

Country Name: ISRAEL

Looted Judaica and Judaica with Provenance Gaps in Country		Yes
Existing Projects	Yes.	
Overview	Looted Cultural Property Databases	<p><i>Hashava</i> <u>Source:</u> (1) Restitution of Assets. Holocaust Victims; www.hashava.org.il, last accessed June 2014.</p> <p>A list of names of owners of bank accounts and other properties in Israel that were not claimed after World War II may be found on the website of the Company for Location and Restitution of Holocaust Victims' Assets Ltd. It is expected that assets such as artworks and probably Judaica will be added in the near future. The list and application for restitution is available in Hebrew at www.hashava.org.il and in English at www.hashava.org.il/eng.</p> <p><i>JCR Objects</i> <u>Sources:</u> (1) "World War II Provenance Research Online". The Israel Museum, Jerusalem; http://www.imj.org.il/Imagine/irso/judaica.asp, last accessed on June 2014. (2) Hoffman, Joseph R. "A Thousand Orphans". <i>The Jerusalem Report</i>, 1 October 2007. (3) Cohen, Julie-Marthe. "Dealing with Looted Art. The Pre-war Collection of the Jewish Historical Museum of Amsterdam Reexamined." Read at the conference "Jewish Art in Context: The Role of meaning of Artifacts and Visual Images," Tel Aviv, January 14-16, 2008. (4) Brinn, David. "The Art of Restitution." <i>The Jerusalem Post</i>, 14 February 2008.</p> <p>The Israel Museum in Jerusalem has posted online provenance information on its collections, including a section on Judaica. As of April 2012, 715 objects were listed, most of which arrived from the Wiesbaden Collecting Point and were handed over to the museum by the JCR and by the JRSO. The database provides a description and, in many cases, a picture of the object, as well as the Wiesbaden collecting point number and information on whether the object was received through the JCR.</p> <p>In the early 1950s, Mordechai Narkiss, the director of the Bezalel National Museum, the predecessor of the Israel Museum, was invited to Europe to select from art that remained "unclaimed." He brought back about 1,200 objects of Judaica, paintings, and works on paper that had not been returned to their owners and were presumed heirless since they had belonged either to communities or institutions that had not survived the war such as synagogues and Jewish homes for the aged and museums or else were objects for which there was absolutely no record of prior ownership.</p> <p>Most Judaica objects can be categorized as Torah decorations, such as curtains, finials, mantles, shields and pointers. These came largely from ransacked synagogues. Some other items originated from private residences or institutions like homes for the aged, community centers and schools, which were equally looted. These include Seder plates, etrog containers and Chanukiot, as well as smaller, easily concealed items like Sabbath cups and spice boxes.</p>

	Publications	<p><i>JCR objects in Israel</i></p> <p><u>Source:</u></p> <p>(1) Herman, Dana. <i>Hashavat Avedah: A History of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc.</i> Department of History, McGill University, Montreal, October 2008.</p> <p>Israel received 191,423 books, as well as 2,285 museum pieces, 976 synagogue pieces, 804 Torah scrolls and 87 Torah fragments (in addition to 127 scrolls that had to be buried) from the JCR after World War II. Israel was the recipient of the largest number of Judaica objects distributed by the JCR after the war, but the distribution itself was mostly carried out outside of the JCR's control. The Ministry of Religious Affairs, which assumed responsibility, was subsequently put in charge of the distribution of religious objects to various synagogues, yeshivas, and other organizations.</p> <p>Among those institutions that profited from this influx of objects were libraries and museums, most notably the Hebrew University, which received, for example, the "Berlin Gemeinde" Library, part of the Breslau collection (totaling up to 4,500 books), and part of the valuable Frankfurt collection. The Breslau collection was stored at the Wiesbaden Collecting Point and is a remnant of the original library of the "Jüdisches Theologisches Institut". The Frankfurt collection on the other hand, consisting of some unclaimed 100-150,000 books, was secured by Gershom Scholem for Israel after the JCR and the Hessian government had agreed to share the books.</p> <p>However, the Hebrew University itself transferred about 7,000 books to the Ministry of Education for further distribution. Some of these objects were subsequently given to yeshivot. Among those museums that received objects was also the Tel Aviv Museum which presumably holds part of the Frankfurt Jewish Museum collection in addition to Judaica objects that had belonged to synagogues in Frankfurt before World War II.</p> <p><i>See also Germany.</i></p> <p><i>Hebrew University and the Jewish National and University Library (JNUL)</i></p> <p><u>Sources:</u></p> <p>(1) Kennedy Grimsted, Patricia. "Sudeten Crossroads for Europe's Displaced Books. The 'Mysterious Twilight' of the RSHA Amt VII Library and the Fate of A Million Victims of War." Prepared for publication in the conference proceedings based on a shorter presentation at the international conference in Liberec organized by the Documentation Centre of Property Transfers of Cultural Assets of WW II. Victims, 24–26 October 2007.</p> <p>(2) http://www.jnul.huji.ac.il, last accessed June 2014. [The Hebrew University holds the archival records of Curt David Wormann (Berlin 1900 – Jerusalem 1991). Mr. Wormann was the director of the Jewish National and University Library (JNUL) between 1947 and 1968 and directed the operations to salvage hundreds of thousands of looted books in Europe for the University's collection.]</p> <p>(2) Hacken, Richard. "The Jewish Community Library in Vienna: From Dispersion and Destruction to Partial Restoration." <i>Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook</i> 47 (2002), pp 151-172.</p> <p>(3) Braunova, Andrea. "The Post-War History of the Book Collection of the</p>
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the legal basis for the restoration of the Diaspora treasures to the Jewish people and the “demands for the return to the Jewish people of cultural treasures that remained ownerless and heirless; a claim that the Hebrew University and the JNUL will be recognized as the *sole* trustees for the cultural treasures; and a recognition for special compensation to be received from among the cultural treasures to be found in the public libraries in Germany” (Schidorsky. “The Salvaging of Jewish Books,” p 198).

