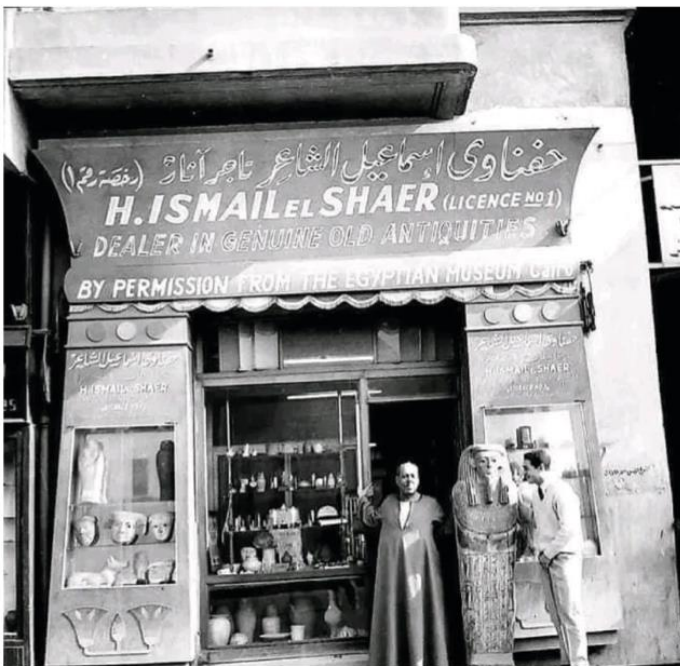




IADAA NEWSLETTER JULY/AUGUST 2024

Inside an Egyptian antiquities shop

Linked In: July 12: A brief but enlightening Linked In post from Mohamed Moustafa, Senior Conservator of wooden artifacts at The Grand Egyptian Museum: “These figures date back to December 1963 from a licensed shop selling original ancient Egyptian artifacts. Please note that selling the original artifacts was legal at this time. Given this context, how many ancient Egyptian objects are legally outside Egypt now?” Here are the accompanying images:



Art dealers: the FPS Economy rejected by the Court of Appeal (Translated from French)

Forbes Magazine: August 2: A Brussels appeal court has ruled that Belgium's Financial Police Force, the General Directorate of Economic Inspection (the DGIE), abused its powers during raids on dealers at the 2020 *Brussels Art Fair* (BRAFA). Three rulings, on June 4, 25 and 26, have led to severe criticism of the Federal Public Service, Finance (FPS).

The FPS launched raids on the fair, seizing exhibits, conducting interrogations, taking photos on stands, and transmitting unsolicited information to supposed countries of origin, inviting them to claim works thought to have been looted. The inspectors expanded their activities to include the Sablon galleries outside the fair. The court ruled that the FPS' conduct during the raids breached data protection laws. Cultural Property lawyer Yves-Bernard Debie, who is also Director-General of *Tribal Art Magazine* and General Director of the *Parcours des Mondes*, Paris's *International Tribal Art Fair*, blames the misconduct on ignorance and prejudice. He argues that the FPS believes that nothing on display can be legal, every antique must have been looted, and, if it came from the Middle East, must have financed terrorism via an international criminal organization. What's worse is that the FPS holds on to this belief in spite of widespread evidence to the contrary, including the US Treasury's 2022 report into the issue, which showed that the art market – and in particular the antiquities market – was not a suitable conduit for laundering money or financing terrorism.

Maître Debie also attacked the historical ignorance of the inspectors, who think every Roman work must have been Italian and plundered, forgetting that the Roman Empire, at its peak, spread across what today accounts for almost the whole of the European Union and Middle East or that “black” pharaohs had presided over the destinies of Egypt, from what is now Sudan.

According to Debie, the FPS inspectors managed to convince prosecutors and investigating judges to authorise investigations by blaming the absence of evidence to justify the raids on a lack of time and resources. The abuse of process created an opportunity for countries of origin to reclaim items by exploiting international agreements intended to facilitate mutual legal assistance, without having to show that their claims were valid.

Refusing to accede to this infringement of their fundamental rights, dealers and collectors fought back through the courts.

The Brussels Appeal Court noted the procedural irregularities, refused the restitutions sought by source countries on the basis of international agreements and ordered the works in question to be returned to their owners. Furthermore, in its June 26 judgment, the indictment chamber has extended the right to request the release of a seized item to dealers holding pieces on behalf of collectors, and not just to the collectors themselves.

