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(Un)fixing Aloula

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CHRIS FRENCH AND MARIA MITSOULA

INTERSTICES 21

(Un)Fixing Aloula: Maps, images and paradigms of The Attic (Marble) Landscape

What follows is a narration (textual and visual) of an encounter with the Open Air Museum of Quarrying Arts in Aloula, Dionysos, on Mount Pentelicon. Aloula is a “repair-scape”, site of a former marble quarry that was “fixed” in 1997 following decades of abandonment. Our narration, through Aloula, aims to un-fix historic (sentimental) representations of Mount Pentelicon, the most celebrated marble mountain in Attica. It explores drawn and written accounts of the mountain, and offers a critique of these accounts as representational instruments. Through Vilém Flusser’s acute observation in *Natural: Mind* that the relationship between the landscape and map has inverted—where the landscape once guided the map, now the map guides landscape—we posit that this inversion of map (image) and landscape is challenged when seeing Aloula, both as a “concrete” site in the world, and through a collection of panoramic representations of Aloula exhibited at the Fondation Hellenique, Paris. As an example of a particular type of repair, Aloula offers new ways to conceive of the “repair-scape” (Lepawsky, Liboiron, Keeling and Mather) as a site of un-fixing and subsequently re-making our understandings of city-landscape relations. Aloula becomes a reciprocal landscape (Hutton, 2019) in dialogue with the city of Athens.

Throughout we refer to an interview conducted in July 2021 with the designers of Aloula, urban landscape sculptor Nella Golanda and architect Aspasia Kouzoupi, to offer their recollections and reflections on making Aloula, almost 25 years after completion. Their voices and views, that of the sculptor (once an engraver), and that of the architect (having also studied Fine Arts), are sometimes different, sometimes complementary. They developed the project together, mother and daughter. Our parallel narration, through text, image and conversation, seeks to present this specific repair-scape as a paradigm of sympoësis, a paradigm that embodies a complex making-with—a making-with people, with material and matter, and with the earth—that approaches the question of “fixing” through specific, situated eyes.

Seeing Aloula. An encounter, June 2018

At the end of Leoforos Pentelis, winding through northern Athens, Mount Pentelicon rises slowly into view from behind ever-expanding suburban

developments. Pentelicon (or Vrilisos in classic literature), Parnitha, Hymettos and Aigaleo frame the triangular peninsula of Attica: the rocky (limestone) Mount Aigaleo to the west; the densely forested Mount Parnitha to the north (the tallest of the four mountains); Mount Pentelicon to the northeast; and Mount Hymettos to the east. To the south, Attica stretches towards the Saronic Gulf. The mountains embrace Athens, spreading southwest to the port of Piraeus, and separate the city from the plains and valleys to the north. Creeping through the traffic leaving the dense *polykatoikies* of Chalandri for the offices and hospitals of Marousi, and passing through the low-rise villas of Vrilissia, we move toward the mountain, eventually leaving the sprawling city to continue its own inexorable climb up the foothills of Melissa and Nea Penteli. We rise up Dionisou. Turning east toward Nea Makri and Marathon, we follow the dusty road twisting over the dry, south-facing slopes of the mountain before turning west—a sharp turn marked by the aptly named Panorama Coffee—into valleys hidden from Athens’ view by the mountain, and descend toward the suburb of Dionysos, nestled in a valley on the north slope of Mount Pentelicon. It is early June 2018, and already hot. We park an exhausted Fiat 500 (“Urban White”, now sporting a distinctly non-urban “Dust Brown” coat) on a street of villas, and set off south, on foot, up a loosely compacted stone road into the hills. The forest of pine, spruce and fir trees provides some shade, for a time, before we emerge into a clearing in a stone cutting: the entrance to Aloula, the Open Air Museum of Quarrying Arts set within an abandoned marble quarry. A large chunk of white marble stands in front of a fixed-up ruin in greeting.

