

2007

# Looted Art: The Case of the Parthenon Sculptures

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# LOOTED ART: THE CASE OF THE PARTHENON SCULPTURES

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Many artifacts which comprise private and museum collections today were possibly stolen from their country of origin and illegally smuggled into the country in which they now reside. In the late eighteenth century, the global powers of England and France exercised their authority over less powerful countries, such as Greece and Egypt, by exporting those countries' traditional artifacts. Now, the governments of the less dominant countries no longer dismiss the pieces as useless artifacts, but view them as valuable cultural objects. The number of countries attempting to regain possession of lost artifacts from private and museum collections was recently increased. The archetypal case of the repatriation of looted art is the controversy over the sculptures of the Parthenon, better known as the "Elgin Marbles." The sculptures have been located in the British Museum in London for the past 200 years and the Greek government is continually requesting the marble sculptures to be returned. By closely examining this specific issue and similar cases, I present an in-depth portrait of the trend for the repatriation of looted artifacts.

As an Art History major, I chose to address in my Undergraduate Honors Thesis this current issue of the repatriation of looted artworks. I combined my interests of classical art and archaeology with my aspiration to pursue a career in museum work. I learned about the rising problem of artworks being smuggled from their region of origin to resurface later in prominent museum galleries, as well as private collections, around the world. A current case which drew much attention during the majority of my research was that of the Metropolitan Museum of

Art returning to Italy a number of smuggled artifacts, including the famous calyx-krater by Euphronios. The J. Paul Getty Museum in California also recently attracted attention as Marion True, the museum's former curator of antiquities, was accused of knowingly purchasing looted artifacts. Rather than focusing on a recent case, I concentrate on the controversy surrounding the so-called "Elgin Marbles."

This research project was intended to contextualize both the historical and current controversial issues pertaining to the Parthenon. The first section titled "The Architectural and Decorative Elements of the Parthenon and Erechtheion" educates the reader on the structure of the Parthenon. Included are the characteristic functions and decorations of a traditional ancient Greek Doric temple, the style in which the Parthenon is constructed. A detailed description containing images of the sculptures' subject matter and original placements is also incorporated in the section.

The second segment, "The History of the Parthenon," contains general background information regarding the history of the Parthenon. A basic outline of the building's history from the ancient temples which once occupied the Parthenon's current site to the control of Ottoman forces in the late eighteenth century is presented to the reader. The majority of the information of this segment is known through historical writings and archaeological discoveries.

"The Role of Thomas Bruce, the seventh Earl of Elgin" includes the historical narrative of Lord Elgin's interactions with the Parthenon. Though no original sources were available, information found in books and articles documenting the events of the removal of the sculptures were analyzed to create a new scenario of Elgin's actions. In the early nineteenth century Thomas Bruce, the seventh Earl of Elgin, was the British Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire.

While stationed in the East for his influential position, Elgin decided to purchase many of the surviving sculptures of the Parthenon and ship them to England. Elgin had his workmen remove marble sculptures from the Parthenon and surrounding structures with the intention of transporting them to England and Scotland.

The next segment, “The Controversy of the Ownership of the Parthenon Sculptures,” discusses the current-day controversy of the possession of the sculptures. This chapter is divided into two sections, “The Argument for Restitution to Athens, Greece” and “The Argument for Retention in the British Museum in London, England,” and the reasoning for both claims is explained. Many groups have vocalized the moral and legal need to return the sculptures to Greece with the basis that the pieces were taken illegally. Opponents of restitution, however, claim the British Museum possesses a legal right to retain custody of the sculptures.

“The Current Issue of Restitution” addresses the way in which the case of the Parthenon sculptures fits into the larger theme of looted artifacts held in museum collections. Specific cases are cited in the paper, such as those of the Metropolitan Museum and the Getty Museum, with the intention of showing the parallel problems arising from questionable museum acquisitions.

Researching the history and politics of the Parthenon marbles involved reading books and articles published in scholarly journals. People have been writing in response to Lord Elgin’s actions since his first excavations on the Athenian Acropolis. From the works of Romantic poet Lord Byron to current scholar John Boardman, completing this background reading taught me both the historical and current views of the issues concerning the Parthenon sculptures.

Ultimately, I found that the norms of the nineteenth century have drastically changed and, therefore, it is a flawed argument to consider an account from a century ago and hold it to contemporary standards. For example, the issue of the legality of Lord Elgin’s purchase cannot be addressed without placing the event into an accurate historical context. In the nineteenth century, it was commonplace for bribery to expedite the less-than-honorable actions of those

wealthy individuals with authority. Lord Elgin, as an upper-class member in society, saw nothing dishonest in purchasing the mainly unwanted sculptures from the ruling Turkish government. The events would be drastically different today, however, with modern laws regulating the sale and transport of protected artifacts. By examining the events of earlier cases regarding the repatriation of looted art, we are better equipped to address the increasing number of current situations.

### **The History of the Parthenon**

Two thousand years before Lord Elgin was criticized for dismantling the buildings of the Acropolis, the initial construction of the structure known today as the Parthenon was begun around 446 BCE.<sup>1</sup> The site on which the Parthenon currently stands contains two previously existing temple foundations. The more recent of the two foundations belonged to a temple which was never fully completed.<sup>2</sup>

The Persians attacked Athens in 480 BCE and destroyed the beginning constructions of the earlier temple.<sup>3</sup> Athenian buildings were demolished and sacred sculptures were badly damaged during the Persian attack. Soon after the event Athenians employed the Oath of Plataea in remembrance of the grave event. This oath designated the razed Acropolis as a sacred area to remain untouched.<sup>4</sup> Thirty years later, however, the well-known Athenian statesman Pericles advocated rebuilding the

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<sup>1</sup> Nancy Thomson de Grummond, An Encyclopedia of the History of Classical Archaeology (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1996), 854.

<sup>2</sup> John Griffiths Pedley, Greek Art and Architecture (London: Prentice Hall, 2002), 248.

<sup>3</sup> Margaretha Rossholm Lagerlöf, The Sculptures of the Parthenon (New Haven: Yale University, 2000), 6.

<sup>4</sup> Pedley, 223.

