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Cover: ancient Egyptian Shabaka Stone, currently held in the British Museum.
Return of the Icons
The Restitution of African Artefacts & Human Remains Project

Mapping a Community of Practice

1. Executive Summary and Key Recommendations

This report sets out the findings of research undertaken by AFFORD from January to May 2020 to map communities of practice in the UK in relation to the restitution of stolen African artefacts and human remains in UK museums and cultural institutions.

184 diaspora community members responded to an online survey, as well as via three online focus group discussions. 22 semi-structured interviews were completed with museum professionals, diaspora professionals, and African government stakeholders active in this area.

The research findings indicate several examples of good practice within UK institutions and among diaspora communities.

Diaspora respondents were overwhelmingly (approximately 80% of all respondents) in favour of the return of stolen African artefacts and human remains to their countries and communities of origin.

Other key findings of the mapping research include:

I. Four main pathways for return –
   a. changes in the law through Parliament
   b. legal test cases
   c. voluntary return agreements
   d. and other forms of return (revolving or long-term loans, etc)

   These options are informing and influencing future advocacy and campaign strategies.

II. Processes for return of human remains are far better developed, and models of good practice are already in use for return of human remains that could and should be extended to stolen artefacts.

III. All museum staff interviewed stressed the need for their institutions to deal with remains and artefacts with dignity. All museum staff interviewed so far stated that they support the decolonisation agenda.

IV. There is a gap (gulf even?) in perception between some museum professionals and the general public on the one hand, who have no experience of being dispossessed of artefacts, and diaspora communities for whom this has formed, and continues to form, part of their lived experiences. Addressing this gap will be important in designing communications and advocacy campaigns.

V. Black, other ethnic minority and decolonisation networks and working groups already exist in most museums and institutions.
VI. Concern about the capacity of African national museums to maintain and conserve the collections is expressed, even by Black and other ethnic minority members. On this point there was much more confidence in continental private museums and galleries by those members who had experience of African institutions. Interesting public, private partnerships were suggested.

VII. The number of formal requests to museums for return of objects is quite limited – some institutions have had very few, if any requests.

VIII. Black and other ethnic minority professionals were keen on supporting museums and cultural institutions in African countries in a voluntary or paid capacity.

Based on these findings, AFFORD proposes the following recommendations to different stakeholders to strengthen work in this area:

**For Governments**

- The UK government should take a broader and more international view of the issues relating to restitution of African artefacts in order to strengthen bi-lateral ties with African states. This is likely to take an added urgency post-Brexit, as the government seeks to envision a new ‘Global Britain’ foreign and trade policy, and also as it responds to the issues of slavery, colonialism and structural racism that the BLM movement have put on the agenda.


- The UK government should establish an All Parliamentary Working Group/Select Committee on the issue of Restitution of African objects in British Museums and Cultural Institutions.

- DCMS should fund a comprehensive mapping exercise of African artefacts held in UK heritage and museum collections, in partnership with diaspora organisations, and make the results of the mapping exercise freely and digitally available. The Department for Education should do the same for collections of manuscripts in universities and other academic institutions.

- The DCMS, should host an international round-table with key museum and heritage sector leaders on the issue of restitution of African objects and human remains in UK museums and heritage collections to develop a comprehensive mapping remit of the objects held and identify objects that can be returned; shared; loaned or copied.

- The UK government should support capacity-building of African cultural institutions and the development of the culture and heritage sectors in African economies, again as part of a response to the 8 ‘Rs’. Through the British Council it should support the training and professional development of Africa-based curators, archivists and other museum and heritage professionals through the development of international partnerships with UK-based museums.

- African governments should extend diplomatic and advocacy efforts for restitution of stolen artefacts and remains from UK museums and other cultural institutions. These should include submission of more formal requests for the restitution of such items held by national, regional, and local institutions in the UK.
For Museums and Cultural Institutions

- Museums and other institutions should identify African artefacts and human remains held within their collections with a view to developing in partnership with diasporic African communities in the UK and African museums policies to enable restitution programmes.

- The Arts Council England should establish and fund a specialist subject network on African artefacts with a view to developing specialist knowledge on African artefacts held within UK collections and sharing good practice on issues of restitution.

- The Arts Council forthcoming guidance on restitution and repatriation for UK museums should hear from African and diaspora communities through the hosting of a one-day seminar, to debate the issues before the guidance framework is agreed.

- The British Museum, The Victoria and Albert Museum and others should fund the training and professional development of partner African museums through a funded PhD-programme 2020-2030.

- The British Library to research and develop a new on-line portal to provide access to previously un-digitised British Library archive materials relating to African history.

- International Council on Museums UK in partnership with the British Council, to host an international conference on Restitution of African Artefacts.

- Institutional collaboration and support with their counterparts in Africa will be important to enable good practice in this field to be shared and adopted in the UK and Africa. Such partnerships should also consider developing innovative partnerships with the public and private sector to ensure that returned items are preserved and exhibited to their full potential.

For Funders

- Issues surrounding the 8 ‘Rs’ are growing in importance. Heritage and other funding should support diaspora and other organisations involved in engagement and educational programmes with museums and their communities, as well as advancing the four-track approach to restitution.

For Civil Society and Community Groups

- Groups and campaigns for the return of stolen African artefacts should be supported to coordinate more effectively to help build momentum and public support, and to carry out advocacy campaigns. Greater coordination between campaigns, and improved capacity and resources for these, can act as a ‘force multiplier’ and promises to strengthen their impact.

- Employing a simultaneous four-track approach to the restitution of African artefacts should be encouraged by all stakeholders, including: advocacy to achieve legal changes preventing returns from national collections, pursuing legal test cases for return of sacred or ceremonial objects, concluding voluntary return agreements with sub-national collections, and other forms of return (including long-term loans, symbolic acts of restitution such as improved contextualization of exhibits and the objects provenance, improved cataloguing of items in collections, and commissioning of replicas of icons for UK institutions (with the originals returned to Africa) and creating fresh works for African Institutions.
• AFFORD to hold individual seminars on each approach with campaign groups, museums and heritage practitioners, and other stakeholders with a view to identifying key priorities for campaigning and restitution.

• AFFORD to work with the Black Studies Association and others, to develop an advocacy network on the return of African artefacts in UK museums and heritage collections, with the view to hosting an annual event on International Museums Days to highlight current issues, campaigning strategies and to share best practice.

• The Black Studies Association with other stakeholders, to advocate for a more comprehensive teaching of Britain’s colonial past in schools and the history of the acquisition of cultural artefacts in developing the collections of British cultural institutions.

• Campaigns groups for return of artefacts and museums and other institutions should also seek to foster deeper partnerships with institutions in countries of origin.

• Finally, there is a need to research and identify key communities of practice in Africa to inform the focus and priorities of any advocacy campaign for the restitution of African Artifacts and human remains.

2. Introduction

This mapping report seeks to explore the policy advocacy community and the legal issues in relation to the restitution of stolen African artefacts and human remains from UK museums and other institutions. The return of these artefacts is greatly sought after by African governments and communities, as well as the African diaspora worldwide, for the following reasons:

• In order to restore their cultural heritage and patrimony, as a resource for the education of future generations, and for socio-economic development as part of growing cultural, heritage, and tourism sectors. An example of how critical such heritage tourism can be to African economies is Ghana’s Year of Return programme throughout 2019 which attracted over one million diaspora visitors and generated $US 1.8 billion in additional spending, with its attendant multiplier effect. Such success has prompted African countries to look at the potential for heritage and cultural tourism as drivers of economic activity and employment, especially in the context of post Covid-19 economic recovery plans, which will need to be accelerated once the health emergency is over.

• Museums in Britain work both independently and within a global context. The 2018 Sarr-Savoy report in France went beyond ‘restoration’ initiatives to endorse at a presidential level the wholesale restitution of African objects from French museums.¹ Feldman (2019) highlights that the German Museums Association wants to extend its reach further than just the whole scale ‘restoration’ of African artefacts.² The example of Australia is also highlighted by Pickering (2007), with regard to the restitution of aboriginal remains and artefacts from within its own museums back to their communities.

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• The global Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement triggered by the killing of George Floyd
has now also in the UK opened up important questions of continuing structural and
cultural racism, with the pulling down of the statue of renowned Bristol slaver owner,
Edward Colston. Foremost amongst these is how to deal with controversial icons and
monuments from the UK’s history of empire and colonialism, most of which, it is argued,
should be housed in museums, rather than public spaces, alongside (or perhaps instead
of) other controversial looted collections from the period of slavery and empire.

Estimates suggest that up to 90% of sub-Saharan Africa’s cultural heritage is currently held
outside the continent, as a result of conquest, plunder, theft, and colonisation, as well as
legitimate trade and exchange.3

These objects are of great artistic, cultural, religious and sacred value to those that lost them.
For many of them, there have been loud calls for their return from the moment they were taken.
More recently in 1976, the Nigerian government requested a temporary loan of the Queen Idia
of Benin Mask from the British Museum, for use as the emblem of the 2nd World Black and African
Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC ‘77). The request was denied, and the mask remains in
the British Museum. The mask was one of 4,000 artefacts looted by British soldiers following
their conquest of the Benin Empire.

Last year, in March 2019, the Egyptian government called on the National Museum of Scotland
to produce certification documents for its Egyptian antiquities after a row broke out over plans to
display a casing stone from the Great Pyramid of Giza4.

The agitation for the return of African artefacts has continued to grow in more recent years, at
tribal, ethnic, national and continental level. As the release of Nelson Mandela and expected
collapse of the apartheid regime unfolded in the early 1990s, these campaigns were frequently
intertwined with a number of other discrete but related issues, involving the 8 ‘Rs’ – recognition,
remembrance, restoration, restitution, reparations, reconnection, return, and reconstruction –
which were part of the reckoning by the black and African world of the damaging impact and
legacies of slavery and colonialism5.

The 8 Rs have frequently developed organisations and movements of their own but also quite
often work as a continuum of one broader movement, first seeking recognition and
acknowledgement of the injustices and crimes, then remembrance of the victims, the restoration
dignity, restitution of physical artefacts and human remains (including African skulls), then
financial and psychological reparations and healing, followed by physical and mental
reconnections with the severed African world, physical human relocation and return as have
been achieved by communities such as the Rastafarian community in Ethiopia, and finally holistic
reconstruction of African societies. This mapping employs this broad framework, in
understanding what drives the motivations of large numbers of Africans, but will focus more
narrowly on issues connected to the restitution of cultural artefacts and human remains.

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3 https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/28112018-macron-report-repatriation; See also
Kingdon, Z (2019), Ethnographic Collecting and African Agency in Early Colonial West Africa: A Study of Trans-
Imperial Cultural Flows, London, Bloomsbury Visual Arts
4 https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jan/10/pyramid-stone-giza-row-egypt-asks-museum-of-scotland-for-
papers
  https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/feb/18/uk-museums-face-pressure-to-repatriate-foreign-items
5 Wambu, Onyekachi – Speech at UN Decade of People of African Descent, Dakar, Senegal, 2019
To date some parts of the restitution of cultural artefacts and human remains agenda has been easier to move forward, namely the restitution of collections of skeletons and body parts, reminders of scientific racism and the creation of human zoos, which took place as recently as 1958, when people from Congo were put on display for a world fair event. The most famous of the returned remains are those of Sarah Baartman, whose brain, genitals, and skeleton were preserved in a back room at the Musée de l'Homme in Paris. Baartman was taken to Europe as an anthropological curiosity in the early 19th century, and displayed under the name of the "Hottentot Venus". She died at the age of 27, but was denied a burial, and her remains fell into the hands of various museums. Her remains were eventually repatriated to South Africa and buried in 2002; 192 years after Baartman had left for Europe.

Meanwhile, in 2018, Germany returned the skulls of Namibian people⁶ killed during the German colonial genocide in Namibia more than 100 years ago. These skulls were used for research by ‘racial anthropologists’. Skulls from Germany’s other African colonies, including modern day Cameroon, Tanzania, Rwanda and Togo, were also used in the discredited research⁷. The visceral and emotional arguments for restitution in these cases were successful in overcoming the usual resistance of the holding institutions.

3. **Return of the Icons Mapping Methodology**

In mapping the community of practice in the UK in relation to the effective restitution and preservation of African artefacts and human remains, AFFORD deployed both qualitative and quantitative research design to explore this community of practice.

This mixed methodology approach took the form of semi-structured interviews and online questionnaires used with selected individuals, networks, organizations, and actors across the European heritage sector.

A qualitative methodology was used due to its potential for generating in-depth knowledge on the context, content and ramifications of this community of practice.

The principal approaches used in data collection therefore included the following:

- Desk-based literature review
- Online questionnaires - a target of 150 completed questionnaires
- Semi-structured key informant interviews (KIIs) with professionals involved in the museums and/or relevant cultural sectors - a target of 20 semi-structured interviews
- Focus group discussions - a target of 4 focus group discussions (FGDs), 2 with diaspora community members, 2 with young people in the diaspora

3.1 **Sampling**

The project employed a combination of the following sampling methods to reach as wide a range of potential respondents as possible:

- Random sampling: selecting a random sample for mapping the community of practice, (e.g. choosing 10 people to interview randomly at an event of 100 people). This could be used at
suitable events, conferences, and other meetings to generate online survey responses and also some semi-structured interviews.

• Snowball sampling (chain sampling): research subjects recruit new subjects from their networks – this type of sampling is most prone to bias, but often most practical in this context. This method was used to identify most Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Key Informant Interview (KII) participants, in combination with purposive sampling below.

• Purposive sampling: selecting your sample on the basis of a particular criterion or characteristics, e.g. ‘museum curators in the UK’

The online survey relied on a combination of random and snowball sampling, while FGDs and KIIs relied more on snowball and purposive sampling to identify suitable participants for both.

3.2 Data Collection Tools

Survey tools, including an online questionnaire distributed via email and social media as well as questions for Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions were developed and piloted in January and February 2020.

While quantitative data were gathered, analysed, and interpreted to demonstrate the extent and magnitude of particular phenomena via questionnaires, these were supplemented and enriched by qualitative data gathered via focus group discussions (FGDs) and semi-structured, one-to-one KIIs. Different dimensions of heritage capital and links to Africa (cultural, social, financial, intellectual and political) were explored by infusing these constituent elements as sub-themes in the questionnaires and other survey tools.

3.3 Methodological Adaptations to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The global COVID-19 pandemic and attendant public lockdown in the UK from March onwards meant that the mapping methodology had to be adapted to use of remote survey methodologies to protect the health of participants and AFFORD staff. This adaptation led to some disruption to data collection, as face-to-face interviews and focus groups had to be rescheduled as either telephone interviews or online webinars.

In addition, all UK museums, cultural institutions, universities, and schools were closed from 23 March 2020 onwards, which made it harder to reach participants working in these sectors.

The online survey was launched in March 2020, while interviews and focus groups were conducted in March and April 2020. A literature review and other background research had been conducted earlier between January and February.

