
PART 1 – HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

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: Kulturgeräte 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 (Mieczysław) 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 Mendeley Moicher Sforim in Odessa (Alukrainisher Bibliotek un Muzey far Yiddisher Kultur ofn Nomen fun Mendeley 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 Żydowskiej Lwów)³⁶

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

1936: Jewish Museum in the Old Synagogue in Cracow (Museum Żydowskie w Starej Bożnicy)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 Kohlauer-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-Lobkowicz, “The History of Judaica and Judaica Collections in Poland Before, During and After the Second World War: An Overview,” note 27.

1.2 Nazi Agencies Engaged in the Looting of Material Culture³⁹

The spoliation of Jewish cultural and religious property was an official part of the Nazis' campaign against those labeled as "ideological enemies of the Reich." Aside from *objets d'art*, a myriad number of Jewish cultural objects were also looted from 1933 to 1945, including various kinds of Judaica, such as ritual, sacred and/or everyday objects, books, and archives. Numerous looting agencies both within the Reich, including those territories that were annexed to Nazi Germany, as well as agencies operating outside of the Reich, yet not outside of Nazi-occupied territories, were responsible for what can be called the greatest theft in the history of humanity.⁴⁰



Figure 1: "German Prewar Territorial Gains"
https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_nm.php?ModuleId=10005141&MediaId=371, last accessed 14 April 2016)

The looting of Jewish cultural property was not orchestrated by a central institution, rather it was carried out by a number of Nazi organizations. Their rivalry with each other and their pursuit in gaining the biggest portion of the Jewish property led to an even more drastic situation. In the case of the Gestapo and the SD, two competitive forces in the expropriation of Jewish property within the German Reich, their antagonistic approach ended with their union within the newly founded RSHA (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*) in September 1939.⁴¹ However, inter-agency rivalry continued in the occupied territories and often determined not only the outcome but also the subsequent distribution of the spoil.⁴²

³⁹ For a more in-depth presentation of the various looting agencies, see Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (ed.), *Descriptive Catalogue of Looted Judaica*, partially updated edition 2016. (Online available at: <http://art.claimscon.org/our-work/judaica/descriptive-catalogue-of-looted-judaica/>); See also the online bibliography at <http://art.claimscon.org/resources/resources-bibliography/> for additional literature on Nazi looting agencies.

⁴⁰ Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, "Tracing Patterns of European Library Plunder: Books Still Not Home from the War," Regine Dehnel (ed.), *Jüdischer Buchbesitz als Raubgut*, Zweiter Hannoverisches Symposium, Frankfurt am Main 2006, p. 143.

⁴¹ Wolfgang Dierker, "The SS Security Service and the Gestapo in the National Socialist Persecution of the Jews, 1933-1945," Gerald Feldman and Wolfgang Seibel (eds.), *Networks of Nazi Persecution: Bureaucracy, Business and the Organization of the Holocaust*, New York 2005, p. 20.

⁴² See for example Martin Dean, "Seizure of Jewish Property and Inter-Agency Rivalry in the Reich and in the Occupied Soviet Territories," Gerald Feldman and Wolfgang Seibel (eds.), *Networks of Nazi Persecution: Bureaucracy, Business and the Organization of the Holocaust*, New York 2005, pp. 88-117.

The following briefly outlines the main Nazi organizations that played a role in the looting of Jewish cultural property, including Judaica. It should be noted that while this chapter primarily focuses on the looting of books and manuscripts, ceremonial objects were often taken in the process.

SD (Sicherheitsdienst des Reichsführers SS)

At the initiative of Heinrich Himmler, the *Sicherheitsdienst des Reichsführers SS* (SD; German Security Service) was created in 1931 as the intelligence branch of Hitler's bodyguards.⁴³ From its inception, Reinhard Heydrich was appointed to head up the operation. After his death in 1942, and with the exception of Adolf Eichmann assuming control for a couple of months, he was succeeded by Ernst Kaltenbrunner, who not only directed the SD but also the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (RSHA).⁴⁴ One of the SD's main tasks was the so-called *Gegnerforschung* or *Gegnerbeobachtung und –bekämpfung* (Enemy Research; Enemy Observation – and Enemy Abatement). This 'enemy research' was not limited to Jews but also targeted Freemasons, the Catholic and Protestant churches, and followers of Marxism or Liberalism. As a result, literature of these 'enemy groups' was confiscated or outright looted and afterwards handed to the *SD-Referate* (SD-offices) for further analysis.

In 1935 Heinrich Himmler ordered the establishment of a central scientific library within the SD: this central library was designed to include political literature that was defined as "damaging and undesirable," including literature dealing with Judaica, Hebraica, liberalism, pacifism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, sexology, anthroposophy, occultism, Masonic literature, political churches, sects, and critiques of Nazism.⁴⁵

The pogrom of November 9-10, 1938 – commonly referred to as *Reichskristallnacht*, the Night of Broken Glass – and its eruption of violence significantly increased the collection of the soon-to-be-established central library. Among confiscations that entered the SD's collection as a result of the November pogrom were the holdings of the Berlin, Breslau, Hamburg, Dresden, Munich and Frankfurt rabbinical seminaries, amounting to about 70 collections. Soon thereafter the collection of the *Zentralverein Deutscher Staatsbürger Jüdischen Glaubens* (Central Association of German Citizens of Jewish Faith) entered the library as well as collections from other Jewish organizations and individuals.⁴⁶

By 1939, the central library of 'opposition collections' became operative after the various Jewish libraries were consolidated into one unit headed by Franz Alfred Six. By the time the RSHA was established in September 1939, the SD's Jewish library had not only collected about 300,000 books,⁴⁷ but Franz Alfred Six had also proposed that existing divisions within the central library should be given a new organizational structure.⁴⁸ Six's suggestions were ultimately put into place in addition to his being put in charge of not only the RSHA's Amt VII, but also of ongoing research on opponents of the regime. Among his responsibilities was the development of a library, a museum, and scientific

⁴³ Schidorsky, *Library of Reich Security Main Office*, p. 21.

⁴⁴ For more information on the SD see: Michael Wildt, *Die Judenpolitik der SD 1935 bis 1938. Eine Dokumentation*, Munich 1995; Shlomo Aronson, *Reinhard Heydrich und die Frühgeschichte von Gestapo und SD*, Stuttgart 1971; George C Browder, *Foundations of the Nazi Police State. The Formation of Sipo and SD*, Kentucky 1990.

⁴⁵ Schidorsky, p. 23.

⁴⁶ Gideon Botsch, "Raub zum Zweck der Gegnerforschung," Inka Bertz and Michael Dormann (eds.), *Raub und Restitution. Kulturgut aus Jüdischem Besitz von 1933 bis heute*, Frankfurt am Main 2008, p. 95.

⁴⁷ As Grimsted noted, "Himmler's patronage proved stronger than Rosenberg's, and none of this Judaica was transferred to the IEF." Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, "Roads to Ratibor: Library and Archival Plunder by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 19.3 (2005), p. 409.

⁴⁸ Schidorsky, p. 24.

research.⁴⁹ In this context the RSHA Amt VII may have also looted Jewish ceremonial objects, but to date evidence is lacking.

Reichssicherheitshauptamt (Reich Security Head Office; RSHA)

In 1939 the RSHA was created by combining the SD, the secret police, and the criminal police, with Reinhard Heydrich heading the organization. The RSHA thus “became one of the more significant agents of the looting of Jewish public and private library collections under the Nazi regime.”⁵⁰ In total, the RSHA ‘collected’ 2-3 million books from Jews, but also from Freemasons, leftists and churches – all of which were considered ‘enemies.’⁵¹

Within the RSHA, the main department responsible for the looting of Jewish cultural treasures (predominantly libraries and archives) was Department VII⁵² “*Kultur*” (culture),⁵³ located in Berlin at Emserstrasse 12/13.⁵⁴ The other principal building in Berlin that housed the RSHA library before evacuation in 1943 was the Eisenacherstrasse 11/13 depot (a former Masonic lodge), which held approximately 100,000 volumes.⁵⁵ And it was the RSHA’s own staff, which included members of the SS, that were responsible for the looting in addition to making decisions as to what should happen to the looted material.⁵⁶

Early on officials of the RSHA planned to establish a library of looted Jewish books which was to be called simply the *Judenbibliothek*.⁵⁷ Generally speaking, most of the books looted for the RSHA library came from Jewish public and private libraries, such as books ‘secured’ from the 150 libraries of B’nai B’rith’s offices. Additional loot came from various public and private libraries in Germany, as well as from Vienna and Warsaw. Among the libraries plundered were the collections of the rabbinical seminaries in Berlin and Breslau and the libraries of Jewish organizations.⁵⁸ Another 3,600 books came from the *Leipziger Institutum Delitzschianum Judaicum*. In 1938, about 13 shipments arrived from Vienna of boxes full of books and archival material. These boxes held important collections of Austrian Jewish organizations such as the *Israelitische Allianz*, *Hebräisches Pädagogium* and the *Union Österreichischer Juden*. In that year, the collection of the RSHA already encompassed 85,000 volumes, not including books and other treasures stolen during the *Kristallnacht* (November Pogrom),⁵⁹ which

⁴⁹ Idem, p. 25.

⁵⁰ Idem, p. 21.

⁵¹ Leonidas Hill, “Nazi Attack on ‘Un-German’ Literature,” Jonathan Rose (ed.), *The Holocaust and the Book: Destruction and Preservation*, Amherst 2001, p. 30.

⁵² Originally Amt II (*Gegnerforschung*) was assigned to hold confiscated library collections as well as significant Judaica holdings. However, by 1941, it was Amt VII (*Weltanschauliche Forschung und Auswertung*) that held all the confiscated libraries and other cultural property. At the same time, the Gestapo took over Amt IV and entitled it *Gegnerforschung- und bekämpfung*. see: Botsch, *Raub zum Zweck der Gegnerforschung*, p. 96.

⁵³ Klaus Dieter Lehmann, “Restitution Jüdischer Kulturgüter als Aufgabe der Deutschen Kulturpolitik,” *Jüdischer Buchbesitz als Beutegut*. Eine Veranstaltung des Niedersächsischen Landtages und der Niedersächsischen Landesbibliothek. Symposium im Niedersächsischen Landtag am 14. November 2002. Heft 50 der Schriftenreihe des Niedersächsischen Landtages. Der Präsident des Niedersächsischen Landtages, January 2003, p. 19. For more information on Amt VII, see: Jörg Rudolph, “‘Sämtliche Sendungen sind zu richten an...’. Das RSHA-Amt VII ‘Weltanschauliche Forschung und Auswertung’ als Sammelstelle erbeuteter Archive und Bibliotheken,” Michael Wildt (ed.), *Nachrichtendienst, politische Elite, Mordeinheit. Der Sicherheitsdienst des Reichsführers SS*, Hamburg 2003, pp. 204-240.

⁵⁴ Grimsted, *Tracing Patterns of European Library Plunder*, p. 147.

⁵⁵ Idem, p. 148.

⁵⁶ Schidorsky, p. 21.

⁵⁷ Idem, p. 26.

⁵⁸ Idem, p. 21.

⁵⁹ Idem, p. 26.

undoubtedly advanced the development of the central library.⁶⁰ After the invasion of Poland, in September 1939, the collections of Polish Jews, including most of the book collections of the synagogues and the large Jewish libraries (for example the Great Synagogue on Tlomackie Street in Warsaw and the Borochoy Library) were added to the RSHA library.

Organizationally, the *Judenbibliothek* of *Amt VII* was divided into three groups, one of which was labeled 'regime opponents,' that included Jewish books or books written by Jews (in addition to, for example, Masonic collections), such as Hebraica, Jewish manuscripts and pamphlets. Excluded were books that were classified as political and ideological literature that were transferred to Rosenberg's Institute for Research of the Jewish Question (*Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage, IEJ*) in Frankfurt am Main.

During heavy Allied bombings in August 1943, an effort was made to bring the collection of Department VII to safe depositories. While over a million books of the RSHA's book collection were evacuated to the Sudetenland (the library headquarters were in Niemes, now Czech Mimoň) from Berlin in the summer of 1943,⁶¹ most of the Hebraica books were shipped to the Theresienstadt (Terezin) concentration camp, where Hebrew scholars were assigned to classify and catalogue them.⁶² However, a number of books, including a number of Jewish collections, remained in various locations in Berlin. After the fall of Berlin, the Soviet Army confiscated many of the books that were looted by *Amt VII*.⁶³ In addition, due to the depository not being safely secured, a small part of the archives was looted by the city's residents and especially by book dealers. Only in July 1945, through the efforts of the U.S. Army, were the remaining books secured and transferred to the Offenbach Archival Depot (OAD),⁶⁴ as were Jewish ceremonial objects that were discovered in various storages.

Overall, there are no concrete figures regarding the total number of books actually amassed by the RSHA. Estimates vary between 500,000 to one million, but also up to 2 to 3 million volumes. According to Schidorsky, the latter numbers seem more plausible, as not only Jewish collections were involved but also collections of Leftists' literature and collections from Freemason orders and church sects.⁶⁵ After the RSHA took over the collections of its predecessors (the SD and Gestapo),

⁶⁰ Idem, p. 26.

⁶¹ Please note that archives were evacuated to Silesia. Patricia Grimsted, "The Road to Minsk for Western 'Trophy' Books: Twice Plundered but not Yet 'Home from the War,'" *Libraries & Culture* 39.4 (2004), p. 370.

⁶² Grimsted, *Tracing Patterns of European Library Plunder*, p. 146. According to Grimsted, "There is now evidence that most of the Breslau materials were in Berlin by the spring of 1939, as confirmed by an RSHA May 1939 list which notes 28,000 volumes from the Breslau Rabbinical Seminary, along with another 10,000 from the Synagogue and over 8,000 from several other Breslau collections. That explains why Niemes was the source of the Hebrew manuscripts and incunabula from the Saraval Collection held by the Breslau Rabbinical Seminary recently returned from Prague to Breslau."

⁶³ In addition, a significant amount of Nazi loot, mainly from two principal Nazi plundering agencies, the already mentioned *Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg* (ERR) and the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (Reich Security Main Office, or RSHA), reached the former Soviet Union through the work of its trophy brigades. The records of, for example, the RSHA's *Amt VII* are held in Moscow. For more information, see: Konstantin Akinsha and Grigori Kozlov, *Beautiful Loot. The Soviet Plunder of Europe's Art Treasures*, New York 1995; Konstantin Akinsha, "Stalin's Decrees and Soviet Trophy Brigades: Compensation, Restitution in Kind, or 'Trophies' of War?," *International Journal of Cultural Property*, Vol. 17, Issue 02, May 2010, p. 195-216; Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, *Trophies of War and Empire. The Archival Heritage of Ukraine, World War II, and the International Politics of Restitution*, Cambridge 2001, p. 288.

⁶⁴ Schidorsky, p. 38.

⁶⁵ Idem, p. 27; In March 1939, Six proposed that the central library make use of six to eight Jewish forced laborers in order to handle the large quantities of books. He further recommended that these six to eight laborers would be paid by

its cultural arm, RSHA *Amt VII*, specifically designated for ‘Ideological Research and Evaluation’ (*Weltanschauliche Forschung und Auswertung*) might have amassed even more books than its competitor, the *Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg* (ERR), Alfred Rosenberg’s Task Force.⁶⁶ But generally speaking, it was not always clear which Nazi organization would loot which collection, and to quote Patricia Grimsted Kennedy, “...on some occasions, library books and archives found in the same household or institution went to different Nazi agencies. For example, the ERR had to turn over most of the



Figure 2: German Administration of Europe, 1942;
https://www.ushmm.org/outreach/en/media_nm.php?MediaId=347, last accessed April 14, 2016.

Jewish and Masonic archives plundered by the ERR in France and the Benelux countries to the RSHA *Amt VII*. But *Amt VII* generally separated out the books from the archives. While most of the Jewish books went to the Sudetenland, most of the Jewish and Masonic archives (together with those received from the ERR) were evacuated to Silesia.”⁶⁷

At the same time the RSHA’s book collections were evacuated in the summer of 1943, its archival materials, which included objects looted by the RSHA’s predecessors, namely the SD and Gestapo, were evacuated from Berlin and stored in

the Castle Fürststein (now Polish Książ). In the beginning of May 1944, the RSHA’s archival collection was again moved, this time to Wölfelsdorf (now Polish Wilkanów), a remote Silesian village which soon thereafter “became the RSHA hideaway storage center for their vast archival plunder from all over Europe (RSHA Amt VII, C-1).”⁶⁸ The Wölfelsdorf depot, located in the region of Klodzko, was possibly also storage for objects from the Jewish Museum Berlin. After their discovery in 1945, Polish authorities transferred these objects to nearby Bozkow (Eckersdorf), which had functioned as a depot for museum and cultural goods. Among the objects were a couple of old printed books, files of the art collection of the museum, and around 150 ritual objects, as well as dozens of lamps, a washing vessel from the Old Synagogue in Berlin, synagogue textiles, Torah crowns and a yad (pointer).⁶⁹

the Central Office for Jewish Emigration (*Reichszentrale für Jüdische Auswanderung*) and supervised by an SS command labeled *Bibliothekskommando*. However, Six’s plan was not put into practice on the grounds that, among other reasons, the RSHA personnel would refuse to work with a group of Jews and it would damage the image of the SD if the matter became known. As a result, during the library’s early years, it suffered from not only insufficient storage, but also from a lack of skilled workers. In 1941 Six reintroduced his suggestion to employ skilled Jewish forced laborers to work in the RSHA’s library. The Federal Union of the Jews in Germany was subsequently tasked with providing eight skilled Jewish librarians. By October they started their work in the offices located in Eisenacher Strasse. In 1943, the group of Jewish librarians was increased, and twenty-five more were enlisted to work in the library. (Schidorsky, pp. 28-29.)

⁶⁶ Grimsted, *Tracing Patterns of European Library Plunder*, p. 145. For more information on the ERR, see pp. 8-12.

⁶⁷ Idem, p. 148.

⁶⁸ Idem, p. 149.

⁶⁹ Jakob Hübner, ‘Auf der Suche nach Objekten des Berliner Jüdischen Museums in Polen. Funde und Hypothesen’, in Chana Schütz und Hermann Simon (Hg): *Auf der Suche nach einer verlorenen Sammlung. Das Berliner Jüdische Museum (1933-1938)*, Berlin 2011. pp. 73-85, p. 81-83.

The RSHA's archival collection is of some significance, especially considering that while the *Hohe Schule* and other ERR destinations retained priority for the books seized by the ERR, the Rosenberg units were eventually asked to hand over their archival loot to the *Amt VII*.⁷⁰

Gestapo (Geheime Staatspolizei)

Similar to the *Amt VII*, the Gestapo also took part in the expropriation of Jewish property.⁷¹ Founded on 26 April 1933 by Hermann Göring, then Prussian Minister of Interior, and headed by Reinhard Heydrich beginning in April 1934, the Gestapo developed into a secret *Gesinnungspolizei* (patriotic ethos police). Its main responsibility was the systematic fight against people labeled as enemies of the NS-regime, in particular communists, socialists and Jews. Organizationally speaking, in 1941 the Gestapo took over *Amt IV* within the RSHA and entitled it *Gegnerforschung- und bekämpfung*.⁷² The Gestapo was the main operational center for anti-Jewish persecution policy, with Adolf Eichmann playing a central role in it. By 1944, it employed about 32,000 people. Between 1938⁷³ and 1941, the Gestapo was largely responsible for the practical implementation of anti-Jewish policies. In doing so, it often dealt with Jewish communities and in the process confiscated their cultural and religious properties.⁷⁴ As a result, Adolf Eichmann's Gestapo-Referat *Zentralstelle für Jüdische Auswanderung*⁷⁵ (Central Office for Jewish Emigration) decided to establish a Jewish Central Museum in Prague. This museum, which started its activities in 1942⁷⁶, was to hold cultural and religious objects from communities in Bohemia and Moravia..⁷⁷

By 1941, the Gestapo started to liquidate its inventory of cultural objects. While many of Hitler's agents were given first choice, other cultural objects were sold by an Austrian agency called the *Vugesta* (an acronym for *Vermögens-Umzugsgut von der Gestapo* or Property Removed by the Gestapo) and headed by Karl Herber. The *Vugesta*'s proceeds for the years 1941 and 1944, amounted to 14 million Reichsmarks, of which 10 million Reichsmarks came from the Dorotheum auction house.⁷⁸ The revenues of these auctions went to the Reich (or the federal government) by way of the Finance Ministry.⁷⁹

⁷⁰ Grimsted, *Roads to Ratibor*, p. 409-410. (Grimsted pointed out that starting with 1939, Rosenberg and Himmler competed over each other's loot and authority. In July 1940, for example, "Rosenberg complained that Himmler was abusing his authority and did not appreciate Rosenberg's mission.")

⁷¹ For more information on the Gestapo, see: Rupert Butler, *The Gestapo: A History of Hitler's Secret Police 1933-45*, Barnsley 2004.

⁷² Botsch, p. 97.

⁷³ The Gestapo's launch in confiscating Jewish-owned cultural property, mostly art, began in annexed Austria following the *Anschluss* in March 1938.

⁷⁴ Botsch, p. 97.

⁷⁵ For more information on the *Zentralstelle*, specifically in Austria, see: Gabriele Anderl, Dirk Rupnow and Alexandra-Eileen Wenck, *Die Zentralstelle für Jüdische Auswanderung als Beraubungsinstitution*. Historikerkommission der Republik Österreich, Wien 2004.

⁷⁶ Magda Veselka, "Jewish Museums in the Former Czechoslovakia," Julie-Marthe Cohen, Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, *Neglected Witnesses. The Fate of Jewish Ceremonial Objects During the Second World War*, Crickadarn 2011, p. 123.

⁷⁷ For more information on the Jewish Central Museum, see, for example: Dirk Rupnow, *Täter-Gedächtnis-Opfer: Das Jüdische Zentralmuseum' in Prag 1942-1945*, Wien 2000.

⁷⁸ Helen Junz, *Das Vermögen der jüdischen Bevölkerung Österreichs. NS-Raub und Restitution nach 1945*, Wien, München 2004, p. 182.

⁷⁹ Jonathan Petropolous, "For Germany and Themselves: The Motivation Behind the Nazi Leaders' Plundering and Collecting of Art". Special Reports, *Spoils of War*, No 4, August 1997.

Sonderkommando Paulsen

At the same time the RSHA was operative, the *Sonderkommando Paulsen* was tasked by the RSHA to confiscate cultural objects in Poland.⁸⁰ Peter Paulsen, the leader of this special unit, was a Gestapo *Unterscharführer* (Lieutenant). The leading force behind the *Sonderkommando* was Heinrich Himmler's *Ahnenerbe*,⁸¹ which employed art historians and experts to draft lists of museums, noteworthy prehistoric material, and valuable art collections for confiscation. The research conducted by these experts was put at the disposal of Himmler's forces and more specifically at the disposal of the *Sonderkommando Paulsen*.⁸²

Between October and December 1939, the *Sonderkommando Paulsen* was able to loot numerous cultural objects,⁸³ in addition to prehistoric, ethnographic and scientific collections, as well as various special libraries, mostly from the cities of Cracow, Sandomir, Warsaw and Lublin.⁸⁴ Further looting sprees by the *Sonderkommando Paulsen* were subsequently inhibited by Hans Frank, governor-general of the General Gouvernement, who had his own looting agenda in mind. In summary, the damage caused by the *Sonderkommando Paulsen* was limited, especially in comparison with the agencies of Himmler and Göring.⁸⁵ To date little is known about Paulsen's role in the looting of Jewish ritual objects. However, it is known that in Warsaw, the *Kommando Paulsen* confiscated 'three crates containing the Masonic and Jewish ceremonial objects from the National Museum', which was used as a collecting point by *Kommando Paulsen* in Warsaw. They arrived in Berlin on 23rd December 1939.⁸⁶

Wehrmacht

Another, somewhat reluctant, player in the looting of cultural objects was the Wehrmacht, the Nazis' unified armed forces, which was active between 1935 to 1945. With the Führer's decree (*Führererlass*)⁸⁷ from 1 March 1, 1942, the Wehrmacht alongside the offices of the Nazi party and the Nazi state was authorized to officially conduct art looting sprees. But already two years earlier, on

⁸⁰ For more detailed information on the Kommando Paulsen, see for example: Andrzej Meżynski, *Kommando Paulsen. Organisierter Kunstraub in Polen 1942–45*, Köln 2000.

⁸¹ The *Ahnenerbe* (*Studiengesellschaft für Geistesurgeschichte*, *Deutsches Ahnenerbe e.V.* – Study Society for Primordial Intellectual History, German Ancestral Heritage [registered society], after 1937 renamed *Forschung- und Lehrgemeinschaft das Ahnenerbe e.V.* – Research and Teaching Community the Ancestral Heritage [registered society]), was founded in 1935 by Heinrich Himmler and had as its goal research on the anthropological and cultural history of the Aryan race. For more information see: Michael Kater, *Das "Ahnenerbe" der SS 1935–1945. Ein Beitrag zur Kulturpolitik des Dritten Reiches*, Studien zur Zeitgeschichte, Munich 2001.

⁸² Petropolous, *Art as Politics*, p. 102.

⁸³ Most cultural objects were looted in October 1939.

⁸⁴ Petropolous, p. 103.

⁸⁵ Idem, p. 103.

