



ICOMOS
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL
OF MONUMENTS AND SITES

HELLENIC COMMITTEE

Athens, April 22 ,2026

Prot. No: 1634

Attention to

ICOMOS President dr Teresa Patricio,
ICOMOS Board,
ICOMOS WH Unit
ICOMOS International Secretariat

Subject: ICOMOS Hellenic press release

Dear President,
Dear colleagues

We hope our message finds you well.

We are sending you attached the translation into English of the ICOMOS Hellenic press release (April 6th) on:
Drastic building interventions in the Acropolis site, the Athenian Agora and Kerameikos. cause irrevocable damage to the authenticity of the monuments

This press release was written under the responsibility of **Dr. Anastasios Tanoulas**, ICOMOS Hellenic past President, and currently responsible for National affairs.

It is posted in **icomos.gr** and in F **ICOMOS Hellenic-GR**, where it had more than 3000 visits and many comments.

We believe that our message is closely connected to this year's message of the World Monuments Day, and we kindly ask you to inform ICOMOS NCs and proceed to a formal notification of UNESCO.

We are waiting for your news and your suggestions.

With best regards

On behalf of ICOMOS. Hellenic National Committee

The President

Sofia Avgerinou-Kolonias



The Secretary General

Ioannis Panopoulos



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Athens, April 6th, 2026

DRASTIC BUILDING INTERVENTIONS IN THE ACROPOLIS SITE, THE ATHENIAN AGORA ETC. CAUSE IRREVOCABLE DAMAGES TO THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE MONUMENTS

Dramatic appeal of ICOMOS Hellenic to the G Ministry of Culture to stop the arbitrary interventions and submit immediately necessary files to UNESCO

A few days before the celebration of the International Monuments Day, ICOMOS Hellenic regrets to have to announce the following.

Five years since the expedition of a joint Advisory Mission of UNESCO and ICOMOS representatives to Athens in April 2022, for monitoring the works on the Acropolis of Athens, a site inscribed in the World Heritage List in 1987, the Ministry of Culture continues massive building on the Acropolis and the surrounding site, in a way that cynically violates the internationally accepted guidelines.

One has to keep in mind that, the Mission was UNESCO's response to the international outcry raised since 2020, by (a) the fact that the living rock of the Acropolis had been covered over extensively with reinforced concrete by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture (FIG. 1) and (b) by the projects then announced, by the same Ministry, for covering the entire Acropolis with terraces and constructions made of new materials¹ and for "reconstructing" the Roman flight of steps on the western access of the rock. (FIG. 2)

The Mission's Report proposed corrections for what was already done but, for the projected works of covering the rock and for the western access, it recommended to the Hellenic State Party to comply, from now on, with the UNESCO/ICCROM/ICOMOS/ITCN (2002) and other management guidelines of the World Heritage Convention.² Specifically, the report recommended: 1. Prior to any implementation, a Heritage Impact Assessment of the studies approved by the Hellenic State party should be carried out, based on detailed documentation with argumentation, plans and drawings; next, the whole package of information should also be shared with the WHC for review with the Advisory Bodies, prior to commencing implementation. 2. Since no Management Plan nor Tourism plan have ever been submitted for the Acropolis, such plans should be done, and the Acropolis implementation projects should be inscribed in them.

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture arbitrarily presented the Mission's report as laudatory,³ at the same time belittling the recommendations for conforming with the guidelines of the World Heritage Convention⁴ and any different interpretation of the Report.⁵ In practice, instead of conforming with the recommendations of the Mission's report, the Ministry of Culture continues to build massively. The pretext that they serve utilitarian

¹ <https://world-heritage-watch.org/content/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/WHW-Report-2021.pdf>, pp. 21-27 (Accessed 15.03.2026)

<https://world-heritage-watch.org/content/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/2022-Report-WHW-final.pdf>, pp. 227-231 (Accessed 15.03.2026)

² <https://whc.unesco.org/en/documents/199557> (Accessed 15.03.2026)

³ <https://www.culture.gov.gr/el/Information/SitePages/view.aspx?nID=4560> (Accessed 15.03.2026)

⁴ <https://www.kathimerini.gr/society/562377325/unesco-poly-kala-prostateymeni-i-akropoli/> (Accessed 15.03.2026)

