

**Salvage to Restitution:
'Heirless' Jewish Cultural Property in Post-World War II**

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Abstract

Despite the extensive research over the past twenty years on Holocaust related restitution, little is known about the disposal process of 'heirless' Jewish cultural property at Central Collecting Points (CCPs) in Germany. This thesis follows the involvement of two institutions in this process: the Bezalel Museum in Jerusalem and the Jewish Museum in New York. In the early 1950s, both museums were used as repositories for a large number of the items shipped from Germany by the staff of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction (JCR) that was responsible for the allocation of 'heirless' Jewish property. By analyzing primary sources from the personal archive of the first director of the Bezalel Museum, Mordecai Narkiss, I will demonstrate the conflicting viewpoints of Narkiss and the JCR personnel that led to the eventual sale of a portion of the objects.

After the traumatic events of the Holocaust strengthened the Zionist concept identifying Israel as the only place for the Jewish people, Narkiss went to Europe to find and ship to Israel remaining Jewish cultural objects. This was one aspect of a larger salvage project that several cultural organizations in Israel and in the USA promoted at the time. Narkiss's unique approach called for the incorporation of all items made or owned by Jews into the category of Jewish art. The foundations for this all-inclusive view are explored through the development of the idea of *Kinnus*, or ingathering, of cultural artefacts of a people, which stressed the importance of Jewish cultural heritage and shifted in the post-Holocaust years to salvage and later to restitution. Relying on the post-war interpretation of these three leading concepts, *Kinnus*, salvage and restitution demonstrate the influence of the Holocaust on the formation of the collections of both museums.

List of Abbreviations

CAHJP - Central Archive for the History of the Jewish People

CCP - Central Collecting Point

CZA - Central Zionist Archives

IRO - International Refugee Organization

JCR - Jewish Cultural Reconstruction

JDC – American Joint Distribution Committee

JRSO - Jewish Restitution Successor Organization

JTA – Jewish Telegraphic Agency

JTC - Jewish Trust Corporation

JTS - Jewish Theological Seminary of America

LEI - Eretz Israel Lira, during the British Mandate it was called in English: Palestine Pound

MoMA – Museum of Modern Art

NARA - National Archives and Records Administration

OAD – Offenbach Archival Depot

OMGUS – Occupying Military Government of the United States

YIVO - the Institute for Jewish research

Introduction

In the spring of 1945, the occupying Allied Forces searched for caches of hidden cultural property taken by Nazi personnel from museums, private collections, and households across Germany and Austria.¹ As war ended, Germany and Austria were divided into four military government zones, the American, the British, the French, and the Soviet. Out of the four zones of occupation the American one was the first to issue a restitution law and it was later adopted at the British and French zones.² Since the majority of efforts to return the cultural property began in the American zone, I chose that area as my focus. The Allied Forces' search for cultural property known to have been removed from private individuals and communities during the war led to the discovery of an unprecedented number of objects.³ The items brought together were kept in temporary depots, called Central Collecting Points (CCPs), in proximity to where they were found.

The American CCPs were set up in four locations across Germany. The first CCP was established in Marburg in May 1945 at the Marburg University Museum of Fine Art.⁴ The second CCP was opened in the Wiesbaden Art Museum. In 1946, the objects from Marburg were moved to Wiesbaden, where Jewish ritual objects were identified and sorted. The third

¹ Written materials about the Central Collecting Points (CCPs): Lynn Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa: the fate of Europe's Treasures in the Third Reich and the Second World War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995); Craig Hugh Smyth, *Repatriation of Art from the Collecting Point in Munich after World War II: Background and Beginnings with reference especially to the Netherlands* (Maarssen, The Hague: Gary Schwartz, SDU Publishers, 1988); Robert Edsel, *Rescuing Da-Vinci: Hitler and the Nazis Stole Europe's Great Art – America and Her Allies Recovered It*, (New York: Laird Publishing, 2006); Michael Kurtz, *America and the Return of Nazi Contraband: The Recovery of Europe's Cultural Treasures* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Isabelle le Masne de Chermont and Laurence Sigal-Klagsbald, *Looking for Owners: French Policy for Provenance Research, Restitution and custody of Art Stolen in France during World War Two*, exhibition catalogue, Israel Museum, Jerusalem 18 February-3 June 2008 and Musée d'Art et d'Histoire du Judaïsme, Paris 24 June-28 September, 2008 (Paris: Editions de la Reunion des Musees Nationaux, 2008); Robert M. Edsel, *The Monument's Men: Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History*, (New York: Center Street, 2009); Krysia Spirydowicz, 'Rescuing Europe's Cultural Heritage: The Role of the Allied Monuments Officers in World War II', in *Archaeology, Cultural Property and the Military*, ed. by Laurie Rush (New York: Boydell Press, 2012), pp. 15-27.

² It was only in June 1950, that the Jewish Trust Corporation (JTC) was established in the British zone of occupation and in March 1952 that a special department of the Jewish Trust Corporation - Branché Française started operating in the French occupation zone.

³ Greg Bradsher, the National Archives and Records Administration's (NARA) archives assistant chief, estimated that 20% of Europe's art was looted by the Nazis. Greg Bradsher, *Documenting Nazi Plunder of European Art*, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) <<https://www.archives.gov/research/holocaust/records-and-research/documenting-nazi-plunder-of-european-art.html>> [accessed 31 December 2016].

⁴ National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Ardelia Hall Collection M1948.0001.260 Administrative files and reports documenting daily activities at the Marburg Central Collecting Point 1945-1949.

CCP was set up in Munich in the building formerly used as the local Nazi headquarters. Works of art were kept in Munich and books, archives and manuscripts were kept in the fourth CCP in Offenbach. By the end of 1946, the Offenbach Archival Depot (OAD) opened in the I. G. Farben building used previously as a chemical factory.⁵ In these CCPs, the cultural objects were listed, catalogued, and valued. The American policy called to allocate the majority of items to their countries of origin and few were returned to their pre-war owners at the time. At this unique moment in history, a large amount of property remained unclaimed, or 'heirless'.

The Allied Forces discovering the caches across Central Europe thus had the task of executing a policy to rectify the difficult situation of weak and scattered survivors at the end of the war. Both people and property needed to find new homes. Moreover, dealing with varied types of property on the one hand and with the outcomes of war on the other was a complex task that demanded a large staff and financial resources. Although research has been published on the post-Holocaust removal of books and archives from Europe as well as the Jewish ritual objects, little is known about the 'heirless' works of fine and decorative art. This research focuses on the process of removal of the Jewish 'heirless' decorative and fine art objects kept in the CCPs in Wiesbaden and Munich and their arrival in 1949 and in the following years at two of their final destinations: the Bezalel Museum in Jerusalem and in the Jewish Museum in New York.

As the Holocaust destroyed Europe's thriving Jewish communities that had existed there for centuries, the Jewish communities in America and Israel became the largest, receiving many refugees and survivors. In 1948, the State of Israel was established as a Jewish state and was thus designated as the heir to the perished Jews.⁶ In parallel, the Jewish Cultural

⁵ Leonidas E. Hill, 'The Nazi Attack On "Un-German" Literature, 1933-1945', in *The Holocaust and the Book: Destruction and Preservation*, ed. by Jonathan Rose (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008), pp. 9-46, (p. 32).

⁶ Aviezer Tucker, *The Legacies of Totalitarianism: A Theoretical Framework* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 162.

Reconstruction Organization (JCR) consulted the Jewish Museum staff in New York in preparing a policy for the treatment of Jewish cultural objects found in Germany.⁷ These two museums not only represented the largest surviving Jewish communities in the post-war years, but also promoted the salvage of Jewish culture. As I will illustrate, both the Bezalel Museum and the Jewish Museum acted as repositories for 'heirless' Jewish cultural objects arriving from Europe in the post-war years. However, while the head of Bezalel, Mordecai Narkiss, made efforts to obtain funds during the war to purchase and bring items to Israel, the Jewish Museum personnel promoted a short lived salvage project that began when the institution was affiliated with the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTS) after the war in the late 1940s.

With hundreds of thousands of objects in addition to property such as bank accounts and real estate, it was decided that two organizations designated to act on behalf of the Jewish people would handle the task of their division.⁸ The primary organization with the responsibility for the valuation and restitution of Jewish assets and immovable property was the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization (JRSO). The second organization responsible for handling cultural objects was the JCR. Both entities were founded by representatives from Jewish institutions and organizations such as the World Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), and the Jewish Agency for Palestine and began working in Germany by 1949. Their handling of the property was disputed by the re-established Jewish communities in Germany and by the Jewish community in Israel, since each believed the property should be distributed to them. However a growing support for removing Jewish cultural objects from Europe prevailed and the majority of the Jewish

⁷ Jerusalem, Central Zionist Archives (CZA), A370.970 *Memorandum of Agreement: Jewish Cultural Property*, 29 January, 1949.

⁸ Nicholas, p. 434.

cultural property was removed from Europe by the early 1950s.⁹ Existing literature valuing the work of the JRSO in Germany includes published reports on the organization as well as the unpublished research by Joel Weiss.¹⁰ While Weiss's investigation focused on the JRSO and rarely referred to the 'heirless' Jewish cultural artefacts, this thesis explores these objects and how the JRSO and the JCR handled them.

The Japanese researcher Ayaka Takei analysed the relationship between the JRSO and the Jewish communities in Germany after the Holocaust.¹¹ The re-established Jewish communities' criticism of the JRSO policy is discussed in this thesis primarily in the context of the objects. The JRSO policy delegitimised the re-establishment of the communities and called to remove all the Jewish ritual and cultural objects from Europe.¹² Further investigation of the JCR, and in particular, the removal of books, is taken up in works by Miriam Intrator and Elisabeth Gallas who researched the process of the restitution of books and the complexities resulting from dealing with 'heirless' cultural property. Finally, Lisa Moses Leff researched Zosa Szajkowski's removal of archival materials from European to American archives.¹³ Leff explored the notion of salvage as it was expressed in the work of the Yiddish Institute of Jewish Research (YIVO), a non-governmental organization in America that was successful in making itself the legal successor to Jewish communities and obtaining their materials. Szajkowski, whose work is at the centre of Leff's research, went out of his way in his efforts to obtain valuable archival documents and remove them from Europe. While Leff's work focused on Szajkowski's salvage operation both as an individual

⁹ Julius Carlebach, 'Der Wiederaufbau jüdischer Gemeinden in Deutschland nach der Schoa', in *Jüdische Gemeinden und Organisationsformen von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. by Robert Jütte and Abraham P. Kustermann (Köln: Böhlau Verlag Wien, 1996), pp. 257-264.

¹⁰ Jewish Restitution Successor Organization, *Report no. 2 of the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization on the restitution of Jewish property in the U.S. Zone of Germany* (Nurnberg, 1949). Saul Kagan and Ernest Weissmann, *Report on the operations of the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization, 1947-1972* (New York: The Jewish Restitution Successor Organization, 1973). Joel Weiss, *Jewish Organizations and Post War European Jewry: Political Action and Self-Definition*, (Unpublished MA Thesis, The Institute of Contemporary Jewry, the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, May, 1997).

¹¹ Ayake Takei, 'The "Gemeinde Problem": The Jewish Restitution Successor Organization and the Postwar Jewish Communities in Germany, 1947-1954', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 16.2, (2002), 217-277.

¹² Julius Carlebach, p. 259.

¹³ Lisa Moses Leff, *The Archive Thief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

and as part of the larger YIVO project, I explore the removal of Jewish ‘heirless’ cultural property by the Allied Forces and the involvement of key figures including Narkiss, from Bezalel and Stephen Kayser, head of the Jewish Museum. Further work on the archives removed from Europe by the JCR is currently being investigated by Jason Lustig of University of California Los Angeles.¹⁴

Several researchers who concentrated on the work of the JCR are invaluable to this thesis. Dana Herman wrote the most detailed examination of the JCR.¹⁵ Herman followed the post-Holocaust restitution process conducted by the JCR while paying attention to the political aspects influencing the staff and leaders of the organization. Herman discussed the removal of Jewish ritual objects and books from Germany by the JCR, however she made no reference to the art objects nor to the JCR’s interpretation of Jewish art.

Katharina Rauschenberger explored the JCR’s handling of Jewish cultural property. Rauschenberger’s research adds another point of view to the research done by Hermann by investigating the work of two German Jews at the CCPs: Ernst G. Lowenthal and Guido Schoenberger. Both left Germany in late 1939 as a result of the Nazi regime and returned to assist the JCR in identifying and dividing objects at the CCPs. In her essay, Rauschenberger discussed the division of books, archives, and Jewish ritual objects.¹⁶ The collection of essays, *Neglected Witnesses: the Fate of Jewish Ceremonial Objects during the Second World War and After*, provides an international review of the post-Holocaust efforts made to return looted Jewish ritual objects and the difficulties restitution organizations encountered.¹⁷

¹⁴ Miriam Intrator, *Books Across Borders and Between Libraries: UNESCO and the Politics of Postwar Cultural Reconstruction, 1945-1951* (unpublished doctoral theses, The City University of New York, 2013); Elisabeth Gallas, ‘Kulturelles Erbe und rechtliche Anerkennung Die JCR, Inc. nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg’, *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung*, 22 (Berlin: Metropol, 2013), 35 – 56; Elisabeth Gallas, ‘Locating the Jewish Future: The Restoration of Looted Cultural Property in Early Postwar Europe’, *Naharaim: Journal of German-Jewish Literature and Culture History*, 9.1-2 (2015), 25-47.

¹⁵ Dana Herman, *Hashavat Avedah: A History of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Inc.* (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, McGill University, Montreal, 2008).

¹⁶ Katharina Rauschenberger, ‘The Restitution of Jewish Cultural Objects and the Activities of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Inc.’, *the Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, 53/1, 2008 (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 193-211.

¹⁷ *Neglected Witnesses: the Fate of Jewish Ceremonial Objects during the Second World War and After*, ed. by Julie-Marthe Cohen and, Felicitas Heimann-Jellinek (Amsterdam: Jewish Historical Museum, 2011).

These sources were useful in understanding of the operation processes of the JCR and the tension between the JCR staff and experts who asked to assist in the identification process. Existing research assists in demonstrating the lack of a leading policy at the CCPs, which resulted in conflicts surrounding the removal of the Jewish cultural property from Germany. This thesis presents an analysis of the 'heirless' Jewish cultural objects, which included for example: paintings, engravings, porcelain miniatures, and small decorative artefacts. The investigation begins with examining the items at the CCPs, where they were gathered for identification and valuation by experts invited to assist the JCR staff. Then, the division of the objects is discussed in the context of a classification system distinguishing between Jewish and non-Jewish art. Key actors involved in the disposal process disputed this categorization. The JCR personnel followed a categorization system that separated Jewish art by theme, while Narkiss considered works by Jewish artists as well as cultural objects owned by Jews as Jewish, regardless of theme. Thus, the question of what belongs to the category of Jewish art and whether Jewish art could include objects that belonged to Jewish owners was crucial in considering the role of such objects within a museum collection. The process of handling these items is discussed beginning with their valuation in the CCPs in Germany, through their arrival at the two museums (Jewish Museum in New York and to the Bezalel Museum in Jerusalem), and leading up to a discussion on their place and treatment in these institutions.

This research was first developed as result of my work as a provenance researcher between 2010 to 2014 in Israel. During that time, I was researching objects that had arrived to Israel from Europe after the Holocaust. Questions that were raised as part of my work included for example inquiries about the history of ownership of the objects, the exhibitions they were shown at, auctions they were sold in and reasons for their arrival to Israel after the Holocaust, lead to my growing interest in expanding existing knowledge about the movement of art

objects during the post-Holocaust period and to initiate this research project. The skills that I acquired as a provenance researcher, investigating objects by using archival documents indicating their owners and the geneology of their owners in addition to fragmentary information found on the items, contributed to my interest in the meaning and significance of artefacts. In the process of research, three interconnected themes were identified. The first theme is *Kinnus* or ingathering, which is explored as the basis of the idea of salvage, the second theme. The third theme is restitution, significant to the discussion of the post-Holocaust period and the efforts made at the time to return the Jewish property to the rightful heirs of perished individuals and communities. Throughout the discussion, I show that the three themes reflect the importance of memory and heritage in the context of the Holocaust. I will explore the interpretation and use of these ideas by leading members of cultural institutions in Israel and in New York. The process of distribution of cultural artefacts took place through a network of European emigrants, particularly those from Germany. By supporting each other in finding positions in both the academic and art world in New York, not only were they able to survive and escape Germany, they were also able to keep their place in social hierarchy.¹⁸ In addition, theories and literature on material culture are employed to understand the role played by the Bezalel Museum and the Jewish Museum in receiving Jewish cultural art objects. The difference in approach between these two museums is valued within an epistemology developed by Michel Foucault and James Clifford with regard to categorization and the significance of objects in the context of history and museums.¹⁹

¹⁸ Elliot B. Weininger, 'Pierre Bourdieu on Social Class and Symbolic Violence', in *Approaches to Class Analysis*, ed. by Erik Olin Wright (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 82-119.

¹⁹ Michel Foucault, *the Order of Things: an Archaeology of the Human Science*, trans. of *Les mots et les choses* (New York: Random House, 1970); James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (London: Harvard University Press, 1997).

***Kinnus*, Salvage, and Restitution: *Kinnus* and the development of Salvage**

The idea of *Kinnus*, which is introduced in chapter one, developed in nineteenth century circles of Jewish intellectuals and by Cultural Zionism.²⁰ Leaders of Cultural Zionism such as Martin Buber (1878-1965) and Ahad Ha'am (1856-1927) believed in the importance of the development of Jewish culture and history in an independent Jewish state.²¹ A creation of what Ahad Ha'am identified as new living conditions was necessary for the formation of a culture.²² Since these conditions were possible only in the land of Jewish fathers, an organic connection between soil and Jewish culture was formed, turning the idea of an independent Jewish state to a prerequisite to creating a new Jewish culture. While the concept of Cultural Zionism was primarily identified with Jewish expression in literature, Ahad Ha'am saw art as an important component of this development. He explained the two goals of Cultural Zionism; the first was to support Jewish artists and develop Jewish Art expressions and the second was to expand the cultural knowledge of the Jewish people until it would become known by all.²³

In his essay, Israel Bartal suggested that the concept of *kinnus* was part of a nationalist drive to find cultural continuity with the Jewish past, leading to the formation of the Zionist movement.²⁴ *Kinnus* is explored as an attitude that existed in Europe, the USA and Palestine since the late nineteenth century. *Kinnus* expressed ideas that formed the basis of the notion of salvage, which became key idea in the post-Holocaust period.²⁵ While *Kinnus* responded

²⁰ Israel Bartal, 'The 'Kinnus project: Wissenschaft des Judentums and the Fashioning of a "National Culture" in Palestine', *Transmitting Jewish Traditions: Orality, Textuality and Cultural Diffusion*, ed. by Yaakov Elman and Israel Gershoni (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 310-323.

²¹ Ahad Ha'am, 'The Spiritual Revival' (1903), in *Selected Essays by Ahad Ha'am*, translated by Leon Simon (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1997), pp. 253-305.

²² Ahad Ha'am, p. 254.

²³ Ahad Ha'am, p. 256.

²⁴ Bartal, p. 316.

²⁵ The notion of salvage originates in ancient maritime laws which stated that a person who recovers a ship that was lost in sea and belonged to someone else, is rewarded. Depending on the situation, the reward could be half of the goods found at sea or all of the property.²⁵ In circumstances in which something had gone wrong, the law formulated the idea of ownership by possession. Despite the differences between the example of a ship wreck and the devastation of the Jewish people in the Holocaust. Salvage becomes a key notion in this research as similarly to the cases in which a person salvages a shipwreck

to shifting Jewish life due to the emancipation, modernization and to pogroms taking place in Eastern Europe, salvage addressed the loss and the trauma of the Holocaust. Moreover, where *Kinnus* advocated for bringing together Jewish books, literature, and archives in order to construct a coherent Jewish history, salvage described the preservation of heritage by Jewish organizations and institutions in parallel to the Second World War. Chapter one introduces salvage as the rescue of Jewish cultural heritage. Salvage is described as a link between the early idea of *Kinnus* and the post-Holocaust legal development of restitution. Although salvage was rooted in a legal concept, in this thesis it is discussed as a moral imperative that pushed Mordecai Narkiss to obtain as many cultural Jewish objects as possible and bring them to Israel.

Since the notion of salvage was constituted in the post-Second World War period of objects that were considered Jewish art, I will first discuss the concept of the classification of Jewish art. This draws on two different understandings of Jewish art: one suggests that Jews have no art, and the second, rooted in the Zionist movement, argues that Jews, as a nation, not only have art but a continuous history of art. The first can be interpreted as a religious argument derived from the second commandment's prohibition of making an image of God.²⁶ The second understanding of the existence of Jewish art is based in the Zionist movement. Though writers have reviewed and interpreted both views since the nineteenth century, this research concentrates on texts from the period between the 1930s and the 1960s.²⁷ While Jewish art was still developing in the 1930s, Jewish scholars attempted to explain its meaning and significance. The debates that occurred after the Second World War show that Jewish art

and there is no one to claim it, during the post-Holocaust years there were no identified claimants for large quantities of the cultural Jewish property found by the Allied Forces in caches across Germany and Austria. Lawrence J. Lipka, 'Abandoned Property at Sea: Who Owns the Salvage "Finds"?' , *William & Mary Law Review*, 12.97 (1970), 97-110 (98).

²⁶ The second commandment: 'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image', Exodus 20.4-6

²⁷ Early references to Jews and Jewish art were made by Heinrich Fraubereger, Director of the Dussendorfer Kunstgewerbe museums (arts and crafts museums) founded in 1882, who saw Jewish art as folk art or Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, who in the early 1930s attempted to explain the lack of Jewish art by the developed Jewish literature, music and dance.

was primarily viewed within religious context at that time.²⁸ Central texts used to explore these ideas were written by Margaret Olin, Kalman Bland, and Joseph Gutmann. Their essays consider shifts between the two approaches over the last two centuries.²⁹ The main change occurred with the emancipation and the industrial revolution that together made it possible for Jews to become involved in local industries and in social structures across Europe. Out of this secularization process came the creation of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* (the science of Judaism) that encouraged scholars to research Jewish culture and led to the formation of Jewish collections and Jewish museums in nineteenth century Europe. During the 1930s with the rise of the Nazi regime in Germany a growing discussion on Jewish art was taking place between scholars from America, Europe, and Palestine. In parallel to the discovery of important Jewish artistic expressions such as the Dura-Europos synagogue in Syria and the in Beth Alpha synagogue in Palestine, perhaps this was a response to growing anti-Semitism that made Jewish scholars contribute to this field.³⁰ Though the debate over the very existence of Jewish art over centuries continued, scholars also discussed the incorporation of Jewish and non-Jewish artists into the Jewish art category, suggesting that it should be seen as part of international art history. Since the debate remained unresolved when the Second World War broke out, when the time came to divide the Jewish cultural objects, the JCR took a stance on the issue. This thesis investigates the JCR's policy that called to bring together Jewish ritual objects and items with a Jewish traditional theme.

In her PhD thesis, *From Past to the Future: the role of the Jewish museum in the crystallization of Jewish identity in the modern era*, Natalia Berger Iticovici analysed the factors behind the founding of three Jewish museums in late nineteenth century Europe: the

²⁸ Rauschenberger, 'The Restitution of Jewish Cultural Objects', *the Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, p. 194.

²⁹ Joseph Gutmann, 'Is There a Jewish Art?', in *The Visual Dimension: Aspects of Jewish Art*, ed. by Clare Moore, (Oxford: Westview Press, 1993), pp. 1-20; Kalman P Bland, *the Artless Jew: Medieval and Modern Affirmations and Denials of the Visual* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000); Margaret Olin, *A Nation without Art: Examining Modern Discourses on Jewish Art* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2001).

³⁰ Margaret Olin, "'Early Christian Synagogues" and "Jewish Art Historians": The Discovery of the Synagogue of Dura-Europos', *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft*, 27 (2000), 7-28, (p. 9).

Jewish Museums of Vienna, Budapest, and Prague.³¹ Anti-Semitism was one of the key factors behind their founding and later, the founding of the Bezalel Museum in Jerusalem. All three museums in Europe were concerned with strengthening the relationship with the local people, and therefore did not address anti-Semitism directly. Instead, these museums responded to it by trying to form a new Jewish identity that incorporated the local Jewish heritage³² Bezalel, however, was opened in Palestine due to rising anti-Semitism in Europe and Schatz's support in the founding of a Jewish homeland.³³ Richard Cohen identified the impulse to promote Jewish national consciousness as one of the main catalysts for the establishment of Jewish museums between the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Exhibiting Jewish achievements in art, such as unique Jewish ritual objects, would revive Jewish national pride.³⁴ The founding of the Bezalel Museum responded to the formation of European Jewish Museums and to the growing nationalist movement in Europe, especially Zionism. Chapter one opens with a review of the history of the Bezalel Museum and its development into one of the two main recipients of 'heirless' Jewish cultural objects after the Holocaust.

Boris Schatz (1867-1932), the founder of Bezalel, was a well-established European artist before he settled in Palestine. He joined the Zionist movement at the turn of the century.³⁵ Schatz planned Bezalel as a combined art school and museum, attracting young Jews to settle in Palestine.³⁶ Inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement that developed in England, the Bezalel School students were to abandon old Jewish traditions and learn agriculture, Hebrew,

³¹ Natalia Berger Iticovici, *From Past to the Future: the role of the Jewish museum in the crystallization of Jewish identity in the modern era* (unpublished doctoral thesis, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 2006).

³² Richard I. Cohen, *Jewish Icons: Art and Society in Modern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 208.

³³ Berger Iticovici, pp.182-187.

³⁴ Richard Cohen, pp. 209-210.

³⁵ Boris Schatz, *Bezalel: its aim and purpose*, (Jerusalem: 1908), p. 2.

³⁶ Schatz, pp. 2-3, 8-9.

and local crafts, building a physical and spiritual connection to the land.³⁷ The new museum was planned as a centre for the development of Jewish art, where an example of every Jewish artist's work and style could be found.³⁸ After the First World War, Schatz was concerned with the destruction of European Jewish collections. In 1919, he called upon all Jewish communities around the world to assist in collecting objects for Bezalel.³⁹ Though Schatz had actively collected Jewish artists' works and received donations, this was his first international plea to secure the remains of Jewish culture in Europe. In his appeal, Schatz recounted the destroyed Jewish communities and stressed the urgency of salvaging Jewish objects from possible destruction in Europe. His request was to send Jewish cultural objects to Jerusalem, where Schatz believed items would become part of the revival of Jewish art in the Bezalel Museum.⁴⁰ Although Schatz's successor, Narkiss, had, upon entering the role of museum director in 1925, different aspirations to form a modern museum and planned to expand the collection with international art, the rise of the Nazi regime in 1933 shifted his perspective and put it in line with Schatz's initial salvage effort.⁴¹

Concerned with the outcome of the war, Narkiss raised funds for a rescue mission of Jewish cultural treasures in Europe. With support from the Jewish Agency for Palestine, he founded the Schatz Fund for the Salvage of Jewish Art Remnants in 1942. As head of the Fund, Narkiss managed to travel to Europe in the late 1940s where he received donations and made purchases for the museum collection. In the wake of the atrocities of the Holocaust and as an avid Zionist, Narkiss called to send all surviving cultural objects from Europe to Israel, both those created by Jews and for Jewish owners. Moreover, at the time, Narkiss held the opinion

³⁷ Yigal Zalmona, 'Trends in Zionism and the Question of Art before the Establishment of Bezalel', in *Bezalel 1906-1929*, ed. by Nurit Shilo-Cohen, (Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 1983), p. 25.

³⁸ Berger Iticovici, pp. 232-233.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 232-233.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 228-238.

⁴¹ Jerusalem, Mordechai Narkiss Archive, 2.15 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter to Yizhak Gruenbaum*, 1 March, 1942.

that Israel was the only homeland for the Jewish people. Newly created Israel, however, suffered from economic and cultural deficiency.⁴²

Narkiss's point of view contradicted the JCR's separation between objects that were identified as Jewish, such as Jewish ritual objects, and fine art. Narkiss argued that every cultural object previously in European Jewish possession belonged in Israel, the heir to European Jewry.⁴³ Thus, the JCR considered a painting of a Rabbi or a biblical story to be Jewish, but not a landscape painting by a Jewish artist. Narkiss's inclusive categorization system made it possible to include a greater variety of objects in the category of Jewish art. His attempt to change the classificatory system that existed at the time is related here by the use of Foucault's theory of classification. In his 1970 book *The Order of Things*, Foucault suggests systems of classification are symptoms of classification of temporal and cultural shifts.⁴⁴ Therefore, classification of objects is constantly created by different cultures. Each object is understood differently by cultures and is assigned meanings. In the 1990s, James Clifford's theory was influenced by the general ideas of Foucault.⁴⁵ He explained that classification systems of objects are not inherent to the objects, but are contextual and therefore formed through the interpretation of objects. In his ethnographic research, Clifford showed examples of ethnographic objects, removed from their makers that were given value in the Western World that strengthened western ideas.⁴⁶ Narkiss classified the Jewish cultural objects from the CCP's as Jewish art due to their memorial significance and the representation of their perished pre-war owners. Thus, items that were categorised separately by the JCR were brought together based on their contextual and historical importance.

⁴² Ruti G. Teitel, *Transitional Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 123.

⁴³ Tucker, pp. 162-163.

⁴⁴ Foucault, *the Order of Things*, pp. XVI-XXVI.

⁴⁵ Cameron Vanderscoff, *James Clifford: Tradition and Transformation at UC Santa Cruz* (Santa Cruz: University of California, 2013), pp. II, 24.

⁴⁶ James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 215-251.

Narkiss's reclassification of the objects under the title of Jewish art strengthened their significance within the context of the Holocaust.

The pursuit of salvage peaked in the post-Holocaust years, with leaders of cultural institutions in Israel and abroad visiting devastated Europe in an effort to find and remove Jewish cultural objects. These leaders include, for example, head of the national library in Jerusalem, Gershom Scholem, the director of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Chaim Gamzu, founder of the Ghetto Fighters House Museum, Miriam Novitch, and the head of the Ein Harod Museum, Chaim Atar. These men and women searched for the Jewish cultural objects of perished Jewish individuals and communities and for testimonies of the Holocaust. Narkiss was not the only one who saw these artefacts as evidence of Jewish culture and Jewish collecting in Germany before the Second World War.

The archaeologist and theorist Ian Hodder divided the meaning of cultural objects into three types.⁴⁷ The first is the function of the object, the second is derived from an object's place within a social structure and the third, refers to the content of the meaning which includes for example the historical and cultural context within which the object is interpreted. Using Hodder's theory, the historical meaning can be transferred onto a specific object and be interpreted symbolically.⁴⁸ Since the most recent history of the objects in post-World War II was their removal from Jewish families and the destruction of the communities they belonged to, Narkiss suggested researching the history of ownership of the items, ensuring the memory of the Jews who perished.⁴⁹ For Narkiss, the items found in the CCPs were not only art pieces offering an aesthetic experience, the symbolic meaning of the objects represented the memory of the Jewish people and their lives that were lost in the war.

⁴⁷ Ian Hodder, 'The Contextual Analysis of Symbolic Meanings', in *The Archaeology of Contextual Meaning* ed. by Ian Hodder (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 1-10.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

⁴⁹ Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *Memorandum on the Salvage of Jewish art remnants*, March, 1950, p. 2.

In his theory introducing the concept of the biography of objects, Igor Kopytoff demonstrated that each evaluation of an object can emphasize different qualities within the same item.⁵⁰ Kopytoff discussed the idea of object biographies.⁵¹ After asking questions similar to ones asked about people, the writer of a biography would select to concentrate on certain elements. Therefore, every biography could express a different aspect of the same object.⁵² Thus, the meanings of objects accumulate so that a work of art could at the same time signify a place and a time and represent its owner.⁵³ Narkiss interpreted the objects in a few ways; first he saw them as artistic objects which have both an historic and a market value. He also identified them as representations of their owners, the Jews who perished in the Holocaust. The items were a form of memorialization of Jewish life and culture before the war broke out.

Memorial museums, such as the Chamber of the Holocaust, founded in 1948 and Yad Vashem, established in 1953, are discussed to highlight Narkiss's unique approach to commemoration.⁵⁴ While the Chamber of the Holocaust memorial museum was concerned with the memorialization of Jewish communities by exhibiting surviving ritual objects, Yad Vashem concentrated on the bravery and survival of individuals and communities. By comparison, Narkiss advocated for the salvage of every object, including items that lacked a direct reference to Jewish history but were in the possession of Jews, to commemorate European Jewish history.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Igor Kopytoff, 'the Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process', in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. by Arjun Appadurai (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986) pp. 64-91.

⁵¹ Kopytoff, 'the Cultural Biography of Things', in *The Social Life of Things*, ed. by Appadurai, p. 68.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 68.

⁵³ Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall, 'The Cultural Biography of Objects', *World Archaeology* 31.2 (October 1999), 169-178 (p. 173).

⁵⁴ Alex Lavon, 'The Chamber of the Holocaust in Mount Zion: between popular remembrance and national memory', *Israelis*, 3 [Hebrew] (2011), 71-91; Roni Stauber, *The Holocaust in Israeli Public Debate in the 1950s: Ideology and Memory*, trans. by Elizabeth Yuval (Vallentine Mitchell, Portland Oregon, 2007).

⁵⁵ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Mordecai Narkiss, *Memorandum on the Salvage of Jewish art remnants removed from Jews in Germany and transferred to Israel*, March, 1950. A translation of the full text can be found in appendix II

From Salvage to Restitution

The third key notion investigated in this thesis is restitution. Restitution is discussed in chapter two by examining the conduct of the Allied Forces in the CCPs in Germany and the introduction of Military Law 59. This was the first restitution law implemented at the CCPs. The law designated a Jewish successor organization to handle the restitution program in the American zone. Efforts were later made to implement Law 59 in the British and French zones as well. The complex restitution policy first called upon the allocation of Jewish cultural property back to the countries the items originated from.⁵⁶ Thus, for example, works of art that were removed from France during the war, were sent back to the French government. The Allied Forces made several efforts to seek out pre-war owners by organizing exhibitions of the items, however very few cases of restitution from that period could be identified in correspondence and other archival documents.⁵⁷ Remaining unclaimed Jewish cultural objects were titled 'heirless', since it was assumed that their pre-war owners perished in the Holocaust and neither family nor heirs claimed them after the war. Thus, these items were given to the JCR for further handling. The Allied Forces were unprepared for the large quantity of items and the lack of identifiable owners. While many proposals for dealing with the cultural objects and returning them to the rightful heirs were made in the late 1940s and 1950s, only since the 1990s have the objects been further researched.⁵⁸ Although this research relies primarily on archival sources from the post-war period, literature published

⁵⁶ *Chapter V: Restitution of Victims' Assets*, Plunder and Restitution: Findings and Recommendations of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States and Staff Report, December 2000 <<http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/pcha/PlunderRestitution.html/html/StaffChapter5.html> > [accessed 3 March 2017].

⁵⁷ Jerusalem, the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People (CAHJP) JRSO.NY.296b *Heinemann restitution claim*, 27 August, 1952; JRSO.NY.296c Dr. H. Tuch, JRSO Berlin, *letter to Saul Kagan*, 3 April, 1957; JRSO.NY.296c Department of State, Washington D.C., *letter to Saul Kagan*, 24 August, 1960.

⁵⁸ More books on restitution:

Lawrence M. Kaye, , 'Laws in force at the Dawn of World War Two: International conventions and National Laws', in *The Spoils of War: World War II and its Aftermath: The Loss, Reappearance, and Recovery of Cultural Property*, ed. by Elizabeth Simpson, (New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc., 1997), pp.100-105; Lyndel V. Prott., *Commentary on the Unidriot Convention on Stolen and Illegally Exported Cultural Objects 1995* (Leicester: Institute of Art and Law, 1997); Norman Palmer, *Museums and the Holocaust: Law, Principals and Practice* (London: Institute of Art and Law, 2000); Wojciech W. Kowalski *The Machinery of Nazi Art Looting: the Nazi Law on the Confiscation of Cultural Property in Poland: A Case Study* (London: Institute of Art and Law, 2000).

since the 1990s is essential for this investigation as it creates a firm basis for questions discussed throughout chapter two on the inconsistent policy of the JCR and the conflicts this uncertainty caused between the JCR staff and Narkiss.

Many primary and secondary sources used here only became accessible after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. One of the important outcomes of the opening of the borders and the fall of the communist regimes of Eastern Europe was the steady stream of newly available archival materials that until then had been kept from the public, preventing restitution claims. The rediscovered abundance of documents served as a catalyst for reopening requests for information regarding the looting of property by the Nazi regime between the years 1933-1945. The scholarly development since then can be roughly divided into three generations of writers. The first, which explored the overall looting and post-war situation in Europe can be identified by the research of Lynn Nicholas, Robert Edsel, Jonathan Petropoulos, Hector Feliciano and Konstantin Akinsha.⁵⁹ Following these investigations, research on social, economic and political elements of the period developed, especially but not only in Germany. Such research includes Michael Kurtz, Götz Aly and Martin Dean.⁶⁰ The last and most recent group of researchers investigated specific case studies through archives and cultural objects. In this group one can find Sophie Lillie's 2007 book, *Was Einmal War* (What Once Was) and the book of essays *Neglected Witnesses* that describes the situation of Jewish ritual art in the immediate post-Holocaust years.⁶¹ The current thesis belongs to this last group as it concentrates on the 'heirless' Jewish cultural property, a specific collection of fine and decorative art objects that was put together in an arbitrary way in the CCPs. As result of these

⁵⁹ Nicholas; Edsel; Jonathan Petropoulos, *Art as Politics in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Feliciano; Konstantin Akinsha and Grigorii Kozlove, *Beautiful Loot: The Soviet Plunder of Europe's Art Treasures* (New York, Random House, 1995).

⁶⁰ Kurtz; Götz Aly, *Hitler's Beneficiaries: How the Nazis Bought the German People*, translated by Jefferson Chase (London and New York: Verso, 2007); Martin Dean, *Robbing the Jews: the confiscation of Jewish property in the Holocaust 1933-1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁶¹ Sophie Lillie, *Was Einmal War: Handbuch der enteigneten Kunstsammlungen Wiens* (Vienna, Czernin, 2003); *Neglected Witnesses: The Fate of Jewish Ceremonial Objects During the Second World War and After*.

published works, national museums have begun examining their collections for works of art with an unclear ownership history, turning provenance research into a field of expertise.

Since the Second World War, legal steps have been taken in order to protect cultural objects in several international conventions such as the UNESCO convention of 14 November 1970 and the UNIDROIT convention of 2 June 1995.⁶² These conventions were part of an effort to prevent the illegal exportation and transfer of ownership on cultural goods. Following them, the Conference on Holocaust-Era Assets held on 3 December 1998 in Washington D.C. was the first to concentrate on forming a process of identification and resolving restitution issues referring to the Nazi period. The eleven Washington principles on Nazi-Confiscated art for conduct include the need to have information about looted works of art available and conducting provenance research.⁶³

Furthermore, legal aspects of restitution have often been published in articles and are discussed in academic conferences.⁶⁴ Cultural heritage and its moral implication in the context of the Holocaust and the Second World War are crucial to understanding the questions raised in this thesis regarding the ownership of the ‘heirless’ Jewish cultural objects. Narkiss’s approach urging the shipment of the objects to Israel contradicted that of the JCR, which proposed selling the items in order to raise funds for survivors.

⁶² *UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property* (Paris, 14 November, 1970) < <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/illicit-trafficking-of-cultural-property/1970-convention/> > [accessed 3 March 2017], *UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects*, (Rome, 24 June, 1995) < <http://www.unidroit.org/instruments/cultural-property/1995-convention> > [accessed 3 March 2017].

⁶³ *Washington Conference Principles on Nazi-Confiscated Art*, Commission for Looted Art in Europe, 3 December, 1998 <<http://www.lootedartcommission.com/Washington-principles> > [accessed 3 March 2017]. The result of this conference was strengthened by the Vilnius International Forum on Holocaust Era Looted Cultural Assets of 5 October, 2000 and later by the Terezin Declaration on Holocaust Era Assets and Related Issues of 30 June, 2009.

⁶⁴ Recent literature includes publications of conferences and symposiums such as Inka Bertz and Michael Dorrman, *Raub und Restitution: Kulturgut aus judischem Besitz von 1933 bis heute* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2008); Eva Blimlinger and Monika Mayer, *Kunst sammeln, Kunst handeln: Beiträge des Internationalen Symposiums in Wien* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2012).

The Federal Office of Coordination, Magdeburg makes summaries of the publications available on a database that holds information about art that was removed from Germany. For information about the publications <<http://www.lostart.de/Webs/DE/Start/Index.html> > [accessed 4 June 2015].

The role of museums in the division of Jewish cultural property and their responsibility to identify the rightful heirs of the objects has not been comprehensively investigated. The most fundamental changes in museum policies have taken place since 1989. While surviving members of the Jewish communities in Europe are still interested in locating and reclaiming objects that belonged to them before the Holocaust, research for private property has increased most dramatically since 1989. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the opening of archives made it possible for heirs of families who lost their property during the Second World War to search for it and claim it. Since then, a growing number of items have returned to individual owners, which was uncommon in the years following the war. This was due to the communist regimes that nationalized many of the items removed during the Second World War and the Holocaust in Eastern Europe. Moreover, recovery in the immediate post-war years was allocated in different forms including money, housing, and immigration rights. The restitution of private property was rarely successful.⁶⁵

From the 1990s onwards, museums around the world started working in parallel with the publication of books and articles in raising awareness to the post-war situation of cultural property in Europe. In 2006, the Jewish Historical Museum, Amsterdam exhibited fifty works of art that were found in museum collections in Amsterdam and were confiscated during the Second World War.⁶⁶ The exhibition was organized by support from the World Jewish Restitution Organization and the Claims Conference that was preparing a comprehensive restitution program at the time that focused on Jewish cultural property. The works in the exhibition were a part of a larger collection of unclaimed looted works of art kept under the

⁶⁵ Teitel, pp. 121-124.

⁶⁶ The Jewish Museum in Amsterdam was reopened in July 1955 in a temporary location and later, in 1987, was opened to the public in its current building. *History of the Jewish Historical Museum*, Jewish Cultural Quarter, Jewish Historical Museum, Amsterdam < <http://www.jhm.nl/collection/history> > [accessed 20 July 2015].

custody of the Dutch government. Provenance research on the works was displayed to both raise the public's awareness and to possibly find the paintings' original owners.⁶⁷

Following this model, in 2008, the Israel Museum in Jerusalem in collaboration with the National French Museums opened two exhibitions *Orphaned Art: Looted Art from the Holocaust in the Israel Museum* and *Looking for Owners: French Policy for Provenance Research Restitution and custody of Art Stolen in France during World War II*.⁶⁸ These exhibitions marked the first time the Israel Museum exhibited objects in its collection that were removed by the JCR from Germany together in the context of post-Holocaust 'heirless' Jewish cultural property. The objects exhibited were shipped from Germany in the late 1940s as part of the division process of unidentified Jewish cultural property organized by the JCR with the involvement of Narkiss. Chapter two analyses the objects that eventually arrived to Israel between 1949-1953 and comprise this collection and Narkiss's months spent at the CCPs. This chapter explores the conflict between Narkiss and the JCR surrounding questions about the value of these items and their removal from Germany. Chapter two ends in 1949, with the removal of a selection of the 'heirless' Jewish cultural objects from Germany and their arrival to the Bezalel Museum in Jerusalem and the Jewish Museum in New York where they were eventually sold.⁶⁹

Art historians and other experts working in 1949-1950 in the CCPs in Germany and at the Jewish Museum in New York viewed the modest cultural objects as mediocre, or even as junk.⁷⁰ These valuations were expressed in the emotional language found in letters from the

⁶⁷ *Netherlands Museum Displays Nazi-Era Looted Art, Hoping to Find Owners*, The Claims Conference exhibition announcement, The Conference On Jewish Material Claims against Germany <<http://www.claimscon.org/2006/12/netherlands-museum-displays-nazi-era-looted-art-hoping-to-find-owners/>> [accessed 2 January 2017].

⁶⁸ Shlomit Steinberg, *Orphaned Art: Looted Art from the Holocaust in the Israel Museum* (Jerusalem: the Israel Museum, 2008); Rita Cusimano, *Looking for Owners: French Policy for Provenance Research, Restitution and Custody of Art Stolen in France during World War Two*, (exhibition catalogue, Israel Museum, Jerusalem 18 February-3 June 2008 and Musée d'Art et d'Histoire du Judaïsme, Paris 24 June-28 September 2008), ed. by Isabelle le Masne de Chermont and Laurence Sigal-Klagsbald (Paris: Editions de la Reunion des Musees Nationaux, 2008), pp. 206-22.

⁶⁹ Jerusalem, the CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296d Mordecai Narkiss, *Property Stored at the Munich Collecting Point*, 26 May, 1949.

⁷⁰ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive 1.3 Benjamin Ferencz, *letter to Saul Kagan*, JRSO Hq. letter 1480, 1952.

period between JCR and Jewish Museum personnel and Narkiss. Narkiss insisted that objects that did not fit into the JCR category of Jewish art were still part of his salvage project and stressed the importance of bringing all such artefacts to Bezalel.⁷¹ The trauma and the urgency of handling and dividing the objects and aiding communities of survivors is demonstrated by the use of language. The JRSO and JCR, for example described the treatment of the objects as “disposal” and “removal”. In contrast, Narkiss used the words “salvage” and “safeguard” in reference to the same artefacts.⁷²

By discussing Georg Simmel’s notions of value, an attempt to understand the tension between Narkiss, JCR and JRSO is made in this thesis.⁷³ Simmel discussed the economic relationship between objects and human society. Objects in his theory, are arranged by humans in an order determined by their value which represents specific qualities. The monetary exchange distills the qualities an object can represent and the relationship between objects. This framework was influential on the Frankfurt school’s exploration of value in the twentieth century.⁷⁴ While Narkiss’s valuation considered three values, the market value, the historical value and the commemorative element of the objects, the JCR staff considered only the market value. The historical and memorial interpretations of the objects made them unique and this rarity made the items more expensive in Narkiss’s eyes. As a result, Narkiss’s valuation was higher than that given by the JCR and JRSO.

Chapter three demonstrates ideas of salvage and restitution in the context of the Jewish Museum in contrast to the approach that Narkiss followed. The Jewish Museum in New York was used by the JCR as a temporary repository for Jewish cultural objects removed from the

⁷¹ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *Memorandum on the Salvage of Jewish art remnants*, March, 1950.

⁷² Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive 2.3 Mordecai Narkiss, *Top Secret Report on a Journey to Europe on behalf of the Schatz Fund for the Salvage of Jewish Art Remnants from Destruction and on behalf of the National Museum Bezalel in Jerusalem during May-August 1947*, [n.d.].

⁷³ Georg Simmel: *The Philosophy of Money*, [*Philosophie des Geldes*, Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1900] ed. and translated by David Firsby (London and New York: Routledge, 1978), pp. 61-138.

⁷⁴ Fredric Jameson, ‘The Theoretical Hesitation: Benjamin’s Sociological Predecessor’, in *Rethinking the Frankfurt School: Alternative Legacies of Cultural Critique*, ed. by Jeffrey Nealon, Caren Irr (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002), pp. 11–30.

CCPs. As such, a large portion of the ‘heirless’ Jewish cultural objects were shipped there before a final disposal policy was decided upon. A description of the process of valuation of the objects that took place in New York highlights the contradictory approaches between the JCR and the Jewish Museum on the one hand and Narkiss on the other.

Arrival of the ‘Heirless’ Jewish Cultural Property in New York

Already by 1939, the Jewish Museum’s predecessor, the JTS, successfully assisted the Danzig Jewish community in the salvage of their ritual objects. In the spring of 1939, the elders of the Danzig community decided to collect Jewish ritual objects, books, textiles, and other communal possessions and ship it to the JTS, home of the Jewish Museum for safeguarding.⁷⁵ The shipment consisted of two important collections: ritual objects from the Great Synagogue of Danzig and the collection of Jewish ritual objects that belonged to Lesser Geldzinski, which he donated to the community in 1904.⁷⁶ Though the objects were not given to the JTS permanently, it was decided that they would remain in New York for fifteen years, unless within that period of time it would become impossible to return to objects to Danzig.⁷⁷ After the Second World War, the Danzig Jewish community was re-established. However, by 1948 Danzig was repopulated with Poles and annexed to Russia and the transfer of objects under the communist regime was limited. A main concern was possibly that any valuable objects would be nationalized, as was commonly done to cultural and religious property in Eastern Europe at the time.⁷⁸ In 1980, the Jewish Museum held an exhibition of the Danzig objects and the catalogue texts give a sense of permanence to the iron curtain.

⁷⁵ *Danzig 1939: Treasures of a Destroyed Community*, ed. by Vivian B. Mann and Joseph Gutmann, (New York: The Jewish Museum, 1980), pp. 9-10.

⁷⁶ Elizabeth Cats, ‘Lesser Geldzinski (1830-1910)’, in *Danzig 1939: Treasures of a Destroyed Community*, ed. by Vivian B. Mann and Joseph Gutmann, (New York: The Jewish Museum, 1980), pp. 43-45.

⁷⁷ New York, Jewish Theological Seminary of America archive (JTS), 60.8 The Danzig Collection.

⁷⁸ Guesnet, François, *Gdańsk*, trans. By Deborah Cohen, the YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe < <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Gdansk> > [accessed 3 March 2017]; ‘Part 13: The Post-War Years, 1945-1990’, *A Brief History of Poland*, Polonia Media Network, 1994 <<http://web.archive.org/web/20110727171044/http://www.poloniatoday.com/history13.htm> > [accessed 27 February, 2017].

Although Poland became a democracy after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the objects remain in the Jewish Museum today.

A different attitude towards salvage is explored at the end of the chapter. The Jewish collector Harry Friedman (1882-1965) was one of the most prominent donors to the Jewish Museum in New York between the mid-1930s and the early 1960s. Friedman, who emigrated from Poland as a child, decided at the end of 1941 to donate his entire personal collection of Jewish ritual objects to the Jewish Museum. From then onward, Friedman actively collected for the Jewish Museum, often consulting with the JTS and the Jewish Museum staff regarding his purchases. Friedman's letters and correspondence reveal his concern to the future of the Jewish community. As a result, he fully invested himself in the salvage of Jewish cultural objects, purchasing them in antiques shops, from Jewish immigrants on the streets, and from synagogues that were closing around New York. Each of the objects he purchased he sent directly to the Jewish Museum, there, Friedman believed, the items could be saved for future generations and studied.⁷⁹ His interest in Jewish art was expressed in guidelines similar to those followed by the JCR in the CCPs. He supported a thematic division, thus understanding Jewish art as items that related to the Jewish religion and to Jewish tradition. During the Second World War, he was particularly interested in items that arrived from Europe and purchased anti-Semitic propaganda to prevent it from falling into the wrong hands.⁸⁰ The analysis of Friedman's collecting offers a unique perspective on the notion of salvage in the post-Holocaust period. By comparing it to Narkiss's correspondence during his visits to Europe between 1947-1950, this thesis brings together two different interpretations of the notion of salvage, stressing its centrality in the post-war years.

⁷⁹ New York, JTS, 80.89.17 Harry Friedman, *letter to Alexander Marx*, 24 December, 1941.

⁸⁰ New York, JTS, 80.89.9 Kayser, *A tribute to Harry G. Friedman*, 1966.

Christopher Tilley investigated the relationship between artefacts and people. Tilley agreed that an object can have multiple meanings assigned to it by historical and social links. Thus, he explained, we think of the objects by looking at the relationships they represent and not by analysing them as individual items.⁸¹ The cultural items in the CCPs became a collection significant for its Jewish owners and their story. For Narkiss, the historical context of the objects was more important than their aesthetic value. While an art historian values works of art based on aesthetic qualities and considers style, colours, and the artists, a historian concentrates on the social and political circumstances either at the time of its creation or at the time of its acquisition. While Narkiss emphasized the importance of memorializing Jewish cultural history in Europe by bringing Jewish cultural objects to Israel without distinguishing between themes or creators, Friedman identified the importance of salvage by collecting items across New York that fit within the Jewish thematic concept accepted by the JCR and the Jewish Museum staff.⁸² As head of a museum, Narkiss was interested in fine and decorative art objects, while Friedman collected mundane Jewish ritual objects, books, political propaganda, and other types of memorabilia relating to Jewish life in Europe.⁸³ Both men had a strong sense of responsibility toward future generations.⁸⁴ For Narkiss, salvage was an integral part of Zionism and the formation of the State of Israel as the home of the Jewish people. Friedman, however, was not an advocate for Zionism and his salvage was a result of his concern for the deteriorating Jewish communities in Europe and around him.

In addition to secondary sources discussed here, archival documents are essential to demonstrate the formation of policies followed in the dispersal process of the remaining 'heirless' Jewish cultural objects. Thus, where the items were valued as mediocre, and were not deemed suitable for the Jewish Museum collection, they were sold off, though where they

⁸¹ Christopher Tilley, 'Interpreting Material Culture', in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. by Susan M. Pearce (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 67-75 (pp. 70-73).

⁸² JTS, 80.89.17 Friedman, *letter to Marx*, 24 December, 1941.

⁸³ JTS, 80.89.17 Friedman, *letter to Marx*, 24 December, 1941.

⁸⁴ Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *Memorandum on the Salvage of Jewish art remnants*, March, 1950.

were interpreted as a form of memorial, they were salvaged. This research followed Narkiss's actions and policy changes as the main catalyst to the development of the disposal process. By so doing, a process yet to be explored is tracked and analysed in a way that demonstrated the shift in the conception of cultural objects that occurred as a result of the Holocaust. Cultural items collected by private Jewish individuals and by Jewish communities became signifiers of their lives and for perished Jewish culture in Europe.

Archives Consulted

Twelve archives were consulted over the course of my research and four of them were indispensable. The archives used for this research are located in Israel, the United Kingdom, and the USA. This geographic diversity indicates the involvement of these countries in the post-Holocaust process of removal of Jewish property and more specifically, in the JRSO and the JCR, whose correspondence is the basis for this research.

The Central Zionist Archives (CZA) were founded in 1919 in Berlin and transferred to the Jewish Agency building in Jerusalem in 1933. In 1954 they were declared the historic archives of the Zionist Movement of the World Zionist Organization, and of the Jewish Agency.⁸⁵ From then onwards, the archives have absorbed materials from the offices of the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency in Israel and in the Diaspora. At least ten collections that compose the archive were consulted while preparing this thesis. Primarily, the Bezalel Collection (Unit no. L42) that holds letters and correspondence from the time of the founding of Bezalel by Boris Schatz onward and the personal archive of Maurice Boukstein, a member of the JCR board of directors (Unit no. 370), which holds important documents

⁸⁵ *About the Archives*, World Zionist Organization, The Central Zionist Archives < <http://www.zionistarchives.org.il/en/about-us/Pages/Default.aspx> > [accessed 3 March 2017].

regarding the work of Mordecai Narkiss in the CCPs and information about the turnover of the ‘heirless’ Jewish cultural property from the JRSO to the JCR in 1949.

In 2016, the Mordecai Narkiss Archive was added to the Archives collection. This was the main resource used in this thesis. The Mordecai Narkiss Archive has rarely been used in the past, thus this is the first time the full archive, estimated at twenty four linear feet, has been reviewed. Along with a large number of exhibition catalogues from the 1920s until the 1960s, images, and over one hundred articles written by Narkiss, the archive holds personal and formal correspondence with Jewish organization officers, directors of museums and cultural institutions, and government officials. This rich archive provides a window to the importance of the idea of salvage in Narkiss’s conduct after the Second World War. For example, it is possible to learn that in 1942, his main interest became the salvage of Jewish cultural objects from Europe. At that time, Narkiss was actively promoting the Schatz Fund for the Redemption of Jewish Art Remnants.⁸⁶ Narkiss’s memorandums and summaries of his travels are key to this research as they magnify his changing priorities and the unusual interpretation he developed with regard to Jewish art in comparison to the existing conception at the time.⁸⁷

The third collection used for this research is found in The Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People (CAHJP). The CAHJP were established in Jerusalem in 1939. The materials kept in the archives include information about Jewish communities across the world from the Middle Ages until today, as well as collections of Jewish leaders and organizations’ documents. Two of the archive’s collections were relevant for this research. First, the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization (JRSO) Collection which holds correspondence, annual

⁸⁶ *The Schatz Fund exhibition catalogue: Redemption of Jewish Art Remnants*, The Jewish National Museum Bezael, Jerusalem, 1946.

⁸⁷ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *Memorandum on the Salvage of Jewish art remnants*, March, 1950; 1.3 Mordecai Narkiss, *Report on a mission to Berlin*, 19-21 June, 1949; 1.3 *A Report on Narkiss’ work in the Wiesbaden Central Collecting Point*, 19 June, 1949; 2.9 *Memorandum: On the importance of dealing with the question of the restitution of Jewish and general art treasures looted from Jews that are found in three of the occupied territories of Western Germany* [n.d.].

reports and legal documentation regarding claims and other administrative files from the JRSO offices in New York, Frankfurt and Berlin. Personnel files and information about Jewish communities in Europe from the post-World War II period can also be found in this collection. Documents crucial to the understanding of Narkiss's unique concept of Jewish art and the conflict it caused with the JRSO and the JCR staff include correspondence between the years 1949-1952, crate content lists of the unidentified Jewish property and receipts printed for buyers of these objects by Henry F. Odell that were found in the CAHJP.⁸⁸

Second, the Jewish Trust Corporation Collection (JTC) dealt with restitution claims in the British zone of occupation, in particular, unclaimed 'heirless' Jewish property. Some of the recipients of the funds recovered by JTC were the Jewish Agency, JDC and British foundations assisting Nazi victims in the United Kingdom. Among the materials found in the CAHJP are administration, personnel and restitution claims files from the London and Hamburg offices.

Last are The Jewish Theological Seminary of America Archives (JTS), founded in New York in 1893. The JTS was the first home of the Jewish Museum, which was established in 1904 as part of the institution's library. The Museum was expanded during the 1930s as result of the policy to collect and preserve Jewish culture in its totality, until it moved to its current location in 1947.⁸⁹ Among the collections that can be found in the archive of the JTS is the Jewish Museum collection that holds information about the founding of the museum, lists of objects, and correspondences with donors beginning in the 1930s. Unfortunately, much of the information about the sales of the 'heirless' Jewish cultural objects, held between March 1949-May 1951 is missing. By bringing together documents found in the JTS and the CAHJP

⁸⁸ Jerusalem, CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296b H. F. Odell, *Reports on sales*, 1951.

⁸⁹ *History of JTS*, Jewish Theological Seminary of America < <http://www.jtsa.edu/history-of-jts> > [accessed 3 March 2017].

it is possible to form a better understanding of the sales process and of the people that were involved in it.⁹⁰

The Danzig collection holds information about the transfer of the collection and its 1941 exhibition, as well as correspondence with the community members prior to the shipping. The archives hold a vast amount of correspondence with Harry Friedman starting in the 1940s and ending after his death in 1965. The Harry Friedman files contain lists of donations and correspondence with dealers and shipping companies regarding objects that Friedman purchased.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Jerusalem, CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296d *Memorandum Re: Paintings and Other Art Objects Turned over to the JRSO by Military Government*, 14 March, 1950.

⁹¹ New York, JTS, 60.2.2 Donations by H. G. Friedman; 60.3.3/5 Donations by H. G. Friedman; 60.5 Donations by H. G. Friedman; RG1A.8.39 Gifts from Friedman, 1942.

Chapter 1

Mordecai Narkiss and the Bezalel Museum

This chapter outlines the founding of the Bezalel Art School and Museum and the shift in approach under its founder, the artist Boris Schatz to his successor, Mordecai Narkiss, who became the museum director in 1925. The Bezalel School and Museum grew out of several ideas originating in the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. These ideas range from Zionism to Ethnographic studies and their adaptation in museums built at the early twentieth century such as the National Museum in Bulgaria, and the Ethnographic Museum of St. Petersburg. The discussion on the founding of Bezalel is enriched by the use of primary sources which is deployed in the context of secondary literature. Several influences are central to the discussion of the forces that led to the establishment of the Bezalel School and Museum. The first was the Arts and Crafts movement that developed in Britain in the 1880s. The theorist John Ruskin (1819-1900) is identified with the Arts and Crafts movement for laying its foundations. Ruskin encouraged artists to return to traditional craft-making models and to use natural inspiration for their creations.⁹² Ruskin wrote against the industrialization process that dehumanised the workers and drove them into poverty.⁹³ Joining Ruskin, the social activist and designer William Morris (1834-1896) turned the theory into practice by rejecting the division between fine art and applied art and by promoting a unified design scheme for interiors.⁹⁴ Morris took these ideas as guidelines for his company, Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Company, taking into consideration the concept of the fulfilment of ones' self through work and of leisure.⁹⁵ Morris rejected the idea of the decorative arts being

⁹² John Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*, 3 vols (Boston: D. Estes & Co, 1911).

⁹³ Charles Harvey and Jon Press, 'John Ruskin and the Ethical Foundations of Morris & Company, 1861-96', *Journal of Business of Ethics*, 14.3 (1995), 181-194 (pp. 184-185).

⁹⁴ Monica Obniski, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in America*, Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, June, 2008 < http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/acam/hd_acam.htm > [accessed 3 October 2016].

⁹⁵ Ruth Kinna, 'William Morris: Art Work and Leisure', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 61.3 (July, 2000), 493-512 (p. 496).

inferior to fine art and set his company to the highest standards of manufacture.⁹⁶ Schatz adopted these notions by teaching fine art and applied arts side by side in the Bezalel School and by inviting the general public to annual student exhibitions.⁹⁷

A second key influence on the role of the Bezalel Museum was the development of political theories in nineteenth century. Richard Cohen, in his book *Jewish Icons: Art and Society in Modern Europe*, suggested that although Bezalel's development resembled that of nineteenth century European museums, the museum was unique for its mixture of religious and Zionist ideas.⁹⁸ Schatz planned a museum in which both the past and the present of the Jewish people would be presented. Under his directorship, the museum had two primary roles: to be a place for inspiration to the Bezalel students and to become a central institute for the entire Jewish people. This notion was strengthened after the First World War when in 1919 Schatz called upon all Jewish communities to send their cultural property for safe keeping in Bezalel, and the museum's function as a place of memory was expanded.⁹⁹

After Narkiss took the role of museum director in 1925 the museum became a national institution with a mandate to educate the public. Narkiss expanded Schatz's idea of gathering Jewish art into a larger project of international scale. Thus he shifted from Schatz's initial concept of the national museum to a universal survey museum. He wished to compare the new institution with great museums of the world, such as the Louvre and the Metropolitan Museum.¹⁰⁰ A key concept in his plan was to exhibit Jewish art side by side with "general" art. He used this description in Hebrew for works of art by every international school, while distinguishing Jewish art as a school of its own. There has been no known research that examined these two models and their influence on the perception of Bezalel during the inter-

⁹⁶ Charles Harvey and Jon Press, 'John Ruskin and the Ethical Foundations of Morris & Company, 1861-96', *Journal of Business Ethics*, 14.3 (1995), 181-194, p. 185.

⁹⁷ Berger Iticovici, pp. 246-253.

⁹⁸ Richard Cohen, pp. 236-241.

⁹⁹ Ibid, pp. 232-233.

¹⁰⁰ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.160 Mordecai Narkiss, *the National Museum Bezalel*, 1956. A translation of the full text can be found in Appendix III.

war years. By using existing literature, Schatz and Narkiss' approaches are compared, fleshing out the key changes that were implemented by Narkiss in the Bezalel Museum. The analysis of primary sources is dominant from this comparison until the end of the chapter, supported by secondary sources.

The Jewish element remained central to the museum as Narkiss pursued *kinnus*, or ingathering, an idea based on the nineteenth century concept that encouraged the investigation and bringing together of Jewish literature and historical documents and lead to the creation of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* (the science of Judaism).¹⁰¹ This key notion intensified throughout the Second World War period, and became paramount to Narkiss' post-war perception of salvage. This theme is significant in understanding Narkiss' transition from the concept of the universal survey museum towards *kinnus* and eventually the salvage of Jewish art.

The final part of this chapter is devoted to the Schatz Fund, a foundation that would salvage Jewish cultural objects. Since little is known about the Schatz Fund and its short existence, the analysis of primary sources is essential. As head of the Schatz Fund, Narkiss travelled to post-Holocaust Europe twice, in 1947 and in 1948. Narkiss's main concerns during these journeys is discussed, including the availability of fine art on the Parisian art market and finally the ultimate destiny of the objects the Allied Forces discovered in caches in Germany and Austria. He believed the objects ought to be kept in Palestine, but at the time, the policies regarding their handling remained uncertain. This final issue leads the reader to chapter two, which investigates the early restitution policies followed at the CCPs in Germany and the treatment of the unidentified 'heirless' Jewish cultural property.

Bezalel Before Narkiss 1906-1920

¹⁰¹ Bartal, pp. 310-323.

The idea of creating an art school in Palestine was envisioned by Boris Schatz at the start of the twentieth century. For this historical summary, I rely primarily on Yigal Zalmona's 2006 research.¹⁰² Schatz was born in 1867 in Varéna, Lithuania to a family with a distinguished Rabbinical lineage. At the age of fifteen, Schatz left his hometown for Vilnius where, in addition to Torah studies, he joined a local art school.¹⁰³ In 1888 he moved to Warsaw and made a living as a painter. A year later, he moved to Paris and joined the Atelier Cormon and became Mark Antokolsky's apprentice.¹⁰⁴ In 1895 he was appointed as head of the sculpture department of the National School of Fine Art in Sofia, Bulgaria, where he lived for ten years.¹⁰⁵ During his time in Bulgaria, Schatz became a world renowned artist, exhibiting locally and abroad. He received a medal at the 1900 World Exposition in Paris, as well as a legion of honour.¹⁰⁶ Zalmona suggested that it was the anti-Jewish riots that took place in Kishinev in 1903 which pushed Schatz to promote the foundation of a Jewish art school in Palestine.¹⁰⁷ By looking at the development of Zionist theories on Jewish culture, including Schatz's, I assess the first stages leading to the founding of Bezalel.

Martin Buber's publications about Jewish Art affected Schatz.¹⁰⁸ Buber, the German Jewish philosopher, participated in the 1901 Fifth Zionist Congress in Basel where he spoke of the need for Jews to create their own national art, an art that could only develop on the land of their fathers.¹⁰⁹ Max Nordau, one of the founders of the World Zionist Organization saw art as an instrument of propaganda, an idea that Schatz referred to in an article published in 1888.¹¹⁰ By using it in this way, Jewish art could bring Jews and assimilated Jews closer to

¹⁰² Yigal Zalmona, *Boris Schatz the Father of Israeli Art* (Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 2006).

¹⁰³ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.151. Mordecai Narkiss, *Professor Boris Schatz and Bezalel*, 1936.

¹⁰⁴ Frédéric Destremau, 'L'atelier Cormon (1882-1887)', *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art Français*, 1996 (1997), 171-184. Atelier Cormon was opened in Paris in the 1880s by the French painter Fernand Cormon (1845-1924). Among the artists who studied there are Emmanuel Mané-Katz, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Vincent Van Gogh.

¹⁰⁵ Zalmona, *Boris Schatz*, p. 32.

¹⁰⁶ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.151 Narkiss, *Professor Boris Schatz and Bezalel*, 1936.

¹⁰⁷ Zalmona, *Boris Schatz*, p. 20-21.

¹⁰⁸ Olin, *A Nation without Art*, pp. 101-103.

¹⁰⁹ Yigal Zalmona, 'Trends in Zionism and the Question of Art before the Establishment of Bezalel', in *Bezalel 1906-1929*, ed. by Nurit Shilo-Cohen (Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 1983) pp. 23-30, (p. 26-29).

¹¹⁰ Boris Schatz, 'Masterpiece' (מלאכת מן־שבת), *Hatzfira*, [Hebrew] (Warsaw: 1888), 216-217.

the ideas of Zionism.¹¹¹ In 1904 Schatz met with Theodor Herzl, founder of the Zionist movement in order to receive his support for the art school project. The meeting did not produce immediate results, however, in the following year, during the Seventh Zionist Congress, Schatz was supported by Otto Warburg who was elected president of the Zionist Organization Committee on Erez Israel following Hertzl's unexpected death.¹¹² In his speech, Warburg spoke of the need to establish a national library, a museum, and an academy in Palestine.¹¹³

Schatz expressed the Zionist ideology, the necessity of a modern Jewish homeland in the historical Jewish land of Israel, in his essays and publications. In his 1908 Essay *Bezalel: Its aim and purpose*, Schatz referred to the need to attract young Jews to live in Palestine. He wrote about the importance of teaching craftsmanship in Palestine as part of a greater plan to give the young generation of Jews an opportunity to make a living.¹¹⁴ Bezalel was to contribute to local industries by requiring young immigrants to work in order to support themselves. In addition, as part of a joint effort to create a set of unique aesthetic values, students would be taught to speak Hebrew as their own language.¹¹⁵

Buber supported Cultural Zionism, a term that Margaret Olin defined as the promotion of national consciousness through a Jewish cultural renaissance.¹¹⁶ In order for a renaissance of Jewish life to commence, Jews arriving in Palestine (and later Israel) needed to abandon the culture and life they were familiar with in Europe and become a part of a spiritual enlightenment.

¹¹¹ Zalmona, 'Trends in Zionism and the Question of Art', in *Bezalel 1906-1929*, ed. by Shilo-Cohen, p. 25.

