Should ancient artifacts return home?

by Sam /user/sam | 159 comments /blog/should_ancient_artifacts_return_home#comments

Even before the word "archaeology" was invented, people have been removing artifacts from their original context - or location. Objects have been taken to be sold for profit, saved as souvenirs, and put in museums. Often, historically important artifacts that have been placed in large, national museums have become points of national pride. Think of the Egyptian Rosetta Stone in the British Museum (http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/compass/ixbin/goto?id=OBJ67), or the Greek "Nike of Samothrace" at the Louve in Paris (http://www.louvre.fr/llv/oeuvres/detail_notice.jsp?CONTENT%3C%3Ecnt_id=10134198673225805&CURRENT_LLV_NOTICE%3C%3Ecnt_id=10134198673225805&CURRENT_LLV_DEP%3C%3Efolder_id=1408&CURRENT_LLV_DIV%3C%3Efolder_id=2534374302024492&FOLDER%3C%3Efolder_id=9852723696500817&bmUID=1121778015550&bmLocale=en) (the French call it the Winged Victory of Samothrace).

In the past few decades, some governments have politely asked for objects that they feel have been pillaged from their countries to be returned. During the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens, Greece attempted to pressure Great Britain for the return of the displaced Parthenon or "Elgin" marbles by announcing the building a brand new museum for them, the Acropolis Museum. Italy recently returned an obelisk that was taken from Ethiopia just before World War II (http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/3252283.stm).

Recently however, the demand for the return of these has taken a more formal, and perhaps less polite, turn. Egypt recently announced that it has decided to sue two museums, one in England and one in Belgium for the return two pharaonic relief - or tomb carvings. Egypt says that if the museums don't return the artifacts in question, archaeologists who work in those museums will not be allowed to continue digging in the "Land of the Pharaohs". Zahi Hawass, the director of Egypt's Supreme Council on Antiquities has made it his mission to have as many objects as possible returned to his home country as quickly as possible, especially the famous ones like the Rosetta Stone - which was the key to unlocking Ancient Egypt's hieroglyphic language.

Some archaeologists are nervous that the return of the Elgin marbles or the Rosetta Stone will open the "flood-gates" for the return of hundreds if not thousands of artifacts. Museums like the British Museum have argued that they not only promote scientific research on these objects, but having them in places like London, Paris, and New York allows millions of visitors to come and visit them every year. Others argue that it is important for countries to have the objects which reflect their cultural heritage and national history in their own museums.

What do you think? Where do these objects belong?

Check out the whole story? (http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20050717/ap_on_re_mi_ea/egypt_antiquities)
Sukey says:

I disagree that the artefacts should be returned home to conditions they wouldn’t possibly be able to survive in. For example if we sent home wooden African figures to their original context they would soon decay in the humid conditions. The protection of these artefacts is also questionable in countries in financial difficulty. The temptation could be too much. Also nobody has absorbed the point that by spreading artefacts around the world, in relation to their origins, we are reducing the understanding of civilisations our future generations will have.

posted on Mon, 01/16/2006 - 5:44am

Joe (user/joe) says:

This makes me think of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (http://www.cr.nps.gov/nagpra/) (NAGPRA). NAGPRA is a Federal law that provides a process for museums to return certain Native American cultural items such as human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony to descendants and affiliated Indian tribes.

If anyone is interested, the Science Museum of Minnesota has a Policy Statement on Collections Management (http://www.smm.org/research/Collections/collmgmtpolicy.php), which includes how we adhere to the NAGPRA guidelines.

posted on Tue, 07/19/2005 - 9:21am

Sam says:

That's a great point, Joe. While NAGPRA governs the return of artifacts via federal law, it is interesting to note that some museums and universities have returned objects (including human remains) to peoples outside of the United States voluntarily.
Is this the start of a world-wide trend? It is hard to say.

One First Nations tribe in particular, the Haida in British Columbia, Canada, have been very successful in organizing the repatriation of human remains held in American museums.

They have a website at: http://repatriation.ca/index.htm

A group of indigenous people of New Zealand, the Maori, have also been very influential in their international requests for the return of sacred artifacts and human remains.

posted on Wed, 07/20/2005 - 11:59am

Anonymous says:

I think that the artifacts should be put back where the people found them.

posted on Wed, 07/20/2005 - 1:16pm

Rey says:

Actually, once an artifact is uncovered, the place where they were found may be unsafe depending on where that is. If that IS the case, the artifact is in danger of being stolen or destroyed by natural causes.

posted on Tue, 01/08/2013 - 5:50pm

Sinz Axion says:

Indeed.

I'm doing a paper on this subject and yes, I believe, if they were in any way moved to another country in the past, the country that houses the original dig site should have everything returned.

Now, there is the issue of past collection and maintenance that England (I'll use the Egyptian artifacts as an example) went through in the last 100 or so years. Should they be reimbursed? Or should the Egyptian Government pay a fee to appease the English so they can give up many precious artifacts?

Thank you.

posted on Fri, 10/28/2005 - 10:33am

David Roe says:
I believe that the government should pay a fee otherwise what's the reward. I mean you found it you deserve a thanks!

posted on Mon, 08/25/2008 - 3:17pm

Anonymous says:

haha you missed spelled Louvre!! but i do think artifacts should go back where they belong because they're part of their culture!

posted on Mon, 10/31/2005 - 1:42am

Gene (user/gene) says:

I suppose it would be cruel to point out the irony here. ;-)

posted on Mon, 10/31/2005 - 11:16am

Marion says:

It is an interesting question and does not led itself to an easy answer. Just because an item is found in a certain location doesn't mean that it is an artifact of the current indigenous population. What if the artifact is from a culture that isn't represented by the current government of the area? Who should the artifact be returned to? What about the cases where a "legitimate" representative of a government donated or even sold an item to a foreign government, museum, or collector? The human remains question can be just as murky. It is far to simplistic to say "yes return them"!

posted on Mon, 10/31/2005 - 6:32pm

Sinz Axion says:

...quite.

But, in retrospect, when Howard Carter, for example, found King Tut's Tomb, could it have remained in Egypt housed by an adequate museum and maintained by proper entities? Or did he make the right decision to send it immediately to England where it can be properly examined and studied.

ah, such controversy, I'm still having trouble starting my paper on this subject.

posted on Tue, 11/01/2005 - 1:07pm
Emma Chatterton, archaeologist says:

Tutankhamen's tomb never left Egypt and neither did any of its contents, except on loan. It's difficult to physically move a tomb! I think that artefacts should be returned to place of origin, in terms of ethics, but as you note, it depends on correct conservation methods.

posted on Fri, 11/25/2005 - 9:16am

Anonymous says:

you spelled artifacts wrong. but i think that artifacts should return home because they were wrongfully taken.

posted on Wed, 12/06/2006 - 11:43pm

Gene says:

"Artefacts" is an acceptable alternate spelling, more common in British English than American.

posted on Fri, 08/28/2009 - 11:21pm

Anonymous says:

i also think artifacts should return home cuz of the egyptians believes and cultures

posted on Thu, 01/26/2012 - 6:50pm

MisterBuoyancy says:

Yes, Carter made the right decision to send the tomb to England but sending the tomb back to Egypt after the examinations would have been ideal.

posted on Sun, 02/20/2011 - 12:06am

cookies says:

it is really important 4 the country of the artifacts 2 have the artifacts u noe

posted on Fri, 10/21/2011 - 3:02pm
Anonymous says:

I was watching the Olympics in Turin and was amazed at the museum they had there that was full of these Egyptian artifacts that were sold by an excavator to the royal family. These artifacts belong to Egypt and should be returned. That would be like someone coming to America and digging up George Washington or Abraham Lincoln and selling them.

posted on Wed, 02/22/2006 - 9:15am

J says:

EXCELLENT POINT!

posted on Thu, 04/12/2012 - 9:10am

Anonymous says:

It is a difficult problem- at what point does the history of the object stop? Many times How and Who found the artifact is just as important as where it was found. For example: British Archeology and Egyptian Archeology DO have ties and connections- is it wrong to dismiss that history?

