

U.S. Import Restrictions on Ancient Coins (current as of June 17, 2021)

This paper details U.S. import restrictions on ancient coins. After an overview of the issue, this paper lists current restrictions. Finally, there is a discussion of “safe harbor” documentation for legal import of restricted items. The ACCG is providing the below information as a public service to coin collectors. **While we believe we are providing as accurate information as possible, it should not be construed as legal advice.**

For twenty-five years after the Cultural Property Implementation Act (CPIA) was passed, there were no import restrictions on ancient coins. This should be no surprise because it is hard to link coins—which by their very nature are instruments of exchange—to one modern nation state. Indeed when the CPIA was being negotiated, Mark Feldman, one of the State Department’s top lawyers, assured Congress that “it would be hard to imagine a case” where coins would be restricted. In 2007, however, the State Department imposed import restrictions on Cypriot coins, against CPAC’s recommendations, and then misled the public and Congress about it in official government reports. What also should be troubling is that the decision maker, Assistant Secretary Dina Powell, did so AFTER she had accepted a job with Goldman Sachs where she was recruited by and worked for the spouse of the founder of the Antiquities Coalition, an archaeological advocacy group that has lobbied extensively for import restrictions. Since that time, additional import restrictions have been imposed on coins from Algeria, Bulgaria, China, Egypt, Greece, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Turkey and Yemen. Import restrictions remain pending for Albania and Tunisia.

The restricted coins can only be imported into the United States with: (a) an export certificate issued by the country for which import restrictions were given (which are non-existent); or (b) “satisfactory evidence” demonstrating that the coins were exported from or were outside that country at least 10 years prior to importation into the U.S.; or (c) “satisfactory evidence” demonstrating that the coins were exported from or were outside the country before the date the restrictions went into effect. What constitutes “satisfactory evidence” is ultimately left to the discretion of Customs, but usually takes the form of a declaration by the importer and a statement by the consigner. Keep in mind, however, that U.S. Customs believes it has authority to ask for additional information to back up such declarations.

The cumulative impact of import restrictions has been very difficult for coin collectors since outside of some valuable Greek coins, most coins simply lack the document trail necessary for legal import under the “safe harbor” provisions of 19 U.S.C. § 2606. The CPIA only authorizes the government to impose import restrictions on coins and other artifacts first discovered within and subject to the export control of the country for which restrictions were granted. (19 U.S.C. § 2601). Furthermore, seizure is only appropriate for items on the designated list *exported from the State Party after the effective date of regulations*. (19 U.S.C. § 2606). Unfortunately, the State Department and Customs view this authority far more broadly. Designated lists have been prepared based on where coins are made and sometimes found, not where they are actually found and hence are subject to export control. Furthermore, restrictions are not applied prospectively solely to illegal exports made after the effective date of regulations, but rather are enforced against any import into the U.S. made after the effective date of regulations, i.e., an embargo, not targeted, prospective import restrictions.

Another related concern is the burden of proof once an item is seized. Mark Feldman, has also confirmed the legislative intent that the burden of proof was on the government to establish that the object was illicitly removed from the country where it was found after the effective date of the implementing regulations. “Statement of Deputy State Department Legal Adviser, Mark Feldman in *Proceedings of the Panel on the U.S. Enabling Legislation of the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property*, 4 Syracuse J. Int’l L. & Com. 97 1976-1977 at 129-130. However, CBP instead views the burden of proof as being on the importer, not the government. This, along with the high cost of legal services, leads to most cultural artifacts, particularly minor ones like coins, being abandoned by the importer if they are seized.

While it is true enforcement has been spotty, we know of situations where coins have been detained, seized, and repatriated where the importer cannot produce information to prove his or her coins were outside of a country for which import restrictions were granted before the date of restrictions.

Below we provide a list of current import restrictions on coins as well as the documentation necessary to take advantage of “safe harbor” provisions of 19 U.S.C. § 2606. Properly filled out documentation should allow free entry but be aware it has been reported that on occasion CBP asks for additional documentation, i.e., published auction references pre-dating the effective date of the applicable regulation.

A. List of Current Restrictions:

1. Algeria:

Effective date: August 14, 2019

Source: 84 Fed. Reg. 41909-41913 (August 16, 2019).

The Designated List of coins subject to import restrictions is as follows:

Pre-Roman mints in Algeria include Cirta, Hippo Regius, Caesarea (Iol), Lix, Siga, and Timici. Roman provincial mints in Algeria include Caesarea, Cartenna, and Hippo Regius. Helpful reference books include: *Corpus nummorum Numidiae Mauretaniaeque*, 1955, J. Mazard, et al., Arts et metiers graphiques, Paris; *Le Trésor de Guelma*, 1963, R. Turcan, Arts et Métiers Graphiques, Paris; *Etude sur la numismatique et l’histoire monétaire du Maroc: Corpus des dirhams idrissites et contemporains*, 1971, D. Eustache, Banque du Maroc, Rabat; *Corpus des Monnaies Alaouites*, 1984, D. Eustache, Banque du Maroc, Rabat; *The Roman Provincial Coinage*, multiple volumes, 1992-, A. Burnett, et al., The British Museum Press, London. Some of the best-known types are described below:

1. Greek—In silver, bronze, and gold, struck in Algeria and in nearby mints (Cyrene, Carthage).
2. Roman Provincial—In bronze, struck at Roman and Roman provincial mints and found throughout Algeria.