Fig. 1 Nella Golanda and Aspasia Kouzoupi (1997). Open Air Museum of Quarry Arts, Aloula, Mount Pentelicon. Restored Houses for Seasonal Workers. [Photo: Maria Mitsoula, 2018]





Fig. 2 Golanda and Kouzoupi (1997).
Aloula, Mount Pentelicon. Scree
Slopes and Stone "Turtles". [Photo:
Maria Mitsoula, 2018]



Fig. 3 Golanda and Kouzoupi (1997). Aloula, Mount Pentelicon. Sculpted Faces, New Walls and Staircases. [Photo: Maria Mitsoula, 2018]

Fig. 4 Golanda and Kouzoupi (1997). Aloula, Mount Pentelicon. The “Inverted Turtle”. [Photo: Maria Mitsoula, 2018]



Making Aloula

Accounts of modern quarrying operations in Aloula vary. Some sources state that most of the quarrying operations were conducted by an English company, who continued to extract marble until 1948 when the rights to quarry were purchased by the Greek company Marmor Ltd (who became Dionyssomarble S.A.). This company continued to quarry marble here until 1986. Others describe the quarry closing in 1940 following Greece's entry into World War II. In either case, the quarry, which was named after a contractor who worked in the area, provided stone slabs for pavements in the streets of Athens and dressing squares in London, and smaller blocks of marble for forming the sinks and other everyday objects which adorned the Neoclassical houses of Athens. In 1994, the company Dionyssomarble S.A., which still operates quarries on the northeast slopes of Mount Pentelicon, commissioned sculptor Nella Golanda and architect Aspasia Kouzoupi to turn the marble rubble left behind from the quarrying operations into an Open Air Museum of Quarrying Arts. The project to re-occupy Aloula was completed in 1997, covering an area of 33 acres.



Fig. 5 Golanda and Kouzoupi, with Johanna Weber (2007). Panoramas of *Dionyssos Quarries: Open Air Museum of Ancient Quarrying Arts*. [Courtesy of the archive of Sculpted Architectural Landscapes: N. Golanda + A. Kouzoupi and Johanna Weber]

Amongst the maze of ruined buildings and marble debris left on the site, Golanda and Kouzoupi exposed the remains of a long chute (used to move cubes of quarried stone from the hillside to the railway station in Dionyssos below, for transportation to Athens), inserted new pathways, and added stairs climbing the mountain, culminating in a “belvedere” looking to Marathon. The project, in its simplest form, could be described as an invitation to walk. Through walking, one finds the successive levels and networks of trails which extend to a raised plateau, and connect with a pilgrimage route to the Monastery and Church of Saint Panteleimon at the summit. But on the ground, nothing is so clear. The project follows the natural contouring of the mountain as much as the paths of the quarrymen, abandoned and subsequently uncovered, and disappears into both the

undergrowth and the exposed stone surface of the abandoned quarry. Curated collections of stones merge with scree, the constructed augmenting the “natural” landscape. In the abandoned quarry Golanda and Kouzoupi describe, the “natural and artificial [...] harmoniously composed a kind of code that we chose to read and reinforce [...] part of the becoming-landscape” of Aloula (N. Golanda and A. Kouzoupi, personal communication, July 21, 2021). Through sketches, they sought to decode the mountain itself, in its entirety, the sculpted faces (exposed by traditional methods of quarrying based on careful readings of the fissures in the material), and those “*damaged areas*” where the brute force of the machine (introduced in the last decade before the permanent closure of the quarries) left a different kind of mark on the landscape, less respectful of the complex structures of marble. Shaped by the lines of geological faults and exploited by the quarrymen, the sculpted faces became “the boundary between the mountain and the sky” (N. Golanda and A. Kouzoupi, personal communication July 21, 2021). Against the order of these cut faces “the hills that were formed from fragmented material [created], with their presence, a sense of disorder in the landscape”. (Belogianni-Argyropoulou, 2004: 40). Golanda and Kouzoupi set about rearranging marble stones to support both, the found order and manufactured disorder of this landscape, adding another interpretative layer to that of geology and production in the reading of the landscape.