Acropolis.<sup>5</sup> He believed that while it was important that Athenians remember their cultural history and the dangers of foreign enemies, it was appropriate for Athens finally to move forward.<sup>6</sup> Once building was approved in 447 BCE, the symbolic construction of the current Parthenon structure lasted until 432 BCE.<sup>7</sup>

The main purpose of ancient Greek temples was to house and protect the cult statues of the temples' respective deities. These statues were considered the personifications of the gods.<sup>8</sup> The ancient Greeks believed that a deity's temple was his or her living area and that the sacred space belonged to the particular god. The Parthenon, therefore, was not only the location of the cult statue of Athena Parthenos, but the house of the goddess herself.<sup>9</sup>

The original statue of Athena Parthenos, dedicated in 438 BCE<sup>10</sup> and now lost since antiquity, was the work of the prominent Athenian sculptor Phidias.<sup>11</sup> Although Phidias' composition no longer exists, scholars have gleaned details regarding the original figure from illustrations and written descriptions, such as ancient tourist accounts and statuettes. From these sources it is known that Phidias' statue was created of ivory and gold, termed a chryselephantine sculpture, and stood nearly 11.5 meters tall. Athena, wearing an intricate helmet fitting her warrior reputation, was portrayed standing while a shield in her left hand rested on the ground and a smaller figure of the goddess Nike stood in Athena's outstretched right hand.<sup>12</sup> The Parthenon had additional religious functions which will be discussed later.

The structure experienced numerous episodes of damage and alteration in the years following its completion. From the Peloponnesian War with Sparta in 431 BCE to Sulla's Roman

occupation of the city in 88 CE, all subsequent events in Athens must have affected the initial condition of the Parthenon. Scholars are largely unable, however, to determine the details of subsequent modifications which occurred after completion.<sup>13</sup> It is known, however, that early in the third century a foreign conqueror had the gold stripped from the cult statue.<sup>14</sup> The gold was later replaced but the affront foreshadowed a line of harmful events to come.

Sometime during the sixth century the Parthenon was adopted as a Christian church and dedicated to the Holy Wisdom (1).<sup>15</sup> In previous centuries Athens was struggling out from Macedonian and Roman occupation and, therefore, was economically failing. Christianity, conversely, was growing in popularity. In 391 CE Athens was under Theodosius' Christian authority when he prohibited any practice of pagan religious cults. This ban required the closure of temples across Theodosius' empire, including the Parthenon.<sup>16</sup> The structure was ignored until the sixth century when, during the preparations to adjust the structure to the specifications of a building meriting Christian worship, the building was both intentionally and unintentionally damaged. Many figural statues of the Parthenon sculptures were considered pagan symbols and were deliberately defaced by Greek Christian iconoclasts in support of their new religion.<sup>17</sup> The structural failure of the west pediment, destroying numerous pedimental sculptures, however, was probably an

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<sup>5</sup> Thomson de Grummond, 854.

<sup>6</sup> John Boardman, "The Elgin Marbles: Matters of Fact and Opinion," *International Journal of Cultural Property* (2000) 233-262, 234.

<sup>7</sup> Pedley, 248.

<sup>8</sup> Martin Robertson, *The Parthenon Frieze* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 5.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>10</sup> Lagerlöf, 7.

<sup>11</sup> Pedley, 261.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 262.

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<sup>13</sup> Robertson, 12.

<sup>14</sup> Robertson, 12.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Browning, "The Parthenon in History," in *Imperial Spoils: The Curious Case of the Elgin Marbles*, ed. Christopher Hitchens (New York: Hill and Wang, 1988), 20.

<sup>16</sup> Robertson, 12.

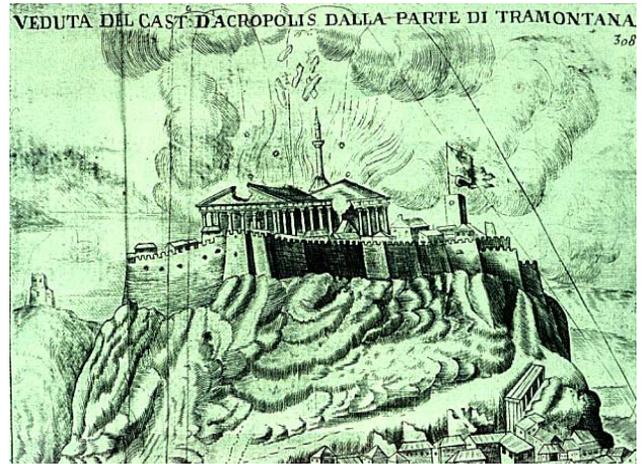
<sup>17</sup> Katherine A. Schwab, "The Parthenon East Metopes, the Giantomachy, and Digital Technology," in *The Parthenon and its Sculptures*, ed. Michael B. Cosmopoulos (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 150.

accident.<sup>18</sup> Not much is known about the Christian decoration, but the interior of the Parthenon may have been decorated with paintings or mosaics depicting Christian themes.<sup>19</sup>



(1) Artist's recreation of the apse of the Christian church located inside the Parthenon circa 400 CE

From the sixth century the Parthenon was used as a Christian church until around 1456 when Ottoman troops successfully attacked Athens. The building was then converted from a Christian church into a mosque and military storehouse for the new controlling Turkish forces.<sup>20</sup> The building suffered much damage as it remained in the center of violent bombings and other forms of warfare. On 26 September 1687 a Venetian army attacked the Turkish forces stationed on the Acropolis (2). During the battle sections of both the Parthenon's interior and exterior structure were demolished when a cannonball ignited gunpowder stored inside the structure.<sup>21</sup> After the explosion the Parthenon ceased to be used by the Turkish troops. The structure was almost entirely abandoned while the surrounding areas continued to be occupied by Ottoman forces.<sup>22</sup>



(2) Engraving of the Venetian attack on the Parthenon in 1687

In the following years the violence of warfare did not cease. The Greek War of Independence began in 1821 and lasted until 1827. The Treaty of Constantinople ended the Turkish occupation of Greece and recognized Greece as an independent country. By 1832 Greece was completely self-governing.<sup>23</sup> Scholars are unable to determine the amount of destruction which occurred to the Parthenon during these periods of time due to earthquakes, warfare, repairs, and modifications.<sup>24</sup> The structural and ornamental features which still exist help researchers and archaeologists to understand better the Parthenon's history and functions.

<sup>18</sup> Robertson, 13.

<sup>19</sup> Browning, 20.

<sup>20</sup> Michael B. Cosmopoulos, The Parthenon and its Sculptures (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 169.

<sup>21</sup> Browning, 22.

<sup>22</sup> Cosmopoulos, 166.

<sup>23</sup> John E. Conklin, Art Crime (London: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1994), 28.

<sup>24</sup> Robertson, 13.

