



Acropolis Museum
Directorate of Collections and Exhibitions
Department of Educational Programs



Acropolis: an endless story

Online educational program for students of 1st - 3rd grades Junior
High School

Educational resource



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Introduction

The organization and preparation of the school's participation in an educational program delivered remotely by the archaeologists of the Acropolis Museum's Department of Educational Programs, are key factors in ensuring a successful and meaningful learning experience.

Beyond exploring, digitally, the Museum's galleries and introducing students to the objects on display, their history, artistic significance, and the world in which they were created, it is equally important to create the conditions that encourage students to engage with, deepen, and build upon the knowledge and experiences they gain during their visit. With this in mind, we have prepared the following educational material for you to use in the classroom both before the online educational program, in order to help students, prepare for and make the most of their learning experience, as well as after the program, to support the further development and consolidation and enrichment of the knowledge they acquire of their knowledge.

Description of the program

You have selected the educational program entitled: *Acropolis: an endless story*, which is designed for students of **1st -3rd grade of Junior Highschool**. The program presents the history of the Acropolis, from its beginnings to the present day in the Acropolis Museum.

Through the digital tour of the Museum's galleries, students discover, through discussion and rich visual material, the adventures of the Acropolis and its monuments as well as the secrets of the exhibition of its findings. How all these fascinating objects ended up in these galleries? Why these objects were chosen and what they have to tell us? Is it easy to set up such an exhibition?

The main objective of the program is to discuss the long history of the Acropolis, as it unfolds through the exhibits, but also the timeless value of the Museum itself as an integral part of our cultural heritage. It is also sought for students to observe, perceive and ultimately judge how a museum exhibition is set up. After all, they themselves will try their best, in the end, in the museological design of their own archaeological exhibition.

The total duration of the program is 90 minutes and is structured as follows:



1. Program Introduction

Before the day of the presentation, and once all the necessary arrangements for booking the online educational program have been completed, you will receive a link to join the program via the Google Meet platform. This means that you will need to have a Gmail account, which will allow you to access and connect to the platform¹. Our aim is not only to explore the history of the Acropolis, but also to help students develop an understanding of what a museum is and, to some extent, of the significance and meaning behind the way a museum exhibition is designed and presented. At the beginning of the program, we discuss the meaning of the word Acropolis and explore the reasons why museums exist and the role they play in preserving and communicating cultural heritage.

2. Digital tour of the Museum

We begin the program by introducing what the Acropolis and the Acropolis Museum are. Through a series of images, we ‘enter’ the Museum’s first exhibition space on the ground floor, the Acropolis Slopes Gallery, and gradually make our way up to the third floor and the Parthenon Gallery, discovering step by step the structure and significance of the exhibition.

Through discussion and guided questions posed by the archaeologist, and with the help of the interpretive material, students are encouraged to observe and reflect on how the Museum itself “tells” the story of the Acropolis, the history and changing fortunes of its monuments, and its enduring significance. They explore how this narrative is conveyed through the Museum’s architectural design, the objects selected for display, and the way these objects are arranged and presented within the exhibition.

¹ If you do not have a Gmail account, the necessary arrangements will be made during the booking process.



Program Objectives – Museum education methods of Implementation

Objectives

The students:

- To get to know the history of the Athenian Acropolis through the Museum's collections.
- To familiarize themselves with the Museum and the museum objects:
 - To understand the value of the Museum and its collection through the authenticity and materiality of museum objects.
 - To understand the value of material culture.
- To enhance their observation and critical thinking, creativity and expressive ability.
- To cultivate their aesthetics and emotional intelligence.
- To work collectively.
- To be entertained.

Museum education methods

- **Narration**
- **Obstetric:**
 - ❖ Directed discussion through questions and answers.
 - ❖ Observation and exploration of authentic artifacts and the museum exhibition.



Guidelines for Using the Educational Material

The material below provides concise information on the Acropolis and the Acropolis Museum. It also includes visual resources and links to additional information, should you wish to explore the topic further. An indicative bibliography is also provided for those who would like to conduct further research or expand their knowledge of the topics presented.

The purpose of the material provided is to familiarize students with the place, historical period, and subject matter of the program, while allowing them sufficient time to develop and engage with the idea of 'visiting' a cultural institution. In this way, we hope to foster their interest and desire for a more meaningful encounter with the Museum and to encourage them to deepen and enrich their knowledge.

You are free to decide how best to use the material according to your students' educational needs and interests. As additional suggestions, we propose the following ways of working with the material:

1. Read the texts carefully and explore the suggested links yourself before presenting them to your students, so that you can plan how best to communicate the information in the classroom. The aim of the program is not only for students to gain knowledge about the subject, but also to engage in an enjoyable and meaningful learning experience. At the same time, we seek to contribute to the development of skills such as observation and collaboration, as well as to foster respect for cultural heritage as a record of collective memory and history. Through active participation, students become engaged participants in cultural life and heritage.
2. Watch the suggested short videos together with your students in the classroom. In this way, students gain an initial acquaintance with the Museum and its collections and, through this process of familiarization, become emotionally and intellectually engaged with the Museum and its exhibits.
3. Use the introductory text for the Acropolis Museum and the Acropolis and encourage students to search for more about the history of the Acropolis Rock and the Museum, on the internet or on social media with the support of an accompanying adult. In this way, they will be able to use a medium that is familiar to them- new technologies- to explore beyond the boundaries of the educational process.



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BEFORE THE PROGRAM



Information

The Acropolis

The Acropolis, meaning “the upper city,” is a low rocky hill that dominates the center of modern Athens. Its history stretches back into the depths of time. Although today it is most commonly associated with the magnificent monuments built as part of Pericles’ architectural program in the mid-5th century BCE, the sacred hill underwent many changes over the course of the centuries.



At the beginning of its history, during the **Late Neolithic period (4000–3200 BCE)**, the inhabitants of Attica chose the summit and slopes of the hill as a place to settle. The rock provided a natural defensive position, while natural springs at its foot supplied fresh drinking water.

One goddess – many cults

The worship of the goddess Athena on the Acropolis was not one but several, as the goddess had many hypostases. Thus, in each era there were more than one temple and altar for her. Her two main cults were those of Athena Polias - protector of the city - which is placed on the north side of the hill and Athena Parthenos or Promachos – the warrior Athena - which is located on the south side. She was also worshipped as Athena Nike, Athena Ergani, Athena Hygeia etc.

Later, during the **Mycenaean period (1600–1100 BCE)**, a palatial complex was built on the summit of the rock for the local ruler. It included administrative buildings, residences for members of the elite, and sanctuaries dedicated to the goddess Athena. To strengthen the Acropolis’s defenses, a massive fortification wall was added around the middle of the 13th century BCE.

Around the **8th century BCE**, the Acropolis was transformed into an exclusively sacred space, with the worship of the goddess Athena becoming predominant, as evidenced by the few surviving remains of the mudbrick temples dating to the Geometric period (1100–700 BCE).

During the **6th century BCE**, the hill began to reflect the gradual development and flourishing of Athens. New monumental stone temples were erected in place of the earlier structures, and the site became



Other Cults on the Acropolis

In addition to Athena, other deities were worshipped on the Acropolis both on the rock and on the slopes. Some of them were Artemis Brauronia, Aphrodite, Zeus, Poseidon, Pan, Apollo, etc.

[The Acropolis caves and its findings \(video\)](#) | [Acropolis Museum](#) | [Official website](#)

[The sanctuaries](#) | [Acropolis Museum](#) | [Official website](#)

On the Persian disaster

<https://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/multimedia-applications/persians-destroy-acropolis-athens-480-bc-video>

More about the temples of the classical era

[The Parthenon Gallery](#) | [Acropolis Museum](#) | [Official website](#)

[Athena Parthenos. The inscriptions](#) | [Acropolis Museum](#) | [Official website](#)

[The temple of Athena Nike](#) | [Acropolis Museum](#) | [Official website](#)

[The Erechtheion](#) | [Acropolis Museum](#) | [Official website](#)

filled with votive offerings dedicated by the Athenians to their beloved goddess.

