



MNPS STEAM EXPEDITION TO THE PARTHENON



ARCHAEOLOGY COLORING BOOK

by the

Archaeological Institute of America-Nashville Society

MNPS STEAM Expedition to the Parthenon

Did you know that ancient Greek sculptures and buildings were brightly painted and colorful? Athena Parthenos at the Parthenon is an example of polychromy, meaning many colors! Scientific and evidence-based reconstructions with polychromy have been ignored for centuries. Scholars have been trying to correct this misconception since the Renaissance.

Ancient Greece was a colorful, vibrant place...

Peplos Kore
about 530 BCE
Acropolis Museum (Akr. 679)

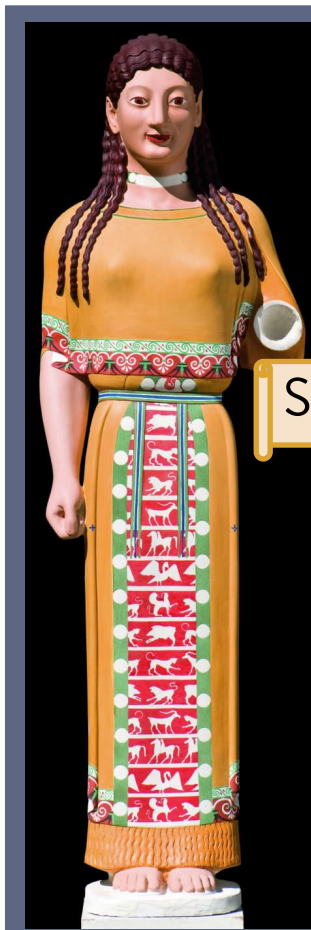
100 years older than the Parthenon!



Archer
about 500-490 BCE
Glyptothek Museum

60-70 years older than the Parthenon!





Reconstructions:
Liebieghaus
Skulpturensammlung,
Gods in Color

Same statues— but with scientific color reconstruction!



Variant B

- Bronze hair locks swayed in wind
- Vest had lions & griffins
- Diamond pattern on pants & sleeves



Variant A

Why is this important?

New technology gives experts more tools to learn about ancient cultures. Paints, gems, stones, wood, ivory, bronze, silver, and gold decorated sculptures and architecture. Sometimes the materials from 2,500 years ago are poorly preserved, so special tools like x-ray fluorescent light reveal the patterns, color, and decorations invisible to the human eye!



Athena Parthenos



before color

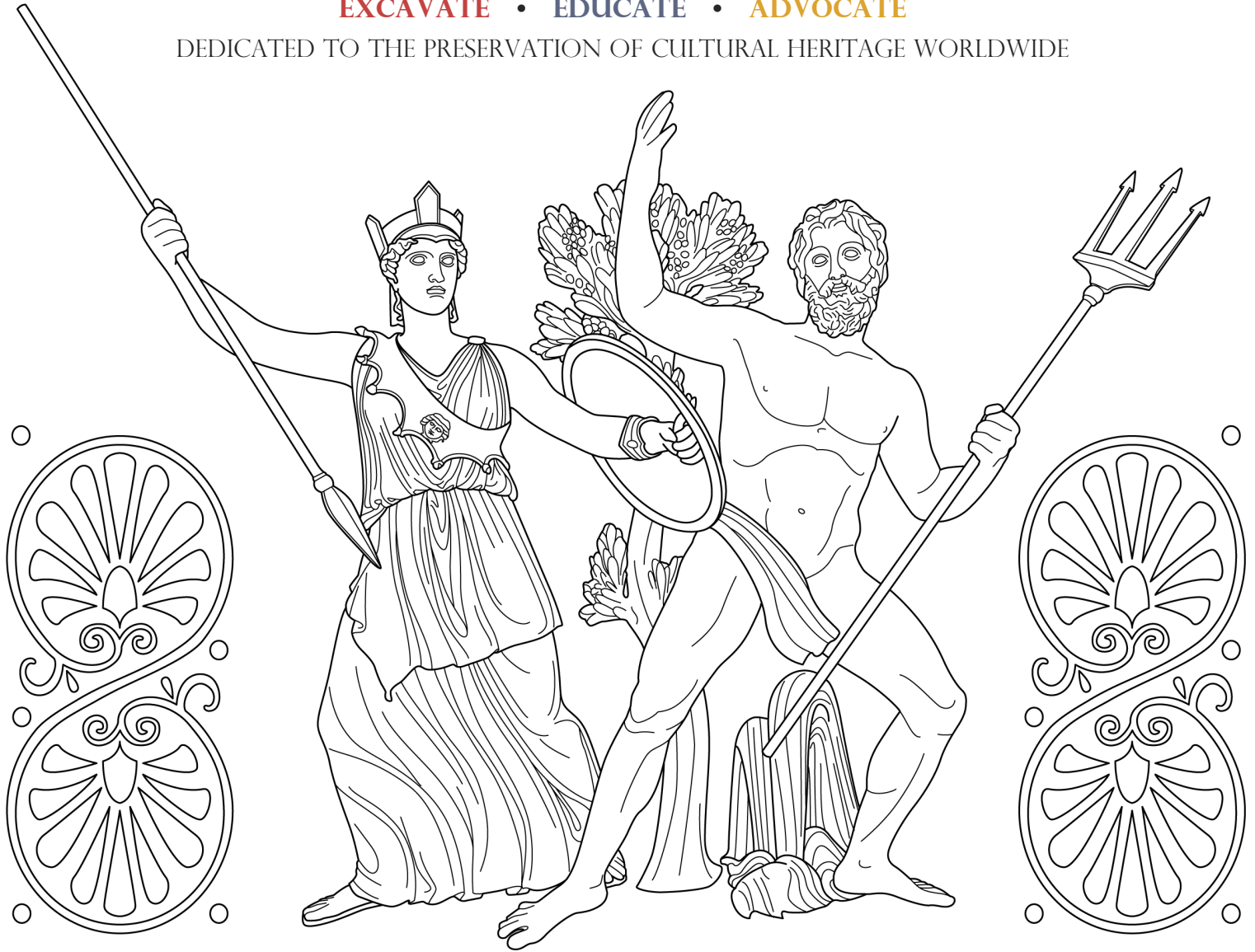
Learning about color on statues and structures better reflects the diversity of the ancient Mediterranean world.



