

Fifty Years of Collecting: The Sale of Ancient Maya Antiquities at Sotheby's

Cara Grace Tremain*

Abstract: Pre-Columbian antiquities, particularly those from the Maya region, are highly sought after on the international art market. Large auction houses such as Sotheby's have dedicated pre-Columbian departments and annual auctions, for which sales catalogues are created. These catalogues offer insight into market trends and allow the volume of antiquities being bought and sold to be monitored. The following study records the public sale of Maya antiquities at Sotheby's over a period slightly exceeding 50 years from 1963 to 2016. More than 3,500 artifacts were offered for sale during this period, of which more than 80 percent did not have associated provenance information. The data suggests that the volume of Maya antiquities offered for sale at Sotheby's public auctions have been steadily decreasing since the 1980s, but their relative value has increased. Quantitative studies of auction sales such as this one can be useful in monitoring the market for illegal antiquities and forgeries.

INTRODUCTION

Sotheby's is one of the most famous auction houses in the world, where art and antiquities have been sold to the highest bidder for hundreds of years.

*PhD candidate, Department of Anthropology and Archaeology, University of Calgary;
Email: c.g.tremain@ucalgary.ca

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: Portions of this research were undertaken during a pre-doctoral residency at Dumbarton Oaks and a pre-doctoral fellowship at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). I would like to express gratitude to both institutions for their support and to acknowledge the assistance of Elayne Silversmith, librarian of the NMAI's Cultural Resource Center, in particular. I would also like to thank Paul Healy and Damien Huffer for reviewing an earlier draft of this manuscript and providing very useful comments. Two anonymous reviewers also offered very useful suggestions for improvement. Finally, I express my deepest gratitude to the interlibrary loan staff at the University of Calgary. Their hard work in locating the majority of the catalogues in this study made this research possible.

Auctions themselves are a practice of considerable antiquity since the term derives from the Latin *auctio*, meaning an increase.¹ As Donna Yates has explained, famous auction houses such as Sotheby's were founded as a way for collectors to both buy and sell while remaining anonymous.² The secretive methods surrounding auctions no doubt created a reputation of being both a secure and intriguing method of trading in antiquities, attracting those who were wealthy and privileged enough to participate.

Once regarded as an intellectual and cultural activity, to fill museum shelves and 'cabinets of curiosities' in private homes, collecting is now portrayed as immoral and considered to be a form of robbing nations of their cultural heritage.³ Nevertheless, auction houses have evolved into large corporations with a seemingly endless supply of antiquities that are marketed to collectors in the form of glossy sales catalogues. This is because the auction market itself is a legal apparatus through which to trade goods; whether the goods are legal is another matter altogether.

Sales catalogues themselves can be an aid to understanding the sale and purchase of antiquities at auction. As Gordon Lobay has recognized, "a vast and virtually untapped amount of information is available in auction catalogues."⁴ The long-standing practice of marketing antiquities in sales catalogues allows for trends and changes through time to be recognized, not only in regard to auction houses and collectors but also in regard to the antiquities themselves. Thus, among other information, catalogues can reveal the quantity and quality of antiquities sold at auction, the highest and lowest sale prices, the pervasiveness of offering provenance information, and the fluctuations in sales through time.

Despite the growing market for Internet auctions, they cannot be effectively monitored in the same manner because of the absence of published information in catalogue form and because of the ability to purchase antiquities almost instantaneously after they have been offered for sale.⁵ The following study is similar to Lobay's research because it employs a culture-regional approach using sales catalogues as a data source, rather than focusing on one particular type of antiquity.⁶ Although this study can only speak to antiquities reaching the market through one public venue, it highlights the continued trade in Maya antiquities despite growing legislation and efforts to curb the illicit looting of archaeological sites.

¹Heath 2012, 4.

²Yates 2016, 176.

³Lobay 2006, 58.

⁴Lobay 2006, 15.

⁵Fay 2011; Brodie 2015.

⁶Lobay 2006. Compare Chippindale and Gill 2000; Chippindale et al. 2001; Luke and Henderson 2006.

HISTORY OF SOTHEBY'S

The international brand known today as Sotheby's, which conducts auctions in 40 countries around the world,⁷ began as a modest company in London specializing in the sale of books. Its inception can be traced back to 11 March 1744, when bookseller Samuel Baker conducted his first auction consisting of several hundred books from the library of the Right Honorable Sir John Stanley.⁸ Baker, who also acted as a publisher, continued to auction books over the following years and became one of six leading booksellers designated as official agents for the Society for the Encouragement of Learning—which assisted authors in the publication of their works. Baker continued to be entrusted with the sale of major libraries and, in 1767, after running his own business for 34 years, hired George Leigh to work alongside him and the company name changed to “Baker and Leigh.”⁹

After Baker's death, Leigh brought John Sotheby, Baker's nephew, into the business, and by July 1778 the company name had changed to “Leigh and Sotheby.”¹⁰ The name of the company continued to change over the years, as new partners came and left, until 1864 when Edward Hodge became a partner and the name became “Sotheby, Wilkinson, and Hodge.”¹¹ Although the grandson of John Sotheby died in 1861, and with him the final line of the Sotheby family in the company, the name did not disappear from the company title because the remaining partners appreciated the importance of maintaining the Sotheby name in the firm.¹² Following the end of the First World War, the company expanded their repertoire and began to hold regular auctions of art and antiques.¹³ In 1924, the firm became Sotheby and Company, and by the time of the Second World War the company was principally engaged in selling works of art.¹⁴ Despite the disastrous consequences that the war had on Britain, the emigration of European refugees into the country brought new ethnographic curios and antiquities to the marketplace.¹⁵ Thus, dealers and collectors were able to continue trading and Sotheby and Company continued to do business.

Shortly after the war, the government relaxed the export and import regulations in Britain, thus opening up the North American market. The company placed John Carter in New York as a representative of the firm, and he traded under the banner “Sotheby's of London.” By 1957, consignments from North America were already

⁷Sotheby's, “The History of Sotheby's Auction House,” <http://www.sothebys.com/en/inside/about-us.html> (accessed 25 January 2017).

⁸Herrmann 1981, 4.

⁹Herrmann 1981, 6–7.

¹⁰Herrmann 1981, 12.

¹¹Herrmann 1981, 46, 49.

¹²Herrmann 1981, 49.

¹³Heath 2012, 6.

¹⁴Herrmann 1981, xiii.

¹⁵Cioni 2014, 12.

responsible for more than 20 percent of the company's turnover.¹⁶ Rival New York auction house Parke-Bernet, which was the largest fine art auction house in the United States at the time, began to feel competition from Carter's low commission rates.¹⁷ Sotheby and Company effectively ended the competition when they purchased Parke-Bernet in 1964,¹⁸ thereafter referring to themselves as "Sotheby Parke Bernet Incorporated" in their New York catalogues. In the late 1980s, the company removed the "Parke Bernet" designation and were known in both London and New York simply as "Sotheby's."

The 1970s and 1980s were periods of growth for the company, with a reported net turnover of US \$113 million in 1989.¹⁹ In late 1990, the market collapsed, and, in 1991, the company's net profit had fallen to \$3.9 million, creating fierce competition for consignments with rival auction house Christie's.²⁰ In 1995, Sotheby's and Christie's illegally conspired to implement price-fixing in order to reduce competition, but it drastically backfired and ended in a criminal trial.²¹ Sotheby's were able to recover from the scandal, and their net turnover in 2007 had reached \$1.9 billion.²² Another scandal that drastically impacted Sotheby's was Peter Watson's undercover investigation into the company's illegal exportation of old master paintings from Italy.²³ After the disclosure of Watson's investigation, Christie's antiquities department outsold Sotheby's for the first time in 43 years, and Sotheby's ceased selling antiquities in London.²⁴

PRE-COLUMBIAN SALES AT SOTHEBY'S

The Pre-Columbian Art Department at Sotheby's offers antiquities for sale from the geographic regions of Central and South America in their annual auctions of African and Oceanic Art in New York (the last recorded auction that included pre-Columbian antiquities in London appears to have been in 1992). Such antiquities, providing they are authentic, were manufactured by ancient cultures of Latin America such as the Aztecs, Inca, and Maya. Sotheby's claims to "lead the field" of pre-Columbian art auctions, with sales totaling over \$17 million in the past five years.²⁵ Beginning sporadically in the 1960s, sales of pre-Columbian objects at Sotheby's soon increased, and, by 1980, there were enough regular

¹⁶Herrmann 1981, 347–50.

¹⁷Herrmann 1981, 349.

¹⁸Herrmann 1981, 395.

¹⁹Ashenfelter and Graddy 2005, 5. All sums preceded by a \$ in this article refer to US dollars.

²⁰Ashenfelter and Graddy 2005.

²¹Ashenfelter and Graddy 2005.

²²Heath 2012, 10.

²³Watson 1997.

²⁴Lobay 2006, 51; Bellingham 2008, 177.

²⁵Sotheby's, "Pre-Columbian Art," <http://www.sothebys.com/en/departments/pre-columbian-art.html> (accessed 25 January 2017).

sales for the company to establish a specialist department of pre-Columbian art (see fig. 1). From 1984 to 2016, the department was headed by consultant Stacy Goodman, a graduate of anthropology from New York University, and, more recently, Paul Lewis has become the associate specialist for the department.

Antiquities sold through Sotheby's Pre-Columbian Art Department are almost exclusively unprovenanced—meaning that their original context is unknown. This may be a result of illegal looting, excavation prior to the establishment of modern archaeology, or recovery as a surface deposit.²⁶ As Clemency Coggins explains, these antiquities may have been imported into a country legally but were almost certainly exported from their country of origin illegally.²⁷ Situations such as this occur because an importing country may not be under any obligation to enforce the laws of the country from which an antiquity was exported.²⁸ Aesthetics, rather than context, influences the purchasing decision of the art market,²⁹ and, therefore, a lack of provenance does not prevent the acquisition of antiquities. Dealers and collectors have often defended their actions, claiming their purchases help to preserve cultural heritage.³⁰ Conversely, many archaeologists strongly deplore the sale and purchase of illicit antiquities.³¹

Despite growing regulations restricting the export of antiquities from Latin America, Sotheby's has continued to market and sell antiquities from Mexico

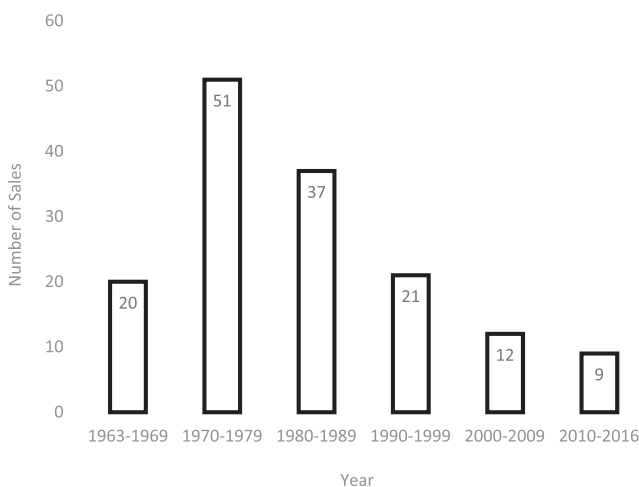


FIGURE 1. Number of sales with Maya antiquities per decade.

