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## **The New Acropolis Museum and the Dynamics of National Museum Development in Greece**

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### **Abstract**

In Greece, the history of archaeological museum and a consciousness of the cultural heritage of antiquity are as long as the independent nation-state. National museums were almost always connected to archaeology and the distant past provided material evidence for the country's master national narrative of cultural and biological continuity. The New Acropolis Museum, opened in 2009, replaces the first museum built in 1874; as a project it took over 60 years to be realized. A remarkably debated affair, the history of this project offers an insight into the way official policy has dealt with the development of museums and culture in Greece. Before and indeed since the opening of the New Acropolis Museum, multitudes of critical voices have made themselves present. An overview of the positions and ideas that they have expressed about the museum since its official inauguration will provide insight into the museum dynamics that have been at play in Greece over the last forty years. Official cultural and museum policy seems to have profited from the experience of handling such a controversial project.

## Introduction

In Greece, the word ‘museum’ has generally been associated with the idea of archaeology, mainly classical and in some cases byzantine, and only to a much smaller extent to the notion of art or other categories of museum. This is largely the result of the origins, goals and intellectual affiliations that museums were connected to since the nineteenth century (Gazi, 2011). The establishment of the first Greek museum dates precisely back to the birth of the Greek State in 1830. Since then, the archaeological museum and its associations to classicism have attained a crucial role for the promotion of the national heritage, closely linked to ancient Greece’s classical period, as Despina Catapoti explains in her text. Museological choices have since continued to promote archaeology over other fields of inquiry, in various ways a dimension of Greek museums that has begun to receive some criticism over the last twenty years.

In this article, I will try to shed some light to the history and ideology of Greek museums in relation to archaeology as a context to understand the inauguration of the New Acropolis Museum in 2009. I will examine its impact on museum dynamics in Greece. The Acropolis Museum holds a central role in national imagery and since its opening is often considered as the most important museum, due to its connection to the Rock of the Acropolis and the Parthenon and its relation to Greek demands for the restitution of its archaeological heritage. Before its creation it aroused great debates concerning its location and its architectural style. Since its construction in the early 2000s, it has been a museum greatly advertised by the Greek State, as well as highly visited and commented by foreigners. I will examine the debates it has given rise to after its opening and add some insights into the new perspectives for Greek museums in general.

## The Archaeological Museum in Greece

During the nineteenth century, looking back into the distant past was a common practice for young nations in their goal to consolidate a collective identity. The invocation of Antiquity which holds the adjective ‘national’ is common as well (*cf.* Loir, 2002: 36; Diaz-Andreu, 2007). Around the times of the independent state’s foundation (1830), Greece’s ideological connections with the remote past gained ground. The relation between the Greek State’s constitution and its ancient heritage, in particular the classical age’s heritage, is a topic widely discussed (Hamilakis & Yalouri, 1996; Jusdanis, 2001: 102-133; Voudouri, 2003; Liakos, 2008; Mackridge, 2008).

What is striking - even if the Greek case of affinity to its past is not an exceptional one (*cf.* Fowler, 2008: 93-119; Prendi, 2000: 281-286; Tsonos, 2009) -, is the insistence of the Greek State to identify itself with classical Greece and nourish the Nation, in terms of artistic production and ideas, appropriating an origin so distant in time. This reflection on Greece’s distant past takes place in the State’s effort to justify its contemporary existence and place in the Western world. The classical past is only an aspect of a threefold vision of Greek identity formed during the nineteenth century, which included the classical past, the Byzantine legacy and the folk culture (*cf.* Gazi, 2011: 363).

Despite the fact that ancient and modern Greek heritage is of major value, inadequacies in definition and legislation about the museum as an institution remained a recurrent issue (Ntaflou, 2011). Attention is mostly focused on questions of propriety, on the protection and the management of antiquities. On the other hand, the material heritage of Greece’s Ottoman period

(fifteenth-nineteenth centuries) has been greatly neglected until recent years. Moreover, recent heritage and contemporary creation did not officially come under the State's protection until 1950 with law 1469 '*On the protection of a special category of buildings and works of art posterior to 1830.*'

In terms of political initiatives and cultural policy, a ministry for Culture was created in 1971. The Ministry's organization reflects the priorities of the State, which is principally interested in the protection of antiquities. This is corollary to a lack of initiative in terms of the development and protection of modern heritage.

