



The Marbles Campaign

Where do we go from here?

In our globalized age is it now time to consider the campaign in a more international context?



By Chris Price, Deputy Chair of the British Campaign for the Reunification of the Parthenon Marbles (BCRPM)

OVER THE PAST two or three decades, the campaign to re-unite the Parthenon Sculptures in Athens has received global publicity. However, it is now important for us to consider how to put the issue in a wider international cultural mobility context.

The British Museum was established by the British Parliament and not by the British Government

"Cultural mobility" has become a common phrase among those who want to see an atmosphere of cooperation supplant arguments in the past. A recent conference in Ohio put it like this: *Globalization is now one of the most common terms to describe how we interact with other countries in the 21st century. Perhaps a better term is "interdependence". Interdependence helps us understand how we can have*

shared opportunities to participate and enjoy a genuine sense of belonging. Collaboration and cooperation are becoming the approaches of choice, replacing the pursuit of short-term exchange. In this context, it is only a period of genuine cooperation between all sorts of institutions, governments, museums and international bodies that will be able to find solutions.

"It is a unique case of cultural injustice"

Perhaps. But there are and always will be countries other than Greece which have suffered from periods of 'colonial' depredation in the past and felt that their claims are important. A wider, even worldwide, discussion about the appropriate location of cultural objects might help begin a genuine bipartite discussion between the UK and Greece about the integrity of classical sculptures currently in the British Museum.

It follows that another priority for campaigning organisations and the UK parliament is to make sure that the respective powers and influence of the Trustees of the British Museum, the British government and the British Parliament are balanced in such a way that there can be a public discussion about how to take this issue forward

Neil MacGregor is a superb communicator. If the Marbles issue is to be solved, his successor will need to be a superb negotiator.

The Trustees hold their office in trust for the people of Britain but yet have made little effort to explain to the people the current position and arguments over the location of the marbles. The Government and Parliament have a similar duty. This is particularly important at a time when

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The Cry of Art Divided

It's time for Neil MacGregor to take note of past experiences and reunite the Marbles

By Geoff White, Committee Member, Marbles Reunited

THE PARTHENON FRIEZE is displayed in the British Museum without gaps, so that visitors could be forgiven for thinking that they were looking at the complete work. But they would be deceiving themselves. The British Museum houses a little over half of the surviving Parthenon sculptures. The rest, with a few minor exceptions, are now on display in the New Acropolis Museum in Athens. Art that is divided cries out to be reunited. It is a cry which we know that Mr MacGregor, Director of the British Museum, has heeded at least twice in the past. When he was Director of the National Gallery in London a painting by Manet called, "The Execution of Maximilian" was put on public display for the first time in over a century. In Manet's lifetime it had been too dangerous to exhibit the painting, considered critical of the French Emperor, and on the artist's death his family had cut it up and disposed of the fragments separately. Outraged by this vandalism, Degas had tracked down the



Elgin Amphora, British Museum

surviving pieces and when he died they had been acquired by the National Gallery. But it was not until Mr MacGregor's incumbency that they were assembled on a new canvas and

placed on public view in Room 43 of the gallery.

At the British Museum something similar has happened. A masterpiece of early Greek vase painting, known as the "Elgin Amphora" has recently gone on display in Room 12. It has been reassembled from fragments excavated by Lord Elgin's workmen in Athens 200 years ago and subsequently dispersed between several private collections. By what the museum calls "detective work" the fragments have all been brought together again. In both of these cases the results, though incomplete, prove that the whole is much greater than the sum of the parts. As an art historian Mr MacGregor has twice proved willing to do what is right when great art is sundered. If art that is divided cries out to be reunited surely the longest and greatest cry comes from the Sculptures of the Parthenon. We hope that Neil MacGregor and the Trustees of the British Museum will soon heed that cry.

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the Trustees will soon be seeking a new Director for the Museum.

The current Director, Neil MacGregor, is a superb communicator. If the Marbles issue is to be solved, his successor will need to be a superb negotiator.

Both the marketing of cultural relics and arguments about their 'ownership' are as old as the hills. We now need a new

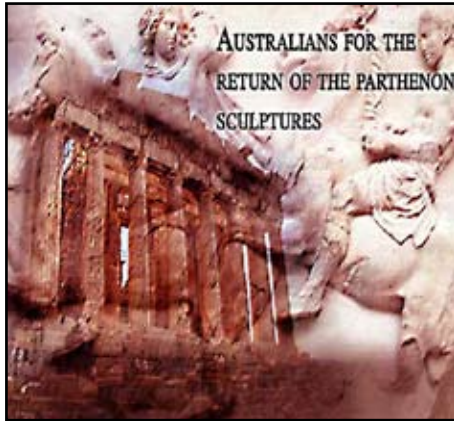
regime of discussions - open to all citizens of the world - which can take the place of insoluble haggling over history, location, ownership and legal status. This will require not so much recourse to national and international courts of law; instead we need a global environment of museums and nations cooperating with one

another in which the mobility of cultural objects and agreements about their location and preservation can be discussed.

The Australians

With many prominent members the campaign Down Under is going from strength to strength

By David Hill, Chairman Parthenon Australia



Its two Patrons are former Australian Prime Ministers Gough Whitlam (Labor) and Malcolm Fraser (Liberal)

THE AUSTRALIANS FOR the Return of the Parthenon Sculptures (ARPS) includes many prominent Australians among its members:

David Hill (*former Managing Director of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and President of the Australian Football Association*)

Des Griffin (*former Director of the Australian Museum*)

Terence Measham (*former Director of the Powerhouse Museum*)

Jennifer Bott (*former Chief Executive of the Australian Council for the Arts*)

ARPS has been very active in the past decade and has organised a number of public seminars and lectures, helping

to raise the level of support in Australia for the return of the sculptures to quite a high level.

In June 2000 forty eight members of the Australian Parliament made a submission to the British House of Commons to call for the return of the Parthenon Sculptures. ARPS made a submission to the same House of Commons Committee In 2006 the Australian Prime Minister John Howard advised British Prime Minister Tony Blair of the widespread support in Australia for the return of the sculptures. Recently ARPS has launched a membership drive for all Australians who support our aims to join their organisation through their website .

www.parthenonaustralia.com

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If you, your organisation, or your company are interested in sponsoring the printing and distribution of the next edition of Marbles Reunited Newsletter, we'd love to hear from you.

The American Committee for the Reunification of the Parthenon Sculptures (ACRPS) now has an official page on Facebook and would like all who share their beliefs to "Like" their page. www.parthenonmarblesusa.org

Marbles Reunited - Friends of the British Committee for the Reunification of the Parthenon Marbles.

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Receive the next newsletter by email. Let us know at: campaign@marblesreunited.org.uk

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“The Marbles belong to Greece, to the world and to the Acropolis”

Mike Rann - Prime Minister of South Australia

Statement from his meeting with the Greek Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr T H Kassimis in Adelaide, Australia (2006)