



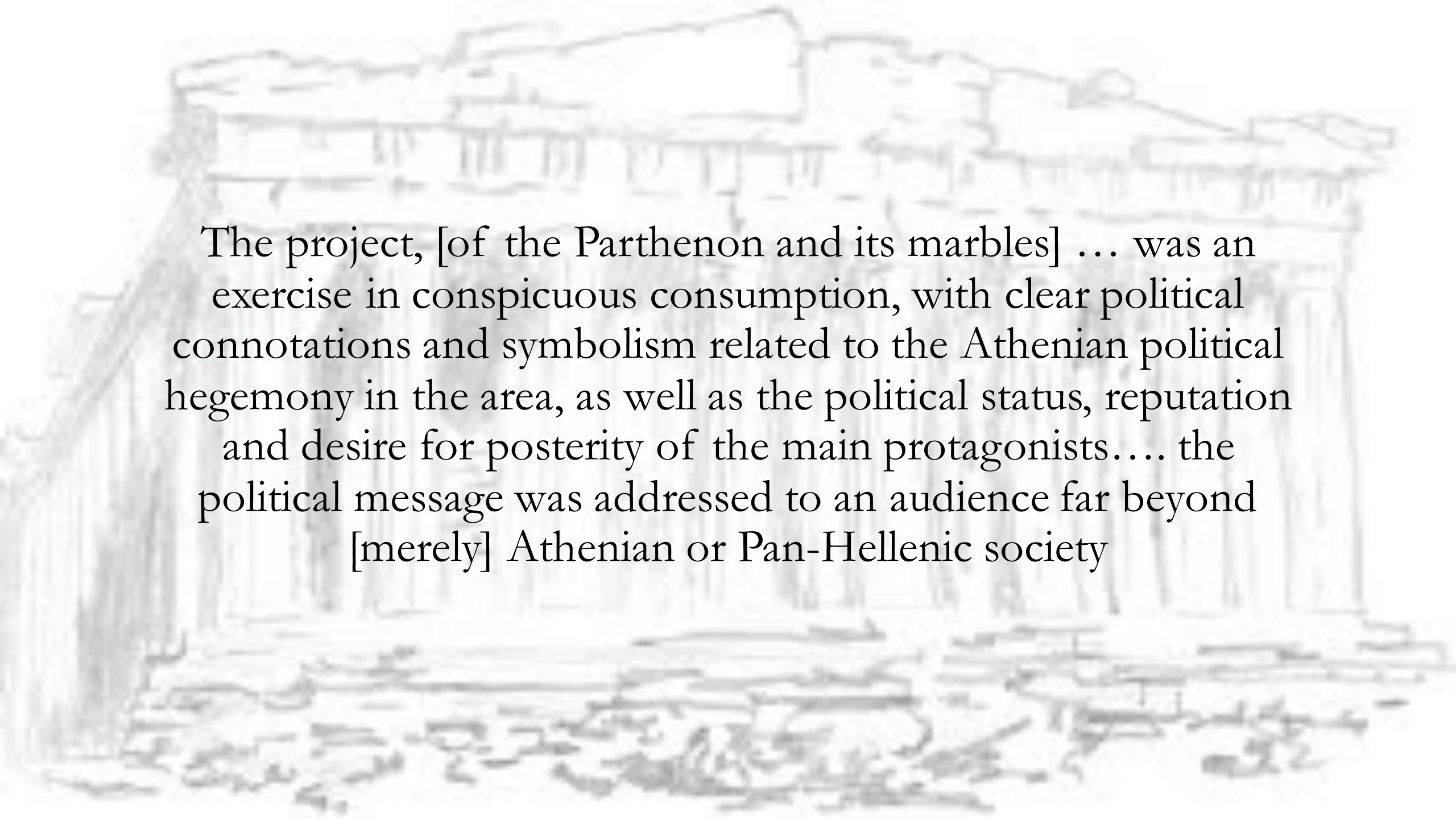
Controversial Archeology:

How Greece Lost Its Marbles

SPLASH 2018

Matthew Yarnall

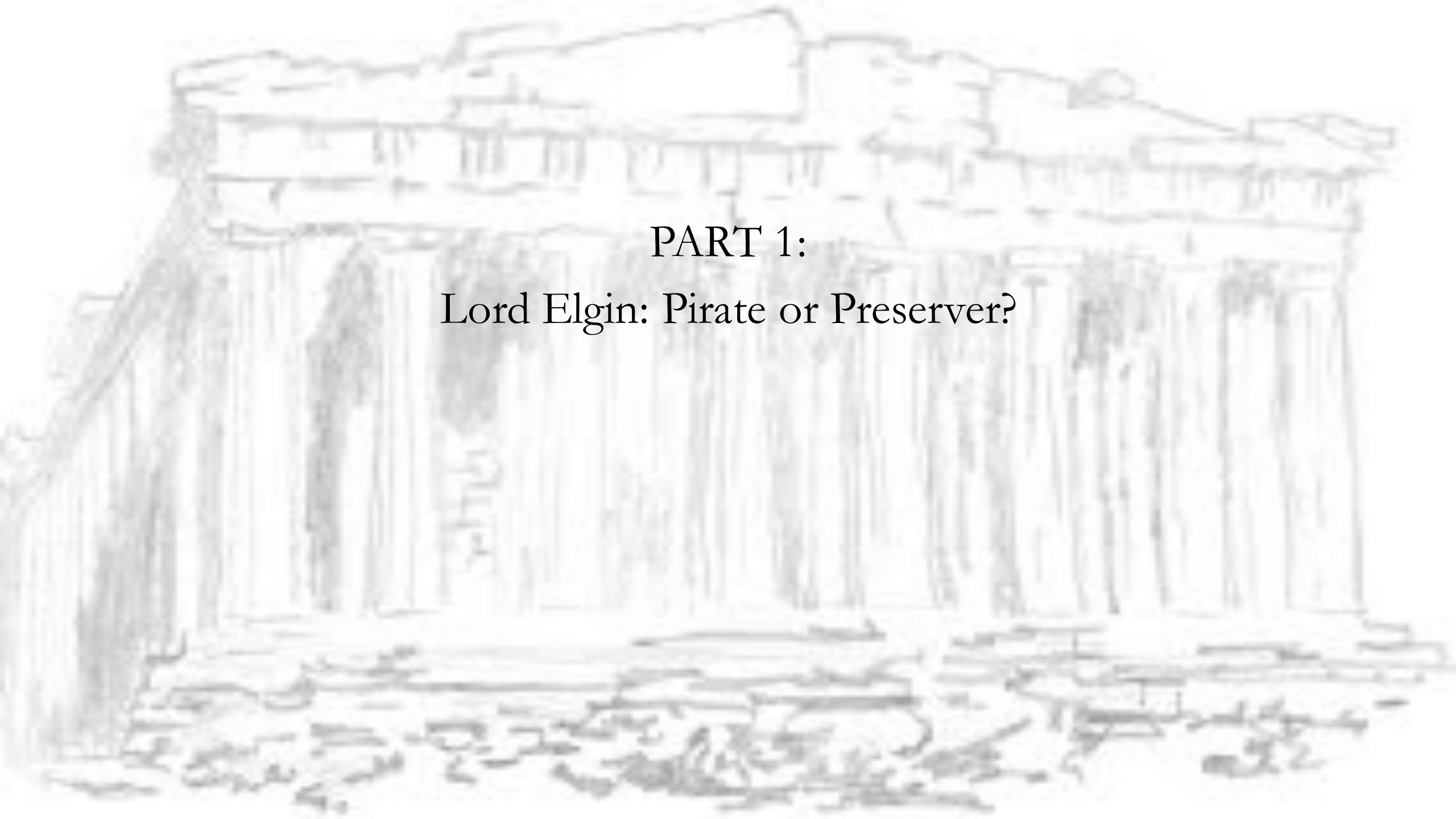




The project, [of the Parthenon and its marbles] ... was an exercise in conspicuous consumption, with clear political connotations and symbolism related to the Athenian political hegemony in the area, as well as the political status, reputation and desire for posterity of the main protagonists.... the political message was addressed to an audience far beyond [merely] Athenian or Pan-Hellenic society









PART 1:

Lord Elgin: Pirate or Preserver?