⁸⁶ The crates may also have contained some exhibits from the Bersohn Museum confiscated by the other special SS unit, which was led by Lothar Beutel (Einsatzgruppe IV. (Nawojka Cieślińska-Lobkowicz, "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. 141-142) After the war, the National Museum in Warsaw handed some pieces of a wooden Torah ark, probably from one of Warsaw's small private synagogues, over to the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw (ZIH) (Eleonora Bergman, "The Jewish Historical Institute: History of Its Building and Collections," Cohen, Heimann-Jelinek (eds.), *Neglected Witnesses*, p. 191).

⁸⁷ "(...) alle Dienststellen der Wehrmacht, der Partei und des Staates (...)" "Juden, Freimaurer und die mit ihnen verbündeten weltanschaulichen Gegner sind die Urheber des jetzigen gegen das Reich gerichteten Krieges. Die planmäßige geistige Bekämpfung dieser Mächte ist eine kriegsnotwendige Aufgabe. Ich habe daher den Reichsleiter Alfred Rosenberg beauftragt, diese Aufgabe im Einvernehmen mit dem Chef des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht durchzuführen. (...) see: Bundesarchiv, NS 8/260, Bl. 110; here cited after: Hannes Hartung, *Kunstraub in Krieg und Verfolgung: die Restitution der Beute- und Raubkunst im Kollisions- und Voelkerrecht*, Berlin, 2012, p. 42.

the occasion of the Nazi invasion of France in spring 1940, the Wehrmacht set up a special unit called the *Kunstschutz* or Art Protection Unit. The *Kunstschutz* was a re-creation of the World War I era art and monument protection office.⁸⁸ Its head was the art historian Franz Wolff-Metternich.⁸⁹

The Wehrmacht – in contrast to other Nazi organizations – adhered to the 1907 Hague convention⁹⁰, which stipulated the protection of private property and respect for art objects and monuments. Yet the Wehrmacht only applied those principles to territories that were occupied and under military rule, such as France, Belgium, Greece, Serbia and at a later stage Italy. (The Netherlands, for example, was under civil administration).⁹¹ Objects owned by Jews were regarded by the Wehrmacht as “heirless” and therefore not covered by the Hague convention.⁹² Those items seized by the *Kunstschutz* in accordance with the Hague convention were placed under military control, even though up until the end of 1943, the organisation was not officially under the OKH (*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*; High Command of the Armed Forces).⁹³

In France, following the Hague rules, Wolf-Metternich stipulated that historic buildings were off-limits to German troops, including 500 castles, and compiled a list of sites that he deemed worth protecting. Another task of the *Kunstschutz*, as defined by Wolf-Metternich, was the continuation of cultural life. Consequently, at the end of September 1940, the *Kunstschutz* organized the re-opening of some rooms in the Louvre. The Wehrmacht’s opposition to the outright looting of cultural property, in particular the transfer of cultural objects to Germany, and continuation of cultural life, did not always meet with approval from other Nazi organizations, and it soon found itself having to cooperate with the ERR.⁹⁴ To that effect, on September 17, 1940, Hitler directed the Army to extend all possible assistance to the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg, which was entitled to not only “secure” objects deemed of cultural value, but also to transport them to Germany.⁹⁵

Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR)

Because of the ERR’s importance in the looting of Judaica, “and the fact that the ERR library commandos may have been responsible for the most extensive library plunder,”⁹⁶ this overview will give emphasis to the role that Rosenberg played as well as to the *Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage* (Institute for the Study of the Jewish Question, IEJ). In addition, it should be noted that precisely because of the looting sprees of the ERR and because of its ambition to study classified enemy groups, large Judaica libraries and archives as well as Torah scrolls and ritual objects (which were often seized along with libraries) were ‘saved’ from destruction. To quote Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, “Ironically, many libraries and archives of the victims were ‘saved’ for the extensive ERR anti-Semitic research, library and propaganda operations.”⁹⁷

⁸⁸ Lynn Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa. The Fate of Europe’s Treasures in the Third Reich and the Second World War*, New York, 1994, p. 119.

⁸⁹ Anders Rydell, *Hitlers Bilder: Kunstraub der Nazis - Raubkunst in der Gegenwart*, Frankfurt/New York, 2013, p. 144.

⁹⁰ Haager Landkriegsordnung (HLKO) from 1907.

⁹¹ Günther Haase, *Kunstraub und Kunstschutz: eine Dokumentation*. Vol. I: “Kunstraub und Kunstschutz,” Norderstedt, 2008, p. 61.

⁹² Erich Wiedemann, “Die Kunsträuber.” *Der Spiegel*, Teil 7 “Jagd nach Kunst”, 18 June 2001.

⁹³ Haase, p. 68. (The art protection unit was officially part of the “Oberkommando des Heeres Generalquartiermeister.)

⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 64; Rydell, p. 146.

⁹⁵ Nicholas, p. 125.

⁹⁶ Grimsted, *Tracing Patterns of European Library Plunder*, p. 143.

⁹⁷ Idem, p. 144.

Research conducted by Dr. Grimsted, in cooperation and with the sponsorship of the Claims Conference, has led to the recent publication of *Reconstructing the Record of Nazi Cultural Plunder: A Guide to the Dispersed Archives of the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR) and the Postwar Retrieval of ERR Loot*. The Guide is available online⁹⁸ and provides information on the current whereabouts of ERR records in addition to detailing their contents and providing links to records that are online available.

The ERR's looting sprees were far-reaching and extensive: ERR units investigated 375 archives, 402 museums, 531 institutions and 957 libraries in the countries the ERR was active. The ERR set up headquarters in Berlin with offices in Brussels, Amsterdam, Paris, Belgrade and Riga, as well as numerous sub-offices in other parts of Europe.⁹⁹

Alfred Rosenberg, born in Reval (Tallin, then part of the Russian Empire, today the capital of Estonia), after the Russian Revolution had a long and distinguished career with the Nazi party. Starting in 1923, he was the founding chief of the newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter*, in addition to serving as the editor of the antisemitic monthly *Der Weltkampf*. Furthermore, Rosenberg was instrumental in shaping the idea of a worldwide Judeo-Masonic-Bolshevik conspiracy, exemplified by the writing of his *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts* (The Myth of the Twentieth Century), which was first published in 1930.

By January 1934, Hitler ordered Rosenberg to direct 'the Plenipotentiary of the Führer for the Supervision of the Entire Intellectual and Ideological Enlightenment of the Nazi Party' (*Dienststelle des Beauftragten des Führers für die Überwachung der gesamten geistigen und weltanschaulichen Schulung und Erziehung der NSDAP*; DBFU). Following Hitler's order, Rosenberg began to create a far-reaching organization that covered all fields of art, music, culture, and science,¹⁰⁰ along with other fields of culture, which were later to provide staff, bureaucracy, and a cultural network for the ERR as an operational offshoot.¹⁰¹

Six years later, on January 29, 1940, Hitler appointed Alfred Rosenberg to head the *Höbe Schule*, which was to become the center for National Socialist ideological and educational research and an alternative to universities for Nazi elites – to be established after the war. The *Höbe Schule* was administered by the DBFU and the Rosenberg *Dienststelle* in Berlin.¹⁰²

After the invasions of France, the Netherlands and Belgium (May to June 1940), on July 17, 1940, Alfred Rosenberg created the *Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg* (ERR). The ERR was designed to be an operational unit that had emerged from the DBFU and consisted of several individual command

⁹⁸ <http://www.errproject.org/guide.php>; As of August 2017, the following chapters are available for download: Introduction to the Guide: "Alfred Rosenberg and the ERR: The Records of Plunder and the Fate of Its Loot;" Chapter 1: "Belgium;" Chapter 2: "France;" Chapter 4: "Israel;" Chapter 6 "Netherlands;" Chapter 10 "United States". A chapter on Germany is expected shortly. A previous full edition entitled "Reconstructing the Record of Nazi Culture Plunder: A Survey of the Dispersed Archives of the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR)" from 2011 may be seen at <https://socialhistory.org/en/publications/reconstructing-record-nazi-cultural-plunder>.

⁹⁹ Hill, p. 29.

¹⁰⁰ Willem de Vries, "Special Reports: The 'Sonderstab Musik' of the 'Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg' 1940-1945," Special Reports, *Spoils of War*, No. 1, 19 December 1995.

¹⁰¹ Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, *A Guide to the Dispersed Archives of the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR) and the Postwar Retrieval of ERR Loot*. Revised and Updated Edition, 2017, p. 22. (online at: <http://www.errproject.org/guide.php>)

¹⁰² Elisabeth Yavnai, "Jewish Cultural Property and Its Postwar Recovery," *Confiscation of Jewish Property in Europe, 1933-1945*. One Day Symposium at the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, USHMM, 22 March 2001, p. 127; Saul Friedländer called Rosenberg's *Höbe Schule* "the party university, Rosenberg's pet project". Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews 1939-1945. The Years of Extermination*, New York 2007, p. 162; Grimsted, *Roads to Ratibor*, p. 403.

forces, called *Sonderstäbe*, covering a wide range of fields such as visual arts, music, theatre, folklore, prehistory, churches, archives, science and genealogy.¹⁰³ The ERR was thus authorized to ransack objects deemed of interest to its organization, including Judaica, Jewish libraries and other cultural property that would contribute to the “ideological task of the NSDAP and the later scientific research work of the Hohe Schule.”¹⁰⁴

One of the advantages held by Rosenberg’s team was the fact that it was authorized to loot in both the western and eastern spheres. The ERR’s approach differed geographically. In Western Europe and the Balkans it concentrated on private and religious organizations – including Jewish institutions, Masonic lodges, socialist organizations, East European émigré groups, and a variety of other agencies – as well as on private, primarily Jewish, individuals. But in Eastern Europe and particularly within the boundaries of the Soviet Union, the ERR’s cultural plunder was primarily directed at state repositories, since most private and religious collections in these areas had long before been nationalized.¹⁰⁵

The ERR’s Special Command Force for Occupied Western Territories started its operations in occupied France in June/July 1940 on the basis of the Führer’s authorization to seize major art collections of Jews who had fled the invasion. Its headquarters were first established in Berlin at Margarethenstrasse 17, Berlin W35. After the occupation of France, the ERR headquarters were temporarily transferred to Paris, but in 1941 they were again moved to Berlin, to the *Haus am Knie* (Bismarckstrasse 1, Berlin-Charlottenburg). Operations carried out by the ERR in Western Europe were based out of Paris and directed by Baron Kurt von Behr (who started in March 1942), who also headed the Western Office (*Dienststelle* or *Amt Westen*) of the RMbO (the *Reichsministerium für die besetzten Ostgebiete*; Reichs Ministry for Occupied Eastern Territories).¹⁰⁶ By 1943, with the advance of the Allies and their increased bombing, the order was given to evacuate cultural property from Berlin, and several of its “divisions and major research operations were evacuated to the isolated Silesian city of Ratibor (postwar Racibórz, Poland), south of Kattowitz (postwar Katowice, Poland).”¹⁰⁷

Following a decision by Hitler and at the time that the deportations of Jews from Western occupied lands intensified in 1942, the ERR started also to link itself closely with the so-called *Möbel Aktion* (*M-Aktion* or Furniture Action), an organization responsible for the stripping of contents from Jewish homes. The *Möbel Aktion*, technically part of the RMbO, was supervised under Rosenberg’s *Dienststelle Westen*, with its French part run by Baron Kurt von Behr. Initially the *Möbel Aktion* was designed to provide household furnishings for bombed-out homes in the Reich, in addition to the RMbO and the ERR, but through its confiscations of Jewish household goods, even more cultural and religious items fell into the hands of the ERR. *Möbel Aktion* branches came into existence in countries such as France, Belgium, and the Netherlands.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ Willem de Vries, *Sonderstab Musik. Music Confiscations by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg under the Nazi Occupation of Western Europe*, Amsterdam 1996.

¹⁰⁴ Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal: Nuremberg 14 November 1945-1 October 1946, Vol. VI (Nuremberg, 1947), p. 85; here cited after Yavnai, *Jewish Cultural Property*, p. 127.

¹⁰⁵ Grimsted, *Roads to Ratibor*, p. 394; see also: Grimsted, Patricia Kennedy, *Documenting the Plunder of Judaica: Perspectives from Remaining Archives of the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR)*, Paper presented at the Holocaust Era Assets Conference, Prague, 26-30 June 2009.

¹⁰⁶ Grimsted, *Roads to Ratibor*, p. 395.

¹⁰⁷ Grimsted, Introduction, ERR Guide, p. 23.

¹⁰⁸ Grimsted, *Roads to Ratibor*, p. 396.

Books looted under the supervision of the ERR were sent to Rosenberg's *Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage* (Institute for the Study of the Jewish Question, IEJ),¹⁰⁹ which was founded in April 1939. The institute was originally located in Frankfurt but later, in the summer of 1943, was moved to Hungen.¹¹⁰ With the opening of the Institute for the Study of the Jewish Question in March 1941 it could claim to be the first institute to be established under the auspices of Rosenberg's *Hohe Schule*,¹¹¹ and apart from the Central Library of the *Hohe Schule* (*Zentralbibliothek der Hohen Schule*, ZBHS), it was also the only one of the planned *Hohe Schule* affiliates that was formally established during the war.¹¹²

The IEJ was first directed by Dr. Wilhelm Grau, and its repositories were established in eight different facilities. The IEJ's library was directed by Johannes Pohl, who earlier had studied Judaica at Jerusalem's Hebrew University from 1934 to 1936 at the Nazi Party's request.¹¹³ The library was initially based on the Rothschild Library in Frankfurt along with other Frankfurt Judaica holdings.¹¹⁴ By April 1943, the library could already claim that in theory it had a collection of about 550,000 volumes (which included books not yet received), originating from France, the Netherlands, Greece, and occupied Soviet territories. The IEJ, however, also received loot from occupied Soviet territories, such as Hebraica from eastern Ukraine and Belarus. More Judaica came from the Baltics, especially from Lithuania, but after some time, the RSHA started insisting that they needed stronger reference collections. By that time, however, many of the most important Jewish collections in the West had already been confiscated.¹¹⁵

In the end, the ERR had amassed such an enormous amount of Judaica, including Torah scrolls, that in a report by the ERR on March 18, 1944 there is a note that "(...) there are numbers of Torah rolls [sic: scrolls] lying here, in which the Frankfurt Institute no longer has an interest. Perhaps, however, the leather can still have some use for bookbinding. Please inform me whether I am to pack available Torah rolls or those which may arrive in the future for the central library."¹¹⁶

The *Zentralbibliothek der Hohen Schule* was first established in Berlin at Behrenstrasse 49 in early 1939 and directed by Dr. Walther Grothe. In 1942, it moved to Tyrol, Austria, to the Grand Hotel Annenheim and later on to the remote Monastery of Tanzenberg, in Austria's Carinthia. The ZBHS was designed to become the central research facility of the *Hohe Schule*. Soon after the invasion of France, ZBHS director Grothe and IEJ director Grau were sent to Paris to head up the special ERR unit "*Sonderstab Bibliothek der Hohen Schule*" (Special Unit Library of the Hohe Schule). Their mission was to target in particular Jewish institutional and private libraries, and by November 1940, the *Sonderstab* started to become active in Brussels and Amsterdam.¹¹⁷ A year later, the *Sonderstab* started its activities in the occupied Soviet lands, particularly in Ukraine. But aside from its own loot, the ERR also received books previously looted by the Künsberg Commando of the Foreign Office, totaling more than 40,000 volumes.

¹⁰⁹ See also Max Weinreich, *Hitler's Professors: The Part of Scholarship in Germany's Crimes Against the Jewish People*, New Haven 1999, pp 97-101.

¹¹⁰ Prior to that, Rosenberg had already founded the *Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage* in Munich in 1932. Lehmann, *Restitution Jüdischer Kulturgüter*, p. 18.

¹¹¹ Grimsted, *Road to Minsk*, p. 371.

¹¹² Grimsted, *Roads to Ratibor*, p. 403.

¹¹³ For more information on Pohl, see: Maria Kühn-Ludewig, *Johannes Pohl (1904-1960). Judaist und Bibliothekar im Dienste Rosenbergs. Eine biographische Dokumentation*, Hannover 2000.

¹¹⁴ Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, p. 162.

¹¹⁵ Idem, p. 410.

¹¹⁶ Joshua Starr, "Jewish Cultural Property under Nazi Control," *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1, January 1950, p. 42.

¹¹⁷ Grimsted, *Roads to Ratibor*, p. 404. See also: Grimsted, *Tracing Patterns of European Library Plunder*, p. 154.

By the time the war ended, over half a million books were collected in the monastery in Tanzenberg, which was then in British hands.¹¹⁸ An additional repository for looted books was Hitler's planned cultural center in Linz, Austria,¹¹⁹ and the ERR research and library center in Ratibor (now Polish Racibórz), to which the Germans transported more than two million books.¹²⁰

At the end of the war, the Allies were faced with tens of millions of books looted by various Nazi organizations, including the RSHA and the ERR. However, this did not account for the looting conducted by the allies and collaborators of the Nazis. Yet, research into the confiscations by the Italians, Croats, Hungarians etc. is for the most part still outstanding.

*Please see also Appendices to Part I:
Organizational Charts - Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR), Reichssicherheitshauptamt (RSHA)*

¹¹⁸ For more information on Tanzenberg, see: Evelyn Adunka, *Der Raub der Bücher. Plünderungen in der NS-Zeit und Restitution nach 1945*, Wien 2002.

¹¹⁹ For more information see Murray Hall's research on the *Führerbibliothek*: Murray Hall and Christina Köstner, ... *allerlei für die Nationalbibliothek zu ergattern. Eine österreichische Institution in der NS-Zeit*, Wien 2006; Murray Hall, Christina Köstner and Margot Werner, *Geraubte Bücher. Die Österreichische Nationalbibliothek stellt sich ihrer NS-Vergangenheit*, Wien 2004.

¹²⁰ Grimsted, *Roads to Ratibor*, p. 390.

1.3 The Looting of Judaica: Museum Collections, Community Collections and Private Collections – An Overview

The *Descriptive Catalogue of Looted Judaica*¹²¹, originally produced in 2009 by the Claims Conference and the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO) and updated in 2016, provides information on 70 countries, including data – if available – on looted Judaica collections, research projects to identify them, and in some cases information on successful restitutions. For some countries the information is extensive, based on years of research and state-financed projects. For other countries, however – mostly states that were only marginally affected by the Holocaust and its aftermath, as well as some countries of the former eastern Bloc – the information is sparser. In a report entitled *Holocaust-Era Looted Art: A Current World-Wide Overview*¹²² published by the Claims Conference and WJRO at the end of 2014, fifty countries were reviewed in terms of their progress in conducting provenance research on looted art and subsequent restitutions (or the existence of governmental sanctioned art restitution measures). Generally speaking, provenance research on looted Judaica has only been conducted in countries that were or are involved in research on looted art. Thus the above mentioned overview and especially its finding that only four (4) countries can be labeled as having made major progress towards implementing the Washington Conference principles and the Terezin Declaration,¹²³ indicates that substantial provenance research and research projects on looted Judaica are for the most part still lacking.

The current overview is separated into three parts: while the first and main section focuses on countries that have been quite active in their research on looted Judaica (and therefore will be described in more detail), the second part focuses on countries that have marginally researched their Judaica collections. The third and last part concentrates on Judaica collections (including vanished collections) in countries that thus far have not conducted any (or insufficient) research. It is important to note that looted Judaica is often not country specific, since the re-distribution of looted Judaica during the Nazi regime and its further dispersal after the war, especially by the Soviet trophy brigades in the East and Jewish Restitution Successor Organization/Jewish Cultural Reconstruction in the west, was not necessarily bound by country borders.

Obviously the situations faced by countries vary greatly. Perhaps the most obvious divide is between countries on whose territory the killings and robbery of the Holocaust took place and those countries that may have been involved in the history of the Holocaust and its aftermath but were not sites of the genocide as such. Whether perpetrator or victim nations, countries where the local Jewish population was robbed face greater complications and generally larger quantities of looted

¹²¹ The compilation, updated in 2016, is based on information from existing published and unpublished literature and archives, as well as information obtained from experts in various countries. (Online available at: <http://art.claimscon.org/our-work/judaica/descriptive-catalogue-of-looted-judaica/>).

¹²² Wesley Fisher, Ruth Weinberger, *Holocaust-Era Looted Art: A Current World-Wide Overview*. Paper presented at the ICOM Museum & Politics Conference, St. Petersburg, September 2014. Online at: <http://art.claimscon.org/our-work/looted-art-report/>.

¹²³ More information on the 1998 Washington Conference and the 2009 Terezin Declaration can be found at: <http://art.claimscon.org/resources/additional-resources-2/>.

cultural property in their museums than do countries that were simply the recipients of looted art and Judaica. Thus the challenges facing countries such as Germany and Ukraine are far greater than those facing countries such as Portugal and Canada.

Researched Looted Judaica Collections – Countries Mentioned in the Worldwide Overview

The already mentioned *Worldwide Overview* singled out four countries that made major progress in researching and documenting looted artifacts and implementing the Principles of the 1998 Washington Conference on Holocaust-Era Assets¹²⁴ as well as the Terezin Declaration of 2009¹²⁵: Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany and the Netherlands.

Austria:

Austria's role during the Holocaust and its active participation in the looting and eventual murder of its Jewish community has been thoroughly documented and researched.¹²⁶ The organization mainly responsible for the looting of Austria's Jews was the Vugesta (*Verwertungsstelle für jüdisches Umzugsgut der Gestapo*; Gestapo Office for the Disposal of the Property of Jewish Emigrants). Between Vugesta's creation in early autumn 1940 until the end of the war, the organization was responsible for the looting of 5,000 – 6,000 apartments, including artworks and Judaica.¹²⁷ However, Adolf Eichmann's *Zentralstelle für Jüdische Auswanderung* (Central Office for Jewish Emigration), established in August 1938 to supervise the emigration and expulsion of Austria's Jews, equally played a significant role.¹²⁸

The Viennese Jewish Community Library, once one of Europe's largest, had about 33,800 volumes in 1938. The collection included numerous very valuable books, among them 41 incunabula and 625 manuscripts, of which 300 were of high monetary value. After Austria's annexation (*Anschluss*) the library was confiscated by the RSHA (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*) and eventually brought to the RSHA depot in Berlin.¹²⁹ As was the case with most libraries that were confiscated by the RSHA, the library of Vienna's Jewish community did not remain intact as a whole. It was partly transferred for

¹²⁴ Links to the texts of these and related documents may be found at <http://art.claimscon.org/resources/additional-resources-2/>

¹²⁵ <http://www.holocausteraassets.eu/en/news-archive/detail/terezin-declaration/>; see also above.

¹²⁶ See for example the published reports by Austria's Historical Commission. All 49 volumes are searchable online: <http://www.boehrlau-verlag.com/histkom/>; In particular see: Clemens Jabloner, Brigitte Bailer-Galanda, Eva Blimlinger, Georg Graf, Robert Knight, Lorenz Mikoletzky, Bertrand Perz, Roman Sandgruber, Karl Stuhlpfarrer, and Alice Teichova (eds), *Schlussbericht der Historikerkommission der Republik Österreich. Vermögensentzug während der NS-Zeit sowie Rückstellungen und Entschädigungen seit 1945 in Österreich. Zusammenfassungen und Einschätzungen*, Wien 2004.

¹²⁷ For more information on the Vugesta, see: Sabine Loitfellner, "Die Rolle der Verwaltungsstelle für jüdisches Umzugsgut der Geheimen Staatspolizei (Vugesta) im NS-Kunstraub," Gabriele Anderl, Alexandra Caruso (eds), *NS-Kunstraub in Österreich und die Folgen*. Innsbruck 2005.

¹²⁸ See also: Gabriele Anderl, Dirk Rupnow and Alexandra-Eileen Wenck, *Die Zentralstelle für Jüdische Auswanderung als Beraubungsinstitution*, Wien/München 2004.

