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Fugitive Stones: The Temple of Athena Nike, Athens in Nineteenth-Century Photographs

Lindsay Smith

Abstract

What happens when early cameras are turned to 5th century BCE monuments and sculptures on the Acropolis of Athens? In what ways might the fragile surface of a daguerreotype, a salted paper print or an albumen print be said to have ‘captured’ a pentelic marble fragment? These questions were thrown into bold relief following the public announcement of the daguerreotype in 1839 when travellers to Greece in search of sites of archaeological interest began to take cameras with them. With rapid developments in photographic technology, photographs joined landmark texts and a body of drawings, paintings, engravings, plaster casts to alter established relationships with antiquities. Highly emotive material objects, photographs spoke a new language of loss and fragmentation; through the relative ease of their reproducibility photographs newly facilitated memory and forms of aesthetic resurrection.

My essay charts nineteenth-century photographs of fragments of relief sculptures of Nikai from the exterior face of the parapet of the Ionic Temple of Athena Nike. Excavation and rebuilding of the Temple during 1835 and 1836 drew the eye of many travellers to the Acropolis. Resurrection of the classical temple shortly preceded the new technology of photography and, in representing a monument described by Wheler and Spon among others, photographs rehabilitated ‘lost’ stones. Exploring, alongside travel narratives, newly fugitive representations of winged and apterous Nikai, I consider what Walter Benjamin termed the collector’s relationship to ‘the scene, the stage’ of the ‘fate’ of a material object.

Key words

Acropolis; antiquities; Athens; fugitive; memory; Nike; nineteenth-century photography; nineteenth-century travellers; photograph albums; “Sandalbinder”.

I begin with two photographs: the first a high relief sculpture from the Acropolis of Athens, captured in 1842 on the reflective surface of a daguerreotype plate (fig. 1). Partially mutilated, a Nike is propped up with fragments, the tip of her wing resting on a pile of book-like stones. Seen through specks of white that conjure starlit depths, the figure appears to push her draped form out of the anonymity of stone. The second, a salted paper print from 1854 shows a large marble slab carved in high relief (fig. 2). Having collected waves of heavy robes over her left arm, a Nike reaches down with her right hand as if to adjust the sandal of her raised foot. The finely modelled form is broken at the neck; the figure's defaced head, appearing as if stretched and flattened, morphs into a damaged arc of what I take to be her retracted wing.

Long lost – then found - these reliefs of winged Nikai, now preserved in the Acropolis Museum, Athens, are parts of two of the few surviving panels from the marble parapet of the fifth century BCE Temple of Athena Nike on the north-west edge of the Acropolis. The daguerreotype is by the French artist and historian of Islamic architecture Joseph-Philibert Girault de Prangey (1804-1892);¹ the salted paper print the work of professional Scottish photographer, James Robertson (1813-1888) who, as chief engraver of coins at the imperial mint in Constantinople, had opened a studio there in 1850.² The photographs were taken a little over a decade apart, but their material forms could not be more dissimilar. One is a small copper plate with the haunting image laterally reversed on its silvered surface; the other, a large albumenised salt print from a paper negative, holds, the right way around, as it were, an image of intense clarity. Girault de Prangey's unique positive, annotated in his hand on the reverse, "50 Athènes T. Vict. Aptère", was never exhibited. It was catalogued, and packed away in a trunk along with over eight hundred daguerreotypes that he had taken on a three-year tour of Italy, Greece, Turkey, Syria and Palestine between 1842 and 1845.³ Robertson's print, by comparison, formed part of *Athens and Grecian Antiquities*, a lavishly

produced portfolio of 44 photographs, that he published simultaneously in Britain and Constantinople in 1853-54. (Constantinou and Tsigakou 1998)

Girault de Prangey's and Robertson's images beg the fundamental question of what happens when early cameras are turned to fifth-century BCE monuments and sculptures. How might a daguerreotype, or a salted paper print be said to have "captured" such pentelic marble fragments in ways distinct from earlier representations of Greek antiquities? On their separate visits to the Acropolis, Girault de Prangey and Robertson were drawn to the Temple of Athena Nike, also known as the Temple of Wingless Victory. Athena, the ancient Greek goddess of wisdom and the patron deity of Athens had several epithets; Athena Nike was her well-known incarnation as Victory. The winged goddess Nike, whose image is prominent in Greek art, is understood to have been the daughter of Pallas and Styx. (Hesiod II, 383-404) Honoured by Zeus, having helped him to banish the Titans from Mount Olympus, Nike was associated with victory in various realms including war, athletics, poetry contests.

