The Acropolis Museum:

Contextual Contradictions, Conceptual Complexities

by Ersi Filippopoulou

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The visitor to the new Acropolis Museum in Athens, climbing to the upper floor and passing through the exhibition gallery door to an all-glass space flooded with natural light, is suddenly awestruck by the breathtaking view of the Parthenon rising up above the surrounding city (Fig. 1). Enjoying the holistic experience inspired by the natural and cultural landscape, the viewer is unaware of past controversies about the museum's location, and is certain that is the right place to be for anyone wishing to admire the ancient monument together with its architectural sculptures. However, tracking in retrospect the multiple factors that contributed to the final outcome can provide useful insights into the multi-faceted relationship between a new museum and its cultural landscape.

Acropolis is understood here as a cultural landscape as articulated by Carl Sauer's terminology, which designates 'cultural landscapes' as natural landscape that had been modified by a culture group (Sauer 1925). However, with a history of 2,500 years, its character is now mainly monumental and archaeological, with ancient temples recognised by UNESCO as 'the greatest architectural and artistic complex bequeathed by Greek Antiquity to the world' and 'universal symbols of the classical spirit and civilization' (UNESCO 1987). The Acropolis is also an emblem of the modern Greek nation-state, and a sense of sacredness therefore persists even in the secular environment of today's metropolitan area of 3.75 million inhabitants (Rossi 1982). Therefore, the strongly picturesque connotation of the term 'landscape' incorporates both the visual act and its imaginative associations that are deeply intertwined in many cultural landscapes (Cosgrove 1998; Debarbieux 1995; Monnet 2011).

The Acropolis museum houses and displays the architectural sculptures removed from their original position on the monuments of Acropolis for preservation reasons, as well as the finds from the 19th century archaeological excavations on the site. Consequently, it is an archaeological site-specific museum, but also an art museum when considering the quality of its exhibits and the visitor experience.

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Fig. 1. The Acropolis and the Parthenon, viewed from the museum's Parthenon gallery. © Ersi Filippopoulou

Fig. 2. The Acropolis and the museum (right), viewed from Philopappou Hill. © Ersi Filippopoulou

The Acropolis of Athens: 5,000 years of continuous history

Athens, a city both ancient and modern, was erected in a valley that is surrounded by mountains on three sides, and stretches down to the sea on the fourth. Embracing several hills, the mid-rise modern cityscape is dominated by the emblematic Acropolis, a flat-topped rocky hill that rises 156 metres above sea level and up 100 metres from its base, with overall dimensions of approximately 170 × 350 metres. Steep on all sides except the western one, the Acropolis was erected as a citadel and a place of worship with temples of great artistic significance on the plateau at its peak in Antiquity.[1] The combined result of the geological formation and the human interventions constitute a monumental ensemble and a cultural landscape of outstanding universal value, both a landmark and a symbol associated with democracy, philosophy and art. It is no coincidence that even today Greeks refer to it as the 'Sacred Rock' (Fig. 2).

Although the hill's top surface had been populated since the end of the Neolithic period (3200 BC), it acquired a religious character in the 8th century BC, dedicated mainly to the city's patron goddess Athena, the goddess of wisdom, connected to the founding myth of the city-state. Various porous rock temples and shrines were erected during the archaic period (7th-6th centuries BC), which were destroyed by the invading Persian army and replaced in the 5th century with the all-marble classical edifices we admire today: the three temples (Parthenon, Athena Nike, Erechtheion) and the entrance building (Propylaea). Smaller shrines and hundreds of votive statues completed the imposing image, declaring to allies and enemies the city's grandeur (Korres *et al.*).