There is also the question of care- how heartbreaking it would be to turn over a collection to another museum knowing that the care of the object(s) would be in question.

posted on Tue, 11/01/2005 - 1:50pm

EminemLuvr says:

I do indeed think that the artifacts should be put back in the COUNTRY they were found. Like if a special rock was found in afgainst or Egypt, whatever, it should be placed in a museum in that country. Not in the best country, U.S.A, but the country they were found.

posted on Wed, 11/16/2005 - 11:57am

Anonymous says:

I think that the artifacts should belong to the country where they were found, but (if the country is OK with it) they should also be allowed to travel to other countries as "special exhibits".

posted on Sun, 08/30/2009 - 11:57am
Anonymous says:

Why couldn't we take them from there original home, show them to other countries and people all around the world, then ship them back to the original country?

posted on Thu, 12/15/2011 - 10:52am

Liza (user/liza) says:


posted on Thu, 11/17/2005 - 3:31pm

Anonymous says:

Can someone help me or tell me the reason that why artifacts should NOT be return back to their orgin.

posted on Sat, 03/25/2006 - 3:49pm

Erowin says:

Theres the issue of whats best for the artifact. If a country can properly house and care for an artifact, its fine to return it. Like the Pantheon in Greece- a wonderful museum was built for them, and the British should return the pieces. Theres also the question of if its even the same culture- I believe objects that are thousands of years old belong to all of humanity. The culture it came from no longer exists, just people living where it once did. They may be descendent's, but no one is 'connected' to their lineage some 2,000 years back.

posted on Mon, 08/05/2013 - 1:52am

Angela says:

Whether return the artifacts or not is a question to debate upon. In fact, even if museums return artifacts back to their countries of origin, it is doubted whether the countries of origin can protect the artifacts properly and safely. Those essentially important artifacts are not only treasures of a single country any more, but treasures of the world--we all have rights to care for them.

posted on Sat, 11/19/2005 - 8:46pm
Sophie says:

The problem, at its centre, is a debate of Internationlism and Nationalism. While it's ok to say that we all have the right to take care of the artifacts, it shouldn't be the excuse under which we refuse to return the treasure to the country of origin.

The artifact has its unique value because of its cultural contents, thus it could only display its integrity in where it belongs. This is like sending a painter to the country where his inspiration lies, not in a city centre where the best drawing facilities can be bought.

We have reasons to doubt the real care taken in the country where the artifacts are kept. In fact some investigations showed that the earlier thefted artifacts are buried and ignored in some possessing countries.

There are many ways we can help the artifacts to be known to more in the world. Seizing them in the hands where they were seized may be the worst, but mentioned the most in the present world, probably because it's internally the more selfish one. If we are really considering for the human treasure, we could help the artifacts return to its country of origin, when the country is capable to take care of the artifacts; and we could help the country of origin to receive the artifacts by aiding with the facilities and the general education.

The artifacts should return to their countries of origin as their final destiny.

We are in the same family. We did contribution to take care of each others' children when their families are in trouble, but we will do crime if we refuse to return the child to their own parents.

It may take efforts for everyone to make an agreement on the issue, but we can see the light if we are really thinking for the artifacts' sake- for the treasure of all humanity.

Anonymous says:

the artifacts that were taken should go back to where they came from. No one had the right to take the artifacts from their original place. They should be returned as soon as possible. How would you like it if someone came and took valuable things from your house? I know I would not like that at all. So be considerate of other people belongings!!!
This article from the *Wall Street Journal* ([http://www.opinionjournal.com/taste/?id=110007746](http://www.opinionjournal.com/taste/?id=110007746)) summarizes many of these issues, and offers a nice solution: ownership of objects may revert to the country of origin, but the objects themselves can stay in their current museums on long-term loan.

posted on Fri, 12/30/2005 - 12:51pm

Anonymous says:

I agree that cultural treasures should be returned to their country of origin because that is where they belong if something came from Africa that means that it can go there without damage according to climate because it was originally from there. I don't think that the government would take something they know wouldn't be able to survive in its country because of security, then there is no point of bringing it back but these historical artefacts have great value to the its people and tell of their stories which might not have great importance to someone of a different background. If an artefact is taken back to its country of origin that means its true identity is told with experience and emotion and truth.

posted on Wed, 02/07/2007 - 2:52pm

sap4001 says:

A lot of people I think are ignoring a fundamental point in this whole discussion. "Economics". Artifacts such as the Rosetta Stone in London and the Nefertiti's statue in Berlin both of which were taken away from Egypt illegally are generating millions of dollars every year for those museums and plays a big role in the tourist industry for those cities. So the question for those governments and museums is whether to do the right thing while suffering huge financial consequences.

It is true that artifacts should only be returned if proper care can be provided by the countries of origins but usually museums argue this differently by stating that they should keep the artifacts because they can display them better and not because Egypt can't house them properly. A lot of arguments are made by museums holding such artifacts in foreign countries but it will be easier to understand their reluctance if you simply considered the amount of money they are generating by keeping them:

posted on Sat, 06/13/2009 - 11:07pm
Hajar says:

Everything that belongs to Egypt must be returned to Egypt. All the money made by those English and German Museums whatever, should be given to Egypt. They are making money on Egyptians' back, and they don't have the right to take them away from their original country. This is part of their heritage and culture. And, hey guys, we are not in the 18th century. The Egyptian Museum can take care of it all!!! And they will be safe, God's will.

posted on Sat, 06/11/2011 - 11:59am

Anonymous says:

The thing to consider is that artifacts taken are not/have not always been cared for in the best possible way and sometimes either by lack of understanding or purpose have been destroyed. Some objects from Egypt were irreversibly damaged because the were made of sandstone and were damaged in Industrial age London smog. Since so much has changed hands we need a policy that allows for change overtime. Like NAGPRA-those seeking a return of an item have to establish (prove) a cultural connection to the item. They also should need to demonstrate an ability to care for the items-but ultimately who are "we" to decide that. It is an sad part of human history that things we just taken and those in power deem themselves the only ones capable of caring for an artifact.

posted on Mon, 03/01/2010 - 2:41pm

Anonymous says:

I in 100% agreement with you

posted on Mon, 01/24/2011 - 12:50pm

humanities<3 says:

Although I agree with that statement for my own personal benefit, looking at it from their point of view, who are we to determine their worthiness. Its a ongoing debate that unfortunately has not correct answer. If we were to loose the declaration to england because terrorist attacks make the east coast an unstable home the i believe we would throw a great fit.

posted on Mon, 01/24/2011 - 12:50pm
Anonymous says:

I agree with you.. If we left these in the countries that weren't able to care for them properly and they parishes because of it, how would we ever know anything about that countries history?

posted on Wed, 09/14/2011 - 10:11am
reply (/comment/reply/213/786204)

Anonymous says:

no way

posted on Mon, 02/06/2012 - 12:31am
reply (/comment/reply/213/792212)

Anonymous says:

Your comment isn't even an argument. It just shows how selfish you are, you think there aren't GOOD museums in other countries? Are you trying to tell the future generations that "looting is right"?

posted on Wed, 02/08/2012 - 7:27pm
reply (/comment/reply/213/792262)

Anonymous says:

I don't think anyone is promoting looting however the point they are trying to make is that realistically some countries (especially third-world countries) main concern is not of the preservation of artifacts so that future generations can learn from, but they hope that by acquiring these artifacts it will give themselves more power. And by the way if you are going to argue a point you incredibly cripple your argument if you attack your opponent personally, its in bad taste and honestly has no purpose.

posted on Tue, 03/27/2012 - 8:51am
reply (/comment/reply/213/794780)

Emzy says:

We're not saying that we're just going to bury the things back in the sand and leave them, what we mean is returning them to their home country, in a museum there.

posted on Mon, 10/08/2012 - 3:00am
reply (/comment/reply/213/803025)
I agree that these artifacts should be returned to the location it came from. It's not their right to take something that doesn't belong to them. Foreigners should be banned, especially the British and Americans.

posted on Mon, 01/21/2013 - 8:51pm

Anonymous says:

the should be returned. hurrah!

posted on Wed, 01/25/2006 - 3:19am

kman says:

i believe that the artifacts do not need to be returned. I use some crude logic, but i believe that artifacts are like land. If we needed to return everything that we took from natives many of us, if not all, would be homeless. In most cases, we are not living in the same land that our direct ancestors inhabited. In the same way that artifacts were taken, pieces of land were taken. However, there is no talk of returning the land; and rightfully so.

