

# Archeological Mystery

## [Ancient Babylonian Clay Tablet Confounds Experts](#)

A. Xaoh 3:00 PM ET April 1

An Iraqi soldier searching a bomb crater on Thursday in the northern town of Nodlebmiw discovered a 5,000-year-old clay tablet that has mystified experts. Ali Jwad was searching for his wristwatch lost in an explosion when he stumbled upon the find. He was prevented by authorities from selling the antiquity on eBay. "I am a soldier," Jwad protested. "I need to know what time it is." By Iraqi law, the tablet remains in his possession.



"It is unlike anything that we have seen," declared an excited director of the

Baghdad Museum. "We are fairly certain that the tablet contains information for some sort of religious ceremony." The numbers 15, 30 and 40 in cuneiform script are clearly visible at both the top and the bottom of the tablet, causing experts to guess at their meaning. A diagram of a subdivided rectangle and small spherical shapes both inside and out have added to the mystery.

Samuel Nehardea, a custodian at the Baghdad Museum, has his own theory about the tablet. "It is some kind of game, I am sure." Experts asked about Mr Nehardea's theory scoff loudly at the notion. According to one expert who prefers not to be identified in this article, "The ancient Babylonians had no notion of zero. How could any game even begin?"

Meanwhile, Jwad retains the valuable tablet that he cannot sell. When a reporter asked what he will do with it, Jwad replied, "I see you have a watch. Is it a good one?"