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The Market Background to the April 2003 Plunder of the Iraq National Museum

Neil Brodie

Saleable artefacts have been plundered from archaeological sites whenever there have been collectors willing to buy them, and for all their importance the sites of Iraq have not been spared. European and later North American collectors and museums started acquiring Iraqi artefacts soon after modern archaeological excavations began there in the 1840s; by the 1880s illegal digging was well established and large quantities of artefacts were being shipped out of the country (Foster *et al.* 2005, 214; Eisenberg 2004, 41). The price of artefacts on the Western market dropped during the first two decades of the 20th century, probably due to their increased availability (Eisenberg 2004, 41), and widespread illegal digging was still being reported in the 1920s, when a Department of Antiquities was established under the British Mandate and backed up by a new antiquities law, which together seem to have had an ameliorating effect (Bernhardsson 2005, 126, 156–7; Gibson 1997, 6). Iraq gained independence in 1932 and a stronger antiquities law was passed in 1974 which prohibited the export of any archaeological artefact except samples for scientific analysis (Foster *et al.* 2005, 217). From the 1960s through the 1980s increased revenue from oil sales allowed the expansion and generous support of the Department of Antiquities, which by the 1970s had become a fully professional organisation, employing alongside archaeologists and other specialists something like 1600 site guards. During this time, clandestine excavation and illegal trade are thought to have stopped almost entirely (Bernhardsson 2005, 179–80; Foster *et al.* 2005, 217; Gibson 2003, 1848; Lawler 2001, 33).

The situation began to deteriorate during the 1980s when the long Iran–Iraq war placed a heavy strain on the Iraqi economy, but worse was to follow in the turmoil that followed the 1991 Gulf War. Eleven regional museums were burgled and by 1995 there was widespread illegal digging. The economic collapse that followed the imposition of a trade embargo by United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 661 exacerbated the situation still further, as it became impossible for the Department of Antiquities to maintain adequate staffing levels or to acquire and maintain necessary equipment and vehicles, and so site protection suffered accordingly (Lawler 2001, 34; Gibson 2003, 1848). At the same time, for the general population, real wages dropped and unemployment increased, so that for many people in rural areas archaeological sites

offered a ready source of income. The excavated artefacts found a market in the West, where no action was taken to prevent their illegal export and sale, even in the face of the UN trade embargo.

THE MARKET FOR IRAQI ANTIQUITIES, 1990–2003

The UN trade embargo should have applied as much to antiquities as to any other class of material, but by 1994 artefacts were flowing out of Iraq onto the international market (Brodie 2006; Lawler 2001), and continued to do so until the Coalition invasion of 2003, and after. By 1994, notice of the UN trade embargo had been provided by the major London and New York auction houses in their relevant sales catalogues. For example, the following statement appeared in the London Christie's catalogue of their 12 December 1990 Fine Antiquities sale:

> A recently imposed United Nations trade embargo prohibits us from accepting bids from any person in Iraq and/or Kuwait (including any body controlled by Iraq or Kuwait residents or companies, wherever carrying on business), or from any other person where we have reasonable cause to believe (i) that the Lot(s) will be supplied or delivered to or to the order of a person in either Iraq or Kuwait or (ii) that the Lot(s) will be used for the purposes of any business carried on in, or operated from, Iraq or Kuwait.

Bonhams' first ever Antiquities sale catalogue of April 1991 contained a similar statement, and so too did comparable Sotheby's catalogues (for example, in the catalogue for the London December 1992 sale). What is remarkable about these statements, however, is that they are aimed very much at potential buyers. There is no mention of potential consignors, and no prohibition on consignments originating in Iraq, even though Article 3(a) of UNSCR 661 stated specifically that states should prevent 'The import into their territories of all commodities and products originating in Iraq or Kuwait exported therefrom after the date of the present resolution;'. It is not surprising then to find evidence suggesting that the auction houses continued to accept consignments of what was most probably material exported in contravention of UNSCR 661. They were able to do so because most material was being sold without provenance.

