



Communicating Provenances, Historical Contexts and Collaborative Methods

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1 Management Summary

1.1 Introduction and Project Overview

This report comprises the results of the second phase of the Benin Initiative Switzerland (BIS), which was conducted as a research collaboration between eight Swiss museums from June 2023 to August 2024 with the support of the Swiss Federal Office of Culture (FOC).

The first phase of the BIS (June 2021 to July 2022) focused on researching the provenances of the collections from the Kingdom of Benin in the participating museums in collaboration with partners in Nigeria and on establishing which objects were looted by the British military in 1897.¹ The BIS presented these results at the Swiss Benin Forum in February 2023, where a delegation from Nigeria was present, and the participants signed a *Joint Declaration* on the future of the objects (see chapter 2.1 and chapter 3). The subsequent second project phase set three new focal points in the research and mediation of these provenances:

First: The participating institutions—in collaboration with colleagues from Nigeria and the Nigerian and wider African diaspora in Switzerland—developed a few exhibitions, public events and a joint publication in order to communicate the history of the collections from the Kingdom of Benin. The participating museums are presenting the different mediation formats to the public starting from December 2023 and into the year 2025. The joint publication *Mobilizing: Benin Heritage in Swiss Museums* (publication in EN and DE, Scheidegger & Spiess) was published in August 2024 (see chapter 2.2.1 and 5.1).

Second: The research into the provenances of the collections was expanded with a focus on the different historical actors relevant to the collections of the BIS museums and their connections to the Benin collections of institutions outside of Switzerland. This shows how Switzerland was tied into the international network that distributed Benin objects after 1897. The analysis also reveals that numerous collectors and dealers only appear in the provenances of Swiss objects, i.e., there was a very specific Swiss market. To provide a broader historical context to the collections, short portraits of several provenance actors were written and a review of literature on the topic of historical trade relations between Europe and the Kingdom of Benin, including the transatlantic slave

¹ The results of the first phase of the BIS are comprised in the report by Alice Hertzog and Enibokun Uzébu-Imarhiagbe: *Collaborative Provenance Research in Swiss Public Collections from the Kingdom of Benin*, eds. Michaela Oberhofer and Esther Tisa Francini, Zurich 2023.

trade, was conducted. The results of the latter were incorporated into one of the mediations formats and the joint publication (see chapter 2.3 and 5.1).

Third: The curators and provenance researchers in the BIS museums evaluated the collaborative approach to research and mediation in the two phases of the BIS regarding its strengths, challenges, and potential for future projects. The participants concluded that, while the existing structures in museums still need to be improved to ensure the sustainability of cooperation with the societies of origin, the network that was established between the Africa departments of the various museums has created a solid basis for further research projects that has proven to be efficient, resource-saving, and scientifically meaningful. It is also noteworthy that provenance research has become established at museums over the four years of the BIS. This could be one of the immediate ramifications of the BIS—a consequence which changes the museum’s work and structurally expands on dealing with the collections in the long term (see chapter 2.4).

1.2 Participating Institutions and Project Team

As in the first phase of the BIS, the project is a collaboration between the following institutions:²

- Museum der Kulturen Basel (MKB)
- Bernisches Historisches Museum (BHM)
- Museum Schloss Burgdorf (MSB)
- Musée d’ethnographie de la Ville de Genève (MEG)
- Musée d’ethnographie de la Ville de Neuchâtel (MEN)
- Kulturmuseum St. Gallen (KMSG)
- Museum Rietberg Zurich (MRZ)
- Völkerkundemuseum der Universität Zürich (VMZ)

Dr. Michaela Oberhofer, curator of Africa and Oceania, and Esther Tisa Francini, provenance researcher and head of archives, both at the Museum Rietberg, led the project. The participating institutions were represented by Samuel Bachmann (curator BHM), Daniel Furter (director MSB), Maylawi Herbas (provenance researcher MSB), Dr. Peter Fux (director KMSG), Dr. Alice Hertzog (provenance researcher VMZ) Floriane

² Institutions in alphabetical order of their location; for the institution description, see Hertzog, Uzébu-Imarhiagbe, *Collaborative Provenance Research*, pp. 36–40.

Morin (curator MEG), Dr. Alexis Malefakis (curator VMZ), Dr. Julien Glauser (curator MEN), Ursula Regehr (curator MKB), and Anja Soldat (curator KMSG). Historian and provenance researcher Daniela Müller conducted the research from June 2023 to April 2024 and art historian Laura Falletta coordinated the joint publication from March to August 2024.

1.3 Collections examined

The collections that were the focus of the project consist of 96 objects from the Kingdom of Benin (Nigeria) in the holdings of the participating museums.³ While the number of objects examined has not changed compared to phase I, two objects from the Bernisches Historisches Museum received a new category while working on the further historical contexts (see page 17 and chapter 4.2.5). In total, there are now 55 objects in the category looted or likely to have been looted.⁴ While working on the exhibition and narratives, the understanding of the works in the Benin collections changed fundamentally: throughout the research, dialogue-based discussion—especially the co-curating process, as well as co-authorship—brought the multi-perspectivity needed to grasp fully the different meanings in the past and present of the works in the Swiss museums.

³ For the description of the holdings and the categorization of the objects see Hertzog, Uzébu-Imariagbe, *Collaborative Provenance Research*, pp. 14–26. For the complete list of objects, *ibid.*, pp. 41–89.

⁴ See for more details, *Mobilizing*, pp. 27–31, especially p. 30.

2 Work Report

2.1 The Swiss Benin Forum 2023 and the Joint Declaration

In February 2023, the BIS Museums invited a delegation of representatives from the museums, university, palace, and guilds from Nigeria to the Swiss Benin Forum in Zurich. At the public event, the Phase I provenance research report was presented to Nigeria and the *Joint Declaration* was announced. The Nigerian delegation consisted of representatives of the NCMM, the General Director, Prof. Dr. Abba Tijani, and the Director of Research, Planning, and Publications, Theophilus Umogbai. The Royal Palace was represented by His Royal Highness Prince Aghatise Erediauwa on behalf of His Majesty the Oba of Benin and Dr. Charles Uwensuyi Edosomwan (Chief Obasuyi of Benin). They were joined by academics Dr. Enibokun Uzébu-Imarghiagbe (historian at the University of Benin and BIS researcher), Prof. Dr. Kokunre Eghafona (Professor of Anthropology at the University of Benin), Osaisonor Godfrey Ekhatator Obogie (researcher at the Benin Studies Institute), Patrick Oronsaye (member of the Ekaiwe Royal Society, painter and art historian), as well as Phil Omodamwen (member of the brass casters guild in Benin City), and Samson Ogiamien (contemporary artist in Graz).

In the run-up to the Swiss Benin Forum, the representatives of the BIS Institutions, the Nigerian delegation, and representatives of the Nigerian embassy in Switzerland wrote and signed a joint declaration. The declaration states: “1) The ownership of the objects which were looted or likely to have been looted in 1897 should return to the original owner. 2) The participating museums are open to a transfer of ownership of these objects which could involve repatriation, circulation, or loans to Swiss museums.”

In addition to the question of the future of the objects, the *Joint Declaration* focused on possible fields of cooperation. This is a declaration of intent that must be clarified by the individual museums with their respective bodies. The process may vary depending on the institution and legal framework.⁵

⁵ For the text of the *Joint Declaration* and the full list of signatories, see Annex I and https://rietberg.ch/files/Forschung/Benin-Initiative/Bios-Statements-Photos_Nigeria-Delegation_Feb2023/BIS_Joint_Declaration_Benin_Forum_2023_Final.pdf.

2.2 Outreach and Communicating Provenances

Following the Swiss Benin Forum and the signing of the *Joint Declaration*, the researchers and curators at the BIS Institutions started to develop their contributions to the second phase of the BIS which was divided into different work packages. To communicate provenances, exhibition and other outreach projects were developed in several BIS museums. Furthermore, a joint publication entitled *Mobilizing: Benin Heritage in Swiss Museums (2024)* was published. All of these formats aim to make the research findings on the Benin collections accessible to both a broad public and a specialized audience. Collaboration with partners from Nigeria and the Nigerian and African diaspora was once again at the center of the various exhibition and mediation projects.

In pursuit of this collaborative approach, BIS institutions also continued to participate in the international database *Digital Benin* by providing archival material on their collections to the database. They also took part in a 3-D digitalization project of selected Benin objects by the Nigerian Museum of West African Art (MOWAA).

Coordination tasks with regard to the joint publication, the implementation of the BIS workshops and coordination of collaborations such as the participation of the BIS institutions in the digitization project of the MOWAA fell within the remit of project collaborator and historian Daniela Müller. Art historian Laura Falletta joined the team in March 2023 to continue to coordination of the publication. The organization of the exhibitions and events was carried out and financed independently in each museum.

2.2.1 Joint publication and co-authorship

The joint publication *Mobilizing: Benin Heritage in Swiss Museums* was published by Scheidegger & Spiess (Zurich) in August 2024. The aim of the publication is to give a new dimension to the collaborations during the two phases of the BIS and to make visible the diversity of voices that have developed over the course of the project. In addition, the entangled history of the Benin collections in Swiss museums as well as the mediation and exhibition formats resulting from this collaboration are presented.

The publication consists of three parts: The first section provides an overview of the methods and process of the BIS, the complex history of Benin, and the country's cultural heritage with a focus on Nigerian perspectives. The second section delves into the provenance of the Benin objects and their entangled histories. It presents specific objects from each museum, showcasing research results from the BIS and illustrating case studies from the established categories. Object biographies illustrate the artifacts'

trajectories from Benin to the vitrines or storage facilities of Swiss museums and provide contextual information on the people involved, the events that happened, and the circumstances of acquisition. The final section presents various collaborations that have emerged from the BIS: these range from commissioning Nigerian contemporary artists, visualizing provenance data, and questioning colonial history to participative research projects with Swiss Edo diasporas and co-curating with Nigerian scholars and designers. These collaborations offer insights into some of the conversations currently underway between Nigeria and Switzerland, as museums seek to sustain the relationships developed over the course of the BIS.

The publication is edited by Esther Tisa Francini, Alice Hertzog, Alexis Malefakis, and Michaela Oberhofer and contains further contributions by curators, researchers, architects and artists like Josephine Ebiuwa Abbe (associate professor at the Theatre Arts Department of the University of Benin), Zainabu Jallo (postdoctoral researcher and lecturer at the Universities of Basel and Bern), Solange Mbafeno (architect and exhibition designer), Samson Ogamiem (contemporary artist), Patrick Oronsaye (art historian and expert in Benin cultural heritage), Lucky Igohosa Ugbudian (lecturer at the Department of History and Strategic Studies at Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Nigeria) and Enibokun Uzébu-Imarhiagbe (historian at the University of Benin). It has been published in German and English and is available not only in printed form but also in open access format, thus guaranteeing worldwide accessibility.⁶

2.2.2 Exhibitions and events at the participating museums

A number of the BIS museums developed exhibitions accompanied by events either fully dedicated to the collections from the Kingdom of Benin or containing Benin objects as part of a larger exhibition concept. The process of curating the exhibitions and developing the narratives and event program was carried out in collaboration with various partners from Nigeria and from Afro-descendant communities in Switzerland. The focus was on multi-perspectivity and participation.

The exhibitions are shown at different times between December 2023 and May 2025. In August 2024, two museums, the Museum Rietberg in Zurich and the Völkerkundemuseum der Universität Zürich, opened exhibitions focusing entirely on collections from the Kingdom of Benin. Objects from the Kingdom of Benin and their provenances, contexts of acquisitions and history are shown as parts of broader thematic exhibitions

⁶ For the full list of contributions, see Chapter 4.1 or the full text https://www.scheidegger-spiess.ch/files_media/ckeditor/scheidegger_spiess_mobilizing_final_en_021002.pdf

in Geneva, Neuchâtel, and Bern. The Museum der Kulturen Basel dedicates an edition of its new series on research projects to the BIS from February to May 2025. These exhibition projects are accompanied by workshops, lectures, panel discussions, guided tours, artist talks and other events that communicate research on the collections from the Kingdom of Benin to the public in various ways.

The BIS II activities took place within a broader framework of Switzerland's critical examination of its colonial heritage: The National Museum is hosting the exhibition *colonial. Switzerland's Global Entanglements* (September 13, 2024 to January 19, 2025) and the ETH Zurich the exhibition *Colonial Traces – Collections in Context* (August 30, 2024 to July 13, 2025).

Musée d'ethnographie de la Ville de Neuchâtel (MEN)

The MEN is presenting a central object from its Benin holdings—the relief panel depicting a Portuguese with inventory number 52.1.1—as part of the exhibition *Cargo Cults unlimited* on the theme of the globalized world economy, which is on display from December 17, 2023 to December 31, 2024. The checkered and violent history of the object, which was reconstructed in the first phase of the BIS and includes several moments of expropriation, was processed by the Nigerian illustrator Osaze Amadasun in a mural and integrated into the exhibition.

Osaze Amadasun was born in the territory of the Kingdom of Benin and brought his in-depth knowledge of the historical contexts, the iconography of the artworks, and the current debates surrounding the Benin objects to his work. His illustration not only shows the significance of the object in the royal court of Benin, but also its links with events such as the transatlantic trade, the colonization of Africa and the theft of art by the National Socialist regime in Europe. The MEN also featured a talk by Dr. Alice Hertzog on the history of the plaque titled *Une plaque de Benin City au MEN* on the January 18, 2024.

Bernisches Historisches Museum (BHM)

The Bernisches Historisches Museum has continued to communicate the results of the BIS through guided-tour formats. This included various short guided tours in February and March 2024 (for example on Museum Night on March 15, 2024) and a guided tour as part of Provenance Research Day on the April 10, 2024, during which curator Samuel Bachmann discussed the BIS and the research on the BHM's Benin collection. The short

tours centered on one of the objects from the Kingdom of Benin, the group of figures E/1903.326.0004, which can be seen as part of an installation in the exhibition *And then came Bronze!* (February 1, 2024 to April 21, 2025). In a collaboration, Nigerian researcher Lucky Ugbudian and Samuel Bachmann also reflected on the history and changing meaning of this object in their contribution to the BIS publication.

Musée d'Ethnographie de la Ville de Genève (MEG)

With the temporary exhibition *Remembering: Geneva in the Colonial World* (May 3, 2024 to January 5, 2025), the MEG focused on a broad history of the collection and the museum. In this framework, it proposes also to communicate around the provenances of the Benin works. The exhibition is divided into three parts: "Collection", "Salon," and "Capsules." The last are independent, immersive universes at the core of the exhibition. Each of them is designed in co-creation with invited partners. Cultural heirs of the collections today held at the MEG play a part in their futures and define the museum as a place of reflection and action concerning material and immaterial "colonial collections," as well as the archives documenting them. Individually, these "focuses" recall all the respect due to the integrity and identity of the collections held by the museum.

One of the "capsules," SE-YA-MA, is dedicated to Benin. In the Edo language, SE-YA-MA means "to remember." The artist Samson Ogiamien chose this verb to embody this capsule in which his sculptural and performative work is presented in dialogue with the objects from the Benin Kingdom (Nigeria) looted by British colonial troops in 1897 and dispersed on the art market during the twentieth century. The relationship was forged around *Iyagbon's Mirror*, the show dedicated to the agony of museum objects disconnected from their ritual uses, which he co-wrote with the compagnie Onyrikon and which MEG co-produced in spring 2022. Our shared ambition to raise awareness of the duty to remember colonial violence, which museums must fulfil to address the futures of their collections, is an enduring one.

Finally, the first phase of the BIS is presented to the public in the capsule by means of texts, video display and a mural of photographs dedicated to the Swiss Benin Forum held in Zurich on February 2, 2023, and followed by the visit of the Nigerian delegation to MEG in Geneva. (Floriane Morin)

Museum Rietberg Zurich (MRZ)

Museum Rietberg organized two exhibitions on the provenance of its Benin holdings and the entangled (art) history of the Benin Kingdom: *Pathways of Art* (2022–24) and *In Dialogue with Benin* (2024/25), which were accompanied by events like artist talks, performances, conferences, and other art education formats. From June 2022 to March 2024, the exhibition *Pathways of Art: How the objects get to the Museum* and the article of Michaela Oberhofer and Esther Tisa Francini in the publication (2022) addressed the colonial injustice context of the Benin objects. Numerous guided tours and discussions as well as the major conference *The Future of Collection Histories: Research, Cooperation and Exhibition* in March 2024 on the future of the collection's history also dealt with the topic of the Benin Initiative Switzerland.

