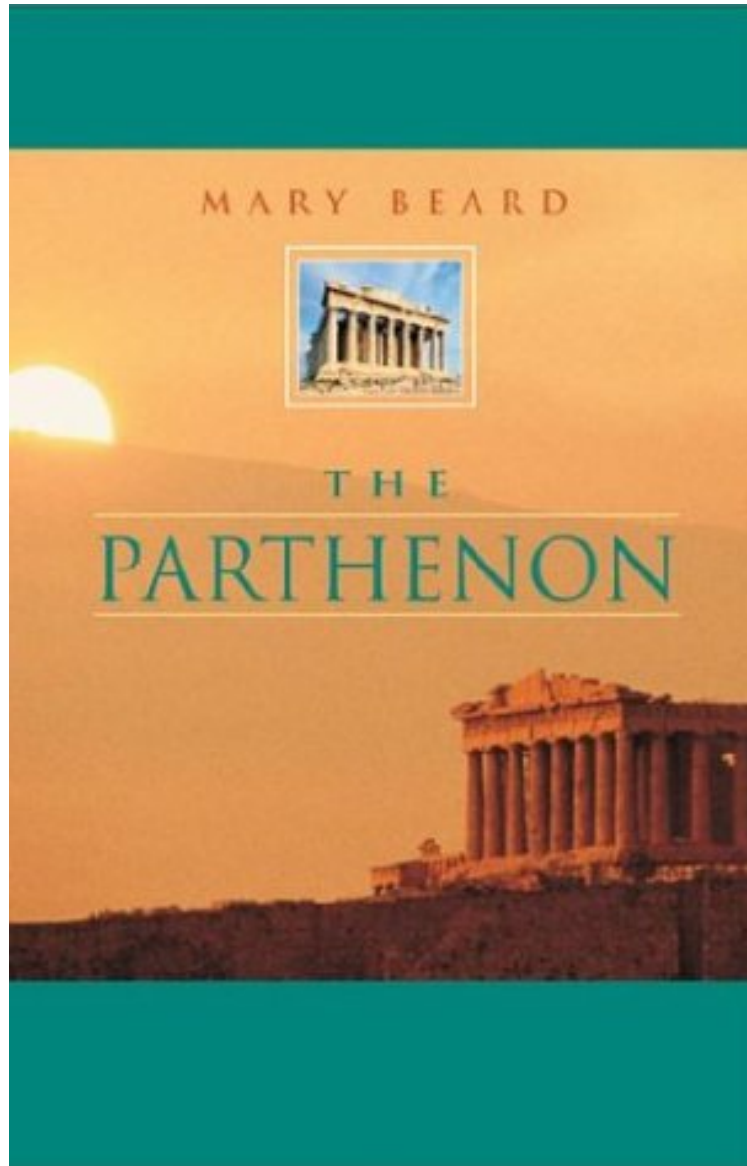


[Mobile ebook] The Parthenon (Wonders of the World)

## The Parthenon (Wonders of the World)

Mary Beard

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**Mary Beard : The Parthenon (Wonders of the World)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Parthenon (Wonders of the World):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A Narrow EscapeBy M. A NewmanThere is an old saying that one kills the thing one loves. Given the treatment meted out to some of the world's treasures, this certainly must have a grain of truth. Of course it is rare for humanity to recognize a world treasure during it's initial creation. The Mona Lisa

was not the painting that it is now until the 19th century. This book on the Parthenon proves just how hard it is to win the acclaim of the world and just how many times we came close to losing it. Probably no monument has had a harder time of it than the Parthenon. It has since 5th century BC been burnt, sacked, looted, converted to a Christian Church, defaced (by Christians), turned into a mosque, defaced (by Moslems), additions added and then removed, in 1687 blown up by the Venetians. The unkindest cut of all was when Lord Elgin gathered up the 5th century sculptures and carvings and shipped them off to London where they eventually found a home at the British Museum. It is all a fascinating, if sad story of the iconic monument to the glorious 5th century of Athenian history. Mary Beard the historian of the classical age has provided an excellent synopsis of the past 2,500 years of this building's history and provides context to many of the developments which shaped its past and present. The section discussing the differences between the Athenian version of democracy (probably about 3% participating on a regular basis, much like in the early days of the US republic) and just how fleeting this concept was even as a thing exercised by elites and for elites. This is a well done addition to the "wonders of the world" series. 8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. A book for the ages. By D. Roberts This is an exhaustive, fabulous treatise on one of the most venerable monuments to classical history the world has ever known. Beard takes us through the entire history of the Parthenon. She details for us its probable early use as a temple to Athena (as well as some other theories) as well as its less known utility as a Christian church and Mosque in later ages. Along the way, Beard offers us statements concerning the Parthenon from various historical and modern personages. Some are profound, some are not. Some simply advertise their ignorance (such as the not-so-venerable Shaquille O'Neal). From the vantage points of different epochs we are able to discern how the Parthenon has been seen down through the ages. Of course, no work on the Parthenon would be complete without examining the highly(!) controversial exploits of one Lord Elgin. As hoped, Beard delivers in giving a thorough description of all the forces at play in both England Greece. She does not take a position on the issue, so her discussion of this sensitive topic is not apt to offend anyone. Then again, since she refrains from taking a position, perhaps that in itself WILL offend some people? I don't know. There is also a background section on the disastrous explosion of 1687. It was caused by the Ottoman Empire using (mis-using!) the Parthenon as an arsenal. Not surprisingly, this made it a target for the Venetians and.....you can guess the rest. What is less known is that 300 people perished when the Parthenon exploded. That's an unfortunate detail that is many times overlooked in history classes. As usual, Beard does an excellent job of giving the whole story of what took place. If you possess an interest in the Parthenon and / or ancient Greece in general, this book is a can't miss. For anyone who wishes to tour Greece (or the British museum in London), this book is highly recommended as well. Even if you only have a passing interest in history per-se, this book will give you an avenue to enjoy the Parthenon all of its frieze and sculptural splendor. 4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. The Parthenon: a Historical Review. By Fezziwig Like her earlier book, The Colosseum, this book by Mary Beard provides a good summary of the history and significance of a great old building. Also, like that book it suffers from the lack of color illustrations, but in this case the black and white illustrations are mostly of much better quality. The Parthenon has a quite fascinating and rich history: a thousand years as a pagan temple, another thousand years as a Christian church, and almost four hundred years as an Islamic mosque. It suffered both depredations and preservation under the ownership of Christians and Muslims. Like many ancient buildings, its survival to this day probably is due to its conversion to church and then mosque. Otherwise, almost certainly its valuable carvings and stonework would have been carted off wholesale long before it would have had a chance to be appreciated as an architectural treasure. Of course, much of the sculpture was carted off by various collectors, most notably the notorious Lord Elgin. But at least these Elgin Marbles ended up in a safe place, the British Museum, where they are well cared for and accessible to the public. But the Greeks want them back! And the Greeks have an even better place, the new Acropolis Museum, to show the world these ancient works of art. Mary Beard covers the controversy over ownership of the Parthenon sculptures in Chapter Six of this book. Although she's a Brit, she tries to take a neutral stance in this political and cultural brawl, but I sense that she favors keeping them where they are.

