

acropolismuseum
year

3

A highlights report
1 june 2011 to 31 may 2012

President's message

In difficult times it is often considered that 'culture' and museums are a dispensable luxury. Our experience at the Acropolis Museum shows differently: visitors taking a brief respite from the daily grind and moved by their walk through the Museum galleries, young people enjoying the contemporary museum setting in which the unique exhibits are displayed and children kneeling on the Museum's glass floors, nose to glass, drawn by the archaeological excavation below. As visitors observe the burnt sculptures of the Persian catastrophe next to the masterpieces that emerged immediately after, they can make the connection to the current economic crisis and the potential for recovery.

This year the Museum again achieved the impossible. Despite the general economic downturn the Museum was able to survive solely from its earnings without burdening the state budget, by no means an easy feat. With both daring and caution the Board of Directors managed with vigilance and absolute transparency. The Museum's senior management team, its services and staff continued to work with admirable enthusiasm and visitors spoke with candid sincerity about the Museum's effective operations.

This success has had a positive influence on the local area. The pedestrian walkway of Dionysiou Areopagitou has come to life, the quality of many of the local retail outlets improved, but most of all as stated by local business people, the almost 5 million visitors to the Museum of the past three years contributed to the economic resurgence of the neighborhood.

To further improve its services the Museum analyses the comments and suggestions made daily by visitors. This year however it undertook its first systematic visitor evaluation, identifying a series of areas for further improvement in the coming year.

More intensely than in the previous year, the Museum increased its focus on improvements and changes in the exhibition spaces enriching the permanent exhibition and improving the presentation of significant exhibits.

This year visitors were provided with an unexpected experience, being able to see the Archaic sculptures to the accompaniment of live music played on the second floor balcony, every Thursday afternoon from Christmas to Easter. The melody of sound and the harmony of the folds of the garments of the *Korai* melded in a spell bounding combination that showed the closeness of the two arts: Sculpture and Music.

The third year of the Museum's operation was fruitful in research and in joint international initiatives that focused on the collections, in the application of innovative communication tools and in the development of conservation and restoration. The conservation of walls, floor surfaces and structures of the archaeological excavation approached their successful completion and pending the approval of the design plan and the identification of the necessary funds, the development of this last and very exceptional exhibition area of the Museum will be completed.

I thank the Ministry of Culture and Tourism for its invaluable support and the First Ephorate for Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities and the Acropolis Restoration Services for our excellent working relationship. I am grateful to the Municipality of Athens and the 'Technopolis' for their unhesitating responsiveness to requests from the Museum. Lastly I would like to thank Samsung Electronics Hellas for their generous contribution to the Museum.

