

Reward for stolen Titian

WARMINSTER, England (AP) - The smash-and grab theft of a 5-million pound \$7.75 million Titian painting from historic Longleat House was "a tragedy," owner Lord Bath said Sunday. Insurers said they plan to offer a reward - estimated at more than 100,000 pounds (\$155,000) - for information leading to return of the 16th century *Rest on the Flight to Egypt*, painted by one of the most celebrated artists of the Renaissance.

Thieves broke into the second-story state drawing room Friday night, removed the small painting from its frame, grabbed two others and got away before security staff responded to the ringing of the burglar alarm.

The 7th Marquess of Bath said the 24-inch by 18-inch (61cm by 46cm) Venetian painting of Mary, Joseph and the infant Jesus was the pride of the collection at Longleat, a Renaissance mansion 13 miles (20 km) southeast of Bath in western England.

Lord Bath, who lives in an apartment in the building, opens the house and a surrounding safari park to visitors. "It all happened so quickly," he said. "It is a particularly fine Titian and one of the paintings acquired by the 4th Marquess of Bath. It would be very difficult to sell. We would be very glad to have it back. It is all very distressing."

Bath's land agent, Tim Moore, who was first on the scene, said they feared that the well-planned burglary was the work of a gang plundering art treasures from stately homes throughout England.

The two paintings stolen in addition to the Titian were a 16th century portrait of Eleanor of Austria attributed to the circle of Joos Van Cleve, and *A Personification of Justice* by Bonifazio Veronese.

When grief becomes song

By MARY SINANIDIS

IN THE days before soap operas, people here would listen to *paralages* (songs which described Greek culture), which were passed on by word-of-mouth, often making the origin of these creations untraceable. These songs would enchant people with their strange plots and topsy-turvy happenings - often sequels to the originals would follow. Their structure, symbols, superstitious quality, as well as the charming, colourful language gave paralages a theatrical twist which easily lends itself to theatrical adaptation. At the Municipal Theatre of Athens, the Argo group will perform a series of paralages for a limited number of performances.

Many may remember the Argo group from their participation last summer on the festival circuit where they performed at a number of venues. Rather than focus on ancient works, the group cast a novel spotlight on another neglected heirloom of Greek heritage - paralages.

These songs speak of life, death, love, heroism and other social themes. From a historical perspective, much can be learnt about the Greek village mentality - how they dealt with migration, loss of a loved one, the role of brigands, *kleftes* and *armatoli* (armed guerrillas who fought for Greek independence in the 19th century), the way society was gender-typed and the brutal punishment for betrayal. From a geographical scope, many of these songs are parochial and make references to various regions around Greece and give clues about the land's make-up (eg, we are told about Arta's Bridge, and learn



Actress Emilia Ypsilanti as a bereaved mourning Greek woman who finds consolation in ritualistic customs and the 'paralages' songs

much about Greece's borderlands). These songs have a mandatory 15-syllable iambic beat and regular use of characters such as *Digenis Akritas* (border guard), *Haros* (death), various villagers and dragons. Though simple, the tales have depth, through the use of symbols and the supernatural. In the up-and-down world of paralages, tragedies occur in threes; a swallow can mean spring or death, animals can

talk, corpses can communicate and rings signify eternity. Though the songs have a demotic tag and spring forth from the common people, they have the poetry and a high language level which make them evocative and representative of Greece's rich heritage. Their strong emotive qualities bear a resemblance to ancient Greek tragedies and Argo's performances have capitalised on this. Director Stavros Tsakiris

wished to preserve the authenticity of these songs, and these performances have followed a great deal of study regarding both the literature and history of the works. The performance consists of six actors, two musicians and a singer - each retaining his or her unique artistic personality while also interacting with others in the group. *Emilia Ypsilanti*, one of the most gifted theatre interpreters in this country, heads the Argo cast with moving interpretations. Other actors include *Panayiota Vlandi*, *Konstandina Papanastasiou*, *Petros Petrakis*, *Vassilis Risvas* and *Yiota Photopoulou*. *Yiota Vei* will sing with *Nikos Grapsas*, who will also provide musical accompaniment (he is also responsible for the musical direction). Other musicians include *Rowan Storm* and *Yiorgos Simeonidis*. Along with the acting and music, there will be dance as choreographed by *Dora Tsatsou*.

The set design is frugal and reminiscent of designs of ancient Greek tragedies. Costumes are also simple, with hints of national dress, such as embroidered motifs and traditional vests. Stage/costume designer *Savvas Haratsidis* blended the demotic and ancient.

This worthwhile presentation begins tomorrow night and will continue until January 29. Performances take place from Wednesday to Sunday at 9pm, with matinee performances on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday at 6.30pm. Tickets are priced at 3,500 drachmas (2,500 drachmas for student concessions).

