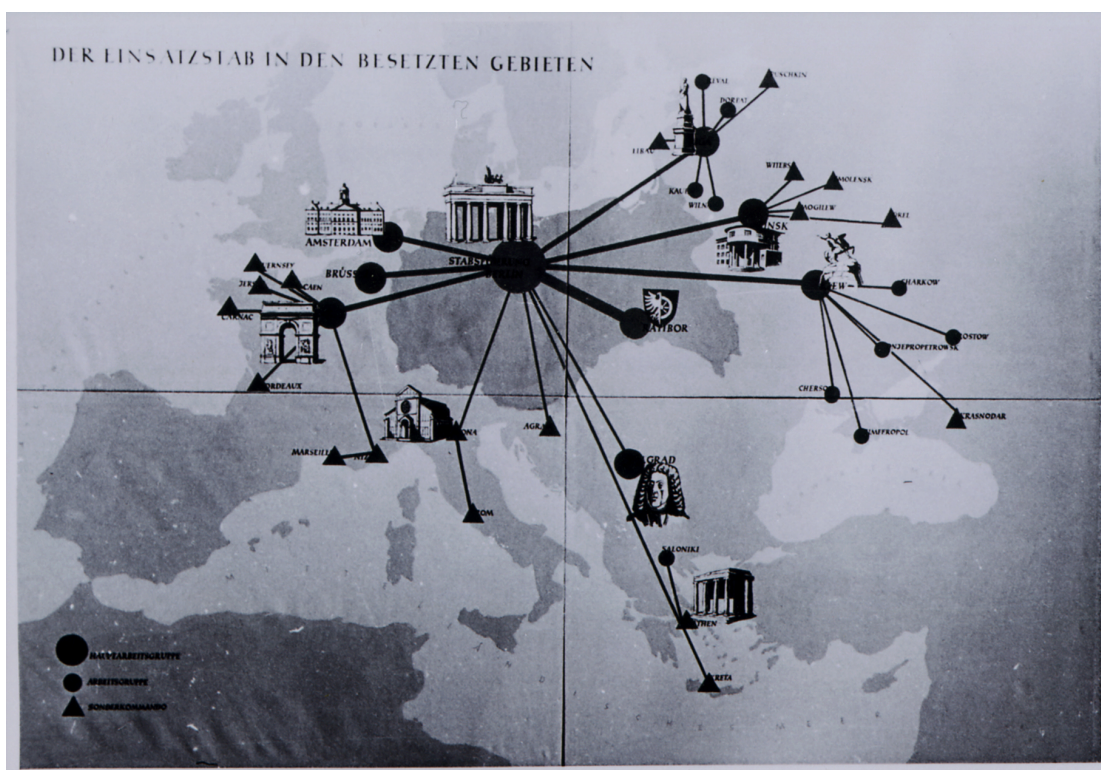


RECONSTRUCTING THE RECORD OF NAZI CULTURAL PLUNDER

A SURVEY OF THE DISPERSED ARCHIVES OF THE EINSATZSTAB REICHSLEITER ROSENBERG (ERR)

Patricia Kennedy Grimsted



IISH Research Paper 47

**Published online by the International Institute of Social History (IISH/IISG),
Amsterdam, March 2011**

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In association with the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Amsterdam,
with generous support of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference)

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<http://socialhistory.org/en/publications/reconstructing-record-nazi-cultural-plunder>.

The Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR), the special operational task force headed by Adolf Hitler's leading ideologue Alfred Rosenberg, was one of the main Nazi agencies engaged in looting cultural valuables in Nazi-occupied countries during the Second World War. The detail with which the ERR documented the art, archives, books, and other Judaica it plundered has proved essential for the recovery of cultural valuables after the war and their return to victims or heirs.

This extensive international survey describes the archival remains of the ERR in 29 repositories in 9 countries – from Washington and Brussels to Moscow and Kyiv. It serves as a preliminary guide to documents generated by the ERR as well as records by postwar agencies seeking to return the ERR loot. Links are provided to many dispersed materials now available on the Internet or in microform; these include the recent efforts of the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), the German Federal Archives (Bundesarchiv), the Ukrainian state archives (TsDAVO), and other repositories, with additional digital contributions expected soon, providing improved access to a major component of the record of wartime cultural plunder and retrieval.

Introduction

(REVISED/UPDATED VERSION)

Alfred Rosenberg and the ERR: The Records of Plunder and the Fate of the Loot

Patricia Kennedy Grimsted

*A revised and updated version of the complete ERR SURVEY is now in preparation.
As an interim measure, this updated version of the 'Introduction' was prepared especially for the
Provenance Research Training Workshop in Athens.
June 2014*

The original Table of Contents of the entire volume follows the Introduction.

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LAST REVISED JUNE 2014

INTRODUCTION

Patricia Kennedy Grimsted

Alfred Rosenberg and the ERR: The Records of Plunder and the Fate of the Loot

The Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR), the special operational task force headed by Adolf Hitler's ideological henchman Reichsleiter Alfred Rosenberg (1893–1946), was the agency of the National-Socialist German Workers Party (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei, NSDAP) organized specifically for plunder of cultural assets in German-occupied countries during the Second World War. Alfred Rosenberg, its chief, was hanged in Nuremberg on 16 October 1946, following conviction for “crimes against humanity” at the Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal (IMT). Although hardly the only culprit, the scale of systematic looting of art, archives, and libraries by the ERR from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Baltic and Black seas in the east was staggering. Memory of those crimes against culture linger on in the thousands of cultural and religious objects never returned to their owners or heirs and the hundreds of thousands of books never returned to the libraries from which they were seized.

Thanks to fastidious ERR documentation, much of the cultural loot found by the western Allies was ultimately returned. By bringing together more of the paper trail left by the ERR in the Survey that follows, perhaps we can better map the plunder if not hope for more returns. Some looted items repatriated to the country of seizure, to France, for example, have yet to be identified as to their owners, despite the availability of extensive documentation. By contrast, Soviet authorities never utilized the ERR files they captured for postwar cultural retrieval or restitution, and hid it them away for half a century rather than making them available to specialists at home and abroad. As a result many objects seized by the ERR and returned to the Soviet Union after the war never reached their home institutions. Given Soviet contempt for German documentation, they never realized the extent to which it could have helped them locate and return their own cultural valuables seized during the war. Nor has there still been any attempt (even since 1991) to identify and return many objects seized first by the ERR or other German culprits throughout the Continent and then seized a second time by Soviet authorities at the end of the war. Identifying and utilizing the paper trail has been complicated in the past, not only by long-closed archives and the politics of restitution, but also because surviving ERR files and related restitution documentation today remains dispersed in over nine countries and more than 32 archives, much of it long inadequately described.

To help resolve these issues, at least in the ERR case, the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference) has undertaken the tripartite ERR project described in the Foreword. Already as a result, considerably more surviving ERR and related documentation is being made available on the Internet, and a database of over 20,000 individual art objects from Jewish collections in France and Belgium processed by the ERR in the Jeu de Paume in Paris is now available on the Internet. As a third and coordinating component, the present Survey guides the researcher to ERR and related documents describing its plunder and the postwar fate of its loot. First issued in March 2011, a revised edition is now in progress to

update and enlarge the coverage with more data that have become available since the initial text was finalized in 2010.

In this brief Introduction, we first sketch how and where the ERR operated, as a context for the records it created. We next describe postwar efforts to find and return the ERR loot, showing the further dispersal of ERR records, including their incorporation in the records of western retrieval and restitution efforts and war crimes trials. Then, country-by-country, the Survey will describe those files in their present archival locations, and alert the researcher to many that are now readily available on the Internet.

The Man and His Mission

The ERR chief and namesake, Alfred Rosenberg, was born in Reval (Tallinn) of German background, when Estonia was still part of the Russian Empire.¹ In 1910, he went to Riga to study architecture, but his polytechnic was moved to Moscow, where he finished his studies in 1917. Witnessing the war and revolutionary turmoil that left the Bolsheviks triumphant, he returned to Reval in February 1918, just days before the German army arrived in the city and Estonia declared its independence. On 30 November 1918, he delivered his first political speech – “Marxism and Jews” – then boarded a train for Germany, heading first to Berlin and then to Munich.

Within weeks of arriving in the Bavarian capital, Rosenberg was already working at the weekly of one of the future founders of the NSDAP. During the next few years as a part of Adolf Hitler’s inner circle, Rosenberg rose to editor of the party newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter*, edited a monthly on the Jewish question, and penned many polemics concerning Jews, Free Masonry, and Bolshevism. His apocalyptic response to his imagined Judaic-Masonic-Bolshevik conspiracy came together in many writings, including his own ponderous *The Myth of the Twentieth Century* (*Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts*), first published in 1930.²

Rosenberg’s Baltic German roots and experience in revolutionary Russia helped make him a party expert on Eastern Europe. When Hitler became Reich Chancellor in January 1933, Rosenberg was put in charge of the Foreign Policy Office (Aussenpolitisches Amt, APA) of the NSDAP. That was soon followed by his promotion to Reichsleiter (Reich director), a party rank in theory parallel to that of a government minister.

¹ Parts of this Introduction are summarized from my earlier article, “Roads to Ratibor: Library and Archival Plunder by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 19, no. 3 (2005), pp. 390–458, and its sequel, “The Postwar Fate of Archival and Library Plunder by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR), and the Dispersal of ERR Records,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 20, no. 2 (2006), pp. 278–308; a revised version of the latter appears in the *Journal of Art Crime*, December 2010. See also the Grimsted chapter on ERR archival seizures in *Returned from Russia: Nazi Archival Plunder in Western Europe and Recent Restitution Issues*, edited by Grimsted, F.J. Hoogewoud, and Eric Ketelaar (Institute of Art and Law, UK, 2007), pp. 65–80. See also my 2012 article surveying library seizures and patterns of restitution: “L’ERR versus le RSHA: Les formes de pillage et de migration de livres et d’archives comme facteurs intervenants dans le processus de restitution,” in *Saisies, spoliations et logiques de restitution. Archives et bibliothèques au XXe siècle (Actes du colloque international, Strasbourg, 22–23 octobre 2010)*, edited by Alexandre Sumpf and Vincent Laniol (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2012), pp. 37–65. More extensive related listings appear in the bibliography at the end of this volume. See also the on-line bibliography, “Displaced Cultural Treasures as a Result of World War II and Restitution Issues: A bibliography of publications by Patricia Kennedy Grimsted” at <http://socialhistory.org/en/russia-archives-and-restitution/bibliography>, with electronic texts of many of the listings.

² An English translation of Rosenberg’s *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts*, first published in 1930, appeared in 1982: Rosenberg, *The Myth of the Twentieth Century: An Evaluation of the Spiritual-Intellectual Confrontations of our Age*, trans. Vivian Bird (Torrance, CA: Noontide Press, 1982).

A year later, Hitler appointed Rosenberg Commissioner of the Führer for the Supervision of the Entire Intellectual and Ideological Schooling and Training of the NSDAP (Der Beauftragte des Führers für die Überwachung der gesamten geistigen und weltanschaulichen Schulung und Erziehung der NSDAP, DBFU). Rosenberg used that office to build up a vast network of ideological and cultural operations.³ By 1937 the DBFU under Rosenberg's guidance had special offices for art and music, along with other fields of culture, which were later to provide staff, bureaucracy, and a cultural network for the ERR as an operational offshoot.

This rapid expansion of enormous responsibilities led Rosenberg to reorganize his private office into what became known as the Rosenberg Chancellery (Kanzlei Rosenberg), which oversaw his official correspondence on behalf of the APA and his ideological organizations, especially the DBFU.⁴ As reorganized and expanded in 1938, the DBFU included an Office for Science (Amt Wissenschaft), which oversaw planning for a university-level Hohe Schule for the future Nazi elite, a training center Rosenberg planned to build in Bavaria after the war.

Despite the Nazi-Soviet pact (German-Soviet Treaty of Non-Aggression) in 1939, Rosenberg and his close associates continued to pursue their ideological struggle against Bolshevism in preparation for invasion of the Soviet Union in what became Operation Barbarossa in July 1941. Rosenberg was appointed as the Führer's Commissioner of the Führer for the Central Handling of Questions concerning the Eastern Realm (Beauftragter des Führers für die zentrale Bearbeitung der Fragen des osteuropäischen Raumes).

Simultaneously, Rosenberg expanded his energies on behalf of the Hohe Schule, for which Hitler authorized preparatory work in January 1940. Indeed, the Central Library of the Hohe Schule (Zentralbibliothek der Hohen Schule, ZBHS) was already operative in Berlin from early 1939, before moving to Austrian Carinthia (Kärnten) in 1942. In March 1940 Rosenberg inaugurated the Institute for Research on the Jewish Question (Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage, IEJ) in Frankfurt, the only Hohe Schule institute that operated during the war, although the ERR was also actively collecting materials for other Hohe Schule institutes. Later in 1943 the IEJ was largely evacuated to Hungen, 70 kilometers northeast, while Masonic materials not turned over to the RSHA were deposited in a hunting lodge in Hirzenheim in the same vicinity. The invasion of France in June 1940 presented Rosenberg with an opportunity to start more active plundering of materials for the Hohe Schule, with the resulting establishment of the ERR.

ERR Aims and Agency Structure

As an operational offshoot of the DBFU with the aim of plunder of cultural materials, the ERR effectively started immediately after the invasion of France on 14 June. Rosenberg dispatched a

³ Regarding Rosenberg's intellectual background and his activities as DBFU, see Reinhard Bollmus, *Das Amt Rosenberg und seine Gegner: Studien zum Machtkampf im Nationalsozialistischen Herrschaftssystem* (Stuttgart, 1970; 2nd edn. with bibliographic essay by Stephan Lehnstaedt: Munich: Oldenbourg, 2006; = *Herausgegeben vom Institut für Zeitgeschichte*, vol. 1). Ernst Piper's impressive biography of Rosenberg, *Alfred Rosenberg: Hitlers Chefideologe* (Munich: Karl Blessing Verlag, 2005), fills in important background on Rosenberg's political career and varied activities, but does not add significant coverage of the ERR or the Hohe Schule. See also the early biography and register of related documents by Joseph Billig, *Alfred Rosenberg dans l'action idéologique, politique et administrative du Reich hitlérien: Inventaire commenté de la collection de documents conservés au C.D.J.C. provenant des archives du Reichsleiter et Ministre A. Rosenberg* (Paris, 1963; = *Les inventaires des archives du Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine, Paris*, vol. 1).

⁴ See the Introduction to the Bundesarchiv finding aid for the Rosenberg Chancellery records (NS 8) at: <http://www.argus.bundesarchiv.de/NS8-25406/index.htm>, with links to digitized on-line documents.

key DBFU staff director, Reichshauptstellenleiter Professor Georg Ebert, who already by 18 June 1940 occupied the building of the largest Masonic lodge, the Grand Orient of France (15 rue Cadet). Ebert's reports of the great abundance of "abandoned" cultural property led Rosenberg to request, already on the 1 July, Hitler's authorization for... "the organization, with the help from an Einsatzstab (composed of political leaders and experts) and from the Wehrmacht, of a thorough examination of items left behind by Jews and Free Masons, that would provide a basis for future intellectual study, as considered necessary for the political, ideological, and academic operations of both the NSDAP and the Hohe Schule."⁵ After establishment in Paris by mid-July, the ERR also organized offices and working units in Belgium and the Netherlands.