In the entrance “square” on arrival, low retaining walls establish open enclosures, securing the loose scree slopes above and protecting visitors from falling stone. More loose stone is gathered within and around the fixed-up ruins and at the base of the “scree” slopes further up the mountainside. Large boulders, unearthed by quarrying, have been relocated using traditional means to form keystones in new walls and staircases. The sculptor and architect emphasise that no machinery was involved in turning this unorganised waste marble into organised scattered matter; the project was realised “entirely by hand” (Golanda and Kouzoupi, 2003: 92). They envisaged the project as one of labour, a working-with landscape in which “the sheer effort of quarrying by traditional methods was apparent” (Golanda, 1997: 60). They worked with the stone themselves, and with five experienced quarrymen—Niko Gemeriali, Thoma Tsantoli, Emmanouil Louki, Antonio Panorio and Yiorgo Kritiko—who had worked in the area when the quarries were active and had a special relationship with, and deep understanding of, this landscape. Kouzoupi stresses the collaborative aspect of the project and the importance of following “the limitations, perceptions and abilities of others” (N. Golanda and A. Kouzoupi, personal communication, July 21, 2021). The quarrymen knew how to handle and make-with the material, and the project became a “*learning process*” for Kouzoupi and Golanda, discovering what the quarrymen could do, the techniques they used (which, significantly, differed from those of stonemasons), and for the quarrymen, shifting their attention from the extraction of material to its reconfiguration. Together, the quarrymen, Golanda and Kouzoupi spent three years on site, slowly developing a verbal and gestural code for communicating their careful makings on Aloula. Construction was slow. Golanda and Kouzoupi would visit every few months to review stone hills and slopes specified previously. They describe these slopes—constructed by turning over individual stones to find the smoothest surface for walking on—as *chelónes*, “turtles”, a shorthand developed to delegate agency to the quarrymen. “From here to here, a big turtle,” was an atypical architect’s instruction (N. Golanda and A. Kouzoupi, personal communication, July 21,

2021). The ruined buildings in the upper part of the site—houses hosting eight to 15 migratory workers from the Greek archipelago for up to nine months of the year—were fixed using the same techniques as the traditional constructions on the Aegean islands on which the quarrymen lived: dry stone structures, no mud or mortar. The project involved both a making-with material and a making-with others, other people and other places.

In this making-with the project recognises its own artificiality, its artifice, and the tension between construction and the seemingly natural: visitors “move around by means of artificial hills, created during the excavation of the marble [...] which echo the surrounding landscape” (Golanda, 1997: 60). The combination of earthly, manufactured and arranged matter imbues visitors “with the spirit of construction that inhabits the site” (1997: 60). Aloula does not conform to recognised museological strategies, whereby material is curated and presented with accompanying explanations, set in time and in place by virtue of its exclusion, or in which the museum itself becomes the object of display. Rather, Kouzoupi describes the project as “an adventure in time,” in which “the magnitude of geological time and human processes come together in a manner akin to hide-and-peek; it is not a museum where everything is clearly labelled” (N.Golanda and A. Kouzoupi, personal communication, July 21, 2021). Material is curated and displayed, but in such a way that we must enter this museum-landscape with a view to finding ways in which to discern its orderings, its histories. Aloula does not immediately disclose itself. The experience of encountering Aloula is akin to the encounter with the mountain as Golanda found it. She narrates her first visit to Aloula, being “taken in a van and left on the mountain, surrounded by stone,” finding her way across the slopes, an embodied experience central to her approach to design that recognises “an unconscious force that comes as one spends a lot of time in a place” (N.Golanda and A. Kouzoupi, personal communication, July 21, 2021). Twenty-five years later, finding ways to discern our relationship with the landscape in time, is still both the subject and structure of the museum.

