

PITCHER  
Preventing Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Heritage:  
Educational Resources



**Open Educational Resources**  
*Touch - don't Touch!*  
*8,000 years in your hand*

Topic: Provenance research and traceability, Preservation of memory of missing artefacts

Age Group: 11-14, 14-18 years old

### Authors

Eva Delaby, Manon Garcia del Barrio, Audrey Thiboust, Isabelle Grosbois, Armelle Philip, Marta Alsina, Céline Redon

With the participation of: Ingrid Senepart, Toomaï Boucherat, Manuel Moliner, Catherine Barra, Damien Massif, Thibault Chevallier and Olivier Meynard

### Reviewer

Oriane Rousselet, Agathe Le Riche-Maugis (Bibracte)

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## Preface

The *PITCHER* project (Erasmus+ Programme, 2021-2024) intends to design and test of a set of open educational resources focusing on improving the capacity of teachers and educators in preparing new learning experiences to support the fight against looting and illicit trafficking of cultural goods. The project intends to propose a new model for raising awareness of young people about the problem of fighting the looting and illicit trafficking of cultural goods, initially focusing on schoolteachers, to raise their interest and enhance their professional development in this field.

PITCHER builds on the final recommendations of the European project NETCHER (H2020 - 2019-2021) coordinated by CNRS, which implemented a strong trans sectoral network as well as Recommendations on the fight against looting and trafficking of cultural goods. One of the components of the recommendations is the need for awareness-raising and guidance toward Educational communities.

The project idea comes from ENSP (the Research Centre of the French national police academy), and the Michael Culture association - members of the NETCHER consortium - and brings together BIBRACTE major actor of Archaeology, MUSEOMIX a reference in mediation for museums, and schools from France, Greece, Italy, and Spain, in order to co-design and implement the PITCHER project.



Photo: Pexels, Oleksandr Pidvalnyi

We hope this resource will bring a new dimension to your work, as well as use it to develop these activities with your students. The selected topics have been chosen together with teachers and educators coming from France, Greece, Italy and Spain through focus groups and surveys. Each resource is accompanied by key learning points as well as several interesting facts or pieces of information, which are intended to be used to provoke further discussion.




Wherever possible we have included a short interactive activity that can be carried out with students or a series of suggested questions to ask, in order to introduce the topics of each learning module. Should you wish to explore certain topics or themes further, each resource includes a link to other related ones. When available, a general list of additional resources related to the topics is provided. The resources and accompanying texts are designed as standalone educational aids. In this respect, the resource is intended to provide an overall framework from which you can pick and choose the issues most relevant to your activities. The module can be used within any country any context as it deals with issues, which are cross-border and universal.

For more information about the *PITCHER* project, please visit:

<https://www.pitcher-project.eu>

## The PITCHER Educational Offer

The *PITCHER* open educational resources include the following learning modules, here listed according to subject matters and suggested age of the target students:

	 7-11	 11-14	 14-18
All the themes		Case Studies	Case Studies
		The Cobannus hoard affair	The Cobannus hoard affair
		Looting is not a game	Looting is not a game
		Traffic International	Traffic International
		The Raiders of the Lost Art	
Theft of antiques and works of art	Looting in the Village	Looting in the Village	Looting in the Village
	Traffic 'Art	Traffic 'Art	Traffic 'Art
	Vade-mecum Educational project	Vade-mecum Educational project	Vade-mecum Educational project
	The Mysterious Theft	The Mysterious Theft	Guilty Treasures
		Crossed interviews	Crossed interviews
		Journey of a Stele	Journey of a Stele
		Protect the sites!	Protect the sites!
		Voiceless	Voiceless
		PillarT	PillarT
		The Talking Clay	
Sale of stolen objects	Traffic 'Art	Traffic 'Art	Traffic 'Art
		Journey of a Stele	Journey of a Stele
		Voiceless	Voiceless
		PillarT	PillarT
			Guilty Treasures
Traffic channels and actors' identification	Traffic 'Art	Traffic 'Art	Traffic 'Art

