

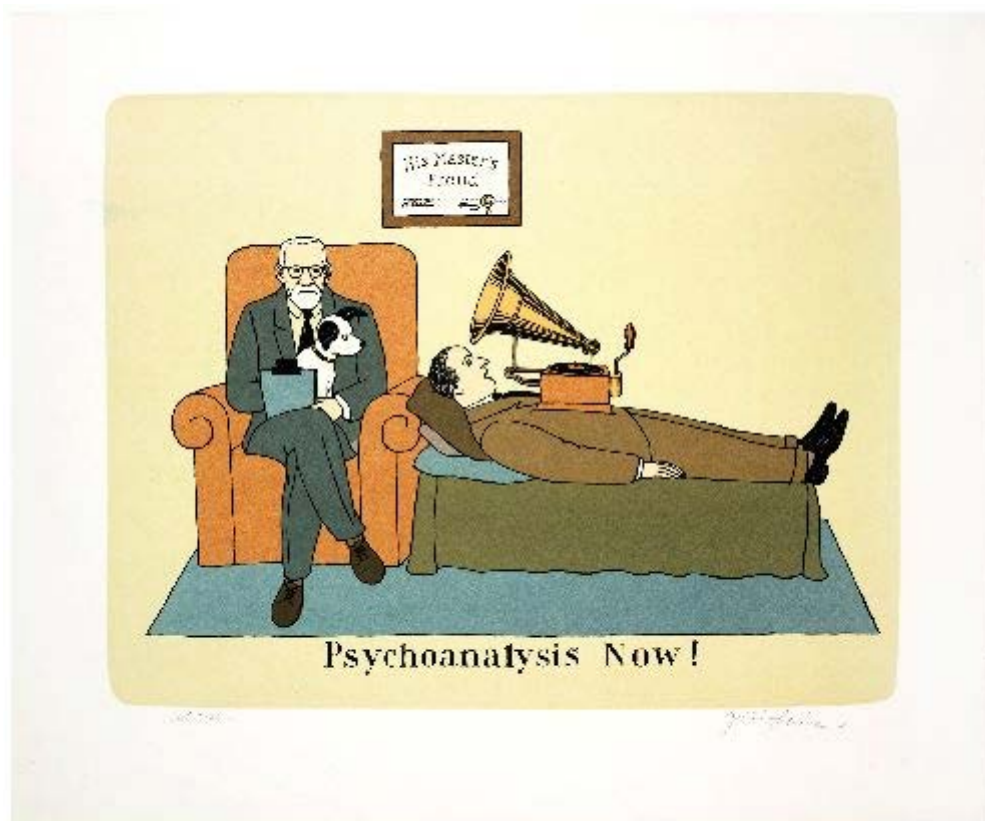
# Newsletter

1 2019

## TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS

### “My Cup of Kafka...” Drawings, Prints and Paintings by Jiří Slíva

The very popular exhibition of work by the graphic artist and illustrator Jiří Slíva at the Jewish Museum's Robert Guttmann Gallery came to a close on 27 January 2019. Over the course of 11 months, it was seen by as many as 52,274 visitors. On view were a number of drawings, colour lithographs, etchings, pastels and several oil paintings on Slíva's favourite subjects – Franz Kafka, Sigmund Freud, the Golem, Jewish customs and symbols and biblical motifs, as well as other works inspired by Jewish writers.



## Jaroslav Róna – "Drawings from Elsewhere..."

On Wednesday 6 March 2019, the Robert Guttman Gallery hosted a preview of a new exhibition of work by the artist Jaroslav Róna (b. 1957), a founding member of the famous Czech art group *Tvrdohlaví* (The Stubborn). The subject of this exhibition is a set of Róna's *Drawings from Elsewhere* from 2012–2018, which gives us an opportunity to delve more deeply into the artist's world and ideas.