A year later, just before the invasion of the Soviet Union, Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring was also taking credit for organizing the ERR, but his role was principally focused on art looting in France. He emphasized to Hitler in May 1941 that:

the war against Jews, Free Masons, their Allies, and other obviously pernicious spiritual agencies is an urgent task for National Socialism to accomplish during the War. That is why I approved Reichsleiter Rosenberg's creation of his Special Command Force in Occupied Territories [ERR. Its] mission... is to seek out and seize all manner of research materials and cultural goods belonging to the above-mentioned groups and transport them to Germany.⁶

In Alfred Rosenberg's "know thy enemy" justification for plunder, he often emphasized the importance of "saving for study" the books and related materials of the "enemies of the regime."

In the course of the war the ERR embraced a vast bureaucracy for ideological and propaganda research, as well as cultural plunder, working in conjunction with, and often in service of, other German agencies in the field, such as the Wehrmacht, yet maintaining its own independence. Rosenberg's personal Chancellery coordinated his many functions in the Nazi Party, among them the DBFU. Gerhard Utikal, who directed the DBFU central office, also served as chief of operations for the ERR. The ERR headquarters (Stabsführung) was centered in Berlin (Margarethenstr. 17/18, Berlin W35), which also housed offices for the DBFU and Rosenberg's Chancellery, with additional offices in the building of the former Haus am Knie (Bismarckstr. 1). Other principal ERR units and research operations were located in and around Berlin in the early years of the war.

With increased Allied bombing in 1943 and orders to evacuate cultural property from Berlin, the ERR maintained only a skeletal office in the Reich capital. Several of its divisions and major research operations were evacuated to the isolated Silesian city of Ratibor (postwar Racibórz, Poland), south of Kattowitz (postwar Katowice, Poland). Some of its Berlin records from the early years of the war were lost in a November 1943 bombing raid, and others were transferred to the Silesian center. Meanwhile, the Special Staff Music (Sonderstab Musik) evacuated to the castle of Langenau (postwar Czernica, Poland), further west in Silesia, while the Special Staff Fine Arts (Sonderstab Bildende Kunst) under Robert Scholtz evacuated to the castle of Kogl in Austria, which the ERR also used as one of its repositories for looted art. In all of these cases,

⁵ This explains why Ebert is often credited with the idea of the Einsatzstab. No conclusive date for the founding of the ERR was established in the Rosenberg interrogation at Nuremberg. Office of United States Chief of Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1946), vol. 2, pp. 1333–37.

⁶ Göring memorandum to Hitler (Berlin, 1 June 1941), French translation in Jean Cassou, ed., *Le pillage par les Allemands des oeuvres d'art et des bibliothèques appartenant à des Juifs en France: Recueil de documents* (Paris: CDJC, 1947; "CDJC, Série "Documents," no. 4), p. 90. The same point is reiterated in Hitler's order (Führererlass) dated 1 Mar. 1942, reproduced in *ibid.*, between pp. 96–97, with a French translation, p. 99.

important files went with them.

ERR operations in Western Europe based in Paris were headed by Baron Kurt von Behr, who later headed the Western Office (Dienststelle or Amt Westen) of the RMbO. Separate main working groups (Hauptarbeitsgruppen, HAG), often started as simply working groups (AG), were organized as successive territories were occupied. Changes in the military situation and the focus of ERR priorities brought several stages of reorganization among the working groups in different areas. Occupied lands under the Amt Westen were serviced by the HAG France, HAG Belgium and Northern France, and HAG Netherlands, at times with subsidiary units.

Simultaneously special staffs ran different types of cultural operations: visual arts, music, prehistory, and libraries, among others, growing out of and often overlapping DBFU offices.⁷ Their task designations shifted over the years, with changing personnel and priorities, while subject- and geographic-area designations were frequently intertwined.

The amorphous and changing affiliations of the ERR and its staff are hard to pin down, although primarily it continued to function administratively within the DBFU until the end of the war. At least through early spring of 1941, the ERR was using the name “Einsatzstab of the Offices of Reichsleiter Rosenberg” (Einsatzstab der Dienststellen des Reichsleiters Rosenberg), but in other instances it was designated as the “Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg for the Occupied Western Territories and the Netherlands” (Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg für die westlichen besetzten Gebiete und die Niederlande). In both cases the name is usually found rubber-stamped below the DBFU designation on printed NSDAP letterhead.

On the heels of Operation Barbarossa, as the Wehrmacht advanced into Soviet lands, the ERR followed the invading armies on the Eastern Front; it dropped the “western” designation and used the name “for the Occupied Territories” (für die besetzten Gebiete). Meanwhile, Rosenberg himself already in July had been appointed to head the newly established Reich Ministry for Occupied Eastern Territories (Reichsministerium für die besetzten Ostgebiete, RMbO), although that appointment was not publicly announced before December. In occupied Soviet territories, the ERR was organized along geographic lines, following the civil administration under the RMbO. Initially most visible were the Reich Commissariat Ostland (Reichskommissariat Ostland, RKO), embracing the Baltic and much of western Belarus, and the Reich Commissariat Ukraine (Reichskommissariat Ukraine, RKU), based on pre-1939 borders, but extending rule into conquered lands to Crimea and the Caucasus. Eventually, on the Eastern Front, the ERR was organized into three main working groups: HAG Ostland for the Baltic, HAG Ukraine, and HAG Mitte for Belarus and western Russia. Territorial operations of the working groups or main working groups and sub-units varied in the course of the war, depending on the changing configuration of occupied lands.

Additional special commandos were designated, similar to those in the west, for libraries, archives, prehistory, or other specific goals. Many of these operated in conjunction with staff from other German agencies, such as the Reichsarchiv in connection with archival exploits. Representatives of the ZBHS and the IEJ were often involved in ERR library confiscations and plunder, first in Western Europe and later on the Eastern Front. The ZBHS Control Office for Books (Buchleitstelle), jointly operated with the ERR, was first based in Berlin, but then in 1943 moved to Ratibor, Silesia, with the ERR library and research operation center.

In Ukraine, some of the ERR cultural research and seizure functions were taken over in the autumn of 1942 by the separate Provincial Administration for Libraries, Archives, and Museums

⁷ Willem de Vries, *Sonderstab Musik: Music Confiscations by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg under the Nazi Occupation of Western Europe* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996), while primarily focused on ERR music operations, brings together considerable western documentation on the ERR.

(Landesverwaltung der Archive, Bibliotheken und Museen, LV ABM). The LV ABM under Erich Koch's Reichskommissariat Ukraine took over or else overlapped the staff and many functions of the ERR. It was headed by Georg Winter, who simultaneously represented the Reichsarchiv, and who earlier had helped organize ERR operations in Ukraine, especially arranging archival surveys.

In Western Europe, early in 1942 an ERR offshoot, the so-called Furniture Operation (Möbel-Aktion, M-Aktion), was formed to strip furnishings from the homes of Jews who had fled or were deported. Rosenberg had recommended the program to Hitler in December 1941, and it was established under the ERR in the following months with offices in Belgium and the Netherlands as well as France. By April 1942, however, the M-Aktion was administratively shifted to Amt Westen of the RMbO, allegedly because many of the goods seized were to be destined for German offices on the Eastern Front. This also meant that the M-Aktion was bureaucratically under state rather than Nazi Party auspices, separate from but closely linked to the ERR. However, a strict demarcation was not always observed, and frequently M-Aktion leaders were reporting to the DBFU, to the extent that in the Netherlands, for example, postwar Dutch specialists have considered the M-Aktion a part of the ERR.

The ERR did not operate in Germany itself or territories annexed to the Reich such as Czechoslovakia and Poland. The ERR was active in Italy starting in the autumn of 1943 and briefly in Hungary in the spring of 1944. By November 1944, with German retreat from both the eastern and western fronts, and most of the "occupied territories" abandoned, the ERR name "for Occupied Territories" was dropped on Hitler's orders. By the end of 1944, the RMbO had also become virtually inoperative, and at this point, Rosenberg officially shifted the RMbO Amt Westen, along with the Möbel-Aktion it controlled, back to ERR jurisdiction, where both the Amt Westen and the M-Aktion had begun.

Even more important than its own various official agency names, or agencies to which the ERR reported at different times, its effectiveness and retention of its loot often depended more on who was pulling the strings from the outside, such as Göring for the ERR art seizures in France, or competing for the spoils, such as Heinrich Himmler, Reinhard Heydrich, and the Reich Security Main Office (Reichssicherheitshauptamt, RSHA) – the home office of the Security Service (Sicherheitsdienst, SD), the Gestapo, and the Criminal Police – rather than its actual bureaucratic alignment.

The ERR in Action on the Western Front

Books and Archives (France, Belgium, and the Netherlands). The ERR started operations in occupied France in June and early July 1940, when Hitler authorized seizure under Rosenberg's direction of cultural materials of Jews and Masons, particularly those who had fled the country. The ERR remained independent but functioned within military authorities, in the case of France, often reporting to the Military Commander for France (Militärbefehlshaber in Frankreich, MBF), paralleled by the Military Commander for Northern France and Belgium. Plundering operations were assisted by the Secret Field Police (Geheime Feldpolizei, GFP) and often accompanied by associates from the Hohe Schule or other German agencies. Even before orders came through from Hitler in late June, the GFP began securing abandoned Masonic lodges, Jewish institutions, and private homes of Jewish leaders.

At first the ERR concentrated on books and archives. Initially ZBHS director Walther Grothe and IEJ director Wilhelm Grau headed a special library command in Western Europe, seizing the most important private French Jewish and Masonic collections, such as those of the Alliance

israélite universelle, the École rabbinique, the three largest Masonic lodges, and Jewish book dealers, among others. While many books went to Berlin for the ZBHS, others went directly to the IEJ library in Frankfurt, which could boast an estimated half million volumes projected by early 1943. Through June 1941, Gerd Wunder headed library plunder efforts in Paris, before his recall to Berlin. Starting in 1943, he headed ERR operations in Ratibor, utilizing materials collected for anti-Bolshevik research and propaganda efforts.

In France, the ERR also confiscated Slavic libraries, such as the Turgenev Russian Library, the Petliura Ukrainian Library, and private socialist collections in Paris, some of them destined for other research operations. After seizure of the Polish Library, for example, the ERR was forced to turn over its 130,000 volumes to the Publication Office (Publikationsstelle, PuSte) under the Ministry of the Interior in Berlin-Dahlem.⁸

In securing books and archival materials, the ERR was actively competing with the RSHA. For example, the ERR initially seized the books and archives from the Paris Branch of the International Institute of Social History (IISG, Amsterdam), headed by exiled Menshevik Boris Nikolaevsky, with important Russian émigré socialist collections transferred to Paris in 1935. Most of the socialist archives from that collection were eventually turned over to the RSHA and other agencies, as were many other looted Jewish and Masonic archives.⁹

Similar ERR ravages proceeded in Belgium and the Netherlands, where they were likewise competing for library and archival materials with the SD and other organizations. In Amsterdam, the ERR set up headquarters in the building of the IISG, to which they transferred socialist materials seized in Belgium, including rich records of the Second International.

Art Looting (France and Belgium). Meanwhile, important French Jewish-owned collections of art were being seized under German Foreign Office orders of Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop, and assembled for “safeguarding” in an annex of the German Embassy in Paris in the control of German Ambassador Otto Abetz. These included gems owned by various members of the Rothschild family, and by Jewish dealers such as the Seligmans and Paul Rosenberg. Starting in October 1940, on Göring’s instigation, the ERR took over almost all of the seized art. Göring was anxious to enrich his own collections, while he cleverly manipulated further ERR art-looting operations in France. Rosenberg already had the art bureaucracy in place in Berlin. Göring supplied assistance from the Currency Protection Commando (Devisenschutzkommando) for seizure from bank vaults, and arranged for the Luftwaffe to assist transport. Collections assembled in the German Embassy were moved to the Louvre, and then by the end of October, the ERR set up shop for art processing in the Jeu de Paume, a prewar museum in the Tuilleries Gardens. That was the start of what became the ERR’s best-known claim to the status of war criminals, namely the seizure of over 22,000 art objects from over 200 private Jewish collections in France and Belgium.

⁸ See, for example, Grimsted, “Twice Plundered, but Still Not Home from the War: The Fate of Three Slavic Libraries Confiscated by the Nazis from Paris,” *Solanus* 16 (2002), pp. 39–76; updated in Polish as “Dwukrotnie zrabowane i nadal z dala od ojczyzny. Losy trzech bibliotek słowiańskich przejętych przez nazistów w Paryżu,” *Archeion* 106 (2003 [2005]), pp. 47–84. See my related case study, *The Odyssey of the Turgenev Library from Paris, 1940–2002: Books as Victims and Trophies of War* (Amsterdam: International Institute of Social History, 2003; “IISG Research Papers,” no. 42; electronic version (PDF file): <http://www.iisg.nl/publications/respap42.pdf>, and related studies listed in the Bibliography below.

⁹ See more details about the fate of archives the ERR turned over to the RSHA in Grimsted, “Twice Plundered or Twice Saved? Russia’s ‘Trophy’ Archives and the Loot of the Reichssicherheitshauptamt,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 15(2) (Fall 2001), pp. 191–244.

The ERR art-looting program was run by the Sonderstab Bildende Kunst and headed in Berlin by Robert Scholtz, another long-time DBFU associate. The Art Looting Investigating Unit (ALIU) of the U.S. Office of Strategic Services (OSS), characterized ERR seizures in France as “the most elaborate and extensive art looting operation undertaken by the Germans in World War II.”¹⁰ Other than a few Belgian Jewish collections brought to the Jeu de Paume, the ERR was not involved in art-looting elsewhere in Western Europe, such as the Netherlands, where other specialized Nazi art agents were operating, such as the office of Kajetan Mühlmann. In Western Europe, it should be emphasized, the ERR concentrated on private Jewish art collections and with few exceptions avoided plunder from state museums.

In the Jeu de Paume, the ERR carefully recorded their achievements, in part to control their art loot, but also to justify their activities and increase their funding in trying wartime conditions and with competing predators. They brought in art specialists to identify the provenance of the art objects seized in detailed inventories for each named collection, and went to great pains to register wartime destinations. Alpha-numeric codes were assigned to each item with the code name of the collection and numbers within; most were duly registered with photographs prepared by ERR art photographers.

