

Newsletter

4 2018

TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS

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

An exhibition of works by the graphic artist and illustrator Jiří Slíva is showing until 27 January at the Jewish Museum’s Robert Guttman Gallery. It features a number of drawings, colour lithographs, etchings, pastels and oil paintings on the artist’s favourite themes – Franz Kafka, Sigmund Freud, the Golem, Jewish customs/symbols, and biblical motifs – as well as other material inspired by the works of Jewish writers. Jiří Slíva has been preoccupied with Jewish humour and illustrating the works of Franz Kafka for many years. In December 2017, the Franz Kafka Publishing House published *My Cup of Kafka*, a book featuring Slíva’s main artworks inspired by the great writer. A selection of these works is on display at the exhibition. Also on view is a range of Slíva’s illustrations from books by the Czech-Israeli writer Ruth Bondy, which are dedicated to the language, names and special idioms of Czech Jews. Slíva’s exhibited work also includes depictions of café society and scenes from everyday life, which are marked by absurd humour and a love of jazz, wine and dancing. A total of 49,421 people visited the exhibition between February and end of December 2018.



In the Pipeline: Jaroslav Róna – „Drawings from Elsewhere...“

Due to open on 7 March 2019 at the museum's Robert Guttmann Gallery, the new temporary exhibition will feature works by Jaroslav Róna (*1957), a renowned Czech sculptor and painter.

Robert Guttmann Gallery, U Staré školy 3, Prague 1
Open daily except for Saturdays and other Jewish holidays,
winter time 9 a.m. - 4.30 p.m., summer time 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.



Plankton, oil on canvas, 2015

(c) Jaroslav Róna

The Second Life of Czech Torah Scrolls in New York

The touring exhibition *The Second Life of Czech Torah Scrolls* opened at the Bohemian National Hall in New York on 3 December. This show 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). Representing the Jewish Museum in Prague at the opening show, the art curator Michaela Sidenberg spoke about the past and present of this institution. The exhibition runs until 4 January 2019. It 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. The opening show was linked with a celebration of the second day of Hanukkah. At the event, a talk was given by Rabbi Norman Patz, spiritual leader emeritus of Temple Sholom of West Essex, which is taking care of the Torah scroll from Dvůr Králové.