¹¹² Berger Iŝicovici, pp. 215-216. The World Zionist Organization was founded by Theodore Herzl in the first Zionist congress held in 1897 in Basel, Switzerland. The organization's main purpose was to assist the Jewish people in obtaining a home in Palestine. It was responsible for establishing branches of Jewish institutions and organizations such as the Jewish Agency for Palestine that represented the Jewish People in Palestine and took upon itself roles that are usually designated to a government. These roles include supporting local industry and culture and immigration.

¹¹³ A reference to the Seventh Zionist Congress Protocol (pp. 116-117), can be found in Berger Iŝicovici, p. 216.

¹¹⁴ Schatz, *Bezalel*, p. 2.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, p. 9. The role of language in the development of the nationalist movements of the nineteenth century was also used by Schatz to promote the creation of one purpose and goal for the students who came to Palestine from all over the world.

¹¹⁶ Olin, *A Nation without Art*, p. 101.

Alon Confino discussed the use of a common denominator to reflect a joint emotion of patriotism through the use of elements as the land and language in Germany.¹¹⁷ Confino identified the way in which the German people created a unifying national memory through the use of *Heimat* (homeland) between the years 1871-1918. The construction of a collective memory that emphasized social commonalities through the usage of similar objects and processes resulted in a patriotic sense of belonging to the German nation.¹¹⁸ Similarly, Schatz was eager to awaken the feeling of connection to the ancient homeland of the Jewish people in Palestine.¹¹⁹ Zalmona proposed that the nationalist awakening in Europe had a direct effect on Jewish nationalism, specifically the Zionist movement and its promotion of a cultural revival.¹²⁰

Two years after his speech at the Zionist Congress, in 1906, the Bezalel School of Art and Crafts was established by Schatz in Jerusalem.¹²¹ Bezalel was to become a source of economic and commercial opportunity for young Jewish artists. The creation of an art and crafts school in addition to a museum was in Schatz's eyes a starting point for redefining Jewish life in Palestine.¹²² Graciela Trajtenberg discussed the selection of visual art as a form of social imperative in her research on art in the Yishuv period. She explained that the national movement assigned two central roles to the arts: to reveal the fortitude and the spirit of the nation and to create a sense of social homogeneity.¹²³ Cultural Zionism, an idea that was used mostly by Jewish philosophers and writers such as Ahad Ha'am, Max Nordau,

¹¹⁷ Alon Confino, 'The Nation as a Metaphor: Heimat, National Memory and the German Empire, 1871-1918', *History and Memory*, 5.1 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 42-86 (pp. 59-60).

¹¹⁸ Ibid, pp. 59-62.

¹¹⁹ Schatz, *Bezalel*, p. 12.

¹²⁰ Zalmona, 'Trends in Zionism and the Question of Art', in *Bezalel 1906-1929*, ed. by Shilo-Cohen, p. 25.

¹²¹ Bezalel, was the name of a Jewish artisan mentioned in the book of Exodos, who was ordered with his assistant Aholiab son of Ahisamakh to build the ark of covenant. Bezalel is considered the first Jewish artist.

¹²² Berger Iticovici, pp. 221-222.

¹²³ Graciela Trajtenberg, *Between Nationalism and Art: the Construction of the Israeli Field of Art during the Yishuv Period and the State's First Years*, (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2005), pp. 167-168.

Micha Joseph Bradichevsky and Martin Buber in the context of literature, Schatz's effort to implement these ideas to art was therefore unique.¹²⁴

In a short autobiographical article written by Schatz and published in Jerusalem in 1925 he explained his dream of living a modest life in proximity to nature as one of the main reasons that led him to plan Bezalel:

Only when men live in nature can one see the futility of the earthly delights and be free. I dreamt of creating a group of educated people, who recognize the evils of the false civilization and who are willing to settle in the nature of Erez Israel and will become the seed for the next humanity. Knowledge will be their temple, art and work will be their essence of life.¹²⁵

This romantic description of the utopian life waiting in Palestine bears resemblance to nineteenth century theories that led to the founding of the Arts and Crafts movement. The Arts and Crafts movement relied on three main ideas: abandoning the existing hierarchy between fine art and decorative art, believing that work can be pleasurable, and improving the quality and the design of consumer goods.¹²⁶ Arts and Crafts ideas were used in educational programs at Bezalel to improve the design and performance of the students.¹²⁷ Schatz was mentioned by Berger Iticovici in reference to a publication in which he expressed his plan to establish Bezalel as a crafts museum, in similar to the Victoria and Albert Museum, founded as The South Kensington Museum in 1852 in London.¹²⁸ The South Kensington Museum was

¹²⁴ Ahad Ha'am (1856-1927) was a Ukrainian Jewish Zionist writer and the founder of Cultural Zionism. Micha Joseph Bradichevsky (1865-1921) was a Ukrainian Jewish journalist and scholar.

¹²⁵ Boris Schatz, *An Autobiographical Chapter*, The Schatz House (Jerusalem: Bnei-Bezalel, 1 January, 1925) <<http://www.schatz.co.il/node/3155>> [accessed 29 April 2016]. Schatz's autobiography was written in Sofia in 1905 and published in Jerusalem in 1925.

שרק בשעה שהאדם חי בתוך הטבע הריהו יכול לראות את כל אפסותם של התענוגות ולהיות חפשי. חלמתי אז על יצירת קבוצה של אנשים משכילים, המודים בכל הרע שנתנה לנו הציביליזציה הכוזבת והמוכנים להתישב בטבע כזה של ארץ-ישראל, ישמשו גרעין לאנושיות הבאה. המידע יהיה להם למקש, האמנות והעבודה יוסיפו להם לשד חיים.

¹²⁶ Barbara Morris, 'William Morris and the South Kensington Museum', *Victorian Poetry*, 13.3/4 (1975), 159-175; Alan Crawford, 'Ideas and Objects: The Arts and Crafts Movement in Britain', *Design Issues*, 13.1 (1997), 15-26 (pp. 17-19); Oscar Lovell Triggs, *Arts & Crafts Movement* (New York: Parkstone Press International, 2009).

¹²⁷ Berger Iticovici, p. 221.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 223. Berger Iticovici hinted to this influence but has chosen not to elaborate on this issue.

created mainly to educate and inspire the working class as well as manufacturers and designers.¹²⁹ Schatz adopted the South Kensington Museum structure as part of his belief that an art museum without an adjoining school would not be able to fulfil its goals.

In his writing, John Ruskin addressed the means of traditional techniques and the usage of natural materials.¹³⁰ For Schatz, a life of creation experienced close to nature in which local influences, materials and methods are practiced was essential.¹³¹ In a 1909 publication Schatz promoted Ruskins' ideas:

[...] The free mind of humans invented clever machines, and these machines turned men into a slave who does not think [...] Because in the factory the artist does not create anything whole nor does he see the object when it is finished [...]¹³²

In this quote, Schatz supported Ruskin's anti-industrial approach. Based on a romantic philosophy that connected men to nature, Ruskin suggested a life of independent thinking and creation. In similar, in Bezalel, Schatz established classes in which the artists would learn to produce unique hand-made applied arts, based on pre-industrial methods of creation.¹³³ Many of the Bezalel creations were later sold around the world. Selling exhibitions of works by Bezalel school students were promoted from 1909 until the early 1930s.¹³⁴ They travelled across Europe, to South Africa, Egypt, Argentina, and to the USA showing their unique

¹²⁹ *A Brief History of the Museum*, The Victoria and Albert Museum <<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/a/a-brief-history-of-the-museum/>> [accessed 29 April 2016].

¹³⁰ John Ruskin, I, pp. 210-220.

¹³¹ Berger Iticovici, pp. 236-237.

¹³² Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2. 12Boris Schatz, *Bezalel: History, essence and future* (Odessa: Kopika biblioteka, 1909). Quoted by Mordecai Narkiss, *About Bezalel* [n.d.], p. 4.

שכלם החפשי של בני האדם המציא מכונות מחוכמות, ואותן המכונות עשו את האדם לעבד שאין בו דעה [...] כי בבית החרושת אין האמן יוצר דבר שלם ואיננו רואה אפילו את הדבר מה הוא בשעת גמירתו [...]

¹³³ Linda Parry, *William Morris Textiles* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983), pp. 36-46. William Morris experimented in order to discover new manufacturing methods to by reviving old ones.

¹³⁴ Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 114-120.

craftsmanship.¹³⁵ The early Bezalel School exhibitions were usually held in Jewish institutions and throughout the Zionist congresses.¹³⁶

Another form of exhibitions in which the Bezalel school occasionally participated was investigated by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett.¹³⁷ In contrast to the selling exhibitions, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett explored the way in which Jews were exhibited in the context of international exhibitions that took place from late nineteenth century until early twentieth century. Unlike the Bezalel students exhibitions, in which unique items produced in Jerusalem were sold, the participation of Jewish collectors in exhibitions such as the Parisian 'Exposition Universelle' of 1878 and the London 'Anglo-Jewish Exhibition' of 1887, tried to bring Jewish culture and art into the context of their local society. By comparison, in later exhibitions organized in Europe and in the USA between 1888-1898 Jews were exhibited as an ethnic group in the context of a foreign village.¹³⁸ After Bezalel was established in 1906, landscape paintings and items created by the students were sent to international exhibitions. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett even mentioned live demonstrations of different crafts that were organized by Bezalel artists to promote the trade and the industry of Palestine.¹³⁹ Schatz's travelling exhibitions were held separately from such large endeavors and promoted the Bezalel School and its new generation of artists in the context of fine arts and craftsmanship.¹⁴⁰

Another possible influence on the development of Bezalel, was of the Jewish museum of St. Petersburg in Russia.¹⁴¹ The St. Petersburg Jewish Historical and Ethnographic Society was established in 1908. Between the years 1912-1914 it supported the expeditions of An-Ski to

¹³⁵ Gideon Ofrat-Friedlander, 'Bezalel Sales and Promotions', in *Bezalel 1906-1929*, ed. by Nurit Shilo-Cohen, (Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 1983), pp. 313-336.

¹³⁶ Berger Iticovici, pp. 246-253.

¹³⁷ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, pp. 79-128.

¹³⁸ Berger Iticovici, pp. 96-106.

¹³⁹ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, pp. 114, 118.

¹⁴⁰ Berger Iticovici, p. 246.

¹⁴¹ Gideon Ofrat-Friedlander, 'The Bezalel Museum (1906-1929)', in *Bezalel 1906-1929* ed. by Nurit Shilo-Cohen, (Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 1983), pp. 337-361 (p. 339).

the Jewish settlements in the Russian Empire.¹⁴² The expeditions were described as folklore research to explore Jewish traditions and culture within the region. This kind of exploration stemmed from the belief that local cultures would eventually fade due to the urbanization and modernization processes.¹⁴³ An interest in both folklore and ethnography rose across Europe from the nineteenth century until it eventually became an academic research field in the twentieth century. The interest in cultural heritage and the local rural communities developed in Russia early in the twentieth century.¹⁴⁴ From 1904 onwards folklorists expressed interest in studying the lives of the local minority communities.¹⁴⁵ Israel Bartal proposed that the rising interest in Jewish heritage and folklore throughout the Russian empire was a part of the awakening of the Jewish national movement.¹⁴⁶ This group of intellectuals such as the Jewish historian Simon Dubnow collected and published community documents and tomb stone inscriptions believing that their collecting would evoke a sense of Jewish history and would be used as proof for the existence of a Jewish nation in future political debates.¹⁴⁷ This indeed, as Bartal explained, led to the founding of societies, political parties and centres for Jewish culture across Eastern and Central Europe. The materials put together during the expeditions formed the basis for the collection of the Jewish Museum of St. Petersburg which was founded in 1916.

Another museum that Oded Shay described as influencing Schatz was the National Bulgarian Museum.¹⁴⁸ The Bulgarian museum, Shay explained, was established in order to preserve

¹⁴² Richard Cohen, pp. 228. Today these are areas of Poland, Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine.

¹⁴³ Maksimowska, Agata, *The route tracking An-Ski's ethnography and journalism*, Shtetl routs <<http://shtetlroutes.eu/en/szlak-sladami-etnografii-i-publicystyki-an-skiego/>> [accessed 26 March 2016].

¹⁴⁴ Several years before An-ski's journey, the Austro-Hungarian Crown Prince, Archduke Rudolf, funded a comprehensive research on the heterogeneous communities living within the borders of the empire. This research was entitled *The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in Word and Picture* and was published between 1886-1902 in twenty-four volumes. *The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in word and picture*, at the suggestion of and assisted by his imperial and royal Highness, the Crown Prince Archduke Rudolf, trans. by Agnieszka Wiercholska, Vol I (Vienna: Druck und Verlag der Kaiserlich-königlichen Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1886–1902), pp. 9-14 <<http://books.openedition.org/ceup/1004>> [accessed 2 May 2016].

¹⁴⁵ Judith Belinfante and Ludmilla Uritskaya *An-Ski Collections*, (2008), <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0002_0_01132.html> [accessed 2 May 2016].

¹⁴⁶ Bartal, p. 314.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, pp. 312-313.

¹⁴⁸ Oded Shay, *Museums and Collections in Late Ottoman Palestine*, (Jerusalem: the Bialik Institute, 2014), p. 181.

local folklore and artistic traditions followed by the people across the Bulgarian kingdom. This approach stood in contrast to Western European countries such as Britain, Germany, and France that were preoccupied with expanding their political control in Africa and Asia, resulting in a different kind of ethnographic expeditions to places such as Egypt and the Far East in an effort to discover other forms of living and unknown historical traditions of oriental cultures. While in Central and Eastern Europe the concentration was on the local peoples and their folklore, in Western Europe the interest was on learning the traditions of others who are separated from them by history, nationality and geography.

Schatz was interested in local creation and Jewish history in the same vein as the Eastern European ethnographers. He paid attention to the varied immigrant communities and to their traditions and customs. He identified existing crafts and assisted local craftsmen by bringing teachers and modern materials for their production. For example: in his memorandum on the Bezalel Art School, written to the World Zionist Organization in 1927, Schatz recounted the crafts practiced in Palestine before Bezalel and after its founding. The early crafts comprised of: engraving, silk embroidery, wood carving, stone carving, photography, printing and gold work, while after Bezalel was founded, twenty-six more crafts were added such as bone carving, miniature making, enamel, carpet making and drawing.¹⁴⁹

The Bezalel Museum Collection

Bezalel adjoined a museum, a library, and an art-school and so the first use made of the museum objects was as teaching materials for the students. In order to understand the role of the Bezalel Museum in Schatz's perspective, the collection and its development are explored in addition to its place in the context of Jewish Museums of the nineteenth and early

¹⁴⁹ Boris Schatz, *An Open Letter to the 15th Zionist Congress*, (Jerusalem: August, 1927), p. 6.

twentieth centuries. The Museum, as Schatz saw it, had a role in constructing the new Jewish identity by teaching Hebrew to all the students, bringing Jewish artists from Europe as teachers, and by producing goods from local components.¹⁵⁰ Schatz planned to open a museum side by side with the art school and for that purpose began collecting books and objects during his stay in Berlin in the early twentieth century. It was extremely difficult for Schatz to expand the museum collection both in terms of obtaining high quality works of art and items that could be used by the Bezalel School students. Palestine was in a constant state of conflict and supporting culture was not in high priority of local people and organizations. Donations were very limited and included scarce funds and reproductions. Schatz expressed his frustration with the strenuous situation in Palestine and the difficulties the museum experienced as a result of it. In a letter to David Wolffsohn, second president of the World Zionist Organization, written in 1905, Schatz voiced his view of the conditions under which Bezalel was functioning:

I arrived to Bezalel at a most difficult time: our land is saturated with blood and tears. Who will now think of working on our art? Only people of wide horizons could possibly understand this.¹⁵¹

The museum collection was primarily comprised of Schatz's Berlin collection with the addition of local antiques and archaeological artefacts.¹⁵² Gideon Ofrat-Friedlander described the early expansion of the collection in his 1983 research:

He collected hundreds of ancient copper and silver coins from the world over and submitted them to Professor Gottheil of the American Institute for

¹⁵⁰ Boris Schatz, *Bezalel*, pp. 2-3, 8-9.

¹⁵¹ Berger Iticovici, p. 220.

באתי לענין בצלאל בזמן קשה ביותר: האדמה שלנו ספוגה מדם ודמעות. מי יחשבו עתה על עבודה למען האמנות שלנו? יכולים להבין זאת רק אנשים בעלי אופק רחב.

¹⁵² Ofrat-Friedlander, 'Bezalel Sales and Promotion', in *Bezalel 1906-1929*, ed. by Shilo-Cohen, pp. 327-328. Ofrat listed over three thousand items that were hidden by Schatz from the Turks when First World War broke out in 1914 and he had to flee Jerusalem. The list includes: two ram horns, three masks, four hundred and eighty-four ivory models, enamelled items by Bezalel students, two ancient drums, one hundred and forty-two ancient and contemporary Hebrew coins, three hundred and four different types of Erez Israel birds.

classification [...] Some time later, Israel's self-portrait (which was previously exhibited at the Eighth Zionist Congress at The Hague), as well as several other pictures given to the museum following Bezalel exhibitions in various German cities in 1910, arrived at Bezalel. These included paintings by Herman, Burchardt, Oppenheimer, Neustatter, Pinter, Wohlfart, Kaufman, etc. A portrait by Liebermann, a plaster statue, "David and Goliath," by Kaufman and a bronze statue, "The Messiah," by Glicenstein also arrived as did Montefiore's carriage (transported with great fanfare by Bezalel students from Jaffa to Jerusalem) and "the chair which Herzl was fond of sitting on" (JCA).¹⁵³

The disparate items on this list are all put together as one museum's collection. Thus, the collection included antique coins that were traditionally collected by museums such as the British Museum and the Altes Museum in Berlin. It also held donated works of fine art. Lastly, Jewish memorabilia, which could be found in historical or folk collections, was kept as part of the Bezalel collection, an example being Herzl's chair. An area dedicated to the memory of Herzl, founder of the Zionist movement, was organized in Bezalel.

In addition to the collection of local archaeological artefacts, a Natural History department was added, which emphasised local botany and zoology.¹⁵⁴ The Natural History department was an addition to Schatz's original plan for the museum. It was after a visit to the home of a German collector of butterflies that Schatz had the idea. This department made it possible for the students of Bezalel to learn from nature itself instead of copying existing depictions.¹⁵⁵

Yudith Kol-Inbar suggested this was an attempt to distance Bezalel from the Jewish Museum

¹⁵³ Ofrat-Friedlander, 'The Bezalel Museum (1906-1929)', in *Bezalel 1906-1929*, ed. by Shilo-Cohen, p. 342.

¹⁵⁴ Oded Shay, 'Zoological Museums and Collections in Jerusalem During the Late Ottoman Period', *CLS Journal of Museum Studies*, 5.1 (2011), 1-19 (p. 16).

¹⁵⁵ Ofrat-Friedlander, 'The Bezalel Museum (1906-1929)', in *Bezalel 1906-1929*, ed. by Shilo-Cohen, pp. 339-340; Berger Iticovici, p. 224.

model and a move towards a national museum in which historic and ethnographic artefacts were exhibited along-side national art.¹⁵⁶

Berger Iticovici compared Bezalel with the existing Jewish Museums in Europe at the time. Schatz, she explained, strongly believed that existing museums did not make efforts to promote Jewish creation and to support Jewish artists. Jewish Museums were divided into several departments such as historical documents, Jewish ritual objects and works of art and were mostly concerned with the place of the Jewish community in the context of their own country.¹⁵⁷ Bezalel's foundation was based on the Zionist ideology and followed national European ideas by expressing the need to find land for the Jewish people, where they would develop their own culture and artistic style.¹⁵⁸ While Jewish Museums were based on the model of the history museums, Bezalel in its beginning was closer to the model of the South Kensington Museum devoted to the arts and crafts.

Schatz criticized the Jewish Museums, claiming that they did not represent the Jewish soul and spirit, the Jewish poetry and imagination.¹⁵⁹ His main disapproval was of what he described as imitation of foreign art by Jewish artists, instead of creating an original style. Furthermore, he expressed his dismay at Jewish artists, who, as he saw it, were not preoccupied with issues that concerned the Jewish people at the time and therefore did not create Jewish art. Since these artists did not express Jewish concerns in their art, he did not believe that they could represent the Jewish people:

¹⁵⁶ Yudith Kol-Inbar, *The History of Museums in Palestine until the founding of the state of Israel as an expression of the Zionist Dream* (unpublished master degree theses, the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1992), p. 23.

¹⁵⁷ Berger Iticovici, pp. 182-187.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 304-305.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 228-229.

No, we do not have Jewish art, for a long time we have not had such, for the simple reason that art can exist and be created only by a people living and working on its own land.¹⁶⁰

Based on Schtaz's point of view, Jewish art would be rejuvenated only when the Jewish people live in their own country. For Schatz this state could not be founded at any place, but in the ancient land promised to the Jews, in Palestine.

Schatz made no reference in his writing to a religious revival, but to a cultural one. For Schatz, culture was an important component in the creation of a new and civilized Jewish life, a way to unite the Jewish past and present. Cohen suggested that the museum became a place of inspiration for artistic creativity and a monument of Jewish history, assembling a large variety of objects relating to this concept.¹⁶¹ The notion of Jewish history and the way in which it was introduced by Schatz and his successor, Mordecai Narkiss is interpreted by use of Schatz and Narkiss' texts and a description of the exhibition halls at the museum. In his 1912 speech, celebrating the opening of the Bezalel Museum, Schatz compared the museum to a holy place:

Only in its own country can a people build an eternal temple, in which the chief artist can exhibit his genius as an example for beauty and glory to the entire people.¹⁶²

Schatz stressed the connection between a people and a land and the place of Bezalel within this context.¹⁶³ In Bezalel the objects became documents that signify the Jewish peoples' spiritual past and culture. Located in the heart of Jerusalem, the holy city, where the ancient

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, pp. 228-229.

לא, אין לנו אמנות יהודית, והרבה זמן אין לנו כזאת, מהסיבה הפשוטה שאמנות יכולה להווצר ולהתקיים רק אצל עם היושב והי על אדמתו.

¹⁶¹ Richard Cohen, pp. 213-214.

¹⁶² Berger Iticovici, pp. 228-229.

רק בארצו יכול עם לבנות לקודש קודשיו היכל נצחי, שבו הטוב ביותר יכול להראות גאוניותו שיהיה מופת ליופי ולהוד לכל העם.

¹⁶³ Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces: Utopian and Heterotopias', *Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité*, trans. by Jay Miskowic, (1984), 1-9 (pp. 3-4). Bezalel was a perfect example for a heterotopia, as Foucault defined it, it was created within a society and for it but acted as a separate institution.

Jewish temples were built in biblical time, Schatz followed a romantic idea of the temple as a place for pilgrimage. Schatz however took this idea a step further when he described his museum as a place for education, independent of religion, where people would find the very best creations. On the tenth anniversary to Schatz's death, Narkiss, Schatz's student and the first director of the Bezalel Museum, explained Schatz's ambition in his own words:

Schatz wished to build a haven to the art of Jews, to educate a generation of artists who will be citizens of one country— their own, he wished to create a territory for Jewish artists in their spiritual centre. He wished that in this shelter there would be a place for the Jewish craftsmen who makes Jewish art, by which the artist can survive while most of the creation would be in abstract art that which is not made for trade, but for itself, for a spiritual purpose – in the future, according to his ideal, there would be no collectors for the collections and important works of art would enter a museum, which he called the temple, a temple for the proud spirit of a Jew who is proud of his new homeland.¹⁶⁴

Narkiss's text however, concentrated on the spiritual role of Bezalel. Inspired by Schatz's view of the museum as a temple in the desert and a place for pilgrimage, Narkiss later compared the creation of the museum to the building of King Solomon's Temple¹⁶⁵:

[...] It is possible that museums were not created this way anywhere else.

Here in this country, there was no other way. In this country it began

¹⁶⁴ Mordecai Narkiss, *Boris Schatz and His Vision*, (Jerusalem, 1 March, 1942) <www.schatz.co.il/en/node/3182> [accessed 3 May 2016]. This text was based on Schatz's 1924 book *The Rebuilt Jerusalem* (ירושלים הבנויה) where he described a utopian future for Erez Israel in which the main industry will be art.

שץ רצה לבנות מקלט לאמנותם של יהודים, להנך דור של אמנים שיהיו אזרחים בארץ אחת-ארצם שלהם, הוא רצה ליצור טריטוריה לאמני ישראל בה מרכזם הרוחני. הוא רצה שבאותו מקלט יהיה גם מקום לפועל הכפים היהודי למלאכת האמנות, שבעזרתה יוכל האמן להתקיים לאחר שעיקר היצירה תהיה באמנות המופשטת שאינה נעשית "לשם מסחר", אלא כולה לשמה, לשם שמים – בעתיד, לפי האידיאל שלו, לא יהיו קיימים בעלי אוסף אלא האספים והיצירות החשובות יכנסו לבית הנכות הנקרא אצלו בשם בית מקדש, בית מקדש ליצירות הרוח הגאה של יהודי גא במולדתו החדשה.

¹⁶⁵ Boris Schatz, *Bezalel*, p. 13; Berger Iticovici, p. 261. Bezalel: history purpose and future, 1909 and 1912 opening speech. Schatz explained that the title Bezalel was selected since it was the name of the first Jewish biblical artisan who built a temple in the desert, Exodus 31.2.

thousands of years ago in temples=tents, and in temporary structures, until King Solomon arrived and built a stable temple. [The spirit of] God was also found in the temporary structures [...] ¹⁶⁶

The First World War strengthened Schatz's Zionist belief that the Jews need to have a land of their own in Palestine. This concept was communicated through his efforts to save Jewish ritual objects and works of art by Jewish artists by bringing them to Bezalel. In 1919, after living in exile during the First World War, Schatz made an effort to call upon Jewish artists and communities for support. Schatz spread his concern following the Pogroms that lead to the loss of several important Jewish collections in Europe and made a promise that the objects sent to Bezalel would forever be kept as part of the revival of Jewish art. ¹⁶⁷ Richard Cohen proposed one of the first forms of collecting adopted at the Bezalel Museum was collecting to avoid extinction which was expanded by Schatz in a three stages plan:

[...] History is to be collected from all corners of the Diaspora [1], stored in its historic and religious center [2], and rejuvenated by the national craftsmen of Bezalel [3]. ¹⁶⁸

This plan consisted of collecting objects from Jewish communities around the world, storing them in Bezalel where they would be revived. ¹⁶⁹ Not only would objects arrive from every corner of the Jewish world, the artists in Bezalel would awaken Jewish culture by their own creations. By aiming to create a museum that holds examples of the entire scope of work of the past and of the present that was considered by Schatz Jewish art one can propose that the museum was given the characteristics of a mausoleum. ¹⁷⁰ The objects sent would be a part of a national inheritance that together would assemble a museum that held both Jewish past and

¹⁶⁶ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.160 Narkiss, *the National Museum Bezalel*, 1956, p. 2.

[...] יתכן שכך לא יצרו מוזיאונים בשום מקום. כאן בארץ זו, לא הייתה אפשרות אחרת. בארץ זו התחילו לפני אלפי שנים במקדשים=אהלים, ובמקדשים ארעיים, עד אשר בא שלמה ובנה מקדש יציב. ואלהים שכן גם באהל מועד [...]

¹⁶⁷ Berger Iticovici, pp. 280-281. For example: the Brody community collection in Galicia.

¹⁶⁸ Richard Cohen, p. 239.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 239.

¹⁷⁰ Theodor W. Adorno, *Prisms*, trans. by Samuel and Shierry Weber, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1998), p. 177.

present.¹⁷¹ Despite his criticism over European museums, Schatz initially brought into the Bezalel Museum elements from the nineteenth century European National museum model.¹⁷² The Museum, as Berger Iticovici explained was originally planned for the benefit of the entire Jewish people, displaying the developments of Jewish artistry. As such, Schatz made efforts to enrich it with any object he was able to put his hand on.¹⁷³ By the end of the First World War, Bezalel took the role of a place for remembrance and Jewish memory and Schatz found it important to assemble objects which were retrieved from the disappearing Jewish world abroad.¹⁷⁴

Narkiss interpreted the role of the museum as a secular temple, a building that symbolizes the permanency of the Jewish people in their homeland. The history of the Bezalel Museum, as Narkiss saw it, began in biblical time with the temporary tents used by the Jewish people for spiritual purposes until King Solomon built a permanent building for them. The spirit of God would remain with the Jewish people until the Bezalel Museum would have its own building again. Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach highlight the role of the museum in the context of historical buildings as churches, palaces and shrines. In this setting, the museum could operate as an ideological temple.¹⁷⁵ Though they consider the exterior qualities of the museum building to signify ceremonial monuments, Schatz and later Narkiss identified these qualities in the ideology behind the founding of the museum and in the plans for its future as a central place of inspiration and learning about Jewish art and culture. The simple exterior of the building in which Bezalel was first housed was due to the fact that the structure was built originally for the lodging of pilgrims and not for a museum.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷¹ Richard Cohen, pp. 213-214.

¹⁷² Ibid, pp. 236-238.

¹⁷³ Berger Iticovici, pp. 220-223.

¹⁷⁴ Richard Cohen, p. 238.

¹⁷⁵ Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach, 'The Universal Survey Museum', *Art History*, 3,4 (1980), 448-469 (p. 449).

¹⁷⁶ Yehoshua Ben-Arye, *A City in the Eye of a Period: the New Jerusalem in its Early Years* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Yad Itzhak Ben Zvi, 1979), p. 427. The first Bezalel building was one of several buildings established by the Ethiopian empress Taitu in 1906 for the Ethiopian pilgrims living in Jerusalem.

Together with the fine art exhibited in the museum an iconographic program expressing the values of the ceremonial museum space was later created.¹⁷⁷ The planned exhibition halls of Bezalel between 1917-1920, for example, promoted such concepts clearly in their titles:

- A. A hall to commemorate the Freeing of Erez Israel by the British from the Turks. In this hall a photograph of General Allenby¹⁷⁸ would be presented along with his uniform, certificates of his participation in the Jewish battalions, documents [...] medals and flags.
- B. A numismatics hall in which the large museum collection will be on view in addition to ancient coins of Samuel Rephaeli, the first Jewish numismatic in Erez Israel. Schatz believed that the collection of Hebrew coins exhibited there would be second in its size to that in the 'British Museum'.
- C. A hall to commemorate 'Bezalel'. In this hall Schatz planned to honor the Bar-Mitzvah celebration [thirteen years], in 1919. Nearly five hundred of 'Bezalel' works were to be exhibited there.
- D. A hall of fine art. The hall was supposed to include self-portraits of Jewish sculptures and painters.
- E. An ethnographic hall that included models representing Jewish characters in the background of holy places in Erez Israel.¹⁷⁹

The commemorating hall for the freeing of Israel from the Turks was an historic hall telling the recent history of the area, in addition to the ethnographic hall, which was to exhibit the history of the Jewish people and sacred places in Palestine. The Numismatics hall, for example was planned based on a comparison with the British Museum, Unfortunately, this

¹⁷⁷ Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach, 'The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual: An Iconographic Analysis', *Grasping the World: the Idea of the Museum*, ed. by Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 483-500, (pp. 483-483).

¹⁷⁸ British General Allenby led the British conquest in Palestine during 1917.

¹⁷⁹ Oded Shay, *Museums and Collections*, pp. 174-175.

plan was not fully realized due to lack of funding. By 1920, most of Schatz's efforts were directed towards the hall of fine art, the natural history collection was moved to a temporary location until it was later housed in the Hebrew University, and available funding was devoted to purchase works of art in Vienna. There, he purchased twenty self-portraits by Jewish artists.¹⁸⁰

Although Duncan and Wallach later suggested that works of art were expected to be viewed in an ahistorical environment, in the case of Bezalel, the physical location, the city of Jerusalem, and the history of the Jewish people was a constant reminder to the visitor, endorsing the museum's right for existence.

Bezalel and Narkiss 1920-1932

After several years of attending the Bezalel School, in 1925 Mordecai Narkiss became the first director of the Bezalel Museum. This short background is based on the writing that Mordecai Narkiss's sister, Rikudah Potash, and wife, Nassia Narkiss, produced after his death in 1957. Additional materials about the history of Jewish communities in Poland are employed to expand upon and contrast with the personal texts. Narkiss was born Mordecai Potash in the village of Skala near Krakow, Poland, in 1897. He was a promising student of Torah studies and also expressed an interest in art and music. Because of a lack of Torah teachers in the village, he moved at the age of thirteen to live with his aunt and uncle in the town of Wolbrom.¹⁸¹ Wolbrom had a vibrant Jewish community in which Torah scholars lived along-side Zionists and representatives of varied social movements.¹⁸² There, Narkiss learnt the Talmud while teaching Hebrew and assisting the local group of Hashomer Hazair

¹⁸⁰ Ofrat-Friedlander, 'The Bezalel Museum (1906-1929)', in *Bezalel 1906-1929*, ed. by Shilo-Cohen, p. 353.

¹⁸¹ 'Mordecai Narkiss: 28 December 1898 – 26 Match 1957', (Jerusalem: Bezalel National Museum), p. 4.

¹⁸² 'Walbrom before the Holocaust', in *Walbrom Irenu (Our Town Walbrom)*, Yad Va'Shem, <<http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/walbrom/before-holocaust.asp>> [accessed 22 September 2016].

Zionist youth movement. In addition, he supported his family by working as a bookkeeper.¹⁸³ During his teenage years, Narkiss established a rich library of Hebrew and Yiddish books that was often used by the local Zionist movement supporters. Unfortunately, Narkiss' library was looted and burnt repeatedly during riots and Pogroms organized by local Cossacks.¹⁸⁴ The Jews of Wolbrom suffered blood libel by the surrounding communities, the 1961 memorial book *Our City Wolbrom* recounts several such accusations, the worst leading to a pogrom that was avoided in 1912.¹⁸⁵ In 1913 Narkiss heard about Bezalel and tried to contact Boris Schatz, but the First World War forced him to change his plans. As war broke out, the city suffered from a typhus epidemic, which, in addition to high unemployment, forced the family to migrate from one village to another in search for income between 1914-1916.¹⁸⁶ They eventually returned to Wolbrom after the war. Upon his return, Narkiss became more invested in the Zionist movement. He was responsible for educational events and visits to different towns promoting the Zionist ideas (it was on one of these visits that he met his wife, Nassia). In 1917, while preparing for his university exams in Krakow, he began participating in art history classes to prepare for Bezalel. At the time, he made a living writing for a local Jewish newspaper and also wrote an original Yiddish play.¹⁸⁷

In 1920 on their boat to Palestine, Narkiss and Nassia met Schatz and his family. They immediately became close and Schatz invited Narkiss to live with him and his family in Jerusalem. He studied art and sculpture at the Bezalel Art School while making a living by

¹⁸³ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.106 Rikudah Potash, *The prodigy boy Mordecai*, 1957.

¹⁸⁴ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.106 Nassia Narkiss *Mordecai Narkiss's Biography*, 1957.

¹⁸⁵ 'Chapters of history', in *Walbrom Irenu (Our Town Wolbrom): Memorial book in commemoration of the terrible destruction of the city that was our past homeland*, ed. by Meir Shimon Geshuri, trans. by David Rendelman (Tel Aviv, 5722 [1961] The Wolbrom Survivors Organization) < <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/wolbrom/wol046.html> > [accessed 22 September 2016]. Further information to support of the Pogroms that Wolbrom suffered of were not found.

¹⁸⁶ Pinkas Kehilot Polin [Encyclopedia of the Jewish Communities, Poland] vol. VII: Lublin and Kielce Districts, (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999).

¹⁸⁷ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.13. Mordecai Narkiss, (אבגעלעבט) אַליין [Survival] (unpublished Yiddish play, Poland, 1917).

bookkeeping and writing.¹⁸⁸ In her writings, Nassia mentioned Narkiss' reply to Schatz's invitation to teach at the Bezalel School in 1924:

I do not think I will be a great artist and my soul is attracted to art history, instead of adding another mediocre artist, I think it is better to devote my life to art appreciation and aesthetic education.¹⁸⁹

Narkiss saw himself first as a public educator. Both teenagers and adults, he believed, had to learn and experience the best international art since Jewish art was not sufficient for people's education.¹⁹⁰ Narkiss chose not to teach fine art, but to teach art history and art appreciation.

From that moment onwards, Narkiss was working closely with Schatz as the museum manager. He was the care-taker of the Bezalel Museum and responsible for all its written materials. Narkiss, interested in expanding his knowledge, tried to take advantage of this time. For example, during a visit to Vienna assisting in the production of one of Schatz's publications, he contacted Professor Behrendt Pick who became his Numismatics and Medals teacher.¹⁹¹

1925 marked the year of the grand opening of the Hebrew University and the re-opening of the Bezalel Museum.¹⁹² The museum was closed during the First World War and when Schatz and other Bezalel school teaching faculty returned in 1919, Schatz embarked on a renovation project that ended in 1925.¹⁹³ Though even with Narkiss as its leader, the museum was still struggling for national recognition. The discussion of the Bezalel Museum in the context of other institutions that developed around it will be crucial to understand Narkiss'

¹⁸⁸ Tidhar, David, *Encyclopaedia of the founders and builders of Israel*, Touro College Libraries, <<http://www.tidhar.tourolib.org/tidhar/view/9/3378>> [accessed 28 August 2014]; Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.106 Rikudah Potash, *The prodigy boy Mordecai*, 1957.

¹⁸⁹ Mordecai Narkiss Archive 7.106 Nassia Narkiss, *Mordecai Narkiss's Biography*, 1957, p. 3.

נראה לי שאמן גדול לא אהיה ונפשי נמשכת לחקר האומנות, במקום להוסיף עוד אמן בינוני אחד, מוטב שאקדיש את חיי להסברה ולחנוך לאמנות וליופי.

¹⁹⁰ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.106 Nassia Narkiss *Several of Narkiss' achievements*, 1957.

¹⁹¹ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.106 Nassia Narkiss, *Mordecai Narkiss's Biography*, 1957, p. 3. Dr. Behrendt Pick was curator of the coin cabinet of Gotha and taught Numismatics at the University of Jena. *The Numismatist: An Illustrated Monthly for those Interested in Coins, Medals and Paper Money*, XXXV.10 (1922), pp. 459-461.

¹⁹² The Hebrew University was established in 1918 but was not officially opened until 1925.

¹⁹³ Ofrat-Friedlander, 'The Bezalel Museum (1906-1929)', in *Bezalel 1906-1929*, ed. by Shilo-Cohen, pp. 347-348.

insistence on the acknowledgement of the museum as a national institution. This demand was repeated by Narkiss throughout the Second World War and its aftermath.

On June 2, 1925, two months after the inauguration of the Hebrew University, the Bezalel museum was officially opened with Narkiss as its director. At the time, the Bezalel School and Museum were beginning a process of separation, Schatz was still the primary director of both institutions with Narkiss who was the manager of the museum. Despite the planned grand opening, the museum struggled for financial support.¹⁹⁴ Several exhibition spaces opened in Jerusalem in parallel to Bezalel as well as in other cities and in Jewish settlements across Palestine.¹⁹⁵ Museums, libraries and theatres were regarded as tools for developing both general and Jewish knowledge and education.¹⁹⁶ Art was understood by local leaders such as Schatz, Chaim Atar and Meir Dizengoff as nourishment to a person's spiritually and as a means that would change society for the better.¹⁹⁷ As Dizengoff described it in a letter written in 1931 to the artist Marc Chagall:

Educating the next generations and their training towards a full national revival demands developing every cultural aspect of the people physically and spiritually, one can not imagine a Jewish renaissance without giving art an appropriate place in it.¹⁹⁸

Dizengoff participated in promoting the development of artistic and cultural institutions in Palestine. He believed that the way to educate the local public would be by creating more cultural locations and by offering a variety of cultural events to choose from. A year later, Dizengoff founded the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, which soon became an unstated rival of the Bezalel Museum.

¹⁹⁴ Ofrat-Friedlander, 'The Bezalel Museum (1906-1929)', in *Bezalel 1906-1929*, ed. by Shilo-Cohen, pp. 353-355.

¹⁹⁵ Trajtenberg, p. 166. In Jerusalem, exhibitions were held in the Tower of David, in school halls and in community centres.

¹⁹⁶ Shay, *Museums and Collections*, p. 171.

¹⁹⁷ Chaim Atar established in 1937 The Ein Harod Museum in the Kibbutz of Ein Harod and Meir Dizengoff, the first mayor of Tel Aviv established the Tel Aviv museum in 1932.

¹⁹⁸ Trajtenberg, p. 168.

חינוך הדורות הבאים והכשרתם לתחיה לאומית מלאה ושלמה מצריך פתוח כל חלקי הקולטורה הגופנית והרוחנית של העם, ואי אפשר לתאר לנו פעולת ריינסנס היהודית בא"י בלי שתתפוס האמנות המקום הראוי לה.

Bezalel was criticized by art critics and even by its founding committee. The Jewish writer Yosef Haim Brenner expressed disapproval of the institutions' artist education programs.¹⁹⁹ Other critics concluded that Bezalel could not be considered a fine art museum nor could it be identified as a national institution.²⁰⁰ Ofrat-Friedlander suggested that the low public opinion of Bezalel was a result of the museum's economic difficulties and its low number of visitors. In the late 1920s, these issues lead to Narkiss' suggestion to close down the museum.²⁰¹ Lack of funding was a part of the institution's daily struggle. Schatz often turned to the Zionist Organization for support. In 1919 Schatz decided to transfer the Bezalel School and Museum to the auspices of the Zionist Organization.²⁰² This shift of ownership made a promise for permanent funding for the museum and supported the recognition of the museum as a national institution by the future government of the State of Israel:

[...] Prof. Boris Schatz hands over all this property to the management of the Zionist Organization in Erez Israel for the sake of founding a national art museum in Erez Israel and it now recognizes the sole owner of the collection and all that will be added to it in time [...]

2. The management of the Zionist Organization in Erez Israel hereby declares and is obligated to:

A. That it received from Prof. Schatz into its property and ownership this collection in good order.

B. It will lobby for acknowledging this museum by the Erez Israel Government²⁰³ including the special privileges resulting with such recognition

[...] ²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁹ Berger Iticovici, pp. 264-265. Brenner blamed Schatz for limiting the employment opportunities of the artists to work by teaching local traditional crafts instead of exposing them to new artistic techniques.

²⁰⁰ Trajtenberg, p. 67.

²⁰¹ Ofrat-Friedlander, 'The Bezalel Museum (1906-1929)', in *Bezalel 1906-1929*, ed. by Shilo-Cohen, pp. 355-358.

²⁰² Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.15. A bill for the transfer of Property [n.d.].

²⁰³ The British Mandate government.

²⁰⁴ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.15. A bill for the transfer of Property [n.d.].

After the initiation of the Jewish Agency for Palestine in 1921 the handling of funding for Bezalel was taken under its responsibility.²⁰⁵ The Jewish Agency, acting as the main financial backer for a variety of Jewish institutions in Palestine, was dependent on international donors.²⁰⁶ In 1925 Nahum Sokolov, secretary of the World Zionist Congress, declared that Bezalel would be the National Jewish Museum and the central Museum of the Jewish people.²⁰⁷ Narkiss continued advocating for Bezalel as the national museum of Israel throughout his life, even more so upon the declaration of Independence and the founding of the State of Israel in 1948. Like Schatz, he believed that Bezalel was a part of the spiritual revival of the Jewish people in the eternal capital, Jerusalem, despite the fact that it was only in December 1949 that Jerusalem officially became the capital of Israel.²⁰⁸

The care takers of this museum, those who nourish it keep in their hearts the importance of its location – Jerusalem – compels them. It compels the management of the Zionist Organization – for the people of Israel everywhere: this museum does not belong only to Israel but to the entire nation, to the people of Israel wherever they live.

The staff of the museum have not forgotten their obligation to the nation of Israel – a responsibility to accumulate Jewish art of every period in the place where the spirit of Israel is revived, the obligation towards the citizens of Israel and their families are also remembered. The young generation. And

[...] שהוא, הפרופ. בוריס שיץ הח"מ מוסר בזה את כל הרכוש הנ"ל להנהלת הציונית בא"י ולשם סידור המוזיאום הלאומי לאמנות בא"י ומכיר בה מעתה את הבעל היחידי של האספן הנ"ל ושל כל מה יתאסף לו במשך הזמן [...] 2. ההנהלה הציונית בא"י מצהירה ומתחייבת בזה: א. שהיא קבלה מאת הפרופ. שיץ לתוך קנינה ובעלותה את האספן הנ"ל במצב טוב ושלם. ב. שהיא תשתדל לקבל בשביל בית הנכחת הזה את ההכרה של ממשלת א"י וגם את הזכויות המיוחדות הכורכות בהכרה שכזו [...].

²⁰⁵ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.13 Mordecai Narkiss, *Report of the Activities of the Jewish National Museum Bezalel*, October 1939-April 1941.

²⁰⁶ Isaac B. Berkson, 'Jewish Education', *Palestine in Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 164, (1932), 139-154 (p. 146).

²⁰⁷ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.2 *The National Museum Bezalel in Jerusalem: collection, activities and requirements 1945-1946* (draft) [n.d.]. The World Zionist Congress acted as the supreme legislative authority of the World Zionist Organization.

²⁰⁸ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.160 Narkiss, *the National Museum Bezalel*, 1956.

During the War of Independence (1947-1949) Jerusalem was under siege and the official authorities were transferred to Tel Aviv, that was regarded temporarily as the capital of Israel.

towards Jerusalem the eternal capital – not only ancient Jewish art has to be accumulated but also the cultural heritage of every nation of the world, especially those – that were ever considered once, or today, a new development in the art.²⁰⁹

Narkiss described Jerusalem not only as a geographic location for the museum but a place with a special spiritual meaning for the Jewish nation. In this text, he made a distinction between the nation of Israel and the citizens of Israel, specifically the young generation. While the responsibility of the museum staff to the nation of Israel was to save the memory of Jewish culture as part of a process of preservation of Jewish creative assets, it was also responsible for the education of the citizens of Israel in world cultural heritage.²¹⁰ For Narkiss, this was the driving force to continue collecting and exhibiting during the most difficult times.²¹¹

Narkiss pursued several new directions for the museum. The examination of the contrast between Schatz and Narkiss' aims will focus on the role of international art in the museum and on the role of Narkiss' visual education. In contrast to Schatz, Narkiss was influenced by art museums around the world and did not follow the arts and crafts ideals as Schatz originally planned.²¹² Although Schatz believed the museum should be a repository for Jewish art, Narkiss described Bezalel as the first “general” art museum which belongs to a Jewish entity.²¹³ The term “general” art is translated from Hebrew in which it was used to distinguish between Jewish art and other art schools, just as, for example, in several

²⁰⁹ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.160 Narkiss, *the National Museum Bezalel*, 1956, p. 1.

המטפלים כיום בבית נכות זה והמטפחים אותו שמו אל ליבם כי מקום המצאו של בית הנכות – ירושלים – מחייבת. כן מחייבת בעלותה של ההסתדרות הצינונית – כלומר בעלותו של עם ישראל לכל תפוצותיו: לא בלבד לישראל שייך בית נכות זה, כי אם גם לאומה כולה, לעם ישראל בכל מקום שהוא יושב.

עושי בית נכות זה לא שכחו את חובתם כלפי עם ישראל – חובה המחייבת צבירת יצירות ישראל מאז כל הדורות, למקום שבו שבה רוח ישראל לתחיה, אך לא נשכחה גם החובה כלפי יושבי ישראל ובניו. הדור הצעיר. וכלפי ירושלים בירת הנצח – לא בלבד יצירת ישראל הנושנה חייבת להיות מכונסת כאן, אלא גם תרבותן האמנותית של כל אומות העולם, וביחוד של אלה – אשר אמרו אי-פעם, או אומרים כיום, מלה חדשה באמנות.

²¹⁰ Bartal, p. 311.

²¹¹ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.160 Mordecai Narkiss, *Memorandum on the National Museum, Bezalel in Jerusalem*, September, 1948.

²¹² Berger Iticovici, pp. 298-299.

²¹³ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.151 Mordecai Narkiss, *From the National Museum Bezalel in Jerusalem: the year of Bezalel Fifty years to the founding of Bezalel*, May 1956, p. 2.

universities the department of Jewish history is independent from the department of art history. Narkiss saw Judaism as a nationality and therefore, Jewish art was a school in itself, just as the French School or the Netherlandish School would be exhibited. In this aspect, he followed Schatz and added that Jewish art ought to be researched further.²¹⁴ However, Narkiss saw Bezalel as an international museum and a place for both Jewish and foreign art.

Narkiss was influenced by the museums founded in France and America, while Schatz described the Paris museums in his memoirs as storehouses or cages for objects.²¹⁵ The role of objects in the Bezalel Museum collection was also perceived differently by Schatz and Narkiss. Schatz regarded them as valuable for teaching and learning purposes, Narkiss, however, tried to combine the educational importance with the aesthetic element, seeing them as inseparable.²¹⁶ He entitled this system 'visual education', which in his view, could create a unified culture and bring the Jewish people together. In a memorandum written to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of Bezalel he described the museum:

A museum in our days, especially a young museum in a young country for a young public – has different roles than those in the days of its founding. It is not a mausoleum, today it is a museum: a dynamic force drives it forward. In addition to the need to accumulate, it has taken upon itself educational responsibilities. Even more so – the accumulation is done as result of this educational duty.²¹⁷

²¹⁴ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.151 Mordecai Nariss, *Jewish Art and its Destiny*, Radio interview, 1943.

²¹⁵ Berger Iticovici, p. 222; Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.2 *The National Museum Bezalel in Jerusalem: collection, activities and requirements 1945-1946* (draft), [n.d.], p. 6.

²¹⁶ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 4.86 Mordecai Narkiss, *The National Museum Bezalel 40 Years to its' existence*, 1946.

²¹⁷ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 4.86 *The National Museum Bezalel 40 Years to its' existence*, 1946.

מוזיאון בימינו, וביחוד מוזיאון צעיר בארץ צעירה ושל קהל צעיר – תפקידיו אחרים מאשר היו בימי הוסד מוזיאון זה. לא מאוזוליון הוא כיום המוזיאון: כמ דינמי מחייה אותו ומניעו. ובצד הצבירה נטלו עליו תפקידים חינוכיים. להפך – גם הצבירה נעשית מתוך התפקידים החנוכיים האלה.

The role of the museum was no longer to gather art and save it for visitors and artists, but a place to learn and educate.²¹⁸ The objects in the collection should, as Narkiss explained, be experienced and learnt. In the early 1920s, during the very beginning of his role as director of the museum, Narkiss identified the need to reorganise, categories and expand the collection. Ofrat-Friedlander described it as his greatest contribution to Bezalel and added that his categorizing emphasis was on the nineteenth century division of art historical periods and schools.²¹⁹ Narkiss described the contents of the two main museum departments, the arts department and the crafts department in an article written in 1928.²²⁰ In the art department he mentioned works by Jewish artists such as Liebermann, Hirszenberg, Israels, Pilichowski and Pann, German artists such as Struck, Bakar and Neustatler and old masters as del Sarto, Dominicino and da Cortona. The crafts department was divided between coins and medals, Jewish ritual objects and archaeological artefacts.²²¹

The creation of a ‘worthy’ collection of fine art by international standards was one of Narkiss’ goals, and was probably influenced by museums established around the world, especially the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art in New York.²²² In his 1956 summary about the Bezalel Museum, Narkiss remembered that upon his arrival, the only valuable painting in the Bezalel collection was a self-portrait by Jozef Israels, given to Schatz as a gift by the artist himself. The majority of the inventory during the museum’s first years was composed of gifts and donations, small objects exhibited in glass cabinets that

²¹⁸ James Clifford, *Routes*, pp. 188-219. Clifford saw the museum as a contact zone, a place that assists in creating relations between people that would otherwise be disconnected historically and geographically.

²¹⁹ Ofrat-Friedlander, ‘The Bezalel Museum (1906-1929)’, in *Bezalel 1906-1929*, ed. by Shilo-Cohen, p. 358.

²²⁰ Mordecai Narkiss, ‘The National Museum Bezalel’, *Yalkut Bezalel (The Bezalel Collection)*, B’ [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: April [Nissan], 1928 [5688]), pp. 39-40.

²²¹ Ofrat-Friedlander, ‘The Bezalel Museum (1906-1929)’, in *Bezalel 1906-1929*, ed. by Shilo-Cohen, pp. 358-359.

²²² Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.151. Mordecai Narkiss, *An artistic Tour in Europe*, 1947.

had no special significance as great works of art.²²³ He tried to explain this situation through sober eyes:

Collections of non-Jewish objects at the museum were composed of old paintings of biblical subjects, most of questionable artistic value, and a collection of crafts from every country – again not of the best quality. A collection of ritual objects was composed of a few examples that were not unique in shape or quality. The system was: accept anything offered to you, and the givers would – give anything one does not want in his house anymore, outdated, invaluable objects.

Schatz knew that these objects can not serve as fine “examples” for the students of his school, however, due to helplessness and lack of funding, he was incapable of rejecting unwanted gifts – one must accept everything in order to create a museum [...]²²⁴

Narkiss implied in this text that fine art of international scale was not the highest priority for Schatz for a couple of reasons. First, funding was hard to come by and secondly the objects had to serve as an inspiration and therefore were not necessarily expected to be of the best quality. Copies and other donations would do. He continued:

In 1920 Schatz obtained funding from the Jewish congress 1,000 Palestine Pound for purchases. He was about to utilize it, and once he arrived to Vienna, the city he selected for his purchases – he found starving Jewish artists and decided to support their art, and so once again the museum became a house

²²³ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.151. Mordecai Narkiss, *From the National Museum Bezalel in Jerusalem, The Year of Bezalel, celebrating the fiftieth anniversary to the founding of Bezalel*, May, 1956.

²²⁴ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.160 Narkiss, *the National Museum Bezalel*, 1956, p. 1.

אספים לא יהודים שהיו לבית הנכות נצטרפו ממספר של תמונות ישנות על נושאים תנ"כיים, רובן מפוקפקות בערכן האמנותי, ואוסף של מלאכת אמנות מכל הארצות – ושוב לא מן הסוג המשובח ביותר. אוסף של תשמישי קדושה הצטרף בעיקר ממספר דוגמאות מועט, שאף הן לא הצטיינו בצורתן או בחשיבותן. השיטה היתה: קבל כל מה שניתן לך, והגותנים – לפי זה: תן כל מה שאינך רוצה עוד בביתך, דבר שעבר עליו כלח, דבר שאינו עוד במודעה, חפץ שאין לו ערך. ידע שן שדברים אלה אינם יכולים לשמש "דוגמא" מעולה לתלמיד בית ספרו, אך מאזלת יד, מאין כסף לרכישה מאין אפשרות לדחות מתנות לא רצויות – חובה היא לקבל הכל, כדי לעשות מוזיאון [...]

for the works of decent, but not great artists who could serve as examples for the young generation.²²⁵

For Schatz it was just as important to help the struggling artists as he was prone to assist students and young artists in his role as an artist and an educator. Therefore, when a choice had to be made between giving aid to a poor soul and obtaining another art object, he preferred the living artist over the object.

One of the key differences between Schatz and Narkiss was in their interpretations of the social role of the Bezalel museum. During its early years, under Schatz's direction, the museum had two functions: acting as a place of inspiration and learning for the students of Bezalel and as a repository for Jewish art. Narkiss's work was aimed at the public, since he identified the museum as a national institution, it was essential for it to be approachable, attractive and interesting to the people. The Jewish nation was emerging and the museum had an important role in supporting the independent national state.²²⁶ Despite the national focus Schatz planned for the museum, Narkiss decided to form a survey museum. By giving Bezalel the statue of well-known survey museums, Narkiss's perspective and future plans for the museum moved from Schatz's concentration on Jewish art to a modern and secular point of view. Moreover, the international nature of the Jewish artists in the diaspora, which included for example, Jewish artists inspired by and working with non-Jewish counterparts in the Berlin Secession and the Paris School corresponded less with the Jewish national ideas and more with universal concepts.

In order to create a universal survey museum, a need for a building designated for a museum was necessary. The European and American universal survey museums were built in a way

²²⁵ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.160 Narkiss, *the National Museum Bezalel*, 1956, p. 1.

בשנת 1920 קבל שיץ הקצבה מאת ועד הצירים בשף של 1000 לירות לשם רכישות. הוא עמד לנצל זאת, ובהגיעו לוינה, שאותה בחר למקום הרכישה – מצא את האמנים היהודים שם רעבים ללחם, והחליט לרכוש מיצירותיהם, ושוב היה בית הנכות משכן ליצירות אמנים מאד הגונים, אך לא אמני-מופת היכולים לשמש דוגמא לדור צעיר.

²²⁶ Duncan and Wallach, 'The Universal Survey Museum', *Art History*, 3.4, p. 451.

that affirmed a connection with the ancient world. Their architecture and structures attached the classical ceremonial meaning of a sacred place such as the temple to the museum.²²⁷ Though nothing on this scale was possible, Narkiss focused on what was available to him in hope that a new building would be erected for the museum in the future.²²⁸ His main priority was to assemble a collection that would be universal in its materials reflecting important moments in both art history and Jewish history. The museum under Narkiss's directorship grew into a separate institution from the art school, consisting of similar departments to great museums around the world, a group that Narkiss wished join.

Narkiss' theory was incomplete without Jewish art. His definition of Jewish art was broader than Schatz's, who limited it to Jewish themes. A place for Jewish art had to be found in the context of the universal survey museum and although the two ideas conflicted, Narkiss made efforts to make the two co-exist in the museum. The principal idea of *kinnus* is key to understand the significant change Narkiss initiated as the Second World War broke out when he moved a step further and launched a salvage project.

On the one hand, Narkiss insisted on distinguishing Bezalel from European Jewish Museums that existed in the past, and on the other, from the contemporary Jewish Museums in New York, London and Paris. In Bezalel, Narkiss believed, there was place to collect international art, or "general" art, as he referred to it, just like other universal survey museums. There would, however, always be a special interest and concern for Jewish art. The Jewish art he described, in reference to Schatz, was not only art made by Jewish artists but also works made by a non-Jewish artist which dealt with Jewish subjects. He summarized his point of view in a memorandum written on the fiftieth anniversary of Bezalel:

²²⁷ Ibid, p. 449.

²²⁸ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.160 Narkiss, *the National Museum Bezalel*, 1956.

This museum will not be a Jewish Museum in the sense of the Jewish Museum in Warsaw, Prague, Vienna or Berlin – in the past, or New York, London, Paris – or anywhere else in the world where they only collect Jewish art or general art on Jewish subjects. [...] It is not so in Jerusalem (or in Israel in general). Here, one must pay attention to Jewish art for National reasons, however, general works of art must also be collected, just as the National Gallery in Washington is not a place for collecting American artists exclusively, but also greatest Masters from all over the world in all times, and just as the British Museum in London or the Louvre in Paris or the Metropolitan Museum in New York – are not a place for the collecting of British, French and American art respectively.²²⁹

In this essay, Narkiss wrote about the idea of *kinnus*, or ingathering, as Bartal translated it. He however interpreted this concept differently from its original root and transferred it into a broader context. H. N. Bialik addressed in the inauguration ceremony of the Hebrew university in Jerusalem held on 1 April, 1925 the concept of *kinnus*:

Of all the disciplines of our literature, from every corner and angle, wherever a trace of the nation's "holy spirit" lurks, wherever a little of the creative force of its finest people resides, we must extract and fan the dying and distant flickers of them all, connect and unify them and make them a whole in the nation's hands.²³⁰

²²⁹ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.160 Narkiss, *the National Museum Bezalel*, 1956, p. 2.

מוזיאון זה לא יהיה מוזיאון יהודי במונח של מוזיאון יהודי בורשה, פראג, וינה, ברלין – לפנינו, או ניו-יורק, לונדון, פאריס, או בכל מקום אחר בעולם, שפירושו כנוס ערכי היצירה היהודים בלבד, או איסוף יצירות כלליות על נושאים יהודיים. [...] לא כן בירושלים (ואף בארץ בכלל). כאן יש, כמוכן, לשים לב ליצירה היהודית, מבחינה לאומית, אך יצירות אמנות כלליות חייבות להצטבר כאן, כשם שהגלריה הלאומית בווינגטון אינה מקום כינוס ליצירתכם של אמנים אמריקניים בלבד, כי אם גם ליצירתם של גדולי האמנים בכל העולם ובכל הדורות, וכשם שהגלריה הלאומית או הבריטיש מיוזיאום בלונדון, או הלובר בפריסוהמטרופוליטין בניו-יורק – אינם מקום איסוף ליצירות אנגליות, וצרפתיות ואמריקאיות גרידא.

²³⁰ Bartal, p. 310.

The concept of *kinnus*, introduced by nineteenth century intellectuals was influenced by two ideologies. First the founding of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* (the science of Judaism) which was a group of secular scholars who studied and investigated Jewish literature, Midrash and community records as historical and artistic monuments. The second influence was of the development of modern national movements across Europe. Bartal mentioned the 1819 lecture *Remarks on Rabbinical Literature* by Leopold Zunz as an early reference to the leading ideas of *kinnus*, one of which is the conflict between the idea of the universal and the particular.²³¹ The idea of putting together all the examples of Jewish art in one place, was Schatz's rationale for founding of the Bezalel Museum. Narkiss expanded this to Jewish art in its varied forms. One of the goals of Bezalel, in parallel with its aim to be a universal survey museum, was to ingather Jewish art. The conflict mentioned by Zunz could also be found in many of Narkiss' writing. On the one hand the formation of a universal survey museum and on the other finding a central place for the continuity of the Jewish national ideology of its founder, Schatz. An example for this clash was expressed in the important role of the classificatory system that developed in nineteenth century museums. It was clearly reflected through the division to departments, styles, and techniques in Narkiss's plans for the museum.²³² However, in his view, adjustments had to be made to this system due to the museum's location and its connection to Zionism.²³³

Narkiss' broad exhibition scheme included educational programs, travelling exhibitions and publications. Unlike Schatz's travelling exhibitions intended for fundraising for the institution by selling objects made by the Bezalel School students, Narkiss developed a program of travelling fine art exhibitions. These exhibits travelled to Jewish communities in Palestine and later Israel, exposing the people to lithographs of works of art by the great

²³¹ Bartal, p. 312.

²³² Narkiss, 'The National Museum Bezalel', *Yalkut Bezalel (The Bezalel Collection) B*, pp. 39-40.

²³³ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.2 Mordecai Narkiss, *The National Museum Bezalel in Jerusalem: its collection activities and needs*, 1946, pp. 3-7.

masters.²³⁴ Public programs bringing art to smaller communities were thriving in the USA at the Museum of Modern Art, for example where a multidisciplinary program introduced visitors to activities including film viewing, to exhibitions such as ‘Useful Objects’, and projects such as ‘Modern Art for Children’ all of which attracted audiences who were eager to learn.²³⁵

Bezalel after Schatz 1932-1942

After Schatz’s unexpected death, in 1932, Narkiss fully invested in the expansion of the museum collections and in obtaining financial support from associations of friends of the museum in Europe and the USA.²³⁶ In the next pages, I explore how Bezalel promoted itself in Palestine and abroad. A comparison between Bezalel and the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA) shows that Narkiss was influenced by the programs of international museums. The selection of these museums is based on two elements: first, Narkiss’s comparison to three museums, the British Museum, the Louvre and the Metropolitan Museum.²³⁷ Secondly, out of the three, the Metropolitan Museum was established in a country which was formed based on democratic ideology, comparable to ideas leading to the formation of Bezalel in a Jewish state.²³⁸ The Metropolitan Museum was thus completely separated from the Louvre considered royal collections. Though the British Museum was

²³⁴ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.2 Narkiss, *The National Museum Bezalel in Jerusalem: its collection activities and needs*, pp. 3-7.

²³⁵ Elodie Courter, ‘Notes on the Exhibition of Useful Objects’, *The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art* 6.6, (1940), 3-4.

²³⁶ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 11.178. Mordecai Narkiss, *Offer*, 1929. A letter to Boris Schatz regarding expanding the financial support of the museum.

²³⁷ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.160 Narkiss, *the National Museum Bezalel*, 1956, p. 2.

²³⁸ Terry Zeller, ‘The Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Art Museum Education in America’, in *Museum Education: History, Theory, and Practice*, ed. by Nancy Berry and Susan Mayer (Reston, VA: The National Art Association, 1989), pp. 10-89, (pp. 11-12).

established as the first national public museum, its collection did not contain a fine art department, unlike Bezalel and the Metropolitan Museum.²³⁹

The strength of a museum, as Narkiss believed, did not derive from the objects that were exhibited but from constantly growing its collection.²⁴⁰ He tightened the relationship between the museum and its associations by producing monthly accounts and updates of the happenings in the museum.²⁴¹

Between the years 1940-1942, the association of Bezalel friends published a quarterly publication *Omanuth* (Art) in Hebrew and English which was sent to members of Bezalel directorate. The purpose of *Omanuth*, as explained on the first page of the magazine published on March, 1940, was:

This publication is responsible, as suggested by its initiator “to reflect realistically the cultural endeavors of the museum”. To guard artistic values, teach about general art and introduce knowledge of Jewish art history into the avenues of cities and towns, villages, to individuals and groups, in the Kibbutz and the farm, in schools and in workshops.²⁴²

The ambitious publishers were aiming for the periodical to reach the local public and attract the interest of even those who were not involved with art and culture regularly. Among the articles that could be found in the publication were *the Art of Yemenite Jews, An Italian scroll and cover, the School of painters of journeys through Palestine and its influences*.²⁴³

The writers explored various fields of fine and decorative art, in hope that everyone could

²³⁹ Christopher Whitehead, *The Public Museum in Nineteenth Century Britain: the Development of the National Gallery* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005); David Mackenzie Wilson, *The British Museum: A History* (London: British Museum Press, 2002).

²⁴⁰ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.160 Narkiss, *the National Museum Bezalel*, 1956, p. 2.

²⁴¹ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.13 Narkiss, *Report of the Activities of the Jewish National Museum Bezalel*, October 1939-April 1941.

²⁴² *Omanuth*: a quarterly publication for the National Museum Bezalel, 1.A, (1940), p. 1.

על רבעון זה הוטל, כהצעת יוזמו "לשמש בבואה נאמנה לעולתו התרבותית של בית הנכות", שתפקידו השמירה על הערכים האמנותיים, הסברת האמנות הכללית והחדרת ידיעת היצירה היהודית בדורות שעברו, אל תוך השדרות הרחבות בעיר ובכפר, במושב ובקבוצה, בקיבוץ ובחוג, בבית הספר ובבית המלאכה.

²⁴³ *Omanuth*: a quarterly publication for the National Museum Bezalel, 1.A, (1940), pp. 6-8; *Omanuth*: a quarterly publication for the National Museum Bezalel, 1.C, (1940), p. 43; *Omanuth*: a quarterly publication for the National Museum Bezalel, 2.A, (1941), pp. 7-10.

find an interest reading and learning about Jewish culture. Between the years 1943-1949, *Omanuth* was replaced with a short monthly publication entitled *Minutes*. On June 1943, the editor of “Minutes” addressed friends of the museum and explained:

As result of the high cost of paper and printing, we were unable to print our quarterly publication “Omanuth” in an orderly manner since March 1942. This publication will be printed in a reduced size and will contain only articles and an annual report, it will not be able to include all the information on the continuous activities of the museum.²⁴⁴

In addition to the economic limitations the museum experienced, during the years of the Second World War, there was a need to cut down on expenses even further. The new publication was smaller in size, shorter in text and more affordable. The reader of *Minutes* could find short updates on the happenings in the museum and information on current and upcoming exhibitions and new acquisitions.²⁴⁵

It is possible to suggest that Narkiss was influenced by international museums and tried to implement programs that were originally introduced by them. The publication of a quarterly bulletin by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, for example, began in 1905. The bulletin contained short summaries about museum objects and exhibitions and in 1928 was joined by a new publication entitled *the Metropolitan Museum Studies*. *The Metropolitan Museum Studies* was printed until 1936 and was composed of extended researches on different art objects and their history and on objects that could be found in private collections around the world. The MoMA also published its own quarterly bulletin between the years 1933-1963. The bulletin gave information about the museums’ exhibitions and activities.²⁴⁶ By reading

²⁴⁴ *Minutes, the National museum Bezalel for the association of friends of the museum* (June, 1943), p. 1.

מחמת יוקר הגיר, הדפוס והקלישאות, לא עלה בידינו להוציא כסדרן, מאז מרץ 1942, את חוברות רבעוננו “אמנות”. החוברת המוכנה לדפוס תצומצם ותכיל רק מאמרים ודין – וחשבון שנתי, ולא תוכל להכיל את הידיעות השוטפות על פעולות בית הנכות.

²⁴⁵ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.13 Mordecai Narkiss, *The First Annual Report of the Activities of the Society of Friends of the Jewish National Museum Bezalel of Jerusalem*, March 1940-April 1941.

²⁴⁶ The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art, was published by the Museum of Modern Art between the years 1933-1963. It was later published under different titles until 2002.

through the publications of the MoMA, it can be understood that the museum was concerned with involving people in the arts. In order to do so, it established a film and dance library in parallel to the existing museum library, where regular film screening and lectures were organized.²⁴⁷ Its exhibition program varied from contemporary photographs, to exhibitions inviting children to learn about art and shows of works by college students.²⁴⁸

This possible influence displays an explicit shift from Schatz's museum model. For Schatz, the main interest was in Jewish art and Jewish artists, and his interest in non-Jewish art was limited to Jewish and biblical themes. Narkiss however, claimed that the focus on Jewish art was not sufficient and was leaning towards promoting canonic art of the Western World. The museum needed to contain examples of everything; works of art from every school and in every media.