Dimitrios Pandermalis
President, Board of Directors



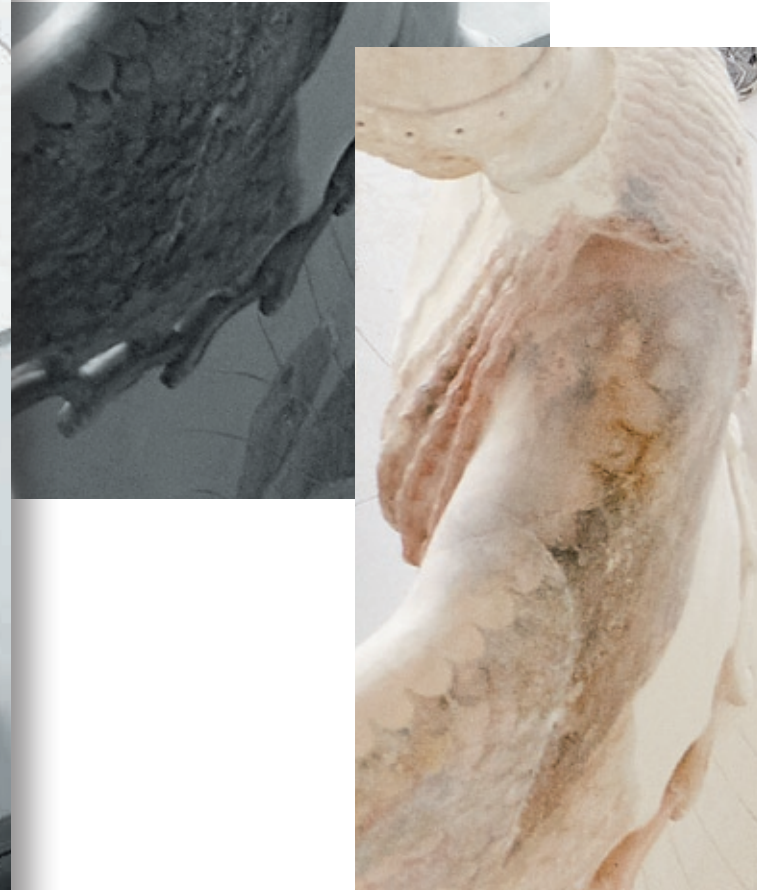


our visitors

In spite of the negative economic climate and the reduction in tourism to Athens over the last 12 months, the Acropolis Museum continued to successfully operate 12 hours daily 6 days a week, remaining open until 22.00 each Friday night. From 1 June 2011 to 31 May 2012, 1,143,886 people came to visit the Museum, creating a healthy demand for services and a positive morale amongst staff, a crucial ingredient for maintaining quality services to the public.

Front desk staff continued to collect data on country of origin and main language spoken from visitors so that the Museum is able to profile the background of its visitors accurately. This year Greek visitors were again a large part of the Museum's visiting public, reversing the trend commonly reported in the media of Greeks not visiting their museums.

Museum ticket prices were kept at 5 euro for a full entry ticket. This is a low admission fee by international standards and reflects Museum policy aimed at helping people to visit the Museum. A large number of eligible visitors (42%) also continued to visit the Museum free of charge or at a discounted rate.



Total visitors

1,143,886

Visitors arriving independently (74% of all visitors)	843,082
Visitors arriving in pre organized groups (26% of all visitors)	300,804
Of these:	
Student Groups (44%)	132,266
Adult Groups (56%)	168,538

Countries of origin (Independent visitors)		
Greece	46%	356,305
United States	13%	101,172
France	6%	47,899
United Kingdom	4%	32,218
Italy	4%	28,149
Spain	3%	26,517
Germany	3%	22,519
Australia	3%	20,580
Canada	2%	17,408
Brazil	1%	9,002
Other Countries	15%	114,597
Total*	100%	776,366

*(excluding special events and restaurant)

Languages spoken (by independent visitors)		
Greek	47%	360,048
English	23%	177,881
French	8%	55,734
Spanish	5%	40,702
Italian	4%	28,013
German	3%	26,854
Dutch	1%	10,739
Portugese	1%	10,625
Russian	1%	8,743
Other Languages	7%	57,027
Total*	100%	776,366

*(excluding special events and restaurant)

Free and Discounted entry		
Free entry tickets	42%*	474,953
Discounted tickets	8%*	88,110

*(of all visitors)

the visitor experience

Changes and improvements to the permanent collection

The centre stage of the Museum experience is its exhibits.

The Museum's priority is to continuously improve the permanent exhibition and to introduce new elements to its galleries.

From the thousands of fragments from the Acropolis stored in archaeological storerooms, Museum archaeologists successfully identified and matched numerous pieces with exhibits. Of particular significance was the identification of a large fragment belonging to the back of the 'Giant' of the 'Old Athena Temple'. Its reattachment to the sculpture will alter the current reconstruction of the figure. From the same temple, the lion's head waterspout was presented in a new display featuring a large section of the sima above the pediment which was rejoined.

The famous *Hunting Dog* attributed to the sculptor of the *Rampin Rider* saw an essential change in its form with the addition of a section of the dog's tail. The right limb of *Horse Rider 700* was augmented with original fragments and *Kore 669* was remounted using modern techniques, following the removal of earlier additions of plaster.

Visitors' opportunity to appreciate the raw materials used to paint and color sculptures during the Archaic

period was enhanced with the mounting of a display of the natural substances used in this period, as well as the tools used by artisans of the times to sculpt objects such as those exhibited in the Archaic Gallery.

In preparation for an extended Museum in-gallery activity on ancient color, an Archaic period Ionic column capital with delicate relief and painted decoration was put on display, as was the pillar capital of *Theodoros*, son of *Onesimos*, that was used as a statue base and features a dedicatory inscription with well preserved coloring.

After years of anticipation, the metopes of the northwest corner of the Parthenon, north metopes 31 and 32 and west metope 1, were removed from the monument. Following conservation in the Museum's workshops, they were put on display temporarily at a low height, so that visitors could for the first time view original metopes from the Parthenon at close proximity and appreciate their exceptional artistic value. Metope 32 with its remarkable composition and its refined rendering of detail draws the eye and it is this metope that escaped destruction by fanatical Christians, possibly because it was thought to depict, in an early manner, the Annunciation.





