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Within-time-ness and Historical Time

Michael Linzey

University of Auckland

Abstract

The term within-time-ness refers to Martin Heidegger's phenomenological interpretation of history and historicality. In Being and Time, within-time-ness reconstructs that "moment of vision" in which a work of architecture first becomes present and meaningful as what it is. But we can also interpret "the time of a work" simply by dating it in reference to major and minor movements of architectural history, such as the classical period, or modernity, or the various movements of Christianity. Both ways of treating history — as within-time-ness and as historical time in reference to extraneous movements — are valid, but Heidegger warned that when discourse addresses beings exclusively in extraneous terms it is inclined to forget about Being.

The paper argues that Tschumi and Photiadis's new Acropolis Museum in Athens comprises in part an imaginative and dramatic reenactment of the within-time-ness experience of the Parthenon.

Introduction

This year's conference theme invites us to explore the historical imagination in its many dimensions, to test how different notions of imagination may be employed to further the work of architectural historians. The present paper experiments with employing Martin Heidegger's Being and Time (1927) in this way. In fact Heidegger did not write a great deal either about architecture or the imagination. "Building dwelling thinking" was hugely influential in architectural circles, and right at the end of his life he wrote briefly about the Parthenon. This latter was very much a personal account, certainly not intended to be a work of architectural history. And I have to remark at once that Heidegger's critique of Kant's transcendental imagination in relation to the problem of metaphysics is the subject of a later work that I will not be dealing
with here. The term “imagination” is not use at all in *Being and Time*. Nonetheless I hope to render Heidegger’s thinking about the architectural historical imagination in a suitably sympathetic spirit.

The conference theme roughly polarises the imagination between the global and the personal, between history as a conventional narrative and architecture as fantasy. In this experiment I propose that Heidegger’s concept of “within-time-ness” (*Innerzeitigkeit*) can serve as a marker for the inner or fantastical pole, and what he called the “usual” conception of historical time is the objective pole. (He also called this conventional way of imagining time “inauthentic” and “metaphysical”.) Heidegger imagined the every-day life of Dasein was rather like that of a Greek craftsperson, what Hippocrates called a *technité*, someone who would rather take care of their own equipment, ensure their tools were sharp and true, even in the face of their own death. Heidegger opposed this phenomenological and also technical perspective to the academic world-view of the likes of Socrates and Aristotle, as we will see, and it is this contrast between imaginative outlooks of the doer and the thinker that this paper will also try to draw out in order to enrich the range of ways that we can imagine architectural history possibly to be. Architects and historians too are riven between these two poles, between practical technology and academic theory.

I think of phenomenology as a non-academic kind of attitude to artistic life and technical work. The German word Dasein means literally being-there or being-together-in-the-world. With Heidegger, being and time and history and truth can be treated as down-to-earth facts of a technical life whereas being for Socrates was always quasi divine. In the academic tradition being and truth are considered to be other-worldly, timeless, a-historical. History is subsumed under a single metaphysical time-line that Aristotle seems to have derived out of the emergent field of Euclidean mathematics. Mathematical truth was thought to be timeless and quasi divine in this academic world-view. Heidegger attempted to reappoint the philosophy of being into this world here, being-here, rather than in some nebulous elsewhere world at the far end of Plato’s divided line. The together-ness and the single-ness of this profound conception are often marked with hyphens in English translations. Being-in-the-world, being-in-time, within-time-ness. I think of within-time-ness as the imaginative grounds for all of the aesthetic productions of a workmanlike Dasein.
A primary instance of an aesthetic production for Heidegger was always the Greek temple, and in the paper I will set out to imagine what it might have been for Iktinos the architect and Pheidi as the master-sculptor to have “seen” the “true” meaning of the Parthenon for the first time in-a-time and a phenomenological mind-set that was non-academic, particularly in the sense that it was not influenced by the thought of Plato. III Of course we will imagine that these famous pre-Socratic Athenians were authentic technitai in the sense that Hippocrates intended.