Róna works in the fields of painting, sculpture, graphic art, drawing, mosaics, set design and stained glass. His drawings are an inseparable component of his work. They are the indispensable means of recording, seeking, shaping, and formulating new ideas and myths. All of Róna's artworks convey a story, whether from the distant past or some future world, or whether about an entire civilization or an individual life. In this way, they differ from the purely visual or aesthetic visions of modern art concepts. Unlike the latter, they introduce into the work a certain motif that attracts us with its unusual shapes and dark striking colour. The motif pulls us into the action and provokes thought, but without providing any clear answers. We have to look for the meaning ourselves, to contribute to its understanding. The themes of Róna's paintings and drawings cover a vast expanse, from the origin of the world to distant cosmic civilisations. Other works remind us of scenes from prehistoric Earth and from our own history – but they are all the fruit of the artist's tireless imagination, fascinated by some object or idea for which he seeks an answer. They all seem to convey some urgent message, the content of which has been forgotten. Attracted by their enigma, we try to puzzle them out and discover the missing connection.

Robert Guttman Gallery, U Staré školy 3, Prague 1  
Open daily except Saturdays and other Jewish holidays  
9 a.m. - 6 p.m.



### **The Second Life of Czech Torah Scrolls in New York**

Between 3 December - 4 January, the touring exhibition *The Second Life of Czech Torah Scrolls* was on display at the Bohemian National Hall in New York. The exhibition covers the fate of about 1,500 scrolls from Bohemia and Moravia during and after the Shoah. The scrolls belonged to Jewish communities in Bohemia and Moravia before the Nazi occupation. They were saved during the war by being incorporated into the collections of the Jewish Museum in Prague. The scrolls were shipped to London in 1964, since when they have been overseen by the Memorial Scrolls Trust, which has made many of them available on loan to Jewish congregations across the world (in North and South America, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand). The exhibition was initiated and supported by the Society for the History of Czechoslovak Jews, the Bohemian Benevolent Literary Association, and the Consulate General of the Czech Republic in New York.



### **Don't Lose Faith in Mankind... The Protectorate Through the Eyes of Jewish Children**

On Friday 25 January 2019, the Jewish Museum's touring exhibition *Don't Lose Faith in Mankind... The Protectorate Through the Eyes of Jewish Children* opened at the Jews in Latvia Museum in conjunction with commemorative events for International Holocaust Remembrance Day. The preview began with opening speeches by the Ambassador of the Czech Republic Miroslav Kosek and the Director of the Jews in Latvia Museum Ilja Lenský. The head of the Jewish Museum's Department for Education and Culture, Zuzana Pavlovská, then gave a speech that not only recalled the importance of the 27th of January as



International Holocaust Remembrance Day, but also drew attention to the 8th of March, which is when we commemorate the liquidation of the Terezín Family Camp at the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp. The aim of the exhibition is to familiarize elementary and high school students with the difficult topic of the Holocaust, and to introduce them to the Jewish minority by presenting the material in an attractive way. The exhibition shows various aspects of the life of Jews in the Nazi Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia from the perspective of the young people of the day.



### **I Have Not Seen A Butterfly Around Here: Children's Drawings from the Terezín Ghetto on view in Kladno**

On 6 March 2019, the touring exhibition *I Have Not Seen A Butterfly Around Here: Children's Drawings from the Terezín Ghetto* opened at the Central Bohemian Research Library in Kladno. This exhibition draws attention to the world of children who became prisoners in the Terezín/Theresienstadt ghetto during the Second World War. Mass deportations of Jews to the newly established Terezín ghetto commenced in November 1941. Originally a military fortress, Terezín was converted into a transit concentration camp at the end of 1941. Above all, Jews from the Nazi Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia were to be gathered there before being sent to extermination camps. Terezín became a transfer station en route to the death camps for tens of thousands of people, including about 11,000 children and young people. The Jewish self-government in the ghetto sought to create bearable conditions for the child inmates. One of the most important issues remained the need for lessons

to be held, so as to preserve and further develop the ethical, aesthetic and intellectual values of the children. The lessons included art classes that were led by Friedl Dicker-Brandeis (1898-1944). The Terezín children's drawings were made over a period of less than two years (1942-1944). The collection is absolutely unique and, comprising 4,500 original items, is the most extensive of its kind in the world. The exhibition is on view at the Malá galerie / Minor Gallery of the Central Bohemian Research Library in Kladno until 23 April 2019 (address: Gen. Klapálka 1641, open during standard visiting hours).