²⁶Kersel (2006) discusses the trafficking of illicit antiquities from their source country to destination markets.

²⁷Coggins 1998, 53.

²⁸Yates 2006, 7.

²⁹Lobay 2006, 96–97.

³⁰Griffin 1986.

³¹Renfrew 1993.

and its southern neighbors. The year 1970 is generally viewed as a watershed date concerning the trade of antiquities because of the creation of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (UNESCO Convention).³² The convention was aimed at stemming the looting of archaeological sites and the sale of illicit antiquities around the world and officially came into force in 1972. Since it is an agreement between UNESCO member states, and not a law, the convention requires ratification to prevent the exportation and importation of items of cultural property.³³ Currently, 131 states have ratified the convention.³⁴

The convention is not retroactive and does not apply to objects exported prior to 1970. Antiquities exported from their country of origin prior to the convention coming into effect may have been done so legally (unless other legislation, discussed below, prevented it) and can thus be sold on the art market lawfully. Although the date of 1970 has no legal significance, it marks an ethical watershed towards the acceptance of unprovenanced antiquities.³⁵ Therefore, unless accompanied by special permission and paperwork, antiquities sold through Sotheby's are usually expected to have a pre-1970 import date. Patty Gerstenblith describes this as adhering to "the 1970 standard."³⁶

Prior to the UNESCO Convention, various Latin American countries established national laws to protect their cultural heritage.³⁷ For example, as early as 1947, Guatemala passed the Law for the Protection and Preservation of the Monuments, Archaeological, Historical, and Archetypical Objects.³⁸ Other agreements were later put in place to protect the illegal export of antiquities. In the same year as the creation of the UNESCO Convention, a Treaty of Co-operation between Mexico and the United States was established,³⁹ followed closely by the US public law, the Regulation of Importation of Pre-Columbian Monumental or Architectural Sculpture or Murals, in 1972.⁴⁰ The former was designed to aid Mexico in

³²Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, 14 November 1970, 823 UNTS 231 (UNESCO Convention).

³³E.g., the US Convention on Cultural Property Act, PL 97-446, 19 USC § 2601–13 (CIPA), ratified the UNESCO Convention in 1983. Sokal (2006) describes the various bills leading up to the CIPA.

³⁴UNESCO Convention, <http://www.unesco.org/eri/la/convention.asp?KO=13039&language=E> (accessed 25 January 2017).

³⁵Brodie 2014b, 440.

³⁶Gerstenblith 2013.

³⁷Such laws can be found on the UNESCO Database of National Cultural Heritage Laws, <http://www.unesco.org/culture/natlaws/index.php?lng=en> (accessed 23 January 2017).

³⁸Law for the Protection and Preservation of the Monuments, Archaeological, Historical, and Archetypical Objects, Decree No. 425, 19 March 1947.

³⁹Coggins 1998, 58, 63; Treaty of Cooperation Between the United States of America and the United Mexican States Providing for the Recovery and Return of Stolen Archaeological, Historical and Cultural Properties, 17 July 1970.

⁴⁰Regulation of Importation of Pre-Columbian Monumental or Architectural Sculpture or Murals PL 92-587, 19 USC § 2091 (1972).

recovering illegally exported materials, and the latter targeted the looting problem that Central America was encountering.⁴¹ The year 1972 also saw Mexico pass its Federal Law on Monuments and Archaeological, Artistic, and Historic Zones, which decreed that artifacts and monuments were the property of the Mexican nation.⁴² This law, bolstered by the US National Stolen Property Act, led to the conviction of five antiquities dealers in the 1977 court case *United States v. McClain*.⁴³ The dealers were found guilty of conspiring to transport, receive, and sell stolen Mexican antiquities.⁴⁴

While such laws decreased the quantity of monuments and sculpture from Latin America on the international art market, looting by *huaqueros* continued to be rife; they began to seek smaller artifacts, such as ceramic vases, that were not specifically covered by legislation.⁴⁵ This led to some Latin American countries requesting emergency import restrictions from the United States (one of the principal markets for antiquities). They began in 1987 when El Salvador requested import restrictions on material from the Cara Sucia region, and the most recent was in 1991 when Guatemala requested import restrictions on material from the Petén region.⁴⁶ Several memoranda of understanding (MOUs) between the United States and countries to the south were later established. These bilateral agreements place import restrictions on various archaeological and cultural materials and are necessary for the 1970 UNESCO Convention to be effective between two state parties. There is currently no MOU between the United States and Mexico, but the United States has signed MOUs with El Salvador (1995); Guatemala (1997); Peru (1997); Nicaragua (1999); Bolivia (2001); Honduras (2004); Colombia (2006); and Belize (2013).⁴⁷ Mexico also has bilateral agreements with Belize, Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Peru.⁴⁸

Sotheby's catalogues have demonstrated a continued international demand for Latin American antiquities, even after 1970. British collectors Sir Robert and Lisa

⁴¹See Coggins 1969.

⁴²The official Spanish title is Ley Federal Sobre Monumentos y Zonas Arqueológicas, Artísticas e Históricas, 6 May 1972.

⁴³*United States v. McClain*, (1977) 545 F.2d 988 (5th Cir.).

⁴⁴Gerstenblith 2006, 69; Hoffman 2006, 165.

⁴⁵*Huaqueros* is a Spanish term, translating to "looter." For more information, see Donna Yates, "Huaquero," *Trafficking Culture*, 17 August 2012, <http://traffickingculture.org/encyclopedia/terminology/huaquero-2/> (accessed 10 July 2016).

⁴⁶Details of these emergency restrictions can be viewed at Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, "Bilateral Agreements," <https://eca.state.gov/cultural-heritage-center/cultural-property-protection/bilateral-agreements> (accessed 23 January 2017). Gilgan (2001, 83) observed that after that Guatemalan restriction was passed, "Petén" virtually disappeared from an antiquity's description in Sotheby's catalogues.

⁴⁷Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, "Bilateral Agreements."

⁴⁸See International Council of Museums, "Red List of Endangered Cultural Objects of Central America and Mexico," 2009, http://icom.museum/fileadmin/user_upload/images/Redlists/Central_America-Mexico/RLCAM_ENG.pdf (accessed 23 January 2017).

Sainsbury, founders of the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, were able to continue purchasing pre-Columbian antiquities at Sotheby's London auctions after 1970 because the United Kingdom (UK) did not sign the UNESCO Convention until 2002. David Scott suggests that the UK delayed signing the convention because "the British were making too much selling [antiquities] at Sotheby's and Christie's."⁴⁹ The Sainsburys admitted that "the stuff [that] came out of Mexico, one didn't ask how it had got out, or whether it had been out a long while. The people who broke the law were the people who brought it over the border presumably. We were in the clear as English."⁵⁰

The interest in purchasing pre-Columbian antiquities at auction has increased throughout the years, so much so that it has become a recognized category of investment for art collectors at "affordable" prices.⁵¹ Val Edwards, a long-time antiquities smuggler, has admitted trafficking Latin American antiquities—some of which were subsequently sold at Sotheby's—into the United States throughout the 1980s and 1990s.⁵² Nevertheless, Stacy Goodman has offered assurances that Sotheby's stringently checks all of the items it sells to make sure they have been purchased and transported over borders legally.⁵³

Although early auctions of pre-Columbian art offered higher quantities of South American and West Mexican antiquities, those from the Maya region have become some of the most sought after and prestigious. In 2001, Elizabeth Gilgan undertook a study of 66 Sotheby's catalogues covering a period of 29 years, in which she recorded 3,300 Maya antiquities.⁵⁴ No other systematic survey focusing solely on Maya antiquities at Sotheby's has been attempted by scholars (at least none that the author is aware of), but Marc Levine and Lucha de Luna's study did demonstrate that antiquities classed as "Maya" are the second most popular of those from Mesoamerica; in total, they recorded 3,263 Maya artifacts from 83 Sotheby's catalogues.⁵⁵ Similarly, while Christina Luke and John Henderson's study is focused on Uluá vases from Honduras, they demonstrate that many are often marketed as "Maya" at auction—likely because they command higher prices.⁵⁶ Other studies of Sotheby's catalogues have concentrated on Cambodian, Greek, Italian, and South American antiquities.⁵⁷

⁴⁹Scott 2013, 58.

⁵⁰Cioni 2014, 32.

⁵¹James Tarmy, "The Smarter Way to Invest in Art," *Bloomberg Businessweek*, 19 March 2015, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-03-19/art-investing-smart-buys-are-overlooked-underappreciated-works> (accessed 8 July 2016).

⁵²William Honan, "Art for Whose Sake?: Trading in Antiquities; Rare Pre-Columbian Relics, at Any Cost," *The New York Times*, 31 July 1995, http://www.nytimes.com/1995/07/31/us/art-for-whose-sake-trading-in-antiquities-rare-pre-columbian-relics-at-any-cost.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0 (accessed 22 January 2017).

⁵³Ioan Grillo, "Red List' Drawn to Help Recover Stolen Art," *Chron*, 16 May 2004, <http://www.chron.com/entertainment/article/Red-list-drawn-to-help-recover-stolen-art-1984216.php> (accessed 8 July 2016).

⁵⁴Gilgan 2001.

⁵⁵Levine and Luna 2013.

⁵⁶Luke and Henderson 2006, 159–62.

⁵⁷Elia 2001; Nørskov 2002a; Davis 2011; Lobay 2006; Yates 2006.