After the 6th century AD, under the successive domination of the Byzantines, the French, the Catalans, the Venetians and the Florentines, the citadel was used as a fortress and the Parthenon as a Christian church, with the latter subsequently converted into a mosque in the 15th century under Ottoman rule. Adaptive re-use safeguarded the classical temples' structural integrity until the 17th century AD, when it became seriously compromised by various human-induced interventions. Following Athens' independence from the Ottoman occupation in 1833, Acropolis was declared an archaeological site in 1834 and participated for the second time since antiquity in another strongly symbolic narrative; this time it was related to the glorification of the Hellenic classicism by Europeans and Greeks alike. Athens—a small, provincial town of approximately 10,000 people at that time—was chosen as the liberated nation's capital due to its ancient history. The Acropolis was endowed with the aura of the most glorious landmark in the monumental topography of the country. In 1987 it was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

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Fig. 3 The 'old' Acropolis museum. © Ersi Filippopoulou

The first Acropolis site museum

After the Ottoman additions were retrieved from the site, a small site museum was constructed (1863-1874) just a few metres southeast of the Parthenon. Dedicated only to the classical art of the Acropolis and with its volume above ground kept to a minimum, the small edifice's mission was to retain the excavated findings in a safe haven *in situ*.[2] For more than a century, the location of the new museum near the classical temples was not disputed, despite the aesthetic ideas inspired by Grand Tour travellers, whose gaze tended to favour ancient ruins as 'romantic landscapes'. Nevertheless, almost immediately after its opening, the small building proved inadequate for the suddenly increased needs of its reserve collection, which was extensively enriched with the finds of the archaic era that came to light during the site archaeological excavations of 1885-1889. Due to space shortage, only sculptures were housed within the museum, while the other items were either transferred to the then-new National Archaeological Museum (bronze figurines, pottery, coins, etc.), or left outdoors (plain architectural members and epigraphic inscriptions).

Despite two small-scale extensions at the end of the 19th and in the mid-20th centuries, the overall exhibition space of 1,150 sq. metres and the small underground storage room remained disproportionate to the number and worth of the objects. However, due to the close proximity to the ancient monuments, the exhibits were connected to their origin in an optimal fashion and the museum functioned as an integral part of the site's cultural landscape, enriching the visitor's experience with multifaceted spatial and historical relationships. However, as concepts change over time, the museum's location, long considered as an asset, began to be questioned sporadically in the 1960s and 1970s by Greek art scholars, firstly for its close vicinity to the ancient monuments of excellence (Fig. 3), and secondly for the compact display of the architectural sculptures in the small galleries (Prokopiou 1965; Laskaris 1975a, 1975b).[3]

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Fig. 4. The museum in its urban environment, as viewed from the Acropolis. © Ersi Filippopoulou

An acute space problem

The rather relaxed search for more museum space entered an urgent new phase in 1975. It was then that the Greek State launched a (still ongoing) extensive restoration programme on the Acropolis monuments in order to reverse cumulative natural and human-induced damage (Fig. 4). With the intention to protect their exterior surface from environmental decay, a few architectural sculptures were removed from their original position on the temples and placed indoors. At the time, *in situ* replacement of authentic parts with copies was deemed an extreme measure but eventually it gained scholarly acceptance (ICOMOS 1964; Petzet 2009).[4]

Although it took years to accept the inevitability of such a drastic intervention, it was soon obvious that more museum space was needed, not only for exhibition but also for conservation, storage and appropriate visitors' facilities. A side extension or storey addition to the existing museum building were out of the question because the projected volume would be too dominant in the historic landscape. Adding an underground floor, although invisible, was rejected for architectural, museological and archaeological reasons. Slowly, the idea of removing the museum to a new facility outside the Acropolis plateau gained ground, with the following objectives: firstly, to host the to-be-removed architectural sculptures in microclimate-controlled conditions; secondly, to better display the objects already exhibited in the old museum; and thirdly, to include in the exhibition other items kept in storage at the time. It was 1976, or six years before the Greek government's claim for the reunification of the Parthenon sculptures, so this issue had no effect on the decision-making process for a new museum at the time.

The prevailing concept for the new museum was that of a shelter, a Noah's Ark for antiquities, a modest space that was expected to guarantee the appropriate indoor air quality and environmental conditions for safeguarding *ad infinitum* its precious contents. This objective was set long before the museums' universal cultural shift from an object-based approach to an audience-oriented one (Weil 1999; McClellan 2008). The old approach was even more evident in Greece, where archaeological museums were rather introverted institutions with limited appeal to the public, established primarily as depositories of excavation finds and aiming mainly to advance scholarly research. Functioning as integral parts of a centralised heritage administration that prioritised antiquities protection over their communication, they moved rather slowly towards more visitor-friendly policies.