In his essay, written for the fortieth anniversary of Bezalel, Narkiss described ongoing projects including the exhibition and educational programs organized annually by the museum:

1. Exhibitions. Every year large and small exhibits are organized at the museum, together they create a special unity and they are selected from the best of our collections, as well as from other public and private collections in Israel. The themes vary, I will only mention a few: Far-Eastern art, Netherlandish art, French Impressionism, Post-Impressionism – in other words every school from Fauvism to contemporary art of our days, French graphic art from Claude to Picasso (an exhibition that was especially successful in Jerusalem and was transferred during the war by the Free French Government to Beirut and was opened by General

²⁴⁷ 'Work and Progress of the Film Library', *The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art*, 4.4, (1937), 2-11.

²⁴⁸ Edward Steichen, and Carl Sandburg, 'Road to Victory, a Procession of Photographs of the Nation at War', *The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art*, 9.5, (1942), 2-17; 'Modern Art for Children: The Educational Project', *The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art*, 9.1 (1941), 3-12.

Catroux), Daumier exhibition (lithographs, works on paper, wood cuts, etc'), new British graphic art, new American graphic art etc'.

2. Monthly exhibits. Over the last few years we have been exhibiting a monthly painting, sculpture or graphic art, a unique object with additional text. Usually these objects come from private collections that are unknown to the public. French art is distinctive since it is highly collected in this country and since our public, especially the young generation identifies it as the complete realization of art. The art library also exhibits new objects as art books on different topics.²⁴⁹

The diverse exhibition program that Narkiss described can be partially referenced to the one at the MoMA, however it was different from it in its essence. Narkiss defined the Bezalel Museum not as a modern art institution but as a universal survey museum. Narkiss therefore increased the amount of “general” art shown and altered the balance in the collections between Jewish and “general” art. He followed a European conception of art schools which was appropriate to his efforts to create a universal survey museum. The exhibition range was very broad and included for example shows by local contemporary artists as well as sixteenth century Netherlandish art and objects from the Bronze era.²⁵⁰ In similar to the MoMA, exhibitions in Bezalel were also devoted to new media such as photography, graphic design and architecture. In this short description however, he did not mention local art or regional archaeology, which were researched at the time. He concentrated on the public and its views

²⁴⁹ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.2 Narkiss, *The National Museum Bezalel in Jerusalem: its collection activities and needs*, 1946.

1. תערוכות. מדי שנה בשנה נערכות תערוכות גדולות וקטנות המצטרפות לשלמות מיוחדת והמצברות מן המעולה שבאוספינו ושבאוספים ציבוריים ופרטיים שבארץ. רבים ושונים הם הנושאים, אם למנות רק אחדים מהם: אמנות המזרח הרחוק, אמנות נידרלנדית, אימפרסיוניסטים צרפתיים, פוסט-אימפרסיוניסטים – כלומר כל האסכולות למן הפוביסטים ועד ימינו אלה, גרפיקה צרפתית למן קלוד ועד פיקסאו (תערוכה שזכתה להצלחה מיוחדת בירושלים והועברה בימי המלחמה על ידי שלטונות צרפת החפשית לבירות ונפתחה שם על ידי הגנרל קטרו), תערוכות דומייה (ליטוגרפיות, רשומים, פתוחי עץ ועוד), גרפיקה אנגלית חדשה, גרפיקה אמריקאית חדשה ועוד ועוד. 2. מוצגי חודש. זה שנים אחדות שאנו מציגים מדי חודש בחדשו, תמונה, פסל, גרפיקה, חפץ מיוחדים, אגב הסברה מיוחדת בכתב. לרוב באים המוצגים מאספים פרטיים שאינם ידועים לציבור. האמנות הצרפתית באה גם כאן עד שכרה, כיון שהיא נצברת בחבה מיוחדת בארץ ומכיון שהציבור שלנו וביחוד הדור הצעיר, רואה בה את הגשמת האמנות. כן מציגה הספרייה לאמנות מוצגים חדשים בספרי אמנות על נושאים שונים.

²⁵⁰ *Netherlandish Art 1500-1800*, October – December 1941, the National Museum Bezalel in Jerusalem; *Ceramics from the Bronze Era*, 1945, a weekly exhibition in parallel to the Useful Art in Erez-Israel exhibition, the National Museum Bezalel in Jerusalem.

on fine art, explaining the reason for the special importance given to French art in the museum exhibitions plan. He explained that French art was highly collected locally, mostly by collectors who emigrated from Europe and managed to bring with them portions of their collections. Several important German Jewish families were particularly known to collect French art from late nineteenth century onwards.²⁵¹ Furthermore, Jewish artists from Central and Eastern Europe, including Boris Schatz, chose to study in Paris and joined the Paris School of artists which was considered superior in its modern approach.²⁵² Lastly, reading through Narkiss's archive shows his personal appreciation and connection to Paris. Narkiss had family there and was familiar with many of the local museum and cultural figures. During his travels to Europe he would usually visit Paris, where he organized the storing and shipping of objects on the way to Palestine.²⁵³

He continued to describe the programs aimed at reaching out to distant communities:

3. Travelling exhibitions. Our youth, working in agriculture, in the fields, the farmers, Kibbutz's, are thirsty for art and we bring it to them by travelling exhibitions each of 30 works wrapped in boxes. Every painting in the exhibition is accompanied by an easy to read text. The paintings are excellent color reproductions that are kept in our archive. 40 exhibitions in average travel every month in the entire country and abroad and even sent to the camps in Cyprus where they are used as a source of enjoyment and education.²⁵⁴ The museum has 120 such exhibitions and it constantly adds more.

²⁵¹ Veronica Grodzinski, *French Impressionism and German Jews. The Making of Modernist Art Collectors and Art Collection in Imperial Germany (1896-1914)* (unpublished doctoral theses, University College London, 2003).

²⁵² Malcolm Gee, *Dealers, Critics, and Collectors of Modern Paintings: Aspects of the Parisian Art Market Between 1910 and 1930* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1981).

²⁵³ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.111 Letters from Paris, 1947-1948.

²⁵⁴ Internment camps were built in Cyprus where the British government held Jews who tried to illegally immigrate to Palestine between 1946-1949.

4. Travelling images. Groups of large reproduction and facsimilia are sent to class-rooms, to youth groups, to culture halls for decoration and as a source of art education. This cultural property is also growing annually [...]²⁵⁵

The 'Travelling Exhibitions' or, circulating exhibitions, as it was titled at the MoMA, was a popular project that made it possible to bring works of art to distant communities. A variety of travelling exhibitions in addition to guided tours of the museum exhibits and publications were part of the educational program that Narkiss introduced. Attracting the local public in Jerusalem was not enough, Narkiss was eager to reach distant settlements and further, all the way to the internment camps in Cyprus, where Jews who tried to enter Palestine illegally were held by the British Mandate Government.

The museum exhibitions were curated in order to convey both the educational and historical value of each object. Education was central in Narkiss's program as he described in the text for the fiftieth anniversary of Bezalel: 'Education, especially visual education, is a key factor for unity and a unification to one culture'.²⁵⁶

in this period, several pioneering approaches towards museum education developed by people who associated it with social responsibility.²⁵⁷ The American philosopher, John Dewey, described the idea of art as an experience and believed that museums are places for high education, just like libraries.²⁵⁸ By comparison, John Cotton Dana, who was director of the Newark Museum in New Jersey between the years 1909-1929, emphasized the social

²⁵⁵ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.2 Narkiss, *The National Museum Bezalel in Jerusalem: its collection activities and needs*, 1946.

3. תערוכות נודדות. הנוער שלנו, העובדים בעבודת השדה, האכרים, הקבוצים, צמאים לאמנות ואני מביאים אותה אליהם באמצעות תערוכות נודדות שכל אחת מכילה 30 מסגרות הארוזות בתיבות. כל תמונה שבתערוכה מוסברה על ידי טכסט קל לקריאה אגב נתוחים. התמונות הן ריפרודוקציות צבעוניות מעולות מתוך הארכיון שלנו. 40 תערוכות בממוצע נודדות בכל חודש בארץ כולה ואין בחוץ לארץ ואפילו למחנות בקפריסין וכן נשלחות ומשמשות שם מקור לעונג ולחנוך. 120 תערוכות כאלה יש לבית הנכות והוא הולך ומוסיף עליהן. 4. תמונות נודדות. ריפרודוקציות פכסימיליות גדולות נשלחות לכתות בבתי הספר, לקלובי נוער, לחדרי תרבות בקבוצות כדי לקשט את הקירות ולשמש מקור של חנוך לאמנות. גם רכוש זה של תמונות נודדות גדל והולך מידי שנה בשנה... [...]

²⁵⁶ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.160 Narkiss, *the National Museum Bezalel*, 1956, p. 8.

הרי החינוך, ובראשו החינוך הויזואלי, המלכד, הוא הגורם לאחדותו של עם לתרבות אחידה.

²⁵⁷ Eilean Hooper-Greenhill 'Museum Education', in *The Educational Role of the Museum*, ed. by Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (London and New York: Routledge, 1994) pp. 229-257.

²⁵⁸ George E. Hein, 'John Dewey and Museum Education', *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 47.4 (October, 2004), 413-427, (p. 417).

responsibility of museums and their place within communities. A third approach argued that a museum is a place for aesthetic interactions and therefore would not be appropriate for high education.²⁵⁹ Narkiss's approach was close to Dewey's, who saw museums as an integral part of education and believed that knowledge and experience are the basis for the creation of meanings.²⁶⁰

Among the groups who benefited from Narkiss' 'visual education' were school children invited to visit the exhibitions at Bezalel and react to what they saw in writing and painting, agriculture students, and the blind, who Narkiss taught by inviting them to touch and feel the objects.²⁶¹

The youth exhibitions and *Object of the Month* exhibitions were part of his idea of visual education. Youth exhibitions were often complimented with lectures and occasionally with concerts.²⁶² An object, as Narkiss liked to exhibit it, was linked to an historical event, a Jewish holiday or was new and unique in the museum collection. Object of the Month exhibitions included for example: a landscape painting by Paul Gauguin, a Torah ark curtain, *Morning Prayer* by Wassily Kandinsky and a guitar with ivory inlay and a wooden head sculpture made in 1420 Nuremberg.²⁶³ Narkiss believed that Bezalel was a living site for the people to be introduced to art through educational programs:

This museum is not a mausoleum, but a place where much is being done, I would say: indeed it is a place for living muses. It had many activities and many departments. All is directed towards inner and outer work. All is

²⁵⁹ More on early twentieth century museum education theories: Benjamin Ives Gilman, *Museum Ideals of Purpose and Method* (Cambridge MA: Museum of Fine Arts Boston, 1918); Carol Duncan, 'Cotton Dana's Progressive Museum', in *Self and History: a Tribute to Linda Nochlin*, ed. by Aruna D'Souza (London: Thames & Hudson, 2001), pp. 127-136; George E. Hein, 'Museum Education', in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. by Sharon Macdonald (Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), pp. 340-352, (p. 343); Carol Duncan, *A Matter of Class: John Cotton Dana, Progressive Reform and the Newark Museum* (Pittsburgh, PA: Priscoper publishing, 2009).

²⁶⁰ Hein, 'John Dewey and Museum Education', *Curator: The Museum Journal*, p. 414.

²⁶¹ Hooper-Greenhill, pp. 230-231.

²⁶² For example, the June 1949 collaboration with the Israeli Music Conservatory in Jerusalem for the monthly program entitled the Leading Movements in Art History and Musicology.

²⁶³ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 4. 117List of Monthly exhibitions, 1944-1957.

directed to serve the audience, to educate it, to refine its taste and improve it

[...] ²⁶⁴

Visitors experienced lively programs and events organized by the museum staff. Exhibiting objects of aesthetic value was an educational experience for visitors of every age. Objects were brought back to life through such shows, lectures and guided tours. In these exhibits, the past was distinguished from the contemporary experience of the visitor to the exhibition. That was because the objects themselves were removed from their original environment and reorganized in a new framework that reflected the curators' interpretation and was experienced by viewer through his or her individual identity.²⁶⁵ Narkiss encouraged visitors to express their own interpretation in surveys distributed during visits.²⁶⁶

Expansion of the museum collection was almost completely dependent on donations and many of the exhibitions were organized around new artefacts or events that could bring new interest in the museum. For example, the 1945 exhibition *Introduction to the idea of Social Aid through Art* was organized to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the social service school of the National Fund, and later, the 1952 *Jewish Doctor* exhibition was organized in parallel to an international doctor's convention that took place in Jerusalem. Many of the gifts and donations were sent to the museum from abroad, crucial because the local art market was small and limited by comparison to those in Europe and the USA. As Narkiss stated:

One must note that here the possibilities to purchase art are limited and it can not be compared to the situation in Europe or America where the art market is

ואין דבר זה דומה למצב בארצות אירופה או אמריקה בהן תפוח שוק האמנות ובכך ניתנת האפשרות למוזיאונים לרכוש במטבע המדינה את אשר הם רוצים לקנות. ולאידך אין תנאי הכלכלה של מדינתנו הצעירה מרשים קניה במטבע זר בחוץ-לארץ, ובכך נתון בית הנכות רק להסד השוק המקומי שאינו עשיר ביותר.

²⁶⁴ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.160 Narkiss, *the National Museum Bezalel*, 1956, p. 3.

אין בית הנכות הזה מאוזוליון, כי אם מקום שהמעשה בו רב, הייתי אומר: באמת, מקום המוזות החיות. מרובות הן פעולותיו ומרובות האינסטיטוציות שלו. הכל מכוון לעבודת פנים וחוץ. הכל מכוון לשרות הקהל, לחנכו, לעדן טעמו ולשפרו [...]

²⁶⁵ Donald Preziosi, 'Modernity Again: The Museum as Trompe L'Oeil', in *Deconstruction and the Visual Arts: Art, Media, Architecture*, ed. by Peter Brunette and David Wills, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 141-150 (p. 143).

²⁶⁶ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive 11.170. Visitors to exhibitions were invited to express their opinions on the selection of works, interpret them and ask questions.

inflated and makes it possible for museums to buy anything they want in local currency. On the other hand the economic situation in our country does not allow any purchases abroad in foreign currency, and therefore the museum is subject to the favors of the limited local market.²⁶⁷

Narkiss tried to explain the situation in Palestine forcing museums to depend on donations. Not only, he claimed, was the market small, foreign currency was hard to come by, making it virtually impossible to purchase abroad.

Finding a Jewish Art

Within this national universal survey museum in which “general” international art would be exhibited, Narkiss found a central place for Jewish art. Narkiss initiated the research of the history and the development of Jewish art as part of the library and the archive of the museum. Jewish art, as Narkiss explained in a radio interview in the summer of 1943, has always existed:

The Jewish creativity has not ceased since the time of the second temple and the days of exile. The scale in the creation of a people is estimated by the impulse to create as a result of their will and intention.²⁶⁸

Narkiss’ concept of the museum moved between two poles: on the one hand, it required “general” art in order to become a universal survey museum; on the other, it required Jewish

²⁶⁷ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.160 Narkiss, *the National Museum Bezalel*, 1956, p. 7.

ויש להגיד שבארץ מועטה האפשרות של קניות, ואין דבר זה דומה למצב בארצות אירופה או אמריקה בהן תפוח שוק של אמנות ובכך ניתנת האפשרות למזויאונים לרכוש במטבע המדינה את אשר הם רוצים לקנות. ולאידך אין תנאי הכלכלה של מדינתנו הצעירה מרשים קניה במטבע זר בחוץ-לארץ, ובכך נתון בית הנכות רק לחסד השוק המקומי שאינו עשיר ביותר.

²⁶⁸ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.151 Narkiss, *Jewish Art and its Destiny*, 1943.

היצירה היהודית אינה פוסקת מאז ימי הבית השני וימי הגלות. קנה המידה ביצירת עם הוא יותר האמפולס היוצר מאשר היצירה מתוך כונה ומתוך רצון בלבד.

art to serve its role as a national museum for the Jewish people.²⁶⁹ In his point of view, Jewish art developed as a discrete section in the history of art, in parallel to international art. By describing the artist's impulse to create, Narkiss connected himself to the romantic nineteenth century theory of Art for Art's Sake: The idea that art is above everything and the artist who is one with nature and creates beauty.²⁷⁰

The question of the existence of Jewish art preoccupied art historians and philosophers during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.²⁷¹ Throughout the next pages the concept of Jewish art is explored by looking at modern theories developed by Jewish art historians such as Cecil Roth and Stephen Kayser in the 1950s in comparison to recent 2000s theorists as Margaret Olin, Kalman Bland and Joseph Gutmann. Thus, I hope to put Narkiss's perspective in the appropriate context, explaining his influences and originality in the field of research of Jewish art, leading him to prepare a four-volume publication on Jewish art that was unfinished and so remained unpublished.²⁷²

Both Bland and Olin presented in their research surveys of the late nineteenth century and the twentieth century interpretations the concept of Jewish art. One of their central hypothesis is based on anti-Semitic and racist distinctions.²⁷³ In the nineteenth century, scholars intertwined history and nationalism and based on such ideas, people were classified into races or nations.²⁷⁴ Jews were defined by their lack of a history, a land, and an art. Jewish art became distinguished from the Jewish artists' local cultures in a way that did not influence

²⁶⁹ The concept of "general" art was later used by Guido Schoenberegger in his essay, 'The Essence of Jewish Art', *Historia Judaica: A Journal of Studies in Jewish History, Especially in the Legal and Economic History of the Jews*, ed. by Guido Kisch, 2.VIII (New York: October, 1946), 191-198 (p. 193).

²⁷⁰ A. H. Hannay, 'The Concept of Art for Art's Sake', *Philosophy*, 29.108 (January, 1954), 44-53.

²⁷¹ Bland, pp. 13-36. Olin, *A Nation without Art*, pp. 3-72.

²⁷² Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.7 Mordecai Narkiss, *the origins of the history of the Art of Israel*, (draft), 1929. Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.162 Mordecai Narkiss, *A Plan for a four-volume book on the art in Israel* (unpublished) [n.d.].

²⁷³ Bland, pp. 26-27. Bland quoted from Wagner's *Das Judentum in der Musik*, (Leipzig, 1888) pp. 72-73. Originally published K. Freigedank, *Letter to Frenz Liszt*, (Leipzig, Neue Zeitschrift für Musik, 1851). Wagner believed that the lack of Jewish creativity stemmed from the absence of a land of their own. In the mid-nineteenth century, when Wagner published this criticism, many Jews were considered 'cosmopolitans,' a portrayal with negative connotations of a people with no national identity, interested only in capital and finances.

²⁷⁴ Olin, *A Nation without Art*, pp. 6-7.

local European culture.²⁷⁵ In her 2007 essay, Annabel Jane Wharton referred to the 1960 aspect of the art historian Heinrich Strauss, who understood ancient and Medieval Jewish art as an expression of the devotion of a minority group that neglected its uniqueness as a result of assimilation. However, the Jews, in his opinion, could regain their unique traits by establishing a Jewish state.²⁷⁶ Lacking a national identity, Jews were described as villainous, menacing, chameleon-like figures.²⁷⁷

Another approach associated the Jews with the Oriental. In his 1842 art history handbook, Franz Kugler described the Jews as exotic. Kugler based his division on a geographical map, according to which the Jews are a part of the group of Semitic or Syrian people. Their art, which consisted of metallic decorations, was linked with splendour and luxury, motifs of Orientalism. Jews were also affiliated with fantasy, based for instance on the description of the cherubim on the arc of the tabernacle who have wings and animal parts.²⁷⁸ Later it was allegories of temple of Solomon that also fed these stereotypes with threatening qualities.²⁷⁹

The basis of the idea that Jewish art never existed is rooted in ideological interpretations of the second commandment ('Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image').²⁸⁰ Roth questioned the prohibition and suggested that the commandment should be read with the verse: 'Thou shalt not bow down to them and shalt not serve them'.²⁸¹ In this context the meaning of the second commandment was narrowed to the prohibition of images that replace divinity. The interpretation of the verse has changed over time, for example, in the year 66 AD all representations of animals and humans were banned.²⁸² Pointing to representations of both animals and humans on Jewish ritual objects, Kayser, art historian and director of the

²⁷⁵ Ibid, pp. 24-27.

²⁷⁶ Annabel Jane Wharton, 'Jewish Art, Jewish Art', *Images: A Journal of Jewish Art and Visual Culture*, (2007), 1-7.

²⁷⁷ Olin, *A Nation without Art*, pp. 17-18.

²⁷⁸ Ibid, pp. 11-12.

²⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 14.

²⁸⁰ Ibid, pp. 5-6.

²⁸¹ Cecil Roth, *Jewish Art an Illustrated History*, (New York: McGraw-Hill - Massadah, 1961), p. 11.

²⁸² Ibid, pp. 12-13.

Jewish Museum in New York agreed with Roth.²⁸³ In a radio interview in 1943, Narkiss strengthened this approach by described his view of an enduring Jewish art:

Discoveries and excavations bring us interesting materials for the history of painting schools in Israel and we must also pay attention to that which is lost. Artistic prohibitions, which are not unique to Judaism – Christian iconoclasm has existed for a long time – these are not beneficial in Judaism. There is an impulsive art, an art that is a response to an inner stimulus, one that produces creators, artists who paint with available materials in the Jewish street – there are no sponsoring Cathedrals or Patron princes. Jewish art has not ceased since the time of the second temple and the days of exile.²⁸⁴

This view contradicted Strauss's opinion that reinforced Zionism by claiming that only in their own land would Jews be able to regain their unique form of art. Moreover, other Jewish thinkers such as Martin Buber and Boris Schatz asserted that in the absence of territory Jewish art was impossible. Narkiss saw Jewish art as a spiritual endeavor, one that was derived from the personal need of the artist to express himself or herself. Art was the outcome of a private impulse and therefore it was not institutionalized by the religious establishment. The concept of Art for Art's Sake was used by Nakiss to separate the development of Jewish art, as he saw it, from Christian art. Narkiss continued to support this idea:

The scale in the creation of a people is based more on the impulse of creation rather than the creation as a result of an intention and a decision. It is not the

²⁸³ Stephen S. Kayser and Guido Schoenberger, *Jewish Ceremonial Art* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1955), p. 16.

²⁸⁴ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.151 Narkiss, *Jewish Art and its Destiny*, p. 3.

אך התגליות והחפירות מביאות לנו חומר מעניין לתולדותיהן של אסכולות ציוריות בישראל ועלינו לשים לב גם למה שנחרב. האסורים האמנותיים, שאינם מיוחדים ליהדות בלבד – האימפולסיביות הנוצרית מאריכה ימים זמן רב – האסורים האמנותיים אינם מועילים ביהדות. קיימת אמנות אימפולסיבית, אמנות שהיא פרי דחיפה פנימית המוציאה בכל זמן יוצרים, אמנים המציירים באמצעים האפשריים ברחוב היהודי – אין כנסיות מזמינות, אין נסיכים מזמינים. היצירה היהודית אינה פוסקת מאז ימי הבית השני וימי הגלות.

subsequent of majestic splendour or the divine adoration of the sculpted monarch that signified it. The desire to create was the principal of this art and not the desire for the physical. An art for arts' sake for the beautification of synagogues and bringing men closer with his God.²⁸⁵

In this interview, Narkiss mentioned examples from fourteenth century Spain and seventeenth century Germany but only from the nineteenth century onwards did he identify distinct periods and types of Jewish artists. Narkiss chose to do so because only in the nineteenth century, he explained, Jewish art became known to the world as a result of the emancipation. Until then, Jewish art was individual and concentrated on traditions. Narkiss mentioned for example, decorated synagogues, illuminated manuscripts, ritual objects and gravestones, as an attempt to show the change in the position of Jewish artists in the nineteenth century. The radio interview quoted here was held to promote the exhibition *Jewish artists: from Oppenheim to Chagall 1814-1914* that opened in the spring of 1943 in Bezalel.²⁸⁶ The exhibition was described as:

Here you will find artists who painted Jews and in order to fulfill their obligation to Judaism or others who remained Jews and started a process of assimilation which they later regret – as Liebermann for example, though there were others who did not wake. There are also those born in Jewish environment, who wished to pursue their old tradition, but the distractive modern education and the gentile surrounding forced them to defend Judaism in protective apologetic iconography. Oppenheim, Moses David Gottlieb, Hirszenberg and others had only one ambition to show the beauty of the

²⁸⁵ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.151 Narkiss, *Jewish Art and its Destiny*, p. 3.

קנה המדה ביצירת עם הוא יותר האמפולס היוצר משר היצירה מתוך כוונה ומתוך רצון בלבד. לא אהבת פאר מלכותית, או חבת ההערצה האלהית של המלך המפוסל ציינה אמנות זו. תאות יצירה הייתה עיקר לאמנות זו ולא תאות הערך הגשמי. היא היתה אמנות לשמה שכוונתה שמושית הדור מצוות, הדור בתי כנסת, קירוב העם למקום:

²⁸⁶ *Jewish Artists: from Oppenheim to Chagall 1814-1914*, exhibition catalogue May 8-June 12, 1943 (Jerusalem: the National Museum Bezalel, 1943).

Jewish spirit. Lesser Uri, Lillien and Schatz saw before them a new way of life and a new duty to Zionism. Schatz translated it into action and created a school in Jerusalem for the art of Israel – territorial art [...]²⁸⁷

Narkiss referred to early twentieth century Jewish artists who experienced the emancipation and anti-Semitism and chose two opposite ways to react, the apologetic way and the Zionist way. Gutmann suggested that the disappointment of the emancipation affected Jews in two ways: some chose to assimilate and others chose to withdraw. As a result of this crisis, the attainment of Jewish art was part of the process of finding Jewish self-awareness.²⁸⁸

After writing a disapproving review essay on Karl Schwarz's 1928 publication *The Jews in Art*, Narkiss prepared a plan for a four-volume publication about the art in Israel.²⁸⁹ Narkiss criticized Schwarz's review, claiming that it was written in a generalizing manner and it chose to ignore unique Jewish elements and emphasize the influences of foreign art.²⁹⁰ Gutmann saw Schwarz's publication as an outcome of the early twentieth century search for a distinctive Jewish art in which he separated the art of the Jews from Jewish art.²⁹¹ Moreover, in 1954 Schwarz published a book devoted to Jewish sculptors.²⁹² He opened the books with a review of the development of plastic arts without distinguishing Jewish artists until he reached the founding of Israel. Schwarz saw the State of Israel as a renaissance for Jews, he then went further to divide the Jews between those who live in Israel and, as he

²⁸⁷ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.151 Narkiss, *Jewish Art and its Destiny*, p. 3.

מוציגים כאן אמנים שציירו יהודים ורוצים לצאת בזאת חובתם, או כאלה שנשארו יהודים והחלו בתהליך ההתבוללות אשר בסוף ימיהם התחרטו עליו – כליברמן למשל ואלם יש כאלה, אשר לא זכולהתעורר. ויש גם כאלה ילידי הסביבה היהודית, אשר רצו להמשיך במסורת נושנה, אך החנוך החדש היה בעוכרם והסביבה הנכרית הכריחה אותה להגן על היהדות על-ידי תיאורה בצורה אפולוגטית, הגנתית. אופנהיים, משה דוד גוטליב, הירשנברג ואחרים שאיפה אחת להם להראות את יפי רוחם של היהודים. לטר אורי, ליליין ושץ רואים לפנייהם הוי חדש ותפקיד חדש על ידי הציונות. שץ מתרגם זאת לשפת המעשה והולך לירושלים ליצור בה אסכולה מיוחדת לאמנות של ישראל – אמנות טריטוריאלית [...]

²⁸⁸ Gutmann, 'Is There a Jewish Art?', in *The Visual Dimension*, ed. by Moore, p. 3.

²⁸⁹ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.7 Narkiss, *the origins of the history of the Art of Israel*, (draft), 1929; 14.162 Narkiss, A *Plan for a four-volume book on the art in Israel* (unpublished) [n.d.].

²⁹⁰ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.7 Narkiss, *the origins of the history of the Art of Israel*, 1929; 14.162 Narkiss, *A Plan for a four-volume book on the art in Israel*, [n.d.], pp. 1-4.

²⁹¹ Gutmann, 'Is There a Jewish Art?', in *The Visual Dimension*, ed. by Moore, p. 5.

²⁹² Karl Schwarz, *Jewish Sculptors*, (Jerusalem: Art Publishers, 1954).

explained, became a single unit and those who live outside of it, which were subject to assimilation.²⁹³

Though Narkiss's book was never published, the written parts found in his archive expressed his grasp of Jewish art. Narkiss started his analysis of Jewish art in ancient times, before the building of the first Temple and ended it in the twentieth century. This understanding of the great unknown history of Jewish art and the concern for the scarce examples that survived of it, was crucial for his active promotion of the concept of *kinnus* or ingathering of Jewish art and later of its salvage.

The Schatz Fund for the Salvage of Jewish Art Remnants

To deepen the understanding of the importance of salvage to Narkiss after the Holocaust, the process of the founding of the Schatz fund is explored in the next pages.²⁹⁴ In November, 1941, Narkiss turned to the Jewish Agency in a first attempt to establish a foundation that would be committed to the recovery of Jewish art remnants.²⁹⁵ By remnants, Narkiss referred to the objects that remained of Jewish culture. The purpose of the fund was:

to redeem remnants of Jewish Art, to transfer them to Palestine and to find a permanent home for them at our Museum, a foundation of the late Prof. B. Schatz.²⁹⁶

First, the objects that have been at risk abroad would be salvaged and transferred to Palestine. There, they would be kept at the Bezalel Museum, which would become a permanent home

²⁹³ Schwartz, p. 11.

²⁹⁴ Another case of post-World War II salvage was researched by Lisa Moses Leff. Lisa Moses Leff, 'Rescue or Theft? Zosa Szajkowski and the Salvaging of French Jewish History after World War II', *Jewish Social Studies*, 18.2 (2012), 1-39.

²⁹⁵ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.15 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter to Yizhak Gruenbaum the executive of the Jewish Agency*, 10 January, 1943; 2.15 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter to Yizhak Gruenbaum*, 10 October, 1943.

²⁹⁶ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.15 *The Schatz Fund exhibition catalogue: Redemption of Jewish Art Remnants*, (Jerusalem: The Jewish National Museum Bezalel, 1946).

for them. In Narkiss' point of view, the dangerous situation in Europe did not make it possible to leave any works of art there, as he explained:

Our old culture has been greatly endangered by the indifference of our own people and by the destroyers of Jewish life, who longed for the gold and silver of our ceremonial objects.²⁹⁷

News of the war in Europe reached the Jewish population in Palestine and spread fear and concern for the fate of Jewish communities and for their cultural artefacts.²⁹⁸ In the 1943 radio interview, Narkiss shared known information about Hitler's confiscations of Jewish art in Germany:

When Hitler took power, his servants removed every work of art by a Jew from museum collections. While there was a long list of Jewish museums in these countries – a list of tens and with additional private collections it would reach hundreds – all of these do not exist anymore. They were robbed, silver objects have been melted, and in many instances destroyed.²⁹⁹

Narkiss expressed concern for works of art and Jewish ritual objects, museums, and private collections. As head of the National Museum, he felt personally responsible to salvage cultural objects that originated in Jewish communities in Europe. Moreover, earlier opportunities in which the Bezalel museum was offered objects for purchase and declined filled Narkiss with guilt and regret. He worked relentlessly to obtain funding for this new purpose that would make it possible to purchase objects instead of losing them forever. He

²⁹⁷ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.15 *The Schatz Fund exhibition catalogue*, 1946.

²⁹⁸ Announcement of a day of fasting and grieving, front page *Hamashkiff*, [Hebrew] 30 November 1942.

ההכרזה על יום צום ואבל כללי, *המשקיף*, יום שני, נובמבר 30, 1942

The War in the Jews, *Davar*, [Hebrew] March 8, 1940.

המלחמה ביהודים, דבר, יום שישי, מרץ 8, 1940.

²⁹⁹ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.151 Narkiss, *Jewish Art and its Destiny*, p. 6.

בראשית שלטונו נהגו משרתי היטלר להוציא כל יצירה של יהודי מן המוזיאונים. ואילו רשת ארוכה של מוזיאונים יהודיים בכל הארצות האלו – ורשת זו היתה בת עשרות מוזיאונים ואם תוסיף לכך אספים אמנותיים פרטיים הרי הרשת היא בת מאות – כל אלה אינם קיימים עוד. הם נשדדו, חפצי המתכת הותכו, ובמקרים רבים נחרבו.

expressed a feeling of despair and responsibility in a letter written in 1942 to the Jewish Agency's executive, Yizhak Gruenbaum:

Over the past years important Jewish treasures have been offered to our museum, however we did not have the ability to purchase anything and lost them. Many of these objects were removed from the country, many that were made of expensive metals were melted while the remnants of these important items were destroyed by the enemy, these remnants perished because of our neglect, and our hands are not clean.³⁰⁰

This emotional description of the funding difficulties that the Bezalel Museum experienced was seen by Narkiss as a part of the responsibility for the loss of Jewish ritual objects that were melted or destroyed.³⁰¹ It can be suggested that Narkiss was also using this emotional sentence to trigger the readers' feelings of guilt.

In the spring of 1942, with an allowance from the Jewish Agency and donations from benefactors of Bezalel, the Schatz Fund was established, commemorating Boris Schatz.³⁰²

The article of association of the fund explained the division of the annual donations between the efforts to salvage Jewish cultural remnants, an award for a young artist, and support for the Jewish art archive in Bezalel.³⁰³ Narkiss was optimistic about the use of the funds, which were mostly designated for purchases of objects in Europe. However, he soon realized that they were too limited to fulfil his ambitious goals. Therefore, he decided only to obtain

³⁰⁰ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.15 Narkiss, *letter to Yizhak Gruenbaum*, 1 March, 1942.

במשך השנים האחרונות הוצאו לבית הנכותנו אוצרות אמנותיים יהודיים חשובים אשר אבדו מאתנו, הואיל ולא היתה בידינו האפשרות לרכוש דבר. רבים מן הדברים הוצאו מן הארץ, רבים שהיו ממתכת טובה הותכו ושרידי אמנות חשובים אלה שרדי האויב בחוץ עשו בהם שמות, שרידי אמנות אלה – כלו מחמת ההזמנחה, ואין ידינו נקיות.

³⁰¹ Nawojka Cieslinska-Lobkowitz, 'The History of Judaica and Judiaca Collections in Poland Before, During and After the Second World War: An Overview', *Neglected witnesses: The Fate of Jewish Ceremonial Objects During the Second World War and After* ed. by Julie-Marthe Cohen and Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, (London: Institute of Art and Law, 2011), pp. 129-182, (p. 155).

³⁰² Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.151 Narkiss, *Jewish Art and its Destiny*, p. 6.

³⁰³ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.15. Articles of association for the Schatz Fund award on behalf of the Jewish Agency for Palestine.

objects of Jewish ritual art.³⁰⁴ Archival documents from the period are limited to describing Narkiss's purchases, while no indications to fund allocated to support artists and the Bezalel archive were found. Narkiss explained his decision in a letter to Gruenbaum:

This fund is not a fund that keeps its donations, since it will devote each year to purchase Jewish art remnants, mainly in the field of craftsmanship of Jewish ritual art, these objects will remain as the property of the Hebrew people in our national museum under the authority of the Zionist Organization [...]³⁰⁵

He repeated the idea that all the objects purchased by the fund would be kept at the Bezalel Museum, while emphasizing the museum's role in keeping the Hebrew and Jewish history for the Jewish people. Narkiss and the Bezalel Museum staff were persistent in writing requests for funding assistance to potential donors and Jewish organizations. Work to promote the Schatz Fund went on throughout the Second World War and the War of Independence in Israel that took place between 1947-1949.³⁰⁶

The rise of the Nazi regime in Germany and the outbreak of the Second World War caused a transformation in Narkiss' attitude and a shift from the concept of *kinnus* as a form of collecting to an urgent need to salvage Jewish cultural objects. Narkiss believed that the Jewish community in Palestine and Jewish organizations were the first to be responsible for the salvage of Jewish cultural objects, and Bezalel was a part of this group. From then until the post-war years, Narkiss used the word *kinnus* as the concept behind the salvage process,

³⁰⁴ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.15 Narkiss, *letter to Yizhak Gruenbaum*, 1 March, 1942.

³⁰⁵ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.15 Narkiss, *letter to Yizhak Gruenbaum*, 1 March, 1942.

קרון זו אינה לעת-עתה קרן במובן של שמירת הסכומים שלה, הואיל ותוקדש מידי שנה בשנה לרכישת שרידי אמנות יהודיים, בעיקר במלאכת אמנות יהודית בתשמישי קדושה יהודיים, אשר ישארו נכסי העם העברי בבית נכותו הלאומי שברשות ההנהלה הציונית [...]

³⁰⁶ For more information about Israel's War of Independence see: Netanel Lorch, *The Edge of the Sword: Israel's War of Independence 1947-1949* (Easton Press, 1991); Uri Milstein, *History of the War of Independence*, 2 vols, (University Press of America, 1996); Benny Morris, *1948: A History of the First Arab-Israeli War* (Yale University Press, 2008).

signifying the idea of the brining together of things.³⁰⁷ In his letters and essays he reinforced the necessity of the salvage by repeating descriptions of the devastating conditions in Europe:

The days of Nazi horror arrived, since 1932, demolition and the burning of synagogues, destruction of cemeteries and gravestones on 11 November, 1938 and the acts to follow throughout the war years – which expressed the problem in its gravity, for those who see in the art remnants a treasure of the art, spirit and soul of Israel.³⁰⁸

This perceived role of Jewish art in the context of the Holocaust can also be seen in the case of the Danzig community collection of Jewish ritual objects, shipped to New York in 1939.³⁰⁹ The community members saw the possible outcome of the war and in order to keep the collection intact, decided to send it to the JTS for safe-keeping in hope that after the war the community would re-establish itself and manage to return the objects. Several researchers examined the post-Holocaust efforts of Jewish communities to return Jewish ritual art in the book *Neglected Witnesses: The Fate of Jewish Ceremonial Objects During the Second World War and After*. Julie-Marthe Cohen, for example, mentioned the post-war efforts of the Dutch Government and the Jewish community in Amsterdam to recover Jewish ritual objects that were taken from them that continues to this day.³¹⁰

³⁰⁷ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.151. Mordecai Narkiss, *From the National Museums Bezalel in Jerusalem: Two Journeys in Europe*, part of a series of radio interviews, 1948, p. 2.

³⁰⁸ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3. Mordecai Narkiss, *On the Question of the Salvage of Art Remnants, their Recovery and Removal to Israel*, September 1948, p. 1. A translation of the full text can be found in Appendix I.

באו ימי הזועה הנאציים מאז 1932, ההתפרצויות של חורבן בתי כנסת ושריפתם, של הריסת בתי קברות ומצבותיהם ב-11 בנובמבר 1938 והמעשים שבאו בעקבותיהם כל ימי המלחמה – והעמידו את הבעיה בכל חריפותה, למען אלה אשר שרידי אמנות ותרבות אלה הם אוצר בלום של מחשבת ישראל, רוזה ונפשה.

³⁰⁹ *Danzig 1939: Treasures of a Destroyed Community*, ed. by Vivian B. Mann and Joseph Gutmann, (New York: The Jewish Museum, 1980).

³¹⁰ Julie-Marthe Cohen, 'Theft and Restitution of Judaica in the Netherlands During and After the Second World War', in *Neglected Witnesses: The Fate of Jewish Ceremonial Objects During the Second World War and After*, ed. by Julie-Marthe Cohen and Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek (London: The Centre for Art and Law, 2011), pp. 199-252.

Narkiss's salvage project could not have prevailed without the Jewish Agency's support. The need for the organization's acknowledgement was both economically and politically key to the Schatz Fund. As he explained:

The main activity is being restricted due to a lack in approval of the articles of association and as a result of our main supporting institution – the Jewish Agency – has not announced its participation in the funding of the Schatz Fund. Several local institutions would not agree to donate due to the lack of institutional support of the Agency.³¹¹

Without the recognition of the Jewish Agency, the central representative organization of the Jewish community in Palestine before the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, Bezalel was a minor struggling institution. Narkiss believed that such an acknowledgement would improve the prestige and importance of Bezalel and place it as the main cultural institution of Israel. Narkiss compared salvage to the ancient Jewish concept of the redemption of captives.³¹²

The Schatz Fund purchases here – whose trustees described as the redeeming of the captives in a small scale, we commenced the efforts to reach other countries, in order to bring art remnants that represent an actual redeeming of the captives; rescue from destruction.³¹³

The first efforts of the Schatz Fund were turned towards Palestine and its neighbouring countries. Local collections were important to obtain for their quality and to prevent them

³¹¹ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.15 Narkiss, *letter to Gruenbaum*, 10 October, 1943.

הפעולה העיקרית נצטמצמת בגלל חוסר אישור לתקנון ובעיקר בגלל כך שהמוסד המרכזי שלנו – הסוכנות היהודית – לא הכריז על מתן חלקו לקרן שן. כמה מוסדות ישוביים לא נענו לנו משום שאין הכח המוסדי של הסוכנות עומד כמגן עלינו.

³¹² Efrati, Natan, *Encyclopedia Judaica: Ransoming of Captives*, Encyclopaedia Judaica, Jewish Virtual Library, 2008 <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0004_0_03941.html> [accessed 18 October 18 2016]. The redeeming of captives is a religious duty to rescue every Jewish prisoner. At the time of the Talmud (the third century) this commitment became of the highest importance.

³¹³ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *On the Question of the Salvage of Art Remnants*, September 1948, p. 2.

עם רכישות קרן שן בארץ – שנאמניה הרגישו בכך מעין פדיון שבויים בקנה-מידה קטן ביותר, החלה ההתאמצות להגיע גם לארצות חוץ, כדי להביא לארץ משרידי האמנות האלה שהטיפול בהם הוא פדיון שבויים ממש; הצלה מכליון.

from being dispersed abroad.³¹⁴ Due to the hostility in Middle Eastern countries, it was decided to expand the funds and reach Europe.³¹⁵

Between the years 1943-1947 hundreds of artefacts were brought to Bezalel and shown in a special annual exhibition devoted to the activities of the Schatz Fund.³¹⁶ In March 1943, several Jewish ritual objects purchased by the Schatz Fund were exhibited in the first Schatz Fund exhibition.³¹⁷ Unfortunately, no description of the show nor has a catalogue devoted to this exhibition been found. Copies of the 1946 and 1947 exhibition catalogues have been found in the Mordecai Narkiss archive. The 1946 catalogue opens with a short commentary on the four years leading up to the exhibition and invited visitors to support the expansion of the fund:

In Purim 1946 the fund enters its fifth year. During the last four years objects made of delicate metal-work that have a great value for the history of art and culture in Israel have been salvaged from melting, as well as other objects such as manuscripts and textiles in which a treasure of Jewish art and culture is hidden.³¹⁸

The objects mentioned in the exhibition catalogues include paintings, Jewish ritual objects and textiles, and Jewish family seals. For example: the last self-portrait of Boris Schatz, a landscape painting by Lesser Ury, a thirteenth century Ashkenazi Passover Haggadah, a Hannukah lamp made in Amsterdam by Shlom Italia (1626-1640) and eighteenth century

³¹⁴ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.151 Narkiss, *Jewish Art and its Destiny*, pp. 6-7.

³¹⁵ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *On the Question of the Salvage of Art Remnants*, September 1948, p. 2; Jeffrey Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). The Middle East was divided between Great Britain (Israel) and France (Lebanon and Syria). In 1942 the Nazi army was fighting the allied forces in Egypt, while promoting a propaganda campaign against the Jews in the area. The French Mandate Government in Syria ended upon the emergence of the independent Syrian state in 1943.

³¹⁶ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.15 Narkiss, *letter to Yitzhak Gruenbaum*, 10 January, 1943.

³¹⁷ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.15 Narkiss, *letter to Gruenbaum*, 10 October, 1943.

³¹⁸ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.15 *The Schatz Fund exhibition catalogue: Redemption of Jewish Art Remnants*, (Jerusalem: The Jewish National Museum Bezalel, 1946), p. 3.

הקרן נכנסת בפורים תש"ו לשנת פעולתה החמישית. במשך ארבעת השנים שחלפו ניצלו מכליון על ידי התכה חפצי מתכת עדינה שרב ערכם לתולדות התרבות והאמנות בישראל, כן ניצלו חפצים אחרים כגון כתבי יד, טקסטילים שאוצר אמנות ותרבות יהודית גנוז בהם.

Torah pointers.³¹⁹ The catalogues reveal that paintings by Jewish artists were as important to salvage as Jewish ritual objects. For each object, the catalogue listed media, artist, period, country of origin, and date of acquisition. The name of the previous private owner or community ownership was not mentioned, however, in certain instances the name of a donor who assisted in obtaining the object was added at the end of the description.

A major supporter was Dr. Heinrich Feuchtwanger, who fled Germany with his family in 1935 to settle in Jerusalem. In Germany, Feuchtwanger collected Jewish ritual objects that upon his arrival to Palestine he decided to give on a permanent loan to the Bezalel Museum.³²⁰ He soon joined the board of directors of the museum and became a close friend of Narkiss's, and was co-signor on the Schatz Fund's article of association.³²¹

By bringing together items that represented traditional Jewish rituals, such as the keeping of the Sabbath, circumcision, and observing the high holidays, the religious life of a nation was portrayed. A Jewish culture was commemorated through salvaged objects that were used to keep Jewish traditions. Since no unique qualities of the objects were mentioned in these catalogues, it is possible to argue that these items specifically were salvaged due to their availability to the museum. Nevertheless, one can assume that there was a process of filtering, and that the artefacts had to suit a form of classification based on Jewish purpose, use and the quality of the object. It is important to note that many of the items transitioned from ritual objects used daily or annually in ceremonies and events of a community to items of display. Thus, while they were initially valued by utility they shifted to be appreciated

³¹⁹ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.15 *Catalogue of a selection from the purchases of the Schatz Fund for the salvage of Jewish objects from destruction*, March 8-29, 1947 (Jerusalem: the National Museum Bezalel, 1947). The catalogue text is very limited and the information does not make it possible for the reader to identify the specific objects that were exhibited. The Ashkenzi Hagaddah referred to is probably the Birds Head Hagaddah, which can be found today in the Israel Museum collection, Jerusalem.

³²⁰ Isaiah Shachar and R. Grafman, *Jewish Tradition in Art: the Feuchtwanger Collection Judaica* (Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 1981).

³²¹ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.15 Letter to the Halvaa and Hisachon [Loans and Savings] Association Inc., 22 April, 1943.

aesthetically.³²² In addition to ritual objects, in 1947 the Schatz Fund received photographs of synagogues in Bohemia and Moravia as well as photographs of grave-stones and Jewish ritual objects from these communities. These and other photographs were kept in the collection of the photography archive.³²³ It is unclear whether the photography archive of the Bezalel Museum survived the transfer of the museum collection to the Israel Museum in the early 1960s. However, the Israel Museum holds a collection of over 20,000 photographs of Jewish synagogues, cemeteries, and communities taken in the early twentieth century. The images compiling the current collection were possibly a part of the items received after the Holocaust in Bezalel. The images operate as memory of a disappearing culture and as evidence of communities that were destroyed.³²⁴

Supplementary exhibitions devoted to unique objects salvaged from Europe were organized in parallel to the annual Schatz Fund exhibitions, for example, in March 1945, 'A Torah cover that was created in Hamburg in 1842' and in April 1947, 'An Illuminated Ashkenazi Passover Haggadah of the late Thirteenth Century'.³²⁵ Several of the objects exhibited were brought to Israel by Jewish refugees and Holocaust survivors.³²⁶ These exhibitions were accompanied by texts that described the items and their history and compared them to similar objects.³²⁷

The post-Holocaust efforts to commemorate Jewish communities that perished during the war intensified as Narkiss and other agents went to Europe in the late 1940s in order to procure

³²² James Clifford, 'On Collecting Art and Culture', *The Cultural Studies Reader*, ed. by Simon During (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 49-73 (pp. 56-57).

³²³ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.15 *Catalogue of a selection from the purchases of the Schatz Fund for the salvage of Jewish objects from destruction*, March 8-29, 1947.

³²⁴ This is an indirect continuation of the early twentieth century ethnographic research and collections leading for example to the founding the Jewish Museum in St. Petersburg discussed earlier.

³²⁵ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 4.117 Monthly exhibitions: *A Torah cover created in 1842 in Hamburg, Germany*, September, 1946; 4.117 Monthly exhibitions: *Illuminated Ashkenasic Passover Haggadah of the late Thirteenth Century*; 'Illuminated thirteenth century Haggadah', *Davar* [Hebrew] (4 April, 1947), p. 4. This is presumably identified as the Birds Head Haggadah, the Israel Museum collection, Jerusalem: M912-4-46; 180/057.

³²⁶ The ark curtain was brought after the Second World War to Israel by Moshe Glickstein, a Holocaust survivor who gave it as a gift to the Bezalel Museum.

³²⁷ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 4.117 Monthly exhibitions: *A Torah cover*, September, 1946; 4.117 Monthly exhibitions: October 1944-March 1957.

the remaining objects of these communities. The relationship between Narkiss and fellow agents is explored through texts and correspondences found in Narkiss's archive. By exploring these texts, I wish to demonstrate the variety of institutions that were involved in the post-Holocaust salvage and the disorganized situation in Europe.

In May 1947, Narkiss went on his first purchasing journey in Europe on behalf of the Schatz Fund. The main purpose of this trip was to salvage Jewish ritual art remnants, however, during the four months spent there, Narkiss managed to receive gifts of modern art that enriched the museum collection beyond his expectations. Although he originally planned to spend most of his time in Germany and Eastern Europe, Narkiss only travelled to France, Holland, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland and Czechoslovakia on this visit.³²⁸ Germany and Eastern Europe were occupied by Russia and the Allied Armies and entry visas were difficult to obtain.³²⁹

The picture depicted in Narkiss's letters was of a grim and poor Europe. Narkiss learned that art books, frames, and even works of art were cheaper to buy there than in Palestine.³³⁰ This desperate state became an opportunity for Narkiss to continue his efforts of the salvage of Jewish art objects on the one hand, and on the other, to expand the museum collection by taking advantage of the low Paris art market.³³¹ For example, he enlarged the museum's collection of works by Jewish artists of the Paris School. In his 1947 travel report Narkiss described the values and prices for which he was able to obtain works of art by Jewish artists of the French School for the museum:

³²⁸ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.151 Mordecai Narkiss, *From the National Museums Bezalel in Jerusalem: Two Journeys in Europe*, p. 1.

³²⁹ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.3 Narkiss, *Top Secret Report on a Journey to Europe on behalf of the Schatz Fund for the Salvage of Jewish Art Remnants*, [n.d.], p. 2.

³³⁰ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.101 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter from Paris*, 13 June, 1947, p. 3.

³³¹ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.151 Mordecai Narkiss, *From the National Museums Bezalel in Jerusalem: Two Journeys in Europe*, p. 1.

In this way a small but important collection of works by the Jewish artists of the Paris School arrived to the museum, in addition to gifts from various donors [...] All of that for the price of 174,000 Franc, which are valued in the international market for at least 565,000 Franc.³³²

Finding the appropriate balance between museum objects and Jewish art preoccupied him.³³³ Objects that would ‘go into storage’, he explained, would not be acceptable for the museum, that is possibly because Narkiss believed the items should be exhibited and used for the public’s benefit.³³⁴ Living Jewish artists were one of his priorities, as part of his plan to expand the collection of art from the Paris School, however the purchase of Jewish ritual objects was the actual salvage which he originally intended.³³⁵ In his own words:

We have a different interest: on the one hand good works by living artists and on the other the ambition to become the national museum of the people of Israel which will contain works by Jews in every field both of the past and of the present but based on my day to day selection.³³⁶

Both directions were equally important for Bezalel. Although the Schatz Fund’s article of association limited the purchase to works by deceased artists, Narkiss tried to find a way around it in order to acquire items he believed were important for the museum collection.

Purchases of Jewish ritual objects for the Schatz Fund were not successful on his 1947 trip as he expected and Narkiss mentioned only three objects that he considered important- a seventh century clay seal, a thirteenth century bowl for purification and a silver Hanukah lamp from

³³² Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.3 Narkiss, *Top Secret Report on a Journey to Europe on behalf of the Schatz Fund for the Salvage of Jewish Art Remnants*, [n.d.], p. 2.

בדרך זו הגיע בית הנכות לאוסף קטן, אך חשוב, של יצירות האמנים היהודים באסכולת פריס, נוסף על מה שקיבלתי במתנה מאת מנדבים שונים [...] וכל זה במחיר של 174,000 פרנק שערכם לפי מחירי השוק העולמי 565,000 פרנק לפחות.

³³³ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.101 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter from Geneva*, 11 August, 1947.

³³⁴ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.101 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter from Paris*, 3 June, 1947.

³³⁵ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.101 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter from Paris*, 5 July, 1947.

³³⁶ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.101 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter from Geneva*, 11 August, 1947.

לנו יש ענין אחר: מצד אחד יצירות טובות של אמנים חיים ומצד שני האמביציה להיות המוזיאון הלאומי של עם ישראל שיכיל את יצירות היהודים בכל שטח גם בעבר וגם של זמננו אבל לפי סלקציה שאעשה יום יום.

Poland. Other objects were sold to American buyers for prices Narkiss claimed he could not afford.³³⁷ He described the process of the sales of what he believed were lesser objects for high prices:

The large amount of silver they showed me, especially in Jewish ritual objects did not get my attention, and the objects I wanted to buy 'were already sold' (this is the trick of those who plan to raise the value: some American buys everything – I do not get excited and give it up). I can say that what we do have in our museum, though not in number – is all of quality.³³⁸

Narkiss often mentioned the contrast between the market behaviour for works of art and for ritual objects. While auctions were often held for works of art of different materials and periods in a variety of prices on the Hôtel Drouot auction house, Jewish ritual objects were usually given as gifts or sold to private collectors who were willing to pay high prices.³³⁹ Narkiss described the unsurveyed situation of the Judaica objects. Jewish ritual objects were sold for a wide range of prices by dubious dealers and were sometimes given to Allied Forces soldiers as gifts.³⁴⁰ He expressed his frustration with these circumstances:

In the case of Jewish ritual objects some things can still be secured however, in Europe, one rarely sees even the simplest objects and which would be most expensive? – that which was destroyed.³⁴¹

Throughout his travels Narkiss was forced to continuously raise funds for his purchases on behalf of the Schatz Fund.³⁴² The Schatz Fund was but one endeavour to expand the museum

³³⁷ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.3 Narkiss, *Top Secret Report on a Journey to Europe on behalf of the Schatz Fund for the Salvage of Jewish Art Remnants*, [n.d.], p. 4.

³³⁸ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.101 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter from Prague*, 20 August, 1947.

הכסף הרב שהראו לי, ביחוד בתשמישי קדושה לא לקח את לבי ומה שרציתי לקנות 'כבר היה מכור' (זהו התכסיס של אלה שרוצים להעלות את השער: איזה אמריקני קונה הכל – איני מתפעל ומותר). אוכל לאמור לכם שמה שיש במוזיאון שלנו, אף אם לא במספר – הרי זה הכל איכות.

³³⁹ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.101 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter from Paris*, 17 March, 1948.

³⁴⁰ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *Memorandum on the Salvage of Jewish art remnants*, March, 1950; 1.3. Mordecai Narkiss, *Berlin* [n.d.].

³⁴¹ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.101 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter from Paris*, 17 March, 1948.

בתשמישי קדושה יש דבר זה או אחר שאפשר עוד להשיגו, אך בדרך כלל אין רואים באירופה גם דברים פשוטים ומה זה יקר? – מה שאפס.

collection, further economic support was necessary for the ongoing museum work. As he stated in 1947:

With constant work I believe, it will be possible to bring to Israel many art treasures, this means enriching the country not only with cultural treasures, but also with valuable property. If the authorized institutions would protect the museum vigorously and see it as the main museum of the People of Israel and recognize it as a national institution, as it was announced in 1925 on behalf of the Zionist Organization by the late Nahum Sokolow – there is no doubt that the Jews of the world, and even non-Jews, will see in this institute one of the greatest properties of the Jewish people.³⁴³

Promoting the Bezalel museum as a national institute was a central part in Narkiss' efforts to recruit donors and obtain gifts for the museum. During his 1947 travels, Narkiss founded the French Patronage Committee for the National Museum Bezalel in Jerusalem.³⁴⁴ The group that comprised the committee joined together after Narkiss shared with them his desire to make Bezalel the central museum of the Jewish people.³⁴⁵ In his report on his journey in Europe he described the process of the formation of the committee and mentioned some of the people involved:

While I was collecting paintings, I met a few men with whom I shared my hope to turn the national museum Bezalel in Jerusalem, which its location and

³⁴² Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.101 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter from Paris*, 18 May, 1947.

³⁴³ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.3 Narkiss, *Top Secret Report on a Journey to Europe on behalf of the Schatz Fund for the Salvage of Jewish Art Remnants*, [n.d.], p. 5.

בעבודה מתמדת מאמין אני, כי אפשר להביא לארץ אוצרות אמנות רבים, דבר שפירושו גם העשרת הארץ לא בלבד באוצרות תרבותיים, כי אם גם העשרתה בקניינים חמריים גדולים. אם המוסדות המוסמכים יגינו, והפעם ביתר שאת, על בית הנכות כעל בית נכותו המרכזי של עם ישראל ויחדשו את הכרתו כמוסד לאומי, כאשר הוכרז כבר בשנת 1925 מטעם ההנהלה הציונית על ידי נחום סוקולוב ז"ל – אין ספק שיהודי כל העולם, ואף גם לא היהודים יראו מוסד זה כאחד הקניינים החשובים של העם היהודי.

³⁴⁴ Comité de Patronage Français du Musée National Bezalel de Jerusalem was composed of the following: Andre Blum, conservator of the Rothschild collection at the Louvre Museum, Jean Cassou head of the Museum of Modern Art, Andre Chamson, director of the Petit Palais Museum, Georges Huisman government consultant and director of the Fine art museums, Rene Huyghe, head of painting department at the Louvre Museum and Georges Salles, director of the French museums.

³⁴⁵ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.3 Narkiss, *Top Secret Report on a Journey to Europe on behalf of the Schatz Fund for the Salvage of Jewish Art Remnants*, [n.d.], p. 2.

title obligates us – to the central museum of the Jewish people. I shared our activities and several of my colleagues consented and founded the temporary patronage committee which was first compiled of museum and art personnel.³⁴⁶

Narkiss used connections that he had in Paris to meet people such as Jean Cassou, the head of the Museum of Modern Art in Paris, and Andre Chamson, director of the Petit Palais Museum in Paris, who joined the committee. Furthermore, various European art collectors gave their endorsement by shipping works of art, books and other materials after learning about Bezalel's varied public activities.³⁴⁷ Several shipments, however, were detained due to the riots across Israel between the years 1947-1949 that led to the War of Independence.

Narkiss spent much of his second journey to Europe in 1948 in Paris. The majority of his work concentrated on obtaining objects for the Bezalel Museum and on the promotion of the French Patronage Committee for the National Museum Bezalel in Jerusalem.³⁴⁸ During this time, he began to research the objects confiscated from the Jews during the Holocaust that were in the hands of the French government.³⁴⁹

In France I have seen the huge depots of the récupération. In every corner more cultural property that will eventually be handed to the French government as it has no owners. The same happens in Holland, where a committee was established on behalf of the museum directors (and they are

³⁴⁶ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.3 Narkiss, *Top Secret Report on a Journey to Europe on behalf of the Schatz Fund for the Salvage of Jewish Art Remnants*, [n.d.], p. 2.

תוך כדי אסוף התמונות נפגשתי בכמה אישים וספרתי בפניהם על הרצון לעשות את בית הנכות הלאומי בצלאל בירושלים, שמקומו ושמו מחייבים – למוזיאון המרכזי של עם ישראל. ספרתי על הפעילויות וכמה מחברי לקבוצה נענו ונוסד הועד הזמני של הפטרונות שנצטרף בראשונה מאנשי המוזיאונים והאמנות.

³⁴⁷ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.3 Narkiss, *Top Secret Report on a Journey to Europe on behalf of the Schatz Fund for the Salvage of Jewish Art Remnants*, [n.d.], p. 3.

³⁴⁸ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive 11.166 Correspondence with the French Patronage Committee for the National Museum Bezalel. In the 1950s the painter and writer, Marcelle Berr de Turique, assisted the Committee in obtaining gifts and donations for Bezalel. A few letters with lists of donations can be found in the Mordecai Narkiss Archive. Further research into the work of the committee is beyond the scope of this thesis.

³⁴⁹ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.101 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter from Paris*, 7 April, 1948.

mostly Jewish – a few are even dedicated Zionists) that takes care of the restitution of this property.³⁵⁰ Same goes for Belgium and the Czech Republic where this property is entitled – enemy property. If we will not act quickly it is us who will be to blame for the loss of this cultural property that was collected with great wealth and could enrich the collections of our country.³⁵¹

Finding storage vaults and learning about the remaining objects that belonged to Jewish individuals and communities before the war was the Schatz Fund's main purpose. Throughout his travels, Narkiss was exposed to depots in which such objects were kept. Since an organized policy regarding the treatment of such objects was not decided at the time, Narkiss believed that this moment could be used to the benefit of the Bezalel Museum and the people of Israel if he could build momentum to salvage many of the stored objects and bring them to Israel.

He was not the only Israeli museum representative coming to Europe to examine the situation and seek objects for his collection. Narkiss's main competition, as can be interpreted from his letters, was the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, founded in 1932 in the house of the city's first mayor, Meir Dizengoff. In its first years, the museum had a small collection of paintings and graphic art by local and European artists. Karl Schwarz, the museum's first director clearly stated in a short summary about the Tel Aviv Museum that the museum was not created as a Jewish museum, but as a place for international art and culture.³⁵² During the Arab strike of 1936-1939, violent attacks along the routes leading to Jerusalem led to a partial blockade of

³⁵⁰ For more information about Holland after the Second World War see: Julie-Marthe Cohen, pp. 199-252.

³⁵¹ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *On the Question of the Salvage of Art Remnants*, September 1948, p. 5.

בצרפת ראיתי את מחסני ה-recuperation הענקיים. על כל צעד ושעל רכוש אמנותי עצום שיפול בסופו של דבר לידי ממשלת צרפת הואיל ואין לו בעלים. הוא הדין בהולנד, שבה קיימת ועדה מטעם מנהלי המוזיאונים (והם רובם יהודיים – ואחדים מהם ציונים מסורים) מטפלת בהשבת רכוש זה. כך הדבר בבליגיה ואותו מצב בצ'כיה שבה נחשב כל הרכוש הזה- לרכוש האוייב. אם לא נעשה דבר בעוד מועד – נהיה אנו אשמים באבדן רכוש אמנותי זה המצטרף מעושר רב ואשר יעשיר עושר רב את המדינה.

³⁵² Chana Schutz, *Karl Schwartz and the Beginning of the Tel Aviv Museum 1933-1947*, (Tel Aviv: The Tel Aviv Museum of Art, 2010); Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 11.181 Karl Schwarz, *A summary about the Tel Aviv Museum* [n.d.]. Prior to his work at the Tel Aviv Museum, Karl Schwarz founded of the Jewish Museum in Berlin. He left Berlin in 1933 and acted at the Tel Aviv Museum director from 1935 until 1947.

the city. When the War of Independence broke out in 1947, Tel Aviv became the temporary capital of Israel. This temporary role indicated that the Tel Aviv Museum could become the country's national museum, an outcome that concerned Narkiss.

Director of the Tel Aviv Museum between the years 1947-1949 was Chaim Gamzu. Gamzu was known mainly for his interest in theatre and therefore Narkiss saw his selection as director of a museum a mockery to museums directors.³⁵³ Positioned in Tel Aviv, the museum managed to remain relatively stable and to secure funding and donations from institutions and local collectors. Narkiss expressed anger and frustration possibly derived of a sense of envy toward the stability that the Tel Aviv Museum in contrast to the difficulties that Jerusalem, and as a result Bezalel Museum, suffered.³⁵⁴ He conveyed this annoyance in one of the letters sent to the Bezalel staff in 1947:

Dobkin tells me that Gamzu contacted him twice as head of a delegation and asked for funding. When Dobkin told them that he has none to give, they pressured him to define limitations to the work of the museum and called to have an arbitration between the museums [...] I have yet to decide how to react to Gamzu. But it is clear to me that he will burden our work. From now on we need to guard each of our achievements.³⁵⁵

The tension between the museums escalated as Narkiss felt that the already limited support obtained by the Schatz Fund was threatened by representatives from other institutions. Additional agents were sent to Europe by the Tel Aviv Museum, other agents were also sent from the Haifa Museum and the Ein Harod Museum. Chaim Atar (Apteker), founder of the

³⁵³ Gila Bels, *Bikoret Omanut: Dr. Chaim Gamzu [Art Criticism: Dr. Chaim Gamzu]* [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv Museum of Art, 2006). Gamzu was both an art and theatre critic and later went on to establish the Ben Zvi theatre school.

³⁵⁴ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.101 Narkiss, *letter from Paris*, 5 July, 1947. Narkiss complained that the Jewish National Fund is sending more funding to the Tel Aviv Museum.

³⁵⁵ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.101 Narkiss, *letter from Prague*, 20 August, 1947.

והנה מספר לי דובקין שגמזו הופיע אצלו פעמיים בראש משלחת שיתן גם להם כסף לנסיעה וכאשר אמר להם דובקין שאין בידו, לחצו במשלחת השניה שיקבע את התחומים לעבודת המוזיאון ויקרא לבוררות בין שני המוזיאונים [...] עוד לא החלטתי בנפשי מה לעשות. כיצד להגיב כלפי גמזו. אבל ברור לי שהוא ירצה להכביד על עבודתינו. מעתה דרושה שמירה על כל הישג שלנו.

Ein Harod Museum and an artist on Kibbutz Ein Harod, arrived in Paris in 1947. Upon learning that Atar was in Paris, an aggravated Narkiss wrote the Bezalel staff:

Apteker also started this. Wrote an article introducing his plan. A flea with such nerve! He is also coming to Paris. Now, more than ever, I insist on the national museum issue, the central museum for the people of Israel – and that is what it will become. Not a municipal museum or a village museum whose people do not know a thing will determine the artistic life of this country.³⁵⁶

Narkiss saw Bezalel as the national museum, versus the municipal museum in Tel Aviv, and the distant Ein Harod Museum. He repeated his claim that only Bezalel could hold the title of the national museum of the Jewish people in Israel because of its location, the city of Jerusalem. Rumours implying that this title would be given to the Tel Aviv Museum concerned the Bezalel staff.³⁵⁷ Bezalel was the first of these museums established on Zionist ideas and the notion of national heritage.³⁵⁸ Narkiss expanded this notion to include international art. By exploring objects in their social and historical context, Narkiss moved from historical commemoration to national heritage. David Lowenthal distinguished between history and heritage. He suggested that history is investigating and explaining the distant past while heritage adds present context and purpose to history.³⁵⁹

Salvage became a national mission led not only by Israeli art institutions. Yad Vashem, the planned Holocaust Memorial Museum, began collecting documents, memorabilia, Jewish ritual objects and works of art immediately after the Second World War.³⁶⁰ The earliest known proposal to establish an institute to commemorate the mass murder of Jews taking

³⁵⁶ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.101 Narkiss, *letter from Prague*, 20 August, 1947.

גם אפתיקר התחיל. כתב מאמר ובו תכנית של פעולה. פרעוש כזה יש לו העוז! אף הוא נוסע לפריס. כעת, יותר מאשר תמיד, אני עומד על דעתי בענין המוזיאון הלאומי, כלומר המוזיאון המרכזי של עם ישראל – ולשכזה נהפוך אותו. לא מוזיאון מוניציפלי או כפאי שאנשיו אינם יודעים מאומה יקבעו את חיי האמנות בארץ.

³⁵⁷ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.101 Narkiss, *letter from Paris*, 17 March, 1948.

³⁵⁸ Oded Shay, *Museums and Collections*, pp. 174-175.

³⁵⁹ David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. XV.

³⁶⁰ Stauber, *The Holocaust in Israeli Public Debate in the 1950s*, p. 66-77.

place in Europe was in 1942.³⁶¹ This proposal led to the founding of Yad Vashem and to the passing of the 1953 Martyrs' and Heroes Remembrance (Yad Vashem) Law.³⁶² The authority of Yad Vashem, as stated in the law is:

1. There is hereby established in Jerusalem a Memorial Authority, *Yad Vashem* to commemorate:
 - (1) The six million members of the Jewish people who died a martyrs' death at the hands of the Nazis and their collaborators;
 - (2) The Jewish families which were wiped out by the oppressors;
 - (3) The communities, synagogues, movements and organizations, and the public, cultural educational, religious and benevolent institutions, which were destroyed in a heinous attempt to erase the name and culture of Israel; [...] ³⁶³

Yad Vashem was tasked with the memorial of the Holocaust by means of objects. The location of the memory remained in Jerusalem, not at the Bezalel Museum, but in Yad Vashem. While the Yad Vashem agents researched a wide variety of objects of historical significance representing the Holocaust, Narkiss was concerned primarily with gathering works of art and Jewish ritual objects for a fine art museum. For both institutions, this kind of search resulted from a unique interpretation of salvage.

Narkiss saw his work on behalf of the Schatz Fund as important as that of Yad Vashem and in 1946 contacted Baruch Zuckerman, of the national committee for the foundation of Yad Vashem, in a request for financial assistance for the ongoing work of the Schatz Fund. Zuckerman rejected Narkiss' request explaining that he would not support any institution that

³⁶¹ Lavon, 'The Chamber of the Holocaust in Mount Zion', *Israelis*, p. 81.

