

# Antiquity market trends in Anatolian figurines 1999–2022: Studies in price, prevalence and provenance

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## Abstract

In recent decades, the Turkish government has adopted a proactive policy of pursuing the restitution of cultural objects it believes were illegally removed from its territory. Utilising open-access sale data, the following article examines the impact of this formal restitution policy upon antiquity market sales in Anatolian figurines between 1999 and 2022 across three major international auction houses and the internet market. By casting a forensic gaze upon seemingly decreasing sale rates and ostensibly improving standards of provenance, this study suggests that apparent improvements in the market for Anatolian figurines should not be attributed to the Turkish government restitution policy. Instead, it argues that salient commercial dynamics and the profit-oriented business strategies of individual auction houses are the operative factors in shaping antiquity market data. In doing so, it provides the first quantitative market analysis of auction house sales in Anatolian figurines, widens the applicability of existing methodologies for navigating the duplicitous nature of antiquity market data, and offers much needed empirical insights into the illicit antiquities trade.

## Özet

Son yıllarda Türk hükümeti, topraklarından yasadışı yollarla çıkarıldığına inandığı kültürel eserlerin iadesi için etkin bir politika benimsemiştir. Aşağıdaki makale, açık erişimli satış verilerini kullanarak, bu resmi iade politikasının 1999–2022 yılları arasında üç büyük uluslararası müzayede evi ve internet piyasasındaki Anadolu figürinlerinin eski eser pazarında satışları üzerindeki etkisini incelemektedir. Görünürde azalan satış oranlarına ve görünüşte iyileşen köken (provenans) standartlarına hukuki bir bakış açısı getiren bu çalışma, Anadolu figürinleri pazarındaki belirgin gelişmelerin Türk hükümetinin iade politikasına atfedilmemesi gerektiğini öne sürmektedir. Bunun yerine, belirgin ticari dinamiklerin ve bireysel müzayede evlerinin kâr odaklı iş stratejilerinin, eski eser piyasası verilerini şekillendirmede etkin faktörler olduğunu savunmaktadır. Bunu yaparken, Anadolu figürinlerinin müzayede evi satışlarında ilk sayısal piyasa analizini sağlamakta, eski eser piyasası verilerinin aldatıcı yapısını anlamak için mevcut metodolojilerin uygulanabilirliğini genişletmekte ve yasadışı eski eser ticareti hakkında çok ihtiyaç duyulan deneysel öngörüler sunmaktadır.

The Guennol Stargazer is a prehistoric marble Anatolian figurine of the Kiliya variety, which was sold on the 28th of April 2017 by Christie's New York for a record fee of \$14.5 million dollars. This figurine, measuring just nine inches in height, commanded the highest fee ever paid for an Anatolian figurine at auction, and its lot information confidently asserted that the

figurine maintained 'an impressive provenance' (Christie's 2017). This provenance begins in 1961, when it was purchased by the American tennis star Alastair Martin from the New York-based art dealer J.J. Klejman. The Stargazer was then passed on to a corporation controlled by the son of Alastair Martin and displayed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art intermittently between 1966

and 1993, and then at the Merrin Gallery in New York, where it was subsequently purchased by the American billionaire hedge fund manager Michael Steinhardt in 1993. It was displayed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art for a second time between 1999 and 2007 before being put forward for sale at Christie's in 2017.

However, when viewed in more detail, this 'impressive provenance' is not as above board as it may first appear. J.J. Klejman was an established antiquities trafficker who acted as a procurer of archaeological objects to the elite within American society throughout the 1960s and 70s, with clients including J.F.K. (Clarke 2013: 170), Greta Garbo and the Rockefeller Family (Mazur 2017). He was also involved in several contentious high-profile museum acquisitions, including the Benin Bronzes on behalf of the British Museum (British Museum n.d.) and the Lydian Hoard on behalf of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Honan 1990). He was referred to by Thomas Holving, former Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, as one of his 'favourite dealer-smugglers' (Moynihan 2021). More latterly, Michael Steinhardt is a disgraced former art collector, who in December 2021 surrendered 180 objects worth \$70 million and was permanently banned from purchasing antiquities as part of an agreement with the New York County District Attorney in exchange for the dismissal of a grand jury investigation into the illicit origins of his archaeological collection (Mashberg 2021).

Just 24 hours prior to the auction of the Guennol Stargazer, the Republic of Türkiye attempted to prevent the sale of this object, filing a legal suit at the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, which claimed the figurine was cultural property of Türkiye that had been looted and illegally exported from the country at an unspecified time after 1906. The Republic's ownership was predicated upon the 1906 Ottoman Decree on Antiquities (Ludel 2021), which grants Türkiye (via its antecedent, the Ottoman Empire) blanket ownership rights over all antiquities recovered from the territory of modern-day Türkiye after the year 1906, irrespective of the fact that the Republic of Türkiye was not founded until 1923 (Özsunay 1997: 278).

In response, Christie's counterclaimed that the 1906 Ottoman Decree is not valid within the U.S. legal system, and that there is no direct evidence proving the object was looted from Türkiye. Furthermore, Christie's claimed that the Turkish government has known the whereabouts of the Guennol Stargazer in New York since at least 1992, and chose to act only once the object was offered for sale in 2017 (Ognibene 2018: 605). The sale went ahead as planned, but the buyer subsequently withdrew their offer in light of the ongoing legal battle to determine ownership and mounting public awareness of the case. Following these initial legal proceedings, the case was moved to a

bench trial in 2021, where a judge rejected Türkiye's ownership claim, ruling that while the figurine was clearly manufactured within the territory of what is now Türkiye, there was not enough evidence to show that it was removed from this territory *after* 1906. Additionally, the judge ruled that Türkiye's claim was barred by laches, as the Republic had waited too long to pursue restitution after learning of the object's whereabouts (*Turkey v. Christie's 2021*).

Türkiye, like many other nations in the arc of the eastern Mediterranean, has become increasingly proactive and vociferous in demanding the return of cultural objects removed from its territory during previous eras, regardless of whether or not these removals satisfied relevant legal criteria at the time of their acquisition (Higgins 2019: 423). However, as demonstrated by the case of the Guennol Stargazer, these restitution claims are seldom straightforward affairs, and have been traditionally regarded as costly and drawn-out legal undertakings which offer no guarantee of success (Brodie, Renfrew 2005: 355). With the heightened nature of official scrutiny from the Turkish government in recent years, and the publicly prominent legal measures undertaken to recover the Guennol Stargazer, a naturally emergent consideration is whether or not these steps have caused sales in Anatolian figurines to decline, and if so, how can this be accurately perceived within the antiquity market data? In an attempt to answer these questions, the following article analyses sales in Anatolian figurines across three major international auction houses and the internet market between the years 1999 and 2022.

### Data and methods

The present study comprises two datasets taken from open-source online sale data in Anatolian figurines. The primary dataset is drawn from the three main auction houses which dominate the international antiquities market – Sotheby's, Christie's and Bonham's – and covers 23 years of activity between 1999 and 2022. This data is taken from the New York and London offices of Sotheby's and Christie's (two major international auction houses commonly referred to as the 'duopoly'), and is supplemented with data from the London office of Bonham's. This primary dataset constitutes the main focus of the analysis, given the dominance of these three auction houses over the international antiquities market.

The second, comparative, dataset is drawn between 2006 and 2022 from 15 smaller individual auction houses operating across the United States and the United Kingdom which predominantly trade on the internet market in antiquities. These two datasets will be analysed separately, which is necessary due to the qualitatively different natures of brick-and-mortar auction houses and internet auction houses, which are characterised by vastly

different business models, average price ranges and standards of provenance. Keeping these datasets separate will make for a more comprehensive appraisal of the market overall, while at the same time allowing for a detailed consideration of its nuances and specificities.

It should be stated that these datasets do not offer a pristine window into the dynamics of the international trade in Anatolian antiquities. A crucial point is that both datasets have been gathered from publicly available online sale records, and therefore cannot be taken as a definitive account of every transaction in Anatolian figurines undertaken by these three auction houses between 1999 and 2022. However, given that this data is freely available online, it can be taken as a broad indicator of what these auction houses are choosing to withhold and disclose within the public domain. Open-source data of this nature is being gradually recognised for its statistical utility, and is being increasingly implemented within studies aimed at quantifying and combating the illicit trade in cultural heritage (Sargant et al. 2020: 71). Additionally, due to the long-standing foreign export ban within Türkiye, there is a thriving internal trade in Turkish antiquities which would not be picked up by any international auction house sale data analysis (Yildizeci 2017).

The author of this paper previously performed an analysis of antiquity market trends in Cycladic figurines, which are marble figurines produced in the Cycladic Islands of Greece during the Early Bronze Age, and demonstrated that declining sale volumes in these objects and apparent improvements in their provenance were not in fact reflective of a more ethically oriented antiquities market (Devlin 2022). Instead, this analysis showed that commercial considerations are the primary operative factor in dictating the nature of Cycladic antiquity market data, and mapped out the specifics of how this market reality manifests itself around three central guide points: ‘Provenance Standards’, ‘The Shifting of Sales’ and ‘The Sweeping Up of Sales’. ‘Provenance Standards’ demonstrated that pre-1970 provenance (which therefore satisfies the 1970 UNESCO convention) is generally only adhered to when a lot is already likely to fetch a high price due to its size, rarity or condition; ‘The Shifting of Sales’ showed that sale lots can often be directed via a different market centre in direct response to hardening legal control measures in another market centre or the economic compatibility of a sale lot with a specific market centre; while ‘The Sweeping Up of Sales’ showed that the higher-volume/lower-value sale lots often overlooked by auction houses with a quality-over-quantity business model like Sotheby’s will usually be picked up by smaller or more quantitatively oriented auction houses like Christie’s or Bonham’s. This tripartite model of analysis will now be applied to Anatolian figurines in order to determine if this

methodology holds and has broader applicability in uncovering these latent market realities. Doing so will bring the potential impacts of Turkish restitution policy into sharper focus, and will offer clarity on the enduring question of whether or not these efforts have made a positive impact upon the market in Anatolian figurines, causing either their rates of sale to decline or their provenance standards to improve.

#### **Turkish government repatriation policy: A background**

Türkiye has had strict export laws since its foundation in 1923; it inherited these from the Ottoman Empire, where they had been in place since 1869 (Çelik 2016: 23). Prior to 1869, there was no legislation to formally prohibit the export of antiquities from Ottoman territory, with permission for removal being the only stipulated requirement (Eldem 2011: 282). European powers operating in Türkiye were thus able to export vast quantities of archaeological material to museums and research institutions in their home nations. The scale and frequency of these exports eventually prompted a change in attitudes among Ottoman authorities, who drafted and implemented a series of successive legal reforms in 1869, 1874 and 1884 which tightly restricted the export of antiquities and significantly curtailed the traffic of archaeological material abroad (Donkow 2004: 111). Further and decisive legal provisions came in the 1906 Ottoman Decree, which solidified previous legislation by stipulating the registration of foreign archaeological projects and enforcing a blanket ban on the export of all antiquities (Leimenstoll 1989: 10).

