
PERSECUTED JEWISH COLLECTORS



Interior of the Schloss mansion

Courtesy of the Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme (mahJ), Paris,
<https://www.mahj.org/fr/decouvrir-collections-betsalel/vue-d-une-des-pieces-de-l-hotel-particulier-d-adolphe-schloss-8>

The goal of the project *Documentation of Persecuted Jewish Collectors* is to contribute to a broader understanding of the significant cultural contribution of pre-war Jewish collectors to European cultural heritage. Each name listed exemplifies the collector's passion at the time – whether from fine arts to book, from Judaica to musical instruments and beyond – but also his or her story of robbery and loss, of persecution and often death, and post-war attempts to recover what was stolen.

As of April 2025, we are able to present an updated snapshot into our research by providing [initial data on over 3,600 persecuted Jewish collectors from 18 European countries](#): Austria, Belgium,

Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Serbia and Slovakia.

The available data for each country is different and largely depends on the level of historical research that has taken place in the country, its historical trajectory both during and after the war, its past and active restitution processes, and the availability and accessibility of archives.

Research on the project has been carried out by the following research staff:

Dr. Ruth Jolanda Weinberger, Dr. Dörte Eriskat, Ariela Braunschweig, Andrea Dunai, Malgorzata Quinkenstein, Dr. Sigalit Meidler-Waks, Phoebe Ellman, as well as by the staff members of [Austria's Commission for Provenance Research](#) and the Czech [Documentation Centre for Property Transfers of the Cultural Assets of WW II Victims](#).

Inquiries, corrections and suggestions can be sent to: info@jdcrrp.org.

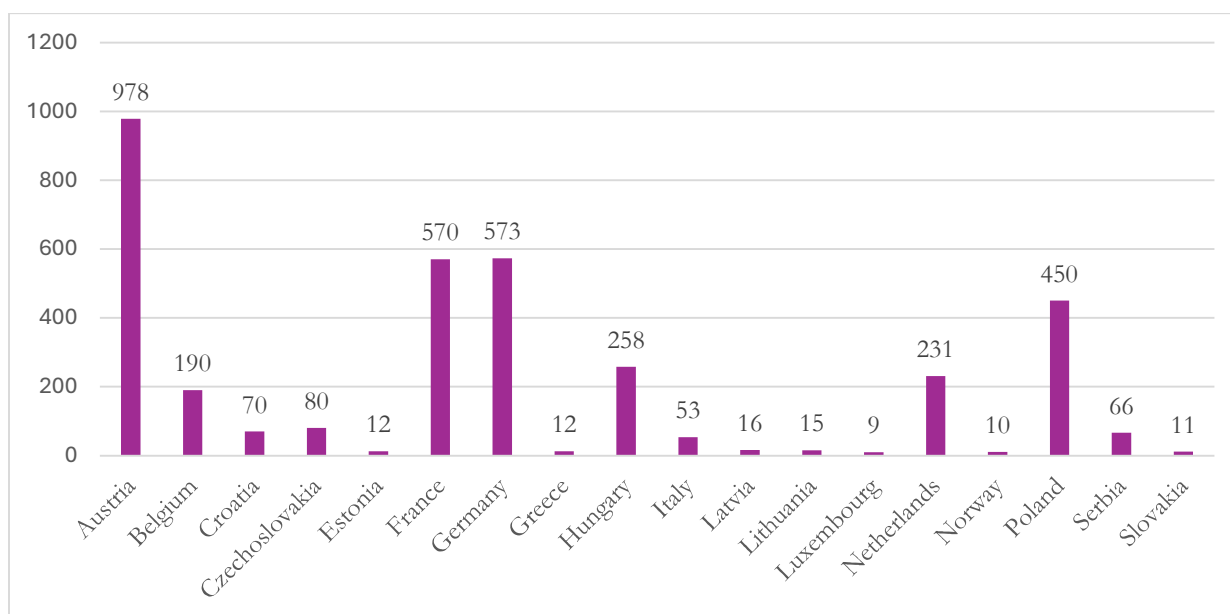
I. Overview of Researched Countries, as of April 2025

As of April 2025, the project *Documentation of Persecuted Jewish Collectors* provides [initial data on 3,603 collectors from 18 countries](#). Moreover, project researchers are currently conducting an in-depth review process of information on approximately 1,500 additional persecuted Jewish collectors from 20 countries, which includes the above-mentioned 18 countries. Research will also continue on thus far underrepresented countries, such as Italy and Greece, and on collectors from countries that have yet to be researched such as Romania and Moldavia.

Information gathered for this in-depth research provides data on a wide array of persecuted Jewish collectors, ranging from well-known names to collectors whose names have faded into history; from collections of fine arts to Judaica, books and musical instruments; from predominantly secular and western regions to more traditional and religious communities, often located in Eastern Europe.

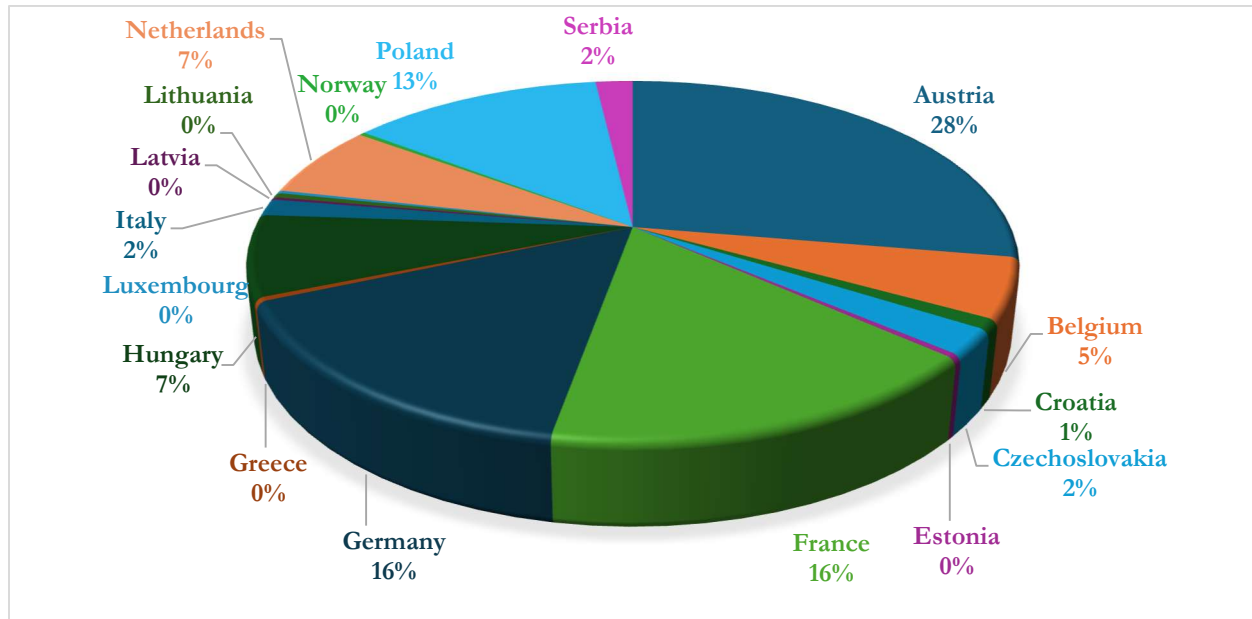
a) Overview: Initial List of Persecuted Jewish Collectors, as of April 2025

Please note that the data refers to research done, not to the number of collectors in given country.



b) Overview: Overall percentages within the initial list of persecuted Jewish Collectors, as of April 2025

Please note that the data refers to research done, not to the number of collectors in given country.



II. Historical Overview

Nazi Germany orchestrated an unprecedented looting campaign against Jewish owned cultural and religious property between 1933 and 1945, first restricting and eventually stripping Jewish collectors and communities of their rights and possessions, including objects of valuable nature and, equally important, also of personal and emotional nature.

From the start of Nazi rule, dispossession of Jews was integral to the Holocaust. The measures targeted not only financial assets but also artworks, libraries, archives, musical instruments, and Judaica. After Hitler's rise to power in 1933, the regime moved swiftly to purge Jews from cultural institutions and professions. The head of the Reichs Minister for Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels and other Nazi leaders framed Jewish artists, art dealers, collectors, and even sacred objects as part of an "ideological enemy" to be eliminated. Book burnings in 1933 signaled the Nazis' intent to eradicate Jewish and



An SA guard by a Jewish owned shop in Berlin, Germany. The poster reads "Germans! Beware! Don't buy from Jews," April 1, 1933.

Yad Vashem, Photo 70119.

