

THE CHESS AUCTION CATALOG PROJECT: A RESOURCE FOR CHESS COLLECTORS



***Jon Crumiller
CCI Meeting
St. Louis, MO
Sept 10, 2011***

Quick Introduction



Jon Crumiller

Princeton, New Jersey USA

Tournament player since 1972

Chess collector since 2002

***My collection is
online at
www.chessantique.com***

My collection focuses on antique / antiquarian chess items:



Sets

Boards



Timers

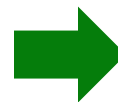
Books



...etc.

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My typical day starts like this.



email

Hi Jon,

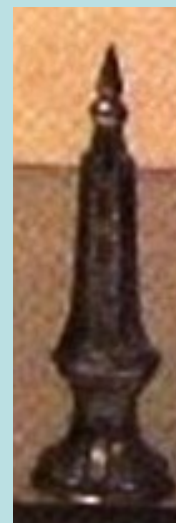
I have a chess set made of metal, it looks like medieval people and it is stamped 800 on the bottom. Attached are some photos. The tallest piece is a little more than 3 inches tall. Do you have any idea what kind of set it is, or its value?

Thanks

Esther [REDACTED]



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Kings

Queens

Bishops

Rooks

Pawns

- 112 AN AUSTRIAN ESHOLZ 'COSSACKS VERSUS TEUTONS' SILVER AND SILVER-GILT SET, bearing an 800 Hallmark, *the king 31/4 inches high, the pawn 11/2 inches high.*

See Christie's South Kensington *Chess*, 27th September 1995, Lot 106.

Provenance: *The Laurence I. Wood Collection.*
\$900-1,000



Hi Esther, it looks like an Austrian Esholz "Cossacks vs Teutons" set. A similar (or identical) set was sold in a Phillips 1996-Nov-06 auction, lot 112. Attached is a photo of the catalog pages from that auction. That set sold for £1216 (British Pounds) hammer price + buyer's premium. At the time that was worth \$2000, so that same amount (taking inflation into account) would now be worth \$2801.

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Here are some other types of questions that you may have asked yourself.

- Haven't I seen this same Napoleon-themed carved wooden set somewhere before?
- Have the so-called "Spanish" Pulpit sets risen in value? What's their overall trend? What about other types of sets?
- What are the relative price ranges of Jaques ivory sets – 11cm, 10cm, 9cm, 8cm?
- A chess set by John Calvert, the Victorian chess manufacturer and retailer, is up for auction. How rare or common is this style of Calvert set? How many have been sold in the past?
- I know I've seen another set with that same type of bishop, but where and when?
- I'm thinking of bidding on a set. Has this particular set ever shown up in prior auctions?
- These Chinese sets are usually stained red, not green. Are there other green Chinese sets?
- I'm sure I've seen an unusual ivory Soviet Propaganda set before – but not the usual porcelain. It was definitely ivory. Where and when did I see it?



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It's been almost impossible to remember what, when, how much...



...until now.

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A step-by-step explanation of how the project came to life:

1

Acquire as many chess auction catalogs as possible, using the “three-B” technique:

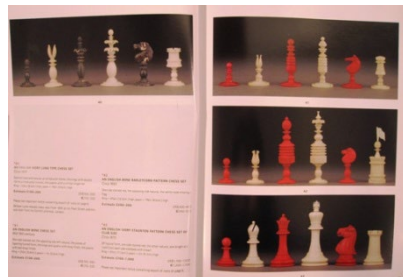
Buy, Beg, Borrow



137 catalogs

2

Photograph or scan all catalog pages that have chess auction lots.



3

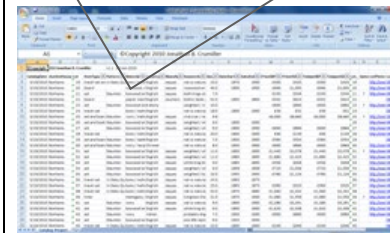
Consolidate the information into a database, with chess auction lots, photographs, exchange rates, and inflation rates.



4

Create a spreadsheet that chess collectors can use to find auction lots.