The Athenian Municipal Theatre is located at 6a *Timokreontos St*, *Agios Sostis*. For further information call 934-4131.

Lost Cellini at Sotheby's

NEW YORK (Reuter) - A small bronze statue that anyone with deep pockets can buy got a big boost on Friday when a leading art expert said it was a long lost work by the Renaissance sculptor *Benvenuto Cellini*. Cellini is among the world's rarest sculptors - less than 15 are known to exist - and a change in attribution of the bronze statue of a reclining *Cleopatra* could add hundreds of thousands of dollars to its price when it goes on sale at Sotheby's tomorrow morning.

"I would say it is a Cellini both from its style and from the inventory found in his home when he died in 1571," said University of California at Santa Barbara art historian *Peter Meller*, who is considered one of the world's leading Cellini experts. The inventory made reference to a wax model of a *Cleopatra* and to another sculpture of her that was not described.

Meller spent Friday examining the 10-3/4 inch (27.3 cm) bronze statue of a reclining nude holding an asp to her neck. Afterwards, he said it bore remarkable similarities to figures on a saltcellar done by Cellini that is now part of the collection at Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna and showed a clear debt by the sculptor to Michelangelo.

But Sotheby's said it would now describe the work as "attributed to Cellini" and add a reference to Meller's findings. The work had been expected to sell for between \$25,000 and \$35,000 but now Sotheby's said it was raising its estimate to between \$250,000 and \$350,000. The Sotheby's catalogue even makes a reference to Cellini, saying the strikingly mannered pose of the female nude "bears a close resemblance to the figures around the base of the Cellini saltcellar."

around THE WORLD

with Paris Agiomamitis

● "IT'S an Elvis thing," said Dawn Smith and placed a birthday card, a teddy bear and a rose at the gravesite of *Elvis Presley*, the king of rock 'n' roll. Smith, who came from Chicago to acknowledge Presley's 60th birthday on Sunday, said she is typical of Elvis fans who agree there is a special aura about the king's home. Her act of devotion was only one of many during a mass celebration at Graceland, Presley's fabled home, honouring the late singer's birthday. With a cake fit for a king awaiting them, nearly 5,000 fans descended on Memphis on Friday for the three-day event. Fans sang happy birthday to the late rock king.



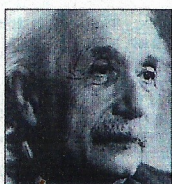
● ACTRESS *Linda Gray* nearly went on a permanent vacation recently after a stunt for her series *Models Inc* went all wrong. It occurred during the taping of a scene in which a car was supposed to speed and smash into a stunt double. However, Linda, confused, somehow got in its way and the car belted her and the stunt woman. Linda escaped from the incident unscathed, fortunately, and carried on with business as usual. A witness said, "It was terrifying. The car, an *Infiniti Q45*, was going about 40 mph before the driver slammed on the brakes and slid toward the double who was standing in for Linda's co-star." But Linda unfortunately got in the way.



● THE PIPE *Albert Einstein* smoked, and a game the Nobel Prize-winning physicist played with as a child, sold for 20,000 dollars at an auction on Saturday. It was not revealed who the buyer was but it is said it was a private collector, not a museum or institution. Einstein died in 1955 and is most famous for his discovery of the theory of relativity. He was often pictured smoking the pipe, and after his death his daughter gave it to friend and photographer *Stanford Roth*. The game included 10 two-inch (5cm) ivory pegs and a spinning top, authenticated by *Christie's* as a 19th-century game he played as a child.



● NIRVANA frontman *Kurt Cobain* was murdered! This stunning claim is being made by private investigator *Tom Grant*, hired by Cobain's widow *Courtney Love*, writes the *National Enquirer* magazine. Grant substantiates his claim on two of his findings. After enlarging the so-called suicide letter Cobain left, he found that the last two sentences of the letter were in someone else's handwriting. Secondly, contrary to police reports, no stool was put up against the door so no one would come in during his suicide. After some scrutiny, Grant says the stool was, instead, in front of two other unlocked doors leading to the balcony.



COMING events

● TWO-DAY workshop on TV with Greek and German panel of experts (in Greek and German) at the *Goethe Institute* (14-16 *Omiron St*, tel 360-8111). On Tues and Wed Jan 17 and 18 at 7pm. Open to all.

● LA CAMERATA Orchestra of the Friends of Music concert with works by *Samuel Barber*, *Luciano Berio*, *Yiannis Papaioannou* and others on Fri and Sat Jan 20 and 21 at 8.30pm at the *Megaron Mousikis* (Vas Sofias & Kokkafi Sts, tel 728-2333). Tickets at 6,000, 3,500 and 1,500 for students.

● FILM Director *Ken Loach* to be featured with four of his films in a festival organised by the *British Council* from Jan 23 to 31. Call the *British Council* (17 *Kolonaki Sq*, tel 363-3211).