

The Phenomenon of Antiquity in Italy and In Greece as a Major Threat to Cultural Heritage.

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ABSTRACT

This article informs about the crime of cultural heritage. In addition to the analysis of the issue, it focuses on the presentation of the phenomenon of organized crime and an aspect that has not been thoroughly investigated and is the reintegration of robberies as a cultural vehicle in the daily lives of citizens. The destructive event of antiquity, which has deep roots in both Greece and Italy and consequently worldwide, is destructive to culture and the cultural identity of people. In recent years, it has become common for cultural property to be sold off through organized crime, either online or through auctions and bargained for profit. This occurrence has become enormous worldwide and for this reason you make the need to preserve and safeguard the world heritage imperative.

KEYWORDS: culture, organized crime, antiquities, Caravaggio, Police crime, stealing ancient's artefacts, Looters, illicit trade in antiquities, smuggling of antiquities, civilization, cultural heritage.

I. CRIME AND CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS

"Organized crime classify as any business or group of individuals involved in ongoing illegal activity, whose primary purpose is to make a profit regardless of national borders.¹" Crime is either personal or organized. Organized crime is a very complex criminal phenomenon, which is constantly evolving, adapting to the various opportunities for profit that are presented, but also to the wider social and economic developments. These enormous financial resources translate into the ability to access and use highly advanced technology means to achieve it is criminal goals. With the result it appears as if it is constantly "one step ahead" of any efforts to deal with it repressively. Trough any operational success against certain criminal organizations seems almost futile, as, immediately, other criminal organizations appear to fill the gap created. The most famous form is the one that is internationally called - "Mafia".

Mafia is a criminal organization that aims at the illicit enrichment of its members and enters through violent means, as a parasitic mediator, which is imposed by force between production and consumption, between the citizen and the state. One of the oldest and most famous is the Sicilian mafia. The word mafia is so famous that it is used all over the world today. Its internationalization dates back to the era of immigration from Italy and especially from Sicily to the United States of America. For example, when we talk about the organized criminal underworld, we refer to the Russian mafia, the Chinese mafia, the Albanian mafia, the Nigerian mafia, etc. In addition, Italian law itself defines organized criminal groups, such as "mafia-type associations" ("Associnre a of mafioso stamp "). Other well-known Italian organized crime groups are those of Calabria - the Ndrangheta, Naples - the Camorra and Puglia, the Apulian criminal groups (Sacra Corona Unita / SCU)². The Organized crime in Greece was recognized and defined as a problem only in the 1990s and was directly linked to the immigration wave of that period. There is also a tendency not to classify in the category of organized crime scandals related to the public sector and the intertwined interests of the Greek elite.

1 INTERPOL adopted it by decision in 1998, as part of the first organized crime symposium in Lyon, France.

2 http://guide.supereva.it/organizzazioni_criminali/sacra_corona_unita_mafia_pugliese

II. ILLEGAL TRAFFICKING IN CULTURAL HERITAGE - REPATRIATIONS OF ANTIQUITIES.

The main criminal activities of Organized Crime are the illegal trafficking, trafficking and general appropriation of national cultural goods (antiquities), Illegal Trafficking of Immigrants and Trafficking of Human Beings, Drugs, Weapons and Firearms, Arms and Firearms activities, terrorism and its financing. The most inhumane aspect of the problem is the link between antiquity and organized crime and terrorism, as demonstrated by Islamic State action in Syria (Palmyra) and Iraq, with the silent tolerance, if not the complicity, of the powerful West. The cradles of civilization, the most looted by antiquity is Iraq (ancient Mesopotamia). In the "Gulf War" in 1991, this unfortunate country was brutally looted and about 5,000 antiques made their way to the museums of the West³. The Cooperation Mechanisms that work to tackle and combat organized crime and its forms, both at European and international level, as well as at the level of law enforcement authorities are Interpol⁴, Europol⁵, the National Sirene⁶ bureau and the Selec Regional Center⁷. Greece and Italy, two countries with rich cultural and archaeological heritage⁸, have become a pole of attraction⁹ for gravediggers and archaeologists over the

3 http://rogmeshra.blogspot.com/2018/01/blog-post_84.html

4 The INTERPOL Department is the National Central Office of Interpol Athens and ensures the communication of the police and other state authorities, with the General Secretariat of the International Criminal Police Organization (IOC - INTERPOL). INTERPOL aims to ensure mutual communication and assistance of all competent authorities, for the prevention and fight against crime, but strictly prohibits any intervention or activity of political, military, religious or racial nature, <http://www.astynomia.gr/index>.