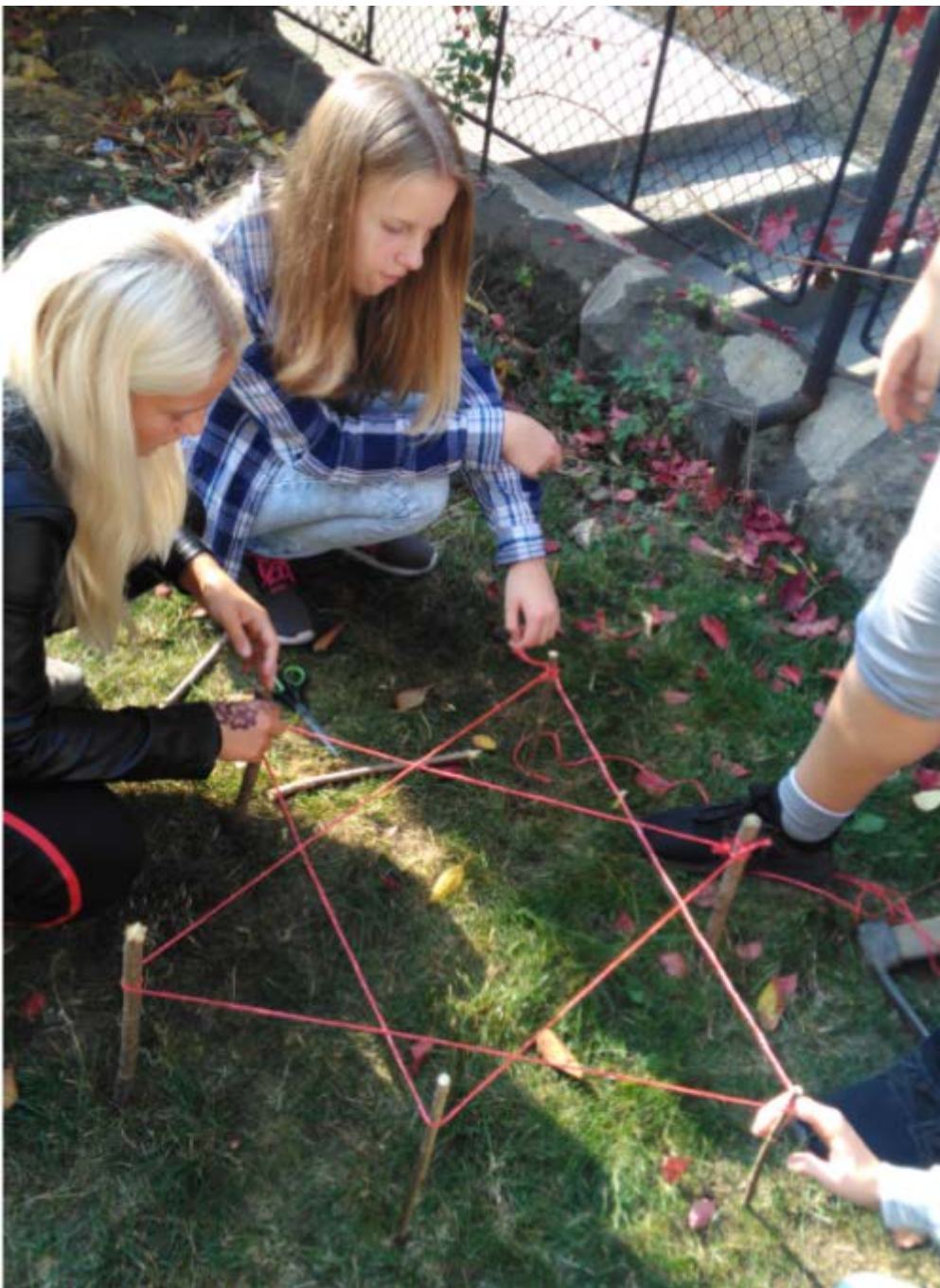
Curator Michaela Sidenberg during the exhibition opening

(c) Czech Centres

A SELECTION OF PRAGUE CULTURE EVENTS AND LECTURES

Crocus Project

This autumn, young people once again became involved in the Crocus Project. As part of this perennial project, school pupils plant yellow crocus bulbs in memory of the 1.5 million Jewish children who perished in the Holocaust and of thousands of other children who were victims of Nazi atrocities. In ideal conditions, the crocuses will bloom around the end of January or the start of February about the time of the International Holocaust Memorial Day (27 January). The project is an initiative by the Holocaust Education Trust Ireland (HETI) in association with the Jewish Museum's Department for Education and Culture. This year, more than 10,000 pupils from 200 schools from throughout the Czech Republic became involved in the project.



Pupils of Alois Klár Primary School in Ústěk planting crocus bulbs

Support for Vocational Training

In collaboration with Prague City Hall, the Jewish Museum's Department for Education and Culture has been carrying out educational programmes with focus against xenophobia, racism and antisemitism since 2015. Vocational pupils from Prague have the opportunity to participate in a guided tour of selected exhibitions of the Jewish Museum in Prague. Under the guidance of an educator from the museum's Department for Education and Culture, they can also take part in an interactive workshop with focus on the Jewish minority and on current problems affecting society, such as antisemitism and racism. More than 1,200 pupils took part in this project between September and December of this year.

Guided Tour for Visitors with Autism Spectrum Disorders

On 25 October 2018, Jewish Museum in Prague was visited by ten clients from the National Autism Institute in the company of their carers. The visitors went on a guided tour of the Old-New Synagogue, the Pinkas Synagogue, the Old Jewish Cemetery, and the Spanish Synagogue. The tour was part of a new project run by the museum's Department for Education and Culture in support of visitors with mental or physical handicaps. Similar events have been planned for the future as part of this project.

