

**Acropolis Museum**

A highlights report  
June 2014 - May 2015

year six

# President's message

With a consistency of commitment to its work, the Acropolis Museum continued its sixth year of operation. The Museum upgraded the presentation of its exhibits with technical improvements, added new exhibits, changed the mounting of sculptures and conserved well known masterpieces. Using an innovative approach the Museum digitally restored the west frieze of the Parthenon. Changing light was used on these three dimensional icons, adding color to the figures and background of the relief and re-attaching bronze horse reins and the bronze weapons of the horse riders. In order that the digital images do not distract visitors from the original works, a system of inclined ground level screens was designed and placed at a reasonable distance from the ancient relief, allowing the visitor to make his own choices. The Museum seeks to provide rich and multifaceted information but also to enable easy access to the exhibits, allowing visitors their own approach to viewing.

A special offering made by the Museum are the specialized services of the Archaeologist-Hosts and the educational team of the Acropolis Restoration Service (YSMA). A host of activities for children, adults and families, special occasion presentations, fun activity sheets and diverse thematic tours, evidence the essence of the Museum's approach to its audiences.

Despite the continuing economic crisis, not only did the number of visitors to the Museum not decrease, rather in the first five months of 2015 they increased by 12% as compared to the same period in the previous year. The general growth in tourism to Greece naturally played a role as did the continuous improvement in Museum services.

Having regard to an enhanced cooperation with other museums, the Acropolis Museum's Board of Directors decided to support a series of exhibitions from regional Greece so that exceptional archaeological finds in remote museums can be brought to Athens and presented to a large Greek and foreign audience. In this way it is considered that the Museum can contribute to the awakening of interest in these important Greek sites while also assisting in the conservation, presentation and mounting of the works, thanks to the many years of accumulated technical experience available at the Acropolis Museum. The program commences this year with 'Samothrace', an exhibition mounted in cooperation with the Archaeological Ephorates of Rodopi and Evros, between 20 June and 30 September 2015 at the Acropolis Museum.

The unexpected passing way of Professor Yiorgos Despini, a unique expert on the sculptures of the Parthenon, bereaved the entire archaeological community. Katerina

Despini, his partner in life, has chosen to generously donate their precious library of books to the Acropolis Museum. The collection will be housed in the neoclassical building located within the Museum grounds at the corner of Hatzichristou and Mitseon Streets, and it is certain that it will constitute an invaluable resource for research on ancient Greek sculpture.

In its sixth year the staff of the Museum continued to provide services with the same zeal as they have in previous years. The Museum management's heightened emphasis on preserving services but also continuously improving them, provided staff with the opportunity for creative work with impressive results.

Dimitrios Pandermalis  
President







# Our visitors

**Total**  
*visitors*

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1,460,135

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*visitors arriving independently*

73%

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1,065,868

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*visitors arriving in organized groups*

27%

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394,267

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**Countries of origin**  
independent visitors



**Total**  
visitors

962,902

**Languages spoken\***  
by independent visitors



\* excludes special events, restaurant patrons and virtual reality theater entries

