

State of trafficking in cultural property in 2016

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The movement of cultural property in 2016: regulation, international cooperation and professional diligence for the protection of cultural heritage

UNESCO, Paris, France, 30th March 2016

Executive summary

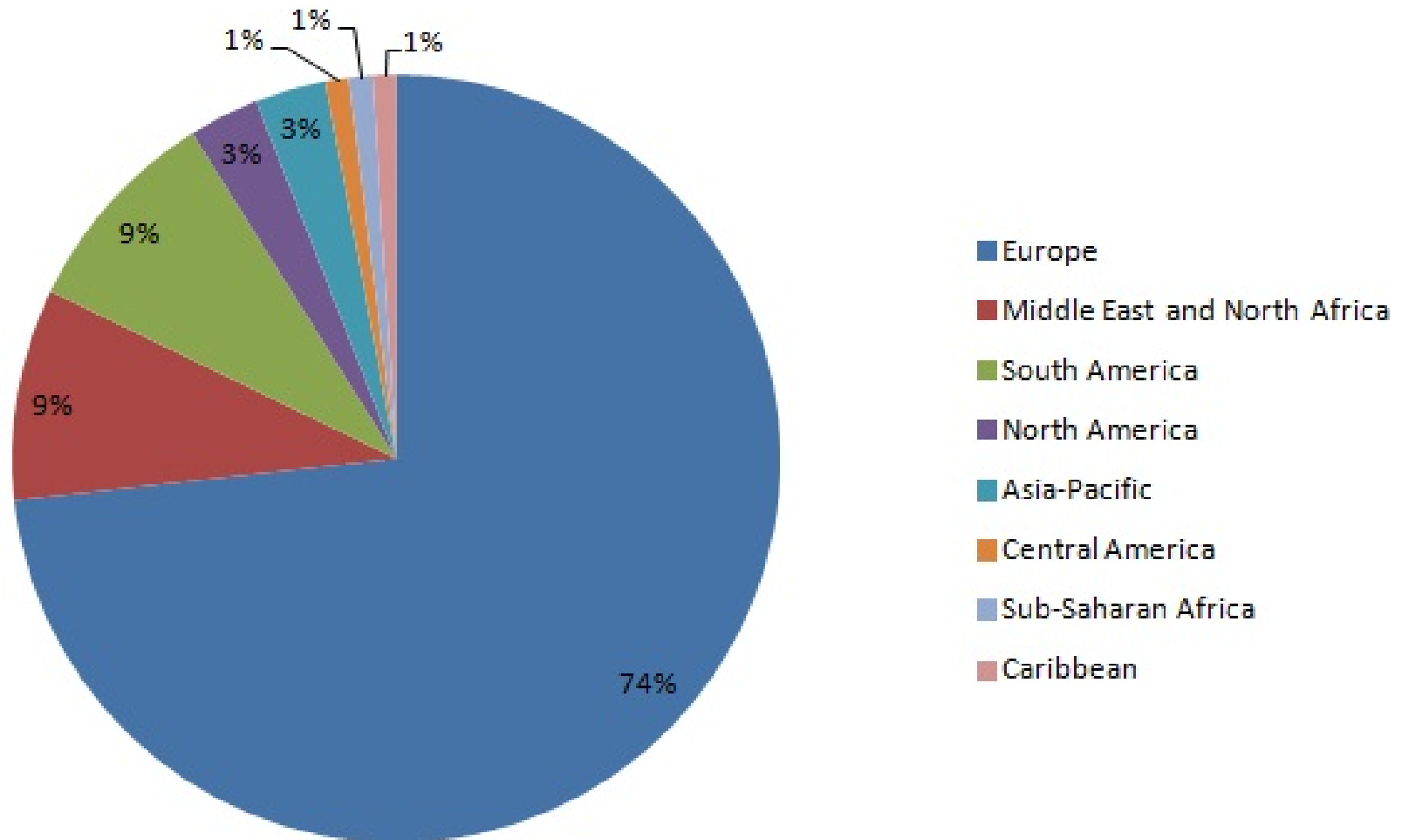
1. Above-ground, underground and underwater cultural heritage is under threat around the world.
2. Yet, the illicit trade in cultural property is so under-researched that basic empirical evidence is unreliable or absent.
3. Still, there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that antiquities trafficking encompasses not only petty crime and white-collar crime, but also organised crime and conflict financing.
4. Trafficking is particularly harmful in zones of physical and economic insecurity, where it worsens the insecurity, and where vulnerable persons may be directly or financially forced to participate.
5. Hence, this study indicates a need for investigation of organised crime and online trafficking, as well as the manifest need to develop an evidence-based understanding of trafficking out of the zones of crisis across the Middle East and North Africa.
6. Cultural heritage cannot be effectively protected without market transparency and due diligence.

Stolen works of art in the Interpol database by number of objects and region of origin

Region	Percentage of objects in database
Europe	Nearly 74%
Middle East and North Africa	Nearly 9%
South America	Nearly 9%
North America	More than 3%
Asia-Pacific	More than 3%
Central America	More than 1%
Sub-Saharan Africa	Less than 1%
Caribbean	Less than 1%

via Criminal Intelligence Officer Françoise Bortolotti, 22nd February 2016; 25th February 2016

stolen works of art in the Interpol database by number of objects and region of origin