5 The EUROPOL Department is responsible for the implementation of Decision 2009/371 / JHA on the establishment and operation of the European Police Office (EUROPOL). It is the National Agency liaison with Europol based in The Hague, the Netherlands, the respective National Units of the Member States, as well as the States that have signed bilateral strategic and operational cooperation agreements with the Agency. At the same time, it is the national point of contact between the Greek Law Enforcement Services, ie the Greek Police, the Coast Guard-Greek Coast Guard and the Ministry of Finance and the respective Services of the Member States, within the competence of Europol, for the exchange of information serious forms of organized crime and terrorism.

6 The main mission of the SIRENE Department is the exchange of additional information under the Schengen Implementation Agreement (PCA). The content of the information concerns the administration of administrative and criminal measures against persons and objects, such as the arrest of persons prosecuted with a European Arrest Warrant, the detection and seizure of stolen vehicles, the detection of minors, etc. In this context, it provides guidance to police, port and customs services regarding the operation of the second generation Schengen Information System (S. I. S. II), the manner of implementation of the Convention, as well as the procedure to be followed in each case. It is also responsible for the exchange of additional information in the context of the implementation by the competent national authorities of Resolutions 2008/615 / JHA and 2008/616 / JHA of the Council of the EU. (Decisions Pr ü m), as well as of P.D. 135/2013, <http://www.astynomia.gr/index>.

7 Law 4054/2012 - Government Gazette 45 / A / 7-3-2012, Ratification of the international convention for the establishment of the Southeast European Law Enforcement Center (SELEC).

8 "Culture has now been recognized, starting with the Johannesburg Conference in 2003 and subsequently in successive international forums and summits, as the fourth pillar for sustainable development, together with the economy, society and the environment. Culture has the potential to mobilize and sensitize citizens in new directions. To create a multiple usable identity for a city, a place or a country. At the same time, it is a leading economic sector for an extroverted and innovative development with quality jobs and multiple externalities. " - From the speech of the Deputy Minister of Culture Costas Stratis at the 4th Delphi Economic Forum "Cultural Heritage, Economic Development and Social Cohesion", Delphi, February 28 - March 3, 2019.

9 Of course, the tombs are not limited to famous paintings or archeological finds. There was a time when even skulls were objects of burial: Archaeologist Kevin Coles of Staffordshire University is convinced that at some point in history someone entered the tomb and snatched Shakespeare's skull. "It is very convincing that his skull is not in the Holy Trinity," he comments. The story of the lost skull appeared in Argosy magazine in 1879, which attributed the removal to gravediggers, when tomb robbery was quite common. Skulls were valuable objects of acquisition at that time, because intelligence would be evident in the remains of a man of

centuries. The scourge¹⁰ of antiquities is one of the biggest scourges in recent years and is one of the main activities of organized crime in both Italy and Greece and this emerges from the arrests of mafia leaders in recent years, where it was discovered. That they had in their possession important finds of archaeological artistic and cultural value, which had been lost or stolen either from museums or from archeological sites. Archaeological crime includes theft, smuggling and sale of antiquities. However, it is no coincidence that antiquities often go hand in hand with well-organized crimes such as arms and drug trafficking. Illegal trafficking, trafficking and general appropriation of national cultural goods (antiquities looting) is a delinquent phenomenon with a long history. The main feature of the illegal excavation and archeological activity is the violence and barbarity with which the ancients are removed from their environment, their "horizon" or their "archaeological layer", as defined in archeology. It is obvious that all we can know about this type of crime is only the details of those cases which have become known and, above all, have been investigated.

As Mary Adamopoulou writes about the International Antiquities Museum, the export routes of antiquities that start or pass through Greece remain open even though 13 years¹¹ have passed (in relation to the date she wrote her article - in 2006. As Mary Adamopoulou writes about International Exhibitions of Antiquities Remain open the export routes of antiquities that start or pass through Greece even though 13 years have passed since the black five years (1988-1993), when archaeologists emptied Greek museums undisturbed and most of the 570 stolen antiquities that "disappeared" from 17 archeological sites and museums to be located and returned to where they belong, but many are still missing and no one knows if they will ever find their way back. In the midnight hours of April 12, 1990 the archaeologists carry out the biggest theft from a Greek museum. They beat the night watchman and from the roof of the building they go down to the inner atrium, break the inner doors and invade the two rooms with the valuable Greco-Roman exhibits. Shortly after the theft, the ancients "leave" in a container with documents for Miami United States. The then head of the Prosecution of Antiquities, George Tzallas, learns the identity of the archaeologists in 1994, but does not arrest them because his goal was to find the antiquities. They try to sell five clay objects through Christie's auction house and manage to sell all four. However, when the buyer found out the origins of the antiquities, he handed them over to the FBI, which discovered the traces of Vilma Savala, a friend of one of the antiquities, who was sentenced to one year in prison. The Greek and American authorities arrive at the warehouse where the antiquities were kept in twelve boxes sealed with strong adhesive tape, with the contribution of Christos Mavrikis, known for the case of interceptions, and in 2001 they return to Greece.