Imaging Athens. Fixed maps and images of The Attic (Marble) Landscape

This landscape is well-trodden. In the mid-seventeenth century, with the advent of the Grand Tour, the ancient marble quarries of Mount Pentelicon became some of the most visited places in Attica, second only perhaps to the Parthenon. Numerous pictorial and written representations of the mountain (*Marble quarry on Mount Penteli* by William Haygarth, 1810–11, *Latomies du Pentelique* by Otto Magnus von Stackelberg, 1854, *Quarries of Pentelicus* by Christopher Wordsworth, 1882, among others) are found in travel journals, paintings and archaeological essays from this time. Mount Pentelicon became as much a symbol of classical ideals as the marble monuments of the metropolis. By the end of the nineteenth century, the first official topographic depiction of the quarried landscape of the mountain was realised as part of a broader mapping project conducted by the geographer Johannes Kaupert and archaeologist Ernst Curtius. Originally conceived as a historical project, this survey developed into a national mapping project, and became the basis of several re-drawings of modern Athens. In these drawings, published as *Karten von Attika* (1895–1903), the ancient quarries are depicted in the same manner as the ancient monuments; both are coloured with the maroon ink that was used to indicate elements of archaeological importance.

This map, along with representations of the mountain in art and poetry, evidences changing perceptions of the city and its landscape driven by new forms of vision which had been emerging since the eighteenth century (Mitsoula, 2018). From the sketches of the Grand Tourists to Kaupert and Curtius' maps, Mount Pentelicon shifts from a working landscape visited as a touristic attraction to an imaged landscape, represented alongside sites of archaeology as a thing of the past, despite the fact these quarries were not only still in operation at that time but expanding. This change, which exemplifies the emergence of what sociologist John Urry (1990) has termed the "tourist gaze", accompanies a shift from dwelling in and working land to perceiving landscape, from land conceived as in dialogue with our modes of dwelling to a visual ordering of *land* in the creation of *landscape*. As Herman Melville, who visited Athens in the mid-nineteenth century, suggests in his poem *The Attic Landscape*, the mountains had become an essential visual backdrop against which the city ought to be perceived. Describing the slopes of the mountains facing Athens, Melville (1891: 57) writes:

The clear-cut hills carved temples face,
Respond, and share their sculptural grace.
'Tis Art and Nature lodged together,
Sister by sister, cheek to cheek.

And in a second poem, *Greek Architecture* (1891: 60), describing the architecture of the city, he writes:

Not magnitude, not lavishness,
But Form—the Site;
Not innovating wilfulness,
But reverence for the Archetype.

Architecture and the city become inseparable from an image of landscape. "Form", the "carved temples", literally look to ("face") landscape, to the "clear-cut hills" as their "Archetype". This synthesis profoundly affects the city: firstly, Mount Pentelicon, following Urry, is transformed from land into landscape, from a site of work to one of appearance; second, an imagined, mythical interpretation of Athens emerges, the "White City" of polished white marble. Somewhat ironically, satisfying this myth of the "White City" would entail further "work" on and in the mountains, leading to the disruption of the ideal image of the hills portrayed by Melville. Active quarrying operations spread from the southwest to the northeast side of Mount Pentelicon in response to an increased demand for Pentelic marble to clad the Neoclassical architectural schemes central to the re-construction of Athens, the capital of the newly independent Greek State. As forester Elias Apostolidis notes (1997: 194), until the formation of modern Greece, most marble quarries around Athens were restricted to the south side of the mountain, facing the city. The myth of the White City triggered an exploitation and disruption of the landscape which gave rise to the myth.

To stand in Aloula today, on the north of Mount Pentelicon, is to occupy the modern quarries that are the reciprocal landscape (Hutton, 2019) to the city of Athens. Aloula, as a repair-scape, a fixed-up former quarry, however re-imagines

Mount Pentelicon, challenging both the imaging of the tourist gaze and the mythologies of the “White City” by blurring the distinctions between manmade activities and the natural environment (or the worked and unworked landscape). Aloula works to undermine the romantic sentiments exemplified by Melville. The ruined stone buildings, which are fixed but not re-occupied, are “built of the self-same rock” as the mountain, “almost camouflaged while remaining obviously the work of man” (Golanda and Kouzoupi, 2001: 24). Construction and geological processes merge. The re-occupation of the landscape by the museum reveals the “succession of strata in which man’s active participation is noticed,” but in such a manner that “Form” is open, uncertain (Golanda, 1997: 60, 62), neither “Art” nor “Nature”, but certainly “lodged together”. The intertwining of the natural and the artificial generates a “plasticity”, a sense that the mountain becomes both sculpted and intrinsically sculptural (Golanda & Kouzoupi, 2001: 27). Imposing the idealising readings on this landscape that have perpetuated since Melville becomes impossible.

