

Re: Codex Argenteus – the Silver Bible

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.archaeology/2004-07/2718.html>

From: Martin Reboul (martin_at_spamfukreboul1471.freemove.co.uk)

Date: 07/30/04

Date: Fri, 30 Jul 2004 21:19:34 GMT

"a.spencer3" <a.spencer3@ntlworld.com> wrote in message
news:D0pOc.59\$9b6.30@newsfe5-gui.ntli.net...

>

> "Martin Reboul" <martin@spamfukreboul1471.freemove.co.uk> wrote in message
> news:k1kOc.6\$Yi5.2@newsfe6-gui.ntli.net...

>>

>> "Jim Webster" <Jim@zerospam.ok.net> wrote in message
>> news:ce8oa2\$q50\$1@news7.svr.pol.co.uk...

>>>

>>> "Kathy" <kathy@slipknotland.demon.co.uk> wrote in message
>>> news:+5NnmcAJn1BBFwCH@knotland.demon.co.uk...

>>>> In article <[qpDNc.1080\\$bi1.317@newsfe4-gui.ntli.net](mailto:qpDNc.1080$bi1.317@newsfe4-gui.ntli.net)>, Martin Reboul
>>>> <martin@spamfukreboul1471.freemove.co.uk> writes

>>>>>

>>>>> snip discussion on the advisability of returning the Elgin marbles,
>>>>> amongst other things

>>>>>>

>>>>>> I only speak of this one, individual and unique case. Others should
> be

>>>>>>> considered on their own merits and very, very carefully. The fact is,
>>> anyone who

>>>>>>> has been to the BM and the V&A will appreciate that they are truly
> vast

>>>>>>> collections, which has both drawbacks and advantages.

>>>>>>>>

>>>>>>>> Everything could be lost in one go were any cataclysm to occur.
> Unlikely

>>>> in

>>>>>> London, but you never know.

>>>>>>>

>>>>>>>> We did recently have a fire in a warehouse full of modern art, which
>>>>>>>> destroyed the lot. Mind you, as most of it was by Tracy Ermin, that
> was

>>>>>>>>> probably a good thing :-}

>>>>>

>>>>>> I have heard several people who reckoned that it was a piece of
> performance

> > > *art they could really empathise with.*
> >
> > *Insurance job, no doubt! I mean, what would you rather look at, the crap*
> *that*
> > *got burned, or a big fat wad of cash?*
> >
> > > > *On the other hand, having them securely kept in good*
> > > > *condition by experts, and available to compare and research has many*
> > > *benefits.*
> > > >
> > > > *I wouldn't send anything back to Iran, Iraq or many other places at*
> > > *present.*
> > > >
> > > > *Exactly. If artefacts are returned, then they must go to suitable*
> > > > *accommodation in stable countries. Many countries do not met both*
> > > > *criteria.*
> > > >
> > > > > *It*
> > > > > *sounds patronising, but the artefacts cannot be guaranteed safety.*
> *Some*
> > > *things*
> > > > *should go back to Egypt however, where they would be welcome and*
> *safe.*
> > > > >
> > > > > *I think the great fear of the BM is that if they return the marbles,*
> *it*
> > > > *will*
> > > > > *start a landslide and set a precedent, which may ruin their*
> *collection.*
> > > *All they*
> > > > *have to do to prevent that is to make that point, and make it clear –*
> > > *this is a*
> > > > *very, very special case, and a one-off. Something good done, and done*
> *for*
> > > *the*
> > > > *good of us all.*
> > > >
> > > > > *What about all the stuff in "Private" collections? When I lived in*
> > > > > *Dorset, we used to take the cherubs I was teaching then to Kingston*
> > > > > *Lacey to see the Egyptian collection. OK, so compared to the BM it is*
> > > > > *exceedingly small, and the NT are doing their best with it, but you*
> > > > > *definitely got the impression that it was deteriorating due to the way*
> > > > > *it had/was being kept.*
> > >
> > > > *I think one thing that you have to bear in mind was the method of*
> > > > *acquisition. If it was legitimately bought from a legitimate seller,*
> *then it*
> > > > *is a different issue from where it came from out of a dodgy dealer*
> *network*
> >
> > *The problem here is what you consider 'legitimate'. Lorg Elgin (gawd bless*