The Ottoman Empire, 1800

-  Ottoman Empire, 1800
-  Border of Ottoman Empire



EUROPE

ASIA

Black Sea

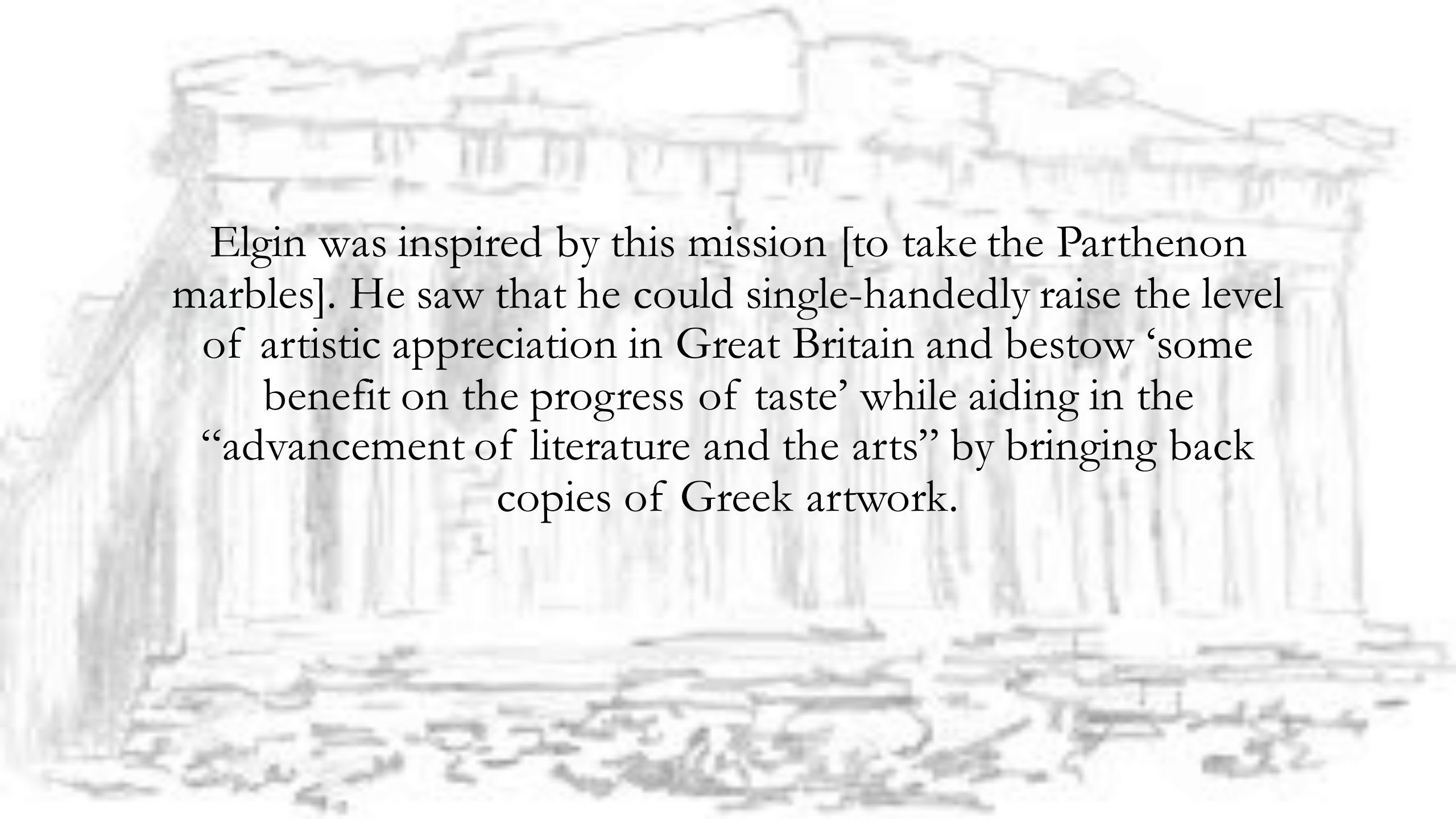
Mediterranean Sea

Red Sea

AFRICA

N

0 300 600 mi
0 300 600 km

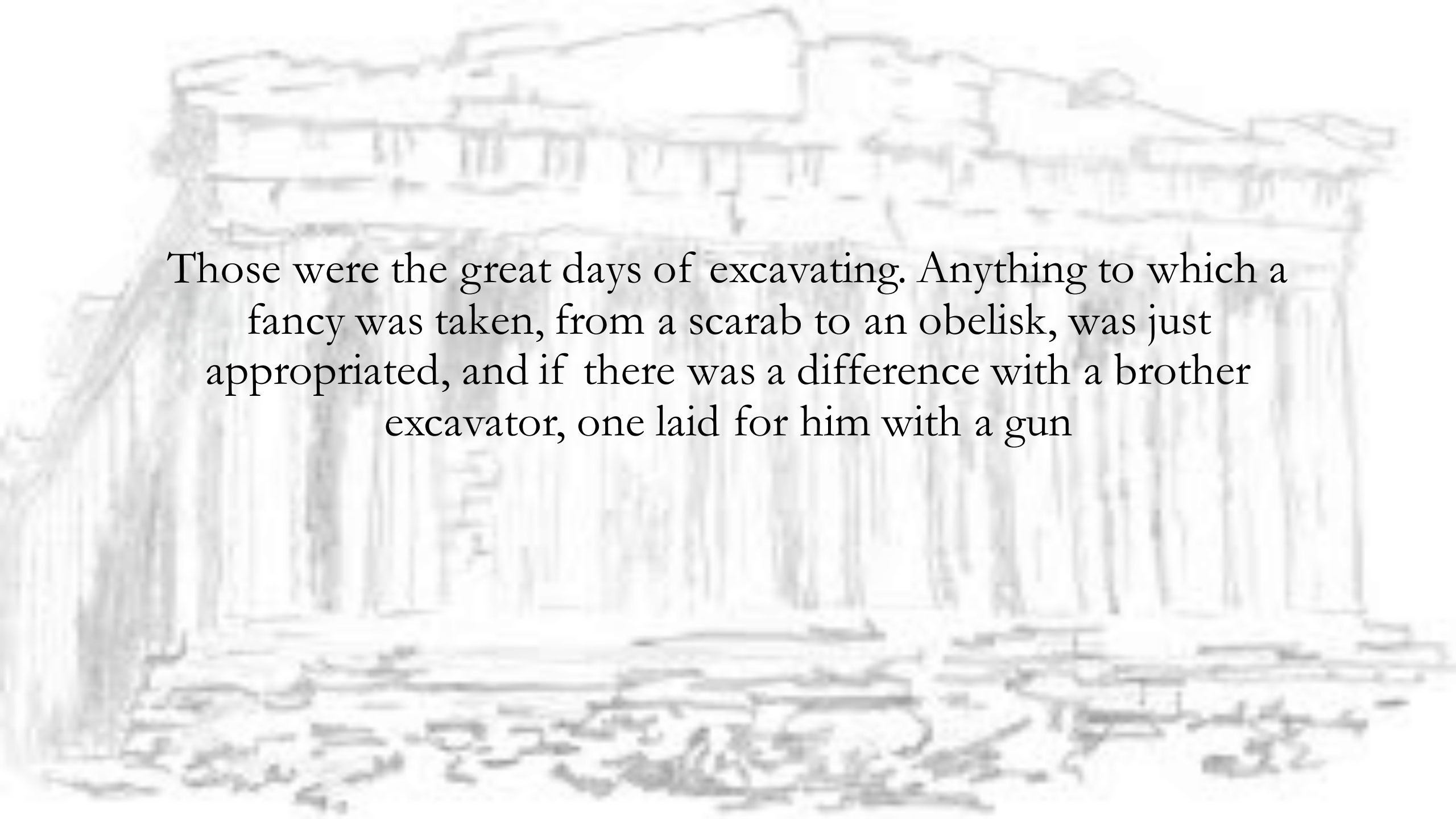


Elgin was inspired by this mission [to take the Parthenon marbles]. He saw that he could single-handedly raise the level of artistic appreciation in Great Britain and bestow ‘some benefit on the progress of taste’ while aiding in the “advancement of literature and the arts” by bringing back copies of Greek artwork.