## The Architectural and Decorative Elements of the Parthenon and Erechtheion

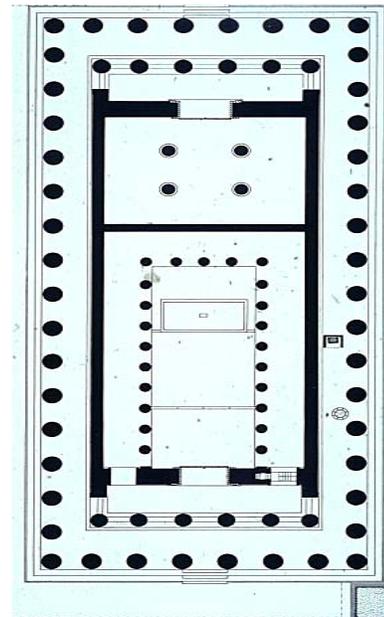
The Parthenon is a traditional Doric temple located on the Acropolis in Athens, Greece (3). The structure was originally dedicated by the ancient Greeks of Athens to the patron goddess of their city, Athena Parthenos.<sup>25</sup> The initial construction of the building was begun around 446 BCE on the site of a previous temple of Athena.<sup>26</sup> The architects associated with the architectural design of the Parthenon were Ictinus and Callicrates, though there is some debate concerning their roles in the production.<sup>27</sup>



(3) The Parthenon in 2005

Somewhat in accordance with the style of a traditional Doric temple, the Parthenon has a rectangular floor plan (4) with exterior colonnades and inner chambers. The peripheral colonnade consists of one hundred thirty-six Doric columns with eight columns on the façade and seventeen along each side.<sup>28</sup> Inside the Parthenon are two main rooms. The larger of the two rooms, called the cella, faced the east and housed the colossal chryselephantine cult statue of Athena. The smaller room opened to the west and was called the opisthodomos. The opisthodomos

was used as a treasury to store the offerings dedicated to the goddess. Also characteristic of a Doric temple was the Parthenon's decorative sculptures. The majority of the building's sculptures occurred in the frieze and pediments. The frieze ran along the outer entablature of the Parthenon. Doric friezes comprise metopes, individual slabs of marble with sculptural reliefs, separated by triglyphs, three vertical carved marble bars.<sup>29</sup> The Parthenon originally possessed a total on ninety-two metopes. The themes of the metopes are well-known mythological wars. The east metopes depicted a battle between gods and giants, termed the Giantomachy. A war between Greek soldiers and Amazons decorates the west metopes. A battle involving the Lapiths and centaurs adorns the southern metopes (5) while the skirmish between the Greeks and Trojans was seen in the northern metopes.<sup>30</sup>



(4) Plan of the Parthenon

<sup>25</sup> Lagerlöf, 7.  
<sup>26</sup> Pedley, 248.  
<sup>27</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 249.

<sup>29</sup> Pedley, 155.  
<sup>30</sup> Boardman, 234.



(5) Metope relief depicting the battle between the apiths and the centaurs



(6) Riders on horses in the Panathenaic Festival shown in the Ionic frieze

A second frieze decorated the inner building of the Parthenon. Differing from the exterior Doric frieze, this second frieze is of the Ionic order. Ionic friezes are a continuous series of uninterrupted sculptured reliefs versus the Doric style of repeating metopes and triglyphs. The scene depicted in the interior Ionic frieze is a procession which occurred every four years at the Panathenaic Festival (6).<sup>31</sup> This festival celebrated the birthday of Athena Parthenos and required all Athenian citizens to parade through the city.

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<sup>31</sup> Yannis Hamilakis, "Stories from Exile: Fragments from the Cultural Biography of the Parthenon (or 'Elgin') Marbles," *World Archaeology* (Oct. 1999), 303-20.

The scene of the frieze originates at the southwest corner of the building and the action progresses along both the north and east walls. Horses, warriors, and chariots follow musicians and elders, who in turn trail sacrificial sheep and cows.<sup>32</sup> Images of gods, goddesses, heroes, and religious attendants fill the east wall and the two lines of movement meet at the southwest corner.

In addition to the friezes, sculpture also was located in the Parthenon's pediments. A Doric temple had two pediments, the triangular spaces located at each end of the temple underneath the apex of the roof halves. The pediment spaces of the

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<sup>32</sup> Pedley, 256.

Parthenon originally displayed life-size marble figures (7).<sup>33</sup> The sculptor Phidias is recorded as the individual responsible for these pediment figures.<sup>34</sup>



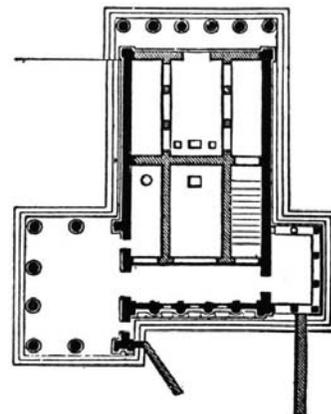
(7) The East pediment showing sculptures *in situ*

Both pediment scenes depict important mythological events pertaining specifically to Athens.<sup>35</sup> On the west pediment was the scene of the mythological competition between the divinities Poseidon, god of the waters, and Athena, goddess of wisdom. The two deities are shown battling for the prestigious title of patron god to the city of Athens. On the opposite side of the temple, the east pediment depicts the birth of the goddess Athena. Zeus, Athena's father and king of the gods, is centered in the triangular pediment. An adult Athena, recently born from Zeus's head, stands at his left side dressed in full armor.

Another structure, the Erechtheion, is located across the Acropolis from the Parthenon. Construction of the Erechtheion began around 430 BCE though the majority of building was completed between 409 and 406 BCE.<sup>36</sup> Unlike the Parthenon, the layout of the Erechtheion is unconventional (8). The irregular plan of the structure is probably due to the fact that the building was used to house

a variety of cults, including Athena, Poseidon, and Erechtheus. The regularity of the structure was compromised in efforts to appease each divinity's cult. Also, the location on which the current building now stands was once the site for a Mycenaean palace.<sup>37</sup> The Erechtheion is a unique building known for its use of caryatids.<sup>38</sup> Caryatids are over life-sized sculptural figures of women which were used for structural support, similar to columns (9). The Erechtheion's south porch originally displayed six caryatids which supported a small flat roof.<sup>39</sup>

Several of these decorative components still adorn the Parthenon and Erechtheion. Marble slabs comprising the friezes and metopes are yet secure on the structure of the Parthenon. The majority of sculpture, however, either was destroyed by warfare or earthquakes, has accidentally become disengaged from the building over time, or has been intentionally removed. The most famous case relating to the Parthenon is that of the marble sculptures acquired by Lord Elgin.



(8) Plan of the Erechtheion showing irregularities

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 251.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 253.

<sup>36</sup> Pedley, 266.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 267.