# School visitors

**Total**  
visitors in groups

394,267

student groups

43%

170,764

adult groups

57%

223,503

**Free and discounted entry**  
total free tickets

586,482

40% of all tickets

total discounted tickets

90,680

6% of all tickets

**Total**  
visitors in student groups

170,764

Greek student visits

68%

116,933

Foreign student visits

32%

53,831

Primary school children

33%

56,036

Secondary school children

59%

100,542

Tertiary Students

6%

9,457

Other childrens' groups

2%

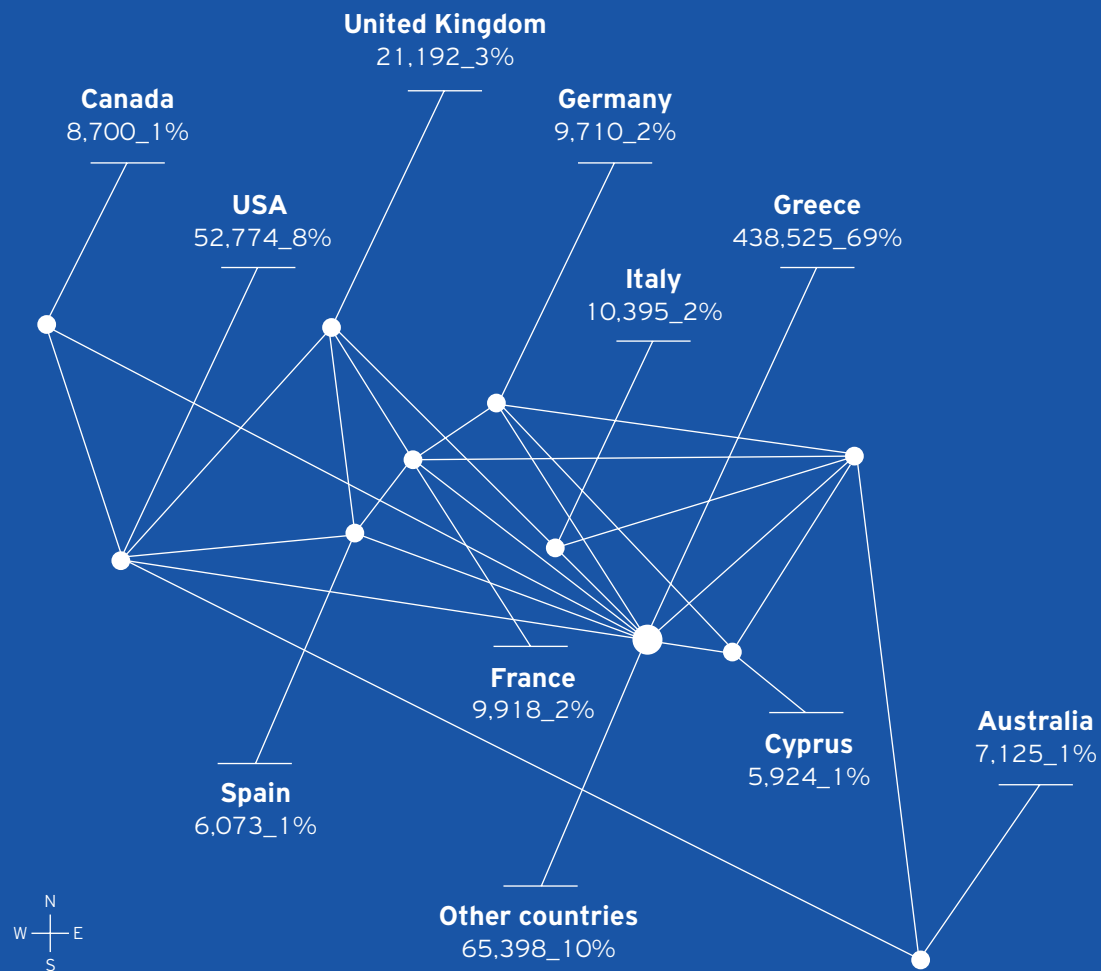
4,729

# Virtual visitors

**Total**  
number of visitors to Museum website

635,734

**Main countries**  
of website visitors



**Facebook**  
total number of friends

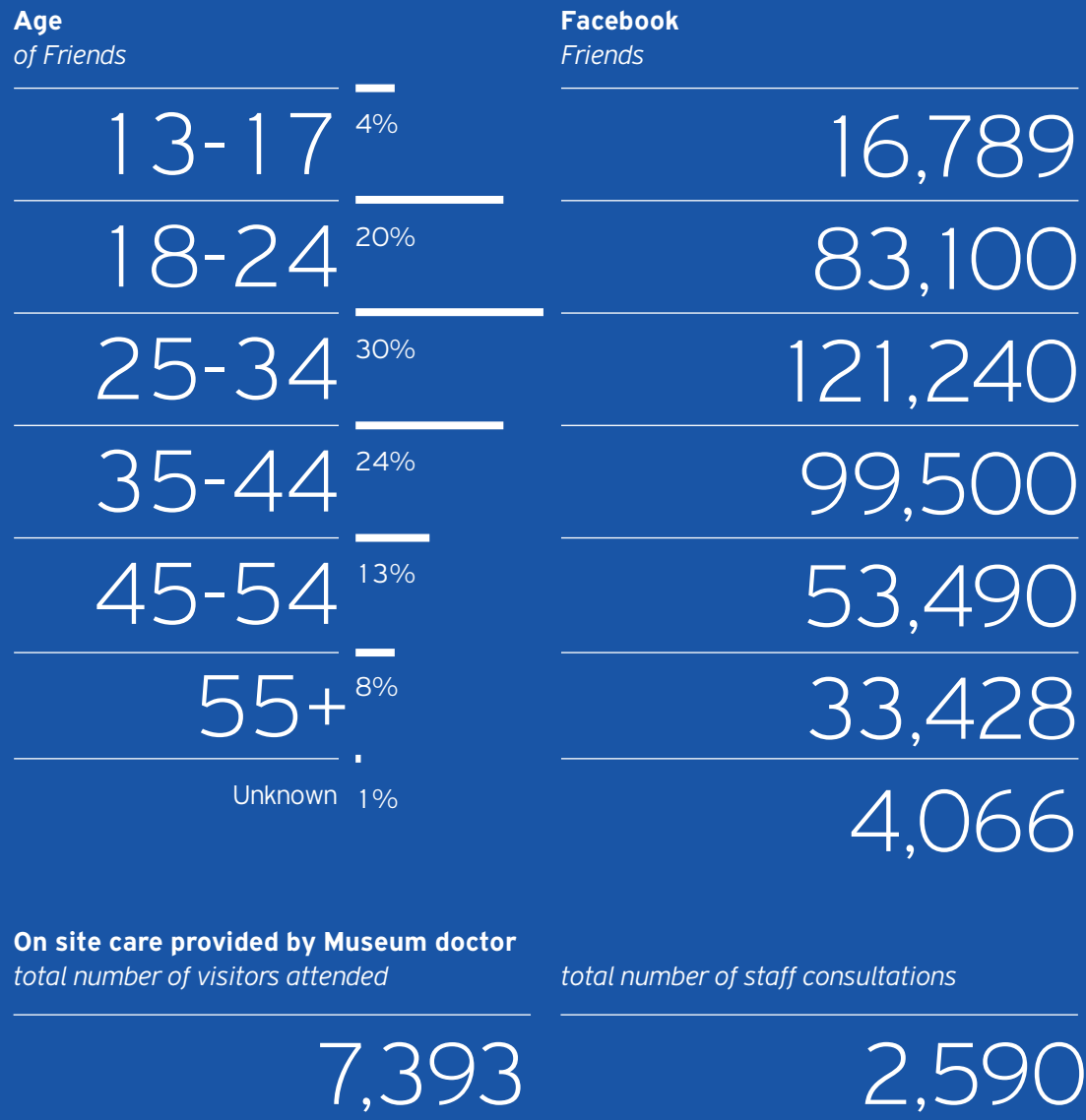
411,615

**Source countries**  
for friends

Greece	312,842	76%
USA	15,951	4%
Cyprus	8,534	2%
Germany	7,789	2%
United Kingdom	7,224	1%
Italy	5,495	1%
Australia	4,086	1%
Serbia	3,127	1%
Canada	2,454	1%
Spain	2,422	1%
Other countries	41,691	10%



# Changes and improvements to the permanent exhibition



## The permanent collection

Conservation, restoration and constant improvements to the exhibition of the permanent collection are core business for the Museum.

In the past year the Permanent Collection and Conservation Departments of the Museum worked to improve the condition of over 280 portable exhibits and to enrich the exhibition's interpretation.

