The British Museum: An Imperial Museum in a Post-Imperial World

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the British Museum’s imperialist attitudes towards classical heritage. Despite considerable pressure from foreign governments, the museum has consistently refused to return art and antiquities that it acquired under the aegis of empire. It is the contention of this article that the British Museum remains an imperialist institution. The current debates over the British Museum’s collections raise profound questions about the relationship between museums and modern nation states and their nationalist claims to ancient heritage. The museum’s inflexible response to repatriation claims also encapsulates the challenges inherent in presenting empire and its legacy to contemporary, post-imperial audiences.

FULL TEXT:

PDF

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Imperial War Museum Duxford is a branch of the Imperial War Museum near Duxford in Cambridgeshire, England. Britain's largest aviation museum, Duxford houses the museum's large exhibits, including nearly 200 aircraft, military vehicles, artillery and minor naval vessels in seven main exhibition buildings. The site also provides storage space for the museum's other collections of material such as film, photographs, documents, books and artefacts.