Re-imaging Aloula. Panoramas that unfix.

Ten years after the completion of work at Aloula, the project (along with others by Golanda and Kouzoupi) was exhibited at the Fondation Hellénique in Paris (January to March, 2007). “Hybrid Landscapes” (hybridity being a recurrent theme in Golanda and Kouzoupi’s work) highlighted the collapse of distinctions between the manmade and the natural, and artistic and industrial labour. To image Aloula within the exhibition, curator Christophe Catsaros proposed the idea of a panorama. In response, Kouzoupi arranged a series of stitched photographs of Aloula, taken by Johanna Weber, to envelop the viewer in a curtained drum elevated above the floor, recalling the sections of the early panorama buildings in which viewers would ascend from below to see an image presented on the inside of the drum. Images covering the exterior of the panorama communicated a notional taxonomy of the stone discerned in the project works, presenting multiple images mapping different structures and textures, orders and scales. Kouzoupi travelled to Aloula with Weber, a photographer of theatre, to “see the project and the landscape through the eyes of someone else” (N.Golanda and A. Kouzoupi, personal communication, July 21, 2021). In seeing otherwise Kouzoupi observed that in order to find one’s sense of scale it was necessary to see different elements in relation: the steps in the lower part of the project offer a sense of measure, where the stone slopes higher up the hill allow a slippage, a loss of scale.

On reflection, Kouzoupi describes how Weber’s photographs encourage such distortions and disturbances and enable such a seeing. They allow the stones depicted within to “slip into different relationships, bringing time and geology into the space of the body” (N.Golanda and A. Kouzoupi, personal communication, July 21, 2021). The images and this installation therefore presented an uncertain image of the project, suggesting perhaps the intrinsic difficulty of imaging Aloula at all and the challenge that this work poses to idealising imagings. The viewer might be centred, but the thing that they view uncentres. The panorama might privilege a singular vantage point, but the combination of multiple view points within the panoramic image and the centring of the viewer in the belvedere depicted in the photograph in the floor (taken by Dimitris Kapalodas) challenges particular visual histories associated with the image type. If the panorama, as



Fig. 6 Nella Golanda and Aspasia Kouzoupi (2007). *Paysages Hybrides/ Sculpted Architectural Landscapes*. Exhibition at the Fondation Hellénique, Paris, 2007, curated by Christophe Catsaros. [Photo: Agnès Janin, © Agnès Janin Photographie, reproduced with permission]

Hyde (1988: 45) has observed, replicated the “God’s-eye view of creation as modified by man,” the installation in the static setting of the gallery, instead invited the movement that was critical to the scheme on the ground and the principal challenge taken up by the scheme for the museum. “The main problem,” Golanda describes, “was the steep slopes and rough ground [...] which made it difficult to move around other than by some kind of fixed itinerary.” The solution was to construct paths and rehabilitate structures to offer an “inducement to those who decide to begin the ascent” (1997: 60). In contrast to those visions of Athens presented by Melville, Haygarth, Magnus von Stackelberg and Wordsworth, which subjugate the mountain to particular views and enshrine it within particular myths, the open movement instigated by Aloula and its imagings “transforms us into simultaneous actors and spectators” (Golanda, 1997: 64). We are made present within landscape and asked to look critically at our looking. The landscape created in the exhibition asks similar questions. It is itself hybrid. It constructs an image of the mountain that is activated by the disengagement of that image from the concrete reality and immaterial imaginings of Athens and its formative matter and myths. Leaving the spaces of the museum and installation open to specific navigation makes it possible for the viewer to deconstruct, and reconstruct that landscape, and to reconceive the landscape (the quarry, the stone, the mountain) and its relation to the city.

