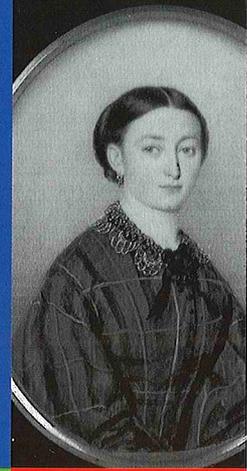


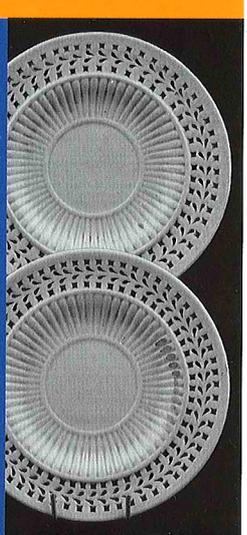
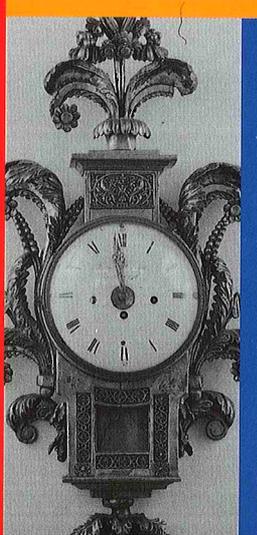
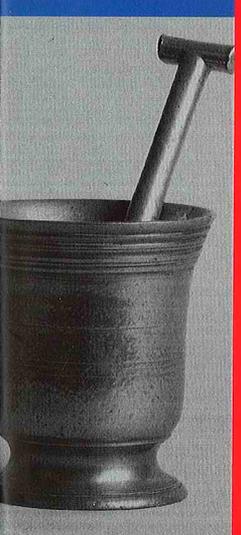
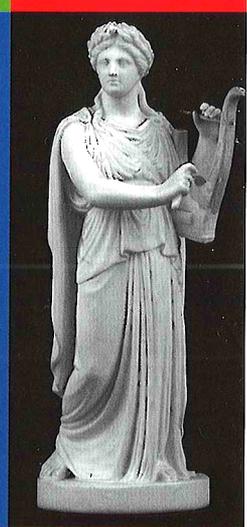
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RESTITUTION OF CONFISCATED ART WORKS— WISH OR REALITY?



Documentation,
identification
and restitution
of cultural
property
of the victims
of World War II

*Proceedings
of the international
academic
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held in Liberec
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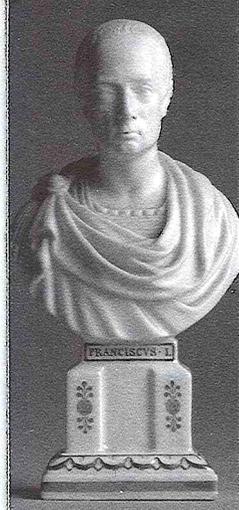
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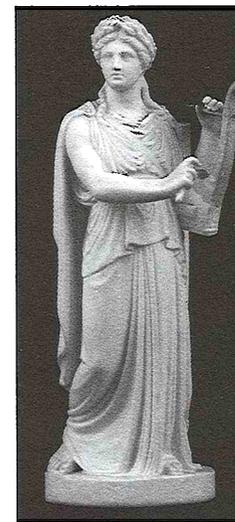
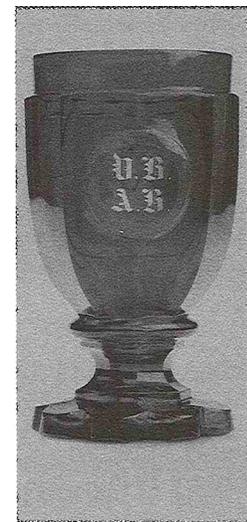
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Restitution of Confiscated Art Works— Wish or Reality?

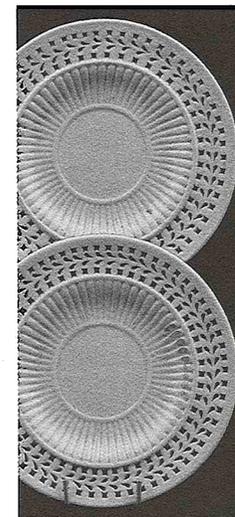
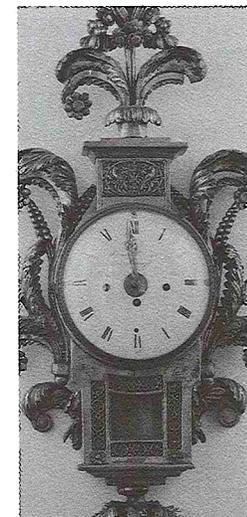
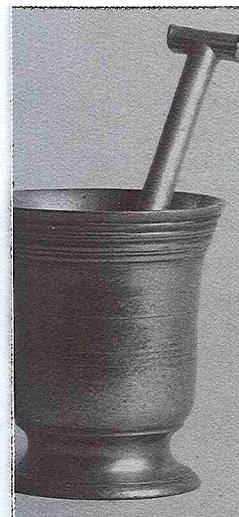


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Sudeten Crossroads for Europe's Displaced Books: The 'Mysterious Twilight' of the RSHA Amt VII Library and the Fate of a Million Victims of War

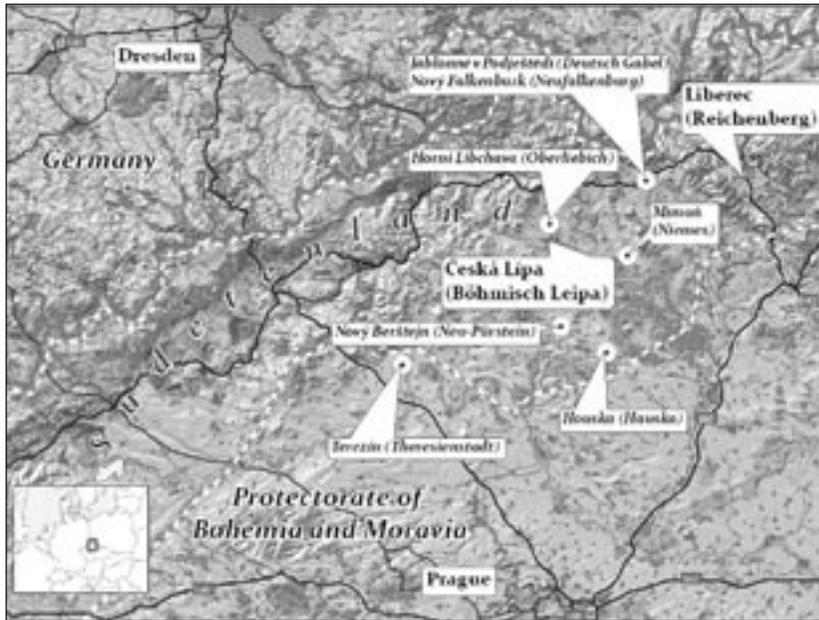
PATRICIA KENNEDY GRIMSTED

When the Sudetenland was incorporated in the German Reich in 1938, many of the people who had inhabited the area were forced to resettle. More were purged, displaced or resettled after the territory reverted to Czechoslovakia in 1945. The foreign books and archives in focus here had no relationship to those people, but they too have been forcibly resettled. This fact, together with suppression of information during the communist era, has meant that the migration and fate of the million books that ended the war there has remained little known until today, even locally.

Books as Victims of War

When trying to locate books still displaced as a result of the Second World War, most important is to determine the Nazi agency that seized them, the path of their displacement, and where they ended the war. The Reich Security Main Office (RSHA—Reichssicherheitshauptamt) vied for loot with the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR). Those two Nazi agencies were among those most directly involved in the plunder, displacement, and dispersal of Europe's cultural heritage and the books we consider here.¹ Usually the aim of both these agencies

¹ For a preliminary general synthesis, see Grimsted, "Tracing Patterns of European Library Plunder: Books Still not Home from the War," in *Jüdischer Buchbesitz als Raubgut. Zweites Hannoversches Symposium*, ed. Regine Dehnel (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann 2006); =*Zeitschrift für Bibliotheks- und Bibliographie* 88, pp. 139–67; and earlier Grimsted publications (many with electronic texts) listed at <http://www.iisg.nl/archives-and-restitution/bibliography.php>.



RSHA Library Evacuation Sites in the Sudetenland (MAP) Prepared by the Harvard Map Collection

in ‘saving’ what books they did from the bonfires or wastepaper mills was ‘research and analysis’ of the declared ‘enemies of the regime’ in the Reich itself as well as occupied countries throughout Europe. It is the RSHA, as organized by Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler in late 1939 as a merger of the Reich security services, that principally concerns us here.

Many of the books and archives plundered by the RSHA, collected in Berlin and deemed most valuable, ended the war in Poland and Czechoslovakia—in remote castles of Silesia and the Sudetenland (at the time both those territories were officially part of the Reich).² Most of the archives were ‘saved’ a second time, captured by Soviet trophy

² My published report from the 2005 conference in Český Krumlov casts a broader look at those and other library displacements in Silesia, now on the Polish side of the border: Grimsted, “Silesian Crossroads for Europe’s Displaced Books: Compensation or Prisoners of War?” in *The Future of the Lost Cultural Heritage: The documentation, identification and restitution of the cultural assets of WW II victims. Proceedings of the international academic conference in Český Krumlov (22.-24. 11. 2005)*, pp. 133–69 (also available in Czech edition).

brigades, and transported to the Soviet Union. Most of those ‘trophy’ or ‘displaced’ captured archives have now been identified in Moscow. Some archives of Eastern European provenance were returned during the Communist period. Many of the survivors from Western Europe have been returned to their homes from Moscow over the past decade and a half following their ‘discovery’ in 1991.³ Most of the books that traveled with them to the USSR, however, have not returned home. A major part of the RSHA Masonic Library, which was evacuated to Silesia, remains in Poland; only a selected few of those books have returned home—to countries other than Germany.⁴

Sudeten Castles and Theresienstadt

Across the international frontier of the Czech Republic, by contrast, we have known much less about an estimated million displaced books collected in Berlin by the RSHA that ended the war as prisoners of war in four castles in northern Bohemia and the concentration camp in Theresienstadt (*Czech Terezín*). The report that follows presents preliminary findings about those little-known developments, cast as they are in a ‘mysterious twilight,’ and curiously involving a prominent SS intelligence officer dabbling in occult sciences with a top-secret project about which we still know too little today. It was particularly appropriate to present this report in the library center of reconciliation in the city of Liberec (*German Reichenberg*), which had served as the administrative center for the Sudetenland after it was annexed to the

³ The present report supplements my earlier publications on the fate of archives collected in Berlin by the RSHA. See Grimsted, “From Nazi Plunder to Russian Restitution,” in *Returned from Russia: Nazi Archival Plunder in Western Europe and Recent Restitution Issues*, ed. Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, F.J. Hoogewoud, and Eric Ketelaar (Institute of Art and Law [UK], 2007), especially ch. 2, “Archival Loot of the Security Services (RSHA) and Military Intelligence (Anabwehr),” pp. 32–80. See also Grimsted, “Twice Plundered or ‘Twice Saved’? Identifying Russia’s ‘Trophy’ Archives and the Loot of the Reichssicherheitshauptamt,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 15:2 (Fall 2001), pp. 191–244; an updated Russian version appears as “Dvazhdy zakhvachennyye ili ‘dvazhdy spasennyye’? Rozysk rossiiskikh ‘trofeinykh’ arkhivov i dobycha Glavnogo upravleniia imperskoi bezopasnosti,” in *Sotsial’naia istoriia. Ezhegodnik 2004* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2005), pp. 401–55. The essay that follows, emphasizing the RSHA library in evacuation, expands that coverage based on newly discovered sources in Berlin and Moscow. A follow-up study now underway will provide more details about the postwar fate of the books. I am particularly grateful to Czech TV producer Jaro Svěcený, who escorted me to all four castles in 2005 and 2006, and arranged for me to meet and interview two of the present owners of those in private hands and a number of local specialists.

⁴ See more details and the microfiche catalogue mentioned in fn. 53 below.



Michal Bušek shows Patricia K. Grimsted, F.J. Hoogewoud and colleagues the database of owners of displaced books held by the Jewish Museum in Prague, November 2005 (photo courtesy Patricia K. Grimsted)

Third Reich in 1938. Those four castles between Liberec and Česká Lípa (German Böhmischo-Leipa) were all less than 80km away: Schloss Niemes (now Czech Mimoň), 15km east of Böhmischo-Leipa; Hauska (now Czech Houska), 30km south-southeast; Schloss Neu-Pürstein (sometimes, Perstein, now Czech Nový Berštejn) in Dubá, 17km south; and Schloss Neufalkenburg (now Czech Nový Falkenburk) on the outskirts of Deutsch-Gabel (now Czech Jablonné v Podještědí), 27km northeast. Theresienstadt (now Czech Terezín) was just across the border in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

Survivors in Prague: the Jewish Museum (JMP) and the National Library

We know most about the over 100,000 Jewish books from the castles and Theresienstadt that remain today in custody of the Jewish Museum in Prague (hereafter JMP). A decade ago, Andrea Braunová

analyzed the formation of the JMP collections with an initial overview of acquisitions from Theresienstadt and the castles.⁵ Michal Bušek's now-published Český Krumlov report describes the impressive JMP database, which as of November 2007 has 5,677 owners identified in book markings in 33,973 out of approximately 80,000 volumes examined.⁶ Work is underway at JMP to examine an estimated 34,000 additional yet-unprocessed volumes.

In December 2004 forty manuscripts and incunabula from the Saraval Collection, identified in the National Library of the Czech Republic, were restituted to Poland. They had been held from the nineteenth century until 1938 by the Breslau Rabbinical Seminary, one of the victims of Kristallnacht.⁷ They too probably ended the war in Niemes (Mimoň), but now digitized images can be viewed on the website of the National Library in Prague.⁸ Like many of those in JMP, they were also part of the RSHA trophy treasure trove in Berlin before mid-1943. But those are only a fraction of the Jewish books that ended the war in Czech lands. What about the hundreds of thousands of others? And what about the hundreds of thousands of non-Jewish books? Relatively few of those books returned to their prewar homes after the war, while most still remain displaced, some of them still in the Czech Republic.

⁵ See Andrea Braunová, "Origin of the Book Collection of the Library of the Jewish Museum in Prague," *Judaica Bohemiae* 36 (2000 [2001]), pp. 160–72; and Braunová's earlier version in *Zpravodaj. Newsletter of The Jewish Museum in Prague*, 1999, no. 2, pp. 3–4; no. 3, pp. 2–5; and no. 4, pp. 3–4 (with parallel text in Czech). See more recently, Michal Bušek et al, "'Hope is on the Next Page': 100 Years of the Library of the Jewish Museum in Prague (Prague: JMP, 2007), pp. 46–49.

⁶ Michal Bušek, "Identifying Owners of Books Held by the Jewish Museum in Prague," in *The Future of the Lost Cultural Heritage* pp. 104–12; also published in *Vitalizing Memory. International Perspectives on Provenance Research* (Washington: American Association of Museums, 2005), pp 138–42. Bušek kindly demonstrated the database to me on several occasions and communicated to me his latest figures in an e-mail message of 23 November 2007.

⁷ See, for example, Nowojka Cieślińska-Lobkowicz, "Raub und Rückführung der Leon Vita Saraval Sammlung der Bibliothek des Jüdisch-Theologischen Seminars in Breslau," in *Jüdischer Buchbesitz als Raubgut*, pp. 366–78. In the 1980s the Saraval manuscripts were microfilmed by the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts at the Jewish National and University Library (JNUL) in Jerusalem. See more about the Breslau collection below (fms. 122 and 138–41).

⁸ The digitized texts are available in the "Manuscriptorium" catalogue at the Clementinum website—<http://www.nkp.cz>. See also Grimsted, "Silesian Crossroads," pp. 161–66.

The RSHA Amt VII Library to 1943

Much has been written about the RSHA library, including Dov Schidorsky's most recent (2007) article about the Jewish Library⁹ and Werner Schroeder's series about various library components.¹⁰ Most of the books that traversed Sudeten crossroads had been held before August 1943 as part of the RSHA Amt VII (Seventh Office) library in Berlin, seized by the SD Main Office (Hauptamt) and the Gestapo starting in 1936. With the merger of the security services in late 1939, most of the collected books and archives preserved by the SD Main Office came under control of the newly formed RSHA Amt II (Second Office), headed by SS-Brigadeführer Franz Alfred Six, charged with investigation of political opponents (*Gegnerforschung*).¹¹

Starting in December 1941, Six organized the Seventh Office (Amt VII), specially for "Ideological Research and Evaluation" (*Weltanschauliche Forschung und Auswertung*), split off from the other more

⁹ Dov Schidorsky, "The Library of the Reich Security Main Office and its Looted Jewish Book Collections," *Libraries and the Cultural Record* 42: 1 (2007), pp. 21–47. Schidorsky appended a report of a 1960 interview by Dutch restitution specialist A.J. van der Leeuw with Ernst Grumach (1902–1967), one of the Jewish specialists forced to work in the RSHA library, pp. 42–47. Earlier Schidorsky published other Grumach accounts in: "Confiscation of Libraries and Assignments to Forced Labor: Two Documents of the Holocaust," *Libraries and Culture* 33:4 (Fall 1998), pp. 347–88. See also Schidorsky's earlier article, "Das Schicksal jüdischer Bibliotheken im Dritten Reich," in Peter Vodosek and Manfred Komorowski (eds.), *Bibliotheken während des Nationalsozialismus* (Weisbaden: O. Harrowitz, 1989), vol. 2 = *Wolfenbütteler Schriften zur Geschichte des Buchwesens*, vol. 16, pp. 189–222. See also the postwar article by Joshua Starr, "Jewish Cultural Property under Nazi Control," *Jewish Social Studies* 12:1 (January 1950), pp. 27–48.