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The sculpture in the West Pediment of the Parthenon tells the story of a contest between Greek gods Athena and Poseidon to become the patron god of Athens. Poseidon, god of the seas, gifted the Athenians a salt water stream representing control of the seas. Athena, goddess of wisdom, warfare, crafts, and weaving, gifted the first olive tree, representing wisdom and industry. Athena won the contest, and legend says her first olive tree still stands on the Acropolis in Greece today.



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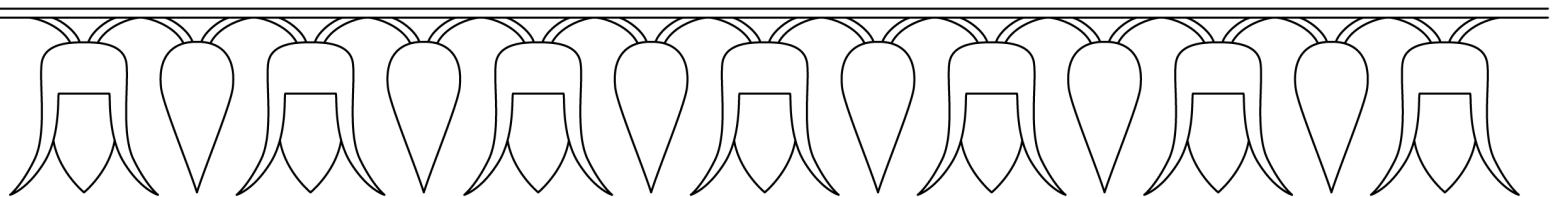
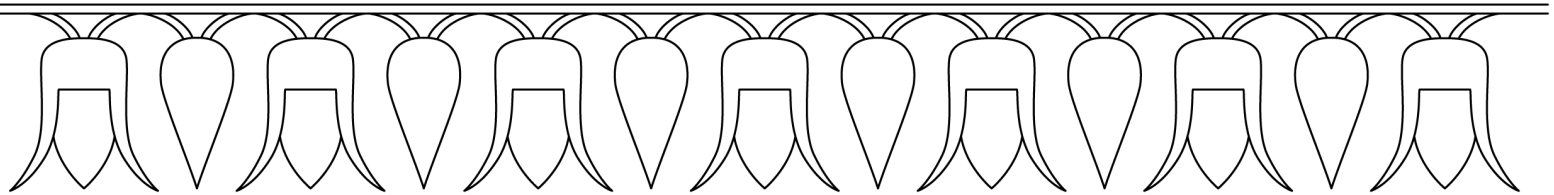