ItemType	Pattern	Material
travel-set and	In Statu Qu	bone / ma
board		rosewood
set	Staunton	boxwood



The Chess Auction Catalog Project

CatalogProject [Compatibility Mode] - Microsoft Excel

Home Insert Page Layout Formulas Data Review View Developer

Clipboard Font Alignment Number Styles Cells Editing

A10384

Chess-Related Auction Lots ©Copyright 2011 Jonathan B. Crumiller v2.1 13-Apr-2011

CatalogDate	AuctionHouse	Lot	ItemType	Pattern	Material	Country	Manufa	Keywords	Size	DateSta	DateEnc	PriceGBP	PriceUSD	TodaySGE	TodayUSD	Lot	Sal	LotPhc	LotTr
17-Jan-2011	Bonhams	22	set		bone	English	Jaques	"No. 20" set	9.5	1875	1885	-	-	-	-	22			http://www
17-Jan-2011	Bonhams	23	set and	Staunton	boxwood, el	English	Jaques	white king	9.0	1860	1862	£660	\$1,047	£660	\$1,047	23	Y	http://www	http://www
17-Jan-2011	Bonhams	25	timer	Congress	wood-maho	English	Jaques	Congress	31.0	1895	1905	£1,440	\$2,284	£1,440	\$2,284	25		http://www	http://www
17-Jan-2011	Bonhams	26	set	Staunton	boxwood ar	English	Jaques	weighted /	9.0	1800	1900	£384	\$609	£384	\$609	26	Y	http://www	http://www
17-Jan-2011	Bonhams	27	travel-set		mahogany, l	English	Hamleys	mahogany	15.0	1905	1915	£240	\$381	£240	\$381	27		http://www	http://www
17-Jan-2011	Bonhams	28	travel-set	[Chinese]	ivory, wood	Chinese		Cantonese /	3.5	1800	1900	-	-	-	-	28		http://www	http://www
17-Jan-2011	Bonhams	29	sets and	Staunton	boxwood ar	English		weighted /	9.0	1830	1900	£60	\$95	£60	\$95	29		http://www	http://www
17-Jan-2011	Bonhams	30	set	Staunton	boxwood ar	English	Jaques	weighted /	9.2	1910	1915	£600	\$952	£600	\$952	30	Y	http://www	http://www
17-Jan-2011	Bonhams	31	travel-set		bone, maho,	English		whaler's	20.0	1800	1900	£1,080	\$1,713	£1,080	\$1,713	31	Y	http://www	http://www
17-Jan-2011	Bonhams	32	set	Staunton	boxwood ar	English	Jaques	weighted /	9.0	1800	1900	£1,200	\$1,904	£1,200	\$1,904	32	Y	http://www	http://www
17-Jan-2011	Bonhams	33	set	Staunton	boxwood ar	English		weighted /	11.3	1830	1900	-	-	-	-	33	Y	http://www	http://www
17-Jan-2011	Bonhams	34	pieces	Staunton	ivory	English	[Asprey?]	ivory	8.5	1895	1905	£960	\$1,523	£960	\$1,523	34	Y	http://www	http://www
17-Jan-2011	Bonhams	35	sets	Staunton	boxwood ar	[English]		in the	10.0			£264	\$419	£264	\$419	35	Y	http://www	http://www
17-Jan-2011	Bonhams	36	set	Staunton	boxwood ar	English	Jaques	weighted /	9.0	1865	1870	£960	\$1,523	£960	\$1,523	36	Y	http://www	http://www
17-Jan-2011	Bonhams	37	set and	Staunton	boxwood ar	English	Jaques	weighted /	9.2	1900	2000	£540	\$857	£540	\$857	37	Y	http://www	http://www
17-Jan-2011	Bonhams	38	travel-set	In Statu Qu	bone, maho,	English	Jaques	pegged bone	23.5	1880	1890	-	-	-	-	38	Y	http://www	http://www
17-Jan-2011	Bonhams	39	set	Staunton	boxwood ar	English	Jaques	in	9.0	1855	1855	£1,920	\$3,046	£1,920	\$3,046	39	Y	http://www	http://www
17-Jan-2011	Bonhams	40	set	Staunton	boxwood ar	English	Jaques	unweighted	6.0	1860	1865	£240	\$381	£240	\$381	40		http://www	http://www
17-Jan-2011	Bonhams	41	set and	St. George	boxwood ar	English		with wooden	10.0	1855	1865	£420	\$666	£420	\$666	41		http://www	http://www
17-Jan-2011	Bonhams	42	set	Barleycorn	bone	English		red vs	11.0	1845	1855	£600	\$952	£600	\$952	42	Y	http://www	http://www
17-Jan-2011	Bonhams	43	sets	St. George	boxwood ar	English		2nd: St.	7.5	1855	1865	£360	\$571	£360	\$571	43		http://www	http://www
17-Jan-2011	Bonhams	44	set and	English	ivory	English		red vs	9.5	1800	1900	£420	\$666	£420	\$666	44	Y	http://www	http://www
17-Jan-2011	Bonhams	45	set	Barleycorn	bone	English		red vs	10.0	1845	1855	£36	\$57	£36	\$57	45		http://www	http://www
17-Jan-2011	Bonhams	46	set	[St. George]	boxwood ar	English		"Old English	9.0	1845	1855	£132	\$209	£132	\$209	46	Y	http://www	http://www
17-Jan-2011	Bonhams	47	set	St. George	rosewood a	English		nicely	9.5	1800	1900	£384	\$609	£384	\$609	47	Y	http://www	http://www
17-Jan-2011	Bonhams	48	set	St. George	boxwood ar	English		kings with	7.0	1875	1875	-	-	-	-	48	Y	http://www	http://www

Ready CatalogProject 100%

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FUN FACTS

What are the top 5 chess set patterns in the auction catalogs?