There have been a large number of Iraqi antiquities in circulation since the 19th century, and more were exported legally during the 20th century before the adoption of the strong 1974 antiquities law. While many of these antiquities are sold with provenance, many are not, and so the trade in these unprovenanced but still licit antiquities is able to provide cover for the entry onto the market of looted material, which is similarly sold without provenance. For example, in the decade leading up to the 1991 Gulf War, and after, most cylinder seals on the London market were traded without provenance, as shown by the numbers of cylinder seals offered for sale at the main London and New York auction houses over the period 1980–2005 (see Plates 2 and 3). The 1990 UN trade embargo made no impact whatsoever on the volume of this trade, which, if anything, increased through the 1990s and up to 2003. An unknown proportion of these unprovenanced seals might well have been acquired and taken out of Iraq illegally, though it would be difficult to prove illegal export for any one individual lot. Subsequent events, however, have confirmed that this was most probably the case.

In May 2003, UNSCR 1483 lifted trade sanctions on Iraq, except for those on weapons and cultural objects. Article 7 of UNSCR 1483 specifically stated that the trade in Iraqi cultural objects was prohibited when 'reasonable suspicion exists that they have been illegally removed' from Iraq since the adoption of UNSCR 661, and that the return of any cultural objects stolen from cultural institutions or other locations in Iraq since that time should be facilitated. UNSCR 1483 was implemented in the United Kingdom as Statutory Instrument 1519, The Iraq (United Nations Sanctions) Order (SI 1519). Article 8 of SI 1519 makes it a criminal offence to hold or to deal in any cultural object that has been removed illegally from Iraq since 6 August 1990 (the date of UNSCR 661), unless there is no knowledge or reasonable suspicion of its illegal export. Since the implementation of SI 1519, it is noticeable that unprovenanced cylinder seals have disappeared from the London auction market (Plate 2); this means that either the auction houses or their consignors feel that they do have reason to suppose that some if not all of the unprovenanced material they had been selling was removed illegally, but while they had not felt obliged under previously existing law to act upon that suspicion and stop the sales, the new criminal offence introduced by SI 1519 has proven to be a stronger deterrent. The explicit criminal offence introduced by SI 1519 has been criticised for not being human rights compliant (Chamberlain 2003), but it has focused minds on the possible consequences of selling unprovenanced material, and confirmed that many if not all cylinder seals most likely have a recent illegal origin.

The Sîn-iddinam cuneiform barrels

It might be argued that with the large numbers of cylinder seals already in circulation before 1990, there was no real reason during the 1990s to suppose that any had a recent illegal origin, and that the auction houses should therefore be given the benefit of the doubt. But during that time there were other types of artefact turning up on the market that, unlike cylinder seals, were not previously well known outside Iraq. The appearance of these objects should have raised questions about provenance, but did not.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, for example, a series of Old Babylonian cuneiform-inscribed clay barrels appeared for sale at the major auction houses. Inscribed barrels of this sort, in the region of 11 to 15 cm high, are usually found in architectural foundation courses. These particular barrels each carry an identical cuneiform inscription recording Sîn-iddinam's achievement of dredging the river Tigris. Sîn-iddinam was king of Larsa (1905–1898 BC) at a time when the city's sovereignty extended over much of Sumer and Akkad in what is today southern Iraq.

The first of these barrels to appear was offered for sale at Sotheby's New York in May 1997. Fortuitously, Toronto's Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia project had published its corpus of all known Old Babylonian royal inscriptions only a few years earlier (Frayne 1990), and it was easy for Sotheby's to check their barrel against known comparanda. The relevant catalogue entry correctly states that at the time there were only three comparable pieces known, one each in the Louvre, the Ashmolean Museum, and Chicago's Oriental Institute. The fact that the Sotheby's barrel had apparently just 'surfaced' might have

raised questions about its provenance, but if it did, they were not enough to stop the sale. At the next Sotheby's New York auction, in December 1997, another barrel carrying the same inscription was offered for sale, and this time the catalogue listed four comparanda, including the barrel sold earlier that year, in May. At Christie's New York the same month, a third barrel appeared. Since then, more barrels have been offered for auction (Table 1), and at least two have turned up outside the auction market, one at Fortuna Fine Arts of New York in 2000,[1] the other at the Barakat Gallery of Beverly Hills and London in 2005 (item no. PF.5531). In total, since 1997, when the first one appeared at Sotheby's, at least 11 previously unknown barrels have appeared for sale, almost a four-fold increase in the size of the known corpus in less than ten years.