The sculptural fragments of Nike, photographed by Girault de Prangey and Robertson, caught the eye of other travellers visiting the Acropolis both after, and shortly before, the invention of photography. I say "shortly before" since the small Ionic Temple of Athena Nike, designed by the architect Kallikrates, and thought to have been built between 426 and 421 BCE, was lost from 1686. Built on the site of earlier temples it was demolished by the occupying Turks, its stones combined into a gun emplacement when the Acropolis faced attack by Francesco Morosini's Venetian forces.⁴ The Temple was "found" in 1834 following Greek Independence by "the first official to guide Greek archaeological policy" Ludwig Ross (1806-1859) when "he began the process of clearing the Acropolis." (Dyson 2006, 74) Some of the column bases and the foundation were discovered in situ while architectural members were uncovered in earth deposits in front of the Propylaea, or gateway, to the Acropolis when the bastion was dismantled. During 1835 and 1836, the German

archaeologist and Ephor of all antiquities in Greece, partially restored the Temple, advised by the architects Christian Hansen, Eduard Schaubert and Eduard Laurent. The return of the classical Temple to the sacred rock appeared as a fitting emblem of Independence.⁵ The reconstruction was rather haphazard, however; gaps were filled with stone blocks found scattered close by. A second reconstruction of the Temple took place in 1940, a third in 2010. The latest restoration work was carried out between 2011- 2013. (fig. 3)

A mood of anticipation inflects the sculptural high reliefs arrested by Girault de Prangey and Robertson, winged forms that represent actions petrified both explicitly, in the figure who touches her sandal and, more implicitly, in the Nike whose gesture – perhaps awarding a trophy? - has been lost with her amputated arm, but whose wings herald still her eternal capacity for flight. The “Sandalizomene” or “Sandalbinder” (fig. 4), as the sculpted figure captured by Robertson became known, is somewhat familiar; the other high relief less so since it was not photographed as often. The “Sandalbinder” crops up in rudimentary internet searches and is cited as evidence of the eroticism of the so called ‘rich style’ of sculpture at the end of the fifth century BCE. In the process a blind eye is turned to the significance of the goddess’s wings. Apterous Nike might call to mind Sigmund Freud’s essay on Wilhelm Jensen’s *Gradiva*, the woman splendid in walking, and fascination with the rise and fall of the stepping foot in the context of archaeological excavation at Pompeii.⁶ But, in a Greek, rather than a Roman, context, I am drawn to locomotion of a different sort, to wings and flight. The dedication of the temple to Athena Nike enshrines the fugitive, figuratively at least, as “having taken flight”. And, I want to explore such Nikai from the Temple of that name precisely for their potential for flight as it intersects with their photographic existence.

Of course, stones had fugitive lives long time the invention of photography. As material objects antiquities were pillaged from their places of origin; they also travelled as

representations in the forms of drawings, engravings and casts. But I chart ways in which the capacity for flight of sculptural fragments of winged Nikai from the Temple, and travellers' accounts of restrictions of that capacity, intersects with their archaeological fate as captured by the new material forms of nineteenth-century photographs. Frederick Bohrer has claimed that, since the discipline of archaeology emerged not long before photography, "the two almost seemed made for each other" (2011, 27). And while archaeology took up photography in vital ways, for travellers, photographs also contributed to archaeological layers of visual and verbal representations of monuments on the Acropolis. Photographs of Nikai, (primarily the "Sandalbinder") as they migrate far and wide like their winged subjects, share an affinity with temporal and excavatory dimensions of collecting as articulated by Walter Benjamin.

In his essay "Unpacking my Library", of 1931, Benjamin contemplates what he calls the collector's "mysterious relationship to ownership" (Benjamin 1979, 60). Rather than forming an attachment to the "functional, utilitarian value" of objects, Benjamin's collector "studies and loves them as the scene, the stage of their fate" (60). A collector handling objects, Benjamin claims, "seems to be seeing through them into their distant past" (61) and that "everything remembered and thought, everything conscious, becomes the pedestal, the frame, the base, the lock of his property" (60). For "a true collector", then, the intricate conglomerate form of "the whole background of an item" including "the period, the region, the craftsmanship, the former ownership" constitutes "a magic encyclopaedia whose quintessence is the fate of his object" (Benjamin 1979, 60). While Benjamin's primary focus is books rather than antiquities, and the thrill of opening cases of volumes long packed away to expose them, once more, to the light,⁷ he notes that collectors, as "physiognomists of the world of objects – turn into interpreters of Fate" (60), thereby evoking the classical mythological sense of "Fate" as a sentence from the gods: that which has been spoken. But

fate as ultimate destiny is also the destination of an object; that which *will* have become of a thing.

The temporal trajectory driving Benjamin's discussion of the collector's relationship to ownership recalls the future anterior tense of photography as telling *what will have been*. In his "Small History of Photography", also published in 1931, Benjamin explores the future anterior, the conceptual, which is equally the material, receptiveness of photographs to the staging of fate. The unique temporal capacities of the medium appear heightened when a photograph suggests an action arrested, or, in the case of a winged Nike, when a photograph re-petrifies the sculptor's petrification of the capacity for flight.

From the public announcement of the daguerreotype in 1839, only five years after the excavation of the Temple of Athena Nike, novel material forms of photographs lent an extra fugitive dimension to what had become, in various ways fugitive, stones. Photographs joined landmark texts such as James Stuart and Nicholas Revett's *Antiquities of Athens*, produced by the Society of Dilettanti and published in three volumes between 1762 and 1794.