3.4 Methodological Limitations

Given the small sample sizes inherent with mapping exercises of this type, especially given resource and time constraints, it is difficult to undertake meaningful quantitative analysis, but the
online survey was subjected to basic statistical analysis, and this generated some interesting results that complemented findings in the key informant interviews and focus group discussions.

The original version of the online survey was significantly longer and sought to capture richer data from respondents about their background, interests, knowledge and activities. However, feedback from piloting was quite negative about the length of the survey and its language being too academic, so it was revised and substantially shortened. This restricted some of the data available, but this is offset by the survey response rate, which was higher than targeted.

While efforts were made to reach out to diaspora communities across the UK for this mapping exercise, the majority of respondents were based in London or the Southeast of England. This may simply reflect the demographic reality for African diaspora communities in the UK, 80% of which are based in Greater London and the Southeast.

4. Literature review

The literature review examines key debates relating to restitution of African and other cultural artefacts from UK collections and thus aims to pin-point some of the key issues and institutions and the current state of play in the field. This takes on a particular relevance as the Arts Council of England is currently updating its advice on restitution guidelines and policies for museums in the UK.

This invites us to question the relevance of arguments put forward in the 2002 *Declaration on the Value and Importance of Universal Museums*, on the subject of custodianship of objects by institutions in the UK and across Western Europe and America. ⁸

The review draws on the work of established scholars as well as those with an interest in the subject, surveying monographs, academic literature, as well as newspaper and other online sources. It examines key debates on, and approaches, to restitution of African artefacts, and surveys the principal barriers to their successful restitution. While the focus of this mapping report is on stolen African cultural artefacts and human remains in British museums and collections, it also includes some discussion of international collections for purposes of comparison; also, some sets of items, such as the Benin Bronzes, sit across museum collections in several countries.

Following the example of recent public interest in this area, it presents case studies of the Benin Bronzes, a series of artefacts held in various museums around the UK, not least the British Museum and the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, as well as in international collections. In addition, case studies on the Ethiopian Maqdala collection hoard and the royal regalia of the Asante Kings are included in the appendices.

British museums and other educational and cultural institutions operate in an environment which is charged with many considerations that affect and are affected by various frameworks in the restitution of artefacts and human remains. A consideration of the semantics demonstrates the seminality of the problem: “restitution” and “restoration” vie with “repatriation.” The latter is widely considered least acceptable, inspiring connotations of forced removal in a similar euphemistic language as deportation, at least to one commenter, for which see Hunt (2020).

Appendices are also included of a timeline of key restitution events and of major collections of African artefacts in British museums and cultural institutions.

4.1 Approaches to Restitution of Human Remains and Cultural Artefacts

Broadly speaking, there are two main trajectories for restitution, with a distinct break between a progressive and long established policy across all institutions in the UK that deals with human remains, which are often returned to their country of origin with the full support of the host institution, as opposed to cultural artefacts and objects.

4.1.1 Restitution of Human Remains

Most institutions in the UK engage actively in the return of human remains, and examples transcend the African continent to also focus on communities in the Americas, Australia and New Zealand. Institutions such as the Natural History Museum are governed by the Human Tissue Act 2004 that empowers them to actively consider requests to change the custody of human body parts that are less than one thousand years old. This thus excludes perhaps the most famous forms of human remains taken from Africa in UK collections – Egyptian mummies.

There are issues of where, and to whom, human remains are returned. In some cases, it may not be appropriate to return human remains to national collections in their countries of origin, but rather the communities for whom the human remains are their ancestors. Good practice in this area involves working closely with national and local institutions and with local communities in the country of origin to agree the most appropriate resting place for the returned remains.

The consensus across the UK is that human remains should be given back upon request. There are numerous examples of human remains in UK museum collections, but also of the successful return of such remains. Models of good practice have been developed and implemented by UK institutions in this regard, such as the partnership between the Manchester Museum, part of The University of Manchester, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and local communities in Australia and New Zealand. Manchester Museum has been returning human remains since 2003.

Similarly, The Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford and Oxford University, amongst others, have experience of returning human remains successfully and appropriately, by working in close partnership with communities of origin.

Not all cases of human remains are clear-cut. In the case of the remains of the Ethiopian Prince Alemayehu held in Windsor Castle, despite the strong demands for his return and burial in

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12 https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-45565784
Ethiopia, some have argued (including a few voices within the Ethiopian community) that the current resting place may be most appropriate, as the young Prince was not abducted or taken by force, but rather according to the express wishes of his mother; and he was clearly a well-regarded member of the royal household until his untimely death. To further complicate matters in this case, the Prince is buried with the remains of other individuals, and this is a reason cited by Windsor Castle for not agreeing to return requests, as this would entail disturbance of other human remains buried there. The Ethiopian government has stated that it will continue to press their claim for the return of his body with the UK government.

In most cases, however, the issues involved in terms of deaccessioning and returning human remains are more straightforward, and processes for these are better developed. As a result, this literature review will mostly focus on the issues concerning return of objects and artefacts.

However, it is worth pointing out the frameworks and processes for return of human remains provide both models and precedents for return of cultural objects and artefacts.

### 4.1.2 Restitution of Objects and Artefacts

Where non-human remains are concerned the restitution process is slower, being a degree removed from the direct ethical implications of ill-treatment of fellow human beings. Indeed, the ethical case for restitution of human remains — as recognized by UNESCO and the International Council on Museums (ICOM and its UK body, ICOM-UK) strongly informs and intersects with the ethical case for restitution of stolen African cultural artefacts.

The treatment of non-human remains – i.e. in most cases objects or artefacts - opens a range of complicated frameworks. Through the additional use of the word ‘restoration’, before ‘restitution’, we will illustrate that this presents a variety of options that can be enacted before and beyond a simple return of the object to its place of origin.

For ‘restoration’ of any sort to happen there must be a considerable interest in the object to begin with. Hunt (2020) demonstrates that UK museums are in one sense victims of their own success. That they remain astoundingly popular tourist sites encourages a public engagement with the collections held by them, which in turn invites questions of provenance and context that can be uncomfortable but equally demonstrate the continued relevance of the institutions themselves. The most successful actively engage with this relevance, opening up storage collections to reveal objects that are hidden from public view, as a form of internal ‘restoration’ that seeks to establish a context to objects that are currently denuded of a thorough object history.

‘Restoration’ of display can take several forms, from the moving of an object from a restricted to public sphere, updating accompanying literature, translocation within a museum or between

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14 Ibid.

15 Deaccessioning is the term used for the the process by which a work of art or other object is permanently removed from a museum’s collection.
museums, a willingness to send an object on loan to other institutions, for a short period of time or indefinitely, or active engagement with diaspora communities who share a heritage with the objects. The museum is hardly ‘the victim’ therefore, and key to its success will be its approach to initially enabling ‘restoration’ processes, as well as dealing with what museums see as the more challenging issues of restitution. Having an active response to both ‘restoration’ and restitution issues will in turn enable Britain to define and redefine its status and beliefs in the changing world of the early 21st Century. This is especially the case at a time when the killing of George Floyd and the BLM movement has put issues of slavery, colonialism and structural racism on the global agenda as a key part of addressing the 8 ‘Rs’. The toppling of the statue of the enslaver Edward Colson in Bristol (described by one UK journalist Darren Lewis as the Fall of the Black Berlin Wall and Tiananmen Square moment rolled into one) has raised important questions about what of history belongs in museums and what in the public square.  

In this, museums in Britain work both independently and within a global context. At its most progressive, the 2018 Sarr-Savoy report in France, went beyond ‘restoration’ initiatives to endorse at a presidential level the wholesale restitution of African objects from French museums. Feldman (2019) highlights that the German Museums Association wants to extend its reach further than just the whole scale ‘restoration’ of African artefacts. The example of Australia is highlighted well by Pickering (2007), in following the restitution of aboriginal remains and artefacts from within its own museums back to their communities.

The Museums Association in the UK released a Statement on Repatriation and Restitution in November 2018. It is brief but worth quoting in toto here:

“The three key principles of the Code of Ethics for Museums are: public benefit and engagement; collections stewardship; and individual and institutional integrity. All three of these principles should apply in cases of claims for repatriation or restitution from museum collections.

Factors to be taken into account include the law; current thinking on the subject; the interests of actual and cultural descendants; the strength of claimants’ relationship to the items; the scientific, educational, cultural and historical importance of the items; and the consequences of retention and repatriation for a range of stakeholders.

Claims for repatriation raise important questions about public benefit and museums’ relationship with communities both in the UK and abroad. In particular the views of source communities should be taken into account and museums should strive to build lasting and meaningful relationships with these communities.

We would encourage museums to develop constructive relationships with representatives of people who contributed to collections and take proactive steps to inform them of the

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16 https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs-the-papers-52959796
17 Available at: https://www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=1266340
As a global framework, The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), convenes an Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property, on which Britain does not sit, but whose aim is, ambiguously perhaps, to return cultural property to “its countries of origin.” Currently 6 of the 22 countries who sit on the committee are African.\(^\text{18}\) The UNESCO committee maintains a clear ‘classical’ interest too, with countries from the Ancient Mediterranean world, Egypt, Greece and Italy, all represented and might be seen as contra the 2002 World Museum Declaration. The international picture is one where giving back is key, and AFFORD suggests that the UK should consider becoming a member of the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property in order to participate in and inform its work.

In recent history an important event in catalyzing the different African movements was the Pan African component of the Reparations Movement launched in Lagos, Nigeria, in 1990, which in turn led the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to set up a Group of Eminent Persons (GEP), in 1992. The GEP was tasked to develop an agenda, and secure technical advisors, who would help solve some of the difficulties associated with the claim for reparations. A second conference on Reparations held in Abuja, Nigeria, in 1993, was attended by representatives from throughout the African world and its diaspora.

That conference issued a declaration, “The Abuja Proclamation\(^\text{19}\),” which called for a national reparations committee to be established throughout Africa and the diaspora, out of which the African Reparations Movement (UK) was formed in 1993. The Abuja Proclamation dealt with financial, psychological reparations as well as restoration of artefacts. It contained the line:

‘Convinced that numerous looting, theft and larceny have been committed on the African People call upon those in possession of their stolen goods artifacts (sic) and other traditional treasures to restore them to their traditional owners the African People.’

4.2 The Preservation and Return of Sacred Artefacts and Manuscripts

There are increasing precedents for repatriation of sacred artefacts and objects, and models of good practice have been developed and implemented by UK institutions in this regard, such as the partnership between the Manchester Museum, part of the University of Manchester, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and the Aranda people of Central Australia, Gangalidda Garawa peoples of northwest Queensland, Nyamal people of the Pilbara and Yawuru people of Broome for the unconditional repatriation of 43 secret sacred and ceremonial objects to their communities of origin.\(^\text{20}\) Similarly, sacred objects have also been returned from the Pitt Rivers Museum to Maasai communities in Kenya.\(^\text{21}\)


\(^{19}\) http://www.shaka.mistral.co.uk/abujaProclamation.htm

\(^{20}\) https://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk/about/repatriation/; https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-50504511

\(^{21}\) https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/
Sacred objects are worth considering as a separate category of artefact, not least because they are generally treated as such by UK institutions. Museums in the UK are aware of the sacred status of some objects in their possession, and make efforts to treat them appropriately. Thus, sacred objects from Ethiopia held by the British Museum (tabots, or replicas of the Ark of the Covenant, see case study below) are only allowed to be viewed by Ethiopian Orthodox Priests; even museum curators are not permitted to handle them. Similarly, religious manuscripts in the British Library (such as copies of the bible in Ge’ez, or the Buddhist Diamond Sutra manuscripts) are usually not put on display (with some exceptions for special exhibitions) and access to these is limited to a few researchers and priests and monks from that faith.

There have been calls for repatriation of sacred objects from foreign governments – Ethiopia and China have formally requested the return of sacred objects from UK institutions, albeit with limited success. But in the case of sacred objects that are not able to be studied by researchers or viewed by the public begs the question, on what basis are museums holding on to these objects? AFFORD suggests here that this type of objects could usefully form the basis for legal test cases to challenge their retention by UK national collections.

4.3 Cultural Patrimony and Questions of Ownership

A major issue is to whom African art and artefacts ‘belong.’ The concept of “cultural patrimony” is advanced across several sources, where an object belongs specifically to the society that manufactured it. This falls contra to the claims of encyclopedic or world museums, who in 2002 signed the Declaration on the Value and Importance of Universal Museums, stating their guardianship of World Culture, (Adams, 2020). Scholars have demonstrated that this is often difficult and contentious, and the debate has moved along from a case of world guardianship in the last two decades. Most recently, Hunt (2020) highlights the difficulty of understanding exactly where such objects do belong, if not in world museums. Ugochukwu-Smooth Nzewi, curator at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, highlighted that, taking the example of French West Africa it can often be difficult to pin-point exactly which modern country holds a claim to a specific object.

Moreover, as noted by the Museums Ethnographers’ Group, ‘each request for return is usually the culmination of a complex of events, discussions and other contacts between the current guardians of the property and the present-day representatives of the originating community that had ownership rights over the property’.22

Appiah (2009) also advances these concerns, highlighting the modern ideological construction of the nation state in relation to Nok sculptures from contemporary Nigeria. He is useful in understanding the limits of cultural patrimony, but also allows us to see art restitution in its wider societal picture. He compares restitution to the case of World Heritage Sites, which ultimately are at the mercy of individual member states and their governance.

The contention behind ‘World Heritage’ lies firmly in the realm of the state which currently holds the objects. Appiah usefully ties together issues of cultural patrimony with restitution of African artefacts, which might be compared to the case of the threat by UNESCO to remove World Heritage Status to Ethiopia’s Simien Mountains National Park. Its status as a site worth

22 https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199900/cmselect/cmcumeds/371/37107.htm#note312
preserving for all humanity is in the hands of one sovereign nation, who are themselves placed in a position where they are threatened and cajoled to adhere to UN mandated international forms of conservation lest this status be removed.

We might use Appiah to inform understanding of the notion of guardianship advanced in the 2002 declaration by encyclopedic museums, comparing the case of antiquities smuggling from Mali which he highlights, with the contemporary and ongoing investigation into the disappearance of papyri at the University of Oxford, where artefacts in the Oxyrinchus collection have been noted as missing presumed for illegal export.23 This opens up the question of integrity of institutions that have prided themselves as being guardians to world culture.

Writing for the New York Times, Marshall (2020) provides a useful contemporary analysis which covers many of the pertinent issues.24 Focused on the Benin Bronzes, she and the government of Nigeria clearly view the collection’s international recognition as a source of pride for the country, and therefore part of its cultural patrimony. She delves into the personal politics at play, of Dunstone and Awoyemi, the interlocutors between the Benin royal family, and those organisations and individuals who possess objects from Benin City.

