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To cite this article: Mari Lending (2018) Negotiating absence: Bernard Tschumi's new Acropolis Museum in Athens, *The Journal of Architecture*, 23:5, 797-819, DOI: [10.1080/13602365.2018.1495909](https://doi.org/10.1080/13602365.2018.1495909)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602365.2018.1495909>



Published online: 18 Jul 2018.



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Negotiating absence: Bernard Tschumi's new Acropolis Museum in Athens

(This paper was originally published in *The Journal of Architecture*, vol. 14, no. 5, pp. 567–589.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13602360903119363>)

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The ambition to inaugurate the new Acropolis Museum illuminated by the Olympic flame of 2004 and broadcast worldwide was not fulfilled. Difficulties and delays of practical, economic and archaeological nature were in the end less daunting than the political, legal and ideological obstacles to the aspiration of crowning the new museum with the Elgin Marbles, which were moved to London about two hundred years ago. The expatriation of the Parthenon fragments and the repeated requests for repatriation, both brought to play in Bernard Tschumi's highly persuasive structure, define a striking prism through which to look at some of the urgent and conflicting issues haunting the museum institution today (Fig. 1).

Driven by the ideals of enlightenment, the idea of the public, universal museum, perfect and complete, proliferated at the turn of the nineteenth century. In 1796, only three years after the foundation of the *Muséum Français* (the later *Musée du Louvre*), Antoine Chrysostôme Quatremère de Quincy advised passionately against the relocation of antique monuments to European capitals in his 'Lettres au général Miranda sur le préjudice qu'occasionnens aux arts et à la science le déplacement des monumens de l'art de l'Italie, Le démembrement de ses écoles, et la spoliation de ses collections, galeries, musées, etc.'¹ In hindsight, however, the physical removal of ancient art and architecture marks not only the decontextualisation of these objects, but also their *re-location* from one discourse to another. Once relocated to the museum, architectural elements are invested with new functions and historical and aesthetic values that radically alter their significance.

Thus, as Greece today reclaims the Elgin Marbles by means of a compelling architectural rhetoric, the discourse on decontextualisation gets a new twist, now including the possible re-contextualisation of a fragment whose original context has changed beyond recognition. In fact, Quatremère himself anticipated this delicious paradox in his Canova-correspondence of 1818 on the Parthenon Collection in London. Here, Quatremère addressed with surprising precision a fundamental museo-theoretical problem regarding decontextualisation as well as re-contextualisation; a problem to which Tschumi's design for the new Acropolis Museum gives such an eloquent architectural manifestation.

The Modern Parthenon

Before being canonised as one of the world's most perfect structures, the Parthenon had served

as a Greek temple, a Byzantine as well as a Catholic church, a Muslim mosque, a palace — and intermittently — as a quarry (Fig. 2). Functioning

Figure 1. Re-contextualisation *live* on television: the removal of objects from the former Acropolis Museum to the new structure, Spring, 2009.



as an arsenal under the Ottoman Empire, the relatively intact structure became a virtual ruin during the Venetian fleet's bombardment of the Acropolis fortifications in 1687 when the roof was blown off, several walls fell out and what remained of the structure was left severely damaged.

Characterising the Parthenon as a 'recent discovery', the architectural historian Panayotis Tournikiotis emphasises the fact that neither the temple nor Greek architecture as an empirical reality was embraced by the Renaissance concept of antiquity.² Although Athens was central to the European imagination of antiquity, the city was isolated for centuries by unrest and wars. Until Julien David Le Roy published *Les Ruines des plus beaux Monuments de la Grèce considérées du côté de l'histoire et du côté de l'architecture* (1758), the actual Parthenon was nearly unknown in Europe. The publication of the second volume of James Stuart's and Nicholas Revett's *The Antiquities of Athens measured and delineated by the architect* (1789) made knowledge about the building readily available to European

architects, artists and connoisseurs. The French and British drawings and measurements were crucial for the process, allowing the Parthenon and Athens to meet, as Tournikiotis puts it, contextualising the temple with regard to geography, topography, materials and climate.³ As such, these works anticipated the spectrum of theoretical and architectural approaches applied to the temple — as a building, an idea and an assembly of principles — through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

In 1801, two years after having been appointed the United Kingdom's ambassador to Constantinople, Thomas Bruce, the 7th Lord Elgin, acquired licenses from the Ottoman authorities granting him, his agents, architects and draftsmen access to the Acropolis for the purpose of documenting the site, as well as the right to remove certain loose figures and inscriptions.⁴ The transaction was controversial even then. When Lord Elgin, who had financed his Acropolis adventures from private funds and was ruined by his obsession, proposed to sell his collection to the British Museum, the British Parliament debated the legality of the contracts he had entered into. Accusations of bribery, threats and gross violations of the spirit of the agreement have haunted the collection to this day. On many occasions Lord Elgin justified his engagement as one benefiting the Fine Arts, supporting 'the progress of taste in England' and serving 'the circumstances towards the advancement of literature and the arts'.⁵

And indeed the arguments for bringing the fragments to London were consistent with the pedagogical and scientific programme on which the grand new museums were founded. The affair of the



Figure 2. The Parthenon with mosque, c. 1841: 'Le Parthenon à Athens', engraving by Martens, based on an original daguerreotype by the Parisian optician N. P. Lerebours, originally printed in *Excursions Daguerriennes, représentant les vues et les monuments les plus remarquables du globe* (Paris, 1841–1864). (National Media Museum/SSPL.)

Elgin Marbles is, according to Françoise Choay, emblematic for 'the paradigm of the scientifically and pedagogically motivated process by which the archaeological holdings of the great European museums were constituted — in an era when, notwithstanding the protestations of Quatremère de Quincy, such behaviour seemed legitimate'.⁶ England and France, although they were at war and also fierce competitors in the race to collect antiquities in the Mediterranean area and the

Middle East, nevertheless agreed on the importance of protecting objects from what was regarded as local neglect and ignorance. In sum, this argument makes conservation the justification for confiscation, and it was used on a broad scale to justify morally and ideologically the treasures being brought to Paris as spoils of war and installed in the Louvre.⁷

At a time when the remains of the buildings on the Acropolis were being re-cycled as dispersed

Figure 3. The Acropolis and the Parthenon, c. 1849: albumen print. (National Media Museum/SSPL.)



Figure 4. Stages of ruination: the Parthenon interior mid-eighteenth century; albumen print, c. 1849. (National Media Museum/SSPL.)



building materials in a small and remote city, the British ambassador could defend his fairly comprehensive dismantling of the Parthenon as protecting priceless works of art against barbaric Turkish conduct (Fig. 3). Hegel was one of many early supporters of this argument, paying homage to Elgin in his lectures on the fine arts given in Berlin during the 1820s:

These marvellous memorials of Greek sculpture we owe, as is well known, to the activities of Lord Elgin who, as English ambassador to Turkey, took to England from the Parthenon at Athens, and from other Greek cities, statues and reliefs of supreme beauty. These acquisitions have been signalled and sharply criticised, but in fact what Lord Elgin did was precisely to save these works for Europe and preserve them from complete destruction, and his enterprise deserves recognition through all time.⁸

It is an understatement to say that subsequent opinions on Lord Elgin's noble purpose have been divided. His contribution is often referred to as a

catastrophe on the scale of the 1687 explosion to the extent that 'elginism' has become a synonym for plunder and damage (Fig. 4). When Daniel Libeskind, in his by-now characteristic idiom, proposed for the 2001 museum competition to raise a monument over 'the catastrophes which have befallen the Parthenon' to evoke its 'violent history, rape, dislocation and subsequent fragmentation' he repeated a well-established position.⁹ As early as 1812 harsh objections had been formulated in Britain as well, with a prominent exponent in Lord Byron's contemporary bestseller *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*: 'The last, the worst, dull spoiler, who was he?', the poem asks malignantly, leaving no doubt whatsoever about who had destroyed what even 'Goth, and Turk, and Time hath spared'.¹⁰

Only over the last twenty-five years has the claim for repatriation of the marbles become a national matter between Britain and Greece, although the accusation that the British Parthenon collection is a result of state imperialism is not self-evidently

valid.¹¹ Lord Elgin was a British ambassador, although operating as a private person in his pursuit of the marbles. Claims for repatriation of plundered cultural treasures based on policies of national pride and identification are blurred by the historically unstable concepts of 'nation' and 'home'. When Elgin acquired his collection of marbles, Athens was a backward province in the periphery of the Ottoman Empire. Even though the Elgin marbles unquestionably did belong to the Parthenon temple, the argument for returning a national collection to its home rests on historical projections that are biased towards the construction of an uninterrupted national identity from ancient Athens to modern Greece.

