**Why did the British Museum ignored Greece’s research on colours**

***The members of the British Committee for the Reunification of the Parthenon Marbles react through "Ta Nea" to the publication of a study that is marketed as "new", while it is a rehash of an older one, published also in 2009 as the Acropolis Museum was inaugurated.***

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LONDON. CORRESPONDENT **YANNIS ANDRITSOPOULOS**

The British Committee for the Reunification of the Parthenon Marbles (BCRPM) expresses its "deep disappointment" over the study on the polychromy of the Parthenon sculptures carried out by researchers from the British Museum, King's College London and the Art Institute of Chicago.

Members of the historical committee are saying the "new research", published last week in the archaeological journal Antiquity, is a rehash of an earlier publication.

They note, the fact that the surface of the works designed by Phidias was covered with colours has been documented for many years, and also by Greek scientists.

"This 'new' research was first published in 2009. So it can't be "new" a second time! At the time, it was propaganda aimed at distracting attention from the opening of the New Acropolis Museum. But why did we see it recycled again last week?" asked Paul Cartledge, a prominent Cambridge Hellenist and vice-president of BCRPM, which was founded 40 years ago.

"Our disappointment when we saw the coverage given by the British media was evident. We would have liked the work that archaeologists have done in Greece to have been recognised also", said Professor Emeritus of Greek Culture and President of the Hellenic Society of London, adding: "The Acropolis Museum already has a wealth of documents available that allow us to fully understand how the ancient Greeks used colour. The British Museum itself has learned a lot from those working on the restoration of the Parthenon and the Acropolis Museum over the decades."

**Egyptian blue**

The team led by art conservation expert Giovanni Veri found traces of Egyptian blue, white and violet paint on 11 pediment sculptures and a figure of the Parthenon frieze. However, as BCRPM points out, the polychromy of the sculptures had already been highlighted by Greek researchers too.

"What a surprise! The glorious British Museum chooses to ignore earlier research carried out by the Acropolis Museum years ago," said Dame Janet Suzman, Chair of the British Commission.

"In 2009 we read a lot about the polychromy of the Parthenon statues. Additional research is always welcome, but, you know, credit has to go to whoever deserves it."

"They could at least say that this 'shocking discovery' of the British Museum had been made before, with similar content, in 2009," said Anthony Snodgrass, professor emeritus of classical archaeology at Cambridge and former Chair of the BCRPM.

"But even then, it should have been pointed out that the Acropolis Museum itself holds at least one stone from the western frieze where traces of pigment on the garment of a figure are still visible to the naked eye," BCRPM's Honorary President added.

The Committee contacted the General Director of the Acropolis Museum, Professor Nikos Stampolidis, who confirmed that after the dismantling of the western frieze in 1992, and during its cleaning of soot deposits, traces of paint were found on the chlamyda of a horseman, which reinforced the conclusion of previous research on the polychromy of the Sculptures. He also stressed that similar traces have been found on other metopes on the west and east sides of the Parthenon.

**GEORGE OSBORNE**

**The proposal for temporary lending to Greece, reinstated**

George Osborne reiterated yesterday the "worn-out" British proposal for the temporary loan of the Parthenon Sculptures to Greece.

Appearing before the House of Commons Cultural Affairs Committee, the chairman of the British Museum said that the sculptures could... "spend part of their time" in their birthplace in exchange for ancient Greek artifacts that have never been exhibited before in Britain.

"We believe they play a very important role in the Museum. I think it's worth exploring – and I'm talking directly to the Greek government about this – if there is some sort of arrangement that would allow some of the sculptures to spend some of their time in Greece," the 52-year-old former Conservative finance minister said.

He then expressed the desire to develop "a proper cooperation in which objects from Greece will come here – objects that may have never left Greece and certainly have never been exhibited here – and objects from the Parthenon collection will possibly travel to Greece."

But he added that this "cooperation between the two countries" focuses on "a problem that is not easily solved and we may not succeed. However, it is worth seeing if we can find a way out."