When the Republic of Türkiye was established in 1923, the 1906 Ottoman Decree was retained, remaining in place and unchanged until 1973, when the Law for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Property was implemented (Özel 2010: 179). This law allowed for the legal division of moveable and immovable heritage, enshrined the notion of a site and its resultant artefacts as a contiguous whole, and established a comprehensive inventory of the nation’s cultural heritage (Blake 2014: 439). In 1983 this law was expanded in scope to include antiquities located within the territorial waters of Türkiye, and was designated under Law No. 2863. This law supplants all previous legislation on terrestrial and maritime antiquities within the country, and outlines how cultural heritage should be defined, administered, excavated and stored, in addition to regulating how cultural material should be sold, loaned or exported abroad (Roosevelt, Luke 2006: 182). A final amendment came in 2009, when the law was further enhanced by the condition that all survey and excavation work conducted within the country must be permitted by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and observed by an officially appointed government representative (Blake 2014: 441).

The permanency of these antiquity laws and their successive solidification should theoretically provide a definitive legal basis for the restitution efforts of the Turkish government, since all archaeological exports have been officially prohibited from Turkish territory since 1906, and any removals proven to have occurred after that date could formally be classed as illegal. Yet, a series of recurring legislative problems has often either stifled or significantly prolonged successful attempts at repatriation. Firstly, there is the difficulty of applying the export laws of one nation state to those of another, as many courts will not consider the export prohibition laws of the origin state alone, and normally require additional proof that the objects in question were stolen (Blake 1998: 825). Secondly, there is the time-barring of claims, which can prevent successful attempts at litigation if significant amounts of time have passed between a looted object initially surfacing on the international market and the legal claim of the source nation to repatriate it (Gerstenblith 2013: 370). It is noteworthy that both of these longstanding legislative issues were specifically drawn upon by Christie's to exonerate themselves in the case of the Guennol Stargazer, with the latter being ultimately successful in preventing its repatriation.

Whilst these are problems pertaining to laws operating at the national level, international legal protocols are often equally obsolete. The 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property Convention (often abbreviated to the '1970 Convention') is a multilateral treaty designed to protect cultural objects from looting and illegal export, and offers signatory nations a means of facilitating the recovery and repatriation of cultural objects illegally exported from their territory (UNESCO 1970). This convention established a provenance threshold which is commonly referred to as 'the 1970 standard' (Prot 2012), granting international legal recourse for the return of objects removed from their country of origin *after* 1970 (Gerstenblith 2013: 364). However, it is not a retroactive treaty, and therefore offers no legal recourse for objects removed from signatory states prior to 1970. Auction houses, dealers and collectors are fully aware of this legislative shortcoming, and routinely manufacture, alter or obscure the provenance of objects to make them appear as though they satisfy the legal statutes of the 1970 Convention (Muscarella 1977; Miles 2014: 509; Boland 2019).

Given the ultimately uncertain nature of such legal proceedings, Türkiye has adopted its own tailored approach to the restitution of its cultural heritage, which often involves direct negotiations with museums that are entirely independent of legislative systems (Talat 2006: 37). Prominent examples include the 'Weary Herakles'

statue, which was looted from Perge in southwestern Türkiye in the 1970s and eventually sold to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, who finally agreed to return the object in 2011 after renewed pressure from the Turkish government; and the Boğazköy, or Hattusha, Sphinx, which was retained by the Pergamon Museum in Berlin in 1907, and only returned to Türkiye in 2011 following sustained efforts by the Turkish authorities (Haines 2012). Beyond landmark individual cases, much progress has also been made regarding wider attempts to repatriate any cultural material from abroad which has been identified as originating in Türkiye. In addition to the major market nations of the United States and the United Kingdom, the General Directorate of Cultural Assets and Museums has overseen the successful restitution of Turkish cultural heritage from nations as diverse as Australia, Austria, Croatia, Denmark, Hungary and the United Arab Emirates (GDCAM n.d.). More quantitatively, between 2003 and 2021, 4862 cultural objects have been returned to Türkiye, with a chronological range spanning from the Chalcolithic period to the Ottoman era (*Hurriyet Daily News* 2021).

#### **Anatolian figurines: Kiliya and Kusura**

It should be noted that while this study focuses on two classifications of marble figurine from Anatolian prehistory due to the high volumes with which they are traded on the international antiquities market, they in fact form part of a temporally broad and materially varied tradition of figurine making within Anatolia. The production of human representations in Anatolia has an extensive chronological history and begins in the Neolithic period (ca 10,000–5200 BC), with anthropomorphic and zoomorphic depictions rendered in clay and stone (Croucher, Belcher 2017: 443). The succeeding Chalcolithic period saw the continued manufacture of figurines and idols in clay, stone and marble, while metallurgical advances of the Bronze Age allowed for the adoption of a wider array of media, which incorporated the use of gold (Muscarella 2003: 279), silver (Zimmermann, Özen 2016) and copper (Atakuman 2017: 91). Before analysing the core Anatolian figurine sale data, it is necessary first to distinguish between the two central classifications of objects analysed within this study, Kiliya and Kusura. This is due to their aesthetic differences and the prices they generally fetch on the antiquities market, and in order to avoid producing a polarised data set which would provide an inaccurate perspective on practices in the commercial antiquity market.

Kiliya figurines (Fig. 1) are stylised figurines which date from the Chalcolithic period (ca 5500–3000 BC). These generally measure anywhere from 9–24cm in height, and were produced at the marble workshop of Kulaksızlar during the fifth millennium BC (Takaoglu

2002). They take their name from the village of Kilia on the Gallipoli Peninsula, where the first examples were uncovered by Frank Calvert in 1880 (Caskey 1972: 192). Kiliya figurines have a widespread geographical distribution throughout western Anatolia, including at Beşik-Yassitepe, Hanaytepe, Yortan, Selendi, Gavurtepe and Alaağaç (Düring 2011: 807). However, the majority come from surface finds and mixed deposits, and have only been uncovered from secure and undisturbed archaeological contexts at two sites thus far, Aphrodisias (Joukowsky 1982: 90) and Çine-Tepecik (Günel 2014: 91), both dating to the fifth millennium BC. This lack of secure stratigraphic information, coupled with the fact that those sold on the international antiquities market come without any archaeological provenance, has posed significant problems in establishing a firm chronology for these objects (Tuncel, Şahoğlu 2019: 253). Many Kiliya figurines were broken during prehistory, but there is uncertainty as to what extent

this was part of a ritual destruction, or simply a practical outcome of the fact that the neck is the thinnest and structurally weakest part of the figurine, and is therefore most prone to breakage. Irrespective of this ambiguity, both fully intact figurines and heads are sold on the antiquities market. Intact figurines are exceptionally rare, and can fetch anywhere from \$14,000 (Christie's 2009) to \$1.8 million (Christie's 2005) and even \$14.5 million, whilst headless or partially intact figurines are infrequently traded and generally do not exceed \$2,000. Heads, sold either individually or in groups, are far more common, and can normally fetch between a few hundred to a few thousand U.S. dollars.

Kusura figurines (Fig. 2), by contrast, are schematic figurines from the Early Bronze Age (ca 3000–2500 BC), with a size range generally of 13–22cm. They are named after the site of Kusura, where the first examples were excavated by Winifred Lamb in 1936 (Lamb 1937). Like



Figure 1. A Kiliya figurine (shared under Wikimedia Creative Commons Attribution Share-Alike 3.0 Licence. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anatolian\\_figurine\\_Kiliya\\_type\\_4000\\_BC\\_GM\\_080893.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anatolian_figurine_Kiliya_type_4000_BC_GM_080893.jpg)).



Figure 2. A Kusura figurine (shared under Wikimedia Creative Commons Attribution Share-Alike 3.0 Licence. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Schematic\\_female\\_figurine\\_of\\_the\\_Kusura\\_type\\_-\\_Athens\\_MCA\\_NG\\_961.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Schematic_female_figurine_of_the_Kusura_type_-_Athens_MCA_NG_961.jpg)).

Kiliya figurines, they also have a widespread geographical distribution throughout Anatolia, but are particularly common in the southwest, at sites such as Karahisar, Karataş-Semayük and Harmanören Cemetery (Takaoğlu 2011: 160). In addition to the Kusura variety, there are two other forms of schematic figurine from the Anatolian Early Bronze Age: figure-of-eight figurines and Beycesultan figurines. Figure-of-eight figurines, as the name suggests, resemble the numeral eight due to their rounded heads and bases with parallel indentations at the waist. They are common throughout Anatolia but are most notably present at Troy I-II (Blegen et al. 1950: 27). Beycesultan, or ‘violin’, figurines are characterised by their squat bodies, triangular arms and elongated necks. They are found throughout southwest Anatolia, and were first excavated at the mound of Beycesultan during the 1950s (Lloyd, Mellaart 1962: 269). There is also a transitional form of figurine which blends aesthetic elements of both the Kusura and Beycesultan varieties, although most examples surface within museums or on the international antiquities market, and come without any archaeological context (Tuncel, Şahoğlu 2019: 253).

It should be noted that the overwhelming majority of schematic Anatolian figurines are traded under the general terms of ‘Anatolian Idol’, ‘Kusura-type’ or ‘Beycesultan-Kusura’, irrespective of their actual typological classification. For the purposes of this study, all schematic Anatolian figurines will be analysed under the term ‘Kusura’, since Kusura figurines form the bulk of the traded material in any case. Kusura figurines are commonly traded on the international antiquities market in volumes which far outstrip those of Kiliya figurines. They are always traded as intact figurines, with the more diminutive examples often being traded in groups. Their price ranges typically stretch from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars, though larger examples can fetch in excess of \$100,000 (Christie’s 2011).

### **Kiliya figurine sales 1999–2022**

#### *The shifting of sales*

Between 1999 and 2022, an accumulated total of 22 Kiliya figurine sale lots were sold by Sotheby’s, Christies and Bonham’s. These sales are mapped out chronologically in Figure 3. An initial assessment of this sale data may seek to potentially impute the preventative impact of the Turkish government’s litigation efforts due to the general paucity of sales over this period, breaching two lots per year on only one occasion since 1999. However, once the commercial contexts are considered and the data is broken down into accumulated New York and London sales, and the figurine and head sales are separated, the picture alters significantly to align more with both established individual auction house practices and wider economic market realities.