Choice of location by elimination

Despite acknowledging that the ideal location of an Acropolis museum was the archaeological site itself, in 1975 the authorities started to search for public land beyond the site, within the city. In Greece, acquiring private land for the erection of public buildings usually creates a battleground between the State and the landowners, who fight tooth and nail against expropriations, even at high prices, because it often takes many years for the State to pay the indemnities for the handing over of their land.

Public land existed in the immediate surroundings of the Acropolis at the foot of the hill, but it constituted a protected archaeological zone *per se*, as the Acropolis and the Agora were the centrepiece of ancient Athenian public life, around which the whole ancient city had developed.[5] For example, to the west is the Agora and the ancient cemetery of Kerameikos. To the southwest are Philopappou Hill—an archaeological park in a wooded landscape—and Pnyx Hill, the official assembly venue of the ancient Athenian citizens. On the southern slope is the 4th century BC Theatre of Dionysus, the first stone theatre ever built and supposedly the birthplace of Greek tragedy, as well as many other monuments. To the north and east lies Plaka, the city's old medieval quarter. All of these features provided arguments against the erection of a large building nearby, so the search was extended to the peripheral zone, in the city fabric.

It was firmly believed at the time that the new museum should be located as near the Acropolis as possible, in order to be part of its cultural landscape, so that the visitor may visually and emotionally connect the exhibited sculptures with their monuments of origin. In this regard, few alternative sites could have been chosen. The final choice was a large plot in the densely built residential Makryianni district on the southeastern side of the Acropolis, then owned by the military. The area had been used by the Gendarmerie, with its headquarters in a derelict 19th century listed building (a former military hospital), and was surrounded by post-war blocks of flats; it did not look appealing. At the time, non-intrusive fieldwork determined the presence of some archaeological remains, which were deemed of no consequence to the museum's construction (an assumption that would later be refuted). It was rapidly decided that this would be the location of the new museum.

The built museum was eventually constructed on this site 33 years later, after four architectural competitions (two national, two international), fierce controversies about its location, dozens of court decisions and multiple technical, archaeological, legislative and urban regeneration works. During all that time, the original parametres changed. The plot surface of 1.7 hectares in 1976 was increased to 2.4 hectares in the 2000s, due to extensive expropriation and demolition of private properties, despite the original intention to avoid friction with neighbouring landowners. The functional programme followed the evolution of the museum's character from a Noah's Ark to an extroverted institution of international standards. Building regulations became more flexible in order to serve the new public land use. The quality of the immediate surroundings improved, as the area was made pedestrian. Even when the assumption about the absence of extensive archaeological remains on the site proved false, the in situ antiquities turned into an asset rather than an obstacle.

However, in 1976, no one had imagined these developments, and no one had realised that the relocation of the site museum could also affect its character deeply (Moolman 1997). While its former role was definitely that of a subordinate annex to the site, its relocation changed its profile. The creation process thus became multi-layered and full of ambivalence, wavering between rising expectations and pragmatism, dependency and autonomy, simplicity and complexity. As the new Acropolis museum project proved, the path to clarifying priorities and defining goals can be complicated.

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Optimising museum location, design and identity

The decision to remove the museum from its original position weighed heavily upon the Greek archaeological community, but once taken, the plan to implement it was put quickly in place. The new location appeared to have been taken for granted, without anyone—be it the scientific, the wider public or the media—expressing any doubts about the new building's future integration in the Acropolis's cultural landscape, focusing solely on the objects' improved conditions. Consequently, a national competition was launched for the design of a building that would be much smaller than the present one, which ended without a winner because of diverging opinions among the members of the jury concerning the typology of the exhibition spaces.