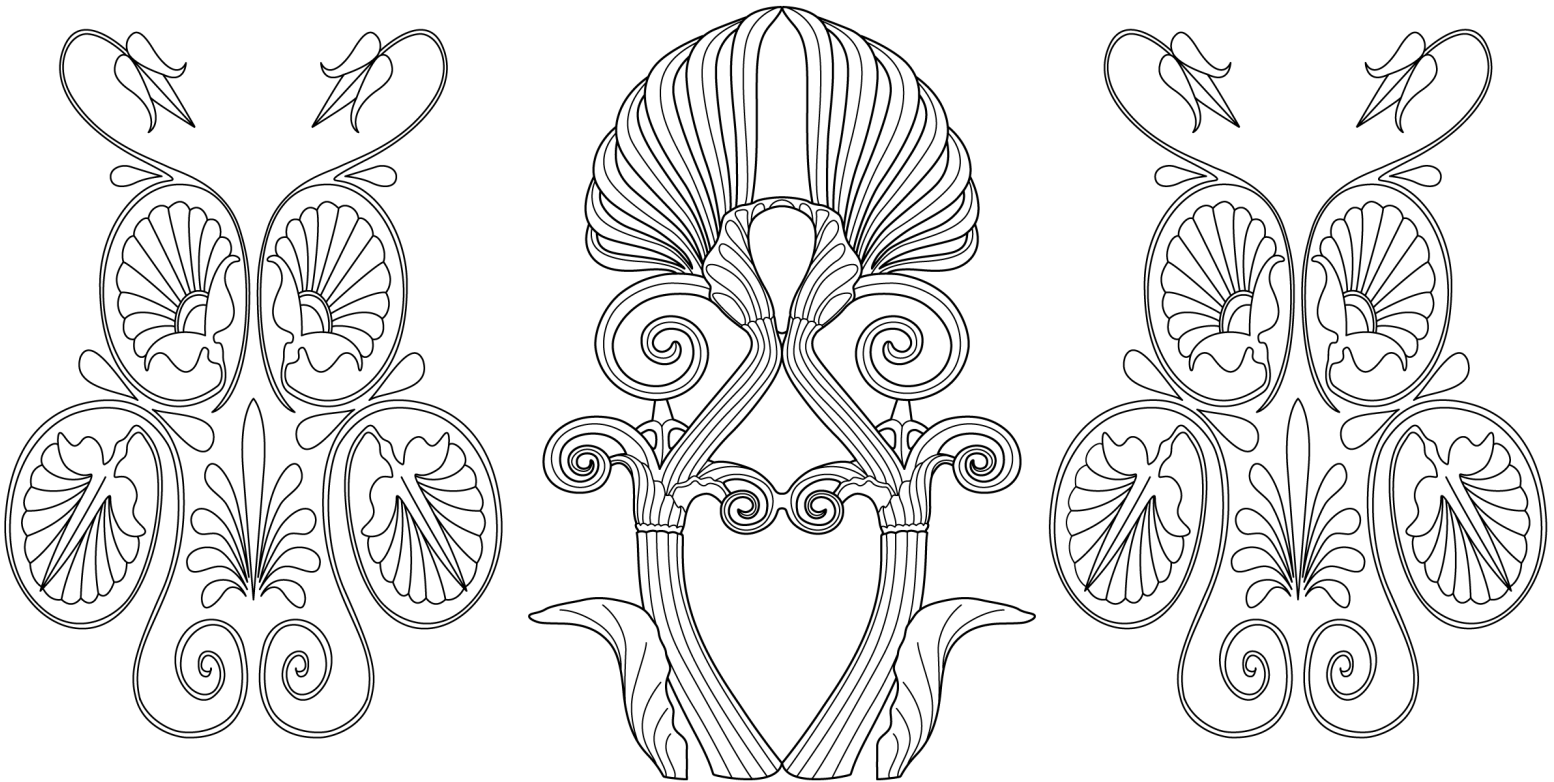
The sculpture in the East Pediment of the Parthenon tells the story of how Athena became one of the 12 Olympian gods. Zeus, king of the Greek gods, sits on his throne watching Nike, goddess of victory, crown Athena with a victory wreath. Zeus swallowed Athena's mother, Metis, but Athena, goddess of wisdom, warfare, crafts, and weaving, kept growing inside her father until bursting from his head. Athena was born as a fully-grown Greek goddess complete with weapons and armor!



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Architectural features on the Parthenon range from large masonry blocks to ornate floral moldings.