Photographs also joined a body of drawings, paintings, engravings, and plaster casts to alter established relationships with such antiquities of both actual, and armchair, travellers. In 1845, for example, we find the British architect and classical archaeologist, Francis Cranmer Penrose, depicting the partially reconstructed Temple in graphite with brown wash (fig. 5). His inscription in pen and ink at bottom: "Temple of Victory without Wings from Propylaea Moonlight March 1845 F.C.P." fixes the building at a particular time, while shadows thrown by strong moonlight that appear to soak the paper support also evoke the monochromatic tones and matte quality of a contemporaneous photographic salt print. In his caption, Penrose commemorates the dedication of the Temple to a wingless Nike.

Prior to its excavation, the Temple of Athena Nike had long been associated with a Nike without wings. The traveller Pausanias, writing in his *Guide Book to Greece* in the mid-

second century AD, claimed the Temple was dedicated to “*Apteros Nike*” who “will always stay where she is because she has no wings” (Bk 3. 15/7). Deborah Steiner, in *Images in Mind*, notes that Pausanias was “doubtless incorrect” (2003, 245) in his claim yet, regardless of whether the apterous Nike was Pausanias’s invention, the fate of the goddess’s wings captured the imaginations of many subsequent travellers. In representing the small Temple and displaced sculptural fragments from the fabric of the building, nineteenth-century travellers with cameras pictured what earlier writers and artists had described. As highly emotive material objects, photographs rehabilitated those salvaged stones. In so doing photographs newly facilitated memory through forms of aesthetic resurrection. But they also spoke a new language of loss and fragmentation.

With the novel medium of photography came the introduction of souvenir photographic albums of “a dilettante’s voyage to classical and Biblical sites in the Mediterranean” (Edwards 1990, 165). Noel-Marie-Paymal Lerebours’s *Excursions Daguerriennes. Vues et Monuments les Plus Remarquables du Globe, 1840-1842*, is generally considered the first of these. As Gary Edwards writes, the volume “showed images of countries in the Eastern Mediterranean among other highlights of an imaginary world tour”, thus “set[ting] the tone for later albums” (165). *Excursions Daguerriennes* included engravings after daguerreotypes by Pierre-Gustave-Gaspard Joly de Lotbinière. The engraving, “Grèce. Le Parthenon à Athènes”, from a daguerreotype of 1839, captures a workman’s hut in addition to the late seventeenth, early eighteenth-century mosque that had been erected inside the cella of the Parthenon, a structure that would be demolished in 1842. In so doing the engraving documents the systematic clearance in the nineteenth century, following Independence, of non-classical buildings from the Acropolis. But Lerebours’s publication is a reminder, too, that daguerreotypes could not be directly reproduced in books. They relied upon the skills of the engraver to harness their elusive photo-chemical images.

Andrew Szegedy-Maszak has demonstrated patterns in the topographical vantage points taken by early photographers on the Acropolis, and the tendency of foreign travellers to seek panoramic views of its remaining classical buildings (2005). Visitors to Athens with cameras synchronised with Greek photographers and, as Aliko Tsirgialou notes, an emergent “pattern” of viewing the city was “duplicated in the structure of [. . .] photographic albums” (2015). While photographers on the Acropolis prioritised the Parthenon, many also took views of the Temple of Athena Nike, often frontal shots that emphasised its reassembled symmetry and fine ionic columns. But the Temple of Athena Nike was also a distinctive object for photography because, unlike the iconic Parthenon, it had been absent from visual representation since the seventeenth century. From its reconstruction, there existed a small window of time in which to visually record the restored Temple before it was captured by cameras. The medium of photography thus brought the building into visibility. Indeed, the technology of photography attached in vital ways to the resurrection of the temple. In the process, photographs granted presence to fragments of sculpted Nikai and especially to the marble high relief of the so-called “Sandalbinder.”

In a salted paper print of 1855 from a wet collodion negative, Philippos Margaritis (1810-1892) - the first Greek photographer of Athens to open a professional studio there - depicts the Temple of Athena Nike from the east (fig. 6).⁸ The elevated position of the camera draws out the flutes and the distinctive ionic capitals of the columns. Strong sunlight bleaches their bases while dense shadows accentuate the weathered reliefs of the newly reconstructed east frieze. Inside the temple, between the two central columns, the marble slab of the “Sandalbinder” is easily identifiable, leaning against the wall. An 1860s albumen print by Petros Moraites (1835-1905)⁹ “Le Temple de la Victoire Aptère dans L’Acropole”, (fig. 7) from the portfolio *Souvenirs d’Athènes* similarly emphasises the symmetry of the building but pictures it from a position to the right of centre. A figure in traditional *fustanella* leans

against the column furthest to the right. The sun, penetrating the roofless temple, floods its interior to reveal not only the “Sandalbinder” but, to the left of it, the same fragment of a Nike daguerreotyped by Girault de Prangey with which I began. In 1870, this figure would command a carbon print of its own in the lavish portfolio, *Antiquities of Athens* by the American photographer William James Stillman (1828-1901).¹⁰ Like Stillman’s autotype, Moraites’s negative positive process corrects the lateral reversal of the fragment generated by Girault de Prangey’s earlier daguerreotype.

