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Cherish the Past, Embrace the Future

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Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikos Dendias travelled to London where he had talks with British Minister of State for Europe, Chris Heaton – Harris. He also held meetings with the High Commissioners of the Bahamas and Brunei to the United Kingdom, with concurrent accreditation to Greece, to discuss Greece's candidacy for the United Nation's Security Council.

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Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikos Dendias visits London

Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikos Dendias travelled to London where he had talks with British Minister of State for Europe, Chris Heaton – Harris. Talks were focused on bilateral cooperation following the signing of the relevant Memorandum last October, on the Cyprus issue as well as on developments in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe.

Mr. Dendias stated to journalists in the course of his visit to the United Kingdom:

“I am back in the United Kingdom, in London, first to meet with the Ambassadors who have concurrent accreditation to Athens - I will do the same tomorrow in Rome - in an effort, on the one hand, to promote our candidacy for the United Nations Security Council, but also to brief them about the Greek positions on a number of issues.

On this occasion, I will be meeting shortly with acting Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Heaton – Harris. As known, Liz Truss is in isolation due to COVID-19. Again, the United Kingdom remains an important global player, and any contact with the British Government is of great importance to us, the Greek Government, the Mitsotakis government.

Evidently, among the topics of discussion with the Minister of State Heaton-Harris, will be the implementation of the Memorandum that we signed with Liz Truss a few weeks ago: how we will be able to implement it and how we will be able to benefit the most from its implementation, both us, the Greek side and the United Kingdom”.

During his stay in London, the Minister of Foreign Affairs also held meetings with the High Commissioners of the Bahamas and Brunei to the United Kingdom, who have a concurrent accreditation to Greece.

In his meeting with the High Commissioner of the Bahamas Mr. Ellison Edroy Greenslade, they discussed Greece-Caribbean relations, their shared commitment to International Law & Greece’s candidacy for the United Nation’s Security Council.

Also, talks with the High Commissioner of Brunei Mr. Dato Paduka Hj Mohd Aziyan Abdullah, were focused on bilateral relations, their shared commitment to International Law & the freedom of navigation, as well as Greece’s candidacy for the United Nation’s Security Council.



Minister Nikos Dendias with with the High Commissioner of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas with concurrent accreditation to Greece, Ellison Edroy Greenslade



Minister Nikos Dendias with the High Commissioner of Brunei with concurrent accreditation to Greece, Dato Paduka Hj Mohd Aziyan Abdullah

Near or Far, we are all one

On Saturday, January 15, the winners of the student competition "Near or far away, we are all one", received an album with drawings from the Greek Ambassador Ioannis Raptakis in an event that took place at the Hellenic residence in London. The competition was organized by the General Secretariat for Greeks Abroad and Public Diplomacy, in collaboration with the Greek Section of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY).

The competition took place during the first phase of the pandemic, in March 2020, to provide an additional, creative incentive for children and young people who were isolated in their homes, away from school and friends. Out of 3,600 children's paintings, from 30 countries around the world, the 125 most representative ones that stood out were printed into an album that was offered to the young artists based in the United Kingdom by the Greek Ambassador Mr Ioannis Raptakis.

The General Secretary of Greeks Abroad and Public Diplomacy, Mr Ioannis Chrysoulakis, attended the event online. Mr Chrysoulakis congratulated the children for their creations, as well as their parents and teachers who, as he said, "exercise their duties with good will and passion" and wished everyone a happy new year. "This event is so moving that it gives us the strength to do many more for the children" said Mr Chrysoulakis. "The participation of all of you was very moving, because through your paintings you expressed your feelings and described, through art, your daily life during the pandemic. You gave us great joy because through your works, through the

colours and shapes you painted, you projected the optimism and hope for a better future that we all so desperately need".

Mr Chrysoulakis referred to the platform www.staellinika.com through which Greek children abroad can learn the Greek language or improve their knowledge, but also receive information about mythology, history and culture of Greece. At the same time, it announced the upcoming upgrade of the platform in order to become an official education tool for the schools of the Greek community.

From his part, Ambassador Raptakis congratulated the children for their successful participation in the competition, thanked the parents for their support in the initiative of the General Secretariat, which was really successful judging from its most welcoming acceptance by teachers, parents and children. He asked the General Secretariat of Greeks Abroad to repeat this initiative, regardless of pandemic.