It is hardly credible that so many of these barrels should have lain dormant in old collections and hidden for decades from dedicated researchers, only to appear *en masse* at a time when there was widespread looting of archaeological sites in southern Iraq. A more parsimonious explanation for their sudden appearance is that, in fact, they *had* been plundered and removed illegally from Iraq. If this was the case, the due diligence procedures of the major auction houses in place during the 1990s and early 2000s were clearly inadequate. Yet this was a time when in the wake of allegations of misconduct in its London Antiquities Department (Watson 1997), Sotheby's claimed to have instituted a new code of conduct with the express purpose of guarding against the sale of illegally-acquired antiquities (Alberge & McGrory 1997).

THE ARAMAIC INCANTATION BOWLS

The Antiquities sales of the large auction houses attract a lot of critical attention, but this is due in part to the fact that the material offered for sale is published systematically and comprehensively – albeit without much information about provenance – in well-illustrated catalogues, and is therefore open to public scrutiny. Recent research, however, has pointed to the importance of the 'invisible market', where the large bulk of archaeological material, including the most valuable objects, is traded away from public view (Nørskov 2002, 270; Watson & Todeschini 2006, 312–14). This is as true for Iraqi material as it is for material originating elsewhere. For example, it was reported in the mid-1990s that illegally-removed pieces of relief sculpture from the Assyrian palaces of Nineveh were being offered for sale (Russell 1997), though these pieces have not publicly 'surfaced' on the market or in collections. Another large corpus of Iraqi material to pass through the invisible market during the 1990s comprised hundreds of Aramaic incantation bowls.

Aramaic incantation bowls are hemispherical or flat-based bowls with Aramaic inscriptions written in ink on their inner surfaces. Each inscription, usually spiralling out from the centre, records a magical incantation intended to ward off malevolent spirits. There are analogous bowls written in Mandaic and Syriac, though the Mandaic and Syriac bowls often adopt other arrangements of text (Hunter 2000a, 171). The bowls were first reported in an archaeological context by Layard (1853, 509, 524), who had discovered them in 1850 at Babylon and Nippur, though two had already been acquired by the British Museum in 1841 (Hunter 2000a, 163).

The best reported archaeological contexts are for bowls that have been excavated at Nippur. Exploratory work during the second University of Pennsylvania expedition to Nippur in 1889 exposed houses immediately below the surface. Each house contained one or more incantation bowls, together with more routine domestic artefacts such as pottery and grindstones (Peters 1897, 182, 194). One house was thought by the excavators to have been the residence of an apothecary or a doctor because of the discovery there of several ceramic containers filled with an unidentified substance and sealed with bitumen (Peters 1897, 183). In total, more than 150 whole or fragmentary inscribed bowls, including Aramaic examples, were recovered (Montgomery 1913, 14). The University of Chicago Oriental Institute's Nippur Expedition returned there for ten seasons between 1948 and 1967, recovering something like 50 whole or fragmentary bowls. Half were taken to the Iraq National Museum and half to Chicago (Kaufman 1973, 170). More bowls were discovered in 1989 (Hunter 1995), and are now in the Iraq National Museum. Outside Nippur, the University of Oxford/Chicago Field Museum excavations of 1923–33 at Kish discovered incantation bowls in the top one metre stratum of the Sasanian settlement (Moorey 1978, 122). On the basis of coins found in context at Nippur and Kish, the currency of the bowls is dated to the 7th and 8th centuries AD.

By 1990, less than a thousand Aramaic bowls were known. In addition to the 238 published examples listed in Table 2, Montgomery (1913, 21) referred to 69 bowls in the 'Berlin Museum' and there is also a collection in Istanbul from the first Nippur project. Thus there were perhaps something in the region of 300–500 bowls outside Iraq, and several hundred more in the Iraq National Museum (Hunter, pers comm). It was a surprise then when many hundreds of previously unknown incantation bowls began to appear in private collections during the 1990s.

In September 2004, a Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) television documentary revealed that the Norwegian collector Martin Schøyen had acquired 650 bowls, and that since 1996 they had been held in University College London (UCL) for study and publication by scholars at the university's Institute of Jewish Studies (Lundén 2005, 6–7). Schøyen's representatives claimed that the bowls had been out of Iraq since the 1960s, but NRK counter-claimed to have evidence that the bowls had been discovered in Iraq by clandestine digging in 1992 and transported by road to Amman, and on to London, before being sold to Schøyen.