To enhance the display of the reconstruction of the Parthenon's *akroterion*, the Museum presented significant original fragments which demonstrate the high quality of the crowning decorative element of this emblematic temple and lay the ground for subsequent research for the reconstruction of the second akroterion.

Many improvements were made in the Parthenon Gallery, in particular with the new mounting of the central south metopes. Original fragments were mounted on thick slabs of transparent Plexiglas using an innovative approach that allows clear viewing and examination without the plaster back mount.

In the north gallery on the first floor, the relief decrees were rearranged. Supplementary information was provided in four languages using digital technology, so that visitors can better appreciate these significant monuments of ancient Athenian public life. The display was enriched with the addition of the decree for *Proxenides*, where besides Athena and Proxenides himself, Aphrodite is depicted as the patron goddess of his homeland of Knidos in Asia Minor.

The cleaning of Caryatid A with a laser technique was successfully completed during 2011.

Preparation of the on site archaeological excavation

The archaeological remains of the ancient Athenian neighborhood that lies under the Museum will form a further 'gallery' of the Museum with a network of ramps and exhibition areas and displays of the portable findings. In the past year Museum archaeologists working with conservators and workmen, approached completion of works to restore and conserve all the ancient structures in the excavation. The proposal for the display of the excavation and the design of the exhibition for the excavation's portable finds was progressed to near completion.

Colour coming to the Museum

The Museum commenced a specialized research project on the colour on the sculptures, the architectural members and the inscriptions of the Archaic period. In 2012 the results of the research will be presented to visitors while the research continues in cooperation with Greek and foreign institutes.

Conservation in situ and in public view

Conservators continued their regular works both in the galleries and in the Museum while also undertaking in public view, the laser cleaning of the Caryatids' balcony in cooperation with the Institute of

Technology and Research of Crete. With the aid of a monitor, visitors were able to observe the process underway.

The laser cleaning of the Archaic Owl was also undertaken outside the Museum in visitors' view, as was much of the conservation and restoration of the archaeological excavation that lies below the Museum.

3D scanning of the Parthenon frieze

In October 2011 the Museum commenced cooperation with the Laboratory of Machine Tools and Manufacturing Engineering of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in a program to undertake the detailed 3-dimensional scanning of the Parthenon frieze in Athens and London. This work informs the possibility of the correct physical reunification of the reliefs in Athens with those in the British Museum. In addition to its essential contribution to research, the program will assist in the scientifically accurate reunification of the frieze blocks and their many fragments that are held in the two museums.



communicating archaeology

With school students: school programs

The Museum offers a restricted number of educational programs and presentations of the permanent exhibition to school groups. Demand for these programs far exceeds supply. Given the impossibility of providing access to organized programs for all school groups, the Museum has commenced exploring the development of resources to support self-guided and teacher lead visits so that more students can benefit from programs and activities in the Museum in the future.

In the past year 2,433 primary school students from 54 schools participated in the Parthenon Sculpture Program with the Acropolis Restoration Service Education Team (YSMA).

A further 7,442 children from 178 schools participated in activities focused on the Museum's permanent collection with Museum Archaeologist-Hosts.

With teachers: teacher training

A critical strategy already in place for multiplying the human resource capacity for productive school visits is the training of teachers in undertaking their own programs within the Museum collection. The YSMA Education Team presented 9 seminars to over 255 teachers in the Museum auditorium on

educational programs for the Parthenon Gallery.

With visitors in the galleries: gallery talks

2,166 visitors participated in gallery talks with Museum Archaeologist-Hosts. Presentations continued on *The Kore of Antenor*, *The Horse Riders* and *The Sanctuary of Asclepios*. Presented in both English and Greek, brief presentations focusing on one exhibit were new to Greek audiences: however the Museum noted that the gallery talks rated amongst the 10 most popular activities in Athens by the weekly magazine *Athinorama*.

In addition to the regular program, the Museum offered a number of special event gallery talks on the occasion of the installation of the Akroterion exhibit in the Parthenon Gallery as well as when the display of north metopes 31 and 32 and west metope 1 of the Parthenon was introduced into the Parthenon Gallery.

With children and their families: the family backpack

The Family Backpack Program *A day at the Acropolis Museum with the Goddess Athena* was first introduced in April 2011 and continues to be popular and well received by families visiting the Museum. The backpack contains various games and activities that are exhibition-based and are supported by colourful children's

exhibit labels in the Museum galleries. The pack activities require families to work together to solve its challenges.

