



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

Organización  
de las Naciones Unidas  
para la Educación,  
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация  
Объединенных Наций по  
вопросам образования,  
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

CLT-2011/CONF.208/COM.17/2REV

Paris, May 2012

Original: French

Distribution: limited

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE  
FOR PROMOTING THE RETURN OF CULTURAL PROPERTY  
TO ITS COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN OR ITS RESTITUTION  
IN CASE OF ILLICIT APPROPRIATION**

**SEVENTEENTH SESSION**

**Paris, UNESCO Headquarters, 30 June-1 July 2011**

**SECRETARIAT REPORT**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Secretariat reports to the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in case of Illicit Appropriation at its 17th session on activities carried out since the 16th session in September 2010 and, in particular, on the follow-up to the recommendations adopted by the Committee.

**I. PROMOTION OF BILATERAL RELATIONS (Recommendations Nos. 1, 2 and 3)**

1. Two cases, namely the Parthenon Marbles (Greece, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the British Museum) and the Boğazköy Sphinx (Turkey, Germany and Berlin Museum), are pending before the Committee. Another case, *in re* Khorvin: Islamic Republic of Iran *v* Maleki (Belgium), is currently suspended pending the decision of national courts.

***The Parthenon Marbles***

2. Pursuant to Recommendation No. 1 adopted by the Committee at its 16th session (Paris, September 2010), the Secretariat has continued to encourage the holding of meetings between Greece and the United Kingdom and has offered UNESCO's assistance.

***The Boğazköy Sphinx***

3. Pursuant to Recommendation No. 2 adopted by the Committee at its previous session, the Secretariat has invited Germany and Turkey to continue the dialogue and has proposed that the Secretariat assist to that end. The Secretariat was informed in May 2011 that discussions between the two parties had resulted in the conclusion of a bilateral agreement.

## ***The Khorvin case: Islamic Republic of Iran versus Maleki (Belgium)***

4. On 4 and 5 April 2011, the fourth chamber of the Brussels Court of Appeal heard the case concerning a request for the restitution of Iranian cultural property currently held in a collection in Belgium, brought by the Islamic Republic of Iran against Ms Yolande Wolfcarius-Maleki (a French national who acquired Iranian nationality by marriage). Several weeks before the case was heard in court, the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran contacted the Secretariat to request that a UNESCO observer be present during the lawyers' oral submissions.

5. The case was submitted to the Intergovernmental Committee in 1985. However, once the case went to court, consideration by the Committee was suspended (in accordance with its Statutes) until all internal legal remedies had been exhausted.<sup>1</sup> A UNESCO observer had previously attended hearings at the Brussels Court of First Instance in the late 1980s, again at the request of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

## **II. WORK ON PREPARATION OF THE MODEL PROVISIONS DEFINING STATE OWNERSHIP OF CULTURAL PROPERTY (Recommendation No. 3)**

6. For several years, and recently during the 40th anniversary of the 1970 Convention (UNESCO Headquarters, 15 and 16 March 2011), several international experts referred to the legal obstacles faced by many countries in applying for restitution of cultural property, particularly in regard to archaeological materials from sites where there was no inventory or provenance documentation. In that context, UNESCO and UNIDROIT convened a committee of independent experts in order to prepare model legislative provisions defining State ownership, in particular regard to undiscovered archaeological heritage. Such legal guidance could inform the drafting of national laws and promote the standardization of terminology, the goal being to ensure that all governments adopt sufficiently explicit legal principles on the subject.

7. Assisted by Professors Marc-André Renold (Switzerland) and Jorge Sanchez-Cordero (Mexico), the UNESCO and UNIDROIT Secretariats established a group of experts on the most geographically representative basis possible. The group of experts held its first meeting in September 2010 at UNESCO Headquarters during the 16th session of the Intergovernmental Committee and considered draft model legislation compiled by Professor Renold on the basis of two working documents and comments made by members of the group. The group of experts was formally mandated by the Committee's twenty-two members at the close of its 16th session to continue the process by preparing "model provisions with explanatory guidelines to be made available to States to consider in the drafting or strengthening of national laws". The group held its second meeting and continued its consideration of the legislative provisions at UNESCO Headquarters in March 2011 on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the 1970 Convention. There are now six provisions, which will be accompanied by explanatory guidelines to be drafted by the group of experts. The group will meet again in June 2011 to improve the explanatory guidelines. A report on the outcome of the group's work was submitted to the UNIDROIT Governing Council at its 90th session (May 2011) and will also be submitted to the Committee at its 17th session.

