APPENDICES
These historic documents which are also found in Peju Layiwola, *Benin 1897.com, Art and the Restitution Question*, 2010,( Wy Art Editions, P.O. Box 19324, University Post Office, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. www.benin 1897.com) enable the reader to follow closely the reasoning behind the positions of the parties involved in the debate on the restitution of the Benin Bronzes.

APPENDIX I

List of holders of the Benin Bronzes
Almost every Western museum has some Benin objects. Here is a short list of where the Benin Bronzes are to be found and their numbers. Various catalogues of exhibitions on Benin art or African art also list the private collections of the Benin Bronzes. The museums refuse to inform the public about the number of Benin artefacts they have and do not display permanently the Benin artefacts in their possession since they do not have enough space. Some museums have their section on Benin or African artefacts closed for years for repair works or other reason.

2. Chicago – Art Institute of Chicago 20, Field Museum 400.
4. Glasgow _ Kelvingrove and St, Mungo’s Museum of Religious Life 22

APPENDIX II

The Case of Benin

Memorandum submitted by Prince Edun Akenzua to the British Parliament
I am Edun Akenzua Enogie (Duke) of Obazuwa-Iko, brother of His Majesty, Omo n’Oba n’Edo, Oba (King) Erediauwa of Benin, great grandson of His Majesty Omo n’Oba n’Edo, Oba Ovonramwen, in whose reign the cultural property was removed in 1897. I am also the Chairman of the Benin Centenary Committee established in 1996 to commemorate 100 years of Britain’s invasion of Benin, the action which led to the removal of the cultural property.

History

“One 26 March 1892 the Deputy Commissioner and Vice-Consul, Benin District of the Oil River Protectorate, Captain H L Gallway, manouevred Obal Ovonramwen and his chiefs into agreeing to terms of a treaty with the British Government. That treaty, in all its implications, marked the beginning of the end of the independence of Benin not only on account of its theoretical claims, which bordered on the fictitious, but also in providing the British with the pretext, if not the legal basis, for subsequently holding the Oba accountable for his future actions.”

The text quoted above was taken from the paper presented at the Benin Centenary Lectures by Professor P A Igbafe of the Department of History, University of Benin on 17 February 1997.

Four years later in 1896 the British Acting Consul in the Niger-Delta, Captain James R Philip wrote a letter to the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Salisbury, requesting approval for his proposal to invade Benin and depose its King. As a post-script to the letter, Captain Philip wrote: “I would add that I have reason to hope that sufficient ivory would be found in the King’s house to pay the expenses incurred in removing the King from his stool.”
These two extracts sum up succinctly the intention of the British or at least, of Captain Philip, to take over Benin and its natural and cultural wealth for the British.

British troops invaded Benin on 10 February 1897. After a fierce battle, they captured the city, on February 18. Three days later, on 21 February precisely, they torched the city and burnt down practically every house. Pitching their tent on the Palace grounds, the soldiers gathered all the bronzes, ivory-works, carved tusks and oak chests that escaped the fire. Thus, some 3,000 pieces of cultural artwork were taken away from Benin. The bulk of it was taken from the burnt down Palace.

**Number of items removed**

It is not possible for us to say exactly how many items were removed. They were not catalogued at inception. We are informed that the soldiers who looted the palace did the cataloguing. It is from their accounts and those of some European and American sources that we have come to know that the British carried away more than 3,000 pieces of Benin cultural property. They are now scattered in museums and galleries all over the world, especially in London, Scotland, Europe and the United States. A good number of them are in private hands.

**What the works mean to the people of Benin**

The works have been referred to as primitive art, or simply, artefacts of African origin. But Benin did not produce their works only for aesthetics or for galleries and museums. At the time Europeans were keeping their records in long-hand and in hieroglyphics, the people of Benin cast theirs in bronze, carved on ivory or wood. The Obas commissioned them when an important event took place which they wished to record. Some of them of course, were ornamental to adorn altars and places of worship. But many of them were actually reference points, the library or the archive. To illustrate this, one may cite an event which took place during the coronation of Oba Erediauwa in 1979. There was an argument as to where to place an item of the coronation paraphernalia. Fortunately a bronze-cast of a past Oba wearing the same regalia had escaped the eyes of the soldiers and so it is still with us. Reference was made to it and the matter was resolved. Taking away those items is taking away our records, or our Soul.