In the past 12 months, 4,489 families used the backpack, with 76% of families using the Greek language package and 24% using the English language version. An evaluation undertaken by the backpacks creators, the YSMA Education Team indicates a high level of satisfaction amongst both children and their parents with over 90% of children surveyed expressing the desire to return to the Museum after using the pack. The digital application *Athena – the Goddess of the Acropolis* (www.acropolis-athena.gr) further extends the activities of the backpack once visitors are at home or even if not visiting the Museum.

With visitors in the virtual reality theatre

The Museum has a 40 seat theatre with a state-of the art screen for 3-dimensional virtual reality projections. Films orienting visitors to the monuments of the Acropolis produced by the YSMA commenced screenings in 2012 with regular showings on the weekends in Greek and English.

With translation of the brief Museum guide

In the past year the Museum translated the Brief Guide to the Museum in 5 languages. Visitors

can now purchase the Guide in French, German, Spanish as well as the original Greek and English editions.

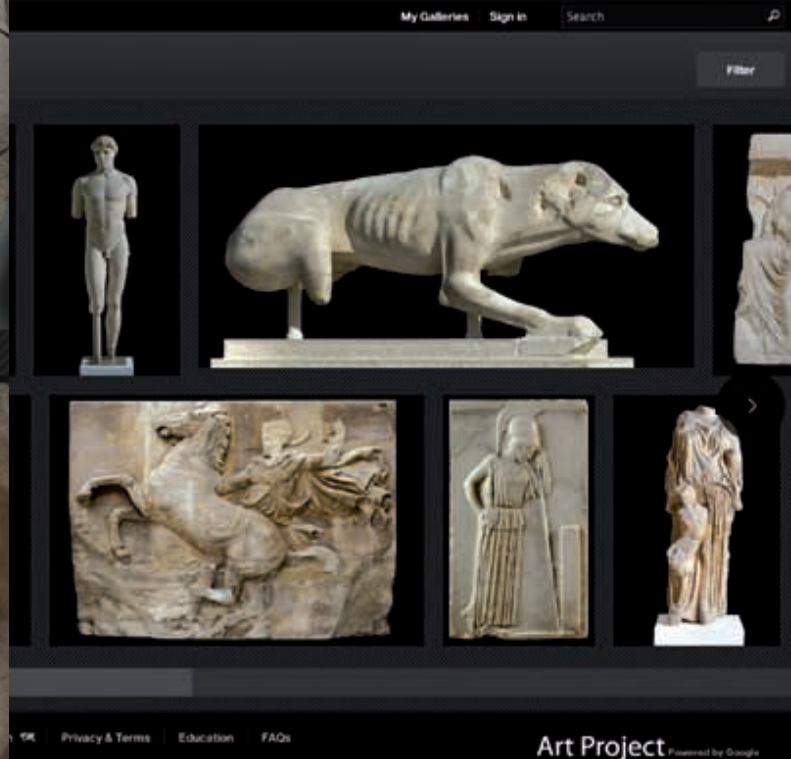
The Guide is now also available in Braille (Greek and English) on loan at the Museum's Information Desk.

With multimedia

The centrality of multimedia and social media in Museum education and recreation is recognised internationally. This year the Board of Directors of the Museum endorsed a policy on multimedia and the systematic redevelopment of the Museum website, as the central platform for onsite and remote visitors. This policy formed the basis of the Museum's application for funding to the EU's National Strategic Reference Framework Development Funds Program. A successful outcome from this application will assist the Museum to implement its policy and a range of programs to enhance visitor access to the Museum collections.

With digitalizing the collection

In order to preserve archaeological data and to aid effective use of this information both for research and visitor resource development, the digitalization of extensive handwritten and analogue files was commenced. In the past year Museum archaeologists supervised the digitalization of 600 archaeological excavation plans,





1,200 individual exhibit archive records, catalogue lists for 12,100 individual portable finds and the contents of 2,000 trays of stored ceramics. The digital photographing of 750 exhibits also completed the basic photographic profiling of the Museum's permanent collection.

With the Google Art Project

From April 2012, a high quality virtual tour of the Museum's Archaic and Parthenon Galleries became available to remote visitors through the Museum's participation in the Google Art Project and the application of Google's Street View technology. Having joined 150 other cultural institutions across the globe, virtual visitors worldwide can now tour these galleries from the comfort of their home, while also accessing high resolution images of exhibits made available on the site. Through Google's application of gigapixel photography, a super high resolution image of Block VI of the Parthenon east frieze enables users to see detail in the relief not available to the naked eye.