At the dawn of the **5th century BCE**, the Athenians found themselves facing the greatest army of the time: that of the Persian Empire. Immediately after their victory at the Battle of Marathon, the Athenians began constructing a new temple dedicated to Athena in her aspect as Promachos, or Parthenos, on the site of the earlier 6th-century BCE temple. In doing so, they sought to thank the goddess for the assistance she had provided them in battle.

Ten years later, in **480 BCE**, this unfinished temple, along with the entire Archaic Acropolis, was destroyed by the Persians when they invaded the Greek city-states for a second time.

Despite the destruction of the Acropolis, the Persian Wars marked a turning point in history, transforming Athens into the leading power of the Aegean and the Delian League. Thus, **33 years later**, under the leadership of Pericles, the Athenians embarked on the construction of new and more magnificent temples. These would not only replace the destroyed Archaic monuments, but also proclaim the greatness and power of Athenian democracy throughout the Greek world. Great monuments such as the **Parthenon, the Erechtheion, and the Temple of Athena Nike** were constructed during the second half of the **5th century BCE**.

The people of Athens would climb the Acropolis to take part in the great festivals held in honor of the goddess Athena and to offer her gifts. These offerings ranged from small and inexpensive objects to highly valuable ones, such as marble statues. Through these offerings, they either asked the goddess to stand by them in times of difficulty



or expressed their gratitude for the help she had given them when they called upon her.

In addition to the great sanctuaries dedicated to Athena on the Acropolis, two other important sanctuaries were established on the southern slope, among others, dedicated to different gods. These were the **Sanctuary of Asclepius**, which also served as a healing center, and the **Sanctuary and Theatre of Dionysus**, where dramatic competitions were held during the Great Dionysia.

Following the age of Pericles, the Acropolis remained the most important sanctuary of the city, continuing to be dedicated to the goddess Athena until the spread of Christianity. In the **early 6th century CE**, the Parthenon was converted into a Christian church. The eventful history of the Acropolis continued in the **13th century**, when, following the Fourth Crusade, the Franks took control of Athens. They converted the Parthenon into a Catholic church and adapted the other buildings for use as palaces.

During the Ottoman rule (**1456-1833**), the Ottoman garrison was installed on the Acropolis and the Parthenon was converted into a mosque.

The year **1687** marked a decisive turning point in the appearance of the Acropolis rock.

During the Venetian–Ottoman War, the Venetian army, led by General Morosini, laid siege to the Acropolis. During the



siege, the Venetians directed their cannons towards the Parthenon and bombarded it.

The Ottomans had stored gunpowder inside the temple, and the impact of Morosini's cannon fire proved devastating. A direct hit caused the gunpowder to explode, resulting in the catastrophic destruction of the Parthenon! When the gunpowder exploded, most of the temple was destroyed. The Venetians managed to maintain control of Athens for a year, after which the city and the Acropolis were recaptured by the Ottomans.

More about the history of the Acropolis and its monuments:

[Timeline \(interactive application\) | Acropolis Museum | Official website](#)

<https://www.acropolismuseumkids.gr/en/video/86-a-bizarre-walk-on-the-acropolis.html>

http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/3/eh351.jsp?obj_id=2384

http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/3/eh3530.jsp?obj_id=2384



It was also during this period that the removal of parts of the Parthenon's sculptural decoration to various European countries began. Following the explosion, numerous fragments of the Parthenon's sculptures were scattered across and around the Acropolis rock, allowing Morosini's mercenaries to collect pieces of ancient sculpture and transport them to their private collections in different parts of Europe.

On the adventures of the Parthenon

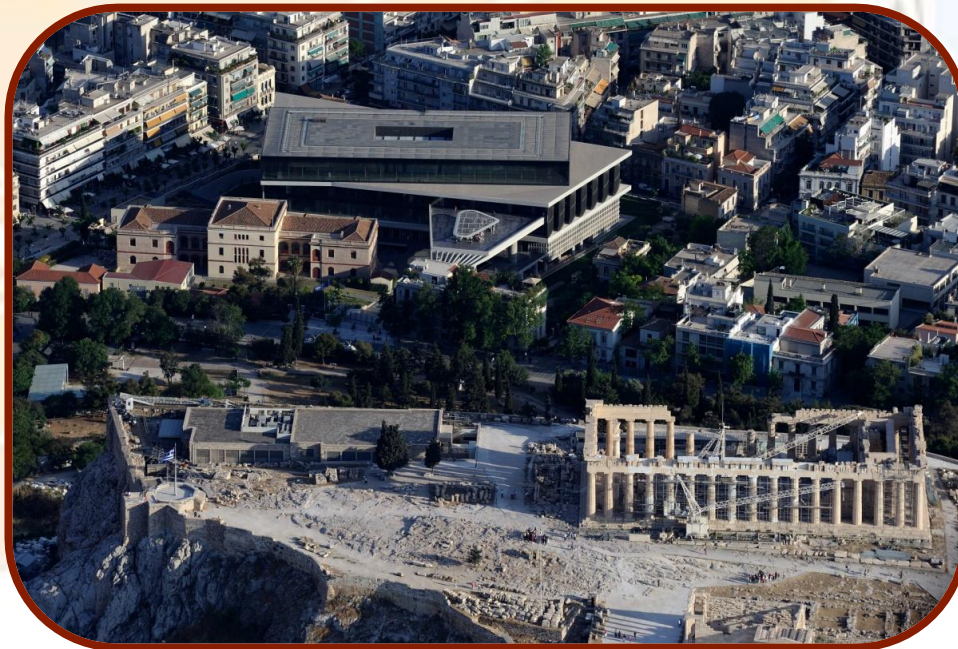
[The adventures of the Parthenon marbles in modern times \(video\) | Acropolis Museum | Official website](#)

The removal of antiquities from the Acropolis continued over the following centuries, culminating in the forcible removal of approximately half of the surviving sculptural decoration of the Parthenon by the team of Thomas Bruce, Lord Elgin, in the **early 19th century**.

Today, the Acropolis is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Its monuments are preserved and restored on the basis of systematic research carried out by archaeologists, architects, and conservators, using appropriate materials and techniques to safeguard their preservation and enhance their cultural significance.



The Acropolis Museum



The Acropolis Museum opened its doors to the public in the summer of **2009**. It is a thematic archaeological museum, meaning that all its collections originate from a single area: the Athenian Acropolis and its slopes.

More about the Acropolis Museum:

<https://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/museum-history>

<https://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/museum-building>

<https://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/virtual-tour-acropolis-museum>

It replaced the old museum, which was founded on the Sacred Rock in **1865** and could no longer adequately accommodate or display the vast number of finds unearthed during the **nineteenth-century excavations** on the Acropolis, the numerous architectural sculptures that had been removed from the ancient monuments to protect them from air pollution, as well as the ever-increasing number of visitors.

The architectural design of the new building was based on the proposal by Bernard Tschumi and Michalis Fotiadis, who won the fourth architectural competition held in **2000**.

Both the choice of location and the design of the building were dictated by the need to maintain visual contact with the archaeological site of the Acropolis, located just 300 meters away; by the need to



provide sufficient space for the full display of the architectural sculptures, particularly those of the Parthenon; and by the need to preserve and incorporate into the building's architecture the section of the ancient city that was uncovered at the construction site.

The exhibition spaces are arranged across three floors of the Museum, while an additional exhibition area extends across its base:

1. First exhibition area

The first exhibition area of the Museum is located on the ground floor and features finds from the slopes of the Acropolis. The floor of the gallery is made of glass, allowing visitors to view the ancient neighborhood beneath the Museum, while its upward slope evokes the ascent to the Acropolis Rock.

<https://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/exhibit-halls/gallery-acropolis-slopes>

<https://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/multimedia/virtual-tour-gallery-acropolis-slopes>



2. Second exhibition area

The second exhibition area is located on the first floor, where visitors follow the history of the Acropolis summit in a circular route, from 1400 BC to the 7th century AD.

At the top of the staircase leading to the gallery, visitors are greeted by the sculptures of the Hekatompedon, the first monumental temple built on the Acropolis, in 566 BC.

However, the tour begins to the left of the sculptures, where display cases contain objects associated with the Acropolis's distant past.

