

Touch a charm to learn more.





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1. Star of David encircling the initial T

T may stand for Theo, a possible love interest of Greta Perlman's (see nos. 8 and 12), or it may refer to Theresienstadt itself. Inmates frequently created artwork bearing the name of the camp or the coat of arms of the Czech town of Terezín.



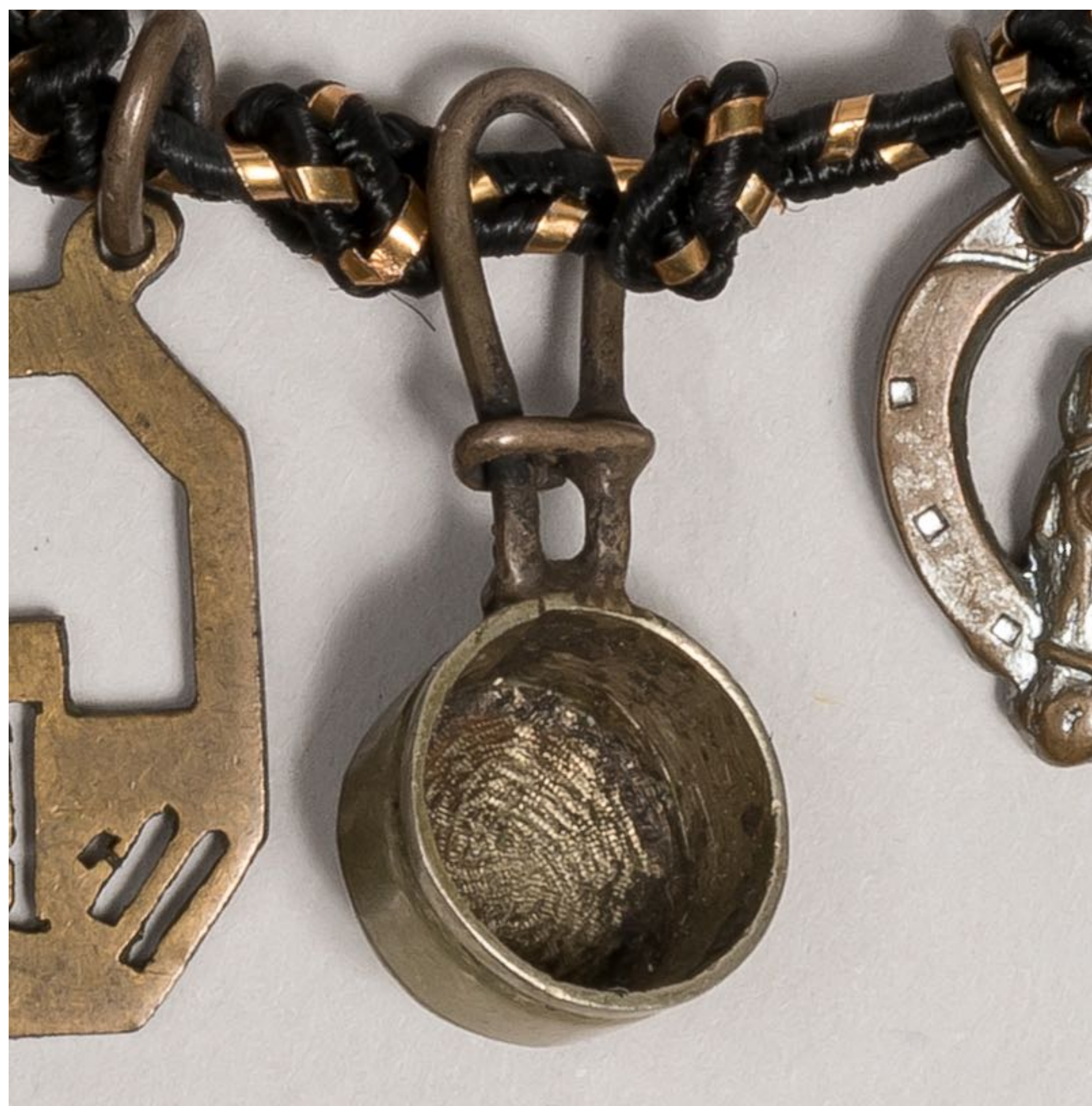
2. Circular pendant inscribed 433 M

M 433 was Greta Perlman's transport number, assigned to her by the Nazis. She was deported to Theresienstadt on transport M, one of the earliest to the camp, which departed Prague on December 14, 1941, her thirty-seventh birthday.