Rep. Van Duyne Defends Collecting Ancient Coins

Numismatic News: July 2: An excellent piece of analysis illustrating the impact that bilateral agreements can have on the legitimate trade in coins and antiquities, it focuses on a technical correction to the Cultural Property Implementation Act (CPIA) in the USA “to facilitate the lawful trade in ancient, medieval, and early modern coins with our partners in Europe”.

The change demonstrates understanding in Congress that evidence required to prove that an item being imported is legitimate must be set at a reasonable level – exactly what IADAA and partner associations are now campaigning for with the EU import licensing regulation due to be enforced from June next year. The correction “directs the level of proof necessary to import restricted coins from legitimate markets

abroad far more reasonable than that is otherwise being contemplated for more culturally significant and valuable items,” the article states.

In effect the technical correction to the CPIA “would allow for the import of coin types on ‘designated lists’ with evidence the numismatic material was acquired lawfully, is of a known type, and is not the direct product of illicit excavations within a State Party after the effective date of any import restrictions on coins”.

The article also notes how a genuine attempt to safeguard the world against the exploitation of looted and trafficked antiquities “has been morphing into a black hole into which any antiquity, including coins, that doesn’t have the proper documentation of provenance can be seized and returned to a country insisting this is the place of that object’s origin”.

Two plundered ancient Greek vases are repatriated from Switzerland

The Canadian Press via The Associated Press: July 2: Different from the usual seizure and return case, the two marble vases have an interesting tale. Although labelled as “plundered”, no evidence is forthcoming to show this.

The story goes back to 2002 when the vases came to light in Basel, Switzerland, during a raid by Italian and Swiss authorities on a warehouse used by an Italian antiquities dealer. They were returned to the dealer in 2014 after an Italian court ruled they were not of Italian origin. However, the Greek authorities intervened three years later after spotting them on sale from a Swiss dealer, and successfully sought their seizure by Switzerland.

“The ministry said it emerged that Swiss authorities had sold them to the second dealer to cover legal costs incurred by the Italian dealer.” How this tallies with them being returned to the Italian dealer is not explained.

Six years on, the Greek claim has succeeded “following out-of-court negotiations”.

SIGNIFICANCE deep learning based platform to fight illicit trafficking of Cultural Heritage goods

Nature.com: July 2: The announcement of findings from another generously funded European research project, this time called SIGNIFICANCE (“Stop Illicit heritaGe traffickiNg with artiFICiAl iNtelligenCE”). Here the focus is social media and e-commerce, and this paper “presents the outcomes of the project, introducing a user-friendly platform that employs Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Deep learning (DL) to prevent and combat illicit activities”.

To start with comes the following bold claim: “Preliminary results indicate a 10–15% increase in the identification of illicit artifacts, demonstrating the platform’s effectiveness in enhancing law enforcement capabilities.”

As with every other study of its kind, however, the evidence supplied does not support the claims made.

The first hint of where this is going comes in the introduction, which states: “The World Customs Organization (WCO) “...estimates the size and profitability of black markets in looted, stolen or smuggled works of art [...] is worth billions of US dollars”. This is simply untrue, as all the WCO’s recent illicit trade reports show, and the claim is not footnoted, so its precise source is not given. Further assumptions are built into additional claims about a rising tide of criminality. The first is “Recently, this criminal behaviour has been encouraged by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has affected the surveillance of archaeological sites and museums.” However, the footnote shows the source for this claim to be dated 2003, almost 20 years before the pandemic.

The following claim is: “In countries experiencing conflict or post-conflict, the pandemic has exacerbated an already fragile security situation. The scale of this profitable crime is increasing globally, even thanks to the dissemination of online illicit conventions.” That, too, is out of date, the accompanying footnote revealing

that it comes from an article dated 2013, long before social media platforms took the hold they have today.

And so it continues until it becomes clear that the 10-15% figure mentioned at the top refers to something entirely different from the initial claim: “The project aims to enhance intelligence investigations, including cross-border cooperation among EU and non-EU member states, with a target of annually increasing the identified quantity of artefacts sold or advertised online by an average of 10% to 15% nationally.”