³⁶² *Martyrs' and Heroes Remembrance (Yad Vashem) Law 5713-1953*, Yad Vashem <http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/about/pdf/YV_law.pdf> [accessed October 2016].

³⁶³ *Memorial Authority Yad Vashem*, 'Martyrs' and Heroes Remembrance (Yad Vashem) Law 5713-1953, Yad Vashem <http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/about/pdf/YV_law.pdf> [accessed 23 October 2016].

suggests to keep materials to itself that ought to belong to the planned Yad Vashem Museum.³⁶⁴

Another institution that took the idea of salvage upon itself is the Kibbutz of the Ghetto Fighters. The Kibbutz sent the Holocaust survivor Miriam Novitch to Europe in order to interview survivors and salvage remaining art and memorabilia objects from the Ghettos and former concentration camps.³⁶⁵ Novitch, who became the founder of the Kibbutz's museum, kept journals in which she described her experiences in Europe in detail.³⁶⁶ Among the items Novitch brought back with her were works of art by Holocaust victims that show the life of the prisoners in the Ghettos and in concentrations camps as well as works given to her by living Jewish artists.³⁶⁷

Lastly, from the early 1940s, the Hebrew University received information from contacts in Europe of repositories filled with books, manuscripts and archives that belonged to Jews before the war. Many great Jewish libraries and archives were looted during the war and representatives from the university were anxious to salvage any items that survived.³⁶⁸ In order to learn about the situation in Europe, Chancellor of the university, Judah L. Magnes corresponded with members of the Allied Forces working in storage facilities across Western Europe.³⁶⁹ In 1949, the head of the National Library, Gershom Scholem and head librarian Shlomo Shunami were sent to assist in identifying and cataloguing the remaining items.³⁷⁰ A

³⁶⁴ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.15 Baruch Zuckerman, letter to Mordecai Narkiss, 23 May, 1946.

³⁶⁵ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.27 *The Museum Association: General Assembly meetings report*, 28 February, 1950; Tzvika Dror, *Masa Miriam [Miriam's burden] – The life story of Miriam Novitch* [Hebrew] (Ghetto Fighters House, 2008).

³⁶⁶ Kibbutz of the Ghetto Fighters Archive, Collections.168 Reports by Miriam Novitch about the creation of the museum collection; 3756 Testimonies of the destruction of the Jewish communities in Greece and Novitch's research materials.

³⁶⁷ Miriam Novich, the Ghetto Fighters' House Museum founder was a survivor who returned to Europe after the Holocaust and was able to bring back with her testimonies and works of art. These and diaries from her trips can be found in the Ghetto Fighters' House Museum in Israel.

³⁶⁸ Jerusalem, CZA, S61.270 *Report on the Salvage of Jewish Cultural Property on behalf of the Hebrew University and the Ministry of Religious Affairs*, September-December, 1952.

³⁶⁹ Berkeley, the Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life, 2866.S1136-1619 *Letter from Judah L. Magnes*, 11 March, 1946.

³⁷⁰ Dana Herman, *Hashavat Avedah; Plunder and Restitution: Findings and Recommendations of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States and Staff Report*, December, 2000
<http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/pcha/PlunderRestitution.html/html/Home_Content.html> [accessed 10 September 2016];

year later, when shipments of books were arriving to Israel, David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister referred to the urgency to salvage these items:

[...] our first duty is to save Hebrew literature. There are thousands of Hebrew manuscripts lying idle in various libraries [...] Many of them have vanished in the darkness of the past or have been destroyed by the wrath of oppressors [...] It is the duty of the State of Israel to acquire and gather those exiles of the spirit of Israel dispersed in the Diaspora.³⁷¹

The notion of salvage, particularly of Jewish books and archives, preoccupied Israeli writers, academics, representatives of cultural institutions, and the Israeli Government. This indicates the importance of salvage after the Holocaust and its central place in the public discussion alongside the difficulty of finding suitable accommodation for the refugees and survivors.

Throughout his 1947-1948 travels, Narkiss saw the condition of Jewish owned artefacts, many of which had been mutilated, while others were shipped to the USA. The high number of remaining unclaimed cultural objects concerned him. At the few times that rightful owners came forward, their property was usually returned to them. The case for unclaimed, 'heirless' objects, was however, unusual and a final policy regarding its division was not yet determined. Narkiss described the difficult atmosphere and the lack of interest in these objects in a memorandum written upon his return in 1948:

In general: it is the same in all countries. The Jewish communities and government are indifferent to the condition of these remnants. This atmosphere changes when one comes to claim the objects – then they both get interested, even Zionists often object the removal of artefacts from these

Dov Schidorsky, *Burning Scrolls and Flying Letters: A History of Book Collections and Libraries in Mandatory Palestine and of Book Salvaging Efforts in Europe after the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 2008). At the early 1950s, as a result of the division of Jewish books and libraries made by the JCR, Israel received nearly 200,000 books.

³⁷¹ *Brief history of the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts*, Department of manuscripts and The Institute of Microfilmed Manuscripts, Jewish National and University Library < <http://jnul.huji.ac.il/imhm/> > [accessed 2 January 2017].

countries. However, it is a fact that with enough persistence one can move mountains, as it occurred to me in several cases.³⁷²

The state of devastation across Europe made the question of handling cultural objects secondary. The surviving Jewish communities were desperately trying to re-establish themselves by searching for economic and physical support. Narkiss suggested that once any interest was expressed in the Jewish cultural objects, the members of the local communities became interested in the possible financial benefit. Yet Narkiss believed that with determination, he could save such objects even when encountering complex situations.

Throughout this chapter, I showed the development of the Bezalel Museum since its founding in 1906 through the immediate post-Holocaust years. The review of the major influences on the establishment of Bezalel, and Zionism, the leading political ideology behind it, are essential for the understanding of the changes that followed.

Narkiss, a generation younger than Schatz, brought with him to Bezalel modern concepts regarding the role of the museum. These ideas were described by a comparison to the educational program of the MoMA in New York. While Schatz was looking to encourage a renaissance of the Jewish people, Narkiss was concerned with the place of the museum within the international art world. His perception of Jewish art was all inclusive and he put all other art schools under the title of “general” art. By so doing, Narkiss remained true to Schatz’s idea of the centrality of Jewish art and the importance of bringing it to Jerusalem.

Based on the nineteenth century concept of *kinnus*, Narkiss worked in two parallel directions, on the one hand promoting Bezalel as a universal survey museum, where one could find examples of the best art of the Western World. While on the other hand, encouraging the

³⁷² Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *On the Question of the Salvage of Art Remnants*, September 1948, p. 3.
 בדרך כלל סדן הארצות כולן – אחד הוא. בכולן אדישה היהדות וגם הממשלות למצבם של שרידים אלה. המצב משתנה כשבאים לתבוע – אז מתחילים להתעניין גם היהודים וגם הממשלות, ואף אז הציונים מתנגדים ברוב המקרים להוצאת הדברים מחוץ לארצם. אך עובדה היא שבעקשנות ידועה אפשר והדין נוקב את ההר, כפי שאירע לי עצמי במקרים אחדים.

research of Jewish art and its development as a neglected field in art history. As the Second World War broke out, the idea of *kinnus* became central to Narkiss's perception of the role of the museum leading him to the notion of salvage.

The founding of the Schatz Fund in 1942 marked a change in his priorities. In an effort to salvage the remains of European Jewish culture Narkiss travelled to Europe twice. In Europe, Narkiss was exposed to the poverty and the destruction and described it as a moment in history that could never repeat itself. Narkiss saw himself on a mission to raise awareness and support for the Bezalel Museum while competing with other agents sent to Europe from other museums in Israel. Finally, Narkiss was shown storage facilities, in which objects that belonged to Jewish families before the war were kept and vowed to do his utmost and bring them to Israel.

Chapter 2

Point of Collecting

The opening part of this chapter explores the post-World War Two situation in the CCPs located throughout the American occupied zone of Germany. The development of Military Government Law no. 59 in 1947, outlined a restitution policy later adopted in the British and French occupation zones. JRSO, the Jewish successor organization that became responsible for the restitution of Jewish property in the occupied American zone was a principal outcome of Military Government Law no. 59. Even so, this organization alone could not handle the scope of unclaimed Jewish cultural property necessitating the founding of JCR. Difficulties for the staff working at the CCPs between 1945-1949, included the varied property, the lack of claimants, and the reluctance of the German staff. This problematic situation is analysed by use of primary sources in the Ardelia Hall collection of the National Archives at College Park.

This portion is followed by a discussion on the debate over who should be the rightful heir or successor of European Jewry. Symptoms of the trauma of the Holocaust were expressed by representatives of the World Zionist Organization and American Jewish Organizations in response to the revival of Jewish communities in Germany. These conflicting views forced the JRSO to reach an agreement with leaders of the Jewish communities who opposed the removal of the objects from Germany.

The key scholarship used in this portion is by Ayaka Takei, who analysed the relationship between Jewish communities and the JRSO and by Elisabeth Gallas, who analysed the issues surrounding restitution of cultural property and the responsibilities and difficulties

encountered by the JCR.³⁷³ Finally, Michael Brenner's essay on the changes in perception of the Jewish communities in Germany is central to understanding the criticism of Jewish communities in Germany after the Holocaust.³⁷⁴ This discussion is enriched by primary sources from the Narkiss Archive and from the CZA in Jerusalem which contributes to the analysis of Narkiss's visits to the CCPs.

Upon Narkiss's arrival, in April, 1949, works of "general" art were stored in both the Wiesbaden CCP and in the Munich CCP. A plan for their final distribution had not been decided. As a first stage, they were to be removed from Munich and kept together in the Wiesbaden CCP. As the Munich CCP closed and crates were beginning to be shipped to the USA, many of the remaining objects were moved to the JRSO headquarters in Nuremberg and were later shipped to their final destinations around the world or given to the Federal Republic of Germany.³⁷⁵ Narkiss's concerns with salvage are explored throughout this and the succeeding sub-chapters. He understood salvage and restitution as interrelated concepts in the process of saving and returning the objects to their rightful heirs. Viewing Israel as the only home for the Jewish people and the rightful heir to the Jewish treasures, Narkiss opposed the division of the property between other institutions and the new Federal Republic of Germany established in West Germany.

The JCR introduced a division policy that called to allocate forty percent of the cultural property to Israel, another forty percent to the USA where the largest communities of survivors were being re-established, and dividing remaining twenty percent among other

³⁷³ Takei, 'The "Gemeinde Problem"' *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 217-277; Gallas, 'Locating the Jewish Future', *Naharaim: Journal of German-Jewish Literature and Culture History*, pp. 39-40.

³⁷⁴ Michael Brenner, 'In the Shadow of the Holocaust: The Changing Image of German Jewry after 1945', Essay published as part of *the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies* (Washington D.C.: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2010) 1-22.

³⁷⁵ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *Memorandum on the Salvage of Jewish art remnants*, March, 1950, p. 1.

Jewish communities in the Western hemisphere such as Britain, South Africa, and Argentina.³⁷⁶

Narkiss was asked to value and divide the property sent to institutions and synagogues around the world. When inspecting the items, Narkiss struggled with the fact that “general” works of art were separated from items that were identified by the JCR as Jewish. Thus, fine art that belonged to Jewish owners was not under the initial jurisdiction of the JCR. Narkiss included objects owned by Jews to the category of Jewish art to overcome this divide. Though the JCR did not accept this definition, the artefacts were eventually handed to the organization as they were considered unidentified or ‘heirless’ cultural objects. The debate between Narkiss and the JCR over the interpretation of these objects as Jewish art represents the two leading approaches to the issue. By looking at texts by Stephen Kayser, Guido Schoenbereger, and Helen Rosenau the two approaches are further examined demonstrating that the JCR chose to follow a particular mode of thinking in the division of the Jewish cultural property, while other ideas were also available.³⁷⁷

Shlomit Steinberg made reference to Narkiss’s work at the CCPs in the 2007 exhibition catalogue for *Orphaned Art: Looted Art from the Holocaust in the Israel Museum*. However, a full account of his stay at the CCPs that includes both a description of the situation and his personal conflicts and ideological point of view has not been published.³⁷⁸ Therefore this chapter contributes to the existing literature by use of primary sources mostly collected from Narkiss’s personal archive.

³⁷⁶ Jerusalem, the CAHJP, JRSO.NY.923a Hannah Arendt, *letter to Eli Rock*, 1 September, 1950; Michael J. Kurtz, ‘Resolving a Dilemma: the Inheritance of Jewish Property’, *Cardozo Law Review*, 20.625 (1998-1999), 625-655, (pp. 640-643).

³⁷⁷ Stephen S. Kayser, ‘Defining Jewish Art: Function, Not Substance’, in *Mordecai M. Kaplan Jubilee Volume: On the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. by Moshe Davis (New York: the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1953), 457-467; Guido Schoenberger, ‘The Essence of Jewish Art’, *Historia Judaica*, VIII.2 (New York: October, 1946), 191-198; Helen Rosenau, *A Short History of Jewish Art*, (London: James Clarke & Co. LTD., 1948).

³⁷⁸ Steinberg, pp. 13-14.

Narkiss considered both the aesthetic and the memorial value of the objects upon valuating them. His views on the role of the cultural objects in the CCPs and their categorization and allocation are explored in light of two theoretical ideas. The first, developed by the French philosopher, Michel Foucault is the idea of classification. Foucault explained that the grouping of items together is influenced by subjective perceptions, values, histories and social codes. These elements assist in selecting items that are ordered within one categorising system or are excluded from it.³⁷⁹ Classification can be used as a social tool that assists in the shaping of a social reality. Thus, Narkiss's classification of the objects can be interpreted as based on a history of the Jewish people in Europe and the existing art historical categorisation of objects between fine art and crafts.

The historian James Clifford identified two categories classifying art objects which, as a result, assign them comparative value.³⁸⁰ The categories are masterpieces and artefacts and they were divided between authentic and inauthentic groups. By using this categorising system, Clifford, distinguished between art objects and cultural objects. Objects that are identified as art were identified by their aesthetic qualities and those identified as not-art were identified as collectible commodities. In Clifford's system, objects could transfer from one category to the other in a way that would promote an item of historical value to the category of fine art.³⁸¹ When Narkiss selected a Jewish ritual object for his museum collection, for example, the item was transferred from the artefact category to a fine art one.

The second theoretical idea explored in this chapter is the symbolic meaning of the objects. The archaeologist Christopher Tilley investigated the interpretation of historical objects in the context of material culture.³⁸² Tilly suggested that objects become signifiers, as indicated in

³⁷⁹ Foucault, *the Order of Things*, pp. XXI-XXII.

³⁸⁰ Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture*, pp. 220-224.

³⁸¹ *Ibid*, pp. 224-225.

³⁸² Tilley, 'Interpreting Material Culture', in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. by Pearce, p. 68.

this specific case, for the concepts of memory and remembrance.³⁸³ Thus the objects have a meaning assigned to them by Narkiss, in addition to multiple other meanings that the items could stand for. The objects that Narkiss saw as carrying the value of history and memory after the Holocaust had a different use and significance in their original, past context. The anthropologist Daniel Miller explored different approaches to material studies to the interpretation of objects and argued, for example that people develop close relationships with objects.³⁸⁴ He valued Ian Hodder's theory. Hodder, an archaeologist, attempted to create models to which both ethnography and archaeology contribute.³⁸⁵ Hodder explained the three types of meaning objects possess.³⁸⁶ The first has to do with the object's value as assessed through its use and exchange rate. This includes religious or emotional qualities that the object can convey. Then, there is the symbolic meaning based on the object's place within a social structure or a code. Lastly, Hodder explained that the object's meaning is created by its historical past and the associations relating to it.³⁸⁷ Hodder argued that the potential effect of objects on their surrounding world based on their function and meaning is part of their value. Narkiss therefore advocated for the salvage and exhibition of Jewish remnants by pointing to their memorial value and the need to commemorate perished Jewish communities. Additionally, as a representative of a national museum with knowledge of art history, he was responsible for determining the market value of the objects. His final estimate, considered high, probably thus incorporated both the market and the memorial value of the items. Narkiss's final valuation provoked criticism and scorn, eventually leading to the objects' re-valuation upon their arrival to New York, in the summer of 1949.³⁸⁸

³⁸³ Ibid, p. 68.

³⁸⁴ Daniel Miller, *A Theory of Shopping* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1998), pp. 8-9.

³⁸⁵ Daniel Miller, 'Things Ain't What They Used to Be', in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. by Susan M. Pearce, (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 13-18, (p. 16).

³⁸⁶ Hodder, 'Contextual Analysis of Symbolic Meanings', in *The Archaeology of Contextual Meanings*, ed. by Hodder, p. 12.

³⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 1.

³⁸⁸ Jerusalem, the CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296d Benjamin Ferencz, *letter to Eli Rock*, 1 June, 1949.

This chapter ends with an examination of Narkiss's outlook upon his return to Israel at the end of 1949 and the arrival of the first shipment from the CCPs. It also examines his efforts to promote the work of a research group to be sent to the CCPs on behalf of the Israeli government. Although such a delegation was not sent, this was a first mention of the need to investigate the provenance of the objects. Finally, the two memorial museums established in Israel at the time, the Chamber of the Holocaust and Yad Vashem, are discussed within the atmosphere of competitiveness Narkiss experienced.

The CCPs and The Question of the Rightful Heirs

As the Second World War came to an end, the Allied Forces in the British, French and American occupied zones across Germany amassed cultural objects of different media, quality and size. Upon these objects' discovery and removal to local depots, the American Military Forces realized that they were unprepared to handle such a large amount of property.³⁸⁹ The military government found itself understaffed to conduct an identification process of the recovered objects, and finding appropriate warehouses was a difficult task.³⁹⁰ Even once the objects were removed from their temporary repositories and kept under military supervision, the staff found it difficult to prevent thefts.³⁹¹

Four CCPs were established across the occupied American zone in Germany: Marburg, Wiesbaden, Munich and Offenbach. American military personnel and locals staffed each CCP to assist with the registration and inventorying of the objects. On 15 June, 1946, the

³⁸⁹ Further bibliography About the CCPs: Craig Hugh Smyth, *Repatriation of Art from the Collecting Point in Munich after World War II: Background and Beginnings with reference especially to the Netherlands* (Maarssen, The Hague: Gary Schwartz, SDU Publishers, 1988); Walter Ings Farmer, *The Safekeepers: A Memoir of the Arts at the End of World War II*, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000); Michael J. Kurtz, *American and the Return of Nazi Contraband: The Recovery of Europe's Cultural Treasures* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

³⁹⁰ Nicholas, p. 357.

³⁹¹ *Chapter V: Restitution of Victims' Assets, Plunder and Restitution: Findings and Recommendations of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States and Staff Report*, December, 2000
<<http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/pcha/PlunderRestitution.html/html/StaffChapter5.html>> [accessed 16 October 2014].

Marburg CCP closed and its remaining objects were transferred to Wiesbaden. By 1947, the American forces had three main CCPs. Objects in the CCPs were assembled according to their use and media. Each CCP became specialized: the central repository for books, manuscripts, and archives was kept in the Offenbach Archival Depot (OAD); the majority of works of art were kept in the Munich CCP; and over sixteen thousand Jewish ritual objects were kept in the Wiesbaden CCP.³⁹²

In 1944, the American Government began developing a restitution policy that gave minorities the right to receive compensation for policies forced upon them during the Second World War and the Holocaust.³⁹³ The process led to the 10 November, 1947, issuance of “Military Government – Germany, United States area of control Law no. 59: Restitution of Identifiable Property.” The law gives a thorough description of the process of restitution and the liabilities of the employees of the JRSO in addition to a claim deadline that was set for 31 December, 1948. At the time, no restitution occurred in the British and French occupation zones.³⁹⁴ The law officially introduced the Allied governments’ restitution policy – allowing victims to reconstitute the properties taken from them illegally during the Nazi regime.³⁹⁵ The law designated an organization to investigate and take responsibility for the allocation process of the remaining unclaimed Jewish property.

The expropriation that had taken place during the Second World War left caches of cultural objects that had no home to be returned to. In order to advance the identification process and the restitution of the cultural objects to their pre-war owners, public exhibitions of the items

³⁹² *Records concerning the central collecting points*, National Archives Records Administration (NARA) (includes photographs) <<http://www.archives.gov/research/microfilm/m1948.pdf>> [accessed 30 September 2014]; Julie-Marthe Cohen, pp. 209-217.

³⁹³ More information about the development of US restitution policy can be found: *Plunder and Restitution: Findings and Recommendations of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States and Staff Report*, December, 2000 <<http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/pcha/PlunderRestitution.html/html/StaffChapter5.html>> [accessed 10 September 2016].

³⁹⁴ The JTC was founded in the British occupation zone in 1950 and dealt with restitution of unidentified Jewish property. It was created based on the model of the JRSO. In 1952 it opened a branch in the French occupation zone.

³⁹⁵ Jerusalem, CZA, S35.71 *The U.S. Zone Restitution Program and German Sovereignty*, 16 January, 1951.

were organized inviting the public to come and identify pieces that may have belonged to them before the war. Between the years 1946-1948, seven exhibitions were held in the CCP in Wiesbaden. The building housing the Wiesbaden CCP was the former Landesmuseum Wiesbaden which was converted at the end of the war to house works of art removed from repositories in the surrounding area. Works that were kept in the CCPs were usually exhibited for a period of four weeks, exhibitions were entitled for example: 'Exhibition of German owned Old Masters', 'Masterwork of Northern Art before 1600' and 'German painting of the nineteenth century'.³⁹⁶ In 1946, five monthly exhibitions were held in the museum building and two were set up in the following years; one exhibition was organized in April 1947, and another between May-September 1948.³⁹⁷ In March of 1949, before the planned closing of the CCP in Munich, an exhibition of works of art was held there as well.³⁹⁸ Between 1949 and 1951, an office responsible for continuing restitution efforts was still operating from the location of the Munich CCP, administrated by the German authorities.³⁹⁹

A letter concerning the United States occupied zone and the restitution program introduced in these areas revealed the charged atmosphere working with the German sovereign:

Experience in applying the restitution law in the U.S. Zone makes it manifestly clear that neither the letter nor the spirit of the prevailing enactment can be enforced without effective U.S. supervision. The German acquirers of Jewish property have, as a general rule, refused to acknowledge any moral or legal liabilities in this field. Associations of restitutors have been organized, which, through publication and lobbying have sought to delay or defeat the restoration of properties taken by duress.⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁶ National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, Ardelia Hall Collection, M1947.260.0007.37, April, 1937.

³⁹⁷ National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, Ardelia Hall Collection, M1947.260.0007.03, May, 1948.

³⁹⁸ National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, Ardelia Hall Collection, M1946.260.0008.10, 7-19 March, 1949.

³⁹⁹ Angelika Enderlein, and Monika Flacke, *Database on the Munich Central Collecting Point*

<http://www.dhm.de/datenbank/ccp/prj_dhm_ccp/ccp_einleitung_en.pdf> [accessed 16 October 2014].

⁴⁰⁰ Jerusalem, CZA, S35.71 *The U.S. Zone Restitution Program and German Sovereignty*, 16 January, 1951.

The Allied Forces identified the difficulties they would face in restoring the property to its original, pre-war owners both by the German people and the local legal authorities. The JRSO was therefore selected to fulfill the task of research and preparation of claims for the property belonging to victims of Nazi persecution.

Upon its incorporation on 12 May, 1947, the JRSO was entitled the Jewish Restitution Commission. Ten Jewish bodies founded the Commission, including the Jewish Agency for Palestine, The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, The JCR and the World Jewish Congress. The 1947 certificate of incorporation described the purposes for which the organization was formed:

To assist, aid, help, act for and on behalf of, and as successor to, Jewish persons, organizations, cultural and charitable funds and foundations, and communities, which were victims of Nazi or Fascist persecution and discrimination, in all matters relating to claims for the restitution of property and property rights of every nature and description, and for compensation and indemnification arising out of loss or damage suffered by them in consequence of such persecution and discrimination; and in connection with the foregoing to discover, claim, acquire, receive, hold, maintain, manage, administer, hire, liquidate, and otherwise dispose of property and property rights of every nature and description for the benefit of victims of Nazi or Fascist persecution or discrimination, and to apply the income therefrom, the increments thereto, and the proceeds thereof for the relief, rehabilitation, reestablishment, resettlement and immigration of such victims, all in accordance with laws and policies established by the Governments or

authorities in control of the countries, or areas, where any or all of the foregoing activities may be carried on.⁴⁰¹

The Commission was responsible for Jewish cultural and religious objects in Germany and areas occupied by Germany. In order to get appointed by the OMGUS and to be able to fulfill its duties in the occupied zones, the Commission was required to revise its title to the JRSO.⁴⁰² In August of 1948 permission was granted to the JRSO to operate in the American zone in Germany.⁴⁰³ The JRSO commenced organized research of Jewish property of economic value nationalized during the Nazi regime. The organization was authorized to prepare claims for the distribution of relief to Jewish survivors and communities. Staff worked under pressure to research and assess the claims in keeping with the 31 December, 1948 deadline issued in Law no. 59.⁴⁰⁴

Critical issues such as the question of the chosen successor for European Jewry prompted conflicts between the Jewish Agency for Palestine, the Jewish Welfare agency of Western Germany, and JRSO and the JCR in the USA.⁴⁰⁵ Each organization saw itself as the sole representative of the perished Jewish communities. After 1947, the appointment of the JRSO in the American zone of occupation (and later the establishment of the Jewish Trust Corporation) which received the successorship for the unclaimed Jewish property in the British and French zones, it became evident that only the designated organizations would be allowed to handle the allocation of the property.⁴⁰⁶

The many types of property, the short time devoted to research and preparation of claims, and the lack of expertise of the JRSO staff, made it clear that the remaining cultural property

⁴⁰¹ Jerusalem, CZA, A444.217 *Certificate of Incorporation the Jewish Restitution Commission*, 12 May, 1947.

⁴⁰² Jerusalem, CZA, A370.91 *Certificate of Change of Name*, 29 July, 1948.

⁴⁰³ Jerusalem, CZA, A444.217 *Regulation No. 3 Under Military Government Law No. 59 and Appointment Thereunder "Designation of Successor Organizations Pursuant to Military Government"*, 1947.

⁴⁰⁴ Jerusalem CZA, A444.217 *Annual Meeting of Board of Directors Jewish Restitution Successor Organization*, 20 October, 1948, p. 3.

⁴⁰⁵ Takei, 'The "Gemeinde Problem"' *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, pp. 266-268.

⁴⁰⁶ Jay Howard Geller, *Jews in Post Holocaust Germany, 1945-1953* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) pp. 202-208.

ought to be treated separately. In the spring of 1949, the JCR received the trusteeship for the unidentified Jewish cultural property and the responsibility to redistribute it among Jewish institutions that perpetuated Jewish art and culture.⁴⁰⁷ Taking its mission statement from the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction initiated in 1944 by the Jewish historian Salo Baron, JCR's early aim was the reconstruction of Jewish cultural life in Europe. In 1945 Baron expressed his concern to the American military governor in Germany regarding the treatment of Jewish cultural objects by unprofessional American soldiers.⁴⁰⁸ As a result, the JCR was founded in November 1947 by the leaders of ten Jewish organizations and was funded by the Jewish Agency and the American Joint Distribution Committee.⁴⁰⁹ Already in the early stages of negotiations with the Office of Military Government of the United States, it was decided that cultural objects such as books would be transferred to the JCR. However, there was not yet a clear policy regarding how the transfer would be handled and what other types of objects it would include. As Saul Kagan, director of the JRSO explained in a letter to Joshua Starr, Jewish historian and the JCR executive secretary:

OMGUS will unconditionally turn over to the JCR all archives, libraries, pamphlets, etc. principally in Hebrew, Yiddish and German, and Jewish ritual objects in OMGUS custody except for property definitely identifiable as having come from such countries outside Germany whose governments would be entitled to restitution.⁴¹⁰

The negotiation process between the JRSO and the JCR lasted for several months until an agreement was signed in May, 1949.⁴¹¹ The Military Government transferred Jewish cultural

⁴⁰⁷ CZA, A370.970 JCR, *Memorandum Agreement: Jewish Cultural Property*, 29 January, 1949.

⁴⁰⁸ Robert Liberles, *Salo Wittman Baron: Architect of Jewish History*, (New York: NYU Press, 1995), pp. 238-239.

⁴⁰⁹ The Jewish Agency for Palestine was established on 11 August, 1929 in Switzerland by the World Zionist Organization. The Agency was acting in accordance with the League of the Nations Mandate for Palestine as the temporary government of the future Jewish state in Palestine and was responsible for helping immigrants from Europe, especially after Adolf Hitler's rise to power in 1933.

⁴¹⁰ Jerusalem, CZA, S57.239 Saul Kagan, *letter to Joshua Starr*, 14 December, 1948, p. 2. A discussion on the entitlement of European countries for restitution can be found in: Nehemiah Robinson, 'War Damage Compensation and Restitution in Foreign Countries', *Law and Contemporary Problems*, 16 (Summer, 1951), 347-376.

⁴¹¹ CZA, A370.970 *Memorandum of Agreement: Jewish Cultural Property*, 29 January, 1949.

properties to the organization for what was described as ‘disposition’. The items were described and numbered, first the books and Jewish ritual objects, followed by paintings, furniture, and other remaining cultural objects. As described in the memorandum of agreement:

Categories of cultural properties:

The properties thus transferred are unidentifiable and hence not the proper subject of a claim under Law 59. They are grouped in the following categories:

- a. Jewish books, archives and miscellaneous documents in various languages.
- b. Torah scrolls and miscellaneous church and synagogue vestments, altar covers, prayer shawls, etc.
- c. Jewish ritual objects of precious metals and including precious stones.
- d. Miscellaneous Jewish paintings and furnishings.
- e. Such other Jewish cultural properties as JCR and Military Government shall agree to transfer. Such properties shall be transferred upon a custody receipt [...] ⁴¹²

This division expressed the literary perception of the concept of *kinnus*, as it developed in early twentieth century: books, archives and items of historical value were at the highest priority. Then came Jewish ritual objects, holy items that were perceived as Jewish art. Interestingly, in category b. religious objects that belong to Judaism and Christendom were grouped together. Fine art and decorative art were grouped together in category d., penultimate in the categorization, only followed by ‘other Jewish cultural properties’. While

⁴¹² CZA, A370.970 *Memorandum of Agreement: Jewish Cultural Property*, 29 January, 1949.

the first three categories reference specific types of objects, as books, Torah scrolls, and prayer shawls, the two last categories are non-specific and generalized. Numbers show that there were over three hundred and fifty thousand books and manuscripts that were immediately handed to the JCR as well as over fifteen thousand Jewish ritual objects.⁴¹³

In order to identify and catalogue the objects, the JCR invited experts to assist in cataloguing and valuating the Jewish cultural objects. Experts were possibly selected based on their involvement in the relevant Jewish organizations and their familiarity with the materials that had to be valuated. Jewish scholars working in cultural institutions were already a part of the JCR leadership. The board of directors included: Dr. Salo Baron (born 1895 in Galicia, immigrated to New York, 1926) of Columbia University, New York, Rabbi Leo Baeck (born 1873 in Poland, immigrated to London after the Second World War) and Professor Gershon Scholem (born 1897 in Berlin, immigrated to Palestine in 1923) of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem.⁴¹⁴ Other Jewish intellectuals were also invited to participate in the redistribution process, to name a few: the philosopher Hannah Arendt, who was acting as the executive secretary of the JCR, Shlomo Shunami of the National Library, Jerusalem, Rabbi, Dr. Bernard Heller of Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati and Mordecai Narkiss, the director of the Bezalel Museum, Jerusalem.⁴¹⁵ Each one of the experts represented a field of Jewish cultural history such as Jewish Art, Jewish ritual objects, Hebraica, or an institution and a community. In that way, for example, Guido Schoenberger, who was invited to value and select some of the Jewish ritual objects arrived from the Jewish Museum, New York and

⁴¹³ CZA, A370.970 *Memorandum of Agreement: Jewish Cultural Property*, 29 January, 1949.

⁴¹⁴ Both men served as vice-presidents of the JCR. 1949 Members of the JCR corporation: American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Conference, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Board of Deputies of British Jews, Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Council for the Protection of Rights and Interests of Jews from Germany, The Hebrew University, Jewish Agency for Palestine, Synagogue Council of America and World Jewish Congress. 1949 list of JCR members: president: Salo W. Baron, Chairman: Jerome Michael, Vice-Presidents: Leo Baeck, Simon Federbusch, Judah L. Magnes and Alan M. Stroock, Treasurer: David Rosenstein, Secretary: Ahron Opher, board of directors: Salo W. Baron, Rudolf Cullmann, Simon Federbusch, Max Gruenewald, Isaiah L. Kenen, A. Leon Kubowitzki, Louis Lipsky, Jerome Michael, Ahron Opher, William F. Rosenblum, Leo W. Schwarz, John Slawson, Alan M. Stroock, Eugene Untermeyer, Executive Secretary: Joshua Starr.

⁴¹⁵ More on the participation of Jewish scholars in the work of the JCR see Herman, pp. 187-196.

represented the Jewish Museum of New York, whereas Mordecai Narkiss arrived from the Bezalel Museum, Jerusalem and became indirectly, through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, a representative of the Jewish community of Israel.⁴¹⁶

The question of ownership of the Jewish property was not easy to resolve as representatives from survivor communities in Europe and around the world stepped forward requesting restitution. A conflict arose between those who believed that there would be no place for Jews in Europe anymore and others who thought the opposite.

The growing number of possible heirs to the Jewish cultural objects made it difficult to reach a final decision as to where they would be deposited. This conflict led to ongoing negotiations between the JRSO, the JCR, and the communities' leaders. Requests to inherit the property came from communities of European refugees and survivors around the world, and primarily from the large communities in Israel and the USA. In addition, the renewed Jewish communities in Germany and Austria saw themselves as successors of the pre-war communities. The eventual decision made in 1948 concluded that JRSO would receive the title to the communal property while the local communities would be allowed to use property that was found essential to their needs.⁴¹⁷ the first report (probably made between 1947-1948) of the JRSO *On the Restitution of Jewish Property in the U.S. Zone of Germany* stated:

About 25 Jewish communities have been re-established in the U.S. Zone of Germany. Representatives of these communities at a conference with the JRSO expressed their strong opinion that they were legally and morally entitled to all of the property of the former Jewish communities. They had begun filing claims for this property and were resolved to continue doing so.

⁴¹⁶ Jerusalem, CZA, S61.270 *Report on the journey to salvage Jewish cultural property in Europe on behalf of the Hebrew University and the Ministry of Religious Affairs*, September-December 1952. The Ministry of Religious Affairs became one of the supporters of the salvage initiative as it was responsible for sending several agents in addition to Narkiss.

⁴¹⁷ Takei, 'The "Gemeinde Problem"' *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, pp. 272-273.

They agreed that all properties surplus to their needs and properties in areas where no new Jewish community has been established should go to the JRSO.⁴¹⁸

Michael Brenner divided the surviving Jews after the Holocaust, who found themselves in post-war Germany into several groups: concentration camp survivors who were fewer than Jews who fled from Eastern Europe to the Soviet Union during the war. In addition, he mentioned a group of German Jewish survivors who were intermarried and survive the war in hiding.⁴¹⁹ Therefore it can be concluded that the new communities usually did not consist of the same group of persons who built the pre-war communities.⁴²⁰ Moreover, it was often the case that the new communities were created by a group of people who were not traditional Jews before the Holocaust and came from another country and followed their own traditions. Each Jewish community operated differently and therefore had to be approached separately regarding property that formerly belonged to its legal predecessor. Most leaders of the new communities expressed a sense of entitlement to the communal property of the former Jewish communities both legally and morally.⁴²¹ On these grounds, the Hebrew University was denied a large amount of books and manuscripts kept in the basement of the *Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden* (The complete archive of German Jews) by the leaders of the new Jewish community in Berlin.⁴²² Gallas explained that the situation of the Jewish community in Berlin was different from other Jewish communities in Germany at the time.⁴²³ The Jewish community in Berlin was composed of mostly Jews of German origin. It was considered larger and stronger than other Jewish communities and had a committed leader. Although the request was first accepted by the American State Department, it encountered the objection of

⁴¹⁸ Jerusalem, CZA, A444.217 Report No. 1 of the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization On the Restitution of Jewish Property in the U.S. Zone of Germany, [n.d.], p. 4.

⁴¹⁹ Brenner, pp. 2-3.

⁴²⁰ Geller, pp. 60-63.

⁴²¹ Jerusalem, CZA, A444.217 Report No 1 of the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization, [n.d.], pp. 4-5.

⁴²² Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, Report on a mission to Berlin, 19-21 June, 1949.

⁴²³ Gallas, 'Locating the Jewish Future', *Naharaim*, pp. 39-40.

the Jewish community of Berlin which refused to ship Jewish cultural objects outside of Germany.⁴²⁴ JRSO, however, did not recognize the German communities as heirs to the perished pre-war Jewish communities. It followed the post-war approach of world Jewry which opposed the resettlement of the Jews in Germany. As stated at the World Zionist Congress of 1948, they supported ‘The determination of the Jewish people never again to settle on the bloodstained soil of Germany’.⁴²⁵ JRSO did, however, agree to transfer a selection of basic objects in order to allow the community to practice Jewish traditions. This decision was reviewed in the first report of the JRSO on the Restitution of Jewish Property in the U.S. Zone of Germany:

The communities wanted the JRSO to agree that title to former community property as indicated above should vest in the new communities. We agreed with the principal that the present communities should have the means for existence and for the preservation of their Jewish traditions [...]⁴²⁶

This situation caused difficulty in the classification of the objects raising the question of which, if any, ought to remain in Europe and how such objects would be selected. Additionally, the conflict between the variety of groups and representatives who believed to have the right to inherit the objects persists to this day.

Cultural Property for Disposition

In order to enter the CCPs, one had to receive an official invitation and a stamped approval.⁴²⁷ Narkiss made efforts to receive such an invitation in his prior visits to Europe, however he was unable to do so until March, 1949. Joshua Starr, a Jewish historian and the

⁴²⁴ Jerusalem, CZA, A370.970 *Memorandum: Turnover of Cultural Property to JCR*, 24 January, 1949.

⁴²⁵ Brenner, p. 1.

⁴²⁶ CZA, A444.217 *Report No. 1 of the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization*, [n.d.], pp. 4-5.

⁴²⁷ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 *Travel orders for Narkiss*, 20 May, 1949, p. 1.

executive secretary of the JCR was expected to make an early valuation regarding the dispersal of the cultural items in the CCPs. Starr, who studied for a period of time in Jerusalem, summoned Narkiss to Germany based on his expertise in Jewish art and history.⁴²⁸

The task given to Narkiss was described in a letter:

Your major assignment is to deal with the collection stored in a room of the Wiesbaden Museum. By no later than about May 15 you should examine certain items at Offenbach, namely, the megillot and parokot; operations at Offenbach are scheduled to end by May 31.⁴²⁹

First, his assistance was required for the valuation of objects stored in the Wiesbaden Museum which consisted mainly of Jewish ritual objects. Other Jewish ritual objects found in the OAD such as scrolls (megillot) and curtains of the holy arch (parokot) had to be identified, valued and selected for both museums and synagogues in Israel. The categories for valuation assigned to Narkiss were quality and durability.⁴³⁰ Based on this initial categorization, it was later decided whether an item would end up in a museum collection or in a synagogue for ritual use. The letter also indicated the percentage of the objects that were to be shipped to Israel:

The total number of items proposed for the two institutions [the Bezalel Museum and the Tel Aviv Museum] should not exceed 40% of the total stock in any one category. If a greater portion is claimed, the JCR Board may find it necessary to reduce the allocation.⁴³¹

⁴²⁸ 'Dr. Joshua Starr, Jewish Historian and Scholar, Commits Suicide; was 42', Obituary, *Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA)* (8 December, 1949) < <http://www.jta.org/1949/12/08/archive/dr-joshua-starr-jewish-historian-and-scholar-commits-suicide-was-42> > [accessed 26 October 2016].

⁴²⁹ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Starr, *letter of instructions for Mr. Narkiss*, March 1949, p. 1.

⁴³⁰ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Starr, *Instructions for Mr. Narkiss*, March 1949, p. 1.

⁴³¹ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Starr, *Instructions for Mr. Narkiss*, March 1949, p. 1.

In accordance with this ratio of division of the items was decided by the JCR board the decision, the number of items Narkiss was allowed to choose from the fine art and the ritual objects categories was limited to forty percent of their total.⁴³² Starr recommended that Narkiss visit Berlin, Munich, Frankfurt and Vienna, where he would be able to valuate more Jewish ritual objects. The artefacts Starr referred to were kept in local depots and were often inaccessible to the JCR representatives due to the unwillingness of the local Jewish community to transfer them. He explained this in the context of the Berlin Jewish community:

While the Berlin Gemeinde has had no contact with JCR and is probably not agreeable to dealing with an “American” agency, the proposed transfer to you as an Israeli representative nevertheless involved the interests of JCR.⁴³³

The JCR was founded in the USA and was staffed by American personnel. In addition, the JRSO and JCR policy limited the number of objects it was willing to leave in the hands of the local Jewish communities. This issue created hostility between JCR personnel and the local communities.

In April, 1949, Narkiss was sent by the Jewish Agency to advise the JCR personnel in the American CCPs.⁴³⁴ In contrast to his prior visits to Europe for the Schatz Fund, Narkiss was now on an official national assignment. When the last British Military Forces had left Israel in May, 1948 and the State of Israel was established, Narkiss was well known for his expertise in art history and Jewish ritual art. Upon the invitation, it was decided that he would

⁴³² Jerusalem, the CAHJP, JRSO.NY.923a JCR, *Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Board of Directors*, 11 January, 1949.

⁴³³ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Starr, *Instructions for Mr. Narkiss*, March 1949, p. 2.

⁴³⁴ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive 7.99 *Portraits of Narkiss and group photographs*. A photograph taken of Narkiss in the Wiesbaden CCP, can be found in Appendix IV.

work at the CCPs as representative of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Bezalel Museum.⁴³⁵ Starr also mentioned this in his letter:

In regard to synagogue materials, as the representative of the State of Israel you are empowered to select objects designated to equip no more than 62 synagogues, again provided that the number proposed does not exceed 40% of the total stock in any one category.⁴³⁶

The JCR's principle of the division of the cultural property was repeated in several of the correspondences with Narkiss. Immigrants who managed to flee Europe during the war and settled in Jewish communities around the world were now interested in getting back their communal cultural objects and their private property. JCR representatives were in contact with Jewish communities in Latin America, South Africa, and with Jewish institutions in the USA, Israel, Britain, and within Western Europe.⁴³⁷

The frequent letters from Narkiss to his family in Jerusalem expressed his outlook on the situation at the CCPs. Based on his description, one can learn that in the summer of 1949, the CCP in Wiesbaden was open from eight in the morning until five in the afternoon and the air there stale and humid. Narkiss worked long hours going over his daily listings of objects and preparing reports for the American Military Forces.⁴³⁸ In these letters, his difficult emotional state was conveyed openly and intensely. Narkiss was overwhelmed by the sheer amount of objects and their poor condition:

My heart is bleeding and I am working. Everything that has been collected here at the Wiesbaden Museum is only a fragment of what the despicable [the Nazis] took from Hungary – as I see it. And everything is counted in

⁴³⁵ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.10 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter to the Ministry of Religious Affairs*, 8 March, 1949.

⁴³⁶ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Starr, *Instructions for Mr. Narkiss*, March 1949, p. 2.

⁴³⁷ New York, The Jewish Museum, Jewish Cultural Reconstruction (Recent correspondence). Letter from the curator of the Beyachad Jewish Museum, South Africa, 24 March, 2003.

⁴³⁸ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.110 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter to Nassia*, 9 May, 1949.

thousands and shows the state of our culture. The few objects removed from Germany were shattered with hammers, and those were the most beautiful and ancient of the pieces. I take anything broken that I would like to fix.⁴³⁹

Before Narkiss's arrival to Wiesbaden, the ritual objects were separated into damaged broken pieces and fragments and to objects that seemed whole and in better condition. Narkiss opposed to melting the objects, instead he tried to find broken pieces and attach them to the objects they belonged to. Recognizing the scope of damages pieces, he offered to send them to Jerusalem, where Jewish artisans could repair them.⁴⁴⁰ Finally, he suggested organized sales to which Jews interested in keeping such objects as cultural heritage of the Jewish communities would be invited.⁴⁴¹ The fragmented objects reminded Narkiss of European Jewish homes like the one that he grew up in. In one of his letters, he made a nostalgic comment, referring to the memories such items generated:

This work is, as I already wrote, tragic, and it gives me pain [to think] about this life, the culture of the Jewish home, unusual in its taste and unusual in life as well as in destruction. I see how those people depended on their tradition and how there was no pity for it, how the despicable came to forcefully take it away. The Jewish home believed that with these objects a salvation of the spirit will arrive, as it was in past generations, but their lives were taken away as well.⁴⁴²

⁴³⁹ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.110. Mordecai Narkiss, *letter to Nassia*, 3 May, 1949.

לבי שותת דם ואני עובד. כל מה שנצבר כאן במוזיאון בויסבדן זהו רק חלק ממה שלקחו המנוולים האלה מהונגריה- לפי שאני רואה מן הדברים. והכל באלפים והכל מראה גם את מצב תרבותנו. הדברים המועטים שלקחו מגרמניה - השחיתו בפטישים, ואלה היו הדברים היפים והעתיקים ביותר. אני לוקח דברים מושחתים שאני רוצה לתקנם.

⁴⁴⁰ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Mordecai Narkiss, *A Report on Narkiss's work in the Wiesbaden Central Collecting Point*, 19 June, 1949.

⁴⁴¹ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *A Report on Narkiss's work in the Wiesbaden Central Collecting Point*, 19 June, 1949.

⁴⁴² Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.110 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter to Nassia*, 7 May, 1949.

טרגית היא עבודה זו, כמו שכבר כתבתי לך, וגורמת כאב על החיים האלה, על תרבות זו של הבית היהודי, המשונה בטעמו ומשונה בחייו כבחרבנו. אני רואה כיצד היו האנשים ההם תלויים במסורת אבות וכיצד לא ידעו רחם עליה, וכיצד באו ידי טמאים מזוהמים אלה לקחתו בחזק יד. הבית היהודי חשב שעם הפצים אלה תבוא הצלה לנפש כמו שהיה בדורות שקדמו והנה באו ונטלו גם את חייהם.

When mentioning Jewish ritual objects, Narkiss very rarely differentiated between community and private property. Though the objects were primarily valued aesthetically, they eventually became a vehicle for memory of Jewish heritage and tradition. He continued:

Every day I discover fantastic pieces in the collection and every day I go and discover the other pieces or tiny fragments that belong to the same objects between the items for melting. Finally, I did not come here to receive fragments and run back, but in order to bring back to Israel and also to divide between museums around the world beautiful objects that are worthy of conserving.⁴⁴³

Narkiss's portrayal of the amount of objects and the hardship of the work at the Wiesbaden CCP intensified as more items were discovered across Germany and brought for valuation at the CCP. Though he had intended to stay just for one month, he extended his visit to over two months. As Narkiss described:

But this is a job for twenty people that was imposed on me and I see myself responsible for it and believe that I must salvage these items from the risk of a second plunder.⁴⁴⁴

While describing his work at the CCPs as exhausting and difficult, Narkiss repeatedly mentioned the importance of the salvage as part of a larger national cause. Narkiss's main concern was of objects left in Germany. Whether it would be left to the Jewish communities or to the new Western German government, Narkiss expressed his dismay that the Jewish community would receive these items:

⁴⁴³ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.110 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter to Nassia*, 12 May, 1949.

כל יום אני מגלה קטעים נפלאים באספים וכל יום אני הולך ומגלה את החלקים האחרים או שברים קטנטנים של אותם דברים בתוך ארגזי המתכת להתכה. וסוף-סוף איני כאן כדי לקבל שברי כלים ולברוח אלא כדי להביא לארץ וגם לחלק למוזיאונים אחרים בעולם דברים יפים שיהיו ראויים לשמירה.

⁴⁴⁴ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.110 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter to Nassia*, 18 June, 1949.

אבל זוהי עבודה לעשרים איש והוטלה עלי ואני רואה עצמי אחראי לדבר ואני חושב שעלי להציל את הדברים מסכנה שניה של גזילה.

The sooner we manage to get it out of here, the better, since nobody knows what they [the Americans] will eventually decide. Their policy is – “it will be handed to the local Jewish community.” There is no community, and when there is one, it is made of converts or mixed marriages, who are often more despicable than the Germans.⁴⁴⁵

Narkiss described an outcome different than that agreed upon by the JRSO and the Jewish communities. In his letter, Narkiss stated that the American staff would transfer remaining objects to the communities – and not necessarily limit the items to those that will fulfil the community needs, as decided in the agreement with the communities in 1948. He was highly critical of the structure of the Jewish communities due to his ethnic approach to Judaism and to those he considered Jewish and described both the Nazis and the converted Jews as despicable (מנוולים). Narkiss was one of many Jewish scholars who did not see a future for the Jews in Europe after the Holocaust. He believed that Israel, a nation state, could be the only home for the Jewish people. The trauma of the Holocaust emphasized the futility of the diaspora, leading to the conclusion that Israel was the only safe place for Jews. Moreover, a leading post-Holocaust approach considered Israel, which became one of the central locations that absorbed Holocaust survivors, as the rightful heir to the Jews who perished in Europe and to their property. Leaving the objects in Germany therefore meant that they would be destroyed or mistreated.

In addition to visiting the CCPs, Narkiss explored the depots and remaining items in Berlin, Worms, Garmisch, Marburg, Heidelberg, Hamburg, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Mainz, Koblenz and

⁴⁴⁵ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss, 7.110 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter to Nassia*, 4 June, 1949.

ככל שנמהר להוציא מכאן, כן יוטב כי אין יודע מה ישיבו לנו הללו. עמדתם היא – "זה ימסר לידי הקהילה היהודית במקום". אין קהילה, וכשישנה היא מצטרפת ממזמרים או מנשואי תערובת, שהם לרוב מנוולים יותר מן הגרמנים.

Frankfurt.⁴⁴⁶ These visits were short and he only described a few at length in his letters. In Berlin, for example, Narkiss met with the heads of the Jewish community:

Yesterday before leaving I discovered the Jewish Museum in Berlin. I received from them three crates filled with items and they have already been transferred to our office in the American sector of Berlin. Most of the objects are from the Seventeenth century and a few are from the Eighteenth century. A tough war I had with these odd men who are running the Jewish community today.⁴⁴⁷

Narkiss did not state the names of the men he was referring to, however, he possibly referred to the leader of the Jewish community in Berlin, Heinz Galinski, a survivor of Auschwitz internment camp who believed in the renewal of the community.⁴⁴⁸ Narkiss recorded more on his visits to Berlin on July and August, 1949, in a hand-written summary.⁴⁴⁹ The Berlin Jewish community leaders, he added, were more concerned with obtaining money than with the objects and only after a long negotiation was Narkiss allowed to see the Jewish ritual objects kept by them. He managed to convince them that it would be better to send the objects to Israel, where they would be exhibited on behalf of the Berlin Jewish community.⁴⁵⁰ In Hamburg, he valued Jewish ritual objects that belonged to the Jewish community and in Frankfurt and Worms he saw the items that belonged to the Jewish Museums:⁴⁵¹

⁴⁴⁶ Mordecai Narkiss Archive 7.99 *Portraits of Narkiss and group photographs*. Photographs taken of Narkiss during his visit can be found in Appendix IV.

⁴⁴⁷ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.110 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter to Nassia*, 22 July, 1949.

אתמול לפני צאתי את ברלין גיליתי גם את המוזיאון היהודי בברלין. קבלתי שם 3 תיבות מלאות כל טוב וכבר הן נמצאות בידי המשרד שלנו בברלין בסקטור האמריקני. הדברים רובם מימי המאה השבע-עשרה ומעוטם מן המאה השמונה עשרה. מלחמה קשה הייתה לי עם האנשים המשוגים האלה המנהלים כיום את הקהלה היהודית.

⁴⁴⁸ Galls, 'Locating the Jewish Future', *Naharaim*, p. 39.

⁴⁴⁹ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *Berlin*, [n.d.].

⁴⁵⁰ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *Berlin*, [n.d.].

⁴⁵¹ *Die Alte Synagoge zu Worms*, ed. by Dr. George Illert and Dr. Hans Lamm (Frankfurt M: Ner Tamid Verlag, 1961); *Das Museum Judischer Altertumer in Frankfurt 1922-1938: Was Ubrig Blieb*, ed. by Anne-Margret Kiessl and Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek (Frankfurt M: Judischen Museum, Taschenbuch, 1988).

Very little is left of the Jewish Museum. Everything was burnt. There are only two Mahzor books⁴⁵² remaining, illustrated in similar to our Hagaddah and also from the Thirteenth century – great works of art.⁴⁵³ But how will I bring it to Israel. The Germans claim that it is a part of their cultural heritage and the Americans do not want to get involved in the inner German life.⁴⁵⁴

A belief in the imperative to salvage these objects led Narkiss to later pressure the Jewish Agency and ministers of the Israeli Government.⁴⁵⁵ This was a part of his attempt to start a research project on the investigation of Jewish collections in Europe.⁴⁵⁶

The Federal Republic of Germany was established in Western Germany on 23 May, 1949 and the Allied Forces made an effort to encourage its development.⁴⁵⁷ Narkiss argued that the American Military Government chose to express support for the new Federal Republic of Germany by leaving libraries and works of art in German custody. Narkiss disapproved of this notion as part of his objection to leaving behind anything that belonged to Jews before the Holocaust in Europe. As he described it:

The Americans wished to express courtesy and handed to the Germans entire libraries of general literature robbed from Jews. The JCR, the New York

⁴⁵² The Worms Mahzor is found in the National Library in Jerusalem. *Worms Mahzor*, The National Library, Jerusalem <http://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLI/English/collections/treasures/shapell_manuscripts/mikra/worm/Pages/default.aspx> [accessed 20 May 2015]; Nils Roemer, *German City, Jewish Memory: The Story of Worms* (Lebanon, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2010), p. 151. Friedrich Illert the war time and post-war archivist who guarded the Worms Mahzor in addition to the community archives and the remains of the Worms synagogue during the war, first resisted the transfer of the materials to the JCR. In 1957 following legal proceedings in Germany, the Mahzor was sent to the National Library in Jerusalem.

⁴⁵³ *The Birds Head Haggada of the Bezalel National Art Museum in Jerusalem* (2 volumes), ed. by M. (Jerusalem: Tarshis Books, 1967). Narkiss was referring to the Birds' Head Haggadah, that can be found today in the collection of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

⁴⁵⁴ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.110 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter to Nassia*, 21 May, 1949.

מעט מאוד נשאר מן המוזיאון היהודי. הכל נשרף. נשאר שני מחזורים מצויירים הדומים בסגנונם להגדה שלנו וגם הם מן המאה השלוש עשרה - יצירות אמנות גדולות. אך כיצד להביא לארץ. הגרמנים טוענים שזהו רכוש תרבותי גרמני והאמריקנים אינם רוצים להתערב בחיי הגרמנים הפנימיים.

⁴⁵⁵ Jerusalem, CZA, S35.88 Georg Landauer, *letter to the Minister of finance, Eliezer Kaplan*, 3 May, 1950.

⁴⁵⁶ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archives, 7.110 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter to Nassia*, 30 May, 1949. Narkiss made no reference to private or museum collections, however, from the context of his letter, it can be suggested that he was interested in private Jewish collections.

⁴⁵⁷ Germany was divided into four between the four Allied Forces: USA, Britain, France and Russia. After the Russians failed to accept economic reforms and withdrew from the division of the four occupying governments, the three remaining allies promoted an establishment of a new German authority in Western Germany. The new authority, the Federal Republic of Germany, was led by Konrad Adenauer until 1963.

committee of incompetents took care only of the Jewish books and not of general books that were Jewish property, which we especially are in need of in this country.⁴⁵⁸

Cultural institutions in Israel, including Bezalel, were struggling to obtain books, works of art and other items which could be used to educate the growing Jewish community in Israel. In this quote, Narkiss distinguished between Jewish and non-Jewish literature, just as he did with works of art. Based on this form of categorization, “general” literature was any kind of literature that was not written by Jewish writers nor concentrated on Jewish themes. Once again, Narkiss implied that all cultural objects were needed in Israel and that it was the only place with moral and legal claims to the objects.⁴⁵⁹

Narkiss questioned the conduct of the German staff working at the CCPs and of German museums. He added that only very few of the cultural objects were returned to the claimants:

Many general works of art belonged to Jews, few were returned since not many claimed the objects. The claimants turned to the Central Collecting Points in request to search for works of art that they left behind or that they were forced to “sell” – in many instances the objects “could not be found” as the German staff of the Central Collecting Points informed the claimants that it is difficult to identify the objects they search for.⁴⁶⁰

Many cultural objects were found damaged, while others ended up in private hands or in local German museums. Narkiss revealed that German museums did not follow Military Government Law no. 59, and tried find ways around it. He recalled seeing a collection that

⁴⁵⁸ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.110 Narkiss, *letter to Nassia*, 18 June, 1949.

האמריקנים רוצים להיות אדיבים ומסרו ספריות שלמות כלליות שנשדדו מיהודים לגרמנים. ו JCR זהו הוועד הניו-יורקי של בטלנים דאג רק לספרים יהודיים ולא לספרים שהם רכוש יהודי וערכים כלליים הדרושים לנו בארץ באופן מיוחד .

⁴⁵⁹ Jerusalem, CZA, A370.120 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter to Guido Schoenberger*, 30 October, 1951.

⁴⁶⁰ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *Memorandum on the Salvage of Jewish art remnants*, March, 1950, p. 1.

אוצרות מרובים של יצירות אמנות כלליות שהיו שייכים ליהודים הושבו במדה מועטת, כי לא נמצאו עוררים רבים. העוררים פנו באמצעות השלטונות האמריקאיים אל תחנות האיסוף בבקשה לחפש אחרי יצירות האמנות שהשאירו או שהוכרחו "למכור" – במקרים רבים מאד "לא נמצאו" היצירות ההן, שכן הפקידים הגרמניים של תחנות האסוף הודיעו בעקשנות לעוררים כי "קשה" לזהות יצירות אלה שעל העדרם הודיעו העוררים.

belonged to Otto Landwehr, a German Jew who settled in Jerusalem, in a museum in Augsburg.⁴⁶¹ Though the law demanded museums and private owners to declare objects of high value, Narkiss suggested that the museum chose to reduce the value of the collection to avoid revealing its whereabouts.⁴⁶² That way, he argued, many cultural items that belonged to Jewish collectors before the Holocaust became part of the collection of museums across Western Germany. While working at the CCPs, Narkiss made a reference to ten thousand objects that were handed over to the Minister President of Bavaria and it was unclear at the time whether several hundreds more would be added to them.⁴⁶³ The status of such transfers of cultural property to the Federal Republic of Germany was explained by Saul Kagan in 1951:

HICOG [High Commissioner for Germany] turned over a number of pictures from the Munich Collecting Point to the Bavarian Minister President as trustee. The conditions of the trusteeship provide that individual pictures may be removed at any time for restitution under Law 59 or for return to foreign countries or for delivery to individual German owners or institutions. The residues of the pictures are to be kept in trust for the Federal Government.⁴⁶⁴

The agreement Kagan described was perhaps a convenient solution for the storing of the items, especially those that the JCR found no reason to send abroad. On the one hand, the items were not of high quality and on the other, there were no known claimants searching for them. The Federal Republic of Germany could act as a trustee in similar to cultural institutions that obtained portions of the property. In addition, shipping and customs expenses

⁴⁶¹ There is no mention of the title of the museum in Augsburg and further information about Otto Landwehr was not found.

⁴⁶² Jerusalem, CZA, A444.217 *Military Law no. 59 Part XIII: Duty to report and penalties, Article 73: Duty to report*, 1947; Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *Memorandum on the Salvage of Jewish art remnants*, March, 1950, p. 1.

⁴⁶³ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *Memorandum on the Salvage of Jewish art remnants*, March, 1950, p. 1.

⁴⁶⁴ Jerusalem, CZA, S35.88 Saul Kagan, *letter to Dr. Max Kreuzberger*, 10 July, 1951.

necessary for the removal of similar items from Europe were avoided.⁴⁶⁵ It is unclear whether the trusteeship was successful in any way, however, recent publications confirmed that many of such works were eventually sold on the German art market and purchased by former Nazi supporters.⁴⁶⁶

Though Narkiss was made responsible for the division of the cultural property, the JCR and the JRSO board of directors made the final decision on the destination of the objects. These organizations worked closely with OMGUS. Objects were first categorized based on their quality, durability, and uniqueness and it was then decided whether they would go to museums, synagogues, or would be melted. Each of these three possibilities impacted the meaning of the object.⁴⁶⁷ This act of classification had the potential of interpreting the objects in a way that would lead to a new division. A ritual object of traditional significance could be considered valueless due to its condition and sent for melting or it could become a museum item. Upon entering a museum collection, it would be valued for its aesthetic and historic qualities, while if used at a synagogue, it would become useful for keeping Jewish tradition.⁴⁶⁸ Narkiss felt accountable for choosing the future homes of the items. He further described his position in a report prepared for Joshua Starr in June, 1949:

I would like to add that not all of the items selected for museums are whole. On the contrary, it is those which are incomplete that are probably the oldest and the most interesting. On the other hand, when it comes to the ritual objects for synagogues I needed to take into account not its preservation

⁴⁶⁵ Doreen Carvajal and Alison Smale, 'Nazi Art Loot Returned... To Nazis', *New York Times* (15 July, 2016) <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/16/arts/design/nazi-art-loot-returned-to-nazis.html?_r=2> [accessed 2 November 2016].

⁴⁶⁶ Carvajal and Smale, 'Nazi Art Loot Returned... to Nazis', *New York Times* (15 July, 2016)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/16/arts/design/nazi-art-loot-returned-to-nazis.html?_r=0> [accessed 2 November 2016].

⁴⁶⁷ Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall, 'The Cultural Biography of Objects', *World Archaeology* 31.2 (October, 1999), 169-178 (p. 172); Hodder, 'Contextual Analysis of Symbolic Meanings', in *The Archaeology of Contextual Meanings*, ed. by Hodder, pp. 1-10.

⁴⁶⁸ Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture*, p. 226.

[literal translation: storing] but its usefulness and durability upon utilization.⁴⁶⁹

Based on Narkiss' descriptions, it can be understood that the items were mostly in bad condition and often fragmentary. In the case of selecting artefacts for synagogues, it was difficult to find those that would be of best quality and durability. Regarding the quality of the items, Narkiss added:

[...] It was extremely difficult to select of these materials that are nothing but average pieces and often, even below average, museum items. As for our museum – although the items for exhibitions are few, I know that there is a great importance for educational materials. Our museums do not have, what other museums call, “a research room” – students room [...]⁴⁷⁰

These materials would be introduced to the art historical canon through the Bezalel Museum, and the academic art historical field in Israel. By adding these objects to the museum collection, Bezalel was to broaden the educational opportunities it was offering scholars and visitors. Jewish ritual artefacts in museum collections would be studied as aesthetic and historic objects.⁴⁷¹ Clifford used religious artefacts as an example of objects that change their value as a result of transfer from a place of worship into a museum.⁴⁷² Narkiss also mentioned that many of the items were vandalized during the Holocaust. Michael Thompson based his Rubbish theory on the idea of the number of objects one possess and is willing to

⁴⁶⁹ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *A Report on Narkiss's work in the Wiesbaden Central Collecting Point*, 19 June, 1949.

רצוני לציין שלא תמיד המוצגים שנבחרו לשם המוזיאונים שלמים הם. להיפך, דווקא הטפסים שאינם שלמים הם אולי הנושנים ביותר והמעניינים ביותר. מצד שני, כשהדבר נוגע בתשמישי הקדושה של בתי הכנסת הרי היה צריך להביא בחשבון לא החסנתו של החפץ או התשמיש באוצר בית הכנסת, אלא שמושיותו וכה עמידותו בפני הטלטול והשמוש.

⁴⁷⁰ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *A Report on Narkiss's work in the Wiesbaden Central Collecting Point*, 19 June, 1949.

[...] היה קשה מאד לבחור מתוך חומר זה שאינו אלא חומר ממוצע ולפעמים קרובות, אף מתחת לממוצע של חומר מוזיאלי. אשר למוזיאון שלנו – אני יודע שאף על פי שחומר התצוגתי מועט הוא, הרי החומר העיוני חשוב למדי. אין למוזיאונים שלנו, מה שקרוי בכל המוזיאונים "חדר מחקר" – students room.

⁴⁷¹ Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture*, pp. 220-224.

⁴⁷² *Ibid*, pp. 226-227.

discard. He divided these objects into three categories: the first is objects in transit, these items decrease their value in time, the second category is durable objects that increase value in time and the third was rubbish which have no value. The objects in the rubbish category are defined by their physical condition. When interpreted by using Thompson's theory, instead of becoming rubbish, these items had a durable quality that allowed them to remain collectable.⁴⁷³

In letters written from Wiesbaden to his wife, Nassia, Narkiss explained the scope of the management of the objects expected of him:

I already began packing on my sixth day. For the time being I only packed fragments that will be sent for melting, I already packed 12 crates [...] Unfortunately, I am not packing only our objects. I must divide between museums and synagogues and ship all the way to South Africa as well as to other countries.⁴⁷⁴

Narkiss referred to the process of distribution of the cultural property between museums and synagogues around the world as a form of "high politics."⁴⁷⁵ As the principal valuator of the objects, he felt compelled to act as an advocate for his own museum and was torn when asked to make selections for museums around the world. As he put it in his own words:

The objects are divided between our museum and Jewish museums in the world, between synagogues in Israel and synagogues all over the world. And I

⁴⁷³ Michael Thompson, 'The Filth in the Way', *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. by Susan M. Pearce (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 269-278 (p. 273).

⁴⁷⁴ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.110 Narkiss, *letter to Nassia*, 18 June, 1949, p. 1.

ביום השישי החילתי לארוז כבר. לעת עתה ארוזתי רק שברים שיש לשלוח להתכה, כבר ארוזתי 12 תיבות [...] לצערי, לא בלבד שלנו עלי לארוז. עלי לחלק בין מוזיאונים ובין בתי כנסת עד לאפריקה הדרומית ולארצות אחרות עלי לשלוח.

⁴⁷⁵ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.110 Narkiss, *letter to Nassia*, 4 June, 1949, p. 1.

must carefully and cleverly assess, so that good items will be divided between the museums and the best of them will reach Israel. High politics.⁴⁷⁶

Throughout the process of selection, Narkiss expressed a practical bittersweet realization that the Bezalel Museum's gains were a result of the war:

For many years this horrible feeling will accompany me: the museum will be enriched as result of the destruction of Jewish homes. Would anyone of these Jews of Munkacs, Grosswardein [Oradea]⁴⁷⁷ and of Sighetu Marmatiiei donate anything to a museum in Jerusalem if I would come and ask? I feel like a thief that comes and takes by force... but I must not complain. Our museum will finally receive important collections.⁴⁷⁸

The Bezalel Museum thus became one of several institutions that expanded its collections as a result of the removal of cultural property from Europe after the Holocaust, and Narkiss expressed a conflict between his sadness and the opportunity for the museum. The accumulation of cultural objects, as Narkiss described it, was a realization of the idea of the cultural centre he wished to create for the entire Jewish people in Jerusalem.

Between May and July of 1949, over sixteen thousand objects were identified, catalogued, valued, and packed in two hundred and twelve crates.⁴⁷⁹ Removing the objects from Europe was Narkiss's priority in what he believed would be a long process that involved an unavoidable conflict with the JCR directors. He was going to pressure the JCR directors to reach a decision that would ensure the shipment of the objects to Israel. In letters to Nassia,

⁴⁷⁶ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.110 Narkiss, *letter to Nassia*, 4 June, 1949, p. 1.

הדברים מחולקים בין המוזיאון שלנו ומוזיאונים יהודיים בעולם, בין בתי כנסת בארץ-ישראל ובין בתי כנסת בכלל בעולם. ועלי לשקול בשימת לב ושכל, כדי שדברים טובים יחולקים בין המוזיאונים ושהמעולים ביותר יגיעו לארץ פוליטיקה גבוהה.

⁴⁷⁷ Narkiss referenced the Yiddish or German name of the city, located today in Rumania. Tamás Csíki, *Oradea*, trans. by Veronika Szabó, *The YIVO Encyclopaedia of Jews in Eastern Europe* <<http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/oradea>> [accessed 2 January 2017].

⁴⁷⁸ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.110 Narkiss, *letter to Nassia*, 7 May, 1949.

עוד שנים תלוח אותי הרגשה אימה זו: המוזיאון יתעשר על משואות חרבנו של בית יהודי. האם היה משהו מיהודים אלה, ממונקאטש ומגרס ורדין וממרורש סיגט, נותן דבר למוזיאון בירושלים אילו הייתי בא לבקש? והריני מרגיש עצמי כשודד זה אשר בא ולקח בחוזק יד. אך אסור לי להתאונן. סוף סוף יתעשר המוזיאון שלנו באספים חשובים.

⁴⁷⁹ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.110 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter to Nassia*, 9 July, 1949.

Narkiss expressed a concern that the JCR board of directors would not accept his division of the objects and as a result, the majority of the objects would be shipped to the USA instead of Israel.⁴⁸⁰ Furthermore, he realized that if his recommended division of the property would not be adopted, much of the property could remain in Germany and part of the items could be sold.⁴⁸¹ As time went by, it became clearer that objects would first be removed to the JRSO headquarters in New York and from there it would be decided where they would be shipped next.