The most noteworthy conservation work of marble exhibits was undertaken for the statue of the mythical *Prokne and Itys* (Acr. 1358) from the collection of the 5th century BC to the end of antiquity, with the completion of laser cleaning and a change to the exhibit's base. The statue of Athena (Acr. 1362) from the same collection was also conserved and restored. Equally significant is the conservation and remounting of the sculpture of *The Archer* (Acr. 599) from the Archaic Period. In the Parthenon Gallery the laser cleaning of the south *metope I* and the two west metopes (2 and 14) which are the most recently descended metopes from the monument, was completed.

The video documenting the complex process of the conservation and remounting of the emblematic *Calf Bearer* (Acr. 624) in 2014 was introduced into the Archaic Gallery and is projected on a screen next to the sculpture. Most of the laser cleaning works on sculptures was undertaken *in situ* in the Museum galleries providing visitors with continued insights into the 'behind the scenes' work of conservation.

## Virtual reconstruction of the Parthenon sculptures

Using data obtained through the digital scanning of the Parthenon frieze project, the Museum embarked on an ambitious program of producing virtual reconstruction of elements of the frieze. In June 2014 a video presenting the virtual reconstruction of the horse riders on the west frieze was launched in the Parthenon Gallery. The video presents virtual reconstructions of the now long lost copper weapons, reins and color thought to have originally adorned the frieze.

