

PITCHER  
Preventing Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Heritage:  
Educational Resources



## Open Educational Resources

### *Case Studies*

**Topic:** Theft of antiques and works of art, Sale of stolen objects, Traffic channels and actors' identification, Fight against the traffic, Provenance research and traceability, Return of stolen objects, Preservation of memory of missing artefacts and Why it is forbidden, what consequences?

**Age Group:** 11-14, 14-18 years old

### Authors

Agathe Le Riche-Maugis, Laura Bécard (Bibracte)

### Reviewer

Pascale Goutagny, Inspectrice Pédagogique Régionale pour l'histoiregéographie, Rectorat de Dijon.

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## Preface

The *PITCHER* project (Erasmus+ Programme, 2021-2024) intends to design and test of a set of open educational resources focusing on improving the capacity of teachers and educators in preparing new learning experiences to support the fight against looting and illicit trafficking of cultural goods. The project intends to propose a new model for raising awareness of young people about the problem of fighting the looting and illicit trafficking of cultural goods, initially focusing on schoolteachers, to raise their interest and enhance their professional development in this field.

PITCHER builds on the final recommendations of the European project NETCHER (H2020 - 2019-2021) coordinated by CNRS, which implemented a strong trans sectoral network as well as Recommendations on the fight against looting and trafficking of cultural goods. One of the components of the recommendations is the need for awareness-raising and guidance toward Educational communities.

The project idea comes from ENSP (the Research Centre of the French national police academy), and the Michael Culture association - members of the NETCHER consortium - and brings together BIBRACTE major actor of Archaeology, MUSEOMIX a reference in mediation for museums, and schools from France, Greece, Italy, and Spain, in order to co-design and implement the PITCHER project.



Photo: Pexels, Oleksandr Pidvalnyi

We hope this resource will bring a new dimension to your work, as well as use it to develop these activities with your students. The selected topics have been chosen together with teachers and educators coming from France, Greece, Italy and Spain through focus groups and surveys. Each resource is accompanied by key learning points as well as several interesting facts or pieces of information, which are intended to be used to provoke further discussion.




Wherever possible we have included a short interactive activity that can be carried out with students or a series of suggested questions to ask, in order to introduce the topics of each learning module. Should you wish to explore certain topics or themes further, each resource includes a link to other related ones. When available, a general list of additional resources related to the topics is provided. The resources and accompanying texts are designed as standalone educational aids. In this respect, the resource is intended to provide an overall framework from which you can pick and choose the issues most relevant to your activities. The module can be used within any country any context as it deals with issues, which are cross-border and universal.

For more information about the *PITCHER* project, please visit:

<https://www.pitcher-project.eu>

## The PITCHER Educational Offer

The *PITCHER* open educational resources include the following learning modules, here listed according to subject matters and suggested age of the target students:

	 7-11	 11-14	 14-18
All the themes		Case Studies	Case Studies
		The Cobannus hoard affair	The Cobannus hoard affair
		Looting is not a game	Looting is not a game
		Traffic International	Traffic International
		The Raiders of the Lost Art	
Theft of antiques and works of art	Looting in the Village	Looting in the Village	Looting in the Village
	Traffic 'Art	Traffic 'Art	Traffic 'Art
	Vade-mecum Educational project	Vade-mecum Educational project	Vade-mecum Educational project
	The Mysterious Theft	The Mysterious Theft	Guilty Treasures
		Crossed interviews	Crossed interviews
		Journey of a Stele	Journey of a Stele
		Protect the sites!	Protect the sites!
		Voiceless	Voiceless
		PillarT	PillarT
		The Talking Clay	
Sale of stolen objects	Traffic 'Art	Traffic 'Art	Traffic 'Art
		Journey of a Stele	Journey of a Stele
		Voiceless	Voiceless
		PillarT	PillarT
			Guilty Treasures
Traffic channels and actors' identification	Traffic 'Art	Traffic 'Art	Traffic 'Art

		Crossed interviews	Crossed interviews
		Journey of a Stele	Journey of a Stele
		Voiceless	Voiceless
		PillarT	PillarT
			Guilty Treasures
Fight against the traffic	Traffic 'Art	Traffic 'Art	Traffic 'Art
		Protect the sites!	Protect the sites!
		Crossed interviews	Crossed interviews
		Journey of a Stele	Journey of a Stele
		PillarT	PillarT
		The Talking Clay	
Provenance research and traceability		Crossed interviews	Crossed interviews
		PillarT	PillarT
	Touch, Don't Touch	Touch, Don't Touch	
Return of stolen objects	Traffic 'Art	Traffic 'Art	Traffic 'Art
		Journey of a Stele	Journey of a Stele
Preservation of memory of missing artefacts	Vade-mecum Educational project	Vade-mecum Educational project	Vade-mecum Educational project
	Touch, Don't Touch	Touch, Don't Touch	
Why it is forbidden, what consequence	Vade-mecum Educational project	Vade-mecum Educational project	Vade-mecum Educational project
		Crossed interviews	Crossed interviews
		Journey of a Stele	Journey of a Stele
		Protect the sites!	Protect the sites!
		Voiceless	Voiceless
		PillarT	PillarT
		The Talking Clay	

## Summary: Case Studies

Topic: Theft of antiques and works of art, Sale of stolen objects, Traffic channels and actors' identification, Fight against the traffic, Provenance research and traceability, Return of stolen objects, Preservation of memory of missing artifacts and Why is it forbidden, what consequences?

Age range:



Educational programme: History, Geography, Moral and Civic Education, History of the Arts, Languages and Cultures of Antiquity, History-Geography specialty, Geopolitics and Political Science, Oral exam of the National Brevet Diploma, Grand Oral of the general baccalaureate.