‘Heirless’ “General” Art

Narkiss’s work in Wiesbaden consisted of valuing Jewish ritual, decorative, and fine art objects that were located at the Wiesbaden CCP and that were brought for his inspection from the OAD, where they were temporarily kept.⁴⁸² These items included, for example, paintings, textiles, silver objects, and porcelains.⁴⁸³ Additionally, Narkiss was requested by the JCR to value a selection of fine art that remained in the Munich CCP.⁴⁸⁴ Based on a few surviving lists we can learn that the paintings and decorative art found in Munich were often average works by European artists suited to a late nineteenth century-early twentieth century European bourgeoisie taste.⁴⁸⁵ Nineteenth century Jewish families who reached substantial financial status collected art as part of their effort to meet the social expectations of the cultured German citizen.⁴⁸⁶ Jews collected items from ancient artefacts to aristocratic portraits and historical German paintings.⁴⁸⁷ Taking after the Jewish bourgeoisie, the middle

⁴⁸⁰ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.110 Narkiss, *letter to Nassia*, 4, June, 1949.

⁴⁸¹ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.110 Narkiss, *letter to Nassia*, 30 May, 1949.

⁴⁸² Jerusalem, the CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296d Benjamin Ferencz, *letter to Eli Rock*, 29 May, 1949.

⁴⁸³ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *A Report on Narkiss’s work in the Wiesbaden Central Collecting Point*, 19 June, 1949.

⁴⁸⁴ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.110 Narkiss, *letter to Nassia*, 21 May, 1949.

⁴⁸⁵ Jerusalem, the CAHJP JRSO.NY.296a *Paintings to be shipped to Israel*, [n.d.].

⁴⁸⁶ Michael Hall, ‘Bric-A-Brac- A Rothschild’s Memoir of Collecting [An Introduction]’, *Jewish Collectors and Their Contribution to Modern Culture*, ed. by Annette Weber (Heidelberg: University Winter Heidelberg, 2011), pp. 21-38.

⁴⁸⁷ Vera Grodzinski, ‘Collecting against the Grain’, in *the Jewish Quarterly* (25 February, 2015)

< <http://www.jewishquarterly.org/issuearchive/article4441.html?articleid=205> > [accessed 10 August 2016].

classes collected lesser works, for example copies of Dutch landscape paintings, religious paintings, portraits, prints, and porcelain miniatures of different qualities.

Though Narkiss was sceptical, upon arrival to the Munich CCP he wrote about the great artistic property that would be given to the Bezalel Museum.⁴⁸⁸ The Allied Forces had put together this group of several hundred objects that remained unclaimed by its pre-war owners. It was believed that many of their owners had perished in the Holocaust and therefore, it was entitled ‘heirless’ Jewish cultural property. This is but one example of the different kinds of property discovered across Europe by the Allied Forces that had no claimants. The properties were a mixture of private and communal property and the JRSO that handled bank accounts and real estate obtained permission from the OMGUS as the successor organization of the Jewish people to act on behalf of the perished people and liquidate these properties. The cultural objects were handled differently; first, the majority of the items that were removed from occupied European countries were allocated back to them, further handling was decided by the receiving governments. The remainder of ‘heirless’ property, which was unclaimed and unidentified, was given in 1949 to the JCR for disposal. Though the objects were not considered Jewish art originally, once they were titled ‘heirless’ they entered the final cultural category e. of Law no. 59 discussed above, described as ‘Such other Jewish cultural properties as JCR and Military Government shall agree to transfer’ and therefore were handed to the JCR.⁴⁸⁹

Partial lists of objects and crate contents found in the CAHJP in Jerusalem indicate that many of the cultural objects could have come from households as they varied in types of media, themes and sizes.⁴⁹⁰ Some works of art were stripped of almost any identifying mark, they were heavily damaged and without an identifiable artist signature, these works were orphaned

⁴⁸⁸ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.110 Narkiss, *letter to Nassia*, 30 May, 1949.

⁴⁸⁹ CZA, A370.970 *Memorandum of Agreement: Jewish Cultural Property*, 29 January, 1949

⁴⁹⁰ Jerusalem, the CAHJP, JRSO.NY. 296a. *Jewish Unidentified Property*, 29 May, 1949.

from a system of values. Only a small number consisted of identified works of art by Jewish artists such as Lesser Ury, Max Liebermann, and Emil Orlik and few paintings depicted Jewish themes such as the wailing-wall and Isaac and Rebecca.⁴⁹¹ Remaining objects included over two hundred miniatures,⁴⁹² furniture, drawings, lithographs, and engravings. In the lists, many of the items were given general descriptions such as German eighteenth century, Italian Romantic Landscape, and Dutch seventeenth century. The majority of subject matters were landscapes and still lives, portraits, and a few Christian religious themes, and Jewish institutions were less likely to be interested in adding these works of art to their collections.

Stephen Kayser, director of the Jewish Museum in New York, for example, identified Jewish art as a thematic category and did not see Lesser Ury and Max Lieberman's works as necessarily Jewish because of their general themes.⁴⁹³ Jewish art, in his opinion, did not depend on its creator, but on its function.⁴⁹⁴

Narkiss's perception, however, called to include Jewish art as an art school that developed in parallel to other European art schools. He expanded his view to include: "general" art owned by Jews to the category of Jewish art, thus proposing that ownership was a form of expression of Jewish people living in Europe before the Second World War and therefore would become a part of their memory. The art historian Helen Rosenau discussed the role of Jewish patrons in a time when more artists were non-Jewish.⁴⁹⁵ She suggested that Jewish patrons influenced artists, and thus commissioned art works by Jews should be considered Jewish art. Moreover, Rosenau identified Jewish artists who participated in modern art

⁴⁹¹ The CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296a *Jewish Unidentified Property*, 29 May, 1949.

⁴⁹² Miniatures were considered both miniature portraits and decorative porcelain figures.

⁴⁹³ Kayser and Schoenberger, p. 9.

⁴⁹⁴ Kayser, 'Defining Jewish Art', in *Mordecai M. Kaplan Jubilee Volume*, ed. by Davis pp. 457-459.

⁴⁹⁵ Rosenau, p. 47.

movements such as impressionism and expressionism, as a part of the canon of Jewish art.⁴⁹⁶ Rosenau's discussion supports Narkiss's all-inclusive perspective Jewish art. He believed that everything coming from Europe was valuable: first, for the heritage of the Jewish people and for the next generations and second, for the Bezalel Museum collection.

The objects became signifiers for Jewish life and culture in Europe.⁴⁹⁷ As such, they played the role of memorialization of the people and communities whose lives could not be saved. In addition, by exhibiting these items in a museum, they became a part of the construction of Jewish identity for future generations. The objects became representations of middle-class taste before the Second World War.⁴⁹⁸

The items were given three levels of context and meaning. First, they were works of art with economic value and aesthetic and social function. Second, they were part of a social code of collecting works of art and third, their historical context was based on the fact that their pre-war owners perished in the Holocaust.⁴⁹⁹ In this unprecedented situation, Narkiss managed to symbolically save cultural memory of the Jews of Europe and to expand the Bezalel Museum collection.

Narkiss explained in his report that most of the objects were not of museum quality, yet, he suggested, several museums could benefit by adding them to their research departments.⁵⁰⁰

Our museum which is situated among Jews and immigrants has many such objects, more so than excellent works, that, however, is not the situation in other Jewish museums that do not hold such material, since their collections

⁴⁹⁶ Rosenau, p. 19.

⁴⁹⁷ Daniel Miller, 'Things Ain't What They Used to Be', in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. by Pearce, p. 14.

⁴⁹⁸ Malgorzata Stolarska-Fronia, 'Jewish Art Collectors from Breslau and Their Impact on the City's Cultural Life at the End of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century', *Jewish Collectors and Their Contribution to Modern Culture*, ed. by Annette Weber (Heidelberg: University Winter Heidelberg, 2011), pp. 237-254; Robin Reisenfeld, 'Collecting and Collective Memory: German Expressionist Art and Modern Jewish Identity', *Jewish Identity in Modern Art History*, ed. by Catherine M. Soussloff (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 114-134.

⁴⁹⁹ Hodder, 'Contextual Analysis of Symbolic Meanings', in *The Archaeology of Contextual Meanings*, ed. by Hodder, p. 12.

⁵⁰⁰ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *A Report on Narkiss's work in the Wiesbaden Central Collecting Point*, 19 June, 1949.

were donated by the wealthiest of our people. For example, the Jewish Theological Seminary collection in New York or the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. These have material that has been selected for its quality, but are missing exemplary material for research purposes. In that sense, this collection will become a source of great wealth for them, if their directors will use this material wisely.⁵⁰¹

Narkiss proposed a point of view that went beyond the approach that the museum should keep only the most exquisite treasures and found research and education as important. Jewish museums in the USA that had representatives involved in the allocation process were part of the group of recipients of the Jewish cultural objects Narkiss divided. Bezalel, however, had an eclectic collection of ethnographic Jewish art and works of lesser quality. This was a chance to divide the objects and create an environment that would promote the research and collection of Jewish art. Even in instances in which he did not consider the objects of great aesthetic significance, he justified salvaging them. As he explained, “In my report to Dr. Starr, I affirmed that these objects had documentary value only and that only as such our Museum was interested to have them.”⁵⁰²

Narkiss made a case that led to an oscillation between history and art when artefacts had historical and documentary values that were just as significant as their aesthetic ones. Narkiss thus created a biography for the objects that consisted of these two elements.⁵⁰³ Based on his art historical experience, Narkiss described the best works in the Munich CCP as ones by well-known artists such as Sisley and Courbet. Still, he took into account the historical

⁵⁰¹ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *A Report on Narkiss's work in the Wiesbaden Central Collecting Point*, 19 June, 1949.

המוזיאון שלנו מתוך שבתו בתוך המונים יהודיים ועליה, היה לו חומר כזה יותר מאשר חומר מעולה, מה שאין כן במוזיאונים היהודיים האחרים שאין להם כלום מחומר זה, הואיל ונצברו או נקנו על ידי עשירים בישראל. כמקרה האוסף של הסמינר התיאולוגי בניו-יורק, או המוזיאון של היברו יוניון קולג' בסנסנינגטון. הללו יש להם חומר מנופה וחסר להם החומר הדוגמאי לחדר במחקר. במובן זה ישמש האוסף הזה מקור של עושר רב בשבילם, אם יבינו מנהליהם כיצד לנצל חומר זה.

⁵⁰² Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3. Mordecai Narkiss, *letter to Eliyahu Dobkin*, 22 August, 1951.

⁵⁰³ Kopytoff, 'the Cultural Biography of Things', in *The Social Life of Things*, ed. by Appadurai, p. 68. Kopytoff discussed and developed the the ide of the biography of an object.

circumstances under which they were removed from Jewish owners who perished during the Holocaust.⁵⁰⁴

On the one hand, Narkiss saw Israel as the rightful heir to the objects however, at the same time he realized many of the pieces of cultural art arrived from private homes. In accordance with the restitution policy followed at the CCPs, he agreed that the museum would act as custodian for the objects. In this explanation, he acknowledged the responsibilities of the institution that would receive the items.

As an alternative, I propose that the shipment be consigned to the Jewish Agency, with Bezalel Museum acting as custodian, with responsibility of making restitution to claimants.⁵⁰⁵

Narkiss valued both private and communal Jewish cultural property during his time at the CCPs. While he stated that Israel was the rightful heir to the communal property, he acknowledged the need to identify the previous private owners of the items.

As Narkiss was preparing to send items to Israel a legal difficulty arose.⁵⁰⁶ Since many of the objects were created by international artists who were often not Jewish, they could not be included in the collection of Jewish materials handled by the JCR. Narkiss expressed anger and frustration at this limitation:

General Jewish artistic property has a value that goes beyond the ritual objects and if nothing will be done, it will all go to the Nazi murderers, and even if it will be salvaged it will be sold by the Joint and the Agency for cents. This week I meant to write to Dobkin that I will resign if they turn the art into bargains. They have never sold such things – and all of a sudden they become

⁵⁰⁴ Henri Zerner, 'Alois Riegl: Art, Value and Historicism', *Daedalus*, 105.1 (Winter, 1976), 177-188 (p. 185).

⁵⁰⁵ Jerusalem, CZA, A370.970 Mordecai Narkiss, *Report to Joshua Starr*, 26 May, 1949, p. 1.

⁵⁰⁶ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.110 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter to Nassia*, 14 July, 1949.

a source of income! I am furious to think about what they are doing without taking into consideration the future generation and past generations.⁵⁰⁷

Narkiss considered property that was believed to have been taken from Jewish homes as Jewish, disregarding the nationality or religion of the creator or the theme of the object.⁵⁰⁸ Based on its pre-war ownership, a landscape painting, for example, painted by the Dutch artist Jan Both was regarded by Narkis as Jewish cultural property.⁵⁰⁹ In this situation, Jewish art that belonged to a Jewish owner was a part of the “general” art that also belonged to the same owner.⁵¹⁰ This inclusive definition of Jewish cultural property however was not adopted by the JCR. Starr explained it briefly in a letter ‘[...] but you must realize that the art objects are not within the jurisdiction of JCR unless they are of Jewish content.’⁵¹¹

A specific definition could not be found in letters and correspondence, yet it can be suggested that Jewish ownership did not mean a work of art would be considered as Jewish. Moreover, this so-called separation of Jewish art from other art schools grew out of a larger discussion taking place at the time. Between the late 1930s and 1950s, several Jewish scholars published their interpretations of Jewish art. Baron examined Jewish art in his 1937 publication *A Social and Religious History of the Jewish People*.⁵¹² He supported the existence of Jewish art and identified a genuine Jewish style in synagogue decorations across Eastern Europe.⁵¹³

⁵⁰⁷ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.110 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter to Nassia*, 2 July, 1949.

רכוש יהודי אמנותי כללי, שערכו עולה על כל הכסף הזה ואם לא ייעשה דבר ילך הכל לידי הרוצחים הנאציים ואף אם נציל אותו ימכור זאת הגוינט יחד עם הסוכנות כדי לעשות מזה פרוטות. איזה גורל מונה לי, להיות ידי קשורות בלא שאוכל לעשות דבר? השבוע רציתי לטלגרף לדובקין שאתפטר מכל העבודה הזאת, אם יעשו מקח וממכר בענייני אמנות. מעולם לא הוציאו על כך כסף ולעולם לא יוציאו - ופתאום עושים זאת לעצמם מקור של הכנסה! אני רותח כולי כשאני זוכר מה שהם עושים ללא אחריות צבורית בפני דור יבוא ומפני דורות שהלכו.

⁵⁰⁸ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.9 Memorandum: *On the importance of dealing with the question of the restitution of Jewish and general art treasures looted from Jews that are found in three of the occupied territories of Western Germany* [n.d.].

⁵⁰⁹ Steinberg, p. 14.

⁵¹⁰ Based on his connections and articles that could be found in his personal archive, I can suggest that Narkiss was familiar with pre-war Jewish collections in Europe. Magazines in his archive include for example: *Pantheon: Monatsschrift für Freunde und Sammler der Kunst*, Herausgegeben von O.v. Falke und A. L. Mayer, F. Bruckmann AG München Jahrgang 1931, 3 Heft, März.

⁵¹¹ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Joshua Starr, *letter to Narkiss*, 8 June, 1949.

⁵¹² Bland, pp. 45-46.

⁵¹³ *Ibid*, p. 49.

In contrast, Kayser suggested that a Jewish style did not exist as early as antiquity but was influenced by the Baroque period.⁵¹⁴ As he explained:

When we speak of “Jewish art” we mean the arts as they are applied to Judaism. This application, of course, is made principally in those areas where art is essential as a means to an end. Such a concept of Jewish art may be called functional, since it does not recognize anything Jewish in art unless it serves a purpose connected with Judaism as a way of life. The definition excludes creations by Jewish artists which are detached from Jewish objectives, but includes works which serve a Jewish purpose even though their makers were not Jewish: a situation quite common in Western Europe before the Emancipation.⁵¹⁵

Kayser’s definition separated between what can be categorised as Jewish art and other art based on subject matter and function. The artists’ religion did not play a central role in the art which was created nor was the question of the owner of the work. Guido Schoenberger, Kayser’s assistant, stressed the function of the object. Jewish art, as Schoenberger explained, is connected to different aspects of Jewish life and therefore its creator can be either Jewish or non-Jewish.⁵¹⁶ Moreover, in his review of Franz Landsberger’s book *A History of Jewish Art*, Kayser criticized his view that implied that Jewish art is similar to the art of other schools. Jewish art should be distinguished from “general” art, Schoenberger wrote, and explained that even its production was difficult because of the prohibition of the second commandment and due to the exposure of Jewish artists to foreign influences.⁵¹⁷ Gutmann explained that Landsberger believed Jewish art should be viewed in ethnic terms and

⁵¹⁴Kayser and Schoenberger, p. 9.

⁵¹⁵ Ibid, pp. 9-10.

⁵¹⁶ Schoenberger, ‘The Essence of Jewish Art’, *Historia Judaica* p. 193.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid, p. 192.

therefore can be treated as other art schools.⁵¹⁸ Similarly, the art historian Heinrich Strauss suggested that Jewish art should be valued by content and not by form.⁵¹⁹ When Jews began to assimilate and become a part of modern society, they lost their distinct art which expressed their religious devotion.⁵²⁰ Finally, Roth, who investigated Jewish art and Judaism supported the existence of early examples of Jewish art.⁵²¹ Unlike Kayser, Roth suggested that Jewish art was made by and for the Jewish people: 'The term "Jewish" thus applies here to authorship and to object; it is not intended to apply to the content'.⁵²² Gutmann explained that Roth's interpretation was similar to that of Landsberger stressing the ethnic qualities of objects.⁵²³

Historians offered two primary interpretations on Jewish art and none of these considered the idea of ownership that Nakiss introduced. The main disagreement evolved around the beginning of Jewish art and whether art by artists who were Jewish was necessarily considered Jewish due to their religion. The JCR chose to follow Kayser and Schoenberger's concepts when it was acting as trustee of the unidentified Jewish cultural objects on behalf of the Jewish people.⁵²⁴ The organization was responsible for redistributing Jewish cultural objects to religious, cultural, and educational institutions in order for them to make use of the items. The difference in opinions on Jewish art indicates that upon selecting a policy regarding the treatment of the 'heirless' Jewish cultural items, several interpretations were available for the JCR to choose from. Based on the JCR policy, works of art that did not represent Jewish themes and Jewish history was not found useful to Jewish communities and institutions for keeping Jewish heritage. The purpose for which the transfer took place was described in a memorandum signed by Starr in January, 1949:

⁵¹⁸ Gutmann, 'Is There a Jewish Art?', in *The Visual Dimension*, ed. by Moore, pp. 8-10.

⁵¹⁹ Steven Fine, *The Menorah: From the Bible to Modern Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), p. 54-55.

⁵²⁰ Wharton, 'Jewish Art, Jewish Art', *Images*, p. 4.

⁵²¹ Roth, pp. 11-20.

⁵²² *Ibid*, p. 19.

⁵²³ Gutmann, 'Is There a Jewish Art?', in *The Visual Dimension*, ed. by Moore, pp.8-10.

⁵²⁴ Jerusalem, CZA, S35.72 *Establishment of Jewish Restitution Successor Organization*, 22 August, 1948, p. 4.

In consideration of the fact that no claims have been received for and no identification of prior ownership can be reasonably established for the properties, these properties are transferred to JCR, Inc., with the proviso that they are to be utilized for the maintenance of the cultural heritage of the Jewish people, and therefore the physical integrity of these properties will be maintained. The Jewish ritual objects of precious metals are to be utilized as such and not converted to monetary metal except such objects as may have been so damaged as to prevent normal use.⁵²⁵

This quote promised to keep the ritual objects intact while clarifying that the objects would be used to promote Jewish cultural heritage. Therefore, the policy regarding items that were not found appropriate to the initial Jewish art category was open for interpretation.

In his thinking of Jewish modernization and acculturation, Narkiss identified a unique group which the “general” cultural property owned by Jews fell into. He tried to fill the gap by categorizing property as Jewish or “general” art and taking into consideration the owners of the art objects.

A Call to Continue the Salvage

In 1950, after returning to Israel from his visit to the CCPs, Narkiss prepared a memorandum in which he explained the main problem he encountered in the process of salvaging Jewish cultural property. In his opinion, the exclusive responsibility of the JCR for Jewish art created an obstacle that resulted in a loss of property that belonged to Jewish families before the war. While JCR was initially restricted to handling Jewish art, a category that included Jewish ritual objects, parts of the books and archives collections, and part of the fine art collection, Narkiss was concerned that the rest of the items would be transferred to German

⁵²⁵ CZA, A370.970 Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, *Memorandum Agreement: Jewish Cultural Property*, 29 January, 1949.

institutions.⁵²⁶ These objects did not fit the existing categories of Jewish art and therefore were handled separately:

[...] JCR, which is a sister organization to the Joint, neglected claiming the general artistic property from the occupying government, which has a higher estimate. It only claimed J E W I S H cultural treasures and as result of this strange attitude, general books looted from Jews were given to German libraries, since their content is not considered Jewish. Obviously a painting by Rembrandt or Velasquez is not as Jewish as a Tallit or the curtain of the Torah ark, as a Torah crown or a Hanukah lamp. Obviously these objects are handed to the German murderers since they are of "general cultural value."⁵²⁷

Narkiss agreed that a painting could not be considered as Jewish when compared to a ritual object. But Narkiss's unique point of view added the aspect of ownership to the idea of Jewish art so that these "general" cultural works would not be lost. This was an unconventional idea and one can argue that it was the result of the extensive confiscations of cultural property that had taken place during the Holocaust. It is likely that Narkiss understood the division of categories by the JCR, but disagreed with it.

In his memorandum, Narkiss identified this as a critical moment for the Jewish people, a chance to salvage the remnants of their culture from Europe:

An opportunity that will not repeat itself and at the twelfth hour, is handed to us now to salvage whatever we can before the Adenauer government will

⁵²⁶ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *Memorandum on the salvage of Jewish art remnants*, March, 1950, p. 1.

⁵²⁷ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *Memorandum on the salvage of Jewish art remnants*, March, 1950, p. 1.

[...] JCR, שהיא בחינת בת לג'וינט, לא שמה לב בתביעותיה מאת שלטונות הכבוש לרכוש האמנותי הכללי שערכו רב יותר. היא תבעה רק אוצרות תרבות י ה ו ד י ת, ומיחס משונה זה נובעת העובדה שאפילו ספרים כלליים שנגזלו מידי יהודים נמסרו לספריות גרמניות, הואיל ואין תכנם יהודי. וכמובן שתמונה של רמברנדט או של ולסקואס אינה יהודית כטלית או כפרוכת, ככתר תודה וכמנורת חנוכה. וכמובן שדברים אלה נמסרים לרשות הרוצחים הגרמניים שכן הם "ערכי תרבות כלליים".

expand its authority – to start action. There are many treasures of every kind across Germany and we must do something.⁵²⁸

The Jewish Agency and the Israeli Government, he believed, ought to get involved in the restitution process. Throughout the first part of this text Narkiss called for salvage and saving, however, he ended his memorandum with an urgent call for restitution. He used the English word instead of translating it to its Hebrew counterpart. He used restitution as a title of a process that was under the supervision of the Allied Forces in which a delegation from Israel must be involved.⁵²⁹

It is necessary to organize a national committee concentrated on the case of restitution and in parallel to establish a delegation of at least 10 people who will be equipped with the means to investigate the provenance of every object about which it was said: they have only artistic value and their Jewish owners are unknown – therefore they were looted by the Nazis from non- Jews. In Wiesbaden, it says next to an important Goya painting that it was removed from... Spain. Through research this delegation, which will have access to artistic literature, could prove the origin of any work of art and will restitute the object to its rightful owners, whether to Jews who are alive or to the State of Israel – the heir to the Jews who were murdered in the furnaces.⁵³⁰

Narkiss identified the need for researchers and professional art historians whose work would be funded by the Israeli government. This is the first time Narkiss described the process of identification of the provenance of works of art in order to establish the history of its

⁵²⁸ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *Memorandum on the salvage of Jewish art remnants*, March, 1950, p. 2.

הזדמנות אשר לא תישנה, ובשעה השתים עשרה, ניתנה לנו כעת להציל את אשר ניתן להציל עוד בטרם תקבל ממשלת אנדוואר סמכויות רחבות ביותר – להתחיל בפעולה. יש אוצרות מרובים מכל הסוגים בכל רחבי גרמניה ובידינו לעשות דבר.

⁵²⁹ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *Memorandum on the salvage of Jewish art remnants*, March, 1950, p. 2.

⁵³⁰ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *Memorandum on the Salvage of Jewish art remnants*, March, 1950, p. 2.

הכרח הוא להקים פעולה מדינית מסביב לענין הרסטיטוציה ובו בזמן – להקים משלחת מטעם מדינת ישראל של 10 אנשים לפחות שיהיו מצוידים באמצעים ויוכלו לחקור את מוצאם של כל החפצים האלה, אשר עליהן נאמר, אם יש בהם רק חשיבות אמנותית ואין בעליהם היהודיים ידועים – כי הם ביות הנאצים מידי לא יהודים. בויסבדן רשום ליד תמונה חשובה של גויה שהיא נלקחה ב...ספרד. מחקרה של משלחת זו, שתהיה מצוידת בספרות אמנותית, יוכל להראות על מוצאה של יצירת אמנו זו או אחרת ותשיב את הרכוש לבעליה האמיתיים, אם ליהודים אלה החיים עוד, ואם למדינת ישראל – יורשתם של יהודים אלה שנשלחו לכבשני האש.

ownership. He stressed that it could not be done without designating expert researchers for this purpose. Narkiss had already called for what he understood as necessary government involvement during the war years while he was working on the founding of the Schatz Fund. His realization of what he described to the Bezalel staff as 'the difficult times ahead' was indicated in his letters to Yizhak Gruenbaum, head of the Jewish Agency's rescue committee:

It will be necessary to save the few Jewish remains in the hands of Jews, it will be necessary to purchase such remains from the hands of the dealers to which they arrived from the robbers, and there would be a need to negotiate with governments and the Peace Committee in order to bring them to Israel
[...]⁵³¹

In this 1943 letter, Narkiss was able to foresee that reaching a resolution regarding the treatment of the cultural objects would become a political matter determined through negotiation. He believed that with the involvement of the Israeli government, more objects could be salvaged.

His 1950 memorandum was sent to government officials requesting their support and assistance both politically and economically in the funding of a delegation that would be sent to Germany and Austria:

Funding of a delegation that will leave soon to Germany and maybe to Austria – as long as we have the time, and as long as the Occupying Military Government can pressure the Western German Government to restitute the plundered objects. There is a risk that the Occupying Military Government is worn out – signs can already be seen in this work – and will decide to hand

⁵³¹ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.15 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter to Gruenbaum*, 10 October, 1943.

הצלת שרידי האמנות היהודיים היא אחד התפקידים שיעמדו בפנינו בתום המלחמה. יהיה צורך להציל את השרידים המועטים שבידי יהודים, יהיה צורך לרכוש שרידים כאלה מידי המסחר אשר אליו הגיעו מידי החמסנים, ויהיה צורך לפעול אצל ממשלות ובוועידת השלום ולהעביר לארץ [...]

over all of the objects back to the German murderers as inheritance, as mentioned in my memorandum.⁵³²

Leaving the objects in Germany was seen by Narkiss as an outrageous outcome, though considering the massive number of items, there had to be a more efficient way to work quickly in the CCPs. One person going through the objects was simply not capable of the work required. In order to convince government ministers to support his purpose, Narkiss tried several approaches. After reporting on his travels in Germany, the objects he saw, and the problems he encountered he moved to a practical tactic. He noted the economic benefit of bringing works of art to Israel:

By salvaging these remnants not only are we bringing great works of art to this country - something that I can not ignore as head of the Bezalel museum in a country so poor in this sense - not only are we taking back our inheritance from the hands of the murderers, but we are also enriching the country with works of art that are of high economic value, and which would be used by every cultural country as a financial guarantee.⁵³³

The financial potential of works of art, an element Narkiss resisted and criticized when the question of the disposal of the items was raised by the JCR directors, was now used to convince the Minister of Finance to support his plan. Narkiss was not blind to the fact that Israel suffered from substantial financial difficulties. As a new state recovering from war and with a growing population of survivors and refugees from Europe, it was in desperate need of financial support. It can be assumed that any means that would potentially become a part of the national wealth of the country would interest the Minister of Finance.

⁵³² Jerusalem, CZA, S35.88 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter to Eliezer Kaplan*, 24 February, 1950.

הקצבה מהירה למשלחת הצריכה לצאת בקרוב לגרמניה ואולי גם לאוסטריה – כל עוד יש לנו שהות, וכל עוד שלטונות הכבוש יכולים ללחוץ על שלטונות גרמניה המערבית להשיב את הגזילה. יש סכנה ששלטונות הכבוש ייעפו – סימנים אלה כבר ניכרים בעבודה זו – וימסרו הכל בירושה לרוצחים הגרמנים, כפי שציינתי בתזכירי.

⁵³³ CZA, S35.88 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter to Eliezer Kaplan*, 24 February, 1950.

בהצילנו שרידים אלה לא בלבד שאנו מביאים יצירות אמנות גדולות לארץ – דבר שאני כמנהל בית נכות איני יכול להעלים עין ממנו, בארץ כה עניה מבחינה זו – לא בלבד שאני נוטלים את ירושתנו מידי הרוצחים, אלא אנו מעשירים את המדינה באוצרות אמנות שערכם הכספי גדול, והמשמשים כעת במידה מסוימת בכל מדינה בעלת תרבות ערובה פיננסית.

A copy of the letter was sent to the Jewish Agency which then turned to Gershom Scholem and to Hannah Arendt to give their opinion on such a proposal and consider the accomplishments such a delegation could achieve. In a letter to the Executive of the Jewish Agency, Hannah Arendt described the difficulties in recovering cultural objects across Germany and the dependency on the good will of German personnel. Before concluding her letter, Arendt explained that she could not share Narkiss's optimism about the amount of information that could be uncovered:

In conclusion I would like to say that it is a debatable question if a mission of a ten-man team will result in any discoveries to justify the costs involved. There is, of course, always a possibility that a systematic search could discover caches, probably still in existence and hidden by former SS men, which the Allied authorities have not been able to find.⁵³⁴

Narkiss was primarily concerned with the items that had already been revealed and were considered 'heirless' by the JRSO and the JCR, while Arendt focused on the possibility of making new discoveries of hidden items. She did acknowledge that there probably were still caches to be found, however explained that 'the unpacking of cases will in many instances be a matter of years'. Whether the time consuming research that was necessary in order to discover potential new depots was available and worth the expenses required to cover it or not, is a question that will remain unanswered since this idea was not taken further. Three months after Narkiss's appeal, the Minister of Finance made a final decision against this endeavour:

Based on all the information we received on this issue we learn that we can not recommend on sending a large delegation to Germany to handle the

⁵³⁴ Jerusalem, CZA, S35.88 Hannah Arendt, *letter to Narkiss*, 18 April, 1950.

salvage of art remnants as Mr Narkiss mentions, but to send two people for this cause (Mr Narkiss and an assistant).⁵³⁵

Thus, a ten-man delegation was not sent to Germany on behalf of the State of Israel for the purpose of provenance research nor in order to discover more hidden repositories of cultural objects. The responsibility remained in the hands of Narkiss and he was willing to pursue it further.

In contrast to Narkiss's emotional descriptions of a major national mission, the JCR and JRSO officials' letters reveal a bureaucratic process that they were urgently attempting to resolve.⁵³⁶ Benjamin Ferencz, director general of JRSO, explained in a letter the last stages in the closing of the Munich CCP:

The Collecting Point will turn all of these over to the JRSO on Monday 30 May. They will all fit into one moving van and will be sent to Nurnberg. Our present plan, subject to confirmation from New York is to store these items in our headquarters and to immediately ship to New York those paintings which we think have real value. Certainly no more than 50 paintings would be shipped and the others could remain here until a decision is made as to their disposition.⁵³⁷

Ferencz's letters were written in a practical manner. These works of art reached up to fifty paintings and only those which are valuable. These were a part of the 'heirless' Jewish cultural property that was handed to the JCR by the American Military Government. In a following letter, Ferencz confirmed the shipping:

⁵³⁵ Jerusalem, CZA, S35.88 Eliezer Kaplan, *letter to Mordecai Narkiss*, 3 May, 1950. Based on his correspondence, Narkiss returned to Europe on his own, and no assistant was sent with him.

מתוך כל האינפורמציה שקבלנו בנידון זה למדים אנו שאין להמליץ על שיגור משלחת גדולה לגרמניה, כדי לטפל בהצלת שרידי האמנות, כפי שמציע מר נרקיס, אלא שיש מקום לשלוח שני אנשים למטרה זו (מר נרקיס ועוזר אחד).

⁵³⁶ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.110 Narkiss, *letter to Nassia*, 4 June, 1949. In his letters Narkiss mentioned that the Americans wanted to get rid of this task as quickly as possible.

⁵³⁷ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Benjamin Ferencz, *letter to Eli Rock*, 27 May, 1949.

The present plan is to ship five crates to the Joint in New York as soon as shipping arrangements can be completed. These five cases contain the most important items and have a total value of about \$60,000. Unfortunately a few pieces of not much value have also been included in these packing crates and I do not think it was worthwhile to repack.⁵³⁸

The crates holding the most valuable pieces from Munich were sent to New York for the final decision of the board of directors. Additional crates, as well as several pieces of antique furniture remained in Germany until their shipping destination was decided:

You will notice that we are also receiving antique furniture. Included is a monstrous cabinet resembling a clothes closet, a seventeenth century chair which thrills Narkiss, but makes me shudder, an old easel and a few similar assorted pieces. I do hope that we will not be burdened with these unpacked pieces for any considerable period of time.⁵³⁹

The disposal process was described here as a nuisance, in particular the removal of furniture. Ferencz supported Narkiss's expression of interest in receiving the fine art and decorative art that remained in Germany in order to spare the JCR from handling items that he found burdensome. In a letter written on July, 1949, Ferencz proposed to ship the antique furniture to Narkiss, if the items would not be sent to Jerusalem, he wrote, '...they will mould in my cellar...'⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁸ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Benjamin Ferencz, *letter to Eli Rock*, 1 June, 1949, p. 1.

⁵³⁹ Mordecai Narkiss Archive 1.3 Ferencz, *letter to Rock*, 1 June, 1949, p. 2.

⁵⁴⁰ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Benjamin Ferencz *letter to Narkiss*, 27 July, 1949.

Until a resolution was reached by the JCR Board of Directors, Ferencz supported a shipment to Israel of the leftover crates. He reinforced this recommendation by repeatedly mentioning Narkiss's ongoing requests to handle the items in Israel:⁵⁴¹

Mr. Narkiss has stressed the need for such objects in Palestine and he would be very pleased to receive them for the Bezalel Museum. He has been most helpful here and I have no doubt that he would make good use of whatever he receives.⁵⁴²

The tone set in Ferencz's letters indicates that there would be nothing to do with such cultural objects, with no history and owners in New York. In Israel, however, there was interest and Ferencz probably thought that the best outcome would be to ship these items there, instead of New York. No documentation could be found that confirmed or denied the shipping of the decorative arts to Israel.

Several possibilities were proposed regarding the distribution of the paintings, but the JCR leaders and Board of Directors made the final decision. Upon the arrival of the first crates to New York in August 1949, they were kept in storage at the Jewish Museum, where a local team of experts examined them and were invited to submit their recommendations to the JCR Board.⁵⁴³ Ferencz recommended they be distributed between Jewish institutions:

The painting can be exhibited or turned over to various Jewish institutions. The receipts we have signed are standard receipts and as long as the paintings are not used for a commercial purpose in order to obtain a private profit, I am confident that Military Government has no further interest in the matter. It is now up to the Board of Directors to decide what action should be taken

⁵⁴¹ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Ferencz, *letter to Rock*, 27 May, 1949, p. 2.

⁵⁴² Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Ferencz, *letter to Rock*, 1 June, 1949, p. 1.

⁵⁴³ New York, the Jewish Museum Archive, Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Files, Stephen Kayser, *Memorandum to Joe Bednarik*, 9 August, 1949.

concerning the five crates being shipped and the remainder being held here in Nurnberg.⁵⁴⁴

By the summer of 1951, the CCPs were all closed. Many of the remaining objects, however, had not yet reached their final destinations. Upon closure, the handling of remaining restitution claims was left for the German authorities along with crates waiting for shipment.

Shipments to Israel began in the summer of 1949. The first crates arrived to the port of Tel Aviv and started a long process that included dealing with local customs and transporting the crates to Jerusalem. In September 1949, Narkiss was still in Germany when a shipment of eighty-seven crates of Jewish ritual objects arrived and was divided between the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Bezalel.⁵⁴⁵

Based on the information we received from our museum manager Mr. M . Narkiss, who is currently in Germany, sent 61 crates for our museum (marked J.N.M.B), (and 26 crates for the Ministry of Religious Affairs). These crates contain Jewish ritual objects, mostly silver, which Mr. Narkiss selected for our collection as well as for synagogues in this country from the J.R.S.O. depots in Wiesbaden.⁵⁴⁶

In addition to these crates, over the next three years Bezalel received approximately ten more boxes from the CCPs. The last five crates were shipped from Munich to Bezalel in July 1953. Based on their description, the crates contained paintings, drawings and sculptures.⁵⁴⁷ Unfortunately, there is a lack of coherence in matching the shipment lists to identifiable

⁵⁴⁴ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Ferencz, *letter to Rock*, 1 June, 1949, p. 2.

⁵⁴⁵ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.51 Hannah Katzenstein, *letter to the head of the customs authority in Israel*, 20 July, 1949.

⁵⁴⁶ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.51 Katzenstein, *letter to the head of the customs authority in Israel*, 20 July, 1949.

לפי הידיעות שקבלנו ממנהל בית נכותנו, ה' מ. נרקיס, הנמצא כעת בגרניה, הוא שלח 61 תיבות בשביל בית נכותנו (מסומנות B.M.N.J), (וכן 26 תיבות בשביל משרד הדתות). תיבות אלה מכילות תשמישי קדושה יהודיים הרוב כסף, שה' נרקיס בחר בשביל אוספנו וכן בשביל בתי הכנסיות בארץ מתוך המחסנים של J.R.S.O. בויסבדן.

⁵⁴⁷ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.51 Katzenstein, *letter to the head of the customs authority in Israel*, 20 July, 1949.

objects. This is due to the partial lists found in the archives and to insufficient available information published by the Israel Museum, which now holds the collection.

Twenty-four crates containing approximately seven-hundred objects were sent to the Ministry of Religious affairs.⁵⁴⁸ The Judaica selected by Narkiss was to be divided between sixty-two synagogues in Israel.⁵⁴⁹ A letter from the director of the Ministry of Religious Affairs sent to Narkiss before his first visit to the CCPs confirmed his designated role:

The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the State of Israel hereby authorises Mr. Mordechai Narkiss, Director of the Jewish National Museum Bezalel, Jerusalem, who is going to Germany for the purpose of selecting Jewish ceremonial objects of art, to receive that part of religious objects which will be placed at the disposal of synagogues in Israel (those already in existence and those to be established at places of new immigration).⁵⁵⁰

Letters confirming Narkiss's appointment as representative of the Ministry and the Israeli Government were sent to Starr and to Narkiss. Due to the large number of survivors arriving to Israel after the war, the Ministry of Religious Affairs had an interest in establishing new synagogues for them. Upon Narkiss's return from Europe, it became clear that the objects were not divided between Israeli synagogues, but were used instead by the Ministry to establish a memorial museum for the perished communities of the Holocaust on Mount Zion. Narkiss expressed his anger:

Upon my recent return from Europe, after a nine month journey, I discovered that the materials which I collected fearlessly in Germany, and my constant battle against different authorities, for synagogues in Israel, not only was not

⁵⁴⁸ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.110 Hannah Arendt, *letter to Narkiss*, 12 February, 1951.

⁵⁴⁹ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Starr, *letter of instructions for Mr. Narkiss*, March, 1949.

⁵⁵⁰ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive 1.3 Dr. Z. Kahana, *letter from Director of the Ministry of Religious Affairs to Joshua Starr*, 9 March, 1949.

given to synagogues in this country and not only were the titles of the hard working people omitted – the National Museum Bezalel in Jerusalem and its director - but the objects were placed in a place where the Ministry of Religious Affairs is planning to establish a Jewish museum, a museum of items with no museum value, but only with practical value for use in synagogues.⁵⁵¹

Upon learning about this new memorial museum, titled the Chamber of the Holocaust, Narkiss was outraged. He wrote to the Minister of Religious Affairs and demanded that the items be divided between synagogues, as promised. Narkiss, who had described the straining task of selecting items that could be used by synagogues and separating them from objects that would be appropriate for museums, must have felt betrayed. Not only would these items remain unused, they would be kept in a museum that could eventually be a competitor to the Bezalel Museum in Jerusalem. Moreover, it seems that one of the main concepts behind the founding of the museum was similar to Narkiss's intention of using the artefacts as documentary and memorial items. This concept looking at the objects as memorial items also considered the history and biography of the items, however, the Chamber of the Holocaust followed a religious narrative, while Narkiss's program seem to have concentrated on history and art history.

The director of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Rabbi Dr. Samuel Zanvil Kahana founded The Chamber of the Holocaust in 1948.⁵⁵² Zanvil Kahana immigrated to Palestine from Poland in early 1940 and was nominated as the director of the Ministry of Religious Affairs at the foundation of the State of Israel. Under the Ministry, Zanvil Kahana developed and re-

⁵⁵¹ Jerusalem, CZA, S58.74 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter to Rabbi Y. L. Hacohen Meimon, head of the Ministry of Religious Affairs*, 24 February, 1950.

בשובי עתה מאירופה לאחר מסע של 9 חודשים, מצאתי והנה החומר, אשר צברתי בחירוף נפש בגרמניה, ומתוך מלחמה מתמדת ברשויות שונות למען בתי הכנסת בארץ, לא זו בלבד שלא נמסר לתעודתו לבתי הכנסת בארץ ולא בלבד שלא צויין שמם של העמלים למען דבר זה – בית הנכות הלאומי בצלאל בירושלים ומנהלו החתום מטה, - כי אם הוכנס חומר זה למקום שבו עומד משרד הדתות ליסד מוזיאון יהודי, כלומר מוזיאון של דברים שאין להם כל ערך מוזאוני, כי אם ערך שמושי לבתי הכנסת.

⁵⁵² Lavon, 'The Chamber of the Holocaust in Mount Zion', *Israelis*, p. 72.

opened holy Jewish sites to the public. His most significant project was Mount Zion and the structure known as King David's tomb.⁵⁵³ In 1948, Mount Zion was selected as a place to establish a site of commemoration for the perished Jewish communities.

Side by side with King David's tomb, connected by the suffering of the wait for the Massiah stands the Chamber of the Holocaust [...] and at it the traditional perpetuation for the memory of the holly souls based on the custom and tradition: lighting of candles, teaching of the Mishnah, the saying of the Kaddish [...] the Chamber of the Holocaust fulfills a national responsibility cast upon us... for the generations that carried with them to the furnaces the dream of our people and its redemption and brought us forward [...]⁵⁵⁴

The vision of Zanzvil Kahana was of a sacred site where prayers would be recited to commemorate the destroyed communities. This monument was created for the Jewish orthodox community and conducted traditional religious ceremonies honouring the dead. The religious perspective was in conflict with the national Zionist way of commemorating the Holocaust chosen by the government of Israel. Already in 1942, the notion to establish Yad Vashem as the national site of commemoration was brought forward to representatives of the Jewish National Fund and the Jewish Agency. Based on the 1953 Martyrs and Heroes Remembrance Law, the task of Yad Vashem was as follows:

The task of Yad Vashem is to gather in to the homeland material regarding all those members of the Jewish people who laid down their lives, who fought and rebelled against the Nazi enemy and his collaborators, and to perpetuate

⁵⁵³ Ibid, pp. 73-74.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 75. S. Zanzvil Kahana, *the Legends of Mount Zion* [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Zion publishing, 1966), p. 21.

their memory and that of the communities, organizations and institutions which were destroyed because they were Jewish...⁵⁵⁵

Though the founding of the Chamber of the Holocaust on Mount Zion could seem like a competitor to Yad Vashem, the Chamber of the Holocaust concentrated on the memory of communities, while Yad Vashem was responsible for research and gathering information on individuals while highlighting the heroism of the fighters against the Nazis and their collaborators.⁵⁵⁶ In addition to Yad Vashem, Holocaust survivors established the Ghetto Fighters House as a monument to the bravery of the rebels. Yad Vashem and other memorial institutions did not immediately receive objects from the CCPs. While fine art handled by the JCR was not sent to these museums, some Jewish ritual objects and books made their way into these institutions' collections during the 1950s and the 1960s. The question of the distribution of such objects is beyond the scope of my research.

Narkiss was concerned for his museum, the national museum of Israel and the central museum for the Jewish people. Since its founding, the Bezalel Museum was divided into halls designated to the commemoration of historical events. During his visits to Europe Narkiss often made promises to communities to exhibit items donated by them in a hall honouring their community.⁵⁵⁷ Thus, another museum focused on the commemoration of communities threatened the commemorative role of Bezalel. Though based on his written correspondence and articles produced during the 1940-1950, the importance of commemoration did not concern Narkiss as much as the notion of salvage and the idea of restitution, which he began using in his letters during his 1949 visit to the CCPs based on the American Military Government Law no. 59.

⁵⁵⁵ *Function and Powers of Yad Vashem*, Yad Vashem, The Martyrs' and Heroes Remembrance (Yad Vashem) Law 5713-1953 < http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/about/pdf/YV_law.pdf > [accessed 23 October 2016].

⁵⁵⁶ Stauber, *The Holocaust in Israeli Public Debate in the 1950s*.

⁵⁵⁷ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *Berlin*, [n.d.].

According to the law, restitution was made to the rightful heirs of a community. Based on this concept, the JRSO was appointed as the successor and heir to all the perished European communities and as a result, to all property that remained 'heirless'. Narkiss had another point of view that saw the State of Israel as the rightful heir to the communities' property. Thus, restitution of every type of cultural property was to be made to Israel.

This chapter analysed the process of categorising, dividing and valuating of the items in the CCPs leading to their allocation within and outside of Germany. Crates were first shipped to Israel and to the USA, while some remained in the JRSO offices awaiting their final distribution. The main notion explored throughout this chapter was that of salvage, which had a central role in Narkiss's conduct. In addition to this concept, after spending over two months working in the CCPs, Narkiss adopted the idea of restitution, an idea he expressed in a memorandum sent to the government of Israel in order to raise support for his research. By so doing, Narkiss expressed his interpretation of restitution as the handing over of items to Israel, which he believed was the rightful heir to the perished communities, while investigating private ownership of the fine art objects. Narkiss's shift between salvage and restitution and the notion of individual and collective restitution indicates his effort in considering both types of property and the moral treatment of each. Yet, his modern awareness to ownership issues led him to express the urgency for research of the ownership of the private cultural property. Although at the time, there was not enough support for this endeavour, nearly forty years later the field of provenance research began to develop in the context of works of art confiscated during the Holocaust.

In parallel, the definitive view of the JCR based on Military Government Law no. 59 called for organized and efficient handling of the thousands of items at the CCPs. The number of items that remained unaccounted for, however, opened the disposition plan to several different interpretations. On the one hand, the JCR did not prioritize works of art that did not

fall into the category of Jewish art. On the other hand, Narkiss had an unusual point of view that called to unite works of art that were considered to have been owned by Jews with Jewish art.

This chapter also explored the role of the objects, how they were represented, and what meanings were assigned to them. Narkiss first considered the aesthetic meaning based on art history and art market valuation upon valuating the objects in the Munich CCP. Second, he recognized the history of the items, which derived from the biography of the objects, the communities and places where they were made and belonged to. This was a part of their memorial value which was, as Narkiss expressed it, a part of his salvage mission. Artefacts had a place in Israel and in the Bezalel Museum where they both enriched the existing collection and were used as a form of commemoration to the communities that were destroyed in the Holocaust.

Chapter 3

The Jewish Museum as Recipient of the ‘Heirless’ Jewish Cultural Property

This chapter follows how the ‘heirless’ Jewish cultural property that arrived in New York in the summer of 1949 was divided. Beginning with the founding of the Jewish Museum at JTS assists in understanding the relationship between these institutions and how scholars from both institutions became involved in JCR. Secondary sources assist in highlighting the heritage JTS inherited, influenced by the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* (science of Judaism) and the socio-cultural role of Jewish scholars in New York. The thesis examines JTS’s emergence as an educational institution and a safe haven for Jewish culture as a response to the rise of anti-Semitism in the USA. The effects of assimilation on Jewish culture in New York and Jewish entrance into middle-class roles such as art critics and art patrons are also discussed.⁵⁵⁸ As a part of JTS, the Museum of Jewish Ceremonial Objects, predecessor of the Jewish Museum invited a variety of social groups to learn about Judaism and Jewish culture, turning it into a contact zone. Clifford coined this term to refer to a museum in which people who were separated geographically or historically were connected and enabled to build relations with objects.⁵⁵⁹ Clifford based the term on the work of Mary Louise Pratt and referred to the relationship between objects and the collector or the place where the collected objects are kept.⁵⁶⁰

Jewish scholars who emigrated from Germany such as Alexander Marx, head librarian of JTS, Paul Romanoff, curator of the Museum of Jewish Ceremonial Objects, as well as Stephen Kayser, curator of the Jewish Museum and Guido Schoenberger, assistant curator at

⁵⁵⁸ Julie Miller and Richard I. Cohen, ‘A Collision of Cultures: The Jewish Museum and JTS, 1904-1971’, in *Tradition Renewed: A History of the Jewish Theological Seminary Vol. II*, ed. by Jack Wertheimer (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary, 1997), pp. 309-362, (pp. 335-336); David Swartz, *Culture and Power: The sociology of Pierre Bourdieu* (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp. 6-11.

⁵⁵⁹ Clifford, *Routes*, pp. 188-219.

⁵⁶⁰ Mary Louise Pratt, ‘Arts of the Contact Zone’, in *Profession* (New York: Modern Language Association, 1991), pp. 33–40.

the Jewish Museum, were part of a network of European experts in New York. Pierre Bourdieu described the art world as a field dominated by a group using interpersonal connections to keep their places in the social hierarchy.⁵⁶¹ These relationships were reinforced by their preference to work with one another. For example, the art dealer later responsible for the sales of the ‘heirless’ Jewish cultural property, Henry F. Odell, a Jewish emigrant from Germany, was selected to join this clique by Kayser in 1950.⁵⁶²

The rise of the Nazi regime and the outbreak of the Second World War led JTS personnel to emphasize the importance of salvage, identifying the USA and Israel as the only places which could protect and preserve Jewish culture.⁵⁶³ As a result of anti-Semitism in Europe, two important Judaica collections came to JTS in 1939: the Mintz collection from Warsaw and the Danzig community collection. While supporters of JTS purchased the Mintz collection, the Danzig collection was given under the condition that if the Jewish community there revived, the objects would be returned. The last chapter briefly discussed the possible resurrection of Jewish culture and the conflicts surrounding the Jewish communities established in Europe after the war. However, a different kind of European Jewish cultural revival in New York can be seen in the efforts to bring Jewish scholars from Europe to the USA and by the establishment of clubs and newspapers for the Jewish immigrant communities.⁵⁶⁴

The war years were a turning point for the Jewish Museum. The notion of salvage impacted the perception of JTS and the museum at the time. The role of the Jewish Museum as a repository for objects is valued through archival documents and correspondences that express the points of view of museum personnel including Schoenberger and Richard

⁵⁶¹ Weininger, pp. 82-119.

⁵⁶² , The CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296d *Memorandum*, 14 March, 1950; Iowa City, Papers of Lil Picard: Series VIII, archives of Henry F. Odell, Msc 817.55 H. F. Odell, *Cover letter*, 9 September, 1953.

⁵⁶³ Alexander Marx, ‘The Library’ in *the Jewish Theological seminary of America, Semi-Centennial Volume*, ed. by Cyrus Adler (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1939), pp. 87-121.

⁵⁶⁴ For example: The University in Exile program organized by the New School for Social Research and the Aufbau publication that was created for the German-Jewish community in New York.

Krautheimer, German immigrants actively involved in laying the groundwork for the Jewish Museum in the 1940s.⁵⁶⁵ Yet, with the increasing success of newly founded contemporary art museums such as the Guggenheim and the Whitney during the 1950s, the Jewish Museum directors felt compelled to compete and introduced new programs promoting contemporary art, moving away from the salvage project.

This section is followed by a discussion on the working relationship between the Jewish Museum staff and the JCR. This collaboration led to the selection of New York and the Jewish Museum as a repository for many of the crates shipped from the CCPs in Germany. Narkiss criticized this decision and was concerned that Israel would lose a large number of items as a result. As objects were beginning to arrive to New York he wrote several letters to the JCR and the Jewish Agency directors urging them to send items from New York to Israel.⁵⁶⁶

The lengthy correspondence between representatives of the Jewish Museum and the JRSO staff, expressed the disdain towards the objects that were sent from the CCPs, referring to them as “junk” and calling the conflict with Narkiss “Narkiss’s Folly”.⁵⁶⁷ This usage of degrading language indicates the disagreement between Narkiss and the JCR, expressed by using loaded semantics as a result of the trauma of the Holocaust. The language expressed the uneasy atmosphere after the Holocaust. Tension and feelings of guilt could have influenced Starr to take his own life in 1949, after leaving the CCPs and returning to the USA.⁵⁶⁸ Furthermore, the use of words such as “disposal” and “removal”, nouns relating to things that are unwanted, reflects the treatment proposed by the OMGUS and the JRSO staff. By contrast, Narkiss used the words “salvage” and “safeguard” in reference to the same

⁵⁶⁵ New York, JTS Archive, RG25.1.27a Richard Krautheimer, *Memorandum concerning changes in plan for the Jewish Museum*, 1 May, 1945; RG1C.53.38 Guido Schoenberger, *letter to Louis Finkelstein*, 21 February, 1945.

⁵⁶⁶ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.9 Eliyahu Dobkin, *letter to Maurice Boukstein*, 24 December, 1950.

⁵⁶⁷ Jerusalem, the CAHJP JRSO.NY.296d Eli Rock, *letter to Benjamin Ferencz Re:Narkiss’s Folly*, 1 November, 1949; JRSO.NY.296d Saul Kagan, *letter to Eli Rock*, 31 August, 1950.

⁵⁶⁸ ‘Dr. Joshua Starr, Jewish Historian and Scholar, Commits Suicide; was 42’, Obituary, *Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA)* (8 December, 1949) < <http://www.jta.org/1949/12/08/archive/dr-joshua-starr-jewish-historian-and-scholar-commits-suicide-was-42> > [accessed 26 October 2016].

artefacts.⁵⁶⁹ The paintings arriving from the CCPs were perhaps considered “junk” or as it can be viewed in the framework of Michael Thompson, ‘rubbish’, by the JCR staff, but were re-valuated by Narkiss, or rediscovered, based on Thompson’s theory.⁵⁷⁰ This drastic semantic difference remains consistent throughout archival materials such as letters, memorandums, and correspondence.⁵⁷¹

The conflict between Narkiss and the JCR escalated when New York-based experts from local galleries re-valuated the objects.⁵⁷² The New York valuers agreed that Narkiss’s valuations were exaggerated and offered options for the disposal and liquidation of the items. The decision to sell objects from the CCPs added to the existing tension between Narkiss and the JCR that stemmed from the initial categorization of the artefacts as Jewish art. Items that Narkiss believed should go to Israel were not only found inappropriate for an American Jewish institution, such as the Jewish Museum, but were also to be sold.

The responsibility of the JRSO as described in Military Law no. 59 was to support the relief and rehabilitation of Jewish communities worldwide and Holocaust survivors in the USA. The JCR planned to sell the unidentified Jewish cultural objects to raise funds to support Jewish communities and survivors. For Narkiss, however, the loss of cultural objects was equivalent to sacrificing the remains of Jewish culture. While the objects’ exchange rate was calculated by the JCR staff according to monetary values based on the local art market, Narkiss took into account the conceptual historical significance of the items. The American economic perspective contradicted the historical perspective Narkiss promoted. We can begin to understand this discrepancy by looking at Georg Simmel’s theory of money.⁵⁷³ Simmel discussed the economic relationship between objects and human society. He explained that

⁵⁶⁹ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.3 Narkiss, *Top Secret Report on a Journey to Europe on behalf of the Schatz Fund for the Salvage of Jewish Art Remnants*, [n.d.].

⁵⁷⁰ Thompson, ‘The Filth in the Way’, *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. by Pearce, p. 272.

⁵⁷¹ The CAHJP JRSO.NY.296d Rock, *letter to Ferencz*, 1 November, 1949; JRSO.NY.296b Saul Kagan, *letter to Eli Rock*, 30 May, 1951.

⁵⁷² Such as: Curt Valentine of the Buchholz Gallery and an appraiser from the Knoedler Gallery.

⁵⁷³ *Georg Simmel*, ed. and translated by Firsby, pp. 61-138.

objects are arranged by humans in an order determined by their value. The value of an object in Simmel's theory is determined by specific qualities individuals identify and by the relationship between objects. The conceptual meaning that individuals attribute to objects is expressed in neutral monetary exchange rates.⁵⁷⁴ Thus the monetary exchange rate distills the diverse values an object can represent. The economic value of the objects dominated the JRSO's system of valuation of the objects, while Narkiss's valuation considered not only the market value, but also the historical value and the commemorative value of the objects, making it higher than that applied by the JRSO.

Although this is not a dominant notion in art market studies, the interpretation of Simmel's theory in this context offers an original contribution to this field. By discussing the value systems behind the complex monetary exchange of the objects Simmel offers an understanding of the conflict between the JRSO, JCR and Narkiss. Simmel connected the idea of utility with the notion of scarcity, which has itself long been considered to be a part of the structure of the system of value. While the economic value of an object equals its utility, scarcity is a determining factor of the specific value of an object. An historical item which was rare because it signified a history of a people of a culture was therefore considered expensive in comparison to a similar item that did not have the same memorial context.⁵⁷⁵ This created a misunderstanding that resulted in a conflict between Narkiss, the JRSO and the JCR.

Finally, in 1950, thirty-five works of art were selected to be shipped to Israel and the rest were sold.⁵⁷⁶ Before they were sent, the Jewish Museum organized an exhibition of the paintings. The remaining objects were sold by a New York art dealer, Henry F. Odell, who

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid, pp. 61-63.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid, pp. 95-97.

⁵⁷⁶ The shipping of 35 paintings selected by Dr. Walter Moses and Dr. Stephan Kayser in 1950, which were exhibited in the Jewish Museum that same year.

was selected to handle the sales organized between 1950-1951 by Kayser and JCR.⁵⁷⁷ Odell was a German Jew who emigrated in response to growing restrictions enforced on German Jews during the 1930s. Little information regarding his collaboration with the Jewish Museum was found during this research. Sale receipts and a few letters of correspondence indicate that the buyers were European Jewish immigrants. This suggests that the buyers were offered the objects due to their familiarity with European aesthetics and collecting history.⁵⁷⁸ The description of the final disposal of the unidentified Jewish cultural property through sales held between 1950-1951 is based on primary sources. Research on this sale process is as yet unpublished. A few comments in published sources confirmed the sales.⁵⁷⁹ An investigation by the JRSO secretary, Antonie Neiger, in 1952 illustrated the absence of a paper trail for the sales and the problematic attributions of the pieces.⁵⁸⁰

The chapter ends with an exploration of the salvage undertaking of the collector Harry G. Friedman. This section offers a comparison of Narkiss's and Friedman's salvage, showing the manifestation of the trauma of the Holocaust as an urgency to accumulate objects for the sake of memorialization and education. Friedman, who immigrated to the USA from Poland as a child in 1889, pursued the notion of salvage since the 1930s, donating to the collections of JTS and the Jewish Museum. Since there has been no comprehensive research published on Friedman, archival documents are key. In contrast to Friedman's collection, other important collections that shaped the Jewish Museum in the 1930s focused on 'one of a kind' Jewish ritual objects. These include the Benguiat, Mintz, and Danzig collections, which are discussed in this chapter. Already in 1941, as the Second World War raged in Europe, Friedman had a clear purpose and had chosen JTS to receive his donations. His salvage

⁵⁷⁷ Jerusalem, the CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296a Stephen Kayser, *Memorandum re Restoration and Disposition of JRSO Paintings*, April, 1950.

⁵⁷⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, translated by Richard Nice (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1984).

⁵⁷⁹ Steinberg, pp. 9-16.

⁵⁸⁰ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Antonie Neiger, *Memorandum of the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization*, 11 September, 1952.

project was a systematic collecting of ‘Jewish’ objects, of different materials and periods. Friedman was eager to obtain every object with a Jewish aspect that could shed light on Jewish life.

Development of the Jewish Museum

In 1944 Frida Warburg, the wife of Felix Warburg (1871-1937), decided to donate their New York City mansion on Fifth Avenue to JTS after his death. As a result, the Jewish Museum opened in its new home in May 1947.⁵⁸¹ Previously, the Museum was called The Museum of Jewish Ceremonial Objects and was housed as part of JTS collection.⁵⁸²

JTS was founded in 1886 as an institution for the preservation and study of Jewish knowledge. Its first class was held in 1887, and it later expanded its mission to become a university for Jewish studies and a Rabbinical School. At the time, the founders planned a library that would be used as a centre for Jewish studies in the USA.⁵⁸³ Donations of rare books and manuscripts from local scholars expanded the library collection. Judge Mayer Sulzberger made the first known gift of Jewish ceremonial objects in 1904.⁵⁸⁴ Sulzberger presented these objects to the library with the hope that a museum would be established alongside the library.⁵⁸⁵ JTS founders saw the value of a collection of objects representing

⁵⁸¹ New York, JTS Archive, RG25.1.27a Alexander Marx, *letter to Frieda Warburg (draft)* [n.d.].

⁵⁸² New York, JTS Archive, 60.1.1/3 *Announcement on the opening times of the Museum of Jewish Ceremonial Objects*.

⁵⁸³ New York, JTS Archive, 60.2.2/4 Alexander Marx, *speech for the 10th anniversary of the museum*, 12 January, 1941.

⁵⁸⁴ JTS Archive, 60.2.2/4 Marx, *speech for the 10th anniversary of the museum*, 12 January, 1941.

⁵⁸⁵ JTS Archive, 60.2.2/4 Marx, *speech for the 10th anniversary of the museum*, 12 January, 1941.

Jewish life.⁵⁸⁶ The first exhibitions held between the years 1905-1930 focused on books and manuscripts in the collection.⁵⁸⁷ However, the 1925 donation of the Benguiat collection provided a catalyst for the formation of a museum.⁵⁸⁸ The Benguiat collection was composed of objects considered by Cyrus Adler, Chancellor of JTS, as ‘the perfect of its kind’ for their richness and beauty.⁵⁸⁹ In 1901, Adler catalogued the collection, which was shown in the 1893 Chicago world’s fair exhibition, with the help of Immanuel Moses Casanowicz.⁵⁹⁰ Adler noted the materials, places, and periods the objects were made in as well as their traditional uses. In 1939, Adler looked back to the acquisition of the collection:

Before the present buildings were even projected, an opportunity came to secure a really noble collection. It was founded by the family of Benguiat, who spread over the larger cities in Europe and America. These men were collectors and dealers. They mostly sold what they collected with the exception of Jewish objects. In 1893, Ephraim Benguiat had a large shop in Boston, and I was looking for collections for the World’s Fair in Chicago. When that exposition closed he transferred this loan to the Smithsonian Institution and later at his death, when it became necessary for his family to dispose of the collection, it was purchased by Felix M. Warburg with the assistance of a few friends, and placed in storage until such time as the

⁵⁸⁶ A. S. W. Rosenbach, ‘The Seminary Museum’ in *The Jewish Theological Seminary of America Semi-Centennial Volume*, ed. by Cyrus Adler (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1939), pp. 144-154.

⁵⁸⁷ Miller and Cohen, ‘A Collision of Cultures’, in *Tradition Renewed*, ed. by Wertheimer, p. 314.

⁵⁸⁸ JTS Archive, 60.2.2/4 Marx, *speech for the 10th anniversary of the museum*, 12 January, 1941. Hadji Ephraim Benguiat was a New York art dealer born in Turkey.

⁵⁸⁹ Cyrus Adler, and Immanuel Moses Casanowicz, *Descriptive catalogue of a collection of objects of Jewish ceremonial deposited in the U.S. National museum by Hadji Ephraim Benguiat* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1901). A digitized copy of the catalogue can be found <<https://archive.org/stream/descriptivecata00benqgoog#page/n0/mode/2up>> [accessed 16 October 2015].

⁵⁹⁰ Cyrus Adler was a founder of the Jewish Publications Society in 1888, the American Jewish Historical Society in 1892 and the Harvard Semitic Museum in 1903. He was active in the preparations for the 1893 Chicago World Exposition and joined the Smithsonian Institution as librarian in 1893. Between 1915-1940 he was JTS chancellor.

Seminary could exhibit it. This is the origin of our present charming little museum.⁵⁹¹

The interest in keeping the Benguiat and other collections of Jewish ritual objects intact was part of the growing interest in the research and preservation of Jewish culture.⁵⁹² Benguiat entitled it a fine art collection and explained his interest in unique objects: ‘Of historical objects my wish is for the beautiful, the valuable and the genuine – not merely those having historical associations’.⁵⁹³ By expressing this, Benguiat distinguished between objects with historical significance and those with aesthetic qualities. He preferred the latter of the two categories and thus built a collection considered to be of unique quality and beauty.

Emily Bilski identified several factors that could have contributed to this process at the time of the museum’s establishment.⁵⁹⁴ The first was the nineteenth century Jewish emancipation which distanced Jews from Jewish customs.⁵⁹⁵ By the early twentieth century, New York had the largest concentration of American Jews.⁵⁹⁶ At the time they suffered from anti-Semitism and social limitations that peaked in the 1930s. With the rise of the Nazi regime in Germany and the influence of the Great Depression, anti-Semitic propaganda based on the Protocols of

⁵⁹¹ Cyrus Adler, ‘Semi-Centennial Address’, in *The Jewish Theological Seminary of America: Semi-Centennial Volume*, ed. Cyrus Adler (New York: 1939), p. 14. Felix Warburg (1871-1937) was a German Jewish banker and philanthropist whose donations assisted in expanding the Jewish Museum collection. After his death in 1937, his Fifth Avenue mansion became the home of the Jewish Museum.

⁵⁹² Emily D. Bilski, ‘Seeing the Future Through the Light of the Past: The Art of the Jewish Museum’, in *The Seminary at 100: Reflections on the Jewish Theological Seminary and the Conservative Movement*, ed. by Nina Beth Cardin and David Wolf Silverman (New York: The Rabbinical Assembly, 1987), pp. 143-154 (p. 144).

⁵⁹³ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, pp. 106-109. In 1904, the collection was displayed in the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition in St. Louis in a fully furnished reproduction of the Damascus Palace rooms.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid, pp. 144-145.

⁵⁹⁵ More literature about the Jewish community in the USA in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries:

Moses Rischin, *The Promised City: New York’s Jews 1870-1914* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962); Arthur A. Goren, *New York Jews and the Quest for Community: The Kehillah Experiment 1908-1922* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970); Irving Howe, *World of Our Fathers* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1976); Moses Rischin, *Immigration and the American Tradition* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1976); Lloyd Gartner, *The Midpassage of American Jewry, 1929-1945* (Cincinnati: University of Cincinnati, 1982); Moses Rischin, *The Jews of North America* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987); Arthur A. Goren, *The Politics and the Public Culture of American Jews* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999); Eli Lederhendler, *New York Jews and the Decline of Urban Ethnicity 1950-1970* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2001); Lloyd Gartner, *History of the Jews in modern times* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁵⁹⁶ Deborah Dash Moore, *At Home in America: Second Generation New York Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), pp. 3-17.

the Elders of Zion was distributed in the USA.⁵⁹⁷ Jerome A. Chanes explained that the main influence of the growing anti-Semitism was experienced in academic institutions and by businesses not willing to serve or work with Jews.⁵⁹⁸

This led to the second generation's need to assert a Jewish-American identity. The second generation of Jewish immigrants became more secular and adopted American middle-class values.⁵⁹⁹ The assimilation taking place within Jewish society, according to Bilski, provided a psychological distance from traditional Judaism and made it possible to re-valuate ritual objects. Moreover, as result of this shift, synagogue attendance dropped and ritual objects were at risk of being damaged or dispersed. A third development in Jewish scholarship was the growth of the scientific method for the investigation of Judaism.⁶⁰⁰ The *Wissenschaft des Judentums* (science of Judaism) was a movement that developed in nineteenth century Germany by Jewish scholars. Several parameters could have promoted development of this movement and they include the civil emancipation and the transition towards reformed Judaism.⁶⁰¹ Teaching Judaism as a science would create a new perspective in which the Jews would be seen as a part of the Western World. The Jewish cultural influence on Western culture could be identified and seen positively. Moreover, these studies would not only be influential for non-Jews, but would make it possible for Jews to understand their people's history. This approach was supported by Adler before World War I:

[...] Judaism, studied and taught according to the canons of modern scholarship, would enhance its respectability and that of its adherents [...] Not only would the non-Jew be prompted to give due accord to the heritage that

⁵⁹⁷ Jerome A. Chanes, *Antisemitism*, (Santa Barbara CA: ABC CLIO, 2004), p. 74.

⁵⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 73-74.

⁵⁹⁹ Dash Moore, p. 4.