Finally, in order to put this experiment with Heidegger into a modern context, I will present a partial critique of the new Acropolis Museum as it stands forth today in present-day Athens (Fig. 1). I will argue that this new work by Bernard Tschumi and Michael Photiadis re-presents the within-time-ness experience of the pre-Socratic Parthenon, but I will mean by the word “representation” not that it is a copy or an imitation in the academic sense, not the meticulous reconstruction of the Parthenon to three decimal places as in Manolis Korres’s careful rebuilding project on the adjacent acropolis site, nor is it yet another reiteration of post-Kantian texts about sublimity and the Parthenon such as Richard Etlin has recently compiled and critiqued. IV I will argue the new museum is more like a repeat performance of an architectural drama, an imaginative and dramatic reenactment of an “original” performance by people who are and were leading practitioners of the techné of architecture.

![Figure 1](https://example.com/figure1.jpg)

**Figure 1.** The new Acropolis Museum in Athens.
Photo: the author.

Alexandra Stara has recently criticised the new Acropolis Museum because it does not subscribe to the Platonic view of craftsmanship as mimēsis. V Stara accuses the architects of sloppiness and idle sophistry because in her eyes
their work does not properly subserve what she calls “the academic ideal”. But I will argue, following Heidegger, that the ideas performed here in Athens today are actually pre-Platonic, not only in terms of historical time, but that they reenact an authentic approach to architecture within-a-time that is both philosophically and imaginatively pre-Socratic.

A phenomenology of Imagination in Three Stages

One reviewer of this paper expressed doubt that within-time-ness can be linked to an imaginative or fantastical pole in terms of architectural history. Given the limitations on length of this paper his or her unconviction is not surprising. However I take this opportunity to provide here the bare outline of a phenomenological theory of imagination based on Being and Time (BT).

What this conference is calling an “objective” view of history is taken here to correspond to what Heidegger calls “the ordinary conception of time.” It is arithmetical, based on Aristotle’s definition (BT, p. 473), and it is quasi divine, based on Plato’s Timaeus (BT, p. 475). Heidegger opposes to this ordinary view what he calls Dasein’s intrinsic temporality and historicality. His analysis of temporality is grounded in concepts of readiness-to-hand and presence-at-hand of technical equipment such as a hammer, a plane or a needle, and here I extend this range of equipment to include a straightedge and a setsquare in the hands of a classical Greek stonemason. I emphasise that readiness-to-hand and presence-at-hand refer to the prehensile musculature and the limited sensitivity of the hands of manually adept technitai.

As such there is nothing imaginative about Heidegger’s notions. In particular the technical imagination requires that light and the eye also be engaged along with other hand-related phenomena. Light is present throughout Being and Time, since phós is already a root term in “phenomenology” (BT, p. 51). But the possibility of a theory of imagination arises only on page 376 where Heidegger introduces the “moment of vision” [Augenblick]. He writes:

[As an authentic Present or waiting-towards, the moment of vision permits us to encounter for the first time what can be “in a time” as ready-to-hand and present-at-hand. (BT, p. 388).]
A phenomenology of imagination then would proceed in three stages from readiness-to-hand to presence-at-hand to the moment of vision. In other words it proceeds from prehension to apprehension to comprehension.

The sense of temporality that is prehended readily-to-hand through the muscles and mechanoreceptor cells of the hand could be the rhythmic beat-beat-beat of a hammer at work, or the stitching rhythm of a taylor’s needle and so on. Manual work takes time and it cannot be done without a proper sense of timing, yet this kind of temporality would appear to be a far cry from the academic refinement of art-historical time. It is not to say that the prehensile technités is blind. The rhythmic manipulation of work is guided by the eye. Heidegger calls this kind of workmanlike sight circumspective vision (BT, p. 98). In a strange way, what grasps and what is grasped circumspectively are not differentiated within readiness-to-hand. Technical equipment seems to dissolve into the prehensile body of the manually proficient technités.