Time:



15/30 minutes to several days depending on the actions

Materials and tools:

Database and online case study sheets

Skills achieved:

Find your way in time and space. Analyse and understand a document. Cooperate and share information.

Learning objectives:

Understand the complex phenomenon of the looting of archaeological sites and the illicit trafficking of cultural property and its consequences: loss of access for the greatest number of people to historical and artistic works, loss of information that impacts our knowledge of the past and threat to our security because this illicit trafficking finances organized crime.

## Instructions for teachers

This resource was designed to meet the need of teachers, identified during the survey carried out in the first phase of the PITCHER project, to have case studies to address with their students the different aspects of illicit trafficking of cultural goods.

You can use them to illustrate, quickly or in detail, different points of your school curriculum in order to address, directly or indirectly, the theme of archaeological looting / theft of works of art and illicit trafficking of cultural goods.



## How to use this educational resource

### 1. Preparation

The PITCHER project online resource space [<https://www.pitcher-project.eu/resources>] provides you with a large number of materials to prepare the use of case studies with your classes. In particular, you will find: resources to explore the subject in more depth, anchor points in school curricula to address the looting of archaeological sites and the illicit trafficking of cultural property, a slide show to present this complex phenomenon, maps of international and Mediterranean trafficking, etc.

### 2. Access to the contents of the “Case Studies” resource

This resource is available in the “PITCHER Case Studies” collection of the Nakala digital repository at the following address: <https://nakala.fr/collection/10.34847/nkl.9cafe25z>. It is composed of two sets:

- A database placed at the head of the collection. In the form of a table, it presents for each object:
  - File number
  - Name
  - Historical period
  - Countries concerned (the country of origin, then the country where it was found)
  - The type of theft or archaeological looting: theft from a museum, a monument or private property, looting of a terrestrial or underwater archaeological site. There are also some examples of thefts linked to the colonial period and the Second World War (Nazi spoliations), which do not fall within the theme of the PITCHER project, but which are present because they are included in school curricula and allow comparisons with the current situation.
  - The amount of information available on the sale of the object, the trafficking to which it was subject, the fight against it and the search for its provenance.
  - If the object has been returned to its country of origin
  - Links to school programs

This database allows you to choose the most relevant case study sheet(s) based on your program and the topics you want to cover in your classes.
- Case study sheets, the number of which will increase over time. You can find the sheet(s) you have chosen using their numbers or by entering their names in the search bar at the top of the page. Each A4-sized card contains the following sections:
  - Card number
  - Name of the object
  - Photograph
  - Historical period
  - Material
  - Heritage interest

This section is important because it highlights the consequences of the looting of archaeological sites and illicit trafficking in terms of loss (loss of information, loss of access to the work for the public and researchers, etc.) when the object has not been found, and



therefore, with the photograph and links to additional information, it constitutes a form of preservation of the memory of this object.

- Context of the theft or looting  
There is an important distinction between these two words: stolen objects are known, inventoried, and therefore identifiable objects when they are rediscovered, which allows them to be returned to their owners. Looted objects have not been inventoried and are therefore much more difficult to identify, they are called "orphan objects".
- Illicit trafficking of the object (when information is available)
- Discovery of the looted or stolen object and its possible return  
These three sections (context, trafficking and rediscovery) make it possible to identify the channels and actors involved in illicit trafficking, and provide information on the sale of stolen objects, the fight against trafficking, the origin and traceability of the objects concerned.
- Consequences of looting/theft and illicit trafficking, where applicable, when there are other consequences than the disappearance of the object itself.
- Current location
- o Web links for more information: some pages in foreign languages have been kept if they refer to the countries of origin of the objects and there is no equivalent page in French. They can easily be translated using an automatic translator, but they also allow activities to be carried out as part of foreign language courses, whether or not they are cross-curricular with other disciplines.

## Suggestions for further activities

### Did you know?



[The Stolen Works of Johannes Vermeer Johannes Vermeer](https://artsandculture.google.com/story/fgXBDxyCMeVtJw)  
(<https://artsandculture.google.com/story/fgXBDxyCMeVtJw>)

This content from the Google Art & Culture platform, created with the Mauritshuis, presents the story of the thefts of four Vermeer paintings, three of which have been recovered. The full-screen images are accompanied by texts that address the following topics: profile and motivation of the thieves, the method of the theft, the search for the stolen works, and returns.

### Ideas for additional tasks

In addition to being used to illustrate your lessons, this resource can also be used to carry out various educational activities, for example:

- Oral, written or graphic activities  
Students in groups of three or four (one card per group) are given cards presenting different cases. Each group takes the time to study the case and research it in greater depth (using the links provided, or researching the period, place or artist concerned). Afterwards, several activities are possible to present these case studies to the other groups or classes:
  1. oral activities: re-enactment of an auction, the interrogation of a suspect, a trial, etc.

2. written activities: each pupil in the group writes a fictitious text, imagining he or she is the person in charge of the museum or archaeological site where the object was stolen, an expert, a detective, or even an advisor for a film...
  3. graphic activity: presentation of the object's history and whereabouts in comic strip form.
- Creation of one or more new cards  
The class as a whole, or students divided into several groups, can contribute to the addition of one or more new cards to this database, based on case studies of your choice: a stolen work or looted object near your school, an object relating to a period or country studied in class...
    1. Identify one objects stolen or looted and possibly recovered :
      - by contacting your local cultural or police authorities
      - by using Interpol's [ID-Art mobile app](#), which enables you to search for stolen objects by type of object, artist, country...
      - by searching [Europeana](#), the digital collection that makes available a wide variety of cultural heritage resources (works of art, archaeological objects, books, films...) from over 3,700 European institutions. Type "stolen" or "looted" in the search bar, but beware: the results also contain works whose subject is theft or looting.
      - by searching [POP - Plateforme Ouverte du Patrimoine](#) with the filter "Missing or stolen items".
    2. Contact Bibracte to find out if anyone else is preparing a file on this object.
    3. Search for information: in press articles, by contacting the owners of the stolen work or archaeological officials for a looted object, and request a royalty-free photograph to illustrate the sheet.
    4. Fill in the card in A4 format, in the same way as the existing ones.
    5. Send the form to Bibracte, who will add it to the database.