¹²⁹ According to forced laborer Ernst Grumach, RSHA's central library was initially in Berlin's Emser Strasse and later moved to Eisenacherstrasse 12 (see: CAHJP, p. 205-17, Grumach, Bericht, p. 3). Schidorsky states that it still later was moved to "a synagogue in Schöneberg", Münchener Strasse 37, without giving details (see: Dov Schidorsky, "Das Schicksal jüdischer Bibliotheken im Dritten Reich", Peter Vodosek and Manfred Komorowski (ed), *Bibliotheken während des Nationalsozialismus*, Teil II, Wiesbaden 1992, p. 194). The Münchener Strasse depot was given to RSHA after 1941 (see: Jörg Rudolph, "Sämtliche Sendungen sind zu richten an...". Das RSHA-Amt VII, Weltanschauliche Forschung und Auswertung als Sammelstelle erbeuteter Archive und Bibliotheken," Michel Wildt (ed.), *Nachrichtendienst, politische Elite, Mordeinheit. Der Sicherheitsdienst des Reichsführers SS*, Hamburg 2003, p. 215).

safekeeping to Silesia and Northern Bohemia in 1943, specifically to the Niemes castle near Reichenberg, now Liberec. Other parts that remained at the RSHA's quarters located in Berlin probably burned down when the building was hit by a bomb. After the war, an attempt was made to reconstitute the library: accordingly, parts were brought back from the Niemes castle, while other book collections were restituted from the Offenbach Archival Depot as well as from the Synagogue Community of Düsseldorf. Yet other books, mostly manuscripts and incunabula, found their way into Warsaw's *Zydowski Instytut Historyczny* (Jewish Historical Institute).¹³⁰

Vienna's old Jewish Museum, founded in 1895, shut down immediately after the *Anschluss* in March 1938. In 1939, the museum's objects were sent to the Museum of Ethnology.¹³¹ Some objects were also sent to other museums, such as the Museum of Natural History or to Austria's National Library.¹³² With the reestablishment of a new Jewish Museum¹³³ by the city of Vienna in 1990, the new museum eventually received from the IKG (*Israelitische Kultusgemeinde*; Austria's Jewish Community) on permanent loan holdings from Viennese synagogues or prayer houses that were destroyed during the pogrom of November 1938 and the restituted remnants of the prewar Jewish Museum. Since their postwar fate was not always straightforward, with objects being placed on the market or otherwise being lost, the prewar collection is far from complete.¹³⁴

Unlike Germany, where the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization (JRSO) was assigned to deal with heirless Jewish property beginning in 1948, Austria's Second Restitution Claims Act,¹³⁵ enacted in February 1947, regulated all legal successions.¹³⁶ Consequently, the IKG became the legal successor to all Jewish institutions, associations, libraries and the like throughout Austria. However, the IKG's role during the Holocaust was also that of a repository for Jewish artifacts by individuals prior to their deportation. As a result of the Second Restitution Claims Act, the remainder collection of the old Jewish Museum became the legal property of the IKG. The old Jewish Museum at the time of the *Anschluss* was not only holding cultural assets that had belonged to the prewar Jewish Viennese community, and items that were on loan at the time were as much restituted to the IKG through the Second Restitution Claims Act as were objects that legally had belonged to the museum.¹³⁷

¹³⁰ Werner Hanak-Lettner, "Phantombibliothek und Bücherasyl. Ein Ausstellungskonzept als Einblick in die Bibliothek des Jüdischen Museums Wien," Stephan Alker, Christina Köstner and Markus Stumpf (eds.), *Bibliotheken in der NS-Zeit. Provenienzforschung und Bibliotheksgeschichte*, Göttingen 2008, p. 202; Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, "From Nazi Plunder to Russian Restitution", Patricia Kennedy Grimsted (ed.), *Returned from Russia: Nazi Archival Plunder in Western Europe and Recent Restitution Issues*, United Kingdom 2007, p. 53.

¹³¹ Birgit Johler, Barbara Staudinger (eds.), *Von Dreideln, Mazżes und Beschneidungsmessern. Jüdische Dinge im Museum (= Objekte im Fokus, 1)*. Exhibition catalogue, Vienna, 2011. (In 2012 the Museum of Ethnology carried out a research project to explore its Judaica collection).

¹³² Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, "Fragments of Remembrance: Viennese Judaica Collections and More," Julie-Marthe Cohen, Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek (eds.), *Neglected Witnesses. The Fate of Ceremonial Objects During the Second World War and After*, Crickadarn 2011, p. 75.

¹³³ For more information on the Jewish Museum's provenance research, see: <http://www.jmw.at/en/provenance-research-restitution>.

¹³⁴ Heimann-Jelinek, *Fragments of Remembrance*, p. 71.

¹³⁵ The text of the second Restitution Claims Act can be found at: <http://www.provenienzforschung.gv.at/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/ZweitesRueckstellungsgesetz.pdf>.

¹³⁶ Heimann-Jelinek, p. 71.

¹³⁷ Idem.

In 1998 Austria passed its Art Restitution Act (*Bundesgesetz über die Rückgabe von Kunstgegenständen aus den Österreichischen Bundesmuseen und Sammlungen*).¹³⁸ Austria's Provenance Research Commission (Kommission für Provenienzforschung),¹³⁹ also founded in 1998, and the Restitution Committee (Kunstrückgabebeirat)¹⁴⁰ have dealt with a number of cases.¹⁴¹ While Judaica objects are by no means a central focus, some Judaica has already been restituted.¹⁴² However, extensive research into looted and vanished Judaica collections seems to be still lacking, in part since Austria's Historical Commission did not deal with the topic. Research that has been done on Judaica thus far has largely focused on looted books: spoliated books reached many libraries throughout Austria during World War II, having been collected by the Nazis for the so-called *Hohe Schule*, while others were acquired by the *Ahnenerbe*.¹⁴³ Some of these objects can still be found in libraries throughout Austria, including the Jewish Museum in Vienna.¹⁴⁴ However it should be noted that numerous restitutions have already taken place, in particular by Austria's National Library¹⁴⁵ as well as by university libraries.¹⁴⁶

Czech Republic

As in Austria, much research has been conducted on Czechoslovakia's role during World War II.¹⁴⁷ Less than a year after Czechoslovakia was forced to cede the Sudetenland, in March 1938 Hitler invaded Bohemia and Moravia and declared these territories Germany's "Protectorate". The *Zentralstelle für Jüdische Auswanderung in Böhmen und Mähren* (Central Office for Jewish Emigration in Bohemia and Moravia),¹⁴⁸ set up on the Viennese model, served the purpose of accelerating the expulsion of both Czech and foreign Jews. The *Zentralstelle*, together with the Office of the Protectorate of the Reich (from 1943 onwards the German State Ministry for Bohemia and Moravia)

¹³⁸ For more information, see: <http://www.provenienzforschung.gv.at/empfehlungen-des-beirats/gesetze/kunstruckgabegesetze/>

¹³⁹ See: <http://www.provenienzforschung.gv.at/>.

¹⁴⁰ For more information, see: <http://www.provenienzforschung.gv.at/empfehlungen-des-beirats/>.

¹⁴¹ Successful restitutions are mentioned in the annual restitution reports. Online available at: <http://www.provenienzforschung.gv.at/empfehlungen-des-beirats/restitutionsbericht/>.

¹⁴² *Descriptive Catalogue*, pp. 83-84.

¹⁴³ The Ahnenerbe, founded in July 1935 by Heinrich Himmler, was a research institute with the aim to study the archaeological and cultural history of the Aryan race. For more information, see Michael Kater, *Das "Ahnenerbe" der SS 1935-1945: Ein Beitrag zur Kulturpolitik des Dritten Reichs*, Munich 2006.

¹⁴⁴ For more information, see: Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, "Fragments of Remembrance: Viennese Judaica Collections and More," Julie-Marthe Cohen, Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek (eds.), *Neglected Witnesses. The Fate of Ceremonial Objects During the Second World War and After*, Crickadarn 2011; Richard Hacken, "The Jewish Community Library in Vienna: From Dispersion and Destruction to Partial Restoration," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, 47 (2002), pp. 151-172; Werner Hanak-Lettner, "Phantombibliothek und Bücherys. Ein Ausstellungskonzept als Einblick in die Bibliothek des Jüdischen Museums Wien," Stephan Alker, Christina Köstner, Markus Stumpf (eds.), *Bibliotheken in der NS-Zeit. Provenienzforschung und Bibliotheksgeschichte*, Göttingen 2008.

¹⁴⁵ For an overview of provenance research being conducted by Austria's libraries and subsequent restitutions, in particular by Austria's National Library, see information provided by the *Descriptive Catalogue*, pp. 83-92. See also: <http://www.onb.ac.at/about/provenienzforschung.htm>, as well as: Murray Hall, Christina Köstner, ... *Allerlei für die Nationalbibliothek zu ergattern ...: eine österreichische Institution in der NS-Zeit*, Wien 2006.

¹⁴⁶ See: <http://bibliothek.univie.ac.at/provenienzforschung.html>.

¹⁴⁷ Livia Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia: Facing the Holocaust*, Lincoln/Jerusalem 2006; Thomas Sniegón, *Vanished History. The Holocaust in Czech and Slovak Historical Culture*, New York/Oxford 2014.

¹⁴⁸ The *Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung*, the Central Bureau for Jewish Emigration, was set up on 26 July 1939. After 20 August 1942, it was renamed into the *Zentralamt zur Regelung der Judenfrage in Böhmen und Mähren*, the Central Bureau for the Regulation of the Jewish Question in Bohemia and Moravia. The bureau functioned as the Prague branch of Adolf Eichmann's Bureau IV B4 within the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (RSHA), the Reich's Main Security Office. See: Dirk Rupnow, "Jewish Museums in Europe. From Final Depository to Memorial. The History and Significance of the Jewish Museum in Prague," *European Judaism*, Vol. 37, No.1, Spring 2004, p. 144.

and the *Treubhandstelle* (founded in fall of 1941), which was a department of the *Kultusgemeinde* (the Jewish Community), were the main institutions for the looting of Jewish property, with the *Treubhandstelle* managing the assets of Czechoslovakia's Jews deported to ghettos and concentration camps.¹⁴⁹

Large numbers of Jewish ritual objects, books and other individual and communal Jewish property resulting from Nazi looting policies in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia found their way into what is now the Czech Republic.¹⁵⁰ Provenance research and restitutions have taken place, including Judaica objects. At the forefront is the Jewish Museum in Prague, which has been conducting provenance research on most of its holdings, including its library collection.¹⁵¹ The Jewish Museum in Prague itself played a unique role during the Holocaust: it remained open after the outbreak of the war in 1939, despite the fact that the Museum Association had been disbanded in 1939 and the collection had since been overseen by the Jewish Religious Community in Prague. Yet the Jewish Religious Community in Prague had been taken over by the above mentioned *Zentralsstelle*. Two years later, the Jewish Museum started to function as a repository for liturgical items from dissolved Jewish synagogues, all managed by the *Treubhandstelle*. In December 1941 the Museum was kept closed until the spring of 1942, during which time all liturgical items from Prague's synagogues were shipped from the Museum to the Pinkas Synagogue.¹⁵² Subsequently the Jewish Museum was reopened (as of August 1942), was renamed the Central Jewish Museum, and served as a repository for the assets of all Jewish communities in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia until the end of the war. It is due to the efforts of the Central Jewish Museum staff that the collection of the pre-war Jewish museum survived, together with objects from all Jewish communities in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (with the exception of the Sudeten border areas).¹⁵³

In 1998, the Czech Republic formed a Joint Working Commission aimed to mitigate property injustices inflicted on Holocaust victims. Two years later, in 2000, the Parliament passed Restitution Act No. 212/2000, which stipulates the responsibility of the director of a contacted state cultural institution to return art objects if they were looted. A year after the restitution law was passed the Documentation Centre for Property Transfers of Cultural Assets of WW II Victims was founded.¹⁵⁴ Initially the Documentation Centre was set up by the government and under the auspices of the

¹⁴⁹ Pavel Jirasek, "Partnership for Restitution of Jewish Cultural Property in the Czech Republic: Principle and Reality," *Museum International*, no. 224, Vol. 56, No. 4, 2004, p. 48.

¹⁵⁰ Patricia Grimsted Kennedy, *Sudeten Crossroads for Europe's Displaced Books. The 'Mysterious Twilight' of the RSHA Amt VII Library and the Fate of A Million Victims of War*. Prepared for publication in the conference proceedings based on a shorter presentation at the international conference in Liberec organized by the Documentation Centre of Property Transfers of Cultural Assets of WW II. Victims, 24–26 October 2007.

¹⁵¹ Magda Veselská, "Jewish Museum in the Former Czechoslovakia," Julie-Marthe Cohen, Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek (eds.), *Neglected Witnesses. The Fate of Ceremonial Objects During the Second World War and After*, Crickadarn 2011; Magda Veselská, "The Selling Off of Items from the Collections of the Jewish Museum in Prague after the Second World War, with Particular Focus on the Sale of Torah Scrolls in 1963-1964," *Judaica Bohemiae*, 42, 2006; Andrea Braunová, "Origin of the Book Collection of the Library of the Jewish Museum in Prague," *Judaica Bohemiae*, 36, 2000 [2001]; Michal Bušek, "Identifying Owners of Books Held by the Jewish Museum in Prague," *Vitalizing Memory. International Perspectives on Provenance Research*. Washington: American Association of Museums, 2005, pp.138-142; Michal Bušek, *Identifying Owners of Books Held by the Jewish Museum in Prague*. The Future of the Lost Cultural Heritage: the documentation, identification and restitution of the cultural assets of WWII victims. Proceedings of the international academic conference in Český Krumlov (22.-24.11.2005), pp. 104–12;

¹⁵² Veselka, *Jewish Museums*, p. 119.

¹⁵³ Idem, pp. 121-124.

¹⁵⁴ For more information, see: <http://www.cdmp.cz/en/>.

Czech Academy of Sciences. In 2011, governmental resolution no. 683 transformed the Centre's status to that of a public benefit organization of the Ministry of Culture. The Centre conducts provenance research and provides information on objects with provenance gaps in its online listing: "The Database of Works of Art".¹⁵⁵ The database holds approximately 1,370 looted objects with a number of Judaica items, including ceremonial objects. The vast majority of objects are simply labeled as having been "Jewish property", while other objects, mostly books, are identified as having belonged to the Jewish Communities Munich, Vienna or Olomouc as well as one object identified as originally from Vienna's Jewish Museum. (The database also lists some specific pre-war owners.) In 2009, the Czech Republic was host to the Holocaust Era Assets Conference in Prague¹⁵⁶ which concluded with the Terezin Declaration. As a follow-up to the Terezin Declaration, in 2010 the European Shoah Legacy Institute,¹⁵⁷ situated in Prague, was founded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Germany

Germany's role during the Holocaust and Hitler's path to succession has been widely researched and documented, as is the case with Germany's post-war role, specifically in its role distributing reparations and individual compensation.¹⁵⁸

Germany held not only Judaica looted from its own Jewish communities, but also much of the looted artifacts, including Judaica, collected outside the Reich by Nazi organizations such as the ERR (*Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg*) for its Frankfurt based *Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage* (Institute for Research on the Jewish Question)¹⁵⁹ and the RSHA (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*). When the U.S. Army arrived in Frankfurt, Rosenberg's institute held about 130,000 books as well as looted archives and ritual objects from all over Europe. Outside of Frankfurt, also the town of Hungen was the repository of much loot collected by Rosenberg. It was in Hungen where the Americans found eight storage rooms containing looted objects, including some 3 million books, 3,000 crates containing books and files, and hundreds of ritual objects such as Torah scrolls or Torah mantels.¹⁶⁰ Most of these objects were later transferred to the Offenbach Archival Depot (OAD). Nonetheless, Germany was also a recipient country of 'heirless' Jewish property sent by Jewish Cultural Reconstruction (JCR)¹⁶¹ after the war, including 11,814 books and an additional 31 museum as well as 89 synagogue pieces.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁵ See: <http://www.cdmp.cz/db/?lang=en>.

¹⁵⁶ See: <http://www.holocausteraassets.eu/>.

¹⁵⁷ See: <http://shoahlegacy.org/>; Specific information regarding the Institute's focus on Judaica can be found at: <http://shoahlegacy.org/category/what-we-do/projects/judaica-and-jewish-cultural-property/>. The Institute is closing as of the end of August 2017.

¹⁵⁸ For an overview of Germany's restitution laws and its recent developments in regard to the identification and possible restitution of looted property, see: *World-Wide Overview*, pp. 22-25. (Or, see: <http://art.claimscon.org/resources/national-organizations/#germany>).

¹⁵⁹ The Institute was founded in 1941 in order to study and portray Judaism and Jewish history. See for example: Dieter Schiefelbein, "Das Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage in Frankfurt am Main: Vorgeschichte und Gründung 1935-1939," *Materialien des Fritz Bauer Instituts*. Vol. 9, Frankfurt am Main, Dezernat für Kultur und Freizeit, p. 42.

¹⁶⁰ Katharina Rauschenberger, "The Judaica Collection of Frankfurt's Museum Jüdischer Altertümer and Its Worldwide Dispersion After 1945," Julie-Marthe Cohen, Felicitas Heilmann-Jelinek (eds.), *Neglected Witnesses. The Fate of Ceremonial Objects During the Second World War and After*, Crickadarn 2011, p. 89.

¹⁶¹ For more information on the JCR, see chapter "1.4 The Dispersion of Jewish Ceremonial Objects after 1945: Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc."

¹⁶² For more information on the OAD, see for example: Elisabeth Gallas, *Das Leichenhaus der Bücher. Kulturrestitution und Jüdisches Geschichtsdenken nach 1945*, Schriften des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts, Vol. 19, Göttingen 2013.

While Jewish private and institutional property was systematically ransacked starting with 1938, unlike many other countries occupied by the Nazis, Jewish archives were not deliberately destroyed in Germany itself. In November 1938, the Gestapo ordered the seizure of Jewish archives throughout the Reich. Accordingly, most Jewish archives were deposited into non-Jewish archives. Some of these archives have not changed location since then.¹⁶³

An interesting sample case is Frankfurt's Jewish Museum. Frankfurt's Jewish Museum (*Museum Jüdischer Altertümer*; Museum of Jewish Antiquities) was originally one of three independent museums of Jewish art and history established in Germany before 1933. Prior to the Holocaust, the Museum held a vast collection of Jewish artifacts which included parts of the Rothschild collection and loans from the Frankfurt Historical Museum. After 1933, the collection was further enhanced by donations or objects deposited for safekeeping by rural Jewish communities throughout Germany. Today only remnants of this collection are on view at the new Jewish Museum run by the municipality of Frankfurt and established in 1988. The majority of objects that survived the war were distributed by the JCR under the assumption that Jewish cultural and religious life had – for the most part – ceased to exist in Europe. Judaica was therefore sent to centers of Jewish life: consequently objects from Frankfurt's former Jewish Museum reached the Israel Museum, totaling 172 objects, as well as 103 objects that were distributed among congregations throughout Israel. 127 pieces went to museums and synagogues in the United States, while Frankfurt's Jewish Community kept only 89 objects from its original Jewish Museum. Frankfurt's newly constituted Jewish Community tried to assert its right as the legal successor to the destroyed Jewish Community in Frankfurt and thereby wanted to limit the influence of the Jewish successor organizations such as the JRSO and the JCR.¹⁶⁴ Then again, Frankfurt was not alone in its wish to curb the JRSO's influence. While thirteen out of seventeen bigger Jewish Communities in Germany signed an agreement with the JRSO, stipulating that the JRSO is the legal successor to the properties of former Jewish communities, Nuremberg, Fürth, Augsburg as well as Frankfurt did not sign the contractual agreement. Between 1950 and 1953 this conflict culminated in a court battle between the Augsburg Jewish communities and the JRSO.¹⁶⁵ In order to avoid the Augsburg crisis, the Jewish Community in Frankfurt and the JRSO settled out of court on the distribution of land, buildings, but also ceremonial objects. The contract, signed in April 1954, and mediated by Rabbi Leo Baeck, stipulated that – among other things – the community was allowed to keep those objects that were already in its possession and were being used.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Yoram Mayorek, "The Fate of Jewish Archives During and After the Holocaust," Jean-Claude Kuperminc, Rafaële Arditti (eds.), *Preserving Jewish Archives as Part of the European Cultural Heritage: Proceedings of the Conference on Judaica Archives in Europe for Archivists and Librarians*. Potsdam, 1999, 11-13 July, Paris: Éditions du Nadir de l'Alliance israélite universelle, 2001, pp. 33-38.

¹⁶⁴ Georg Heuberger, "Zur Rolle der 'Jewish Cultural Reconstruction' nach 1945," Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek (ed.), *Was übrig blieb. Das Museum jüdischer Altertümer in Frankfurt 1922 – 1938*, Frankfurt am Main 1988, p. 102.

¹⁶⁵ For more information on the legal conflict see: Ayaka Tekei, "The Gemeinde Problem: The Jewish Restitution Successor Organization and the Postwar Jewish Communities in Germany," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 16, 2, 2002.

¹⁶⁶ For more information see: Georg Heuberger, *Jewish Cultural Reconstruction*, pp. 97–103; *Plunder and Restitution: The U.S. and Holocaust Victims' Assets: Findings and Recommendations of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the U.S. and Staff Report*. Chapter VI. Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000; Katharina Rauschenberger, "The Judaica Collection of Frankfurt's Museum Jüdischer Altertümer and Its Worldwide Dispersion After 1945," Julie-Marthe Cohen, Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek (eds.), *Neglected Witnesses. The Fate of Ceremonial Objects During the Second World War and After*, Crickadarn 2011; Georg Heuberger (ed.), *Die Pracht der Gebote. Die Judaica-Sammlung des Jüdischen Museums Frankfurt am Main*, Cologne 2006. (The catalogue offers an overview of the Judaica collection of Frankfurt's Jewish Museum.); Grace Grossman, *Jewish Museums of the World*, Westport: 2003.

Numerous provenance research projects have taken place already in Germany, but the vast majority of them have not dealt with specifically Judaica holdings. Yet there are exceptions such as, for example, the Municipal Library of Nuremberg which is researching its collection entitled *Sammlung Israelitische Kultusgemeinde* (Jewish Community Collection), formerly known as the *Stürmer-Bibliothek*.¹⁶⁷ Another example is a project conducted by the Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz entitled “*Beschlagnahmte Bücher: Reichstauschstelle und Preussische Staatsbibliothek zwischen 1933 und 1945. Aspekte der Literaturversorgung unter der Herrschaft des Nationalsozialismus*”. (Confiscated Books: the Reichs-Exchange-Center and Prussia’s State Library between 1933 and 1945. The Supply of Literature under National Socialism).¹⁶⁸ Additional provenance research projects with a focus on Judaica holdings are carried out by a few other German cultural institutions,¹⁶⁹ with most researched objects listed on www.lostart.de.

Netherlands:

Jewish property in the Netherlands was – as in most European countries – either stolen or destroyed. The systematic theft of Jewish property began in 1941 when the *Reichskommissar für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete* (Reich Commissar for the Occupied Netherlands), headed by Arthur Seiss-Inquart, set up Lippmann, Rosenthal & Co. (LIRO), a bank specifically for Jewish assets.¹⁷⁰ However, the theft of cultural and religious items, including Judaica, was carried out by the *Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg* (ERR) which set up an office in Amsterdam.¹⁷¹ The Netherlands enacted a number of restitution laws after the war ended, but more than 4,000 artworks remained in the state’s possession and became known as the NK-collection, or *Nederlands Kunstbezit-collectie*.¹⁷² During the last several years, the Netherlands has initiated more research, such as the 2013 report published by the Netherlands Museum Association entitled “Museum Acquisitions from 1933 Onwards” which details provenance research in Dutch museums.¹⁷³

During the Holocaust, Dutch Museums sometimes functioned as a safekeeping place for Jewish property feared to be otherwise destroyed or misappropriated. Those objects were treated as temporary gifts or purchases to prevent art (and in some cases Judaica) belonging to Jews from being confiscated by the Nazis. In addition, research has revealed that the Ministry of Education, Culture, Education and Science purchased several collections from Jewish owners in 1943 and 1944 with the

¹⁶⁷ See: <https://www.nuernberg.de/internet/stadtbibliothek/sammlungikg.html>

¹⁶⁸ See: <http://staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/die-staatsbibliothek/abteilungen/historische-drucke/aufgaben-profil/projekte/projekt-reichstauschstelle/>

¹⁶⁹ See: <http://www.kulturgutverluste.de/de/projektinformationen/projekte>

¹⁷⁰ Julie-Marthe Cohen, “Theft and Restitution of Judaica in the Netherlands During and After the Second World War,” Julie-Marthe Cohen, Felicitas Heilmann-Jelinek (eds.), *Neglected Witnesses. The Fate of Ceremonial Objects During the Second World War and After*, Crickadarn 2011, p. 199.

¹⁷¹ For an overview of ERR’s archival records regarding the Netherlands see: Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, *Reconstructing the Record of Nazi Cultural Plunder: A Guide to the Dispersed Archives of the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR) and the Postwar Retrieval of ERR Loot*, August 2015; online at: http://errproject.org/guide/ERR_Netherlands_12.18.2015.pdf.

¹⁷² The online database “Origins Unknown Database” (<http://www.herkomstgezocht.nl/eng>) lists among other objects four Judaica pieces in the NK collection. Partly as a result of the restitution of an eighteenth-century tin Maccabee lamp, an exhibition was launched entitled “Geroofd, maar van wie?” (Looted, But From Whom?) in Amsterdam’s Hollandsche Schouwburg (Dutch Theatre) in 2007. For more information see: <http://www.hollandscheschouwburg.nl/actueel/presentatie/archief/geroofd,-maar-van-wie>.