¹⁰ See especially Werner Schroeder, "Strukturen des Bücherraubs. Die Bibliotheken des RSHA: Aufbau und Verbleib", *Zeitschrift für Bibliotheks- und Bibliographie* 51:5-6 (2004), pp. 316–24; and "Beschlagnahme und Verbleib jüdischer Bibliotheken in Deutschland vor und nach dem Novemberpogrom 1938," in *Jüdischer Buchbesitz als*, pp. 27–36; and Schroeder, "'Bestandsaufbau durch Plünderung': Jüdische Bibliotheken im Reichssicherheitshauptamt," in *Entehrt, Ausgeplündert. Arianisiert: Entrechtung und Enteignung der Juden*, ed. Koordinierungsstelle für Kulturgutverluste Magdeburg, with Andrea Baresei-Brand (Magdeburg, 2005). I am grateful to Werner Schroeder for reading a preliminary version of this article and assisting me on several points regarding the RSHA library and staff.

¹¹ See the scholarly biography of Six (1908–1975) by Lutz Hachmeister, *Der Gegnerforscher: Die Karriere des SS-Führers Franz Alfred Six* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1998). Simultaneously, Six was involved in the Faculty of Foreign Affairs (Auslandswissenschaftliche Fakultät) of the University of Berlin and in founding the Wannsee Institute for research on the Soviet Union.



Great Provincial Lodge of the Freemasons of Germany, Berlin-Schöneberg, Eisenacherstrasse 11 / 13 after 1938, Gestapo headquarters and one of the RSHA library locations (photograph adapted from an early 20th-century postcard)



SS-Obersturmbannführer Paul Dittel, last acting chief of RSHA, Amt VII (from an NS-period official identification file, courtesy the Bundesarchiv)

operational offices. Having inherited most of the SD/RSHA library and archival loot, Amt VII was responsible for organizing the RSHA library and archival centers, although some of the books went to other RSHA units. Most of the Amt VII staff, which Six headed until 1943, were members of the SS.¹² Most of the books and archives were held in the buildings of two liquidated Masonic lodges the Gestapo had commandeered (Emserstrasse 12/13, and Eisenacherstasse 11/13), although some were stored in other depots in Berlin.¹³ From the spring of 1943, SS-Obersturmbannführer Paul Dittel, who from the start had been particularly involved with the collected Masonic materials, was the last head of Amt VII. Yet his title remained “acting,” indicative of the reduced importance and “mysterious twilight” of that unit towards the end of the war, as he made clear to his British interrogators afterwards.¹⁴

¹² See Jürgen Matthäus, “‘Weltanschauliche Forschung und Auswertung’—Aus den Akten des Amtes VII im Reichssicherheitshauptamt,” in *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 5 (1996), pp. 287–330; and Jörg Rudolph, “‘Sämtliche Sendungen sind zu richten an: ...’ Das RSHA-Amt VII ‘Weltanschauliche Forschung und Auswertung’ als Sammelstelle erbeuteter Archive und Bibliotheken,” in Michael Wildt (ed.), *Nachrichtendienst, politische Elite und Mordeinheit. Der Sicherheitsdienst des Reichsführers SS* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2003), pp. 204–40. Many RSHA senior staff are covered in the study by Michael Wildt, *Generation des Unbedingten: Das Führungskorps des Reichssicherheitshauptamtes* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2003), but only a few of those in Amt VII.

¹³ The large building of the liquidated Great Lodge of Hamburg (Provinzial-Gross Loge von Hamburg) in Berlin-Wilmersdorf (Emserstrasse 12/13) had been taken over as one of the Gestapo headquarters in 1936. In 1938 they also acquired the impressive building of the Great Provincial Lodge of the Freemasons of Germany (Grosse Landesloge der Freimaurer von Deutschland) in Berlin-Schöneberg (W 30—Eisenacherstasse 11/13).

¹⁴ “RSHA AMT VII (Ideological Research),” British interrogation report on SS-Obersturmbannführer Dr Paul Dittel (b. 14 January 1907; Mittweide, Saxony), “Late Acting Leiter of Amt VII RSHA,” 13 September 1945, NACP, RG 165 (OSS), G-2 Intelligence Division, Captured personnel and Material Branch, Enemy POW Interrogation File, esp. pp. 3, 5–6; Jürgen Matthäus, Senior Research Historian at USHMM, kindly shared with me a copy he found in the PRO (now TNA), WO 208/3620, SIR 1723. See also the file on Dittel in NACP, RG 319, Entry 134B, Classified Intelligence Dossiers, Personal Files, box 417, file XE 003779. BArch retains Dittel’s personal SS file (SSO), as well as his RUS (Rasse-und-Siedlungshauptamt) file. See the brief biographical sketch in Wildt, *Generation des Unbedingten*, p. 933. See also http://www.arikah.net/enzyklopadie/Paul_Dittel. Following release from custody, Dittel lived in Mönchengladbach, where he worked as a clerk, at least through 1973. I am grateful to independent historian and translator Ray Brandon in Berlin for assistance in checking files on the RSHA staff in BArch-Lichterfelde and the Berlin Landesarchiv; in cases where the date of death is not available, I have given the full birthdate.

Newly Available SD and Amt VII Operational Files

During the Cold War, little was known about Amt VII, because its major surviving records were not publicly accessible. The Soviets found many SD Main Office administrative files among the massive RSHA-plundered archives they captured in Silesia (Wölfelsdorf), along with those of later Amt VII operations, and they seized a few more in the bombed-out RSHA Eisenacherstasse building in Berlin. Some of those files they passed on to the Stasi in the 1950s, and those are now being processed with other Stasi RSHA holdings by the Bundesarchiv in Berlin. Others were captured in Silesia by the Poles, came out of hiding in 1989, and were traded to the Bundesarchiv in 1997. However, many important SD Main Office and subsequent RSHA Amt VII files remain in Moscow, not all of them open for research.¹⁵ Combining clues from documents now in Moscow and Berlin provides hitherto unknown revelations about RSHA library operations, especially those in the Sudeten castles.

Jewish Library

The Amt VII Jewish Library was one of the most extensive components, with volumes from many important Jewish collections preserved from the bonfires. Acquisitions increased especially after Kristallnacht (November 1938), the major Nazi anti-Semitic pogrom when so many Jewish synagogues were burned. In many cases by special order, the archives and libraries deemed most valuable were saved. By the spring of 1939, recent acquisitions for the Jewish Library alone totaled an estimated 300,000 volumes from seventy major libraries, although that was only one segment of the RSHA library. Shipments came from as far away as Königsberg (*now Russian* Kaliningrad) in East Prussia and from Troppau (*now Czech* Opava) in the Sudetenland. Among other well-documented 1938/39 receipts that we will meet again, for example, were the major collections from the Jewish Rabbinical (or Theological) Seminary in Breslau and the Jewish Community in Vienna—IKG (Israelitische Kultusgemeinde). Both were seized following the November 1938 ravages of Kristallnacht and shipped to Berlin, in some cases with preliminary catalogue data. Extensive documents from former Stasi files in Berlin report seizure and shipping data for these and many

¹⁵ More about the fate of these RSHA records is explained by Grimsted, in *Returned from Russia*, ch. 2, “Archival Loot of the Security Services (RSHA),” esp. pp. 36–38. See also my earlier study of the Wölfelsdorf component in “Twice Plundered or ‘Twice Saved?’”

other major Jewish collections.¹⁶ The 1939 Peter Paulsen Commando (with Paul Dittel representing the RSHA Amt II) secured no less than six freight train wagons of books from Poland, including many from the Jewish Library beside the Great Synagogue in Warsaw, parts of which would later be found in the Sudeten castles.¹⁷

Private family collections were also a main target, especially in Western Europe, where considerable more materials remained in private hands, as compared, for example, to the Soviet Union. Following German occupation of Western Europe, the SD had their own agents in the field, competing with the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR) for choice Jewish and Masonic holdings.¹⁸ Among specific seized collections, parts of which ended the war in Czechoslovakia, were those of the Hebraicist Sigmund Seeligmann of Amsterdam,¹⁹

¹⁶ Schroeder, "Beschlagnahme und Verbleib jüdischer Bibliotheken," *Jüdischer Buchbesitz als Raubgut*, mentions the number of books from large German collections that appear on a list from June 1939 (BArch R 58/6424 [alt ZB I/0648], fols. 433–35), and kindly gave me a copy of the document he had found, which led me to many others in a recently reprocessed section of RSHA records now in BArch–Berlin-Lichterfelde. See Grimsted, in *Returned from Russia*, ch. 2, pp. 50–53, including citations to a few of the other sources. The Breslau and Vienna (IKG) collections were among those noted by Ernst Grumach, as edited by Schidorsky, in "Confiscation of Libraries," pp. 353–54 and 363.

¹⁷ The Jewish Library is listed among other Polish libraries seized (and sent to Eisenacherstrasse 12) in several documents presented in Polish translation in Andrzej Meżyński, ed., *Kommando Paulsen październik-grudzień 1939 r.* (Warsaw, 1994; "Straty Kultury Polskiej"), pp. 52–59; see also the German edn: *Kommando Paulsen. Organisierter Kunstraub in Polen 1942–45*, tr. Armin Hetzer (Köln: Dittrich, 2000), pp. 72–78, and also Burmester's report on the Amt VII library (22 April 1942), pp. 85–91. See also Meżyński, "Die Judaistische Bibliothek bei der Grossen Synagoge in Warschau und das Schicksal der Bücher aus dem Warschauer Ghetto," in *Jüdischer Buchbesitz als Raubgut*, pp. 85–95. (Regarding the return of some of the books to Poland, see below fns. 122, 136, and 137.)

¹⁸ For example, the entire folder BArch R 58/6710 (alt 750A2) covers SD Main Office western missions during the summer of 1940. See Grimsted, in *Returned from Russia*, pp. 53–55. The collections mentioned here were among those specifically noted by Ernst Grumach, "Report on Confiscation and Treatment of the Former Jewish Libraries by the Gestapo from 1933 to 1945," as edited by Schidorsky, "Confiscation of Libraries," p. 354.

¹⁹ Sigmund Seeligmann (1873–1940), born in Karlsruhe, Germany, spent his professional life in the Netherlands, where he started rabbinical studies in 1884. The library of "the Jew Siegfried Seligmann [sic]" was described by SD librarian Dr. Walter Kellner (see below fn. 58) after his return from Amsterdam, in "Reisebericht" (Berlin, 28 August 1940), BArch, R 58/6502, fol. 248–48v. And a year later SS-Ustuf Heinz Ballensiefen, who then headed the Jewish Library, was recommending sending the library to Berlin: "Bibliothek des Juden Seligmann in Amsterdam" (Berlin, 10 October 1941), BArch, R 58/6380a, fols. 81–82. The RSHA documents following in the same R 58 file give more details about the library and its transport, fols. 83–100, with mention also of the library of his son Isaac Leo Seeligmann (see below fns. 127–29); apparently, a small part of the Amsterdam holdings were turned over to the ERR.

French author André Maurois,²⁰ and Polish-born émigré pianist Artur Rubinstein, the latter two seized from Paris.²¹ Some collections from Western occupied countries seized by the ERR, and especially archives, were subsequently handed over to the rival RSHA. While most of the archives received by the RSHA were evacuated to Silesia, many of the books ended the war in Czechoslovakia.

Thanks to the Amt VII files preserved in Moscow, for example, we also now know more about the recruitment and composition of the Jewish forced labor gangs (Ger. *Arbeitskolonne*) used by the RSHA for their Jewish Library in Berlin. These supplement the published postwar reports of and about Ernst Grumach, a prominent survivor of those Amt VII Jewish labor gangs.²²

Masonic Library

Parallel to the Jewish Library the RSHA also had extensive Masonic holdings, likewise divided between the two lodge buildings in Berlin. Given Himmler's interest in Freemasonry, that component got special attention. The SD Main Office in Berlin, already in 1935 and 1936, was gathering Masonic regalia, vestments, and other objects to encourage the study of Masonic symbolism and ritual and establish a special Masonic Museum. Paul Dittel (who later headed Amt VII) then headed the Masonic unit and was in charge of assembling materials from the

²⁰ André Maurois (*pseud.* of Émile Salomon Wilhelm Herzon, 1885–1967), French novelist and biographer. Some of his papers were returned from Moscow, where they had been transported after the war with other RSHA-plundered archives from Silesia.

²¹ Artur Rubinstein (1886–1943) was born in Łódź, when it was still part of the Russian Empire. Willem de Vries notes the seizure of Rubinstein's collection in Paris by the ERR—*Sonderstab Musik: Music Confiscation by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg under the Nazi Occupation of Western Europe* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996), pp. 130–31; but at least part of the collection ended up with the RSHA. The Soviets found part of his library and music scores in Berlin, and they are now in Moscow.

²² See the postwar accounts of Ernst Grumach published by Dov Schidorsky in "Confiscation of Libraries and Assignments to Forced Labor: Two Documents of the Holocaust," *Libraries and Culture* 33: 4 (Fall 1998), pp. 347–88, and the report of a 1960 interview with Grumach in Schidorsky's 2007 "The Library of the RSHA," pp. 42–47 (see fn. 9). Recently uncovered recruitment correspondence, name lists, and personnel cards preserved in Moscow (RGVA, fond 500k) identify additional highly trained Jews in the labor gangs; these documents require further study and publication in comparison to those supplied by Schidorsky. Ernst Grumach (1902–1967) had been a lecturer in early philology at the University of Königsberg from 1929 to 1933, and was subsequently a docent in the Lehranstalt für die Wissenschaft des Judentums in Berlin. He served in two different labor gangs in the RSHA Jewish Library in Berlin (1941–1945). After the war he was a professor at Humboldt University in East Berlin.

archives for a projected “Encyclopedia of German Freemasonry,” in the planning stages already in 1936.²³ Staff in the Masonic Section produced several weighty monographs in a series under Dittel’s editorship, published by the SS publisher Nordland-Verlag under contract with Amt VII. Subjects ranged from the Rosicrucians and Masonry during the French Revolution to U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s ties with Freemasonry. Several of these monographs utilized archival materials captured from occupied countries.²⁴

Other Library Components

Separate extensive collections preserved materials seized from socialist (especially Bolshevik and anti-Bolshevik) sources, émigrés (aliens within the Reich), and Christian churches, together with a host of smaller religious and pseudo-religious sects, from pacifists and theosophists to various occult circles, all considered “enemies of the regime.”²⁵

Nazism and the Occult in the Amt VII Library: Werner Göttisch

Alleged occult elements in the Nazi ideology and Himmler’s interest in neo-paganism and Masonic rituals have aroused widespread interest since the defeat of the National Socialist regime. Even the History TV Channel produced a documentary on “Hitler and the Occult,” suggesting what would seemingly be a sensationalist theme. The popular internet Wikipedia suggests that ‘Nazism and Occultism’ is usually “a topic for sensational authors in pursuit of strong sales,” but it prominently cites Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, and his serious Oxford doctoral thesis on the Austrian Arisophists.²⁶ Other important scholarly studies have

²³ See biographic data for Dittel in fn. 14.

²⁴ For example, Hans Schick, *Das ältere Rosenkreuzertum: Ein Beitrag zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Freimaurerei* (Berlin: Nordland Verlag, 1942; = “Quellen und Darstellungen zu Freimaurerfrage,” Bd. 1); Adolf Rossberg, *Freimaurerei und Politik in Zeitalter der französischen Revolution* (Berlin: Nordland Verlag, 1942; = “Quellen und Darstellungen zu Freimaurerfrage,” Bd. 2); Erich Ehlers, *Freimaurer arbeiten für Roosevelt: Freimaurerische Dokumente über die Zusammenarbeit zwischen Roosevelt und der Freimaurerei* (Berlin: Nordland-Verlag, 1943). More details about these men and their publications are in preparation for a separate publication.

²⁵ See, for example, the library plans encompassed in the unsigned memorandum “Gegnerforschung, Referat II 2 (Bibliothek): Der Aufgabenkreis der Bibliothek im Reichssicherheitshauptamt” (Berlin 19 January 1940), BArch R58/6499(Teil 1).