During the event, the children had the opportunity to decorate the "tree of wishes", with handmade cards for the New Year 2022, which they hung on the two olive trees that adorn the entrance of the Hellenic residence. The children and the teachers were very excited about the event- especially after visiting the office of Greek poet and Nobel laureate George Seferis, who had also served as Ambassador of Greece in London (1957 - 1962). In the end, the Greek Ambassador cut the 'vasilopita' and the lucky one for 2022, who won the 'flouri', was Emmanuela, from the Greek Language School of the Greek Orthodox Church of St. Cosmas & St. Damian.



The Reunification of the Parthenon Sculptures



The voices in favour of the reunification of the Parthenon Sculptures are increasing. The change of public opinion is reflected in the leading article of the Times, a newspaper that is now admitting for the first time that they belong to Athens.

In an article entitled "The Times view on the Elgin Marbles: Uniting Greece's Heritage. The case for returning the Elgin Marbles to Athens has become compelling", the British newspaper says that the Sculptures are sublime in their depiction of the human form and the impression of movement. Millions have marvelled at these sculptures that once adorned the Parthenon and for the past two centuries have reposed in the British Museum, among the most beautiful of all its holdings.

For more than 50 years, artists and politicians have argued that artefacts so fundamental to a nation's cultural identity should return to Greece. The museum and the British government, supported by The Times, have resisted the pressure. But times and circumstances change. The sculptures belong in Athens. They should now return.

The immediate precedent is the agreement by Italy to lend Greece a marble fragment of the goddess Artemis which was taken, like the Parthenon sculptures, from Ottoman-controlled Athens in the early 19th century, and later sold to the University of Palermo. In return, Italy will receive an ancient statue of Athena and an amphora. The deal is similar to one proposed to the British Museum several years ago. In exchange for the return of the sculptures, Greece would send London a rotating exhibition of some of its finest classical artefacts not on permanent display.

The proposal came close to agreement, says the article. It fell through because of an argument over ownership of the Parthenon sculptures. Britain insisted they had been bought, not looted, and must remain the property of the British Museum. Greece argued that the Ottoman Empire had no right to dispose of artefacts made in Greece almost two millennia before the Ottoman conquest. The museum and the government have tossed the decision back and forth. Such bureaucratic absurdity can be swiftly resolved, argues the newspaper. "Let the sculptures be sold back at cost price. An act of parliament awarded Lord Elgin's purchases to the museum. Let parliament therefore sanction their return".

Britain has advanced other arguments for continued possession. Rising air pollution in Athens has taken a toll on much of the Parthenon, whereas the marbles have been kept in almost pristine condition in a clean, safe environment. This argument no longer holds. Not only have the marbles already been damaged by inappropriate cleaning but Greece has built a magnificent museum next to the Acropolis, safe and accessible, where the original sculptures are now kept, and where the marbles would complete the frieze.

A more compelling argument has been made by Neil MacGregor, the former British Museum director, on the future of all museums. Can any continue to hold possessions bought, stolen or taken from other countries in the past? Looted objects, such as the Benin Bronzes, have rightly been returned. But can museums remain centres of global culture and heritage if permitted to hold only what originated within today's political boundaries? Other countries, notably France, are already under pressure from claimants. That is their affair.

The Parthenon sculptures are sui generis. They stand in the way of what should be a warm relationship with Greece: Lord Byron is seen as a hero of Greek independence; Hellenism reached its zenith in Victorian Britain. Separating components of an artistic whole is like tearing Hamlet out of the First Folio of Shakespeare's works and saying the two can still exist apart. Giving back the Elgin Marbles would be a magnanimous gesture when Britain needs to rekindle European friendships.

Repatriation of Parthenon fragment from Italy

Greek PM Kyriakos Mitsotakis said that the momentum is building for UK to give back the Parthenon Sculptures after the repatriation of Parthenon fragment from Italy to Athens that could lead to a deal with the British Museum.

Speaking to The Telegraph, Kyriakos Mitsotakis said Greece is "putting together the jigsaw" and the deal struck with an Italian museum could form the blueprint for an arrangement with Britain.

In November Mr Mitsotakis made a fresh bid for the return of the marbles when he visited Downing Street, and said an interview with the Telegraph that coincided with the visit had helped create "a big wave of international support" for his cause.