Building an argument

After two architectural competitions during the 1970s had failed to overcome problems of logistics, traffic and archaeology, the Greek Ministry of Culture in 1989 initiated a third competition for a new Acropolis Museum. Even though this third competition for the new Acropolis Museum — won by the Roman architects Lucio Passarelli and Manfredi Nicoletti — was cancelled by the Greek Supreme Court, the 1989 competition programme still deserves some attention. While the programme for the fourth and final competition of 2000 was never published, the text from the previous competition inserted an ideological as well as rhetorical complexity to the significance of place and displacement within a museographical discourse rarely performed by means of architectural competitions. The political and legal implications that in 1989 implicitly aimed at invalidating the various British

arguments for retaining the Elgin Marbles in the British Museum and tendentiously to set aside the thorny question of ownership, perfectly resonates with Bernard Tschumi's winning proposal of 2001 and the completed museum that was inaugurated in Athens on June 20th, 2009.

Article 1 straightforwardly defined the potential museum's objective as securing the best solution for 'the great works of the Acropolis'.¹² The numerous references to 'the Acropolis masterpieces', the 'architectural members and sculptures that have been removed from the Acropolis monuments' and the description of how these shall be 'housed in the Museum after completion of conservation and restoration projects on the same structures' could still be understood as referring to objects in actual Greek possession.¹³ The continuation, however, left no doubt about the character of the collection to be installed in the new museum: 'Furthermore, the envisaged return of the Parthenon pediment marbles (the so-called "Elgin Marbles") necessitates the creation of corresponding areas for their display.'¹⁴

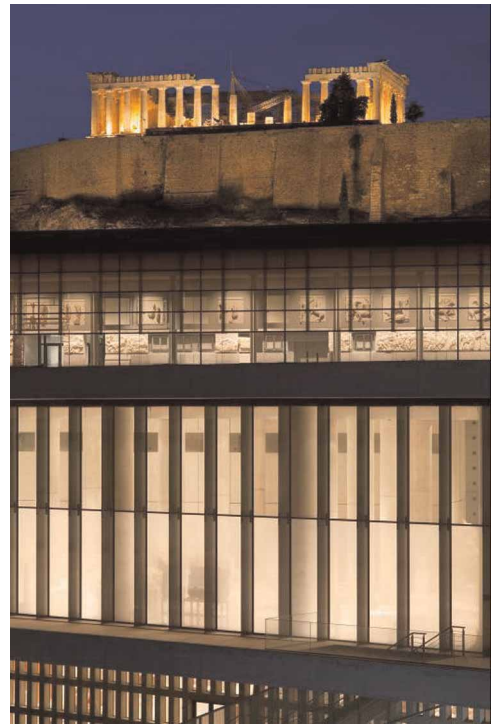
Hidden in a paragraph in the competition programme of 1989 we find, thus, a most striking demand for the return of the Elgin Marbles. A detailed list of chronologically ordered objects that are to be exhibited in the permanent exhibition anticipates the creation of the first complete exhibition of the Parthenon fragments, as a totality: 'Since the repatriation of the original Parthenon sculptures is envisaged, room must be provided to facilitate their display together with the remaining architectural members and sculptures which are found in Greece.'¹⁵ Paragraph H, 'Area for the Exhibition of

Figure 5. The upper-floor glass galleries provide visual contact to the Parthenon. (Courtesy of Bernard Tschumi Architects).

the Parthenon Sculptures', is especially noteworthy, as it establishes the repatriation as a virtual reality: 'It is obvious that when the Parthenon marbles are returned from the British Museum, the unity of the originals will be complete, and the cast exhibition will be dismantled.'¹⁶

A political-legal and museum-historical manifesto in disguise, this competition programme was drafted as if an agreement on repatriation had already been reached. It did, though, reveal traces of doubt, not as to *whether*, but as to *when* the repatriation would take place. Therefore, the 1989 participants were encouraged to evaluate the following alternatives: '(a) The building of a venue to remain empty until such time as the exhibits are returned to Greece. (b) Provision to be made for the extension of the exhibition areas when the marbles are returned.'¹⁷ The latter alternative is of course the more diplomatic approach. Consciously or unconsciously, Bernard Tschumi's winning proposal of 2001 radically echoes the first alternative, in the form of a lavish testimony to the fact that museums are not, and never were, neutral spaces. The fact that museum architecture frames and displays ideals for the exhibited objects and accentuates certain ways to see, conceive and understand what is being displayed has rarely been given more explicit, expressive and polemic expression than in the new Acropolis Museum, whose most conspicuous feature involves the display of a collection which the museum does not possess.

Located 300 metres from the Acropolis, the glass galleries of the upper floor provide visual contact to the Parthenon (Fig. 5). In scale, the top floor repeats the temple, and displays the frieze fragments,



metopes and pediment sculptures in an almost internally correct relationship. The twofold transparency of the architecture indicates which parts have been lost over time, while plaster casts executed with surfaces that are easily distinguished from the originals point to the exiled fragments in London. Loss is accentuated by empty spaces and reproductions that make the absent pieces as spectacularly present as those actually displayed. Thus, the display holds the intriguing duality of being both a

tomb and a vacancy nurturing the expectation of a return of the removed objects.

In effect, this merging of museum architecture and exhibition installation simultaneously exhibits a physical absence and thereby unfolds a politics of identity. 'It's impossible to stand in the top-floor galleries, in full view of the Parthenon's ravaged, sun-bleached frame, without craving the marbles' return', the New York Times's architectural critic Nicolai Ouroussoff exclaimed, exposed to the seductive setting.¹⁸ Even visitors with no special interest in issues of repatriation cannot avoid being touched by the subtle staging of the Greek claim against the British Museum. Fulfilling the demand for 'an enticing and active artistic and cultural venue', the building underscores the judicial connotations of the word 'venue' as a jurisdiction or a location where causes are tried.¹⁹ Finally, the architectural claim for repatriation serves as a reminder of the museum's political dimension and the legal complexities that confront many of the world's finest and best-furnished museums. It offers a clear answer to an utterly complex situation (Fig. 6).

The new Acropolis Museum highlights several aspects of the late eighteenth-century critique of de-contextualisation. Through lighting, scale and framing, Tschumi's potential *re-contextualisation* raises profound issues of historicity, durability and perhaps some form of museum-historical revisionism. If the British collection were to be transferred to Athens, we would for the first time be presented to a new totality: the Parthenon collection. What historical status can be assigned to this — still imaginary — collection? What would then really be on display in the new Acropolis Museum? The



Figure 6. The 'Plague of the Ergastines', fragment from the frieze on the East side of the Parthenon: acquired in 1784 by the Comte de Choiseul-Gouffier, French Ambassador to Constantinople; in the Louvre since 1798.

meaning of the Parthenon fragments known as the Elgin Marbles was altered by their incorporation into the British Museum. What would a new relocation of the marbles signify?

