
Thomas J. Watson Library

Research Guides

Methods in Provenance Research

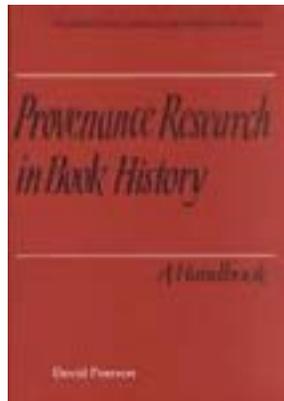
The following books describe methods of provenance research for objects of various kinds, especially fine art objects and books.

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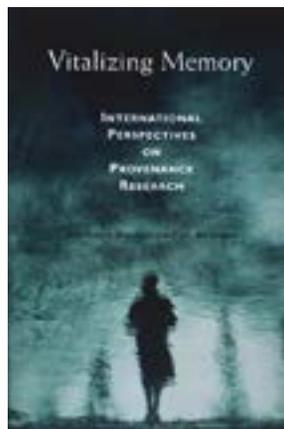
The Met Fifth Avenue
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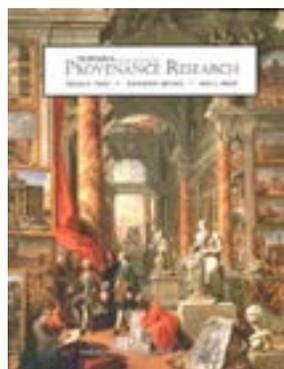
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Pearson, David. *Provenance Research in Book History: A Handbook*. London: The British Library, 1994.



Vitalizing Memory: International Perspectives on Provenance Research. Washington, DC: American Association of Museums, 2005.



Yeide, Nancy H. *The AAM Guide to Provenance Research*. Washington, DC: American Association of Museums, 2001.

Intro

The following books can be used to find out about how works of art were looted, stolen, and dispersed during and after World War II.

General Information for WWII Provenance Research

Akinsha, Konstantin. *Beautiful Loot: The Soviet Plunder of Europe's Art Treasures*. New York: Random House, 1995.

Alford, Kenneth D. *Hermann Göring and the Nazi Art Collection: The Looting of Europe's Treasures and their Dispersal after World War* Jefferson, NC : McFarland & Company, 2012.

Bruckler, Theodor. *Kunstraub, Kunstbergung und Restitution in Österreich, 1938 bis Heute*. Wien: Böhlau, 1999.

Farmer, Walter I. *The Safekeepers: A Memoir of the Arts at the End of World War II*. Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2000.

Feliciano, Hector. *The Lost Museum: The Nazi Conspiracy to Steal the World's Greatest Works of Art*. New York: Basic Books, 1997.

Müller, Melissa. *Lost lives, Lost Art: Jewish Collectors, Nazi Art Theft, and the Quest for Justice*. New York: Vendome Press, c2010.

Nicholas, Lynn H. *The Rape of Europa: The Fate of Europe's Treasures in the Third Reich and the Second World War*. New York: Knopf, 1994.

Petropoulos, Jonathan. *Art as Politics in the Third Reich*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.

----- . *The Faustian Bargain: The Art World in Nazi Germany*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Ronald, Susan. *Hitler's art thief : Hildebrand Gurlitt, the Nazis, and the Looting of Europe's Treasures*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2015.

Simpson, Elizabeth. *The Spoils of War: World War II and its Aftermath: The Loss, Reappearance, and Recovery of Cultural Property*. New York: Abrams, 1997.

The resources listed below provide photographs and other documentation on works of art reported missing or stolen from public and private collections during World War II.

Finding lost works from particular countries or collections

Austria

Committee on the Preservation and Restitution of Works of Art, Archives and Other Material in Enemy Hands. *Works of Art in Austria (British zone of occupation): Losses and Survivals in the War*. London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1946.

Belgium

Office de récupération économique. *Répertoire d'Oeuvres d'Art Dont la Belgique a été Spoliée Durant la Guerre 1939-1945*. Brussels: Royaume de Belgique, 1948.

Missing Art Works of Belgium. Bruxelles: Ministère des affaires économiques, 1994.

France

Répertoire des biens spoliés en France durant la guerre, 1939-1945 List of property removed from France during the war 1939-1945. Tome II: Tableaux, tapisseries et sculptures. Berlin: Impr. Nationale, 1947.

[Click here for the online version.](#)

Schloss Collection, Non-Restituted Works Looted 1943–1998. Published by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 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 Répertoire de Biens Spoliés.