Marshall highlights the issue of personal validation at play in restituting objects. A minor theme is drawn out by Marshall that the private collector Mr. Walker did not want to accept any ‘glory’ or celebration for the returning of the work, stressing that the publicity offered to him was designed to encourage other private collectors to perform similar acts of restitution. There is a paradox at play; she at once gives a platform for the government of Nigeria to be allowed to seek pride in the cultural patrimony of the Benin Bronzes while at the same time highlighting that individuals, such as Mr. Walker, were unhappy to hand over their objects to the Government of Nigeria, believing that they did not belong to them.

Most importantly, Marshall highlights the work of the National Museum of World Cultures in the Netherlands who have since March 2019 enacted a positive restitution policy.25 It is clear that the restitution sector in Britain is being influenced by the similar debates taking place in continental Europe; Hunt (2020) makes specific reference to the 2018 Sarr-Savoy Report, that called for a full scale restitution of all French colonial loot, endorsed by President Macron of France.26 However it is perhaps telling of the resistance to it by the French Museological establishment that no representative of a French encyclopaedic museum appeared in Hunt’s programme, despite the efforts to feature discussions from Europe and America, as has been highlighted. The Sarr-Savoy authors have accused the authorities at the British Museum of “burying their head in the sand,” however such criticism arguably ignores the work of the Museum as a seminal player in the Benin Dialogue Group.27

Considering further precedent set by European practice, an interesting case is highlighted by Feldman (2019) who in Die Zeit, the German daily newspaper, demonstrated the example of the internal relocation in Hamburg of three Benin Bronzes.28 This is useful because, like the work at the Pitt Rivers Museum, it attempts to acknowledge the wrong committed by the extraction of the

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24 https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/23/arts/design/benin-bronzes.html?fbclid=IwAR3Eqh3ZjgWzPvIBH-9AnDE6HIN-8NhPi_WTI72rGhMOVyCA0L8aK3gpoxwh
26 https://itsartlaw.org/2019/01/31/the-sarr-savoy-report/
works from Benin in 1897, by placing the Bronzes in a museum where its context can be greatly explained. The Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe admits freely that it constitutes looted work, denuded of its contextual meaning. Here we see another possibility in the spectrum of ‘restoration’.

4.4 Summary of Key Arguments for and against Restitution of Artefacts

Historically a range of arguments have been deployed for and against restitution. These are summarized in the table below, although this review does not seek to suggest any equivalence between these arguments; rather it is meant to be merely indicative of the way that arguments and in particular counter-arguments are deployed, especially by institutions seeking to avoid the return of artefacts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arguments for</th>
<th>Arguments against</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morally, it is the right thing to do. It would address the historical injustices of colonialism and the role museums have played (Moral/Ethical Case)</td>
<td>They are part of a global story, sitting side by side with other civilizational achievements, and accessible to wider audiences (Education/Cultural Protection Case)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They have been illegally procured, often as a result of theft, looting, and violence (Moral/Ethical Case)</td>
<td>Not all of the collection items were acquired illegally or through conquest, many were legally traded and gifted to museums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artefacts that may seem meaningless or divorced from context in the UK, often have great meaning to the peoples they were taken from, and form an important part of their cultural heritage and identity (Moral/Ethical Case)</td>
<td>Laws are in place against breaking up collections or returning them. For instance, in the UK, the British Museum, British Library, National Army Museum and V&amp;A, amongst others are affected (Legal Case)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical artefacts are important for the education of citizens in the countries where artefacts were seized from, and especially young people, of their cultural heritage and history, rather than the distorted narratives handed down by colonial and postcolonial governments. They are an important resource for local people in the country of original provenance to draw on (Education Cultural Protection Case)</td>
<td>Historical artefacts are important for the education and history of UK citizens and other global visitors to the Museums (Education/Cultural Protection Case)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of artefacts is enriched by being viewed in their place of origin (Education/Cultural Protection Case)</td>
<td>Understanding of artefacts is enhanced by being viewed in comparative context in ‘world museums’ (Education/Cultural Protection Case)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artefacts are part of the area’s history – restoring to local experts and audiences the idea of Africans as</td>
<td>Artefacts are part of British history, and removing them elides the role of British people, for good or for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Producers and Maintainers of their own history (Education/Cultural Protection Case)</th>
<th>Bad, in their provenance, preservation, and research (Education/Cultural Protection Case)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They are the foundation of a potentially lucrative heritage tourist trade and should bring revenues to the country of origin (Heritage tourism/Business Case)</td>
<td>It is unrealistic to build a tourism trade with one or a few national museums, especially in areas where the infrastructure for tourism is less developed (Poor Infrastructure Case)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The artefacts serve as important reminders of past oppression (Education/Moral Case)</td>
<td>The artefacts serve as important reminders of past oppression (Education Case)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The resources are now available to restore such collections 30 (Adequate Protection Case)</td>
<td>There are few world class facilities in the countries of origin to maintain many fragile and delicate pieces, which are currently well looked after (Inadequate Protection Case)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return is a moral imperative as the artefacts were seized, often with great violence. Return is an important form of reparation, and it should be the right of African institutions to then loan them to museums in other countries. (Moral/Ethical Case)</td>
<td>Return is not the only option, loans and museum partnerships offer other possibilities (Collaboration/ 'Shared' Ownership Case)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return is the default position but while waiting for returns, loans and museum partnerships offer other possibilities (Collaboration/ 'Shared' Ownership Case)</td>
<td>African institutions may lack capacity and resources to preserve, research, and display them adequately (Inadequate Protection case)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Certainly, from an African and African diaspora perspective very few of the arguments against return of stolen artefacts carry any weight, as demonstrated by the repeated requests from African governments and communities for their restitution, and these arguments can appear to represent special pleading by institutions. In any case, the ethical case for returning stolen artefacts is largely unanswerable – where there are grounds for challenge are questions of process and technicalities.

However, there are some differences of view between African diaspora communities and the broader worldwide historical African diaspora, in particular the African Caribbean community who have a different relationship with these artefacts and who might, some have argued, risk losing access to parts of their history if some items are returned to Africa.

30 https://debatewise.org/debates/204-historical-artefacts-should-be-repatriated-to-their-country-of-origin/
4.5 Legal Barriers to the Restitution of African Artefacts in UK Museums and Cultural Institutions

Perhaps the biggest barrier to the restitution of African artefacts from national collections in the UK, and in particular the British Museum, is the 1963 British Museum Act, which places severe restrictions on deaccessioning collection items found within it (see below for a summary of its contents).

As noted by Geoffrey Robertson QC in his recent book, *Who Owns History: Elgin’s Loot and the Case for Returning Plundered Treasure*, the Act has (mis)informed legal, political, and cultural debates about restituting stolen items from the British Museum (and other institutions) in the UK since its introduction. Robertson skillfully describes how the ‘Elgin Marbles’ (also known as the Parthenon Marbles), a collection of Classical Greek marble sculptures made under the supervision of the architect and sculptor Phidias and his assistants, have since their acquisition in the early 18th century taken on a totemic value in British culture, politics and law.\(^{31}\)

The Greek government has consistently demanded their return since their seizure. The Acropolis Museum, opened in 2009, displays a proportion of the complete frieze, aligned in orientation and within sight of the Parthenon, with the position of the missing elements clearly marked and a specially dedicated space left should they be returned to Athens.

Robertson describes how the seizure of the Elgin Marbles was controversial at the time, and how their fate has informed and conditioned public and official attitudes to a broader restitution agenda, noting that as early as 1924 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) was urging its officials not to create precedents whereby the Elgin Marbles would have to be returned, as this risked the British Museum collections being emptied.\(^{32}\) Indeed, this has been the recurrent leitmotif in discussions in the UK on restitution of all artefacts – if they are returned, this will be the thin end of the wedge, leading to the repatriation of the Elgin Marbles and entire museum collections, and this concern led to the development of the British Museum Act.

**British Museum Act 1963**

Particular legal restrictions apply to national museums and galleries in the UK, which can only remove from their custody objects in carefully prescribed circumstances. For example, under the terms of the British Museum Act 1963, Trustees of the British Museum and the Natural History Museum may only dispose of objects which are duplicates of other objects, or are printed matter created after 1850 which can be reproduced by a photographic process, or objects which have been so damaged as to become useless, or items which are deemed "unfit to be retained in the collections of the Museum".\(^{33}\)

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\(^{31}\) From 1801 to 1812, agents of the Earl of Elgin, then Ambassador to the Sublime Porte, removed about half of the surviving sculptures of the Parthenon, as well as sculptures from the Propylaea and Erechtheum, before having them transported by sea to Britain. Elgin later claimed to have obtained in 1801 an official decree (a firman) from the Sublime Porte, the central government of the Ottoman Empire which were then the rulers of Greece. This firman has not been found in the Ottoman archives despite its wealth of documents from the same period, and its veracity is vigorously disputed.

\(^{32}\) Robertson (2019:190)

\(^{33}\) https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199900/cmselect/cmcumeds/371/37107.htm#a23
The British Museum Act prohibits by law the return of artefacts from the British Museum in almost all circumstances, and its introduction was influenced by, and referenced with, concern for the Elgin Marbles.

The disposal on the grounds of "unfitness" is subject to a second test and to a proviso. The proviso is that no object can be disposed of on these grounds if that is contrary to the terms of a relevant gift or bequest. The second test is that any object deemed "unfit" can only be removed if it is also considered by the Trustees that the object "can be disposed of without detriment to the interests of students".

The British Museum's interpretation of the act is that "the Trustees may dispose of an object as unfit if no reasonable person would want the Museum to keep it because, for example, it is a forgery or was wrongly identified and is for that reason, in the Trustees' reasonable opinion, without merit or value".34

Robertson (2019) argues persuasively that there are ways in which to interpret the provisions of the Act to allow for greater exceptions to the ban on the return of items. For example, there is a provision within the 1963 Act that allows the British Museum trustees to give away items (or 'deaccession') from the collection if the trustees deem them to be "unfit" for retention in the collection and that the removal would not be detrimental to the interests of students. The term 'unfit' is understood broadly in this context, but mainly applies to forgeries and fakes.

Robertson also points out that there are other avenues for those working towards return of artefacts, notably campaigning for legal changes, whether in the form of bringing in new legislation or modifying existing legislation, to allow for greater powers for institutions to return items.

**National Heritage Act 1983**

Similar legal restrictions apply to other national museums and galleries under the National Heritage Act 1983, which aimed to alter the way in which Britain's national heritage assets are managed and protected.

The 1983 Act established the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Science Museum, the Armouries and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew as non-departmental public bodies to be governed by boards of trustees, and places conditions on the circumstances under which Museum Boards may acquire or dispose of objects. It was amended in 1997, extending the scope of the National Heritage Memorial Fund to include 'things of any kind which are of scenic, historic, archaeological, aesthetic, architectural, engineering, artistic or scientific interest'.35

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34 Ibid.
Specifically with regard to restitution of artefacts from museum collections, it states that:

‘6 Acquisition and disposal of objects.

(3) The Board may not dispose of an object the property in which is vested in them and which is comprised in their collections unless—

(a) the disposal is by way of sale, exchange or gift of an object which is a duplicate of another object the property in which is so vested and which is so comprised, or

(b) the disposal is by way of sale, exchange or gift of an object which in the Board’s opinion is unsuitable for retention in their collections and can be disposed of without detriment to the interests of students or other members of the public [Editor’s emphasis], or

(c) the disposal is an exercise of the power conferred by section 6 of the Museums and Galleries Act 1992, or

(d) the disposal (by whatever means, including destruction) is of an object which the Board are satisfied has become useless for the purposes of their collections by reason of damage, physical deterioration, or infestation by destructive organisms.’

The Museums and Galleries Act 1992

This Act is concerned primarily with the appointment of Board Members to, and transfers between, the national museums and galleries covered by the Act. However, it also places similar limitations on the conditions in which objects may be transferred, loaned, or disposed of as set out in the National Heritage Act 1983. The table below sets out the national collections that fall under the Museums and Galleries Act 1992:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Governing body</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The British Library</td>
<td>The British Library Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The British Museum</td>
<td>The Trustees of the British Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Imperial War Museum</td>
<td>The Trustees of the Imperial War Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The National Gallery</td>
<td>The Board of Trustees of the National Gallery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The National Galleries of Scotland</td>
<td>The Board of Trustees of the National Galleries of Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The National Library of Scotland (established by section 1(1) of the National Library of Scotland Act 1925 (c.73))</td>
<td>The Board of Trustees of the National Library of Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The National Maritime Museum</td>
<td>The Trustees of the National Maritime Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The National Museums of Scotland</td>
<td>The Board of Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite this list of the major museums and collections in the UK, it is worth noting national museum legislation does not cover a broad range of institutions, ranging from the National Army Museum, to all sub-national museums and university collections. This gives these institutions much more freedom to deaccession objects and items, depending on the governance documents of the institutions concerned. As a result, local, regional, and university museums are able to conclude voluntary return agreements for African artefacts in their collections.

**Legislation for Restitution – The Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) Act 2009**

It is worth highlighting the fact that the national museum legislation set out above is interpreted so conservatively, and Parliament is seemingly so reluctant to amend this legislation, that the government had to pass an entirely separate piece of legislation to enable restitution of artefacts and objects looted by the Nazis from Jewish communities in Europe during the Third Reich.

The Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) Act 2009 was passed following a case where the British Museum was barred from restoring four Old Master drawings looted by the Nazis. The heirs of Dr Arthur Feldmann and his wife Gisela, who died after being imprisoned by the Nazis, had fought for the return of these drawings, all of which were acquired by the British Museum after WW2.

The British Museum had accepted the request of the Feldmanns’ heirs to return the paintings, but the case ended up in the British courts after concerns were raised that restitution of these items could ‘create a legal opening for Greece to pursue its claim to the Parthenon Marbles’\(^{37}\). A High Court Judge ruled that the British Museum Act could not be overridden by a "moral obligation" to return works known to have been plundered.\(^{38}\)

This shameful decision prompted UK parliamentarians to introduce an entirely new piece of legislation, the Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) Act 2009. Its purpose is to confer, on national institutions falling under the national museum legislation set out above, the power to return to their rightful owners cultural objects unlawfully acquired during the Nazi era. It was amended in 2019 to remove a ‘sunset clause’ and make the law permanent.\(^{39}\)

This Act is interesting for several reasons. Firstly, it was a clear case of looted property that was acquired by the British Museum, with legal heirs still living. Secondly, the fact that it was needed at all indicates just how conservatively UK law interprets the British Museums Act and other legislation governing national museums and galleries. An act of Parliament was required to force

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\(^{38}\) Ibid.

the British Museum to return art work which it had already agreed to return, but were barred from doing so by existing museum legislation.

Most importantly of all for our purposes, the Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) Act 2009 also sets a precedent for UK national museums and galleries to restore looted artefacts to other groups of owners, especially if there is sufficient public interest or pressure. It would be entirely reasonable, and also not implausible, for UK parliamentarians to enact other pieces of legislation that would enable restitution of looted African artefacts.

