

Elgin Marbles may return to Greece

Britain and Greece are trying to negotiate an agreement that could see the Parthenon Marbles returned to Athens, ending a feud dating from the 1800s

ELGIN MARBLES

Classical Greek sculptures taken from ruined Parthenon by **Lord Elgin**, British ambassador to Ottoman Empire, in early 19th century

Elgin Marbles contain sculptures from **pediments, metopes and frieze**



Sculptures from east pediment



Horse of Selene

1 PEDIMENTS: Include 17 life-sized figures. Most impressive, on east pediment, depict birth of goddess Athena

2 METOPES: High relief panels above colonnade, illustrate battles between Centaurs and legendary Lapith people. **Elgin Marbles contain 15 of original 92 metopes**

PARTHENON: Temple to goddess Athena built on Acropolis of Athens in 5th century BC by sculptor **Phidias**

West pediment
Depicts contest between Athena and Poseidon for supremacy over Athens

Athena Parthenos
Large statue covered in gold and ivory in inner chamber

3 FRIEZE: Carved in low relief around temple inside colonnade – shows Athenians in festival procession

Elgin Marbles contain 75 metres of original 160m frieze

Metopes

450-430 BC
Perikles, leading statesman of Athens, commissions reconstruction of Acropolis

1458: Ottomans capture Athens – Parthenon becomes mosque

1801: Ottoman Sultan grants permission for Lord Elgin to remove sculptures

1807: Elgin Marbles first exhibited in London

1817: Acquired by British Museum

1961: Marbles moved to Duveen Gallery, where they remain

500 BC
404 BC: Athens' Golden Age ends after defeat to rival city Sparta

AD 500-600: Parthenon becomes church under Roman Emperor **Justinian**. Many sculptures destroyed



1687: Parthenon heavily damaged when Venetians bombard Ottoman garrison, igniting gunpowder stored inside temple

2009: Acropolis Museum opens, with Parthenon Gallery built specifically to house sculptures

