

‘The Place of my Fathers’ Sepulchres’: The Jewish Cemeteries in Vienna

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Tim Corbett

‘The Place of my Fathers’ Sepulchres’: The Jewish Cemeteries in Vienna

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of PhD

by

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University of Lancaster, June 2015

Declaration

I certify that this thesis is my own work, and has not been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

Frontispiece: (from left to right and top to bottom) untitled, former exhibition of the Jewish Museum in Vienna (before 1938), JMW, 2628; *matzevah* of Francisca Edle von Hönigsberg (1769-1795), Währing, 4-385; *Grabsteine beim Hofburgbau*, CAHJP, AU-196; Detail from *Wiener Zentralfriedhof*, 1953, ÖNB Kartensammlung, KI 104092; *matzevah* of Joachim Stiasny (1826-1908), Tor I, 52A-12-20; *Fotosammlung Seegasse*, JMW, 3217; הָעִיר בֵּית-קְבָרוֹת אֲבֹתַי (*the city, the place of my fathers’ sepulchres*), Nehemiah 2:3; *matzevah* of Rabbi Shimshon (Samson) Wertheim(er) (1658-1724), Seegasse; *matzevah* of Karl Kohn (1889-1914), Tor I, 76B-1-1; *matzevot* at Tor I, Section 5B; *matzevah* of Chief Rabbi Adolf Jellinek (1820-1893), Tor I, 5B-1-2; *matzevah* of Marcus Engel (1825-1909) and family, Tor I, 7-1-11; *matzevah* of Emanuel Weber (1851-1906), Tor I, 51-17-69; *Wien 11, Zentralfriedhof 4. Tor*, ÖNB Bildarchiv, HW 58, 8.

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Tim Corbett, Vienna, June 2015

The inferno of the living is not something that will be; if there is one, it is what is already here, the inferno where we live every day, that we form by being together. There are two ways to escape suffering it. The first is easy for many: accept the inferno and become such a part of it that you can no longer see it. The second is risky and demands constant vigilance and apprehension: seek and learn to recognize who and what, in the midst of inferno, are not inferno, then make them endure, give them space.

– Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*.

Why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? – Nehemiah 2:3

Abstract

This thesis presents the first integrated history of Vienna's four Jewish cemeteries as sites reflecting the construction, negotiation and at times contestation of Jewish communal belonging within Viennese society, embedded in the Viennese cityscape. Through a novel analysis of the sepulchral epigraphy of the thousands of *matzevot* or grave-memorials contained therein, the development and expression of codes of belonging constructed in the nexus between shifting notions of 'Jewish' and 'Viennese' culture are illuminated in a *longue durée* from the medieval into the modern periods. The Shoah, while it does not represent the first instance of the violent erasures of Jewish life and culture in the city, through its magnitude and presence in living memory constitutes a profound rupture in the historic enmeshment of the Jewish community in Viennese society. During the Shoah, the cemeteries became a focal point for the attempted excision or revision of Jewish cultural heritage and its place in Viennese culture, perpetrated by a complex network of agency, with the cemeteries moreover becoming recalibrated as sites of intense Jewish-communal introspection and activity. The cemeteries constituted after the Shoah some of the only sites of Jewish heritage to survive in the physical and memorial landscape, becoming moreover deeply contested sites of memory, within the context of the fledgling re-establishment of Jewish life in the city and the conflicted political and historical discourses in the Second Austrian Republic. This thesis presents the cemeteries as sites of the most profound engagements with Vienna's long and convoluted Jewish history, comprising moments of great cultural prowess as well as murderous destructivity, embodying the deeply interactive yet conflicted relationship between the City of Vienna and its successive Jewish communities.

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List of Abbreviations

AIKGW	Archive of the Jewish Community in Vienna
BArch	Federal Archive of Germany
BjF	Union of Jewish Front-Line Soldiers
BZÖ	Austrian Future Alliance
CAHJP	Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People
DöW	Documentation Centre of the Austrian Resistance
FPÖ	Austrian Freedom Party
HDKE	Holocaust Memorial Center in Budapest
IDF	Israeli Defence Forces
IKG	Jewish Community Organisation in Vienna
JMW	Jewish Museum in Vienna
LBI	Leo Baeck Institute in New York
NHM	Natural History Museum in Vienna
NSDAP	National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nazi Party)
ÖNB	Austrian National Library
ÖSK	Austrian Black Cross
ÖStA/AdR	Austrian State Archives/Archive of the Republic
ÖVP	Austrian People's Party
RSHA	Reich Main Security Office
SPÖ	Austrian Socialist Party
WStLA	Vienna City and State Archive
YVPA	Yad Vashem Photo Archive

Introduction

Destination of the living, abode of the dead, the cemetery is a place where spirit manifests itself in matter, heaven touches the earth and humankind appeals to eternity. Connoted variably as a place of serenity or of mortal dread, the cemetery holds a multitude of meanings to different cultures and individuals, moreover subject to the caprices of time. Yet always it resonates with the most fundamental questions about the meanings of life and death, and about humankind's place in the cosmos, as so poetically illustrated by Italo Calvino: 'On fine afternoons the living population pays a visit to the dead and they decipher their own names on their stone slabs (...) footsteps echo beneath the hollow domes; the questions are asked in silence; and it is always about themselves that the living ask'.¹ Death is universal, the grave our destination, as Job lamented: 'I know You will bring me to death, The house assigned for all the living' (Job 30:23), thus the cemetery is in Jewish tradition euphemistically called *beit hachaim*, the 'House of Life'.² Death is eternal, and therefore the cemetery is also called in Hebrew *beit ha'olam*, the 'House of Eternity', in allusion to Ecclesiastes 12:5: 'Man sets out for his eternal abode, With mourners all around the streets'. Yet death is not the end, the cemetery not the final destination, 'For you will not abandon me to *Sheol* [the land of the dead], or let Your faithful one see the Pit. You will teach me the path of life' (Psalm 16:10-11). Jewish tradition is grounded in the promise of life: as the cemetery holds the life that once was, it holds the life that is still to come, for 'Thus said the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves and lift you out of the graves, O My people, and bring you to the land of Israel' (Ezekiel 37:12). Hence Jewish tradition commands that the 'House of Eternity' be inviolable; the grave is the inviolable property of the dead until such time that they shall rise again. The cemetery is thus not merely a site of death, it is more significantly the

¹ Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities* (translated by William Weaver, London: Vintage, 1997, originally published 1972), 127-8.

² Note that all Biblical citations here employ the translations from *JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh* תנ"ך (Philadelphia: JPS, 1999) as these endeavour to remain true to the Hebrew originals.

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'House of Life'. The cemetery is finally also a site of memory, the memory of family, ancestry and community, to which the Hebrew name *beit haqvarot*, the 'House of Sepulchres', alludes, as Nehemiah asked: 'Why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? (Nehemiah 2:3). The profundity of the cemetery, a site of death, as equally a site of culture, memory and community was poignantly articulated in April 1917 by Vienna's Chief Rabbi Moritz Gudemann (1835-1918) at the opening ceremony for the city's newest Jewish cemetery:

However mute the cemeteries, however deep the silence in which they are covered, they nevertheless convey the loudest and most eloquent language for those who know how to understand this language. In this is grounded their sanctity, their holiness, their inviolability. (...) The Jewish cemeteries are the archive of Jewish history. Hence the cemetery is to us not a site of death, but the "House of Life", not a site of transience, but the "House of Eternity".³

Vienna's Jewish cemeteries are the most profound memorials to the long but anfractuous history of Jewish life, culture and community surviving in the present cityscape. Vienna is today regarded as one of the cradles of modern culture,⁴ while the role of Vienna's Jews in the genesis of Viennese culture has been the focus of intense scholarly interest in recent decades.⁵ Jewish-Viennese history moves in cycles of inclusion and exclusion, blossoming and destruction, experienced by an amorphous Jewish population in whom a sense of 'community', despite all

³ Cited in *Der neue israelitische Friedhof in Wien und seine Bauten – Denkschrift* (Vienna: Israelitische Kultusgemeinde, 1928). 11.

⁴ This reputation applies especially to the era known as the *fin-de-siècle*, and is often credited to the work of Carl Schorske, especially his *magnum opus*, *Fin-De-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980).

⁵ This includes a wealth of literature such as most eminently Steven Beller, *Vienna and the Jews, 1867-1938: A Cultural History* (Cambridge University Press: 1990); Eveline Brugger, Martha Keil, Albert Lichtblau, Christoph Lind & Barbara Staudinger, *Geschichte der Juden in Österreich* (Vienna: Ueberreuter, 2006); William McCagg, *A History of Habsburg Jews 1670-1918* (Indiana University Press: 1989); Marsha Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna 1867-1914: Assimilation and Identity* (State University of New York Press: 1983); Hans Tietze, *Die Juden Wiens* (originally published 1933, this edition Vienna: Mandelbaum, 2007); Robert Wistrich (ed.), *Austrians and Jews in the twentieth century: from Franz Joseph to Waldheim* (London: Macmillan, 1992), and many more.

discontinuities, has grounded itself through time.⁶ Vienna's Jewish cemeteries are some of the only sites in the cityscape to survive in the present day to testify to the emergence and development of this anfractuous community, and no other physical space more profoundly reflects the enmeshment but also the conflicts of Jewish life within Viennese society.⁷ The Jewish cemeteries stand at the nexus of this maelstrom of history, reflecting the development of communal and cultural codes of belonging and (self-)representation located within the complicated matrix of interaction of the Jewish community with Viennese society and Austrian polity. This development was driven by change and innovation on a remarkable multitude of levels, affecting and reflecting issues of religiosity, economy, class, gender, profession, and education, among others, while continuously drawing on, sustaining, advancing or contesting Jewish sepulchral traditions. The consequence was a unique yet multifarious Jewish-Viennese sepulchral culture, wherein the cemeteries became a principle locus of the negotiation of 'Jewish' and 'Viennese' or 'Austrian' cultures and the challenges which these continuously evolving categories posed to individual and communal codes of belonging.

The history of this Jewish community is punctuated by the recurring incisions of deportations, pogroms and genocide, leading to a division popular in historiography of Vienna's Jewish history into four distinct 'communities':

⁶ I employ a fluid sense of 'community' as a set of relations determined by a complex discourse of belonging and exclusion, as discussed by Sara Ahmed & Anne-Marie Fortier, *Re-Imagining Communities*, *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol. 6 (2003). The history of the specific use of the term 'community' in Jewish-Viennese history, either in German *Gemeinde* or in Hebrew קהלה, is discussed in Martha Keil, "Gemeinde und Kultur: Die mittelalterlichen Grundlagen jüdischen Lebens in Österreich" in Brugger *et al*, *Geschichte der Juden*.

⁷ Symbolism and rituals surrounding death as systems reflecting values of culture and life were explored in pioneering anthropological works such as Richard Huntington & Peter Metcalf, *Celebrations of Death: The Anthropology of Mortuary Ritual* (Cambridge University Press: 1979), who remarked that 'in many funeral rituals signs of life and community eclipse representations of death and separation', 2; and in Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of our Death* (translated By Helen Weaver, London: Allen Lane, 1981), who remarked that practices commemorating death serve 'to express the individual's solidarity with his family and community', 603. The significance of the materiality of dead bodies, and by extension of graves, grave-memorials, and the cemetery as a social space, were explored to great effect in Fredrik Fahlander & Terje Oestigaard (eds.), *The Materiality of Death: Bodies, Burials, Beliefs* (Oxford: Hadrian Books, 2008); and in Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change* (Columbia University Press: 2000).

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1) the first community, established sometime in the High Middle Ages and existing until its wholesale extermination in the *Wiener Gesera* in 1421, a notoriously violent pogrom which earned the Duchy of Austria the epithet *Bloodland* in contemporary Jewish chronicles;⁸

2) the second community, established in the early sixteenth century and existing until the wholesale expulsion of Viennese Jewry by Emperor Leopold I (1640-1705) in 1670, resulting in the displacement of 3000-4000 people, one of the largest Ashkenazi Jewish communities worldwide at the time;

3) the third community, established shortly after the expulsion of 1670, which blossomed into the greatest Jewish community in Viennese history, and was annihilated during the Shoah in 1938-45;

4) the fourth community, established in the wake of the Shoah from 1945 onwards and constituting Vienna's Jewish community in the present day.⁹

Within this broken meta-narrative, the Jewish cemeteries remained some of the only sites of continuity to Vienna's often fledgling Jewish community. Since the nineteenth century, Vienna's Jewish population was incorporated in the *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde*, the umbrella organisation representing Vienna's Jewish community formally recognised in 1852, hereafter IKG. For a long time, the cemeteries were the only land this community owned, and thus the only site of rootedness in the land for this often peripatetic population, constituting therefore some of the most powerful

⁸ Cited in Tietze, *Die Juden*, 34.

⁹ Two histories of the fourth community have appeared to date: Evelyn Adunka, *Die vierte Gemeinde: Die Wiener Juden in der Zeit von 1945 bis heute* (Vienna: Philo, 2000); and Helga Embacher, *Neubeginn ohne Illusionen: Juden in Österreich nach 1945* (Vienna: Picus, 1995). Only few works have attempted a unified narrative of this long and convoluted history, transcending the rupture of the Shoah, such as Joachim Riedl, *Jüdisches Wien* (Vienna: Christian Brandstätter, 2012); and the above-cited Brugger *et al*, *Geschichte der Juden*.

sites of memory and mourning to the community to survive into the present day. The Shoah represents an overwhelming datum, yet its magnitude should not obscure the long and painful history of Jew-hatred and persecutions in Vienna, which on a microcosmic level resulted in numerous comparable destructions of Viennese Jewish communities through the last millennium.¹⁰ This having been said, the Shoah both through its magnitude and its ponderous presence in living memory constitutes the most profound rupture in the modern history of the cemeteries as of Vienna's Jewish history more broadly, hence why this era is dealt with in a discreet chapter in this thesis. I employ the Hebrew term *Shoah* to differentiate between the genocide against European Jewry specifically and the broader atrocities committed under National Socialism more generally known as the Holocaust.

Arguably no space so succinctly expresses the being and self-understanding of a religiously-grounded community as does the cemetery, particularly a community which for so long had no other physical space to call its own, and in whose tradition the cemetery is regarded as eternally inviolable.¹¹ No integrated history of Vienna's Jewish cemeteries has been written to date, though numerous histories of specific cemeteries have appeared both before¹² and after¹³ the Shoah, with the Jewish

¹⁰ The tendency for the Shoah to distort discussions of events both preceding and following it was discussed for example by Steven Aschheim, *In Times of Crisis: Essays on European Culture, Germans, and Jews* (University of Wisconsin Press: 2001), ix; and by Werner Mosse, "Preface" in Edward Timms & Andrea Hammel (eds.), *The German-Jewish Dilemma: From the Enlightenment to the Shoah* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1999), xiv.

¹¹ On the religious and cultural history of the Jewish cemetery, see Gustav Cohn, *Der jüdische Friedhof: Seine geschichtliche und kulturgeschichtliche Entwicklung mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der ästhetischen Gestaltung* (Frankfurt am Main: Franzmathes, 1930). On *halachic*, that is Jewish-religious, provisions for the cemetery, see the influential and comprehensive, though orthodox-leaning, essays by Ernst Roth, *Zur Halachah des jüdischen Friedhofs*, *Udim*, Vol. IV (1973); and Ernst Roth, *Zur Halachah des jüdischen Friedhofs II*, *Udim*, Vol. V (1974-5).

¹² The earliest histories of the cemetery in the Seegasse are Ludwig August Frankl, *Zur Geschichte der Juden in Wien I: Der Alte Judenfriedhof* (Vienna: Bei Mörschner's Witwe und W. Bianchi, 1847); and Bernhard Wachstein, *Die Inschriften des alten Judenfriedhofs in Wien* (Vols. 1 & 2, Vienna: K. u K. Hof- und Universitäts-Buchhändler, 1912); while both the Seegasse and Währing cemeteries were explored in Gerson Wolf, *Die jüdischen Friedhöfe und die „Chewra Kadischa“ (heilige Brüderschaft) in Wien* (Vienna: Alfred Hölder, 1879).

¹³ The cemetery in the Seegasse was explored in Traude Veran, *Das Steinerne Archiv: Der Wiener jüdischer Friedhof in der Rossau* (Vienna: Mandelbaum, 2002). The cemetery in Währing was explored in Eva Maria Bauer & Fritz Niemann (eds.), *Währinger jüdischer Friedhof: Vom Vergessen*

cemeteries also making appearances in general histories of Viennese cemeteries.¹⁴ Some of these works focus on the cemeteries as sites reflecting Jewish contributions to Viennese culture,¹⁵ a problematic narrative because of its implied teleology and essentialist understandings of Jewish culture that has been the focus of numerous scholarly discussions.¹⁶ Others focus on the destructions the cemeteries suffered during the Shoah, the most deeply researched aspect of their history.¹⁷ The scholarly focus has to date been perennially and disproportionately placed on the cemetery in Währing,¹⁸ with the cemetery in the Seegasse and the Jewish sections of the Central Cemetery having been the focus of only one monograph each,¹⁹ the latter moreover constituting essentially a brief biographical survey of prominent individuals buried at the Central Cemetery. For the greatest part, these histories do not examine, or at best do so cursorily, the thousands of *matzevot* or grave-memorials located in the cemeteries, material artefacts of remarkable cultural significance and constituting a veritable archive of historical data.²⁰ Some works cataloguing Vienna's older Jewish *matzevot* exist, though these either merely transcribe the purely Hebrew-language

Überwachsen (Vienna: Educult, 2008); Martha Keil (ed.), *Von Baronen und Branntweinern: Ein jüdischer Friedhof erzählt* (Vienna: Mandelbaum, 2007); and Tina Walzer, *Der jüdische Friedhof Währing in Wien: Historische Entwicklung, Zerstörungen der NS-Zeit, Status Quo* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2011). The Jewish sections of the Central Cemetery were explored in Patricia Steines, *Hunderttausend Steine: Grabstellen großer Österreicher jüdischer Konfession auf dem Wiener Zentralfriedhof Tor I und Tor IV* (Vienna: Falter, 1993). General histories incorporating Vienna's Jewish cemeteries include Patricia Steines, Klaus Lohrmann & Elke Forisch (eds.), *Mahnmale: Jüdische Friedhöfe in Wien, Niederösterreich und Burgenland* (Vienna: Club Österreich, 1992); and Claudia Theune & Tina Walzer (eds.), *Jüdische Friedhöfe: Kultstätte, Erinnerungsort, Denkmal* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2011).

¹⁴ These include Isabella Ackerl, Robert Bouchal & Ingeborg Schödl (eds.), *Der schöne Tod in Wien: Friedhöfe, Gräfte, Gedächtnisstätten* (Vienna: Pichler, 2008); Werner Bauer, *Wiener Friedhofsführer: Genaue Beschreibung sämtlicher Begräbnisstätten nebst einer Geschichte des Wiener Bestattungswesens* (Vienna: Falter, 2004); Hans Havelka, *Zentralfriedhof* (Vienna: Jugend & Volk, 1985); and the older work by Hans Pemmer, *Der Wiener Zentralfriedhof: Seine Geschichte und seine Denkmäler* (Vienna: Österreichischer Schulbücherverlag, 1924).

¹⁵ As in Steines, *Steine*.

¹⁶ See for example Aschheim, *Crisis* 86.

¹⁷ As in Walzer, *Friedhof*.

¹⁸ As in Bauer & Niemann (eds.), *Friedhof*; Keil (ed.), *Von Baronen*; and Walzer, *Friedhof*.

¹⁹ Veran, *Archiv*; and Steines, *Steine* respectively.

²⁰ The motif of the Jewish cemetery as an 'archive of stone' is often invoked in historiography, as for example in Stefan Bajohr (ed.), *Archiv aus Stein: jüdisches Leben und jüdische Friedhöfe in Nordrhein-Westfalen* (Oberhausen: Asso, 2005); in Oliver Breitfeld, *Archiv aus Stein: 400 Jahre jüdischer Friedhof Königstraße* (Hamburg: ConferencePoint, 2007); and in the above-cited Veran, *Archiv*.

inscriptions without comment,²¹ or provide only general commentary without translations or specific analyses.²² Where Vienna's Jewish cemeteries have been discussed in general histories of Viennese cemeteries, these have often obscured the specificities of Jewish-Viennese social and cultural history paramount to the history of the cemeteries, while moreover dealing in generalisations and sometimes outright clichés that do not contribute positively to the understanding of Jewish sepulchral culture. Most problematically, the literature on the Jewish cemeteries to date has often characterised, and thereby to a considerable extent dismissed, the manifold modern developments in Jewish sepulchral culture as a product of 'Jewish assimilation' into an ostensible Viennese or Austrian mainstream culture, reflecting the residual proliferation of a narrative nowadays largely discredited in the general historiography of Jews in Vienna and in Central Europe more widely.²³

The earliest post-Shoah history written about Jews and Viennese culture, and hence a work with a profoundly durable effect on subsequent historiography, was Marsha Rozenblit's 1983 monograph *The Jews of Vienna 1867-1914: Assimilation and Identity*.²⁴ While constituting an important empirical study of Vienna's largely destroyed pre-Shoah Jewish community, Rozenblit's work is based on the methodologically dubious and now outmoded narrative, as suggested by the title, of 'Jewish assimilation', which she defined as 'the process by which Jews shed their

²¹ Max Grunwald, *Grabschriften des jüdischen Friedhofs im 18. Wiener Gemeindebezirk (Währing) aus den Jahren 1784-1799* (Vienna: Victoria, 1934).

²² Bernhard Wachstein, *Hebräische Grabsteine aus dem XIII.-XV. Jahrhundert in Wien und Umgebung* (Vienna: K. u. K. Hof- und Universitäts-Buchhändler, 1916); and Wachstein, *Inschriften*.

²³ Examples from histories of Viennese Jewish cemeteries include Martha Keil, "„... enterdigt aus dem jüdischen Friedhof“: Der jüdische Friedhof in Wien-Währing während des Nationalsozialismus" in Karl Fischer & Christine Gigler (eds.), *Studien zur Wiener Geschichte – Jahrbuch des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Wien* (Vol. 61, Vienna: Verein für Geschichte der Stadt Wien, 2005), 9; Patricia Steines, "Zwischen Tradition und Assimilation" in Steines, Lohrmann & Forisch (eds.), *Mahnmale*; and Tina Walzer, Michael Studemund-Halévy, & Almut Weinland, *Orte der Erinnerung: Die jüdischen Friedhöfe Hamburg-Altona und Wien-Währing* (Hamburg: ConferencePoint, 2010), 15. More generally, such a claim was made for Jewish cemeteries Europe-wide by Julius Schoeps, "The abortive Emancipation" in Timms & Hammel (eds.), *Dilemma*, 97; and Reiner Sörries, *Ruhe Sanft: Kulturgeschichte des Friedhofs* (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 2009), 85.

²⁴ The impact of Rozenblit's book on the development of the field formed the basis of the discussions in Klaus Hödl (ed.), *Jüdische Identitäten: Einblicke in die Bewußtseinslandschaft des österreichischen Judentums* (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2000).

traditional values and particularist modes of behaviour, and embraced the modern secular world'.²⁵ This notion of 'Jewish assimilation' is deeply problematic for the essentialism of the categories of 'Jewishness' and 'Austrianness' which it implies, reduced to a simple binary ignoring both the complexity and multilaterality of human identities and the inherently fluid characters of such cultural identities. Since the 1980s, when Rozenblit's earliest work was published, a profound shift has taken place in the humanities and social sciences away from such essentialist models of culture and identity, emphasising instead their fluidity and shifting attention towards the types of discourse and interaction through which various representations of culture and identity are dynamically constructed and negotiated.²⁶ Following this shift, identity is today predominantly understood by scholars as existing in a state of flux, of 'becoming', 'formation' or 'narration'.²⁷ The notion of ethnicity and of 'minorities', here implied in the narrative of Jewish 'assimilation' into an ostensible mainstream culture, is deeply problematic since, as Stephen Castles and Alastair Davidson discussed with regards to migration in multi-ethnic societies, it is often 'oversimplified' and 'ignores the issue of multiple memberships and identities (especially the relationship between ethnicity, class and gender)'.²⁸ There is altogether the danger, when discussing issues such as the role of a particular group in the formation and negotiation of a mainstream culture, for example Jews and Viennese culture, inadequately, if at all, to acknowledge the complexity and 'intersectionality' of human

²⁵ Rozenblit, *Vienna*, 2. Of course, such notions of Jewish peoplehood go back as far as the earliest Biblical texts, as explored for example in Solomon Zeitlin, *Studies in the Early History of Judaism* (Vol. 2, New York: Ktav, 1974). The relationship of scripture to the construction of 'ethnic' or 'national' identity was explored by Anthony Smith, *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity* (Oxford University Press: 2003). More controversially, there are some who argue that the notion of Jewish peoplehood is altogether fabricated, such as Shlomo Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People* (London: Verso, 2009).

²⁶ Some of the earliest and key texts to develop these ideas were Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); and Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge University Press: 1983).

²⁷ As discussed for example by Sheila Croucher, *Globalization and Belonging: The Politics of Identity in a Changing World* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 38.

²⁸ Stephen Castles & Alastair Davidson, *Citizenship and Migration: Globalization and the Politics of Belonging* (London: Macmillan, 2000), 63.

identity, meaning the situational nature of and relationship between facets of identity such as ethnicity, religion, class, education, gender, age, sexuality and more.²⁹

Martina Niedhammer, whose recent work has provided a seminal new take on the Jewish bourgeoisie in modern Prague, remarked how a large part of recent historiography on Central-European Jewish culture seems to have taken little notice of this colossal turn in identity studies.³⁰ Nevertheless, an increasing number of scholars, like Niedhammer, are beginning to engage fruitfully with this turn in the conception of identity, with studies appearing in recent years such as Simone Lässig's work analysing the 'embourgeoisement' of Central-European Jewry and the consequent ascendance of a Jewish middle class that did not 'secularise' or 'assimilate' but began to understand and perform its Jewish and other identities in a variety of situations, for example at home, in the synagogue, in cultural organisations or through political activity, to name but a few examples.³¹ Marsha Rozenblit more recently revised her opinions in her work on Jewish 'national' identity in the late Habsburg Empire, arguing that it was the definition of the boundary of 'Jewishness' – who belonged and who did not – that was the perennially contested issue, rather than the specific 'cultural content' within these boundaries, which was always prone to change.³² Klaus Hödl conducted one of the most sophisticated analyses of Jewish-Viennese culture and identity to date, arguing that Viennese culture constituted a 'matrix' wherein Jews and non-Jews interactively negotiated their identities, resulting in an ever-evolving notion of 'Jewish difference' as a fault line along which notions of

²⁹ As discussed by Anne-Dorte Christensen, *Belonging and Unbelonging from an Intersectional Perspective*, *Gender, Technology and Development*, Vol. 13, Nr. 1 (2009), 22.

³⁰ Martina Niedhammer, *Nur eine »Geld-Emancipation«? Loyalitäten und Lebenswelten des Prager jüdischen Großbürgertums 1800-1867* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 12-13. She provides a long list of examples.

³¹ Simone Lässig, *Jüdische Wege ins Bürgertum: Kulturelles Kapital und sozialer Aufstieg im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004).

³² Marsha Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria During World War I* (Oxford University Press: 2001), 8.

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'Jewishness' and 'Austrianness' were both defined.³³ Lisa Silverman more recently picked up and expounded the role which 'Jewish difference' played in the interactive constructions of 'Jewishness' and 'Austrianness' in the interwar period, demonstrating that Jewishness was 'one of a number of analytical categories or frameworks, like gender and class, that not only intersected and overlapped, but also erased each others' terms in order to articulate their power'.³⁴ To give a practical example, she analysed the encoding according to perceived Jewishness of the two major Viennese football teams, *Austria* and *Rapid*, the former 'coded as bourgeois and Jewish' and the latter proletarian with an 'antisemitic reputation', although both counted a mix of Jews and non-Jews as members and supporters and neither could therefore in any 'objective' sense be called 'Jewish' or 'non-Jewish'.³⁵ The concept of 'Jewish difference' therefore implies a

dialectical, hierarchical framework that encompasses the relationship between the socially constructed categories of "Jew" and "non-Jew". This term, like gender, refers to the relationship between cultural ideals, allows us to avoid essentializing our understandings of what is "Jewish" and automatically implies that its definition is necessarily subject to change.³⁶

³³ Klaus Hödl, *Wiener Juden – jüdische Wiener: Identität, Gedächtnis und Performanz im 19. Jahrhundert* (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2006). While Hödl's is the most explicit and sophisticated engagement with this model of interactive negotiation of identity to be applied to Jews in Vienna to date, the notion of interactivity in shaping notions of Jewish as opposed to European, Christian and other identities were already implicit in works dealing, for example, with the psychology of antisemitism, see the notion of the Jewish-Christian 'cultural pair' in Rudolph Loewenstein, *Psychoanalyse des Antisemitismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1967).

³⁴ Lisa Silverman, *Becoming Austrians: Jews and Culture between the World Wars* (Oxford University Press: 2012), 6.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 17. The evident malleability of 'Jewishness' is also the reason why 'antisemitism' and 'antisemites' are not hyphenated in this work. On this issue, see Shmuel Almog, What's in a Hyphen? *Newsletter of the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism* (Summer 1989), <http://sicsa.huji.ac.il/hyphen.htm>, accessed 11 July 2012.

³⁶ Silverman, *Austrians*, 7.

One must differentiate, therefore, between Jews 'as people', insofar as people define themselves as Jewish, and the Jewish 'as a socially constructed ideal that stems from, but is not equal to, Jews'.³⁷

The cemetery as a social space, most importantly conceived and perceived as a 'Jewish' space, is a potent theatre for the often contested construction and negotiation of notions of 'Jewish' and 'Viennese' or 'Austrian' culture and community, and furthermore for the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion which framed these constructions. The parameters and content of the notions of 'Viennese' and 'Austrian' culture, it must be emphasised, have throughout the last centuries been as much in a state of flux as have understandings of 'Jewishness'.³⁸ What the Jewish cemeteries in Vienna display is a codex of references to culture and community, and of belonging variably within 'Jewish' or 'Viennese' society, not as a fixed and unchanging entity, but as 'transition, always producing itself through the combined processes of being and becoming'.³⁹ While the definition of the Jewish 'community' throughout Viennese history is amorphous at best, the cemetery presents a space which is at once understood explicitly as 'Jewish', a place created by and for Jews, but reflecting the profound changes in understandings of this culture and community as they have been negotiated, contested and (re)constructed through time. The history of the cemeteries thus closely parallels, and is causally closely tied to, the history of the IKG as the community's umbrella organisation. The IKG represents what Anne-Marie Fortier called the 'institutional definition of identity', which is 'commonly understood as tantamount to the construction of boundaries, which, in turn, is accepted as a mechanism of aggregation of differences located *within*

³⁷ *Ibid*, 7.

³⁸ On the historical transition of the concept of Austria, see for example Hans Rauscher (ed.), *Das Buch Österreich: Texte, die man kennen muss* (Vienna: Christian Braumüller, 2005).

³⁹ Borrowing this idea from Anne-Marie Fortier, *Migrant Belongings: Memory, Space, Identity* (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 2.

boundaries'.⁴⁰ This construction of boundaries is constructed from within and from without, as throughout the history of their social ostracism, most significantly under National Socialism, belonging within the Jewish community was externally forced.

This thesis presents the cemeteries as spaces which have for centuries facilitated and reflected the complex negotiation of individual and communal forms of belonging and identity and the responses to the numerous challenges of the modern era, most significantly but by far not exclusively in the ruptures of the Shoah. The attempt not only to apply the insights of the last few decades to the study of Jewish cemeteries, but moreover to illuminate the role which cemeteries as social spaces have played in the construction and contestation of community and belonging, has to date been briefly but lucratively undertaken for example by Martina Niedhammer regarding the Jewish cemetery in Wolschan/Olšany in Prague, a case study closely mirroring that of the Währing cemetery in Vienna, analysed here.⁴¹ Similar studies have been undertaken on the Trumpeldor Cemetery in Tel Aviv, by various scholars, explicating this cemetery as one of the most profound sites of the construction and negotiation of communal memories and identities in modern Israel.⁴² My aim here is to bridge a gap between the historiography of the Jewish cemeteries in Vienna and the historiography of Viennese, and by extension Central-European, Jewish culture, contributing moreover a significant case study for more general developments in Central-European (Jewish) sepulchral cultures. By adopting the view of individual and communal identities as dynamically constructed and intersectional phenomena, this study of the cemeteries allows for a fresh perspective on the self-representation of Vienna's Jews over the *longue durée* of their complex history, in the spaces most

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 2-3.

⁴¹ Niedhammer, »Geld-Emancipation«, 235 onwards.