L'abuse des musées

Quatremère de Quincy's discourse on de-contextualisation evolved in response to a specific political and historical situation: the French Italian campaign during the spring and summer of 1796 led by the young general, Napoleon Bonaparte, and the transport of works of art and monuments from Rome to Paris. The systematic confiscation and classification of treasures from the Netherlands, Prussia, Vienna, Italy and Egypt were undertaken in consultation with French art experts who followed the army. The renaming of the 'Muséum Français' as the 'Musée central des arts' in 1797 and again to the 'Musée Napoleon' in 1803 implies the position of the leading French museum during the Republic and later during the Empire. And thanks to what may euphemistically be termed Napoleon's guidance of foreign affairs, ownership of the confiscated artworks was formalised through peace treaties. The confiscated art works were documented

and legitimised under the jurisdiction of the French Republic.

The imaginary 'République des Lettres' and 'République des Arts' promoted by Quatremère and the expanding French Republic both and in different ways ignored territorial boundaries.²⁰ However, Quatremère and the state whose cultural policy he criticised shared a crucial premise: the importance of a paradigmatic capital. For the cosmopolitan Quatremère, this capital was Rome; for France it was, of course, Paris. Quatremère's ideal republic was culturally without boundaries, but not stateless. Art and science were considered the common property of enlightened Europe, and with implicit reference to Napoleon's Italian campaign he declared that only barbarians would confiscate and nationalise a common heritage and negatively influence further developments — for all parties.²¹

Aiming to make Paris the new Rome, the First Republic and its continuation under Napoleon designated the Louvre as an obvious institutional context for the most admired works of art. Imposing processions bore large quantities of looted Italian art to Paris in 1798: 'Horses transported from Corinth to Rome, from Rome to Constantinople, from Constantinople to Venice, and from Venice to France. Finally, they are in a free country', read the text of a banner following the four bronze horses from the San Marco basilica, Venice, which in Roman manner fronted the triumphal procession of wild animals, collections of books and coins, manuscripts, natural curiosia, painting and sculpture borne in tribute to the new capital of Europe.²²

He who removes Rome's art treasures kills 'la poule aux oeufs d'or', Quatremère warns in his

letters to General Miranda.²³ It is, however, not a discourse on origins that motivates the privileges Quatremère bestows on Rome as a city and as an idea: the picture of Rome is painted by a profound historicity, as 'une sorte de mappe-monde en relief', a palimpsest of antiquity and modernity.²⁴ By insisting on Rome as living world history Quatremère invokes a *topos* handed down in French literature. The metaphor of Rome as a world map echoes, almost paraphrases, Joachim du Bellay's beautiful 26th sonnet from *Les Antiquités de Rome* (1558) concluding that 'le plan de Rome est la carte du monde'.

Even though Quatremère does not hesitate to characterise the museum as a space for harassment and mistreatment, an unconcealed museological logic informs his defence of the 'grand muséum qui s'appelle Rome'. This universal museum in situ is geographically and historically inclusive; a total environment of sky and earth, climate, landscape, vernacular buildings, games, mores and costumes.²⁵ In other words, the local particularity of romanticism enforces the city's irreplaceable singularity. An arsenal of metaphors drawn from nature and botany embodies art in a distinct environment, a specific climate and a special purpose. The later *secrétaire perpétuelle* at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris compares art students with seeds and sprouts, art academies with nurseries and greenhouses, and development of the arts with farmers' cultivation and gardeners' embellishment of gardens, parks and landscapes.²⁶

A decontextualised monument will thus, like a rare plant, run the risk of withering away if replanted in alien soil. Only 'la matière' follows a

relocated monument while purpose, immaterial qualities and aesthetic impact are lost, Quatremère claims, with special address to Alexandre Lenoir, director of the Musée des Monuments Français.²⁷ Haphazardly arranged by random, historically specific taxonomies, the museum threatens the objects' authenticity, presents them in an aesthetically alienated mode of observation. Loss of context leads to a loss of cultural meaning: removed from its context, from life and history, art has become 'signes d'honneur sans signification'.²⁸

The voids and the replicas of the Elgin Marbles on Tschumi's top-floor installation nourish themselves on the many antitheses and paradoxes at work in the museum. The rumour of inauthenticity continues to haunt the discourse of museums, Didier Maleuvre observes: 'The idea that museums kill culture forms a universal doxa of modern philosophy.'²⁹ Quatremère's critique of the Louvre is a significant source for this still vivid rumour and for many of the ambivalences that are being exchanged, not least through the metaphorical vocabulary of life and death, captivity and freedom.

Art is dead: 'With his *Aesthetics*, Hegel constructs its tomb', Denis Hollier dramatically stated.³⁰ The assertion evokes the Altes Museum in Berlin, which in contrast to the Palais du Louvre was built for the purpose of exhibiting art. The reciprocity of Hegel's aesthetics and Schinkel's architecture is well established. The Altes Museum's periodically arranged galleries epitomised Hegel's portrayal of art as past history, famously summed up as 'Thought and reflection have spread their wings above fine arts.'³¹ While the Altes Museum may be seen as a monument over a particular aesthetic

system, the same system may be understood as an imaginary museum where the three paradigmatic stages of art are reflected in 'three immense galleries, the first of which was dedicated to the Orient, the second to ancient Greece, and the last to Western Christianity.'³²

If the history of art is regarded as completed, the museum appears as a comprehensive and realistic framework for decontextualised objects. In this perspective, the ordering of former and fulfilled art-historic periods as displayed in the Altes Museum completes the process initiated in the Louvre and observed by Quatremère. By presenting decontextualised highlights from the development of art history to a detached public, the Berlin museum exemplified the process of the museum making objects historic by lifting them out of history — creating history as well as exhibiting the end of history. Understandably, this scenario was as unattractive as absurd for Quatremère: trapped in museums, art could only carry dead knowledge. The process of aesthetising, autonomising and presenting art in apparently neutral rooms, came at a high price. The result is ultimately — an epitaph.³³

Contrary to offering art institutional protection, Quatremère anticipates the metaphorical death so intimately associated with museums. When Le Corbusier declared Pompeii the only museum worthy of the name and described its creation as a 'événement miraculeux', he rephrased an old call for literal death.³⁴ The catastrophe invoked is just a somewhat dramatic expression of an old reciprocity of death and museums, a thousand times repeated, as when Adorno holds that the association of museums and mausolea goes deeper than the

sounds of the words.³⁵ Quatremère's elaboration of the same correlation is however more radical. He promotes museums as 'mausolées sans sépulture' and evokes a graveyard landscape of 'cénotaphes doublement vides' caught in a remarkable oxymoron, as graves no longer animated by death.³⁶

Historically, the process of making art autonomous simultaneously allowed it to support preferred historical developments and political ideals. In the Louvre, the French Republic constructed new genealogies as an effective demonstration of a predetermined fate, as the masterworks on display subsequently became symbols for Napoleon's victories. Quatremère compares this praxis to that of being one's own pallbearer.³⁷ Contrary to the French Revolution's objective of liberating Roman art from Rome — analogous to the view that the Elgin Marbles were finally safe in the British Museum, rescued first from Turkish barbarism and subsequently from Greek neglect — he held that museums transferred art from freedom to captivity. The concept that autonomous art requires institutional protection takes the form of a paradox: the museum becomes a place for the protection of freedom, a leitmotif of the modern museum thoroughly discussed by Didier Maleuvre.³⁸

Against the backdrop of the recurrent comparison of museums as prisons and graveyards, Quatremère's celebration of the Parthenon collection in the British Museum marks a surprising turn. Only two years after the London museum obtained the Parthenon fragments from the ruined Lord Elgin, he praises the good luck that had saved it from its native land, and describes its original site on the Acropolis as, well — a tomb.