Thanks to the surviving documentation and its postwar retrieval, it has been possible today to create a database for the individual art objects the ERR processed in the Jeu de Paume (at <http://www.errproject.org/jeudepaume>). This major effort, compiled under the direction of Marc Masurovsky, brings together data for over 22,000 art objects (21,700 entries) from ERR registration cards preserved in the National Archives in College Park, MD (NACP), combined with original ERR images of the art objects from the Bundesarchiv in Koblenz and some from other sources.¹¹ Identifying images of the ERR wartime exhibitions for Göring and the Nazi elite in the Jeu de Paume are also now displayed on a French website honoring Rose Valland, the French curator from the Louvre who kept track of the ERR Jeu de Paume operation and the art collected there during occupation. Other images from the exhibitions can be found on the Bundesarchiv Bildarchiv website.¹²

Most of the early art shipments from Paris went to Füssen, the closest railway junction for the main ERR art repository in the legendary Bavarian castle of Neuschwanstein. Later French shipments went to the former Cistercian Abbey of Buxheim, but there were also other Bavarian destinations and several castles taken over as ERR art repositories in Austria. The castle of Kogl became Robert Scholtz’s evacuation headquarters for the Berlin Office of the Sonderstab Bildende Kunst, while Füssen and the castle of Neuschwanstein remained headquarters for Bavarian operations. Starting in 1944, on Hitler’s orders, much of the most valuable art from French collections was transferred to the salt mines above Altaussee in near-by Austria.¹³

¹⁰ “Activity of the ERR in France” (15 Aug. 1945), OSS ALIU, Consolidated Interrogation Report, No. 1, compiled by J.S. Plaut, p. 1. See the full listing in Appendix 3; this and other ALIU reports are now available at Fold3.com: (http://www.fold3.com/browsemore/231997495_WWII:%201935-1950%5eHolocaust%20Collection/). See additional literature cited at the beginning of the French chapter.

¹¹ See Section 9.1.7.3. The database is housed at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington, DC, jointly created with the Claims Conference. Citations to the original sources for the ERR-processed art objects at the Jeu de Paume are recorded in the chart of French collections (and a few from Belgium) below, Appendix 1. Included are references to many of the newly opened French restitution claims dossiers, and the images of paintings in the collections held by the MAEE Archive in La Courneuve.

¹² See ‘Site Rose-Valland Musées Nationaux Récupération’ at <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/documentation/mnr/MnR-jdp.htm>. 123 images of ERR exhibits are also now on line in the Bildarchiv database: <http://www.bild.bundesarchiv.de> (search: ‘B 323 /Bild-310’).

¹³ Appendix 2 describes the principal ERR repositories.

Möbel-Aktion (France, Belgium, and the Netherlands). Even more horrendous in Western Europe was the plunder by the ERR offshoot, the Möbel-Aktion (M-Aktion), which, as mentioned above, stripped furnishings from the homes of Jews who had fled or been deported. By April 1942, when the program became fully operational, the M-Aktion was administered by Amt Westen of the Rosenberg Ministry – RMbO.

The M-Aktion nevertheless was headed by ERR staff, and the ERR reaped many of the prize cultural proceeds. In France, for example, the M-Aktion was run by Baron Kurt von Behr, as head of Amt Westen. Massive collection points, such as the warehouse near the Gare d’Austerlitz brought in extensive stores of household goods from pianos to pots and pans and children’s dolls from an estimated no less than 38,000 homes in France.¹⁴ By August 1944, the M-Aktion boasted removal of furnishings from over 68,000 dwellings in Western Europe. They also reported at least 29,000 dwellings in the Netherlands, most of the goods from which were sent to bombed out areas in Germany. The first choice of art objects plundered by the M-Aktion, including fine furniture, was turned over to the ERR for processing at the Jeu de Paume. Other M-Aktion branches operated with ERR personnel in occupied Belgium and the Netherlands.

The ERR separated art objects from the M-Aktion transferred to the Jeu de Paume into a number of special type-specific “M-A” collections, from paintings and Oriental *objets-d’art* to weapons and rare books. Inventoried at the Jeu de Paume without revealing the name and address of the home from which they had been seized, most of the M-A collections were forwarded to special ERR art repositories in neighboring Austria, such as Kogl and Seisenegg.¹⁵ Choice musical instruments were turned over to the Sonderstab Musik, many of which were sent to the ERR music center in Leipzig. They were later evacuated to the Abbey of Raitenhaslach in southern Bavaria near the Austrian border. Most of the books seized by the M-Aktion were processed through ERR library collecting centers, such as several large ones in Paris and Amsterdam.¹⁶

The ERR on the Eastern and Southeastern Fronts

Occupied Soviet Lands. Western Europe was only the start of ERR operations. With the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 and Rosenberg’s appointment as Reich minister for the occupied eastern territories in July, the ERR followed the Wehrmacht to the east. Rosenberg’s long-standing attitude towards the Bolshevik regime may well reflect the harsher treatment of peoples on the Eastern Front as opposed to Western Europe, as apparent when he was queried in Nuremberg:

Q. Why were the occupied countries of the West treated differently from the occupied countries of the East?

¹⁴ See the published album of photographs edited by Sarah Gensburger, *Images d’un pillage. Album de la spoliation des juifs à Paris, 1940–1944* (Paris: Éditions Textuel, 2010), which reproduces an album of original photographs of the Möbel-Aktion and its exploits in Paris, found in BArch Koblenz (B 323/311); those photographs are now available in the Bundesarchiv Bildarchiv database: <http://www.bild.bundesarchiv.de> (search ‘B 323/Bild-311’).

¹⁵ See the full list of M-Aktion collections, including those from Belgium, in a separate section of Appendix 1.

¹⁶ See an initial account and examples of M-Aktion library plunder by Sem Christian Sutter, “The Fate of Books Confiscated in the Möbel-Aktion,” in *Restitution of Confiscated Works – Wish or Reality? Documentation, identification and restitution of Cultural property of the victims of World War II. Proceedings of the international academic conference held in Liberec, 24–26 October 2007* (Prague, 2008), pp. 102–13.

A. Because those whom we considered as our adversaries or opponents from the point of view of our conception of the world are different in the West from what they are in the East. In the West there were certain Jewish organizations and Masonic lodges, and in the East there was nothing more than the Communist Party.¹⁷

Such reasoning and his “know the enemy” approach also justified the extensive ERR program of anti-Bolshevik research centered in Ratibor starting in mid-1943 and confiscation of related research materials for ideological and propaganda aims. The ERR found no rich private Jewish art collections in the Soviet lands (save for a few in the Baltic countries), where all major private property had long-since been nationalized. The Masons and “other pernicious” elements had already been eliminated and outlawed by the Bolshevik regime, while significant Judaica and Hebraica had been integrated into state repositories, if not earlier sold off to the west in the interwar period. Hence even in the library realm, in contrast to the private Jewish and Masonic collections in the west, the ERR turned to the plunder of Soviet state cultural, academic, and other institutions on the Eastern Front. In occupied Soviet territories, the ERR seized hundreds of thousands of books and other cultural assets – from Estonia in the north to Ukraine and Crimea in the south. They seized Communist Party archives that the Soviets had left behind or failed to destroy, including those from Smolensk and Dnipropetrovsk, so that the records could be used for research and propaganda ends.¹⁸

In Lithuania, which had been annexed to the Soviet Union only in July 1940, as an exception, the ERR pillaged such important Jewish institutions as the Jewish Scientific Institute (Yidisher Visnshaftlekher Institut, YIVO) in Vilnius (prewar Wilno, Poland; also Vilna), only part of which had been evacuated to the west before the German invasion, along with many private Jewish collections. IEJ library director Johannes Pohl was brought in to supervise the systematic plunder. Many materials not shipped to Frankfurt were destroyed for waste paper. In Riga, which became a sorting center for its book shipments to the west, the ERR also netted a significant amount of Judaica. At one point, they boasted one million books gathered in Riga, 90,000 of which had already been catalogued for the Ostbücherei, a special ERR library on Bolshevism. ERR reports from the Soviet Union often indicate exactly the quantities and titles of books removed from which libraries, and where they were sent.

Soviet authorities, with museum and archival specialists working overtime, had barely enough time to evacuate the most important museum treasures from Leningrad and neighboring imperial palaces. There the ERR was only able to plunder the palace libraries, while officers from the Wehrmacht’s Art Protection Office (Kunstschutz) removed the Amber Chamber as well as remaining furniture and other trimmings from the former Russian palaces, most of it shipped to Königsberg. Moscow museums, libraries, and archives had also evacuated their most prized holdings. Fortunately the German army ground to a halt outside the Soviet capital.

In occupied Soviet lands, as in the west, the ERR initially concentrated on books. In addition to the imperial palace library books outside Leningrad, they netted prize early editions from Novgorod and Kyiv (Kiev), some of which were initially seized by the Künsberg commandos, the trophy scouts from the German Foreign Office. After exhibitions in Berlin, and some handouts to top Nazi leaders, most of the literature was turned over to the ERR and ended the war in collections for the ZBHS in the monastery of Tanzenberg in Austria.

¹⁷ “Testimony of Alfred Rosenberg, taken at Nurnberg, Germany” (29 Sep. 1945)... “Reason for Harsh Treatment of Eastern Peoples,” in *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, vol. 2, p. 1347.

¹⁸ See Grimsted (editor and major contributor), *Vozvrashchenie “Smolenskogo arkhiva” / The Return of the “Smolensk Archive,”* Bilingual edition, edited by Marianna Tax Choldin, K.A. Dmitrieva, E.Iu. Genieva, and P.K. Grimsted (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2005).

Ukraine suffered at least two-thirds (if not three-quarters) of the cultural losses of the entire Soviet Union. Early on the ERR sent several hundred thousand Jewish and Hebrew books from Kyiv to the IEJ, while rare books and other trophies were collected by the Künsberg commandos. By the end of 1942, many ERR staff members were serving in the LV ABM, based in Kyiv, under the RKU.¹⁹ The LV ABM was, in fact, headed by Georg Winter from the Reichsarchiv, who had first been sent with the ERR to Ukraine in the autumn of 1941. Considerably more “Bolshevik” literature and art, to say nothing of archives and photo archives, were collected for further analysis of the main Nazi enemy on the Eastern Front and were sent to Ratibor. As they were retreating from Ukraine, convinced many treasures would not survive the anticipated brutality of Soviet recapture, the Germans seized and evacuated extensive art and archeological exhibits from state museums, as well as archives, to the extent that rolling stock was available.

The LV ABM itself, together with its chief Georg Winter, evacuated archives and art first to Kamianets-Podilskyi. From there the most valuable archives were forwarded to the Reichsarchiv archival center for captured archives from the Eastern Front in Troppau (Cz. Opava), then part of the Sudetenland. (That was where Soviet archival scouts found many of the archives and the LV AVM records.) When further retreat was imperative after Troppau was bombed in January 1945, many of the plundered Ukrainian and Latvian archives, rare books, and Riga museum exhibits ended the war in a Bohemian castle and the monastery of Kladruby, west of Pilsen (Cz. Plzeň), also then part of the Sudetenland, where they were recovered by the U.S. Third Army.²⁰

By contrast, Erich Koch, the Reich Commissar for Ukraine, who was often at odds with Rosenberg, ordered art and icons from Kyiv museums that Winter had evacuated to Rivne and Kamianets-Podilskyi transferred to Königsberg (now Russian Kaliningrad), where he still held out as Gauleiter of East Prussia. Many of the cultural treasures from Soviet lands were destroyed if not by British bombing, then later intentionally by the Germans as the Red Army approached, knowing that Soviet annexation was threatened.²¹ Koch, like other Nazi leaders, assembled his own private collection of art in Königsberg with ERR help, some of which came from museums in Kyiv; part of his collection he managed to have evacuated to Weimar in 1945.

Together with the RMbO and other German agencies, the ERR sent trainloads of archeological and ethnographic collections, fine arts, Orthodox icons, and some prime examples of Bolshevik art from Soviet museums in occupied areas to designated ERR repositories in Bavaria. For example, the castle of Colmberg, near Lehrberg (Ansbach County), was the principal repository for shipments of art (paintings, icons, furniture, decorative arts) from northwest Russia, particularly Pskov and Novgorod, the imperial palaces outside of Leningrad (Gatchina, Pavlovsk, and Peterhof), and also Belarus and Ukraine. Most of the art and archeological treasures from Ukraine and Crimea went to the ERR repository of Höchstädt. That was also where they took some Ukrainian specialists they intended to employ for a projected research center. Other shipments went to Buxheim, which the ERR had already used for some of the overflow art collections from Paris.²² Meanwhile, major groups of archives from the Baltic countries that were

¹⁹ See Grimsted, *Trophies of War and Empire: The Archival Heritage of Ukraine, World War II, and the International Politics of Restitution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press for the Ukrainian Research Institute, 2001).

²⁰ See Grimsted, “The Fate of the Kyiv Central Archive of Early Acts: A Triple Tragedy of Destruction, Plunder, and Propaganda,” in *Synopsis: A Collection of Essays in Honour of Zenon E. Kohut*, ed. Serhii Plokhly and Frank E. Sysyn (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2005); also in *Canadian Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 29 (Summer–Winter 2004), pp. 73–114 (updated from the Ukrainian 2004 version in *Arkhiv Ukrainy*).

²¹ See Grimsted, “Art and Icons Lost in East Prussia: The Fate of German Seizures from Kyiv Museums,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 61 (2013), no. 1, pp. 47–91.

²² See Appendix 2 for a description of principal ERR repositories.

not sent to Troppau ended the war in the mines near Goslar in what became the British Zone of Occupation in western Germany.

Greece, the Balkans, and Italy. ERR units were also active in Greece and former Yugoslavia, where they removed countless archival and library treasures, and even some important art and antiquities. For example, in the autumn of 1941, a large Sonderdommando Griekland IEJ library director Johannes Pohl headed a special ERR expedition to Greece, based in Thessaloniki, from where over 90 percent of the Sephardic Jewish Community were later deported to their deaths by the Nazi regime. The ERR seized most of the community archives for the IEJ. A surviving report from November 1941, for example, graphically details their exploits between May and November of 1941, when their plunder had extended to Jewish communities and Masonic lodges throughout Greece.²³

Starting in 1942, the ERR was also active in Croatia and Serbia, confiscating many library books and archives, most of them first shipped to Ratibor, but earlier some directly to Berlin and Frankfurt. Reports, book lists, and even a card file remain to document their library seizures from Jews and Masons in Zagreb and Dubrovnik.²⁴

Starting in the autumn of 1943, after the fall of Mussolini, the ERR was busy removing prime Judaica from Rome, with two wagonloads or more from the Rome Synagogue sent to the IEJ in Frankfurt, while at least some books from the Rome Rabbinical College (Biblioteca del Collegio Rabbinico) eventually reached the IEJ outpost in Hungen. However, other major ERR exploits in Italy were more directed to propaganda, and as far as is known, they were not confiscating art collections. By early 1944 an ERR office for Special Commando Italy (Sonderkommando Italien; later AG Italien) was organized in Verona under the direction of Dr Hans Maier, who had earlier headed a task force under HAG Ostland. Only a few ERR reports survive in Berlin from the brief visits and confiscations in Italy by the Sonderstab Musik, as well as purchases and microfilming of music manuscripts. Documentation also survives for a small shipment of music materials from Trieste, and there are indications of other books removed from that Adriatic port.

Postwar Fate of ERR Cultural Loot

The postwar location, identification, and restitution operations, heroically carried out by western Allied “Monuments Men” – officers of Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives, MFA&A – retrieved most of the ERR and other cultural loot, together with wartime reports about the looting.²⁵ With the help of art-looting intelligence officers from the Office of Strategic Services

²³ “Abschlussbericht über die Tätigkeit des Sonderkommandos Rosenberg in Griechenland,” Athens, 15 Nov. 1941, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde, NS 30/75; a digital copy of the original typescript is available on-line: http://www.argus.bundesarchiv.de/NS30_25600/index.htm, attached to the finding aid for the record group. Additional copies of the report are available among ERR documents in Paris (CDJC), Amsterdam (NIOD), and Moscow (RGVA) as described in subsequent chapters. (N.B. BArch links have changed since the 2011 version of the German chapter.)