⁴² Barbara Mann, *Modernism and the Zionist Uncanny: Reading the Old Cemetery in Tel Aviv, Representations*, No. 69, Special Issue: Grounds for Remembering (Winter, 2000), 63-95; Yacov Markel, *The Pantheon of Tel Aviv* (untranslated, originally entitled הפנתאון של תל-אביב, Tel Aviv: Rachel, 2002); and Aharon Palmon, *The Language of the Tombstones: Hebrew Epitaphs in Israel from 1900 to the Present* (untranslated, originally entitled לשון המצבות: טקסטים על מצבות עבריות בארץ ישראל מ-1900 ועד ימינו, Tel Aviv: Tirosh, 1996).

profoundly shaped within this matrix of self-understanding. As Anne-Dorte Christensen remarked, 'it is a huge challenge to develop multifaceted analyses that can accommodate diversity and uncover complex interactions in power hierarchies'.⁴³ A comprehensive history of the Jewish cemeteries in Vienna presents precisely such a challenge, yet for this very reason can yield rich results which potentially further our understanding of Jewish-Viennese culture and history.

The source materials relating to Vienna's Jewish histories are multitudinous and require an eclectic methodological approach, reflected moreover in the variability of sources employed in each chapter. The most continuous, and also the most original, approach adopted in this thesis is to treat the cemeteries as archives and the thousands of *matzevot* or grave-memorials contained therein as primary sources. The novelty of this approach necessitates some explanation, and will be elaborated shortly. The more recent aspects of this history, beginning in the early nineteenth century, are recorded in a wide variety of source materials including official documents, institutional memoranda, newspapers, correspondence, autobiographies, diaries, testimonies, photographs, fictional literature and more, spread across a variety of archives and libraries in Austria, Israel and other countries. The source materials used here, the specific literature on different aspects of the cemeteries' histories and their contexts, and the relevant theoretical or methodological considerations arising from the long-term chronology covered in this study, are highly specific to particular cases and discussions, and will therefore be discussed accordingly as they become relevant. Cemetery ordinances and the IKG reports, for example, provide a solid source base for the period from the 1890s, when they began to be published, to the 1960s, the most recent period which has to date been made public, and therefore form a strong part of the discussion in the latter sections of Part I and the early sections of Part III. Beginning in the twentieth century, and

⁴³ Christensen, *Belonging*, 38.

especially during the Shoah, a wide array of personal reflections on the cemeteries were recorded in diaries, poetry and so forth, and thus appear particularly in the latter sections of Part II. Beginning in the 1990s, a wide array of discourses surrounding the cemeteries began appearing in media, online and in political discussions, and consequently form the basis of discussion in the latter sections of Part III. Finally, the specific literature reviews on the various eras covered in this tripartite thesis – the earlier history before 1938, the Shoah, and the post-Shoah era – are dealt with in the introductions to the various chapters, which are accordingly detailed.

In the following, I shall briefly discuss the cemetery as a social space, and the Jewish *matzevah* as a material and cultural artefact, as the more novel and continuous bulk of the material analysed in this thesis alongside more conventional archival and textual sources. As Philippe Ariès explored in his seminal work, the cemetery as a social space in Europe was largely an invention of the Middle Ages, as reflected in the medieval Francophone origins of the word, yet for a long time remained in Christian-European tradition just one of several burial places.⁴⁴ It was not until the modern era that cemeteries were monolithically conceived as the sole space for the dead, and moreover as monumental spaces to be visited, as shrines to great individuals through whose commemoration a ‘community’ could be invoked.⁴⁵ In Jewish tradition, by contrast, the cemetery has existed as the sole and unique burial space since at least the Middle Ages, with the practices surrounding burial and the commemoration of the dead in part going back to antiquity and scriptural sources.⁴⁶ Burial with one’s ancestors has since antiquity constituted the final redemptive act of a Jewish religious life, with phrases such as to ‘lie down with my fathers’ or to ‘be gathered with my kin’ constituting general euphemisms meaning to *die*, explaining the profundity of ‘the place of the fathers’ sepulchres’ as a site of

⁴⁴ Ariès, *The Hour*, 53, 62-4 & 475.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 492-503.

⁴⁶ See for example Rabbi H. Rabinowicz, *A Guide to Life: Jewish Laws and Customs of Mourning* (London: Jewish Chronicle Publications, 1964), 44-5.

heritage (see Genesis 25:9, 47:30, 49:29 *et al*). Not to be buried with one's ancestors was a great punishment, as in I Kings 13:22, evincing one of many facets of the crime committed against those murdered in the Shoah who were denied a grave.

As death is one of the most profound events in life, and one of the most difficult to come to terms with for the painful existential questions it provokes, a complex set of customs has arisen for the occasion, including in Jewish tradition prescriptions for the behaviour of the family at home as well as the practices surrounding burial in the cemetery.⁴⁷ After death, the eyes of the corpse are closed by the most distinguished son or relative, and the mourning period begins. As the water of the house has become unclean through the onset of death, it is poured away outside, traditionally a visible outward sign that a death has occurred in a household. The body is ritually washed to prepare it for burial, by modern times conducted in the purpose-built *beit tahara*, the ritual funerary hall located at the cemetery. The rituals are tended to by the *chevra qadisha*, the 'holy society' whose sole task it is to tend to burial.⁴⁸ The *chevra qadisha* in Vienna, dating in its modern form from 1764, is much older than the IKG itself and its charter became a model for other burial societies throughout Europe.⁴⁹ Traditionally, the corpse was to be buried without delay, although today delays are inevitable following stricter government regulations involving medical examinations, death certificates and possible autopsy, practices bemoaned as 'un-Jewish' by orthodox Jews.⁵⁰ In modern Israel, the ancient custom of burying the corpse in a simple shroud has been revived, while in Europe simple

⁴⁷ See for example Maurice Lamm, *The Jewish Way in Death and Mourning* (New York: Jonathan David, 1969).

⁴⁸ Wolf, *Friedhöfe*, 2.

⁴⁹ *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (Vol. 3, New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1925), 438.

⁵⁰ Historic discussions of such issues can be found in Wolf, *Friedhöfe*, 49; and Cohn, *Friedhof*, 51. More recently, Lamm polemicised on what he viewed as 'un-Jewish' practices in Lamm, *Jewish Way*, 8-15.

wooden coffins remain the norm. The mourner's *qaddish*, a hymn in praise of God, is recited at the grave, in Ashkenazi tradition usually by the youngest son.⁵¹

It is universally customary to erect the *matzevah* on the first anniversary of death. The origins of the practice of marking graves can be found throughout the *Tanach*, where the word *matzevah* is used to mean both specifically a tombstone and more generally a memorial, and has been translated variously into other languages. A medieval *midrash* or Rabbinical commentary argued that the practice of erecting a *matzevah*, whether to mark a grave or to mark some momentous occasion (as for example in Genesis 31:44-48, 35:14 *et al*), is indicative of an ancient memorial culture wherein memory is made material, and matter invokes memory, as succinctly expressed in Joshua 4:7, 'And so these stones shall serve the people of Israel as a memorial for all time'.⁵² As Josef Hayim Yerushalmi commented in *Zakhor*, his brilliant work on Jewish history and memory, 'not the stone, but the memory transmitted by the fathers, is decisive if the memory embedded in the stone is to be conjured out of it to live again for subsequent generations', thereby foregrounding the dynamic relationship between ancestral heritage, memory and its materialisation as a means to keeping this link alive.⁵³ The manifold scriptural instances of placing stones to foreground memory (see for example Genesis 35:20, Joshua 7:26, Ezekiel 39:15 *et al*) could well constitute a semiotic, if not a causal, link with the widespread and recognisably 'Jewish' practice of placing stones on graves and memorials today.⁵⁴ The *matzevah* thus connotes specifically a grave-memorial as well as a memorial and a witness more broadly, demonstrating the central importance of naming and

⁵¹ On funerary liturgy, see Abraham Millgram, *Jewish Worship* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1971), 153-6 & 330-3.

⁵² Rabbi Tobiah ben Eliezer, *Midrash Leqach Tov* (untranslated, originally entitled מדרש לקח טוב, edited by Salomon Barber, L'viv: 1920?).

⁵³ Josef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (University of Washington: 1982), 10.

⁵⁴ The origins of this practice are disputed, with Patricia Steines for example citing over forty possible explanations. Patricia Steines, "Totenkult als Wegweiser" in Steines, Lohrmann & Forisch (eds.), *Mahnmale*, 27.

remembering the deceased from yore in Jewish tradition, as profoundly expressed in Isaiah 56:5, 'I will give them, in My House And within My walls, A monument and a name'. The term *yad vashem* (יד ושם, 'a memorial and a name'), today most widely connoted with the vast Shoah memorial complex and museum in Jerusalem, thus also works as a poignant synonym for the *matzevah*. In Jewish tradition, humankind finds redemption in memory, 'the beneficent man will be remembered forever' (Psalm 112:6). In this sense, too, the Jewish cemetery is allegorically a 'house of life'.

Various historians have noted that Christian tradition only began the widespread individual commemoration of the dead in the nineteenth century, this honour previously being reserved for only the most prestigious of individuals, usually men.⁵⁵ Yet by the Middle Ages at the latest it was common practice in Jewish tradition to mark each individual's grave with a *matzevah*. From the earliest cases in Vienna, regardless whether they commemorated rich or poor, male or female, famed or obscure individuals, the function of the *matzevot* as *yad vashem*, as 'a memorial and a name', was self-evident, while just about every facet of their encoding, from their material and aesthetic design through to their inscription with eulogies and symbolism, are subject to incessant innovation, change and development. This memory made material thus provides not only a rich archive of historical data, but also a profound and evolving codex of memory and (self-)representation created in the nexus of individuals and their community, therefore constituting perennially important objects of study for anthropologists and archaeologists, genealogists and historians alike.⁵⁶ Sepulchral epigraphy in particular has been highlighted repeatedly as the richest source of historical and cultural data contained on the *matzevot*, the analysis of which, sorely lacking in the study of Vienna's Jewish cemeteries to date,

⁵⁵ For example Vilmos Tóth, *Grabmalkunst* (Budapest: Stadtbibliothek, 2006), 13; and Werner Bauer, *Wiener Friedhofsführer: Genaue Beschreibung sämtlicher Begräbnisstätten nebst einer Geschichte des Wiener Bestattungswesens* (Vienna: Falter, 2004), 17.

⁵⁶ See for example the discussion of grave materials in Fahlander & Oestigaard (eds.), *Death*, 9-11.

forms a significant and novel part of this thesis.⁵⁷ Sepulchral epigraphy, even where it is extensive, still only says little about individuals and the communities they belonged to, while usually doing so according to the motto *nil nisi bene*, speaking 'nothing but good' about the dead. Nevertheless, it provides a profound codex attesting to a community's self-representation, its social prestige and accomplishments, this profundity underscored by the gravity of the act of commemorating the dead and by the fact that, in many cases, no other sources survive which speak of these people.

This thesis analyses Vienna's four historic Jewish cemeteries, namely:

1) The cemetery in the **Seegasse**, located in Alsergrund, the city's ninth district and dating from the Middle Ages to 1784. This is the smallest of the cemeteries and the most hidden, containing only a few hundred *matzevot*.

2) The cemetery in **Währing**, the city's eighteenth district, dating from 1784 to 1879. This is the most severely desecrated and dilapidated of the cemeteries and is today publicly inaccessible, containing some 9000 *matzevot*.

3) The cemetery known as **Tor I** due to its location at the first gate of the Central Cemetery in Simmering, the city's eleventh district, dating from 1879 to 1942, with sporadic burials continuing after 1945. This is the most accessible of the cemeteries and the largest in number of *matzevot*, numbering around 52,000.

4) The cemetery known as **Tor IV** due to its location at the fourth gate of the Central Cemetery, dating from 1917 to the present day. This is the IKG's main cemetery today, and therefore one of the principle

⁵⁷ See the general discussion of Jewish sepulchral epigraphy for example in Cohn, *Friedhof*, 35.

spaces of the Jewish community in the present cityscape. It is the largest in terms of space, and contains over 40,000 *matzevot*.

This analysis excludes the Jewish cemetery in Floridsdorf, today Vienna's twenty-first district, since it was created for the independent Jewish community of Floridsdorf, only incorporated into the Viennese IKG in 1904 and therefore not constituting a part of Vienna's historic Jewish community.⁵⁸ For the same reason, the various cemeteries in Lower Austria and the Burgenland administered by the IKG since the Shoah are also excluded. Finally, since the focus here is on the Jewish cemeteries as discreet properties of the Jewish community and hence a significant part of its socio-cultural history, this study also excludes the numerous graves of Jewish individuals or people of Jewish descent located in non-Jewish cemeteries in the city, whether Christian or non-denominational, such as the Döbling cemetery.

Beyond the more conventional bibliographical and archival research I conducted for this study, I collected the data for the sepulchral analysis through the simple approach of repeatedly walking through these spaces and recording whatever caught my eye, due either to the proliferation or alternatively the peculiarity of some datum.⁵⁹ My approach was not aimed at creating a statistical or quantitative representation of Jewish-Viennese sepulchral culture, which at over 100,000 *matzevot* in four different cemeteries obviously exceeds the scope of a single PhD. Instead, I was interested in capturing the breadth and diversity of (self-)representations, imagery and language evident in the cemeteries. I was guided by the awareness that many of the histories of Jewish-Viennese culture and of Jewish cemeteries in Vienna to date have focussed disproportionately on socio-

⁵⁸ See *Statistical and historical internal report of the IKG on Vienna's Jewish cemeteries*, 23 November 1939, Archiv der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Wien, A/VIE/IKG/I-II/FH/1/1.

⁵⁹ This methodology was developed from Harold Mytum, *Recording and Analysing Graveyards* (York: Council for British Archaeology, 2000); and more generally from literature emerging in the 'spatial turn' such as Steve Pile, *Real Cities: Modernity, Space and the Phantasmagorias of City Life* (London: Thousand Oaks, 2005) and Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: the Perspective of Experience* (University of Minnesota Press: 1977).

culturally prominent individuals, mostly men, and I thereby endeavoured to portray or more balanced and nuanced picture. This was also due to Albert Lichtblau's influence, who wrote that 'the evaluation of minorities, however these are defined, should not follow from exceptional achievements, as this would mean for minorities in general that they could only legitimate themselves thereby'.⁶⁰ Unfortunately, many *matzevot* of less privileged individuals have succumbed to the destruction of time, while often those that have survived only say little about the individuals they commemorate. Nevertheless, I have attempted to be representative, whether in including marginalised groups, or in representing cases that were alternative, subversive, or in some other way defied the 'norms' of the ever-evolving traditions of the cemeteries, whatever these may have been at a given time.

Authorship of the epigraphy is mostly indeterminable, with Bernhard Wachstein's catalogue of almost a thousand *matzevah* inscriptions in the Seegasse cemetery, for example, evincing only four references to authorship, meaning that my analysis necessarily focusses predominantly on the epigraphy as a generic though evolving codex of communal (self-)representations.⁶¹ While a comparative study with non-Jewish gravestones exceeds the scope of this analysis, wherever possible I remark upon parallels or distinctions in contemporaneous non-Jewish Viennese gravestones to assess developments in sepulchral culture in Vienna more generally. Such comparisons are hampered by the lack of non-Jewish gravestones to have survived into the present day, though there are a few gravestones on the exterior walls of St. Stephen's Cathedral dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, contemporaneous with the *matzevot* in the Seegasse, while the Biedermeier-era cemetery in St. Marx, most famously the burial site of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791), makes for the most fruitful control group, contemporaneous with and

⁶⁰ Albert Lichtblau, "Integration, Vernichtungsversuch und Neubeginn" in Brugger *et al*, *Geschichte der Juden*, 515.

⁶¹ Wachstein, *Inschriften* (Vol. 1), XXV.

strikingly similar to the Jewish cemetery in Währing. The Central Cemetery allows for the most obvious point of comparison of all manner of sepulchral cultures.

For the most part, my data consists of photographs and transcripts of the *matzevot* and their epigraphy which I recorded on site and later transcribed and translated. For the Seegasse cemetery, which was almost totally destroyed during the Shoah, I largely resorted to transcripts published by Bernhard Wachstein.⁶² His knowledge of Hebrew language and epigraphy rivalled that of any Rabbi, and his transcripts are an invaluable source which, however, he himself did not translate or analyse, apart from his useful introductory commentaries, his work therefore facilitating but also necessitating such an analysis. Of similar efficacy are Max Grunwald's transcripts of epigraphy in the Währing cemetery from 1784-1799,⁶³ and the transcripts made by the IKG during the Shoah of a number of *matzevot* in Währing which faced destruction.⁶⁴ While no transcripts exist of the large majority of Viennese *matzevot*, located in the Jewish sections of the Central Cemetery, these have largely survived time, war and cultural genocide unscathed and can therefore be accessed and documented in the cemeteries themselves with relative ease. The vast quantity of data including all photographs, transcripts, and translations used in this thesis make their reproduction here highly impractical. I have therefore limited myself to referencing or quoting from the *matzevot*, and do not reproduce images or longer extracts except where these are absolutely pertinent to the discussion. Where an inscription is published, for example in Wachstein's work, I provide a regular bibliographical reference. Otherwise I provide a reference for locating the physical *matzevah* itself, based on an online database of the IKG,⁶⁵ in the following form:

⁶² Wachstein, *Inschriften*; and Wachstein, *Grabsteine*.

⁶³ Grunwald, *Grabschriften*.

⁶⁴ These are stored alphabetically in Archiv der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Wien, A/VIE/IKG/II/FH/3/1.

⁶⁵ *Abfrage Friedhofs-Datenbank*, <http://friedhof.ikg-wien.at/search.asp>, accessed 18 June 2015. The database excludes the Seegasse, is incomplete on Währing, for data protection reasons excludes

[Name of the deceased] + [dates] + [cemetery] + [plot-row number-grave number]

For example: Adolph Fischhof (1816-1893), Tor I, 5B-1-3. The *matzevot* cited in this thesis are listed separately as primary sources in the bibliography.

The anfractuosity character of Vienna's Jewish history, the eclectic nature of the source materials relating to the city's Jewish cemeteries, and the enormous constellation of contexts and persons to which their stories relate, allow for numerous frames within which to present their histories. My interest in language and in the complex issues of textuality naturally predisposed me towards a literary approach to the presentation of this research. In particular, I was impressed by Gérard Genette's playful – and not a little bit ironic – postulation of the *architext* as a model of analysis, namely the positioning of each 'text' in relation to each other text and to each type of discourse to which these texts belong, forming the 'architext' which is 'above, beneath, around the text', constituting a system of 'architecture' in which one can 'float (...) somewhere out beyond the text'.⁶⁶ This thought appealed to me as a means of enriching this history and its presentation through an interpretative, thematic structure, informed by the constellation of materials or texts relevant to each era of their history. The three parts of the thesis I present here follow a broad chronology from the Middle Ages into the present day, mostly subdivided according to each cemetery, moreover thematically constructed as three 'houses' of history derived from the meta-narratives of the cemeteries' development: the 'house of life', the 'house of eternity' and the 'house of sepulchres'.

Part I, 'The House of Life', examines the emergence of the cemeteries within the context of Vienna's urban, social and political history from the Middle Ages until 1938, and the encoding of their *matzevot* with a matrix of profound self-referential

searches after 1945 and can at times deliver contradictory results. Nevertheless, as a general tool it has proven quite useful for locating graves.

⁶⁶ Gérard Genette, *The Architext: An Introduction* (translated by Jane Lewin, originally published 1979, this edition University of California Press: 1992), 83-5.

and self-representational constructions of Jewishness and belonging within Jewish and/or Viennese/Austrian society. This evinced the increasing enmeshment of the Jewish community, or at least segments of it, within Viennese society accompanied, however, by a deep social fragmentation along lines of religion, class, gender, education, profession and other markers, resulting in a profound blurring of lines between 'Jewish' and 'Austrian', or between 'Jewish' and 'non-Jewish'.

Part II, 'The House of Eternity', examines the history of the cemeteries during the fateful years of the Shoah, arguing that the Nazi project of physical genocide was to be accompanied by a particular form of cultural genocide. The expropriation and abuse of Jewish cemeteries and the material artefacts therein was intended to permanently revise the boundaries between 'Jewish' and 'non-Jewish', thereby to redefine the boundaries and content of 'Viennese' culture. By contrast to this history of death and destruction, however, the Jewish cemetery at Tor IV, for a short time at least, became a site of refuge and life amidst the wholesale slaughter of the Jewish community, representing a recalibration of the meaning of this house of death.

Part III, 'The House of Sepulchres', examines the conflicted years from the Shoah to the present day as a fledgling Jewish community attempted to establish itself in the emerging Second Austrian Republic. Here, the cemeteries became some of the most significant sites for the contestation of memory and belonging, both within the Jewish community, and between the Jewish community and Viennese or Austrian polity and society. This convoluted and conflicted history, finally, locates the Jewish cemeteries in Vienna as some of the most profound sites of culture, heritage and memory in the contemporary Austrian landscape, explaining their perennial pull on social, political and academic discourses, resounding into the present day.

בית החיים

Part I: The House of Life

Culture, Community, and the Creation
of Vienna's Jewish Cemeteries,

Middle Ages – 1938

איוב ל' כ"ג : כי-ידעתי, מות תשיבני, ובית מועד לכל-חי.

I know You will bring me to death, The house assigned for all the living. (Job 30:23)

Humankind's fate lies in death, the great leveller, 'for one sees that the wise die, that the foolish and ignorant both perish, leaving their wealth to others' (Psalm 49:11). Hence the cemetery is known in Hebrew as 'a place where all become equal' (מקום שהכל שוין בו). Yet the cemetery is not merely the house of death, it is also *beit hachaim* (בית החיים), 'the house of life', since, as one commonly reads on Jewish *matzevot*, the 'soul shall be bound in the bundle of life' (I Samuel 25:29); in righteousness there is the promise of life (as in Psalms 16:10-11, 30:4, 56:14, Job 14:14-15, Daniel 12:13 *et al*). The cemetery, the site of death, holds the promise of life, as in Messianic belief God shall 'open your graves and lift you out of the graves, O My people, and bring you to the land of Israel' (Ezekiel 37:12, Isaiah 26:19). Over centuries of a largely peripatetic existence, the cemetery was often the sole site in which the Jewish peoples of Europe were rooted in the land, as in the words of Lord Byron 'The wild-dove hath her nest, the fox his cave, Mankind their country,—Israel but the grave!' (*Oh, Weep for Those*, 1815). As sites of memory, and physical records of community, these archives of stone also constitute 'houses of life': on their stone faces are recorded the lives of the generations, and in these houses the generations are invoked to life once more.

1.1 Introduction

On 21 October 1931, Arthur Schnitzler, one of the greatest writers of modern Austria, died in his home city Vienna. His obituaries were numerous. 'Not only art and literature', noted the *Neue Freie Presse*, 'all Austria mourns for Arthur Schnitzler', continuing: 'If it was granted to any writer to be the incarnation of an era, the valid representative of an epoch, then it was Arthur Schnitzler for the end of the last century and for the beginning of the new Austria'.¹ Schnitzler was buried in an honorary grave of the *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde* (hereafter IKG), in the Jewish section at Tor I of Vienna's Central Cemetery. The IKG offered this honour to Schnitzler's family immediately upon the news of his death, while a similar offer made by the City of Vienna for a grave in the honorary plot at the heart of the Central Cemetery only shortly later was turned down because the family had already agreed to the offer of the IKG.² In his testament, Schnitzler had insisted there be no wreaths, obituaries, speeches, or mourning, with a burial of the 'lowest class' and 'abstention from all ritual trappings'.³ Accordingly, he was buried in a simple wooden casket, draped in a black pall, though adorned with a few wreaths commissioned before his testament had been made public. One of these, donated by the *Burgtheater*, bore a red-and-white ribbon, the colours of the City of Vienna, and was dedicated to 'our great writer'.⁴ The funeral, devoid of religious rituals, was attended by a great number of people, including representatives of the Austrian and Viennese governments and of various theatres, in the presence of 'extraordinarily numerous personages from Viennese literary circles'.⁵

The apparent indifference of Schnitzler's family towards the question of his burial in either the Jewish or non-Jewish part of the city's Central Cemetery, in either

¹ "Ein erschütternder Verlust für Österreich", *Neue Freie Presse*, 22 October 1931, 1.

² "Die heutige Leichenfeier", *Neue Freie Presse*, 23 October 1931, 2.

³ "Die letzten Wünsche des Dichters", *Neue Freie Presse*, 23 October 1931, 2.

⁴ "Artur [sic] Schnitzler", *Wiener Zeitung*, 24 October 1931, 9.

⁵ *Ibid.*

case in an honorary grave, and the attendance of the essentially irreligious burial by a large number of Viennese notables regardless of Jewish or non-Jewish background, is indicative of a considerable ambiguity in the writer's own cultural heritage and sense of self. Any 'Jewishness' in Schnitzler's work has been the subject of much debate since his death. His obituaries, while commemorating him as the incarnation of 'Austria', itself a concept undergoing profound change at the time of Schnitzler's death, emphasised the degree to which, as writer and critic Felix Salten (1869-1945) remarked, 'he thus created work after work, each of which was alien to all politics, removed from every lowly tendency, filled only with humanity, with human fate'.⁶ Characteristic of his apparent aversion to 'political issues', when Schnitzler was asked for an interview for *The American Hebrew* in 1923, he at first declined with the curt reply: 'All I have to say on the Jewish question is in my book, *Der Weg ins Freie*', though as Lisa Silverman explored he actually 'had plenty to say that day about Jews'.⁷ Nikolaj Beier demonstrated that it was precisely Schnitzler's carefully conceived 'public persona', which 'always behaved diplomatically in a social context or reservedly in a political context', which allowed Schnitzler to more implicitly explore the nature and meaning of Jewishness in modern Austria and the world.⁸ On 1 November 1918, only days before the collapse of the Habsburg state and the proclamation of the First Austrian Republic, Schnitzler noted in his diary: 'I am an Austrian citizen of the Jewish race loyal to German culture'.⁹ In these few words, he captured the essence of a very particularly Jewish-Viennese, or Jewish-Austrian, identity at the beginning of the last century, a product of the profound and complex

⁶ "Arthur Schnitzler", *Neue Freie Presse*, 22 October 1931, 2. The role of the literati in formulating notions of "Austria" and "Austrian culture", in lieu of widespread academic and political discourses on the subject, in the interwar period are the focus of William Johnston, *Der österreichische Mensch: Kulturgeschichte der Eigenart Österreichs* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2010).

⁷ Lisa Silverman, *Becoming Austrians: Jews and Culture between the World Wars* (Oxford University Press: 2012), 3.

⁸ Nikolaj Beier, *Vor allem bin ich ich: Judentum, Akkulturation und Antisemitismus in Arthur Schnitzlers Leben und Werk* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2008), 12.

⁹ Arthur Schnitzler, *Tagebuch 1917-1919* (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1985), entry from 1 November 1918.

matrix often invoked as the 'tripartite identity' of Habsburg Jewry, which will be discussed shortly.



Figure 1.1: Entrance to *Zeremonienallee*, Tor I.

Schnitzler was buried in Section 6, row 0, plot 4, marked in Figure 1.1 with the number [18]. This site comprised the entrance to the *Zeremonienallee*, the central avenue of the Jewish cemetery, also the site of the *beit tahara* or ritual funerary hall before its destruction in the November Pogrom in 1938. Characterised by the silent noblesse of the large *matzevot* marking its graves, this vista was conceived as a showcase of the illustrious Jewish community of Vienna in the late nineteenth century, comprising in order of burial the graves of the 1848 revolutionary and later IKG President, Ignaz Kuranda (1811-1884) [14], of the progenitor of 'ghetto literature', Leopold Kompert (1822-1886) [13], of one of the earliest presidents of the IKG and a member of the nobility, Josef Ritter von Wertheim[er] (1800-1887) [12], of Cantor Salomon Sulzer (1804-1890) [8], of one of the chief protagonists of the 1848 revolution in Vienna, Adolf Fischhof (1816-1893) [10], of Chief Rabbi Adolf Jellinek (1821-1893) [9], and of Cantor Josef Goldstein (1838-1899) [11]. During the interwar period, numerous Rabbis of various denominations were interred at the site, including Chief Rabbi Zwi Perez Chajes (1876-1927) [7], Salomon Funk (1866-1928) [1], Aron Leiser Mandl (1869-1929) [2], Armin Abeles (1872-1930) [3], Adolf Schwarz (1846-1931) [6], and Moritz Lewin (died 1939) [4]. This plot also became the site of numerous reinterments, including that of Chief Rabbi David Feuchtwang (1864-1936)

[5] in 1937 after the posthumous decision to grant him an honorary grave. In 1941, the remains of Chief Rabbi Isak Noa Mannheimer (1793-1865) [20] were reinterred here from the cemetery in Währing to protect them from exhumations being carried out by Nazi anthropologists. In 1946, after the Shoah, the long-term IKG President, Alois Pick (1859-1945), was reinterred here in order to preserve his remains in an honorary grave [15]. In a counter-example of reinterment, the remains of the staunchly Zionist Rabbi Zwi Perez Chajes were taken in 1950, along with his *matzevah*, to the Trumpeldor Cemetery in Tel Aviv, itself a monumental showcase for the new Zionist state. The plot at Tor I continued to be used for the burial of notable members of Vienna's Jewish community after the Shoah, mostly of *rémigrés*, those who returned from exile, such as the writer Friedrich Torberg (1908-1979) [17] and more recently the cabaret artist Gerhard Bronner (1922-2007) [16] and the photographer Harry Weber (1921-2007) [19].

Revolutionaries and community notables, Rabbis and literati, orthodox religious Jews and secular intelligentsia, Zionists and Austrians: Arthur Schnitzler had been laid to rest in the most prominent plot of Vienna's largest Jewish cemetery, in a site reflecting the convoluted spread of Jewish-Viennese cultural identities, albeit predominantly reflecting the influential, the affluent, and dominated by male notables. At this site, the notion of 'Jewishness' is kaleidoscopic in its heterogeneity, singular and multiple at once, consisting of memorials to individual Jews belonging to a loosely defined collective community, yet where individual engagements with and understandings of Jewishness and communal belonging are multitudinous indeed. If Schnitzler was one of the principle progenitors of modern Austrian culture, then it is striking, as Lisa Silverman explored, to what extent 'the sense of an ideal "Austrian" culture in the First Republic was often most apparent in the culture created by those who felt it most lacking in their own self-definitions, and whose cultural products

reflect an engagement with that absence'.¹⁰ Chief among those were Austria's Jews, and arguably no other spaces in the Viennese landscape more powerfully exhibit the often tortuous negotiation of Jewish-Austrian identity than do the city's Jewish cemeteries. The cemeteries emerged in the matrix of interaction between the progressively institutionalised Jewish community and an evolving Viennese and/or Austrian society and polity in the *longue durée* from the sixteenth century to 1938 and the cataclysm of the Shoah. Over this long timespan, Vienna's Jewish community grew while continuously developing new forms of religious and cultural self-understanding, becoming the third-largest Jewish community in Europe by 1938, and one of the most influential worldwide, with a vastly heterogeneous character, composed of numerous social and cultural networks, all of which were however united through belonging within a unitary Jewish community. The cemeteries reflect their various negotiations of belonging in Jewish, Viennese, Habsburg and Austrian society, and the changing constellations of these societies and, in turn, their changing attitudes towards death, memory and the cemetery. In this long history, the peoples constituting Viennese and/or Austrian society and the Jewish community, and the notions of 'Austria' and 'Jewishness' more generally, were in a state of enormous flux. Within this tremendous change and development, the cemeteries represented constants, both in their materiality in the urban landscape and in the evolving sense of community and belonging being invoked therein and thereby. The following section will briefly sketch this complex history, elucidating the key moments of Jewish-Viennese history and their intimate relationship to the emergence of the cemeteries as communal spaces and memorials.

¹⁰ Silverman, *Austrians*, 8.

Religion and Community: The Jewish Cemetery in the Seegasse, Middle Ages –
1784

Medieval European Jewry formed, with its closed communities and self-governance, a kind of state within the state in a society characterised by strict religious hierarchisation, and were 'traditional' in the sense that they were grounded in a particularist historical narrative derived from Jewish religious scriptures and performed through historically developed religious rituals.¹¹ Religious tradition was a powerfully cohesive force since, in the absence of a common land and language, it served as the sole basis of a wider group belonging for Jewish communities in Central Europe.¹² Although the degree of institutionalisation and official recognition of Vienna's Jewish 'community' fluctuated significantly through these centuries, the sense of Jewish communal belonging, especially of belonging in a religious community of faith, was one of the most powerful tropes in Jewish-Viennese sepulchral epigraphy in this era. This was reflected, among other things, in a rich codex of titles and honorifics which this chapter analyses.¹³ The cemetery in the Seegasse presumably emerged sometime in the mid- to late-sixteenth century, constituting the only Jewish cemetery in the city until its closure in 1784 and making it one of the oldest Jewish cemeteries still in existence in Europe. It postdates a medieval Jewish cemetery located roughly where today the Goethe monument stands on the Ringstraße. That cemetery was completely destroyed in the *Wiener Gesera* in 1421.¹⁴ The oldest *matzevot* in the Seegasse actually belong to the medieval cemetery, which were discovered during construction work in central

¹¹ See Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto: The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation* (Harvard University Press: 1973); and Josef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (University of Washington: 1982).

