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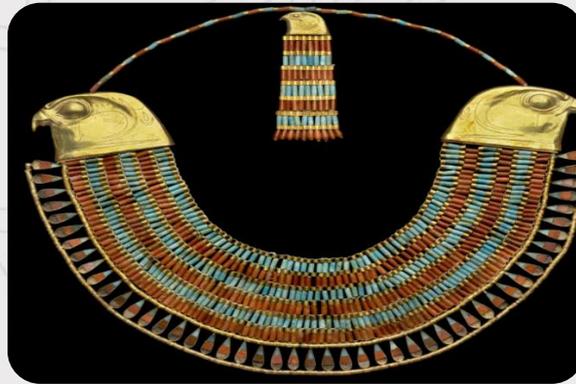
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## Will Monaco exhibition return tourism to Egypt?

Hussein Duqeil

On Friday, 6 July, 2018, “The Golden Treasures of Pharaohs” Exhibition was inaugurated in the Principality of Monaco by the Egyptian Minister of Antiquities Khaled el-Anani and Prince Albert II of Monaco. The exhibition was held under the auspices of the Egypt’s Ministry of Antiquities and Grimaldi Forum center in Monaco, and attended by a number of Egyptian officials, including the Minister of Antiquities, the Minister of Tourism, the French Ambassador to Cairo and the heads of the House of Representatives’ committees of “Culture, Archeology, and Information” and “Tourism and Aviation”.



The exhibition was held at the Grimaldi Forum, which is named after the royal family in the emirate. Some 149 pieces will be on display at the exhibition, which lasts for two months, including two pieces of the young king Tutankhamun, and 147 pieces of other collections that were kept in storehouses, including the funerary furniture of Yuya and Toya, Akhenaten’s ancestors, Tanis treasures, a mask of King Psusennes I, a statue of King Ramses II, a statue of King Amenemhat III, a number of bracelets and necklaces

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used for decoration, and silver dishes. After the exhibition the artefacts will then be returned to Egypt to their final display venue at the Egyptian Museum, which is set to reopen on November 15, after renovations, according to official statements. The exhibition also includes other Egyptian antiquities coming from the museums of other countries, including Belgium, Austria, and France. Although these pieces are part of the Egyptian Pharaonic heritage, yet they belong to the countries that keep them in their museums!!



These pieces shed light on the great works of ancient Egyptians, whether from gold, silver or copper, during 2500 years; and show how these different pieces of bracelets, rings and pendants were produced.

Despite the many advantages that Egyptian media and officials speak of with respect to holding 'The Golden Treasures of Pharaohs in Monaco', we can objectively state that:

1- It is essential that we should seek together to find ways to promote tourism and encourage tourists to return to Egypt. The return of tourism will have a positive impact on the Egyptian economy in general and on the Egyptian citizen in particular. At least three million Egyptians live on a daily basis on the tourism revenue. But we wonder: Is

this the way we can return tourism to Egypt? Will the announcement of Minister of Antiquities during the inauguration of the exhibition that Egypt is fighting terrorism - will this attract tourism to Egypt? Are these officials actually speaking based on a scientific view or are they following a policy set for them by the Egyptian regime and literally apply what is being said to them, especially as the Minister of Antiquities has recently announced in an interview with the “Youm7” newspaper that “Sisi knows about antiquities even more than me.”!!



2- There is no doubt that the exhibitions of antiquities abroad are of great importance, but in Egypt we do not follow sound scientific methods as others usually do. World countries organize such exhibitions, but they present copies of the real artifacts, leaving the original pieces in their home countries; thus the exhibition becomes a powerful advertisement, representing an incentive to attract tourists to go and see the original artefacts in its home country, and not the other way around. What will drive tourist who goes to the Monaco exhibition and sees the original pieces there to visit Egypt? If this is the best way to display antiquities abroad, then England, Germany and France, would have done so a long time ago.

3- The officials should provide an answer to this important question: Will this exhibition achieve its goal and return tourism to Egypt? And will it provide an adequate income to cover the travel expenses of these officials and their companions? Amid statements released by officials and media men praising the idea of holding this exhibition in the Principality of Monaco, saying that it is one of the world's most attractive tourist destinations, and the most luxurious resorts in the world, which hosts at least five million tourists a year; can these officials tell us about the approximate number of tourists that came to Monaco and moved to visit Egypt following the Exhibition?



Did these officials tell us that the Principality of Monaco is Monaco is a tiny independent city-state on France's Mediterranean coastline of no more than 2 km<sup>2</sup>, with a population of only 30,645 people? Should a high level delegation visit this principality only to inaugurate an exhibition? And what is the profit that such an exhibition would yield, especially that the prices of the exhibition tickets were relatively low: only 11 euros for individuals; 9 euros per person for students under 20 years old, elderly people, and groups of more than 10 people; while minors are allowed to visit the exhibition freely.

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Have the ministers of Antiquities and Tourism prepared a study showing the number of tourists who came to Egypt from Monaco after the exhibition of “Queens of Egypt” that was held in the same emirate in 2008 and was also inaugurated by a large number of officials headed by Suzan Mubarak, wife of former president Hosni Mubarak?



4- After the Egyptian officials praised the process of displaying the Egyptian artefacts at the exhibition halls in Monaco in a professional manner that highlighted the beauty of these pieces, is it possible to transfer this experiment to all the Egyptian museums, especially the Egyptian Museum, which will witness its 116<sup>th</sup>. anniversary within a few months, and where these artefacts are supposed to be displayed when they return to Egypt?