

Morocco probes dinosaur tail sold in Mexico auction

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Moroccan authorities have opened an inquiry into the origins of a dinosaur tail from the North African country sold at auction in Mexico, the culture ministry said Saturday.

The four-metre-long (13-foot) fragment of an "Atlasaurus tail from the Jurassic period" was sold on Tuesday for 1.8 million pesos (\$96,000), according to Mexican auctions website Morton.

It said the fossil came from the Atlas mountains in Morocco after which the dinosaur is named.

Abdellah Alaoui, the head of Morocco's cultural heritage department, said Rabat would seek to enforce international conventions against trafficking of items of cultural heritage.

The skeleton of an Atlasaurus, a species which dates back 160 million years and is estimated to have measured 18 metres in length and 10 metres in height, is on display at the [natural history museum](#) in the Moroccan capital Rabat.

Last April, Morocco secured the return of the bones of an aquatic dinosaur which was withdrawn from an [auction](#) in Paris.

With its land mass partly submerged by the sea around 500 million years ago, Morocco is rich in palaeontological treasures, minerals and space rocks.

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