<https://www.in.gr/2023/04/19/life/culture-live/unesco-akropoli-protypo-syntirisis-klironomias-se-pagkosmio-epipedo/> (Accessed 15.03.2026)

<https://www.lifo.gr/now/entertainment/unesco-i-akropoli-protypo-syntirisis-klironomias-se-pagkosmio-epipedo> (Accessed 15.03.2026)

⁵ <https://thepressproject.gr/epistimones-kai-anthropoi-tou-politismou-stilitevoun-to-neo-tsimentoma-tis-akropolis/> (Accessed 15.03.2026)



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needs cannot in the least justify the fact that, they break the national legal frame by using heavy caterpillar machinery, instead of being carried out with proper systematic excavation.⁶

This policy is continued on the Acropolis, in its slopes, and in the immediate proximity, including monuments considered to be among the most representative creations of Ancient Hellenic Culture, while none of the recommendations

of the 2022 Advisory Mission's Report have been fulfilled.

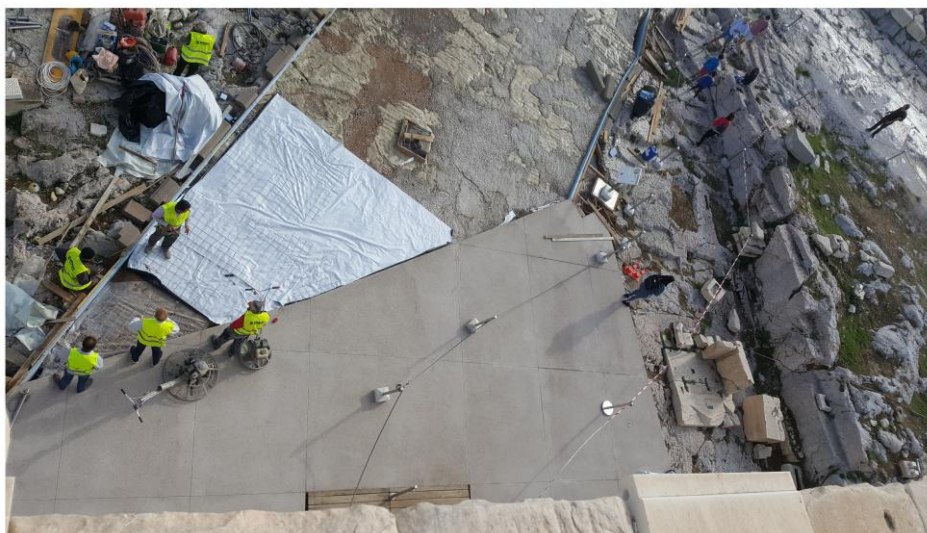


FIG. 1a. The area east of the Propylaia, in the process of being paved with reinforced concrete, covering over the face of the living rock. View from the top of the east front of the Propylaia. The metal mesh is spread on the plastic sheet spread out on the living rock. Photo: Tasos Tanoulas, October 29, 2020.



FIG. 1b. The area east of the Propylaia, in the process of being paved with reinforced concrete, covering over the face of the living rock. The wet cement on the picture's left end is covering the plastic sheet and metal mesh, seen in FIG. 1a.

⁶ <https://world-heritage-watch.org/content/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/WHW-Report-2023.pdf>, pp. 48-49 (Accessed 15.03.2026)



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View from the NW corner of the platform. Above left, the west end of the Parthenon. Photo: Tasos Tanoulas, October 29, 2020.