### **Digital management of exhibits**

As the Permanent Collection Department works to develop its comprehensive digital database of the Museum's collection, considerable progress was made in the digitalization of records that enable greater efficiency in exhibit management. Handwritten archival documentation was scanned for digital addition to individual exhibit records. Over 1,300 stored sculptural objects and fragments were digitally photographed and individually measured. As part of research undertaken to update information for the Museum's digital database, individual exhibit entries were enriched with the most current bibliographic references.

### **The on-site archaeological excavation**

The much awaited opening to the public of the archaeological ruins that lie beneath the Museum remains pending the Museum's acquisition of the necessary funding. The Permanent Collection Department continued to undertake the planning works required to operate this new exhibition area: the preliminary design for public access to the archaeological site and the exhibition of its portable findings was prepared and submitted successfully to the Central Archaeological Council in October 2014.

Conservation and restoration works of selected areas of the site continued, notably the conservation and restoration of a Classical/Hellenistic house at the southwest area of the excavation and the conservation of the mosaic floor of the apse and the marble floor of a second room of the Late Roman Building Z.

The Ceramics Workshop of the Museum's Conservation Department conserved 165 portable objects in preparation for the excavation display. Original hand written archaeological catalogue inventories were transferred to a computer file assuring their long term survival and providing a basis for the development of future digital applications and publications.

### **Exhibit loans to local and international exhibitions**

The Acropolis Museum supported a significant number of temporary exhibitions organized by other institutions locally and abroad.

Between November 2014 and May 2015 the Museum of Cycladic Art in Athens displayed the votive relief, Acr. 7232, on loan from the Acropolis Museum as part of the temporary exhibition '*Hygeia: Health, Illness, Treatment from Homer to Galen*'.

Seven Acropolis Museum exhibits from both the permanent exhibition and its storerooms joined exhibits from 21 other Greek museums for the Hellenic Ministry of Culture's travelling exhibition '*The Greeks: Agamemnon to Alexander the Great*'. The exhibits loaned from December 2014 to October 2016 are the Kore Acr. 673, the Head of an Athlete (Acr. 699), the pilaster capital (Acr. 3761), the Female Head (Acr. 1309 and Acr. 7243) and the Honorary Decrees EM 2811, EM 7180 and Acr. 6787. The exhibition is presented from December 2014 to October 2016 in museums in Ottawa, Montreal, Chicago and Washington in the United States.

The Head of a Priest (Acr. 1353) was provided on loan to the *Musei Capitolini* in Rome for the exhibition '*The Age of Anxiety: from Commodus to Diocletian*' from January to October 2015.

Finally, the archaic hoard of 62 silver Athenian coins (showcase 38) was loaned to the Numismatic Museum in Athens for the planned exhibition '*Archaic Mints of Athens: Mines, Metals and Coins*' between May and October 2015.

# Communicating the exhibits

*Communicating the exhibits and the Museum are in fact one and the same thing. However for ease of reading, this section focuses only on in-gallery activities.*

## **In-gallery Museum Archaeologist-Hosts**

In the past year Museum Archeologist-Hosts remained available daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the Archaic Gallery to respond to visitor questions. The 'Reading Lounge' program introduced in early 2014, also continued each Saturday morning providing visitors with the opportunity to avail themselves of information on topics relating to the Museum's collections. Archaeologist-Hosts draw regularly on digital resources to enrich communications with visitors in the galleries and in the Saturday program.

## **Regular gallery talks**

The program of regular weekday and weekend gallery talks ('*The Parthenon*', '*Masterpieces in the Acropolis Museum*' and '*Archaic Colors*') continued to be offered in the Greek, English and French languages. This program was expanded to include an additional Saturday talk, featuring a new topic each fortnight selected from visitor suggestions. This program is offered in Greek, and in English on request.

## **Special events and themed gallery talks**

The Museum provides additional opportunities to visitors for new and different gallery talks on the occasion of National Holidays and other special celebratory days.

The Gallery talk entitled '*Personalities from Antiquity*' was offered during the European Heritage and World Tourism Days (26-28/9/2014). The unique sculpted bust of Aristotle, a statue revealed in 2005 during the archaeological excavations on the Museum's construction site, was displayed and was the starting point for these talks.