Contact : [pitcher@bibracte.fr](mailto:pitcher@bibracte.fr)

## Annex: The Cards

### CARD 1

**NAME: Bust of Drusus Germanicus**

PROVENANCE: Bavaria, Germany

PERIOD: 1st century B.C.

TYPE: Statuary

MATERIAL: Marble

HERITAGE INTEREST: This bust bears witness to the techniques used in sculpture and to the links between Roman and Germanic history, at a pivotal moment in the territorial and civil wars of the 1st century BC.

THEFT / PILLAGE CONTEXT: This bust was stolen at the end of the Second World War from the Pompejanum site (a reconstruction of a Pompeii villa) in Bavaria, following its bombing in 1944. It was probably stolen by a member of the Allied forces as they advanced through German territory.

REDISCOVERY AND RETURN: In 2018, an American antique dealer bought it for \$35 from a second-hand store in Austin, Texas. She then researched its origin and confirmed its Roman authenticity. To do this, she contacted experts, professors from the University of Texas Department of Classics and Art History, auction house representatives, etc., who provided information on the dating of the work, the character depicted, its provenance and the circumstances of its disappearance. After being exhibited at the San Antonio Art Museum, the work was returned to the German state in 2023.

CURRENT LOCATION: Bavaria, Germany

**MORE INFORMATION:**

- New York Post article:

<https://nypost.com/2023/04/17/texas-museum-to-return-stolen-roman-bust-after-woman-bought-it-for-35/>

- Wikipedia page of Nero Claudius Drusus:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nero\\_Claudius\\_Drusus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nero_Claudius_Drusus)



## CARD 2

**NAME: The treasure of Cobannus**

PROVENANCE: Couan, Burgundy, France

PERIOD: Gallo-Roman

TYPE: Coins, statuary, finery, instrument (small furniture).

MATERIAL: Bronze, silver and gold.



HERITAGE INTEREST: This deposit, possibly votive, comprises two sets of coins, a sculpture of Apollo, statuettes of the god Cobannus and various objects. The sheer number and diversity of these objects are what make this deposit so interesting. The coins make it possible to date its burial, as do, to a lesser extent, the other objects. The stylistic characteristics of the statuary, furniture sconces, ornaments and small furniture are also of interest. Together, these two pieces of information provide further insight into Gallo-Roman stylistic chronology.

THEFT / LOOTING CONTEXT: In 1970, a looter used a metal detector on Couan hill to recover archaeological objects.

TRAFFICKING: The treasure's various objects are immediately dispersed and enter the art market circuit, including an auction house in Auxerre. From exchange to exchange, the whole thing fell apart, first in France, then internationally after several objects were smuggled out of the country. From 1989 onwards, some of them were donated to the Getty Museum in California, while others found their way into the hands of New York patrons.

REDISCOVERY AND RETURN: In 2008, the looter repented to archaeologists. He provided them with his photographs, plaster copies of the statues he had made before selling them, and his "excavation diary". Thanks to his testimony, geophysical prospecting and archaeological excavations have been carried out since 2016.

CONSEQUENCES: Without the looter's declaration, the site would probably not have undergone any archaeological work. This operation revealed that the deposit originated from a Gallo-Roman sanctuary, with an ancient Gallic occupation that preceded the first building.

CURRENT LOCATION: Los Angeles (USA) and Bibracte (France) for copies.

## MORE INFORMATION :

- Journal du Centre article:

[https://www.lejdc.fr/saint-aubin-des-chaumes-58190/actualites/mis-au-jour-par-un-pilleur-nivernais-le-sanctuaire-de-couan-pres-de-vezelay-devoile-ses-mysteres-le-14-juin\\_13582944/?fbclid=IwAR1bLkujBU0sM\\_rKywQvwOAc8HekJ1FuoKBltzYaZ74jTIPeWQz3mt24OEA#refresh%20,%20consult%C3%A9%20le%2014juin%202019](https://www.lejdc.fr/saint-aubin-des-chaumes-58190/actualites/mis-au-jour-par-un-pilleur-nivernais-le-sanctuaire-de-couan-pres-de-vezelay-devoile-ses-mysteres-le-14-juin_13582944/?fbclid=IwAR1bLkujBU0sM_rKywQvwOAc8HekJ1FuoKBltzYaZ74jTIPeWQz3mt24OEA#refresh%20,%20consult%C3%A9%20le%2014juin%202019)

CARD 3

**NAME: Statue of Bacchus**

PROVENANCE: Vertillum, Vertault, Burgundy, France

PERIOD: 1st century B.C. - 1st century AD

TYPE: Statuary

MATERIAL: Bronze

PATRIMONIAL INTEREST: Gallo-Roman statuary is well known, but this object is a unicum: its study is therefore important for understanding the iconography and technique of bronze sculpture.

THEFT / LOOTING CONTEXT: During the night of December 18-19, 1973, one or more intruders broke into the museum at Châtillon-sur-Seine (Burgundy, France) and stole a number of ancient objects: the Bacchus statue, a replica of the dame de Vix torque, a gold pendant and ring, bronze and silver coins and ticket money. A plaster copy of this statue is now on display at the museum.



