

COUNTRY REPORTS

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Repatriation from Scottish Museums: A Short Report

Abstract: Scotland's museums include many collections that are the result of Scotland's involvement in the British Empire. These include items that were fairly and legally collected, but also include items that were acquired as military loot, those that reflect power imbalances in favour of collectors, and ancestral remains that were acquired to demonstrate theories of racial supremacy. This past has left problematic legacies that museums in Scotland are now addressing, including by their involvement in repatriation. This paper reviews the repatriations that have taken place since 1990, noting a focus on the return of ancestral remains and the recent increase in

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the number of cases. It also considers the legal, political, and cultural backgrounds to the decisions, including how international moves towards decolonization and aimed at addressing racism in museums are interacting with Scotland's own complex relationship with colonialism as well as the political debate about the identity and future of the nation.

Keywords: museums, colonial restitution, repatriation, decolonization, Scotland

Introduction

An article on repatriation from Scottish museums published in 2010 in *Museum Anthropology* reflected on the (then) current practice and listed 23 known cases involving repatriation from Scotland in the period 1990-2009.¹ Of those 23 listed, four cases were rejected, including one proposed return within Scotland itself, and there was one settlement via a payment following a Spoliation Advisory Panel judgment. All but three returns concerned ancestral human remains. The cases involved eight museums out of the more than 340 museums in Scotland at the time. As of 2022, there are more than 400 museums in Scotland, over 250 of which are Accredited.²

The above-mentioned article concluded – arguably optimistically – that:

Since the late 1990s, repatriations from Scottish museums have been remarkably uncontroversial, particularly in contrast to the well-publicized rejection of the initial request for the return of the Ghost Dance Shirt in 1995. Despite the small number of cases, repatriation is now seen as a normal part of the role of museums in Scotland.³

However, the second decade of the 21st century initially proved to be very quiet on the repatriation front, with hardly any recorded returns, while the third millennium has now started with a flurry of activity. By the end of 2022 there have been a further nine cases – all approved – by six institutions, including two by additional institutions, i.e. the Moray Council and the Scottish Borders Council. The table at the end of this article lists all cases between 1990 and 2022. Given the nature of this short article, it contains some very condensed summaries of complex contexts and realities. The authors emphasize that much of the thinking and practice

¹ N.W.G. Curtis, *Repatriation from Scottish Museums: Learning from NAGPRA*, "Museum Anthropology" 2010, Vol. 33(2), pp. 234-248.

² Museums Galleries Scotland, *Governing Museums*, <https://www.museumsgalleries.scotland.org.uk/advice/new-museums/governing-museums> [accessed: 09.10.2022].

³ N.W.G. Curtis, op. cit., p. 243.

about repatriation work has been driven for many decades by originating countries and communities, often from the so-called Global South.

The Global Context: a Few Highlights

The most recent years have seen a dramatic increase in the amount of attention paid to repatriation by museums in the Global North, including Scotland and the rest of UK. A landmark speech by French president Emmanuel Macron in November 2017⁴ pushed the issue to the fore. It was followed by the publication of the report *The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage. Toward a New Relational Ethics* by Felwine Sarr and Bénédicte Savoy, which proved to be a game-changer when it was published in November 2018.⁵ It argued for substantial returns from French to African museums and set off numerous initiatives in (mostly) European countries, such as Belgium, Germany, and The Netherlands, to research colonial legacies in museums and to initiate new legislation, policies, and concrete actions aimed at addressing historical injustices through the return of museum objects and ancestral human remains, as well as influencing thinking elsewhere. This development was further fuelled by the global Black Lives Matter movement, which in 2020 called attention to global racial injustices following the murder of George Floyd on 25 May 2020 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA, as well as more local issues such as the death of Sheku Bayoh while in the custody of Police Scotland.⁶

Building on, amongst other things, the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP),⁷ UNESCO recently adopted a Declaration for Culture in Mexico City on 30 September 2022, which formulates, *inter alia*, the following aims:

[...] (v) implementing legal and public policy frameworks that uphold the rights of peoples and communities to their cultural identity and heritage, including the expressions of the cultures of indigenous peoples; and

(vi) expanding efforts to promote the protection, return and restitution of cultural property, including in consultation with the populations concerned and with their free, prior and informed consent; [...]⁸

⁴ Présidence de la République, *Emmanuel Macron's Speech at the University of Ouagadougou*, 28 November 2017, <https://www.elysee.fr/en/emmanuel-macron/2017/11/28/emmanuel-macrons-speech-at-the-university-of-ouagadougou> [accessed: 09.10.2022].

