

Julie-Marthe Cohen, “Relics of the Second World War: Dealing with Missing and Misplaced Objects in the Jewish Historical Museum Collection,” *Studia Rosenthalia* 45 (2014), pp. 57-74.

During the Second World War, countless ceremonial objects and other Jewish artefacts that were kept in Jewish museums in Europe, or used by Jewish communities were looted by the Nazis. They were destroyed or taken to Germany where they were stored as relics and objects of study. After the war they were discovered by the Allies and in collaboration with the governments concerned a number of identified objects was returned to their legal owners or handed over to other substitute (Jewish) institutions.⁷²² The majority, consisting of unidentified and now ownerless objects, were dispersed by the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction⁷²³ and entered Jewish museum collections, mostly in the U.S.A., and Israel. Objects were also distributed to Jewish communities, to be used in synagogue services. More than sixty years after the war, Jewish museums in Europe, the United States and Israel have become aware of their responsibility to deal with the consequences of the seizure of these Jewish assets by Nazi Germany. Provenance research of items has become a serious concern, while museums that were robbed are also searching for objects that were never returned.

One of the many Jewish Museums that suffered severely under Nazi occupation was Amsterdam’s Jewish Historical Museum. This article will focus on my research into the history of its collection during the war and post-war period.⁷²⁴ The aim of this research is threefold: first, to reconstruct the exact fate of the collection after confiscation; second, to determine the objects from the pre-war collection that returned, that are still missing and those items with unknown provenance that entered the collections after the war; third, to make this data publically available in a database on our museum website.⁷²⁵

Museum History

Amsterdam’s Jewish Historical Museum was founded in 1930 as an initiative by the Society of Jewish Studies in the Netherlands.⁷²⁶ The museum was officially opened in the former Weigh House in the centre of Amsterdam in 1932 (Fig. 1). In 1931, the first museum guide appeared with brief descriptions of 175 objects. By November 1941, the collection had grown to 738 numbers, consisting of around 940 items. Objects were loaned or donated by individuals and institutions. Especially during the last years the financial position of the museum allowed purchases on a more regular basis. Brief descriptions of the objects, and information on how they were acquired were written down in an inventory book.⁷²⁷ Its existence was forgotten till 1987, when the book was anonymously handed over to the museum director during the opening of the museum at its present location.⁷²⁸

After the German invasion in May 1940 the museum was ordered to close its doors. Between 1939-1942, museum staff managed to return some loans to the owners and to entrust 610 objects for safekeeping to

⁷²² For example, after the war the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw received eighty ritual objects from the Jews of Saloniki that were transferred from the death camps by the Ministry of Culture. The Institute also holds objects from the Vienna and Berlin Jewish communities. Communicated by Eleonora Bergman of the JHI, November 2008.

⁷²³ On the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, see Dana Herman, *Hashavat Avedah: A History of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction*, Inc., McGill University, Montreal (Canada), 2008.

⁷²⁴ For a more extended description of the history of the museum, see Julie-Marthe Cohen, ‘A Jewish Museum Gained, Lost and Regained’, in Julie-Marthe Cohen, Jelka Kröger and Emile Schrijver (eds.), *Gifts from the Heart. Ceremonial Objects from the Jewish Historical Museum, Amsterdam* (Zwolle, Amsterdam 2004), p. 12-30.

⁷²⁵ The database has gone live in 2010 and is accessible via www.jhm.nl.

⁷²⁶ On the foundation of the Society (Genootschap voor de Joodse Wetenschap in Nederland), and its relation with the Jewish Historical Museum, see *ibid.*, p. 16-18. See also S. Seeligmann, ‘De voorgeschiedenis van ons genootschap’, in *Bijdragen en Mededeelingen van het Genootschap voor Joodsche Wetenschap in Nederland* (1925), p. 12-21.

⁷²⁷ JHM, document collection inv.no.00003317.

⁷²⁸ The museum moved from the Weigh House to the complex of four former Ashkenazi synagogues dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries on Jonas Daniël Meijerplein.

Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum (Fig. 2).⁷²⁹ However, in April 1943, the collection was confiscated by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR) and brought to the Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage in Frankfurt.⁷³⁰ Late in 1943, following the Frankfurt air raids, the Institute was evacuated to Hungen, 60 km north of Frankfurt. There the objects were stored at the castle and in private premises.⁷³¹ Valuable silver objects, including objects belonging to Amsterdam's Portuguese Jewish community and of the Jewish Historical Museum, were kept in the Spar- und Leihkasse where they were found by the American Army (Fig. 3). These and other items, also discovered in Hungen, were transferred to the nearby American Central Collecting Point in Offenbach, established by the US Army department of Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives to secure cultural assets found by the Americans and to arrange for their quick and orderly return to their rightful owners (Fig. 4).

In 1946 the Dutch Art Heritage Foundation (Stichting Nederlands Kunstbezit), established to recover stolen Dutch cultural property, commissioned Lion Morpurgo, a Jewish antiquarian from Amsterdam, to recover the museum objects and objects belonging to Amsterdam's Portuguese and Ashkenazi communities. During the same year these objects came back in three shipments. According to a list of the Dutch Art Heritage Foundation, dated January 1947, 300 museum objects were returned to the Netherlands.⁷³² The short descriptions on this list do not allow identification and thus the establishment of the exact number of pre-war museum objects. However, the list does contain other than museum objects only: the collection did not contain wooden and silver Torah crowns and had only one pair of zinc finials, rather than the three mentioned in the list.

Once the objects were returned in Amsterdam, they were stored in Morpurgo's depot. In 1947 some more objects that were found not to have been taken by Alfred Rosenberg, arrived there from the Stedelijk Museum. More pre-war museum objects returned almost thirty years after the re-opening of the museum, as late as 1983, when a remarkable discovery of 40 items, including some bearing museum labels, was made at De Haar Castle in Haarzuilens near Utrecht.

Reconstructing the Pre-War Collection

The key source for the reconstruction of the pre-war collection is the inventory book that reappeared in 1987. My first step was to copy the information on the 738 numbers, a total of around 940 items, into a table, which included the following information, from row to row (Fig. 5): (1) pre-war inventory number; (2) the description in the pre-war inventory book; (3) the provenance of the object (lender, donor or purchase details); (4) a note when a loan was returned to its owner; in case of a positive match, (5) the current inventory number; (6) reference to the list compiled for the insurance of objects in the museum building in late 1940; (7-8) reference to inventories (or other documents) that relate to the safekeeping (objects handed over to the Stedelijk Museum), looting (by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg) or return to the Netherlands (as appears from bills of lading drawn up by the Offenbach Collecting Point personnel and from the 1947 list of the Dutch Art Heritage Foundation); followed by (9) bibliographical references to museum catalogues and published articles, as well as additional descriptions and remarks; and finally 10) an indication of extant pre-war photographs.

To itemise the recovered objects as well as the missing items, the collected data was then tested against the present collection. Our focus was on the inventory numbers from 1 to 536: these were the items that

⁷²⁹ For the war history of the Stedelijk Museum collection, see Margreeth Soeting, 'Het Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog. Een reconstructie aan de hand van archiefstukken die bewaard worden in het museum', *Jong Holland. Tijdschrift voor kunst en vormgeving na 1850*, n. 2/01, p. 11-24. For the list of objects that were entrusted for safekeeping, see JHM, document collection aanwD364.

⁷³⁰ JHM, document collection 00000787, 00000790-00000792. The transport took place on 22 August, see Bundes Archiv Berlin (BAB), NS 30/15, Archive of Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg, Wochenbericht der Arbeitsgruppe Niederlande für die Zeit vom 11. bis 16. August 41, f. 0353291.

⁷³¹ National Archives (NA), see the report in RG 331, box no. 333, see Annexure II, Headquarters Third United States Army, G-5 Section, 17 April 1945, p. 16.

⁷³² JHM, document collection no. 000009744.

were registered around 1960 – five years after the re-opening of the museum – when museum staff started assigning inventory numbers to objects that had returned from Germany and to new acquisitions, thereby not always knowing the provenance of these objects.

