



Benin Bronze

Why in News?

Germany has returned 20 **Benin Bronzes** that were looted in the 19th century to Nigeria.

- The return of these precious artifacts took place after Germany in July 2022 signed an agreement with Nigeria, **pledging to transfer the ownership of around 1,100 Benin Bronzes.**

What is Benin Bronze?

- The **Benin Bronzes are a group of over 3,000 sculptures and artworks** from the ancient Kingdom of Benin in present-day Nigeria. It dates back to at least the **16th century.**
 - They were **looted by British colonial forces during the infamous raid on Benin City in 1897.**
- Several of these pieces were **specially commissioned for the kings or Obas, and Queen Mothers of the kingdom.**
- These artefacts provide insight into the **culture of the Benin Kingdom as well as its relationships with neighbouring states.** Some of these pieces also point to the kingdom's relationship with Europeans.



Which other looted Artifacts have Countries Demanded to be Returned?

- **Koh-i-Noor diamond:**
 - The Koh-i-Noor has a **long and storied history in pre-partition India** and the British Raj. It is said to have been mined in what is present-day Andhra Pradesh.
 - The diamond was acquired by Queen Victoria in 1849, following the **second Anglo-Sikh war, during which Punjab was brought under the East India Company.**
 - The diamond was taken by the British after the signing of the Last Treaty of Lahore.
 - The Lahore treaty held between **Lord Dalhousie and Maharaja Duleep Singh in 1849**, Kohinoor diamond was **surrendered by the Maharaja of Lahore** to the Queen of England.
- **Rosetta Stone:**
 - The other well-known example is the **Rosetta Stone.** Currently displayed at the British Museum, it is an **ancient Egyptian stone that features the inscriptions** that formed

- the basis of Egyptology itself.
- The stone was discovered by the army of **Napoleon Bonaparte near the town of Rashid (Rosetta)** in 1799 during the emperor's campaign to conquer Egypt. It was passed on to the British after they defeated the French in 1801.

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