REDISCOVERY AND RETURN: An art expert found the statue in the Netherlands and, given its quality, wondered about its provenance. He contacted the Office central de la lutte contre le trafic des biens culturels, who in turn contacted the director of the Musée du Pays Châtillonnais to ascertain when the statue had been stolen, and that it was unique. The archive work that followed retraced the sequence of events since 1973: the theft had been the subject of a complaint, proving that the statue had come from the museum. There is no recognized offense in the Netherlands, and criminal proceedings are statute-barred in France. The agreed method for returning the object is an amicable financial transaction between the museum and the buyer.

CURRENT LOCATION : Museum of the Châtillonnais region, Burgundy, France

MORE INFORMATION :

- BBC article: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60226454>

- CBS article: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/bacchus-statue-stolen-1973-returned-museum-arthur-brand/>

CARD 4

**NAME: Euphronios Krater**

PROVENANCE: Etruscan necropolis of Cerveteri, Italy

DATE: 6th century b.-c.

TYPE: Vessel

MATERIAL: Ceramic



PATRIMONIAL INTEREST: Considered one of the finest examples of ancient Greek ceramics, signed by the painter Euphronios, this crater depicts a Homeric subject: Hypnos and Thanatos abducting the body of Sarpedon. In addition to its iconographic and stylistic interest, it also provides an insight into ancient Greek art and craftsmanship, and the exchanges between Greece and Etruria.

THEFT / LOOTING CONTEXT: It was looted in 1971 by a "tombarolo" (the Italian name for an Etruscan grave robber) from a necropolis near Cerveteri (Italy).

TRAFFICKING: This looter is in contact with Giacomo Medici, an Italian art dealer in charge of exporting archaeological objects out of Italy on behalf of a clandestine art trafficking network. This network includes suppliers (looters and thieves), Italian regions and intermediaries with links to international art dealers, museums and collectors. The crater may have passed through Giacomo Medici's warehouse at the Geneva airport Freeport before arriving in New York.

REDISCOVERY AND RETURN: The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York acquired the vase in 1972 for \$1.2 billion, but without providing any precise information on the seller or the intermediary. In 1973, the New York Times reported that the vase had been illegally exported from Italy, but the Italian state was unable to prove the vase's illicit origin, the MET's bad faith or any other element justifying an official request for its return. It was not until 1995 that the Italian Carabinieri of the Office for the Protection of Cultural Heritage identified and dismantled the network. In 2001, a search of Robert Hecht's home in Paris revealed the origin of the crater. In February 2006, the Italian State and the MET signed an agreement for the return of the crater, which was repatriated to Italy in January 2008.

CURRENT LOCALISATION: National Archaeological Museum of Cerveteri, Cerveteri, Italy

**MORE INFORMATION:**

- Pennsylvania State University:

<https://sites.psu.edu/museumstudies2015/2015/02/01/the-euphronios-krater-controversy/>

- The New York Time article:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/08/arts/design/08abroad.html>

CARD 5

**NAME: The disk of Nebra**

PROVENANCE: Nebra/Unstrut, Saxony-Anhalt, Germany

PERIOD: Bronze Age or Iron Age

TYPE:

MATERIAL: Bronze and gold



HERITAGE INTEREST: The Nebra disc is a unique piece that could be a representation of the solar system with what can be interpreted as the moon and sun. Other interpretations suggest a representation of the solar boat, which is a recurring motif for the Bronze Age period.

THEFT / LOOTING CONTEXT: This disc was unearthed in 1999 by two looters using a metal detector. In addition to the disc, other objects were dug up: two swords, two hatchets, a chisel and fragments of bracelets. They were sold the very next day for 31,000 Deutsche Mark (around 15,850 Euros) in Cologne.

REDISCOVERY AND RETURN: As early as 2001, archaeologists were aware of the existence of this disc, but without knowing its location. In 2002, an archaeologist infiltrated the black market to acquire it. It worked, and the disc was recovered for DM 700,000 (around €357,904). What's more, the seizure enabled the looters to be tracked down and archaeological excavations to be carried out.

CONSEQUENCES: While these archaeological digs may lead to the discovery of other objects, they cannot compensate for the loss of information due to the destruction of the context in which the disc was found, which might have helped to support the various interpretations of its meaning.

CURRENT LOCATION: State Museum of Prehistory, Halle, Saxony-Anhalt, Germany.

**MORE INFORMATION:**

- UNESCO website: <https://en.unesco.org/memoryoftheworld/registry/500>

- Astronomy website:

<https://www.astronomy.com/science/the-nebra-sky-disk-is-the-worlds-oldest-star-map-really-a-map-at-all/>

CARD 6

**NAME: The wreck of the Jeanne-Elisabeth**

PROVENANCE: Villeneuve-les-Maguelone,  
Occitanie, France  
TIME: 1755  
TYPE: Shipwreck cargo  
MATERIALS : Wood, wheat, silver etc...



HERITAGE INTEREST: The Jeanne Elisabeth was a Swedish ship trading between Cadiz (Spain) and Marseille (France). However, the ship ran aground and sank some 100 km from its destination. The Jeanne-Elisabeth is the most significant wreck in the northern Mediterranean of the modern period, and the richest in historical information. It is therefore a key witness to 18th-century trade and shipbuilding, as the vessel is extremely well preserved despite the passage of time and the looting to which it has been subjected.

THEFT / LOOTING CONTEXT : In 2006, the wreck was plundered by divers, who recovered 18,000 of the 24,360 silver piastres the ship had been carrying and caused extensive damage to the wreck.