Re-fixing Aloula. Map, image and landscape.

Through Golanda and Kouzoupi’s intervention, and the representation of Aloula as an unsettling imaging of landscape, Aloula emerges from the mountain as a very specific site of repair. Following Lepawsky, Liboiron, Keeling and Mather’s (2017) terminology, the landscape of Aloula exemplifies what they describe as a repair-scape, a “fully worked-over” site that is a “composition” of “various and variable natures” (Braun, 2016, cited in Lepawsky et al., 2017: 58), where the natural and the anthropogeographic are indiscernible. To repair, as Lepawsky et al. (2017: 56) suggest, is to make something ready (*-parare*, make ready) again. A repair-scape is therefore a site that is in a constant state of re-production, “maintaining some kind of continuity with the past in the face of breaks or ruptures to that continuity” (Spelman, 2003, cited in Lepawsky et al., 2017: 56). This sense of a continuity is the reason for the tension between the imaging and affectivity of Aloula; or, put another way, of the fixity of the image and Aloula’s capacity for un-fixing. A repair-scape operates not just at the level of concrete

things (the repair of stones or paths) but to instigate a continual re-production of our understanding of and relationship with history and site.

This understanding of the repair-scape, in which how we experience, image and work in a landscape, as an active participant in the formation of that landscape, offers a new way of conceiving of repair, and projects of repair. As Vilém Flusser (2013: 11) posits in the essay “Valleys”, over time the relationship between the map, as an image of landscape, and the landscape itself has inverted:

The map no longer serves as an instrument so that we may orient ourselves in the landscape, but now it is the landscape that serves as an instrument so that we may orient ourselves in the map. The truth stops being a function of the map’s adjustment to the landscape, and becomes a function of the landscape’s adjustment to the map.

Where once the map recorded a landscape as a means of positioning humankind within that landscape, the map has become a means by which we project human paradigms onto landscapes (2013: 19, 16).

Flusser describes two such conceptual maps in “Valleys”. The engineer who sees a watercourse as a source of generative power, paths for passage, for crossing, maps the valley according to this view. The engineer’s map becomes a map of dams and bridges, framing the landscape primarily as an object for exploitation and the propagation of human systems. The humanist, likewise, sees the landscape as a site of human activity, of migrations, mobilities, and cultural practices. The landscape becomes a site of paths, of gatherings (2013: 19). These two maps, both based on particular imagings of the valley, come to dominate readings and images of the valley: as pre-conceived paradigms they impose themselves on landscape, and thus the landscape is subsequently arranged to conform to this map. By degrees, Flusser argues, the landscape of the specific valley becomes emblematic of a general type of “valley”, and all valleys are subsequently brought into relation as typical “valleys” through these maps. Flusser writes: “My concrete valley could here be generalised into an empty form: ‘a class of valleys’ [...] It may serve as a concrete example of the abstract class ‘valleys,’ therefore, as epistemological inversion” (2013: 14–15). The “concrete” valley, the valley as a physical place or site, becomes a paradigmatic valley, a conceptual place formed of an assemblage of overlapping valley-paradigms informed by representational traits and conventions.

In Athens, the image of the landscape of Mount Pentelicon perpetuated by the myth of the “White City”—what we might call the Attic-paradigm—is so entrenched as to render Aloula, as an active repair-scape, irreconcilable with the contemporary city. This is its significance: it invites a perpetual reconstruction of our conceptual maps. Aloula offers a different means of conceiving our relationship with landscape. This specific repair-scape is sympoetic, not necessarily in the complete sense of sympoesis-as-worlding offered by Donna Haraway (2016), but nevertheless a site that embodies a complex making-with. It is a landscape that was not planned, but rather formed through a making-with people and with the earth, together, as human labour and matter in enduring reciprocity, which in turn involves a re-making with Athens.