<sup>38</sup> Lesley Adkins and Roy A. Adkins, Handbook to Life in Ancient Greece (New York: Facts on File, 1997), 234.

<sup>39</sup> Pedley, 267.



(9) The Erechtheion's south porch and caryatids

### **The Role of Thomas Bruce, the seventh Earl of Elgin**

Since the early nineteenth century when Lord Elgin shipped the Parthenon artifacts to Great Britain, the permanent custody of the pediment sculptures, carved metopes, decorative friezes, and marble caryatid of the Acropolis have been the focus of controversy. Thomas Bruce (1766–841), the seventh Earl of Elgin (10), was the acting British Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1799 to 1803.<sup>40</sup> After marrying the young and wealthy Mary Nisbet in early 1799, Elgin was officially approved to the distinguished position by King George III of England. Elgin's station was to be centered at Constantinople.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> John Henry Merryman, Thinking About the Elgin Marbles (London: Kluwer Law International, 2000), 24.

<sup>41</sup> Theodore Vrettos, The Elgin Affair (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1997), 8.



(10) Detail of drawing by George Perfect Harding after a painting by Anton Graff, 1787, The National Portrait Gallery, England

Elgin was excited about the prestige his new political position offered him, but he also enjoyed the prospect that his job promised to take him to the Levant. Earlier in his life, while gaining a proper education at Westminster and in Germany as a young man, Elgin acquired a strong affinity for art.<sup>42</sup> In addition to his personal interest, Elgin was excited to travel to the East due to the increasing popularity of classical art in Europe. He must have known that the greatest examples of ancient art and architecture were located in Greece. From his post in Constantinople, travel to Greece's admired sites such as Athens and Eleusis was relatively comfortable.

Initially Elgin intended to depart from England with an assemblage of talented artists with the duty to record the historical sites they encountered.<sup>43</sup> This action reflected the similar events of Napoleon Bonaparte's occupation of Egypt. After a succession of interviews with well-known artists such as Benjamin West, J. M. W. Turner, and Thomas Girtin failed,<sup>44</sup> probably due to the scant salary available to the artists, Elgin was forced to travel without an established company of draughtsmen, painters, and engravers. Elgin desired to not only see the historical sites for himself, but he also wanted

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<sup>42</sup> Vrettos, 7.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 9.

to return to England with the knowledge of the ancients' works.<sup>45</sup> Elgin's actions may have been incited by an honest desire to elevate Britain's cultural standing in the world by exposing the English people to new examples of classical art. There is also the possibility, however, that he worked solely to improve his personal political standing and reputation by associating himself with the popular ancient Greek sculptures.

Elgin would organize a work force of artists to document the existing structures of the Acropolis. Included in this initial work order was the structure of the Parthenon. Elgin was insistent that the painters and sketchers under his charge record their compositions accurately and with as much attention to detail as possible. Meticulous measurements and precise images were Elgin's main objective. In addition to drawings and paintings, Elgin also wished to receive plaster casts made from the original marble sculptures of the Parthenon to decorate his home estate in Scotland.<sup>46</sup>

While Elgin resided outside of Athens, his principal worker Giovanni Lusieri acted on Elgin's behalf regarding the artistic work occurring on the Acropolis.<sup>47</sup> Elgin expected Lusieri to oversee the artists' progress and maintain the artists' personal safety while working. In a letter to Elgin dating from August 1801, Lusieri explains the situation on the Athenian Acropolis.<sup>48</sup> Apparently, Elgin's artists had been facing hardships, such as financial burdens and insults from the existing Turkish military persons, in gaining admittance onto the Acropolis to carry on with their work. According to Lusieri's report to Elgin, the "most powerful man" of the government of Athens was the Voivode, a chief officer of the Sultan's assembly. The most important individual under the Voivode was the Disdar who "commands from his citadel on top of the Acropolis Hill, along

with his garrison of soldiers. He alone has the authority to regulate the access of strangers to the Acropolis."<sup>49</sup>

Without official protection, the artists were unable to proceed with their work. Elgin and his assembly presented to the authorities of the Turkish government many gifts and bribes to facilitate approval for Elgin's artists to work onto the Acropolis. In another letter Lusieri informed Elgin that with the assistance of the British consul in Athens, Leonidas Logothetis, the Voivode had issued a firman. The Turkish term "firman" refers to a type of permit. The first firman granted to Elgin was vague and left much to be interpreted.<sup>50</sup> The original document has since been lost and but was fully relayed in Italian by Lusieri in a letter to Elgin.<sup>51</sup> The letter stated that Elgin's five artists would be able to "freely go in and out of the citadel", "fix scaffolding around the ancient Temple of the Idols", and "excavate where necessary in order to discover inscriptions which may have been hidden in the ruins."<sup>52</sup> Elgin and his supporters used the imprecise wording to grant them the legal authority to excavate fallen pieces of sculpture and remove them from the Acropolis. After much political intimidation and bribery, Elgin was able to see his first shipment of Parthenon sculptures depart Greece for England in 1801.<sup>53</sup>

When Elgin traveled to Greece during the beginning of his artists' work, he often visited the Acropolis to monitor the scene and the progress of his laborers.<sup>54</sup> Originally intending to send to England only the accurate records of the Acropolis structures produced by his artists, Elgin eventually resolved to excavate many of the fallen marble pieces and transport them to Britain. After discussions with and persuasion by friends, Elgin finally decided to use the existing scaffolding with the intention to detach works still *in situ* on

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>46</sup> Hamilakis.

<sup>47</sup> Russell Chamberlin, Loot! The Heritage of Plunder (New York: Facts-on-File, 1983), 14.

<sup>48</sup> Vrettos, 47.

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 46.

<sup>50</sup> Merryman, 39.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 38.

<sup>52</sup> Vrettos, 47.

<sup>53</sup> Hamilakis.

<sup>54</sup> Vrettos, 57.

the Parthenon.<sup>55</sup> These dismantled decorative elements of the Parthenon were also shipped to England.

Eyewitness accounts record that Elgin's workers sawed through stone and pounded with chisels to remove metope pieces still attached to the building.<sup>56</sup> In total, Elgin relocated "fifty-six pieces of the Parthenon frieze, fifteen sculptured metopes, seventeen pediment figures, and one caryatid from the Erechtheion."<sup>57</sup> By 1812, the last shipment of the now-called "Elgin Marbles" was transported from Athens, Greece to Britain.<sup>58</sup>

### Neoclassicism

Elgin's actions were motivated by both his personal passion for classical art and the dominating popularity of Neoclassicism. Neoclassicism was an artistic movement in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries which developed first in England and France mainly by means of the dissemination of works by art students trained in Rome.<sup>59</sup> These artists rejected the previous styles of Baroque and Rococo and preferred to study and copy directly from the original classical Roman sculptures and architectural structures. The growing esteem for the Neoclassical style by European society, which subsequently influenced Elgin's actions regarding the Parthenon, was propelled by a new appreciation for the ancients' cultural sophistication and the Enlightenment.