Ten years after the theft, two of the four allegedly as involved in the biggest antiquities case are arrested. The mastermind of the grand theft in Corinth in 1990 escapes arrest and reportedly lives in Venezuela. The window was chosen for the archaeologists to enter the Kolonas Museum of Aegina in January 1992. They left unmolested with 90 objects, among them the prehistoric tributes from the tomb of the "prince" of Kolona, which had never been photographed and published. They followed the same method in August of the same year to enter the museum of Tegea. They took with them the marble head of Telephos, work of Skopas, from the gable of the temple of Athena Alea and 67 other objects. A year later in the hands of Kyriakos Palikaras and Christos Tsimbras, the Prosecution of Antiquities finds some of the stolen antiquities from Tegea, while locating part of the treasure of Aegina in the area of Aspropyrgos, buried near the Mornos canal. But not the masterpiece of Skopas, which is supposed to have been included in a private collection on the other side of the Atlantic.

It is possible that the 285 objects, which were stolen from the Museum of Corinth - the largest museum theft in Greece - have returned home. The same may have happened with the approximately 170 antiquities, which were removed from the Museums of Kolona Aegina, Tegea and Rhodes. Alarm systems and a central control system that monitors all museums and warehouses of archeological sites in Greece may have been deployed to reduce

Shakespeare's range. It is no coincidence that in "Hamlet" the hero holds a skull as he expresses his thoughts about death. From REUTERS A.P., KATHIMERINI Newspaper, 25.3.2016.

10 The trade of antiquities is a cultural flame as its annual turnover amounts to several billion euros while large international circuits have been involved in it. The phenomenon of illegal excavations is almost as old as humanity. According to German media, the illicit trade in cultural objects ranks third on the world list of organized crime, right after weapons and drug trafficking. According to Interpol, UNESCO and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the revenue from the illegal trade in antiquities amounts to six to eight billion dollars. This amount is estimated to be 40 times higher than the revenues of the respective legal market. - <https://www.sofokleousin.gr/i-mastiga-tis-arxaiokapilias>, April 13, 2016.

11 In relation to the date she wrote her article, in 2006.

theft. Authorities may estimate at first reading that this is the same spiral that hit a series of museums and then disintegrated, but a way to block the export of antiquities to international markets has not yet been found.¹² Archeology theft is, for Italy, the fourth largest criminal activity, after drugs, weapons and money laundering. This is the conclusion of a report by the country's authorities, which warn that thieves are becoming more organized and more ruthless, while the police are unable to control the movement of stolen works of art abroad. The Minister of Justice of Italy, Andrea Orlando, on 31 October 2017 signed the new Council of Europe Convention on Offenses concerning Cultural Property. The Convention aims¹³ to prevent and combat the illicit trafficking and destruction of cultural property in the framework of the Agency's action against terrorism and organized crime. As of May 2017, nine countries have signed the Convention: Armenia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Portugal, San Marino, Slovenia, Ukraine and Mexico¹⁴.

An example of international cooperation in another obscure case of stolen antiquities comes to light. Instead of being in the possession of the Greek State, two stolen vessels - masterpieces of the 4th century BC, stolen from Athens in the 70's, as Howard Swains mentions in his article, October 22, 2017, in the Guardian¹⁵ newspaper - were put up for sale by the Frieze Masters art fair in Regent's Park, London from 5 to 8 October for 100,000 English pound each¹⁶. An ancient greek vessel-classical antiquity was identified from the archive of the infamous Sicilian archaeologist Gianfranco Becchina, the Greek Christos Tsirogiannis,¹⁷ the "criminologist" archaeologist who discovers circuits of antiquities internationally and for obvious reasons, is not in the system. The archaeological treasure of Gianfranco Becchina,¹⁸ who returned to Italy, was presented at the National Roman

12 As Mary Adamopoulou, (2006) writes, article in the newspaper TA NEA.

13 As Panos Panagiotou (2017) reports to analitis.gr, The editing, on the initiative of the Republic of Cyprus, of the new Convention on Offenses Relating to Cultural Property, was assessed by the Cypriot Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ioannis Kasoulidis, as its most important achievement of the Presidency of the Council of Europe, from November 2016 to May 2017.