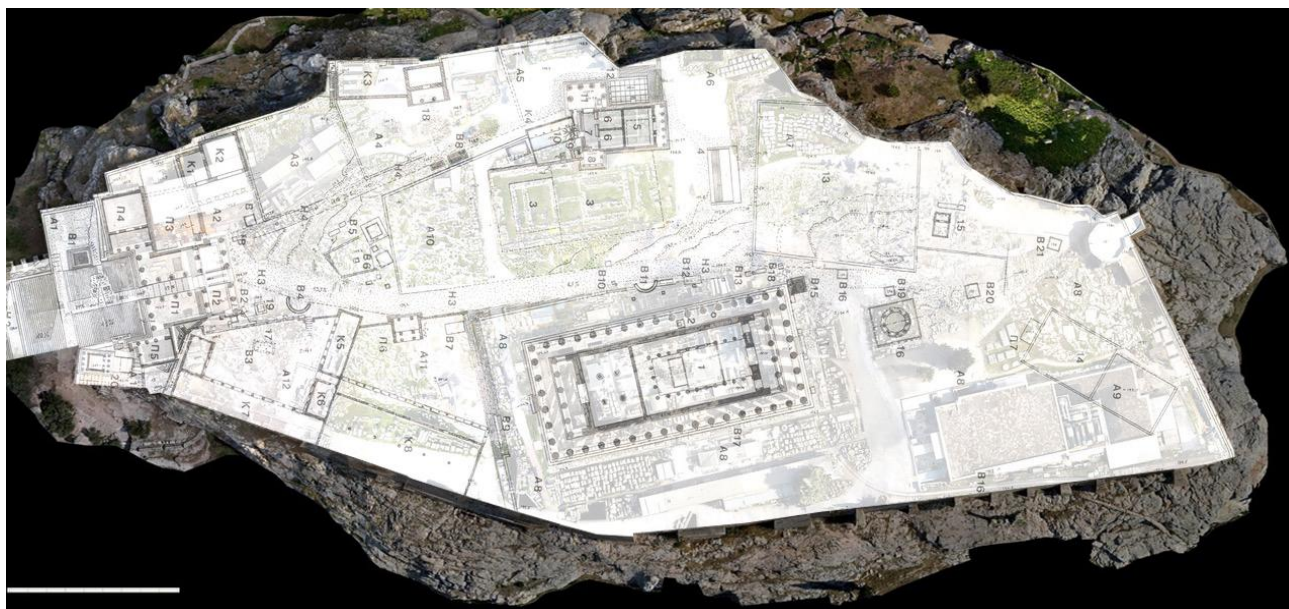


FIG. 2a. A conjectural representation of the Acropolis plateau in the 2nd century A. D., superposed on the digital photomosaic plan of the Acropolis depicted in FIG. 2b. It shows the potential form of the Acropolis plateau if the Acropolis rock were covered with new structures in the form of levelled terraces. Source: Hellenic Ministry of Culture