Of the 22 Kiliya lots offered for sale between 1999 and 2022, 13 were heads and 9 were intact figurines. No intact Kiliya figurines were sold on the London market during this period, with all nine being sold via New York. A prospective market analysis may therefore attempt to correlate the lack of intact figurine sales via London with a more stringent market control environment being in operation there. This scenario could potentially be explained by the fact that while Turkish repatriation efforts were widespread throughout the United States and included museums in New York, Cleveland, Dallas and Los Angeles, the vast majority of their restitutional efforts within the United Kingdom were aimed at institutions within London, largely focusing on the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum. Yet, when the average price range for intact Kiliya figurines is considered, an alternative scenario emerges to explain the effect on the London market. As the mean price range for intact Kiliya figurines ranks in the millions (Fig. 4), these objects are more comparable with the nature of the New York market, where there is a greater chance that they will command a higher profit margin. The absence of intact Kiliya figurines sales in London is therefore far more likely to be explained by their economic incompatibility with the London market than by the enhanced scrutiny of the Turkish government on that market centre. As a result, their absence on the London market should not be interpreted as a demonstration of a more successful control environment operating in London as compared to New York.

Similarly, when examining the sale patterns of Kiliya heads, of the thirteen sold between 1999 and 2022, seven were sold via New York, with the remaining six being sold via London. As the mean price for a Kiliya head sale lot is greater on the New York market than on the London market, it is unsurprising that the majority of the Kiliya heads have been sold via New York (Fig. 4). From a business perspective, it would make better commercial sense to sell these objects in New York, where their sale values are more attuned to the economic realities of this market environment. Cumulatively, the directing of intact figurines via New York and the simultaneous prevalence of Kiliya heads in that market centre evidences a tailored effort by auction houses to shift sale lots to specific market locations in order to maximise sales and profits. Any prospective market analysis which does not take into consideration these prevalent commercial contexts and views one market centre in isolation (in this case London) may incorrectly infer a heightened or more successful control environment operating within that market environment. The specifics of how this dynamic plays out across and within individual auction houses is explored in more detail in the ‘Sweeping Up of Sales’ section below.

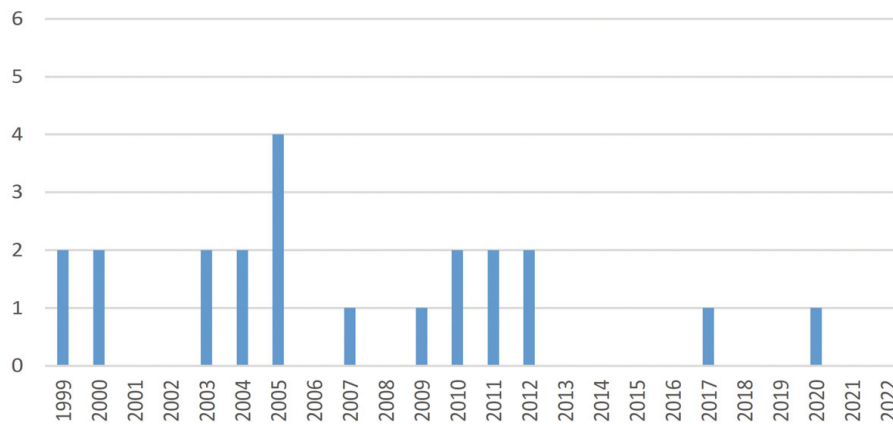


Figure 3. Accumulated Kiliya figurines sold 1999–2022.

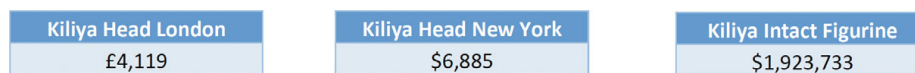


Figure 4. Mean Kiliya lot prices on London and New York markets.

#### Provenance standards

The provenances of the 22 Kiliya sale lots sold between 1999 and 2022 have been divided into two categories: Traceable or Pre-1970, and Non-Traceable or Post-1970. Traceable or Pre-1970 means that the provenance information provided either lists a pre-1970 date which satisfies the UNESCO 1970 Convention, or provides the name of a previous owner or gallery where the object was exhibited, who in theory could be traced and contacted in order to determine the date of acquisition and the inherent legalities. Non-Traceable or Post-1970 means that neither provenance information nor names of previous owners or exhibiting galleries have been provided, or it means that the initial date of acquisition is listed as occurring after 1970. Vague and imprecise appellations of this variety include ‘Private Collection, New York, acquired in the 1990s’ (Christie’s 2010) and ‘Acquired recently at an English country auction/house clearance’ (Bonham’s 2008). Of these 22 sale lots, 11 had a Traceable or Pre-1970 provenance, while 11 had a Non-Traceable or Post-1970 provenance. An initial observation is that half of the Kiliya lots sold over this time period are without any sound legal provenance, which naturally counters any notion that the restitutional efforts of the Turkish government have had a positive residual effect on provenance standards. These lots without any legally relevant provenance have an accumulated monetary value of \$197,819 on the New York market, £4,900 on the London market.

However, given that the other half of these sale lots were accompanied by a legally viable provenance, a

longer-term analysis may seek to optimistically conclude that this suggests the market in Kiliya figurines is gradually improving toward a more regulated state. Moreover, given the recent high-profile repatriations from New York to Türkiye (Voon 2022), it may also seem reasonable to infer that provenance standards will continue to improve as the investigative efforts of both the New York and Turkish authorities continue apace, with this data potentially indicating the emergence of a new and more ethical trend. Yet, once the provenance standards of Kiliya heads and Kiliya figurines are viewed separately, the picture again alters, and the data begins to support a scenario in which provenance standards are largely underpinned by economic motives.

Of the thirteen Kiliya heads sold, eight had a Non-Traceable or Post-1970 provenance, while only five had a Traceable or Pre-1970 provenance (Fig. 5). By comparison, of the nine Kiliya figurines sold, six had a Traceable or Pre-1970 provenance, whilst only three had a Non-Traceable or Post-1970 provenance (Fig. 6). The contrast in provenance standards between Kiliya heads and Kiliya figurines is telling, as these numbers are essentially the inverse of one another. When viewed alongside the respective mean price data shown above for Kiliya figurines and heads, this evidence adds further weight to the hypothesis outlined in relation to Cycladic figurines (Devlin 2022: 329–35), which is that improving provenance standards are primarily predicated upon commercial attempts to maximise sales and enhance profits, rather than an economically impartial desire to reform the market or

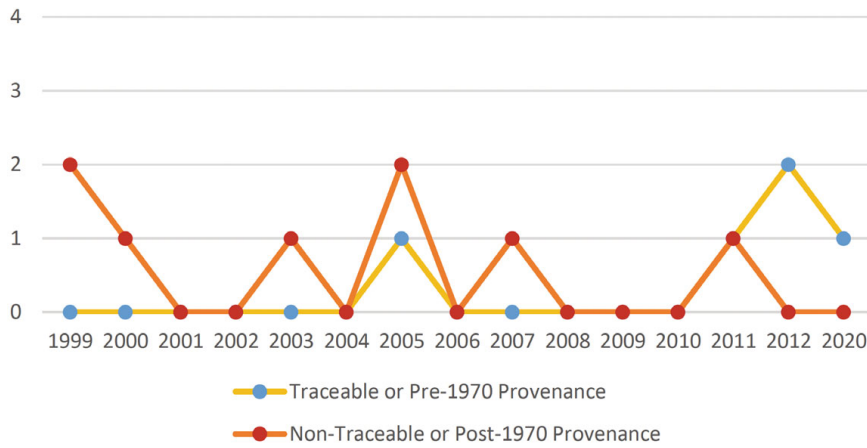


Figure 5. Kiliya head provenance 1999–2020.

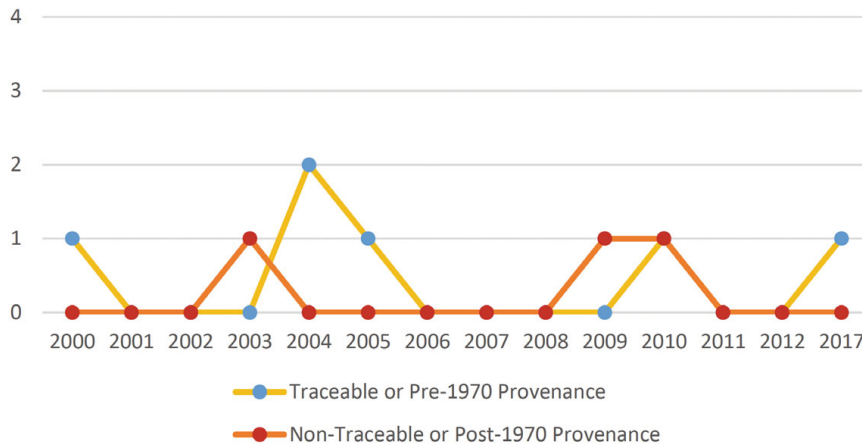


Figure 6. Kiliya figurine provenance 2000–2017.

adhere to hardening control measures. As with Cycladic figurines, if better standards of provenance were symptomatic of a desire to reform the market, then better provenance standards would be broadly discernible throughout the antiquity market data relating to Eastern Mediterranean prehistoric figurines, rather than being detectable only among the lots with higher average sale prices, or whose value could be enhanced by provenance which nominally satisfies salient legal criteria. Such a correlation dissuades from any notion that the repatriation efforts of the Turkish authorities are having a positive impact upon provenance standards, and highlights the methodological requirement to closely consider variations in ostensibly improving standard of provenance and the respective economic incentives which they entail.

*The sweeping up of sales*

As Sotheby’s high-end business model is largely compatible only with intact Kiliya figurines, a prospective market

analysis may therefore deduce that the limited activity of Sotheby’s in the Kiliya market would therefore mean reduced sales volumes in the overall accumulated sale lots for Kiliya objects. The market data may initially appear to support this theory, as Sotheby’s have only traded three Kiliya figurines to date, and have sold no Kiliya heads. All three figurines were sold via their New York office, with the two sold in 2004 having an accumulated monetary value of \$821,100, and the third being sold in 2010 for \$28,125.