REDISCOVERY AND RETURN: Following the discovery of this looting, two actions were coordinated by the relevant authorities: customs seized the looted objects, and the Département des Recherches Archéologiques Subaquatiques et Sous-Marines (DRASSM) provided proof of a dating match between these objects and the wreck.

CURRENT LOCATION: The wreck is still in place but artifacts are being investigated at various laboratories.

**MORE INFORMATION:**

- French Ministry of Culture (English text):

<https://archeologie.culture.gouv.fr/archeo-sous-marine/en/jeanne-elisabeth-herault>

- OpenEdition journals, Archaeonautica:

<https://journals.openedition.org/archaeonautica/918>



CARD 7

**NAME: The wreck Fort Royal 1**

PROVENANCE: Archipelago of Lérins,

Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, France

PERIOD: 2nd century

TYPE: Shipwreck cargo

MATERIAL: Terracotta



PATRIMONIAL INTEREST: Amphorae are very useful for archaeologists, as they bear witness to the transport of goods and thus to trade between the various territories of the ancient Mediterranean. By studying their shape, we can learn about their origins and their contents; in addition, they sometimes preserve internal deposits that provide information about their exact contents.

THEFT / LOOTING CONTEXT: 60 amphorae were looted by a father and his son in 2022 with the aim of being sold.

REDISCOVERY AND RETURN: When archaeologists began excavating the wreck, they saw tools used to plunder the site, as well as objects that were missing: the looters were in the process of operating and were due to return shortly. The remaining amphorae were all brought up to prevent another act of looting. The looted amphorae were recovered in Antibes; the looters have been arrested and are awaiting trial.

CURRENT LOCATION: Nice, France

MORE INFORMATION:

- RFI article: <https://www.rfi.fr/en/france/20220428-outrage-as-2-200-year-old-shipwreck-looted-off-french-riviera>

- CBS article: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/shipwreck-fort-royal-1-looted-damaged-france/>

CARD 8

**NAME: The treasure of Cuts**

PROVENANC: Cuts, Hauts-de-France, France

PERIOD: 11th century

TYPE: Coins

MATERIAL : Silver



PATRIMONIAL INTEREST: Coins are chronological indicators that can be used to date an archaeological site and its structures. They also provide information on trade, as well as the way in which the issuing power wanted to be represented (emperor's portrait, various symbols...).

THEFT / LOOTING CONTEXT: In 1998, three illegal prospectors working with metal detectors in a private wood in Cuts (60) discovered and unearthed a stone chest containing medieval silver coins.

REDISCOVERY AND RETURN: They sell the coins to a Paris numismatist and a bookseller in Noyon. The latter, on the advice of an expert, decides to declare the coins to the Direction régionale des affaires culturelles, which opens an investigation. The investigators traced the coins back to the two looters and recovered most of the deposit. The 1,108 coins finally recovered from the various seizures were returned to the rightful owner of the land on which the treasure had been found. They were acquired by the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in 2015. Some of the coins were never recovered.

CURRENT LOCATION: French National Library, Paris, France

**MORE INFORMATION:**

- Le Parisien article: [Ils avaient découvert et revendu un trésor - Le Parisien](#)
- Bibliographic notice of the French National Library: [Notice bibliographique Trésor de Cuts \(Oise\) | BnF Catalogue général - Bibliothèque nationale de France](#)

CARD 9

**NAME: The treasure of Laignes**

PROVENANCE: Laignes, Burgundy, France

PERIOD: 1st century B.C.

TYPE: Coins

MATERIAL: Silver (?)



**PATRIMONIAL INTEREST:** Coins are chronological indicators that can be used to date an archaeological site and its structures. They also provide information on trade and the way in which the issuing power wanted to be represented (emperor's portrait, various symbols...).

**THEFT / LOOTING CONTEXT:** Three people using metal detectors went in search of archaeological objects a few kilometres from the oppidum of Vix et Vertillum (an ancient town). They found some 2,000 Gallic coins and sold them for 30,000 euros to a Dijon real estate agent.

**REDISCOVERY AND RETURN:** Eric Champault, archaeologist, infiltrates a Facebook group and notices the illegal find. 10 individuals are arrested in all France

**CURRENT LOCATION:** Probably in the hands of French justice.

**MORE INFORMATION :**

- Le Bien Public article:

[Côte-d'Or - Justice. Laignes : un trésor qui peut leur coûter cher](#)

- Journal du Centre article:

[LAIGNES \(Côte-d'Or\). Un trésor, des pilleurs... Et des enquêteurs](#)

CARD 10

**NAME: Treasure of Tavers**

PROVENANCE: Tavers, Centre-Val de Loire, France

PERIOD: Protohistory

TYPE: Ornaments et weapons

MATERIALS: Copper alloy, lead and iron



**PATRIMONIAL INTEREST:** This hoard provides an insight into the craft of jewellery making in the protohistoric period, particularly in terms of appearance and technique. In addition, this type of hoarding deposit is common for the period, and allows us to learn more about the extent of this practice. Although common, the association of different types of furniture is rare.

**THEFT / LOOTING CONTEXT :** The looting was done using metal detectors in 2012.

**REDISCOVERY AND RETURN :** The inventors went to declare it to the Regional Service of Archaeology, for fear of having repercussions. The deposit was then bought by the National Archaeology Museum for the price of 50 000 euros.