Also, in a way, the conquering armies earned the artifacts. Many empires who went across the world conquering lands collected these artifacts. It isn't necessarily finders keepers. But if an army were to get the pieces of cultural importance it is theirs. I have a lot more thoughts but i dont feel like explaining them.

posted on Tue, 01/31/2006 - 6:18pm

Anonymous says:

I think we should return the land because we had no right to this land, it belonged to the Native Americans, we wrongfully took the land killed their people and crushed their culture.

posted on Tue, 10/13/2009 - 8:07pm

Ashley says:

i personally think that artifacts should return the the home they came from, if you disturb them they may not rest in peace

posted on Wed, 03/01/2006 - 12:24pm

Anonymous says:
The monuments are literally crumbling and Africa needs money to restore them. They don't have the resources to take care of these artifacts and are in many problems right now that can affect the artifacts in a negative way. We have to think of what will happen to the artifacts before spiritual beliefs.

posted on Tue, 03/07/2006 - 9:34pm

Anonymous says:

Yes they should return to the care of the original nation. This is not for indulging your past history. This is the nation's history, their culture, their life!

I understand the concerns of England and France, as to not trusting the nations. But when I go to Greece or Egypt I do not want to go to France and England to find out the history's of the other nations.

posted on Mon, 06/12/2006 - 12:34pm

Anonymous-JayJay says:

Well, I personally think we should return the artefacts. Our class is debating upon this issue, and I pretty sure it's the right thing to do.

posted on Fri, 10/13/2006 - 11:42pm

Anonymous says:

Regarding the Elgin Marbles,

"...a Nitrogen Air-Conditioning Hall has been built in Athens where the Caryatids will be sheltered and protected from the city's pollution. Other relative measures are being taken to preserve the Elgin Marbles if and when they are eventually returned."

Why insist that this can't be returned because of climate conditions?

Source (http://www.museum-security.org/The%20Parthenon%20and<br />%20the%20Elgin%20Marbles.htm)
Anonymous says:

I think that these artifacts should be returned to the countries they were found. In my opinion the western world stole these things to enrich their own culture, which is almost non-existent when compared to the past civilizations that existed. These artifacts are the heritage and lineage for those countries. How would we Americans like it, if things that are important in our history be displayed in Japan for their viewing pleasure? I strongly believe that it just thievery disguised in a fancier way, if they cared a lot about these artifacts as they argue, they would take them back home and preserve them there. So that if you want to see them you go there for yourself and experience everything that country has to offer both past and present. It is a pattern in history where the western world strips other "primitive" civilizations of what rights they have and what rightly belongs to them. I do not think that is ever going to change although I truly hope it does.

Even when it comes to civilizations like the early roman and greek and egyptian civilizations, most of their artifacts are in France or Britain and even here in the U.S. They should be taken back to Rome, Greece and Egypt...etc, to the people who have every right to them.

posted on Sat, 11/11/2006 - 10:25am

Anonymous says:

In my opinion, these artefacts should return to their origin. Even if they were stolen, which we do not know, they should be viewed in their country of origin because they are part of the identity of the culture, and people in this culture should be able to see these things in their own country not in another place.

posted on Sun, 11/12/2006 - 5:55pm

Anonymous says:

Due to the fact that the Rosetta Stone is currently in The British Museum, I personally think that since it is the Egyptian icon of their identity. It will be protected properly there and besides, how would you like it if someone just came along and looted a precious artifact of your original culture? Respect other countries identities.

posted on Wed, 12/06/2006 - 11:54pm

MisterBuoyancy says:

I think we should return these artefacts but if your arms are weak and
you cannot hold you baby, wouldn't you rather someone else hold it rather than lay the baby on the ground. That's why the best way to handle this is to help the developing and then return their artefacts.

posted on Sun, 02/20/2011 - 12:56am

Anonymous says:

i agree

posted on Fri, 01/19/2007 - 12:15pm

Anonymous says:

Conditions:
If proper documentation and proof of ownership is established, then by all means a particular artefact should be returned. The onerous part is establishing ownership and the possession chain. Unlike many illicit materials (and stolen artefacts, by nature of being wrongfully obtained, are illicit materials), ownership and a papertrail should exist and provide adequate evidence of whose rightful property such objects are.
On another note, Public Museums do not OWN their collections per se. Public Museums are merely the stewards of such objects. Therefore, if it is proven by due documentation that any given piece of a collection was wrongfully - or erroneously - acquisitioned, then the given object should be deacquisitioned to the proper authorities who should then make the decision as to whether to return the artefact to a private owner.
As long as it is accomplished by due process, any such artefact should be returned to a steward organization local to the original owner. That entity should then decide the article's fate, as is its right. Say a state museum is holding an Iriquois treasure obtained from a village when sacked by US Cavalrymen. The rightful owner (assuming that in this enlightened age we can dispense with 'to the victors . . .') would be either the descendent or the tribe thus assaulted. The state museum cannot go to Joe Running Bear and hand over the object (most state museums can only hand over pieces of their collections to registered non-profit organizations). The Curator or Director of the museum would have to deacquisition the object and transfer custodianship to a responsible organization such as a tribal council. It would then be the tribal council's responsibility to decide the fate of the object, a decision which would require proper identification and documentation.

Now, more essoterically, who should have proprietorship over treasures of [no longer extant] civilizations? The muddle-blooded offspring only locationally related to the original artisans? The current political institution
claiming dominion over the original dig sites? I believe such objects are treasures of humanity. Those found destroying such, in my opinion, should be subject to indictment for crimes against humanity (such as certain idols and millennia-old icons destroyed out of religious fanaticism by numerous extremists over the last few hundred years, including damage to the sphinx and the parthenon).

Doralyn Dell Lacoste says:

Today technology makes it possible to reproduce most of the artifacts. For restoration or visual display, virtual replicas could more than represent any lost treasure. Privately owned archaeological or historical art is a fact complicated by rights, value, and historicity.

Anonymous says:

Wasn't there an act past in the 70's to make it illegal to own artfacts and such items or to take them out of its country of origin? I am doing some reading on cambodian art an have read how they took statues out of the country back in 80's and 90's. Is that illegal? a

Brigid says:

Not all artifacts should be returned to source countries. More people can learn about and appreciate the artifacts if they are spread out in museums throughout the world. Also, artifacts belong to all people, not just the citizens of the country where they were found. The cultures that artifacts represent are not the same as the people living in the country now. I don't think there are many people in Greece who still worship Zeus. Finally, museums should be allowed to keep some objects in exchange for their preservation of artifacts and the scientific contributions they have been able to make by studying them. Some artifacts should be returned to countries, but not all of them.

Anonymous kayla says:

I am doing an essay on this subject and I have just read through the
comments. I think that we don't need to return them, because the people took them because they didn't have a camera to make a picture of them. As well when they got home they wanted to show the people of their country how other people lived.

Anonymous says:

I see the point for returning them, but some of them are not very good reasons. I think that we should be able to ship them around the world as "special exhibits" and after we are done we could return them back. But there is also the possibility that the country is not able to take care of the artifacts. What if we could decide on letting other countries keep them until the country was able to take care of it. Or we could all share them and legally transport them all around the world.

Alex says:

The following are in order of priority:

1. The artifacts should be returned to the Country of Origin if circumstances dictate that it will be in good hands, and not fall into the hands of a corrupted government, who would sell it for profit.

2. If not, the embassy or consulate of the Country of Origin may set up a center for displaying the artifacts.

3. Another way to preserve artifacts of international interest is to keep them in the UN headquarters.

4. The last resort is to keep them as it is.

D.K says:

The items should not be returned. Look what happened to the Bagdad museum! As soon as the country destabilized, the townsfolk looted the museums and took everything, now all those wonderful artifacts from Mesopotamia are gone. They will never be returned or researched further. If you send artifacts back to Egypt, then next war or civil unrest, say goodbye to those pieces as well. Nothing will happen to those pieces in America, Canada, Britain, France, Germany etc... They're safe and in
the hands of non-radical fundamentalist religious fanatics who wish to make Allah supreme God. They will all be destroyed eventually otherwise. Let scholars and researchers take care of them!

Freddy says:

1) What say European countries would not engage in war? In fact Europe has seen war TWICE in the last century and Paris was nearly destroyed by Hitler.

2) The fact that somebody can take better care of the artifact does not warrant stealing it. Theft remains theft. It is like stealing rich people’s money because you think you can better spend/keep/invest it.

3) Western countries contribute just as much if not more than middle east countries to the instability of the region. It is like me keep raiding your home and wouldn’t return what I have stolen because I believe "your home is unsafe". Well who made it unsafe at the first place?

4) Last but not least, what about artifacts that are from countries that have stability and financial power to take care of them? The Chinese, in particular, will have more than enough resources and scholars to take care of their own artifacts. If what is stolen from China is not returned, all the "it is dangerous", and "they can't take good care of them" saying remains excuses.

