



A Last Farewell

A tribute to Christopher Hitchens 1949-2011

Photo by Jose Ramirez



A sunny day in June 1987, and Eleni Cubitt had invited me to the press launch of Christopher Hitchens' excellent book "The Elgin Marbles" – later reprinted and revised in 2008 as "The Parthenon Marbles – the case for reunification". When we were introduced, he made the connection with my film on 'Lord Elgin & Some Stones of No Value' and wrote the above touching dedication there and then. We discussed how valuable the letters were both for my film and his book, and also how damning they had been to Elgin's cause. He thought that the firman, (the permission the Turks were supposed to have given Elgin to take the sculptures away), was not as important as the sheer undisputed vandalism of the act of hacking down the sculptures and shipping them back to England. How could the then dominating Turkish imperialists, he said, give another imperialist country permission to purloin the most important jewels in the subjugated country's crown?

As philhellenes, we talked about his fondness of Cyprus, and mine for the Peloponnese. We discussed Melina Mer-

couri, Jules Dassin and other Greek friends we had in common.

That morning his confrontational style, of which I had heard so much, was absent. However I could see the spark of his wit and humour. Later, on reading his book for the first time, I realised how well organised it was, and how brilliantly his arguments elucidated the natural justice and the weighing of the well researched evidence for the return of the Parthenon sculptures to their rightful home.

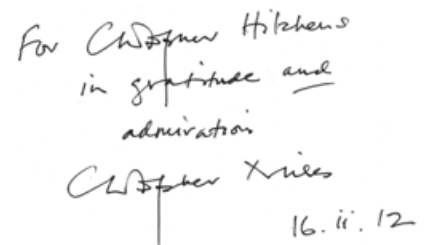
That morning his confrontational style, of which I had heard so much, was absent. However I could see the spark of his wit and humour.

How right therefore were the BCRPM and Eleni to invite him to write the book, and how generous of her to sponsor it.

However there was always a chink in the armour of his argument. For the marbles could not be put back in situ on the temple itself, nor could they rest in the cramped and already overcrowded old Acropolis Museum built in the 1870's. However, by 2007, the new Acropolis Museum was complete, which Christopher went to see. He then realised there was now an ideal opportunity to re-state the case for the reunification of the marbles, not only could they now be next to the temple itself, but also be seen in the Attic light in the impressive space reserved for them by the architect Bernard Tschumi. So a year later, after Christopher's discussions with the BCRPM, the new edition of his book, now called "The Parthenon Marbles – the case for reunification" was printed in which there was an introduction by the Nobel Laureate Nadine Gordimer, and a new one by Christopher, both of which made a more forceful case for reunification.

We will greatly miss Christopher's challenging, argumentative, and often wittily abrasive style, we will miss his hatred of hypocrisy and cant and above all his erudite defence for the reunification of the Parthenon Marbles. Finally, knowing he championed "antitheism" and his views of the afterlife, he is now in the unique position to know the truth, as to whether or not he will be able to read my written gratitude for all he has done ...

We will greatly miss Christopher's challenging, argumentative, and often wittily abrasive style, we will miss his hatred of hypocrisy and cant and above all his erudite defence for the reunification of the Parthenon Marbles.



**By
Christopher
Miles**



MR recruit Stephen Fry

From left to right: Matthew Taylor (Treasurer), Andrew George MP (Chairman) and Stephen Fry

We have a new recruit! We mourn the loss of the great Christopher Hitchens. But it brought a silver lining in the form of Stephen Fry who immediately published a brilliant essay in support of the return of the Parthenon Marbles and in honour to the memory of Christopher.

Without hesitation, Marbles Reunited congratulated Stephen. We agree that the increasingly feeble arguments used to defend the retention of these stolen artefacts can be easily rebutted.

Without hesitation, Marbles Reunited congratulated Stephen.

Stephen came over to Parliament for an initial chat with Treasurer, Matthew Taylor and I, and would like to support future activities of Marbles Reunited. Unfortunately, Stephen is currently away in New Zealand until May, filming The Hobbit! However, he is keen to be more involved on his return. More news to follow...



stephenfry Stephen Fry

Had very good meeting with Andrew George MP, who like me sees the decency and pride in returning the marbles stephenfry.com/2011/12/19/a-m... Need more!