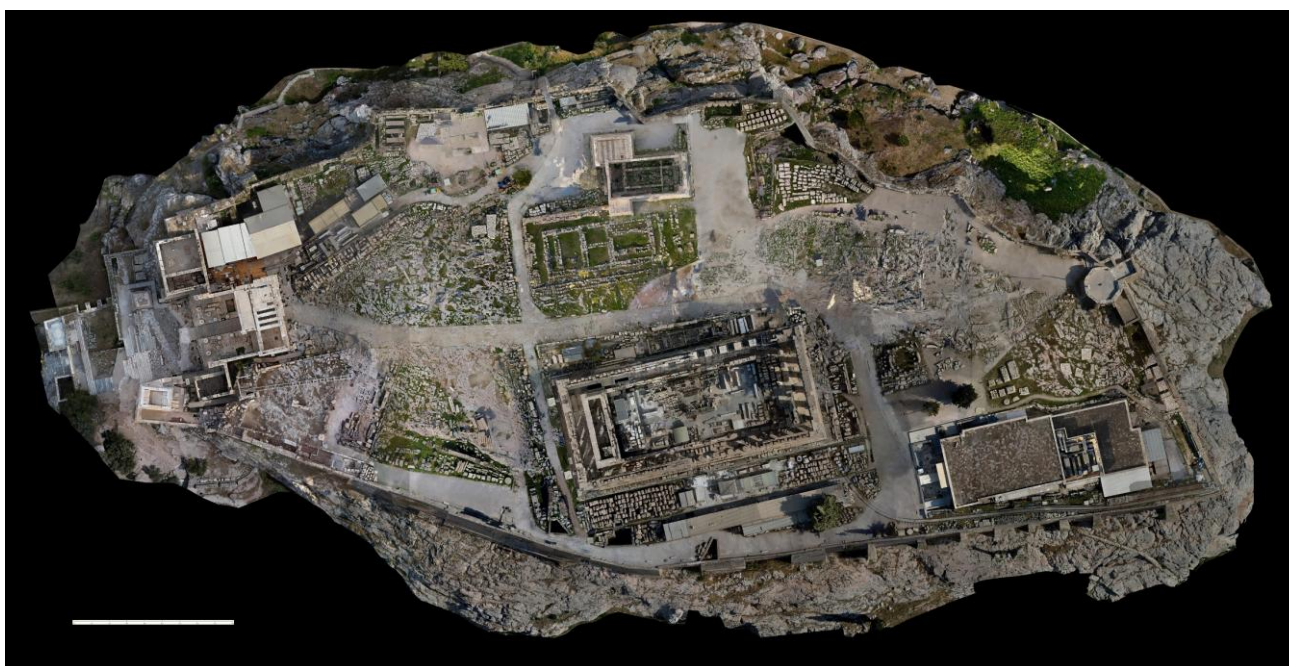


FIG. 2b. Digital photomosaic plan of the Acropolis plateau, before the implementation, in 2020, of the reinforced concrete pavement and the installation of the present elevator. Source: Hellenic Ministry of Culture



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ACROPOLIS PLATEAU

The NE area of the plateau was for a long time inaccessible to visitors because of ancient remains; in the last two years it has been extended to the north and west, with the excuse of the implementation of structural works for the transformation of the old Acropolis museum for serving new functions, the refurbishment and extension of the visitors' toilets on the plateau, and for the consolidation of the Acropolis walls and other antiquities. (FIG. 3) It seems very probable that the rather robust implementations at the southeast corner of the Acropolis, just inside the ancient walls, are projected towards accommodating a second elevator, which the Minister of Culture has already announced. One wonders why, instead of fixing the elevator built in 2020, a new one is planned to be established at an even more conspicuous place.



FIG. 3. View in the southeast area of the Acropolis plateau, showing part of the work-site to the north and west of the old museum of the Acropolis. The mess is obviously due to many small multi-purposed projects going on in a slow pace for almost two years. At the background: mount Hymettus and the old museum.

ODEION OF HEROD ATTICUS AT THE SOUTH SLOPE OF THE ACROPOLIS

The Odeion of Herod Atticus in the immediate proximity of the south wall of the Acropolis and the west access, is closely connected with the iconic image of the Acropolis rock and plateau from the south and south west. The Odeion of Herod Atticus will be closed to the public for over three years, for massive reconstruction, rehabilitation and updating of the mechanical equipment for the needs of the annual Athens Festival, which is held in the monument in summer. (FIG. 4-5) Accessible documents show as most probable that the study and the realization of the work will be assigned to contractors with non-transparent procedures, while no reference is made to the need of complying with the national legal framework and other guidelines of the World Heritage Convention.



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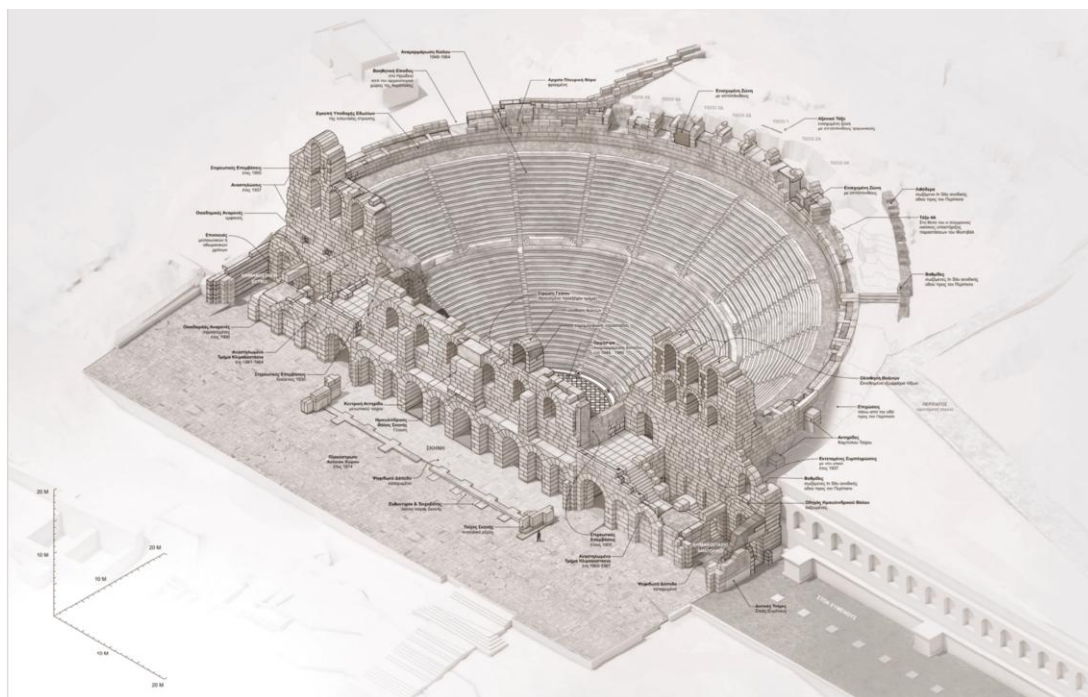


