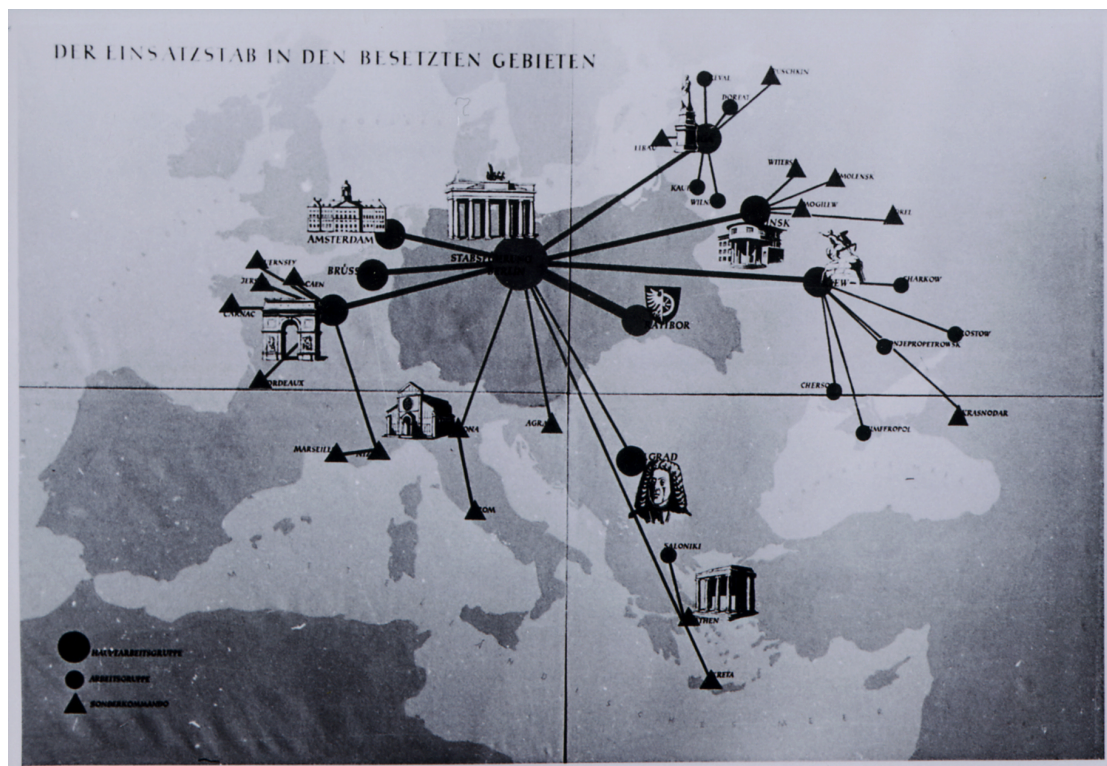


RECONSTRUCTING THE RECORD OF NAZI CULTURAL PLUNDER

A GUIDE TO THE DISPERSED ARCHIVES OF THE EINSATZSTAB REICHSLEITER ROSENBERG (ERR) AND THE POSTWAR RETRIEVAL OF ERR LOOT

Patricia Kennedy Grimsted



Expanded and Updated Edition

CHAPTER 1: BELGIUM (*LAST REVISED* December 2016)

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**Introduction: “Alfred Rosenberg and the ERR:
The Records of Plunder and the Fate of Its Loot” (revised August 2015)**

as well as

Chapter 4 (new): Israel (LAST REVISED December 2015)

Chapter 6 (earlier 5): The Netherlands (LAST REVISED December 2015)

Chapter 10 (earlier 9): United States of America (LAST REVISED April 2015)

Other updated country chapters will be available as completed at:

<http://www.errproject.org/guide.php>

The Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR), the special operational task force headed by Adolf Hitler’s leading ideologue Alfred Rosenberg, was the major NSDAP agency 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.

The original 2011 edition describes the archival remains of the ERR in 29 repositories in 9 countries – from Washington and Brussels to Moscow and Kyiv. The newly revised U.S. chapter now adds four more repositories, the Dutch chapter an additional two, while a new Israeli chapter adds a tenth country with four more repositories.

The whole volume serves as a preliminary guide to remaining documents generated by the ERR, and in many cases it goes well beyond ERR and related M-Aktion materials. Attention also focuses on key records of postwar U.S., French, British, and Soviet agencies seeking to retrieve the ERR loot, particularly those components that incorporated wartime ERR documents or reports on key ERR repositories and staff, including war-crimes trials. Links are also provided to many ERR documents and related archival sources now available on the Internet: These include records from the U.S. National Archives in College Park (NACP), the German Federal Archives (Bundesarchiv, BArch) in Koblenz, Freiburg, and Berlin-Lichterfelde, the National Archives (TNA) of the United Kingdom, a major State Archives of Ukraine (TsDAVO), the NIOD, and other repositories, with additional digital listings providing improved access to a major component of the record of wartime plunder and postwar retrieval of cultural loot.

1. BELGIUM

(LAST REVISED December 2016)

A Chapter for

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Expanded and Updated Edition (*forthcoming 2017*)

by Patricia Kennedy Grimsted

N.B. See the additional Front Matter, including the Foreword, Technical Note, List of Acronyms, and Summary Table of Contents of the entire forthcoming volume, with the updated Introduction,

“Alfred Rosenberg and the ERR: The Records of Plunder and the Fate of Its Loot” (*LAST REVISED* August 2015)

at: <http://www.errproject.org/guide>

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

The following list contains abbreviations and acronyms used for the Belgian chapter. Location has usually been given only for institutions that still exist. Details concerning historical institutions and units are provided in the text.

AG	Arbeitsgruppe (Working Group)
AGR	Archives générale de Royaume (National Archives), Brussels; (<i>Dutch</i> : ARA)
AGR2	Archives générale de Royaume (National Archives) – Depot Joseph Cuvelier, Brussels
ALIU	Art Looting Investigatory Unit
AMAE	Archives de Ministère des affaires Étrangères, <i>sometimes</i> FRMAE, Paris, La Courneuve
Amsab	Amsab Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, Ghent (Amsab Institute of Social History)
AN-Pierrefitte	Archives nationales de France, Site de Pierrefitte-sur-Seine (National Archives of France, Pierrefitte-sur-Seine Site)
ARA	Algemeen Rijksarchief (National Archives of Belgium), Brussels; (<i>French</i> : AGR)
ARA2	Algemeen Rijksarchief (National Archives of Belgium) – depot Joseph Cuvelier, Brussels
BRüG	Bundesrückerstattungsgesetz (Federal Restitution Law)
BN	Belgien-Nordfrankreich (<i>ERR art collection code</i>)
BTG	Brüsseler Treuhandgesellschaft (Brussels Trust Company)
CEDOM	Centre d'études et de documentation maçonniques (<i>Dutch</i> : MADOC)
CEGES	Centre d'Études et de Documentation de Guerre et Sociétés contemporaines (Center for Historical Research and Documentation on War and Contemporary Society), Brussels, <i>now</i> CegeSoma
CegeSoma	Centre d'Étude Guerre et Société / Studie-en documentatiecentrum Oorlog en hedendaagse Maatschappij, Brussels (Study Center War and Society), <i>earlier</i> CEGES/SOMA
DBFU	Beauftragter des Führers für die Überwachung der gesamten geistigen und weltanschaulichen Schulung und Erziehung der NSDAP (The Führer's Commissioner for the Supervision of the Entire Intellectual and Ideological Schooling and Training of the NSDAP)

DER	Dienst Economische Recuperatie (Office for Economic Recovery), under the Ministry of Economic Affairs (<i>French</i> : ORE)
DOS	Dienst voor de Oorlogsslachtoffer (Service for War Victims), Brussels (<i>French</i> : SVG)
DSK	Devisenschutzkommando (Currency Protection Commando)
EHRI	European Holocaust Research Infrastructure
ERR	Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (Operational Staff of Reichsleiter Rosenberg)
Gestapo	Geheime Staatspolizei (Secret State Police)
HAG	Hauptarbeitsgruppe (Main Working Group), under ERR
IEJ	Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage (Institute for Research on the Jewish Question), Frankfurt am Main, later Hungen
IISA	Institut International des Sciences administratives (International Institute of Administrative Sciences)
IISG / IISH	Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis (International Institute of Social History), Amsterdam
IMT	International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg
JRSO	Jewish Restitution Successor Organization
MADOC	Maconniek studie- en documentatiecentrum (Masonic Research and Documentation Centre (<i>French</i> : CEDOM)
MAE	Ministère des Affaires économiques (Ministry of Economic Affairs), Brussels (<i>Dutch</i> : MED)
MB BelgNFr	Militärbefehlshaber in Belgien und Nordfrankereich (Military Commandant in Belgium and Northern France)
M-Aktion	Möbel-Aktion (<i>literally</i> Furniture Operation)
MCCP	Munich Central Collecting Point
MEZ	Ministerie van Economische Zaken (Ministry of Economic Affairs), Brussels (<i>French</i> : MAE)
NACP	National Archives of the United States, College Park, MD
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
NIOD	NIOD Instituut voor Oorlogs-, Holocaust- en Genocide Studies (NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies), Amsterdam
NISG	Nationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis (National Institute of Social History), <i>predecessor of Amsab</i>

NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (National-Socialist German Workers Party)
OAD	Offenbach Archival Depot
OD 4	Operational Directorate 4 (National Archives of Belgium)
OMGUS	Office of Military Government, United States
ORE	Office de Récupération économique, under the Ministry of Economic Affairs (<i>Dutch</i> : DRE)
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
PS	Paris-Storey (<i>document series prepared for the IMT</i>)
RIOD	Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie (Royal Institute of War Documentation); <i>now</i> NIOD
RMbO	Reichsministerium für die besetzten Ostgebiete (Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories)
RSHA	Reichssicherheitshauptamt (Reich Security Main Office)
SAI	Second Labour and Socialist International
SD	Sicherheitsdienst (Security Service)
SOMA	Studie en Documentatiecentrum Oorlog en Hedendaagse Maatschappij (Center for Historical Research and Documentation on War and Contemporary Society), Brussels, <i>now</i> CegeSoma
SVG	Service des Victimes de la Guerre (Service for War Victims), Brussels (<i>Dutch</i> : DOS)
TsDAVO	Tsentral'nyi derzhavnyi arkhiv vyshchikh orhaniv derzhavnoi vlady ta upravlinnia Ukraïny (Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of State Power and Administration of Ukraine), Kyiv (Kiev)
TsGOA SSSR	Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi osobyi arkhiv SSSR (Central State Special Archive of the USSR), Moscow, <i>now part of RGVA</i>
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
ZBHS	Zentralbibliothek der Hohen Schule (Central Library of the Hohe Schule NSDAP)

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The present 2016 Belgian chapter draws heavily on the initial chapter of my *Survey* of ERR archival materials published by the International Institute of Social History (Amsterdam, 2011). Renewed thanks are due to many who assisted with that publication. My association with IISH as an Honorary Fellow since the 1990s has given me a congenial European base for my multi-national research and reference efforts, particularly appropriate in this case for neighboring Belgium.

Reference specialists in the archival repositories covered deserve renewed thanks for consultations regarding their holdings and finding aids. Considerable revision in my Belgian coverage was required with the 2011 opening of the Joseph Cuvelier Repository of the National Archives of Belgium (AGR2/ARA2 – see Section 1.1.), across the city from the main AGR/ARA building. The Cuvelier Repository now brings together all of the major holdings of the National Archives covered in this chapter, many of them newly available and described for public research. I have been very grateful to Filip Strubbe of the National Archives, compiler of several of the new inventories, and to historian and archival reference specialist Dertjan Desmet, one of the authors of the new 2016 guide to Jewish-related sources (see Section 1.0.1.2.); both have contributed greatly to my current presentation. Dirk Martin kindly reviewed my coverage of the CegeSoma Study Centre War and Society, which he now directs under the National Archives.

Historian-Archivist Michel Vermote, long-associated with the Amsab Institute of Social History in Ghent, and coordinator of a major database on Belgian private archives (Archiefbank Vlaanderen), earlier advised with my initial Belgian coverage; he has greatly assisted my investigations for this expanded and updated chapter. I also appreciate consultations with Jacques Lust, long the major Belgian authority on the ERR and Belgian wartime art losses, and with Johanna Pezechkian, who earlier assisted my coverage of sources relating to the Mobil-Aktion in Belgium.

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1.0. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The ERR in Belgium

The Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR) opened its office in Brussels on 15 August 1940. First established in Paris in early July, the ERR had already started its initial seizures of libraries and archives of abandoned Masonic lodges and major Jewish collections in France. As a relatively independent NSDAP agency, it was an operational arm of the so-called DBFU, Reichsleiter Alfred Rosenberg's ideological office as the Führer's Deputy for Supervising the Entire Spiritual and Ideological Training of the Nazi Party (Beauftragter des Führers für die Überwachung der gesamten geistigen und weltanschaulichen Schulung und Erziehung der NSDAP). With headquarters (Stabsführung) in Berlin and administratively part of the DBFU, the ERR in Belgium was associated with, and frequently reported to, the Administrative Division (Verwaltungsabteilung) of the Military Commandant for Belgium and Northern France (Militärbefehlshaber in Belgien und Nordfrankreich, MB BelgNfr).¹

Rosenberg's aim in establishing the ERR as an operational arm of the DBFU was to collect research materials from occupied countries for the so-called Hohe Schule, a university-level training program for Nazi elite planned to be established on the Chiemsee after the war. The Central Library of the Hohe Schule (Zentralbibliothek der Hohen Schule der NSDAP, ZBHS) was already operating in Berlin since early 1939; it moved to Austrian Carinthia in 1942. Rosenberg inaugurated the Institute for the Study of the Jewish Question (Institut der NSDAP zur Erforschung der Judenfrage, IEJ) in Frankfurt am Main in March 1940, just as the German military drive through Western Europe was getting underway. Although IEJ was the only Hohe Schule institute operative during the war, the ERR was collecting materials for other institutes as well. ERR seizures in Belgium, similar to those in France, came primarily from private Jewish, Masonic, and socialist sources. The initial targets in Belgium were collections left behind by designated "enemies of the Reich" who had fled in the face of German invasion.

ERR plunder operations started in full force in Belgium in August of 1940 with seizures from Masonic lodges in Brussels, Antwerp, and Liège. Simultaneously they turned attention to important Jewish holdings, including the Alliance Israélite in Brussels and the Federation of Belgian Zionists (Fédération des zionistes belges) in Antwerp. Among key socialist targets were the leaders of the Second Labour and Socialist International (SAI) and the National Institute of Social History (NISG).² As apparent in the Belgian case, the ERR also seized books and archives from many key political leaders of various persuasions, not all of them Jews or Masons. Some of those were destined for other Nazi agencies. ERR Belgian library and archival seizures continued unabashed through 1941 and well into 1942, with a few later seizures and shipments, the latest found so far in March 1943.

