

# IDENTIFYING FEATURES



Markings, labels and tags  
typically found on items  
originally owned by victims  
of the Second World War

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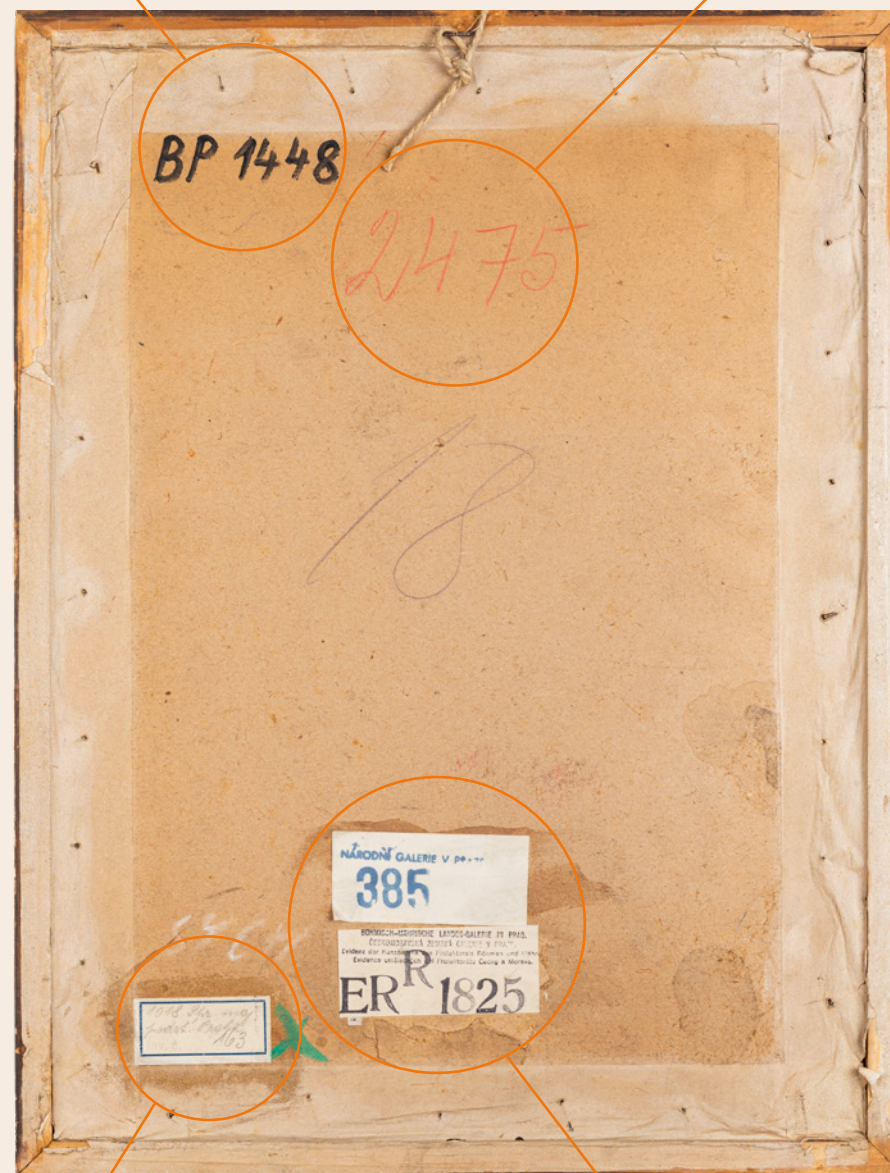
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Current inventory number  
BP means Benešov nad Ploučnicí,  
the current location of the item

Original numbering from  
a Treuhandstelle depot



National Cultural Commission, Transfer 1018, serial  
number of the item  
A green cross designated a movable cultural monument

Strahov depot, ERR (Records of Reichseigentum  
engravings)  
Serial number of a transfer consignment list

# Identifying features

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The search for items that belonged to victims of Nazi persecution begins with a thorough study and comparison of sources, mainly various inventories and lists. Archive materials can provide insights into the complicated and often turbulent movements of items that were looted from the Nazis' victims, as well as indicating where specific items are currently located.

However, another invaluable source of information for provenance research comes from the identifying features found on the items themselves. These features enable us to **verify the items' provenance**, and in some cases they can even be essential to identifying an item – especially in cases when the chain of relevant written records of the item's origin and movements has been broken. These identifying features may also help **identify the original owners** of looted artefacts.

This brochure presents the typical markings, labels and tags that can be found on items originally belonging to Jewish owners from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia who were deported by the Nazis.