²⁴ Some of these ERR files are now held in Moscow (see Section 6.1.1.), while others are in YIVO in New York (see Section 9.3.1.), with copies from YIVO in BArch-Berlin-Lichterfelde (see Section 3.1.1.).

²⁵ See Lynn Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa: The Fate of Europe's Treasures in the Third Reich and the Second World War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), chs VII–XVI, and the popularized account by Robert Edsel (with Bret Witter), *The Monuments Men: Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves, and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History* (New York: Center Street, 2009), and the 2014 Hollywood film.

(OSS), they further succeeded in tracking down and interrogating many of the perpetrators in Western Europe.²⁶ As a result of these operations, wartime ERR documents became interspersed in postwar restitution, intelligence, and trial records, as will be seen in the descriptions of many of them in the Survey that follows. Thus wartime migration and postwar cultural restitution operations – or non-restitution in the Soviet case – have much to do with the dispersal of the records of plunder and their present locations.

Central to the western Allied postwar restitution program, the MFA&A organized a series of collecting points in the U.S. Zone of Occupation in Germany under the Office of Military Government, U.S. (OMGUS) for the cultural loot found in thousands of castles and salt mines. A French Central Collection Point was organized in Baden-Baden, with Rose Valland taking the lead in tracking down loot from France found in Germany. The castle of Celle, north of Hannover, became a cultural collecting point for the British Zone, with many of the Königsberg and other Baltic archives, as well as treasures from Berlin collections that the Germans had evacuated to the Graslaben mine, initially assembled in Goslar, further southeast. The ERR had been only tangentially involved in the case of the Baltic archives. In both French and British zones, records of cultural restitution were often intermixed with documentation on the return of non-cultural materials plundered by the Germans. Restitution, as operated in postwar occupied Germany and Austria, it should be noted, actually meant repatriation to the country from which the objects were seized. In all four Allied occupation zones, items were not restituted to individual owners or institutions outside of Germany, even when they had been identified.

Restitution of ERR-Looted Art to France and Belgium: MCCP. Postwar restitution of a large percentage of the ERR art loot from Jewish collections in France and Belgium processed through the Jeu de Paume was possible because of the careful detail with which the ERR documented and photographed the art objects. Identification and return was aided, often with the help of French sources and postwar investigatory agents, who succeeded in tracking down that documentation and the valuable looted art. Half a century later, Hector Feliciano explains in *The Lost Museum* (1994): “many of the obsessively precise Nazi looting inventories and art files are still the best and most reliable source to be used to reconstruct the history of these looted missing paintings.”²⁷

In the U.S. Zone of Occupation, the Munich Central Collecting Point (MCCP) was the most important transit point in the migration and restitution processing of ERR-looted art objects after the war. Because most of the ERR art loot from Paris was shipped to ERR art repositories in Bavaria and near-by Austria (both part of the U.S. Zones of Occupation), as well as the art and museum exhibits the ERR seized from the Eastern Front, most of the art objects were removed for restitution processing to the MCCP. There, however, the ERR loot was intermixed with even more art captured by other Nazi looting agencies, and also art evacuated for safekeeping from many German and Austrian public and private collections in major cities during the war. To aid the restitution process, MFA&A officers succeeded in bringing together many of the surviving German documents pertaining to art looting in a Document Center at the MCCP. Among those collected were voluminous documents on art looting created by the ERR, although several other Nazi art plundering agencies were also represented.²⁸

When crates of objects arrived in Munich, registration cards were prepared in multiple copies

²⁶ See Appendix 3 for postwar art-looting intelligence and interrogation reports.

²⁷ Hector Feliciano, *The Lost Museum* (New York, 1997; French edn.: Paris, 1944), p. 7.

²⁸ For MCCP records now in U.S. custody, see Section 9.1.5.3.4. with references to electronic versions at F3.com from the *NARA Microfilm Publication M1946*.

for each object, and a Munich accession number assigned to each “Property Cards Art,” which usually also recorded ERR codes or other registration data found. MCCP property cards also bear “exit” dates, documenting when the item was shipped out to the country of seizure. In the case of the extensive ERR loot from France found in Neuschwanstein and Buxheim, the MFA&A arranged shipments directly back to Paris in the autumn of 1945 and early 1946, but usually MCCP property cards were prepared for those items returned. Many of the objects were photographed in Munich, although often wartime ERR photographs were utilized, all of which became intermixed in the MCCP photo collection. Many different series of MCCP Property Cards Art and photographs survive to this day but, like other ERR documentation described in the Survey, have been widely dispersed.²⁹ Yet they constitute important clues to track the life cycle of wartime plunder and migration. Those held with OMGUS records by NACP are included with the MCCP files now on the Internet via the vendor Fold3.com.

The MCCP was only one of several collecting points for cultural objects organized by OMGUS. The Marburg Central Collecting Point was short-lived, and most of its acquisitions turned over to Wiesbaden. Some of the ERR loot that ended up in museums or other collections in other parts of Germany at war’s end were collected and processed through the Wiesbaden Central Collecting Point (WCCP), also under OMGUS, where they were registered on similar Property Cards Art, numbered, and photographed. Property cards from NACP OMGUS records for those Wiesbaden items are also on the Internet at Fold3.com.³⁰

After the OMGUS Central Collecting Points closed down at the end of 1949, in Munich the German office known as the Trust Administration for Cultural Assets (Treuhandverwaltung für Kulturgut, TVK) continued restitution operations in Bavaria until 1962. Many residual working files were retained by that office, including recovered ERR documentation, MCCP property cards, and photographs, and hence those records today, as described below in the Bundesarchiv in Koblenz, remain crucial for determining the fate of wartime cultural loot.³¹ Many of the original photographs, along with art objects not yet returned to their legal owners, however, remained in the custody of the West German Ministry of Finance, which explains why they are now held in the Berlin Federal Office for Central Services and Unresolved Property Issues (Bundesamt für zentrale Dienste und offene Vermögensfragen, BADV) under the German Federal Ministry of Finance (see Section 3.6.). Additional photographs have surfaced among those collected by the Central Institute for Art History (Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte, ZI), which now occupies the building used for the MCCP in Munich.

MCCP Database. As an aid to continuing provenance research and verification of returned art objects processed in Munich, a bilingual German database was compiled by specialists from the BADV and the German Historical Museum (Deutsches Historisches Museum, DHM) in Berlin. Launched in 2009 on the DHM website, the database combines images of the Property Cards Art held today in the Bundesarchiv-Koblenz, with the 50,000 correlated images of individual art objects from the MCCP (previously not publicly accessible) that are now held by BADV.³² It

²⁹ See more description of the MCCP Property Cards Art and related photographs, among other documents remaining in U.S. custody in the NACP (see Section 9.1.5.3.4., Entry 520–Entry 523).

³⁰ The set of Property Cards from Wiesbaden that came to the States after the war are now on-line at Fold3.com from *NARA Microfilm Publication M1947* (see Section 9.1.5.3.2, Entry 501–Entry 505).

³¹ See remaining TVK records and MCCP Property Cards Art in the Bundesarchiv Koblenz, B 323 (Section 3.2.1.), and the on-line finding aid: <http://www.argus.bundesarchiv.de/B323-52029/index.htm>.

³² “Datenbank zum ‘Central Collecting Point München’,” http://www.dhm.de/datenbank/ccp/dhm_ccp.php?seite=9; an English version is also available. Although ERR loot is only a small part of the art objects processed, the MCCP

would be helpful to researchers if this key database could be eventually expanded with additional MCCP property cards, including the equally extensive batches of property cards and images of objects held by the NACP, RG 260, all of which have now been digitized. Similar databases are not yet available for the Wiesbaden, and Marburg CCPs, or for the corresponding British and French restitution operations. The MCCP numbers have been added to the ERR codes for those items that had been processed at the Jeu de Paume in the recently launched Jeu du Paume database, which will assist correlation for those French Jewish collections with the MCCP Property Cards.

Database for the Sonderauftrag Linz. Another related Internet database launched by the German Historical Museum (DHM) combines images for individual objects and registration cards for art objects that had been brought together during the war for Hitler's projected museum in his hometown of Linz, the so-called Sonderauftrag Linz, also now available in bilingual format on the DHM website in Berlin.³³ However, only 53 items (56 objects) of provenance in French collections processed by the ERR in the Jeu de Paume have been identified in the Linz Collection, most of which were processed for restitution after the war in MCCP.

Göring Collection DHM Database. Over 875 art objects from the Jeu de Paume went to the private collection of Reichsmarschall Herman Göring, although some of those he utilized for his elaborate system of art exchanges to further enrich his own holdings. Nancy Yeide's impressive 2009 printed catalogue of paintings in the Göring Collection, although not yet available in an on-line database, is a must for researchers following the fate of the ERR Jeu de Paume collections.³⁴

The earlier wartime catalogues of the Göring Collection (to 1945), from the originals held by the Bundesarchiv-Koblenz, have now been incorporated in a new DHM database, but researchers should be aware that these do not include the results of significant postwar research on the paintings Göring had acquired. Eventually, it would be helpful if the new Göring database could be expanded to include the wealth of data and images of additional paintings in the Yeide catalogue as well as photographs collected in MAEE by the French, but for now the project remains limited in scope.³⁵

ERR Loot Still Not Returned. Many objects looted by the ERR, however, never made it to any of the restitution centers. Among many art objects registered by the ERR at the Jeu de Paume, an estimated 500 art objects were destroyed by the ERR in Paris in July 1943, as part of the campaign against "degenerate art." Some objects were never registered. Others were stolen, while many were sold locally or exchanged by the ERR or its agents during the war. Still many others were sent for sale in Switzerland or other neutral countries. Still others were hidden away and remained missing for decades, such as the Impressionist paintings recently identified in a Zurich

database regrettably does not have a field for ERR code numbers (although many are accessible in the full-text search mode).

³³ "Datenbank 'Sammlung des Sonderauftrages Linz': <http://www.dhm.de/datenbank/linzdb>.

³⁴ Nancy H. Yeide, *Beyond the Dreams of Avarice: The Herman Goering Collection* (Dallas: Laurel Publishing, 2009; see <http://www.goeringart.com>).

³⁵ See the 2012 DHM Göring Database, compiled by Hans-Christian Lohr, at <http://www.dhm.de/datenbank/goering>. The collection of images of paintings from the Göring Collection held by the MAEE Archives, as of 2013 are being digitized so they can be made available to the public.

bank, associated with one of the ERR art-looting operatives, Bruno Lohse.

Many of the major French Jewish families and dealers whose art collections were seized and processed by the ERR in the Jeu de Paume have now been identified. However, as of 2014 provisional figures suggest that little more than half of the items now listed in the Jeu de Paume database have been restituted to their prewar owners or heirs.³⁶ French specialists further estimate that those items that passed through the Jeu de Paume probably represent only one-fifth of the works of art that left France during the war, many of them, to be sure, not through the hands of the ERR. Many more families who lost their libraries, art objects, or home furnishings, or who for various reasons were not on the priority ERR lists, have never known the fate of the treasures seized from the homes they were forced to abandon. Many paintings seized in France, including many that passed through the Jeu de Paume and registered by the ERR, are still “Looking for Owners,” as apparent in a 2008–2009 exhibition in Jerusalem and Paris.³⁷ Many of the paintings exhibited came from the so-called French collection of Recuperated Artwork in National Museums (Musées Nationaux Récupération, MNR), which contains works of art repatriated to France after the war whose owners have still not been identified, although many have ERR codes. A catalogue with images of the MNR is available on the Internet, and recently a database has been launched as part of the French Ministry of Culture Portal.³⁸ Such exhibitions and catalogues call attention to the continuing need for further provenance research with expanded reference tools.

Cultural Restitution to the Soviet Union. Tracing art and other cultural items plundered from Soviet museums that ended the war in the ERR repositories in Bavaria remains much more difficult today, as is apparent in the Survey coverage for Russia and Ukraine. Even more difficult it is to trace books removed from Soviet lands, most of them by the ERR to its various book storage centers. Only since the collapse of the USSR have Russian authorities been publishing catalogues of losses, now displayed on the Russian website “lostart.ru” Based primarily on prewar (c.1938) inventories, the data is not conceived for convenient searching, nor is it linked to available German seizure documents or Soviet retrieval reports. No mention is made of items returned by the Western Allies. The “lostart.ru” website also displays most of the published catalogues of “trophy” cultural treasures now held in different Russian state institutions.³⁹ However, the promised public revelation of data regarding the foreign-owned “displaced cultural valuables” (as Russians now term their loot) brought to the USSR, lasted on the Internet for only a short period in 2003. It covered only limited listings for a few museums and libraries before it disappeared from public view.⁴⁰ Because of the extensive cultural destruction in the USSR and the fact that German (and Romanian in Ukraine) cultural seizures there were by and large from

³⁶ Additional checking in newly opened French sources in MAEE will probably raise that total. See Appendix 1, but many of the names of owners and collections listed there still require identification.

³⁷ See *À qui appartenaient ces tableaux? La politique française de recherche de provenance, de garde et de restitution des oeuvres d'art pillées durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale / Looking for Owners. French policy for provenance research, restitution and custody of art stolen in France during World War Two. Catalogue de l'exhibition Jerusalem-Paris*, edited with an introduction by Isabelle le Masne de Chermont and Laurence Sigal-Klagsbald (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 2008).

³⁸ Lesné, Claude, and Anne Roquebert, *Catalogue des peintures MNR* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 2004); on-line database edition: <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/documentation/mnr/pres.htm>.

³⁹ See the Russian website <http://lostart.ru/ru/> also available in an abridged English version, “Cultural Values – The Victims of the War” (undoubtedly ‘valuables’ is intended) – <http://lostart.ru/en/>.

⁴⁰ The long-promised updated version is still not available in 2014.

state institutions, different patterns of German seizure and related problems are involved on the Eastern Front.

Problems arose because in the postwar period the Soviet Union simply did not have a centralized agency monitoring cultural displacements, keeping track of retrievals in relation to losses, and compiling additional data about missing items. The massive records of the Soviet Extraordinary State Commission on War Losses (ChGK), opened for public research scrutiny only c.1990, had not been updated once completed. Besides lists of losses, even for individual museums, make no distinction among cultural valuables destroyed, plundered at home, or seized by the Germans.⁴¹ And there was no postwar attempt to link ChGK recorded losses with captured German documents regarding seizures, items subsequently retrieved, or incoming U.S. or French inventories of items returned. Given the inadequacies of those Soviet postwar compilations and restitution claims tendered to western occupation authorities in Germany for the staggering Soviet cultural losses, and later secrecy assigned to the sources, it is still exceedingly difficult even to differentiate wartime destruction from plunder by the invader and local looting.

With the Internet launch of the ERR records in Kyiv described in the Ukrainian chapter, much more documentation is available about ERR operations on the Eastern Front and the specifics of German seizures. There are even many initial survey reports and some shipping inventories for ERR cultural plunder. Some ERR inventories were found for objects that arrived in Bavaria, and for those processed at the MCCP, registration numbers or other identifying markings from the plundered Soviet repositories are found on the Munich Property Cards, while U.S. restitution shipment inventories to the USSR provide Munich registration numbers for items turned over to Soviet authorities. Many of the property cards for those items can now be found in the on-line MCCP database, some even with photographs; additional copies from NACP holdings are now online at Fold3. But again, the ERR was not the only agency responsible for cultural plunder on the Eastern Front, and it is often impossible to distinguish their loot from others.