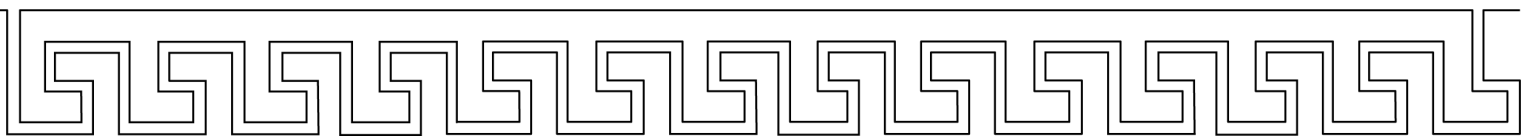
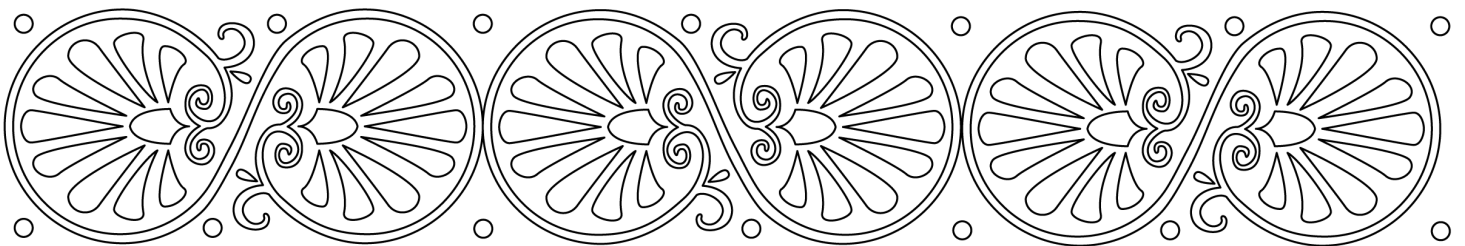
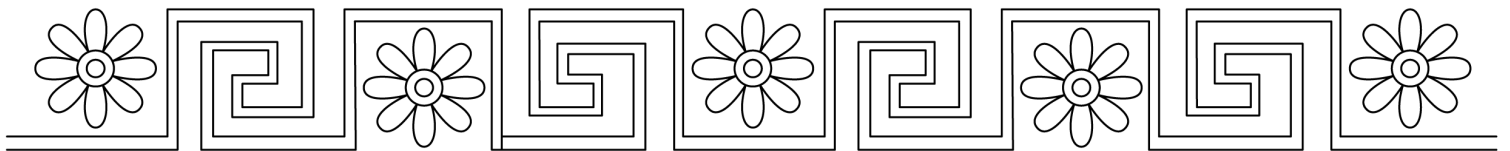
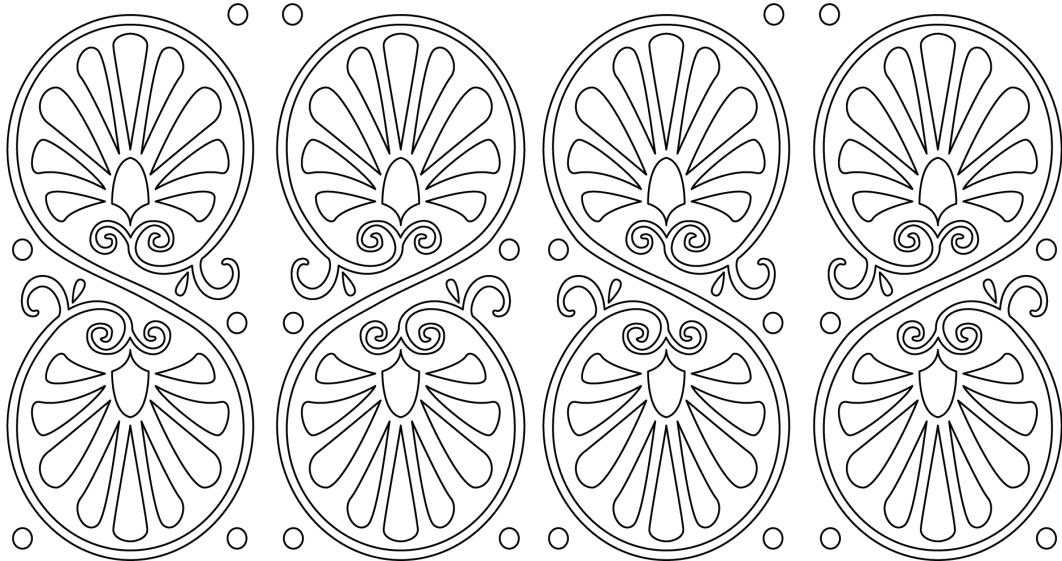
The center decoration here is a drawing of the marble acroteria crowning the top of the Parthenon pediments. The acroteria are over nine feet tall!



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Architectural features on the Parthenon range from carved sculptural figures to intricate painted details. For its over 8,900 marble roof tiles, the Parthenon had 130 decorative antefixes in the shape of palmettes along the edge of the roof.

The bottom decoration here is a drawing of the famous Greek key, or meander, a motif with a never-ending, interlocking pattern. This pattern decorated the top of all four exterior walls, which measure 228 ft. long by 101 ft. wide.