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**TURKEY'S LAWSUIT AGAINST METROPOLITAN
MUSEUM OF ART ENDS WITH RETURN OF
LYDIAN HOARD ANTIQUITIES TO TURKEY**

The Metropolitan Museum of Art has agreed to return the fabled "Lydian Hoard" antiquities in its possession to the Republic of Turkey. Under the terms of an agreement ending Turkey's six year lawsuit against the Museum, signed this week by Engin Özgen, Turkey's Director General of Monuments and Museums, and Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Metropolitan, the Museum will return the treasure to Turkey within the next 30 days. Five of the most extraordinary pieces in the collection are being carried back to Turkey by Mr. Özgen and will be exhibited in Istanbul at a conference announcing the recovery of the Hoard to be held by Turkey's Minister of Culture, Hon. Fikri Saglar; the conference is presently scheduled for Friday, September 24th at 1:00 p.m. (Istanbul time).

The "Lydian Hoard" is a treasure of rare and exquisitely crafted ancient objects, including gold, silver and bronze pitchers, bowls, ladles and incense burners, and jewelry of

gold, silver, carnelian and glass, as well as wall paintings, and sculpted sphinxes. The objects date back 2,500 years to the 6th-century B.C. reign of the legendary King Croesus of Lydia, a civilization that thrived in what is today the western Anatolian region of Turkey.

In the mid-1960s, the spectacular collection was plundered from ancient burial tombs, and most of the objects were smuggled out of Turkey, sold to dealers and then acquired by the Metropolitan. Although acknowledged by Metropolitan officials to be one of the Museum's great acquisitions, the first significant public display of the objects did not occur until 1984, when some of them were placed on permanent display and heralded as part of the Museum's "East Greek Treasure." It was only at this point that the Republic was able to identify the Hoard, long rumored to be in the Met's possession. The Republic demanded its return and, when the Met refused, commenced its lawsuit in 1987.

Director General Özgen hailed the agreement as an extraordinary victory for the people of Turkey, the rightful owners of the Hoard, and expressed the Republic's gratitude to its attorneys, Lawrence M. Kaye and Harry I. Rand, of the New York law firm of Herrick, Feinstein. Mr. Kaye noted that "the recovery of the priceless collection is a vindication of the

persistent and tireless efforts of the Turkish government over the past several years to restore to Turkey the cultural patrimony which has been looted from its land." Mr. Rand added that "the Metropolitan's return of the Lydian Hoard to Turkey represents a monumental step in establishing the rights of all nations to protection of their artistic and cultural property from the ravages of plunderers and international traffickers in stolen art." A number of important repatriation cases brought by Turkey and other nations are presently pending before American courts.

Mr. Özgen said that the 363 "Lydian Hoard" antiquities now being returned by the Metropolitan will be prominently exhibited in the museums of Istanbul, Ankara and other Turkish cities, and he noted that the significance of their return cannot be stated strongly enough. The Hoard comprises the largest and most complete collection of objects of the Lydian civilization. The objects being returned will be displayed in their proper setting, joining the some 100 artifacts recovered by the Turkish authorities from the thieves when the tombs were plundered in the mid-1960's. Mr. Özgen stated that the Hoard is one of Turkey's great treasures and will afford the Turkish people, as well as archaeologists and other scholars, a heretofore unavailable resource for the study and appreciation of the Lydian civilization.

Mr. Özgen declared that, with the end of this long litigation, the Ministry of Culture is looking forward to a new era of mutual cooperation with the Metropolitan. Accordingly, the Ministry and the Museum have agreed to consider cultural projects of mutual benefit, including art conservation, reciprocal loans, archaeological excavation in Turkey and the establishment of study fellowships both in Turkey and with the Museum.