



International Committee for Egyptology in the International Council of Museums
Comité International pour l'Égyptologie du Conseil International des Musées

Statement from CIPEG, the International Committee for Egyptology in the International Council of Museums on the sale of the statue of Sekhemka

The ancient Egyptian statue of the official Sekhemka, part of the collection of Northampton Museum and Art Gallery, which is owned by the Northampton Borough Council, is about to go on auction at Christies's in London on July 10, 2014 with an estimate of between 5 and 7.5 Million EUR (see:<http://www.christies.com/about/presscenter/releases/pressrelease.aspx?pressreleaseid=7325>). The council has announced that it has agreed to share the proceeds with the Marquess of Northampton, whose ancestor donated the statue to the museum, and to whom, under the terms of the original donation, the statue would revert in the event of the Museum no longer wishing to possess the piece. The council has stated that its share of proceeds from the sale will go towards a GBP 14M (18M EUR) extension of Northampton Museum and Art Gallery.

The sale of artifacts to pay institutional expenses is strictly against the ethical codes of national and international heritage bodies.

The ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums clearly states:

2.16 Income from Disposal of Collections

Museum collections are held in public trust and may not be treated as a realisable asset. Money or compensation received from the deaccessioning and disposal of objects and specimens from a museum collection should be used solely for the benefit of the collection and usually for acquisitions to that same collection.

CIPEG is concerned that, as a consequence, a well-known masterpiece of Egyptian art may disappear into a private collection, making it inaccessible to the general public, students, and scholars.

CIPEG urges the Northampton Borough Council to abandon the sale of the statue of Sekhemka, and thereby to set an example of ethical behavior on the part of a public institution which acts as custodian for objects of world cultural importance.

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Chair of CIPEG / ICOM