The following example shows how collecting data from different sources made identification of pre-war and post-war objects possible: pre-war inventory number 61 is a Hanuquillah (Portuguese term for *chanukiah*, Chanukah lamp), embossed copper, c. 1680, as described in the pre-war inventory; further specific details are lacking, except for the lender's name. The lamp and the lender were also found to appear in an exhibition catalogue of 1913, according to which the lamp had 'a vase with flowers in the middle'. This description corresponds with a lamp on a photo made for the official opening of the museum in February 1932. Knowing its physical appearance, it was possible to match it with a Chanukah lamp in the present museum collection (Fig. 6).

Research of the collection should, however, not be limited to these first 536 items, for pre-war objects may have re-entered the collection even in later years: an at first presumed lost glass painting of Amsterdam's Portuguese Synagogue (pre-war inv. no. 79), that was purchased at auction in 1930, seemed to appear on a pre-war photograph of poor quality, showing the interior of one of the museum rooms. Comparing this vague image with object inventory number 00993 in the museum repository, image and object could be identified as the same object. The match was reconfirmed by a label on the back of the painting with the pre-war inventory number, which had remained unnoticed, or at least, was not described in the museum database. The painting does not appear on the list of objects confiscated by Alfred Rosenberg, and somehow must have ended up in the hands of the person who donated the object to the museum in 1976. Another example of an object with a higher inventory number is a silver Kiddush cup with inscription, which was given on loan by the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana to the museum before the war (inv. no. 41) and that was donated to the museum by a former librarian of the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana in 1980 (JHM 01306).

As a result of this investigation around 180-200 objects from the pre-war collection could be matched with items in our post-war collection, while it became clear that other objects among our present collection had unknown provenance. What were the circumstances that allowed these objects to enter the museum collection? One has to keep in mind that the Offenbach administrators and employees of the Dutch Art Heritage Foundation had no inventories or other documents itemising the looted collections, which might have prevented mistakes like this. The exact number of these erroneously acquired objects still needs to be established, although some have already been identified as such. For example, one of a pair of *rimonim* with inscription cannot be identified with any such object in the pre-war collection, but does appear on the list of objects that returned from Offenbach.⁷³³ In 2000, the missing half was found in the collection of the Consistoire Israélite de Paris.⁷³⁴ The match was established through the maker's mark, the date letter and a Hebrew inscription. The separation of the two objects must erroneously have taken place in Offenbach. It is still not known to which individual or communal organisation this pair originally belonged. Obviously, the museum post-war collection needs further systematic provenance research. What happened to the missing objects is the subject of speculation. Obviously, some may have been lost, damaged, stolen or destroyed. For example, a handwritten note in the archives of the United States' Military Government in Germany lists certain broken museum objects, such as a glass with an inscription dated 1851, which corresponds with inventory number 313: The text simply reads: 'Kristall gesprungen'.⁷³⁵ Other objects may also have disappeared after their return, which is at least proven to be true for many books or manuscripts of the

⁷³³ JHM 00111. Pieter van Hoven, 1693 or 1717, Hebrew inscription: 'Samson son of Moses Levi de Boer presented these finials to the Neveh Yesha old-age home in the old Jewish quarter of Amsterdam in 1833.' This donation was probably done in occasion of the dedication of its own synagogue. See also *Gifts from the Heart*, op. cit., p. 140-141.

⁷³⁴ E. van Voolen, 'Lost and Found: The Van Hoven Torah Finials', *Studia Rosenthaliana* 34, 1 (2000), p. 89-92.

⁷³⁵ National Archives at College Park, Maryland, Microfilm Publication M1949, Records of the monuments, fine arts, and archives (MFAA) section of the reparations and restitution branch, OMGUS, 1945-1951, roll 19, p. 118.

two Amsterdam Jewish libraries, volumes that have sometimes reappeared in other institutions or in private collections.⁷³⁶ As for museum objects, these were not registered before they entered Morpurgo's storage or when they were transferred to the museum building in 1954. There is therefore no way to check if the number of objects remained constant during this seven year period. Furthermore, according to Fia Polak, who became curator of the museum in 1960, the situation was rather chaotic. One could find objects everywhere, be it in the storage rooms, or in the offices, on shelves and in cupboards. Soon after her appointment Polak started to inventory and register the collection in a systematic way.