Despite all the detailed conclusions and tech speak, the nub of the matter comes under the heading ‘Limitations’: “Currently, it is not possible to automatically classify whether an object is legal or illegal.” How does the study propose to overcome this? “...through the developed platform, it is possible to filter objects by type, making it easier for experts to focus only on selected objects and indicate for each of them whether it is legal or illegal. To achieve the latter, it would be necessary to synthesise rules that can then be implemented by an algorithm (rule based); or, to annotate instances of legality or illegality in order to create a dataset from which to extract through statistical approaches, machine learning, deep learning, the function that connects the data that can be acquired with the status of legality/illegality. This requires the additional need to have experts such as archaeologists, art historians, cultural heritage experts etc in order to validate the results and not only to structure the databases for training. This is the only way to fully achieve the goal of early and automatic identification of illegal trade.”

As this study acknowledges, it has also inspired other EU-funded projects, including ENIGMA (<https://eu-enigma.eu/>), AURORA (<https://www.aurora-euproject.eu/>), and RITHMS (<https://rithms.eu/>), “which have continued to advance the use of AI in this vital domain”.

The exact cost of all these initiatives is unclear, but it is certainly well into the tens of millions of euros of public money so far. In light of the above, it is time for an independent review into the robustness of these projects’ research and methodology.

Nicholas Penny resigns from Acceptance in Lieu panel in protest over adviser ‘forced out’ of Arts Council role

Art Newspaper: July 3: Anastasia Tennant is a well-known figure in the art market, having spent the past 12 years as the UK Arts Council’s senior policy adviser on cultural property.

The understanding, trust and contacts she has built up over years in the job have proved invaluable, and now Nicholas Penny, a former director of the National Gallery in London, has resigned from the Arts Council’s Acceptance In Lieu panel, complaining that Tennant was forced out of her role.

The *Art Newspaper* reports: “Penny regards Tennant’s departure as ‘catastrophic’. He says: “She knows the auction houses, the curators, the dealers and many of the owners [of art] far better than anyone else in the Arts Council. Her knowledge of the intricacies of tax and heritage law is unmatched. It has been her expertise, her connections and her experience that have made things work.”

Penny believes Tennant is irreplaceable, her departure putting the delicate balance of private and public interest that sustain healthy relations between the public sector and the market at risk.

Tennant is not commenting on the matter.

Al-Wafd Party reports members expelled for apparent involvement in antiquities trafficking to prosecution

Ahram Online: July 12: The Al-Wafd political party in Egypt has announced that it has expelled two members who appeared to be involved in artefact trafficking. The move came after a leaked video showed the pair in what seemed to be a clandestine

meeting that took place inside the party headquarters during which they discussed a business deal involving artefacts.

Hartwig Fischer, former British Museum director, is appointed to run Saudi museum of world cultures

Art Newspaper: July 12: Just a few months after resigning as director of the British Museum as a result of the thefts scandal, Hartwig Fischer is to become the founding director of a new cultural museum in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, due to open in 2026.

Antiquities Authority to stop some projects that harm the archaeological site of Leptis Magna

Libya Observer: July 15: Development projects near of Leptis Magna will now not go ahead for fear of damaging the ancient site. “According to the Libyan Antiquities Authority, one of the projects that was discussed being stopped was the establishment of an office and a garbage recycling plant about 1,000 metres from the site.”

Chinese artefacts in repatriation row were ‘given willingly’ to British Museum

The Guardian: July 20: A rare but welcome article recognising historical facts that are often airbrushed out of the media by those obsessed with pushing the anti-colonial agenda. According to the report, US historian Justin M Jacobs has uncovered evidence that treasures from China now residing in the British Museum and other institutions were “willingly and enthusiastically” handed over as gifts and trade goods by the Chinese in pursuit of closer ties. The irony is that government-sponsored returns by countries such as the United States, often brought about through law enforcement operations, are now driven by the same motives.

Jacobs claims to have seen letters and other papers confirming that dealers and archaeologists from the West were welcomed and that fostering professional and social relationships with them was seen as more important than retaining the items which they removed.

“I conclude that most of today’s moral outrage over western museums and their collections is the result of projecting today’s values backward in time to an era in which our values today were not shared, either by westerners or non-westerners.” He told *The Guardian*. His new book, *Plunder? How Museums Got Their Treasures*, features his research.

