

Heracles finally returning to its homeland

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The top half of 'Weary Heracles' will meet its lower half which is on display at the Antalya Archaeology Museum.

The top half of an 1,800-year-old Roman sculpture of the mythological hero Heracles, which was smuggled out of the country 40 years ago, is to return to Turkey in the plane of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, according to daily Hürriyet.

Turkish Culture and Tourism Minister Ertuğrul Günay said he was happy about the imminent return of the top half of the statue, which has been on display at the Boston Museum and added that Turkey would continue to work for the return of cultural artifacts stolen from the country.

The bottom half of the statue, known as “Weary Heracles,” was discovered in 1980 by Professor Jale İnan in Perge, a few years after the top half was smuggled out of the country. “[There have been] 40 years of longing between the top and lower half of the statue,” Günay said. Together, the two halves weigh 200 kilograms.

Günay said they had been working for the top half’s return since officials were notified about its display at the Boston Museum.

Speaking to Anatolia news agency, Günay said the return process was slow because of bureaucratic obstacles. “We are following very determined policies about this issue. We deliver our demands via our representatives abroad. We have finally started to get good results.”

Paperwork for the return of the statue was completed last week, after which Weary Heracles was delivered to the Cultural Artifacts and Museums General Director Murat Süslü in the United States.

The statue was loaded onto Erdoğan’s plane Saturday and was expected to arrive in Turkey on Sunday. The Turkish prime minister has been attending U.N. meetings in the U.S. The statue will be taken to the Antalya Archaeology Museum and presented to Turkish and foreign guests at a ceremony in the near future.