The Greek National Holiday (28 October 2014) featured the display of the bronze '*Quadriga with the Goddess Nike*', a statuette on loan to the Acropolis Museum from the Collection of Theophil Hansen, the 19th century architect of neoclassicism in Greece and central Europe. The quadriga was part of the exhibition '*Hellenic Renaissance: The architecture of Theophil Hansen*' organized by the Theocharakis Foundation for Fine Arts and Music in Athens. With the quadriga as a fine example, gallery talks were given on the influence of the Acropolis and its sculptures on the development of the Classical Renaissance in the Western World.

'*Museum exhibits and the historical memory of the ancients*' was the topic of gallery talks offered to visitors on the occasion of the 25th March National Holiday in 2015.

The European Night of Museums (16/5/2015) followed closely by International Museums Day (18/5/2015) were both celebrated at the Museum with free entry on Museums Day and discounted entry after 8 p.m. to midnight on the European Night of Museums. On International Museums Day the Museum released its annual commemorative coin featuring the Black Raven, the sacred bird of the God *Apollon* that is featured on exhibit EAM X6669. Continuing with this theme, gallery talks for that day took the '*Raven and other winged creatures*' as their topic, engaging visitors with stories of the significance of these motifs in antiquity. The diverse and fascinating world of the '*Astral Divinities: Images, beliefs, cult*' were addressed in gallery talks on the European Night of Museums.

## **Children and families**

### **Family backpacks and family trails**

Young children and their families continued to enjoy the free gallery activities available at the Museum's Front Desk. Family backpacks were loaned to 2,614 Greek speaking families and to 1,346 English speaking families in the past year. Brief activity sheets (family trails) for 5-8 year olds and 8-10 year olds were also popular with over 3,720 being provided to individual families. These colorful and fun educational resources are developed by the Acropolis Restoration Service Education Team (YSMA) for the Acropolis Museum.

## Sunday workshops

Between March and July 2014 Museum Archaeologist-Hosts offered weekly Sunday workshops to children aged from 4 years and over. A variety of workshops for different age groups were offered including the popular cooking class *'Sweet offerings for gods and mortals'*, a walk through the galleries with *'Surprises amongst the statues'* for the younger children and a series of workshops on mythology themed activities for older children.

## Summer and festive season programs

During the summer period, the Museum offered a week long holiday program for children aged 7-12 with activities including *'Playing games from ancient times!'*, *'Temples: the homes of the Gods'* and *'The Olive: the Gift of a Goddess'* resourced by the Acropolis Restoration Service Education Team.

For the 2014 Christmas period a range of weekend activities were on offer for children aged 7-12 including workshops entitled *'Ancient customs and decorations for the new year'*, *'Dressing a Goddess'* and *'Gifts for Gods and Mortals'*.

Museum Archaeologist-Hosts also offered the *'Ancients Athenians remember their past'* activities for children on the 25th March National Holiday and *'Wings and Feathers'* activities in the Archaic Gallery for International Museums Day 2015.

## Lego Acropolis

Through the personal initiative of its Senior Curator, Mr. Michael Turner, the University of Sydney's Nicholson Museum (Australia) donated its Lego model of the Acropolis to the Acropolis Museum. Comprised of over 120,000 Lego bricks and made by one of the 13 certified Lego professionals worldwide, the model attracts the attention of young and old on the second floor 'The Lab' area, where it was first displayed during the festive period of 2014.

## School visits and programs

Over 170,764 children came to the Museum in pre-booked school visits this year from both local schools and schools from abroad. From these students, 10,829 followed the Museum's educational programs and 1,123 followed 3d projections about the Acropolis. Due to limited staff availability it was impossible for the Museum to accommodate all school requests for a program. However, a considerable effort is made by Museum staff to diversify the programs made available and to increase the offering of resources that schools could use to independently prepare for visits and undertake their own programs.

During the school year, Museum Archaeologist-Hosts provided educational programs to local schools weekly with 9 different topics for classes of children for 4th grade primary school to senior high school classes. A total of 7,260 students participated in presentations or activities with an emphasis on student interaction with four new programs (*'The exhibits through your own eyes'*; *'From child... to citizen'* and *'Ancient faces and you!'*) and with the renewal of existing programs with the aid of digital resources. Three educational programs accompanied by craft workshops were offered by the Museum with the support of the Acropolis Restoration Service Education Team to over 2,829 students with the revised program *'The Sculptures of the Parthenon'* and two new programs *'Making your own God'* and *'The Temples: the homes of the Gods'*.