In the second stage, presence-to-hand, the regular rhythm of work-time is temporarily (or permanently) suspended. The hammer is too heavy, the needle or the plane blade is blunt, the straightedge is not straight or the setsquare is not square. The workshop falls silent. Heidegger calls equipment in this condition of inadequate suspension present-at-hand. No longer simply prehended and no longer viewed circumspectively, instead the defective equipment is observed and stared at apprehensively. It calls attention to itself in the mode of conspicuousness, obtuseness and obstinacy (BT, p. 104).

To stare at something apprehensively, however, is not yet to understand it. Comprehension comes in what I am calling the third stage of the analysis, with what Heidegger calls the “moment of vision”. The word “comprehension” derives from Cicero’s translation of the Stoic technical term, katalépsis, meaning to grasp something firmly and resolutely, and the Stoic criterion for alétheia was known as a phantasia kataléptiké, grasping something firmly in the imagination. I think of this in Heidegger’s terms to mean Dasein resolutely and imaginatively engaging with what had previously been ready-to-hand and present-at-hand.

When resolute, Dasein has brought itself back from falling, and has done so precisely in order to be more authentically “there” in the “moment of vision” as regards the Situation which has been disclosed. (BT, p. 376).
In a phrase that may remind us of Pheidias’s full-scale workshop-cella at Olympia, Heidegger writes that when work is suspended and everything is called into question, “[t]he whole workshop … is lit up.” Presence-at-hand in the moment of vision takes on the character of alétheia. (BT, p. 105).

Heidegger does not clearly describe a possible fourth stage in technical phenomenology in which work once again resumes its primordial rhythm. The statement, “[T]hen—when it dawns—it is time for one’s daily work,” (BT, p. 467), does not I think fully capture that most peculiar phenomenon of all where what had formerly been stared at as present-at-hand and then disclosed or discovered in the eureka-like light of a moment of vision now mysteriously rapidly and quietly subsides into the former kind of circumspective invisibility of readiness-to-hand. To rehandle a hammer or to lighten an interior room requires no great feat of the imagination after it has been done the first time. On the other hand a greater effort of the historical imagination can be required to recapture the drama and excitement or even the fact, the whatness of what was discovered within-time in the original moment of vision.

The New Acropolis Museum

The new Acropolis Museum was opened at Athens in June last year. It is organised, according to Bernard Tschumi, by three principle concepts. All of these, I argue, can be described as Heideggerian ideas.
Firstly is the way that Dasein, in this case a museum visitor who is careful about history and also cares about architectural technique, finds itself suspended between earth and sky in a gesture of concern towards archaeology and interpretation. This strategy of architectural suspension was also deployed successfully by Sverre Fehn at the Hamar Bispegaard Museum in Norway.

Secondly the visitor to the museum is moved in a looping promenade. Tschumi writes, “Movement in and through time is an important aspect of the architecture.” This association of architectural space with the actual bodily movement of a technically alert Dasein, rather than trying to re-copy the grand movements of architecture in historical time, is for me a characteristic of the Heideggerian intellectual climate. It signifies Heidegger’s Destruktion of history in *Being and Time*, reiterated in 1979 when Lyotard announced the demise of “meta-narratives”. The grand meta-narratives of the 18th and 19th century architectural styles were pre-Heideggerian attempts to imitate the major movements of historical time. But at the New Acropolis the “base, middle and top” massing of the museum eschews historicism. It is designed instead to provide the utmost clarity for visitors’ bodily movement through the space of the museum artefacts.

Tschumi’s third conceptual principle is the conditioned use of natural daylight in the interior of the museum. Again it was Heidegger who pointed out that it should be our primary task to draw what is ready-to-hand and present-at-hand out of the apprehensive night and into the light of day. Tschumi writes,

> The conditions animating the New Acropolis Museum revolve around natural light – more than any other type of museum. Light for the exhibition of sculpture differs from the light involved in displaying paintings or drawings. The new exhibition spaces could be described as a museum of ambient natural light, concerned with the presentation of sculptural objects within it whose display changes throughout the course of the day.