<https://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/exhibit-halls/early-history-acropolis>





On the southern side of the floor is the **Archaic Acropolis Gallery**. It is a spacious, light-filled gallery where architectural sculptures and votive offerings from the Acropolis dating from the 6th and early 5th centuries BC are displayed. The natural light entering through the large glass windows and skylights in the roof creates a sense of being outdoors, evoking the open-air spaces of the Acropolis sanctuary, where the sculptures originally stood in antiquity.

<https://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/exhibit-halls/archaic-acropolis-gallery>



On the western side of the first floor, architectural sculptures and architectural elements from monuments included in the building program initiated by Pericles for the Acropolis in the 5th century BC are displayed. These include the **Propylaia**, the monumental entrance to the Acropolis, the **Temple of Athena Nike**, and the **Erechtheion**.

<https://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/exhibit-halls/other-monuments-periklean-building-programme>



Continuing along the northern side of the same floor, visitors can trace the history of the Acropolis from the 5th century BC to the end of antiquity through votive offerings, dedicatory bases, marble portraits, and inscriptions.

<https://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/exhibit-halls/5th-century-bc-end-antiquity>



3. Third exhibition area

Passing through the second floor, which houses recreational areas and other visitor services, visitors reach the third floor of the Museum, the third exhibition area, which has been specially designed to accommodate the sculptures of the Parthenon. Passing through the second floor, which houses recreational areas and other visitor services, visitors reach the third floor of the Museum, the third exhibition area, which has been specially designed to accommodate the sculptures of the Parthenon.



The exhibition combines the original marble sculptures with plaster casts of those housed in the British Museum and other museums abroad. The **glass façade** surrounding the gallery provides natural light and allows visitors to enjoy a direct visual connection between the sculptures and the monument

from which they originate, as well as with the modern city, of which the Acropolis Museum is itself a part.

<https://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/exhibit-halls/parthenon-gallery>

<https://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/multimedia/virtual-tour-parthenon-gallery>



4. Fourth exhibition area

At the base of the Museum lie the remains of an ancient Athenian neighborhood brought to light by the **archaeological excavation** that preceded the construction of the Museum.

The excavation, which was opened to the public in June 2019, offers visitors the opportunity to explore at close quarters a neighborhood

that was home to human life and activity from the 4th millennium BC to the 12th century AD. Streets, houses, baths, workshops, and tombs form a complex archaeological landscape, with the best-preserved remains dating from Late Antiquity.





The visitor experience concludes at the small “**Excavation Museum**”, which opened in June 2024. Located along the southern edge of the excavation, it presents a selection of the objects left behind by the people who were born, lived, worked, and created in this corner of ancient Athens.



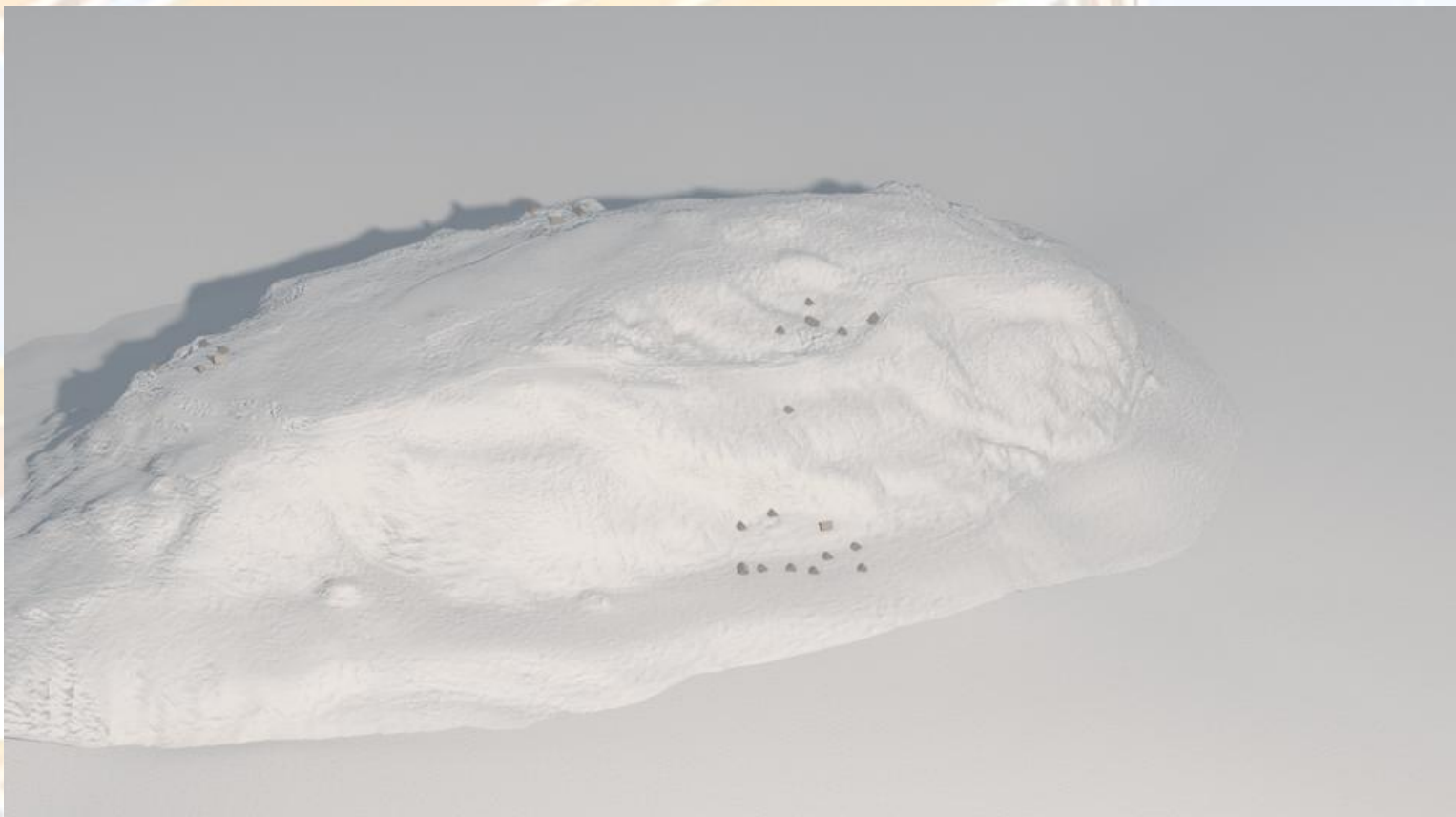
More about the excavation of the Acropolis Museum:

<https://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/exhibit-halls/archaeological-excavation>