⁵ F. Sarr, B. Savoy, *The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage. Toward a New Relational Ethics*, November 2018, http://restitutionreport2018.com/sarr_savoy_en.pdf [accessed: 09.10.2022].

⁶ See the website of the Sheku Bayoh Inquiry: <https://www.shekubayohinquiry.scot/> [accessed: 09.10.2022].

⁷ 2 October 2007, UN Doc. A/RES/61/295.

⁸ See point 10 of the Declaration in particular: https://www.unesco.org/sites/default/files/medias/fichiers/2022/10/6.MONDIACULT_EN_DRAFT%20FINAL%20DECLARATION_FINAL_1.pdf [accessed: 16.10.2022].

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While these declarations have had little direct impact on Scottish museum policy, they nonetheless have contributed to the growing sense among people working in museums that the moral force of repatriation is something that they should embrace rather than resist.

The Scottish Legal Context and Developments

One of the earliest international repatriation cases, the return of a Ghost Dance Shirt to the Lakota Sioux by Glasgow Museums in 1999, has given Scotland a higher profile than would be expected given its size. It can also be argued that since the campaign for the re-establishment of the Scottish Parliament in the 1980s, issues relating to the cultural and political identity of Scotland have become particularly significant, including its complex relationship with colonialism. Cairns Craig has argued that Scotland sees itself as being:

at once a colonised nation (its languages, both Scots and Gaelic, under deliberate repression in favour of English; its institutions being gradually deprived of this unique tradition and integrated in to the English pattern; its heritage corrupted by the deliberate use of its national emblems and symbols as part of the UK *geist* by the British military), and yet an active – and often proud – partner in England’s colonising of the rest of the world.⁹

Although this may provide a receptive climate for restitution, it must be acknowledged that the number of actual returns is low.

In Scotland there is no comparable law to the USA’s 1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA),¹⁰ which compels federally funded museums and federal agencies in the United States to return items to tribes, with specific legal consequences for museums that do not comply. In Scotland, most museums have legal title to the collections in their care under general property law, which means there are no legal constraints on their ability to transfer ownership or possession if they choose to do so. If they are charities, they must act within their charitable purposes when using their “assets” (such as collections), though this is unlikely to be an issue as these typically include the advancement of education; the advancement of citizenship or community development; the advancement of the arts, heritage, culture, or science; the advancement of human rights, conflict resolution, or reconciliation; and the promotion of equality and diversity. Depending on the age and valuation of an item,¹¹ export of cultural items from the UK may require that an export licence be granted by the UK Government, while export may also

⁹ C. Craig, *Sham Bards, Sham Nation, Sham Politics: Scotland, Nationalism and Socialism*, “The Irish Review” 1990, Vol. 8, p. 25.

¹⁰ 104 Stat. 3048.

¹¹ Arts Council England, *UK Export Licensing for Cultural Goods*, 2021, <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/20449/download?attachment> [accessed: 09.12.2022].

be affected by regulations deriving from the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).¹² Museums Galleries Scotland, the national lead body for museums, provides some guidance for museums considering repatriation, including links to resources produced by other organizations,¹³ and specific guidance on human remains;¹⁴ guidance which was originally published in 2011. Museums can also use the general guidance on repatriation and restitution¹⁵ produced in 2021 by the UK Museums Association as part of its work to support decolonization in museums and draw from the guidance produced for England museums by Arts Council England, while noting that it refers to a different legal, political, and organizational context.