Discussing Aloula. July, 2021.

It is July 2021, in the middle of a record-breaking heatwave and a pandemic, and we are climbing the southern tip of Hymettos, looking onto the Saronic Gulf. The Fiat, less dusty now, is parked on the street below. We are sitting (socially distanced, grapes, peaches and notebooks distributed across three tables) in Golanda’s garden discussing Aloula. Cicadas, *tzitzikia*, in the fir trees overhead chirp as the heat of the day gives way to sunset. Paths formed of a tight mosaic of fragments of stone, sometimes formed into patterns, sometimes following unseen logics within the stones themselves, wind up the steep slope, connected occasionally by stone steps. We wonder how much of this stone has come from Aloula, directly or indirectly. In conversation we note the similarity of this garden-landscape and Golanda and Kouzoupi’s work at Aloula with Dimitris Pikionis’ interventions on the Acropolis, but in contrast to the lush, living garden around us Golanda describes Pikionis’ work as “a site of sorrow, sadness,” a site that serves as a reminder of a lost Neoclassical Athens. “One can feel that the material there came from an accumulation of destroyed things,” she observes, and yet Pikionis’ work “is a reminder that when something gets destroyed, people build again: a reason to live” (N. Golanda and A. Kouzoupi, personal communication, July 21, 2021).

Fig. 7 Dimitris Pikionis (1954-57). Plan of a stepped ascent to the Acropolis. [© 2021 by Benaki Museum Athens]



In Pikionis’ landscaping of the area surrounding the Acropolis, the material used in the paving comes directly from the marble sinks, steps, etc., stripped from the Athenian Neoclassical houses demolished and replaced during the rapid urbanisation of Athens in the 1950s. As Dimitris Antonakakis (1989: 15) notes, these remnants form “an open dialogue with the monuments, the landscape and time.” We contend that this dialogue extends to encompass the specific spaces of Aloula in which some of the stone, from which these artefacts were made, most likely originated. Together, the slopes of Aloula and the surfaces of the Acropolis form a more recognisable version of what Jane Hutton describes as a “reciprocal landscape” of material and labour, in the sense that practices in one site entail a simultaneous and proportionate alteration in the other. As Hutton declares, “circulating back and forth between the two sites, it becomes difficult to see either in isolation” (2019: 3). Aloula therefore serves as a reminder of the significance and recurrence of material through time in the making of Athens.

Pikionis (1989: 68), in a passage in “The Sentimental Topography” reminiscent of Melville, writes:

Stone, you compose the lineaments of this landscape. You are the landscape. You are the Temple that is to crown the precipitous rocks of your own Acropolis.

The Parthenon, in Melville's telling of *The Attic Landscape* finds its "response" and "grace" in its "sister" mountain, Pentelicon. While Pikionis' description might suggest a similarly romantic, or in Pikionis' words sentimental, response to landscape, we might see, indirectly, an earthier counterpart to the Acropolis pathways in Aloula. Pikionis, like Golanda and Kouzoupi, insisted on work being undertaken by hand, and resisted the use of mechanical equipment (Papandreou, 2016: 72). As Antonakakis recalls, for Pikionis construction provided "the logic by which the characteristics of the materials were revealed" (1989: 11). Unlike Golanda and Kouzoupi, Pikionis' project generated drawings, many drawings, forming both a record of decisions and an exploration of formal arrangements. These drawings fix: they make fast the landscape in place. In contrast Aloula, as a site where "relation-making practices work to sustain the very possibility of spatial *and* temporal continuity," is a site "always under construction" (Lepawsky et al., 2017: 59). It moves and is refigured. The dry-stone construction over which we walk, scramble, and climb invites slippages, challenges the "fixed, motionless geometry of the earth" described by Pikionis (1989: 68). The few fragmented sketches and drawings of Aloula, a handful made during the works as part of the decoding process, some produced retrospectively, recognise this mobility. They provide an image of a landscape in motion which expresses "the different states