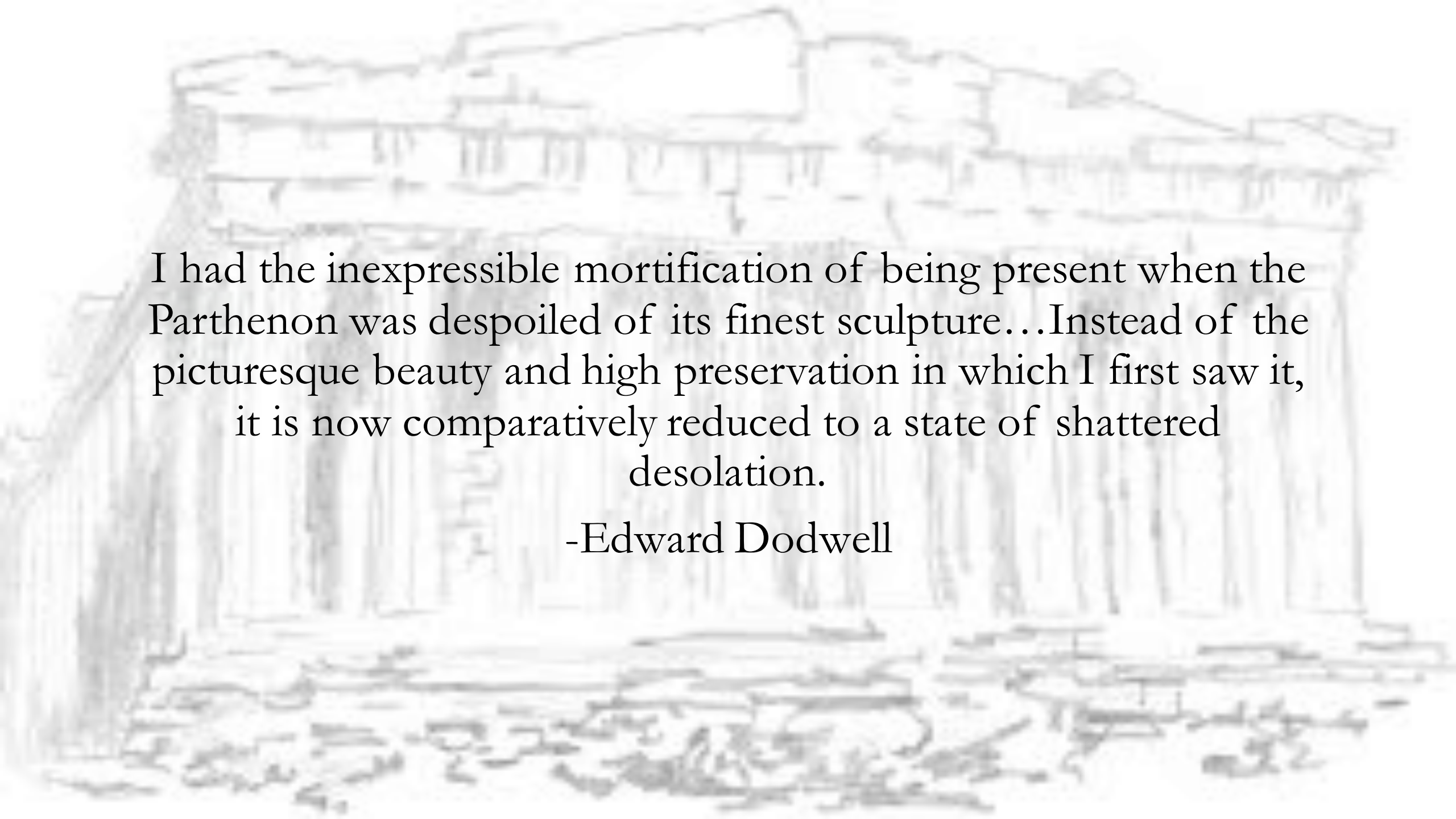
VEDUTA DEL CAST: D'ACROPOLIS DALLA PARTE DI TRAMONTANA







Those were the great days of excavating. Anything to which a fancy was taken, from a scarab to an obelisk, was just appropriated, and if there was a difference with a brother excavator, one laid for him with a gun



I had the inexpressible mortification of being present when the Parthenon was despoiled of its finest sculpture...Instead of the picturesque beauty and high preservation in which I first saw it, it is now comparatively reduced to a state of shattered desolation.

-Edward Dodwell



1 Here's a Bargain for you Johnny? Only £35 000!! I have bought them on purpose for you! Never think of Bread when you can have Stones so wonderous cheap!!

2 I don't think somehow that these here Stones are perfect! and had rather not buy them at present Trade is very Bad and provision very Dear, and my Family can't Eat Stones! Besides they say it will cost £40 000 to build a place to put them in — As the Turks gave them to our Ambassador or in his Official capacity for little or nothing & solely out of compliment to the British Nation — I think he should not charge such an Enormous price for Packing & Carriage.

3 Don't buy them Daddy! we don't want them, Stones, give us Bread! give us Bread, give us Bread!

4 Let him take his Stones back again to the Turks we don't want them in this Country!!

Just Publish'd Speculation!! or Travels in the East in search of ruinous fragments of Stone for John Bull Lord Elgin

Ministerial Economy & Justice of 1816

Good News for J. Bull In consequence of the glorious Peace & Decrease of Taxes the Quantity of Food will be sold in future for One Shilling & Six pence.

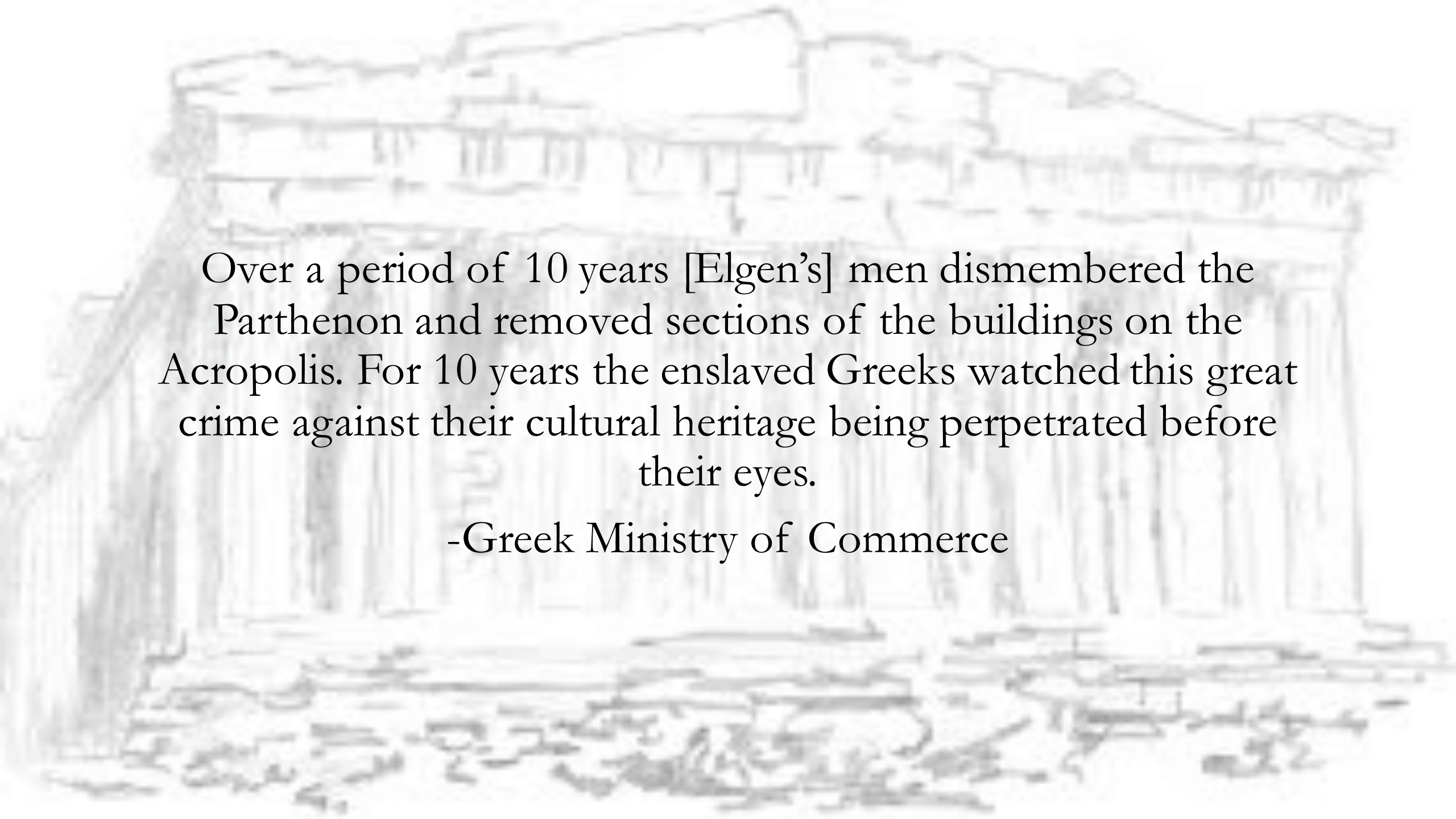
The Grand National Stone Build'g of the Strand or Waterloo Bridge was delayed by an Enormous & Liberal Demand for the purchase of the Crown Land in the Savoy

The Elgin Marbles! or John Bull buying Stones at the time his numerous Family want Bread!!