3. Numidian and Mauretanian—Associated with Numidian kings such as Micipsa, Jugurtha, Hiempsal II, and Juba I, and Mauretanian kings such as Syphax, Juba II, Ptolemy II of Mauretania, Bocchus I, and Bocchus II.
4. Byzantine—In bronze, silver, and gold, struck in nearby mints like Carthage or mobile mints in Arab-Byzantine period Ifriqiya.
5. Islamic—In silver and gold struck at various mints including Algiers, Bijaya, Biskra, Qusantina, and Tlemcen. Examples include any coins of the following dynasties: Almohad, Hafsid, Marinid, and Ziyamid.
6. Ottoman—Ottoman coins of Algeria in silver, gold, billon, and copper, struck at various mints including Algiers, Qusantina, Tagdemt, and Tlemcen. Also Spanish coins of Oran in billon or copper, produced in Toledo or Madrid for use in Spanish Oran between 1618 and 1691.

Comment: This Designated List includes many coins that circulated in quantity outside of Algeria. These include Greek issues of Cyrene, Carthaginian coins, Numidian and Mauritanian coins, Byzantine, Islamic and Ottoman coins. The fact is Algeria was until the recent times part of larger Empires.

2. Bulgaria:

Effective Date: January 16, 2014

Source: 79 Fed. Reg. 2781-2785 (January 16, 2014).

The designated list, taken from the Federal Register, is as follows:

7. Coins – In copper, bronze, silver and gold. Many of the listed coins with inscriptions in Greek can be found in B. Head, *Historia Numorum: A Manual of Greek Numismatics* (London, 1911) and C.M. Kraay, *Archaic and Classical Greek Coins* (London, 1976). Many of the Roman provincial mints in modern Bulgaria are covered in I. Varbanov, *Greek Imperial Coins I: Dacia, Moesia Superior, Moesia Inferior* (Bourgas, 2005), id., *Greek Imperial Coins II: Thrace (from Abderato Pautalia)* (Bourgas, 2005), id., *Greek Imperial Coins III: Thrace (from Perinthus to Trajanopolis), Chersonesos Thraciae, Insula Thraciae, Macedonia* (Bourgas 2007). A non-exclusive list of pre-Roman and Roman mints include Mesembria (modern Nesebar), Dionysopolis (Balchik), Marcianopolis (Devnya), Nicopolis ad Istrum (near Veliko Tarnovo), Odessus (Varna), Anchialus (Pomorie), Apollonia Pontica (Sozopol), Cabyle (Kabile), Deultum (Debelt), Nicopolis ad Nestum (Garmen), Pautalia (Kyustendil), Philippopolis (Plovdiv), Serdica (Sofia), and Augusta Traiana (Stara Zagora). Later coins may be found in A. Radushev and G. Zhekov, *Catalogue of Bulgarian Medieval Coins IX-XV c.* (Sofia 1999) and J. Youroukova and V. Penchev, *Bulgarian Medieval Coins and Seals* (Sofia 1990).
 - a. Pre-monetary media of exchange including “arrow money,” bells, and bracelets. Approximate date: 13th century B.C. through 6th century B.C.
 - b. Thracian and Hellenistic coins struck in gold, silver, and bronze by city-states and kingdoms that operated in the territory of the modern Bulgarian state. This designation includes official coinages of Greek-using city-states and kingdoms, Scythian and Celtic

coinage, and local imitations of official issues. Also included are Greek coins from nearby regions that are found in Bulgaria. Approximate date: 6th century BC through the 1st century B.C.

c. Roman provincial coins – Locally produced coins usually struck in bronze or copper at mints in the territory of the modern state of Bulgaria. May also be silver, silver plate, or gold. Approximate date: 1st century BC through the 4th century A.D.

d. Coinage of the First and Second Bulgarian Empires and Byzantine Empire – Struck in gold, silver, and bronze by Bulgarian and Byzantine emperors at mints within the modern state of Bulgaria. Approximate date: 4th century A.D. through A.D. 1396.

e. Ottoman coins – Struck at mints within the modern state of Bulgaria. Approximate date: A.D. 1396 through A.D. 1750.

Comment: Another exceptionally overbroad list including many coins that circulated in quantity outside of Bulgaria, most notably Hellenistic issues in silver and bronze. These restrictions are particularly ridiculous because there is a large internal market for such coins within Bulgaria itself.

3. China

Effective Date: January 14, 2019

Source: 74 Fed. Reg. 2838-2844 (January 16, 2009).

The Designated list is as follows:

3. *Coins.*

a. Zhou Media of Exchange and Tool-shaped Coins: Early media of exchange include bronze spades, bronze knives, and cowrie shells. During the 6th century BC, flat, simplified, and standardized cast bronze versions of spades appear and these constitute China's first coins. Other coin shapes appear in bronze including knives and cowrie shells. These early coins may bear inscriptions.

b. Later, tool-shaped coins began to be replaced by disc-shaped ones which are also cast in bronze and marked with inscriptions. These coins have a central round or square hole.

c. Qin: In the reign of Qin Shi Huangdi (221–210 BC) the square-holed round coins become the norm. The new Qin coin is inscribed simply with its weight, expressed in two Chinese characters *ban liang*. These are written in small seal script and are placed symmetrically to the right and left of the central hole.

d. Han through Sui: Inscriptions become longer, and may indicate that inscribed object is a coin, its value in relation to other coins, or its size. Later, the period of issue, name of the mint, and numerals representing dates may also appear on obverse or reverse. A new script, clerical (*lishu*), comes into use in the Jin.

e. Tang: The clerical script becomes the norm until 959, when coins with regular script (kaishu) also begin to be issued.

Comment: Another exceptionally overbroad list including many coins that circulated in quantity outside of China, most cash coins that helped monetize Japan and South East Asia. These restrictions are particularly ridiculous because there is an immense internal market for such coins within China itself.

4. Cyprus

Effective Date: July 16, 2007

Source: 72 Fed. Reg. 38,470-73 (July 16, 2007).