²⁶ The reference given in the entry “Nazi occultism” is to Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism* (New York, London: Tauris-Parke, 2005; originally published 1985). See the internet entry cited at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazi_occultism.

analyzed occult themes in Nazi circles, especially under Heinrich Himmler, and the Masonic Library, confiscated from one of the alleged ‘enemies of the regime,’ was one of the most important components in the RSHA Amt VII holdings. Himmler’s interest in witchcraft and the supernatural was highlighted in Amt VII’s special unit devoted to Witchcraft (C 3), Sonderauftrag H, and Himmler’s card file on witches (*Hexenkartothek*), all of which are well documented.²⁷ Reportedly, the materials gathered for the Witchcraft unit were sent to Schlesiersee with the Masonic collections, rather than the Sudeten castles, and that unit had ceased to function by the time of evacuation.²⁸

In the Sudeten castles, on the other hand, we find Amt VII SS specialists busily sorting and cataloguing occult literature, which the SD Main Office and Amt VII library had been collecting. Suddenly, that section of the library assumed a major prominence, and a top-secret project was launched on its basis—another important example of Nazi preoccupation with the occult.

‘Sonderauftrag C’

Simultaneous with Amt VII library evacuation from Berlin, a special project (Sonderauftrag C) was being organized starting in 1943 under the codename ‘Leo.’ Parallel to the earlier Amt VII Witchcraft Sector with its card file of witches for Himmler—‘Sonderauftrag H’ (*Hexenkartothek*)—this Special Project C dealt more broadly with the Amt VII pseudo-religious and occult holdings. The project apparently also embraced the large pornographic collection

²⁷ See, for example, Jürgen Matthäus’ essay on Amt VII witchcraft research, “Kameraden im Geist: Himmlers Hexenforscher im Kontext des nationalsozialistischen Wissenschaftsbetriebs,” in the collective volume *Himmlers Hexenkartothek: Das Interesse des Nationalsozialismus an der Hexenverfolgung*, ed. Sönke Lorenz, Dieter R. Bauer, et al (Bielefeld, 1999; *Hexenforschung*, Bd. 4), pp. 99–107. Jörg Rudolph’s article in the same volume provides more details about the fate of the materials held by the Amt VII sector involved: “‘Geheime Reichskommando-Sache!’ Hexenjäger im Schwarzen Orden: Der H-Sonderauftrag des Reichsführers-SS, 1935–1945,” in *ibid.*, especially pp. 47–52. Several articles in that collection have additional notes about the RSHA witchcraft research during the war. Matthäus’s and other contributions are based principally on the RSHA records from Schlesiersee that remained in Poland until 1997 (in secret before 1989; now in BArch). Some notes about the Witchcraft sector and Masonic holdings are found in the British interrogation: “RSHA AMT VII (Dittel),” pp. 17–18.

²⁸ As noted by “RSHA AMT VII (Dittel),” p. 18, and in a contemporary signed document, commenting on Schmid’s mission to Niemes, Dittel to Chief of Dienststelle Schlesiersee (Berlin, 10 February 1944), RGVA, 500k/3/427, fol. 41.

and the section on sexology, which had been “stored in a special room at Eisenacher Street.”²⁹ Remaining documents bearing the code ‘Leo’ do not always distinguish between the entire Amt VII occult collection and a special sub-collection being arranged in the castle of Neufalkenburg.³⁰

Werner Götttsch and His Project

Starting in the fall of 1943, a rather curious player enters the Amt VII stage from the realm of foreign intelligence to oversee a top-secret special project. As his British interrogators reported with regard to Dittel:

Only once, and rather suddenly, did Amt VII seem to gain an unexpected importance. This was in autumn 43 when PW [Dittel] received a visit from Ostufaf Goettsch, whom he had not known till then, and of whom he knew only that he belonged to KALTENBRUNNER’s closest collaborators.³¹

SS-Obersturmbannführer Werner Götttsch, a somewhat shadowy figure attached to the highest circles of Amt VI (Foreign Intelligence), was then based in Vienna. A small portion of the holdings being evacuated to the Sudeten castles from Berlin comprised a separate special occult sciences (*Geheimwissenschaftlichen*) collection being prepared for him. A commercial high-school graduate left unemployed by the depression, Götttsch had joined the SS in 1932 in Kiel, where he first served in the SD, before assignment to Berlin, and then transfer to Munich to the SD HA Communism and Marxist

²⁹ This collection was mentioned by Ernst Grumach, in Schidorsky, “Library of the RSHA,” Appendix, p. 45. Grumach specifically mentioned the sexology collection of Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld from Berlin, and noted, “this library was used by the SS men very often.” The fact that at least part of this library was evacuated to the Sudeten castles serves to supplement the findings of Ralf Dose and Rainer Herrn, “Verloren 1933: Bibliothek und Archiv des Instituts für Sexualwissenschaft in Berlin,” in *Jüdischer Buchbesitz als Raubgut*, pp. 137–51.

³⁰ Most of the documents now held together in a file in RGVA (fond 500k/3/427) are marked with the code ‘Leo,’ either in the heading, or in handwritten notes. It would appear that ‘Leo’ also embraced the more general work with the occult collection and not only the special project of Werner Götttsch and Hans Richter mentioned below.

³¹ “RSHA AMT VII (Dittel),” p. 4. SS-Obergruppenführer Ernst Kaltenbrunner (1903–1946) headed the RSHA starting in 1943. See the well-documented biography by Peter R. Black, *Ernst Kaltenbrunner: Ideological Soldier of the Third Reich* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), also available in a German edition: *Ernst Kaltenbrunner Vassall Himmlers, eine SS Karriere*, translated by Karl and Heidi Nicolai (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1991).



SS-Obersturmbannführer Werner Götttsch (from an NS-period official identification file, courtesy the Bundesarchiv)

section.³² He already had several SD and Gestapo covert missions to his credit before 1935, when he led an SD death-squad in Czechoslovakia to eliminate the so-called 'Black Front' against Nazism, involving the sensational slaying of anti-Nazi radio broadcaster Rudolf Formis.³³ Götttsch told his American interrogators after the war that he had requested discharge from the SD after that episode, but he is listed in 1936–1937 as head of the SD Main Office (SD Hauptamt—II 12) for Ideological Research on Political Enemies (*Gegnerforschung*). In fact, Götttsch claimed he was ordered back to the SD by Heydrich in 1937, and completed the Sipo Officer School (Führerschule).³⁴ In 1939, he helped organize an intelligence service in the Balkans, and was also active in the Sudetenland and the Protectorate organizing German minority revolts, to say nothing of similar exploits in Bulgaria and Hungary. By 1940 he had risen in the foreign intelligence to head Amt VI E (Eastern Europe) in Vienna, in charge of intelligence in the Danube region and the Balkans.³⁵

³² The career of SS Oberstufab Werner Götttsch (b. 22 October 1912; Kiel) is summarized in USFET "Final Interrogation Report [FIR] No. 8: Werner Goettsch" (24 July 1945), as excerpted in John Mendelsohn, ed., *Covert Warfare: Intelligence, Counterintelligence and Military Deception during the World War II Era*, vol. 13, *The Final Solution of the Abwehr* (New York, London: Garland Publishing, 1989), section 20, pp. 1–15. The "Personal Data" in that published report list Götttsch as belonging to Amt VII at the end of the war, but U.S. authorities determined later that he remained in Amt VI. A copy of the full FIR report, preliminary ones, and later analysis of his career are found in the CIA name files on 'Goettsch, Werner', U.S. National Archives (College Park, MD), RG 263 (CIA), boxes 19 and 43 (no. 197); and in RG 319 (Records of the Army Staff), Investigative Records Repository (IRR), Personal Name Files, box 612 (XE008444). He had been held in U.S. investigatory custody (1945–48). His personnel NS and SSO files are available in BDC records in BArch. According to George C. Browder, Götttsch was initially an "unemployed 1932 recruit from Kiel," and "became one of those jacks-of-all trades that Heydrich favored for willingness and ability to take on any kind of mission." *Hitler's Enforcers: the Gestapo and the SS Security Service in the Nazi Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 188.

³³ "FIR, no. 8: Werner Goettsch." In Browder's *Hitler's Enforcers*, appended Chart B.5 (p. 256), SS-O'Sturm. Götttsch appears as head of II 12 for "Political Enemies."

³⁴ Gerhard Paul implicates Götttsch in the SD 1935 death squad in Czechoslovakia: "Von Judenangelegenheiten hatte er bis dahin keine Ahnung." Herbert Hagen, *der Judenreferent des SD aus Neumünster*, *Informationen zur Schleswig-Holsteinischen Zeitgeschichte* 33/34 (September 1998), at <<http://www.akens.org/akens/texte/info/33/333407.html>>. The Czech Formis episode is also covered in "FIR, no. 8: Werner Goettsch," Annex 1. It was later subject to court investigation in Land Hamburg (1963–67), but was not brought to trial.

³⁵ Wildt, *Generation des Unbedingten*, p. 661, fn. 171) noted that in 1940 Schellenberg appointed Götttsch to head the Amt VI section for the Danube region and the Balkans. Those activities are confirmed in the U.S. interrogation cited above.

When Götttsch was interrogated by the Americans in 1945, he was apparently trying to play up his 'conversion' from Nazi ideology, and disassociate himself from continuing intelligence work, which generated the report:

After November 1939 GOETTSCHE'S work was increasingly hampered by tuberculosis. He spent the next three years under medical care and busied himself with reading political theory, history, and publications on mysticism. Early in 1943, while deep in this reading which changed his feelings towards Nazi ideology, GOETTSCHE was appointed liaison officer between Amt VI and the Propaganda Ministry. Because of continued illness and a changed ideological point of view, GOETTSCHE asked KALTENBRUNNER to transfer him to Amt VII, where he was able to read publications and books available only in the library of Amt VII.³⁶

There is no mention of Götttsch's Amt VII 'special project' in the American report, and the Americans found no evidence of his formal transfer to Amt VII. The British interrogation report of Amt VII chief Paul Dittel, by contrast, highlights the 'important special project.' Dittel told his British interrogators, and contemporary RSHA documents confirm, that Götttsch remained active in foreign intelligence (Amt VI). All agree that Götttsch was one of the RSHA Chief Ernst Kaltenbrunner's closest collaborators until the end.³⁷

Indeed, according to the postwar Schellenberg interrogation, after Kaltenbrunner took over leadership of the RSHA in 1943, Götttsch, who had been serving as Schellenberg's liaison officer to the Propaganda Ministry, was assigned "special duties" for the new chief. He was even considered to head the covert mission to 'rescue' Mussolini, but had to decline because of health

³⁶ "FIR, no. 8: Werner Goettsch," p. 3. Harry Lennon, who signed the USFED report, concluded: "GOETTSCHE is religious and highly emotional, a believer in Freemasonry, mysticism, and fortune-telling. His past has begun to tell on him, and his present confused state of mind linked with his extremely bad memory limit the reliability of his statements. He is cooperative. ... He hopes that his activities in the Freemasons and in the Free Austria movement will gain him employment with the Allied Occupation Government." (p. 4).

³⁷ "RSHA AMT VII (Dittel)," p. 4; Appen. 3, p. 3 (para. 22). Dittel described him as "a most unbalanced nature, hypocritical and affected to believe in miracles. A half-wit and incorrigible busybody." Götttsch's close involvement with Kaltenbrunner is also evident in the frequency of his appearance in the unsigned CIA website report "The Last Days of Ernst Kaltenbrunner" <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/kent-csi/docs/v04i2a07p_0016.htm>.

considerations.³⁸ Simultaneously in Vienna, during the final years of the war, Götttsch was involved in the Free Austria Movement, which he also stressed to his American interrogators. He claimed to have “formed an independent group of influential RSHA members who wanted to free Austria from Nazi rule.”³⁹ Although not so named by the Americans, this was part of the broader ‘Operation Herzog’ for “discreet contact with non-Nazi and anti-Nazi groups in Austria,” leading to “a preliminary apparatus for the initiation of peace feelers to the Western Allies.” Proposed in the spring of 1943 by Götttsch’s controversial Amt VI friend and colleague, SS-Sturmbannführer Wilhelm Höttl, the plan was reportedly approved by Kaltenbrunner, who then harbored serious doubts about the possibility of Hitler’s final victory. According to the Götttsch interrogation, eventually Höttl made contact with a U.S. representative in Switzerland.⁴⁰

Götttsch has also been named in the even more fantastic scheme in the fall of 1943, stemming from Kaltenbrunner’s top-secret peace efforts, to use as an intermediary a high-level Austrian Mason, a physician by the name of Dr. Karl Dobbler, who claimed to have treated U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt and his wife and to be a member of the same lodge as the president. The scheme was never implemented, but apparently it was even suggested Dobbler might be smuggled to Washington on a U-boat so that he could personally contact his

³⁸ Regarding that appointment, see Reinhard Doerries, [ed.], *Hitler’s Last Chief of Foreign Intelligence: Allied Interrogations of Walter Schellenberg* (London: Frank Cass, 2002), pp. 115 and 123; the same text appears in the extracts from the Schellenberg interrogation in *Covert Warfare*, vol. 13, section 22. Norman J.W. Goda, writing about Allied postwar use of Nazi agents, in Richard Breitman et al, *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 278-79, recounted that the French jailed Götttsch in 1945, but then used him for intelligence purposes several years later. According to his CIA files (see fn. 32 above), the U.S. held him in investigatory custody (1945-48). He then returned to Kiel where he was doing commercial work in a statistical department. U.S. authorities used him briefly for intelligence regarding a right-wing German political party in the mid-1960s.

³⁹ “FIR, no. 8: Werner Goettsch,” esp. pp. 13-14, which named others with whom he was associated since the winter of 1943, in part through his Jewish mistress in Vienna, Ursula Hegewald, who was named in the interrogation.

⁴⁰ Black, *Ernst Kaltenbrunner*, pp. 223-24. The assignment also included his Amt VI-Ausland colleague SS-Sturmbannführer Wilhelm Waneck, who then headed Amt VI E (Southeast Europe). Black based his account on postwar testimony of Höttl, including his own 1977 interview with Höttl. Goettsch named Höttl as having made contact with U.S. representative Leslie in Switzerland. “FIR, no. 8: Werner Goettsch,” p. 4, pp. 13-14.

‘Masonic brother.’⁴¹ The scheme was not mentioned to Götttsch’s American interrogators, although their report notes that he “sought the acquaintance of Dr DOPPLER, a Freemason in Vienna, who later advised him concerning the evacuation of Amt VII’s library.” Dobbler was apparently known to Götttsch earlier, as the U.S. report also noted that Dobbler was requested (but refused) to bring Masonic literature from England.⁴² Details regarding the extent or nature of Dr. Dobbler’s role, or his connection with the Amt VII library, are still needed, but if his proposed role in peace negotiations in the fall of 1943 could be corroborated, Götttsch’s simultaneous ‘special project’ with Amt VII, also embracing Freemasonry, may well have involved more serious political motivations.

According to Dittel, however, the important high-level project took a somewhat different cast. In the fall of 1943, Götttsch approached him and explained that “during a recent illness he had developed a great interest in occultism and Freemasonry.” He informed Dittel “that he had obtained permission from Kaltenbrunner to study books on those subjects in the library belonging to Amt VII.” Subsequently Kaltenbrunner summoned Dittel and, in front of Götttsch, instructed Dittel to comply with Götttsch’s requests. Not surprisingly, Dittel turned to SS-Sturmbannführer Karl Burmester, who had headed the RSHA library (VII A1) since April 1942, although hardly a trained librarian.⁴³ Karl Burmester was in regular contact with Götttsch about the work. Götttsch, however, remained

⁴¹ The scheme is documented by Black, *Ernst Kaltenbrunner*, p. 224, based on postwar testimony and interrogations of Kaltenbrunner and Höttl. I am grateful to Werner Schroeder for calling my attention to Black’s mention of Götttsch in these projects, and suggesting their possible relationship to his Amt VII ‘special project.’

⁴² “FIR, no. 8: Werner Goettsch,” p. 3.

⁴³ SS-Sturmbannführer Karl Burmester (b. 17 October 1911). According to “RSHA AMT VII (Dittel)” (App. 3), Burmester had studied economic and cultural geography at the University of Berlin but had no library training. He had worked as an import-export merchant. Michael Wildt identifies him as the son of a Protestant minister, who started in the SD Press Department in 1934, and rose to head an office (Referent) in Amt II under Six—*Generation des Unbedingten*, p. 369. Burmester’s NSDAP file and SS file (SSO 123) are held in BArch. Jewish specialist Ernst Grumach, who served in one of the RSHA slave labor gangs, spoke of Burmester as “a bastard unparalleled’ and capable of every type of atrocity” —quoted by Dutch restitution specialist A.J. van der Leeuw’s report on his meeting with Grumach, published by Schidorsky, in “Library of the RSHA,” Appendix, p. 43. According of his Berlin court file in the Berlin Landesarchiv, he was called to active military duty in earlier 1945 and was wounded in action in the Danzig area. He later lived in Ludwigshafen-Oppau, where he worked as a merchant.

in Amt VI.⁴⁴ According to British intelligence officers, Dittel himself claimed to be “ignorant of the purpose of the investigation.” But he and his colleagues had learned enough that he could postulate “that Kaltenbrunner [through the Götttsch project] intended to form some sort of a Masonic lodge or esoteric sect” in which chosen recruits would “enjoy full freedom to satisfy their inclinations so long as they would, in return, collaborate with the regime by acting as observers and informers.” Götttsch and Richter were “to carry out the preliminary work for establishing such an organization,” using the Amt VII library and considerable additional literature specially requested.⁴⁵

Hans Richter

As his trusted special assistant to gather the needed literature for the project, Götttsch chose Amt VII Masonic specialist SS-Sturmbannführer Hans Richter, who was thereby assigned to the secret mission. In 1936 Richter had headed the SD unit Himmler had ordered to establish a Masonic Museum (C 2), and then headed the Amt II Masonic section (B 1) under Six. Richter had considerable experience in collecting Masonic archives, as for example he, together with Burmester, were the individual SS officers implicated in plundering Masonic archives in Norway.⁴⁶ Richter continued with the Amt VII Masonic Department in Berlin, and was also responsible for the special collection on witchcraft and sorcery, which he had accompanied to Schlesiersee before assignment to the Götttsch project.⁴⁷ Richter was collecting books for Götttsch at least by late 1943 or early January 1944.