It is important not to understate the likely challenges involved in achieving this, which would require significant advocacy efforts towards parliamentarians as well as support from diaspora communities and the public. It could also fall foul of legal requirements to only return items to the legal heirs of the original owners, providing sufficient evidence of which may be challenging in some African countries. However, it is one potential route to loosening the strictures of national museum legislation and achieving restitution of African artefacts.

4.6 The Case of Egypt and Egyptology

At this juncture it is worth considering the particular case of Egypt and Egyptology. Egyptology has its origins in the colonial project of European powers; it was born in the modern sense with Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt, which was accompanied by scholars who excavated and took a range of carvings, sculptures, and artefacts, including human remains. One of these Egyptian artefacts, the Rosetta Stone, is used by opponents of restitution to argue against it, as it throws up questions of provenance and scholarship. UK national museums and sub-national collections hold substantial numbers of Egyptian artefacts, including the British Museum, the V&A, and the Flinders-Petrie Museum, the latter of which is dedicated to the research and display of artefacts from Ancient Egypt.

Egypt at the time was technically under the control of the Ottoman Sultan, but without real authority. The French initially excavated the trilingual inscription and took it to Paris, but after the French defeat in the Battle of the Nile, it was awarded to the British and it ended up in the British Museum. Given this provenance, some have argued it is unclear if it should be returned to Egypt or Turkey.

Underpinning this position is the notion that Ancient Egypt was, if not a European culture, a Classical Mediterranean culture that bore more in common with classical Greece and Rome than it does with the later Arab Islamic Egypt. This Orientalist discourse permeated the development of Egyptology (and archaeology) as a discipline and influenced the design and display of Egyptology collections and indeed of museums worldwide, especially in Egypt itself. The Egyptian museum in Cairo, designed and run entirely along European lines, was headed by a European until after independence. Egyptological artefacts are still viewed by many Egyptology and classical scholars as ‘European’ rather than ‘African’, including within Egypt itself.

From the 1980s onwards, archaeological and heritage tourism became an increasingly important part of the Egyptian economy under President Mubarak. The Egyptian government has over the years made repeated calls for return of a range of Egyptian artefacts from museums in Europe and America, and while there have been some successes, these calls have largely been ignored.
The Director of the new Grand Egyptian Museum, Dr El-Tayeb Abbas, has recently stated he is relaxed about Egyptian artefacts remaining in the British museum, as it would act as an advert for the museum and the Egyptian tourism sector. Egypt has also focussed on securing artefacts excavated after 1970, along with the combatting the market in illegal antiquities.40

4.7 The Sarr-Savoy Report: A New Imperative for Restitution

Demands for artefacts to be returned have been increasing over the last few decades. In 2005 a 1,700-year-old granite obelisk was finally returned home from Italy to Ethiopia, 68 years after it was looted by Benito Mussolini, and 58 years after Italy agreed in the UN to its return. More recently the issue has been galvanized by the report: ‘The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage: Toward a New Relational Ethics’41 by Felwine Sarr of Senegal and Bénédicte Savoy of France.

President Emmanuel Macron of France commissioned the report and it recommends that objects that were removed and sent to mainland France without the consent of their countries of origin be permanently returned if the country of origin asks for them. This restitution should be part of a collaborative process of information gathering, research, scientific exchange and training in the next five years. This has particular relevance to stolen African artefacts in UK museums and collections as these too have been the beneficiary of artefacts that were removed from their country of origin without their consent.

The Sarr-Savoy report has opened up a global conversation around these issues, and put other museums in Europe and America on alert. The British Museum alone has some 700 objects from the Kingdom of Benin, whose territory is now part of Nigeria. The Humboldt Forum Museum in Berlin holds several hundred sculptures from the same kingdom and collectively these are known as the Benin Bronzes.

When in December 2018 Senegal’s president Macky Sall opened the Musée des Civilisations Noires (the Museum of Black Civilizations, “MCN”) in Dakar in December, he brought a new weapon into the arsenal of activists fighting for the return of treasured objects from foreign collections. The MCN has all the latest technology and knowledge needed to protect and preserve ancient treasures — and that might prove to be its most radical feature.

4.8 The ‘Rhodes Must Fall’ Campaign and the Decolonisation Agenda for UK Institutions

The Sarr-Savoy report was delivered within the context of on-going discourses about decolonisation of institutions, and the modern role of museums and collections. The report also reopened questions around responsibility, legal liability, moral and ethical responses as well as practical solutions.

The debate around the need to decolonise institutions had been rumbling through academic departments in the UK concerned with non-European history and literature for decades, one example of which was the ‘sub-altern studies’ movement in the social sciences from the 1990s.
onwards, which sought to reevaluate colonial and postcolonial histories and narratives by placing the perspectives of the colonized at the heart of their investigations.

However, these calls took on an added urgency and poignancy with the development of the ‘Rhodes Must Fall’ Campaign, which initially arose in South African universities. The campaign began on 9 March 2015 as a protest movement originally directed against a statue at the University of Cape Town (UCT) that commemorates Cecil Rhodes. The campaign for the statue’s removal received global attention, and led to a wider movement to decolonise education across South Africa. On 9 April 2015, following a UCT Council vote the previous night, the statue was removed. Rhodes Must Fall captured national headlines throughout 2015 and sharply divided white and black public opinion in South Africa.

The ‘Rhodes Must Fall’ campaign in South Africa inspired students at Oxford university, which was a major beneficiary of Cecil Rhodes’ bequests, which were used to build both Rhodes House in Oxford, as well as establish the well-known Rhodes Scholarships, established in 1902 to ‘promote unity between English-speaking nations and instill a sense of civic-minded leadership and moral fortitude in future leaders irrespective of their chosen career paths.’

Oxford students called in 2015 for a statue of Rhodes to be removed from Oriel College, and started a movement at the university to better represent non-white culture in the curriculum, in addition to fighting racial discrimination and insensitivity. Organising members of ‘Rhodes Must Fall’ in Oxford stated that awareness should be raised at the university about the institution’s role in slavery and colonialism and the violence that accompanied it, and that representation of black voices should be improved.

The ‘Rhodes Must Fall’ campaign also inspired students in other parts of the world, including in the US (one example of which was the Royall Must Fall campaign that called for the retirement of the Harvard Law School shield because of its links to slavery). These are hardly radical requests in 21st-century Britain, but the campaign in the UK sparked a lively and at times vicious national debate in the UK that fed into incipient culture wars of the time. Although dismissed as an initiative by and for insufficiently ‘rounded’ students and/or those fixated on ‘identity politics’, the Rhodes Must Fall campaign fed into a broader movement across UK academic, cultural, and other institutions, led not just by students but also academics, museum and other professionals, to decolonise UK institutions.

This movement continues to grow apace, and there are networks of UK academics and museum curators who are working to address the inequalities of access, experience, and ownership that arguably affect institutions in the UK, the Global North, and in Africa. One example of this is ‘Museum Detox’, a network of museum professionals who identify as people of colour who are working to ‘champion fair representation and inclusion of Black and other ethnic minority cultural, intellectual and creative contributions’ and ‘challenge…and deconstruct systems of inequality that exist to enable a sector where the workforce and audience is reflective of the UK’s 21st century population.’ It is important to stress, however, that the drive to decolonize institutions

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42 https://archive.org/details/lastwillestam00rhodiala/page/n6/mode/2up
43 https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-statue-of-cecil-rhodes-like-that-of-saddam-must-fall-sqtptrrvbl
44 https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2015/11/2/harvard-law-seal-change/
46 https://www.museumdetox.org/
and improve how artefacts are contextualized and displayed is somewhat separate from the issue of the removal of statues, even if the two are clearly interlinked.

The decolonisation debate also extends to African institutions, not least because museums and libraries were laid out along European lines during the colonial period in almost all African states. This is especially the case in relation to Egypt and Egyptology, for the reasons outlined above. But it also underlines a broader point about the collection, curation, and exhibition of artefacts in cultural institutions. The late Kenyan author Binyavanga Wainaina famously wrote of his sadness and anger at discovering a library in Nigeria that contained no literature by African authors; he refused to step foot there ever again.47

The toppling of the statue of Bristol slaver, Edward Colston, in the wake of the global reaction to the killing of George Floyd and the BLM movement, and the decision on 17 June 2020 by Oriel College to recommend the removal of the Rhodes statue, has provided added impetus to the decolonisation debate.

4.9 The Jesus College Cockerel and University Collections

The distinctions between University collections and UK government national collections is drawn out in brief in a Times Leader from 10th February 2020. The leader reminds us that universities are at greater liberty to succumb to calls for returning objects from their collections than state museums. As chief evidence the Benin Bronze cockerel held by Jesus College Cambridge is cited, having been ordered by vote of the college Junior Common Room to return the object to Nigeria. The Times makes the case that universities denude themselves of their primary role in education if they return such objects. However, the Jesus College Cockerel was gifted to the college due to its anthropomorphic similarity to the College’s crest, which displays three cockerels, rather than for any didactic purpose. In short it represents a simplistic symbol of a colonial wrong.

Where the Times is more thought provoking is in considering the provenance of the Benin Bronzes, down to the materiality of the objects. The metals used were traded by European traders in Benin in exchange for enslaved people, who were supplied as part of elaborate, pre-colonial trade in kidnapped and trafficked people. The context of the Bronzes, it is argued, might be seen therefore to be more European, and indeed this type of object history work has an increasing following among scholars of Africa, such as the work on tracing the sources of African Ivory by Ashley Coutu at the Pitt Rivers Museum. While the Times urges reflection on the complicated issues of the provenance of objects, it fails to explain why the descendants of slave traders in the UK are somehow more worthy guardians of these objects than the descendants of Africans traders in enslaved people.

More pertinently for our purposes, this example shows how much greater latitude university collections have in terms of restitution of artefacts, and this suggests that advocacy efforts targeted at UK universities with African collections have the potential to form one sub-strand of voluntary return agreements. This has taken on added relevance in the context of the recent decision by Oriel College in Oxford to recommend the removal of the statue of Cecil Rhodes in June 2020.

47 https://granta.com/binyavanga/
5. **Institutional Campaigns to Return the Benin Bronzes and Other Artefacts**

Having sketched the condition of international and British frameworks for return, we shall now progress to survey some of the key public and private players in the UK sphere, through the primary lens of the Benin Bronzes.

The most vocal literature comes from those attached to the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford. Dan Hicks, as Curator of Archaeology at the Pitt Rivers Museum of the University of Oxford, provides a constructive dialogue for contemporary restitution policy. His twitter feed offers an interesting public platform for engagement, and with a sizable following of c. 15,000 members communicates a clear message to a wide audience. His current work is focused upon an upcoming monograph of the Benin Bronzes. Alongside this he has been focused on a pair of wooden ceremonial Itsekiri paddles “on temporary display” before return to Nigeria.\(^{48}\)

In a separate online account, *The Brutish Museums*, Hicks and his colleagues seek more broadly to track, “colonial violence and African Cultural Restitution,” at the museum.\(^{49}\) The language used by Hicks is deliberately provocative and punchy, encoding a sophisticated message in the Twitter medium of 140 characters. This initially misleads the reader into believing the entire collection of artefacts in the museum is, “on temporary display,” and in the process of being returned to their country of origin. This is his intention, and only on further investigation does the reader learn that the temporary display relates only to the specific paddles, which in context are being returned from a private collection to the Royal Court of Benin, Nigeria, with the help and assistance of the Pitt Rivers Museum.\(^{50}\) The case of the private collector, Mr. Walker, is in itself interesting and will be discussed in the work of Marshall, below. The spears act to invite the reader to assess the status of other items in the museum’s collection and actively demonstrate the positive restitution policy that the museum is pursuing.

In January 2020 Hicks appeared on a BBC Radio 4 programme presented by Tristram Hunt, director of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.\(^{51}\) *Curating the Future* examined contentious aspects of the museum profession in the 21st century, and brings together senior curators from a selection of the largest museums across Europe and America. Hicks and his colleague Marenka Thompson-Odlum appear in the first episode alongside the directors of the British Museum and the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. The team at the Pitt Rivers Museum advocate a policy of engagement which places the needs of the ‘source community’ of the objects held in their collections at the top of their concerns.

Thompson-Odlum goes further to advance theories of restitution, which involve a wider level of accessibility to objects that is not necessarily achieved by only returning them to their place of origin. Other types of restitution or ‘restoration’ as we dub it in this mapping, can involve ensuring objects are correctly catalogued and displayed with contextualized labels. Thompson-Odlum’s project at the museum, *Enabling Matters*, seeks to find offensive language encoded in the museum’s exhibits, as well as trace the evolution of language from the displays. An example of note is the case in the Museum, “Human Form and Art” which from 1890 was entitled, “Savage Art,” and in 2002 renamed, “Tribal and Folk Art.” ‘Restoration’ is being performed in the context of continual (re)evaluation.

\(^{48}\)https://twitter.com/profdanhicks?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor
\(^{49}\)https://twitter.com/BrutishMuseum
\(^{50}\)https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/dec/17/soldiers-grandson-to-return-items-looted-from-benin-city-nigeria
\(^{51}\)https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000d7f; https://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/news/curating-the-future.
The Pitt Rivers Museum provides a fascinating example of the engagement of a 19th century collection with the contemporary world. The work of Pickering (2007) highlights that such actions should be contextualized to understand the potential benefit to be held to the host institution in enacting a positive restitution policy. Using the case study of the large-scale restitution of Aboriginal remains by National Museum of Australia; Pickering shows that although the efforts of the museum are led by a moral obligation, underlying these actions is a calculation which asks the question, “What’s in it for us?” – distinguishing here that “us” means both the museum and, as he terms them, its clients, of which the restitution communities prove a small portion, with others including visitors to the museum and academics working with artefacts.

To Pickering, the engagement of the National Museum of Australia in the restitution of human remains illustrates the delicate political balance, which emphasises that in the overall picture, restitution is one component of the complex role which museums play in our society. We should be careful not to extend the use of the word “us” to be a disingenuous universal. In the wrong context, this would be used to suggest that all people have an equal voice in the restitution process, which given the imbalance of power is not the case. Pickering would do well not to disguise his intentions which in and of themselves are valuable: it is natural for a museum to ask if it will in some way benefit from any restitution, through added footfall or an increased collection.

The powerful statements made by the curatorial team at the Pitt Rivers Museum juxtapose with the more restricted reality. As part of the University of Oxford, the museum works to the same framework as the other university collections, chiefly the Ashmolean Museum. In place for the past fifteen years is a Human Remains policy which seeks to actively return them to source communities. A wider restitution policy, focused also on the return of objects from the museum collections, such as the substantial hoard from the Benin expedition in 1897 cannot under such a framework be enacted at present and requires active cooperation with a number of other players within the university.

The curatorial team at the Pitt Rivers Museum are more than aware of this and so have sought to employ more subtle techniques of restitution, such as playing an active part in the restitution of objects from private collections, and in the internal ‘restoration’ of objects through a relabeling exercise inside the museum. Such acts are entirely within the interests of the institution, making the space relevant to the contemporary audience while at the same time preserving, as Hicks describes on Radio 4, “one of the great museum moments,” to the visitor to the gloomy late 19th century exhibition hall.