⁶⁰⁰ Bilski, 'Seeing the Future Through the Light of the Past', *The Seminary at 100*, ed. by Cardin and Silverman, p. 145.

⁶⁰¹ George Y. Kohler, 'Judaism Buried or Revitalised? *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Nineteenth-Century Germany – Impact, Actuality and Applicability Today', in *Jewish Thought and Jewish Belief*, ed. by Daniel J. Lasker (Beer-Sheva: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, 2012), pp. 27-64.

had nurtured Western religion, but the Jews themselves would understand the relevance of their 2000-year-old tradition.⁶⁰²

Adler was the first to receive a doctorate degree in Semitic Studies in the USA from the Johns Hopkins University in 1887.⁶⁰³ He became the librarian at the Smithsonian Institute and was involved in organizing the international expositions in Cincinnati, Atlanta, and Chicago between the years 1888-1897.⁶⁰⁴ In his exhibits, he treated objects as documents to illustrate ideas. Copies of objects were acceptable, as they were a part of a lesson in history and could be labelled and arranged logically.⁶⁰⁵ Adler and other academics who supported the Science of Judaism movement attached a social and cultural value to the founding of Jewish museums.⁶⁰⁶ Judaica collecting was given an academic approach that moved from remembrance toward a creative expression of Jewish historical developments.⁶⁰⁷ Exhibiting carefully catalogued specimens demonstrated the significance of Jewish cultural history while keeping Jewish culture alive. Although Benguiat made it clear that the items in his collection were selected for their aesthetic qualities, Adler had an interest in their Jewish history. As Adler and Casanowicz's 1901 catalogue of this collection shows, the history and use of each of the items was researched.⁶⁰⁸

In 1930 JTS moved to its new building at Broadway and West 122 Street. The Museum of Jewish Ceremonial Objects opened in a ground floor room of the Seminary in 1931. Until late in 1931 when Paul Romanoff, a Jewish art historian, was given the position of curator, the museum organization was handled by the head librarian, Alexander Marx. Romanoff's role

⁶⁰² Naomi W. Cohen, 'Introduction', in *Cyrus Adler: Selected Letters*, ed. by Ira Robinson (Philadelphia and New York: The Jewish Publication Society and the Jewish Theological Seminary, 1985), pp. xxv-xlii (pp. xxviii and xxix).

⁶⁰³ Jonathan D. Sarna, 'Cyrus Adler and the Development of American Jewish Culture: The 'Scholar-Doer' as a Jewish Communal Leader', *American Jewish History*, 78 (1989), 382-394 (p. 384).

⁶⁰⁴ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, p. 89.

⁶⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁶⁰⁶ Julie Miller, 'Planning the Jewish Museum, 1944-1947', *Conservative Judaism* 47, Fall (1994), 60-73 (pp. 62-63).

⁶⁰⁷ Richard Cohen, pp. 222, 231-232.

⁶⁰⁸ Adler and Casanowicz, *Descriptive catalogue of a collection of objects of Jewish ceremonial deposited in the U.S. National museum by Hadji Ephraim Benguiat* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1901)

was considered minor, and some of the staff suggested that he obtained his job out of Adler's willingness to help him support his family in New York and in Europe.⁶⁰⁹ Between 1931 and 1939 several exhibitions dedicated to Jewish holidays, prints, Jewish Music and rare books and manuscripts took place.⁶¹⁰ A publication from November, 1935 described the museum under Romanoff's curatorship as a place to visit a collection of aesthetically beautiful and unique Jewish objects.⁶¹¹

Throughout its early years, a steady stream of small donations supported the museum collection. This support indicates that the museum was already viewed as a repository for Jewish ritual objects.⁶¹² Objects from synagogues, communities, and private individuals were donated and kept as part of the library and the museum collections. In his 1941 presentation marking the tenth anniversary of the Museum of Jewish Ceremonial Objects, Alexander Marx, head librarian, remembered the founding of the library:

The establishment of this library was a providential event. It was started at a time when it was still possible to acquire great riches of rare books and manuscripts; many of the unusual items gathered on our shelves would have been destroyed during the world war [i.e. World War I] and the disorders that followed, if they had not found [a] safe resting place on these shores. Now, when, most of the Jewish collections of continental Europe have been confiscated or destroyed and Jewish scholars are denied access to the Jewish books in public libraries, there is a haven of refuge for Jewish learning in

⁶⁰⁹ Miller and Cohen, 'A Collision of Cultures: The Jewish Museum and JTS, 1904-1971', in *Tradition Renewed*, ed. by Wertheimer, pp. 319-320. Dr. Paul Romanoff was born in Russia and immigrated to the United States in 1928.

⁶¹⁰ Rosenbach, 'The Seminary Museum', in *The Jewish Theological Seminary of America Semi-Centennial Volume*, ed. by Adler, pp. 152-153.

⁶¹¹ New York, JTS 60.1.1/5 'Jewish Theological Seminary', *While You Are In New York Series* Bulletin 2 November, 1935.

⁶¹² Miller and Cohen, 'A Collision of Cultures', in *Tradition Renewed*, ed. by Wertheimer, p. 317.

these walls and in the other Jewish collections built up subsequently in this country and in Palestine.⁶¹³

Marx saw JTS and its departments as a place to save Jewish culture and its artefacts. First, for items that left Europe after the First World War, and then for additional items that arrived with the European refugees after the Nazis took power in the 1930s. The opening of this unique museum marked, according to Marx, an important cultural event in the history of New York Jewry. He continued:

[...] for the first time the people of this city were enabled to view a choice collection of ceremonial objects in metal and tapestry which had served to beautify synagogues and homes.⁶¹⁴

However, at its December 1931 opening the Museum of Jewish Ceremonial Objects was not the first of its kind in the USA. Hebrew Union College, established in 1875 in Cincinnati, Ohio, founded the first formal Jewish Museum in the USA.⁶¹⁵ The Union Museum was created in 1913 with the assistance of the Jewish Reform organization and the National Federation of Temple Sisterhood.⁶¹⁶ The Museum received many important donations and later opened branches in New York, Los Angeles, and Jerusalem.

Although the museum had a curator, Romanoff, he is rarely mentioned in letters and correspondence between JTS and its donors. It therefore seems that Marx was primarily responsible for selecting exhibition topics and objects.⁶¹⁷ Furthermore, Romanoff was left out

⁶¹³ JTS Archive, 60.2.2/4 Marx, *speech for the 10th anniversary of the museum*, 12 January, 1941.

⁶¹⁴ JTS Archive, 60.2.2/4 Marx, *speech for the 10th anniversary of the museum*, 12 January, 1941

⁶¹⁵ *Skirball Museum in Cincinnati*, Museums, Hebrew Union College: Jewish Institute of Religion, 2013 < <http://huc.edu/research/museums/skirball-museum-cincinnati> > [accessed 9 September 2015].

⁶¹⁶ Nadell, Pamela S., *National Federation of Temple Sisterhood*, Encyclopedia, Jewish Women's Archive, 2009 < <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/national-federation-of-temple-sisterhoods> > [accessed 9 September 2015].

⁶¹⁷ New York, JTS Archive, 60.1.1/5 The Host Presents: The Trip of the Week, *The Jewish Theological Seminary – Library and Museum*, [n.p.] [n.d.].

of 1930s newspaper publications and promotional materials about the Museum of Jewish Ceremonial Objects where Marx was mentioned and photographed.⁶¹⁸

In 1939, the volatile situation leading to the outbreak of the Second World War in Europe prompted a rise in anti-Semitism in the USA. Romanoff described local children throwing stones at JTS windows in a letter to Louis Finkelstein, JTS Chancellor between 1940-1972.⁶¹⁹ Romanoff blamed the ignorance of local Christian institutions, which he later invited to tour the museum. After the tour, he explained, these incidents ceased almost completely.⁶²⁰ These occurrences supported the museum's reputation for promoting interfaith understanding and tolerance.

In Europe, however, rich holdings of Jewish artefacts were in danger of confiscation and destruction. This paved the way to an enlargement of the Museum of Jewish Ceremonial Objects's collection with the arrival of two important collections from Poland to the USA: The Danzig Jewish community collection and the Benjamin Mintz collection from Warsaw. In 1904, the Jewish community of Danzig received the Lesser Gieldzinski Judaica collection. Gieldzinski, a wealthy Jewish collector of fine and decorative art, chose to donate the Judaica objects in his collection on the occasion of his seventy-fifth birthday. Symbolically, the ritual objects returned to the religious sphere where they originally belonged to.⁶²¹ In 1938, however, due to the grave situation under the Nazi regime, the community decided that to keep the collection intact, it would be best to ship it abroad.⁶²² While important pieces of Judaica were being secured, other Jewish communal property was sold in order to raise the necessary funds to finance the emigration of Danzig Jews. With assistance from the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), the entire Danzig collection was shipped to JTS under the

⁶¹⁸ New York, JTS Archive, 60.1.1/5 *A Nook of New York's Centre of Hebrew Culture: Dr. Cyrus Adler* [n.p.] [n.d.].

⁶¹⁹ Miller and Cohen, 'A Collision of Cultures', in *Tradition Renewed*, ed. by Wertheimer, pp.322-323. Rabbi Louis Finkelstein was a JTS scholar and one of the leaders of JTS. He later took the role of chancellor of JTS.

⁶²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 323.

⁶²¹ Richard Cohen, pp. 225-227.

⁶²² New York, JTS Archive, 60.8 *The Danzig Collection*.

condition that if a Jewish community would be re-established in Danzig within fifteen years, it would be returned.⁶²³ The Danzig objects, however, remain in the Jewish Museum until this day.⁶²⁴

Upon their arrival in 1939, objects from the Danzig collection were exhibited in empty dormitory rooms at JTS for view by appointment throughout the summer and kept separate from the rest of the collection. Exhibited as salvaged objects from Europe, the items lost their practical ritual value and were instead recognized for their unique aesthetic qualities.⁶²⁵ Later, the objects moved to a display window at Scribner's Bookstore on Fifth Avenue, where a large number of people could view the exhibit.⁶²⁶ This prominent display in a central part of Manhattan demonstrated the growing confidence in the museum and acceptance of the Jews in New York.⁶²⁷ Jews were still a minority in the USA and were treated as such.⁶²⁸ Thus they were not allowed to attend most of the public universities and could not join most country clubs or other community centres that were not established by and for the Jewish community. Yet, the Jews of New York were one of the largest and wealthiest Jewish communities in the USA. The community responded to these limitations by establishing Jewish institutions and organizations including Jewish cultural programs and a Jewish graduate school.⁶²⁹ An exhibition of Jewish ritual objects on Fifth Avenue was a significant moment for the Jewish

⁶²³ Bilski, 'Seeing the Future Through the Light of the Past', *The Seminary at 100*, ed. by Cardin and Silverman, pp. 147-148.

⁶²⁴ *Danzig 1939: Treasures of a Destroyed Community*, ed. by Vivian B. Mann and Joseph Gutmann (New York: The Jewish Museum, 1980).

⁶²⁵ Miller and Cohen, 'A Collision of Cultures', in *Tradition Renewed*, ed. by Wertheimer, pp. 318. The first step in this direction happened at the point of entry to the Gieldzinski collection in 1904

⁶²⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 318.

⁶²⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 318-319.

⁶²⁸ More literature about the history of Jews in the USA: *The Jews of the United States 1790-1840: A Documentary History*, ed. by Joseph L. Blau and Salo W. Baron (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963); Howe, Irving. *World of Our Fathers: The Journey of the East European Jews to America and the Life They Found and Made* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1976); Diner, Hasia. *Jews in America* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1999), Irving Howe and Kenneth Libo, *How We Lived, 1880-1930: A Documentary History of Immigrant Jews in America* (New York: Plume, 1981); Marcus, Jacob Rader, *The Jew in the American World: A Source Book* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996).

⁶²⁹ *Timeline in American Jewish History*, The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives < <http://americanjewisharchives.org/education/timeline.php> > [September 13, 2016].

community of New York because it represented their acceptance by the rest of the local communities.⁶³⁰

Benjamin Mintz (1870-1946) was an antiques dealer in Warsaw who collected Jewish ceremonial objects. After giving up his business in the late 1930s, he and his wife received permission from the Polish government to escort the collection to the 1939 World's Fair in New York. The Zionist couple planned to sell it in the USA to fund their immigration to Palestine.⁶³¹ The collection included extraordinary pieces of Judaica made in Eastern Europe and paintings by Jewish artists.⁶³² The limited art market in Palestine and the sparse number of places that could exhibit it, such as the Bezalel Museum, made it unrealistic to raise funds by selling the ritual objects there.⁶³³ Although the collection was never exhibited in the World's Fair, it arrived to New York in advance of the outbreak of war in Poland. The art market was low at the time and the couple, who accompanied the collection to New York were unable to sell it and remained in the USA. In 1947, after Benjamin's death, Rose Mintz sold the entire collection to JTS.⁶³⁴ The hope to purchase the collection and keep it intact at JTS was expressed by Marx in 1939 when it was exhibited at JTS.⁶³⁵

Like the Benguiat collection at the turn of the century and the Danzig collection, which were composed of Jewish ritual objects of high quality, Mintz was interested in the aesthetic value of the objects in his collection.⁶³⁶ However, upon the arrival of both the Danzig and Mintz

⁶³⁰ Miller and Cohen, 'A Collision of Cultures', in *Tradition Renewed*, ed. by Wertheimer, p. 318.

⁶³¹ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, p. 123.

⁶³² Grace Cohen Grossman, 'Dr. Stephen S. Kayser: A Personal Testimony', in *A Crown for A King*, ed. by Shalom Sabar, Steven Fine and William M. Kramer, (Berkeley: The Magnes Museum, 2000), pp. 1-22; New York, JTS RG25.1.27a Alexander Marx, *Statement on the Library and Museum*, 20 October, 1939, p. 3; Examples of items in the collection can be found: NARA Ardelia Hall Collection: Munich Administrative Records M1946.260.0149.208 Decorative Art War Losses in Poland [Straty Wojenne Zbiorow Polskich W Dziedzinie Rzemiosla Artystycznego] Vol.1.

⁶³³ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 14.160 Narkiss, *the National Museum Bezalel*, 1956, p. 7.

⁶³⁴ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, pp. 123-124.

⁶³⁵ JTS RG25.1.27a Marx, *Statement on the Library and Museum*, 20 October, 1939, p. 3; Mintz Collection of Ceremonial Objects, Saved from Warsaw, on View Here, Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA), 13 October, 1939 < <http://www.jta.org/1939/10/13/archive/mintz-collection-of-ceremonial-objects-saved-from-warsaw-on-view-here> > [accessed 8 May 2017].

⁶³⁶ Bilski 'Seeing the Future Through the Light of the Past', *The Seminary at 100*, ed. by Cardin and Silverman, p. 147. Bilski quotes Judge Max N. Korshak, a friend of Benjamin Mintz, who described his collection as 'a most amazing collection'.

collections from Europe in the shadow of the Nazi regime in Germany in 1939, the collections were interpreted as salvaged cultural Jewish objects. In line with Clifford's theory of the dynamic nature of classification, upon the entry of the collection to the Museum of Jewish Ceremonial Objects, items made for Jewish traditional use were moved from an aesthetic category to a category of salvaged cultural objects.⁶³⁷ Though still valued as important aesthetic items the context to their arrival and their entry to the museum collection reframed them in a new set of uses. In comparison to collectors of such items, scholars, such as Adler, were interested in the historical and traditional context of these Jewish objects. In 1939 upon exhibiting the items the historical significance of the objects and the fear for the future of the communities the objects arrived from that turned them into salvaged objects, became more important than their aesthetic qualities.

Planning a New Jewish Museum

Visitors from different backgrounds were invited to the museum to bring Jews and non-Jews closer, thereby creating a place for interaction between people of different backgrounds and cultural histories.⁶³⁸ Finkelstein believed that the museum should become an educational centre.⁶³⁹ He wanted to promote a program for inter-religion understanding and was supported by the museum curator, Paul Romanoff, until his death in 1943.⁶⁴⁰ Modern scholars might use the term contact zone to describe this kind of institution.⁶⁴¹

⁶³⁷ Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture*, p. 226.

⁶³⁸ Rosenbach, 'The Seminary Museum', in *The Jewish Theological Seminary of America Semi-Centennial Volume*, ed. by Cyrus Adler, p. 148.

⁶³⁹ New York, JTS Archive, IB.41.37 Louis Finkelstein, *letter to Frieda Warburg*, 6 June, 1944.

⁶⁴⁰ Miller, 'Planning the Jewish Museum, 1944-1947', *Conservative Judaism*, p. 63; 'Dr. Paul Romanoff, Curator of Jewish Theological Seminary Museum, Dead', Obituary, *The Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA)*, (14 December, 1943) <<http://www.jta.org/1943/12/14/archive/dr-paul-romanoff-curator-of-jewish-theological-seminary-museum-dead>> [accessed 19 January 16].

⁶⁴¹ James Clifford, *Routes*, pp. 188-219.

New York had the Metropolitan Museum, the prestigious universal survey museum that Narkiss wished to imitate in Israel. The Jewish Museum thus had to find a place of its own in the existing museum landscape in New York. A possible role as a place to exhibit Jewish art and history was expressed by Schoenberger during the preparations for the new museum building between 1944-1945. Schoenberger wrote a memorandum in which he explained the purpose of the Jewish Museum:

Establishment of a Museum to present the history of Judaism and the present-day Jewish life in visual form. The present collections of the Seminary were to form a basis which was to be enlarged by mergers with and by the purchase of other collections in the field.⁶⁴²

Schoenberger received his doctorate degrees in art history from the University of Freiburg and from the Frankfurt University.⁶⁴³ From 1926 he taught fine art at the University of Frankfurt and took on the role of curator of the historical museum of Frankfurt in 1928.⁶⁴⁴ In 1935, after the rise of the Nazi regime, Schoenberger lost both positions and began working as cataloguer for the Jewish Museum of Frankfurt. He emigrated from Germany after receiving a position as professor of art history at New York University in 1939. In parallel to his work at the university, Schoenberger assisted in cataloguing of works in the collection of the Museum of Jewish Ceremonial Objects.⁶⁴⁵

Schoenberger wrote his plans for the museum as the Second World War was ending. At this unstable time, he identified the importance of an archive of objects in the form of the history museum. Schoenberger's plan was to display a history of Jewish cultural life in the museum. In the group of historical museums, the Jewish Museum was to purposefully illustrate the

⁶⁴² JTS Archive, RG25.1.27a Krautheimer. *Memorandum*, 1 May, 1945.

⁶⁴³ Rachel Wischnitzer, 'Guido Schoenberger (1891-1974)', *Journal of Jewish Art* (Chicago Illinois: Spertus College of Judaica Press, 1977), p. 132.

⁶⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 132. The Frankfurt Historisches Museum was founded in 1878 and still exists today.

⁶⁴⁵ New York, JTS Archive, RG25.1.3 *Minutes: A meeting of the Museum Committee*, 1 October, 1946.

history of Judaism through objects and documents.⁶⁴⁶ Moreover, Schoenberger stressed the importance of classifying the objects according to their historical value above their artistic and economic value.⁶⁴⁷ By using photographs, maps, labels, and charts he wished to fill gaps in the collection.⁶⁴⁸ As Miller and Cohen explain, Schoenberger was interested in creating a coherent chronology of the selected cultural items supported by documents.⁶⁴⁹

At the time, Richard Krautheimer acted as the part time director of research at the museum's Research Centre on Jewish Art.⁶⁵⁰ Krautheimer strongly believed in the need to promote research and collecting of Jewish art and supported salvage in Europe. However, he was indecisive in developing a strategy for museum exhibitions and he questioned the appeal of Jewish ceremonial objects to the public. He conveyed this difficulty in a proposal for the museum plan in 1944:

It has been suggested from various sides to constitute the new institution as a Museum of Jewish Art. The difficulty of such a scheme lies in the limited amount of material available. It lies even more in the fact that the quality of Jewish art is rarely so outstanding in itself as to make it an object of purely aesthetic interest. Jewish life and thought had never been expressed as predominantly in the field of art as, for example, in the life and thought of the Italian Renaissance or of Seventeenth Century Holland; rarely has it created any great work in the field of art. Jewish art is to a large extent folk art and its position in the life of the Jewish community resembles very much the position

⁶⁴⁶ JTS Archive, RG25.1.27a Krautheimer, *Memorandum*, 1 May, 1945.

⁶⁴⁷ JTS Archive, RG25.1.27a Krautheimer, *Memorandum*, 1 May, 1945.

⁶⁴⁸ Miller and Cohen, 'A Collision of Cultures', in *Tradition Renewed*, ed. by Wertheimer, p. 332. Before Schoenberger, the history museum model was used by Adler and by George B. Goode, the Smithsonian Museum historian before him. As Goode insisted before him to develop a museum that was based on the model of the public library.

Spencer Baird and the Ichthyology at the Smithsonian: George Brown Goode (1851-1896) <
http://vertebrates.si.edu/fishes/ichthyology_history/ichs_colls/goode_g_brown.html> [accessed 26 January 2016].

⁶⁴⁹ Miller and Cohen, 'A Collision of Cultures', in *Tradition Renewed*, ed. by Wertheimer, pp. 331-333.

⁶⁵⁰ Miller, 'Planning the Jewish Museum, 1944-1947', *Conservative Judaism*, pp. 70-71. Krautheimer was an architecture historian born in Germany who is known for his research on Byzantine and Roman Churches in Europe. His first book, about Medieval synagogues, was published in 1927: Richard Krautheimer, *Mittelalterliche Synagogen* (Berlin, Frankfurter Verlag, 1927).

of art in the life of colonial America: rarely outstanding and never on a pedestal, yet part of the community's religious and daily life.⁶⁵¹

Reflecting the tension between art history and Jewish tradition, Krautheimer categorized Jewish ritual objects as Jewish folk art. Krautheimer thus felt that Jewish art fell short when compared to major European art schools. He questioned the significance of Jewish art to art history since it expressed Jewish traditional life. Krautheimer did not mention the unique Jewish ritual objects in the museum collection.⁶⁵² This disregard indicated a shift in the museum's direction from traditional Jewish art to modern and contemporary Jewish art. Stephen Kayser, the chief curator of the Jewish Museum, defined Jewish art as art that relates to Judaism.⁶⁵³ Kayser categorized Jewish art not by comparing it to other art schools as Krautheimer did, but by a thematic division. Thus a work of art with a biblical Jewish reference, for example, was considered Jewish whether its maker was Jewish or not.

As result of the Second World War and the Holocaust, several of the museum directors suggested that museum should be a memorial to murdered European Jews and their culture.⁶⁵⁴ Alexander Marx saw this initiative as a responsibility of the library:

The main centres of Jewish learning of the last century are disintegrating, and it is evidently the task of American Jewry, together with the newly growing centre in Palestine, to uphold the banner of Jewish learning.⁶⁵⁵

JTS would continue to act as a repository for European Jewish ritual objects and the items would be used in the USA to recreate the history of the destroyed communities. Marx identified the two growing centres of Jewish life – in the USA and in Palestine. Palestine was

⁶⁵¹ New York, JTS Archive, RG25.1.27a Richard Krautheimer, *Comments on the Memorandum: General Plan for a Museum of Jewish Culture in New York*, 29 September, 1944.

⁶⁵² Items that arrived from the Benguiat collection for example.

⁶⁵³ Cohen Grossman, 'Dr. Stephen S. Kayser: A Personal Testimony' in *A Crown for A King*, ed. by Sabar, Fine and Kramer, p. 5.

⁶⁵⁴ Miller, 'Planning the Jewish Museum, 1944-1947', *Conservative Judaism*, pp. 62-63.

⁶⁵⁵ Marx, 'The Library' in *the Jewish Theological seminary of America, Semi-Centennial Volume*, ed. by Adler, pp. 87-121.

recognized by the British Mandate Authorities in the Balfur declaration of 1926 and the White Paper of 1939 as a Jewish national home.⁶⁵⁶ Marx believed that the responsibility for the continuation of Jewish life and learning fell upon these two countries. Krautheimer agreed with the point of view that the only places that could be responsible for the salvage effort were in the USA or Palestine. In May 1945, he proposed the formation of a program to rescue the remnants of Jewish art in Central Europe as part of the museum research centre:

Indeed the time places, in this writer's opinion, a duty on the shoulders of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and on those of the Jews all over the country. The almost complete destruction of Jewish life in Central and Eastern Europe including its monuments, museums, libraries and research centres is the worst cultural loss Judaism has suffered in the last five hundred years. The last remnants of Jewish art and history in these countries must be collected now, if at all, and this can be done only in this country or else in Palestine. Judaism's cultural monuments must be preserved and should be made available to the world not only in writing but also visually. The Seminary, through the planned Museum and Research Centre is in a position to fulfil this task. To let this opportunity pass would be difficult to explain to future generations.⁶⁵⁷

Krautheimer identified the roles of the museum as collecting, preserving and making the items visually available for learning and research. The objects would commemorate the destroyed communities and would make it possible to learn about them. In addition, Krautheimer supported collaborating with the United States Monuments Commission to

⁶⁵⁶ In May 1939 the British Government published a policy paper titled "The White Paper" that explained the outlines of the policy used in Palestine between 1939-1945 and called to establish an independent Jewish country in the Palestinian state. Protocol of the commons sitting, 23 May, 1939
<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1939/may/23/palestine#S5CV0347P0_19390523_HOC_302> [accessed 1 February 2017].

⁶⁵⁷ JTS Archive, RG25.1.27a Krautheimer, *Memorandum*, 1 May, 1945.

investigate the remnants of Jewish art in Europe.⁶⁵⁸ Schoenberger expressed his support of this effort in a letter to Finkelstein written about the important task that the museum faced in 1945. He explained:

To provide a refuge for the treasures of pillaged Synagogues, to rebuild at least in effigy a part of the spiritual and material achievements of the European communities which have been destroyed, is a task of the greatest importance, and it would have the greatest effect right now.⁶⁵⁹

The emotional words used by Schoenberger to describe the situation are evidence of the shock he and other Jews who fled Europe experienced upon hearing about the atrocities taking place in their hometowns. The trauma of the atmosphere of death and destruction was demonstrated in his reference to the objects as treasures that needed to be rescued.

This discussion traced a shift in the priorities from Jewish ritual art to Jewish culture of the curators and leaders of the Museum of Jewish Ceremonial Objects since its opening in 1931. Initially, the collection was composed of Jewish ritual objects that were bought and donated under the leadership of Adler. Adler was also responsible for promoting the historical importance of the items through research and exhibitions. This led to the development of an educational program which Romanoff orchestrated. After the Second World War broke out in Europe, Krautheimer expressed interest in expanding the research and education program in order to promote the salvage of Jewish cultural objects from Europe. During the 1940s and after the end of the war in 1945, the notion of salvage gained support by the new Jewish Museum curators, Kayser and Schoenberger. It is important to note that Krautheimer, Kayser and Schoenberger emigrated from Germany as a result of the Nazi regime in the late 1930s. The three historians were familiar with the pre-war Jewish museum landscape in Germany

⁶⁵⁸ Miller and Cohen, 'A Collision of Cultures', in *Tradition Renewed*, ed. by Wertheimer, pp.328-329, 333. During the war years, Krautheimer assisted the Office of Strategic Services in Washington DC.

⁶⁵⁹ JTS Archive, RG1C.53.38 Schoenberger, *letter to Finkelstein*, 21 February, 1945.

and that made it possible for them to assist the American Military and to return to Europe after the war and rescue specific items.⁶⁶⁰

With the founding of the European Commission on Jewish Cultural Reconstruction in 1944, scholars from JTS and the Jewish Museum took roles as advisors on the commission's board of directors.⁶⁶¹ The commission, founded by Salo W. Baron, a Jewish History professor at Columbia University, was conducting research for the reconstruction of Jewish life in Europe after World War II.⁶⁶² However, as soon as the war ended, the commission identified the urgent need to form a policy for handling the Jewish cultural objects in Central Europe.⁶⁶³ In a meeting held in June 1946, the advisory committee described five urgent objectives:

1. The Commission should represent the whole Jewish people as far as cultural and religious interests are concerned and eventually be established as a representative of all Jewish libraries in the world. Other Jewish cultural bodies, such as the YIVO, the Hebrew University, etc. should stop sending cablegrams.
2. The Commission should try to get a charter from the State of New York as a non-profit organization.
3. The Commission should try to get a charter from the United Nations Organization in order to have a legal basis as an international Jewish body.
4. The Commission should have at least \$50,000 in funds.
5. The Commission should provide space for a depot where the books can be stored.⁶⁶⁴

⁶⁶⁰ New York, JTS Archive, IG96.40.1951.JCR Guido Schoenberger, *Report of trip to France and Germany, 8 August- 7 September, 1951*, [n.d.].

⁶⁶¹ New York, JTS Archive, 80.28.32 JCR committee meeting, *Minutes*, 21 February, 1946. Alexander Marx, Rabbi Leo Baeck who established the Leo Baeck institute, Gerschon Scholem one of the founders of the National Library in Jerusalem.

⁶⁶² *Plunder and Restitution: Findings and Recommendations of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States and Staff Report* (December, 2000)

<http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/pcha/PlunderRestitution.html/html/Home_Content.html> [accessed 17 September 15].

⁶⁶³ JTS Archive, 80.28.32 JCR committee meeting, *Minutes*, 21 February, 1946.

⁶⁶⁴ New York, JTS Archive, 80.28.32 *Minute of meeting held at the office of the Commission*, 26 June, 1946.

The first priorities of the Commission indicate the organization's aim to become a central body accepted by the United States government and the international community to represent the Jewish people on cultural and religious issues. The cultural objects in most urgent need to salvage were books. Several important Jewish libraries were confiscated by the Nazis during the war and efforts to locate them were being made by the commission's staff. Hannah Arendt mentioned YIVO and the Hebrew University as institutions that made repeated demands regarding the books and libraries under the responsibility of the JCR. YIVO, established in Vilnius in 1925, continued its activities during the Second World War and after, through its New York branch. The founder of the institute, Max Weinreich, managed to flee Europe and acted as the head of YIVO New York until his death in 1969.⁶⁶⁵ The Hebrew University, established in Jerusalem in 1918, housed the National Library of Israel. The directors of the university saw Israel as the heir to perished Jewish communities and attempted to obtain the Jewish cultural objects that were recovered by the Allied Forces. Other institutions, including YIVO, also saw themselves as successors of the Jewish communities in Europe, and were just as interested in these book collections. As a result, there was conflict around the division of the property.⁶⁶⁶ In 1945, the commission was retitled the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction (JCR) and its staff began to prepare to work with the JRSO in Germany.

In 1947, the Jewish Museum opened in the renovated Fifth Avenue Warburg mansion.⁶⁶⁷ The new location made it possible for the museum to expand both its collection and exhibition space.⁶⁶⁸ The architect responsible for the renovations, Percival Goodman, predicted that the museum would become an international cultural centre for the largest Jewish community in

⁶⁶⁵ Cecile Esther Kuznitz, *YIVO*, the YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe <<http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/YIVO>> [accessed 24 January 2016]; Lisa Moses Leff, *The Archive Thief* (Oxford University Press, 2015).

⁶⁶⁶ Herman, pp. 180-189.

⁶⁶⁷ New York, JTS Archive, 60.1.1/2 *A ceremony to mark the closing of the Museum in the Seminary building*, [n.d.].

⁶⁶⁸ New York, JTS Archive, RG25.1.27a *General plan for a Museum of Jewish Culture in New York*, 15 September, 1944.

the world.⁶⁶⁹ Museum programs included lectures, a museum guide, and periodical. In addition, the museum staff collaborated with the Monuments Commission of the United States Government to ascertain whether or not any Jewish art remnants in Central Europe could be saved.⁶⁷⁰

The staff at the museum included the Chief Curator, Kayser who was invited to join the museum in 1946. Kayser was born in Frankfurt and grew up in an Orthodox Jewish home.⁶⁷¹ He received his doctorate degree from the University of Heidelberg in art history and philosophy. In 1938, he and his wife came to the USA. After two years of research at the Columbia University in New York, they moved to Berkeley, California where he was offered a position in the University of Berkeley Fine Art Library.⁶⁷² President of the JTS, Louis Finkelstein, offered the role of director of the Jewish Museum to several German scholars who immigrated to the USA at the time. This instance and others like it indicates the preference toward German academics and strengthened the central role they played in institutions during the 1940s and earlier. As such, even after leaving Europe both Kayser and Schoenberger, for example, were able to find work in their fields within the context of the Jewish world in the USA. This group established interpersonal networks to maintain its place of importance within the academic hierarchy.⁶⁷³

The moment of the opening of the Jewish Museum in its new building on Fifth Avenue was an opportunity to make drastic changes to the existing model of the history museum, though Kayser and Schoenberger followed European models.⁶⁷⁴ Both men brought with them experience based on display methods typical to the folk museum and the history museum

⁶⁶⁹ Miller, 'Planning the Jewish Museum, 1944-1947', *Conservative Judaism*, p. 61.

⁶⁷⁰ JTS Archive, RG25.1.27a Krautheimer, *Memorandum*, 1 May, 1945. The Monuments, Fine Art and Archive's Men, known as the Monuments' Men who joined the American Army in Europe at the end of World War II.

⁶⁷¹ Cohen Grossman, 'Dr. Stephen S. Kayser: A Personal Testimony', in *A Crown for A King*, ed. by Sabar, Fine and Kramer, pp. 1-22.

⁶⁷² *Ibid*, pp. 2-3.

⁶⁷³ Weininger, pp. 82-119.

⁶⁷⁴ Finkelstein contacted people such as Mayer Schapiro as a possible director for the museum. Schapiro was known for his strong support of contemporary art.

developed in the 1920-1930s. Jewish Museums in Europe at that time focused on exhibitions that re-validated the place of the Jewish community within each country.⁶⁷⁵ Karl Schwarz, curator at The Berlin Jewish Museum, planned to exhibit the museum treasures as references to Jewish intellect throughout times and countries.⁶⁷⁶ The Frankfurt Museum, which opened in 1922 in a house donated by the Rothschild family, received the family archive, portraits, and decorative arts.⁶⁷⁷ Exhibiting aesthetic highlights of Jewish art placed Jewish culture in the context of the western history of art. Kayser expressed a wish that the Jewish Museum would become ‘The most advanced show window of the aesthetic side of Jewish tradition and spirit in the whole world’.⁶⁷⁸ Kayser supported living Jewish artists reshaping Jewish visual life through the aesthetics of architecture, paintings and sculpture.⁶⁷⁹ He promoted this idea when he explained the difference between the role of the museum versus other educational structures:

To put up a museum which teaches Judaism, that is to say, which enters into the task of the Sunday Schools and of the Jewish parent, would be something very worthwhile I admit, but that would be a product of Jewish education in general and not of a museum which places its main emphasis upon the visual part of tradition.⁶⁸⁰

Kayser did not see the role of the museum as one for standard Jewish education, since he preferred to focus on the aesthetics of the objects. Kayser saw the role of the museum as a visual centre for Jewish tradition which offered an experience of Jewish ideas through art.

⁶⁷⁵ Berger Iticovici, pp. 53-70.

⁶⁷⁶ Tobias Metzler, ‘Collecting Community: The Berlin Jewish Museum as Narrator between Past and Present, 1906-1939’, in *Visualizing and Exhibiting Jewish Space and History* ed. by Richard I. Cohen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 55-79 (p. 61). After several years of fundraising for a Jewish Museum in Berlin, the museum opened in January 1933. However, in June of 1933, Schwarz left Germany to become director of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art.

⁶⁷⁷ Katharina, Rauschenberger, ‘The Judaica Collection of Frankfurt’s Museum Judischer Altertumer and Its Worldwide Dispersion After 1945’, in *Neglected Witnesses: The Fate of Jewish Ceremonial Objects During the Second World War and After* ed. by Julie-Marthe Cohen and Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, (London: Institute of Art and Law, 2011), pp. 81-102.

⁶⁷⁸ New York, JTS Archive, RG25.1.5 *Jewish Museum Report to the Board of Overseas*, [n.d.].

⁶⁷⁹ New York, JTS Archive, RG25.1.5 Inaugural exhibitions: the giving of the law and the Ten Commandments, pp. 1-2.

⁶⁸⁰ New York, JTS Archive, RG25.1.21 Stephen Kayser, *letter to Harry Friedman*, 7 September, 1948.

Kayser promoted programs bringing together old and new Jewish art, for example, a workshop for contemporary ceremonial art and partnering with the University of Judaism in Los Angeles and Temple Emanu-El in Miami.⁶⁸¹

In its new location, the Jewish Museum was surrounded by three major museums of contemporary art: MoMA, The Whitney Museum of American Art, and The Guggenheim.⁶⁸²

This new emphasis on contemporary art attracted many curious visitors and eventually led the Jewish Museum to also emphasize modern art at the expense of the Jewish ceremonial objects. Focussing on aesthetics and art history, in the 1940s the museum exhibited work by both living and dead Jewish artists.⁶⁸³ In May 1947, the Museum's first exhibition in its new location was composed of works by contemporary Jewish artists such as Marc Chagall, Jacques Lipchitz, and Reuben Rubin.⁶⁸⁴ This movement towards modern art accelerated the institutional separation process from JTS and created tension between new Jewish art for the purpose of rejuvenating Jewish culture and educating Jewish visitors on the traditional Jewish values and Jewish ritual objects.⁶⁸⁵

In December 1948 the museum opened an exhibition of works by contemporary American artists, in parallel with two exhibitions that dealt with the destruction of Jewish communities in Europe: an exhibit of photographs of ghetto life by George Kadish and a second exhibition of drawings of destroyed Synagogues by George Loukomski.⁶⁸⁶ There was a need to balance between exhibiting salvaged Jewish art and contemporary art. Kayser also proposed using the halls and stairways of the museum building to exhibit pictures of the 'destroyed synagogues

⁶⁸¹ Cohen Grossman, 'Dr. Stephen S. Kayser: A Personal Testimony', in *A Crown for A King*, ed. by Sabar, Fine and Kramer, p. 12.

⁶⁸² MoMA, was first opened in 1929 and later, in 1939, re-opened in its current location. The Whitney Museum of American Art, which opened in Greenwich Village in 1931 and later moved to the Upper East Side was a second competitor, exhibiting local contemporary artists. The third was the Guggenheim Museum that was opened in 1939 under the title *the Museum of Non-Objective Paintings*.

⁶⁸³ Miller, 'Planning the Jewish Museum, 1944-1947', *Conservative Judaism*, p. 63.

⁶⁸⁴ Miller and Cohen, 'A Collision of Cultures', in *Tradition Renewed*, ed. by Wertheimer, pp. 334-335. The art historian Meyer Schapiro submitted the original plan for this exhibit in 1946 bring the accomplishments of Jewish artists to greater attention. He believed that such an exhibit could bring the accomplishments of Jewish artists to the front of the stage.

⁶⁸⁵ Miller, 'Planning the Jewish Museum, 1944-1947', *Conservative Judaism*, pp. 72-73.

⁶⁸⁶ Miller and Cohen, 'A Collision of Cultures', in *Tradition Renewed*, ed. by Wertheimer, p.358.

in the Old World'.⁶⁸⁷ This plan did not take place, due to Kayser's growing interest in contemporary Jewish art. The museum's display, Miller explained, was aiming to look towards the future of Judaism through exhibitions of Jewish art.⁶⁸⁸

By 1950, Kayser reported a drop of fifty percent in visitors. The committee overseeing the museum work blamed the situation on the questionable appeal of the museum's Judaica collection. As a result, art historian Meyer Schapiro's 1944 proposal to exhibit contemporary art whether or not it included Jewish themes, was finally accepted in 1957.⁶⁸⁹ In addition to exhibitions of objects from the Museum's permanent collection, Schapiro proposed exhibiting modern and contemporary art on loan.⁶⁹⁰ This marked a break away from the JTS and the ideas that formed the creation of the Museum of Jewish Ceremonial Objects, the Jewish Museums' predecessor. Although scholars leading the JTS and the museum were well aware of the historical and artistic value of the Jewish ritual objects, there was no public appetite for such artefacts. These objects symbolized a past life and the folklore of a people that was becoming less common as the process of secularization and assimilation was taking place in the Jewish community. In order to sustain the museum and attract visitors, the curators had to reconcile the role of the museum as repository of objects under threat in Europe and the scheme of the competing New York museums.⁶⁹¹

Though the museum took the salvage mission another step further by collaborating with the JCR in 1949 and serving as a repository for items sent from Europe, sustaining a museum that interested the public by showing these items seemed like an impossible task. The museum staff were uninterested in keeping the objects in the museum collection and became

⁶⁸⁷ Miller, 'Planning the Jewish Museum, 1944-1947', *Conservative Judaism*, p. 64.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid, p.64.

⁶⁸⁹ Miller and Cohen, 'A Collision of Cultures', in *Tradition Renewed*, ed. by Wertheimer, p. 340; New York, JTS Archive, RG25.1.3 Meyer Schapiro, *Memorandum for the Jewish Museum*, 25 June, 1946.

⁶⁹⁰ Miller and Cohen, 'A Collision of Cultures', in *Tradition Renewed*, ed. by Wertheimer, pp.334-335.

⁶⁹¹ Ibid, p. 344. In 1966, the Jewish Museum was described by art critic Emily Genauer as "The city's 'in' Museum...".

involved in the division process.⁶⁹² Compared to the extensive salvage plans made in the 1940s by the Jewish Museum staff, only a small number of Jewish ritual objects remained in the Jewish Museum and the salvage project reached its end by the late 1950s.

Working with the JCR

The first parts of this chapter discussed objects that composed the collection of the Museum of Jewish Ceremonial Objects. These objects could be classified under the JCR category of Jewish art. From now on, this thesis will explore art objects and Jewish cultural objects that were not put under this category by the JCR. It was Narkiss who included them in the Jewish art category.

In the spring of 1949, the staff of the JCR in Europe was making progress towards the closure of the CCPs that had been open since 1945 across the American occupied zone in Germany.⁶⁹³ In August 1949, Kayser wrote a letter confirming the shipment of eighty-three crates to the Jewish Museum, a large portion of these objects were to be divided between institutions in the USA and in the Western hemisphere. Eleven crates were divided among synagogues and the rest between museums in the USA and around the world.⁶⁹⁴ The crates sent to the Jewish Museum included Jewish ritual objects and works of art. Out of five thousand Jewish ritual objects removed from Jewish Museums and synagogues in Europe during the war, Schoenberger selected one hundred and twenty to officially enter the Jewish Museum collection in 1952.⁶⁹⁵ In a summary of the meeting of the JCR Advisory Committee held on 19 September, 1949, Arendt described the complex situation of the museum and

⁶⁹² Iowa City, Papers of Lil Picard: Series VIII, archives of Henry F. Odell, Msc 817.55 H. F. Odell, *Cover letter*, 9 September, 1953.

⁶⁹³ New York, JTS Archive, IG.96.40 *Minutes of the annual meeting of the corporation*, 10 December, 1951.

⁶⁹⁴ The Jewish Museum Archive, Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Files, Kayser, *Memorandum to Joe Bednarik*, 9 August, 1949.

⁶⁹⁵ Bilski, 'Seeing the Future Through the Light of the Past', *The Seminary at 100*, ed. by Cardin and Silverman, p.148.

ceremonial objects that arrived to New York. Museum objects were handled separately from Jewish ritual objects found in the CCPs. The JCR divided all groups of cultural property based on their policy which required distributing forty percent to the USA, forty percent to Israel and twenty percent to other Jewish communities in the Western hemisphere. Arendt's summary showed the first institutions in the United States in line to receive objects from the CCPs were the largest Jewish cultural institutions in the USA at the late 1940s. the Jewish Museum was the first mentioned:

E. Recipients in the United States – the committee agreed that the Jewish Museum in New York and the Jewish Museum in Cincinnati should have first call. It was recognized that Yeshiva University has a special claim and should follow immediately after these top priorities. A list of other prospective recipients, who should be notified, will be drawn up by the sub-committee. The following institutions were mentioned: The Jewish Centre Lecture Bureau for its exhibits, the Jewish Community centres in Chicago, Cleveland and San Francisco.⁶⁹⁶

Synagogue items were handled separately, and first priority was given to congregations that accepted refugees and immigrants from Europe. Since many of the objects were damaged, their recipient was responsible for any repairs. Finally, remaining museum pieces were to be offered to non-Jewish institutions. Both Arendt and Finkelstein refer to the New York depot that held books and Jewish ritual objects from Europe in their correspondence during May 1950. Arendt reminded Finkelstein that JTS agreed to accept the objects and act as their custodian until their redistribution.⁶⁹⁷

⁶⁹⁶ New York, the Jewish Museum Archive, JCR Files, Hannah Arendt, *Minutes of Advisory Committee Meeting*, 19 September, 1949. Yeshiva University, founded in New York in 1896, received from the JCR books and ritual objects.

⁶⁹⁷ New York, JTS Archive, IF.86.14.1950 Hannah Arendt, *letter to Louis Finkelstein*, 1 May, 1950.

Several reasons could have made the Jewish Museum and JTS the chosen repositories for the Jewish cultural objects shipped from Europe. Firstly, both the JRSO and the JCR were founded and headquartered in New York. These organizations took responsibility over the 'heirless' Jewish cultural property recorded in Europe. The newly renovated port of New York was convenient for accepting the objects and had a geographic advantage in comparison with museums that received books and cultural objects through the JCR.⁶⁹⁸ After sorting the objects, they were transferred to their new locations across the USA. Franz Landsberger (1883-1964), for example, requested a part of the collection of paintings for his museum at the Hebrew College in Cincinnati.⁶⁹⁹ Landsberger was the last curator of the Jewish Museum of Berlin. As such, he was familiar with works of art that compiled the Berlin museum collection as well as works of art that were sent to the museum for safekeeping by Jewish collectors when the Second World War broke out. After leaving Germany in 1938 for England he was invited to work at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati in 1939.

Narkiss criticized the decision to ship the cultural objects to New York upon its announcement in 1949, believing the items must go to Israel.⁷⁰⁰ Narkiss was familiar with the objects after cataloguing and valuating them at the CCPs in Germany. He insisted that the objects should be sent to the Jewish homeland in Israel. Thus, when a proposal to dispose of the items by sale was discussed, Narkiss protested against it.⁷⁰¹ Selling the objects was,

⁶⁹⁸ *Descriptive Catalogue of Looted Judaica, Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany*, 24, February, 2009 <<http://forms.claimscon.org/Judaica/us.pdf>> [accessed 28 April 2017]. A list of institutions that received Jewish ritual objects in the USA: The Jewish Museum, Hebrew Teachers College, Roxbury, MA, B'nai Brith Hillel Foundations, New York, Hebrew Theological College, Chicago, Museum of Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, The Temple, Cleveland, OH, Yeshiva University, New York, National Jewish Welfare Board, New York, Bureau of Jewish Education, Buffalo, Brooklyn Museum, New York University and synagogues of immigrant congregations. .

⁶⁹⁹ Jerusalem, the CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296b Samuel Dallob, *letter from to Benjamin Ferencz*, 20 November, 1953. In 1953 Landsberger requested to receive a part of the paintings that belonged to the Jewish Museum in Berlin, which were kept in Hamburg by the Jewish Trust Corporation, in the British zone. Many of the painting belonged to Jewish families and collectors and were handed to the Jewish Museum before the war broke out for safekeeping.

More information about the Jewish Museum in Berlin before the Second World War: Hermann Simon, *Das Jüdische Museum in der Oranienburger Strasse. Geschichte einer zerstörten Kulturstätte* (Berlin: Berlin Museum 1983; 2nd ed., Berlin: Union, 1988); Katharina Rauschenberger, *Jüdische Tradition im Kaiserreich und in der Weimarer Republik. Zur Geschichte des jüdischen Museumswesens in Deutschland* (Hanover: Hahn, 2002).

⁷⁰⁰ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.110 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter to Nassia*, 4 June, 1949.

⁷⁰¹ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Maurice Boukstein, *letter to Eliyahu Dobkin*, 15 November, 1951.

however, an option Kayser considered. In March 1950, Kayser comprised a list of the objects planned for sale. The list consisted of:

125 Paintings, 150 Drawings and prints, 200 Miniatures, also a number of wood-carved angels, gilded angels etc'..., and finally one large figure of St. Ambrosius.⁷⁰²

Kayser's emphasis on Christian objects such as angels and a sculpture of St. Ambrosius reflects his view that such objects had no place in a Jewish Museum. In addition to this list, later that year Kayser prepared a memorandum on the restoration and disposal of JRSO paintings. In this memorandum, he confirmed the sale of the paintings that arrived to the Jewish Museum, with the exception of a group of thirty-five set aside for Israel.⁷⁰³ Narkiss was not the only museum representative from Israel interested in these objects. Walter Moses, an art collector and board member of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art was invited to inspect the paintings in New York and to request items he saw fitting for Israeli museums. The outcome of his valuation was a group of thirty-five paintings which was to be sent to Israel.⁷⁰⁴ The process of re-valuation of the cultural objects and Moses' involvement is discussed in the next sub-chapter. This invitation of a representative of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art to value the objects demonstrates the involvement of another Israeli institution in the division process and suggests that once again, Narkiss was not the only one interested in the Jewish cultural objects.

A Controversial Disposition

⁷⁰² The CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296d *Memorandum*, 14 March, 1950.

⁷⁰³ The CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296d *Memorandum*, 14 March, 1950.

⁷⁰⁴ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Neiger, *Memorandum*, 11 September, 1952, p.2.

A lack of clear regulations on the conduct and handling of the Jewish cultural objects led to uncertainty regarding the shipment of items to Israel. The final valuation Narkiss gave the art objects at the Munich CCP which were not considered Jewish art, was of \$100,000.⁷⁰⁵ In his valuation, he highlighted the most important items: paintings by Sisley, Utrillo, Courbet, Vlaminck, and Derain which were valued together at \$80,000.⁷⁰⁶ Narkiss was interested in having these items shipped to Bezalel and was therefore anxiously waiting for the JRSO approval of his recommendation on the division of the Jewish cultural property. Starr, the JCR executive secretary, tried to calm his concern explaining that Narkiss's request would be presented and considered by the JRSO board:

I am in entire agreement with the views you express, but you must realize that the art objects are not within the jurisdiction of JCR unless they are of Jewish content. The decision on whether these things are to be sold will be made by the JRSO Board, where we can present your proposal, and perhaps the outcome will be favorable. A great deal will depend on the attitude taken by the Jewish Agency representatives in N.Y., but I have not yet had a chance to discuss it with them.⁷⁰⁷

Rather than the movable property discussed here, the JRSO and JCR cared more about the monetary support provided for the survivors.⁷⁰⁸ Starr thought that with enough support of Narkiss's request, the board of the JCR would decide to send the cultural items to Israel rather than sell them. However, as a letter to Kayser explained, the final decision was to sell the objects:

⁷⁰⁵ CZA, A370.970 Narkiss, *Report to Starr*, 26 May, 1949.

⁷⁰⁶ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Ferencz, *letter to Rock*, 27 May, 1949.

⁷⁰⁷ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Starr, *letter to Narkiss*, 8 June, 1949.

⁷⁰⁸ CZA, A444.217 *Certificate of Incorporation the Jewish Restitution Commission*, 12 May, 1947.

With reference to the remainder of the paintings, the Jewish Agency and the Joint Distribution Committee are of the opinion that these paintings should be sold in the US to the maximum extent possible, without incurring any further expense for preliminary restoration or improvement of the paintings.⁷⁰⁹

This decision prompted a debate between the two approaches. The JCR's sales as a form to raise funds for Jewish refugees and Narkiss's all-inclusive salvage project. Narkiss's protest against holding such sales began in 1949 and intensified in 1950.⁷¹⁰ As he explained:

JRSO that handles Jewish property and real estate is willing to deal with the objects and bring them to the Joint for sale. This means that important art treasures will be sold for cents while the country which desperately needs them will give them up.⁷¹¹

Narkiss indicated that the decision makers on the sale did not have experience in dealing with cultural property. Therefore, he argued, their museum potential would not be identified. In his eyes this was a grave mistake, preventing Israel, which had only a few museums with limited collections, to enjoy these works of art.

Apart from a group of items shipped to Israel and a group that remained packed in Germany, hundreds of items shipped to New York were kept in the Jewish Museum storage for months. While Narkiss was following a unique set of guidelines based on his own beliefs and understandings, the JRSO and JCR still followed a policy based on Law no. 59, which expired on December 1948 when the deadline for restitutions ceased. The law granted the JRSO and the JCR the legal responsibility to obtain, distribute and to claim 'heirless' Jewish property in order to support the relief and rehabilitation of Jewish communities worldwide

⁷⁰⁹ Jerusalem, CZA, A370.120 Eli Rock, *letter to Stephen Kayser*, 22 March, 1950.

⁷¹⁰ The CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296d Narkiss, *Property Stored at the Munich Collecting Point*, 26 May, 1949.

⁷¹¹ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *Memorandum on the Salvage of Jewish art remnants*, March, 1950, p. 2.

JRSO המטפלת ברכוש יהודי בנכסי דלא נידי מוכנה לטפל בדברים ולהביאם לידי הג'וינט לשם מכירה. כלומר שאוצרות אמנות חשובים יימכרו בעד שוה פרוטה והארץ – הזקוקה לאוצרות אלה מכל הבחינות תוותר עליהם.

and Holocaust survivors in the USA. Thus, if the objects were not sold, the JRSO would lose potential monetary aid. For Narkiss, however, the loss of cultural objects meant sacrificing the memory of Jewish life in Europe.

The cultural objects arrived in New York in the fall of 1949. To prepare for their sale, they were re-appraised by several central figures in the local art market. Eduard M. Warburg, co-chairman of the JDC, consulted with Curt Valentine, of the Buchholz Gallery, regarding the quality of the unidentified paintings.⁷¹² Warburg suggested three possible options for their disposal:

The J.R.S.O. has the job of disposing of these objects. There are three courses we had in mind: one, to distribute them to Jewish cultural organizations both in this country and in Israel and the other was to sell those for which we could find a market and use the funds for our general relief programs, or, thirdly, there might even be the possibility of selling them and using the funds to build up art collections in connection with cultural organizations.⁷¹³

Warburg's first two suggestions were similar to Narkiss and to the JCR's ideas. Dividing the objects between institutions in the USA and Israel fit well with the JRSO's original plan and with Narkiss's understanding. While working in the CCPs, Narkiss was asked to divide the items between cultural institutions and his list was sent for JRSO approval in the summer of 1949.⁷¹⁴ The third idea was unique and indicated that the cultural objects were to be replaced

⁷¹² 'Dictionary of Art Historians', *The Department of Art, Art History and Visual Studies, Duke University* <<https://dictionaryofarthistorians.org/warburge.htm>> [accessed 6 November 2014]. Eduard was the youngest son of Felix and Frieda Warburg. Warburg started collecting contemporary art during his university studies and in 1932 became a member of the advisory committee of the MoMA.

Archives Directory for the History of Collecting in America, The Frick Collection Archive <<http://research.frick.org/directoryweb/browserecord.php?-action=browse&-recid=6067>> [6 November 2014].

Valentine was an art dealer working for Karl Buchholz dealership in Hamburg. The gallery was dealing with modern German art and in 1937 he immigrated to New York with a portion of the gallery stock in order to open a branch for the Buchholz Gallery there.

⁷¹³ Jerusalem, the CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296d Edward Warburg, *letter to Stephen Kayser*, 1 November, 1949.

⁷¹⁴ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *A Report on Narkiss's work in the Wiesbaden Central Collecting Point*, 19 June, 1949.

with others, more fitting to specific cultural organizations. This suggestion demonstrated Warburg's perception of the items as objects of pure aesthetic value and not as objects with memorial value stemming from their pre-war Jewish owners.

Warburg's proposal disappointed the JRSO and JCR staff. As a result, the possibility of shipping the remaining crates from Nurnberg was reconsidered. Benjamin Ferencz, legal advisor to the JRSO, expressed his surprise in a letter to Eli Rock, executive director of the JRSO:

[...] In view of the spasms of joy expressed by the experts Narkiss and Kreutzberger⁷¹⁵ I am amazed to see the present evaluation [valuation] in New York. I presume you have considered the possibility of placing these things on sale with the appeal that receipts go to charity and these are objects looted by the Nazis. That should raise the value at least another three dollars.⁷¹⁶

The concern about the paintings' value led to a second appraisalment by the Knoedler Gallery.⁷¹⁷ The Knoedler Gallery was founded in 1848 in New York as a branch of the French gallery, Goupil & Cie. In 1857 Knoedler became an independent gallery which made its reputation with old master paintings.⁷¹⁸ The Knoedler Gallery consultant gave the objects a total estimate of \$5,000 - less than twenty percent of Narkiss' assessment.⁷¹⁹ Later that year, the paintings, along with remaining unidentified objects such as miniature portraits, miniature figures and wooden sculptures arrived at the Jewish Museum where Kayser and Walter

⁷¹⁵ Between 1948-1955, Max Kreutzberger worked in Germany as the Director of the Jewish Agency. Further information about Kreutzberger: *Guide to the papers of Max Kreutzberger (1900-1978)*, The Leo Baeck Institute < <http://findingaids.cjh.org/?pID=121525> > [accessed 3 February 2017].

⁷¹⁶ Jerusalem, the CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296d Benjamin Ferencz, *letter to Eli Rock*, 8 November, 1949.

⁷¹⁷ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Neiger, *Mamorandum*, 11 September, 1952. She identified Mr. Walter Leary of Knoedler gallery as the consultant.

⁷¹⁸ Christian Huemer, *Database of Knoedler Gallery Stock Books Now Online*, The Getty institute for Research, 2014 <<http://blogs.getty.edu/iris/database-of-knoedler-gallery-stock-books-now-online/>> [6 November 2014].

⁷¹⁹ The CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296d Ferencz, *letter to Rock*, 27 May, 1949.

Moses from Tel Aviv viewed them.⁷²⁰ Moses was the founder of the Eretz Israel Museum in Tel Aviv and a board member of the Tel Aviv Museum.⁷²¹ In addition, a letter by Eli Rock regarding the thirty-five paintings suggested that Moses was a member of the of the American Fund for Israeli Museums.⁷²² Together they reached a conclusion that the old master paintings were appropriate for Israel:

According to Dr. Moses, most of the above art objects, in terms of numbers, were not needed in in Israel and could be disposed of in the U.S. He and Dr. Kayser, however, made an initial selection of 35 old masters, for which there is a considerable need in Israel by way of offering representative types of art work.⁷²³

Moses's valuation was thus in line with the New York experts who found most of the items to be of modest value. For museums in Israel, he selected what he saw as the best of the collection. Moses concentrated his approach on the aesthetic value of the items. A memorandum of his meeting with Kayser confirmed the dismissal of Narkiss's valuation, explaining that 'It has now become apparent that the value placed on the above at the time they have turned over to JRSO in Germany was far in excess of their actual value'.⁷²⁴ At this point, the JCR staff hoped that a sale of the objects would at least cover their shipping expenses.⁷²⁵

In May 1950, the thirty-five paintings to be shipped to Israel were exhibited at the Jewish Museum.⁷²⁶ Since additional information to the documents found in archives indicating the exhibition taking place was not found, this analysis is based on archival documents such as

⁷²⁰ Moses was a German Jew who immigrated to Israel in 1926 and started a collection of glass and antiques which he later donated to the city of Tel Aviv

⁷²¹ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Neiger, *Memorandum*, 11 September, 1952.

⁷²² Jerusalem CZA, A370.120 Eli Rock, *letter to Moses A. Leavitt and Maurice Boukstein*, 12 May, 1950. The American Fund for Israeli Museums (today known as The America-Israel Cultural Foundation) was founded in 1939 to assist in developing culture in Israel.

⁷²³ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 3.1 Neiger, *Memorandum*, 11 September, 1952, p. 2.

⁷²⁴ The CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296d *Memorandum*, 14 March, 1950.

⁷²⁵ The CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296d Warburg, *letter to Kayser*, 1 November, 1949.

⁷²⁶ Jerusalem, the CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296d Rock, *Memorandum*, 12 May, 1950.

letters and correspondence between staff at the Jewish Museum and the JCR. A list of thirty-five paintings titled *Paintings To Be Shipped To Israel* indicates the works exhibited in the exhibition.⁷²⁷ Works included for example: Gert Wollheim's *Portrait of the Dancer Tatyana Barbacoff*, Andre Derain's drawing *Dancers* and Lesser Ury's *Woman at the Window*, which can all be found today in the Israel Museum's collection.⁷²⁸

Simultaneously, discussions regarding the sales of the remaining items were taking place. The binding legal obligations described in Law no. 59 expired in December 1948, but the objects were still in the hands of the JCR. This led to a lack of clarity regarding the legal responsibilities of the organizations in the restitution and disposal process. Kayser suggested allowing possible claimants to view the works before the selling process would begin. His suggestion was:

Before any disposition is begun, a notice will be inserted in the "Aufbau", announcing the location of the paintings and offering the opportunity for inspection to any would-be claimants. It is anticipated that this notice will be inserted within the next few weeks, and that the actual disposition of the paintings will begin immediately after would-be claimants have had their opportunity to look at the paintings.⁷²⁹

Representatives of the JCR considered the chance that claimants would be looking for their property and interested to have it returned to them. The only magazine mentioned in this correspondence is the *Aufbau*, which was a German newsletter published for members of the German- Jewish Club of New York. During the limited period of time to file claims fixed by Law no. 59, very few claimants to Jewish cultural objects stepped forward. There was no

⁷²⁷ The CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296a *Paintings To Be Shipped To Israel*, [n.d.].

⁷²⁸ *World War II Provenance Research Online*, Research database < <http://www.imj.org.il/imagine/irso/en/> > [accessed 3 February 2017].

⁷²⁹ The CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296a Kayser, *Memorandum*, April, 1950.

legal clause forcing the museum to make the information about the cultural art objects available to the public, rather it was a moral responsibility that the JCR representatives were considered. Despite Kayser's proposal no reference to these announcements were found in search in the Aufbau archive.⁷³⁰

The idea of inviting potential claimants of the paintings to view them and step forward was expressed in a memorandum. This memorandum discusses the reservations the JCR staff had in so doing. The language in it sounds harsh:

- 1) For one thing, everyone will assume that the paintings are all valuable old masters and it is possible that "hordes" of refugees in New York will descend on the Jewish Museum in an effort to recoup their fortunes.
- 2) Whether or not large numbers of claims are in fact received, the task will then arise of passing upon the claims that are in fact filed. It should be considered that there will be no established standard or criteria for proving of passing on such claims, and it may well be that the organizations will be saddled with a considerable administrative burden in passing on these claims.
- 3) At the same time, the above prospects would appear particularly regrettable in view of the fact that the JRSO would not appear to be under any legal obligation to open the paintings to inspection. Since the deadline date for filing claims expired on December 31, 1948 and since all claimants who did not file their claims by that date suffered automatic cancellation of their rights, it would seem fairly clear that the JRSO has

⁷³⁰ *Aufbau* (New York, 1934-2004), The Leo Baeck Institute, < <https://archive.org/details/aufbau> > [accessed 3 February 2017]. *Aufbau* (New York, NY), The LBI Periodical Collection, Leo Baeck Institute < <https://www.lbi.org/collections/library/highlights-of-lbi-library-collection/periodicals/aufbau-york-ny-periodical/> > [accessed 4 May 2017]. The Aufbau was founded in 1934 by and for the German-Jewish club in New York. Among its contributors were Hannah Arendt, Albert Einstein and Thomas Mann. In the post-World War II years it printed lists of survivors located in Europe.

clear title to these paintings and that any claimants who might now appear do not in fact have any strict legal rights to claim.⁷³¹

Eli Rock, executive director of the JRSO and author of the memorandum, acknowledged the problematic situation now that Law no. 59 was not enforced with any limitations and guidelines assisting in identifying the rightful owner of the objects. However, having realized the mass amount of work this would require, he explained that claimants did not have legal standing to claim the works, indicating that providing such an opportunity to review the objects was not mandatory. The unsuccessful management of the objects and the long period of time it took the JCR to find a solution for the division of the objects indicates the overwhelming amount of property that remained unclaimed, demonstrating the scale of the destruction to communities and lives. Therefore, suggesting that a mass of Holocaust survivors would arrive to demand their property seems somewhat exaggerated.

Despite the lack of reference in the Aufbau publication, a short reference to the shipping of the remaining works of art from New York to Israel can be found in *Quick Magazine* published in 22 May, 1950.⁷³² A proposal for a full article about the exhibition in *Quick Magazine* was disputed by Rock for the same reasons he expressed in the memorandum and possibly never took place.⁷³³

A last appraiser, Michael Zagajski (1895-1969), was invited to assist in the final decision regarding the disposal of the remaining paintings.⁷³⁴ Zagajsky was a well known Polish

⁷³¹ Jerusalem, the CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296a, *Memorandum re Proposed Plan for Inviting Inspection by Potential Claimants of JRSO Paintings*, 7 April, 1950.

⁷³² 'Nazi-Looted Art Return to Israel', *Quick Magazine*, (22 May, 1950). Quick was published by Cowles Magazines Inc. between the years 1949-1953 as a weekly pocket news magazine. Auer, Arno, *Quick Magazine* < <http://www.quick-magazine.com/> > [accessed 21 January 2016].

⁷³³ The CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296d Rock, *Memorandum*, 12 May, 1950, p. 2.

⁷³⁴ Michael (Mieczyslaw) Zagajski was a Polish Jewish art collector who immigrated to New York in 1940. He began to collect in New York and donated part of his Judaica collection to the Jewish Museum. In 1964 he auctioned a part of his collection and after his death, the rest of his collection was put on auction at the Parke-Bernet Galleries in New York in 1970. Parke-Bernet Galleries, *Important Hebrew Books, Incunabula & Illuminated and Other Manuscripts from the Collection of the Late Michael Zagajski*, Part two, Parke-Bernet Galleries, 12 and 13 May, 1970, Kestenbaum & Company, 27 May, 2010 <<https://www.kestenbaum.net/content.php?subj=15&item=117&pos=29>> [accessed 5 February 2017].

Judaica collector who managed to emigrate from Poland in 1939. His collection was confiscated by the Nazis as war broke out. Kayser mentioned Zagaiski in a letter confirming the shipment to Israel and the value of the items for sale:

The paintings, most of which are in bad conditions, are not well suited at all for the American market. Their Maximum value is about \$15,000. The 35 selected for Israel are to be valued by \$9,000 to \$12,000 [...]⁷³⁵

The moral implications and the history of the objects coming from Europe was clearly important to Kayser; even in this letter, he repeatedly stated that buyers of the works would need to be aware of ‘the nature and background of such a sale’.⁷³⁶ The gap created between the initial expectation based on Narkiss’s high valuations and the later valuations of the objects in New York expressed the different interpretations given to the items. While Narkiss saw them as signifiers of Jewish culture, the New York valuers identified primarily the market value of the objects and did not recognize their historical Jewish context. As Simmel explained, scarcity has a direct impact on the price of an object.⁷³⁷

A confirmation for the process taking place starting with Narkiss’s valuation of the items in the summer of 1949, through the different appraisals given by art experts in New York which led to the decision to sell the majority of the objects was sent to the JRSO and JCR members in September 1952. Due to Narkiss’s ongoing demands, Antonie Neiger, the JRSO secretary, was requested to prepare a memorandum on the process.⁷³⁸ This document confirmed that the exhibition took place.⁷³⁹ While the thirty-five paintings were exhibited, the remaining objects in New York were sold. Sales were organized by the JCR and the Jewish Museum between April, 1950 and the summer of 1951.

⁷³⁵ The CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296a Kayser, *Memorandum*, 11 April, 1950.

⁷³⁶ The CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296a Kayser, *Memorandum*, 11 April, 1950.

⁷³⁷ Georg Simmel, ed. and translated by Firsby, pp. 95-97.

⁷³⁸ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Neiger, *Memorandum*, 11 September, 1952.

⁷³⁹ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Neiger, *Memorandum*, 11 September, 1952, p. 2.

No published information on the process of sales was found prior to this research. Therefore, this is the first effort made to identify the key players and the steps leading to the sale. Based on correspondences and existing buyer's receipts, it can be concluded that rather than an auction, private sales were the chosen direction. Kayser indicated these two options in a summary:

The problem of selling the rest of the paintings can be resolved in two ways – by auction or by sale to individual purchasers. It is to be doubted that a reputable firm would, with a few exceptions, consider an auction of the remaining paintings and miniatures on their premises possible. In this connection, the very bad shape of paintings which could yield some monetary equivalent, is to be underlined.⁷⁴⁰

Being pragmatic, Kayser viewed the items' conditions as prohibitive of a profitable auction. From a moral perspective, Kayser expressed his interest in sharing information about the origins of the objects with buyers. Thus, he believed that any purchase would be made for emotional reasons, suggesting that potential buyers could be of European descent and would be familiar with the items and their history.⁷⁴¹

The person chosen to conduct the sales was the antiques dealer, Henry F. Odell.⁷⁴² Odell was born in Germany in 1890 as Hans Felix Jüdel. When the Nazis took power in 1933, he changed his name from to Henry F. Odell.⁷⁴³ After he was forced to leave his job as a banker in Berlin, he and his wife left Germany to New York in 1936. Upon arriving to New York, Odell, who claimed to have studied art history in Europe and collected Asian art, opened an antiques shop on Madison Avenue where many antiques dealers were established.⁷⁴⁴ Very

⁷⁴⁰ The CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296a Kayser, *Memorandum*, 11 April, 1950.

⁷⁴¹ The CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296a Kayser, *Disposition of J.R.S.O. Paintings*, 11 April, 1950.

⁷⁴² The CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296d *Memorandum*, 14 March, 1950.

⁷⁴³ Iowa City, University of Iowa Libraries, Papers of Lil Picard: Series VIII – archives of Henry F. Odell.