In light of the information that Sotheby's sales catalogues provide, the present author has conducted a study of Maya antiquities in catalogues dating from 1960 to 2016. Lots that were specifically designated as "Mayan" were included, but antiquities that were clearly mislabeled or from peripheral regions were excluded (the Maya region encompasses the Yucatan Peninsula, Belize, Guatemala, and Western portions of Honduras and El Salvador). Due to the large number of catalogues, most of which are located in libraries and research institutions spread across North America and Europe, it took a period of roughly two years to collect the catalogues. Interlibrary loans through the University of Calgary were instrumental in locating the majority of catalogues, but use of the Sotheby's website and research trips to other libraries in North America also proved useful in locating sales catalogues. A total of 287 catalogues were studied, 150 of which included Maya antiquities.

Unfortunately, despite the author's best efforts, this study does not reflect a complete record of the public sale of Maya antiquities at Sotheby's. While recent sales catalogues are available to view online with high resolution color photographs, searchable terms, and accessible condition reports, older catalogues are more difficult to source and contain far less information. Detailed lists of pre-Columbian sales from 1960 onwards are not available at Sotheby's,⁵⁸ perhaps because they do not hold all of their own past sale catalogues, and therefore some catalogues may not have been located.⁵⁹ Furthermore, since early catalogues did not include photographs of lots, information about antiquities could only be obtained from the title and description. Therefore, incorrect or ambiguously described lots (such as those that were simply titled "pre-Columbian") may have included Maya antiquities that have not been included in this study. Finally, the reliance on obtaining catalogues from interlibrary loans has prevented an exhaustive study because many catalogues were sent as scanned copies and some may have been incomplete.

It should be noted that the information in this study is from public auction sales, but Sotheby's also conducts private sales, and the number of Maya antiquities that move through these avenues cannot be known. Private sales are an important element of Sotheby's business model, and many take place at their S|2 Gallery for Contemporary Art.⁶⁰ In 2013, private sales at Sotheby's constituted 19 percent (or \$1.2 billion) of overall sales.⁶¹ However, 2013 was considered a boom year, and figures have dropped since then—with Sotheby's reporting private sales totaling \$673 million in 2015.⁶² Gordon Lobay, following Vinnie Nørskov, refers to private

⁵⁸Stacy Goodman, personal communication, 2015.

⁵⁹Lobay 2006, 130.

⁶⁰Pfeffer 2014.

⁶¹Agovino 2014.

⁶²Anna Brady, "What Do Auction House Private Sales Mean for Collectors and the Art Market?" *Apollo: The International Art Magazine*, vol. 4, 4 August 2016, <https://www.apollo-magazine.com/what-do-auction-house-private-sales-mean-for-collectors-and-the-art-market/>.

sales as the “invisible market,” and he suggests that a greater quantity of central Italian antiquities is sold through the private, rather than public, market.⁶³ Similarly, Yates argues that the apparent reduction in the quantity of South American antiquities at auction is due to their movement into private sales arenas.⁶⁴ Thus, there may be a much larger trade in Maya antiquities through private Sotheby’s sales in comparison to the visible sales at public auction.

To conduct a study of Maya antiquities offered for sale at Sotheby’s, information from 31 categories was collected. This included, where available, the date, name, and location of the sale; whether the catalogue featured a Maya antiquity on the cover; the total number of lots and antiquities; the total lots sold; the highest and lowest sale prices; the total number of lots with a named owner and provenance; if the lot description suggested an antiquity was modern rather than ancient; if the lot had been published or exhibited; if a photograph by Justin Kerr (a prominent photographer in the field of Maya antiquities) accompanied the lot description; and the material classes within each lot.

Date, Name, and Location

Catalogues dating from the 1960s onwards were studied, since this is when sales of pre-Columbian antiquities at Sotheby’s began. The first occurrence of a Maya antiquity was in the 11 February 1963 London sale (a sole terracotta figure head). During the following decades, the quantity of Maya antiquities increased significantly but decreased following the millennium (see table 1). The 1980s saw the greatest quantity of Maya antiquities, matching Gilgan’s results, and can be considered a peak in sales (the volume has been steadily decreasing since).⁶⁵

Prior to being sold in dedicated auctions marketed as pre-Columbian art, antiquities from Latin America have been sold in auctions alongside “tribal art”; “primitive art”; “decorative works of art”; and “American art.” Apart from an isolated

Table 1. Total number of lots with Maya antiquities and total number of Maya antiquities offered for sale at auction from 1963 to 2016

Year	Total lots	Total antiquities
1963–69	161	188
1970–79	455	539
1980–89	1,258	1,341
1990–99	1,087	1,256
2000–09	223	247
2010–16	86	88
Total	3,270	3,659

⁶³Lobay 2006; Nørskov 2002b, 291.

⁶⁴Yates 2006, 39.

⁶⁵Gilgan 2001.

occurrence in 1961, “pre-Columbian” appeared in sales titles from 1964 onwards. The first auction titled simply “Pre-Columbian Art” took place on 6 March 1971 in New York. Up until the establishment of the Pre-Columbian Art Department at Sotheby’s in 1980, there were 191 sales including antiquities from Latin America in both the London and New York offices (only 116 included “pre-Columbian” in the sale title [see fig. 2]).

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, pre-Columbian art became a stand-alone sale, likely owing to the great quantities of antiquities from Latin America on the market at this time (if the numbers for Maya antiquities is a marker of other pre-Columbian antiquities [see table 1]). Yates suggests that “the creation of a sale for only Pre-Columbian objects signalled that the ancient art of the Americas has discarded the ‘primitive’ moniker and entered the mainstream of western collecting.”⁶⁶ From the year 2000 onwards (when there was a decline in the quantity of Maya antiquities), pre-Columbian art was once again sold alongside other antiquities and is currently sold in conjunction with African and Oceanic art in New York.⁶⁷

It is interesting to note that when the quantity of Maya antiquities on the market declines, sales catalogues begin to change. Early catalogues are devoid of photographs and have minimal descriptions. When photographs are introduced, they are black and white and only accompany select lots. In the mid-1980s, catalogues

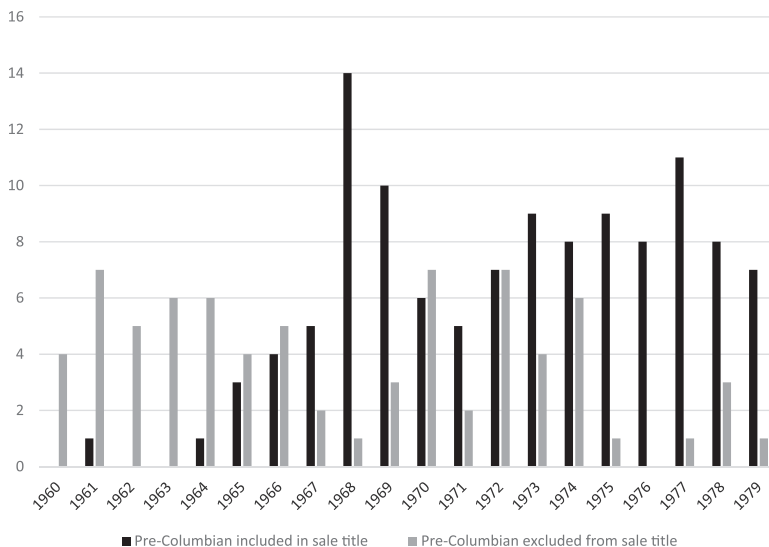


FIGURE 2. Number of auctions per year from 1960 to 1979 with “pre-Columbian” included and excluded from sale title.

⁶⁶Yates 2006, 4–5.

⁶⁷Yates suggests this is due to a significant decrease in the quantity of pre-Columbian items offered at public auction. Yates 2006, 13.

began to include color photographs and lengthier descriptions. Lobay describes this change as one from mere “shopping lists,” which catered to a wholesale venue, to catalogues that catered primarily to retail-based operations geared for private buyers.⁶⁸

Of the 150 sales that included Maya antiquities, 110 were in New York, 39 were in London, and one was in Paris (see table 2). In New York, 3,158 relevant lots were sold with 3,534 artifacts; in London, 87 relevant lots were sold with 100 artifacts. The sole Paris sale included 25 lots consisting of 25 artifacts. This demonstrates that the majority of Maya antiquities are sold through the North American market, which is to be expected based on its proximity to the ancient Maya cultural area. The catalogues also reflect this dominant market, since it is the New York catalogues, rather than the London catalogues, that were first supplemented with photographs and lengthy descriptions of lots.

Catalogue Cover

As previously discussed, glossy color catalogues began to appear in the mid-1980s. They advertised an individual lot or group of lots on their covers, thereby drawing increased attention to one or several items in the sale. Of the 150 catalogues that included Maya antiquities, only 17 (11 percent) featured a Maya antiquity on the cover (although nine of the remaining 135 catalogue covers were unavailable to the author, so there are potentially more than 17). The first instance of a Maya antiquity on the cover of a Sotheby’s catalogue was on 6 March 1971, when a black and white photograph of a Jaina figurine advertised the pre-Columbian art sale at the Parke Bernet Galleries in New York.⁶⁹ The lot successfully sold for \$1,150 (today’s equivalent of \$6,822)—the highest price reached for a Maya antiquity in the sale. Of the 16 remaining sales with a Maya antiquity on the cover, 13 lots sold, two failed to sell, and the sale data was unavailable for the final lot.

Although it is expected that the cover lot will sell because of increased attention and advertising, and the data demonstrate that this is usually the case, it is obviously not guaranteed that all cover lots will sell. Goodman commented in response

Table 2. Number of sales, Maya lots, and Maya antiquities across the New York, London, and Paris auctions from 1963 to 2016

	New York	London	Paris	Total
Total sales	110	39	1	150
Total lots	3,158	87	25	3,270
Total artifacts	3,534	100	25	3,659

⁶⁸Lobay 2006, 66–67.

⁶⁹See Corson 1973 for examples of these figurine types.

to an auction on 23 November 1998 that “the market for Pre-Columbian works is still selective at the top, as is demonstrated in the failure of the cover lot to sell.”⁷⁰ Thus, while the catalogue cover offers prime real estate for marketing specific items and advertising unique or important antiquities, it does not guarantee sales. Market trends, economic currents, and legislation likely all influence the success of particular sales. The choice of which lot to advertise on the catalogue cover is no doubt a strategic one, but its success or failure is dependent on the larger issues facing the art market at the time.