Read the Bldg Blog interview with Mary Beard about the Wonders of the World series (Part I and Part II) Oscar Wilde compared it to a white goddess, Evelyn Waugh to Stilton cheese. In observers from Lord Byron to Sigmund Freud to Virginia Woolf it met with astonishment, rapture, poetry, even tears--and, always, recognition. Twenty-five hundred years after it first rose above Athens, the Parthenon remains one of the wonders of the world, its beginnings and strange turns of fortune over millennia a perpetual source of curiosity, controversy, and intrigue. At once an entrancing cultural history and a congenial guide for tourists, armchair travelers, and amateur archaeologists alike, this book conducts readers through the storied past and towering presence of the most famous building in the world. Who built the Parthenon, and for what purpose? How are we to understand its sculpture? Why is it such a compelling monument? The classicist and historian Mary Beard takes us back to the fifth century B.C. to consider the Parthenon in its original guise--as the flagship temple of imperial Athens, housing an enormous gold and ivory statue of the city's patron goddess attended by an enigmatic assembly of sculptures. Just as fascinating is the monument's far longer life as cathedral church of Our Lady of Athens, as "the finest mosque in the world," and, finally, as an inspirational ruin and icon. Beard also takes a cool look at the bitter arguments that continue to surround the "Elgin Marbles," the sculptures

from the Parthenon now in the British Museum. Her book constitutes the ultimate tour of the marvelous history and present state of this glory of the Acropolis, and of the world.

From The New Yorker This short, lively history by a Cambridge classicist examines not only the building's construction in the fifth century B.C. but also its subsequent life as Byzantine cathedral, Ottoman mosque, and iconic ruin and tourist destination. Beard steps adroitly through such controversial matters as the ownership of the Elgin Marbles, and is happiest when teasing out contradictions in the building's history: the Parthenon as it appears today is largely the result of the depredations of Victorian archeologists bent on stripping away anything that was not from Periclean Athens, and of extensive reconstruction in the nineteenth-twentieth the combined results of which would be unrecognizable to any Athenian of classical times. She suggests that the Parthenon is ultimately as much an ideal of classicism as it is an actual building, and she relishes the story of the German scholar who went to Athens early in the twentieth century but couldn't bear to visit the Parthenon, in case it didn't live up to his expectations. Copyright 2005 The New Yorker Wry and imaginative, this gem of a book deconstructs the most famous building in Western history. Beard, probably Britain's best-known classicist, elucidates...the history of the ancient building, the functions--church, mosque, barracks, ammunition dump--it has served since antiquity, and the place it has held in the European imagination in the modern era. With clat she dashes most of what we think we know about the ancient Greeks' building: the iconic image of the Parthenon held today is the product of a terribly inaccurate reconstruction in the 1920s, a reconstruction now being painstakingly undone...Beard reveals just how alien...the classical Greeks are to us, and just how little we know about them. (Benjamin Schwarz The Atlantic 2003-04-01) With painstaking attention to detail and a fair-minded view of centuries-old controversies, Mary Beard delivers a brief, but thorough, and surprisingly readable history of what is arguably the world's most famous building...Beard pieces together what we do know, beginning with the earliest surviving account...[She] does a fine job of storytelling...describing changes on the site from a modern tourist's perspective. (Stephen H. Morgan Boston Globe 2003-05-04) In her brief but compendious volume [Beard] says that the more we find out about this mysterious structure, the less we know. Her book is especially valuable because it is up to date on the restoration the Parthenon has been undergoing since 1986. (Garry Wills New York of Books 2003-10-09) The Parthenon is an excellent and concise guide to one of the most famous structures in the world. Mary Beard takes readers on a journey, at once historical, anthropological, and archaeological, that is both thorough and good-naturedly humorous...This book will appeal to a wide range of readers looking to learn more about the Parthenon and Greek history. And, it can be used as a guide for those visiting the Parthenon or as an armchair trip for those who can't get to Greece. (Rachel Wallace Sacramento Book 2010-11-15) About the Author Mary Beard has a Chair of Classics at Cambridge and is a Fellow of Newnham College. She is classics editor of The Times Literary Supplement and author of the blog A Dons Life. She is also a winner of the 2008 Wolfson History Prize.