
Thomas J. Watson Library

Research Guide

Provenance Research

A brief guide to books and online resources to assist with your provenance research.

Thomas J. Watson Library

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Methods in Provenance Research

International Provenance Research Colloquium. 2005. *Vitalizing memory: international perspectives on provenance research*. Washington, DC.: American Association of Museums.

Pearson, David. 1994. *Provenance research in book history: a handbook*. London: British Library.

Yeide, Nancy H., Amy Walsh, and Konstantin Akinsha. 2001. *The AAM guide to provenance research*. Washington, DC.: American Association of Museums.

Collectors' Marks

Marks, such as stamps and inscriptions, can help determine ownership over time.

Fagan, Louis, Milton I. D. Einstein, Max A. Goldstein, and Howard Coppuck Levis. 1918. *Collectors' marks*. Saint Louis: The Laryngoscope Press. (Freely [available online](#))

Lugt, Frits. 1921. *Les marques de collections de dessins & d'estampes; marques estampillées et écrites de collections particulières et publiques. Marques de marchands, de monteurs et d'imprimeurs. Cachets de vente d'artistes décédés. Marques de graveurs apposées après le tirage des planches. Timbres d'édition. Etc. Avec des notices historiques sur les collectionneurs, les collections, les ventes, les marchands et éditeurs, etc.* Amsterdam: Vereenigde drukkerijen. (Freely [available online](#))

Ris-Paquot. 1893. *Dictionnaire encyclopédique des marques & monogrammes, chiffres, lettres initiales, signes figuratifs, etc., etc.: contenant 12,156 marques*. Paris: Henri Laurens. (Freely [available online](#))

Freely Available Databases & Websites for General Provenance Research

[Commission for Looted Art in Europe \(CLAE\)](#)

CLAE is an international non-profit organization which researches, identifies, and recovers looted property (see lootedart.com). The Commission's website provides news concerning recent restitutions, as well as many links for further information on provenance.

[Getty Provenance Index](#)

Inventories of art and archives, sales catalogs, transactions, and public collections. German sales catalogs from 1930-1945, focusing on the period of Nazi looting during WWII, are a work-in-progress.

[IFAR Catalogues Raisonnés](#)

This database from the International Foundation for Art Research, provides references to catalogues raisonnées—scholarly compilations of artists' bodies of work—both published and in preparation. The site also includes [a guide for provenance research](#) with many useful links.

WWII Provenance Research

The following resources can be used to research how works of art were looted, stolen, and dispersed during and after World War II.

Books

- Akinsha, Konstantin, Grigorii Kozlov, and Sylvia Hochfield. 1995. [Beautiful loot: the Soviet plunder of Europe's art treasures](#). New York: Random House. (Freely [available online](#))
- Alford, Kenneth D. 2012. [Hermann Göring and the Nazi art collection: the looting of Europe's art treasures and their dispersal after World War II](#). Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, ([Available online*](#)) only*)
- Bruckler, Theodor, and Bernadette Reinhold. 1999. [Kunstraub, Kunstbergung und Restitution in Österreich, 1938 bis heute](#). Wien: Böhlau.
- Farmer, Walter I., and Klaus Goldmann. 2000. [The safekeepers: a memoir of the arts at the end of World War II](#). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Feliciano, Hector. 1997. [The lost museum: the Nazi conspiracy to steal the world's greatest works of art](#). New York: Basic Books. (Freely [available online](#))
- Müller, Melissa, and Monika Tatzkow. 2010. [Lost lives, lost art: Jewish collectors, Nazi art theft, and the quest for justice](#). New York: Vendome Press.
- Nicholas, Lynn H. 1994. [The rape of Europa: the fate of Europe's treasures in the Third Reich and the Second World War](#). New York: Knopf. (Freely [available online](#))
- Petropoulos, Jonathan. 1996. [Art as politics in the Third Reich](#). Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- . 2000. [The Faustian bargain: the art world in Nazi Germany](#). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ronald, Susan. 2015. [Hitler's art thief: Hildebrand Gurlitt, the Nazis, and the looting of Europe's treasures](#). New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Simpson, Elizabeth. 1997. [The spoils of war: World War II and its aftermath : the loss, reappearance, and recovery of cultural property](#). New York: H.N. Abrams in association with the Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts.