FIG. 4a. Actual state of the Odeion of Herod Atticus. View from SE. Source: LIFO, 23.2.26

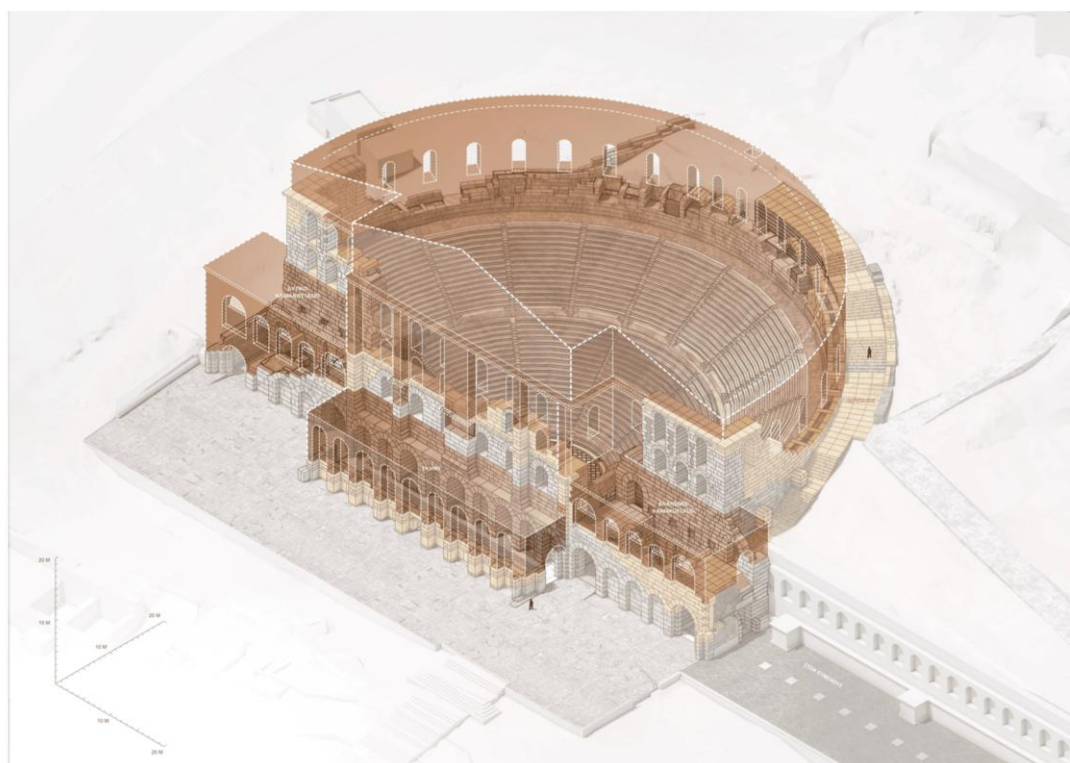


FIG. 4b. A conjectural reconstruction of the original shape of the Odeion of Herod Atticus. View from SE. Source: LIFO, 23.2.26



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FIG. 5a. The south front of the Odeion of Herod Atticus, after the projected reconstruction. Reconstructed parts indicated in yellow. Source: LIFO, 23.2.2026