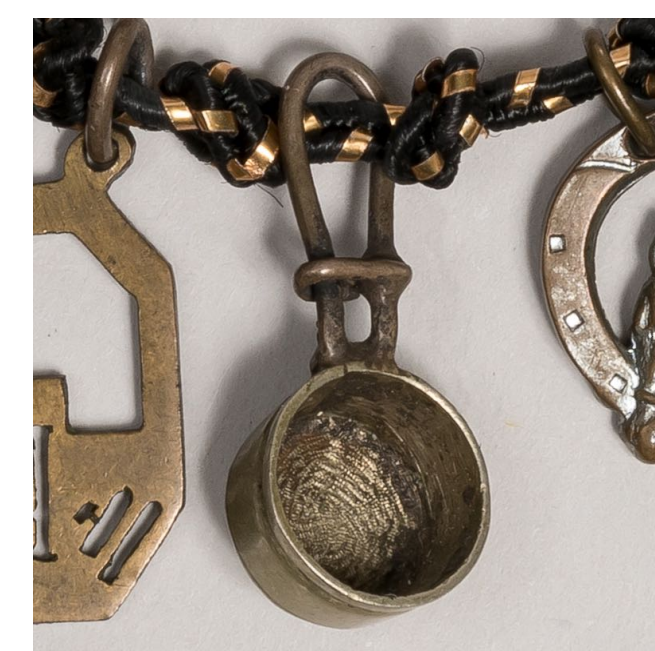
3. Good-luck horseshoe

A good-luck horseshoe charm would have been a welcome gift for a Theresienstadt prisoner. A horseshoe without the horse head is one of several charms now held at the Terezín Memorial in Theresienstadt. It displays the number of a prisoner (M 854) deported to Theresienstadt in Transport M, the same transport as Greta Perlman.



4. Miniature cooking pot

This no doubt alludes to Perlman's work in the camp kitchen, where there was always a shortage of pots. The job was a good one in a place where prisoners were at constant risk of starvation. The bottom of the pot is inscribed 14 / XII. 1941, the date of her transport to Theresienstadt and her birthday.



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5. GP monogram

These are Greta Perlman's initials. A number of charms from Theresienstadt with internees' initials have survived in museums and private collections; many also incorporate the prisoner's transport number. This stylized monogram, in which the initial of the surname is set within a larger first-name initial, is unusual.



6. Window with a potted plant

This simple silhouette evokes the safety and tranquility of home. Other charms from the camp have been preserved in the collection of the Terezín Memorial in Theresienstadt, including several with plants or flowers. One made by the prison gardener for his fiancée has gardening tools. A charm in a similar cutout style, with a scene of a cityscape, is in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC.



7. Miniature wooden clog

A Nazi document of June 1943 lists jobs in the ghetto, including clog making. Clogs were one of the few new articles of wear available in the camp, but they were in very short supply.



8. Ceramic shard in the shape of a pentagon, inscribed on the back, "Greta Terezín 1.IX.43"

A similar charm (no. 12) is inscribed "Theo Terezín 1.IX.43." Theo and Greta may have had a romance at the camp. Perlman was married (her maiden name was Aufricht) but her spouse, Hanuš Perlman, was not listed with her in the paperwork for Transport M to Theresienstadt. His fate is unknown.

It is a Jewish tradition to break a china plate after a couple becomes engaged and agrees to the *tna'im*, or conditions of marriage. The two matching potsherd charms suggest that Greta and Theo may have become engaged in Theresienstadt. The breaking of the plate recalls the destruction of
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On September 6, 1943, two large transports were sent from Theresienstadt to the Auschwitz extermination camp, carrying 5,007 prisoners. It is possible that Theo was one of them, though this cannot be confirmed. (For more on Theo see no. 9.) The date on this pair of charms, September 1, 1943, may indicate that the two became engaged when they learned they were to be separated. Greta Perlman was sent to Auschwitz a year later, on October 4, 1944.



