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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Customs Service

19 CFR PART 12

[T.D. 99--35]  
RIN 1515--AC46

Import Restrictions Imposed On Byzantine Ecclesiastical and Ritual  
Ethnological Material from Cyprus

AGENCY: U.S. Customs Service, Department of the Treasury.

ACTION: Final rule.

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SUMMARY: This document amends the Customs Regulations by imposing emergency import restrictions on certain ecclesiastical and ritual ethnological [[Page 17530]] material from Cyprus representing the Byzantine period, ranging in date from approximately the 4th century A.D. through approximately the 15th century A.D. These restrictions are being imposed pursuant to a determination of the United States Information Agency issued under the terms of the Convention on Cultural Property Implementation Act in accordance with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. The document contains the Designated List describing the Byzantine ecclesiastical and ritual ethnological material from Cyprus to which the restrictions apply.

EFFECTIVE DATE: April 12, 1999.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: (Legal Aspects) Donnette Rimmer, Intellectual Property Rights Branch (202) 927-2273; (Operational Aspects) Joan E. Sebenaler, Trade Operations (202) 927-0402.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The value of cultural property, whether archaeological or ethnological in nature, is immeasurable. Such items often constitute the very essence of a society and convey important information concerning a people's origin, history, and traditional setting. The importance and popularity of such items regrettably makes them targets of theft,

encourages clandestine looting of archaeological sites, and results in their illegal export and import.

The U.S. shares in the international concern for the need to protect endangered cultural property. The appearance in the U.S. of stolen or illegally exported artifacts from other countries where there has been pillage has, on occasion, strained our foreign and cultural relations. This situation, combined with the concerns of museum, archaeological, and scholarly communities, was recognized by the President and Congress. It became apparent that it was in the national interest for the U.S. to join with other countries to control illegal trafficking of such articles in international commerce.

The U.S. joined international efforts and actively participated in deliberations resulting in the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (823 U.N.T.S. 231 (1972)). U.S. acceptance of the 1970 UNESCO Convention was codified into U.S. law as the "Convention on Cultural Property Implementation Act" (Pub. L. 97-446, 19 U.S.C. 2601 et seq.) ("the Act"). This was done to promote U.S. leadership in achieving greater international cooperation towards preserving cultural treasures that are of importance to the nations from where they originate and to achieving greater international understanding of mankind's common heritage.

During the past several years, import restrictions have been imposed on archaeological and ethnological artifacts of a number of signatory nations. These restrictions have been imposed either as a result of requests for emergency protection received from those nations or pursuant to bilateral agreements between the United States and other countries.

This document amends the regulations by adding additional ethnological artifacts to the list of articles for which importation restrictions exist.

#### Cyprus

Under Sec. 303(a)(3) of the Cultural Property Implementation Act (19 U.S.C. 2602(a)(3)), Cyprus, a State Party to the 1970 UNESCO Convention, asked the U.S. Government to impose import restrictions on certain categories of archeological and/or ethnological material the pillage of which, it was alleged, jeopardizes the national cultural patrimony of Cyprus. Notice of receipt of this request was published by the United States Information Agency (USIA) in the Federal Register (63 FR 49154) on September 14, 1998.

The request was forwarded to the Cultural Property Advisory Committee, which conducted a review and investigation and submitted its report in accordance with the provisions of 19 U.S.C. 2605(f) to the Deputy Director, USIA. Pursuant to the provisions of 19 U.S.C. 2603(a)(3), the Committee found the situation in Cyprus to be an emergency, and recommended that emergency import restrictions be imposed on certain Byzantine ritual and ecclesiastical ethnological material from Cyprus. The Deputy Director, pursuant to the authority vested in him under Executive Order 12555 and USIA Delegation Order 86-3, considered the Committee's recommendations and on March 4, 1999, the Acting Director made the determination that emergency import restrictions be applied. The Commissioner of Customs, in consultation with the Acting Director

of the USIA, has developed a list of types of covered ritual and ecclesiastical ethnological material from Cyprus representing the Byzantine period. The materials on this list are subject to Sec. 12.104a(b), Customs Regulations (19 CFR 12.104a(b)). As provided in 19 U.S.C. 2601 et seq., and Sec. 12.104a(b), Customs Regulations, listed materials from this area may not be imported into the U.S. unless accompanied by documentation certifying that the material left Cyprus legally and not in violation of the laws of Cyprus. In the event an importer cannot produce the certificate, documentation, or other evidence required by Sec. 12.104c, Customs Regulations (19 CFR 12.104c) at the time of making entry, Sec. 12.104d, Customs Regulations (19 CFR 12.104d) provides that the port director shall take custody of the material until the certificate, documentation, or evidence is presented. Section 12.104e provides that if the importer states in writing that he will not attempt to secure the required certificate, documentation, or evidence, or the importer does not present the required certificate, documentation, or evidence to Customs within the time provided, the material shall be seized and summarily forfeited to the U.S. in accordance with the provisions of Part 162, Customs Regulations (19 CFR Part 162).