		Crossed interviews	Crossed interviews
		Journey of a Stele	Journey of a Stele
		Voiceless	Voiceless
		PillarT	PillarT
			Guilty Treasures
Fight against the traffic	Traffic 'Art	Traffic 'Art	Traffic 'Art
		Protect the sites!	Protect the sites!
		Crossed interviews	Crossed interviews
		Journey of a Stele	Journey of a Stele
		PillarT	PillarT
		The Talking Clay	
Provenance research and traceability		Crossed interviews	Crossed interviews
		PillarT	PillarT
	Touch, Don't Touch	Touch, Don't Touch	
Return of stolen objects	Traffic 'Art	Traffic 'Art	Traffic 'Art
		Journey of a Stele	Journey of a Stele
Preservation of memory of missing artefacts	Vade-mecum Educational project	Vade-mecum Educational project	Vade-mecum Educational project
	Touch, Don't Touch	Touch, Don't Touch	
Why it is forbidden, what consequence	Vade-mecum Educational project	Vade-mecum Educational project	Vade-mecum Educational project
		Crossed interviews	Crossed interviews
		Journey of a Stele	Journey of a Stele
		Protect the sites!	Protect the sites!
		Voiceless	Voiceless
		PillarT	PillarT
		The Talking Clay	

## Summary: Touch - don't Touch! 8,000 years in your hand

Topic: Provenance research and traceability, Preservation of memory of missing artifacts

Age range:  7-11,  11-14

Educational programme: History, Art history and Civic education

Time:  60/90 minutes

Materials and tools: Sandbox, game booklet, pen, printed sheets, boxes, objects for carry out the activities following the excavation experiment.

Skills achieved: Manual and thorough ability, ability to describe and recognise specific forms, knowledge and vocabulary.

Learning objectives: Encourage students to:

- Understand methods and challenges of uncovering archaeological remains of past societies, which are part of our heritage.
- Discover that this archaeological activity involves actors of different professions;
- Better understanding the reasons why this archaeological activity requires strict rules to be respected.

### Instructions for teachers

It is best to organise a visit to an archaeological site or museum to prepare, with the site/museum staff, a list of tasks (to be carried out in groups if necessary) to adapt the activity presented in the following pages to the school context.

The example presented here refers to the Museum of the Friends of Castrum Vetus, in Châteauneuf-les-Martigues, France. It was designed and implemented at the Museomix event held from 10 to 12 November 2023.



The pitch of the device as imagined during Museomix.

## What is looting?

### Stolen objects, looted objects: what difference?

Stolen objects are known to their owners, who can therefore file a complaint for their theft. These objects are stored in databases of stolen objects, such as PSYCHE, which is the database of INTERPOL, the international criminal police organisation. They are thus identifiable and, if found, can be returned to their owners.

The looted objects are archaeological objects that have been unlawfully removed from the ground, i.e. without authorisation. They are therefore not known to their owners or archaeologists. Not inventoried, these objects are very difficult to identify. They don't have a history, we don't know anything about them. This is called orphan objects.

Looting of archaeological sites and theft from museums, private collections... are the main source of objects for the illicit trafficking of cultural objects. This source is more or less abundant depending on the economic and political stability of the countries of origin. It increases in times of war, political instability or natural disasters, but archaeological looting is also widely practised in peacetime and in stable countries because it is an activity that can be considered as a leisure activity and allows a financial supplement.