#1 Staunton



#2 Chinese



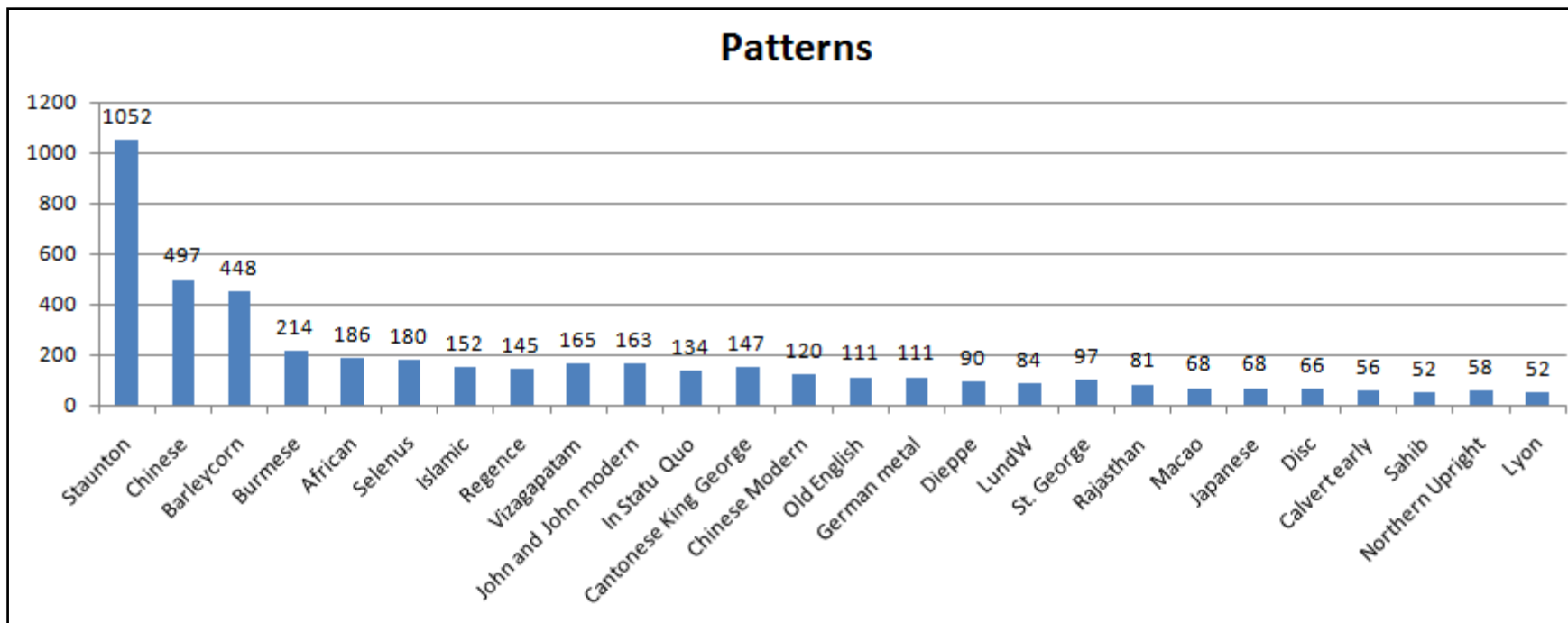
#3 Barleycorn



#4 "Burmese"



#5 African



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FUN FACTS

Who are the top 5 chess manufacturers in the auction catalogs?