However, simultaneous to Sotheby’s selective sale strategy are increased sale volumes via both Christie’s and Bonham’s. Christie’s New York sold 12 Kiliya lots between 1999 and 2017 (Fig. 7), comprising six figurines and six heads, whilst Christie’s London sold just one lot, a Kiliya head in 2011 for £11,250. Among Christie’s New York lots are two sales fetching the highest sums paid for Kiliya figurines to date: one figurine sold in 2005 for \$1,808,000, and the aforementioned Guennol Stargazer



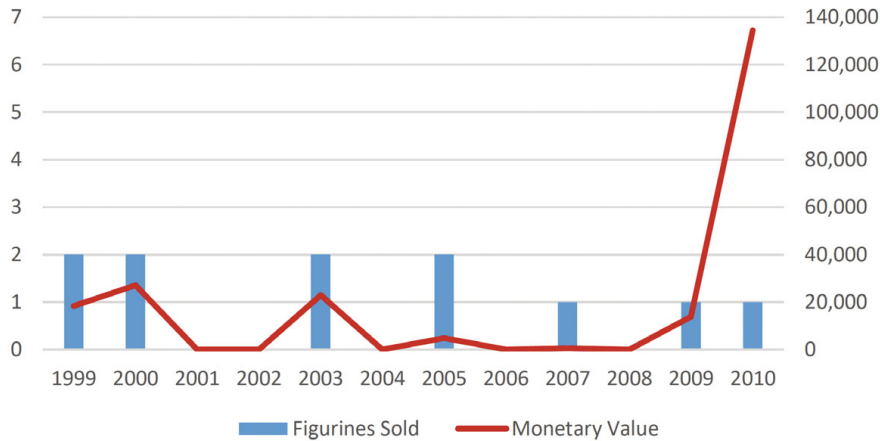


Figure 7. Christie's New York Kiliya sales 1999–2010. Not included in this graph are the \$1,808,000 Kiliya figurine sold in 2005 and the \$14,471,500 Kiliya figurine sold in 2017.

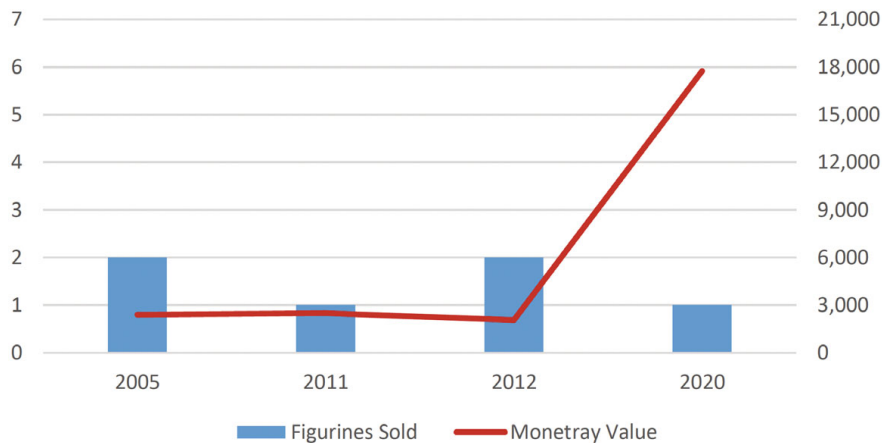


Figure 8. Bonham's Kiliya sales 2005–2020.

sold in 2017 for \$14,471,500. In contrast, Bonham's sold six Kiliya lots between 2005 and 2020, which were all heads (Fig. 8). The individual economic value of the Kiliya lots sold by Bonham's is heavily restricted, only surpassing £2,500 on one occasion, with the 2020 sale of a head for £17,750. The nature of this price data suggests that Bonham's are targeting the lower end of the Kiliya market, which is limited to heads.

Overall, the price data from these three auction houses corroborate a 'Sweeping Up of Sales' scenario, with Christie's sweeping up the head and figurine lots being overlooked by Sotheby's, and Bonham's sweeping up the low-value heads being overlooked by both Sotheby's and Christie's. This observation reiterates the importance of considering auction houses with both quantity-focused and quality-focused business models in tandem, and the

necessity of extending the analytical gaze across and beyond the duopoly of Sotheby's and Christie's. A prospective market analysis that does not include these latent economic considerations may seek to link the diminished sales by Sotheby's to the Turkish government's restitutorial policies, and moreover that the inactivity of Sotheby's reflects a trend across the market, when in reality Christie's are outperforming Sotheby's in high-end sales strategies, and Bonham's are sweeping up the lower-value lots.

### Kusura figurine sales 1999–2022

#### The shifting of sales

Between 1999 and 2022, an accumulated total of 99 Kusura figurine sale lots were sold by Sotheby's, Christies and Bonham's. The data presented here (Fig. 9) would

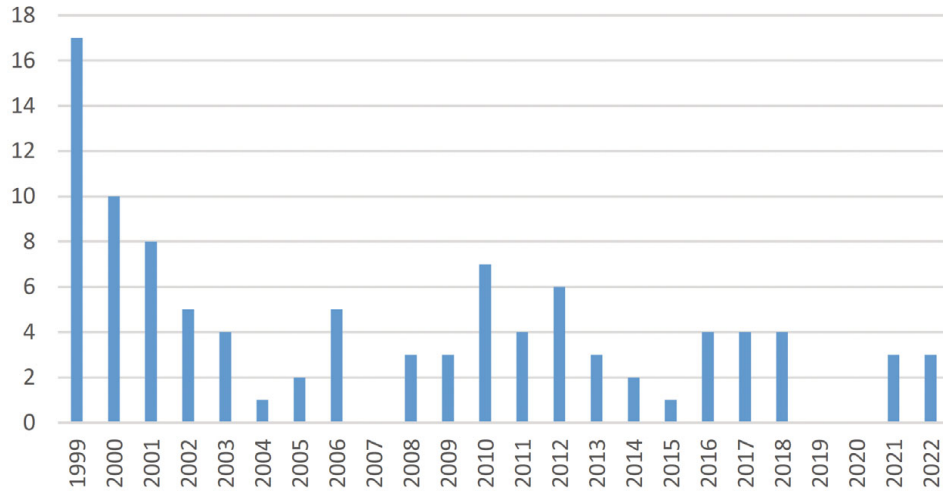


Figure 9. Accumulated Kusura figurines sold 1999–2022.

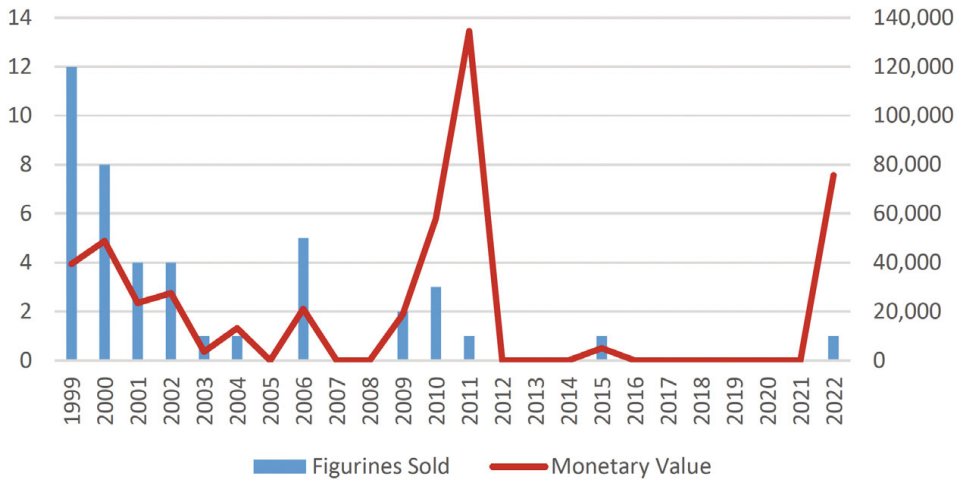


Figure 10. Accumulated New York Kusura sales 1999–2022.

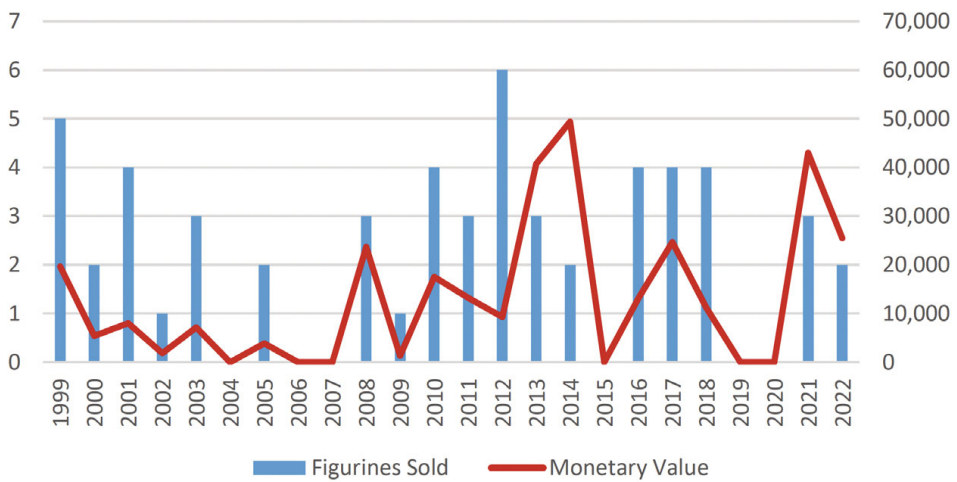


Figure 11. Accumulated London Kusura sales 1999–2022.

initially appear to support the theory that the restitution efforts of the Turkish government are positively affecting the market, showing that Kusura sales have generally decreased since 1999, dropping from 17 sales per year. Since 2001 sales have only breached six lots per year on one occasion. Yet, once the overall Kusura sale data presented above is broken down into accumulated New York and London sales, the perceived decrease in sales in fact occurs only on the New York market, beginning after 1999 (Fig. 10).

Matching these declining sales on the New York market is a concurrent rise in Kusura sales on the London market, which starts in 2008 (Fig. 11). New York has been shown in the Kiliya analysis above to be a sale environment orientated towards quality over quantity, commanding consistently higher average sales prices than the London market. This picture is also reflected in the mean price data for Kusura figurines, as the average price for a figurine in New York is \$10,789, whilst it is only £5,632 in London. Therefore, the apparent decrease in both accumulated sales and New York sales can instead be viewed as a ‘shifting’ of Kusura lots onto the London market after 2008, where their restricted economic value and quantitative nature are more compatible with the operative commercial realities of this market environment.

Broadly speaking, this data corroborates a ‘Shifting of Sales’ scenario rather than a reforming market. The shifting of Kusura lots to the more amenable London markets demonstrates that seeming decreases in overall sale volumes cannot be taken at face value, and reiterates that auction houses can shift lots in targeted and tailored drives towards maximising sales and thus profits. Coupled with the Kiliya data on the shifting of sales, this analysis shows the importance of considering both the New York and London branch offices of auction houses, and their inherent economic differences during any future market analysis which seeks to gauge the success of market control measures.

