

1.1 Pre-War Judaica and Jewish Museum Collections: An Overview²

One of the first semi-public Judaica collections was the so-called „Juden-Cabinet“ in the Dresdner Zwinger. Elector August the Strong had acquired a number of objects in 1717 stemming from the Mayer'sche „Lehrsynagoge“ of Lutheran theologian Johann Friedrich Mayer, who had assigned convert Christoph Wallich to present them in Mayer's library for educational purposes.³

Court agent Alexander David (1687-1765), factor to the Brunswick court, bequeathed his estate of Judaica objects to the community of Brunswick. He is considered the first collector of Jewish ceremonial objects.⁴ This private possession of Jewish ritual objects was evidently not the only example of the practice, however – i.e. we find a spice-container in the estate of Wolf Oppenheimer, deceased in 1730, grandson of famous court agent Samuel Oppenheimer.⁵ And his daughter-in-law, Judith, bequeathed a considerable part of valuable equipment for a prayer room in 1738.⁶

A major collection was compiled by French composer Isaac Strauss (1806-1888). It was this collection that was presented for the first time to a wider public at the Paris World Fair in 1878. With the financial support of Nathaniel Rothschild the collection was acquired by the Musée de Cluny.

In 1887 the first publicly accessible exhibition of Jewish materials took place at the Royal Albert Hall in London. The Anglo-Jewish Historical Exhibition featured parts of the famous collection of Efraim Benguiat (1856-1932).⁷

Well known would also become – among others - the private Judaica collections of Polish grain merchant Lesser Geldzinski (1830-1910),⁸ German art collector Salli Kirschstein (1869–1935)⁹, Schachne Moses Salomon¹⁰, English banker Arthur E. Franklin (1857-1938),¹¹ Polish clerk

² See also: “Tentative List of Jewish Cultural Treasures in Axis-Occupied Countries,” *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1946; “Addenda and Corrigenda to Tentative List of Jewish Cultural Treasures in Axis-Occupied Countries,” *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 10, No.1, 1948. Available online at <http://forms.claimscon.org/Judaica/appendixA.pdf>.

³ Michael Korey, *Fragments of Memory: The Temple of Solomon in the Zwinger of Dresden. Facets of a Baroque Architectural Model and an Early Jewish Museum*, Dresden 2010, pp. 12ff.

⁴ Cecil Roth, “Ceremonial Objects,” *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Vol. 5, Jerusalem 1971, c. 288-312, esp. 310.

⁵ J. Taglicht (ed.), *Nachlässe der Wiener Juden im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert. Ein Beitrag zur Finanz-, Wirtschafts- und Familiengeschichte des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts*, Wien und Leipzig 1917, Nr. 15, p. 75.

⁶ Idem, Nr. 13, p. 64.

⁷ Cyrus Adler, Immanuel Moses Casanowicz, *Descriptive catalogue of a collection of objects of Jewish ceremonial deposited in the U.S. National Museum by Hadji Ephraim Benguiat*, Washington 1901.

⁸ Elizabeth Cats, „Lesser Geldzinski,“ Vivian B. Mann, Joseph Gutmann (eds.), *Danzig 1939. Treasures of a Destroyed Community*, New York 1980, pp. 43-45.

⁹ *Die Judaica-Sammlung S. Kirschstein, Berlin: Kultgeräte für Haus und Synagoge, Manuskripte, Gemälde, Miniaturen, Graphik, Urkunden, Bücher*; 12. bis 14. Juli 1932, München 1932.

¹⁰ <http://www.jta.org/1931/07/23/archive/one-of-worlds-most-rare-collections-of-jewish-art-objects-housed-in-london>

¹¹ William D. Rubinstein et al. (eds.), *The Palgrave Dictionary of Anglo-Jewish History*, London 2011, entry: Franklin Family.