**Jerusalem: Everyday Uniqueness - photos by Leona Kalvodová**

New photo exhibition will be on display at the Museum's Department for Education and Culture 2 May - 28 June, 2019.

Maiselova 15, Prague 1, 3rd floor

Opening times: MO-THU 12-16, FRI 10-12 or as otherwise pre-arranged



Jerusalem, photo (c) Leona Kalvodová

## **A SELECTION OF PRAGUE CULTURE EVENTS AND LECTURES**

### **Gala concert in the Spanish Synagogue**

On 28 January 2019, the Jewish Museum in Prague – in association with the Jewish Community of Prague and the Foundation for Holocaust Victims (NFOH) – hosted the annual gala concert at the Spanish Synagogue in Prague to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day. The opening speeches were given by Michal Borges (Secretary of the Prague Jewish Community, representing the chairman Jan Munk) and Leo Pavlát, the director of the Jewish Museum in Prague. The concert featured works by Antonín Rejcha, Maurice Ravel and Pavel Haas performed by the Belfiatio Quintet.

### **I Know What Happened: the second year of an extraordinary project**

From 25 January to 22 February 2019, the Jewish Museum's Department for Education and Culture in Prague hosted the second annual event titled *I Know What Happened* – an extraordinary project devoted to the memory of the victims of the Second World War in connection with the International Holocaust Remembrance Day. This year, the department collaborated with the Prague *Gymnázium Přírodní škola* (Nature School) whose students led the workshop themselves under the supervision of instructors from the department. The programme was attended by nine schools, so the participating pupils and students had the opportunity to interact not only with the instructors, but also with their peers. They also learned what life was like in the Nazi Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and, on the basis of their own research of Terezín children's magazines and children's drawings, they became acquainted with the



specific fate of the child inmates of the Terezín/Theresienstadt ghetto during the Second World War. The programme ended with a visit to the Pinkas Synagogue Memorial for the Victims of the Shoah from the Czech Lands, where the participants searched for the names of specific children whose stories they had focused on during the project. Following on from last year's success with the preview and exhibition of student projects inspired by this project, the department will once again display the artworks made by the participants of the "One Day in Terezín" workshop. The artworks will be presented in September 2019 during a discussion with a Shoah survivor and the opening show with music performed by students from the Nature School.



January gala concert at the Spanish Synagogue

Photo Josef Mirovský (JMP)

### **Presentation of the Warsaw Diary with Yiddish Songs by Olga Bilińska**

On Wednesday 23 January 2019, the Maisel Synagogue hosted a presentation of a new Czech-language edition of *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniaków* (published by nakladatelství Sefer). Adam Czerniaków was the head of the Warsaw Ghetto Jewish Council (Judenrat) between 1939 and 1942, during which time he kept a diary. The special evening event was held in co-operation with the Polish Institute in Prague and was presented by its director Maciej Ruczaj. At the event, the translator Jiří Červenka spoke about the fate of the diary after Czerniaków's death in 1942. Extensive excerpts from the book were read by the Czech actor Arnošt Goldflam, accompanied by Polish singer Ola Bilińska with a selection of her Yiddish adaptations of love songs and lullabies.