An additional point of note concerning the shifting of sales regards the Memorandum of Understanding signed between Türkiye and the United States of America on 19 January 2021. This bilateral agreement is designed to restrict the import of cultural material originating from Türkiye into the United States, and ‘*reduce the incentive for pillage of irreplaceable archaeological and ethnological material representing Turkey’s cultural heritage*’ (U.S. Department of State 2021). It is noteworthy that of the six Kusura lots sold since this legal mechanism came into force in 2021, five have been sold via London while only one has been sold via New York. Previous analysis on Cycladic figurines has shown an increase in sales in these objects on the London market *after* a similar MOU was

signed between the U.S. and Greece in 2010 (Devlin 2022: 323). An additional factor driving the shift of Kusura lots to London might be the increased activity from the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office towards investigating and repatriating illicitly sourced antiquities, which began in earnest around 2016. The investigations of prosecutors and their related court proceedings and rulings have been observed in the past to impact market behaviour (Beltrametti, Marrone 2016), and therefore it is not inconceivable that the New York prosecutors’ proactivity may be a contributory factor. While the predominance of Kusura figurines on the London market after the MOU between Türkiye and the U.S. may simply be the continuation of a previously established and economically motivated trend, there is nonetheless a recognised precedent of auction houses shifting sales lots to different market centres in direct response to hardening control measures in another. It will prove instructive to monitor this situation in the coming years, and to determine whether Kusura lots return to the New York market or if they remain largely restricted to London, where the legal obstacles are minimised.

#### *Provenance standards*

The 99 Kusura figurines sold between 1999 and 2022 have been categorised according to the same two central characteristics as the Kiliya figurines: Traceable or Pre-1970 and Non-Traceable or Post-1970. Of these 99 figurines, 34 had a Traceable or Pre-1970 provenance, while 65 had a Non-Traceable or Post-1970 provenance (Fig. 12). A primary observation is that the Kusura sale lots without any legally viable provenance number almost double those that do. Those with a Non-Traceable or Post-1970 provenance have an accumulated monetary value of \$151,969 on the New York market, and of £104,339 on the London market.

It is possible to read this data on Traceable or Pre-1970 provenance between 2011 and 2017 as an indicator of successful market regulation, since several prominent restitution cases such as the Boğazköy Sphinx, Weary Herakles and the Guennol Stargazer occurred during this period. However, an alternative reading of this data which is predicated upon economic imperatives, and which focusses on the general lack of concern for Traceable or Pre-1970 provenance consistently shown between 1999 and 2022, offers a more sceptical view. When the overall lack of Kusura provenance standards is viewed alongside the mean prices for Kusura figurines outlined above, and also their average provenance prices on the New York and London markets (Fig. 13), it can be reasonably concluded that there is a clear link between low average sale prices and low standards of provenance. In other words, since the economic value of a Kusura figurine is generally capped

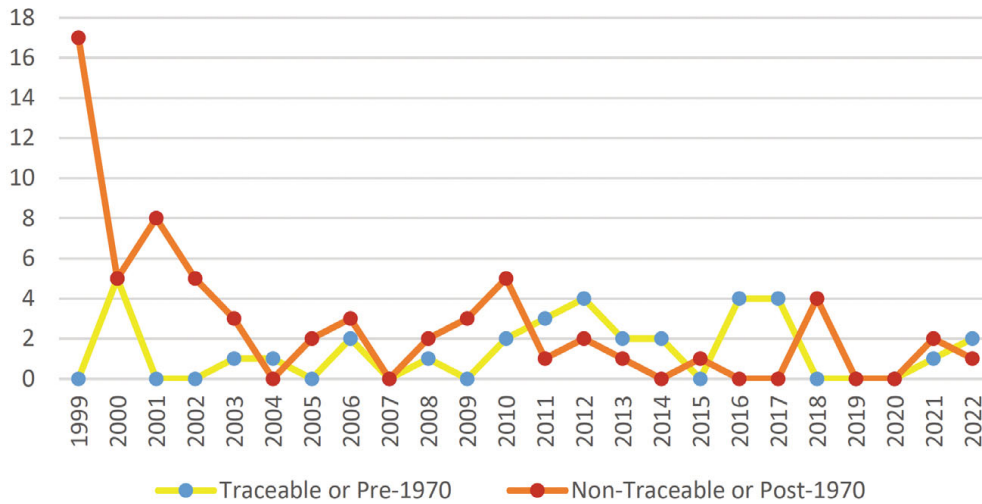


Figure 12. Accumulated Kusura provenance 1999–2022.

Traceable or Pre-1970	Non-Traceable or Post 1970
£7,204	£2,736
Traceable or Pre-1970	Non-Traceable or Post 1970
\$21,039	\$4,897

Figure 13. Average provenance prices for Kusura figurines on London and New York markets.

at around \$5,500, and very rarely breaches \$10,000, good provenance standards (i.e. those which satisfy salient legal criteria such as the 1970 UNESCO Convention) would only add a minimal amount to their sale value, if any.

From a business perspective, then, there would be no need to secure high standards of provenance, as their bearing upon price is negligible. There is also a reduced risk of litigation by the Turkish authorities regarding Kusura sales, due to their proliferation throughout the antiquities market and the legal impracticalities of pursuing them. The overall implication, then, must be that the economic incentives for good provenance do not exist in the same manner for Kusura figurines as for intact Kiliya figurines. This interpretation explains the poor adherence to provenance standards for Kusura figurines across the New York and London markets when compared with the provenance standards of intact Kiliya figurines. A near identical scenario was borne out in relation to Cycladic figurines, where diminutively sized or badly damaged figurine fragment lots maintained poor standards of provenance, while intact figurine lots consistently demonstrated provenance which satisfied the 1970 UNESCO Convention (Devlin 2022: 333).

*The sweeping up of sales*

Due to the low fees generally commanded by Kusura figurines, they are largely incompatible with Sotheby’s high-end business model. As a result, Sotheby’s did limited trade in the objects on the New York market between 2000 and 2022, selling only 13 figurines (Fig. 14). In the same period, they sold only three Kusura lots via their London office: a lot in 2014 for £5,625, and two lots in 2022 totalling £25,452. As with the Kiliya data presented above, it may initially appear reasonable to conclude that diminished sales of Kusura figurines by a market leader like Sotheby’s will mean reduced sales volumes in the overall accumulated Kusura sales statistics. However, rather than being evidence of the Turkish government’s repatriation efforts, when viewed alongside the contemporaneous Kusura sale statistics of Christie’s and Bonham’s, the picture again alters significantly to support another ‘Sweeping Up of Sales’ scenario.

Whilst the Christie’s New York sale data presented in Figure 15 does not show a drastic increase in sales to match Sotheby’s contemporaneous decline, they nonetheless sold 30 figurines between 1999 and 2022, outpacing Sotheby’s by 17 lots in the same period. Of particular note

are the 12 figurines sold by Christie’s in 1999, which have an accumulated economic value of just under \$40,000. The high-volume/low-value nature of Christie’s Kusura sales in 1999, coupled with the complete lack of Kusura sales by Sotheby’s in the same year, indicates the success of this model for Christie’s, as well as a reticence by Sotheby’s to enter the low-value end of the market.

A similar situation can be perceived on the London market. The Kusura sale data from the London office of Christie’s presented in Figure 16 would initially appear to contradict a ‘Sweeping Up of Sales’ scenario due to their generally low numbers. The Kusura lots sold by Christie’s London breach two lots per year on only three occasions, while only 21 lots were sold between 1999 and 2022. Yet,

once the investigative gaze is extended beyond the duopoly of Sotheby’s and Christie’s to include Bonham’s, the market situation in London broadly corroborates a ‘Sweeping Up of Sales’ dynamic.

Between 2005 and 2022, Bonham’s sold 32 Kusura figurines (Fig. 17). Over this same period, Christie’s London sold only six Kusura figurines. The chronological span of these respective sales suggest that Bonham’s are sweeping up the sales that both Sotheby’s and Christie’s are overlooking. This scenario is also supported by the price data, which shows that the accumulated yearly value of Bonham’s sales generally stays below £15,000 and has only breached this sum on two occasions: once in 2017 at £25,000, and in 2021 at £43,000. By contrast, the limited

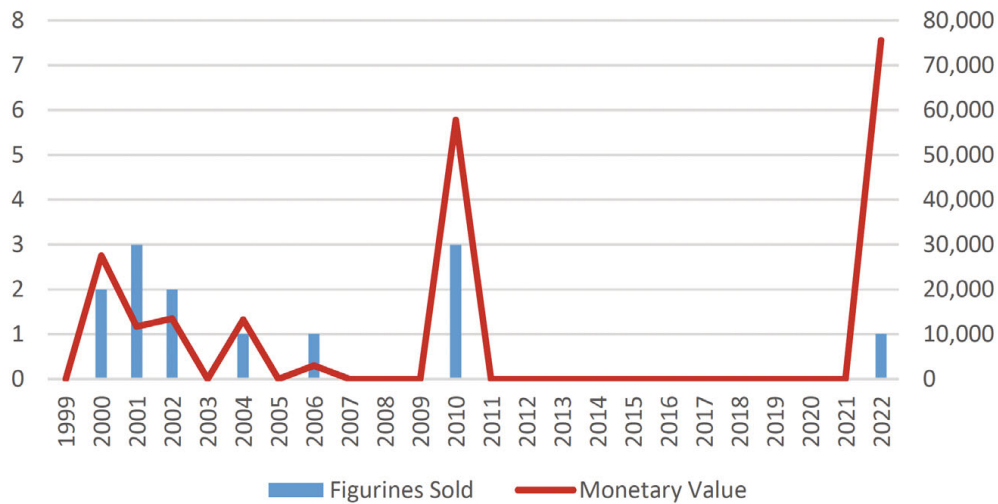


Figure 14. Sotheby’s New York Kusura sales 1999–2022.

