

The library which remained in their Palm Beach home, mirrored the couple's collecting interests. They often made special bindings for exhibition catalogues or pamphlets on artists represented in their collection, some of which accompany the lots in the sale. A large portion of the library, as well as extensive correspondence, has been donated by one of Doris Zagayski's heirs to the Library of The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York.

The Zagayskis' art collection showed a lively interest in a wide range of creative human endeavor. There was a particular commitment to Jewish artists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, especially those artists touched by the events of World War II. An unusually large number of the artists represented in the collection were born within a few years of Michael Zagayski himself, and many came from Poland. It is unlikely that Michael Zagayski personally knew the Italian artist Luigi Levi or the German artist Rudolf Levy, one of the earliest expatriate members of the School of Montparnasse (Fig. 4). He may have met Jankel Adler; and he certainly knew Ludwig Meidner, Jacques Lipchitz (Fig. 5), Ossip Zadkine, Nathan Rapaport, Sigmund Menkes and most of the other artists represented in the collection. Without doubt, these works carried an intense personal significance to the Zagayskis. As collectors, they were determined to preserve and to document a culture whose very existence was threatened during the Holocaust.

Michael and Doris Zagayski shared a commitment to philanthropy, and the Weizmann Institute of Science was among their favorite charities. Located in Rehovot, Israel, the Weizmann is a world-renowned scientific research center and graduate school. Its 2,300 scientists, students, technicians and engineers pursue basic research in the quest for knowledge and the enhancement of the human condition. New ways of fighting diseases and hunger, protecting the environment and harnessing alternative sources of energy are high priorities. The establishment of the Zagayski Instrumentation Fund and the gift of a unique collection of paintings by Maurycy Gottlieb (as well as the two Chagalls offered in this sale as lots 330 and 331) gave eloquent expression to Doris Zagayski's commitment to this cause. She founded the Palm Beach chapter of the American Committee for the Weizmann Institute of Science and is remembered as a woman of charm, wit and determination. The proceeds of the present sale, with the exception of these items designated as *Property of a Family Member*, will benefit the Weizmann Institute of Science.

Jennifer Roth



Fig. 3 Zagayski exhibition at The Jewish Museum, New York, 1951



Fig. 4 (Left to Right) Wilhelm Uhde, Walter Bondy, Rudolf Levy and Jules Pascin at the Café du Dôme, Paris, circa 1910



Fig. 5 Jacques Lipchitz in his Hastings, New York, studio (photograph given to Michael Zagayski)

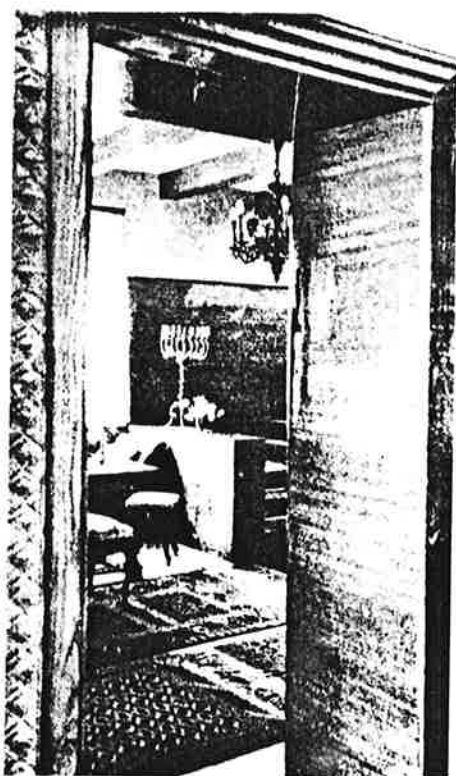


Fig. 1 The Zagayski villa, Warsaw, circa 1935

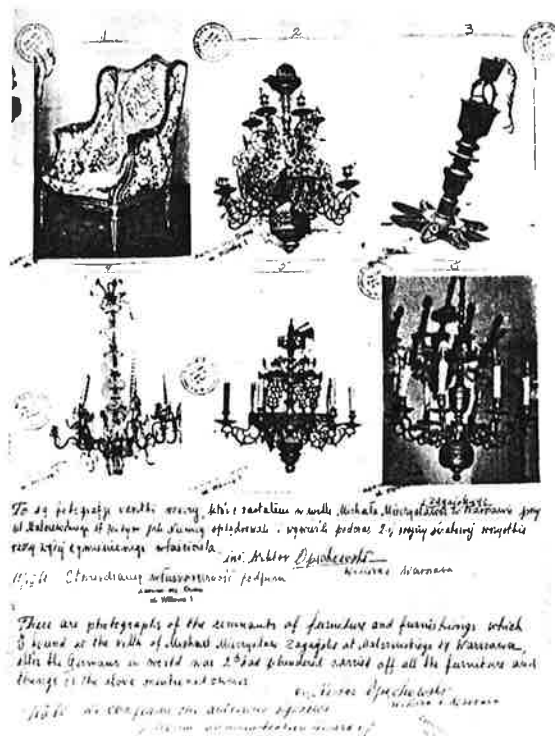


Fig. 2 Affidavit documenting items recovered from the Zagayski villa after World War II.

The Collection of Michael and Doris Zagayski

The home of Michael and Doris Zagayski in Palm Beach, Florida was a testament to a lifetime of shared interests and love of art. Their passion for paintings and sculpture of the 19th and 20th centuries was evident in paintings hanging three deep on a living room wall. On another wall, Old Testament themes were beautifully woven in needlepoint. Shelves of antique heads in one room gave way to rows of Hanukkah lamps in another. Silver, pewter and European porcelains were arranged on sideboards and in cabinets. Rich oriental rugs covered the floors and elaborate brass chandeliers hung from every ceiling.

Michael M. Zagayski was one of the greatest private collectors of Judaica in America. He was born in Poland in 1895 and began collecting in his student days. He became a leading industrialist and assembled his collection in six rooms of his mansion near Warsaw. (Fig. 1) The collection was described in *The Black Book of Polish Jewry* in the following terms: "The collection of a period of twenty years became so rich and interesting it was considered a private museum."

In July of 1939 Zagayski went to Switzerland as a delegate of the Jewish Agency, and from there to England, where he was appointed Consul in New York to the Polish Government in exile. He was destined never to see his beloved collection intact again. His house was completely plundered by the Nazis. Among the few items which remained when he returned after the War were the brass chandeliers, offered in this sale as lots 53, 54 and 58; and an armchair, lot 380. The provenance of these works is documented in an affidavit signed by the Polish occupant of the Zagayski villa during the War (Fig. 2).

Having established residence in New York, Zagayski set about assembling a second collection devoted to the art and history of his people. In 1951 the Jewish Museum accorded the collection its first American exhibition (Fig. 3); in 1955 many items were included in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's *American Jewish Tercentenary* exhibition, and in 1963 the Jewish Museum held a second and much more comprehensive exhibition.

Commencing in 1955, a series of landmark sales of the Zagayski collection of Judaica and Hebraica was held at Parke-Bernet Galleries. (See the auction catalogues offered as lots 252 and 253). As items from these early sales have been resold over the years, the Zagayski name in their provenance has been recognized as a sign of unparalleled quality and desirability. Doris Zagayski shared her husband's passion for art and served as co-curator of the collection. Together they also amassed a superb library, and a significant bequest of books was made to Harvard University in the late 1960's.