¹⁷³ The Netherlands Museum Association provides access to an online database of objects with provenance gaps in Dutch museums. The online listing also includes thirteen (13) Jewish ritual objects: <http://www.musealeververvingen.nl/1508/objecten/joodse-rituele-objecten/>.

aim of keeping these artworks in the Netherlands. In almost all cases the artworks were returned. The Netherlands was also the recipient country of 1,813 books from the JCR after World War II¹⁷⁴

Similar to Vienna's, Prague's or Frankfurt's Jewish museums, the Jewish Historical Museum (JHM) of Amsterdam should be mentioned. Today the museum plays an instrumental role in researching not only its own history, but also in having completed an inventory of those Jewish ritual objects in the Netherlands that existed prior to World War II.¹⁷⁵ During the Holocaust, 610 out of the 940 objects in the Museum's pre-war collection were looted by the ERR in 1943 and brought to the *Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage* in Frankfurt. In December 1943 alone, a shipment of more than 680 boxes and packages holding Hebraica, Torah scrolls, textiles, and other objects, was sent to Rosenberg's institute. Of the looted museum objects, approximately 200 were returned in 1946, in addition to some valuable objects held in the Offenbach Depot that were from the Amsterdam Portuguese Sephardic and Ashkenazi communities.¹⁷⁶ Some items sent to the JHM turned out to be erroneous restitutions, while other objects with clear Dutch provenance went elsewhere – for example, a 1763 Torah mantle which was loaned to the JHM in 1936 by the Leiden Jewish community was erroneously turned over to the JCR which in turn sent it to what is now the Israel Museum.¹⁷⁷

Looted Judaica Collections that have Marginally been Researched – Countries Mentioned in the World-Wide Overview as Having Taken Some Steps

The *World-Wide Overview* identified five countries in which the Holocaust took place - Belgium, France, Luxembourg, Norway, Slovakia¹⁷⁸ – as having taken some steps toward the identification of looted art, including Judaica. An additional six countries were mentioned - Canada, Israel, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States – as equally having taken some steps. However, the latter group was not directly involved in the Holocaust, was rather affected by its aftermath.

Overall research into looted Judaica holdings was and is not at the forefront in any of the five countries in which the Holocaust took place. While Belgium conducted some research and ultimately

¹⁷⁴ JCR, Inc. World Distribution of Books 1 July 1949-31 January 1952, July 1952, Geneva. IV/32/1B, Archives, Jerusalem. Cited after Dana Herman, *Hashevat Avedah: A History of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc.*, PhD diss., McGill University, 2008, pp. 225-26.

¹⁷⁵ Julie-Marthe Cohen, "Relics of the Second World War: Dealing with Missing and Misplaced Objects in the Jewish Historical Museum Collection," Naomi Feuchtwanger-Sarig, Mark Irvin and Emile Schrijver, *Jewish Art in Context. The Role and Meaning of Artifacts and Visual Images, Studia Rosenthaliana*, Vol. 45 (2014), p. 57-74; [see also Appendix 3.A – "Jewish Art in Context: The Role and Meaning of Artifacts and Visual Images"] Julie-Marthe Cohen, "Relics of the Second World War: Dealing with Missing and Misplaced Objects in Jewish Museum collections." Paper presented at the 43rd Annual AJL Convention, Cleveland Marriott East, Cleveland, Ohio. June 22-25, 2008 and read in the session on 'Dutch Jewish Library Collections since WW II: The Recuperation And Reconstruction Of Dutch Jewish Collections In Post War Europe', June 24 2008. Presentation given by Julie-Marthe Cohen at the Meetings of the Association of European Jewish Museums in Amsterdam, November 22-26, 2008.

¹⁷⁶ Julie-Marthe Cohen, "Theft and Restitution of Judaica in the Netherlands During and After the Second World War," Julie-Marthe Cohen, Felicitas Heilmann-Jelinek (eds.), *Neglected Witnesses*, pp. 201- 221.

¹⁷⁷ These objects are noted in the museum's database which can be accessed at: <http://www.jhm.nl/collection/wwii-looted-judaica/search>.

¹⁷⁸ As for Slovakia see the catalogues: Švantnerová, Jana, et al., *The Shadow of the Past*. Bratislava: [editor] 2013; Borský, Maroš, *Heritage Rediscovered*. Bratislava 2016.

“sold” 656 Hebrew books assumed to have been looted to the Central Jewish Consistory in 1948,¹⁷⁹ as well as undertook some research following the country’s Historical Commission, in-depth research is still outstanding.

France’s research has thus far concentrated on looted artworks, mainly the so-called MNR collection.¹⁸⁰ Nonetheless, some restitutions of religious objects, mostly books, were made in France shortly after World War II ended. It should be noted that unlike in other countries, in France there was no particular plan by the German occupation forces to loot Jewish ceremonial objects, which is why most synagogues survived the war untouched. Exceptions were the synagogues in Alsace and Lorraine, where the main synagogue in Strasbourg was destroyed. Also in Alsace and Moselle looting of Jewish ritual objects did take place.

The one major exception to the above was Paris, where the ERR (*Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg*) was looting Jewish cultural and ritual objects. Among the many Jewish institutions the ERR targeted were Jewish libraries, such as that of the *Alliance Israélite*. In addition, Rosenberg’s *Möbelaktion* (M-Aktion, furniture action) can be blamed for the looting of Judaica from Jewish households. ERR activities in France were largely supported by Hermann Göring and enabled a larger scale of looting than in some other Western countries. By the end of Germany’s occupation of France in the summer of 1944, approximately 27,788 cultural objects from about 203 Jewish collections in Paris had been “aryanized.”¹⁸¹ The database, “Cultural Plunder by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg: Database of Art Objects at the Jeu de Paume,” which brings together the remaining registration cards and photographs produced by the ERR of art objects taken from Jews in German-occupied France and, to a lesser extent, in Belgium, now lists more than 30,000 objects, of which some were specifically categorized by the Germans as Judaica objects.¹⁸²

The only exception to these five countries seems to be Slovakia, which has initiated more initial research. Specifically the Jewish Community Museum in Bratislava, as well as smaller museums and small Jewish communities throughout Slovakia recently inventoried and partially researched their Judaica holdings with the hope of identifying looted objects.¹⁸³

A number of the countries, with the exception of Norway, Slovakia, Liechtenstein and Luxembourg, received objects from the JCR after the war,¹⁸⁴ with Belgium receiving 824 books, and France receiving 8,193 books, 125 museum and 219 synagogue pieces from the JCR after World War II.

¹⁷⁹ Michel Vermote, Jacques Lust, “Belgium: Papieren Bitte! The Confiscation and Restitution of Belgian Archives and Libraries (1940-2003),” Patricia Kennedy Grimsted (ed.), *Returned from Russia. Nazi Archival Plunder in Western Europe and Recent Restitution Issues*, United Kingdom 2007, pp. 191-240.

¹⁸⁰ See: <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/documentation/mnr/pres.htm>.

¹⁸¹ For more information see *Descriptive Catalogue*, pp. 126-127; also: Séan Hand, Steven T. Katz (eds.), *Post-Holocaust France and the Jews, 1945-1955*, New York 2015.

¹⁸² French Jewish and a number of Belgian Jewish collections from 1940 to 1944 were brought to the Jeu de Paume building in the Tuileries Gardens in Paris for processing by the ERR *Sonderstab Bildende Kunst* or “Special Staff for Pictorial Art”. The database, online accessible at <http://www.errproject.org/jeudepaume/>, is a joint project of the Claims Conference and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, with the cooperation of the Bundesarchiv (The German Federal Archives), Archives Diplomatiques / France Diplomatie: Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development of the Republic of France, The United States National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), and the Commission for Art Recovery.

¹⁸³ See: <http://www.synagogue.sk/>; Maroš Borský, “Inside the Museum: When Orthodox synagogue meets museum: the New Jewish Community Museum in Bratislava,” *East European Jewish Affairs*, 2015, Vol. 45, Nos. 2–3, 261–26; Jana Švantnerová, „Here in the Holy Community ... Bratislava Synagogue Textiles,” Maroš Borský, Jana Švantnerová, *Heritage Rediscovered*, Bratislava 2016, pp. 13-33.

¹⁸⁴ See: Dana Herman, *Hashanat Avedab: A History of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc.* PhD thesis, Department of History, McGill University, Montreal, October 2008.

Specifically, the *Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme* in France, the successor museum to the *Musée d'art juif* in Paris, established in 1948 by a private association in order to pay homage to a culture that had been destroyed by the Holocaust, received Judaica objects from the JCR, and the *Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine* received books. Switzerland received 7,843 books from the JCR after World War II, including part of the Breslau collection that had been stored in the Wiesbaden collecting point and which was deposited into the Geneva, Zurich and Basel libraries.¹⁸⁵

More objects distributed by the JCR were received in the early 1950s by Canada: 2,031 books and 151 museum and synagogue pieces. At that time the Canadian Jewish Congress was tasked with distributing the books and ceremonial objects to synagogues throughout Canada. Most of the objects distributed were silver chanukiot, Torah ornaments, as well as old books, including prayer books. A few years ago, the Canadian Jewish Congress, encouraged by the 2001 Conference “A Matter of Justice – Canadian Symposium on Holocaust-era Cultural Property,” attempted to locate original heirs following the few leads available. However, none of the heirs were found.¹⁸⁶ Similarly, the United Kingdom received 19,082 books, 245 museum pieces, 66 synagogue pieces and 12 Torah scrolls from the JCR after World War II. In 1952, the Jewish Museum in London, the Jewish Historical Society, the Wiener Library and the Society for Jewish Studies, among other institutions, received 19,000 volumes and over 300 ceremonial objects. The Wiener Library alone received six hundred volumes from the library that had belonged to the Central Union of Jews in Germany, the *Jüdischer Zentralverein*.¹⁸⁷

The biggest portion of the JCR distribution was received by the United States and Israel: The United States alone received 160,886 books, 1,326 museum pieces, 1,824 synagogue pieces and 110 Torah scrolls (of which an unknown number had to be buried) from the JCR after World War II.¹⁸⁸ Objects distributed by the JCR entered more than 400 recipient institutions, including university and other libraries, archives, museums, and synagogues.¹⁸⁹ Similar to most recipient countries, the current location of these objects is often not only under-researched, but simply unknown.¹⁹⁰ Overall it can be said that while the JCR planned on accompanying each shipment of ceremonial objects with an

¹⁸⁵ Zsolt Keller, “Jüdische Bücher und der Schweizerische Israelitische Gemeindebund (1930-1950),” *Bulletin der Schweizerischen Gesellschaft für Judaistische Forschung* (Beiheft zur Judaica) 14 (2005), p. 20-34; Gallas, *Das Leichenhaus der Bücher*, p. 53.

¹⁸⁶ In January 1951 the *Congress Bulletin* reported that “A number of ceremonial objects, formerly the property of European Jews, have been received by the Canadian Jewish Congress and will be kept by the Congress as a memorial... among the articles are the appurtenances of a sefer torah, chanukah lamps, Passover seder plates, havdalah incense boxes and silver ornamentation for Taleissim ... the Congress states that the collection will be kept intact in the headquarters of the Congress in Montreal...” Only a few years later, in May 1956, the *Bulletin* reported that “many of these objects have been placed on loan in various new synagogues and new community centers across the country... Congress made available some of these objects to the newly built congregations in Canada as a permanent link between these congregations and the Jewish communities in Europe which were destroyed.” See: *Descriptive Catalogue*, p. 107-108.

¹⁸⁷ Gallas, *Das Leichenhaus der Bücher*, p. 181; Herman, Dana. “‘A Band Plucked Out of the Fire’: The Distribution of Heirless Jewish Cultural Property by the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc. 1947-1952,” 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. 29-61.

¹⁸⁸ JCR, Inc., *World Distribution of Ceremonial Objects and Torah Scrolls*, July 1, 1949 to January 31, 1952, S35/88, CZA, Jerusalem. Cited after Herman, p. 226.

¹⁸⁹ For more information see Herman, *Hashavat Avedah*, pp. 261-263; *Descriptive Catalogue*, pp. 238-244. (The catalogue summarizes not only the relevant documents but presents an overview of the distribution of books and ceremonial objects in the United States).

¹⁹⁰ Research conducted by the Claims Conference in spring 2015 and documented in the *Descriptive Catalogue*, p. 240-244; see also: Grace Cohen Grossman, “The Scirball Museum JCR Research Project: Records and Recollections,” 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. 307-339.

itemized list, this did not always materialize, even less so with the JCR's book transfers. The same was true for receiving institutions: While they were 'obligated' to appropriately tag the object or mark books with a special bookplate, the step was not always taken. Sixty years after the fact the lack of lists or tags poses a great challenge on behalf of the receiving institutions to adequately identify ceremonial objects but even more so books received from the JCR and consequently to preserve them as such. An exception regarding ceremonial objects is a recent research carried out and published by the Illinois Holocaust and Education Center which holds as a loan the JCR Collection of the Hebrew Theological College, Skokie.¹⁹¹ Moreover, JCR books often ended up in various library deposits within one receiving institution, including the rare book collection; yet some books were simply sent to the general stack of library books. Financial constraints on behalf of the receiving organizations additionally posed a challenge to handling some of the JCR objects. As a result, over the decades some objects were sold off or more often were not adequately preserved or maintained. Others are simply "lost".

Israel received 191,423 books, as well as 2,285 museum pieces, 976 synagogue pieces, 804 Torah scrolls and 87 Torah fragments (in addition to 127 of the scrolls that had to be buried) from the JCR after World War II.¹⁹²

Israel was therefore the largest recipient of Judaica objects, but the distribution itself was mostly conducted outside of the JCR's control. The Ministry of Religious Affairs, which assumed responsibility, was subsequently put in charge of the distribution of religious objects to various synagogues, yeshivas, and other organizations. Among those institutions that profited from this influx of objects were libraries and museums, most notably the Hebrew University, which received, for example, the *Berlin Gemeinde* Library, part of the Breslau collection (totaling up to 4,500 books), and part of the valuable Frankfurt collection. After the war the Breslau collection was stored at the Wiesbaden Collecting Point and is a remnant of the original library of the *Jüdisches Theologisches Institut*. However, the Hebrew University itself transferred about 7,000 books to the Ministry of Education for further distribution. Some of these objects were subsequently given to yeshivot. Among those museums that received objects was the Tel Aviv Museum which presumably holds part of the Frankfurt Jewish Museum collection in addition to Judaica objects that had belonged to synagogues in Frankfurt before World War II.¹⁹³ Today, a number of JCR objects can be found at the Israel Museum.¹⁹⁴

Provenance research is almost non-existent in Israel.¹⁹⁵

Looted Judaica Collections that Have Not Yet Been Researched or Are Undocumented (Countries Mentioned in the World-Wide Overview as Having Taken Some Steps or Having Made No Progress in Researching Looted Objects)

Countries such as Croatia, Denmark, Greece, Lithuania, Russian Federation – countries in which the Holocaust took place – were identified in the World-Wide Overview as having taken some steps

¹⁹¹ Grace Cohen Grossman, Arielle Weininger (eds), *Rescue & Renewal: The Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Collection of the Hebrew Theological College*, Skokie 2015.

¹⁹² For an overview, see *Descriptive Catalogue*, pp. 154-159.

¹⁹³ Herman, *Hashavat Avedah*, p. 268.

¹⁹⁴ "World War II Provenance Research Online". The Israel Museum, Jerusalem; <http://www.imj.org.il/Imagine/irso/judaica.asp>; David Brinn, "The Art of Restitution," *The Jerusalem Post*, 14 February 2008.

¹⁹⁵ Schidorsky, *Salvaging of Jewish Books*, p. 209; Schidorsky, *Shunamis Suche*, pp. 339-40.

toward researching and restituting looted Judaica,¹⁹⁶ while countries such as Belarus, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Ukraine – in all of which the Holocaust took place and had a significant impact on their Jewish communities – made little or no progress towards the identification of looted objects, including Judaica.¹⁹⁷ While not all countries that have yet to conduct sufficient or any research on looted Judaica are assumed to have large amounts of it, some do, such as Belarus, the Russian Federation, Poland, and Ukraine. Initial steps were taken by countries such as Lithuania, Latvia, or Estonia by establishing Historical Commissions that not only examined the countries' roles during the Holocaust but subsequent crimes that were carried out by the Communist regime. Yet other countries, such as Poland or Belarus, with presumably large quantities of Nazi looted Judaica are still falling behind, and large-scale research has yet to take place.¹⁹⁸

Belarus was the recipient of much looted Judaica after the war. It is not clear how many books and religious objects – including Torah scrolls – actually reached the libraries, museums and archives of Belarus and their precise locations.¹⁹⁹

The pillaging of Judaica from private and communal centers in Poland was enormous. In January 1940, Hans Frank, Governor-General of occupied Poland, issued a decree clearly stating that cultural looting was also to include libraries, in particular rare manuscripts and archival holdings. At the end of the war, it was estimated that Jewish collections as a whole suffered about 70% losses, though some libraries - especially those in private schools and religious libraries - were completely destroyed. While ceremonial objects of Judaica were often destroyed, they were preserved if the objects were deemed precious or antique and of high value, inasmuch as they could be sold or otherwise used. Judaica found in ghettos was equally destroyed. In March 1941, before the ghetto in Krakow was sealed off, the Jewish Community successfully bribed Nazi officials at the Trustee Office to transfer some synagogue furniture (including Torah arks), prayer books, and about 150 Torah scrolls to the *Judenrat's* building in the ghetto. In terms of the Torah scrolls, it was ultimately decided to wall them into the building used for funeral services at the Plaszow Jewish cemetery. There they were later discovered by Amon Göth, the commander of the Plaszow concentration

¹⁹⁶ Countries such as Australia, Finland and Ireland, have equally been identified as having taken some steps. For more information on these three countries, see the *World-Wide Overview* and the *Descriptive Catalogue*.

¹⁹⁷ Similarly, Argentina, Brazil, Holy See, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and Uruguay were mentioned, yet given that the Holocaust did not take place in these countries, they will equally only be mentioned here. For more information on these three countries, see the *World-Wide Overview* and the *Descriptive Catalogue*.

¹⁹⁸ Please note that more information, including information on additional countries, is available in chapter 1.5 Nationalizations in the East after World War II.

¹⁹⁹ There are two Torah scrolls in the State Historical Archive of Belarus, one Torah scroll is located in the Historical Museum of Mogilev, and one is located in the Historical Museum of Vitebsk. *Descriptive Catalogue*, p. 97. Many of the hundreds of thousands of books seized by the ERR from France were found by a Red Army trophy brigade in 1945 in warehouses near an abandoned ERR research and library center in Silesia. That trophy brigade also found many books in the same place that the ERR had seized from the Soviet Republic of Belorussia. In the fall of 1945 a Soviet convoy of 54 railroad freight cars carried an estimated 1.2 million books directly to Minsk. While perhaps two-thirds of the books were from libraries in Belorussia and the Soviet Baltic republics, a third or more of them were books from France and other countries of Europe. The largest number of the looted books of foreign provenance are still today held by the National Library of Belarus. See the discussion of ERR looting of French libraries at https://www.errproject.org/looted-libraries_fr.php and “French Autographs in the Holdings of the National Library of Belarus” at https://www.errproject.org/looted-libraries_fr-belarus.php

camp. While some scrolls were simply burned, others were shipped off.²⁰⁰ Today, Judaica objects can be found in many Polish cultural institutions, including museums, archives and libraries. Very little research on these collections has thus far taken place.

In the Russian Federation (former Soviet Union), the country's State Historical Museum (GIM), for example, was handed 344 Torahs from the Special (*Osoby*) Archive, which is now part of the Russian State Military Archive (RGVA).²⁰¹ The Torahs are believed to have originated from foreign Jewish communities looted by various Nazi organizations and subsequently brought to the Soviet Union by its trophy brigades.²⁰² Additional Jewish holdings of the former *Osoby* Archive, now part of the RGVA, Moscow, include looted material such as a collection of historical archives of Jewish international organizations, of Jewish political organizations and parties as well as papers of Jewish intellectuals. Most material that was or is currently held in the Moscow archive was initially gathered for Rosenberg's Research Institute on the Jewish Question in Frankfurt and, to a lesser degree, for possible display in the projected *Führermuseum* in Linz.²⁰³ And while these collections were first purged by the Nazis, they were subsequently taken by the Soviet trophy brigades and seen as just compensation for the many losses suffered by the Soviet Union.²⁰⁴ Many of these objects were distributed to state museums like the State Museum of the History of Religion in St. Petersburg (formerly the State Museum of the History of Religion and Atheism) but also to various People's Republics' institutions such as the Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine and the Museum of Historical Treasures of Ukraine, both in Kiev; the Chernihiv Historical Museum named after V. Tarnovsky, the Local Lore Museum of the Cherkassy region, the Museum of Ethnography and Crafts at the Institute of Ethnology, the Museum of the History of Religions (formerly the Museum of Atheism), both in Lviv and to the Lviv Museum of History; as well as to the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. For the most part the provenance of these objects has not been researched. The respective holdings comprise Torah scrolls, partly with their staves, Torah ornaments, synagogue textiles and interiors, objects for use on Sabbath and festivals.

²⁰⁰ For more information, see: Marek Sroka, "The Destruction of Jewish Libraries and Archives in Krakow during World War II," *Libraries and Culture* 38.2 (2003), pp. 148-150; Nawojka Cieślińska-Lobkowicz, "The History of Judaica Collections in Poland Before, During and After the Second World War: An Overview," Julie-Marthe Cohen, Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek (eds.), *Neglected Witnesses. The Fate of Jewish Ceremonial Objects During the Second World War and After*, Crickadarn 2011; Jacqueline Borin, "Embers of the Soul: The Destruction of Jewish Books and Libraries in Poland during World War II," *Libraries & Culture*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Fall 1993), pp. 445-460; David Shavit, "Jewish Libraries in the Polish Ghettos During the Nazi Era," *Library Quarterly*, Vol. 52., No. 2, April 1982.

²⁰¹ For more information on the *Osoby* Archive, see: David Fishman Mark Kupovetsky and Vladimir Kuzelenkov, editors, *Nazi-Looted Jewish Archives in Moscow: A Guide to Jewish Historical and Cultural Collections in the Russian State Military Archive*. Scranton, 2010.

²⁰² Konstantin Akinsha, Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, "The Sárospatak Case: Rare Books Return to Hungary," *Art and Antiquity and Law* Vol. XI, Issue 3, September 2006, p. 223; Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, "Sudeten Crossroads for Europe's Displaced Books. The 'Mysterious Twilight' of the RSHA Amt VII Library and the Fate of A Million Victims of War." Prepared for publication in the conference proceedings based on a shorter presentation at the international conference in Liberec organized by the Documentation Centre of Property Transfers of Cultural Assets of WW II Victims, 24–26 October 2007.

²⁰³ More detailed information can be found in: *Jewish Documentary Sources Among the Trophy Collections of the Russian State Military Archives: A Guide* (in Russian), edited by David Fishman, Mark Kupovetsky and Vladimir Kuzelenkov (RSUH), 2005; Patricia Kennedy Grimsted (ed), *Returned from Russia. Nazi Archival Plunder in Western Europe and Recent Restitution Issues*, United Kingdom 2007;

²⁰⁴ See for example: Konstantin Akinsha, Grigorii Kozlow, *Beautiful Loot. The Soviet Plunder of Europe's Art Treasures*, New York 1995.

Overall the Nazis had looted 3-4 million books alone from the entire USSR (in particular Belarus and Ukraine) and destroyed many more.²⁰⁵ In contrast to that, between 1945 and 1946, it is estimated that 10 million trophy books, including Judaica and Hebraica, were brought back to the USSR²⁰⁶. In-depth research, especially into Judaica holdings in the countries of the former Soviet Union, is therefore still lacking.²⁰⁷

Please see also Appendices to Part 1, in particular “The Fate of Three Museum Collections that Illustrate the Impact of the Second World War and the Holocaust on Judaica Collections in Europe,” as well as “Lviv 1944 – 2009: Jewish Cultural Objects and Property. Some Cases and Tendencies.”

²⁰⁵ Hill, pp. 29-31.

²⁰⁶ Grimsted, *The Road to Minsk*, p. 354.

²⁰⁷ In regard to Belarus some important first steps into the identification of looted books were taken in late 2016. For more information see the following articles: *Return of Belarus' Lost Values*, 7 September 2016 (<http://nn.by/?c=ar&i=176764>); *International Seminar: Lost and Displaced Cultural Values: The Belorussian Context*, National Institute of Higher Education 7 September 2016 (<http://www.nihe.bsu.by/index.php/ru/novosti-instituta/1259-mezhdunarodnyj-nauchno-prakticheskij-seminar-utrachennye-i-peremeshchennye-kulturnye-tsennosti-belorusskij-kontekst-5-7-sentyabrya-2016-goda>); as well as *Lost and displaced cultural values: the Belorussian context*, Presidential Library of the Republic of Belarus, 7 September 2016 (<http://www.preslib.org.by/news/type1/utrachennye-i-peremeshchennye-kulturnye-tsennosti-belorusskij-kontekst>) See also the references given above in footnote 191.

1.4 The Dispersion of Jewish Ceremonial Objects in the West after 1945: Jewish Cultural Reconstruction



Figure 3: JCR bookplate on inside cover of book ;
<http://townson.libguides.com/c.php?g=442107&p=303189&>

The formation of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction (JCR), Inc., the focus of this chapter, was not only a historical milestone but also a political one. For the first time in Jewish history was the emphasis not on the creation of Jewish cultural and ritual objects, or of centers for doing so – as the name would imply – but instead on the redistribution of Jewish cultural objects. The Jewish world faced a new geopolitical reality after World War II ended. The centers of Jewish learning and their scholars and students had disappeared. Jewish life was no longer at that point in time - as understood by the JCR – a realistic scenario in Western and Eastern Europe. Rather world Jewry had moved to the United States and to the new state of Israel, and these should be the main destinations of heirless Jewish cultural and religious objects distributed by the JCR.

While this chapter focuses on the activities of the JCR carried out by scholars such as Salo W. Baron, Judah Magnes, Gershom Scholem, Max Weinreich and Hannah Arendt, to name a few, its establishment, mandate and the

implementation of its mission can only be properly explained and understood by briefly outlining what preceded the JCR. Weight will also be given to the historical and political framework surrounding the organization, all of which ultimately determined its success.

