Country Name: **AUSTRIA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Looted Judaica and Judaica with Provenance Gaps in Country</th>
<th>Yes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Existing Projects</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2. | Research is being conducted on university libraries. This includes Judaica.  
Sources:  
(1) [http://www.ub.univie.ac.at/provenienzforschung](http://www.ub.univie.ac.at/provenienzforschung), last accessed February 2016.  
(4) Email exchange with Markus Stumpf on 21 March 2012.  
Since 2004, the University of Vienna is researching its book acquisitions between 1938 and 1945. These include books that were originally intended for the Central Library of the *Hohe Schule* or were acquisioned by the *Ahnenerbe*. Since March 2006, research is also taking place in faculty libraries and libraries outside of Vienna. Of special interest is the Salzburg University library which received ‘heirless’ books from the Offenbach archival depot.  
The website of Vienna’s University Provenance Research project ([http://bibliothek.univie.ac.at/provenienzforschung/](http://bibliothek.univie.ac.at/provenienzforschung/)) provides an overview of volumes that have been already restituted, are in the process of being restituted or are considered heirless and were therefore handed over to the National Fund. A very small percentage of these objects concern Judaica items: A Talmud Bavli is listed among those volumes that are to be restituted. The Talmud Bavli is dated 1905 and is currently held by the Jewish Institute of the University of Vienna: Pîq-Beerîn, Yeşa yâhû [ed] *Masekhet Gitin min Talmud Bavli*, Piotrkow: Shalom Shakhna, 1905 [FB Judaistik, Restitutionsfall: Info vor Ort, Restitution vorgesehen/NS-Raubgut: Wolf Krautstück [RABI-158]] According to Markus Stumpf, the heirs of the object could not be located. Other Judaica is probably located in the main University library, as well as in the specific libraries for “Katholische und Evangelische Theologie”. |
Sources:  
(1) [http://www.onb.ac.at/about/provenienzforschung.htm](http://www.onb.ac.at/about/provenienzforschung.htm), last accessed June 2014.  
During the immediate post-war years, about 5,420 books were restituted (which amounted to about 1/3 of all looted books) by Austria’s National Library. Starting with the 1998 Art Restitution Law, in-depth research has been conducted. As a result, since December 2003, the
4. Research conducted in Vienna’s municipal library and museum.

**Sources:**


The Wienbibliothek im Rathaus (Vienna City Library) and Vienna’s City Museum commenced their provenance research in 1999 following a decision by Vienna’s district council. Since March 2012, Vienna’s Restitution Committee also took responsibility for the municipal collection of Vienna’s Jewish Museum. All restitution reports can be accessed on online. [The online restitution report, [http://www.wienbibliothek.at/ueber-die-wienbibliothek/provenienzforschung/restitutionsberichte/](http://www.wienbibliothek.at/ueber-die-wienbibliothek/provenienzforschung/restitutionsberichte/), also includes information on Vienna’s Jewish Museum.]

As of February 2016, the Wien Museum restituted 3,050 objects from 48 collection. In four cases the heirs have yet to be found and an additional 10 cases are in progress.

The Wienbibliothek restituted 2,844 objects. (The majority of the objects were either purchased after the restitution or donated to the library.)

Between April 2012 and March 2014, the Jewish Museum restituted 13 objects, which included Judaica objects but also art works.

