

THE PARTHENON SCULPTURES



NEWSLETTER NO. 9

THE AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR THE
REUNIFICATION OF THE PARTHENON SCULPTURES

JANUARY 2010

IS THERE REALLY A NEED FOR TWO PARTHENON COLLECTIONS?

By Dennis Menos

A new ultramodern museum graces the foothills of the Acropolis in Athens. Its top floor, the Parthenon Gallery, built to replicate the size and configuration of the original temple, is universally considered to be the ideal venue for bringing together in one location all surviving sculptural art of the Parthenon. Already in place in the new gallery are the sculptures that survived Elgin's pillage, each positioned to face outward in the precise location it occupied on the temple. Bathed by the Athenian sun, the sculptures provide a memorable spectacle of beauty in rhythm.

There is a second collection of Parthenon sculptures, of course, in the Duveen Gallery of the British Museum in London where the sculptures removed from the Parthenon by Lord Elgin are on display. The contrast between the two collections could not be more striking. Devoid of direct sunshine and displayed under colored spotlights in a location hundreds of miles from the temple for which they were crafted, the statues in London are clearly diminished -- aesthetically and historically. Clear proof that they do not belong there. Yet, The British Museum insists on keeping a tight hold on them.

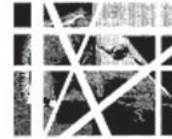
A logical question arises. Does the world really need two separate collections of Parthenon sculptures -- one in Athens, the second at the other end of the European continent? Why should the work of the master sculptor Pheidias be displayed in a museum 1,500 miles from its natural and historic setting when a far superior facility for that purpose already exists in Athens, within sight of the famed temple? Why expect persons, seeking to understand the true meaning and artistry of the Parthenon sculptures, to travel to two distant cities to obtain that information? More important, how can the Parthenon's sculptural art really be understood unless all its surviving pieces are assembled and viewed in one location?

We are all too familiar with the British Museum's arguments for retaining its collection of Parthenon sculptures. Within its confines, the museum claims, the accomplishments of Athenian civilization can be admired alongside works of other civilizations, something which is

not possible in the New Acropolis Museum. Granted, there may be some truth to the claim, but does it really justify maintaining two separate Parthenon collections?

The sculptures now in London were illicitly removed from the temple and need to be returned to their place of origin. A brand new museum in Athens is waiting to receive them. To pretend that the New Acropolis Museum has no bearing on the issue of the sculptures' return, is an indefensible position, not befitting the great institution that the British Museum is.

The British Museum knows quite well what it must do... and now is the time to do it.



ALL SIDES OF THE PARTHENON

THE AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR THE REUNIFICATION
OF THE PARTHENON SCULPTURES

AND

THE EMBASSY OF GREECE
CORDIALLY INVITE YOU

TO

A GALA DINNER CELEBRATION
IN SUPPORT OF

ALL SIDES OF THE PARTHENON

2010 TOURING EXHIBIT

AT

THE WESTIN DIPLOMAT
HOLLYWOOD, FLORIDA
ON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2010
AT SEVEN O'CLOCK

BLACK TIE

RSVP

VIVIANA: 305-822-8422

THANK YOU NORFOLK, BETHESDA and MIAMI!

We wish to thank our many friends and supporters in Norfolk VA, Miami FL, and Bethesda, MD, for inviting us to discuss the Parthenon sculptures issue before audiences in their cities. Their tireless efforts in organizing these events are greatly appreciated.

NORFOLK, VA

Speaking on October 17th to an enthusiastic crowd of over 200 attendees, Michael Reppas, our Committee President, was greatly pleased by the support and encouragement he received from the Norfolk community. "In the dozens and dozens of lectures I have given over the past twelve years," he reported, "I can honestly say that this is the first time that the question and answer period exceeded the actual lecture time! What a fantastic group!" Photos of the event may be viewed on our webpage at the EVENTS tab. We wish to thank particularly Ioanna Williams for her leadership and support in making this event such a success.



Michael Reppas with Committee supporters in Norfolk.

BETHESDA, MD

On October 28th, Dennis Menos, our Committee Vice-president, engaged a large audience of members and friends of the 'Over Fifty Club' of St. George's Greek Orthodox Church in Bethesda, MD, with a presentation entitled: "*The Stalemate Over the Parthenon Sculptures; Is the End in Sight?*"

"The intransigence of the British Museum", noted Mr. Menos, "which claims to legally own the Parthenon sculptures, makes difficult the reunification of all survived Parthenon sculptural art in the New Acropolis Museum. The British Museum's position notwithstanding, there is optimism that the stalemate will be broken. Numerous visitors that tour daily the new museum (many from the United Kingdom) openly question the rationale for London maintaining its own collection of Parthenon sculptures. International public opinion will ultimately force the British Museum to act, as will proposals advanced by interested third parties".

MIAMI, FL

On November 19th Michael Reppas successfully presented to a group of Florida attorneys his third Continuing Legal Education course, entitled "*The Shortcomings of International Law: Why the World's Symbol of Justice Cannot Find Justice Itself.*" "[It was] excellent, as I expected," wrote the North Dade County Bar Association President, Maria Antonatos.