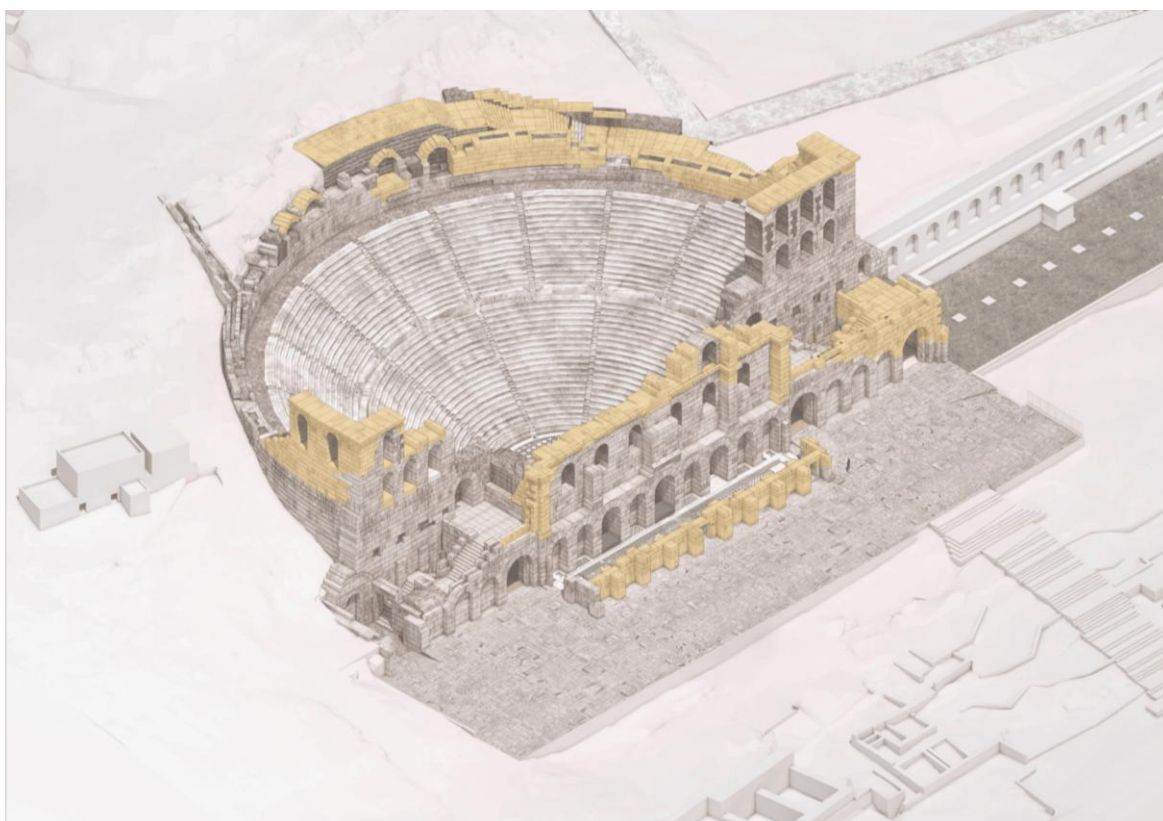


FIG. 5b. View of the Odeion of Herod Atticus from SW, after the projected reconstruction. Reconstructed parts indicated in yellow. Source: LIFO, 23.2.26



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ATHENIAN AGORA

New buildings have been erected since last spring, to serve as ticket offices for the entrance at the site's north. Instead of proper systematic excavation, heavy caterpillar machinery was used for digging; the vertical surface of dirt revealed, was covered by a tall retaining wall of reinforced concrete, facing southwest. (FIG. 6-7) New pavement of concrete is under construction across the Agora, over the Panathenaic Way from northwest to southeast. At the southeast corner of the Agora, the foundations of a Roman temple, known as the Southeast Temple, are being covered with reinforced concrete, poured at the site. The door sill and the lower parts of the walls of the cella, the krepis (that is, the formal steps of Greco-Roman architecture) of the porch facing north have already been "reconstructed" in reinforced concrete. Most probably, the "reconstructed" krepis is destined to bear a number of Ionic columns which are attributed (in second-hand use) to the north façade of the temple; these columns originate from the classical temple of Athena Sounias (the original foundations are identified at cape Sounion) and are now lying nearby. However, the erection of the columns cannot justify the ceiling of the ancient foundation under massive structures of reinforced concrete. (FIG. 8) Nevertheless, very close to the northeast temple, more steps are reconstructed with reinforced concrete, on top of surviving original roman steps lining the Panathenaic way on the west side, to allow access at a platform before the east end of the Middle Stoa. (FIG. 9) It seems that there are no proper studies for the reconstructions, as all the works appear in the frame of a rainwater drainage implementation project.