Often sculptural forms are indistinguishable in the backgrounds of early photographs of antiquities, but these Nikai insistently haunt them. Indeed, early cameras appear to espy the fragments from the parapet of the Temple, pulling the high reliefs out of its interior. The sojourn in the Temple of these high reliefs can thus be tracked in photographs that seek to record the whole building. By 1875, Moraites would be one of nine professional photographers working in Athens and, as his and Margaritis’s prints reveal, once unearthed, slabs of Nike from the parapet of the Temple were kept inside it just as many statues and fragments were initially stored in buildings on the Acropolis, to guard them from further damage and theft.

There were, however, other more elaborate methods of securing antiquities on the Acropolis. Fragments and architectural members were built into walls as a temporary measure to stop theft. Moreover, as part of the Athenian archeologist Kyriakos Pittakis’s systematic project of excavation of the Acropolis, he introduced a process of fixing fragments into wooden frames.¹¹ From 1837-1840 Pittakis became the first General Keeper of Antiquities in Greece (Dyson 2006, 74-75). A salt print by Margaritis (1855) evocatively captures Pittakis’s method of storage. Stones appear locked into frames with plaster to prevent their wandering as the fixing of their bulky forms is additionally fixed by the agency of photography. A later albumen print by Felix Bonfils (1831-1885), *Athènes* (1870) (fig. 8)

also depicts such composites of sculptural fragments stacked in large vertical frames. Thus, represented photographically, these framed collections of disparate forms, three times petrified, resurrect individual pieces of marble by granting them aesthetic significance in new two-dimensional compositions on light sensitised paper. The fate of such captive stones, additionally arrested by the medium of photography, is differently evoked in an albumen print by Dimitrios Constantinou.¹² In what has become a gated structure, the “Sandalbinder” appears no longer simply stored, but imprisoned inside, the Temple dedicated to Wingless Nike.

I want to turn now to the relationship of such photographs, as they capture the sculpted form of the “Sandalbinder”, to texts by travellers that dwell upon a fugitive Nike. Many writers focus upon the fate of Nike’s wings. In his book *Athens and Attica: Journal of Residence There*, Christopher Wordsworth, nephew of the poet, Fellow of Trinity College, and later correspondent of the archaeological Institute in Rome, remarks upon the absent “Temple of Victory” which, “stood” he tells his reader,

a little to the southern wing of the Propylaea. The statue of Victory in this temple, was sculptured wingless. Such a representation of Victory was conformable to the more ancient, but not to the then received method of exhibiting the Goddess. The difference in the modes by which Sparta and Athens respectively expressed the same feeling with respect to this deity, is characteristic of both. To secure the permanence of her favour the Spartans *chained* their Victory to her shrine: the Athenians relieved their’s of her wings. (108)

This alleged distinction between the Greek and Spartan forms of restraining the Goddess – of preventing her from abandoning her favour of “protection” – the removal of wings in the case of the Greek and the shackling in the case of the Spartan - is immediately striking. To make

Victory wingless is to rob her of her power of flight only; to chain her is to render her immobile. For when, as Wordsworth says, “the Athenians relieved their’s of her wings” (108) they did not “relieve” her of all mobility; apterous Nike retained the ability to step out.¹³ Wordsworth took his grand tour in 1832 following Greek Independence but, by the time he published the second edition of his book in 1836, the Temple of Athena Nike had been excavated. He therefore includes an appendix by Charles Holte Bracebridge who notes:

The great discovery of the day is the long lost temple of the Wingless Victory, seen by Wheler, and subsequently blown up and enclosed in a Turkish bastion. It is not of the Doric order, as that traveller asserts, but of the beautiful Ionic, the columns about fifteen feet high, and fluted: four columns stand on the front, and four on the back [. . .] The reliefs of the frieze are very bold and spirited, and tolerably preserved: the subjects are supposed to be the Athenian victory over the Amazons, and that over the Persians at Marathon. Nearly the whole frieze has been discovered, except the four pieces in the British Museum. Two very fine pieces of relief, about three feet high, have been found near the Victory Temple: they do not appear to have belonged to it. (Wordsworth 1836, 281-282)

The “pieces of relief” did indeed belong to the Temple. Four blocks of frieze were, and remain, in the British Museum.¹⁴ But those four pieces that depict battles of winged Nikai suffered two-years’ watery burial on the seabed when in 1802 Elgin’s frigate the *Mentor* carrying them to Malta was wrecked in a storm off the island of Cythera (St. Clair 1998, 115-16). There is more than a little tragic irony in the sinking of Elgin’s *Mentor* with precious cargo from Athena’s temples. The long interment of the Temple of Athena Nike, however, meant that much of the decorative frieze escaped such fate at the hands of Lord Elgin’s men and survived subsequent ravages of war and pillage occurring up until its excavation.