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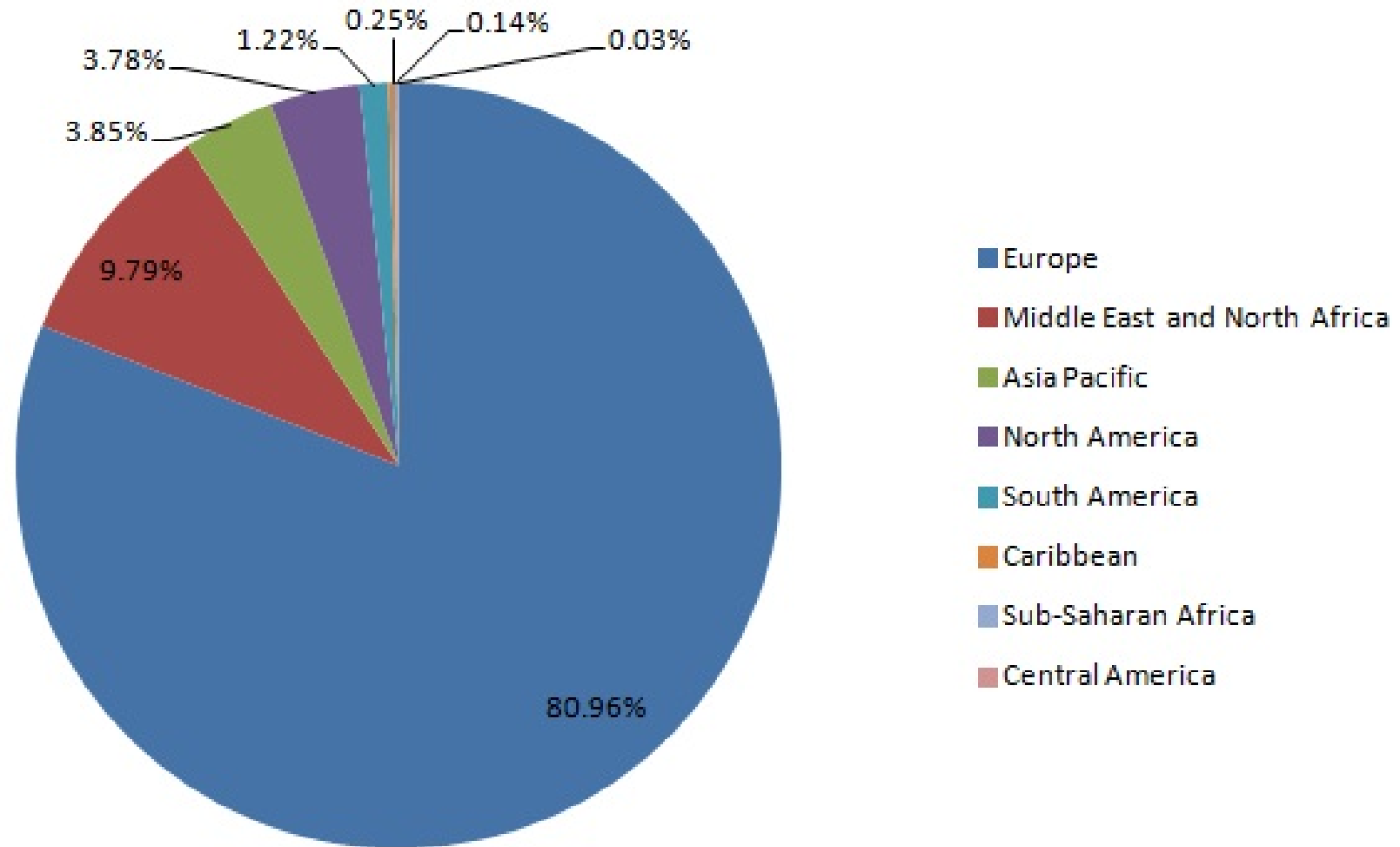
Limitations in documentation

Includes	Excludes
Objects that were documented before theft	Most objects stolen above ground, which have not been (adequately) documented
	Disproportionately, cultural property from areas with low capacity
Objects that have been documented since recovery	All objects looted from underground, which have not been documented
	Disproportionately, cultural property from zones of recent crisis and conflict
False provenance	Mostly meaningless certification
Traffickers fabricate or simply obscure the country of origin, records of transfer and history of ownership	Subhash Kapoor forged paperwork, then got certificates from the Art Loss Register (ALR) to give the impression that his stolen goods were clean

Repatriations of antiquities, 2006-2015, by number of objects and region of origin

Region	Percentage of repatriations by volume
Europe	80.96%
Middle East and North Africa	9.79%
Asia-Pacific	3.85%
North America	3.78%
South America	1.22%
Caribbean	0.25%
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.14%
Central America	0.03%

repatriations of antiquities, 2006-2015, by number of objects and region of origin



Exceptional efforts

Italy

Carabinieri

Exceptional resources

Exceptional successes

Still under-represented - for example, it was impossible to use media reports about 1,389 antiquities that were found “abroad”, “45 boxes”, “5,000 stolen antiquities”, etc.

Elsewhere

Citizens and institutions

Department for Restitution of Antiquities in Egypt

Database of portable antiquities in Greece

India Pride Project by archaeologist Kirit Mankodi and citizen journalist Vijay Kumar

320+ antiquities in the archives of Giacomo Medici, Gianfranco Becchina and Robin Symes and Christos Michaelides have been recovered from museums, galleries and private collections by Italy and Greece (Tsirogiannis, 13th March 2016: pers. comm.)