Deportees' property was gathered, sorted, recorded and administered for the Reich authorities by the **Treuhandstelle**, a department of the Jewish Religious Community that was established for this purpose by the Central Office for Jewish Emigration (Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung) in the autumn of 1941, when the mass deportations of Jews began. At the Treuhandstelle depots, items were first marked with a depot number and the original owners' transport number. Some of these items were moved again during the war and transferred to other depots, where they were often given new depot numbers.

In the summer of 1944, numerous artefacts were removed from Treuhandstelle depots at the instigation of Karl Maria Swoboda, the Trustee for Reich-owned Artistic Property in the Protectorate, to be transported to two **central depots at the Sternberg (Šternberk) Palace and the Strahov Monastery in Prague** (and in some cases to be received by major museums and galleries in the Protectorate). These items were given new depot numbers, and they were designated as "Reichseigentum" – property of the Reich.

After the war, the restored Czechoslovak state entrusted the depots containing the property of deported Jews to the newly formed **National Property Administration (NSMP)**. This organization continued to administer the property, as well as restituting it when possible.

However, at the end of the 1940s the NSMP's activities were brought to an end. In 1948 it received an instruction to liquidate unrestituted property – i.e. items lacking identifying features, making it impossible to tell who had originally owned them. The **National Cultural Commission** (NKK), which was the state heritage management authority at the time, selected items from the NSMP depots for its own use, transporting these items to depositories at several chateaux. There, new inventories of the items were compiled. The items remained in the care of the heritage authority; some were lent or transferred to other institutions, and others were sold off during the 1960s.

By comparing archive sources, in many cases it is possible to trace the movements of specific artefacts originally belonging to deportees and to identify them in the inventories of present-day memory institutions. However, the chain of documentary records is frequently broken, making it difficult to identify items in current collections from the often-vague descriptions given in inventories and documents of receipt. Moreover, although some items demonstrably belonged to deportees, it is not possible to identify their specific owners on the basis of existing sources.

In such cases, valuable information can be provided by labels, tags, markings or inscriptions on the items themselves. We can read these features as pieces of evidence casting light on the complicated history of an item. They may include the numbers that were assigned to individual items at the depots, or the typical tags designating items as "cultural property of the Reich". In some cases, the presence of a transport number makes it possible to identify an item's original owner.

We therefore owe a great debt of gratitude to the staff of memory institutions who left these often-incomprehensible markings intact on the items in their care.

**Albarelo**  
around 1550 / Italy, Gubbio?  
*majolica*  
KuK, KU00604

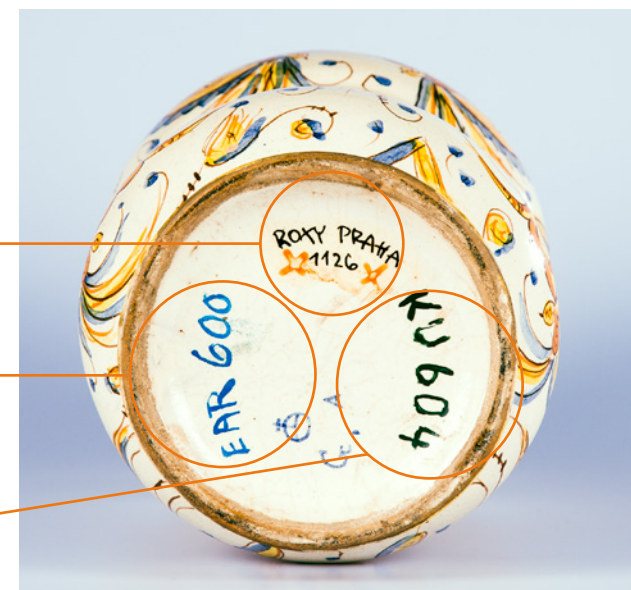
Provenance: **Regina Adlerová**  
1942 Zentralstelle für jüdische  
Auswanderung  
1944 Reichseigentum Strahov  
1945 NKK  
1947 NSMP  
1950 NKK, Sychrov chateau depot  
1956 KuK hospital



**ROXY PRAHA 1126**  
serial number, Roxy transfer

**EAR 600**  
number from the Strahov depot,  
EAR - Evidence antikvit  
Reichseigentum (Records  
of Reichseigentum antiquities)

**KU 604**  
current inventory number





# Collectors' markings

- ▶ Markings such as ex libris, collectors' stamps and monograms can help identify the original owner.
- ▶ Unfortunately, these markings were removed from items at the Treuhandsstelle depots.
- ▶ A typical example of a collector's marking is a stamp in the shape of a Star of David, which was used by Josef Pollák to mark the individual items in his collection.
- ▶ Some pieces of furniture originally belonging to Adéla Heimbachová have retained a tag stating that the item is the property of her husband, Alexander von Hohenlohe. Egon Alexander, Prinz zu Hohenlohe (1879–1933) gave up his original title when he married Adéla Edita Löwy, and the King of Württemberg subsequently granted him the title Graf zu Heimbach. In this case, written sources lack both the name and the transport number of their original owner Adéla Heimbachová
- ▶ Although some items are marked with tags giving their owner's name, it is not always possible to determine the origin of the tag or to read the name correctly and thus identify the owner beyond doubt (e.g. both tags shown in the pictures below).



