The Benin Kingdom: Politics, Religion, and Natural Order

Monday, February 6, 2023

Photograph of soldiers sitting among the Oba’s royal artefacts following the British Punitive Expedition, Benin City, Nigeria, 1897.
Above left: Benin Kingdom, Nigeria, Memorial head, late 15th century. Brass. 
Above right: Map of West Africa, circa 1650. 
Right: Map detail of the Benin Kingdom, 17th century.
Left: Benin Kingdom, Nigeria, Queen Mother head with “iyoba” (chicken’s beak) crown, 16th century. Brass. Right: Benin Kingdom, Nigeria, Queen Mother head with “iyoba” (chicken’s beak) crown, 18th century. Brass.
Left: Benin Kingdom, Nigeria, Hip mask of Idia, Queen Mother of King Esigie, 16th century. Ivory. Above: Benin Kingdom, Nigeria, Salt cellar featuring Portuguese soldiers, 16th century. Ivory.
Left: Benin Kingdom, Nigeria, Figure with mudfish head, 17th century. Brass. Right: Benin Kingdom, Nigeria, A pair of water vessels in the form of leopards, 16th century. Bronze.
Benin Kingdom, Nigeria, Helmet mask (ododua), 18th century. Brass.
Benin Kingdom, Nigeria, Altar to the hand (ikegobo), 18th century. Brass.