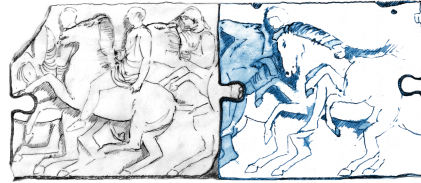


COMITÉ SUISSE POUR LE RETOUR



DES MARBRES DU PARTHÉNON

Synopsis of talk by Professor Dusan Sidjanski

Chairman of the Swiss Committee for the
Return of the Parthenon Marbles

« Europe and the Parthenon Marbles : a common cause »

Thursday, 3rd April 2014
Zurich University

Phidias' Marbles embody the very spirit of Ancient Greece which gave birth to the first European civilisation and to which our modern societies owe the concept of democracy. Since its creation in the 5th Century B.C., the Parthenon, a monument symbolic of perfect harmony which inspired and shaped European culture, fell victim to wars, invasions and religious intolerance. However the worst damage to the Parthenon sculptures was inflicted by Lord Elgin when he removed nearly half the existing sculptures and shipped them to Britain.

Elgin's motivations and the legality of his actions are questionable, but the Swiss Committee is against seeking a solution through a legal battle between two countries, especially during this time of crisis when Europe is striving to achieve unity. The restitution of the Parthenon Marbles to Greece is not a national issue, it is a European cause which should be resolved through dialogue, at the level of European Institutions, and by informing public opinion, in particular in Britain. Moreover, it is a unique case – therefore in no way a precedent - which concerns the integrity of an emblematic monument which has been dismembered, an artistic whole divided between two museums. And what could be a more appropriate setting than to exhibit the Marbles in their original context, in the new Acropolis Museum facing the Parthenon to which they belong.