¹² Katz, *Ghetto*, 5. Martha Keil demonstrated that Austrian Jewry in all likelihood never spoke Yiddish. Martha Keil, "Gemeinde und Kultur: Die mittelalterlichen Grundlagen jüdischen Lebens in Österreich" in Eveline Brugger, Martha Keil, Albert Lichtblau, Christoph Lind & Barbara Staudinger, *Geschichte der Juden in Österreich* (Vienna: Ueberreuter, 2006), 33-4.

¹³ Katz, too, pointed to the significance of this code of titles for the establishment of Jewish-communal belonging. Katz, *Ghetto*, 21.

¹⁴ Keil, "Gemeinde", 24.

Vienna in the early twentieth century.¹⁵ These date between 1263 and 1414, and are mounted in niches in the walls at the Seegasse. The *matzevot* in the Seegasse therefore cover a *longue durée* of roughly 500 years, from the earliest documented period of Jewish history in the city, and comprise the histories of Vienna's first, second and early third Jewish communities, straddling the ruptures of the destruction of the first community in 1421, the expulsion of the second community in 1670, and ending with the closure of the cemetery following a series of urban reforms in 1784. This long era was marked by repeated expulsions amidst a cycle of discriminatory decrees levied against Jews by the state on an almost yearly basis.¹⁶ The Seegasse, as an urban space which has remarkably survived into the present day, validates the summation of Austria's Jewish history by Albert Lichtblau that 'creating continuities on the basis of content-related foci cannot hide the fact that a characteristic of Austrian-Jewish history represents exactly the opposite, namely discontinuity'.¹⁷

This is the paradox of continuity and discontinuity in which an examination of the early-modern Jewish community oscillates, a paradox reflected in the *matzevot* of the cemetery. The pre-Enlightenment Habsburg state was infused with religious bigotry, and especially by a Jew-hatred reflected in a mountain of anti-Jewish decrees and repeated expulsions of Jewish individuals. However, Jewish capital was a desirable commodity for the Habsburg state to finance its military campaigns and ambitious construction projects. Throughout the early modern period, Jews were a 'highly welcome source of income' for Habsburg rulers, contributing 'high taxes, "protection costs", "contributions for military purposes" and other tributes'.¹⁸ Before legal emancipation, Vienna's Jews were therefore dependent on the caprices of the

¹⁵ Bernhard Wachstein, *Hebräische Grabsteine aus dem XIII.-XV. Jahrhundert in Wien und Umgebung* (Vienna: K. u. K. Hof- und Universitäts-Buchhändler, 1916), 3.

¹⁶ See the catalogue of relevant sources amassed by Alfred Francis Přibram, *Urkunden und Akten zur Geschichte der Juden in Wien –1526-1847* (Vienna: Braumüller, 1918).

¹⁷ Albert Lichtblau, "Integration, Vernichtungsversuch und Neubeginn: Österreichisch-Jüdische Geschichte 1848 bis zur Gegenwart" in Brugger *et al*, *Geschichte der Juden*, 447.

¹⁸ Traude Veran, *Das Steinerne Archiv: Der Wiener jüdischer Friedhof in der Rossau* (Vienna: Mandelbaum, 2002), 89.

Habsburg rulers, these cycles of toleration in the city, often followed by disinheritance and expulsion, marking a deep ambivalence in the relationship between pre-modern Viennese Jewry and the state, as Traude Veran summarised: ‘their history going right into the nineteenth century reads parallel to the history of the ruler; vicissitudes correspond to the periods of rule’.¹⁹ This ambivalent relationship, appeasing the fiscal needs of the Habsburg rulers while allowing the establishment of limited forms of Jewish communal life, resulted in the phenomenon known as the *Hofjuden* or ‘court Jews’, usually ‘economically potent Jews’ who, as Barbara Staudinger examined, ‘took on a special legal status vis-à-vis the remaining Jewry’ and were ‘to an exceptional degree tied to the court’.²⁰ The *Hofjuden* were instrumental in regulating the relationship between the community and the non-Jewish state, explaining the continuity despite ruptures of Jewish communal life in this period as well as the sharp contrast of wealth and poverty of Viennese Jewry. Their *matzevot* are significant memorials to the fortunes but also tribulations of early-modern Viennese Jewry.

The legal status of early modern Viennese Jewry, tied to the privilege of certain individuals but ever subject to uncertainty and thus a considerable sense of homelessness, has led to the view espoused for example by the eminent historian of the Seegasse, Bernhard Wachstein, that until the nineteenth century it was ‘no *Judenschaft* [Jewry or Jewish community] that lived on the grounds of this city, but individual Jews who were permitted entry for a limited time for reasons of state’.²¹ Certainly, the capricious conditions of Viennese Jewry over these centuries meant that the people commemorated in the Seegasse often came from far and wide, enjoyed no certainty in life and often only found a ‘home’ in death. Yet the patterns of communal organisation in Vienna were more complex than can simply be divided

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 71. See also Barbara Staudinger, “Die Zeit der Landjuden und der Wiener Judenschaft 1496-1670/71” in Brugger *et al*, *Geschichte der Juden*, 263.

²⁰ Staudinger, “Judenschaft”, 263.

²¹ Bernhard Wachstein, *Die Inschriften des alten Judenfriedhofs in Wien* (Vol. 2, Vienna: K. u K. Hof- und Universitäts-Buchhändler, 1912), XIII.

between modern and pre-modern. Martha Keil demonstrated the establishment since as early as the Middle Ages of the diasporic *qehillot* or 'communities' in Central Europe, what in later centuries became incorporated as the *Kultusgemeinden*.²² Before the expulsion of 1670, there was a formal Jewish community in Vienna, what Barbara Staudinger described as 'a small community of privileged, protected Jews'.²³ The Jews immigrating after 1670, however, were no longer allowed to organise a formal community, an embargo that was to persist until the mid-nineteenth century. The kind of community organisation which Keil demonstrated emerging in the medieval period, complete with *betei din* (Rabbinical courts), *yeshivot* (Rabbinical schools), synagogues and a community leadership charged with taxation and governance, was therefore largely absent in early-modern Vienna. Nevertheless, the cemetery – both the urban space and the epigraphy of the *matzevot* contained within – evidences a distinct sense of 'community' among Vienna's pre-modern Jewry. With its segregated living spaces and places of worship, its *miqvot* (ritual baths), its kosher butchers and, of course, its cemetery, even the most unrecognised 'community' such as that which then existed in Vienna can be viewed structurally as a communal organisation, its members demonstrably aware of belonging to a 'community'.²⁴ The very presence of a communal cemetery throughout this period, which transcended the rupture of the expulsion of 1670, marked Vienna as a *Hauptgemeinde*, a 'principle community', since as Keil remarked 'only the most important communities, which hoped to build upon some form of continuity, established cemeteries', to which bodies were brought for burial from many miles away.²⁵

The Seegasse is a site of remarkable continuity in this anfractuous history. The creation of the Seegasse as a Jewish-communal burial space, long predating comparable trends in Christian sepulchral practice, underlines the continuity of the

²² Keil, "Gemeinde", 39-60.

²³ Staudinger, "Judenschaft", 234.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 281.

²⁵ Keil, "Gemeinde", 41.

sense of 'community' among Vienna's Jews existing long before the nineteenth century, despite the precarious realities of Jewish life at the time.²⁶ This moreover reflects the centuries-old commitment to these ancestral burial sites in Jewish culture. Bernhard Wachstein noted that beyond the 'clutter of documents about debts, privileges, expulsions, re-admittances, complaints of guilds and much more', which this era left behind, little can be deduced about the lives of those buried in the Seegasse.²⁷ Their principle legacy is the cemetery in the Seegasse, a space moulded in the image of the community, and reflecting a strong sense of belonging within this community, reflecting moreover the piety and religiosity of Viennese Jewry. Section 1.2 demonstrates how the cemetery in the Seegasse and its *matzevot* reflect a community characterised by religiosity and Jewish particularism as a result of the strict hierarchisation of Habsburg society in this era and the ostracism of the Jewish community from mainstream society. This self-reflection is enciphered in an evolving codex of titles and honorifics which demonstrates the stratification of this community along the lines of what Martha Keil demonstrated as typical of Central-European Jewish communities in this era, which were organised top-down on the principle of 'wealth connected to the security of a residence-permission, political power over the community members, codetermination in the communities of the realm and finally erudition and intellectual capability', where by contrast 'piety and loyal observance of the *Halachah* [Jewish-religious law] was an element of recognition and honour that encompassed all strata'.²⁸ Section 1.2 demonstrates the development of a profoundly religious language of commemoration which drew on Hebrew scriptural lexis to nevertheless commemorate both religious and secular

²⁶ See the fragmented sepulchral practices amongst Christians in Vienna discussed in Isabella Ackerl & Ingeborg Schödl, "Vom Massengrab zur „schönen Leich“ – Totengedenken und Begräbnisstätten gestern und heute" in Isabella Ackerl, Robert Bouchal & Ingeborg Schödl (eds.), *Der schöne Tod in Wien: Friedhöfe, Gräfte, Gedächtnisstätten* (Vienna: Pichler, 2008).

²⁷ Wachstein, *Inschriften* (Vol. 1), XIII.

²⁸ Keil, "Gemeinde", 52.

achievements, foregrounding a sense of 'Jewish community' in the absence of a sense of belonging in Viennese or Habsburg society.

Toleration and Reform: The Jewish Cemetery in Währing, 1784-1879

The century following the Enlightenment witnessed a rapid succession of turbulent changes to the structure of European society, broadly resulting in the development of a mass society reorganised according to criteria such as class, gender and profession. This era was marked by the fragmentation of traditional society and the collapse of boundaries between social groups accelerated by the movements towards legal and social emancipation taking place across Western and Central Europe. Jacob Katz attributed the concurrent fragmentation within Jewish society to rising standards of living, laxity of religious observance, decrease in religious education and the cultivation of 'knowledge of a non-Jewish origin', meaning essentially secular education.²⁹ The result was an expanding constellation of networks within Jewish society and between the increasingly indistinctly defined 'Jewish' and 'non-Jewish' societal spheres, grounded in increased social interaction and resulting in the increased intersectionality of identities. Despite this fragmentation, however, the perception of 'Jewishness' as a discreet social category persisted amongst Jews and non-Jews alike, albeit undergoing constant reconceptualisation, resulting in what Jacob Katz called the 'semineutral society', whereby Jews formed 'their own circles' and, despite the growing disparity amongst Jewish circles such as most prevalently the schism between orthodox and liberal Judaism, 'Jewishness' continued to be regarded as an ontological category.³⁰

The opening of the Jewish cemetery in Währing, today the city's eighteenth district, coincided with the reforms of Emperor Joseph II (1741-1790), especially the Edicts of Toleration aimed at the religious minorities of his territorially expanding and

²⁹ Katz, *Ghetto*, 34.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 56 & 201.

culturally diversifying monarchy. The Edicts were intended, Joseph explained, 'in no way to expand the Jewish nation in the crownlands, nor to introduce them where they are not yet tolerated, but only to make them, where they are already to some degree tolerated, more useful to the state'.³¹ This included permitting Jews to study anything except theology and to achieve the degree of doctor in law and medicine,³² and the conscription of Jews into the army.³³ As the historiography on the Edicts generally surmises, they aimed principally at streamlining the bureaucracy and hence control of the Habsburg state apparatus in Vienna over the disparate lands and peoples which then constituted the monarchy, thereby to increase their economic cohesiveness for the state.³⁴ The short-term consequence of these reforms was not the legal emancipation of Viennese Jewry, but at best an economic emancipation leading, as Simone Lässig examined more broadly, to the embourgeoisement of Vienna's Jews and, in some cases, to their ennoblement.³⁵ Despite its obvious limitations, *allhier tolerirt* ('tolerated here') nevertheless became a badge of honour in *matzevah* inscriptions at Währing.³⁶ The long-term consequence was the steady dissolution of the social and legal barriers that had ostracised Viennese Jewry hitherto, resulting in the rapid growth of the city's Jewish population and their proliferation in the industrial and financial spheres. Numbering only 72 'tolerated' families in 1789, by 1880 Vienna's legally emancipated Jewish population was booming at over 72,000.³⁷ This

³¹ Přebam, *Urkunden* (Vol. 1), 476.

³² *Ibid* (Vol. 2), 3. The first Jewish doctor graduated in 1789. Hans Tietze, *Die Juden Wiens* (originally published 1933, this edition Vienna: Mandelbaum, 2007), 112.

³³ Albert Lichtblau (ed.), *Als hätten wir dazugehört: Österreichisch-jüdische Lebensgeschichten aus der Habsburgermonarchie* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1999), 33.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 29. See also Oscar Jászi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (originally published 1929, this edition University of Chicago: 1961), 71; Robert Kann, *A History of the Habsburg Empire 1526-1918* (University of California Press: 1974), 186; Robert Kann, *The Multinational Empire: Nationalism and National Reform in the Habsburg Monarchy 1848-1918* (Vol. 1, Columbia University Press: 1950), 53 *et al.*

³⁵ Simone Lässig, *Jüdische Wege ins Bürgertum: Kulturelles Kapital und sozialer Aufstieg im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004).

³⁶ Gerson Wolf, *Die jüdischen Friedhöfe und die „Chewra Kadischa“ (heilige Bruderschaft) in Wien* (Vienna: Alfred Hölder, 1879), 127.

³⁷ The first figure cited in Přebam, *Urkunden* (Vol. 1), 608-10, the latter cited in McCagg, *Habsburg Jews*, 145.

growth was much faster than that of the non-Jewish population, the proportion of Jews to the overall population of the city rising from 2.2 percent in 1857 to 10.1 percent in 1880.³⁸

The period during which Währing was the community's cemetery thus witnessed the steady emancipation of the city's Jewish population, formed in the gradual collapse of the legal, economic, political and social barriers hitherto stratifying Viennese society. While this led to the increasing enmeshment of various segments, particularly amongst the bourgeoisie, and a blurring of lines between 'Jewish' and 'non-Jewish', this was balanced by the gradual consolidation of the Jewish community organisation. In 1821 the community received permission to construct a purpose-built synagogue, still today the city's main synagogue in the Seitenstetengasse, and appoint an unofficial Chief Rabbi, Isak Noa Mannheimer.³⁹ A significant turning point in the social and political history of Viennese Jews and non-Jews alike was the revolution of 1848, which like in no other European city was driven by Jewish individuals.⁴⁰ The uprising in Vienna was spearheaded by a Jewish doctor, Adolph Fischhof, a watershed following which, by early 1849, the young Emperor Franz Joseph I (1830-1916) decreed the total freedom of religion in the Empire, repealed the *Judensteuer*, the tax which Jews were required to pay to live in the imperial capital, and allowed the establishment of an official *israelitische Gemeinde* (Israelite Community).⁴¹ Although many of these reforms were temporarily repealed in the counterrevolution which followed, they set the stage for lasting

³⁸ Marsha Rozenblit, "Jewish Assimilation in Habsburg Vienna" in Jonathan Frankel & Steven Zipperstein (eds.), *Assimilation and Community: the Jews in Nineteenth Century Europe* (Cambridge University Press: 1992), 226.

³⁹ Klaus Lohrmann, "Vorgeschichte: Juden in Österreich vor 1867" in Gerhard Botz, Ivar Oxaal, Michael Pollak & Nina Scholz (eds.), *Eine Zerstörte Kultur: Jüdisches Leben und Antisemitismus in Wien seit dem 19. Jahrhundert* (Vienna: Czernin, 2002), 41.

⁴⁰ As remarked by Siegfried Mattl, *1848: Die fatale Revolution* (Vienna: JMW, 1998), 42; and Werner Hanak-Lettner, "Revolution! Ein Drahtseilakt" in *Unsere Stadt! Jüdisches Wien bis Heute* (Vienna: JMW, 2013), 155.

⁴¹ Joachim Riedl, *Jüdisches Wien* (Vienna: Christian Brandstätter, 2012), 39-41.

reforms in the near future, with 1848 constituting the first instance in Viennese history that Jews and non-Jews fought for a common cause together.⁴²

The profundity of the event was exemplified in the communal burial in the Schmelz cemetery of the victims of the police crackdown on the 13 March 1848 uprising, among them two Jews. At the funeral, Rabbi Mannheimer and Cantor Salomon Sulzer appeared to deliver the Jewish rites, whereupon the Catholic priest conducting the funeral invited his Jewish colleagues to pray together. Mannheimer stated: 'But now grant those who fought the same battle and the more difficult battle that they may live with you on one earth, free and unencumbered. Accept also us as free men, and may God's blessing be upon you!'⁴³ All the victims of the 1848 uprising were reinterred in an honorary grave in the Central Cemetery in 1888, underlining the fluctuation of boundaries between communities in the short-lived constitutional monarchy of Austria-Hungary, as well as the liberal disposition of the IKG at the time, which today would not support its members' burial in a non-Jewish cemetery. However, anti-revolutionary media at the time were replete with antisemitic diatribes, marking the genesis of antisemitism as a political force within the emergence of mass politics and media.⁴⁴ In 1852, the community was legally recognised as an established religious organisation and received the name *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde*.⁴⁵ Full legal emancipation followed in 1867 after Austria's disastrous war against Prussia and the granting of a constitution in the ensuing establishment of the Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy.⁴⁶

Of the multitude of developments in this era – such as migration to the city, the rise of secular education, the greater social freedom for women, the decline of

⁴² Přebam, *Urkunden* (Vol. 2), 546-9. See also Jászi, *Dissolution*, 86.

⁴³ Cited in Riedl, *Wien*, 40.

⁴⁴ See Mattl, *1848*, 25-34.

⁴⁵ See the gradual replacement of the term *jüdisch* by *israelitisch* in official documents in Přebam, *Urkunden* (Vol. 2), 325 onwards. The new term reflects the notion of a solely religious, as opposed to some form of 'ethnic', community, though with a complex semantic history, as discussed in Solomon Zeitlin, *Studies in the Early History of Judaism* (Vol. 2, New York: Ktav, 1974), 460.

⁴⁶ Lohrmann, "Vorgeschichte", 44.

traditional forms of religious observance, and more – the most distinct change in the social makeup of Vienna's Jews was the rise of the bourgeoisie, with the earlier phenomenon of the *Hofjude* giving way to a new phenomenon, the banker.⁴⁷ Due to the endurance until the middle of the nineteenth century of the 'toleration taxes' levied against Jews wishing to reside in Vienna, the community at this time was composed to a disproportionate degree of this bourgeois class which was strikingly visible in its success and self-representation, as evident in their grand *palais* on Vienna's world-famous Ringstraße and in the lavish grave-memorials in the Währing cemetery.⁴⁸ A glance at some of the individuals buried in Währing is demonstrative of this class, increasingly interconnected with the Habsburg bureaucracy, nobility and state. These include Nathan Adam von Arnstein (1748-1838), who together with Bernhard Eskeles (1753-1839) founded the bank *Arnstein & Eskeles*, the largest bank in the Habsburg Austria until the rise of the Rothschild financial empire, supporting the early rail industry and later co-founding the Austrian National Bank.⁴⁹ These men were among those who signed a plea to Emperor Franz I (1768-1835) in 1815 to legally emancipate Austrian Jewry in light of their financial services to the state during the Napoleonic Wars and the unprecedented numbers of Jewish soldiers fighting in the Habsburg army, indicating how these bourgeois bankers fulfilled much the same intermediary roles between the state and the Jewish community as had the *Hofjuden* before them.⁵⁰ Nathan's Berlin-born wife Fanny (1758-1818) ran a renowned salon in Vienna, entertaining for example the foreign dignitaries at the Congress of Vienna and constituting an early example of women's social emancipation.⁵¹ She introduced a Berlin tradition to Vienna, the Christmas tree, what Klaus Hödl characterised as a prime example of the interactive negotiation of

⁴⁷ Katz, *Ghetto*, 187.

⁴⁸ Lässig, *Bürgertum*, 17.

⁴⁹ Tina Walzer, Michael Studemund-Halévy & Almut Weinland, *Orte der Erinnerung: Die jüdischen Friedhöfe Hamburg-Alttona und Wien-Währing* (Hamburg: ConferencePoint, 2010), 27.

⁵⁰ Christoph Lind, "Juden in den habsburgischen Ländern 1670-1848" in Brugger *et al*, *Geschichte der Juden*, 409.

⁵¹ Lichtblau (ed.), *Als hätten wir dazugehört*, 37.

Viennese culture between Jews and non-Jews.⁵² The Jewish-Viennese bourgeoisie became the most influential of Jewish groupings in the city in the nineteenth century. Until the repeal of limitations on Jewish immigration, it accounted for a bulk of the Jewish population, whereas by the mid-nineteenth century the influx of poorer Jewish migrants nuanced this picture substantially. The poorer strata of Jewish-Viennese society left behind considerably less visible grave-memorials, in various senses of 'visibility', literal and figurative, indeed left behind few sources of any kind, leading to an unfortunately persistent imbalance in the self-representation of Viennese Jewry which is difficult to redress, except through repeated emphasis on this absence.

Section 1.3 demonstrates the diversification of epigraphy and grave.memorial designs alongside the retention of basic Jewish burial traditions in the Währing cemetery, correlating with the emergence in this era of the cemetery as a monumentally conceived space and as a site of communal memory. Tying in with general developments of the time such as the fragmentation of traditional religious society and the emergence of the bourgeoisie, Währing reflects the trend towards new, secular forms of commemoration alongside the retention of established sepulchral traditions. Vilmos Tóth, in a seminal study of nineteenth-century sepulchral culture in Budapest cemeteries comparable with their Viennese counterparts, opined that the 'characteristic tendency of the era was secularisation, in Christian as well as in Jewish burials'.⁵³ Secularisation is an over-simplified concept to describe the profound developments of the era. While the era was certainly characterised by an incisive turn towards non-religious language of commemoration, the proliferation of worldly titles and achievements, and a greater emphasis on the family rather than the community (predominantly religiously defined) as a marker of

⁵² Klaus Hödl, *Wiener Juden – jüdische Wiener: Identität, Gedächtnis und Performanz im 19. Jahrhundert* (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2006), 32-4. The permanent exhibition of Vienna's Jewish Museum, *Unsere Stadt! Jüdisches Wien bis Heute*, places a strong emphasis on this fact as representative of Vienna's Jews' foundational role in what has become Viennese culture.

⁵³ Vilmos Tóth, *Grabmalkunst* (Budapest: Stadtbibliothek, 2006), 40.

belonging, religious and secular codes of commemoration were not mutually exclusive, the rise of bilingual inscriptions and the division between religious and secular eulogies reflecting rather a division of spheres, or in other words the growing intersectionality, of individual life within Viennese society at the time. The increasing enmeshment of this small community in Viennese bourgeois and noble society is reflected in the growing division between an existing codex of Hebrew religious honorifics and a new codex of German-language civic titles. These developments closely parallel the findings of Martina Niedhammer's case study of the Jewish cemetery in Wolschan/Olšany in Prague.⁵⁴ The divisions between religious and secular, private and public, personal and professional spheres, moreover, are analogous to developments in Christian sepulchral culture of the time, reflecting the growing enmeshment of Habsburg society and the increasing interactionality of spheres which characterised this era.

Emancipation and Self-Realisation: The Jewish Cemetery at Tor I, 1879-1917

The opening of the monumental Central Cemetery and its Jewish section at Tor I in the 1870s followed incisive developments such as the legal institutionalisation of the IKG in 1852, the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, and the grand urban renewal schemes of the mid-nineteenth century such as the construction of the Ringstraße and the regulation of the River Danube. The 1867 Compromise and the creation of the dual monarchy was accompanied by the granting of a constitution for the Cisleithanian (non-Hungarian) half of the monarchy, comprising the disparate lands reaching from the Alps to beyond the northern Carpathians which during this period was widely though unofficially called 'Austria'. The Cisleithanian constitution stipulated among other things the admissibility of every citizen to public office (§3), the free movement of persons and goods (§4), the right of every citizen to live

⁵⁴ Martina Niedhammer, *Nur eine »Geld-Emancipation«? Loyalitäten und Lebenswelten des Prager jüdischen Großbürgertums 1800-1867* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 235-53.

anywhere and purchase real estate (§6), and the freedom of religion (§14).⁵⁵ This repeal of all legal limitations resulted in mass migration to the capital, which underwent enormous change, expanding, industrialising and modernising in infrastructure and administration. The large and amorphous Jewish population of the dual monarchy constituted a good fifth of world Jewry, fairly evenly split between Austria and Hungary, with about three quarters of what can be collectively though cautiously called 'Austrian Jewry' residing in Galicia and Bukovina.⁵⁶ This population was extremely heterogeneous in its makeup, deeply divided by differences between rich and poor, renegades and faithful, orthodox and reformed, with Galician Jews especially viewed as the 'bottom class'.⁵⁷ This heterogeneity was reflected in the makeup of Viennese Jewry, with a Jewish population of over 72,000 in 1879, the year of the closure of the Währing cemetery, an eighteen-fold increase within one generation.⁵⁸ The IKG thus faced an enormous challenge as an officially recognised cultural and religious umbrella organisation having to balance the sometimes vast discrepancies which this heterogeneity entailed, a challenge analogous to the tasks faced by the Habsburg State.

The increasing enmeshment of Jewish communal life within Habsburg society, evident in the Jewish bourgeoisie and Ringstraße-nobility as in the growing number of middle and lower-middle class professionals and merchants and the disproportionate number of Jews pursuing a liberal education, was countered by backlashes within Jewish culture first with anti-Enlightenment orthodox movements

⁵⁵ *Staatsgrundgesetz vom 21. December 1867*, <http://alex.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/alex?apm=0&aid=rgb&datum=18670004&zoom=2&seite=00000394&x=10&y=7>, accessed 11 June 2015.

⁵⁶ Marsha Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria During World War I* (Oxford University Press: 2001), 3-4.

⁵⁷ McCagg, *Habsburg Jews*, 148.

⁵⁸ Walter Grab, "Das Wiener Judentum: Eine historische Übersicht" in Wolfgang Plat (ed.), *Voll Leben und Tod ist diese Erde: Bilder aus der Geschichte der jüdischen Österreicher (1190 bis 1945)* (Vienna: Harold, 1988), 54.

such as Chassidism, and later with Jewish-nationalist movements such as Zionism.⁵⁹ Such divisions were exacerbated by the influx into Vienna beginning in the 1880s of Galician Jews, stigmatised by established Viennese Jews and non-Jews alike as *Ostjuden*, 'Eastern Jews', seen to epitomise the fabricated idiosyncrasy of the 'primordial Jew'.⁶⁰ With its mix of rich and poor, established and immigrated, progressive and traditional elements, Vienna's Jewish community in the period 1867 to 1918 could be called kaleidoscopic: manifestly multitudinous and yet, uniquely in Europe, remarkable retaining its cohesiveness as a group, as demonstrated most poignantly in the unification of its many religious, cultural and social institutions under one roof in the IKG, and their burial together in one cemetery at Tor I, the cemetery consequently coming to reflect profoundly the kaleidoscopic character of this community. In 1890, the IKG was recognised as a semi-public body, conferring upon it taxation rights to fund synagogues, schools and cemeteries, and the duty to keep civil records of births, marriages and deaths. Until 1918, all Jews, unless they converted, were *de facto* members of the IKG, although many neither attended synagogue nor voted in IKG elections.⁶¹ The IKG maintained its cohesiveness through compromise, for example building numerous synagogues to house the most various streams of Judaism.⁶² Although orthodox groups occasionally threatened schisms, particularly in the early 1870s, reflecting growing internal divisions that were to be powerfully played out in the cemeteries, this compromise held until the Shoah.⁶³

⁵⁹ See Raphael Mahler, *Hasidism and the Jewish Enlightenment: Their Confrontation in Galicia and Poland in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1985), and Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972).

⁶⁰ See Klaus Hödl, *Als Bettler in die Leopoldstadt: Galizische Juden auf dem Weg nach Wien* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1994). This phenomenon is discussed more broadly in Steven Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800-1923* (University of Wisconsin: 1982).

⁶¹ Walter Weitzmann, "Die Politik der jüdischen Gemeinde Wiens zwischen 1890 und 1914" in Botz *et al*, *Eine Zerstörte Kultur*, 198.

⁶² *Ibid*, 200.

⁶³ Rozenblit, "Assimilation", 233.

Vienna, as the capital of the gamut of cultures of the Habsburg state by this period, reflected the state's heterogeneity while becoming the theatre for the rising tensions created by this historically conditioned multiculturalism. Throughout its latter days, the ruling Habsburg elites attempted to instil societal cohesiveness, at least in Cisleithania, through the replacement of identification with the nation-state with patriotism to the dynasty and to the monarch in the form of Emperor Franz Joseph I.⁶⁴ This became an especially powerful vehicle for identification for many Austrian Jews, particularly in Vienna, who venerated Franz Joseph as their protector.⁶⁵ The very heterogeneity of Austrian Jewry could be seen as the embodiment of the dual monarchy, with various historians remarking that, by the First World War, the only 'true Austrians', in the sense of patriotism to the Habsburg state, were the Jews.⁶⁶ Marsha Rozenblit demonstrated that this 'intense loyalty' was 'because the supranational state allowed them the luxury of separating the political, cultural, and ethnic strands in their identity'.⁶⁷ This resulted, Rozenblit argued, in a 'tripartite identity in which [the Jews] were Austrian by political loyalty, German (or Czech or Polish) by cultural affiliation, and Jewish in an ethnic sense'.⁶⁸ By significant contrast to countries then involved in powerful nation-building exercises such as Germany

⁶⁴ Pieter Judson, "Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe" in Pieter Judson & Marsha Rozenblit (eds.), *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe* (New York: Berghahn, 2006), 3.

⁶⁵ There is a wealth of statements, publications and dedications testifying to this adulation, especially those commissioned by the IKG. See for example the appeals to Franz Joseph on various occasions in *Bericht des Vorstandes der israel. Kultusgemeinde in Wien über seine Thätigkeit in der Periode 1896-1897* (Vienna: Verlag der israelitischen Kultusgemeinde in Wien, 1898), 5; in *Bericht des Vorstandes der israel. Kultusgemeinde in Wien über seine Thätigkeit in der Periode 1898-1899* (Vienna: Verlag der israelitischen Kultusgemeinde in Wien, 1900), 6; in *Bericht des Vorstandes der israelitischen Kultusgemeinde in Wien über seine Tätigkeit in der Periode 1906-1907* (Vienna: Verlag der israelitischen Kultusgemeinde in Wien, 1908), 3 *et al.*

⁶⁶ For example Erika Weinzierl, "Der jüdische Beitrag zur österreichischen Kultur der Jahrhundertwende" in Plat (ed.), *Tod*, 208; Wolfgang von Weisl, Juden in der österreichischen und österreichisch-ungarischen Armee, *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Juden*, No. 1/2 (1971), 1; Erwin Schmidl, *Juden in der k.u.k. Armee 1788-1918* (Eisenstadt: Österreichisches jüdisches Museum, 1989), 87 *et al.*

⁶⁷ Rozenblit, *National Identity*, 15.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

and France, this afforded Jews in Cisleithania 'the freedom to be as Jewish as they chose'.⁶⁹

There are several problems with this model, not least of all arising from the problem of ascribing to a group as disparate as 'Austrian Jewry' any kind of coherent identity, no matter how complex.⁷⁰ Many Jews, for example Zionists, Chassidim, or parts of the secular intelligentsia in cities like Vienna, evidently did not conceive of themselves in this manner, while such a model ignores other facets of the intersectionality of identities in this period such as class, gender and profession. This model nevertheless serves as a useful paradigm to understand how the construction of a plethora of identities was facilitated by the profoundly diverse identity matrix conditioned by the complexities of Habsburg society. This includes facets not explicitly named in Rozenblit's model such as traditional, progressive and nationalist streams of Jewish thought, which were to come especially to the fore in the interwar period in the form of Aguda, Union and Zionist movements, discussed further later. Ultimately, the majority of Austrian Jews thus developed a unique kind of patriotism in this period, *in lieu* of a national identity, what Rozenblit calls a 'state patriotism'.⁷¹ This complemented the prevailing situation in Cisleithania, which by its multicultural nature precluded the formation of a 'national identity' along West-European lines, whereby 'Austrianism was a political identity shared by the emperor, the bureaucrats, the army officers, and others, an identity whose essence was loyalty to the state and the dynasty'.⁷² Rozenblit's work moreover underlines the important point that Austrian Jewry – both before and after 1918 – perceived itself as a separate entity to the notion of a 'German Jewry' with which it is often conflated, a notion which tends to exacerbate essentialist models of Jewishness while obfuscating the very profound

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 4.

⁷⁰ This was also the conclusion of the conference *Multiple Jewries: New Perspectives on the History of Jews in the Habsburg Empire from the 18th Century to 1918* which took place at Vienna University in November 2014.