<https://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/node/25147>

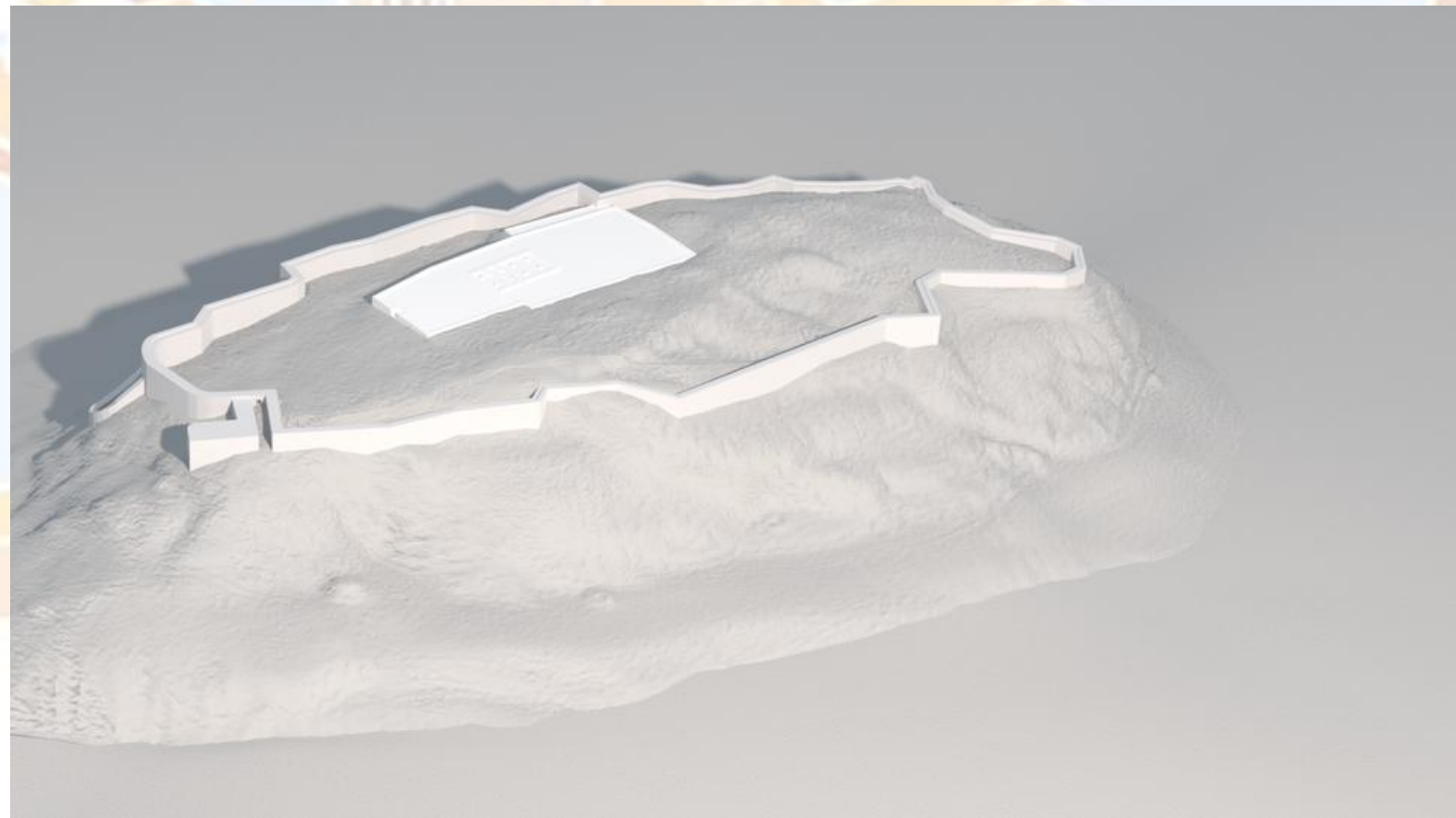
<https://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/node/25146>

Visual means



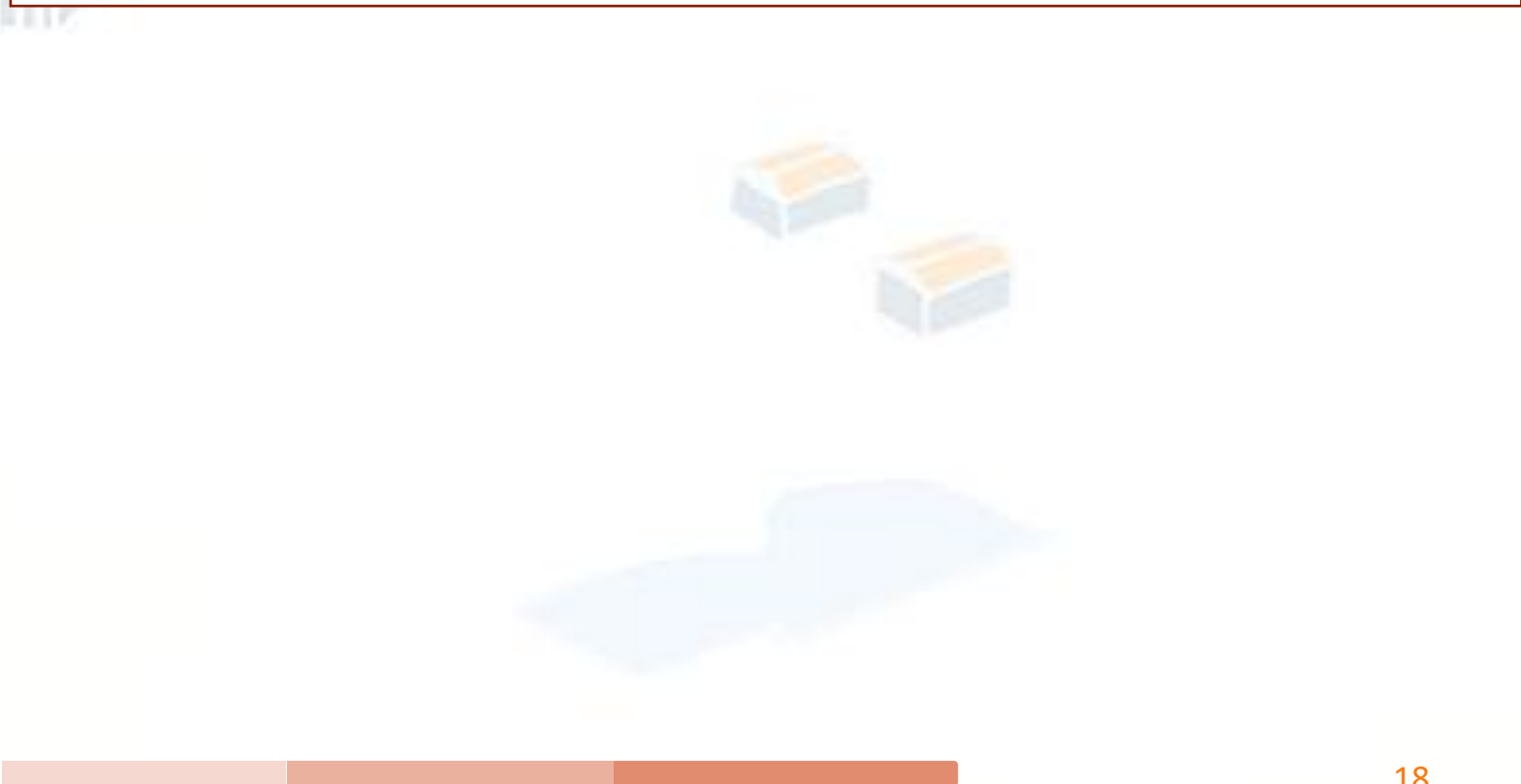
Digital representation of the Neolithic Acropolis (4000-3200 BC)

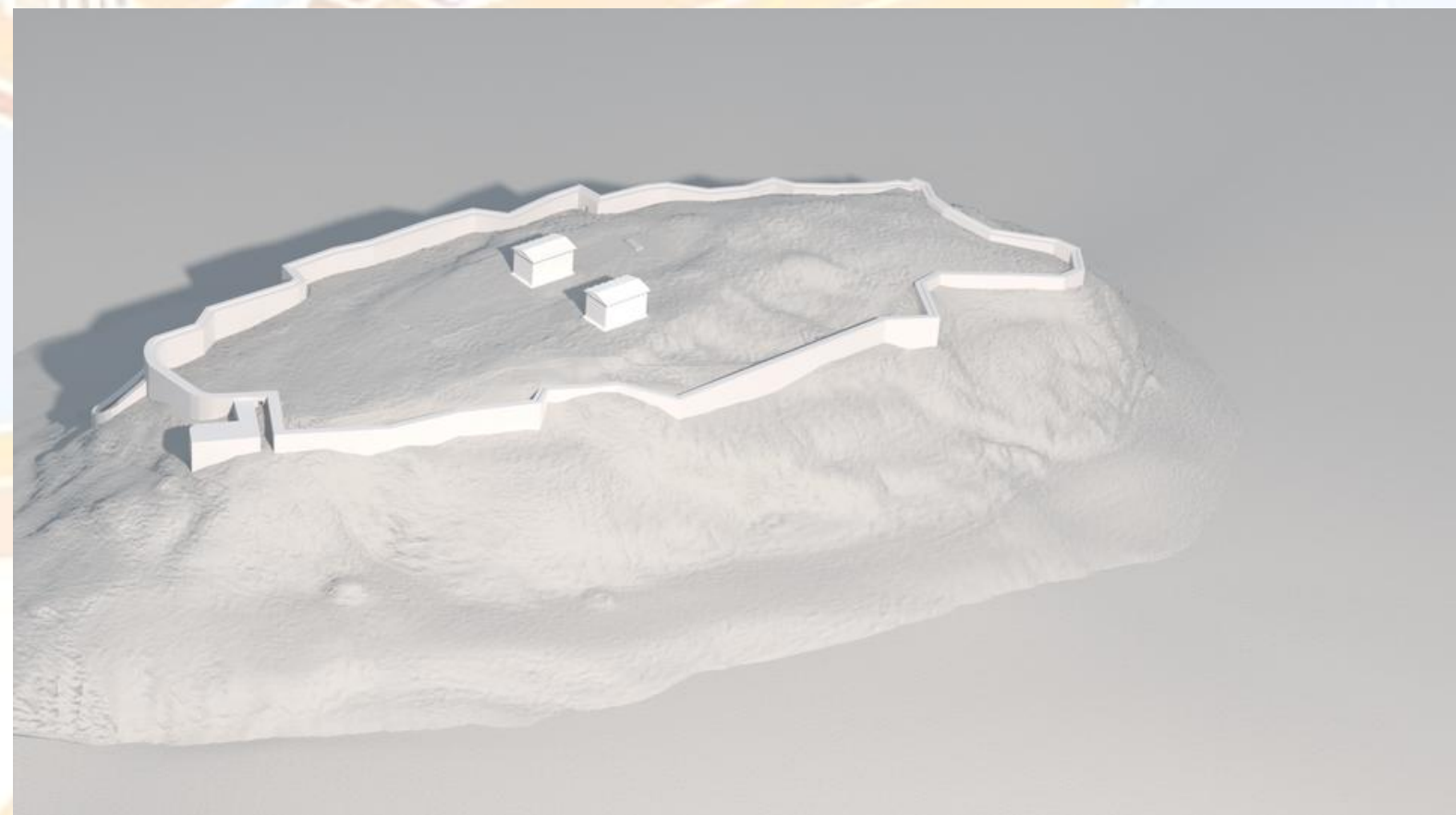
<https://xronologio.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/-3551/-3548>