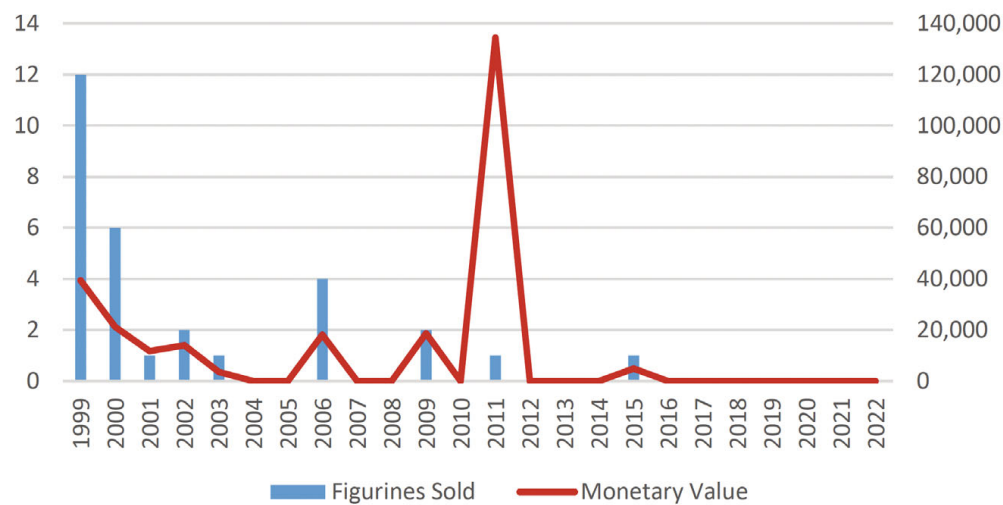


Figure 15. Christie’s New York Kusura sales 1999–2022.

Kusura sales output by Christie’s London shows a dynamic of higher profits for lower sale volumes, selling only one figurine in 2013 for £35,000, and a solitary figurine in 2014 for £43,750.

A cursory glance across the online sales data of smaller London auction houses reveals that schematic Kusura figurines are being offered for as little as £40, whilst several have been offered for under £100 that did not sell at all (Chiswick 2019). Indeed, between 2004 and 2012, Bonham’s offered eight Kusura figurine lots which failed to sell. The time, money and resources invested in each sale lot are not inconsiderable, and as such, a ‘no sale’ inflicts a real financial loss upon an auction house (Brodie, Manivet 2017: 6). The overall Kusura evidence discussed here shows that post-2000, London is *the* premier destina-

tion for Kusura sales, where the likelihood of a no sale is decreased, and the low average price ranges are more compatible with the London market. Methodologically speaking, this observation dictates that any future market analysis must incorporate auction houses with high-volume/low-value business models, paying special attention to the London markets. Failure to do so will result in an imbalanced focus on the high end of the commercial spectrum, and conclude that declining sales within the duopoly are reflective of broadly diminishing sale volumes when this is empirically not the case.

**The internet market**

With these considerations in mind, it is necessary to briefly analyse the internet market in Anatolian figurines as a

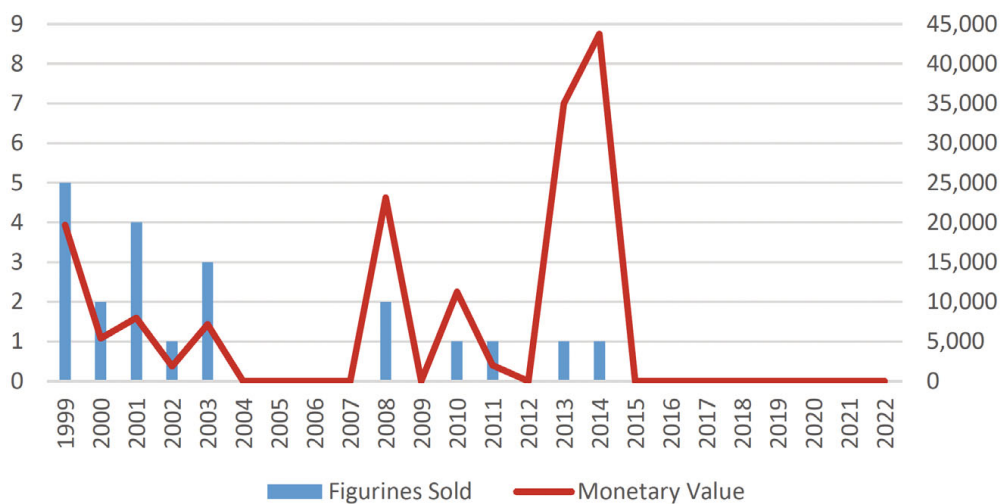


Figure 16. Christie’s Kusura London sales 1999–2022.

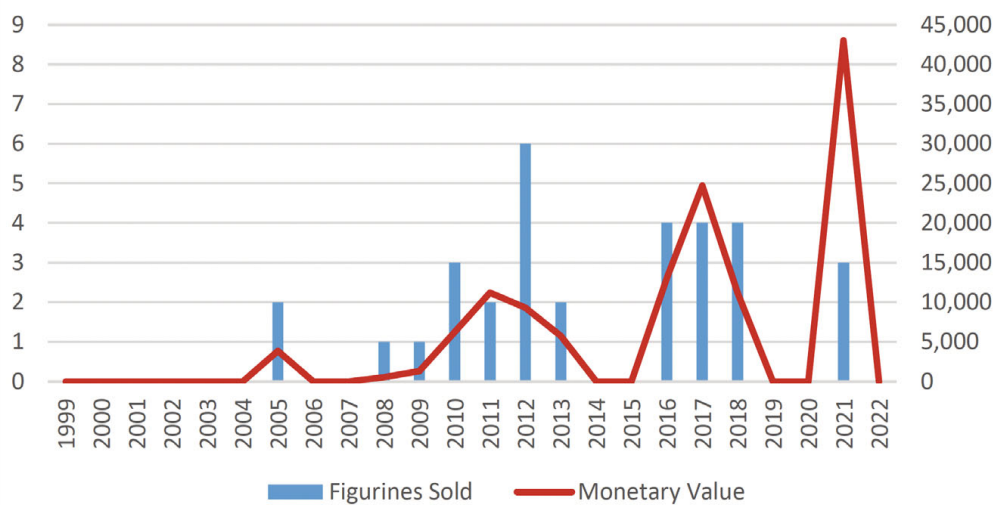


Figure 17. Bonham’s London Kusura sales 1999–2022.

supplementary dataset to the main data provided by the brick-and-mortar auction houses of the duopoly and Bonham's. This can provide a deeper insight into the realities of the high-volume/low-value business model and further refine perceptions of the sweeping up of sales dynamics. The internet market in cultural heritage has grown in recent decades in both scale and outreach to rival the traditional brick-and-mortar auction houses at the lower end of the market, and now accounts for a significant portion of the global trade in antiquities (Topçuoğlu, Vorderstrasse 2019). Through enabling private transactions where buyers residing in any part of the world can successfully bid online for antiquities, both individual merchants and smaller auction houses which maintain physical galleries can trade at a fraction of the costs incurred by the established auction houses located in cosmopolitan urban centres.

The economic plan of these enterprises is predicated upon a high-volume/low-value business model, and it should therefore be expected that these auction houses will sweep up the Anatolian figurine sale lots of an even lower economic value which are overlooked by Bonham's. It should also be expected that the quantity of these low-value sale lots will be higher than those traded by Bonham's. This online market is generally underpinned by a minimal and almost non-existent regard for provenance, while also being characterised by a prevalence of forgeries (Brodie 2017: 191). This data has been taken from the online auction platform *LiveAuctioneers*, which consolidates global sale statistics from online auction houses. Overall, between 2006 and 2022, a total of 61 Kiliya lots and 28 Kusura lots were sold across 15 auction houses registered in the U.S. and Britain. An initial point of note is that these numbers are the inverse of the numbers analysed above within the 'big three' of Christie's, Sotheby's and Bonham's, where 22 Kiliya lots and 99 Kusura figurine lots were traded. This points to a qualitative difference between the brick-and-mortar marketplace and the internet marketplace, which is explored further below.

#### *Internet Kiliya figurine sales 2006–2022*

Of the 61 Kiliya lots sold on the internet market, 56 were heads and 5 were partially intact figurines. Of these lots, 54 were traded by online auction houses registered in the U.S., while 7 were traded by online auction houses registered in Britain. A breakdown of their average prices

demonstrates the overall diminished economic nature of the internet market in Anatolian figurines, where the mean price of a Kiliya head is just \$228 and the mean price of a body is \$1095 on the American market, while on the British market the mean price for a head is £947 (Fig. 18).

As noted above, the mean price for a Kiliya head on the New York brick-and-mortar market is \$6885, while the mean price for a Kiliya head on the London brick-and-mortar market is £4119. The mean price of an intact Kiliya figurine on the New York brick-and-mortar market is \$1,923,733, while the internet market contains no intact figurine lots and has a comparatively paltry mean price of just \$1,095 for a damaged figurine lot. The reduced financial value of Kiliya heads and bodies on the internet market, when both viewed in isolation and compared with the average prices found within the duopoly and Bonham's, demonstrates that the internet market in Anatolian figurines is in fact focussed on the lower end of the market. This is supported by the average price ranges, along with the absence of intact figurines and the overwhelming predominance of heads. Additionally, this price data from the internet market reinforces the previously identified trend within the brick-and-mortar environment, which is that smaller auction houses will sweep up the lower-value lots overlooked by larger auction houses. In this case, these internet auction houses are focussing on the Anatolian figurine lots of such negligible financial value that they are even being overlooked by Bonham's, whose business plan is geared towards the lower end of the market, and which is the smallest of the big-three brick-and-mortar auction houses.

The chronological distribution of these sale lots and their accumulated financial value is also of note, and reiterates the qualitatively divergent natures of the internet and brick-and-mortar auction environments. There is a consistent output of Kiliya sale lots from 2013 through to 2022 across the American portion of the internet market (Fig. 19). While this shows uninterrupted volumes across a nine-year window, the annual monetary value of these sale lots never exceeds \$3000.

In the British segment of the internet market, a total of seven Kiliya lots were sold between 2013 and 2021, with the accumulated annual value never exceeding £3500 (Fig. 20). The previous analysis of the brick-and-mortar auction houses showed that London-based Bonham's were sweeping up the lower-value Kiliya head lots being over-

Kiliya Head America	Kiliya Body America	Kiliya Head London
\$228	\$1,095	£947

Figure 18. Average mean prices on the internet market for Kiliya head and bodies in America and heads in Britain.