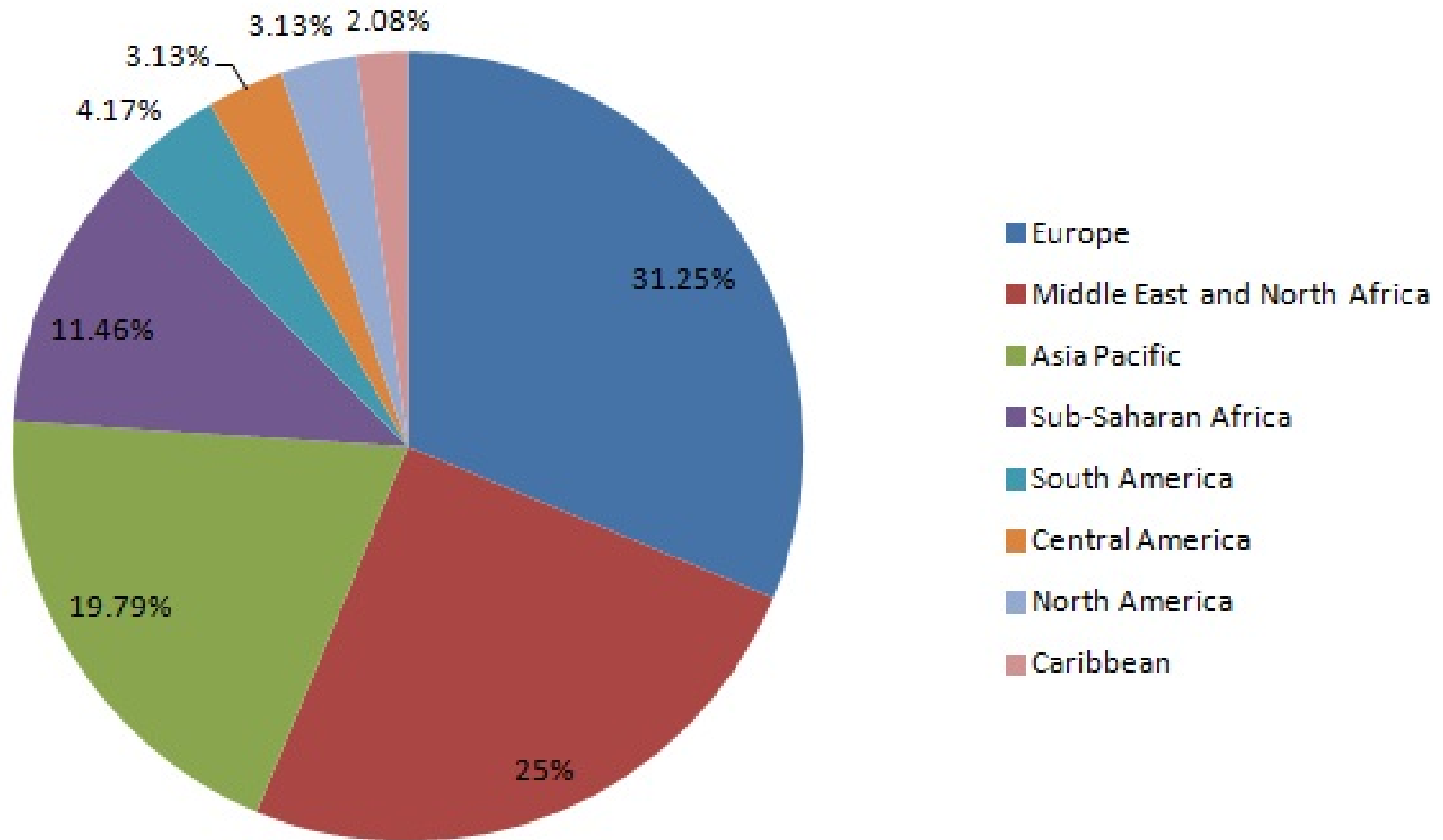
1,000+ antiquities have been identified by forensic archaeologist Christos Tsirogiannis

‘Tens of thousands’ have yet to be identified

Repatriations of antiquities, 2006-2015, by number of cases and region of origin

Region	Percentage of repatriations by case
Europe	31.25%
Middle East and North Africa	25%
Asia-Pacific	19.79%
Sub-Saharan Africa	11.46%
South America	4.17%
Central America	3.13%
North America	3.13%
Caribbean	2.08%

repatriations of antiquities, 2006-2015, by number of cases and region of origin



Recovery of illicit cultural goods by Italy

Objects	2014	1970-2014
Cultural	38,488	738,878
Archaeological	17,981	1,087,411
Counterfeit	1,687	269,150
<i>Counterfeit share</i>	<i>2.90%</i>	<i>12.85%</i>

Cf. Captain Luigi Spadari, Association for Research into Crimes against Art (ARCA), 27th June 2015

A market for every commodity, a venue for every market

Rank at auction

Egyptian, Greek, Roman

Sculpture

Mosaics, Jewellery

Ceramics

(Kiel and Tedesco, 2011: 10)

Role in trade

Millions of coins a year

Coins are 'fundamental and lucrative'
(Elkins, 2012: 93)

Looters must know 'about the history of coins to make the most' (Achilleas, cited by Mackay, 28th January 2008)

If it can be sold, it will be looted

More than 70% of human remains for sale lack any history of ownership
(Huffer and Chappell, 2014: 137)

52.6% through online galleries,
37.6% through private dealerships,
9.8% through auction houses
(Huffer and Chappell, 2014: 137)

'there's a whole "community" of buyers, sellers of human remains', who give full names, phone numbers, online account details ([Huffer and] Graham, 2015)

9,517 posts about trade in human remains on Instagram in December 2015 alone ([Huffer and] Graham, 2016)

Who and how?

Traffickers

Subsistence workers

Poverty-driven traffickers

Entrepreneurs

Networks

Organised criminals

Ideologically-driven anti-state forces

Power and profit-driven shadow states

Ideologically-driven deep state forces

Para-state forces

State forces

Tools in looting and theft

Local and geographical knowledge

Satellite-based navigation systems

Popular and academic publications

Public registers

Metal detectors

Probes and augers

Disguises

Diving equipment

Portable grids

Bulldozers

Asset theft

How much *do* looters, thieves and source-end dealers make?

Less than one per cent in Guatemala (Brodie, 1998: 8)

Less than one per cent in Nigeria (Brodie, 1998: 8)

Less than one per cent in Italy (Brodie, 1998: 7)

Less than two per cent in Turkey (Brodie, 1998: 8)

Less than one per cent in China (Brodie, 1998: 8)

How much *can* looters, thieves and source-end dealers make?

One dealer in Nigeria bought for 1.5% and sold for 50% (Labi and Robinson, 2001)

One embezzler in China paid an intermediary 33% and kept 67% (Ramzy, 2015)

Asset accumulation

How much can networks and gangs make?

In Thailand, one gang had 20,000-30,000 antiquities, of which the first 80 authenticated objects were valued at \$1,500,000 (Bangkok Post, 2014)

In China, another gang had 1,168 antiquities, which were valued at \$80,000,000 (Beijing Times, 2015)

One transnational dealer, Subhash Kapoor, had 2,622 antiquities, which were valued at \$110,000,000 (Kumar and Daniel, 2015)

Another transnational dealer, Robin Symes, had 17,000 antiquities, which were valued at \$210,000,000 (Watson and Todeschini, 2006: 259)

Multi-commodity trafficking

Entrepreneurs and networks

Antiquities-for-methamphetamine within the USA (Bowman Proulx, 2011)

Arms, cannabis and antiquities via Greece (Tsiliopoulos, 2014)

Antiquities and cannabis in Greece (Zafiropoulos, 2014)

Antiquities and cocaine in Italy (H24 Notizie, 2014)

Antiquities, ivory and other endangered wildlife via France (SNDJ, 2016)

Gang crime and state crime

Antiquities and drugs through Nigeria (Maniscalco, 2006: 57; 70)

Antiquities and heroin west, arms east through Bulgaria (Lazarova and Hristov, 2007)

Antiquities and drugs through Burma/Myanmar (Chouvy, 2013: 15)

Antiquities and heroin west, arms east through Turkey (Hardy, 2015: 335-336)

Arms from Turkey for antiquities from Syria (Söylemez, 2015; Taştekin, 2015)

Conflict antiquities

State crime since 1860

British Empire	Ottoman Empire	Soviet Union	Nazi Empire
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Victim communities since 1949

Afghanistan	Argentina	Bulgaria	Cambodia
Cuba	Cyprus	DRC	East Timor
Germany	Iraq	Ireland	Israel and Palestine
Lebanon	Libya	Mali	Nigeria
Pakistan	Somalia	South Ossetia	Sri Lanka
Syria	Thailand	Tibet	Turkey
Ukraine	United Kingdom	Vietnam	Yemen

Where else?