The Parthenon in London

In June, 1818, Quatremère wrote seven new letters, this time from London, later collected under the title: 'Lettres écrites de Londres à Rome, et adressées à M. Canova, sur les marbres d'Elgin, ou, Les sculptures du temple de Minerve à Athènes'. The purpose of his London journey was to examine the Elgin Marbles, which were about to be installed in the British Museum after a period of storage in Lord Elgin's backyard. While the letters to Miranda unequivocally condemned the French plundering of Rome, the letters to the sculptor Canova represent an equally unreserved praise of Elgin's transfer of the Parthenon fragments from Athens to London. Luckily, Quatremère writes, the precious remains have been taken away from their paternal soil so that they may serve as tools for learning and models.³⁹

The highly captivating Canova letters were composed by an eyewitness to the collection being installed in London, and are staged as a discussion with yet another contemporary witness: Canova had studied Elgin's Parthenon fragments in London two years earlier. The exchange of letters between the two friends manifests a unique historical documentation of what we today acknowledge as a major reversal of canon. Initially, Quatremère doubts Canova's firm opinion that the ranking of art held by 'several centuries of enlightened taste' is about to be profoundly reassessed.⁴⁰ The relocation of antique monuments from Rome to Paris was bluntly termed as plunder. The dismantling of structures and environments was measured as synonymous with devastation, and the value of decontextualised works was depreciated.

To Quatremère in the 1790s these violences compare to the horrid experience of a Roman monument in London smog, in Parisian rain or in St. Petersburg's freezing cold.⁴¹

One might assume that the same arguments would apply to the British Parthenon collection. Ever since Winckelmann explained the supremacy of Greek art by reference to local conditions (such as system of government and climate) and thus indirectly happened to imply the Achilles' heel of classicism, context was established as paradigmatic: for antiquity also.⁴² One would surmise that Quatremère would consider this equally significant and sacred for Athens as for Rome. As Elgin's people had cut large sections of the structural ornaments to facilitate transport of whole metopes and parts of the frieze, the temple fragments in London were by any measure the result of architectural disintegration. Even so, Quatremère proclaims their new museum context outstanding. Exposed to the Parthenon fragments in the British Museum, Quatremère is perfectly in harmony with the then-expressed ambitions for the Museum: the exhibition of classical art may foster the understanding of the history of art, and otherwise provide ideals and models for contemporary artists.

Quatremère offers several reasons for why the Italian works in Paris and the Elgin Marbles in London cannot be compared: the physical conditions of the objects in situ (the Rome pieces were safe in a living tradition, the Athens pieces were in catastrophic decline); the legal circumstances (Napoleon's imperialistic policies and confiscations violated common legal perceptions and practice, while Elgin had obtained valid approvals from the

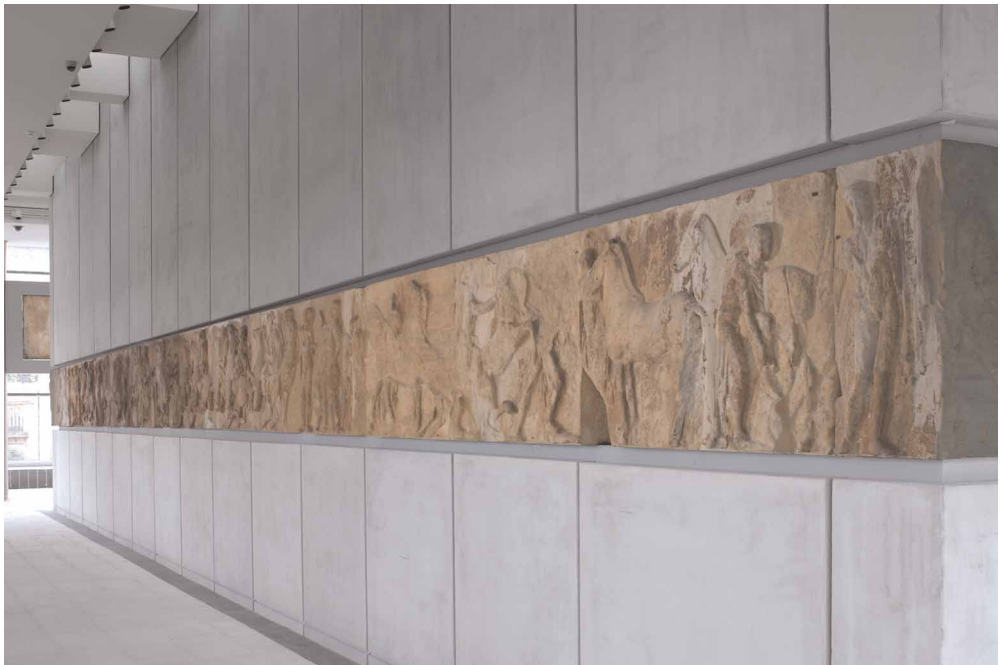
authorities); and finally, access — Rome was accessible, while Athens was a relatively inaccessible periphery.⁴³ 'This self-contextualisation, however, had a more important function than simply to explain apparent contradictions: it emphasised his belief in the necessary connection between all works of art and their context', Sylvia Lavin comments.⁴⁴ These justifications are, however, historically specific and as such also subject to historical change. The firm insistence that the two cases are incomparable does not explain how the British Museum can avoid the lethal logic of the museum, as this was based on contextual and institutional, not political, arguments. Anyhow, Quatremère's reflections on the Parthenon fragments in London represent several intriguing implications in relation to the recontextualisation that is being demanded in contemporary Athens.

When Quatremère praises the collection in the process of finding its form in a room he finds especially beautiful, it is remarkable how he presents the Museum as the preferred location for experiencing art. In fact the current setting is presented as even more attractive than, in this case, the Acropolis:

In a completed building, the individual sculptural object, seen in its place, loses its grandeur; observed in the company of everything surrounding it, it is available from merely one side, in only one rapport: the more the total ensemble has of harmony and proportion, the more the eye and mind are given to generalise and to see the individual part within the totality. Thus, both the idea of the details and the feeling for their painstaking execution is lost.

(Author's translation.)⁴⁵

Figure 7. Tschumi's structure re-contextualises by reconstruction, thus performing a de-contextualisation in the spirit of Quatremère, evoking the lost totality. (Photograph by Nikos Daniilidis.)



Within the framework of the museum the details are visible as parts of a whole work of art in a manner that is unavailable in the total environment he previously declared a necessary precondition for the understanding and appreciation of art (Fig. 7).

This vision was never more strikingly self-evident than in the display of the caryatids in the new Acropolis Museum. Long ago replaced by copies at the front of the Erechtheum temple itself, on the north side of the Acropolis, we used to experience the originals of these breathtaking beauties lined up, side by side, against a wall in the former Acropolis

Museum. In close cooperation with the Museum's curators, Tschumi has installed them architecturally and spatially according to their original relationships on a mezzanine overlooking the new Museum's grand interior stairway. Thus, we are now allowed to circulate around five of these columns shaped as maidens (the sixth and last one is in the British Museum), to inspect them from every angle, to admire their complicated, individually braided hair and to study each singularly designed fold in their dresses. Today, the caryatids appear as if a novelty, exactly because 'both the idea of the details and

the feeling for their painstaking execution' are now on display.