# Treuhandstelle depots

- ▶ These depots were used to store deportees' property. They were usually established in buildings belonging to the victims of persecution (including Jewish associations or religious organizations). In Prague there were almost 60 Treuhandstelle depots.
- ▶ At these depots, items were given a depot number as well as being marked with the transport number of the original owner. (For example D309 in the picture at the top right). Unfortunately, in the large majority of cases there are no surviving sources that would make it possible to compare the depot numbers with the transport numbers.
- ▶ The depot number may be given on a label or a tag attached to the item, or it may be written on the item itself.
- ▶ When items were taken to a different depot, the old label or tag was sometimes removed when the item was given a new depot number.
- ▶ Labels and tags may also include additional information, e.g. the estimated value of the item in Reichsmarks (RM) or a categorization of the item's value in the form of a Roman numeral.



- Orange labels were typically used at the depot of artefacts in Haštalská Street. The printed depot number was commonly modified with the addition of handwritten numbers.



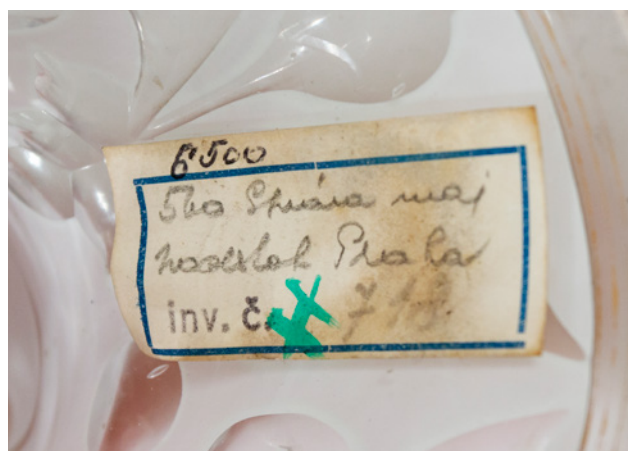
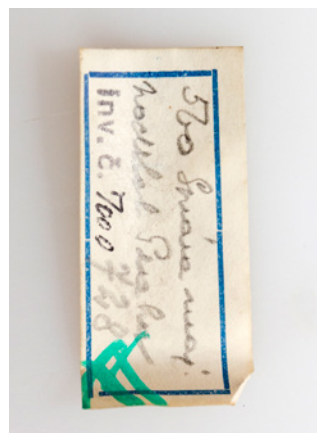
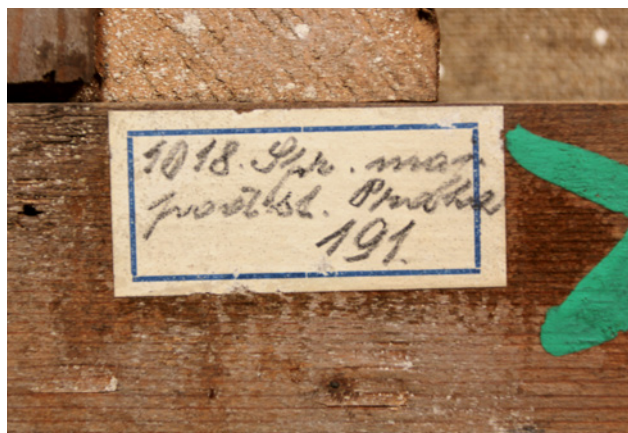
# “Reichseigentum” labels and markings

- ▶ These markings were given to items selected and removed from Treuhandstelle depots and then deposited at Strahov Monastery and the Sternberg (Šternberk) Palace at the instigation of Karl Maria Swoboda, the Trustee for Reich-owned Artistic Property in the Protectorate.
- ▶ Artefacts were usually marked with a typical label bearing a bilingual stamp with the text “*Böhmisch-Mährische Landes-Galerie in Prag. Českomoravská zemská galerie v Praze; Evidenz der Kunstwerke des Protektorats Böhmen und Mähren. Evidence uměleckých děl Protektorátu Čechy a Morava.*” In some cases, the National Gallery later added another label giving the serial number of the list under which the item was transferred to its depository (e.g. 333 and 385 on the opposite page).
- ▶ Abbreviations used:
  - EAR** – Evidence antikvit Reichseigentum (Records of Reichseigentum antiquities)
  - EKR** – Evidence kreseb Reichseigentum (Records of Reichseigentum drawings)
  - EOR** – Evidence obrazů Reichseigentum (Records of Reichseigentum paintings)
  - EPR** – Evidence plastik Reichseigentum (Records of Reichseigentum sculptures)
  - ERR** – Evidence rytin Reichseigentum (Records of Reichseigentum engravings)