While, as Bracebridge claims, George Wheler, may have been muddled about doric and ionic columns, in recounting his visit to the Acropolis in *A Journey into Greece, in company of Dr. Spon of Lyon* (1682), Wheler notes that “the first thing” they “observed”

was a little Temple on our right hand; which we knew to be dedicated to *Victory without Wings*. It is built of white Marble, with one end near the Wall; where ‘tis said, that Aegeus cast himself down at the Sight of the Black Sails, his Son Theseus forgot to change, when he returned Victorious from Combate with the Minotaur in *Crete*. It was therefore stiled *Without Wings*; because the fame thereof arrived not at Athens, before Theseus himself, that brought it. For otherwise, Victory used still to be represented *with Wings* (358).

Spon and Wheler were among the last travellers to record having seen the temple before it was destroyed and Wheler provides a fascinating interpretation of the well-known story of Aegeus, King of Athens, and the black sails as the reason for the removal of Nike’s wings. For Wheler, Theseus’s forgetting to hoist white sails in place of black ones on his return from killing the Minotaur, and his father’s suicide resulting from the misleading sign, implies a dereliction of protection on Nike’s part; if news of his success had arrived in advance of Theseus’s ship, tragedy would have been avoided and, claims Wheler, ‘Victory’ would still have been *represented with Wings*. For Wheler, then the story is not so much about Theseus’s forgetting to change the sails, but rather one of Nike’s simply not getting there in time. Thus, Wheeler embellishes Pausanias’s account in which the temple is dedicated to a wingless Nike to keep her perpetually present on the Acropolis for protection and victory.

Writers between Wheler and Wordsworth likewise focus on the loss of wings.

William Martin-Leake, for example, in *Researches in Greece* (1814), claims that “after the battle of Marathon, when victory so often attended the Athenian arms [. . .] a new

mythological meaning should be attached to [the] worship [of Victory]: For, [she] was then fabled to have been fixed by Minerva to her favourite spot, the Acropolis, by being deprived of her wings.”(200) Yet, when it comes to mid-nineteenth century travellers writing about the Temple, not only do they revive the focus on Nike’s wings but they also frequently identify the sculptural fragment of the “Sandalbinder”. Is this, one wonders the result of their having seen photographs of it?

The Irish poet Aubrey Thomas de Vere, in *Picturesque Sketches in Greece and Turkey* (1850), notes that “the small but exquisite structure” of the Temple of Athena Nike was built by Pericles “on the Acropolis, to intimate that the most wandering of divinities had taken her permanent stand on the spot” (75). For De Vere, “the Temple of the ‘Wingless Victory’,” has been “released from darkness, like a captive set free, since the conclusion of the war” of Independence (75). While De Vere draws upon Wordsworth’s earlier text, he offers his own reflection on the fate of the apterous figure:

The wingless Victory enjoyed a prospect which might have atoned for the loss of her plumes. She gazed right over the bay of Salamis, where, some forty years before, she had touched the fleet of Xerxes, in passing with a flying hand, and she beheld the Island of Egina, in the caverns of which the Athenians had hidden their wives and children when they abandoned their capital. Contented she may have been; and yet when a wind much less rough as a wooer than that which carried off Orithyia, blew from the purple mountains of the Morea, and made the “wine-black” sea flash in the sun, the Goddess must sometimes have longed for her wings again, that she might cast herself upon it (76).

This is a wonderful passage in imagining the lure of flight for a captive goddess whose Temple has only recently emerged from the obscurity of burial. De Vere’s projection of

longing on to Nike, specifically a longing for her wings, a desire to fly again upon the wind, anticipates in tone John Ruskin's meditation upon the goddess Athena, in *The Queen of the Air* (1869). While, Ruskin's Athena "first and chiefly" represents "the ambient air" - both "air as the spirit of life", and, also, "fresh air" (328),¹⁵ - in her incarnation as a bird on the wing, she becomes, like the bird, "little more than a drift of the air brought into form by plumes." (360)

The year before De Vere's account of the Temple of Athena Nike, Claudius Galen Wheelhouse (1826-1909) had photographed the building, and the fragment of the "Sandalbinder" Nike stowed in its interior, collecting the images into a unpublished album entitled *Photographic Sketches from the Shores of the Mediterranean* (1849-1850). The photograph album accompanied his diary, *Narrative of a Yacht Voyage in the Mediterranean 1849-1850*. Wheelhouse is an example of a mid-nineteenth century traveller commissioned - in this case as ship's surgeon by Lord Lincoln - to take photographs on a tour of ancient sites. Lord Lincoln was later the Minister of War who authorized photographic coverage of the Crimean Campaign (1853-56) sending Roger Fenton to document British military units. While Wheelhouse was a member of the Leeds Photographic Society and is known to have participated in a photography exhibition there in 1857, it is not known how he gained his knowledge of photography.¹⁶ He was, however, the first British photographer after the Reverend George Wilson Bridges to have taken calotypes in the Mediterranean. Wheelhouse records meeting Bridges in Malta who, he writes, "showed [him] many beautiful Talbotypes from Naples, Pompeii, Rome, Otua, etc. (49)." A loose piece of paper in Wheelhouse's hand, dated March 26, found inside his photograph album reads:

The photographs were taken by what was then called the Talbot-type process, a process only recently introduced by Mr Fox Talbot, and a first endeavour to obtain

“negative” pictures, on paper, from which “positive” ones could be printed at will, and as often as desired.