The Designated List is as follows:

D. Coins of Cypriot Types

Coins of Cypriot types made of gold, silver, and bronze including but not limited to:

1. Issues of the ancient kingdoms of Amathus, Kition, Kourion, Idalion, Lapethos, Marion, Paphos, Soli, and Salamis dating from the end of the 6th century B.C. to 332 B.C.
2. Issues of the Hellenistic period, such as those of Paphos, Salamis, and Kition from 332 B.C. to c. 30 B.C.
3. Provincial and local issues of the Roman period from c. 30 B.C. to 235 A.D. Often these have a bust or head on one side and the image of a temple (the Temple of Aphrodite at Palaipaphos) or statue (statue of Zeus Salaminios) on the other.

Comment: The first import restrictions on coins, imposed against the recommendations of the Cultural Property Advisory Committee. CPAC's chairman at the time, the late Jay Kislak, confirmed in an affidavit that the decision was made against his Committee's recommendations, and that the State Department misled the public and Congress about it in official government documents. The Designated List includes early issues found in the famous Asyut Hoard from Egypt, Hellenistic coins that circulated throughout the Ptolemaic Empire, and Roman Provincial coins that circulated in quantity in nearby Turkey.

5. Egypt

Effective date: December 5, 2016

Source: 81 Fed. Reg. 87805- 87809 (December 6, 2016).

The Designated List is as follows:

H. Coins

In copper or bronze, silver, and gold.

1. General—There are a number of references that list Egyptian coin types. Below are some examples. Most Hellenistic and Ptolemaic coin types are listed in R.S. Poole, *A Catalogue of Greek Coins in the British Museum: Alexandria and the Nomes* (London, 1893); J.N. Svoronos, *Τὰ Νομισματά του Κρατους των Πτολεμαίων (Münzen der Ptolemäer)* (Athens 1904); and R.A. Hazzard, *Ptolemaic Coins: An Introduction for Collectors* (Toronto, 1985). Examples of catalogues listing the Roman coinage in Egypt are J.G. Milne, *Catalogue of Alexandrian Coins* (Oxford, 1933); J.W. Curtis, *The Tetradrachms of Roman Egypt* (Chicago, 1969); A. Burnett, M. Amandry, and P.P. Ripollès, *Roman Provincial Coinage I: From the Death of Caesar to the Death of Vitellius (44 BC-AD 69)* (London, 1998—revised edition); and A. Burnett, M. Amandry, and I. Carradice, *Roman Provincial Coinage II: From Vespasian to Domitian (AD 69-96)* (London, 1999). There are also so-called *nwb-nfr* coins, which may date to Dynasty 30. See T. Faucher, W. Fischer-Bossert, and S. Dhennin, “Les Monnaies en or aux types hiéroglyphiques *nwb nfr*,” *Bulletin de l'institut français d'archéologie orientale* 112 (2012), pp. 147-169.

2. Dynasty 30 —*Nwb nfr* coins have the hieroglyphs *nwb nfr* on one side and a horse on the other.

3. Hellenistic and Ptolemaic coins—Struck in gold, silver, and bronze at Alexandria and any other mints that operated within the borders of the modern Egyptian state. Gold coins of and in honor of Alexander the Great, struck at Alexandria and Memphis, depict a helmeted bust of Athena on the obverse and a winged Victory on the reverse. Silver coins of Alexander the Great, struck at Alexandria and Memphis, depict a bust of Herakles wearing the lion skin on the obverse, or “heads” side, and a seated statue of Olympian Zeus on the reverse, or “tails” side. Gold coins of the Ptolemies from Egypt will have jugate portraits on both obverse and reverse, a portrait of the king on the obverse and a cornucopia on the reverse, or a jugate portrait of the king and queen on the obverse and cornucopiae on the reverse. Silver coins of the Ptolemies coins from Egypt tend to depict a portrait of Alexander wearing an elephant skin on the obverse and Athena on the reverse or a portrait of the reigning king with an eagle on the reverse. Some silver coins have jugate portraits of the king and queen on the obverse. Bronze coins of the Ptolemies commonly depict a head of Zeus (bearded) on the obverse and an eagle on the reverse. These iconographical descriptions are non-exclusive and describe only some of the more common examples. There are other types and variants. Approximate date: ca. 332 B.C. through ca. 31 B.C.

4. Roman coins—Struck in silver or bronze at Alexandria and any other mints that operated within the borders of the modern Egyptian state in the territory of the modern state of Egypt until the monetary reforms of Diocletian. The iconography of the coinage

in the Roman period varied widely, although a portrait of the reigning emperor is almost always present on the obverse of the coin. Approximate date: ca. 31 B.C. through ca. A.D. 294.

Comment: The current designated list for Egypt ignores the statutory requirement that restricted objects must both be “first discovered within” and subject to Egyptian “export control.” Only coins that “exclusively” circulated within Egypt can meet both requirements, but larger denomination gold and silver Alexander the Great, Ptolemaic and Roman Egyptian coin types that circulated in quantity outside the modern borders of Egypt nonetheless ended up on the 2016 designated list. Proponents may have raised Egypt’s so-called “closed monetary system” under the Ptolemies and Roman Provincial authorities to justify these restrictions, but that system was meant to keep foreign coins "out" and not Egyptian coins “in.” Moreover, the borders of ancient Egypt stretched well beyond its modern borders, and larger denomination Greek and Roman Egyptian Provincial coins with Greek legends are found in quantity well outside of Egypt.

