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## Vienna City Library

### Common information

#### Address

Rathaus, Eingang Felderstraße, Stiege 6 (Lift), 1. Stock  
1080 Vienna

#### Website

<http://www.wienbibliothek.at/>

#### E-Mail

[christian.mertens@wienbibliothek.at](mailto:christian.mertens@wienbibliothek.at)

#### Telephone

+43 1 4000 84920

### Provenance research

#### Provenance researcher

Mag. Christian Mertens

### Restitution procedure of the Vienna City Library

The Vienna City Library (formerly Vienna Municipal and Provincial Library) was founded in 1856. Although it was not centrally involved in the organised looting of books and libraries during the National Socialist era, like other institutions it also strove to acquire objects cheaply or free of charge, mostly confiscated or seized from Jewish owners or sold by them under duress.

The work in the Library, which commenced on the basis of a resolution by the Vienna City Council in April 1999, concentrated in the early phase exclusively on objects acquired directly from former Jewish owners, on the acquisition of seized objects and on the inadequate restitution of confiscated property after 1945. The exchange of experience on provenance research at the national and international levels soon made it clear, however, that not all cases were covered by this approach. The Vienna City Library therefore began to attempt to trace the origins of 'ownerless objects' that it had acquired through irregular channels. Research has also concentrated in the last few years in particular on the indirect acquisition of objects that had been looted during the Nazi era and obtained by the Library through third parties. This involves tracing the origins of objects (provenance) that were acquired in 'good' faith but that might actually have been looted.

Over 2,300 inventoried objects and 24 boxes without a previous detailed inventory have so far been returned to their owners. The vast majority have been re-purchased by the Library or donated to it. A further 71 objects are currently being processed for restitution.

The following holdings from the Vienna City Library are listed in the National Fund Art Database:

- 21 objects purchased from Vugesta ('Gestapo Office for the Disposal of the Property of Jewish Emigrants') as anonymous Jewish assets, which in compliance with the Vienna Council Resolution are to be handed over to the National Fund,
- 252 objects that cannot be clearly identified because of the absence of documentation (without prejudice to their eligibility for restitution),
- the Holzmann collection of over 200 printed items and around 200 autographs, and half a box of correspondence, album sheets, drafts, documents and manuscripts that have not been inventoried in detail and whose rightful owners or heirs have not yet been identified,
- the Richter collection of almost 2,000 objects comprising the personal correspondence of the sisters, diaries, notes and documents, whose rightful owners or heirs have not been fully identified to date,
- 37 objects identified as having been originally owned by persons who, as Jews under the Nuremberg Laws, might have been wronged by third parties (without prejudice to their eligibility for restitution)

Further information can be found on our website at [www.wienbibliothek.at](http://www.wienbibliothek.at)

translated by Nick Somers, edited by National Fund