Famed Egyptian archaeologist pledges to ‘join together’ with Italy to secure return of Mona Lisa

The Art Newspaper: July 23: Did he or didn’t he? According to this report, Egypt’s pre-eminent archaeologist, Zahi Hawass, has said he will help Italy recover Leonardo Da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa*, the world’s most celebrated painting. Asked about advising Italy’s Culture Minister Hawass is said to have told Italy’s leading news agency: “Yes, I will talk to the minister when I see him. Italy and I can join together to return Italy’s stolen artefacts. The Gioconda [Mona Lisa] is the most important thing. It has to come back to Italy.”

Italy’s claim is not official, nor is it likely to succeed if ever pursued as Leonardo completed the *Mona Lisa* while living in France and the most authoritative historical reports – those of Giorgio Vasari – note that it was sold to the King of France.

6,400 Trafficked Artworks and Antiquities Have Been Recovered From Across Europe

Artnet News: July 23: Details from the latest international operation to clamp down on looting and trafficking of cultural goods, this report reveals that Operation Pandora VIII has resulted in the seizure of more than 6,400 items and 85 arrests.

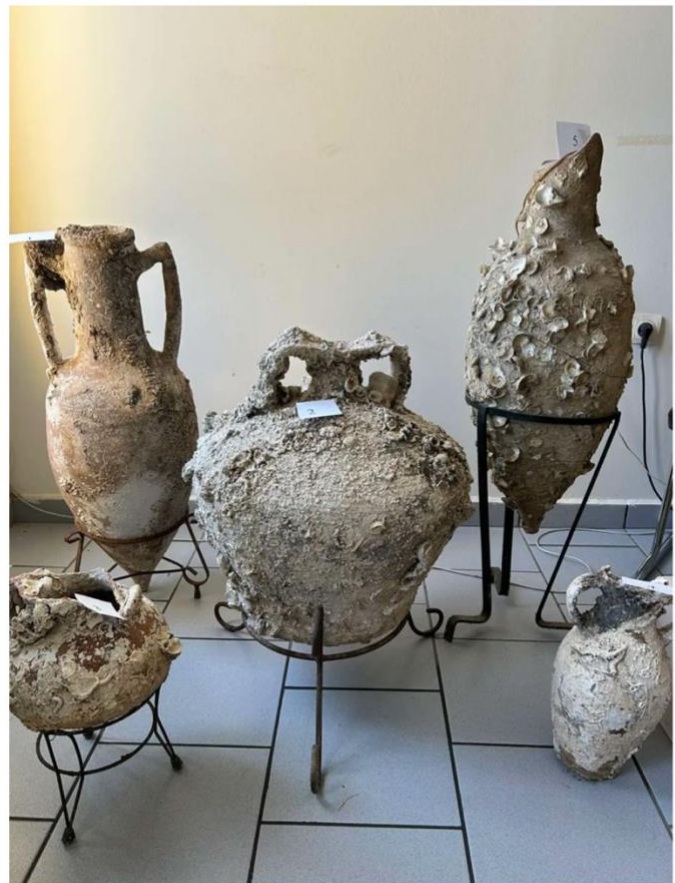
The operations are a joint effort between Interpol and Europol, with the support of national law enforcement across many countries – in this case 25 in all.

Headlining this operation is the recovery of 11 pieces of Scythian gold jewellery reportedly smuggled into Spain as part of a money laundering operation and valued at €60 million, so more than €5.5 million per item, an extraordinary sum, if accurate. Just who is providing these valuations is no clearer than those supplying the apparently overhyped values given to boost the reputation of the Manhattan District Attorney's Antiquities Trafficking Unit for its seizures. Forty three Ancient amphorae seized in Greece were also highlighted.

As with all prior such operations, no data is available to show how many of the seizures proved justified, nor how many of the arrests have led to successful prosecutions.

Likewise, no evidence of terrorism funding has been made public.

It is clear from the report, however, that data concerning operational success does exist and that the authorities have access to it, as we are told that 113 criminal and 137 administrative cases are not yet resolved. So why, over the nine years that these operations have been held, have no figures regarding evidence of terrorism financing ever been released? Ultimately, they are the only measure by which the operations effectiveness can be judged. The article's headline is misleading because it assumes that everything seized was illicit when no evidence of that has been provided.



Some ancient amphorae that were seized in Greece as part of Operation Pandora VIII. Photo courtesy of Interpol.