5. Provenance research in Austria’s federal museums.

**Sources:**

   2. Email exchange with Birgit Johler, Volkskundemuseum. (Birgit.Johler@volkskundemuseum.at), on 4 November 2013.

A number of Austria’s federal museums are conducting or have conducted provenance research. This list includes the following museums: Albertina ([www.albertina.at](http://www.albertina.at)), Belvedere ([www.belvedere.at](http://www.belvedere.at)), MAK- Österreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst / Gegenwartskunst (Museum for Applied Arts/Contemporary Arts) [www.mak.at/sammlung/f_provenienz1.htm](http://www.mak.at/sammlung/f_provenienz1.htm), Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien (Museum of Fine Arts, [www.khm.at](http://www.khm.at)), Museum für Völkerkunde (Museum of Ethnology, [www.Ethno-museum.ac.at](http://www.Ethno-museum.ac.at)), Österreichisches Theatermuseum (Austria’s Theater Museum, [www.theatermuseum.at](http://www.theatermuseum.at)), Technisches Museum Wien (Technical Museum Vienna, [www.tmw.at](http://www.tmw.at)), Leopold Museum ([www.leopoldmuseum.org](http://www.leopoldmuseum.org)) and the Österreichisches Museum für Volkskunde Wien (Austria’s Museum for Folklore, [www.volkskunde.at](http://www.volkskunde.at)). In addition, a number of state museums also conduct provenance research: these include, for example, Salzburg’s Rupertinum, the Joanneum in Graz, and the Ferdinandeum in Tyrol.

Austria’s Museum für Volksskunde is in the process of preparing a special report entitled “Die Judaica Sammlung des Österreichischen Museums für Volksskunde” ("The Judaica collection of Austria’s Museum for Folk Life and Folk Art"). The report was expected to be released sometime in 2014, but as of October 2015 it was still not available.

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6. **Provenance research conducted in Vienna’s Jewish Museum.**

**Sources:**
(1) Presentation by Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek of the Jewish Museum Vienna at the Meetings of the Association of European Jewish Museums in Amsterdam, November 22-26, 2008.
(2) [http://jmw-dev.mindtake.at/de/collections/die-sammlung-ikg](http://jmw-dev.mindtake.at/de/collections/die-sammlung-ikg), [http://jmw-dev.mindtake.at/de/provenienzforschung](http://jmw-dev.mindtake.at/de/provenienzforschung), last accessed on 28 October 2013.

During National Socialism, Vienna’s pre-war Jewish Museum was closed, and its objects were subsequently transferred to the Museum of Ethnology, the Natural History Museum, Austria’s Museum of Folk Life and Art, Austria’s National Library and to Vienna’s University Library. In the 1950s the majority of these items were restituted to the Jewish Community (IKG); however, some items were only discovered as late as in the 1990s. In the final year of the museum’s existence, the inventory register indicated 5,414 entries (while another list, typed by the Gestapo, referred to 6,474 objects). In 1992, when the remaining objects were handed over to the IKG, its legal successor, and then subsequently loaned to the Jewish Museum, they amounted to only 3,517 objects (Jelinek, p. 76).

The Jewish Museum Vienna holds seven collections consisting of private collections purchased by the City of Vienna and the IKG (*Israelitische Kultusgemeinde*; Jewish Community) “collection” consisting of objects from private individuals, synagogues, and other institutions in addition to the pre-War museum. It holds approximately 50% of the collection of the pre-War museum, while the other 50% has been lost. Provenance research has been carried out already but still needs to be done on 15% of the holdings of the Jewish Museum Vienna, and some of the objects concerned may be private property. However, a New York Times article from later 2013 referred to 490 objects and more than 980 books that curators suspect might have been spoliated during the war.

In December 2012, the Jewish Museum restituted three ritual objects to the Jewish Community of Vienna following a decision by Vienna’s restitution committee. All three objects had been part of the so-called Berger collection.

Similar provenance research has been taking place on the Jewish Community’s library holdings, which are, like the art objects, on permanent loan to the Jewish Museum.

[See section “Information taken from publications” for more information on the library of the Jewish Community.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overview</th>
<th>Looted Cultural Property Databases</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Kunstdatenbank des Nationalfonds (Art Database of the National Fund); <a href="http://www.kunstrestitution.at/">http://www.kunstrestitution.at/</a>, last accessed June 2014.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

The database of the National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism (National Fund) provides an online listing of art objects, including Judaica, “which might have been, according to latest provenance research, seized under the National Socialist regime.” The database does not provide a separate listing for Judaica. However, a few Judaica objects can be found. For example go to section: Kunsthandwerk → Leuchter → for example: ID 87823, two candle sticks by Jakob Krautaure; Vienna, 1819; see: [http://www.kunstrestitution.at/frontend/content/show_cat.php?id=95253&row=8782](http://www.kunstrestitution.at/frontend/content/show_cat.php?id=95253&row=8782)
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For religious manuscripts, search section Handschriften → Sonstige Handschriften → for example: ID 83451; Midrach Mischl by August Wünsche; see: http://www.kunstrestitution.at/frontend/content/show_cat.php?id=95157&row=8345

(2) “Projekt Provenienzforschung. Universität Wien” (http://bibliothek.univie.ac.at/provenienzforschung/online-katalog.html), last accessed June 2014.

