

## Lesson 2: The Elgin Marbles

Read the paragraph below and find the reasons for both sides of the current debate. Consider using two different colored highlighters.

The Elgin Marbles are a collection of ancient Greek sculptures that once decorated the Parthenon, a temple on the Acropolis in Athens. They were created in the 5th century BCE during the height of ancient Greek civilization. In the early 1800s, Thomas Bruce, Lord Elgin, removed many of these sculptures and transported them to Britain, where they are now displayed in the British Museum. Their removal happened while Greece was under Ottoman rule, which adds complexity to the debate about whether the removal was legal or ethical.

Today, the Elgin Marbles are at the center of an ongoing international discussion about cultural heritage and ownership. Greece argues that the sculptures should be returned to Athens so they can be displayed in their original setting at the Acropolis Museum, where their historical and cultural context is clearer. The British Museum maintains that the marbles are part of a shared world heritage collection and are preserved for global public access. This disagreement highlights larger questions about who has the right to control ancient artifacts and how the past should be represented in modern museums.

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Write reasons for both sides of the Elgin Marbles debate, then write what you believe at the bottom.

Returned to Greece

Kept in the British Museum

Your Verdict