14 www.coe.int

15 <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2017/oct/22/looted-antiquities-allegedly-on-sale-at-london-frieze-masters-art-fair>

16 <https://www.thetoc.gr/politismos/article/neo-skandalo-poulisan-sto-londino-klemmenes-arxaiotites>

17 Christos Tsirogiannis is an archaeologist and researcher at Illegal Antiquities and International Archaeocapital Circuits at the University of Glasgow. He has made it his life's purpose to make known to the general public the irreparable damage caused by archaeologists. Over the last decade it has managed to locate about 1,000 ancient artifacts. He studied Archeology and Art History at the University of Athens. He received his PhD in 2013 from the University of Cambridge with his study of the International Antiquities Circuit. He worked in the Ministries of Culture and Justice from 1994 to 2008, participating in excavations throughout Greece and in the recording of antiquities that were in private hands. From August 2004 to October 2008 he collaborated voluntarily with the Antiquities Prosecution Department of the Greek Police at the Ministry of Citizen Protection. In July 2006, he was officially given access by the Greek prosecutor's office to the Robin Sims - Christos Michailidis, Medici and Bekina files and was seconded to the Ministry of Justice. He was a member of the Greek Team that repatriated stolen antiquities found at the Getty Museum, the Shelby White / Leon Levy Collection, the Jean-David Cahn AG Gallery and elsewhere. He is the first Greek archaeologist to be appointed an expert with a court order in a case of Greek justice (Schinoussa case, International Circuit of Archaeocapitalism). In an interview with the newspaper STOCHOS, August 5, 2015, he states: "Stealing and trading stolen goods is not only a crime against the law, it is also a crime against humanity. Our culture is something that belongs to everyone, it is not something that should be stolen and sold for quick profit. When archaeologists steal objects, they remove them from the environment in which they "lived" for hundreds or thousands of years. The object may reappear, but its context, where it was on the ground, as well as information about what happened, is lost forever. This is the great catastrophe created by the archaeologists: the irreparable loss of knowledge about our past. "

18 Gianfranco Becchina describes himself as "A merchant, a collector, unrelated to the illegal sale of works of art. First, Paolo Borsellino investigated me, and then after his execution, prosecutor Gian Carlo Caselli and it was a pointless investigation, state money thrown in the air, I stopped trading in art since 1994, and in 1996 I was expelled from the Chamber of Commerce. " Known to everyone in Castelvetro, Becchina owns several buildings of great historical and artistic interest, such as the Ducal Palace of Princes Pignatelli Aragona Cortes Tagliavia. Located in the heart of the historic center of Castelvetro, the palace was actually the ancient castle "Bellumvider" which was built in 1239 to receive Frederick II. Becchina also owns a beautiful manor, where he lives today, which once also belonged to the princes Pignatelli Cortes, An area of 25 hectares, not far from the archeological zone of Selinunte, with 3000 olive trees, from which it produces its oil. "It's not just any oil,"

Museum in January 2015 and consists of 5,361 objects: thousands of vases(amphorae, beetles and craters), bronze statues, statuettes and armors. The valuable works of art date from the 8th century. e.g. until the 3rd c. A.D. and were found in warehouses in the Kingdom of Switzerland, owned by the infamous art dealer Gianfranco Becchina.¹⁹ Almost all the antiquities are products of illegal excavations made in various parts of Italy: in Calabria, Campania, Lazio, Puglia, Sardinia and Sicily.The "Becchina circuit", with tentacles in the United States, Australia, Japan and Britain, has occupied the authorities for years. The circuit involves conservationists, gravediggers, art historians, as well as unsuspecting collectors and major museums around the world.²⁰

Ferrante²¹ (2015) reports that in the Becchina case more than 13,000 documents, invoices, consignment notes, letters addressed to buyers, thousands of Polaroid images, divided into 140 groups were found. This vast and detailed documentation seems to be redesigning some of the most controversial passages in the history of the illicit trade in works of art.As Rorry Carroll notes in the British newspaper The Guardian,²² the tombaroli - the gravediggers - who search for the archeological treasures hidden in Etruscan and Roman tombs - operate mainly in southern Italy and Sicily, under the protection of the Mafia and without special precautions and bulldozers, even in daylight!²³ The findings are then promoted abroad, mainly in Switzerland. Police in 1999 arrested the Mafia's liaison with the Swiss collector Vincenzo Cammarata, Baron of Casale²⁴ (who is accused of belonging to the Mafia as a member of an "association linked to the Cosa Nostra"²⁵, essentially the fugitive Matteo Messina Denaro²⁶ and Giuseppe Fontana - now deceased), owner of 30,000 items worth a total of 10.6 billion drachmas, believed to have been stolen.However, the successes of the Authorities are limited, compared to the number of works appropriated by the archaeologists. Nevertheless, among the most important finds²⁷ that returned to Italy from Switzerland are: a gold vial from 450 BC, a marble sarcophagus from the 2nd century BC. century, a marble Capitoline, of the same era, and a statue of Aphrodite. We are talking about a crime that concerns the identity and history of the people to whom the various works of art belong - ancient Greek, Roman, Etruscan, Byzantine, ecclesiastical, paintings. But the main cause of this crime is financial gain. So we end up identifying this crime as a financial crime! There are many difficulties in documenting the categories and composing the whole picture. Tsiganou (2017)²⁸ argues that the statistical recording of a single category under the term "financial crime" is not possible from the outset but must be constructed as it is legally reflected in a number of legal provisions whose violations are not statistically taken into account because of the substantive texture of crimes committed, but also their legal treatment is different.