Discussions at the Democracy Festival

In October, the Maisel Synagogue hosted two discussions as part of the Democracy Festival, which was held for the 22nd Forum 2000 conference. The debate on Sunday 7 October was titled "Shall we Pack Up? The Decline of Liberal Democracy and the Rise of Antisemitism in Central Europe" and featured Irena Kalhousová (London School of Economics), the Polish journalist Konstancy Gebert, and the Slovak politician Martin Poliačik. It was moderated by Jan Fingerland. The debate on Tuesday 9 October was titled "Democratization of Religion, Democratization of Society" and featured the academics Paul Cliteur (Leiden University, Netherlands) and William Cook (State University of New York, USA). Both events met with great interest and were attended by more than 130 people.



Photo by Vaiva Bezhan

(c) Forum 2000

Remembering the Kindertransports 80 Years On

On the evening of 19 November, the Maisel Synagogue hosted a special event for the 80th anniversary of the Kindertransports. This memorial occasion was organized in co-operation between the Institute of Contemporary History (Czech Academy of Sciences), the USC Shoah Foundation, and the Jewish Museum in Prague. Speaking at the event were the historian Laura Brade, the documentarist Martin Šmok, and the former director of the American Jewish Distribution Committee, Yechiel Bar-Chaim. The host of the evening was Kateřina Čapková from the Institute of Contemporary History. The event was accompanied by a screening of interviews with Shoah survivors from the USC Shoah Foundation's database.



Po-lin: Exhibition Opening and Film Screening

On 12 December, the Auditorium of the Jewish Museum's Department for Education and Culture hosted the opening of an exhibition titled Po-lin / Jews in the Republic of Many Nations, co-organized by the Polish Institute in Prague and the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews. The first part of the event included a screening of the film *The Last Klezmer* and was presented by the deputy director of the Polish Institute Laura Trebel-Gniazdowska. The guests were then invited to look round the exhibition. The film and exhibition were viewed by 43 guests at the event.



Map of Europe, 1617. The Rzeczpospolita territory is outlined in colour.

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BRNO DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND CULTURE

Andre Steiner Exhibition – Not only a Brno Architect

On Monday 26 November, the museum's Department for Education and Culture in Brno hosted the opening of an exhibition on the life and work of architect, humanist and teacher Andre Steiner (1908–2009). Andre Steiner was one of the last protagonists of 1920s–30s Functionalist architecture in Brno. During the Second World War, he helped to save the lives of more than 7,000 Slovak Jews as a member of the Bratislava Working Group, an underground Jewish organization. The exhibition *Andre Steiner – Not only a Brno Architect* is currently on view in the hall of the museum's Department for Education and Culture in Brno (address: třída Kpt. Jaroše 3). The show features large-format photographs by Kateřina Rusňáková, which depict examples of Steiner's Brno architecture in its current form – houses that many people walk past every day without being aware of the eventful life of the person who designed them.

Andre Steiner was born into a Jewish family in Dunajská Streda, Slovakia. In 1925 he moved to Brno, where he studied architecture, worked for the architect Ernst Wiesner, and set up his own office in 1934. His designs there were mainly for apartment houses and interiors for Jewish clients. After being arrested by the

Gestapo and wrongfully accused of foreign exchange machinations, he decided to leave for Slovakia as quickly as possible. He then became a member of the Bratislava Working Group, a resistance organization that sought to prevent the deportation of Slovak Jews to the extermination camps in Nazi-occupied Poland and also organized a smuggling network for Jewish refugees. After the Communist takeover of Czechoslovakia in 1948, he left with his family for Cuba, where he was offered a position as chief architect at an American design studio. In 1950 he obtained a visa for the United States and moved with his family to Atlanta, Georgia, where he lectured at the local university and focused on urban design. His eventful life and wartime experiences were chronicled in a 1999 documentary by Brad Lichtenstein, titled *André's Lives*, which was shown at the opening of the exhibition in Brno.