Search for Missing Objects

The search for the objects that did not return is a time-consuming process. Some may appear in post-war auction catalogues and exhibition or museum catalogues, but researching these sources involves enormous effort and time, with little guarantee of success. The Internet, on the other hand, is a serious tool that may facilitate finding these missing objects, as the following example proves: An item in the pre-war inventory, numbered 481, is described as 'Torah mantle', without providing any further description, but mentioning the Ashkenazi community of Leiden as its lender. Pre-war photographs of the object, found in two different archives show it to be a valuable eighteenth-century Ashkenazi Torah mantle, decorated with embroidery, depicting Jacob's dream, the binding of Isaac, and pomegranates and sprays (Fig. 7). The loan is mentioned in a newspaper item of 29 December 1936.⁷³⁷ In 2007, the Israel Museum was the first Jewish museum to launch a database of what were assumed to be unclaimed objects that it had received through the Jewish Restitution Successor Organisation. This database is given the name: Second World War Provenance Research Online, see <http://www.imj.org.il/Imagine/irso/>.

Although the information on each object is limited, this is an important initiative. While searching the database I found a photo showing one side of a Dutch Torah mantle, which for several reasons I presumed to be the same as the missing Torah mantle of the Leiden community. On my request I received a photograph of the other side of the mantle from the Israel Museum which, indeed, confirmed the match (Fig. 8). After the discovery the JHM has informed both the Israel Museum and the Jewish Community of Leiden about the mantle.⁷³⁸

The Israel Museum database provides an inventory number of the Wiesbaden Collecting Point, which was one of the originally four American storage places. Because of the closure of the Offenbach Archival Depot, which was undertaken in June 1949, the remaining objects, generally unidentified and heirless, were sent to Wiesbaden.⁷³⁹ Thus Wiesbaden became the storage of countless Jewish ceremonial and other objects. During the following years these objects were handed to the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction,⁷⁴⁰ which acted as trustee for the Jewish people in its distribution to public or quasi-public religious, cultural or educational institutions, 'to be used in the interest of perpetuating Jewish art and culture, or to utilize them for the maintenance of the cultural heritage of the Jewish people ...'.⁷⁴¹ To date, we lack specific information on the fate of the mantle before it finally arrived in Jerusalem.⁷⁴²

⁷³⁶ See also the silver Kiddush cup on loan from the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, donated to the museum in 1980, above.

⁷³⁷ *Algemeen Handelsblad*.

⁷³⁸ The Jewish community of Leiden officially claimed the object in 2008, but as to September 2013 the two parties have not yet reached a settlement. The Leiden claim is the first official one involving a ceremonial object.

⁷³⁹ Wiesbaden had held till then mostly German-owned material and internal loot (that is a certain amount of materials confiscated from German nationals and objects subject to restitution).

⁷⁴⁰ The database record mentions the mantle was received through the Jewish Restitution Successor Organisation, which is the umbrella organisation of JCR.

⁷⁴¹ See National Archives Washington, formula on Receipt for Jewish Cultural Properties: 1949 [Jewish Cultural Reconstruction: i-ii, 1-18], RG 260 Office of Military Government for Germany (U.S.) (OMGUS), Property Division 'Ardelia Hall Collection', Wiesbaden Central Collecting Point Records. Series: Cultural Object Movement and Control Records, 1945-1952, Microfilm Publication: M1947, roll 40.

⁷⁴² Objects were distributed from JCR's headquarters in New York.