In the spirit of the last and actual heritage law of 2002, the Greek State defines, conceives and creates museums of all types. However, the law's reference to museums still mostly addresses national museums, which consequently means mainly those concerned with archaeological heritage of classical Antiquity and the Byzantine period. This absence of a general framework for every museum - whatever its juridical status or its type may be - poses yet unresolved questions about a global museum policy and a standardized denomination of museums.

In addition to this imbalance, the excessive lack of any clear distinction between a museum and a collection indicates the degree of legal and political inadequacy in this domain. For example, when the National Gallery was created in 1900 - the museum of fine arts *par excellence* - it was so with a law that established a museum without a building and only provided protection for the given collections. The National Gallery remained inexistent to the eyes of the public, except for a discontinuing exhibitions' program, until 1976, the date of its opening. Annie Malama provides significant information about this museum in her own text. A law describing its functions was issued in 1980.<sup>1</sup> After long discussions and a multitude of projects, the extension of its building is underway.

Priorities and discontinuities in cultural development enabled the archaeological museum to rapidly develop and, whether of public or rarer private status, to spread all across Greece (*cf.* Gazi, 2008: 67; Mouliou, 2008: 83-84). This phenomenon should be considered from a political and ideological perspective and studied along with other developments in the domain of the arts (Matthiopoulos, 2003: 437). For the most part, Greek museums, just like the archaeologists in charge of them, were dominated by the passion for antiquities.

To a greater or a lesser degree, the archaeological museum very often embrace or have embraced quite an ambitious ideological agenda considering the Nation's past, such as in the case of Greece (Papataxiarchis, 2005: 203-212; T'oundassaki & Caftantzoglou, 2005: 229-242). These narrations concerning the ancient past and developed in museums, within intellectual circles or even across the country's population, are mainly responsible for the imbalance in the study and research on culture and civilization whose promotion has experienced a lack of diversity in geographical extension or even different cultural expressions.<sup>2</sup> This is due to the extreme importance given to Antiquity and to national history, which overrides the importance of integrating other cultures and civilizations into museums.

## **The Acropolis Museum**

'I have always believed that Nations place themselves in history according to their cultural achievements. No nation has ever imposed itself in the world's conscience with material accomplishments. The nations who have imposed themselves were those who had created culture and with this culture they have created history. No country ever had in its possession greater cultural wealth than Greece and no other country has proved itself more incapable of

exploiting this wealth [than Greece]. I believe that we can reach high levels in the domain of culture. What we need is to deprive this domain from disputes and partisanships, to collaborate closely with each other and to elaborate our efforts'. Constantine Caramanlis (Tatouli & Zacharaki, 2004, s.p.)

The idealized and romantic portrayal of the Parthenon (*cf.* Kefallineou, 1999) is characteristic of how Greece perceives and uses cultural heritage. Developed by archaeologists, architects, politicians and intellectuals since the nineteenth century,<sup>3</sup> reports on Parthenon have mostly described a 'monument' as if it had never changed since Antiquity. Evocations of the 'purified,' white Parthenon persisted for a long time, even as scientific evidence and data clearly showed the transformation of the building over time. Despite it being previously known that the monument had been subjected to different uses throughout the ages<sup>4</sup> (*cf.* Soteriou, 1929: 24 & 35; Procopiou, 1943: 15; Mallouchou-Tufano, 1998: 276; Hurwit, 1999: 291-302; Loukaki, 2008: 235, et al.), for the large public this has only recently become evident. To a large extent this was due to the opening of the new Acropolis museum in 2009 and the discussions it aroused (*cf.* Hamilakis & Yalouri, 1996; Hamilakis, 2000; Hamilakis, 2001; Alcock, 2002: 4-5). Information about the monument became widely available and discussions sprang up many conflicting voices about the museum itself and the perceptions of heritage.