Number of Lots and Antiquities

A single sale can consist of several hundred lots, all from one collection or owner or each from different owners and collections. Lots can consist of a single antiquity, several antiquities of the same media, or antiquities of mixed media. Early sales often contained several antiquities in one lot, but recent sales usually contain lots consisting of a single antiquity. Of the 150 catalogues that included Maya antiquities, there were a total of 3,270 Maya lots and 3,659 Maya antiquities (see table 1). Some antiquities have been resold at auction over the years so the results undoubtedly include duplicates.⁷¹

Tracking these duplicates is difficult, but the author has been able to identify 36 Maya ceramics that have been resold on at least two occasions (see table 3). The number of additional auctions that these ceramics were sold at total 41. Since these ceramics were in individual lots, subtracting 41 from the total number of Maya lots gives a more accurate number of 3,229 lots. Subtracting this same number from the number of antiquities identified above gives a more accurate total number of 3,618 Maya antiquities. Although this number does not take into consideration duplicates of other types of antiquities, it is clear that over a period of 53 years a considerable number of Maya antiquities have entered the market. Interestingly, Yates recorded 3,677 lots of South American antiquities at Sotheby’s over a 39-year period.⁷² This demonstrates that greater quantities of South American antiquities have been sold at Sotheby’s compared to Maya antiquities, which speaks not only to collecting practices but also to targeted looting of specific antiquities. It may also suggest that there are greater quantities of South American fakes and forgeries.

As previously discussed, the 1980s saw the greatest quantity of Maya antiquities offered for sale at auction, as verified by the total number of lots and antiquities (table 1). Lobay has noticed that the decades following important

⁷⁰Carter B. Horsley, “Pre-Columbian Art,” *City Review*, 23 November 1998, <http://www.thecityreview.com/precolf98.html> (accessed 8 July 2016).

⁷¹E.g., Luke and Henderson explain that one particular Uluá ceramic vase has been sold on at least three occasions at Sotheby’s. Luke and Henderson 2006, n. 7.

⁷²Yates 2006, 19.

Table 3. Maya ceramics resold at Sotheby's

Ceramic lot number	Auction	Number of additional sales
Lot 89/213	12 July 1977; 10 May 1980	1
Lot 249/196	10 November 1979; 23–24 November 1982	1
Lot 250/231	10 November 1979; 9 May 2006	1
Lot 227/168/114	10 May 1980; 20 November 1989; 16 May 1995	2
Lot 149/282	25 February 1981; 17 May 2002	1
Lot 182/191	9 May 1981; 28 May 1997	1
Lot 224/338/301	5 December 1981; 27–28 November 1984; 11 November 2004	2
Lot 217/219	5 December 1981; 18 November 1991	1
Lot 229/176	5 December 1981; 23 November 1992	1
Lot 227/84	5 December 1981; 17 May 1993	1
Lot 221/279	5 December 1981; 11 November 2004	1
Lot 225/160	12 June 1982; 19 May 1992	1
Lot 221/260	12 June 1982; 15 May 2003	1
Lot 19/318	22 March 1983; 19 November 1990	1
Lot 193/99/152	12–13 May 1983; 26 November 1985; 19 May 1992	2
Lot 194/81	12–13 May 1983; 14 May 1991	1
Lot 192/101/69	12–13 May 1983; 18 November 1991; 15 May 2015	2
Lot 196/288	12–13 May 1983; 11 November 2004	1
Lot 328/79	27–28 November 1984; 26 November 1985	1
Lot 355/283	27–28 November 1984; 11 November 2004	1
Lot 123/115	31 May 1985; 20 May 1986	1
Lot 99/190	31 May 1985; 2 June 1999	1
Lot 89/133	26 November 1985; 24 November 1986	1
Lot 222/413	18 November 1987; 2 June 1999	1
Lot 117/296	2 May 1990; 14 May 1991	1
Lot 111/484/326	2 May 1990; 18 November 1991; 17 May 1994	2
Lot 197/74	18 November 1991; 15 May 2015	1
Lot 159/144	19 May 1992; 22 November 1993	1
Lot 158/74	19 May 1992; 22 November 1999	1
Lot 85/161	17 May 1993; 24 November 1997	1
Lot 153/183	15 November 1994; 25 November 1996	1
Lot 158/73	15 November 1994; 15 May 2015	1
Lot 169/79	20 November 1995; 22 November 1999	1
Lot 157/217	18 May 2000; 9 May 2006	1
Lot 540/122	19 May 2001; 22–23 March 2013	1
Lot 261/124	15 May 2003; 7 May 2016	1
Total		41

Note: The auctions and lot numbers are organized chronologically.

legislation show signs of heightened auction sales, which he suggests was due to collectors off-loading items at auction to avoid legal issues.⁷³ The data for Maya antiquities appears to match the pattern of increased sales following important legislation (including the 1970 UNESCO Convention, the Mexico-US Treaty of 1970,

⁷³Lobay 2006. In a later study, Lobay (2009) tests specifically for the effectiveness of current legislation between the United States and Italy and determines that it is failing to reduce the incentive to loot antiquities.

the US and Mexican laws of 1972, and the 1977 case *United States v. McClain*).⁷⁴ There was a slight decrease in the quantity of Maya antiquities from 1990 onwards, but it is not until the millennial decade that there is any significant reduction. Levine and Luna have also demonstrated a significant reduction in the quantity of Mesoamerican antiquities offered for sale at auction from 2000 onwards, as has Yates in regard to South American antiquities.⁷⁵ As Yates later suggests,⁷⁶ such reductions are likely a result of fewer antiquities being offered at public auction (rather than a result of a decrease in public demand).

Of the 3,229 Maya lots identified, it is unclear how many sold because sales data for every auction was not available to the author. Of the 150 auctions with Maya antiquities, sale data was only available for 78 auctions dating from 1966 to 2016. During this 50-year period, there were 2,240 lots, and, of these, 1,649 sold, demonstrating that 74 percent of the lots successfully sold (see fig. 3). Lots not listed in the final sale data may have been omitted, passed, or unsold—the latter is known as a “burned” lot.⁷⁷ Lobay observes that if lots did not reach their reserve price at auction, the auctioneer informed the final bidder that there was a possibility to make a private transaction with the vendor outside of the auction.⁷⁸ Consequently, although there were 591 lots not listed in the final sale data, some of these may have later sold in a private sale. Therefore, there may have been more than 1,649 lots that sold during the 50-year period. In comparison to the Maya lots, 2,798 South American lots were sold during a 39-year period.⁷⁹ This suggests that

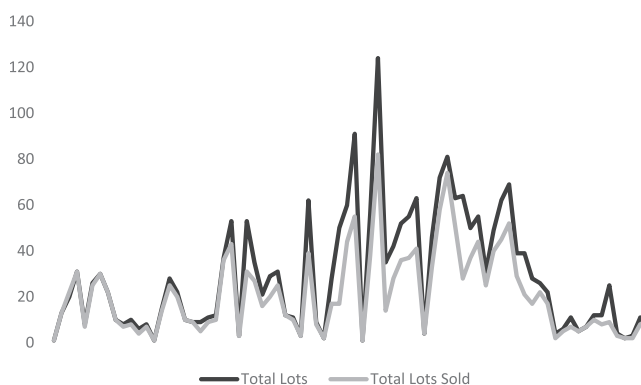


FIGURE 3. Comparison of the total number of lots offered for sale in 78 auctions and the total number of lots that sold.

⁷⁴Gilgan (2001) suggests there has been a reduction in the number of pre-Columbian objects reaching Sotheby’s in the late 1980s because of the United States’ ratification of the UNESCO Convention and the emergency import ban on objects from El Salvador in 1987.

⁷⁵Levine and Luna 2013, figure 1; Yates 2006, 19.

⁷⁶Yates 2016, 44.

⁷⁷Pfeffer 2014, 9.

⁷⁸Lobay 2006, 52.

⁷⁹Yates 2006, 19.

South American antiquities are more popular among collectors purchasing at Sotheby's public auctions.

Sale Prices

Sales results are sometimes inserted into catalogues after the auction has taken place, and they were therefore available to study. Sotheby's required a fee for a printed list of all of the prices in the early catalogues, and, therefore, they were not attached to every catalogue studied by the author. More recent sale data is proudly exhibited on Sotheby's website and, thus, more accessible. During the 50-year period for which sale data was available, the highest and lowest sale prices were recorded. For a fair comparison of prices, I adjusted all of the prices to the 2016 US dollar inflation rate using the US Department of Labor's consumer price index (CPI) inflation calculator and rounded up to the nearest dollar.⁸⁰ For example, \$350 in 1966 is the equivalent of \$2,595 in 2016. To convert Euros (€) and British pounds (£) to the US dollar, historical exchange rate data was used,⁸¹ and the US dollar value was then converted using the CPI calculator. The highest sale price achieved for a Maya antiquity during the 50-year period was the equivalent of \$500,353 (in 2007) and the lowest was the equivalent of \$117 (in 1980).

As Figure 4 demonstrates, the highest sale price has fluctuated through time. Sale prices in the 1960s through the early 1980s remained at \$100,000 or under, but higher sale prices of \$300,000 have become increasingly common from the 1990s onwards. Interestingly, a Jaina figurine from an auction on 17 May 2007 that sold for the equivalent of \$500,353 is similar in style to a Jaina figurine that sold at auction on 9 November 1968 for today's equivalent of \$25,887 (both auctions were held in New York). This demonstrates that the relative value of Maya antiquities has increased over time.⁸² One of the higher sale prices reached in recent years was in Paris in 2013 (€325,500, equivalent to \$435,150), attesting to the growing popularity of Maya antiquities outside of North America.

These findings parallel those by Levine and Luna regarding Teotihuacan antiquities.⁸³ The authors propose that sale prices of these antiquities have continued to increase, despite quantities sold at auction decreasing, because Sotheby's may have shifted their focus to a smaller number of higher value items. Additionally, they suggest that the establishment of various MOUs between the United States and Latin American countries may have discouraged the trade in Mesoamerican

⁸⁰Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Databases, Tables and Calculators by Subject," http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm (accessed 8 July 2016).

⁸¹FXtop.com, "Major Historical Exchange Rates," <http://fxtop.com/en/historical-exchange-rates.php?MA=1> (accessed 8 July 2016).

⁸²One anonymous reviewer suggested that virtually identical objects can also differ tremendously in price due to authenticity, legality, and other extraneous reasons.

⁸³Levine and Luna 2013, 268.