The discovery of the Torah mantle highlights two important points. Firstly, that missing museum objects can still be found, even sixty years after the war. Secondly, databases of wartime and post-war records are potentially fruitful sources. Indeed, databases have become indispensable for museums and scholars engaged in this particular aspect of Jewish history during the Nazi period and in doing provenance research of individual items. And yet these databases are still few and far between. Familiar databases such as lootedart.com or lostart.de provide no real information on the kind of objects Jewish museums are investigating. They tend to focus on fine art, particularly paintings, and decorative art, such as furniture, glasswork and the like.

So it is up to Jewish museums themselves to put the relevant information in an accessible database. Moreover, since the fate of all the Jewish collections during the war is interconnected, museums in Europe, Israel and the United States would do well to deal with this issue collectively. After all, every detail or new information could be a piece of the puzzle. Realising such a project is not a simple task. Naturally, a joint enterprise like this, with each museum undertaking a considerable amount of research, would face major obstacles. Museums are short-staffed as it is, and this would certainly be a time-consuming project. Funding for the project would also have to be found. Moreover, some museums may have serious doubts to pursue a project that may result in the loss of objects from their collection. And finally, specialised databases may actually generate new, spurious claims.

Nevertheless one should start somewhere. In order to get as much support as possible for this initiative, the focus should not be on the restitution of objects once they have been located, but on research. There are two strong interrelated arguments in favour of this approach. First, the JCR acted as trustee for the Jewish people when it distributed the objects among numerous Jewish institutions, to be used in the interest of preserving Jewish art and culture and keep it accessible to surviving Jewish communities. The unidentified and heirless objects in other words belong to the Jewish people as a whole, which in itself may not be a legal entity, but can be defined as such from a moral point of view. In addition, museums are by nature public institutions that exhibit their objects and knowledge. We are the custodians and not the owners of the objects and it is our duty to be communicative and open and give others the opportunity to enjoy or study the cultural heritage of the Jewish people.

Tools to Facilitate Research

To improve our collective effort two tools could be developed: first, a database of missing and misplaced museum objects; second, a digitalised museum manual providing continuous updates on the state of research, on relevant sources and other practical information. Doing research in a field that has had relatively little attention so far, and where only few sources are known or have been studied, is a demanding enterprise. Sharing one's findings could help us in our research and stimulate other museums to start investigating the history of their collections.

Database

Any database designed for missing and misplaced objects should have specific requirements, as with any database. In the framework of my research, we have developed a database, which at the time of writing this article, still needs refinement.⁷⁴³ However, it may already offer an example of how such specific databases could be developed. The Jewish Historical Museum stores its data in the museum

⁷⁴³ Our database includes three categories of objects: first, objects that were looted and did return in 1946; second, looted objects that got lost and are still missing; third, those objects, mostly of Dutch origin, that after 1955 were registered as museum property, but were found out to belong to different owners: these can be pre-war museum objects that, according to the pre-war inventory, were in fact loans, or objects that do not appear at all in the pre-war inventory but were among the objects Morpurgo selected in Offenbach. (For the online version of the database, see www.jhm.nl.)

and library information system Adlib, a program that our museum has been using since 1987. All the collected information that is linked to each object, is imported and categorised in the database. This information includes every tiny detail, since experience shows that even the smallest clue may lead to an identification. This is especially true in the case of pre-war objects that were often poorly described and rarely photographed.

Entering the database one can search the records by selecting one of the following access points: present JHM inv. no., pre-war inv. no., inv. no. combination, object name, object name other, words, date of fabrication, provenance. Every record consists of several record fields: record field 1 = identification, 2 = inscriptions, 3 = keywords, 4 = name of maker, place and date of fabrication, 5 = kind of acquisition, 6 = photograph of the object, 7 = references to primary sources and 8 = other references. The following example will illustrate how the database works: pre-war inventory number 121, is a missing circumcision book, given on loan to the museum by the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana of Amsterdam (Fig. 9). Record field 1 contains the description from the pre-war inventory: 'circumcision book for the mohel, manuscript with coloured drawings 5473 [1713].'