Mark Geller, who was Director of UCL's Institute of Jewish Studies at the time the bowls were received for study, wrote soon after the sack of the Iraq Museum in defence of his institution's possession of the bowls that 'Many of the sites in Iraq have Jewish Aramaic incantation bowls' and that 'Within the past decade [i.e. 1993–2003], hundreds of Aramaic incantation bowls have appeared on the antiquities market, collected from archaeological sites; there is no evidence that these objects have been stolen from a museum' (Geller 2003). Geller, while trying to convince his critics that the bowls are not stolen property, and were found by chance, seems in fact to have confirmed NRK's version of events.

On 10 October 2004, UCL announced that it had informed the Metropolitan Police of the incantation bowls in its possession and that it was to establish a committee charged with undertaking an investigation into the provenance and rightful ownership of the bowls and also into the university's future policy as regards the acquisition and study of such material. The question of Iraqi provenance was crucial to the UCL enquiry and to Schøyen's claim to good title. If incantation bowls are found only in Iraq, and Schøyen cannot document the history of his bowls back to before August 1990 (the date of UNSCR 661), then the bowls might be forfeit. If, on the other hand, a substantial proportion of the previously known corpus of bowls was found in countries other than Iraq, it would be easier for Schøyen to contend there is no reason to suspect an Iraqi origin for his own bowls.

Although prior to the recent appearance of hundreds of bowls something like 240 had been published, very few were recovered through archaeological excavation; most were acquired on the market (Table 2). Those that have been recovered through documented excavation have come from Iraq. There are several bowls that are said to have come from Iran, though none are known to have been recovered through a documented and published archaeological excavation. It seems possible that some might have been found in the Iranian province of Khuzestan, which geographically and culturally would have been an extension of Sassanian Mesopotamia, but none are confirmed. One Aramaic-inscribed vessel said to have been found at Susa and currently located in a Mumbai museum in India is actually a jug, not a bowl (Unvala 1953, pl. 21). There is also a bowl at the British Museum, said in the accessions register to have been found by Layard at Arban in Syria. Layard did excavate at Arban, in 1850, but he does not record finding an incantation bowl there (Layard 1853, 272–82), nor does he mention an Arban bowl in his conspectus (Layard 1853, 524). Thus, again, it is conceivable that a bowl was found at Arban, but not demonstrable. It remains the case that no Aramaic incantation bowl has been found outside Iraq in circumstances that today can be verified.

The UCL committee of enquiry into the Schøyen bowls submitted its report in July 2006, and a copy was made available to Schøyen, though at the time of writing (October 2007) the contents of the report had still not been made public. In March 2007, Schøyen initiated legal proceedings against UCL for the return of the bowls (Schøyen Collection 2007a), and in June 2007 a joint UCL/Schøyen press release announced that after 'investigation by an eminent panel of experts, and further enquiries of its own, UCL is pleased to announce that no claims adverse to the Schøyen Collection's right and title have been made or intimated', and that 'UCL has now returned the Bowls to the Schøyen Collection and has agreed to pay a sum in respect of its possession of them' (Schøyen Collection 2007b). The agreement for payment and return was made as part of an out-of-court settlement of the action initiated by the Schøyen Collection in March 2007. UCL has steadfastly refused to publish the report of the committee of enquiry or its conclusions and recommendations, and so it is believed that agreement not to publish the report was part of the same settlement.

In October 2007 some of the report's contents were leaked to the journal *Science* (Balter 2007). It was revealed that UCL's committee of enquiry had concluded that the

bowls had probably been removed illegally from Iraq sometime after August 1990, though Schøyen would not necessarily have been aware of that fact. *Science* also reported that the Iraqi authorities intended taking legal action of their own to recover the bowls.