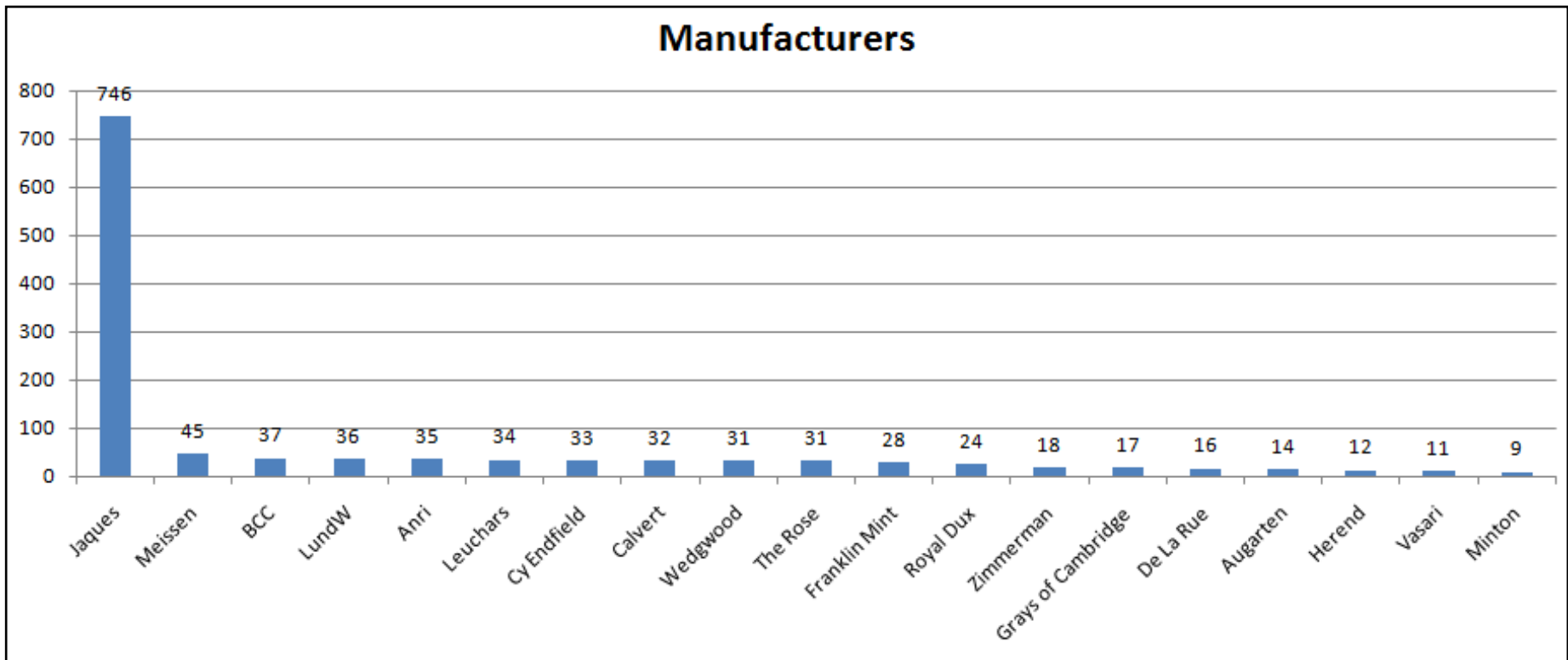
Jaques
#1

Meissen
#2

BCC
#3

W. Lund
#4

Anri
#5



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FUN FACTS

What are the top 5 materials (in the catalogs) used to make chess sets?