> 'im)
> > *paid cash for them but bought them from a 'dodgy dealer'. Did he know? Did*
> *he*
> > *care? Most importantly, who cares, it was a long time ago and they're all*
> *long*
> > *dead.*
> >
> > *All that matters (to me) is doing the right thing. The Greeks, our great*
> *friends*
> > *and loyal allies for centuries, are rightly hurt by what appears to be*
> *British*
> > *reluctance to return a very important national treasure (what if the Crown*
> > *Jewels were pinched, then sold to a Greek – same thing).*
> >
> > *I'll be honest – they are nothing to shout about as they are, nearly all*
> *the*
> > *heads missing (and where did they go, eh? Some are 'available' I believe),*
> *and*
> > *magnificent as they are, they are most definitely 'out of place'.*
> *Incomplete as*
> > *they are, they seem almost tragic, however beautifully displayed, merely*
> *hinting*
> > *at their past magnificence. They are however unquestionably part of the*
> *jigsaw*
> > *of a unique magnificence – they are out of context, and the Parthenon is*
> *even*
> > *less complete.*
> >
> > *Here we come to a tough point – how far do you go in 'restoration'?*
> >
> > *I liked the way the Greeks had restored dome of the statues and buildings*
> *in*
> > *Athens, making it clear what was original and what was restored through*
> *colour.*
> > *They could have perhaps done it with more subtlety, but the scale and*
> *splendour*
> > *of everything was nicely hinted at.*
> >
> > *When it comes to the Parthenon, I know very well that there is no*
> *intention of*
> > *replacing the original marbles for 'safety' reasons, and agree with that*
> > *entirely – they are too precious to risk. However, with modern technology,*
> *it is*
> > *easily possible to mould, cast and reproduce them exactly as they are, in*
> > *weatherproof, earthquake proof epoxy and acrylic – no problem. Perfect*
> *replicas*
> > *can be placed on the Parthenon, and (I sincerely hope) will be soon.*
> >
> > *It is the *principle* of the thing – the BM has offered to provide such*
> *things I*
> > *believe, why should they not? Then they can display them, and return the*

- > *marbles*
- > > *to where they came from, where they ordered in the first place, carved and*
- > > *installed. Make that two sets of castings?*
- > >
- > > *Cheers*
- > > *Martin*
- > >
- > >
- > *Before others get too hot under the collar about this, don't forget that*
- > *parts of the marbles and of other sculptures from the Parthenon and*
- > *Acropolis are also in the Louvre, Munich, Wiirzburg, Heidelberg, Vienna,*
- > *Copenhagen, Rome, Palermo and Gawd knows where else!*
- > *Incidentally, I believe a bit is also built into an obelisk in Washington*
- > *DC.*
- > *So where does it start and where would it end?*
- > *It's a nonsense.*

A good roofing contractor would be a start... the Turks should pay for that (what a place to use as an ammo dump!)

It comes down to 'how far do you go' in such a matter of restoration, which some people get very shirty and funny about. As a ruin it remains splendid and magnificent, but (being one who likes icing on cakes and no slices missing), I'd probably go further than most would approve of, and do it up completely to original standards (NB, very importantly, as long as they are known for sure – nothing 'imaginative'!)

I'd also restore the bright white jura limestone and gld cap of the Great Pyramid however, replace the nose of the Sphinx, replace the arms of the Venus de Milo and replace the missing parts of Stonehenge....

This might come from a lifetime of fixing and restoring things like cars, to make them 'good as new', and will no doubt truly horrify and appall many historians and most archaeologists. I'd just like to see these wonders as they were made to be seen, in all their glory....

The Elgin Marbles are another matter though, merely a gesture of goodwill and friendship. They mean more to the Greeks than they do to us – everyone I have known who has seen them has been disappointed by the state of them anyway (call me a philistine if you will, but I always think statues look better with their heads).

As for all the other bits, they (or perfect copies) should go back too IMHO. On their own they are nothing, it's like having parts of an airfix kit missing!

Cheers
Martin