



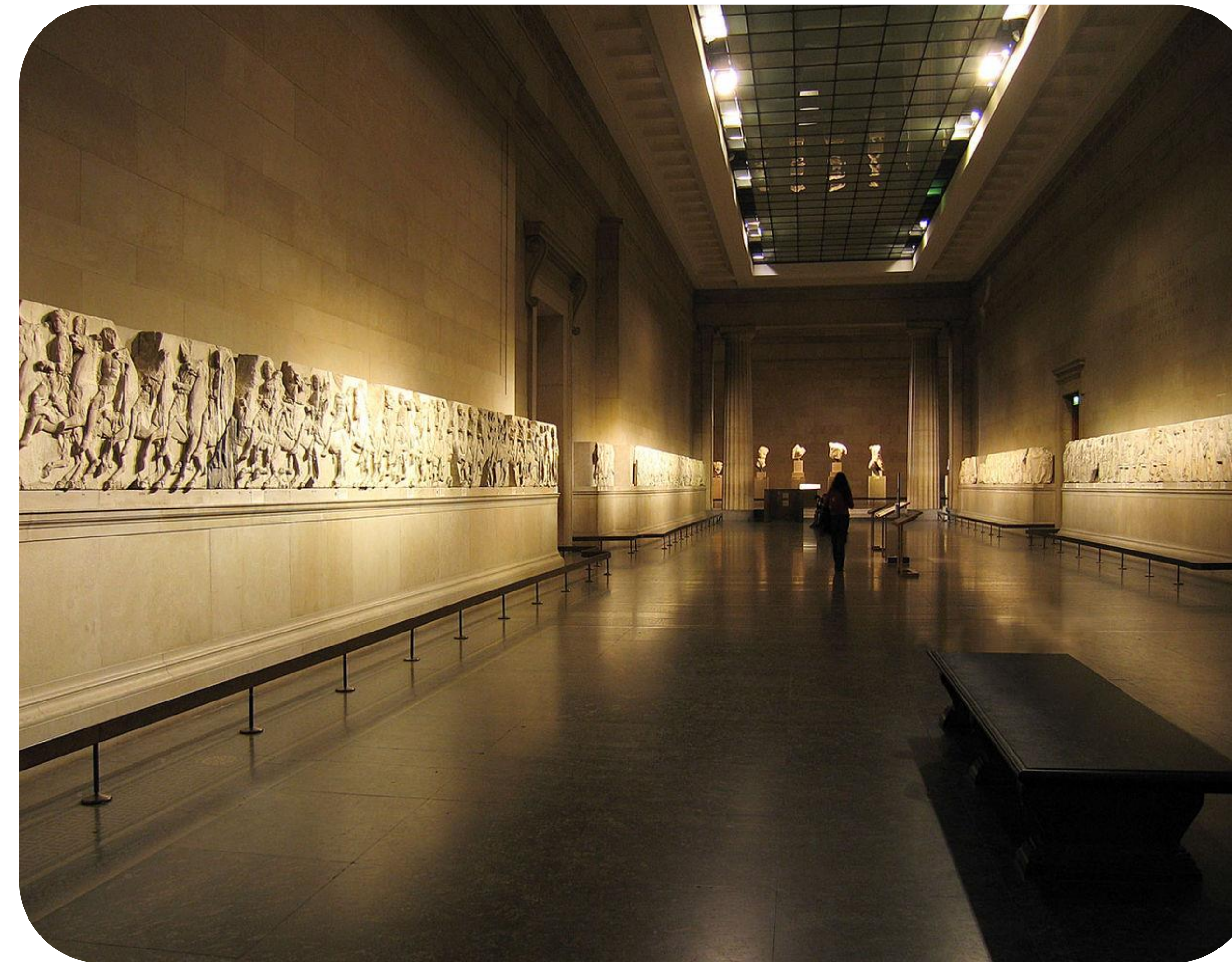
THEY TOOK OUR MARBLES!

HOW HAS CULTURAL IMPERIALISM AFFECTED CULTURAL HERITAGE IN GREECE?

KELLY FORD

FACULTY SPONSOR: DR. LESLIE CECIL (ANTHROPOLOGY, GEOGRAPHY, AND SOCIOLOGY)

When visiting archaeological sites across Greece, one cannot help but marvel at the fantastic sites while simultaneously wondering why so many ancient Grecian treasures reside outside their country and thus out of context. This author struggled with this dichotomy during a visit to Greece in March 2019. Why were only half of the Parthenon Marbles displayed in Athens's new museum built to display all of the marbles? What about the gold death mask of King Agamemnon? Wouldn't the marble plaques plundered from the Treasury of Atreus' interior walls in Mycenae be better understood in context rather than in a faux setting at the British Museum among thousands of other 'uncontextual' artifacts?



BRITISHMUSEUM.ORG



PARTHENONUK.COM

BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON, ENGLAND

ACROPOLIS MUSEUM, ATHENS, GREECE

WHERE DO YOU THINK THESE CULTURAL ARTIFACTS SHOULD RESIDE?

Half of the Parthenon Marbles were cut from the Parthenon and purchased by the British Museum from Lord Elgin. The other half reside in the Acropolis Museum with a view of the Parthenon.

By reviewing the arguments presented for keeping these and many other artifacts outside of their original context by Great Britain, the 'collector's' mentality is found to persist to this day, displayed in blatant ethnocentrism. It is our duty as citizens of the world to preserve cultural heritage for future generations and share them in a manner accurate to their original context and culture, not reassigned to the culture of the collector.



Imperial travel firman for Lord Elgin, March 1802.

Letter from Port Authority notifying Lord Elgin he had no authority to remove artifacts, July 1811..

Removal of marbles from the Parthenon in 1801. Watercolor by Edward Dodwell. Packard Humanities Institute, California.

By reviewing the social theory of Great Britain during the 19th century, which prevailed during the times of unrestrained looting of other countries, one finds the emergence of a 'collector' mentality. By reviewing the history of laws governing these artifacts' ownership, the full weight of cultural imperialism's influence on Greek heritage becomes apparent as millions of artifacts gather dust on shelves throughout Western Europe and the United States.



SCIENCEBLOGS.COM

SOME COUNTRIES SUCH AS FRANCE, GERMANY, AND THE NETHERLANDS HAVE IMPLEMENTED REPATRIATION POLICIES IN AN EFFORT TO RECTIFY THE CULTURAL HERITAGE LOOTING OF THE PAST. HOWEVER, GREAT BRITAIN IS STICKING WITH THE ORIGINAL PHILOSOPHY OF UNESCO. AFTER ALL, UNESCO'S FIRST DIRECTOR-GENERAL, JULIAN HUXLEY'S INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE, REQUIRED AN EMPIRICAL LEADER. UNESCO HAS MADE SOME PROGRESS, BUT IT IS MERELY NOT ENOUGH. IT SEEMS IT MAY HAVE TO CATCH UP WITH THE GROWING ETHICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND INTERNATIONAL LAWS OF THE WORLD.

SUPPOSE WE ARE AN INTERNATIONAL WORLD, AND THESE ARTIFACTS BELONG TO HUMANKIND. IN THAT CASE, AS GREAT BRITAIN ARGUES AGAINST REPATRIATION OF CULTURAL ARTIFACTS, THIS AUTHOR ARGUES THAT WE, AS HUMANKIND, SHOULD DEMAND CULTURAL HERITAGE BE SHOWN IN A MANNER AUTHENTIC AND REPRESENTATIVE TO ITS ORIGINAL CONTEXT AND CULTURE.