Looting, theft and illicit trafficking of cultural property constitute a significant threat to the preservation of a community's cultural and historical wealth. When a large part of that heritage is stolen for sale abroad, the community concerned may feel disconnected from its own roots and the history that preceded them. This can have a lasting impact on social cohesion and the intergenerational transmission of cultural values. This loss of cultural identity is compounded by the degradation of archaeological sites and monuments, either as a result of archaeological looting and the removal of decorative features, or as deliberate destruction of heritage for ideological reasons. Since 2000, ICOM has published Red Lists which list, by major geographical area, the cultural objects most likely to be looted and stolen. Designed for police and customs officials, heritage professionals and art dealers, these tools aim to make it easier to identify looted and stolen objects that they may encounter during checks or potential purchases.

We used a similar approach to simulate the fact that artefacts from the Lugdunum Museum could have been looted or stolen, to raise awareness among students and visitors of the importance of fighting together to protect our memories and heritage.

In conclusion, illicit trafficking in cultural heritage objects affects not only specific objects and places, but also impacts on the social and cultural fabric of a community. Preserving heritage is not only about preserving monuments and artefacts, but also about protecting a society's identity and cohesion.





## How to use this educational resource

### Scenario

**1-** At the reception: an archaeologist's bag, which contains various tools as well as a pen and pre-printed forms) is given to one (or two) people (who can make the device together).

**2-** A signpost leads to a “Room of budding archaeologists” presenting an archaeological site of an ancient period (historical or prehistoric). Signage allows the visitor to describe the experience they will experience and to position them for successive activities.

**3-** Activity 1: "Search": the research bin. The person begins by reading the procedure positioned above the bin, exits and chooses the tools from the bag; then searches and discovers the objects.

**4-** Activity 2: “Identify” allows identification of objects. The person can put the objects in a new study tray next to the excavation tray: they can consult and fill out four forms (see Appendix) that invite to make the identity card of the object and an assumption about its use. The person is instructed by the instructions to put everything back in place carefully. Here, visitors are invited to become aware of an excavation protocol and the work of the archaeologist.

**5-** Activity 3: "Decorate": after a phase of discovery of the archaeologist's objects, the visitor discovers what experimental archaeology is: in order to understand the function of an object, it is necessary to redo the gestures of the women and men of the past.

In the prototype tested, the visitor experiments with decorating a ceramic: he makes patterns of the so-called "cardial" ceramic using a shell, cardium, and, on a fresh clay plate positioned flat in a wooden frame, one can try to trace patterns. Examples of the patterns and method typically found on Neolithic vases and bowls are shown in photos on an illustrative sheet.

**6-** Activity 4 ‘Reconstitute’: Here, on a base, the shape of a broken vase must be recovered using the pieces placed in front of it. These clay pieces can be “scratched” to lift the entire vase like a puzzle. This is how the archaeologist tries to reconstruct a man-made object.

**7-** Activity 5 “Learn”: when the person has managed to trace everything back, he can trigger an expertise delivered by two experts. Experts help validate the young archaeologist’s approach and explain their profession. They also highlight the importance of scientific work in unearthing remains during the excavation and raise awareness about the preservation of cultural property.

In the device tested during Museomix (with the help of a FabLab): Placing one hand on an illustrated hand, covered with two aluminium strips and having sensors, the person starts a video. One or two people at a time could see the holograms of Ingrid Senepart, an archaeologist and prehistoric doctor, and Toomai Boucherat, an experimental animator.

Self-produced variant: The young participants make the sensor box and hologram device with their technology teacher and take the expert’s place to tell their fellow students what they learned at the museum.

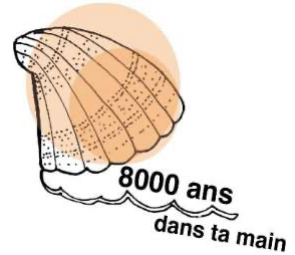
**8-** End of the device: The person can return the archaeologist’s bag to the reception and continue visiting the other rooms.

## Objectives

Provide inclusive access to the usually unreachable remains behind the museum window, while valuing the work of archaeologists and museum collaborators and friends.

the origin of the device: the desire to manipulate materials, objects (natural or manufactured) to understand with a new sensitivity (tactile, audiovisual, proprioceptive, even olfactory) the wealth of research on societies of the past. The aim is to understand, through sensitive experience, the importance for researchers of the remains found on this site.