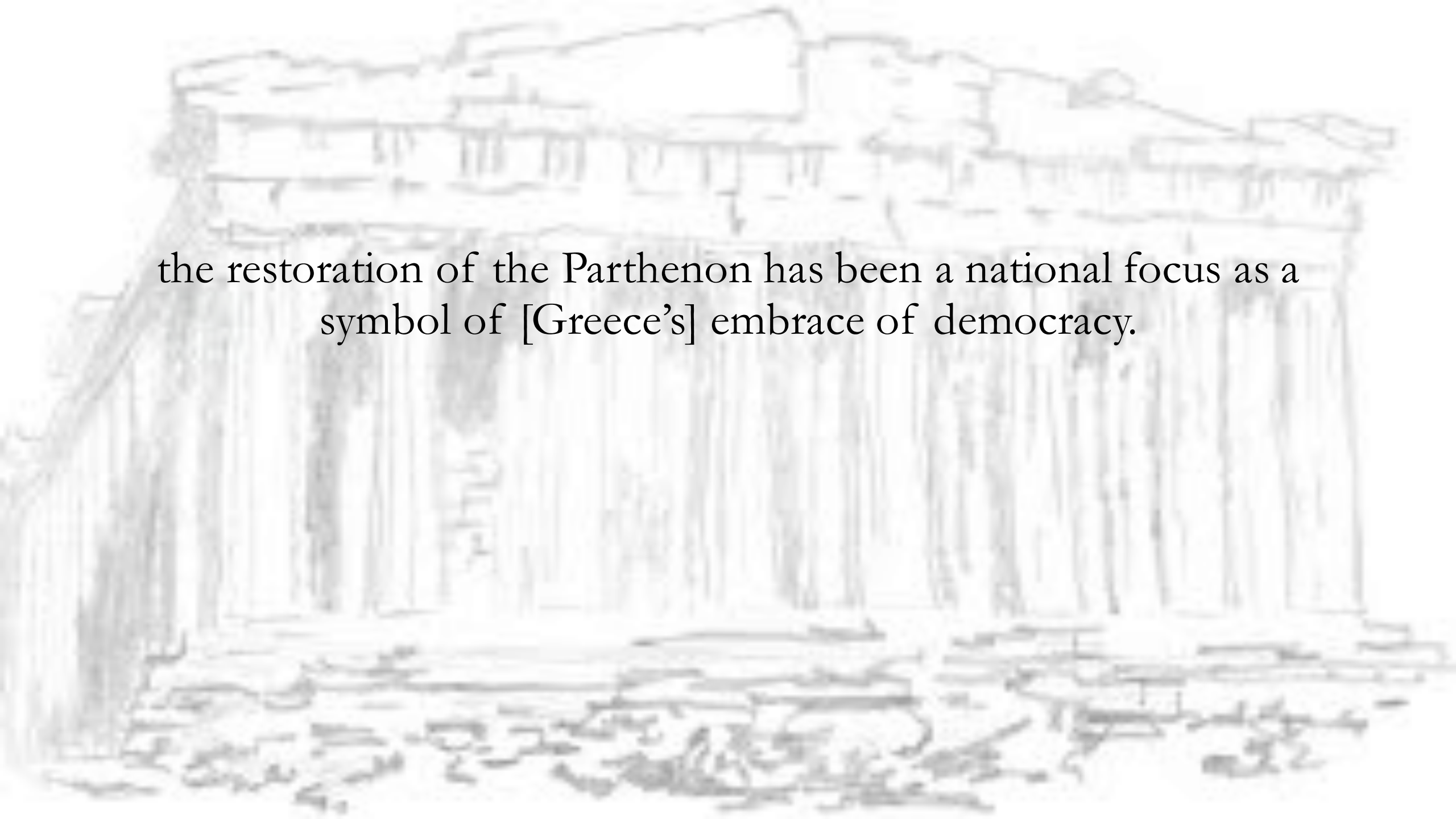
PART II

Greece and The Plea For Reparation

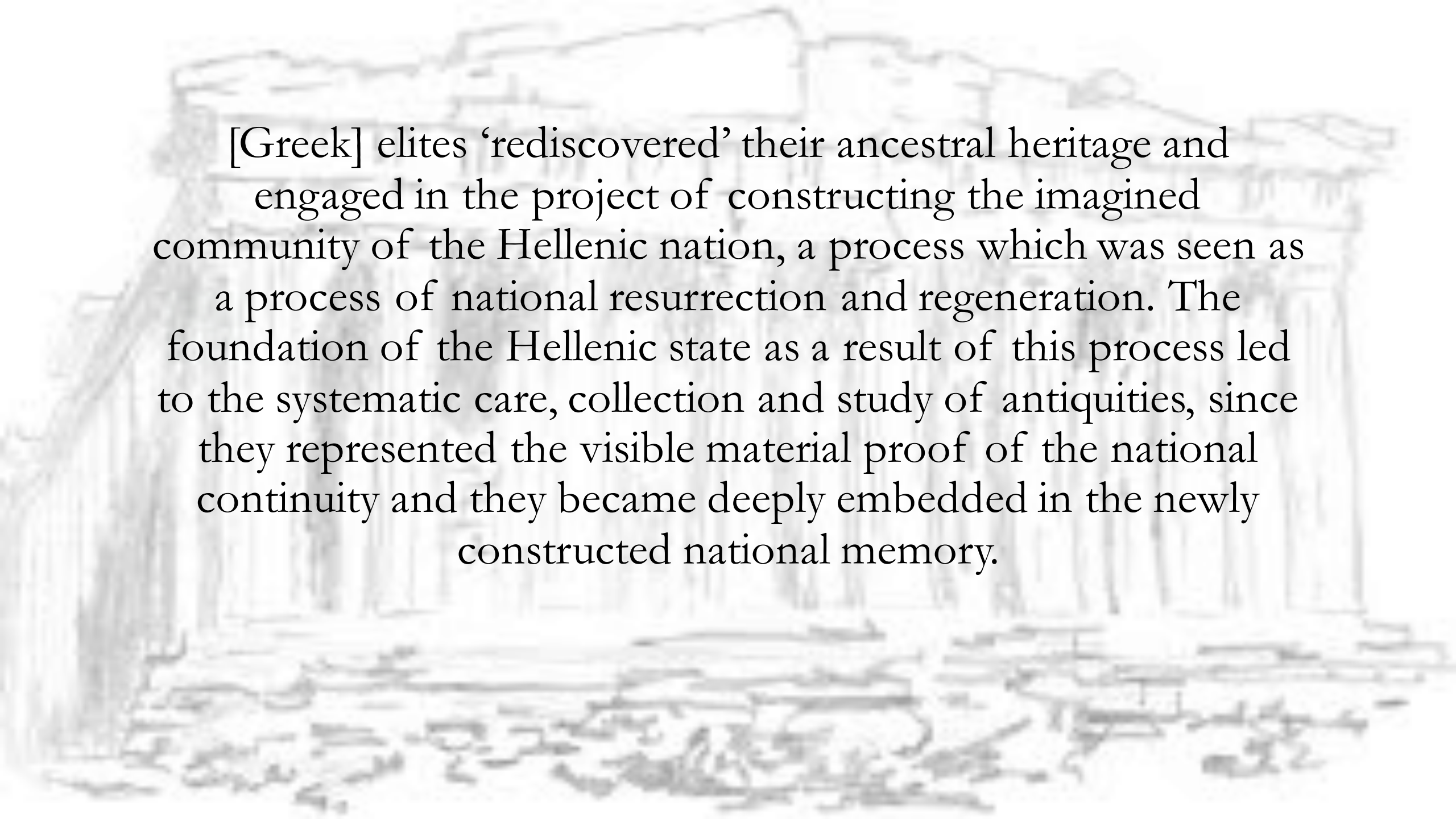


Over a period of 10 years [Elgen's] men dismembered the Parthenon and removed sections of the buildings on the Acropolis. For 10 years the enslaved Greeks watched this great crime against their cultural heritage being perpetrated before their eyes.