They were taken on simple paper, no glass plates or films having, at that time, been invented, and, when completed were made as transparent as possible by being saturated with white wax, with the aid of a warm flat iron and blotting paper, by which means they were also made tough and durable. (Wheelhouse)

Written retrospectively, this note reminds us that, during the 1840s and 50s, it was common to apply heated wax to a developed calotype negative, not only to make it ‘durable’ and to increase printing transparency, but also to make the paper fibres appear less visible in the image. Wheelhouse’s private album contained over seventy calotypes and on a single day (22 November 1849) he took at least sixteen photographs on the Acropolis, including two of the Temple of Athena Nike. The first he annotates “The Temple of Victory (isolated)”; the second he takes from below, from steps up to the Propylaea. His title in the left hand corner, “The Temple of Victory in Situ” refers to the reconstruction of the Temple. Wheelhouse then calotypes the “Sandalbinder.” As far as I am aware this is the earliest photograph of the fragment. His caption to the calotype reads: “The Statuette of Victory taking off her Sandal After the Battle of Marathon Nov 22nd 1849 – albumen print” (fig. 9). Wheelhouse thereby imagines, or invents, the Nike’s arrival at her destination following her return from the celebrated battle. The goddess, he tells us, is in the process of removing her sandal. In his separate diary entry, having noted that that “the little Temple of Victory” “contains several exquisite pieces of sculpture,” Wheelhouse pronounces “the ‘wingless Victory’ taking off her sandals after the Battle of Marathon, finer certainly than anything of the kind I ever saw” (63). He thereby turns Nike’s single sandal into a pair. Wheelhouse’s photograph arrests the panel, propped-up in the temple, in such a way that the hand, foot, shoulder and neck glow,

almost seeming to emit light as emphasis falls on the left-hand side of the high relief. The vertical oval format, with the words “Goddess Victory” inscribed around its curve, sets off the jagged edges of stone, evoking a portrait.

While Wheelhouse’s Nike has flown back to the Acropolis after the battle of Marathon, the American traveller Henry Martin Baird’s Nike has lost her wings. In *Modern Greece: a Narrative of a residence and Travels in that Country* (1856), Baird muses upon an apterous goddess. He notes that

Cimon dedicated this exquisite little temple to Victory; but fearing lest the fickle goddess should some day take it into her head to desert his native city, he robbed her of her wings. Perhaps he hoped this way to fix her irrevocably to her present seat; but succeeding generations discovered to their cost, that if Victory had lost the power of soaring away on her airy pinions, she could, in a more prosaic manner, abandon her beautiful niche, and give them leg-bail. (37)

For Baird, in the absence of her “pinions,” or flight feathers, the goddess remained at liberty to escape, to take flight, so to speak, on foot. And it is perhaps not surprising that following his comment on leg-bail, as Baird “admire[s] the few sculptured slabs” “collected” in the temple, he especially remarks upon the ankle of the “Sandalbinder”:

One [slab] was so exquisite that I could have stopped an hour before it without weariness. It represents the goddess just alighting on her favourite hill. She stoops to unbuckle her sandal, indicating the determination here to cease her wanderings and take up a perpetual abode. Nothing can be more elegant than the posture and finish of the well-turned ankle. (Baird 1856, 38)

Baird eroticizes the foot and ankle – predictable nineteenth-century fetishes - but ones present in ancient Greek epithets that sanction focus on Nike’s ankle. Hesiod, for example, in the *Theogony* from 700 BCE refers to “trim-ankled Nike (Victory)” (II, 383), and versions of the epithet, such as “three thousand neat-ankled daughters of Ocean” are familiar from his text (II, 346). In Baird’s passage, however, I find myself drawn to Nike’s sandal by the anachronistic presence of a buckle fastening. The buckled sandal appears to be solely his invention as Baird modernizes the goddess’s footwear.

In June 2018, I discovered the “Sandalbinder” unexpectedly in a personal album in the Photographic Archives of the National Historical Museum in Athens. A photographic print of the sculptural fragment is included in one of two photographic albums entitled *Athens Ancient Monuments 1884*, taken by the amateur photographer Nikolaos Kontogiannakis.¹⁷ The albumen print is the eighth of nine prints in *Album B* (fig. 10). Attached by its four corners with mounting slits to the page, the photograph of the fragment commands the frame as it appears among largely topographical views of Athens. Another personal album in the same archive holds largely professional photographs of the antiquities of Athens, many containing numbers in the negatives indicating purchase from commercial catalogues.¹⁸ This unattributed album includes nineteenth-century photographs of the Temple of Athena Nike and, having become so used to encountering photographs of the “Sandalbinder”, I expected to find it pictured there. Instead of occupying a discrete print, however, the fragment appeared in a long-range photograph clearly discernible, as I had frequently identified it, in the interior of the Temple. The winged figure was again shut into the building by gates erected in the late 1860s.