9. Oval badge with profile of a policeman and the initials GW, for Ghattowache

The Ghattowache, or Ghetto Police, composed of male prisoners under age forty-five, was established by the Nazis on December 6, 1941, to keep order in the camp. Members wore a small metal badge like this one on the chest or belt. Following the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in the spring of 1943, fear of a similar revolt in Theresienstadt led the Nazis to disband the group and deport its members to extermination camps. We know that Greta worked in a kitchen in Theresienstadt. Between autumn 1942 and late summer 1943 a kitchen was set up in the barracks of the Ghetto Police. She may have

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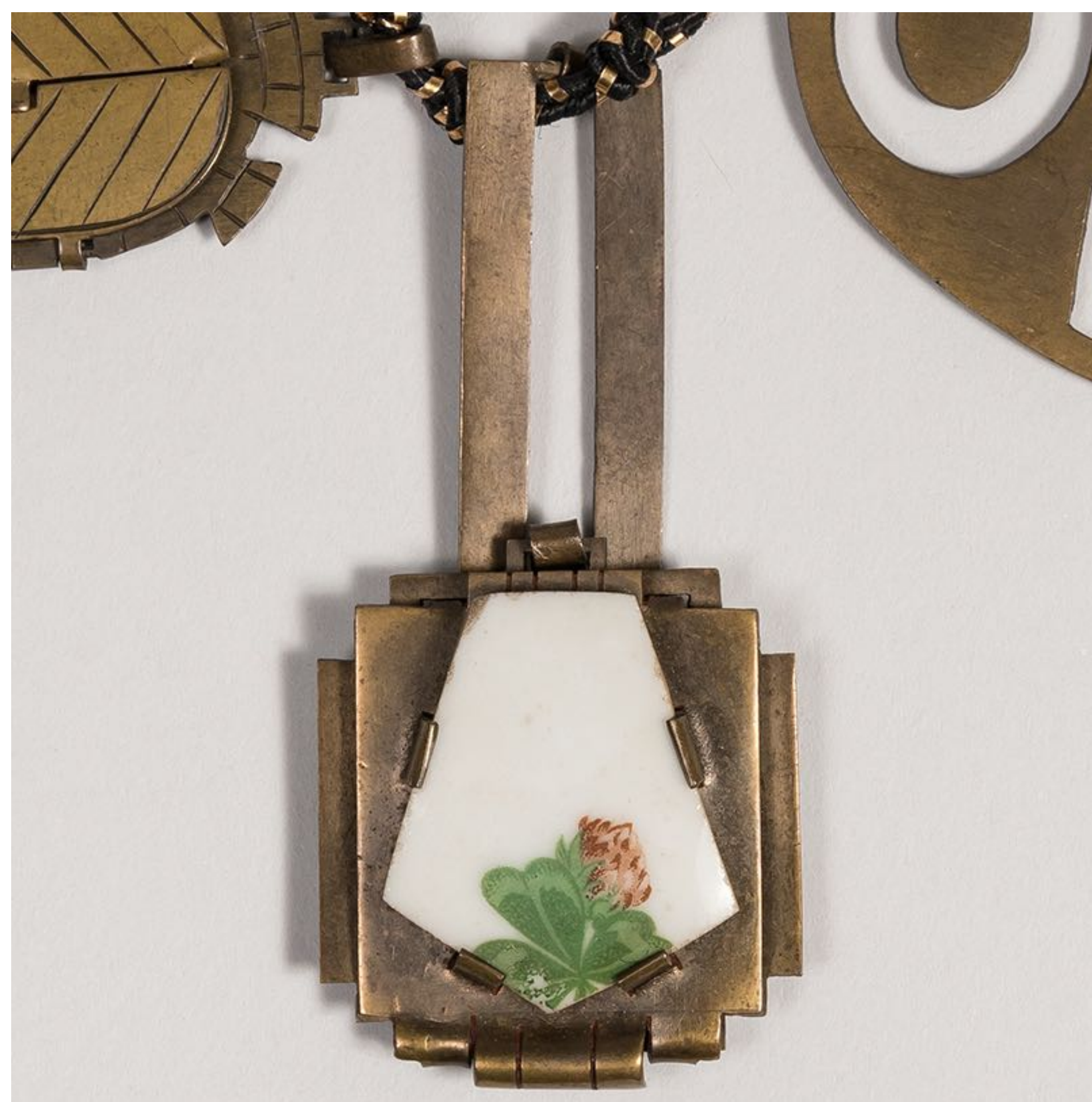
10. Triangular charm with the stylized figure of a female cook stirring a pot

The pot forms Greta Perlman's transport number, M 433 and alludes to her work in the camp kitchen. Walter Weiss, an artist and survivor of Theresienstadt, drew a design for a similar charm, but with a male cook and a different transport number, and may have been the creator of this piece. That ink drawing is now in a private collection.