We might say the new museum design is a bit facile. Other than deploying optical and heat absorbing glass, it doesn’t break new ground for modernism. There is no grand overriding gesture towards novelty or experimentation. But in a way this is what I mean; Heidegger’s is already the voice of a radical modernity. Nothing in the end was added with Postmodernity and
Deconstruction. Yet Alexandra Stara’s recent piece in *Architectural Review* shows that some of us at least have yet to take on board just how radically Heidegger has transformed the climate of modern art-historical criticism. Phenomenology licenses a kind of architecture that performs to a different tune than academic historicism.

Stara refers to the “relentless banality, consistently poor material choices and frightful detailing” of the new museum in Athens. But one does also get the impression that Stara herself may not have ventured beyond the ground floor of the museum. For Martin Filler, writing in the *New York Review of Books*, says he was ecstatic about the “wedge shaped” Archaic Gallery on the first floor. He describes the effect of its exterior glass walls, modulated with tiny white ceramic dots, the way that they suffuse a “supernal glow” to the sculptures on display. He calls this effect “unimaginably sublime”. One is disquieted that perhaps Stara, or the *Architectural Review*, or both, may have been voicing in part a political agenda, being British, being opposed to Greek Republicanism. “Athens must not lie to itself about the quality of this new building,” railed the *AR*. “It is simply not good enough.” Not good enough, that is, to be the new home for the diasporised Parthenon marbles. Peter Kelly predicts on the *Blueprint* webpage that the new museum will provoke a political debate that goes beyond quality and architectural vision. He says that Stara’s review of it was “excoriating”.

Of more direct concern for this paper is Stara’s assertion that Tschumi’s museum transgresses against “Platonic thought”. She writes,

> Architecture is one of the disciplines shaped by Platonic thought, but unfortunately one of Plato’s later dialogues, *The Sophist*, does not appear to have made an impact. In this Plato warns against sophistry as a way of reasoning. … The New Acropolis Museum … is a testament to the allure of sophistry …

Apart from the polemical rhetoric of her own article, more to the point for us, Stara herself seems unable to imagine what a good work of architecture would be that is not dominated by the academic viewpoint. She accuses Tschumi of “rehash[ing] the same sophistry about light and clarity.” Stara says Tschumi’s work should have been more “Platonic”. But why? The classical Parthenon preceded the life of Plato, and what I am taking to be its principle idea, the way that it uses interior light and space to draw the gods out of concealment, also
precedes Platonism. What could be more appropriate for the new museum than to try to use the aesthetic strategies of the original? In the next section we will attempt to imagine Pheidias and Iktinos and the likes of Mnesicles engaging with the old acropolis in pre-Platonic aesthetic terms.

Truth and the Parthenon

The science of history, Heidegger writes, is to put present-day Dasein into touch with the Dasein which has-been-there.\textsuperscript{xii} Going back into the past does not first get its start from the acquisition, sifting and securing of historical material. Rather these activities presuppose an interest in the having-once-been-there of an historical Dasein. Some technités in the past was motivated by architecture but differently than is the case today. In our experiment with Heidegger’s approach to the historical imagination, we ask, what may have been the “moment of vision” of the likes of Iktinos and Pheidias? What was it about the classical Parthenon that got the architects and sculptors excited within-their-own-time, what would have been the focus of their technical care?