Even prior to the end of World War II, in 1943 and in anticipation of the huge amount of Nazi war loot, the United States appointed the Roberts Commission, which established the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives (MFA&A) program. The MFA&A, also known as the *Monuments Men*, was subsequently charged with protecting cultural treasures in Europe,²⁰⁸ dealing with the handling of

²⁰⁸ The Roberts Commission, named after its chairman, Supreme Court Justice Owen J. Roberts, was charged with promoting the preservation of cultural properties in war areas. Its headquarters were located in the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. For more information on the Roberts Commission and the MFA&A see: “The Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in War Areas Report of the American Commission. United States Government. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016 (originally published in 1946). The records of the Roberts Commission can also be found online at: https://www.fold3.com/title_759/roberts_commission_protection_of_historical_monuments#overview [M 1944 - Records of the American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in War Areas (The Roberts Commission), 1943-1946]

See also: Lynn Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa*, New York 1994; Kathy Preiss, “Cultural Policy in a Time of War: The American Response to Endangered Books in World War II,” *Library Trends* 55.3 (2007), p. 372; and Michael Kurtz, *America and the Return of Nazi Contraband*, Cambridge 2006.

incoming claims from individuals, and with managing so-called lost-and-found warehouses of stolen European cultural property. These temporary collecting points in Munich, Wiesbaden, Marburg and Offenbach soon became known as the Allied collecting points or depots.²⁰⁹

The Wiesbaden²¹⁰ and Munich collecting points have been researched in more detail, mostly due to the fact that they were the largest collecting points in the American zone and because they held valuable looted art. But it is the Offenbach Archival Depot that is of most interest to this historical overview in regard to Judaica and the activities of the JCR.

The Offenbach Archival Depot (OAD), located in a five-story building that had formerly housed the I.G. Farben factory, “served a unique role in postwar American efforts of book and archival restitution, not just with regard to Jewish property, but to important state and institutional libraries that were successfully returned to the European countries from which they came.”²¹¹ Officially established on 2 March 1946 under an order by the director of the office of military government for greater Hessen (OMGGH),²¹² it ceased to exist about three years later when it was closed in April of 1949.

Because of the sheer number of objects held at the OAD, identifiable or not, with more than 3,000,000 looted cultural items²¹³, among them books, it was commonly called “the biggest book restitution operation in library history.”²¹⁴

Colonel Seymour J. Pomrenze served as the OAD’s first director (March-May 1946), followed by Captain Isaac Bencowitz (May-November, 1946); Theodore Heinrich (November 1946-January 1947); Joseph Horne (1947-48); and James Kimball (February-April 1949).²¹⁵ By 1947, members of the Offenbach archival depot had distributed 1,300,000 books of which 650,000 were of Jewish origin,²¹⁶ most commonly to the country from which they had been taken. Yet 628,259 items remained at Offenbach; again mostly books. Of these, 328,903 were classified as identifiable and 299,356 were unidentifiable. Of the identifiable books, 123,641 were non-Jewish and needed to be returned to their countries of origin. 126,137 were Jewish books identified as belonging to YIVO and other owners. 51,414 were Jewish books once owned by German Jewish communities now

²⁰⁹ Anne Rothfeld, “Returning Looted European Library Collections: An Historical Analysis of the Offenbach Archival Depot, 1945-1948,” *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage*, Vol. 6, No. 1, Spring 2005, p. 17; see also: Iris Lauterbach, *Der Central Collecting Point in München*, Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte, Vol. 34, Munich 2015. Please note that collecting points also existed in the British as well as in the French occupation zones, for example in Celle.

²¹⁰ The Wiesbaden collecting point was located in the *Landesmuseum* Wiesbaden. By 1948 it took over the tasks originally carried out in the OAD. See: Katharina Rauschenberger, “The Restitution of Jewish Cultural Objects and the Activities of Jewish Cultural Objects and the Activities of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc.,” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 53, 2008, p. 205.

²¹¹ Dana Herman, *Hashavat Avedab: A History of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc.* PhD thesis, Department of History, McGill University, Montreal, October 2008, p. 153.

²¹² Colonel S.J. Pomrenze, *The Restitution of Jewish Cultural Treasures after the Holocaust: The Offenbach Archival Depot’s Role in the Fulfillment of U.S. International and Moral Obligations* (A First Hand Account). Proceedings of the 37th Annual Convention of the Association of Jewish libraries (Denver, CO – June 23-26, 2002), p. 2. For more information on Offenbach, see: Fritz J. Hoogewould, “The Nazi Looting of Books and its American ‘Antithesis’,” *Studia Rosenthaliana* 26, 1992, pp. 158-192.

²¹³ Herman, pp. 4-5.

²¹⁴ Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, “The Postwar Fate of Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg Archival and Library Plunder, and the Dispersal of ERR Records,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 20.2, 2006, p. 279.

²¹⁵ Herman, pp. 152-3.

²¹⁶ Either Hebrew or Yiddish books, or their content was Jewish.

extinct, and 27,711 were Jewish books identified as coming from the Baltic States, Poland, and former Czechoslovakia. Of the unidentifiable books 222,768 were Jewish and 76,588 were non-Jewish.²¹⁷

While a large number of objects held at the OAD were books, it also served as a repository for manuscripts, ceremonial and ritual silver²¹⁸, as well as 600 Torah scrolls in addition to Torah pointers and, for example, Torah curtains.²¹⁹ Captain Isaac Bencowitz called the OAD the antithesis to the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg,²²⁰ and between April and December 1946 created an album entitled *The Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR) of which the Offenbach Archival Depot has Become the Antithesis*.²²¹

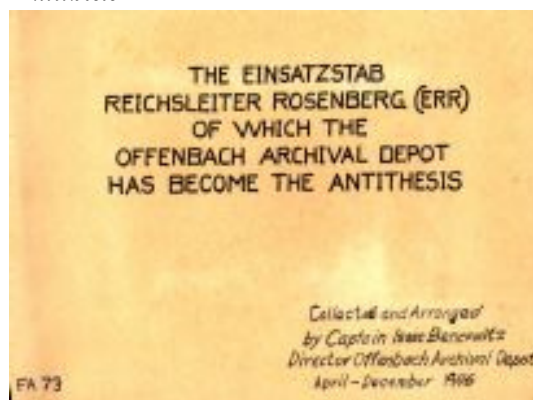


Figure 4: Isaac Benkowitz, “An album that documents the confiscation of cultural property by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR)”. Yad Vashem: Album: Nr. FA1 73/0, Archival Signature: 368, Item Nr.: 75060; online available at: <http://collections1.yadvashem.org/>

In addition to the Offenbach Archival Depot, the Wiesbaden Collecting Point also served as a depository for Jewish cultural and religious property, including books and ceremonial objects as well as artworks. However, compared to Offenbach, most objects stored at Wiesbaden proved to be identifiable, such as artworks and Judaica that had belonged to German-Jewish institutions (i.e. the Hermann Cohen Collection or the so-called “Baltic collection”). Nonetheless, about 1,000 rare volumes whose Jewish ownership was questionable and a handful of reference books were stored in Wiesbaden, in addition to some ceremonial objects that were originally placed in Offenbach but later transferred to the Wiesbaden depot.²²² It is also within the Wiesbaden archival records held at the National Archives and Records Administration, online available

at Fold3, that the activities of the JCR are recorded.²²³

²¹⁷ Jerome Michael to Salo Baron, 15 February 1947, P3/2058, CAHJP, Jerusalem, p. 153-4; information taken from Herman, p. 154; see also: Robert Waite, “Returning Jewish Cultural Property: The Handling of Books Looted by the Nazis in the American Zone of Occupation, 1945 to 1952,” *Libraries and Culture* Vol. 37, No. 3, Summer 2002, p. 215.

²¹⁸ Grimsted, p. 279.

²¹⁹ About 1,000 Torah scrolls and 17,000 ceremonial objects are mentioned in Plunder and Restitution: The U.S. and Holocaust Victims’ Assets: Findings and Recommendations of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the U.S. and Staff Report. “Chapter VI. Heirless Assets and the Role of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc.” Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000. Online available at: <http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/pcha/PlunderRestitution.html/html/StaffChapter5.html>. For all of these objects, no claims had been received, and “no identification of prior ownership (could) be reasonably established.” See also: Rauschenberger, p. 198.

²²⁰ Gabriele Hauschke-Wicklaus, Angelika Amborn-Morgenstern, and Erika Jacobs, *Fast vergessen: Das amerikanische Bücherdepot in Offenbach am Main von 1945 bis 1949*, Offenbach am Main 2011, p. 23.

²²¹ The album can be accessed at Yad Vashem’s online photo archive: <http://collections.yadvashem.org/photosarchive/en-us/75060-container.html>

²²² Herman, p 195. See also Michael Kurtz, *America and the Return of Nazi-Contraband. The Recovery of Europe’s Cultural Treasures*, Cambridge 2006, p. 162.

²²³ M 1947 – Records Concerning the Central Collecting Points (“Ardelia Hall Collection”): Wiesbaden Central Collecting Point, 1945-1952: Wiesbaden Administrative Records; Series: Cultural Objects Movement and Control Records; Series: Receipt for Jewish Cultural Properties: 1949. [Jewish Cultural Reconstruction: 1-11, 1-18]; Receipt For Jewish Cultural Properties: 1950 [Jewish Cultural Reconstruction: 19-62]; Receipt For Jewish Cultural Properties: 1951 [Jewish Cultural Reconstruction: 1-4];

Jewish Restitution Successor Organization (JRSO) and the Commission on European Jewish Reconstruction

The foundations for what later was to become the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization (JRSO) emerged in the summer of 1945, when five American-based Jewish groups formed a committee to represent Jewish interests in reparations and restitution negotiations. The JRSO was originally called the Jewish Restitution Commission, but it changed its name to the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization at the request of the Military Government.²²⁴ Another impetus for the creation of the JRSO was the founding of the Commission on European Jewish Reconstruction, also in 1945. And similarly to the JRSO, the Commission on European Jewish Reconstruction was incorporated two years later, in 1947.²²⁵ The driving force behind the Commission were American Jewish religious leaders, scholars, and teachers,²²⁶ headed by Professor Salo Baron of Columbia University.



Figure 5: Group portrait of members of the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization (JRSO) at a staff conference in Nuremberg, Germany, ca. 1949. [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: Photograph #41624]

One of the Commission's most important publications was entitled, "Tentative List of Jewish Cultural Treasures in Axis-Occupied Countries".²²⁷ The Tentative List provides information on institutions, books, and documents looted by the Nazis. It was originally prepared by the staff of the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem (JNUL), under the directorship of Hannah Arendt. The List covered fifteen Nazi institutions, most of which had absorbed parts of what had been taken by the Nazi looting; 430 Jewish institutions, among them libraries, archives, and museums located in 20 countries, in addition to 264 non-Jewish institutions; and 474 Jewish publishers: 3.5 million books are noted, as well as 5,000 manuscripts.²²⁸ The tremendous amount of research that went into this list came largely from archival material within the Institute of Jewish Affairs, records that surfaced through the Nuremberg trial, in addition to the evaluation of hundreds of questionnaires that had been addressed to Jewish scholars in exile, journalists, rabbis, social workers, artists and members of American-Jewish organizations.²²⁹

²²⁴ Ayaka Takei, "The Gemeinde Problem?: The Jewish Restitution Successor Organization and the Postwar Jewish Communities in Germany, 1947-1954," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Vol. 16, Nr. 2, Fall 2002, p. 271.

²²⁵ Plunder and Restitution: The U.S. and Holocaust Victims' Assets: Findings and Recommendations of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the U.S. and Staff Report. "Chapter V. Restitution of Victims' Assets." Inc. Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000. Online available at: http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/pcha/PlunderRestitution.html/html/Home_Content.html

²²⁶ Idem.

²²⁷ The list was originally published in 1946 as a supplement to *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1; See also: "Addenda and Corrigenda to Tentative List of Jewish Cultural Treasures in Axis-Occupied Countries", Vol. 10, Nr. 1, 1948. [The list appears as an Appendix to the *Descriptive Catalogue of Looted Judaica*, online available at: <http://art.claimscon.org/our-work/judaica/descriptive-catalogue-of-looted-judaica/>]

²²⁸ Natan Sznajder, "Die Rettung der Bücher, Hannah Arendt in München (1949/1950)," *Mittelweg* 36, Nr. 2, 2009, p. 71.

²²⁹ Elisabeth Gallas, "Kulturelles Erbe und rechtliche Anerkennung. Die Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc. nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg," *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung*, 22, 2013, p. 39.

The list functioned as a roadmap for Jewish culture and reflected the wide geographical dispersal of Jewish cultural assets and the often strong involvement of Jews in their communal life.²³⁰ But the list was also witness to the loss of Jewish cultural and communal assets as a result of the Holocaust. Moreover, the list had served, and to some extent still serves, as the basis for the submission of claims for damage and for restitution.²³¹ The first initial list “Tentative List of Jewish Cultural Treasures in Axis-Occupied Countries” was followed by two more: “Tentative List of Jewish Periodicals in Axis-Occupied Countries” again published in *Jewish Social Studies* (1947) and “Addenda and Corrigenda to Tentative List of Jewish Cultural Treasures in Axis-Occupied Countries” in *Jewish Social Studies* (1948).

Though initially not intended as such, the lists led to a fundamental new understanding on behalf of its creators: While the emphasis had previously been on “reconstruction” – as in the Commission on European Jewish Reconstruction – the lists made it abundantly clear that reconstruction, given the magnitude of destruction, was simply impossible. Rather, according to Salo Baron, the Commission’s aim would be to distribute the remainder of Jewish cultural treasures and therefore act in accordance with the new geographical and political situation Jews faced around the world.²³²

In the fall of 1946, General Clay met with representatives of the JRSO and the Commission on European Jewish Reconstruction and agreed to support their idea of creating an organization that had as its aim the claiming of heirless Jewish property and assets.²³³ Consequently, in May 1947, “The Jewish Restitution Commission” – serving as an umbrella for seven organizations – was incorporated as a charitable organization in New York.²³⁴ The group of seven organizations was soon expanded by including the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in Germany and the Agudat Israel World Organization, in an attempt to broaden its representation.²³⁵

After plans for a quadripartite restitution law and later a British-American bi-zonal law both failed, the Jewish Restitution Commission’s operations were confined to the U.S. Zone. Following many consultations and negotiations among the Jewish leaders, the U.S. Military Government, and the State Department, the U.S. restitution law was enacted on November 10, 1947, as Military Government Law 59.²³⁶ Law 59 provided for property restitution of identifiable property confiscated

²³⁰ Dov Schidorsky, “Hannah Arendt’s Dedication to Salvaging Jewish Culture,” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, Vol. 59, 2014, p. 181.

²³¹ Schidorsky, p. 190.

²³² “In view of the wholesale destruction of Jewish life and property by the Nazis reconstruction of Jewish cultural institutions cannot possibly mean mechanical restoration in their original form or, in all cases, to their previous location. The Commission intends, in collaboration with other agencies of good will, to devise if necessary some new forms better accommodated to the emergent patterns of postwar Europe. Ultimately it may also seek to help redistribute the Jewish cultural treasures in accordance with the new needs created by the new situation of world Jewry.” Salo W. Baron, “Introductory Statement. Tentative List of Jewish Cultural Treasures in Axis-Occupied Countries. Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction,” *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 8, Nr. 1, p. 6.

²³³ Constantin Goshler, *Wiedergutmachung: Westdeutschland und die Verfolgten der Nationalsozialismus 1945 – 1954*, Munich 1992, p. 111.

²³⁴ These seven organizations were the Jewish Agency for Palestine, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the American Jewish Conference, the American Jewish Committee, the World Jewish Congress, the Board of Deputies of British Jews, and the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction. For more information see: *Plunder and Restitution: The U.S. and Holocaust Victims’ Assets: Findings and Recommendations of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the U.S. and Staff Report*. “Chapter V. Restitution of Victims’ Assets.”

²³⁵ Goshler, p. 172.

²³⁶ A copy of the Military Government Law Nr.59 can be found online at the Clinton Presidential Library & Museum, see: <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/30179>

by the Nazis within Germany between 1933 and 1945²³⁷, with articles 8, 9, 10 and 11 outlining the creation of a Jewish successor organization.²³⁸

Due to the objection of Major General Daniel Noce, the Chief of Civil Administration of the War Department, to accepting the JRSO request for appointment in 1947, its official recognition only followed on June 23, 1948, when OMGUS appointed the JRSO.²³⁹

“THE TASK of locating heirless properties left by Jews who died in Germany under Nazi oppression, and of turning the proceeds from these properties into charity use has been delegated by OMGUS directive AG 010.6 (PD) of Aug. 18 and attached Authorization No. 1 to the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization, (JRSO), a New York corporation.”²⁴⁰

Two months after the June directive, in August 1948, the JRSO commenced its work from its German headquarters in Nuremberg under the directorship of Benjamin Ferencz, who had previously been the chief prosecutor of the Einsatzgruppen case at the Nuremberg Military Tribunal.²⁴¹

One major difficulty for the JRSO was the fact that it only had three months to discover more than a hundred thousand unclaimed properties and to comb through land registers, notaries' files, tax rolls, patent rosters and several other types of records due to the fact that the law of indemnity had made December 31, 1948 the deadline to register all property. In order to meet the deadline, the JRSO increased its staff to about 300 people who worked in eight-hour shifts. That way, about 2,000 applications a day could be filed. In doing so, the JRSO operated out of the belief that heirless Jewish property should not be restituted to those countries that had lost their Jewish communities due to state terror but should be made available to world Jewry. Consequently the decision was made to transfer these heirless cultural and religious Jewish objects to private organizations by applying Law No. 59 rather than leave them in the respective European country.

Part III of Law No. 59 addressed the issue of heirless property by stating that:

“A successor organization to be appointed by Military Government shall, instead of the State, be entitled to the entire estate of any persecuted person in the case provided... Neither the state nor any of its subdivisions nor a political self-governing body will be appointed as successor organization.”²⁴²

As a practical matter, this law meant that the JRSO would represent the victims and act on their behalf.

²³⁷ As Michael Kurtz has noted, “The law was designed to provide for restitution of identifiable property confiscated by the Nazis within Germany between 1933 and 1945.” (Michael Kurtz, *America and the Return of Nazi Contraband. The Recovery of Europe's Cultural Treasures*, Cambridge 2006, p 149.)

²³⁸ Takei, p. 270.

²³⁹ Michael Brenner, *After the Holocaust: Rebuilding Jewish Lives in Postwar Germany*, Princeton 1997, p 62; see also: *Plunder and Restitution: The U.S. and Holocaust Victims' Assets: Findings and Recommendations of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the U.S. and Staff Report*.“ Chapter V. Restitution of Victims' Assets.”

²⁴⁰ “OMGUS gives JRSO the go-ahead,” *Information Bulletin*, Nr. 144, September 1948, p 26. Online available at: <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/History/History-idx?type=div&did=HISTORY.OMG1948N144.I0015&size=text>.

²⁴¹ Takei, p. 271.

²⁴² Military Government – Germany United States Area of Control, Law No. 59, Restitution of Identifiable Property. Here cited after: Rena Lipman, “Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Reconsidered,” Ulf Bischof (ed.), *Kunst und Recht. Journal für Kunstrecht, Urheberrecht und Kulturpolitik*, No. 4, 2006, p. 90.

A few years later, in 1950, the British Occupation Authorities followed suit and founded the Jewish Trust Cooperation (JTC) under the chairmanship of Mr. Barnett Janner,²⁴³ and the French established the *Branche Française*, which likewise functioned as the legal heir to heirless and public Jewish property. In December 1951, the JTC took over the French zone.²⁴⁴

In sharp contrast to the archival depots managed by the American Occupation Authorities, the number of cultural and religious objects discovered in the British zone of Germany was small. This was largely due to the fact that the bulk of such objects were stored in the U.S. zone.²⁴⁵

Jewish Cultural Reconstruction (JCR):

Until Jewish Cultural Reconstruction was formally established on 25 April 1947, with its headquarters in New York, there were competing Jewish organizations working to salvage heirless Jewish cultural property in Europe. They were not succeeding, in large part due to the fact that they could not agree on a best way how to proceed. At the same time, the American military forces insisted that they would only deal with unified organizations and only those that would also include Jewish groups from Austria and Germany.²⁴⁶

Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, or JCR for short, grew out of the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, which had been founded in order to serve as a central research and coordinating body for all American activities concerning European Jewish cultural reconstruction. For a while the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, the JRSO and the JCR all operated at the same time, despite pursuing very similar agendas. But with the creation of the JCR the JRSO was able to slowly wind down until the JCR was firmly in place.²⁴⁷

As a matter of distinction between the JRSO and the JCR, it should be noted that while the JRSO served as a trustee for recovering property of economic value – and was in fact only established three weeks after the JCR itself, on 15 May 1947²⁴⁸ – the JCR set its sights on recovering property of cultural value. The JCR was in short the cultural arm of the JRSO. However, this distinction was not always obvious given that not only their work overlapped, but also their members. In August 1947, in an attempt to clarify matters, the relationship between the JRSO and the JCR was defined by signing an agreement in which the JCR agreed to act as an agent of the JRSO in tracing, restituting and allocating Jewish books, Jewish ceremonial objects, and other Jewish cultural property found in the U.S. Zone in Germany.²⁴⁹

²⁴³ Charles I. Kapralik, *Reclaiming the Nazi Loot: The History of the Work of the Jewish Trust Corporation for Germany*, London 1962, p. 10.

²⁴⁴ For more information, see, for example, Michael Kurtz, “Resolving a Dilemma: The Inheritance of Jewish Property,” *Cardozo Law Review*, Vol. 20, Nr. 2, 1998/99, p. 64.

The French implemented their own restitution law, ordinance 120, but according to experts, it proved to be rather useless. One particular problem was that the law did not provide for heirless property to go to the surviving Jewish victims. The British military authority did not pass a restitution law. However, compared to the French, the British at least completed the first draft of a restitution law in 1949. Herman, p. 151.

²⁴⁵ Kapralik, p. 88.

²⁴⁶ Herman, p. 32.

²⁴⁷ Idem, p. 130.

²⁴⁸ Mark Glickman, *Stolen Words. The Nazi Plunder of Jewish Books*, Nebraska 2016, p. 254.

²⁴⁹ *Plunder and Restitution: The U.S. and Holocaust Victims’ Assets: Findings and Recommendations of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the U.S. and Staff Report*. “Chapter V. Restitution of Victims’ Assets.”

A certificate of incorporation, filed on 30 April 1947, not only marked the official start of the JCR but also laid out its five main principles:

- “1. To locate, identify, salvage, acquire by gift or purchase or any other lawful means, hold, preserve, repair, protect, catalogue and determine the disposition of, Jewish books and manuscripts and, generally, Jewish religious and cultural objects and property of every sort whatsoever anywhere in the world.
2. As successor organization, to institute and prosecute claims for the recovery of, or compensation for, Jewish religious and cultural objects and property of every sort.
3. To distribute the property in such a way as to best serve and promote the spiritual and cultural needs and interests of the Jewish people in particular and of mankind in general, and especially the spiritual and cultural needs of the victims of Nazi or Fascist persecution.
4. To abide by the law in accomplishing such functions.
5. The Corporation shall operate in accordance with those policies established by the United States.”²⁵⁰

The JCR was comprised of nine organizations: the World Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Conference, the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, the Council for the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Jews from Germany, the Hebrew University, the Synagogue Council of America, the American Joint Distribution Committee and the Jewish Agency for Palestine. The latter two provided its operating funds.²⁵¹

In May 1947, at its first meeting, Professor Salo Baron became President. Members of the JCR also included Joshua Starr, who served as Executive Secretary from January 1948 until his death in 1949. He was followed by Bernhard Heller, the Field Director at Wiesbaden and a distinguished rabbi, educator, and author²⁵², as well as Hannah Arendt who worked as the Executive Secretary of the JCR until 1952. Rabbi Leo Baeck and Professor Gershon Scholem both served as Vice Presidents.²⁵³ It was due to Ms. Arendt’s efforts that the JCR was able to secure and recover some 440,000 books and countless ritual objects.²⁵⁴

After some initial hurdles, the JCR was eventually recognized as the trustee of heirless cultural property, both within the Jewish communities and organizations as well as within the United States government and occupation authorities.²⁵⁵ Consequently, by April 1947, it started to work out of the Offenbach and Wiesbaden collecting points,²⁵⁶ and began requesting Judaica from German museums.

²⁵⁰ Idem.

²⁵¹ Idem.

²⁵² Idem.

²⁵³ Idem.

²⁵⁴ Schidorsky, p.195.

²⁵⁵ *Plunder and Restitution: The U.S. and Holocaust Victims’ Assets: Findings and Recommendations of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the U.S. and Staff Report*. “Chapter V. Restitution of Victims’ Assets.”

²⁵⁶ Pomrenze, p. 7.

On 15 February 1949, Orren McJunkins, in his capacity as head of the U.S. Allied restitution branch, and Benjamin Ferencz as well as Joshua Starr signed the so-called Frankfurt Agreement in the former I.G. Farben headquarters that stipulated the JCR's legal right to act as the guardian of heirless Jewish property.²⁵⁷ And although the historical and political significance of the Frankfurt Agreement is often not stressed enough, it should be noted that it marked a milestone in Jewish geopolitics: with its implementation the JCR, as a union of various Jewish interest groups, ensured that the interests of world Jews were met, in the Diaspora as well as in Israel.