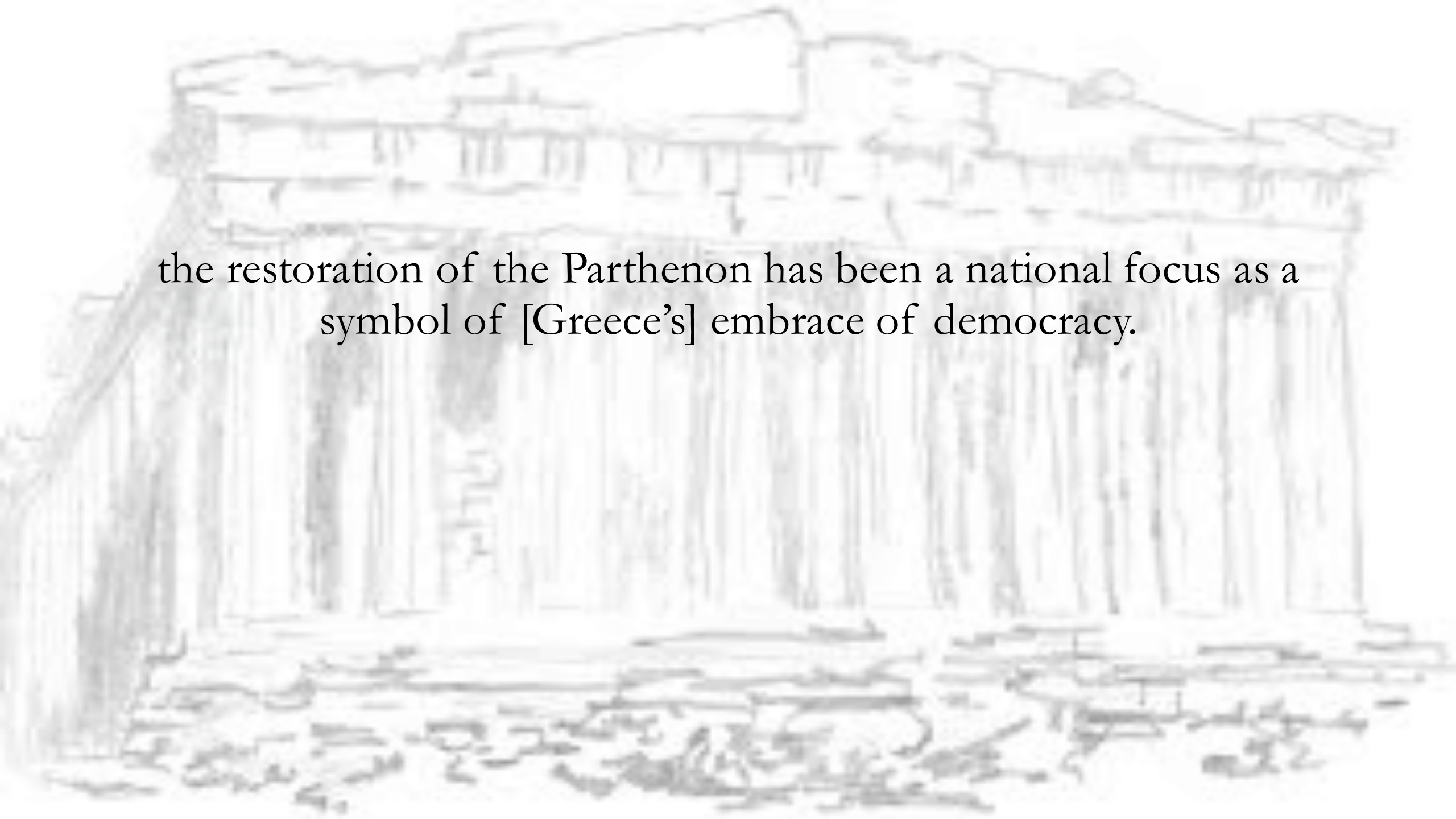
-Greek Ministry of Commerce



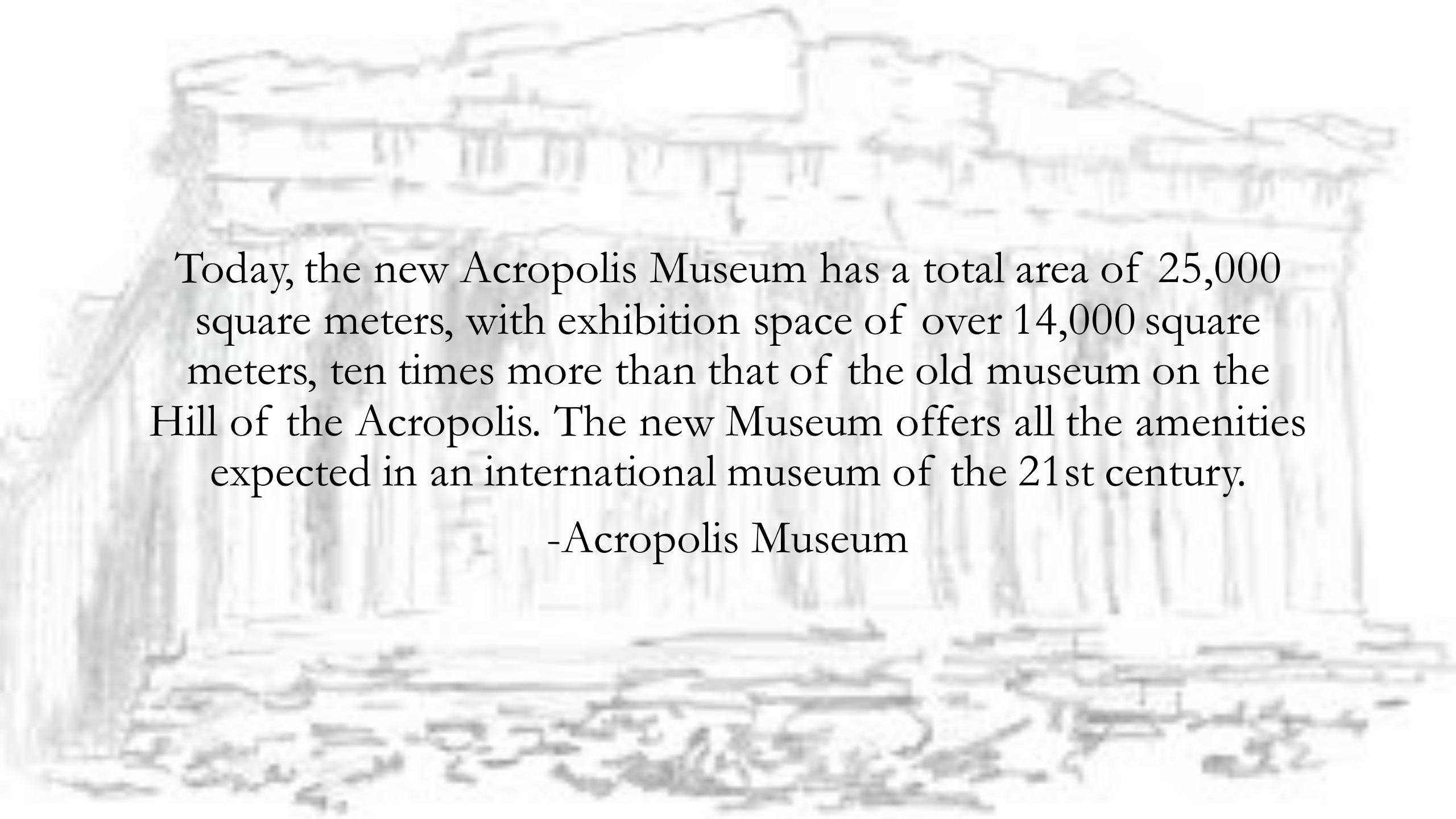
the restoration of the Parthenon has been a national focus as a symbol of [Greece's] embrace of democracy.



[Greek] elites 'rediscovered' their ancestral heritage and engaged in the project of constructing the imagined community of the Hellenic nation, a process which was seen as a process of national resurrection and regeneration. The foundation of the Hellenic state as a result of this process led to the systematic care, collection and study of antiquities, since they represented the visible material proof of the national continuity and they became deeply embedded in the newly constructed national memory.



the restoration of the Parthenon has been a national focus as a symbol of [Greece's] embrace of democracy.



Today, the new Acropolis Museum has a total area of 25,000 square meters, with exhibition space of over 14,000 square meters, ten times more than that of the old museum on the Hill of the Acropolis. The new Museum offers all the amenities expected in an international museum of the 21st century.