Consequently, the Hebrew University started to claim property held in German libraries and noted that the Jewish people were entitled to demand specific compensation in the form of literary *Judaica* and *Hebraica* held by public libraries in Germany. These would include manuscripts and old Hebrew and Jewish printed books held in public libraries.

The Hebrew University’s claim, as Schidorsky pointed out, must be seen in context, given that at the time it was the only Jewish university in the world and its library was that of a national library of the Jewish people. In addition, the Hebrew University was arguably the single appropriate institution with the expertise to catalogue and care for heirless objects (Yavnai. “Jewish Cultural Property.” p 133).

Nonetheless, after some time the Hebrew University changed its approach by becoming part of the JCR. By “doing this, it was obliged to partially abandon the policy that had been laid down by the legal committee. As a member of this cooperative effort, it could no longer insist on its right to serve as the *sole* trustee for the treasures of the Diaspora.” However, the Hebrew University still got first priority in terms of selecting the works of *Hebraica* and *Judaica* (Schidorsky. “The Salvaging of Jewish Books.” p 209).

After World War II ended, the Hebrew University and JNUL dispatched emissaries to Europe in order to realize these policies regarding the salvaging of heirless books. The first trip of that kind was undertaken by Gershom Scholem who went to the Offenbach Depot and collected some 600 manuscripts that had originated in “Jewish communal libraries in *Southern Germany* and the *Baltic States*” (Schidorsky. “The Salvaging of Jewish Books.” p 204).

Emissaries of the Hebrew University and of the JNUL in Europe after the Holocaust

Emissaries	Dates of Mission	Destinations
Gershom Scholem, Avraham Yaari	April 1946 – August 1946 (Yaari to May 1946)	Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia
Hugo Bergmann	November 1946	Czechoslovakia
Arthur Bergmann	May 1947	Czechoslovakia
Zeev Shek	September 1947 – July 1948	Czechoslovakia
Menachem Mendel Schneurson	December 1947	Poland
Shlomo Shunami	March 1949 – November 1949	Germany
Daniel Goldschmidt	1949, 1950	Italy
Gerhard Scholem	September 1950	Germany
Shlomo Shunami, Yehuda Leb Bilor*	September 1952 – December 1952	Italy, Austria, Yugoslav Netherlands
Shlomo Shunami	September 1954	Austria

		Shlomo Shunami, Yehuda Leb Bilor*	August 1965	Austria, Hungary, Romania	
		Shlomo Shunami	August 1966 – November 1966	Germany, Austria, France, Hungary, Romania	
		Shlomo Shunami	Summer 1975	Austria	
		Shlomo Shunami	May 1976	Austria	

**Joint Missions of JNUL and the Ministry of Religious Affairs.*
Source: Schidorsky. “The Salvaging of Jewish Books.” p 204.

Shlomo Shunami, as can be seen in the table above, was one of the leading advocates of salvaging heirless libraries. During several “book-hunting” trips to Europe, according to Schidorsky, he tried to “discover and ensure the safety of the treasures of the Diaspora and their secure transfer to Jerusalem” (Schidorsky, “Shunami’s Book-hunting trips to Europe and the Absorption Provenance Research and Distribution of the Treasures of the Diaspora”). Shunami headed the special department at JNUL that was established in 1950 to house the books that were brought to Israel. He was further responsible for the establishment of guidelines that determined which books were to be restituted or distributed among the libraries in Israel.