⁷¹ Rozenblit, *National Identity*, 17.

⁷² *Ibid*, 22.

differences between German and Austrian Jewry.⁷³ Simultaneously, the multiculturalism of the Habsburg state allowed, by significant contrast to the situation in other European states, the proliferation of a sense of Jewish ethnicity, as evident in the ubiquity of the word *Volk* amongst Viennese Jewry, as we shall see in the epigraphy of the period, despite the otherwise fervent rejection of Zionism in Vienna before 1918.⁷⁴

Although Jewry was not widely regarded as a *nation* in the nineteenth century, it continued throughout Europe despite its evident diversity to be regarded, as Shmuel Almog discussed, as 'tainted by particularism', while simultaneously and paradoxically being regarded as 'the very archetype of universalism', thus becoming the 'anti-nation nationality' in Europe.⁷⁵ Almog portrayed opposition to Jews as an underlying tenet of nationalist movements across Europe, surmising: 'Even Jews who had resided in a country for generations continued to be regarded as not really belonging, as foreigners threatening to flood the country with more of their kind, subvert its essence, and obscure its unique character.'⁷⁶ The rise of political antisemitism, a movement spearheaded in Austria, was conceived as opposition to the political liberalism which had led to the granting of constitutional rights, and which especially after the stock market crash in 1873 came to be generally identified with Jews.⁷⁷ The situation in the Habsburg state especially lent itself to political antisemitism as Jews could be scapegoated by various groups as middlemen for oppositional forces: thus Czech antisemitism was driven by anti-German sentiment, Slovak antisemitism was driven by opposition to Magyarisation and so forth.⁷⁸ The

⁷³ See such cases for example in Steven Aschheim, *In Times of Crisis: Essays on European Culture, Germans, and Jews* (University of Wisconsin Press: 2001), or in Edward Timms & Andrea Hammel, *The German-Jewish Dilemma: From the Enlightenment to the Shoah* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1999).

⁷⁴ Rozenblit, *National Identity*, 34.

⁷⁵ Shmuel Almog, *Nationalism & Antisemitism in Europe, 1815-1945* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1990), 23; *Unsere Stadt*, 16.

⁷⁶ Almog, *Nationalism*, 32.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 33-4.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 38.

appearance of a string of antisemitic ideologues in the German-speaking part of Cisleithania, including the rise to power in Vienna of the first successful antisemitic demagogue, the mayor Karl Lueger (1844-1910), was to have a profound effect on the ideology of Adolf Hitler (1889-1945), who lived in Vienna from 1908 until 1913.⁷⁹ Considering its unique but volatile cultural makeup, it is no coincidence that Vienna was simultaneously home to the first mainstream antisemitic politician and the founder of the Zionist movement, Theodor Herzl (1860-1904).

Despite the profound diversity of the makeup of Viennese Jewry in the late nineteenth century, the community continued to be characterised, partly in reality but chiefly in perception, by its visible affinity towards the liberal socio-economic middle classes, constituting circa ten percent of the city's population, yet accounting for up to half of its lawyers and doctors of medicine and as many as three quarters of its journalists.⁸⁰ This heightened visibility of some of Vienna's Jews in certain professions became calamitous for the perception of Jews generally amongst non-Jewish peers, as observed by Steven Beller: 'The problem with the antisemitic attacks on the 'Jewish press' was that, in Vienna at least, they were based on hard fact. All the major daily newspapers of the liberal press were either owned or edited by people of Jewish descent'.⁸¹ The growth of antisemitism as a mass movement invoked numerous responses within Viennese Jewry, affecting the development and expression of Jewish belonging and community. This broadly oscillated between positive self-assertion, such as patriotism to the Habsburg state – a line adopted with particular insistence until the very end of its existence by the IKG leadership – and reactive self-assertion, such as the retreat into particularist Jewish movements such as Chassidism and Zionism, or into radical individualism divorced of such strategies

⁷⁹ See Michael Wladika, *Hitlers Vätergeneration: Die Ursprünge des Nationalsozialismus in der K. u. K. Monarchie* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2005); and Brigitte Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna: A Portrait of the Tyrant as a Young Man* (New York: Tauris Parke, 2010).

⁸⁰ Tietze, *Die Juden*, 203-4.

⁸¹ Steven Beller, *Vienna and the Jews, 1867-1938: A Cultural History* (Cambridge University Press: 1990), 38.

of group identification. These dynamics – between belonging and rejection, inclusion and exclusion – poignantly inscribed themselves in the *matzevot* at Tor I, albeit that all who were buried there identified on some level as Jewish. The era now known as the *fin-de-siècle* has been widely construed as a product of the cultural diversity of its mostly Jewish protagonists and their interactive relationship with Austrian culture and society.⁸² These studies, however, have also been criticised for focussing too closely on elites in Viennese society, ignoring the vast majority of the (Jewish) population who did not make up this comparatively small and often secular group of intelligentsia.⁸³

Section 1.4 examines the *matzevot* at Tor I as some of the only remaining testaments to this later largely destroyed community, allowing at least a partial re-evaluation of this community and its responses to the dynamics of the time. The *matzevot* reflect a profound engagement with their sense of belonging more narrowly in the Jewish community and more broadly in the Viennese community of which they were citizens, reflecting their widespread participation in its civil, economic, cultural, professional, judicial and political life. The diversity of its grave-memorials reflects the diversity of the community, and more broadly the emergence of Viennese cultural networks which intersected with or contested ‘Jewishness’ as an ontological category. Heterogeneous though it demonstrably was, this community never lost its cohesiveness as a group, even though the boundaries which constituted this group were in a state of extraordinary flux. The IKG, though characterised generally by political affinity towards Habsburg patriotism, religious affinity towards reform and social affinity towards the bourgeoisie, was remarkably successful and, what cannot be understated, unique in Europe for uniting all the multitudinous streams of Jewish

⁸² For example in Carl Schorske, *Fin-De-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1980); Beller, *Vienna*; Hödl, *Wiener Juden* and other works cited throughout this chapter.

⁸³ This point is made by the curators of Vienna’s Jewish Museum with specific reference to the problems of exhibiting a population the broader swathe of whom left little to no records. Maren Waffenschmid, “Der Unsichtbare Teil der Gemeinde: Armut ausstellen?” in *Unsere Stadt*, 176.

religion and culture into one organisation, and one cemetery.⁸⁴ The perfunctoriness of Jewish group-belonging, most profoundly reflected in the loose collection of secular, atheist or irreligious people who chose not to convert, is reflected in their choice of burial site: citizens could be buried where they wished in this period, so the choice of a Christian, Jewish or non-denominational cemetery was indicative at least superficially of an individual's or family's sense of belonging. The vast majority of Vienna's Jews did not convert, at a time when no legal or social barriers remained to prevent them doing so, and moreover most of Vienna's Jews, however defined, religious or not, continued to be buried in the Jewish cemetery at Tor I. This cemetery therefore represents to a large degree a success story of the positive self-assertion of a strong and diverse Jewish community and its integration into Habsburg-Viennese society. However, by the early twentieth century this development towards ever-greater enmeshment increasingly conflicted with traditional and orthodox groupings within the IKG, reflecting the genesis of deep-seated conflicts that were to have a marked effect on the development of the new cemetery at Tor IV reaching through the twentieth century.

Collapse and Division: The Jewish Cemetery at Tor IV, 1917-1938

Tor IV, the newer Jewish section of the Central Cemetery, was opened in 1917 in the wake of the enormous casualties of the First World War. Marsha Rozenblit's analysis of war-time memoirs, correspondence, and Jewish charitable work demonstrated that without a doubt the war mobilised strong feelings of solidarity as much towards Habsburg Austria as towards Jewish peoplehood amongst the disparate Jewish populations of the Habsburg lands, superceding their otherwise numerous divisions.⁸⁵ Most significantly, Rozenblit demonstrated how the sharp rise in antisemitism during the war underlined the feeling that only the multinational state

⁸⁴ Weitzmann, "Politik", 200-1.

⁸⁵ Rozenblit, *National Identity*.

offered security to the Jews, with campaigns for Jewish autonomy not necessarily aiming at the establishment of a Jewish state, but most broadly, as in 1918, at 'the recognition of the Jews as one of the autonomous nations in the new Austrian *Völkerstaat*'.⁸⁶ The sudden collapse of the state at the end of the war consequently presented a great calamity for its Jews, a turning point that marked itself in radical changes in communal life amongst the Jewish-Viennese population of the interwar period. For at least a century, the Jews of Habsburg Austria had been cultivating a variety of supranational identities, taking the form in some cases of Jewish particularism and in others of cosmopolitanism, but broadly aligning themselves to the cohesive forces of the Habsburg state as represented by the emperor and the army.⁸⁷ The Jews, after all, more than any other peoples embodied the supranational character of the state.⁸⁸ With irredentist nationalism spreading in the imploding state in 1918, with most non-Jewish, German-speaking Austrians across the political spectrum calling for an *Anschluß* or absorption into Germany, the only 'true Austrians', in the multicultural Habsburg sense, were the Jews. The creation of the First Austrian Republic and the concurrent reconstruction of Austrian identity was as conflicted for Austria's Jews as it was for Austria in general, as Lisa Silverman explored, whereby the Jews as hitherto 'the most loyal citizens of the monarchy' found themselves 'in danger of becoming the *least* Austrian' (emphasis in original).⁸⁹

Silverman remarked how the scholarly focus on the histories of the Habsburg state and the Shoah has often eclipsed the interwar period and the highly fertile relationship between Jews and other Austrians in the First Republic, where discourses surrounding national and cultural identity were increasingly polarised

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 37.

⁸⁷ See for example Marsha Rozenblit, "The Jews of Germany and Austria: A Comparative Perspective" in Robert Wistrich (ed.), *Austrians and Jews in the Twentieth Century: From Franz Joseph to Waldheim* (London: Macmillan, 1992), 5.

⁸⁸ Lichtblau (ed.), *Als hätten wir dazugehört*, 23.

⁸⁹ Silverman, *Austrians*, 6.

according to the notion of 'Jewish difference'.⁹⁰ By the 1920s, Silverman remarked, what one found under the banner of 'Austrian Jewry', now meaning those who remained within the borders of the rump state though comprising backgrounds from all over the former Habsburg state, was 'a broad range of Austrians, from self-professed Jews to converts, from native Yiddish speakers to secular Viennese Jews, regardless of their degree of Jewish self-identification'.⁹¹ The IKG, which had already been one of the most influential Jewish institutions in the Habsburg state, became largely synonymous with Austrian Jewry after 1918 and, although Austrian citizens were no longer required by law to belong to one or another religious community, the vast majority of Jews remained members of the IKG.⁹² The Jewish community in the interwar period propagated a new kind of identity, though not necessarily in accordance with its membership, of being 'politically Austrian, ethnically Jewish, and now, more than ever, – "culturally" Viennese'.⁹³

Both Lisa Silverman and Marsha Rozenblit pointed to the strategies developed by Austria's Jews to cope with the ruptures and challenges of the interwar period, marked first by the recalibration of the meaning of 'Austrian' identity and later by the increasing isolation they experienced in an increasingly antisemitic environment, strategies including retreat into cosmopolitan socialism, into religious particularism, or into Zionist nationalism.⁹⁴ The growth of Zionism in particular, a movement that despite its roots in Vienna had never been very popular there before 1918, has been explained by the fact that, unlike other minorities in the newly configured states of Central Europe, Jews had no state to which to appeal, while Jews all over Central and Eastern Europe were accused of collaboration with

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 20.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 4.

⁹² Rozenblit, *National Identity*, 64.

⁹³ Silverman, *Austrians*, 16.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 16; and Rozenblit, *National Identity*, 169.

enemies of the nation.⁹⁵ The divisions between socialism, Zionism and orthodoxy in the interwar period increasingly galvanised communal politics in the embattled IKG.⁹⁶ Prior to 1918, the IKG had maintained a long tradition of moderate and inclusive governance, fostering strong ties to the Habsburg state through the successive appointment of Chief Rabbis whose policy was negotiation between the perceived polarities of orthodoxy and reform, and between Jewishness and Austrianness, most recently Rabbi Moritz Güdemann (1835-1918) who was especially vocal about his opposition to Zionism.⁹⁷ Therefore the appointment in September 1918 of the outspoken Galician-born Zionist, Rabbi Zwi Perez Chajes, represented quite a turning point for the political orientation of the community.⁹⁸ The appointment was bitterly condemned by various groups, whether Unionist (those adhering to the *Österreichisch-Israelitische Union*, an Austrian-patriotic union) or orthodox, themselves fragmented into various streams, highlighting the growing divisions in the interwar IKG.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, Zionism became a growing force in the interwar period, with Zionist factions consistently winning about a third of the IKG vote, always in competition with the Unionist and orthodox parties, who fluctuated in their attitudes towards Zionism.¹⁰⁰ Partly a response to growing ethnocentrism and antisemitism in

⁹⁵ Almog, *Nationalism*, 100.

⁹⁶ Rozenblit, *National Identity*, 117.

⁹⁷ See Moritz Güdemann, *Nationaljudenthum* (Leipzig: Breitenstein, 1897).

⁹⁸ His ideology can be surmised from his accession speech reproduced in Hugo Gold, *Zwi Perez Chajes: Dokumente aus seinem Leben und Wirken* (Tel Aviv: Olamenu, 1971), 25-9.

⁹⁹ See the various complaints submitted to the IKG in *Oberrabbiner Dr. Zwi Perez Chajes, Amtstätigkeit (betr. u.a. seine zionistischen Aktivitäten und die Kritik seiner Gegner)*, Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, A/W 725,4. On the origins of Unionism, see Ian Reifowitz, *Imagining an Austrian Nation: Joseph Samuel Bloch and the Search for a Multiethnic Austrian Identity 1846-1919* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 2003). No monograph on orthodoxy in Vienna has been published to date, though this topic was addressed in Shlomo Spitzer, *Das jüdische religiöse Leben in Wien in der Zwischenkriegszeit*, paper from the conference *Jüdisches Wien vom Ende des 1. Weltkriegs bis zur Schoa, 1918-1945*, Vienna, November 2012, published under <http://www.misrachi.at/index.php/geschichte/geschichte-der-juden-in-wien/56-symposium-shoa>, accessed 18 November 2014.

¹⁰⁰ See the election results in *Bericht der israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Wien über die Tätigkeit in der Periode 1912-1924* (Vienna: Verlag der israelitischen Kultusgemeinde in Wien, 1924), 3-4; *Bericht der israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Wien über die Tätigkeit in der Periode 1929-1932* (Vienna: Verlag der israelitischen Kultusgemeinde in Wien, 1932), 3; *Bericht des Präsidiums und des Vorstandes der*

Austrian society, this was also a reflection of the changing attitudes towards Zionism following the increased possibility of *aliyah* or emigration to Palestine during the British Mandate era, with 8425 Austrian Jews, mostly Viennese, making *aliyah* between 1920 and 1935.¹⁰¹ This period moreover witnessed a trend of reentry into the IKG of previously departed members, and a radical recession in the numbers leaving, underlining the changing attitudes towards Jewishness and the resurgence of strong feelings of belonging to the community as embodied in the IKG.¹⁰²

Despite the growth of Zionism from within and the pressure of antisemitism from without, the IKG leadership continued to cultivate loyalty to the Austrian state, even after the government's takeover by the Austrofascist movement in 1934. The last IKG president before the Shoah, Desider Friedmann (1880-1944, murdered in Auschwitz) was appointed a member of the Austrofascist State Council, reflecting as much the IKG's desire to be participant to and protected by the state, as it demonstrates the state's aim to exert control over as many factions in the deeply divided society as possible.¹⁰³ Jewish patriotism was further reflected in the creation of a memorial to the Jewish soldiers of the Habsburg army at Tor I which, despite its avowal to the Habsburg state, became instrumental in the staging of militant patriotism to the new Austria, particularly during the short-lived Austrofascist regime.¹⁰⁴ The attempted reconstitution of Jewish-Austrian identity, especially amongst Unionists, was most evident with the *Bund jüdischer Frontsoldaten*, a Jewish veterans' organisation that by 1935 had become the second-largest Jewish

Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Wien über die Tätigkeit in den Jahren 1933-1936 (Vienna: Verlag der israelitischen Kultusgemeinde in Wien, 1936), unpaginated.

¹⁰¹ Evelyn Adunka, *Die Veränderungen der Wiener jüdischen Gemeinde in der Zwischenkriegszeit 1918 bis 1938*, paper from the conference *Jüdisches Wien vom Ende des 1. Weltkriegs bis zur Schoa, 1918-1945*, Vienna, November 2012, published under <http://www.misrachi.at/index.php/geschichte/geschichte-der-juden-in-wien/56-symposium-shoa>, accessed 18 November 2014, 3-5.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 16.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 16.

¹⁰⁴ Martin Senekowitsch, *Ein Ungewöhnliches Kriegerdenkmal: Das jüdische Heldendenkmal am Wiener Zentralfriedhof* (Militärkommando Wien: 1994), unpaginated.

organisation by membership in the country after the IKG.¹⁰⁵ Their outspoken and controversial support of the Austrofascist regime can in retrospect be understood as a last-ditch attempt at protecting the Jewish community as Austria's sense of helplessness in the shadow of National Socialism grew.

The Zionist and Unionist factions of Viennese Jewry in this period were contested by the proliferation of orthodoxy in a community hitherto characterised by its moderate, even ambivalent, relationship to religiosity. This was largely a consequence of the fact that, during the First World War, some 77,000 Jewish refugees from Galicia had poured into the city, many of whom were adherents of Chassidism or other orthodox movements, and many of whom stayed after the war since return to their former homes in what had become the Soviet Union or independent Poland, where an estimated 100,000 Jews were killed in the wars of 1918-20, was dangerous or impossible.¹⁰⁶ This included around sixty prominent Chassidic Rabbis, who formed the core of a short-lived but influential Chassidic community in Vienna. This community of Galician Jews, despite their cultural diversity, which is today a considerable topic of scholarly attention, and the fact that their roots in Vienna preceded the First World War by several decades, were encountered by a hostile atmosphere fostered by Viennese Jews and non-Jews alike, leading them to form a distinct and separate group within the Viennese Jewish community.¹⁰⁷ Their perceived otherness was well-documented in the interwar period as orthodox Jews in particular presented a fertile visual stereotype for antisemitic prejudices.¹⁰⁸ John Emanuel Ullmann, a Jewish-Viennese refugee during the Shoah, commented in a memorial lecture on Vienna's destroyed Jewish community that their 'experience was much closer to a real emigration and a cutting of ties' than that of

¹⁰⁵ The group's founding history and aims are outlined in Sigmund Friedmann, *Drei Jahre Bund jüdischer Frontsoldaten Österreichs* (Vienna: BJF, 1935).

¹⁰⁶ Rozenblit, *National Identity*, 136-7.

¹⁰⁷ Marsha Rozenblit, A Note on Galician Jewish Migration to Vienna, *Austrian History Yearbook*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (January 1983), 151.

¹⁰⁸ See examples in Rield, *Jüdisches Wien*, 75-8.

the many generations of Jewish immigrants who had preceded them and had, for various reasons in the easier climate of the later Habsburg state, integrated better into Viennese society.¹⁰⁹

The rapid growth of the Galician community had numerous effects on the makeup of Vienna's Jewish community, such as the palpable turn towards religious orthodoxy, resulting in repeated conflicts over the Jewish cemetery at Tor IV. The schisms produced in the religious character of the community by this gradual orthodoxisation, and the schisms in political discourse deepening between Unionist and Zionist factions, reflected the increasing complication of inner-Jewish understandings of community and belonging in the interwar period which once again were poignantly and vexedly negotiated in the Jewish cemetery, both in the sepulchral epigraphy of the period, as well as more broadly in discussions over the religious and cultural character of Tor IV as a Jewish cemetery. Section 1.5 explores how this cemetery emerged through an unprecedented degree of planning, eventually receiving the most monumental *beit tahara* or ritual funerary hall of any of the cemeteries, one of the most preeminent Jewish-communal structures in the city alongside the synagogues, a reflection of the standing of Vienna's Jewish community. However, the growing interference of the IKG in matters concerning burial and memorialisation at Tor IV reflected the growing schisms within the Jewish community as a result of the gradual contestation of belonging and Jewishness from within as well as the increasing contestation of belonging from without, in the context of the short-lived and tumultuous history of the First Republic. The analysis demonstrates that Tor IV, by contrast to Tor I, became a site of increasing isolation and introspection for the Jewish community, evidencing a gradual retreat into Jewish particularism which preceded the final calamity of the Shoah.

¹⁰⁹ John Emanuel Ullmann, *The Jews of Vienna: A Somewhat Personal Memoir*, 1993, Leo Baeck Institute, AR 106827, 7.

This chapter examines the historical emergence of Vienna's Jewish cemeteries as sites of communal belonging and identity, forged in the dynamic yet conflicted relationship between the Jewish community and Viennese society amidst the constant recalibration of notions of 'Jewishness' and 'Austrianness' through the modern era, reflecting moreover the fragmentation of religious communities amidst the emergence of new social classes such as the bourgeoisie. The cemeteries constituted sites of remarkable continuity for this extremely amorphous community, which by the *fin-de-siècle*, as Joachim Riedl summarised, was

no less divided and fractured than the rest of the population. It was in parts pious and loyally arrested to the traditions, it lived in parts far from God and estranged from the heritage of the fathers. It presented itself partly as statesmanlike and partly rebellious. It was on the one hand a religious community of notables, avid for recognition and monuments of prestige, and on the other hand a faith of beggars, indifferent towards all earthly symbols.¹¹⁰

Vienna's Jewish community and its modes of self-representation emerged through and closely reflect the profound developments of Viennese, and Central-European, society at the time, resulting in an extremely heterogeneous society where Jewishness, as Lisa Silverman among others so powerfully demonstrated, was a potent yet amorphous marker of individual and communal belonging. The cemeteries were powerful sites of familial and communal rootedness to Vienna's Jews, however else they defined themselves – the cemetery, as Jewish-Austrian exile Robert Pick remarked, 'was the one place common to them all'.¹¹¹ It was within these spaces that the fruitful interaction but also the conflicted ruptures of belonging within Jewish, Viennese and/or Austrian society were continuously negotiated and encoded through the tumultuous passage of centuries.

¹¹⁰ Riedl, *Wien*, 9.

¹¹¹ Robert Pick, *The Vienna of the Departed, Commentary*, Nr. 16 (1953), 153-4.

1.2 The Jewish Cemetery in the Seegasse, Middle Ages – 1784

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Here referred to as: Seegasse

Also Known as: Jewish cemetery in the Roßau (since 1999 spelled Rossau)

Location: Seegasse 9-11, Alsergrund

Area: Circa 2250m²

Number of Burials: Unknown

Number of Matzevot: circa 980

Figure 1.2: *Jüdischer Friedhof Rossau*, Google Maps, accessed 7 June 2014.




Figure 1.3: The Jewish cemetery in the Seegasse.

The Seegasse as an urban space is doubly shrouded in obscurity, first owing to the near-total lack of historical records pertaining to its origins, and second due to its near-total destruction in the Shoah. Fortunately, the entirety of *matzevah* inscriptions were preserved in Bernhard Wachstein's work on the Seegasse, which went in tandem with the restoration of the cemetery in 1908-1912, and without which little knowledge of the cemetery would have survived. Traude Veran concluded from this catalogue of *matzevot* and Wachstein's illustration of their positions that the burial customs of the era followed a strict spatial separation resembling a kind of 'sociogram' – Rabbis, martyrs and other notables were prominently buried in central clusters, families and extended families were buried side-by-side or close together, criminals and other disgraced individuals towards the edges of the cemetery. She remarked that the especially complex language of the *matzevah* inscriptions constituted a 'mosaic' comprised of linguistic symbolism and Biblical references which drew on 'local traditions of a religious or profane nature'.¹¹² These inscriptions are by far not adequately researched. Wachstein's analysis, for example, represented rather an overview of the history of Viennese Jewry in the early modern period, coupled with a partly descriptive and partly analytical catalogue of common practices in sepulchral epigraphy, comprising praise, eulogies, euphemisms, tone, authorship, language, dating, titles, and references to age, dying, death and burial.¹¹³ Moreover, he included the physical design of the *matzevot*, as well as very usefully, though unfortunately not comprehensive, a list of Hebrew epigraphic abbreviations. As a catalogue of inscriptions, including style, form, language and so forth, Wachstein's work is highly useful and interesting. Yet the thematic breadth obviously entails a lack of analytical depth which, as Veran pointed out, has not yet been compensated for.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Veran, *Archiv*, 39-40.

¹¹³ Wachstein, *Inschriften* (Vol. 1), XVI-LI.

¹¹⁴ Veran, *Archiv*, 40.

The following section addresses this gap by analysing the inscriptions of the *matzevot* at the Seegasse to determine how notions of community and belonging were established or negotiated. This section demonstrates that, from the end of the Middle Ages, sepulchral epigraphy took on an increasingly sacral character which went hand-in-hand with the development of a complex codex of epitaphs and eulogies, entirely composed in Hebrew and borrowing extensively from Jewish religious scripture. This codex, drawing on and thereby sustaining a Jewish religious narrative of historic peoplehood, thereby invoked a sense of community even in an era when state policy forbade its institutionalisation. The epigraphy thereby exhibits a remarkable consistency in terms of style, language and content which belies the instability of Jewish communal life in Vienna through these tumultuous centuries. Moreover, the epigraphy is accompanied by laudations of worldly attributes and achievements which complement, rather than contradict, the religious character of the inscriptions and of the community they invoke. The following section plots the development of a sense of community which long predates the establishment of a formal Jewish community organisation in Vienna, foreshadowing in its multifaceted forms of commemoration developments in later eras and in later cemeteries and allowing for the appraisal of continuities and discontinuities in later Jewish-Viennese epigraphy. First, however, this section demonstrates how the protean history of the cemetery reflects the obscurity of early-modern Jewry in Vienna, its widespread segregation in Viennese society before the Enlightenment, but also the demonstrable ambivalence which characterised the relationship between this fragile community and Habsburg society.

The Cemetery

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Figure 1.4: *Fotosammlung Seegasse*, undated (before 1938), Jüdisches Museum Wien, hereafter JMW, 2522.

The earliest known burial in the Seegasse is presumed to date to 1582, yet the cemetery itself is not mentioned in any documentation until 5 April 1629, when it was expanded to accommodate more burials.¹¹⁵ Coupled with the knowledge that in this period, between the destruction of Vienna's first Jewish cemetery in 1421 and the late sixteenth century, there were only ever individual 'privileged' Jews living in Vienna, this suggests that any deceased Jews from Vienna were presumably buried in one of the Jewish cemeteries of Lower Austria outside of the city.¹¹⁶ Following the growth of a sizeable Jewish population in Vienna towards the latter third of the sixteenth century, a result of the emergence of the *Hofjuden*, the 'court Jews', and

¹¹⁵ Statistical and historical internal report of the IKG on Vienna's Jewish cemeteries, 23 November 1939, Archiv der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Wien, hereafter AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/I-II/FH/1/1.

¹¹⁶ Staudinger, "Landjuden", 234.

their dependents, the cemetery in the Seegasse was presumably created in what is today the city's ninth district as it stood outside the city's settlements of the time, but close enough for easy access to the old Jewish quarters in the inner city to satisfy *halachic* or Jewish-legal purity requirements.¹¹⁷ The alley alongside the cemetery was named Gassel allwo der Juden Grabstätte (*Alley where the Jews' Gravesite*) in 1629, shortened to Judengasse in 1778, and finally renamed Seegasse in 1862.¹¹⁸ The area has thus for centuries had an association with Vienna's Jews.

Rabbi and historian Gerson Wolf remarked in 1879, even before the destructions wrought during the Shoah, that the cemetery was not believed to correspond to the original lay of the land.¹¹⁹ Bernhard Wachstein's research some thirty years later revealed that many *matzevot* were missing and that many remained only as fragments, while the accumulated silt of centuries of repeated flooding was reckoned to have added as much as six metres on top of the original land. Wachstein drew a map of the cemetery as it stood in the 1900s, which serves as the basis for restoration work on-going today, yet he remarked himself that it almost certainly did not correspond to the original layout of the cemetery, while construction work before, during and after the Shoah has further blurred the dimensions of the land.¹²⁰ The cemetery is rarely marked on historic maps of Vienna, and in any case these lack sufficient detail to facilitate a precise reconstruction of the cemetery's dimensions.¹²¹ Therefore the cemetery's 'sociogram' – its spatial encoding as a reflection of patterns

¹¹⁷ See for example Leviticus 21:1-2 & 11, Numbers 19:14-16, Isaiah 43:7 & 9 *et al.* See also *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (Vol. 12, New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1925), 184.

¹¹⁸ Peter Autengruber, *Lexikon der Wiener Straßennamen: Bedeutung – Herkunft – Frühere Bezeichnungen* (Vienna: Pichler, 2010), 253.

¹¹⁹ Wolf, *Friedhöfe*, 3.

¹²⁰ Wachstein, *Inschriften* (Vol. 1), final appendix. This issue is also discussed in Veran, *Archiv*, 36-7.

¹²¹ Compare the maps visible under *Historische Karten vor 1850 von Wien*, <http://www.wien.gv.at/kultur/kulturgut/karten/>, accessed 22 January 2013, as well as an otherwise extremely detailed, modern map, *Plan der kais. königl. Haupt- und Residenzstadt Wien mit allen Vorstädten*, Georg Adam Zuerner, 1811, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, hereafter ÖNB, Kartensammlung, AB 7 A 7.

of societal networks and relationships – is now largely obliterated.¹²² Strictly speaking, Veran wrote, considering the Jewish religious provisions regarding the sanctity of gravesites, ‘one should not be allowed to enter the cemetery at all; it is one single massive grave which possibly reaches widely into the surrounding area’.¹²³ The difficulty in reconstructing this fragmented archive is characteristic of the early history of Vienna’s Jewish community: obscure and unstable, a segregated population defined by religious difference who existed on the limited toleration of the Catholic state and were subject to repeated persecutions and expulsions. Yet there is also evidence of ambivalence in the relationship between the state and the city’s successive Jewish populations in this period, lending itself to the establishment of a clearly continuous if brittle sense of Jewish community and belonging through this period, as expressed in the *matzevot* and the durability of the cemetery.

Characteristic of this ambivalent relationship is one of the only documented interactions between the Jewish community and the state regarding the cemetery, which occurred during the expulsion of 1670. Before being forced out of the city and following the recent burial of their father Jakob in the Seegasse, the Koppel brothers managed to raise 4000 Guilders from amongst the Jewish population to conclude a contract with the state to ensure the protection of their cemetery.¹²⁴ This contract was honoured until the 1940s, and has significantly meant that since 1670 this land has officially been owned first by the state and later by the City of Vienna. The contract, which was reaffirmed in 1784 when the cemetery was officially closed, sets an important legal and historical precedent in the history of Vienna’s Jewish cemeteries.¹²⁵ The Koppel brothers were thereby fulfilling one of the greatest *mitzvot* (commandments or good deeds) in the Jewish faith, namely the protection of the

¹²² Veran, *Archiv*, 22.

¹²³ *Ibid*, 37.

¹²⁴ The full contract is preserved in Přeborn, *Urkunden* (Vol. 1), 254-6.

¹²⁵ Statistical and historical internal report of the IKG on Vienna’s Jewish cemeteries, 23 November 1939, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/I-II/FH/1/1.

cemetery as a 'House of Eternity', the sole and inviolable property of the deceased, affirming also the significance of these sites as 'places of their fathers' sepulchres', providing a link with ancestry and tradition, rooted in the earth, for these otherwise peripatetic people. That members of a community on the brink of deportation would, as a final endeavour, ensure the safekeeping of their ancestral burial grounds, is an indication of the values invested in the Jewish cemetery, as remarked by Rabbi Gustav Cohn (1881-1943): 'Nothing was more difficult for the Jews in their restless history than when they, coerced by external forces, had to relinquish their burial grounds'.¹²⁶ The Koppel brothers returned after sixteen years finally and belatedly to erect a *matzevah* on the grave of their father.¹²⁷

By the 1690s, only a few years after the expulsion, the Habsburg court, which found itself in renewed financial straits, began inviting wealthy Jews back into the city as *Hofjuden*.¹²⁸ The Seegasse, which had been maintained by the state throughout this hiatus in the city's Jewish presence, resumed its function as the Jewish community's cemetery. Samuel Oppenheimer (1630-1703) was the first to return and remains one of the most prominent *Hofjuden* in Viennese history.¹²⁹ Regarded in non-Jewish circles as a shrewd businessman and in Jewish circles as a benefactor to his community, he personally paid for the upkeep of the cemetery and funded a Jewish hospice adjacent to the cemetery.¹³⁰ The hospice, which continued to exist in one form or another until its final demolition in the 1970s, further underscored the continuity of a Jewish presence in the Seegasse. The limited freedoms accorded Oppenheimer and his community of *Hofjuden*, including the transferral of the Koppel brothers' contract ensuring the protection of the Seegasse cemetery into his name,

¹²⁶ Gustav Cohn, *Der jüdische Friedhof: Seine geschichtliche und kulturgeschichtliche Entwicklung mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der ästhetischen Gestaltung* (Frankfurt am Main: Franzmathes, 1930), 6.

