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2 auctions for Egypt antiquities in London; will Cairo act?!

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2 auctions for Egypt antiquities in London; will Cairo act?!

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Although the most important exhibition of Egyptian antiquities abroad was inaugurated in London a few days ago: "Tutankhamun: Treasures of the Golden Pharaoh" at the Saatchi Gallery London (3 Nov. 2019 - 3 May 2020) in the presence of high-ranking Egyptian officials – a few steps away, other Egyptian antiquities will be sold at public auctions organized by two international auction houses late this month and early next month, exactly as the head of the young King Tutankhamun was sold at an auction in London only a few weeks ago!

A) The Bonhams Auction House:

The Bonhams Auction House will hold its auction on November 29th, for selling several Egyptian antiquities, including:

- 1- A set of four Egyptian limestone canopic jars, worth £30,000 to £50,000.
- 2- An Egyptian limestone sphynx, worth £25,000 to £35,000.
- 3- An Egyptian limestone figure of a queen or goddess, worth £15,000 to £25,000.
- 4- An Egyptian alabaster canopic jar for the royal scribe Semen-Tawy, worth £15,000 to 20,000.
- 5- An Egyptian wood sarcophagus mask, worth £15,000 to £20,000.
- 6- An Egyptian serpentinite heart scarab pectoral for Pra-em-nekhu, worth £6,000 to £8,000
- 7- An Egyptian gift and polychrome painted cartoonage mummy mask, worth £5,000 to £7,000
- 8- An Egyptian gesso-painted wood mummy mask, worth £4,000 to £6,000
- 9- An Egyptian limestone offering table for the priest Horemheb, worth £3,000 to £5,000.
- 10- An Egyptian polychrome wood figure of a man, worth £3,000 to £5,000.
- 11- An Egyptian limestone sphynx, worth £3,000 to £5,000.

- 12- An Egyptian limestone jar, worth £2,000 to £3,000.
- 13- An Egyptian painted wood servant figure, worth £2,000 to £3,000.
- 14- An Egyptian blue glazed composition ointment cup, worth £1,000 to £1,5000.
- 15- An Egyptian limestone polychrome painted shabti for Tawert, worth £1,000 to £1,5000.
- 16- An Egyptian blue glass eye rim inlay, worth £800 to £1,200
- 17- A small Egyptian granite head of Osiris, worth £800 to £1200.
- 18- A large Egyptian turquoise glazed composition djed-pillar amulet, worth £1,000 to £1,500.
- 19- An Egyptian bronze amulet of Nehebkau, worth £2,000 to £3,000.
- 20- An Egyptian turquoise glazed composition plaque with five goddesses, worth £800 to £1,200.
- 21- An Egyptian glazed composition amulet of Nehebkau, worth £800 to £1,200.
- 22- An Egyptian turquoise glazed composition amulet of Sekhmet, worth £800 to £1,200.
- 23- Three Egyptian glazed composition amulets of Nefertum, Taweret and Nephthys, worth £2,000 to 2,500.
- 24- A large Egyptian turquoise glazed composition amulet of Nefertum, worth £2,500 to £3,000.
- 25- An Egyptian glazed composition Hathor-headed sistrum handle fragment, worth £800 to £1,200.
- 26- An Egyptian wood panel with Happy, worth £2,000 to £3,000.
- 27- An Egyptian terracotta Isis-Bubastis and an Egyptian terracotta Baubo, worth £800 to £1,200.
- 28- An Egyptian glazed composition lion amulet, worth £2,000 to £3,000.
- 29- A Romano-Egyptian terracotta figure of Harpocrates with two eagles, worth £800 to £1200.
- 30- An Egyptian glazed composition beaded shroud fragment, worth £800 to £1200.

31- An Egyptian glazed composition vessel fragment with a male figure, worth £1,800 to £2,200.

32- A Roman-Egyptian gift copper alloy diadem, worth £3,000 to £5,000.

33- A pair of Egyptian plaited palm leaf sandals, worth £2,000 to £3,000.

B) The Christie's Auction House:

The second auction will be organized by Christie's Auction House on the 4th of December, displaying a large number of ancient [Egyptian and Roman](#) antiquities at prices higher than those set by the Bonhams Auction House because of the value of exhibited antiquities; where the price of only one piece is estimated at £250,000, equivalent of more than LE 5 million. The artefacts exhibited at the Christie's auction include:

1- An Egyptian brown steatite baboon from the 19th. dynasty, worth £150,000 to £250,000.

2- An Egyptian limestone relief fragment from the third intermediate period, worth £40,000 to £60,000.

3- An Egyptian bronze cat from the late period-ptolemaic period, worth £40,000 to £50,000.

4- An Egyptian carnelian agate bead and amuletic necklace from the third intermediate period, worth £30,000 to £50,000.

5- An Egyptian polychrome sandstone relief from the Ptolmaic period, 332-30 B.C., worth £30,000 to £40,000.

6- An Egyptian 20-cm-high statue, dating back to 1794-2046 BC, estimated from £25,000 to £35,000.

7- An Egyptian mosaic glass griffin inlay from the Ptolemaic period, 323-30 AD, worth £25,000 to £35,000.

8- An Egyptian glazed steatite enthroned Bastet from the third intermediate period, worth £12,000 to £15,000.

9- An Egyptian wood mask from the third intermediate period, worth £8,000 to £12,000.

- 10- An Egyptian bronze statue dating from 332 to 664 BC, worth £8,000 to £12,000.
- 11- An Egyptian bronze statue of Bastet from the late period, 664-332 BC, worth £6,000 to £8,000.
- 12- An Egyptian bright blue faience Shabti for Tayuheret from the third intermediate period, 21st dynasty, worth £4,000 to £6,000.
- 13- An Egyptian mosaic panel, worth £2,000 to £3,000.

But. Will Cairo move to stop the sale of Egyptian antiquities or will they be sold as had happened before? However, these pieces would not have been offered for sale at public auctions had they not had ownership contracts – and it seems that most of these artefacts came out of Egypt before 1983, before the issuance of Law No. 117 of 1983, which prohibits the sale and export of antiquities.

This must not prevent Egyptian officials from moving towards resolving this problem. They can enact laws through which we can retrieve our monuments; and they must benefit from international legislation and institutions on the protection of cultural heritage; especially the [UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in case of Illicit Appropriation](#). The question that arises now is: Will Cairo immediately respond and take action towards this serious issue?!