6. Greece-

Effective Date: December 1, 2011

Source: 76 Fed. Reg. 74691-74695 (December 1, 2011)

The Designated List is as follows:

7. *Coins*—Many of the mints of the listed coins can be found in B.V. Head, *Historia Numorum: A Manual of Greek Numismatics* (London, 1911) and C.M. Kraay, *Archaic and Classical Greek Coins* (London, 1976). Many of the Roman provincial mints in Greece are listed in A. Burnett *et al.*, *Roman Provincial Coinage I: From the Death of Caesar to the Death of Vitellius (44 BC–AD 69)* (London, 1992) and *id.*, *Roman Provincial Coinage II: From Vespasian to Domitian (AD 69–96)* (London, 1999).

a. *Greek Bronze Coins*—Struck by city-states, leagues, and kingdoms that operated in territory of the modern Greek state (including the ancient territories of the Peloponnese, Central Greece, Thessaly, Epirus, Crete and those parts of the territories of ancient Macedonia, Thrace and the Aegean islands that lay within the boundaries of the modern Greek state). Approximate date: 5th century B.C. to late 1st century B.C.

b. *Greek Silver Coins*—This category includes the small denomination coins of the city-states of Aegina, Athens, and Corinth, and the Kingdom of Macedonia under Philip II and Alexander the Great. Such coins weigh less than approximately 10 grams and are known as obols, diobols, triobols, hemidrachms, and drachms. Also included are all denominations of coins struck by the other city-states, leagues, and kingdoms that operated in the territory of the modern Greek state

(including the ancient territories of the Peloponnese, Central Greece, Thessaly, Epirus, Crete, and those parts of the territories of ancient Macedonia, Thrace and the Aegean islands that lie within the boundaries of the modern Greek state). Approximate date: 6th century B.C. to late 1st century B.C.

c. Roman Coins Struck in Greece—In silver and bronze, struck at Roman and Roman provincial mints that operated in the territory of the modern Greek state (including the ancient territories of the Peloponnese, Central Greece, Thessaly, Epirus, Crete, and those parts of the territories of ancient Macedonia, Thrace and the Aegean islands that lie within the boundaries of the modern Greek state). Approximate date: late 2nd century B.C. to 3rd century A.D.

Comment: The Greek designated list is one of the few that tries to distinguish between widely circulating coins and other local issues that are more likely to be found within the confines of modern-day Greece. While we can debate whether larger denomination coins from most Greek city states should have been included, the list at least recognizes the fact that large denomination coins of Aegina, Athens, Corinth, and the Macedonian Kingdom circulated far outside the confines of modern-day Greece.

7. Iraq-

Effective Date: April 30, 2008

Source: 73 Fed. Reg. 23334-23342 (April 30, 2008).

The Designated List is as Follows:

B. Coins

1. Coins in Iraq have a long history and great variety, spanning the Achaemenid Persian, Hellenistic Seleucid, Parthian, Sasanian, and Islamic periods. Coins from neighboring regions circulated in Iraq as well. Early coins are hand-stamped, so that the design is usually off-center.
2. Achaemenid coins are the gold daric and silver siglos, and fractional and multiple denominations. Both are stamped on the front with an image of the king holding a bow, and on the back with a non-figural oblong mark.
3. Coin types and materials for coins minted or circulated in Iraq during the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanian periods include gold staters and dinars, bronze or silver drachms, tetradrachms, and hemidrachms, and smaller bronze and lead coins. These coins usually have male and female busts (of kings and queens) on the front. Seated archers, seated gods such as Zeus, winged Victory, and other Greco-Roman mythological subjects, are usually on the reverse of the Seleucid and Parthian coins, which are inscribed in Greek or Parthian. Sasanian period coins typically feature a fire altar on the back, either with or without figures, and are inscribed in Middle Persian.
4. Early Islamic coins are of gold, silver, and copper. Most are stamped on both sides with inscriptions in Arabic, though a few types have an image on one side and an inscription on the other.

Comment: Another all-encompassing list that includes many coins that circulated far outside of Iraq. These restrictions were made under separate statutory authority justified by looting in Iraq after the First Gulf War.

8. Italy-

Effective Date: January 19, 2011

Source: 76 Fed. Reg. 3012-3014 (Jan. 19, 2011).

The Designated List is as follows:

F. *Coins of Italian Types*—A type catalogue of listed currency and coins can be found in N.K. Rutter *et al.* (eds.), *Historia Numorum: Italy* (London, 2001). Others appear in G.F. Hill *Coins of Ancient Sicily* (Westminster, 1903).

1. *Lumps of bronze (Aes Rude)*—Irregular lumps of bronze used as an early medium of exchange in Italy from the 9th century B.C.

2. *Bronze bars (Ramo Secco and Aes Signatum)*—Cast bronze bars (whole or cut) used as a media of exchange in central Italy and Etruria from the 5th century B.C.

3. *Cast coins (Aes Grave)*—Cast bronze coins of Rome, Etruscan, and Italian cities from the 4th century B.C.

4. *Struck coins*—Struck coins of the Roman Republic and Etruscan cities produced in gold, silver, and bronze from the 3rd century B.C. to c. 211 B.C., including the “Romano-Campanian” coinage.

5. *Struck colonial coinage*—Struck bronze coins of Roman republican and early imperial colonies and *municipia* in Italy, Sicily, and Sardinia from the 3rd century B.C. to c. A.D. 37.

6. *Coins of the Greek cities*—Coins of the Greek cities in the southern Italian peninsula and in Sicily (Magna Graecia), cast or struck in gold, silver, and bronze, from the late 6th century B.C. to c. 200 B.C.

Comment: Italy is another country where restrictions are ridiculous given the country’s immense legal internal market in ancient coins. This designated list encompasses large denomination Sicilian issues that are thought to have circulated in quantity outside of the confines of modern-day Italy. Thankfully, no restrictions have been put in place on late Roman Republican and Roman Imperial issues that mostly circulated outside of Italy. This exclusion makes sense. Scholarly research demonstrates that only 2.8% of Roman Imperial coin hoards containing coins from Italian mints are found within Italy itself making it impossible to fairly consider them Italian cultural patrimony.