However, the national cultural and scientific institutions, such as National Museums Scotland (NMS), operate under specific legislation – the National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985¹⁶ – which restricts their freedom to decide to repatriate items in a similar way to legislation such as the British Museum Act 1963.¹⁷ For NMS, Part I, Section 8 of the Act states that disposal from the collections is normally restricted to items that are duplicates, of negligible value to the collection, or deteriorated to the point of being “useless”. However, the Act also permits disposal by the Board of Trustees with the approval of the Scottish Government. In June 2021, NMS was therefore able to approve a Procedure for Considering Requests for the Permanent Transfer of Collection Objects to Non-UK Claimants.¹⁸ The core purpose for this procedure is set out in its Sections 1.3 and 1.4:

1.3 National Museums Scotland will consider a request made by claimants located outside the United Kingdom to transfer a specific object or group of objects where the request meets certain criteria. This document outlines what these criteria are and, when they are met, how requests will be considered and managed.

1.4 In all instances, if a legal basis for the transfer of an object(s) to a claimant is established, National Museums Scotland will deaccession and transfer the object(s) to the claimant.

¹² 3 March 1973, 993 UNTS 243.

¹³ Museums Galleries Scotland, *Restitution and Repatriation Resources*, <https://www.museumsgalleryscotland.org.uk/advice/empire-slavery-scotlands-museums-resources/restitution-and-repatriation-resources/> [accessed: 08.11.2022].

¹⁴ Museums Galleries Scotland, *Introduction to Human Remains in Museums*, <https://www.museumsgalleryscotland.org.uk/advice/collections/introduction-to-human-remains-in-museums/> [accessed: 08.11.2022].

¹⁵ Museums Association, *Collections, Part Three*, <https://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/decolonising-museums/supporting-decolonisation-in-museums/collections-3/> [accessed: 08.11.2022].

¹⁶ National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985, c. 16.

¹⁷ British Museum Act 1963, c. 24.

¹⁸ National Museums Scotland, *Collections Policies*, <https://www.nms.ac.uk/about-us/our-organisation/policies-and-reports/collections-policies/> [accessed: 07.10.2022].

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It further refers to its case-by-case policy, which has been in place since February 2020, in NMS's Collections Development Strategy:

7.9.3 – All items proposed for disposal or transfer will be considered on a case-by-case basis in line with The National Heritage (Scotland) 1985 Act.¹⁹

The first concrete outcome of this more open framework took place in August 2022, when NMS officials met with a delegation of First Nations leaders, urging NMS to return a totem pole that was stolen in 1929 from the Nisga'a Nation in British Columbia, Canada.²⁰ In December 2022 the request was formally agreed to by the Board of Trustees of National Museums Scotland and subsequently approved by the Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture.²¹ It should, however, be noted that NMS had previously repatriated ancestral human remains to Australia and New Zealand in 2008, as human remains are not considered as property in Scots law, and thus are not covered by the above-mentioned legislation.

Cultural affairs and law in Scotland are the responsibility of the Scottish Parliament, with similar arrangements in Wales and Northern Ireland, while in England they are the responsibility of the UK Parliament. This has led to significant variations in political approaches, especially between England and Scotland. In England, leading conservative politicians and their government have taken an arguably populist stance in recent years, aiming at keeping the status quo by introducing “retain and explain” policies²² and by appointing trustees whose role is perceived by the museum sector to be to oppose any change, including the repatriation of items,²³ and in 2021 the UK Culture Minister argued that the Benin Bronzes “properly reside in the British Museum”.²⁴

¹⁹ Ibidem.

²⁰ G. Angeleti, *National Museum of Scotland Urged to Return First Nations Totem Pole Stolen by Canadian Anthropologist*, “The Art Newspaper”, 15 August 2022, <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2022/08/15/national-museum-scotland-urged-return-first-nations-totem-pole> [accessed: 16.10.2022].

²¹ National Museums Scotland, *National Museums Scotland to Transfer Memorial Pole to Nisga'a Nation*, 1 December 2022, <https://media.nms.ac.uk/news/national-museums-scotland-to-transfer-memorial-pole-to-nisgaa-nation> [accessed: 09.12.2022].

²² Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, *New Legal Protection for England's Heritage*, 17 January 2021, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-legal-protection-for-england-s-heritage#:~:text=Historic%20England%20and%20the%20Secretary,in%20the%20most%20exceptional%20circumstances> [accessed: 09.10.2022].

²³ J. Ungoed-Thomas, *Six Tory Donors Given Top Cultural Posts Since Boris Johnson Became PM*, “The Guardian”, 19 February 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/feb/19/six-tory-donors-given-top-cultural-posts-since-boris-johnson-became-pm> [accessed: 07.10.2022].

²⁴ K. Nzerem, *Benin Bronzes “Properly Reside” in British Museum, Says Culture Secretary*, “Channel 4 News”, 10 September 2021, <https://www.channel4.com/news/benin-bronzes-properly-reside-in-british-museum-says-culture-secretary> [accessed: 08.10.2022].

In June 2020, the Scottish Parliament approved a motion that included the statement that it “agrees that Scotland should establish a slavery museum to address our historic links to the slave trade; regrets the fact that so many monuments and street names still celebrate the perpetrators and profiteers of slavery, and calls on all levels of government to work to address this toxic legacy”.²⁵ This has led to the Scottish Government sponsoring a report on *Empire, Slavery and Scotland's Museums*, which was published in June 2022. It presents recommendations from the Empire, Slavery & Scotland's Museums independent Steering Group on how Scotland's involvement in empire, colonialism, and historic slavery can be addressed using museum collections and museum spaces.²⁶ One of its recommendations is that the Scottish Government should demonstrate its support for restitution and repatriation of looted or unethically acquired items in Scottish collections.²⁷ As of November 2022, the Scottish government has not yet responded to the report.

Recent Returns from Museums in Scotland

Since 2019, there have been a number of (proposed) returns of items and ancestral human remains from museums in Scotland. There has been one return – to Sri Lanka in 2019 by the University of Edinburgh:

In 2019 the University of Edinburgh returned nine skulls taken from Sri Lanka during the British colonial period in the 1880s, as well as three skulls originally collected for the study of phrenology by the Reverend George Lyon, presented to the University in 1827. The repatriation took place following a collaborative research project led by Wanniyalaeto Vedda elders. A minority indigenous group, the Vedda are thought to be the earliest inhabitants of Sri Lanka.²⁸

A decision to return Aboriginal Tasmanian ancestral remains by the University of Aberdeen in February 2020 was unfortunately prevented from being completed by the outbreak of Covid-19 and the stringent restrictions on travel to Australia.

²⁵ The Scottish Parliament, *Motion ref. S5M-22004.2: Showing Solidarity with Anti-Racism – Amendment*, 9 June 2020, <https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/votes-and-motions-search/S5M-22004-2> [accessed: 09.10.2022].

²⁶ Museums Galleries Scotland, *Empire, Slavery & Scotland's Museums*, <https://www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/projects/empire-slavery-scotlands-museums/#:-:text=The%20role%20of%20MGS%3A,with%20anti%20racist%20education%20worldwide> [accessed: 09.10.2022]. At the time of the writing of this article, the Scottish government has not yet declared its position on the report and its recommendations.

²⁷ *Empire, Slavery & Scotland's Museums Steering Group Recommendations*, June 2022, <https://www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/media/2804/empire-slavery-and-scotlands-museums-recommendations.pdf> [accessed: 09.10.2022].

²⁸ The University of Edinburgh, *A Skull Collection Revisited: From Colonial Resistance to Repatriation*, <https://exhibitions.ed.ac.uk/exhibitions/mind-shift/colonial-resistance-to-repatriation> [accessed: 09.10.2022].

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Another return from a Scottish museum was the widely-published handover of a so-called “Benin Bronze” in October 2021 to Nigerian officials by the University of Aberdeen.²⁹ It was the first recorded return by a museum and followed contact having been made by the University with representatives of the Nigerian Federal Government, the National Commission for Museums and Monuments, the Edo State Government, and the Court of the Oba of Benin. This proactive approach saw the development of a pathway which was also used by Jesus College at the University of Cambridge, which returned a bronze cockerel the same week.³⁰ Both items were later presented by representatives of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments to the Oba of Benin in a ceremony in Benin City in February 2022. These initiatives to return Benin Bronzes have already been followed up on by many museums in Europe and the USA via further transfers of items and/or pledges to do so. Indeed, the pathway developed by Aberdeen has been used as a model by some of these other institutions.

