

# Safeguarding treasures

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Timeline tracks reforms and legal developments in the world of antiquities.

**1939:** Italy passes a cultural patrimony law declaring all archeological artifacts to be government property unless the items were in private hands before 1902.

**1970:** A UNESCO convention calls for tighter international import-export restrictions on cultural property.

**1977:** Several art dealers are convicted of conspiring to sell stolen artifacts in the first American criminal case to recognize a foreign country's ownership of archeological items under U.S. law.

**1979:** Italy ratifies the UNESCO accord.

**1983:** Congress ratifies the UNESCO accord, committing the U.S. to greater import controls on antiquities.

**1987:** The Getty Museum announces its first antiquities acquisition policy, which relies on the guarantees of dealers and puts the burden on foreign governments to prove an artifact has been looted.

**1995:** In September, Swiss authorities raid Geneva warehouses, seizing thousands of illicit antiquities and photos of thousands more. Items shown in 42 of the photos were later identified by Italian police as being in the Getty's collection.

In November, the Getty announces a tougher acquisition policy that allows the museum to purchase only those antiquities held in private collections before 1995 or with written documentation.

**1999:** Getty antiquities curator Marion True testifies on Italy's behalf in favor of tighter U.S. imports of antiquities. The Getty returns three items to Italy after discovering they had been stolen or looted.

**2000:** Italian authorities notify the Getty that True is a target of their investigation into the looting of antiquities.

**2001:** The Getty's outside counsel advises Trust chief executive Barry Munitz not to give Italian authorities several "troublesome" documents that show True had close relationships with two art dealers, both of whom have since been named her co-defendants.

**2005:** True trial is to resume in Rome in November.

*Source: Times reporting*