The rediscovery of ancient Roman and Greek art, architecture, philosophy, and science captivated the imaginations of Europeans. By the late eighteenth century wealthy Europeans were traveling throughout Europe and nearby regions. Many of these travelers were young British noblemen from

affluent families on their route of the Grand Tour.<sup>60</sup> While sightseeing and traveling for up to a couple of years, the young men were expected to enhance their formal education with learning about the politics, culture, and art of neighboring countries, especially pertaining to include the ancient world. The growing popularity of the Grand Tour made exotic and historical destinations the most desired locations for wealthy Europeans.

The concepts of logic and reason popularized by the Enlightenment were also impetuses for thinkers of the era to look back to antiquity. Proponents of the Enlightenment favored the ancient Greeks since Greece was considered to be the source of the original philosophers.<sup>61</sup> Artists denounced the subsequent artistic styles and aspired to return to the concepts of simplicity and the "ideal" formerly held by the ancient Romans and Greeks.

The writings of Johann Joachim Winckelmann also influenced the development of Neoclassicism. Winckelmann published his first book in 1755 titled Reflections of the Imitation of the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks.<sup>62</sup> In the text he declared Greek art superior to all other artistic styles.<sup>63</sup> Winckelmann is considered to be the founder of modern archaeological method due to his work in a later book called History of Ancient Art which was published in 1764.<sup>64</sup> With the discovery of the ancient Roman cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii in 1738 and 1758, new knowledge regarding the daily lives of the ancient Romans was revealed.<sup>65</sup> The excavations of Herculaneum and Pompeii incited the masses in Europe to learn and travel more despite the fact that the sites were not Greek.

The sculptor John Flaxman (1755–1826) was a prominent Neoclassical artist

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<sup>55</sup> Hamilakis.

<sup>56</sup> Vrettos, 61.

<sup>57</sup> S.B. Brysac, "The Parthenon Marbles Custody Case: Did British Restorers Mutilate the Famous Sculptures?" Archaeology (June 1999), 74-7.

<sup>58</sup> Merryman, 24.

<sup>59</sup> Irwin, David. Neoclassicism. (London: Phaidon, 1997), 42.

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>61</sup> Merryman, 641.

<sup>62</sup> Irwin, 26.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>65</sup> H. W. Janson and Anthony F. Janson. History of Art. (New York: Prentice Hall and Harry N. Abrams, 2001), 655.

whose work was produced in England in the late eighteenth century. Flaxman worked closely with Josiah Wedgwood, who was attributed with perfecting the mass-manufacturing of pottery. Flaxman created sculptural reliefs for Wedgwood's pottery and was well-known for his popular scenes of mythological subjects. One example is a vase from the late eighteenth century showing the three classical Muses named Thalia, Urania, and Erato (11).<sup>66</sup> The background of the vessel is the typical "Wedgwood blue" and the shape resembles those of traditional Greek vases.



(11) Vase by John Flaxman and Josiah Wedgwood showing the Neoclassical style, late eighteenth century

Due to factors including the rediscovery of classical culture and the Enlightenment, a "Greek Revival" was evident around the year 1800.<sup>67</sup> Artists portrayed examples of traditional ancient Greek architecture and décor in their artworks.<sup>68</sup> This desire for Greek-inspired art or authentic Greek antiquities explains Elgin's preoccupation with the Athenian Acropolis. Elgin's export of the sculptures from Greece to Britain, as in the early nineteenth century, still receives both critical and encouraging reactions.

<sup>66</sup> "John Flaxman; Made by Josiah Wedgwood and Sons." 2006. Metropolitan Museum of Art. [www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org).

<sup>67</sup> Irwin, 404.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 642.

## British Imperialism

Toward the end of the eighteenth century, the countries of England and France were becoming increasingly powerful. Both nations were competitively involved with trade and colonial expansion. By spreading their country's culture, the British and French traders and colonizers exerted a global notion of imperialism. This competitive setting is another reason Elgin decided to return to England with authentic Greek sculptures.



(12) *The Emperor Napoleon in His Study at the Tuileries*, Jacques-Louis David, 1812, The National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

In France, the French Revolution spanned the years 1789 through 1799.<sup>69</sup> Napoleon Bonaparte (12) was a general who earned recognition early with his military victories in Paris during the revolution. By 1798 Bonaparte held enough authority that he began an expedition into Egypt.<sup>70</sup> Bonaparte wanted control of Egypt in order to ensure that French trade lines were protected as well as to interfere with England's connections with India. This decision was made with direct concern for the competition between French and British imperialism. The expedition into Egypt in 1798 was not a solely military venture. Bonaparte brought

<sup>69</sup> Chamberlin, 133.

<sup>70</sup> Chamberlin, 130.

175 archaeologists, scientists, and artists along with his army.<sup>71</sup> The painters' responsibility, very similar to the work of Elgin's crew of artists, was to visually document the ancient artifacts and sites the French party discovered. Bonaparte also included scholars and scientists, which Elgin was forced to do without due to his limited personal budget.

During Bonaparte's exploration of Egypt, many antiquities, such as sarcophagi and obelisks, were shipped to France.<sup>72</sup> Among the more important discoveries made by the French teams was that of the Rosetta Stone (13). The popular concept of the Enlightenment was fueled further when the historically rich antiquities were sent to Europe. The arrival of the ancient Egyptian works gave Bonaparte the opportunity to promote his personal devotion to the Enlightenment and academia.<sup>73</sup> Critics believe, however, that Bonaparte used the ancient sculptures as propaganda to gain public support.<sup>74</sup> These conflicting perceptions are comparable to the arguments made for Elgin and the Parthenon marbles.



(13) The Rosetta Stone on display in the British Museum

<sup>71</sup> Irwin, 335.

<sup>72</sup> Chamberlin, 130.

<sup>73</sup> Irwin, 89.

<sup>74</sup> Chamberlain, 145.