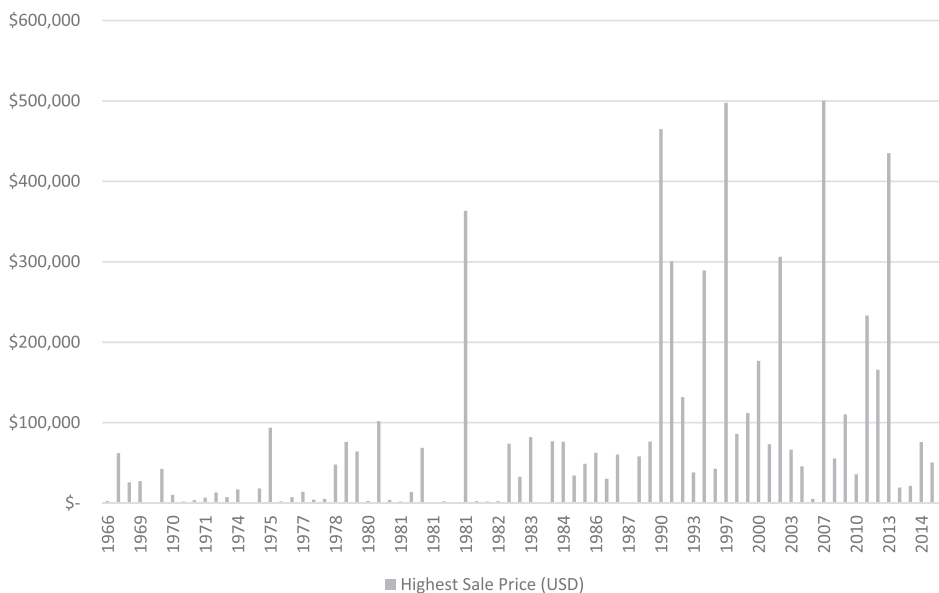


FIGURE 4. Highest sale prices of Sotheby's auctions over a 50-year period.

antiquities for which provenance information was weak. Sotheby's vice-president of North American compliance, Elyse Dreye, communicated with the authors and agreed that the decrease was likely partly due to the company's "decision to accept on consignment only those objects for which we can substantiate provenance going back far enough to satisfy our standards."⁸⁴

These results have not been compared to sale estimates because, as Yates has explained, price estimates do not relate to how much the piece is valued at but, instead, are marketing tools designed to drive up the price or attract consignees.⁸⁵ The official Sotheby's 1980 price guide for Maya antiquities suggested a \$700 price point for a Jaina warrior, for example, even though a Jaina warrior had sold for \$3,750 in 1968.⁸⁶ Furthermore, Yates suggests that estimates are subjective, and "no two experts will come up with the same price tag for the same object."⁸⁷ Lobay has also stated that determining the value of ancient objects is extremely difficult because they are usually rare and in many cases one-of-a-kind; thus, it is only the final sale price that becomes the true value of the object and provides the benchmark for subsequent sales.⁸⁸ Therefore, it is the sale results, rather than the estimates, that speak to the market value of Maya antiquities.

⁸⁴Levine and Luna 2013, 269.

⁸⁵Yates 2016.

⁸⁶Colt 1980, 564.

⁸⁷Yates 2016, 176.

⁸⁸Lobay 2006, 52–53.

Material Class

The most common material classes of Maya antiquities offered for sale at auction were ceramics (not including ceramic figurines), and the least common were wood and metal items (see table 4). These results correlate to the material classes deemed at risk in the International Council of Museum's Red List of Central America and Mexico since ceramics are the first material class mentioned.⁸⁹ Figurines and greenstone are the second and third most popular antiquities offered for sale, respectively, no doubt because they are portable items (thus, easier to export) and highly decorative. Only 4 percent ($n = 135$) of the total number of Maya antiquities were stone sculpture, whether complete carved panels, stelae, or parts of larger sculptural programs. It is likely that a much larger number of stone sculpture exists on the invisible market and is sold through private sales—the Placeres façade being such an example. An unusual amount of documentation is available about the looting and sale of the façade on the Trafficking Culture website, allowing what would have remained in the invisible market to become visible.⁹⁰ The overall results of the material class study are similar to Gilgan's findings.⁹¹

Within the dominant material class, there were several characteristic types: Codex (identified by a white or cream background and black lines, often with red borders around the rim and base [see fig. 5 for an unprovenanced example]);⁹² incised or carved (such as the “Chocholá” style);⁹³ other painted styles (such as

Table 4. Material classes of Maya antiquities offered for sale at auction from 1963 to 2016

Material class	Total number offered for sale at auction
Ceramic	1,964
Figurine	774
Greenstone	438
Stone sculpture	135
Shell	120
Groundstone	98
Lithic	81
Bone	28
Obsidian	16
Miscellaneous	3
Wood	2
Total	3,659

⁸⁹International Council of Museums, “Red List of Endangered Cultural Objects of Central America and Mexico.”

⁹⁰Trafficking Culture, “Placeres Stucco Temple Façade,” <http://traffickingculture.org/encyclopedia/case-studies/placeres-stucco-temple-facade/> (accessed 8 July 2016).

⁹¹Gilgan 2001, 83.

⁹²See Museo Nacional de Antropología 2011, 267 for a provenanced example.

⁹³Tate 1985.



FIGURE 5. Cover lot (lot 159) of a Codex ceramic from a sale on 23 November 1992 (K2096 © Justin Kerr).

“Chama,” “Holmul,” and “Ik”);⁹⁴ stucco;⁹⁵ appliqué;⁹⁶ and plain (that is, undecorated). Table 5 demonstrates the different number of ceramic types, clearly demonstrating that painted ceramics (other than Codex) are the most prevalent and the least prevalent are plain ceramics. Over a period of 53 years, only eight plain Maya ceramics have been offered for sale at Sotheby’s. This low number is to be expected because undecorated ceramics are generally regarded as less valuable in comparison to highly decorative types. Thus, the material types sold on the auction market directly reflect market interest.

Not only do the types of material offered for sale reflect the interest of the general market for Maya antiquities, but they also reflect the expected materials. For example, the poor preservation of organic materials in the Maya region hinders their archaeological recovery. It would be highly unusual for textiles, rubber, or bark paper books (known as codices) to appear on the auction market in any great quantity, and their absence from the recorded data reflect this reality. Although materials such as lithic and obsidian are prevalent at ancient Maya sites, their prosaic use for everyday tools likely make them undesirable on the art market. When they do occur, it is usually in the form of elaborate “eccentrics.”⁹⁷ Of the three antiquities recorded as “miscellaneous,” two were iron pyrite mirrors and one was gold. Mirrors are found throughout the Maya region,⁹⁸ but gold is rare in comparison and has only been recovered from a limited number of sites.⁹⁹

Owner and Provenance

As Yates explains, auction houses are under no obligation to reveal the identities of their consignees or buyers.¹⁰⁰ Owners may not want to reveal their property for fear of publicizing it to criminals or because they do not want to reveal the sale of

⁹⁴See Reents-Budet 1994, ch. 5.

⁹⁵For an example, see Reents-Budet 1994, figure 1.4.

⁹⁶For an example, see Reents-Budet 1994, figure 1.4.

⁹⁷For examples, see Willey 1972, 181–207.

⁹⁸Healy and Blainey 2011.

⁹⁹For examples, see Coggins and Shane 1984.

¹⁰⁰Yates 2016, 176.

Table 5. Number of ceramic types offered for sale at auction from 1963 to 2016

Ceramic type	Total number offered for sale at auction
Painted	962
Appliqué	457
Incised or carved	440
Codex	81
Stucco	16
Plain	8
Total	1,964

certain items to family members.¹⁰¹ Thus, the auction market has created strict rules to protect the identities of buyers, sellers, and the provenance—otherwise known as the history of ownership—of objects offered for sale. In fact, “there is no accepted international approach to standards of proof in provenance.”¹⁰² This makes tracking the provenance of antiquities extremely difficult and allows illegal antiquities to infiltrate the market.¹⁰³ Provenance information in sales catalogues may consist of the name of a previous owner or the name of a dealer or museum from which an antiquity was purchased. In some instances, information regarding the length of time an antiquity has been part of a collection is also offered.

However, even in instances where provenance is offered, it is sometimes too vague to be of use. Early sales catalogues tended to describe lots as “from the collection of a lady” or the “property of a private collector” rather than provide a name. This ambiguity has continued through time and appears to be an accepted condition of purchasing antiquities at auction. In fact, Michael Stoll claims that the “reluctance to inquire into a piece’s history is endemic to the field.”¹⁰⁴ Neil Brodie suggests that auction houses have no real incentive to reform their policies concerning publishing provenance information, allowing anonymity to continue.¹⁰⁵

In addition to vague information, there have also been instances in which provenance printed in a sales catalogue is false.¹⁰⁶ Frank Herrmann records the sale of two suits of armor in a July 1917 sale at Sotheby’s in which false provenance was provided in the sales catalogue, demonstrating that false provenance has a long history at the company.¹⁰⁷ The armor was the property of the Pembroke family, who claimed it was fifteenth and sixteenth century in date. Experts inspected the

¹⁰¹Lobay 2006, 56.

¹⁰²Mackenzie 2011, 142.

¹⁰³Mackenzie 2011.

¹⁰⁴Michael Stoll, “Whose Art Is This, Anyway?,” 2004, <http://www.michaelstoll.com/writings/deyoung.htm> (accessed 10 July 2016), 138.

¹⁰⁵Brodie 2014a.

¹⁰⁶Yates 2015, 78.

¹⁰⁷Herrmann 1981, 158–63.

property ahead of the sale and not only attributed a much later date to them but also claimed that the provenance attributed to them was false. Geoffrey Hobson, then a partner in the firm, admitted he had not thought to doubt their traditional attribution and considered removing them from the auction. Instead, he arranged for Lord Pembroke to issue a letter to the press to support the provenance, and the auction house continued with the sale. This strategy proved successful, and both suits of armor sold for over \$10,000 each, far surpassing any price that had been paid for armor at auction previously.

Although provenance information may be hidden to buyers, Sotheby's is required to perform due diligence into the provenance of an antiquity to ensure that it does not willingly sell illegally smuggled items. The difference between legal and illegal antiquities is by no means easy to distinguish.¹⁰⁸ The company has outlined its precautions to guard against illicit trading, stating: "Sotheby's will not sell property if it knows that it was illegally exported or imported unless irregularities can be legally rectified before the sale."¹⁰⁹ Although Sotheby's requires consignees to sign a guarantee that they have no reason to believe that property was illegally imported, Goodman has admitted the company "do make mistakes ... we could not stay in business if I interrogated our clients."¹¹⁰

Despite the apparent good intentions of the company, staff at Sotheby's have publicly voiced disregard concerning due diligence. In the 1991 court case *Regina v. James Hodges*, the head of antiquities at Sotheby's was asked: "If you ... suspected that an item might have been smuggled ... would you be prepared to sell it through Sotheby's sales?"; to which she answered "Yes, I think we would."¹¹¹ Furthermore, in the same court case, the managing director of Sotheby's claimed that the company was not breaking any laws in selling smuggled material and that it was not their responsibility to police the market.¹¹²

Of the 3,270 lots with Maya antiquities recorded in this study (including resales), 605 lots (19 percent) had their current owner listed and 419 lots (13 percent) had a listed provenance (ownership prior to the current owner [see table 6]). Conversely, this means that 81 percent of lots contained no information about the current owner, and 87 percent of the lots were devoid of provenance information. This is startling, but such high numbers correspond to studies of other antiquities sold at Sotheby's.¹¹³ The names of current owners of Maya lots appear as early as 1963 and continue to appear, albeit sporadically, until 2016. Information about the provenance of lots first appeared in 1966, again in 1970, and then not again until 1980.

