

# Vatican returns Parthenon fragment to Greece

**ATHENS, Greece (AP) —** The ancient marble head of a youth was fitted into place Wednesday at a museum in Athens in a deal that Greek officials hope will serve as a model for returning other treasures.

The one-year loan from the Vatican's Museo Gregoriano Etrusco could be used as a way to regain other iconic Parthenon sculptures that have been systematically removed from Greece in the past. Several European museums — especially the British Museum in London — hold Parthenon artifacts and Greece has long campaigned for their return.

"This gesture sets an example for others," Greek Culture Minister Michalis Liapis said.

The Parthenon was built 2,500 years ago on the Acropolis in honor of Athena, goddess of wisdom and patron of ancient Athens. It survived virtually intact until 1687, when a Venetian army besieging the Acropolis blew it up with cannon fire during the Ottoman occupation of Greece.

More than a century after the blast, Britain's Lord Elgin removed large sections of the temple's sculptural decoration with Ottoman permission. He eventually sold the works to the British Museum.

Greece has long campaigned for the return of the so-called Elgin Marbles. However, the British Museum has refused, arguing that the works were legally acquired and are accessible free of charge to millions of visitors.

The museum said Wednesday its position on the Elgin Marbles was unchanged by the return of the youth's head.

"We don't think it increases pressure on the British Museum," spokeswoman Hannah Boulton said, adding the Vatican's return was "just a loan."

About half the Parthenon frieze is at the British Museum. A handful of other museums, including the Louvre, own small pieces of it as well, while the remaining fragments are in a new museum under the Acropolis.

The sculpture returned Wednesday was made between 445-438 B.C.. It was part of a 520-foot (160-meter) series of panels — known as a frieze — depicting a religious procession, which circled the outer walls of the Parthenon.

The head, measuring nine by 10 inches (24 by 25 cen-



Culture Ministry employees put at the new Acropolis museum, the marble head of a young man, a tiny fragment from the 2,500-year-old sculptured decoration of the Parthenon Temple on the ancient Acropolis in Athens on Wednesday, Nov. 5, 2008. The 9 and a half by 10 inch (24 by 25 centimeter) piece was sent to Greece as a loan from the Gregoriano Etrusco Museum in the Vatican, in a new victory for the Greek campaign to win back all surviving pieces of the Parthenon sculptures from museums abroad. It will be displayed at the New Acropolis Museum, which is set to open in the spring of 2009. (AP Photo/Thanassis Stavrakis)

timeters), is attached to a youth carrying a tray of sweets as an offering to Athena.

Giandomenico Spinola, the head of the Vatican museum's classical antiquities department, said the loan of the sculpture "might" be renewed. He said the museum might also lend Greece another two small bits of the Parthenon sculptures it owns.

"The pieces are the property of the pope, and it is his decision," he said. Pope Benedict XVI discussed the works' return with the visiting Church of Greece leader in 2006.

A similar deal allowed the return in September of another small piece of the Parthenon frieze from a museum in Palermo, Sicily, and the University of Heidelberg in Germany sent back a third piece two years ago.

The Museo Gregoriano Etrusco is the largest museum so far to comply with the Greek request.

The move to regain the works has gained new momentum in recent years because of the construction of the New Acropolis Museum, which is expected to open by next March.

## 2 missing after Greek military helicopter crashes

**ATHENS, Greece -** A Greek Army Apache helicopter crashed on an island near Athens on Wednesday and two crew members are missing, authorities said.

The chopper crashed on the island of Evia, near the town of Kymi, about 85 kilometers (53 miles) northeast of Athens.

Defense Ministry officials said two helicopters, a military transport plane and rescuers on the ground were searching for the two missing pilots.

They said the crash started a small fire but did not give any other details. -



## Olympic Airlines' Suitors

Of the 38 suitors interested in acquiring the Greek national air carrier, Olympic Airlines, only 12 were released by the Transport Ministry, as the rest did not wish their candidacy to go public at this stage. The names of the investors interested in Olympic Airlines are:

Athens Airways (new airline company operating in Greece),

Chrysler Aviation (a California-based private charters and jet company),

Fouad Al Ghanim Group (a Kuwait group in charge of Gainjet Gainjet),

MyAir (low-cost Italian airline company),

Qatar Airways,

Sky Europe (low-cost airline company in central Europe),

SkyOne (US charter company),

Ellaktor (Greek construction group),

Goldair (company controlling ground operations in Greek airports),

Hellenic Cargo Group (Consortium supported by Atis Global and Aitrans Group),

Swissport (company controlling ground operations in Greek airports),

Iberia (Spain's largest airline company).

## Balcony Plunge Dad To Appeal

A father who killed his son when he threw his two children off a hotel balcony has won the right to challenge an inquest verdict.

John Hogan, whose six-year-old son Liam died in the fall on the Greek island of Crete in August 2006, is hoping to overturn the ruling of "unlawful killing".

Two High Court judges in London today ruled that Hogan's case raised "serious points that are plainly arguable" and granted him permission to seek a judicial review.

In January, the father was acquitted by a Greek court of Liam's murder after judges heard he had suffered an "earthquake" of psychosis.

But later British coroner Paul Forrest found that the six-year-old had been "unlawfully killed".

In September, the Crown

Prosecution Service said Hogan would not face charges in the UK on the grounds that no "new and compelling evidence" had surfaced since his Greek trial.

Hogan, 34, of Bradley Stoke, near Bristol, jumped off the fourth-floor balcony of the Petra Mare Hotel clutching his son and two-year-old daughter Mia, following a row with his then wife, Natasha.

Mia survived the 50ft plunge but Liam died from severe head injuries.

Hogan is currently detained in a Greek psychiatric hospital.

His ex-wife was



said to be "distressed" by the prospect of the review.

"It is hard on Natasha who has to

continue to worry about this again," her stepfather, Brian Chandler said.

"Her priority is to help her daughter, Mia, working on her psychological recovery, as well as her own.

"It is very distressing for her to have this all dragged up again."