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British Museum loan to Acropolis Museum coincides with dispute over demand to return Parthenon Marbles



The Acropolis Museum launched an exhibition on Tuesday that includes a renowned ancient Greek water jug from 420 BC on loan from the British Museum.

The exhibit comes during a dispute over Greek demands for the return of the Parthenon Sculptures that are housed in the British Museum.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak canceled a planned meeting with Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis in London a week ago, accusing him of seeking to “grandstand” by publicly campaigning for the return of the Parthenon Marbles while visiting Britain.

Sunak said his government had no intention of re-opening the issue or amending legislation that would block the artifacts’ return.

Mitsotakis described the incident as “an unfortunate moment” but added that the campaign for their return had received a boost after Sunak’s cancellation drew

international attention.

The British Museum said it was continuing talks with Greek authorities and the Acropolis Museum, raising hopes in Athens that an arrangement could be reached to display the sculptures in Greece. On Tuesday, Acropolis Museum director Mr. Nikolaos Stampolidis said his museum maintained “excellent relations” with the British Museum and expressed confidence that the Parthenon Marbles would eventually be returned.

“After all, culture is not only about art. It’s also about relationships,” he said. Excavated in southern Italy, the water jug known as Meidias Hydria, considered to be a masterpiece of the Athenian potter Meidias, became part of the British Museum collection 250 years ago and has not left the London museum until now.

The jug will be displayed at the Acropolis Museum in Athens through April, when it will move to 2024 Olympics host city Paris to be included in an exhibition at the Louvre Museum.

Just over 50 centimeters in height, the vessel is decorated with scenes from Greek mythology including a depiction of Heracles, the legendary Greek hero renowned for his strength. The Athens exhibition will open to the public on Thursday.

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