## **III. DRAFT RULES OF PROCEDURE ON MEDIATION AND CONCILIATION (Recommendation No. 4)**

8. The General Conference at its 33rd session adopted 33 C/Resolution 44, which added mediation and conciliation to the Committee's terms of reference. The goal was to enable States, through the Committee, to make use of a new additional tool for researching ways and means of facilitating bilateral negotiations to improve the restitution or return of cultural property to its countries of origin.

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<sup>1</sup> At its fifth session in April 1987, the Committee requested the Secretariat to follow the developments of the case and to keep it informed of the matter (Recommendation No. 4). At its seventh session in June 1993, a delegate of the Islamic Republic of Iran requested that a UNESCO observer be present at the hearings.

9. Draft rules of procedure drawn up by the Secretariat on the basis of Recommendation No. 3 adopted by the Committee at its 13th session were submitted to the Committee at its 14th, 15th and 16th sessions. It examined, amended and adopted the proposed text at the 16th session last September. Pursuant to the new Article 2(6) of the Rules of Procedure, the Secretariat is required to draw up and maintain an updated list of mediators and conciliators and, to that end, to invite UNESCO Member States to nominate two individuals who could fulfil the role of mediator or conciliator in international cultural property disputes.

#### **IV. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION (Recommendation No. 6)**

##### ***New States Parties to the 1970 UNESCO Convention and the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention***

10. Following the ratifications by Belgium and the Netherlands in 2009 and Haiti and Equatorial Guinea in 2010, the Secretariat was informed that another key State in the art market, Austria, was taking steps to become a party to the Convention. The total number of States Parties to the Convention is now 120. The 1995 UNIDROIT Convention currently has 31 States Parties, following ratification by Denmark in February 2011. Turkey and Sweden have also taken steps to become parties to the Convention.

##### ***Cooperation with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations***

11. UNESCO continues to cooperate fruitfully with INTERPOL, UNIDROIT, the World Customs Organization (WCO), the International Council of Museums (ICOM), the Swiss authorities, the specialized police corps of the Carabinieri (Italy) and the *Office Central de Lutte contre le Trafic des Biens Culturels* (OCBC – France) in action to combat trafficking and to develop and implement tools for the return and restitution of cultural property. These organizations communicate almost daily on matters relating, in particular, to the theft and illicit export of cultural property worldwide and to procedures to be followed to secure its restitution. Such cooperation yields tangible results.

##### ***UNESCO's action to protect heritage in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya***

12. During the recent uprisings in Arab States, UNESCO responded promptly by alerting the international community to the need to protect cultural heritage and to combat the trafficking in cultural property in these three countries and their respective regions. In a press release dated 16 February 2011, the Director-General urged art dealers and collectors to heighten their vigilance against movement of stolen Egyptian artefacts. On 15 March 2011, on the occasion of the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the 1970 Convention and taking advantage of the presence of international experts, an emergency technical meeting on the protection of cultural heritage in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya was held at UNESCO Headquarters, chaired by Ms Bokova. Further to that meeting, UNESCO, assisted by ICOM, dispatched a special expert mission to Cairo in order primarily to assess the needs of the museum sector and establish contact with the Egyptian authorities in order to continue efforts to protect Egypt's cultural heritage. INTERPOL, UNESCO's partner in action to combat trafficking in cultural property, was also working there. A list of nearly 900 stolen artefacts, with descriptions provided for some 600 items, was released for inclusion in the database of stolen works of art. A second mission, comprising two experts, one of whom was from INTERPOL, was dispatched in May 2011 to evaluate the site security situation and the looting of Egyptian cultural property. A mission was also dispatched to Tunisia in order first to establish contact with the new leaders in the field of culture, take stock of the situation on the ground and subsequently enhance the action plan agreed at the emergency meeting held on 15 March. As a follow-up to those missions, an information meeting on UNESCO's activities and strategy in response to the events in the Arab States region was held on 1 April at UNESCO Headquarters and was attended by the delegations of the States in question. The UNESCO experts who had conducted the field missions submitted their reports at that meeting.