19 Jan

Stephen Fry's Twitter update, following our meeting



By
Andrew George MP

Chairman of Marbles Reunited

An international conference for the Reunification of the Parthenon Sculptures

The 19th and 20th of June 2012 will witness an important international collaboration. The London Hellenic Centre will be the venue and the event will be a colloquy on issues of topical concern about the Parthenon Marbles.

The date has been chosen to coincide with the anniversary of the opening of the New Acropolis Museum, now widely celebrated as International Parthenon Day, and the London Olympics which open one month later.

The colloquy will be presented jointly by the British and American Committees for the Reunification of the Parthenon Marbles and the International Organising Committee - Australia - for the Restitution of the Parthenon Marbles (Inc).



The Hellenic Centre in London. Photo taken by Mike Quinn

Day one of the colloquy will consist of presentations by speakers from the UK, Australia, USA, Greece and elsewhere. Themes will include legal issues relating to the reunification of the marbles, the concept of the "universal museum", the relevance of the Greek financial crisis and how we should respond during these current difficulties. Day two (June 20th) will consist of an "organised attendance" at the British Museum. A conference dinner (chargeable separately) will take place on the evening of day one at which the guest speaker will be our distinguished South African colleague George Bizos.

As the important international festival of the Olympic Games approaches in London we intend through this colloquy to remind the world that in London also there is another debt to Greece which will not be repaid until the Parthenon Marbles in the British Museum are reunited with their other halves in Athens.

For further details contact eddieohara@hotmail.co.uk



By
Eddie O'Hara

Honorary President

Greece made us. We owe them. They are ready for its return and have never needed such morale boosting achievement more. And it would be so graceful, so apt, so right. Stephen Fry

Views on the reunification of the Parthenon Sculptures



It was a bitterly cold Sunday morning and as we exited the Acropolis underground station an icy blast of wind hit our faces. Making our way up the cobbled road to the New Acropolis Museum (NAM), I wondered how successful our attempts would be at convincing museum visitors to oblige us for a 5 minute interview, in the cold.

We soon reached the white marble steps that lead into the museum courtyard. Standing there, looking at the museum, it was impossible not to surrender to its architectural beauty but also to the feeling of renewed hope for the reunification of the Parthenon sculptures, which it has come to represent. A short turn to my right, and there was the awe-inspiring Acropolis situated on the hill above me. But as I stood there, on that Sunday morning, I was overcome by sadness at the thought of the crude way in which it had been stripped bare.

Though this damage can never be reversed, standing in front of the new purpose-built Acropolis museum, the answer appeared to be so simple. These sculptures should return to their point of origin. To be housed in the new museum and put on exhibit so that visitors can marvel

at both the sculptures and the view of the Acropolis, visible through the museum window. What better way to fully appreciate this ancient monument! I wondered if the visitors shared my thoughts.

Several hours later, and in spite of the unusually cold Athenian weather, we had managed to interview visitors from Brazil, Austria, Iran, Australia and the US.



"It is a tragedy that Britain can't see itself able to return these marbles that are so important to Greece". Elizabeth Minchin, Professor of Classics at the Australian National University.

The visitors were quick to praise the New Acropolis Museum. Maria-Regina, a professor from Brazil, was especially taken with the glass floors through which the excavated ancient city was still visible. Renatta, also from Brazil, expressed her appreciation for the reconstruction of sculptures held elsewhere, but explained she would much rather see the originals reunited with the fragments

currently held in the museum. Stefan from Austria indicated that he regarded his visit as a rich cultural experience, but was saddened by the absence of certain sculptures and believed it right that these should return to the country they originated from.

Their message was clear. They all felt that the sculptures should be returned to Greece and reunited with their counterparts in the New Acropolis Museum. In an effort to support this message, the first of our edited videos was posted on our YouTube channel, with the aim of informing and inspiring an even larger audience. Our next set of interviews have been scheduled for spring when the weather will be more welcoming. Until then, please visit our YouTube channel to view and share the first of the videos. And, please, don't lose faith!