Photo by Hana Němečková

OTHER NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM

Visit by the Criminal Police

On 10 October, the staff of the Jewish Museum's Collection Department – in cooperation with the Search Department at the Criminal Police Service and Investigation Office of the Czech Police Presidium – organized a special tour of the museum and a seminar at its Department for Education and Culture. This event took place in connection with the European Year of Cultural Heritage and was intended for Czech Police specialists from throughout the Czech Republic who are involved in searching for art objects and in investigating criminal activities related to trafficking in cultural assets. Thirty specialists from the ranks of the Czech Police took part in the special day-long tour and seminar, which

gave them an opportunity to become acquainted with the collections of the Jewish Museum in Prague. They were shown around the museum by the textile curator Dana Veselská and by the curator of metal and other three-dimensional objects Jaroslav Kuntoš. The aim of the event was, among other things, to promote the general knowledge of police specialists in identifying Judaica and to familiarize them with the specific features of the international trade in this attractive commodity. The event met with an extraordinary response from the police specialists and it was judged to be highly beneficial by the Police Presidium.



Restoration Work in the Pinkas Synagogue

Over the course of November and December, the specialized firm R.E., s.r.o. carried out restoration work in the Pinkas Synagogue, which involved repairs to the walls and to selected inscriptions of the names of Shoah victims. After taking photo documentation of the sections affected by damp, the restorers fully repaired, cleaned and secured a 4.5 metre inscription panel on the wall. As part of the repairs, they removed all the salts from the walls, treated loose plaster with silicates, removed all the broken stucco and returned it to its original state. Afterwards, corrections were made to sixteen inscriptions on the synagogue walls with inaccurate information about the dates of birth and death of Shoah victims – relating to Anna Mellerová, Alžběta Joklová, Olga Klingerová, Josef Brumlík, Rudolf Burger, Antonín Richter, Elsa (Eliška) Singerová, Gustav Nettel, Gustav Waldstein, Jiří Oplatka, Kamila Schwarzová, Karel Zenker, Lidmila Mahlerová, Robert Eisler, Rosalie Rita Eislerová and Hedvika Berwaldová.

On the basis of an ongoing study of documents, staff at the Jewish Museum's Shoah Documentation Department are preparing background material for adding the names of other Shoah victims. The museum's new research is focused mainly on tracing the names of children who were born during the war in the

Terezín or Litzmannstadt ghettos, in the Auschwitz–Birkenau death camp, or on one of the death marches.

Acquisition of a Rare Family Relic

A unique set of materials relating to the young Yella Glücklichová (married name Kubálková) has been donated to the Jewish Museum in Prague by her son, Petr Kubálek. Petr's parents bridged their different religious beliefs by having a civil wedding in Vienna in 1936. Yella's mother came from a Jewish family. She officially left the Jewish community in 1938 and had her son baptized, but this did not protect her from racial persecution. An attempt to save her child and a mistaken recommendation to get a divorce led to Yella's being deported to the Terezín ghetto with other Jews from Olomouc at the end of June 1942. Along with her younger sister Líza and local friend Anděla Wesselá, she was soon deported to the east. All three women were murdered in the Maly Trostinec death camp near Minsk in July 1942. The donated set of items includes not only material of a purely personal nature (e.g. portrait/family photographs and private correspondence), but also official documents (marriage certificate, police registration forms, and various receipts). Particularly outstanding is a set of drawings by Yella that depict her young son shortly before her deportation. There is also a unique letter that Yella wrote at a school building assembly point in the Hodolany district of Olomouc on the day before being sent to the Terezín ghetto. Of immense historical and informational value are two letters that Yella threw out of the train on the way to the Maly Trostinec death camp. There is also a letter from Anděla Wesselá, with whom Yella lived in Olomouc before deportation. Neither of these women wanted to add to the worries of their loved ones; they both emphasized, however, the importance of their mutual support. Their letters provide the last information about the lives of these three women. It remains unknown how these secret letters were eventually delivered to their addressees. This set of donated items is of exceptional value to the collections of the Jewish Museum in Prague.