We also want to raise awareness of looting and unreported discoveries, which most often lead to the trafficking of works, as well as to the research" that does not respect scientific protocols, by offering the public an opportunity to discover the importance of carefully studying an archaeological context, as well as preserving the remains of the site, for understanding the discoveries and the society from which they are derived.



## Activity 1: Search

### Bags of archaeologists:

Handmade bags made of recovered materials (fabric): a strip of fabric sewn in square + outer pockets for a playful design and to store small tools. Otherwise, use an old toolbox.

Its content:

- optional: latex sanitary gloves (like archaeologists, you can also wash your hands after the excavation)
- 2 small shovels
- 2 small trowels
- different flat brushes: 2 fin 2 medium 2 large
- 2 buckets

### Construction of an excavation bin:

- Square 80 cm x 80 cm in pallet board/wood, edges approx. 25 centimetres.
- Two layers of waterproof garden tarpaulin cover the bottom and are stapled and studded to the rim, separated by a layer of cardboard, to accommodate 70 kilogrammes of game or construction sand (or an equal mixture of soil and sand, closer to archaeological reality).  
Tray to be placed on a support about 80 cm from the floor for teenage children and parents, and with room for the legs so that a chair or wheelchair can be placed underneath.

Examples:

- Large blocks of limestone to simulate the original terrain.
- Ash and charcoal to simulate human activity in the kitchen and home.
- Bones to simulate hunting and food.
- Silex to simulate the cut, the size.
- Pieces of pottery to simulate crafts and cooking.
- Cardium (seashell) to simulate food and crafts.



The excavation tray is built, before filling, then in the process of finishing.



Young amateur archaeologists in action!

## Activity 2: Identify

### Fact sheets:

Four pre-structured forms mimic the dig's fact sheets by simplifying them (descriptive sheets filled in by archaeologists as they are discovered). They invite you to record the position of the objects in the bin, then to simply describe and draw the objects extracted from the excavation bin, and to document certain basic information: dimensions, colour(s) and material.

The forms are A4 sheets to be printed in black and white. Examples are provided in Appendix 1 (but can be improved).



A young participant fills out his search form.

## Activity 3: Decorate

### Cardium drawing experimentation area:

- Shell of approximate clam size
- A non-hardening fresh clay plate positioned flat in a wooden frame,
- Soft lid + water sprayer (as for plants) to prevent clay from drying



A young participant decorates a ceramic container.



### Activity 4: Reconstitute

#### Creating a jigsaw puzzle:

Construction of a self-hardening clay vase: Trace shapes and then cut with a cutter at the mid-stage of hardening, when not yet dry, to form a false break with pieces that can be assembled.

Then there are two options:

- Self-adhesive painter roll (Tesa or equivalent) to be supplied for reassembly
- Creation of a negative of the mould, serving as a base, in plaster lined with iron mesh, to lay and assemble the ends which will be magnetised.

In the device tested, the ceramic was a bowl with a round bottom and two small handles.



The vase-puzzle before reassembly.

### Activity 5: Learn

#### Production of explanatory videos:

2 videos shot on a green background with two experts testifying: 2 to 3 minutes, normal sound recording.

Make a “home” hologram: [https://hitek.fr/actualite/tuto-fabriquer-hologramme-maison\\_5657](https://hitek.fr/actualite/tuto-fabriquer-hologramme-maison_5657)

#### Construction of a holographic viewing station:

- Editing software for quadrupling the filmed image
- Touch pad for audio-visual broadcasting
- Pregnant sound.
- Plastic reverse pyramid from the model (see “hologram” link below) to pose on the tablet and create the hologram effect.