Singer Olga Biliňská  
Photo Josef Mirovský (JMP)

### ***... and Heaven Hurt***

On 24 January 2019, for International Holocaust Remembrance Day, the Jewish Museum in Prague included in its Maisel Synagogue programme a performance of the theatre play *... a bolelo nebe (... and Heaven Hurt)* by the Disman Children's Radio Ensemble. Based on authentic texts written by child inmates of the Terezín ghetto, the show was inspired by books by Dagmar Hilarová (*Nemám žádné jméno / I Have No Name*), Marie Rút Křížková, Kurt Jiří Kotouč and Zdeněk Ornest (*Je mojí vlastí hradba ghatt? / Is My Homeland a Ghetto Wall?*), Chava Pressburger (*Deník mého bratra / The Diary of My Brother*) and Hanuš Hachenburg (poetry anthology *Hned vedle bílá barva mráčků / Right Next to the White Colour of the Clouds*). The theatre show (written and directed by Jana Franková) was followed by a short discussion with the Shoah survivor Toman Brod, together with the spontaneous participation of children from the Disman Children's Radio Ensemble.



Photo Josef Mirovský (JMP)



### **The Second Life of Vendulka V.**

On Monday 25 March 2019, the Maisel Synagogue hosted a presentation of *Vendulka. Útěk za svobodu* (Vendulka: Escape to Freedom), a book that has recently been published by nakladatelství Paseka. The book describes the life story of Vendulka Vogelová, a girl who survived the Holocaust. Her story would probably never have made it into written form without the existence of photographs by the Czech photographer Jan Lukas, who photographed the Vogel family only a few hours before their deportation to the Terezín/Theresienstadt ghetto. Eighty years later, Vendulka Vogelová talked about her eventful life and friendship with the photographer Jan Lukas to the author of the book, Ondřej Kundr, who had searched for her in the USA on the basis of the photographs taken by Jan Lukas. Besides the author of the book, the gala evening was also attended by the daughters of Jan Lukas and by representatives of Vendulka Vogelová's family.



Vendulka Vogelová before the transport

Photo © Jan Lukas

## **Toman: Bolshevik villain or Zionist patron?**

On Thursday 28 March 2019, a discussion was held in the Maisel Synagogue about Zdeněk Toman, alias Zoltan Goldberger, a controversial figure in modern Czech history. The inspiration for the discussion was the autumn release of Ondřej Trojan's film *Toman*, which describes a short period in the contradictory life of the foreign intelligence chief in post-war Czechoslovakia. Experts involved in the making of the film accepted an invitation to the discussion. In addition to Toman's biographer Frank Reiss, upon whose story the film is based, the guests of the evening included the documentary filmmaker Martin Šmok and Toman František Hanzlík, a historian from the University of Defence in Brno and an expert advisor to the film. The entire evening was hosted by the journalist Petr Brod. The event met with great interest, and numerous questions were raised from the audience.



## **OTHER NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM**

### **Looking back at co-operation with the Foundation for Holocaust Victims**

The Foundation for Holocaust Victims (NFOH) has been supporting the activities of the Jewish Museum in Prague for a long time. Several projects were successfully implemented with its help last year.

The most significant support went to educational programmes, including seminars for pupils and students organized by the Jewish Museum's Education and Culture Department, and a project supporting the department's Sunday workshops for parents and their children. Through the department's offices in Prague and Brno, more than 5,000 pupils and students of Czech schools

attended lectures, tours and workshops that were supported by the Foundation in 2018. The popular Sunday workshops for parents and their children have been organized by the Jewish Museum since the 1990s. Last year they were held every month except for the summer holidays, and they were attended by more than 300 people.

The Foundation also systematically supports the Jewish Museum's cultural activities. Every month, except for July and August, the Jewish Museum organizes several programmes for the general public. These take place in the Auditorium of the Prague office of its Department for Education and Culture (Maiselova 15), or directly in the Maisel Synagogue (Maiselova 10), as well as at the Jewish Museum's Brno office (tř. Kapitána Jaroše 3). Concerts, discussions, book presentations, lectures and meetings with interesting personalities are regularly held there. The programmes are open to the general public and are mostly free of charge. You can find an up-to-date overview of the planned cultural programmes on the Museum's website <https://www.jewishmuseum.cz/en/program-and-education/learning/for-the-general-public/>.