This summary represents the results of the current best research efforts by the JDCRP. The JDCRP makes no representation as to the accuracy and completeness.

other “un-German” ideas. Key turning points – such as the decree that forced Jews to declare their property starting in 1938, the “*Kristallnacht*” pogrom of the same year, as well as the expansion of the Third Reich across Europe – marked surges in state-organized plunder of Jewish property. Nazi agencies like the *Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg* (ERR) coordinated theft throughout the European continent, seizing everything from Old Master paintings to Torah scrolls and musical instruments. Other Nazi looting agencies, such as the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (RSHA), specifically Amt VII within that agency, as well as the *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD) and the Gestapo (*Geheime Staatspolizei*), also played key roles in the expropriation of cultural and religious property from Jewish collectors, as did local governmental and civil collaborators.

The impact on Jewish collectors was devastating: Jews across Europe lost art collections, libraries, religious artifacts, musical instruments, and for example, books, that were an integral part of their personal lives and cultural legacies. In addition, the theft and dismantling of Jewish-owned collections had a shattering effect on European Jewish culture, which for decades had been immeasurably enriched by Jewish collectors and their collecting ambitions.

Post-war, the Allied Forces recovered significant portions of looted art and objects, but immeasurable numbers of objects previously owned by Jewish collectors remained missing or displaced. Countless objects were taken by the Soviet Trophy Brigades, justifying their plundering as rightful compensation for endured losses.

Efforts at restitution have been uneven. Western European nations undertook restitution laws in the late 1940s (with renewed initiatives decades later), whereas Eastern Europe, under communist regimes, retained many looted treasures in state repositories. Recent decades have seen renewed global focus – via international principles and national commissions – on provenance research and the return of Nazi-looted cultural property.

For more information on recent research and restitution efforts, see: “[Holocaust-Era Looted Cultural Property: A Current Worldwide Overview](#)”

III. Key Dates, Laws, and Decrees Facilitating Looting

1933–1938 (Pre-War Aryanization and Plunder): Soon after Hitler’s appointment as Chancellor in 1933, state-sanctioned theft from Jews began inside Germany. Jewish art dealers were forced out and their stock often confiscated or sold at forced discounts. On April 26, 1938, the Nazi government issued a decree requiring all Jews in Germany, as well as in annexed Austria, to register property exceeding 5,000 Reichsmarks, which *de facto* identified valuable art, books, and religious artifacts for eventual seizure. Also in Italy, which aligned itself early on with Nazi Germany, antisemitic race laws were enacted in 1938.

The *Anschluss* (annexation) of Austria in March 1938 was a catalyst for massive plundering in Austria, unprecedented in its vigor until that point: Nazi authorities and mobs looted Jewish homes and collections in Vienna immediately after the takeover. The Viennese Rothschild family, for example, had its palaces and extensive art collections aryanized (confiscated or forcibly sold) to the



View of the destroyed interior of the Hechingen synagogue the day after Kristallnacht.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Photograph 87449.

Nazi regime in 1938. Nazi policies like the Reich Flight Tax (*Reichsfluchtsteuer*) and other levies on emigrating Jews also resulted in countless cultural items being surrendered to German authorities in these years. The climax of pre-war looting came with the *Kristallnacht* pogrom of November 9–10, 1938. During this state-orchestrated night of terror, synagogues were burned and Jewish businesses and homes across Germany and Austria were ransacked. In addition to the destruction, Nazis seized ritual objects from synagogues and smashed or stole Judaica – Torah scrolls were ripped from arks and desecrated, and countless Jewish books were thrown into bonfires. In the aftermath of

Kristallnacht, Hermann Göring, one of the primary architects of the Nazi police state, issued decrees formalizing the expropriation of all Jewish property as “atonement” for the damage. Jewish owners were forced to relinquish insurance claims to the state and to transfer businesses and valuables to Aryans at token prices. By the eve of World War II, the legal and bureaucratic framework for wholesale plunder was firmly in place.

1939–1941 (Early War – Occupied Europe and Organized Looting): The German invasion of Poland in September 1939 expanded Nazi looting to a continental scale. In occupied Poland, Nazi administrators moved quickly to seize property of the dispossessed and murdered Jews. A *Haupttreuhandstelle Ost* (Main Trustee Office for the East) was set up to manage confiscated assets, and special units of the SS and military gathered artworks and rare books. In 1940, as German forces conquered Western Europe (the Netherlands, Belgium, France, etc.), the Nazi leadership issued secret orders to secure culturally significant collections, especially those owned by Jews who had fled or been deported. One pivotal directive came from Hermann Göring in July 1940: he empowered the *Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg* (ERR), an operational task force under Alfred Rosenberg, to confiscate “abandoned” or ownerless Jewish collections in occupied countries. The ERR had been initially formed to loot Masonic lodges and Jewish libraries for ideological research, but it evolved into the Nazi Party’s main looting arm across Europe. By late 1940, ERR commandos were systematically cataloguing and shipping art and archives from France and the Low Countries to Germany. In occupied Paris, the ERR set up its base at the Jeu de Paume museum, where tens of thousands of seized artworks were assembled for selection by Nazi leaders.

Meanwhile, Nazi occupation authorities in Western Europe implemented anti-Jewish laws to legitimize plunder: for instance, in Vichy France, the Aryanization law of July 1941 enabled the *Commissariat-General for Jewish Questions* to sequester Jewish-owned artworks and religious items, often in coordination with the ERR. In the East, after the June 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union, Rosenberg (now also Reich Minister for Occupied Eastern Territories) extended the ERR's



ERR sorting books in the Baltic states.
Yad Vashem, archival signature: 368.

mandate. ERR units followed the Wehrmacht into the Baltic states, Ukraine, and Belarus, targeting the rich Jewish scholarly heritage there. In *Vilna* (Vilnius) – known as the “Jerusalem of Lithuania” – the ERR looted the famed Strashun Library and the archives of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.

Similar operations unfolded in Riga, Tallinn, and Kyiv, as the Nazis aimed to obliterate Jewish presence but preserve select cultural remnants for their own propaganda or scholarship. Key decrees during this phase included Göring's November 1940 order establishing the *Möbel-Aktion* (“Furniture Action”),

which entailed emptying the apartments of deported Jews in France, Belgium, and the Netherlands – trainloads of furniture, household goods, and even pianos were sent back to the Reich to benefit German civilians bombed out of their homes. By 1941, a web of Nazi agencies – the ERR, the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (RSHA, or Reich Security Main Office, which through the Gestapo and SD seized archives and artifacts of Jewish organizations), military art protection units, and local proxy authorities – was coordinating the greatest organized theft in history.

1942–1945 (Final Phase – Intensified Plunder and Hiding the Loot): As the genocide of the Jews accelerated with the Wannsee Conference in January 1942, plunder went hand-in-hand with mass murder. In the killing fields of occupied Eastern Europe, the personal effects of Jews were routinely taken: watches, jewelry, even gold dental fillings (melted down for the Reichsbank). But cultural items were not neglected. In Greece, after the Germans occupied Salonika (Thessaloniki) in 1941, the large Sephardi Jewish community was gradually dispossessed. By 1943, when Salonika's Jews were deported to Auschwitz, the Nazis had also looted the community's revered library and archives, shipping them to Germany. In 1944, as the German army occupied Hungary, the last major European Jewish community to be targeted, special SS teams under Adolf Eichmann not only sent 437,000 Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz but also stripped them of their treasures. Most of the art and other cultural objects had been seized



Birkenau, Poland, Sorting personal belongings next to the “Canada” barracks, May 27, 1944 (Auschwitz Album, photos taken by SS photographers in Auschwitz-Birkenau during the arrival of a transport of Hungarian Jews)
Yad Vashem, Archival Signature 4522.

by the Horthy government prior to the German occupation. The famed Herzog art collection in Budapest, including works by El Greco and van Dyck owned by the Jewish Herzog family, was seized – some paintings were sent to Germany (where Soviet troops later captured them), while others were taken by Hungary’s Arrow Cross fascists. In the chaotic final year of the war, Nazi officials scrambled to hide or evacuate their loot. Thousands of crates of art and Judaica were transferred to secret storage sites: salt mines in Altaussee (Austria) and Heilbronn (Germany) and castles in Bavaria, among others.

In all, Nazi looting operations succeeded in pillaging an estimated 650,000 works of art from across Europe, alongside vast quantities of books and religious artifacts. Contemporary research suggests the book theft dwarfed even the art theft – by one estimate, the Nazis plundered 100 million or more books from occupied countries.