Black display box:

- With one or two viewing slots
- Contain tablet and pyramid to isolate the image from light

Build an interactive trigger:

- Hand “buzzer” to validate the success: Aluminium strip positioned on the cardboard hand so that the laying of the human hand closes the circuit and activates “play” or “pause” (device Makey Makey)

Description of the interactive device Makey Makey

<https://www.robot-advance.com/cat-makey-makey-162.htm>



The viewing box and its trigger (left image).

## Annex 1: Fact sheets of the excavation

### Device Introduction Sheet

In your hands: 8000 years of history...

This is an excavation bin that represents a small archaeological site.

Depending on what you discover in this bin, you will be able, like an archaeologist, to identify objects of different nature.

By asking yourself about the presence of these objects in the same place and their peculiarities, you can try to explain what they were used for.

-----  
STEP 1: I choose my tools. Card #1.

STEP 2: I discover objects. Card #2.

STEP 3: I describe the object and its parts on a card that will become his ID card. Card #3

STEP 4: I think about the use of these objects. Card #4  
-----

Are you done? Carefully replace the objects as you found them in the bin. You can help yourself from the page #2.

If you've put sand on the ground, pick it up with the shovel and the sweeper and put it back in the bin.

## Tool Sheet

### #1. I choose my tools

I'm not going to search without thinking...

What are the items in my bag for?

Picto	Object	Use	I use / I don't use
	The trowel	It is used to clear the earth from the object	
	The brush	It is used to make appear gentleness an object spotted in the soil (land, sand...).	
	The sweeper	It is used to clean a tough surface for the clear of particles glued or to remove a film of dried earth.	
	The shovel	It can be used (at start) to be cleared with precaution the soil superficial, then to receive the earth which has been removed.	

### The Archaeologist's Advice



Be careful, each tool has a specific function, you must understand what a moment it is wise to use them to do not damage the site archaeological.



### Carrying-Location Card

#2. I'm discovering things

My research reveals the presence of objects. Before taking them out of the excavation bin, I photograph them to document the discovery and draw them carefully where I found them on my map at the scale that corresponds to the excavation squares of my archaeological area.


On a real site, the position of the object (location and depth in the ground) is accurately measured, using survey equipment, particularly for measuring altitude (depth).







### Identification card

#3. I describe the search area, each object and its characteristics on a card that will be his identity card

An object (excavation bin number + object number) should be inventoried before being retrieved and then studied. It is possible to observe it and question its nature: is it an artefact (manufactured object) or a natural element? In the latter case, is it derived from human activity (e.g. harvested or burned in a household) or not?

Analyse in your turn what you found:

(connect matches >> arrows / to mix in the final)

photo	Material	Nature of the object	Natural or fabricated?	Number
	Ceramic	pottery shards	artefact	
	charcoal	charcoal	natural	
	shell	cardium	natural	
	bone	animal bone	natural	
	flint	arrowhead	artefact	
	limestone	limestone blocks	natural	

During an excavation, specialised archaeologists (ceramics, pollen identification, etc.) Will study the objects before storing them where they can be found. Other studies, through a number identification.



## Assumptions Sheet

#4. I think about the use of these objects.

Now you'll try to understand what connects the collected objects: why were they in the same place?  
how were they used?

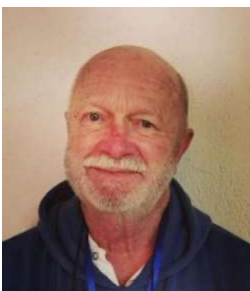
In our example:

Link 1: pebbles arranged in a triangle + coal → picto fire  
Link 2 : cut flint + bone → picto hunting  
Link 3 : ceramic + cardium → picto pottery

---

Final assumption:

Picto fire + picto hunting + picto pottery = picto kitchen



The objects that are picked up are used to infer their use in a specific context. If one is missing, interpretation may be more difficult. To validate the hypotheses, experimental archaeology is of great help: we try to reproduce the gestures of the men who used the recovered objects.