This manuscript also appears in exhibition catalogues published in 1913 and 1933. These descriptions provide the full name of the maker (Mozes Juda Leib), and details about the illustrations: 'beautifully painted miniatures representing a circumcision and the accompanying meal'. In addition, we learn that the circumcision register at the end is bound into the book and contains a list of 155 boys circumcised by Magnus Jochem Mozes between 1765 and 1792; and finally, the manuscript has a leather binding. All these data are added to this record field, with reference to the source.

In the third record field, keywords, name of the object (circumcision book) and all the different versions of the name as they appear in the descriptions (in record field 1) are listed. In record field 4 we read: Mozes Juda Leib ben Wolf Broda, Trebitsch, Moravia, 1713. In record field 5: Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana is given as the provenance of the object. No. 7 records the primary sources, in this case the Weigh House list of 1940 and the Stedelijk Museum list (see note 7 above) only, the object does not appear on the other lists; and record field 8 gives secondary sources, also including descriptions of the objects that do not add to those descriptions mentioned in record field 1. Record field 2 and 6, in this case, are empty. To create a standard, centralised database for all museums would from certain angles be a desirable option. However, this would also be a complicated and unpractical undertaking: museums use different database systems, some museums may have only limited experience in the field, while others may not even be using a computerised database at all. Nevertheless, we should find a way to make war-related databases accessible through the Internet in order to facilitate research and enhance the chances in relocating missing objects. Museums would have to agree on several issues, which in the future need to be examined in greater detail: for example, how to fund and how to organise the work of importing data into the database; would it be preferable if only a limited number of experienced museums would first participate in such enterprise? Should funding be a collective or individual undertaking? Should the imported data be coordinated by one person and controlled by that person once it is online? Which language or languages should we use? Finally, could we come to an agreement on what standard formats for object descriptions would be used best? For example, it would be desirable to include colour photos of the entire object, inscriptions should be readable, transcribed and translated and the database should be equipped with an extended search facility. None of these are currently included in the Second World War Israel Museum database.

Digitalised Museum Manual

The second tool I would like to suggest is the creation of a digitalised museum manual to support both the object database and research in general. It should be designed to help Jewish museums in conducting their research. The manual could contain short overviews of museum histories during and after the war, details about pre-war collections, together with a survey of the work that has been undertaken in the field of provenance research so far. In addition, it would provide practical information about research

methods, lists of relevant archives, photo archives and other sources, useful links, names of experts in the field and a bibliography. It would be a dynamic tool, which would give regular updates about progress, new developments and new findings.

This manual would be something along the lines of two other important publications: the *Guide to Provenance Research* and the *Descriptive Catalogue of Looted Judaica*. The *Guide to Provenance Research*, compiled by Nancy Yeide, Konstantin Akinsha and Amy Walsh, was published by the American Association of Museums in 2001, to meet the need of museums to review the provenance of their collections. The Guide comprises a description of current methodology, U.S. and European resources for conducting provenance research, various bibliographies and inventories, as well as current databases. It is intended for provenance research of fine art only, which has its own kind of problems and specific research requirements.

The *Descriptive Catalogue of Looted Judaica* is a major initiative by the Claims Conference and the World Jewish Restitution Organisation, which was first published on the Internet in 2007 and was accessible to registered users only. In February 2009 it became publically available via <http://forms.claimscon.org/Judaica>. It is intended for libraries, archives and museums and provides important information on existing projects, on relevant literature, on places where looted Judaica is kept and on experts.

However, the catalogue does not provide information on the history of specific Jewish museums during and after the war, on the state of research, and on looted objects that have disappeared since. Our museum manual, conversely, would combine both publications, focusing on guidelines and information the kind of research our specific field requires. Crucially, I would like to stress the word *research*, meaning that it would not deal with restitution procedures that may result from that research once a missing object has been located. And, may be needless to say, both the museum manual and the database should be well secured and accessible only to registered users. As mentioned above, lack of documentation is one of the main obstacles of research. However, relevant sources, spread over different countries and in different archives or other institutions, may be more numerous than we think at this point. Inventories of archival war-related material are nowadays easily accessible on the Internet, microfilms can be ordered, while other initiatives will also help to expand our knowledge: in 2008, I discovered approximately 200 pages of photographs (3 photos per page, each photo showing a considerable number of objects) of thousands of ritual silver objects that are among the files of the Wiesbaden Central Collecting Point in the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland;⁷⁴⁴ a major survey of the dispersed archives of the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg compiled by Patricia Grimsted, has appeared online in 2011.⁷⁴⁵ A dissertation on the history of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction appeared in 2008 as the first substantial publication on this subject.⁷⁴⁶ Furthermore, a publication on the war and post-war history of Jewish museum collections in Europe has appeared in 2011.⁷⁴⁷

