



Thefts of Artifacts Containing Precious Metals Have Risen, Dillon Gage Says

Metals prices, tough economic times and security breakdowns overseas are to blame

ADDISON, TX (August 1, 2013)... Thefts of artifacts containing precious metals have escalated in the last decade or so as metals prices strengthened while economic conditions worsened. In other countries, political turmoil and security breaches created opportunities for thieves searching for ancient artifacts. Buyers of precious metals artifacts need to be aware of these thefts, says [Dillon Gage Metals](#), dealers in Dallas. An object you purchased could be something the authorities have been trying to locate as stolen.

Thieves are motivated in part by prices. Gold and silver reached record highs two years ago, and platinum touched an all-time high five years ago, notes Terry Hanlon, president of **Dillon Gage Metals**. They've held on to at least some of those gains. "That's good for investors, but one downside has been more precious metals thefts, including burglaries of artifacts made from metals," Hanlon explains.

Thieves often want to get rid of their stashes quickly and sell them to pawn shops or on the internet, Hanlon adds. They try to sell them to art dealers, too.

Museums in California have lost valuable artifacts dating back to the Gold Rush to robbers. In early January, a thief broke into the Oakland Museum of California and took a gold jewelry box worth over \$800,000. Last September, robbers armed with pick axes entered the California State Mining and Mineral Museum and removed up to \$2 million in gold artifacts, gold and gems.

Pawn shop owners and art dealers often spot these artifacts as stolen. Back in 1995, a Washington, DC pawn shop owner quickly sized up the value of a small, gold sculpture of a vulture and called the police. The article had been taken from the National Geographic Society museum.

War and political turmoil abroad have created opportunities for thieves. Many thousands of historic artifacts containing precious metals – some more than 3,000 years old – were stolen from Iraqi museums during the 2003 Gulf War. They showed up at airports and in art markets in New York and London. In Iraq's chaos and rebellion, anti-government mobs attacked museums, looting gold-plated firearms, ornamental knives and other objects containing precious metals. U.S. Department of Defense contractors, U.S. military personnel and members of the media were also implicated in thefts of Iraqi artifacts. The FBI seized a number of stolen artifacts and returned them to Iraq.

In Egypt, where security has broken down in recent political turmoil, gold artifacts have been stolen from museums, ancient temples and tombs.

Greece, rich in archaeological treasures, has been targeted by antiquity smugglers for centuries. And the nation's recent financial crisis, resulting in hundreds of layoffs of guards and archaeologists, has left sites and museums vulnerable. In February 2012, two armed robbers took nearly 80 artifacts, including gold and bronze objects, from a museum dedicated to the ancient Olympic Games. A suspect was arrested in Greece after trying to sell one of those items – a 3,300-year-old gold ring – to an undercover officer for \$387,000.

If you're concerned an artifact that you purchased might be a stolen object, contact your local police or closest FBI Field Office. The FBI has a dedicated art crime team of over a dozen special

agents, supported by trial attorneys for prosecutions. The agency runs the National Stolen Art File, a computerized index of art and cultural properties that have been reported as burglarized. That file is used by law enforcement agencies around the world.

Hanlon says **Dillon Gage** has experts on staff who can help determine the sources of certain precious metals artifacts namely, rare coins and assess their value. **Dillon Gage Metals** offers estate liquidations, jewelry liquidation, bullion and rare coin trading and online metals trading. There are, however, certain criteria which must be met to become a Dillon Gage customer.

For more information on **Dillon Gage Metals**, please visit www.dillongage.com/metals or phone 800-375-4653. Follow **Dillon Gage** on Twitter @DillonGage and on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/dillongage>. Dillon Gage Metals Blog: <http://dillongageblog.com/> and Dillon Gage Metals Smartphone App visit the iTunes store (<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/dillon-gage-metals/id586486914>) or Google Play (<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.dillongage.metals>).

About Dillon Gage Metals

Dillon Gage Inc. of Dallas (DillonGage.com) was founded in 1976, and its companies include:

- Dillon Gage Metals, www.DillonGage.com/Metals, is one of the largest precious metals dealers in the U.S. (DillonGage.com/Metals) 800.375.4653
- FizTrade Online Trading, www.FizTrade.com, offers real-time trading for bid and ask markets for gold, silver platinum and palladium. 800.375.4653
- Diamond State Depository, www.DiamondStateDepository.com, is a precious metals and certified coin depository outside Wilmington, DE. (DiamondStateDepository.com) 888-322-6150
- International Depository Services of Canada Inc., www.IDSofCanada.com, is a precious metals and certified coin storage facility near Toronto. 855-362-2431
- Digital Metals is responsible for delivering advanced tools and technologies that enable dealers to be more successful in their businesses. The company offers cloud-based solutions for physical precious metals built upon the Digital Metals Platform.

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