On 8 March 1949, the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives section of the U.S. Military government for Germany, (Reparations and Restitutions Branch, Property Division) handed over its first batch of Judaica in the form of 22 cases containing 4,743 prayer books.²⁵⁸ This official transfer contract referred to the Frankfurt agreement between the Office of Military Government (U.S.) for Germany and the JCR by pointing out that the JCR would herewith act as the trustee for the Jewish people in the distribution of these items when heirs could no longer be located. The objects would be used "for the maintenance of the cultural heritage of the Jewish people (...)". Furthermore it stated that under Law 59 the following categories were to be transferred:

- a. Jewish books, archives and miscellaneous documents in various languages.
- b. Torah scrolls and miscellaneous synagogue vestments, prayer shawls, etc.
- c. Jewish ritual objects or precious metal and including precious stones.
- d. Paintings and furnishings of previous but specifically unidentifiable Jewish ownership.
- e. Other Jewish cultural properties which the Military Government agreed to transfer to JCR, and which would be transferred in accordance with special conditions.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁷ Gallas, p. 35.

²⁵⁸ M 1947: Records Concerning the Central Collecting Points ("Ardelia Hall Collection"): Wiesbaden Central Collecting Point, 1945-1952: Wiesbaden Administrative Records; Series: Cultural Objects Movement and Control Records; Category: Receipt for Jewish Cultural Properties: 1949 [Jewish Cultural Reconstruction: 1-11, 1-18; online available at: <https://www.fold3.com/image/114/232018747>

²⁵⁹ Idem; Online available at: <https://www.fold3.com/image/114/232018747>

JCR 1

RECEIPT FOR JEWISH CULTURAL PROPERTIES
OFFICE OF MILITARY GOVERNMENT (U.S.) FOR GERMANY
MONUMENTS, FINE ARTS AND ARCHIVES SECTION
REPARATIONS AND RESTITUTIONS BRANCH, PROPERTY DIVISION

PLACE: .Offenbach a.M.,.....

DATE: .8 March 1949.....

1. The undersignedMr. Joshua S. T. A. R. R., authorized representative of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Inc., hereby acknowledges on behalf of JCR Inc. from the U.S. Commander in Chief in Germany receipt for the items described in Schedule A, attached hereto, which have this day been delivered to JCR from the Wiesbaden Central Collecting Point / Offenbach Archival Depot.
2. The scheduled Jewish cultural properties transferred herewith to JCR Inc., in accordance with the Frankfurt agreement of 15 February 1949 between the Office of Military Government (U.S.) for Germany and Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Inc., were wrongfully separated from owning individuals and organizations in Europe during the period of Nazi rule and were subsequently taken into protective custody by Military Government.
3. JCR. Inc., in accepting custody therefor, certifies that individual ownership of subject items cannot be determined and undertakes to act as trustee for the Jewish people in the distribution of said property to such public or quasi-public religious, cultural or educational institutions as it sees fit, 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, and to this end further undertakes to maintain the physical integrity of all such properties which had not been so damaged as to prevent normal use.
4. Properties transferred in the present receipt, unidentifiable and hence not the proper subjects of claims under Law 59, fall under one or more of the categories checked below:
 - a. Jewish books, archives and miscellaneous documents in various languages.
 - b. Torah scrolls and miscellaneous synagogue vestments, prayer shawls, etc.
 - c. Jewish ritual objects of precious metals and including precious stones.
 - d. Paintings and furnishings of previous but specifically unidentifiable Jewish ownership.
 - e. Such other Jewish cultural properties as Military Government shall agree to transfer to JCR, and which shall be transferred in accordance with special conditions.
5. The receiving agency undertakes to restore to Military Government for proper disposition any object which has been delivered to it by mistake and is not covered by the special provisions.
6. The receiving agency agrees that the occupying power and all its agents and representatives shall be saved harmless from any claim for loss,

P.T.O.

Figures 6, 7, 8: M 1947 – Records Concerning the Central Collecting Points (“Ardelia Hall Collection”): Wiesbaden Central Collecting Point, 1945-1952: Wiesbaden Administrative Records; Series: Cultural Objects Movement and Control Records; Category: Receipt for Jewish Cultural Properties: 1949 [Jewish Cultural Reconstruction: 1-11, 1-18]; Online available at: <https://www.fold3.com/image/114/232018747>; <https://www.fold3.com/image/114/232018756>; <https://www.fold3.com/image/114/232018762>;

damage or deterioration suffered by any item from the time of its removal from the original owner to its transfer into custody of JCR Inc.

James Kimball
.....
Witness

Joshua Starr
.....
Signature

James Kimball
.....
Signature typed

Joshua Starr
.....
Signature typed

.. Administrative Superintendent OAD
Signature & Office typed

OFFENBACH ARCHIVAL DEPOT
OFFICE OF MILITARY GOVERNMENT
FOR HESSE
.....
Place PROPERTY DIVISION
APO 757 US Army

Authorized Representative JCR
.....
Title or Capacity of Signer

... 6 April 1949
Date

Distribution:

Original and one copy - OMGUS (Prop Div)
2 - OMGH
2 - JCR Inc

Figure 7

SCHEDULE A	
ITEM	DESCRIPTION (Including Statement of Condition of Object)
22 cases	containing 4743 Prayer-Books in fair condition / / / / / / / / / / LAST ITEM / / / / / / / / / /

Figure 8

By the end of May 1949, only three months after the JCR distribution process had begun, the Offenbach Archival Depot was basically empty of its books. There was still more material at the collecting points in Wiesbaden²⁶⁰ and Munich, as well as at numerous German libraries and museums throughout the country, but the JCR had nevertheless reached an important milestone.²⁶¹



Figure 9: Torah Shield (19th century), Yeshiva University Museum, JCR Collection, Call Nr. 1977.113

<http://access.gjib.org/query.php?term=jewish+cultural+reconstruction&qtype=basic&stype=contains&paging=25&dtype=any&repo=all&go=#1>

With the JCR's distribution process in full swing, it not only had to face up to the newly emerged Jewish geopolitical reality but it had to start discussing what should be done with heirless property, such as the thousands of ceremonial or ritual objects or the thousands of unidentified books. It was agreed upon – consistent with its agreement with OMGUS – that heirless property should be used to “benefit the Jewish people,” and therefore to distribute objects to existing Jewish communities and to institutions that could best use and care for them. Particular Jewish institutions, such as the Bezalel Museum and Hebrew University in Israel, were given first selection rights.²⁶² Within the United States, the Jewish Museum in New York and the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati were given first priority in choosing cultural and ceremonial objects, followed by Yeshiva University and, after 1950, other colleges and institutions. Most objects distributed were spice boxes, Torah shields, Hanukkah lamps, and pointers.²⁶³

Because Torah scrolls require a different kind of treatment than other cultural and religious objects, in that according to Jewish law destroyed scrolls have to be buried, the JCR's initial task was to carefully examine them. The preliminary sorting was carried out by the American Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC). Of the 1,151 Torah scrolls distributed by 1952, the overwhelming majority went to Israel (931), followed by the United States (110), Western Europe (98) and Great Britain (12). 127 Torah scrolls were sent to Israel to be buried.²⁶⁴

In addition to Torah scrolls, the Offenbach Archival Depot also held about 17,000 other religious objects in its “Torah Room.” The JCR and JRSO in addition to OMGUS agreed for these objects to be utilized, as they all originated from synagogues and homes ransacked during the Holocaust. While the majority of objects were sent to synagogues, some objects, if considered suitable, were sent to

²⁶⁰ The National Archives and Records Administration holds documents detailing the transfer of objects from the Offenbach archival depot to the Wiesbaden depot. These were presumably objects that were still awaiting restitution but could not have been handled in Offenbach. See: “List of Various Objects of Jewish Interest sent from Offenbach Archival Depot to Wiesbaden Center Collecting Point.” M 1947 – Records Concerning the Central Collecting Points (“Ardelia Hall Collection”): Wiesbaden Central Collecting Point, 1945-1952: Wiesbaden Administrative Records; Series: Cultural Objects Movement and Control Records; Category: Receipt for Jewish Cultural Properties: 1949 [Jewish Cultural Reconstruction: 1-11, 1-18]; Online available at: <https://www.fold3.com/image/114/232019085>

²⁶¹ Glickman, p. 261.

²⁶² *Plunder and Restitution: The U.S. and Holocaust Victims' Assets: Findings and Recommendations of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the U.S. and Staff Report.* “Chapter V. Restitution of Victims' Assets.”

²⁶³ Idem.

²⁶⁴ Idem; see also: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, “JCR” (online edition, accessed through the New York Public Library);

museums. Between 1949 and 1952, 7,867 ceremonial objects were distributed, with most of these objects going to Israel and the United States.²⁶⁵

This distribution scheme followed a decision by the JCR Board of Directors, which agreed in October 1949 to a 40:40:20 split of Jewish cultural and religious objects, whereby 40 percent would go to Israel, 40 percent to the Western Hemisphere, which included the United States, and 20 percent would go to all other countries.²⁶⁶

In Israel, the JCR decided to give priority to the Bezalel Museum in Jerusalem. All told, 61 cases worth of museum material were sent to Israel. The Bezalel Museum, like all other museums that received objects, was asked to clearly label these items and to furnish itemized receipts.²⁶⁷ In addition, all institutions were asked to return any objects at the request of the JCR.²⁶⁸ Responsible for the distribution in Israel was the Ministry of Religious Affairs, in the Americas the JCR, and everywhere else the JDC. However, the Synagogue Council of America soon took over the JCR's responsibilities in the Americas.²⁶⁹

According to a JCR document labeled "World Distribution of Ceremonial Objects and Torah Scrolls" dated July 1949, the following countries were recipients²⁷⁰:

²⁶⁵ Idem.

²⁶⁶ Idem. This agreement was preceeded by various discussions at which the United States was first envisioned to receive the vast majority of objects, together with Israel. In March 1949, the allocations would be 40 percent to Israel, 40 percent to other countries, and 20 percent to the United States. In June yet another instruction was issued that would allocate the ceremonial objects according to yet another formula (Israel, 40 percent; Western Europe, 25 percent; Western Hemisphere, 25 percent; Great Britain, 5 percent; South Africa and other countries, 5 percent). However, by October 1949, an agreement was reached at which the decision was to adhere to the following ratio: 40:40:20 (40 percent of all items should go to Israel, 40 percent to the Western Hemisphere, including the United States, and 20 percent to other countries).

²⁶⁷ Objects that the Bezalel museum refused to take were split between other established Jewish Museums such as the museums in Tel Aviv, Prague, Budapest, London, New York and Cincinnati. see: Dana Herman, "A Brand Plucked Out of Fire: The Distribution of Heirless Jewish Cultural Property by Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc., 1947-1952," Cohen, Heimann-Jelinek (eds.), *Neglected Witnesses*, p. 36.

²⁶⁸ Idem; See also: Lipman, p. 91.

²⁶⁹ Herman, *Hashavat Avedah*, p. 252.

²⁷⁰ JCR, Inc., World Distribution of Ceremonial Objects and Torah Scrolls, July 1, 1949 to January 31, 1952, S35/88, CZA, Jerusalem; quoted after: Herman, *Hashavat Avedah*, p. 226.

World Distribution of Ceremonial Objects and Torah Scrolls:

Country	Museum Pieces	Synagogue Pieces	Scrolls
Israel	2,285	976	804 (including 87 fragments and 127 buried scrolls)
United States	1,326	1,824	110 (including an unknown number of scrolls that had to be buried)
Great Britain	245	66	12
France	125	219	
Germany	31	89	
Western Europe (excluding France and Germany)	129		
Western Europe (including France and Germany)	98		
South Africa	150	66	
Canada	151 (Museum and Synagogue pieces)		
Argentina	150 (Museum and Synagogue pieces)		
Peru	35 (Museum and Synagogue pieces)		

The restitution of books, similar to the restitution of ceremonial objects, was more difficult than the restitution of looted paintings and sculptures. Only in very rare cases did a looted book or a collection of specific books carry significant markings that indicated by which Nazi agency they had been initially spoliated.²⁷¹

Generally speaking, the books transferred to the JCR were placed into various categories, including those that were unidentifiable and of Jewish content in the German language; books that were identifiable and other archival materials belonging to private owners and Jewish institutions in Germany; unidentifiable books and partially identifiable books in languages other than German; identifiable books from the Baltic states.²⁷² After some difficulties sorting through these book collections, the JCR decided to adopt the same principle for distribution with books as they did with ceremonial objects: the 40:40:20 model.²⁷³ In Israel, the Hebrew University was given first priority. However, books were also sent to Jewish institutions in Antwerp, Brussels, Paris, Teheran, Rome,

²⁷¹ Lehmann, p. 23.

²⁷² *Plunder and Restitution: The U.S. and Holocaust Victims' Assets: Findings and Recommendations of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the U.S. and Staff Report*. "Chapter V. Restitution of Victims' Assets."

²⁷³ Already in 1949, an allocations committee was formed which decided on a place for book distribution: 1) books would go to the Jewish National and University Library, 2) to major Jewish communities remaining in Western Germany (for immediate use consisting primarily of German Judaica, 3) to European institutions outside of Germany subsidized by the JDC, and 4) to countries to be determined. While the JCR oversaw the book distribution in a number of places, the JDC was responsible for the book distribution in Western Europe. Herman, p. 137.

Strasbourg, Algiers and Amsterdam, with each receiving between 4 and 528 books. About 10,000 books went to survivors of Jewish communities in Germany.²⁷⁴ OAD officials also gave the JDC permission to distribute some 25,000 books in Displaced Persons camps (DP-camps) between 1946 and 1947. However, since the JDC was soon unable to reconcile how many books had been borrowed and where, a second and similar request for book distribution by the JDC was denied.²⁷⁵

According to the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, heirless books were distributed as follows²⁷⁶:

World Distribution of Books 1 July 1949 to 31 January 1952:

Country	Number of Books
Israel	191,423
United States	160,886
Canada	2,031
Belgium	824
France	8,193
Germany	11,814
Great Britain	19,082
Holland	1,813
Sweden	696
Switzerland	7,843
South Africa	7,269
Morocco	378
Australia	3,307
Argentina	5,053
Bolivia	1,281
Brazil	2,463
Chile	1,219
Costa Rica	442
Ecuador	225
Mexico	804
Peru	529
Uruguay	1,670
Venezuela	456
Others	2,044
TOTAL	431,745

Within the United States, as mentioned previously, 160,886 books were distributed. The distribution favored Jewish institutions, such as the Jewish Theological Seminary (which received 13,320 books and periodicals), Brandeis University (which received 11,288 books and periodicals), and the Yiddish

²⁷⁴ Herman, *Hashavat Avedah*, pp. 274, 276.

²⁷⁵ Idem, pp. 164, 167.

²⁷⁶ "Introductory Statement," Tentative List, p. 5; Herman, *Hashavat Avedah*, p. 225.

Scientific Institute (YIVO, which received 12,360 books and periodicals), especially in regard to rare books.²⁷⁷

But the decision was soon made to also send books, including rare volumes, to the Library of Congress, Harvard University, the New York Public Library, Columbia University, Yale University, and others. By the time book distribution ended in 1952, the JCR had distributed 160,886 books to 48 libraries and institutions in the United States.²⁷⁸

Each receiving institution was required to sign an agreement with the JCR that stated, “Each library is asked to adhere to the following procedure, so that all books will be treated as part of the cultural heritage of European Jewry.” The terms of the agreement were:

- “1. No books received may be sold, nor may any be exchanged for other books without the permission of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction obtained prior to the exchange.
2. The recipient will furnish Jewish Cultural Reconstruction with an itemized receipt, listing authors and their titles, within six months after the delivery of each shipment.
3. The recipient places at the disposal of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction all duplicates of publications already in its library unless Jewish Cultural Reconstruction authorizes the recipient in writing to retain them specifically.
4. Any books identified by a claimant as his property to the satisfaction of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction within two years of its delivery to the recipient shall be returned promptly to the claimant or to Jewish Cultural Reconstruction upon the latter’s request.
5. Any book which Jewish Cultural Reconstruction may desire to re-allocate to another library within two years of its delivery to the recipient shall likewise be promptly returned to Jewish Cultural Reconstruction upon its request. However, the total number of items requested for re-allocation shall not exceed 10% of the number of items allocated to the recipient.”²⁷⁹

After the institutions agreed to these terms and signed the agreement letter, they received special bookplates and the following request:

“In view of the extraordinary history of the books which are now being distributed by the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc. to Jewish libraries and institutions of higher learning throughout the world, we feel that it will be of great importance to have each volume marked, so that present and future readers may be reminded of those who once cherished them before they became victims of the great Jewish catastrophe.

Without such distinctive mark it will also be impossible for present and future scholars to retrace the history and the whereabouts of the great cultural treasures of European Jewry which once were the pride of scholars, institutions and private collections.

²⁷⁷ Herman, *Hashavat Avedah*, pp. 164, 167.

²⁷⁸ Idem.

²⁷⁹ Direct quote from “JCR, Inc., “Memorandum to Libraries Co-operating with JCR,” June 20, 1949, Dept. of Special Collections and Univ. Archives, Stanford Univ. Libs., Salo Baron Papers, Box 232, Folder 10 [123234]; “Agreement Between Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc., and Recipient Libraries,” NACP, RG 260, Ardelia Hall Collection, Box 66, JRSO [311758]. See also, memo from JCR, “Memorandum to Libraries Co-operating with JCR,” June 20, 1949, Dept. of Special Collections & Univ. Archives, Stanford Univ. Libs., Salo Baron Papers, Box 32, Folder 10 [123234].” quoted after: *Plunder and Restitution: The U.S. and Holocaust Victims’ Assets: Findings and Recommendations of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the U.S. and Staff Report*. “Chapter V. Restitution of Victims’ Assets.”

We therefore are sending you today bookplates which should be pasted into each of the volumes which you received from us. We trust that you will understand the historic significance of this request and will gladly comply with it.”²⁸⁰

While most books remained at the libraries to which they were sent to, the JCR was also able to reconstitute some 9,000 volumes from the Brooklyn-based depot to their original owners.²⁸¹ Further restitutions were rare, and as time progressed not only did many JCR bookplates disappear, but numerous books were often simply integrated into already existing library collections without specifically marking them or were simply sold off. In many cases the book’s journey from its original murdered owner, followed by its redistribution by the JCR, is no longer traceable.²⁸²

Aside from religious objects and books, the JCR was also faced with spoliated archival collections for which it equally assumed responsibility.²⁸³ If after the war the origin of the archives, or the appropriate heirs, were known, these archival records were restituted. In cases where the archival records were deemed heirless, which often meant that they originated from German Jewish communities, the decision was made to send them to Jewish organizations in New York and Jerusalem, particularly to the Israel Historical Society.²⁸⁴

By the time that the JCR operation closed in Germany on 31 January 1951, JCR had asked that all pending claims, shipments, and incoming information be handled through the JRSO office in Nuremberg.²⁸⁵ And while the JCR ceased its active operations in the early 1950s, it officially closed only on November 9, 1977. Jewish Cultural Reconstruction therefore existed for nearly 30 years.²⁸⁶

While its name was misleading, since the JCR ultimately did not strive to rebuild destroyed shtetl libraries or yeshivot, nor to restore European Jewish life, it insisted that Jewish objects – books, archives and religious as well as ceremonial objects – ought to stay in Jewish hands, wherever Jews may live. Their new geopolitical understanding, after facing up to a decimated and shattered European Jewry that emerged after the Holocaust, helped Jews around the world to maintain their ties with the culture and literature of the world the Nazis had aimed to destroy.

At the same time, Hannah Arendt instinctively knew that without real cooperation from German libraries and other German institutions²⁸⁷ it would not be possible to fully discover and locate surviving cultural assets.²⁸⁸ In her mind, the Jewish cultural objects found in the various archival

²⁸⁰ Letter from Hannah Arendt, Exe. Secy., JCR, to "Dear Friends", Sept. 1949, Harvard Univ. Lib., Correspondence between the Harvard Lib. & the JCR Org. [122325]. quoted after: *Plunder and Restitution: The U.S. and Holocaust Victims' Assets: Findings and Recommendations of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the U.S. and Staff Report*. "Chapter V. Restitution of Victims' Assets." Glickman, p. 271.

²⁸¹ Glickman, p. 275.

²⁸² For an analysis of the fate of JCR books distributed to the United States, please see the United States chapter within the *Descriptive Catalogue*.

²⁸³ Yoram Mayorek, "The Fate of Jewish Archives During and After the Holocaust," Jean-Claude Kuperminc, Rafaële Arditti (eds.), *Preserving Jewish Archives as Part of the European Cultural Heritage: Proceedings of the Conference on Judaica Archives in Europe for Archivists and Librarians*. Potsdam, 1999, 11-13 July, Paris 2001, p. 33.

²⁸⁴ *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, "JCR" (online edition, accessed through the New York Public Library).

²⁸⁵ Herman, *Hashavat Avedah*, p. 222.

²⁸⁶ Idem, p. 276.

²⁸⁷ Arendt reflected on this situation in her report for the Commentary Journal: Hannah Arendt, "The Aftermath of Nazi Rule. Report from Germany," *Commentary*, 10, 1959, pp. 342-353.

²⁸⁸ In 1950 Arendt concluded that "bei dem wahrscheinlichen Aussterben der deutschen Gemeinden in den nächsten Jahren [das] kulturelle Eigentum der jüdischen Gemeinden automatisch an den deutschen Staat fallen würde." UI.

depots within the U.S. zone of occupation were only the tip of the iceberg. In an article in the 1950s, Arendt referred to the fragments of what once were the great German Jewish collections that surfaced after the war. She stressed that especially Judaica and Hebraica had to be researched,²⁸⁹ since without any proper examination within German institutions, the problem of spoliated Jewish artifacts could not be properly addressed, and these objects would remain in the wrong hands. Arendt repeated her plea in 1952, but to little avail.

In her efforts to convince German bureaucrats at libraries, archives or within the post-war German government, she often referred to the “Tentative List of Jewish Cultural Treasures in Axis-Occupied Countries” as evidence of the vast German Jewish heritage.²⁹⁰ But despite her pleas for voluntary help from German libraries, it would take more than 50 years, until the convening of a 1998 international conference in Washington, for wide-ranging provenance research to be conducted into the holdings of state institutions.²⁹¹

Stamford, Baron Papers, M0580, Box 232, Folder 5, Hannah Arendt, Memorandum an Dr. Weis, JRSO von der Sitzung des Bayrischen Landesverbandes am 22 Januar 1950. here cited after Elisabeth Gallas, “In der Lücke der Zeit,” in: Nicolas Berg, *Konstellationen, Über Geschichte, Erfahrung und Erkenntnis*, Festschrift für Dan Diner zum 65. Geburtstag, Göttingen 2011, p. 270. See also Sznajder, pp. 66-67.

²⁸⁹ “In Frage kommen vor allem Judaica und Hebraica aller Art (Bücher, Inkunablen, Manuskripte, Archivalien) [...]“ here quoted after Sznajder, Natan. „Hannah Arendt in München (1949/50)“. *Hannah.Arendt.net. Zeitschrift für politisches Denken*. Vol. 4, Nr. 1, 2008; online available at: <http://www.hannaharendt.net/index.php/han/article/view/136/238>

²⁹⁰ Sznajder, *Die Rettung der Bücher*, p. 69.

²⁹¹ Schidorsky, p. 191-192.

1.5 The Dispersion of Ceremonial Objects in the East: The Soviet Trophy Brigades and Nationalizations in the East after World War II

The Soviet Trophy Brigades

The trophy brigades set up by the Soviet government to collect reparations mainly from Germany, began their work in territories occupied by the Red Army as soon as the war ended. Yet decrees issued by Josef Stalin for the Soviet removal of cultural property from Eastern Europe and German territories so occupied were few.²⁹² Shortly after returning from the conference in Yalta, on 21 February 1945, Stalin signed a decree of the State Committee of Defense on the establishment of permanent commissions ordering the Soviet military to remove industrial equipment and materials from Poland and Germany. This set in motion the creation of the trophy brigades. A couple of months later, in June 1945, Stalin issued another decree that dealt specifically with the removal of art collections.²⁹³

At least five or six different types of trophy brigades representing various Soviet institutions were involved in the removal of cultural property. The main role in the search and confiscation of cultural property belonged to the trophy brigades of the Committee on Arts. The Committee on Scientific-Educational Organizations, for example, was involved in the removal of a broad variety of cultural goods, from library collections to pianos, but they were also removing art works. Archival collections and manuscripts were targeted by yet another unit (SMERSH) which was directly responsible to the Communist Party.²⁹⁴

While the trophy brigades' original intent was to search for cultural objects thought to be 'eventual equivalents', this approach was soon replaced by a much broader looting spree: trophy experts started to load entire collections on trains heading to the Soviet Union.²⁹⁵ The first area affected by the trophy brigades was the eastern territory of Germany,²⁹⁶ Silesia, which later was to become part of Poland, followed by more territories in Poland and eventually Germany, with major looting in Berlin and Dresden, in addition to parts of Hungary and Yugoslavia. The first major removal took place in March 1945 from the village of Hohenwalde (now Polish Wysoka). Between 1945 and 1946,²⁹⁷ objects were removed indiscriminately, no matter if they were Nazi loot from Jews or other

²⁹² Konstantin Akinsha, "Stalin's Decrees and Soviet Trophy Brigades: Compensation, Restitution in Kind, or "Trophies" of War?," *International Journal of Cultural Property*, Vol. 17, Issue 02, May 2010, p. 195.