Germany

Bernhard, Marianne. *Verlorene Werke der Malerei in Deutschland in der Zeit von 1939 bis 1945: Zerstörte und Verschollene Gemälde aus Museen und Galerien*. Munich: Ackermanns, 1965.

Hungary

Laszlo Mravik. *The ‘Sacco di Budapest’ and Depredation of Hungary, 1938–1949: Works of Art Missing from Hungary as a Result of the Second World War*. Budapest: Hungarian National Gallery, 1998.

Italy

Works of Art in Italy: Losses and Survivals in the War. Compiled from War Office Reports by the British Committee on the Preservation and Restitution of Works of Art, Archives, and Other Material in Enemy Hands. London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1945–46.

Morozzi, Luisa. *Treasures Untraced: An Inventory of the Italian Art Treasures Lost during the Second World War*. Rome: Istituto poligrafico e zecca dello stato, 1995.

Netherlands

Venema, Adriaan. *Kunsthandel in Nederland, 1940–1945*. Amsterdam: Arbeiderspers, 1986.

Museum Boymans-Van Beuningen Koenigs Collection. *Missing Old Master Drawings from the Franz Koenigs Collection Claimed by the State of The Netherlands*. The Hague: Netherlands Office for Fine Arts, 1989.

Collectors’ marks, like stamps and inscriptions, can help determine ownership over time.

The following resources may be helpful in identifying such marks.

Materials

Fagan, Louis. *Collectors’ Marks*. Arranged and edited by Milton I.D. Einstein and Max A. Goldstein. St. Louis: The Laryngoscope Press, 1918.

Lugt, Frits. *Les Marques de Collections de Dessins & d’Estampes; Marques Estampillées et écrites de Collections Particulières et Publiques*. Amsterdam, Vereenigde drukkerijen, 1921.

Ris-Paquot. *Dictionnaire encyclopédique des marques & monogrammes : chiffres, lettres initiales, signes figuratifs, etc., etc.; contenant 12,156 marques ...* Paris: Henri Laurens, 1983.

Domestic Databases

The Getty Provenance Index—This is comprised of several different databases. These art inventories include Archival Inventories, Sales Catalogs, Goupil & Cie Stock Books, Payments to Authors, and Public Collections. German Sales Catalogs 1930–1945 is a work-in-progress, focusing on the period of Nazi looting of art during WWII.

Catalogues Raisonné—Established by IFAR (International Foundation for Art Research) as two databases of catalogues raisonné—scholarly compilations of artists work—both published and in preparation, for research by artists name or to browse alphabetically.

Frick Research Library Online—During World War II, the Frick Art Reference Library assisted the armed forces in identifying and protecting cultural monuments and art works. Now, this searchable collection of photographs, catalogs, and monographs assist researchers in WWII provenance research.

Nazi-Era Provenance Portal—Searchable registry of objects in US museum collections that changed hands in Continental Europe during the Nazi Era (1933–1945)

International Databases

Art Database of the National Fund — Provides information on art and cultural objects located in the Republic of Austria or city of Vienne museums and collections that may have been seized under the National Socialist Regime.

Database of Art Objects at The Jeu de Paume — The Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR) was a Hitler-designed “Special Task Force” formed to appropriate cultural property during WWII. One operation was the plundering of art objects from French and Belgian collections that were brought to The Jeu de Paume building in the Tuileries Gardens in Paris for processing before shipment to Germany. This database is a searchable illustrated index of remaining registration cards and photographs of more than 20000 objects taken from French and Belgian households. One can search by object or name of owner from whom object was taken.

LootedArt.com — The central registry of information on cultural property looted 1933–45.

In addition to many useful links and breaking news of cases involving looted art, LootedArt contains two databases:

- The Information Database contains information and documentation from forty-nine countries, including laws and policies, reports and publications, archival records and resources, current cases and relevant websites.
- The Object Database contains details of over 25,000 objects of all kinds — paintings, drawings, antiquities, Judaica, etc— looted, missing and/or identified from over fifteen countries.

Internet Resources

Art Loss Register

The Central Registry of Information on Looted Cultural Property, 1933–1945

Commission for Looted Art in Europe (CLAE)

The Lost Art Internet Database

Musées Nationaux Recupération

New York State Holocaust Claims Office

National Archives Holocaust Era Assets — A finding aid to the records at the National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

Researching Holocaust Era assets at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)

IFAR's Online Provenance Guide

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
- War and art
- Art treasures in war
- World War, 1939–1945— Art and the war