Yella Kubálková with her son

Restitution of an Old Printed Book from Pre-War Library

In August 2018, a sale held by Winner's Unlimited Auctions in Jerusalem contained an old printed book of Hebrew poetry, titled *Mahberet Tophet ve-Eden u-Mahberet Purim* [The Book of Hell and Paradise] (Berlin, 1778), from the Prague Jewish Community's pre-war library (with original call number 1.388). The book includes a compilation of verses that are condemnatory of drunkenness, as well as a parody of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, with biblical and Talmudic references interspersed with trenchant humour from the work's author, Immanuel ha-Romi (1260–c.1336).

This copy of the book was part of the Library of the Prague Jewish Community, which dates back to 1857. The library's core collection was based on donations and bequests from important Prague figures, such as Chief Rabbi Solomon Judah Rapoport, the Prague book printer Moses Israel Landau and the secretary of the Prague Burial Society Koppelman Lieben. The flyleaf of the book contains the ownership mark of the Rapoport Library. The latter contained up to 3,000 printed books and was acquired by the Jewish community after his death in 1867. The book in question had been registered as missing from the Jewish Museum's library collection. Winner's Auctions complied with the museum's request to withdraw the item from its sale. The consignor Simon Cohen from London, UK, who had bought the book without being aware that it belonged to the Jewish Museum in Prague, kindly returned it free of charge to our institution. We would like to thank Winner's Auctions and Mr. Cohen for their co-operation in this matter. The book was returned to the Jewish Museum's library collection in November 2018.



Title page of *Mahberet Tophet ve-Eden u-Mahberet Purim* (Berlin, 1778) with the original call number and stamp of the Prague Jewish Community. On the opposite page is the mark of the Rapoport Library.

Old Printed Book Added to the Museum's Library Collection

At an auction held by Kestenbaum & Company (Auction No. 79, 11/2018), the Jewish Museum's library has managed to acquire a copy of Abraham ben Mordecai Galante's *Kol Bokhim: Kinat Setarim* – a rare book that was printed in Prague, 1621, by Moses ben Bezalel Katz and Abraham Heida. This is the first separate edition of the kabbalistic commentary on the Book of Lamentations. The author (died 1560) was an Italian kabbalist from a respected Jewish family in Rome. Together with his brother, Moses Galante, he settled in Safed in the Holy

Land and was an outstanding pupil and follower of Moses Cordover. With his great wealth, Abraham Galante had an opulent tomb built for Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai in Meron, which remains a respected site to this day. In appreciation of his knowledge and modesty, Abraham was given the title 'Ha-Kadosh' (the Holy). This volume is an important addition to the museum library's collection of rare printed books. It comes from the renowned Valmadonna Trust Library, a selection of whose books was made available for the first time at auction by Kestenbaum's in New York. The Valmadonna collection, comprising 13,000 Hebrew printed books and manuscripts, was built up by the Lunzer family from the small Italian town of Valmadonna. It contains works from throughout the world, particularly from Italy, and is on a par with many of the world's prestigious collections of Judaica. A large portion of the collection was sold to the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem in 2017.



Title page of Abraham Galante's *Kol Bokhim* (Prague, 1621)

Museum's Collections Enriched by the Addition of a Set of Adolf Kohn Artworks

In September 2018, the Jewish Museum in Prague purchased a set of ten oil paintings by Adolf Kohn (1868–1958) from a private collection in Germany. These artworks contain depictions of interesting corners of Josefov, the former

Jewish Quarter of Prague, prior to its redevelopment. The backs of almost all of the paintings contain extensive hand-written notes relating to the places depicted, as well as to the people who lived in the local houses, including their occupations and family relations. They are a compilation of oral memories and of information derived from literature and the press; one of the paintings even has a newspaper clipping about the Café Dworeles affixed to its back. There is an anecdotal quality to some of the oral testimony notes, in particular, and they contain a number of interesting observations – such as the prices of local food, the characteristics of certain ghetto residents, and details concerning the owners and staff of hospitality establishments. This set of paintings provides an excellent complement to the museum’s already fairly sizeable collection of artworks by Kohn. The museum’s Kohn collection is being gradually expanded to include previously unknown works that depict this long-vanished district of Prague. Such works were previously featured in a 2002 monographic exhibition of Kohn at the Robert Guttmann Gallery.