¹⁰⁸Brodie 2006, 53.

¹⁰⁹Lobay 2006, 56.

¹¹⁰Honan, "Art for Whose Sake?"

¹¹¹Watson 1997, 80. *Regina v. James Hodges* KCC [1991].

¹¹²Watson 1997, 99.

¹¹³Yates 2006; Davis 2011.

Table 6. Number of lots with current owner and/or provenance listed from 1963 to 2016

Year	Current owner	Provenance
1963–69	63	1
1970–79	78	1
1980–89	190	53
1990–99	214	200
2000–09	26	81
2010–16	34	83
Total	605	419

Provenance information appears more frequently and in greater quantity from 1984 onwards. In relation to the number of sales per decade (see fig. 1), it is clear that owner and provenance information appear most frequently in the 1990s. Lobay discovered that the frequency of provenance descriptions decreased, while the volume of antiquities increased, after new regulations concerning the trade in antiquities were implemented.¹¹⁴ While the quantity of Maya antiquities matches this pattern, since the 1980s saw the greatest quantity of Maya antiquities being bought and sold, owner and provenance information also increases. The growth in owner and provenance information for Maya lots may be related to an increase in the chances of a successful sale. Emily Fay has suggested that auction market epithets such as “from the collection of” or “previously sold at” become a proxy indicator for authenticity and value.¹¹⁵ No doubt this is because it demonstrates that certain antiquities have been coveted by other collectors and considered to be of monetary value. De-accessioned antiquities from museum collections, in particular, are regarded as being prestigious and valuable.¹¹⁶

Brodie explains that various scholars have theorized a process of auto-regulation on the antiquities market, whereby collectors discriminate against poorly provenanced or unprovenanced antiquities by paying higher prices for well-provenanced pieces.¹¹⁷ He tested whether provenance affected sale prices at auction to determine if auto-regulation was in place and discovered no strong evidence to suggest this is the case. In a similar vein, Brian Daniels, Sasha Renninger, and Richard Leventhal undertook a study of pre-Columbian antiquities in Sotheby’s and Christie’s sales catalogues from 2000 to 2010 to determine whether antiquities sold with a provenance had a price premium.¹¹⁸ They calculated an 80 percent premium on antiquities with provenance that pre-dated 1970 and an 18 percent premium on antiquities without a provenance. However, as Brodie explains, it is often

¹¹⁴Lobay 2006.

¹¹⁵Fay 2011, 452.

¹¹⁶Washburn 1987, 28; Pfeffer 2014, 3.

¹¹⁷Brodie 2014b, 428.

¹¹⁸Daniels, Renninger, and Leventhal 2014.

difficult to separate the influence of aesthetics and object quality from provenance, and, therefore, it can be difficult to demonstrate evidence for auto-regulation from sale data alone.¹¹⁹

Lengthy or detailed provenance information is by no means necessary to achieve a high sale price at auction. Lot 126 from a New York auction on 7 May 2016 sold for \$125,000, despite the provenance information listed simply as “acquired in the 1960s.” Julian Dawes, Sotheby’s co-head of day sales, has explained that “the longer that something is off the market, the better.”¹²⁰ Thus, although the aforementioned lot had no specific provenance listed, the information provided suggests the antiquity may have been part of a collection since the 1960s and therefore off the market for roughly 50 years. It is likely the antiquity reached a high sale price not only because it had increased in value over time but also because it was re-entering the market after a long period of unattainability.

In some instances, prior Sotheby’s sales are offered as provenance information. This is likely because it can demonstrate that antiquities were in collections outside of Central America prior to 1970, while allowing previous owners to remain anonymous. However, in some instances, information about prior sales is omitted from catalogues, likely to disguise the failure to sell. For example, Lot 79 from a sale on 26 November 1985 was previously offered for sale in a sale on 27–28 November 1984 as Lot 328 (both New York auctions), yet this information was not provided in the 1985 catalogue. The lot failed to sell in 1984, having been given an estimate of \$8,000–\$10,000. In 1985, unsurprisingly, the lot was given a lower estimate of \$5,000–\$7,000, and it sold for \$3,300.

As well as being relegated to a lower estimate after failing to sell, it appears that the way in which antiquities are marketed to buyers also changes after failing to sell. Specifically, owner and provenance information are introduced to lot descriptions. For example, Lot 193, an incised vase, in a catalog dated 12–13 May 1983 failed to sell and was offered for sale again as Lot 99 in a sale on 26 November 1985 (both New York auctions). No owner or provenance was listed in the 1983 catalogue, but, in 1985, the information “property of an American institution” and the provenance “Cedric Marks collection” was provided. It failed to sell in 1985 and entered the market for a third time as Lot 152 in a New York sale on 19 May 1992. The 1992 lot description stated that the vase was the “property of the Manoogian Collection” and that the provenance was “Mr. and Mrs. Peter Wray Collection.” Unfortunately, sales data for the 1992 auction was unavailable so it cannot be determined whether offering the owner and provenance information secured a sale for the vase. Regardless, the sales catalogues demonstrate differing information about owners and provenance in 1985 and 1992. Perhaps a private sale moved the vase into the hands of the Wrays after

¹¹⁹Brodie 2014b, 430.

¹²⁰Sotheby’s Television, “The Value of Art, Episode 4: Provenance,” 20 December 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_dxr9r0stiU (accessed 10 January 2017).

the 1985 sale, and then into the Manoogian Collection, before coming back to market in 1992. This may be evidence of three different owners of the vase in the space of eight years, with ownership averaging just 2.6 years, or it may be evidence of false provenance.

Another example of owner and provenance information being introduced to sales catalogues can be seen with Lot 108, a carved lidded vessel, from a New York auction on 20 May 1986. Although the author did not have access to the sales data for this auction, the vessel is unlikely to have sold because it appears again as Lot 85 in a New York auction on 19 November 1990, despite it being the cover lot of the 1986 catalogue. No owner or provenance information for the vessel was provided in 1986, but, in 1990, the provenance was listed as “Mr. and Mrs. Peter G. Wray collection.” The addition of provenance information appears to have secured a sale since the vessel sold for \$18,700. Although the year of sale is likely influenced by economics or market trends, this example may demonstrate that provenance information is considered to be valuable and influential (perhaps more so than an antiquity advertised on the catalogue cover).

Authenticity

In 1984, the following notice appeared in sale catalogues marketing pre-Columbian antiquities:

The inclusion of the word *style* and/or the absence of a date in the heading of an object’s description indicates that in our opinion the object is not of ancient origin. Statements in the catalogue regarding the condition of objects in the sale are open to misinterpretation, and, therefore, rarely appear in descriptions.

This statement remained in catalogues until 2000, but, from 2001 onwards, the first sentence was removed and replaced by a statement asserting that “all lots are sold on an ‘AS IS’ basis” (that is, *caveat emptor*). This “as is” basis appeared under the conditions of sale in early catalogues and explains that neither Sotheby’s nor the consignee provides any warranty about the accuracy of descriptions regarding, among others, condition, importance, provenance, or historical relevance of property. Thus, while the age of antiquities is not explicitly mentioned, it is likely that even without including the word “*style*” or excluding a date, Sotheby’s deem themselves free of responsibility for any mistakes regarding the age of an antiquity.

The decision to include such a notice in catalogues demonstrates that Sotheby’s is aware that forgeries, which are defined as copies of works of art made for fraudulent purposes, supplement the antiquities market, and buyers are at risk of unintentionally purchasing them.¹²¹ This is a problem that exists for art in general if suggestions

¹²¹Savage 1976, 1.

that 50 percent of art on the market is not authentic is to be believed.¹²² The issue of forgeries in pre-Columbian art has concerned scholars for some time,¹²³ and the expertise that Sotheby's appears to offer here, in being able to distinguish between ancient and modern items, may have acted as an assurance for buyers.

However, Peter Watson demonstrates that Sotheby's has failed to identify forgeries in the past.¹²⁴ He recalls that the company went to great lengths to arrange the illegal export of an Egyptian lion statue out of Rome to New York, costing thousands of dollars, only to find out that it was not authentic, even though it had been assessed in person by Sotheby's head of antiquities. The value of the statue dropped from a high estimate of \$200,000–\$300,000 to its final selling price of \$8,000. Prominent antiquity collectors Sir Robert and Lisa Sainsbury are reported to have been well aware that inauthentic antiquities muddy the art market; they claimed to prefer to buy from dealers rather than auction houses because of the expertise that their dealers have in identifying forgeries.¹²⁵ This speaks to the lack of confidence that some buyers may have in auction houses, perhaps because forgeries are being sold with success. The burgeoning online marketplace for antiquities is undoubtedly increasing the presence and sale of forgeries on the art market even more, as has been discussed by several scholars.¹²⁶

Yates suggests that the identification of antiquities as forgeries may be a method used by some governments and institutions to deter buyers from pre-Columbian antiquities.¹²⁷ An example of this, she explains, is the 2013 Barbier-Mueller auction in Paris, which prompted Mexico to formally declare that 79 objects in the auction, supposedly of Mexican origin, were “handicrafts” (that is, modern forgeries). Unfortunately, despite Mexico's protest, the auction achieved sales totaling more than €10 million (\$12,948,000) and “established a new world record for the sale of Pre-Columbian Art.”¹²⁸ Of the 3,270 lots that included Maya antiquities (including resales), only 12 (0.4 percent) included either the word “style” in the lot title or lacked an accompanying date. Interestingly, of the 12 recorded lots, five successfully sold. In comparison, Yates recorded three South American antiquities with the word “style” in her study of Sotheby's catalogues, all of which successfully sold.¹²⁹ Lobay explains that “determining the value of an object through its sale helps authenticate it as a genuine object and not a modern forgery.”¹³⁰ Items that

¹²²Shirley Mueller, “The Art Market In a Muck,” *Physician's Money Digest*, 6 November 2014, <http://www.hcplive.com/physicians-money-digest/columns/my-money-md/11-2014/The-Art-Market-in-a-Muck> (accessed 17 December 2015).