Two important battles occurred while the French forces were located in the Mediterranean. While Bonaparte was fighting the Mamelukes and exploring inland at Egypt, he had the French navy stationed in the Mediterranean Sea. A British fleet lead by Rear-Admiral Horatio Nelson faced against the French fleet of Vice-Admiral François-Paul Brueys D'Aigallier in 1798.<sup>75</sup> The ensuing battle is known as the Battle of the Nile or the Battle of Aboukir Bay and was an important victory for establishing British naval dominance. A battle which was more significant to the later events of Elgin and the Parthenon sculptures was the Siege of Acre in 1799. Bonaparte, in his attempts to further his French empire, wanted authority of the city of Acre in present-day Israel.<sup>76</sup> In the late eighteenth century, the city was controlled by Ottoman forces. Bonaparte attacked the city for two months and was finally defeated by the Turkish troops which were aided by the British troops under Sir Sidney Smith.<sup>77</sup>

Imperial competition was encouraged by the artistic and military achievements of each country. Both England and France assumed possession of many artifacts discovered in foreign regions and shipped them to Europe. The British military and navy interrupted Bonaparte's strategic campaigns numerous times. Due to the rivalry between the global powers of the time, Elgin's actions are more understandable. Elgin knew of Bonaparte's great discoveries in Egypt and desire to fill the Louvre with cultural treasures.<sup>78</sup> Combined with a nationalistic perception, Elgin was not only saving the Acropolis sculptures from the harmful effects of weather and warfare, but he was also saving them from French acquisition. Elgin was again acting in favor of the British Empire. He not only hoped to promote the arts and culture in England, but also

<sup>75</sup> James Marshall-Cornwall, Napoleon (London: B. T. Batsford LTD, 1967), 87.

<sup>76</sup> Leslie McGuire, Napoleon (New York: Chelsea House, 1986), 49.

<sup>77</sup> Marshall-Cornwall, 90.

<sup>78</sup> Irwin, 259.

attempted to counteract the French threat on British imperialism.

### **The Controversy of the Ownership of the Parthenon Sculptures**

The Parthenon Marbles are at the center of controversy today. As such excellent examples of ancient Greek sculpture and culture, it is not surprising that a disagreement over the custody of the priceless pieces would emerge. Many individuals believe using present laws to decide the custody of the pieces would be wrong since the sculptures were taken so long ago. Today's laws were not in existence when Elgin shipped the marbles to England and, therefore, applying modern regulations to the case would be inappropriate. The central argument favoring the sculptures' return to Greece is explained first, followed by the general points held by those who advocate that the marbles should remain in the British Museum in London.

It is incorrect to assume that all individuals in Britain and Greece automatically support their respective arguments. While many British authors of the subject do advocate the British Museum retaining possession, there are strong motions for restitution coming from British citizens. Researching the Parthenon marbles without reading a call for restitution authored by Ian Jenkins is nearly impossible. Also, numerous British organizations have formed to support the Greek government in its actions to retrieve the Parthenon Marbles, such as the British Committee for the Restitution of the Parthenon Marbles.<sup>79</sup> While British pro-restitution proposals are common, Greek sentiments almost never favor leaving the sculptures in London.

### **Argument for Restitution to Athens, Greece**

Lord Elgin's actions in the early 1800s have been referred to as vandalism and robbery. Advocates of the return of the Parthenon marbles claim the sculptures were illegally and immorally taken from Greece. There is a subtle differentiation between these two categories. The case for restitution can be argued on legal grounds according to today's legal standards and laws. There is also the issue that the case can be argued from a moral or emotional standpoint.

As explained before, the current self-governing country of Greece was controlled by the Ottoman Empire in the early nineteenth century. Proponents of restitution argue that after the Greeks asserted their independence from Turkish control, any contract issued by the Turkish government regarding Greece was, consequently, void after 1827. Those in favor of restitution believe that the British Museum's current entitlement to the sculptures, therefore, is invalid. This claim directly challenges the British Museum's references to Elgin's original agreement and firmans with the Turkish government as proof of the museum's legitimate ownership.<sup>80</sup>

It is argued further that the firmans Elgin acquired from the Turkish officials are insufficient in validating the sculptures' export.<sup>81</sup> It is correct that the documents' expectations were ambiguously written and subject to a multitude of interpretations. Lord Elgin brandished the firmans as his legal permission to excavate, detach, and transport the sculptures to England. Advocates claim the firmans did not fully verify the nature or extent of excavation allotted to Elgin by the Turkish government, but Elgin's bribery of Turkish officials solidified the transaction.<sup>82</sup> More moderate views, however, consider the initial intentions for the documents allowed Elgin to export only those pieces already fallen from structures. Still others believe

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<sup>79</sup> The Parthenon Marbles, The British Committee for the Restitution of the Parthenon Marbles, 2001, revised 2002, <http://www.parthenonuk.com>, 17 Jan. 2006.

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<sup>80</sup> Merryman, 102.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, 101.

<sup>82</sup> Merryman, 101.

Elgin had no authority under Turkish law to ship any pieces.<sup>83</sup>

In addition to highlighting the questionable legality of Elgin's actions and the British Museum's possession, many supporters of restitution champion their opinion with emotional appeals. Melina Mercouri (14), Greece's Minister of Culture from 1981 through 1989, was a forerunner in publicizing the controversy. Though countless pleas for the return of the marbles were made to the British Museum and British government, the first official request for the sculptures to be restored to Greece was made by Mercouri in 1983.<sup>84</sup> In a speech to Oxford University in June 1986 she poignantly said, "You must understand what the Parthenon Marbles mean to us. They are our pride. They are our sacrifices. They are our noblest symbol of excellence. They are a tribute to the democratic philosophy. They are our aspirations and our name. They are the essence of Greekness."<sup>85</sup>



(14) Postage stamp featuring Melina Mercouri and the Parthenon

Another claim the proponents of restitution use is the damages the antiquities experienced while under British ownership. They assert that the sculptures received poor treatment throughout the time in British possession. On the initial trek from Greece to England, a shipment of seventeen cases of

sculptures sank while onboard the ship *Mentor*.<sup>86</sup> The pieces were recovered two years later and completed the remainder of the journey to Britain.<sup>87</sup>

A second incident occurred due to the British government's refusal to fund Elgin's artistic endeavors from the onset of his political appointment. Since 1799 Elgin had assumed the large personal debts associated with solely funding his artistic project. Once the sculptures arrived at his estate in Scotland, Elgin was left unable to care properly for the marbles. The sculptures were stored for a time in a barn on Lord Elgin's property. It is unsurprising that the barn was not the ideal environment to house the marble sculptures. Lord Elgin, acknowledging his inability to care for the pieces appropriately, asked the British government to purchase the lot to save them from their current state of deterioration. The Museum originally refused on accounts of the high price offered by Elgin and the growing animosity from the British public, incited by the writings of Lord Byron, regarding the removal of the marbles.<sup>88</sup> After Elgin was forced to lower his first asking price for the group of sculptures, the museum board accepted the proposal and became the owners of the Parthenon sculptures.