A second national competition, launched in 1979 on the same site with a slightly modified building programme, met the same unhappy fate of no winning design, perhaps because at that time doubts started to be publicly voiced about both the consequent removal of antiquities from the Acropolis plateau and the urban aesthetic of the future museum's physical context. Due to the double failure, the museum project reached deadlock. The problem of inadequate museum space was meanwhile aggravated, as the restoration works on the monuments proceeded and, one after another, architectural sculptures were transferred indoors. Part of the exhibition galleries of the existing museum closed to the public in order to serve conservation needs, thus further downgrading the visitor experience. The situation grew even more complicated when the claim for the reunification of the Parthenon Sculptures was put forward in 1982 by then-Greek Minister of Culture, Melina Merkouri.
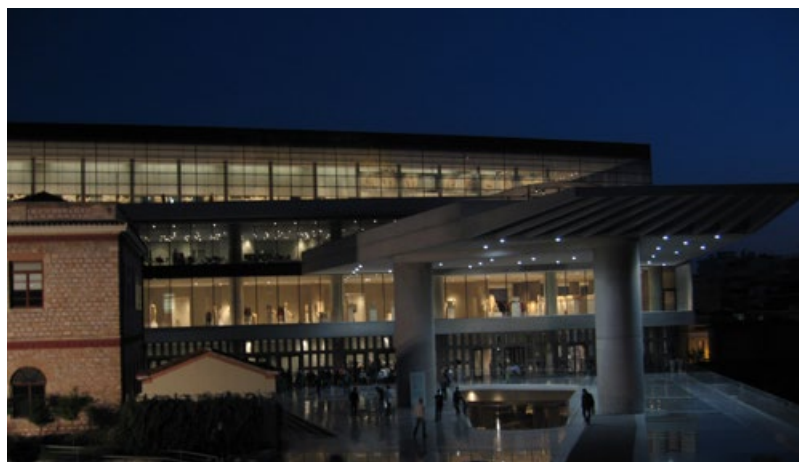

Fig. 5. The museum entrance façade after the sunset. © Ersi Filippopoulou

Given these circumstances, the need for a new museum building was even more pressing. However, the previous planning model was deemed obsolete. The magnitude of change was an incentive to think outside of usual Greek museum patterns of practice, and a fresh start with a new approach was undertaken. In 1989, a third architectural competition was launched. It was international, open to architects from all over the world, who were called to provide an outstanding original design and implement a new, much more ambitious brief that would provide ample space not only for exhibition but also for visitor facilities, venues for cultural events, conservation workshops, archaeological storerooms and administrative offices.

The modification of the museum's scale and philosophy was such that archaeologists and architects expressed their doubts as to whether it could be accommodated satisfactorily by the plot. It became obvious that expropriations and demolitions of nearby private properties were unavoidable. The prospect of future deprivation of their property alarmed the local residents, who resorted to legal measures. Without attributing all siting disputes to 'nimbyism', it is a fact that the revision of requirements for the museum activated broad public and scholarly debates about its character and location, entailing political indecisiveness.[6] To calm things down, two more alternative locations were added in the competition brief, competitors were allowed to choose according to their own vision for the museum. Despite the jury's difficulty in picking a design based on dissimilar data, a winner was determined with a concept for a large museum of 45,000 sq. metres on the original site (Filippopoulou 1991), a selection that prompted new protests. This winning

design was never built, because it was deemed incompatible with the preservation *in situ* of archaeological remains found during the excavations for the building's foundations.

By the time a fourth competition was launched in 2000, the political decision on the location was solid. The data of the archaeological excavations was included in the competition brief so that the participants would take this into consideration, as well as museological specifications for displaying the Parthenon frieze and viewing the Acropolis from the museum's interior. The winning design by Swiss-French architect Bernard Tschumi in collaboration with Greek architect Michael Photiadis was built on foundation pillars amid the archaeological findings (Tschumi 2009). The result is a museum filled with light and life, which, since its inauguration in 2009, has enjoyed popularity among Greeks and foreign tourists, visited by some 1.5 million people annually (1,486,171 in 2015).[7] With a direct view to and from the Acropolis, but also of and from the city (Fig. 5), its transparent enclosure allows the visitor to feel part of the Acropolis cultural landscape, while at night, when darkness obscures the building's compactness, the illuminated indoor sculptures become a familiar part of city life.