¹²³Batres 1910; Ekholm 1964; Boone 1982; Kelker and Bruhns 2010.

¹²⁴Watson 1997, ch. 7.

¹²⁵Cioni 2014, 5.

¹²⁶Stanish 2009; Fay 2011; Bruhns 2000.

¹²⁷Yates 2015, 80.

¹²⁸Sotheby's, “Collection Barbier-Mueller Art Précolombien,” 22 March 2013, <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/2013/collection-barbier-mueller-pf1340.html> (accessed 8 July 2016).

¹²⁹Yates 2006, 34.

¹³⁰Lobay 2006, 52.

may not be genuine are given a sense of authenticity through their sale at auction and can become problematic for the marketplace, particularly if they are not marketed as inauthentic objects in future auctions.¹³¹

In addition to the 12 lots with either the word “style” or the exclusion of a date, which appear to distinguish forgeries, an additional lot description highlighted a fake, which is defined as a genuine artwork that has been altered or added to for the purpose of enhancing the value.¹³² Lot 358 from a New York sale on 20 November 1995 was described as being “[a] Mayan Tecali Vessel, A.D. 550–950 and later, the straight walls slightly flaring ... now incised overall with a modern frieze based on Mayan-inspired iconography.” Unfortunately, sale data is lacking for this auction so it cannot be determined whether fakes, like forgeries, have also successfully sold at Sotheby’s auctions.

Publication and Exhibit History

In the 4 May 1967 New York catalogue, four lots containing Maya antiquities included a reference to exhibitions that had showcased them. It was not until 1975 that lot descriptions included reference to exhibitions again and also included reference to publications in which the antiquities had appeared. Soon after, catalogues began to include this information on a regular basis. As Eva Pfeffer and David Gill and Christopher Chippendale explain, involvement in exhibitions increases the price of an artwork because it lends them authenticity and respectability.¹³³ Likewise, publication of an artwork lends credence and undoubtedly increases its value. Of the 3,270 lots with Maya antiquities (including resales) recorded in this study, 287 lots (9 percent) were exhibited and 219 lots (7 percent) were published (see table 7). In relation to the number of sales per decade (see fig. 1), it is clear that, like owner and provenance information, the majority of publications and exhibits appear in lot descriptions in the 1990s.

Table 7. Total number of publications and exhibitions listed in lot descriptions from 1963 to 2016

Year	Publications	Exhibitions
1963–69	0	4
1970–79	5	32
1980–89	27	72
1990–99	96	116
2000–09	47	19
2010–16	44	44
Total	219	287

¹³¹As discussed by Kelker and Bruhns 2010, 58.

¹³²Savage 1976, 1.

¹³³Gill and Chippendale 1993, 614; Pfeffer 2014, 4.

The decision to include exhibit history and publications is likely dependent on whether the owner of the sale offers this information to Sotheby's. Some collectors have close relationships with museum curators or academics, offering to loan their collection for exhibit or share it for research purposes. The sale of the Barbier-Mueller pre-Columbian collection in Paris on 16 May 2013, for example, had 25 lots of Maya antiquities, and all were listed with accompanying publications. Only three of the 25 lots did not have accompanying exhibit history. This demonstrates that this particular collection had been widely published and exhibited. Many other Maya antiquities in Sotheby's sales have been published in the Justin Kerr volumes, which are widely distributed among scholars (see discussion below).

The decision to omit publication and exhibit information from sales catalogues might also be taken, perhaps for anonymity or legal reasons. Watson, for example, claims that a Sotheby's employee in Milan admitted to him that it is difficult to smuggle an antiquity if it has been published.¹³⁴ He recalls an incidence of an Egyptian basalt statue that was sold through Sotheby's in 1996 which demonstrates this situation.¹³⁵ At the time of the sale, the statue was in London, having been illegally smuggled out of Italy. The statue was published in three academic journals prior to the sale, proving that it had been in an Italian collection and later smuggled to London. The owner of the statue did not want these publications to be mentioned in the sales catalogue, and Sotheby's apparently attempted to devise various ways in which to omit them. Legally, however, Sotheby's could not ignore the publications, and the statue was removed from public auction and later sold through a private sale.

Justin Kerr Photographs

The final category for which information was recorded was the inclusion of Justin Kerr photographs. Kerr is a photographer from New York with a keen interest in the ancient Maya.¹³⁶ He began his career as a commercial photographer and saw the benefits of applying the techniques of peripheral photography (also known as rollout photography) to the exterior of Maya vases. In the 1960s, Kerr began to photograph vases and other artifacts and, over the years, has compiled a portfolio of thousands of Maya antiquities. In conjunction with his late wife Barbara Kerr, he has published his photographs alongside scholarly essays and created a website so that his work would be freely available to scholars and the public alike.¹³⁷ The gratis permission that Kerr has given for his photographs in scholarly and

¹³⁴Watson 1997, 22.

¹³⁵Watson 1997, ch. 6.

¹³⁶Tom Gidwitz, "Revealing the Maya: Justin and Barbara Kerr." *Tribal Art Magazine*, vol. 40, Spring 2006, 124–27.

¹³⁷Kerr 1989; Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies, "The Kerr Collections," <http://www.famsi.org/research/kerr/index.html> (accessed 25 January 2017). See Kerr 1989 for the first of six volumes.

not-for-profit publications has led to an abundant and wide-ranging usage, particularly in art historical studies.

The antiquities that Kerr has photographed are largely in private collections, enabling otherwise concealed antiquities to be viewed and studied. The Kerrs photographed antiquities for various dealers and collectors of pre-Columbian antiquities, and Barbara has also restored antiquities for dealers.¹³⁸ Therefore, it is no surprise that Kerr photographs have been included in Sotheby's catalogues. Of the 3,270 lots with Maya antiquities (including resales), 59 lots (2 percent) were accompanied by a photograph taken by Justin Kerr, and the New York catalogue from 23 November 1992 even had a Kerr photograph on its cover (see fig. 5). The decision to include a Kerr photograph in a catalogue is likely a marketing tactic to add credence to both the monetary and scholarly value of particular lots—no doubt increasing attraction and perhaps even sale prices.

CONCLUSION

The systematic study of 150 Sotheby's catalogues demonstrates that the quantity of Maya antiquities offered for public sale has steadily declined since the 1980s, yet their relative value has increased. During the 53-year period encompassed by this study, the number of Maya antiquities offered for sale totals 3,618 (excluding identified ceramics in resales). In comparison to past studies, this research has been able to increase the number of recorded Maya antiquity sales at Sotheby's by more than 300 (Gilgan recorded 3,300, while Levine and Luna recorded 3,263). Since this study is an attempt to monitor the flow of Maya antiquities into and out of one particular auction house, studies of other auction house catalogues, combined with online auction websites and sales data from private dealer shops, are necessary for a comprehensive understanding of the quantity of Maya antiquities reaching the public market.

It is clear that more than 70 percent of lots with Maya antiquities have successfully sold at Sotheby's over a 50-year period. This may be due in part to the increase in marketing efforts, reflected in the increase in color photography and the presence of Kerr photographs; lengthy descriptions of lots; and/or the inclusion of owner and provenance information. However, these data only speak to the public auction market, not to the private or invisible market. The volume of Maya antiquities publicly sold through Sotheby's has been steadily decreasing since its peak in the 1980s, yet their sale through the private market (which cannot be monitored) may be increasing. Alternatively, collectors may be keeping antiquities in their collections for longer periods of time and not offering them for sale at auction as frequently as they did in the past.

¹³⁸Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, "Justin and Barbara Kerr," <http://www.doaks.org/library-archives/dumbarton-oaks-archives/historical-records/oral-history-project/justin-and-barbara-kerr> (accessed 7 July 2016).

Within this study, it has become clear that Maya ceramics are the most vulnerable to looting and forgery. The general lack of information on current ownership or provenance reveals the opaque nature of the auction market, and the repercussions of this can be devastating. It increases the likelihood that illegally excavated items and forgeries, particularly ceramics, will continue to penetrate the market.¹³⁹ Looting of sites in the Maya region continues to be a concern, as does the forgery business, and, unfortunately, it shows no signs of abating. It is clear that the market in antiquities continues to drive looting and forgery and will continue to do so as long as there are collectors of unprovenanced Maya antiquities.

Lobay has suggested that scholars create a “culture of vigilance” around the open market so that objects on the market at present, as well as those that have previously passed through the market, can be recorded.¹⁴⁰ This is of course a short-term solution to the longer-term goal of changing the attitudes of collectors and convincing them not to buy illicit antiquities. Although the discipline of archaeology has taken a firm stance on the acceptability of illicit antiquities for research and publication purposes, it is important not to ignore the growing trade and market. As antiquities dealer James Ede has suggested, “a market for antiquities will continue to exist—man’s interest in his own past, not to mention the legitimate impulse to collect beautiful objects, will see to that.”¹⁴¹ Therefore, stopping the sale of illicit antiquities is currently not an option. However, it is possible to increase awareness of the problem, monitor the market, and push for improved legislation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Agovino, Theresa. 2014. “Christie’s Latest Bid to Compete.” *Crain’s New York Business* 30, no. 44: 29.
- Ashenfelter, Orley, and Kathryn Graddy. 2005. “Anatomy of the Rise and Fall of a Price-Fixing Conspiracy: Auctions at Sotheby’s and Christie’s.” *Journal of Competition Law and Economics* 1, no. 1: 3–20.
- Batres, Leopoldo. 1910. *Antigüedades Mejicanas Falsificadas: Falsificacion y Falsificadores (Fake Mexican Antiquities: Forgery and Forgers)*. Mexico City: Fidencio S. Soria.
- Bellingham, David. 2008. “Ethics and the Art Market.” In *The Art Business*, edited by Iain Robertson and Derrick Chong, 176–96. New York: Routledge.
- Boone, Elizabeth Hill. 1982. *Falsifications and Misreconstructions of Pre-Columbian Art: A Conference at Dumbarton Oaks, October 14th and 15th, 1978*. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University.
- Brodie, Neil. 2006. “An Archaeologist’s View of the Trade in Unprovenanced Antiquities.” In *Art and Cultural Heritage: Law, Policy, and Practice*, edited by Barbara T. Hoffman, 52–63. New York: Cambridge University Press.