"The whole debate has really struck a chord. I do sense there is a momentum building and of course the elephant in the room is the discussion we will have to have with the British Museum. There are similarities between what is happening now and what could potentially happen with the British Museum", said the Greek PM

Under the agreement reached with the Antonino Salinas archaeological museum in Palermo, the piece - which depicts either Artemis or Peitho - will be loaned to Athens for four years in return for the loan of two Greek artefacts. The deal can be renewed for a further four years, after which Sicily intends to make the return permanent subject to approval by Italy's culture ministry.

The piece was originally acquired by Robert Fagan, the former British consul to Sicily, and was bought by Palermo University from his widow in 1820. It has been in Sicily for centuries.

Mr Mitsotakis said: "It's an important step in terms of putting together the jigsaw. It involves many museums, not just the British Museum. "This is an important fragment because it's quite big, it's part of the frieze that portrays the gods. It has been in Sicily for almost two centuries and what's important is the arrangement, not as a loan but as a deposit for eight years with the prospect of remaining indefinitely."

Dr Lina Mendoni, the Greek Culture Minister, said: "The Fagan fragment itself is particularly important. It comes from the East frieze, in which all the Gods of Olympus are portrayed. The Government of Sicily has asked the Italian Republic to amend its Code of Cultural Heritage, so that the fragment can be permanently reunited with the frieze of the Parthenon in the Acropolis Museum. This collaboration between the Sicilian Government and the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports confirms both sides' understanding of how important Europe's common cultural heritage is. The Sicilian government has created a model that shows what the United Kingdom could do to allow the Parthenon Sculptures to find their place back home. British and global public opinion have already expressed their support for the reunification of the Parthenon Sculptures and their return to Athens."

Telegraph, by Gordon Rayner, 07/01/2022

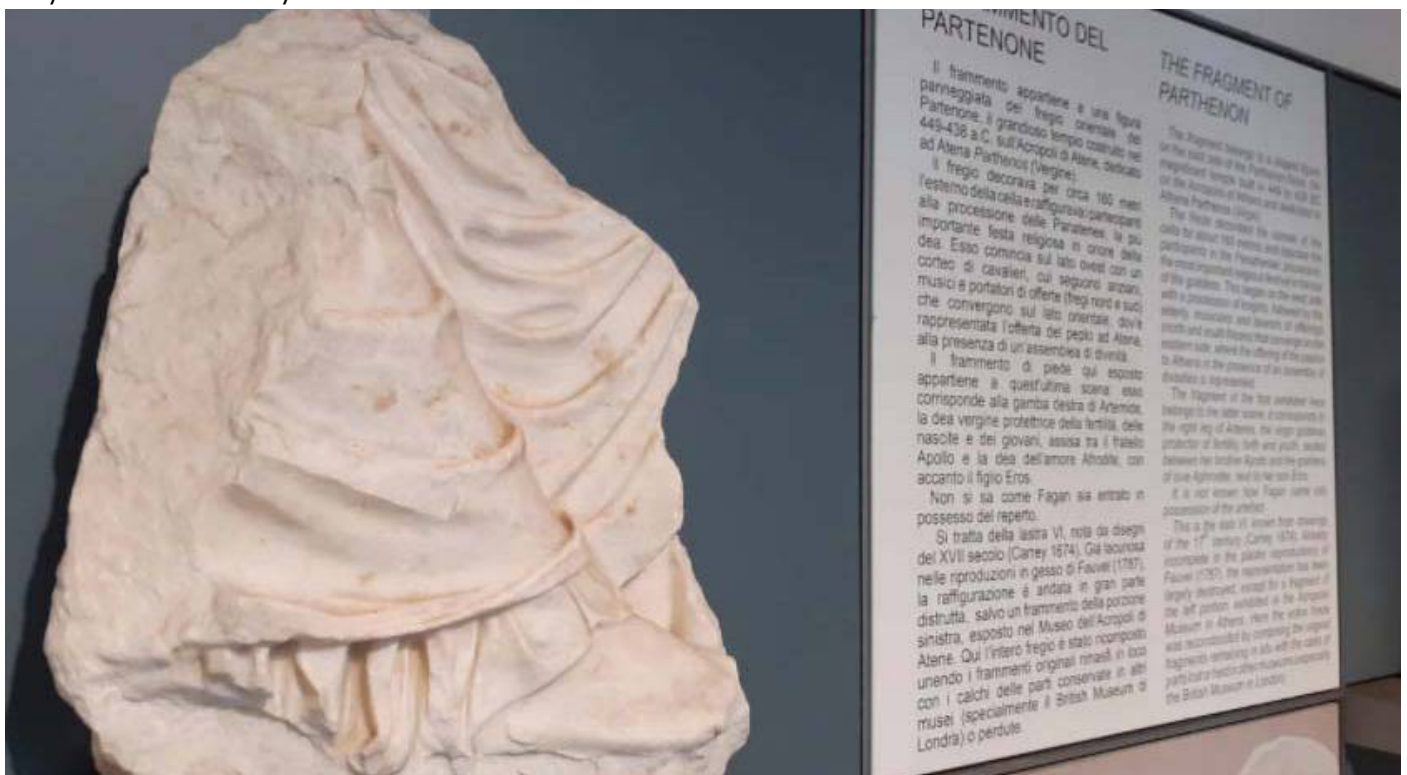
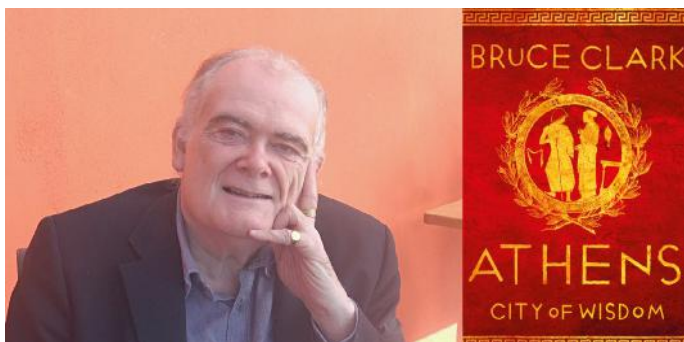