In this section I will argue that Heidegger’s criterion for truth as \textit{alétheia} more accurately reflects the actual concerns of the classical technitai than some other approaches to Parthenon studies. It is not likely, for example, that the classical architects viewed the Parthenon with the same kind of concerns that Richard Etlin identifies among architects in the modern era. Etlin claims that the Parthenon has “towered over” the artistic imagination of the Western world since the Renaissance in the fifteenth century, and that for the likes of Le Corbusier and Alvar Aalto, “L’idée de Dorique” has meant appreciating the Parthenon for the way that

\begin{quote}
the very Athenian sunlight seems to unify the columns of the Parthenon to complement the living aspect conveyed through tapering shaft, swelling entasis, and fluid fluting.\textsuperscript{\textit{xii}}
\end{quote}

Etlin notes how a modern concern with the sublime effected an imaginative trans-materialisation of the Parthenon from stone into metal. Emile Burnouf remarked in 1847 that the oblique rays of the setting sun caused the Parthenon to “shine like glowing metal”, and in 1925 Charles-Edouard Jeanneret compared the Parthenon at midday to “newly cast bronze.” Le Corbusier also, famously, compared it to a motorcar. “This harmonious ensemble of site and architecture,” Etlin writes, “is like a demonstration of
Yet Socrates himself specifically discussed the beauty of the Parthenon from the \textit{inside} rather than the outside of the architecture. In \textit{Hippias Major}, Plato describes a debate regarding the nature of beauty, \textit{kalos}, in which Socrates is portrayed citing Pheidias’s chryselephantine sculpture of the goddess inside the eastern naos of the Parthenon. Socrates admitted that the sculpture was beautiful, but not because it was made out of gold.

Pheidias didn’t make Athena’s eyes out of gold, nor her face, feet and hands. He made them from ivory. For the pupils he used precious stones.\textsuperscript{xiv}

Pausanias too hardly seems to have noticed the Parthenon “from the outside”, instead he made a beeline for the eastern cella where again he commented on Pheidias’s master-work, the size and materiality and the symbolism of the statue of Athena.\textsuperscript{xv}

Lothar Haselberger argues that Iktinos and his architect friends would not have been so excited either about the curvature and other so-called “refinements” of the Parthenon. And again Haselberger draws attention instead to the experimental novelty of the interior architecture. He writes,

\begin{quote}
... the design of the Parthenon has no exceptional use of curvature and other refinements. The ongoing investigation of the Parthenon and continued addition of comparative material may well change this heretical conclusion, but what emerges at present is that the architectural and historic merits of this building are not dependent on its strategies of ‘adding and subtracting.’ Although an extraordinarily high level was reached in this and signs of experimentation can be discerned, these are minor and subdued compared to other aspects of the structure. A much more significant experimentation – long recognised by Gottfried Gruben – is obvious in the novel, pi-shaped column arrangement that dramatically widens the cella space.\textsuperscript{xvi}
\end{quote}

The Parthenon architects were already well versed in “additions and subtractions”. They didn’t develop these techniques by themselves. Vitruvius (7.pr.12) records that Iktinos and Karpion wrote a treatise about the \textit{symmetriae} of the Parthenon, noting that judgement, sensitivity and a “flexible mind” are most helpful, whilst exaggerations and “improbities” are not acceptable. But Haselberger makes the point that none of these so-called “refinements” (so far
discussed, and in particular none reported by Vitruvius) were new with the classical Parthenon. The practices were already well established in the Temple of Apollo at Didyma for example, also in the Temple of Hephaistos in the Agora at Athens. In the Parthenon’s predecessor on the Acropolis that was destroyed by the Persians there is clear archaeological evidence of curvature of the stylobate. Indeed I suggest the co-author of the treatise, Karpion, about whom nothing else is known, could have been the sixth century architect of the older Parthenon, and Iktinos may have been merely re-presenting a compilation of techniques that were used by Karpion first.

The “refinements” were conceived in a pre-Socratic world-view, but they would have had nothing to do with producing optical illusions and visual deceptions. Such an attitude, Haselberger said, would have been “unthinkable”.