The Glasgow City Council has also decided to repatriate 19 Benin Bronzes to Nigeria, following a recommendation by its Spoliation and Repatriation Working Group. In June 2022 representatives of the City Council and Glasgow Life – the charity which operates the museums on its behalf – met with a delegation from Nigeria to discuss the transfers and dates for their return. And, following the return of a Ghost Dance Shirt in 1999:

25 other Lakota and Oceti Sakowin ancestor and cultural items – sold and donated to Glasgow’s museums by George Crager, an interpreter for the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show who visited the city in 1892 – will also be handed back to the Cheyenne River Sioux and Oglala Sioux tribes of South Dakota.³¹

Last but not least, on Friday 19 August 2022, Glasgow Life welcomed dignitaries from the High Commission of India for a transfer of ownership ceremony to return seven Indian antiquities, making it the first UK museum service to repatriate artefacts to India.³²

Scottish museums also participate in wider initiatives that support repatriation, such as The Hunterian at the University of Glasgow, which took part in the so-called “Devolving Restitution” project, initiated by Prof. Dan Hicks from the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford University. In 2021 and 2022, this project had six non-national UK museums developing and sharing their understanding of restitu-

²⁹ University of Aberdeen, *Ceremony to Complete the Return of Benin Bronze*, 27 October 2021, <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/news/15479/> [accessed: 16.10.2022].

³⁰ Jesus College, Cambridge, *Jesus College Returns Benin Bronze in World First*, 27 October 2021, <https://www.jesus.cam.ac.uk/articles/jesus-college-returns-benin-bronze-world-first> [accessed: 16.10.2022].

³¹ *Glasgow Becomes First UK Museums Service to Repatriate Artefacts to India*, Glasgow Life, 19 August 2022, <https://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/news/glasgow-becomes-first-uk-museums-service-to-repatriate-artefacts-to-india> [accessed: 16.10.2022].

³² *Ibidem*.

tion principles and processes, in particular with respect to Africa.³³ The Hunterian organized a webinar on the restitution of human remains, which in turn has led to consultation with Koi San community leaders and a concrete initiative to return a number of ancestral human remains to South Africa.³⁴ Other participants in these networks have also undertaken returns in recent years, such as those by Manchester Museums (to Australia, 2019) and the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford (with Maasai people from Kenya and Tanzania).³⁵

It is worth noting that many of the museums mentioned here are university museums. In general, their governance structures give them a much greater independence from political intervention in order to pursue their own strategies and policies. Through strong national and international networks, such as University Museums in Scotland (UMIS),³⁶ the European academic heritage network UNIVERSEUM,³⁷ and the International Committee for University Museums and Collections from the International Council of Museums (ICOM UMAC),³⁸ university museums globally have been able to develop a *Guidance for Restitution and Return of Items from University Museums and Collections*.³⁹ This guidance:

[...] elaborates upon the principles expressed in the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums concerning the return and restitution of items from museum collections and in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). It specifically focusses on the return and restitution of items from universities and their museums and collections.⁴⁰

This approach favours ethical arguments over legal ones and thereby differs in substantial ways from the approach that Arts Council England has taken, as discussed briefly above. The project was chaired by Steph Scholten and proposed a set of criteria to be used when considering a repatriation – a set that drew on the criteria first developed by Glasgow Museums in the 1990s when considering the return of the Ghost Dance Shirt and was revised by the University of Aberdeen in subsequent years.

³³ Pitt Rivers Museum, *Current Research on African Restitution*, <https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/african-restitution> [accessed: 16.10.2022].

³⁴ See the recording of the webinar: <https://ne-np.facebook.com/AFFORD.UK/videos/devolving-restitution-webinar-hunterian/2032439670264633/> [accessed: 16.10.2022].