## ***United Nations organizations***

13. UNESCO continues to follow closely the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, Vienna) in combating crime relating to cultural property. An expert from the Organization participated in the fifth session of States Parties to the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo, 2000), held from 18 to 22 October 2010, and in the 20th session of the UNODC Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ),<sup>2</sup> held from 11 to 15 April 2011. UNESCO considers that there is no need at present for a new standard-setting instrument to combat trafficking in cultural property. Action and resources should be focused on the full ratification and application of existing instruments, in particular the 1970 and 1995 Conventions. Further efforts must be made, in particular, to train legal professionals, police officers, customs officers and museum staff and to raise market awareness among stakeholders in the art market, civil society and tourists.

### ***Training workshops***

#### Training for Asia

14. Since 2008, the Monegasque cooperation agency has agreed to provide financial support for a UNESCO capacity-building project in Mongolia to combat trafficking in cultural objects (2010-2013). The project, negotiated by the authorities of Monaco and Mongolia, the Secretariat at Headquarters and the UNESCO Office in Beijing, is being implemented in coordination with the Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO. The main goal of this three-year project is to build Mongolia's capacities to combat trafficking in its cultural property by strengthening its operational capacities and awareness-raising activities. A series of seminars has already been held in Ulaanbaatar:

- a training and awareness-raising workshop for secondary-school teachers and museum practitioners (10 and 11 May 2010);
- an operational training workshop on museums security and theft prevention for museum directors and curators (27-29 September 2010);
- a training workshop on action to combat trafficking in cultural property for customs officers and border police (5-7 October 2010);
- an awareness-raising activity in the Zanabazar Museum of Fine Arts (15-17 February 2011);
- a legal training workshop on the negotiation of bilateral agreements for the restitution of stolen cultural objects, scheduled for 24 and 25 May 2011, was specifically designed for government officials and museum representatives.

#### Training for the Gulf States and Yemen

15. From 21 to 25 November 2010, the authorities of Bahrain hosted a capacity-building workshop for national institutions to prevent trafficking in cultural objects. The workshop was organized by the UNESCO Section of Museums and Cultural Objects and the UNESCO Offices in Bahrain and Doha in cooperation with the UNESCO National Commissions of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. The workshop was designed primarily for institutions active in protecting cultural property against trafficking, in particular public and private museums, the aim being to provide professionals from such institutions with sufficient

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<sup>2</sup> The CCPCJ is the central body of the United Nations in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. The Commission formulates international policies and recommendations on criminal justice issues, particularly human trafficking, transnational crime and several aspects of terrorism prevention. The Commission monitors the use and application of relevant United Nations norms and standards and shapes the policy development in response to new problems.

information on standard legal instruments on the subject and with practical methodological tools for the compilation of inventories. The training course contributed to the implementation of the 1954 Hague Convention, the two Protocols thereto and the UNESCO 1970 and 2001 Conventions. Expert contributions were made by representatives from UNIDROIT, INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization and a specialist in cultural property inventorying.

## **V. THE UNESCO CULTURAL HERITAGE LAWS DATABASE (Recommendation No. 6)**

16. UNESCO's database of national cultural heritage laws protects cultural heritage by combating the looting, theft and illicit traffic of cultural property. The planned development of this innovative tool was initiated in 2005 at the Committee's 13th session and is funded by United States of America funds-in-trust. It currently comprises 2,310 national cultural laws from 180 countries. All of these texts are available online at <http://www.unesco.org/culture/natlaws> where, on average, 2,500 pages are viewed each month.

17. States are still strongly encouraged to submit their national cultural heritage legislation to the Secretariat for inclusion in the database. They are requested to provide information officially to UNESCO in electronic format (on diskette, CD-ROM or email), together with official written authorization from the competent national authority so that UNESCO may reproduce the legislation and the export/import certificates on its website and insert a link between the website and the official national website, unless it is expressly specified that such a link is barred or not desired.