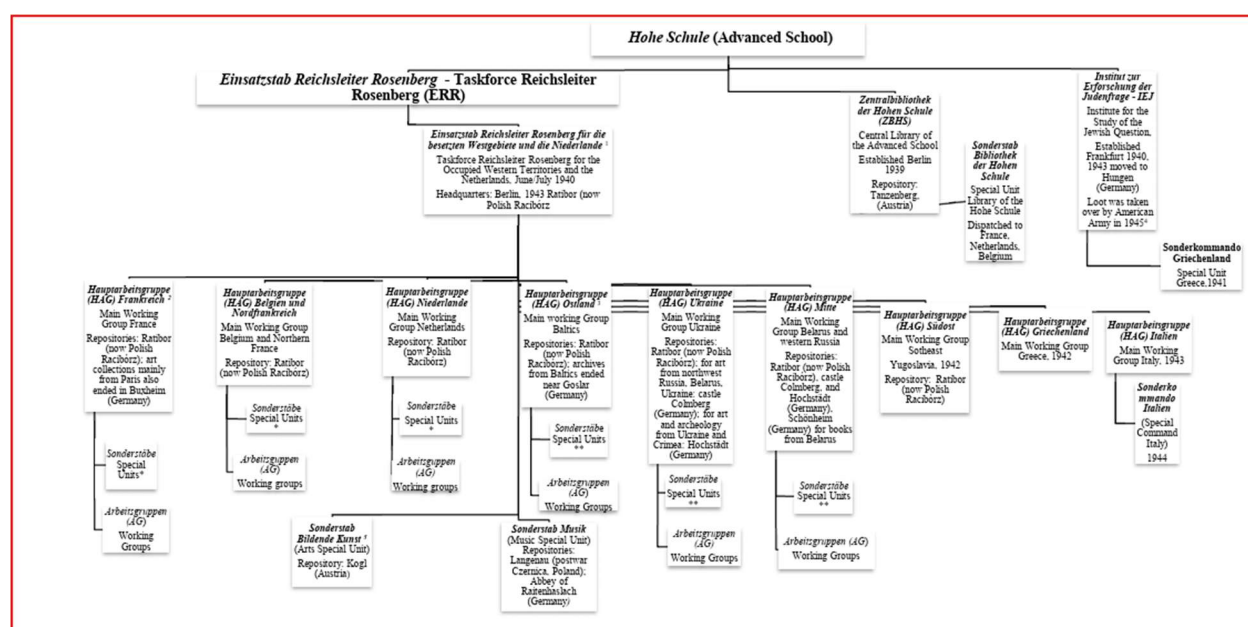
For a general overview, see for example Yad Vashem’s Holocaust timeline, <https://www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/resource-center/timeline.html> and the timeline of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/timeline/holocaust>.

IV. Brief Overview of the Main Nazi Organizations Involved in the Looting

IV.a. General

- Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR):** Rosenberg's special task force was the chief instrument for art and library plunder, especially in Western and Eastern Europe. It operated in occupied countries through local "Task Staff" units (e.g. ERR staff in Paris, Amsterdam, Brussels, Riga, Vilna, Kiev, Tallinn, etc.). The ERR coordinated the confiscation of Jewish collections and also handled the so-called *M-Aktion* (looting of furniture from Jewish homes). By 1944, the ERR had looted tens of thousands of individual artworks and millions of books, packing them into hundreds of railcars bound for the Reich.

Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg - Organizational Chart

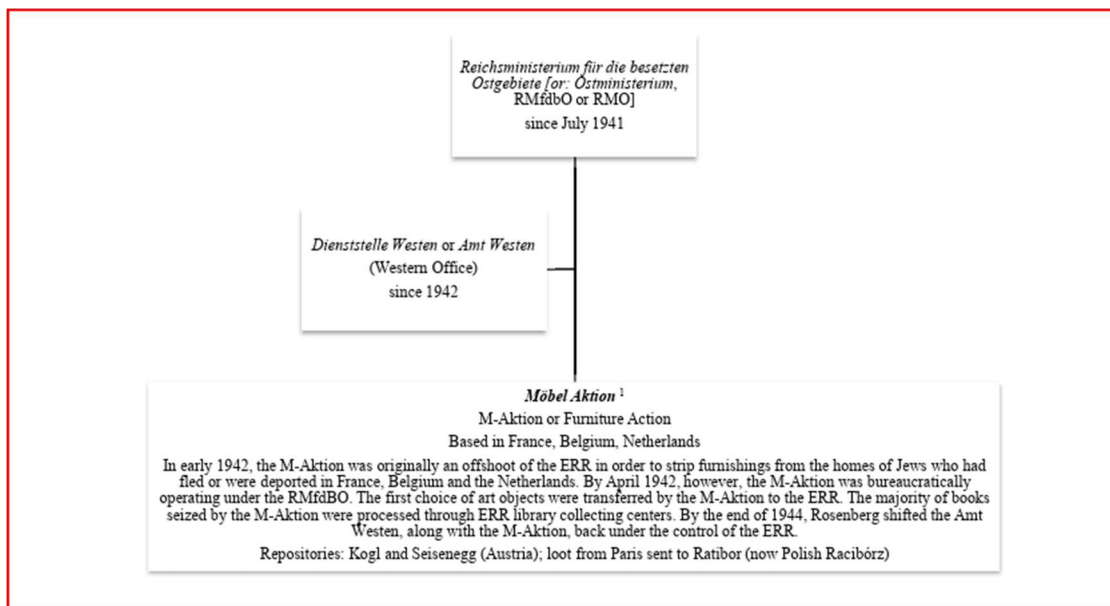


Julie-Marthe Cohen, Felicitas Heiman Jelinek, Ruth Jolanda Weinberger, Handbook on Judaica Provenance Research: Ceremonial Objects, 2019, p. 170, <https://art.claimscon.org/work-provenance-research-archives/judaica/handbook-judaica-provenance-research-ceremonial-objects/>

- Reichsministerium für die Besetzten Ostgebiete (Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories):** Created in July 1941 under Rosenberg's leadership, this ministry oversaw civilian administration in the Soviet-occupied lands. It worked closely with the Wehrmacht and SS to exploit resources, including cultural treasures. While the ERR (a Party organization) did the hands-on looting, Rosenberg's ministry provided political backing and logistics in the East – for example, arranging shipments of looted libraries to Germany and selecting Judaica for the Frankfurt Institute. The ministry's mandate explicitly included "securing" archival and museum materials from Jewish and Masonic institutions for use by Nazi scholars.

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Reichsministerium für die besetzten Ostgebiete - Organizational Chart



Julie-Marthe Cohen, Felicitas Heiman Jelinek, Ruth Jolanda Weinberger, Handbook on Judaica Provenance Research: Ceremonial Objects, 2019, p. 172, <https://art.claimscon.org/work-provenance-research-archives/judaica/handbook-judaica-provenance-research-ceremonial-objects/>

- **Gestapo and RSHA (Reichssicherheitshauptamt):** The Secret State Police (Gestapo), as part of the RSHA, played a key role in expropriating Jewish property inside the Third Reich and occupied territories. The Gestapo enforced anti-Jewish decrees, froze Jewish bank accounts, and sealed homes after deportations, thereby enabling other agencies to collect the belongings. In Vienna, a Gestapo office known as the *Vugesta* (*Die Verwaltungsstelle für jüdisches Umzugsgut der Gestapo*; Vienna Agency for the Administration of Confiscated Property) organized auctions of art and household goods taken from Jews. The RSHA's Amt VII (Ideological Research) also ran its own library program, seizing Jewish books and rabbinic manuscripts (often competing with Rosenberg's ERR for the same material). In 1942, the RSHA even established a "Central Library of the SS" in Berlin stocked largely with looted Jewish and Masonic literature.
- **Military and Civil Authorities in Occupied Countries:** In some cases, regular army units and occupation authorities initiated looting or cooperated with Nazi art agents. In Italy (after 1943), German *Kunstschutz* officers ostensibly tasked with protecting art removed works from Jewish owners under the guise of safeguarding them. In the Netherlands, the occupying administration set up a puppet bank (Lippmann, Rosenthal & Co.) to which Jews were forced to surrender valuables, including art and jewels, before deportation; this made it easier for Nazi officials to appropriate those assets. Local collaborationist governments also passed laws mirroring Nazi anti-Jewish decrees – for example, the Independent State of Croatia in 1941 required Jews to register property, facilitating Ustaša and German seizure of Jewish

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ceremonial objects (the Nazis later pressured Croatia to turn over collections of Judaica for the projected Prague Museum).