There turned out to be no discrete image of the “Sandalbinder” in this anonymous Greek photograph album. Instead of an image of the Nike, however, on the final page that held a photograph I came across one of two women (fig. 11). It was a peculiar experience to

encounter an informal double portrait in an album of this type - a gentle shock in the process of viewing formal albums of antiquities that countered my assumptions that this type of amateur souvenir album would have been collected and assembled during a fairly contained space of time.

I remain intrigued by the small photograph. The women pose as if dancing in a large garden or a park. The one nearest us, with her hair in a plait, appears to be laughing. The slight bend of her left knee under her dress indicates she is about to step forward, take off, as she holds a parasol over her dance partner; is this a parasol or some sort of aberrant mark in the image? The darkened patch falling upon the pale gown of the second woman, who looks older and turns her eyes to the camera, resembles the shadow of a parasol. Might this be a portrait of the compiler of the album or of her or his loved ones? Are the women mother and daughter? Coming upon this photograph as the final enclosure I wondered whether the album had begun to be re-purposed for family photographs. Had the impulse to fix in portraits either not got going fully, or abruptly stopped? Had spare pages in a large book of photographs of ancient monuments from Athens provided a convenient place in which to collect a different kind of photograph? Or was the double portrait significant in terms of the owner's encounter with the familiar monuments depicted?

The archivist could not tell me who the album had belonged to, nor did she know who had given it to the museum. The positioning of the image, off centre, in the top left hand corner, implies an intention to add more photographs to the page (fig. 12). Adhesive escaping from the top edge of the print also anchors the volume in specific ways. The photograph appears a hasty addition, an informal signature; there are two pin holes in the top corners of the print indicating that before being glued down it had at some point been displayed elsewhere. The print is numbered "25" in pencil, sequenced in a later hand along with the twenty-four topographical photographs comprising the album.

The experience of finding this photograph checked assumptions I had been making about destinations. The image embodied the insistently fugitive nature of the material objects I was working with, the capacity of photographs to end up in unpredictable places. Moreover, on finding the informal double portrait, I was back with Benjamin the collector who, in “unpacking” the last cases of his “library” unexpectedly unearths “two volumes bound in faded boards which”, he writes, “strictly, speaking, do not belong in a book case at all: two albums with stick-in pictures which”, he explains, “my mother pasted in as a child and which I inherited” (1979, 66). For Benjamin the unexpected albums confirm that: “there is no living library that does not harbour a number of book like creations from fringe areas” (66). So too, for me, this photograph assigned this particular album to the “prismatic fringes” of those more regularly configured albums I had been researching. To recognise this anonymous photograph album as a type of Benjamin’s “booklike creations”, that is, “not strictly [a] book” or an object making up a collection, was thus also to remember the extra material, or photographic, life of an object. It was to remember the unique ability of a photograph to take flight, to have been bound for a destination.

With Benjamin’s mention of his mother’s albums, I also recognised a power in the incongruous portrait of the two women. A commonplace image in another context, the double portrait found unexpectedly among photographs of antiquities, spoke to memory and to that which I had been unable to speak. My mother had died just prior to the period of my archival research in Athens. And, after my days spent surveying photographs of mutilated stones, the surprise produced by the candid snapshot of two women had also been one of comfort. The camera had captured its human subjects about to take flight; the women’s hands were locked together, their pose fleeting. And, as I conjured destinations for the women beyond the frame of the image, those imagined destinations combined with the fates of fugitive Nikai from the Temple dedicated to the goddess on the Acropolis.

Capturing sculptural fragments of winged and apterous Nikai, nineteenth-century photographs mobilized the memory in stone of their capacity for flight. In this context, the anonymous photograph of two women became a type of Nike. For, the image conjured something of the relationship to memory that nineteenth-century photographs of Greek antiquities came to occupy. As ancient stones began to acquire wings by the agency of photography their newly fugitive status had already long been enshrined in the little Temple of Athena Nike whose re-birth practically coincided with the birth of the medium.

¹ See, for example, Joseph-Philibert Girault de Prangey, *Essai Sur L'Architecture des Arabes et des Mores, en Espagne, en Sicile et en Barbarie* (Paris: A. Hauser, 1841). The volume - containing coloured engravings of his exquisite drawings – begins with a comparison of the monuments of Egypt with those of Greece, both countries in which he would daguerreotype architectural forms.

² See: *Photographs by James Robertson : "Athens and Grecian antiquities, 1853-1854", from the photographic archive of the Benaki Museum*. Eds. Fani Constantinou, Fani-Maria Tsigakou; English translation: John Leatham. Athens: Museum, 1998. The Benaki Museum Photographic archive holds this exquisite portfolio. In photographing this fragment, Robinson has signed the edge of the stone. The inscription, oscillates between the signature of a sculptor and the graffiti of a philhellene.