The second exhibition *In Dialogue with Benin: Art, Colonialism and Restitution* (August 2024 to February 2025) was dedicated solely to the past, present, and future of the cultural heritage of the Kingdom of Benin in present-day Nigeria. It was developed in close cooperation with representatives from Nigeria and the pan-African diaspora. The exhibition shows a historic and culturally comparative overview of Benin's art history and emphasize the significance of these pieces for Benin. At the same time, it explores the question of restitution considering how these works were plundered by British colonial forces and sold as looted cultural goods on the international art market.

The curatorial process was collaborative and participatory, in order to explore story telling from different perspectives with the focus on Benin's view of its own history and art. The Nigerian and Swiss curators Josephine Ebiuwa Abbe, Solange Mbanefo, Michaela Oberhofer, and Esther Tisa Francini come from different disciplines like performance studies, architecture, art anthropology, and history. For the first time, the exhibition design was created by Solange Mbanefo, reflecting African aesthetics and imaginations. In close exchange with experts from Benin, the exhibition content, texts, design, and accompanying program were developed. Films and interviews with colleagues from the National Commission for Museums and Monuments, the University of Benin, the Royal Palace of the Oba of Benin, and with various artists highlight the Nigerian perspectives on their cultural heritage. The museum commissioned several new works for the exhibition, which were produced in the guild workshop of the brass caster Phil Omodamwen in Benin City. The exhibition also featured the contemporary artists Cherry-Ann Morgan and Kwaku Opoku who explored topics as slavery, cultural heritage, remembrance, and reconciliation.

The accompanying program of the exhibition included artist talks (Cherry Ann Morgan, Samson Ogiamen, Kwaku Opoku, Uriel Orlow), performances in cooperation with the Theater Spektakel Zürich (Josephine Ebiuwa Abbe with the Edo Cultural Art Forum, Zora Snake), the Restitution Forum with international experts from Nigeria and Europe on the October 26, 2024, and outreach projects from the Art Mediation Department entitled “Where do we belong.” The museum organized in November 2024 a major conference with the Kunsthaus Zürich, the Swiss National Museum, on the challenges when dealing with cultural heritage.

Völkerkundemuseum der Universität Zürich (VMZ)

For the exhibition *Benin Dues: Dealing with Looted Royal Treasures* (August 24, 2024 to August 2025) provenance researcher Dr. Alice Hertzog and curator Dr. Alexis Malefakis at the Völkerkundemuseum der Universität Zürich (Ethnographic Museum of the University of Zurich) collaborated with three Zurich-based organizations of the Edo or African diaspora during the second phase of the BIS.

The Edo United Club of Switzerland is a diaspora organization of people from Edo State, the state in Nigeria on the territory of the historic Kingdom of Benin. The members are descendants of the creators of the artifacts housed in the museum. The African Students Association of Zurich (ASAZ) represents African students at universities in Zurich. As a hub for young Afro-Swiss intellectuals in Zurich, it promotes African academics and research and aims to present Africa from an African perspective. The Isla Victoria counselling center is a drop-in center for sex workers in Zurich and Winterthur, which is often visited by sex workers from Nigeria, many of whom come from Edo State. For the exhibition project, Isla Victoria acts as a mediator between the museum and the women from Edo State in Zurich.

By making the Benin objects in the museum accessible to members of these three groups, the ongoing project aims to activate Benin’s heritage and thus rethink its status, value, and potential beyond the scholarly discourses that have so far been dominated by non-African authors. On a more general level, the project is trialing new forms of outreach and engagement with diaspora communities in Switzerland, contributing to the reorientation of the Völkerkundemuseum der Universität Zürich in a post-migrant society. In the context of the increased public attention expected from the other exhibitions on colonial heritage, the project will make a significant contribution to the public debate on Switzerland’s colonial entanglements and the controversial cultural heritage from non-

European societies in Swiss museums, with the voices of the African communities concerned taking center stage.

In addition, the museum is conducting two teaching formats for secondary schools at level I and II: Guided tours for the history and Visual Arts Departments and Workshops to strengthen interdisciplinary skills. (Alice Hertzog)

Museum der Kulturen Basel (MKB)

In May 2024, the Museum der Kulturen Basel (MKB) launched a series called *In Full View*, in which projects on research in general and provenance in particular will be presented and the future of collections will be discussed. Its focus is on trajectories of the MKB's collections, on new approaches to the current meanings of things for members of communities (including the scientific community) and its consequences.

In Full View: Benin, Nigeria in February 2025 will revolve around the 21 artifacts from the Benin Kingdom at the MKB. This edition will present the findings of the collaborative provenance research of the BIS: according to the report from 2023, thirteen artifacts were looted in 1897; two are likely to be looted; five are unlikely to be looted, and one has not been looted.

At the Swiss Benin Forum 2023, representatives of the Nigerian government and of the Oba, as well as academics and artists, expressed their hope for the restitution of looted items. The *Joint Declaration* on the future of the collections stated the will for a transfer of ownership and interest in Swiss-Nigerian cooperation. Although the how and when are still in process, that will might be seen in shifts in museum practices and in changing notions of ownership: museums today conceive themselves as caretakers of collections rather than as gatekeepers of collections.

As a jointly curated project with Dr. Zainabu Jallo (University of Basel and University of Bern) the project will continue a dialogue with a Nigerian scholar. It aims at presenting multiple perspectives and voices. Alongside the series, public events (talks, guided tours, and artist interventions) will take place, among them the opening colloquium of *In Full View: Benin, Nigeria* on February 5, 2025 and *BIS: Future prospects* on May 7, 2025. (Ursula Regehr)

2.3 New Research Findings on Object Trajectories

Further research on the provenances and the historical context of the objects was carried out by researcher and project team member Daniela Müller. The research into the provenances of the Benin collections in the BIS museums was continued through archival research and the analysis of newly accessible databases and sources. An actor-based approach was used to place the objects in the BIS museums in the context of the global distribution of Benin cultural heritage after the looting of 1897. The research also comprised a review of the literature on some areas of the historical context of the Benin objects. The focus was set on trade relations between the Kingdom of Benin and Europe and specifically the slave trade. The results of this review were then included in the BIS publication as well as in the exhibition at Museum Rietberg.

2.3.1 Research on actors and provenances

The network-approach allows for a new perspective on the international connections of the actors in the BIS collections, showing who among them was of international relevance in the dispersion of the objects from the Kingdom of Benin and who might have only been relevant to Swiss museums. Since the first phase of the BIS, the database www.digitalbenin.org has made a compilation of objects from the Kingdom of Benin in 136 public collections around the world available to the public (including those of the eight BIS institutions). For each of the almost 5300 objects listed in the database, the actors associated with the provenance of the object are noted. A particular opportunity for research lies in the fact that these actors can be called up individually in the database and every object and institution that is connected to them can be seen. This makes it possible to link the actors who are relevant for the BIS collections to the research that was already carried out by other institutions on the same person. A systematic comparison of the provenance gaps in the holdings of the eight participating museums with the *Digital Benin* database was carried out on this basis in order to follow up on possible new provenance traces in other institutions. Each actor was therefore checked for possible links to the Benin objects registered on the platform.

In the first phase of the BIS, 71 actors connected to the trajectories of the objects in the BIS museums after 1897 were identified. In the second phase, three more actors were added: The first is the German art anthropologist, collector, and dealer Hans Himmelheber (1908–2003), who sold the hip mask (ETHAF 020501) to the MEG in 1932. The fact that Hans Himmelheber had also traded in objects from the Kingdom of Benin

was previously unknown and sheds new light on his trading activities in the 1930s.⁷ Another previously unknown actor, Wolfgang Kipf as well as his mother Hildegard Kipf, could also be added to the list of actors.

In January 2024, a document archive was also added to the platform *Digital Benin*, in which over 4900 historical documents from 45 institutions were made publicly accessible and searchable. This again includes archival material from the BIS museums, which were added to the database during the second phase of the BIS—an important step towards creating transparency, gaining insights into archive holdings, and enabling further research.

In cases where other institutions provided indications of previous or subsequent owners in relation to actors relevant to the Swiss collections, the institution's digitized archive records were evaluated and, in some cases, further research was carried out (see chapter 4.2). However, this comparison and links to other institutions undoubtedly offer a research track that still has a lot of potential: many institutions, which are linked to the BIS collections by common actors, only have a limited selection of archival material online or have yet to add their archival material, which will necessitate further archival research in the different institutions to follow up on the leads gathered during this review (see chapter 4.1).

The analysis of the database revealed entries at other institutions for 26 out of 74 actors in the collections of the BIS museums (i.e., around 35 percent). This shows on one hand how the objects in Swiss institutions are connected to the international network that brought artifacts from the Kingdom of Benin to European museums after 1897. Major figures like the traders William Webster, William Ohly, the Umlauff company, and Charles Ratton, the collector Hans Meyer, and members of the British Military like Admiral Harry Rawson are a common denominator linking the Swiss collections to those abroad, tying the BIS collections into the international network that distributed the objects from the Kingdom of Benin after the looting of 1897.

On the other hand, the comparison of the BIS actors with the entries on *Digital Benin* shows that Switzerland also has its own landscape of collectors and museum benefactors, which did not necessarily act globally but which have only had ties to certain Swiss museums. In addition, many objects in the BIS collections entered museums later than those in German or British museum collections, hence the relatively long time that some the objects moved from person to person on the open art market.

⁷ See for more information the research project *Hans Himmelheber – African Art and Entangled Knowledge Production*, financed by the SNF and co-headed by Prof. Gesine Krüger (UZH) and Dr. Michaela Oberhofer (MRZ). The research findings are accessible on www.africa-art-archive.ch.

In addition to the archival materials published by *Digital Benin*, other important source materials have also been digitized and made accessible to researchers since the end of the first phase of the BIS, in particular the inventory books and correspondence collections of the British dealer William Webster, through whose hands 13 objects in the BIS collections passed. These archival holdings were analyzed, which led to the discovery of the Webster number and the place of purchase (Steven's auction house) of the MKB commemorative head III 1033. The research into the Webster pieces also led to a renewed critical examination of the provenance of the belt mask 2011.9 in the Museum Rietberg Zurich, as its attribution to the former collection of Hans Meyer in Leipzig had become uncertain. Records don't exactly trace his ownership, such as William D. Webster's account book. "Hans Meyer, Leipzig" buys many works from Webster, but not exactly this one—at least it is not written down. A recent provenance document mentions another Meyer, A. B. Meyer from Dresden, but no source is given. The likelihood of this being Hans Meyer is high, as he was a well-known collector of Benin. Further research was also carried out into Friedrich Wilhelm Reichert, a previous owner of a figure-group (E/1903.326.0004) and an altar bell (E/1903.326.0005), which are now in the Bernisches Historisches Museum. The reason for this was the fact that the objects in question had already been sold to the former Museum of Ethnology in Hamburg (now MARKK) in 1903. The early presence of the objects in Europe cast doubt on their previous categorization as "unlikely to be looted." Based on the new findings about Reichert's life as a colonial goods trader in Hamburg and new information on the origins of the figure group, the categorization of the objects was changed to "likely to be looted."

In addition, further research was undertaken in German and British archives in order to consult correspondence and auction catalogues that had not yet been evaluated and to check for links to the collections of the BIS museums. The research focused on the search for actors linked to provenance gaps in the BIS collections in the Archives of the British Museum, the National Art Library, the Central archive of the Anthropological Museum in Berlin, and the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin. For the results of the provenance research, see chapter 4.

Tying in with the actor-focused provenance research described above, short portraits for a selected number of actors were written in order to provide more information on their biographies and networks in regard to the collections of Benin objects in Switzerland and abroad after 1897. The actors selected were: Han Coray, Hans Himmelheber, Wolfgang and Hildegard Kipf, Admiral Harry Rawson, Friedrich Wilhelm Reichert, and William

Downing Webster. The selection of actors is based on their relevance for the BIS collections (in the case of Han Coray and William Webster) and/or the need to contextualize new research findings (for the portraits, see chapter 4.2).

2.3.2 Historical contextualization of the BIS collections

A review of the literature on the long history of trade relations between the Kingdom of Benin and Europe and especially the slave trade was conducted on the basis of the extant literature and source databases on the transatlantic slave trade (primarily the *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*). The research in the field of the history of the transatlantic slave trade is extremely broad and is supplemented by well-processed quantitative sources, though there are some significant weaknesses in the data structure of the database for early trade relations which, for example, lower its relevance for the early Portuguese trade with Benin.

The review of the literature has shown that, on the one hand, the Kingdom of Benin entered into its first direct trade relations with European powers very early on—starting with the Portuguese in the late fifteenth century—and that these trade relations also included the trade in enslaved individuals. These trade relations varied significantly over the course of time with the main European trading partners of the Kingdom of Benin first being the Portuguese, later Dutch, and then French and British traders. The transatlantic slave trade between the Kingdom of Benin and different European and American partners ended in the nineteenth century when the transatlantic slave trade generally found its end in both its legal and later its illegal forms. These results were incorporated in the publication *Mobilizing: Benin Heritage in Swiss Museums*⁸ and the exhibition *In Dialog with Benin* at the Museum Rietberg Zurich.

2.4 Reflecting the methods of cooperation

A central goal of the second phase of BIS was to further develop the collaborative approaches to research and museum work that had begun in the first phase. While the first phase focused on collaborative provenance research, the second phase focused on the collaborative mediation of the results of this research to the public. This included various types of cooperation between the BIS institutions and partners from Nigeria and the Nigerian and Afro-descendant diaspora in Switzerland in the development and

⁸ See Müller, Oberhofer, "Benin and the world: Entangled (art) histories", in *Mobilizing*, pp. 36–39.

realization of exhibitions, workshops, and various public events (see chapter 2.2). In addition, cooperation between the eight museums was an innovative and important aspect of the BIS in Swiss provenance research.

During a workshop in February 2024, the participating curators and provenance researchers reflected on these two central collaborative aspects of the project, discussed their strengths and weaknesses from a museum perspective, and discussed their suitability for the future and translatability into other projects. The results of this workshop are summarized below. Furthermore, the publication *Mobilizing* further discusses the different forms of collaboration with contributions from both members of the BIS institutions and cooperation partners from Nigeria and Switzerland.

2.4.1 Cooperation with partners from Nigeria and the diaspora

From the very beginning, the cooperation with partners from Nigeria and the African and especially the Nigerian diaspora was at the heart of the research and mediation work carried out in the context of the Benin Initiative Switzerland. This approach was an attempt by the participating museums to find an answer to the question of how to deal with museum collections from colonial contexts and, in doing so, to decolonize museum work, make a greater diversity of voices heard, and also create space for critical questioning of the collections and institutions. At the same time, the exchange with colleagues from Nigeria and the diaspora generated a multitude of ideas and new interpretations of the collections.

The collaborative provenance research put at its center the Edo community's perspectives and knowledge of the objects. The collaboration with artists, scientists, and museum colleagues from Benin in researching the history of the objects placed the focus more broadly than just on the reconstruction of previous owners. It included the historical, present, and possible future significance of the objects, and traced the biographies of the objects back to their makers. This collaborative approach was pursued further in different ways in the individual institutions in the second phase of the research project. The approaches include the co-curation and co-design of exhibitions, the collaboration with contemporary artists who engage with the collections, the writing of exhibition and book texts by colleagues from Benin and the involvement of diaspora groups in the exhibition development process. What these approaches had in common was that they sought to relinquish the museums' authority to interpret the collections and instead place the knowledge and interpretations of the descendants of the society of origin of the objects at the center and tell the history of the collections from their perspective.

2.4.2 Cooperation between museums

The BIS is the first collaboration between the eight participating Swiss museums in a joint research project and created new perspectives and synergies in a variety of ways. On the one hand, it became clear that joint research on collections such as those from the Kingdom of Benin has great potential: redundant research processes in the individual institutions were minimized, and knowledge and materials were exchanged and shared efficiently. Similarities and differences in the provenances became visible, allowing a more holistic view of the collection history of Swiss museums. For smaller museums with limited human resources in particular, this type of collaboration provides opportunities for in-depth study of the provenance of individual collections that would otherwise not have been possible. In particular, the international network of researchers established by the BIS and especially the building of relationships with cooperation partners in Nigeria would have been prohibitively resource-intensive for individual museums and was an outcome of the BIS from which all participating institutions have benefited. For partners from the societies of origin, too, such joint action by the Swiss museums relieves the burden and conserves resources, as not every institution approached them individually with needs and the BIS staff could in some cases handle enquiries and coordinate tasks for cooperation with the individual museums.