With the help of the Foundation, the Jewish Museum in Prague continues to revitalize its exhibitions. In recent years, the Foundation has provided generous support for the Pinkas Synagogue revitalization project, which was completed in 2018. Co-operation is continuing with an upcoming project for building alterations to the Spanish Synagogue in Prague and for the complete replacement of the current exhibition on the 19th-20th century history of the Jews in Bohemia and Moravia.

The Jewish Museum also receives constant support from the Foundation for its long-term project aimed at restoring tombstones in the Old Jewish Cemetery. In 2017 the tomb of Joseph Solomon Delmedigo was restored, and in 2018 a full set of 20 tombstones by the wall adjacent to the Museum of Applied Arts were restored.

Since 1990, the Jewish Museum's oral history project has been systematically recording interviews with Shoah survivors and witnesses with the aim of charting the history of the Jews in the 20th century. The oral history collection currently contains more than 1,300 interviews and is the largest and most widely used of its kind in the Czech Republic. We believe it is vital to preserve Jewish memory and to establish the Jewish experience as part of the Czech collective memory. Our goal is to chart the lives of Jews in our country through the method of oral history. We are interested not only in memories of the Shoah, but also in the post-war experience of the first and second generations of Jewish survivors. Transcripts of the interviews are included in our archival collection and, according to a particular specification in the authorization protocol, they serve researchers from both the lay and professional public. The material is also used for publication and exhibition purposes, as well as for creating educational materials. The



Jewish Museum's long-term project for recording interviews with survivors and witnesses is supported by the Foundation for Holocaust Victims and by the generous donor Robert R. Fried from the USA.



All of the above projects are continuing in 2019.

### March commemoration

This March, the Jewish Museum in Prague and the Terezín Initiative honoured the memory of Bohemian and Moravian Jews from the Terezín/Theresienstadt Family Camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau who were murdered in March 1944. In total, 3,792 Jews from Bohemia and Moravia perished in the gas chambers of Auschwitz-Birkenau on the night of 8-9 March 1944 – the largest single murder of Czechoslovak citizens during the Second World War. This tragic event was commemorated on the morning of 8 March 2019 in a memorial ceremony that was held by the Terezín Initiative at the Pinkas Synagogue Memorial for the Victims of the Shoah from the Czech lands.



On 7 March 2019, to commemorate the tragic events of 8 March 1944, the Prague Shoah Memorial and the Terezin Composers Institute, in co-operation with the Terezín Initiative and the Jewish Museum in Prague, organized a concert for the Terezín Family Camp at an event subtitled “Remembering BIIb” (BIIb was the section of Auschwitz II-Birkenau where the Terezín Family Camp was located). Czech soprano Irena Troupová performed with piano accompaniment by Jan Dušek. The Prague *Gymnázium Přírodní škola* (Nature School) recalled

the tragic events with the songs of Terezín child inmates and motifs from the texts of Hanuš Haachenburg.