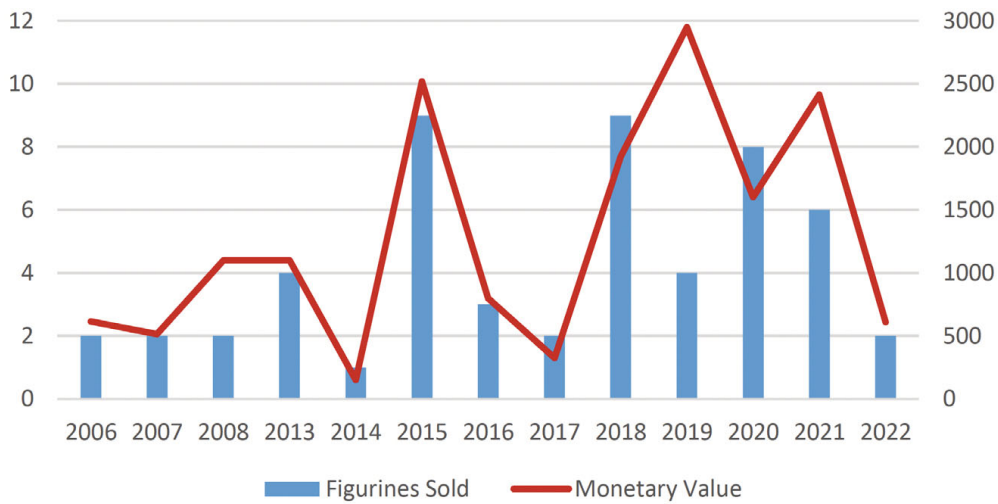


Figure 19. Kiliya sales on the internet market from U.S. auction houses: Aphrodite Gallery, Arte Anico, Revere Auctions, Artemis Gallery, Artemission, Ancient Resources Auctions, Palmyra Heritage Gallery, Hindman, Michael Malter, 2006–2022.

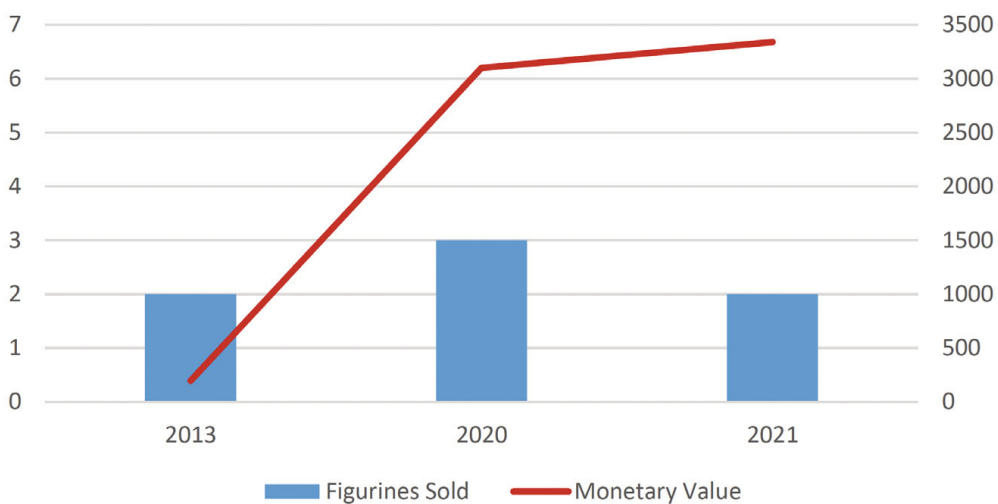


Figure 20. Kiliya sales on the internet market from British auction houses: Timeline Auctions and Lyon and Turnbull, 2013–2021.

looked by Sotheby’s. Here, the situation appears to be quantitatively reversed and geographically more diffuse, as the majority of head lots has been sold by online galleries spread throughout the U.S., with only a minority being sold by London-based internet vendors. This shows that the lower end of the internet market for Kiliya head lots is primarily based within the United States, and can be contrasted with the brick-and-mortar Kiliya head market, which is primarily concentrated in London. These patterns reinforce the methodological need to extend the investigative gaze across as geographically wide and economically varied a range of auction houses as possible, but also distinguish between the virtual and brick-and-

mortar sale environments. Indeed, there are many years where there are no Kiliya head sales across the duopoly and Bonham’s, yet sizeable amounts are contemporaneously traded on the internet market. In 2015 and 2018, no sales were recorded by the brick-and-mortar auction houses, yet nine head lots were sold in each of these years on the internet market.

However, the vastly different nature of the sale lots on the internet and brick-and-mortar markets should also be accounted for. Many of the Kiliya figurine head lots offered for sale on the internet market are nothing more than barely articulated lumps of marble, while others are so badly encrusted with an ostensibly ancient patina that



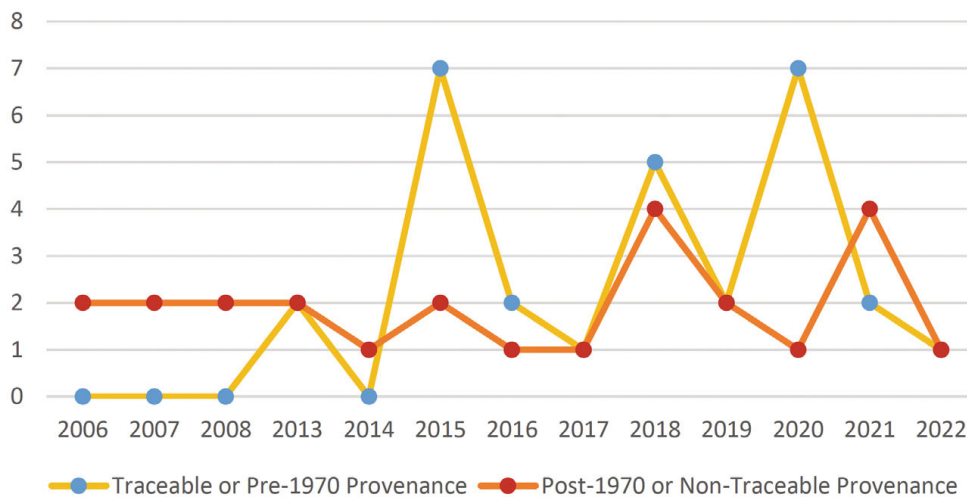


Figure 21. Figure 21: Kiliya provenance on the internet market from the U.S auction houses: Aphrodite Gallery, Arte Anico, Revere Auctions, Artemis Gallery, Artemission, Ancient Resources Auctions, Palmyra Heritage Gallery, Hindman, Michael Malter 2006–2022.

Traceable or Pre-1970	Non-Traceable or Post 1970
\$365	\$240

Figure 22. Mean prices for Traceable or Pre-1970 Provenance and Non-Traceable or Post 1970 for Kiliya lots on the American internet market.

they do not resemble in any way a Kiliya figurine head. The prevalence of fakes within the internet market is a widely known phenomenon (Fay 2011), and this has evidently driven down the average sale prices of Kiliya heads into the low hundreds. While provenance is normally drawn upon to guarantee the purported authenticity of an object, the nature of provenance on the internet market is of a practically different nature when compared with that of the brick-and-mortar market. Provenance on the internet market is largely vestigial and often amounts to nothing more than a slip of paper guaranteeing a refund if an object is proven to be fake. Given that the costs involved in the independent corroboration of an artefact, the majority of buyers on the internet market are unlikely to initiate a verification process (Brodie 2015: 15). In other cases, the provenance of artefacts on the internet market has been shown to be entirely contradictory, or to include incompatible paperwork, such as import documents showing the very recent transit of an object from a Middle Eastern country and collecting histories which state it originates from the European art market during the 1960s (Brodie 2017: 194).

An initial assessment of the provenance standards on the American internet market for Kiliya figurines would

appear to indicate generally favourable patterns, as 29 lots have a Traceable or Pre-1970 provenance while 25 have a Non-Traceable or Post-1970 provenance (Fig. 21). Yet, with the excessive numbers of forgeries and the low mean prices for Kiliya heads, it can be reasonably deduced that provenance on the internet market is largely concerned with guaranteeing a sale in the first instance, rather than with driving up price or dissuading attempts at repatriation from the Turkish government. This is reinforced by the mean prices predicated upon provenance, which shows a marginal difference between those of Traceable or Pre-1970 and Non-Traceable or Post-1970 provenance (Fig. 22). Provenance of *any* nature is likely to help finalise a sale, while the frequency of forgeries, low average price ranges and generally poor condition mean that it is highly unlikely that the Turkish government would pursue the restitution of these objects from the internet market.

#### Internet Kusura sales 2007–2022

The patterns borne out in the analysis of Kiliya sale lots on the internet market also hold true for the internet market in Kusura figurines. A total of 28 Kusura figurine lots were traded between 2007 and 2022, with a majority of 22 being traded on the American market while just 6 were traded on

the British market. The mean price for a Kusura sale lot on the American internet market is \$2012, while the mean price on the British internet market is £1265. This can be contrasted with the brick-and-mortar sale environments across the duopoly and Bonham’s already outlined above, where the mean price on the New York market is \$10,789 and on the London market is £5,632. This reiterates the reduced financial incentives at play within the virtual sale environment and its overall orientation towards the lower-value end of the market.

The distribution of these internet sales again highlights a geographical spread which can be contrasted with the brick-and-mortar market. While the Kusura brick-and-mortar market was primarily focussed on London due the diminished financial realities of that sale environment, the internet market for Kusura figurines is dominated by virtual galleries and auction houses registered across the United States (Fig. 23). The accumulated monetary value of these annual sales is generally capped at well below \$3500, barring the years 2019 and 2022, where seven Kusura lots were sold for a total of \$22,950 and three were sold for a total of \$13,500, respectively.

Similarly, the British-based element of the internet market shows comparatively diminished sales, where the six Kusura sale lots sold between 2016 and 2022 only once top £3000 in monetary value (Fig. 24). As the Kusura sale lots found within the brick-and-mortar environments of Christie’s and Bonham’s in London are shown above to regularly exceed £10,000, this evidence can be taken overall to support the notion that the internet market in Kusura figurines is predominantly concerned with the lower end of the market, and demonstrates a more specific dynamic where these internet vendors are sweeping up the Kusura sale lots of such low economic value that they are

being passed over by the brick-and-mortar auction houses of Bonham’s and Christie’s London.

The bearing of provenance within the internet Kusura market also appears to be of a similar nature to the Kiliya market, with broad parity between the two standards of provenance. On the American internet market for Kusura figurines, 14 lots had a Traceable or Pre-1970 provenance, while 8 had a Non-Traceable or Post-1970 provenance (Fig. 25). These broadly similar standards of provenance are matched by comparable mean prices, as the average price for a Kusura lot with Traceable or Pre-1970 provenance on the internet market is \$1137, while the average price for a Non-Traceable or Post-1970 provenance is \$806. As with Kiliya lots on the internet market, the diffusion of forgeries across the internet sale environment for Kusura lots is also a central consideration, which casts significant doubts over the authenticity of virtually all sale lots, and caps their monetary value at an average of around \$1000. Provenance within the Kusura internet market is therefore largely concerned with attempting to guarantee the primary sale of the object, rather than with driving up its price or preventing a restitution attempt by the Turkish authorities.