**CURRENT LOCATION :** Musée d'Archéologie Nationale, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, France.

**MORE INFORMATION:**

- Agence France Presse (subtitle in English) : <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x77egum>

CARD 11

**NAME: "The dream of San José", Francisco de Goya**

PROVENANCE: Villanueva de la Canada, autonomous community of Madrid, Spain

PERIOD: 1771-1773

TYPE: Painting

MATERIALS: Wood, canvas and oil paint

HERITAGE INTEREST: This work was painted in the early stages of Francisco de Goya's career as a painter. It provides an insight into the aesthetics and techniques he used before joining the Romantic movement in 1780.

THEFT / LOOTING CONTEXT: In 2015, burglars broke into a private property, a house in Spain, and made off with two works by Francisco de Goya.

REDISCOVERY AND RETURN : the works have not yet been found.

CONSEQUENCES: Although this work was kept in the private domain, its location was safe. Today, it is in danger of being damaged and lost forever.

CURRENT LOCATION : Unknown

MORE INFORMATION:

- El País article: [Robados dos 'goyas' de una casa de Madrid | Cultura | EL PAÍS](#)

## CARD 12

**NAME: "La apoteosis de las artes"**

PROVENANCE: Bruxelles, Belgium

PERIOD: 17th

TYPE: Tapestry

MATERIALS: Wool and silk

HERITAGE INTEREST: This Flemish tapestry was created in Bruges in 1654 by Corneille Schutz, a disciple of Rubens.



THEFT/LOOTING CONTEXT: This tapestry, along with five others, was stolen in 1980 from the church of Santo Domingo in Castrojeriz, Spain, by art thief René Alphonse van den Bergue and his gang of criminals.

TRAFFICKING: René Alphonse van den Berghe, known as Erik le Belge, was an art dealer, restorer, painter, writer and international thief, who made thefts from Spanish churches and chapels his specialty. He was the head of a gang dedicated to stealing religious works of art, at the request of wealthy collectors looking for a specific work or simply for sale on the international black market.

REDISCOVERY AND RETURN : An international investigation, led by Interpol, had solved the case of the theft of six tapestries. Erik the Belgian, arrested in 1982 in Barcelona, had concluded an agreement with the Spanish authorities, his last wife being his lawyer at the time: in exchange for his freedom, he had undertaken to recover as many of the stolen works of art as possible; he returned around 1,500... All the tapestry fragments were thus returned to the San Domingo church, with the exception of one. The latter was found by police officer Ángel Alcaraz, who, having studied Erik the Belgian's thefts, was able to trace the fragment back to the art thief's former lawyer. The piece of tapestry was returned to the Archdiocese of Burgos in February 2022.

CURRENT LOCATION : Archdiocese of Burgos, Spain.

## MORE INFORMATION:

- El Dia de Valladolid article :

[La 'Apoteosis de las artes' ya está completa | Noticias El Día de Valladolid](#)

- Diaro del Burgos article: [La 'Apoteosis de las artes' ya está completa | Noticias Diario de Burgos](#)

CARD 13

**NAME: The Celtic deposit of Manching**

PROVENANCE: Manching, Bavaria, Germany

PERIOD: 1st century B.C.

TYPE: Coins (mainly)

MATERIALS: Gold and bronze



PATRIMONIAL INTEREST: The Manching deposit, discovered in 1999, consists of 483 staters (Gaulish gold coins) from Bohemia, as well as three rings and a large nugget of melted gold. This discovery in Bavaria attests to the exchanges between the various peoples of the Celtic civilization.

THEFT / LOOTING CONTEXT : On the night of November 22, 2022, people broke into the Kelten and Romermuseum in Manching and stole the Manching "treasure", which was on display there.

CURRENT LOCATION : unknown

**MORE INFORMATION:**

- Fortune article: <https://fortune.com/2022/11/23/germany-celtic-gold-coins-heist-theft-manching-museum-organized-crime-wave/>

- DW article: <https://www.dw.com/en/celtic-gold-coins-worth-millions-stolen-from-german-museum/a-63851987>

CARD 14

**NAME: "The Port of La Rochelle", Paul Signac**

**PROVENANCE:** Nancy Museum of Fine Arts, Lorraine, France.

**PERIOD:** 1915

**TYPE:** Painting

**MATERIALS:** Wood, canvas and oil paint

**PATRIMONIAL INTEREST:** Paul Signac was a great French painter, precursor of the pointillist technique and a member of the Neo-Impressionists.



**THEFT / LOOTING CONTEXT:** This painting was stolen in May 2018. Three people entered the museum, painstakingly cut the canvas with a box cutter, detached it from the frame and took it away, simply rolled up under a raincoat.

**REDISCOVERY AND RETURN:** The painting was found in April 2019 in Kiev during a search in connection with a murder case. Verification by French experts confirms that it is indeed the work stolen from the Nancy museum. A two-year period will follow before the painting is returned (in February 2021), to allow time for analysis and investigation into the network behind the theft and trafficking of this work.

**TRAFFICKING:** Investigations identified a criminal gang made up of three other people who had committed several art thefts, notably at auctions in the Paris region. The alleged mastermind is an inmate incarcerated in Vienna, Austria, an art lover with extensive knowledge of the high quality of the Nancy collection.

**CURRENT LOCATION:** Nancy Museum of Fine Arts, Lorraine, France.



CARD 15

**NAME: Okukor**

PROVENANCE: Former Kingdom of Benin, Nigeria

PERIOD: Between the 17th and the 19th century

TYPE : Statuary

MATERIAL: Bronze



PATRIMONIAL INTEREST: For the Beninese, the rooster is a strong symbol of their beliefs, as it was offered as a sacrifice to Olokun, the Yoruba goddess of the sea. A dozen examples are known worldwide. Their interest lies in the technique used - lost-wax casting and combed decoration - as well as in their religious symbolism linked to the sea and wealth.