To the Parthenon architects the truth lay not in “distorting” realities for the sake of extraneous vantage points, but rather in the object itself, in shaping it own life and truthful presence. This truth could lie in a bent structure, yet never in deceptively bending the truth.xvii

How do we imagine truth might lie in a structure that is bent? We turn to Heidegger, but before this we can also find some interesting traces of what was meant by “truth” in the non-academic classical literature. Sextus Empiricus writes that the empirical criterion for truth was the prosbolé, the “landing-place”, which Richard Bett translates as the “impact”, of the stonemason’s straightedge. Sextus writes,

> For the determination of straight and crooked objects there is a need of the craftsman, and the ruler, and the prosbolé.xviii

The long straightedge of the ancient stonemason was sometimes known as the kanon. But what if the kanon itself was bent? Then, Sextus argued, the “truth in the object” would depend on the visual judgement of the mason. Tools like this, Heidegger says, are vital equipment that is ready-to-hand and present-at-hand for the technités who cares about the truth. In fact most canonical equipment can be present either to the left or the right hand, and what Sextus called the prosbolé of a straightedge may be related to the fact that the kanon is also “handed”. Thus a careful craftsman regularly turns a setsquare from the left to the right hand, and turns a straightedge end for end, and draws a second line. This turning of equipment from one hand to the other is the kind of judicious action that reveals the unsquareness of the setsquare
and the unstraightness of the straightedge in the small divergences, the sharp angle between the two lines drawn with the setsquare and the entasis-like divergence of the two lines drawn with the straightedge. Heidegger later says this kind of equipmental “erring” of tools that are present-at-hand is opposite to straying from the truth or taking a wrong path. The judgement of the eye in the moment of vision crafts and unconceals the truth that is alétheia.

The errancy through which man strays is not something which, as it were, extends alongside man like a ditch into which he occasionally stumbles; rather errancy belongs to the inner constitution of the Dasein into which historical man is admitted.

Is what Heidegger called “errancy” the same sort of “truth in bent objects” that Haselberger said the ancient stonemasons were attempting to reveal through the so-called refinements? Even if it were so, I do not believe these refinements would have been the “moment of vision” for the architects of the classical Parthenon.

It was not the outside of the temple that was seen to be especially beautiful, but the beautiful interior composition that was constructed “for the first time” in Athens, with minutely curved internal walls and fine interior columns made from polished Pentelic marble, with the golden drapery, polished ivory skin and eyes of the goddess made of precious stones, with the water surface of a reflective pool on the floor of this inner room, and all of these luscious materials were ignited by the dawning light of the newly-risen sun. Barbara Barletta writes that sunlight pierced into the front room of the temple through two high windows that Iktinos had constructed on the eastern wall of the naos. Up until this time,

[w]indows were an unusual feature in Greek architecture. In … the Parthenon, light was essential for viewing the works inside; thus … windows are situated in relation to the façade and porch supports in such a way as to allow a direct line inside from the exterior of the building.

This glowing interior room, lit by the morning sun, was also constructed to be wider in the classical Parthenon than was the equivalent corridor-like space in its predecessor. Iktinos achieved this extra width, as we know, by introducing eight columns on the eastern and western elevations of the temple rather than the usual six. The north and south walls of the cela were roughly aligned with
the second and seventh frontal columns, whereas in all earlier octastyle Doric temples that we know of the cella walls had been aligned with the third and sixth columns.\textsuperscript{xvi} Finally, at the Parthenon, the more slender columns in the interior of the eastern naos were laid out in a novel pi-shape in plan. The proportions of the inner “room” so formed were about the same (4:9) as the overall plan proportions of the stylobate. Iktinos and Pheidias composed this amazing fugue of light and shadows that would have changed colours and visual textures as the sun rose at dawn. In this room the goddess Athena was presented in a new light with distinctively Homeric characteristics. We can conclude that the “moment of vision” of the Parthenon was this unique interior “room”. This experimental unconcealment of the goddess inside the temple in a new way was what Heidegger would have called the \textit{alétheia} of the Parthenon within-its-own-time.