The new Acropolis museum, officially inaugurated in June 2009 after many years of delay (Loukaki, 2008: 284), has served - and continues to serve - as the main argument in support of the demands concerning the return of the 'Elgin marbles', or the 'Parthenon marbles' as they are commonly called in Greek. An important aspect of the museum is the binding of Greece with the classical past and therefore promoting the country's continuous history. Another important role of the Acropolis museum, in the Greek context, is the enlargement of the notion of heritage site. This includes long debates that concerned the potential destruction of buildings dating back to the beginning of the twentieth century located next to the museum. One of the two buildings concerned was a creation of the Greek architect Vassilis Kouremenos (1875-1957), graduate of the School of Beaux-Arts of Paris, who with his four-storey neoclassically inspired building of 1934 next to the museum has introduced many Art Deco elements in its facade, rendering it one of the few architectural examples of the capital that bears witness to the influences of this architectural and decorative style. Its destruction could open up the path for the demolition of another, similar building next to it. The potential destruction or choice of façadism that was discussed for the two buildings, in order to keep the view from the museum's cafeteria to the Parthenon and the Acropolis rock clearer, raised many protests from around the world and the buildings were finally saved. This way, the museum has after all contributed to the renewal of conceptions about museum architecture itself and mostly about built heritage's conservation, as supported by international heritage conventions.

The first Acropolis museum initially was constructed in 1874, according to the plans of Panagis Kalkos (1810-78) and housed archaeological monuments and findings from the Acropolis site. Soon, it became evident that the initially constructed museum was not sufficiently large to exhibit all objects. Subsequent arrangements were added to it at the end of the nineteenth century and a new building replaced the old one in 1953-56. This was built by Patroclos Karantinos (1903-76) and was inaugurated in 1956. Its permanent exhibition was completed in 1964, under the supervision of the archaeologist and responsible for the Acropolis Museum

Yannis Miliadis (1895-1975). But as early as the mid 1960s, Constantine Caramanlis (1907-98)<sup>5</sup> began to defend the idea of creating afresh a new museum of the Acropolis, intended to house the sculptures of the Parthenon. Without any doubt, this museum project was to be directly related to the claims of restitution of the Elgin marbles that were occasionally already expressed.



Figure 1: The Acropolis Museum as seen from Acropolis rock (© the author, picture taken on 25.04.2009).

Caramanlis envisaged the construction of the museum in the district of Makriyiannis, laying on the edges of the Acropolis rock, to the block of the actual museum. As suggested by the citation in the beginning of this section he was a convinced advocate of the Nation's cultural achievements that he was dedicated to promoting. From 1971 onwards, the idea of the Makriyiannis placement was adopted by the majority of ministers of Culture, and from 1976 on, efforts for a new Acropolis museum started to gain increasing popularity. However, decisive motivation for the new museum was provided by the project concerning the restoration of the Parthenon and its surrounding space. This project received considerable support mostly after 1977 (Tatouli & Zacharaki, 2004: 14) when the Acropolis Conservation Committee was created.<sup>6</sup> By 1980, protecting measures for the Makriyiannis' quarter area had significantly increased (*Ibid.*: 16) indicating a strong drive for the construction of the museum.

Efforts to build the Acropolis museum went on for more than 20 years. In 1976 and 1979, two national contests were announced without any winning results, due to the debates concerning the site of the construction of the museum that was criticized by archaeologists and architects. It was in 1985 that Melina Mercouri firmly established in an international context the



link between the construction of the museum and the demands for the return of the Elgin marbles to Greece. Mercouri turned the creation of the Acropolis' museum into a political issue raising international awareness: in 1987, the Parthenon entered the UNESCO's World Heritage List, partly due to her efforts. Mercouri also decided to organize an international contest for the building of the new museum in 1989<sup>7</sup> (The New Acropolis Museum, 1991). In 1991, the results were issued; the contest was annulled because of the difficulty to apply the architectural plans to a site where many antiquities of the post-byzantine era were discovered, so in fact the winning project was never realized in order to conduct excavations.<sup>8</sup> Finally, in 2000, the Organization for the construction of the new Acropolis museum launched an invitation for an international contest in accordance with European Union rules. The winners of this last contest were the Swiss Bernard Tschumi and the Greek Michalis Fotiadis, who have indeed seen the realization of their project.