The “Jews in Bohemia” Seminar

The 7th seminar on the history of the Jews in Bohemia was held in Třeboň on 24 and 25 October. This event is held every two years by the Jewish Museum in Prague in co-operation with a regional archive or with another museum. This year’s seminar took place with organizational support from the State Regional Archives in Třeboň, which we would like to thank for their kind welcome, pleasant environment and very interesting archive excursion. The main focus of the seminar is on the 20th-century history of Jews in the Czech border regions,

although the time frame and geographic scope of this topic is being gradually expanded. The historians and archivists who attended the seminar gave 24 papers on the history of Jews in Bohemia from the early modern period through to the post-WW2 years. The seminar proceedings should be published by the end of 2019.



Prevention of Extremism and Respect for Cultural Diversity

On 1–2 November, the “Prevention of Extremism and Respect for Cultural Diversity” conference took place in Brno within the framework of the “Občanský průkaz 4.0” [National Identity Card 4.0] project. The aim of the project is to support the active participation of secondary school pupils in decision-making processes and in areas of influence on social and democratic life. It will involve the creation and validation of programmes for secondary school teachers and pupils that will help to develop competences for democratic culture. The project focuses mainly on building values of human dignity, human rights, democracy and the rule of law, civic attitudes, co-operation skills, problem-solving skills, and a critical understanding of the world. At the conference, Jiří Tejkal gave a paper on the results of the educational project “Ours or Foreign? Jews in the Czech 20th Century” and also talked about the range of educational activities provided by the Jewish Museum in Prague.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Judaica Bohemiae 53(2018)

A new issue of the journal *Judaica Bohemiae* (Vol. 53/2018, 2) came out at the end of December 2018. The opening study by Pavel Kocman (*Zu den Umständen der Erteilung des Privilegiums für die mährischen Juden im Jahr 1629*) explores the circumstances surrounding the granting of a charter for Moravian Jews in 1629 – an important document that redefined the legal status of Jews in Moravia after two centuries. On the basis of a careful analysis of the source base, this study determines the key influence exerted on the preparation of the charter by Cardinal Franz von Dietrichstein, the Governor of Moravia in the period after the Battle of White Mountain, as well as the influence the charter had on accelerating the process of institutionalizing the provincial representation of the Moravian Jewry. On the basis of Slovak oral history projects, the next study by Monika Vrzgulová (*The Memory of the Return of Slovak Holocaust Survivors in Jewish and Non-Jewish Testimonies*) examines how Shoah survivors and eye-witnesses remember their return home after the Second World War. In the 'Documents' section, a study by Pavel Sládek (*Moses ben Aaron Morawczyk and his Treatise on the System of Education, 1634/1635*) looks at the life and work of the Jewish pedagogue Moses ben Aaron Morawczyk. This study provides the first English translation of Morawczyk's treatise 'On the System of Education' (*Ketzad seder mishnah*), placing it in the context of early modern Ashkenazi scholarship and learning. In the 'Reports' section, Lenka Uličná provides information about the 11th Congress of the European Association for Jewish Studies (EAJS), which took place in Kraków in July 2018, and Daniel Baránek informs about the Visual Antisemitica workshop that was held by the Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences in September 2018 in Prague as part of the project "Visual Manifestations of Anti-Semitism in the Czech Lands from the Middle Ages to the Present Day". The final section of the journal contains a review by Ines Koeltzsch of Klaus Hödl's book *Zwischen Wienerlied und Der Kleine Kohn. Juden in der Wiener populären Kultur um 1900* (2017) and a review by Arno Pařík of Rudolf Klein's book *Metropolitan Jewish Cemeteries of the 19th and 20th Centuries in Central and Eastern Europe: A Comparative Study* (2018). Published since 1965 by the Jewish Museum in Prague, *Judaica Bohemiae* focuses on Jewish history and culture in Bohemia, Moravia and the wider Central European area (the territory of the former Habsburg Monarchy). The texts are in English and German.

JUDAICA BOHEMIAE LIII-2



JEWISH MUSEUM IN PRAGUE 2018



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