

Recently, fossils over tens of millions of dollars have more often appear at auctions. For example, the stegosaurus left the hammer for \$ 40.5 million, and the young Ceratosaurus for \$ 30.5 million. Some believe that such sales are harmless and even useful for science, while others compare fossils with works of art. Paleontologists consider this a mistake.

In fact, fossils are not jewelry or trophies, but scientific data. They help to study evolution, extinction of species, climate change and ecosystem development. Their value is not in price, but in the fact that they can tell about the past of the Earth, scientists say.

Scientific work is possible only if fossils are in museums and are available to researchers forever. An example is the Rex Tyrannosaurus named Sue, sold at the auction in 1997: it was bought by a consortium, including the Chicago Museum, and the skeleton immediately became available to science and the public.

Today, many rare finds come to private collectors. Even if they temporarily give them to museums, scientists cannot fully explore such samples. Science requires constant access – without it it is impossible to check the results and use new technologies.

Paleontologists urge: instead of buying skeletons, billionaires must support museums, research projects and students, so that fossils remain a source of knowledge for everyone.