How are looted and stolen antiquities sold?

Offline	
Flea markets	Antique shops
Art galleries	Auction houses
Newspaper adverts	Private sales

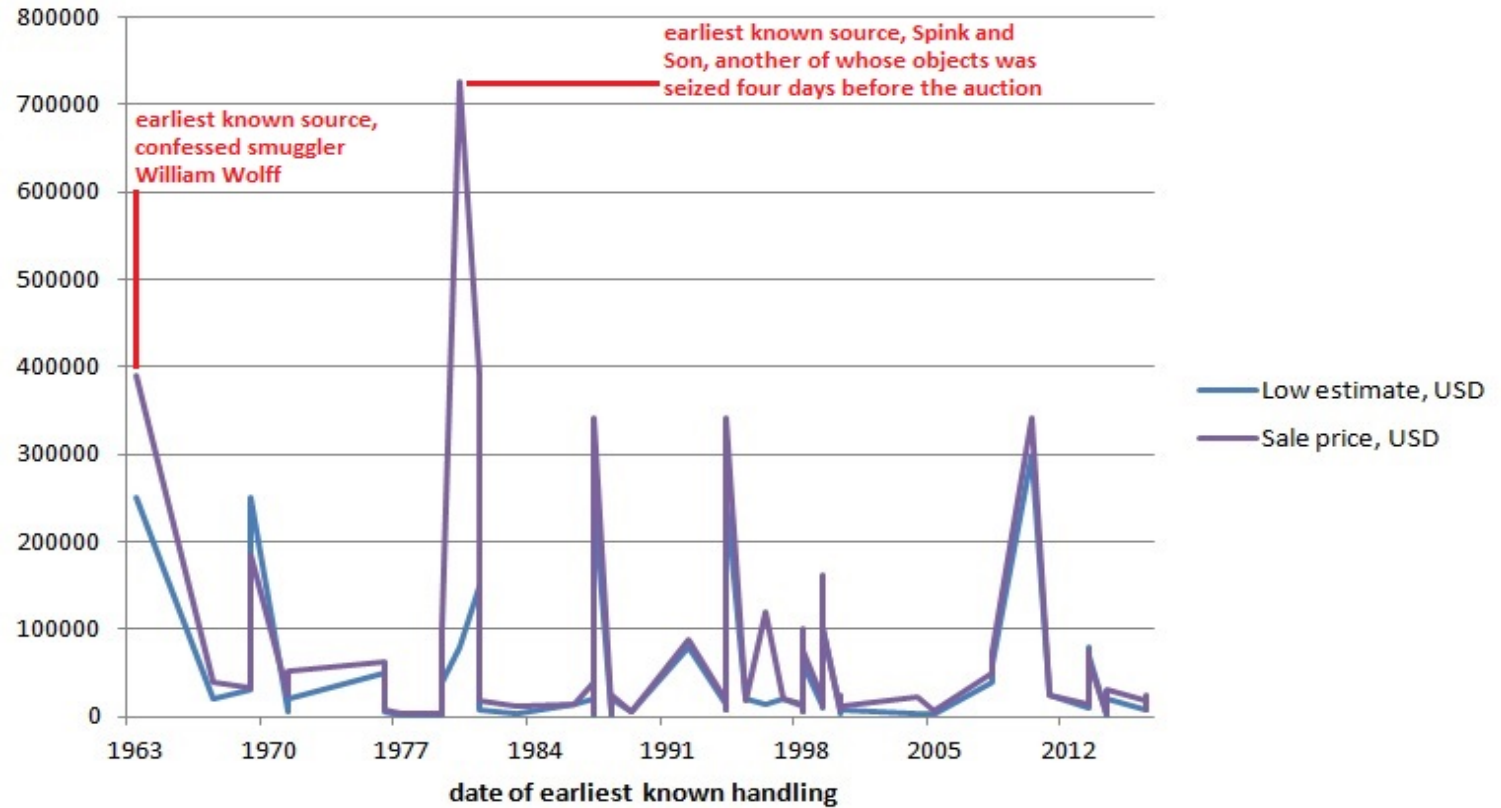
Online	
Local platforms	National platforms
Regional (e.g. language) platforms	International platforms
Bulletin boards (e.g. for hobbyists)	Personal web pages and sites
Community web pages and sites	Business web pages and sites
Dealers	Auctioneers
Marketplaces	Encrypted communications

Looting to order, theft on commission

Afghanistan	Argentina	Australia	Belgium
Cambodia	China	Cyprus	Denmark
Egypt	Finland	France	Germany
Guatemala	Honduras	Hungary	India
Indonesia	Iran	Iraq	Israel and Palestine
Italy	Mali	Mexico	Mongolia
Nigeria	Norway	Pakistan	Peru
Poland	Portugal	Russia	Slovakia
South Africa	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland
Syria	Turkey	Ukraine	United Kingdom
United States	Uzbekistan	Yemen?	Where else?

