



**THE MINISTRY OF STATE
FOR ANTIQUITIES AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF THE MINISTER**

PRESS RELEASE

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From: Office of Dr. Zahi Hawass, Minister of Antiquities Affairs

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I am pleased to report that an additional five objects that were stolen from the Qantara East Magazine in the Sinai were located and returned to the storage magazine on February 8, 2011. It seems that the thieves simply threw these five objects in the desert, and the police was able to retrieve them. To date, 293 objects have been returned to the Qantara East Magazine, but as I have previously stated, we will not be able to know the exact number of the stolen objects until the current situation calms down. A committee will be formed in order to inventory the contents of the magazine. I believe that it will be impossible for the people who stole the objects to sell them. No museum or private collector will buy Egyptian antiquities now, they will be too scared. I am very happy that my calls for the return of these objects on television and in newspapers were successful.

The many rumors spread about Egyptian antiquities were started by people who weren't fully informed on the state of museums and sites throughout the country. I would like to remind people that it would be useful for me to announce any stolen or damaged objects and sites because local and international organizations and institutions would unite to help search for and repair the Egyptian antiquities. It is my job to be honest; I am not a politician and I never will be. My job, since I was 19 and a half up until today, has been to protect and care for the monuments of Egypt. I will continue to run excavations and write articles and books because this is what I love to do.

There are people who are still concerned about the antiquities and monuments of Egypt. I would again like to reassure the world that the tomb of Maya, south of Saqqara is safe. People have asked me to move all the objects from the Egyptian Museum, Cairo to another location. I am telling everyone now: the museum is safe because the Egyptian Army and the Egyptian people are protecting it. The Egyptian people are proud of their cultural heritage, and have done all they can to protect it.

I am not sure what will be the end result of all these protests, but I am focusing all of my efforts to protect antiquities and restructure the Ministry of Antiquities. This is the first time in Egyptian history that a ministry dedicated to antiquities was created, and we are very proud that the dedication and devotion of the entire Egyptian archaeological community for Egypt's archaeological heritage was received with such acknowledgment.



Dr. Sabry Abdel Aziz and Mr. Osama el Shemey examine the tomb of Maya at Saqqara on 8 February, 2011.