The Acropolis museum is often considered as an extension of the Parthenon and a monument in its own right (figure 1). According to Argyro Loukaki, the new museum of the Acropolis functions as a multi-polar circuit between the Acropolis, the Greek contemporary society and its own existence, incarnating the physical and psychological dimensions on each one<sup>9</sup> (Loukaki, 2008: 288-9). The Acropolis and its surrounding area are considered to form a large space of antiquities' remains, including the Elgin marbles, whose return should be negotiated in the frame of restitution policies as applied on an international level and agreements among states and international conventions about heritage (*Cf.* Apostolidis, 2006: 477).

The institution of the museum and the material culture of Antiquity hold a key-role in the continuing process of claiming of the marbles. The claim was initially used as a principal argument for the creation of the new Acropolis museum (Armaos, 2001: 107; Loukaki, 2008: 284). Throughout the years, the logic of argumentation was reversed: the return of the marbles is now valid because of the construction of the new Acropolis museum (Loukaki, 2008: 299).

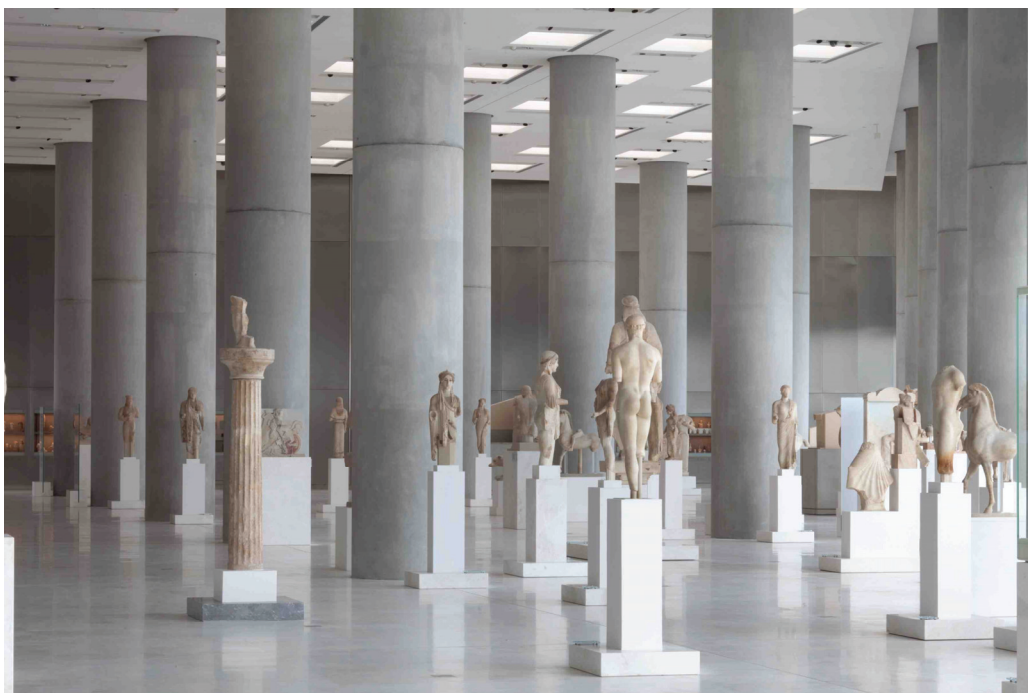


Figure 2: The Archaic Gallery, Acropolis Museum (with permission of the Acropolis Museum).

Aside from international questions of restitution politics and a large range of questions about heritage and museum politics, claims on the return of the Elgin marbles attempt to put forward a series of arguments related to the valorisation of Greek heritage. In Athens, the Greek State, desirous to establish the promotion of the national and international heritage, disposes of three means: the new Acropolis museum and its specific museological choices, a project concerning the unification of archaeological sites across the centre of Athens<sup>10</sup> and a program concerning the restoration, conservation and study of the Acropolis and the Parthenon (Memorandum, [2000]: 3; Bouras & Zambas, 2002). These three directions are integrated in a national project, which along with consolidating it, it ‘promotes’ the classical identity of the Greek Nation and the global importance of classicism for art history and for culture in general (*cf.* Pandermalis, 2011: 39).

The Elgin marbles seem to naturally belong to ‘Classical Greece,’ an aspect of the country’s ancient history still promoted today, and an image of the historical past that the Greek State was built upon. This past finds its first and leading representative in archaeological museum, the most emblematic of which is the new Acropolis museum.