Let me remind you, these artifacts are STOLEN from their home countries.

MisterBuoyancy says:

Artefacts are not always stolen. Some are found by people within the country and sold on the black market to neighbro countries. I also believe that the protection of these artefacts are the main priority. I'm not saying that western countries should keep them but we should be wise. I think helping countries with financial difficulties would be the best way to insure that the artefacts are safe in there home country.
Not all middle eastern countries are filled with "radical fundamentalist religious fanatics who wish to make Allah supreme God" who loot museums and destroy culture. That is an ignorant position...those people looted those artifacts for their own reasons and looting does happen everywhere after an emergency. Think of Los Angelos and the looting that happens after earth quakes.

posted on Sun, 03/28/2010 - 10:10pm

Rose says:

I think that the stollen monuments should return to their home country only if the government of their home country could preserve them properly in suitable museums and make them accessible to their visitors like the Greek government and the Egyptian one who are able to preserve their monuments.

posted on Sun, 07/01/2007 - 4:06pm

Robert says:

Should artifacts be returned to there country of origin? That really depends on how they were originally obtained! In most cases the ancient artifacts that are displayed in the major museums of the world were obtained with the complete knowledge and consent of the countries from which they came. That being the case they should remain where they are. Archaeological expeditions are funded by individuals and organizations with the anticipation that a certain amount of the artifacts that are found will be allowed to be exported in return for the work that is performed by the Archaeological expedition. Generally, in the past the countries of origin have agreed to this and have 'first pick' of the artifacts that are found. It is only within the recent past that countries such as Egypt, Greece and Turkey have started to press for the return of artifacts that have been LEGALLY exported to others for display in museums. There are many cases of museums that have returned artifacts to countries of origin when it has been shown these were not legally obtained. There are also cases were museums have returned fragments of artifacts so that they could be reunited with other pieces of the artifact thus making it whole once again. In both of these cases museums have acted in an extremely responsible manner and will probably continue to do so! To ask for entire collections or portions of them to be returned when they were legally obtained is UNREASONABLE! When museums display artifacts from other countries it allows the culture of the country of origin to be shared and
possibly better understood by others. As our world evolves into a global economy this has to be an very positive aspect.

posted on Tue, 09/25/2007 - 7:00pm

Anonymous says:

i have mixed views on this subject as on the one hand its good knowledge and very interesting and informational but on the other you have to understand that the ancient Egyptians believed in the after life and this i think will hinder them in some way from having a full after life also we should think about it this way would you like your ancestors put on show with all there worldly goods in all different countries we have to think that back in ancient time they were very strong believers that they would go onto better things like becoming gods and do we really have the right to step into that path.

posted on Wed, 09/26/2007 - 5:45am

Anonymous says:

That is so cool

posted on Tue, 01/15/2008 - 9:57am

Anonymous says:

I think that this is completely wrong that they would not give artifacts to their original countries. But they won't because the other countries want them as an eyecatcher in a museum so they can make money

posted on Sun, 03/30/2008 - 4:13pm

Joe (user/joe) says:

Isn't that what the museum that is holding the artifacts that are from the other country is doing? Though I would argue that the museum's intent is more to educate than to rake in cash, and further the countries that are trying to reclaim the artifacts are just trying to get back parts of their history. It's not a simple answer.

posted on Fri, 04/04/2008 - 10:30pm

Anonymous says:

artifacts should not be returned to their countries of origen. if someone
else had to come into their country and find them, it means that the
native people of that country were unable to do it themselves. I say
finders keepers.

posted on Mon, 04/14/2008 - 8:43am
reply (/comment/reply/213/496307)

Anonymous says:

I think that the artifacts should be returned to their countries. What if
the natives of the country knew where to find them but didn't want to
disturb them because the artifacts were seen as sacred? If you just
go in there and take the artifacts when some people would just like
them to stay as they were it would be like stealing!

posted on Sun, 08/30/2009 - 12:06pm
reply (/comment/reply/213/687366)

Remington Student says:

They should go back home where they belong! What kind of morals are
you setting for the future? Is that right to find something and just keep it?
NO! You should always return it to the owner. For example... What if you
found a really cute loving dog and you knew that it belonged to
someone? Would you try to find the owner and return the dog or just say
"OH FINDERS KEEPERS!"?

posted on Mon, 06/16/2008 - 8:32pm
reply (/comment/reply/213/533893)

Anonymous says:

Is there any way for a private collector to obtain ancient artifacts legally?

posted on Fri, 10/17/2008 - 2:48pm
reply (/comment/reply/213/576812)

Anonymous says:

MANY of the objects which are under debate such as King Tut's tomb,
his burial headdress and his belongings which reside in England ... and
many other artifacts... where taken out of countries a LONG time ago. At
that time in history these artifacts were NOT stolen ... there were NO
laws or restrictions governing what should happen to these artifacts.
Archaeologists were allowed to come in and keep whatever they found...
it was up to them to find the resources necessary to remove them and
ship them back to their countries ( a lot harder back then). It was not
stealing then ... it is only considered stealing now due to modern
restrictions and laws saying people cannot take things out of countries...
Is it fair to give them back when, when they were taken it was perfectly
LEGAL? Not really! I agree that objects found now should reside in their country of origin or where they are found BUT artifacts taken from countries lets say before WWII don't have to be returned. People and countries all evolve, maybe restrictions were set in place because countries have learned from their "mistakes" of the past...

posted on Mon, 10/27/2008 - 10:59am
Anonymous says:
haha you are are all telling lies.
FINDERS KEEPER
posted on Mon, 11/03/2008 - 4:31pm
Rich says:
U R wrong. People should keep the artifact to sell to museum. They have no right to take an artifact from someone who found it.
posted on Wed, 11/05/2008 - 7:25pm
Anonymous says:
Im doing a Prop on this in class and I believe the foreign countries should get back their stolen goods. In america we have rules right like no violence, drugs, abuse, and stealing etc. So if the museums can just steal artifacts from other countries isn't that just breaking what america stands for today?
Also america brings up a good argument that "these artifacts would never have survived if they were left these items there". In most cases this is true. Americas intentions were good but their actions weren't. It's the foreign countries decision to do whatever they please with their property. America can't take matters into their own hands like that.
In addition, If the museums really wanted to have a piece of the distance countries culture they should've just asked permission. "Hello we are a famous museum that is collecting rare artifacts of the different cultures, we were curious if you would like to contribute a special items that represent your heritage and of course we will send you pieces of the profits we make" These few words is all it basically takes.
posted on Sun, 11/16/2008 - 12:33pm
Gene (/user/gene) says:
In many cases, the artifacts were acquired within the laws that were in force at that time. But the argument has been made that those old laws were too lax. Should museums be held responsible for actions which were legal 100 years ago when the object was collected, but which are illegal today?

e bunny says:

I'm doing a research paper for school on this topic, apparently there is quite a variety of perspectives. Personally, I think the artifacts belong to the country they came from, after all, most of them were stolen. However, many of you do have a point, the artifacts are international as well as national treasures, plus, not all of us have the money to go to Egypt or China solely to admire that nation's historical icons... another thought: why is it that we don't return the artifacts to their countries and they rest of the world can enjoy fakes? second thought: how on earth am I gonna do the paper now?! I'm only allowed to pick one side of the argument...

SHHS student says:

I agree that they belong in the country they came from due to there heritage and that the countries may want them for there own.

If a country didn't want their artifacts, well the other countries can have. I think that is OK.

If the other country got them and then destroyed or threw it away then IT IS NOT OK.