THEFT/PILLAGE CONTEXT: It is an example of colonial looting. It was stolen by a British soldier in 1897 and donated to Cambridge University in 1905.

REDISCOVERY AND RETURN: English students of African origin saw the statuette at Cambridge University and decided to take steps to return it to Nigeria. In October 2021, the statuette was returned to Nigeria. It is the first object to be returned from British colonial times.

CURRENT LOCATION: Nigeria

**MORE INFORMATION:**

- Wikipedia: [Okukor - Wikipedia](#)

- Channels Television: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-pLvN80Pj4>

- Local10 article: <https://www.local10.com/news/world/2021/10/27/colonial-art-cambridge-hands-over-looted-bronze-to-nigeria/>

CARD 16

**NAME: "The Parsonage Garden at Nuenen",  
Vincent Van Gogh**

PROVENANCE: Nuenen, Netherlands

PERIOD: 1884

TYPE: Painting

MATERIALS: Wood, canvas and oil paint



**PATRIMONIAL INTEREST:** Vincent van Gogh was a Dutch painter from the second half of the 19th century. His work is internationally renowned and exhibited in a large number of museums. He was part of the post-Impressionist movement (1880-1910), which pioneered Pointillism, Synthetism and Symbolism.

**THEFT / LOOTING CONTEXT:** The painting was stolen on the night of 29-30 March 2020 from the Singer Laren Museum (Netherlands) while on temporary display in that museum, as it was on loan from the Groningen Museum (Netherlands). As the museum was closed due to the pandemic, it was easier for the thieves to take it.

**REDISCOVERY AND RETURN:** The painting has not yet been found, but in June 2020, an art expert, Arthur Brand, is said to have seen photos of the work. This would prove that it is not destroyed.

**CURRENT LOCATION:** Unknown.

**MORE INFORMATION:**

- Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Parsonage\\_Garden\\_at\\_Nuenen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Parsonage_Garden_at_Nuenen)

- Artnet: <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/thieves-stolen-van-gogh-masterpiece-dutch-museum-1819743>

CARD 17

**NAME: "Count Lepic and his daughters",**

**Edgar Degas**

PROVENANCE: Zurich, Switzerland

PERIOD: 1870

TYPE: Painting

MATERIALS: Wood, canvas and oil paint



PATRIMONIAL INTEREST: Edgar Degas was a French multidisciplinary artist: painter, sculptor, photographer, naturalist, etc. He was part of the Impressionist movement and is considered one of its most representative painters.

THEFT / LOOTING CONTEXT: In a theft from the private collection of E.G. Bürhle in Zurich in 2008, four paintings were stolen, including Degas' Ludovic Lepic and his daughters.

REDISCOVERY AND RETURN: In 2012, the work was found in Serbia, as was one of the other stolen works. It was later returned to its owner. The work is damaged but it is possible to restore it.

CURRENT LOCATION: Zurich, Switzerland

MORE INFORMATION:

- Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Count\\_Lepic\\_and\\_His\\_Daughters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Count_Lepic_and_His_Daughters)

- Herald Sun:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20080217222440/http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,23203876-663,00.html>

CARD 18

**NAME: “Young Woman with a serpent”, Auguste Rodin**

PROVENANCE: Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, Etats-Unis

PERIOD: 1880-1900

TYPE: Statuary

MATERIAL: Plaster

HERITAGE INTEREST: Rodin was a multi-disciplinary artist who produced a large number of photographs, paintings, engravings and, above all, sculptures. The latter made his reputation. He is a leading exponent of modern art and symbolism, two major artistic movements of the 19th and 20th centuries.

THEFT / LOOTING CONTEXT: Theft from a private property in Beverly Hills in 1991 while the owners were on holiday. Several works by Rodin were stolen.

REDISCOVERY AND RETURN: The police realized that one of the criminals was an employee of the villa and that he was already being prosecuted in Switzerland. He was therefore arrested in Miami but the objects were not recovered. In 2011, The Girl with the Snake, one of the stolen works, reappeared at an auction. A legal battle ensued between the victims of the theft and the seller. The seller relinquishes ownership of the property and the statue returns to its original owners.

CURRENT LOCATION : Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, Etats-Unis

MORE INFORMATION:

- Los Angeles Time article: <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/la-et-cm-stolen-sculpture-20150729-story.html>

- Observer article: <https://observer.com/2015/07/stolen-rodin-sculpture-recovered-after-24-years-missing/>

- The Independent article: <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/news/rodin-sculpture-stolen-during-1-million-beverly-hills-heist-recovered-in-london-10375671.html>



CARD 19

**NAME: Archaeological artifacts of the Olympia Museum**

PROVENANCE: Olympia, Greece

PERIOD: Geometric to classical period

TYPE: Furniture related to the ancient Olympic Games

MATERIALS: Gold, bronze and terracotta

HERITAGE INTEREST: These objects are linked to the history of the Olympic Games, and provide an insight into the customs and practices of the people who took part in the event.

THEFT / LOOTING CONTEXT: 80 objects were stolen from the Olympic Games Museum in Olympia in February 2012. The cause? Lack of security in the museum due to a reduction in staff numbers, linked to a budget cut. Two armed individuals entered the museum between 5 and 6 am. They took advantage of the change in the surveillance team at that time, as well as the deactivation of the alarm to act.

REDISCOVERY AND RETURN: All the objects were found and returned to the Olympic Games Museum in Olympia in 2012, in June. They were not far from Olympia: in a small village nearby. The thieves were unmasked by a plainclothes policeman who pretended to buy one of the objects in the collection.

CURRENT LOCATION: Olympic Games Museum in Olympia.