Because, of course, it is better to prevent it, in an effort to prevent crime, the report of the Italian Association of Museums and the International Council of Museums scolds countries that refuse to sign the protocols of the UN

explains archaeologist Tsao Cevoli, president of the International Observatory for Ancient Mafia (Osservatorio internazionale archeomafie) and director of the master in Archeologia Giudiziaria e Crimini contro il Patrimonio Culturale. and Bush, because - imagine - he is the official supplier of the White House. He also owns two cement factories: Cementa Iraklis in Greece and Atlas srl in Sicily. ”
https://inchieste.repubblica.it/it/repubblica/rep-it/2015/01/12/news/mafia_e_arte-99674768/?refresh_ce
19 <https://www.in.gr/2000/06/20/culture/i-istoria-tis-italias-sto-eleos-twn-arxaiokapilwn/>
20

<https://www.karfitsa.gr/%CE%B5%CF%80%CE%AD%CF%83%CF%84%CF%81%CE%B5%CF%88%CE%B1%CE%BD-%CE%B1%CF%80%CF%8C-%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%BD-%CE%B5%CE%BB%CE%B2%CE%B5%CF%84%CE%AF%CE%B1-%CF%80%CE%AC%CE%BD%CF%89-%CE%B1%CF%80%CF%8C-5-000-%CE%B1/>

21 Valeria Ferrante, I tesori dell'arte nelle mani della mafia (Οι θησαυροί της τέχνης στα χέρια της μαφίας), άρθρο-έρευνα σε συνεργασία με Valeria Teodonio και Ellis Vicettone, στην εφημερίδα La Repubblica, 12 Ιανουαρίου 2015, https://inchieste.repubblica.it/it/repubblica/rep-it/2015/01/12/news/mafia_e_arte-99674768/?refresh_ce

22 <https://www.theguardian.com/arts/arttheft/story/0,,1034288,00.html>

23 <https://www.in.gr/2000/06/20/culture/i-istoria-tis-italias-sto-eleos-twn-arxaiokapilwn/>

24 Casale, Municipality of the region of Messina, Sicily

25 <https://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/1998/12/07/archeologia-miliardi-mafia-manette-professori-ed-esperti.html>

26 Sicilian Mafia boss from Castelvetro, as well as Becchina

27 <https://www.panorama.it/operazione-teseo-grande-recupero-beni-archeologici-storia>

28 As Ioanna Tsiganou, (2017) writes, The statistical record of "economic crime" in Greece today. A preliminary investigation.

and other international organizations banning the trade in stolen works of art.²⁹ Antiquities are being fueled mainly by competition between the world's museums for lively exhibits, according to the American Archaeological Survey, and the British newspaper *The Guardian* adds that Italian police are systematically examining the lists of major auction houses of a dark origin. Some of them have returned to Italy, when it turned out that they were stolen.³⁰ Respectively, many items stolen from Greece, whether ancient Greek, Byzantine, or ecclesiastical art have been repatriated due to relentless efforts to monitor auctions, catalogs of works of art, etc., as shown in the following catalog:³¹ -The Treasure of Aidonia, a collection of valuable Mycenaean objects, jewelry and seals of exceptional art, was recovered from Greece. A list of these objects, which came from illegal excavations in the Mycenaean cemetery of Aidonia, near Nemea, was published in an auction list with texts by J.H. Betts and rich illustration, in New York in 1993. - The golden myrtle wreath with colored flowers with enamel, repatriated from the Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, was in the collection of the Getty Foundation since 1993. It comes from a tomb in Central Macedonia, probably from the area of Amphipolis. It is an excellent example of Macedonian goldsmith art and dates back to around 340-330 BC, the brilliant art of the Macedonian Kingdom. It is a brilliant exhibit from the largest collection of ancient gold wreaths in the world that is kept in the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, at the beginning of the large wing with exhibits from the "Gold of the Macedonians".

