Re: U.S./Cyprus Bilateral Agreement

2 February 2007

Cultural Property Advisory Committee
Cultural Heritage Center
U.S. Department of State
301 4th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20547

On behalf of the World Archaeological Congress (WAC), I am writing to you regarding Cyprus' recent request to include coins more than 250 years old on the list of archaeological materials whose import into the U.S. is restricted through bilateral agreement. WAC supports Cyprus' request. Coins have important archaeological research potential when found in context and unfortunately are easily subject to pillage and illegal export. Coins are part of Cyprus' rich cultural heritage and when remove seriously jeopardizes its ability to interpret and understand its past.

WAC is an international organization representing professional archaeologists and other heritage professionals with members in over 90 countries around the world. WAC is dedicated to the protection, research, and understanding of the world's rich and diverse cultural heritage. Of particular importance to WAC is the right of sovereign nations to decide for themselves how best to manage their cultural heritage and implement effective measures to safeguard these valuable resources from pillage. Granting Cyprus' request is a proper move in the right direction.

Coins found in context offer archaeologists the ability to scientifically study the social, political, and economic history of Cyprus. Once coins are removed from their context without proper archaeological recording, it is impossible to ascertain this information and it is lost forever. Adding coins to the lists of archaeological materials protected by the bilateral agreement will ensure that Cyprus cultural patrimony is protected for future generations. WAC urges the Cultural Property Advisory Committee to include coins on the prohibited list of archaeological materials.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Claire Smith, Ph.D
President