Resource material to aid schools in preparing before and after and in some cases during their visit at the Museum was developed and is available to schools freely on the Museum website ([www.theacropolismuseum.gr](http://www.theacropolismuseum.gr)) for a number of the educational programs.

## Teacher training

With the collaboration of the Acropolis Restoration Service Education team, the Museum assists interested teachers to learn how to organize their own program for a class visit by offering a seminar. This year teachers were offered the choice of attending either the generic program *'Educational Resources for the Acropolis and the Museum'* or a seminar preparing them for a specific topic visit among the following: *'The Parthenon and its Sculptures'*, *'The Monuments of the Acropolis in the Acropolis Museum'* or *'The Gods of Olympus at the Acropolis Museum'*. The Acropolis Restoration Service Education team offers a range of resources to teachers including Museum kits, printed material, class plans and YSMA digital applications also available on the Museum website.

## Technology and the digital museum

After a lengthy lead up time the Museum was successful in its submission for funding to the National Strategic Reference Framework (2007-2013) in early 2014. The Museum's proposal entails the development of a digital database and a range of digital applications.

# Communicating the museum

Following the purchase of a museum's collection management software, 7,700 objects from the Museum's collection were recorded in the database. A further 13,300 of the Museum's stored objects had profile data prepared and made ready for entry on the program and considerable work was done on the development of models and guidance for text entries that will be made available to the public on the Museum website in the future. In addition, 2,900 original handwritten records of collection objects were scanned and digitally saved.

The scenarios and specifications for a series of planned digital applications were developed in readiness for production. Work is expected to continue in all of these areas as soon as the next National Program (2014-2020) is approved.

## **Production of cast copies of Museum exhibits**

Constant improvement of the quality of the Museum's precise cast copies continues to be a priority of the Conservation Department, responsible for the production of the copies for sale in the Museum Shops. In the past year conservators produced almost 3,500 individual cast copies that were then packaged and supplied to the Museum Shops. Two new exhibits were introduced, namely the *Relief of the Pensive Athena* (Acr. 695) and the *Portrait of Alexander the Great* (Acr. 1331). An additional seven moulds were reproduced to ensure high quality reproductions and 6 cast copies were thoroughly hand painted.

## **Temporary exhibition: *Samothrace. The mysteries of the great gods***

Work on the Museum's first of a series of 13 temporary exhibitions presenting significant but often overlooked archaeological collections from various regions of Greece was completed in the past year. '*Samothrace. The mysteries of the great gods*' opens on 20 June 2015 in the Museum's Temporary Exhibition Gallery. The exhibition is organized in cooperation with the Ephorates of Rodopi and Evros and the expert on Samothracian antiquities, Mr. Dimitrios Matsas.

## **Hosting the temporary exhibition '*Tourism Landscapes: Remaking Greece*'**

The greek national participation at the 14th Venice Architecture Biennale 2014 titled '*Tourism Landscapes: Remaking Greece*', curated by the Greek Commissioner Yannis Aesopos, and organized by the Greek Ministry of the Environment was presented at the Acropolis Museum. Re-mounted in the Museum's Temporary Exhibition Gallery from 27 March to 19 April 2015, the exhibition presented the historic role of tourism in the modernization of Greece.

## **Participating in '*Greek Tourism*' exhibition**

The Acropolis Museum participated in the international '*Greek Tourism*' exhibition that took place in Athens in December 2014, with an architecturally designed pavilion at the Metropolitan Expo.

## **Music**

As has been the tradition since its opening, the Museum continued to link music to its events and celebrations.

On the occasion of its 5th birthday on 20 June 2014, the Museum remained open til midnight and hosted the popular indie-pop performer *Leon of Athens* in its entrance courtyard. Another warm summer's full moon night on 10 August 2014 was the setting for popular Greek cinematographic music and other Greek classics performed by the Hellenic Air Force Band with the Museum again open to midnight for all visitors.

The Museum's first autumn concert was organized in cooperation with the Embassy of Belgium in Athens with the piano trio, *Trio Solista*, on the Museum's second floor balcony overlooking the Archaic Gallery.

During the weekends of the Christmas period, the Museum's foyer flooded with traditional Christmas and New Year songs from vocalists accompanied by the Hellenic Navy Band.

