

Alfred Mansoor
2212 Hillside Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95404-2316, USA
Phone: 707.578.4755 Email: amansoor@sonic.net

August 6, 2009

Mr. Henri Loyrett, Président-Directeur
Musée du Louvre
Pavillon Molière
75058 Paris-Cedex 01-France

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Dear Mr. Loyrette :

Louvre Statuette E27215

I must confess that my several attempts to convince you to make a rational decision regarding your artifact # E 27215, have totally failed and I am sorry.

I have given you every opportunity to settle this matter in a friendly and honorable manner. Yet, all I have received from you is total silence and I do not appreciate it. It is only with the kind interference of H.E. Ambassador Pierre Vimont that I heard from you and then again total silence, regarding my letter of May 29, 2009. I appreciate that you have other business to attend to, but frankly I consider this matter to be of the utmost importance, not only for my family but also for the reputation of Dr. Etienne Drioton, Fr. Pierre DuBourguet, SJ and Dr. Christiane Desroches Noblecourt and, of course, the Louvre and the CNRS.

“émettons quelques doutes sur l'authenticité de la pièce en référence” is not a valid reason to condemn an artifact. Couldn't your staff, or yourself, have consulted with your scientists to come to a serious conclusion? Mme. Noblecourt did ! Or are they afraid of the results? When the late Etienne Drioton saw the collection at my father's gallery in Cairo, he expressed the desire to acquire it for the Egyptian Museum. But being a prudent man, he sought the advice of the late Alfred Lucas and had him examine the artifacts scientifically. Mr. Lucas confirmed the authenticity of the objects. Your staff can tell you who the late Alfred Lucas was. So, why spend millions of Euros to staff your national laboratories, if you don't consult them?

In my last letter, I asked you to respond by July 15, 2009, even by email, if more convenient. I offered you more time, if necessary, to solve this matter. I offered to send you other artifacts for your scientists to examine. You preferred to ignore my offers and listen to your staff's subjective opinion. Your département des Antiquités Egyptiennes staff may have convinced you to ignore my requests, but it will be a pyrrhic victory for them, since they would have destroyed the legacies of Chanoine Etienne Drioton and Fr. Pierre DuBourguet, SJ and the stellar reputation of Madame Christiane Desroches Noblecourt. And let's not forget the integrity of the Louvre, the laboratoires des Musées Nationaux and the CNRS. If petty politics is what drives your Egyptologists, and that is what you accept, *tant pis!* Wildung is history and they owe him no allegiance whatsoever. They never should have! I must admit you have a difficult decision to make, but this is what separates the men from the boys !

Now, I must yield to demands of other members of my family: if you wish to keep the artifact, nothing would please us more. However, it must be exhibited as stated in my previous letter, and

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soon. If that is not acceptable, then we must demand the immediate return of the artifact. Failure on your part to respond before September 1, 2009 will force me to take appropriate, if unpleasant, steps for the return of the artifact. To be honest, we consider this artifact to be in hostile hands and we must protect it.

Please review my letters carefully, since they contain facts you may have overlooked and may not be aware of.

With my regrets,

Alfred Mansoor, for the family of
The Late M.A. Mansoor

cc. His Excellency Ambassador Pierre Vimont
Dr. Catherine Brechignac, CNRS
Dr. Arnold Migus, CNRS

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August 14, 2009

His Excellency Pierre Vimont
Ambassador of France in Washington
Embassy of France
4101 Reservoir Rd. NW
Washington, D.C. 20007-2170

Your Excellency :

Louvre Statuette # E 27215

As you are aware, I wrote Mr. Loyrette several letters regarding the status of the above captioned artifact. In my last letter, dated May 29, 2009, I asked him to give me an answer regarding the fate of the artifact, by July 15, 2009, or to let me know if he needed more time to decide what course of action he planned to take. Unfortunately, it seems that we have both failed to convince him of the urgency of the matter, because I have not heard from him since. Two and one half months and no answer !

Your Excellency, I frankly find it ludicrous, that the leader of one of France's greatest institutions has so little respect for his correspondents and donors. No one should be so humiliated by this seeming indifference.

Your Excellency, I am not a six year old, throwing a tantrum to obtain another piece of candy. I am a seventy eight year old man, trying to do my best to salvage an artifact which constitutes a legacy, which cannot be replaced. For almost seventy five years, my family has been privileged to be the guardian of a collection of Ancient Egyptian artifacts. And yet, it does not belong to us, nor the Louvre, nor any other entity. It belongs to mankind. It belongs to history. And this we were told by, none other than, some of your greatest scholars and scientists.

When Dr. Noblecourt suggested the gift to honor the late Etienne Drioton, we were elated to know that we were entrusting the artifact to trusted friends, but now, I frankly think the artifact is in hostile hands and we must protect it.

No viable solution will be found, if the decision rests with the current management of the Louvre and its conservators. Sure, we can demand the return of the artifact and get it, but at what cost? It would be a hollow and pyrrhic victory for our opponents, since it would destroy forever the legacies of the late Abbé Drioton and Père Dubourguet and, of course, there is the fabled Mme. Noblecourt, who cannot defend her actions at her present age- she is ninety five ! No, Your Excellency, we cannot allow this to happen to people we have known, admired and respected all our lives. As far as the reputation of the laboratoire des Musées Nationaux and the CNRS are concerned we leave that to your government to worry about.

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