¹ For more details and with an overview of ERR wartime activities and the postwar retrieval and restitution of ERR loot, see the Introduction, "Alfred Rosenberg and the ERR: The Records of Plunder and the Fate of Its Loot" (revised August 2015), at http://errproject.org/guide/ERRguideINTRO_10.15.2015.pdf

² See the case studies on Friedrich Adler and NISG, together with other details about plunder, by Jacques Lust and Michel Vermote, "Papiere Bitte! The Confiscation and Return of Belgian Archives and Libraries (1940–2003)," in *Returned from Russia: Nazi Archival Plunder in Western Europe and Recent Restitution Issues*, ed. P.K. Grimsted, F.J. Hoogewoud, and Eric Ketelaar (Institute of Art and Law, UK, 2007; paper edn, 2013), pp. 190–224., esp. pp. 220–25.

The ERR had many competitors, and hence was responsible for seizure of only a part of the archives seized in Belgium. As the introductory chapters of the collected volume *Returned from Russia* reveal, before their postwar second capture by Soviet authorities, those archives had been seized and brought together in various German centers by several key agencies of the National Socialist Regime in addition to the ERR. Most important were the Military Archives (Heeresarchiv), the Künsberg Commando under the Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt), and the Reich Main Security Office (Reichssicherheitshauptamt, RSHA), the latter comprising the SD (Sicherheitsdienst) and the Gestapo.

The SD was the ERR's strongest competitor, and was the recipient of an extensive quantity of books and related archives seized in Belgium, waging bitter turf wars with the ERR over many collections. In some cases of Masonic archives, libraries, and ritual items, the ERR was forced to hand over some of the loot to the RSHA in Berlin, parts of which were later evacuated to Silesia and the Sudetenland. Yet at other points in Belgium, the SD cooperated with the ERR. A summary list of Masonic seizures in Belgium by the ERR (and/or SD) was submitted after the war by a Belgian restitution officer to U.S. authorities in Germany. In one documented example, the ERR was ordered to ship seized Masonic materials to the SD or RSHA Amt VII in Berlin.³ Unfortunately, we do not have the same quality of original SD reports, or composite retrospective lists of their seizures and shipments from Belgium such as are now available for the ERR operations.

By early 1942, the ERR leadership in Belgium was also involved in Rosenberg's newly formed Möbel-Aktion, or M-Aktion, a vast program for the removal of household furnishings – including cultural assets – from homes abandoned by Jews (and others) who fled the country or were deported. By spring of 1942, the M-Aktion was officially shifted to the jurisdiction of the Western Office (Dienststelle Westen, often Amt Westen) of the Ministry for Occupied Eastern Territories (Reichsministerium für die besetzten Ostgebiete, RMbO), which Rosenberg headed.⁴ While operational orders for the M-Aktion came from Dienststelle Westen, headed by ERR staff, most of the actual seizures in Belgium were carried out under the auspices of the Brussels Trust Company (Brüsseler Treuhandgesellschaft, BTG), an agency created for the seizure, management, and disposal of 'enemy' (mainly Jewish) property and financial assets in Belgium. Administratively, the BTG functioned as part of the Economics Department (Wirtschaftsabteilung) of the Military Administration (Militärverwaltung) under the MB BelgNfr.⁵ The precise number of lodgings from which furnishings were removed by the M-Aktion in Belgium is not available, but specialists estimate they stripped a total of 7,200 houses and apartments. The 2001 Commission report cites the figure of 3,868 from September 1942 to 30 August 1943, with a total of 11,173 pieces of furniture

³ See an attached note with the letter of Lt. R. Lemaire to Capt. E.C. Rae, 27 Nov. 1945 with description of Masonic seizures in Brussels, Antwerp, Liège, Charleroi, and Namur, available at Fold3: <https://www.fold3.com/image/114/270094468> ff; detailed lists of books and other Masonic objects follow. Extracts of ERR documents submitted with one Belgium claim include mention of a German telegram ordering seized Masonic materials be expedited to the Berlin address of Emserstrasse 12, the Masonic building of the Great Lodge of Hamburg (Provinzial-Gross Loge von Hamburg) in Berlin-Wilmersdorf that had been taken over as the Gestapo headquarters in 1936, with basement facilities used by the RSHA Amt VII for Masonic archives and libraries.

⁴ See Johanna Pezechkian, "La Möbelaktion en Belgique," *Cahiers d'histoire du temps présent / Bijdragen tot de Eigentijdse Geschiedenis* 10 (2002), pp. 153–80, which expands the Pezechkian contribution, "La Möbelaktion," in the 2001 Buysse Commission Report: Belgium. Services du Premier Ministre, *Les biens des victimes des persécutions anti-juives en Belgique: Spoliation, Rétablissement des droits, Résultats de la Commission d'étude: Rapport final de la Commission d'étude sur le sort des biens des membres de la Communauté juive de Belgique spoliés ou délaissés pendant la guerre 1940–1945* ([Brussels], July 2001) at <http://www.combuysse.fgov.be/hoofdframemenufr.html> (see Section 1.0.2.1. below for other editions).

⁵ A chart of the occupation administrative structure in Belgium is provided in the Buysse Commission Report (above note 4), pp. 40–42.

removed.⁶ The ERR nevertheless reserved first choice of the cultural property seized by the M-Aktion. In Belgium, as in other countries where the M-Aktion operated, ERR personnel dominated the leadership and overall planning, and ERR facilities were frequently used for the disposition of many works of art, archives, and books seized. Owners were never designated for M-Aktion confiscations, which greatly complicated postwar restitution efforts.

Reconciling ERR Library and Archival Seizures with Restitution

Following the return of 40 fonds of the Soviet-captured Belgian archives from Moscow in 2002, with which they had been officially involved in the appraisal and negotiations, Jacques Lust and Michel Vermote provide many specific examples in their 2007 account of the general pattern of ERR seizures of libraries and archives in occupied Belgium. Following a second seizure by Soviet authorities at the end of the war and its immediate aftermath, those archives – along with archives from many other European countries – were held in secret in Moscow throughout the Soviet period.⁷ Accompanying charts of the looted archives from Belgium returned from Moscow in 2002 can now be matched by name with those seized, although we can still only begin to establish the discrepancy in the amount taken and returned. Sadly, none of the books or other library materials seized by the ERR with the private archives were returned home. It is doubtful, however, if all of those reached Moscow, because along the way, the ERR frequently separated archival materials (including personal papers) from books. Besides, Soviet archivists in principle removed printed matter from archival fonds, and even for government records, Moscow authorities refused to return the printed materials they had separated out from the rest of the archives when they finally returned the archives to Belgium.

Resulting from the renewed interest in cultural property still missing from the Second World War and international call for restitution of ‘Holocaust assets’ in the 1990s (as exemplified in the 1998 Washington Principles), a Belgian Royal Decree of 6 July 1997 created the Study Commission on Jewish Assets, as part of the services of the Prime Minister’s Office. The Buysse Commission, assembled in 1998 under the chairmanship of Lucien Buysse, examined losses of the Belgian Jewish Community during the wartime occupation and the insufficient postwar indemnification. The Commission was unable to provide compensation in all cases, however, because many victims or their heirs could not adequately document their losses. In the 2001 Commission report, Jacques Lust presented a helpful section describing seized Jewish cultural assets (with an appended list of 100 Jewish victims and an estimated 120,000 items) based on an ERR 1943 list of close to 150 seized library and archival collections.⁸ A final report of the Buysse Commission was completed in 2008, but no new lists of Jewish library losses were published.⁹

A recent article by Michel Vermote, based on research in newly available archives, appends facsimiles of six original ERR lists and a combined chart of Belgian library and archival seizures, updating earlier coverage. Planned for launch in early 2017, the article and related lists form part of a

⁶ [Johanna Pezechkian], “La Möbelaktion,” in the 2001 Buysse Commission *Report* (above note 4), p. 130.

⁷ See Jacques Lust and Michel Vermote, “*Papieren Bitte!*...,” in *Returned from Russia:* (above note 2), pp. 190–224., esp. pp. 191–205.

⁸ [Jacques Lust], “Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg: ERR et la spoliation des biens culturels,” in the 2001 Buysse Commission *Report* (above note 4), pp. 133–41; Dutch edn, pp. 133–42. Appendix 5 (in vol. 2), pp. 21–23. See also the 1993 list of books looted and sold during occupation in AGR2, ORE/DER, I:21/405; some recovered books appear in I:21/379/2.

⁹ See the English edition of the Buysse Commission Final Report, dated 4 Feb. 2008 at http://www.combuysse.fgov.be/en/eindrapport_commissie_schadeloosstelling_2_en.pdf.

new website devoted to ERR library and archival looting. The accompanying chart also indicate availability of additional more detailed reports on specific seizures among the ERR files available online in Kyiv. Berlin was the only destination indicated for ERR out-shipments from Belgium, involving an estimated total of 1,223 crates with no less than 150,000 volumes as of early 1943.¹⁰ Daniel Dratwa, curator at the Jewish Museum in Brussels, speculates that there also may have been an estimated 400,000 more books from Jewish lodgings seized by the Möbel-Aktion. The matter will require further investigation, because no documents have yet surfaced either from wartime reports or postwar retrieval to reinforce his brief account.¹¹ Additional sources reveal that some of those captured books and archival materials the ERR first amassed in Berlin were destined for the ZBHS, the IEJ, and other institutions, including other N-S agencies – either directly or via the ERR Book Sorting Office (Buchleitstelle) in Berlin. Further research is needed in various U.S. and British restitution records as well as claims and receipts now available in the Belgian National Archives (AGR2/ARA2) to determine more detailed losses of various Belgian collections and where at least parts thereof ended the war. For example, one series of Belgian claims for seized library collections to U.S. restitution authorities in Germany includes many lists of books seized, some of which will undoubtedly match up with the ERR seizures reported in the Vermote presentation.¹²

In the case of books and archives that remained in the West, for instance, only 25 crates came home from the Offenbach Archival Depot (OAD), the U.S. Army book and archive collecting point near Frankfurt.¹³ OAD processed an estimated million and a half books and periodicals from the IEJ evacuation site in Hungen (70 km northeast of Frankfurt) and from IEJ collections that had remained in Frankfurt. According to Belgian government figures, 19 crates of Belgian books were returned from the ZBHS collections in Austrian Carinthia via French restitution services. The British found over 650,000 books the ERR had collected for the ZBHS in the monastery of Tanzenberg (near Villach), and processed them for restitution. Regrettably, few of the books returned were restituted to their owners or heirs.¹⁴

Currently, Belgian specialists estimate that no more than 20 percent of the books the Germans seized from Belgium during occupation were returned to Belgium thereafter, but some suggest that only 1.2 percent of Jewish library losses were returned to their original owners or heirs. Hitherto, however, less analysis of library losses has been available than for archives and art.

When British bombing intensified on the German capital in 1943, many of the hundred thousand Belgian books the ERR sent to Berlin were evacuated to Silesia (with the ERR Berlin library collections and the Buchleitstelle). The ERR reestablished its research operations in Ratibor (*postwar Polish* Racibórz, 70 km south of Katowitz, *postwar Polish* Katowice). That new ERR center focused particularly on anti-Bolshevik research, continuing work started in Berlin and supported by the Ostbücherei (ERR Eastern European library), with a number of satellite sites and book repositories in the surrounding region. An estimated over two million books ended the war with

¹⁰ Michel Vermote, with P.K. Grimsted, “Library Plunder in Belgium by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg: Six ERR Seizure Lists of Confiscated Belgian Library and Archival Materials,” forthcoming 2017, an original publication at www.errproject.org/libraries.php.

¹¹ Daniel Dratwa, “The Plunder of Jewish-Owned Books and Libraries in Belgium,” in *Vitalizing Memory: International Perspectives on Provenance Research* (Washington, DC: American Association of Museums, 2005), pp. 143–45.

¹² See the series of Belgian claims with book lists from the NACP MCCP records at: <https://www.fold3.com/image/114/269995379> ff. with a series of several folders (151 + 102 pages).

¹³ Lust and Vermote, “*Papieren Bitte!*” in *Returned from Russia*, pp. 206–207, cite figures for the return of books to Belgium from OAD and Tanzenberg. One of the OAD reports cited mentions specifically 9 crates of Belgian materials containing Free Masonic items and materials from Jewish libraries in Antwerp and Brussels.

¹⁴ See comments of Lust and Vermote on book restitution from Tanzenberg in *Returned from Russia*, pp. 206–209.

the ERR Ratibor center, by then significantly enriched by extensive library and archival materials confiscated from occupied areas of the Soviet Union.¹⁵

Rather than being returned to their home libraries at the end of the war, as was the case with books that ended the war in the West (Germany and Austria), many of the ERR Ratibor holdings fell into the hands of Red Army trophy scouts. Others remained in Polish hands, but only a relatively small number came home from Poland to Belgium in the 1950s. Because Soviet authorities found so many books from the Belorussian and Baltic Soviet republics in one of the ERR Silesian sites, they directed an initial shipment of books and periodicals to Minsk in April 1945. But after they discovered the millions of books from the Germans had transferred from Ratibor to warehouses in Myslowitz (*postwar Polish* Mysłowice), a suburb of Katowitz, with many more from the Belarussian and Baltic republics, they sent a major echelon to the Belarussian capital of Minsk in October. Those 54 freight cars carried an estimated 1.2 million books, at least one third from Western Europe, including many the ERR had seized from Belgium.

Official Soviet statistics cite up to seven million books seized or destroyed during the war in the Soviet republic of Belorussia. Hence, Soviet authorities consider those hundreds of thousands of western books transported to Minsk as ‘compensation’ for their losses. Today, now independent Belarus librarians think likewise and have never considered any restitution. This explains why the large number of books from France, Belgium, and the Netherlands are still found today in several libraries in Minsk.¹⁶ Following Belgian participation in a September 2016 week-long international library seminar in Minsk, a more detailed report on Belgian – and other Western European – library holdings still in Belarus is in progress.¹⁷

Many of the private Jewish, Masonic, and socialist archival materials seized by the ERR during the occupation that returned to Belgium from Moscow in 2002, if they had remained with the ERR during the war, probably also had first arrived in the Soviet Union in Minsk, having been part of that same Soviet 1945 echelon from Silesia. Others first went to Kyiv with the large collection of original ERR archives (most probably from Ratibor) that still remain in the Ukrainian capital. Postwar Soviet archival regulations required all captured foreign archival materials found in the Soviet Union to be transferred to Moscow. Hence, most of those acquired after the war in both Minsk and Kyiv were transferred to Moscow and placed in the top-secret Central State Special Archive of the USSR (Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi osobyi arkhiv SSSR, TsGOA SSSR); although some were deposited in other archives. Because some of the ERR files that came to Kyiv in 1945 were generated from the extensive ERR operations in Ukraine, Soviet Ukrainian archivists retained the entire collection in Kyiv. It was only after 1990 that Belgian specialists learned about the major collection of original ERR reports from Belgium remaining among the ERR records still in Kyiv. Microfilm copies of some of them have since been acquired

¹⁵ See P.K. Grimsted, “Roads to Ratibor: Library and Archival Plunder by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 19, no. 3 (Winter 2005), pp. 390–458; at: <http://socialhistory.org/sites/default/files/docs/err-ratibor-pkg.pdf>.