Anonymous says:

I think artifacts should be returned home because they come from that country, but they shouldn't be returned to countries who can not afford to look after them. Also if they are returned the country should lend them out to other countries.

another SHHS student says:
hi i think we should return the artifacts but i am bored now so bye

posted on Thu, 02/19/2009 - 5:53pm
reply (/comment(reply/213/624095)

A girl from a school says:
I believe that the country of origin should get their artifacts back, UNLESS the country can not afford to look after them, then they should stay where they are so they don't get destroyed and so other people can see them.

posted on Thu, 02/19/2009 - 5:56pm
reply (/comment(reply/213/624097)

Anonymous <3 says:
I believe that the country of origin should have the artifacts. simply because it is part of their heritage and culture. It is vital that the country of origin to learn about their past. In order to learn about their past they need things from their past to provide knowledge.
But, if the country of origin cant afford to keep it in good condition they should just probably just leave it in the other countries museum. Thats what i believe.

posted on Thu, 02/19/2009 - 6:03pm
reply (/comment(reply/213/624100)

Henry says:
In different situations, different acts are required. With something like an artifact that is made of wood, it can't be in a very wet/cold country, or a very humid country, it would decay.
And you need to take in the facts that some countries simply cannot look after some artifacts, and a more advanced country, say, Britain, or the US of A, would have the necessary technology to support them.

posted on Thu, 02/19/2009 - 6:05pm
reply (/comment(reply/213/624101)

Anonymous says:
so...going along with all that...then all artifacts and remains found must go back to africa and asia...because according to evolution, we all came from there originally...(unless u don't believe in evo)
that's what i don't like about claiming artifacts and such. i know it's disrespectful from the human perspective (especially if artifacts are human remains) but personally, in the perspective of science, it's just all science...human remains(just living creatures like everything
Should ancient artifacts return home? | Science Buzz

posted on Thu, 02/19/2009 - 8:50pm
reply (/comment/reply/213/624136)

Just Reading says:

If you honestly and seriously would be ok with your mother or your spouse or your child's dead bodies ("just human remains") being put on display for strangers to see and comment on, then I guess you can have that opinion for yourself. But even in that case, just because you would be ok with it doesn't mean everybody else is. We are humans, not scientific-only emotionless automatons, and these were real people. They are someone's son/daughter, mother/father, sister/brother. They are someone's (now living someone's) ancestor, whether you can technically trace it back on paper or not. Even if they had no children and are no one's ancestor, they are a human being and deserve to be treated with respect. Their bodies should not be disturbed. At *least*, if you must dig them up for scientific/historical importance, then do your research and properly replace them.

As for the idea of other countries having these artifacts "on long term loan" - that's just fancy talk for "never gonna give it back". Anybody knows that if you simply look at how long these museums have had the artifacts already. "Long term loan" is ambiguous and has no end date so you can just keep anything indefinitely on "long term loan" and say it's not stealing cuz you're just "borrowing" it. That's no less stealing than anyone else who takes your stuff and never gives it back cuz they are "just borrowing it". If museums are going to have things on display via a "long term loan" the actual "term" should be given. Otherwise it's just fancy theft to dance around the obvious grievance with legal wordage. The law doesn't always = what's right, and what's right should take precedence when it's obvious. That's like saying slavery was ok back in the day because it was still legal back then. That's like saying human sacrifice was ok because it was legal/religiously acceptable back then. If in fact we are making progress ethically and in society, then we should function on our progress, not on how things were or what was legal "at the time".

posted on Wed, 09/12/2012 - 3:15pm
reply (/comment/reply/213/801792)

Just Reading says:

If you can honestly say you would be okay with strangers from
everywhere viewing and commenting on the dead bodies of your mother, spouse, or children (who are "just living creatures") then I guess you could fairly have that opinion for yourself. But even if you do, that doesn't mean everybody else is ok with it. We *are* humans, and (even scientifically) as such, we are emotional beings. We are not automatons who could possibly ever see all things (maybe some things, and we are highly selective about those) from a removed point of view.

We have to remember that, no matter how long ago they died or were found, that these were real people. These were someone’s son/daughter, mother/father, husband/wife. They were no less human than we are, and they cared for one another, as obviously evidenced by the care with which they were entombed in the first place. The answer becomes obvious if you simply put yourself in the situation. If your father died and a few hundred years from now someone "dug him up for science" then maybe you'd be ok with that. Maybe you'd be ok with them doing tests on his bones to find out about our way of life from "way back then". But what about when they take his favorite pocket knife that never left his pants pocket? What about when they take his gold wedding ring off his boney finger that he so insisted to be buried with? The one that represents his eternal undying love for your mother - a very interesting cultural concept (most countries' cultures even now don't have that tradition of wearing a ring on that finger to represent marriage) - and display it in a museum. What then? Then it's wrong. And this is no different. Sometimes you don't have to invoke science or even the law (which isn't always supporting the right thing anyway) to know what's right and what's wrong. There is no law written that says helping someone struggling to carry a heavy load is right, but we all know it is. There is no scientific theory that says a mother who loves her adopted child does so for any reason other than the biological urge to pass on one's way of life and memory. But we all know there's more to it. Come on, people. It's a thin argument at best to say that displaying the precious belongings of the dead (or even their own bodies) is ok period, nevertheless for it to be done somewhere thousands of miles from the country where they were originally buried. We *are* human, so let's not play the game of pretending we aren't and that we are above emotional thought or incapable of reconciling ethics with reason.

As for museums keeping things on "long term loan", that's thin too, seeing as how there's no acutal "term" to define just how long a "long term loan" is. Once again it's easy if you simply put yourself and *your* stuff there. Your grandma lent my grandma her car and was
naive enough not to delineate on legal paper how long she could "borrow" it because she thought surely people have values and morals and wouldn't do that. My family's had it for over 100 years. It's a relic now, one of the first cars ever produced, and we keep it on display in our state-of-the-art garage made especially to keep it up-to-par for as long as possible (nevermind that we charge admission for viewing). What are you upset for? We're only keeping it on "long term loan"... We're just "borrowing" it. Grandma said we could, 100 years ago, remember? We're not done with it yet... and we never will be. And neither will those big museums. They'll always keep them out on "long term loan" unless someone goes in and forces an actual legal time limit on it.

The answers always become much clearer when you simply put *yourself* in the situation. It's so easy for us to discount something just because it isn't happening to us.

posted on Wed, 09/12/2012 - 3:36pm

Anonymous says:

i think that the circumstances and conditions in their country of origin dictate what should happen.

Say that the country was in a state of warfare, or encroaching poverty, for the time being, it would be wise to keep them in a place/museum where they are safe from danger and will have better protection. Religious views will change. Some artefacts, for example, may depict a Christian state of the past. But if that same country is now dominated by a entirely different culture and religion, it is hardly likely that they will be respected by those people, especially when they suggest ideas untolerted by that culture.

However, i believe that all these "excuses" can only be used temporarily. In the end, each country has a right to their artefacts, and these requests cannot be ignored. In the end, most of the world's artefacts will eventually be returned, either by good will or by force, and ultimately, their original context is where they belong, and will be appreciated the most.

posted on Tue, 03/17/2009 - 5:40pm

jane says:

i think that the artifacts should stay in egypt

posted on Fri, 10/22/2010 - 9:02am
JERRAD says:

I like the article about the ancient artifacts that have to come home.

posted on Fri, 03/27/2009 - 7:11am

reply (/comment/reply/213/639796)

caprithor says:

Ok in my view,

1) I agree that all the artifact must come home. Where in this case, who ever took India's artifact especially its jewelry since ancient time has to return back to India. It sounds nonsense right? So, none will bother to do so. At the same time, most of the statues was stolen and almost 2/3 of artifact and temples was demolished. Those people who conquer India since ancient time has destroyed its rich heritage too under the name of religion!!.

2) I believe that those artifact stolen from Afghanistan shouldn't be return back for time being. See what taliban did to Bamiyan Buddha Statues. So here, i agree that things stolen here shouldnt be brought back because chances are high to be destroyed again.

3) Another point is in China. When Dynasty changes, new king will destroy previous heritage. Wipe out it completely. So many times this happened, many books lost, many traditional knowledge especially on medicine has lost forever.

4) The best among all is "Area 51". They keep all these things claiming that those artifact is properties of.........

You see, my opinion on points is contradicts each others. Talking about this point, can be a never ending story. Who to blame in this three points? May be you can give more points.

But i wish that one day either by armageddon or by aliens invasion, human can really learn to respect each other. Until there is no external factors there will be no peace!!!!!

(Regarding nations above, its just an example, i did meant it in racist way, but this example can be seen in all over the world.)

posted on Fri, 05/08/2009 - 4:51am

reply (/comment/reply/213/650526)

stateofhockey10 says:

artifacts should be allowed to stay in the museums that currently house them. Without these artifacts the entire idea of a museum is lost. They
Should ancient artifacts return home?

Anonymous says:

i think the egyptian artifacts claim is reasonable; they only want looted objects such as the rosetta stone and nefertitis bust.

Anonymous says:

RETURN THE ARTIFACTS!

Billybobjoe says:

Artifacts belong in the country the were made in

Gene (/user/gene) says:

The new Acropolis museum has opened, (http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2009/jun/16/acropolis-museum-athens-elgin-marbles) reigniting the debate over the Elgin marbles.