Digital representation of the Mycenaean Acropolis (app. 13th century BC)

<https://xronologio.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/-1278/-1253>

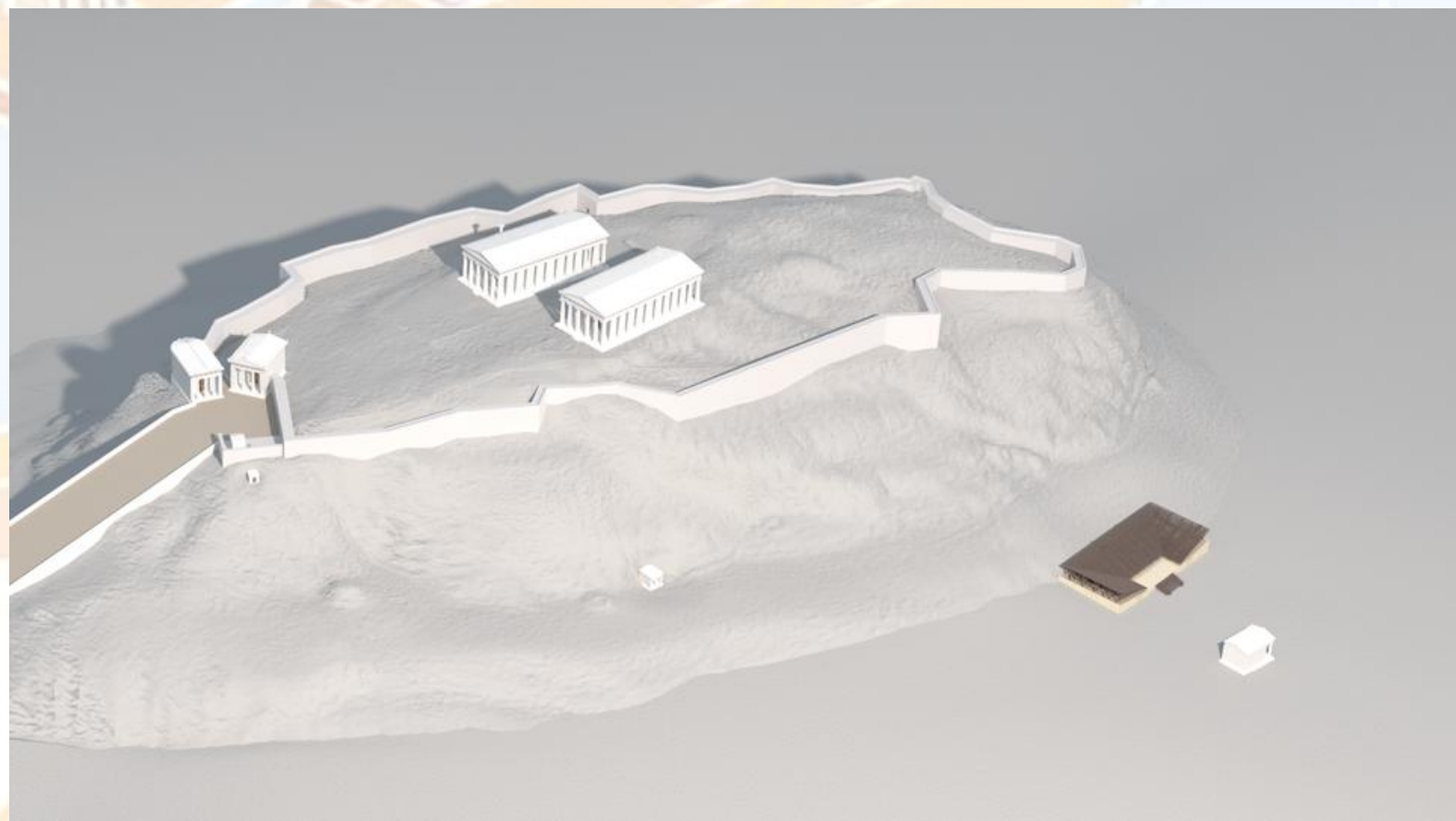




Digital representation of the Geometric Acropolis (8th century BC)

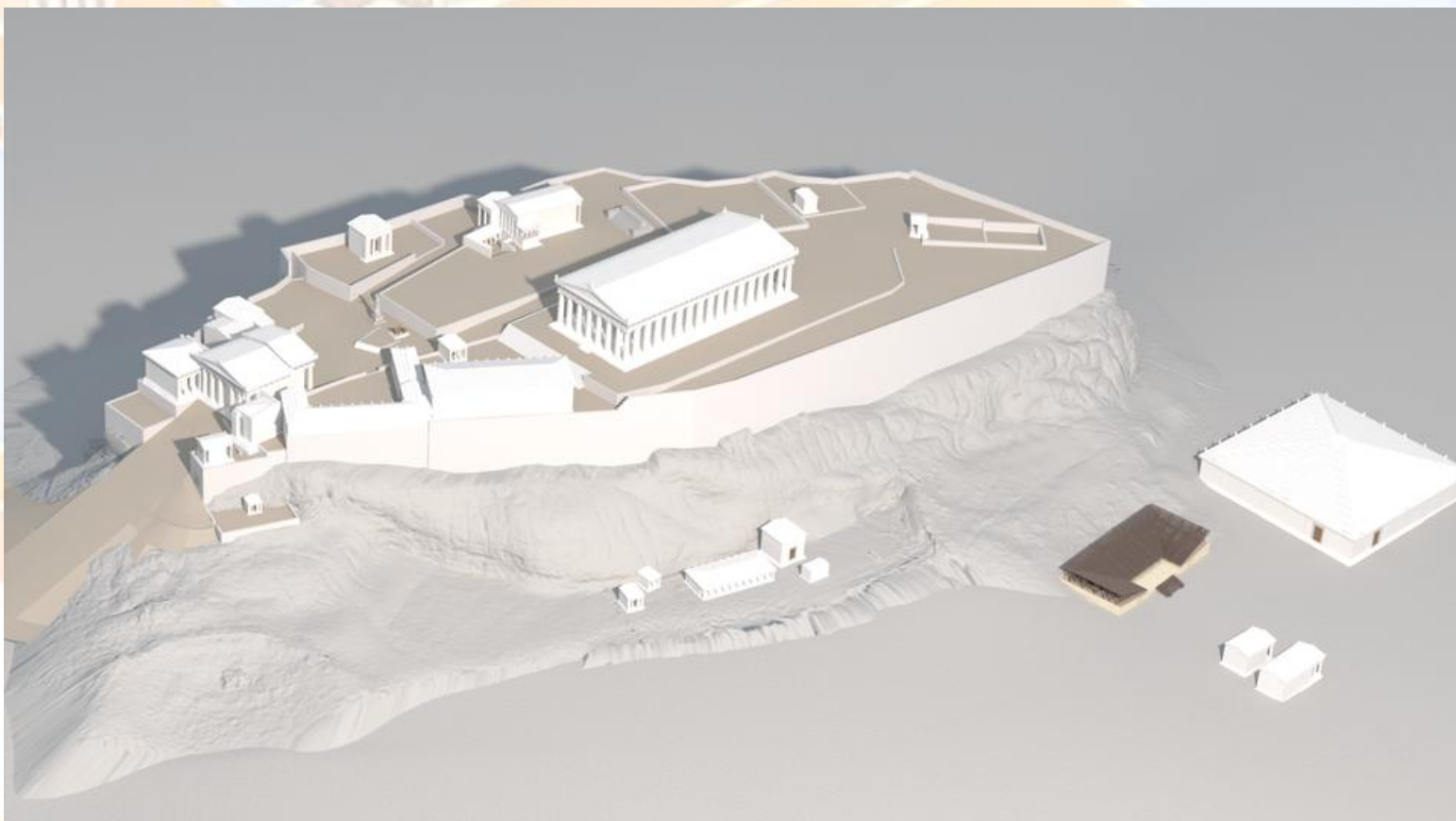
<https://xronologio.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/-753/-747>