⁴⁴ “RSHA AMT VII (Dittel),” p. 4. Several of Burmester’s communications with Götttsch are preserved in RGVA, 500k/3/427, but all spell his name with only one ‘t’ (the spelling in the original documents is retained in those references).

⁴⁵ “RSHA AMT VII (Dittel),” pp. 4–5.

⁴⁶ Reported to me by Norwegian Masonic researcher Helge Bjørn Horrisland.

⁴⁷ “RSHA AMT VII (Dittel),” pp. 4–5. These arrangements are confirmed by surviving RSHA documents in RGVA. SS-Sturmbannführer Hans Richter (b. 15 November 1903–1972?). According to Dittel, Richter was ‘a typical University failure,’ who had earlier “studied Art History and Medicine without success, [and] then turned to painting.” Richter joined the RSHA in 1936. “RSHA AMT VII (Dittel),” p. 5, Appen. 3, p. 8. Wildt suggests he had artistic ambitions, had studied law and then decorative arts, and had served in Austria starting in 1938 with Eichmann’s special team. Wildt, *Generation des Unbedingten* p. 941. His party card from BDC is in BArch.



SS-Sturmbannführer Hans Richter (from an NS-period official identification file, courtesy the Bundesarchiv)

Occult Library Collection

Surviving SD Main Office documents suggest the organization of a special collection on occult subjects as early as 1938. By mid-1939 reference was made to a “central library of occult literature (Zentralbibliothek der okulten Weltliterature),” which was then being dealt with by one of the members of the Masonic unit.⁴⁸ One of Grumach’s postwar reports confirms the existence of a “small, specialized library on pseudo-religious groups (theosophy, etc.)” as part of the “Church” section in Berlin, but apparently Grumach, who had been working with the Jewish Library, had not known as much about other Amt VII units.⁴⁹ Burmester’s May 1943 instructions for organizing the Amt VII library in Berlin do not mention the separate section on occult subjects, although literature on theosophy appears on another plan.⁵⁰ Other RSHA documents reveal new acquisitions, for example, an astrology collection from Düsseldorf, and some journals from the Gestapo in Hamburg.⁵¹

Werner Göttisch told his American interrogators that Himmler early in 1943 had “ordered that all books and publications about occultism, astrology, and mysticism be transferred to the ‘Ahnenerbe’ (Ancestral heritage), but the librarian of Amt VII, Stubaf BURMESTER, secretly kept duplicates and put them at GOETSCH’s disposal.”⁵² To the

⁴⁸ Report of SS-Bewerber [candidate] Riegelmann (28 June 1939), BArch R 58/6499 (Teil 2), fol. 960. Hans Riegelmann (b. 1906) had worked in the RSHA Masonic unit in Schlesiersee. He then was one of the last RSHA officers in Wölfelsdorf, and one of the few who was not in the SS. See more about him in Grimsted, in *Returned from Russia*, ch. 3, p. 58, including an image of his 1945 identification card now held in RGVA, 500k/1/1305, as is a small fond of his personal papers found in Wölfelsdorf from his last period in Silesia, RGVA, fond 639k.

⁴⁹ Ernst Grumach, “Report on Confiscation,” as edited by Schidorsky, “Confiscation of Libraries,” p. 354.

⁵⁰ Burmester, “Vermerk,” report of a meeting on 21 May 1943 (25 May 1943), RGVA, 500k/3/426, fols. 3–5. See “Abteilung Theosophie,” RGVA, 500k/3/426, fols. 29–33, the memorandum mentions a subject catalogue including various occult topics, such as astrology, Christian Science, and occultism.

⁵¹ For example, from Düsseldorf, 14 April 1943, RGVA, 500k/3/426, fol. 6; from the Gestapo in Hamburg, 16, 24, and 30 April 1943, *ibid.*, fols. 9–12.

⁵² “FIR, no. 8: Werner Goettsch,” p. 12. Himmler personally controlled the Ahnenerbe, a quite separate SS unit for anthropological and cultural research on the ‘Aryan race’ and prehistoric German ancestry. Regarding the Ahnenerbe, see Michael H. Kater, *Das ‘Ahnenerbe’ der SS 1935-1945. Ein Beitrag zur Kulturpolitik des Dritten Reiches*, 2nd ed., (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1997; “Studien zur Zeitgeschichte,” Bd. 6; earlier edn: Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1974). The helpful postwar OMGUS MFA&A report on the Ahnenerbe, prepared under the direction of Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt (Berlin, 1 March 1948), includes summaries of many related documents; a mimeographed copy is available in the Library of Congress and in NACP, RG 260.

contrary, no evidence has yet been found suggesting Amt VII library transfers to Himmler’s Ahnenerbe, although certainly that secretive organization was indeed interested in occult subjects, especially relating to prehistory and the ancient Orient. On the other hand, Himmler’s predatory interest in this part of the Amt VII library may also well have served an impetus for the extensive cataloguing of occult literature that took place in the Sudeten castles.

Amt VII ‘Twilight’ Library Operations in Evacuation

Evacuation to Silesia

With intensified Allied bombing of Berlin, starting in the summer of 1943, Joseph Goebbels ordered evacuation of the holdings from German cultural institutions in Berlin. Captured archives and library materials held by the RSHA were no exception. Men in the Amt VII labor gang were forced to load the RSHA Masonic Library for evacuation to Schlesiersee (*now Polish Sława*), one of Himmler’s favorite castles (codenamed ‘Brabant I’). Most of the captured archives (including Jewish and Masonic materials), to the extent these had been separated out from library books, were first transported to Schloss Fürstenstein (*now Polish Książ*) in Silesia. But then in April 1944, they were moved to the village of Wölfelsdorf (*now Polish Wilkanów*), where the distinguished castle served as a holding center for the archives Amt VII had collected (codenamed ‘Brabant II’), and a former brewery housed the Masonic archives.⁵³

Evacuation to the Sudeten Castles

The well-educated Jewish men in the labor gang (including Ernst Grumach) also prepared the Jewish books for evacuation to the Sudeten castles, along with thousands of other books, while a smaller portion

⁵³ See summary details and sources about the different sites in Grimsted, *Returned from Russia*, pp. 55–56. Over 80,000 books from the Masonic Library now form a special collection in a branch library of the University of Poznań. See Andrzej Karpowicz, “Zbiory masonskie Biblioteki Uniwersyteckiej w Poznaniu,” *Ars Regia* 1:1 (1992), pp. 149–56; English version, “The Masonic Collection of the University Library in Poznań,” pp. 174–80; reprinted in German: “Die Freimaurer Sammlung der Universitätsbibliothek Posen,” in *Jahrbuch Quatuor Coronati* 30 (1993), pp. 111–15. A microfiche edition of the catalogue of the Masonic collection has been issued in Germany: *Katalog der Masonica Sammlung der Universitätsbibliothek Poznan/Posen* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1989). I am grateful to Pierre Mollier (Grand Orient de France) for recounting impressions of his visit to Ciężań and acquainting me with the microfiche, and to Evert Kwaadgras (Great East of the Netherlands) for reporting on his visit to Ciężań.

of the unprocessed Hebraica went to Theresienstadt. For example, Grumach could report after the war: "The Judaic Department [shelved in Eisenacherstrasse], together with the Theosophy Department and other departments, were removed to Niemes Castle near Reichenberg in Bohemia ... in about forty cases." At the same time, he postulated, "The entire Hebrew and Yiddish collection [which he had labeled section 7 in his list, including Ladino literature] was sent to Theresienstadt in Bohemia, where it was processed and catalogued by experts under the direction of the former Viennese scholar and Rabbi Dr. Marmorstein [sic, Murmelstein]." Grumach also suggested the Jewish manuscripts may have gone to Niemes.⁵⁴ Grumach obviously knew most about the Jewish collections, with which he had worked. Amt VII evacuation lists have not been found, and surviving documents provide few indications of collections being evacuated, although as will be evident later, many such lacunae are filled in by postwar reports, which at least partially confirm Grumach's report.

Evacuation of the Götttsch Collection

Contemporary documentary evidence is preserved, however, about the evacuation of occult and related materials collected for Götttsch. At the end of 1943, a major part of Götttsch's personal "reference collection (*Handapparat*)" was still in Berlin. This caused some alarm, because one of the main library buildings used by Amt VII for library holdings had been hit by a bomb in November 1943. Acting Amt VII Chief Paul Dittel had suggested transporting the Götttsch collection to Vienna, where Götttsch was based with Amt VI, but Götttsch vetoed that prospect, explaining he was not in a position to take a large quantity, wanting only limited books for his 'special assignment.' He requested instead that his special collection be installed under lock and key in the Sudetenland.⁵⁵ Sources available leave unclear how many of the Amt VII holdings were involved, or if Götttsch himself ever visited it there.

At one point Burmester personally sent Götttsch handwritten lists of at least one hundred books in eleven packets prepared for shipment to Götttsch, containing select volumes on subjects such as magic, witchcraft, spiritualism, and telepathy, among others—presumably the 'limited'

⁵⁴ Grumach, in "Report on Confiscation," as edited by Schidorsky, "Confiscation of Libraries," p. 355. As it turned out, some of the manuscripts were found in Niemes, but many others had gone with the RSHA-plundered archives to Silesia, which is how they ended up in Moscow.

⁵⁵ Burmester, "Aktennotiz—Rücksprache mit SS-O'stubaf. Götsch, 13.1.44" (Berlin, 14 January 1944), RGVA, 500k/3/427, fol. 16.

books he had wanted in Vienna.⁵⁶ Apparently the Amt VII special Pornography Section was also involved in Götttsch's project, as were other parts of the occult collection, at least peripherally. Burmester wrote that he was sending Götttsch's register and the pornography section by special truck to Niemes, where Engelmann would be waiting, because "under no circumstances should anything happen to the materials."⁵⁷ Burmester intended to visit Niemes himself in late January together with Dr. Walter Kellner, who was then responsible for the RSHA Jewish collections. A civilian employee, Kellner was a former priest and morphine addict.⁵⁸



SS-Sturmbannführer Karl Burmester (from an NS-period official identification file, courtesy the Bundesarchiv)

⁵⁶ Burmester to Götsch (Berlin, 4 February 1944), RGVA, 500k/3/427, fols. 29–40.

⁵⁷ Burmester, "Vermerk für Dr. Kellner — "Sonderauftrag in Niemes" (Berlin, 14 January 1944), RGVA, 500k/3/417, fol. 15.

⁵⁸ Walter Kellner (1906–1963); "RSHA AMT VII (Dittel)" (App. 3, p. 5, no. 36) describes Kellner as a "civilian employee and research assistant.... Former student of theology and religious folklore. Good worker, knowledgeable, but somewhat unsteady. Though Party member, is strongly opposed to the Régime. Not an antisemite." In a report published by Schidorsky, "Library of the RSHA," Appendix, pp. 43, 45, Grumach describes Kellner as "an exceedingly eccentric personality. Previously a priest and very gifted, he was a morphine addict as well as being burdened with other vices." Grumach further suggests he was probably selling off valuable books to support his addiction.

Library Operations in Sudeten Castles

The Amt VII Sudeten castles sites and staff involved are all listed briefly in the lengthy British interrogation report on Amt VII chief Paul Dittel.⁵⁹ Newly available RSHA documents corroborate and amplify the Dittel account. Library operations in the Sudeten castles and Theresienstadt were directed by SS-Sturmbannführer Karl Burmester, who, as noted above, headed the RSHA library (VII A1) after April 1942. He remained based in Berlin, but occasionally visited the castles and Theresienstadt. According to an RSHA staff list in December 1944, the Branch Office (Aussenstelle) in Niemes (*now Czech Mimoň*) had a staff of five.⁶⁰ SS-Obersturmführer Karl Engelmann was the only staff name given for the office locations listed, suggesting he was in charge of operations in the four named castles, which had the code-names Burgund I through Burgund IV.⁶¹ Niemes was the headquarters, and now fragmentary documents provide evidence of active cataloguing work there, but curiously involving only Amt VII literature on occult sciences.

Niemes (Mimoň)

Located about fifty km west of Liberec, and 15 km east of Česká Lípa (Böhmisch-Leipa), Schloss Niemes, the Amt VII library evacuation headquarters, was codenamed Burgund I. First built in the early sixteenth century by the Biberštejn family, the castle had been owned since 1707 by the Hartwig family (Austrian origin), proprietors of considerable textile mills in northern Bohemia.⁶² Some members of the

⁵⁹ "RSHA AMT VII (Dittel)," pp. 8–9.

⁶⁰ "Ausweichen des Amtes VII" (15 December 1944), BArch, R 58/849, fol. 19(18). Wilhelm Lenz, now retired from the Bundesarchiv, kindly alerted me to this document. A more general RSHA information circular two months earlier, however, lists only Niemes as a site for Amt VII operations in addition to Wölfelsdorf and Schlesiersee (15 October 1944), RGVA, 500k/1/1302, fol. 80.

⁶¹ SS-Obersturmführer Karl Engelmann (b. 1 November 1909; Chemnitz). According to his SSO file, he was a pharmacist by training and joined the NSDAP in early 1930. Starting in November 1937 he worked in the SD Main Office as the SS liaison to the Deutsche Bücherei in Leipzig, and in April 1941 was a member of an Einsatzkommando in Belgrade. He started in Amt VII A 1 in August 1942, specializing in forbidden literature. According to Dittel, Engelmann was "not a qualified library assistant but gained much experience in sorting books and did much work when the library was evacuated. Old Party member, but now disillusioned." "RSHA AMT VII (Dittel)," App. 3.

⁶² See the brief history of the castle (with a picture of the entranceway) in *Hrady, zámky a tvrze v Čechách, na Moravě a ve Slezsku*, III: *Severní Čechy*, comp. Rudolf Anděl, ed. Zdeněk Fiala et al (Prague: Svoboda, 1984), pp. 319–20.



Mimoň, with the castle and church, circa 1905 (the castle was destroyed in 1985) (from an early 20th century postcard, courtesy Jaro Svěcený)

Hartwig family stayed on during the war, presumably serving as cover for the RSHA operation. The large family library (17,000 books and 370 manuscripts), amassed in the castle over the previous century, was kept separate from the incoming books evacuated from Berlin.⁶³ Soon after the Sudeten area reverted to Czechoslovakia, in the summer of 1945, the University Library in Prague sent a team to sort out the books discovered there and in the other castles, as will be noted below. But already in 1947, Czech military authorities were taking over the castle and surrounding area as a training base. Despite efforts by the prewar owners to save it, the castle was destroyed in 1985.⁶⁴

When I visited Mimoň in 2006, I met an elderly man who had been a teenager when the Red Army liberated the town. His house and many others were destroyed by Soviet bombs on 8 May 1945, and 60 local residents perished. In a café beside the memorial to the Soviet

⁶³ A large part of the family castle library is now held in the neighboring castle of Zákupy (15 km. west of Mimoň), according to Antonín Luboš and colleagues in the castle department of the National Museum in Prague.

⁶⁴ Reportedly relatives of the Austrian prewar owners (Hartwig family) had sent money for the restoration of the castle in the 1970s, but to no avail. Dynamite had already been laid when the castle was struck by lightning in 1985, which set off some of the dynamite, and the rest of the castle was subsequently demolished.

'liberation,' he told me that he remembered that books had been stored in the castle. There were also books in the twelfth-thirteenth century Church of Saints Peter and Paul on the hill: "more books than you could imagine," he explained. "They took them all away," he recalled, but he had no idea where they had come from or what happened to them.⁶⁵

Cataloguing Occult Literature

Extant wartime reports in Moscow and Berlin document active library work in Niemes, and a considerable number of book crates had been moved there by early 1944. On 14 February Dittel dispatched SS-Hauptsturmführer Gerhard Schmidt to organize the special library in Niemes, together with SS-Rottenführer Josef Sabutsch, who had been in training with other workers in Schlesiersee.⁶⁶ Schmidt had started in the SD Publications Office (Schrifttumsstelle) in the German Library (Deutsches Bücherei) in Leipzig. He subsequently worked in the Amt VII C Witchcraft sector, 'Sonderauftrag H,' which had been active in Berlin and partly evacuated to Schlesiersee in 1943 with the Masonic Library, but was closed down by the beginning of 1944.⁶⁷

During their first two weeks in Niemes Schmidt and his staff were busy with technical preparations, and they moved many of the books that had earlier been sent to the neighboring castle of Neu-Pürstein. Their actual library work started in early March. By the time of Schmidt's first three-week report on the 8th of March, they had "shelved twenty large crates, started on the subject catalogue,

⁶⁵ I am grateful to Zdeněk Rydygr for meeting with me in Mimoň (15 August 2006) and to Jaro Svěcený for arranging the visit and interpreting.