Despite the lack of utilization of Soviet-captured ERR documents (hidden away in Kyiv, Minsk, and Moscow), and lack of knowledgeable Soviet cultural representatives at the MCCP or WCCP, the U.S. collecting points in Germany restituted over half a million items to the Soviet Union immediately after the war. That was many more than Soviet authorities formally claimed or that many Russians today admit as having been received.⁴² Additional Soviet valuables were returned from French and British occupation zones in Germany, although relatively few of those items returned had been plundered by the ERR. While Red Army Trophy Brigades were actively seizing cultural trophies of their own, Soviet authorities cooperated only minimally in the cultural restitution efforts of the western Allies, and rarely sent qualified representatives to the CCPs. Soviet authorities never compiled and circulated adequate data about their losses, and they never utilized the extensive ERR records they captured to trace German seizures and out-shipments from the USSR. Yet despite their large receipts from the western Allies and their own extensive cultural retrieval, they complained bitterly about the lack of restitution from the west. That charge

⁴¹ The full Russian name in English translation was the Extraordinary State Commission for the Establishment and Investigation of Crimes of the German-Fascist Aggressors and their Accomplices and for the Appraisal of the Losses Incurred by Citizens, Collective Farms, Social Organizations, State Enterprises, and Institutions of the USSR (ChGK). Most of the records are not open to researchers in GA RF, fond 7021, but it was clear they had no central agency monitoring and coordinating search and retrieval. See my earlier discussion of the deficiencies of those reports in Grimsted, *Trophies of War and Empire*, pp. 177–98.

⁴² See the Grimsted article with chart of transfer shipments, “Spoils of War Returned: U.S. Restitution of Nazi-Looted Cultural Treasures to the USSR, 1945–1959,” *Prologue: Quarterly of the National Archives and Records Administration* 34(1) (Spring 2002), pp. 27–41. Electronic version: <http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2002/spring/spoils-of-war-1.html>.

is repeated even today by Russian politicians and the public at large seeking to justify retention of the Soviet unilateral cultural seizures in Germany and Eastern Europe at the end of the war. Unlike the situation in the Soviet era, considerable valuable works of art and other cultural objects are today in private hands of the new business oligarchs.

Soviet Sources Repressed. While more and more Western sources are opening to researchers, and many online, considerable Soviet archival documentation on cultural retrieval and restitution proceedings still remains inaccessible in Russia. Adequate provenance research and identification has still not been completed for many of the ‘trophy’ valuables ‘displaced to the Soviet Union’ at the end of the war and during the early postwar period, including some items previously seized by the ERR and others from foreign Holocaust victims throughout Europe. During recent years, alas, even documents that were declassified relating to western restitution to the USSR are again being suppressed.

For example, the Soviet copies of western item-level inventories of cultural restitution shipments to the Soviet Union from Germany and Austria include many items seized by the ERR in Belarus, Ukraine, and the Baltic countries, as well as western Russia. As late as the year 2000, Russian specialists in the Ministry of Culture were unaware those documents existed, even as they prepared extensive new catalogues of Russian wartime losses. When the Soviet copies still were not found by 2000, preserved original inventories of the outgoing U.S. restitution shipments to the Soviet Union from the MSCP, WSCP, and other points, were issued by the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) on CD-ROM in 2001, including many items plundered by the ERR.⁴³

Finally, the Soviet copies of these inventories (together with Russian translations) were identified in Moscow in 2009, not in the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF) with the contingent files from the Soviet Military Administration in Germany (SVAG) where they belong, but rather mixed in with other reparation and restitution files among the records of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Trade. Limited access was possible only briefly in the Russian State Archive of the Economy (RGAE). The series with the SVAG files was again closed for ‘reprocessing’, and in 2010, when the relevant series (*opis*) was reopened it had been ‘sanitized,’ and the files containing copies of western inventories of cultural objects restituted and documents regarding cultural valuables retrieved by SVAG authorities were withdrawn from public access. Hence full description of Soviet restitution and retrieval files could not be included in the Russian chapter herein. Apparently Russia does not want more claims from former Soviet republics such as Ukraine and Belarus. Details can be found in those same now-restricted SVAG files about Soviet cultural receipts from the French and British zones of occupation in Germany; already it has been possible to verify some of that data in publicly available French and British sources.

One other example of long suppressed and never-utilized sources are the recently identified inventories for over 1,000 paintings and icons seized in 1943 by ERR and LV ABM staff and shipped from Kyiv to Königsberg, although the inventories cover only half of the German seizures shipped to East Prussia. Most of the items were destroyed there in February 1945. Quite unexpectedly, original German carbon copies of the original inventories were found in a little utilized series of U.S. Nuremberg records, and a copy with Russian translation from U.S.

⁴³ *U.S. Restitution of Nazi-Looted Cultural Treasures to the USSR, 1945–1959: Facsimile Documents from the National Archives of the United States*, compiled with an Introduction by Patricia Kennedy Grimsted; Foreword by Michael J. Kurtz (CD-ROM edn.: Washington, DC: GPO, 2001), prepared in collaboration with the National Archives of the United States. Free copies can still be ordered from NARA.

microfilms surfaced in long-secret records of a Soviet Commission searching for the Amber Chamber. So much attention has been focused on the Amber Chamber reassembled in the Königsberg Castle during the war that the fate of other art objects shipped to East Prussia has been overlooked. Nothing was written until recently about the German scorched-earth operations in East Prussia when the Red Army captured the area in 1945.⁴⁴ More provenance research is needed to determine specific losses and survivals.

While some Soviet cultural retrieval documents are now available in various archives, and the “Lostart.ru” website is expanding, other important sources that were open to researchers in the 1990s and early years of the new century (often only on a limited basis) are again off limits for public research. At the same time, potentially important restitution-related and cultural retrieval files held by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs all still remain classified, as do the even more extensive relevant records under the Ministry of Defense, including records of the Red Army Trophy Brigades, thus barring not only our description in this Survey, but also public knowledge of what was and was not returned to the USSR.

Bremen Project Documentation. Even after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the “archival revolution” in Russia, adequate Soviet documentation was still unavailable. While the Russians refused to restitute more of the spoils of war seized from Germany, such as the treasures of the Bremen Kunsthalle Museum,⁴⁵ they frequently accused Germany and the United States of harboring many of the cultural treasures that had been seized from the USSR. To counter such charges, the Research Center for East European Studies (Forschungsstelle Osteuropa) at the University of Bremen undertook a major project in the 1990s to assess Soviet wartime losses and postwar restitution efforts. Specialists from several countries searched many archives and collected copies of related documents, leading to a series of important publications and collaborative symposia on the subject.⁴⁶ As one of the products of those efforts, Bremen specialists compiled a German-language database (1996) for items of Soviet provenance that passed through the MCCP on the basis of Bundesarchiv Koblenz and NACP documents. As then created, that compilation is obsolete today, not only in terms of software, but also because it lacks images combined with the object descriptions, such has since been done in the 2009 German MCCP database on the DHM website.⁴⁷

It would be helpful for researchers today if the documents gathered by the Bremen Center (recently transferred to Berlin) could be catalogued for public research, or even prepared for Internet display. That resource could augment the data available about still lost cultural valuables

⁴⁴ See Grimsted, “Art and Icons Lost in East Prussia” (above, note 21).

⁴⁵ See Konstantin Akinsha, “Why Can’t Private Trophies Go Home from the War? The Baldin-Bremen Kunsthalle Case: A Cause-Célèbre of German-Russian Restitution Politics,” *Spoils of War v. Cultural Heritage: The Russian Cultural Property Law in Historical Context*, edited by P.K. Grimsted; published as *International Journal of Cultural Property* 17, no. 2 (2010), pp. 257–90. Electronic text at: <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayIssue?decade=2010&jid=JCP&volumeId=17&issueId=02&iid=7901872>.

⁴⁶ See Wolfgang Eichwede, “Trophy Art as Ambassadors: Reflections Beyond Diplomatic Deadlock in the German-Russian Dialogue,” in *Spoils of War v. Cultural Heritage*; = *IJCP* 17, no. 2 (2010), pp. 387–412; see pp. 403–405 for a summary of the Bremen Project and bibliography of major publications.

⁴⁷ Wolfgang Eichwede and Ulrike Hartung, eds., *Property Cards Art, Claims and Shipments. Amerikanische Rückführungen sowjetischer Kulturgüter an die UdSSR nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* – Die CD der Arbeitsstelle “Verbleib der im Zweiten Weltkrieg aus der Sowjetunion verlagerten Kulturgüter” (Bremen: Forschungsstelle Osteuropa, 1996). See also Gabriele Freitag, “Die Restitution von NS-Beutegut nach dem zweiten Weltkrieg,” in “*Betr: Sicherstellung*,” *NS-Kunstraub in der Sowjetunion* (Bremen: Edition Temmen, 1998), pp. 170–208, along with other articles in that collective volume from the Bremen Project.

seized during the war from occupied Soviet lands. However, many of the documents themselves have been reprocessed with changed archival signatures, and permission for open access would often be difficult to obtain. A few of those materials are revealed in published German compendia, but they have made little impact towards more open and active investigation by Russian and Ukrainian specialists, many of whom are not fluent in German.⁴⁸

Indeed, more international cooperation is needed to bring together surviving data about seizure and retrieval of cultural objects from occupied Soviet territories to dispel prevailing beliefs that little was returned and that many Soviet treasures remain abroad. Today for independent Ukraine, Belarus, and the Baltic republics, such efforts might also help locate treasures from those republics that were returned to the USSR but never reached their home institutions. But at present, such issues remain exceedingly sensitive in Russia, where there appears to be little concern about resolving the continuing controversies or enabling further restitution among former Soviet republics, let alone abroad.

Postwar Fate of ERR-Looted Books and Archives

U.S. Restitution: Offenbach Archival Depot (OAD). A large percentage of the ERR library loot that ended the war in Germany was returned by the western Allies to the country of origin, and thence it was hoped to the prewar institutions, owners, or their successors – to the extent they could be located and their claims legitimized. The Offenbach Archival Depository (OAD) outside Frankfurt am Main, characterized as the “American antithesis to the ERR” and “the biggest book restitution operation in library history,” served as a centralized American restitution facility for many collections plundered by the ERR and other agencies. Yet it functioned without the significant ERR documents about wartime library seizures now available. Between its March 1946 opening and its closure in April 1949, OAD nevertheless processed more than three million displaced books and manuscripts, along with related ritual treasures, relying largely on *ex libris* and book markings for identification.⁴⁹ These included loot the ERR had collected from Jewish and other sources all over Europe for the IEJ in Frankfurt and Hungen, and the ERR-captured Masonic collections from Western Europe stored in Herzenheim. Although OAD returned nearly 300,000 books to the Soviet Union, most plundered by the ERR, Russian publications have only recently acknowledged any part of that restitution from the west.⁵⁰ OAD records described in the U.S. chapter below are now on the Internet (see Section 9.1.5.4.4.), and many of the French records of retrieval and restitution of library books are now open for consultation in Paris (see Section 2.1.1.3. and Section 2.4.6.). Large numbers of the library returns from OAD, however, represented books plundered by other German agencies. Those included many from the equally

⁴⁸ See, for example the well-researched articles in “*Betr: Sicherstellung*,” *NS-Kunstraub in der Sowjetunion* (Bremen: Edition Temmen, 1998), and the document collection by Eichwede, Wolfgang, and Ulrike Hartung, eds. *Verschleppt und verschollen: Eine Dokumentation deutscher, sowjetischer und amerikanischer Akten zum NS-Kunstraub in der Sowjetunion (1941–1948)* (Bremen: Edition Temmen, 2000).

⁴⁹ See Leslie I. Poste’s article, “Books Go Home from the Wars,” *Library Journal* 73 (1948), pp. 1699–704. See the Internet exhibit by the USHMM at: <http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/oad/>, with links to images and bibliography. See also the recent, well-illustrated OAD memorial volume by Gabriele Hauschke-Wicklaus, Angelika Amborn-Morgenstern, and Erika Jacobs, *Fast vergessen: Das amerikanische Bücherdepot in Offenbach am Main von 1945 bis 1949* (Offenbach am Main: Offenbacher Editionen, 2011).

⁵⁰ See Grimsted, “Pokhishchennyye natsistami knigi vozvrashchaitusia s voyny: Zabytaia istoriia britanskoi i amerikanskoi bibliotechnoi restitutsii v SSSR,” *Istoriia bibliotek. Sbornik nauchnykh trudov* 6 (St. Petersburg: Rossiiskaia natsional’naia biblioteka, 2006), pp. 242–93.

large collections brought together by the RSHA that had survived the bombing of Berlin, as well as those found elsewhere in Germany. It should also be remembered that many books plundered by the ERR and other agencies were distributed to libraries and other agencies throughout the Reich. Recently German libraries have been doing considerable provenance research and are finding even more books that are still “looking for owners.”

British Restitution: Tanzenberg. At the end of the war, the British found over a half million books in the remote monastery of Tanzenberg, near Klagenfurt, in Austrian Carinthia that the ERR had collected from all over the continent for the ZBHS. British MFA&A officers kept several captured ZBHS librarians under house arrest to assist in restitution. The librarians had managed to burn most of their wartime files, leaving only a fraction of the ERR library-seizure and shipping records in Tanzenberg. Unfortunately, we do not know today the fate of all the German documents the British reportedly found. However, The British National Archives (TNA), as will be noted below, preserves extensive British restitution records indicating the books returned from Tanzenberg to many European countries, with lists documenting the owners involved.⁵¹

For example, the largest single shipment of 975 crates that went home to the Netherlands contained materials from the IISH in Amsterdam, plundered by the ERR. French library restitution records follow the trail of the books returned to Paris in considerable details about their owners (see Section 2.1.1.3. and Section 2.4.6.). Another 569 crates with a total of about 65,000 volumes were transferred to Soviet authorities, including some 35,000 rare books from the former imperial palaces in suburban Leningrad, as well as many valuable early printed books from Novgorod, Kyiv, and Voronezh. Most of those were collected by the ERR working groups in occupied Soviet lands, although some were captured by the Künsberg commandos and transferred to the ERR in Berlin. This British restitution effort in Tanzenberg was only recently revealed in Russia. Regrettably, librarians still complain that many of the books returned never reached their home libraries in Kyiv and Voronezh, despite available lists and stamps.⁵²

Jewish ‘Reconstruction’ as Opposed to Restitution. We also have to take into account that vast quantities of “heirless” Jewish books were turned over to Jewish reconstruction agencies for distribution around the world, and especially a large number were transferred to the United States and Jerusalem. It became U.S. Government policy, as was agreed with Jewish successor organizations, not to return Jewish books to Germany, even if there were markings to indicate their provenance in German Jewish Communities, many of which had been annihilated in the Holocaust or from which most of the luckier members had fled abroad.