¹⁶ See P.K. 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, at: <http://socialhistory.org/sites/default/files/docs/libcult.pdf>; a Russian version appeared in proceedings from a conference in Minsk, “Trofeinye knigi iz Zapadnoi Evropy: Doroga v Minsk cherez Ratibor (Ratsibuzh). Ograblenie bibliotek ERR (Operativnym shtabom Reikhsliaitera Rozenberga),” in *Matieryaly trietskikh mizhnarodnykh knihaznuchykh chytanniau “Kniha Belarusi: Poviaz’ chasoi” (Minsk, 16–17 verasnia 2003 g.)* (Minsk: Natsyional’naia bibliatiaka Belarusi, 2005), pp. 39–90.

¹⁷ Michel Vermote, the Belgian representative taking part, plans a more detailed report to supplement his 2017 article and chart of ERR Belgian library and archival seizures (above note 10).

by the Study Centre War and Society in Brussels, now under of the National Archives as Operational Directorate 4 (OD 4) CegeSoma, as will be explained below.¹⁸

After the Belgian Masonic archives were returned from Moscow in 2002, they were consolidated in an expanded Masonic center in Brussels under the Grand Orient of Belgium, the Centre d'études et de documentation maçonniques (CEDOM) / Maconniek studie- en documentatiecentrum (MADOC), which includes a museum on the history of Free Masonry in Belgium.¹⁹ Meanwhile, the main fonds of Jewish organizations returned from Moscow are now held by the Central Israelite Consistory of Belgium (Consistoire Central Israélite de Belgique (CBIG), where on-site inventories have been prepared.²⁰

ERR Art Loot from Belgium and its Fate

While ERR art looting was much less extensive than was the ERR looting of libraries and archives in Belgium – and certainly much less in comparison to France – the wartime migration and postwar fate of art seized by the ERR, or that fell in its hands through the Möbel-Aktion, followed different patterns than was the case for books and archives. Seventy years after the end of the war, we still do not have a complete account of Belgian art losses and the extent of recovery. A much-needed comprehensive compendium of lost art, linked to retrieval and restitution, awaits completion – including those works of art left behind by Belgians who fled or were deported, those seized by the ERR and other Nazi agents, those alienated from their owners through forced sales, theft, and an uncontrolled, often black market in art during the war. Jacques Lust presented many details in his contribution to the 2001 Commission Report cited above, the most extensive coverage to date, but fifteen years later, more remains to be done.²¹

In France, on the impetus of Reich Chancellor Hermann Göring, the ERR gained notoriety for its confiscation of over 200 impressive private Jewish art collections, most of which were processed in the ERR center for looted art at the Jeu de Paume, adjacent to the Louvre. In Belgium by contrast, art was a secondary target of the ERR. Although Jacques Lust reported at least 885 works of art were seized from Belgium, the ERR was not responsible for all of those.²² We now know that the ERR seized many more art objects from Belgian private individuals at the same time it seized books and archives, and even more art treasures through the Möbel-Aktion. Details of the wartime migration of the art still needs clarification, and a full compendium of all the looted and still lost art objects is badly needed.

The ERR sent only two prominent Belgian Jewish art collections to Paris for processing in the

¹⁸ See note 35.

¹⁹ The compiler is grateful to CEDOC/MADOC director Frank Langenaken for arranging a visit and explaining more about the facility, rue de Laeken 73 / Lakensestraat, 73, B-1000 Brussels. A 2016 documentary film “La mémoire volée des Francs Maçons” recounts the ERR Nazi confiscation of Masonic archives in France and Belgium and their recovery from Moscow; available on the website of the Grand Orient de Belgique at <http://www.gob.be/wp/de-berlin-a-moscou/> and at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5JWed9-m4nY>.

²⁰ See detailed listings in *Returned from Russia* for these and other fonds returned to non-governmental and/or private organizations, pp. 233–37; and personal papers, pp. 237–39.

²¹ See the most complete coverage of art seizures available [by Lust], “ERR et la spoliation des biens culturels,” in the 2001 Commission Report (above note 4), especially pp. 136–45. For items lost as of 27 Dec. 1948, see also *Répertoire d'oeuvres d'art dont la Belgique a été spoliée durant la guerre 1939–1945* (Brussels: ORE, 1948); available for free download at: https://issuu.com/hesiod/docs/r_pertoire_d_oeuvres_d_art_dont_la_belgique_a_t; a damaged archival copy is now processed in AGR2, as I 21/365/1.

²² This total figure is reported [by Jacques Lust] in “ERR et la spoliation des biens culturels,” in the 2001 Buysse Commission Report (above note 4), especially pp. 139–45.

Jeu de Paume, together with a few art objects looted from other Jewish collections. Only five ERR inventories remain from the Jeu de Paume for named Belgian Jewish collections. ERR inventories and registration cards survive for 46 items belonging to the Belgian financier and industrialist Hugo Daniel Andriess (1867–1942) and his wife Elisabeth, while 20 items were registered belonging to Belgian art dealer and collector Eric-Émil Lyndhurst (1876–1961).²³ Some of the Andriess Collection went to Göring, and most of the rest was shipped to the ERR repository of Buxheim (Bavaria). Although a few Lyndhurst paintings also went to Göring, most of the collection went to the ERR repository of Nikolsburg (then in Austria, now Czech Mikulov); although the Mikulov castle was intentionally burned when the Red Army arrived in April 1945, some of the art saved was returned to Paris after the war, and then to Brussels.²⁴ Individual items from these two collections (most with images) are now displayed in the ERR Jeu de Paume database, along with works of art from a few other minor Belgian owners, with notes about the restitution status of individual items.²⁵ Data about archival sources for those Belgian art collections are also included in a now updated chart of archival sources related to victimized Jeu de Paume collection owners in the expanded edition of the *ERR Archival Guide*.²⁶

The ERR was only tangentially involved with the large art collection owned by Belgian citizen Baron Jean Germain Cassel van Doorn, seized in southern France. Not registered in the Jeu de Paume, it was shipped from Paris to art repositories in Austria, rather than those operated by the ERR.²⁷ Other Nazi agents were also seizing art in Belgium during the occupation, including the Dienststelle Kajetan Mühlmann, which was the principal Nazi art agency in the Netherlands. Meanwhile, Göring had his own art agents at work: for example, the important collection of the wealthy Belgian art historian Émile Renders was ‘sold’ in 1940 to the Dutch art dealer Alois Meidl, who subsequently ‘sold’ a large portion of that collection to Göring.²⁸

Complete data has yet to be compiled for ERR receipts of works of art from the M-Aktion, although Jacques Lust provides many details in the 2001 Commission Report.²⁹ In that connection, the Jeu de Paume database also reveals many details and now identifies some of the art owners not revealed in remaining ERR inventories. Since the ERR processed Belgian receipts from the M-Aktion in five separate relatively small ‘M-A’ collections, individual data have been preserved –

²³ On the ERR seizure of these collections, see the ERR report, “Übersicht über die Arbeitsvorhaben der Arbeitsgruppe Belgien in zeitlicher reihenfolge” (n.d. [Mar. 1943]), TsDAVO, 3676/1/164: Seizures n° 127 (Andriess, 10 Mar. 1942) and 128 (Lyndhurst, 9 Mar. 1942).

²⁴ See the report on Lyndhurst receipts in AGA2/ARA2, I:21/379; and AMAE, 209SUP 444/P105.

²⁵ See the Jeu de Paume Database at <http://www.errproject.org/jeudepaume.php>.

²⁶ Table 2: “Private Belgian Jewish Collections Processed by the ERR in the Jeu de Paume,” as part of Appendix 1 to the French chapter, forthcoming at <http://www.errproject.org/guide.php>.

²⁷ Code-named ‘Aktion Bertha’, the collection was seized by the SD and Vichy police from the Cassel van Dorn estate in Cannes and a house in Ruoms (Ardèche). An inventory of the collection is nonetheless found with the French copies of ERR inventories in AMAE, 209SUP 97/18 and also in 209SUP/546/P255–P256; works of art from the collection found in MCCP after the war were returned to Paris, as per the list in 209SUP/147/A98; see also the file in 209SUP/284/B138. The Jeu de Paume database includes data for items coded B-1–B-2537.

²⁸ Some details about the Renders Collection and the dealings of Alois Meidl and Kajetan Mühlmann with some loss registration forms, along with more details about the Andriess and Lyndhurst losses and other Belgian art seizures by the ERR are in the Belgian claims file submitted to U.S. restitution authorities in Germany, copies online with Fold3, with MCCP Administrative Records, RG 260, available on Fold 3 at <https://www.fold3.com/image/114/270092726> ff (157p.) See an additional variant of the Belgian claim file in WCCP records at <https://www.fold3.com/image/114/232007782> ff. See especially ORE, “Rapport sur la collection Renders-Bruxelles, Février 1947,” by Capt. Jan Vlug, available at <https://www.fold3.com/image/114/270001275> (17p.) from NACP, MCCP Admin. Records, and in Brussels at AGR2, ORE, *I 21/ 367.

²⁹ [Lust], “ERR et la spoliation des biens culturels,” in the 2001 Buysse Commission Report (above note 4), especially pp. 139–40, 142–43, p. 145.

thanks to the survival of ERR registration cards in the U.S. National Archives in College Park, MD (NACP) – and incorporated in the Jeu de Paume database, with images for many from the Bundesarchiv in Koblenz. Only 35 paintings and works on paper were processed for the Belgian M-Aktion Paintings Collection (Belg. MA-Bilder, coded ‘Belg. MA-B’ or ‘MA-B-Belgien’; with images for some). After return to Belgium, half of them were sold at public auction in 1950, when only 4 were identified as to owners and could be restituted. A second ERR Belgian M-Aktion collection comprised 32 small *objets d’art* of antiquity (Belg. MA-AN). The Belgian M-Aktion ‘Metal’ Collection (Belg. MA-MET) contained only 2 items, while another 2 works on paper were registered in the Belgian M-Aktion East Asian Collection. None of the owners for either of those latter collections were identified after the war. As part of his helpful contribution to the 2001 Belgian Commission report, Lust cited the example of 68 paintings seized by the M-Aktion in Antwerp that were sold at the Café Nutt am Zoo in Cologne on 9 February 1944.³⁰

Presumably also from the M-Aktion, the Belgian ERR collection coded BN (Belgien-Nordfrankreich), received from the BTG, comprised 215 miscellaneous items registered, many classified as decorative arts, but with some paintings, works on paper, and sculptures, among other items. Names of many owners of items in that collection are revealed among ORE/DER records, while ERR registration cards survive for only a handful. In addition to the separate Andriessse Collection, for example, surviving inventories attribute 51 BN items for Andriessse (HA) and 40 for Lyndhurst (LYN). Owners for some other items were identified after the works of art returned to Belgium after the war, including, for example, 4 items belonging to May de Bauer in Brussels, 4 to Oppenheim-Errera, Brussels, 9 to Landau in Antwerp, and 15 from ‘Hause Wassermann.’³¹ Many of the items returned to Belgium from the BN Collection, as well as other sources, for which owners were not identified, were sold at public auction, while others were ceded to Belgian museums.³²

In addition to those the ERR registered in the above M-Aktion collections, the Neuwied Collection (ERR code: NWD or Neuw) was reportedly processed by the ERR from M-Aktion seizures in the Netherlands and Belgium, together with some art works from the south of France assembled in the ERR/M-Aktion Office in Nice. The collection was registered by the ERR, not in the Jeu de Paume in Paris, but rather in a German customs depot in Neuwied (across the Rhine and just north of Koblenz). Most of the art objects were transferred to the ERR repository of Kögl (near St Georgien) in Austria in 1943.³³ After the war, they were then transferred from Kögl to the Munich Central Collecting Point (MCCP) under U.S. Army Occupation authority. The owners of those paintings and graphic art in the Neuwied Collection, however, were never identified at the MCCP. They were accordingly transferred to the Wiesbaden CCP and from there were handed over as ‘heirless’ to the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization (JRSO) and sold or distributed to Jewish communities throughout the world. 25 paintings from the ERR Neuwied Collection have recently

³⁰ [Lust], “ERR et la spoliation des biens culturels,” in the 2001 *Commission Report* (above note 4), p. 137; Lust cites a report in the German restitution files in Koblenz.

³¹ To the extent available, such data has been noted in the entries for the BN collection in the Jeu de Paume database. See the reports about owners of items in the BN collection described below found among Belgian restitution and claims files in the ORE/DER records in AGR2/ARA2), for example, I 21/364. Lust treats the BN Collection as distinct from the M-Aktion, and provides some alternate data – Lust, “ERR et la spoliation des biens culturels,” in the 2001 *Buyse Commission Report* (above note 4), p. 142–43.

³² Sale catalogues for those that went to auction have been preserved in the same record group, I:21/380–385 and 435; documentation on those ceded to Belgian museums (1948–1957), will be found in the files I:21/386–388 and 447.

³³ An ERR inventory of the Neuwied Collection remains in the Bundesarchiv-Koblenz, B 323/312. Some of the art objects included were from the Netherlands and the South of France, although Lust suggests a larger percentage was from Belgium. Lust notes that some items from the collection went to a repository in Halle/Saale, but that address would appear to refer to the Hohe Schule Institute for Religious Studies, rather than an actual ERR repository.

been identified in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem; their provenance has yet to be determined.³⁴

Archival Sources

In contrast to holdings in neighboring France and the Netherlands, only a few scattered original documents created by the ERR itself were found in Belgium after the war or since. Surprisingly, the most extensive group of original ERR files from their Belgian operations surfaced in the early 1990s in a major Ukrainian State Archive (TsDAVO) in Kyiv. This is the most extensive group of ERR files held anywhere, and contains the largest run available of original ERR reports from Belgium during the first year and a half of ERR operations, when they were most active in library and related archival seizures. These include reports – mostly to ERR headquarters in Berlin – from the Belgian ERR Working Group (AG Belgien), and later the Main Working Group (Hauptarbeitsgruppe Belgien, HAG Belgien) through mid-1943.³⁵ Since 2010 the entire Rosenberg Collection of ERR files remaining in Kyiv is available in PDF files for free download at the TsDAVO website, albeit still with only Russian-language finding aids.³⁶

In contrast, considerably more original documentation relating to the Möbel-Aktion survives in Belgium, with relevant files dispersed among several repositories and collections within them. Most remaining M-Aktion documentation is now incorporated within the records of the major postwar Belgian government agencies that assisted wartime victims and their heirs, handled claims for compensation, and identified war crimes, such as collaboration with German occupation authorities.