Photo Credit: Archeological Museum Antonino Salinas via AP

Athens, City of Wisdom, book by Bruce Clark

Athens, City of Wisdom, is the title of the book by Bruce Clark, presenting an exhaustive overview of the city's distant and recent past, including periods of its history that are often overlooked. [Greek News Agenda](#) interviewed Bruce Clark on his latest book, his connection to Greece, and his view on matters such as the changes that Athens has undergone over the years and the reunification of the Parthenon marbles. Bruce Clark is an international news reporter from the Northern Ireland. He studied Philosophy and then Social and Political Sciences at Saint John's College, Cambridge in 1979. He has worked as diplomatic correspondent for the Financial Times and Moscow correspondent for The Times (1990-1993). Since 1998, he has worked mainly for The Economist, writing about international affairs, culture and religion. His books Athens, City of Wisdom [2021, Head of Zeus 9 (UK) & Pegasus Books (US)] met with enthusiastic reviews. Professor Roderick Beaton has called it «a magnificent tour de force». According to the Financial Times review, «Clark's affection for a city that he still sees as a symbol of democracy is unmissable and highly informative». In January, 2022, Athens: City of Wisdom was longlisted for the 2022 Runciman Award.



Bruce Clark writes, broadcasts and speaks on a wide range of subjects including religion and geopolitics, the history of southeastern Europe and the story of textiles. He is the online religion editor of The Economist. He has been an active participant in global debates organised by the Ecumenical Patriarch on the subject of faith and the environment.

Leonidas Kavakos in Wigmore Hall, in London

A long-term musical partnership between the violinist Leonidas Kavakos and the pianist Enrico Pace has seen them win especial renown with their cycle of Beethoven sonatas; the New York Times wrote that 'it is the musicianship that Kavakos and the excellent pianist Enrico Pace contribute that makes the journey so exciting.' Their programme on Monday, January 24, at Wigmore Hall in London included one such Beethoven sonata alongside Schubert's 1817 'Grand Sonata' and Schumann's Op. 121, first premièred by Joseph Joachim and Clara Schumann in 1853.



Leonidas Kavakos is recognised across the world as a violinist and artist of rare quality, acclaimed for his matchless technique, his captivating artistry and his superb musicianship as well as for the integrity of his playing. He works with the world's greatest orchestras and conductors and plays as recitalist in the world's premier recital halls and festivals.

Creating Diasporic Worlds

The Centre for Greek Diaspora Studies and the Centre for the GeoHumanities at Royal Holloway, University of London in collaboration with the Cyprus High Commission in London and the Fitzwilliam Museum – University of Cambridge, are pleased to announce the funding of up to 3 Creative Commissions on the theme of 'Creating Diasporic Worlds'. Each Commission will be funded with up to £3,000. The Creative Commissions will run from 14/3/2022 to 31/5/2022. The programme is open to any collaboration between creative practitioner(s) and early career researcher(s).