The U.S. and British were also not returning books to the Baltic countries, given the fact that U.S. authorities did not recognize their annexation by the Soviet Union. And there was often reluctance to turn over other Jewish books to Soviet authorities, even with identifiable markings, given reports of growing anti-Semitism in postwar years. Vilnius and surrounding areas of

⁵¹ See Section 8.1.2. See also Evelyn Adunka, *Der Raub der Bücher: Plünderung in der NS-Zeit und Restitution nach 1945* (Vienna: Czernin Verlag, 2002), and her several subsequent articles listed in the ‘Bibliography’ below.

⁵² Regarding British restitution to the Soviet Union, see Grimsted, “Rare Books from Voronezh to Tartu and Tanzenberg: From Nazi Plunder and British Restitution to Russian ‘Lost Book Treasures,’” *Solanus* 18 (2004), pp. 72–107; Grimsted, “Knigi iz Tsarskogo Sela vozvrashchaiutsia domoi s voiny,” in *Kniga: Issledovaniia i materialy*, ed. I.N. Tarasenko (Moscow: Nauka, 2005), 72–94; and Grimsted, “Pokhishchennye natsistami knigi vozvrashchaiutsia s voiny.”

Lithuania had developed major Jewish libraries in the interwar period, which had been pillaged by the ERR as noted earlier. Already in 1940 YIVO émigré directors had reincorporated that institution in New York, and as a result were permitted to retrieve many books and manuscripts from Vilnius collections including their own that had come to Offenbach after the war from IEJ Frankfurt and Hungen. They were transferred to New York via the Library of Congress Mission, which was also entitled to retrieve additional books from OAD, including German wartime publications that were not being returned to Germany. Thousands additional Jewish books were distributed for temporary use to D-P camps in the U.S. Zone of Occupation.

From Offenbach (OAD), while 650,000 Jewish books were returned to their countries of origin, well over half a million Jewish books and manuscripts were declared “heirless.” An estimated over 500,000 Jewish books, close to 8,000 ritual objects, and 1,000 Torah scrolls were transferred first to Wiesbaden CCP and then to the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc. (JCR), an agency officially incorporated in the spring of 1947 as the cultural arm of the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization. In 1949 JCR was recognized by the U.S. Government as the trustee of heirless Jewish property. As explained in Dana Herman’s a recent study of JCR,

Eighty-one percent of the cultural property was sent to Israel and the United States; nine percent was allocated to West European countries (with half going to Britain), and the remaining ten percent was distributed to more than fifteen other countries including South Africa, Argentina, Brazil, Australia, and Canada.⁵³

As has become apparent recently in revealing investigations, many of the transferred books did bear identifying markings of their owners or the libraries from which they had been seized.

From the “heirless” books that British restitution authorities could not identify or return to their countries of origin from the ZBHS horde in Tanzenberg, a large shipment later also went to Jerusalem. JCR also found the funds for transport to Jerusalem of displaced 60,000 books from throughout Europe that ended the war in Czechoslovakia, but most of those had come from RSHA deposits evacuated from Berlin in Sudeten castles rather than ERR loot.

Ratibor: Soviet Retrieval But No Return to the West. Before the 1990s, little was known about the third major concentration of ERR library loot in and around the Silesian city of Ratibor, site of the major ERR research and library center evacuated from Berlin in the summer of 1943. ERR documentation long hidden in Kyiv, together with other files in Berlin-Lichterfelde, makes clear that through the end of 1944, Ratibor continued to be the main collecting point for ERR book loot from all over the Continent, including the Balkans and the Eastern Front, particularly as the ERR was retreating from Soviet lands.⁵⁴ As the ERR was retreating from Silesia in early 1945, the Germans evacuated millions of books from Ratibor and its vicinity, leaving them in warehouses in the small town of Myslowitz (Pol. Mysłowice), a suburb of Kattowitz on a main east-west rail

⁵³ Dana Herman, “Hashavat Avedah: A History of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc.” (Ph.D. diss., McGill University, 2008), accessible online at: http://digitool.Library.McGill.CA:80/R/?func=dbin-jump-full&object_id=99925, quote from p. 7. Herman presents a helpful analysis of the context and controversies in postwar handling of Jewish property. See also Dov Schidorsky, “The Salvaging of Jewish Books in Europe after the Holocaust,” in *Judischer Buchbesitz als Raubgut: Zweites Hannoversches Symposium*, ed. Regine Dehnel, pp. 197–212 (Frankfurt a/M: Vittorio Klostermann, 2005). See also his study of the issue in Hebrew: Schidorsky, *Burning Scrolls and Flying Letters: A History of Book Collection and Libraries in Mandatory Palestine and of Book Salvaging Efforts in Europe after the Holocaust* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2008).

⁵⁴ See Grimsted, “Roads to Ratibor,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 19, no. 3 (Winter 2005), pp. 390–458.

line. Red Army trophy scouts found the Myslowitz warehouses in the spring of 1945 and used them as a collecting point for additional library loot found in the vicinity, including one large abandoned German echelon in a railway junction near one of the several ERR satellite facilities.

In late October or early November 1945, 54 railroad cars containing over a million books were dispatched from Myslowitz to Minsk. Close to half of that shipment were volumes that the ERR had looted from Western Europe and the Balkans and gathered in the Ratibor center, while the rest the ERR had plundered from Soviet libraries, especially in Belarus and the Baltic republics. Unfortunately, a large part of the books and archives that the ERR had amassed in the Ratibor area were never returned to their prewar homes, including many books from many Soviet libraries retrieved from Silesia. They remain to this day in Minsk, together with an estimated 400,000 twice-plundered books from Western Europe. Belarusian librarians still consider all of them legitimate “compensation” for their own horrendous wartime library losses. Although it is hard for many in Western Europe to understand why they would insist on claiming even those books bearing foreign library markings or personal dedications to Holocaust victims abroad, they still remain as hostages in Belarus libraries to this day.⁵⁵ Additional Soviet book shipments from Silesia went to Moscow, and from there were dispersed throughout the former Soviet Union; we do not know how many of those books represent ERR loot. Many other books and related materials the ERR had amassed in the Ratibor area were left for the Poles, who found those and more in various parts of Silesia themselves, only some of which were returned to their home countries; many now have had their wartime and prewar markings removed.⁵⁶

The Dispersal of ERR Records and Their Present Locations

The account above of ERR wartime plunder and postwar Allied restitution has already revealed much about the dispersal of ERR records of plunder, which are often intermixed today with sources relating to the location and return of ERR and other Nazi loot. It may nonetheless be helpful briefly to review some of the highlights here. When faced with retreat at the end of the war, ERR policy generally called for the destruction of operational records that they were not able to evacuate. However, the ERR did not succeed in evacuating or destroying all of its files; many were left behind in the countries they were forced to abandon. Those, together with many outgoing ERR documents addressed to other agencies during the war, have been incorporated into various record groups of German occupation agencies in different countries, or of the Allied governments that occupied Germany. Those are among the reasons why remaining ERR records or related records have been located in over thirty repositories in nine countries.

⁵⁵ See Grimsted, “The Postwar Fate of ERR Archival and Library Plunder,” updated in the *Journal of Art Crime*, 4 (Fall 2010), pp. 23–47. See also Grimsted, “Silesian Crossroads for Europe’s Displaced Books: Compensation or Prisoners of War?” in *The Future of the Lost Cultural Heritage: The documentation, identification and restitution of the cultural assets of WW II victims. Proceedings of the international academic conference in Český Krumlov (22.–24.11. 2005)*, ed. Mečislav Borák (Prague: Tilia Publishers, 2006), pp. 133–69.

⁵⁶ See Grimsted, “The Road to Minsk for Western ‘Trophy’ Books: Twice Plundered but Not Yet Home from the War,” *Libraries & Culture*, 39, no. 4 (Fall 2004), pp. 351–404. As an example of books and archives remaining in Poland, see most recently, Michel Vermote, “La Commission Daniszewski et le retour de Pologne de la ‘Collection hollandaise’: Du transfert d’archives dans le bloc de l’Est (1945–1991),” in *Saisies, spoliations et logiques de restitution*, pp. 301–12.

From Germany to the US and Back to Germany. For example, the ERR arranged to destroy most of their own working and administrative files that they were unable to evacuate from the Ratibor area. ERR documents they did evacuate attest to that fact. Many of the files they tried to expedite further west, including some of the records transferred to Ratibor from Berlin in 1943, were found en route by Red Army trophy scouts, namely the large group now in Kyiv described below. Other ERR records evacuated from Ratibor (December 1944–January 1945) did nonetheless reach their evacuation center in Bavaria at the castle and former abbey of Banz on the estate taken over during the war by Baron Kurt von Behr, who had fled there from Paris and committed suicide before capture. Rosenberg himself initially also took refuge there.

Those documents hidden in Banz and in several other neighboring locations in Staffelstein, Bavaria, and vicinity were joined by others that the chief of Ratibor operations, Gerd Wunder, brought with him in February 1945. Those included many of Wunder’s own office files from Ratibor, along with some books saved from the Ostbücherei. He set up a working office in Staffelstein.⁵⁷ The materials gathered in the Banz/Staffelstein area were mixed in with records taken there from ERR headquarters units that had remained in the Berlin area. Some of the records removed from Banz by U.S. Army MFA&A officers were transferred first to a U.S. Army Document Center in Bamberg, Germany; more files were found in the Banz castle later. Other personal papers and office files found by the U.S. Army in Rosenberg’s Berlin villa were first deposited in the Berlin Document Center. Many of the captured Rosenberg files from Bavaria and Berlin in original or copy were transferred to Nuremberg and incorporated in various pretrial series and later IMT trial records, while many (some in copy) found their way into other postwar groups of records, including ALIU files and restitution records at the M CCP.

A large part of the ERR records captured by the U.S. Army after the war, especially those from Banz and the Staffelstein region, joined by those from Berlin, became known as the Rosenberg Collection. After some dispersal and several intermediate transfers in Germany, those files were shipped to the United States and deposited in what later became the Captured Records Center in Alexandria, Virginia. That group of Rosenberg files, in addition to those created by the ERR and DBFU, contained many documents from other agencies Rosenberg headed, most notably the RMbO. Before their return to the Federal Republic of Germany in the 1960s, they were all microfilmed with a printed descriptive English-language guide; the large series was erroneously entitled as if all of the documents were created by Rosenberg’s Ministry (RMbO).⁵⁸ After their return to Germany in the 1960s, as will be seen in the German chapter, those Rosenberg records were all reprocessed by the Bundesarchiv according to their German offices of creation, and the U.S. microfilms are not used today in Germany.

The ERR files themselves comprising a separate record group (Bestand NS 30) are now available on the Internet efficiently linked to an electronic finding aid (see Section 3.1.1.). However, many more ERR or ERR-related documents are found with the records of other Rosenberg agencies, including the ERR’s parent agency, the DBFU, now classed as NS 15 (see Section 3.1.3.). Since the DBFU was also the parent agency for the Hohe Schule, many of remaining files of the Hohe Schule, the ZBHS, and the IEJ are found in NS 15.⁵⁹ Many ERR planning, personnel, and correspondence files are interfiled in the Bundesarchiv with records of

⁵⁷ See especially Wunder’s detailed report on the evacuation from Ratibor, in his “Meldung an den Stabsführer” (Staffelstein, 23 Feb. 1945), BArch, NS 30/50. See more details in Grimsted, “The ‘Smolensk Archive,’” in *The Return of the “Smolensk Archive.”*

⁵⁸ See the introductory section on the Bundesarchiv (see Section 3.1).

⁵⁹ Technically the Hohe Schule was not part of the ERR, although both were functioning under the DBFU. The ERR was the main supplier of its books and other research materials, and often Hohe Schule staff were simultaneously serving in ERR special commandos.

the Rosenberg Chancellery (NS 8), now also available on the Internet linked to a recent finding aid (see Section 3.1.2.). Long held in the Bundesarchiv in Koblenz, following German unification, the Bundesarchiv brought together most remaining records of Rosenberg and other agencies from the Third Reich in its Berlin-Lichterfelde facility. However, most of the surviving ERR art-looting files from Western Europe, as mentioned above, are now incorporated in the TVK records in the Bundesarchiv Koblenz (Bestand B 323; see Section 3.2.1).

From Paris and ERR Repositories to MCCP: Files Divided Between NACP and Koblenz.

Simultaneously, as mentioned above, the ERR sent many of its remaining Paris records from the Jeu de Paume, along with the art plundered from French Jewish collections, to its art repositories in Bavaria or to Kogl in near-by Austria. Early in 1945 many of those records held in Kogl were moved back to Füssen, joining others already stored in nearby Neuschwanstein. Likewise, some original ERR inventories for art and archeological treasures from the Eastern Front were found after the war by the MFA&A in the castle of Höchstädt and the abbey of Buxheim, along with related documentation and hand-drawn plans of the castle storage areas. Those recovered by U.S. MFA&A officers were taken to the MCCP Document Center.

The most extensive ‘restitution research files’ organized at the MCCP incorporated various ERR and related documents from western sources. When MFA&A specialists prepared property cards for the individual art objects, they often used the ERR photographs rather than making new ones, and they used ERR inventories of artworks in preparing restitution case files. As a result, many of the relevant ERR wartime documents became interspersed with, and incorporated into, U.S. restitution files. When the Central Collecting Points were closed down, many of their records were incorporated into OMGUS records for transfer to the United States. Subsequently, as integral components of OMGUS records transferred to the U.S. National Archives, they were long held in the Suitland Branch as Record Group 260. Most of the CCP records and related restitution files, however, first went to the U.S. Department of State as part of the so-called Ardelia Hall Collection, named after the U.S. cultural affairs officer most closely involved in postwar cultural restitution. After the new Archives II building was completed in College Park, MD (NACP), all of those records were combined there in RG 260. Many of those files had been microfilmed in Germany before transfer, and copies of those films are now preserved both in Koblenz and in the NACP.

As explained in the U.S. chapter below, in recent decades NARA has microfilmed most of the remaining OMGUS restitution records, especially those from the Central Collecting Points. On the basis of a 2007 agreement with the commercial vendor Footnote.com – since 2011 known as Fold3.com – NARA has been making some 2.5 million documents among those records available through digitization and Internet display. As of 2014, the OMGUS records from the OAD, WCCP, and MCCP, among other related NACP series, are now searchable in full-text at Fold3.com.⁶⁰

Residual CCP files stayed in Munich, together with copies of the microfilms and/or printouts from them, for the German restitution office TVK that continued restitution operations in Bavaria until 1962. The TVK files were transferred in 1992 to the Bundesarchiv in Koblenz, where they are now held as a separate record group (B 323). This explains why many ERR files of correspondence, seizure reports, inventories, and photographs are now found among the

⁶⁰ See the list of microfilmed series available in the introduction to the NACP coverage (see Section 9.1.), and the chart of the series of NARA microfilm publications for the RG 260 (OMGUS), and especially for the Ardelia Hall Collection (see Section 9.1.5).