The Belgian National Archives (Archives générales du Royaume, AGR / Algemeen Rijksarchief, ARA) retain the most important groups of government records relating both to wartime seizures and to postwar retrieval and restitution. Relevant fond/record groups are now consolidated in its Joseph Cuvelier Repository (AGR2/ARA2 – see Section 1.1.), which opened in 2011 across the city from the main AGR/ARA building. In terms of records from the German occupation, of particular importance for documentation on the M-Aktion, are the remaining records of the Brussels Trust Company (BTG), the agency that in fact ran the M-Aktion. Few of the BTG documents involved, however, carry a letterhead of the M-Aktion. That fond has recently been reprocessed with a new published finding aid, as part of the extensive remaining records of the Office of Sequestration (Office des Séquestres) under the Ministry of Finance.

Most of the extensive Belgian records of postwar art recovery, cultural property recovery, and restitution have become available to researchers in the National Archives only since 2010. Those are

³⁴ See complete listings (many with images) for the Neuwied Collection – for the portion that went to Kögl in the Jeu de Paume database and also in the MCCP database. The new Israeli chapter of this *ERR Archival Guide*, at http://errproject.org/guide/ERR_Israel_12.10.2015.pdf, provides cross-references to 25 paintings and works on paper covered in the database of the Israel Museum in Jerusalem (Section 5.4.). [Lust], “ERR et la spoliation des biens culturels,” in the 2001 Commission *Report* (above note 4), p. 137.

³⁵ See Dirk Martin, “Something New: Archives from the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg from Kiev have been brought to the Centre War and Society (SOMA/CEGES) in Brussels,” *Spoils of War. International Newsletter*, no. 7 (Aug. 2000), pp. 71–75; at: <http://www.lostart.de/cae/servlet/contentblob/6742/publicationFile/224/Spoils%20of%20War%207.pdf>. A finding aid is available in CegeSoma (see Section 1.2.).

³⁶ See the website “Kolleksiia dokumentov Operativnogo shtaba reikhsliaitera Rozenberga,” at: <http://err.tsdavo.gov.ua>. More description of the fonds included, how they arrived in TsDAVO, and the finding aids available will be found in the forthcoming Ukrainian chapter of this *ERR Archival Guide* at <http://www.errproject.org/guide.php>; in the meantime the original 2011 published version may be downloaded for free at <https://socialhistory.org/en/publications/reconstructing-record-nazi-cultural-plunder>. TsDAVO is the acronym for the Central State Archive of Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine (Tsentral'nyi derzhavnyi vyshchykh orhaniv vlady ta upravlinnia, TsDAVO).

also all now held in the Joseph Cuvelier Repository (AGR2/ARA2), namely the three fonds described below. Most important for the fate of works of art the ERR looted, as well as some files on library and other cultural seizures, including those by the M-Aktion, are the records of the Office or Department for Economic Recovery (ORE/DER) under the Ministry of Economic Affairs. Now held in AGR2/ARA2 with file-level descriptions as Inventory I:21, these files document postwar retrieval and the extent of restitution or alternate disposal. Files contain postwar reports on works of art seized, including claims filed. There are a few reports on interrogations of key ERR staff and some scattered copies of ERR documents.³⁷

A provisional list of seized art prepared under U.S. Army auspices in 1947, reissued by ORE/DER, is now available in AGR2/ARA2, and on the AGR/ARA Intranet (internal online system).³⁸ The following year ORE/DER issued a printed register of still-missing works of art, listing 285 paintings, 10 sculptures, 4 tapestries, and 2 pieces of antique furniture, with 120 images illustrating many of the lost items; presumably based on the 1947 compendium.³⁹ Also in 1948, the Museum of Fine Arts in Brussels published an illustrated catalogue from an exhibition of wartime seized art that had been returned to Belgium, listing 42 paintings, 3 sculptures, 11 porcelain works of decorative art, 5 tapestries, 6 incunabula, and 9 rare books.⁴⁰

The more ambitious four-volume Belgian catalogue of wartime art losses initiated in the 1990s, reportedly on the basis of a more extensive database, was never completed. The first two volumes – covering public-domain and state-owned collections – were printed for limited distribution in 1994, but never for wide-scale circulation. Archival copies of the two printed volumes are open for research in AGR2/ARA2, but not on the Internet; even initial compilations for the third volume covering private collections and a fourth for library losses have yet to reach the National Archives.⁴¹ Regrettably, earlier database compilations of art and library losses have not been released from the ORE/DER offices, and it is not clear if all related archival files have been transferred.

The postwar War Damages Service (Service Dommages de guerre / Dienst Oorlogsschade) under the Ministry of Public Works and Reconstruction that oversaw claims and compensation for property and material damage produced an immense collection of records totaling some 22 linear kilometers in shelf space. It was not until 2015 that the entire complex could be transferred to AGR/AGA premises; by 2015, only 8 linear kilometers – with some 900,000 individual or family files – had been processed. Already in the late 1990s, the Buysse Commission examined a core group of 5,320 files for its assessment of war losses and indemnity for the Belgian Jewish Community. Postwar accounts of losses in connection with the extensive claims held in this record group now in the

³⁷ See Section 1.0.1.4 below.

³⁸ AGR2/ARA2, I 21/ 365: “Liste des oeuvres d’art, volées par les allemands en Belgique pendant l’occupation.” (25 p. mimeographed), prepared by the U.S. Army in Germany and “SHAEF Mission Belgium,” 15 Mar. 1947. The table includes losses from Belgian museums and private owners. That list was reissued in mimeographed format by ORE/DER with their own cover sheet; several copies survive in the ORE/DER records, now displayed on the AGR/ARA Intranet (see I:21/366), along with other files with data about private wartime art losses and postwar claims. A copy is available online through Fold3 from a U.S. file of Belgian claims in RG 260 (OMGUS), MCCP Administrative records, at <https://www.fold3.com/image/270001365>.

³⁹ ORE, *Répertoire d’oeuvres d’art dont la Belgique a été spoliée durant la guerre 1939–1945* (Brussels: ORE, 1948), with a total of 301 numbered items and 120 plates; the introductory note (in French, English, German, and Russian) is dated 27 December 1948.

⁴⁰ M. F. Baudouin, *Palais des beaux-arts, Chefs-d’oeuvre récupérés en Allemagne: [Exposition] novembre-décembre, 1948* (Brussels: Éditions de la connaissance, 1948)/ *Paleis voor schone Kunsten, In Duitsland herwonnen Kunstwerken, November–December 1948* (Brussels: Éditions de la Connaissance, 1948).

⁴¹ See Section 1.0.1.4 below for the full listing of the two volumes of *Missing Art Works of Belgium* (Brussels: Office Belge de l’Economie et de l’agriculture, [20 June 1994]. This compiler first saw these printed volumes thanks to the archival copies recently publicly available in AGR2/ARA2, I :21/ 407 and 408.

Cuvelier Repository (AGR2/ARA2) will be of considerable interest in tracing individual ERR and particularly M-Aktion seizures and the fate of their victims.⁴²

CegeSoma – the Study Centre War and Society (Centre d'étude guerre et société / Studie-en documentatiecentrum Oorlog en hedendaagse Maatschappij) in Brussels – in 2016 became the Fourth Operational Division of the Belgian National Archives (AGR/ARA) – see Section 1.2. CegeSoma has been collecting documents from various sources abroad relating to the German wartime occupation. Most relevant, in the late 1990s, CegeSoma acquired microfilms of selected documents from ERR operations in Belgium that surfaced in the Ukrainian state archive TsDAVO in Kyiv. Researchers should be aware, however, that the Kyiv microfilms held by CegeSoma are far from complete in terms of the Belgian-related ERR documents in TsDAVO, all of which are now available on the Internet as noted above.

After the war, the Service for War Victims (Service des Victimes de la Guerre, SVG / Dienst voor de oorlogsslachtoffers, DOS) – now the General Directorate for War Victims – dealt with war damages and helped individual victims trace and document their losses. Its services were first transferred to the Ministry of Social Affairs and later to the Federal Public Service for Social Security, where it continues its work to this day as a separate office in Brussels. Its archive holds few original files, but has brought together many copies and postwar reports related to the M-Aktion, among other files for assisting formal claims by victims and their heirs (see Section 1.3.).

In addition to these three repositories – AGR2/AGA2, CegeSoma, and SVG/DOS – a few additional original M-Aktion files in the Ghent City Archives are described below. Undoubtedly files may be found in other local archives not covered herein.

In terms of sources for art looting and recovery of loot in Belgium, considerable government funding and public efforts have gone into a database of Belgian wartime art losses. Yet, even provisional results of the initial database compiled after the war were never made public. Nor was the database developed in the early 1990s, which was stated as the source basis for the 'internally published' 1994 catalogues mentioned above.⁴³

In June 2000 under the auspices of the Buysse Commission, researchers and art historians engaged in the search for works of art started compiling a new database – “Jewish Cultural Assets–Belgium.” The Commission reported its significant results with “more than 4,000 entries describing art works stolen from more than 225 Jewish collections.” Unfortunately, as the Commission report explains, “For the lack of time and means, this research was not completed.” The report concludes with recommendation for further research, but as far as can be ascertained, only limited further work was undertaken before funding was exhausted, and even provisional results are not currently accessible, nor were more noted in the subsequent 2008 government reports.⁴⁴

More recently, in September 2014 two specialists from the Free University of Brussels reported at an international conference at Newnham College, Cambridge, about a database underway for “Jewish Art Collections and the Art Market in Occupied Belgium.” Sadly, contact with the compilers in Brussels a year later led to the discovery that their project was abandoned for want of support.⁴⁵

⁴² See Pascale Falek-Alhadeff and Gertjan Desmet, “Une source incontournable pour l’histoire de la spoliation des juifs en Belgique,” in Pierre-Alain Tallier, ed., “*Une brique dans le ventre et l’autre en banque*” *L’indemnisation des dommages aux biens privés causés par les opérations de guerre et assimilées. Sources pour une histoire plurielle du 20^e siècle*. Brussels: ARA/AGR, 2012; =*Miscellanea Archivistica Studia*, n° 136, pp. 83–94; also published in Dutch as *Miscellanea Archivistica Studia*, n° 137.

⁴³ See the catalogues listed below in Section 1.0.1.4., and the archival copies described in AGR2/ARA2 in the ORE/DER records.

⁴⁴ Quoted from the 2001 Report of the Buysse Commission (above note 4), “Final Evaluation,” Section 5.2.1.2., pp. 467–68, at <http://www.combuysse.fgov.be/hoofdframemenuen.html>. Only a small portion of the 2008 report is online.

⁴⁵ Noémie Goldman and Geraldine David (Université Libre de Bruxelles), “Jewish Art Collections and the art

1.0.1. GENERAL RESEARCH GUIDES

1.0.1.1. GENERAL INTERNET DIRECTORIES OF SOURCES

**Portal of the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI):
Belgian Archival Coverage at:** <https://portal.ehri-project.eu/countries/be>

The Belgian section of the newly-launched EHRI Portal Archive – as of late 2016 – presents growing coverage of 122 Holocaust-relevant repositories with description of some 584 fonds or collections, some of which may well include documentation about seizures and postwar claims for ERR and M-Aktion loot. For example, for the National Archives, AGR2/ARA2 18 different fonds are described, 5 in French and 13 in Dutch. The Portal also provides bibliography of many available published references. Further expansion is anticipated.

Yerusha Jewish Archives Portal Europe of the Rothschild Foundation. Forthcoming.
Outline online at: <http://yerusha.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/project-summary-for-website.pdf> (forthcoming).

Yerusha (literally translated as ‘inheritance’), the still developing web portal of the Rothschild Foundation Europe (Hanadiv), aims to become the premier online hub of information regarding Jewish and Jewish-related archival materials in Europe. The project is built upon archival collection-level descriptions, which will be brought together into a single, searchable online platform hosted by the National Library of Israel. For Belgium, it draws on descriptions of repositories and their holdings prepared for the EHRI Portal, many of which will be translated into English. It also draws heavily on the descriptions prepared for the new Belgian directory of Jewish sources (1.0.1.2.).

1.0.1.2. PUBLISHED DIRECTORY AND SURVEY OF JEWISH SOURCES

Tallier, Pierre-Alain (dir.); Gertjan Desmet, and Falek Alhadeff Pascale. *Bronnen voor de geschiedenis van de Joden en het Jodendom in België, 19^{de}–20^{ste} eeuw*. Brussels: ARA-AGR/ Avant-Propos, 2016. 1328 p.

French edn:

Sources pour l’histoire des populations juives et du judaïsme en Belgique, XIX–XXe siècles. Brussels: AGR-ARA/ Avant-Propos, 2016. 1328 p.

The extensive new guide provides an historically oriented reference work for sources for Jewish history in Belgium. Introductions are in Dutch and French in the respective editions, but archival descriptions are in French, Dutch, and English, many of them simultaneously prepared for the EHRI Portal. Organized historically by archival creating agencies in public and private sectors, including foreign agencies affecting Belgium. In the latter case, those from the Second World War and occupation include German agencies such as the Devisenschutzkommando (DSK), the ERR, the MB BelgNfr, and other German occupation agencies whose records survive. In each

market in Occupied Belgium,” presented at the international conference “Looted Art and Restitution in the Twentieth Century: Europe in transnational and global perspective,” Newnham College, Cambridge, 18–20 September 2014. I am grateful to the conference organizers for inviting me to participate, and to the compilers for responding.

case there is a brief description of relevant files within the fonds or series of records. Many descriptions are being translated into English for the Yerusha Portal above.

Tallier, Pierre-Alain, ed. “*Une brique dans le ventre et l’autre en banque*” *L’indemnisation des dommages aux biens privés causés par les opérations de guerre et assimilées. Sources pour une histoire plurielle du 20e siècle*. Brussels: Algemeen Rijksarchief / Archives Générales du Royaume, 2012; =*Miscellanea Archivistica Studia*, n° 136.

Dutch edn:

Puin en wederopbouw. Oorlogsschadedossiers Tweede Wereldoorlog en verwante archieven. Bronnen voor een veelzijdige geschiedenis van de 20ste eeuw. Brussels: Algemeen Rijksarchief / Archives Générales du Royaume, 2012. =*Miscellanea Archivistica Studia*, n° 137.

This extensive historical study and explanation about wartime property losses and postwar compensation provides considerable background information about surviving archival materials available. Of particular relevance to the present *Guide* are the articles by Filip Strubbe covering three archival fonds of importance, including the records of the BTG and the ORE/DER covered below, and the article by Pascale Falek-Alhadeff and Gertjan Desmet on the Dommages de Guerre records, both of which are described below. The publication was prepared in connection with a large archival exhibition.