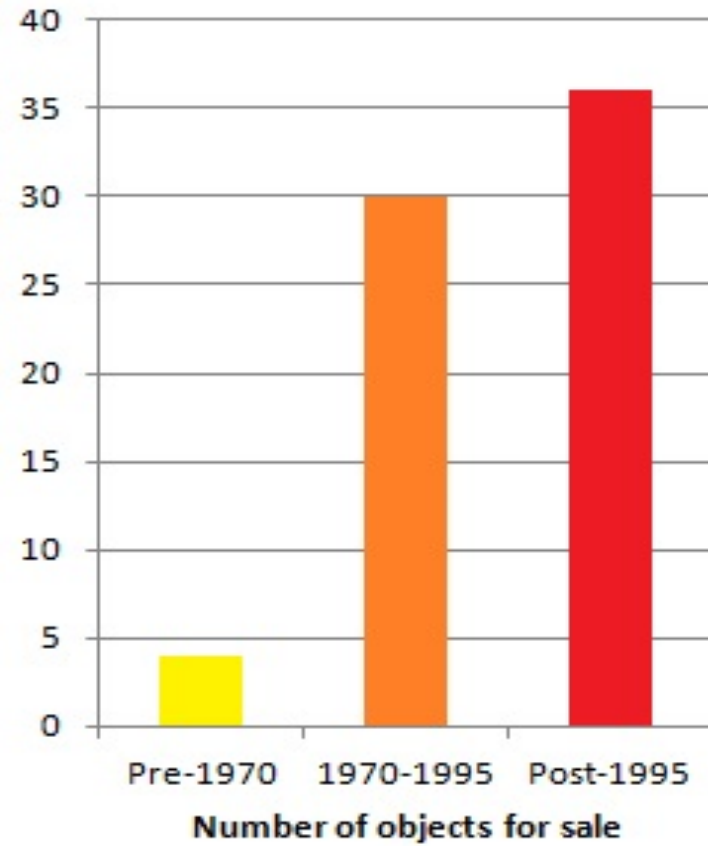
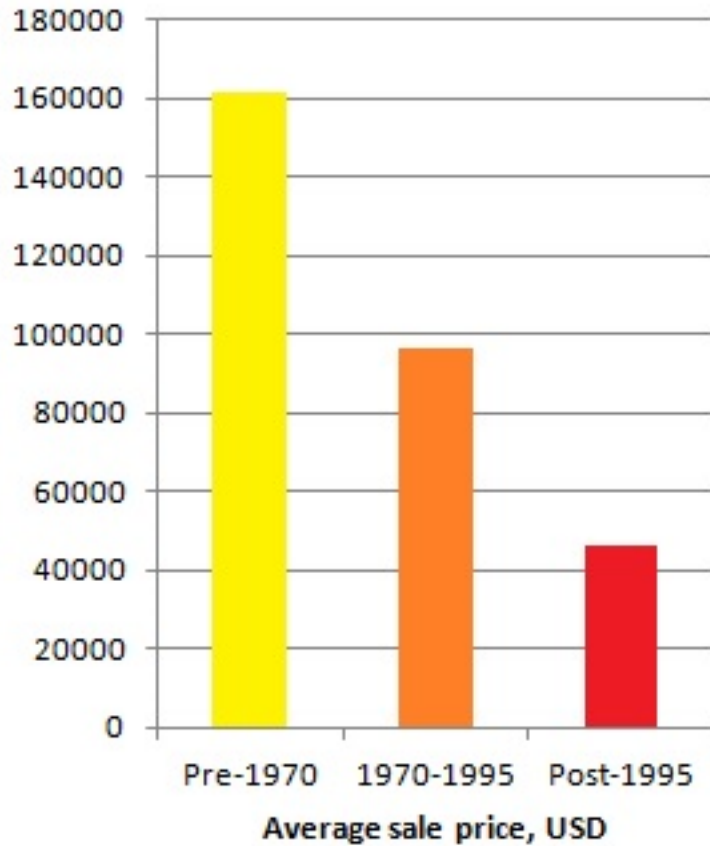
<http://bit.ly/1KNIGGN>

Recent measures of the American market for Central, South and South-East Asian antiquities



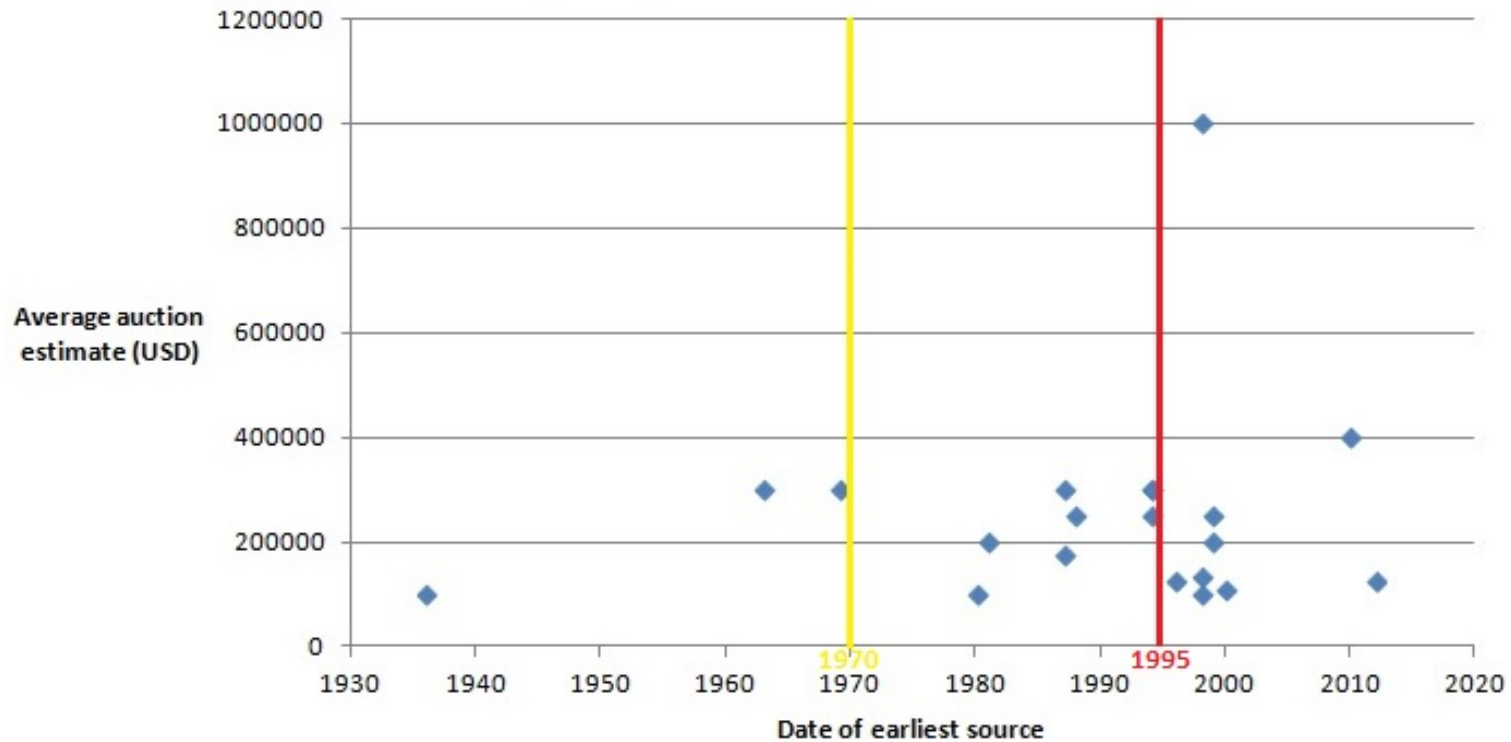
Pre-1970 provenance	1970-1995 provenance	Post-1995 provenance
\$161,625	\$96,683	\$46,197
4 (5.71%)	30 (42.86%)	36 (51.43%)