¹²⁷ Wachstein, *Inschriften* (Vol. 1), 482. Note that all *matzevot*, where these are reproduced in published literature, are cited there.

¹²⁸ Lind, "Juden", 340-1.

¹²⁹ See the detailed biography in Wachstein, *Inschriften* (Vol. 2), 6-19.

¹³⁰ Veran, *Archiv*, 103-5.

Wachstein described as a ‘tacit recognition of the Jewish element in Vienna’, an example of the ambivalence in the attitudes of the state.¹³¹ The Seegasse thus highlights the issue of (dis)continuity represented by Vienna’s Jewish cemeteries: it remains as one of the only constants in this capricious history, while simultaneously representing a broad spectrum of individuals moving in and out of the city from all over the Ashkenazi part of Europe due to the geography the Habsburg realm and its political connections to the Holy Roman Empire. As Wachstein surmised:

The many memorials, designed in noble forms, erected from precious materials, and covered in lavish inscriptions, at first do not suggest that the people whom these memorial stones commemorate only here found that peace out of which no-one could jolt them again.¹³²

The Matzevot



Figure 1.5: *Matzevah* of Sara Pereyra (died 1746), Seegasse.

¹³¹ Wachstein, *Inschriften* (Vol. 2), XVI.

¹³² *Ibid*, XVIII.

The *matzevot* in the Seegasse all faced east, towards Jerusalem, befitting a burial custom in accordance with Messianic hopes of resurrection that has endured in part to this day, reflecting a community grounded in faith and in the sense of a common origin and mission.¹³³ The majority were fashioned from limestone or marble, materials relatively resistant to time and weather, but not to the destruction wreaked during the Shoah.¹³⁴ If there was a noticeable difference between the *matzevot* of the pre-1670 second community and the emerging third community which followed it, then it was that the latter, due to its greater constitution of wealthy *Hofjuden*, commemorated itself more opulently.¹³⁵ Most *matzevot* consisted of round headstones, the rounding achieved either through the masonry or through the inscription, though a common exception was the sarcophagus, a style common in Jewish and non-Jewish sepulchral culture in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which largely disappeared later,¹³⁶ although sarcophagi remain one of the few styles that have existed in Jewish sepulchral culture since ancient times.¹³⁷ The most illustrious sarcophagus in the Seegasse is that of the *Hofjude* and Rabbi Shimshon (Samson) Wertheim(er) (1658-1724), which was fully restored in 1995, inscribed with over 7000 Hebrew characters.¹³⁸ The sarcophagi are, however, follies, as in Jewish religious practice the corpse is without exception interred directly into the ground. The *matzevot* in the Seegasse were almost exclusively ornamented with text, which was incised into the stone and fashioned calligraphically, constituting a trademark of Jewish sepulchral culture in this period and underscoring the significance of the inscriptions to the development of Jewish-Viennese memorial culture. While the majority of the *matzevot* were destroyed or severely damaged

¹³³ Veran, *Archiv*, 58.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, 58. Wachstein, *Inschriften* (Vol. 1), XLVI.

¹³⁵ Wachstein, *Inschriften* (Vol. 1), XI.

¹³⁶ Harold Mytum, *Recording and Analysing Graveyards* (York: Council for British Archaeology, 2000), 7.

¹³⁷ Cohn, *Friedhof*, 40.

¹³⁸ For his biography as well as transcripts and translations of his *matzevah*, see Veran, *Archiv*, 52-54 and Wachstein, *Inschriften* (Vol. 2), 129-45.

during the Shoah, historic photographs as well as reproductions in Wachstein's work depict the consistency of these styles, and demonstrate that the Seegasse, had it been saved, would today be comparable in age and content to its more famous counterpart in Prague.¹³⁹

The epigraphy of the Seegasse is exclusively composed in Hebrew. This was a development of the medieval Ashkenazi world, with studies of older Jewish *matzevot*, found predominantly around the Mediterranean and the Middle East, revealing that they were usually inscribed in Greek or other vernaculars, Greek alone constituting 68 percent of all known Jewish epigraphy prior to the eighth century.¹⁴⁰ Wachstein noted that Hebrew as the 'sacred tongue' seemed to medieval Ashkenazi Jewry an obvious choice for sepulchral epigraphy, particularly as the *matzevah* as an artefact in this era evidently became more than simply mnemonic and took on increasingly sacral connotations. The quality of the language, as Wachstein remarked, is evidence of the (historically variable) level of religious education of the (largely unknown) authors of the inscriptions, not to mention the social standing of the individual being commemorated. The Hebrew employed in the Seegasse was, with obvious exceptions, generally quite poor, presumably due to the state's embargo on establishing a formal religious community complete with *yeshivot* (Rabbinical schools).¹⁴¹ Over time, even the more elaborate inscriptions became, in Wachstein's opinion, merely 'variations repeated often to the point of tastelessness'.¹⁴² Certainly one finds the repeated use of what discourse analysts call 'lexical chunks', words or phrases that are commonly known and frequently recombined in different texts, yet taste is subjective, and these epitaphs still demonstrate the evolution of various forms of individual commemoration and communal belonging in Jewish-Viennese

¹³⁹ See for example *Fotosammlung Seegasse*, JMW, 3217.

¹⁴⁰ See Cohn, *Friedhof*, 35, and P.W. van der Horst, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1991), 22.

¹⁴¹ Wachstein, *Inschriften* (Vol. 1), XLV; (Vol. 2), XXX-XXXI.

¹⁴² *Ibid* (Vol. 2), XXXI.

epigraphic tradition, particularly in the form of Hebrew titles and honorifics, and their subsequent transmutation into German which persisted right into the twentieth century.

The earliest *matzevot*, those from the medieval cemetery which predated the Seegasse, reveal little about the individuals they commemorate, often listing only the name, patronymic and date of death of the deceased, all in Hebrew with dates given exclusively in the Hebrew calendar.¹⁴³ This accords with the *matzevah* as solely *yad vashem*, a 'memorial and a name' intended to grant the deceased a memory within an entirely inner-Jewish religious context. By the late sixteenth century, however, a complex and evolving system of honorifics had emerged in Jewish-Viennese sepulchral epigraphy alongside the practice of lauding life accomplishments. The Hebrew honorifics, usually inscribed in the form of abbreviations, developed from originally Rabbinical titles, the most basic case being the abbreviation R' (ר', 'Rabbi' or 'the great'), from which the patronymic title B"R (ב"ר, 'son of Rabbi/the great') was derived.¹⁴⁴ R', however, was by this era widely used to mean simply 'Mr.', as a result of which the properly Rabbinical epithet evolved into titles such as HR"R (הר"ר, 'the great Rabbi'),¹⁴⁵ CM"R (כמ"ר, 'the great respected Rabbi')¹⁴⁶ and the related term HC"R (הח"ר, 'the great *chaver*', a religious role lesser than that of a Rabbi).¹⁴⁷ As these titles also began to be used in a profane manner, or were used for preachers and religious teachers of any standing or capacity, properly Rabbinical titles evolved further into the more complex MVHR"R (מוהר"ר, 'our teacher and Rabbi, the great Rabbi')¹⁴⁸ and variations thereupon, titles which could only be granted by a *yeshiva*

¹⁴³ Wachstein, *Grabsteine*, 6.

¹⁴⁴ Wachstein, *Inschriften* (Vol. 1), 1. I transcribe the Hebrew abbreviations into Roman script for the convenience of the readers not familiar with the Hebrew script.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 11.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 34.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 77.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 2.

or Rabbinical school.¹⁴⁹ Religious honorifics were thereby persistently appropriated for use in profane contexts, mostly employed for wealthy individuals, family patriarchs and community notables, representing an increasing division between religious and secular standing in the community. Religious epigraphy consequently entrenched itself in increasingly complex forms of Hebrew-religious discourse.¹⁵⁰ Nevertheless, and in contrast to later epigraphic developments, there is no sense of conflict between the religious and the secular in the Seegasse, the latter often being framed in reference to the former. These interrelated titles constituted what Wachstein called a 'scale of title-giving': generally speaking, the longer the title, the higher the prominence, representing an individual's standing in the community, in either a religious or secular context.¹⁵¹

This harmony of religious and secular virtues is evident in a common laudation, *Nadiv* (נדיב, 'generous'), lauding the accomplishment of a religious duty – charity – but as Wachstein noted also constituting 'the usual title in this period for a respected man in the community, perhaps a representative or similar'.¹⁵² Sometimes sublime scriptural references were used as laudations, so for example Rabbi Moshe ben Shimshon (died 1551) was called 'a mound toward which all faces are turned', a Talmudic reference to Zion, towards which all Jews turn to pray.¹⁵³ In the early modern period, complex and often tautological laudations began appearing, for example rephrasing a passage in Isaiah 3:2-3, 'Augur and Elder; Captain of Fifty, Magnate', to read 'wise and elder, counsellor and magnate'.¹⁵⁴ Such laudations increasingly drew on religious language to commemorate communal standing and secular attributes. Such honorifics were often obscure and non-specific, as evident in the proliferation of terms such as *Sar* (שר), *Segen* (סגן), *Qatzin* (קציין), *Gaon* (גאון),

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 11. See also Keil, "Gemeinde", 61.

¹⁵⁰ This was also noted by Wachstein, *Inschriften* (Vol. 1), XXXVII, and Veran, *Archiv*, 41.

¹⁵¹ Wachstein, *Inschriften* (Vol. 1), XXXVIII.

¹⁵² Wachstein, *Grabsteine*, 8-9.

¹⁵³ Reference to Brachot 30a. Wachstein, *Inschriften* (Vol. 1), 2.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 2.

Manhig (מנהיג), *Rosh* (ראש), *Aluf* (אלוף), *Parnas* (פרנס), *Gavir* (גביר), *Tifsar* (טפסר), and *Torani* (תורני), and in the unique case of *B'nei HaChai* (literally 'of the children of the living', meaning 'soldier', בני החי).¹⁵⁵ While some of these terms have a literal meaning (*Gaon/genius*, *Manhig/leader* or *Gavir/wealthy master*), many of them are oblique titles of Biblical or Talmudic origin, originally meaning 'chief' (*Sar* in Exodus 18:25 or *Qatzin* in Micah 3:1), 'ruler' (*Rosh* in Micah 3:1), 'champion' (*Aluf* in Jeremiah 3:4), 'marshal' (*Tifsar* in Jeremiah 51:27) or generally 'someone who cares for the poor' (*Parnas* in Baba Bathra 10a). And while these terms by today have acquired political and military meaning in modern Israel (*Sar/minister*, *Segen/lieutenant*, *Qatzin/officer* or *Aluf/general*), these titles were clearly for the most part honorific in nature, considering the prohibition upon Vienna's Jews throughout this period to organise a formal religious community, to exercise public office or to join the military. Their use as essentially tautological honorifics is evident, to give one example representative of many, in the epitaph of Shmuel ben Mendel Oppenheim (died 1747):

Here lies the *Gavir* and *Nagid*, *Sar* and *Tifsar*, the *Qatzin Torani* and remarkable Rabbi, MHVR"R [our teacher and Rabbi the great Rabbi] Shmuel son of the *Gavir* and *Qatzin*, the glory of up high, the *Nadiv*, famous *Shtadlan* son of the great Rabbi Mendel Oppenheim ZZ"ל [זצ"ל], may his memory be a blessing, from Proverbs 10:7].¹⁵⁶

Wachstein noted, by comparison between their testaments and the *matzevot* of the individuals buried in the Seegasse, that many died impoverished, but that 'piety commanded that a man who excelled in influence, affluence and charity should be honoured through a memorial that would commemorate these virtues'.¹⁵⁷ This demonstrates how the apparent tautology of such honorifics, as in the case above, was indicative of an individual's standing in the community. Their rhetorical use, too,

¹⁵⁵ The term 'soldier' appears in *ibid*, 73.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid* (Vol. 2), 322.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, XXIX.

was indicative of such standing, as for example the epitaph of Moshe Yaqov ben Menachem Manesh Shiq (died 1620) naming him a ‘head of the community’ (ראש הקהל), an unusually specific epithet in the absence of a formal community organisation, nevertheless constituting what Wachstein called ‘the highest honour’.¹⁵⁸ The proliferation of such honorifics reflects the sense of belonging within an exclusive, religious Jewish community which was self-conscious and which commanded the means to commemorate its prominent members, even the impoverished ones, in such a striking manner, despite its lack of formal organisation.

From the the late seventeenth century, the term *Shtadlan* (שתדלן, sometimes also written שתדלון or שתדלין) began to be used more widely, connoting the wealthiest and therefore most influential *Hofjuden*. These days specifically translating to ‘lobbyist’, the term traditionally connotated a representative or an advocate, Wachstein translating it with the German term *Fürsprecher*, essentially ‘speaker-on-behalf-of’, and characterising it as ‘a word that contains the misery of entire centuries’.¹⁵⁹ Considering the harsh restrictions imposed on Jews wishing to live in the city and the repeated expulsions they faced throughout this period, the title *Shtadlan* was obviously more than merely honorific, as also evident in the epigraphy. For example, ‘the *Aluf* and *Qatzin*, *Parnas* and *Manhig* and *Shtadlan*’, Naftali Hirtz ben David Vol “zum weißen Schwanen” (died 1707), from Frankfurt am Main, ‘endeavoured in the imperial court to renew the subsistences [the *Judenprivilegien* required by the court] and to maintain them for the future as they had been in the past’.¹⁶⁰ Similarly, the eulogy of Simeon ben Michael Pressburg (died 1719) states:

The great *Shtadlan* in all his days worked and acted for the good of Israel and achieved favour in the eyes of kings and lords to repeal *gezirot* [‘decrees’,

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid* (Vol. 1), 80.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid* (Vol. 1), XL & (Vol. 2), 23.

¹⁶⁰ Wachstein, *Inschriften* (Vol. 2), 23. The proto-surname “zum weißen Schwanen” was based on his dwelling place, a common practice among Frankfurt Jewry from whence the more famous name Rothschild derives.

used since the Middle Ages in the Ashkenazi world to mean anti-Jewish decrees] whether minor or severe. In places where a man of Israel could not hitherto enter he opened them up to set free, safe and sound, the imprisoned and honour the LORD with his wealth¹⁶¹ (...) According to the *Halachah* [religious legal codex] he held the hands of the learners. He established the pillar of the *Torah* in the religious schools in a number of holy communities.¹⁶²

This inscription demonstrates the importance of Simeon's activism in the court on behalf of Vienna's Jews, collectively invoked as a community of faith through the term 'Israel', his philanthropy in founding religious schools in various communities, and thereby indicates an elementary self-awareness of community and belonging. Simeon was, incidentally, the great-great-grandfather of the renowned poet Heinrich Heine (1797-1856).

The marginalisation and consequent insularity of Viennese Jewry in this period is reflected in the fact that, for the most part, explicit references to work or profession were overwhelmingly religious in nature, most obviously in Rabbinical epithets such as in the eulogy of Yosef Qobler ben David (died 1721) referring to him as a travelling preacher 'from the country of Poland' who died while preaching in Vienna and naming him 'the great Rabbi and remarkable preacher',¹⁶³ or in the more specific epithet 'father of the *beit din*', meaning the chief judge of the Jewish religious court responsible for arbitrating inner-Jewish affairs according to Jewish religious law, a title also often used in this era to denote a community's Chief Rabbi.¹⁶⁴ From the same context is derived the title *Dayan*, meaning a judge in the *beit din*.¹⁶⁵ However, some examples, although sublimely, combined religious and secular pursuits, as on the *matzevah* of Manoach Hendl ben Shemaryah (died 1611):

¹⁶¹ Constructed from Psalm 68:7 and Proverbs 3:9.

¹⁶² Wachstein, *Inschriften* (Vol. 2), 44.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, 119.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid* (Vol. 1), 116.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 452.

Grave-memorial of the genius man who was set on high to Israel like dew. A great man. Versed in all the *Torah*. A mine of knowledge. (...) Paragon of a generation. A light to all of Israel. Altogether wise. The heavens like a parchment to unroll. Father of fathers. Superior of the prophets. Last of the geniuses and head of the intelligent. (...) The great Rabbi Manoach. father of the abandoned.¹⁶⁶

Although the epithet refers to Manoach's great religious learning, passages such as 'the heavens like a parchment to unroll' and 'father of the abandoned' refer specifically, if obliquely, to his astronomical studies and to his charity work respectively. A briefer combination of the spiritual and the worldly is the epitaph on the *matzevah* of Yaqov Yehudah Lema ben Mordechai Pressburg (died 1741) stating that 'the matter of the teaching and the way of the earth that was his measure'.¹⁶⁷ This reads like a succinct reference to the Talmudic injunction that 'he who is versed in Bible, *Mishnah* and secular pursuits (that is *derech erez*, the way of the earth, such as industry and commerce) will not easily sin, for it is said (in Ecclesiastes chapter 4 verse 12) that a threefold cord is not quickly broken. But he who lacks Bible, *Mishnah* and secular pursuits does not belong to civilization'.¹⁶⁸ This constitutes an early example of the comfortable harmony of religious and secular functions that would really come to the fore during the nineteenth century.

Mostly, however, the epigraphy in this period remained vague and non-specific, with phrases such as 'he performed great deeds' abounding.¹⁶⁹ Very rarely did the epigraphy make explicit references to the everyday situation of the Jewish community and its members, with some notable exceptions. Wachstein demonstrated this in a poignant example with the *matzevah* of Rabbi Moshe ben Shimshon (died 1551) which informs us that he 'died on Wednesday in the year 312

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 38.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid* (Vol. 2), 266.

¹⁶⁸ Kiddushin 40b.

¹⁶⁹ Wachstein, *Inschriften* (Vol. 1), 73.

in times of captivity', the date and the phrase 'times of captivity' (שבי מונים) forming a chronogram, a phrase expressing both words and numbers. Wachstein inferred that this 'could lead one to think of the ordinance of Ferdinand I decreed a few months earlier relating to the yellow badge (...) and in general of the precarious situation of the Jews back then'.¹⁷⁰ The ostracism of Vienna's Jews is evident in the near-total absence of epigraphic references to professions and positions within Viennese society, the Jews until the late eighteenth century having been limited to trades such as money-lending and the import of tobacco, the community thus being largely made up of *Hofjuden* and their dependents. Moreover, the absence of reference to these financial professions, contrasted with the abundant references to charity or the 'advocacy' practised by the *Hofjuden*, strongly suggests that business and wealth were not of themselves regarded as commendable achievements. For most of those people who were not wealthy or prominent, the *matzevah* evidently remained merely a *yad vashem*. Representative for so many of these ordinary people is the following inscription, including simply dates, a patronymic and, as had become standard by the later period of the Seegasse, most of the text was compressed into a series of simple and common epigraphic abbreviations such as P"N (פ"נ, 'here lies buried') and TNZB"H (תנצב"ה, 'may his soul be bound up in the bundle of life', from I Samuel 25:29):

P"N [here lies buried] HB"C [the bachelor, literally 'the important man'] Aharon
B"C [son of the respected] Sha'ul from Porschitz [Poříčf, Bohemia] [who] died
and was buried ES"Q [on the eve of the Holy Sabbath] 13 Elul 508 LF"Q
[minus the millennial number] TNZB"H [may his soul be bound up in the
bundle of life]¹⁷¹

A notable development of this period was the adoption of proto-surnames based on places of origin, essentially toponyms, long predating the decree for the

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 3.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid* (Vol. 2), 334.

adoption of Jewish surnames of 1787 and demonstrating a sense of rootedness, despite their segregation, of German-speaking Jewry in the German-speaking world. A common occurrence in the Seegasse is the name Linz, such as on the *matzevah* of Yosef Israel ben Gerson (died 1609): 'here lies Yosef Israel son of the great Gerson (...) also known as Israel Linz'.¹⁷² This distinction between an inner-Jewish, religious name (Yosef Israel ben Gerson), what in later periods became known as the 'synagogal name', and a secular name (Israel Linz) became widespread in later centuries. Considering the frequent expulsions of the era, however, it becomes a matter of interpretation whether this practice represented a sense of rootedness or quite the opposite, namely the rootlessness of Jewish individuals moving around Europe at a time when their presence in many places, including Vienna, was subject to the caprices of the state. The *matzevah* of Shlomo Zalman Vite ben Chaim (died 1698), for example, whose patronymic 'Chaim' is translated into the Italian 'Vite', states that he was 'from the holy community of Venice', yet names him as one 'of the expelled from Austria' of 1670.¹⁷³ This constitutes a rare case of an individual from the second community who returned, and suggests that rootlessness, rather than rootedness, lay at the heart of these toponyms. Significantly, as Martha Keil commented, the cemetery, above all places, therefore 'lent a kind of "sense of home" [*Heimatbewußtsein*] despite voluntary and forced mobility'.¹⁷⁴

The subordination of women within the patriarchal structure of Jewish communal life – as throughout European society – is patently evident in the epigraphy, where women were usually mentioned only in reference to their fathers (...בת, 'daughter of...') or husbands (...מרת, 'wife of...'), and whose attributes were constructed accordingly. A common epithet is the term 'a capable wife', in reference to Proverbs 31:10. Where non-familial accomplishments were lauded, these usually

¹⁷² *Ibid* (Vol. 1), 35.

¹⁷³ *Ibid* (Vol. 2), 3.

¹⁷⁴ Keil, "Gemeinde", 93.

related to charity, for example on the *matzevah* of Edel Horowitz (died 1637): 'This *matzevah* shall be witness, it speaks of the female, greater among the daughters in the distribution of gifts on four horns [reference to the Temple in Jerusalem, see Zvachim 52b] for the poor and the needy. A worthy wife from among the tranquil women. Her praise cannot be recounted'.¹⁷⁵ One noteworthy exception is Rachel Leviya bat Zalman (died 1746) who, similarly to some of the more prominent men of her time, was essentially called a *Shtadlan*, for she 'saved the wealth and the souls of Israel through her advocacy [בשתדלנותה]'.¹⁷⁶ Generally, however, this trend of linguistic differentiation and commemorative subordination of Jewish women was to continue into the nineteenth and even into the twentieth centuries.

Some general trends of this era include the circumscription of death in euphemism, for example (s)he 'entered his/her eternity', relating to the connotation of the cemetery as the 'House of Eternity', derived from Ecclesiastes 12:5, 'But man sets out for his eternal abode', albeit that the *abode* was here omitted due to its materiality, as opposed to the immateriality of eternity.¹⁷⁷ Another common euphemism was to be 'gathered',¹⁷⁸ derived from Numbers 27:13, 'you too shall be gathered to your kin', altogether a common euphemism in the *Tanach* and representing the significance of the cemetery as the 'House of their Fathers' Sepulchres'.¹⁷⁹ A significant theme in the sepulchral epigraphy in the Seegasse relates to martyrs, people who died violently for being Jewish, who were usually denoted through the term 'the holy',¹⁸⁰ and in at least one case derived from Ecclesiastes 3:15 'the persecuted'.¹⁸¹ These would often also include epitaphs such

¹⁷⁵ Wachstein, *Inschriften* (Vol. 1), 175.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid* (Vol. 2), 305.

¹⁷⁷ Wachstein, *Grabsteine*, 5, 8, 6 et al.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 6 & 8.

¹⁷⁹ Genesis 25:9, 47:30 & 49:29, Judges 2:10 & 8:32 et al.

¹⁸⁰ Wachstein, *Inschriften* (Vol. 1), 1.

¹⁸¹ Wachstein, *Grabsteine*, 19.

as 'God avenge his blood before our eyes'.¹⁸² Such references demonstrate the precariousness and uncertainty of Jewish life in Vienna in this period, and were revived in the wake of the Shoah.

The almost exclusive laudation in religious language of an individual's standing within the Jewish community, that loose and officially unrecognised body of subjugated individuals who constituted Vienna's Jewish population in the medieval and early modern periods, reflects interesting parallels but also stark contrasts to the surviving Christian epigraphy of the period, which was both specific and grandiose in reference to individuals' offices and achievements in Christian-Viennese society. Such gravestones often named individuals as a 'citizen of Vienna', an epithet that Jews could not claim until centuries later.¹⁸³ The long strings of titles applied to Jewish individuals were clearly largely honorific, while Christian epitaphs could, along with comparably honorific and tautological descriptors such as 'the honourable and honourable' (*Ehrnuest und Erbar*), nevertheless claim actual offices such as 'member of the inner [or outer] council' of the Habsburg court.¹⁸⁴ This demonstrates the manner in which Vienna's Jews established a sense of community and belonging through an inward gaze directed towards standing amongst their community through achievements such as learning or charity. This sense of community was grounded not only in the familiarity of marriages and interrelations, but also more broadly through the positive identification with a 'community of faith' and the negative sense of a 'community of fate' which required protection by its most influential members against the caprices of an often hostile society. Veran noted that although much of the epigraphic language of the Seegasse, consisting of 'conventional expressions',

¹⁸² Reference to Deuteronomy 32:43 and Psalm 79:10.

¹⁸³ For example the gravestone of Achatzy Müllner (died 1539) & Wolff Bluemb (died 1570), St. Stephen's Cathedral, seventh gravestone to the right of the porch.

¹⁸⁴ For example the gravestones of Achatzy Müllner (died 1539) & Wolff Bluemb (died 1570), St. Stephen's Cathedral, seventh gravestone to the right of the porch, of Wolffgann Lindtner (died 1556) & Juliana Lindtnerin (died 1561), St. Stephen's Cathedral, second gravestone to the right of the porch, and Iacoben Himlreich (died 1570), St. Stephen's Cathedral, fourth gravestone to the left of the porch.

was little more than *de mortuis nil nisi bene* ('nothing but good about the dead'), 'these laudations nevertheless teach us the values of Jewish life'.¹⁸⁵ In this era, and under these conditions, these values were essentially loyalty to the Jewish faith and Jewish customs, erudition and charity, and maintaining strong connections within the Jewish community when connections without were all but non-existent.

The Seegasse was created in the image of a community who suffered under the most extreme forms of social, legal and economic segregation and repeated persecutions, while managing to some degree at least to establish themselves as pillars of their community, sometimes with enough clout to sway the policies of the court vis-à-vis this community. This self-contained space, with its Hebrew-religious memorials appealing to a sense of community and a life beyond that of the material world, to some degree represents the kind of segregated ghetto life which European Jewish communities are generally thought to have lived in the long centuries before modernity. This segregation was the consequence of religious divides, one partly cultivated from within but largely imposed from without the Jewish community and shared to a lesser degree by other religious minorities at the time. It would be short-sighted to isolate the history of Vienna's Jewish community from the broader context of the Counter-Reformation, of which the persecution of Jews was one aspect, which represented the multilaterality of religious intolerance before the modern era.¹⁸⁶ Nevertheless, the efforts invested into the security of the cemetery as the 'House of Life' and a site of rootedness in an often dislocated existence, and the intertextually related epigraphic trends over these centuries, continuously evoke a profound sense of community among successive generations of Vienna's Jews. Their social segregation as a result of religious hierarchisation and the evocation of religious-communal belonging evident in the epigraphy is not unrelated: the references to

¹⁸⁵ Veran, *Archiv*, 42.

¹⁸⁶ As discussed in Charles Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1618-1815* (Cambridge University: 2000), 39, 69 & 136-7, and in Jászi, *Dissolution*, 47.

Jewishness and to a sense of Jewish community in the Seegasse contrast with frequent reference to 'all Christian souls' or 'all of us Christians' in contemporaneous Christian epigraphy.¹⁸⁷ As such, these comparisons demonstrate parallel developments despite segregation between Christian and Jewish sepulchral culture long predating societal emancipation and the consequent fragmentation of societal divisions in the nineteenth century. This strict segregation, expressed in the delineated spaces of the cemetery, underlined through the use of the Hebrew language and a codex of Jewish epigraphic lexis, and profoundly lamented in the inscriptions in reference to expulsions and *gezirot* or anti-Jewish decrees, explains the concurrent need to laud achievement and to canvass recognition in the only realms in which these were available to Jewry at this time: religious learning and charitable benevolence. This underscores all the more the importance of a sense of community when this was the only arena in which such achievements and recognition could be actualised.

¹⁸⁷ For example on the gravestones of Ernest Sewastian Khobler (date unknown), St. Stephen's Cathedral, fourth gravestone to the right of the porch, Wolfgang Lindtner (died 1556) & Juliana Lindtnerin (died 1561), St. Stephen's Cathedral, second gravestone to the right of the porch and Walburch (died 1573) & Georg (died 1609) Prugl, St. Stephen's Cathedral, fifth gravestone to the right of the porch.

1.3 The Jewish Cemetery in Währing, 1784 – 1879

Image removed from electronic version for
copyright reasons – TC

Here referred to as: Währing

Also Known as: Döbling¹⁸⁸

Location: Schrottenbachgasse 3,
Währing

Area: historically circa 15,300m², today
circa 12,800m²

Number of Burials: circa 30,000

Number of Matzevot: circa 9000

Figure 1.6: *Währing*, Google Maps, accessed 7
June 2014, the blank space at the centre of the
image.



Figure 1.7: The Jewish cemetery in Währing.

¹⁸⁸ The use of the name Döbling is due to the cemetery lying on the boundary between the two districts. This can be confusing, but there is only the one Jewish cemetery.

Before its severe desecration in the Shoah, the Währing cemetery would have been an intricate sociogram reflecting the makeup of Vienna's late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century Jewish community. The diversity of the *matzevot* which survived evidence the gradual emancipation and consequent diversification of Vienna's growing Jewish population throughout this period. The cemetery has been analysed in various histories, most prolifically by Tina Walzer, though to date no analysis has been undertaken of the development of the epigraphy in the cemetery.¹⁸⁹ In the 1930s, Rabbi Max Grunwald transcribed and cross-referenced the 63 *matzevah* inscriptions dating from 1784 to 1799, providing a valuable source for further study though without conducting an analysis himself.¹⁹⁰ *Matzevot* analysed from this era below are referenced to Grunwald. The following analysis of the cemetery reflects the emergence of the modern cemetery as a park-like space and a communal monument. The epigraphy, meanwhile, evidences the increasing separation of Hebrew and German inscriptions, reflecting the growing separation of religious and civic spheres as well as the increasing enmeshment of Vienna's Jews in Habsburg society, with a concomitant retreat of religiosity and expressions of Jewishness into the private sphere. The cemetery in Währing exemplifies the various socio-cultural effects of gradual legal emancipation, the overwhelming embourgeoisement of Vienna's Jewish community, finally reflecting the self-assertion of this increasingly institutionalised community.

¹⁸⁹ Compare the various works on the cemetery such as Eva Maria Bauer & Fritz Niemann (eds.), *Währinger jüdischer Friedhof: Vom Vergessen Überwachsen* (Vienna: Educult, 2008); Martha Keil (ed.), *Von Baronen und Branntweimern: Ein jüdischer Friedhof erzählt* (Vienna: Mandelbaum, 2007); Tina Walzer, *Der jüdische Friedhof Währing in Wien: Historische Entwicklung, Zerstörungen der NS-Zeit, Status Quo* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2011); and Walzer, Studemund-Halévy & Weinland, *Orte*.

¹⁹⁰ Max Grunwald, *Grabschriften des jüdischen Friedhofs im 18. Wiener Gemeindebezirk (Währing) aus den Jahren 1784-1799* (Vienna: Victoria, 1934).

The Cemetery

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Figure 1.8: *Fotosammlung Währing*, 1928, JMW, 855.

Emperor Joseph II's radical reforms changed the face of the city as it did the history of its cemeteries. In 1783, burials within the *Linienwall*, the city's outer defensive walls, were forbidden: cemeteries were henceforth to be created in 'removed, isolated places'.¹⁹¹ Such reforms were being introduced Europe-wide as the link between burial grounds and pestilence was being realised, in contrast to Jewish custom which had since ancient times regarded graves as impure and had thus created burial sites outside of human habitats.¹⁹² Joseph's pragmatic rationalism was exemplified in the strict regulation of practice surrounding burial during his rule, although this did not affect Jewish funerary practice which continued to be

¹⁹¹ Cited in Hanns Leo Mikoletzky, *Österreich: Das große 18. Jahrhundert* (Vienna: Österreichisches Bundesverlag für Unterricht, Wissenschaft und Kunst, 1967), 351.

¹⁹² Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of our Death* (translated By Helen Weaver, London: Allen Lane, 1981), 484-92.

administered by the community and its *chevra qadisha*.¹⁹³ The *chevra qadisha* had been reconstituted in Vienna in 1764, the first organisation of its kind in Europe in the modern era, constituting a formal organisation in full control over the administration and practices surrounding the cemeteries.¹⁹⁴ This era witnessed the creation of a new type of urban space: the monumental cemetery, necropolis and park alike.¹⁹⁵ Where Christians had hitherto often been buried in churchyards, charnel houses, crypts and the like, these reforms heralded a revolutionary new space: the necropolis, the large, delineated urban space of the dead. While the widespread individual commemoration of the dead and the spatial segregation of burial spaces in Christian tradition only began in this period, this combination of sanitary segregation and monumental commemoration had been a cornerstone of Jewish tradition for centuries.