The Dimitri Vassilakis Quintet featured in the first outdoor concert for 2015 with European jazz music, on the occasion of European Night of Museums (16/5/2015).

#### **Museum presentations locally and abroad**

In June 2014, the President of the Museum, Professor Dimitrios Pandermalis, spoke on *'The restoration of the Parthenon Sculptures at the Acropolis Museum'* at a conference organized by the Marianna D. Vardinoyiannis Foundation *'Parthenon: the unity of the monument-the role of citizens'*.

In December 2014, Professor Pandermalis addressed the conference co-hosted by the Acropolis Museum and the University of Athens *'Open Access: Movement to Reality - Putting the Pieces Together'* on *'ICT applications at the Acropolis Museum'*. In the same month, he made the closing presentation *'From antiquity to contemporary Greece: the Acropolis Museum'* at the Conference of the Hellenic Rheumatology Council and the Association

of Rheumatologists of Greece in Athens. In late November 2014 Professor Pandermalis spoke on the *'Use of digital technology at the Acropolis Museum'* at the University of Verne and at the Skulpturhalle of Basel. In the same month he participated in the International Communication Summit in Rome with a presentation titled *'Storytelling: the European challenge of heritage communication'*.

In February 2015, Professor Pandermalis presented the exhibition program of the Acropolis Museum at the Szepmuveszeti Muzeum in Budapest and in March 2015 he presented *'The Acropolis Museum and its public engagement activities and approaches of the past 5 years'* in a conference hosted by the Fitzwilliam Museum at the University of Cambridge. In May 2015 he participated at the *'Art Light from God-International conference for culture art and peace'* presenting on the topic of *'Classical Art & Modern Societies'* at the Rome Parliament.

#### **Languages: the Museum Guide and Way finder**

Following the translation of the Museum's official archaeological guide in the French language, German and Spanish language translations are currently underway. Additionally, in April 2015 the Museum's way finder brochure, distributed freely to Museum visitors, was translated and made available in the following additional languages: Russian, Chinese and Japanese.

#### **Staff development**

Staff training and development continued in the past year in areas identified as a priority by the Museum's management. Temporary staff recruited in October 2014 and in April 2015 undertook induction training with the use of Museum-developed training videos and presentations by the staff.

Visitor services staff attended refresher courses provided by the Red Cross in First Aid in December 2014 and on the use of defibrillators in March 2015.

Administrative staff attended intensive training on Working with the Digital Public Contracting System with the Institute of Training of the Hellenic National School of Public Administration.

Museum middle management staff followed a 30-hour training course in *'Management by Objectives'* taught by the Institute of Training of the Hellenic National School of Public Administration.

The Museum's Conservation Department coordinator attended the International Training Program at the British Museum in August 2014.

*We once again thank SAMSUNG Electronics Hellas for their generous and continuing support in the provision of electronic and digital equipment to the Acropolis Museum.*

