The head, arms and shoulders of the sun-god Helios emerge out of the sea at dawn. His chariot is to be imagined as still under water. The heads of four horses were once visible, of which two are shown here.

EAST PEDIMENT A-C

On the backs of these figures, where they would not be seen, the carving has been economised in his treatment of the drapery. Compared with the front, the modelling is more shallow and the folds broader and less complex.

EAST PEDIMENT G and F

The flying drapery of this figure is almost as dramatic viewed from the back, as it is from the front. In her hands she held a shawl, a fragment of which is preserved. Figure G is exceptional in that her plinth was sunk into the pediment floor.

EAST PEDIMENT G

A centaur with pointed ears carries off a struggling girl. His mild expression is out of keeping with the violence of his action.

SOUTH METOPE XXIX

East Pediment, K, L and M. The drapery on the backs of these figures is less fully carved than the front. Some details, however, may seem unnecessary considering that the backs would not be seen, e.g. the hem of the fabric that cushions the rock. Rough cuttings into the back of figure L were necessary before these figures could be placed in the pediment.

SOUTH METOPE XXVIII

A centaur draped with a panther skin rears up triumphantly over a fallen Lapith. In his right hand the centaur brandished a bowl, now lost. The contrasting moods of these two figures make this one of the most effective metopes.

SOUTH METOPE XXVII

This is compositionally one of the most impressive metopes. A centaur pressing a wound in his back tries to escape, while the Lapith restrains him and prepares to deliver a final blow. The Lapith’s cloak fans out to provide a dramatic backdrop.

SOUTH METOPE XXVII
The centaur rears up to strike the Lapith, who fends him off with a hand and a foot. The carving of this sculpture seems incomplete. The Lapith’s cloak is missing between arm and thigh. A drill-hole in the left upper arm indicates where a metal attachment was fixed to replace the missing cloak.

SOUTH METOPES XXVI

The chariot scene
The composition of the chariot groups echoes the action of the centaur: the chariot generally stands ahead of the horsemen in rock-cut, but those in front hold spurs and are in a low crouch, while the charioteer is pulled up short to avoid collision with the pedimental figures ahead. This part of the frieze was likely damaged in the explosion of 1867.

A charioteer (Ch) stands holding the reins of a waiting team. A foot soldier stands beside him, with his right arm and back right leg. The left arm and (by inference) the adjacent horse are on the opposite side of the galley. The soldier’s helmet crest is visible above his remembered left shield, indicating that he looked back at the advancing horsemen.

SOUTH PEDILET XXVI A

This block has suffered particularly from the explosion of 1867. Only the middle and rear quarters of the horse are visible here. Other fragments are in Athens.

SOUTH PEDEMET XXVI

The leading chariot is pulled up sharply by the driver. Breaking on the reins (now missing), he uses his body to counter the forward thrust of the horses. Part of a foot soldier with one foot resting on a rock can be seen on the right. On the left a charioteer in the chariot behind.

SOUTH PEDEMET XXVI B

The north frieze continues on the opposite wall of the Gallery.

A soldier wearing a cloak pins a shield on the horse’s neck. The tasseled part of this figure, together with the foot soldier and door of the next most chariot, are in Athens.

SOUTH PEDEMET XXVI C

Sometimes a charioteer is shown directing his team, here one is placed on the far side of the horse. The charioteer’s arms are outstretched, and their hands are held just above their heads.

SOUTH PEDEMET XXVI D

Originally three figures were shown carrying tropes of offerings. These two figures are said to have been carved from the blocks of the Lapith and the centaur who had once stood outside to the left. A drawing by Eugène Viollet shows a group similar to this apparent before the explosion of 1867.

SOUTH PEDEMET XXVI E
GROUPS OF FRIEZES

Visiting groups of pedestrians walked ahead of the chariots. The surviving fragments are mostly in Akhmim. A group of elders was placed immediately ahead of the chariots, proceeded by musicians, youths carrying water-pots, imperial beasts and sheep and cattle being led to sacrifice.

THE EAST FRIEZE

The east frieze brings together two arms of a procession that were shown on the other three sides of the Parthenon.