

GREEK DENIGRATES BOSTON'S 'HOARD'

Archeologist Says Treasure in Museum Is Forgery

Special to The New York Times

ATHENS, Feb. 5 — A top Greek expert on prehistoric antiquity branded as a forgery today the 137-piece gold treasure, said to be 4,000 years old, that was put on display yesterday at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

Spyridon Marinatos, inspector general of Greece's Archeological Services, after studying published pictures of main objects in the collection, said in an interview: "In my humble, personal opinion, this is a grotesque forgery."

Greece had been cited among the countries from where the gold hoard, reportedly found in an early Bronze Age royal tomb, might have been smuggled in defiance of strict bans.

The Boston museum has refused to identify the origin of the treasure, bought privately last year, beyond stating that it came from "the eastern half of the Mediterranean."

Mr. Marinatos said it was no longer a question of where the treasure had been excavated but of "where it had been manufactured."

The 68-year-old archeologist, who has excavated prehistoric sites in Greece since 1925, added:

"In the last generation, largely as a result of improved techniques and also, unfortunately, of the progress of science, the world has been filled with forgeries to the point that archeology, as a science, is in danger of being discredited."

A Hoard Is Missing

Mr. Marinatos said he had found many similarities between the Boston gold collection and the so-called "Dorak" treasure, a hoard of outstanding gold objects seen and sketched by a British archeologist in Turkey many years ago. The objects have mysteriously vanished.

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Yet in all cases of jewels from burial offerings, he said, the quantity of gold was limited. The Boston jewels, weighing a total of 11 pounds, were made exclusively of massive gold "as if the forger felt that if the ploy did not succeed, he could always recast the metal."

Mr. Marinatos said that although the smuggling of antiquities was a punishable offense in most Near Eastern countries, "even if the Boston collection had been genuine," there would be no legal grounds for any country to claim it unless it were previously duly registered as the property of the museum or a private collection.

"As long as foreigners are prepared to pay fantastic prices for smuggled antiquities," he said, "those who are inclined to defraud their neighbors shall be encouraged. Yet, this may ultimately engender mistrust in purchasing antiquities, unless their provenance can be absolutely certified."

Reply From Boston

Cornelius Vermeule, curator of classical arts at the Boston Museum, said yesterday:

"I have a great admiration for Professor Marinatos. My respect for him as a scholar is unbounded. But it could be said that he speaks with national as well as professional pride.

"I respectfully feel that when he has had an opportunity to examine the find at the Boston Museum, he will concur that whatever the origins of the jewelry, wherever it was found, it is not a forgery."

"It has been my privilege now to look at the gold trea-

sure on exhibition in Boston with a number of scholars from different countries, and while scholarly debate rages hot and heavy over historical implications, the word forgery has never escaped from a single tongue."

Mr. Vermeule's wife, Emily, an archeologist who is professor of art and Greek at Wellesley and has just been appointed to the Zemurray-Stone Radcliffe-Harvard professorship for fine arts and classics, worked with Mr. Marinatos for several seasons.

She will publish a fuller ac-

count of her research on the jewelry collection in Horizon magazine this summer, and ultimately in a learned journal.

The collection was purchased for "six figures" for the Boston Museum from a Western European dealer by Landon T. Clay, a trustee of the museum and a Boston securities broker.

It was bought on the advice of the Vermeules and the late William Stevenson Smith, curator of Egyptian art at the museum, who read the identifying hieroglyphs on the large gold Egyptian seal accompanying the treasure.

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Jale İnan Arşivi



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