⁶⁶ Burmester, "Akttenotiz: Unternehmen Leo-Rücksprache mit SS-Sturmbannführer Richter beim Amtschef VII" (Berlin, 25 January 1944), RGVA, 500k/3/427, fol. 42; Dittel to Chief of Dienststelle Schlesiersee (Berlin, 10 February 1944), RGVA, 500k/3/427, fol. 41-41v.

⁶⁷ SS-Hauptsturmführer Gerhard Schmidt (b. 22 February 1911; Pockau [Erzgebirge]). According to Dittel, Schmidt "had studied classics and history, but not graduated. Steady character, good worker but slow. Old Party member but not a fanatic, rather disillusioned, criticized and grumbled."—"RSHA AMT VII (Dittel)," (Appen. 3, p. 10, no. 75). According to his Party card in BArch, he had been a member of the nationalist, para-military Jungdeutscher Orden movement before joining the NSDAP in August 1932; following reserve army training (1937–1938), from August 1939 until 4 September 1940, he was apparently in the Army. SS-Rottenführer Josef Sabutsch (b. 20 March 1905) was from St. Veit in Austrian Carinthia. He is listed with the Witchcraft sector (VII C 3) by Jörg Rudolph, "Geheime Reichskommando-Sache!," p. 62.

and were busy with the periodicals for occult sciences (*heimwissentlichen*)." For the catalogue, he specifically noted subject categories of "Anthroposophy, Astrology, Theosophy, Mysticism, Hedonism (*Lebenskunst*), Orientalia (foreign religions), Belles-Lettres, and Spiritualism."⁶⁸ They had at least seven women assisting with recording.⁶⁹ At the same time they searched seven requests from Amt III, finding only four of the books available but, for example, were able to locate the requested literature on the Bhagavad Gita, and prepared an unspecified list for Dittel.⁷⁰

By the end of July 1944, Schmidt reported to Burmester, at least 8,000 books had been processed, as well as 150 journals with 24,000 issues. Approximately 6,700 books had been entered in a catalogue, and some 18,000 issues of 130 periodicals were recorded in an alphabetical card catalogue. From the outset, they had processed altogether 85 crates of occult science materials.⁷¹

Schmidt's surviving reports from Niemes reference cataloguing only of the vast range of literature Amt VII had amassed on occult subjects, and those are the only German reports from Niemes that have been found. Indicative of the work there, a systematic plan for a subject catalogue of the Theosophic section of the Amt VII library dated February 1944 surfaced in another RSHA file in Moscow.⁷² Even more revealing, in Berlin RSHA files, scattered segments are preserved of what is assumed to be the catalogue itself, totaling almost 400 pages—with short-title listings covering close to forty categories of occult subjects in the Niemes library (Ausweichstelle Niemes), including all of those mentioned in Schmidt's March 1944 report. Other separate sections list books on such topics as alchemy, hypnosis, kabala, parapsychology, prophecy, telepathy, and the interpretation of dreams, among many others. Most of the books listed date from the nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries in

⁶⁸ Schmidt to Burmester, report for 14 February through 3 March (Niemes, 8 March 1944), RGVA, 500k/3/427, fol. 42.

⁶⁹ The report named Frau von Durov, Frau Braat, Brüss, Frl. Böneke, Frl. Miethe, and for the more time-consuming work with periodicals, Frl. Busch and Frl. Fischer. Ibid. (Niemes, 8 March 1944), RGVA, 500k/3/427, fol. 42.

⁷⁰ Ibid. (Niemes, 8 March 1944), RGVA, 500k/3/427, fol. 42.

⁷¹ Schmidt to Burmester "Auftrag Leo; Arbeitsberichte," 4 March–20 July 1944 (Niemes, 27 July 1944), RGVA, 500k/3/427, fol. 56.

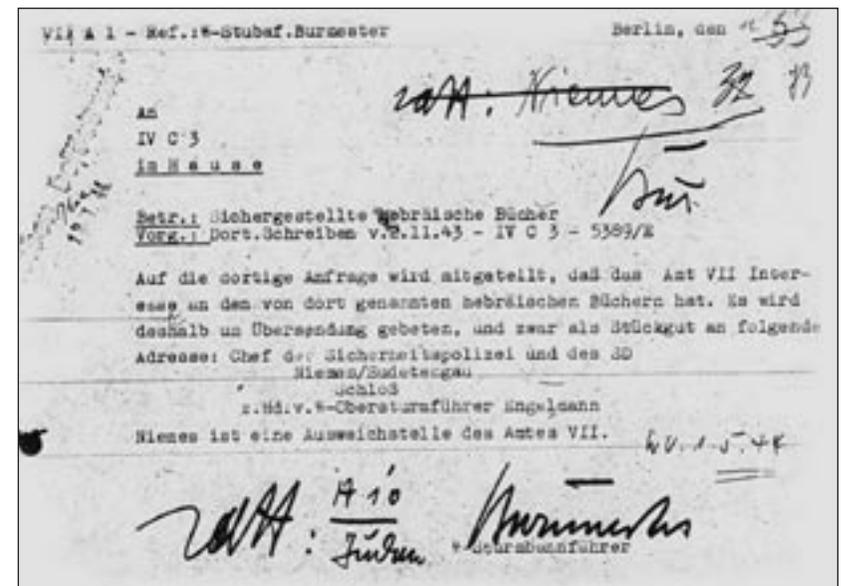
⁷² "Abteilung Theosophie-System des Sachkataloges" (4 February 1944), RGVA, 500k/3/324, fols. 29–33. While still in Berlin they had been starting to organize that section.

German and French, but other European languages are represented, including English and Dutch.⁷³

So far no documents have surfaced that might explain more about the purpose of the catalogue, or provide details about the provenance of the books listed. Nor is there any evidence that Himmler had “ordered that all books and publications about occultism, astrology, and mysticism be transferred to the ‘Ahnenerbe’ (Ancestral heritage),” as Göttisch had recounted (see above). Perhaps the sorting and cataloguing work was in response to Himmler’s interest in the collection. But Göttisch’s suggestion that “Stubaf BURMESTER secretly kept duplicates and put them at GOETSCH’s disposal”⁷⁴ hardly squares with the surviving Niemes catalogue. Certainly the thousands of books covered in the Niemes lists could not all have been “duplicates.” Besides, in a signed memorandum of May 1944, Burmester specifically noted that Amt IV had already turned over its collection of occult (*Geheimwissenschaftliches*) material to Amt VII, and that “Amt VII was then taking responsibility for collection of such

⁷³ The undated catalogue in two somewhat jumbled groups (in two different current BArch R 58 files) comprises close to forty segments of varying length, each with lists giving authors, short titles, place and date of publication. Folder covers for each providing titles, all with the same general title format, indicating their origin in Niemes branch office (Ausweichstelle Niemes) and naming the separate subjects of the books listed in each: “Liste der bei VII A 1 (Ausweichstelle Niemes) aufgestellten Schriften über Yoga”; “Liste ... über Schöne Literatur”; “... über Spiritismus”; “...Symbolik”; “...Sympathie”; “...Telepathie”; “...Theosophie”; “...Traumdeutung”; “...Priphetie”; “...Pseudo-Medizin”; “...Psychologie”; and in the section part (Teil 2) of the same numbered file: “...Religions-Philosophie”; “...Rosenkreuzer”; “...Parapsychologie”; “...Pendellehre (lacking cover sheet)”; “...Pendelliteratur”; “...Phrenologie”; “...Neugeistlehre”; “...Okkultismus”; “...Orientalia”; “...Antroposophie”; and “...Naturheilkunde”—BArch, R 58/6485 (alt ZB1/1268), Teil 1, fols. 67–176, and Teil 2, fols. 177–279 (on BArch microfilm, frames 38–158 and 566–678). And a second group in another file (carbon copies by subjects in labeled folders): “Liste der bei VII A 1 (Ausweichstelle Niemes) aufgestellten Schriften über Allgemeines”; “...Zeitschriften” (divided into 15 subject-named sections within); followed by separate folders for: “...Alchemie”; “...Ariosophie”; “...Astrologie”; “...Astrologie-Ephimeriden”; “...Chiromantie”; “...Heilsehen”; “...Christian Science”; “...Graphologie”; and in the second part of the numbered file: “...Lebenskunst”; “...Hypnotismus”; “...Magnetismus”; “...Magie”; “...Mazdaznan”; “...Menschenkenntnis”; “...Monismus”; “...Metaphysik”; “...Mystik”; “...Hypnose”; and “...Kabbala”, R 58/6501, Teil 1 and 2 (alt ZB1/1286), [unfoliated] (on BArch microfilm, frames 1400–90 and 1498–1585). These fragmented segments are preserved among RSHA files received from the Stasi, as indicated by their previous archival signatures. I had first seen the original files in BArch, Berlin-Lichterfelde in 2005, but when I returned in 2006, readers were required to use the BArch microfilm copies.

⁷⁴ “FIR, no. 8: Werner Goettsch,” p. 12. See fn. 52.



Document from the RSHA Moscow files relating to Judaica, signed by SS-Sturmbannführer Karl Burmester, as library director, with indication of the Niemes office (May 1944) (photograph by Patricia K. Grimsted, courtesy the RGVA, fond 500k)

materials in occupied areas,” as was known to the chief officer in Amt IV B (Gestapo) responsible. “In France, Amt VII had already surveyed the occult and sexual-science materials (including pornography),” as approved by Amt IV B. Amt VII was preparing the small reference collection with duplicates that Amt IV had requested, but borrowing such materials from the Amt VII library “was not possible because of the special project ‘C.’”⁷⁵ Perhaps Himmler’s interest, and certainly Göttisch’s project (as approved by Kaltenbrunner), had stimulated work on that catalogue to the neglect of other parts of the Amt VII library in Niemes. But further documentation is still needed.

Judaica in Niemes

Grumach had described shipments of Judaica and Hebraica to Niemes, and they are documented elsewhere. However, there is

⁷⁵ Burmester (signed), “Aktentnotiz: Geheimwissenschaftliches Material—Rücksprache bei Regierungsrat SS-Stubaf. Hahnenbruch vom Amt IV” (Berlin, May 1944), RGVA, 500k/3/324, fol. 28.

no indication those materials were being processed in Niemes or the three other neighboring Sudeten castles, and presumably Amt VII had no qualified staff there. Shipments of Judaica to Niemes continued throughout 1944, and Amt VII was still acquiring Jewish collections in Germany. For example, a short title list of some important Hebrew imprints (17th-20th cc.) from the police in Leipzig indicates books were ready for transfer to Amt VII in Niemes in late 1944. At the same time, the accompanying report explained, “many of the purely religious service books were being destroyed.”⁷⁶ No RSHA documentation is preserved indicating what Judaica was held in the castles, even on a collection level.⁷⁷ For example, when a freight train wagon of Judaica arrived from Cracow in November 1944, there was no hint of the provenance of the contents. And the SD office in Cracow explained that they could themselves not provide details, because they had no one to sort and appraise the considerable Hebraica included.⁷⁸

Hauska (now Czech Houska)

Hauska, 30km south southeast of Česká Lípa (Böhmisch-Leipa) with the code name Burgund II, appears to have been primarily used by Amt VII for library storage. Quite possibly the SS-men of Amt VII may also have been interested in the isolated castle because of its distinguished royal pedigree dating back to the end of the thirteenth century, intriguing frescoes in the chapel, and links to mystical and psychic happenings going back several centuries.⁷⁹ After the war the castle was turned over to the Prague University: first used for storage of books, it thereafter became part of a university sanatorium. It was

⁷⁶ Burmester correspondence with the Gestapo (Amt IV) in Leipzig (Berlin, 2 November 1944), RGVA, 500k/3/320, fol. 74–94.

⁷⁷ See below for Grumach’s postwar report to Gershom Scholem and Hugo Bergmann’s report based on his November 1946 visit.

⁷⁸ Regarding the preparations for shipment, see the Amt IVB report to Eichmann (7 January 1944), RGVA, 500k/3/427, fol. 14. Shipping papers are preserved for at least one wagon from Cracow, along with the SD report from Cracow to Burmester in Berlin (1 November 1944), RGVA, 500/3/320, fols. 104–105.

⁷⁹ It was a royal castle of the Czech Kingdom (1280–1316). From 1316–1432, and again in the early seventeenth century, it was owned by the Berka family, who also owed Hauska and Neu-Pürstein. In 1924 it was purchased by Josef Šimonek, president of the Škoda automotive works in Plzeň. Reconstructed in 1929 and 1930, the castle continued to be owned by the family until 1938, when it was taken over by German authorities. See the brief history of the castle in *Hrady, zámky a tvrze v Čechách*, III, pp. 148–51, with historic pictures.



The castle of Hauska (now Czech Houska)
(From *Hrady, zámky a tvrze v Čechách, na Moravě a ve Slezsku, III: Severní Čechy*, comp. Rudolf Anděl, ed. Zdeněk Fiala et al, Prague: Svoboda, 1984, p. 146)

restituted to its prewar owner in 1990–1991, and is today used for entertaining and is open to tourist groups.⁸⁰

Only a few details survive about shipments of books to Hauska during the war, again mainly references to literature on occult subjects, such as the fifty crates of periodicals Schmidt reported to Burmester in Hauska at the end of July 1944, hard to access due to lack of transport.⁸¹ Postwar reports suggest many Jewish books were stored

⁸⁰ The Šimonek family of the Škoda automotive works reclaimed the castle in restitution proceedings in 1990–1991. It is used for entertaining and group tourist excursions with a costumed impresario. Early frescos are preserved in the chapel and today, the castle itself portrays the charm and historic nostalgia of a renaissance palace. I am grateful to the current owner for graciously receiving us in November 2005, telling us about the castle, and arranging a special tour with his impresario. The family had not known about books having been stored in the castle during the war.

⁸¹ Schmidt to Burmester (Niemes, 27 July 1944), RGVA, 500/3/427, fol. 56.

there, including books from the Great Synagogue in Warsaw, but we cannot be sure when they arrived. Prague University Library moved many books to Houska from Mimoň soon after the war, and especially in 1947 and early 1948, when Czech military authorities took over Mimoň and the University was required to vacate that facility.

Schloss Neu-Pürstein

(sometimes, Perstein, now Czech Nový Berštejn)

Schloss Neu-Pürstein (now Czech Nový Berštejn), just off a main road north from Mělník to Česká Lípa, bore the RSHA code name of Burgund III. An elegant renaissance palace dating from the sixteenth century, it was owned by the Berka family (also then owners of Hauska and Neufalkenburg) until 1620. Owned briefly in the seventeenth



The castle of Neu-Pürstein (sometimes, Perstein, now Czech Nový Berštejn), November 2005
(photographs by Patricia K. Grimsted)

century by Albrecht of Valdštejn, the castle again belonged to the Valdštejn family from 1810 through the First World War. Nový Berštejn was purchased after Czech independence by the Maglič family, involved with the Škoda automotive works.⁸² During the 1930s the castle belonged to the Czech movie actress Zita Kabátová, but following annexation of the Sudetenland in 1938, the owners were forced to sell to a German baron, Graf Ludolf Wadel-Parlow. During the war the castle was visited by representatives of the Nazi elite, including Joseph Goebbels, and it served as a setting for the 1944 film “*Heimlichen Bräute*” (Secret Bride), starring the well-known German actress Magda Schneider.⁸³ The castle is now privately owned and operated as a summer resort.⁸⁴

Even before cataloguing operations were underway in Niemes, books were already being stored in Pürstein. Although Dittel claimed books were only stowed away there, in early February shelving was ordered for 50-60,000 books, and they were planning to move some materials there from Niemes. At that point Burmester was arranging for workspace for Göttisch in Pürstein, but there is no evidence that plan was implemented.⁸⁵ Apparently at least part of the special Göttisch collection was there, and there are other references to occult science materials in the winter and spring of 1944.⁸⁶ And in July 1944, Schmidt reported another ten crates of periodicals they had been processing.⁸⁷

⁸² A brief history of the castle is included in *Hrady, zámky a tvrze v Čechách*, III, pp. 350–51.

⁸³ This information comes from the present owners. They have reports of raw footage for the film “*Heimlichen Bräute*” (1944), but have not located a finished copy. They heard reports that a second film was made in the castle, but was destroyed by the censors.

⁸⁴ After the war, the castle was left in increasingly bad repair and the lands were part of a cooperative dairy farm. The present owner Miroslav Slezák purchased the castle in 1991 and spent the next ten years reconstructing it. I am exceedingly grateful to Slezák and his wife for their hospitality, first in November 2005, and again in August 2006, while I was researching and drafting this essay.

⁸⁵ Burmester to Götsch (Berlin, 4 February 1944), RGVA, 500k/3/427, fol. 29. The present owners report that a woman working as a servant there during the war described the movement of heavy crates of unspecified content. See Dittel’s remark in “RSHA AMT VII (Dittel),” p. 9.

⁸⁶ Burmester, “Vermerk für Dr. Kellner; Sonderauftrag in Niemes” (14 January 1944), RGVA, 500k/3/427, fols. 15, mentions ‘Perstein’ as an alternative to Niemes. See also Schmidt’s library report (14 February–4 March 1944), RGVA, 500k/3/427, fols. 42–44, which mentions the retrieval of books from Pürstein.