**Conclusion**

Given the nature of the evidence presented and discussed above, it can be concluded that the restitution efforts of the Turkish authorities regarding both the Guennol Stargazer and other cultural heritage removed from its territory have had no discernible preventative impact upon the sale rates of Anatolian figurines or standards in their provenance.

The analysis performed on Kusura and Kiliya figurines shows that the commercial practices of individual auction

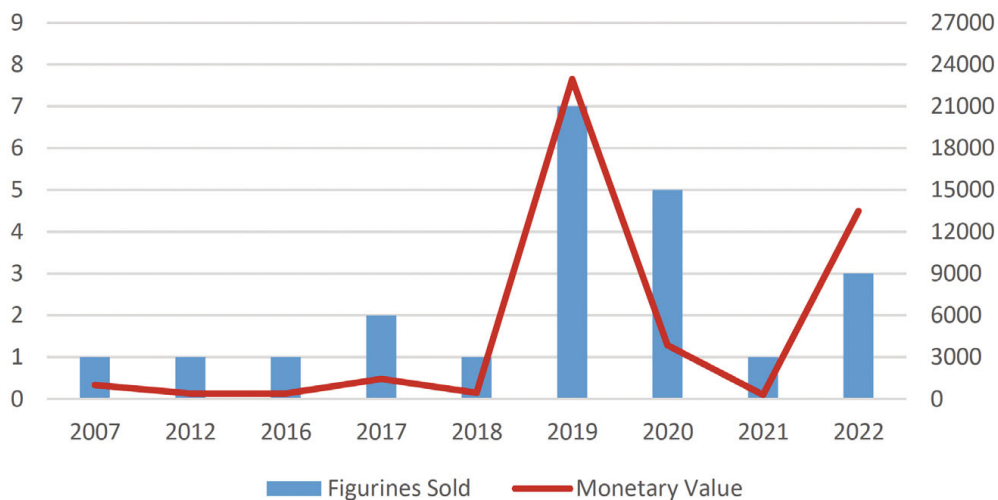


Figure 23. Kusura sales on the internet market from the U.S. auction houses: Artemis Gallery, Jasper52, Artemission, Ancient Resources, Hindman, Michael Malter, 2007–2022.

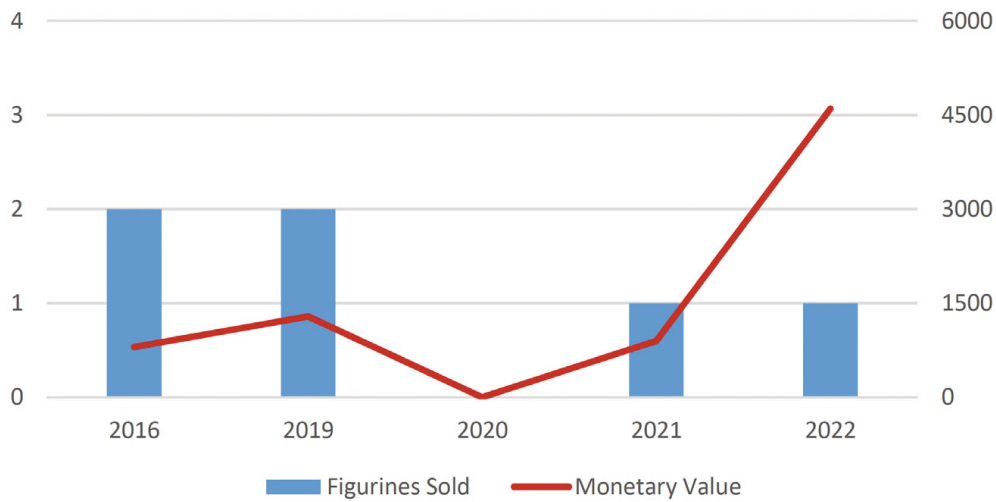


Figure 24. Kusura sales on the internet market from British auction houses: Apollo Art Auctions, Chiswick’s, Bertolami Fine Art, TimeLine Auctions and Lyon and Turnbull, 2016–2022.

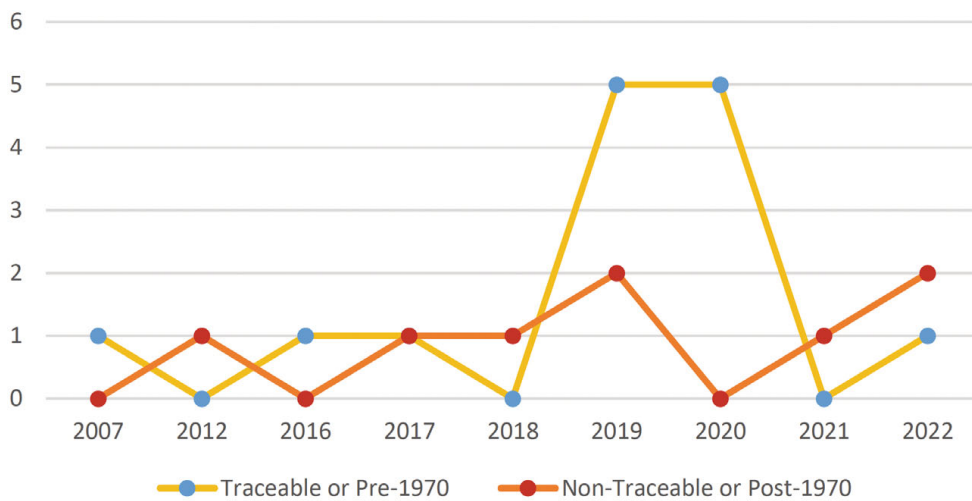


Figure 25. Kusura sales on the internet market from the U.S. auction houses: Artemis Gallery, Jasper52, Artemission, Ancient Resources, Hindman, Michael Malter, 2007–2022.

houses are the decisive factor in dictating the nature of antiquities market data. The three methodologies of ‘Shifting of Sales’, ‘Provenance Standards’ and ‘Sweeping Up of Sales’ which were previously applied to Cycladic figurines have been shown to also be applicable to Anatolian figurines. On the brick-and-mortar market, ‘Shifting of Sales’ demonstrated that the entirety of intact Kiliya figurines and the majority of Kiliya heads were sold via New York, where their higher average price ranges are far more amenable to that market centre. Meanwhile, the comparatively cheaper Kusura lots have been sold post-2000 predominantly via the London market, where their likelihood of sale is enhanced. Additionally, there is

evidence to suggest that since the 2021 MOU between Türkiye and the U.S., Anatolian figurine lots have been shifted to London due to the increased scrutiny on the New York market. ‘Provenance Standards’ shows that legally salient provenance is widely detectable among intact Kiliya figurines lots, but is far more variable among the comparatively inexpensive Kusura figurines and Kiliya head lots. Lastly, ‘Sweeping Up of Sales’ shows that rather than Sotheby’s general inactivity in the Anatolian figurine market resulting in overall reduced sale volumes, Christie’s are successfully competing in both quality and quantity on the Kiliya and Kusura markets, whilst Bonham’s are dominating the low-value markets.

On the internet market, which is replete with forgeries and diminutively sized and priced sale lots, the pattern of ‘Sweeping Up of Sales’ held, demonstrating that the virtual marketplace is sweeping up the low-value sale lots of both Kiliya and Kusura figurines being overlooked by Bonham’s. This high-volume/low-value internet market is concentrated in the U.S., and can be contrasted with the brick-and-mortar Kusura market, which is predominantly in London. The numbers on the internet are the inverse of the brick-and-mortar market, as the internet market contains a majority of Kiliya sale lots (almost wholly heads) and a minority of Kusura lots, while the brick-and-mortar market has a minority of Kiliya lots and a majority of Kusura lots. This points to the vastly different quality focussed on within each marketplace, which is underpinned by divergent economic and ethical realities. The internet market is where likely faked and meagrely priced Kiliya and Kusura lots will be purchased in high volumes by largely indifferent buyers, while the brick-and-mortar markets is where the rare, culturally significant and economically substantial sale lots will be bought under comparatively stringent legal scrutiny.

It has previously been accepted that the threat of litigation has acted as a general deterrent in the acquisition of looted Turkish antiquities (Acar, Kaylan 1990: 130). As the analysis conducted above contradicts this narrative, questions are naturally raised concerning what factor or combination of factors actually *will* deter looting. Firstly, regarding the antiquities market, there is evidence to suggest that the commercial business models of individual auction houses are continuing to adapt and evolve in order to maximise profits, in a manner which diverges from those uncovered within this study. Both Sotheby’s and Christie’s are looking to shift their business models towards the middle market, balancing quality and quantity in their sales output (Gerlis 2016). Regarding quality, Christie’s have sold three of the most expensive Kusura lots to date, including one figurine in New York for \$134,500, and the two figurines mentioned above which sold in London for £35,000 in 2013 and £43,750 in 2014. These sales, coupled with the fact that Christie’s also sold two out of the four Cycladic figurines which have sold for

over \$1 million (Devlin 2022: 328), would appear to suggest that they have been more successful than Sotheby’s at implementing a high-end business strategy. Future market studies will need to be mindful of these emergent commercial trends and their bearing on the data, and to remain sceptical that any perceived decreases in sales are the outcomes of successful market control measures.

Secondly, there has been a recent surge in activity by the Manhattan District Attorney’s office, which has targeted an array of prominent institutions, auction houses, dealers and collectors which were previously beyond the reach of the law due to nominal adherence to national and international antiquities legislation. These raids and subsequent seizures have resulted in numerous substantial repatriations to Türkiye, including 28 antiquities valued at \$4.6 million in January 2022 (Manhattan District Attorney’s Office 2022) and 12 items in March 2023 valued at over \$33 million (Manhattan District Attorney’s Office 2023). Fourteen of the objects returned in 2022 were from the private collection of the aforementioned Michael Steinhardt, including an Anatolian terracotta idol valued at \$50,000 and an Anatolian limestone idol valued at \$50,000, while nine of the objects returned in 2023 were recovered from the private collection of Shelby White, trustee of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and include an intact Kiliya figurine. Such precedents offer hope that looted cultural heritage can be successfully repatriated to their countries of origin, regardless of their secretive distribution and long residencies in the private collections of high-profile individuals, or the convoluted legal mechanisms put in place to prevent their return.

With output across these three areas: sustained repatriation efforts by Turkish authorities, proactive district attorneys in major global market centres like New York, and a continued production of market studies which maintain a sceptical stance regarding the correlation between diminishing sales and notions of a reforming market, there is a realistic prospect that the space within which the flagrant international trade in illicitly sourced antiquities originating from Türkiye can be minimised, and hopefully over time, eradicated once and for all.

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