Anonymous says:

If you find an antient artifact you should do some research on it before you decide to give it away. If the object is very valuable, it might not be something you would want to keep in your home. If you felt you worked so hard to dig this ancient fossil up, or whatever it is, you might decide that you would want this in a famous museum so someday you could be the famous speaker at a ceremony telling about your journeys or expeditions to Africa to find an artifact.

Barth Tutterow says:

All stolen, pillaged or illegally obtained artifacts currently in museums around the world should be returned to their original source countries. If
we really want to heal the wounds of past transgressions, then we need to start by repatriating these artifacts.

posted on Mon, 11/23/2009 - 6:36pm

Reply (comment/reply/213/742531)

Leandra Machado says:

Doesn’t matter the political issues, ancient artifacts reflect the cultural heritage of a nation and must be relocated to it, where they belong to. And besides usually it’s just the rich nations stealing from the poor ones, in the name of "preservation and good care"!

posted on Wed, 12/02/2009 - 3:11am

Reply (comment/reply/213/745185)

Flor says:

I get pleasure from, lead to I discovered just what I was taking a look for.
You have ended my 4 day long hunt! God Bless you man.
Have a nice day. Bye

posted on Mon, 05/20/2013 - 11:50am

Reply (comment/reply/213/816896)

Anonymous says:

I’m doing a debate on this subject in school. Does anyone have good reasons for their thoughts????

posted on Tue, 01/05/2010 - 7:30pm

Reply (comment/reply/213/745549)

Stefan-Atl says:

Many have said "Return to the country..." but when the items were removed there was no country. The museum saved the item from being destroyed or lost. Is it fair to return the items to a new guy just because he currently runs the place? Can you guarantee that won’t change next week?

Many have said "Illegally stolen..." but at the time many of these items were legally obtained. We're not talking simple grave robbing here - It cost millions of dollars to find King Tut's tomb and deals were made to divide the spoils if they could be found. Legal issues are being misconstrued or retroactively applied because of political correctness. In many cases these pieces of art would be lost today if they hadn't been removed. Can anyone tell me what happened to the other half of the Rosetta Stone?
Many have discussed the ability of the country too maintain the items but as we've seen in Iran, Afghanistan and other places that this is no guarantee either.

A few have touched on the issue of economics - Some countries invested tremendous amounts of money to find, preserve and display these items. Isn't it fair that they be compensated for their investment?

A few have also mentioned the issues of education and access - In their current location these items are on display and accessible to many people - Can you guarantee that if the items are returned? And how many people will travel to China or Egypt to see the items versus the number of people that will travel to England or America?

It's a very complicated issue and very educated, involved, and diplomatic people are having difficulty determining the answer.

In today's news, Jordan is suing Israel for the return of the Dead Sea Scrolls because they claim they were found in Jordan. But clearly, they are significant to the Israeli culture. The suit isn't about culture, it's about politics. How can we be sure the Jordanians won't destroy them the way the Taliban destroyed the Buddhist statues?

"It belongs in the original country" is over-simplified and wrong.

Anonymous2 says:

The problem with Hawass' demands is that he is not Egyptian, he is an Arab and most of modern Egypt's population are Arabs and are not descended from the ancient Egyptians. They were displaced south into modern Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia and it is they who can claim cultural heritage over Egyptian artefacts. The argument that the Rosetta Stone, for example, is an essential part of Egyptian culture is nonsense - modern Egyptians are Arabs, their culture is in Mecca not in Egypt. Egypt has no cultural claim to these artifacts whatsoever.

Anonymous says:

While historically true, that isn't entirely correct. Culturally, if they believe they are Egyptian, and were born in Egypt, then who is to say that they shouldn't own them? Anyway, your argument is redundant. I could argue that we all originated from Africa anyway, so your point is
invalid. Wherever we were born and feel connected to is our nationality, its not about where your ancestors came from.

posted on Sun, 05/09/2010 - 3:20am

reply (/comment/reply/213/757305)

Anonymous says:

i think they should be returned as long as they will be kept in proper order so that everyone can enjoy them.

posted on Sun, 02/28/2010 - 9:29pm

reply (/comment/reply/213/749159)

Geoff says:

After looking at David Eliot's "Should The Lewis Chessmen be returned?" in his Clan Magazine I turned my attentions to other Scottish artifacts. How much of our heritage is on show in Scotland? Much of what is in the country is hidden away in storage. There are many pieces here which could be on loan to other countries, creating interest in Scotland's history, while other pieces should be brought back to Scotland eg "The Declaration of Arbroath" and "The Wallace Safe Conduct Letter". Whether it be for native Americans, Scots, Egyptians, Australians, we should share our pasts but the main objective is for the people to visit the country home of the relics.

posted on Mon, 05/31/2010 - 9:57am

reply (/comment/reply/213/759878)

Anonymous says:

Nothing should be returned to any third world country especially if that country is under muslim law. And Zahi HawASS should be barred from the British Museum and all Western museums until he learns to respect people.

posted on Wed, 07/21/2010 - 9:21pm

reply (/comment/reply/213/763479)

Shana (/user/shana) says:

I think it is less about the continuity of culture and more about place. The issue with so many historical narratives is the idea that anyone living anywhere has had a completely continuous, homogenous culture for centuries. Keeping objects in their place makes this story more obvious-- if you look at the Parthenon in Athens, it was a civic building, then a mosque, then a church, then a weapons storehouse, and now it is a temple to Greekness. How can you tell that story with the same impact except atop the Acropolis, looking around at the sprawling city of
Athens?

I also think that postcolonial nations need to give countries of origin the right of refusal for objects taken illicitly or illegally. It may not be required by law, but museums should have a higher standard.

posted on Thu, 07/22/2010 - 1:02pm
Gene (user/gene) says:

It may not be required by law, but museums should have a higher standard.

Why?

Seriously: why should museums be singled out and be expected to adhere to standards other than the law? Where would such a standard come from? And -- more importantly -- where would it end? If country A makes a modest extra-legal claim, and the museum complies, then what's to stop country B from making a stronger claim, and country C from making an even stronger claim, etc. etc.? And if museums go along with these demand, at some point a truly unacceptable demand will be made, and the museum community will have no defense, no established principle for refusal.

I have no particular opinion on the Parthenon or any other issue of contention. I merely raise a procedural point.

posted on Sat, 07/31/2010 - 10:56pm
Shana (user/shana) says:

Well, in some cases laws regarding cultural objects were initiated by museum ethics. And there are already state, national, and international (though not including all countries) laws and conventions protecting cultural objects.

(Good) museums already adhere to a code of ethics above and beyond the law that holds institutions accountable for the actions of their leaders and staff. So I don't see this as a stretch.

The reason I believe there is a special situation with postcolonial nations is that in every case there was a power imbalance. And of course, getting the objects back seems to happen alongside nations' striving for power and stability. Look at the case of the marbles--Greek people who
were living in Athens had no say over the architectural heritage of that region. They were occupied by the Ottomans, who gave permission for Lord Elgin to take fragments. Today, we can see that the Greek economy has been struggling to strengthen for decades. Greek people have lived in the shadow of a Western historical narrative in which their country all but disappears once Rome comes to power. But Greeks want to tell their own history, and that requires powerful objects as well as the respect of other nations.

There are countless other cases where objects were taken from the nation of origin without the permission of the people living there. To decide that an invading nation automatically has the right to all the heritage of the invaded nation reinforces an unfortunate precedent. Would it be ok for us to decide that Iraq and Afghanistan are to become colonies of the US and start moving people there and taking stuff from their museums?

Some people argue that we have to draw a line and leave past injustices in the past. But what about families of Nazi victims whose art was looted? That's in the past, too, but I think few would argue that the art shouldn't be returned. These kinds of cases are why (good) museums work to ensure clear and legal title to the objects they acquire.

Some also argue that this will open up the floodgates, so to speak. After 20 years of NAGPRA, this has yet to happen in America. Yes, it has taken time and money to process repatriation claims, but that doesn't mean it isn't the right thing to do. In many cases, the museums can use it as an opportunity to build relationships with tribes, who then donate other objects, sometimes keep the repatriated items in the museum, and even perform ceremonies in the collections. If museums are to be trusted as well as relevant, they have to respect their communities, act responsibly in the public trust, and work to correct what wrongs they can.

Finally, I take issue with the very idea of the universal museum. What gives any museum the right to decide that IT is THE universal museum? There's only one Rosetta Stone, one Nefertiti bust, one Parthenon. The whole idea of universality is born out of imperialism. Displayed in England and Germany, these are spoils. And the new argument--that this stuff is everyone's heritage and so it shouldn't matter where it's housed--that's just mighty convenient, isn't it?