### **The Critical Reception of the New Acropolis Museum**

Since the inauguration of the new Acropolis Museum, many critical voices have been raised regarding its architecture and museography, conceived with the objective of what was characterized as a ‘*context-free archaeology*’ (Plantzos, 2011; see also Plantzos, 2010) (figure 2). It was also criticized for its calculated view onto the hill of the Acropolis, and it has been asked whether this helped in the understanding of the existence of the Acropolis and the Parthenon (James, 2009: 1144 & 1150). Specialists questioned the supposed openness that the museum thus intends to provide to visitors, by enabling them to conceptualize the Acropolis more freely (*ibid.*: 1144). Opinions also pointed to the idea of the ‘*museum of absences*’ devoted only to the missing Parthenon marbles (*cf.* Pandermalis, 2011: 39). Similarly, articles referred to a museum of ‘*forgetting, of oblivion*’ (Hamilakis, 2011: 628) because emphasis is placed only on the classical era of the monument (figure 3). In addition to this, the museological choice of leaving a void space when the original piece of sculpture or architecture is exposed in another museum outside Greece is greeted with divided sentiments, as it is also noted that the choice of using cast copies for the pieces of the Parthenon frieze which belong to museums abroad highlights a political character of the exhibition program (figures 3 and 4). Finally, a discussion developed around the notions of the ‘*poetics of nationhood*,’ the ‘*sacralisation of objects of the Classical times*,’ the ‘*politics of vision*,’ due to the direct visual contact with the Acropolis rock (Hamilakis, 2011: 625-6).



Figure 3: The Caryatids of the Erechtheion, Acropolis Museum. A void space is kept for the one belonging to the British Museum (with permission of the Acropolis Museum).



Figure 4: The Parthenon Gallery, Acropolis Museum. Void space is kept for the lost fragments of the Parthenon and cast copies of pieces that are in museums abroad complete the image of the frieze (with permission of the Acropolis Museum).



Outside of these critical views, there are some interesting points that need to be made. The building of the museum has been constructed in a site where monuments of the Antiquity, Byzantium and of the modern era (nineteenth century) finally coexist after they had created long debates about distractions. Moreover, the historical Weiler building (nineteenth century)<sup>11</sup> has entered in a dialogue with the new museum. This happens in a surrounding envrioning urban space, which embraces or rather constrains the museum, and which the visitor cannot fail to be aware of. The new Acropolis museum participates in this manner in an effort to link the different layers of the past in Athens, until then combined with difficulty and with a kind of negation of cultural juxtaposition. This effort to bring the past to the forefront will be further reinforced with the opening for the public announced for June 2012 of the excavations' site laying in an open space under the ground level of the museum (figure 5).

Moreover, the fact that the Parthenon is actually visible from the interior of the museum is decidedly an innovative form of museographical perspective, making the visit to the museum distinctly different from the experience of viewing the Parthenon sculptures at the Louvre or the British museum. The city, the museum and the ongoing restoration project of the Parthenon are as much part of their present as of their history and the dense surrounding urban environment captures attention.

In short, the questions aroused by the new museum's building are related to questions of urbanism, architecture, heritage and museography, as well as of different points of view (Kimmelman, 2009). The critique is focused on the narrations about heritage from the point of view of presentation, interpretation and conservation of 'art objects' (James, 2009: 1149) and not as part of some material cultural objects, created within a specific historical time and having encountered many changes through the ages. This critique brings to the forefront discussions concerning the need for re-examining the exhibition of material culture in Greece.

At the same time, specialists and scholars, legal experts, architects, archaeologists, historians and others have long highlighted the desire to establish a legislative framework for all museums, be them public or private, archaeological or other, that would also include heritage sites belonging to all historical periods (*cf.* Kioussopoulou, 2008). The Acropolis museum has certainly contributed to the debate about modern museums in Greece and elsewhere, a debate that expresses the concern about open museums that are in harmony with their time and scientific developments of archaeology, history, museology and other disciplines.



