

Germany returns 3,000-year-old wooden Olmec busts to Mexico

March 20 2018

Mexico says German authorities have returned two rare, wooden Olmec sculptures over 3,000 years old.

Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History said Tuesday the sculptures had been held at the Bavarian State Archaeological Collection.

The objects were the source of a nearly decade-long legal case involving Costa Rican artifact dealer Leonardo Patterson.

Mexico claimed the two busts had been illegally taken from the Olmec ruin site of El Manati, in the Gulf coast state of Veracruz, and wound up in Patterson's hands. Authorities seized the pieces in 2008 after Patterson brought them to Germany.

A court ruled they belonged to Mexico in 2017.

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