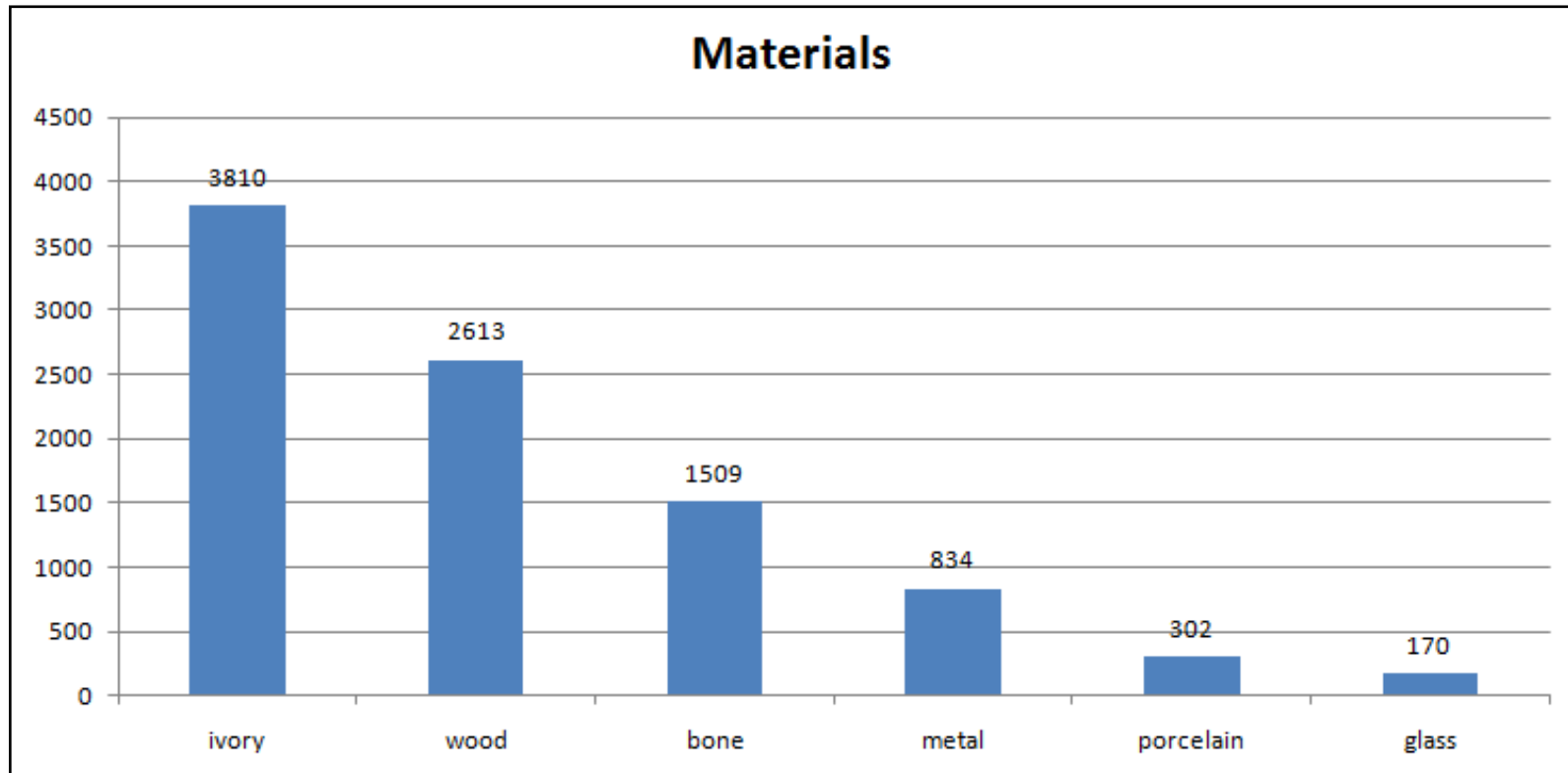
ivory
#1

wood
#2

bone
#3

metal
#4

porcelain
#5



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FUN FACTS

What are the top 5 chess manufacturing countries in the catalogs?