Unperturbed by the contradiction of Rome versus Athens, Quatremère states that the exhibits in the British Museum provide a more genuine understanding than the original building itself could provide, whether intact or as a ruin. Exposed to disintegrated building elements he actually glorifies the qualities and possibilities of the decomposed architecture, adopting a peculiar historicist perspective when he realises that the observer actually experiences himself as a witness truly present at the moment of creation:

Here, on the contrary, you are on the construction site or in the atelier itself, with the objects to hand, appearing in their real dimensions, you walk around them, counting the pieces, combining the relations between them and their dimensions; and your imagination, compelled to contemplate the entire ensemble of works, makes you speechless at the thought of all the labour and expedience invested to fulfil this enterprise, in such a short period and with such a degree of perfection.

(Author's translation.)⁴⁶

In the case of Rome, the removal of art works was considered a destructive neutralisation. Released from the context that they were created in and for, detached from their cultural, political, religious and spiritual purpose they became incomprehensible, inaccessible and ultimately worthless. In London, this perspective evaporated. It exposed the exhibition as a reconstructed representation of the temple's intent and purpose:

In architecture, a fragment of a cornice and an entablature is sufficient to re-establish the totality. Hence, nothing would be easier than to construct, in plaster or masonry, the line of the anterior columns and the tympanum of the Parthenon in a museum, to place below this colonnade a moulded part of the frieze; and to incrust the metopes between the triglyphs, and to fill the tympanum with plaster casts of the statues that once decorated it. In one glimpse one would grasp the spirit and purpose of all these parts as they were once conceived and experienced in the atelier.

(Author's translation.)⁴⁷

This 1818 description of an installation-as-reconstruction is far more fitting for the reconstructive installation created by Tschumi for the Parthenon fragments than for the first installation of the collection in the British Museum. Using scale and light as his main parameters, Tschumi has designed a Museum that exactly re-contextualises by reconstruction. Somehow, the new Acropolis Museum is poised to fulfil Quatremère's London vision of the Greek temple — in Athens!

A possible recontextualisation

The 1989 competition programme for 'The New Acropolis Museum' underlined local character by reference to climate and in particular to light: 'The mild climate and Attic sky, famous for its clarity of crystal-clear "Attic Light", complemented the natural harmony of the area.'⁴⁸ While the argument is cultural, what it sustains is derived from nature. Invocation of the Attic Light places the ambition for the museum within a romantic place-specificity that encompasses architecture's geographical

Figure 8. The upper floor of the new museum carries a topo-mimetic dimension in the repetition of the Parthenon's scale and orientation within an only-marginally displaced setting. (Courtesy of Bernard Tschumi Architects.)



dependency and climatic component, with an important source in Montesquieu's theory of climate as elaborated in *L'Esprit des Lois* (1748).

The 2001 winning proposal for the new Acropolis Museum profoundly emphasised local light conditions as a fundamental guide: 'Its central idea is to allow Attic light to shine on the exhibits, as it did from the time of their creation', Tschumi poetically explained.⁴⁹ The reference to the Attic Light, which almost 2,500 years ago enveloped a structure that was later disassembled into historical 'exhibits', accentuates an a-historical permanence for the otherwise historically charged structure. Copies have long ago replaced the sculptural elements from the Acropolis in order to avoid the effects of air pollution. The recontextualisation rests on a staging of the objects in a setting defined exactly by the natural lighting conditions, not by their exact original positions.

A topo-mimetic dimension is thus unfolding as the structure and the exhibition architecture repeat the temple's original orientation in an only marginally

displaced setting (Fig. 8). The light falling through the Museum's upper-floor galleries will also, via an atrium, illuminate the caryatids from the Erechtheum temple installed on the level below: 'The museum not only begins from a specific collection but must also be pre-eminently a museum of natural light, concerned with the presentation of sculptural objects within it', according to the architect.⁵⁰ Although the Museum must fit onto a plot of land determined by archaeology and traffic, the glass top floor re-establishes the internal relationships between the fragments, and the relationships of the fragments to sun and shade by duplicating the scale and exact orientation of the temple. Tschumi has described this situation as an 'imaginary Parthenon'.

In the Duveen Gallery in the British Museum the Elgin Marbles are exhibited in an inverted fashion, as a complete entity. Both the frieze and the metopes, hung at eye level on the gallery wall, and the pediment sculptures, placed on pedestals along the short walls, are turned towards the room and the visitor. The metopes, all originating from the south wall of the temple, are grouped around the expanded spaces by the short walls. The 25 pieces of the frieze are mounted close together on the long walls, and give no impression whatsoever of their original height, scale and composition, or of the narrative once played out on the complete frieze (Fig. 9). The marble bands are interrupted by doorways and by the arrangement of the metopes and pediment sculptures, and homogeneous artificial light casts no shadows. The British Museum exhibits a collection of autonomous artworks, relieved of their initial architectonic purpose and definition (Fig. 10).

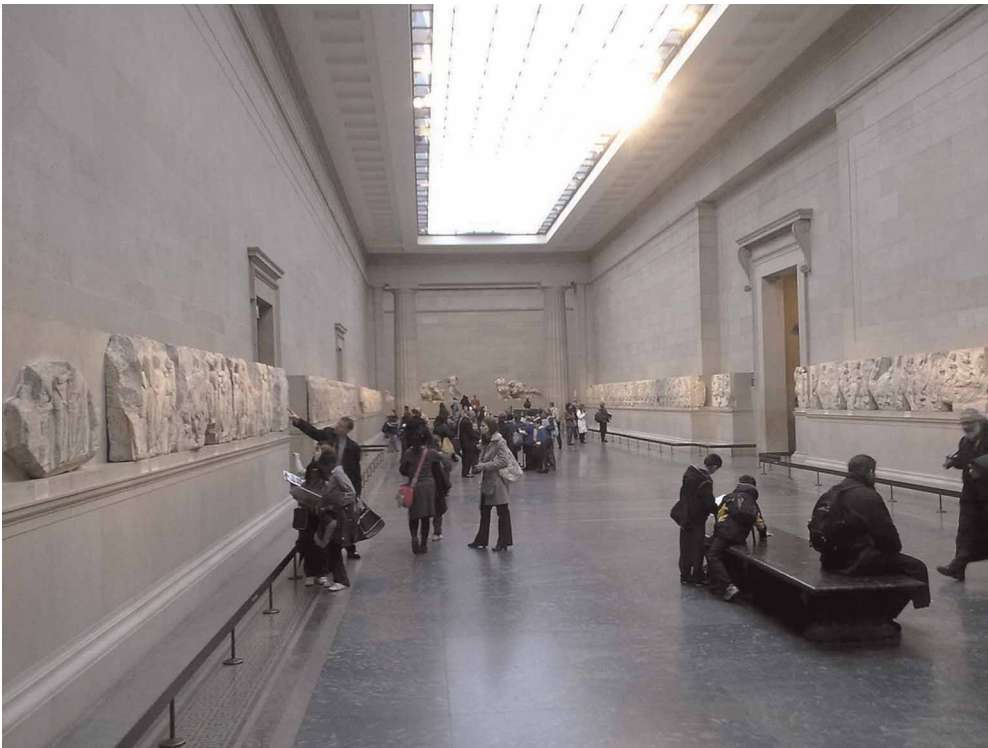


Figure 9. The Parthenon frieze as mounted in the Duveen Gallery, British Museum.