![Figure 3. Reconstruction drawing of the pronaos of the Parthenon, showing one of the high windows into the eastern naos. Courtesy: M. Korres.](image)

**Conclusion**

Our experiment with employing Heidegger’s \textit{Being and Time} to explore the historical imagination seems to have a number of interesting outcomes.

Firstly, Heidegger’s particular conception of presence as the presence- of canonical equipment at-the-hands of a qualified \textit{technités}, defeats the domination of time in its arithmetic sense. Jacques Derrida wrote an essay in 1968 in which he tried to reverse the order of the argument of \textit{Being and Time}, arguing that: “[t]he concept of time in all its aspects belongs to metaphysics …”
in other words that presence-at-hand is derived from Aristotle’s arithmetic model, rather than the other way around. But since presence-at-hand also engages the essential “handedness” of technical equipment, then I would argue this present moment of phenomenological time defeats the metaphysical generality of the grammē, of perfectly straight lines in space and time. Kant had already discovered this “subjective” aspect of real objects in his Prolegomena of 1781. Presence-at-hand therefore is not just another version of différance between the end of the past and the beginning of the future on an arithmetic number line. And, we might add, there is a life for architecture after Deconstruction.

Secondly Heidegger’s concept of alétheia as the unique dawning of truth in art cuts across the orderly arithmetic movement of time in the ordinary view of history. An alternative way of thinking presence-to-hand as the dramatic gift of art to the world in what some linguists are now calling the “dramatic present tense”, and within-time-ness as a theatrical presentation and re-presentation of technē, may have rich consequences for interpreting art history. This more phenomenological version of the truth in art again is not founded on mimetic references to extraneous movements, nor is it the inconsequential fragmentation of this movement into petits récits of non-referential insignificance.

Thirldy Heidegger’s rather romantic interpretation of alétheia as the dramatic unconcealment of the gods of ancient Greece obtains a very literal and even empirical interpretation in the architecture of the classical Parthenon. I have argued that the “moment of vision” of the Parthenon, within-the-time of the likes of Iktinos and Pheidias, was not the sublime appearance of the temple jutting from the earth from the outside but it was a refined effect of interior design that unconcealed the great statue of Athena in the dawning light of high summer. This effect, from the few classical accounts, was greatly appreciated in the ceremonial cycle of Athenian life.

Finally I have argued that a similar architectural drama is re-enacted today in this other interior room at Athens. This image of the sloping entrance-gallery of the Acropolis Museum, Fig. 4, was clearly intended to be the “money-shot” of Tschumi and Photiadis’s architecture. The photograph seems to recreate some of the generosity of interior space, the visual excitation that can be achieved with natural light, the suspension of our disbelief in the gods, that had once been part of the imaginative experience of the eastern cella in the classical
Parthenon. Stara reports that this more recent interior space is clumsily executed and that it is ill proportioned. I disagree. For me the absence of the goddess in this inner concourse is irrelevant, as is the absence of the errant marbles from the upper region. The chryselephantine work of Pheidias is irrevocably lost today but Tschumi and the museum curators have done the next best thing by suspending the famous caryatids of the Erechtheum in this most illustrious space. In Heidegger’s Interpretation, present-day Dasein too awaits the second coming of the gods to earth in this state of suspension.xxiii

Heidegger’s concept of within-time-ness provides some very different insights concerning what might have been truly valued by the technités of the distant past. It helps to direct our trowels and word processors as we meticulously excavate this history in our own time.

Endnotes

vii Tschumi, 'Architectural fact sheet.'
x Heidegger, Being and Time, 446.
xi Eltin, 'The Parthenon in the modern era', 392.
xii Eltin, 'The Parthenon in the modern era', 393.
xvii Barletta, 'The architecture and architects of the classical Parthenon', 73-4.
xvii Heidegger, Sojourns, 40-1.