From Lord Elgin's estate the marbles were transported to the British Museum in London in 1816.<sup>89</sup> There they experienced further damages in the 1930s in an effort to "improve" them.<sup>90</sup> As it was the preference in the twentieth century that antiquities appear

<sup>86</sup> Christopher Hitchens, *Imperial Spoils: The Curious Case of the Elgin Marbles* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1988), 89.

<sup>87</sup> Brysac, 74.

<sup>88</sup> Vrettos, 146. In response to Elgin's work Byron composed a number of scathing poems which quickly gained popularity in England. One such poem titled "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" states, "Dull is the eye that will not weep to see/Thy walls defaced, thy mouldering shrines removed/By British hands, which it had best behaved/To guard those relics ne'er to be restored."

<sup>89</sup> Vrettos, 167.

<sup>90</sup> William St. Clair, "The Elgin Marbles: Questions of Stewardship and Accountability," *International Journal of Cultural Property* (1999), 391-521.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 102.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 100.

<sup>85</sup> Merryman, 103.

classically white, Lord Joseph Duveen (15), a popular British art dealer in charge of the cleaning project, ordered his workers at the British Museum to restore the sculptures in order to make them appear more “authentic.”<sup>91</sup> The techniques the restorers employed, however, actually harmed the pieces.<sup>92</sup> Using copper tools and abrasive substances to remove centuries’ worth of grime and pollution, the British workers effectively scoured away the outer orange-brown patina, all traces of original paint, and the original chisel marks of the ancient Greek sculptors.<sup>93</sup>

The effective argument for restitution is no longer one of concern for the sculptures’ safety. There is no doubt that Greece is presently a stable country completely capable of properly maintaining the Parthenon marbles. In fact, a new museum, designed specifically to house the Parthenon sculptures which are now on display in London, is scheduled to open in 2007. The museum is to be located in Athens within view of the Acropolis and the Parthenon.<sup>94</sup>



(15) Sections of the Parthenon frieze on display in the Duveen Gallery of the British Museum

<sup>91</sup> Hitchens, 92.

<sup>92</sup> St. Clair, 426.

<sup>93</sup> Brysac, 75.

<sup>94</sup> Acropolis Museum, The, The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 2001, <http://www.culture.gr/2/21/211/21101m/e211am01.htm> 1, 19 Feb. 2006.

## The Argument for Retention in the British Museum in London, England

The opposing opinion, that the Parthenon sculptures should remain in the British Museum, was once largely based on the desire to ensure the antiquities’ safekeeping. In the decades after Elgin, Greece continued to experience civil wars due to an unstable government. The Athenian Acropolis was not a sufficient environment able to protect the sculptures. This argument, that Greece is not able to care adequately for the sculptures, is no longer merited since Greece is now a recognized self-governing country.

Despite Greece’s recent efforts to prepare for the return of the sculptures, the British Museum still claims the marbles are more protected staying in London than in Greece.

Proponents of this opinion correctly claim that had the marbles remained on the Parthenon, as many pieces have, their current condition would be much worse.<sup>95</sup> Constant exposure to the pollution of acid rain has deteriorated numerous other sculptures still located on the open Acropolis (16). It is true that the superior condition of the Parthenon marbles housed in the British Museum is a result of their litigious relocation to England by Elgin.<sup>96</sup>



(16) Sculptures damaged by pollution still *in situ* on the Parthenon

<sup>95</sup> Hitchens, 93.

<sup>96</sup> Brysac, 73.

Also, it is argued that Greece has not exercised faultless judgment of proper care for ancient works. Select columns located on the Acropolis were damaged recently in an effort to fortify them. A Greek engineer incorporated iron clamps into pieces of supportive stone in order to restore and reinforce the temple. When the metal rusted, the marble slabs cracked due to the unanticipated swelling of the metal.<sup>97</sup>

Today, however, the majority of the argument promoting the retention of the sculptures originates from the claim that the pieces were, in fact, legally purchased.<sup>98</sup> This aspect of the controversy states that the firmans given to Elgin are legitimate because the Turkish officials did have the authority to issue such documents. Turkish authorities are believed to have been able to legally sell the Parthenon sculptures due to the fact that the Turkish government had rightful possession of the Acropolis and its structures during the early nineteenth century.<sup>99</sup> Proponents for keeping the marbles in London (17) accept the British Museum's claim to ownership as legal and justifiable. The opposing argument, that all agreements associated with previous Turkish control were deemed invalid when Greece declared its independence from the Ottoman Empire, is not convincing due to the large amount of elapsed time since the initial affront.<sup>100</sup>



(17) Parthenon sculptures on permanent display in the British Museum

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 75.

<sup>98</sup> Merryman, 36.

<sup>99</sup> Merryman, 37.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, 40.

The concern for additional artifacts located in collections with similar questionable acquisition histories also supports the argument to allow the sculptures to remain in London. The majority of well-known museum collections from across the world are comprised of art objects which many times originated in another region. The methods in which these artifacts were acquired and admitted into the collections, similar to the Parthenon sculptures, are often dubious in manner. The final verdict of the sculptures' placement affects not only artifacts associating with the Parthenon, but will also dictate the fate of all art objects of questionable provenance housed in museums. If the marble sculptures of the Parthenon are restored to Greece, other countries requesting the return of cultural artifacts will have a strong precedent. This scenario would probably lead to the emptying of many museums around the world.<sup>101</sup> This issue will be discussed more in depth in the following section.

### **The Current Issue of Restitution**

The Parthenon Marbles are an example of cultural, artistic, and historical objects currently at the center of a larger issue. There has been a worldwide increase in legal court hearings regarding the ownership of looted art. The idea of art or antiquities being illegally taken from the location of origin is a recently new concept. There existed no established guidelines to control or protect cultural property in the nineteenth century when Lord Elgin first began excavations on the Acropolis.