IV.b. Overview of Nazi Looting Agencies by Country

Nazi looting operations were carried out by a variety of organizations, as noted above. Below is a snapshot of the major Nazi (or sanctioned collaborationist) agencies that were involved in cultural plunder in each country researched for the project “Persecuted Jewish Collectors.” Local spoliation agencies, based on country specific anti-Jewish race laws, such as Italy’s enactment of its own antisemitic race laws in 1938, were often present prior to the Nazi regime. Some of these racist laws and subsequent looting waves and agencies are noted, however, emphasis in this overview is on the various kinds and types of Nazi looting agencies present in the eighteen countries presented here.

Austria (part of Nazi Germany following the Anschluss in March 1938): Shortly after the March 1938 *Anschluss*, Austria’s annexation with Germany, the first unregulated, wild robberies occurred against Jewish owned cultural and religious property. The official looting was managed by the local Gestapo and the Nazi party apparatus, with the *Vuegsta* (*Die Verwaltungsstelle für jüdisches Umzugsgut der Gestapo*) in Vienna playing a key role in the handling and sale of seized cultural and religious property. On the basis of specially created legal foundations, such as tax demands and export bans, expropriations and confiscations were further carried out. Some Austrian art was further earmarked for the *Sonderauftrag Linz* (Hitler’s Linz museum special commission under art dealer Hans Posse).

Belgium (occupied 1940–1944): Between 1940 and 1944, the *Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg* Western Office (*Amt Westen*) had a branch in Brussels (led by Kurt von Behr), which primarily seized art and libraries, including Freemason collections. The *Möbel-Aktion*, which was active from 1942 onwards, was primarily run locally by ERR staff. It emptied thousands of homes of deported or fled Jews, shipping personal and religious items to Germany. Artworks found during the M-Aktion were inventoried and sent to ERR depots. The ERR also received crates of art seized by the SS *Devisenschutzkommando* (DSK, “Currency Protection Commando”) – an SS looting unit – which in 1941 raided wealthy Jewish collections and handed them to the ERR for shipment to Germany.

Croatia (Independent State of Croatia, 1941–1945): KOMZA (*Povjerenstvo za sabiranje i čuvanje umjetnina i starina*), the Commission for the Gathering and Protection of Cultural Monuments and Antiquities, was an Ustaše-run commission established by the Nazi-aligned Croatian regime in 1941. It was led by Croatian officials under the Ministry of Culture and organized the looting of Jewish-owned art, religious objects, and antiques. The Ustaše regime carried out its looting independently from the Nazi regime, although Nazi envoys intervened for high-value items.

Czech Republic (Bohemia/Moravia Protectorate, 1939–1945): The Protectorate authorities and SS Central Office for Jewish Emigration in Prague, which was active between 1939 and 1943, orchestrated the confiscation of Jewish owned cultural and religious property. Under its supervision, the Central Jewish Museum in Prague was established in 1942, which during its time amassed over 140,000 Judaica artifacts, including Torah scrolls, ritual objects and books from dissolved communities. Rosenberg’s ERR did not run operations in the Protectorate as extensively – instead,

Reinhard Heydrich's RSHA (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*) Amt IV and Amt VII were involved in the looting of Jewish owned property, mostly Jewish books. The Gestapo and the *Sicherheitspolizei* (SD) played a significant role in the confiscation and looting of Jewish-owned cultural properties, including archive and books.

Estonia (Reichskommissariat Ostland, 1941–1944): Estonia was administered by the *Reichskommissariat Ostland*, which was based in Riga, Latvia. The ERR's Work Group Estonia (*Arbeitsgruppe* Reval/Tallinn) handled the looting of libraries, archives and artworks. The Einsatzkommando 1a (Security Police) which carried out killings also collected Jewish artifacts, as well as the *Sicherheitsdienst* which arrived before the ERR in the country.

France (occupied 1940–1944): The *Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg*, headquartered in Paris, was primarily responsible for the looting of cultural and religious property owned by Jewish collectors between 1940 and 1944. Within the ERR, the *Sonderstab Bildende Kunst* (Fine Arts unit) catalogued paintings, while the *Sonderstab Musik* seized musical scores/instruments. The *Möbel-Aktion* (M-Aktion or Furniture Action) in France was run by ERR sub-units code-named *Dienststelle Westen* using forced labor from French prisoners to pack goods. Hermann Göring's art staff, such as Bruno Lohse, also operated semi-independently in Paris, while sometimes making use of the ERR seizures. In addition, artworks were seized for Hitler's envisioned museum in Linz. On the French side, Vichy's Commissariat *Général aux Questions Juives* (CGQJ) under Xavier Vallat (and later Darquier) aryanized Jewish property in the unoccupied Zone. While they initially attempted to control the seized cultural and religious artifacts, the ERR and the German embassy soon were in charge of these expropriations as well.

Germany (1933-1945): Agencies involved in taking cultural and religious property from German Jews included the Gestapo, primarily by sealing and confiscating property of emigrants and deportees, tax offices, by assessing "flight tax" and fines, and often by taking art/valuables as payment, and Amt VII of the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (RSHA), which collected books for the SS library. The ideological research arm of Amt VII was headed by Paul Dittel after 1942. He oversaw the collection of Jewish religious books and ethnographic material for SS "research" purposes. These party and SS agencies largely cooperated – Rosenberg's staff and Himmler's RSHA had an understanding to share materials (though rivalry existed, they divided collections by interest area). For instance, Hebrew books went to Rosenberg's institute, while the RSHA kept some items for a projected "Jewish museum" that never materialized. In addition, Hitler's *Sonderauftrag Linz* under Posse scoured the German art market for pieces from Jews forced to sell earlier, as well as the various establishments under the *Einsatzstab Rosenberg & Hobe Schule Institutes*. The ERR's headquarters in Berlin coordinated the intake of looted libraries and Judaica from across Europe, while Alfred Rosenberg's Institute for Research on the Jewish Question in Frankfurt was established in 1941 specifically to house stolen Jewish books, archives, and ritual artifacts. Its director, Johann Wilhelm von Stroop, and later Dr. Franz Six of the RSHA's Amt VII) received tens of thousands of volumes sent by the ERR (i.e. libraries from France, Belgium, the Netherlands).

Greece (occupied 1941–1944): Between 1941 and 1944, Greece was under German, Italian and Bulgarian control. In the German zone (Salonika [Thessaloniki] and later Athens), the Wehrmacht Economic Office under Dr. Max Merten orchestrated economic plunder, including Jewish property. The *Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg* was active in Greece from March until November 1941. It

operated in two teams, with one being located in Salonika (Thessaloniki) and the other in Athens. The top priority was the large Sephardic community in Salonika (Thessaloniki). Following Italy's surrender in September 1943, Germany took over Italian-held territories, including Athens, and the German Embassy in Athens took custody of Jewish artifacts. German forces began withdrawing in late 1944 with the advance of the Soviet Red Army.

Hungary (occupied March 1944 – 1945): During Miklós Horthy's regency in Hungary (1920-1944), the government implemented policies that led to the confiscation of Jewish-owned cultural and religious property. Starting in 1938, a series of four main anti-Jewish laws were enacted, progressively stripping Hungarian Jews of their rights and properties. After Germany's occupation of Hungary in March 1944, *Eichmann's Sonder Einsatzkommando* (known as "*Sondereinsatzkommando Eichmann*") was effectively in charge of Jewish affairs, including plunder. Located in Budapest, the *Sondereinsatzkommando Eichmann* worked with the Hungarian Government Commissioner for Economic Affairs of the Jews (László Endre) to seize valuables. The Arrow Cross Party (Nyilas) in late 1944 took over and engaged in wholesale robbery of Jewish homes and ghettos. Many stolen goods were loaded onto the Hungarian Gold Train by Hungarian officials (State Treasury). Meanwhile, German soldiers and SS stationed in Hungary helped themselves to art and gold – a special unit under Deputy Reich Regent Veessenmayer coordinated sending some art to Germany. In late 1944, the Taskforce Italy (*Arbeitsgruppe Italien*) of the *Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg* briefly operated in Hungary as it was retreating through the country.

Italy (occupied by Germany 1943–1945 in the north): Italy aligned itself early on with Nazi Germany and enacted its own antisemitic race laws in 1938. By 1939, Italy's Ministry of Education issued a circular restricting the export of antiques and artworks. After Italy's unconditional surrender to the Allies in September 1943, Germany occupied northern and central Italy, as well as the Italian zones in Yugoslavia, Greece, and France, in addition to the ERR expanding into Italian territory. A *Sonderkommando Italien* (later an *Arbeitsgruppe* under ERR) was set up in Verona by early 1944. This unit targeted libraries and archives of Jewish communities, including those of Rome, Milan and Trieste, and Masonic lodges in northern Italy. In the German-occupied north (Italian Social Republic), also *Kunstschutz* officers (art protection, a Wehrmacht unit under Lt. Col. Viktor von Loewenstein) listed Jewish-owned art.