⁷⁴⁴ University of Iowa Libraries, Papers of Lil Picard: Series VIII – archives of Henry F. Odell. box 55, Henry F. Odell, short autobiographical letter, 9 September, 1953; Jerusalem, the CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296a The H. F. Odell logo paper has the address 555 Madison Avenue, New York.

little could be found about Odell and his short period of cooperation with the Jewish Museum. In correspondence with Kayser, he was identified as a dealer who was familiar to the JCR:

Dr. Kayser has recommended a certain Mr. Odell, who is an experienced antique dealer and art seller and who has been doing some work for the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Inc. Dr. Kayser states that Mr. Odell could begin at once to contact the art market in New York and could arrange private sales for virtually everything which is in fact saleable.⁷⁴⁵

Odell confirmed in an autobiographical note found in his personal archive that Kayser saw him as a specialist and recommended him on more than one occasion to assist with sales of Jewish cultural objects. Thus, he became involved in 1949 in the distribution of Jewish ritual objects that arrived to the Jewish Museum from the CCPs. The following year, he explained, he was called back to assist with 'heirless' Jewish cultural property:

A short while later the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization, working under the auspices of the American Joint Distribution Committee, was entrusted with the disposal of paintings found among the Nazi loot whose owners were no more to be found. I was given the task of selling these paintings. There was no restriction – I had *plein pouvoir*, my judgement was trusted, and I had to make the prices. Within about a year I had sold almost every of the hundred [*sic*] of items at prices which were to the complete satisfaction of the organization. These were not Jewish objects, but mostly paintings by artists like Liebermann, Lesser Ury etc. and old Italian and Dutch Masters.⁷⁴⁶

⁷⁴⁵The CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296d *Memorandum*, 14 March, 1950.

⁷⁴⁶ University of Iowa Libraries, Papers of Lil Picard: Series VIII – archives of Henry F. Odell. box 55, Henry F. Odell, short autobiographical letter, 9 September, 1953

As with Kayser and Schoenberger, Odell did not identify the items as Jewish, even paintings by Jewish artists were under the category of “general” or European art. Since this art had no place at the Jewish Museum at the time, the men responsible found it appropriate to sell them. A variety of paintings, prints, miniature portraits, and miniature figures, were among the objects sold for between one and six hundred dollars.⁷⁴⁷ Receipts prepared by Odell summarising each sale, list descriptions of the pieces along with the Munich CCP number and the price.⁷⁴⁸ The buyers listed on them include fine art, antiques, and book dealers who emigrated from Germany such as Elly Beckhardt, who dealt with European paintings and antiques,⁷⁴⁹ Zickel Gallery, which belonged to Frederic and Nadja Zickel and their daughter, Ruth, who immigrated from Munich in 1939 and dealt with paintings.⁷⁵⁰ Other buyers included Walter Schatzki, a book dealer from Frankfurt who opened his bookshop in New York in 1937,⁷⁵¹ Arthur Weiser, a German scholar who joined the University in Exile at The New School in New York,⁷⁵² and the Van Diemen-Lilienfeld Galleries that were founded in Germany by Dr. Karl Lilienfeld who immigrated to New York in the 1930s and joined by Van Diemen.⁷⁵³ The Van Diemen-Lilienfeld Galleries are listed as buyers of the most expensive item: a seventeenth century Dutch still life oil painting, purchased for \$600.⁷⁵⁴ The

⁷⁴⁷ Jerusalem, the CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296a Sale bills produced by H. F. Odell.

⁷⁴⁸ A summary of the lists is found in Appendix V.

⁷⁴⁹ *The Aufbau Listings*, 23 November 1945

<<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~alcalz/aufbau/1945/1945pdf/j11a47s23.pdf>> [accessed 8 February 2017].

⁷⁵⁰ *Archives Directory for the History of Collecting in America: Listing for Ruth Zickel Blumka 1920-1994*, The Frick Collection Archives <<http://research.frick.org/directoryweb/browserecord.php?action=browse&-recid=7020>> [accessed 8 February 2017].

⁷⁵¹ Bernard M. Rosenthal, *The Gentle Invasion: Continental Émigré Booksellers of the Thirties and Forties and Their Impact on the Antiquarian Booktrade in the United States*, lecture given at Columbia University, School of Library Science (December, 1986).

⁷⁵² *University in Exile*, The New School History Project <http://thenewschoolhistory.org/?page_id=280> [accessed 5 February 2017].

⁷⁵³ *Archives Directory for the History of Collecting in America: Listing for Van Diemen-Lilienfeld Galleries*, The Frick Collection Archives <<http://research.frick.org/directoryweb/browserecord.php?action=browse&-recid=6206>> [accessed 8 February 2017].

⁷⁵⁴ Jerusalem, the CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296b H. F. Odell, *Reports on sales to the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization*, 1951.

next highest price was \$450, paid by Mrs. Elly Beckhardt for an oil painting by Max Liebermann.⁷⁵⁵

The majority of items, however, were sold for under fifty dollars. Several seventeenth and nineteenth centuries paintings were purchased for a price range of \$5-\$60. Unique to this category were two paintings by Anton Schiffer, sold for \$150 and \$153, and a landscape painting by Gustave Courbet sold for \$200.⁷⁵⁶ Additional objects offered for extremely low prices include both: porcelain miniatures and miniature portraits, engravings and prints of cities, such as Vienna and Frankfurt.

The German background of both Odell and his buyers indicates that Kayser's suggestion to invite buyers who would be familiar with the type of objects sold was appropriate. Though there is little information available about the buyers, their shared origins and interest could indicate that they were a part of a network of German Jewish art dealers living in New York at the time. Unfortunately, correspondence between the buyers describing the purchase process could not be found. Neiger's JRSO report in the only document found that gave examples of instances in which claimants stepped forward after the sales took place. Her description referenced a possible policy of handling such cases:

Practically from the beginning there has been a problem arising from the fact that the original owners of some of the paintings came forward to claim them. Several paintings were therefore withheld from sale, and in one case, that of a painting by Hans Meillich [Muelich], it was necessary to re-buy a picture from a dealer for \$200, which had been sold to him for \$100. At present the only picture in this category still awaiting disposition is a Cranach Venus belonging to Mr. Paul J. Heinemann.⁷⁵⁷

⁷⁵⁵ The CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296b Odell, *Reports on sales*, 1951.

⁷⁵⁶ The CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296b Odell, *Reports on sales*, 1951.

⁷⁵⁷ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Neiger, *Memorandum*, 11 September, 1952, p. 3.

The artists mentioned can not be regarded as “junk” as they had at the time at least an art historical and an aesthetic value. Muelich and Cranach, were both highly regarded German sixteenth century artists, whose works are still found in museum collections around the world. This possibly shows that there was no market for these works in the USA. The document showed that objects claimed were in several exceptional cases returned to private owners. This text confirmed that items were sold to art dealers, thus it is possible to assume that dealers re-sold them afterwards. In August 1950 letters from claimants were re-valuated by Theodore Heinrich, the JRSO cultural affairs adviser.⁷⁵⁸ Heinrich disapproved of the JRSOs decision to put objects up for sale and saw their return to their rightful owners as first priority. He reminded the JRSO staff that:

You will recall that although all materials transferred into custody of JRSO were at that time unidentified as to previous ownership, it was recognized that identification might subsequently be established and it was agreed that objects transferred would be held in trust for a period of two years in order to permit further searches to be made.⁷⁵⁹

Heinrich’s letter raised the issue of conducting further research in order to establish an understanding of the pre-war ownership on the objects. The JCR staff addressed this idea when discussing the possibility of inviting potential claimants to review the items. Heinrich criticized the JCR conduct and premature decision to sell the cultural objects. This letter contributed to Narkiss’s efforts to prevent the sale of the last objects. In a frank letter to Eliyahu Dobkin of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, Hannah Katzenstein, the Bezalel

⁷⁵⁸ National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, Ardelia Hall Collection, M1947/260, Roll 0022/118, 10 August, 1950.

The Monuments Men, *Theodore Allen Heinrich (1910-1981)* < <http://www.monumentsmenfoundation.org/the-heroes/the-monuments-men/heinrich-1t-theodore-a> > [accessed 5 February 2017]. Between 1932-1936 Heinrich studied for a masters’ degree in Art and Architectural History at Cambridge University. He joined the Monuments, Fine Art and Archives Unit of the American Military in 1945 after serving as an intelligence officer.

⁷⁵⁹ National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, Ardelia Hall Collection, M1947/260, Roll 0022/117, 10 August, 1950.

Museum secretary, expressed Narkiss's disappointment with the arrival of only two crates to Israel. She explained:

As we already informed you we received two crates of the paintings of the Jewish property saved in Germany. We notified Mr. Narkiss. He was surprised that out of this large collection, composed of over twenty crates only two were shipped to us, and that they did not send Israel the most valuable paintings such as a painting by Courbet and other non-Jewish objects, also there were other paintings by Liebermann and Lesser Uri as well as graphic art that contained hundreds of drawings of the 15th through 18th centuries in addition to many engravings, and all of which was not sent to us. Mr. Narkiss said that "he sees this as a crime against us. This must be the property of the Jewish Agency – The Zionist Organization".⁷⁶⁰

The Courbet painting Katzenstein mentioned was sold by Odell in 1951.⁷⁶¹ The tension between Narkiss and the JCR is apparent, as she quoted him blaming the JCR for a crime.

This crime is described as against not only the Bezalel Museum, but the State of Israel.

The following summer, Narkiss wrote a severe letter to Maurice Boukstein, the legal advisor to the Jewish Agency. He compared the sales of the cultural objects to the controversial auctions organized by the IRO in 1947.⁷⁶² The IRO was responsible for the liquidation of the ownerless objects found in Austria in 1945 by the Allied Forces in the "Gold train". Items in the "Gold train" included jewellery, gold, porcelain, carpets, and tapestries looted from Hungarian Jews.⁷⁶³ Despite the success of the auction, reports published afterwards criticized

⁷⁶⁰ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.9 Hannah Katzenstein letter to Eliyahu Dobkin, 17 December, 1950..

כפי שכבר הודענו לך נתקבלו בינתים שתי תיבות ובהן תמונות מהרכוש היהודי שניצל מגרמניה. הודענו על כך לה' נרקיס. הוא תמה מאד שמכל האוסף הגדול שהכיל עשרים וכמה תיבות נשלחו לנו רק שתי תיבות, ולא שלחו לישראל דווקא את התמונות החשובות ביותר, כגון התמונה מאת קורבה והדברים הלא יהודים האחרים, כן היו שם תמונות אחדות מאת ליברמן ולסר אורי ואמנות גרפית שהכילה מאות רשומים מימי המאה ה"ו ועד ה"ה וכן תחריטים רבים, וכל זה לא נשלח אלינו. בדברי ה' נרקיס הוא "חושב את הדבר לפשע כלפינו. זה צריך להיות רכוש הסוכנות – ההנהלה הציונית".

⁷⁶¹ The CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296b Odell, *Reports on sales*, 1951.

⁷⁶² Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági, *Self-financing Genocide*, (Budapest, New York: Central European University Press, 2001); Ronald Zweig, *The Gold Train: The Destruction of the Jews and the Looting of Hungary*, (New York: HarperCollins, 2002).

⁷⁶³ William Lindsey, 'Sale of Loot Tops All Expectations', the *New York Times* (23 June, 1948), 25.

the shortcoming of the Allied Forces and their lack of restitution efforts.⁷⁶⁴ Narkiss thus compared the case of the sale of the Jewish cultural property by JCR to the IRO sales:

[...] If there really are still pictures left unsold, I would like to have a list of them so that I could select those in which we are interested. I protest against the fact that pictures which by right belong to this country, lacking in works of art, should be sold in the U.S. or distributed among institutions which have the means and possibilities to purchase such works of art.

In the cases which were sent to the Joint by I.R.S.O. Nurnberg, there were also jewellery and golden boxes which might have paid their way. There were also sculptures and paintings of minor importance, the prices of which would have covered the transfer and I do not think that the expert committee advised the Joint to sell at insignificant prices, important items, the more so as the prices of the American market are considerably higher than those in Europe and especially in Paris, according to which I estimated them. To my mind, this matter should be subject to a public investigation.⁷⁶⁵

First, Narkiss described Israel as a state lacking in art, but demanded to choose works of art instead of, as in Katzenstein's letter, urging the JCR to ship every remaining work of art to Israel. This could be an outcome of Narkiss's realization that many of the items were already sold and the intention to sell the remaining objects persisted. Second, by comparing these sales organized by the Jewish Museum and Odell to the IRO auctions held in New York, he criticized the decision to sell. By so doing, he also implied the JCR did not make an adequate effort to restitute the items.

⁷⁶⁴ *Progress Report on: The Mystery of the Hungarian "Gold Train"*, University of North Texas Libraries, <<http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/pcha/goldtrainfinaltoconvert.html>> [accessed 12 September 2016].

⁷⁶⁵ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Mordecai Narkiss, *letter to Maurice Boukstein*, 20 August, 1951.

Going against Narkiss's demand, Rock, anxious to end the work with the CCPs paintings, requested to hold one last sale of the remainder of the pieces in storage:

Incidentally, I am under the impression that there are still a few "odds and ends" out of our original collection, and I am wondering whether it could be feasible for Mr. Odell to arrange for a final bulk sale of these remaining items. It does seem to me that you should not be burdened with storing them any longer, and from our side I am most anxious to close this matter finally.⁷⁶⁶

There were no receipts of sales held after April 1951 that could be found, and thus whether or not these sales were held remains uncertain. This route proposed by Rock signified his approach towards the items. By the spring of 1951, six years after the war ended, these items had become a nuisance for the JCR staff. In letters by JRSO and JCR personnel, the Jewish cultural objects were referred to as "odds and ends" and as "junk", modest items that nobody was interested in.⁷⁶⁷ Narkiss's approach suggested that not only were some of these objects valuable art works by important painters, they could act as a memorial for the Jews from whom they were taken during the Holocaust.

Kayser remained sceptical regarding Narkiss's valuation. The items sold by Odell and the Jewish Museum only represented a portion of the objects valued by Narkiss in 1949 at the CCPs. Thus, after Kayser was requested to go over the list of cultural objects that remained in Nurnberg and select those that would be shipped next to New York, he urged the JRSO representatives to leave the objects in Germany. He explained the reasons for this decision in a letter:

The estimate of \$2,065 is just too high, at least not as much out of proportion as the estimate in the case of the paintings which we have here. With the

⁷⁶⁶ Jerusalem, the CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296b Eli Rock, *letter to Stephen Kaiser*, 31 August, 1951.

⁷⁶⁷ Jerusalem, Narkiss archive, 1.3 Max Kreutzberger, *Shipments – JCR*, 3 July, 1952.

exception of one painting, number 13, of the enclosed list, there is hardly anything which could be sold here.

I would strongly advise you not to have those paintings and objects shipped to this country. They are of typical central European taste and implication [*sic*].

There should be places, particularly in Munich, where they could be sold.⁷⁶⁸

Kayser did not find a place for the objects in the Jewish Museum due to the fact that the works of art were not of Jewish themes.⁷⁶⁹ Moreover, he criticized Narkiss's valuations, which he believed were too high. Unlike Kayser and Schoenberger, who had academic degrees and experience working in German museums before the war, Narkiss studied art in Bezalel and was responsible for the formation of the Bezalel Museum, a new museum in a state with very few cultural institutions. This was a main reason in the disapproval of his valuations. The remaining objects that would be shipped were planned for sale and due to the low prices items fetched in Odell's sales, he recommended leaving them in Europe. There, they could be sold for higher prices since they were better aligned with local taste. The only exception Kayser regarded was a painting by the German nineteenth century painter Eduard Theodor Ritter von Grützner (1846-1925). Grützner was known for his high quality realistic paintings of monks and genre scenes.⁷⁷⁰

In 1951, a year after Kayser's request to leave the items in Germany, Schoenberger, the Jewish Museum research assistant, was sent to Europe to value and assist in the disposal of remaining Jewish cultural property.⁷⁷¹ Perhaps the primary reason for Schoenberger's visit

⁷⁶⁸ Jerusalem, the CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296d Stephen Kayser, *letter to Eli Rock*, 17 April, 1950. Paintings number thirteen is a painting by the German painter Eduard Theodor Ritter von Grützner (1846-1925) which Kayser believed was in good condition and could be sold in America for \$400-\$500. Kayser referred to a list of objects that were left in four crates in the JRSO Nurnberg office sent by Benjamin Ferencz.

⁷⁶⁹ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 *List of items transferred from Munich Central Collecting Point to Nurnberg*, [n.d.].

⁷⁷⁰ Hector Feliciano, *The Lost Museum: The Nazi Conspiracy to Steal the World's Greatest Works of Art*, translated by Tim Bent and the author (New York: Basic Books, 1995), pp. 21-22. Grützner was one of Hitler's most valued artists.

⁷⁷¹ JTS Archive, IG96.40.1951.JCR Schoenberger, *Report of trip to France and Germany, 8 August- 7 September, 1951*, [n.d.]; *Das Museum Jüdischer Altertümer in Frankfurt 1922-1938: Was Ubrig Blieb*, ed. by Anne-Margret Kiessl and Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek (Frankfurt A/M: Jüdischen Museum, Taschenbuch, 1988); Katharina Rauschenberger, 'The

was the preparation of the shipping of the collection that formerly belonged to the Jewish Museum in Frankfurt.⁷⁷² During his visit Schoenberger made a selection of Jewish ritual objects. One hundred and seventy-two items were sent to museums in Israel and one hundred and twenty six to museums in the USA.⁷⁷³ Schoenberger was familiar with the collection as he had worked in the museum before leaving for New York in 1937.⁷⁷⁴ Looking through the list of objects that arrived from the CCPs in Europe and remained in the Jewish Museum reveals a range of objects from kitchen tools for Matzah making, to nineteenth century portraits.⁷⁷⁵

During his four-week visit, Schoenberger advised the JRSO and JCR staff on the division of fine art, archives, and Jewish ritual objects, re-valuating items that were inspected by Narkiss in 1949. He spent time at the Munich and Nurnberg offices of the JRSO and in Frankfurt, where he selected objects to ship to the Jewish Museum, New York and to other Jewish institutions in the USA. He explained his responsibilities in a report:

I checked these works against the lists prepared by the Collecting Points of Wiesbaden and Munich; I determined their DM value for insurance purposes; I advised as to whether these works should be sent to museums in Israel or USA or sold by JRSO. [*sic*] The objects were mostly German paintings of the

Judaica Collection of Frankfurt's Museum Judischer Altertumer', in *Neglected Witnesses*, ed. by Cohen and Heimann-Jelinek, pp. 81-102.

⁷⁷² JTS Archive, IG96.40.1951 Schoenberger, *Report of trip to France and Germany, 8 August- 7 September, 1951*, [n.d.], p. 1.

⁷⁷³ JTS Archive, IG96.40.1951 Schoenberger, *Report of trip to France and Germany, 8 August- 7 September, 1951*, [n.d.]; *Das Museum Judischer Altertumer in Frankfurt 1922-1938: Was Ubrig Blieb*, ed. by Anne-Margret Kiessl and Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek (Frankfurt M, Judischen Museum, Taschenbuch, 1988); *The Judaica Collection of Frankfurt's Museum Judischer Altertumer and Its Worldwide Dispersion After 1945*, in *Neglected Witnesses: The Fate of Jewish Ceremonial Objects During the Second World War and After*, ed. by Julie-Marthe Cohen and Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek (London, Institute of Art and Law, 2011), pp. 81-102.

⁷⁷⁴ Cohen Grossman, 'Dr. Stephen S. Kayser: A Personal Testimony', in *A Crown for A King*, ed. by Sabar, Fine and Kramer, pp. 8-9.

⁷⁷⁵ New York the Jewish Museum Archive, JCR Files, *JCR pieces in the Jewish Museum; Rescue & Renewal: The Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Collection of the Hebrew Theological College*, ed. by Grace Cohen Grossman and Arielle Weinger, (Chicago: Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center, 2015). Items that arrived to New York and were not kept at the Jewish Museum collection were sent to the collection of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, today the Skirball Museum and the Hebrew Theological College in Chicago.

19th century, some very good ones, like Menzel or Uhde, and many other of high quality [...]⁷⁷⁶

While the objects previously shipped to New York included works by French artists, Dutch and Flemish artists and Jewish painters such as Lesser Ury and Max Liebermann, Schoenberger's description shows that indeed most of the items left behind were paintings that would fit a local taste, as Kayser implied. Both German artists mentioned by Schoenberger: Adolph Menzel and Fritz von Uhde, were highly valued nineteenth century painters. Coming from Germany, Schoenberger and Kayser were well familiar with German art and taste. In a short description of his work in Wiesbaden, Schoenberger confirmed the plan to sell some works in Germany. 'Here too', he explained, 'I evaluated the objects for insurance purposes and advised which should be sent to Israeli museums and which should be sold in Germany'.⁷⁷⁷

With the understanding the most of the works left in Germany would not reach high prices on the art market in New York, Saul Kagan recommended the shipping of the several crates from Nurnberg to Israel. He explained:

I would suggest that the Jewish Agency may want to ship these paintings to Israel, particularly in view of the complaints which were recently voiced by Dr. Narkiss there concerning the disposition of paintings in New York. [...] I frankly cannot conceive of any desirable alternative, inasmuch as Dr. Kayser indicates that in his opinion these paintings could not even be sold at auction and I am reluctant to suggest that they be destroyed.⁷⁷⁸

⁷⁷⁶ JTS Archive, IG96.40.1951 Schoenberger, *Report of trip to France and Germany, 8 August- 7 September, 1951*, [n.d.], p. 2.

⁷⁷⁷ JTS Archive, IG96.40.1951 Schoenberger, *Report of trip to France and Germany, 8 August- 7 September, 1951*, [n.d.], p. 2.

⁷⁷⁸ Jerusalem, CZA, A370.1064 Saul Kagan, *Memorandum to Maurice Boukstein and Moses Leavitt*, 23 November, 1951.

Narkiss's persistence led to Kagan's reconsideration of additional sales. Five crates arrived to the Bezalel Museum in July 1953.⁷⁷⁹ In a letter to the customs office, Narkiss confirmed that they were part of the unidentified Jewish cultural property:

We hereby confirm that 5 crates of restituted unidentified German Jewish property had been sent to us from Germany after remaining in Munich since 1949. These crates were transferred by the Restitution Organization in Germany.⁷⁸⁰

Narkiss viewed this shipment as an act of restitution by the JRSO. This indicates his view of Israel as the state of the Jewish people and therefore the rightful heir of European Jewish property.

Narkiss passed away in 1957 and his successor, Karl Katz, was contacted by Kagan in 1962 regarding a restitution claim.⁷⁸¹ The painting requested, a work by Wilhelm Altheim, was returned to the family of the pre-war owners. This case however, opened the question of the legal custodianship of the cultural items. Reuven Eytan, Administrative Director of the Bezalel Museum, described the situation:

As you know, the Bezalel National Museum received, in the years following the war, a considerable number of art objects from Germany through the intermediary of I.R.S.O. [JRSO] The objects were incorporated in the collections of the Museum, but some of them, which were considered by the Director of the Museum not to be suitable or sufficiently important for the Museum, were exchanged for other objects or sold in order to use the

⁷⁷⁹ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 the *List of items transferred from Munich Central Collecting Point to Nurnberg* [n.d.]. The list is twenty-one pages long. It is unclear which items exactly were in the five crates shipped to Israel from Nurnberg.

⁷⁸⁰ Jerusalem, Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.51 *5 JRSO Crates 201/205 that arrived on the Ship "Elias" on 21.6.53*, 1 July, 1953.

אנחנו מאשרים בזאת ש-5 התיבות הנ"ל הן רסטיטוציה של רכוש יהודים גרמנים שלא זהו ואשר הובאו אלינו מגרמניה לאחר שארוזים בשנת 1949 במנכן. התיבות האלה הועברו אלינו ע"י החברה לרסטיטוציה בגרמניה.

⁷⁸¹ Jerusalem, the CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296d the Stern claim for the painting "Der Heilige und sein Bär" by Wilhelm Altheim. 31 July, 1959.

equivalent for the acquisition of pieces needed by the Museum. Such transactions are usual in all museums, since they are a valuable means for enlarging the scope and raising the standard for the collection.⁷⁸²

Eytan's letter expressed the change in policy that has taken place after Narkiss's death.⁷⁸³ There was no information found indicating any exchange of the objects received from New York or Germany. This 1962 correspondence is the first remark on such sales or exchanges taking place at the Bezalel Museum. The shift in the museum policy towards the 'heirless' Jewish cultural property put the ideology of Narkiss's extensive salvage process in question. If such exchanges took place, Katz clearly did not see the memorial value that Narkiss believed the items had, nor did he find it important to search for the pre-war owners of the items.

During the post-Holocaust years, the notion of salvage was in Narkiss's opinion morally binding. As a result of this view, he made relentless efforts to bring as many of the 'heirless' Jewish cultural objects as possible to Israel. For Narkiss, each object signified a part of Jewish life that was destroyed in Europe and therefore needed to be saved. Restitution, as a concept signifying the return of the items to the rightful heirs had a place in Narkiss's plan since Israel was perceived as the state of the Jewish people and as the heir to their property.⁷⁸⁴

This sub chapter followed the process of shipping objects to Israel and the involvement of the Jewish Museum. Primary sources used through this research indicate that items were received by Bezalel, however the question of the division of the objects after their arrival to Israel is unclear.

Harry G. Friedman and the Salvage of Jewish Culture

⁷⁸² Jerusalem, the CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296d Reuven Eytan, *letter to Maurice Boukstein*, 1 February, 1962.

⁷⁸³ The CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296d Eytan, *letter to Boukstein*, 1962. The letter makes a reference that the current director of the museum made the decision to exchange and sell the objects, i.e. Katz.

⁷⁸⁴ Teitel, pp. 122-124.

Similarly to Narkiss, during and after the Second World War, the notion of salvage was adopted by scholars in the USA and around the world. In the late 1930s, members of JTS saw the library and the museum as repositories for Jewish history and culture.⁷⁸⁵ The collector Harry G. Friedman began donating regularly to JTS library and to the Museum of Jewish Ceremonial Objects and later to the Jewish Museum to uphold this approach. Friedman is discussed here as Narkiss's American counterpart.

Friedman was born in Poland in 1882 and immigrated with his family to the USA in 1889. He grew up in a conservative Jewish family. His father studied the Torah and followed a traditional Jewish lifestyle. In 1896, Friedman began his studies at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati where he was ordained as a Rabbi.⁷⁸⁶ A shift occurred in his life when, in 1900, he was offered a scholarship to study in the political economy department at Columbia University. As a result, he left the rabbinical route and moved to live in New York in 1904. Upon his move to New York, he began working as a corporate finance statistician. He adopted a more secular life style, choosing to marry in a civil ceremony.⁷⁸⁷

Though Friedman never abandoned his interest in Judaism, from 1910 he was involved in the founding of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies and in 1925 he began his association with JTS.⁷⁸⁸ The earliest donations Friedman made were to the JTS library and only in 1934 the first donations of objects for the Museum of Jewish Ceremonial Objects were registered. Two antique coins representing King David and the Sanhedrin, the ancient Jewish court assembly, marked the beginning of a relationship that lasted for over thirty years with the Museum of Jewish Ceremonial Objects and the Jewish Museum and led to a donation of

⁷⁸⁵ JTS Archive, 60.2.2/4 Marx, *speech for the 10th anniversary of the museum*, 12 January, 1941.

⁷⁸⁶ *Great Books from Great Collectors*, an exhibition: 15 December, 1993- 5 April, 1994 (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1993), p. 53. By studying at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati Friedman was already moving away from traditional Judaism towards Reform Judaism.

⁷⁸⁷ 'Harry Friedman, Financier, Dies: Leader in Jewish Philanthropies', *The New York Times* (23 November, 1965), 38.

⁷⁸⁸ 'Harry Friedman, Financier, Dies', *The New York Times* (23 November, 1965), 38.

approximately six thousand objects by Friedman.⁷⁸⁹ This relationship reached a peak in 1939, when Friedman decided to donate his entire personal collection of approximately eight hundred and fifty objects to JTS. Marx described the collection in his 1941 speech:

[...] is much more international and is characteristic for the possibilities which our city now offers to the collector of Jewish art who is looking for the objects not only in the fashionable stores but also in out-of-the-way corners. The persistence, love and understanding with which Dr. Friedman has been pursuing his great hobby resulted in a magnificent collection to be enjoyed by present and future generations.⁷⁹⁰

Though Kayser confirmed in his writing about Friedman that he was known in the circle of local antiques dealers who sold the higher end of the market, Friedman was just as interested in simple daily Jewish objects.⁷⁹¹ As Marx continued to explain:

He rightly feels that a museum ought not only to own choice pieces of workmanship – often by non-Jewish masters – but should be in a position to place at the disposal of the historian of art the cruder and more common pieces as well. Only a combination of both illustrates the various phases of the development. The primitive objects produced by Jewish artisans at the same time are interesting as specimens of Jewish folk-art.⁷⁹²

In similar approach to Kayser and Schoenberger, Friedman categorized Jewish art based on its historical importance and not on the origins of its maker. Here Friedman was described as a man interested in education, exhibiting high quality Jewish art objects side by side with

⁷⁸⁹ New York, JTS Archive, 60.3.11 *List of objects in the Museum Collection*; Chaim Steinberger, *Harry G... (As in Harry G. Friedman) A Biographical Journey* (lecture distributed to the Friedman Society held at the Center for Jewish History, New York, 3 April, 2011).

⁷⁹⁰ JTS Archive, 60.2.2/4 Marx, *speech for the 10th anniversary of the museum*, 12 January, 1941.

⁷⁹¹ JTS Archive, 80.80.9 Kayser, *A tribute to Harry G. Friedman*, 1966.

⁷⁹² JTS Archive, 60.2.2/4 Marx, *speech for the 10th anniversary of the museum*, 12 January, 1941.

modest ones. These artefacts were an inseparable part of Jewish culture. By donating them to JTS, they became available for scholars and researchers. He made it clear that the history of the object is one of the most valuable traits of the items in his collection:

In making this collection, my motive has been primarily to assemble objects which broadly served the Synagogue or the home. I have been, therefore, more nearly interested in objects that had popular vogue and which represented the craftsmanship that existed in the larger Jewish communities. For these reasons it is my wish that such objects, though of comparatively little financial value be retained. I have regarded such objects as having possibly a higher historical importance than objects of greater artistic value which represent, in many instances, the work of non-Jewish craftsmen for more limited and wealthier individuals or communities. I do not under-rate the importance of such objects, particularly Synagogue objects, for these reflect the general cultural life which Jews shared.⁷⁹³

In his speech, Marx referred to Jewish art using negative adjectives such as ‘crude’ and ‘primitive’. Friedman, however took a positive approach, describing the objects as popular items of unique craftsmanship. The cultural context of the objects interested him more than their market value.⁷⁹⁴ In the museum collection, Friedman believed, the items could be studied and taught to the next generations.⁷⁹⁵

Since his first donations, Friedman collected collaboratively with JTS, often consulting Marx and his successors before purchasing an object.⁷⁹⁶ Kayser described him at his happiest moments, holding a Jewish ritual object:

⁷⁹³ JTS Archive, 80.89.17 Friedman, *letter to Marx*, 24 December, 1941.

⁷⁹⁴ New York, JTS Archive, 80.20.18 Harry Friedman, *letter to Anna Kleban*, 18 March, 1944.

⁷⁹⁵ JTS Archive, 80.89.17 Friedman, *letter to Marx*, 24 December, 1941.

⁷⁹⁶ New York, JTS Archive, 60.3.3/5 Harry Friedman, *letter to Alexander Marx*, 6 August, 1934.

[...] with a Jewish object in his hand, particularly if it had a Hebrew inscription, he felt best. Two peculiarities of such an item excited him: when it was of high quality or when it was somehow enigmatic. If both of these characteristics were united in one piece, he rejoiced – inwardly of course, because he always remained master of his emotion.⁷⁹⁷

Friedman mentioned that many of the fine Jewish ritual objects were created by non-Jewish artists, whereas it was the items made by Jews for Jewish purposes that he found most interesting. Recognizing that many did not value this approach, Friedman made a special request to keep the collection intact. Upon making the decision to donate his collection to JTS, Friedman's frequent gifts arrived directly from the seller or dealer. Kayser described the first time he saw Friedman in 1939, during one of his afternoon visits in the antique shops in the East Side of Manhattan:

I was just examining one of the items, when a distinguished looking gentleman entered the store. He was evidently well-known to the owner, because the latter immediately brought some Jewish objects to the rather taciturn visitor who examined them with that kind of acumen which distinguished the connoisseur from other mortals.⁷⁹⁸

The nuances of Friedman's collecting personality are expressed in texts by Marx and Kayser. Both describe a respected art collector, interested in unique high quality items. However, Friedman's 1941 letter describes his interest in Jewish objects that were common expressing his perception of salvage. After the Jewish Museum was opened in its new building in 1947, Friedman became a frequent visitor. Rarely did he arrive empty handed, and he was always

⁷⁹⁷ JTS Archive, 80.89.9 Kayser, *A tribute to Harry G. Friedman*, 1966.

⁷⁹⁸ JTS Archive, 80.89.9 Kayser, *A tribute to Harry G. Friedman*, 1966.

delighted by an opportunity to see one of his donated objects exhibited and available for further study.⁷⁹⁹

With the outbreak of war in Europe and during its aftermath, Friedman began buying items from German and Austrian refugees.⁸⁰⁰ He discussed this form of purchasing in his letter to Marx:

The collection was accumulated, with comparatively few exceptions, in New York, over the last twelve years. The greater part of the Collection, and the most important items reflect the coming of Hitler and the flight of Jews from Germany and subsequently from other Nazi-dominated countries.

[...] It may be of interest to you that while in the early days objects of Jewish interest were obtainable chiefly in the lower East Side, with the coming of the refugees from Germany, the market changed to Madison Avenue in the 50s, and later to 57th Street, and more recently to Third Avenue in the 50s.⁸⁰¹

The change mentioned by Friedman of the market location reflects the movement of objects from the streets of the lower East Side, where a large part of Jewish immigrants lived, to high end antiques shops on Madison Avenue. Dash Moore described the growing Jewish community in New York and their development in other New York neighbourhoods such as Brooklyn, the Bronx and Harlem.⁸⁰² Friedman became interested in collecting items that reflect the political situation in Germany and the growing anti-Semitism. Kayser later described a shift in Friedman's collecting. An obsession with salvage. A man who found importance in every object:

⁷⁹⁹ JTS Archive, 80.89.9 Kayser, *A tribute to Harry G. Friedman*, 1966.

⁸⁰⁰ New York, JTS Archive, RG25.1.27a *Annual Report on the Library and the Museum*, May, 1939.

⁸⁰¹ JTS Archive, 80.89.17 Friedman, *letter to Marx*, 24 December, 1941.

⁸⁰² Dash Moore, pp. 8, 12.

Nothing should be lost, everything was to be preserved, even the most modest little object was “history” to him. And it should also be safeguarded from falling into the wrong hands. That was the reason why he bought all the anti-Semitic items he could lay hands on: To get them out of circulation!⁸⁰³

Among the items sent by Friedman to JTS, important for their historical and educational value, were: lithographs of caricatures from the Dreyfus affair and other anti-Semitic objects.⁸⁰⁴

The decision to donate his entire collection to JTS during the Second World War was a way of ensuring these items would be saved for generations in a repository. He saw the JTS as an archive and safe haven for Jewish items, just as Marx described its role in 1941. The JTS was to serve as a place of refuge for Jewish culture and its artefacts, telling and educating on the history of Jewish culture and traditions.⁸⁰⁵

Throughout the 1940s, Friedman proceeded with his salvage project, just as Narkiss and others did in Israel, as if unaware of Narkiss’s work in the CCPs and in Israel. Friedman’s little reference to Israel indicates a lack of closeness to the Zionist movement. The only reference to Narkiss and to the German Judaica collector, Heinrich Feuchtwanger living in Jerusalem, found in a 1938 letter, was a side comment on Feuchtwanger’s ‘unremarkable collection’.⁸⁰⁶ Furthermore, the only direct reference Friedman made to Zionism was found attached to a clipping from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA) about the Jewish community in Turkey sent to Marx in 1949:

⁸⁰³ JTS Archive, 80.89.9 Kayser, *A tribute to Harry G. Friedman*, 1966.

⁸⁰⁴ JTS Archive, 80.89.9 Kayser, *A tribute to Harry G. Friedman*, 1966. Kayser explained that they were purchased in order to be taken out of circulation. Moreover, in 1956 Friedman made another reference to an anti-Semitic object a broadside “De Juden-Eyd” which he purchased and sent JTS. New York, JTS Archive, 80.89.5 Harry Friedman, *letter to Gerson Cohen*, 19 January, 1956.

⁸⁰⁵ JTS Archive, 80.89.17 Friedman, *letter to Marx*, 24 December, 1941.

⁸⁰⁶ New York, JTS Archive, 80.20.15 Harry Friedman, *letter to Alexander Marx*, 27 July, 1938.

The attached will interest you as an historian. Is it possible that this community escaped the Zionists in view of the last sentence? I can not believe that they escaped Elkan Adler, Dinard, Frankel and their scouts.⁸⁰⁷

The newspaper report mentions an unknown Jewish community that survived in Turkey for centuries. Despite their strong national feelings, the writer of the article mentioned that nobody from this community immigrated to Israel. Friedman mentions the names of three early twentieth century Jewish scholars, supportive of the Zionist movement who travelled to the Middle-East and to Palestine. Elkan Adler, an English Jewish ancient manuscripts collector donated much of his collection to JTS upon his death.⁸⁰⁸ He was a supporter of Zionism and an early member in the Hovevei Zion movement.⁸⁰⁹ Ephraim Deinard was a writer, publisher and book collector. He was an avid Zionist and devoted several books to Palestine and the National Jewish movements.⁸¹⁰ Frankel could not be identified without a mention of his first name, due to his common name. Both Adler and Deinard ended their lives in the USA several years before Friedman wrote to Marx. This letter implied Friedman's reservation of Zionism, a feeling he shared with other Jewish scholars in New York. Until 1948, JTS which was identified with the conservative Jewish movement, never publicly supported Zionism.⁸¹¹

On 15 May 1957, after attending a lecture by James J. Rorimer at the Metropolitan Museum, Friedman sent him a letter of thanks for his work at the CCPs. Rorimer was a former member

⁸⁰⁷ New York, JTS Archive, 80.20.27 Harry Friedman, *letter to Alexander Marx*, 19 December, 1949; 'Existence of Ancient Jewish Community in Turkey Disclosed: Was Isolated for Centuries', *The Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA)* (7 December, 1949) <<http://www.jta.org/1949/12/07/archive/existence-of-ancient-jewish-community-in-turkey-disclosed-was-isolated-for-centuries>> [accessed 30 April 2017]. Friedman referred to men who were involved in the Zionist movement by supporting Jewish communities in immigrating to Palestine.

⁸⁰⁸ Goodman Lipkind, *Adler, Elkan Nathan*, Jewish Year Book, Jewish Encyclopedia.com, 1899 <<http://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/814-adler-elkan-nathan>> [accessed 24 January 2016].

⁸⁰⁹ *Adler, Elkan Nathan, 1861-1946*, The Jewish Theological Seminary <https://www.jtsa.edu/prebuilt/archives/jtsarchives/adler_elkan.shtml> [accessed 24 January 2016].

⁸¹⁰ Brad Sabin Hill, *Ephraim Deinard: Bookman, Historian and Polemicist (1846-1930)*, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, Brill Academic Publishers, 1999 <<http://www.digento.de/titel/104476.html>> [accessed 24 January 2016].

⁸¹¹ Naomi W. Cohen, 'Diaspora plus Palestine, Religion plus Nationalism: The Seminary and Zionism, 1902-1948', in *Tradition Renewed: A History of JTS*, ed. by Jack Wertheimer (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1997), pp. 113-176 (pp. 115-117, 148-149). Louis Finkelstein, chancellor of JTS between 1940-1972 cemented the relationship with Israel on the basis of the spiritual role the land of Israel had for the religious Jew.

of the Monument, Fine Art and Archives department of the United States Military, stationed in Germany at the end of the war.⁸¹² In the letter he expressed the gratitude of the entire Jewish people:

I was very much impressed with your account of the situation in Europe on the collapse of Hitlerism. I feel grateful to you for your share in saving some of the religious objects associated with our past.⁸¹³

Between the late 1930s and his death in 1965 Friedman was consistently buying objects and sending them to JTS and to Jewish Museum. After the opening of the Jewish Museum in 1947, a room was named for him. Friedman was unique in his collecting of everyday Jewish objects. Moreover, in the long list of Jewish ritual objects comprising his collection tens and sometimes hundreds of items are listed under each category.⁸¹⁴ Friedman described these objects in his 1941 letter to Marx as popular objects that could be found in large Jewish communities.⁸¹⁵ His purchase of large quantities of objects included for example: twenty-four pewter plates that can be found in a list of donations from 16 March, 1939, forty more plates are mentioned in a list that dates 9 December, 1940, as well as twenty-three Hanukkah Lamps and eighteen more plates are added to the collection in addition to seventeen Hanukkah Lamps and other objects listed on 13 October, 1942.⁸¹⁶ Rarely can one find a reference to an exceptional object, though on many occasions Friedman wrote descriptions of items he was interested in for JTS's collection. In his 1966 eulogy after Friedman's death, Kayser explained the reason for this quantity of objects:

⁸¹² James J. Rorimer, *Survival. The Salvage and Protection of Art in War* (New York: Aberlard Press, 1950). James Rorimer, associate curator at the Metropolitan Museum, was drafted to the army in 1943. There he joined the Monument Fine Art and Archives department who were responsible for the safekeeping of monuments across France and Italy during the war. After the war, he was one of the people responsible for the opening of the Munich CCP.

⁸¹³ New York, JTS Archive, 80.89.6 Harry Friedman, *letter to James Rorimer*, 16 May, 1957.

⁸¹⁴ New York, JTS Archive, 80.20.24 *List of Objects Received from Friedman*, 13 October, 1942.

⁸¹⁵ JTS Archive, 80.89.17 Friedman, *letter to Marx*, 24 December, 1941.

⁸¹⁶ JTS Archive, 80.20.24 *List of Objects Received from Friedman*, 13 October, 1942.

Why then did he acquire quantity and not only quality? One has to understand his action in this regard in the light of his general philosophy. He understood Judaism very much like his life-long friend Louis Ginzberg as historical Judaism.⁸¹⁷ But he emphasized only history. Of the three fundamentals, Torah, Avoda [worship] and Gemiluth Chasadim [charity], only the latter he regarded as a binding force. Historical Judaism to him, however, was not only what is to be found in the textbooks, but everything that had a past.⁸¹⁸

Kayser described Friedman as a man concerned with the Jewish past in a non-religious manner. Charity, the only binding value for Friedman was expressed in his donations and in his work as founder of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropists in New York. Objects and artefacts were an inseparable part of Jewish life and history for Friedman. Kayser gave the example of a collection of Torah Wrappers from Central Europe on which names of boys who were brought to synagogue for the first time were inscribed. Friedman used to sit and write down every name in order to keep them for reference in the archive.⁸¹⁹ Both large and small objects were equal in Friedman's eyes, all, he believed, should be safeguarded.

Special requests Friedman made upon his donation demonstrate his hope that the objects would become a part of a larger collection of Jewish objects, representing Jewish life and would be used for educational purposes. As he explained:

I have no desire to impose burdensome restrictions on this gift. I therefore expressly authorize you to dispose of any objects which duplicate those now in your Collection or which may hereafter come to you. You are authorized to

⁸¹⁷ David Danzig and Dr. Steven Fine, 'Louis Ginzberg and His Historical Writing', paper presented at the course *Seminar in Historiography of Ancient Judaism in the Greco-Roman Period*, (New York: Yeshiva University, Bernard Revel Graduate School, 2009). Louis Ginzberg was a Talmud teacher at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America from 1903 until his death in 1953. He was a leading figure in the Jewish Conservative Movement. He was interested in studying and publishing fragments of ancient Jewish writings. He used an ethnographic view of contemporary Jewish culture to create a better understanding of ancient Jewish scholars. He identified the difference and similarities between past Jewish scholars and contemporary ones.

⁸¹⁸ JTS Archive, 80.89.9 Kayser, *A tribute to Harry G. Friedman*, 1966.

⁸¹⁹ JTS Archive, 80.89.9 Kayser, *A tribute to Harry G. Friedman*, 1966.

exchange such duplicated or to sell them; in the event if sale, the proceeds are to be applied to the purchase of similar objects to be added to the Collection.

You shall be under no obligation to segregate my Collection; in the interests of the Museum, you are hereby authorized to mingle the objects in it with the objects in the rest of your Collection. It is my desire to facilitate such grouping in the Seminary Collection as will best serve any historical, geographical or other classification or arrangement that may be deemed to be in the best interest of the Museum.

You are authorized freely to loan objects from my Collection in furtherance of any educational purpose or in furtherance of the interests of the Museum or of the Seminary. Such loans shall, however, not be permanent.⁸²⁰

Friedman expressed a complex point of view. On the one hand, as Kayser explained, he believed in keeping every object, but on the other, Friedman allowed the selling of items from his collection. These two ideas seem to contradict one another. However, Friedman's intention was to expand the scope of the collection by exchanging duplicates with other objects. Friedman allowed JTS to exchange items, to loan them, and to incorporate the objects into the larger collection. These three requests were made for the purpose of expanding the collection, using the objects for education and study and categorising them within the context of similar items. The educational purpose superseded salvage. In order to have a variety of artefacts that could be studied, Friedman was willing to give up certain objects.

In 1957, Friedman expressed growing concern for the future of Jewish communities in New York and for the items in synagogues with dropping attendance.⁸²¹ The Jewish community

⁸²⁰ JTS Archive, 80.20.17 Friedman, *letter to Marx*, 24 December, 1941.

was going through a process of withdrawal from Jewish traditions, a process that had begun during the eighteenth century. As a result Jews were becoming liberal and non-observant.⁸²² This led to a decline in keeping Jewish lifestyle and in attendance to services. Friedman offered to fund the purchase of documents that belonged to defunct Jewish communities:

I wonder if you or the Seminary could find someone familiar with the older Synagogues in New York, particularly those in the East Side and in other neighbourhoods in Brooklyn and Brownsville which are ceasing to be Jewish. I would be glad to put at your disposal \$250 to be used in getting some such Synagogue documents and books. I have reference to charters, by-laws, Jahrzeit lithographs, Omer tables and similar material I remember seeing in Orthodox Synagogue at the turn of the century. I should think also that there may be books, no longer put to any use but which might be of particular value to you or your students.⁸²³

Friedman was actively using JTS as a repository for Jewish objects and saw it as an appropriate place for the safekeeping of such documents. After being involved in the salvage of items from Nazi Europe he became more sensitive towards disappearing Jewish tradition in the Jewish communities around him.⁸²⁴

His relationship with JTS was not exclusive; since the opening of the new Jewish Museum building in 1947, Friedman chose to divide objects between the two institutions. When he was purchasing fine art for donation, Friedman contemplated on the place in which the work would bring the most benefit to the public. For example, in 1951, after donating a print of a London synagogue to JTS, Friedman wrote to the librarian Gerson Cohen:

⁸²¹ New York, JTS Archive, 80.89.6 Harry Friedman, *letter to Gerson Cohen*, 18 March, 1957.

⁸²² Hyman B. Grinstein, *The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York 1654-1860*, (Philadelphia: Porcupine press, 1976), pp. 333-336.

⁸²³ New York, JTS Archive, 80.89.6 Harry Friedman, *letter to Gerson Cohen*, 18 March, 1957.

⁸²⁴ *Great Books from Great Collectors: An Exhibition December 15-1993-April 15, 1994* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1993), p. 53.

I am wondering whether selected prints of artistic or just pictorial value might not have a greater public use at the Museum than just in the files of the Library. The Museum could well have a constantly changing exhibition of prints in one of its rooms or corridors.⁸²⁵

Cohen replied aggressively by suggesting that Friedman preferred the Jewish Museum to JTS and from now on would transfer his donations there. Upon that Friedman responded:

I have no greater love for the Museum than for the Library. On the contrary, I feel that the library is far more important. I do however, believe that a selection of prints of artistic interest or even of popular appeal, would reach a far wider audience at 92nd Street and Fifth Avenue than at 122nd Street and Broadway. From the standpoint of educational significance to a large number, I think that items of no particular scholarly significance but of popular educational appeal should therefore be shown or be available where larger numbers congregate.⁸²⁶

Friedman's division was thus based on what he identified as the potential public exposure the item could receive in each of the institutions. Cohen ended the issue in an apologetic letter to Friedman, in which he confirmed that Marx agreed 'that the library should and is ready to furnish the Museum with these and any other prints as fast and as often as the Museum wishes to exhibit them'.⁸²⁷

Furthermore, in the 1950s, Friedman began to donate fine art, etchings and engravings to the Metropolitan Museum, a collection that reached over one thousand items.⁸²⁸ By the 1950s the

⁸²⁵ New York, JTS Archive, 80.20.19 Harry Friedman, *letter Gerson Cohen*, 31 July, 1951.

⁸²⁶ New York, JTS Archive, 80.20.18 Harry Friedman, *letter to Gerson Cohen*, 6 August, 1951.

⁸²⁷ New York, JTS Archive, 80.20.18 Gerson Cohen, *letter to Harry Friedman*, 5 September, 1951.

⁸²⁸ *History of the Museum: Main Building*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art <<http://www.metmuseum.org/about-the-museum/history-of-the-museum/main-building>> [accessed 11 October 15]. Over one thousand items donated by Friedman come up in a search on the Metropolitan Museum collection website.

Metropolitan Museum had become an important art institution with a vast collection that included Greek and Roman antiquities, Egyptian art and European paintings by well-known artists. In May 1959, Friedman confirmed that he consulted with experts from the Metropolitan Museum regarding biblical prints he was interested to donate to JTS in order to ensure that they were of museum quality. He added:

I am sending you, 49 woodcuts of German origin. You may be able to determine the bible or other book from which they are taken. On most of them I have indicated the biblical source.⁸²⁹

When the forty-nine prints were later catalogued by JTS cataloguer, Hannah Abrahamson, they were identified as prints based on the Holbein Bible illustrations.⁸³⁰ Friedman's donations to the Metropolitan Museum consist of etchings and lithographs as well as various portraits and hand coloured caricatures, ancient Greek and Roman objects, and nineteenth century applied art.⁸³¹ Becoming a donor to the Metropolitan Museum was a significant expansion of Friedman's philanthropy and a move from a distinct interest in assembling Jewish objects to items of a wide variety of themes and purposes. This was possibly a matter of a rise in his social status as well, as Friedman adopted a habit of the New York upper class.⁸³²

From the moment Friedman added the Metropolitan Museum as one of his beneficiaries, his perspective regarding the type of value and the best place for each object developed. Prints and etchings, for example, that had no Jewish connotation were given to the Metropolitan Museum, Jewish ritual objects were continuously sent to the Jewish Museum and books and

⁸²⁹ New York, JTS, 80.88.21 Harry Friedman, *letter to Hannah Abrahamson*, 23 June, 1959.

⁸³⁰ New York, JTS Archive, 80.88.21 Hannah Abrahamson, *letter to Harry Friedman*, 16 June, 1959.

⁸³¹ *Search for objects in the museum collection donated by Harry Friedman*, The Metropolitan Museum < <http://www.metmuseum.org/search-results?ft=Harry+Friedman&pg=1&cat=Collection> > [accessed 2 November 15]. Objects include for example: Greek Terracotta oil flasks, Roman lamps an Islamic glass dish and a nineteenth century Myanmar hanging.

⁸³² Alan Pryce-Jones, *The Collector in America* (Worthing, West Sussex: Littlehampton Book Services Ltd., 1971).

manuscripts to JTS. There was not one place that could accommodate all the different types of items Friedman was collecting. This form of classification was perhaps based on the role of each of these institutions as it was seen in Friedman's eyes: JTS as a place for history and research, the Jewish Museum as a place of Jewish cultural history, and the Metropolitan Museum as a secular museum of international fine art. As Clifford explained, while art museums classify objects as creations of individual artists and materials, ethnographic museums would consider items as 'interesting', 'beautiful' or 'original'. At the early twentieth century, he added, objects were perceived as a source of information and as witnesses to a culture.⁸³³ In Friedman's salvage project objects donated to JTS and the Jewish Museum were seen as such witnesses and were valued by their history and educational potential.

This chapter explored the tensions between Narkiss and representatives of the Jewish Museum and JCR. Although leaders of the Jewish Museum promoted a salvage policy, it was quickly set aside when the need to situate the museum in line with possible competing contemporary art museums in New York arose. Thus, the Jewish cultural objects from the CCPs could not find a permanent home there and valuations had to be made to determine their future.

As I have shown, Narkiss not only saw the objects as worthy cultural items, he also believed they acted as representations of the life of European Jewry before the Second World War. Being given the role of substitutes for people and for communities, Narkiss urged their salvage and referred to the process of bringing them to Israel as a form of restitution to the Jewish people. The objects took the place of the people who perished and became these people's memorial, acting as signifiers for their pre-war lives. In addition to their artistic and

⁸³³ Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture*, pp. 226-228.

physical characteristics, the objects were stand-ins for lives that were lost in the war. This added symbolic meaning, raised the value of the items in the eyes of Narkiss.

Friedman's collecting, discussed in the final sub-chapter, puts Narkiss's salvage project in a broader context. Like Narkiss, Friedman was born in Poland at the end of the nineteenth century and later emigrated. While Narkiss immigrated to Palestine in his twenties, after joining the Zionist movement, Friedman immigrated as a child to the USA and grew up influenced by changing American Jewish community. Interestingly, both men studied Torah and eventually left their spiritual training for secular life-styles.

Interestingly, primary sources used in this research do not indicate that Narkiss and Friedman knew of each other. Friedman remained involved with Jewish history by collecting books, manuscripts and Jewish ritual art that he later donated to JTS. He was inquisitive and curious and formed a secular relationship with Judaism by collecting its traditional objects. Narkiss chose to concentrate on Jewish history and culture. He investigated and researched as head of the Bezalel, the national museum of Israel and believed it ought to be taught to visitors and in communities across Israel.

As the Second World War broke out, both men got involved in salvage. Narkiss expressed it by the founding of the Schatz Fund and later by working in Europe and at the CCPs. While Friedman began purchasing Jewish objects from European Jews who managed to flee to the USA and donated items regularly to the JTS and the Jewish Museum, turning these institutions into repositories for Jewish cultural objects. Finally, Narkiss strove to include fine art and decorative art objects that belonged to Jewish owners in the category of Jewish art thereby adding them to the national Bezalel Museum collection. Friedman, however expanded his interests in a variety of artistic fields and began donating to other cultural institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Objects that did not fit the

Jewish Museum's definition of Jewish art were offered by Friedman to other institutions.

Both men identified the educational potential of cultural objects and repeatedly expressed the importance of making objects available for researchers and for future generations.

Conclusion

Beginning with the discovery of an immense amount of Jewish property at the end of the Second World War and the enactment of Military Law no. 59, this research explored the complexity of the changes in policy that shaped the division process of Jewish cultural objects over time. Law no. 59 designated the JRSO as responsible for the restitution of the varied Jewish cultural property in addition to bank accounts and real-estate property. The JRSO gave the JCR, an organization founded by Jewish scholars, authority over the ‘heirless’ Jewish cultural property, while the allocation policy followed by the Monuments Fine Art and Archives Men (MFAA) called for the return of cultural property found in caches in Germany and Austria to the countries from which it originated. After initial allocation, the remaining ‘heirless’ Jewish cultural property was put together in the CCPs where it awaited its shipment elsewhere. The implementation of Military Law no. 59 that called for a removal of Jewish cultural property from Europe was not without conflicts. The re-established Jewish communities in Germany were not willing to give up objects that belonged to the pre-war communities and the JRSO and JCR staff had to come to a compromised agreement. This agreement approved the division of communal cultural property in such a way that would allow the re-established communities to practice Judaism with a minimal number of Jewish ritual objects that remained after the majority had been shipped to communities outside of Europe.⁸³⁴ Moreover, in the post-Holocaust years, the growing Jewish community in the State of Israel saw itself as the heir to the property of Jews who perished. Therefore, Israeli representatives requested the items be sent there.⁸³⁵

Correspondence between JRSO and JCR personnel, as well as meeting memorandums of both organizations indicate that there was no leading disposition policy for the handling

⁸³⁴ Takei, ‘The “Gemeinde Problem”’ *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, pp. 272-273.

⁸³⁵ Aviezer Tucker, *The Legacies of Totalitarianism: A Theoretical Framework* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 162-163.

of the Jewish cultural property and the eventual division of the objects was influenced by conflicting elements such as a feeling of moral responsibility as a result of the Holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel.⁸³⁶

This investigation explored the salvage of Jewish cultural heritage in three stages. The first idea was *Kinnus* or ingathering, an idea that developed in the nineteenth century as a result of the growing nationalist movements at the time and called to collect written historical materials of the Jewish people. This concept was well expressed in the formation of the Hebrew University in the 1920s and was a rationale for the re-opening of the Bezalel Museum in 1925. While *Kinnus* originally referred to Jewish books and archives, Schatz and Narkiss expanded this idea to include Jewish art and ritual objects at Bezalel. For them, *Kinnus* was the bringing together of Jewish and international art from every corner of the world. However, while Schatz saw Bezalel primarily as a centre for Jewish art, Narkiss advocated for a universal survey museum that would encompass both Jewish and international art.⁸³⁷ Both men expressed a wish to turn Bezalel to an art centre for the Jewish people.

The second stage was that of salvage, that stemmed from Schatz's concern for the future of Jewish communities in Europe and their cultural property after the First World War. With the outbreak of the Second World War, salvage became the foundation of Narkiss's policy. In 1942, Narkiss founded the Schatz Fund for the Salvage of Jewish Art Remnants, a major step in his salvage project, which later escalated during his work in the CCPs. The universal survey museum concept thus became second in priority to the mission of salvage and the importance of memorializing Jewish culture in Europe during the final years of the Second

⁸³⁶ For example: the CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296a Kayser, *Disposition of J.R.S.O. Paintings*, 11 April, 1950; JRSO.NY.296d Kayser, *letter to Rock*, 17 April, 1950.

⁸³⁷ Duncan and Wallach, 'The Universal Survey Museum', *Art History*, 3.4 (1980), 448–469, Berger Iticovici, *From Past to the Future: the role of the Jewish museum in the crystallization of Jewish identity in the modern era* (unpublished doctoral theses, Hebrew University Jerusalem, 2006), Richard I. Cohen, *Jewish Icons: Art and Society in Modern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

World War, but it was not completely forgotten as Narkiss's letters and correspondence express.⁸³⁸

Restitution was the third and final notion and was discussed in the context of the work of the American Allied Forces and the JCR. Restitution is a legal concept used during the post-war years primarily by the Allied Forces in their efforts to return looted objects to private individuals and communities. The objects whose owners could be identified were first allocated to the countries from which they were believed to have been removed during the war. Still, the question of the treatment of the 'heirless' Jewish cultural property persisted. Narkiss interpreted restitution as a justification for sending all items to Israel, the state of the Jewish people. In his view, restitution meant the return of the objects to the heir of the Jewish people who perished.⁸³⁹ This interpretation was explored through Narkiss's memorandums written after his visits to the CCPs in Germany in the late 1940s. In Narkiss's eyes, the items were not only a form of restitution but also a memorial to the perished Jewish people. The 'heirless' Jewish cultural objects signified the lost people and communities. Thus, as Hodder explained, the historical context influenced the meaning of the artefacts in addition to the social codes they communicate. The analysis of Hodder, Kopytoff and other material theorists offered a critical lense the differing perspective of the JCR and the Jewish Museum personnel from that of Narkiss. This contrast was also explored by looking at the semantics that expressed the emotional trauma by use of loaded words such as "disposal" and "junk" by the JCR staff and "safeguard" by Narkiss.⁸⁴⁰

Understanding the trauma of the Holocaust as the catalyst for the growing interest in salvage is part of the foundation of this thesis. Narkiss's emotional reactions while working at the

⁸³⁸ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 2.3. Narkiss, *Top Secret Report on a Journey to Europe on behalf of the Schatz Fund for the Salvage of Jewish Art Remnants*, [n.d.]. When Narkiss arrived in France in 1947, he succeeded in obtaining donations of art works for the museum collection in addition to purchasing items and materials such as frames and engravings, which were cheaper to buy there than in Israel.

⁸³⁹ Tucker, pp, 162-163.

⁸⁴⁰ Mordecai Narkiss Archive 1.3 Ferencz, *letter to Saul Kagan*, JRSO Hq. letter 1480, 1952.

CCPs reflect the trauma he and many other personnel working at the CCPs experienced. As this thesis demonstrated by analysing Narkiss's unique interpretation of Jewish art that developed as a response to the JCR categorization system. This was also Narkiss's way of justifying the removal of a large number of the 'heirless' Jewish cultural objects to Israel. Foucault and Clifford's conceptions of classification were important for the understanding the significance of this idea.⁸⁴¹ Narkiss's new all-inclusive classificatory system that incorporated Jewish owned art under the category of Jewish art contradicted the existing idea that Jewish art only included works of art with Jewish themes. In addition, Narkiss was ahead of his time in promoting the process of identification of the owners of the items when in 1950 he offered to form a delegation of art historians to research the items.⁸⁴² Provenance research has since become a field primarily for Holocaust related restitution cases.

These contradictory ideas led to the shipment of a limited number of 'heirless' Jewish cultural objects to Israel and to the sale of the remaining objects in New York. The shipment of the objects and their partial addition to museum collections can also be interpreted as an opportune moment for these institutions as their collections were expanded.

The disposal process of the last remaining 'heirless' Jewish cultural objects in the CCPs is under-researched in comparison to other types of property such as the books, archives, and Jewish ritual objects. Primary sources from a variety of archives contributed in forming a narrative of the process of the removal of these items from the CCPs in Germany to the Bezalel Museum in Jerusalem and to the Jewish Museum in New York.

The thesis analysed the outcomes to the disposal process. While in the Bezalel Museum efforts were made by Narkiss to secure the objects and keep them as a form of memory, the Jewish Museum in New York was involved in sales that took place between 1950-1951 and

⁸⁴¹ Foucault, *the Order of Things*, pp. XVI-XXVI; Clifford, *Routes*, pp. 188-219.

⁸⁴² Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 1.3 Narkiss, *Memorandum on the Salvage of Jewish art remnants*, March, 1950.

invited mostly Jews involved in antique trade to purchase the ‘heirless’ Jewish cultural objects. As demonstrated, the objects sold were not considered Jewish art by the JCR perspective and therefore had no place in Jewish institutions and museums. This information was based on buyers’ names found on receipts produced by Odell, the dealer responsible for the sales. Reading the correspondence found in the CAHJP and the JTS Archives showed that although a public auction was considered as a possible solution, it did not take place.⁸⁴³ Analysis of the names confirmed that majority of these buyers emigrated from Europe and were involved in the fine and decorative art market. This investigation uncovered and analysed the networks between the buyers, demonstrating their understanding of the items’ history and potential historical value. This interpretation of the sales process differs from existing references which have suggested that the auctions were held publicly.⁸⁴⁴ Although auctioning property sent from Germany was not uncommon at the post-war years.

In 1948 the IRO put on several auctions in the Parke-Bernet Galleries in New York of jewellery, carpets, and other miscellaneous objects that were shipped from Germany as unidentified Jewish property.⁸⁴⁵ Yet there are no other known cases in which a dealer was requested to orchestrate the private sale of items sent from Germany. Unfortunately, much of the information about these sales, held between March 1949 and May 1951 is lacking. The discussion in this thesis is solely based on materials found in the CAHJP, at JTS, and the Jewish Museum Archive in New York.

A comparison between Narkiss and Friedman provides a broader context for Narkiss’s salvage and demonstrated that he was not unique in pursuing his notion of salvage at the time. Despite their different academic experiences, both were deeply interested in Jewish art and offered interpretations influenced by the Holocaust. While they were interested in

⁸⁴³ The CAHJP, JRSO.NY.296a Kayser, *Disposition of J.R.S.O. Paintings*, 11 April, 1950.

⁸⁴⁴ Steinberg, pp. 15-16.

⁸⁴⁵ *Progress Report on: The Mystery of the Hungarian “Gold Train”*, University of North Texas Libraries <<http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/pcha/goldtrainfinaltoconvert.html#body53>> [accessed 12 September 2016]

education, they began collecting to fulfil different needs. Initially, Narkiss expressed interest in bringing to the Bezalel Museum collection the best works of art of all times turning it into a universal survey museum. This interest shifted to an obsessive urgency to save every art object available belonging to European Jews before the war. Friedman, who was a private collector of books, manuscripts, and Jewish ritual objects, decided in 1941 to donate his entire collection to JTS and continued adding to it until his death in 1965. After the Jewish Museum opened in its new building, Friedman began dividing his donations as a way to categorise them by theme and promote public exposure. In addition, he began sending donations of various types of items to the Metropolitan Museum. Nevertheless, primary sources demonstrate that both men were concerned with the memorial value of the items and the opportunities for future generations to learn from them.

Even in Israel, Narkiss worked in parallel to other museum directors and members of the cultural world in his efforts to send as much Jewish cultural property as possible from Europe to Israel.⁸⁴⁶ Yet, Narkiss's actions stand out in the context of both Israel and New York as particularly uncompromising, given that he did not have the fiscal and political support of a respected institution. In 1949, he realized that his role in the salvage of the Jewish cultural objects was the most important one he would have in his lifetime:

My Nanush, I am petrified, I'm between a rock and hard place. On the one hand our joint lives – us and our son – and on the other “the other woman” as you call it – art, the museum, the need to fulfil this task to which my entire life is consecrated and which has been dear to me throughout my entire life.⁸⁴⁷

⁸⁴⁶ To mention a few: Chaim Atar Ein Harod Museum, Chaim Gamzu Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Miriam Novitch Ghetto Fighters House Museum.

⁸⁴⁷ Mordecai Narkiss Archive, 7.110 Narkiss, *letter to Nassia*, 4 June, 1949.

נאנוש שלי, הלב מתפלץ - אני נמצא בין הפטיש והסדן. מצד אחד עניינינו המשותף - אנו שנינו, הבן, ומצד שני: "האשה השנייה" כדבריך - האמנות, המוזיאון, הרצון להביא לידי שלמות איזה מעשה שכל ימי חיי היו קדושים לו וכל ימי חיי היה יקר לי.

By comparison, Friedman's collection expressed a different sense of salvage within the context of the Jewish Museum. Friedman followed the same classification approach to Jewish art as the JCR and the Jewish Museum with minor differences, while Narkiss persistently promoted his all-inclusive view. Although both Friedman and Narkiss came from similar backgrounds, lived at the same time, and identified the need to salvage Jewish cultural items in the post-Holocaust years, they worked in significantly different ways to promote their cause and to salvage large amounts of Jewish cultural property for the same purpose, the education of future generations. As has been demonstrated in this thesis the differences are related to opposite attitudes to Zionism and Jewish art.

Narkiss was the director of a national museum within the Zionist movement. He promoted the concept of a universal survey museum which would hold examples of art objects from all around the world while forming a distinct place for Jewish art removed from Germany after the Holocaust. Friedman, however, questioned the Zionist movement and preserved his ongoing connection with Judaism by collecting its cultural objects. Examining the situation of Jewish communities in Europe and in New York at the time, Friedman believed that the objects would be better kept in a museum than in the hands of a private collector or a diminishing community. Friedman donated the items he collected based on their type, material, and history. Little research has been done on Friedman's extensive collecting and donations to cultural institutions in New York and his donations to institutions other than the Jewish Museum remained out of the scope of this research.

The question of the role of Jewish Museums today has been researched in the context of memory and trauma, yet The Chamber of the Holocaust Museum remains an unfamiliar institution on the margins of existing research and out of place by comparison to well-known institutions such as Yad Vashem and the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC. This research compared this institution, as well as of Yad Vashem to Bezalel Museum. The

role of these two Israeli remembrance institutions at the time of the founding of Israel was researched by scholars such as Roni Stauber and by Alex Lavon.⁸⁴⁸ Yet there still is room to think about institutions established immediately after the Holocaust for commemorative purposes and did not achieve international recognition.

This research analysed two Jewish institutions that represented the largest Jewish communities that existed at the time in Israel and New York. The collective approach to restitution has been discussed in the context of Narkiss in Israel, the re-established Jewish communities in Germany and the JRSO and the JCR in the CCPs. Returning 'heirless' Jewish ritual objects to a country or a community that saw itself as heir to the Jews who perished in the Holocaust stands in contradiction to the approach that has been adopted by cultural institutions and governments over the last twenty years.

The fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 was a transitional moment in history for Eastern Europe and for families looking for proof of ownership of their pre-war property. The opening of archives in the early 1990s resulted in families stepping forward in efforts to return cultural objects removed from their ancestors who were persecuted during in the Second World War. The growing number of restitution claims raised questions on the responsibility of museums to provide information about their holdings. This prompted a change in the role of the museum since the 1950s. For example, museums located across Europe that had adopted a national model and nationalized cultural objects allocated by the Allied Forces began to address individual restitution cases.