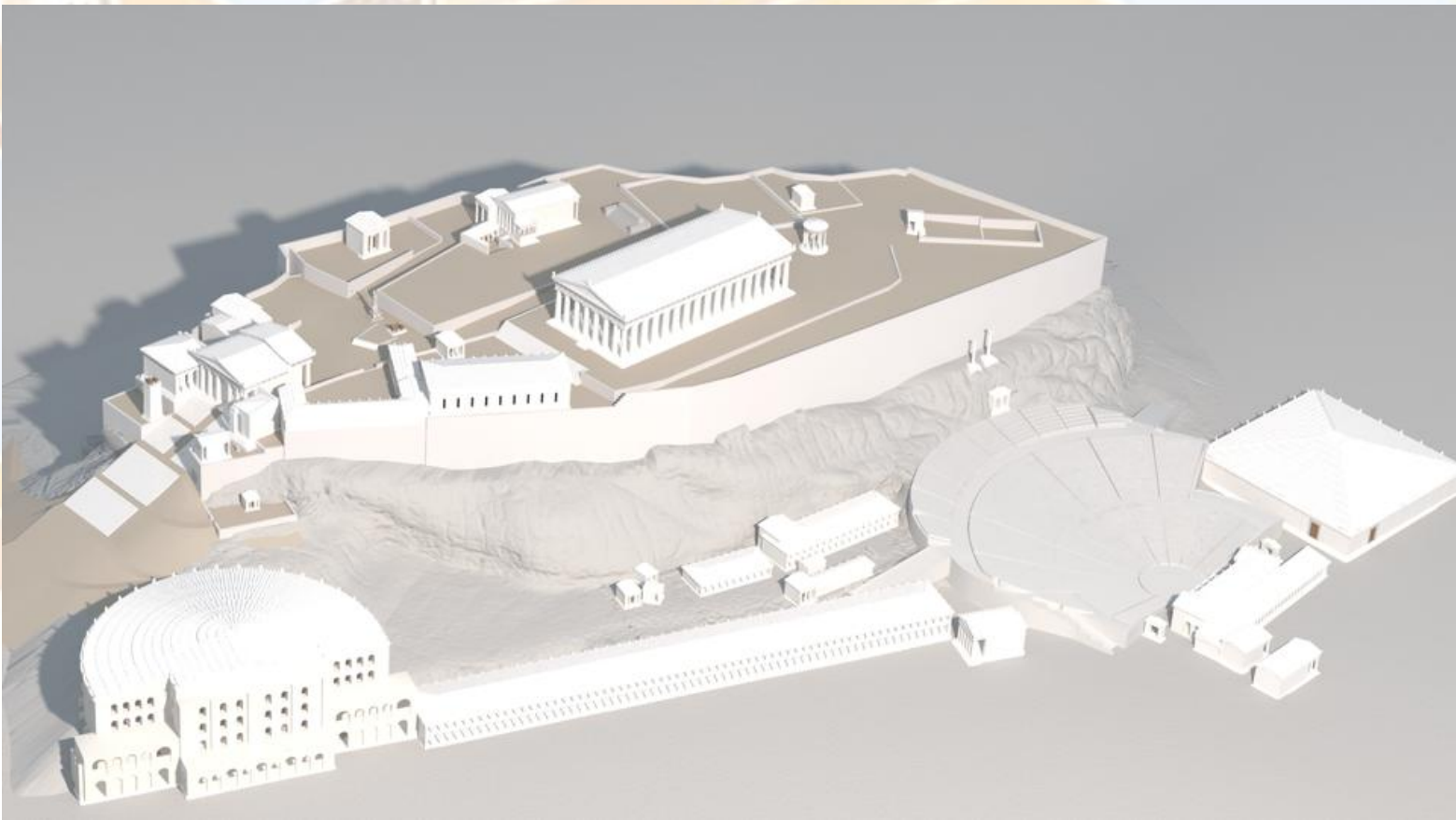
Digital representation of the Archaic Acropolis (6th century BC)

<https://xronologio.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/-573/-569>



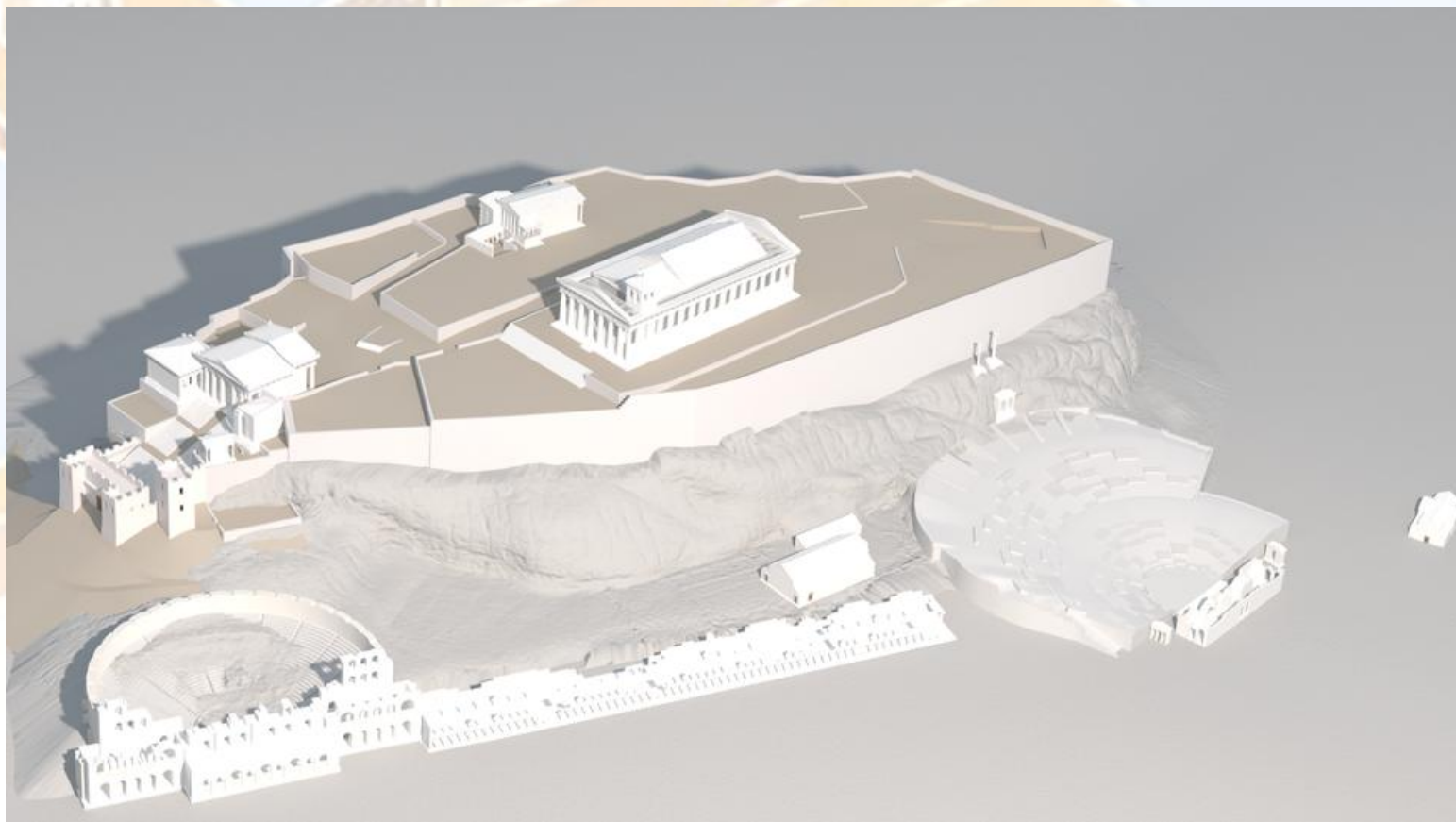
Digital representation of the Classical Acropolis (5th century BC)