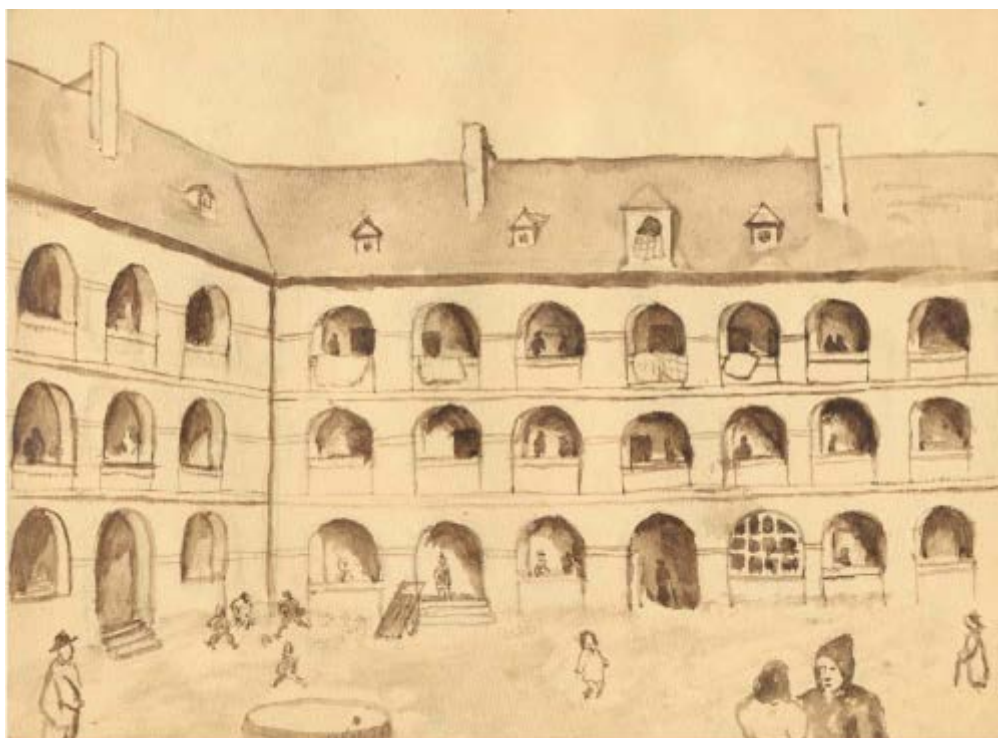


Illustration provided by Bubny Memorial of Silence

### **Jews, History and Culture: a seminar for teachers**

On Monday 11 March 2019, the Jewish Museum's Department for Education and Culture organized the first seminar for teachers in the series *Jews, History and Culture* on the topics of antisemitism and the Shoah. This year, for the first time, the seminar was held during a single day. It was attended by 20 teachers from across the Czech Republic. Another seminar in this series will be held on 12 April, and 26 people have already applied to take part. In September 2018, the department also successfully held a follow-up to the series focusing on the anniversary of the founding of Czechoslovakia and Israel. This year's sequel, which will be held August, is entitled *The Jewish Story of the Velvet Revolution*.

### **Restitution of an early printed book from pre-war library**

A rare book printed in Prague in 1590, *She'elot u-Teshuvot ha-Geonim* by Mordecai Gershon ha-Kohen, was recently found to be on sale at an auction held by Kedem Auction House in Jerusalem (lot number 54/2017). This copy has been reported missing from the Jewish Museum in Prague. It was originally in the pre-war library of the Prague Jewish Religious Community, where its call number was 2.958. The Jewish Museum's Library currently only has an incomplete fragment of the book. An agreement was reached with the auction house and with the consignor to withdraw the book from the auction and to return it to the Jewish Museum in Prague.

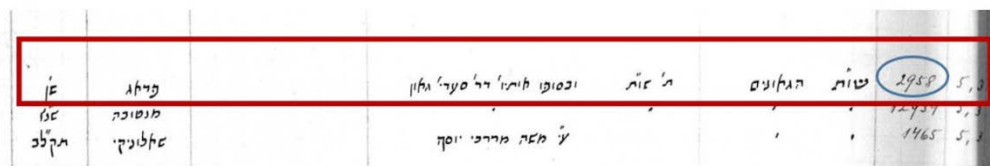




Title page of *She'elot u-Teshuvot ha-Geonim* (Prague, 1590) with the original call number 2.958 and Prague Jewish Religious Community stamp. Above the title is the hand-written autograph of Rabbi David Zevi ben Aryeh Leib.

This is the second edition of short rabbinic responsa, referring back to the Constantinople edition of 1575. The title page is decorated with various human figures, angels, lions and the printer's emblem in the middle – hands raised in the priestly blessing (signet of the printer Mordecai Gershon ha-Kohen). Above the title is the autograph signature of David Zevi ben Aryeh Leib – namely, Rabbi David Zevi Auerbach of Kremenets (Ukraine, ca. 1743-1808), whose father was a student of Baal Shem Tov.





Hebrew record of the book *She'elot u-Teshuvot ha-Geonim*, printed in Prague in 1590 with visible call number 2.958 in a bound catalogue kept by the Prague Jewish Community librarian Tobias Jakobovits (1887–1944).