Latvia (Reichskommissariat Ostland, 1941–1944): Under Alfred Rosenberg's ministry, an ERR *Hauptarbeitsgruppe* was based in Riga, which covered operations in all of Latvia. From 1941 until 1944, ERR officers led operations aimed at seizing Jewish cultural and religious property. Major targets were the libraries and archives of Latvia's pre-war Jewish community and organizations. In Riga, for example, the Judaica collections of synagogues and the Jewish Museum were looted. The German civil administration under *Reichskommissar* Heinrich Lohse cooperated with the ERR, issuing decrees that all "abandoned" Jewish books or ritual objects be turned over. Local Latvian auxiliaries often helped identify hidden Jewish valuables.

Lithuania (Reichskommissariat Ostland, 1941–1944): In occupied Lithuania, the *Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg* carried out one of the largest thefts of Jewish cultural heritage. From 1941 onwards, the ERR in Vilnius, which was one of the major centers of Jewish learning, often labeled as the "Jerusalem of Lithuania," targeted its treasures and looted the YIVO's Institute library and archives, plus collections from additional synagogues and yeshivas. By 1943, roughly 30,000 Hebrew

and Yiddish volumes from Vilnius had been processed and packed by the ERR – notably with forced labor from the Vilna Ghetto’s so-called “Paper Brigade,” who were made to sort and catalogue Jewish books for Nazi use. Many rare Jewish manuscripts and religious artifacts were set aside for shipment to Frankfurt for Rosenberg’s institute or Berlin, while duplicates and lesser items were slated for destruction. Aside from the ERR, also the RSHA (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*) was partaking in the plunder and looted some Torah scrolls and ritual objects.

Luxembourg (planned annexation 1940 as Gau Moselland): After Luxembourg’s occupation followed by a period of military administration, the country was placed under a German civil administration under Gauleiter Gustav Simon, the *Gauleitung Luxemburg*. From 1941 onwards, all Jewish property in Luxembourg was confiscated by German authorities. This included the synagogue’s ceremonial objects, which were sent to Germany, and private art or book collections of Jewish families. The process was managed by the Luxembourg Gestapo and finance office: Jewish homes were inventoried, and valuables, including furniture, art and for example Judaica, were either sold or transferred to Reich agencies. No dedicated art unit existed due to the small size of the country’s collections, and any notable art that was found was forwarded to Hitler’s envisioned Museum.

Netherlands (occupied 1940–1945): The *Reichskommissariat Niederlande* was administered by Arthur Seyss-Inquart who, in 1941, set up *LiRo* (Lippmann, Rosenthal & Co. Bank) as the repository for confiscated Jewish valuables. Jewish residents were thus ordered to surrender valuables to LiRo, which then turned them over to German control, unless paintings or antique books were specifically flagged for the art-looting units. The *Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg*, Amsterdam branch, was active between 1940 and 1944. The ERR in the Netherlands was headed by Dr. Gerhard Utikal, later Willy Rath, and was responsible for the looting of Jewish and Freemasonic libraries, archives, and, artworks. The *M-Aktion* (Furniture Action) was active in the Netherlands from 1942 and subsequently looted about 30,000 Jewish homes. The *M-Aktion* was administered both by the ERR and the *Dienststelle Mühlmann*. The *Dienststelle Mühlmann* was effectively a parallel art-looting outfit, which operated semi-autonomously by securing hundreds of Dutch-owned artworks for the Reich. In addition, the *Sicherheitsdienst* SD (Security Service) in The Hague dealt with libraries and archives. Furthermore, many Dutch Jewish archives were handed to SS-*Hauptsturmführer* Willy Lages (SD) who shipped them to Germany.

Norway (occupied 1940–1945): In Norway, the looting of Jewish property was organized by the collaborationist Quisling administration with the Norwegian State Police actively seizing Jewish cultural and religious property. The Gestapo in Oslo administered the arrests as well as property sequestration of deported Jews and transferred assets to the Norwegian treasury. There was no separate Nazi art unit in Norway; instead, after the mass arrest of Norwegian Jews in October–November 1942, Quisling’s regime set up a Liquidation Committee for confiscated Jewish assets. By law of November 26, 1942, all property of Jews was seized by the state. The process was overseen by Quisling’s Finance Department (Minister Frederik Prytz) and executed by the Norwegian police. The German occupation authorities (Reichskommissar Josef Terboven and the SS) closely supervised this process and took custody of items of particular interest.

Poland (occupied 1939–1945: areas annexed to Reich & General Government): In territories annexed to Reich, the *Haupttreuhandstelle Ost* (HTO, Main Trustee Office East) was the main looting

agency handling the confiscation of Jewish-owned cultural and religious property. Formed in October 1939, HTO spoliated Jewish property in areas such as Łódź and Poznań on a massive scale. At the same time, the Governor Hans Frank of the *Generalgouvernement* (GG; General Government), which oversaw territories like Warsaw, Lviv, and Lublin, managed the spoliation of Jewish-owned property in these parts of Poland, which were carried out by the Security Police (*Einsatzgruppen* and *Sicherheitsdienst*, SD). The SD confiscated Jewish archives, libraries, and religious items during and after the 1939 invasion. At the same time, the *Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit* (Institute for German Ostarbeit) in Cracow gathered Judaica, and by 1942 held thousands of Jewish ritual objects (menorahs, scrolls, etc.) taken from synagogues across the General Government. However, by 1943 to 1944, as the focus shifted to hiding loot from the advancing Red Army (Trophy Brigades), carloads of Jewish books and Torah scrolls from Poland were evacuated to the Reich, some of which were discovered in post-war Germany. In addition, the *Sonderkommando Paulson*, which was set up by Goering in 1940, was tasked to secure Polish art for Linz and Germany, which included Jewish-owned art. The competition between the Governor and the HTO escalated to the point that Hermann Göring brokered a deal between the two, whereby the HTO handled “Aryanization” of commercial assets, while art looting within the General Government was left to Frank’s appointees like Kajetan Mühlmann. The *Dienststelle Mühlmann* emerged when Poland was occupied in 1939, and Hermann Göring dispatched Dr. Kajetan Mühlmann as a special delegate for securing art in the General Government. The *Dienststelle Mühlmann* was active between 1939 and 1940, and Mühlmann’s team cataloged and seized major art collections – including those of Polish state museums, nobility, and Jewish collectors. By 1941, Mühlmann left for the Netherlands, and Frank established his own *Kunstschutz* (Art Protection) unit to continue looting. That unit cooperated with the *Haupttreuhandstelle Ost* (HTO) and police to comb through the remaining Jewish properties. The *Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg* (ERR) didn’t have an official branch named in Poland, mostly due to Rosenberg’s and Frank’s animosity towards each other. However, from 1942 until 1944, the ERR collected leftover Jewish books from Poland and incorporating them into the ERR’s pan-European library plunder. For example, after the Warsaw Ghetto’s destruction in April 1943, ERR sifted through the ruins for surviving books and manuscripts.

Serbia (occupied 1941-1944): Serbia was under German Military Command in Serbia, with a local puppet government in place, which issued decrees turning all Jewish assets over to German *Besatzungsverwaltung*, and the Serbian Special Police helped in gathering looted property. From 1941 through 1944, they oversaw the expropriation of Jewish property after orchestrating the murder of nearly all Serbian Jews by mid-1942. Jewish synagogues and community buildings in Belgrade, Novi Sad, etc., were emptied: the contents (Torah scrolls, ritual silver, community archives) were inventoried by the German *Besatzungsverwaltung*. Much of this loot was handed to the *Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg* after it arrived in Belgrade and established a main office in Belgrade. By 1942, the ERR started to ship out Jewish books and archival documents from Serbia (along with Freemason lodge archives) to Germany.

Slovakia (Slovak State, 1939-1945): In the Nazi-aligned Slovak Republic under President Jozef Tiso, the looting of Jewish property was legalized through “Aryanization.” From 1940 to 1944, Slovak agencies like the Central Economic Office (*Ústredný hospodársky úrad*) led handled the transfer of Jewish businesses and also took control of Jewish community properties. When 70,000 Slovak Jews were deported in 1942, the state seized their remaining belongings – synagogues were closed

and their ritual objects confiscated by the Slovak Ministry of Education or Museum authorities. After the Slovak National Uprising in August 1944, Germany occupied Slovakia militarily. At that point, German SS units, specifically the *Einsatzkommando Eichmann* led by Alois Brunner, took charge of rounding up remaining Jews (1944–45) and plundering whatever was left. Much of the seized cultural and religious Jewish-owned property was handed over to the *Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg* or sent to Prague’s Jewish Museum (which received some Slovak synagogue items in 1944).