## **VI. CELEBRATION OF THE 40th ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1970 CONVENTION (Recommendation No. 7)**

18. At the 16th session, the Member States of the Intergovernmental Committee decided (Recommendation No. 7) that the 40th anniversary of the 1970 Convention would be an appropriate occasion to evaluate and strengthen the Convention's effectiveness and to formulate strategies to improve its implementation in the face of new forms of trafficking in cultural heritage. To mark that event, a two-day meeting was held at UNESCO Headquarters on 15 and 16 March 2011, structured around an international round-table discussion on trafficking in cultural property, a press conference and an expert forum. The anniversary was organized with the financial support of the Federal Office of Culture of the Swiss Confederation, Mexico, the Banco di Sicilia Foundation and Dev.tv and the logistical support of VMF – Patrimoine Historique, a non-governmental organization (NGO).

19. The two days of debate and deliberation<sup>3</sup> were followed by more than 500 people, representatives of Member States and UNESCO Observers, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs specialized in the field of heritage protection, experts, specialist lawyers, archaeologists, historians, art dealers, researchers, students and many journalists from all over the world. As a result of the four half-days' discussions, the Secretariat formulated several recommendations and a plan of action have been submitted to the Director-General. The goals are to monitor more effectively the 1970 Convention and action to combat trafficking in cultural property and to ensure its return or restitution in the event of theft and illegal export, both within UNESCO and in cooperation with Member States, partner intergovernmental organizations and NGOs, experts and the public.

## **VIII. LINKS TO THE ART MARKET AND AWARENESS CAMPAIGN**

### ***Cooperation with the art market***

20. UNESCO continues to strengthen professional contacts and dialogue established since 2008 with representatives of the international art market. The aim is to encourage an improvement of

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<sup>3</sup> A detailed report of the two days of celebration has been sent to Member States and is available on UNESCO's website (<http://www.unesco.org/new/fr/culture/themes/movable-heritage-and-museums/illicit-traffic-of-cultural-property/40th-anniversary-of-the-1970-convention/>).

mutual understanding, firstly, of the working methods of the art market and, secondly, of Member States' concerns about the movement of works of art and about issues relating to the return of cultural property. In that context, during the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the 1970 Convention, UNESCO invited Ms Jane Levine, Worldwide Director of Compliance and Senior Vice-President of Sotheby's, to take part in a discussion panel during the open debate. Other representatives of the art market, such as Christie's, the *Syndicat National des Maisons de Ventes Volontaires* (SYMÉV, France) and the *Conseil des Ventes Volontaires de Meubles aux Enchères Publiques* (CVV, France), were also present.

21. In late March 2011, the UNESCO Secretariat was invited to participate in the working group established by the *Conseil des Ventes Volontaires de Meubles aux Enchères Publiques* (France) to draft a code of ethics for auction houses. At the meeting, the representative of the Secretariat reminded participants that the General Conference of UNESCO had adopted a Code of Ethics for Dealers in Cultural Property in 1999. The Code, which has an ethical dimension, is based on the 1970 Convention against trafficking in cultural property, several national codes (the United Kingdom's and Switzerland's in particular) and the principles of the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention. The drafting of an ethical code for auction houses is an important step that will doubtless help to remedy specific current problems, such as the lack of information in catalogues on provenance, particularly that of archaeological items.

### **Video materials**

22. With the financial support of the authorities of Switzerland and the Netherlands, the Organization has implemented several projects since 2009 in order to promote its activities and raise State and public awareness of the importance of protecting heritage and participating in action to combat trafficking in cultural property. Accordingly, the Secretariat has produced a series of video clips tailored to Africa and Latin America to alert the general public to the dangers of such trafficking. The aim is to sensitize tourists and the local population by including images of looted sites and destroyed objects in the clips in order to illustrate the link between the object, the site and the act of pillaging. Each clip (approximately one minute and 30 seconds) is intended to be shown in public places and areas frequented by travellers in the region (airports, stations, aircraft, tourist information offices and so on) and at tourist sites (particularly those on the World Heritage List). Depending on available resources, the clip will also be tailored to other countries and regions. This project has been implemented owing to extrabudgetary funds from the Netherlands and the Swiss Confederation.