The curators at the Pitt Rivers museum provide a substantial output of independent literature to be critiqued and understood but they like other UK institutions are constrained by the wider consideration that their museum does not exist in isolation. The same is true for the collection of the British Museum, which highlighted by Hunt (2020) is positioned against the deaccessioning of objects by The British Museum Act 1963. This puts it in a similar politicised position to the Pitt Rivers. Instead of actively pursuing a returns policy, the work of the British Museum is more focused on dialogue, through its commitment to loan objects to the Royal Museum of Benin. Marshall (2020) offers the most dynamic proposal, suggesting that a series of loans could work on permanent rotation offering a constantly changing collection. However, such a proposition would be foreshadowed by costs of constant relocation, and so seems unlikely. The British

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52 https://www.glam.ox.ac.uk/human-remains-policy#Claims
53 https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/23/arts/design/benin-bronzes.html?fbclid=IwAR3Eqh3ZqWzPvtBH-9AnDE6HN-8NHP1t2T24kOvCA0L3aK3GPxqhw

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Museum, like the Pitt Rivers Museum is involved in the Benin Dialogue Group, and will chair the forthcoming meeting in 2020.54

Further to Pickering (2007), Jenkins (2016) provides an analysis of the ‘classic case’ debates including the Benin Bronzes. In this she provides a useful set of arguments that ultimately argues for the benefits of keeping objects in the museums to which they have traditionally been associated. The greatest value of Jenkins’ work is found in the case she makes which demonstrates that so often in the narrative of restitution of artefacts, the intellectual field is being occupied by those without any responsibility for the care of the objects. Highlighted in Marshall (2020) is the case of Mr. Dunstone, the amateur lobbyist on behalf of the Oba of Benin, who by his own admission had not heard of the Benin Bronzes until he was asked to help return them in 2004.55

Like Hicks, several curators are active participants on the digital stage of Twitter. Ellie Miles, Curator at the London Transport Museum, makes a valid point which helps to critique the argument of Jenkins and others. Using the language of “repatriation,” she argues that all in the sector need to be aware of the context denuded of objects in museum collections, irrespective of whether individual collections have objects in need of restitution themselves.56 Her approach is a simple one: to be vigilant to the concerns of the industry in general, and to plan for the future, putting object context at the centre of all new acquisitions. Thus, restitution of artefacts in her eyes will lead the way for better archiving techniques that will have industry-wide implications, demonstrating how progressive practice in what Pickering sees as being only a small part of the wider role of Museums can have a positive impact on the greater whole.

Where Jenkins sees trouble in innocent bystanders becoming involved in debates, Miles advocates that even innocent bystanders within the museum profession must also have a role. In this she includes herself and her collection in the London Transport Museum. It is a collection that does not need repatriating but one that might benefit from active engagement in the object histories of its collections. Such a policy looks forward to the future as well as back to the past.

6. Principal Pathways for Return of African Artefacts from UK collections

Following Robertson (2019), this mapping report argues that there are four principal pathways to return of African artefacts from UK collections.

Two of these consist of legal routes to the restitution of African artefacts: seeking to change the law, through lobbying and advocacy of MPs and peers, and use of procedural measures such as private members’ bills (a path being explored by the JustGhana group for the return of the Asantehene’s royal regalia); or taking legal test cases through the courts to challenge retention of specific objects by UK institutions.57

A third approach, which is appropriate for sub-national collections that are not subject to legal restrictions is the conclusion of voluntary return agreements for specific items whose return has

55https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/23/arts/design/benin-bronzes.html?fbclid=IwAR3Eqh3ZgWzPvtBHi9AnDE0HN--8NHPI_WITi2RYG6MOVyCA0LbaK3Gpxqhw
56https://twitter.com/ellie__miles/status/122467976957142017
57 The Asantehene is the formal title of the King of the Asante (sometimes rendered as ‘Ashanti’ in English)
been requested, as in the case of the Jesus College Cockerel above. This is likely to be applicable to local, regional and university collections.

The fourth main approach may be termed ‘other forms of return’, such as agreements for the loan (on a revolving, long-term or permanent basis) of items to institutions in countries of origin. This is the model proposed by Tristram Hunt for the return of Ethiopian artefacts held by the Victoria and Albert Museum, and has also been suggested by British Museum curators as an alternative compromise to return objects without changing the law.

While this latter route is clearly preferred by some UK institutions, it has encountered resistance from some in countries of origin and in the diaspora, who argue (not unreasonably) that this is an attempt to avoid more difficult questions about ownership; from this perspective, stolen items should be returned first, then African institutions or individuals they have been returned to can then agree to loan them (on a revolving, short, long, or permanent basis) to other institutions.

Practically, however, long-term or permanent loans are likely to form an important strand in any campaign to return artefacts from British institutions as until the law changes in the UK, this will be the most likely route for returns from national collections.

7. Mapping Research Findings

7.1 Key Findings – Key Informant Interviews

20 Key Informant Interviews were conducted as part of the mapping exercise. Respondents included museum professionals in the UK diaspora professionals with experience of the arts and culture sectors, as well as background conversations with officials in Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Ghana, as well as representatives of the Ethiopian Embassy in the UK. Several museum professionals in the UK would not speak on the record, largely due to how controversial the topic of restitution of African artefacts has proved in the UK in recent months, with a high profile and at times rancorous debate conducted in the local and national media on the topic in response to returns (and proposed returns) of African artefacts.

Respondents were asked a range of questions about their Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) in relation to restitution of African artefacts and human remains from UK museums and cultural institutions. Once completed, interviews underwent textual and thematic analysis to identify key themes and issues, which are presented here.

7.2 Attitudes to Restitution of African Human Remains

There was a unanimous consensus among all interview respondents that human remains should be returned to their country and community of origin, where these could be identified. All interview respondents acknowledged that the frameworks for return of human remains were well established, and models of good practice in this regard have been developed by institutions such as the Liverpool World Museum, the Manchester Museum, the Pitt Rivers Museum, and the Horniman Museum. All museum professionals interviewed took pains to stress the importance of treating human remains with dignity, and stressed the duty of care of museums and other institutions to ensure human remains were handled respectfully. It was considered industry practice by all museum professionals interviewed not to display human remains less than 1000
years old. However, the question of why human remains are displayed at all remains unanswered.

Interview respondents also noted the need for due process to be observed in approaching the issue of return of human remains. Typically, this process consists of a request for human remains to be returned to the community of descendants that the remains were taken from, once provenance has been established. This can throw up complications – in the case of returning human remains to a country, where should they be returned to, a national level institution (such as a museum), or to the communities whose ancestors they are? However, models of good practice deployed by UK museums include working in partnership with local communities of descendants and national and local institutions in the country of origin to agree the best resting place for the returned human remains.

Some cases of human remains were less clear-cut and more contentious. The body of Prince Alemayehu, an Ethiopian prince who was taken by British forces after the Maqdala punitive campaign to the UK and was brought up in Queen Victoria’s household, is buried in Windsor Castle. Requests from the Ethiopian government for his return from the 1960s onwards have been consistently rejected, with the reason given that the Prince’s body was buried with other bodies and so it would not be possible to disinter his body without disturbing the remains of others. However, some interviewees expressed some doubts over the moral case for his remains to be returned, given that the Prince was instructed to join the British by his mother and so was not a captive or abduction; and also the fact that he was brought up within the Royal Household as a family member until his death at a young age from illness which, some argued, means that his connection with the UK is stronger than his connection to Ethiopia.

7.3 Attitudes to Restitution of African artefacts

Regarding restitution of African artefacts, there was a fairly clear split between most museum professionals on the one hand, and many diaspora and African respondents on the other, regarding the case for the return of stolen African artefacts. While all accepted that the moral case for return of stolen artefacts was largely unarguable where provenance can be established, museum professionals, even those who were sympathetic, tended to be somewhat more cautious about returns, stressing the need to satisfy certain strict criteria.

These included: whether a request for return (as opposed to information requests) had been received, whether the provenance of the artefact has been established beyond doubt, whether the institution or individual making the request can prove their claim to ownership, and whether the institution or individual has the capacity to preserve and/or exhibit the artefact. These criteria set a high bar in practical terms of return of stolen African artefacts from UK collections, but they also limit in real terms the number of artefacts that could be returned, disproving commonly expressed fears that return of artefacts would lead to an emptying of UK museum collections.

Diaspora and African respondents also acknowledged the need for nuance in treating return requests, but were more likely to be sympathetic to the basic principle that all stolen artefacts should be returned, even though several were cautious about the capacity of African museums and other institutions to preserve or exhibit such artefacts to the same high standards as in UK institutions. However, this position may result from an outdated understanding of the resources and capacities of African museums and cultural institutions. As the examples of Egypt, Ghana, and Senegal show, African states are increasingly investing in building the capacity of these.
All interview respondents cited the legal barriers to returns from national collections as being the biggest single barrier to achieving greater restitution of stolen artefacts.

7.4 Attitudes to Different Forms of Restitution

7.4.1 Duty of care for collections

Interview respondents described several forms as well as pathways for returning artefacts. These were often framed as part of a process of decolonising museums, libraries, and other institutions, a process which all museum staff interviewed mentioned unprompted. Similarly, all museum professionals stressed the need for, and their institution’s policy around, treating artefacts (as well as human remains) with dignity and a ‘duty of care’ approach to the items in their collections.

It is important to note too that all interview respondents recognized that museum professionals cared deeply about the preservation of items in their collection, and for which they had undergone long periods of professional and academic training.

7.4.2 Improved contextualization and display

The most common forms of ‘symbolic’ restitution or ‘restoration’ cited were improving the descriptions and display contexts for African artefacts to better convey their true meaning, significance, and history for the people they were taken from. Diaspora professionals interviewed felt this was important work, especially in the context of decolonising museum spaces, but argued that this was not really a form of restitution and that describing this as such was a ‘cop out’ by their colleagues in museums. It might be better understood as ‘restoration.’

7.4.3 Need to catalogue African artefacts in UK collections

Another symbolic act of ‘restoration’ cited was improving the cataloguing of African artefacts in museum and other collections. All interview participants noted that this was an important stock-taking activity, and in several cases UK museums have not fully catalogued the African items in their collections. This is significant too as the total number of African artefacts held in UK collections is currently unknown; although museum professionals interviewed estimated that the total was likely to be in the hundreds of thousands, if not higher. Most African artefacts in UK museums are not on display and are held in storage. One respondent suggested that one strategy that could be deployed by diaspora communities in this regard was to make information requests for African items in museum collections, with the aim of creating a flood of information requests, rather like a Distributed Denial of Service (DDOS) attacks on websites, in order to encourage museum administrations to catalogue African artefacts in their collections more thoroughly and be more sympathetic to return requests.

7.4.4 Use of replicas

One other form of symbolic return or ‘restoration’ cited by some interviewees was that of using replicas in UK museums and collections to replace items that had been returned. Such replicas could also take the form of works made by artists, or in one unusual example, microfiches of Swahili manuscripts in Tanzania held by SOAS library were digitized and returned to Tanzania to replace the original manuscripts that had been destroyed by fire there. Use of replicas in museums and collections is not uncommon in other parts of the world, such as South Asia, where...
geopolitical tensions have made it difficult for originals to be retained or alternatively returned, but its use in UK collections seems to be rather limited.\(^{58}\)

### 7.4.5 Returning looted artefacts

All museum professionals interviewed stated they were keen to see more artefacts returned where these could clearly be demonstrated to be looted and where provenance was clearly established, and stressed models of good practice in this regard, such as those utilized by Manchester Museum for the return of sacred objects to Aboriginal and Pacific Islands peoples last year. They were also keen to stress that the question of returns was not straightforward and required great nuance and sensitivity.

### 7.4.6 Loaning artefacts to countries of origin

The idea of loaning items back to institutions in their countries of origin was also cited by several interviewees as another form or restitution they were keen to explore. However, long-term or permanent loans were often controversial in communities in countries of origin as well as in the diaspora, who argue that items should not be loaned back when they were stolen in the first place; rather, these should be returned as a matter of principle. For example, this has made the Ethiopian government cautious about requesting long-term loans (such as proposed by the director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, Dr Tristram Hunt) as the concept of such loans is seen as very controversial for many Ethiopians. There was thus a difference of view between museum professionals and governments on the one hand, who are interested to explore the use of loans as a form of return, and communities of origin in Africa and in the diaspora, many of whom feel such loans are unethical.

### 7.4.7 Ambivalence towards legal changes

Equally, there seemed little enthusiasm from museum professionals interviewed for working to achieve legal changes to enable items to be returned, especially from national collections, although they were happy for other actors, and in particular community activists, to try to achieve this. In part this lack of enthusiasm was attributed to a realistic appraisal of the challenges involved in getting the law changed, as well as a lack of time and resources, but another factor was also a concern to avoid any potential conflicts of interest with museum management or donors.

### 7.4.8 Issues of Diversity among Museum Professionals and the Decolonisation Agenda

Several museum professionals also cited the importance and value of community outreach to diaspora communities in particular to encourage these to engage with institutions and with specific artefacts or collections with which they have a historical connection. This was also felt to be important as part of a process of informing young people in Britain about British history, especially its (post)-colonial history, in order to encourage civic participation and also greater equalities.

However, African diaspora and other minority museum professionals expressed concerns about such outreach and how it was framed. Some noted how diaspora and minority museum staff

\(^{58}\) For example, see Anwar Akhtar (2019), Lahore’s Best Kept Secret: the Lahore Museum
were increasingly being tasked with community engagement or outreach activities, at the expense of the curatorial duties for which they were trained. Several expressed this to AFFORD’s researchers as a case of ‘tokenism’, stressing the lack of diversity among museum professionals and the need for black and other minority museum professionals skills and experience, especially in relation to specialist language skills, to be valued properly by their institutions.

Several decolonisation working groups have been established within the museums and higher education sectors, including within the Association of Museum Studies. These have a number of objectives, some of which are directly relevant to the question of returns: challenging and transforming the colonial structures and frameworks of museums and collections; examining how items in collections are displayed and described; advocating for greater engagement of museums and institutions with diaspora and other minority communities; and encouraging greater recruitment of diaspora and other minority staff by such institutions. This is important work: in the words of one interviewee the museums and archaeological sectors are ‘almost 100% white’, a state of affairs which has implications for the skills and scholarship of museum staff, archaeologists, and ethnographers, especially in terms of working in and on different world regions.

The network ‘Museum Detox’ cited in the literature review is one leading example of diaspora museum professionals working to address barriers to equality of access, of experience, and of professional advancement across the sector. However, while an important constituency in this area, it should also be noted that Museum Detox has a slightly ambivalent approach to restitution of artefacts from UK museums and other collections, as their strategic focus is on removing barriers to black and other minority staff and communities within museums, rather than advocating for return of stolen items. Indeed, a few interviewees noted that this had created internal tensions within the organization as some members felt this was something it should be focusing on.