1.0.2. GENERAL REFERENCE SOURCES

1.0.2.1. OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT REPORTS

Commission pour le dédommagement des membres de la Communauté juive de Belgique pour les biens dont ils ont été spoliés ou qu’ils ont délaissés pendant la guerre 1940–1945. Rapport final. 4 février 2008.

Online at: http://www.combuysse.fgov.be/fr/eindrapport_commissie_schadeloosstelling_2_fr.pdf

Dutch edn:

Commissie voor de schadeloosstelling van de leden van de Joodse Gemeenschap van België voor hun goederen die werden geplunderd of achtergelaten tijdens de oorlog 1940–1945. Eindrapport. 4 februari 2008.

English edn:

The Commission for the indemnification for the Belgian Jewish community’s assets, which were plundered, surrendered or abandoned during the war 1940–1945. Final report. 4 February 2008.

Online at: http://www.combuysse.fgov.be/en/eindrapport_commissie_schadeloosstelling_2_en.pdf

This final report has only a brief section on cultural losses and returns, English edn, pp. 56–57; French edn, pp. 56–58.

Belgium. Services du Premier Ministre, Commission d’étude des Biens Juifs. *Les biens des victimes des persécutions anti-juives en Belgique: Spoliation, Rétablissement des droits, Résultats de la Commission d’étude: Rapport final de la Commission d’étude sur le sort des biens des membres de la Communauté juive de Belgique spoliés ou délaissés pendant la guerre 1940–1945*. [Brussels], July 2001. **Online at:** <http://www.combuysse.fgov.be/hoofdframemenufr.html>

Dutch edn:

Belgium. Diensten van de Eerste Minister, Studiecommissie joodse goederen. *Eindverslag van de*

Studiecommissie betreffende het lot van de bezittingen van de leden van de joodse gemeenschap van België, geplunderd of achtergelaten tijdens de oorlog 1940–1945. 2 vols. [Brussels], July 2001. (Internal edition). **Online at:** <http://www.combuysse.fgov.be/hoofdframevernl.html>

English edn:

Belgium. The Prime Minister's Office, Study Commission Jewish Assets. *The Assets of the Victims of the Anti-Jewish Persecutions in Belgium: Looting, Re-establishment of Rights, Findings of the Study Commission: Final Report of the Study Commission into the Fate of the Belgian Jewish Community's Assets, Which Were Plundered or Surrendered or Abandoned during the War, 1940–1945.* 2 vols. [Brussels], July 2001. (Internal edition).

Online (partial) at: <http://www.combuysse.fgov.be/hoofdframemenuen.html>

The comprehensive report of the Buysse Commission, assembled in 1998 under the chairmanship of Lucien Buysse. Within the major section on wartime plunder (Section 2), separate sub-sections are devoted to the Möbel-Aktion: 2.77 – “La Möbelaktion” [by Johanna Pezechkian] – in both French and Dutch editions, pp. 119–32; and “Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg: ERR et la spoliation des biens culturels” [by Jacques Lust] – French edn, pp. 133–41; Dutch edn pp. 133–42. Appendix 5 (in vol. 2) lists seized Jewish library and archival collections transported to Germany, pp. 21–23. The bibliography lists archival documentation, as well as published sources.

1.0.2.2. REGISTERS OF WARTIME ART LOSSES AND RETURNED ART

Missing Art Works of Belgium. Brussels: Office Belge de l'Économie et de l'agriculture, [20 June 1994]. 2 vols. Multi-lingual introduction (French, Dutch, English, and Russian. Internal Publication): Vol. 1: *Public Domain Art Works*; Vol. 2: *Belgian State [Art Works]*.

An original archival copy is held in the records of the Office for Economic Recovery (ORE/DER, see below under AGR2/ARA2, I 21/407 and 408), within the fond of the Ministry of Economic Affairs (MAE/MEZ). A copy is available in the Library of Congress (call no.: N9165.B4M57 1994). A third volume covering private art collections and a fourth on library losses were planned but never completed.

Palais des beaux-arts. *Chefs-d'oeuvre récupérés en Allemagne: [Exposition] novembre-décembre, 1948.* Edited by M. F. Baudouin. Brussels: Éditions de la connaissance, 1948.

Dutch edn:

Paleis voor schone Kunsten. *In Duitsland herwonnen Kunstwerken, Tentoonstelling 11/1948-12/1948.* Brussels: Editions de la Connaissance, 1948.

A catalogue for an exhibition of works returned from Germany in cooperation with ORE/DER, listing 42 paintings, 3 sculptures, 11 porcelain pieces of decorative art, 5 tapestries, and a few incunabula and rare books.

Répertoire d'oeuvres d'art dont la Belgique a été spoliée durant la guerre 1939–1945. Brussels: Office de récupération économique, 1948. Non-paginated. 301 numbered items; 120 plates. Brief introduction in French, English, German, and Russian, dated 27 December 1948.

Online edn: https://issuu.com/hesiod/docs/r_pertoire_d_oeuvres_d_art_dont_la_belgique_a_t .

Published with limited distribution. Lists 285 paintings, 10 sculptures, 4 tapestries, and 2 pieces of antique furniture, with 120 images illustrating many of the lost items. (A damaged archival copy in ORE/DER records, AGR2, I 21/365/1. Presumably based on and updated from the 1947 compendium, “Liste des oeuvres d’art, volées par

les allemands en Belgique pendant l'occupation," 15 March 1947 (25 p. mimeographed), prepared by the U.S. Army in Germany and "SHAEF Mission Belgium"; reissued in mimeographed format by ORE/DER, 1947 (AGR2, I 21/365 and 366).

1.0.2.3. DOCUMENTARY COLLECTION (UNPUBLISHED)

United Restitution Organization. "M-Aktion, Frankreich, Belgien, Holland und Luxemburg, 1940-1944." Typescript (mimeographed). [Frankfurt]: URO, 22 July 1958. With added note by Kurt May, 30 October 1958. [188 p.].

A postwar report by the major international (U.S.) claims service for Holocaust survivors in connection with West Germany's 1957 Federal Restitution Law (Bundesrückerstattungsgesetz, BRüG). The report provides important information about the function of the Möbel-Aktion, with a brief introduction and transcription of key original German documents (with no indication of source). Many of the documents included are incorporated into SVG/DOS files (see Section 1.2.).

Copies are held by the SVG/DOS (Brussels), the NIOD (Amsterdam), and the Archives of the Leo Baeck Institute (New York), MS 529. A microfilm copy is available in the Wiener Library (London).

1.0.3. BACKGROUND LITERATURE: THE ERR AND THE M-AKTION IN BELGIUM

Dratwa, Daniel. "État de la question des biens spoliés et recherches sur la provenance au Musée Juif de Belgique et dans les collections publiques belges." *Le MuséeOn: Revue d'art et d'histoire du Musée juif de Belgique* 4 (2012), pp. 36–47.

Emphasis is on the seizure of books from Jewish collections and the fate of art by Jewish artists with several examples from those now held in the Jewish Museum. An appended chart identifies Jewish artists in Belgium whose works were seized.

Dratwa, Daniel. "The Plunder of Jewish-Owned Books and Libraries in Belgium." In *Vitalizing Memory: International Perspectives on Provenance Research* (Washington, DC: American Association of Museums, 2005), pp. 143–45.

Provides examples and research problems and recent findings, with a speculative estimate of the still inadequately documented library seizures from Jewish lodgings by the Möbel-Aktion.

Lust, Jacques. "De *Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg* en de bibliotheekroof in België (1940–1943)." Brussels: Office of the Prime Minister, Studiecommissie joodse goederen, 30 October 2000. Internal Paper for the Study Commission on Jewish Property.

Lust's well-informed and helpful report on ERR library plunder and limited restitution includes case studies on libraries of Alfred Stern, Herbert Speyer, Alice Pels, and Alfred Errera. Part of the text was subsequently included in the July 2001 Buysse Commission report, but regrettably its more complete version is not available publicly.

[Lust, Jacques], "Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg: ERR et la spoliation des biens culturels." In the 2001 Buysse Commission *Report: Belgium*. Services du Premier Ministre, *Les biens des victimes*

des persécutions anti-juives en Belgique: Spoliation, Rétablissement des droits, Résultats de la Commission d'étude: Rapport final de la Commission d'étude sur le sort des biens des membres de la Communauté juive de Belgique spoliés ou délaissés pendant la guerre 1940–1945 ([Brussels], July 2001), pp. 133–41; Dutch edn, pp. 133–42, with Appendix 5 (in vol. 2), pp. 21–23.

Online at: <http://www.combuysse.fgov.be/hooofdframemenufr.html>

(See Section 1.0.1.3. above for other editions of the entire report)

Lust, Jacques; and Michel Vermote. “PAPIEREN BITTE! The Confiscation and Restitution of Belgian Archives and Libraries (1940–2004).” In *Returned from Russia: Nazi Archival Plunder in Western Europe and Recent Restitution Issues*, ed. P.K. Grimsted, with F.J. Hoogewoud and Eric Ketelaar, pp. 190–225. Builth Wells: Institute of Art and Law, 2007.

A detailed report on the confiscation of Belgian archives and libraries by various German agencies during the occupation, especially by the ERR and RSHA; the search for their postwar locations; and negotiations for the return from Russia of the extensive fonds identified in Moscow in the early 1990s. The authors were closely involved in the search and retrieval process.

Lust, Jacques. “The Spoils of War Removed from Belgium during World War II.” In *Spoils of War. World War II and Its Aftermath: The Loss, Reappearance, and Recovery of Cultural Property*, ed. Elizabeth Simpson, pp. 58–62. New York, Henry N. Abrams, 1997.

Lust, Jacques; Evert Maréchal, Wouter Steenhaut, and Michel Vermote. *Een zoektocht naar archieven. Van Nationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis naar het Archief en Museum van de Socialistische Arbeidersbeweging*. Ghent: AMSAB, 1997.

An important case study of the wartime fate and migration and the postwar search and retrieval of the looted archives of the National Institute of Social History (NISG/NISH), the prewar predecessor of Amsab Institute of Social History (Ghent).

Martin, Dirk. “L’Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg en Belgique, entre pillage culturel et politique culturelle (1940–1944).” In *Saisies, spoliations et restitutions. Archives et bibliothèques au XXe siècle*, pp. 84–97. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2012.

Nicholas, Lynn. *The Rape of Europa: The Fate of Europe’s Cultural Treasures in the Third Reich and the Second World War*. New York: Knopf, 1994. Translated editions in numerous languages.

Presents a well-documented and highly readable general account of cultural plunder during the N-S regime and the efforts of the Western Allies to retrieve and return the loot thereafter.

Pezechkian, Johanna. “La Möbelaktion en Belgique.” *Cahiers d’histoire du temps présent / Bijdragen tot de Eigentijdse Geschiedenis* 10 (2002), pp. 153–180.

Previously issued as an internal paper by the Buysse Commission, still the best-informed, thorough survey of M-Aktion operations in Belgium. The author’s footnote 2 and appended list “1. Archives” provide details of the documentation available, although there have been some changes in location since publication. See also Pezechkian’s section on the M-Aktion in the 2001 Buysse Commission report.

Stabel, Kris. “De Möbelaktion. Het Duitse beheer van de in België geconfisqueerde Joodse goederen tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog.” Leuven (Louvain): Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 1999–2000.

Online at: http://www.ethesis.net/mobelaktion/mobelaktion_inhoud.htm

A dissertation at the University of Leuven with emphasis on the M-Aktion in Antwerp and the collaboration of local commercial firms. The published version reveals a much less extensive source base than the Pezechkian article (above).

Vermote, Michel; with Patricia Kennedy Grimsted. "Library Plunder in Belgium by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg: Six ERR Seizure Lists of Confiscated Belgian Library and Archival Materials." An original Internet publication. *Forthcoming early 2017*.

Online at: <http://www.errproject.org/libraries.php>.

Provides updated coverage of ERR library and archival seizures in Belgium, with appended facsimiles of six original ERR lists of seizures. An accompanying chart combines the names, addresses, seizure dates and quantity, and English translation of German descriptions of the victims and the materials seized.

Vermote, Michel. "The Nazi Looting of Books in Belgium and their Partial Restitution. 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 Cesky Krumlov (22-24.11.2005)*. Edited by Mecislav Borák, Documentation Centre for Property Transfers of WWII Victims. Prague: Tilia Publishers, 2006.

Vries, Willem de. *Sonderstab Musik. Music Confiscations by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg under the Nazi Occupation of Western Europe*. Amsterdam University Press, 1996.

German edn:

Sonderstab Musik: Organisierte Plünderungen in Westeuropa 1940–45. Cologne: Dittrich-Verlag, 1998.

While primarily focused on ERR music operations and its Sonderstab Musik, the author brings together considerable available documentation on the ERR and its general organization and activities. The study was prepared, however, before the author had consulted the extensive ERR files recently opened in Kyiv (TsDAVO). Includes a separate section on the ERR in Belgium, documenting many seizures of music materials (3.1.3., pp. 169–80).

1.1. ARCHIVES GÉNÉRALES DU ROYAUME (AGR) / ALGEMEEN RIJKSARCHIEF (ARA)
 [NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF BELGIUM / GENERAL ARCHIVES OF THE KINGDOM]

Address: Rue de Ruysbroeck, 2 / Ruisbroekstraat 2; 1000 Brussels

Tel.: +32 (0)2 / 513 76 80

Fax: +32 (0)2 / 513 76 81

E-mail: Archives.generales@arch.be

Website: <http://www.arch.be/index.php?l=en&m=practical-information&r=our-reading-rooms&d=nab>

**ARCHIVES GÉNÉRALES DU ROYAUME 2 (AGR2) – DÉPÔT JOSEPH CUVELIER /
 ALGEMEEN RIJKSARCHIEF (ARA2) – DEPOT JOSEPH CUVELIER**
 [NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF BELGIUM 2 – JOSEPH CUVELIER REPOSITORY]

Address: Rue du Houblon, 26-28 / Hopstraat 26-28; 1000 Brussels

Tel.: +32 (0)2 / 274 15 00

E-mail: agr_ar_2@arch.be

Website: <http://www.arch.be/index.php?l=en&m=practical-information&r=our-reading-rooms&d=nab2>

Open hours: By appointment – Tuesday to Friday, 9:00–16:30;

July and August: Tuesday to Friday, 9:00–12:00; 13:00–16:30.

N.B. Advance reservation by e-mail is required for research in AGR2/ARA2 –
 <agr_ar_2@arch.be>.

Several record groups in the Belgian National Archives (AGR/AGA) have documents relating to wartime plunder and postwar claims, but there are no separate groups of surviving ERR records. Currently, all of the relevant records described below are now held in the Joseph Cuvelier Repository of the National Archives (AGR2/AGA2), which opened in 2011.