"There is a growing trend in the global community," concluded Mr. Reppas, "to aggressively make legal challenges for the return of looted art and artifacts being held by international museums. This represents a significant change from the decades' old practice of passive acceptance of the de-facto ownership by museums of the looted artifacts. Changes are also expected in the acquisition practices of museums and perhaps in the overall structure of the museums themselves."

NEW COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

We are pleased to announce that Alexandros Alexandrou, until recently our Committee's Treasurer, has assumed responsibility for the newly created position of 'Director for Congressional and Academic Affairs.' In this position, Alexandros will direct and coordinate all Committee contacts and activities with members of the U.S. Congress and with scholars in the United States engaged in the study of classical Greece. Committee members who may already have personal or professional contacts with elected officials on Capitol Hill and their staffs or with nationally known academics, are encouraged to provide this information to Mr. Alexandrou at (301) 762-5619 to ensure that future actions relating to our issue are carried out in an effective and coordinated manner

Replacing Mr. Alexandrou as Committee Treasurer is Andreas Leontsinis of Sunrise FL. Andreas is a graduate of the University of South Carolina and of Florida International University, with degrees in biology, marketing and international business. An expert in the customer service industry, he is a NACE Certified Inspector and Secretary for the NACE South Florida Section. Andreas is a member of St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Ft Lauderdale, the Miami and Port Everglades Propeller Clubs, and a past Board member of Friends of Greece.

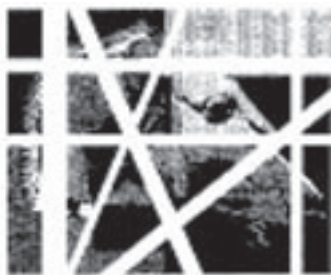
American Committee members who wish to renew their memberships for the year 2010 may do so by forwarding payment to the attention of Mr. Andreas Leontsinis at: ACRPS, Inc, 7850 N.W. 146th Street, Suite 501, Miami Lakes, FL 33016. Andreas' phone number is (954) 868-1218

THE PARTHENON EDUCATIONAL EXHIBIT Progress Report

Preparations are on schedule for the opening of the Parthenon Educational Exhibit at the Coral Springs Museum of Art in Florida in May 2010. Several important milestones have already been met, including the selection of a curator for the exhibit and adoption of its official logo.

Mr. W.F. Withers II, President of *Correlation Design and International Art Services*, has agreed to provide curator services for the exhibit and to work with us in the development of what promises to be a very dynamic exhibit on Greece's famed temple. Mr. Withers is a noted authority in this field, whose clients have included the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Vatican Museum, and the Royal Academy of London. We are extremely fortunate to have engaged his services.

Konstantine Vaxevelis, President and Creative Director of *Omega Communications and Konstantine Partners*, similarly has made a major contribution to our exhibit by his skillful design of the exhibit's logo. Utilizing the image of the horse's head from the sculpture of the chariot of the moon goddess Selene, on which he superimposed several abstract geometric forms, Mr. Vaxevelis was successful in illustrating on the logo Greece's ongoing struggle to bring back to Athens the sculptures removed by Lord Elgin. A reproduction of this highly challenging logo is shown below.



Please keep an eye on the section of our Webpage -- "All Sides of the Parthenon Exhibit" -- for updates, press releases, YOU TUBE videos, and more.

GREECE'S NEW MINISTER OF CULTURE AND TOURISM

We congratulate Pavlos Yeroulanos on assuming recently his duties as Minister of Culture and Tourism of Greece. Mr. Yeroulanos, an Athenian by birth, holds academic degrees in history from Williams College MA, in public administration from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, and in business administration from the Sloan School of Management at MIT. Mr. Yeroulanos has had an illustrious career in business and as a tireless official of PASOK, the ruling party of Greece. We look forward to working with him to promote the return to Greece of the Parthenon sculptures in London and elsewhere.

NEW WEBPAGE ON THE PARTHENON'S FRIEZE

We commend to our readers an extremely interesting and authoritative Webpage dealing with the Parthenon frieze. Launched recently by the Greek Ministry of Culture and Tourism and produced in the Greek and English languages, the page is suitable for both serious art professionals as well as youth. It can be accessed at: <http://www.parthenonfrieze.gr>

It is recalled, that of the original 525 foot-long frieze that once adorned the upper part of the Parthenon's inner temple (or *naos*), only about 430 ft survived; of these, 262 ft are on display at the British Museum and 165 ft in the New Acropolis Museum. Fragments are also found in the Louvre and in museums in Palermo, the Vatican, Heidelberg, Vienna, and Munich.

QUOTE

"There is no reason for the [Parthenon] sculptures to remain in the British Museum and this is why you should continue your efforts for their return."

Ilber Ortayli, Director of the famed Topkapi Museum in Istanbul (Constantinople) after touring the New Acropolis Museum.