-Acropolis Museum



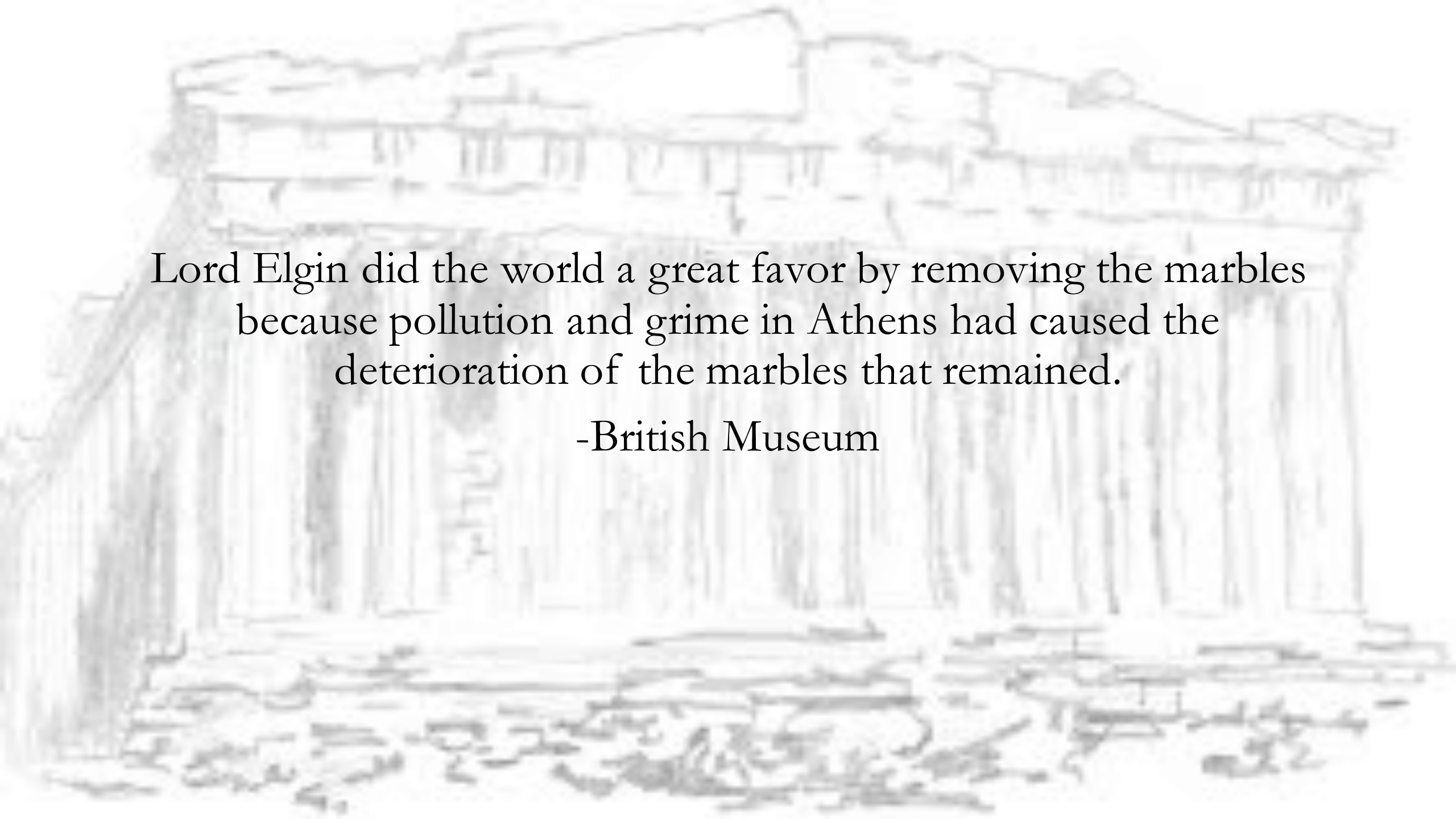


PART III:

The British Museum: *An Argument for Global Heritage*

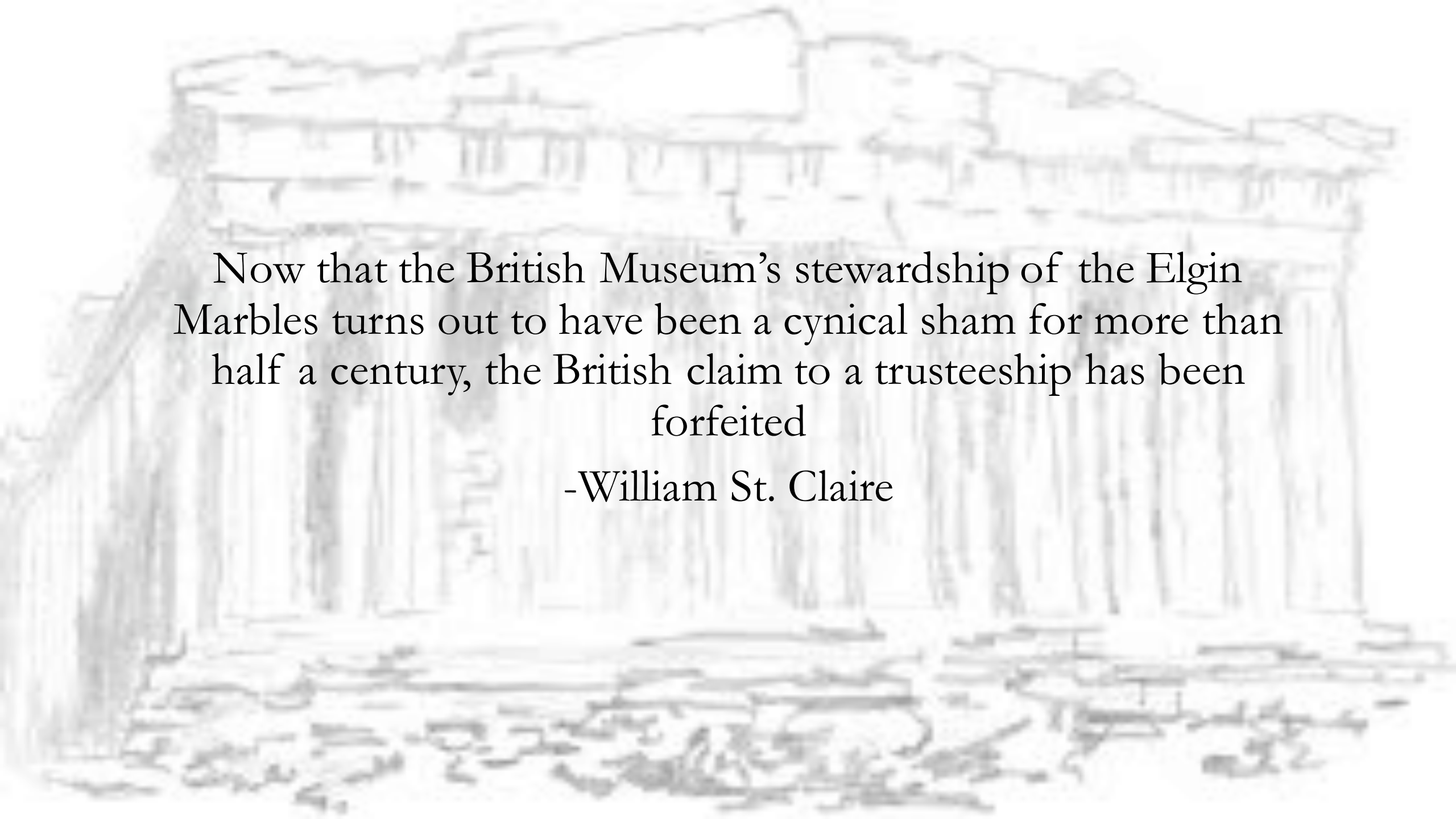


United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



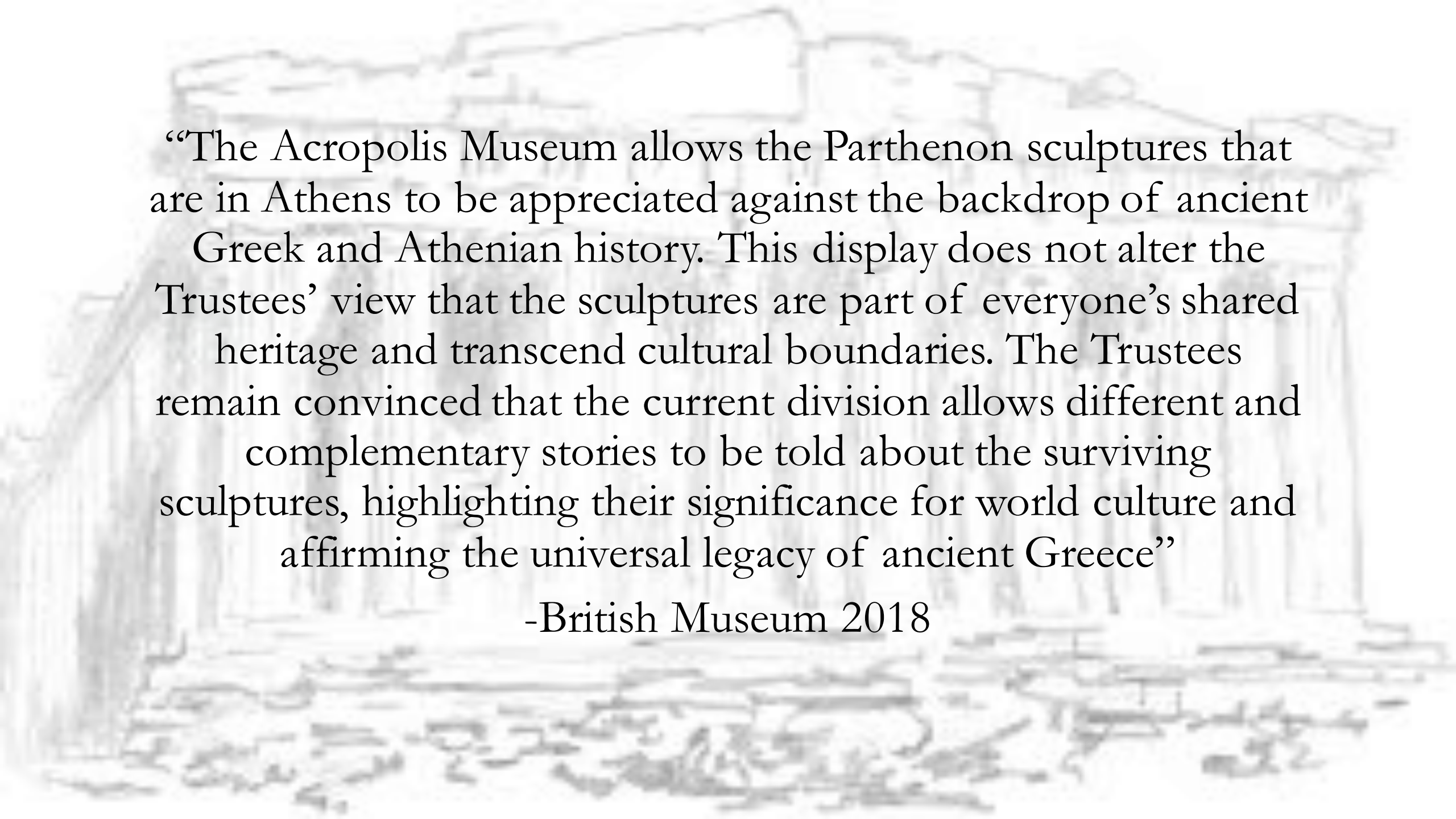
Lord Elgin did the world a great favor by removing the marbles because pollution and grime in Athens had caused the deterioration of the marbles that remained.