9. Jordan-

Effective Date: February 5, 2020

Source: 85 Fed. Reg. 7204 (Feb. 7, 2020),

The Designated List is as follows:

The restrictions on coins include:

10. Coins—Some of the best-known types include:

a. Nabataean—Coins in silver, lead, copper or bronze and struck at Petra. They typically have cornucopias or wreaths on the reverse and portrait of the ruler or rulers on the obverse.

b. Roman Provincial—Coins in silver and bronze were struck through the third century A.D. at Roman and Roman provincial mints of Abila (Abel), Adraa (Daraa), Charachmoba (Al-Karak), Dium, Esbous (Heshbon), Gadara (Umm Qais), Gerasa (Jerash), Medaba (Madaba), Pella, Petra, Philadelphia (Amman), Rabbathmoba (Aroer) Capitolias/Dion (Beit Ras), and Raphana. This type also includes the pseudo-autonomous coinage of the second and first centuries B.C.

c. Byzantine—Coins in bronze and struck at the Arab-Byzantine mint of Aylah/Elath (Aqaba).

d. Early Islamic—Coins in bronze or silver and struck at the Umayyad mints of Adraa (Daraa), Gerasa (Jerash), Philadelphia/Rabbath-Ammon (Amman) and under the Abbasids at Philadelphia/ Rabbath-Ammon (Amman). These coins are epigraphic in design, featuring one or more lines of Arabic script. Some Abbasid bronze coins from Philadelphia/Rabbath-Ammon (Amman) feature a small flower-like design in the center of one side.

e. Crusader—These coins appear as thin, light-weight, low-quality-silver billon. Examples usually feature crosses and/or crude portraits or buildings as central images.

Comment: This list again includes coins that circulated in quantity outside of the confines of modern-day Jordan. Moreover, restrictions were imposed despite open sales of coins at the archaeological site of Petra as well as an annual numismatic bourse in Amman. If Jordan wants tourists to visit, it should encourage sales of such common material rather than expect CBP to seize such material purchased by tourists on their return to the United States.

10. Libya (“Emergency” import restrictions)

Effective Date: December 5, 2017.

Source: 82 Fed. Reg. 57346-57351 (Dec. 5, 2017).

The Designated List is as follows.

a. General--Examples of many of the coins found in ancient Libya may be found in: A. Burnett and others, *Roman Provincial Coinage*, multiple volumes (British Museum Press and the Biblioth[egrave]que Nationale de France, 1992-), R.S. Poole and others, *Catalogue of Greek Coins in the British Museum*, volumes 1-29 (British Museum Trustees 1873-1927) and H. Mattingly and others, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum*, volumes 1-6 (British Museum Trustees 1923-62). For Byzantine coins, see Grierson, Philip, *Byzantine Coins*, London, 1982. For publication of examples of coins circulating in archaeological sites, see *La moneta di Cirene e della Cirenaica nel Mediterraneo. Problemi e Prospettive*, Atti del V Congresso Internazionale di Numismatica e di Storia Monetaria, Padova, 17-19 marzo 2016, Padova 2016 (Numismatica Patavina, 13).

b. Greek Bronze Coins--Struck by city-states of the Pentapolis, Carthage and the Ptolemaic kingdom that operated in territory of the Cyrenaica in eastern Libya. Approximate date: 4th century B.C. to late 1st century B.C.

c. Greek Silver and Gold Coins--This category includes coins of the city-states of the Pentapolis in the Cyrenaica and the Ptolemaic Kingdom. Coins from the city-state of Cyrene often bear an image of the silphium plant. Such coins date from the late 6th century B.C. to late 1st century B.C.

d. Roman Coins--In silver and bronze, struck at Roman and Roman provincial mints including Apollonia, Barca, Balagrae, Berenice, Cyrene, Ptolemais, Leptis Magna, Oea, and Sabratha. Approximate date: late 3rd century B.C. to 1st century A.D.

e. Byzantine Coins--In bronze, silver, and gold by Byzantine emperors. Struck in Constantinople and other mints. From 4th century A.D. through 1396 A.D.

f. Islamic Coins--In bronze, silver, and gold. Dinars with Arabic inscriptions inside a circle or square, may be surrounded with symbols. Struck at mints in Libya (Barqa) and adjacent regions. From 642 A.D. to 15th century A.D.

g. Ottoman--Struck at mints in Istanbul and Libya's neighboring regions. Approximate date: 1551 A.D. through 1750 A.D.

Comment: The restrictions explicitly encompass Greek, Carthaginian, Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman coins struck outside Libya that are found within Libya. This is a major departure from prior restrictions that listed coins based on where the coins were made hundreds, if not thousands of years ago, rather than where they were found today. While this phraseology is more consistent with applicable statutory language, it remains to be seen how it is applied.

11. Morocco

Effective Date: January 15, 2021

Source: 86 Fed. Reg. 6562—6566 (Jan. 21, 2021).

The Designated List is as follows:

10. Coins—This category includes coins of Numidian, Mauretanian, Greek/Punic, Roman, Byzantine, Islamic, and Medieval Spanish types that circulated primarily in Morocco, ranging in date from the fifth century B.C. to A.D. 1750. Coins were made in copper, bronze, silver, and gold. Examples may be square or round, have writing, and show imagery of animals, buildings, symbols, or royal figures.

Comment: This designated list is peculiar because other than some bronze coins of the Mauritanian Kingdom struck at Lix and Roman Provincial issues of cities of Tingis (Tangier), Lix, and Tamuda, no Numidian, Mauritanian, Greek/Punic, Roman, Byzantine, and Medieval Spanish coins “primarily circulated” there. Instead, the only coins most associated with Morocco are Islamic ones struck within the confines of modern-day Morocco like Marrakesh, Fez, Misknash, Nul, Sijilmasa, Tangier, Cueta, Aghmar, Sala and Bani Tavula. As large gold issues were struck there, it is also debatable whether such coins “primarily circulated” within Morocco or not.