Maksymilian Goldstein (1880-1942),¹² Polish Benjamin Mintz (d. 1940), German entrepreneur Max Hahn (1880-1942),¹³ Polish physician Marek Reichenstein (1876-1932),¹⁴ German merchant Siegmund Nauheim (1874-1935),¹⁵ Austrian wine merchant Sándor Wolf (1871-1946),¹⁶ Polish entrepreneur (Mieczyslaw) Michael Zagajski¹⁷, the German antiques dealer family Seligsberger,¹⁸ British politician Arthur Howitt (1885-1967)¹⁹ and German dentist Heinrich Feuchtwanger (1898-1963)²⁰.

Prior to World War II, many important and valuable collections were held by synagogues and Jewish communities. The most eminent included the following in Germany: Baden-Baden, Bad Buchau (prepared the establishment of a Jüdisches Altertums-Museum), Bonn, Braunschweig, Breslau, Cologne, Danzig, Fürth, Hamburg, Karlsruhe, Kassel, Mannheim, Munich, Nürnberg, and Speyer, to name but a few. In Nazi-occupied countries they included, for example, Amsterdam (the Ashkenazi as well as the Sephardi community), Carpentras, Cracow, Opatow, Poznan, Lemberg, Livorno, Lublin, Vienna, Warsaw, Paris, Rome, Strasbourg and Thessaloniki.²¹

Pre-war Jewish museums in chronological order of foundation²²

¹² Maksymilian Goldstein, Karol Dresdner, *Kultura i sztuka ludu żydowskiego na ziemiach polskich. Zbiory Maksymiliana Goldsteina*, Lwów 1935.

¹³ Lisette Ferera, Cordula Tollmien, *Das Vermächtnis des Max Raphael Hahn – Göttinger Bürger und Sammler. Eine Geschichte von Leben und Tod, mutiger Beharrlichkeit und der fortwirkenden Kraft der Familientradition*, Göttingen 2014.

¹⁴ Sergey R. Kravtsov, Marek Reichenstein, "Collector and His Collection," Vita Susak (ed.), *Jewish Marriage Contracts. Collection of Ketubbot in the Boris Voznytsky National Art Gallery of Lviv*, Lviv 2015, pp. 11-29.

¹⁵ Katharina Rauschenberger, „Das Museum Jüdischer Altertümer 1922-1938. Die Entstehung einer neuen Wissenschaft und ihr gewaltsames Ende," Georg Heuberger (ed.), *Die Pracht der Gebote. Die Judaica-Sammlung des Jüdischen Museums in Frankfurt am Main*, Frankfurt am Main-Köln 2006, pp. 12-23.

¹⁶ Dieter Szorger, „Sándor Wolf (1871–1946) Gründer des Landesmuseums," *Burgenland. 90 Jahre – 90 Geschichten*. = Wissenschaftliche Arbeiten aus dem Burgenland (WAB) Band 137, Eisenstadt 2011, pp. 190f.

¹⁷ R. Feldschuh, *Yiddisher Gezelshaftecher Lexikon*, Warsaw 1939, p. 223.

¹⁸ Rotraud Ries (ed.), *Seligsberger - Eine jüdische Familie und ihr Möbel- und Antiquitätenhaus*, Würzburg 2015.

¹⁹ http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0004_0_04111.html

²⁰ Isaiah Shachar, *Jewish Tradition in Art: The Feuchtwanger Collection of Judaica*, Jerusalem 1981.

²¹ For many more and details see: Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (ed.), *Descriptive Catalogue of Looted Judaica*, partially updated edition 2016.

