

The Parthenon

Acropolis

Athens

Greece

The trustees: British Museum

Great Russell Street

London

(CC 10 Downing Street)

Sirs,

As you are aware this is not my first missive on this subject. I am currently looking over the top of my glasses in disgust at the recent news that the Bayeaux Tapestry is to be returned to the British Museum for display. It is a travesty that this 'symbol of shared history' be allowed to materialize whilst the Museum still clings onto illicit booty. I speak of the ancient monuments illegally poached by the so-called Lord Elgin in conjunction with his corrupt partners, the Ottoman occupiers of our sacred city.

The Parthenon Sculptures demand and require to be afforded the same kudos and compassion.

Through my role as Hellenic Member of the European Parliament and as UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, I have travelled many countries that have been ravaged by war, famine and natural disaster. I have seen destruction, robbery and looting firsthand. I consider Lord Elgin's actions all those years ago to be on a par with the most heinous of these travesties.

I have dedicated my life to highlight the irrevocable loss of heritage across Europe. From an observer in battle torn Sarajevo to the Eurovision song contest, peace through culture has always been my personal mission.

There can be no consideration of a different time. The pillage of the Parthenon Sculptures and currently being held hostage in your mausoleum goal is sheer vandalism. They have been significantly damaged and poorly conserved. The museum should stand trial over their stewardship.

Lord Byron's censure still stands true,

*Dull is the eye that will not weep to see
Thy walls defaced, thy mouldering shrines removed.*

Your government calls itself an 'International Partnership Champion' and has a recent history in recognizing past misdemeanours that include slavery and numerous national miscarriages of justice. You laud previous exhibitions of the Terracotta warriors and King Tut's finery, yet you still condone our sculptures appropriation. Don't be organised criminals masquerading as a responsible governance. Open a dialogue. Talk the talk; then walk the walk. I implore that these misappropriated sculptures be treated likewise and as such are immediately restored to their rightful standing. Equality personified.

Did not the people of Bristol recently rebel and confront the question of cultural inappropriateness head on. They cast a statue, one of the perpetrators of human misery into the dock repudiating all legacy. I am not promulgating direct action but dialogue and remuneration. I would even come out of retirement to complete a fund-raising concert to assist. I recently offered to return my own pension to assist with Greece's recent financial meltdown. I know how things can get when money is tight.

As reparation and recognition of the many indiscretions of the past have already ensued, returning the sculptures to their rightful home is the logical next step. A win-win.

I look forwards to your actions. Make them speak proud.

Yours in anticipation

Nana Mouskouri.

The White Rose of Athens