V. Overview of the Main Archival and Other Resources: General Databases, Archives, and Genealogy Platforms

- Yad Vashem – The Central Database of Shoah Victims’ Names, <https://yvng.yadvashem.org/>
- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum – Database of Holocaust Survivor and Victim Names, <https://www.ushmm.org/remember/resources-holocaust-survivors-victims/database-of-holocaust-survivor-and-victim-names>
- United States National Archives and Records Administration, Fold3 (Holocaust Collection), <http://www.fold3.com>
- Arolsen Archives (formerly International Tracing Service), International Center on Nazi Persecution, <https://collections.arolsen-archives.org/>
- Bundesarchiv (German Federal Archives), <https://invenio.bundesarchiv.de>
- Landesarchiv Berlin (Berlin National Archive; restitution files), <https://www.landesarchiv-berlin.findbuch.net/php/main.php>
- Center for Jewish History, which includes the Leo Baeck Institute and Yivo Institute for Jewish Research, <https://search.cjh.org/primo-explore/search?vid=beta>
- Archivportal-D, Digital archival material and information on archives from all over Germany, <https://www.archivportal-d.de/>
- Cultural Plunder by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg – Database of Art Objects at the Jeu de Paume, <https://errproject.org/jeudepaume/>
- Ancestry, <http://www.ancestry.com>
- MyHeritage, <http://www.myheritage.com>
- Geni, <http://www.geni.com>

For a more detailed overview of research resources per country, see Appendix 2.

For additional information, see: <https://art.claimscon.org/resources/overview-of-worldwide-looted-art-and-provenance-research-databases/>

Appendix 1

TIMELINE – LOOTED CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS PROPERTY ***With Reference Primarily to Germany***

1933

April 1, 1933 - Reich-wide boycott of all "non-Aryan" businesses.

April 7, 1933 - [Law on the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service](#): The "Aryan Paragraph" (Paragraph 3), which is formulated in this law for the first time, prohibits the employment of "non-Aryans" in the civil service, who are to be immediately retired.

May 10, 1933 - [Book Burning](#): Book burnings take place in 34 university towns and cities with works of prominent Jewish, liberal, and leftist writers ending up in bonfires. The book burnings stand as a powerful symbol of Nazi intolerance and censorship.

July 1933 – The [Kulturbund Deutscher Juden](#) was founded by the doctor and conductor Kurt Singer in Berlin with the aim to create earning opportunities for the many Jewish artists and academics dismissed from their place of employment following the Law on the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service. Based on the Berlin model, over 35 regional cultural federations with 70,000 members were set up throughout Germany.

September 17, 1933 - [Reich representation of German Jews established](#). The organization is headed by [Rabbi Leo Baeck](#).

September 22, 1933: [Law on the formation of the Reich Chamber of Culture](#): The Reich Chamber of Culture [Reichskulturkammer], a government agency in Nazi Germany, is established at the instigation of Reich Minister Joseph Goebbels as a professional organization of all German creative artists.

1934

January 24, 1934 – Establishment of the “[Plenipotentiary of the Führer for the Supervision of the Entire Intellectual and Ideological Enlightenment of the Nazi Party](#).”

May 18, 1934 - [Law Regarding Changes in the Reich Flight Tax](#) Regulations.

Individual Case: [Max Silberberg](#), who owns a 143-piece collection of Impressionist art, which is considered one of the finest private collections in Europe, is [forced to sell his art collection at one of the so-called “Jew-auctions” in Berlin](#). These auctions are organized by the Nazi Chamber of Culture throughout Germany between 1933 and 1938.

1935

April 1935 – Establishment of the “[Reichsverband Jüdischer Kulturbünde](#)” (“Reich Association of Jewish Cultural Federations”), thereby placing all members of the *Kulturbund Deutscher Juden* under this new umbrella organization tightly controlled by the National Socialist regime.

1936: see general timeline, i.e. <https://www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/resource-center/timeline.html>

1937

July 18, 1937 - "[Great German Art Exhibition](#)": the first Great German Art Exhibition (Große Deutsche Kunstausstellung [GDK]) opens at the House of German Art in Munich. The exhibition occurs annually from 1937 to 1944 and showcases hundreds of works by selected German artists.

July 20, 1937 – "[Degenerate Art](#)" exhibit opens: In 1937, Nazi Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels plans to show the public the forms of art that the regime deems unacceptable and organizes the confiscation and exhibition of so-called “degenerate” art.

1938

March - August 1938 - Antisemitic Regulations:

March 23, 1938 - [Recognition of Jewish organizations revoked](#): The third regulation to the Citizenship Law passes in Nuremberg defining Jewish businesses and enterprises. From then on, if an owner or partner in a business is defined as a Jew, the company is considered Jewish and has to be registered as such. This regulation paves the way for compulsory Aryanization and leads to the banishment of Jews from economic life under the provisions of the Four-Year Plan.

March 29, 1938 - [Implementation of Provisions on the Appointment of Temporary Administrators](#): attempts are made to control the “uncontrolled Aryanizations”. April 26, 1938 - [Decree on the Registration of Jewish Property](#).

April 13, 1938 - [Law on the Appointment of Temporary Administrators and Supervisors](#).

May 31, 1938 - [Law on the Confiscation of Products of Degenerate Art](#).

June 14, 1938 - Jewish businesses registered since April are marked.

June 18, 1938 - Reich Minister and head of the Reich Chancellery Hans Heinrich Lammers issues the [Führervorbehalt](#) (Führer Reservation) that provides Hitler with the legal basis to secure art and assets, something that already had taken place.

August 17, 1938 - [Compulsory middle name for Jews](#) (Law on Alteration of Family and Personal Names): “Israel” for men, “Sarah” for women. March - April 1938 - "uncontrolled (wild) Aryanizations" in Austria: The [annexation of Austria \(Anschluss\)](#) is accompanied by protracted antisemitic eruptions and humiliations of Jews by Austrian citizens under German

patronage: Jews are dismissed from their positions in theaters, popular cultural institutions, and public libraries; soon afterwards, they are banned from universities and colleges; synagogues are desecrated and Jews are arrested and held in detention until they sign away their property.

November 12, 1938 - [Decree for the Elimination of Jews from German Economic Life](#) and [Atonement Tax on the Jews of German Nationality](#).

November 21, 1938 - [JUVA - Judenvermögensabgabe](#) (Jewish Capital Levy).

November 1938 - February 1939: "[Judenaktion](#)" - The so-called "Judenaktion" refers to the concentrated "seizure" of art and cultural objects by the Gestapo in Munich. More than seventy private residences of Jewish collectors are invaded. The Gestapo officers enter the homes of Jewish collectors, each with an art expert, to keep a record of the art objects, antiques, carpets, furniture, silver objects, or porcelains to be seized, most of which are "museum-worthy." In most cases, the objects are immediately transported away. Only in individual cases are they stored in sealed rooms and collected later.

December 3, 1938 – "Decree on the Use of Jewish Property" orders the forced sale of movable and immovable assets. Jews are only allowed to sell cultural and valuable objects worth more than 1,000 Reichsmark through state agencies.

1939

February 21, 1939 – Third Order on the Registration of Jewish Property: All gold, platinum and silver objects, as well as precious stones and pearls have to be surrendered to public purchasing offices.

March 1939 – Italy: Ministry of Education issues circular "Measures for the Defense of the National Artistic Heritage now in the hands of the Jews" (circular, No. 43), which asks the offices responsible for granting export licenses for antiques and artworks to hinder and discourage such exports.

May 30 - June 29, 1939: [Galerie Fischer \(Luzern\) exhibition: Gemälde und Plastiken Moderner Meister aus Deutschen Museen](#).

June 26, 1939 – Hitler appoints [Hans Posse](#), one of his chief advisors and the highly respected director of the Dresden Gemäldegalerie, to take charge of the "Sonderauftrag Linz" (Special Project Linz). (After Posse's death in 1942, [Hermann Voss](#) takes over the Sonderauftrag Linz.)

October 6, 1939 - "Haupttreuhandstelle Ost" (HTO, Central Trustees Office-East). established in Poland to counter unorganized looting.

October 1939 - "Kommando Paulson" starts confiscating archival records and libraries in Warsaw.

November 15, 1939 - "[Vermögensverkehrsstelle](#)" (Property Transaction Office) established.

December 16, 1939 - Hans Frank issues a decree to loot all art collections in Poland (By January 1940, Frank amends his decree to also include libraries and archival holdings.)