Fig. 6. Philopappou Hill, as viewed from Odeon of Herodes Atticus, with the proposed Dionysos site. © Ersi Filippopoulou

The Acropolis museum and its cultural landscape

Cultural landscapes may have gained significance in museological discourse but architects and urban planners have always considered landscape, both natural and human-made, a vital component in their work (Schneekloth and Shibley 2000). Much of its appeal to them, writes Cosgrove, 'lies in landscape's capacity to combine incommensurate or even dialectically opposed elements: process and form, nature and culture, land and life. Landscape conveys the idea that their combination is—or should be—balanced and harmonious, and that harmony is visible geographically' (Cosgrove 2006).

Although it is debatable whether these are indeed the priorities of today's architecture and city planning, in the case of the new Acropolis museum they were. The success of the project depended on finding a balance and harmony between the larger whole and its constituting parts removed and transferred, between the protected heritage site and a museum worthy of the high art it would contain. The endeavour raised several issues, from the level of the archaeological values to the level of the cultural landscape to the level of the museum building and that of the exhibits. The initial responses to these issues varied so much that some of them ended up even challenging the museum's fundamental

character as a unity, extending broadly between two extremes: keeping the objects on the 'Sacred Rock' to rupturing any connection with it (Filippopoulou 2011).

Several proposals considered it imperative that at least part of the exhibition should remain on the Acropolis plateau, preserving the deep relationship between the museum and the cultural landscape that holds so many tangible and intangible testimonies. In such a case, the museum visit would be part of a pleasant archaeological promenade among the temples high above the city, without the visual and acoustic distractions of the city below. However, the extensive modern museum spaces that would be required in close vicinity to the monuments led to the rejection of this idea, as it entailed substantial concessions in other aspects.

The next alternative suggestion was to divide the exhibition into two buildings in two different locations: using the old museum on the Acropolis plateau and developing a new building on the public land of the Makryianni plot. The archaic sculptures would remain in the old museum, thus emphasising their unique *chthonic* mythical character, while the classical sculptures exhibition, together with all the other museum activities, would be accommodated in a new building on Makryianni site, which would be of course smaller than

what would be required for the totality of the museum functions.[8] This concept respected the cultural landscape, taking into consideration ancient myths and legends, but to the detriment of the museum's exhibition as a whole.

A variation of this dual-site proposal also provided for part of the exhibition on the Acropolis plateau, but with a different approach. The old museum would be demolished and a new subterranean exhibition space created by using the cavities that would result from a project of rehabilitating the urban landscape of the Acropolis plateau to its original 5th century BC formation. At that time, a series of terraces were formed between the temples by levelling off the natural bedrock in some places and raising the level in others by filling them in with earth, which was almost completely removed during the archaeological excavations of the 19th century.[9] Restored landscaping would provide spaces for accommodating museum functions. However, both the prospect of such drastic intervention on the plateau's contemporary image and the idea of an underground claustrophobic museum were altogether rejected.

It became clear that the initial approach to build the new museum outside the perimeter of the Acropolis site was a more feasible solution. The aforementioned Makryianni plot grew increasingly popular among many archaeologists because of its vicinity to the Acropolis outside the protected area. Two other sites—the Dionysos and Koile sites, both at abandoned old quarry cavities at the foot of Philopappou Hill—also gained support in the 1980s. The first one, at the northern side of the hill, opposite Propylaea and at the beginning of the promenade leading to the entrance of the Acropolis, was very well situated as far as the visitors' route was concerned, but the plot was small (surface 0.59ha) with strict planning restrictions. The second one, on the west side of the hill, was larger (2.54ha), but cut off from the immediate surroundings of the Acropolis and with visible in situ archaeological remains. The idea of a museum building against the scenic backdrop of the pine-clad slope appealed to many architects, but objections were raised by many archaeologists and environmentalists: by the former, because the hill had been an archaeological park since the mid-1950s; by the latter, because of its unspoilt natural environment and importance for the city's urban wildlife.[10]

It is obvious that making a decision was largely an issue of subjective evaluation, where doctrines and opinions based on different values clashed. Given the emotional tension, the somewhat false impression emerged that from the museum's point of view everything could be debatable, so long as the facility would not 'compete' with the Sacred Rock's panorama. Having stretched minds beyond normal ways of thinking about museum planning, there was no hesitation to propose any kind of alternative solution, including the distribution of its functions among various locations without much consideration of the impact of such fragmentation on the museum's future operation. For example, an imaginative proposal was praised for a museum divided into a series of low-storey units, terraces, courtyards, patios, small gardens and passages extending along the approximately 600m-long residential frontage of Dionysiou Areopagitou street, linking the Makryianni and Dionysos sites (including the sites themselves) to the southern side of the Acropolis hill.