23. The UNESCO Office in Venice, in cooperation with UNESCO Headquarters, has produced a 12-minute film to raise awareness of action taken by UNESCO and its partners to combat trafficking in cultural property in the South-East Europe region. This project was implemented in close cooperation with ministries of culture and national commissions throughout the region. Ms Bokova was interviewed for the film, which stresses the scale of trafficking in cultural property in the region, the steps ("best practices") taken by States in the region (ratification of the 1970 Convention, development of a database, training of professionals, general introduction of export certificates and so on) and the need for effective and supportive regional and international cooperation.

24. One of the numerous activities and events organized to mark the 40th anniversary of the 1970 Convention was the coproduction by the Secretariat, OnePlanetPictures and Dev.tv of a documentary entitled "Stealing the Past", which deals with the pillage of archaeological sites, the various traffickers in cultural property and action taken by the international community to deal with this problem, with particular emphasis on the role of UNESCO. The film was broadcast by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in March 2011.

### **Promotion of Iraqi heritage**

25. Owing to funding from the Czech Republic and the Swiss Confederation, workshops and materials promoting Iraqi heritage for children have been developed since 2009 in cooperation with

the UNESCO Office in Baghdad. The Secretariat is currently developing a game in DVD format, with a trilingual (French, English and Arabic) explanatory and promotional handbook designed to raise children's awareness of the importance of preserving their cultural heritage. The game will be distributed through UNESCO's Associated Schools Project Network.

### **Publication**

26. As part of activities to mark the Committee's fortieth anniversary and with the financial support of the Republic of Korea, UNESCO has published *Witnesses to History: Documents and Writings on the Return of Cultural Objects*, edited by Professor L. V. Prott as a scientific publication giving historical, philosophical and legal insights into the return of cultural property. This compendium, intended for the public, students, specialists and decision-makers, contains a selection of significant writings published by authors and reference institutions from the late eighteenth century to the present day, thus elucidating the contemporary debate on the issues of the worldwide movement of cultural property and on the problems of restitution. Originally in English, it is now available in French and Chinese and is being sold by UNESCO Publishing. Negotiations are under way for it to be translated into Spanish. The Secretariat is also seeking support from the States concerned for the Arabic and Russian versions.

### **Continuing distance training – e-patrimoine.org**

27. In February 2011, the French Ministry of Culture and Communication, in partnership with the *Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie* (AUF, France) and the *Université Numérique Francophone Mondiale* (UNFM), established a continuing distance-education project for French-speaking countries. UNESCO is a partner in this provision of free distance education, delivered by high-level professionals through the AUF digital campuses (in 16 countries to more than 60 learners). The first module, on combating the theft and illicit traffic of cultural property, consists of nine lessons and a documentary. Teaching focuses on current legislation in France and in those countries for which the module is intended, on organizations working to combat trafficking and on all types of heritage trafficked (movable, natural and subaquatic heritage). This initiative has aroused curiosity, interest and enthusiasm. A second module, on inventories, will be available from October 2011. As a general rule, two training modules will be provided online each year. Such training is designed primarily for heritage professionals, but also for all persons who, in the course of their work, must increase their knowledge by means of one of the modules offered. To be provided with such free distance education, applicants must register, fill in the registration form and attach a curriculum vitae. Once the application has been reviewed, the successful applicant will receive a username and password in order to have access to the module.

## **IX. EUROPEAN COMMISSION HERMES 11 PROJECT**

28. HERMES 2011, a study of methods to prevent and combat trafficking in cultural property, is the subject of a contract concluded by the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) and the European Commission Directorate-General for Home Affairs and is being implemented in partnership with the Centre for Criminal Justice and Criminology of the University of Paris in conjunction with UNESCO, UNIDROIT and INTERPOL. The aim of the study is to identify bottlenecks and constraints resulting from the legal framework and the practice of those involved in preventing and combating trafficking in cultural property in the European Union and in other States. The study, which entails processing existing legislation and requires knowledge of each Member State's practices, is being achieved owing to the cooperation of national specialists.





## ANNEX

### EXAMPLES OF CULTURAL PROPERTY RETURNED OR RESTITUTED WITHOUT ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE

The role of the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return Of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation is to seek ways and means of facilitating bilateral negotiations for the restitution or return of cultural property. To assist the Committee in this task and in accordance with Recommendation No. 3 adopted at its twelfth session, recent examples of items returned or restituted as a result of legal proceedings, bilateral negotiations, voluntary acts by the possessor or other solutions (trade, loans and production of replicas) are listed below to guide the Committee.

