

# Getty antiquities to be returned to Italy

A joint statement by the Getty and Italian government says 21 pieces will go back

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The Getty Trust and the Italian Ministry of Culture have announced that they have reached a tentative agreement in which the Getty will return objects from its collection that are believed to have been illegally excavated and smuggled from Italy. “The Italian government will receive from the Getty a number of very significant objects,” said a statement issued on 21 June, adding that “in return Italy will provide loans of comparable beauty and historical importance”. The agreement stems from negotiations in Rome between Getty director Michael Brand and culture minister Francesco Rutelli.

The exchange is similar to the deal struck between the Metropolitan Museum and the Italian authorities earlier this year. The Met will return the Euphronios krater believed to have been looted from Etruria and silver possibly illicitly excavated in Morgantina, Sicily, in exchange for comparable works.

Italian officials say that the Getty is willing to return 21 of the 52 objects that Italy has demanded—including two marble griffins, a marble Apollo and ceramics painted by Euphronios. The joint statement continued: “The parties expect to conclude a final agreement, which will include mutual collaboration, research and the exchange of important antiquities in the summer.”

Even if a resolution is reached, there may be new demands from the Italians. In June, the Los Angeles Times reported that an internal review by the Getty last year found that 350 objects in the collection were acquired from dealers implicated in sales of looted antiquities. According to a Getty spokesman: “The issue of the 350 objects...was discussed and reviewed during meetings with the Italian ministry officials, but it did not hinder the development of a tentative agreement.”

Greece also has been pressing the Getty Trust to return allegedly looted antiquities. In May, Mr Brand agreed, pending board approval, to return two of the four items claimed by Greece, and to explore the other claims.

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