But there are further positive developments: the subject of looted Judaica was discussed during the last three annual meetings of the Association of European Jewish Museums in Venice, Munich and Amsterdam in respectively 2006, 2007 and 2008. During the Amsterdam meeting, the topic received special attention with two public lectures,⁷⁴⁸ followed by an internal discussion on future policy regarding

⁷⁴⁴ This is an important source that needs thorough study and may eventually be published on the Internet. I would like to thank M'Lisa Whitney of the Holocaust-Era Assets Records Micro-filming Project for making this source available to me. Some of these photos are published in Julie-Marthe Cohen, with Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek (eds.), *Neglected Witnesses. The Fate of Jewish Ceremonial Objects During the Second World War and After* (Amsterdam 2011).

⁷⁴⁵ See www.iisg.nl/publications/digiput.php#respap.

⁷⁴⁶ Dana Herman, op. cit.

⁷⁴⁷ *Neglected Witnesses*, op. cit. This volume appeared as a compendium to Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, F.J. Hoogewoud and Eric Ketelaar (eds.), *Returned from Russia. Nazi archival plunder in Western Europe and recent restitution issues* (Institute of Art and Law, 2007).

⁷⁴⁸ The present article combines my paper given during the conference in Tel Aviv in January 2008, which was entitled: 'Dealing with Looted Art. The Pre-war Collection of the Jewish Historical Museum of Amsterdam Re-examined' and an

provenance research. A working group was formed which will investigate the possibility of an integrated database of missing objects or objects of dubious provenance in museum collections.

Furthermore, in April 2009, Jewish museum experts formed a working group on Judaica and Jewish cultural property that discussed future action and policy regarding provenance research and restitution. This working group was constituted in the framework of the Holocaust Era Assets Conference, organised in Prague from 26 to 30 June 2009. The recommendations of this working group will be published on the Internet. These and other initiatives will significantly further our research and will eventually help finishing this important chapter on the looting of Judaica and its consequences that museums still face.



*Figure 1. Board members and special guests at the official opening of the Jewish Historical Museum in the Weigh House, 24 February 1932.
Photo Archive NIW001001486.5.*

elaboration of my public lecture in Amsterdam. The second lecture was given by Dana Herman who spoke on *Hasavat Avedab: The Distribution of Heirless Jewish Cultural Property After World War II*. See also note 2, above.



*Figure 2. Objects of the JHM that were entrusted for safekeeping to Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum were later stored in crates that were kept in a shelter at Castricum, 35 kilometres from Amsterdam.
Photo: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.*



*Figure 3. Jewish Historical Museum objects and objects of the Portuguese community of Amsterdam at Spar- und Leibkasse bank in Hungen, 1945.
Lincoln Kirstein collection in possession of Lynn H. Nicolas (Washington D.C.).*



Figure 4. Judaica in the Offenbach Archival Depot, 1946. JHM, photo collection 00002333.