⁸⁷ Schmidt to Burmester (Niemes, 27 July 1944), RGVA, 500/3/427, fol. 56.



The castle of Neufalkenburg (Czech Nový Falkenburk), 2006 (photographs by Patricia K. Grimsted)

Schloss Neufalkenburg (Czech Nový Falkenburk)

With the codename 'Burgund IV', Schloss Neufalkenburg (Czech Nový Falkenburk), on the outskirts of Deutsch-Gabel (now Czech Jablonné v Podještědí), was the fourth area castle used for library operations, and appeared on the RSHA Amt VII office address list in 1944. Similar in style to Nový Berštejn, Nový Falkenburk dates from the mid-fifteenth century, and in the sixteenth century was owned by the Berka family (1565–1599), who were again the owners starting in the seventeenth century (1620–1718).⁸⁸ From 1901 until 1945 it was owned by the Liebig, a prominent textile family in the area, some of whom stayed on during the war.⁸⁹ Nationalized by the Czech government

⁸⁸ The Mattausch family of textile manufacturers owned the castle in the late nineteenth century (1872–1901). Graf Liebig also had an apartment in Reichenberg.

⁸⁹ See the brief history of the castle in *Hrady, zámky a tvrze v Čechách*, III, p. 351.

after the war, the castle was extensively renovated and today houses a children's home and school.⁹⁰

Starting in the spring of 1944 several rooms in Neufalkenburg housed the special top-secret unit headed by SS-Stubaf Hans Richter (in cooperation with Werner Göttisch) mentioned above, with a highly selective library collection on astrology, theosophy, and other esoteric occult subjects. Dittel portrayed the project, as noted above, as Amt VII's last claim to "an unexpected importance."⁹¹ Already in 1943, even before Amt VII moved its library to the Sudetenland, appeals went out to units in different cities in Germany for the esoteric materials Richter requested to be selected from confiscated collections in the Reich. Amt VII even had a special representative in France.

Some of the earlier requested literature had gone to Schlesiersee with the Masonic library with which Richter had earlier been associated. Apparently books were moving back and forth, because parts of the special collections had gone to the other castles. Some books relevant to the project were part of the Masonic Library, which had been evacuated to Schlesiersee, the lakeside castle near Glogau and one of Himmler's favorites. Dittel in his British interrogation claims that "many Masonic books were shifted to DEUTSCH-GABEL in 44 for the sole use of GOETTSCHE and his assistant RICHTER." And certainly some of the other 'special' and occult literature came from Masonic collections. Correspondence back and forth with Berlin makes it clear that ties with the Masonic research operations in Schlesiersee continued during 1944.⁹²

According to Dittel, with Richter's continuing demand for more and more books, serious disagreements about the project developed with the Amt VII library chief Burmester. Remaining documents also suggest differing opinions about library acquisition and borrowing practices.⁹³ Dittel claimed that Richter was borrowing:

⁹⁰ I am grateful to the director Jana Pittnerová, who gave us a complete tour of the interior when I visited in August 2006 with Jaro Svěcený. At that time the children were away for summer recess.

⁹¹ Regarding SS Stubaf Hans Richter, see above, fn. 47. Coverage of the project in the British report on Dittel ("RSHA AMT VII [Dittel]," pp. 4–5), is confirmed by the newly discovered RSHA wartime documents in the Moscow (RGVA) file cited here.

⁹² "RSHA AMT VII [Dittel]," p. 11.

⁹³ The Amt VII controversy with Amt VI mentioned by Dittel, "RSHA AMT VII (Dittel)," p. 4, is also reflected in a surviving "Aktentnotiz" signed by Burmester (Berlin, 25 October 1944), RGVA, 500/3/427, fol. 59.

...masses of books not only about Freemasonry, but also on occultism, anthroposophy ([including]... secret SD files on anthroposophic communities in Germany which had been suppressed by the Nazis), telepathy, European and Oriental religious sects and, lastly, on the history and literary pattern of the English detective-story.⁹⁴

The subjects mentioned for Richter's book orders, except for Freemasonry and English detective stories, conform to those for books being catalogued in Niemes, as noted above. Again this suggests that the Richter-Götttsch project was tied to the cataloguing work on the whole Amt VII occult book collection in the castles, but that point did not arise in the British interrogation report; nor did Dittel divulge the extensive occult catalogue being prepared in Niemes. The controversy, with "RICHTER's arrogance and his unsatiable hunger for ever increasing masses of material," according to Dittel, led to Götttsch's threat to have the library taken away from Amt VII if Richter did not get the books requested. "In the end," Dittel explained, Götttsch and Richter "proved stronger than Burmester and the management of Amt VII. Richter got a study of his own in SCHLOSS FALKENBURG and a shorthand-typist, FrI RADEMACHER."⁹⁵

In fact, in November 1944 Burmester was negotiating with the Neufalkenburg owners' attorney to arrange more room in the palace for the Richter project with Götttsch, although Götttsch himself was still based in Vienna. Other problems arose for Richter at the same time when it was learned that the father of his secretary/assistant, Fraulein Rademacker, had been a Freemason, the fact of which had been previously suppressed. Burmester explained that she was to be demoted and sent away.⁹⁶

Richter's project was not alone in Neufalkenburg. In addition to some of the owner's family, another institute, represented by SS-Hauptsturmführer Hoffmann and directed by SS-Oberführer Professor Höhn, was also installed in several rooms. Burmester does not name the Höhn-Hoffman institute involved, but presumably it was the Institut für Staatsforschung (Institute for Research on Government), directed by Professor Dr. Reinhard Höhn of the University of Berlin (Berlin-Wannsee, Königstrasse 71), with Berthold Hoffmann as deputy.

⁹⁴ "RSHA AMT VII (Dittel)," p. 4.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ See Burmester, "Bericht: Rücksprache mit SS-Stubaf. Richter in Burgund" (Berlin, 28 November 1944), RGVA, 500k/3/427, fol. 62. The spelling of Fraulein Rademacker's name in that document differs from the Dittel report in fn. 94.

Höhn had risen in the 1930s parallel to Götttsch in the SD leadership to head the SD department II 2 dealing with "Analysis of spheres of life" within Germany.⁹⁷ Although their operation was unrelated to the Richter-Götttsch project, the library of that institute had received plundered books from all over Europe, also seized by the SD, and was hence not unrelated to other parts of the RSHA Amt VII library. The institute presence there is borne out by that fact that many books from that institute were found in the Neufalkenburg castle after the war.⁹⁸

Although the earlier Amt VII witchcraft section was no longer functioning, witches had not been forgotten. Another Amt VII staff associate, novelist Friedrich Norfolk (from the Sudetenland), who had earlier been active in the witchcraft project, was still on the job, turning out assigned novels about witch hunts (usually unjust ones by the Church authorities). Apparently, he was also involved at least tangentially with the Richter project.⁹⁹ In November of 1943 Norfolk was being called for a meeting with Richter and Schmidt at Schlesiensee, where the Masonic research unit was still based.¹⁰⁰ In September 1944,

⁹⁷ SS-Standartenführer Dr Reinhard Höhn (1904–2000) had joined the SD in 1932, and by 1936 he headed the SD Main Office II (Domestic [Inland]) 2 for 'Analysis of Spheres of Life.' With strong academic credentials he was a Dozent by 1934 and established at the University of Berlin as Professor of State and Administrative Law. Starting in 1937, he directed the Institute for Research on Government (Institut für Staatsforschung). On Höhn, see Browder, *Hitler's Enforcers*, pp. 127, 176, 194-95, and 256; and Max Weinreich, *Hitler's Professors: The Part of Scholarship in Germany's Crimes Against the Jewish People* (2nd ed., New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 271. After 1945, Höhn started as a non-medical, alternative health practitioner. By 1953 he was business manager of the German Economic Society (Deutschen Volkswirtschaftlichen Gesellschaft), and by 1956 emerged as founding director of the highly successful Academy for Managers of Commerce and Industry (Akademie für Führungskräfte der Wirtschaft). SS-Hauptsturmführer Berthold Hoffmann (b. 16 May 1910; Karlsruhe), trained in law, worked as an officer in the SD Main Office at least until 1940, and then was an assistant in the Höhn institute.

⁹⁸ Burmester, "Bericht: Rücksprache mit SS-Stubaf. Richter in Burgund" (Berlin, 28 November 1944), RGVA, 500k/3/427, fol. 62–62v. See below (fn. 119) for the reports regarding the postwar retrieval of books from the Hoffman-Höhn institute.

⁹⁹ Regarding Friedrich Norfolk (1899–1948; *pseudo* of Friedrich Soukup after 1939), and his earlier involvement with the RSHA Amt VII witchcraft sector, see Jörg Rudolf, "Geheime Reichskommando-Sache!," in *Himmels Hexenkartothek*, pp. 61-62 and 84-85. One of his novels, *Der Widerruf des Dietrich Flade* (Berlin: Nordland Verlag, 1943), about the hero of a famous sixteenth-century unjustified witch trial of Frundsberg, was issued by the publishing house used by Amt VII. Another longer novel, *Herz im Panzer* (Leipzig, H.H. Kreisel, [1942] and 2nd and 3rd eds. [1943]), appeared in several editions.

¹⁰⁰ Rudolf Lewin to Norfolk (Schlesiensee, 15 November 1943), BArch 58/6484), fol. 136. Lewin then was working with the Masonic unit.

arrangements were being made for Norfolk's access to some of the books in Deutsch Gabel, with reference to his own special collection on aesthetics (*Schöngeistige*), which was to be kept separate from the rest of the Amt VII 1 library.¹⁰¹

No further details are available regarding the Richter-Göttlich project in Deutsch Gabel. But recent art restorers have remarked about the statues of devils surrounding the palace of Nový Falkenburk today, and the iconographic significance of some of the murals in various rooms.¹⁰² The last Amt VII chief Paul Dittel, who claimed not to know "the purpose of the investigations," even "lost sight" of Richter at the beginning of 1945. Richter himself was called up to active military service soon after.¹⁰³

SS Occult Preoccupations in the Castles—Conclusions

Clearly, as the war was increasingly turning against the Nazi regime, Himmler and his high-level RSHA subordinates, and especially those heading the ideological wing, still retained a strong interest in the occult and were intent on preserving the considerable literature they had amassed on occult sciences. Dittel spoke of "a 'mysterious twilight' [that] surrounded the activities of Amt VII."¹⁰⁴ Nothing could have been truer of the library operations in the Sudeten castles the last year of the war. The existing extensive occult catalogue fragments from Niemes, along with reports of additional occult literature stored in the other castles, and the top-secret pseudo-Masonic occult project in Neufalkenburg, are clear evidence of a major preoccupation of at least some of the RSHA elite during the final years of the war. More clarification about the implications is needed, but documentation remains sparse. Yet with the Berlin and Moscow sources cited here—however bizarre for the Reich central security agency in a period of 'total war'—the subject of SS occult preoccupations cannot be dismissed as insignificant sensationalism.

Perhaps RSHA leaders, such as Himmler and Kaltenbrunner, both of whom as we now know were secretly initiating peace feelers at

¹⁰¹ Burmester, "Aktennotiz: Sonderauftrag Friedrich Norfolk" (Berlin, 11 September 1944), RGVA, 500k/3/427, fol. 57.

¹⁰² The possible significance comes from remarks of two Czech art historians involved in the restoration of the palace in a meeting arranged by Jaro Svěcený in Prague (November 2007). Further analysis is in order.

¹⁰³ "RSHA AMT VII (Dittel)," pp. 3, 18.

¹⁰⁴ "RSHA AMT VII (Dittel)," p. 6.

that time, were themselves also not ready to abandon the pursuit of spiritual or even pagan sources for survival or renewal of their mission, while the world around them was destroying the Nazi regime and its ideology for which they were assigned to provide security. Freemasonry was a declared enemy of the Reich, but at that point when the very existence of the Reich lay in the balance, they apparently even considered utilizing the bonds of Freemasonry in their search for peace. Certainly the SS men who managed to avoid the front lines in Sudeten and Silesian castles were more than prepared to comply as long as they could. According to Dittel's postwar testimony, of those mentioned above in Sudeten library operations, Burmester, Engelmann, Richter, and Schmidt were all called up for active service by April 1945. And by then Dittel himself was "unemployed pending posting to a front-line unit."¹⁰⁵

Theresienstadt (Czech Terezín)

Meanwhile, as the Nazi regime was increasing its efficiency in destroying Europe's Jewish population, it was sadistically simultaneously preserving and cataloguing important written treasures of the Jewish heritage saved from destruction. While considerable Judaica and Hebraica from the Amt VII Berlin collection was stored in the Sudeten castles, no less than 581 crates of plundered Hebrew books were sent to the concentration camp of Theresienstadt (Czech Terezín). The only serious Hebrew cataloguing in the final years of the war was being done by incarcerated Jewish specialists. Much has been already written, including a 1991 German dissertation, about the different library operations in the eighteenth-century fortress that was turned into a 'model' ghetto and subsequent concentration camp.¹⁰⁶ Published memoirs by survivors such as Chief Librarian Emil Utitz describe work in the Central Ghetto Library, where a special Hebrew

¹⁰⁵ They were assigned to the SS Training Battalion (Ausbildungsbataillon) Konitz. "RSHA AMT VII (Dittel)," p. 3.

¹⁰⁶ German librarian Kornelia Richter identifies many of the librarians in Theresienstadt, although she provides few details about the Hebrew specialists and their work, "Bibliothekarbeit und Lektüre im Ghetto Theresienstadt," typescript (Berlin, Humboldt University, 1991). See also Kornelia Richter, "Lesen im Ghetto Theresienstadt," in *Bücher und Bibliotheken in Ghettos und Lagern (1933–1945)* (Hannover: Laurentius, 1991; *Kleine historische Reihe*, vol. 3); and Richter, "Bibliothekarbeit im Ghetto Theresienstadt," *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, 102 (1988, no. 3), pp. 97–103. Her studies were completed before the availability of many RSHA files in Berlin and Moscow and hence also do not deal with the relationship to the Berlin Amt VII library.

Room (Hebräischer Raum) housed 10,000 volumes of Hebraica reserved for scholarly study, among other library operations.¹⁰⁷

Apart from the Ghetto Library open to inmates, cataloguing of the Hebraica from Berlin took place in the specialized unit inaccessible to the public, manned by inmates known as the 'Talmudkomando.' That quite separate program, headed by Prague Hebraicist Otto Muneles, was under the Vienna Rabbi Dr. Benjamin Murrelstein, who became the last camp elder in December 1944. The Talmudkomando included Dutch Hebraicists Isaac Leo Seeligmann and Izaak Kisch, among other specialists comprising "20 rabbis, 15 theologians, a linguist, librarians and historians." Surviving card catalogues in JMP today reveal many of the books processed, which were marked with a distinctive 'Jc.'¹⁰⁸

Although the concentration camp was under RSHA Amt IV (Gestapo) and local camp administration, the major Hebrew holdings came from the plundered Amt VII collections in Berlin sent there for cataloguing. The program was coordinated from Berlin by the same SS-Sturmbannführer Karl Burmester, who was the Amt VII library chief for the nearby evacuation sites in the Sudeten castles.¹⁰⁹ Many additional books were acquired from arriving inmates and Czech sources. The use of inmate labor as the work force for Hebrew cataloguing (at that point in cooperation with Amt IV) should be seen as a continuation of the Amt VII system of using Jewish labor gangs in Berlin. Thus in Theresienstadt the RSHA ideological arm and library preservation program of Amt VII was superimposed on and interacted with the 'final solution' institutionalized in Nazi concentration camps run by the Gestapo (Amt IV).

Postwar Recovery and Removals from the Castles

The Red Army liberated the castles in northern Bohemia, but as far as can be determined, the Soviets did not seize any of the books. Nor have

¹⁰⁷ See especially Emil Utitz, "The Central Ghetto Library in the Concentration Camp Terezín," in *Terezín*, ed. František Ehrmann, Otto Heitlinger, and Rudolf Iltis (Prague: Council of Jewish Communities in the Czech Lands, 1965), pp. 263–66; also issued in German, "Die Theresienstädter Zentralbücherei," in *Theresienstadt* (Vienna: Europa-Verlag, 1968), pp. 287–90.

¹⁰⁸ Bušek et al, "Hope is on the Next Page," pp. 38–39. More details about library arrangements in Theresienstadt were brought together in this catalogue of the 2007 exhibition, pp. 30–47.

¹⁰⁹ I am grateful to Mgr. Tomáš Fedorovič (Ghetto Museum, Terezín) for documenting Burmester's role in Terezín. He had found references in several documents in the National Archives in Prague. I had not known about Burmester's involvement in Theresienstadt before discussing the subject with him; and in turn he had not known of Burmester's connection with the other four castles.

reports surfaced of Soviet library trophy brigades seizing books from the four RSHA castles. Numerous Czech sources document postwar findings, including Czech confiscation and removal of books from all four castles. Meanwhile, postwar reports of foreign retrieval missions shed further light on the books found in the castles and Theresienstadt, and the connections between them. Only a few examples can be cited here, because details will require further analysis. Most important at this point is to raise some of the crucial issues and outline directions of inquiry based on newly available sources.