²² The list given refers only to independent Jewish museums and not to Jewish departments in municipal or regional museums. As examples of the latter the following may be mentioned: One of the first history museums in Germany to establish a Jewish department around 1900 was the municipal museum in Göttingen. From the time of its foundation in 1907 the Alsatian museum in Strassbourg (today: Musée Alsacien) has run a Jewish department. In 1914 another city museum, namely the Altonaer Museum founded a separate division for the history of Ashkenazi and Sephardi history in Altona in its institution. A major Jewish department in a public museum was installed in the 1920s: since 1922, the interior furnishings of the Baroque Hornburg Synagogue have been part of the Judaica collection of the Braunschweigisches Landesmuseum, and since 1987, they constitute the main exhibit at the Hinter Ägidien department of Jewish religion and culture. Steinacker had not been the first to have a synagogue partially relocated: between 1907 and 1912, for instance, the Historischer Verein für Württembergisch Franken (Historic Association of Württemberg-Franconia) had already acquired the paneling of the Unterlimpurg Synagogue and had installed it in the museum in Schwäbisch Hall as early as in 1908. While in Schwäbisch Hall the Jewish department considered the paneling, the Jewish community's Aron Hakodesh from Unterlimpurg, and two candle holders to be sufficient so far as objects were concerned, the Vaterländisches Museum in Braunschweig collected further material-cultural testimonies of regional Jewish life, respectfully accepted related donations, successfully negotiated for loans from the Jewish communities of Braunschweig and Gandersheim, and took on objects from the liquidated Samson school in Wolfenbüttel. In 1928 a Jewish division was founded finally in Breslau at the Schlesisches Museum für Kunstgewerbe und Altertümer under the auspices of the Verein Jüisches Museum, E. V.

1895: Jewish Museum Vienna (Jüdisches Museum Wien)²³

1904: The Jewish Museum New York (then in the library and under the auspices of The Jewish Theological Seminary of America)

1906: Jewish Museum in Prague (Židovské Muzeum v Praze)²⁴

1909: Jewish Museum Budapest (Zsidó Múzeum; today: Magyar Zsidó Múzeum és Levéltár)²⁵

1910: The M. Bersohn Museum of the Jewish Community Warsaw (Muzeum Gminy Wyznaniowej Żydowskiej im. Mathiasa Bersohna)²⁶

1913: The Hebrew Union College's Museum, Cincinnati

1913: S. Anski Museum of the Historical-Ethnographical Society, Vilna (Muzeum Towarzystwa Historyczno-Etnograficznego im. Sz. Anskiego).²⁷

1913: Museum for Jewish Folk Art in Hamburg (Museum für jüdische Volkskunde; in the building of the Museum für Völkerkunde)²⁸

1922: Museum of Jewish Antiquities in Frankfurt- am-Main (Museum Jüdischer Altertümer in Frankfurt am Main)²⁹

1924: Jewish Community Museum Worms (Museum der Israelitischen Gemeinde Worms)³⁰

1926: Museum of Jewish Antiquities Mainz (Museum jüdischer Altertümer Mainz)³¹

²³ As for its fate during and after WWII see: Bernhard Purin, *Beschlagnahmt. Die Sammlung des Wiener Jüdischen Museums nach 1938*, Wien 1995; Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, "Fragments of Remembrance: Viennese Judaica Collections and More," Julie-Marthe Cohen, Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek (eds.), *Neglected Witnesses. The Fate of Jewish Ceremonial Objects During the Second World War and After*, Crickadarn 2011, pp. 63-80.

²⁴ As for its fate during and after WWII see: Hana Volavková, *Schicksal des Jüdischen Museums in Prag*, Prag 1965; Magda Vezelská, "Jewish Museums in the Former Czechoslovakia," Cohen, Heimann-Jelinek (eds.), *Neglected Witnesses*, pp. 103-128.

²⁵ As for its fate during and after WWII see: Zsuzsanna Toronyi, "The Fate of Judaica in Hungary During the Nazi and Soviet Occupation," Cohen, Heimann-Jelinek (eds.), *Neglected Witnesses*, pp. 285-306.

²⁶ As for its fate see: Nawojka Cieślińska-Lobkowitz, "The History of Judaica and Judaica Collections in Poland Before, During and After the Second World War: An Overview," Cohen, Heimann-Jelinek (eds.), *Neglected Witnesses*, pp. 129-182.

²⁷ After the February Revolution the Jewish Historical and Ethnographic Society founded a respective museum to which Anski's collection was moved. After the final Soviet nationalization of the collection it was dispersed to different state institutions like the Russian Ethnography Museum and others.