2.4.3 The BIS as a template for new museum projects

The work of the BIS has no doubt lead to an increased sensitization to questions of colonial heritage in the collection of Swiss museums, both in public discourse and in terms of the public funding for provenance research. It has also strengthened the relationships between the eight participating museums. The well-established cooperation between the institutions and especially between the curators responsible for the Africa collections have created a solid network across language regions that has proven its efficiency and effectiveness repeatedly throughout the BIS project. The transferability of this successful cooperation during the BIS to new joint projects is clearly a given and desirable. The first steps towards joint provenance research between Swiss museums have been taken for both the Namibian and Cameroonian collections. Within the individual institutions, the BIS has also led to an increased focus on the importance of cooperation with members of the communities of origin and the diaspora in Switzerland, which will undoubtedly have an impact on the future working methods of the participating curators and provenance researchers. The intensified collaboration with members of communities of origin and diaspora communities, the collaborative

provenance research, co-curation and the joint development of exhibitions, and other mediation formats that were carried out in the various institutions within the framework of the BIS are considered an important part of the future of museum work by the participating curators and researchers.

2.4.4 Challenges for collaborative research and mediation

The collaborative approach to research and mediation encounters challenges in museum work, where friction sometimes arises between the decolonial approach described above and the institutional processes and logics. In this respect, the evaluation of the BIS cooperation has revealed structural challenges to long-term cooperation within the current mode of operations of museums:

First: the structure of museums has historically been designed in such a way that their work serves the public at their location. However, it is crucial for the future of museums with collections from other regions of the world to cultivate connections beyond their geographical locations and, in particular, to the regions in which objects from their collections were created. Forward-looking and decolonial museum work requires both the exchange with the societies from which the objects originate and the involvement of diverse publics in Switzerland itself. However, this is not yet sufficiently anchored in the structure of the institutions and is not yet seen as one of their central tasks in the distribution of funds. Because there is usually no fixed existing budget for this type of cooperation within the institutions, the conducting of cooperations, and the obtaining of third-party project funding is often left to the initiative of individuals.

In order to ensure the sustainability of the research and the cooperation networks established with the societies of origin, museums, therefore, still often lack long-term structures. Project-based collaboration with external partners, whether for exhibition or research projects, is often time limited by the structure of the funding and too often results in difficulties in adequately maintaining and deepening these relationships after the end of the project. In order to organize this type of cooperation well over the long term, it is necessary to make it a core component of museum and collection work, as otherwise the established networks cannot be adequately maintained.

Furthermore, the project-oriented working methods of museums were also cited as a challenge for collaborations that are established with partners, as working with diverse interest groups is not always easy to reconcile with the schedules and deadlines of museum work. This circumstance harbors the risk that there is a lack of time and space for the sharing of authorship and that the development of alternative perspectives will have to take a back seat to deadlines. In this respect, too, it would be advantageous for

collaborations to be less project-based and more embedded in separate and longer-term structures, which do not necessarily aim at the development of a time-limited final product, but which are tied to continuous and stable funding and staff and are understood as a central part of the museum's ongoing work on their collections.

2.5 Outlook

The second phase of the BIS was centered around the collaborative mediation of the results of provenance research. The participating museums developed a range of practices for collections originating from the Kingdom of Benin, from co-curation and co-authorship with colleagues from Nigeria to the involvement of diaspora communities in the development of exhibitions and new art works, all of which built on the collaborative provenance research conducted in the first phase of the BIS. These approaches as well as the network built between the participating museums is no doubt a basis and blueprint for future projects.

Phase two also pursued new research tracks in regard to the provenance history of the objects after 1897. The diverse connections that tie the collections in the BIS museums to those of institutions all over the world provide numerous avenues for further research, which can deepen our understanding of the networks that dispersed the objects from the Kingdom of Benin. The collaborative research – collaboration with Nigeria, within the Swiss museums but also with experts from museums, art market and academia on a broader level – proved to be at the end necessary to gather knowledge and perspectives on this fragmented cultural heritage.

3. Appendix I: The Joint Declaration of the Swiss Benin Forum

Joint Declaration of the Swiss Benin Forum

February 2, 2023

Addressing the Future of the Benin Collections in Swiss Public Museums

We, the participating museums of the Swiss Benin Initiative (BIS), the representatives of His Royal Majesty the Oba of Benin, the Director General of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments of Nigeria, the representative of the Nigerian Embassy to Switzerland, along with Nigerian researchers and artists, have wholeheartedly reached the following agreement on the Benin objects currently in Swiss public museums:

1. The ownership of the objects which were looted or likely to have been looted in 1897 should return to the original owner.
2. The participating museums are open to a transfer of ownership of these objects which could involve repatriation, circulation, or loans to Swiss museums.
3. The Benin objects are items of social, religious, historical, and aesthetic importance with emotional value.
4. The Benin objects carry histories that need to be told and the public should be informed as to how and why the objects came to be in Swiss museums.
5. The Benin objects can be ambassadors that draw admiration and understanding, show beauty and skills and enhance respect.
6. The Benin objects shall serve education for pupils, students, artists, and society in general.
7. The BIS can set an important example for dealing with colonial heritage.

The BIS will pursue its collaborations with the values and commitments presented below:

On the Future of our Collaborations

8. The BIS commits to developing new models of exemplary collaboration that foster sincerity, transparency and restore dignity. These relationships are foreseen as long-term, open engagements that respect the plurality of worldviews and adopt a new relational ethics.
9. As a hub, the BIS will seek to enable multi-level initiatives. This network will connect people with one another and engage communities of origin, the Swiss and Nigerian general public, and the diaspora.
10. The artists, guilds, and artisans of Benin should be encouraged and enabled in order that the artistic production of Benin remains alive.

11. We will contribute to the interflow of knowledge, developing joint exhibitions, research, and exchanges with museums, universities, and art schools.
12. We will explore our entangled and shared histories along with the provenance and circulation of objects, shedding light on museum histories in Nigeria and Switzerland.
13. We will collaborate to improve our shared research on care, conservation, and display of Benin heritage. This will enliven objects with renewed interpretation and recognize their value and cultural significance in a way that can be of benefit to the people of Nigeria and Switzerland.
14. As we develop our future collaborations, making new history together, we recognize that the objects are an expression of Benin identity and the Benin people's reverence for the Oba of Benin.

Authored by:

Prof. Dr. Abba Isa Tijani, Director General, NCMM
 Theophilus Umogbai, Head of Research, Planning and Publications, NCMM
 His Royal Highness Prince Aghatise Erediauwa on behalf of his Majesty the Oba of Benin
 Dr. Charles Uwensuyi-Edosomwan, Chief Obasuyi of Benin, Senior Advocate of Nigeria
 Chijioke McHardy Ani, Minister Counsellor, Embassy of Nigeria, Bern
 Samuel Bachmann, Africa Curator, Bernisches Historisches Museum
 Dr. Carine Ayélé Durand, Director, Musée d'ethnographie de Genève
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 Daniel Furter, Director, Museum Schloss Burgdorf
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 Phil Omodamwen, 6th Generation Bronze Caster, Benin City
 Patrick Oronsaye, Art Historian, Member of Ekaiwe Royal Society
 Dr. Thomas Pauli-Gabi, Director, Bernisches Historisches Museum
 Ursula Regehr, Africa Curator, Museum der Kulturen Basel
 Dr. Anna Schmid, Director, Museum der Kulturen Basel
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4. Appendix II: Actors and provenances

In the first phase of the BIS, 71 actors who were connected to the provenances of the objects in the BIS museums after 1897 were identified. Three more names have since been added, bringing the total number of people or firms involved in the change of hands of the objects to 74.

These 74 actors were checked against the database *Digital Benin*. This database contains the actors involved in the provenance histories of the Benin collections of 135 international museums and other institutions. This comparison of actors illustrates which individuals (and companies) might have had an exclusive connection to Benin collections in Swiss institutions and which belonged to an international network that was relevant beyond Switzerland in the trade in objects from Benin.

For the following actors no matches were found in the collections of other institutions:

Hans Ernst Barth	G. Berthoud	Brummer Brothers/ Gallery
Han Coray	Hans Coray	Davey Family
Éluard, Paul	Jean Gabus	Gallery Menist
Germain, Jacques	Heinrich, Ernst	Hans Himmelheber
Can, Alphonse	Wolfgang Kipf	Hildegard Kipf
Hans W. Kopp	Kuhn, Gotthelf	La Reine Margot
O. Lindenmann	Lindt, August	Peter Rufus Osunde
Frank Paulig	Podgorska, Sofia	Fritz Real
Rohrer, Ernst F.	Rolf Schenk	Ulrike Schenk
Franz H. Rolle	Maurice de Rothschild	Leopold Rütimeyer
Erwin Stiefel	Storrer, Emil	Leod Van Bussel
Mia van Bussel	Pierre Vérité	Susanne Vérité
Ernst Vischer-Wadler	Annemarie Vischer-Wadler	Hans Jakob Wehrli
Winizki, Ernst	Paul Wyss	Maria Wyss
Sybille Zemitis	Elisabeth Zink-Niehus	

For the 26 actors listed in the tables below, connections to the Benin collections of other institutions were found in the *Digital Benin* database.

For those individuals who were thus established to also be relevant to the collections of other institutions in this manner and for whom there were provenance gaps in the BIS collections, further research was carried out. The main point of interest in this regard was the question, whether other institutions had managed to link the actors to any previous or subsequent owners of objects in their collections. Such links might provide crucial information on the personal or trade networks each actor was involved in and could provide a possibility of closing provenance gaps for objects in the collections of the BIS institutions. Information regarding any known previous or subsequent owners linked to the actor has therefore been noted in the footnotes and further paths for subsequent research were identified. In cases, where no information regarding subsequent or previous owners was noted in the database, no footnote was set.

In cases where no provenance gaps were associated with an actor in connection with objects in the collections of BIS institutions, no further research was carried out and the lack of a provenance gap has been noted in the footnote.

In some cases, the connections between the collections of the BIS museums and other institutions had already been known and followed up during the first phase of the BIS. When this was the case, it has been noted in the footnote.

The footnotes to the table also contain information on the research routes that were followed regarding the different actors. However, the connections that were established between the collection histories of the BIS museums and numerous institutions in Europe, Africa, and America still contain much potential for further research.

Lastly, some of the objects referenced in the table below have been restituted from Germany to Nigeria. In the current iteration of the *Digital Benin* database, they are however still connected to the German institution that formerly held them. In these cases, the “Non-BIS Institution associated with the actor” has been referenced as “NCMM (formerly *Name of German Institution*)”.

4.1 Actors and their links to the Benin collections of other institutions

Name of Actor	BIS institutions and objects connected to the actor	Non-BIS Institution associated with the actor	Non-BIS Objects associated with the actor
Ascher, Ernst	MEG Altar Bell ETHAF 02288 Commemorative head ETHAF 022819		
		Art Institute of Chicago	Relief plaque 1933.782 ⁹
		Sidney and Lois Eskenazi Museum of Art, Bloomington Indiana	Commemorative head 62.89 ¹⁰
Beer, Edgar	MKB Altar Bell III 4048		
		Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen and Wereldmuseum, Rotterdam	Relief plaque RV-2771-3 ¹¹
		AfricaMuseum, Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren	Tusk EO.1963.2.1
Bey & Co¹²	MEN Relief Plaque 52.1.1		
		NCMM (Formerly Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)	185 objects
		NCMM (Formerly Linden Museum Stuttgart)	43 objects

⁹ Previous owner: 1958, Maitre Reheims, Hotel Drouot, Paris, France. Subsequent owner: 1962, Henry Hope purchase from Ascher, Paris, France; 1962, Gift to the Indiana University Art Museum from Henry and Sally Hope, Bloomington, Indiana. (Since the objects in the MEG were in Ernst Ascher's possession in the 1930s and before 1950, these dates are, however, too late for a match in provenance).

¹⁰ Previous owner: The piece comes from the collection of George W. Neville and was sold by his heirs through Foster's (auction house) after his death in 1929. London, May 1, 1930, lot. 53 (according to correspondence with Jean-Louis Paudrat in curatorial object file). Subsequent owner: Paul Vamos, Paris, Nov. 25, 1932. Ladislav Szecsi (Ladislav Segy, died 1988), Paris then New York, by March 1933; sold to the Art Institute, 1933.

The period is relevant, but an examination of the Foster's catalogue yielded no results. An examination of the connection to Paul Vamos and Ladislav Segy would be a next step in the research.

¹¹ Previous owner: Not known. However, the purchase took place in 1948, the same year as the purchase of bell III 4048 by the MKB, which is why an examination of the museum archives would be a sensible next step. At the time of writing, the Nationaal Museum has not entered any documents relating to Edgar Beer in the database. On Edgar Beer's connection to the Nationaal Museum (see Hans / Schmidt, Likely link to the 1897 British military campaign).

¹² Further research has yet to be carried out on this actor in regard to the BIS collections. For a general context of the acquisitions by Bey & Co, see the essay by Silke Reuther, *The Beginnings in Hamburg*.

		NCMM (Formerly MARKK, Hamburg)	34 objects
		Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen and Wereldmuseum, Rotterdam	17 objects
Blad, Caspar¹³	Kulturmuseum St. Gallen Relief Plaque KV C 31 73		
		NCMM (Formerly Staatliche Ethnographische Sammlungen Sachsen und Staatliche Kunstsammlung Dresden)	Relief plaque 16055 Relief plaque 16057 Relief plaque 16056 Relief plaque 16059 Relief plaque 16060
Cutter, Eva	MKB Staff of office III 1039 Altar Bell III 1040 Relief Plaque III 1041		
		NCMM (Formerly Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)	Bronze cock III C 7616
		Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen and Wereldmuseum, Rotterdam	Relief plaque RV-1170-5 ¹⁴
		Weltmuseum Vienna	Relief plaque VO_64693
		Brooklyn Museum, New York	Hip mask 23,280
		British Museum, London	Pendant Af1898,1022.1 Pendant Af1898,1022. Pendant Af1898,1022.3
Company Ludwig Glenk	Kulturmuseum St. Gallen Commemorative head VK C 3172		
		NCMM (formerly Museum Fünf Kontinente München)	Hip mask 12-62-1 ¹⁵

¹³ No provenance gap in the BIS collections in connection with this actor.

¹⁴ Previous owner: "The plaque (RV-1170-5) was part of the 315 plaques that arrived from the British Foreign Office in September 1897 and were displayed in the British Museum. In 1898, a sale was organised at the British Museum of the 112 plaques that the museum had not selected." (Source: https://digitalbenin.org/catalogue/34_RV11705). The Foreign Office's relief plaque sales were examined in the first phase of the BIS. The relief plaque of MKB III 1041 was not recorded.

¹⁵ The previous or subsequent owner (this is unclear) was an unknown "M. Heppner". The commemorative head VK C 3172 was purchased by the Glenk company in 1922 and the belt mask in the Museum Fünf Kontinente entered the collection as early as 1912. Examination of the museum's inventory book revealed no further information (see Museum Fünf Kontinente archive, inventory book, SMV-35 [1912 Inv. Nos. 12-51 to 12-71]). The next step would be further research in the Munich museum archives.

Guillaume, Paul	MRZ Hip Mask RAF 605 Kulturmuseum St. Gallen Hip Mask VK C 3166		
		Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia	Hip mask A227 ¹⁶ Hip mask A213
von der Heydt, Eduard	MRZ Commemorative head RAF601 Relief Plaque RAF 602 Relief Plaque RAF 603 Leopard Head RAF 604		
		NCMM (formerly Rautenstrauch- Joest Museum)	Container RJM 1949/05 ¹⁷ Leopard head RJM 44523 ¹⁸
		Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History	Commemorative head E402858-0 (?)
Hewett, Kenneth John¹⁹	MRZ Tusk RAF 607		
		British Museum	Container Af1949,20.1.a-b Group of figures Af1952,11.1
		Brooklyn Museum, New York	Belt mask 1994.143
		Los Angeles County Museum of Kind	Relief plate M.74.90
		Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York	Flute player figure 1978.412.310 Relief plaque 1978.412.309 Relief plaque 1978.412.320 Commemorative head 1979.206.87 Leopard figure 1978.412.321 Box 1991.17.70a, b Bangle 1991.17.79 Staff 1974.5 Staff 1991.17.98

¹⁶ Previous owner before Paul Guillaume: "A. A. (See Sales Catalogue Tesser & Sarrou)." There are no further details on this person in the database. The information is based on the publication by Ladislav Medgyes "The Art of the African Negro." International Studio (November 1922) and the comment "A Mask in Black Bronze from Benin (collection of A. A. Feder)." An examination of the publication revealed no further information.