I'm not saying everything should go back in every case--Egypt has refused many mummies because it doesn't have the space or funds to
care for them. All I'm saying is that nations of origin should have a right to refusal--all that takes is museums asking, "You sure it's ok that we got this?" I think in most cases it will be ok. Then they could tell the stories of these objects with the blessing of the nation of origin rather than the scorn.

posted on Mon, 08/02/2010 - 9:25am

Anonymous says:

I think that ancient Cultural and Historical artifacts should definitely return home.  
I am even writing an argumentative essay about it for my school English project.

Does anyone have any ideas for five reasons they should return home?  
I only have two :(  

Please help  
Thanks,

posted on Mon, 09/20/2010 - 5:18am

Anonymous says:

"If we needed to return everything that we took from natives many of us, if not all, would be homeless."

I wouldn't. My people would have their land back.

"In most cases, we are not living in the same land that our direct ancestors inhabited."

You're right. I'm not--because my people's land was wrongfully taken from them. The reservation on which I grew up and currently reside is far away from my ancestral lands. Unlike you, I wish this was not the case.

"In the same way that artifacts were taken, pieces of land were taken. However, there is no talk of returning the land; and rightfully so."

Perhaps wrongfully so. Of course you wouldn't want the land returned--people who live off stolen property wouldn't want to return it. Stealing is wrong. It doesn't matter how you spin it--it's still wrong, and the passage of time doesn't make it right.
Anonymous says:

I have an article that was purchased in 1200 AD by my ancestor, from the original maker. It was used in the family for 500 years and shelved around 1720 right here in the good old USA. Along about 1890, my Great Grandfather sold it to a collector where it stayed until 1920. It was sold back to my grandfather and brought back to the old farm house where it sits today. In 1978, some stupid lawyer tried to claim it had been stolen from a museum, and had it not been for an identifying mark that had luckily been placed on the item more than three centuries earlier we would not have it today.

America's entire population came here as immigrants, bringing things here from all over the planet. They weren't all stolen. Making a blanket ruling such as I am reading above, smacks of injustice and will never solve the crime of theft. When you take something that does not belong to you it is called stealing and you will go to jail, whether it is an artifact or a toaster. If someone proves that you are not the legal owner, will get you into trouble. We don't need a blanket law that would harm as many as it helps.

posted on Mon, 10/11/2010 - 2:33pm

ag123 says:

they should take it because they probaly worked hard to get it

posted on Fri, 10/22/2010 - 7:31am

seth says:

I believe that some items should be kept and some should be returned, but not permanently. Everyone knows about the smuggling law that was and still is used in Egypt. This was started back in 1983 so all artefacts taken before then should be left where they are but the ones that were taken after that should still be left in the us and the british museums. Then the countries that would like to be able to keep then for certain times and periods then returned to where they were.

posted on Fri, 10/22/2010 - 1:09pm

Anonymous says:

There are thousands of items that are in countries other than where they are from. All the way back to centuries BC, craftsmen have made merchandise for buyers that were not from the country where it was
made. If you have a sculpture made today, and someone a thousand years from now has it, that now lives in Jordan, does this mean we should go rip it out of that person's hand? What if it was never stolen? There are already laws that does not allow for theft. If something has been stolen, then it should be returned. Making blanket laws about such things would be the same thing as trying someone for murder even though that person was defending innocent people lives, just because we have laws against killing. Don't make the tired statement, "this is different." It is not. Not everything in life can fit into a standard mold. Issues like this have to be worked out by individual case, just like they always have. Sometimes we have to work hard at investigations. What is wrong with that?

posted on Sun, 10/24/2010 - 2:06pm
Anonymous says:

To the native American (by the way I am a native American as well) I bet you did not know that there was over 14,000 Native Americans that fought against the British on the side of America in the American revolution. I have a question for you. How many tribes of Indians were developed between the years of 1500 and 1750? Careful, don't be too sure you are correct with a rebuttal.

Artifacts and land are hardly the same subject. Artifacts can be created, in fact the ones being screamed about, are. Don't lump the two together.

posted on Sun, 10/24/2010 - 2:18pm
Thor (/user/thor) says:

Here's a story that just broke this week that the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York is planning to give back to Egypt 19 artifacts (http://www.sciencebuzz.org/blog/bursts/returning-home-nyc-museum-agrees-return-king-tut-art) currently in its collection that were found in King Tut's tomb.

posted on Thu, 11/11/2010 - 1:16pm
Anonymous says:

I think that the artifacts should be returned to their country of origin because it belongs their not anywhere else. If they find an artifact the person who found it should let the country of origin choose if it should be in a museum or should be in the country of origin.
Anonymous says:

yes that is very true they should be going back to there home origin

posted on Sat, 11/13/2010 - 12:40pm
reply (/comment/reply/213/768488)

MC says:

If all the countries return the artfacts of other countries, it wont take months but hundreds of years! What if we dont know where exactly an artfact came from? Will this one be 'nowhere'?

Today, some of the biggest countries are in peace, so why not try to find a solution where maybe some of the most known art is given back, and the rest stayes where it is?

posted on Sun, 11/14/2010 - 7:37am
reply (/comment/reply/213/768548)

Anonymous says:

i think acient artifacts should stay where they are because its history.So i Amari Fennell beleive that its not rightto take history away.

posted on Sun, 11/14/2010 - 11:22am
reply (/comment/reply/213/768553)

Anonymous says:

hi my school is doing a debat on this and i as wondering if anyone has any proof or reason that the artfacts should stay where they presently are

posted on Tue, 11/16/2010 - 11:46am
reply (/comment/reply/213/768578)

Anonymous says:

I totally aggre with you all because with out artfacts you can not be the same country that you were.

Home countries deserve there own crafts.

posted on Tue, 11/16/2010 - 11:50am
reply (/comment/reply/213/768580)

Anonymous girl who goes to skool and does debates says:

should artfacts stay where they r now and why??
Anonymous says:

just think about this.....now there are laws that when another county wishes to take an artifact from its county of orgin they need permission from the government and they would exchange it for money. so if the country want their artifact back, or if this is what the people for the argument believ, then why blame the country tthat has taken it with permission. blame their government. they are the ones that allowed it, they prefer the money than the national treasure.

if the country of origin really wanted the aartiface they should have been looking for it themselves.

Anonymous says:

seriously! think about it why should you leave the artifacts in the places were you found them??!! havent you heard of "RAIDING"? if an archaeologist didnt pick it mise as well just be sold off to the highest bidder!! because people dont really care about the artifacts they just want the $$ that comes with it! its safer at a museum than were it was found!!

the same Anonymous girl that goes to scool and does debates says:

ok thanks to all of u that helped me the dbates in 2 days and i need 3 questions for theese opion 1 anigites should belong to the country of oriagn but she be allowed to travel. 2 antquities should stay where they are found and 4 antiquities should be aloud to be sold on legeal market thanks for all who comment on this!

vantaco says:

If ot was stolen yes if given or bought nooooooooooooooooooooooo.
"Today, Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities demanded the return of a famous bust of [Queen Nefertiti] which has been in Berlin since its discovery in 1912 by German archaeologists (Science Insider [http://news.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/2011/01/cairo-or-bust-for-nefertiti.html?rss=1])."

posted on Mon, 01/24/2011 - 1:39pm

Anonymous says:

I think that the museum should not return their artifacts to Egypt because they might get broken or something else might happen to them or may be the government should pay a fee because after all they found the artifacts I mean like Hello were is there thanks of the hard work they did to find these amazing artifacts

posted on Tue, 02/15/2011 - 12:23pm

Anonymous says:

I think that the museum should not return the artifacts they took a very long time trying to discover them they found them so where is a thanks from Egypt that they put their amazing artifacts on the museum soooo.

posted on Tue, 02/15/2011 - 12:27pm

MisterBuoyancy says:

Some of these comments are very insightful and some are ridiculous. I know it's easier said than done but the only way to resolve this problem is to help the countries with financial difficulties so that they can take care of their artifacts. I say we rebuild this world before going off on an expedition to find information about our collective past. So stop fighting and arguing because the answer is so straightforward and yet extremely difficult to achieve.

posted on Sun, 02/20/2011 - 12:44am

MUN student says:

many artifacts were acquired illegally or unethically giving cause to their return...Artefacts such as the parthenon marbles were often acquired
illegally, for example through looting in war (the Benin Bronzes) under
the duress of imperial force (many Chinese Artefacts) or by bribing
officials to ignore the carrying away of sculptures from monuments they
were meant to be guarding (the Elgin marbles).

