

FOREWORD

The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, Inc. (Claims Conference) and the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO) have as a central goal the return of assets looted during the Shoah to their original owners. Commencing in the 1950s, Claims Conference negotiations led to the establishment of the BRUEG – the German property restitution legislation for individual claimants. Since then, the Claims Conference and WJRO have sought to ensure the return of stolen assets to their original owners including real estate, businesses, insurance policies and bank accounts. Some of these efforts have also resulted in the recovery of unclaimed assets, others have not.

In regard to looted art and cultural property, including Judaica, the current approach of the Claims Conference/WJRO is as follows:

1. The commitment to the restitution of looted cultural and religious property to their original owners is a continuation of the commitment in the past and present to restitution of other forms of looted Jewish property.
2. The Claims Conference/WJRO prioritizes at present two areas:
 - (a) Provenance research – so that information regarding the location of looted items is publicly available;
 - (b) Establishment of fair and just claims processes for claimants.
3. The Claims Conference/WJRO does not take on the representation of individual claimants.
4. The effort to ensure that Judaica is held by or used by appropriate bodies is of the utmost moral importance. Particular focus should be on *tashmishey kedusha* and *tashmishey mitzvah*. Prioritization regarding this effort is critical after completion of current research and review of existing research. The types of solution in any given case to be sought will vary from country to country and from case to case.

This draft *Descriptive Catalogue of Looted Judaica* builds in part on research conducted in regard to looted Jewish cultural and religious property in individual countries generally. While this Catalogue does not claim to be complete or a definitive source concerning looted Judaica, it is, so far as is known, the only country-by-country “snapshot” of the current situation regarding looted Judaica.