England

#1

India

#2

China

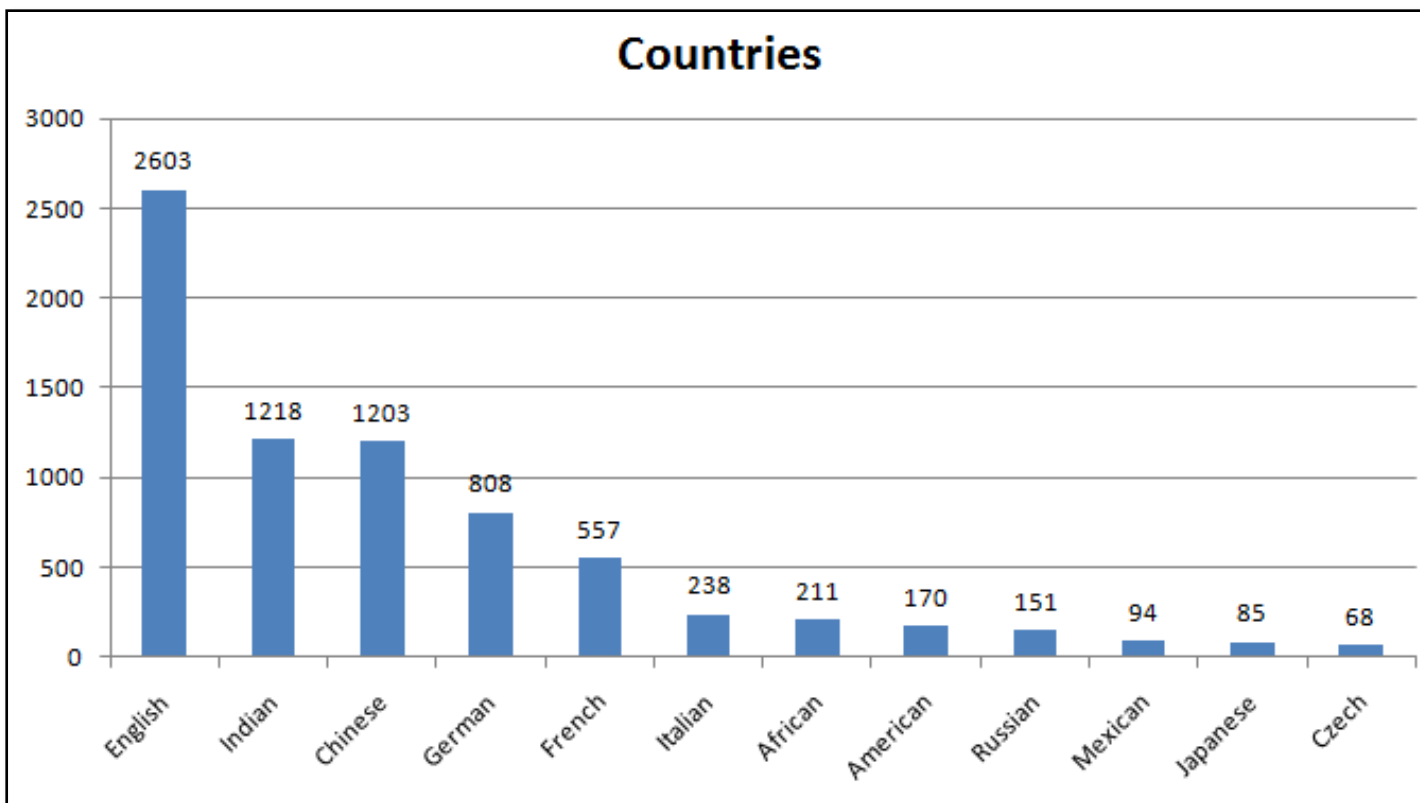
#3

Germany

#4

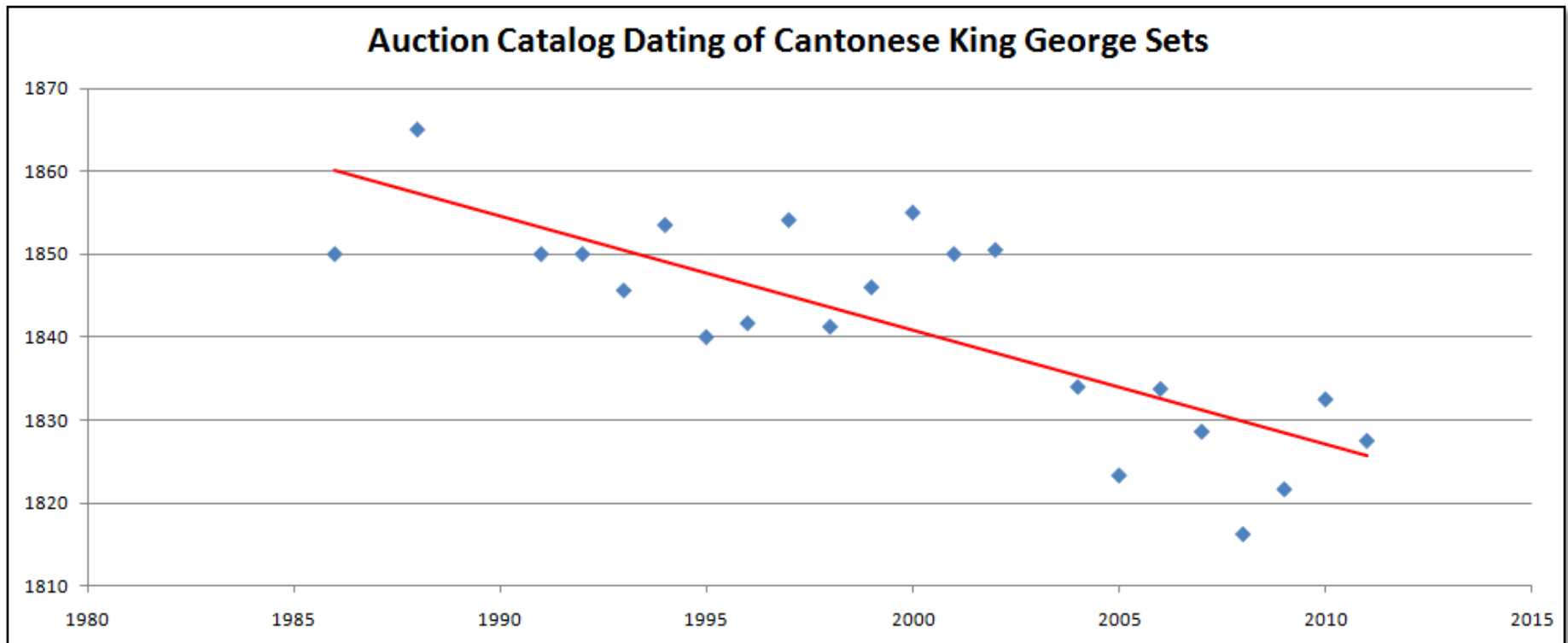
France

#5



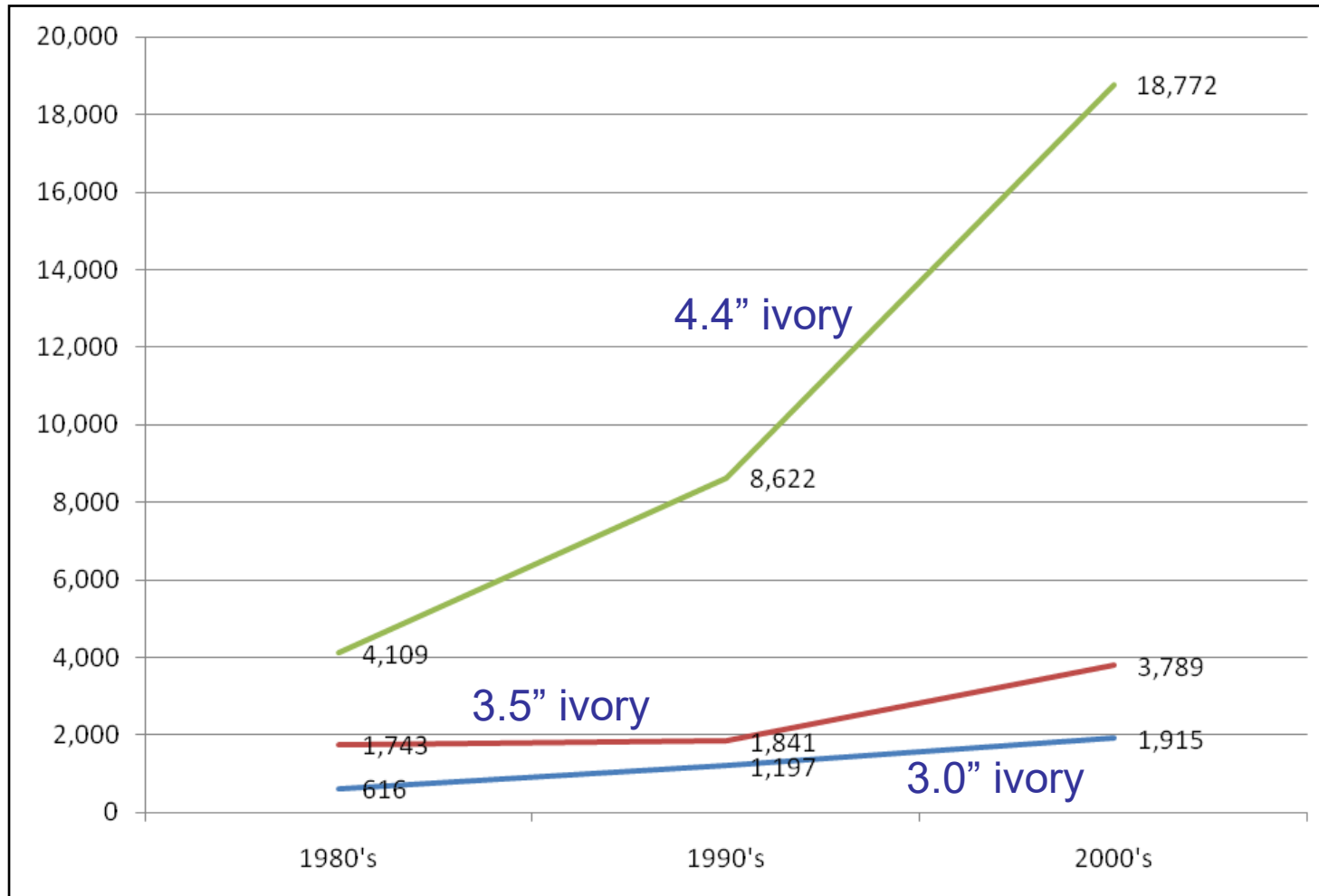
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Interesting trends can be determined as well. For instance, the dating of Cantonese “King George” pattern sets in the auction catalogs has gradually changed over time.