**With digital storytelling:
the Chess project**

Following funding in early 2011 the Museum furthered its work in the Cultural Heritage Experiences through Socio-Personal Interactions and Digital Storytelling (CHES) Project. In cooperation with several other partners, this

program draws together the content knowledge of the Museum, the technical skills of its project partners and the approaches of story tellers, authors and other disciplines to be able to tell the stories of the Museum's exhibits using varied approaches for different 'types' of visitors. Initially to be implemented with mobile hand held technologies, the project is evolving a model for broader application in the Museum's production of multimedia and a library of audio-visual assets In the past 12 months.

1 June 2011 to 31 May 2012

Programmed school visits form a significant component of Museum visits and an important investment in the socialization of school students to museum visiting.

Total visitors in student groups **132,266**

Of which:		
Greek students	(76%)	100,701
Foreign students	(24%)	31,565
Primary school children	(32%)	42,723
Secondary school children	(48%)	64,106
Tertiary students	(20%)	25,437

Virtual Visitors

Total number of visitors to website 450,468

Greece	72%	322,851
United States	8%	34,561
United Kingdom	3%	12,539
France	2%	7,412
Italy	1%	6,899
Germany	1%	6,646
Spain	1%	5,679
Canada	1%	5,470
Australia	1%	4,234
Cyprus	1%	3,367
Other countries	9%	40,810

Facebook

Total number of friends 324,584

New friends since 1 June 2011 46,851

Source countries for friends

Greece	73%	236,458
United States	5%	15,845
Cyprus	2%	7,175
United Kingdom	2%	5,621
Germany	2%	5,512
Italy	1%	4,237
Australia	1%	3,375
Other countries	14%	46,361

Age of Friends

13-17	12%
18-24	25%
25-34	31%
35-44	19%
45-54	7%
55+	4%
Unknown	2%

Medical services

Total number of Museum visitors attended 2,807

Total number of Museum staff consultations 1,454

communicating the museum

With music

Music was introduced as a stable ingredient to Museum programming in the summer of 2011 and continued throughout the year with both contemporary and orchestral concerts performed in the Museum's courtyard and lobby, with small group performances on the balcony overlooking the Archaic Gallery. Balcony performances commenced in December 2011 followed by the February Thursday afternoon series (*Musical Meetings with Mano Hatzidakis*) and a series of six performances in March/April titled *Greek Crossroads: a meeting with an Anthology of International Music*. Visitors were able to either tour the Archaic exhibition within earshot of the music from the balcony, or take a place on the balcony itself.

With morning to midnight openings and free entry days

As another means of optimizing access for visitors, the Museum remains open from morning till midnight on special occasions. The Museum opened for visitors from 8.00 am to midnight for the Museum's second birthday in June 2011, the Full Moon celebration of August, the two nights of the European Days of Cultural Heritage, International Museum Day and the European Night of Museums in May 2012.

Entry was free for all visitors on four full days and between 8.00 am and 12.00 midnight for four other late night openings.

With postcard promotion

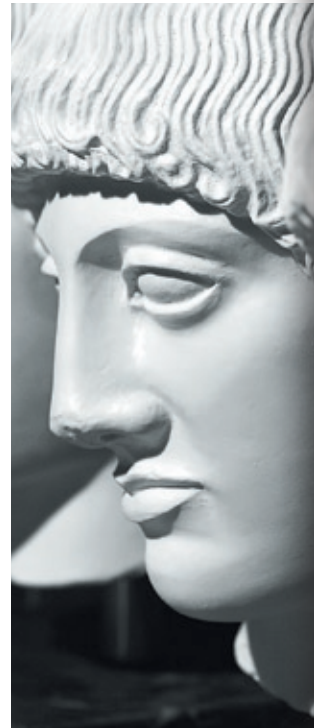
In August 2011 the Museum made promotional postcards available to city hotels, key tourist information points at the airport and elsewhere and to large bookstores. Almost 18,000 postcards have been distributed free of charge so far in this first step in informing visitors to Athens of the Museum's operating hours and address.

With museum exact cast copies

In May 2012 the Museum's Conservation Department produced its first cast copies of original exhibits for sale in the Museum shop. Museum franked copies of the *Head of Athena Parthenos*, the *Head of the Blond Boy* and a recently exhibited relief from a base from the Odeion of Herodes Atticus depicting the personification of the community of Athens. Commemorative medallions were also produced in cooperation with the National Mint to celebrate International Museum Day.