Significant documentation from the Möbel-Aktion is now found in several groups of files that are part of the Sequestration Archives of the Brussels Trust Company (Brüsseler Treuhandgesellschaft, BTG – Section 1.1.1.). These files are now held as a series within the records of the Ministry of Finance, recently reprocessed with a new inventory.

Two other record groups (fonds), hold important groups of postwar claims files – namely those of the Department/Office for Economic Recovery under the former Ministry of Economic Affairs (ORE/DER – Section 1.1.2.) – with important files regarding seized works of art, including references to those restituted and those still missing or destroyed. The War Damage Service (Service Dommages de guerre / Dienst Oorlogsschade – Section 1.1.3.) Administration under the Ministry of Public Works and Reconstruction contains extensive files of postwar claims for remuneration for wartime losses and damage.

Several other record groups not described below may also be of importance for investigations of cultural plunder during the Second World War and the specific role of the ERR and its subsidiary M-Aktion in Belgium.

General Descriptions

Strubbe, Filip. “Les Dommages de guerre au pluriel. Les sources apparentées conservés aux Archives Générales du Royaume,” pp. 137–53. In Pierre-Alain Tallier, ed. *“Une brique dans le ventre et l’autre en banque” L’indemnisation des dommages aux biens privés causés par les opérations de guerre et assimilées. Sources pour une histoire plurielle du 20e siècle*. Brussels: ARA/AGR, 2012. =*Miscellanea Archivistica Studia*, n° 136.

Some 18 related fonds are covered in the EHRI Portal (as of 2016).

More fond-level coverage of Jewish-related holdings is available in the 2016 *Guide to Sources for Jewish History in Belgium* (see Section 1.0.1.2.).

ACCESS

Because some of the documents in the three fonds (record groups) described below deal with property of private individuals and institutions, Belgian privacy laws require restrictions on access, copying and/or citation for data within some series of documents.

1.1.1. MINISTÈRE DES FINANCES, OFFICE DES SÉQUESTRES. ARCHIVES DU SÉQUESTRE DE LA BRÜSSELER TREUHANDGESELLSCHAFT (BTG) / MINISTERIE VAN FINANCIËN, DIENST VAN HET SEQUESTER. ARCHIEF VAN HET SEKWESTER VAN DE BRÜSSELER TREUHANDGESELLSCHAFT (BTG)

[MINISTRY OF FINANCE, OFFICE OF SEQUESTRATION, SEQUESTRATION ARCHIVES OF THE BRUSSELS TRUST COMPANY]

75.5 meters; 932 numbered inventory files; 1922–1988

Of particular relevance for documentation of the M-Aktion are the records of the Brussels Trust Company (Brüsseler Treuhandgesellschaft, BTG), the financial trust created by the Nazis for the seizure, management, and disposal of enemy and Jewish property and other financial assets in Belgium. As outlined in the Introduction above, while many M-Aktion operational orders came through the Ministry for Occupied Eastern Territories (Reichsministerium für die besetzten Ostgebiete, RMbO) and its Western Office (Dienststelle Westen), a sizeable number of M-Aktion operations were run by the BTG. First choice of cultural property plundered went to the ERR.

The surviving BTG records preserve significant but scattered documentation on M-Aktion seizures and the disposition of property looted from Jewish homes. The records were accessioned by the National Archives in 2002 as part of the records of the Ministry of Finance, Office of Sequestration. As of 2014 the record group has been completely reprocessed and a new inventory is now available listed below (I 25). Of most relevance for the M-Aktion are several series of BTG Sequestration Office files and those under the heading “Gruppe XII. Feind- und Judenvermögen” (Group XII. Enemy and Jewish Property).

The introduction to the new inventory provides a good explanation of the competency and functions of these German agencies during occupation and the postwar efforts to retrieve and process the records.

Only a few key files are described below, including those directly related to the sequestration of ‘enemy’ (including Jewish) assets from bank safes, and through aryanization procedures and the M-Aktion.

ACCESS

See the general statement on access above.

Finding Aid

Strubbe, Filip; and Jérôme Franssen. *Inventaire des archives du Séquestre de la Brüsseler Treuhandgesellschaft et du Groupe 12 y compris les archives du 'Service Belgique' de l'Office de Politique coloniale du NSDAP (1899–1988 [principalement 1940–1963])*. Brussels: AGR2, 2014; Joseph Cuvelier Repository, Inventory I 25.

Online edn at: http://search.arch.be/nl/zoeken-naar-archieven/zoekresultaat/ead/index/zoekterm/treuhand/eadid/BE-A0545_007101_006943_FRE

Also available in PDF: http://search.arch.be/ead/pdf/BE-A0545_007101_006943_FRE

The French edition posted is now definitive, although a few additional items in this record group have been added since publication. A Dutch edition was not issued.

1.1.1.1. BRÜSSELER TREUHANDESELLSCHAFT (BTG): FILES RELATING TO THE LIQUIDATION OF BANK ACCOUNTS AND SAFE DEPOSIT BOXES

Postwar Lists and Indexes

I 25/ 171–172: “Répertoire/Liste des dossiers du Groupe XII.”

[n.d. 1944–1947]. (See *Inventory* I 25, p. 60; pp. 77–80)

These files consist of postwar alphabetical lists/indexes identifying the individual named files preserved from the occupation period (with numerical reference to those indicated in later sections of the inventory, nos. 546–652) by subject, organization, individual person, or firm.

N.B. After these essential postwar lists were prepared as a finding aid for the wartime files preserved, approximately one-third of the files themselves disappeared. The list indicates the subjects of the files now missing, such as the folder designated for the ERR (no. 387), the list of the furniture warehouses (garde-meubles, no. 334), and the file on Hugo Andriesse, the Belgian financier whose large art collection was turned over to the ERR in the Jeu de Paume.

I 25/ 173: “Répertoire des dossiers jaunes.” [n.d. 1944–1957].

This file consists of a postwar alphabetical list indexing and identifying the individual named and numbered so-called “**yellow (*jaune*)” files (nos. 546–652)** preserved from the occupation period with numerical reference to those indicated, by individual person, organization, or firm.

The “**yellow (*jaune*)” files (nos. 546–652)** contain documents on the liquidation of

bank accounts and safe deposit boxes for Jews of all nationalities, but relatively few of the safe deposit boxes involved contained works of art. Because Jews had been declared ‘enemies’ of the German Reich, all of their possessions were declared property of the Reich. (See *Inventory I 25*, p. 60, pp. 77–80)

I 25/ 174: “Répertoire des dossiers rouges, violets, bruns.” [n.d. 1944–1957].

This file consists of a postwar alphabetical list indexing and identifying the individual named and numbered files preserved from the occupation period with numerical reference to those indicated by individual person, organization, or firm.

The “**red (*rouge*)” files (nos. 658–668)** contain documents on the liquidation of bank accounts and safe deposit boxes for French and Belgian nationals resident in France during the war.

The “**violet (*mauve*)” files (nos. 653–657)** contain documents for Jews of German, Austrian, or Polish nationality, 1940–1944, who would have thereby been stripped of their nationality. Relatively few of the safe deposit boxes involved contained works of art or other cultural assets.

(See *Inventory I 25*, p. 60, p. 77, p. 80)

Wartime Seizure Documents

I 25/ 546–652 (“yellow”) and 653–657 (“violet”): comprise two individual file series (“yellow” and “violet” files), as explained above, mainly with documents on the looting of financial assets and bank accounts belonging to people of Jewish origin. However, a few files also contain information on other seized movable cultural assets. The files can be accessed through alphabetical registers which can be found under inventory nos. 173–174 described above.

I 25/ 546–652: Dossiers individuels, “série jaune,” 1940–1944.

Numbered German files (not in alphabetical order) contain documents on the liquidation of individual bank accounts and safe deposit boxes for Jews of all nationalities (numbered consecutively starting with ‘1’). Only a few of the safe deposit boxes involved contained works of art or other movable cultural assets.

I 25/ 548, for example, has “yellow” dossiers for Ivan Esberg (Ghent) listing jewelry and a silver service; Isodore Saks with paintings, engravings, furniture, porcelain, and books, along with stocks and other financial instruments; and Bernard Halpern (Brussels) including an inventory of his lodgings. Because Jews had been declared “enemies” of the German Reich, all of their possessions were declared the property of the Reich.

I 25/ 653–657: “Dossiers individuels, “série mauve,” 1940–1944.

Numbered German files (not in alphabetical order) contain documents for Jews of German, Austrian, or Polish nationality, 1940–1944, similar to the “yellow” dossiers described above.

Only a few references to works of art or other movable cultural assets.

1.1.1.2. BRÜSSELER TREUHANDGESELLSCHAFT (BTG): FILES RELATED TO SEIZURES BY THE MÖBEL-AKTION AND LOOTED CULTURAL PROPERTY (SELECTED EXAMPLES)

I 25/ 714: Classeur 92: RMfdbO Zahlung über Konto Nr 63

(Related general correspondence in nos. 708 and 712; see *Inventaire I 25*, pp. 87–89)

I 25/ 714: Notices of expulsion from lodgings and notes regarding seizure of household furnishings of five Jewish families in Antwerp, 1942–1944: Bonettenmaker, De Jonge, Gelbstein, Grunfeld, and Rabinowitz.

I 25/ 715: Folder with hundreds of form sheets entitled “Abtransport aus besichtigten Wohnungen” (Removal from inspected residences) for household goods confiscated from Jewish residences by the M-Aktion. Notices of expulsion from lodgings and notes regarding seizure of household furnishings of Jews in Antwerp and Brussels, 1942–1943.

I 25/ 716: (with original spine bearing the German label “RMfdbO” [RMbO]) Contains dossiers alphabetically by family name (B–V) – including several specific reports and memoranda from the RMbO to the BTG relating to the removal and shipment of Jewish goods (*Judengut*) from individual family residences.

Files are preserved from several of the Belgian removal firms used for seizures, for example La Continentale Menkes, Brussels, Mobilier de M. Peeters, and others. One file from the latter firm contains a list with 33 invoices (28 June 1944), while another has a list of 20 invoices forwarded with AT removal numbers, surnames of families, removal charges, and shipment notes, some with reference to the Office des Propriétaires SA, Société Internationale de Déménagements.

In some cases, there are appeals to the Office of Jewish Property (Office de la propriété juive / Joods Vermogen), with correspondence between the RMbO and BTG; protests and demands for payment, appeals to the BTG from lawyers representing families regarding the removals, indication of removal fees, and shipping charges received from BTG, judgments against the tenants, explanations justifying seizures, and other such documents.

I 25/ 2780–2802: Individual case files (S-4005–S-5001) with names, addresses, and in many cases inventories of items found, together with relevant correspondence and reports relating to the findings. For example, dossier no. 2787 (case file S-4017) names Léon Dens (Brussels, av. Louise, 280), which shows an example of ERR intervention in a case involving works of art found in a residence.

I 25/ 3042–3046: Seizure of Household Furnishings: RMbO, meubles (furniture)

Folders with hundreds of alphabetical German forms entitled “Abtransport aus besichtigten Wohnungen” (Removal from inspected residences) for household goods confiscated from individual named Jewish residences during the M-Aktion. The printed seizure forms, identifying the issuing agency as “RMbO, Einsatzleitung Belgien,” have lines filled in with full name of the inhabitant, street address, date of removal, summary of crate contents in several categories, transport used for removal, destination depot or forwarding shipment. All are original signed forms.

(See individual names listed in the Inventory, pp. 284–85)

**1.1.2. MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES ÉCONOMIQUES (MAE),
OFFICE DE RÉCUPÉRATION ÉCONOMIQUE (ORE) /
MINISTERIE ECONOMISCHE ZAKEN (MEZ),
DIENST ECONOMISCHE RECUPERATIE (DER), 1944–1968**

[MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT/OFFICE FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY]

120 linear meters, in two series; 1940s–early 1960s

Following liberation of Belgium (November 1944), the Office or Department for Economic Recovery (ORE/DER) under the Ministry of Economic Affairs was the Belgian government office responsible for tracing and recuperating Belgian public and private movable property within Belgium and abroad lost during the Second World War.

Within that department a Cultural Office was responsible for identification and restitution of looted works of art. Resulting records about stolen/looted art works include printed declaration forms, card files, and a collection of photographs and glass negatives. The “General Files” for the recovery of art works (inventory numbers 362–632) were digitized in 2012 and linked to existing inventory descriptions; these are now available on the Intranet (internal online system) at the main AGR/ARA Brussels Reading Room (rue de Ruysbroeck, 2).

Individual dossiers with data about loss and claims established by the postwar Office of Economic Recovery (ORE/DER) now constitute an archival fond of 120 linear meters, in two series (1940s–early 1960s). These contain many individual documents of interest regarding seizure by the ERR or the Möbel-Aktion and their postwar fate and possible restitution.

Finding Aids

Strubbe, Filip. *Inventaris van het archief van de Dienst voor Economische Recuperatie en rechtsvoorganger 1940–1968 (1997)*. Brussels: Het Rijksarchief in België, n.d. [2012]. National Archives 2, Joseph Cuvelier Repository, Inventory I 21.

Online at: http://search.arch.be/en/zoeken-naar-archieven/zoekresultaat/ead/index/zoekterm/ore/eadid/BE-A0545_006785_006783_DUT
(PDF version): http://search.arch.be/ead/pdf/BE-A0545_006785_006783_DUT.ead.pdf

English edn:

Inventory of the archive of the Department for Economic Recovery and Legal Predecessor, 1940–1968 (1997). Brussels, 2013. National Archives 2, Joseph Cuvelier Repository, Inventories I 21.

Online: (PDF version): <http://www.archives.gov/research/holocaust/international-resources/belgium-inventory.pdf>

See also the Introductory Note on the NARA International Research Portal for Records Relating to Nazi-Era Cultural Property.

Online English edn:

<http://www.archives.gov/research/holocaust/international-resources/belgium.html>

Individual Personal Files

Antoine, François. *Ministère des Affaires économiques, Archives de l'Office de Récupération économique: Dossiers individuels 1940–1967*. Brussels: AGR, 2007. “AGR. Inventaires / ARA. Inventarissen,” vol. 400.

An inventory covering individual dossiers involving postwar claims, many of which have information and sometimes copies of documents regarding German seizures. The dossiers are accessible **only by AGR2/ARA2 archivists** in the Cuvelier Repository through an alphabetical card file arranged by family name of all individuals who filed claims.

N.B. Given the extensive English-language inventory for this archival fond, only a few of the most relevant highlights are described below as examples from Part IIIA, which deal directly with wartime ERR and M-Aktion seizures.

*Files with asterisks are digitized and can be viewed on the AGR/ARA Intranet.