This copy was part of the pre-war library of the Prague Jewish Religious Community. Dating back to 1857, the core of the library's holdings comprised gifts and bequests from prominent Prague personalities, such as Chief Rabbi Solomon Judah Rapoport, the Prague book printer Moshe Israel Landau, and the Burial Society Secretary Koppelman Lieben, among others. The book was returned to the Jewish Museum Library in March 2019.



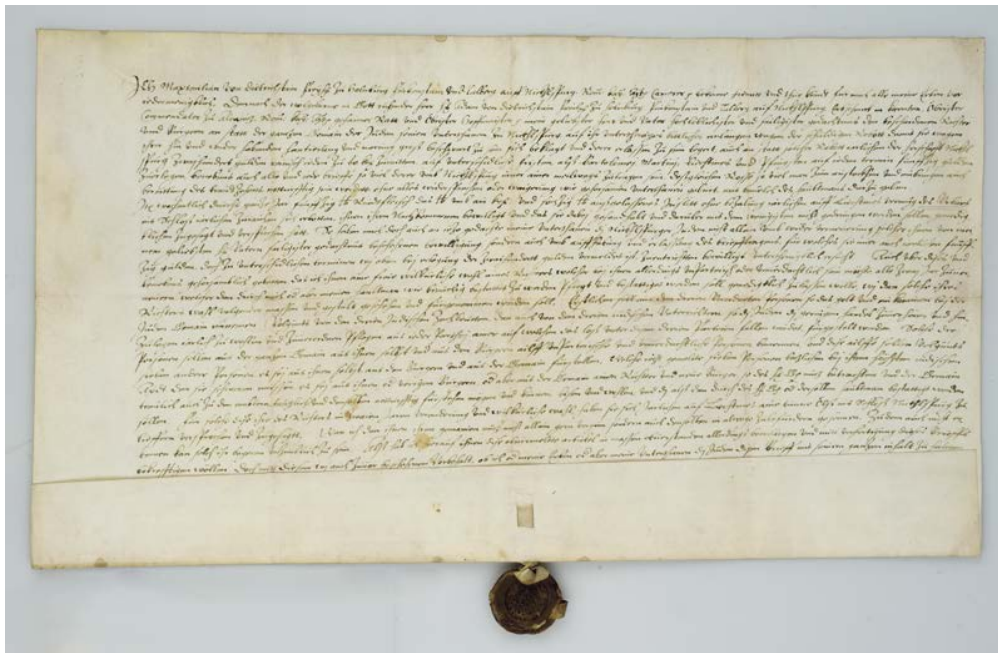
Verso of the title page

### Purchase of three rare documents for the Jewish Museum in Prague

On 19 December 2018, the New York office of the world-renowned Sotheby's Auction House held a sale of more than 200 Jewish antiques at an auction titled "Important Judaica, including a Distinguished Private Collection". The auction catalogue included four items of Bohemian origin, specifically documents from the 16th-18th centuries that are of exceptional historical, cultural and diplomatic interest: a privilege granted to the Jewish Community of Mikulov/Nikolsburg by Maximilian von Dietrichstein in 1591, a privilege granted to Rabbi David Oppenheimer by Leopold von Dietrichstein in 1700, a certificate of 1739 attesting to a barber-surgeon's qualifications, and a power of attorney granted to the leaders of the Prague Jewish Community in 1687. Moreover, the first three documents stem from the private collection of Dr. Richard Teltcher, a well-known merchant and philanthropist who became known, among other things, as the founder of the Jewish Central Museum for Moravia-Silesia in Mikulov.

The Jewish Museum in Prague decided to take part in the New York auction for the reason that Bohemian Judaica of such importance very rarely appear at auction, and the opportunity to add such interesting documents to its archival collections is unlikely to be repeated for many years. We were able to make successful bids for three of the four documents.