Quality versus quantity?



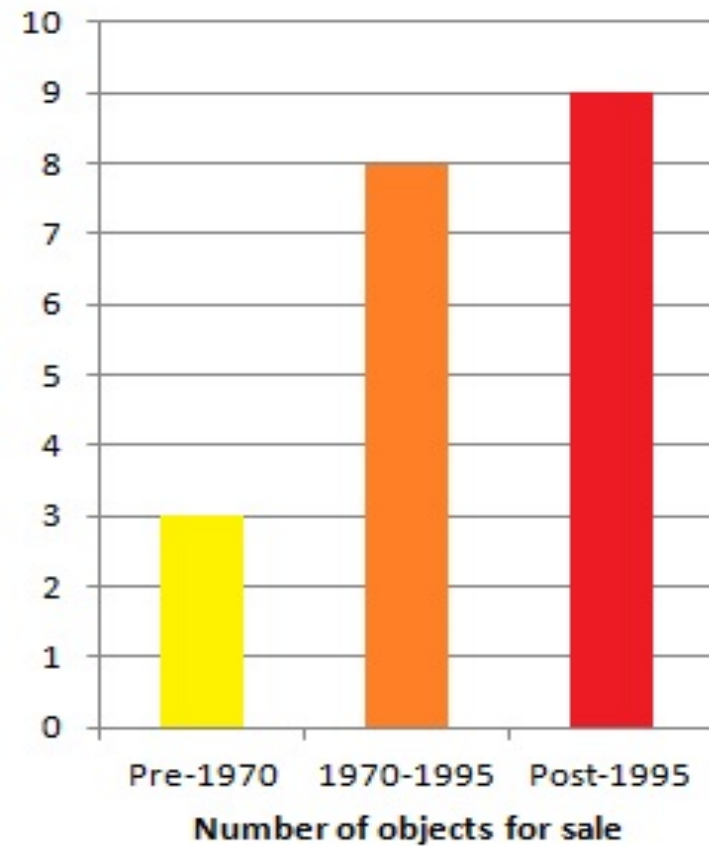
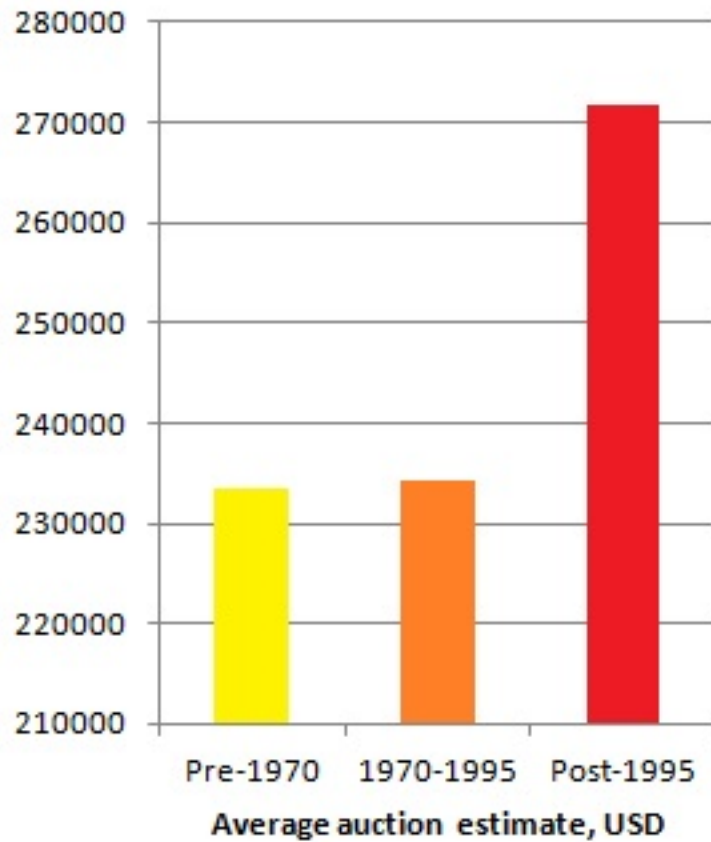
Objects with long histories of ownership may achieve high prices, but they are few.
Most objects are poorly provenanced or entirely unprovenanced.