Zionist Aims: Saving the Books for Jerusalem

Jewish specialists, and especially those of Zionist persuasion such as the well-known scholar of Jewish mysticism Gershom Scholem, Czech-born Hugo Bergmann and his brother Arthur, and Zeev Scheck (*sometimes* Shek) of the Hebrew University Library in Jerusalem, were targeting Jewish collections brought together by the Nazis throughout Europe, in hopes of 'saving' again those that had survived the war. Their ultimate (and often immediate) aim was acquiring more of the survivors for the expanding Jerusalem library, which was to become the Jewish National and University Library (JNUL).

Gershom Scholem was among the most outspoken in advocating that displaced Jewish books in Czechoslovakia and other countries that survived the war, especially those left 'heirless,' should not be returned to their countries of prewar provenance. Given the decimation of Jewish communities in Europe and the significantly enlarged Jewish Diaspora across the oceans, in his view, the Jewish heritage would better be preserved in Jerusalem. Having learned about the RSHA evacuation described above from Grumach in Berlin, Scholem pleaded with a sympathetic American Jewish leader in August 1946:

[...] Only recently I have come across much more important information and I should like you and all those concerned among our friends to take very serious and immediate action on the following matter:

I know definitely that the most important part of the German Jewish libraries, several hundred thousand volumes, have been sent by the "Reich ssicherheitshauptamt" Amt 7 in Berlin, 12 Eisenacherstr. for safekeeping to Schloss Niemes, near Reichenberg and Böhmisch Leipa. The names are now in the Czech language: Castle Nimon [sic], near Liberec and Cesha Lipa [sic].

I have talked to the man who sent the books away. This is Dr. Grumach, a Jew and very reliable man who was force[d] to work for the Gestapo library in Berlin.

We have two witnesses ...who have been to the castles after the liberation and the books were still in the castle. If these books ... have not been taken away by the Russians or the Czechs or somebody else, it would be one of the, nay, the most important thing in my mission, and we must include them in the action for transfer into trusteeship of the Hebrew University. The books have been sent from Berlin to Czechoslovakia since August 1943 until the end of the year. Among them were the bulk of the Berliner Jüdische Gemeinde Bibliothek, the Breslauer Rabbiner Seminar, Fränkelsche Stiftung, the Bibliothek des Central-Vereins in Berlin and many others, especially a library comprising everything written by Jews in all branches of the general humanities and sciences, parts of the catalogue of which I have found here.

...It would be a great thing to be instrumental in saving these treasures. Perhaps Dr. Muneles would be willing to assist in this matter and this would be all the more important, as he is the only available expert on the spot.... The books from Theresienstadt, I am informed, were only a small part of the Berlin Gestapo library which were, for some reason or other, separated from the bulk.¹¹⁰

The information about the holdings in the Czech castles that Scholem had learned from Ernst Grumach in Berlin proved crucial in postwar recovery efforts.¹¹¹ Scholem's Zionist point of view that all of the books saved should be sent to Jerusalem, while quite understandable from a Jewish immediate-post-Holocaust perspective, may not be so popular with Jewish communities in Europe today. But his aggressive efforts to have more and more books transferred to Jerusalem, together with similar efforts of Jewish leaders, must be seen in the postwar context, a subject now being analyzed by retired Jerusalem library school professor Dov Schidorsky.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ G[ershom] Scholem to Dr. Sharp ([Berlin], 4 August 1946), in Gershom Scholem, *Briefe I, 1914–1947*, ed. Itta Shedletsky (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1994), pp. 322–24; excerpts (with several incorrect names) in Gershom Scholem, *A Life in Letters, 1914–1982*, ed. and trans. Anthony David Skinner (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 338. The U.S. editor notes Sharp was an American helping with the acquisition of books for Hebrew University. Gershom [originally Gerhard] Scholem (1897–1982) was born in Berlin, educated in Germany, and emigrated to Palestine in 1923. He began teaching at Hebrew University when it opened in 1925, and in 1933 was appointed a full professor in Kaballah studies.

¹¹¹ See Grumach's reports, as published by Dov Schidorsky, above, fns. 9 and 22.

¹¹² Schidorsky reported some of his findings based on available Israeli sources at a library conference in Hanover (May 2005), including references to the Theresienstadt and castle collections: Dov Schidorsky, "The Salvaging of Jewish Books in Europe after the Holocaust: The Efforts of the Hebrew University and of the Jewish National and University Library—Success and Failure," in *Jüdischer Buchbesitz als Raubgut*, esp. pp. 203–208. Schidorsky is currently finishing a book on the subject to be published in Hebrew in 2008.

Bergmann's Report from Niemes

Among Jewish specialists in search of books, Czech-born Hugo Bergmann, director of the library of Hebrew University, spent a week in Czechoslovakia in November 1946. He personally visited Mimoň (Niemes) on 11 November with Czech Hebraicist and JMP librarian Dr. Otto Muneles, who had survived incarceration in Theresienstadt. He reported about the books in Mimoň "and in three or four neighboring castles," then under the control of "the chief of the library of the University of Prague":

...The official who works on the spot estimates their number to be about 650,000. Part of them are Judaica, the other part, books of all kinds. I saw [C]atholic books from cloisters, theosophical books[,] socialist books[,] etcetera. The librarian in charge was ordered to arrange the books according to the stamp marked therein and country of origin. So we saw piles of books with the inscriptions Poland, Netherlands, Hungary, etcetera. All books, the origin of which cannot be traced, are piled specially and marked "Reserved for the library of the University of Prague." The books having the Hebrew stamp (and therefore cannot be understood by this librarian) and the Hebrew and Yiddish books are piled separately. In the attic of the cast[le] I found[,] thrown on the floor, a Dutch archive that I could not identify. Also in the attic there was a heap of Yiddish newspapers bound or packed in paper boxes. These had come from the archives of YIVO, Vilna.¹¹³

Bergmann reported collections dispersed:

How absolutely accidental the division of books between Theresienstadt and the castle of Mimon had been is illustrated by the fact that parts of the collections which were brought to Theresienstadt, for instance the library of the community of Berlin, or of the "Lehranstalt" of Berlin or the library of Rabbi Werner of Munich or the collection of Se[e]ligman[n] of the Netherlands, are found in Mimon too.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ "Prof. Hugo Bergmann's report on his trip to Prague (6–15 November 1946)," typescript (December 1946), Salo Baron Papers, Stanford, M580, box 43, folder 6. Michael Grunberger kindly provided me a copy of that report. A Hebrew-language version of the same section from that report is cited in English translation by Elisabeth Yavnai, "Jewish Cultural Property and its Postwar Recovery," in *Confiscation of Jewish Property in 1933–1945. New Sources and Perspectives. Symposium Proceedings* (Washington, DC: U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2003), p. 130. In the English version, Bergmann refers to the Czech librarian as Monels, but undoubtedly the reference is to Dr. Otto Muneles, who was then working with holdings of JMP. Regarding Muneles, see Bušek et al, "Hope is on the Next Page'," pp. 60–61. Schmuël Hugo Bergman(n) (1882–1975) was born in Prague and emigrated to Palestine in 1920, where he became the director of the Jewish National Library and professor of philosophy at Hebrew University.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

Removals from the Castles to Prague and Houska

Many of the details in Bergmann's report are confirmed and extended by contemporary documents in Czech archives.¹¹⁵ Already in October 1947, the Czech military authorities were demanding the immediate removal of books from the castle, and a March 1948 deadline was proclaimed. Most of the Jewish books from all four castles were turned over to the National Council of Jewish Elders (Národní Správa židovské Rady Starších) and stored in several buildings of the Jewish Museum in Prague in November 1947. Several additional batches were transferred at different times, and some not until in 1950.¹¹⁶ The University and National Library in Prague lacked room for all the books that remained. Hence, many of the books from Mimoň and the other castles, along with some found in neighboring sites, that remained under its jurisdiction were transferred to the castle of Houska, which came under control of the Prague University and National Library in 1945.¹¹⁷

Dispersal of Books

The extent of looting or destruction of books left in the castles has not been estimated, but allegations are widespread. Some fifty books from Mimoň now in the museum in Česká Lípa had been found in a castle ceiling, having been used earlier for attic insulation.¹¹⁸ Newly available documents in the Czech Republic provide evidence that some of the books were sold, given to local museums and libraries, or transferred to other Czech institutions; details require analysis. From the castle of Nový Falkenburk, for example, an estimated 18,000 volumes with stamps of the Institut für Staatsforschung (Institute for Research

¹¹⁵ Analysis of these questions is underway and will be reported in a separate article on the basis of documents kindly furnished me recently by several different archivists in Prague.

¹¹⁶ Braunová, *op. cit.*, p. 167, and Bušek et al, "*Hope is on the Next Page*," esp. p. 49. More documents have since come to light about these transfers, but further analysis is needed.

¹¹⁷ Documents about the military takeover and confiscation of property in Mimoň, found in a file in Národní archiv, Prague, fond Státní památková správa (SPS)—dodatky, zámek Mimoň, karton 141, were kindly prepared for me during visits in October and November 2006.

¹¹⁸ As related to me by historian Ladislav Smejkal at the Regional Museum (Vlastivědné Muzeum a Galerie) in Česká Lípa during a visit in November 2005. At the time of my visit to the museum, the curator in charge of the books was not available, and it has not yet been possible to examine them and determine titles and possible book markings.

on Government) of the University of Berlin were turned over to the Higher School of Political and Social Sciences (Vysoká škola politická a sociální) in Prague, although some of the books were sold to Orbis, and multiple copies of Nazi political literature were destroyed.¹¹⁹ That institute had been sharing the palace of Nový Falkenburk with the RSHA, as noted above. Like the RSHA library, the institute had amassed books plundered by the SD from many countries.

The National Library and its Depository in Neratovice.

Already immediately after the war many books had been brought to the University and National Library in Prague, but figures are not available about how many. Many that did come in the late 1940s were restituted to countries of provenance when such could be determined (see below). Others were transferred to specialized libraries within the university or other cultural institutions. Later in the 1960s and 1970s, the remaining books from the castles stored in Houska were moved closer to Prague to a depository in Neratovice (30 km NE), although some were placed in the basement of the Clementinum, as had some crates that arrived earlier. Thereafter the castle of Houska became part of a university sanatorium.¹²⁰

Not all the books in Neratovice and other deposits of the National Library, however, had come from the Sudeten castles as RSHA library evacuations from Berlin. The books from the castles were intermixed with many more numerous books confiscated during the Communist regime from Czech monasteries, churches, and other institutions. After 1989, a commission worked several years to identify confiscated books for return to the churches and monasteries from which they had been removed. In the process, the books in Neratovice became further intermixed to the extent that it would be difficult today to locate those that had specifically come from the castles, including Houska.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Books of the institute and their postwar disposition are specifically mentioned in a file on Nový Falkenburk—Národní archiv, Prague, fond Státní památková správa (SPS)—2. díl (dodatky), Nový Falkenburk, karton 142, kindly prepared for me during visits in October and November 2005. Additional reports, including one from 1948 by the National Cultural Commission (Národní kulturní komise) are found in a file held by the National Museum in Prague, NM(P), 76716/52.

¹²⁰ Adolf Knoll, Deputy Director of the Czech National Library, recalled one of his first assignments at the start of his library career was assisting the transfer (in 1979-1980) of books out of the castle of Houska—in conversation with me in August 2006.

¹²¹ These factors were pointed out to me by National Library Deputy Director Adolf Knoll in conversations in August 2006 and October 2007.

Following a visit to Prague in 1994, German librarian Falk Wiesemann reported at the EAJJS conference in Amsterdam in 2002 that he found much of the Judaica and Hebraica in the National Library had not been adequately catalogued. He personally identified “stranded” Hebrew books in the National Library with markings from the Synagogue Library of Warsaw, the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary in Breslau, and the library of the Rabbinical Seminary in Budapest. He specifically listed the incunabula in the Saraval Collection that have since been transferred to Poland, and are hence no longer “stranded” in Prague. He referenced books from several Jewish communities in Germany, while emphasizing the 900 Hebrew imprints he found from the Jewish Community of Olmütz (*now Czech Olomouc*) in Moravia.¹²² This is a good example of Jewish books from within the Czech Republic brought to Prague, or possibly Theresienstadt, during the German occupation and that ended up in the National Library rather than the Jewish Museum. Such examples, and especially the Jewish books Wiesemann found from abroad, raise the strong desirability of including books from the National Library in the database being developed by JMP. They also underscore the need for further provenance research on Judaica and Hebraica in the Clementinum.¹²³

The question was raised from the floor at the conference in Liberec as to how many books from the castles—Jewish and non-Jewish—remain today under jurisdiction of the National Library (Clementinum). The answer to such a question will be exceedingly difficult to determine. First, many of the books from the castles that were transferred directly to Prague after the war were sorted by country of origin, and many were offered for restitution or transfer to other Czech institutions, when such efforts were underway before 1950 (see several examples below). Others, including those moved and stored in Houska, and later moved to Neratovice, were never registered or catalogued by the National Library, and many have not been processed since. Many bear no distinctive book markings. Once deposited there, however,

¹²² Falk Wiesemann’s pioneering unpublished 2002 report, “Stranded books saved from destruction: Hebraica in the National Library in Prague,” presented to a session in which I participated in the EAJJS conference in Amsterdam. An English translation was prepared for possible publication, but the paper would now require considerable updating. See fns. 138–41, regarding the collections from Breslau (Wrocław), and especially fns. 7 and 8 regarding the Saraval Collection. Approximately 100 rare Hebrew books that Wiesemann identified were recently catalogued by a Hebrew specialist from JMP, and are now held in the rare book collection of the National Library.

¹²³ Wiesemann, “Stranded books.”

the books were intermixed with those confiscated by the Communist regime within Czechoslovakia.

Thus several hundreds of thousands of books in the Neratovice depository today have still not been identified as to provenance. Hence it is difficult to speculate how many of foreign provenance could be identified, even if each and every book were to be examined. Perhaps more important, besides, many of the more valuable books from the castles that were not (or for various reasons could not be) returned to their countries of origin after the war were catalogued, and today are integrated into the holdings of the National Library or other Czech institutions. Clearly, it would be desirable to try to answer the question raised in Liberec, but that will require more extensive provenance research, as has been the case in other countries. Given the complexities mentioned above, it will not be an easy task, and funding for such an effort will be difficult to find.

Books from Theresienstadt (Czech Terezín): the Jewish Museum in Prague (JMP) and Transfers to Jerusalem

Estimates suggest a quarter million books ended the war in Theresienstadt (*by then Czech Terezín*). As many as half of the books had to be destroyed due to ‘bacterial contamination,’ because there were no facilities for fumigation and disinfection immediately after the war. Most of the survivors were moved to the Jewish Museum in Prague, including the 28,245 volumes catalogued by the Talmudkommando. Starting in 1947, they were joined by the several batches of Jewish books from the castles mentioned above, and some from other Czech sources that had survived the occupation. And the books were further intermixed in the course of selection for those to be sold or sent to Jerusalem.

An American relief worker, Lucy Schildkret [Davidowicz] from New York, visited Prague in April 1947 on behalf of the American Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC). She reported about the “vast collection of Judaica, of the Theresienstadt collection ... [that was] being held ... by the Council of Jewish Elders ... and stored at the offices of the Jewish Museum at Jachymova 3.”

...The cellars here are extremely damp, the books have been dumped indiscriminately and unprotectedly. A spot check of the books revealed that the greater part of them have library markings: Germany, Austria, Poland, and other countries, including some from Czechoslovakia. Among these were: Jüdische Gemeinde, Berlin; Jüdische Gemeinde, Hamburg; Jüdische Gemeinde, Vienna. There is a large number of religious books, but also considerable quantities of other valuable Judaica.

After the liberation, every member of the Prague Jewish community could claim thirty books from the collection for a home library.¹²⁴

...These books have been given to the Narodni Sprava ... to dispose of as they see fit. The collection is considered as property that may be sold, the assets thereof to continue to be administered by the Narodni Sprava. ...In government legal circles it is believed that these funds will be used against reparations claims made by Czech Jews.¹²⁵

She further explained:

...it was in connection with this desire of the government agency to sell that I went to Prague. Some months ago, the AJDC bought about 2,000 prayer books for use in DP camps in Austria, paying 4 Czech crowns per volume (the original price requested was 10 crowns). ...I explained the interest of AJDC in additional prayer books for use in DP camps in Germany ... [but] I would not approve any further expenditure.... As a result of my circumlocution ... AJDC was promised a quantity of prayer books as a gift.¹²⁶

Isaac Leo Seeligmann, one of the Dutch Hebraicists who was transported to Theresienstadt and worked in the library, found books seized from the Amsterdam library of his father who had died on the eve of the German invasion of the Netherlands. He also found some of his own. Seeligmann himself returned to Amsterdam, but then emigrated to Israel in 1950.¹²⁷ Approximately 1,300 volumes of the Seeligmann library (all of those from Mimoň and part from Terezín) were sent to Jerusalem in a shipment in April 1948, and 500–750 more were sent later. Thus most of the Seeligmann library (father and son) went to Jerusalem, the final batch arriving in 1950.¹²⁸ The Seeligmann

¹²⁴ Lucy Schildkret [Davidowicz], Education Officer, AJDC, to Joseph A. Horne, Director of the Offenbach Archival Depot (19 April 1947), RE: "Restitutable books in Czechoslovakia," NACP, RG 260, Property Division (Ardelia Hall Collection), box 260.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Schildkret [Davidowicz] to Horne, *ibid.*

¹²⁷ Isaac Leo Seeligmann (1907–1982), son of the renowned bibliographer Sigmund Seeligmann (1873–1940), returned to Amsterdam from Theresienstadt and became curator of the Rosenthaliana Collection at the University of Amsterdam Library, before emigrating to Israel in 1950. Izaak Kisch (1905–1980) also came back to Amsterdam from Theresienstadt following the war. See Rudolf Smend, "Isaac Leo Seeligmann: Fascinated by the Septuagint," in *Studia Rosenthaliana* 38/39 (2006), pp. 100–106; and F.J. Hoogewoud, "The Reopening of the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana in 1946," in *The Return of Looted Collections: An Unfinished Chapter. Proceedings of an International Symposium to Mark the 50th Anniversary of the Return of Dutch Collections from Germany in 1946*, ed. F.J. Hoogewoud et al. (Amsterdam, 1997), pp. 105–106.