III. Directorate of Recovery

A. Files on the Recovery of Looted Art and Restitution Efforts

- I 21/ 364:** File of documents relating to the organization and operations of the ERR and its staff in Belgium (many translated into French).
- Postwar reports on the ERR Belgian staff;
 - Interrogation of Muchow, head of ERR HAG Belgien;
 - Report on Roskamp and his appraisal of paintings in Brussels with note of paintings from Brussels M-Aktion in Kögl;
 - Copies of German documents regarding shipments to ZBHS;
 - Note on the Émile Render Collection (wealthy art historian and collector) with important Flemish paintings ‘sold’ to Alois Miedl for Hermann Göring in 1940 (not ERR);
 - Report on individuals involved in art looting;
 - Note on ‘BN Collection’ (Belgien–Nordfrankreich) sent to St Georgien (Kögl), 1943;
 - Copies of M-Aktion official regulations (in French), 1942;
 - Large group of photostat copies of German transport/ shipping documents, most from the Franzkowiak firm, 1942–1943, mostly for books but also some others with precise addresses and numbers of crates, etc., and
 - a few for ERR Sonderstab Bildende Kunst (Bellevaestr 3);
 - some for Frankfurt (IEJ); many for ZBHS (Annenheim and Tanzenberg);
 - Some shipments from Kharkov to Berlin, and to Amt Bildende Kunst;
 - Some from Kiev; also books from Neuwied;
 - Interrogation of Dr Essen regarding his work with ERR in Brussels, Aug.-Dec. 1943;
 - Lists and notes on many Wassermann paintings in BN Collection (Belgien-Nordfrankreich);
 - Seyffers Collection taken by Gestapo (not ERR) from antique dealer, with list of paintings and engravings;
 - Lists of paintings and engravings; carpet from Frankel-Reder, receipts from Wassermann; and Hause Landau (Antwerp);

- Inventory/lists of ERR Treuhandgesellschaft Brussels receipts from M-Aktion, some with notes from what houses items were taken;
- (last item) Series of inventories including paintings from several Belgian collections with list of ERR Belgian codes, with many ‘BN’ paintings marked as belonging to Wassermann; 51 items for Andriesse (HA); 20 items for Lyndhurst (LYN);
- M-Aktion Belgium–list of paintings marked with codes and a few with owners’ names, many with ‘R’ for restituted;
- Note regarding the Lamberty-Lombard 16th c. panel – “vendu lot 110 30&31/1/1950.”

I 21/ 365: “Liste des oeuvres d’art, volées par les allemands en Belgique pendant l’occupation.” (25 p. mimeographed), prepared by the U.S. Army in Germany and “SHAEF Mission Belgium,” 15 Mar. 1947. Table with fields for artist or school, date, work, dimensions, and owner; also notes some books from Belgian museums and private collections.

(See the second and third copies below, now on AGR/ARA Intranet. The subsequent Belgian ORE published version is listed below (365/1) and described in Section 1.0.1.4.)

I 21/ 365/1: *Répertoire d’oeuvres d’art dont la Belgique a été spoliée durant la guerre 1939–1945*, ORE, 1948, not paginated, 301 numbered items with 120 plates.

Issued by ORE for limited distribution, with introductions in French, English, Russian, and German was presumably based on the 1947 archival version listed above and below (I 21/365 and 366). The archival copy is damaged with some images having been cut out. The original text was transferred to AGR/ARA after the Inventory I:21 for the ORE/DER records was published, and hence was added later to the inventory. An Internet edition is available for free download at:

https://issuu.com/hesiod/docs/r_pertoire_d_oeuvres_d_art_dont_la_belgique_a_t_ .

***I 21/ 366–369:** now digitized and online (via Intranet) in AGRI, 1654 images.

Online with inventory via AGR/ARA Intranet:

http://search.arch.be/nl/zoeken-naar-archieven/zoekresultaat/inventaris/index/eaidid/BE-A0545_006785_006783_DUT/inventarisnr/167856783366/level/file

***I 21/ 366:** A second copy of the French account in I 21/365; an additional copy is in I 21/367).

***I 21/ 367:** Identification forms for Belgian restitution claims, by name of former owners.

- Survey of books looted from the Institut International des Sciences administratives (IISA);
- Survey of works of art looted from Belgium (as of 15 Mar. 1947) (same as I 21/365 and 366);
- Investigative report of Dutch Captain Vlug on the Renders Collection (Feb. 1947).

***I 21/ 368:** Documents about Belgian restitution claims to MCCP, by family names (1945–1948) from HICOG microfilms (1951).

- Report on the Renders Collection (1945–1950);
- Some notes on losses from private libraries (1946–1950).

- *I 21/ 369:** Surveys of looted maps, plans, and books from the Belgian Ministry of the Interior, and from libraries of organizations and private individuals, including a Liège Masonic Lodge, Société bouddhique belge, Société théosophique belge, and the Institut International des Sciences administratives (IISA), some of those seized by the ERR (1946)
- I 21/ 370:** Original typewritten copy [*abschrift*] of OSS ALIU “Consolidated Intelligence Report No. 2: Goering Collection,” 1945, with annexes.
- I 21/ 371–379:** Reports, receipts, and other documents regarding looted Belgian art works and correspondence with American, British, French, German, Austrian, and Czech authorities.
- I 21/ 371:** Recovery of 31 Belgian art works from the U.S. Zone, 1948.
Receipt signed by Captain Lemaire for DER.
- I 21/ 372:** Marcel Armand report on investigation of looted art from Belgium in British Zone of Germany.
- I 21/ 374–375:** Belgian works of art recovered from Germany, late 1955.
– Letters to Bundesamt für äussere Restitutionen, 1956, 1959, 1960.
- I 21/ 376:** Relating to recuperation of Belgian works of art in Austria, Altaussee and Kögl, including sales via the Dorotheum, Vienna.
- I 21/ 377:** Dienststelle Mühlmann during occupation and Belgian works of art.
- I 21/ 378:** Recuperation of works of art from Belgium in Austria.
- I 21/ 379:** Recuperation of works of art from Czechoslovakia (via Paris), including Lyndhurst Collection from Nikolsburg (Mikulov).
- I 21/ 380–385:** Catalogues of sales of recovered art from Germany at public auctions at the Centre for Fine Arts, Brussels, 1948–1955.
- I 21/ 386–388:** Files on recovered artworks ceded to Belgian museums, 1948–1957.
- I 21/ 389–396, 409:** Documents on the private art collection of the Belgian banker and art collector Émile Renders (1872–1956) from Bruges, which had been ‘sold’ to Alois Meidl for Hermann Göring in 1941, and postwar efforts to recover the paintings, including a long court case.
(*N.B.: documents in files 392–393 subject to privacy restrictions)
- I 21/ 397–399:** Files relating to Belgian recovery of paintings from the collection of Count Joachim Wolfgang von Moltke.
(*N.B.: documents in files 397–399 subject to privacy restrictions)
- I 21/ 400:** Regarding 10 works of art removed from villa “Chez Nous” (Sint-Idesbald), owned by the André Meyer Foundation, May 1943 (not ERR).

- I 21/ 401:** Documents regarding the Diensstelle Mühlmann, with additional miscellaneous Documents.
- “Geschäftsbuch der Diensstelle Dr Mühlmann,” fols. 5–45 (poorly legible copy);
 - Copy of Robert Scholtz report on artwork in Altaussee (Kögl, 19 May 1945), with letter to Capt. Robert Possey (20 May 1945), 12 p. and other documents regarding Altaussee;
 - ALIU DIR #12: Hermann Voss (15 Sep. 1945) – photocopy;
 - Dutch Captain Vlug report on Diensstelle Mühlmann (25 Dec. 1945), 182 p. “Kajetan Mühlmann and the Diensstelle Mühlmann”;
 - ALIU Final Report – copy.
- I 21/ 402–404:** Documents regarding looted art – paintings and other works of art.
- I 21/ 405:** “Recuperation of books looted from Belgian Libraries,” 1993.
Large format printout of preliminary data files listing Belgium libraries returned. Also indicates those that were sold. Apparently, the lists being processed for the planned ORE volume of lost libraries, never completed for the series with nos. 407 and 408.
- I 21/ 407 and 408:** *Missing Art Works of Belgium*. Brussels : Office Belge de l’Economie et de l’agriculture, [20 June 1994].⁴⁶ 2 vols. Multi-lingual introduction (French, Dutch, English, and Russian. (Internal Publication). (*also listed above in Section 1.0.1.4.*)
- no. 407:** Vol. 1: *Public Domain Art Works*;
 - no. 408:** Vol. 2: [Art Works belonging to] *Belgian State*.
- I 21/ 410–412:** Internal declaration forms (ORE/DER) for looted artworks.
- I 21/ 413–434:** Identification forms and notes regarding recovered paintings, sorted by artist’s name (most repeat of forms in nos. 410-412).
- I 21/ 435:** Identification forms of paintings sold on public auction, 1946–1954.
- I 21/ 436–447:** Identification forms of recovered paintings (436–445) and other art works (446), and those handed over to Belgian museums (447).
- I 21/ 448–450:** Identification forms for restitution of recovered paintings to private collections.
- 448:** David Reder collection, 54 documents;
 - 449:** M. Seyffers collection;
 - 450:** Hugo and Elisabeth Andriesse Collection (26 numbered forms, some with images), each painting on individual card, seized by ERR from Musée du Cinquantenaire, Brussels; most marked ‘restituted.’
- I 21/ 451:** Grand Duchy of Luxembourg: recovered art works, some found in Wiesbaden.
- I 21/ 452–477:** Identification forms for non-recovered paintings, arranged by artist.
- I 21/ 478–503:** Identification forms for non-recovered paintings, most anonymous, arranged by school of paintings, 1946–1961.

⁴⁶ A copy of this two-volume internal edition is in the Library of Congress: *Missing Art Works of Belgium* (Brussels: Office Belge de l’Economie et de l’agriculture, [20 June 1994]), call no.: N9165.B4M57 1994.

I 21/ 504–510: Other non-recovered artworks, including textiles and furniture.
no. 506: From the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg;
no. 507: Includes some listings from the Lyndhurst Collection.

I 21/ 519–559: Identification forms by declaration file number.

I 21/ 599–602: Photographs.

I 21/ 603–630: Glass negatives.

**1.1.3. MINISTÈRE DES TRAVAUX PUBLICS ET DE LA RECONSTRUCTION,
 ADMINISTRATION DOMMAGES DE GUERRE /
 MINISTERIE VAN TRANSPORT EN INFRASTRUCTUUR, DIENST OORLOGSSCHADE
 [MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND RECONSTRUCTION, WARTIME DAMAGES ADMINISTRATION]**

Dossiers individuels Dommages de Guerre / Individuele oorlogsschadedossiers, 1945–1970
 (Individual files on war damages, 1945–1970)

An immense collection of records remaining from the war and immediate postwar period, known under the heading of the “Administration Dommages de Guerre” (22 linear km in shelf space), contains extensive files documenting wartime “material damage.” Includes postwar claims files and related correspondence of individuals who filed claims. Many of the files were used after the war to process Belgian claims under West Germany’s 1957 Federal Restitution Law (Bundesrückerstattungsgesetz, BRüG) and to analyze collaboration with the Nazis during the war.

After many years of conservation in a special depot (rue Pasteur, Anderlecht, Brussels), under the Ministry of the Interior, the National Archives (AGR/ARA) took over custody of these archives in 2002 and initially transferred approximately half of them (10 km) to its depots; by 2015 the entire complex has now been transferred to the AGR/ARA premises. As of 2015, 8 linear kilometers with 900,000 individual dossiers regarding claims for damages during the Second World War have been processed with documentation from numerous Belgian communities. The files, classified by province, are still being processed.

As far as can be determined, these records do not contain any documents created by the ERR or the M-Aktion, although there are numerous accounts of seizures during the German occupation. Many individual files contain detailed explanation and inventories of loss and destruction, some with floor plans and photographs of damage.

Série Commission Buysse, no. 480

A small group of 497 cartons (7 linear meters) contain 5,210 files relating to Jewish victims that were examined by the Buysse Commission (1997–2001) in the investigation of damage and loss of Jewish assets, in view of compensation, including furniture, clothing, and cultural property.

The series includes 290 files for the province of Antwerp, 180 for Brabant, 20 for Liège, 5 for Luxembourg, 4 for Limbourg, and 1 for East Flanders.

ACCESS

Given that these files relate to personal individuals or families, special access restrictions apply, due to consideration of privacy laws.

Survey Descriptions

Falek-Alhadeff, Pascale; and Gertjan Desmet. “Une source incontournable pour l’histoire de la spoliation des juifs en Belgique.” In Tallier, Pierre-Alain, ed. “*Une brique dans le ventre et l’autre en banque*” *L’indemnisation des dommages aux biens privés causés par les opérations de guerre et assimilées. Sources pour une histoire plurielle du 20^e siècle*. Brussels: ARA/ AGA, 2012; =*Miscellanea Archivistica Studia*, n° 136, pp. 83–94. Also published in Dutch as *Miscellanea Archivistica Studia*, n° 137 (see Section 1.0.1.2. for the Dutch edition).

Antoine, François. “Les dossiers individuels des dommages de guerre aux biens privés (Deuxième Guerre mondiale).” *Jalons de recherche/Zoekwijzers*, n°27. Bruxelles, ARA/AGR, 2011.

Antoine, François. “De individuele dossiers «Oorlogsschade aan private goederen» (Tweede Wereldoorlog).” *Jalons de Recherche/Zoekwijzers*, n°33. Brussels: ARA/AGR, 2012.

Finding Aid (unpublished)

Finding aids for these records are accessible **only by archivists** of the National Archives 2 (AGR2/ARA2), to whom personal inquiries should be directed.

Stubbe, Filip. “Inventaris van de dossiers Oorlogsschade, behandeld door de Commissie Buysse, bordereau de placement.” Brussels, 2012. Restricted inventory.

Normally not available for public use.

**1.2. CEGESOMA – CENTRE D’ÉTUDE GUERRE ET SOCIÉTÉ /
STUDIE- EN DOCUMENTATIECENTRUM OORLOG EN HEDENDAAGSE MAATSCHAPPIJ**
[CEGESOMA – STUDY CENTRE WAR AND SOCIETY]

Previous Name (1997–2016):

Centre d’étude et de documentation guerre et sociétés contemporaines (CEGE) /
Studie-en documentatiecentrum Oorlog en hedendaagse Maatschappij (SOMA)
[Centre for Historical Research and Documentation on War and Contemporary Society]

Address: Square de l’Aviation, 29 / Luchtvaartsquare, 29; 1070 Brussels

Director: Dirk Martin

Hours: Tuesday–Friday, 9:00–16:30

Tel.: +32 (0)2 / 556 92 11

Fax: +32 (0)2 / 556 92 00

Website: <http://arch.arch.be/index.php?l=en&m=practical-information&r=our-reading-rooms&d=cegesoma>

and http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/index_fr.php

E-Mail: cegesoma@cegesoma.be

CegeSoma, now named the Study Centre War and Society is the most important Belgian centre for research, as well as academic and public activities regarding the history of the 20th century wars. As of 1 January 2016, it became the fourth Operational Directorate 4 (OD 4) of the National Archives of Belgium (Archives générales du Royaume) AGR/ARA. As the leading Belgian public institute for research covering the Second World War, it was first established in 1967 as the Centre for Research and Historical Studies of the Second World War (Centre de Recherches et d’Etudes historiques de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, CRESGM / Studiecentrum voor de Geschiedenis van de Tweede Wereldoorlog, NCWOII). Its mission was expanded to embrace the First World War in 1997, when its name was changed to the Centre for Historical Research and Documentation on War and Contemporary Society / Studie- en Documentatiecentrum Oorlog en Hedendaagse Maatschappij (CEGES/SOMA).