The USA and India sign first ever cultural property Memorandum of Understanding

The United States has just signed off on its latest cultural property bilateral agreement, this one with India. These Memoranda of Understanding seek to protect cultural patrimony and confound crime – at least that's what the headline is. In reality, they serve a less publicised purpose: oiling the wheels of international diplomacy and geopolitical influence. In doing so, the rights of innocent private citizens are subsumed to what is questionably viewed as the wider interest. Note the conditions of this latest MoU, as reported by Indian media outlet uktarsh.com:

“Under the Cultural Property Agreement the USA government will return to India any Indian artefacts which have been mentioned in the **Designated List** of the USA government as per the Cultural Property Agreement.”

What is on that Designated List?

- Identified archaeological material from 1.7 million years ago to 1770 Common Era (CE); and
- Identified ethnological material, such as religious, civic, and royal architectural material, religious material and ceremonial items, and manuscripts, from the 2nd century BCE (Before the Common Era) to 1947 CE.

India banned the export of archaeological objects under its [Antiquities and Treasures Act, 1972](#), which was updated in 1976. [Further restrictions](#) came into force under the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992 and the Import-Export Policy 2015-2020.

India also ratified its state membership of the 1970 UNESCO Convention on cultural property on January 24, 1977.

Anything found to have been exported illegally under these laws would be subject to recall. Official statements and media reports relating to the MoU refer to it in terms of reclaiming only illicit material smuggled out of India. The US Embassy in India confirmed this in its [official statement](#): “Cultural property agreements prevent the illegal trade of cultural property and simplify the process by which looted and stolen antiquities may be returned to their country of origin. The United States has been unwavering in its commitment to protect and preserve cultural heritage worldwide and to restrict trafficking in cultural property.”

However, cultural exports took place legally for centuries before these laws ever existed. The problem with the MoU is that it intends to reclaim those items too. This will happen at the point of entry to the USA, where, under the terms of the MoU, Customs will have the power to seize any item on the Designated List (*see above*), wherever it is being imported from at this stage, and regardless of whether it was originally sold and exported legally from India.

So let's be clear about what this means.

Take for example a fourth-generation Indian family living in the UK whose heirlooms include antique cultural items brought over from India legally by the original immigrants at the end of the Second World War. Since that time, some members of the family have emigrated to the United States. There, a descendant has inherited one of the heirlooms from a grandparent in the UK. As they import it to the US, it is seized at Customs and, under the terms of the MoU, returned to India.

Now note the officially stated objectives of the MoU, as set out above and repeated here: “Cultural property agreements prevent the illegal trade of cultural property and simplify the process by which looted and stolen antiquities may be returned to their country of origin. The United States has been unwavering in its commitment to protect and preserve cultural heritage worldwide and to restrict trafficking in cultural property.”

In this case, the property was not looted, stolen or trafficked; it was the legal property of the family in question. So where is the justification for the seizure? Under Article 17.2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to which the United States is a signatory, “No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property”. But what does “arbitrarily” mean here?

With no evidence to show a crime, and under the general principles of law, can it really be argued that the item in question should be seized, especially when those introducing the MoU have clearly stated that its purpose is to restore stolen and trafficked items? Wouldn't such actions be arbitrary and so in breach of the UDHR? In February this year, [Cultural Property News](#) published its in-depth analysis of the background against which the USA's MoU with India was established. This shows just how many questions remain unanswered in this debate, including why source countries are increasingly allowed to rely on such undemocratic bilateral agreements in place of acting responsibly and fulfilling their own obligations in this context.

A telling point in the CPN analysis is as follows: “Virtually all the objects named on the proposed Designated List for India were made for trade as much or more than for domestic use. Is it the intent of the CPIA to reverse the trade of centuries, even millennia, and claw back trade goods made between 75 and 2000 years ago?”

One of the reasons that MoUs remain popular – and the US now has more than 30 of them relating to Culture – is that few understand their true consequences. While their stated aims may be laudable, in practice their terms and execution can be anything but.

In an article published by *Cultural Property News* on August 26, collector, lawyer and campaigner Peter Tompa considered the problem of returning cultural goods to failed states under US policy: “If the point is to protect cultural heritage, a MOU with Lebanon makes absolutely no sense,” he quoted the late Presidential candidate Bob Dole in his criticism of the State Department over the issue in the 1980s. Debating the problem with Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan at the time, it is clear that Dole had a firm grasp on how the credibility of seemingly well-intentioned transnational agreements like these can fall apart at the slightest scrutiny.