-British Museum



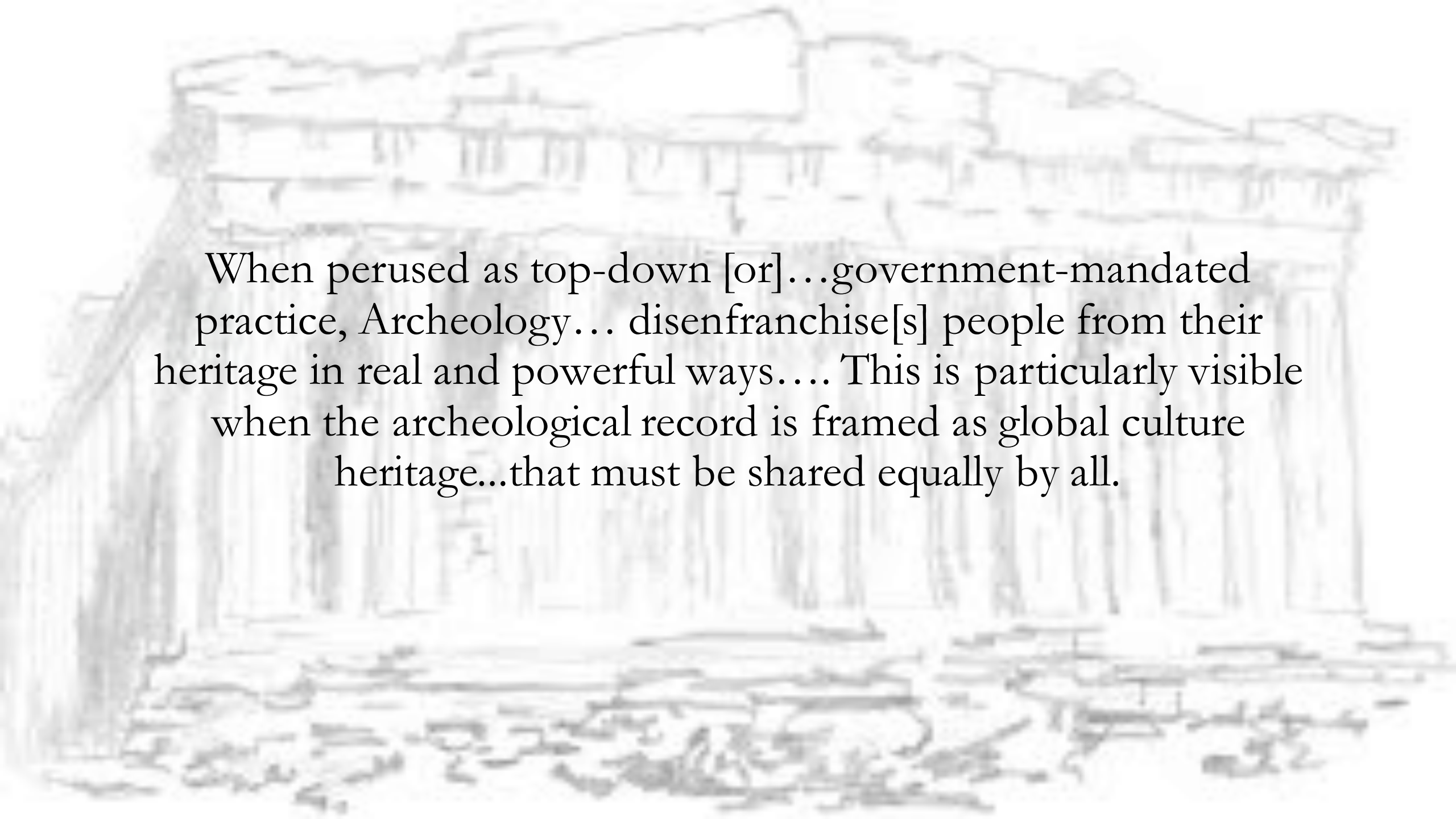
Now that the British Museum's stewardship of the Elgin Marbles turns out to have been a cynical sham for more than half a century, the British claim to a trusteeship has been forfeited

-William St. Claire

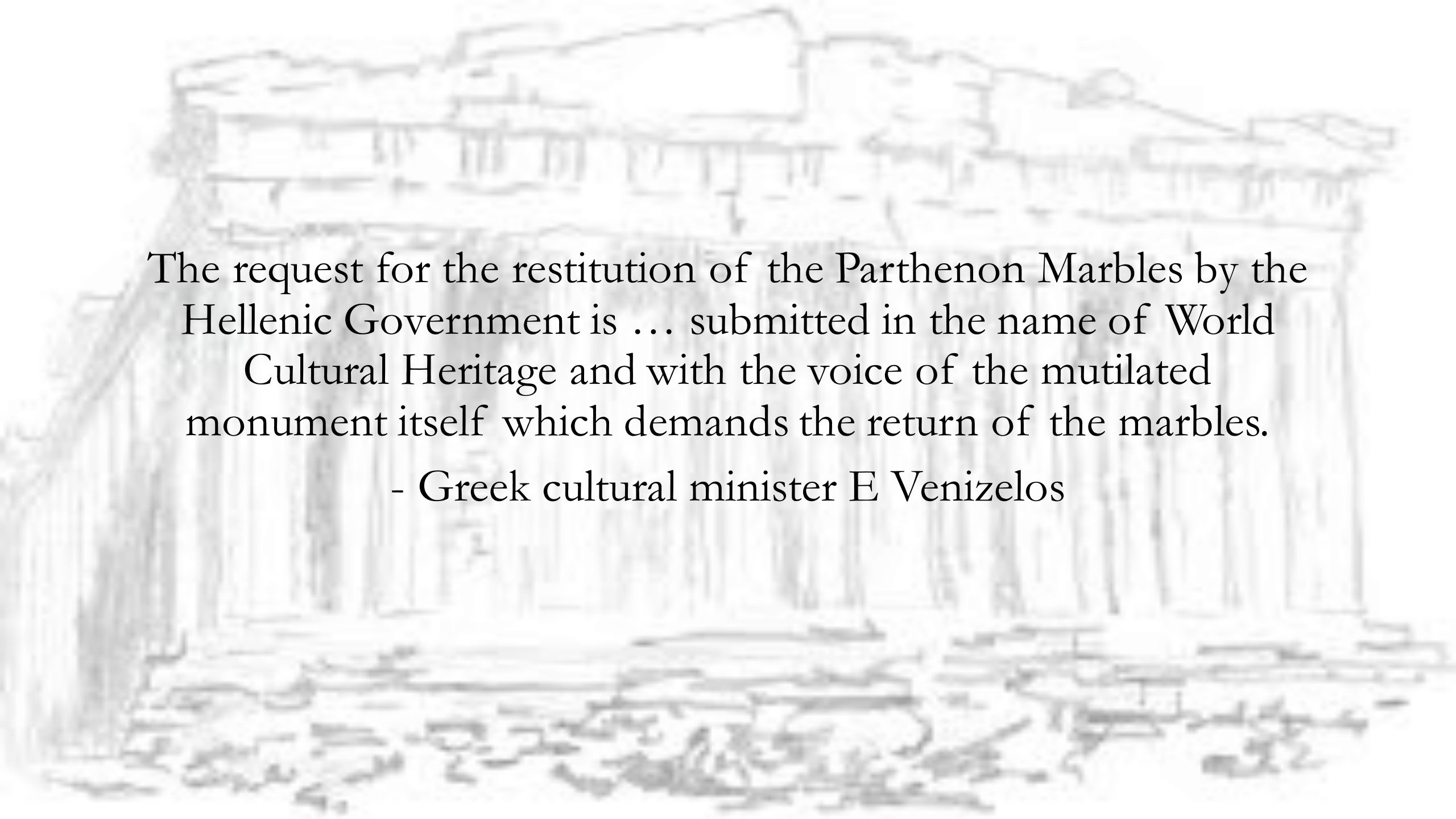


“The Acropolis Museum allows the Parthenon sculptures that are in Athens to be appreciated against the backdrop of ancient Greek and Athenian history. This display does not alter the Trustees’ view that the sculptures are part of everyone’s shared heritage and transcend cultural boundaries. The Trustees remain convinced that the current division allows different and complementary stories to be told about the surviving sculptures, highlighting their significance for world culture and affirming the universal legacy of ancient Greece”