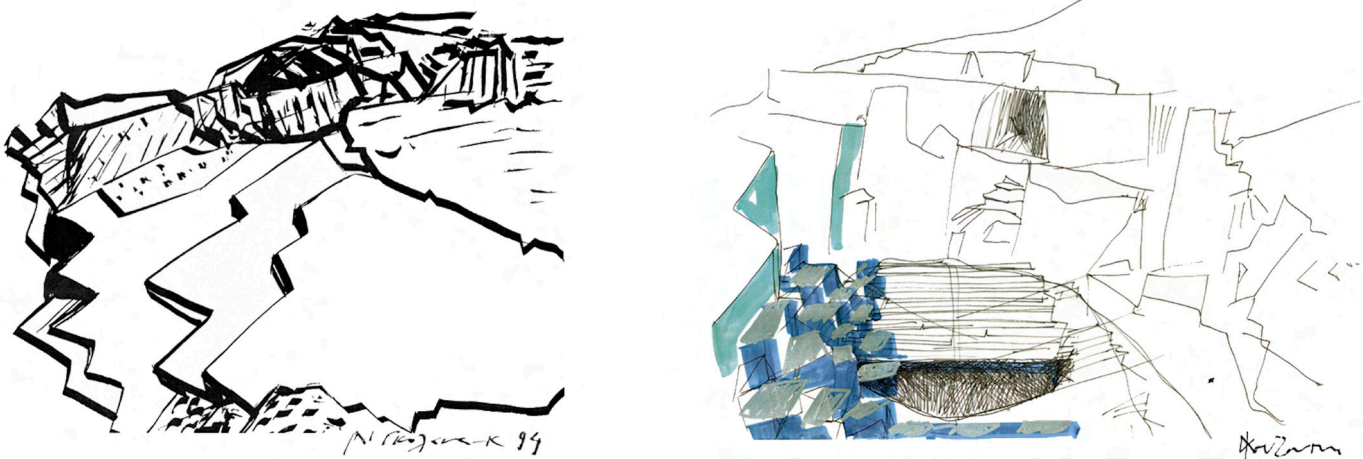


Fig. 8 Sketches by Nella Golanda and Aspasia Kouzoupi produced during the making of the Open Air Museum of Ancient Quarrying Arts, Dionysos. [Courtesy of the archive of Sculpted Architectural Landscapes: N. Golanda + A. Kouzoupi]

of stone," (N. Golanda and A. Kouzoupi, personal communication, July 21, 2021) a map in Flusser's original sense, recording landscape rather than a projection of a desire for order onto landscape. One drawing, a fragment of Aloula made with a thick, black, continuous outline drawn by Golanda (the engraver's sketch, perhaps, deliberate, heavy) describes shadow, weight, fissures. A second drawing, of another fragment of Aloula, describes the finer, broken lines of marble veins, chisel marks, tooling (the architect's sketch, Kouzoupi's sketch). Together both record the landscape and describe a way of making a landscape. Rather than projecting a desire for order onto landscape they instigate a thinking-with landscape. Their sketches embody the sensibility and sensitivity required of meaningful repair.

As an exemplary repair-scape, therefore, Aloula offers more than just the rehabilitation of an abandoned site. Aloula un-fixes us; like the dry stones on the slopes of Pentelicon we become untethered, unsettled in time through the contestation of abstract images of landscape. Aloula, as a "concrete" or physical place to invoke Flusser, is today a place of "deciphering and not of resolving" (2013: 20). It

does not necessitate the formulation of a particular form for material, rather it describes the agency of material in its different stages of being. The landscape of Aloula as a site of repair is a site of ongoing engagement with matter in time. Aloula allows us to conceive new means to engage with and describe landscape which resist the desire to fix.



Fig. 9 Golanda and Kouzoupi (1997).
Aloula, Mount Pentelicon. View from
the Open Air Museum in Aloula,
Mount Pentelicon to Marathon.
[Photo: Maria Mitsoula, 2018]

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