Recent highlights in the American market for Central, South and South-East Asian antiquities



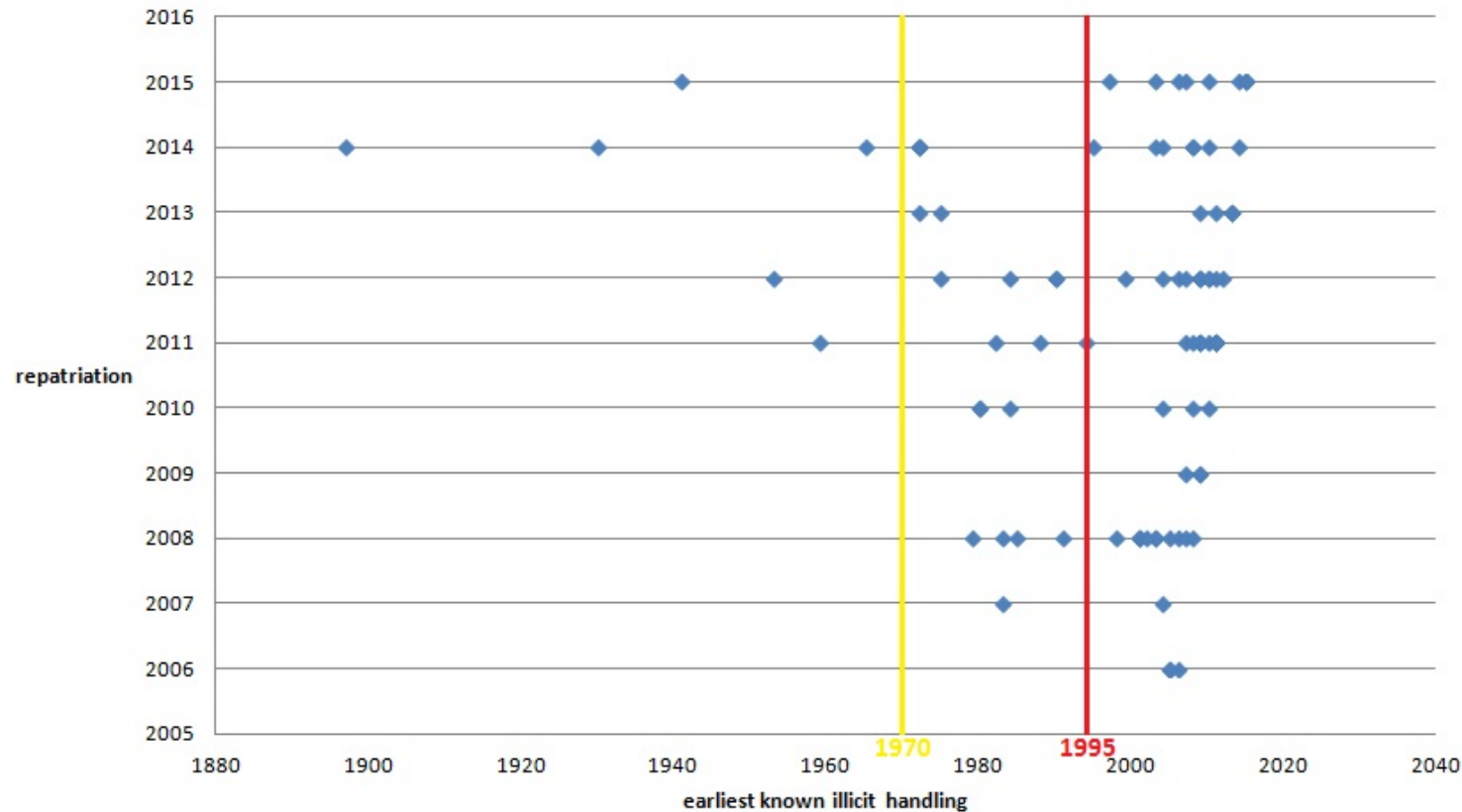
Pre-1970 provenance	1970-1995 provenance	Post-1995 provenance
\$233,333	\$234,375	\$271,667
3 (15%)	8 (40%)	9 (45%)

Quality versus quantity?



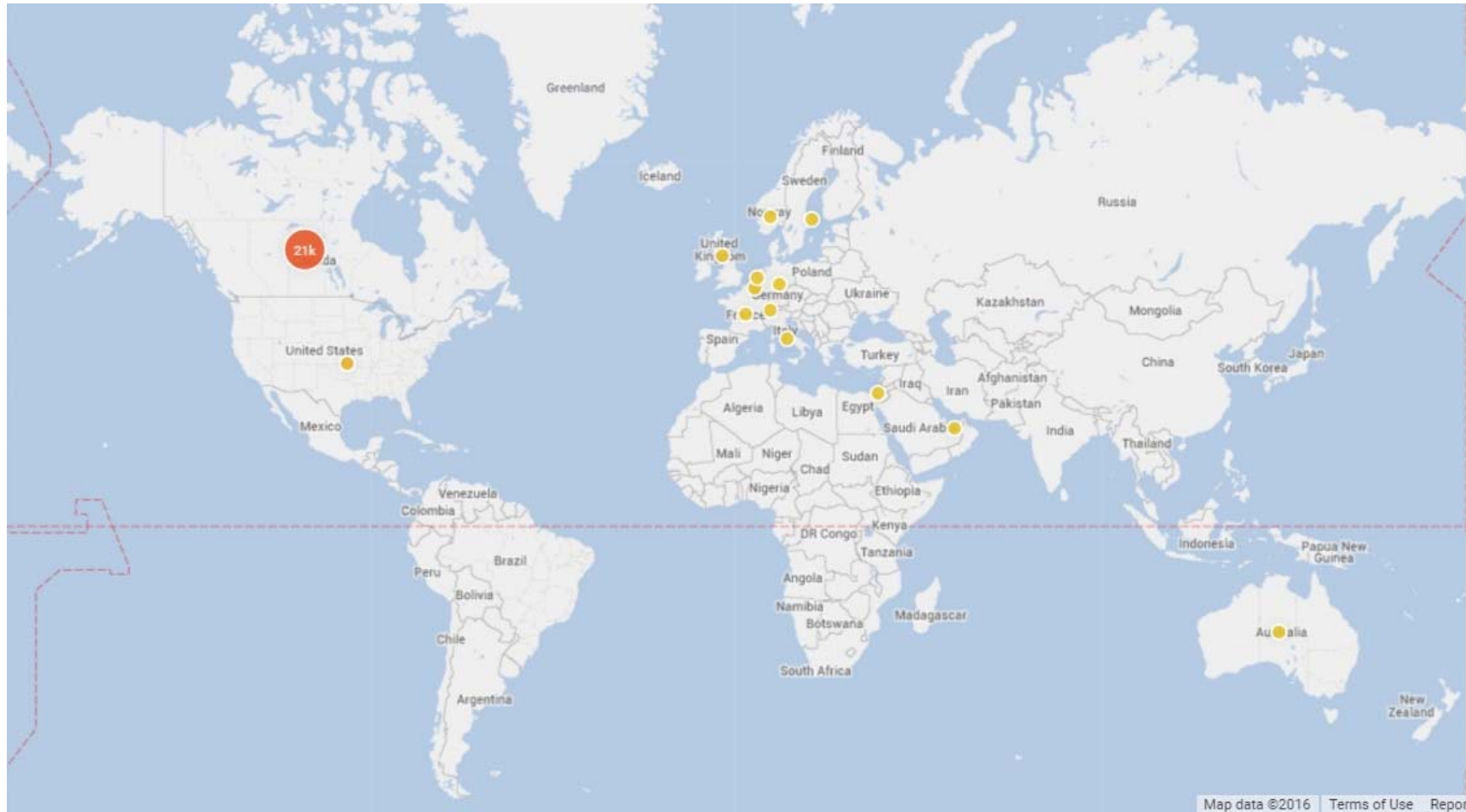
When the market selects its own highlights, they do not appear to reflect any concern for provenance.