³ As Lindsay Stewart indicates, Girault de Prangey used “a custom made camera” with “a max plate size of 19 x 24 cm. This unusually generous format, and the smaller formats he created by subdividing his large plates is striking when compared with other French outdoor scenes produced around the same time” (72).

⁴ The Temple of Athena Nike replaced the sixth century BCE Archaic Temple destroyed by Xerxes’s Persian Army in 480-479 BCE. See Ira S. Mark, *The Sanctuary of Athena Nike in Athens: Architectural Stages and Chronology*. The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1993.

⁵ In May 1835 the first tickets to the Acropolis were issued “declaring the Acropolis an architectural monument open the public”. See: *Great Moments in Greek Archaeology* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2007), 40-42.

⁶ See Sigmund Freud, “Delusion and Dream in Jensen’s Gradiva” (1907), Vol. IX (1906-1908), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey, London: the Hogarth Press. For Freud on Jensen’s *Gradiva* see also, Mary Bergstein, *Mirrors of Memory, Freud, Photography, and the History of Art* (Ithaca: Cornell, 2010).

⁷ When in “Unpacking [his] Library” Benjamin rediscovers his treasured books, not lost, only forgotten, he has Marcel Proust in mind for whom reading old works was a kind of archaeology, a way of preserving the past lives of objects in a manner analogous to the chisel of a sculptor. See Benjamin ‘The Image of Proust’ (1929) in *Illuminations* ed. Hannah Arendt. Trans. Harry Zohn. Glasgow: William Collins, 1979, 203-217.

⁸ On the development of Margaritis’s early photographic career see: Hans Christian Adam and Alkis X. Xanthakis, “Margaritis and the Mysterious Perraud, Early Daguerreotypes of Classical Athens”, *History of Photography*, Vol. 16, no.1. Spring 1992, 61-69.

⁹ Petros Moraites who trained as a painter in Athens, took up photography in 1859 when he became the partner of Athanassios Kalfas. He was a prolific photographer held in high esteem by the public “who thronged to his studio to be photographed” (*Athens 1839-1900*, 314).

¹⁰ On Stillman, see Andrew Szegedy-Maszak, “An American on the Acropolis, William James Stillman” in Claire Lyons et al, *Antiquity and Photography: Early Views of Ancient Mediterranean Sites* (Getty, 2005).

¹¹ Not only did Pittakis use wooden frames hung up in the Pinakothek in the Propylaea but, as evident in other nineteenth century photographs, he stacked fragments into remarkable walls on the Acropolis and around its south circuit wall.

¹² Constantinou was, after Margaritis, one of the first Greek photographers to establish a professional studio and the first photographer to collaborate with the Greek Archaeological Society. This photograph is in the Benaki Museum Photographic Archive.

¹³ Wordsworth cites Pausanias III, 15, 7 when distinguishing between the Greek and the Spartan statues of 'Victory'. However, the Spartan representation that Pausanias refers to is *not* the goddess Victory but "an old image of Enyalios in fetters" situated opposite the "temple of Hipposthenes". Enyalios, a minor god or spirit of war was an attendant of Ares. As Pausanias explains: 'the idea the Lacedaemonians express by this image is the same as the Athenians express by their Wingless Victory; the former think that Enyalios will ever run away from them being bound in the fetters, while the Athenians think that Victory, having no wings, will always remain where she is (Pausanias, III, 15, 7).

¹⁴ Two sections from the south and two from the west of the frieze remain in the British Museum. The frieze, running around all sides of the Temple, comprised fourteen sections. While the east frieze represents the Olympian Gods, the other sides depict battles, including the Battle of Marathon 490 BCE. Pittakis ordered casts from the British Museum to replace the slabs taken by Lord Elgin; those casts attached to the Temple in place of the originals. See Panos Valavanis and Vasileios Petrakos, *Great Moments in Greek Archaeology* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2007) 43-44.

¹⁵ for Ruskin, "a great number of the most interesting passages in Homer regard [Athena] as flying over the earth in local and transitory strength, simply and merely the goddess of fresh air" (*The Queen of the Air*, 328).

¹⁶ The Leeds Photographic Society founded in 1852 by J. W. Ramsden was "the first properly organised photographic society in the United Kingdom". Early members included: "a book seller, an iron monger, two surgeons, a merchant, an optician and a Scotch whiskey merchant" (lps1852.org/history/).

¹⁷ "Albums A and B" have decorative paper covers annotated in ink in Greek: *Athens Ancient Monuments 1884. Photographs taken by Nikolaos Kontogiannakis*. Photographic Archive of the National Historical Museum, Athens. ID number: AEYK 52 and 53.

¹⁸ Unattributed personal "Album" containing twenty-five prints, both professional and amateur, dating from the 1860s, 70s and 80s. Photographic Archive of the National Historical Museum, Athens. ID number: AEY1586.

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