**Relief sought**

In view of the fore-going, the following reliefs are sought on behalf of the Oba and people of Benin who have been impoverished, materially and psychologically, by the wanton looting of their historically and cultural property.

(i) The official record of the property removed from the Palace of Benin in 1897 be made available to the owner, the Oba of Benin.

(ii) All the cultural property belonging to the Oba of Benin illegally taken away by the British in 1897 should be returned to the rightful owner, the Oba of Benin.

(iii) As an alternative, to (ii) above, the British should pay monetary compensation, based on the current market value, to the rightful owner, the Oba of Benin.

(iv) Britain being the principal looters of the Benin Palace, should take full responsibility for retrieving the cultural property or the monetary compensation from all those to whom the British sold them.

[http://www.publications.parliament.uk](http://www.publications.parliament.uk)

**APPENDIX III:**

*Letter of the late Bernie Grant, member of Parliament, to director of Glasgow museum and the reply thereto.*
Mr Julian Spalding  
Director  
Art Gallery and Museum  
Kelvingrove Glasgow  
G3 6AG

10 December 1996

Dear Mr Spalding,

**African Religious and Cultural Objects**  
Thank you very much indeed for your recent correspondence about the above matter.

I write on behalf of the Oba of Benin, Oma n'Oba, Uku Akpolokpolo, Oba Erediauwa, and on behalf of the Africa Reparations Movement (UK) of which I am the Chair. The subject of this letter is the Benin Bronzes, Ivories and other cultural and religious objects contained in the Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum, about which I understand you have recently spoken to Mr Edward Wood of the House of Commons Library.

As you are aware, most of the Benin religious and cultural objects currently in British museums and other institutions were looted in February 1897 from Benin City. The context of this was the battle for trade in the carve up of Africa, into "spheres of influence", by the European powers, and the launching of a military expedition by the British in 1897, to depose the King of Benin who insisted on preserving the independence and sovereignty of his kingdom.

The Benin religious and cultural objects belong to a living culture and have deep historic and social value, which go far beyond the aesthetic and monetary value which they hold in exile. I was recently informed by Prince Akenzua, the Oba's brother, who was in the UK on a quest to speak to MP's regarding the return of the Bronzes etc., that those officiating at the Oba's coronation ceremonies had forgotten the rituals. They had had to consult some of the Bronzes that are still in Benin, in order for them to wear the correct vestments and have the appropriate officials present.

Prince Akenzua explained that the previous coronation had been well over 50 years previously and because the ceremony is not written down, the officials had forgotten and their only recourse to the proper rituals were the Bronzes which were made for that specific purpose. He went on to say that many of their ceremonies have not been performed satisfactorily because most of the Bronzes are missing. This situation is very distressing for the Benin people of today. Moreover, the objects have come to symbolise the intense sense of injustice widely felt in Africa, and indeed amongst many people of African origin in Britain, about the mis-appropriation of African art, cultural and religious objects, arising from the period of European colonisation.

There has for many years now, been a demand for these religious and cultural objects to be returned to Benin, and as the centenary of their looting approaches in February 1997, the strength of feeling around this has intensified. Formal requests for their return have been made in the past by the Nigerian Government, and by the Obas of Benin themselves, but have been met with refusal. A request for the mere loan of an ivory mask for the purposes of a major World African Arts Festival was denied in 1977, and this affair led to the cooling of relations between Britain and Nigeria at that time.
As Chair of the Africa Reparations Movement (UK), (ARM UK), at the recent meeting with Prince Akenzua, I discussed the plans for the centenary commemoration next year. The demand for the return of the Benin religious and cultural objects is clearly central to this occasion, and the Prince has formally authorised me to investigate the possibility of returning at least some of the objects at this time. However, as you will no doubt be aware, the legal position as regards returning artefacts lodged in English museums and institutions is complex, although a challenge to the current legislation features firmly on the agenda of ARM (UK). I understand though that the position in Scottish Law is different, and it is within the powers of individual local authorities to make decisions on the restitution of items from collections which they hold. I also understand that there are precedents for restitution where a formal request has been made.

