

Against a suit for the return of the Parthenon sculptures

Noted philhellene and professor of law Dusan Sidjanski has said that seeking the return of the Parthenon sculptures through legal processes would be a dire mistake.



Euthimis Tsiliopoulos | 14 Oct. 14 (13:11)

“We don't have adequate arguments to pursue the reunification of the Parthenon sculptures,” professor of law Dusan Sidjanski told TheTOC.gr. The philhellene and renown jurist that sent the PM a letter concerning his positions on the issue explained that in the event that Greece has a great chance of losing if it takes the case to court and then the responsibility will be great.

As the professor said “lawyers can always claim they did the best they could with the data at hand, but Greece will have placed its head in the guillotine...”

Professor Sidjanski explained that a lot of arguments will be tabled in the event of a legal battle and the weight of the UK's clout will weigh heavily vis-a-vis Greece's relative weakness, as he has experienced in many cases in his career.

If Greece wins, the noted legal expert observes, it will be an extremely important thing, but if it loses it will lose the sculptures, perhaps, forever. He also noted that as plaintiff the court will have to take it as granted that Greece is “hostile” towards the British Museum, something which has negative connotations to begin with.

In professor Sidjanski's opinion the suitable approach is through mediation to find a win-win solution. The mediation of UNESCO is an ongoing procedure that will have far greater pull on the UK

government. One must also use public opinion, as most Britons see the return of the sculptures favorably. There are also two British committees that are on the side of Greece.

The noted jurist was in favor of the exchange of cultural goods, and he was not against the visit of Ms Alamuddin, but was very much against the Australian commission's president David Hill being the spokesperson for International effort to reunify the Parthenon sculptures.

Professor Sidjanski said he sent the PM the letter to stress that most committees around the world for the reunification of the sculptures were against a recourse to justice. He noted that Ms Alamuddin will be very useful as an adviser and will be even more useful as Mrs Clooney. In this way she could influence her celebrity husband who could garner support.

The professor stressed that he will fight any decision to claim the sculptures through legal procedures.

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professor of law Dusan Sidjanski

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