³⁵ G.K. Adams, *A New Approach to Repatriation*, Museums Association, 2 November 2020, <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/features/2020/11/a-new-approach-to-repatriation/> [accessed: 09.10.2022].

³⁶ <https://www.umis.ac.uk/> [accessed: 16.10.2022].

³⁷ <https://www.universeum-network.eu/> [accessed: 16.10.2022].

³⁸ <http://umac.icom.museum> [accessed: 16.10.2022].

³⁹ ICOM UMAC, *Guidance for Restitution and Return of Items from University Museums and Collections*, December 2021, <http://umac.icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/UMAC-Guidance-Restitution-2022.pdf> [accessed: 16.10.2022].

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 2. For the ICOM *Code of Ethics*, see <https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/code-of-ethics/> [accessed: 16.10.2022].

Conclusions

A number of institutions, including the universities of Glasgow⁴¹ and Dundee⁴² and the city councils of Glasgow⁴³ and Edinburgh,⁴⁴ have issued reports outlining how they benefitted from colonialism and transatlantic slavery and committing themselves to undertake actions to address this legacy. The museums of these institutions have often taken the lead, with the appointment of a Curator (Legacies of Slavery & Empire) in Glasgow Museums⁴⁵ and a Curator of Discomfort in The Hunterian.⁴⁶ These posts have not only looked outwards to better interpret their displays for visitors, but have also challenged institutions to address their own institutional racism and so to change their employment practices, collections documentation, and community engagement.

With the Empire, Slavery & Scotland's Museums report in mind, a consortium of the museums of the universities of Glasgow and Aberdeen and Glasgow Museums with National Museums Scotland have established the project "Reveal and Connect" which "aims to publish a national review of African and Caribbean collections held in museums across Scotland, and establish a network of interests to encourage engagement with these collections".⁴⁷ It is a reasonable expectation of the consortium that the information this project will bring together will form the basis for many types of engagement, including activities inspired by the Empire, Slavery & Scotland's Museums report and further repatriation from museums across Scotland.

While it is perhaps not yet possible to say that "repatriation is now seen as a normal part of the role of museums in Scotland",⁴⁸ it is nonetheless the case that there is negligible criticism of repatriation in the Scottish museum community, with examples from the national museum, university museums, and local authority museums, and with clear support from the national lead body and membership organi-

⁴¹ University of Glasgow, *Historical Slavery Initiative*, <https://www.gla.ac.uk/explore/historicallslaveryinitiative/> [accessed: 08.11.2022].

⁴² University of Dundee, *University of Dundee Publishes Report into Slavery Links*, 17 October 2022, <https://www.dundee.ac.uk/stories/university-dundee-publishes-report-slavery-links> [accessed: 08.11.2022].

⁴³ Glasgow City Council, *Glasgow's Slavery Legacy*, <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=27980> [accessed: 08.11.2022].

⁴⁴ The City of Edinburgh Council, *Edinburgh Slavery and Colonialism Legacy Review Group to Present Recommendations*, 24 August 2022, <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/news/article/13529/edinburgh-slavery-and-colonialism-legacy-review-group-to-present-recommendations> [accessed: 08.11.2022].

⁴⁵ J. Knott, *Glasgow Life Appoints Curator Focusing on Slavery and Empire*, Museums Association, 28 September 2020, <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2020/09/glasgow-life-appoints-curator-focusing-on-slavery-and-empire/> [accessed: 08.11.2022].

⁴⁶ University of Glasgow, *Hunterian Appoints New Curator of Discomfort*, 11 September 2020, https://www.gla.ac.uk/hunterian/about/news/headline_741564_en.html [accessed: 08.11.2022].

⁴⁷ National Museums Scotland, *Reveal and Connect: African and Caribbean Collections in Scottish Museums*, <https://www.nms.ac.uk/collections-research/collections-departments/global-arts-cultures-and-design/projects/reveal-and-connect/> [accessed: 16.10.2022].

⁴⁸ N.W.G. Curtis, op. cit., p. 243.

zations. This probably reflects that the museum community of a small country can work closely together in developing shared practices, but may also reflect a growing recognition across Scotland of the need for it to address its colonial legacies as it considers its own national future. Repatriation by museums in Scotland is now recognized as an important element of the re-evaluation of Scotland's histories, as well as one of the most important ways that museums can properly respond to the wishes of people whose ancestors and belongings have been in their care.

