
News

Hermitage Theft Suspect Released

The St. Petersburg Times

Prosecutors in have dropped all charges against Ivan Sobolev, who had been detained in the theft of nearly \$5 million in artifacts from the State Hermitage Museum, Interfax reported Monday. Sobolev, a lecturer in the history department at St. Petersburg State University, was released from the pre-trial detention facility where he had been held since early August.

Police told Interfax that Sobolev had been implicated only in thefts that occurred before 1995 and that the 10-year statute of limitations had therefore expired.

A routine inventory at the Hermitage this summer revealed that 221 items had gone missing. Thirty of the items have since been returned to the museum by collectors and antique dealers.

Sobolev was one of three suspects detained in the theft. The other two were the son and husband of the late Larisa Zavadskaya, a curator who worked in the section of the museum where the thefts occurred.

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