As a result, Holocaust related restitution has moved to the forefront for museums and other institutions policies. This led to a growing number of specialized academic fields such as provenance research and art law. Though there is still work to be done, museums have been taking more responsibility and considering the history of ownership of works in their

⁸⁴⁸ Stauber, *The Holocaust in Israeli Public Debate in the 1950s*; Lavon, 'The Chamber of the Holocaust in Mount Zion', *Israelis*, pp.71-91.

collections, auction houses have been involved and formed departments dealing specifically with the research and resolutions in such delicate cases. However, this policy indicates museums' moral responsibility to research and return items with questionable history of ownership in their collections. Whether or not this would become a legal obligation embraced by all museums is part of an on-going public debate.

Appendix I

Memorandum: On the question of the salvage of art remnants their recovery and removal to Israel

By M. Narkiss

A. The Problem

The problem of the salvage of art was, since the conclusion of the First World War, with the destruction of many communities in Eastern Europe, with the mass immigration to central cities in West Europe and with the eradication of many communities in Italy, the question of the cultural life of Israel. As commonly accepted in public issues, these occur and are sensed by only few, whose voice is rarely heard until reality strikes – and even then, whether or not these who are able to act and to help would awaken, is doubtful.

The days of Nazi horror arrived since 1932, demolition and the burning of synagogues, destruction of cemeteries and gravestones on November 11, 1938 and the acts to follow throughout the war years – which expressed the problem in its gravity, for those who see in the art remnants a treasure of the art, spirit and soul of Israel.

It seems that a lot would be done for such remnants – to those whose hearts were filled with concern for the fate of objects it was clear that the fate of humans is a graver problem, they believed however, that it could be possible to do a lot in the field of the Jewish art remnants as well.

Memorandums sent to institutions and representatives did not receive any attention while other futile recommendations weakened those who were planning to act. And so we reached a situation that nearly nothing that could have been achieved is done and everything that is done in reality is perused by this poor foundation, “The Schatz Foundation for the Salvage of Jewish Art Remnants from Destruction” organized by the national museum Bezalel in Jerusalem.

B. What is the “Schatz Fund”?

This foundation established in 1942 by the national museum Bezalel in Jerusalem, on the tenth year to the passing of its initiator and first director Professor Boris Schatz, started its active efforts a year after its establishment.

The title “Fund” should not be perceived as an institution that keeps its funds and reaches achievements based on its existing fruits. The fund was small and its profits were few, moreover, there were many difficulties in obtaining funding for its establishment. Applications to leading institutions of our state were futile and therefore funding began by collecting every cent in hope that once established, the fund will become a national institution for the salvage of Jewish art remnants as well as general art for other cultural institutions in Israel.

The late Dr. Arthur Ruppin⁸⁴⁹ promised his assistance and offered to make it into a fund for purchases and scholarships for Israeli artists. After his sudden death these ideas were not realized and hope was crushed once again.

The funds accumulated by the museum for this purpose from friends and donors were few, together they make the following sum:

1942	82,400 LEI (Palestine Pound)
1943	77,500 LEI
1944	85,000 LEI
1945	1109,454 LEI
<u>1946</u>	<u>676,985</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>2031,339 LEI</u>

C. Activities of the fund so far

⁸⁴⁹ *Arthur Ruppin*, Jewish Virtual Library, The Pedagogic Center, The Department for Jewish Zionist Education, The Jewish Agency for Israel, <<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/ruppin.html>> [accessed 2 June 2015].

Throughout the war years, the fund purchased small Jewish Ritual objects, each of them is important for different reasons. Between the years 1942-1946 hundreds of objects have been accumulated. In Purim of each year we commemorate ‘Founder’s day’ – the day of the passing of Professor Schatz – and exhibit the objects recently purchased by the fund. When the fund was 5 years old we exhibited 100 objects – a selection of the purchases – from every field in which the fund was involved according to its regulations. In parallel a catalogue was published listing the most important objects exhibited.

By then the fund purchased an important collection of photographs of synagogues from Moravia and Bohemia, photographs of grave-stones and Judaica from these communities that reached 3,000 and joined our existing photographs archive that holds over 15,000 photos and sketches.

D. A journey in Europe in the spring of 1946

The Schatz Fund purchases here – whose trustees described as the redeeming of the captives in a small scale, we commenced the efforts to reach other countries, in order to bring art remnants that represent an actual redeeming of the captives; rescue from destruction.

Every plan to salvage remnants in the Middle-East and our neighbouring countries reached dead ends due to lack of funds and the hostility of these countries. For example, we were unable to use the license obtained especially in order to photograph and copy the ceiling frescos of the synagogue of Dura-Europos⁸⁵⁰ which were on view in Damascus due to the hostile attitude of the Syrian government towards us after the French were forced to leave.

⁸⁵⁰ EIKON, *Image database for biblical studies*, Yale Divinity School
<<http://divdl.library.yale.edu/dl/Browse.aspx?qc=Eikon&qs=464>> [accessed 2 June 2015].

Yet the field remains wide in Eastern and Central Europe and. For these travels higher funds were necessary. Once we saw that no one lifts a finger to save these remnants and rumours of the distribution of valuable objects reached us, many to the United States, we decided that it is in our hands to act. The Hebrew University that informed in 1944 about its plan to salvage of art remnants has failed to do a thing. Neither did the management of “Yad Vashem”. That left the Schatz fund with its scarce funds. In the beginning of May 1947 the write of this memorandum travelled to Europe in order to research the condition of the art remnants and to salvage them. The results - despite the funds that we had would amaze even the optimist among us. Not only did we purchase most valuable objects – in France, Holland, Switzerland, Italy and Czechoslovakia, but entire collections were received including the collection of a museum in Slovakia. We began negotiating with museums in several countries in order to transfer parts of collections to designated halls for the Jewish history in these countries for example: Bohemia, Moravia, Italy, Holland, etc’. In Switzerland we received a unique donation of Jewish ritual objects and we have been negotiating several other issues which, once resolved, will bring to our country many treasures of Jewish art.

The fund has been accumulating works of art by the greatest Israeli artists and therefore many important works of art that would have disappeared had not the fund gotten involved in their purchase.

E. A second journey in Europe in 1948

In January 1948 the write of this memorandum went on a second visit to Europe and once again he managed to salvage Jewish art remnants of the highest quality. Whether they were purchased by use of funds or given as gifts these objects include silver and bronze Jewish ritual objects that every museum would have been proud to exhibit – not once did

we spend funds on an object that is not of the highest quality. Many donations were received – once again many works of art by Jewish artists were saved that include: Oppenheim, Levitan (13 of his works), Bekst (tens) and others – artists whose work would not have been collected elsewhere and it emphasizes the artistic creation of Jewish artists.

In Holland an attempt to transfer property from Ashkenazi communities was successful – the most ancient, highest of quality Jewish ritual objects will all be moved into a special hall for the Jewish community in Holland in our museum.

But the writer did not find this sufficient. An investigation of the situation across Europe showed the catastrophic and concerning situation of Jewish art remnants that can only be salvaged by government efforts.

F. The Situation

I described the situation as disturbing and I am uncertain whether I will be able to describe it in this memorandum, if not by facts and description of the situation in the different countries and that which was left in them. In general: it is the same in all countries. The Jewish communities and government are indifferent to the condition of these remnants. This atmosphere changes when one comes to claim the objects – then they both get interested, even Zionists often object the removal of artefacts from these countries. However, it is a fact that with enough persistence one can move mountains, as it occurred to me in several cases.

Allow me to describe the situation country by country:

1. Germany. Property that belonged to synagogues and to several Jewish museums in Berlin, Frankfurt, Darmstadt, Wirzenberg, Mainz, Hamburg – can be found in Offenbach today in a central collecting point organized by the American Military

Occupation. This storage, from which much has already disappeared – is the interest of many. The Jewish Congress and several other institutions, including the Hebrew University have been making requests for over two years to General Clay for the collections, including suggesting a possible division between these institutions. Our institute is listed among those who are eligible to receive objects on behalf of the state. It is clear that today, our political situation allows us to act in this direction.

But there are also other problems in Germany. Known communities that were ‘revived’: a group of people join together and receive cultural property, sometimes very important objects. They can be given to these people according to certain conditions, one of them is that there is no other use for these ritual objects, in Wirzenberg (the old choir of Gailingen), in Hamburg and there is much more property that could be moved to Israel.

The transfer of wooden decorated synagogues that are found in several museums creates a special problem, but I believe that with appropriate negotiation with the artistic institutions holding them and with a certain payment – as it is a redemption of the captives! – one or two can be saved. There is also a private Jewish museum in Schnittlich, Bavaria which we can purchase. The institute for De-Nazification in Munich could save much – and with the government’s help even that can be obtained. In the French Zone are several synagogues and Jewish property and one of our friends- professor Folbach – a half Jew, is willing to assist in any way in order to move objects from there. Friends in America agree to assist with funds in order to transfer the synagogue from Worms to Jerusalem. I doubt this can actually be done.

2. Austria. According to information that I received, there has been a criminal neglect of the art remnants. American soldiers would take memorabilia in the storages that kept

all such treasures in Salzburg. Even the Joint handed objects to DP camps and their fate remains unknown. The fate of the Jewish Museum in Vienna, whose director fled in 1937 is unknown, a search revealed a few objects in a private collection in Switzerland. These objects have been donated to our museum and with the end of the hostilities in Israel it will be transferred and exhibited in a special hall named after the donor. Ancient communities in southern Austria whose synagogues held important cultural objects were erased completely and only a thorough investigation might assist in finding their whereabouts. In Eisenstadt the collection of Sandor Wolf which is an entire museum of the Jewish community and its fascinating cemetery and the certificates of its people. Sandor Wolf passed away in Haifa and this museum could be transferred with the help of his heirs and either a diplomatic request or an exchange.

3. Czechoslovakia. A special problem lies in the city of Prague. Here the Nazis created, with the assistance of Jews who were later annihilated a large museum that held all the treasures of the synagogues of Moravia and Bohemia, this museum is situated in a synagogue called after Mordechai Meisel, only show a selection of what was collected here. It is enough to mention that in storages over 10,000 Torah covers are kept, in the same amount and even more different rich Torah decorations. The treasure of Jewish ritual objects in silver – Torah crowns, Torah Shields, pointers, goblets, spice boxes, Zdakah boxes etc' is one of the richest treasures of a Jewish community around the world. In storage also lie 5,000 naked and torn Torah books. The museum's director is a converted Jew in addition to approximately 30 workers. This kind of treasure cannot be exhibited as one whole. Even if they cover the entire city and exhibit in other institutions. Last year, I offered to hand the objects to

Jerusalem one half of these objects which we will select and will be entitled after the Jewish communities of Bohemia and Moravia. Many of the Christians who oversee this property on behalf of the government and other non-Zionists, were delighted to accept this offer. The only ones who were uncertain about this possibility were the Zionists who preferred to keep this 'monument' intact. My offer to dress and decorate the Torah books and hand them to existing communities in Israel in order to be used during a memorial day for the Jews of Moravia and Bohemia was ignored. Even though I believe that it will be possible to hold diplomatic negotiations for the salvage of these objects and I am certain that with the right sensitivity we can succeed.

Slovakia which is a unique country holds many more treasures, but many of them have already been sold and reached America and other countries. This is where I received the gift of the Jewish museum in Prešov which is exceptional in its unique Jewish Ethnographic objects, the synagogue Judiaca created of copper, Iron, brass, tin and lead. Very interesting materials. 19 crates are already packed – but in the meantime the transfer is complicated, I also received two crated gifts from Bratislava from a Jew and I hope to transfer it all as soon as I obtain the necessary means.

4. Italy. Despite the exploitation that Italy suffered since the 19th century, it still holds many treasures. Private individuals and communities hold a huge amount of Jewish ritual objects of silver and other metals, textiles etc'. The treasures of the Jewish community in Rome is one of these examples. Ritual objects that will never be used and are most decorated are kept in storage. The chief Rabbi, Dr Pratto sees himself as the keeper of these objects and is unwilling to transfer them to Israel or elsewhere where they will be of use and will tell the story of the flourishing days of the Jewish community in Rome.

The Jewish Museum in Livorno was one of the wealthiest institutions of its kind but now the objects have all been dispersed. Different small communities that vanished before the war left behind important cultural property. Hundreds of synagogues are being used as storages and as animal stables, their richly decorated wood panels could have been with little effort be shipped to Israel in order to be hung at the museum or for use in new synagogues. However this calls for the handling of municipalities and governments – Jewish communities are supportive and it seems that the Italian municipalities will be able to cooperate.

The Jewish community in Rome donated a 16th century marble Torah Arc and the Basalt seat of the Rabbi of the same century – with proper funding we will be able to ship them and reconstruct in a special hall at the museum.

5. Holland. Communities that flourished in the early 17th century until the 19th century are disappearing quickly. The large Jewish Portuguese community in Amsterdam reaches 900 people and mostly join as result of mixed marriages. The Jewish Portuguese community in Haag does not actually exist anymore and its treasures are kept with the Jewish Portuguese communities in Amsterdam. This treasure has an abundance of unique Jewish ritual objects which include several created when the community was established (gift of Jacob Tirado) with others they are not used or exhibited. Negotiations about the shipping of a part of this property to Israel were rejected by the heads of the community, most of which are assimilated Jews who do not accept the existence of the State of Israel or Zionism. One of these men mentioned upon the distribution of a poster on behalf of the Haganah⁸⁵¹: “Why are they distributing posters of foreign countries?”. I have seen these treasures and it will be

⁸⁵¹ The Haganah (in Hebrew ‘The Defence’) The Jewish paramilitary organization during the British Mandate of Palestine which later became the IDF.

advisable to transfer them to Israel, as one of the local Jewish researchers said “an object would never go to Israel, not with the last of the Portuguese”. Yet I managed to reach some of these people’s attention and I hope that with further negotiations we will succeed.

The treasures of the Ashkenazi Jewish community in Holland have all been removed to one place in Amadé – where they also have an excellent collection of their own. Thanks to my negotiation, the heads of the community decided to support a transfer of some of the objects, those without existing family inscriptions to the museum. Soon we will also receive a list of the objects we selected that will be shipped.

The question on the acknowledgement of the Israeli government in our museum as a national one has been questioned in this case. Only with an attempt on behalf of the state will local Zionists see themselves as obligated to assist. From the objects I collected here I will mention the 13th Century Bronze Hannukah lamp, a Hannukah lamp by Meir Heilbron- valuable objects and the oil painting of the wise Jacob Sasportas that was attributed to Rembrandt and now it is known that it was made by the Dutch artist Isaac Litichheuse in 1679. I managed to accumulate a collection of copper works including objects that are not familiar to the Dutch researchers such as objects made especially for the Portuguese “Hevre Kadisha” (burial society) in Amadé and more.

6. Poland. I myself did not reach Poland, and I can only base my writing on my investigations among the immigrants from Poland and those who have visited there. Even there many objects are hidden underground or held by robbers. Different objects are kept in archives, private and public institutions who are willing to hand them to us. The question of their transportation remains urgent.

7. Hungary and Rumania, Yugoslavia. I also know of these countries only from words of mouth and there is much yet to be done there. But the availability is unclear to me and I believe there needs to be a first attempt before we get to our work. Before the war, these countries were rich with traditional handsome ritual objects.

8. Eastern countries. Turkey, Iran – one might still be able to access them, however the neighbouring countries cannot be handled. There is need for preparation for attempts to reach them in the future, as they keep many unique treasures that no one had heard of.

9. Jewish cultural property in other museums. I am yet to tackle the question of the Jewish property in museums which could be – if the objects are of great value – be purchased either by exchange or with funds. This issue also demands a special investigation.

For example, I have heard that the National Museum in Budapest holds a list of the most beautiful Jewish ritual objects which they are willing to sell for a few dollars.

The Cathedral of Palma de Majorca holds a pair of Torah ornaments (Rimonim) from the Cammarata community in Sicily - the only ones that survived of this rich community that have been described by the Rabbi of Bartenura.⁸⁵² An offer might bring these adorned objects to Israel.

10. Jewish artistic property in the hand of governments under the title 'enemy property'.

The property that belonged to Jews which includes Jewish ritual objects and general

⁸⁵² Ovadiah ben Abraham of Bartenura, a 15th Century Italian Rabbi known for his commentary on the Mishnah.

works of art that are in the hands of different governments creates a unique problem. If we will not make an effort to obtain these objects most of it will remain in the hands of their current holders as many of the owners will not return.

Every country I visited has similar institutions and the property was returned to the rightful owners when they came forward. But what about the property that has no claimant?

In France I have seen the huge depots of the *récupération*. In every corner more cultural property that will eventually be handed to the French government as it has no owners. The same happens in Holland, where a committee was established on behalf of the museum directors (and they are mostly Jewish – a few are even dedicated Zionists) that takes care of the restitution of this property.⁸⁵³ Same goes for Belgium and the Czech Republic where this property is entitled – enemy property. If we will not act quickly it is us who will be to blame for the loss of this cultural property that was collected with great wealth and could enrich the collections of our country.

G. Summary

The legend tells that in the future all the synagogues abroad will settle in Israel. If we are unable to bring them all in their entirety, we will do our utmost to bring selected examples of the remnants of our artistic culture from each land.

The writer knows that we are at a time of war. But the condition of the objects demands an urgent solution to salvage these captives and bring them to Israel.

The writer suggests to prepare for a mission that will leave at the end of winter to the countries mentioned above with the promise of monetary assistance and the governments

⁸⁵³ For more information about Holland after the Second World War see: Julie-Marthe Cohen, pp. 199-252.

support. I have made several budgetary suggestions which I will be happy to share if necessary to support this issue.

September, 1948

M. Narkiss

Director, the National Museum
"Bezalel" Jerusalem

Appendix II

Memorandum: On the Salvage of Jewish art remnants removed from Jews in Germany and transferred to Israel

The problem

A journey in Germany in the summer of 1949 (May-August) proved that valuable art treasures that belonged to Jews – whether paintings, graphic art, sculpture, medals, coins or Gilded, silver, earthenware, porcelain, marble and wood or artistic Jewish ritual objects – were in constant danger of being given to the Germans. The Occupying American Military Government has given to the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, with the help of the writer of this memorandum, a collection of 15,000 different Jewish ritual objects mostly made of silver, a few of other metals and embroidered ritual garments with gold and silver thread. These materials were divided following a division determined by the JCR's committee, in which the Jewish Agency and the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, participated as well as other cultural organizations, as it is possible to see in the report I hope to prepare in the coming days. Our part of this collection reached only 3,000 silver objects that are valued for at least 300,000 LEI, though JCR, which is a sister organization to the Joint, neglected claiming the general artistic property from the occupying government, which has a higher estimate. It only claimed J E W I S H cultural treasures and as result of this strange attitude, general books looted from Jews were given to German libraries, since their content is not considered Jewish. Obviously, a painting by Rembrandt or Velasquez is not as Jewish as a Tallit or a curtain of the Torah ark, a Torah crown or a Hanukah lamp. Obviously these objects are handed to the German murderers since they are of “general cultural value”. As result of this attitude, during my visit to Germany, 10,000 general art objects whose value reaches at least one million LEI, have been given to the Minister-president of Bavaria. Many works of art, including Jewish silver objects were given to the International Refugee Organization (IRO)

that held an auction in New York which raised large sums for the refugees (among them many who were war criminals in Poland, Latvia etc).

What is the Jewish property that can be found in Germany today?

Many general works of art belonged to Jews, few were returned since not many claimed the objects. The claimants turned to the Central Collecting Points in request to search for works of art that they left behind or that they were forced to “sell” – in many instances the objects “could not be found” as the German staff of the Central Collecting Points informed the claimants that it is difficult to identify the objects they search for. In addition, many objects are found in the hands of private individuals (after whom it is difficult to follow), especially in cases of museums that deceived the law that obligates an owner to inform the authorities of any large cultural property or a forcefully sold object which has a value of on less than 1,000 DM. The writer of this memorandum discovered the collection of the “Augsburg” of Mr. Otto Landauer, now living in Jerusalem, in a museum in Augsburg. This claimant has been claiming for the return of his objects since the fall of Germany. However, it was impossible to discover the collection since the Augsburg museum valued it for 600 DM and according to the law⁸⁵⁴, the museum is exempt from informing about its location to the authorities. In the same place the writer discovered several other such typical cases, as well as in other cities (I have a list).

In many cases, there are no claimants to come forward and the property is entrusted by the occupying governments to the German government, as shown above.

In the occupied British and French Zones, the situation is even worse – there is no restitution law, for the time being. In Hamburg, I was offered a pair of silver *Rimonim*⁸⁵⁵ of 18th century

⁸⁵⁴ Jerusalem, Central Zionist Archive, A444.217, *Military Law no. 59, Part XIII: Duty to report and penalties, Article 73: Duty to report*, 1947.

⁸⁵⁵ ‘Rimon’ (pomegranate in Hebrew) is also used to describe Torah finials.

Augsburg for the price of 750 DM, in order to deceive the law (of the handing of the objects), while the value of the silver (only by weight) is higher than this estimate.

In Hamburg, a collection of valuable silver objects looted from Jews was found in a basement of a city museum. It weighs 2,000 Kg, while an amount of 6,000 Kg of silver has already been melted in 1943 by the Nazis. This silver treasure is one of the most valuable I have ever seen – including the collections of the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, which do not hold so many beautiful and valuable things in one place.

In Berlin, the painting collection of the Jewish Museum is under the supervision of Mr. Schweig, municipal supervisor for property of absentees, in the British sector. This collection holds a number of important paintings and is preserved in a narrow room in concerning conditions; one leaning on the other, after they have all suffered the dump conditions of their last shelter.

In the French occupation zone, in Mainz, it is possible to find an important collection of hundreds of Jewish ritual objects and in worms – two volumes of the Mahzor written and illustrated by Simcha Bar Baruch in the 13th and 14th centuries.⁸⁵⁶ In my opinion, no price is too high for these valuable manuscripts. The communities in these cities reach 268 people, they are composed of mixed marriages and the average age is 68. The head of these communities is young, 24 years old Mr. Bernhardt. Only the communities can decide about the future for these treasures – that was the proposed legislation when I left Germany at the end of August, 1949.

Wiesbaden and Munich are two CCPs for general art. Both keep important works of art and archaeological objects that were taken from Jews – now the Americans are closing Munich and moving the remaining objects to Wiesbaden, however measures to save these objects are

⁸⁵⁶ *Worms Mahzor*, the National Library, Jerusalem

<http://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLI/English/collections/treasures/shapell_manuscripts/mikra/worm/Pages/default.aspx> [accessed 20 May 2015].

yet to be taken. In addition, delegations from different countries arrive daily to the CCPs in order to receive objects taken from their citizens. The French are taking back every object by a French artist whose owner cannot be identified, as they assume that since the painter is French the painting must belong to France. So do other delegations, and as result the little Jewish Museum in Amsterdam became rich with objects. The Dutch representative, a Jew called Morphogo, selected from whatever he could and shipped approximately 40 boxes to Amsterdam. And I have other examples.

JRSO which handles Jewish property and real estate is willing to deal with the objects and bring them to the Joint for sale. This means that important art treasures will be sold for cents while the country which desperately needs them will give them up.

We must act now!

An opportunity that will not repeat itself and at the twelfth hour, is handed to us now to salvage whatever we can before the Adenauer government will expand its authority – to start action.

There are many treasures of every kind across Germany and we must do something.

It is necessary to organize a national committee concentrated on the case of restitution and in parallel to establish a delegation of at least 10 people who will be equipped with the means to investigate the provenance of every object about which it was said: they have only artistic value and their Jewish owners are unknown – therefore they were looted by the Nazis from non- Jews. In Wiesbaden, it says next to an important Goya painting that it was removed from... Spain. Through research this delegation, which will have access to artistic literature, could prove the origin of any work of art and will restitute the object to its rightful owners, whether to Jews who are alive or to the state of Israel – the heir to the Jews who were murdered in the furnaces. In Frankfurt, a trial is taking place against a Nazi dealer who

executed a family of 16 persons in order to obtain their collection of paintings. The trial has not reached its conclusion since this criminal “cannot” appear at court due to a heart condition. The writer has been present at court when the accused was fined for 50 DM for not showing up at court even after a doctor testified that he is “dangerously ill”.

While I received a collection of paintings that were clearly taken from Jews in Munich, though their owners were unidentified and the German staff of the CCP announced for clear reasons that these works are nothing but “a pile of trash”- different German personnel came up to me removing the paintings and explaining that these objects belonged to Hitler’s collection or to other Nazi officials and these objects belong to the Bavarian state. When the paintings were already packed, a painting by Utrillo, (valued 750 LEI) was taken in addition to an expensive 17th century Goblin of the war of Alexander (valued 1,000 LEI) together with an expensive Persian carpet.

The delegation and its needs

The delegation I refer to needs to hold an authorization for acting on behalf of the Israeli State. I believe the Joint can participate in it since it has a good reputation in Germany. I am certain that the Joint can be persuaded that the saving of these objects for the state can be handled with a small allowance; these objects are to educate our youth, our immigrants and at the same time have a very high material value. The delegation therefore should be composed of at least 10 persons, between them, educated people and office assistants.

I suppose the time that will take the delegation to finish the restitution work is 6 months. The necessary budget for that is 15,000 LEI. It should be paid in part in Israel and in part abroad. If their work is finished sooner, the sum will be reduced accordingly.

My calculation gives each of these men an average of 1.250 LEI per diem

2,250 LEI

An average salary of 70 LEI per person	4,200 LEI
Two cars will be available for the delegation	2,200 LEI
Extra expenses: return travel 120 LEI	1,200 LEI
Car repairs, gas, accommodation, insurance, photography, office supply, packing supply, transportation, etc'	<u>5,150 LEI</u>
	15,000 LEI

I hope that for such a price, important works of art will reach Israel, works whose value exceeds the expense, I dare think of millions of LEI.

The sums can be paid from the JRSO funds. An organization that handles restitution of real estate property with cooperation of the Jewish Agency for Palestine and the Joint. In case we will need to live off the German economy, and in the case that we obtain assistance by the American Occupation Military Government, than we will prefer to live off the military economy, in which we will have few expenses. In any way our allowance must be insured in advanced in order to prevent difficulties.

The action should be planned so that the delegation will be able to begin its work no later than the beginning of May.

I hope the delegation will also be able to include in its work Austria, where many treasures are hold, this will be discussed in my next report, which will soon be delivered.

March 1950

Appendix III

The National Museum “Bezalel” in Jerusalem by M. Narkiss

In 1956 the National Museum “Bezalel” – the first museum in this country - will be 50 years old.

From a collection that belonged in a small cabinet, which was composed of a few examples of earthenware and glassware objects discovered in this land, “a pair of Japanese hand buttons, gift of Professor Warburg”, a few examples of Swedish goldsmith which was fashionable in the start of our century, etc’ - materials that would set as examples to the “Bezalel” School students, established in 1906 by Professor Boris Schatz in memory of the first Jewish artist who built a Temple in the desert – the Biblical “Bezalel”. Schatz himself (1856-1932), a student of the French academy and a fan of French tradition, imagined it as an example of the French museums in the French capital at the end of the last century, and this became his ideal.

With the development of the museum into an independent institution, part of the “Bezalel” building bloc, purchased at the time by Professor Schatz, with assistance from the Jewish National Fund, which Schatz expended – obtained collections of paintings by 19th and 20th century painters mainly from Germany and Poland whose main importance lies in their Jewishness. The only valuable painting – only one! – was a painting by Jozef Israëls (1824-1911), a self-portrait painted in 1909, a gift of the artist that reached the museum with a heart-warming letter written by the 85 year old artist.

Collections of non-Jewish objects at the museum were composed of old paintings of biblical subjects, most of questionable artistic value, and a collection of crafts from every country – again not of the best quality. A collection of ritual objects was composed of a few examples that were not unique in shape or quality. The system was: accept anything offered to you, and

the givers would – give anything one does not want in his house anymore, outdated, invaluable objects.

Schatz knew, that these objects cannot serve as fine “examples” for the students of his school, however, due to helplessness and lack of funding, he was incapable of rejecting unwanted gifts – one must accept everything in order to create a museum. The change in the museum includes: good objects for display would be purchased, out went the old and in came the new. In 1920 Schatz obtained funding from the Jewish congress 1,000 Palestine Pound for purchases. He was about to utilize it, and once he arrived to Vienna, the city he selected for his purchases – he found starving Jewish artists and decided to support their art, and so once again the museum became a house for the works of decent, but not great artists who could serve as examples for the young generation

In 1925, after the museum building, which was filled with objects from wall to wall, was renovated, it was decided to open it daily to the public. It was the first museum in Israel that was open daily to visitors and the only Jewish museum in the world that was open in that way. The (good) Archaeological department and the Painting and Sculpture departments were opened. In its official opening ceremony, Nahum Sokolov, then President of the Zionist Federation, announced that “Bezalel” is the National Museum since 1920, when Schatz transferred it to the management of the Federation.

A.

In the next few lines, the writer will do his best to describe the situation in the museum today, its departments and collections, the activities it holds within and outside its walls. The image received by the readers will express one goal – to make this institution worthy of its role and title.

The care takers of this museum, those who nourish it keep in their hearts the importance of its location – Jerusalem – compels them. It compels the management of the Zionist Organization – for the people of Israel everywhere: this museum does not belong only to Israel but to the entire nation, to the people of Israel wherever they live.

The staff of the museum have not forgotten their obligation to the nation of Israel – a responsibility to accumulate Jewish art of every period in the place where the spirit of Israel is revived, the obligation towards the citizens of Israel and their families are also remembered. The young generation. And towards Jerusalem the eternal capital – not only ancient Jewish art has to be accumulated but also the cultural heritage of every nation of the world, especially those – that were ever considered once, or today, a new development in the art.

As result of this, an action to assemble works of art in Jerusalem has been set up. It already began in the early 1930s and increased over the years following World War II, since 1947. A report on the work of the museum during these years will prove that the museum has been constantly following its goal and reached important achievements.

B.

The visitor to the museum will receive an impression, but this impression will only be partial. It must be mentioned in advanced that the museum has not enough space for its collections nor for its activities. The museum is composed of one wing, the entrance hall between two floors and unaltered rooms due to the difficulties to make changes and renovations. The exhibition cabinets are old, usually made of old boxes in which shipments to the museum arrived (the museum never obtained budget for furniture), the lights are not aimed properly – and the collections on view in this wing, such as remnants of Jewish art from many countries,

are the most important and unique. In the same wing paintings by old masters and a collection of 19th century Jewish painters are exhibited.

The second wing, built originally by Schatz for the carpet department of the “Bezalel” School, was added to the museum in 1934. It is composed of a large hall and a few small offices, a smaller hall for exhibitions and a reading hall for the library which is not big enough to hold the readers and the collection of 20,000 books which is quickly expending. In this wing, other museum collections are exhibited when temporary exhibitions are not held there.

For general knowledge: half of the adult citizens of the city of Jerusalem, whose population only reaches 140,000 people, do not visit the exhibitions due to their indifference and also their constant concern for food and housing. In such a city, a museum cannot reach an audience with a developing taste without holding changing exhibitions every one to two months. A three-month exhibit does not attract any more visitors and therefore the museum must increase its exhibitions, the number of approximately 80,000 annual visitors to Jerusalem (a combined small percentage of tourists and a percentage of visitors from other cities) – proves the educational importance of these exhibitions, how high the interest is of the crowd of Jerusalem and especially its youth. This shows the importance of holding changing exhibitions even though it prevents the museum from showing its permanent collections which are growing each year. Two important exhibitions are on view in the halls: Persian Islamic ceramics from a private collection in Jerusalem (Harry Philips) and Dutch graphic art of our generation. These two instructive exhibitions forced us to store the 20th Century paintings, sculptures and drawings from the permanent collection added throughout the last year by gifts, exchange, purchase (very few!) and donations. These exhibitions will be followed by a major exhibit of works of art just received from France after a long activity

there. Among the works exhibited: paintings by the great French artists: Matisse, Picasso, Lager, Delauny, Masson, Utrillo, Duffy, Marchand, Despiau, Gleizes etc’.

This exhibit will not be able, as they do elsewhere in the world, to join the existing collections and compliment them, it will have to be taken down in order to use the space for future exhibitions, without seeing the light of day until a special opportunity in which the building the museum ought to have, will finally be built.

The visitor who returns to the museum time after time; the local visitor and myself are thrilled to point out that the museum has returning visitors who come at least once a week, on Saturdays, to see the museum! The local visitor is familiar with the museum collections, he loves the museum and is sharing the concern for its lack of space. The foreign visitor who encounters the museum is impressed by its permanent unchanging collection. He, the foreigner, who has no interest in local activities for education through art, who sees greater works of art in his own country, wishes to have a unique experience here, he does not know of the important general collections and the collection of Israeli art which we are very proud of.

C.

The inquirer would then ask - what is the point in collecting when there is no room to exhibit the collection? Our reply is that the essence of the museum does not lie in what they exhibit of their collections, but in the fact that they can exhibit. A museum is not judged by what a one-time visitor sees, but by what the museum aspires to accomplish. This museum aspires to be worthy of its name – the National Museum of the People of Israel in its spiritual and actual capital, Jerusalem. It must concentrate now on accumulation, this is a “time of ingathering”! This museum will not be a Jewish Museum in the sense of the Jewish Museum in Warsaw, Prague, Vienna or Berlin – in the past, or New York, London, Paris – or anywhere else in the

world where they only collect Jewish art or general art on Jewish subjects. Many great museums hold important general works of art, it is not so in Jerusalem (or in Israel in general). Here, one must pay attention to Jewish art for National reasons, however, general works of art must also be collected, just as the National Gallery in Washington is not a place for collecting American artists exclusively, but also greatest Masters from all over the world in all times, and just as the British Museum in London or the Louvre in Paris or the Metropolitan Museum in New York – are not a place for the collecting of British, French and American art respectively.

The inquirer must be aware that what is true about the State of Israel is also true for its museum. The pioneers did not research their possibilities first – they saw it as an urgent necessity. It is possible that museums were not created this way anywhere else. Here in this country, there was no other way. In this country it began thousands of years ago in temples=tents, and in temporary structures, until King Solomon arrived and built a stable temple. [The spirit of] God was also found in the temporary structures...

Clearly the museum's directors are not comfortable in such conditions. They feel that a new building could solve all or at least most of their most difficult problems. Moreover: a building could have been a catalyst for a constant expansion of the collections, an ongoing relationship with the generous friends of the museum and this is the main goal! – To serve the public in the best and most extensive way possible.

D.

Yet, these hard facts do not cause a lack in doing. Despite these conditions, this museum is not a mausoleum, but a place where much is being done, I would say: indeed it is a place for living muses. It had many activities and many departments. All is directed towards inner and outer work. All is directed to serve the audience, to educate it, to refine its taste and improve

it. It does so in a few ways: within its walls and beyond them. Inside, as well as out, the museum reaches many layers of society: from youth to the elderly, students to professors, from men of culture to those who never saw a work of art in their lives. Outside - our work is not limited to Jerusalem: our Travelling Exhibitions, paintings and other activities reach the different cities, villages and Kibbutzs, the army camps and even the local temporary accommodation for immigrants.

Letters arriving to the museum each morning from cultural activists across the country, teachers and counsellors show gratitude to the museum staff for their efforts to introduce art to the people across this country.

The positive attitude of donors from around the world, informing of their gifts, their bequests, the love that our museum encounters when we ask for assistance in the expansion of the museum collections, whether by works of art, art books for its library, reproductions for its archive, the attention given to the museum by a group of dealers who offer valuable objects to our museum while willingly waiving their own profits, the generous assistance of donors that allow the museum to purchase works of art, which we would not be able to otherwise. The assistance given by the Zionist Federation, by the American Foundation for Israeli Institutions and by the Israeli government – is a great support to continue the hard work, despite the hardships and worries surrounding it.

What is the scope of the museum collecting, what is the extent of its activities, what institutions does it include? – This will be told next.

E.

As a National museum of a People, as a museum in a national capital, the museum sees itself as a part of a group of such museums in other countries, in similar, the museum accumulates works of art by every generation and people, while giving special attention to the art of its

people, for example: the people of Israel throughout its entire existence. I will only say this: only here will the artistic creation of every Jewish generation be exhibited, as a part of our unique conception of the continuity in this creation – it is time that the world sees our part in the international creation and a part of our essence, whether big or small. We believe that we can renew – in research as well – Jewish art history as a field.

Our museum holds large collection of Jewish ritual art used at home and at the synagogue, hand painted manuscripts and more that can become a part of Jewish art history. In the last hundred years we witnessed the creation of many art historical fields. Jewish art history was not one of these fields because of the lack of respect on behalf of the Jews themselves and of the Christians, the other reason is the misunderstanding of the ban described in the Ten Commandments.

Journeys through Europe in the years following the war, purchases and gifts, resulted in the arrival of such rare objects – despite the neglect of their owners – which make them remain important and will be a part of future research on Jewish art and culture.

Throughout the years, other ethnographic materials exhibiting the artistic culture of Jewish communities in different countries arrived to the collection and our ambition is to build such collections in the future based on their country of origin. There are fields such as the crafts of the Jews of Yemen, both the secular and the sacred or the crafts of the Jews of Persia, the Jews of North Africa etc' which only in our museum are put side by side to create a bigger picture.

Another part of this collection is Jewish painting and sculpture as part of the European Schools. Here, we see a continuation from the art of decorating synagogues that is based in the ancient manuscripts even though one can often find a Christian influence in them. We

know today that there are many influences between creations of artists who belong to different nations.

The general art collection is growing nicely. Though the museum cannot take pride in departments of great Medieval Art nor Renaissance Art. We have only few works by great 17th Century Spanish, Dutch and Flemish Schools. Still a beginning of a collection of such great works was established here as photographs of many of the works can prove. It is too soon for us to boast in a 19th Century collection of great works of art, though we have several of those. An important collection of 20th Century French artists was received from donors in France. A major collection of drawings by great artists which includes graphic art – of approximately 35,000 pages, including works by Rembrandt and his circle – this is one of our treasured collections and will be a part of the graphic art department in the future. A special department will be created for the Dutch collection which will carry the titles of the art collectors– the Israelis Zadok and Simcha Van Vriesland.⁸⁵⁷

It is obvious that a collection of important works by local artists has been established in our museum - even though we rarely get to exhibit it to the public, we hope that once shown in full it will show the great development of artistic creation over the last 50 years.

Israeli archaeology, especially from an artistic aspect, found a home in our museum just as Greek antique art, European, the art of China and Japan, and even Pre-Columbian art. Lorestan Bronze and ceramics, Islamic steel, earthenware and glass, textiles and goblets and embroidery all have examples in our collections.

An important numismatic collection of 25,000 medals and coins – Jewish elements are in abundance in this collection – is a part of our museum collection and is the basis for the numismatic department.

⁸⁵⁷ Obituary, Van Vriesland, Industrialist, Zionist Leader, Dies in Tel Aviv at 53, *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (4 December 1939) <<http://www.jta.org/1939/12/05/archive/van-vriesland-industrialist-zionist-leader-dies-in-tel-aviv-at-53>> [accessed 13 February 2017].

F.

The museum consists of three main institutions: The Library, the Archive of Reproductions and the Graphic Art department.

The library is devoted only to art history in every language and field. It is quickly reaching 20,000 volumes and our ambition is to constantly expand it. The library is used not only by the museum staff, but also by students and researchers, artists and artisans and books are loaned to high-schools and elementary schools each day of the week. The comprehensive catalogue that holds not only books and magazines but also articles and essays is the result of our librarian, Ms Rikuda Photach's hard work.⁸⁵⁸

Approximately 100,000 reproductions in color consist the reproduction archive for Art History and Jewish history. These are often used by researchers as materials for comparison, by historians as encyclopedias, by publishers – as publishable materials in their books and publications and by our Travelling Exhibitions – for examples of works of art. When the department of art history will be established in the University, they will be able to use the library and archive for teaching and research. The archive is under the supervision of my friend Dr. Schiff and with his extensive knowledge, he manages it with great devotion, overcoming the small space given to him.

The graphic art department contains thousands of art posters, thousands of envelopes, books, 35,000 Ex Libris and a collection of propaganda posters, small signs, stamps and other artistic markings - used by the researcher of graphic art. The majority of objects in this collection are packed due to the lack of space and it creates a great difficulty for the people using it.

G.

⁸⁵⁸ Rikuda Potash is Mordechai Narkiss's sister.

It has been mentioned earlier, that the museum is not satisfied with its permanent collections and organizes changing exhibitions in order to educate the public and distribute the knowledge of art. These exhibitions are varied and if I was to give a list of the most important ones – it would have been very long. It will be sufficient to mention only a few: Art of the Far East, Old Netherland's Art, Post-Impressionism, Jewish artists from Oppenheim to Chagall, French Engravers from Callot to Picasso, The art of the Jews of Yemen, The art of the Jews of Italy, Jewish Amsterdam, Archaeology as a source for new imagery, bi-annual exhibitions of practical art in Israel, an annual exhibition of Israeli artists, Jewish Medicine throughout generations, a retrospective of Marc Chagall's works, a retrospective of Marquet and a list of solo exhibitions by Israeli and international artists, mainly from the Paris School.

Still, this is not sufficient for the museum. It must arouse interest and encourage visitors and it does so in different ways. It wishes to make the people of Jerusalem proud of their museum, not only through its rich collections but also through its monthly exhibitions of 'Object of the Month', 'Books of the Month' and many guided tours and academic publications that include the monthly bulletin, a magazine for art historical research etc'.

Since 1944, the museum exhibits a different object each month with an explanation, occasionally with examples for comparison. Usually "Object of the Month" was chosen from the collection of the museum and on occasions from private collections – these are mainly exceptional pieces that the visitors do not see often. Works of art are only one of the many types of objects collected at the museum. Painting, sculpture, drawing, graphic work, ritual art or antiques. Usually the object is selected for a specific month for example: A Haggadah for the month of Passover or a Hannuka lamp for the month of Hannuka. The "Object of the Month" must be exceptional. Monthly exhibits have been ongoing, even during the days of blockade on the Jerusalem during the War of Independence, and during curfews under the British Mandate. Our strength lies in our consistency.

The monthly exhibit is composed of a great collection and concentrates on one theme of the new acquisitions, for example: Chinese art that arrived to the museum, 20th century paintings, ancient graphic works, sculpture, drawing, old masters, ancient glass works, etc' – the selection of objects is necessary because of the fast growing collection and the lack of space. In October 1952, for example, we exhibited works of art by artists of our generation from Italy, America, France, England etc'. In November, we exhibited works of art from the 7th century until the 17th century, in December – important Hannuka lamps from the 13th century-18th century made of different materials that recently arrived to the museum, and in January 1953, an exhibition of graphic works by Israeli artists, and so on.

Beside the important exhibitions already mentioned, the museum held many exhibits of old masters, exhibitions of recent purchases, and graphic exhibitions from the museum's collection. If I am to give an example of the planned exhibits for this year, the season begins in October and ends at the end of September, according to the beginning of the Jewish year, which is also the way in which the Zionist Federation divides its year economically.

This is the list of exhibitions: 1. Ancient Persian and Islamic Ceramics from the Harry Philips collection, Jerusalem; 2. New Dutch Graphic Art; 3. New French Art – gifts of artists and friends (this is the fifth exhibition of acquisitions from France since 1948); 4. Victor Hugo's paintings; 5. Leonardo Da Vinci, Five Hundred Years to his Birth; 6. Retrospective of Boris Schatz's works; 7. L. Wolfert – works of art; 8. Musical instruments from the collection of Serge Kosovski and others (with collaboration of the Art Department of the Ministry of Culture and Education); 9. Primitive Masks from the collection of Dr. El. Raphaeli and others; 10. Works of art by Hecht from Paris; 11. Manet's graphic art; 12. Selected Israeli Artists (with collaboration of the Art Department of the Ministry of Culture and Education); 13. The Sacks collection, Toronto – Modern French Art; 14. Camille Pissarro – Graphic

works of art; 15. Ethnographic art exhibition – to celebrate Independence Day; 16. Far Eastern Art; 17. The Educational undertaking of Debora Keln; 18. Pre-Historic Art.

The variety of these exhibition and their scope is the proof of the museum's devotion to educating its public by using every available mean in order to create a great artistic experience. The public's gratitude is its greatest gift to the museum staff.

The art library organizes monthly exhibits of art books, usually – books that relate to one of the existing exhibitions or an exhibit of new books. That is how one can familiarize himself with the books and articles that are held at the library.

A lack of energy does not prevent us from hosting guided tours: at least once a week on Saturdays for art lovers and the city of Jerusalem should be proud of them. Often these tours are organized for adults, but there are also regular tours for school children and youth groups. Guided tours are held several times each day.

Lectures are few for several reasons; lack of space and equipment, the heat of summer and the cold of a winter without heating – though those held, receive much attention. Most of the lectures discuss current exhibitions, current issues relating to art, or we hold special lectures for memorial days other special exhibitions are held for selected audiences. Before the World War, we established a publication house that concentrated on research on Jewish art. The list of books published during its first year shows the extent which we were planning to reach and includes monographs on special subjects. In this department a book about the Hanukkah lamp was published, several manuscripts are ready for print but have not been published yet due to a lack of funding. A list of magazines entitled "The Museum's research" written on subjects that should be further researched were published as well, these include: Rashi's Knowledge

of Niello Art⁸⁵⁹; The Craftsmanship of the Yemenite Jews; The Invention of the 'Hadas' for Perfumes, which will soon be published. In addition, as many catalogues as our funds allow are published each month for the changing exhibitions.

The research of Jewish Art has yet to come to the main stage and the museum wishes to create a special front place for it. However, there is also a need for research of general art in Israel. The magazine "Art" wishes to give a stage to them both. This publication ceased in 1944 and we are working to re-publishing it and distributing it to a larger audience. The magazine will now be published in both Hebrew and English in order to make this research available to more potential readers. It has already been mentioned that it is necessary that the research of Jewish Art will become a profession, since it was neglected for too long. This magazine will take this role upon itself as of April 1953. Every magazine will be composed of 64 pages, texts and 16 images. Paper was promised by the donor of the museum, the author and published AB Serti, Paris.

The monthly bulletin "Lists" on the current activities of the museum is published in stencil in both Hebrew and English. Next, we plan to renew it and print it in three languages: Hebrew, English and French, the reader will find there lists of the museum's current exhibitions, purchases, Travelling Exhibitions etc'.

H.

We do a lot outside the walls of the museum. One of the most important enterprises of the museum is the Travelling Exhibitions, that are known around the world, and that is not all.

The Travelling Exhibitions of the "Bezalel" Foundation entitled after Sigmund B. Sonbern⁸⁶⁰, was initiated in 1931 for a trial period. It was expended since we received funding from the

⁸⁵⁹ *Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (Rashi) (1040-1105)*, Jewish Virtual Library
 <<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/rashi.html>> [accessed 1 June 2015]. Rashi is one of the most important Jewish Bible commentator living in France in the Middle Ages

foundation mentioned. The foundation was established by Sigmund B. Sonbern, who admired the first steps we took in this direction. This foundation only supports this enterprise partially, however, we found it appropriate to name it after the generous donor who identified its importance and supported our institution. Each of the Travelling Exhibitions is composed of 30 reproductions around a specific subject. Interpretations and explanations are a part of each exhibit and the reproductions are numbered in a specific order and framed in a standard size of 35X50 cm frame. The receivers only need to hang the images accordingly. The explanations, that are appropriate to every level of knowledge (difficult expressions are sometimes explained separately in a dictionary of words referring to the relevant exhibit), replace the guide and make the exhibition accessible even to high-school students. Such exhibitions are useful for schools, agricultural settlements, IDF bases, boarding schools and temporary accommodation for immigrants. Exhibitions deal with every historical period in both Jewish and general art. Exhibitions are also devoted to Jewish holidays, Jewish and Israeli history and crafts.

Such exhibits are very useful to the public and the museum holds an average of 30 Travelling Exhibitions per month. A lack in appropriate equipment and frames, reduces their availability. We are proud to report that these exhibits reach every corner of the country and during the Second World War were sent to military bases, and internment camps⁸⁶¹ from the Persian Gulf to Egypt and Cypress. During the War of Independence our Travelling Exhibitions reached the front lines and our youth learned to appreciate art even under fire. Even nowadays our exhibitions travel between the different IDF bases and we also currently hold exhibitions in North Africa and in America.

⁸⁶⁰ Yehuda Reinhertz, 'The Founding of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem – Chaim Weizmann (1913-1914)', in *Founding History of the Hebrew University: Beginnings*, ed. by Saul Katz and Michael Head, Vol 1, [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, Magnes Press, 1997), 123-146. Head of the Baltimore committee for funding of the Hebrew University (est. 1913).

⁸⁶¹ Between the years 1946-1949 immigrant ships from Europe to Palestine who violated the British policy were sent to internment camps in Cypress.

We can estimate the number of visitors to each exhibit from 100 upwards, and we are certain that their average number rises – one can make a remark that the annual number of visitors is of at least 36,000 to the Travelling Exhibitions. The ‘thank you’ letters we receive from all over the country: from schools and Kibbutzes, boarding schools and the IDF bases- indicate the importance of this service.

Side by side with the Travelling Exhibition project a second enterprise entitled Travelling Pictures that is composed of colour offprints (facsimile) of great artists of every generation and especially of our generation is taking place. The museum has just reached 400 Travelling Pictures, 300 of which are already framed and that travel between schools, Kibbutzes and similar institutions.

The museum also holds exhibitions outdoors, around the country and abroad, specifically in agricultural settlement where they request to view Jewish ritual objects around the high holidays, crafts by different Jewish ethnic groups such as the Jews of Yemen, Jews of North Africa etc’. In addition, we are now curating a list of major exhibitions on Jewish Art, the art of the land of Israel that will be on loan on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Culture of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, to different institutions abroad. A variety of our museum exhibitions are often loaned to other institutions in cities and villages. During the past years, these exhibits include: Original lithographs by Toulouse-Lautrec, Useful art in Israel 1952 (which exhibited works by 68 artists), a solo exhibition for the painter Marquet and a solo exhibition of works by the painter A. Millich, a solo exhibition of works by the sculpture Constan, to mention only a few.

The teachers in schools and academic institutions, who teach history, folk or art receive materials from our archive regularly for their use in their writing and research. There is an

endless number of institutions and private individuals turning to our museum for assistance to which we rarely are unable to comply due to a lack of relevant materials.

Publishers, encyclopaedias, magazines and newspapers regularly use our assistance whether in reproductions, art books or biographies from our library, archive and collections or the knowledge of our researchers.

I.

This institution is the property of the Zionist Federation and its supporters are the Ministry of Education and Culture of the State of Israel and the American Foundation for Israeli Institutions, even the public is not indifferent to the museum. An association of friends of the museum in Israel and abroad constantly send support whether by monetary funds or works of art.

The association of friends of the museum in France, led by great French artists, actors, museum directors, art critics, ministers of parliament – have been helping us purchase major works of art in France since 1947. Four large-scale exhibitions put these treasures on view for the public.

In the Netherlands, where such an association was established, led by important men from the art world, important purchases have been made. In 1951 we organized an exhibition of works of art donated by friends in the Netherlands.

Even in Italy, a branch of our association was established with the help of art historians and public figures and we were able to accumulate an important collection of Italian works of art, exhibited at the museum in 1952.

Yet even in countries in which we do not have associations or committees, we managed through correspondence to receive important donations and gifts from artists and generous

donors and it is encouraging to know that there are those who see the importance of the national museum in Jerusalem. The importance of art to our youth and the educational and moral value this support brings to us.

J.

For the past five years a great effort has been made to create a change in the museum's collections. Four journeys of the director of the museum, to different countries in Europe, brought art treasures in every field of the museum's existing collections and new fields in which the museum had the ambition to start collecting became a reality – the collections now exist. Both the new French School and the old. Gifts are of course unplanned and the museum makes a special effort to purchase works in order to fill in the gaps as much as possible. One must note that here the possibilities to purchase art are limited and it cannot be compared to the situation in Europe or America where the art market is inflated and makes it possible for museums to buy anything they want in local currency. On the other hand the economic situation in our country does not allow any purchases abroad in foreign currency, and therefore the museum is subject to the favors of the limited local market. Even so, I would like to mention that since October 1952 important international works of art were bought in Israel. With the assistance of the private owners who lowered their asking price, the museum obtained a drawing by Degas, an excellent drawing by Modigliani, an etching by Rembrandt, which is an addition to our cabinet of Dutch graphic art after Zadok and Simcha Van Vriesland, an oil painting by Elsheimer. A 19th century Russian Icon, an important oil painting by Israëls and more – each opportunity was taken advantage of. Since the end of the World War high quality works of art, antiques and archaeological objects were purchased in Israel: a 16th century Haggadah from Germany – a unique work and a Mahzor in the French style of 1450, in addition to a few other manuscripts – one can see the variety and extent of the collection.

We must not forget the part of restitution of the Nazi looting that only fragments of it were brought to Israel with assistance from the different restitution institutions such as: The Jewish Cultural Reconstruction and the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization. The majority of works were still lying in the basements of museums and communities across the British and French zones where very little has been done for our country, even in the American occupation zone work still continues.

In summary: only photographs can give an idea of the treasures enriching the museum and long lists will not be of any use.

K.

In the difficult conditions of our country, this museum must, just as any other, fight for its existence. To fight against authorities and people who lack the muse, hit on their heads and explain the importance of a museum for the cultural life of a people. The gratitude of the people, the young generation and art lovers proves that museums are necessary for this nation, their establishment in Tel Aviv, Ein Harod – a Kibbutz of 1000 people - and Haifa, as well as a number of regional museums – this shows that museums are beloved by this people. There is no doubt whether a museum is necessary while there is no well in Hulda or no water in Kibbutz Dafna, and while there is no roof on the heads of immigrants⁸⁶².

The old and the new settlements and even the temporary accommodation for immigrants – all need museums. If we do not want this country to become a divided land of tribes, who will fight between themselves, who will be intolerant for differences in customs – and we do not wish that – education, especially visual education, is a key factor for unity and a unification to one culture. Therefore, this country is in need for the type of the universal museum, the national museum which is central for a people, a state, as the one I just described.

⁸⁶² The Dafna and the Hulda Kibbutzes were established in the 1930's. Both places were on the front lines during the 1948 War of Independence. Dafna, in the northern border with Syria and Hulda is situated near the main route to Jerusalem.

L.

What are the main concerns of the national museum "Bezalel" at the moment? They are many.

It is missing basic equipment that every organized museum has, a restoration room, and a photograph laboratory that now escorts each museum. It is missing the funds for purchasing new collections, to hold and insure larger exhibitions and to publish research in art history, and to publish our magazine. It is also lacking the funds for any regular acquisitions, though two main issues concern us at the moment.

The first, which is most meaningful is the lack of a youth who can assist the museum staff in research and abilities. We are in need of stipends for young art historians who can be sent by us to participate in conferences and who will become expert photographers, archivists etc'.

Lastly, but not our last need at all, we need a building, a large building that will be fitting for the museum departments and institutions: the library, archives, graphic cabinet, numismatic collection etc'.

Our great dream was that in 1956, by the 50th anniversary of the museum at least a part of the collection will be moved into the new building, built in a central and respectful place in Jerusalem as a national museum of the Jewish people ought to.

Samuel II chapter 7: 2 the king said to Natan the prophet, "Here, I'm living in a cedar-wood palace; but the ark of God is kept in a tent!"

Kings I Chapter 5: 2 Then Solomon sent word to Hiram, saying, 3 "You know that David my father was unable to build a house for the name of the LORD his God because of the wars which surrounded him, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet. 4 "But now the

LORD my God has given me rest on every side; there is neither adversary nor misfortune. 5

"Behold, I intend to build a house for the name of the LORD my God..."⁸⁶³

⁸⁶³ The memorandum ends with a citation from the Torah (the old testament).

Appendix IV

Standing on the remains of the historic 1038 Worms synagogue. Worms Museum director, Dr. Friedrich M. Illert (centre), S. Shunami (left) and M. Narkiss (right).



M. Narkiss (second right) in the courtyard of the Worms Museum with the museum director, Dr. Friedrich M. Illert (right), JRSO secretary J. Mayer and her husband (Ari) (left) and S. Shunami (centre).



M. Narkiss (back row centre) with the staff responsible for packing at the Wiesbaden CCP on the day of shipping (some of the staff are missing).



Appendix V

List of Sales conducted by H. F. Odell: 1950-1951

date	name	Title/description of objects	Number of objects	Price
April 19, 1950	Dr. Arthur Weiser	Painting, Romantic Landscape, Signed "Anton Schiffer", 1851	1	\$150
April 19, 1950	Dr. Arthur Weiser	painting- Romanitic landscape signed Anton Schiffer, 1851	1	\$153
April 24, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Oil painting, Troika, signed C. Stojanoff	1	\$60
April 24, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Miniatures	14	\$149
April 25, 1950	Rudolf Wien	Coronation series	5	\$30
April 25, 1950	Rudolf Wien	Drawing	1	\$10
April 25, 1950	Rudolf Wien	Print - Vienna - View	1	\$10
April 25, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Small Pastel, signed M. Liebermann	1	\$60
April 25, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Miniature	2	\$10
April 25, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Small oil sketch signed M. Liebermann	1	\$40
April 25, 1950	Rudolf Wien	Drawing	4	\$210 together
April 25, 1950	Rudolf Wien	Miniature water color	1	\$210 together
April 25, 1950	Rudolf Wien	prints	9	\$210 together
April 25, 1950	Rudolf Wien	Miniature (Em. Peter)	1	\$40
April 25, 1950	Rudolf Wien	Print Prague	1	\$40
April 25, 1950	Rudolf Wien	Drawing	1	\$15
April 25, 1950	Rudolf Wien	Drawing, Vienna view	1	\$15
April 25, 1950	Rudolf Wien	Print - Vienna - View	1	\$15

April 25, 1950	Rudolf Wien	Drawing	1	\$20
April 25, 1950	Rudolf Wien	Print - Vienna - View	1	\$15
April 26, 1950	Elly Beckardt	Pastel by M. Liebermann	1	\$60
April 26, 1950	Elly Beckardt	oil painting by C. Stojanoff	1	\$60
April 26, 1950	Elly Beckardt	oil sketch by M. Liebermann	1	\$40
April 26, 1950	Elly Beckardt	Miniatures	16	\$159
May 1, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Miniatures	2	\$25
May 1, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Small painting on copper, winter landscape, Dutch 19th Century	1	\$30
May 1, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Miniatures	12	\$75
May 1, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Enameled miniature painting	1	\$50
May 1, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Miniatures	1	\$20
May 1, 1950	Rosenau Importing Co., Inc.	Miniature	17	\$85
May 1, 1950	Rosenau Importing Co., Inc.	Box, miniature carvings	1	\$6
May 1, 1950	Rosenau Importing Co., Inc.	Box, miniature carvings	2	\$24
May 1, 1950	Collector's Corner	Frame	1	\$50
May 1, 1950	Collector's Corner	Gilded Angels, Consoles etc'	18	\$400
May 1, 1950	Hellmuth Wallach	Lithographies	4	\$4
May 2, 1950	E. Weyhe	Color lithograph, Self portarit by Georges Roul, signed	1	\$50
May 4, 1950	Hellmuth Wallach	oil painting, signed W. Truebner, House in Garden	1	\$140
May 5, 1950	Rosenau Importing Co., Inc.	Various miniatures with mostly damaged frames	25	\$70
May 5, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Oil painting, signed M. Liebermann, child playing in garden and	1	\$450

women sitting in chair				
May 9, 1950	Van Diemen - Lilienfeld Galleries	Painting, still life, Dutch 17th Century Oil on canvas	1	\$600
May 9, 1950	Walter Schatzki	Chagall, Self portrait print	1	\$25
May 9, 1950	Walter Schatzki	Print of Vienna	1	\$20
May 9, 1950	Walter Schatzki	Miniature portrait of a woman, oil on cardboard	1	\$18
May 9, 1950	Walter Schatzki	Map of Vienna	1	\$8.75
May 9, 1950	Walter Schatzki	Map of Pennsylvania	1	\$8.75
May 9, 1950	Walter Schatzki	Map of Paris	1	\$8.75
May 9, 1950	Walter Schatzki	Map of London	1	\$8.75
May 9, 1950	Walter Schatzki	Drawings	3	\$10
May 10, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Small water color portarit (Moser)	11	\$11
May 10, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Small water color portarit (Em. Peter)	1	\$20
May 10, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Miniatures inferior condition	9	\$38
May 10, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Small damaged frame	1	\$1
May 10, 1950	Zickel Gallery	Pastel River Landscape, signed Lesser Ury	1	\$75
May 10, 1950	Zickel Gallery	Oil painting on wood, Gaisser, interior scene	1	\$50
May 10, 1950	Zickel Gallery	Water colors, Shephards, signed Th. Hosemann	2	\$50
May 16, 1950	Guido Schoenberger	Print of Frankfurt (by Graff)	1	\$8
May 16, 1950	Rosenau Importing Co., Inc.	Miniatures, mostly damaged	30	\$50
May 17, 1950	Essex Arts	Painting, landscape signed Vanderborcht	1	\$40
May 17, 1950	Essex Arts	Miniatures	7	\$35
May 17, 1950	Essex Arts	Painting, Portrait of Saint, 18th Century	1	\$40

May 17, 1950	Essex Arts	Various folders with drawings & prints	33	\$25
May 17, 1950	Essex Arts	Portrait of an officer	1	\$10
May 17, 1950	Essex Arts	Print of Vienna	1	\$10
May 20, 1950	Girondelle Decorators, Inc.	Print	1	\$10
May 26, 1950	Essex Arts	Folder with Japanese color prints	1	\$5
June 1, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Etching, Ostade, Peasants	1	\$10
June 1, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Miniatures	18	\$30
June 1, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Pastel, German Prince	1	\$5
June 1, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Miniature badly damaged porcelain bird	6	\$3
June 1, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Paul Weber, Oil painting, Landscape	1	\$20
June 2, 1950	Essex Arts	Sydkowski, seascape, oil painting	1	\$5
June 2, 1950	Essex Arts	Winter, Landscape, Dutch 19th Century, on copper	1	\$5
June 2, 1950	Essex Arts	Vues Optiques	4	\$3
June 2, 1950	Essex Arts	Prints of Berlin	2	\$2
June 2, 1950	Essex Arts	Copy after Veronese, oil painting	1	\$20
June 2, 1950	Collector's Corner	Picture frame	1	\$25
June 8, 1950	E. Weyhe	Lithography by Utrillo	1	\$35 all together
June 8, 1950	E. Weyhe	Prints by Chagall	2	\$35 all together
June 8, 1950	E. Weyhe	Prints by Ensor	2	\$35 all together
June 9, 1950	Elly Beckardt	Lesser Ury, In the wood Paster	1	\$40
June 9, 1950	Elly Beckardt	Austrian Nicholsburg, oil on wood	1	\$5
June 9, 1950	Elly Beckardt	German, Portrait of a women	1	\$5

June 9, 1950	Elly Beckardt	Orlik ? Drawing of a child	1	\$5
June 9, 1950	Elly Beckardt	Defregger ? Oil sketch on board	1	\$5
June 9, 1950	Elly Beckardt	French Hay Waggon oil on wood	1	\$5
June 9, 1950	Elly Beckardt	Lautherbourgh, Landscape, oil on wood	1	\$5
June 9, 1950	Elly Beckardt	A. Villette, Lithography	1	\$5
June 9, 1950	Elly Beckardt	Ferthauer, Drawing	1	\$5
June 9, 1950	Elly Beckardt	Mayerahofer, Drawing	1	\$5
June 9, 1950	Elly Beckardt	19th Century, Portrait	1	\$5
June 9, 1950	Elly Beckardt	Broken table	1	\$10
June 9, 1950	Elly Beckardt	Chodowiecki Engraving	1	\$2
June 9, 1950	Elly Beckardt	German Romantic Landscape	1	\$10
June 9, 1950	Elly Beckardt	Dutch, 17th Century, Interior scene	1	\$20
June 9, 1950	Elly Beckardt	Neder dated 1845 Austrian Portrait of a cook	1	\$20
June 9, 1950	Elly Beckardt	Lesser Ury, Landscape pastel	1	\$20
June 9, 1950	Elly Beckardt	German 19th Century Protarit of a Women	1	\$3
June 9, 1950	Elly Beckardt	Orlik, German Flower still life	1	\$20
June 11, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Collection of drawings	2?	\$27
June 12, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Otto Dill, three oxen, oil on canvas	1	\$25
June 12, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	School of Teniers, Dancing peasants, oil on canvas	1	\$25
June 12, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	German-Flemish Altar, 16th Century	1	\$200
June 12, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Ch. Noel, Head of a girl, oil on canvas	1	\$5
June 12, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Dutch landscape, oil on canvas	1	\$5

June 12, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Philippi, Portrait of a women, oil on canvas	1	\$5
June 12, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Buerkel, Landscape, oil on wood	1	\$5
June 12, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	German 18th Century, Isaac & Rebecca, oil on canvas	1	\$5
June 12, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	German 19th Century, Aschaffenburg, oil on canvas	1	\$5
June 12, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Dutch 17th Century landscape, oil on wood	1	\$20
June 12, 1950	Central Picture Galleries	Adoration of the Magi, Dutch 17th Century oil on wood	1	\$25
June 12, 1950	Central Picture Galleries	Portrait of a Gentleman Spanish school, 17th Century Oil on wood	1	\$10
June 15, 1950	Fred Boxer	Courbet, landscape, oil on canvas	1	\$200
June 15, 1950	Fred Boxer	Alexandresu ?, The wailing wall, oil on canvas	1	\$5
June 15, 1950	Fred Boxer	Gustav Limt, drawing	1	\$10
June 15, 1950	Fred Boxer	Correggio, dated 1856, still life with fruits, oil on canvas	1	\$15
June 15, 1950	Fred Boxer	Folders with prints, woodcuts etc'	4	\$25
June 15, 1950	Fred Boxer	German 17th Century (Mielich?) Portrait of a Man oil on canvas	1	\$100
June 19, 1950	Essex Arts	Lesser Ury, Still life with tankard	1	\$25
June 19, 1950	Essex Arts	Miniatures	14	\$30
June 19, 1950	Essex Arts	Wille, engraving	1	\$2.5
June 19, 1950	Essex Arts	Print (Guckkasten-bild)	1	\$2.5
June 19, 1950	Essex Arts	Print (Guckkasten-bild)	1	\$2.5
June 19, 1950	Essex Arts	Map of Hamburg (Homann)	1	\$2.5
June 19, 1950	Essex Arts	Map of Bremen (Homann)	1	\$2.5

June 19, 1950	Essex Arts	Map of Rome (Homann)	1	\$2.5
June 23, 1950	Karl F. Meyer	Clock movement from an old Dutch clock, incomplete (case, pendulum, weights and parts missing)	1	\$25
June 25, 1950	Elly Beckardt	Max Liebermann, Net fixer, oil sketch on card board	1	\$200
June 25, 1950	Elly Beckardt	Lesser Ury, Street in Berlin, pastel	1	\$50
June 25, 1950	Elly Beckardt	Theo van Broc Khusen, Landscape, oil on canvas	1	\$20
June 28, 1950	Guido Schoenberger	Print by Merian, Frankfurt Reomerberg	1	\$3
August 1, 1950	Zickel Gallery	Lesser Ury, in the wood, oil on canvas	1	\$75
August 1, 1950	Zickel Gallery	Max Liebermann, chalk ?	1	\$25
August 3, 1950	Mr. Fred Boxer	German, 17th Century - crucifixion, oil on wood	1	\$100
August 5, 1950	Fred Boxer	German 17th Century crucifixion, oil on wood	1	\$100
August 14, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Champion, Landscape Oil	1	\$5
August 14, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Modern Paintings German Weimar Oil (badly spoiled by water)	1	\$1
August 14, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	German 17th Century Conversation of Paulus Oil on wood	1	\$10
August 14, 1950	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Unknown Master 19th Century Still life	1	\$10
undated	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Hans Kohlschein, oil on wood, Masons	1	\$10
undated	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Ulrich Huebmer, oil on canvas, Still life	1	\$10

undated	Elly Beckardt	French 18th Century Landscape oil on wood, badly damaged	1	\$10
undated	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	H. Kohlschein oil on wood, Harvest	1	\$10
undated	Essex Arts	Italian Romantic Landscape	1	\$15
undated	Rudolf Wien	Guache drawing	1	\$15
undated	Rudolf Wien	Color print (Prague)	1	\$20
undated	Elly Beckardt	Dutch, 17th Century Venetian Vedute oil on canvas	1	\$25
undated	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	German 18th Century Oil on Wood (broken) portrait of an officer	1	\$3
undated	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	A. Achenbach ?, Oil sketch on board, Marine	1	\$5
undated	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Otto Geigenberger, watercolor Harbor	1	\$5
undated	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Dutch 17th Century, Shephard & sheep, oil	1	\$5
undated	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	German landscape	1	\$5
undated	Walter Schatzki	Schwarzenberg Palais, Print	1	\$5
undated	Walter Schatzki	Vie of Schoenbrunn, print	1	\$5
undated	Walter Schatzki	Vienna View, print	1	\$5
undated	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Fritz Erler, German, Man on Horse, oil on canvas	1	\$6
undated	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	French 18th Century	1	\$8
undated	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Dutch 18th Century	1	\$8
March 8, 1951	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Engraving	1	\$0
March 8, 1951	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Bridal of Joseph & Maria, oil	1	\$10
March 8, 1951	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Max Kohlschein, Russian war prisoners, oil	1	\$10

March 8, 1951	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Dutch 17th Century, Still life, oil	1	\$10
March 8, 1951	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	German 18th Century, Landscape, oil	1	\$10
March 8, 1951	Mrs. Elly Beckhardt	Hunter with Dog, oil, torn	1	\$10
April 6, 1951	Essex Arts	Courbet ?, Landscape, oil	1	\$100

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Box 2 Folders 2, 3, 7, 9, 10, 12, 15, 27, 51

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