Application should include the followings:

The application form comprising no more than 2 x A4 pages

A CV for each collaborator – max. 2 A4 sides per collaborator, including a statement regarding early career status if relevant and detail of any previous collaborations

Record of creative work – up to two web-links or two PDFs (up to five pages each) Application should be emailed to geohumanities@rhul.ac.uk by 5 pm GMT on 14th February 2022

Culture in the Historical Archive of the newspapers TO VIMA and TA NEA: Language and Literature

In honour of the 90 years' circulation of the newspaper TA NEA and the 100 years' circulation of the newspaper TO VIMA, the Historical Archive of the two newspapers is organising, under the auspices of the General Secretariat of Greeks Abroad and Public Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an international scientific conference, with the title: "Culture in the Historical Archive of the newspapers TO VIMA and TA NEA: Language and Literature".

The conference will take place in Athens from 6 to 8 December 2022.

Those who are interested in participating in the Conference with either an oral presentation or a poster are invited to submit:

a. Title and summary of the presentation (up to 300 words) with reference to the topic to which it belongs to

b. Short resume (up to 150 words) at the following email address: istorikoarcheio@alteregomedia.org

Closing date of abstracts submission: 18 March 2022



#VisitGreece



On January 8 and 9, 2022, Sunday Times made a special tribute to Greece highlighting the Greek beauties and the reasons why Greece is ideal for sightseeing unique cultural monuments, traveling around the islands and the mainland, eating delicious food, walking around picturesque locations and hanging around with locals. «Bettany Hughes, When in Greece adopt the nomads spirits», «Hydra and Aegina: the Greek islands drawing the arty crowd», «Thessaloniki: The foodie capital of Greece»«A coastal castle crawl of Rhodes», «Thirasia: Santorini's Quiter Little Sister», are only some the titles of the numerous articles published in Sunday Times. The whole feature was accompanied by wonderful photos from Greece which illustrated Greece's natural, unique beauty.



Idolaters – Ειδωλολάτρες

When: 15/02/2022, 7:00pm

Where: The Hellenic Centre

<https://helleniccentre.org/event/idolaters/>**Intelligent Modelling of e-Government Initiatives in Greece**

When: 15/02/2022, 6:00-7:30pm

Where: Online

https://lse.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_JOloVKudS--6wZprqwKGRA**Greek Dialogues Online - A Conversation on Folklore, Antiquity, and Nation Building in Late Nineteenth-Century Greece**

When: 15/02/2022, 6:30pm

Where: Online

<https://www.ccgscsah.cam.ac.uk/events/greek-dialogues-online-conversation-folklore-antiquity-and-nation-building-late-nineteenth>**Venizelos: Crete to Athens, Great War and schism, Peace Conference and after**

When: 16/02/2022, 5:00pm

Where: ESC Seminar Room and Zoom

<https://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/events/venizelos-crete-athens-great-war-and-schism-peace-conference-and-after>**Lullabies of the World**

When: 23/02/2022, 7:30 pm

Where: The Hellenic Centre

<https://helleniccentre.org/event/lullabies-of-the-world/>**Greek Carnival Celebration for Children with Asterakia**

When: 27/02/2022, 12:00-2:00pm

Where: The Hellenic Centre

<https://helleniccentre.org/event/childrens-carnival-2022/>
Deciphering the Formulation of Greek Economic Diplomacy towards the Western Balkans

When: 01/03/2022, 6.00-7.30pm

Where: LSE Online

<https://bit.ly/3gyOmtM>**Kathara Deftera Celebration with Kourelou and London Greek Collective**

When: 07/03/2022, 7pm

Where: The Hellenic Centre

<https://helleniccentre.org/event/kathara-deftera-2022/>**Songs from the Labyrinth: Is it Better to Remember or Forget?**

When: 09/03/2022, 7pm

Where: The Hellenic Centre

<https://helleniccentre.org/event/songs-from-the-labyrinth-is-it-better-to-remember-or-forget/>**Turkey Under Erdogan: How a Country Turned from Democracy and the West**

When: 09/03/2022, 5pm

Where: SEESOX

<https://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/events/turkey-under-erdogan-how-country-turned-democracy-and-west>

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