There were two contributors to the repatriation of stolen antiquities from California's famous museum. The journalist of the newspaper "Eleftherotypia" Nikolas Zirganos and the policeman George Gligoris, then head of the Department for the Prosecution of Antiquities. The first out of professional consistency and journalistic passion and the second because he did his job well and collaborated with the famous hunters of antiquities, the Italian carabinieri. These were the people who brought back in his place the priceless golden Macedonian wreath, in 2007.

- At the same time from the Getty Foundation returned:

(a) The archaic votive relief of Thassos, 6th century BC, which as confirmed by EPKA Kavala had been stolen from the excavation warehouse of the French Archaeological School in Thassos and had been illegally removed from our country at the beginning of the 20th century . After wandering in various collections of foreigners, it was acquired by J.P. Getty, in 1955. In 1995 the Greek embassy in Washington informed the Ministry of Culture when the claim of antiquity began through diplomacy.

(b) The column of the classical times (4th century) made of black stone, has an engraved representation of a warrior and the name ATHANIA and is a type of column that often appears in Boeotia, from the same laboratory, similar to the 8 columns kept in the Archaeological Museum Thebes.

- In the summer of 2008, following an agreement between the Greek Ministry of Culture and the well-known American collector Shelby White, they returned to Greece:

(a) A bronze calyx crater. It dates back to around 340 BC, and according to Greek archaeologists comes from Pieria, Northern Greece. According to experts, it was most likely found in a royal tomb in the area, during an illegal excavation and

(b) The upper part of the tombstone, which depicts a young man and a warrior, and dates to the early 4th century BC. The lower part of the same tombstone was found in the 1960s, privately owned in Porto Rafti, Attica. , during the excavation of the Hellenic Archaeological Service. The find is now on display at the Archaeological Museum of Vravronos.

- The ancient funeral vessel "Lekythos" dating from 400 to 500 BC. Previously "belonged" to a private collection in the Kingdom of Switzerland. He returned in the spring of 2008 from Switzerland to Greece following an agreement between the Ministry of Culture and the Collector.

- From the Michael Carlos Museum at Emory University in Atlanta, USA, were repatriated:

(a) A life-size marble statue of Terpsichore (4th-2nd BC) that was kept in a sheepfold in Ioannina before going abroad - worth at least \$ 10 million.

(b) A monumentally sized pit probably from Rhodes (650-600 BC)

(c) An intact Minoan clay shrine (14th century BC) with rich written decoration (mainly sea creatures) from Crete.

- Repatriation of antiquities from Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom:

29 <https://www.in.gr/2000/06/20/culture/i-istoria-tis-italias-sto-eleos-twn-arxaiokapilwn/>

30 <https://www.in.gr/2000/06/20/culture/i-istoria-tis-italias-sto-eleos-twn-arxaiokapilwn/>

31 <http://history-of-macedonia.com/2011/04/14/ellinikes-arxaiotites-epanapatrismos/>

(a) Belgium: One hundred and eleven (111) shells, lead links and seven (7) coins, which come from Thoriko, Attica and date from the 5th to the 2nd century BC. The coins come from Attica and Salamis. The antiquities were handed over by the Belgian School of Athens.

(b) Germany: Ninety-six (96) ancient bronze and clay vessels (burial offerings), coming from a cemetery of post-classical times, probably of Thessaly. They were found in May 2007 in a truck coming from Greece and confiscated by the German authorities at the Nuremberg customs.

(c) United Kingdom: Fragment of a mid-Byzantine iconostasis or fringe, with embossed floral decoration (plinth), dating to the 11th to 12th century. It is considered possible to come from a monument of the Ancient Agora or the wider area of Plaka, where there were several Byzantine temples.

- Finally, the statue of Apollo Lyceum that had been stolen from Gortyna, Crete and changed hands of art dealers and collectors returned to Greek territory after coordinated efforts and the signing of a Bilateral Agreement on the Import, Transit and Repatriation of Greek Culture and Repatriation.

The process of repatriation of an archaeological find : Holders of antiquities can be the State, local government, legal entities under private law (eg museums) and individuals.

According to article 30 of Law 4611/2019 on finding and claiming movable monuments

1. The rightful owner of a movable ancient antiquity is protected against third parties as an owner. This means that if it is stolen from him, he enjoys the independent protection of the property, and he has the right to file with the State the actions of expropriation and disturbance of the property.

If the ancient antiquity has been exported illegally, the claim is made by the State. Upon return the ancient antiquity is returned to the holder unless its export is due to deceit or negligence. In this case the possession of the ancient antiquity that is returned falls to the State without compensation of the holder. The holder bears the expenses incurred by the State, including the compensation that may have been paid to the bona fide nominee, if the ancient antiquity one after the return is returned to him.