FIG. 6



FIG. 7

FIG. 6. Digging inside the northern entrance of the Athenian Agora, view from the south. Caterpillar machinery is used. Source: Tasos Tanoulas, May 2025.

FIG. 7. Inside the northern entrance of the Athenian Agora, from the almost same point of view as in fig. 6. The work is completed. Source: Tasos Tanoulas, March 2026.



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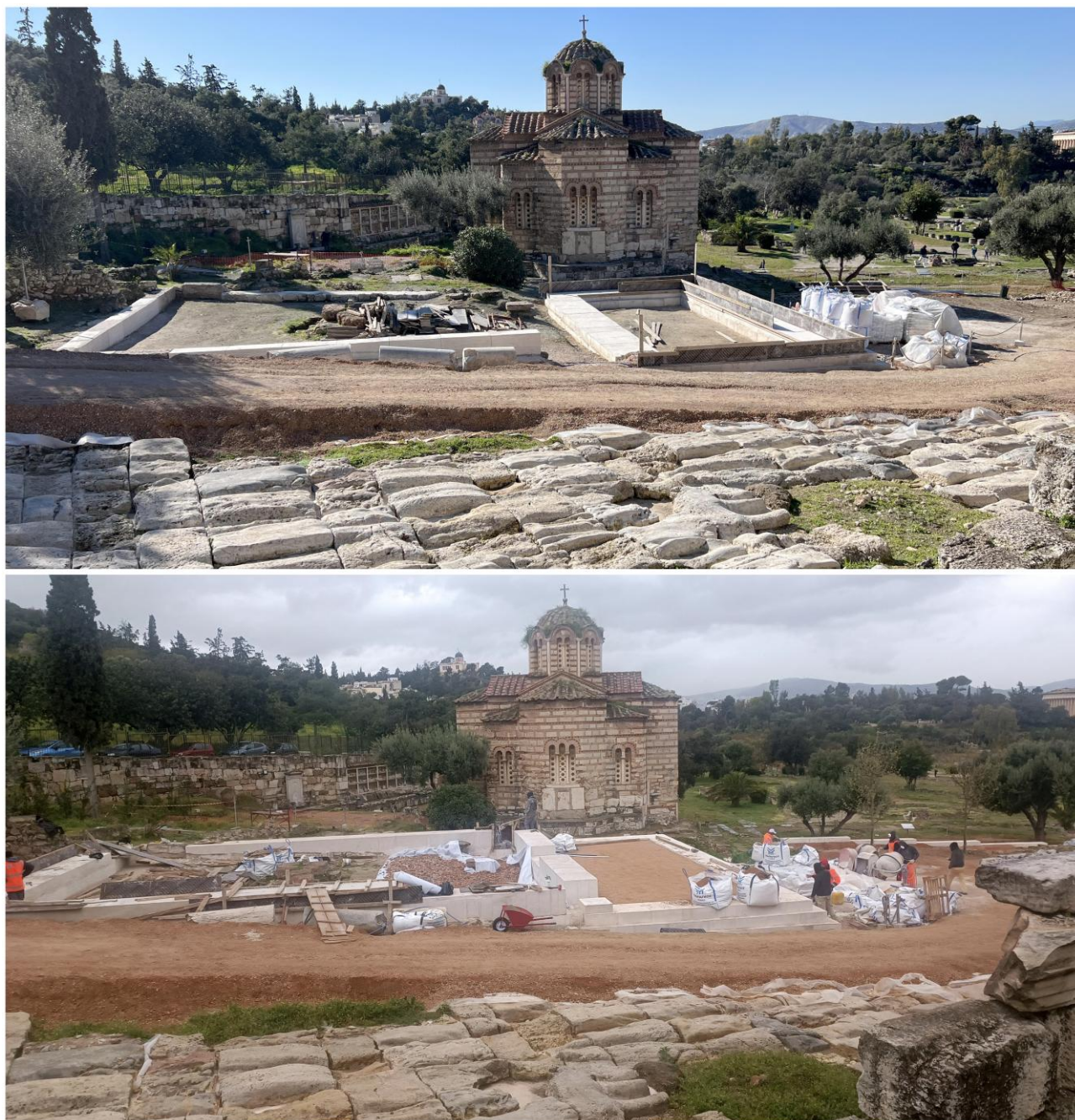