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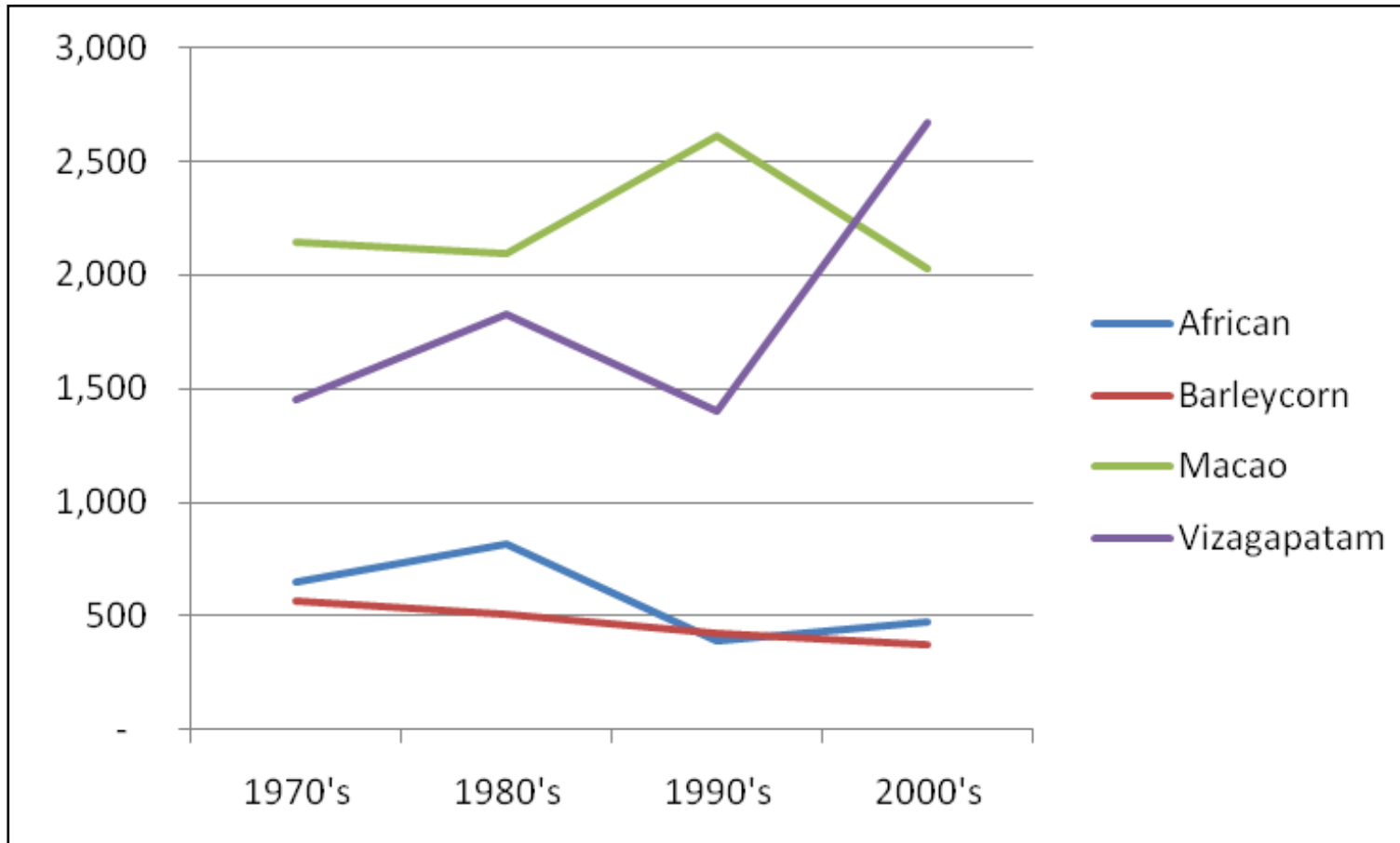
It is also possible to compute the value of Jaques ivory sets over time.



Values are given in today's GBP based on inflation rates

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...As well as other types of sets.



Values are given in today's GBP based on inflation rates

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“How can I get access to the Auction Catalog Spreadsheet?”

You may download the spreadsheet, and use it for your own chess collecting purposes, from the following web folder:

www.chessreference.com/Projects

File	Description
CatalogProject.xls	This is the catalog spreadsheet that I’ve demonstrated today, in Microsoft Excel format.
CatalogProjectInstructions.pdf	This is the instruction manual for the Catalog Project spreadsheet, in PDF format.
LatestVersion.txt	As chess auctions occur, I will continue to make updates to the Catalog spreadsheet. If you aren’t sure whether you have the latest version of the spreadsheet, just click on this file and compare its version number with the version number on your Catalog spreadsheet.

The Chess Auction Catalog Project

Thanks to the following people who contributed one or more catalogs for the Auction Catalog Project:

Peter Armit

Alan Fersht

Keith Middleton

Mick Deasey

Billy and Hope Levene

Floyd and Bernice Sarisohn

Ole Drønen

Michael Mark

(I hope I remembered everyone)

This project took a lot of time and effort, so attribution is appreciated.

Thank you for your time and attention today. I hope the auction catalog spreadsheet will prove to be as helpful a resource to you and other chess collectors as it is for me. Happy Collecting!



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