²⁹³ Idem, p. 196.

²⁹⁴ Idem, p. 202.

²⁹⁵ Idem, p. 203.

²⁹⁶ Soviet trophy brigades claimed more than 2.6 million works of art, over 6 million books, and kilometers of archival materials from Germany alone. In the 1950s until the beginning of the 1960s, the Soviet Union returned about 1.5 million works to the GDR. For more information, see: <https://www.preussischer-kulturbesitz.de/en/priorities/provenance-research-and-issues-of-ownership/wartime-losses/cultural-assets-relocated-to-russia-as-a-result-of-the-war.html>.

²⁹⁷ "Tracking the Trophy Brigades," *ArtNews*, November 1, 2007. (Online available at: <http://www.artnews.com/2007/11/01/top-ten-artnews-stories-tracking-the-trophy-brigade/>).

‘enemies’ of the Nazi regime. But the Soviet trophy brigades were not alone: also the Ukrainian Soviet Republic dispatched its own trophy brigades from Kyiv accompanying various army units, competing with those sent from Moscow.²⁹⁸

In the majority of cases the masterpieces and cultural objects removed from Europe to the Soviet Union by the Soviet trophy brigades with the aim to compensate for the enormous losses never reached those museums or other cultural institutions that had suffered major losses during the Nazi occupation;²⁹⁹ rather they were concentrated in cultural centers such as Moscow and Leningrad.³⁰⁰ It should also be mentioned that among the artworks removed or destroyed by the Nazis were generally no masterpieces, with the exception of the Dürer drawings looted from Lviv and the Amber Room. Stalin’s secret sales at the end of the 1920s and early 1930s damaged Soviet museums infinitely more than the looting sprees by the Nazis. Countries that suffered the most from the Nazis were Ukraine, Belarus and the Baltic states. Major museums in Russia itself were for the most part never occupied by the Nazis.

Among the loot were also a considerable number of Nazi-looted Jewish cultural and religious artifacts; they were as much removed by the Soviet trophy brigades as artworks from famous museums.³⁰¹ The subject of “trophy books,” which included confiscated Jewish archives and collections, was taboo during the Soviet period. A semi-open discussion only emerged in the 1990s.³⁰² Today spoils in cultural institutions of the former Soviet Union can generally be divided into three categories, with the first and third being of significant relevance to this Handbook: 1. property taken from victims of racial and religious persecution; 2. objects taken from museums, libraries, and archives of countries that were allies of the Soviet Union or that fought against Germany, or within Germany against the Nazis; and 3. postwar seizures from wartime enemies of the Soviet Union, especially Hungary, Romania and Germany.³⁰³

Much of the Judaica that the Nazis had looted in other countries was subsequently brought to the Soviet Union and distributed among its territories, with priority given to countries that had suffered major losses during their Nazi occupation, such as Belarus. Consequently Belarus and its capital Minsk became an important repository for Nazi looted Judaica. In the summer of 1944, when Belarus was liberated, virtually no synagogues or prayer houses had remained intact. Buildings had been destroyed and looted of their ritual objects, interior decorations and furniture, and old Torah

²⁹⁸ The Kyiv trophy brigades centered around Dresden and succeeded in airlifting to Kyiv a substantial part of the collection of the Dresden Gallery. Idem, pp. 203 – 204. For more information on Ukraine’s trophy brigades see: Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, *Trophies of War and Empire. The Archival Heritage of Ukraine, World War II, and the International Politics of Restitution*, Cambridge 2001.

²⁹⁹ Idem, p. 211. Akinsha further mentions that the number of objects removed by the Trophy Brigades was four and half times higher than the quantity of the museum objects lost by Soviet Museums.

³⁰⁰ Idem, p. 211. [Akinsha notes that “The whole content of museums of Dresden, Leipzig, Weimar, and Gotha, along with hundreds of thousands of art works from public and private collections were crowded in the Pushkin Museum in Moscow and the Hermitage in Leningrad.” The one exception to this was in the Ukraine, where the damaged museum of Kyiv was the main repository of cultural objects removed from European countries, specifically by Ukraine’s own trophy brigades.]

³⁰¹ Grimsted, “Tracing ‘Trophy’ Books in Russia,” *Solanus*, 2005, p. 133. (Online available at: <https://socialhistory.org/sites/default/files/docs/solanus.pdf>).

³⁰² Idem, p.134.

³⁰³ Charles Goldstein, “Foreword,” *International Journal of Cultural Property*, Vol. 17, Issue 02, May 2010, p. 136. (online available at: [http://www.commartrecovery.org/docs/SCAN%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.commartrecovery.org/docs/SCAN%20(1).pdf)).

scrolls and precious libraries had been ravaged by the Nazis and their collaborators.³⁰⁴ In autumn of 1945 an estimated 1,200,000 books were shipped to Minsk. Half a million of those books had been looted from their owners in France, the Benelux countries, and former Yugoslavia and found by Red Army trophy brigades in the spring of 1945 in warehouses in a Kattowitz (now Polish Katowice) suburb. Books that arrived in Minsk were, as mentioned, regarded as compensation for the enormous library losses that had taken place there. These volumes are now primarily in the new building of the National Library of Belarus, but also in the Library of the Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Presidential Library.³⁰⁵ Collections known to be in Belarus include collections from the Serbian Jewish Community and parts of the valuable Julius Genss collection from Estonia.³⁰⁶ However, Judaica in Belarus can also be found in for example the State Historical Archive. Throughout Belarus' Communist rule numerous Judaica objects found their way into archival holdings, with the State Historical Archive being only one example of many. Other repositories are the Historical Museum of Mogilev, as well as the Historical Museum of Vitebsk.³⁰⁷

While the Soviet Union also encompassed countries such as Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, very little can be said about them. Yet it is known that 100,000 German books entered the Central Library of the Academy of Sciences in Tbilisi, Georgia, in the 1950s via the Soviet trophy brigades, most of which were returned from Georgia to Germany in 1996.³⁰⁸ More research on this topic in these countries remains to be done.³⁰⁹

The situation is vastly different for the Russian Federation itself: Aside from the Soviet trophy brigades, which brought Nazi spoliated objects into Russia, the country's own nationalization measures took a toll on private and communal Jewish property. Stalin's rule after World War II, labeled as the dark years of Soviet Jewry, greatly undermined Russia's Jewish community. Jews were placed in the Gulag or were otherwise faced with oppression. During the 'Night of the Murdered Poets' in 1952, on Stalin's order a number of leading Russian Jewish intellectuals were murdered.³¹⁰ Jewish property was nationalized and Yiddish publishing houses were closed. However, nationalizations already had taken place during the early years of the Bolshevik regime. A prominent example is the Schneerson Collection which consisted of some 381 religious transcripts, 12,000 books and 50,000 rare documents that were maintained by the first of five Lubavitcher Rebbe

³⁰⁴ Leonid Smilovitsky, "Jews under Soviet Rule. Attempts by religious communities to renew Jewish life during the postwar reconstruction period. The case of Belorussia, 1944-1953," *Cahiers du monde russe*. 2008/2, Vol. 49, pp. 475-514.

³⁰⁵ In 2011 the Belarus Library published a CD ROM entitled (in Russian) French Autographs in the Holdings of the National Library of Belarus, displaying the title pages of 66 books from Paris with autograph dedications by and/or to famous French politicians, writers, and other cultural leaders, together with photographs of the individuals named. Almost all the names appear on ERR seizure lists. For further information, see: "French Autographs in the Holdings of the National Library of Belarus," online available at: <https://www.errproject.org/looted-libraries-fr-belarus.php>; See also: Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, "The Postwar Fate of ERR Archival and Library Plunder," *Journal of Art Crime*, 4 (Fall 2010), pp. 23-47. See also Grimsted, "Silesian Crossroads for Europe's Displaced Books: Compensation or Prisoners of War?," *The Future of the Lost Cultural Heritage: The documentation, identification and restitution of the cultural assets of WW II victims*. Proceedings of the international academic conference in Český Krumlov (22.-24.11. 2005), ed. Mečislav Borák (Prague: Tilia Publishers, 2006), p. 133-69; and Grimsted, "The Road to Minsk for Western 'Trophy' Books: Twice Plundered but Not Yet Home from the War," *Libraries & Culture*, 39, no. 4 (Fall 2004), pp. 351-404.

³⁰⁶ Julius Genss was a book collector in pre-war Estonia who amassed a collection of about 20,000 volumes, mostly art history books.

³⁰⁷ *Descriptive Catalogue*, p. 97.

³⁰⁸ Grimsted, *Tracing 'Trophy' Books in Russia*, p. 142.

³⁰⁹ Georgia is the only country with a sizeable Jewish community numbering approximately 13,000. Second is Azerbaijan's Jewish Community which numbers about 6,400 Jews.

³¹⁰ <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vjw/russia.html>, last accessed 2 March 2016.

dating to 1772. After the October Revolution, the collection was seized, and parts were stored in the Russian State Library (former Lenin Library). The Russian State Military Archive holds another part of the collection that consists of archival documents confiscated by the Nazis in Poland during the Holocaust. More recently parts of the collection have been transferred to the newly established Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center, yet they remain part of the Russian State Library.³¹¹

The *Osoby* Archive (TsGOA)³¹², now part of the Russian State Military Archive (RGVA), was the repository of much of the trophy Jewish archives that were brought to the country after the end of World War II. It received more than 1,350 archival fonds, in addition to looted material from Jewish organizations and parties, including religious and ceremonial objects, as well as material from Jewish intellectuals.³¹³ Other archives and museums in Russia equally received looted art and Judaica. Some restitutions of archives have taken place, but many more are unresolved.³¹⁴ A handful of archival research projects have taken place, among them the projects by Heritage Revealed,³¹⁵ a project designed to research and uncover assets displaced to the Soviet Union after World War II through the works of its trophy brigades. Three catalogues emerged from this research project: The “Catalogue of Manuscripts and Archival Materials of Jüdisch-Theologisches Seminar in Breslau held in Russian Depositories,”³¹⁶ “Catalogue of Art Objects from Hungarian Private Collections,”³¹⁷ and lastly “Manuscripts and Archival Documents of the Vienna Jewish Community held in Russian Collections.”³¹⁸ Yet, many more research projects remain to be done, and looted Judaica, including important archival records, as well as book collections are believed to be still in Russian repositories.

³¹¹ For more information on the Schneerson Collection, see: Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, “Beyond Cold War Over a Restitution Claim?,” *Art Antiquity and Law*, Vol. XVIII, Issue 4, December 2013; Talya Levi, “Russia and the Solen Chabad Archive,” *Georgetown Journal of International Law*, 2015. Online available at: <https://www.law.georgetown.edu/academics/law-journals/gjil/recent/upload/zsx00315000915.PDF>; Paul Berger, “Russian and American Chabad Arms Split Over Schneerson Library,” *Forward*, 3 March 2014; Ellen Barry, “In Big New Museum, Russia has a Message for Jews: We like You,” *New York Times*, 8 November 2012; Olga Gershenson, “The Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center in Moscow: Judaism for the masses,” *Journal of East European Jewish Affairs*, Vol. 45, Nos. 2-3, pp. 158-173.

³¹² The Special Archive (Osobyi Arkhiv) was officially established in 1946 to house the archival materials of foreign origin, mainly from European countries. Most of these archival records were captured by the Red Army at the end of World War II and brought back to Moscow. For more information, see: <http://www.iisg.nl/abb/rep/B-8.tab1.php>.

³¹³ For a more in-depth overview, see the *Descriptive Catalogue*.

³¹⁴ For more information on restitutions that already took place, see: Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, F.J. Hoogewoud, Eric Ketelaar (eds.), *Returned from Russia: Nazi Archival Plunder in Western Europe and Recent Restitution Issues*, Crickadarn 2007. See also section on Russian Federation in Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, *Reconstructing the Record of Nazi Cultural Plunder. A Survey of the Dispersed Archives of the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR)*, IISH Research Papers, 2011. Online available at: https://socialhistory.org/sites/default/files/docs/publications/errsurvey_total-111019.pdf.

³¹⁵ <http://www.commartrecovery.org/projects/heritage-revealed>.

³¹⁶ Online accessible at: http://www.commartrecovery.org/docs/catalog1_1.pdf.

³¹⁷ Online accessible at: http://www.commartrecovery.org/docs/catalog2_0.pdf.

³¹⁸ Online accessible at: http://www.commartrecovery.org/docs/catalog3_0.pdf.

Nationalizations in the East after World War II



Figure 10: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iron_Curtain

The following briefly examines the fate of Judaica in the countries of the East after World War II ended. While much has been and may be written about the fate and suppression of Jewish communities and Jewish life in general during Communism, here the focus is only on the journey and losses of Jewish ritual objects as a result of communist rule. The following overview, divided into two political spheres – examples of countries that were aligned through the Warsaw Pact,³¹⁹ as well as an overview of countries that were part of the former Soviet Union – aims to outline the journey of communal and private property during Communism, as well as developments since 1989 and the official fall of the Soviet Union in 1991.

As pointed out in previous chapters, compulsory changes in property ownership and Soviet nationalization measures took place already during the first Soviet Occupation between 1939 and 1941. In some cases, these property transfers were only interrupted by the German invasion in June 1941. Between the end of the German occupation and 1948, a considerable portion of the local economies in East-Central Europe were

nationalized, and the property of former wartime enemies and occupiers was seized by the states. For obvious reasons, the vastly different political approach in the East had a large impact on restitutions that took place immediately after the war,³²⁰ and was in stark contrast to restitution procedures in the West.

After World War II, the political landscape changed with the Soviet Union being firmly established and numerous areas and countries added to it such as western Ukraine and Belarus, Moldova, Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia. Other countries, such as Poland, the former Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary were not officially part of the USSR, but their governments were loyal Stalinists and aligned themselves with the Soviet Union politically and militarily via the Warsaw Pact. Yugoslavia, while being Communist, did not align itself with the Soviet Union.

Generally speaking, Communist policies in Eastern Europe had a dramatic impact on Judaica objects: Jewish cultural institutions suffered considerable losses,³²¹ and private Jewish property and communal property was nationalized. In the case of Jewish museums, their only chance of survival

³¹⁹ The Warsaw Pact was formed on 14 May 1955 as a military alliance. The following countries were members: Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic (East Germany), Hungary, Poland, Romania, Soviet Union and Albania. The pact was dissolved in 1991.

³²⁰ Constantin Goschler, Philipp Thier, “A History without Boundaries. Jewish property in Europe,” Martin Dean, Constantin Goschler, Philipp Thier (eds.), *Robbery and Restitution. The Conflict Over Jewish Property in Europe*, New York 2008, p. 5.

³²¹ For an overview of Judaica looted during World War II and its current whereabouts, as well as to a lesser degree Judaica that fell victim to nationalization measures, see the Claims Conference’s *Descriptive Catalogue*.

was if they were state-run or otherwise had the support of the relevant regime. Most Jewish museums, however, were situated in disused synagogues,³²² some of which were in dire need of repairs. The Stalinist state doctrine of atheism and antisemitism resulted in local Jewish life being portrayed as something in the past with no place existing for any present-day Jewish communal life.

Today, more than 25 years after the fall of the Iron Curtain, the Jewish landscape is quite different: While historical research and consequently restitutions are still necessary for a number of countries, some countries in former Eastern Europe have seen an increase in Jewish public culture. During the last couple of years a number of new Jewish museums – some of them large, some of them small – have been created in former communist countries, including in Moscow (Russian Federation), Dnipropetrovsk (Ukraine), Czernowitz (Ukraine), Krakow (Poland), Warsaw (Poland), Bratislava (Slovakia), Vilnius (Lithuania), Riga (Latvia), the Bukharan-Jewish Museum in Samarkand (Uzbekistan) and the Jewish Museum of Chişinău (Kishinev) in Moldova.³²³

What follows is a brief overview of some countries within the post-war communist sphere in regard to their compulsory property changes as experienced by the local Jewish population.³²⁴ Emphasis has been given to countries that not only aligned themselves with the Warsaw Pact such as Hungary, the former Czechoslovakia, and Poland, but also to countries that have conducted historical research and for which information is readily available. Some countries that were part of the Soviet Union, namely Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, initiated state-run historical commissions examining not only their role regarding the crimes during the Holocaust, but also during the communist regime.³²⁵ Other countries such as Romania³²⁶ and Bulgaria³²⁷ are only mentioned here since detailed research

³²² Ruth Ellen Gruber, “Post-trauma. ‘Precious Legacies’: Jewish Museums in Eastern Europe after the Holocaust and before the Fall of Communism,” Richard Cohen (ed.), *Visualizing and Exhibiting Jewish Space and History*, Studies in Contemporary Jewry. Institute of Contemporary Jewry. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Vol. XXVI, Oxford 2012, p. 127.

³²³ See the special issue “New Jewish Museums in Post-Communist Europe,” *East European Jewish Affairs*, Vol. 45, Issue 2-3, 2015.

³²⁴ For in-depth articles on Poland, the Czech Republic or Hungary, please see: Julie-Marthe Cohen, Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek (eds.), *Neglected Witnesses. The Fate of Ceremonial Objects During the Second World War and After*, Crickadarn 2011.

³²⁵ The “Commission of Historians of Latvia” was established in November 1998 on the initiative of former president Guntis Ulmanis and examined the “Crimes against Humanity Committed in the Territory of Latvia under Two Occupations, 1940 – 1956”. Equally Lithuania and Estonia initiated Historical Commissions entitled the “International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania” and the “International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity” respectively (For more information, see *Descriptive Catalogue*, p. 124, 169 and 171.)

³²⁶ For more initial information on Romania, see: Francesca Gori, “Transilvania rossa: Il comunismo romeno e la questione nazionale (1944–1965),” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 11, Number 2, Spring 2009, pp. 131-133; Radu Ioanid, *The Ransom of the Jews: The Story of the Extraordinary Secret Bargain Between Romania and Israel*, Chicago 2005.

³²⁷ Information on Bulgaria is mostly limited to the foundation of a Jewish Research Institute at the Central Consistory of Jews in 1947. However, by 1951 as a result of insufficient money for maintenance purposes, the Council of Ministers decided to move the institute into the system of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, first to the Institute of Bulgarian History and, from January 1964 onwards, to the Institute of Balkan Studies. Religious objects, on the other hand, were kept at the Central Sofia Synagogue. Today most of these pieces may be found at the General Religious Council of Israelites and at the Jewish Museum of History in Sofia, founded in 1993 (under the guidance of the National Museum Centre at the Ministry of Culture). During the 1960s and 1970s, as a result of death, departure, but also defection, some of the Hebraica was moved from the Ashkenazi synagogue to the library of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, and in 1980, the collection became part of the Central Record Office. See also Vladimir Paunovsky, “The Bulgarian Archives and the Jewish Cultural and Historical Heritage: A Brief Survey,” Jean-Claude Kuperminc, Rafaële Arditti (eds.), *Preserving Jewish Archives as Part of the European Cultural Heritage: Proceedings of the Conference on Judaica Archives in Europe for Archivists and Librarians*, Potsdam, 1999, 11-13 July, Paris 2001, pp. 114-118.

into their Judaica losses during the communist regime is for the most part still lacking. The same is even more true for countries of the Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan) that were originally part of the Soviet Union and countries of Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan). It can be assumed that the Soviet Trophy Brigades distributed objects also to the Caucasus or to Central Asia, but it is not known if Judaica is among these objects. Comprehensive research is still lacking.

Czechoslovakia

Country Facts: Czechoslovakia, founded in 1918 after it declared its independence from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, existed until 1993 when it peacefully separated into the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Between 1939 and 1945, the country was incorporated into Nazi Germany. After the war Czechoslovakia aligned itself with the Warsaw Pact. A period of political liberalization, known as the Prague Spring, in 1968 ended forcefully when several other Warsaw Pact countries invaded.³²⁸

Several Jewish museums and Judaica collections existed in the former Czechoslovakia before World War II, with Judaica holdings in many local Bohemian and Moravian museums. Compared to other European countries, Czechoslovakia's institutional Judaica collections were largely preserved due to the Nazis' own wishes.³²⁹ The Jewish Museum in Prague, founded in 1906, is one of Europe's oldest Jewish museums, and the oldest one in what was to become communist Eastern Europe.³³⁰ During the Holocaust, the Jewish Museum functioned as the Central Jewish Museum,³³¹ with its collection largely being expanded with ceremonial objects, books, manuscripts and archival documents of former Jewish religious communities in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. The Museum's collection encompassed artifacts from 153 Jewish communities that were destroyed during the Holocaust.³³² After the war, it was soon reinstated under Jewish administration and reopened to the public in 1946, although the state had already assumed control of the Museum's assets. This resulted in the fact that the Council of Jewish Religious Communities in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia – as the legal successor to the disbanded Jewish communities – was unable to take effective control of the Museum before the communist coup of February 1948.³³³ By 1950, two years after the

³²⁸ For a more in-depth analysis of the Jewish Community during Communism, see: Alena Heitlinger, *In the Shadows of the Holocaust & Communism: Czech and Slovak Jews Since 1945*, New Brunswick 2006. A review of the book is available in: Lynn Rapaport, "In the Shadows of the Holocaust and Communism: Czech and Slovak Jews Since 1945 (review)," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Vol. 22, Number 1, Spring 2008, pp. 120 – 122.

³²⁹ Magda Veselká, "Jewish Museums in the Former Czechoslovakia," Julie-Marthe Cohen, Felicitas Heiman-Jelinek (eds.), *Neglected Witnesses. The Fate of Jewish Ceremonial Objects During the Second World War and After*, Crickadarn 2011, p. 103.

³³⁰ The earliest Jewish museum was established in Vienna in 1896, followed by the Jewish Museum in Frankfurt in 1897. Worms' Jewish Museum followed in 1912, the one in Budapest in 1916 and the one in Berlin in 1933. Only Prague's and Budapest's Jewish Museums can claim to have had a direct relationship to the respective prewar Jewish museum. Under communism these museums were run by state or civic authorities and as such were aligned with the official communist propaganda at the time. In places such as Belgrade, Sofia and Bucharest, the museums functioned mainly as memorial places and were sponsored by Jewish communal institutions. Gruber, p. 115.

³³¹ For more background information on the role of the Jewish Museum during the Holocaust, see: Björn Potthast, *Das Jüdische Zentralmuseum der SS in Prag. Gegnerforschung und Völkermord im Nationalsozialismus*, Frankfurt am Main 2002; Dirk Rupnow, *Täter Gedächtnis Opfer: Das "Jüdische Zentralmuseum" in Prag, 1942-1945*, Vienna 2000; Dirk Rupnow, "The Jewish Central Museum in Prague and Holocaust Memory in the Third Reich," *Holocaust & Genocide Studies*, 16, Spring 2002, pp. 23-53.

³³² Gruber, p. 120

³³³ "History of the Museum", <http://www.jewishmuseum.cz/en/info/about-us/history-of-the-museum/>.

communist take-over, the state seized control over the entire Museum.³³⁴ Only 46 years later, in 1994, was the Museum officially returned to the Jewish community.³³⁵

During those 46 years, the Jewish Museum in Prague suffered tremendous losses. Expert estimates are that perhaps as many as 158,000 books were removed from the Jewish Museum collections by 1950.³³⁶ In 1964, 1,500 Torah scrolls out of 1,800 and 400 Torah binders out of 2,200³³⁷ of the former State Jewish Museum were sold off to foreign trade companies such as Artia. These scrolls are now partially located at the Czech Memorial Scrolls Centre at the Westminster Synagogue in London.³³⁸

Poland

Country Facts: Poland had a long history of independence wars to counter the numerous attacks on its sovereignty even before the onset of World War II. The invasion of Poland by Nazi troops on September 1, 1939 also marked the start of World War II. Following the August 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Poland was divided into German and Soviet spheres of influence. The pact remained in force until the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941. About 90% of the Polish pre-war Jewish population was murdered under the Nazi regime. After the war, the Soviet Union instituted a communist government in Poland, and in 1952 the People's Republic of Poland was officially declared. In 1989, with the end of communism in Poland, the country changed back to the Polish Republic. Two years later, in 1991, the Warsaw Pact was formally dissolved.

Recovering property in post-war Poland that had belonged to Jews, including Judaica, was difficult, in part because many locals combed ghettos and camps as soon as the Germans left in order to enrich themselves. However, there were also instances in which Poles or Polish institutions returned Judaica to their original owners or to organizations, such as the Warsaw National Museum.³³⁹

Poland was home to much Nazi-plundered Jewish property that was found in the country after the war.³⁴⁰ German and Jewish cultural assets were regarded as a form of reparations for the losses the

³³⁴ "(...) this complex and chaotic post-war period culminated in the 1950 takeover of the Museum, including its collections and buildings, by the Czechoslovak State." Veselka, *Jewish Museums in the Former Czechoslovakia*, p. 126.

³³⁵ Gruber, p. 121; Veselka, pp. 126-127.