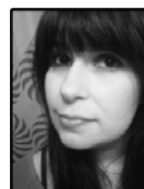
You can find the video at the following link: http://youtu.be/ufvTTx56s_s



By

Maria Koutsikou

Interviews filmed by Lazaros Filippidis



We say to the British government: you have kept those sculptures for almost two centuries. You have cared for them as well as you could, for which we thank you. But now in the name of fairness and morality, please give them back. Melina Mercuri

Marbles Reunited Online

The hope for the reunification of the Parthenon sculptures and the actions that have taken place in the name of the cause would not matter, if this wasn't a cause followed by millions of people around the world. The purpose of Marbles Reunited is to provide a voice for these people as well as inform anyone interested in the cause. The internet has proven to be an important tool in reaching people from around the world and offering an arena for debate. 2012 marks a year in which our online presence is being updated in order to reach and engage even more followers.

We have been using social media networking sites to increase our followers and we have noticed an increase in follower participation, specifically on our Facebook page. The page has been kept updated with news posts and we are now ready to start running campaigns. A first attempt was made by sharing a video of interviews taken outside the New Acropolis Museum. This video has reached 141 people in one month and we are hopeful this number will increase in the coming months. The video is available through our own Marbles Reunited channel, and we intend to upload further campaign videos in the near future.

In addition to using social networking tools we have also been updating our own website. The purpose of these changes has been to update the functionality of the site as well as add new features which will attract more followers. One of the main additions to the site is a new section titled *The Parthenon Sculptures*. Here, the viewer is given a more detailed description of the various items which comprise the Parthenon sculptures as well as their current location in museums across the world. We felt this was an essential introduction for new recruiters to the cause, old and young alike. To complement this new section we have also added a gallery which offers a full-sized slideshow of some of the Parthenon sculptures whose pieces are split between London and Athens. This gallery has been aptly titled *Virtual Reunification*, and as well as the slideshow it also offers a detailed background on each piece. A new gallery has also been recently added to this section. It is titled *Marbles with an Attitude* and contains a series of thought provoking images using photos of some of the Parthenon sculptures and paired with witty remarks. These images were created by Lazaros Filippidis, who very kindly gave us permission to reproduce the work on the Marbles Reunited website.

Marbles Reunited has long offered an annual membership for supporters of the cause. We would, however, be amiss if we did not offer an online registration method as well as the current printed form. As a result we have been developing an online registration form which will allow supporters to become members, or renew their membership, within minutes. This feature will be going live shortly and we hope it will encourage even more people to join our organization.

It has been an interesting few months, but even more interesting activities lie ahead. If you would like to keep abreast of all our news and campaigns please visit one of our online pages! You can find the details below! chan



<http://www.marblesreunited.org.uk/>



<https://www.facebook.com/marblesreunited>



<http://www.twitter.com/MarblesReunited>



<http://www.youtube.com/MarblesReunitedOrg>



By

Maria Koutsikou

Shame on you, trustees of the British Museum!

Today, Lord Elgin would be guilty of Misconduct in Public Office. 200 years ago one could get away with such actions, especially when being judged by the beneficiaries of your plunder. Notices at archaeological sites around the world forbid and warn you not to remove anything; guides advise you to "take away your memories and leave only your footsteps". Nobody wants another Lord Elgin!

Is it acceptable to do nothing about what went on just because it was so long ago? No, it most certainly is not! And if the Trustees of the British Museum could do something about it and don't, does that make them as morally guilty as Lord Elgin? Instead of rectifying this wrong, they fall back on the British Museum Act 1963: you need an Act of Parliament. Go to the House of Commons. The Commons then tell you it's up to the Trustees of the BM to determine the fate of its contents. Very neat, and very like a burglar covering his tracks!

Shame on you, Trustees! Excuse after excuse, the current one feebler than the rest: the Marbles in London are part of a world context, unlike those in Athens. Time for a little honesty. How about "We stole 'em fair and square"? Irrefutable!



By
Angelos Economou

How about "We stole 'em fair and square"? Irrefutable!

Marbles Reunited

Friends of the British Committee for the Reunification of the Parthenon Marbles.
c/o Time & Tide Shipping Ltd
180 Piccadilly, London W1J 9HF
Tel: +44 (0)845 5194 574

campaign@marblesreunited.org.uk

Honorary President: Eddie O' Hara
Chairman: Andrew George MP
Deputy Chairman: Dr Christopher Stockdale
Treasurer: Matthew Taylor
Secretary: Angelos Economou

Receive the next newsletter by email.
Let us know at:

campaign@marblesreunited.org.uk

© Copyright 2012 Marbles Reunited