MORE INFORMATION:

- The Guardian article: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/feb/17/thieves-raid-ancient-olympia-museum>
- CNN article: <https://edition.cnn.com/2012/02/17/world/europe/greece-museum-robbery/index.html>
- BBC article: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17071934>
- NBC article: <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/armed-robbers-steal-70-relics-museum-olympia-greece-flna157774>

CARD 20

**NAME: “The Ghent Altarpiece”**

**or “The Mystic Lamb”, Jan Van Eyck**

PROVENANCE: Ghent Cathedral, Flanders,  
Belgium

PERIOD: 1432

TYPE: Altarpiece

MATERIALS: Wood and oil paint

HERITAGE INTEREST: The Van Eycks were Flemish artists, emblematic of the Flemish Primitive movement.



THEFT / LOOTING CONTEXT: In 1942, Adolf Hitler, a lover of Flemish art, wanted to seize the altarpiece to put it in his castle in Neuschwanstein (Bavaria, Germany). However, it was eventually stored in the Altaussee storage facility in Austria along with a large number of other works looted by the Nazis.

REDISCOVERY AND RETURN: The Monuments Men recovered the altarpiece and the other works looted from the salt mine and it was returned to Belgium. It is subsequently restored and displayed in Ghent Cathedral.

CURRENT LOCATION: Ghent Cathedral, Flanders, Belgium

MORE INFORMATION:

- Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stealing\\_the\\_Mystic\\_Lamb](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stealing_the_Mystic_Lamb)

- The Guardian article: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2013/dec/20/ghent-altarpiece-most-stolen-artwork-of-all-time>

- Wion article: <https://www.wionews.com/world/worlds-most-stolen-painting-from-15th-century-may-finally-be-safe-in-belgium-373308>

CARD 21

**NAME: The Madonna of Bruges, Michelangelo**

PROVENANCE: Bruges, Flandres, Belgique

PERIODE: 1501-1504

TYPE: Statuary

MATERIAL: Marble

HERITAGE INTEREST: Michelangelo is a world-renowned, multidisciplinary Renaissance artist. He was also a model for his fellow artists, who adopted his techniques and style, giving rise to Mannerism.

THEFT / LOOTING CONTEXT: It was stolen twice. The first time in 1794 by French revolutionaries and the second time in 1944 by the Nazis, when it was taken to the Altaussee salt mine in Austria, hidden in a Red Cross truck.

REDISCOVERY AND RETURN: In 1815, following Napoleon's defeat, the statue returned to Bruges. In 1945, the Monuments Men found it in the Altaussee salt mine. It later returned to Notre Dame de Bruges, where it was protected by bullet-proof glass for several years.

CURRENT LOCATION: Church of Our Lady of Bruges, Flanders, Belgium

MORE INFORMATION:

- Wikipédia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madonna\\_of\\_Bruges](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madonna_of_Bruges)

- Ben Vaughn website: <https://www.benvaughn.com/the-madonna-of-bruges-michelangelos-masterpiece-in-belgium/>



CARD 22

**NAME: Azulejos**

PROVENANCE: Portugal, Spain and their former colonies

PERIOD: 15th at 18th century

TYPE: Wall decor



MATERIALS: Ceramic (earthenware)

HERITAGE INTEREST: Azulejos are earthenware tiles that decorate the facades of buildings in Portugal, Spain and South America. They come in a variety of shapes and sizes, and are very colourful, although often blue, with figurative or geometric decorations. Over the centuries, their aesthetic forms and decorations have evolved, reflecting a particular aesthetic tradition.

THEFT / LOOTING CONTEXT: The locals remove these tiles from the walls to sell them to tourists, most of whom are unaware that they are being looted.

**MORE INFORMATION:**

- Wikipedia: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Azulejo>

- Bloomberg website: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-02-19/why-lisbon-can-t-stop-its-azulejo-thieves>



CARD 23

**NAME: The Kouroi of Klenia**

PROVENANCE: Klenia, Peloponnese, Greece

PERIOD: 530-520 BC

TYPE: Statuary

MATERIALS: Parian marble



HERITAGE INTEREST: Kouroi are statues from the Archaic Greek period. Depending on the region, they may be found in temples or necropolises. Their human figuration lends itself perfectly to these functions: they are sculptures in the round, standing with arms at their sides and one leg forward. Their realistic style provides a better understanding of human representation in this period.

THEFT / LOOTING CONTEXT: These two kouroi were unearthed in 2010 in the modern village of Klenia, near Corinth, by antiquities dealers planning to sell them for 10 million euros each.

REDISCOVERY AND RETURN: Coordinated action between the Greek police and the Ministries of Civil Protection, Culture and Tourism led to the seizure of fragments of these statues from smugglers in the village of Klenia in May 2010. The missing fragments were later discovered on the looted site, enabling the kouroi to be reassembled and restored at the National Archaeological Museum in Athens.

CONSEQUENCES: The information gathered during the seizure enabled us to locate the looted site, where excavations began on May 21, 2010. This was a necropolis where the missing fragments of the Kouroi were found, close to the burial site of two deceased whose age, 35, could be determined by studying their dentition.

CURRENT LOCATION : Archaeological Museum of Ancient Corinth, Greece. Their exhibition aims to prevent the illicit trafficking of antiquities.

**MORE INFORMATION:**

- Archaeological Museum of Ancient Corinth: [The famous Kouroi of Klenia – Archaeological Museum of Ancient Corinth](#)

- News Network Archaeology: <https://archaeonewsnet.com/2011/08/kouroi-return-to-corinth-archaeological.html>

- Greece Is: <https://www.greece-is.com/news/twin-kouroi-finally-at-ancient-corinth-museum/>