A. A. Feder is presumably the painter Adolf Ayzik Feder (1886–1943, name in different spellings), who was one of the first collectors of African art in France. There are pictures of Feder in his studio showing part of his African collection. There is no Benin piece visible in the image. (Image source: <https://www.roger-viollet.fr/image-photo/adolphe-feder-1886-1943-russian-born-french-695115?lang=fr>). In the Orangerie archive, where Paul Guillaume's correspondence is kept, Feder is not listed as a correspondent. So far, no connection to RAF 605 or VK C 3166 could be established on this trace.

¹⁷ Previous owner: Presumably Eckard von Sydow. The connection to Eckart von Sydow has already been researched and proven in the case of RAF 623.

¹⁸ See note 11.

¹⁹ No provenance gap in the BIS collections in connection with this actor.

		Pitt Rivers Museum	Head 1966.13.1
		Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts	Commemorative head 232 Staff 231 Belt mask 233 Relief plaque 234 Mug 235
		Seattle Art Museum	Belt mask 81.17.493
		De Young Museum, San Francisco	Relief plaque 1980.31
Meyer, Hans²⁰	Possibly MRZ Hip Mask 2011.9 Possibly MEG Hip Mask ETHAF 020501		
		Art Institute of Chicago	Commemorative head 2003.16 ²¹
		NCMM (formerly Ethnological Museum, Berlin State Museums)	45 objects ²²
		NCMM (formerly Linden Museum Stuttgart)	Relief plate 004669 Ivory tusk 010324 Bangle 1117889 ²³ Ivory tusk 004671 Relief plaque 004670 Relief plaque 004668 Relief plaque 004667
		Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York	Relief plaque 1991.17.15
		NCMM (formerly Museum Fünf Kontinente, München)	Bell 32-36-1 ²⁴ Bell 32-36-2 Bell 32-36-3
		Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography	28 objects, Donation from Hans Meyer

²⁰ See the text in this report, p. 45, where these links are discussed regarding their relevance to the BIS objects.

²¹ Subsequent owner: Hans Meyer's widow, Elisabeth Meyer, sold the object to Jacques Seligmann and Company, New York, in 1933, several years after Hans Meyer's death. At the time of writing, the Art Institute of Chicago has not yet made any archive holdings accessible on the database and further research in the museum archive would have to be the next step.

²² The objects were transferred directly from Hans Meyer to the museum. However, in some cases the previous owners from whom Meyer had purchased are known. In some cases, purchases are recorded directly from Webster, which is also clearly visible in the Webster inventory books or at J. C. Stevens Auction Rooms. In one case, Meyer possibly also bought from Sir Ralph Moor. (See https://digitalbenin.org/catalogue/13_211160).

²³ Previous owner: Hermann Seeger, who sold the object to the Lindenmuseum in 1940. This could be of interest, as this could be an object that was sold either by Meyer's heirs or by himself, as could also be the case for RAF 2011.9 or MEG ETHAF 020501. As the Lindenmuseum has not yet entered any archival records for the object into the database, a comparison with the museum archive would be the next research step.

²⁴ For all three objects, it is noted in the entry book that they come from the "Hans Meyer estate," that the purchase had been arranged by the Völkerkundemuseum Leipzig and that the pieces had entered the collection in 1932, which indicates acting heirs, possibly the widow of Hans Meyer, Elisabeth Meyer. (See Archive Museum fünf Kontinente, SMV-61 (1932 Inv. Nos. 32-1 to 32-53)).

		NCMM (formerly Reiss-Engelhorn-Museums, Museum Weltkulturen)	17 objects, including Ivory tusk IV Af 3109 ²⁵ Bell IV Af 3101 ²⁶
		Statens museer för världskultur	31 objects
		Weltmuseum Vienna	13 objects
		NCMM (formerly Übersee-Museum Bremen)	Commemorative head B13619 ²⁷
Moor, Ralph ²⁸	Kulturmuseum St. Gallen Relief Plaque VK C 3173		
		British Museum, London	16 objects
		Cleveland Museum of Art	Relief plaque 1999.1
		Denver Art Museum	Relief plaque 1955.317
		Ethnological Museum, Berlin State Museums	9 objects
		Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York	Hip mask 1978.412.323
Mosse, Hans Lachmann ²⁹	MEN Relief Plaque 52.1.1		
		Musée du Quai Branly - Jacques Chirac, Paris	Memorial head 73.1997.14.1
Neville, George	MRZ Tusk MRZ 607		
		Art Institute of Chicago	Relief plaque 1933.782
		Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham UK	Altar piece BIRBI-48.1

²⁵ This tusk and eight other objects were added to the collection of the Reiss-Engelhorn Museum in 1925 as a purchase from Hans Meyer.

²⁶ This object entered the collection as a purchase in 1935. Both the 1925 purchases and the 1935 purchase could be of interest in tracing the provenance of the two BIS pieces. At the time of writing, the Engelhorn-Reissmuseum is not yet represented in the document archive of the database and research in the museum archive would therefore be the next research step.

²⁷ The object entered the collection in 1936. The research report on the Benin holdings of the Überseemuseum Bremen stated that this was a purchase from the widow of Hans Meyer, who decided in 1936 to "relinquish her husband's estate collection and commissioned the Leipzig museum to sell it." (See Schmidt, "Recherche zur Provenienz von 18 Objekten aus Benin," p.55f.). The research report contains a detailed analysis of the estates of Hans and Hermann Meyer.

²⁸ No provenance gap in the BIS collections in connection with this actor.

²⁹ This connection was already pursued in the first phase of the BIS.

		British Museum, London	Ivory tusk Af1897,-.649
		Fowler Museum at UCLA	Figure group X65.9088
		National Museum, Benin	Cock figure (n.d.)
		National Museum, Lagos	Pendant mask LG1952.32.2
		Musée du Quai Branly, Paris	Pendant plaque 70.2002.4.1
Ohly, William	MEG Tusk ETHAF 021934 Commemorative head ETHAF 023094		
		National Museum, Lagos	Commemorative head LG1947.20.26 Commemorative head LG1947.20.27
		Buffalo Museum of Sciences	Relief plaque 1947.003
		National Museums Scotland, Edinburgh	Staff A.1956.1125
		British Museum	Altar of the hand Af1948,02.11 Container Af1948,02.12 Pendant Af1949,41.1 ³⁰
		Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts	Commemorative head 236
Ratton, Charles³¹	Museum Rietberg Zurich Relief Plaque RAF 603		
		Brooklyn Museum, New York	Musical instrument 75.152.4 Musical instrument 75.152.1
		Buffalo Museum of Sciences	Rod C12763 Pendant C14885
		Cleveland Museum of Art	Staff 1938.5 Commemorative head 1938.6

³⁰ Previous owner: "First District Commissioner at Benin after the 1897 Expedition & then of his stepdaughter, Mrs. Ossiakova." It is not clear from the record whether the piece passed directly from Ossiakova to Ohly and it would be advisable to consult the museum archives. There is an inventory book on the sales by William Ohly in the possession of the family, which could provide information on the previous owners. However, it has not yet been possible to consult it.

³¹ No provenance gap in the BIS collection in connection with this actor.

		Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields	Commemorative head 1989.821
		Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York	Relief plaque 1978.412.309 Relief plaque 1987.412.473 Cock figure 50.145.47 Key 1991.17.116 Staff 1991.17.98 Casket 1991.17.701,b Aquamanile 1991.17.58a,b
		Museum of Fine Arts, Boston	Relief plaque 2020.383
		Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen and Wereldmuseum, Rotterdam	Relief plaque TM-1772-2018
		New Orleans Museum of Art	Relief plaque 80.194
		Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford	Commemorative head 1966.13.1
		NCMM (Formerly Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum, Köln)	Key RJM 43018 Pendant RJM 1943/05 Bell RJM 1943/05 Container RJM 1943/05
		SLAM, Saint Louis Art Museum	Relief plaque 10:1996 Commemorative head 12:1936
		Musée du Quai Branly - Jacques Chirac, Paris	Tusk 71.1932.15.13 Ceremonial sword 71.1932.49.1 Pendant 70.2002.4.1
Rawson, Harry ³²	Museum Rietberg Zurich Bracelet RAF 608		
		Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York	Chair 1991.17.62 ³³
		National Museum, Benin	Chair 83B:R:142 ³⁴
		British Museum	Ivory tusk Af1961,09.2 Leopard figures 69926 Commemorative head Af1961,09.1
		Cleveland Museum of Art	Relief plaque 1953.425

³² See the text on Rawson in this report, p. 50.

³³ This object entered the collection of Klaus and Amelia Perls at an unknown date. The object was published by Felix von Luschan as a piece from the Rawson collection (Die Altertümer von Benin, p. 399). The list of objects that were in the possession of Harry Rawson's son and then his widow until 1948 contains the description of a piece that corresponds to the chair. (See British Museum, AOA, Archives, Benin, Rawson, Loan In and ibid., Rawson, Correspondence)

³⁴ Previous owner: Lady Elisabeth Loch. See text in this report, p. 50.

Reichert, Friedrich³⁵	BHM Figure Group E/1903.326.0004 Altar Bell E/1903.326.0005		
		NCMM (Formerly MARKK, Hamburg)	Bangle C 3689 Vessel C 3688
Ridyard, Arnold³⁶	MRZ Tusk RAF 607		
		World Museum, National Museum Liverpool	Bangle 16.2.06.21 Bird figure 15.11.04.18 Fan 9.7.95.7 Commemorative head 27.11.99.8 Bird figure 15.8.04.34b Bird figure 15.8.04.34a
Schmidt, Eduard	Kulturmuseum St. Gallen Commemorative head VK C 3172		
		NCMM (formerly Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)	44 objects
		NCMM (Formerly Institut für Ethnologie und Afrikastudien, Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz)	Commemorative head 2595
		Minneapolis Institute of Art	Aquamanile in leopard shape 58.9
		NCMM (Formerly Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich)	Aquamanile in leopard shape 52-7-1 b
		National Museum, Benin	Commemorative head III C 8196 Relief plaque III C 8208
		Musée du Quai Branly - Jacques Chirac, Paris	Commemorative head 73.1997.4.3
Speyer, Arthur II³⁷	Kulturmuseum St. Gallen Relief Plaque VK C 3173 Relief Plaque MEN 52.1.1		
		NCMM (Formerly Linden Museum, Stuttgart)	Ceremonial sword 118740
		Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York	Relief plaque 1979.206.96

³⁵ See the text on Reichert in this report, p. 55.

³⁶ This connection was already pursued in the first phase of the BIS.

³⁷ No provenance gap in the collections of the BIS institutions in connection with this actor.

		Musée du Quai Branly - Jacques Chirac, Paris	Memorial head 73.1997.4.3
		NCMM (Formerly Staatliche Ethnographische Sammlungen Sachsen und Stl. Kunstsammlungen, Dresden)	Pendant 47242
From Sydow, Eckard³⁸	MRZ Leopard Head RAF 623		
		NCMM (Formerly Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum, Köln)	Container RJM 1949/05 Leopard head RJM 1949/05
Umlauff, J.F.G. (Company)	MKB Tusk III 1038 Commemorative Head III 1935 Tusk III 6694 Probably VKMZ Commemorative Head 10001		
		Buffalo Museum of Sciences	2 objects
		NCMM (Formerly Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)	7 objects
		NCMM (Formerly Linden Museum, Stuttgart)	2 objects
		NCMM (Formerly MARKK, Hamburg)	6 objects
		Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen and Wereldmuseum	21 objects
		NCMM (Formerly Staatliche Ethnographische Sammlungen Sachsen und Stl. Kunstsammlungen, Dresden)	11 objects
		UiO, Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo	5 objects
		University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archeology and Athropology	1 Object
		NCMM (Formerly Weltkulturen Museum Frankfurt am Main)	6 objects

³⁸ This connection was already analysed in the first phase of the BIS.

Wolff-Knize, Annie and Friedrich	MEN Relief Plaque 52.1.1		
		Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York	Relief plaque 1979.206.96
		Musée du Quai Branly - Jacques Chirac, Paris	Commemorative head 73.1997.14.1 ³⁹ Relief plaque 71.1939.69.1
		Weltmuseum Vienna	Relief plaque VO_139554
Whitaker, Clayton⁴⁰	MEG Rooster Figure ETHAF 022867		
		National Museum of Ireland, Dublin	Ceremonial paddle AE:1948.31 Ceremonial paddle AE:1948.32 Ceremonial paddle AE:1948.33 Ceremonial paddle AE:1948.34 Ceremonial paddle AE:1948.35 Ceremonial paddle AE:1948.36
Webster, William⁴¹			
TOTAL		41 Institutions	881 objects

³⁹ This connection was already pursued in the first phase of the BIS.

⁴⁰ This connection was already pursued in the first phase of the BIS.

⁴¹ See text on William Webster in this report, p. 57. A comparison with the database was dispensed with here, as William Webster's inventory books and his correspondence books were newly digitized and the primary sources were thus directly accessible for the comparison.

4.2 Analysis of selected actors and additional provenances

4.2.1 Han Coray (1880–1974)

The gallery owner, reform pedagogue, art collector, and hotelier Han Coray (whose full name was Karl Heinrich Ulrich Anton Coray) was one of the most important early collectors of African art in Switzerland.⁴² He was born in 1880 in the canton of St. Gallen and grew up first with his mother and then, after her death in 1888, in a St. Gallen orphanage.⁴³ He attended the teacher training college in Zurich from 1896 and then worked as a teacher for several years from 1900, pursuing and publishing reformist educational ideas.⁴⁴ In 1905, he married the first of his four wives, Domenica Hössli. In 1912, he took over the management of the Pestalozzi School in Zurich, a position he left in 1917, thus ending his educational career.⁴⁵

Even during his time as a teacher, Coray began to pursue his lifelong passion for collecting art, socializing in Zurich artistic circles—including the Dadaists—as a patron and opening a gallery in Zurich and Basel in 1916.⁴⁶ After his first marriage ended in 1917, Coray married his second wife, Dorrie Stoop in 1918, whose substantial fortune was to become the basis for his rapidly growing collection, which became increasingly focused on the Old Masters.⁴⁷

It is not exactly clear when Coray's interest in African artifacts began,⁴⁸ but he seemed to have become engrossed in this new passion by the mid-1920s at the latest, when he acquired around 2,000 objects in a major purchase from Parisian art dealer Paul Guillaume.⁴⁹ What is certain, however, is that he acquired a collection of around 2500 objects from Africa in the course of the 1920s, including a number of artifacts from the Kingdom of Benin.⁵⁰

After the tragic suicide of his wife and the subsequent end of financial support from her wealthy family, Coray's financial situation became increasingly precarious. In 1931, heavily in debt, he finally lost his Africa collection to the Schweizerische Volksbank.⁵¹

⁴² See Oberhofer, Tisa Francini, "Han Coray between Dada and Africa," p. 116. On the Coray collection at the Museum für Völkerkunde der Universität Zürich, see also Malefakis, "The fate of the Coray Collection", 2016.

⁴³ See Schäfer, Schlothauer, et al., "Die Afrikasammlung von Han Coray," p. 6.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ See Oberhofer, Tisa Francini, "Han Coray between Dada and Africa," pp. 114f.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 116.

⁴⁹ See Schäfer, Schlothauer, et al., "Die Afrikasammlung von Han Coray," p. 7.

⁵⁰ See Oberhofer, Tisa Francini, "Han Coray between Dada and Africa," pp.116f.

⁵¹ See Schäfer, Schlothauer, et al., "Die Afrikasammlung von Han Coray," p. 8.

The collection was finally sold to the Ethnological Museum in Zurich in 1940, which then sold parts of it on to various institutions and collectors.⁵²

Coray married for the third time in 1930 and moved with his wife to Agnuzzo in Ticino, where he opened the Casa Coray hotel. Even after his divorce in 1941 and his marriage to Margarethe Hossmann in 1943, Casa Coray continued to operate and Coray built up a second collection in the decades following his bankruptcy, which again included African art and which passed to his heirs after his death in 1974.⁵³

Connection to objects in the collections of Swiss museums

Han Coray is a central figure in the history of collections of artifacts from the Kingdom of Benin in Swiss museums. Twenty-nine of the 96 objects from the Kingdom of Benin in the BIS museums were part of his collection at one time or another. The Ethnological Museum of the University of Zurich owns the largest group with fifteen objects, followed by the Kulturmuseum St. Gallen with eight and the Museum Rietberg Zurich with six objects.