Other, more down-to-earth approaches, preferred a larger distance from the Acropolis, cutting the umbilical cord between the whole and its parts. Another suggestion was to locate the museum to the northwest at the Theseion metro station, approximately 800 m from the Acropolis Hill and at a much lower level, between the archaeological sites of the Ancient Agora and the ancient cemetery of Kerameikos (Fig. 6). Although it fulfilled the viewing criterion, the distance and the difference in level would not facilitate visitors' emotional connection to the Acropolis cultural landscape, in addition to the cost increase for the relocation of the metro station.

At the same distance but in a different direction (to the southeast), a proposal to locate the museum in a former brewery—fully integrated into the urban fabric—had nothing to do with a dialogue with the Acropolis cultural landscape. Its main objective was the preservation and restoration of the abandoned industrial heritage building.[11]

Once the concept of a larger distance from the Acropolis was introduced in the public discourse, two other radical ideas were set forth: the first that the Acropolis collection should be moved two kilometres to the north and incorporated into the country's most representative museum, the National Archaeological Museum (to be expanded accordingly). This choice was based on the argument that the objects' fundamental connection with their temples of origin had been cut off when they were removed from the site; the second rejected every single functional criterion, romantically imagining a museum far away from the noisy big city, in the beautiful natural setting of Mount Hymettus. Both ideas deliberately ignored the Acropolis cultural landscape, creating a different context for its antiquities.

The site that came to be chosen was the initially preferred location, Makryianni. Due to new urban regeneration policies in the area, the project met, during the construction phase, strong objections from many local residents, architects and, following the *in situ* excavation, a number of archaeologists, too. Nevertheless, despite the obstacles, this site offered the best relationship between the museum and its cultural landscape without affecting green spaces, historic sites and archaeological areas, which are abundant around the Acropolis (Fig. 9). From a planning point of view and taking all parametres into consideration, it was the most rational solution.

The Dionysian temperament that prevailed in the related public discourse for many years did not allow for dispassionate decision-making by developing a location evaluation hierarchy based on prioritising among a set of desired criteria—cultural, archeological, museological, architectural and urban (Filippopoulou 2011). On the contrary, intense and often polarised debates were sparked. A possible explanation for this tension might be that they were never really only about territory (Macdonald 2003). Hellenic Antiquity has always been a legacy open to multiple readings and different interpretations, with new layers of meaning inscribed over time, appropriated not only by Greek but also by European modernity (Hamilakis 2007; Shanks 1996). This glorious past, admired throughout the world, has established political legitimacy in various contexts and formed collective identities since the Enlightenment. Producing a museological narrative for the representation of this civilisation using its generic symbol for arts and philosophy presented the first difficulty (Loukaki 1997). Contextualising it with the stunning cultural landscape of the Acropolis was the second. Properly displaying the famous sculptures admired for their exquisite art was the third (Corby *et al.* 2006; McClellan 2008). Building the museum in the middle of a city that has not escaped the fate of rapid 20th century urbanisation, was the fourth.

Creating a museum under such circumstances can stir up emotions, with the tendency of over-emphasising the main concept of each viewpoint and downgrading its disadvantages. The same arguments continued to resurface over the years, fuelling fierce controversies, which meant that people were not effectively convinced to build a consensus. However, when the museum opened its gates to the public, the actual experience became the best argument of all (Ouroussoff 2007; Glancey 2007).