Thanos says:

"What does Shakespeare mean to England?
Saint Paul's cathedral?
What does the Taj Mahal mean to India?
What do the paintings in the Sistine Chapel mean to Italy?
The Parthenon marbles are our pride. They are our identity.
They are today’s link with Greek Excellence.
They are creations synonymous with our concepts of democracy and
freedom."

BRING THEM BACK!!!

Anonymous says:

great britan has no culture or real history if you think about it ..the
civilizantions in greece italy and china date back thousands of years no
wonder they like to steel from other countries...the people in great britan
were climbing on trees back than

Anonymous says:

What about the battle of Hastings, rule over india, empire, first for the
industrial evolution?? your point of Great Britain having no history is
invalid.

Anonymous says:

they should be returned
i think they should return it because they fail

posted on Wed, 10/19/2011 - 2:53pm

Anonymous says:

cool i want to see it

posted on Fri, 10/21/2011 - 4:50pm

Anonymous says:

You guys are all nuts.

Ok, lets say we bring it back.
Then where does it ends ?
My country is invaded, by the French, the German, Spain, Norwegian people. We where in war with England.
All hundreds of years ago.

Do you hear us moan about, hey we want a compensation, for the robbery and the wrongdoing ?

That is complete nonsense.

There is only one exception, if it happened recently, like the nazi's who stole the gold and belongings from the Jews.
Then it is ok to ask for returning goods. And compensation.

But you can't cry about what happened 100 years ago.
Then the whole world is paying the whole world for damage and lost and robbery.

Nuts, only to think about such thing,
Completely lunatic.

Next to that, when the English came, the locals didn't care less about the ancient artifacts.
They looted the graves and sold it to the English.

This is now "our" possession. Think again before you act, next time.

And as final, this does not belong to my reasoning, the muslim brotherhood is in charge right now, they are not so much fan of all those ancient things, they think it is offensive, and would love to destroy it.

posted on Fri, 12/16/2011 - 10:32am

reply (/comment/reply/213/789609)
Anonymous says:

You can't demand things back retrospectively if they were were legitimately at the time. No society can survive when you never know what you do today will be made illegal tomorrow and you get carted off to prison.

posted on Tue, 12/20/2011 - 1:10pm

reply (/comment/reply/213/789772)

JGordon (/user/jgordon) says:

Totally! I mean, one day human trafficking and slavery are legal, and then all of a sudden they're not?! What's a society to do?

Sorry—that's an extreme counterexample, but I don't think your argument holds water. Yes, I suppose a society, or the people in it, needs to know that contracts and agreements will be held true. But that doesn't absolve people from other ethical responsibilities. Nor does it address whether objects were in fact taken "legitimately." And what seems absolutely legitimate at one point in time will not necessarily continue to be held that way in the future. There are plenty of things that were legally and ethically acceptable at one time that we would completely balk at now. Is the acquisition of foreign artifacts one of those things? Or do we stick with finders-keepers? Given the varied circumstances of past acquisitions, the answer perhaps trickier than a solid position in either camp could account for.

posted on Tue, 12/20/2011 - 3:29pm

reply (/comment/reply/213/789782)

SWeetness (/http://www.msn.com) says:

We are doing a court case on this for school, and I say that they should keep the artifacts in their home, but then I thought. If all the artifacts in egypt stay in egypt, all musuems would be full, and you wouldn't be able to find new ones for there is no place to put them!!

posted on Thu, 01/05/2012 - 10:04am

reply (/comment/reply/213/790937)

Anonymous says:

I feel sick with this case. Greeks lost the marbles when the country was under the Ottoman empire. Elgin stole them and I have to visit the British museum to see them. I don't have money to do this. And all these beautiful ancient pottery in Mallibu and Berlin and Harvard and Boston depicting all these figures that I know since I was a child, when learning about Greek Mythology. I will never be able to see them.
When I went to the Acropolis museum and saw these things that we manage to keep I felt really strong feelings and I said to my self look what they were creating, we have to try to be more like them, to cultivate this refined culture.

I know most of you think Greeks are nothing like the ancient Greeks, but guess why this happened.

After Ottoman empire ended and Greeks fought like mad for that, all the superpowers did everything they could to keep the country as protectorate. They let the greedy and stupid in charge and greek education never recovered.

Moreover things that would remind us of the great past were taken away. Now we've got a great museum to keep the marbles safe but still British museum refuses to give it back. How much money do they earn because of the marbles? And here in Greece we suffer the new-age poverty because of the banks wars that super powers along with our greedy politicians created.

The whole issue is that they took our treasures away, they established lame people to govern us and now they ask us to give away everything else we have. I guess after a century or so the question will be should we give Greece back to Greeks or they won't be able to keep it safe. Finders keepers. That's not culture that's barbarian. It's sad. They turn countries into protectorates and then saying Greeks are so uncultivated we can;t trust them with these treasures. How cool is that? And when someone says all these things then they say Oh this happened 100 years ago, get over it. Like injustice reparation has a 'Best before' sign on it.

A last thing I want to say is that I said all these as a Greek but I equally feel these for every other culture that suffered this kind of damage from super powers.

Thank all of you who support that people need their ancient artifacts to remind them of their past and ofcourse I m 100% in favour of the exhibitions around the world.

The accusations I did on superpowers does not include people only governments. Pls don;t misunderstand me.

Sorry for english mistakes.

posted on Sat, 01/21/2012 - 7:05pm

Anonymous says:

Good to get your point across. I agree.
Anonymous says:

Yes, during the decline of the Ottoman Empire Westerners stole so much from Ottoman lands. They even stole a whole temple from Turkey...

I don’t understand how you Greeks see Western Europe, which has used and pillaged Greece repetitively, as allies. I mean look at your current debt crises, a creation of the EU. And now they want to buy your islands.

Do you know that when Greece requested some items back from England, the English said there was no place for the Greeks to store it. So Greece built a museum. Now the English say that air in Greece is harmful for the items..

Anonymous says:

i beilive artifacts should be put pack and never taken in the first place. historical places will start losing value if they become empty

Anonymous says:

The artifacts MUST be returned home to their countries of origins. I

Anonymous says:

How would you people like it if the Statue of Liberty was chopped up and shipped to a bunch of countries??

It is downright infuriating that people in the West have been stealing artifacts from other countries for centuries now.

That culture belongs to the people in the 'origin' countries, they must be returned!

Turkey especially has large and extremely modern museums. However, in the past Europeans stole so much. A whole ancient temple from Western Turkey stands reconstructed from its original pieces in a museum in Germany.
And today, through a network of smuggling syndicates western museums continue to pillage Turkish heritage (Turkey has an enormous archeological ‘reservoir’, so even with modern standards of national excavation and security thousands of artifacts still get smuggled).

Enough is enough, what is Turkish belongs in Turkey and if other people want to see it, they are welcome to come. But as tourists and visitors, not as thieves.

VRaj says:

Maybe we should have a world museum? Where all out historical artifacts are put in the same place. Pick a neutral country, like the UN was put in Switzerland.

I would feel so scared thinking artifacts might be stolen or corrupt politicians would sell them to a private bidder. I also think its so sad that some countries can't even see their cultural belongings as they are so far away. The exception being Egypt. The Muslim government and people have butchered the original Egyptians. If you can't take care of them, you should not get their cultural heritage back, just to make money off it!

Any proceeds that countries get (such as the Louvre) should use all profits to maintain the artifacts, then give the remainder to the country the artifact came from that they are making money off.

Zoe says:

In my view, all stolen or illegally obtained artifacts currently in museums around the world should be returned to their original source countries. Thanks

Truthseeker says:

The truth is these "findings" were actually invader's who stole them then made excuses under scientific discoveries for keeping them.....If another country came to the US and "found" acient artifacts on US soil the gouvernemnt would immediately take them....buy force if necessary so yes all these countries need to give back what they stole.......That's why
they had to go somewhere else to find it....it wasn't theirs to begin with

posted on Sun, 09/23/2012 - 11:36am

Anonymous says:

i think the person who finds it should be able to keep it

posted on Sun, 11/18/2012 - 6:31pm

Anonymous says:

Shhit must be returned to the original country it was taken from, whether the artifact is taken care of or not it is none of our business, if you were allowed by the country to dig their crap up gives you no right to take it, It belongs to the people, Don't like it? Don't dig!

posted on Sat, 07/13/2013 - 12:01pm

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E-mail:

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