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MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON REACHES AGREEMENT CONCERNING HOLOCAUST-ERA SETTLEMENT OF GIAQUINTO PAINTING

BOSTON, Mass. (October 19, 2000)-Today, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA) announced that it has reached an agreement with the heirs of Federico Gentili di Giuseppe for the painting *Adoration of the Magi*, c. 1725, by the Italian master Corrado Giaquinto. The MFA, working with the heirs of Gentili di Giuseppe, has reached a part purchase and part donation agreement for the painting which will enable it to remain in the MFA's collection. Its previous owner, Gentili di Giuseppe, was a Jewish resident of France who died of natural causes in 1940. His collection, including this painting (then thought to be a work of the artist Pietro da Cortona), was sold under the order of a French court during the Nazi occupation of Paris and much of France.

"The restitution of artwork from the Holocaust and World War II-era is one of the most important issues that museums are dealing with today," said Malcolm Rogers, Ann and Graham Gund Director of the MFA. "We are so pleased that we were able to work with the family to reach an amicable conclusion regarding this painting and hope that in some way this resolution honors the memory of Federico Gentili di Giuseppe."

In 1998, the heirs of Gentili di Giuseppe brought legal action against the Musée du Louvre and the State of France to have the April 1941 auction sale of Gentili di Giuseppe's estate declared null and void. On June 2, 1999, the Court of Appeals of Paris nullified the 1941 sale, determining that the descendants of the owner had been prevented from attending to the administration of the estate due to the German occupation of France. Five works of art in the collection of the Musée du Louvre that had been sold in the April 1941 auction were returned to the family of Gentili di Giuseppe. In February 2000, after this dispute was resolved, the heirs began discussions with the MFA about Giaquinto's *Adoration of the Magi*, which came from the Gentili di Giuseppe collection, was part of the April 1941 auction, and had been purchased by the Museum in 1992.

Since February, the Museum and the heirs of Gentili di Giuseppe have worked together amicably on an agreement. Because the MFA purchased the painting in 1992, before the claim of the Gentili di Giuseppe heirs was registered with the French government, the heirs affirmed that the Museum acquired the work in good faith, without knowledge that the sale from the collection of Gentili di Giuseppe was suspect. This fall, the MFA and the heirs agreed on a part purchase, part donation settlement. Beginning with their first contact with the Museum, the heirs, whose relatives took refuge in Canada and then Boston during World War II and who have close ties with Harvard University, have expressed a strong desire to leave the painting in the MFA's collection for the people of Boston and the world to enjoy. *Adoration of the Magi* is the MFA's only painting by Giaquinto, one of the most important Italian Rococo artists of the early 18th century.

"We are grateful to the heirs of Gentili di Giuseppe for their good will and for their desire to work with the MFA to insure that the work will remain on view to the public," said George T. M. Shackelford, Chair of the Art of Europe department at the MFA. "We are glad to see such a happy conclusion for everyone involved."

The Museum purchased the painting in April 1992, from Thomas Agnew & Sons Ltd., a distinguished firm of art dealers established in London in the early nineteenth century. The firm, in turn, had purchased the painting at Christie's, Monte-Carlo in June 1990.

In April 2000, the Museum posted on its Web site, www.mfa.org, a list of seven European paintings for which it has history of ownership concerns. *Adoration of the Magi* was not included on the Museum's Web site because the heirs of Gentili di Giuseppe requested anonymity during the discussions leading to a settlement. (It was acknowledged to the press in April that discussions about a European painting in the MFA's collection were underway with heirs who had requested privacy.) Today, the painting will be added to the Museum's Web site; its entry will include information about the 1941 sale, the 1999 judgment of the French court in favor of the heirs of Gentili di Giuseppe and the MFA's amicable resolution with the family. A new wall label has also been created for the painting, which remains on view in the Museum's European galleries, which acknowledges the history of the work and the fact that it comes from the collection of Federico Gentili di Giuseppe.