99	besnijde nisstoel Lodewijk XV, in 1768 geschonken door de kerke stuurders David ben Berman en Leip ben Jospe Cohen 	NIHS	-	Waag 1940	SM lijst bruiklenen NIHS; zie ook SM lijst jhm zonder inv.n.r. 'besnijde nisst oel met in rug drie koperen platen'	Zie afbeelding catalogus der nat. Tentoonstelling van oude kerkelijke kunst Den Bosch 1913, nr. 194 wegl. beschrijving p. 219, cat.nr. 922 alwaar jaar 1769 wordt genoemd. Zie ook afbeelding museumgids jhm 1932, nr. 77, volgens EvV 2007; Gids jhm 1931, no. 77; Arseen tt no. 54; genoemd in GAA perdocumentatie 1930-3, blad 94100 achter alwaar David ben Berman...; volgens Gids jhm 1931, no. 77; geschonken door den kerke stuurder David ben Berman Leijser, ben Jospe Cohen; Vergl cat. Ghetto Amsterdam, 1916, nr. 635; zie ook duidelijke foto Spaarnestad foto archief map Spiegel Historiaal.
100a -b	Stel filigrain ziertoons klein model, gemerkt NIH Amsterdam, GS 13	NIHS		120	SM lijst bruiklenen NIHS	Gids jhm 1931, no. 69
101	Jad silber met haak om aan de wetsrol te hangen	NIHS			SM lijst bruiklenen NIHS	Gids jhm 1931, nr. 72
102	kiddeotjebeker zilver op 3 pootjes met beelden in relief (Renaissance) geschenk van Samuel ben Jacob Speyer aan de gemeente Adath Jeshurun (de zg. Neie Kille) te Amsterdam, 5563 (1603) 	NIHS	-		SM lijst bruiklenen NIHS	Vermoedelijk zilfne object als afb. in GAA perdocumentatie jaren 1930-1933 f. 94099 achter. Gids jhm 1931, no. 32; te voorwerpen tjabbat 1927/8, cat. no. 5; cat. Franse tijd 1928, nr. 78 (Speyer); ook foto afbeelding Spaarnestad foto archief 6841-3, samen met 103 en 104; achterop stempel fcb. 1932; afbeelding in eerste jaarverslag conservatoren jhm, p. 4, foto aldaar genomen door Hannah Elkan.

Figure 5. Table with information on each individual object of the pre-war collection.



Figure 6. Chanukah lamp, brass, Dutch 2nd half 18th century, JHM 00206.



Figure 7. Torah mantle of the Ashkenazi Community of Leiden in the Jewish Historical Museum. The photo was taken in or after 1936. JHM, photo collection 00007694.



Figure 8. Torah mantle of the Ashkenazi community of Leiden, Holland 1763. Photo: Israel Museum Jerusalem, Accession number: B50.02.1838; 151/003, received through JRSO (Jewish Restitution Successor Organization).

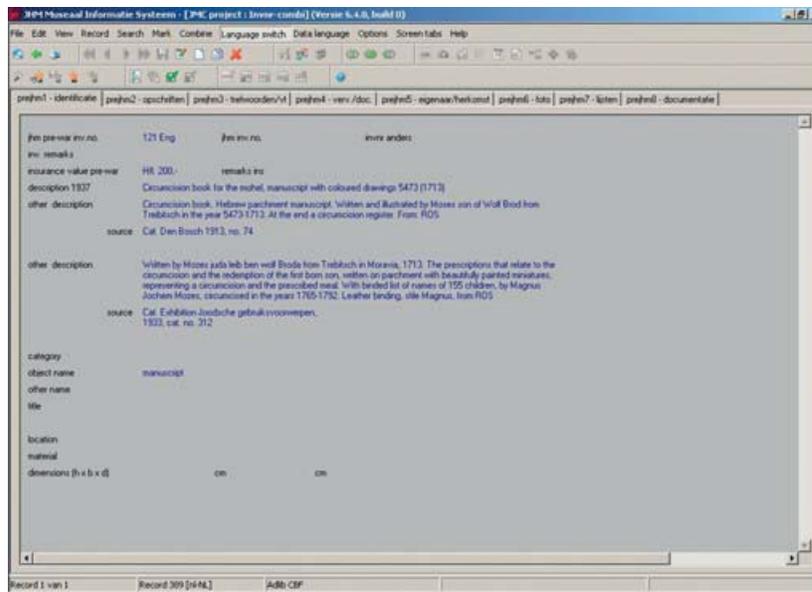


Figure 9. Record field of JHM database of missing and misplaced objects, pre-war inv. no. 121.