Coray left no archival material documenting his collecting activities, which makes it very difficult to trace the chains of provenance. In an interview with Coray's son, Pieter Coray, it was confirmed that his descendants are not in possession of any further documents relating to Han Coray's art purchases.⁵⁴ So far, only purchases from the art dealers Paul Guillaume (Paris) and Carel van Lier (Amsterdam) have been documented.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, further research into the provenance of the hip mask VK C 3166 from the Kulturmuseum St. Gallen revealed that it too had been purchased from the French art dealer and collector Paul Guillaume.⁵⁶

Research into the provenance of the staff RAF 609 currently held at Museum Rietberg on the other hand, showed that there is no clear evidence in the sources that the object was already in Han Coray's collection in the 1920s. Rather, the object is currently only recorded in his collection from the 1960s onwards.⁵⁷

Coray was probably able to recover a few dozen pieces from his collection of African objects seized in 1931.⁵⁸ Although this leaves open the possibility that the object

⁵² Ibid. p. 9.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Interview with Pieter Coray conducted by Michaela Oberhofer and Daniela Müller, June 19, 2023.

⁵⁵ See Oberhofer, Tisa Francin, "Han Coray between Dada and Africa," p. 116.

⁵⁶ See Schriftenarchiv Museum Rietberg Zurich, pp. 0005-0006a, list of Coray acquisitions with Guillaume.

⁵⁷ See Morigi, *Masterpieces of Old African Culture from the Casa Coray Collection*, 1968.

⁵⁸ See Schäfer, Schlothauer, et al. "Die Afrikasammlung von Han Coray," p. 9, note 7.

belonged to his collection created in the 1920s and was still part of his collection in 1968 (as was for example the armlet RAF 608⁵⁹), there is currently insufficient evidence that the staff RAF 609 was part of his early collection, which is why the provenance was revised accordingly.

Amended provenances

Uhunmwu-Èkue, hip mask VK C 3166, St. Gallen Museum of Culture	
Status: <i>Likely Looted in 1897</i>	
Provenance:	
19th century	Commissioned from the Royal Bronze-casting Guild (Igun Eronmwon) by the Royal Palace of Benin
Unknown date	By inheritance to Oba Ovonramwen (ca. 1857–1914), Benin City
1897	Likely looted during the invasion of the Kingdom of Benin
[...]	
Before 1928	Paul Guillaume, Paris [1]
Until 1931	Han Coray (No. BM 7) [2]
1931–1940	Schweizerische Volksbank [3]
12.1940	Culture Museum St. Gallen [4]
Proof of provenance:	
[1] See Schriftenarchiv Museum Rietberg Zurich, pp. 0005-0006a, list of Coray acquisitions from Guillaume.	
[2] See <i>ibid.</i> , Han Coray photo album and collection register.	
[3] See <i>ibid.</i>	
[4] See Kulturmuseum St. Gallen, index card VK C 3166.	

Ahianmwẹ-Ọrọ, rod with bird figure RAF 609, Museum Rietberg Zurich	
Status: <i>Likely Looted in 1897</i>	
Provenance:	
19th century	Commissioned from the Royal Bronze-casting Guild (Igun Eronmwon) by the Royal Palace of Benin
Unknown date	By inheritance to Oba Ovonramwen (ca. 1857–1914), Benin City
1897	Likely looted during the invasion of the Kingdom of Benin
[...]	
from 1968 at the latest	Han Coray [1]
probably 1974–1985	Han Coray, acquired by inheritance [2]
probably 1985–2001	Hans W. Kopp, Zumikon [3]
2001	Acquisition by the Museum Rietberg Zurich [4]
Proof of provenance:	
[1] See Paolo Morigi, <i>Meisterwerke altafrikanischer Kunst aus der Casa Coray</i> , 1968, p. 60. The object is not listed in the “Album Afrikanischer Kunst” and the object register, which was compiled in the 1930s about the Coray collection after the objects were confiscated (see Schriftenarchiv Museum Rietberg, pp. 0005-0006a, photo album Han Coray / register Han Coray).	

⁵⁹ See pp. 51-55.

[2] See museum database Museum Rietberg Zurich.

[3] See Archiv Museum Rietberg, folder Eingangsdokumente, Ausgaben-Anweisung zum Ankauf, 14 November 2001 and *ibid.*, S0002- S0016, invoice RAF 608 & 609.

[4] See Schriftenarchiv Museum Rietberg, Inventarbuch IV, p. 157.

4.2.2 Hans Himmelheber (1908–2003)

Hans Himmelheber was a German art anthropologist and art dealer who made thirteen research and collecting trips to Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Mali, Cameroon, Gabon, and the Democratic Republic of Congo between 1933 and 1976.⁶⁰ He sold the objects he acquired there to museums and galleries, including in Switzerland. Today, important Himmelheber collections can be found in the Museum der Kulturen in Basel, the Musée d'ethnographie in Geneva and the Museum Rietberg in Zurich.

Himmelheber was born in Karlsruhe in 1908, the son of a furniture manufacturer. After completing secondary school, he first completed a banking apprenticeship and then began studying economics.⁶¹ His studies took him to Paris in 1929, where he first came into contact with the then flourishing trade in artifacts from Africa. A short time later, he entered the art trade himself and quickly built up a network of clients in various European museums, including the former Museum of Ethnology in Basel (now the Museum der Kulturen Basel) and the Musée d'ethnographie in Geneva.

Himmelheber began studying art history and anthropology in 1931. In 1933, he traveled to West Africa for the first time, where he conducted research for his dissertation and also acquired objects for the museums in Basel and Geneva as well as for other clients. Himmelheber, who never held a permanent position at a university or museum, earned his living throughout his life by trading in zoological and ethnological collections, which after 1933 he acquired primarily during his travels, be it by buying directly from the makers of the objects, from the owners in villages he visited or from local traders.⁶² Himmelheber's early travels were primarily financed by museums and other clients until the early 1950s. These sponsors received objects for their collections in return. Later, however, he also received contributions from public donors such as the German Research Foundation, which supported his research.⁶³ His scholarly interests focused mainly on questions of art production and artistry in West Africa, but he published on a

⁶⁰ See Guyer, Oberhofer, eds., *Congo as Fiction*, 2020 and www.africa-art-archive.com, a website and database dedicated to Hans Himmelheber and his research and collecting activities.

⁶¹ For all biographical details, see Krüger, Müller, et. al., "Biographie," in www.africa-art-archive.ch.

⁶² See Oberhofer, "Objects," 2023.

⁶³ See Müller, "Travelling," 2023

wide range of ethnological topics, including fairy tales, biographies, and etiquette.⁶⁴ Even after his last trip to Liberia in 1976, Himmelheber continued to publish and took part in exhibitions at the Museum Rietberg in Zurich, where his photo archive and written legacy are now managed alongside his private collection.⁶⁵ Himmelheber died in Heidelberg in 2003 at the age of 95.

Connection to objects in the collections of Swiss museums

New findings show that Hans Himmelheber was the seller of the metal hip mask ETHAF 020501 to the Musée d'ethnographie de Genève in January 1933.⁶⁶ His connection to the trade in artifacts from Benin was previously unknown and only clearly documented in one case.

Himmelheber's trading activities before his first research trip in 1933 can only be reconstructed incompletely, as his own documents were destroyed in a bombing raid on his parents' house in Karlsruhe and his written legacy does therefore not cover this period.⁶⁷ Correspondence in the archives of the Musée d'ethnographie and Geneva, the Museum der Kulturen in Basel, and various German museums provides an insight into Himmelheber's early trading activities and his extensive network in the museum sector in the period before his first research trips.⁶⁸

In his correspondence with the curator and later director of the MEG, Prof Eugène Pittard, Himmelheber only hints at information about the previous owner of the hip mask from Benin: the piece had come from an extremely famous collection, which had been sold because the owner had died.⁶⁹ As the object had already come onto the European market in the late nineteenth century through William Webster, it is reasonable to assume that the "famous" collection was that of a collector and not that of a member of the British military.

A few months earlier, Himmelheber had failed to sell another hip mask to the MEG because the price was too high.⁷⁰ This first, unsold mask was also a piece from an unnamed deceased previous owner, whose heir was at that point in possession of the

⁶⁴ See Oberhofer, "Publications," 2023.

⁶⁵ See Krüger, Müller, et al. "Biographie," 2023.

⁶⁶ Many thanks to Floriane Morin, who came across the correspondence with Himmelheber in the MEG's correspondence archive.

⁶⁷ See Tisa Francini, "Schriftenarchiv," 2023.

⁶⁸ See Krüger, Müller, et. al, "Biographie," 2023.

⁶⁹ See MEG Archives, Megcor_1412_0032, letter from Hans Himmelheber presumably to Eugène Pittard, November 27, 1932.

⁷⁰ See *ibid.*, Megcor_1413_0006, letter presumably from Eugène Pittard to Hans Himmelheber, September 21, 1932.

object⁷¹ and who was not a dealer but a collector, according to Himmelheber.⁷² However, Himmelheber does not explicitly state that the two masks under discussion come from the same collection, even if the parallels of the deceased previous owner allow this hypothesis.

If one takes Himmelheber at his word and traces the mask back to a famous collection of a deceased previous owner, then the question arises as to which important collections came onto the market after the death of a collector in the period from or before 1932.

One possible answer to this question would be the African explorer, colonial politician, and important collector of Benin artifacts Hans Meyer, who died in 1929. Meyer was one of the most important collectors of artifacts from the Kingdom of Benin in Germany in the early twentieth century and was, for example, a good customer of William Webster, as is clear from his inventory books.⁷³

During his lifetime, Meyer had loaned artifacts from Benin to the Ethnological Museum in Leipzig, but individual objects from his collection were also circulated by him as well as placed on the market by his heirs after his death. In 1932, for example, three Benin bells from Hans Meyer's collection entered the holdings of the Museum Fünf Kontinente in Munich as "Nachlass H. Meyer, Leipzig," presumably via his heirs.⁷⁴ In 1933, Meyer's widow Elisabeth (née Haeckel) also sold a commemorative head to Jacques Seligmann and Company in New York.⁷⁵ In 1936, the Überseemuseum Bremen also acquired an object from Hans Meyer's former collection and two objects from the widow of Hans Meyer's brother, Hermann Meyer.⁷⁶ (As both women had the first name Elisabeth, there is a risk of confusion here).

The Bremen commemorative head B13621, which was sold to the museum by Elisabeth Meyer (Hermann Meyer's widow) in 1934, has an interesting parallel to the MEG belt mask (ETHAF 020501): in addition to the inventory number by William Webster, both bear a further numbering which looks deceptively similar to the Webster number but, according to the Webster inventory book, is not a Webster number and is surrounded by a white circle.⁷⁷

This number is most probably not a number from Hermann Meyer's collection, as it bears no resemblance to other Meyer numbers such as the one on an object from the State

⁷¹ See *ibid.*, Megcor_1413_0021, letter from Hans Himmelheber to Eugène Pittard, March 14, 1932.

⁷² See *ibid.*, Megcor_1413_0007, letter from Hans Himmelheber to Eugène Pittard, September 14, 1932.

⁷³ See, for example, the publication of the Museum für Völkerkunde zu Leipzig: *Kunst aus Benin. African Masterpieces from the Hans Meyer Collection*, 1994, but the quantitative analysis of the holdings on *Digital Benin* also shows that Meyer was probably the most important collector of objects from Benin in Germany.

⁷⁴ Museum Fünf Kontinente, entry book, SMV-61 (1932 Inv. Nos. 32-1 to 32-53).

⁷⁵ Today in the Art Institute of Chicago with the inventory number 2003.16 (https://digitalbenin.org/catalogue/48_180750)

⁷⁶ See Schmidt, "Recherche zur Provenienz von 18. Objekten aus Benin," pp.16f.

⁷⁷ See *ibid.* p. 52.

Ethnographic Collections of Saxony and the Dresden State Art Collections.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, it indicates that the two objects belonged to the same collection at one time and it is quite possible that both subsequently ended up in the possession of the Meyer family.

Himmelheber had placed adverts in German newspapers from about 1930 onwards, which were aimed at former German colonial officials and their widows who were in possession of works of art from Africa.⁷⁹ It is not implausible that Himmelheber could have come into contact with the family of the deceased Hans or Hermann Meyer in this way. However, this theory has not yet been substantiated and the seller of the belt mask to Hans Himmelheber currently remains unknown.

Amended provenance

Uhunmwu-Èkue, hip mask MEG ETHAF 020501, Musée d'Ethnographie de Genève	
Status: <i>Looted in 1897</i>	
Provenance:	
18th/19th century	Commissioned from the Royal Bronze-casting Guild (Igun Eronmwon) by the Royal Palace of Benin
Unknown date	By inheritance to Oba Ovonramwen (ca. 1857–1914), Benin City
1897	Plundered during the invasion of the Kingdom of Benin
[...]	
04.07.1899	Sale at J. C. Stevens Auction Rooms, London [1]
1899-1902	William D. Webster, London (No. 7610) [2]
03.06.1902	Sale at J. C. Stevens Auction Rooms, London [3]
[...]	
probably 1932 to 1933	Hans Himmelheber, Karlsruhe [4]
1933	Acquisition by the Musée d'Ethnographie de Genève [5]
Proof of provenance:	
[1] See Archive of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, CA000229/001/0001.	
[2] See <i>ibid.</i> , as well as: Webster, Catalogue No. 24 of Ethnographical Specimens in Bronze, Wrought Iron, Ivory and Wood, from Benin City, West Africa, taken at the fall of the City in February 1897, by the British Punitive Expedition under the command of Admiral Rawson. <i>Illustrated Catalogue of Ethnological Specimens. European and Eastern Arms and Armour. Prehistoric and Other Curiosities</i> , vol. 4, no. 24.	
[3] See <i>ibid.</i> , and catalogue of the J. C. Stevens Auction Rooms, "Unique Collection of Benin Bronzes," June 3, 1902.	
[4] See MEG Archive, Megcor 1413, correspondence between Hans Himmelheber and Eugène Pittard 1932 to 1933.	
[5] See <i>ibid.</i>	

⁷⁸ See entry for object MAF 29789 on *Digital Benin*. (https://digitalbenin.org/catalogue/47_1798248).

⁷⁹ This is based on the research of Anja Soldat, curator at the Kunstmuseum St. Gallen (see Krüger, Müller, et al., "Biography." 2023).

4.2.3 Wolfgang and Hildegard Kipf (dates of birth and death unknown)

Little is known about the lives of Wolfgang and Hildegard Kipf. In the sources, Wolfgang Kipf appears in the early 1990s as the seller of the relief plaque RAF 603 from the Museum Rietberg Zurich, which was stolen by unknown persons in 1968. He had inherited it from his mother Hildegard Kipf, who in turn had probably owned the plaque since the early 1970s and had likely purchased it in the Frankfurt region.⁸⁰

Amended provenance

Ama, relief panel with depiction of the Prince Odogbo RAF 603, Museum Rietberg Zurich	
Status: <i>Looted in 1897</i>	
Provenance:	
16th/17th century	Commissioned from the Royal Bronze-casting Guild (Igun Eronmwon) by the Royal Palace of Benin
Unknown date 1897	By inheritance to Oba Ovonramwen (ca. 1857–1914), Benin City Probably plundered during the invasion of the Kingdom of Benin
[...]	
Until 1931	Paul Éluard, Paris [1]
02/03.07.1931	Auction at the Hôtel Drouot auction house, Paris [2]
02/03.07.1931	Purchased by Charles Ratton, Paris [3]
1932–1952	Eduard von der Heydt, Ascona [4]
1952	Donated to the Museum Rietberg Zurich [5]
1968	Stolen by unknown persons from the Museum Rietberg Zurich [6]
[...]	
Early 1970s	Acquired Hildegard Kipf in the Frankfurt area [7]
1989	By inheritance to Wolfgang Kipf, Bad Homburg [8]
1990 or 91	Acquired by Frank Paulig, Wiesbaden [9]
1993	Consignment to Sotheby's and seizure [10]
1993	Acquired by the Museum Rietberg Zurich with funds from Pierre Udry [11]
Proof of provenance:	
[1] Auction catalogue Hôtel Drouot of 02/03.07.1931, Sculptures d'Afrique, d'Amérique, d'Océanie. Collection André Breton et Paul Éluard, plate 1 and Trocadéro Archives, FR_751059807_MNHN_Archives_2AM1 / 2 AM 1 K81d_Correspondance Ratton, letter from Charles Ratton to Eduard von der Heydt April 14, 1932 and <i>ibid.</i> , 2 AM 1 K48, Letter from Eduard von der Heydt and Charles Ratton, April 19, 1932.	
[2] Auction catalogue Hôtel Drouot of 02/03.07.1931, Sculptures d'Afrique, d'Amérique, d'Océanie. Collection André Breton et Paul Éluard, plate 1.	
[3] Archives Bellier, Bibliothèque Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, cote PATR-2018-51, Sous-fonds Alphonse Bellier Archives 162/25/11.	
[4] Archive du Musée d'Histoire Nationale, Trocadéro Archives, FR_751059807_MNHN_Archives_2AM1 / 2 AM 1 K81d_Correspondance Ratton, letter from Charles Ratton to Eduard von der Heydt April 14, 1932.	
[5] Leuzinger, Elsy, <i>Afrikanische Skulpturen. Beschreibender Katalog</i> , no. 74, Zurich, Atlantis Verlag, 1963.	
[6] NZZ No. 313, p. 29, 23.05.1968, Theft in the Rietberg Museum.	
[7] Schriftenarchiv Museum Rietberg Zurich, folder "Naked Boy," letter from Wolfgang Kipf to Frank Paulig, April 4, 1993	
[8] Schriftenarchiv Museum Rietberg Zurich, folder "Naked Boy," letter from Frank Paulig to Lorenz Homberger, April 27, 1993 and letter from Wolfgang Kipf to Frank Paulig, April 4, 1993.	