¹³⁹Gerstenblith (2007) offers suggestions on how to regulate the market and decrease illegal looting.

¹⁴⁰Lobay 2006, 103.

¹⁴¹Ede 1998.

- Brodie, Neil. 2014a. "Auction Houses and the Antiquities Trade." In *Third International Conference of Experts on the Return of Cultural Property*, edited by S. Choulika-Kapeloni, 63–73. Athens: Archaeological Receipts Fund.
- Brodie, Neil. 2014b. "Provenance and Price: Autoregulation of the Antiquities Market?" *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research* 20, no. 4: 427–44.
- Brodie, Neil. 2015. "The Internet Market in Antiquities." In *Countering Illicit Traffic in Cultural Goods: The Global Challenge of Protecting the World's Heritage*, edited by Desmarais France, 11–20. Paris: International Council of Museums.
- Bruhns, Karen O. 2000. "www.plunderedpast.com." *Society of American Archaeology Bulletin* 18, no. 2: 14–17.
- Chippindale, Christopher, and David W. J. Gill. 2000. "Material Consequences of Contemporary Classical Collecting." *American Journal of Archaeology* 104, no. 3: 463–511.
- Chippindale, Christopher, David Gill, Emily Salter, and Christian Hamilton. 2001. "Collecting the Classical World: First Steps in a Quantitative History." *International Journal of Cultural Property* 10, no. 1: 1–31.
- Cioni, Enrico. 2014. "From John Hewett to John Stokes: How Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Assembled Their Collection of Pre-Columbian Art." Unpublished MA thesis, University of East Anglia.
- Coggins, Clemency. 1969. "Illicit Traffic of Pre-Columbian Antiquities." *Art Journal* 29, no. 1: 94–114.
- Coggins, Clemency. 1998. "United States Cultural Property Legislation: Observation of a Combatant." *International Journal of Cultural Property* 7, no. 1: 52–68.
- Coggins, Clemency Chase, and Orrin C. Shane, III, eds. 1984. *Cenote of Sacrifice: Maya Treasures from the Sacred Well at Chichén Itza*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Colt, Charles C., Jr., ed. 1980. *The Official Sotheby Parke Bernet Price Guide to Antiques and Decorative Arts*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Corson, Christopher. 1973. "Iconographic Survey of Some Principal Figurine Subjects from the Mortuary Complex of Jaina, Campeche." In *Studies in Ancient Mesoamerica*, edited by Graham John, 51–75. Berkeley: University of California.
- Daniels, Brian, Sasha Renninger, and Richard Leventhal. 2014. "Evaluating the Impact of Archaeological Context on the Antiquities Market: A Case Study." Paper presented at the Society for American Archaeology 79th Annual Meeting, Austin, 26 April.
- Davis, Tess. 2011. "Supply and Demand: Exposing the Illicit Trade in Cambodian Antiquities through a Study of Sotheby's Auction House." *Crime, Law, and Social Change* 56, no. 2: 155–74.
- Ede, James. 1998. "Ethics, the Antiquities Trade, and Archaeology." *International Journal of Cultural Property* 7, no. 1: 128–31.
- Ekholm, Gordon F. 1964. "The Problem of Fakes in Pre-Columbian Art." *Curator: The Museum Journal* 7, no. 1: 19–32.
- Elia, Ricardo J. 2001. "Analysis of the Looting, Selling, and Collecting of Apulian Red-figure Vases: A Quantitative Approach." In *Trade in Illicit Antiquities: The Destruction of the World's*

Archaeological Heritage, edited by Neil Brodie, Jennifer Doole, and Colin Renfrew, 145–53. Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research.

Fay, Emily. 2011. “Virtual Artifacts: eBay, Antiquities, and Authenticity.” *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 27, no. 4: 449–64.

Gerstenblith, Patty. 2006. “Recent United States Legal Developments in the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage.” In *Archaeology, Cultural Heritage, and the Antiquities Trade*, edited by Neil Brodie, Morag M. Kersel, Christina Luke, and Kathryn Walker Tubbs, 68–92. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Gerstenblith, Patty. 2007. “Controlling the International Market in Antiquities: Reducing the Harm, Preserving the Past.” *Chicago Journal of International Law* 8, no. 1: 167–95.

Gerstenblith, Patty. 2013. “The Meaning of 1970 for the Acquisition of Archaeological Objects.” *Journal of Field Archaeology* 38, no. 4: 364–73.

Gilgan, Elizabeth. 2001. “Looting and the Market for Maya Objects: A Belizean Perspective.” In *Trade in Illicit Antiquities: The Destruction of the World’s Archaeological Heritage*, edited by Neil Brodie, Jennifer Doole, and Colin Renfrew, 73–87. Cambridge: McDonald Institute Monographs.

Gill, David W. J., and Christopher Chippindale. 1993. “Material and Intellectual Consequences of Esteem for Cycladic Figures.” *American Journal of Archaeology* 97: 601–59.

Griffin, Gillett G. 1986. “In Defense of the Collector.” *National Geographic* 169, no. 4: 462–65.

Healy, Paul F., and Marc G. Blainey. 2011. “Ancient Maya Mosaic Mirrors: Function, Symbolism, and Meaning.” *Ancient Mesoamerica* 22, no. 2: 229–44.

Heath, Christian. 2012. *Dynamics of Auction: Social Interaction and the Sale of Fine Art and Antiques*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Herrmann, Frank. 1981. *Sotheby’s: Portrait of an Auction House*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.

Hoffman, Barbara T. 2006. “International Art Transactions and the Resolution of Art and Cultural Property Disputes: A United States Perspective.” In *Art and Cultural Heritage: Law, Policy, and Practice*, edited by Barbara T. Hoffman, 159–77. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Kelker, Nancy L., and Karen O. Bruhns. 2010. *Faking Ancient Mesoamerica*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press.

Kerr, Justin. 1989. *The Maya Vase Book, Volume 1: A Corpus of Rollout Photographs of Maya Vases*. New York: Kerr Associates.

Kersel, Morag M. 2006. “From the Ground to the Buyer: A Market Analysis of the Trade in Illicit Antiquities.” In *Archaeology, Cultural Heritage, and the Antiquities Trade*, edited by Neil Brodie, Morag M. Kersel, Christina Luke, and Kathryn Walker Tubbs, 188–205. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Levine, Marc N., and Lucha Martínez de Luna. 2013. “Museum Salvage: A Case Study of Mesoamerican Artifacts in Museum Collections and on the Antiquities Market.” *Journal of Field Archaeology* 38, no. 3: 264–76.

Lobay, Gordon Brock. 2006. “Objects and Objectivity: An Archaeology of Auctions. Central Italian Antiquities at Bonhams, Christie’s and Sotheby’s 1970–2005.” Unpublished PhD diss., Department of Archaeology, University of Cambridge.

- Lobay, Gordon Brock. 2009. "Border Controls in Market Countries as Disincentives to Antiquities Looting at Source? The US-Italy Bilateral Agreement 2001." In *Criminology and Archaeology: Studies in Looted Antiquities*, edited by Simon Mackenzie and Penny Green, 59–80. Oxford: Hart Publishing.
- Luke, Christina, and John S. Henderson. 2006. "The Plunder of the Ulúa Valley, Honduras, and a Market Analysis for Its Antiquities." In *Archaeology, Cultural Heritage, and the Antiquities Trade*, edited by Neil Brodie, Morag M. Kersel, Christina Luke, and Kathryn Walker Tubb, 147–72. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.
- Mackenzie, Simon. 2011. "Trafficking Antiquities." In *International Crime and Justice*, edited by Mangai Natarajan, 141–47. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Museo Nacional de Antropología. 2011. *100 Obras: Catálogo Esencial Museo Nacional de Antropología*. Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia.
- Nørskov, Vinnie. 2002a. *Greek Vases in New Contexts: The Collecting and Trading of Greek Vases – An Aspect of the Modern Reception of Antiquity*. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press.
- Nørskov, Vinnie. 2002b. "Greek Vases for Sale: Some Statistical Evidence." In *Illicit Antiquities: The Theft of Culture and the Extinction of Archaeology*, edited by Neil Brodie and Kathryn Walker-Tubb, 23–37. London: Routledge.
- Pfeffer, Eva A. 2014. "From Auction to Gallery: Sotheby's Private Sales Development." MA thesis, Sotheby's Institute of Art.
- Reents-Budet, Dorie. 1994. *Painting the Maya Universe: Royal Ceramics of the Classic Period*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Renfrew, Colin. 1993. "Collectors Are the Real Looters." *Archaeology* 46, no. 3: 16–17.
- Savage, George. 1976. *Forgeries, Fakes and Reproductions: A Handbook for Collectors*. London: White Lion Publishers.
- Scott, David A. 2013. "Modern Antiquities: The Looted and the Faked." *International Journal of Cultural Property* 20, no. 1: 49–75.
- Sokal, Marina Papa. 2006. "The US Legal Response to the Protection of the World Cultural Heritage." In *Archaeology, Cultural Heritage, and the Antiquities Trade*, edited by Neil Brodie, Morag M. Kersel, Christina Luke, and Kathryn Walker Tubb, 36–67. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.
- Stanish, Charles. 2009. "Forging Ahead." *Archaeology* 62, no. 3: 18–66.
- Tate, Carolyn. 1985. "The Carved Ceramics Called Chocholá." In *Fifth Palenque Round Table, 1983*, edited by Merle Greene Robertson and Virginia M. Fields, 123–33. San Francisco: Pre-Columbian Art Research Institute.
- Washburn, Wilcomb E. 1987. "Increasing our Knowledge of Pre-Columbian Civilizations by Not Collecting Pre-Columbian Objects." In *Pre-Columbian Collections in European Museums*, edited by Anne-Marie Hocquenghem, Peter Tamási, and Christiane Villain-Gandossi, 28–35. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.
- Watson, Peter. 1997. *Sotheby's: Inside Story*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Wiley, Gordon R. 1972. *The Artifacts of Altar de Sacrificios*. Cambridge: Peabody Museum.

Yates, Donna. 2006. "South America on the Block: The Changing Face of Pre-Columbian Antiquities Auctions in Response to International Law." Unpublished MA thesis, University of Cambridge.

Yates, Donna. 2015. "Value and Doubt: The Persuasive Power of 'Authenticity' in the Antiquities Market." *PARSE* 2: 71–84.

Yates, Donna. 2016. "Museums, Collectors, and Value Manipulation: Tax Fraud through Donation of Antiquities." *Journal of Financial Crime* 23, no. 1: 173–86.