<https://xronologio.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/-451/-448>



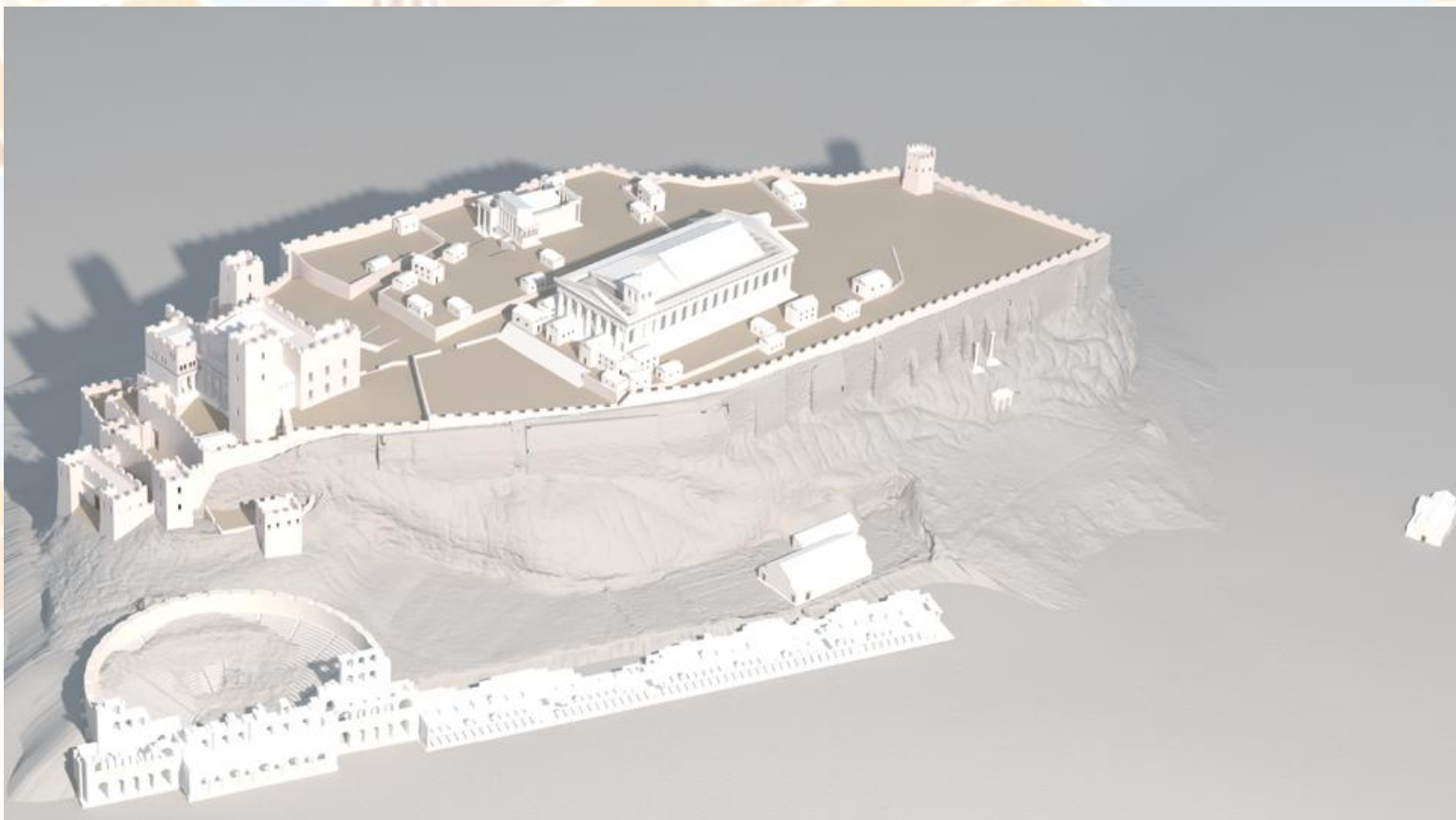
Digital representation of the Roman Acropolis (1st BC- 2nd AD)

<https://xronologio.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/2/90>



Digital representation of the Byzantine Acropolis (6th century AD)

<https://xronologio.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/580/1204>



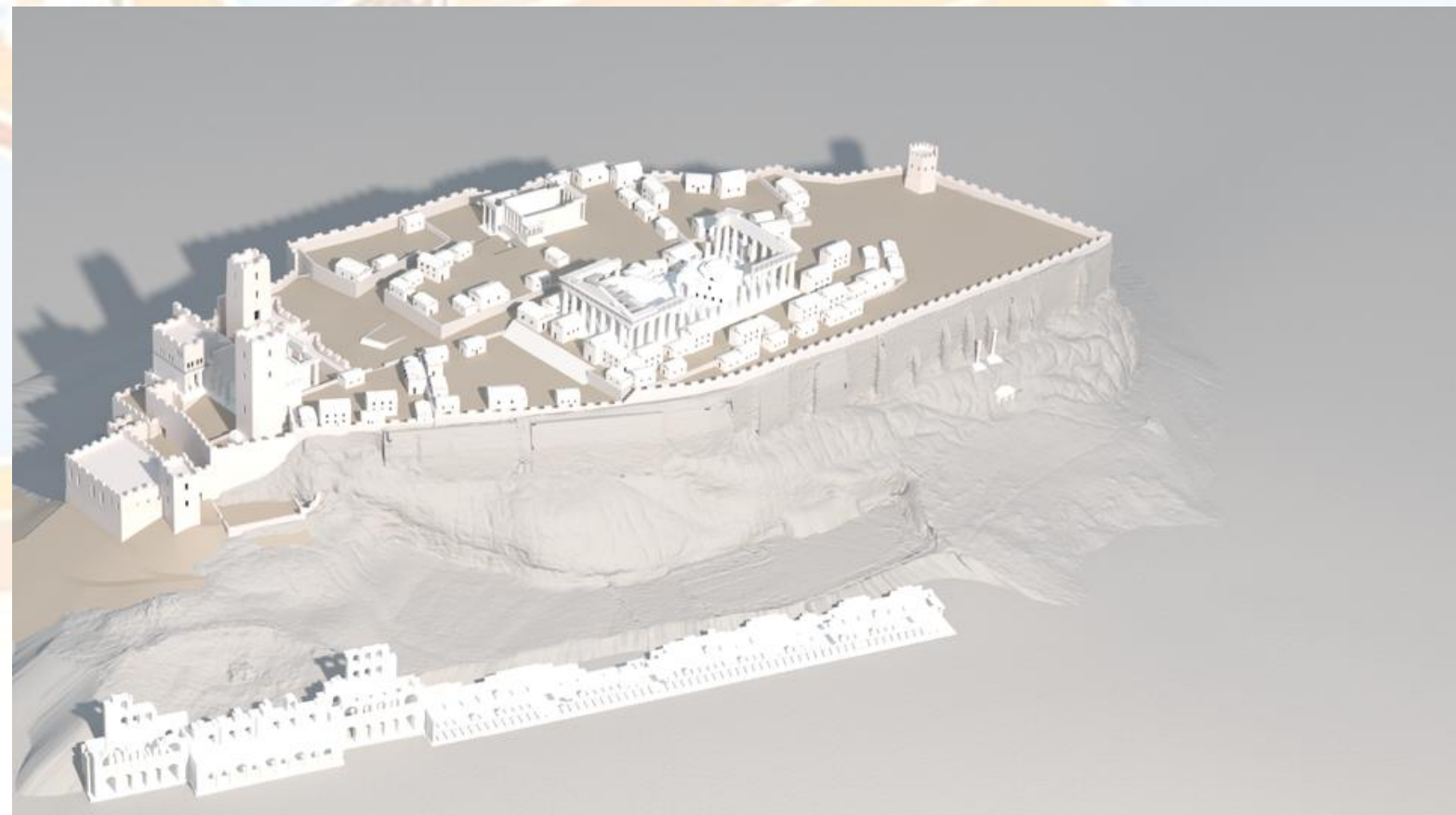
Digital representation of the Acropolis during the Frankish occupation (13th century)