MCCP/TVK records in Koblenz, not always duplicating those among the OMGUS records (RG 260) in the NACP. Because restitution activities continued longer in Munich after OMGUS withdrawal, original ERR inventories and many more ERR photographs are found today in Koblenz rather than in the NACP. In 2009, the Bundesarchiv completed a detailed new finding aid for the Koblenz B 323 records, which is now available on its Bundesarchiv Koblenz website (see Section 3.2.1.). Regrettably, due to German privacy concerns, digitized versions of the ERR documents (prepared for the ERR Project) have yet to appear as planned on the Bundesarchiv website; however, they are available in the Bundesarchiv Koblenz Reading Room. Many of the images of individual works of art are displayed in the Jeu de Paume database, and some of the other ERR and related photographs from that record group have been incorporated into the database of images (Bildarchiv) on the Koblenz website.⁶¹

Local Original Files in the Netherlands. The Netherlands is one of the few countries in which the ERR was operating during the war where relatively complete operational files were found locally thereafter. These were discovered in the late 1950s in the building of the IISG on the Keisersgracht, which the ERR had used as its Dutch headquarters. They are now preserved at the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Amsterdam, together with the only surviving collection of original inventories of household goods seized from Jewish dwellings in the Netherlands (see Section 5.1.1). The original ERR files held there, including the M-Aktion inventories, were recently launched on the Internet. The NIOD also holds other files of importance for cultural plunder and restitution in the Netherlands.⁶²

Dutch restitution files are now held in the National Archives in The Hague, including the records of the postwar Netherlands Art Ownership Foundation (Stichting Nederlandsch Kunstbezit, SNK). Also of particular interest is the collection of postwar object-level art claims files brought together in the so-called Origins Unknown (Herkomst Gezocht) office in the National Archives building. Photographs are available for many of the art objects described.⁶³ Digitization of this collection is being planned in 2014, as part of the ERR Project.

Although the ERR was not the principal Germany agency of art seizure in the Netherlands, it has recently been discovered that, presumably, some of the art works among Mobil-Aktion seizures from Dutch Jewish households were assembled in a special ERR coded collection in Neuweid, a customs house on the Rhine north of Koblenz. The paintings in that collection (coded Neuw, or NWD) were sent to the ERR repository of Kogl (Austria) with other M-Aktion collections late in the war. Removed thereafter by the U.S. Army, they were transferred to the MCCP. Declared to be “heirless”, the entire collection of art was subsequently transferred to the Weisbaden CCP and turned over to the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction (JCR) agency. Dutch claims for many of those works of art have recently been identified in the Origins Unknown files.

⁶¹ The 2009 finding aid for B 323 is available at: <http://startext.net-build.de:8080/barch/MidosoSEARCH/B323-52029/index.htm>; the database of photographs can be searched in English or German: <http://www.bild.bundesarchiv.de>, but search terms do not necessarily follow the archival signatures in the finding aid, nor do they conform to those listed below.

⁶² The NIOD website currently presents the files in the framework of the Dutch finding aid: <http://www.archieven.nl/nl/result-modonly?miview=inv2&mivast=298&mizig=210&miadt=298&micode=093a&milang=nl>.

⁶³ Contact information for the Origins Unknown Art Collection can be accessed in English and Dutch at <http://www.herkomstgezocht.nl/eng/index.html>, with its important database of art retrieved in the Netherlands, but still displaced paintings not identified as to owner.

France: Original Files Amidst Restitution Records. Increasing access and reprocessing of French restitution records in the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (Ministère des affaires européennes et étrangères, MAEE) now make it possible to trace the fate and restitution of more French Jewish art and library collections plundered by the ERR, as will be seen in the French chapter. When the helpful French handbook for research in sources related to World War II displaced cultural assets appeared in 2000, the French archivist compiler could not legally have access to the Quai d’Orsay archives.⁶⁴ Ten years later, the compiler of this present international survey of ERR and related archives has been able to describe many highlights of that documentation.

French restitution agency records are now grouped in the large collection under the title of the Commission for the Recovery of Art (Commission de récupération artistique, CRA). Long closed to the public, they are now being processed with publicly accessible digital finding aids. With the 2009 reopening of the MAEE archives in the new facility in La Courneuve, and thanks to the 2008 French archival law lowering the period of closure to 50 years, several series of these crucial sources are now open for public research. As of 2014, for example, newly created finding aids are already available for two major groups of French claims dossiers (with a related series of photographs), and a series of ERR inventories from the Jeu de Paume collections and related ERR documents.⁶⁵ The restitution records from French occupation authorities, earlier housed in Colmar, have also now been reprocessed and are available for public consultation in La Courneuve.

The printed postwar series listing French cultural losses has recently been digitized with full-text searching possibility, and is now on the French Ministry of Culture web portal – ‘Site Rose-Valland’ – together with a database of the unclaimed paintings repatriated to France (MNR) and other publications relating to cultural losses and restitution processing.⁶⁶ That expanding portal also displays now-identified images of paintings displayed in ERR Jeu de Paume exhibitions. It also provides links to materials relating to library seizures and returns, as well as links to other important related sites abroad.

The author of a recent pioneering study of French libraries during the war, Martine Poulain, has brought together lists of victims of library plunder on-line.⁶⁷ Utilizing French library restitution records now open in both the MAEE and the Archives nationales, Poulain has continued to expand the coverage with Internet listings of individual and institutional victims to whom books were returned. Recent attention has also focused on a series of ERR French library seizure lists, in preparation for Internet display. Indicative of the problem of dispersed ERR files in many countries, the most complete reports of ERR priority library seizures in France and Belgium surfaced among the ERR records in Kyiv.⁶⁸ Others have been found in British Foreign

⁶⁴ *Guide des recherches dans les archives des spoliations et des restitutions*, edited by Caroline Piketty, with Christophe Dubois and Fabrice Launay (Paris: La documentation française, 2000; Mission d’étude sur la spoliation des Juifs de France), available in PDF at: <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/documentation/mnr/Matteoli/RM-guide.pdf>.

⁶⁵ See, for example, the newly opened series RA 1–69 in Section 2.1.1.6.1. and the OBIP series in Section 2.1.1.6.2.

⁶⁶ See the series *Le Répertoire des Biens Spoliés* at: <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/documentation/mnr/MnR-rbs.htm#A>, on the same website with the ‘Catalogue des MNR’ <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/documentation/mnr/MnR-pres.htm>, and related materials included in the portal.

⁶⁷ Martine Poulain, *Livres pillés, lectures surveillées: les bibliothèques françaises sous l’occupation* (Paris: Gallimard, 2008); notice and on-line lists of victims: <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/documentation/mnr/SdL/MnR-SdL.htm>.

⁶⁸ Central State Archive of Highest Agencies of State Power and Government of Ukraine (TsDAVO), 3676/1/172, fols. 274–276, together with other lists, fols. 273, 283, and 277–82, and the Brethauer memo bound in the same file,

Office records in the TNA.

A few scattered ERR and ERR-related documents have been identified in the Archives Nationales, before 2013 in Paris, but since transferred to new facilities outside of Paris in the Pierrefitte Site (see Section 2.4.). These include part of the recently described records of the German Military Commandant in France (MBF), with receipts for art seizures from bank vaults by the Devisenschutzkommando among them. Some of the ERR-related documents that were used for postwar French collaboration trials of ERR staff, however, are incorporated into court records, and accordingly are subject to still long-term access restrictions in France.

British Restitution Records On-Line. Meanwhile in the United Kingdom, significant progress has recently been made in archival description of relevant files in British wartime and postwar records in The National Archives in Kew (TNA, earlier PRO), including occupation records from Germany and Austria. Gradually description and digital images of selected documents themselves are becoming available on the TNA website. These files are scattered across many record groups of Foreign Office records and those of other British agencies involved in tracing looted art and cultural restitution. Starting in 2009, the Central Registry of Looted Art, 1933–1945 (London) has overseen a group of graduate specialists in the creation of expanded specialized finding aids, providing file-level lists of the most relevant documentation. Those lists are now accessible on the website of the Central Registry, including a separate document-level finding aid for some key files already digitized on the TNA website.⁶⁹

British restitution and related files listed from the British Zone of Occupation in Germany contain only scattered files of ERR relevance, because few objects plundered by the ERR were found in the British Zone. Not yet covered in the new finding aid or online, however, British occupation records from Austria include extensive documentation regarding the ERR library collections amassed in the monastery of Tanzenberg for the ZBHS. The detailed reports and restitution records cover the estimated 600–700,000 books found by the British in the monastery in Austrian Carinthia; examples of key files are listed below (see Section 8.1.2.).

A Vital ERR Segment On-Line: From Ratibor to Kyiv. Before the period of glasnost we did not even know about the existence of the major complex of ERR records held secretly since 1945 in state archives in Kyiv, which became available to researchers only in 1990. Initial published notes about them by the present author in 1991 represented an early step in the present Survey launched in 2005.⁷⁰ Since independence in 1991, Ukrainian colleagues have done much to analyze and describe those files, especially portions relating to Ukraine. Unfortunately, it was not possible for the Ukrainian archives to reprocess the records. The Bundesarchiv was not in a position to help because Ukraine refused restitution, and hence the files themselves remain in scrambled order. Those files include important seizure reports and compilations from many parts

now fol. 324.

⁶⁹ Initial listing by the Central Registry of Looted Art, 1933–1945 (London) now appears at: <http://www.lootedart.com/MFEU4P39718>; a separate finding aid covering selected files is also available. Note that website has many helpful leads for researchers in wartime art looting, and art provenance research.

⁷⁰ See Grimsted, “The Fate of Ukrainian Cultural Treasures during World War II: The Plunder of Archives, Libraries, and Museums under the Third Reich,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 39, no. 1 (1991), esp. pp. 54–57. See the expanded Ukrainian monograph with appended documents with the collaboration and translation of Hennadi Boriak, *Dolia ukrains'kykh kul'turnykh tsinnosteï pid chas Druhoï svitovoï viiny: vynyshchennia arkhiviv, bibliotek, muzeïv* (Kyiv: Arkheografichna komisiia, 1991; 2nd edn.: Lviv, 1992).

of Europe, especially Belgium for example, as well as voluminous ERR reports on cultural seizures and other activities throughout occupied Soviet lands. On the first of September 2010 the Kyiv “Rosenberg Collection” was launched on the website of the Central State Archive of Highest Agencies of State Power and Government of Ukraine (TsDAVO), together with a Russian-language “guide-index.”⁷¹ Four years later, the Internet display still has only Russian-language descriptors, but an English version is in the works for better international access. In addition to ERR files from Ratibor and Soviet lands, the collection also includes remaining files of the German occupation cultural authority (LV ABM) under the Reich Commissar of Ukraine. The latter agency took over most of the ERR staff and continued its functions during German evacuation of Ukraine (see Section 7.1.2).⁷²

ERR Files in Moscow and Vilnius. A few additional ERR files from Ratibor operations have ended up in the Russian State Military Archive (RGVA) in Moscow. Most of those files had earlier been accessioned by the formerly separate top-secret Special Archive (Osobyi arkhiv, TsGOA SSSR) in the 1950s from Belarus. Most of those files arrived in Minsk with the book shipment from Silesia mentioned earlier, but only a few of the Moscow files relate to wartime cultural seizures, most importantly in former Yugoslavia (see Section 6.1.1.). The ERR fond now in RGVA (fond 1401k) in the 1990s acquired a major file of ERR historical monument registration cards prepared in occupied Soviet areas. Later found in Poland, the cards were published in facsimile and Russian translation in 1998.⁷³ An additional 300 cards from the Baltic republics also remain in RGVA but were not included in the publication.

Another 150 ERR cultural registration cards from the Baltic countries remain today in the separate but fragmentary ERR fond in Vilnius. The Lithuanian State Archive also holds fragmentary files from local ERR library and archival operations there during occupation (see Section 4.1.). Some of these reference specific Jewish collections in Lithuania, including YIVO, decimated by the extensive ERR seizures before liquidation of the Vilnius Ghetto.

Nuremberg IMT Records. Soviet authorities offered none of their captured ERR documents to the International Military Tribunal (IMT) in Nuremberg, where Alfred Rosenberg was interrogated, tried, and hanged for war crimes in October 1946. They did, however, use some of the captured ERR documents now held in the former Soviet Union for postwar domestic collaboration trials, as is evident in several of the current series within the ERR fonds in Kyiv. And that may mean the existence of still more ERR documents in still-closed Soviet security agency records.

In contrast, many of the most important ERR documents relating to cultural plunder found by British and American armies in the west were processed in several pretrial series for the

⁷¹ See the “Rosenberg Collection” in Kyiv at the TsDAVO website: <http://www.tsdavo.org.ua>. Current descriptive coverage is in Russian. See also <http://ww2provenanceseminar.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/kyryloerrpresent.pdf>, and remarks by Leigh Turner, British Ambassador to Ukraine at: http://www.kyivpost.com/news/opinion/op_ed/detail/81263/#ixzz0ym5AILyP.

⁷² See more details in Grimsted, *Trophies of War and Empire*, pp. 323–27, and Section 7.1.

⁷³ Mikhail A. Boitsovyi and Tat'iana A. Vasil'eva, eds. and comps., *Kartoteka “Z” Operativnogo shtaba “Reikhsliaiter Rozenberg”*: *Tsennosti kul'tury na okkupirovannykh territoriakh Rossii, Ukrainy i Belorussii, 1941–1942* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 1998); = *Trudy istoricheskogo fakul'teta MGU 5* (ser: “Istoricheskie istochniki” 1). See the coverage of the rest of the ERR and related RmBo records (with a few M-Aktion files) in RGVA in Section 6.1.

Nuremberg war crimes trials. Many of the most important ERR documents covering cultural seizures were prepared in the so-called Paris-Storey (PS) Series, generated in the U.S. Paris office of Colonel Robert Storey; copies of many of those documents are available in several different repositories. Documents actually used as evidence by the IMT were assigned exhibit numbers, sequentially under the code for the country introducing them: Great Britain (GB), France (FR), the Soviet Union (USSR), and the United States (USA). Copies of almost all those documents, translated into several languages, remain with the trial records in the National Archives of each of the participating countries, including the Soviet Union (see Section 6.2.1.), or in the British case, now in the Imperial War Museum in London (see Section 8.2.). Many additional documents prepared for the IMT but not used in court are found in various collections, although some were used in other war-crimes trials.

While official French records from Nuremberg remain in the Archives Nationales in Pierrelafitte outside of Paris (see Section 2.4.5.), many of the Rosenberg documents submitted but not used for the trial went to the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine (CDJC) after the trials. Now part of the Mémorial de la Shoah in Paris, the CDJC accordingly now has one of the most extensive collections of original and copied ERR documents, as well as documents from other Rosenberg operations (see Section 2.5.). Recently, the CDJC Rosenberg Collection has been digitized, and the French card catalogues are being reprocessed in a database system. As of 2014, only a small selection has been launched on the Internet, but many more documents are available in the CDJC reading room; Internet display of more is being encouraged by the Claims Conference ERR project.

A Guide to ERR and Related Files

As this Introduction makes clear, the present Survey should help overcome the problem of locating remaining original ERR documents and those of related wartime agencies such as the Möbel-Aktion and the Hohe Schule. And it should also point researchers to records relating to the postwar retrieval and restitution of ERR cultural loot. Research in the records of ERR plunder and the fate of its loot is still seriously hampered by their wide dispersal, including their incorporation into many different groups of records in many different archives in many countries. The international politics of restitution make it impossible for the ERR files to be physically consolidated in Germany, where they could best be appropriately processed for research by the Federal Archives (Bundesarchiv). For example, neither Ukraine nor France would consider turning over to Germany the large collections of ERR files from all over Europe that have been held in archives in Kyiv and Paris for the last 65 years: hence, the need to make available as many of the scattered ERR records (and related files) as possible virtually in electronic form.

