# George Clooney renews push for the Elgin Marbles to return to Greece despite legal hurdles



Oscar-winning actor George Clooney has long been an advocate for the return of the Elgin Marbles to Greece, a stance he reiterated recently, reaffirming his commitment alongside his wife, human rights lawyer Amal Clooney. In a recent interview with the Greek newspaper *Ta Nea*, Clooney stated, “They’re going to come back. I know they are,” expressing confidence that the marbles will eventually return to their country of origin despite existing legal obstacles. The British Museum Act of 1963 currently prohibits the museum from permanently disposing of artefacts in its collection, restricting any potential agreement to a temporary loan—a notion that Greece has historically rejected.

The Elgin Marbles, a collection of classical Greek marble sculptures, have been housed in the British Museum since they were brought to Britain in the early 19th century by Thomas Bruce, the 7th Earl of Elgin. This act, which was sanctioned by the Ottoman authorities at the time, has been fiercely contested by Greece, where national pride in the Parthenon and its sculptures runs deep. Clooney’s renewed remarks come amid ongoing discussions between the Greek government and George Osborne, the chairman of the British Museum, highlighting a complex dialogue surrounding the marbles’ fate.

Clooney’s involvement in this debate is not new; he first lent his voice to the cause during a press conference at the Berlin Film Festival in 2014, promoting the film *The Monuments Men*, which focused on the recovery of cultural treasures plundered during the Second World War. During this event, he stated that the return of the Parthenon Marbles would be “the right thing to do.” His position aligned with a growing sentiment within Britain, where public opinion has increasingly favoured repatriation. At that time, he faced criticism from then London mayor Boris Johnson, who dismissed Clooney’s comments as overly dramatic. Clooney, however, responded to Johnson’s remarks with humour, emphasizing that they were merely “hyperbole washed down with a few whiskies.”

The subject of the marbles' return also intersects with the academic and cultural landscape in Greece. Amal Clooney has acted as an adviser, joining a panel of experts who have explored potential legal avenues for reclaiming the artefacts. A comprehensive report was released detailing a robust legal strategy for reconnecting the Marbles with their homeland, though the Greek government ultimately chose not to follow these recommendations. Instead, the report was published as a book titled *Who Owns History?*, reflecting the urgency and passion surrounding the repatriation efforts.

The British Museum maintains its position that the Elgin Marbles are better preserved in London, citing their role in promoting global cultural education and heritage. In a recent online statement, museum trustees reaffirmed that Elgin’s actions were legitimate, claiming that he acted with the consent of the legal authorities of the day. Furthermore, they highlighted that the museum has never been formally asked by Greece for a loan, instead only for the permanent removal of the sculptures.

As discussions between the British Museum and Greek authorities continue, the path forward remains fraught with legal and diplomatic challenges. With advocates like George and Amal Clooney unwilling to let the issue fade from public consciousness, the debate over the Elgin Marbles represents not only a cultural dilemma but also a pivotal moment in the discourse surrounding the ethics of cultural heritage and ownership in the 21st century.

### Reference Map

* Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14725129/George-Clooney-says-pushing-return-Elgin-Marbles-Greece.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14725129/George-Clooney-says-pushing-return-Elgin-Marbles-Greece.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 3: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14725129/George-Clooney-says-pushing-return-Elgin-Marbles-Greece.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/film/2014/feb/09/george-clooney-parthenon-marbles), [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/feb/11/george-clooney-bill-murray-matt-damon-elgin-marbles)
* Paragraph 4: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14725129/George-Clooney-says-pushing-return-Elgin-Marbles-Greece.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.theguardian.com/film/2014/feb/09/george-clooney-parthenon-marbles), [[7]](https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/feb/11/george-clooney-bill-murray-matt-damon-elgin-marbles)
* Paragraph 5: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14725129/George-Clooney-says-pushing-return-Elgin-Marbles-Greece.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/film/2014/feb/09/george-clooney-parthenon-marbles)
* Paragraph 6: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14725129/George-Clooney-says-pushing-return-Elgin-Marbles-Greece.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/feb/11/george-clooney-bill-murray-matt-damon-elgin-marbles)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14725129/George-Clooney-says-pushing-return-Elgin-Marbles-Greece.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2014/feb/09/george-clooney-parthenon-marbles> - In February 2014, during the Berlin Film Festival, George Clooney expressed support for returning the Parthenon Marbles to Greece, stating it would be 'very nice' if the British Museum repatriated the ancient frieze removed by Lord Elgin in the 19th century. Clooney emphasized the importance of returning the artifacts to their rightful place, aligning with Greece's longstanding campaign for their return.
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