The Royal Family of Benin has therefore authorised me to make such a formal request, and has asked me to draw an analogy with the recent return to Scotland of the Stone of Destiny. Just as the Stone is of such great significance to the people of Scotland, so the Benin treasures are significant to the people of Benin. Theirs was a rich, sophisticated, and advanced civilisation, which was in many ways far more developed than contemporary European societies. The denial and destruction of the history of the Benin people were acts of appalling racism, which need urgently to be rectified. These are indeed some of the most distasteful and abiding injustices arising out of the period of European colonisation of Africa.

Whilst I am aware that the collection held in the Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum is a relatively minor one, its symbolic value is immense. The Oba himself would be more than pleased to visit Glasgow to receive the religious and cultural objects, and to express his appreciation if restitution can be arranged.

I would be grateful if you could look into this matter and let me have your views as soon as possible.

I remain,

Yours sincerely,

BERNIE GRANT M.P.

Art Gallery and Museum
Kelvingrove, Glasgow G3 BAG
Tel: 0141-287 2600 Fax: 0141-287 2608
Director of Glasgow Museums: Julian Spalding

Mr Bernie Grant MP
House of Commons
London SW1A OAA

10 January 1997

Dear Mr Grant

AFRICAN RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL OBJECTS

We have now had a chance to consider your request for the return of the Benin bronzes, ivories and other cultural and religious objects contained in our collection. We have considered the whole complex position and have reached the following conclusion. Though it is possible for our museum service to restitute items from its collection and we have done this recently in the case of some Aboriginal human remains, we cannot advise the City Council that this should happen in this case.
Our reasons are entirely professional. Museums have a collective responsibility, both nationally and internationally to preserve the past so that people can enjoy it and learn from it. In the case of the Benin collection in Glasgow though it is small and not of the highest quality, it does play an important role in introducing our visitors to the culture, and religious beliefs of Benin, whose artistic achievements rank with the finest not just in Africa but in the whole world. Virtually all our 22 Benin items are on permanent view to the public in Kelvingrove and in St Mungo's Museum of Religious Life and their withdrawal from these displays would limit, in our opinion, our visitors' understanding of the world.

We have taken into account, too, the fact that the museums in Nigeria, including the one in Benin itself, do now have one of the world's finest representations of this great culture and our collections would not add significantly to this, even if the request for restitution had come from them. However, in this case, we are not considering a transfer from one public museum to another, but a request on behalf of the Oba of Benin, for future religious use. We believe, however, that these artefacts have an important role to play in the public sector by informing over 3 million visitors here about the culture of Benin and, it has to be said, the history of British Imperialism.

Kind regards.

Julian Spalding Director

cc Councillor F McAveety, Glasgow City Council

http://www.arm.arc.co.uk

APPENDIX IV:

Letter to Director, Glasgow Art Gallery And Museum - from Emmanuel N. Arinze - Chairman, West African Museums Programme

WAMP West African Museums Programme
Programme des Musées de l'Afrique de l'Ouest
B.P. 357. Dakar. Sénégal. Tel: (221) 22 50 57 Fax: (221) 22 12 33

P.O. Box 71041
Victoria Island
Lagos, Nigeria
Tel: 01-262917, 09-2341722, 09-5234757
Fax: 01-2694642, 09-2341722

Dear Mr. Spalding

Return of Benin Objects to The Oba of Benin

I have just heard of the effort being made by Mr. Bernie Grant, MP to convince your Museum to return some Benin artefacts to the Oba of Benin as a gesture of historic reconciliation and positive response to the age long yearnings and aspirations of an aggrieved People. This gesture would not have come at a more appropriate time in the history of Benin and indeed Nigeria, as we prepare to celebrate the centenary of the great Benin Expedition of 1897.

The return of any single Benin artefact is of great significance as the object returns to the altar of our ancestors where they religiously, culturally and historically belong. Each object on the ancestral altar has a meaning and performs a function that is paramount and necessary to the life of the Edo. In a different context, environment and situation, the same object becomes sterile, empty and just a work of art.
Having worked in Museums for close to twenty-five years, I do understand and appreciate that humanity should have access to the creative works of different peoples and different cultures. However, this universal idea should not deprive people of their natural right to hold and to keep that which they have made and which is part of their very existence and humanity.

