## The Documents:

# The Main Types of Relevant Archival Records



### TYPES OF ARCHIVAL RECORDS THAT DOCUMENT THE THEFT

The largest theft of cultural objects in history was methodically documented by both the perpetrators and the rescuers of looted Jewish-owned property. The main questions – what was stolen, by whom, from where, and from whom – can be investigated with the

- help of documents from three main categories of archival records.
  Documentation by the perpetrators of the looting: the National Socialists, their allies and collaborators.
- Documentation by the Allied Forces of their recovery of looted cultural property in Germany and beyond. [1]
- Documentation by the victims of their losses, which they identified in postwar restitution and compensation claims.

#### PERPETRATOR DOCUMENTS:

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The main Nazi government looting agency, the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR), produced meticulous records of the theft. For example, at its Paris headquarters at the Jeu-de-Paume Museum, the ERR took photographs and inventoried most of the looted objects on index cards. These documents are available online on the Jeu-de-Paume Database Cultural Plunder by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg [2] [3]

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Other documents, such as lists produced by the ERR, provide details of the theft itself. For example, there is an inventory list that records the seizure of the Hugo Daniel Andriesse Collection in Brussels on December 3, 1941, and its subsequent transport to the Jeu-de-Paume Museum in Paris. [4]

#### **ALLIED FORCES DOCUMENTS:**

After liberatio n, the Allied Forces set up dozens of repositories for recovered objects in Germany. U.S. forces in 1946 merged the repositories in their occupation zone into four Central Collecting Points (CCPs) to safeguard looted objects and to restitute them, when possible, ideally to the original owners or to the countries where the theft occurred. Staff at the CCPs photographed and inventoried recovered objects on property cards before sending them to their owners and/or countries of origin. [5] [6]

Other documents that were produced at the Central Collecting Points enable researchers to trace the further trajectory of the looted objects, as the example demonstrates. This outshipment list of the Central Collecting Point in Wiesbaden documents the restitution of the Madonna, WIE 1790, to Karl Haberstock on February 28, 1950. [7]

#### **HOLOCAUST VICTIM DOCUMENTATION:**

Survivors of the Shoah frequently had no personal possessions, documents, or evidence of property ownership after World War II. Their own recollections of what happened and what was stolen from them are documented in postwar claims found in compensation and restitution files. [8] [9]

#### OTHER DOCUMENTS

Many other types of documents, such as tax records, auction catalogues, shipping documents, museum and library acquisition records, and correspondence bear important evidence of the looting. The examples in this panel demonstrate how the combination of such sources can add verifiable details to the whereabouts of the objects in question both before and after the looting took place. The sources outlined here refer to the painting by Caspar Netscher, *A Woman Feeding a Parrot*, with a Page, 1666.

The first source is the record for the painting in the archive of art dealer Julius Böhler in Munich. It documents the painting's distinguished provenance from the collection of the Bavarian State Painting Collections, from where Böhler had purchased it on August 31, 1936. It also documents the subsequent sale in January 1937, only four months later, to the Dutch art dealer Katz in Dieren, from whom the Andriesses purchased the painting. [10] [11]

The second source, an auction sales catalog, documents the sale of the Netcher painting on June 4, 2014, by the auction house Christie's, Manson & Woods, New York. The ERR documents within the Jeu-de-Paume Database made it possible to prove that this painting had been looted from the Andriesses' collection. After its subsequent restitution to Andriesse family heirs, it was sold at Christie's for \$5,093,000. [12]

Such examples demonstrate the possibilities of reconstructing the ownership and subsequent journeys of stolen cultural plunder. While many key records in the above categories are concentrated in the German Federal Archives and the United States National Archives and Records Administration, records and source material of potential relevance for the provenance of individual stolen objects can be widely scattered across archives in numerous countries. Thanks to JDCRP'S partnership with key archival repositories in numerous countries, the future JDCRP archival platform will make many of these documents accessible and searchable for content at a document level from a central digital access point.