CegeSoma shares the same building as the SVG/DOS (see Section 1.2.) and maintains a public reading room.

CegeSoma holds considerable related microfilm documentation and a few original files.

The collections are all listed and well described and indexed on the center’s website and in the database finding aid. Most important for this *Guide* are the microfilms of selected ERR Belgium-related files from Kyiv. Also held are relevant microfilm selections from the wartime German Military Commandant during occupation (MB BelgFr).

1.2.1. ERR-RELATED MATERIALS

ERR Files from the Central State Archive of Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine (Tsentral'nyi derzhavnyi vyshchykh orhaniv vlady ta upravlinnia, TsDAVO), Kyiv.

Microfilms. Mic 199. 7 rolls.

Of special relevance are these microfilmed files of ERR records from Kyiv prepared in the late 1990s. However, there are many more Belgian-related files available in TsDAVO.

The full collection is now available and linked to the Russian-language finding aid and reference system on the TsDAVO website: “Kollektsiia dokumentov Operativnogo shtaba reikhsliaitera Rozenberga” at: <http://err.tsdavo.gov.ua>.⁴⁷

Finding Aid

“mic 199: Deelarchief Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg, Hauptarbeitsgruppe Belgien.”
Compiled by Dirk Martin. Brussels, 23 June 1999.

Online at: http://www.cegesoma.be/docs/Invent/EinsatzstabRosenberg_mic199.pdf

Related Survey

Dirk Martin. “Something new: Archives from the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg from Kiev have been brought to the Centre War and Society (SOMA/CEGES) in Brussels.” *Spoils of War. International Newsletter*, no. 7 (Aug. 2000), pp. 71–75.

Online edn (in *Spoils of War Newsletter*, no. 7):

<http://www.lostart.de/cae/servlet/contentblob/9628/publicationFile/224/Spoils%20of%20War%207.pdf>

Describes the ERR Belgian files acquired on microfilm from TsDAVO. It should be noted, however, that the documents covered are not complete in terms of those available in TsDAVO, and that there are more files from the ERR Main Working Group Belgium (Hauptarbeitsgruppe Belgien, HAG Belgien) still in Kyiv that were not ordered, as now confirmed in the new finding aids.

(See more details about the ERR records in TsDAVO Kyiv in the Ukrainian Chapter (Section 8.1.) and the TsDAVO website noted above.)

Microfilms from Archives nationales, Paris (originals now in the AN-Pierrefitte site)

AJ/40: Militärbefehlshaber in Belgien und Nordfrankreich (MB BelgNfr) – Militärverwaltung

Files concerning the anti-Jewish policy and confiscations, 27 microfilms in CegeSoma.

(See the more detailed description of the originals in the French chapter, Section 2.2.3.)

⁴⁷ More description of the ERR and related fonds included, how they arrived in TsDAVO, and the finding aids available will be found in the forthcoming updated Ukrainian chapter of this *ERR Archival Guide* at www.errproject.org/guide.php; in the meantime the original 2011 published version may be downloaded for free at <https://socialhistory.org/en/publications/reconstructing-record-nazi-cultural-plunder>; individual country chapters not yet available in the updated and expanded guide can be downloaded in separate pdf files.

**1.3. DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE VICTIMES DE LA GUERRE, SERVICE ARCHIVES
ET DOCUMENTATION /
DIRECTIE-GENERAAL OORLOGSSLACHTOFFERS, DIENST ARCHIEF EN
DOCUMENTATIE**

[GENERAL DIRECTORATE FOR WAR VICTIMS, ARCHIVES AND DOCUMENTATION SERVICE]

Previous Names: Service for War Victims (Service des Victimes de la Guerre, SVG / Dienst voor de Oorlogsslachtoffers, DOS)

Agency: Service public fédérale Sécurité sociale / Federale Overheidsdienst Sociale Zekerheid [Federal Public Service for Social Security]

Address: Square de l'Aviation, 31 / Luchtvaartsquare 31; 1070 Brussels

Tel.: +32 (0)2 / 528 91 87

Fax: +32 (0)2 / 528 91 75

Website: <http://warvictims.fgov.be/fr/research/intro.htm>; <http://warvictims.fgov.be/nl/index.htm>

E-mail: archidoc@minsoc.fed.be

The Archives and Documentation Service of the Belgian government agency for assisting war victims holds an important collection of documentation from the Second World War. Long known as the Service for War Victims (SVG/DOS), since 2001, this agency is officially reorganized as an office within the General Directorate for War Victims under the Federal Public Service for Social Security. Between 1995 and 2001, the SVG/DOS was under the Ministry of Social Affairs, Public Health, and the Environment. The SVG/DOS has long shared the same building with Cege/Soma, the Centre for Historical Research and Documentation on War and Contemporary, see Section 1.2.

Relatively few original wartime files came into SVG/DOS custody, although there is a vast array of documents gathered from many sources to assist postwar claimants. In the late 1950s and 1960s, several specialists associated with this agency, among them Hubert Dumonceau de Bergendal, proved particularly adept at tracing and verifying developments during the German occupation. In doing so, they acquired the originals or copies of several important files and groups of documents relating to the Möbel-Aktion. The documents preserved here include lists and card files of residences from which the furnishings were confiscated, financial records of moving companies that assisted in the removal and the transport of the containers (*liftvans*), and records of warehouses and shipping firms responsible for forwarding the property removed from Jewish homes.

The documentation in the SVG/DOS archives is not well organized for research purposes. The examples described below, while indicative of the documents available, are not exhaustive.

ACCESS

Provisions for access to documentation are explained and applications are available on the website above. Normally individuals are not permitted to research in the files, but rather must request the data needed and the archivists will respond. Advance arrangements for consultation of specific archival materials are required, while provisions and space for research is extremely limited.

Published Description

Nefors, Patrick. *Inventaris van het Archief van de Dienst voor de Oorlogsslachtoffers / Inventaire des archives du Service des Victimes de la Guerre*. Brussels: Ministerie van Sociale Zaken, Volksgezondheid en Leefmilieu, Dienst voor de oorlogsslachtoffers / Ministère des Affaires sociales, de la Santé publique et de l'Environnement, Service des Victimes de la Guerre, and SOMA Studie-en Documentatiecentrum oorlog en hedendaagse maatschappii, 1997.

A file-level finding aid, covering SVG/DOS holdings, among them many important remaining files from the M-Aktion in Belgium. However, the organization of this inventory does not reflect current SVG/DOS archival arrangement, and the sequential numbers presented are not applicable. Nevertheless, it does list many of the available files with reference numbers that can assist retrieval.

Unpublished Description

A handwritten card catalogue serves as an index to many of the important documents, listed individually or by group, particularly in a section entitled "Möbelaktion."

1.3.1. DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE ERR

R 123, Tr 153.077: Letter from Gerhard Utikal to Rosenberg (18 Jan. 1941) and report by Dr Payl (12–14 Oct. 1941), enclosed with a later November 1941 letter.

Copies of two important 1941 documents revealing the ERR bureaucratic situation and its operations in Belgium. The photostats of the original German documents on the letterhead of the DBFU – 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) – are filed with French translations added. The originals, stamped as received by the Rosenberg Chancellery, were apparently part of the U.S Rosenberg Collection, held in Alexandria, VA, when the copies were made. The copies were received in 1958 from A.J. van der Leeuw in Amsterdam (State Institute for War Documentation, RIOD, now the NIOD). The originals are presumably now in Berlin, although the accompanying letter does not indicate the source.

1.3.2. DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE MÖBEL-AKTION**Index card file (*fichier*)**

See especially the major sections:

Möbelaktion**Möbelaktion: Ordinances** (original)

Individual cards provide summaries of individual M-Aktion documents or groups of documents in French, arranged on 5 x 8 cards.

R 123/Tr 148.282

A collection of translations of German documents relating to the M-Aktion. The two groups of documents with carbon copies of French translations are currently held as the last third of the

same archival binder:

Möbelaktion I (1942–1944)

Möbelaktion II (1944)

Many of these documents were apparently extracted from the URO 1958 report, “M-Aktion Frankreich, Belgien, Holland und Luxemburg, 1940–1944.” [Frankfurt]: URO, 1958.

A complete copy of this report has yet to be found in the SVG/DOS, but most of the individual documents contained in this file are available, classified separately and translated into French. Many of these documents had been processed for use by the International Military Tribunal (IMT) at Nuremberg. Hence many also bear IMT exhibit or PS series document numbers.

R 123/Tr 144.828: Spoliation agglomération bruxelloise. 6 archival binders (classeurs): A–C; D–H; I–L; M–O; P–S; and T–Z.

An original set of German card files listing citizens whose household furnishings were seized in Brussels and vicinity. Files are alphabetized by street name (A–Z), indicated at the top of each sheet; the street name is followed by house number and surname of individual (or family), with the number of the matching residence report (*Wohnungsbefund*, W.B.) in the right column of each card. SVG/DOS documentation affirms entries for 3,407 seizures. Most surnames are crossed out in red pencil. German alphabetical paper dividers remain, and some postwar cross-reference sheets have been added indicating changed street names and correcting the original German rendition. The files contain many original German household inventories showing the day of survey (*Tag der Besichtigung*) with a larger section on contents of residences (*Inhalt der Wohnung*), all on one sheet. In some cases, there are RMbO forms – “Abtransport aus besichtigten Wohnungen” (Removal from examined residences) – similar to the Brussels file in the National Archives (BTG, classeur 263; see Section 1.1.). The files were transferred from Antwerp to the agency Aide for Jewish Victims of the War (Aide aux Israélites Victimes de la Guerre) in May 1955.

Listes d’Israélites spoliés, 1940-1945. Doc AIVG (Photocopies). 3 unnumbered archival boxes.

A second set of the above lists (R 123/Tr 144.828) with working copies of the originals, now arranged in three archival cartons, with a few postwar copies of original documents interspersed among the files.

R 497/Tr 159.816: Office des Propriétaires. Meuble spoliés.

Dossiers in three binders (1: B-F; 2: G-L; 3: M-W) assembled after the war and arranged alphabetically by family name with attestations of loss, receipts from moving or storage companies, etc.

R 497/Tr 159.969: Rapport des enquêtes faites les 9-14 et 15 juin 1960 par Monsieur Dumonceau de Bergendal à Anvers et Bruxelles (Brussels, 1960)

A postwar Belgian official report of investigation of the Möbel-Aktion in Antwerp and Brussels, with description of existing sources found after the war.

R 497/Tr 181.926: Liste de mobilier enlevé aux Juifs par les Allemands (Liège, 1942–1943)

Folder containing original German carbon copies of 150 RMbO Möbel-Aktion seizure documents (plus five photocopies) from the region of Liège. All are on printed German forms with the heading “Abtransport aus besichtigten Wohnungen” (Removal from examined residences), similar to those for Antwerp and Brussels in the National Archives (BTG, classeur

263; see Section 1.1.1.); a carbon copy of the postwar Belgian report on the German documents found, entitled “Rapport des enquêtes faites par Monsieur Dumonceau de Bergendal à Liège et Charleroi les 5 et 12 décembre 1963” (Brussels, 17 and 20 Dec. 1963), regarding “Ordres de transport de meubles confisqués aux Israélites.”

See also the related French translation of a German report – “Action contre les Juifs dans le ressort de Liège” (6 Dec. 1943) – in file R 123/Tr 148.282.

“Möbelaktion” Unnumbered binder.

The first two-thirds of this binder contain photocopies of documents and handwritten notes; testimonies of individuals – most addressed to the Procureur du roi in 1944 regarding the sequestration of household goods from Jewish residences; some process-verbal from police; crate lists; and “Pro Justitia” court reports from prosecutors. Some of the appeals contain 1940 inventories of contents together with evaluation by appraisers. Also includes a partial postwar notebook with reports on findings.

Fichier de la Möbelaktion

Postwar card file of 27 file boxes prepared from copies of original German documents from several different sources listing furnishings seized by the Möbel-Aktion and date of seizure.

The Antwerp files, constituting the largest portion, are arranged by city ward, then by street, and then by house number; numbered references are preceded by “WB” (*Wohnungsbefund*).

The boxes from Brussels are alphabetized by family name.

A separate file box indexes seizures from Charleroi (including Dampremy, Lodelinsart, and Marcinelle, part of the German territorial unit), Arlon, and Liège/Louvain (including Ans, Bressany, Chênée, Liège, and Seraing, all part of the German territorial unit of greater Liège/Louvain).

ERR Files from the Archives Nationales, Paris

Microfilm mic 250/1. Militärverwaltung (Military Administration; AJ/40/15/6), 1942–1944.

For a description of the originals from which the film was made, see the French chapter Section 2.2.3.1.

Dienststelle Rosenberg, Correspondence. AA 1289-M-19.

This file contains a few pages of original documents and photocopies addressed to the ERR Main Working Group Belgium (HAG Belgien) or related to the ERR, but there are no seizure reports. The documents are too fragmentary for adequate identification.

1.4. STADSARCHIEF GENT / ARCHIVES DE LA VILLE DE GAND [GHENT CITY ARCHIVES]

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<https://stad.gent/cultuur-sport-vrije-tijd/cultuur/erfgoed/de-zwarte-dooos>

The Ghent City Archive retains a folder with ca. 75 numbered Möbel-Aktion confiscation forms from Ghent, Ostend (Oostende), Middelkerke, Knokke, Duinbergen, Bredene, and Blankenberge, dating from January through July 1943. The forms are similar to the confiscation forms listed above for Antwerp and Brussels found in the AGR/AGA in Brussels (BTG, classeur 263; see Section 1.1.1.).

Modern Archief, Joden, Wohnungsbefund Doos / boîte no. 2 formulieren

“Abtransport aus besichtigten Wohnungen” (Removal from residences examined), nos. 1201–1225 (20 Jan. 1943–14 Feb. 1943), nos. 1226–1250 (18 Feb. 1943–16 July 1943), nos. 3626–3650 (18 July 1943–15 May 1943).