Books on Lost Works From Specific Countries or Collections

Austria

Great Britain, and Hugh Pattison Macmillan Macmillan. 1946. [Works of art in Austria \(British zone of occupation\) Losses and survivals in the war](#). London: H.M. Stationery Office.

Belgium

Office belge de l'économie et de l'agriculture. 1994. [Missing art works of Belgium](#). Bruxelles: Office belge de l'économie et de l'agriculture.

France

Germany (Territory under Allied occupation, 1945-1955 : French Zone). 1947. [Répertoire des biens spoliés en France durant la guerre, 1939-1945 = List of property removed from France during the war, 1939-1945](#). [Berlin]: [Impr. nationale]. (Freely [available online](#))

Germany

Bernhard, Marianne, and Klaus P. Rogner. 1965. [Verlorene Werke der Malerei; in Deutschland in der Zeit von 1939 bis 1945 zerstörte und verschollene Gemälde aus Museen und Galerien](#). München: F.A. Ackermanns Kunstverlag.

Morozzi, Luisa, and Rita Paris. 1995. [Treasures untraced: an inventory of the Italian art treasures lost during the Second World War](#). Rome: Istituto poligrafico e zecca dello stato.

Netherlands

Elen, Albert J. 1989. [Missing old master drawings from the Franz Koenigs Collection claimed by the State of The Netherlands: provisional handlist](#). The Hague: SDU Publishers.

Venema, Adriaan. 1986. [Kunsthandel in Nederland 1940-1945](#). Amsterdam: Uitgeverij de Arbeiderspers.

Freely Available Databases

[Art Database of the National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism](#) [Austria]

Information on art and cultural objects presently located in museums and collections of Austria which may have been, according to the latest provenance research, seized under the National Socialist regime.

[Cultural Plunder by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg](#) [France/Belgium]

The Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR) was a Nazi "Special Task Force" formed to appropriate cultural property during WWII. This database accounts for those art objects with remaining photographs and registration cards from one operation in which the ERR plundered French and Belgian collections and brought them to the Jeu de Paume building in the Tuileries Gardens in Paris for processing before shipment to Germany.

[Holocaust-Era Assets Records at the National Archives and Records Administration \(NARA\)](#)

A finding aid to the records at the National Archives, College Park, Maryland, as well as bibliographies and digitized materials.

[LootedArt.com](#)

A registry of cultural property looted from 1933–1945. In addition to many useful links and breaking news, this site includes an information database of law and policy documentation, reports and publications, archival records, and an object database of looted, missing, and/or identified objects.

[Lost Art-Datenbank](#)

A German database of artworks that were confiscated by the Nazis from 1933 to 1945.

[Mission de recherche et de restitution des biens culturels spoliés entre 1933 et 1945 \(M2RS\)](#)

A department of the French Ministry of Culture, M2RS conducts research, raises awareness, and addresses individual cases of dubious provenance.

[Nazi-Era Provenance Portal](#)

A searchable registry of objects in US museum collections that changed hands in Continental Europe during the Nazi Era (1933–1945)

[New York State Holocaust Claims Processing Office](#)

Investigates claims on behalf of Holocaust victims and their heirs seeking the return of assets to their original owners.

[Schloss Collection: Non-Restituted Works Looted 1943–1998](#) [France]

This website lists over one hundred works still missing from the collection of Adolphe Schloss as of July 1, 1997. Includes images, descriptive information, and cross-references to the *Répertoire de biens spoliés*.

Search Tips

Locate other titles in the Met libraries by doing a KEYWORD search in the library catalog for any of the following terms. Enclose phrases in quotation marks. (Example: “art thefts”)

- [Art thefts](#)
- [Art treasures in war](#)
- [World War, 1939–1945— Art and the war](#)

Have a question?

Reach a reference librarian at watson.library@metmuseum.org or use our virtual chat service, Ask a Librarian, Monday-Friday, 10am-4pm, from the [Watsonline](#) homepage.

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