Archaeologists in Turkey Unearth a Literal Pot of Gold



Artnet News: August 6: Archaeologists from the University of Michigan, Brown University, and Sinop University have found a pot of gold coins while surveying the ruins of Notion, an ancient Greek colony in western Turkey. The coins, called Darics, are dated to the 5th century B.C.E., and were probably used to pay Greek and barbarian mercenaries involved in military operations around the contested city. Darics were used from the 6th century BC until the reign of Alexander the Great. What is odd about this article is that despite the irrelevance, it launches an attack on the sale and collecting of coins without archaeological context. The Darics have a fully recorded context and were discovered concealed in a small pot underneath the courtyard of a Hellenistic mansion. As can be seen by the image here, they are engraved with the image of a kneeling archer. The find team and researchers believe that the coins ended up in Notion as payment for mercenaries. “According to the Greek historian Xenophon, one Daric constituted the monthly pay of a single soldier. Perhaps these troops fought for Persian sympathizers from the nearby town of Colophon, who occupied Notion between 430 and 427 B.C.E., or for Paches, an Athenian general who battled pro-Persian mercenaries.”

When Deaccessioned Art and Antiquities Have Nowhere to Go

Observer: August 8: “There are a lot of loudmouths out there, people saying ‘repatriate, repatriate—get all this looted stuff out of museums and give it all back to the people it was looted from,’” said Christopher Marinello, founder and chief executive officer of Art Recovery International, a London-based organisation whose

clients are varied but some of whom possess cultural objects that were stolen from somewhere in the developing world.

It is a sentiment shared by many subscribers to this newsletter who well understand that public outrage at the holdings of museums is often ill-informed and misplaced. As Marinello goes on to detail, even when owners decided to hand back objects, they can find no one responsible to hand them to, and rarely is the infrastructure in place to conserve and protect them.

The article also highlights the fact that assumptions as to where an object originates can be wrong: “The older the object, the more complications may arise, in part because borders are different now than they were centuries before. An ancient Greek vase may have been produced in Egypt, Italy, Turkey, North Africa or Greece because the Greek empire extended over 1,000 miles. An object identified as “Mesopotamian” could be claimed by half a dozen countries today.”

For the Rescuer of an Ancient Shipwreck, Trouble Arrived in the Mail

New York Times: August 12: She was responsible for one of the most important finds of the past 60 years that shed new light on ancient trade and how the Greeks built ships; her dedication to scholarship in the study of the ancient world is eminent; her contribution to the United States cultural legacy is unquestioned. Now, however, law enforcement is chasing after Susan Womer Katzev, a woman in her eighties who they believe possesses a large number of trafficked antiquities.

Katzev’s pedigree is well known, as this article sets out. Working with her husband, the archaeologist Michael L Katsev, in the 1960s, she documented the wreck of a third century BC ship off Cyprus. Before sinking, the *Kyrenia* had traded food, iron and millstones out of its home port, thought to be the island of Rhodes. “After more than 2,000 years underwater, much of its hull and cargo — old plates, coins, amphoras that once held wine and others that still held almonds — were remarkably intact.”

Mrs. Katzev’s drawings and photographs were integral to the research, and only this year she was lauded for her part in publishing a definitive account of the ship’s excavation.

After a lifetime in the spotlight for this work, she now finds herself at the heart of a law enforcement investigation surrounding a series of packages shipped to her from London dealer Artemission, which investigators say may be illicit — suspect items they assert “had likely been stolen from Iran and Iraq”.

According to the *NYT*, “Probable cause exists to believe,” an investigator wrote in an affidavit this April, that the seized items “were, or may have been, imported into the United States in violation of the law.”

While Mrs Katzev herself has not been accused of wrongdoing, she has been depicted as naïve and, arguably, uncaring about provenance. The report notes that in a recent article she said “she had no clue there was any question about the objects that were seized, nearly all of which are listed in the court papers as having come from the same dealer in London.”

“I thought these were imported properly, legally, in the correct way,” she said. “I would not have bought something knowing it had been looted.”