³³⁶ Michal Bušek, "Identifying Owners of Books Held by the Jewish Museum in Prague," *Vitalizing Memory. International Perspectives on Provenance Research*. Washington: American Association of Museums, 2005, pp. 138-142; Andrea Braunova, "Origin of the Jewish Museum Library Holdings: Origin of the Jewish Museum in Prague," *Newsletter of the Jewish Museum in Prague*, No. 3, 4, 1999.

³³⁷ Veselka, p. 127.

³³⁸ For more information, see: <http://www.memorialscrollstrust.org/>.

³³⁹ Nawojka Cieślińska-Lobkowicz, "The History of Judaica and Judaica Collections in Poland Before, During and After the Second World War: An Overview," in: Cohen, Heimann-Jelinek (eds), *Neglected Witnesses*, pp. 164-165.

³⁴⁰ On the question of looted books, see: Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, "Sudeten Crossroads for Europe's Displaced Books. The 'Mysterious Twilight' of the RSHA Amt VII Library and the Fate of A Million Victims of War". Prepared for publication in the conference proceedings based on a shorter presentation at the international conference in Liberec organized by the Documentation Centre of Property Transfers of Cultural Assets of WW II. Victims, 24-26 October 2007; Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, "Silesian Crossroads for Europe's Displaced Books: Compensation or Prisoners of War?," *The Future of the Lost Cultural Heritage: The Documentation, Identification and Restitution of the Cultural Assets of WW II Victims*. Proceedings of the International Academic Conference in Český Krumlov (22.-24. 11. 2005), pp. 133-69.

Polish state had endured.³⁴¹ These assets included parts of the RSHA (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*) collection which was found in Lower Silesia and Moravia.³⁴²

This situation was aggravated by a flourishing private antique trade that existed in Poland until 1950 and a black market for so-called ownerless property. In March 1946 legislation was established by the communist regime that prohibited the export of artistic, historical or cultural valuables. In effect that meant that most of the remaining “post-Jewish” private property ended up in the hands of the Polish state.³⁴³ This included both individual property and the property of numerous pre-war communities, institutions and societies.³⁴⁴ A legal basis for this appropriation was provided by legislation of 1945 and 1946 pertaining to so-called abandoned property and former German assets that came under state control. The term ‘abandoned’ was predominantly used for Jewish property. This situation worsened in March 1946 with the imposition of a deadline that was set for individuals to file for restitution of private property: 31 December 1947 (later extended by a year). In addition, restrictive inheritance laws (announced October 1947) stipulated that only next of kin could inherit. Given the tremendous human loss during the Holocaust and the chaotic aftermath, this resulted in only a very few restitutions. As Cieślińska-Lobkowitz has pointed out, “there is no denying that the state derived considerable profit from the ‘heirless’ private property of Polish Jewry.”³⁴⁵ In 1997, new legislation restored the legal status of the Jewish communities in Poland, however movable property is still not covered by this legislation.³⁴⁶

Most of the loot found on Polish soil after the war, or Judaica that was not granted an export license, was eventually brought to the Jewish Historical Institute (*Żydowski Instytut Historyczny*; ŻIH). The Institute grew out of the Central Committee of Jews in Poland, established in 1944 in Lublin to supervise the organized search for looted assets. The Committee immediately formed the Central Jewish Historical Commission to salvage cultural heritage and to establish archives, a library, a museum, and a photographic collection. In 1947, the Commission was renamed the Jewish Historical Institute. It presented its first exhibition on April 19, 1948.³⁴⁷ In that same year, the Institute’s museum had received a significant collection of Judaica found in the Kunzendorf castle in Lower Silesia, among which were three parochot. A year later, in 1949, the Ministry of Culture and Art instructed the Municipal Museum in Toruń to transfer 89 Judaica objects to the Institute. Other museums followed suit: the National Museum transferred objects it had originally stored while it was being used as a depot by the *Einsatzkommando Paulsen*, the special unit that had been established by order of the SS and Gestapo headed by Heinrich Himmler to secure artistic and historic objects in Poland. In the following years, even more loot found its way into the Institute’s collection, including Judaica that had belonged to Greek Jews.³⁴⁸

Although ŻIH definitely functioned and functions as the main depository of looted Judaica located in Poland, a considerable number of looted objects remained in other museums used by the Nazis as

³⁴¹ Julie-Marthe Cohen, “The Impact of the Second World War and the Holocaust on Judaica Collections in Europe.” Lecture held 24 January 2012 in the framework of The Rothschild Foundation (Hanadiv), Keter: a Professional Training Course for Museum Experts in Ukraine, Lviv, 23-26 January 2012.

³⁴² Cieślińska-Lobkowitz, p. 162.

³⁴³ Idem, p. 167.

³⁴⁴ Idem.

³⁴⁵ Idem, p. 168.

³⁴⁶ Idem, p. 173.

³⁴⁷ Gruber, p. 115.

³⁴⁸ For more information on the Jewish Historical Institute, see also: Eleonora Bergman, “The Jewish Historical Institute: History of Its Building and Collections,” Cohen, Heimann-Jelinek (eds), *Neglected Witnesses*, p. 183-198; and the online *Descriptive Catalogue*.

storage. In addition, museum collections may include Jewish ceremonial objects that circulated in abundance after the war. Some professionally managed museums took advantage of the post-war chaotic situation and purposefully enriched themselves by recovering a good deal of silver Judaica from 'silver scrap metal' that was kept in special depots. The Warsaw National Museum has the largest such collection - of its 340 Judaica objects, over 250 were recovered from scrap.³⁴⁹

Poland's pre-war Jewish Museum, situated in Cracow's City Historical Museum, was completely looted by the Nazis. By order of the governmental Monuments Preservation Fund, in 1959 the building was restored in order to house a permanent exhibition of the Judaica collection owned by Cracow's City Historical Museum. And while the synagogue technically remained the property of the Jewish Community, in fact it was rented out for 99 years for the sum of 1 zloty a year.³⁵⁰

Hungary

Country Facts: Hungary's current borders were established after World War I and the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. During World War II, Hungary joined the Axis Powers. However, in 1944 the country was occupied by Nazi Germany. Hungary's Jews suffered significant losses during the Holocaust, particularly during the German occupation. Aligned with the Warsaw Pact, Hungary was under firm communist rule until 1989.

Budapest was the only city in post-war communist Eastern Europe with a sizeable Jewish community (90,000). Yet, many of the main centers of Hungary's Jewish life had disappeared or were left to their own demise, including the Dohány Street Synagogue, the largest in Europe and a symbol of Hungarian Jewry.³⁵¹ During the Hungarian Stalinist oppression (1949-1956), Jews were not allowed to restructure their institutions, and all Jewish communities were unified under the centralized, state-controlled organization *Magyar Izraeliták Országos Képviselete* (Representation of Hungarian Israelites, MIOK), established in 1950.³⁵²

Budapest's Jewish Museum, founded in 1916, was forced to close during the Nazi occupation. Its collection was boxed and hidden. In 1947, the Jewish Museum reopened to the public in the presence of the Minister of Culture. Following the destruction of many Jewish communities, the museum curators collected items from congregations that had perished, which resulted in an approximate doubling of the number of items in the Jewish Museum's collection between 1945 and 1963.³⁵³ In 1963, the communist regime appointed a new director who was an agent of the communist secret police. Under her leadership, the collection was re-inventoried in accordance with statutory regulations: as a result, the original order of the collection vanished, with 4,600 objects losing their original inventory numbers, in addition to omitting any provenance information such as from which community the objects had come or when they were acquired.³⁵⁴ Without these records the objects lost their symbolic, historical, social and cultural meaning and their value was reduced to a merely material one.³⁵⁵ Likewise, Judaica objects that were considered unimportant and/or of little

³⁴⁹ Cieślińska-Lobkowitz, p. 172.

³⁵⁰ Gruber, p. 115, 119.

³⁵¹ Idem, pp. 117-118.

³⁵² Idem.

³⁵³ Zsuzsanna Toronyi, "The Fate of Judaica in Hungary During the Nazi and Soviet Occupations," Cohen, Heimann-Jelinek (eds), *Neglected Witnesses*, pp. 292 - 294.

³⁵⁴ Cohen lecture.

³⁵⁵ Idem.

material value were simply not preserved. In the end, throughout Hungary's communist regime, Budapest's Jewish Museum lost much of its own unique history. Lately the institution has merged with the archives under the title "Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archives," and the museum staff tries to reconstruct this history. Besides the Jewish Museum, the Ethnographic Museum in Budapest and the Hungarian National Museum hold Judaica objects.³⁵⁶

The Non-Aligned Country - Yugoslavia

Country Facts: Yugoslavia came into existence after World War I originally as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. In 1941, Yugoslavia was invaded by the Axis powers. In 1946, the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia was formed under Josip Broz Tito's rule. After the Yugoslav Wars in the 1990s, the countries Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia emerged, and later Montenegro and a declaration of independence by Kosovo.

Josip Broz Tito's handling of Yugoslavia's Jewish community was largely different from that of other Communist countries at the time: not only did Tito recognize Jews as a national community, but also as a religious one. Thus Jews were allowed to conduct their affairs freely.³⁵⁷ Consequently, although the regime in Yugoslavia was authoritarian, it was also the most liberal of all Eastern European countries, and its Jewish community enjoyed freedom both with regard to the organization of communal life and the conduct of religious and cultural activities.

There is not a lot of information available on Judaica that was nationalized from the Jewish Community, its post-war journey or its current whereabouts in the countries that succeeded Yugoslavia. Research thus far has focused on the confiscations conducted by the *Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg* (ERR),³⁵⁸ the main Nazi looting agency to ransack Jewish communal and private property in Yugoslavia. The ERR's emphasis in Yugoslavia was mostly on the looting of libraries and archival records if they did not duplicate items already taken in France.³⁵⁹ In addition, Croatia's (then part of Yugoslavia) own Ustashi regime, including its extensive plundering of Jewish-owned property, still requires further research.³⁶⁰ Likewise, research is still lacking on the PONOVA state agency which was responsible for disposing cultural objects seized by the Ustashi regime. The remainder of those Ustashi-ordered seizures fell into the hands of post liberation Yugoslav authorities and eventually ended up in State collections, government offices, and private hands. Zagreb's Museum of Arts and Crafts, for example, holds many Judaica objects that were looted by the Ustashi regime.³⁶¹ Post-war restitutions were rare, with the exception of the Dr. Lavoslav Šik library from Croatia, which was returned in 1959 to the Jewish Community in Zagreb, and since

³⁵⁶ The Ethnographic Museum published a small catalogue: Zsuzsa Szarvas (ed.), *Kö kövön. Picking up the Pieces. Fragments of Rural Hungarian Jewish Culture*, Budapest 2015.

³⁵⁷ On the other hand, Tito ceased all contact with Israel after the Six-Day War; see: Gruber, p. 126.

³⁵⁸ Report prepared by the Claims Conference "The Looting of Jewish and Cultural Objects in Former Yugoslavia: The HAG Südosten & the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg in Belgrade, Agram (Zagreb) and Ragusa (Dubrovnik)", June 2012. Online available at: <http://forms.claimscon.org/art/ERR-Looting-Yugoslavia-Oct2013.pdf>.

³⁵⁹ "The Looting of Jewish and Cultural Objects in Former Yugoslavia," pp. 7-8; see also: Wesley Andrew Fisher, "Restitution of Art, Judaica, and Other Cultural Property Plundered in Serbia During World War II," *Godina XI*, 2014, p. 58.

³⁶⁰ A fairly recent publication sheds light on the plundering of Jewish property by the Ustashi regime. See: Ivo Goldstein, Slavko Goldstein, *The Holocaust in Croatia*, Pittsburgh 2016.

³⁶¹ For more information on Yugoslavia's role during and after the war, see also: Provenance Research Training Program of the European Shoah Legacy Institute Workshop, March 10-15, 2013, Zagreb, Croatia (http://provenanceresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/PRTP-Zagreb-Report_list-of-attendees_final_07052013_bb.pdf)

1989 some 7,000 books mostly in Hebrew and other Jewish languages, no further private libraries are known to have been returned.³⁶² Fairly recent restitutions involved the Geca Kon collection, with parts of the collection being transferred to Serbia's National Library, albeit without consultation of Serbia's Jewish Community.³⁶³

The Jewish Museum of Yugoslavia, originally founded in Zagreb in 1948, was moved in 1952 to the Jewish Federation building in Belgrade. By 1959 the museum was renamed the Museum of the Federation of the Jewish Communities in Yugoslavia.³⁶⁴ The museum was filled with artifacts from all over Yugoslavia and already in 1951 the Jewish Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as some individuals, were coerced into handing over Judaica pieces to the new-to-be established Jewish Museum in Belgrade. Consequently, the Jewish Museum located in Sarajevo, established in 1965, never owned any valuable Judaica objects and its collection consisted mainly of "third class Judaica".³⁶⁵ A small Judaica collection is owned by the Synagogue and Jewish Museum in Dubrovnik, Croatia.³⁶⁶

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³⁶² Books, manuscripts and codices written in Hebrew and other Jewish languages which are preserved in Croatian archives and libraries will be registered as part of an ongoing project organized by the Croatian Ministry of Culture, the National and University Library in Zagreb, the National Library of Israel and the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, with participation by the Jewish communities of Croatia. An agreement between the National Library of Israel and the National and University Library in Zagreb was signed in October 2013. The vast majority of these books and manuscripts were plundered by the Ustashi and the Nazis during World War II. Along with review of relevant German and other historical documentation, activities under this agreement are part of a pilot study to try to determine what was taken during the Holocaust, what was returned, and what is still missing for an entire country. See *Descriptive Catalogue*, p. 112. The National Library of Israel has recently completed the cataloging of the 7,000 books transferred to the Jewish Community of Zagreb, and an announcement is forthcoming shortly.

³⁶³ Geca Kon was the owner of Yugoslavia's biggest inter-war publishing house, and presumably murdered in 1941. The books of the Geca Kon Publishing House were confiscated and brought to the National Library of Austria, from where they were forwarded to four other major libraries in the Reich: the Prussian Federal Library (*Preussische Staatsbibliothek*) in Berlin, the Bavarian State Library (*Bayrische Staatsbibliothek*) in Munich, the City and University Library of Breslau (Wrocław), and the University Library of Leipzig (Christina Köstner, "Das Schicksal des Belgrader Verlegers Geca Kon," *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Buchforschung in Österreich*, 1: 7–19, 2005). All of these libraries have conducted provenance research on their collections and were able to identify many of the books from the GecaKon Publishing House. In 2011, the University Library of Leipzig transferred 796 books from the GecaKon collection to the National Library of Serbia, and in April 2016, the Bavarian State Library restituted its collection to Serbia (see: <https://www.bayerische-landesbibliothek-online.de/kon>).

³⁶⁴ Gruber, p. 126.

³⁶⁵ Julia Koš, "Lavoslav Šik i njegova knjižnica. Dva stoljeća povijesti i kulture židova u Zagrebu i Hrvatskoj." *ŽOZ*, 1998, pp. 78-83; Croatia Delegation Statement in Washington Conference on Holocaust-Era Assets, November 30-December 3, 1998: Proceedings. Washington, DC, 1999, pp. 231-240.

³⁶⁶ see: <http://www.jhom.com/bookshelf/synagogues/dubrovnik.htm>

³⁶⁷ Much research has been done on the impact of Stalin's antisemitism and anti-Zionism on Jewish life in the Soviet Union, as well as that of his successors. Jewish life generally came to a standstill and Jewish emigration was not granted. By the early 1970s the situation eased slightly with Jews being allowed to leave. However, only with Mikhail Gorbachev's ascent to power in 1984 did the restrictions gradually loosen and Jews were not only allowed to emigrate, but the Soviet Union began to crumble. The dissolution of the Soviet Union was formally enacted on December 26, 1991. See: Zvi Gitelman, *A Century of Ambivalence. The Jews of Russia and the Soviet Union, 1881 to present*, Bloomington 2011; Benjamin Pinkus, *The Soviet Government and the Jews, 1948-1967: A Documented Study*, Cambridge 2008; Benjamin Pinkus, *The Jews of the Soviet Union: The History of a National Minority*, Cambridge 1988; Yaakov Ro'i, *Jews and Jewish Life in Russia and the Soviet Union*, The Cummings Center Series, Portland 1995; Mordechai Altschuler, *Religion and Jewish Identity in the Soviet Union, 1941-1964*, Tauber Institute Series for the Study of European Jewry, Waltham 2012. For an overview of the Soviet

With the Soviet Union's annexation of the Baltic States and areas of Poland and Romania in 1941 and again in 1944, the Jewish population significantly increased by about two million. Jews were present in these areas in almost every aspect of life, culturally, politically and militarily. While Jewish life continued for a while after the end of World War II, it all came to an end by 1948 as a result of Stalin's increasingly anti-Jewish policies. In Vilnius, Lithuania, for example, immediately after the city's liberation from German troops in July 1944, the Museum for Jewish Arts and Culture was founded by two surviving partisans. During the occupation they had been members of the *Papierkommando* which had managed to hide parts of the renowned YIVO collection.³⁶⁸ In order to avoid a Communist takeover of this collection, they were able to ship some of the Museum's objects abroad, mainly to New York where YIVO was relocated. In late 1948, however, the Vilnius Jewish Museum was disbanded, and its collection was stored in warehouses of the Lithuanian National Library, where it remained inaccessible for over 40 years.³⁶⁹ More than 60 years later, and numerous political changes, the Lithuanian government returned more than 309 Torah scrolls and megillot that had been hidden during World War II to the Jewish community.³⁷⁰

In 2014, the Lithuanian Central State Archives, the National Library of Lithuania and YIVO announced a project to scan and make accessible over the internet not only all YIVO documents and books – both those in Lithuania and those in New York – but also the remaining books of the Strashun Library and other pre-war Lithuanian Jewish collections.³⁷¹

Lviv (Ukraine), like Vilnius, was another important center for Jewish life: After 1918, Lviv (or Lwów or German Lemberg), situated in Galicia, was part of a reestablished and independent Poland.³⁷² During that time Lviv transformed into one of the most important Jewish centers, and by 1939 Jews constituted 33 percent of the urban population. In September 1939, Lviv became part of Soviet Ukraine, and private property, including Jewish property, was nationalized, as was the case with the

Union and the Holocaust see for example: "Soviet Jewry and Soviet History in the Time of War and Holocaust," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, Vol. 15, Number 3, Summer 2014.

³⁶⁸ The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research was founded by scholars and intellectuals in Vilna, Poland, in 1925 to document and study Jewish life in all its aspects: language, history, religion, folkways, and material culture. With the Soviet's annexation YIVO was absorbed into the Institute of Lithuanian Studies and by 1941, Vilna was occupied by the Nazis. Mainly responsible for the theft was the ERR (*Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg*) which plundered YIVO's holdings for them to be used at the 'Institute for the Study of the Jewish Question' based in Frankfurt. Books that were deemed unimportant were shredded to paper mills. At the onset of World War II, Max Weinreich, YIVO's director at that time, had been on a trip outside of Poland, and therefore managed to temporarily reestablish YIVO in new headquarters in New York. Aside from books, YIVO also had its own art museum, which included hundreds of artefacts, as well as religious art and liturgical objects and works by contemporary Jewish artists. After the war, YIVO's printed Judaica fell under the direct military jurisdiction of the American Allies and was brought to the Offenbach Archival Depot (OAD). It was in large part due to Lucy Davidowicz's role as an educational worker for the JDC that the remnants of the YIVO library and archives were restituted from the OAD and shipped to YIVO's new location in New York in June of 1947. For more information, see: <https://www.yivo.org/History-of-YIVO>; Nancy Sinkoff, "From the Archives. Lucy S. Davidowicz and the Restitution of Jewish Cultural Property," *American Jewish History*, Vol. 100, Number 1, January 2016, p. 97; see also: Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, *U.S. Restitution of Nazi-Looted Cultural Treasures to the USSR, 1945–1959. Facsimile Documents from the National Archives of the United States*. Prepared in collaboration with the National Archives of the United States, Washington 2001, p. 46. (Online available at: <https://socialhistory.org/sites/default/files/docs/intro.pdf>)

³⁶⁹ The collection was not destroyed during Stalinism and in 1988, it was made public. See: Cieślńska-Lobkowicz, pp. 162-163.

³⁷⁰ For more information on restitutions by the Lithuanian government, see the online *Descriptive Catalogue*, p. 170.

³⁷¹ For more information, see *Descriptive Catalogue*, p. 171 and The Edward Blank YIVO Vilna Collections Project at <https://vilnacollections.yivo.org/>; see also: David E. Fishman, *The Book Smugglers: Partisans, Poets, and the Race to Save Jewish Treasures from the Nazis. The True Story of the Paper Brigade of Vilna*. Lebanon, NH, forthcoming 2017.

³⁷² For an historical overview of Lviv, see: <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Lviv>.

property of Lviv's Jewish Community. This resulted in the closure of two of the most important Jewish cultural institutions, the community's library and its museum. The library holdings, which constituted around 18,000 volumes, were incorporated into the newly established Lviv branch of the library of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. The community's museum, which had opened in 1934, had about 5,000 exhibits that were handed over to Lviv's Museum of Arts and Crafts. The collection included various ceremonial objects from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, deposits from synagogues in Lviv, contributions from private donors and other acquisitions.³⁷³ The Judaica collection of Maksymilian Goldstein was handed over to the same institution.³⁷⁴ Between July 1941 and July 1944, Lviv, was part of the *Generalgouvernement* and therefore essentially a part of Nazi Germany. When Soviet troops reconquered Lviv in July 1944, Judaica was transferred again to the same institutions that had received objects during the first Soviet occupation.

Today, parts of the collection of the Jewish Community Museum, liquidated in 1940, the collection of Maksymilian Goldstein, given by the owner to the museum for safe-keeping in 1941, the collection of the Museum of the Shevchenko Scientific Society as well as the Museum of Artistic Crafts are kept by the Museum of Ethnography and Arts and Crafts. Comprising over 1500 objects, it is the largest Judaica collection in Ukraine and reflects the cultural heritage of Jewish Galicia from the 1600s to the 1930s. The Museum of Religions (formerly the Museum of Religion and Atheism) holds nearly 1000 Judaica objects. They entered the collection from the Lviv Historic Museum, from the Lviv Jewish Religious community and from Synagogues nationalized 1939-1941 in Western Ukraine. 30 objects were added to the collection from the Lviv synagogue that closed in 1962. A coincidental find in Zhuravno in the Lviv region was handed over to the museum in the 1970s as well as the discovery of a Jewish family treasure in Lviv from the World War II era during construction works. The Lviv Art Gallery holds a number of portraits and objects that were described as 'ownerless,' but originated from the Jewish Community Museum, as well as a number of pictures from the former Goldstein collection.³⁷⁵ A collection of Jewish marriage contracts is also held in the Lviv Art Gallery.³⁷⁶ The Lviv Historical Museum keeps close to 100 Judaica objects which stem from the collection of Wladyslaw Lozinski and different museums, re-organized under Soviet rule.

The Chernivtsi Museum of the History and Culture of Bukovinian Jews holds around 150 Judaica objects. Most of them entered the collection as acquisitions from private individuals.

A small Judaica collection is to be found in the Chernihiv Historical Museum. The objects entered the collection via the former Chernihiv Museum of Worship (established in 1921), which received them from local prayer houses and synagogues closed down by Soviet authorities. A small Judaica collection is also kept in the Cherkassy Local History Museum. Its basis is formed by objects which were transferred from local synagogues to the museum. The Museum of the Culture of the Jewish People and Holocaust History "Mikhail Marmer Museum" in Kryvyi Rih (established in 2010) holds a collection of around 600 Judaica objects which - to a considerable part - stem from various doubtful sources. A number of them might not prove to be authentic. The State Historical Cultural Park "Mezhybizh", holds 20 Judaica objects the provenance of which is still unclear. The Museum of Jewish Life of the Community Center "Thiya" in Khmelnytskyi keeps more than 100 ritual objects, most of which were donated by regional family members.

³⁷³ Cohen lecture.

³⁷⁴ Sarah Harel-Hoshen et al. (ed.), *Treasures of Jewish Galicia: Judaica from the Museum of Ethnography and Crafts in Lvov, Ukraine*, Tel Aviv 1996.

³⁷⁵ Idem.

³⁷⁶ Vita Susak (ed.), *Jewish Marriage Contracts: Collection of Ketubbot in the Borys Voznytsky National Art of Lviv*, Lviv 2015.

The Vinnytsa Regional Art Museum holds a number of Judaica objects which are mostly neither on display nor researched, whereas the Vinnitsa Nature and History Museum presents a selection of artifacts from the Jewish community of Vinnytsa.

The Museum of Historical Treasures of Ukraine holds a Judaica collection of nearly 400 objects. A majority of the objects had been removed from Ukrainian synagogues and prayer houses in the 1920s and 1930s and transferred to the Shevchenko All-Ukrainian Historical Museum (today the National Museum of the History of Ukraine). Another part stems from the Mendeleyev All-Ukrainian Museum of Jewish Proletarian Culture in Odessa (1927-1941). During World War II objects were partly sent to Moscow and Ufa for safekeeping and came back in the late 1950s. Most of them entered the collection of the Museum of Historical Treasures of Ukraine (a department of the National Museum of the History of Ukraine) in 1964. Further, Judaica objects that had been seized by Kyiv Customs were added to the collection in the 1980s.