7.5 Differences in Perception on Restitution

Another issue highlighted by interviewees – which was also echoed in the diaspora Focus Group Discussions (see below) – was the gap in perceptions and knowledge between museum professionals and diaspora community members. Several interviewees noted that while there was widespread awareness within diaspora communities that UK museums and collections held stolen artefacts and human remains from Africa and other world regions, there was often a poor awareness of what items there were exactly, their provenance (contested or otherwise), and the challenges that had to be overcome for them to be returned.

The one obvious point of difference between non-diaspora and diaspora professionals interviewed was on the moral case for returns. Diaspora respondents almost unanimously argued that stolen artefacts – or artefacts procured under the threat of colonial violence – should be returned as a point of principle. Conversely, non-diaspora professionals were much more cautious and dispassionate about this question, even though they stressed they were aware of the sensitivity of these issues to diaspora communities. Some interviewees also drew attention to the perception gap between diaspora communities and the broader British public, and speculated that the indifference of the broader public to the issue of restitution was symptomatic of not only media and nationalist discourses, but also because they have not had the experience of having ‘their’ artefacts stolen from them. These interviewees suggested that any advocacy
activities or campaigns therefore should consider the value of raising awareness of the issue of restitution of stolen African artefacts both amongst diaspora communities (and especially young people in the diaspora) and among the general public. Several museum professionals interviewed argued that a valuable and effective strategy in this regard would be to frame any such campaign in terms of anti-racism or pro-equalities in order to win allies and build a wider movement of public support for various forms of restitution. The BLM movement has now considerably raised awareness of these issues amongst the general public.

Other interviewees also noted that while a given diaspora community was likely to be well aware of its own treasures, there was often limited awareness of artefacts from other African regions. Some interviewees also pointed out that while awareness of Egyptological collections in general among African diaspora communities in the UK was quite widespread, there was a common misunderstanding concerning Ancient Egyptian human remains that these should be returned, even though because of their great antiquity there was little or no case for doing so. The failure to identify Ancient Egyptian artefacts as 'African' rather than 'classical European' was raised by several interviewees, opening up another area on how collections are presented and labelled as part of a potential ‘restoration’ project.

7.6 Capacity Needs in the African Museums and Cultural Sectors and the Potential for Developing Heritage and Culture Tourism in African States

Interviewees were asked questions about the need to build the capacity of African museums and other institutions to preserve and display properly any items returned. All interviewees felt this was an important area of activity, and some pointed to precedents in this regard, in particular technical support from the British Museum and financial support from agencies such as DFID to the Baghdad Museum after it was looted in 2003.

Both white professionals and diaspora professionals working in the culture sectors expressed concerns about the capacity of African institutions to preserve and safeguard artefacts, especially in countries affected by conflict and instability, such as Mali or Nigeria. In the Nigerian context, a few interviewees stated that state-run museums lacked the capacity and skills to display and preserve Nigerian artefacts appropriately, and argued that private galleries may be better able to do so, suggesting this could form the basis for innovative public-private partnerships in the country.

However, other interviewees argued that existing institutions were best placed to hold and preserve such items. This was particularly the case with sacred objects, such as the Ethiopian tabots, which have been looked after and revered by Ethiopian Orthodox Churches for millennia, and also for royal regalia, which can also have important ceremonial functions, such as the royal regalia of the Asante King of Ghana, the Asantehene.

Interview respondents were asked about their interest in providing capacity-building technical support to African museums and institutions. All interviewees expressed that they would be interested in doing so, assuming resources were available for this and that such technical support could be provided without jeopardizing existing professional and family commitments. Equally, it should be noted that interviewees expressed skepticism that public funding would be allocated.
for this purpose, noting in particular how limited resources were in the UK museums and cultural sector for existing staffing and exhibitions.

At the same time, several museum professionals (and some diaspora professionals) interviewed also expressed skepticism about the viability of plans of several African nations to develop their heritage and tourism sectors through return of artefacts from UK museum collections. They were doubtful, despite the success of Ghana's year of Return, that this could form the basis of any upsurge in the tourism economies of those countries without substantial investment in other forms of infrastructure needed to support increased tourism.59

8. Key Findings – Online Survey

The online survey targeting the UK African diaspora was launched in March 2020 and received a total of 184 responses by March 28, 2020. The survey was distributed through AFFORD Website, Newsletter, social media (Facebook, Instagram and twitter), and snowballed through other diaspora networks. Results of the online survey are presented below.

The survey had a target of 150 diaspora respondents, based on AFFORD’s experiences of uptake rates of online surveys by this group. It was significant therefore that this internal stretch target was exceeded, and this suggests that there is growing interest and support for AFFORD’s Return of the Icons programme, and for return of African artefacts from UK museums and collections.

8.1 Demographics

8.1.1 Age distribution of respondents

The graph above shows the age group 55-64 forming the highest number of respondents, representing over 28%. The 35-44 age group was second, representing over 24% of respondents, followed by the 45-54 age group at over 19% and the 25-34 age group at over 16%. The oldest and youngest sample cohorts were the smallest, each representing around 5% of the sample. The survey format may also have proved less appealing to younger respondents, while the older cohort are less likely to be online.

59 Ghana’s Minister of Tourism, Barbara Oteng Gyasi, said the Year of Return had injected about $1.9bn (£1.5bn) into the economy. See https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-51191409
8.1.2 Location of respondents

Over 64% of survey respondents were London-based and with the rest of the over 35% were based in Southern England, Northern England, Midlands, Scotland, and Wales. This is consistent with demographic trends for African diaspora communities in the UK, 80% of whom are based in Greater London or the Southeast of England.

8.1.3 Previous experience in the sector or in campaigns for return

Respondents were asked whether they were currently working, or had previously worked for organisations or institutions involved with the return, preservation or study of cultural artefacts.

161 people representing over 89% of respondents did not have any background with the return, preservation or study of cultural artefacts. 19 respondents representing over 10% work within the sector.
8.1.4 Knowledge of cultural artefacts and campaigns to return them

Just over half of respondents rated their knowledge of African artefacts and attempts to return them as either average or above average. This is in line with the research team’s expectations, and suggests awareness of these artefacts is relatively high. It would be interesting to ask this survey question to the broader British population as this could indicate any degree of variance with this sample of African diaspora respondents.

8.1.5 Number of visits to a museum or institution housing African cultural artefacts

75 of respondents representing over 41% visit museums and institutions housing African cultural artefacts more than once a year. 45 respondents (representing 25% of the survey sample) visit museums and institutions more than once in the last 5 years, 41 (representing over 22% of the survey sample) visited more than once. 9 respondents (representing 5% of the survey sample) visit museums once in the last 5 years, and 10 respondents (representing over 5% of the survey sample) have never been to museums and institutions that house African cultural artefacts. This is consistent with the findings of the DCMS...
Taking Part Survey: England Adult Report (2018/19), which found that 68.5% of those who described themselves as ‘Black’ engaged with arts institutions at least once a year.\(^{60}\)

8.1.6 Accessibility of visits to museums and cultural institutions by diaspora communities.

On average, 53% of survey respondents overall stated that they felt museums and other cultural institutions were accessible to diaspora communities. Interestingly 14% of respondents, the highest number of respondents allocated to any score, stated that they felt these institutions were extremely accessible for diaspora communities.

8.1.7 Trusted sources of information to find out about cultural artefacts and their restitution

Survey respondents were asked what sources of information they trusted on issues related to African artefacts and their return.

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Interestingly, while ‘community groups and word of mouth’ was a popular choice at 62%, academic journals came in slightly higher at 63%, and newspapers were only trusted by 31% of respondents. This may reflect broader public distrust in the media, and also that academic journals are seen as more credible sources. The 16% of respondents who said they trusted other sources gave examples that fell into three main categories: African scholars, community elders (who were perceived to have a better understanding of the history of artefacts that were taken from them), and international organisations such as UNESCO.

8.1.8 Awareness of history and stories of how those artefacts ended up in British cultural institutions

The average level of awareness of the history of African artefacts in UK museums expressed by respondents was 47%, and the largest number of respondents (29 out of 174) stated they had little or no awareness of this history. However, 20% of respondents rated their level of awareness as 80% or higher.

8.1.9 Reasons cited for lack of knowledge about the history of African artefacts in UK collections
Respondents indicated that the most significant reason for lack of knowledge about the history of African artefacts in UK collections was a lack of teaching in schools, representing over 78%, followed by lack of accurate information by museums or cultural institutions at just over 60% (in dark blue in the chart above).

55% of respondents also noted that the lack of awareness of the history of these artefacts during Black History Month (in orange in the chart above) was a reason, while 13% (the only option less than 50 %) felt a lack of awareness by African diaspora/heritage community groups or Saturday schools was the key issue (in light blue in the chart above).

8.2 Preferred means of receiving information on cultural artefacts

Respondents indicated that the way they would most prefer to receive information about African cultural artefacts was through hands-on collaboration between diaspora/heritage community groups, with over 78% of respondents (in light blue in the chart above).

A high proportion, over 70%, also felt that special programmes delivered by museums and cultural institutions would be their preferred means of learning more about African artefacts (in dark blue in the chart above). This was followed closely by 67% of respondents who felt that official programme such as Black History Month should include learning about African artefacts in UK museums, followed by teaching in schools (in yellow in the chart above).

A further 16% suggested other forms of education, such as arts and storytelling as well as multimedia. These results show there is clearly a significant appetite for learning more about African artefacts in UK collections.

8.2.1 Awareness that the remains of African people, including skulls, are also held in some British museums and institutions.
56% of respondents stated that they were aware that the remains of African people, including skulls and other body parts, are held in UK museums and other cultural institutions.

8.2.3 Interest in return of human remains to their country of origin

An overwhelming majority of respondents (82%) indicated that they believe very strongly that human remains should be returned to their countries of origin. This strength of feeling was anticipated by the research team, but not to such a great extent.

8.2.4 Beliefs that cultural artefacts should be returned to their country of origin?

Respondents were asked to rate how strongly they believed African artefacts should be returned to their country of origin, and again an overwhelming majority (79%) expressed a very strong belief that such artefacts should be returned. Again, this very high degree of enthusiasm for return was not anticipated by the research team.
8.2.5  Awareness of specific artefacts

Finally, respondents were also asked to nominate their favourite African artefacts in UK museums. Answers were varied, but clustered around three main collections: the Benin Bronzes (40% of respondents), the Egyptological collection in the British Museum (36% of respondents), and Ethiopian artefacts held in various collections (24% of respondents). This suggests that while knowledge of specific African artefacts may be limited by the survey group, there is likely to be value in building campaigns to raise awareness around specific items.

Circumstances in which artefacts should not be returned to their country of origin

Respondents were asked if there were any circumstances under which artefacts should not be returned to their countries of origin. 81 respondents, representing over 45%, indicated that there were no circumstances under which artefacts should not be returned, while over 39% indicated that there are circumstances in which it is not appropriate to do so. Reasons given for not wanting artefacts or remains to be returned centred on conflict and instability and corruption.

The question was deliberately left open, however, and answers to this question may have differed if more qualifications of the types of circumstances which might prevent the return of artefacts (e.g. conflict or natural disasters) were provided.

8.3  Interest in getting involved in campaigns to raise awareness about the return of African artefacts and human remains from UK museums
Respondents were asked what forms of involvement would most interest them, if they wanted to get involved in efforts to raise awareness about, or campaign for, the return of African human remains and artefacts from UK museums or cultural institutions. Over 68% of respondents wanted to be kept informed by email updates and newsletters, with a similar proportion, 64%, expressing an interest in attending events on this topic. A further 48% of respondents stated they would like to be involved by attending webinars. Nearly 40% stated they would like to be involved by joining campaigns and advocacy projects, and a further 35% stated an interest in getting involved by disseminating information to their community. These results suggest diaspora communities are very eager to get involved in campaigns for the return of African artefacts from UK collections and are interested in doing so using a range of methods.

8.3.1 Support for those involved in campaigns to return human remains or cultural artefacts to Africa

Respondents who were already involved in such campaigns were asked what types of support they would like to assist them in the activities. Over 42% of respondents stated they would like to be supported by connecting them to other organisations or people working in this area, followed by over 38% who said they wanted support in promotion and campaigning. A further 33% of respondents requested support via expert advice and guidance, and 30% cited other forms of support, although responses to this ‘other, please specify’ option suggest many of these were using this option to indicate they are not already involved in such campaigns or activities but would like to do so. Interestingly, fundraising support was the least preferred option, cited by only 19% of respondents.

9. Key Findings – Focus Group Discussions

Three Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were held remotely with diaspora community members as part of the mapping exercise to drill down on emerging issues from the survey. Two of these were held with West African (and some Caribbean) diaspora members, while a third was conducted with a mixed group of Rastafarians and Ethiopians.

Focus group participants were asked a range of questions about their Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) in relation to restitution of African artefacts and human remains from UK collections.
museums and cultural institutions and key emerging issues from the survey. Once completed, the focus group discussions underwent textual and thematic analysis to identify key themes and issues, which are presented here.

9.1 Awareness of African Artefacts and Human Remains in UK Museums and Collections

Participants in all three focus groups expressed a high level of awareness in general terms of the fact that British museums and institutions hold significant numbers of stolen objects. There was also a high level of awareness of certain high-profile artefacts and remains linked to their own community of origin, or nearby communities of origin.

With diaspora respondents of West African heritage, many cited the examples of the Benin Bronzes, or the Asante King’s Royal Regalia. Similarly, Ethiopian and Rastafarian focus group respondents cited examples of the Maqdala hoard, the dresses of Empress Terunesh (held in the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology and the V&A), or the remains of Prince Alemayehu. However, awareness of what African artefacts were held in UK collections beyond those with which they had a community or cultural connection was limited.

Knowledge of artefacts and cultural heritage was also seen as important for the education of young people in the diaspora, and most participants felt that school curricula in the UK were sorely lacking in terms of British colonial history and the history of Africa and its diaspora. Education about African artefacts in the UK and their history was also seen as important to help second and third-generation diaspora learn about their parents’ and grandparents’ culture and heritage. Several participants noted that Black History Month was a potentially important opportunity in terms of highlighting the existence of stolen African artefacts as well as educating the next generation of diasporans and wider communities in the UK about their history.

Most participants stated that they had visited museums and other cultural institutions to view African artefacts in the last two years. They did not cite any barriers to accessing museums, but this could be a result of sample bias as the majority of respondents were based in London and the Southeast, and have access to good public transport networks and free access to many museums.

9.2 The Case for Return of Stolen African Artefacts

Respondents in all three focus group discussions argued unanimously that human remains should be returned. Similarly, all focus group participants argued that sacred objects, objects with important ceremonial functions, and objects with a clear owner (such as royal regalia) should be a priority for return. At the same time, participants were aware of some of the complexities surrounding provenance and noted there were examples where African artefacts were acquired through trade or as gifts.