²⁸ As for its fate see: Christoph Daxelmüller, „Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde," Stefanie Schüler-Springorum et al. (eds.), *Das Jüdische Hamburg. Ein historisches Nachschlagewerk*, keyword: Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde.

²⁹ As for its fate see: Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, Anne-Margret Kiefl, „Zur Geschichte des Museums Jüdischer Altertümer in Frankfurt am Main," Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, Georg Heuberger (ed.), *Was übrig blieb. Das Museum Jüdischer Altertümer in Frankfurt 1922-1938*, Frankfurt am Main 1988, pp. 13-45.

³⁰ As for its fate see: Jens Hoppe, "Das Jüdische Museum in Worms. Seine Geschichte bis 1938 und die anschließenden Bemühungen um die Wiedererrichtung der Wormser Synagoge," *Der Wormsgau* 21, 2002, pp. 81–102.

³¹ As for its fate see: Andreas Lehnardt, „Was übrig blieb – Die Reste des Museums Jüdischer Altertümer in Mainz," Lehnardt (ed.), *Eine Krone für Magenza. Die Judaica-Sammlung im Landesmuseum Mainz*, Petersberg 2015, pp. 13-43.

1926: Historical and Ethnographical Society named in honor of Simon Dubnow in Kovno (Zidu Historius Etnografius Draugija namo Simon Dubnow)

1927: Ukrainian National Library and Museum for Jewish Culture named in honor of Mendele Moicher Sforim in Odessa (Alukrainisher Bibliotek un Muzey far Yiddisher Kultur ofn Nomen fun Mendele Moicher Sforim)

1928: Jewish Museum of the Jewish Museum Society in Presov³²

1930: Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam (Joods Historisch Museum)³³

1930: Museum of the Jewish Community Livorno (Museo della Comunità Israelitica)³⁴

1932: Jewish Museum London

1933: Jewish Museum Berlin (Jewish Museum Berlin)³⁵

1934: Museum of the Jewish Religious Community Lemberg (Muzeum Gminy Wyznaniowej Zydowskiej Lviv)³⁶

1936: Jewish Central Museum for Moravia-Silesia in Nicolsburg (Jüdisches Zentralmuseum für Mähren-Schlesien in Nikolsburg)³⁷

1936: Jewish Museum in the Old Synagogue in Cracow (Museum Zydowskie w Starej Boznicy)³⁸

³² As for its fate see: Jana Švantnerová, *The Prešov Jewish Museum (1928–1942). History, collection, ideas, personalities and places*, Dissertation thesis, Brno 2014, pp. 76-86; online available at:

http://is.muni.cz/th/344586/ff_d/EN_PhD_J.Svantnerova.pdf

³³ As for its fate see: Julie-Marthe Cohen, “Theft and Restitution of Judaica in the Netherlands During and After the Second World War,” Cohen, Heimann-Jelinek (eds.), *Neglected Witnesses*, pp. 199-252.

³⁴ As for the fate of Italian Judaica see: Paola Bertilotti, “Italy’s Attitude Towards Jewish Cultural Property During and After the Second World War,” Cohen, Heimann-Jelinek (eds.), *Neglected Witnesses*, pp. 253-284.

³⁵ As for its fate see: Chana C. Schütz und Hermann Simon (ed.), *Auf der Suche nach einer verlorenen Sammlung: das Berliner Jüdische Museum (1933–1938)*, Berlin 2011.

³⁶ Gabriele Kohlbauer-Fritz, „Judaicasammlungen zwischen Galizien und Wien. Das Jüdische Museum in Lemberg und die Sammlung Maximilian Goldstein,“ Julius H. Schoeps et al. (ed.), *Wiener Jahrbuch für Geschichte, Kultur und Museumswesen*, vol. 1, Wien 1994, pp. 133-145.

³⁷ As for its fate see: Veselská, “Jewish Museums in the Former Czechoslovakia,” note 25.

³⁸ As for its fate see: Cieślińska-Lobkowitz, “The History of Judaica and Judaica Collections in Poland Before, During and After the Second World War: An Overview,” note 27.