- **May 2011: return of a collection of Peruvian cultural objects (United States of America – Peru)**

On 12 May 2011, the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the United States Customs and Border Protection returned to Peru Peruvian cultural objects illegally imported to the United States of America and discovered during searches carried out by the American authorities. The representatives of Peru welcomed the high level of cooperation between their Government and the American authorities in this case. The highly valuable objects included an eighteenth century manuscript, an Inca pot, textile objects and a stone sculpture of a man-jaguar.

- **May 2011: restitution of a Maori head (France – New Zealand)**

On 9 May 2011, a tattooed and mummified Maori warrior head that had been donated to the Natural History Museum of Rouen in 1875 for exhibition there (until 1996) was officially restituted to a delegation of the Maori people who took part in the ceremony. This restitution was legal, as the French Parliament had adopted a law in May 2010 authorizing the restitution of all Maori heads held in France. Another 15 heads will be restituted in early 2012.



Maori Ceremony  
© City of Rouen/Barbara Cabot

- **February-March 2011: agreement between France and the Republic of Korea concerning the loaning of Korean manuscripts (France – Republic of Korea)**

An agreement has been concluded between France and the Republic of Korea regarding a series of Korean manuscripts seized by French military forces in 1866 and conserved at the National Library of France since that time. According to the terms of the agreement, the 297 volumes of the Uigwe illustrated manuals on royal protocol, written during the Chosun Dynasty (1392-1910), will be lent to the Republic of Korea and conserved at the National Museum of Korea in Seoul for five years. Moreover, the loan may be renewed with the written approval of both parties. France retains ownership of the manuscripts loaned to the National Museum of Korea.



Protocol of the marriage ceremony of King Jeong Jo and Queen Jeong Sun  
© Korean Cultural Heritage Administration

- **April 2011: restitution of six icons (United Kingdom – Greece)**

In early April 2011, six icons dating from the eighth and ninth centuries, which had been stolen from the churches and monasteries of Epirus and Pelion in north-west and central Greece, were found in a London gallery and repatriated to Greece. According to the police, the thefts were the work of an organized group of traffickers. The icons are on temporary display in the Byzantine and Christian Museum in Athens.

- **March 2011: return of archaeological items (Yale University – Peru)**

Some 400 archaeological items from Machu Picchu (whole skeletons and bones, pottery, ceramics, decorative objects and tools) were returned by Yale University, one century after they had been "borrowed" from the Inca site. In all, nearly 45,000 objects, mostly fragments, will be returned by late 2012 under an agreement signed by Yale University and Peru in 2010. The objects will eventually be entrusted to the National University of San Antonio Abad in Cuzco, the great city, gateway to Machu Picchu and historic heart of the Inca Empire.

- **March 2011: restitution of ancient objects (Australia – Cambodia)**

In early March 2011, the Australian Government returned cultural objects to Cambodia. These were mainly bronze objects (earrings, wrist and leg bracelets), dating from the Iron Age, that had been looted from tombs. The objects were then exported illegally to Australia before being offered for sale on eBay through an Australian gallery. The objects were seized under Australian legislation (Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act, 1986), which provides that it is an offence to import an object whose export is prohibited under the cultural heritage legislation of its country of origin. The Ambassador of Cambodia to Australia, who was present at the restitution, said that the return of the objects was proof of cooperation and understanding between Cambodia and Australia in protecting cultural heritage and in combating the illegal trade in cultural property.

- **January 2011: return of the “Morgantina Venus” statue (Getty Museum – Italy)**

The Morgantina Venus was returned by the Getty Museum to Italy, which had claimed it. The famous Los Angeles museum had acquired the object from an art dealer who claimed that it had come originally from a collection. Italy, on the other hand, had always maintained that the Morgantina Venus had been stolen from the Morgantina site. This statue was the last of 40 antique items recently returned by the American museum to Italy. In a protocol signed by the Director of the Getty Museum and the Italian Government in August 2007, the museum undertook to return to Italy the Morgantina Venus and 39 other valuable archaeological items (vases, amphora fragments of fresco, etc.) that had been acquired illegally.



The Morgantina Venus  
© J. Paul Getty Museum