# International recognition

**2014**

***Traveler's Choice TripAdvisor:***

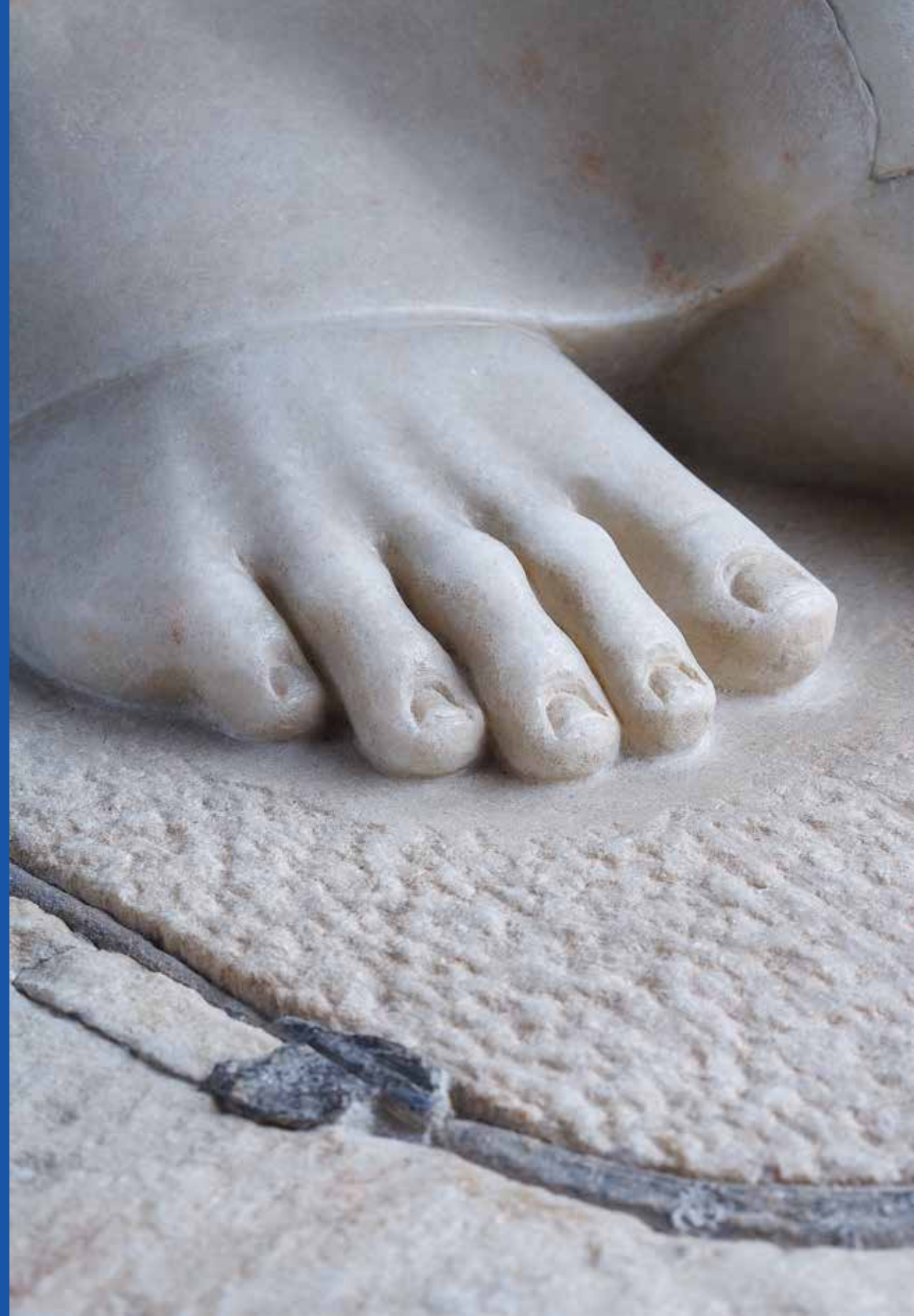
The Acropolis Museum voted amongst the Top 25 Museums of the World by World Travelers.

**2015**

***Piranesi Prix de Rome***

**(March 2015)**

Museum architect Bernard Tschumi awarded the Piranesi Prix de Rome 2015 by the Accademia Adrianea for Architecture and Archaeology and by the Institute of Architects in Rome.







# Board members

## President

### **Dimitrios Pandermalis**

*Archaeologist, Professor Emeritus  
of Archaeology Aristotle University  
of Athens*

## Members

### **Giorgos Kaminis**

*Mayor of Athens*

### **Nikolaos Stambolidis**

*Archaeologist, Professor of Archaeology  
(from August 2014)*

### **Panayiotis Tetsis**

*Academician and Artist*

### **Julia Iliopoulos-Strangas**

*Professor of Law University of Athens  
(until August 2014)*

### **Konstantinos – Augustos Rizos**

*Lawyer (from August 2014)*

### **Nikolaos Damalitis**

*Civil Engineer*

### **Kathy Paraschi**

*Architect Engineer*

### **Constantinos Kissas**

*Ephor, First Ephorate for Prehistoric and  
Classical Antiquities of the Ministry of  
Culture (until November 2014)*

### **Eleni Banou**

*Ephor, Ephorate of Antiquities of Athens  
of the Ministry of Culture  
(from December 2014)*

### **Haralambos Bouras**

*Emeritus Professor of Architecture  
President of the Acropolis  
Restoration Service*



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**Photos**

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1. Detail. Kore Acr. 682.

2. Side close up view: Centaur from the South  
Metope 1 of the Parthenon.

3. Detail of a dancer's garment from the  
Theatre of Dionysos.

4. Detail. The foot of the 'Euthydikos Kore'.

5. Horseman fastening his sandal. Depicted on the marble  
block VI of the Parthenon's west frieze.

6. The 'Blond Boy' Rear view of his braided hair.

**Annual report design**

G Design Studio

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