# The National Property Administration (NSMP) and the National Cultural Commission (NKK)

- Items were re-numbered when they were transferred to other institutions. Similar types of tags or labels were used both in transfers from the NSMP to the NKK and also in other transfers. (Those shown at the left were affixed to items transferred to the chateau in Sychrov.)
- Tags usually bore a designation of the particular transfer (e.g. 560, Roxy, 1012), the original depot number, the serial number of the transfer consignment list for the NKK or the chateau depository, and the original inventory number allocated to the item at its new location.
- The tag at the top left gives both the serial number of the transfer consignment list (942) and the original (6176) and new (S-30002) inventory numbers at the Sychrov depository.



- During an inventory carried out at Sychrov in 1953–54, adhesive labels were attached to the individual artefacts stating each item's origin in the NSMP depots, the transfer consignment number (1018 is a transfer from Strahov, 560 the Roxy transfer), and the serial number of the item in the transfer consignment list (e.g. 191, 728).
- In 1958–1962, the Coordinating Committee for the Utilization of State Castles and Chateaux sorted and categorized all furnishings and fittings within its purview and marked the items with coloured crosses. For example, a green cross indicates movable cultural monuments, and a red cross indicates items of cultural value (visible in the image on page 7).



# Transport numbers

- ▶ The names of those deported by the Nazi authorities were replaced by a code known as a transport number. These codes consisted of letters designating a particular transport, and serial numbers designating the individual deportees. (The alphabetical order of the letters designating the transports usually corresponded with their chronological order, and the alphabetical series of single letters was followed by combinations of multiple letters.)
- ▶ The transport numbers of the original owners are generally not given in the written sources. They were only used in the documents of correspondence between the Treuhandstelle and the Central Office for Jewish Emigration. However, although these documents are essential for identifying the original owners, hardly any of them are still in existence.
- ▶ Czechoslovakia's National Property Administration (NSMP), which in the summer of 1945 took over the entire material assets of the former Central Office for Jewish Emigration (including the Treuhandstelle depots), subsequently added the individual transport numbers (or the names of the original owners) to the existing lists and then compiled new lists. Among the sources used by the NSMP for this purpose were the labels and inscriptions giving the transport numbers of the deported owners, if these labels and inscriptions were still found on the individual items that were systematically inventoried by the NSMP.
- ▶ Some of the labels or inscriptions with the original owners' transport numbers still remain present on the items up to the present day, and they are an invaluable aid to provenance research.



- Some labels and tags give a combination of different types of information: the Treuhandstelle depot numbers, the transport numbers of the original owners, or other information such as the estimated value of the item in Reichsmarks (RM) or a categorization of the item's value in the form of a Roman numeral.
- Tags often give information on both sides, as can be seen in several examples on the opposite page.



- Some items still bear markings documenting their complete history from their confiscation to the present day. At the left is the rear side of a miniature belonging to Viktor Glauber, at the right is the front side and an NKK tag.

**1539**  
original marking from the Treuhand-  
stelle depot

The older tag is unfortunately  
illegible

**D 316**  
transport number of the owner  
Viktor Glauber

**79**  
handwritten depot number from the  
Haštalská Street depot

**Roxy**  
label with a designation of the  
transfer from the depot in the Roxy  
building, Dlouhá Street

**S-00303 a 560/137**  
adhesive labels showing the transfer  
consignment number (560), the  
item's serial number (137) and both  
inventory numbers from Sychrov  
(14255 and S-00303)

A green cross designated a movable  
cultural monument

**An NKK tag**  
on the rear is the number (79) from  
the Haštalská Street depot, on the  
front the serial number in the Roxy  
transfer consignment list (137) and  
the first Sychrov inventory number  
(14255)



**Girl in White**  
unknown artist  
1st quarter of the 19th century /  
Central Europe, Bohemia?  
watercolour and gouache on ivory  
Sychrov, S00303a, b

Provenance: **Viktor Glauber**  
1941 Zentralstelle für jüdische  
Auswanderung  
1945 NSMP  
1950 NKK, Sychrov chateau depot



Various markings, labels and tags provide an invaluable source of information for provenance research. Besides making it possible to verify the accuracy of information obtained from comparing archive sources, the presence of the original owner's transport number also enables us to identify the owner's name - which is usually not given in the written sources. These markings thus provide tangible historical evidence and offer a unique insight into the fates of items looted from the victims of Nazi persecution during the Second World War.