2. The master of the monument may request the assistance of the competent Service for the search, as well as its return or return if it is stolen or illegally exported. Upon return, the monument is returned to him, unless he exported it himself or allowed it to be removed out of deceit or gross negligence. In this case, the ownership of the returned monument goes to the State, without compensation. The owner is obliged to pay the costs incurred by the State for the return, including the compensation that may have been paid to the bona fide nominee, if the returned monument is returned to him.

3. The owner and the holder of a monument that is returned according to the above provisions are obliged to allow its exposure to the public under conditions and for a period determined by a decision of the Minister of Culture after the opinion of the Central Archaeological Council.³²

The penalties and the gravity of the crimes of international trafficking are defined in articles 63§4, 64 and 65 of law 3028/2002,³³

The basis of national case law is mainly:

- a. The UNESCO Convention on the Illicit Import, Export and Transport of Cultural Property, adopted in Paris on 14 November 1970.³⁴
- b. Council of Europe Directive 93/7 / CEE of 15 March 1993 on the return of cultural goods illegally exported from the territory of a Member State.³⁵
- c. The UNIDROIT Convention of 24 June 1995, which is an international agreement governing the return and return of stolen cultural goods that have been illegally exported or smuggled.³⁶

32 <http://www.athinodromio.gr/%CF%80%CF%8E%CF%82-%CE%B5%CF%80%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%B1%CF%80%CE%B1%CF%84%CF%81%CE%AF%CE%B6%CE%BF%CE%BD%CF%84%CE%B1%CE%B9-%CE%BF%CE%B9-%CE%BA%CE%BB%CE%B5%CE%BC%CE%BC%CE%AD%CE%BD%CE%B5%CF%82-%CE%B1%CF%81/#.X48U3kQzbIU>

33 The Law 3028/2002 (Codified) - Government Gazette A 153 / 28.06.2002 - For the protection of the Antiquities and in general of the Cultural Heritage.

34 The Law No. 1103/1980 ratifying the UNESCO International Convention (1970) for the Suppression of the Illicit Traffic in Cultural Goods, Government Gazette 297 / A / 29 December 1980

35 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/ALL/?uri=celex:31993L0007>

d. The UNESCO Convention, signed in Paris on 2 November 2001, which deals with the protection of the underwater cultural heritage.³⁷

The public bodies that deal with the finding and repatriation of stolen antiquities are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs - General Secretariat of Public Diplomacy and the Antiquities Deposits of the Hellenic Police. Apart from the State, there are other independent organizations that contribute to the finding and return of antiquities to the country to which they belong. Some of them are:

- Department of Antiquities of the Republic of Cyprus
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- INTERPOL - Directorate for the Prevention of Crimes against Cultural Heritage
- Walk of Truth - Culture Crime Watchers Worldwide (Cyprus)³⁸

In Italy, the main lever for the protection and restoration of cultural heritage is the Comando Carabinieri per la Tutela del Patrimonio Culturale, which, notably Operation Teseo, recovered the 5361 ancient artifacts from the Archaeological Treasure of Becina's Giancina.³⁹ On the other hand, there are works and even famous ones that were stolen and never found again! Some of them, in fact, the stolen works of art were so hurt by their absence that they then functioned, as present, as a source of inspiration for another kind of art! Consider, for example, the famous case of Caravaggio's painting, *Natività con i santi Lorenzo e Francesco d'Assisi*, which he painted in 1609 for the church of San Lorenzo in the historic center of Palermo. Caravaggio⁴⁰ is a huge chapter in the world history of art and sealed the baroque school of painting. And the theft of his famous painting from the night of October 18, 1969 when the painting was lost, was attributed to organized crime. The damage to the city was enormous because it attracted the attention of the most sophisticated public opinion to an image of violence, environmental neglect and negligence of the authorities. A symbolic image of inertia and decline for one of the most important areas of Italian "becoming", culture. Nevertheless, the criminal act was a source of inspiration for another art form, literature. There were people of inspired letters and an interesting production, such as: Leonardo Sciascia,⁴¹ impressed by the theft that took place twenty years earlier, decided to dedicate his latest story, *A Simple Story*, to this mystery, which was released in bookstores on the same day as the author's death. Luca Scarlini⁴² also recomposes a chronicle on the same subject and mentions it in the novel of *Il Caravaggio rubato. Mito e cronaca di un furto*, many controversial aspects. The robber and the mastermind of this act were never known. The motive has not been clarified, that is, whether it was the profit or the persistent need for possession, a masterpiece or even part of a strategy of humiliation of the state.