In complete contrast, a mimetic impulse is at work in Tschumi's design for the 'complete' (but still hypothetical) Parthenon collection: by stipulating the Attic light in its most literal sense as the Museum's central theme, the architect has thus given himself a tool to recreate the temple exterior. Originally, the frieze always remained in shade. 12 metres above ground, it was hidden behind the columns carrying the metopes, and only indirectly lit by reflected sunlight from the marble wall

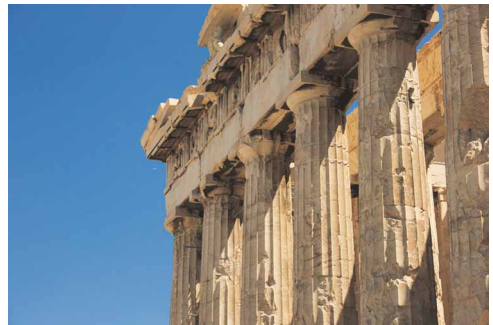
below. The metopes and the large sculptures on the East and West pediments were exposed to direct sunlight, which would change dramatically throughout the day. Deep reliefs both in the frieze and metopes gave rise to marked shadows (Fig. 11).

While one side of the building was exposed to direct sunlight, the opposite side would be in the shade, and those encircling the temple were exposed to dramatic shifts from light to shadow to dark, as can still be experienced by the vertical

Figure 10. Iris, from the West Pediment, presented as an autonomous piece of art in the Duveen Gallery, British Museum.

Figure 11. The position of the sun changes the Parthenon radically through the day.

Figure 12. The transparent arrangement blurs the borders between exhibited architecture and exhibition architecture. (Courtesy of Bernard Tschumi Architects.)



black-and-white contrasts created by the columns' fluting. Through simplicity and employment of only a few materials, the new Museum repeats some of the temple's qualities — architectonically also by the ramps connecting the various levels of the Museum recreating the experience of ascending the Acropolis. The use of light offers an opportunity to re-experience the materiality of the temple.

The transparent arrangement operates on the borderline between exhibited architecture and

exhibition architecture (Fig. 12). By being placed in accordance with their original internal relationships the temple fragments regain, to a large extent, their initial spatiality. Quatremère described vividly how the experience of a complete building tends to generalise details with the effect that they get lost in the totality. The reconstruction of the temple's dimensions in the new Acropolis Museum, however, allows each element to be studied in detail while our imagination may grasp

the lost totality — and possibly gain insight into the effort required to attain the original construction's perfection. Thus, Tschumi's announcement reads not only as an echo, but as a realisation of a perspective formulated almost two hundred years ago: 'The orientation of the Marbles will be exactly as it was at the Parthenon centuries ago, and their setting will provide an unprecedented context for understanding the accomplishments of the Parthenon complex itself.'⁵¹

There are numerous examples of reconstructed buildings that consist of original and copied elements in varying proportions. It is highly unlikely that Quatremère would have recommended a radical reconstruction, and inconceivable that Tschumi for a second would have contemplated anything comparable. What Tschumi achieves by reconstructing scale and orientation is to enable a recontextualisation by means of the two elements common to the original and the contemporary context: dimension and light. Hence, the new Museum has become an historically reflective but non-historicist comment on the history of the Parthenon.

Absence on display

In 2002, confronting the inescapable reality of a new Acropolis Museum, the British Parliament debated a proposed law (bill) on the repatriation of the Elgin Marbles. The debate was heated. 'The Parthenon cannot come to the marbles. They, therefore, should go back to the Parthenon', argued Edward O'Hara, the Member of Parliament (MP) who sponsored the bill.⁵² In spite of this utterly controversial position — implying that the

sculptures might be mounted outdoors on the temple ruins — the evocation of context is easily comprehensible. The original context of the Parthenon sculptures was unquestionably the Parthenon, on the Acropolis, in Athens, the city that became the capital of the national state of Greece. Not surprisingly, the proposal met resistance, and the disagreement also revolved around what context would be appropriate for the Elgin Marbles. According to another MP, the scenario evoked represented nothing less than a disastrous 'iconoclastic de-contextualisation' that 'would open a Pandora's box.'⁵³

The British Parthenon fragments undoubtedly hold a special position among the many demands for repatriation of works of art that are currently being advanced worldwide. 'In the case of the Elgin Marbles, there is but one authority, namely the Elgin Marbles', it has been said.⁵⁴ Pandora's Box or not, the repatriated Elgin Marbles would most certainly establish a precedent and very likely become a point of reference for repatriation claims upon Western museums. Although the invocation of an iconoclasm may sound shrill, it is fully conceivable that a consistent, thoroughgoing policy of repatriating prominent archaeological collections and antique art would entail a winding-down of the institution of the grand western museums, as we know them today. It may appear counterintuitive to apply the term 'decontextualisation' to describe a potential transfer of the Parthenon sculptures from London to Athens. However, the MP's warning leaves no doubt about what he considers the Elgin Marble's only possible context: in the course of two hundred years the collection has become 'an

integral part of the British Museum's heritage and are intrinsic to its identity.⁵⁵

In contemporary culture the Louvre appears more as a monument to the modern public museum than a symbol of the French Revolution, the Republic and Napoleon's rise and fall. It presents itself as an historically naturalised habitat for the works it houses. The Mona Lisa today connotes the Louvre, and vice versa. 'One has only to think of [Jules] Michelet's despair in the Louvre when the allies of 1815 repatriated the plundered works of art. Could the Victory of Samothrace be moved from the Louvre today?' the philosopher Jean-Louis Déotte asks.⁵⁶ Quatremère, for his part, had seen the Laocoon and the Apollo Belvedere in the Vatican in his youth, and regarded their installation in Paris as the result of a barbaric swindle.

Contexts change; that is one among many insights derived from museum history. The absolute and existential determination of context that constituted the basis for Quatremère's early critique of decontextualisation was formed at the time when the modern museum was an historic novelty. Since then, museums have become depositories for art history and a privileged place to show and store historic art, 'its very landscape, its light, geography and history have become an intrinsic part of the Museum', as Déotte puts it.⁵⁷ In this respect, the claims for recontextualisation rest upon a series of dilemmas.

The original sites of the de-contextualised works of art have also been subject to change. By various interventions and restoration strategies temples, churches, castles and squares have been assigned new historic value and determination. Similarly, the

works of art that once belonged to them have been redefined as historic objects. Playing Bach on original instruments does not change the fact that the listener of today has other references, Didier Maleuvre reminds us: 'The idea that art and its original context can be restored and de-esthetised instills the notion that the work of art inhabited its time and space immediately, like a tree in the forest.'⁵⁸

As the world outside the museum has changed, the art in the museum has been recharged with a different and new historicity, independent of the context in which and for which the works were created. Quatremère's repeated warnings that the intent and purpose of decontextualised works of art and architecture would change by incorporation into the epistemologies of museums have thus proved correct, dramatically and irreversibly. The museums invested art with new references, new identities and new genealogies. Both the Greek and the British Parthenon fragments are irrevocably caught in a museum discourse and cannot revert to their original state of innocence.

The fate of the Parthenon fragments and the concept of an 'imaginary Parthenon' exemplify not only how museums assign to art an historic character and flair by conservation and curatorial practices, but also the degree to which they create history. Should the new Acropolis Museum succeed in its ambition to take over the part of the Parthenon fragments currently situated in London and thus create a complete 'Parthenon collection', the event would be historic. This imagined event would not mark the re-establishment of a dissociated whole, but the presentation of a novelty. The last time

these objects were in ensemble, they were elements in a building in decay. They were not yet inscribed in a discourse of aesthetics and not defined as autonomous works of art.

Should the 'Parthenon collection' become a reality: to what extent would it, by virtue of its new status, erase the Elgin Marbles' particular historicity? Would a repatriation imply a dehistoricisation of the British collection and undo the trajectory of events associated with these objects from the time when they were dismantled, collected, transported from Athens to London (some of the fragments were even recovered from the seabed after a shipwreck), and later the various strategies for conservation, the most definitive being the scandalous chemical cleansing performed in the British Museum in the 1930s? The part of the Parthenon fragments named after a British Lord is among the most exquisite of European museum collections, and the sculptures have influenced British and European art, probably more than would have been the case had they remained in Athens.