The first document purchased by the Jewish Museum at the auction is the Privilege Granted to the Jewish Community of Nikolsburg by Maximilian von Dietrichstein, Nikolsburg, 1 November 1591. This is the oldest extant privilege for this community, but it is also an important historical source for studying the local Jewish self-government. With regard to this historic document, it is also of interest that for many years the scholarly literature thought it to be lost.



Privilege Granted to the Jewish Community of Nikolsburg by Maximilian von Dietrichstein, Nikolsburg, 1 November 1591

The second document is the Vollmacht (Power of Attorney) to Negotiate on Behalf of the Estate of Mordechai Meisel, Prague, 2 January 1687. This manuscript is uniquely valuable, particularly because it is signed, in German and Hebrew, by twenty-one elders and officers of the Prague Jewish community leaders. Moreover, it is a remarkable historical record of the long, drawn-out trials concerning the estate of Mordechai Meisel, the former leader of the Prague Jewish community and Court Jew to Emperor Rudolf II.

The third document is the Certificate Granted by Herschl Porges to Simon ben Moÿßes Löbl of Holleschau Attesting to His Skill as a Barber-Surgeon, Prague, 26 May 1739. This parchment has a beautiful seal attached and is an interesting proof of the requirements for Jewish barber-surgeons to practice their trade in Prague in the first half of the eighteenth century.



Certificate Granted by Herschl Porges to Simon ben Moyses Löbl of Holleschau, 1739

The acquisition of these three documents considerably enriches the Jewish Museum's archival holdings, especially in view of the fact that Judaica of such importance are only sparsely represented in its collections. The documents are of incalculable historical and cultural value to the Czech Jewish community. Their acquisition will undoubtedly contribute to the prestige of the Jewish Museum in Prague among the professional and lay public. After careful inspection by conservators, the documents will be professionally catalogued and permanently placed in the depository of the Jewish Museum's Archives. We also expect that they will be placed on display in temporary exhibitions, or that facsimiles will be made of them for the Jewish Museum's permanent exhibitions.

### TripAdvisor rating

In 2018, the Jewish Museum in Prague won a TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice Award, which is awarded to institutions with the highest rating in the Museum category. The award was given not only for the Museum's profile as a whole, but also for the Spanish Synagogue. The Travelers' Choice award is the highest award given by TripAdvisor. Based on the reviews and opinions of millions of travellers, the Museum is among the top one percent of tourist destinations. Last year, the Museum managed to win a total of five TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence awards for its long-term reviews. Namely, this concerns the profile of the Museum as a whole, as well as the Spanish Synagogue, the Pinkas Synagogue, the Klausen Synagogue, and the Old Jewish Cemetery. The Certificate of Excellence highlights the uniqueness of the Museum's historic monuments and tourist destinations. It is only given to organizations that have received excellent reviews from travellers across the world on TripAdvisor. The Jewish Museum in Prague devotes systematic attention to the reviews and



comments from its visitors. In total, more than 10,000 visitor reviews have been received and answered by the Museum through the TripAdvisor Review portal.

## VIP VISITS

Ivana Dubová, a long-time supporter of the Jewish Museum in Prague, visited the Museum on 4 January 2019. Together with her escort, she visited the Old-New Synagogue and the Museum's conservation/restoration workshops, where she talked to experts from the Museum's Collections Department about the possibilities for supporting their conservation/restoration activities.



Ivana Dubová (second from the right) at the Museum's restoration workshop

On 15 February 2019, the Museum was privately visited by Jason Dov Greenblatt, U.S. President Donald Trump's Special Middle East Envoy. In the company of the Museum director, he visited the Old Jewish Cemetery and the Museum's exhibitions.

Rabbi David Baruch Lau, the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel, arrived in Prague on 13 March 2019 at the invitation of the Jewish Community of Prague. On the second day of his stay, he visited the Old Jewish Cemetery and the Museum's exhibitions and was shown a selection of rare manuscripts and printed books in the reading room of the Museum Library.



Rabi Lau in the museum library's study room



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[www.jewishmuseum.cz](http://www.jewishmuseum.cz)

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