



ANCIENT COIN COLLECTORS GUILD

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<http://accg.us>

12/14/2007

Dr. Pavlos Flourentzos
Director, Department of Antiquities
Ministry of Communications and Works
P.O. Box 22024
1516 Nicosia
CYPRUS

Dear Dr. Flourentzos:

The Ancient Coin Collectors Guild is comprised of collectors, dealers and independent scholars interested in protecting the public's right to collect, preserve, study and display ancient coins, including those of Cypriot types.

We noted with interest the comments that you made during an interview with Jessica Dietzler of SAFE, and request that you will also, in equity, be so kind as to respond to some questions we seek to explore.

As you are aware, the recent decision to impose import restrictions on coins of Cypriot types has been very controversial in the United States, largely because the reasons why the State Department decided to take this unprecedented action are unclear. By responding to these questions, you can help to improve our understanding of the key issues relating to the decision.

1. If coins are of great importance to Cyprus' cultural heritage, why did Cypriot authorities ignore our reasonable queries about whether Cyprus was going to seek new import restrictions on them? The request to add coins was made of the State Department shortly before the public hearing—after the time allotted for public comment had elapsed.

2. Does your statement (in the SAFE interview) that all ancient artifacts, including those as common as coins, belong in museums rather than in private collections reflect your own individual views or does your statement present the position of the Cypriot government?

3. How many ancient coins of Cypriot types does the Republic of Cyprus maintain in state collections?

4. What percentage of these coins are on public display?

5. What percentage of these coins have been published? In which publications?
6. What percentage of these coins have provenances traceable back to a find spot?
7. Do the facilities in which these coins are stored have adequate security and environmental controls?
8. If (as the ACCG and others suspect) import restrictions on coins of Cypriot type were imposed against the recommendations of the experts on the Cultural Property Advisory Committee, and/or without proper approvals, would you still support these restrictions?
9. Do you think it is fair that import restrictions should be imposed solely based on coin types or do you agree there should be some effort to trace the individual coin in question back to Cyprus before a coin is detained by US Customs?
10. The Cyprus Mail recently published an article entitled, "Too Much Digging is Damaging our Heritage." [<http://www.cyprus-mail.com/news/main.php?id=23075&archive=1>] This article paints a rather unflattering picture of archaeology in Cyprus. What actions do you plan to take to address the problems raised in this article?
11. Do you have any plans to investigate whether a system akin to the Treasure Act and Portable Antiquities Scheme in Britain and Wales could be applied in Cyprus?
12. In your SAFE interview, you speak of damage to Greek patrimony on the Turkish side of the Island. What has the Republic of Cyprus done to protect Ottoman era artifacts and sites on the Greek side of the Island?
13. What would you like to say to US collectors that now have negative feelings toward the Republic of Cyprus, resulting from these import restrictions?

Your attention to these questions would be appreciated. We will post these questions and your responses on our web site.

Sincerely yours,



David Welsh
Chairman, International Affairs Committee