Before the establishment of responsible laws, tourists seeking souvenirs were, in a way, the first archaeologists. These individuals returned to their wealthy estates with objects acquired on their travels. Many of these objects, not illegally taken at the time, now comprise the bulk of many western museums. Without the early collections of travelers in the early nineteenth century, the

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<sup>101</sup> Merryman, 35.

world's museums would lack permanent collections of varying origins. In fact, the actions of these early travelers returning with and sharing the artifacts gave rise to the beginnings of scholarly research and writings for archaeology and art history.<sup>102</sup> In response to the increasing incidents of looted artifacts, organizations were established, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization or UNESCO in 1945, to protect cultural property and monitor ethical issues.<sup>103</sup>

The number of current cases calling for the restitution of alleged looted antiquities is rising. The indictment of Marion True, the former curator of antiquities for the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, California, was announced in November of 2005.<sup>104</sup> True was taken to Italian court for her actions of knowingly accepting looted and illegally exported artifacts into the museum's collection. At the time of this writing, she is on trial in Rome for conspiracy to acquire looted antiquities. The Italian government possesses well-documented evidence that the allegations against True are accurate.<sup>105</sup>

In February of this year the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City announced it intends to return a cache of twenty items to Italy based on probable evidence that the objects were looted.<sup>106</sup> The group intended to leave the Metropolitan Museum for Italy includes the famous Euphronios calyx-krater (18), a set of Hellenistic silver, and four additional artifacts. The calyx-krater was a prized piece

in both the museum's permanent collection and in the surviving examples of ancient Greek art. The Metropolitan Museum's director, Philippe de Montebello, met with Italian officials to discuss the details of the agreement. In exchange for the twenty artifacts, the Metropolitan Museum will be the recipient of a long-term loan of numerous Italian works. The acknowledgment and restitution of looted artifacts by the Metropolitan Museum is a major milestone in the development of future restitutions.



(18) The calyx-krater which will be returned to Italian authorities by the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Similarly, Yale University and the government of Peru are arguing over the rightful custody of numerous artifacts originating from the Peruvian city of Machu Picchu.<sup>107</sup> The pieces were collected by Yale professor Hiram Bingham at Machu Picchu in 1911.<sup>108</sup> Parallel to the situation of the Parthenon sculptures, Yale claims Bingham, who later bequeathed his collection to Yale University, was granted a "special dispensation" to export artifacts from the Peruvian government in the early twentieth century. Peru, similar to Greece, has repeatedly requested the return for the objects. Presently, Yale has not agreed to Peru's appeals.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>102</sup> Colin Renfrew, *Loot, Legitimacy and Ownership: The Ethical Crisis in Archaeology* (London: Duckworth, 2000), 17.

<sup>103</sup> UNESCO, United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, 2005, [www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org), 25 Jan. 2006. The mass looting of private and public art collections by Nazis during World War II necessitated the establishment of such an establishment.

<sup>104</sup> Elisabetta Povoledo, "Exhibited in Antiquities Case: The Cracks of a Broken Cup," *The New York Times*, (6 Dec. 2005).

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Hugh Eakin and Elisabetta Povoledo, "Ceding Art to Italy, Met Avoids Showdown," *Museum Security Network*, (21 Feb. 2006).

<sup>107</sup> Matthew Campbell, "Wrath of the Incas Descends on Yale," *Museum Security Network*, 5 Feb. 2006.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

Directly regarding the Parthenon sculptures' future, a small marble fragment held in the collection of the Heidelberg Museum of Antiquities in Germany, which was attributed to the Parthenon in 1958, is planned to be returned to Greece.<sup>110</sup> The fragment, a carving of a man's leg with the word "Parthenon" etched on the reverse side, is believed to have originally belonged to the Parthenon's northern frieze.<sup>111</sup> The piece has been in the museum's collection since 1871 yet never displayed.<sup>112</sup> On January 11, 2006 Professor Angelos Chaniotis, the University of Heidelberg's Museum Vice Rector, announced the university would be returning the marble sculpture to Greece.<sup>113</sup> This transaction is currently setting another precedent for the possible return of the Parthenon sculptures still in London.

Elements of the Parthenon's original sculptures are located in public and private collections throughout the world.<sup>114</sup> While the most attention and publicity focuses on those specific pieces housed in the British Museum in London, it is important to acknowledge that numerous other recognized institutions also possess pieces of the Parthenon.

In the aftermath of these legal battles it will be interesting to witness the actions of the Greek government and the British Museum regarding the Parthenon marbles. The evidence of the illegally smuggling of the Metropolitan Museum's Euphronios calyx-krater, which was used to solidify the item's return to Italy, was not new. Many of the pieces included in the Metropolitan's acquisition have been associated with the work of Marion True, former J. Paul Getty curator. The information pertaining to the dubious documentation has been well-known for years.

It is only recently that both individuals and institutions are analyzing their current situations. The media and press have also played a role in the outcome of major decisions of restitution. Each case serves as an example for what is to come for the Parthenon sculptures. If additional cases regarding questionable provenance are addressed, the majority of the world's museum collections will be depleted

## Conclusion

As I prepare for my first summer as a college graduate, I am grateful I chose to research the issue of looted art for my Honors Thesis. The knowledge I gained over the course of my research will surely aid me in my future career in museum work. The concern for smuggled artifacts is not new and will continue to warrant scrutiny in years to follow. My experiences working on Looted Art: The Case of the Parthenon Sculptures has helped me solidify my own opinions in such topics.

When I began reading about Lord Elgin and the Parthenon, I knew the Greek government was never getting the sculptures back. The British Museum seemed such a strong institution which was able to deflect all requests of restitution. Now, after two years of research and paying attention to related court cases, my confidence in the British Museum is wavering. I was surprised to learn, despite the convincing evidence of looting, that the Metropolitan Museum of Art agreed to return the Euphronios krater to Italian authorities. I considered that a huge victory in all calls for the return of allegedly smuggled artwork. It seems the Parthenon sculptures are the last stand.

I believe a compromise between the British Museum and the Greek government will be eventually enacted. The current unrest for the return of the sculptures, in combination with future cases in favor of return, will incite the British Museum to loan the marbles to Greece for long-term exhibition or open a mini-British Museum in Athens to display the sculptures. Although similar ideas have been officially proposed

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<sup>110</sup> Martin Bailey, "Parthenon Fragment Returned to Greece," Museum Security Network, 21 Feb. 2006.

<sup>111</sup> "Heidelberg University to Return Fragment of Parthenon Frieze to Greece," Hellenic Republic: Embassy of Greece, [www.greekembassy.org](http://www.greekembassy.org), 19 Jan. 2006.

<sup>112</sup> Bailey.

<sup>113</sup> Hellenic Republic: Embassy of Greece.

<sup>114</sup> Bailey.

and rejected, I believe a similar situation will ultimately occur.

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#### Acknowledgements

Dedicated to my father, mother, and younger brother who inspire me to "Do well, learn, behave, and have fun."

Dr. Carter and Dr. Murphy,

Thank you for the past three years I have been an Art History student at UNF. I sat in your classes and was inspired to pursue a career as a museum curator. Enjoy the geese!

LouAnne B. Hawkins,

I have appreciated your support while working on this project. Thank you for all of your help!