Socrates.

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