12. Syria

Effective Date: August 15, 2016 but regulations retroactive to March 15, 2011

Source: 81 Fed. Reg. 2016-19491 (Aug. 15, 2016)

“Below is the Designated List of Archaeological and Ethnological Material of Syria that describes the types of objects or categories of archaeological or ethnological material that are subject to import restrictions, if unlawfully removed from Syria on or after March 15, 2011.”

I. Coins--In copper or bronze, silver and gold.

1. Coins in Syria have a long history and exist in great variety, spanning the Achaemenid Persian, Hellenistic Seleucid and Ptolemaic, Roman, Sasanian, and Islamic periods. Coins from neighboring regions circulated in Syria as well. Some major mints for coinage that circulated in Syria in various periods include Emesa, Antioch, Apamea, Damascus, Beroea, and Laodicea.

2. Achaemenid coins include silver drachms stamped on the obverse with the head of the king and on the reverse with an altar.

3. Coin types and materials for coins minted or circulated in Syria during the Hellenistic Seleucid and Ptolemaic periods include gold and silver staters and obols, bronze or silver drachms, hemidrachms, tetradrachms, and smaller bronze and lead coins. These coins have a wide variety of decorative elements. Male and female busts (of kings, such as Seleucus, and queens, such as Cleopatra, or sometimes deities) are usually found on the front. Seated archers, seated gods such as Zeus, winged Victory, Tyche, and Herakles, other Greco-Roman mythological subjects, animals such as lions and elephants, palm trees, and ships are usually on the reverse of the Seleucid and Ptolemaic coins, which are often inscribed in Greek.

4. Roman coins minted and circulated in Syria during the Roman period come in a variety of denominations and weights and were struck primarily in silver and bronze, though examples (sesterces) of brass also appear. The front usually has an image of the emperor; sometimes, other notable personages (e.g., Julia Domna) might appear. Subjects shown on the reverse include seated and standing deities, wreaths, temples and altars, mythological scenes, and eagles. Inscriptions are usually in Latin, but sometimes also in Greek. Late Roman (Byzantine) coins are similar, but the reverse often shows Christian iconography (e.g., crosses), and inscriptions are in Greek.

5. Sasanian period coins are typically silver drachms with an image of the ruler on the obverse and a religious scene with a fire altar on the reverse.

6. Islamic coins are of gold, silver, bronze, and copper and include examples from the Ummayyad, Abbasid, Ghaznavid, Fatimid, Ayyubid, Seljuq (including Zengid), Timurid, Mamluk, Safavid, and Ottoman periods. Most are stamped on both sides with inscriptions in Arabic, although a few types have an image on one side and an inscription on the other.

Comment: These restrictions were imposed by statute. The breathtakingly broad restrictions with a retroactive date to 2011 also include a specific provision that the coins in question were unlawfully removed from Syria after that March 15, 2011 date. As such, they are much more in keeping with the CPIA's limitations of restrictions to items "first discovered within" and "subject to" the export control of the country for which restrictions were granted than many other import restrictions.

13. Turkey

Effective Date: June 16, 2021

Source: 86 Fed. Reg. 114 (Feb. 16, 2021)

The list of coins is extensive. It includes:

9. Coins

a. Greek coins – Archaic coins, dated to 640 – 480 B.C., in electrum, silver and billon, that circulated primarily in Turkey; Classical coins, dated to 479 – 332 B.C., in electrum, silver, gold, and bronze, that circulated primarily in Turkey; and Hellenistic coins, dated to 332 – 31 B.C., in gold, silver, bronze and other base metals, that circulated primarily in Turkey. Greek coins were minted by many authorities for trading and payment and often circulated all over the ancient world, including in Turkey. All categories are based on find information provided in Thompson,

M., Mørkholm, O., Kraay, C., *Inventory of Greek Coin Hoards, 1973* (available online at <http://coinhoards.org/>) and the updates in *Coin Hoards I-X* as well as other hoard and single find publications. Mints located in Turkey and surrounding areas are found in Head, B. V., *Historia Numorum, A Manual of Greek Numismatics, 1911* (available online at <http://snible.org/coins/hn/>).

b. Roman provincial coins – Roman provincial coins, dated from the end of 2nd century B.C. to the early 6th century A.D., in gold, silver, and bronze and copper that circulated primarily in Turkey.

c. Byzantine period coins – Byzantine period coins, in gold, silver, bronze, copper coins, and sometimes electrum, dating from the early 6th century to the 15th century A.D., that circulated primarily in Turkey, (e.g., coins produced at mints in Nicaea and Magnesia under the Empire of Nicaea).

d. Medieval and Islamic coins – Medieval and Islamic coins, in gold, silver, bronze, and copper coins from approximately A.D. 1077 – 1770, that circulated primarily in Turkey.

Comment: These restrictions are breathtakingly broad. However, they are qualified to only include coins that “circulated primarily in Turkey.” If this phraseology is meant to comply with the CPIA, it only pays “lip service” to the statutory provision limiting any restrictions to archaeological objects “first discovered within” and “subject to export control by” Turkey. (19 U.S.C. § 2601.) Moreover, what coins “primarily circulated in Turkey” is undefined putting the importer in the position of gambling whether the coins they import will be deemed to be covered by the restrictions or not. On a positive note, Roman Imperial coins remain exempted from the restrictions.

14. Yemen

Effective Date: February 7, 2020

Source: 85 Fed. Reg. 7209 (Feb. 7, 2020)

The list of coins is extensive. It includes:

9. *Coins*—A reference book for ancient, pre-Islamic material in Yemen is M. Huth, *Coinage of the Caravan Kingdoms: Ancient Arabian Coins from the Collection of Martin Huth*, New York, 2010, pp. 68-152. A reference book for Islamic coinage to A.D. 1750 is S.