This is a chronicle and a research that follows the various hypotheses that have been made about the fate of the table. with a more original way of exploring the meanders and highly sophisticated strategies with which the mafia communicates. In a theatrical event, Salvo Piparo⁴³ presented his story of theft, surrounded by carefully designed characters on the board. The theft also triggered a series of cultural events and events that took place exactly fifty years after the painting disappeared. The Association of Friends of the Museums of Sicily, has

36 Law 3348, Ratification of the UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Property, Government Gazette 144, June 23, 2005. Issue A'

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http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/CLT/pdf/declaration_cultural_diversity_el.pdf

38 <http://www.athinodromio.gr/%CF%80%CF%8E%CF%82-%CE%B5%CF%80%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%B1%CF%80%CE%B1%CF%84%CF%81%CE%AF%CE%B6%CE%BF%CE%BD%CF%84%CE%B1%CE%B9-%CE%BF%CE%B9-%CE%BA%CE%BB%CE%B5%CE%BC%CE%BC%CE%AD%CE%BD%CE%B5%CF%82-%CE%B1%CF%81/#.X48U3kQzbIU>

39 <https://www.panorama.it/operazione-teseo-grande-recupero-beni-archeologici-storia>

40 Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, (1571 -1610), Italian painter, who gradually perfected the depiction of religious scenes, especially through the use of the chiaroscuro technique.

41 Leonardo Sciascia (1921 - 1989) was an Italian writer, journalist, playwright, poet, director and politician.

42 Essayist, playwright. He teaches at the Brera Academy and other Italian and foreign institutions. He collaborates with many theaters and festivals in Italy and abroad. He collaborates with Radio3 and has written about the relationship between music and society. His texts are translated into many languages.

43 His main activity in the world of cinema is that of an interpreter.

invented a series of cultural events that are part of a program that takes place from 10 to 20 October 2019 entitled "Caravaggio 50".

There were talks about the Nativity, analyzing it from a scientific point of view, and the research was examined, accompanied by exhibitions and documentary screenings. On October 15, at the Biondo Theater, the (already) famous interview given in 2001 to the director Massimo D'Anolfi by Monsignor Rocco, the parish priest of San Lorenzo (who died in 2003), was screened. In the video presented to the public, for the first time, Monsignor Rocco accused Gaetano Badalamenti, saying that he was given the opportunity to negotiate, receiving a piece of canvas as proof of theft. The Minister of Cultural Heritage Dario Franceschini and the Member of Parliament Rosi Bindi were invited to the screening.

This is the program of "Caravaggio 50", except for the exhibition "the return of lost masterpieces", which opens on Thursday, October 10 at 6 p.m. at Palazzo Abatellis: in addition to the Nativity, seven other projects are being realized thanks to a project signed by Factum Arte's team of historians, artists, restorers and 3D software experts (to be set up by December 8). The "Caravaggio 50" closed on October 20 at 7 p.m. at Oratorio San Lorenzo with "In memory of a stolen Caravaggio", solo cello concert by Silvia Gira, music by Giovanni Sollima. "We are organizing this program of events to keep the light on the Caravaggio extinction research always - explains Bernardo Tortorici - to support the institutions in the campaign for the protection of Italian heritage, which is shared by the Italian Federation of Friends of Museums, and finally. to focus our attention on the use of new technologies for the re-realization of works of art that have disappeared permanently". So apart from the much-discussed works of art which hide behind them something bright and interesting, the same interests can be the archeological findings. The enormous popularity of cultural treasures has often made them the object of desire, resulting in them being stolen. But it is no coincidence that magnificent works of art give birth even if they have been stolen and removed from their natural space, such as Caravaggio's painting, powerful symbolism and culture in a form other than the original.

III. CONCLUSIONS

All of the above demonstrates how deep and extensive is the problem of preserving the cultural heritage of the various countries in general. The elements of cultural heritage, whether they are archeological finds, works of art, creations of a famous artist or an insignificant one, have to tell a story or give people stimulation to cultivate spiritually, that is, in the end they continue to produce over time culture! Protection is often difficult, either because of a lack of resources or because of a lack of staff - which ultimately comes down to a lack of resources, whether or not there is a good effort on the part of the state, expressed through relevant national and international legislation. The huge profit that individual offenders make, but especially those who are part of organized crime, is enough to push them into constant delinquency, which, as it turns out, is constantly increasing. Perhaps the only way to reduce or even stop this delinquency is to severely punish those involved, especially in organized crime. Perhaps, the confiscation of their property, if they have left it in their name, but also the removal of their citizenship made them reconsider. Caressing the ears, with light punishments, is not a deterrent, while their crime is very serious, as it is directed against the nation itself, its identity and its history.

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