The new Acropolis museum may be the three-dimensional ending of the tumultuous story of its creation spanning 33 years, but the diverging opinions about its location reveal an interesting wide spectrum of opinions, not only on its context with its cultural landscape, but also on its museological concept. The particularity of its case consists mainly of reservations concerning the attempted paradigm shift from the traditional archaeological site museum to a site-specific one as a hybrid approach combining the display of the site's artefacts with the glamour of a major urban cultural landmark in its own right. This ambiguity sets conflicting goals for the contextual relationship between the new museum and its cultural landscape (Filippopoulou 1988). Societal dynamics add to the complexity. Urban development has changed the very idea of landscape—both natural and cultural—on a scale never before seen in the history of humanity. At the same time, the museum paradigm is subject to continuous change, adapting to the constantly shifting social, political and economic environment.

The scientific discourse deals with principles and a code of ethics for both heritage preservation and museums, but their interaction is still in need of qualitative criteria that could apply to complex situations like the cultural landscapes and help the various stakeholders with decision-making. Since the notion of 'context' includes, besides physical, also cultural, historical and social interpretations—which are indeed the museum's focus—the chances of mutual benefits will be increased. Siena Charter (2014) is a first step towards establishing guidelines for collaboration and shared responsibilities. However, there is such a variety in cultural landscapes that the 'one-size-fits-all' approach is unrealistic. The polysemy could be gradually clarified with more research, cutting across a wide range of disciplinary boundaries (Bender 1993). On the one hand, heritage stewardship could consider the museum a significant part of the integrated heritage ensemble, and on the other, appropriate museological concepts could balance the museum's activities with respect for the authenticity of the heritage and the values of the cultural landscape's community.

NOTES

1 In ancient Greek, 'acropolis' designates 'the highest point of the city'.
2 The current discourse on the role of Greek archeological museums is currently addressed is steeped in history and tradition (Gazi 2011). They cannot look to the private medieval *Wunderkammer* as their ancestor; rather, they are the descendants of the humble archaeological storehouses, originally built to protect excavation finds, near ancient heritage sites under excavation. Eventually, they evolved into small museums, adding to the conservation and storage facilities a modest display of the site's most important objects. Their contents could hardly be defined as a 'collection', considering that, according to the Greek law on heritage, all antiquities belong to the *stricto sensu* State in terms of ownership and possession, not to the individual museums or the archaeologists.
3 Concepts have changed again, and although the old museum closed in 2009 after the inauguration of the new one, its remaining in place (with a new role as a research and information centre) was decided in 2012, on the basis that it is part of the Acropolis' historical trajectory until our day.

4 According to the 1964 Charter of Venice for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (the international code of professional standards for interventions on ancient buildings), the structural integrity and authenticity of monuments is of paramount importance. Items of sculpture which form an integral part of a monument may only be removed if this is the sole means of ensuring their preservation, and even then, under the condition of reversibility. For such a process to be approved, every other preservation alternative should first be scientifically examined, debated and excluded.
5 Acropolis was the religious centre of ancient Athens and the Agora the administrative and commercial one.
6 'Nimbyism' is, according to the MacMillan Online Dictionary, the 'opposition from local people to something such as a new building or new road being built near to where they live'. Available at: http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/nimbyism [accessed 14 June 2017].
7 According to 'Top 100 Art Museum Attendance', *The Art Newspaper, Special Report*, Number 278, April 2016, p. 15.

8 In prehistoric and archaic Greek cults, *chthonic* deities were mythical creatures that were supposed to live in, under or beneath the earth and were symbolised by serpents and lizards. Their imaginary role in ancient communities was very important, because they were associated with the doctrine of *autochthony* (meaning literally 'springing from the earth'), thus asserting the right of the city-state's inhabitants to their land.
9 The ancient Acropolis fill of the classical era that was, in some areas, up to 10m thick, was composed not only of soil and cobbles but also of broken sculptures, votive offerings and architectural members from the destroyed anterior edifices. It was in this fill that archaeologists have found the objects that are exhibited in the Archaic Gallery of the Acropolis Museum.
10 Philopappou Hill is also the home of the small owl *Athene noctua*, which represents the goddess and is a symbol for wisdom.
11 The old brewery, named 'Fix' out of the previous industrialist, has been a landmark of industrial heritage in Athens. Although the idea of using it as the Acropolis Museum was not adopted, the building has been restored and it now houses another museum, the National Museum of Contemporary Art.

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