Table: Repatriations from Scottish museums 1990-2022

Museum authority	Description	Request from	Outcome
Glasgow City Council	Aboriginal Australian ancestral remains	Australian High Commission	Repatriated 1990
University of Edinburgh	Aboriginal Tasmanian ancestral remains	Tasmanian Aboriginal representatives	Repatriated 1991
University of Edinburgh	Aboriginal Australian ancestral remains	National Museum of Australia	Repatriated 1992
Glasgow City Council	Waistcoat said to have belonged to Rain-in-the-Face	Marcella LeBeau	Rejected 1994
Glasgow City Council	Ghost Dance Shirt	Wounded Knee Survivors Association	Rejected 1995
Glasgow City Council	Benin bronzes and ivories	Oba of Benin per Bernie Grant MP	Rejected 1996
University of Edinburgh	Aboriginal Tasmanian ancestral remains		Repatriated 1997
Glasgow City Council	18th century human remains from Lanarkshire	Central Wishaw Community Council	Rejected 1997
Glasgow City Council	Ghost Dance Shirt	Wounded Knee Survivors Association	Repatriated 1999 to South Dakota Historical Society
Angus Council	Necklaces from the Cook Islands	Cook Islands National Museum	Decision to repatriate 1999

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University of Edinburgh	Aboriginal Australian ancestral remains	National Museum of Australia	Repatriated 2000
University of Edinburgh	Hawaiian ancestral remains		Repatriated 2000
University of Aberdeen	Kainai sacred bundle	Blood Tribe Horn Society	Repatriated 2003 to Mookaakin Heritage Foundation
University of Edinburgh	Ethiopian manuscripts	Association for the Return of the Magdala Ethiopian Treasures	Rejected 2003
Glasgow City Council	Still life attributed to Chardin	Descendants of Jewish owners	Payment following 2004 Spoliation Advisory Panel judgment
Glasgow City Council	Māori ancestral remains	Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand	Repatriated 2005
Perth & Kinross Council	Māori ancestral remains	Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand	Repatriated 2005
Glasgow City Council	Torres Straits Islander ancestral remains	National Museum of Australia	Repatriated 2007 for return to Mer Island
University of Aberdeen	Māori ancestral remains	Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand	Repatriated 2007
National Museums Scotland	Aboriginal Australian ancestral remains	Australian Government	Repatriated 2008
National Museums Scotland	Ngarrindjeri ancestral remains	Ngarrindjeri people	Repatriated 2008
University of Edinburgh	Ngarrindjeri ancestral remains	Ngarrindjeri people	Repatriated 2008
National Museums Scotland	Māori ancestral remains	Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand	Repatriation 2008 converting 1999 permanent loan

National Museums Scotland	Aboriginal Tasmanian ancestral remains	Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre	Repatriated 2008
University of Glasgow	Māori ancestral remains	Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand	Repatriated 2009
Scottish Borders Council	Hauhau flag	Wairoa Museum, Hawkes Bay	Repatriated 2016
Moray Council	Māori ancestral remains	Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand	Repatriated 2016
University of Edinburgh	Vedda ancestral remains	Wanniyalaeto Vedda elders	Repatriated 2019
University of Aberdeen	Aboriginal Tasmanian ancestral remains	Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre	Repatriation agreed 2020
University of Aberdeen	Uhunmwu-Elaol (Benin Bronze)	Nigerian Federal Government	Repatriated 2021
Glasgow City Council	Tulwar (sword) and stone frieze fragments	Indian High Commission	Ownership transferred 2022
Glasgow City Council	Benin Bronzes	Nigerian Federal Government	Repatriation agreed 2022
Glasgow City Council	Lakota Sioux items	Le Beau Family for Cheyenne River and Oglala Sioux Tribes	Repatriation agreed 2022
National Museums Scotland	House of Ni'isjoohl Memorial Pole	Nisga'a Nation	Repatriation agreed 2022

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