¹²⁸ Elisabeth Yavnai cites these figures for the Seeligmann library (father and son) (p. 142, fn. 60), which is the focus of her discussion regarding the books sent to Jerusalem from Czechoslovakia—Yavnai, "Jewish Cultural Property and its Postwar Recovery," pp. 127–42.



An Ex Libris of Isaac Leo Seeligmann, found in one of the books from Theresienstadt (Terezín) now held in the Jewish Museum in Prague (JMP) (photograph by Patricia K. Grimsted)

library, as noted above by Bergmann, was one of the libraries split between Theresienstadt and the castles. As many as sixty additional volumes from the Seeligmann library can today be identified in the JMP database. Dutch Hebraicist Frits Hoogewoud examined a number of them to verify the ex libris and other markings in 2005.¹²⁹ Again, these are all symbolic fragments of a much larger unfinished story, a silent reminder of wartime dispersal and of the fact that many books have not yet gone home, wherever that home may be today.

According to calculations of specialists Andrea Braunová and Michal Bušek, over 158,000 were removed from the museum collections by 1950, some to local Czech Jewish communities or families, some to various DP camps and Jewish relief organizations. They both cite

¹²⁹ The ex libris of both father and son are reproduced in "Hope is on the Next Page," p. 40. See the image of the informal meeting at JMP following the Český Krumlov conference in November 2005.

the figure of approximately 40,000 books that went to the National and University Library in Jerusalem.¹³⁰ Adding together various shipments, along with other data found in Jerusalem and cited by Yavnai, would suggest a higher total, probably closer to 60,000, but the sources are contradictory.¹³¹ Later, Braunová revised her estimate upwards to between 50,000 and 60,000, and Schidorsky from the Israeli side suggested it might be as high as 70,000 volumes.¹³²

As Yavnai points out, discrepancies remain between the number of books selected by several Jerusalem envoys, the number approved for shipment, and the number actually shipped. Besides, many were transferred in secret, and even some valuable manuscripts were hidden in boxes between other books without inclusion in the inventories, as Yavnai discovered from reports in Israel. It is even more difficult today to determine how many of the books sent were from the castles or how many from Theresienstadt, because approved boxes were switched back and forth, well-known Jewish collections were found split among different locations, and not all the books selected and approved were actually shipped.¹³³ Others that did not go to JNUL were sold to book dealers in Jerusalem, adding a further complication for totals. Some of those for booksellers went in the same shipments with those for JNUL, and some of them may have eventually been resold to the university. Thus definitive figures for books sent from Prague to Jerusalem after the war remain unresolved.

Postwar Restitution Abroad from Czechoslovakia

Issues regarding book restitution within Czechoslovakia and abroad after the war have also yet to be studied conclusively. As to restitution for owners of books within the country, Lucy Davidowicz painted a very dim picture, but her remarks must be understood in relation

¹³⁰ Andrea Braunová, *op. cit.*, and Bušek et al, “‘Hope is on the Next Page,’” pp. 46–49.

¹³¹ Yavnai, “Jewish Cultural Property,” esp. pp. 135–37. Yavnai does not provide a total figure of books shipped, and from the numbers she quotes of books shipped at different times, some measured in boxes, some in number of volumes, it is not possible to establish a reasonable estimated total.

¹³² Dov Schidorsky, in a letter to the author 17 December 2007. Schidorsky also quotes a message from Andrea Braunová written to him 10 June 2003, and comments on discrepancies among sources quoted by Yavnai. Researching this problem for a forthcoming book to be published in Israel, he has been unable to come up with a more reliable figure. He is also finding difficulties in locating all the documents needed. Braunová has since taken maternity leave from JMP and could not be reached for comment.

¹³³ Yavnai, “Jewish Cultural Property,” esp. pp. 135–37.

only to the Jewish books being held by the Jewish Museum (JMP). She reported:

*On the whole, no attempt has been made to sort the books and locate the owners. ... As far as I could learn, there has been only one case of restitution to a Czech Jewish family whose library had fortunately remained intact. The family applied to the Narodni Sprava for their books, presenting proper documentation of *ex libris* and the books were restituted.*¹³⁴

At the end of March 1947, she reported to Joseph Horne, then director of the Offenbach Archival Depot:

*As you are undoubtedly aware, the Czech government generally has a negative attitude towards the question of restitution and has in certain instances labeled the desire of persons or organizations for return of their property as “Fascist,” “Bourgeois,” or whatever is the appropriate term at that particular time.*¹³⁵

Her remarks have no apparent bearing on the books that were found in the four castles under the jurisdiction of the National and University Library.

To the contrary, evidence has now been found of restitution abroad of books from the castles to at least ten countries, and more thorough investigation of this question is in process. The following examples of the return of books to four different countries suggest some of the issues at stake, and also illustrate the fate of a few individual collections evacuated to the Sudeten castles that we have been following.

Poland

Hugo Bergmann reported one instance of restitution already directly from Mimoň to Poland, when in November 1946 he:

...witnessed the sending of some railroad cars by the Polish government which was busy claiming the books of Polish origin, Jewish and non-Jewish. Before my eyes a load of books of the library of the big synagogue of Warsaw ([Tłumacki]) was packed in boxes and brought to the station of Mimoň to be transferred to Poland.¹³⁶

Bergmann’s account has been confirmed from the Polish side by Andrzej Mężyński, who wrote that books from the Great Synagogue in Warsaw were among those returned to Poland 28 November 1946; although Mężyński does not say how many were returned, he

¹³⁴ Schildkret [Davidowicz] to Horne.

¹³⁵ Schildkret [Davidowicz] to Horne.

¹³⁶ “Prof. Hugo Bergmann’s report on his trip to Prague (6–15 November 1946).”

determined that those had been found in Schloss Hauska.¹³⁷ As noted above, Grumach's report confirmed that those Warsaw books had been part of the RSHA library in Berlin, and documents from the Paulsen Commando attest to their initial transport from Warsaw.

Transfer to Poland in December 2004 of over 40 manuscripts and incunabula from the Saraval Collection, a key component in the library of the Breslau Rabbinical Seminary, involves a collection dispersed during the Holocaust from a major Jewish library in what had been German Silesia. Wrocław is now part of Poland, but the seminary no longer exists. The materials were digitized before being turned over to Polish authorities and can now be consulted on the internet through the National Library (Clementinum) in Prague. But other books and manuscripts from that eminent Breslau collection remain dispersed, including an important part in Moscow. Those had gone with other Jewish manuscripts and archives to Wölfelsdorf (Wilkanów) in Silesia in 1944.¹³⁸ But Soviet authorities did not find them all, and those left behind went to Warsaw after the war. More details about their 1938 seizure and wartime migration have been established, although some differences of opinion remain about how and when the Saraval manuscripts came to Prague and where they had been kept since.¹³⁹ Specialists in the

¹³⁷ Andrzej Mężyński, "Die Judaistische Bibliothek bei der Grossen Synagoge in Warschau," p. 95. A commentary in the publication *Kommando Paulsen* (German edn), p. 114, notes also that other Polish books were found in Hauska, and returned to Poland, and others were found in Berlin. Benjamin Richler, however, in the introduction to his edition of a prewar inventory of the manuscripts, was under the mistaken impression that "none of the 40,000 printed books and 150 Hebrew manuscripts survived the war": "The Lost Manuscripts of the library for Jewish Studies in Warsaw," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 38/39 (2006), p. 360.

¹³⁸ See, for example, the 2003 catalogue of some of the Moscow portion of manuscripts, *Katalog rukopisei i arkhivnykh materialov iz Evreiskoi teologicheskoi seminarii goroda Breslau v rossiiskikh khranilishchakh/ Catalogue of Manuscripts and Archival Materials of Juedisch-Theologisches Seminar in Breslau held in Russian Depositories*, with a preface by Ekaterina Genova (Moscow: "Rudomino," 2003; Proekt Obretennoe nasledie/ Project "Heritage Revealed"); available electronically for a free download (PDF) at <http://www.libfl.ru/restitution/catalogs/index-eng.html>. As demonstrated in that publication, the remaining manuscripts and archival materials in Moscow are now indiscriminately divided between RGVA and the Russian State Library (RGB, former Lenin Library). That part of the Breslau library was found evacuated by the RSHA in Habelswerdt (*now Polish* Bystrzyca-Kłodzko), close to where the major Amt VII archival depository was found by Soviet authorities in Wölfelsdorf (*now Polish* Wilkanów).

¹³⁹ SD Main Office documents about the seizure of that Breslau collection in 1938 have surfaced in Berlin (BArch). Some of the most important Breslau manuscript holdings in Berlin had first been evacuated to Wölfelsdorf (*now Polish* Wilkanów), near Habelswerdt in Silesia, where the RSHA sent most of its archival materials. But a large part of them were apparently shipped to Niemes (*Czech* Mimoň).

National Library suggest that the manuscripts were specially sent by the Germans to Prague.¹⁴⁰ More likely, as Jewish manuscript specialist Benjamin Richler has asserted, they were sent with other valuable books from Breslau first to Berlin, and then to Mimoň. Such a conclusion follows from the postwar identification of the Breslau collection in Mimoň, and Grumach's attestation that it was sent there, along with many Amt VII Hebrew manuscripts.¹⁴¹ More books from Breslau (*now Polish* Wrocław) have been identified in the Jewish Historical Museum in Prague and a few others reported in the Czech National Library.

Germany

Some of the German books from the castle collection were returned to East Germany in the 1940s, as demonstrated from newly revealed documents in the Czech National Library. As a different example from Jewish sources, German Jewish historian Helmut Eschwege, in his autobiography, describes forwarding Jewish, Marxist, and other books from Prague in the late 1940s, including Judaica of German provenance. He noted that the Czech authorities had already sold some of the books to booksellers in Switzerland. He tried to overcome considerable reluctance on the part of Czech authorities, arguing that Germany desperately needed "books of a democratic nature" to replace Nazi literature. In the end he found funding for the required payments to the Czechs. The books that he packed were from among those that had been turned over to the Jewish Council; as he noted they were "crowding the Maislowa Synagogue." He arranged to send them to Saxony, where he became a librarian himself and responsible for book marketing.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ This was probably based on a postwar letter sent from Argentina to the Prague library by recently arrived Jewish specialists knowledgeable about the collection. The original is now held in the records of the Manuscript Department in the Archive of the National Library (Archiv Národní knihovny ČR), Prague.

¹⁴¹ Benjamin Richler, recently retired from the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts at JNUL, had earlier identified them with the MS materials held in Niemes (Mimoň), and based on what we know about wartime movements, I would agree. Hence I beg to differ with Veronika Procházková's suggestion (at the Liberec conference) that the Germans had sent those manuscripts separately to Prague late in the war. I believe that is unlikely, when they sent other valuable parts of the Breslau collection to safer evacuation sites in Silesia or the Sudetenland.

¹⁴² Helmut Eschwege, *Fremd unter Meinesgleichen* (Berlin: Ch. Link, 1991), pp. 56–58. The subject is also mentioned in an internet biographic sketch of Eschwege (1913–1992), who had left Germany for Palestine in 1937 and returned in 1946: <http://www.arikah.net/enzyklopadie/Helmut_Eschwege>. This information comes courtesy of Efroyim Grossberger, of the Committee for the Search of the Gora Kalwaria Library. The number of books in the transfer is not given.

The Netherlands

Some files from the Ashkenazi Jewish Community of Amsterdam were returned to the Netherlands in 1948, and some files from the Jewish Orphanage in The Hague a few years later. Those may well be the Dutch manuscripts Hugo Bergmann mentioned he could not identify during his November 1947 visit to Mimoň. Eight more boxes of records of the Amsterdam Ashkenazi Jewish Community found in Mimoň surfaced in Prague more recently, and were returned to the Netherlands in 2000.¹⁴³ That was three years before the return of contingent Dutch Jewish records that were taken to Moscow from the RSHA Silesian archival center in 1945.¹⁴⁴ Two years ago, Dutch Hebraicist F.J. Hoogewoud identified one more eighteenth-century manuscript from the Amsterdam Community in JMP, which probably was left behind from those returned to Amsterdam in 2000.

France

According to documents in the archive of the National Library in Prague, Czech specialists found 32,000 volumes of French provenance among the volumes from Mimoň received by the University and National Library in Prague; these were offered to French authorities for restitution in 1947. According to receipts among French library restitution records in the Archives Nationales in Paris, however, French cultural representatives in Prague identified and accepted delivery of approximately 18,000 volumes of French provenance from the University and National Library. French documents attest to the arrival of a shipment of 226 crates from Prague in Paris 31 March 1949. Some documents suggest an earlier shipment in 1947, but documentation has not been found. Discrepancies in the dates and the totals await resolution.¹⁴⁵

Most relevant here is not just the fact of the large book restitution to France, but also the French reports of the contents of that shipment,

¹⁴³ See Odette Vlesing, "Dutch-Jewish Archives Come Home from East and West," in *Returned from Russia*, pp. 254-55.

¹⁴⁴ See Eric Ketelaar, "The Return of Dutch Archives from Moscow," in *Returned from Russia*, p. 241.

¹⁴⁵ Investigation of the possible discrepancy is underway. I am grateful to Sophie Coeuré for alerting me to the French receipt documents in a recently opened series of files in Paris of the Sub-Commission for Books of the Commission for Art Recovery (CRA). The Prague report was found among the postwar records of the University and National Library (Národní a univerzitní knihovna Praha) in the archive of the National Library (Archiv Národní knihovny ČR), Prague.

which quite appropriately pick up significant threads of our earlier discussion. The first three crates were books with ownership markings of André Maurois, Marc Bloch, and George Mandel. (Another French document mentions books belonging to A[rtur] Rubinstein and the Rothschild family.) Several of the same names appeared on reports about the RSHA library in Berlin noted above. Six more crates were identified from private libraries; about 1,000 were designated rare books with special bindings and dedications. "As to subject," the French report explains, "...half [were] works on philosophy, history, and law; many [were] books in Hebrew characters," and —of special interest in connection with the findings about processing work in Niemes presented above— "[t]he most important part constituted works on occult sciences."¹⁴⁶ Thus a document found recently in Paris confirms some of the clues mentioned in documents from Moscow and Berlin about the 'mysterious twilight' of the RSHA Amt VII library work in the Sudeten castles, and particularly the seriousness of the Amt VII preoccupation with occult sciences in the final years of the war. Much more research into such matters will be needed, as more clues come together about the displaced books and archives that ended the war in Czechoslovakia.

Post Script

Yet another neighboring Sudeten castle, with archives from France!

Even closer to Česká Lípa than the other castles, the RSHA Amt IV (Gestapo) was using the castle of Horní Libchava (*then German Oberliebich*) for its French counter-intelligence center, evacuated from Berlin in August-September 1943. Our new book on archival restitution, *Returned from Russia* (with flyers on display at the conference in Liberec) tells more about the activities in that Sudeten castle, where several of the most important group of plundered French archives ended the war. These included German-captured records of the French military intelligence (II-me Bureau) and security services (Sûreté nationale), as well as many trade-union files, among others. Oberliebich even had an SS-constructed tunnel leading from the castle to a neighboring airstrip.

¹⁴⁶ J. Pinguard to Paris office, Ambassade de France, OBIP Prague Bureau (24 October 1948), Archives Nationales 17/17982. The French representative suggested, "possibly to cover costs, some could be sold." A memorandum in the same file rejected that possibility: "the Commission [for Art Recovery] does not agree to sale." No indication has been found of the libraries of provenance of the French occult literature returned to Paris, nor of the extent to which the books reached their prewar owners.



Patricia Kennedy Grimsted at the castle of Horní Libchava (German Oberliebich), November 2005 (*photograph by Jaro Svěcený*)

After Soviet counter-intelligence SMERSH discovered that hideaway in May of 1945, Lavrentii Beria ordered a top-level archival team from Moscow, reinforced by forty army personnel from the Dresden area, to prepare the shipment. By early July 28 freight-train wagons of French security and military intelligence archives were transported to Moscow, where they formed the basis for what became the Special Archive (TsGOA, now part of RGVA). The story of their capture and Soviet retrieval first broke in 1991, and most of them finally went home to Paris in 1994 and 2000.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷ Details of their capture in France, transport to Berlin, Oberliebich, and then Moscow, and then their return to Paris are found (with relevant pictures) in the Grimsted introductory chapters in *Returned from Russia* (2007).