In addition to the Schøyen bowls, there is an unspecified number of previously unknown bowls in the collection of Shlomo Moussaiff (Shanks 2007); 20 have recently been published (Levene 2003a). It is also rumoured that a large consignment of bowls reached the United States towards the end of the 1990s, although this rumour has been hard to confirm. Nevertheless, it is becoming increasingly common to find incantation bowls with the spiral inscriptions characteristic of Aramaic appearing for sale on the Internet. A search on 12 July 2006 discovered 11 examples (Table 3). More have appeared since. It is interesting to note that the findspot of bowls on the Internet is rarely given unequivocally as Iraq, except on the site Baghdad Market Place, which with disarming honesty claimed that:

> Our company has established relationships with Iraqi merchants whose families have been in the antiquities business for generations. During the period when Saddam Hussein was in power, no items of antiquity were allowed to be sold on the open market. During this period, these merchants continued to travel the deserts of Iraq buying and bargaining with the rural Bedouins, herders and farmers. Information about age and provenance for these items comes from the merchants themselves, in addition to research conducted by us.

Thus the Baghdad Market Place, by its own admission, is selling antiquities, including at least one incantation bowl, that were smuggled out of Iraq prior to 2003. It is not possible from the information and e-mail address provided on the site to ascertain its physical location, which is perhaps why it can afford to be so candid.

The information presented in Table 3 also offers an insight into the economic value of scholarly support for the trade. Most of the bowls offered on the Internet are for prices in the range US$ 350–900. The two bowls offered by the Barakat Gallery, however, are priced much higher. One is offered for US$ 6000, and for the other bowl the price is available only on request, and presumably therefore in excess of US$ 6000. Similarly, four bowls were offered at Christie's London in their May 2003 Antiquities sale with estimated prices in the region US$ 5000–9000. The apparent added value of the Barakat and Christie's bowls probably derives from the fact that they were accompanied by translations of their texts. The translations increase the interest of the bowls, but also, and more importantly perhaps, attest to their authenticity as Aramaic creations, and also to their magical potency – some bowls were originally inscribed with a nonsense pseudoscript, presumably either by an illiterate scribe or for an illiterate client. Thus scholarly intervention has increased the price of the bowls ten-fold.[2]

Incantation bowls with documented contexts normally have good associations and a secure stratigraphy. They are not 'collected' as Geller (2003) maintains. Presumably, the unrecorded extraction of hundreds of bowls will have caused a large amount of archaeological damage. It is possible from the published report of Hunter (1995, pers comm) to make an approximate quantification of the real extent of the damage. Hunter discusses some incantation bowls found during excavations at Nippur in 1989, where

three Aramaic bowls were found buried in a courtyard. The excavated area was 230m^2, thus one Aramaic bowl was found for every 77m^2. Extrapolating from this figure to the 650 bowls thought to constitute the Schøyen collection, they would have been derived from a minimum area of 50,000m^2, or 5 hectares (an area slightly larger than that of Trafalgar Square in London).

CONCLUSION

Matthew Bogdanos, who led the official US investigation into the National Museum thefts, has reported anecdotal evidence that professional antiquities thieves moved into Baghdad hotels in the run-up to war (BBC 2006), and he has also concluded from his investigation that some of the thefts were carried out by knowledgeable thieves and involved some degree of forward planning (Bogdanos 2005, 213–15). For higher quality items there might already have been buyers in place before the theft occurred (Bogdanos 2005, 215), while the transportable material stolen from the basement was most likely directed to a middleman buyer who would be able to arrange its transport out of Iraq for subsequent dispersal on the international market (Bogdanos 2005, 216). Thus Bogdanos believes that a well-organised criminal network was already in place before the 2003 Coalition invasion, waiting to take advantage of any breakdown in museum security that might ensue.

The facility with which material stolen from the Museum was transported out of the country confirms that mechanisms and routes for smuggling Iraqi archaeological objects had been tried and tested during the 1990s. Within three weeks of the National Museum thefts, stolen material had been moved out of Iraq to London, and then to the United States. On 30 April 2003, US customs officials at Newark Airport seized four FedEx boxes that had arrived from London addressed to a New York art dealer. The boxes contained 669 artefacts that had been stolen from the National Museum (Bogdanos 2005, 229; Bailey 2003, 1). And it is by no means certain that US customs intercepted the first or the only shipment.