Repatriations of antiquities, 2006-2015



Unidentified	Pre-1970	1970-1995	Post-1995
4 (0.02%)	443 (1.62%)	50 (0.18%)	26,777 (98.18%)
Excl. 18,000 coins	443 (4.78%)	50 (0.54%)	8,777 (94.68%)

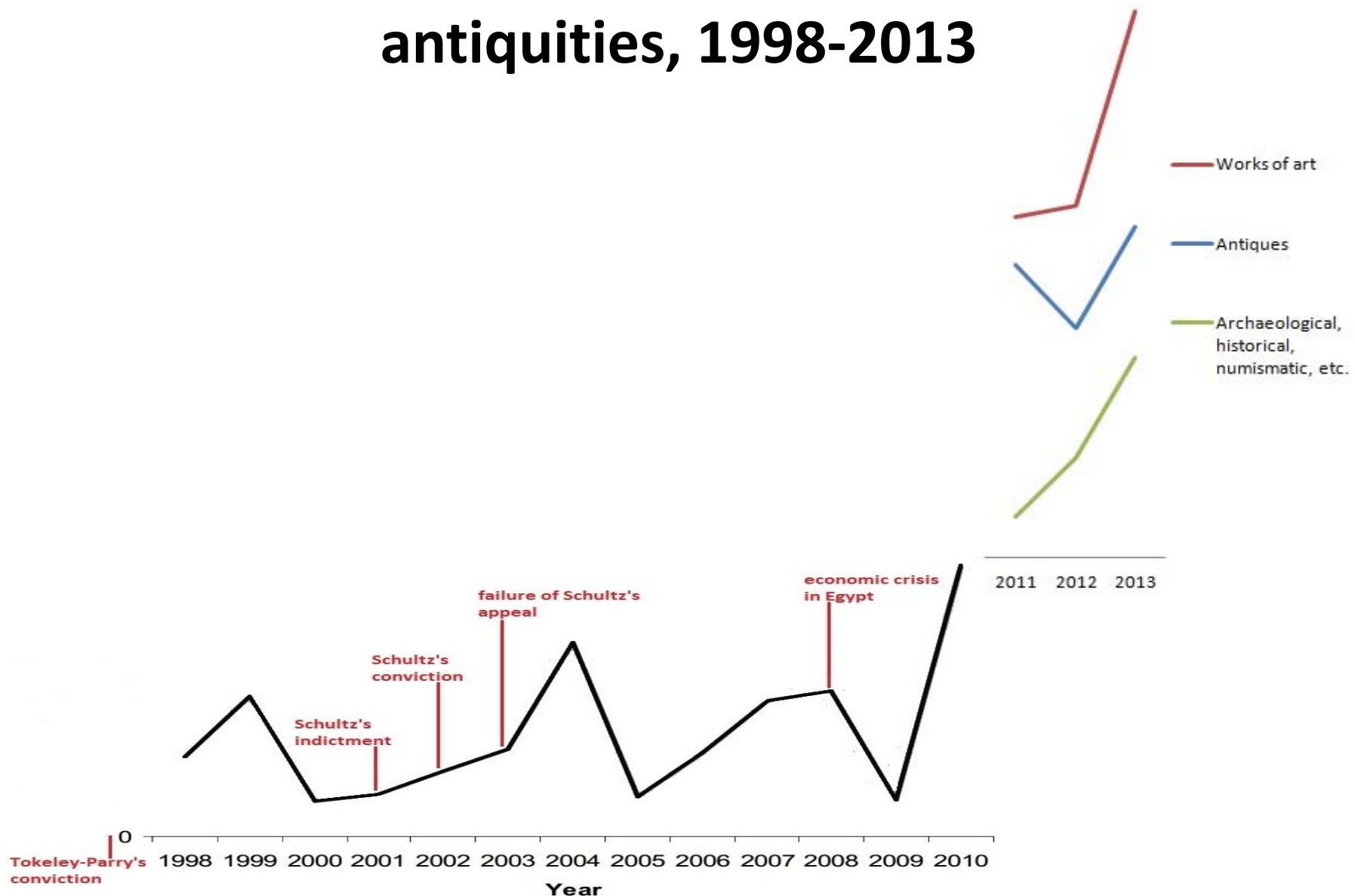
Repatriations of antiquities, 2006-2015, by returning country



Repatriations of antiquities, 2006-2015, by country of origin



Measures of the American market for Egyptian antiquities, 1998-2013



L: sales in U.S., 1998-2010 (cf. Gill, 2015: 68) R: imports to U.S., 2011-2013 (cf. St. Hilaire, 2014)

Who sacrifices nearly half of their assets?

	Hanson (2011)	Kiel and Tedesco (2011)	Hardy (2014)	Coplin in Tully (2015)
Type	Mesopotamian	Antiquities	Near Eastern	Antiquities
Average price with <i>any</i> docs.	\$957	100%	\$3,460	100%
Average price with <i>no</i> docs.	\$549	58%	\$2,098	50%
Premium	74%	72%	65%	100%
Market value of undoc.	57%	58%	61%	50%

Once quality is considered, there is 'no evidence of autoregulation acting to depress post-UNESCO prices or to elevate pre-UNESCO prices' (Brodie, 2014: 439)

'auction houses are using the term "confidentiality" to cover up the involvement of convicted dealers' (Tsirogiannis, 2013: 15)