The collection has lived through various, time-typical exhibition architectures. Praised and condemned, studied and interpreted, it represents a very special part of British and European museum history — and belongs to the history of British imperialism as well. Just as the Nike of Samothrace today seems inseparable from the Louvre, the fame of the Elgin Marbles is irrevocably associated with the British Museum. The social, ritual, religious and functional context of the Parthenon temple has changed several times. The statues in London have — *off situ* — played a decisive rôle in the process that made the temple on the Acropolis one of the most paradigmatic buildings in the world.

The radical disintegration of the architectonic structure in 1687 facilitated new integrations, among them the constitution of the collection named the Elgin Marbles. Whether the Greek and the British Parthenon collections remain separated or are merged into one new collection, the histories associated with the separate objects can of course never be erased, nor can their impact be undone. As aesthetic objects they are contaminated by the museum and can be neither de-historicised nor de-aestheticised, or as Didier Maleuvre aptly states: 'The relation of the statue to its cultural origin stands out more clearly as a *reflective* connection, rather than a *natural* one, when it is actually taken up in discourse (the only place where, in fact, relation exists).'⁵⁹

The Louvre has given up its status as an universal museum, an event that in 2006 resulted in a new monument: the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris. The British Museum still holds onto its rôle and function as universal: 'Because the Parthenon is now a ruin the best use that the world can make of these sculptures is for them to be here in England in the context of other great art works.'⁶⁰ The Acropolis Museum counters the British rhetoric on universalism by emphasising the new museum's importance as being 'the first rank, not only for Greece but for the entire International Community.'⁶¹

In 1829, in the summer prior to the official inauguration of the Altes Museum in Berlin, the empty building was presented to the public as a work of art in its own right. This was an emblematic moment, bestowing autonomy for the museum as a new architectural typology. This display of emptiness designates a fertile historical context for the

new museum in Athens. On the one hand it demonstrates the museum's institutional and historical self-reflection; on the other hand it highlights the effective rhetoric of absence that is now exceptionally set on display.

The new Acropolis Museum will remain a permanent reminder of the claim against the British Museum, whether its political ambition is fulfilled or not. A grand though subtle way of answering this persuasive manifestation of absence unfolding in Athens would, of course, be for the British to dismantle their Parthenon collection, return the marbles and leave the Duveen Gallery empty; a museographical gesture that would recapture the momentum which is now manifested physically under the Acropolis. In the meantime, a solution to the question of repatriation might be considered less important than the reformulation of the question — as presented by Tschumi's new building in Athens. The Acropolis Museum is a museo-historical document and a monument, a mesmerising reflection on the history and future of the museum.

Notes and references

1. Quatremère de Quincy, *Considérations morales sur la destination des ouvrages de l'art, suivi de Lettres sur l'enlèvement des ouvrages de l'art antique à Athen et à Rome* (Paris, 1836; Paris, Fayard, 1989).
2. Panayotis Tournikiotis, 'The Place of the Parthenon in the History and Theory of Modern Architecture', in, Tournikiotis, ed., *The Parthenon and its Impact on Modern Times* (Athens, Melissa Publishing House, 1994), p.202.
3. *Ibid.*
4. This license, which survives only in Italian translation, did not confer the right to dismantle integrated sculptures. William St. Clair discusses the legal circumstances of Lord Elgin's appropriation and the British Museum's acquisition in *Lord Elgin and the Marbles. The Controversial History of the Parthenon Marbles* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998), especially p.86 ff. and p.245 ff. For a discussion of the contemporary law of repatriation, *cfr.* Irini. A. Stamatoudi, 'Legal issues associated with the return of the Parthenon Marbles', in *The Parthenon. The Repatriation of the Sculptures. Historical, Cultural and Legal Aspects* (Athens, I. Sideris, 2004).
5. The Mediterranean was at the time a war zone. Asking the British Navy to ship a cargo of sculptures safely to England, Lord Elgin assures the captain that he will be doing 'a very essential service to the Arts in England': quoted after St. Clair, *op. cit.*, p.100.
6. Françoise Choay, *The invention of the Modern Monument* (1992; Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.59.
7. 'If the rapports are to be believed, so poor was the condition of certain paintings in their original settings that without French intervention they would have deteriorated past the point of repair', Andrew McClellan states, referring to French reports documenting the status and damages of confiscated Flemish art; McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre. Art, Politics, and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1999), p.132f.
8. George Frederick Hegel, *Aesthetics. Lectures on Fine Arts*, vol. II, trs., T.M.Knox (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975), p.724.
9. Daniel Libeskind, 'New Acropolis Museum', *Architecture in Greece*, 36(2002), p.164. 'Elgin's shameful rape of the monument' is, *eg.*, discussed in the Greek

archaeologist Charalambos Bouras' 'Restoration Work on the Parthenon and Changing Attitudes towards the Conservation of Monuments. A Theoretical Contribution to Restoration Work Today', in, Tournikiotis, ed., *op.cit.*, p.319.

10. Lord Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, II, XII (New York, Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., 1888).
11. The first formal claim was set forth by the Greek Minister of Culture Melina Merkouri in 1983. Yannis Hamilakis discusses the rôle of the public and the press in 'Stories from Exile: Fragments from the Cultural Biography of the Parthenon (or "Elgin") Marbles', *World Archaeology*, vol 31, issue 2, pp.303–320.
12. 'The New Acropolis Museum. International Competition.' (Athens, Ministry of Culture, Directorate of Museum Studies, 1989), p.11.
13. *Ibid.*, p.21f.
14. *Ibid.*, p.23.
15. *Ibid.*, p.49.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. Nicolai Ouroussoff, 'Where Gods Yearn for Long-Lost Treasures', *The New York Times*, October 28th, 2007.
19. 'The New Acropolis Museum. International Competition.', *op. cit.*, p.21.
20. 'La République des Arts' belongs to Quatremère's 'most significant and revealing inventions', according to Sylvia Lavin, who has given the most illuminating discussion of the institutional and political preconditions of his theories on art and society. *Cfr.* Lavin, *Quatremère de Quincy and the Invention of a Modern Language of Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass., The MIT Press, 1992), especially chapter 4.
21. 'La propagation des lumières a rendu ce grand service à l'Europe, qu'il n'y a plus de nation qui puisse recevoir d'une autre l'humiliation du nom de barbare [...] les arts et les sciences appartiennent à toute l'Europe, et ne sont plus la propriété exclusive d'une nation. [...] Toutes les nations sont tellement en contact l'une avec l'autre, qu'il ne peut s'opérer dans l'une aucun effet, qui ne réagisse promptement sur toutes les autres.'; Quatremère, *Considérations morales...*, 'Première lettre' (to Miranda), *op.cit.*, p.191f.
22. Patricia Mainardi, 'Assuring the Empire of the Future: The 1798 Fête de la Liberté', *Art Journal*, vol. 48, no. 2 (1989), p.158.
23. Quatremère, 'Deuxième lettre' (to Miranda), *op.cit.*, p.200.
24. Quatremère, 'Septième lettre' (to Miranda), *op.cit.*, p.242.
25. Quatremère, 'Troisième lettre' (to Miranda), *op.cit.*, p.207.
26. 'Qu'on élève dans les pépinières des germes choisis, qu'on les cultive avec plus de soin, qu'on les acclimate, je trouve là l'image des institution scholastiques propres à seconder la nature; j'approuve les soins de l'agriculteur, pourvu que de là sortent des élèves qui aillent enrichir nos campagnes, orner nos jardins, embellir nos payages. Tel doit être l'effet des séminaires de l'Art. Que si leurs produits devaient être regardés comme ces plantes exotiques et curieuses qu'on n'ose livrer aux influences de l'air, certes, le soin qu'il en faudrait prendre serait la meilleure de toutes les raisons pour n'en prendre aucun.'; Quatremère, *'Considérations morales...'* (1989), *op. cit.*, p.46.
27. 'Qui, vous y en avez transporté la matière; mais avez-vous pu transporter avec eux ce cortège de sensations tendres, profondes, mélancoliques, sublimes ou touchantes, qui les environnait.', *ibid.*, p.48.
28. *Ibid.*, p.55.
29. Maleuvre, *Museum Memoirs. History, Technology, Art* (California, Stanford University Press, 1999), p.20.
30. Denis Hollier, *Against Architecture. The Writings of Georges Bataille* (1974; Cambridge, Mass., The MIT Press, 1992), p.6.