The burgeoning export of artefacts during the 1990s was clearly in contravention of the 1974 domestic antiquities law, noted above, and though the relevant stolen property statutes of the United Kingdom and the United States might have been used to prosecute the trade, no prosecutions were forthcoming. International regulatory instruments offered another possible means to stem the trade, but their effectiveness was compromised because of poor subscription or for procedural reasons. Iraq had joined the 1970 UNESCO *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property* in 1973, but the United Kingdom did not follow the Iraqi example until 2002, and although the United States had partly implemented the Convention in 1983, and could have made a constructive response to an Iraqi request for US import control, in the absence of diplomatic relations between the two countries such a request was not possible (Foster *et al.* 2005, 270). The 1954 *Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict* together with its 1954 First Protocol (and later 1999 Second Protocol) could also, in principle, have offered

some protection. Although the Convention itself is designed to protect cultural heritage from intentional military action and from removal or destruction by occupying powers, its First Protocol is concerned with the prevention of illegal trade and arrangement for the return of illegally-traded material. Iraq has been party to the Convention and its First Protocol since 1967, but during the 1990s neither the United States nor the United Kingdom had ratified the Convention (and still had not by the time of writing in 2007). Both countries had signed the Convention, which means that they should recognise its principles, though the sincerity of their commitment can be questioned (Foster *et al.* 2005, 255–6). Finally, there was the 1990 UNSCR 661 trade embargo. But although it was completely flouted by the ongoing export, the political action necessary to achieve its enforcement was not forthcoming.

In retrospect, it is all too easy to see that during the 1990s, political and ultimately academic and public apathy allowed the illegal trade in looted Iraqi antiquities to develop and prosper. Despite the best efforts of a small number of academics and journalists, most of academia and the media seem to have been unaware of what was happening. Those profiting from the trade, either commercially or academically, looked the other way. Politicians were under no pressure to ensure more effective law enforcement, although there was a range of regulatory laws at their disposal. The public outcry that followed the burglary of the Iraq National Museum finally forced the UK government to take decisive action against the trade, and in 2003 it implemented SI 1519 as noted above and also enacted the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act, and in 2004 announced its intention to ratify the 1954 Hague Convention and its two Protocols. Arguably, if such action had been taken in the 1990s, and followed through with effective enforcement, the illegal trade in Iraqi antiquities might have been stopped from taking root. Then there would have been no point in robbing the National Museum in 2003, as there would have been no market for the stolen material.

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TABLE 1. SÎN-IDDINAM INSCRIBED CUNEIFORM BARRELS OFFERED FOR SALE AT AUCTION BETWEEN 1997 AND 2002

Sotheby's New York, May 1997, lot 165
Sotheby's New York, December 1997, lot 175
Christie's New York, December 1997, lot 30
Christie's London, April 1998, lot 71
Christie's New York, December 1998, lot 251
Sotheby's New York, December 1998, lot 210 (possibly the one offered at Christies New York in December 1997)
Bonhams London, October 1999, lot 255
Christie's New York, December 1999, lot 512
Christie's New York, June 2001, lot 350
Bonhams London, November 2002, lot 209
Christie's New York, December 2002, lot 285 (the one sold at Christie's New York in December 1997).

TABLE 2. PREVIOUSLY KNOWN ARAMAIC INCANTATION BOWLS. ALL FINDSPOTS ARE IN IRAQ UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE.[3]

Reference	**Bowls**
Cook 1992	1 (Oriental Institute), excavated at Tell Khafaje.
Franco 1978–9	5 (Iraq National Museum), excavated at Ctesiphon.
Gawlikowski 1990	1 (? location), excavated at Bidjân.
Geller 1976	1 (private ownership), no findspot
Geller 1980	2 (private ownership), no findspots; 1 (private ownership), bought in Teheran; 1 (Gulbenkian Museum), no findspot.
Geller 1986	7 (private ownership), 1 said to be Iraq, remainder no findspots.
Gordon 1934	7 (Istanbul and Iraq National Museum), said to be from Iraq.
Gordon 1937	2 (private ownership), no findspots.
Gordon 1941	2 (Harvard Semitic Museum), no findspots; 2 (Jewish Theological Seminary), no findspots; 12 (Ashmolean Museum), excavated at Kish; 1 (Ashmolean Museum), said to be from Iran; 18 (Hilprecht Collection), probably excavated at Nippur; 1 (Metropolitan Museum), excavated at Ctesiphon; 9 (Louvre), no findspots.
Gordon 1951	1 (private ownership), no findspot.
Gordon 1984	2 (private ownership), no findspots.
Harviainen 1981	1 (private ownership), bought at Borsippa.
Hunter 1995	4 (Iraq National Museum), excavated at Nippur.
Hunter 1996	1 (Cambridge University), no findspot
Hunter 2000a	75 (British Museum), 4 excavated at Kutha, 2 excavated at Babylon, 1 excavated at Nineveh, 7 said to be from Babylon, 5 said to be from Babylon or Borsippa, 1 said to be from Sippar, 3 said to be from Nimrud, 1 said to be from Uruk, 1 said to be from Arban (Syria), 50 no findspots.
Hunter 2000b	2 (Iraq National Museum), said to be from Babylon.
Isbell 1976	1 (Chicago Oriental Institute), excavated at Nippur; 1 (private ownership), said to be Susa, Iran.
Hyvernaut 1885	1 (Musée Lycklama de Cannes), said to be found at Babylon.
Kaufman 1973	1 (Chicago Oriental Institute), excavated at Nippur.
Koldeway 1911	Numerous, excavated at Borsippa.