Figure 5: Part of the excavation site, in front of the Acropolis Museum (© the author, picture taken on 10.11.2011)

## Conclusions

In the Greek context, for a long time the protection of historical and monumental ‘heritage’ was related the authority of the State and ‘art’ to the domain of private initiative. From the point of view of museum policy, Greek governments have avoided dealing with the issue of the creation of a museum of contemporary art, a demand that dates back to the 1950s. Movements deriving from individual initiative are often completed and supplemented by the groups’ initiatives and municipalities’ efforts to support the arts, which have flourished since the 1980s (Ntaflou, 2011).

Notwithstanding, a development can be noted in the decisions of the Museum’s Council, the Archaeological Service and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, who are more concerned in proceeding with other museum projects of national and international breadth, which will protect and highlight Greece’s heritage. Some projects that have been recently approved by the authorities include: the project of valorization of industrial settings of the Piraeus’s port, which includes a series of museums (of sub-aquatic antiquities, of antiquities in provenance of Piraeus, a museum of the marine, of immigration, etc.) (Politistiki Akti Pirea, 2010). Similarly, in the centre of Athens, another project concerns the Loverdos’s house, which will be used by the Byzantine and Christian Museum. Finally, in 2011, two more projects were approved for the fine arts; the extension project of the National Gallery and the extensive restoration project of the building of the Fix factory (Kafetsi, 2011; Vatopoulos, 2011).<sup>12</sup> The later was designated in 2000 to become the National Museum of Contemporary art<sup>13</sup>. All these current and future projects could not have been promoted if the specialists and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism hadn’t faced the

difficulties and experienced the opening of the New Acropolis Museum, which was a project developed at an international level that provoked widespread controversy.

The Acropolis museum is today the most visited of Greek museums.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, the law that specifies its functions mentions clearly in its goals the claim of the Elgin marbles, which is a political position (l. 3711, art. 2, par. 2, 15). Its creation provided the opportunity for several debates to take place, especially for those concerning museological, scientific and ideological issues. Consequently, it became clear that archaeology holds without doubt a leading power in Greece's cultural and political affairs, as well as in the State's ideology. The project for the new museum in general can serve as an example for debates about the maintenance or destruction of visual and material evidence from the past lives of a museum's site. It also serves to illustrate the impact of political choices on heritage and national museums' narratives.

Since the nineteenth century, the Greek State has been accused of controlling every aspect of research of an archaeological, ethnological, historical and artistic character (Voudouri, 2003: 218) but has been clearly promoting archaeology above all else after World War II. The notion of heritage is gradually changing and diversifying with the contributions of scientific works on Byzantine art and history, on ethnography and folklore and, finally, on modern and contemporary art history. Annie Malama's text offers a welcome insight on the enriched notion of heritage with the inscription of modernity to the Greek State's cultural interests. Nevertheless, the importance of heritage is nourished with regard to certain aspects of the past it promotes, certain myths and, above all, national symbols. Museums and heritage are often attributed a symbolical role of national spread.

However, international museum projects, the dynamic and multifaceted activities of archaeologists, historians and art historians have contributed to the reconciliation of the notions of heritage and art along with that of the museum. This rejuvenates the museum as an institution, to innovate in contact with the public, who participates in the discussions concerning its status (*cf.* Voudouri, 2010: 556). Concurrently, discussion concerning the positioning of museums in their respective time frame, as the one provoked after the opening of the new Acropolis Museum, has an important impact on museological practices and on interpretations of them.