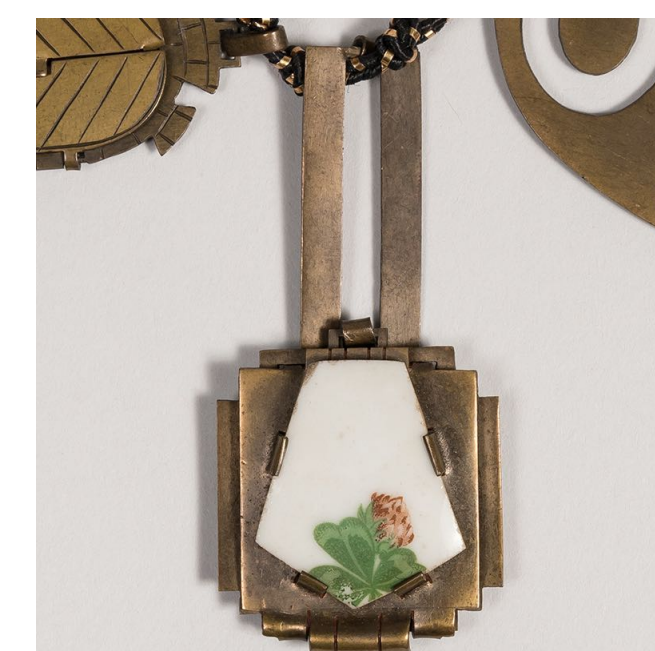
11. Large oval badge with the initials GKW

GKW may stand for Ghetto Kriminalwache; the Ghetto Criminal Police; this was another self-policing squad within Theresienstadt and included women. Greta Perlman may have been a member, or she may have been given the badge by another prisoner.



12. Ceramic shard in the shape of a pentagon inscribed on the back “Theo Terezín 1.IX.43”

The ceramic shards used in this charm and its companion (no. 8) may have come from porcelain made in one of the Theresienstadt workshops. Perhaps the two were created to celebrate Greta Perlman’s engagement to Theo (whose identity remains unknown). Both have a leaf and blossom—possibly a lucky four-leaf clover. The metalwork on this piece is similar to that on a locket charm with a dog in a doghouse, now in the collection of the Museum of Jewish Heritage, New York.



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13. Locket in the shape of a gate

This locket in the form of a fortified gate opens to reveal the inscription "M 433 Perlman Greta." Theresienstadt, built in the nineteenth century as a military garrison, had many such gates. The combination of her transport number and her name captures her dual identity as individual and prisoner, set within symbolic doors she was unable to open.



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14. Ladle

Like many charm bracelets, this one has miniature objects that might, in another context, have been used in a doll's house. This cooking ladle is probably a reference to Perlman's work in the camp kitchen.



15. Circular pendant

The design incorporates Greta Perlman's transport number, M 433.



16. Bullet

The presence of armed guards belied the Nazi myth that Theresienstadt was a model town for Europe's Jews. The bullet, despite its decorative brass and copper pattern, is a sharp reminder of the bleak reality of the camp.



17. Circular pendant with number thirteen

Numerology plays a large role in Jewish mysticism and symbolism. Thirteen is a good number, embracing ideas of love and oneness. Hebrew letters are assigned numeric values; the words *ahavah* (love) and *ehad* (one) are both composed of letters that add up to thirteen. Jewish boys and some girls have their bar mitzvah at thirteen to celebrate reaching the age of observance of commandments, a mark of adulthood.



18. Camel

There were many children among the prisoners in Theresienstadt. In a place with no toys and few happy distractions, animal charms like this one were sometimes made for young inmates. Drawings by the artist Walter Weiss of a cat and a pair of deer have survived and are in a private collection.



19. Miniature latrine with the initial G for Greta

Latrines were shared by many inmates; this small charm is the sort of wry joke that was common among prisoners, expressing a desire for privacy in a place where they were dehumanized.



20. Comb

A comb was useful for more than just personal grooming: a fine-tooth comb could remove lice, widespread among prisoners in the unsanitary camp.