FIG. 8.

a. The Southeast temple of the Athenian Agora, view from the E. The original vestiges of the foundations are completely covered with reinforced concrete, aiming at a sort of “reconstruction”. At front level, the original Roman pavement of the Panathenaic Way. At the background, the Byzantine church of the Holy Apostles. Source: Tasos Tanoulas, 20.2.26.

b. The Southeast temple of the Athenian Agora, view from the same point of view as in FIG. 9a. The original vestiges of the foundations are completely covered with reinforced concrete, aiming at a sort of “reconstruction”. At front level the original Roman pavement of the Panathenaic Way. At the background, the Byzantine church of the Holy Apostles. In the ten days separating these photographs, the krepis and the door sill have been completed, along with the low parts of the flanking walls. Source: Tasos Tanoulas, 1.4.26



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FIG. 9. On top of original Roman steps, before the east end of the Middle Stoa in the Athenian Agora, new steps are being “reconstructed” in reinforced concrete.

a. Detail and b. general view. At the upper level of both Figures, the SE Temple seen from NW. Source: Tasos Tanoulas, 20.2.26



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KERAMEIKOS

At the same time, major works are carried out in the Kerameikos. There is information for hasty digging with improper methods, but the site is inaccessible and closed all around with panels, defending visual contact. Only the new entrance from the Agion Asomaton street is accessible, showing massive reinforced concrete structures being under construction. The experience of the Ministry of Culture's practices in and around the Acropolis, and in the Agora, cause serious concerns about the ways and methods used in the works behind the panels surrounding the Kerameikos.

WIDER SITE IN THE HILLS WEST OF THE ACROPOLIS:

Works have been announced for the enhancement of the 'diateichisma', that is, the fifth century B.C. ancient wall between the hill of the Nymphs and the hill of Muses (Philopappos Hill). (FIG. 10)



FIG. 10.

- a. A view of surviving parts of the "Diateichisma". Source: Ministry of Culture.
- b. An aerial view of surviving parts of the "Diateichisma", indicating projected interventions for "enhancement". Source: Ministry of Culture.



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All these interventions affect the authenticity and the integrity of the monuments and are not in conformity with the national legal frame and absolutely incompatible with the principles of the World Heritage Convention, as recommended in the UNESCO/ICOMOS Advisory Mission Report, the 1964 Venice Charter and the 2003 ICOMOS Charter.

As far as we know, the Hellenic State Party has not provided UNESCO, and the Advisory Bodies, with the files of information responding to the recommendations of the Advisory Mission's report.

ICOMOS Hellenic has often expressed, since 2020, its concerns and its opposition to the works on and about the Acropolis. Under the pretext of utilitarian needs, arbitrary interventions spread out on the surrounding antiquities, degrading their values, with immediate negative effects on the Acropolis, World Heritage Monument since 1987. This policy of the Ministry of Culture showcases a most serious problem of the Cultural Heritage Management in Greece, which already damages irrevocably the authenticity and the value of the monuments as unassailable cultural evidence.

Once more, we ask for the following actions to be taken:

- 1. The "Acropolis, Athens" World Heritage Property must urgently be put on the agenda of the World Heritage Committee.**
- 2. The World Heritage Committee must request from the Hellenic State Party**
 - a. To stop all practical activity on the site immediately.**
 - b. To fulfill the recommendations of the Advisory Committee Report (Heritage Impact Assessment of the studies approved by the Hellenic State party with argumentation, plans and drawings to be shared with the WH Center for review together with the Advisory Bodies and, also, Management Plan and Tourism plan for the Acropolis to be submitted, with the Acropolis implementation projects inscribed in them).**
 - c. Not to proceed to any intervention before the WH Committee has taken a decision about the implemented and planned works.**