31. Hegel, *op.cit.*, vol I, p.10.
32. Beat Wyss, *Hegel's Art History and the Critique of Modernity* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.2. For a discussion of the contemporary philosophical deliberations concerning the Altes Museum, see Douglas Crimp, 'The End of Art and the Origin of the Museum', *The Art Journal*, vol. 46, 4 (New York, 1987).
33. 'Déplacer tous les monuments, en recueillir ainsi les fragmens décomposés, en classer méthodiquement les débris, et faire d'une telle réunion un cours pratique de chronologie moderne; c'est pour une raison existante, se constituer en état de nation morte; c'est de son vivant assister à ses funérailles; c'est tuer l'Art pour en faire l'histoire; ce n'est point en faire l'histoire, mais l'épithaphe.' Quatremère, *Considérations morales...*, *op. cit.*, p.48.
34. Le Corbusier, 'Autres Icones. Les Musées', in *L'art décoratif d'aujourd'hui* (1925; Paris, Les éditions Arthaud, 1980), p.17.
35. Adorno, 'Valéry Proust Museum' (1953), in *Prisms* (Cambridge, Mass., The MIT Press, 1982).
36. Museums are 'mausolées sans sépulture, ces cénotaphes doublement vides, ces tombeaux que la mort n'anime plus.' Quatremère, *Considérations morales...*, *op. cit.*, p.48.
37. 'se constituer en état de nation morte; c'est de son vivant assister à ses funérailles.' *ibid.*
38. Maleuvre, *op.cit.*, especially chapter 1, 'Museum Times'.
39. 'Quel heureux destin, en veillant à la conservation de ces précieux restes, a pu les faire sortir de leur terre natale, devenue en quelque sorte leur tombeau, et les transporter en Europe, pour servir encore une fois de leçon et de modèle au goût des artistes, aux entreprises de l'art?' Quatremère, *Considérations morales...*, 'Deuxième Lettre' (to Canova), *op. cit.*, p.110.
40. 'L'antiquité, malgré tout ce qui en est perdu (et ce sont ses plus beaux ouvrages), nous a transmis tant d' excellens morceaux, entre lesquels le goût éclairé de plusieurs siècles a établi les rangs, que j'eus peine à croire, qu'une semblable échelle pût être dérangée par les objets dont vous me parliez.' Quatremère, 'Première lettre' (to Canova), *op. cit.*, p.97.
41. Quatremère, 'Cinquième lettre' (to Miranda), *op.cit.*, s. 221. Climatic conditions were of frequent concern in the history of the Elgin Marbles. During an 1840 hearing in the British Parliament on the noticeable worsening of the sculptures, an English art expert testified that the 'atmosphere in London is loaded with smoke from coal, which has a certain quantity of foil mixed with it; it clings to the objects, and it is almost impossible to keep it off; the very process of cleansing them almost makes matters worse, because it gives the dirt a polish'. Quoted after R.H. Marijnissen, *The Case of the Elgin Marbles* (Ghent, Ludion, 2002), p.10.
42. 'Die Ursache und der Grund von dem Vorzuge, welchen die Kunst unter den Griechen erlanget hat, ist theils dem Einflusse des Himmels, theils der Verfassung und Regierung, und der dadurch gebildeten Denkungsart, wie nicht weniger der Achtung der Künstler und dem Gebrauche und der Anwendung der Kunst unter den Griechen, zuzuschreiben.' Winckelmann, *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (2002), in *Schriften und Nachlaß*, Vol. 4, 1 (Mainz am Rhein, Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1996-), p.212.
43. Quatremère, 'Avant-propos', *Considérations morales...*, *op. cit.*, p.90 f.
44. Lavin, *op.cit.*, p.152.
45. 'Dans un édifice terminé, chaque objet de sculpture, vu sa place, perd de sa grandeur; considéré en compagnie avec tout ce qui l'accompagne, il ne se laisse examiner que d'un côté, que sous un rapport: plus l'ensemble a d'accord et de proportions, plus l'oeil et l'esprit sont

portés à généraliser, et à voir chaque partie dans le tout. Alors disparaissent, et l'idée des détails, et le sentiment des longueurs, ainsi que des difficultés du travail.' Quatremère, *Considérations morales...*, 'Troisième lettre' (to Canova), *op.cit.*, p.122.

46. 'Ici, au contraire, vous êtes sur le chantier ou dans l'atelier même, vous avez la main sur les objets, ils vous apparaissent dans leur dimension réelle, vous tournez autour de chacun, vous dénombrez les morceaux, vous en combinez les rapports et les mesures; et votre imagination, forcée de se reporter sur l'ensemble qui avait réuni tant d'ouvrages, vous restez confondu par la pensée de tout ce qu'il a fallu de travail et de célérité d'exécution, pour conduire à sa fin, en si peu de temps et avec une si grande perfection, une telle entreprise.' : *ibid.*
47. 'En architecture, il suffit d'un fragment de corniche et d'entablement, pour en rétablir la totalité. Rien ne seroit donc plus facile que de construire au bout en Muséum, en plâtre ou en maçonnerie, la ligne des colonnes antérieures de Parthenon avec son fronton, de placer, sous cette rangée de colonnes, une portion moulée de la frise; d'incruster, entre les triglyphes, les plâtres des métopes, et de remplir le tympan du fronton, de plâtres des statues qui l'ornoi-ent jadis. On verroit ainsi d'un seul coup d'oeil tous ces morceaux, tels qu'on les vit dans l'atelier, et tels qu'ils furent vus selon l'esprit, et selon le voeu de leur destination.' : Quatremère, *Considérations morales...*, 'Deuxième lettre' (to Canova), *op. cit.*, p.104.
48. 'The New Acropolis Museum. International Competition', *op. cit.*, s. 23.
49. Tschumi, 'New Acropolis Museum', *Architecture in Greece*, 36 (2002), p.160.
50. Tschumi, 'New Acropolis Museum, Athens, Greece', *GA document*, nr. 79 (May, 2004), p.66.
51. *Ibid.*
52. The debate of May 5th, 2002, is referred at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk>. O'Hara's speech is referred to in column 774.
53. Tim Loughton, Member of Parliament, *ibid.*, column 777.
54. Marijnissen, *op.cit.*, p.28.
55. Loughton, *op. cit.*
56. Jean-Louis Déotte, 'Rome, the archetypal museum, and the Louvre, the Negation of Division', in, Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago, eds, *Grasping the World. The Idea of the Museum* (Aldershot, Aschgate, 2004), p.57.
57. *Ibid.*
58. Maleuvre, *op.cit.*, p.74.
59. *Ibid.*, p.27.
60. Neil MacGregor, Director of the British Museum, BBC News, January 2nd, 2003.
61. 'The New Acropolis Museum. International Competition', *op. cit.*, p.23.