CONGRATULATIONS . . .

To the students of the First Middle School, in Pefka, Thessaloniki, for producing a truly professional DVD on the history and architecture of the Parthenon. Entitled "An ancient temple is moving...", the DVD makes special reference to the sculptures still in London and the case for their return to Athens and placement in the New Acropolis Museum. The new museum, the students emphasize, is a cause of pride for every Greek citizen. "More than anything, however, it provides a profound argument for the return to our nation of the Marbles of the Parthenon held by the British Museum for two whole centuries."

To Sofka Smales for her appearance on the fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square. (The plinth is a 22-foot pedestal in London's Trafalgar Square that offers ordinary persons the opportunity to speak and promote their favorite causes).

On September 12, 2009, 19-year old Sofka Smales, a student from Todmorden, in England, who is passionate about seeing the Parthenon sculptures return to their country of origin, spent an hour on top the plinth promoting her cause. Her message to the gathered crowd on Trafalgar Square was simple and to the point: "Send the Elgin Marbles home."

To fellow American Mary Phillips, who on November 22nd, despite a heavy rain downpour, staged her own one-person, silent protest in front of the British Museum in London, dressed in a Caryatid costume. According to our colleague Marlen Taffarello in London, the director of the British Museum, stopped by briefly to have a look at Mary's peaceful protest and declared it 'an elegant gesture.'

DISTORTIONS and HALF-TRUTHS

A friend and recent visitor to London, who had the opportunity to visit the Duveen Gallery of the British Museum, provided us with a copy of the pamphlet on the 'Parthenon Sculptures' that the museum hands out to its visitors. It makes for 'interesting' reading. A few excerpts are listed below:

...“Between 1801 and 1805 Lord Elgin, the British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, of which Athens had been part for some 350 years, *acting with the full knowledge and permission of the Ottoman authorities*, removed about half of the remaining sculptures from the fallen ruins and from the building itself”... (*Editor's note*: Lord Elgin never received official permission from the Ottoman authorities to take down from the temple the more than ninety panels of its frieze, metopes, and pediment sculptures that he had removed and sent to London).

... “*Lord Elgin was passionate about Greek culture*” (*Editor's note*: There is no historical evidence to support this claim. While still in Britain, Lord Elgin showed absolutely no interest in Greek culture. His interest was aroused when he arrived in Athens and saw the potential value of the Parthenon sculptures as decorations for his planned mansion in Scotland).

...“Recently the Greek authorities have continued the process of removing the sculptures from the Parthenon *work that began over 200 years ago*”.... (*Editor's note*: The implication here is, that it was appropriate for Lord Elgin to take down the Parthenon's art, since the Greek government would do similarly 200 years later (!) What the statement overlooks, however, is that the Greek government's action was motivated by the desire to protect the surviving art, while Lord Elgin's motivation was greed and the desire to decorate with classical Greek artifacts his mansion in Scotland).

...“The Greek Government has also disputed the British Museum Trustees' legal title to sculptures” (*Editor's note*: How insulting! Legal title to the sculptures rests with the people of Greece).



WE ASK LONDON, "WHY NOT?"

NOTICES:

THE PARTHENON SCULPTURES is the official Newsletter of the American Committee for the Reunification of the Parthenon Sculptures, Inc. Dennis Menos at DMenos@msn.com is editor; Cimon Psira at ameragreek@verizon.net is responsible for design and layout.

The American Committee for the Reunification of the Parthenon Sculptures, Inc. (ACRPS) is the only IRS recognized Not-for-Profit organization in the United States, formed expressly to educate the American public about Greece's most acclaimed Parthenon sculptures now in London and to demand their return to Athens. Contributions and membership fees are considered by the IRS as charitable donations and are fully deductible.

PLEASE JOIN OUR COMMITTEE AND HELP US RETURN TO GREECE THE PARTHENON SCULPTURES NOW IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM. YOUR FINANCIAL HELP IS URGENTLY NEEDED TO PRODUCE AND MAIL PUBLICITY MATERIALS, PROVIDE FOR ESSENTIAL TRAVEL, AND FOR MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES PROMOTING OUR CAUSE. FORMS FOR JOINING OUR COMMITTEE AND/OR OFFERING CONTRIBUTIONS ARE AVAILABLE IN OUR WEBPAGE: www.parthenonsculpturesusa.org

Payment of membership fees and/or donations may be made to ACRPS Inc., to the attention of Andreas Leontsinis, Treasurer, at 7850 N.W. 146th Street, Suite 501, Miami Lakes, FL 33016. Please make checks payable to ACRPS, Inc.

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED TO TAKE THE LEAD IN ESTABLISHING PARTHENON COMMITTEES IN MAJOR U.S. METROPOLITAN CENTERS, TO RECRUIT SUPPORTERS AND ORGANIZE EVENTS. Please contact Lefteris Karmiris, ACRPS Secretary at (301) 229-9389 or by E-Mail at Lefteris.Karmiris@verizon.net