Album, *Checklist of Islamic Coins*, Santa Rosa, 2011, pp. 116-127. Some of the best-known types are described below:

a. Ancient—In gold, silver, and bronze/copper, with units ranging from tetradrachms down to various fractional levels.

i. Earliest coins from Yemen are imitations of silver tetradrachms from Athens; feature a bust of Athena on the obverse and an owl on the reverse. The style of these imitations is distinctive, and they are usually marked with Arabian monograms or graffiti. Approximate date: 500 B.C. and later.

ii. Minaeans produced schematic imitations of the Athenian coinage; these coins have angular shapes, often triangular. Style is distinctive with monograms with Arabian letters. Approximate date: 200 B.C.

iii. Sabaeans struck distinctive local imitations of Athenian tetradrachms, with or without monograms, often with the curved symbol of Almaqah to the right of the owl, and of smaller units than previously. In the 1st century A.D., the head of Athena is replaced with a male bust resembling Augustus; owl on the reverse continues, as do monograms and the curved symbol. In the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D., a beardless male head appears on the coins with the curved symbol, and a facing bucranium (a bull's head) appears on the reverse with the curved symbol and monograms. Approximate date: 400 B.C.-A.D. 300.

iv. Himyarite coins feature beardless male heads on the obverse coupled with bearded male heads on the reverse. Various South Arabian monograms appear on the coins. Rulers include Yuhabirr, Karib'il Yehun'im Wattar, Amdan Yuhaqbid, Amdan Bayan, Tha'ran Ya'ub, Shamnar Yuhan'am, and unknown kings. Approximate date: 110 B.C.-A.D. 200.

v. Qatabians produced imitations of Athenian coins also in 2nd-4th century B.C., with or without monograms; distinctive style. From the 2nd century B.C. to the 2nd century A.D., head of Athena is replaced with male ruler portraits, including those of Yad'ab Dhubyān Yuhargib, Dhūb, Hawfi`Amm Yuhan'am III, Shahr Yagul, Waraw'il Ghaylan, Shahr Hilal, Yad`ab Yanaf, and various unknown rulers. Reverses of early types have the owl, while later types have a second portrait on the reverse. Approximate date: 400 B.C.-A.D. 200.

vi. Bronze coins from Hadramawt have radiate male portraits in a circle on the obverse and a standing bull on the reverse; Arabian symbols appear. Approximate date: A.D. 200-400.

vii. Various South Arabian types imitate Athenian coins, Hellenistic Alexander tetradrachms with a head of Herakles on the obverse and Zeus seated on the reverse, and Ptolemaic coins with a cornucopia on the reverse. Style is distinctive; designs are accompanied by Arabian monograms.

b. Islamic Period—In gold, silver, and bronze, and including anonymous mints in Yemen, and coins of unknown rulers attributed to Yemen. Non-exclusive mints are the primary manufacturers of the listed coins, but there may be other production mints.

i. `Abbasid coins struck in gold, silver, and bronze, at non-exclusive mints San`a, Zabid, `Adan, Dhamar, `Aththar, and Baysh mints. Approximate date: A.D. 786-974.

ii. Coins of the Amirs of San`a, struck in gold, at the mint of San`a. Approximate date: A.D. 909-911.

iii. Rassid (1st period) coins struck in gold and silver at Sa`da, San`a, Tukhla', and `Aththar. Approximate date: A.D. 898-1014.

iv. Coins of the Amirs of Yemen, struck in silver, at an uncertain mint. Approximate date: A.D. 1000-1100.

v. Coins of the Amirs of `Aththar, struck in gold, at the mint of `Aththar. Approximate date: A.D. 957-988.

vi. Tarafid coins, struck in silver, at the mint of `Aththar. Approximate date: A.D. 991-1004.

vii. Ziyadid coins, struck in gold and silver, at non-exclusive mint Zabid. Approximate date: A.D. 955-1050s.

viii. Khawlanid coins, struck in silver, at the mint of San`a. Approximate date: A.D. 1046-1047.

ix. Najjahid coins, struck in gold, at the mints Zabid and Dathina. Approximate date: A.D. 1021-1158.

x. Sulayhid coins, struck in gold and debased silver, at non-exclusive mints Zabid, `Aththar, `Adan, Dhu Jibla. Approximate date: A.D. 1047-1137.

- xi. Zuray'id coins, struck in gold, at the mints of `Adan and Dhu Jibla. Approximate date: A.D. 1111-1174.
- xii. Coins of Mahdid of Zabid, struck in silver, at the mint of Zabid. Approximate date: A.D. 1159-1174.
- xiii. Rassid (2nd period) coins, struck in gold and silver, at non-exclusive mints Zufar, San`a, Sa`da, Huth, Dhirwah, Kahlan, Muda', `Ayyan, Bukur, al-Jahili, and Dhamar. Approximate date: A.D. 1185-1390.
- xiv. Ayyubid coins, struck in gold, silver, and bronze, at the mints of Zabid, `Adan, Ta`izz, San`a, al-Dumluwa, Bukur, and Mayban. Approximate date: A.D. 1174-1236.
- xv. Rasulid coins, struck in gold, silver, and bronze, at non-exclusive mints `Adan, Zabid, al-Mahjam, Ta`izz, San`a, Tha'bat, and Hajja. Approximate date: A.D. 1229-1439.
- xvi. Tahirid coins, struck in silver, at the mint of `Adan. Approximate date: A.D. 1517-1538.
- xvii. Rassid (3rd period) coins, struck in silver and bronze, at the mints of San`a, Zafir, and Thula. Approximate date: A.D. 1506-1572.
- xviii. Ottoman coins, struck in gold, silver and bronze, at the mints of Zabid, San`a, `Adan, Kawkaban, Ta`izz, Sa`da, al-Mukha, and Malhaz. Approximate date: A.D. 1520-1750.