The sacred and unique religious ceremonies that are performed in the Palace of the Oba of Benin and which affect the life of every Edo citizen draw a huge crowd to the Palace grounds and it is significant that these ceremonies centre around the artefacts one finds on the ancestral altars.

In this regard, and in my capacity as the Chairman of the West African Museums Programme and President of the Commonwealth Association of Museums, I join my voice with those of eminent citizens like Rt. Hon. Bernie Grant, MP in appealing to you, your Museum and your Council to be gracious enough and agree to return the Benin artefacts in your Museum collection to the Oba of Benin who today is the personification of the Edo nation in all its ramifications.

This singular act of your Museum will encourage many others in our great profession to take the path of honour and join in the historic quest for restitution.

I wish you well. Best wishes,

Emmanuel N, Arinze Chairman 22-01-97

APPENDIX V:

LETTER FROM PROF. T. BABAWALE, CBAAC TO NEIL MACGREGOR, DIRECTOR, BRITISH MUSEUM

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
C/CBAAC183/114
16th February, 2007

Director of British Museum
Russell Square, London
EC1

Dear Sir,

COMMEMORATION OF THE 10th ANNIVERSARY OF FESTAC ’77 REQUEST FOR SPONSORSHIP

In 1977, Nigeria hosted the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC’77). The festival covered dance, exhibition, colloquium, durbar and a boat regatta. From all conceivable parameters, FESTAC’77 was an unqualified story. It brought Africans from all over the world in a celebration of the rich cultural heritage of the African race. More importantly, it brought to the fore the invaluable contributions of Africans to the funds of universal knowledge.

The success of FESTAC’77 made it imperative that the gains of the festival should be sustained. The Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC) was established to perpetuate the gains of FESTAC’77. Thirty years after the hosting of the momentous festival, CBAAC has considered it necessary to commemorate the epoch-making event. Thus a number of events have been lined up for the commemoration (Please see document attached). Proudly Nigerian Project has been commissioned by CBAAC to act on its behalf in sourcing for sponsorship and coordination of events.
The essence of this letter is to request that the British Museum, safely return/hand over the original 16th century ivory mask which was last worn by King Ovonramwen Nogbasi of the ancient Benin Empire in 1897 before he was exiled by Britain. The ivory mask is the official emblem for FESTAC and a unification symbol for Nigerians and Black and African peoples worldwide. The mask is also of great significance to us as Africans. Attempts were made to recover the mask for the 1977 FESTAC event but to no avail. Nigeria and Britain have enjoyed a mutually warm and cordial relationship over the years. We are therefore optimistic that the British Museum would not object to this humble but historically significant request.

We await your reply in writing and look forward to your positive response. Thank you for your anticipated cooperation and assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Prof. Tunde Babawale,
Director/Chief Executive.

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**REPLY OF DIRECTOR, BRITISH MUSEUM TO DIRECTOR CBAAC**

Prof. Tunde Babawale,
Director/Chief Executive.
CBAAC National Theatre
Inganmu
Lagos, Nigeria

Dear Professor Babawale,

**BENIN IVORY MASK**

Thank you for the letter dated 23 February 2007, (which was delivered to the British Museum on 19th March 2007) concerning the Benin ivory mask, and the history of CBAAC’s interest in it since FESTAC’77.

Let me assure you that the British Museum appreciates the significance of the Benin material in the collections for Nigeria, Africa and the world, and wishes to make it better understood and more accessible in Africa and worldwide. To this end, we are currently engaged in a new dialogue with the National Commission on Museums and Monuments in Nigeria. We have been invited by NCMM to offer our assistance and advice on the development of the Lagos Museum through a programme of museum development, training, professional exchanges, and capacity building for which we are seeking international backing. We are currently also involved with NCMM in a project together with the University of Frankfurt, Germany, on the material culture of Ife.

It is through programmes such as these, undertaken in partnership with our colleagues in Nigeria and at their instigation that we will best be able to further relations between British and Nigerian museums and, most importantly, promote public understanding of Nigeria’s culture and history worldwide.

Yours sincerely,

Neil MacGregor.