Joseph's reforms resulted in 1784 in the closure of the Seegasse due to its location within the *Linienwall*. As with the expulsion in 1670, Vienna's Jews pleaded with the city authorities for the safekeeping of their ancestral burial ground, and the authorities acquiesced.¹⁹⁶ Vienna's Jews thus needed a new cemetery, and so the city administration granted them a piece of land, against payment, in the fields then between the villages of Währing and Döbling, land which was sequestered from the Christian cemetery being created there.¹⁹⁷ The cemetery was created for burial 'of all Jews who died in and around Vienna', demonstrating the regional significance of Vienna's Jewish community.¹⁹⁸ This marks a considerable moment not only in the history of Vienna's Jewish cemeteries, but also in Jewish-Christian relations at the time since, for the first time, the Jewish cemetery lay side-by-side with a Christian

¹⁹³ Mikoletzky, *Österreich*, 351.

¹⁹⁴ Wolf, *Friedhöfe*, 8.

¹⁹⁵ Ariès, *The Hour*, 494-503.

¹⁹⁶ Statistical and historical internal report of the IKG on Vienna's Jewish cemeteries, 23 November 1939, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/I-II/FH/1/1.

¹⁹⁷ Walzer, *Friedhof*, 15-6.

¹⁹⁸ Walzer, Studemund-Halévy & Weinland, *Orte*, 5.

cemetery. This creation of side-by-side denominational cemeteries is demonstrative of the increasing enmeshment of Viennese society in this era, which was to increase with the immigration of divergent peoples from all over the Habsburg lands from the mid-nineteenth century. The rapid increase in the Jewish population, exponentially more so than among its non-Jewish counterparts, and the Jewish commandment of the eternal preservation of the grave, meant that during its history Währing had to be expanded numerous times to accommodate the ever-increasing number of burials.¹⁹⁹ The expansions were paid for by the Jewish community, which financed these acquisitions through donations from its members, testimony to the value invested in the cemetery by the community.²⁰⁰ However, when the community first requested an enlargement of the cemetery in 1833, the local council of Währing, not yet incorporated into Vienna, commented that the Jewish *halachic* provision for the eternal preservation of a grave 'would over the years run into infinity and consume many square miles', but that in any case, concerning this provision, 'its modification moreover lies in the caprices of the state since the Jewish religion is only a tolerated one'.²⁰¹ This reflected the limits of 'toleration' in this era and the limited space, physically and culturally, that Viennese politics were willing to allocate to the Jewish population. However, the eventual acquiescence of the council demonstrated that such views were not necessarily dominant, demonstrating that the relationship between the Jewish community and Viennese polity continued to be characterised by marked ambivalence.

Währing eventually received a purpose-built *beit tahara* or ritual funerary home, presumably dating from the 1820s, designed in the Biedermeier style by the influential Viennese architect Joseph Kornhäusel (1782-1860), who also designed

¹⁹⁹ This expansion is portrayed in a map in *ibid*, 5.

²⁰⁰ Walzer, *Friedhof*, 18.

²⁰¹ Cited in *ibid*, 17.

the synagogue in the Seitenstettengasse.²⁰² The *beit tahara* was noteworthy for the absence of ornamentation, with the exception of a winged hour-glass set into the architrave above the door, symbolising evanescence in the 'House of Life'. The fashionably designed *beit tahara* was therefore representative not only of the growing security of early-nineteenth-century Jewry's place in the city, but also of the impact of styles of the era on the design of the cemetery, intelligible as part of an overall European trend of the creation of cemeteries as grand civic and communal monuments. The emerging styles of neoclassicism, revival and historicism were a dominant trait of post-Enlightenment Europe, lending cemeteries across Europe a similar face through the use of, as Philippe Ariès explored, 'steles with urns, pyramids, obelisks, whole or broken columns, and pseudo-sarcophagi'.²⁰³ There was, therefore, nothing specifically Jewish nor Christian about these practices.

As the nineteenth century progressed, Währing increasingly displayed secular forms of commemoration paralleling similar developments in Christian sepulchral culture at the time. The development of burial practices in Währing represented the fragmentation of religious traditions that had hitherto dominated at the Seegasse, a result of the community's diversification following its socio-economic advancement within mainstream society. In some respects, religious traditions continued to be respected, such as the interment of corpses facing east, where in other respects, social prestige and secular achievement became the dominant themes in the commemoration of individuals and families, as most evident in the creation of prominent family plots along the perimeter walls.²⁰⁴ A trend was therefore discernible whereby the communal burial space was sub-divided according to inner-communal social, cultural and religious groupings, allowing for a variety of expressions of

²⁰² *Ibid*, 16.

²⁰³ Ariès, *The Hour*, 535. See also Tóth, *Grabmalkunst*, 10, and Mytum, *Graveyards*, 3.

²⁰⁴ Tina Walzer, "Jüdische Friedhöfe in Österreich und den europäischen Ländern" in Claudia Theune & Tina Walzer (eds.), *Jüdische Friedhöfe: Kultstätte, Erinnerungsort, Denkmal* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2011), 32.

Jewish identity and belonging. The monumental character of the cemetery was expressed in the ensemble of features such as walls, buildings, paths, foliage and elaborate grave-memorials.²⁰⁵ Through this combination of attributes connoting a burial ground, a park, and a communal monument, Währing thus conformed to a general trend in European sepulchral culture in the nineteenth century, as evident by comparison to its only surviving Christian contemporary, the cemetery at St. Marx, which will be used as a point of reference in the following analysis.

The Matzevot



Figure 1.9: *Matzevah* of Francisca Edle von Hönigsberg (1769-1795), 4-385.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁵ Walzer, Studemund-Halévy & Weinland, *Orte*, 4.

²⁰⁶ These numbers refer to the section and plot number to locate *matzevot* in the cemetery.

About seventy percent of the surviving *matzevot* are lime sandstone, the remainder comprising marble and granite, their complexion thus lending Währing a lighter aura than later Viennese cemeteries where darker, imported stone was used.²⁰⁷ The *matzevah* designs were considerably more diverse than those in the Seegasse, a manifestation of the diversity of the growing community, their economic means, and the diversification of sepulchral cultures in Europe during the nineteenth century. A common design in the cemetery's earliest period is a headstone with two prominent shoulders and incised entirely in text, resembling an open *Torah* scroll, as depicted for example in Figure 1.9.²⁰⁸ These are the most symbolically religious *matzevot* to be found in Währing, inscribed for the most part entirely in Hebrew, often drawing on religious discourse and, aside from occasional heraldic symbolism, employing calligraphic text and the physical allusion to the *Torah* as their only symbolism. As Walzer poetically surmised: 'the word itself is the ornamentation – the word is aesthetic. Thereby the spirit of Judaism – the religion of the word – is brought to the forefront'.²⁰⁹ Significantly, from at least the 1850s onwards, the period from which the majority of intact stones in both cemeteries survive, we find highly similar, sometimes identical, masonry and inscriptions both in Währing and in the cemetery in St. Marx. Examples include the sleek headstones with the word *Wiedersehen*, meaning in this context 'reunion', or the word *Unvergesslich*, 'unforgettable', though the soft material of many of these *matzevot* and gravestones has rendered much of their remaining inscriptions illegible. Such stones in St. Marx were often further augmented to include angels or crosses, constituting a visible religious demarcation between Jewish and Christian sepulchral art.²¹⁰ Nevertheless, their otherwise

²⁰⁷ Walzer, Studemund-Halévy & Weinland, *Orte*, 10.

²⁰⁸ We find these especially in Section 4.

²⁰⁹ Walzer, Studemund-Halévy & Weinland, *Orte*, 15.

²¹⁰ For example the gravestone of Anna (1802-1859), Maria (1814-1870) & Mathias (1799-1874) Schönmann, St. Marx. Note that no database of the plot numbers in St. Marx exists, therefore I cannot supply coordinates as in Währing.

identical designs suggest that Jews and Christians employed the same masons in this period. This complements the epigraphic similarities discussed further below.

Sarcophagi remained a fashionable choice for prominent individuals in Währing.²¹¹ Although sarcophagi, as noted earlier, have been a staple of Jewish sepulchral culture since antiquity, this design in Währing aesthetically complemented the neoclassical tastes which became widespread in Europe in the nineteenth century, reflecting furthermore what Philippe Ariès termed the nineteenth-century 'extraordinary craze for visible and lasting tombs'.²¹² However, all the monumental tombs and mausolea in Währing include large stone slabs covering the graves, demonstrating the continuity of the religious tradition of interring corpses directly in the soil.²¹³ Probably the most common feature in this period was the stele, often simply an erect, sleek piece of fashioned stone, sometimes fashioned to resemble a broken column, which is widely held to symbolise a young deceased person.²¹⁴

While the earliest *matzevot* in Währing were almost entirely inscribed in Hebrew, representing the continuity of epigraphic tradition evident in the Seegasse, the nineteenth century witnessed the proliferation of German-language epigraphy, though usually combined with Hebrew eulogies. These bilingual inscriptions, a widespread practice continuing to this day, often distinguished between a person's Hebrew synagogal name and his or her German civic name, the former usually drawn from Hebrew-scriptural origins and the latter from an Austro-German background. Examples include Eliezer (Hebrew synagogal name) also known as Leopold (German civic name) Epstein²¹⁵ and Chanah (Hebrew synagogal name) also

²¹¹ Used for example in the original *matzevah* of Joachim Ephrussi (1792-1864), 18-7.

²¹² Ariès, *The Hour*, 539.

²¹³ Cohn, *Friedhof*, 45.

²¹⁴ Patricia Steines, "Totenkult als Wegweiser" in Patricia Steines, Klaus Lohrmann & Elke Forisch (eds.), *Mahnmale: Jüdische Friedhöfe in Wien, Niederösterreich und Burgenland* (Vienna: Club Österreich, 1992), 24. This is also true in non-Jewish cemeteries, see Mytum, *Graveyards*, 23.

²¹⁵ *Matzevah* of Leopold Epstein (1798-1864) & family, 1-126.

known as Johanna (German civic name) Todesco.²¹⁶ The two names were often phonetically or etymologically linked, with some names already transcending this linguistic-cultural divide, such as most prolifically Yosef/Joseph or Yaqov/Jacob. Another common practise in this era was the inscription of the western side of the *matzevah* in German, with the eastern side, facing Jerusalem in conformity to established tradition, in Hebrew. However, a notable exception is posed by the *matzevot* of Henriette Forchheimer (1821-1855) and her brother Vincenz Landauer (1824-1856), with the scripts reversed so that the German inscriptions, as the intelligible *lingua franca*, are legible from the path passing by the graves.²¹⁷ Generally, the Hebrew inscriptions began simplifying, often including only names, dates and a selection of standard epigraphic abbreviations. A representative example is the *matzevah* of Josef Hertzka (1801-1870), a simple stele inscribed in Hebrew and German, the Hebrew modelled on scripture and inscribed in an arch of text resembling the prevalent style in the Seegasse. The opening line reads: 'And Yosef Menachem went to meet his heavenly father', modelled on Genesis 46:29, including the otherwise exceptionally complicated chronogram: 'and the righteous will sing and rejoice LF"Q [minus the millennial number]' (וצדיק יריוויוישימיח' לפי"ק), 'will sing and rejoice' spelling $10 + 200 + 6 + 50 + 6 + 10 + 300 + 40 + 8 = 630$ in the Hebrew calendar, 1870 in the Gregorian calendar.²¹⁸

The inscriptions in Währing almost without exception begin with either P" N (פי"נ, 'here lies buried') or P" T (פי"ט, 'here lies'), either abbreviated or in full, and end with TNZB" H (תנצב"ה, 'may his/her soul be bound in the bundle of life'), demonstrating the trend of the last two centuries towards greater simplicity and uniformity in sepulchral epigraphy. The earliest *matzevot*, almost exclusively inscribed in Hebrew, continued to mark belonging within established religious codes,

²¹⁶ *Matzevah* of Johanna Todesco (1808-1870), western Währing (?).

²¹⁷ *Matzevot* of Henriette Forchheimer (1821-1855), 2-69, & Vincenz Landauer (1824-1856), 2-70.

²¹⁸ *Matzevah* of Josef Hertzka (1801-1870), 19-254.

such as the abbreviation S"GL (סג"ל, 'assistant priest'), an abbreviation that completely disappeared in ensuing decades.²¹⁹ Previously Rabbinical titles such as HR"R (הר"ר, 'the great Rabbi'), however, had become near-ubiquitous for males, with ordinary individuals commonly receiving complex laudations, such as Yaqov Qoppel ben Eliyahu Trach (1735-1786), whose epitaph named him 'a faithful and kosher man, HR"R [the great Mr.] Yaqov also known as Qoppel'.²²⁰ The most common epithet for properly ordained Rabbis had consequently evolved into the far more complex MVHR"R (מוהר"ר, 'our teacher and Rabbi, the great Rabbi').²²¹ The earliest inscriptions at Währing retained the highly honorific language of patronage and protection as employed for the *Hofjuden* of the Seegasse. Max Grunwald catalogued the use on those earliest *matzevot* of the titles *Qatzin* (essentially 'leader', fifteen times), *Gaon* ('genius', twice), *Torani* (one learned in scripture, eleven times), MVHR"R (the standard Rabbinical epithet, fourteen times), *Rosh Qahel* ('head of the community', twice), *Even Masdot* ('cornerstone', similar to *Rosh Qahel*, once), *Shtadlan* ('advocate', the term traditionally denoting a *Hofjude*, five times), which complemented the general references to charity (nine times), the favour of kings (six times), the use of the German language (three times), and one interfaith reference.²²² There is thus a striking continuity in epigraphic practice with the language of the Seegasse, particularly in the use of titles and honorifics. However, these titles further reflect the greater autonomy of Vienna's Jews in the Josephinian era and thereafter, with terms such as *Rosh Qahel* no longer being merely honorific. The references to royal favour and the early examples of German inscriptions are demonstrative of increasing emancipation while simultaneously Viennese Jewry continued to occupy a distinctly separate position in Viennese society due to their religion and their special relationship with the court.

²¹⁹ For example Grunwald, *Grabschriften*, 363 & 381.

²²⁰ *Ibid*, 367.

²²¹ *Ibid*, 381.

²²² *Ibid*, 403.

An example of the continuity in traditional epithets with reference to social standing and charitableness is the *matzevah* of Asher Anshil Arnstein (1721-1785), an ancestor of one of the most prominent families of Jewish bankers and nobility in Vienna:

P"ן [פ"ן, Here lies buried] a man of the faithful, a cornerstone, a foundation stone, a father to the wretched, benefactor of benefactors, he helped and aided the broken-hearted,²²³ to those that eat the bread of toil,²²⁴ he will be mourned and lamented by the many poor, H"ח [ה"ח, that is] the *Aluf*, the *Shtadlan*, the *Mefursam* [famous], *Tifsar* and *Nagid*, the *Qatzin*, HR"ר [הר"ר, the great Mr.] Asher Anshil.²²⁵

The eulogy is modelled around the acrostic, a line of text formed by the first letter(s) of each line of the inscription, a kind of eulogy within the eulogy, read from top to bottom, 'Asher Anshil son of son of the great Mr. [בן בהרר, sic, tautology] Itziq Arnstein ZZ"L [זצ"ל, may his memory be a blessing]' (אשר אנשיל בן בהרר איצק ארנהיים זצ"ל), while the year is incorporated into a chronogram stating 'rise [תקום, 500-6-40] and have mercy on Zion', referencing Psalm 102:14. Although there was still no formally institutionalised Jewish community in this period, the language of community was demonstrably intensifying, as on the *matzevah* of Shmuel Wertheim (1710-1786), the grandson of the renowned Rabbi and *Hofjude* Samson/Shimshon Wertheim and an ancestor of another of Vienna's more prominent bourgeois Jewish families: 'Woe, the crown has fallen from our heads,²²⁶ our glory and the head of our community, for a thousand generations you shall be known, generous is your heart and your accomplishment is your story'.²²⁷ The establishment of prominent family

²²³ Constructed from Isaiah 61:1 and Psalm 34:19.

²²⁴ Reference to Psalm 127:2.

²²⁵ Grunwald, *Grabschriften*, 364.

²²⁶ From Lamentations 5:16.

²²⁷ Grunwald, *Grabschriften*, 366.

lineages resulted in the surnames sometimes receiving their own Hebrew epigraphic abbreviations, such as QO"V (קיו) for Königswart²²⁸ and W"ח (ויה) for Wertheim.²²⁹

Vienna's Jewish community in this era was comprised of those 'tolerated' families whose names were later linked with influential Viennese companies, banks and the palaces on the Ringstraße. Their *matzevot* became dynastic memorials, reflecting a strong sense of personal accomplishment which was increasingly derived from material, secular achievement and their greater standing in Viennese society. A characteristic example is the original *matzevah* of Russian/Sephardi-born Joachim Ephrussi (1792-1864), whose family was the subject of Edmund de Waal's 2010 bestseller *The Hare with Amber Eyes*.²³⁰ Joachim's epitaph names him 'Chaim (...) of the house of Ephrussi', employing his Hebrew synagogal name, the 'house' emphasising his patriarchal role at the head of a family dynasty.²³¹ The establishment of a new bourgeois elite comprised largely and visibly of Jewish families went hand-in-hand for many of these families with their increasing self-representation in secular forms, most evident in the increasing use of non-religious, German-language epigraphy, evident furthermore in the break with the previously traditional layout of Ashkenazi cemeteries. Where in previous centuries the central plots of a cemetery had been the most prominent, the outer plots reserved for the poor or for sinners, Währing's perimeter walls are lined with imposing family mausolea, as these plots lent themselves well to the creation of wide and deep family graves. Consequently, they faced in any direction, not necessarily east, as had previously been traditional. However, this was only a visual break with religious practice, as the bodies continued to be buried facing east.²³² This is characteristic of the development of Vienna's

²²⁸ *Ibid*, 363.

²²⁹ *Ibid*, 369.

²³⁰ Edmund de Waal, *The Hare with Amber Eyes: A Hidden Inheritance* (London: Vintage, 2010).

²³¹ Original *matzevah* of Joachim Ephrussi (1792-1864), 18-7.

²³² Walzer, "Friedhöfe", 32.

Jewish community into the nineteenth century, with its fluid boundaries of culture and identity which, however, never broke completely with its Jewish group identification.

While the earliest epigraphy remained in Hebrew and commemorated the deceased primarily through inner-Jewish religious discourse, later epigraphy evinced the opening up of Jewish communal life into mainstream Viennese society. The shift from Hebrew to German thus demonstrably went hand-in-hand with the effects of the Josephinian reforms, including ennoblement and the granting of royal privilege. The earliest example occurred with the Hönig family, originally from Kuttienplan/Chodová Planá in Bohemia, the patriarch Israel (1724-1808) being the first Jew in Austrian history to be ennobled as Israel Hönig Edler von Hönigsberg in 1789.²³³ The *matzevah* of his son, Aharon Moshe (1730-1787), in the form of a *Torah* scroll and exclusively incised with Hebrew characters, contains a passage transliterated directly from German: 'הערר קייסי קעניג באנקהל טאבאק אונד זיעגעל גפעלל דירעקטאר' (*herr kais. könig. bankal-, tabak- und siegel-gefäll direktor*), the title which was the preserve of a number of members of the Hönig family as 'directors of the imperial and royal banking, tobacco and insignia businesses'.²³⁴ More elaborately, the near-contemporaneous *matzevah* of Shmuel ben Yaqov Goldschmid (1735-1787) contains a hybrid German-Hebrew inscription, though entirely incised in Hebrew characters. I underline the transliterated hybrid parts:

The *Bachur*, the *Qatzin*, the *Merumam* [noble], CHR"R [כהר"ר, the great and respected Mr.] Shmuel son of CHR"R Yaqov, Z"L [ז"ל, blessed be his memory] from Königsberg [קעניגסבערג, *Königsberg*] in the land of Prussia [פרייסן, *Preußen*] from the family Goldschmid, he was Shmuel who found favour in the eyes of YR"ח [יר"ח, his majesty] the Emperor Yozefum [הקיסר, *Ha-Kaiser Yozefum*] the second until he ascended to the heights of

²³³ Hönig, Israel (Edler von Hönigsberg), <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/7848-honig-israel-edler-von-honigsberg>, accessed 26 August 2014.

²³⁴ Grunwald, *Grabschriften*, 369.

God [he died], once appointed [האף-אנענט, *ha-af-ernannt*] director of the imperial and royal salt company [די רעקטאר דער קייסרליך קיניגליכ זאלץ-רעגיע, *Direktor der kaiserlich-königlich. Salz-Regie*] in the land of Poland, and always his hand was open to give charity, and by his *Shtadlan* hand worked and acted for the good of his people.²³⁵

Shmuel's German-language title and place of origin are transliterated here, while the linguistic hybridity extends to the term *ha-af* [Hebrew] –*ernannt* [German], 'once appointed'. Joseph II is named personally, his name transliterated in Yiddish style *Yozefum* (יאזעפום) with a Latin accusative suffix instead of the Hebrew equivalent *Yosef* (יוסף), suggesting an emphasis on Joseph II as a gentile and a Catholic. In a further demonstration of the proliferation of Habsburg noble and bureaucratic titles amongst Vienna's Jews, the standard *k.k.* (*kaiserlich-königlich*, 'imperial-royal') soon began appearing in the Hebrew epigraphy simply transliterated as 'ק.ק'.²³⁶

The first German-language inscription in Roman characters appears on the *matzevah* of another member of the Hönig family, Carl (1756-1790), son of the patriarch Israel, stating simply his name and title: 'Herr Herr [sic] Carl Honig Edler v. Honigsberg' (without *Umlaut* in the original).²³⁷ The repetition of the title *Herr* is presumably a linguistic transposition of the Hebrew HR"R, the standard honorific of Rabbinical origin. The inscription names Carl 'a man of the *Gavirim* [the lords or the wealthy] from the House of Israel', a reference both to his Jewishness as well as to his father Israel, who is himself eulogised 'Israel the *Sar*, raised up high to the respected name by the Emperor Yozefum the Second'. This refers to Israel's ennoblement following which, for arguably the first time in the history of Jewish-Viennese epigraphy, the Hebrew honorific *Sar* can be read as an actual title, equivalent to the German *Edler*, and not merely as an honorific. These ground-

²³⁵ *Ibid*, 370.

²³⁶ *Ibid*, 399.

²³⁷ *Ibid*, 373.

breaking firsts on Carl's *matzevah* are completed by the reference to how 'he left behind himself a blessing for all the generations, a fund for the poor of his people and also for strangers', an explicit reference to charity towards non-Jews as well as Jews, this being the unique interfaith epithet referred to by Max Grunwald, above.

The next German-language, Roman-character inscription appeared only three years later on the *matzevah* of Leibe Königsberg (1738-1793), which included more than merely her name, reading: 'L. Königsberg née Horwitz, she died too soon for daughters and friends'.²³⁸ Significantly, the very earliest appearance of non-Hebrew epigraphy was complemented by the use of distinct surnames as opposed to the more usual patronymics. However, these are names that had also demonstrably been in use over a century earlier in the Seegasse, and thus cannot be located solely in the Josephinian reforms which required Jews to adopt a surname and 'a German given name'.²³⁹ The name reform is a cornerstone of the argument that the Toleration Edicts were aimed at the 'assimilation' of Austrian Jewry into 'German' culture, an argument however debunked in a seminal onomastic study by Dietz Bering.²⁴⁰ An epitaph from 1795 exemplifies the significant emergence of a bilingual trend that persists to the present day, in the division of German- and Hebrew-language inscriptions with concurrent German-civic and Hebrew-religious nomenclature, on the *matzevah* of Francisca Edle von Hönigsberg (1769-1795), depicted in Figure 1.9:

[German:] Here rests Mrs. Francisca Edle v. Hönigsberg née Dobruska. (...)

[Hebrew:] H"V [ה"ה, That is] the dear Mrs. Frodl Z"V [ז"ל, may her memory be a blessing] wife of the *Qatzin* and the dear HR"R Wolf Edler von Hönigsberg.²⁴¹

²³⁸ *Ibid*, 381.

²³⁹ Přebam, *Urkunden* (Vol. 1), 582-4.

²⁴⁰ Dietz Bering, *The Stigma of Names: Antisemitism in German Daily Life, 1812-1933* (translated by Neville Plaice, Cambridge: Polity, 1992).

²⁴¹ Grunwald, *Grabschriften*, 387.

By the first decades of the nineteenth century, bilingual *matzevot* were becoming the norm, self-reflections of the emerging class of prominent bourgeois Jewry then establishing itself in the city, as for example on the *matzevah* of Siegfried Philipp Wertheimber (1777-1836), naming him a '*k.k. priv. Grosshändler*', an imperially-royally patronised merchant, where the term *Grosshändler*, common in nineteenth-century Jewish-Viennese epigraphy, does not mean the more usual translation of 'wholesaler', but rather distinguished the proprietors of large businesses from smaller street-merchants.²⁴² The increasingly German-language inscriptions were noticeably non-religious in nature, by contrast to the Hebrew epigraphy which continued to draw on scriptural and religious lexis, reflecting the growing divisions between religious and secular life in the increasingly bourgeois Jewish community.

The general embourgeoisement of Viennese Jewry and their increasing enmeshment within Viennese civil society was most evident in the creation of the monumental family plots along the perimeter wall. A characteristic example is the *matzevah* of the family Epstein, burial site of three generations: the grandfather Leopold (originally from Prague, 1798-1864), Leopold's daughter-in-law Caroline (born in Prague 1799, died in Venice 1856), Caroline's son Friedrich, who carried his father's title Ritter von Epstein (1859-1876), Friedrich's sister Anna (1835-1890) and Anna's husband Joseph Henry Teixeira de Mattos (originally from Amsterdam, 1828-1898), named 'knight of various orders, consul general in Budapest'.²⁴³ While Leopold received a bilingual inscription including both his synagogal and civic names, along with an honorific, a patronymic and various standard Hebrew epithets, the remaining inscriptions were exclusively in German, with the exception of Anna and Joseph Henry's which were in Dutch due to the latter's origin in Amsterdam. They

²⁴² *Matzevah* of Siegfried Philipp Wertheimber (1777-1836), 2-102.

²⁴³ *Matzevah* of Leopold Epstein (1798-1864) & family, 1-126. As the family's 'Aryanised' *palais* today belongs to the Austrian parliament, the parliament published on its website a history of the family and their legacy in the city, *Die Spuren der Familie Epstein bis Heute*, <http://www.parlament.gv.at/GEbF/EPSTEIN/FAMILIEEPSTEIN/Spurenbisheute/>, accessed 27 August 2014.

were, moreover, entirely secular in content, referencing only their familial ties and the pain of their loss, as in 'the adoration of all who knew her' (Caroline), 'the pride, the joy, the hope of those close to him [and in death] their incurable pain' (Josef), and 'the deep pain of husband and offspring' (Anna).

Along with these powerful statements of ennoblement and privilege found on the *matzevot* of Vienna's prominent Jewish families, references to profession began appearing from the earliest days following the Toleration Edicts. For example, Abraham ben Ephraim (1757-1791), obviously a linguist and doctor, was eulogised 'the expert in languages and in the wisdom of medicine', an indication of the newly granted right to higher education which became widespread in the epigraphy of the nineteenth century.²⁴⁴ Occasionally, professional achievements surmounted all else, signifying a shift in the epigraphy towards the exclusive laudation of secular accomplishments. For example, the *matzevah* of Edmund Lewinger (1838-1869) states in German: 'Dr. Edmund Lewinger, attorney to the royal court and court of justice, councillor of the City of Vienna', while the only Hebrew inscription is essentially a transliteration of his name and title: 'Doctor Itziq Lewinger' (דאקטאר איצק).²⁴⁵ The absence of explicitly religious discourse in this inscription, however, is counterbalanced by the continuing division of the inscription into both Hebrew and German, emphasising the intersectionality of the community between Viennese and Jewish.

In this sense, a milestone was set with the *matzevah* of Isak Noa Mannheimer, effectively though not officially the first Chief Rabbi of Vienna's Jewish community.²⁴⁶ Mannheimer, originally from Copenhagen, became famous for his religious reforms in Vienna, resulting in bilingual Hebrew-German liturgy and the introduction of an organ into the synagogue, although Mannheimer was further

²⁴⁴ Grunwald, *Grabschriften*, 376.

²⁴⁵ *Matzevah* of Edmund Lewinger (1838-1869), 5-24.

²⁴⁶ *Matzevah* of Rabbi Isak Noa Mannheimer (1793-1865), Tor I, 6-0-8, formerly Währing.

credited for holding the new Viennese tradition back from the more radical breaks reflected in reform movements elsewhere in Central Europe, for example by retaining the Messianic prayer to Zion in his liturgy.²⁴⁷ This symbiotic approach to tradition and reform was characteristic of Vienna's emerging Jewish culture, reflected in the fact that the Viennese IKG became the sole Jewish community in Europe not to split into factions in the contestation between orthodoxy and reform which defined nineteenth- and twentieth-century Jewish-European society. Mannheimer's role as the first Rabbi of a united and officially recognised community organisation, the IKG, is reflected in the German-language eulogy: 'to the preacher and teacher from the grateful community'. The Hebrew inscription, the linguistic calibre of which is evidence of the vibrancy of cultural and religious Jewish life that had developed in the city by the mid-nineteenth century, reflects the hyphenated sense of belonging growing amongst Habsburg Jewry at the time in the epitaph 'here rests Yitzchaq Mannheimer, religious teacher to the congregation of Yeshurun in the city of Vienna', *Yeshurun* being a literary term of Biblical origin meaning Israel.²⁴⁸ The profundity of the sense of community invested in the IKG is underlined through the closing of the eulogy with a citation from Psalm 40:9-10, 'I proclaimed [Your] righteousness in a great congregation' (בשרתי צדק בקהל רב).

In the epigraphy at Währing, women often continued to be commemorated by reference to their fathers and husbands and through Biblical epithets such as 'a capable wife' (Proverbs 31:10). Louise Singer (1816-1883), for example, according to her eulogy 'wanted only one thing, one thing alone, to be the best mother possible'.²⁴⁹ This gendered commemorative discourse is conspicuous in the side-by-side *matzevot* of the siblings Henriette Forchheimer and Vincenz Landauer, the former commemorated: 'as loyal and true as she was a daughter, so she was a wife

²⁴⁷ Rozenblit, "Assimilation", 227-30. The documents pertaining to discussions on the creation of a formal religious community are contained in Přibram, *Urkunden* (Vol. 2), 307-16.

²⁴⁸ Deuteronomy 32:15, 33:5 & 33:26, and Isaiah 44:2.

²⁴⁹ *Matzevah* of Louise Singer (1816-1883), 11-8A-D.

and mother, mother too she was called by the children left to her by her deceased sister',²⁵⁰ while her brother was lauded for more independent achievements, such as 'boundless kindness', 'charitable work', 'profession' and 'knowledge'.²⁵¹ Nevertheless, women were increasingly also mentioned in reference to charitable deeds, an activity they could engage in *in lieu* of pursuing a profession or a higher education in this era.²⁵² Increasingly, too, titles began transferring from husbands to wives, as for example the *matzevah* of Beila Arnstein (1727-1787) which spells out the acrostic 'Beila the *Qatzinah*-wife of the famous, great Mr. Asher Anshil' (ב-י-ל-א-א-ש-ת-ה-ק-צ-י-נ-).²⁵³ In such cases, the titles were transposed and feminised from their husbands' titles, but as early as 1797 we find an unmistakable case of a stand-alone title for a prominent woman buried in Währing, Blimele [Barbara Baruch] Königswart (1724-1797), called 'an upright woman, the *Qatzinah* and *Gavirah* Mrs. Blimele' and receiving the otherwise unusually complex laudation:

Lament greatly, you generous people, acquiesce to cry out with sorrow for the *Gavirah* who sought justice, who acted righteously, here in the grave she dwells, her days in this life she spent as a stronghold and refuge for any who passed, from her bread she gave to the poor, from her pocket to the needy, the hearts of orphans and widows and the lovers of the *Torah* she made happy with the fruit of her deeds, she went now to the land of life to see the good that is concealed in her destiny.²⁵⁴

Such complex Hebrew eulogies, conferring titles onto women and lauding them for charitable works, indicated their increased social standing in the Jewish community.

By the mid- to late-nineteenth century, the dominant trend which had emerged at Währing consisted of *matzevot* in the form of headstones, commonly steles, often

²⁵⁰ *Matzevah* of Henriette Forchheimer (1821-1855), 2-69.

²⁵¹ *Matzevah* of Vincenz Landauer (1824-1856), 2-70.