Comment: Ironically, both Martin Huth and Stephen Album's firm have expressed concerns about import restrictions on coins to the Cultural Property Advisory Committee (CPAC) in the past. Yet, here their scholarly works on these coins are being cited as a basis for the restrictions! Once again, the restrictions include issues that would have circulated outside of the confines of modern Yemen, including many pre-Islamic silver and Islamic silver and gold coins.

B. Safe Harbor Provision:

Under 19 U.S.C. § 2606, coins of the above restricted types can only be imported into the United States with: (a) an export certificate¹; (b) “satisfactory evidence” demonstrating that the coins were exported from or were outside these countries at least 10 years prior to importation into the U.S.²; or (c) “satisfactory evidence” demonstrating that the coins were exported from or were outside of these countries before the restrictions went into effect. What constitutes “satisfactory evidence” is ultimately left to the discretion of Customs, but usually takes the form of a declaration by the importer and a statement by the consigner. As described above, it may be in practice quite difficult to procure such statements because provenance information may be lacking, particularly for Roman or lower value Greek coins.

Under the CPIA, import restrictions only apply to coins “first found in the ground” in these countries. *See* CPIA § 2601 (2). However, if a coin on these lists was excavated outside of those countries in a country that declares anything found in the ground to be state property (i.e., Egypt or Turkey), it may still be subject to seizure pursuant to the National Stolen Property Act and other provisions of U.S. law.

¹ It is our understanding that among these countries only Italy regularly issues export certificates.

² This provision is rarely used because it makes more sense to provide documentation of export before the effective date of the import restrictions.

Restricted coins should be imported separately to avoid delays of unrestricted coins. Also, importers should include the find spot, if known, of such coins, though one must also understand that such information may prompt additional inquiries from Customs to ascertain whether such coins were illicitly excavated.

“Satisfactory evidence” under these safe harbor provisions included with Customs paperwork identifying the type of item, country of origin (manufacture), and value should allow free entry, but on occasion CBP asks for additional documentation, i.e., published auction references predating the effective date of the applicable regulation.

The proper customs codes should also be included with the customs paperwork. At the request of the numismatic trade, effective July 1, 2020, the US international Trade Commission has recognized the concept of “ancient coins in trade” through the creation of a new harmonized tariff code subheading for “Coins made prior to the 14th century and not known to be the direct products of excavations, finds or archaeological sites.” As a result of this change, the new HTS code number 9705.00.00.01 should be used for all coins prior to 14th century. where there is no evidence of them coming from a hoard or excavation.

Coins greater than 250 years old that are from known hoards or excavations should still be listed as archaeological objects under HTS code, 9705.00.00.79, and more modern coins not known to be from hoards or excavations should be listed under more general codes. The changes to Heading 9705 applies to imports into the United States and do not change the reporting codes of Schedule B for reporting exports on the Shipper's Export Declaration. Accordingly, exporters may still use Schedule B codes 9705.00.0030 (for Gold) and 9705.00.0060 (for other than gold) for reporting exports on the Shipper's Export Declaration or under the program for electronic reporting of exports. Furthermore, the changes to Heading 9705 apply only in the United States and would not dictate how the EU treats coins for purposes of exports from the EU.

1 Consigner’s Statement

Here is a sample Consigner’s Statement for the legal import of restricted coins under the “safe harbor” provisions of 19 U.S.C. § 2606.

STATEMENT OF CONSIGNOR OR SELLER REGARDING CERTAIN [Fill in Nationality of] COINS

I, _____, state as follows:

1. I am the consignor or seller of Certain Coins from [**fill in nationality of coins**] described on Schedule I (the “Coins”).

2. I make this statement in satisfaction of the evidence required to establish lawful exportation in accordance with the Import Restrictions set forth in the Convention on Cultural Property, 19 U.S.C. § 2606(b)-(c) (the “Import Restrictions”).
3. To the best of my knowledge, the Coins were exported from [**fill in nationality of coins**] prior to [**fill in effective date of regulations**], the date the date such material was designated under § 2604 of the Import Restrictions.
4. To the best of my knowledge, the Coins do not violate § 2607 of the Import Restrictions as they do not appertain to the inventory of a museum or religious or secular public monument or similar institution in [**fill in nationality of coins**] which were stolen from such institution after January 12, 1983.

Signature

Date

Schedule I

[Please provide a schedule of the coins being transferred to the consignee or buyer. This schedule must list and identify each coin individually; it is not acceptable to list coins in groups or lots for this purpose.]

2 Importer’s Statement

Here is a sample Importer’s Statement for the legal import of restricted coins under the “safe harbor” provisions of 19 U.S.C. § 2606. This statement should be faxed or emailed to the exporter so it may be included within the package. We understand that CBP often allows entry simply with a consigner’s statement, but the statute provides for the inclusion of an importer’s statement in the form of a declaration as well.

STATEMENT OF IMPORTER OR BUYER REGARDING CERTAIN [Fill in Nationality of] COINS

I, _____, state as follows:

1. I am the importer of Certain Coins from [**fill in nationality of coins**] described on Schedule I (the “Coins”).
2. I make this statement in satisfaction of the evidence required to establish lawful exportation in accordance with the Import Restrictions set forth in the Convention on Cultural Property, 19 U.S.C. § 2606(b)-(c) (the “Import Restrictions”).
3. To the best of my knowledge, the Coins were exported from [**fill in nationality of coins**] prior to [**fill in effective date of regulations**], the date the date such material was designated under § 2604 of the Import Restrictions.
4. To the best of my knowledge, the Coins do not violate § 2607 of the Import Restrictions as they do not appertain to the inventory of a museum or religious or secular public monument or similar institution in [**fill in nationality of coins**] which were stolen from such institution after January 12, 1983.

Signature

Date

Schedule I

[Please provide a schedule of the coins being transferred to the consignee or buyer. This schedule must list and identify each coin individually; it is not acceptable to list coins in groups or lots for this purpose.]