



International Organising Committee – Australia – for the Restitution of the Parthenon Marbles
Inc. established 1981

Prime Minister Hon. Boris Johnson
10 Downing St,
Westminster,
London SW1A 2AA,
United Kingdom

26th March 2021

Dear Prime Minister,

We read your interview with Yanni Andritsopoulos, London correspondent for the Greek newspaper *Ta Nea*, and we must stress our disappointment with your quoted statement that the “UK Government has a firm longstanding position on the sculptures which is that they were legally acquired by Lord Elgin under the appropriate laws of the time and have been legally owned by the British Museum’s Trustees since their acquisition.”

We find it hard to believe that the Government of the United Kingdom, and British Museum, can be so out of step with the times. May we remind you that “under the appropriate laws of the time”, when Elgin removed the Parthenon Marbles Great Britain was selling people as slaves, according to law.

Extensive research on the legality of Lord Elgin’s removal of the Marbles has been conducted by historians in the United Kingdom and abroad. Consequently, it is now well known both internationally and in the United Kingdom that Lord Elgin **had no legal authority** to remove the Parthenon Marbles. This also applies to other antiquities from the Acropolis that Greece has not sought to have returned.

Elgin claimed to have a *Firman* authorising his actions. Without going into copious detail, it is sufficient to note that a *Firman* could only have been obtained from the Sultan. Such documents bore the Sultan’s seal and followed a precise form, just as an Act of Parliament does. No such document has ever been produced. In addition, we all know that the Sultan was not in Constantinople on the 6th July 1802, when Lord Elgin claims he received the *Firman* from the Sultan.

I'm confident Greece, and the world at large, is grateful to United Kingdom and the British Museum for the long term care of the Parthenon Marbles held in the museum.

Let's now forget whether Lord Elgin took them legally or illegally, and also overlook the irreparable damage inflicted on them while they were being removed with brute force, and also the subsequent damage caused to them by Lord Duveen in 1930's. Let us forget all these matters.

If your government was to unconditionally return the Parthenon Marbles to Greece you would be viewed with the highest esteem. It would be an act demonstrating vision and statecraft worthy of comparison with that of Pericles.



Emanuel John Comino AM JP
Founder and Chairman



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