⁸⁰ See also the Mémoire de recherche of Caroline Bakra, 2022/23.

[9] See *ibid.*

[10] Schriftenarchiv Museum Rietberg Zurich, folder "Naked Boy," letter from Frank Paulig to Lorenz Homberger, April 27, 1993 and letter from Wolfgang Kipf to Frank Paulig, April 4, 1993 and *ibid.*, unknown author, Zur Rückkehr einer im Jahre 1968 gestohlenen Benin-Bronze, July 1993.

[11] See Schriftenarchiv Museum Rietberg Zurich, p. 0002-0015, RAF 603, payment receipt and database Museum Rietberg Zurich.

4.2.4 Admiral Harry Holdsworth Rawson (1843–1910)

Harry Holdsworth Rawson was in command of the British military campaign against the Kingdom of Benin in 1897, during which thousands of artifacts were looted from the city and the royal palace.

At the time of the invasion of Benin, Rawson was the commander of the British fleet at the Cape of Good Hope.⁸¹ He had joined the navy in 1857 at the age of thirteen and from then on led a life characterized by the interests and conflicts of the British Empire: the very next year he was deployed in the Second Opium War and was involved in the Battle of Taku Forts and in the conquest of Peking in 1860. (According to his own account, he did not take part in the plundering of the Summer Palace and thus had no share in the valuable booty in this case.)⁸²

A rather uncritical biography, published in 1914, tells of Rawson's participation in various conflicts and geopolitical manoeuvres after the war in China, as well as administrative duties within the navy in various regions of the British Empire. Rawson served as Commandant of Nicosia in the occupation of Cyprus in 1878⁸³ and as principal transport officer in the Anglo-Egyptian War to put down the Urabi Revolt in 1882.⁸⁴ Rawson rose through the ranks of the British navy over the years. He was promoted to captain in 1877⁸⁵ and rear-admiral in 1892⁸⁶ and finally became commander of the fleet at the Cape of Good Hope in 1895⁸⁷.

After his transfer to Africa, Rawson was involved in several military campaigns even before the campaign against Benin in order to assert British interests against the resistance of local rulers, such as the conquest and destruction of the city of Mveli and the destruction of the palace and harem of Zanzibar to depose the sultan, Sayyid Khalid bin Barghash.⁸⁸

⁸¹ See Phillips, *Loot*, p.100.

⁸² See Hicks, *British Museums*, p.160 and Phillips, *Loot*, p.113.

⁸³ See Rawson, *Life of Admiral Rawson*, pp.53–67.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 70f.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁸⁸ See Hicks, *British Museums*, pp. 81–84.

As commander of the British troops from January to February 1897, he led the military preparations and ultimately the conquest of Benin and was subsequently an important figure in the distribution of the spoils of war among the British officers.⁸⁹

Rawson was awarded the Order of Bath after the conquest of Benin. In 1898, he left his post in South Africa, was promoted to vice-admiral and was given command of the Channel Squadron of the British Navy.⁹⁰ In 1902, he was appointed governor of New South Wales and promoted to admiral in 1903, before dying in London in 1910 at the age of 67.⁹¹

Connection to objects in the collections of Swiss museums

An ivory ikoro (bracelet) from Admiral Harry Rawson's personal booty from the raid on Benin is now in the Museum Rietberg in Zurich.⁹² A photograph of the object was published in 1919 in Felix von Luschan's book *Die Altertümer von Benin*, where it was labelled as belonging to Rawson's private collection.⁹³ The dating of the book has previously been taken as the reason to attribute ownership of the bracelet to the Rawson family until at least the year 1919.

However, correspondence between the two men shows that Felix von Luschan had already contacted Rawson in 1901 in order to catalogue and photograph objects in British private ownership for his book. (The publication of the book was subsequently delayed by more than a decade.) Rawson agreed to have his collection photographed in 1901 and wrote to von Luschan that he owned "the king's chairs and swords also two plaques and other things."⁹⁴

Luschan then asked Charles Hercules Read, the British Museum curator responsible for the ethnographic collection, to send a photographer to Rawson's house in London to have his collection photographed,⁹⁵ which was done by 1903 at the latest.⁹⁶

After that, no trace of the ikoro is found in the sources until it is noted again in 1931 in the collection of the Swiss collector Han Coray.⁹⁷ Remnants of an inventory number, which can be read as EA1, are visible on the bangle—this type of numbering was used

⁸⁹ See Phillips, *Loot*, p. 134.

⁹⁰ See Rawson, *Life of Admiral Rawson*, pp. 164–166.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 211, 223 and 256.

⁹² Museum Rietberg Zurich, Inv. No. RAF 608.

⁹³ See von Luschan, *Alterthümer von Benin*, p. 399.

⁹⁴ See Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Felix von Luschan estate, box 17, letter from Rawson to von Luschan, August 15, 1901.

⁹⁵ See Central Archive, British Museum, AOA, letter from Luschan to Read, September 9, 1901.

⁹⁶ See Central Archive, British Museum, AOA, letter from Luschan to Read, April 9, 1903.

⁹⁷ See Morigi, *Masterpieces of Old African Culture from the Casa Coray Collection*, fig. 65.

by Han Coray in the 1920s. This number indicates that the object was already in his collection at this time, even though it is not recorded in the lists that were compiled after Coray's collection was confiscated by the Schweizerische Volksbank. The Object and its inventory number EA 1 do, however, appear in the documentation of an exhibition of Coray's collection in Munich in 1931.⁹⁸ As discussed above, Coray was able to reacquire a small number of the objects confiscated in 1931, which might be how the object came to remain in his collection and make a renewed appearance in the book on the Coray collection by Paolo Morigi in 1968.

Reference to other institutions

The whereabouts of Rawson's personal spoils from the conquest of Benin has not yet been conclusively researched.⁹⁹ However, some pieces from Rawson's private collection are already clearly assigned to various museum collections and *Digital Benin* currently lists seven objects that specifically name Rawson as a previous owner: In addition to the ikoro, which is in the Museum Rietberg Zurich, there are two objects in the collection of the British Museum (plus two leopard figurines in the Royal Collection Trust, also in the British Museum),¹⁰⁰ one in the National Museum in Benin,¹⁰¹ and one each in the Metropolitan Museum in New York¹⁰² and the Cleveland Museum of Art.¹⁰³

It is clear that a significant part of Rawson's personal booty remained in the possession of the family after his death. In his will, Admiral Rawson had left, among other things, his "trophies" to his three surviving children.¹⁰⁴ These "trophies" apparently included his Benin collection because Rawson's son, Captain Harry Christopher Shaw Rawson, was in contact with the ethnographic department of the British Museum in the person of Hermann Braunholtz in 1947 to negotiate the sale of 46 objects that he had inherited from his father.¹⁰⁵ After Captain Harry Rawson's death in 1948, his wife continued the negotiations with the British Museum, but ultimately decided to sell the collection to the Director of Antiquities of the Nigerian colonial government, Kenneth Murray, who was a key figure in the establishment of museums in the colony at the time.¹⁰⁶ The list of these

⁹⁸ Vgl. Peraldi/ Schlothauer, *Objekte aus dem Königreich Benin*, p. 24.

⁹⁹ See Hicks, *British Museums*, p. 160.

¹⁰⁰ Inventory numbers of the British Museum: Af1961,09.1 and Af1961,09.2, as well as the pair of leopards with the inventory number 69926 (see *Digital Benin*).

¹⁰¹ Inventory number: 83B:R:142 (see *Digital Benin*)

¹⁰² Inventory number MET: 1991.17.62 (see *Digital Benin*)

¹⁰³ Cleveland Museum of Art inventory number: 130708 (see *Digital Benin*)

¹⁰⁴ See UK Government, probate records: Harry Rawson's last will and testament.

¹⁰⁵ See Pugh, *Guardians of Beautiful Things*, p.70.

¹⁰⁶ See Pugh, *Guardians of Beautiful Things*, pp. 73f.; Grout, *Museum Correspondences*, pp. 136–139; Bodenstein, "Getting the Benin Bronzes Back," 2022; Phillips, *Loot*, pp. 535f.

objects and the correspondence between the Rawson family and Braunholtz are now in the archives of the British Museum.¹⁰⁷ To date, there is no evidence that the bracelet from the Museum Rietberg was part of this collection, as the description of the bracelet on the list does not match the object. However, the correspondence at the British Museum indicates the existence of photographs of Harry Rawson's collection, which might still be in the British Museum archives. Although these photographs could not be located at the time of writing, they could provide definitive certainty as to the identity of these objects.

A number of objects acquired in 1948 for the National Museum in Lagos have not yet been digitally linked to Admiral Rawson in the *Digital Benin* database but can in some cases be attributed to his collection on the basis of the acquisition list and other sources. Some of the pieces that are in Lagos today were for example exhibited at the Berkeley Gallery by William Ohly in 1947,¹⁰⁸ and even if a clear assignment is not possible due to the lack of illustrations in the catalogue, the unusual Ikoru LG 1948.28.1 in the museum in Lagos could well be Ohly catalogue number 15A.¹⁰⁹

According to a former curator of the British Museum, William Fagg, a cast bronze rider in the National Museum in Lagos also came from the Rawson collection.¹¹⁰ This is probably the rider LG1948.36.2.¹¹¹

The relief plate LG1948.36.40 with a tree motif and Amufi acrobats also very likely comes from Harry Rawson's personal spoils.¹¹² It is reasonable to assume that other objects from the Rawson collection are also in the museum in Lagos today but have not yet been publicized as such.

A chair that is now in the collection of the National Museum in Benin City also goes back to the collection of Harry Rawson. After leaving the possession of Harry Rawson, the object was owned by a "Lady Loch."¹¹³ This is likely Lady Elizabeth Villiers Loch (ca. 1841–1938). She was the wife of Henry Brougham Loch, a high-ranking colonial official

¹⁰⁷ See British Museum, AOA, Archives, Benin, Rawson, Loan In and *ibid.*, Rawson, Correspondence. Photographs of these objects may also exist in the British Museum. After comparing this list of 48 objects, 46 of which were sold to Murray, with the object in the Museum Rietberg, it is considered unlikely that the armcuffs described on it could be a match. A comparison with the photographs could provide the final certainty.

¹⁰⁸ See also Phillips, *Loot*, pp. 284f.

¹⁰⁹ See Ohly, *Ancient Benin*, number 15A. "Ivory armet, carved with heads of Portuguese, and with conventional floral designs which are inlaid with gilt bronze pieces probably of Portuguese make. (...) Height 5 in."

¹¹⁰ See entry on Harry Rawson on *Digital Benin* database. Also see Fagg, *The Alleman Collection*, p.166. (See Hicks, *British Museums*, p.160.) In his footnote, Fagg refers to the exhibition *Traditional Art of the British Colonies* at the Royal Anthropological Institute in 1949, in whose accompanying catalogue the rider can be seen on plate viii. An exhibition view in the journal *Man* also shows the rider from the collection of the National Museum in Lagos. (See Unknown, *Traditional Art of the British Colonies*, p.108)

¹¹¹ See https://digitalbenin.org/catalogue/37_LG1948362

¹¹² See British Museum, AOA, Archives, Benin, Rawson, Loan In, relief plate no.1.

¹¹³ See entry *Digital Benin*, https://digitalbenin.org/catalogue/36_83BR142.

who was the Governor of Victoria, Australia from 1884–1889 and the sister of Edith Lytton, the Vicereine of India.¹¹⁴ Rawson, who himself became Governor of New South Wales in Australia in 1902, undoubtedly moved in the same social circles as Elisabeth Loch, but the exact circumstances of the change of hands of the chair have not yet been clarified. It is quite possible that Rawson gave away selected pieces from his collection during his lifetime and that the object thus came into Lady Loch's possession. Although this has not been proven, the giving away of objects by Rawson during his lifetime could offer a further explanation as to how objects from his personal collection like the ikoro at the Museum Rietberg came into circulation.

Amended provenance

Ikoro, bracelet RAF 608, Museum Rietberg Zurich	
Status: <i>Looted in 1897</i>	
Provenance:	
18th/19th century Royal	Commissioned from the Royal Guild of Ivory Carvers (Igbesanmwan) by the Palace of Benin
Unknown date 1897	By inheritance to Oba Ovonramwen (ca. 1857–1914), Benin City Looted during the invasion of the Kingdom of Benin by Harry Rawson [1]
1897- at least 1903 [...]	Possession of Harry Rawson [2]
from 1931 at the latest probably 1974 – 1985 probably 1985 – 2001 2001	Han Coray (Reg. No. EA1) [3] Hans Coray, acquired by inheritance (Reg. No. HC 40?) [4] Hans W. Kopp, Zumikon [5] Acquisition by the Museum Rietberg Zurich with private funds and donations of the Rietberg circle [6]
Proof of provenance:	
[1] See Felix von Luschan, <i>Die Altertümer von Benin</i> , 1919, p. 399 with illustration.	
[2] See Staatsbibliothek Berlin, Nachlass Felix von Luschan, Box 17, Letter from Admiral Rawson to Felix von Luschan August 15, 1901; British Museum Archive, AOA, Correspondence between C.H. Read and Felix von Luschan / C.H Read and Captain George Egerton, 1901–1903.	
[3] See Peraldi/ Schlothauer, <i>Objekte aus dem Königreich Benin</i> , p. 24. See also Paolo Morigi, <i>Meisterwerke afrikanischer Kunst aus der Casa Coray</i> , 1968, p. 65.	
[4] See database Museum Rietberg.	
[5] See Archive Museum Rietberg, folder "Eingangsdokumente," Ausgaben-Anweisung zum Ankauf, November 14, 2001 and <i>ibid.</i> , S0002- S0016, invoice RAF 608 & 609.	
[6] See Archive Museum Rietberg, inventory book IV/157.	

¹¹⁴ See *New York Times*, "Lady Loch marks her 96th Birthday," September 19, 1937.

4.2.5 Friedrich Wilhelm Reichert (dates of birth and death unknown)

Little is known about Friedrich Wilhelm Reichert's life.¹¹⁵ However, a vague picture of Reichert as a colonial goods merchant in the port of Hamburg can be reconstructed from trade directories, newspapers, and address directories.

Reichert lived in Hamburg¹¹⁶ and from 1881 at the latest was active in the trade in tea and coffee, which, according to his own newspaper adverts, he bought directly from various plantations and some of which appear to have come from African production.¹¹⁷ Later he seems to have specialized in the sale of tobacco products and appears in a Hamburg address book and a directory of cigar merchants as a cigar and tobacco dealer, with his business address at Deichstrasse 30.¹¹⁸ Finally, in 1923 he appears in the address book of the Oddfellow Club as a private individual, after which his trace is lost in the sources.¹¹⁹

Reference to objects in the collections of Swiss museums

In 1903, Reichert sold four African artifacts to the then Museum für Völkerkunde in Hamburg (now MARKK). Two of these artifacts—the figurine group E/1903.326.0004 and the altar bell E/1903.326.0005 from the Kingdom of Benin—were sold on to the Bernisches Historisches Museum in the same year.

It is not possible to reconstruct from the sources how Reichert came into possession of the artifacts from Benin. The fact that he only approached the MARKK as the seller of four objects, suggests that Reichert's trade in African artifacts was more of an occasional activity.¹²⁰ With regard to the objects now in the Bernisches Historisches Museum, it is relevant that in the years following the British conquest of the Kingdom of Benin, the port of Hamburg became one of the most important transshipment centers for the objects

¹¹⁵ See Dau, *Provenance Research on the Hamburg Benin Collection*, p. 194.