Staff development and training

The provision of training and development activities is central to the Museum's delivery of quality services to visitors and to constantly improving staff skills and knowledge in all disciplines.





The program of the past year included an emphasis on multimedia in the Museum. Museum shop staff received specialized training on sales and service to visitors as well as information sessions with Museum archaeologists so that they can better communicate the link between shop products and Museum exhibits. Museum Archaeologist-Hosts trained with the Lighthouse for the Blind in Greece to be able to competently guide visitors that are blind or visually impaired.

In addition to training for regular staff, the Museum provided induction training for 45 seasonal security officers and 15 administrative support staff that enabled their effective integration into the Museum.

Optional lunchtime presentations were introduced for staff on a monthly basis including an experimental series on personal health and well-being designed to support staff.

Library

Museum archaeologists supervised the establishment of a library with electronic and hard copy materials to support staff undertaking research.

Presentations abroad

The Museum was presented at three key international events in the past year. Museum President Professor Dimitrios Pandermalis presented at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, at the Leventis Foundation in Nicosia, Cyprus and the Prado Museum.

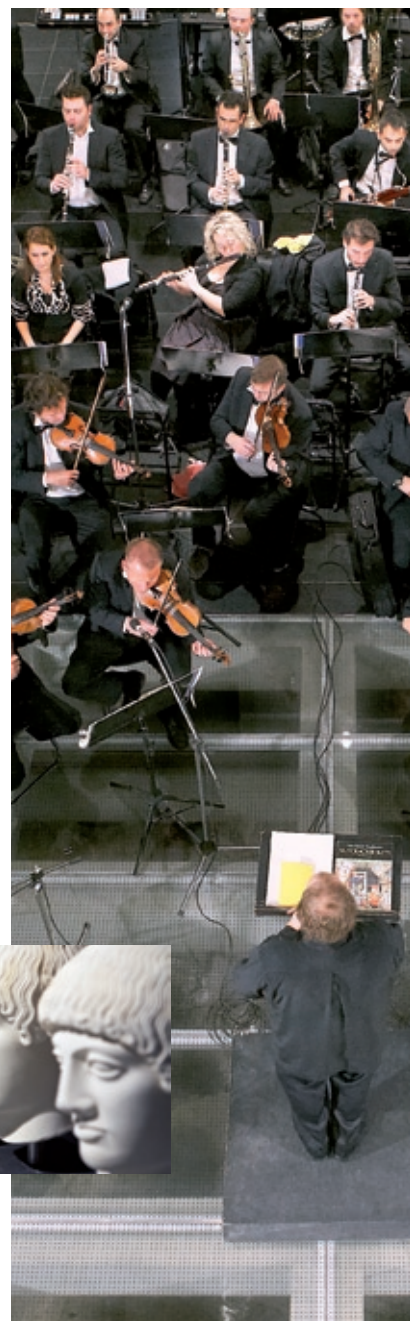
Visitors respond to the museum

In addition to responding to and monitoring comments received from visitors on museum comment forms or via the email, the Museum sought visitor views with its first Visitor Survey in the summer of 2011. Undertaken jointly with the University of Toronto's Faculty of Information, a statistically valid and representative sample of 188 visitors was interviewed from 1 June to 17 July 2011. The project was undertaken with the academic supervision of Associate Professor Costis Dallas and Dr. Barbara Soren and with the assistance of postgraduate

students from the University of Toronto and Greek Universities.

The survey results provide a range of valuable insights for Museum planning that will be presented in a separate report. Key findings that rewarded the Museum positively include that almost a quarter of the study sample had visited the Museum up to 3 times or more. Almost 60% of visitors spent between 1- 2 hours in the Museum during their visit and 37% spent over 2 hours. 82% of respondents considered the Museum labels and texts in galleries a useful source of information in the exhibition, a particularly satisfying result following the Museum renewal of these texts in the previous year. Over 45% of the sample considered staff to be extremely helpful, while an additional 51% considered that staff was helpful. 65% considered that the Museum was extremely accessible for people with disabilities and a further 34% considered accessibility to be at 'good' levels.

The survey results direct the Museum to consider the need for additional audiovisual interpretation aids, to review the Museum's way finding map and to the greater promotion of Museum services such as the reading area and the availability of Museum Archaeologist-Hosts.



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