<https://xronologio.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/1204/1456>



Digital representation of the Acropolis in the Ottoman years (1456-1687)

<https://xronologio.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/1455/1460>

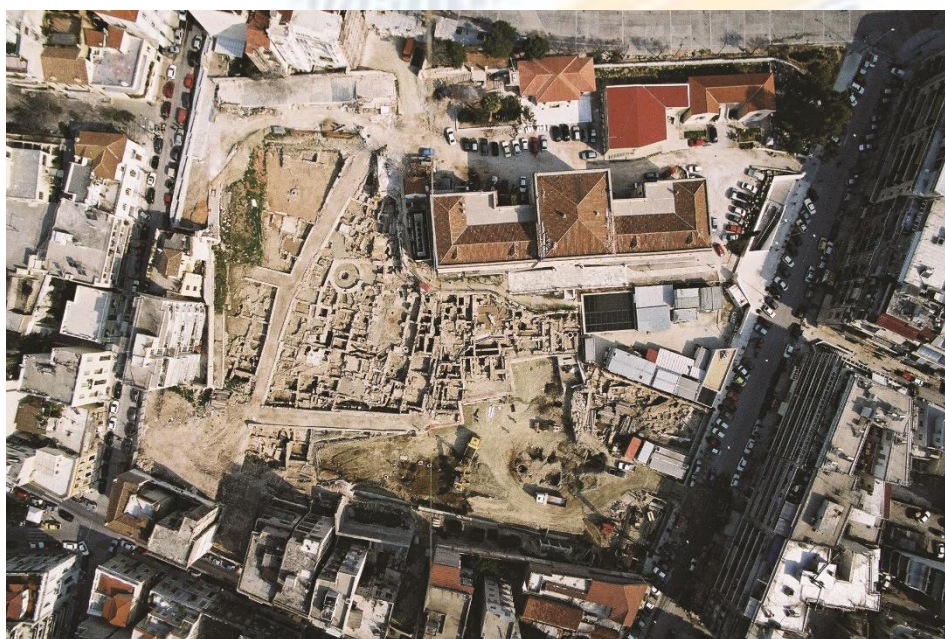


Digital representation of the Acropolis in the Ottoman years (1687-1833)

<https://xronologio.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/1686/1689>



The modern Acropolis where the old Museum to the east of the Parthenon can be seen



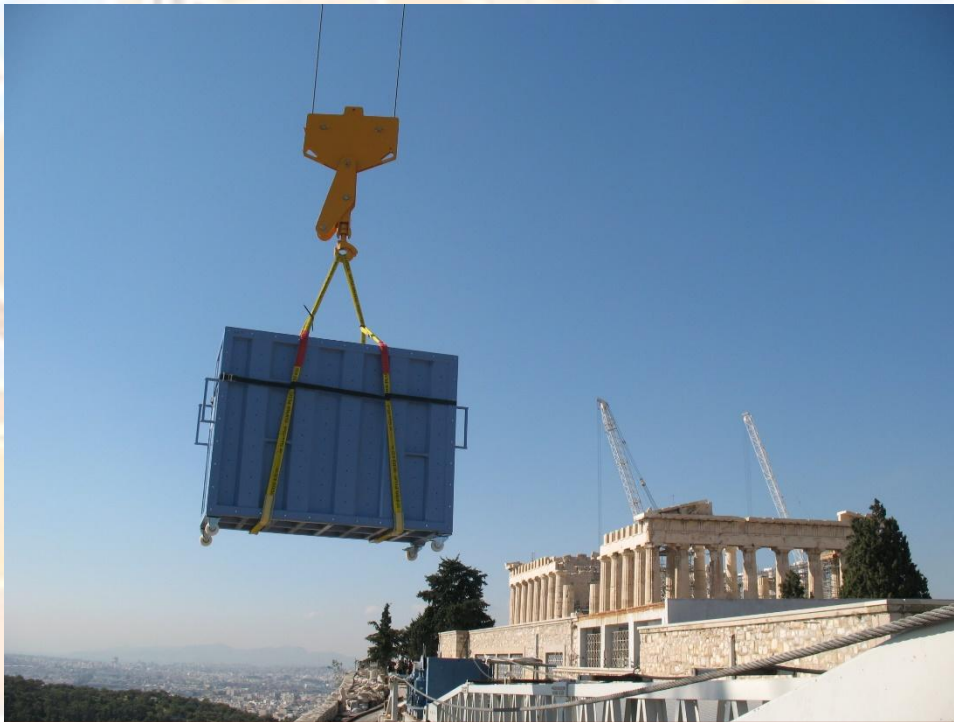
The archaeological excavation that preceded the construction of the new Acropolis Museum



The new Acropolis Museum. The Acropolis hill can be seen in the background



The preparation for the transfer of the sculptures from the old to the new Acropolis Museum



The "transfer of the century"



The setting up of the exhibition at the new Acropolis Museum



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AFTER THE PROGRAM



Suggested Activities

The school group's involvement in the museum's educational activity after the end of the digital visit to the Museum helps to transform learning from a mental process into a living experience. At the same time, it offers a break from formal education, raising the interest of children and opening up new horizons. Thus, the museum experience and participation in each educational program are completed more substantially.

After the program, you can choose to implement in the classroom some of the following activities or anything else you think would suit your group of students:

1. **Creating a museum exhibition** inspired by objects from the Acropolis Museum: For this activity, you will receive guidelines and all the necessary materials immediately after the completion of the program.
2. **Promotion of the museum exhibition in the media and social media:** collaborate with students and discover ways to promote and advertise the museum exhibition created by your school team. E.g. create a poster for media display or history and memes in social media.
3. **Create a digital tour:** students choose their favorite Acropolis Museum exhibits and create a digital tour. They draw information from the Acropolis Museum website (<https://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/>) and for the objects they chose for their exhibition (<https://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/explore-collections>) and create a small tour script. Then they either record it in podcast format or videotape it.
4. **Our classroom becomes the Neighborhood Museum:** Encourage students to photograph monuments, statues, traditional buildings, churches and anything else that interests them from their neighborhood (e.g. old cafes, traditional doors, etc.). Gather the photos, decide which ones will be included in the "exhibition" and with what criterion they will be organized, e.g. "The



monuments of our neighborhood", "Old and new neighborhood" etc. Stick the photos on the classroom walls or on cardboard, write captions and any other texts you want and give a title for your exhibition. Alternatively, you can create a digital exhibition. Useful applications can also be found on the following websites: <https://www.artsteps.com/>, <https://exhibbit.com/>, <https://www.shapespark.com/>. Once you've completed your essay, invite students from other classes or students' parents to present it.

Note: We hope that the museum experience of school groups, as well as the communication between the Museum and the School, will extend beyond the individual visit. We would therefore be delighted if you could share with us any activities you carried out in connection with the program and in the period following your visit, as well as any thoughts, questions or concerns you may have regarding this educational resource. You can contact the Department of Educational Programs at the following email address: learning@theacropolismuseum.gr



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Useful links



Acropolis Museum
Directorate of Collections and Exhibitions
Department of Educational Programs

Acropolis Museum:

<https://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/educational-resources-repository>

<https://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/multimedia-applications>

Archaeology of the city of Athens:

<https://archaeologia.eie.gr/archaeologia/en/index.html>