-British Museum 2018

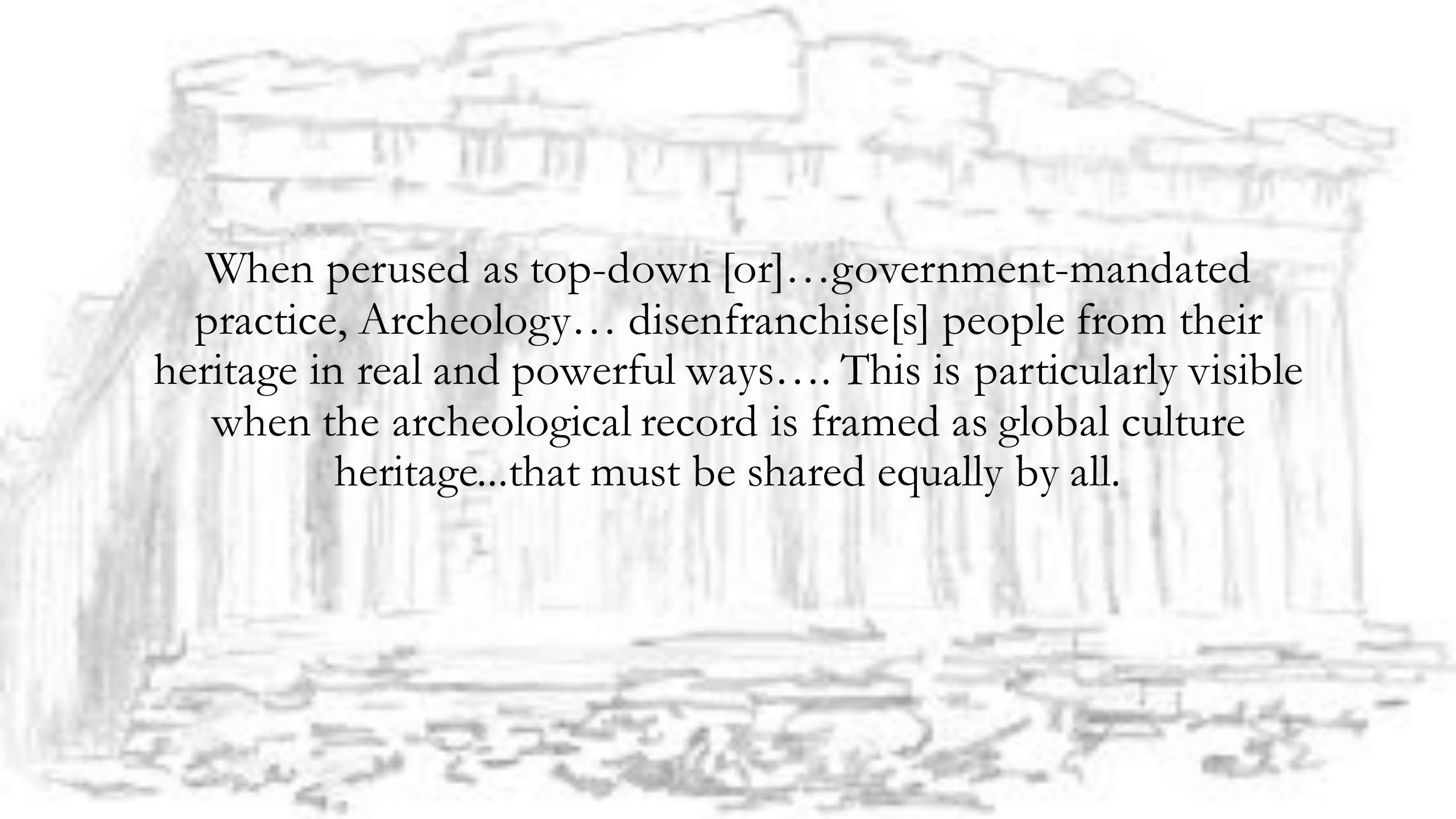


When perused as top-down [or]...government-mandated practice, Archeology... disenfranchise[s] people from their heritage in real and powerful ways.... This is particularly visible when the archeological record is framed as global culture heritage...that must be shared equally by all.



The request for the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles by the Hellenic Government is ... submitted in the name of World Cultural Heritage and with the voice of the mutilated monument itself which demands the return of the marbles.

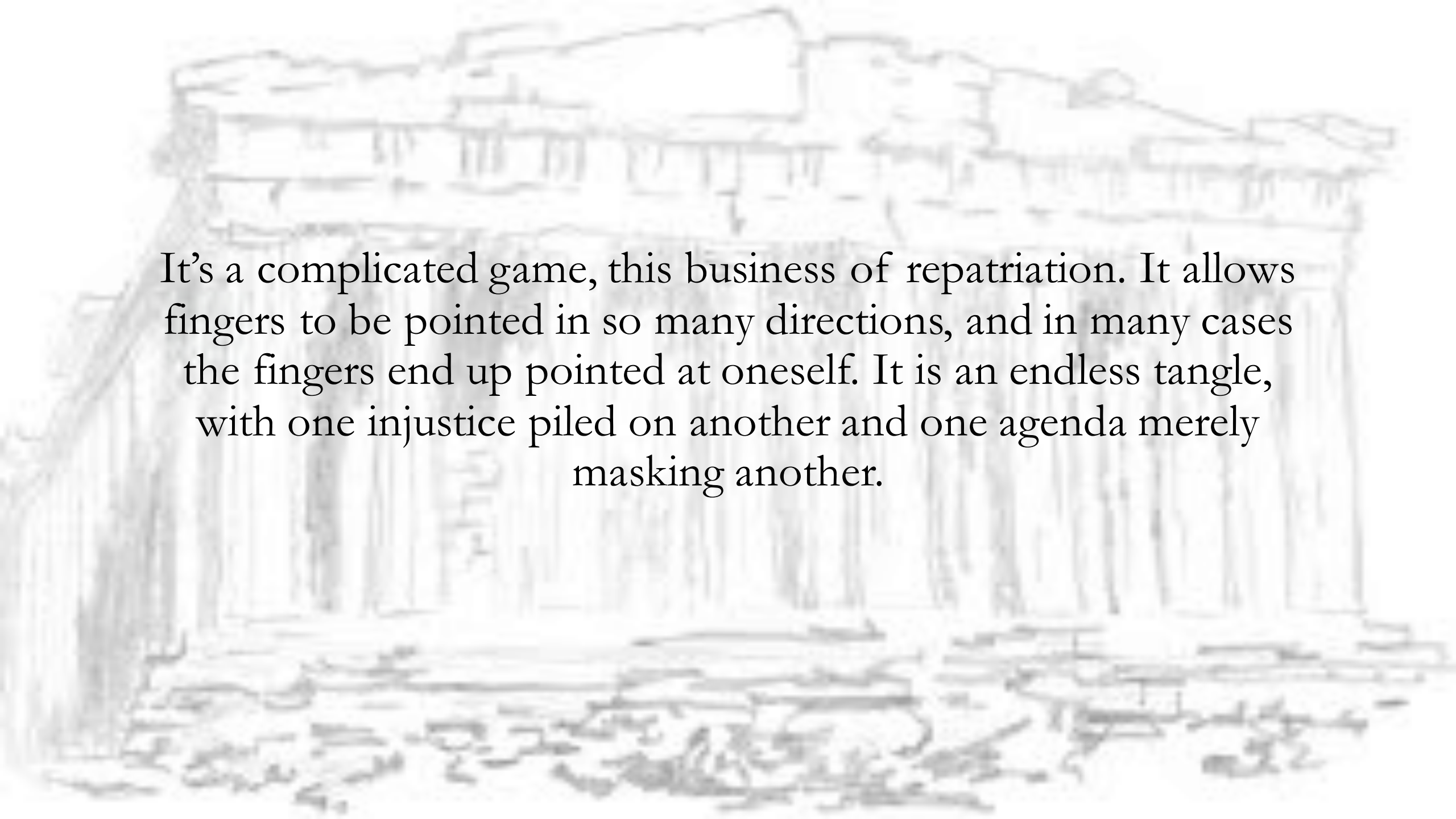
- Greek cultural minister E Venizelos



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A faint pencil sketch of a classical building facade, featuring a row of columns and a pediment. The drawing is light and serves as a background for the text.

CONCLUTION



It's a complicated game, this business of repatriation. It allows fingers to be pointed in so many directions, and in many cases the fingers end up pointed at oneself. It is an endless tangle, with one injustice piled on another and one agenda merely masking another.



THANK YOU