Lacau 1893	1 (private ownership), no findspot.
Levene 2003b	2 (Pergamon Museum), said to be from Iraq.
McCullough 1967	2 (Royal Ontario Museum), no findspots.
Montgomery 1913	30 (Pennsylvania University Museum), excavated at Nippur.
Moriggi 2001	1 (Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale), bought in Tehran, Iran.
Moriggi 2005	2 (private ownership), no findspots.
Müller-Kessler 1994	1 (Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte zu Berlin), no findspot; 1 (private ownership), no findspot.
Naveh & Shaked 1985	3 (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), no findspots; 4 (Israel Museum), no findspots; 1 (National and University Library, Jerusalem), no findspot; 1 (Jewish Historical Museum of Belgrade), said to be from Iraq; 2 (private ownership), 1 said to be from area of Jerusalem, 1 no findspot.
Naveh & Shaked 1993	1 (Bible Lands Museum), no findspot; 1 (Smithsonian Institution), no findspot; 8 (private ownership), no findspots.
Obermann 1940	4 (Yale University), no findspots.
Schwab 1890 & 1891	1 (Musée Lycklama de Cannes), no findspot; 3 (Musée Dieulafoy), said to have been excavated at Susiana, Iran; 2 (Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris), no findspots; 1 (Musée de Winterthur), no findspot.
Smelik 1978	1 (Allard Pierson Museum), no findspot.
Wohlstein 1893 & 1894	5 (Königlichen Museums zu Berlin), no findspots.
Yamauchi 1965	1 (private ownership), said to be from Iran.

Table 3. Aramaic incantation bowls found for sale on the Internet on 12 July 2006.[4]

Vendor	Material description	Findspot	Asking price
Janus Antiquities (Akron, Ohio)	1 Judaic incantation bowl	Holy Land	$450
Windsor Antiquities (New York City)	3 Ancient Aramaic inscribed incantation bowls	Syria	$350;$300; $400
Barakat Gallery (Beverly Hills, California; London, UK)	1 terracotta demon bowl	Near East	On request
Barakat Gallery	1 Babylonian demon bowl	Iran/Iraq	$6000
Jerusalem Antiquities (Jerusalem, Israel)	2 Byzantine/Talmud incantation bowls	Israel	$500; $600
Ancient Creations	1 incantation bowl	Holy Land	$895
Baghdad Market Place (Location not known)	2 Babylonian incantation bowls	Southern Iraq	$600; $750

NOTES

1. I thank John Russell for drawing my attention to this barrel.
2. In the event, one month after the sack of the Iraq National Museum, the Christie's bowls did not sell.
3. Some bowls have been published more than once, with improved editions of their texts. This table avoids duplication by counting only the reference with the best provenance-related information. Thus some publications may refer to more bowls than are listed here. The table is intended to be an archaeological corpus of bowls, not a reference list of reproduced and translated texts.
4. The Internet addresses of the named dealers are: Ancient Creations: http://www.ancientcreations.com/index.asp – The Barakat Gallery: http://www.barakatgallery.com/ – Baghdad Market Place: http://www.baghdadmarketplace.com/page10.html – Janus Antiquities: http://www.trocadero.com/janus/ – Jerusalem Antiquities, on ebay at: http://cgi3.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewUserPage&userid=homeosell – Windsor Antiquities: http://www.vcoins.com/ancient/windsorantiquities/store/dynamicIndex.asp

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