The University of Vienna provides a searchable database of objects that were already restituted, are in the process of being restituted or objects where more information is needed.


The Findbuch (a project under the auspices of Austria’s National Fund) provides access to archival documents relating to National Socialist property seizure and post-war restitution and compensation proceedings held at Austria’s State Archives and other cooperating archives. As of October 2013, the Findbuch held 144,785 records.

Publications

Collection Berger, Jewish Museum

Sources:
(2) http://www.jmw.at, last accessed June 2014.

The Sammlung Berger (Max Berger collection) of the Jewish Museum was bought by the city of Vienna in the 1980s for the soon-to-be-established Jewish Museum. Max Berger, born in 1924 in Poland, was the only survivor of his family. In the 1950s he moved to Vienna. In memory of his family, he started to collect Judaica, predominantly from Austria but also from the former Austro-Hungarian territories. By his death, he had collected about 10,000 objects, including some items of unclear provenance.

In 1980, Wayne State noted that “unfortunately, the Berger collection has its share of spurious objects which should be eliminated from an otherwise fine private Judaica collection.”

The Jewish Museum’s website refers to another 3,275 objects that were received by the museum in 2010 following the death of Max Berger’s wife.

Pre-war Jewish Museum objects elsewhere

Source:
Objects originally held by Vienna’s pre-war Jewish Museum are currently held elsewhere: The Israel Museum in Jerusalem holds a Torah curtain from the former Sephardi or Turkish temple in Vienna (Israel Museum, Jerusalem, inv. No. B85.592;152/240); a parochet from the same location can today be found in a private collection in New York (Mr and Mrs Abraham Halpern).

(Heimann-Jelinek, p. 77)

**Restitution Reports**

Source:

(1) “Restitution Reports, Commission for Provenance Research”

The Commission for Provenance Research publishes “Restitution Reports”, all of which can be accessed at:


Source:


The article notes that it is possible that cultural institutions in Vienna hold part of the original Library of the Jewish Community in Prague.

Source:


All together about 18,500 art and cultural objects were seized between 1938 and 1945 or deposited in special repositories.

*Please note that some of these objects have already been returned.*

**Jewish Community Library Vienna**

Source:


The Viennese Jewish Community Library, once one of the largest in Europe, 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 (please note that these numbers are primarily based on Moses Rath’s description of the Jewish Community’s library to the JCR on 12 October 1945). Today, there is only one valuable incunabula left, a Mischne Tora dating back to 1490, in addition to 5 manuscripts. After Austria’s annexation the library was consequently confiscated by the RSHA (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*). As was the case with most libraries that were confiscated by the RSHA, the library of Vienna’s Jewish community – or the part that survived the war – was transferred for 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’s Emser Strasse probably burned down when the building was hit by a bomb.

After the war, an attempt was made to restitute the library: consequently, 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. Other books, mostly manuscripts and incunabula, however, found their way into Warsaw’s *Zydowski Instytut Historyczny*. (see: Hannak-Lettner, p 202; Grimsted, Patricia. “From Nazi Plunder to Russian Restitution.” p 53.)