Asked if it was reasonable to expect collectors like herself to fully determine whether objects had been stolen, she is reported as replying: “You would spend the rest of your life trying to check each of your pieces,” she said. “That’s asking a lot from the buyer.”

Importantly, the *NYT* notes that Mrs Katzev focused on the beauty of ancient objects, rather than their origins, collecting at a time when provenance was not the priority it is today.

Influential academic friends have queued up to sing her praises and defend her reputation: “Gordon Moore, a friend and professor at Harvard Medical School, described her as a meticulous collector, who affixed notes to items with all the

information she had about them and their purchase, but did not necessarily press to know exactly where they had come from.”

Information released by investigators states that the paperwork accompanying the packages sent to Mrs Katzev did not match their contents, in some cases vastly underestimating their value and importance.

“The overall conclusion from the experts,” Special Agent David C. Fife of Homeland Security Investigations later wrote in court papers, “was that the piece most likely originated from modern-day Iran and had likely been looted.”

Exactly how strong the evidence is to show this remains unclear – it is rarely shared with the public even after seized items have been sent back to source countries.

However, the article notes that the court papers “do not portray Mrs. Katzev as sympathetically as her friends do”.

Importantly, the *NYT* article supports the trade’s view that the collecting world of antiquities today is subjected to a great deal of scrutiny by the authorities, among others: “Antiquities collecting today is, indeed, not for the faint of heart... antiquities have for years now become the sort of thing that cannot just show up in an auction catalog with a name, a date and a price. Countries display increasing concern for the return of their patrimony. Law enforcement officials enforce stricter policies against looting. Museums employ in-house experts to help spot suspect items among the many objects they own.”

The investigation continues.

British Museum Finds Itself Guilty of Breaking UK Law for Mistreating Collection After 2,000 Items Disappeared

ARTnews: August 12: An internal investigation has concluded that the British Museum broke the law in its failure to safeguard its collection against theft by an insider. The internal audit found that "it was not compliant with UK legislation dictating how national treasures should be kept".

Under normal circumstances those bodies who breach such rules risk having their collections transferred elsewhere. However, that is not the case here.

Instead former chancellor and chairman of trustees at the museum, George Osborne, and Nicholas Cullinan, the British Museum’s director, wrote in its 2024 report that “a number of actions are currently being considered by management, who are continuing to work with the National Archives towards compliance”.

Export licensing system becomes fully digital

Arts Council England: August The UK's export licensing system for cultural goods has been transferred to a new digital portal to provide a simple, easy-to-use service for both applicants and experts advising on the process.

"The new portal replaces the need for paper licences to be posted out and hosts the entire process in one digital space from application through review to the final decision – making a better experience for exporters and expert advisers," says the Arts Council, which runs the system on behalf of the UK Government.

Archaeologists discover the sunken temple of Aphrodite brimming with glittering jewels

Good.is: August 23: The ancient Egyptian city of Thonis-Heracleion disappeared beneath the waves after being blighted by a series of earthquakes. Now, an expedition has uncovered some of its treasures about four miles off the coast beneath the waters of Aboukir Bay.

The discoveries include a Temple to Aphrodite, as well as “priceless ancient treasures such as silver ritual instruments, gold jewelry, alabaster jars that would have held perfumes for the ancient Egyptians”.

“Bronze and ceramic objects imported from Greece, as well as remains of buildings supported with wooden beams, have also been documented from the 5th century

BC,” reported Mostafa Waziri, secretary-general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities of Egypt, speaking to *Heritage Daily*.

Export of cultural property: a comparative analysis of the laws of eight countries

Finestre sull’Arte: August 28: A useful reference on the rules, regulations and attitudes of eight countries when it comes to the export of cultural property, this article looks at Italy, France, the UK, Germany, Spain, Greece, Switzerland and the USA.

Three looted objects from ancient Egyptian graves returned by the Netherlands

The Art Newspaper: August 29: Another in a long line of articles concerning returned cultural goods where the headline is not supported by the story beneath it.

The report gives no detail of where these items have come from or what raised suspicions about them. However, it does let slip that no conclusive evidence of them being looted exists: “The shabti and the painting **are believed to have been illegally exported** from Egypt...”. (Emphasis added).

Either they are illicit and have been illegally exported or they aren’t and haven’t been. “Believed to have been” simply reveals that the reversal of the burden of proof is being applied here yet again. This has not stopped the headline upgrading the claims, however.