¹¹⁶ In 1925, Reichert was listed as living in Hamburg (see Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, *Hamburger Adressbuch*, ZC 1018, 1925, p. 828), but as early as 1881 adverts referred to a relationship with Hamburg (see note 51).

¹¹⁷ Reichert placed these adverts as far away as Bavaria, for example in *Das Bayrische Vaterland* and the *Augsburger Abendzeitung* (See Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 4 Eph.pol. 40 k-1881, 7-12, *Das Bayerische Vaterland* no. 252 and *ibid.*, 2 Eph.pol. 115 t-1881, 10-12, *Augsburger Abendzeitung* no. 298, p. 6). Among the products listed are mocha made from African pearl beans.

¹¹⁸ See Hamburg address book, entries for cigar and tobacco shops in Hamburg, 1915, p. 499 and Hamburg address book, 1894, p. 431.

¹¹⁹ See Austrian National Library, *Odd-Fellows Address Book*, 1923, p. 495.

¹²⁰ Many thanks to Jamie Dau for generously sharing his knowledge of Reichert's relationship with the MARKK.

looted during or acquired in the aftermath of the military campaign, and that the Hamburg merchant class played an important role in that process.¹²¹

Objects such as the figurine group—which stylistically cannot be attributed to the royal court of Benin but is likely the representation of the vassal king Pere and might have found its way to Benin city as a gift to the court—and the altar bell were not in circulation in Europe before 1897.¹²² Their appearance in the hands of a Hamburg merchant just six years after the conquest of the Kingdom of Benin suggests that these objects are probably connected to the British punitive expedition. The objects were therefore re-categorized as “likely to be looted.”

Supplemented provenances:

Group of figures E/1903.326.0004, Bernisches Historisches Museum	
Status: <i>Likely to be looted</i>	
Provenance:	
Unknown date 1897 [...]	Possibly produced by Ijaw bronze casters Probably plundered during the invasion of the Kingdom of Benin
Unknown date Presumably 1903 1903	Friedrich Wilhelm Reichert, Hamburg [1] Acquired by the Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg [2] Acquisition by the Bernisches Historisches Museum with funds from Prof. M. M. Stein, Prof. Sidler, Ryf and Baur [3]
Proof of provenance:	
[1] BHM Archive, A.001.009.004 Letter from Stöltin to Zeller dated August 3, 1903. [2] BHM Archive, A.001.009.004 Letter from Stöltin to Zeller dated August 3, 1903. [3] Inventory book BHM 1, p. 269.	

Erero, altar bell E/1903.326.0005, Bernisches Historisches Museum	
Status: <i>Likely to be looted</i>	
Provenance:	
Unknown date 1897 [...]	Possibly produced by Ijaw bronze casters Probably plundered during the invasion of the Kingdom of Benin
Unknown date Probably 1903 1903	Friedrich Wilhelm Reichert, Hamburg [1] Acquired by the Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg [2] Acquisition by the Bernisches Historisches Museum with funds from Prof. M. M. Stein, Prof. Sidler, Ryf and Baur [3]

¹²¹ See Dau, *Provenienzforschung*, p.181; Reuther, *The Beginnings in Hamburg*, pp.165–176.

¹²² Samuel Bachmann and Lucky Ighosa Ugbudian discuss the attribution of the group of figures to the Ijaw king Pere in their essay “The Pere: The significance of the supposedly inferior,” 2024. Many thanks to Barbara Plankensteiner and Jamie Dau for sharing their knowledge on the objects and the Hamburg trade networks.

Proof of provenance:

[1] BHM Archive, A.001.009.004 Letter from Stöltin to Zeller dated August 3, 1903.

[2] BHM Archive, A.001.009.004 Letter from Stöltin to Zeller dated August 3, 1903.

[3] Inventory book BHM 1, p. 269.

4.2.6 William Downing Webster (1868–1913)

The Briton William Downing Webster was one of the most important dealers in artifacts from the Kingdom of Benin after the British military campaign of 1897.

Webster was born near London in 1868, the son of potato merchant Robert Burrow and Sarah Elizabeth Webster.¹²³ An early interest in drawing first led him to train as a glass painter in Lancaster.¹²⁴ In 1891, he married Agnes Harrison, with whom he had two daughters, Doris and Phyllis Webster.¹²⁵ His activity as a dealer and collector of ethnographic objects began in the early 1890s and in 1895 he began to publish sales catalogues of ethnographic objects.¹²⁶

In his work, Webster bought partly from auctions and partly from private individuals whom he visited while traveling through England.¹²⁷ He often sold directly to museums, but also to private collectors and at auctions. J. C. Stevens Auction Rooms in London was central to Webster both as a place of purchase and as a place of sale, which is also clearly evident in the provenances of the objects in the BIS museums.

Around the turn of the century, Webster became one of the most important sellers of objects from the Kingdom of Benin, often buying pieces directly from members of the British military who had been involved in the campaign in Benin.¹²⁸ His inventory books reveal a truly international network that stretched from Europe to New Zealand and America. In the case of the objects from Benin, important customers included museums such as Dresden, Vienna, Leipzig, and, to a lesser extent, the Völkerkundemuseum Basel, as well as private collectors such as the British general, Pitt Rivers, and the Africanist, geographer and colonial politician Hans Meyer in Leipzig.¹²⁹

The couple separated around 1901 and in 1904 Webster decided to sell his holdings at J. C. Stevens Auction Rooms.¹³⁰ However, his trade in ethnological objects is

¹²³ See King, W. D. Webster, p. 55.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid., pp. 55 and 57.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 56.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 59.

¹²⁸ See Phillips, *Loot*, p. 194 and entry on William Webster in the *Digital Benin* database.

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 195.

¹³⁰ See King, W. D. Webster, pp. 57f.

documented until shortly before his death.¹³¹ Webster died in 1913 as a result of alcoholism.¹³²

Connection to objects in the collections of Swiss museums

William Webster is associated with thirteen pieces in the collections of the BIS museums. The Museum der Kulturen Basel purchased eight objects directly from William Webster in 1899 and two more in 1901.¹³³

The hip mask number 2011.9 in the Museum Rietberg Zurich as well as the hip mask number ETHAF 020501 and the tusk ETHAF 021934 in the Musée d'Ethnographie de Genève were recorded in Webster's holdings in the early twentieth century, but afterwards had been in other, partially unreconstructed possession for several decades before being acquired by the respective museums.

William Webster's inventory books, which are held at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa in New Zealand, have been digitized since the completion of the first phase of the BIS and could thus be completely matched with the pieces in the Swiss museums. The Uhunmwu Elao (memorial head) with the registration number III 1033 in the Museum der Kulturen Basel could thus be assigned to the Webster inventory number 6807.¹³⁴ Webster had previously purchased the object from J. C. Stevens Auction Rooms.¹³⁵

The two other missing register numbers for two bronze pendants in the MKB were also searched for, but there is only one other entry in Webster's inventory books in which an object was sold to Basel. This bears the Webster number 7595 and is recorded as a "Benin Bronze Armllet."¹³⁶ Webster had also purchased this object from J. C. Stevens Auction Rooms. However, apart from bracelet III 1035, which bears the Webster number 7588, there is no other object matching the description in Basel.

During the examination of the newly digitized archive holdings relating to William Webster, a new search was also carried out for the belt mask 2011.9 (Webster number 14356) in the Museum Rietberg, which led to a revision of the provenance, as uncertainties arose in the previous attribution to the Hans Meyer collection.

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 58.

¹³² Ibid., p. 56.

¹³³ See Hertzog, Uzébu-Imarhiagbe: "Collaborative Provenance Research," p.23. The pieces in question are MKB III 1033, III 1034, III 1035, III 1036, III 1037, III 1039, III 1040 and III 1041. In 1901, MKB III 1190 & III 1191 followed.

¹³⁴ See Archive of Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Stockbook of William Webster, CA000229/001/0001, p. 274, where the bronze head is referred to as a "bronze mask," but this was not an isolated case for Webster. (See British Museum Archive, Af, A154 (Photographic Catalogue of William Webster).

¹³⁵ See *ibid.*, p. 307.

¹³⁶ See Archive of Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Stockbook Webster, CA000229/001/0001, p. 274.

Connection to objects in other institutions

Webster was the most important actor in the dispersal of objects from the Kingdom of Benin after 1897. One can find today 881 Benin objects that passed through his hands in a total of 41 different public institutions.¹³⁷ Larger collections are held by the State Ethnographic Collection of Saxony and the Dresden State Art Collections (197 objects), the Field Museum in Chicago (164 objects), the Ethnological Museum in Berlin (86 objects), the Museum of Archeology and Anthropology at the University of Cambridge (73 objects), the Weltmuseum Vienna (58 objects), the Nationaal Museum von Wereldculturen and Wereldmuseum in Rotterdam (50 objects), the Statens museer för Världskultur in Stockholm (38 objects), the National Museum Scotland (35 objects), the Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum in Cologne (30 objects), and the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford (20 objects).¹³⁸

Amended provenances

Uhunmwu-Elao, memorial head III 1033, Museum of Cultures Basel	
Status: <i>Looted in 1897</i>	
Provenance:	
16th/17th century	Commissioned from the royal guild of bronze casters (Igun Eronmwon) by the Royal Palace of Benin
Unknown date 1897	By inheritance to Oba Ovonramwen (ca. 1857–1914), Benin City Looted during the invasion of the Kingdom of Benin
[...]	
until 06.03.1899	J. C. Steven's Auction Rooms, London [1]
until 31.05.1899	William Webster, London (Reg. No. 6807) [2]
1899	Acquisition by the Museum für Völkerkunde Basel [3]
Proof of provenance:	
[1] See Archive of Museum of New Zealand, Stockbook of William Webster, CA000229/001/0001, p. 274.	
[2] Ibid.	
[3] Ibid., and Archive MKB, Inventory Book III Afrika and index card for object III 1033.	

¹³⁷ See *Digital Benin*.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

Uhunmwu-Ekue, belt mask
2011.9, Museum Rietberg Zurich

Status: *Looted in 1897*

Provenance:

17th/18th century	Commissioned from the royal guild of bronze casters in Benin City (Igun Eronmwon) by the Royal Palace of Benin
Unknown date	By inheritance to Oba Ovonramwen (ca. 1857–1914), Benin City
1897	Looted during the invasion of the Kingdom of Benin
[...]	
01.07.1902	J. C. Stevens Auction Rooms, London [1]
From 01.07.1902	William Webster, London (Reg. No. 14356) [2]
[...]	
Unknown date	Possibly Adolf Bernhard Meyer, Dresden or Hans Meyer, Leipzig [3]
Around 1950 at the latest	Ernst Heinrich [4]
1972 or earlier - 2009	Acquired as a gift or by inheritance from Sybille Zemitis (daughter of Ernst Heinrich), USA [5]
From 2009	Leod and Mia van Bussel, dealer, Amsterdam [6]
2010-2011	Jacques Germain, dealer, Montreal [7]
2011	Acquired by the Museum Rietberg with funds from Regula Brunner Vontobel [8]

Proof of provenance:

[1] See Archive of Museum of New Zealand, Stockbook of William Webster, CA000229/002/0001, p. 155.
[2] Ibid.
[3] See Schriftenarchiv Museum Rietberg, Eingangsdokumente, Dossier Jacques Germain and *ibid.*
E-mail from Jacques Germain to Lorenz Homberger dated June 20, 2011. It is unclear whether the previous owner was the Africanist and geographer Hans Meyer in Leipzig or the Dresden museum director Adolf Meyer. The provenance was noted as "A. B. Meyer, Leipzig" by Jacques Germain, who refers to a statement by Sybille Zemitis.
[4] See Schriftenarchiv Museum Rietberg, entry documents, photograph of the Heinrich Collection ca. 1950.
[5] Interview with the Heinrich family conducted by Alice Hertzog and Katja Schurr on July 6, 2022 in Tübingen.
[6] Ibid.
[7] See Schriftenarchiv Museum Rietberg, entry form 2011.9 and dossier Jacques Germain.
[8] See Schriftenarchiv Museum Rietberg, entry form 2011.9.

5. Appendix III: Research output and mediation formats

5.1 Joint Publication

Tisa Francini, Esther, Alice Hertzog, Alexis Malefakis, and Michaela Oberhofer, eds. *Mobilizing: Benin Heritage in Swiss Museums*, Zurich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2024.

Abbe, Josephine Ebiuwa and Michaela Oberhofer. "Energy from the Source: Co-curating Benin Arts and Performance." In *ibid.*, 104–107.

Bachmann, Samuel B. and Lucky Igohosa Ugbudian. "The Pere at the Bernisches Historisches Museum: The significance of the supposedly inferior." In *ibid.*, 54–57.

Bachmann, Samuel B. and Lucky Igohosa Ugbudian. "Benin Arts from the Margin." In *ibid.*, 92–95.

Glauser, Julien. "Double Context of Injustice: The relief plaque at the Musée d'ethnographie de Neuchâtel." In *ibid.*, 70–73.

Herbas, Maylawi. "Benin-Burgdorf: The figure of an Oba, its provenance and its meaning." In *ibid.*, 74–77.

Hertzog, Alice. "A Horse, a Rider and a Head: Fragments of Edo Heritage at the Völkerkundemuseum of the University of Zurich." In *ibid.*, 62–65.

Jallo, Zainabu and Ursula Regehr. "In Full View: Benin, Nigeria – Dialogue and Multiperspectivity." In *ibid.*, 108–111.

Malefakis, Alexis and Alice Hertzog. "I Lay My Hand on the Ivory and Felt the Red Benin Soil": Diaspora Encounters in the Museum Storage facility." In *ibid.*, 96–100.

Mbafeno, Solange. "Designing an afrocentric Benin exhibition," In *ibid.*, 100–103.

Morin, Floriane. "Questions surrounding a carved ivory tusk in the Musée d'ethnographie de Genève." In *ibid.*, 66–69.

Müller, Daniela and Michaela Oberhofer. "Benin and the world: Entangles (art-) histories." In *ibid.*, 36–39.

Ogamien, Samson and Floriane Morin. "SE-YA-MA means both 'to cast in bronze' and 'to remember'." In *ibid.*, 88–91.

Regehr, Ursula. "Following the Traces of a Commemorative Head: From the Benin Kingdom to the Museum der Kulturen Basel." In *ibid.*, 50–53.

Soldat, Anja: "From 'dignitary' to 'warrior' and back again: Object descriptions of an Ama relief plaque in the Kulturmuseum St. Gallen." In *ibid.*, 58–61.

Laville, Yann. "More than Illustration: A Scenographic approach to provenance." In *ibid.*, 84–87.

Tisa Francini, Esther, Alice Hertzog, Alexis Malefakis, and Michaela Oberhofer. "Benin Initiative Switzerland. New ways of working together." In *ibid.*, 8–15.

Tisa Francini, Esther, Alice Hertzog, Daniela Müller, and Enibokun Uzébu-Imariagbe. "Collaborative Provenance Research: Investigating Benin Object Biographies." In *ibid.*, 26–31.

Tisa Francini, Esther. "Milestones of the Benin Initiative, 2020–2024." In *ibid.*, 16–21.

Tisa Francini, Esther. "An example of the role of provenance and the Art Market: The hip mask at the Museum Rietberg." In *ibid.*, 78–81.

5.2 Exhibitions and project presentations at the participating museums

Musée d'ethnographie de Neuchâtel

Butins

As part of the exhibition *Cargo Cults Unlimited*

December 17, 2023 – December 31, 2024

Bernisches Historisches Museum

Wall of Hands

As part of the exhibition *And then came Bronze!*

February 1, 2024 – April 21, 2025

Musée d'ethnographie de Genève

Capsule SE-YA-MA

As part of the exhibition *Remembering: Geneva in the Colonial World*

May 3, 2024 – January 1, 2025

Museum Rietberg Zurich

One Station in *Pathways of Art: How the Objects get to the Museum*

June 17, 2022 – March 24, 2024

Exhibition *In Dialog with Benin: Art, Colonialism and Restitution*

August 23, 2024 – February 16, 2025

Völkerkundemuseum der Universität Zürich

Exhibition *Benin Dues: Dealing with Looted Royal Treasures*

August 24, 2024 – August, 2025

Museum der Kulturen Basel

Project presentation *In full view: Benin, Nigeria*
from February 5, 2025 – May 7, 2025

5.3 Events, lectures, and guided tours at the participating institutions

Numerous guided tours on the Swiss Benin Initiative as part of the exhibition *Pathways of Art: How the objects get to the museum*, for private individuals, schools, and universities.