Equally, participants when asked identified circumstances where artefacts should not be returned, in particular during times of war, conflict, natural disaster, or other humanitarian crises (although one exception to this was cited, where return of an artefact could help with peacemaking or unifying a country affected by disaster). Over two-thirds of participants agreed that the UK should help build capacity in, and provide expertise to, African museums and
institutions, both as a form of reparations for colonial crimes and interestingly to support better bi-lateral relations with the UK. Several participants speculated that African states may in the future demand concessions on return of their stolen artefacts as part of trade negotiations, post-Brexit.

Focus group participants of Caribbean heritage were also supportive of the return of stolen African artefacts to their countries of origin, although a few did express a slightly more nuanced position; while they felt the moral case for their return was impeccable, they also acknowledged that their communities had their own relationship with these artefacts, mediated through a shared history of enslavement and colonial rule, and they also appreciated the opportunity to see these artefacts here in the UK.

9.3 Awareness of Barriers to Restitution

Awareness of the barriers to restoring African artefacts to their countries and communities of origin was limited. Very few focus group participants were aware that it is currently illegal for national collections such as the British Museum to return items in their collection under most circumstances. Indeed, most focus group participants expressed surprise (if not exactly shock) that this legal impediment was in effect.

When asked what they considered to be the barriers to return of artefacts, several suggested that one barrier was the fear of British museums that their collections would end up being emptied out, which is an interesting reflection of common media and public discourses in the UK, while others stressed that many of the stolen items were literally priceless, which served as a further disincentive to their return. Others felt that the museum profession had too much invested (emotionally and in employment terms) to be able to act as ‘honest brokers’ in support of the restitution of African artefacts.

Most participants had some awareness of the importance of provenance and the complexities this could entail, even if they did not have knowledge of the technical details. Several participants cited the importance of establishing the conditions in which the artefacts were received and noted that many objects may not have ended up in UK museums as a result of looting or plunder; and also that establishing to who exactly artefacts should be returned could be contentious.

9.4 Involvement in Campaigns for Return

Participants were asked if they were involved, or interested in being involved, in campaigns for the return of African artefacts. Some participants reported they had supported online and other campaigns for return of specific artefacts, such as the Ghanaian artefacts or the Ethiopian tabots, but the majority had not participated in such campaigns.

Nevertheless, all participants expressed great interest and willingness to take part in such campaigns in the future, both from the perspective of helping to return African artefacts to their country of origin and also as a way of educating young people in the diaspora about their heritage, as well as the broader public about British history.
10. Analysis of Findings – Mapping the Communities of Advocacy Practice Involved in Restitution of African artefacts and remains.

Overall knowledge and awareness of specific items and campaigns for their return among survey participants was relatively high in relation to artefacts linked to their own communities of origin and heritage, even if awareness of other communities’ artefacts and other campaigns for return were limited. This suggests there is potential for advocacy and education around a broader range of campaigns for returns that seeks to raise the profile of specific artefacts from different African regions. This promises to build a momentum of public opinion within the diaspora, which will form an important part of any advocacy campaign for the return of artefacts.

At the same time, the findings also suggest there are gaps (or a gulfs even) in perception between museum professionals, diaspora communities, and the broader public in the UK. Simply put, diaspora communities and individuals tended to feel much more strongly about the issue of returns than museum professionals, or the broader public in the UK. Their starting position is that stolen artefacts should be returned on a point of principle, and then there can be discussions about loaning heritage to different collections around the world.

They also view these artefacts and their return as important in teaching the next generations about their history, a viewpoint echoed by African government stakeholders. Diaspora respondents argued persuasively that education about the history of these items was important both in terms of teaching British history in schools, and for teaching about the history of their own communities.

Museum professionals interviewed were broadly supportive of the need for returns, but they were keenly aware of the practical, legal, and logistical challenges involved in doing so. They were also keen to encourage diaspora communities to develop their relationship with their institutions and improve accessibility to these.

This suggests too that a community of advocacy practice and accompanying campaigns for the return of African artefacts needs to target all of these groups: diaspora communities, museum professionals, and the broader public in order to build a momentum of public opinion in the UK for a change in official policy on returns. This is all the more important in the context of how the issue of restitution of artefacts in UK museums and collections has become another front in the incipient culture wars of the 2010s, and indeed used as a wedge issue by different interests, including the UK government. The BLM has also provided opportunities for new conversations and actions around these issues.

The current UK government, however, remains deeply opposed to any returns from UK collections, and has made its position clear in this regard: in April 2019 the then Culture Secretary Jeremy Wright ruled out legal changes to enable restitution of artefacts, preferring instead to focus on ‘collaboration and long-term loans’ and emphasising the need for museums as ‘single points where people can see multiple things’.61

This clearly echoes the position of the British Museum and some other collections. These arguments also appear to be in bad faith on two levels: even accepting the principle of long term, revolving loans, the costs would be prohibitive, and the recent pandemic and COVID-19 shutdown has increasingly forced museums into the digital space, a trend that is likely to continue after the shutdown. It is likely too that museums are aware of the sensitivities regarding loaning of artefacts among communities of origin and in the diaspora, which can militate against the return of artefacts on this basis.

This situation suggests that campaigns for the return of artefacts will need to influence public opinion as well as that of diaspora communities in order to pressure policy-makers to shift their position on this issue.

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The mapping also identified several key groups of actors and campaigns working in this area, and it will be important moving forward for the work of these to be supported, and amplified. The Pitt Rivers Museum, the Benin Dialogue Group, JustGhana’s work campaigning for the return of the Asante King’s royal regalia, the campaign to return the Maqdala hoard, and Museum Detox are all carrying out excellent work, but could benefit from greater engagement with diaspora communities around a range of issues. Meanwhile, diaspora groups are keen to get involved, both as a means of educating their young people and through building relationships with local and national institutions, as well as campaigning for return of artefacts of special importance to them. However, they are limited in capacity and resources and could benefit from greater resources, training, and coordination. A recommendation of this report is that these groups be supported to engage with museums and cultural institutions around these issues.

11. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings from the mapping exercise indicate that there are overlapping communities of practice and advocacy in relation to return of African artefacts in UK museums and collections. These include museum professionals as well as diaspora experts within and outside the museums and heritage sectors, as well as diaspora communities more broadly in the UK who are also key stakeholders in this debate and who have their own relationship to these artefacts.

We have seen how restitution debates can be framed: from a full-scale return, to a promise of full-scale return, through a reconstitution or ‘restoration’ of objects both within their current host museum or a translocation to a different museum that better highlights its provenance.

The research findings highlight that there is not necessarily any single path or method to restitution practices or achieving the return of African artefacts, so all options should be pursued simultaneously. However, what is clear is that current debates about African artefacts in UK museums and other collections provide a unique opportunity to lead the way in innovation and good practice in the museological sector.

There are four principal pathways open to achieve restitution of African artefacts from UK museums and collections:

- Amending legislation;
- Taking legal test cases;
- Concluding voluntary return agreements with particular institutions that are not subject to the Museum Act; and
- Other forms of return, such as proposals for long-term or permanent loans to institutions in countries of origin.

Based on this, we argue that groups and individual campaigning for return of African artefacts from UK institutions will want to adopt one (or more) of these four pathways, and it is suggested that this should form the basis for advocacy and campaigning efforts.

In addition to this, we observe that one of the most immediate forms of restitution available to UK museums involves an internal interrogation of object histories. The severest damage is done by not properly acknowledging provenance and context. To do so not only sets past wrongs in perspective but creates a positive working framework for museum acquisitions of the future.
Objects of whatever origin will be of most use when this origin can be fully understood and contextualized. However, this should not be used as a pretext for less engagement around returns by UK museums and cultural institutions.

Museums, by their very nature, largely developed as imperial and colonial institutions and this creates its own series of challenges. However, UK museums and cultural institutions are not static and are evolving along with the society in which they are based.

There is an opportunity, especially in the light of the BLM movement, for museums and institutions to work innovatively with communities of origin, and in particular diaspora communities in the UK, to build on and extend existing models of good practice developed for the restitution of human remains, to include stolen African artefacts.

See the Executive Summary starting on Page 3 for a full list of recommendations.
Appendix 1: Case Study: The Maqdala Hoard and Ethiopian Tabots in the British Museum

The Maqdala hoard is one of the major collections of stolen African artefacts in the UK, and has been the cause for various campaigns for its return. Most recently, Dr Tristram Hunt (2018) set the tone for engagement on alternative pathways to return with the Victoria and Albert Museum, which sought to restore the objects by placing them in a deeply synthesised context. There was much speculation at the time that the artefacts would be returned to Ethiopia in a long term loan following the closure of the exhibition, however as Hunt (2020) confirms this has yet to materialise, in part due to opposition from Ethiopians to their return on a loan basis.

In the early years of the millennium, a key lobby group on the Ethiopian front was AFROMET, however after some initial successes in Scotland, with the return of a tabot from the Church of St John in Edinburgh to Ethiopia in 2014. In the years following the organisation has become less active. 

The current discourse has a history stemming back to 2010, with the President of Ethiopia demanding the return of the objects in 2008. Tabots (Ge’ez / Amharic / Tigrinya ṭabôt ) are replicas of the Tablets of Law, onto which the Ten Commandments were inscribed, contained in the Ark of the Covenant. They are considered as sacred objects by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Eritrean Orthodox Church.

Tabots are between 40cm and 15cm across, and may be made from alabaster, marble, or wood from an acacia tree. They are always kept in ornate coverings to hide them from public view; indeed, the only time the public are allowed to view the tabots is when they are brought out by priests in a procession around the church courtyard during the patronal feast day of the patron saint of the church, or on the great Orthodox Feast of Timk’et (known as Epiphany or Theophany in Europe).

Only Ethiopian Orthodox Priests are permitted to view and hold the tabots, a symbol of how sacred they are considered by Ethiopian Orthodox Christians. Indeed, Ethiopian Orthodox Christians believe the original Ark of the Covenant is located at the Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion in Axum, Ethiopia, where it is guarded by a single Ethiopian Orthodox priest nominated for life.

The British Museum currently holds 11 wooden tabots that were looted by British soldiers during the Maqdala punitive expedition in 1868. In this campaign, a 12,000 strong expeditionary force was sent from British India to rescue the British Ambassador to Ethiopia, Hormuzd Rassam, and other British and Europeans held hostage by Emperor Tewodros. Items seized during the campaign are rather coyly described by the British Museum as ‘material taken from Maqdala…auctioned soon after on the Delanta plain’.

The reality is rather different – after the suicide of Emperor Tewodros, British troops were encouraged to loot Ethiopian artefacts, in part to help defray the costs of the expedition. The British Museum had even sent a representative, Richard Rivington Holmes, an assistant in the manuscripts department, as an archaeologist attached to the military expedition, with orders to obtain items for the institution. Rivington bought priceless manuscripts (many now held in the British Library) and artefacts, including several of the tabots, that were auctioned off by the soldiers after looting them.

There are 11 tabots in the British Museum, with a twelfth held in Westminster Abbey. Their storage arrangements are confidential, but they are believed to be kept in a sealed storeroom in the basement of the Bloomsbury complex, where they are individually wrapped in cloth and placed on a shelf covered with

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62 https://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/museum-life/maqdala-1868
64 https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/ethiopia-demands-stolen-crown-back-1031229.html
65 https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/E_Af1968-0401-1
purple velvet. Even the museum’s keeper of Africa, Oceania and the Americas, has never set foot in the room, let alone seen the tabots.56

Nine of the museum’s 11 tabots are made from wood, the other two from stone, and they probably all feature a carved cross. The tabots were made to sanctify the individual churches where they were originally kept and usually include the name of the saint after which their church is named.

The tabots held by the British Museum have never been put on public display, and are kept under lock and key in a special room. Even museum curators are not allowed to view them.67 They have been viewed a very limited number of times in the past 100 years; Ethiopian orthodox priests accompanying Emperor Haile Selassie during his exile in the UK during WWII were permitted to view them. When they were moved from a Museum storage facility in east London to the main British Museum in 2004, they were transported by Ethiopian orthodox priests.68 Indeed, Ethiopian government ministers visiting the UK have repeatedly been refused permission to view the tabots.

The British Museum has consistently refused requests for the return of the tabots, citing the 1963 British Museum Act. The Ethiopian Minister of Culture, Hirut Kassaw, tried to view the tabots during an official visit to the UK in 2019, but was refused permission to view them. She met the Director of the British Museum, Hartwig Fischer, who promised to take a proposal to loan the tabots to the British Museum board within six months.69 There has been no statement on this from the British Museum since mid-2019.

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57 Ibid.
Appendix 2: Case Study: Royal Regalia of the Asante Kings of Ghana

In 1974, on the centenary of the invasion of Kumasi and the loss of the Asante Regalia there were various ceremonies held in Ghana. Memorial services were conducted and people sang funeral dirges and wept. At a ceremony attended by millions in Kumasi, the then Asantehene (the King of the Asante), Otumfu Nana Opoku Ware II (November 30, 1919 - February 26, 1999) declared it was time the British returned the regalia and appealed to the British to return the sacred objects.

The British had been trying to gain control over the lucrative trade in gold and enslave people in the then Gold Coast but had found in the Asantehene, Kofi Karkari, the king of the Asantes from the interior of the Gold Coast, a formidable competitor who controlled effectively trade along the coast. The Asantes were known for their gold and the Golden Stool which was said to embody the spirit of the Asante nation and not even the Asantehene was allowed to sit on.

The British Museum, and the Victoria and Albert Museum many other museums in London and elsewhere in the United Kingdom are still holding onto African cultural artefacts which were removed from the continent under violent conditions and circumstances. One such museum is the Wallace Collection, London including the Asante golden trophy head and swords which are displayed in the Wallace Collection. This spectacular piece of the Asante regalia looted by the British has been considered as “the largest gold work known from Ashanti (sic) or indeed from anywhere in Africa outside Egypt”.

Next to these Asante objects was a short notice which read as follows:

“Part of the Treasure of Kofi Karikari, King of Ashanti (sic) in West Africa [Asante in present-day Ghana] 1867-75, consisting of two ceremonial SWORDS, A PAIR OF TERMINALS from a Chair of State, three FINGER RINGS, a KNIFE HANDLE (incorporated into a paper knife), a DAGGER KNIFE and a TROPHY HEAD, all of virgin gold. Taken during Field Marshall Viscount Wolseley’s punitive expedition of 1873-4 and subsequently auctioned for charity.”

Sir Richard Wallace bought the Asante treasure at a charitable auction in London, the proceeds of which were given to the wives and families of soldiers killed or incapacitated during the 1873 war. Many of the stolen/looted Asante items found their way to the Museum of Mankind in London and are in the Wallace Collection. There are also some Asante cultural objects in Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford and in the Glasgow Museum and Art Gallery. Many Asante gold objects are also in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. A considerable number of looted Asante gold weights can also be found in these museums.