#### List of Ecclesiastical and Ritual Ethnological Material from Cyprus Representing the Byzantine Period

Ecclesiastical and ritual ethnological material from Cyprus representing the Byzantine period dating from approximately the 4th century A.D. through the 15th century A.D., includes the categories listed below. The following list is representative only.

##### I. Metal

###### A. Bronze

Ceremonial objects include crosses, censers (incense burners), rings, and buckles for ecclesiastical garments. The objects may be decorated with engraved or modeled designs or Greek inscriptions. Crosses, rings and buckles are often set with semi-precious stones.

###### B. Lead

Lead objects date to the Byzantine period and include ampulla (small bottle-shaped forms) used in religious observance.

###### C. Silver and Gold

Ceremonial vessels and objects used in ritual and as components of church treasure. Ceremonial objects include censers (incense burners), book covers, liturgical crosses, archbishop's crowns, buckles, and chests. These are often decorated with molded or incised geometric motifs or scenes from the Bible, and encrusted with semi-precious [[Page 17531]] or precious stones. The gems themselves may be engraved with religious figures or inscriptions. Church treasure may include all of the above, as well as rings, earrings, and necklaces (some decorated with ecclesiastical themes) and other implements (e.g., spoons).

##### II. Wood

Artifacts made of wood are primarily those intended for ritual or ecclesiastical use during the Byzantine period. These include painted icons, painted wood screens (iconstasis), carved doors, crosses,

painted wooded beams from churches or monasteries, thrones, chests and musical instruments. Religious figures (Christ, the Apostles, the Virgin, and others) predominate in the painted and carved figural decoration. Ecclesiastical furniture and architectural elements may also be decorated with geometric or floral designs.

### III. Ivory and Bone

Ecclesiastical and ritual objects of ivory and bone boxes, plaques, pendants, candelabra, stamp rings, crosses. Carved and engraved decoration includes religious figures, scenes from the Bible, and floral and geometric designs.

### IV. Glass

Ecclesiastical objects such as lamps and ritual vessels.

### V. Textiles--Ritual Garments

Ecclesiastical garments and other ritual textiles from the Byzantine period. Robes, vestments and altar clothes are often of a fine fabric and richly embroidered in silver and gold. Embroidered designs include religious motifs and floral and geometric designs.

### VI. Stone

#### A. Wall Mosaics

Dating to the Byzantine period, wall mosaics are found in ecclesiastical buildings. These generally portray images of Christ, Archangels, and the Apostles in scenes of Biblical events. Surrounding panels may contain animal, floral, or geometric designs.

#### B. Floor Mosaics

Floor mosaics from ecclesiastical contexts. Examples include the mosaics at Nea Paphos, Kourion, Kouklia, Chrysopolitissa Basilica and Campanopetra Basilica. Floor mosaics may have animal, floral, geometric designs, or inscriptions.

### VII. Frescoes/Wall Paintings

Wall paintings from the Byzantine period religious structures (churches, monasteries, chapels, etc.) Like the mosaics, wall paintings generally portray images of Christ, Archangels, and the Apostles in scenes of Biblical events. Surrounding paintings may contain animal, floral, or geometric designs.

### Inapplicability of Notice and Delayed Effective Date

This amendment is being made without notice or public procedure, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), because the action being taken is of an emergency nature and such notice or public procedure would be impracticable and contrary to the public interest. For the same reasons, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3), a delayed effective date is not required.

### Regulatory Flexibility Act

Because no notice of proposed rulemaking is required, the provisions of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) do not apply.

Executive Order 12866

This amendment does not meet the criteria of a "significant regulatory action" as described in E.O. 12866.

Drafting Information

The principal author of this document was Keith B. Rudich, Esq., Regulations Branch, Office of Regulations and Rulings, U.S. Customs Service. However, personnel from other offices participated in its development.

List of Subjects in 19 CFR Part 12

Customs duties and inspections, Imports, Cultural property.

Amendment to the Regulations

Accordingly, Part 12 of the Customs Regulations (19 CFR Part 12) is amended as set forth below:

PART 12--[AMENDED]

1. The general authority and specific authority citation for Part 12, in part, continue to read as follows:

Authority: 5 U.S.C. 301, 19 U.S.C. 66, 1202 (General Note 20, Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (HTSUS)), 1624;

\* \* \* \* \*

Sections 12.104 through 12.104i also issued under 19 U.S.C. 2612;

\* \* \* \* \*

2. In Sec. 12.104g(b) the list of emergency actions imposing import restrictions on described articles of cultural property of State Parties is amended by adding Cyprus in appropriate alphabetical order as follows:

Sec. 12.104g Specific items or categories designated by agreements or emergency actions.

State party	Cultural property	T.D. number
Cyprus.....	Byzantine ecclesiastical and ritual ethnological materials from Cyprus.	99-35

Approved: March 30, 1999.  
Raymond W. Kelly,  
Commissioner of Customs.  
Dennis M. O'Connell,  
Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Treasury.  
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