Esther Tisa Francini and Dr. Michaela Oberhofer
Museum Rietberg Zurich, 2023/2024.

Lecture *Une plaque de Benin City au MEN*
Dr. Alice Hertzog
Musée d'ethnographie de Neuchâtel, January 18, 2024

Short guided tour "Benin Bronzes in Bern" through the exhibition *And then came Bronze!* as part of the *Museumsbier – Abends ins Museum* format
Samuel Bachmann
Bernisches Historisches Museum, February 29, 2024

Guided tour of the depot on Provenance Research Day *Benin Bronzes in Bern*
Samuel Bachmann
Bernisches Historisches Museum, April 10, 2024

Guided tour "The BIS: Collaborative research and curating in the exhibition" *Memory – Moments of remembering and forgetting* on Provenance Research Day
Ursula Regehr
Museum der Kulturen Basel, April 10, 2024

Lecture and performance
Dr. Josephine Ebiuwa Abbe (Benin City)
Museum Rietberg Zürich, August 24, 2024

Numerous guided tours and discussions on the exhibition *In Dialogue with Benin. Art, Colonialism and Restitution* for private individuals, schools, and universities.
Dr. Michaela Oberhofer and Esther Tisa Francini
Museum Rietberg Zurich, 2024/2025.

Lecture on *Provenance research and colonial entanglements in Museum Schloss Burgdorf*
Maylawi Herbas
Museum Schloss Burgdorf, September 19, 2024

Forum: Restitution and Beyond with panel discussions on the future of museums in Nigeria, with Prof. Bénédicte Savoy and the Director General of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments, Olugbile Holloway and other international guests.
Museum Rietberg and Völkerkundemuseum der Universität Zürich
Museum Rietberg Zurich, October 26, 2024

Guided tour (Mittwoch Matinee): *Benin, Nigeria*
Museum der Kulturen Basel, April 23, 2025

Public discussion *BIS: Future prospects*
Museum der Kulturen, May 7, 2025

5.4 External presentations and contributions

Presentation *Beyond Restitution. Towards a Transcultural Collaboration and Holistic Museum Practice Between Africa and the Global North*
MIASA Midterm Conference *Sustainable Governance in a Time of Global Flux: Issues, Concepts and Future Directions*
Solange Mbanefo and Dr. Michaela Oberhofer
University of Ghana, Accra, September 21, 2023

Participation on the Panel *Research: Sensitive Collections & Provenance*
Daniela Müller
Workshop *Museum Curation in Practice*
Department of History, European University Institute, Florence, October 27, 2023

Lecture during the 16^e séminaire de l'Ecole du Louvre : *Spoliation – Restitution – Recherche de provenance*
Dr. Julien Glauser
Institut d'histoire de l'art et muséologie, Université de Neuchâtel, 05.12.2023

Workshop about the Benin exhibition at Museum Rietberg with Nigerian Partners
Online, Museum Rietberg Zurich and University Benin in Benin City, December 11, 2023

Presentation *How to connect? Wissenschaftliche, kuratorische und künstlerische Perspektiven auf Dinge im Museum*
Conference *Dealing with Heritage. Über Dinge, Beziehungen, Erinnern. Eine festliche Ansammlung für Anna-Maria Brandstetter*
Dr. Michaela Oberhofer
Universität Mainz, February 16, 2024

Presentation *Benin Swiss Initiative. Past, Present and Future of African Heritage in Swiss Museums*
Dialogue on *African Artifacts in Switzerland: Africa in Museum*
Dr. Michaela Oberhofer
African Diaspora Council of Switzerland with Offene Kirche Bern, March 12, 2024

Keynote and Round Table *Transcultural Collaboration. Decolonizing Curatorial Practices*
International Day *Decolonisation: Concrete Examples from Artistic Disciplines*
Dr. Michaela Oberhofer
Zürcher Hochschule der Künste, May 14, 2024

5.5 Internal workshops at the BIS institutions

Workshop I by representatives of the BIS institutions

Topic: Mediation and Exhibitions

Museum Rietberg Zurich, September 23, 2023

Workshop II by representatives of the BIS institutions

Topic: Research, publications and digital questions

Online, December 7, 2023

Workshop III by representatives of the BIS institutions

Topic: Mediation of the project results and the Benin magazine

Musée d'ethnographie de Neuchâtel, January 25, 2024

Workshop IV by representatives of the BIS institutions

Topic: Reflecting on the methodology of cooperation

Online, February 27, 2024

5.6 Media coverage

The BIS was accompanied by media coverage during its second phase. Below is an incomplete list of media reports from January 2023, the date of publication of the research report of the first phase:

Schweizer Museen und Kunst aus Benin

SRF Tagesschau, February 2, 2023

In öffentlichen Schweizer Sammlungen befindet sich Raubkunst aus Benin

Neue Zürcher Zeitung, February 2, 2023

Schweizer Museen entdecken Raubkunst aus Benin

Radio SRF News, February 2, 2023

Benin-Bronzen in Schweizer Museen mit heikler Herkunft

Radio SRF 2 "Echo der Zeit," February 2, 2023

Schweizer Museen sind im Besitz von geplünderten Objekten aus Benin

SRF 3 "Info 3," February 2, 2023

Koloniale Raubkunst. "Bei der Rückgabe gibt es kein Limit"

Swissinfo, February 2, 2023

Gestohlenen Kunst in Zürcher Museen

Radio SRF Regionaljournal Zürich Schaffhausen, February 3, 2023

Hälfte der Benin-Objekte in Schweizer Museen mit Heikler Herkunft

Watson.ch, February 3, 2023

Wie umgehen mit Raubkunst aus Benin in Schweizer Museen ?

Radio SRF 2 "Kultur kompakt," February 3, 2023

Ces œuvres qui rentrent au Pays
arcinfo.ch, February 3, 2023

Nigeria will nicht, dass Schweizer Museen geleert werden
Tagesanzeiger, February 4, 2023

Koloniale Raubkunst. Schweizer Museen schliessen Rückgabe nicht aus
Schaffhauser Nachrichten February 4, 2023

Artifacts in Swiss Museums were looted from the Kingdom of Benin, new report says
The Art Newspaper, February 6, 2023

Koloniale Raubkunst. Auch Verdachtsfälle sollen Nigeria gehören
Swissinfo, February 9, 2023

Umgang mit Beutekunst in Europa. Die Schweiz
WDR 3 Mosaik, February 15, 2023

La Suisse passe au crible ses collections d'art africain
Le Journal des Arts, N.607, March 17 – March 30, 2023

Swiss Museums investigate how they acquired Benin Art treasures
artafricamagazine.org, April 13, 2024

Schwarz/Weiss. Wie umgehen mit geraubtem Kulturgut?
Radio X, April 13, 2024

Geschichtsbuch eines Königreichs. Die Benin-Bronzen
Deutschlandfunk Nova, May 5, 2023

Benin Bronzen in der Schweiz. Toxisches Erbe aus der Kolonialzeit
srf.ch, May 9, 2023

Recherche de provenance. Une démarche de recherche commune
La revue suisse des musées, May 10, 2023

Benin-bronzen. Schweizer Museen hofieren die Nachfahren von Sklavenhändlern und ignorieren das Blut, das an den Kunstschatzen klebt
NZZ, May 12, 2023

Spielt die Schweiz Musterschüler? Die Benin-Bronzen beschäftigen die Politik
ajour.ch, May 15, 2023

Wem gehört Afrikas Kulturerbe? Die Rückgabe der benin-Bronzen und die Zukunft des Museums
Geschichtedergegenwart.ch, May 17, 2023

Guter König, Böser König
WOZ Die Wochenzeitung, June 8, 2023

Die Benin-Bronzen oder der Stein von Rosetta – wem gehört diese Kunst?
NZZ.ch, June 16, 2023

Warum werden die Opfer der Sklaverei totgeschwiegen?
NZZ, August 5, 2023

Wem gehören die Bronzen von Benin?
TA Magazin, August 19, 2023

Wie es mit restituierten Benin-Bronzen weitergehen könnte
derstandard.at, August 8, 2023

Die Rückseite der Geschichte
NZZ, September 23, 2023

Der Mythos vom Verschweigen der Sklaverei
geschichtedergegenwart.ch, December 3, 2023

Wir reden uns das Opfer-Täter-Bild schön
Schweiz am Wochenende, December 9, 2023

Nigeria collaborates with Switzerland over Benin Antiquities
museum.ng, undated

Provenienzforschung und Restitution. Für ein Denken in unabgeschlossenen Prozessen
Geschichtedergegenwart.ch, July 7, 2024

A Zurigo una mostra sul saccheggio e la restituzione delle opere del Regno del Benin
Finestre sull'Arte, August 2, 2024

Benin-Ausstellung im Museum Rietberg erkennt koloniales Unrecht an
www.swissinfo.ch, August 21, 2024

Das Museum Rietberg und die Kunstschatze aus dem Königreich Benin
Radio SRF 2 Kultur, Kultur-Nachrichten, August 22, 2024

So geht die Schweiz mit ihren Benin-Plastiken um
Badische Zeitung, August 22, 2024

Raubkunst aus Benin - In Zürcher Museen kommen jetzt Stimmen aus Nigeria zu Wort
www.srf.ch, August 23, 2024

Tatort «Raubkunst», Blut aus Benin klebt an Schweizer Museen – wie lange noch?
Tagblatt, August 25, 2024

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AOA, Correspondence between Charles Hercules Read and Felix von Luschan, 1901–1903.

AOA, Correspondence between Charles Hercules Read and Captain George Egerton, 1901–1903.

Systematic search in the correspondence holdings for the actors for whom there are still unanswered questions in the provenances of the objects in the BIS institutions.

Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, Leipzig

ZC 1018; Laufende Nummer: 23, Hamburger Adressbuch, 1925.
Digitized Version available on www.ancestry.de

www.digitalbenin.org

The database was used to cross-reference the actors connected to the provenances of the collections in the BIS institutions and to access the digitized archival material provided to the platform by – at the time of research – 45 different institutions.

Kew National Archives

ADM 116/87, Admiralty, records office, Cases, Benin Massacre

ADM 123/127, Punitive Expeditions in Gambia, Benin and Sierra Leone, etc.

ADM 123/128, Punitive Exped. in British East Africa, Zanzibar and Benin City.

ADM 1/12823 Ivory tusk from Benin City

Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa

Stock Book Collection Number Range 1 to 9834, CA000229/001/0001.

Stock Book Collection Number Range 9833 to 16913, CA000229/002/0001.

Webster Collection Outward Letter Book 1900-1901, CA000223/001/0001.

Webster Collection Outward Letter Book 1903-1907, CA000223/002/0001.

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek

236865-A NEU MAG, Odd-Fellow-Adressbuch. Namensverzeichnis sämtlicher Mitglieder der Groß-Logen, Logen und Lager in Deutschland, Göttingen 1923.

Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin

Estate of Felix von Luschan, boxes 8, 17 and 21, as well as systematic examination of the correspondence files with regard to the actors for whom there are still unanswered questions in the provenances of the objects in the BIS institutions

Museum der Kulturen

Written Archives, Inventory Books, III_Afrika

Written Archives, Inventory Cards

Written Archives, 04-0080 Sammler-Korrespondenz, Hans Himmelheber 1931-1933

Written Archives, 04-0081 Sammler-Korrespondenz, Hans Himmelheber 1921-1930

Zentralarchiv Berlin

I/MV 0086, Abgabe und Tausch von Dubletten (1916 – 1922)

I/MV 0087, Abgabe und Tausch von Dubletten (1922 – 1929)

Museum Fünf Kontinente

Inventory book, SMV-35 [1912 Inv..No. 12-51 to 12-71]

Inventory book, SMV-61 [1932 Inv.Nr.32-1 to 32-53]

Musée d'ethnographie de Genève

MEG Archives, Megcor 1412 and 1413, Correspondence between Eugène Pittard and Hans Himmelheber, 1932.

Museum Rietberg Zurich

Written Archives, Inventory Books

Written Archives, S 0005-0006 Han Coray

Written Archives, without Inventory Number, Documentation of Accession

Written Archives, without Inventory Number, Folder „Naked Boy

Database Roger Viollet

Photographic Archive, Adolphe Feder (1886-1943), peintre russe naturalisé français, dans son atelier. Paris, vers 1920.

(<https://www.roger-viollet.fr/image-photo/adolphe-feder-1886-1943-russian-born-french-695115?lang=fr>)

Transatlantic Slave Trade Database

The Database www.slavevoyages.org was consulted in order to help quantify and contextualise the trade in enslaved persons between different European powers and the Kingdom of Benin.

6.3 Auction, exhibition and sales catalogues

Berkeley Galleries: *Primitive Art: Exhibition of the Art of primitive Peoples at the Berkeley Galleries*. London, June–July 1945.

Berkeley Galleries: *Ancient Benin: Art of Primitive People with a Foreword by William Fagg. Exhibition held at the Berkeley Galleries*. London, December 1, 1947–January 31, 1948.

Berkeley Galleries: *Exhibition of the Art of Ancient Benin*. London, January 8–February 3, 1951.

Christie, Manson & Woods: *Relics taken at Benin: Property of a Gentleman*. London, April–June 1900.

Christie, Manson & Woods: *Ethnographica, Islamic and classical antiquities*, London, December 3, 1968

Foster's: *A Catalogue of the Highly Important Bronzes formed by the late G. W. Neville* London, May 1, 1930.

Foster's: *Fine Bronzes Ivory and Wood Carvings from the Walled City of Benin, West Africa. An important collection of Benin Bronzes, the property of a field officer who removed them himself at the time of the Expedition*. London, July 16, 1931.

Foster's: Unknown title. London, August 2, 1934.

Hôtel Drouot: *Collection André Derain et a divers amateurs*. Paris, March 9–11, 1955.

Hôtel Drouot: *Haute Epoque Extrême-Orient*. Paris, November 26 and 27, 1957.

Hôtel Drouot: *Armes blanches et armes à feu d'Orient et d'Extrême-Orient; sculptures africaines*. Paris, June 9, 1971.

Kende Galleries at Gimbel Brothers: *Primitive art of Africa, the Americas, Pacific Islands. African wood sculptures, ivories, Benin bronzes, Mexican sculptures, masks, pottery, textiles; Central American, New Guinea and New Zeland early art; also of the American Indian and Eskimo tribes*. New York, November 11, 1950.

Medgyes, Ladislas: *The Art of the African Negro*. International Studio, November 1922.

Parke-Bernet Galleries: *Primitive Art. Columbian - African - Oceanic. From Various European and American Owners*. April 22, 1965 (Sale No. 2342)

Rains Galleries: *Modern art, paintings, drawings, watercolours; Benin bronzes*. New York, November 19, 1936.

Sotheby & Co: *Catalogue of Native Art*. London, July 10, 1935.

Sotheby & Co: *Catalogue of Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Indian and South American Antiquities*. London, May 27, 1936.

Sotheby & Co: *Catalogue of Egyptian, Greek, Roman Antiquities etc. comprising a collection of Scarabs*. London, July 5 and 6, 1938.

Sotheby & Co: *Prehistoric, Assyrian, Egyptian, Greek and Roman antiquities, a collection of Eastern weapons, coins and medals*. London, July 24, 1940.

Sotheby & Co: *Catalogue of Egyptian, Greek, Roman Antiquities, Stone age and Bronze Age implements and Benin Bronzes*. London, October 17, 1949.

Sotheby & Co: *Catalogue of Egyptian, Greek and Roman Antiquities*. London, April 17, 1950.

Sotheby & Co: *Catalogue of Ethnographical Art including fine Benin Bronzes and Carved Tusks. Also Egyptian, Greek and Roman Antiquities*. London, June 26, 1952.

Sotheby & Co: *Catalogue of Ethnographical Art and Antiquities*. London, July 5 and 6, 1954.

Sotheby & Co: *Catalogue of Primitive Art and Indian Sculpture, Ancient Glass and Islamic Pottery*. London, March 18, 1968.

Sotheby & Co: *Catalogue of Primitive Art and Indian Sculpture*. London, July 14, 1970.

Sotheby & Co: *Catalogue of Primitive Art, Tibetan Tankas, Indian Khmer and Thailand Sculpture*. London, December 7, 1971.

Sotheby & Co: *Catalogue of Primitive Art from the Edward G. Robinson Collection*,

Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde München (exhibition booklet): *African Negro Art and its Relationship to High Culture. Coray Collection – Lugano, from 20 June to 1 September 1931*.

Tessier&Sarrou, Online Sales Catalogue Entry, 23 November 2015, Lot, 21, Composition aux fruits by Adolphe Feder.