²⁵² For example Grunwald, *Grabschriften*, 363.

²⁵³ *Ibid*, 367.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 393.

bilingual in Hebrew and German, including names (often separated between a Hebrew-religious and German-civic name), dates (often separated into the Hebrew and Gregorian calendars), and perhaps a short eulogy employing common Hebrew and German epigraphic phraseology. A representative example is the matzevah of Theresia Rosenthal (1786-1868):



Figure 1.10: *Matzevah* of Theresia Rosenthal (1786-1868), 1-292.

פ"ט	P"t [פ"ט, Here lies]
האשה היקרה והחשובה	the dear and important woman
מרת קריסל	Mrs. Krisl
ראזענטהאל	Rosenthal
מתה ביום ש"ק ט"ו מרחשון	who died on S"Q [ש"ק, the Holy Sabbath] 15 Marcheshvan
בשנת תריכ"ט לפ"ק	in the year 629 LF"Q [לפ"ק, minus the millennial number]
תניצב"ה	TNZB"H [תנצב"ה, May her soul be bound in the bundle of life]
Dem Andenken	To the memory of
unserer	our most
innigstgeliebten	deeply loved
Mutter Frau	mother Mrs.
Theresia Rosenthal	Theresia Rosenthal
geb. Goldscheider	née Goldscheider
gest. am 31. October	died 31 October
1868	1868
im 82. Lebensjahre.	aged 82.
Geweiht	Dedicated
von ihren tieftrauernden	by her deeply mourning
Kindern und Enkeln.	children and grandchildren.
Friede ihrer Asche!	Peace upon her ashes!

Note that the common epitaph 'peace upon his/her/their ashes' was an allusion to Genesis 3:19, not a reference to cremation.

The linguistic divisions evident in these examples represent the growing partition between private and public spheres, of an inner-Jewish religious community as a part of a broader, civic Viennese society. This growing partition was not a uniquely Jewish phenomenon, displaying strong commonalities with the laudation of secular achievements in Christian epigraphy by the 1860s and 1870s, when the barriers regulating education and profession were breaking down. Christians, however, not only marked titles, such as *Magistratischer Markt-Ober-Comissär*, many also referred to their property ownership, such as for example 'tenant-house owner in the Landstraße Nr. 170'.²⁵⁵ This practice is unheard of in Jewish epigraphy, even though Jews from 1867 had the same property rights as non-Jews. Similarly we often find the epithet 'citizen of Vienna'²⁵⁶ or the marking of a locality such as 'civil chimney sweep's spouse in the Leopoldstadt'²⁵⁷ on Christian gravestones in the mid-nineteenth century, but not on the Jewish *matzevot* in Währing. The trends evident in St. Marx nevertheless largely overlapped with developments in epigraphy in Währing, resulting in the widespread practice by the end of the century of listing titles, positions, memberships in noble societies and decorations received. A representative example from Christian practice in the era is the gravestone of Josef Kotschy (1790-1858) naming him '*jubil. k.k. Finanz Rath und Gefallen-Oberamts Director*' and 'Knight of the Order of Franz-Josef', the kind of honorary epitaph which would become widespread in Jewish epigraphy by the end of the century.²⁵⁸

Währing, as the first Jewish cemetery to be created side-by-side with a Christian cemetery in Vienna, reflected the tendency of the era towards rapprochement between religious communities while paradoxically marking a continued sense of segregation. The relationship between Vienna's Jewish community, which was officially institutionalised in 1852, and the state, itself

²⁵⁵ This example from the gravestone of Joseph Fromm (1803-1855), St. Marx.

²⁵⁶ For example the gravestone of Josef Lemberger (1782-1858), St. Marx.

²⁵⁷ Gravestone of Elisabeth Mayer (1815-1859), St. Marx.

²⁵⁸ Gravestone of Josef Kotschy (1790-1858), St. Marx.

gradually evolving into a more federal structure in the nineteenth century, continued to be marked by ambivalence, evident in the reluctance with which the city or state granted the community rights and privileges, such as in the discussions concerning the enlargement of the Jewish cemetery cited earlier. Nevertheless, the dynamics of the era, conditioned through the growing enmeshment of the lands under Habsburg rule, tended towards social and legal emancipation, resulting in the exponential growth of Vienna's Jewish population through the nineteenth century. The resulting changes in Jewish communal life, especially the growing intersectionality of the community within Viennese civil society and the consequent renegotiation of codes of belonging, are profoundly reflected in the development of Jewish-Viennese sepulchral culture in the Währing cemetery. This was expressed in the modification of inherited traditions, in the establishment of a self-conscious new class of Jewish-Viennese bourgeoisie, and in the correlating shift from Hebrew- to German-language epigraphy expressing increasingly secular social standings and achievements. However, the very spatial segregation of the Jewish cemetery and the continuities in the epigraphy, even those which took on more subtle forms such as the transposition of Hebrew epithets into German, demonstrate that Jewish cultural and communal codes of identity were not disappearing, but were rather being renegotiated in this period. Religious and secular, like Hebrew and German, epigraphic codes were therefore not paradoxical but rather complemented each other as they allowed Jewishness to be encoded in particular contexts and to varying degrees, such as belonging in the Jewish community expressed through traditional religious eulogies in Hebrew-language epigraphy, while belonging within Viennese civil society was increasingly expressed through secular titles and positions in German-language epigraphy. The proliferation of heterogeneous codes of commemoration at Währing thus foreshadows the fluidity of Jewish-Viennese networks which were to reach their most profound self-realisation by the *fin-de-siècle*.

1.4 The Jewish Cemetery at Tor I, 1879 – 1917

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Here referred to as: Tor I

Also known as: *Alter jüdischer
Friedhof* (Old Jewish Cemetery)

Location: Tor I, Central Cemetery,
Simmeringer Hauptstraße, Simmering

Area: Circa 232,500m²

Number of Burials: circa 100,000

Number of Matzevot: circa 52,000

Figure 1.11: Detail from *Wiener
Zentralfriedhof*, 1953, ÖNB, Kartensammlung,
KI 104092.



Figure 1.12: The Jewish cemetery at Tor I.

Vienna's Central Cemetery is one of the largest cemeteries in Europe, extending over 2.5 million m², containing circa 330,000 graves with around three million burials since its creation, almost twice the number of living Viennese citizens today.²⁵⁹ It is so large that it has its own internal public bus route. Its creation transformed the eleventh district, Simmering, into a parade of mortuaries, stonemasons and flower shops, with tram line 71 having constituted the physical and associative connection between the city centre and the cemetery since its inauguration in the early twentieth century. Vienna's Central Cemetery is one of Europe's most striking examples of the nineteenth-century necropolis, 'no longer', as Phillipe Ariès put it, 'a municipal repository but a place to be visited'.²⁶⁰ The latter half of the nineteenth century, an era of rapid societal change as a result of urbanisation, industrialisation and the challenges posed to traditional power structures through the emergence of new social classes, produced a civic society with a profoundly developed sense of self-consciousness that increasingly displayed itself, its achievements and its status in monuments and grave-memorials. This self-portrayal was akin to a cult of the dead, with the cemetery recreated as a communal memorial space and a repository of socio-cultural data. As Ariès remarked, 'the topography of the cemetery reproduces the society as a whole, just as a relief map reproduces the contours of a piece of land'.²⁶¹

Tor I is by far the largest of Vienna's Jewish cemeteries in number of *matzevot*, and second only to Tor IV in area.²⁶² Its inclusion on equal footing alongside the predominantly Catholic sections of the Central Cemetery, including its administrative autonomy within the organisational superstructure of the cemetery

²⁵⁹ *Wiener Zentralfriedhof*,

<http://www.friedhofewien.at/eportal/ep/channelView.do/pageTypeld/13572/channelId/-26709>, accessed 22 October 2013. See also Isabella Ackerl, "Vom Zentrum an den Stadtrand: Wiener Friedhöfe und ihre Geschichte" in Ackerl, Bouchal & Schödl (eds.), *Tod*, 40.

²⁶⁰ Ariès, *The Hour*, 502.

²⁶¹ *Ibid*, 503.

²⁶² Statistical and historical internal report of the IKG on Vienna's Jewish cemeteries, 23 November 1939, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/I-II/FH/1/1.

administration, itself a municipal office of the Vienna City Council, contrasts with its spatial and socio-cultural segregation as a discreetly Jewish space. This reflects the layering of cultural networks in the latter years of Habsburg rule, united under constitutional egalitarianism but separated by distinct social, cultural, religious and linguistic markers, reflecting also the manner in which 'Jewishness' continued to be a category which, despite the evident fluidity of identities in this era, determined the encoding of particular forms of communal belonging. The societal stratification of the time as a result of the rapidly changing demographic makeup of the city and the emergence or disappearance of particular social classes is evident in the internal makeup of the cemetery, with its contrasts between rich and poor, religious and secular, traditional and progressive. It is without a doubt the most diverse and monumental of the cemeteries, as the following analysis reveals, and it remains the single greatest surviving monument to the late-Habsburg Jewish community and its profound enmeshment in the society of the imperial capital.

The Cemetery

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The origins of the Central Cemetery lie in Vienna's rapid urban growth beginning in the mid-nineteenth century and coincided with other grand and progressive schemes of urban planning such as the creation of the Ringstraße and the regulation of the Danube. By the 1860s it was self-evident that the municipal cemeteries created during Joseph II's reign less than a century earlier could not sustain the number of burials of a growing metropolis. Vienna's city council decided to settle the issue with the creation of one vast cemetery. The project raised a number of questions, some pragmatic, such as where the cemetery should be located, others reflecting ideological considerations, such as whether this would be a Catholic or interfaith cemetery. The latter point reflected the conflict of attitudes resulting from Vienna's demographic and socio-cultural diversification, resulting in conflicts between secular and sectarian positions as between local and immigrant populations. The liberal-dominated city council decreed on 28 December 1869: 'there is to be a general cemetery, accessible to all religions, but this project should take into account that individual religions will be granted separate sections if they so wish'.²⁶³ The Catholic Church, one of the traditional powerhouses in Habsburg society, protested this decision, yet was overruled by the city council which further decreed on 13 October 1874 that the cemetery was 'not to be consecrated'.²⁶⁴ This religious conflict led one satirist to remark that this was more 'Central Battlefield' (*Zentralschlachtfeld*) than Central Cemetery (*Zentralfriedhof*).²⁶⁵ This debate suggests that traditional powers, such as the Catholic Church, sometimes viewed the changes brought about by legal emancipation with skepticism or even hostility, by comparison to the overall societal rapprochement occurring between religious, ethnic and cultural groups in the state and its capital.

²⁶³ Cited in Hans Pemmer, *Der Wiener Zentralfriedhof: Seine Geschichte und seine Denkmäler* (Vienna: Österreichischer Schulbuchverlag, 1924), 10.

²⁶⁴ Cited in Hans Havelka, *Zentralfriedhof* (Vienna: Jugend & Volk, 1985), 9.

²⁶⁵ Cited in *Ibid*, 12.

The cemetery, construction of which began in 1873, was divided into various subsections, the majority Catholic, eventually including Protestant, Orthodox, Jewish and, more recently, Muslim and Buddhist sections, of various sub-denominations. The first Jewish section, opened in 1879 at Tor I, was secured by a down payment of 36,929.25 Guilders with the IKG contributing to the administrative costs of running the Central Cemetery at a ratio of 20.5 to 346.5, roughly six percent, reflecting the size of its section in relation to the remaining cemetery.²⁶⁶ This moreover reflected the standing which the IKG had achieved within the city's administrative organisation as the representative of a significant sub-stratum of Viennese society, included but remaining distinctively separate. Tor I was originally only assured to the IKG for the duration of the existence of the Central Cemetery as a whole, and not eternally, as was the agreement over the Seegasse and Währing. However, owing to the cultural and historical value of the Central Cemetery and the consequent unlikelihood of it ever being decommissioned, it was generally accepted that it would be preserved.

The awareness within the Jewish community, which had in any case always invested greatly in its cemeteries, of the enormous significance of the Central Cemetery as a socio-cultural space is attested to by the creation in 1879 of a cemetery office within the IKG, whereupon the *chevra qadisha*, which had hitherto administered Vienna's Jewish cemeteries, was responsible merely for the ritual interment of the dead. The cemetery office administered all other aspects of the cemetery, including memorial and architectural projects, which were to increase significantly in coming decades.²⁶⁷ Tor I came to be an expression of the new-found self-assuredness of Vienna's Jewish community and its umbrella organisation, the IKG, a memorial to its standing, its cultural achievements, and its belonging within

²⁶⁶ All following citations from Statistical and historical internal report of the IKG on Vienna's Jewish cemeteries, 23 November 1939, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/I-II/FH/1/1.

²⁶⁷ "Bericht des Friedhof-Comités" in *Bericht des Vorstandes der israel. Cultusgemeinde in Wien über seine Thätigkeit in der Periode 1890-1896* (Vienna: Verlag der israelitischen Kultusgemeinde in Wien, 1896), unpaginated.

the broader socio-cultural matrix of the Habsburg capital. It was an affirmation of its inclusion, at long last, on equal footing with its non-Jewish counterparts in a manifestly multicultural state. This is evident in the speech by Chief Rabbi Adolf Jellinek at the inauguration of the new cemetery in 1879. His words reflect the profound self-consciousness of the Jewish community going into the late nineteenth century, its confidence in the project of modernity, and its security in the Habsburg state. Jellinek proclaimed:

Our community owns three cemeteries which symbolise three phases of our history. The oldest cemetery in the Roßau [Seegasse] commemorates the time of deep humiliation and unspeakable suffering as Israel, in the words of the poet, could call nothing his own but - the grave! (...) The cemetery in Währing belongs to the days of competing and fighting when one began to stand up for a secure legal emancipation, and continued in speech and writing for full, unencumbered civil rights in the state (...) The Central Cemetery represents the modern age and our victory on every level of civil life. With its mute cadaver-stones it will herald the dawn of a new era in history. For who would have thought it possible a quarter-century ago that one single cemetery in the capital of Austria would become the sole resting place for the deceased of all confessions?²⁶⁸

Jellinek's words reflect a profound historical understanding of the cemeteries as spaces moulded in the image of Vienna's Jewish community, albeit framed in a teleological narrative of progress and optimism befitting the spirit of the time – a spirit that was to be challenged by deepening conflicts and, especially, the rise of political antisemitism in coming years. The poem he referred to was Lord Byron's *Oh, Weep for Those*, cited at the beginning of this chapter, which described the grave as the sole dwelling place of the diasporic Jewish people.

²⁶⁸ *Toast auf die Mitglieder der Chewra Kadischa*, 2 March 1879, cited in Patricia Steines, *Hunderttausend Steine: Grabstellen großer Österreicher jüdischer Konfession auf dem Wiener Zentralfriedhof Tor I und Tor IV* (Vienna: Falter, 1993), 43.

At the same event, the later Chief Rabbi Moritz Güdemann proclaimed:

The denominational groups first had to stand side-by-side peacefully in life before one could imagine uniting their graves within one perimeter wall. Once the dividing wall between the living fell, the rapprochement of the dead, insofar as the difference in ritual allows, could follow. In this sense the new cemetery is a monumental witness to the spirit of our time.²⁶⁹

Reflecting the same confidence and optimism as Jellinek before him, Güdemann moreover highlighted the symbolic significance of the unprecedented absence of a dividing wall between the Jewish and non-Jewish burial sites at the Central Cemetery. The design of Tor I was altogether remarkable for both the deliberate and incidental reflections of the burgeoning Jewish community and its place within Viennese society. The absence of a dividing wall was unheard of in Jewish cemetery practice, constituting a decisive break with centuries-old tradition and profoundly illustrating the blurring of boundaries within Viennese society towards the end of the nineteenth century. The cemetery, a planned space, was conceived as beginning at Tor I, hence its colloquial name. This was the site of the *beit tahara* or ritual funerary house, a neo-classical design by the prolific Jewish-Viennese architect Wilhelm Stiassny (1842-1910), himself later buried in this cemetery, depicted in Figure 1.12.²⁷⁰ Although the IKG autonomously administered the cemetery, the numbering system of the sections and their spatial layout was integrated into the infrastructure of the Central Cemetery as a whole, a demand of the city council when negotiations over the IKG's lease of the land was first discussed.²⁷¹ Within this there are various subdivisions, such as the soldiers' graves created in section 76B in the 1920s, while the area surrounding the *beit tahara*, as well as the plots running along the Ceremonial Avenue and the perimeter wall, clearly lent themselves to the exuberant

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁰ *Matzevah* of Wilhelm Stiassny (1842-1910), 20-1-25.

²⁷¹ Steines, *Steine*, 37-8.

expression of prominence and wealth, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter. The plots along the perimeter wall to the west include the imposing family mausolea of industrialist and entrepreneuring families as well as the *ohelim* (literally 'tents') or grave-houses of Chassidic Rabbis, many of whom fled to Vienna during and after the First World War. In summary, the spatial layout at Tor I expresses both the illustriousness and the diversity of Vienna's Jewish community in the *fin-de-siècle*.

The Matzevot

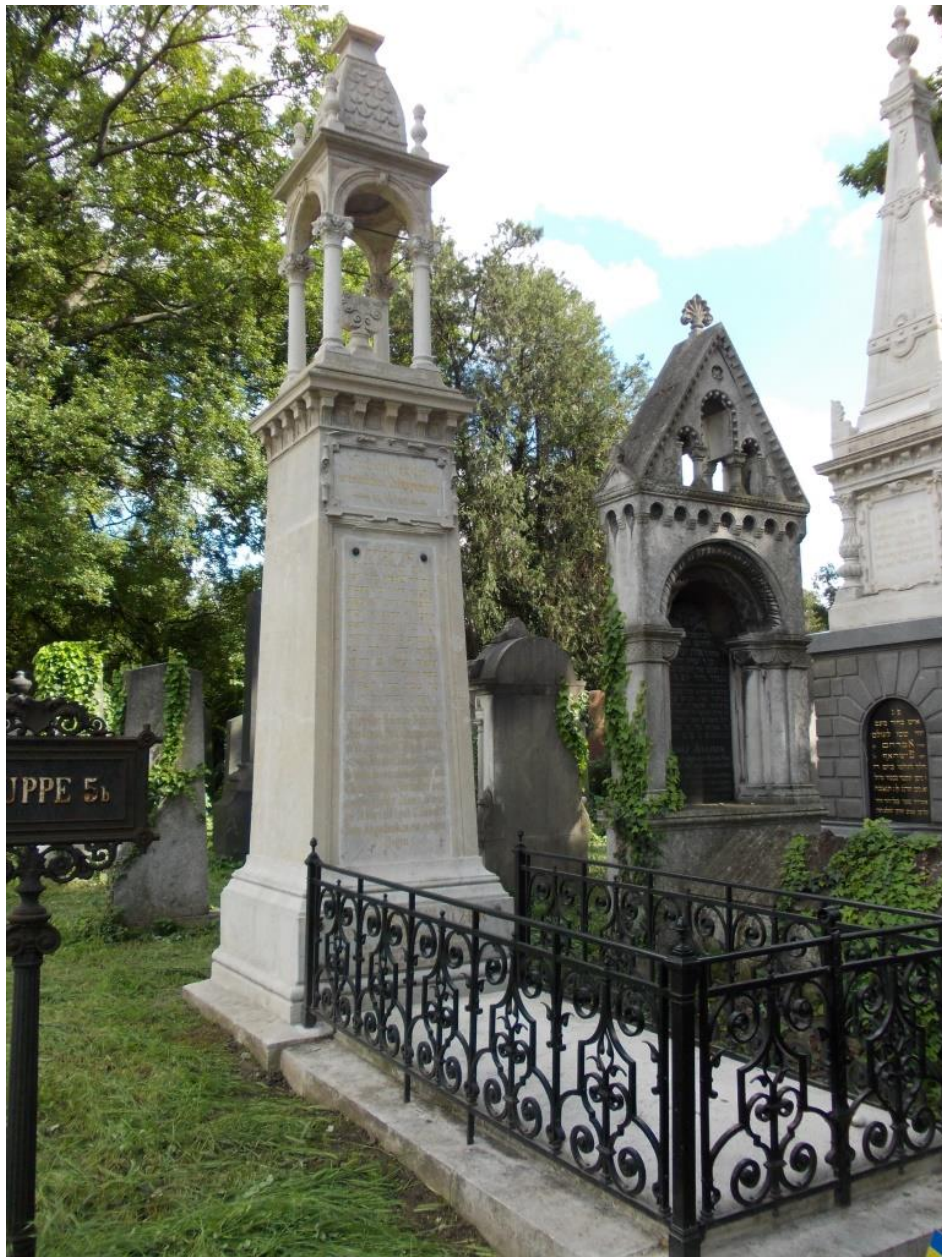


Figure 1.14: *Matzevah* of Salomon Sulzer (1804-1890), 5B-1-1.

The *matzevot* at Tor I reflect the greatest diversity in the history of Jewish-Viennese sepulchral culture, in size, form, style and inscription, the exception to the latter being the predominance of German- and/or Hebrew-language inscriptions. Due to limited restoration works in recent decades and their relative youth compared to the *matzevot* of Vienna's older Jewish cemeteries, the *matzevot* at Tor I are generally well-accessible and for the most part legible. However, by contrast to the older cemeteries, no transcripts were made of their inscriptions, which number over 50,000 in all. The analysis conducted here, the first of its kind, is primarily concerned with the question of novelty and diversity in order to present a broad picture of the various encodings of identity and communal belonging evolving in this period. The *matzevot* at Tor I reflect the profound and multifarious intersections of individual, familial and communal identities and networks conditioned by the vicissitudes of the era and the consequent blurring of socio-cultural and religious boundaries. Yet the very congregation of all these individuals together in one space, encoded and perceived as a distinctly 'Jewish' space, is a reflection of the unique condition in Vienna in that all streams and movements within this vastly heterogeneous Jewish population were united in the IKG, who administered this space. The *matzevot* reveal altogether different conceptions of what Jewishness meant to a given individual, family, or group – and its relationship to other facets of identification and commemoration, such as class, gender or social standing – which were, however, altogether united in the understanding of belonging to a loosely defined but nevertheless cohesive Jewish community. The understandings of Jewishness expressed at Tor I are therefore kaleidoscopic: singular yet multiple.

Unlike in older cemeteries, where locally available stone lent the cemeteries a characteristically light aura, the railway network created in the nineteenth century led to the import of stone from as far as Bohemia and Italy, and resulted in a greater

diversity in colour and texture at Tor I, as elsewhere in the Central Cemetery.²⁷² Family plots, whether modest or ostentatious, became the norm in the late-nineteenth century, with individual *matzevot*, whether simple or massive, often commemorating several generations of the same family, as opposed to a single *matzevah* being erected for each individual as had been established tradition, reflecting the growing importance of the family as a focal point of belonging in the unprecedented anonymity of modern, metropolitan life. Wealth, influence and the prevailing tastes of the time combined to produce lavish memorials designed by renowned architects, such as most prolifically Max Fleischer (1841-1905), who was himself buried at Tor I in a mausoleum of his own design.²⁷³ Born in Proßnitz/Prostějov, Moravia, he was one of Vienna's most prominent Jewish architects whose oeuvre included a variety of synagogues, all of which were destroyed in the November Pogrom in 1938. He was proficient in styles ranging from Moorish to neo-Gothic, as evident in his work at Tor I. There is disagreement amongst art historians as to whether Fleischer's neo-Gothic memorials, which at least superficially resemble Christian sacral architecture, simply reflect the tastes of the time, or whether they reflect a drive towards 'assimilation' through the conscious abandonment of idiosyncratic Jewish architectural styles.²⁷⁴ Considering that Fleischer employed a range of styles, and that there is no exclusively 'Jewish' style in sepulchral architecture, the former view appears more credible. Fleischer's grave-memorials are some of the most ornate in the entire cemetery, commissioned by Rabbis, artists, politicians and businessmen, his work thus reflecting the elite of Vienna's Jewish community in its most illustrious era. Significantly, many of these *matzevot* were financed by the IKG to honour 'distinguished, especially notable men

²⁷² Andreas Rohatsch, "Die Denkmalgesteine historischer jüdischer Friedhöfe in Wien – Gesteinskundliche Grundlagen" in Theune & Walzer (eds.), *Friedhöfe*, 266.

²⁷³ *Matzevah* of Max Fleischer (1841-1905), 5B-35-85.

²⁷⁴ Compare for example Fredric Bedoire, *The Jewish Contribution to Modern Architecture 1830-1930* (New York: Ktav, 2004), 330, and Anthony Alofsin, *When Buildings Speak: Architecture As Language in the Habsburg Empire and Its Aftermath, 1867-1933* (University of Chicago: 2008), 44.

of the Vienna Community',²⁷⁵ including Rabbis,²⁷⁶ cantors,²⁷⁷ religious teachers,²⁷⁸ community notables,²⁷⁹ and political fighters for Jewish legal emancipation.²⁸⁰ While these are the most conspicuous of grave-memorials at Tor I, representations of a self-conscious and confident community organisation, they are reflective solely of the elite of Vienna's *fin-de-siècle* Jewish community and must therefore be contextualised by contrast to the numerous other *matzevot* making up this cemetery.

Bilingual Hebrew-German epigraphy continued to proliferate at Tor I, albeit with exclusively German-language inscriptions increasing while established Jewish epigraphic practices such as the listing of patronymics and the exclusion of dates of birth steadily declining. The epigraphy in this era progressively ossified into standard practices including in Hebrew-language epitaphs the use of abbreviations such as P"N/P"T and TNZB"H and of simple phraseology such as a 'dear' or 'important' man or woman,²⁸¹ and in German-language epitaphs the use of phraseology such as 'mourned deeply', 'unforgettable' and 'peace unto his/her ashes'.²⁸² Languages other than German and Hebrew were negligible to non-existent, with the possible exception of the Chassidic *ohelim*. These were exclusively inscribed in Hebrew, but also demonstrated Yiddish influences, as in the spelling of town names, for example אױיערנא/Ozierno, today Ozerna in Ukraine, reflecting the Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazi world of pre-Shoah East Europe from which Chassidism originated. The orthodox religious character of this epigraphy is underlined through the use of scriptural

²⁷⁵ "Bericht" [1896], unpaginated.

²⁷⁶ For example the *matzevah* of Adolf Jellinek (1820-1893), 5B-1-2.

²⁷⁷ For example the *matzevah* of Salomon Sulzer (1804-1890), 5B-1-1.

²⁷⁸ For example the *matzevah* of Sigmund Freud's childhood religion teacher, Samuel Hammerschlag (1826-1904), 20-1-84. Their relationship and Hammerschlag's influence on Freud is explored in Gerhard Fichtner, "Freud and the Hammerschlag family: A formative relationship", *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 91 (2010).

²⁷⁹ For example the *matzevah* of Salomon Rosner (1848-1905), 20-1-95.

²⁸⁰ For example the *matzevah* of Adolph Fischhof (1816-1893), 5B-1-3.

²⁸¹ For example on the *matzevot* of Samuel König (1833-1890), 19-16-21; of Solomon Elias (1847-1899), 20-14-57; of Salomon Rosner (1848-1905), 20-1-95; *et al.*

²⁸² For example the *matzevot* of Josef Zerner (1839-1891), 8-61-41; of Emilie Wertheimer (1837-1893), 19-15-69; of Adolf Löwe (1835-1897), 8-62-23; *et al.*

language, for example Aramaic terminology from the *Zohar*, the central text of *Qabbalah*, employed on the *ohel* of Rabbi Menachem Nachum Dov Friedmann (1845-1883).²⁸³

The Chassidic *ohelim* were exceptional, however, while the increasingly secular language of the *matzevot*, coupled with the decline in the use of the Hebrew language, caused growing consternation in some segments of the IKG. By the early twentieth century, the IKG's cemetery office bemoaned the occurrence of mistakes in the Hebrew-language epigraphy in its annual reports and requested to conserve the 'religious character' of Tor I by including 'next to the German text at least a few Hebrew characters or words on the gravestones'.²⁸⁴ The epigraphy at Tor I reveals that this remained only a request, with exclusively German-language inscriptions and/or eulogies of a secular nature continuing to abound. While these did not necessarily preclude a continued sense of Jewishness, albeit in reconceived form, the issues surrounding the inclusion of Hebrew epigraphy were early indications of differences in opinion over the character of Jewish-Viennese communal life and culture representing deep schisms in the making, such as between religious or secular, or at least orthodox and non-orthodox, understandings of Jewishness, as on another level between individual and communal authority in commemorative practices. This decline in the use of the Hebrew language has been interpreted by some, such as Julius Schoeps, as a symptom of Jewish 'assimilation'.²⁸⁵ Yet it is symptomatic only of a shift in indicators of cultural identification among Vienna's Jews and the intersectionality of Jewishness with other forms of belonging, as the following analysis of the epigraphy reveals.

²⁸³ *Ohel* of Rabbi Menachem Nachum Dov Friedmann (1845-1883) & Rabbi Levi Yitzchaq (1847-1916), 7-30-95.

²⁸⁴ *Bericht* [1908], 38-9.

²⁸⁵ Julius Schoeps, "The abortive Emancipation" in Timms & Hammel (eds.), *Dilemma*, 97.

Centuries of evolution in the epigraphic lauding of individuals through honorifics and titles continued to develop at Tor I with the proliferation of civic titles, whether noble, academic or professional, along with the prevailing religious honorifics of past eras. A characteristic example is the honorary *matzevah* of Leopold Kompert, which reads: 'PhD, k.k. government councillor. Citizen and city councillor of the City of Vienna. Lower Austrian state school councillor, representative of the IKG, knight of various orders etc.'²⁸⁶ His epitaph represents a broad intersection of realms: academic (PhD), professional (government/city councillor), political (school councillor), communal (representative of the IKG) and noble (knight of various orders), the multiplicity of belongings underscored through the simple word 'etc.', an allusion to Emperor Franz-Joseph's 119-word official title, which was punctuated throughout with 'etc.'. The epitaph further names Leopold simply but powerfully a 'citizen of Vienna', a popular epithet amongst Viennese Jews in the late nineteenth century,²⁸⁷ representing Viennese Jewry's inclusion after centuries of ostracism into Viennese civil society, further tying into a trend of referencing an individual's birth and/or death in Vienna.²⁸⁸ Noble titles abounded in this era, such as 'Edle(r)' or 'Ritter von',²⁸⁹ while government positions were especially commonly referenced, again reflecting Viennese Jewry's newly-awarded freedom to participate in governance and to hold public office, and their pride in doing so, as for example Adolf Schwab's (1833-1897) *matzevah* naming him 'member of the house of representatives of the Austrian Reichsrath'.²⁹⁰ Of special prominence were any laudations, awards or honours received from the emperor or the state, foreshadowing the widespread

²⁸⁶ *Matzevah* of Leopold Kompert (1822-1886), 6-1-2.

²⁸⁷ Also included on the *matzevot* of Benjamin (1825-1892) & Josef (1854-1916) Scheiner, 7-28-49; of Friedrich Breitenfeld (1824-1897), 8-62-22, *et al.*

²⁸⁸ For example the *matzevot* of Rosalia Edle von Kuffner (1831-1899), 7-1-19, born in Stampfen/Stupava; of Alois Kuffner (1820-1890), 5B-35-18, born in Břeclav/Lundenburg; of Moritz (1819-1893) & Minna (1822-1906) Miskolczy, 20-21-25, born in Vásarhely/Trhovište and Bonyhád respectively; *et al.*

²⁸⁹ For example on the *matzevot* of Rosalia Edle von Kuffner (1831-1899), 7-1-19; of the Freiherr von Springer family, 5b-1-4 *et al.*; and including in one case the French-language *Cavaliere de* on the *matzevah* of Alois Kuffner (1820-1890), 5B-35-18.

²⁹⁰ *Matzevah* of Adolf Schwab (1833-1897), 8-62-14.

commemoration of soldiers amid expressions of loyalty to the Habsburg state during the First World War, such as the *matzevah* of Israel Wellisch (1822-1899) naming him 'k.k. board member of the military-geographical institute. Holder of the golden medal of achievement, „Viribus unitis,”²⁹¹ etc.²⁹² The abundance of references, explicit or not, to the emperor and the Habsburg state, reflect the depth of the patriotism of Viennese Jewry in this era and their sense of belonging within Habsburg Austria.

These *matzevot* reflect the meteoric rise, often over the space of merely one generation, of a community largely composed of immigrants many of whom had until very recently been impoverished and severely ostracised. The profound enmeshment of Vienna's Jews within Viennese society, and their pride in showing off their standing in their grave-memorials, was not only evident amongst the elite, but also in the abundance of references to humbler positions and professions, such as the *matzevah* of the Magyar family, who were eulogised as 'Senior Clerk of the insurance company "Der Anker"' (Ludwig), 'merchant's widow' (Katharina) and 'real estate owner' (Alexander), with their epitaphs referring both to their origins in Hungary, as their name suggests, and to their residence in Vienna.²⁹³ This is representative of a large segment of the Jewish-Viennese population which had emigrated from elsewhere in the Habsburg state, was ascendant in the middle classes, and commemorated itself in increasingly secular codes in its sepulchral epigraphy. In similar examples, the *matzevah* of Adolf Löwe (1835-1897) names him simply a 'writer',²⁹⁴ while the *matzevah* of Jacques Rubinstein (1841-1912) names him a 'banker from Galatz/Galați'.²⁹⁵ The ascendancy of the Jewish population as a result of legal emancipation was especially poignantly represented by the emancipation of

²⁹¹ Meaning 'with united forces', a motto of Emperor Franz Joseph I.