1940

January 15, 1940 - [Decree on the Treatment of Enemy Property](#).

January 29, 1940 – Adolf Hitler orders Alfred Hitler to loot Jewish and Masonic cultural treasures.

January 24, 1940 - Jewish property in Generalgouvernement registered.

January 29, 1940 - Establishment of the “[Hohe Schule](#)” (Advanced School): The Hohe Schule, to be established after the war, is envisioned as the center for National Socialist ideological and educational research and an alternative to universities for Nazi elites.

March 1940 - Inauguration of the [Institute for the Study of the Jewish Question](#) (“Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage,” IEJ) in Frankfurt.

May 23, 1940 - Ordinance on Enemy Property in the Occupied Territories of the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg.

June 17, 1940 – Enemy Property Ordinance enacted in northern France.

June 21, 1940 – Enemy Property Ordinance enacted in France’s Departments Seine, Seine-et-Orse and Seine-et-Marne.

July 4, 1940 – Enemy Property Ordinance enacted in remaining occupied French territory.

July 17, 1940 – Establishment of the [Einsatzstab Reichleiter Rosenberg \(ERR\)](#) and Establishment of the Western office of the ERR (“Amt Westen”) in German-occupied Paris.

September - December 1940 - [Confiscation of “ownerless” Jewish art collections](#): Hitler orders Rosenberg to confiscate all Jewish art collections as these objects are now deemed "ownerless" by Nazi decree. At that time, Jews in most of Europe are labeled "stateless" and thereby no longer hold property rights.

Fall 1940 - ERR sets up a unit in Paris, headed by Bruno Lohse and Kurt von Behr.

September 7, 1940 - [VUGESTA \(The Gestapo Office for the Disposal of the Property of Jewish Emigrants\)](#) starts operating in Vienna.

September 7, 1940 - [Decree on Jewish Property in Luxembourg](#)

October 1940 - Antisemitic regulations in the Vichy regime:

October 4, 1940 - Proclamation of the “Statut Juif.”

October 5, 1940 - Vichy decree pertaining to the administration of Jewish-owned assets under sequestration.

October 7, 1940 – Vichy decree retracted the 1871 Crémieux-laws resulting in the loss of French citizenship for Jews from Algeria.

October - December 1940 - Registration and administration of Jewish properties

October 22, 1940 - Registration of Jewish businesses in the Netherlands.

October 28, 1940 - Registration of Jewish property in Belgium.

December 1, 1940 - “[Oneg Shabbat](#)” [clandestine archives](#) established: Emanuel Ringelblum, a Warsaw-based historian prominent in Jewish self-aid efforts, establishes a clandestine organization that aims to provide while the ghetto exists an accurate record of events taking place in German-occupied Poland.

December 12, 1940 - Creation of an administrative office for Jewish and emigrant assets in Luxembourg.

1941

February 7, 1941 - Jewish property and that of other emigrants in Luxembourg is placed under German administration.

February - August 1941 - Netherlands: Administration of confiscated Jewish property.

March 21, 1941 - “[Economic Judaization Ordinance](#)”: The enactment creates the basis for the “Aryanization” of Jewish businesses in the Netherlands. Jewish businesses can now be taken over, expropriated, and sold by administrators or trustees (administrative or liquidation trustees).

April-May 1941 - Croatia- Legal Provisions on the Confiscation of Art.

April 19, 1941 - [Legal Provision on the Preservation of Croatian National Property](#).

April 30, 1941 - [Legal Provision on the Appointment of Commissioners in Business Enterprises](#).

May 2, 1941 - [Legal Provision on the Establishment of an Office for Economic Reconstruction](#).

May 16, 1941 - [Legal Provision on the Duties and Rights of Commissioners Appointed by Business Enterprises](#).

May 23, 1941 – Jews in Belgium are forced to declare their property.

May 29, 1941 - [Decree issued by the Führer and the Reichskanzler regarding the utilization of confiscated property from enemies of the Reich](#) August 8, 1941 - [First “Liro Ordinance”](#): The first “Liro Ordinance” compels Jews in the Netherlands to deposit cash amounts and checks above an exemption limit of 1,000 guilders into an account of Bankhaus Lippmann, Rosenthal & Co. (Liro Bank) that serves as an administrative agency for the registration and liquidation of Jewish assets.

June 2, 1941 – Jews in the unoccupied French territories need to be registered.

June 5, 1941 - [Implementation Order on the Legal Provisions on the Vacating and Occupancy of Residential and Business Premises for Reasons of Public Safety](#).

June 5, 1941 - [Legal Provisions on Preventing the Concealment of Jewish Property](#).

June 5, 1941 - [Legal Provision on the Expropriation of Buildings in Favour of the State](#).

June 12, 1941 - [Legal Provisions on the Expropriation of Printing Houses](#).

June 24, 1941 - [Legal Provision on the Establishment of the State Directorate for Reconstruction](#).

July 22, 1941 - Economic destruction of Serbia's Jewry with forced aryanizations.

Summer 1941 - Bulgaria: Jewish businesses and apartments expropriated.

September 1941 - ERR divisions in Vilnius and Kaunas established with the goal to systematically loot Jewish cultural and religious possessions (i.e. Strashun, Balosher, and YIVO libraries).

October 10, 1941 - [Legal Order on the Nationalization of Jewish Property and Jewish Business Enterprises](#).

October 30, 1942 - [Legal Provision on the Nationalization of Jewish Property](#).

November 25, 1941 - [Eleventh Decree to the Reich Citizenship Law](#): The 11th Ordinance to the Reich Citizenship Law states that Jews who reside abroad lose their German citizenship and become stateless, thereby losing their property which automatically falls to the German Reich. In an additional circular, this provision is also extended to Jews deported to the occupied territories, ghettos, and concentration camps.

November 27, 1941 – Reich Security Main Office (RSHA) decree concerning Jewish movable property: Jews are forbidden to dispose of their movable property.

December 3, 1941 – Extension of the Eleventh Decree to the Reich Citizenship Law to include Jews located in the occupied territories and those that had been deported.

1942

March 13, 1942 – Reich Security Main Office (RSHA) decree on identifying Jewish apartments with a black Star of David on the entrance doors.

March 1942 - "[M-Aktion](#)" (*Möbel-* or Furniture Aktion): Furniture and furnishings are confiscated from the homes of deported or escaped Jews in France and the Benelux countries. The objects are transported to collection warehouses and used by the administrations of the occupied Eastern territories, and later resold to German citizens, especially to the bomb-damaged

May 1942 - "[Diensstelle Westen](#)" opens with Kurt von Behr at its head.

May - November 1942 - Netherlands: Continuation of antisemitic regulations.

May 21, 1942 - The [second "Liro Ordinance"](#) in the Netherlands lowers the exemption limit from 1,000 to 250 guilders and obliges Jews to hand over all assets to the Liro Bank.

August 15, 1942 – Reich decree of the Reich Ministry of Finance concerning the assets of deported Jews: the assets are forfeited to the Reich.

September 1, 1942 – Reich decree of the Reich Ministry of Interior concerning the estate of deceased concentration camp prisoners: the assets are forfeited to the Reich.

October 2, 1942 - Disposition of Jewish property.

November 21, 1942 - The Liro Bank is ordered to close all accounts of so-called "Volljuden" and to transfer the assets to a collective account by the end of 1942. All funds received as of the beginning of 1943 have to be booked to this collective account resulting in the fact that individual accounts and credit balances of Jews can no longer be traced and are effectively liquidated.

1943

January 5, 1943 – [Inter-Allied Declaration Against Acts of Dispossession Committed in Territories Under Enemy Occupation or Control](#).

June 23, 1943 – [Roberts Commission](#), officially known as the American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in War Areas, established and chaired by Supreme Court Justice Owen J. Roberts.

(June) 1943 – [Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Program \(MFA &A\)](#), under the Civil Affairs and Military Government Sections of the Allied armies, established in order to help protect cultural property in war areas during and after World War II. (The MFA&A is dissolved in 1946.)

July 1943 - ERR establishes *Aussenstellen* (foreign branches) located in Belgrade, Riga, Dorpat (Tartu), Reval (Tallinn), Vilna, Minsk, Gorki, Smolensk, Kiev, Charkov (Kharkiv), Dnjepropetrovsk, and Simferopol.

July 1, 1943 - The Thirteenth Decree to the Reich Citizenship Law stipulates that the Reich is the legal heir to all property of a deceased Jew.

Summer 1943 - Bulgaria: Bulgarian Commissariat of Jewish Affairs undertakes house to house expropriations of Jewish property.

September - November 1943 - Expropriation of Italian Jews.