Current Status

The Asante objects are not found or mentioned in any of the pamphlets or books that should assist orientation in the Wallace Collection. In the museum itself however, the Asante objects are placed in the section called Oriental Armoury where the brilliance of the Asante gold cannot be overlooked.

Many of the objects, including the famous gold head, usually incorrectly known as the ‘death mask’ of Kofi Karikari, are not available for the public to see. If exhibited in Kumasi not only would Ghanaians be able to see them but it is not improbable that they would be visible to more British citizens than they are at present.

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70 Wallace Collection, http://www.wallacecollection.org
72 https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/E_Af1935-1110-79
In 1985, following negotiations between Ghana and Britain a ceremonial Asante stool was returned to Ghana. The stool had been one of the objects looted by the British in the 1874 punitive expedition to Kumasi. The stool had been taken as booty by a Captain Jackson and was given back to Ghana by his family. But the bulk of the Asante regalia looted in 1874 still remains in Britain. The refusal to return the looted objects, despite the appeal by the Asantehene, Otumfou Nana Opoku Ware II means that all subsequent kings of the Asante would have to pursue this quest which has become a sacred duty. In an interview in 2009, the present Asantehene, Otumfou Nana Osei Tutu II, referred to this pending issue raised by his predecessor.

The King has been collaborating with JustGhana Campaign over the past 15 years, an organisation that has a deep understanding of Ghana’s unique culture and potential, advocating and campaigning for the return of the regalia.
### Appendix 3: Key Timeline of 8 Rs and Restitution Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Marcus Garvey Launches the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) to create a continental African State where Africans in the diaspora could physically return to.</td>
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<td>1947</td>
<td>Following Ethiopian requests Italy signs a pledge to the United Nations to give back all the property plundered from Ethiopia.</td>
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<td>1948</td>
<td>Emperor Haile Selassie makes land available for Africans in the diaspora who contributed to Ethiopia’s war effort against the invading Italian forces.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Nigeria requests the return of the FESTAC ’77 emblem.</td>
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<td>1987</td>
<td>ENCOBRA, a reparations group, formed in the USA.</td>
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<td>1993</td>
<td>African Reparations Movement (ARM) is established by Bernie Grant, MP in the UK. ARM would later demonstrate outside the British Museum, demanding the return of African artefacts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Bernie Grant’s ARM starts campaign to return Benin Bronzes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>African Remembrance Day (ARD) is formed in the UK and holds the first Remembrance Day event, with Bernie Grant MP as keynote speaker.</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>August UN Conference Against Racism and Xenophobia held in Durban, S Africa - slavery is declared a crime against humanity.</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>Return and burial of the body of Sarah Baartman to South Africa.</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>A letter addressed to Edinburgh’s Director of University Collections, was received from AFROMET (Association for the Return of The Magdala Ethiopian Treasures), seeking the return of ‘manuscripts looted from Magdala’ and now held in Edinburgh University Library.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>ARD holds negotiations with Manchester Metropolitan University for the building where the 5th Pan African Congress was held to be given as part of a restoration project.</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>1,700-year-old granite obelisk returned home from Italy to Ethiopia, 68 years after it was looted by Benito Mussolini.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>British state launches a year-long commemoration of the Abolition of the Slave Trade.</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>Restitution of the bust of Marcus Aurelius from the United States to Algeria.</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>France returns more than 260 stolen archaeological items to Burkina Faso.</td>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>CARICOM govts issue a call for reparations and establish 10-point reparations plan.</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>Coalition of diaspora groups begin annual reparations Marches to Downing Street.</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>UN Decade of People of African Descent is launched.</td>
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<td>2018</td>
<td>Senegal’s president Macky Sall in opening the Musée des Civilisations Noires (the Museum of Black Civilizations, “MCN”) in Dakar, said he brought a new weapon into</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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74 [http://ncobra.org/](http://ncobra.org/)
76 [https://berniegrantarchive.org.uk/timeline/1990s/](https://berniegrantarchive.org.uk/timeline/1990s/)
78 [http://www.shaka.mistral.co.uk/lordhansard.htm](http://www.shaka.mistral.co.uk/lordhansard.htm)
82 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3X08uZqEwE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3X08uZqEwE)
the arsenal of activists fighting for the repatriation of treasured objects from foreign collections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>The Ethiopian government calls on the British Museum and other UK custodians of treasures seized at the battle of Maqdala to follow the example of the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&amp;A) and offer to return them on long-term loan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Several major European institutions, including the British Museum, agreed in principal, as part of the Benin Dialogue Group, to return artefacts to Nigeria on loan for a new museum that the country is planning to open in 2021. The objects include the Benin bronzes, which have been the subject of longstanding negotiations between the Nigerian authorities and European institutions.</td>
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<td>2018</td>
<td>Egyptian government called on the National Museum of Scotland to produce certification documents for its Egyptian antiquities after a row over plans to display a casing stone from the Great Pyramid of Giza.</td>
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<td>2018</td>
<td>The Sarr-Savoy Report, recommend the return of all African artefacts in French institutions to their countries of origin.</td>
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<td>2019</td>
<td>Glasgow and University of the West Indies reach a £20m reparations settlement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Sir David Adjaye announces the building of a grand Museum in Benin that will house the Bronzes when returned.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Open Society Foundations announce $15 Million of funding to support restitution campaigns in Europe and Africa.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>On 10 Feb at the sidelines of 33rd AU summit, 12 Heads of State commit themselves to play the role of leadership, advocacy and facilitation for Arts, Culture and Heritage: Heads of State includes: President of Cape Verde, Jorge Carlos Fonseca; President of Ghana, Nana Akufu-Addo; President of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari; President of Equatorial Guinea, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo; President of Congo, Denis Sassou Nguesso; President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Felix Tshisekedi; Kingdom of Morocco, His Majesty Mohamed VI; President of Egypt, Abdel Fattah al-Sissi; President of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta; President of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia, Mrs Sahle-Work Zewde; President of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa; President of Namibia, Hage Geingob.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>The 25 May killing of George Floyd triggers a global Black Lives Matter movement that protests against the legacies of slavery, colonialism and structural racism. Issues of restitution and reparations are once more high on the agenda.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

86 https://www.gla.ac.uk/news/headline_659999_en.html
### Appendix 4: List of Key UK Museums and Cultural Institutions Holding Collections of African Artefacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Collection notes</th>
<th>Provenience of Acquisition</th>
<th>Link to relevant media coverage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Ashmolean Museum, Oxford | Oxford | University museum | [www.ashmolean.org](http://www.ashmolean.org) | Egypt and Sudan: approximately 50,000 objects from the Nile Valley from prehistory to the 7th century AD  
- The major holdings derive from British excavations in Egypt conducted from the 1880s until the late 1930s  
- Oxford University excavations in southern Egypt and Sudan from 1910 onward added a representative collection of Nubian material  
- The Museum also houses over 8,000 ostraca covering all scripts and languages that have been used in Egypt | Mixed, imperial conquest and private bequest | |

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87 This list was compiled by Tim Moller (Wolfson College, Univ. of Oxford), Sanira Yusuf (SOAS, University of London), and Emily Edgar (Boston University)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Museum Name</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>University Museum</th>
<th>Website Link</th>
<th>Collections Description</th>
<th>Acquisition Method</th>
<th>Website Link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Huntarian Museums, Glasgow</td>
<td>Glasgow</td>
<td>University Museum</td>
<td><a href="https://www.gla.ac.uk/hunterian/collections/collectionsummaries/archaeologyandworldcultures/worldcultures/">https://www.gla.ac.uk/hunterian/collections/collectionsummaries/archaeologyandworldcultures/worldcultures/</a></td>
<td>Ghana (weights); Nigeria (Thomas Ona sculpture)</td>
<td>Mixed, imperial conquest and private bequest</td>
<td><a href="https://www.gla.ac.uk/news/headline_658999_en.html">https://www.gla.ac.uk/news/headline_658999_en.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The British Museum</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>National Museum</td>
<td><a href="https://www.britishmuseum.org/our-work/departments/africa-oceania-and-americas/africa">https://www.britishmuseum.org/our-work/departments/africa-oceania-and-americas/africa</a></td>
<td>Ghana (silk); DRC (wooden sculpture); Egyptian collection, Nigerian (Benin Bronzes); Ethiopia, (Magdala); Tanzania (tools) - 69,000 objects from sub-Saharan Africa.</td>
<td>Largely imperial conquest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria and Albert Museum</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>National Museum</td>
<td><a href="http://www.vam.ac.uk/page/africa/">http://www.vam.ac.uk/page/africa/</a></td>
<td>Egypt, Ghana, Ethiopia (artefacts); North Africa (glassware); Southern Africa (Prints and Photographs) - collection across departments</td>
<td>Largely imperial conquest</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Armouries Museum</td>
<td>London; Leeds</td>
<td>National Museum</td>
<td><a href="https://royalarmouries.org">https://royalarmouries.org</a></td>
<td>Army objects</td>
<td>Bequests from European individuals, private purchase</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Africa Memorial Museum</td>
<td>Exeter</td>
<td>Civic Museum</td>
<td><a href="https://www.rammuseum.org.uk/discovering-worlds-africa/about-the-africa-collections/">https://www.rammuseum.org.uk/discovering-worlds-africa/about-the-africa-collections/</a></td>
<td>Egypt (writing tools); South Africa (human remains); (3000 objects of a range)</td>
<td>19th and 20th century bequests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plymouth Museum</td>
<td>Plymouth Civic Museum</td>
<td><a href="https://plymhearts.org/pcmag/collections/world-cultures/africa/">https://plymhearts.org/pcmag/collections/world-cultures/africa/</a></td>
<td>Ghana (goldweights); South Africa (beadwork); Nigeria (weapons)</td>
<td>19th and 20th century bequests</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology</td>
<td>Cambridge University Museum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19th and 20th century bequests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitt Rivers Museum</td>
<td>Oxford University Museum</td>
<td><a href="https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/">https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/</a></td>
<td>- Egypt: Roman shoe excavated in 1899 at Illatum, Egypt by the archaeologist William Matthew Flinders Petrie; other items - Sudan: various pots and pans not on display Kenya: Maasai items</td>
<td>19th and 20th century bequests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology</td>
<td>London University Museum – linked to UCL</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology in London is part of the University College London Museums and Collections. The museum contains over 80,000 objects and ranks among some of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Website</td>
<td>Collections</td>
<td>Date Range</td>
<td></td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horniman Museum</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>civic museum</td>
<td><a href="https://www.horniman.ac.uk/collections/browse-our-collections/keyword/africa">https://www.horniman.ac.uk/collections/browse-our-collections/keyword/africa</a></td>
<td>Egyptology, contemporary collection, Morocco, Nigeria, Congo, South Africa; 19th and 20th century bequests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Return of the Icons Mapping Report*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World Museum</td>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>National Museum</td>
<td><a href="https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/wml/collections/ethnology/africa/index.aspx">https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/wml/collections/ethnology/africa/index.aspx</a></td>
<td>10,000 objects reflect the development of Liverpool's important maritime links with the western coast of Africa.</td>
<td>19th century bequests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| University of Manchester Museum | Manchester | University Museum | https://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk/collection/livingcultures/ | The museum will be creating a new two-storey extension for Egypt and Sudan artefacts  
https://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk/collection/ancientegyptandsudan/ | Egyptian | https://twitter.com/ethnomcr |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology | Manchester | University museum | http://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/index.php?cmd=objects | - Rwanda;  
Very broad bracelet of basketwork over a reed stuffing with an “unknown” donor,  
Small bracelet of black and white basketwork over a reed stuffing with an “unknown” donor, 3 other jewellery items with donor named “Guillebaud”  
- Sudan;  
126 items with various donors  
- Egypt;  
133 items with various donors | | |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Institution Type</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>URL</th>
<th>Documents/Exhibits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/library-museum-gallery/crc/services/museums-collections-and-development">https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/library-museum-gallery/crc/services/museums-collections-and-development</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Egypt; 1 Exhibit, Classics Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rest of Africa; 12 Exhibits,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crown Estate</td>
<td>England</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ethiopian Prince Alemayehu, taken to Britain after battle of Maqdala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Death of individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/6716921.stm">http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/6716921.stm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>conquest and bequest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum Name</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>Institution Type</td>
<td>Website</td>
<td>Highlights</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great North Museum</td>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>Civic Museum</td>
<td><a href="https://greatnorthmuseum.org.uk/whats-on/world-cultures">https://greatnorthmuseum.org.uk/whats-on/world-cultures</a></td>
<td>- Egypt:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Excavations in Egypt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Bequests</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Stone statues, tiny lucky charms, precious burial goods, entire coffins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Baths Museum</td>
<td>Bath</td>
<td>Civic Museum</td>
<td><a href="https://www.romanbaths.co.uk/">https://www.romanbaths.co.uk/</a></td>
<td>Items associated with Haile Selassie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitzwilliam Museum</td>
<td>Cambridge</td>
<td>University</td>
<td><a href="https://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/collections/">https://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/collections/</a></td>
<td>- In 1822 two members of the University of Cambridge gave the university a set of coffins belonging to a man named Nespawershefyt, and the following year Giovanni Belzoni gave them the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
sarcophagus lid of Ramesses III which he had retrieved from the Valley of the Kings

- The collection grew in importance towards the end of the 19th century and in the early years of the 20th century, benefiting from the work of Sir Flinders Petrie, the Egypt Exploration Fund and the British School of Archaeology in Egypt

- also have sandstone grave relief, limestone statue of Amenemhat III, limestone statue of a royal female, fragment of a painted wooden coffin, wooden model of butchers from the tomb of Khety, sandstone relief of a divine consort from a chapel, bone hair comb

Nubia and Sudan:

https://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/collections/nubiaandsudan
- has a small collection mainly from excavations by the Oxford Expedition at Sanam Cemetery in the 1920s and the Egypt Exploration Society excavations at Qasr Ibrim in the 1960s
  - clay vessel, Faience beads, faience amulets, clay vessel, faience beads
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[Accessed 24 June 2020]

[Accessed 24 June 2020]

[Accessed 24 June 2020]
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[Accessed 24 June 2020]

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[Accessed 24 June 2020]

Report was compiled by Paul Asquith, AFFORD’s Engagement and Policy Manager, with support from Emily Edgar (Univ. of Boston), Samira Yusuf (SOAS, Univ. of London), Richard Leigh (AFFORD), and Tim Moller (Wolfson College, Univ of Oxford)

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About AFFORD

The African Foundation for Development (AFFORD) is an international organisation established in 1994, with a mission ‘to expand and enhance the contributions Africans in the diaspora make to African development’.

Our innovative approach mobilises the financial, intellectual, and political assets of the African diaspora and channels them to drive economic growth and social development in Africa. We also enhance the capacity of actual and potential investors and actively influence international policies to ensure they address the real needs and root causes of underdevelopment and poverty on the continent.

Our mission is achieved through programmes and projects within the following overlapping themes: enterprise and employment, diaspora remittances and investments, diaspora engagement and capacity and action-research, policy and practice.