Initially the Claims Conference ERR Project planned to consolidate remaining ERR files from many locations in a virtual reconstruction with a systematic electronic finding aid, as had been suggested by this author in a seminar at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum a decade ago in 2000.⁷⁴ However, such an ambitious plan for virtual integration into a single international database system has proved too costly and administratively too complicated to realize. Besides, even as digitization was starting to get underway in connection with the project, several of the

⁷⁴ I first submitted a proposal for the project at the request of Wesley A. Fisher in 2000, when he was director of international programs (and later director of external affairs) at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, after a seminar on the ERR that I presented as a visiting fellow. That proposal was further developed in October 2000 at the Vilnius Conference on Holocaust-Era Cultural Assets.

holding repositories in the United States, Germany, and France, and most recently Ukraine and the Netherlands, initiated their own digitization projects, often involving larger groups of records incorporating ERR documentation.

A Half-Century Perspective and Antithesis to the ERR. The fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War brought renewed focus on the cultural devastation to the European Continent wrought by the National Socialist regime with its ideological cultural operatives such as the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg, and to postwar efforts to restore plundered culture heritage. The collapse of the Soviet Union made it possible to examine more thoroughly the ERR devastation on the Eastern Front and the Soviet postwar response. In the context of the pan-European cultural legacy of the Second World War, albeit divergent in East and West, the ERR has become a symbol of Nazi cultural plunder.

The first major international conference on the *Spoils of War* in New York in 1995 coincided with the fiftieth anniversary and examined on a more academic basis the fate of European cultural heritage as a result of the war.⁷⁵ The conference coincided with and was inspired by the publication of Lynn Nicholas' *Rape of Europa*, and simultaneously the revelations about the long-hidden Soviet *Beautiful Loot* by Konstantin Akinsha and Gregory Kozlov; those authors all took part in the New York deliberations.⁷⁶ Participants even included some of the original U.S. Monuments Men. That conference provoked the first major international confrontation between Russia and Germany on the issue of cultural restitution of Russia's "trophy loot." The controversy remained unabated by the concluding presentation by Lyndel V. Prott from UNESCO of "Principles for the Resolution of Disputes Concerning Cultural Heritage Displaced during the Second World War."⁷⁷

Three years later, the 1998 Washington Conference on Holocaust-Era Assets, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, with the cooperation of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, involved a more official diplomatic level. It launched renewed international incentives for the tracking down and restitution of cultural loot from the Second World War.⁷⁸ A conference followed two years later in Vilnius, sponsored by the Council of Europe in 2000, but the results were not published widely. Ten years later, the Holocaust-Era Assets Conference held by the Czech Republic in June 2009 (as part of the Czech presidency of the European Union), brought together representatives of 47 countries and some 24 non-governmental organizations for a renewed international perspective on those issues.⁷⁹ Government leaders, diplomats, and specialists, gathered in Prague to reconsider the *Washington Conference Principles on Nazi-Confiscated Art* and then signed on to the *Terezín Declaration*, thereby reaffirming the

⁷⁵ The conference proceedings were published as *The Spoils of War: World War II and Its Aftermath: The Loss, Reappearance, and Recovery of Cultural Property*, edited by Elizabeth Simpson (New York: Henry N. Abrams, 1997, in association with The Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts).

⁷⁶ See Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa*, since published in many languages, including Russian. See Konstantin Akinsha and Gregory Kozlov, with Sylvia Hochfield, *Beautiful Loot: The Soviet Plunder of Europe's Art Treasures* (New York: Random House, 1995). See also Nicholas' introduction, "World War II and the Displacement of Art and Cultural Property," *The Spoils of War*, pp. 39–45, and 46–48; and Akinsha and Kozlov, "The Discovery of the Secret Repositories," pp. 162–65.

⁷⁷ Lyndel Prott's "Principles" in *The Spoils of War*, pp. 225–30; those principles were never adopted by UNESCO.

⁷⁸ See *Washington Conference on Holocaust-Era Assets, November 30–December 3, 1998: Proceedings*, edited by J.D. Bindenagel et al. (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 1999; U.S. Department of State, Publication 10603); also available in CD-ROM; on-line version: http://1997-2001.state.gov/www/regions/eur/wash_conf_material.html.

⁷⁹ The conference website is available at: <http://www.holocausteraassets.eu/en/working-groups/looted-art>.

Washington Principles with renewed pleas for archival access and restitution, especially for Holocaust victims and their heirs.⁸⁰

Meanwhile, the Russian Federation, in lieu of restitution, passed a 1998 law virtually nationalizing the Soviet spoils of war, which included some books and archives seized by the ERR, as well as extensive works of art from many countries in Europe, some of it belonging to Holocaust victims. There have been only a few examples of Russian restitution since, the most important ones of archives to seven European countries.⁸¹ A workshop at the Harvard Law School a decade later examined the law itself and its subsequent effects on cultural restitution from the Russian Federation, although Russia itself was not officially represented. The published proceedings present up-to-date assessments of many of the issues involved.⁸²

Unfortunately that focus today leads us to emphasize the need for access to the archives of plunder as well as those relating to retrieval and restitution of the loot. But clearly today, even on the issue of access to records, the European Continent is not united in a shared resolve to make right the wrongs of plunder. Colleagues in the former Soviet Union, particularly the Russian Federation and Belarus, by contrast continue to claim of the “right” to retain their “spoils of war” and seek more “compensation” for the devastating loss of cultural heritage in the most brutal conflict of the Twentieth Century.

Most recently the issue arose at the latest major international conference on provenance research, documentation and identification of looted cultural assets. The academic gathering in the Czech resort town of Poděbrady in October 2013 raised the question “‘The West’ Versus ‘The East’ or the United Europe?”, but indicative of continued gap in cooperation, no Russian or Belarus participant attended. As a lone voice from the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, Serhii Kot noted that “Ukraine is actively participating in the general process of restitution and is making a contribution to the shared task of searching out and returning the cultural valuables lost in the war period.” He pointed out at the same time that estimates of aggregate Soviet museum losses suggest that “74% fall to Ukrainian territory,” but even “many Ukrainian valuables returned to the USSR ... have never returned” to Ukraine.⁸³

An International Portal for NS-Era Cultural Plunder: From Prague 2009 to DC 2011. Of special relevance in the 2009 Prague Conference, during the opening Archives Panel for the

⁸⁰ The “Washington Principles” appear at: <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rt/hlcst/122038.htm>, and other Internet sites.

⁸¹ See *Returned from Russia*, above note 1.

⁸² See Grimsted, “Legalizing ‘Compensation’ and the Spoils of War: The Russian Law on Displaced Cultural Valuables and the Manipulation of Historical Memory,” in *Spoils of War v. Cultural Heritage: The Russian Cultural Property Law in Historical Context*, edited by Patricia Kennedy Grimsted; published as *International Journal of Cultural Property* 17, no. 2 (2010), pp. 217–56; and “Why Do Captured Archives Go Home?: Restitution Achievements under the Russian Law,” pp. 291–334. That volume likewise includes other relevant contributions, as well as an English-language text of *Federal Law on Cultural Valuables Displaced to the USSR as a Result of the Second World War and Located on the Territory of the Russian Federation*, No. 64-FZ of 15 April 1998 (with amendments), translated by Konstantin Akinsha and Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, pp. 413–26. Full text of the issue at: <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayIssue?decade=2010&jid=JCP&volumeId=17&issueId=02&iid=7901872>.

⁸³ Serhii Kot, “Return and Restitution of Lost Cultural Valuables: the Ukrainian Experience (a short review),” in “*The West*” Versus “*The East*” or a United Europe? *The different conceptions of provenance research, documentation and identification of looted cultural assets and the possibilities of international cooperation in Europe and worldwide. Proceedings of an international academic conference held in Poděbrady on 8–9 October 2013*, ed. Mečislav Borák (Prague: Documentary Centre for Property Transfers of Cultural Assets of WWII Victims, 2014), pp. 144–47. My own published discussion raised the issue of “Progress in Identification and Restitution of Nazi Cultural Loot?: Access to Archives East and West,” pp. 120–43.

Working Group devoted to Looted Art, Deputy Archivist of the United States Michael Kurtz, who then directed the NACP, announced NARA plans for expanded Internet access to some 2.5 million documents relating to Holocaust-era looted cultural property through the vendor Footnote.com – since renamed Fold3.com. He further announced an “International Research Portal for Records Related to Nazi-Era Cultural Property” from the National Archives of France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, together with those of the United States. Later in that same panel, the archivist now in charge of the French restitution records at the Archives of the MAEE, Anne Liskenne, announced plans to launch more digitized files and finding aids on the MAEE website from those records long closed to public access. The present author reported on this Survey of ERR archives in the context of documenting looted art. An additional report on the ERR Survey to the Judaica and Jewish Cultural Property Working Group, focused on looted library books as well as ritual silver, Torah scrolls, and other Judaica.⁸⁴

Two years later in May 2011, the “International Portal” was launched on the NARA website at a ceremony in Washington, DC, with postings from France, Germany, Ukraine, and the United States – followed by the promise of more to come from Belgium, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.⁸⁵ Unfortunately with budget restrictions and the retirement of key archivists involved from several participating countries, the NARA Portal was slow in keeping up to date, but a colloquium in London in May 2013 gave new incentive.⁸⁶ Twenty-two institutions were included by 2014, with coverage of participating institutions from the United States, Germany, United Kingdom, France, Ukraine, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, and Austria.

Meanwhile, other countries have augmented independent portals out of London – maintained by the Central Registry of Information on Looted Cultural Property, 1933–1945;⁸⁷ Paris – maintained by the French Ministry of Culture;⁸⁸ Magdeburg – maintained by the Coordination Office for Lost Cultural Assets (Koordinierungsstelle für Kulturgutverluste);⁸⁹ and Bern – maintained by the Swiss Federal Office for Culture.⁹⁰ All provide coverage specific to their own country and institutions, as well as important international links.

As was apparent in the question raised by the Poděbrady 2013 conference mentioned above, academic specialists, politicians, and diplomats from both East and West may still not agree or be prepared to implement all of the signed principles or previous international resolutions, and

⁸⁴ Michael Kurtz spoke as chair of the panel; the reports of Anne Georgeon-Liskenne (MAEE) and Grimsted appear at: <http://www.holocausteraassets.eu/en/working-groups/looted-art>. The Grimsted report for the Judaica Working Group is at: <http://www.holocausteraassets.eu/en/working-groups/judaica-and-jewish-cultural-property/>.

⁸⁵ See the “International Research Portal for Records Related to Nazi-Era Cultural Property” at <http://www.archives.gov/research/holocaust/international-resources/>.

⁸⁶ See the 9 May announcement at lootedart.com: <http://www.lootedart.com/Q1PN1A878981>, and the TNA announcement at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/news/841.htm>. The updated Portal itself is at <http://www.archives.gov/research/holocaust/international-resources/>.

⁸⁷ Central Registry of Information on Looted Cultural Property, 1933–1945 (London) at: <http://www.lootedart.com>. See above, note 67. The Central Registry also reports new publications in their open access Internet weekly Newsletter.

⁸⁸ ‘Site Rose-Valland– Musées Nationaux Récupération’ (Rose Valland Site – Recuperated Art in National Museums (MNR), Paris, at <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/documentation/mnr/MnR-pres.htm>. In addition to the catalogue of MNRs (above note 64), the site presents other historical documentation, links to the series of guides prepared as part of the Matteoli Report; a section on seized books; digitized searchable versions of the French postwar catalogues of losses – *La Répertoire des Biens Spoliés*; and images of exhibits at the Jeu de Paume; as well as links to other helpful sites.

⁸⁹ Coordination Office for Lost Cultural Assets (Koordinierungsstelle für Kulturgutverluste), Magdeburg, at: <http://www.lostart.de>.

⁹⁰ The Swiss portal with a wide range of resources is available in German, French, Italian, and English: “Looted Art” at <http://www.bak.admin.ch/kulturerbe/04402/index.html?lang=en>. See Catherine Hickley, “Swiss Website Aims to Help Museums Track Nazi-Looted Art,” *Bloomberg*, 17 Jun 2013, at <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-06-17/swiss-website-aims-to-help-museums-track-nazi-looted-art.html>.

lawyers may still argue over “just and fair solutions” in the second decade of a new century. Nonetheless, much progress is evident in making available to specialists many new resources and tools to find archival files they need to identify the provenance of Europe’s still displaced cultural heritage. Sharper focus on the ERR and the records of seizure left by that agency lead us a step further in the task of *Reconstructing the Record of Nazi Cultural Plunder*. Such focus is particularly appropriate with the renewed international interest in still missing cultural valuables and the efforts needed in restitution for the still ‘displaced’ cultural heritage.

More Electronic Links for ERR Files. The electronic publication of this Survey, initially issued in March 2011, with data gathered over the past two decades, has accordingly been adapted to serve as an integrating guide to accompany and facilitate electronic access to the ERR and related files described within component record groups. With an updated version underway, increased coverage has been added for more documentation and descriptive reference materials recently launched on the Internet by holding repositories, as well as links to related international portals.

The brief comments above regarding the postwar restitution of ERR loot and the dispersal of ERR records suggest some of the highlights to be found in the text that follows. Updating the entire *Survey* volume is now in progress as of mid-2014, with plans for a revised edition, while completed segments are being posted on the ERR Project website – errproject.org.

This reference volume remains something of a hybrid between a survey and a guide, and for some files a more detailed analytic inventory, of remaining documentation of – and relating to – the ERR and the fate of the cultural loot it seized in occupied countries across the European continent.⁹¹ The coverage has grown in length and depth during its compilation over the past two decades since the compiler first discovered and started exploring in 1990 the most extensive extant collection of ERR files were located in Kyiv. For some repositories, not already well described, or where the documents are incorporated in other groups of records, the coverage has been extended to that of an actual file-level – and at times a document-level – finding aid. The reasons for this reflect the state and level of descriptions publicly available to researchers. More details about the organization of individual country chapters and the coverage of archival repositories within each country is explained in the Technical Introduction.

This *Survey* remains a preliminary step, and it is to be expected that more ERR documents will emerge beyond those currently listed. Nonetheless, the data described here should provide background and context for researchers in many fields who may want to utilize remaining ERR documents, as well as the newly launched object-level database of plundered works of art that were processed through the Jeu de Paume. Eventually more documentation accessible and links among scattered parts, a comprehensive study of the ERR culture ravages may also emerge.

Here we are dealing with the record of plunder and fate of the loot of only one key Nazi agency during the Second World War. That is only a small step in terms of the extent of looted art, books, and archives. There were many other competitors in wartime cultural looting and the horrendous destruction, displacement and loss to the European cultural heritage. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this attempt to track the sources for ERR exploits and the recovery of its loot may serve as a significant example of the resources available for piecing together the record of wartime cultural plunder and postwar restitution. And it is further hoped that this production will encourage other repositories and younger specialists to provide more and better descriptions, and to make more of their holdings publicly and efficiently accessible on the Internet.

⁹¹ See the analysis by Eric Ketelaar at the Amsterdam presentation of this Survey at the Jewish Historical Museum in October 2011, at <http://socialhistory.org/en/publications/reconstructing-record-nazi-cultural-plunder>.

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