Noteworthy book salvaging trips on behalf of the Hebrew University and JNUL were taken to the Czech Republic, then Czechoslovakia, and Austria:

a) Czech Republic:
 In 1946, the Hebrew University entered into negotiations with the Council of Jewish Communities in Bohemia, then administrator of the Jewish Museum and trustee for books stemming from the Theresienstadt library, to gain part of the collection for its library. Representatives on behalf of the Hebrew University in Israel were Gershom Scholem, then Shmuel Hugo Bergmann and his brother Arthur Bergmann and finally Zeev Scheck (who was charged with the legal and technical part of the transfer). As a result of these negotiations, approximately 50,000 books were transferred to the Hebrew University, consisting of the most “valuable for the cultural, religious and educational work in Palestine.” (Please note that other estimates of books transferred to Hebrew University are as high as 70,000. The discrepancies in numbers stem from the fact that some shipments took place in secret and that some valuable manuscripts were hidden in boxes between other books without inclusion in the inventories. Another issue evolved around books that did not go to JNUL but were sold to book dealers in Jerusalem.) While most of these 50,000 books originated from the Theresienstadt ghetto library, some might also have come from one of the three castles in the former Czechoslovakia that contained looted books after the war: Mimon, Novy Perkstejn, and Houska.

See also section on the Czech Republic.

b) Austria:
 Among the book collections salvaged for Israel, in 1949 Shunami arranged for parts of the collection held by Vienna’s Jewish Community (IKG) to be sent to Jerusalem. As some members of Vienna’s Jewish Community saw no future for the community after the war had ended, a book exchange between Vienna and Jerusalem was agreed upon in 1952 and 1953. Consequently, the Hebrew University was allowed to pick out some of the most precious items 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. Overall it is believed that the Hebrew

		<p>University received about 40,000 books over a period of 30 years.</p> <p><i>For more information on the library of Vienna's Jewish Community see section on Austria.</i></p> <p>Moreover, in 1956 approximately half of the 69,000 volumes that were given to the trustee Richard Fuchs and which had come from Austria's <i>Tanzenberg</i> collection (the Tanzenberg collection, so named after Tanzenberg, Carinthia, to which these holdings of the <i>Zentralbibliothek</i> of the so-called "Hohe Schule" of the NSDAP had been transferred from Berlin in 1942 because of ongoing air raids) were divided between the University Library in Vienna and the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem. The final agreement regarding the transfer was signed between the Austrian Ministry for Cultural Affairs, the IKG and Hebrew University.</p> <p>In addition to those from Austria and the Czech Republic, books originating from other European communities also ended up in the Hebrew University's library, among them books from Hungarian Jewish communities such as the collection Löw and 2-3,000 books that came from Bucharest. (Schidorsky. "Shunamis Suche." p 331-3)</p> <p>Overall, Israel was the recipient of approximately 700,000 to 800,000 books, with some 300,000 books finding their way to Israel's cultural, scholarly, scientific and religious institutions. Among those institutions that profited from the influx of books were the newly founded universities in Tel Aviv, Bar Ilan, Haifa and Ben Gurion. Provenance research is almost non-existent. (Schidorsky. "Shunamis Suche." p 339-40)</p> <p><u>Source:</u> (1) Melamed, Yitzhak. "The Lost Textual Treasures of a Hasidic Community." <i>Jewish Review of Books</i>, Number 9, Spring 2012.</p> <p>According to Yitzhak Melamed, the Jewish National Library of the Hebrew University purchased one rare kabbalistic manuscript via what Melamed calls "murky world of Hebraic dealers". The kabbalistic manuscript originally belonged to the lost archive of the Stoliner Hasidim.</p>
	Information from Other Sources	<p><i>Hashava - Company for the Location and Restitution of Holocaust Assets</i></p> <p>In January 2014, the Company for the Location and Restitution of Holocaust Assets (Hashava) in Israel held a meeting of representatives of Israel's main cultural institutions as a first general attempt to bring about cooperation in regard to provenance research in Israel and examination of collections in the country generally. The following museums were represented: Israel Museum, National Library, Beit Lohamei Haghetat, and Tel Aviv Museum of Art. It is assumed that a large number of museums hold looted cultural and religious items. With assistance from the Claims Conference/WJRO, Hashava hosted an international conference on Holocaust-Era Cultural Assets in Israel in June 2014 followed by a workshop on provenance training for museum curators – while the focus was on artworks, there was also discussion of Judaica.</p>
	Historical Commission	<p>Parliamentary Committee Inquiry on the Location and Restitution of Assets of Holocaust Victims in Israel.</p> <p>See: <i>Report of the Knesset Inquiry Committee on the Location and Restitution of Assets (in Israel) of Victims of the Holocaust</i>. Jerusalem, December 2004</p>

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