In order to facilitate the return of these book collections, the IKG (*Israelitische Kultusgemeinde*) set up a special commission located at Austria’s Ministry of Education. Because of this effort, 150,000 books were restored from the University Library, 30,000 from Austria’s National Library and 20,000 from a storage location within the Federal Ministry of Finance. However, research has indicated that part of the holdings today of the Jewish Community’s library does not correspond to the holdings of the original library: some books now in possession of the Jewish Community originated from Jewish organizations outside of Austria. It is assumed that some of these books may have originally belonged to the Jewish Community in Berlin (and that the Berlin Jewish Community may erroneously hold books that belonged to the Jewish Community of Vienna). The difficulty in researching the original collection of the Jewish Community, in addition to establishing what was erroneously restituted to the Community after the war, is in part due to the fact that the Nazis not only looted books but entire catalogues and to the fact that most books carry a misleading IKG stamp. (Hannak-Lettner, pp 192-6, 206.)

In the early 1950s, emissaries of the Hebrew National and University Library traveled throughout Europe to save the remnants of lost Jewish library collections. As some members of Vienna’s Jewish Community saw no future for the community, a book exchange between Vienna and Jerusalem was agreed upon in 1952 and 1953. Consequently, the Hebrew National and University Library was allowed to pick out the biggest “nuggets of the IKG library collection. This permanent loan, consisting principally of literature from rabbinic and Judaic studies, amounted to an estimated seventy-five to eighty percent of the reconstituted IKG library.” (Hacken, p. 172)

In 1970 the IKG made another gift of 346 older library works to Beit Shemesh in Israel (however, requests from Tel Aviv University as well as from Bar Ilan University were turned down).

*For more information on the collection of the Hebrew National and University Library, please see the section on Israel.*

**Jewish Communal Records in Russian Archives**

(1) Grimsted, Patricia Kennedy. “From Nazi Plunder to Russian Restitution.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information from Other Sources</th>
<th>Historical Commission</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Austria’s Historical Commission was appointed in 1998 by Austria’s Council of Ministers. By 2003/04, the Commission published its findings.</strong></td>
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**Sources:**


The topic of looted cultural property was not part of the Commission’s mandate but was supposed to be dealt with by the Commission for Provenance Research. Consequently, libraries, archives and particularly Torah scrolls that were aryанизed

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(2) *Manuscripts and Archival Documents of Vienna Jewish Community Held in Russian Collections: Catalogue*. Moscow: ‘Rudomino’, 2006 “Project Heritage Revealed”


(6) Information provided by Susanne Uslu-Paauer, IKG Archivist, May 2014.

Grimsted notes that part of the IKG manuscripts that were looted during World War II ended the war in or near Wölfelsdorf but were subsequently transferred to Moscow with the rest of the RSHA Amt VII archival loot. A recent catalogue of the IKG manuscripts in Moscow, as noted above, provides information.

A few years ago, 52 Austrian fonds – albeit non-Jewish ones – were returned to Austria. In addition, approximately 1,200 archival records of Austria’s Jewish community were discovered and are being processed in the RGVA for a possible return to Austria. Following some recent negotiations, it is expected that 19 out of 24 archival volumes will be restituted shortly. For an additional 5 archival volumes further research is necessary.

While some of the IKG manuscripts ended up after the war in the RGVA archive in Moscow as well as in the Lenin State Library, other manuscripts that were left behind in Silesia by the Russians were subsequently transferred to the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. However, a number of these objects then disappeared. An overview of some of the manuscripts that disappeared in Warsaw as well as in Moscow has been compiled by Benjamin Richler, who worked at the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts in Jerusalem until his retirement.

*Please see section on Russian Federation for Jewish archival holdings at the RGVA archive.*
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Commission for Provenance Research
Source:
(1) http://www.provenienzforschung.gv.at/, last accessed on June 2014.

In 1998, then Federal Minister for Education and Cultural Affairs, Elisabeth Gehrer, appointed a Provenance Commission to investigate looted art in federal museums and in the Bundesdenkmalamt (Federal Authority for the Preservation of Monuments). This ultimately lead to the Federal Art Restitution Law of November 5, 1998 (2 Abs. 3 des Bundesgesetzes zur Rückgabe von Kunstgegenständen aus den Österreichischen Bundesmuseen und Sammlungen).

Selected Bibliography

→ Please note that the general literature may also contain information on the specific country.

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