Cultural and political priorities are connected to arts, museum and national heritage, but also to economy and tourism, an activity taken in charge since 2009 by the Greek Ministry of Culture. Whatever the future developments will be in the maelstrom of economical, political and institutional crisis, the Acropolis Museum has contributed to the establishment of a series of discussions in Greece about heritage and museums' development regarding their status, communication, educative potentialities and protection. This is a beginning for new museum dynamics within the Greek context, even if the museum of the Acropolis itself examined above should reconsider some of its initiative aspects. This concerns mostly the way the exhibition of material culture which is inscribed in time and in space is organised. Besides the view of artistically 'beautiful' and 'elevated' objects, the museum's presentation should be more inviting for visitors to gain knowledge of a culture distant in time.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Law 1079 *On the agency and functioning of the National Gallery and Alexandros Soutzos Museum* published in the official journal 239/A/14.10.1980.
- <sup>2</sup> That is the case of Greece and Turkey, whose Byzantine material culture and heritage is ubiquitous. For the Turkish case, see Akyürek, 2010, 205-209.
- <sup>3</sup> The romantic and neoclassical ideal of the late nineteenth century demanded a purification of monuments from the remnants of the Middle Ages. The architect Lysandros Caftantzoglou (1811-85) was a great defender of the purification of the monument. There were, though, voices of protest against the destructions made.
- <sup>4</sup> The Muslim mosque of the Parthenon has remained until 1843 when it was destroyed and the Frankish tower at the Propylea until 1874. For a short idea of the 'lives' the Parthenon has experienced, it is interesting to watch a film by Costas Gavras, *Parthenon*, <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGitmYl6U90>> (accessed 27 June 2011). The film was originally projected at the new Acropolis Museum, but it was soon outcast because of the depiction of proto-Christians destroying the nude sculptures, which have created a furious protestation from the part of the Greek Orthodox Church. It was decided by the Ministry of Culture to stop diffusing it in the museum.
- <sup>5</sup> Prime minister since the mid-1955 until the contested elections of 1956. And then prime minister from 1974 to 1980, with some interruptions due to political instability and often elections, from 1956 to 1963. He was President of the Greek Republic since the mid-1980 to 1985 and from 1990 to 1995.
- <sup>6</sup> In 1979, the five Caryatids of the Erechtheion have been transported in the ancient Acropolis museum (on the South-East side of the Parthenon) and on the monument, there were placed copies of plaster.
- <sup>7</sup> The first phase had come to an end in April 1990 and the second in November 1990.
- <sup>8</sup> The winners of this international contest were: first prize to Manfredi Nicoletti and Lucio Passarelli (Italy); the second prize to Tasos Biris, Dimitris Biris, Panos Kokkoris and Eleni Amerikakou (Greece). The third prize was attributed to Raimund Abraham (Austria-USA) (The New Acropolis Museum, 1991: 35-54).
- <sup>9</sup> It is a vision that, as Loukaki puts it, suggests three different Athens: the ancient(s) city (-ies), the imaginary city and the 'natural' city.
- <sup>10</sup> The project is managed by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and by the Ministry of the Environment, Urbanization and Public Work (on February 2012, Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climatic change). The project contains a series of interventions that have as target the reconstitution of the historical, cultural and natural landscape of the site around the Acropolis. A network of paths - some of which ancient - has been predicted, in order to connect the surrounding archaeological sites (the Olympeion (Temple of Zeus), the cemetery of Ceramicos, the Dionysus' theatre, the Odeon of Herodes Atticus, the Pnyka, the Ancient Greek Agora) creating a 'park of open air museums' accessible by everyone. This park was promoted since 1945, especially by the architect Costas Biris (1899-1980), a plan which was not realized at that time.
- <sup>11</sup> The Dekemvriana, an episode of the Greek civil war of 1944, have taken also place in the Weiler building, next to the Acropolis museum, then a gendarme's barracks. During the 1980s the Wilhelm von Weiler building became a center for the study of the Acropolis. Today it is standing always next to the new museum.
- <sup>12</sup> A building of the architects Takis Zenetos (1926-77) and Margaritis Apostolidis (1921-2005), constructed between 1957 and 1963.
- <sup>13</sup> On the 15 November 2011, the director of the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Anna Kafetsi, has signed a deal with the construction company Aktor for the taking charge of the restoration and layouts of the Fix factory, the building which will host the museum. The final cost for the completion of the works to be done will be covered from financial aid of the European Union, through the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF).
- <sup>14</sup> The Acropolis Museum has welcomed more than one million three hundred visitors, Greeks and foreigners, since June 2010 until May 2011. It is a receding number comparing to the year 2009-2010. The museum's total size is 25,000 m<sup>2</sup>, from which 14,000 m<sup>2</sup> are destined to the exhibition. It has ten times larger spaces than the ones of the former museum. See: <<http://www.theacropolismuseum.gr>> (accessed 23 November 2011). According to professor Dimitris Pandermalis, the museum has received more than three and a half millions of visitors since its opening in 2009.

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