
Letter¹

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Vassos Karageorghis' recent article (No: 2, Vol: 1, 1992, page 331) in which he discusses the trade in Cypriot antiquities in London presents a distorted picture of facts and realities.

Contrary to the baseless allegations of Mr Karageorghis the main source of Cypriot antiquities sold in the London market is not Northern Cyprus but in fact it is Southern Cyprus run by the Greek Cypriot Administration.

It is truly surprising that such allegations were made by Mr Karageorghis since according to the most recent information published in the Greek Cypriot press, it was none other than Mr Karageorghis himself who issued nearly 2000 export licences permitting the export of some 9000 pieces of valuable and mostly unprovenanced Cypriot antiquities to Europe and the United States while he served as the director of the Greek Cypriot Department of Antiquities, a post he held until recently.

Moreover, according to a recent statement made by Mr Michailis Loulloupis, of the Greek Cypriot Department of Antiquities, over the Greek Cypriot state radio, the flow of antiquities from the Greek Cypriot controlled part of Cyprus to Europe and the United States still continues unabated, with around 430 export licences being issued every year.

Finally, I would like to emphasize the fact that the Government of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is in firm control of the antiquities of North Cyprus and, contrary to the never-ending Greek Cypriot allegations, it is doing its best, with limited financial resources to preserve and protect them.

Editor's Note: According to the Antiquities Law of Cyprus, the Director of the Department of Antiquities may grant permission to export antiquities which are not considered to be worthy of retention for the Collections of the Museums of Cyprus. This Law has been in force since 1935 and has been followed by Dr Karageorghis' predecessors and successors. An official permit accompanies each of these exports (information received from Dr Karageorghis).

Note

1 Letter to the Editor dated 16 March 1993.

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