September 8, 1943 - Looting of cultural objects commences in Italian territories directly under German occupation ("Operationszone Alpenvorland"). On the Italian peninsula the spoliation is carried out by Italian authorities by the newly established Repubblica Sociale Italiana.

November 24th, 1943 - Salo's Council of Ministers discusses a specific law that will allow the "sequestration of artworks and of Archaeological Historical and Bibliographical Artifacts" belonging to either Jews or Jewish institutions. This sequestration is put into effect by circular No. 665 and allows for the "requisition of Jewish-owned artworks."

November 30th, 1943 - The Salo Republic promulgates a provision allowing for the sequestration of all Jewish assets.

1943 – On the advice of art historian Igor Grabar, Stalin forms the Bureau of Experts to document cultural losses and to make a list of "eventual equivalents," European masterpieces in Axis countries that would serve as substitutes for the works that had been lost.

1944

Early 1944 - Expropriation of Italian Jews continues.

January 4, 1944 - Italian legislation passed declaring all property owned in Italy by persons 'of the Jewish race' to be confiscated in favor of the State.

Early 1944 - The ERR "Sonderkommando Italien" (Special Command Italy) commences its activities.

1944 - The library of the Collegio Rabbinico Italiano (Italian Rabbinical College) in Rome and that of the Jewish Community in Rome are stolen. [The library of Rome's Jewish Community is still missing.](#)

April 1944 - Expropriation in Hungary.

April 16, 1944 - The Hungarian Government continues to register Jews and confiscates their property, as was already done under the Horthy regime.

April 30, 1944 - Requirement to report all artworks as well as other cultural property or simple luxury items. Art treasures owned by Jews are collected by the Government Commission for the Registration and Safekeeping of Artworks Sequestered from Jews.

July 1 to 22, 1944 – The Bretton Woods Conference, officially known as the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference, gathers 44 national delegates in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire. Agreement upon a series of new rules for the post-WWII international monetary system. Chapter VI of the Final Act outlines details on looted property's control and restitution. Neutral countries are instructed to undertake immediate measures preventing any dispositions or transfers of property taken from occupied countries or citizens. Special attention is given to art disposals and transfers.

October - December 1944 - Restitution ordinances under provisional French government.

November 14, 1944 - "Acts of Spoliation" committed by the Nazis or under its oversight are declared null and void.

November 24, 1944 - "[Commission de récupération artistique](#)" formed.

November 21, 1944 - Establishment of the [Art Looting Investigation Unit](#) (ALIU): The Office of Strategic Services (OSS) establishes the Art Looting Investigation Unit to collect and disseminate information about art properties that had been looted and confiscated across Europe.

December 13, 1944 - September 30, 1949 - "[Office des Biens et Intérêts Privés](#)" [OBIP] created: The agency is specifically tasked with the responsibility of overseeing the recovery of stolen assets and property and their return to rightful owners. Of the 100,000 artworks looted by the Germans, 60,000 are returned by the Allies to France, of which 45,000 are returned to the original owners, some 13,000 are auctioned off, and some 2,200 are kept as the MNR artworks.

1944 - Publication of Cultural Losses of Poland: Index of Polish Cultural Losses during the German Occupation 1939-1943.

1945

February 21, 1945 - Stalin signs 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 sets in motion the creation of the Soviet Trophy Brigades that are ordered to also take artworks, libraries, and archives.

March 1945 - First seizures by the Soviet Trophy Brigades.

March 1945 - Restitution Law of Jewish Properties and Rights in Bulgaria. (Laws only enforced months later.)

April - May 1945 - U.S. military discovers art repositories.

April 8, 1945 - [US military raid on Merkers mine](#).

April 1945 - France restitution laws.

April 11, 1945 - Ordinance No. 45-824 pertaining to the inheritance of specific categories of tangible assets stolen by the enemy and recovered by the French government, on French territory.

April 16, 1945 - Decree regarding the declaration of specific categories of assets and property, removed by the enemy and recovered by the French government, on French territory.

April 21, 1945 - Ordinance No. 45-770 amending ordinance of November 12, 1943, declaring null and void all acts of spoliation committed by the enemy or under its oversight and enacting measures for restitution to victims of those spoliations of those assets and property that were disposed of under those acts.

May 1, 1945 - [Austria passes the constitutional law on the restoration of law and order](#).

1945 - Registration Act of 1945 obliges any person holding aryanized assets, including artwork, to register them with Austrian authorities

May 8, 1945 - [U.S. troops enter the salt mine of Altaussee](#): The Altaussee salt mine is one of the largest repositories for plundered art, which includes art objects looted for the Führermuseum as well as for Hermann Göring's art collection. The mines house roughly 6,500 paintings, in addition to books, statues, furniture, and jewels from museums and private collections.

May 15, 1945 - Annulment Act declares null and void all legal transactions which had been entered into after the Anschluss. (Between 1946 and 1949 the Republic of Austria passes a total of seven restitution acts which deal with the restitution of seized assets.)

May 31, 1945 - Greece: Decree 788/31.05.1945 declares that restitutions of Jewish property should only go to the rightful owner.

June 1, 1945 – On about June 1, 1945, the United States Army decides to establish four Central [Collecting Points](#) in Marburg, Offenbach, Wiesbaden, and Munich to house recovered cultural property.

June 10, 1945 - [Establishment of an ALIU interrogation center at Bad Aussee.](#)

August 1, 1945 - 52. [U.S. military government Asset Freeze and Control Act.](#)

Fall/Winter 1945 – SOVIET TROPHY BRIGADES

1945 - The [Red Army/Trophy Brigades occupy Berlin and find the museum collections of Dresden, Leipzig, Dessau, Schwerin, Gotha, Weimar and Warburg.](#)

Fall 1945 - An estimated [1,200,000 books](#) are shipped to Minsk: while most are books that were looted from Belarus, half a million of these books were 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. [This also includes the book collection of the Estonian Jewish book collector and art historian Julius Genss.](#)

November 1945 - The [Special Commission of the Ukrainian Government](#) comes to Berlin and subsequently sends cultural trophies directly to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine and the Council of Peoples Commissars of the Ukraine. In addition, the Soviet Trophy Brigade is active in Berlin.

December 10, 1945 - Switzerland: Federal Council orders that looted art, which reached the territory of the Federation, needs to be returned. (The restitution deadline is set with December 31, 1947.)

1945 - Poland: Ministry of Culture creates “Bureau for Restitution and Reparations” to identify cultural losses and prepare restitution claims.

1945 - Croatia: Post-War Restitution Laws: [Establishment of the Commission for Ascertaining War Damages Inflicted by Occupying Forces on Cultural and Historical Objects and Natural Landmarks; Regulation on the Education of the Commission for Gathering and Protecting Cultural Monuments and Antiquities on the Territory of Federal Croatia.](#)

1945-1946 - The Soviet Trophy Commission is at its height: Trains filled with German industrial equipment and museum treasures, including the Pergamon Altar, arrive in Moscow with the Committee of Arts placing thousands of boxes of pictures and sculptures in Soviet museums. The Osoby Archive (TsGOA), now part of the Russian State Military Archive (RGVA), is the repository of much of the trophy Jewish archives. It is estimated that the Osoby Archive receives 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.

Appendix 2

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH RESOURCES PER COUNTRY

AUSTRIA

General Resources:

- Restitution Reports, Kunstrückgabebeirat / Beiratssitzungen, <https://provenienzforschung.gv.at/empfehlungen-des-beirats/beschluesse/>)
- National Restitution Reports, Bundesministerium, <https://www.bmkoes.gv.at/kunst-und-kultur/schwerpunkte/kunstrueckgabe-gedenkkultur/restitutionsberichte.html>

Key Databases:

- Lexikon-Provenienzforschung (lexicon for provenance research), <https://www.lexikon-provenienzforschung.org>
- ZDK (*Zentraldepot für beschlagnahmte Sammlungen*; Central Depot for Looted Collections), <https://www.zdk-online.org/das-zentraldepot/>
- Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes, Namentliche Erfassung der österreichischen Holocaustopfer (Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance, Registration of Austrian Holocaust Victims by Name), <https://www.doew.at>
- Findbuch for Victims of National Socialism, <https://www.findbuch.at/>
- Kunst-Datenbank (Art Database), <https://www.kunstdatenbank.at/>

Museums, Libraries, and Cultural Institutions

- Wien Museum, <https://www.wienmuseum.at>
- MAK-Museum für Angewandte Kunst (Wien), <https://www.mak.at/sammlung/>
- Universalmuseum Joanneum (Graz), <https://www.museum-joanneum.at>
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