²⁹² *Matzevah* of Israel Wellisch (1822-1899), 20-14-58.

²⁹³ *Matzevah* of Ludwig (1840-1880), Katharina (1815-1889) & Alexander (1843-1899) Magyar, 19-1-45.

²⁹⁴ *Matzevah* of Adolf Löwe (1835-1897), 8-62-23.

²⁹⁵ *Matzevah* of Jacques Rubinstein (1841-1912) & family, 20-24-201.

women taking place in this period, whether expressed more subtly in the equalisation of commemoration of husband and wife in form and content, or more explicitly, such as the *matzevah* of Berta Krüger (1857-1907) naming her 'founder and first president of the Empress Elisabeth apprentice girls' and female workers' home', later renamed *Krügerheim* in her honour.²⁹⁶

The proliferation of German-language titles, although evidencing the increasing intersectionality of the Jewish population and, in some cases, a growing degree of secular self-understanding, remained in some senses analogous to the long-standing tradition of religious, Hebrew-language honorifics, which were often used concomitantly in *fin-de-siècle* epigraphy. For example, the honorary *matzevah* of Gustav Kohn (1840-1915), the first Vice-President of the IKG, includes a Hebrew-language epitaph reminiscent of the language of the Seegasse, naming him 'a dear, intellectual and respected man, *Parnas* and *Manhig* of our community, MV"ח [מו"ח, our teacher and Rabbi] Naftali Cohen Z"l [נ"ח, may his memory be a blessing]', while the German-language epitaph, reminiscent of the epitaph of Leopold Kompert discussed above, names him 'Dr. Gustav Kohn, royal and legal councillor, member of the *k.k.* Lower Austrian state school council, Knight of the Order of the Iron Cross and of the Order of Franz Joseph, First Vice-President of the Vienna Jewish Community'.²⁹⁷ The Hebrew eulogy proclaims that 'his business was the requirements of his faith, and the poor were the children of his house. It was the lot of all his labours, the reason his name will not be forgotten for ever after him', while the German eulogy simply reads 'the Vienna Jewish community to their unforgettable first vice-president'. In both inscriptions, the man is honoured for his intellectual achievement and learning, his standing in Jewish-Viennese society and in Habsburg society more broadly, while both invoke his memory lasting through his good reputation. This is demonstrative of the manner in which the secular and religious,

²⁹⁶ *Matzevah* of Berta Krüger (1857-1907), 51-1-11.

²⁹⁷ *Matzevah* of Gustav Kohn (1840-1915), 52A-1-12.

German- and Hebrew-language epigraphy mirrored each other in characteristics and content, and were furthermore complementary rather than conflicting, representing the comfortable intersectionality of Jewish-Viennese society in this time. Kohn's *matzevah* also demonstrates the manner in which the IKG as an institution became a major player in commemorative practices at Tor I, a result of its hegemony over all social, cultural and religious aspects of Jewish communal life following its institutionalisation in 1852, a fact underscored in the cemetery with the assumption of full control over its administration with the opening of a cemetery office in 1879. The language of community which had evolved through centuries of Jewish-Viennese epigraphy had reached a zenith by the end of the nineteenth century, with both Hebrew- and German-language references to 'community' (קהל or *Gemeinde* respectively) often clearly meant synonymously with the IKG. Broader reference to Jewry or Jewish 'people'-hood was, by contrast, usually connoted through the terms עם or *Volk*.²⁹⁸ The intersection of religious and secular functions of the IKG is evident in the range of honorary *matzevot*, the activities they commemorate, as also in the linguistic enmeshment of Hebrew and German epigraphy.

Even epigraphic trends at Tor I which appear worlds apart in content and connotation, ostensibly embodying the schism between 'traditional' and 'assimilated' Jewry, certainly between religious and secular, upon closer inspection are not contradictory at all, but in fact mirror each other in purpose and language, as the following comparison of two *matzevot* demonstrates. The nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of increasingly complex, and increasingly secular, German-language epitaphs, often inscribed on imposing, neoclassical grave-memorials, indicative of the aggrandised self-image of the families buried there, their prominent standing in Habsburg society and, more implicitly, their lack of formal religiosity. A characteristic and flamboyant example is the *matzevah* of Eduard

²⁹⁸ For example on the *matzevah* of Salomon Sulzer (1804-1890), 5B-1-1.

Wiener von Welten (1822-1886), a banker and nobleman whose *palais* stands on the Schwarzenbergplatz. The *matzevah* was designed by Max Fleischer and reads:

Here rest[s] Eduard Ritter Wiener von Welten, *k.k. pr.* [imperial-royally patronised] wholesaler, royal Portuguese Consul General, president of the directorate of the *k.k. pr.* Austrian Credit-Institute for Commerce and Industry, president of the directorate of the first *k.k. pr.* Danube Steamboat Shipping Company, Commander of the Order of Franz Josef, Knight of the Order of the Iron Crown third class, Commander of the royal Portuguese Order of Villa Vicosa, of the royal Portuguese Order of Christ and of the Royal Spanish Order of Charles III, etc. etc.²⁹⁹

We can compare this with an early example of a Chassidic *ohel*, lying nearby along the perimeter wall, that of Rabbi Menachem Nachum Dov Friedmann (1845-1883) and his son-in-law Rabbi Levi Yitzchaq (1847-1916).³⁰⁰ Menachem was the grandson of the renowned Rabbi Israel Friedmann of Ruzhin (1796-1850), the patriarch of a number of influential Chassidic dynasties such as Sadigorah, Boyan and Chortkov, some of whom we will encounter later.³⁰¹ Menachem died in Vienna by chance, at a time when immigration from Galicia, the birthplace of Chassidism, was only just beginning, and there was no large Chassidic community in Vienna to speak of yet. This *ohel* therefore foreshadows the development of a sub-culture of Chassidism in Vienna that would emerge following the First World War. The language of commemoration for Chassidic Rabbis matches any of its German-language counterparts in complexity and pomposity, sometimes running for several lines, as in the case of Menachem, whose epitaph states: ‘*tziyun* [ציין, grave-marker] of the righteous Rabbi, the holy candle [בוצינא קדישא, reference to the *Zohar*], MHVR”R

²⁹⁹ *Matzevah* of Eduard Wiener von Welten (1822-1886), 6-29-43.

³⁰⁰ *Ohel* of Rabbi Menachem Nachum Dov Friedmann (1845-1883) & Rabbi Levi Yitzchaq (1847-1916), 7-30-95. In Steines, *Steine*, the names of various members of the Friedmann family are confusingly mixed, and the dates do not all match the records. I have therefore stated names and dates here exactly as they are given in Hebrew on the *ohelim* themselves.

³⁰¹ Steines, *Steine*, 91.

[מהור"ר, our teacher and Rabbi, the great Rabbi] Menachem Nachum Dov ZLH"R [זלה"ה, his memory will live in the world to come]'. The epithet of his son-in-law is even more complex:

ADMO"R [אדמו"ר, Our lord, teacher and Rabbi] the holy and pure Rabbi,
MOH"R [מוה"ר, our teacher, the Rabbi] Levi Yitzchaq ZZVQLH"R [זצוקקלה"ה,
his righteous, holy memory is invoked in blessing and will live in the world to
come] from Ozierno, grandson of the great tamarisk, the divine man, crown of
Israel, from Ruzhin ZLH"R.

These epithets, including the lavish title ADMO"R which specifically denoted the leaders of these powerful Chassidic dynasties, worked merely as titles on the exterior of the *ohelim*, the interior containing even more elaborate, Hebrew-language eulogies. The total absence of even the most superficially non-Jewish attributes, including civic surnames (as in their case Friedmann) or German-language epitaphs is underscored by the explicit reference to Jewish peoplehood and the community of faith in the eulogies. Menachem's death, for example, is called 'great grief to the Jews, weeping and lamentation for the Chassidim', which moreover layers belonging specifically within the Chassidic community and within the Jewish community more broadly. Such inscriptions include long honorifics and patronymics, entirely devoid of civic data such as birthdates or dates in the Gregorian calendar, identifying these individuals solely by their Hebrew-religious nomenclature, their lineage and, sometimes, their place of origin. However, such complex strings of honorifics, the reflection of great prominence and standing within one and the same Jewish community, albeit with an appeal to different socio-cultural networks and standards of achievement, are remarkably similar to the German-language, bourgeois epigraphy we analysed above. Eduard Wiener von Welten's epithet, for example, is so long that it is concluded with 'etc. etc.', alluding, as discussed above, to Franz-Joseph's official title. Eduard's epithet is altogether secular in the absence of even the most basic

religious symbolism or language, even referencing Eduard's membership in the royal Portuguese Order of Christ [!]. Nevertheless, despite his obvious affinity to his non-Jewish peers in the late-Habsburg nobility and his pride in his international standing in European civil society, Eduard married a Jewish woman, Henriette Goldschmidt (1829–1894), and chose to be buried in a Jewish cemetery at a time when total legal emancipation meant that any citizen of any faith could be buried in any cemetery. Eduard's *matzevah* and the Friedmanns' *ohel* represent extremes of identification, and yet they also represent a remarkable degree of linguistic and commemorative affinity, moreover befitting the extraordinary love of titles and honorifics regarded as stereotypically Austrian to this day, highlighting the inherent problem of casting Jewish communal and cultural life in this period in strong polarities, when the inscriptions reveal a remarkably similar discourse albeit reflecting a variety of sub-cultures within the broader Jewish community and within Viennese society. What these diverse epigraphic cultures express are nothing more nor less than differing engagements with what it meant to be Jewish in Vienna in the *fin-de-siècle*, rather than representing different degrees of Jewishness.

The increasing enmeshment of Jews in Viennese civil society, such as through the assumption of secular roles, did not constitute a teleological move towards secularisation in commemorative practices, however, just as trends such as the growing dominance of the German language in epigraphy did not represent a sweeping decline in the expression of a sense of Jewish group belonging. The intersectionality of cultures and the possibility of layering identities to various degrees, enabled by the conditions of *fin-de-siècle* Viennese society, allowed for a great degree of personal freedom in the encoding of 'Jewishness' or 'Austrianness', depending on the given circumstance, as evident in the *matzevah* of Emanuel Weber (1851-1906), topped with a *Magen David* and bilingually inscribed in Hebrew and

German.³⁰² Emanuel was neither an IKG representative nor a religious functionary, but a 'k.k. regional court councillor', a judge. His Hebrew-language eulogy reads:

Marker for the soul: wise and respected. The sublime is in the heavens and in his attributes he is loyal to his people and in his faith loves Zion and in the name of the Jews boast of our teacher Mr. Menachem son of Mr. Abraham, Z"l [ז"ל, may his memory be a blessing], Weber, Y"n [י"נ, his soul departed] on Tuesday 24 Qislev, H"h [ה"ה, that is] the deceased Menachem the Jewish judge!

Such inscriptions demonstrate the strong sense of belonging in a Jewish community prevalent amongst the majority of Viennese Jewry going into the twentieth century, including amongst those who occupied prominent secular positions within Viennese society. In this case, Menachem/Emanuel's eulogy succinctly entwines his personal religiosity, his secular position as a judge, and his belonging to the Jewish people in a seamless layering of attributes and networks of belonging.

The late-nineteenth century evidently witnessed a recalibration of the notions of Jewishness, peoplehood, and community, which came to be understood in a variety of contexts transcending their religious origins. A characteristic reflection of this recalibration is the *matzevah* of the Vice President of the Jewish Museum and painter Isidor Kaufmann (1853-1921), whose work is remembered for its insightful portrayals of the traditional ways of Jewish life in the eastern Habsburg state later eradicated in the Shoah. Appropriately, his eulogy reads 'the great human and master whose art was dedicated to *Judentum*', which can be variably understood as applying to Judaism or more broadly to Jewry.³⁰³ The multiple intersecting identities of Viennese Jewry in this period and the recalibration of Jewishness alongside Austrianness as categories of belonging, are most obvious on the *matzevot* of IKG notables, many of which lie along the Ceremonial Avenue, such as that of Salomon

³⁰² *Matzevah* of Emanuel Weber (1851-1906), 51-17-69.

³⁰³ *Matzevah* of Isidor Kaufmann (1853-1921), 52A-1-64.

Sulzer.³⁰⁴ Born in Hohenems in Austria's remote Vorarlberg region, Salomon's musical liturgy is still played across European Jewish communities to this day, in particular the compilation *Shir Tzion*.³⁰⁵ Sulzer's liturgy, coupling reform with tradition through the novel use of music and the continued use of Hebrew, is thereby characteristic of the compromising politics of the IKG. This hybridity is also expressed in Sulzer's *matzevah*, depicted in Figure 1.13, a tall, corniced column topped with a lyre and cupola, designed by Max Fleischer. The form thus already nods towards his profession in a symbolic manner, while the inscription is bilingual Hebrew-German. In Hebrew he is called the community's *Shaliach Tzivur* (ש"י צ), meaning the Chief Cantor and connoting a highly honorary position within the community.³⁰⁶ He is further called 'the favourite of the songs of Israel', a reference to his sublime musical-liturgical reputation drawn from II Samuel 23:1, and is finally granted the ordinarily Rabbinical epithet MHVR"R. In German he is called 'Professor Salomon Sulzer, Chief Cantor of the IKG in Vienna from 1826 to 1881, Master Singer', while both inscriptions name his most famous composition, 'the refined ritual and choral music' *Shir Tzion*, which 'became the greatest of the choral melodies' and is 'performed in all communities'. The close linguistic parallels between the Hebrew and German inscriptions are further evident in the epitaph 'his memory is an eternal blessing' (זכרונו לברכה לעד / *Sein Angedenken ein ewiger Segen*).

Equally succinct layerings of religious and secular, Hebrew and German, Jewish and Viennese attributes, evidencing moreover the growing understanding of the state's Jewish population in an ethnic sense, can be found on the *matzevah* of the revolutionary Adolph Fischhof, buried in an honorary grave beside some of the IKG's most prominent religious notables.³⁰⁷ The Hebrew date of death (תרינגי / 653)

³⁰⁴ *Matzevah* of Salomon Sulzer (1804-1890), 5B-1-1.

³⁰⁵ Sholom Kalib, *The Musical Tradition of the Eastern European Synagogue, Volume 1: History and Definition* (Syracuse University Press: 2001), 69-74.

³⁰⁶ See Keil, "Gemeinde", 50.

³⁰⁷ *Matzevah* of Adolph Fischhof (1816-1893), 5B-1-3.

is mirrored by the Latin date (MDCCCLXXXV / 1895) of the erection of the *matzevah*, dedicated to ‘the pioneer of freedom and of justice by friends and admirers’. Fischhof was granted the ordinarily Rabbinical title MHV”R, while the German epitaph named him ‘doctor and publisher’, as well as listing his more short-term appointments as ‘President of the security committee’ and ‘Reichstag deputy of the City of Vienna’ in the revolutionary years 1848-9. Finally, and most profoundly, the Hebrew eulogy calls him ‘one of the people’, from the context obviously the Jewish people (מֵעַם), citing Psalm 45:18 (‘I commemorate your fame for all generations, so peoples will praise you forever and ever’), while the German eulogy cites his speech of March 13 1848, on the eve of the revolution, in which he stated: ‘An ill-advised state-craft has until now kept apart *the peoples of Austria*; now they must come together as brothers and increase their strength through unity’ (emphasis added). This is a powerful indication of the layering of communities and identities enabled by the conditions of the multicultural Habsburg state, in which it was possible to construct a sense of Jewish peoplehood imagined as part of a broader community of peoples united under constitutional rule in ‘Austria’ – the conglomeration of East-Central Europe.

The trends evident in these *matzevot* of venerated community notables are reflected in many *matzevot* of more ordinary IKG members from these years. For example, the *matzevah* of Benjamin Scheiner (1825-1892), born in Lwów/Lviv/Lemberg, Galicia, names him in Hebrew ‘MHV”R Binyamin Ze’ev son of C”H [כ”ה, the respected Mr.] ArieH HaLevi’, where the ordinarily Rabbinical title MHV”R can be read as simply honorific, marking Benjamin, the most prominently and centrally commemorated on this stele, as the patriarch of the family, demonstrating moreover the increasing appropriation of traditional religious honorifics for increasingly honorific purposes.³⁰⁸ The German inscription significantly names the

³⁰⁸ *Matzevah* of Benjamin (1825-1892) & Josef (1854-1916) Scheiner, 7-28-49.

Galician-born man a 'Citizen of Vienna'. His son, by notable contrast, receives a purely German-language inscription with the Austrian title 'k.k. government councillor', representing moreover the kind of generational shifts which were characteristic of Habsburg Jewry in the final years of the state's existence and thereafter. Even particularist expressions of Jewishness, constructed in contradistinction to the non-Jewish environment, were coupled with a sense of rootedness and belonging in Vienna, by that point one of the largest Jewish communities worldwide. This is evident in the exclusively Hebrew-language epitaph of Jonas Kraemer (1835-1905), which references his Biblical namesake in a phrase constructed from Jonah 1:3 and 1:9: 'Yonah descended to the beached ships and said I am a Hebrew in a foreign land', and linking his middle name Arieḥ to the phrase 'a lion [*arieḥ*] roared in the diaspora'. This unusually segregated sense of belonging by reference to being 'a Hebrew in a foreign land', a Jew in the diaspora, is mitigated in the end of the inscription: 'Yonah found peace in the congregation which he built; God suddenly extinguished his light in Vienna the capital city'.³⁰⁹

Some cases evinced the complete disappearance of religious language and references to Jewishness of any kind, whether linguistic or visual. Grave-memorials emphasising style over textual commemoration came into vogue particularly with avant-garde cultural progenitors and patrons of the era who, nevertheless, continued to be buried in the Jewish cemetery, prominent examples including the *matzevah* of the composer Ignaz Brüll (1846-1907) and his wife Marie (1861-1932), a simple, white headstone embossed with a harp, including only their names and the dates of birth and death,³¹⁰ or the more lavish, neoclassical grave-memorials of Jacob Nirenstein (1851-1921), who organised the first ever exhibition of Egon Schiele's (1890-1918) work and was the first to patronise Oskar Kokoschka (1886-1980);³¹¹

³⁰⁹ *Matzevah* of Jonas Kraemer (1835-1905), 20-1-90.

³¹⁰ *Matzevah* of Ignaz (1846-1907) & Marie (1861-1932) Brüll, 20-1-23.

³¹¹ *Matzevah* of Jacob Nirenstein (1851-1921), 5B-1-7.

and of Moritz Bauer (1840-1905), whose daughter Adele (1881-1925), was famously one of Gustav Klimt's (1862-1918) models.³¹² In other cases, the complete disappearance of linguistic markers of Jewishness often went hand-in-hand with an increase in personalised and emotional epitaphs. A characteristic example is the *matzevah* of Simon (1843-1906) and Lucie (1859-1936) Schablin, embossed with two intertwined trees, reading simply: 'One soul / One love / One strength'.³¹³ These practices, divorced from all Jewish sepulchral tradition and encompassing the cultural elite as well as the highly personal, would be at the forefront of conflicts over the regulation of sepulchral customs in subsequent decades.

Equally, the great diversification of symbolism evident at Tor I in the late nineteenth century reflected the breadth of cultural networks represented in this space, another issue which was to cause great conflict by the beginning of the twentieth century. There was a marked increase in the symbolism of professions and cultural pursuits, such as the lyre to symbolise writers and poets, for example on the white marble stele of the writer, historian and revolutionary Ludwig August Frankl (1810-1894).³¹⁴ The harp symbolised musicians, as most prominently on the *matzevah* of Cantor Salomon Sulzer.³¹⁵ There was a proliferation of the square-and-compass symbol, often mistakenly referred to as 'Masonic' symbolism.³¹⁶ In some cases, such as on the *matzevah* of author and journalist Julius Löwy (1851-1905), this could well be a masonic symbol.³¹⁷ However, this symbol also appears for example on the *matzevah* of Carl Mayer (1857-1908), where it clearly denotes his architectural profession as a *Stadtbaumeister*.³¹⁸ Belonging in the Habsburg nobility was widely attested to by the engraving of heraldry, for example the coat of arms of

³¹² *Matzevah* of Moritz Bauer (1840-1905), 19-1-83.

³¹³ *Matzevah* of Simon (1843-1906) & Lucie (1859-1936) Schablin, 51-17-40A.

³¹⁴ *Matzevah* of Ludwig August Frankl (1810-1894), 5B-35-58.

³¹⁵ *Matzevah* of Salomon Sulzer (1804-1890), 5B-1-1.

³¹⁶ For example in Isabella Ackerl, "Für die Ewigkeit" in Ackerl, Bouchal & Schödl (eds.), *Tod*, 120; and in Steines, *Steine*, inlay.

³¹⁷ *Matzevah* of Julius Löwy (1851-1905), 19-56-34.

³¹⁸ *Matzevah* of Carl Mayer (1857-1908), 51-1-94.

the Wiener von Welten family, including the German-language motto 'in loyalty and persistence', flanked by crowned grid-iron helmets as found in contemporaneous heraldry relating to the title *Ritter*.³¹⁹ Moreover, the *fin-de-siècle* witnessed a trend of purely decorative symbolism, such as the *matzevah* of the Mendl family, adorned with floral patterns and displaying the sun shining out from behind a cloud.³²⁰ More unusual are the bucrania on the Steinhof family *matzevah*, designed by Max Fleischer, such living forms being rare in Jewish cemeteries.³²¹ A really perplexing case for its presence in a Jewish cemetery, at least nominally a Jewish-religious space, is the Christogram – a symbol composed of the Greek *Chi Ro* and representing Jesus Christ – on the *matzevah* of Heinrich Bloch (1841-1903).³²²

Nevertheless, traditional religious symbolism, such as most commonly connoting belonging in the *Cohen* and *Levi* priestly castes, continued to constitute the most widespread and idiosyncratically Jewish symbolism at Tor I. The *Magen David* became prolific in this era, understood as a Jewish symbol in the widest sense, communal, religious and national, often employed in connection either with explicit religiosity or on the *matzevot* of Jewish community notables or activists. This era witnessed a general revival of ancient Jewish symbolism, including the *Magen David*, the menorah and the palm tree.³²³ As Michael Studemund-Halévy discussed, the (re-)discovery of symbolic representations in Jewish sepulchral art in the modern era demonstrates as much a revival of a 'normative' Jewish past as it can be interpreted as a break with (medieval) Jewish tradition.³²⁴ There is thus a danger in superficial surveys of *fin-de-siècle* Jewish cemeteries interpreting such novelties of the time according to a binary model of tradition and assimilation, or Jewish and non-Jewish,

³¹⁹ *Matzevah* of Eduard Wiener von Welten (1822-1886), 6-29-43.

³²⁰ *Matzevah* of Mendl family, 20-1-96.

³²¹ *Matzevah* of Steinhof family, 7-1-31.

³²² *Matzevah* of Heinrich Bloch (1841-1903), 7-30-44.

³²³ Cohn, *Friedhof*, 37-8.

³²⁴ Michael Studemund-Halévy, "Grenzenlos und globalisiert: Sefardische Grabkunst in der Alten und Neuen Welt" in Theune & Walzer (eds.), *Friedhöfe*, 131-5.

when in fact they reflect the continuous renegotiation of Jewishness.³²⁵ Nevertheless, symbolism lay at the heart of quarrels in the twentieth century between orthodox and non-orthodox parties, often cast precisely in terms of relative 'Jewishness'.

Viennese culture in the tumultuous final days of Habsburg rule reflected and was constantly reinvented by the diverse peoples, coming from all over the Habsburg lands and beyond, who each brought and contributed something to the life and culture of the city. The Jewish progenitors and patrons of *fin-de-siècle* Viennese culture spoke German 'irrespective of their citizenship, ethnic origin, or religious affiliation', as Robert Kann emphasised: nominally 'German' Vienna was nevertheless 'center and intersection of crossroads of the empire's people from east and west, north and south'.³²⁶ As has often been remarked, much of the cultural innovation of the era, decried as degenerate at the time by the antisemites yet today marketed as one of the city's greatest tourist assets, was largely created or at least patronised by Vienna's Jews, as John Emanuel Ullmann commented: 'we were always our own good customers and, in fact, quite often supported the output of others when their own brethren would not'.³²⁷ Tor I was created in the image of a community united in its common Jewishness, but with a plethora of understandings of what it meant to be Jewish and Viennese or Austrian in late Habsburg society. The tensions amounting in this era were numerous: between religious and secular, cosmopolitan and national, rich and poor, affecting Jews and non-Jews alike. These tensions were eventually to spill over with the beginning of the First World War, resulting in social and political conflicts with catastrophic consequences.

³²⁵ This was one of the dominant themes of the conference *Jews and Modern Visual Culture* held by the Manchester Metropolitan University and the Manchester Jewish Museum in September 2013.

³²⁶ Kann, *A History*, 561-2.

³²⁷ Ullmann, *The Jews*, 41.

1.5 The Jewish Cemetery at Tor IV, 1917 – 1938

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Here referred to as: Tor IV

Also known as: *Neuer jüdischer
Friedhof* (New Jewish Cemetery)

Location: Tor IV, Central Cemetery,
Simmeringer Hauptstraße, Simmering

Area: Circa 252,500m²

Number of Burials: circa 70,000

Number of Matzevot: circa 43,000

Figure 1.15: Detail from *Wiener Zentralfriedhof*,
1953, ÖNB, Kartensammlung, KI 104092.



Figure 1.16: The Jewish cemetery at Tor IV.

Today the city's only functioning Jewish cemetery, Tor IV is a complex memorial site reflecting both pre- and post-Shoah Jewish communal life and culture. The cemetery originated in the aftermath of the First World War, and its early history came to reflect the growing divisions within the Jewish community as well as its increasing socio-political isolation in the First Austrian Republic. This history has often been over-shadowed by the far more destructive years of the Shoah which followed, yet it was in the interwar period that the conflicts over the cemetery as a site for the negotiation of Jewish and Jewish-Austrian identity began, poignantly marking themselves in the cemetery and continuing to divide the community to the present day.

The Cemetery

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Figure 1.17: *Originalpläne der Neuen Zeremonienhalle bei Tor IV von Ignaz Reiser*, reproduced from Steines, *Steine*, 250.

The Central Cemetery was created to provide sufficient burial space to meet the long-term demands of a rapidly growing metropolis. Yet by 1910 the number of burials at the Jewish section at Tor I, in graves that were to remain undisturbed for eternity, was already necessitating the acquisition of further burial space.³²⁸ As Tor I had been expanded to its maximum extent, the IKG decided to purchase the land immediately adjoining the Protestant cemetery on the other end of the Central Cemetery, land which belonged to the city council of Vienna.³²⁹ At first the IKG took its time developing plans for the new cemetery, proceeding intermittently in ensuing years. In April 1913, it was agreed that a team of Jewish architects would be invited to submit plans for the overall design of the new cemetery, constituting a master-concept hitherto unseen in the creation of Vienna's Jewish cemeteries.³³⁰ A month later, a team of IKG board members were appointed to tour larger cemeteries in Germany to gather inspiration for the design of the new cemetery.³³¹ As only the monumental Jewish cemetery at Weißensee, Berlin, was of a size comparable to the cemetery at Tor IV, it was agreed that the team would also tour non-Jewish cemeteries, demonstrating the continuing tendency in Vienna's IKG prior to the First World War of finding points of reference between Jewish and non-Jewish culture.³³² Despite their careful planning, the IKG was forced into action during the First World War as both the war dead and the increase in civilian dead due to the influx of Jewish refugees predominantly from Galicia rapidly consumed the remaining space at Tor I. Tor IV was thus opened at short notice as a matter of urgency.³³³ Temporary walls and a provisional *beit tahara* or ritual funerary hall were erected, and the cemetery

³²⁸ *Bericht des Vorstandes der israelitischen Kultusgemeinde in Wien über seine Tätigkeit in der Periode 1910-1911* (Vienna: Verlag der israelitischen Kultusgemeinde in Wien, 1912), 7.

³²⁹ *Plenum 4. Dezember 1910. Erweiterung eines neuen Friedhofsgrundes*, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/I-II/FH/1/1.

³³⁰ *Plenum 10. April 1913*, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/I-II/FH/1/1.

³³¹ *Vertreter 4. Mai 1913*, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/I-II/FH/1/1.

³³² *Bericht* [1924], 47-8.

³³³ *Der neue israelitische Friedhof in Wien und seine Bauten – Denkschrift* (Vienna: Israelitische Kultusgemeinde, 1928), 10.

was officially opened on 4 April 1917.³³⁴ The provisional *beit tahara* was designed by Jakob Gartner (1861-1921), like Max Fleischer an influential synagogue architect whose oeuvre was destroyed in the November Pogrom in 1938. It was not until 1924 that the IKG was in a financial position to return to the drawing board in search for a suitable final design for the *beit tahara*.³³⁵ From 32 submitted designs, that of Ignaz Reiser (1863-1949), depicted in Figure 1.16, was chosen, the most monumental building of its kind in Austria.³³⁶

At the opening ceremony for the new cemetery in April 1917, Chief Rabbi Moritz Gudemann expounded the importance of the cemetery as both an archive for the history of the Jewish people, a 'House of Life', and the inviolable space of the dead, a 'House of Eternity', stating:

However mute the cemeteries, however deep the silence in which they are covered, they nevertheless convey the loudest and most eloquent language for those who know how to understand this language. In this is grounded their sanctity, their holiness, their inviolability. (...) The Jewish cemeteries are the archive of Jewish history. Hence the cemetery is to us not a site of death, but the "House of Life", not a site of transience, but the "House of Eternity".³³⁷

Gudemann had held a similar speech in 1879 at the opening of Tor I, cited earlier, in which he had spoken of the 'dividing wall between the living' falling, making that cemetery a 'monumental witness to the spirit of our time'.³³⁸ In 1917, he reflected back on that time:

When, forty years ago, the Central Cemetery was opened there were some amongst us who thought that the communality of the cemetery meant the dawn of general fraternity and they regretted only the continuing division of

³³⁴ *Ibid*, 10.

³³⁵ *Errichtung des Zeremoniengebäudes*, 1924, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/I-II/FH/1/1.

³³⁶ *Der neue israelitische Friedhof*, 15.

³³⁷ Cited in *ibid*, 11.

³³⁸ *Toast auf die Mitglieder der Chewra Kadischa*, 2 March 1879, cited in Steines, *Steine*, 43.

the religions (...) Today, after forty years, all the religions have their own special cemeteries and so today we too consecrate our own Jewish cemetery, and this all happens in mutual agreement. So what does this mean? It is not our burial under and beside each other that will erect the temple of peace in which one religion, love, will unite all people (...) So let us leave everything which now divides people more than ever, hate, enmity and war, buried in the old cemeteries.³³⁹

It is fortunate for posterity that one and the same Rabbi officiated at both ceremonies forty years apart, affording a unique insight into how Güdemann, a leading figure in the IKG who had published numerous works on Jewish religion, culture and history over his years in office, perceived the vicissitudes of the times. The rupture of the First World War was as evident in his 1917 speech as emancipation was in his 1879 speech. Indeed, he himself had been one of the persons who in 1879 had hoped 'that the communality of the cemetery meant the dawn of general fraternity'. Implicit in his 1917 speech was the awareness that this feeling of general fraternity had exposed itself as a bubble, with the old order of the Habsburgs – including the dream of general fraternity – burning in the inferno of war as the small congregation met in the provisional *beit tahara* to consecrate the new, segregated cemetery. 'So what does this mean', he asked, and suggested that the new segregation of burial spaces, a profound reversal of a centuries-long trend of spatial rapprochement, was merely superficial. His very emphasis on this reversal suggested it was not.

The creation of Tor IV alongside yet outside of the Central Cemetery, entirely divided by a perimeter wall and with a separate entrance, represented a spatial segregation between Jewish and non-Jewish burial spaces which broke with the tendency beginning in the Josephinian era of ever-closer enmeshment in the cityscape. This worked as a spatial metaphor for the ruptures of the time and the

³³⁹ Cited in *Der neue israelitische Friedhof*, 12.

impending collapse of the multicultural Habsburg project amidst the growing divisions between various ethnic and cultural groups in the capital. This spatial metaphor was underlined in ordinance maps of the interwar period depicting Tor IV, by contrast to Tor I, as an entirely blank and consequently anonymous space, marked only with the words 'new Jewish cemetery'.³⁴⁰ The contrast in Güdemann's speeches of 1879 and 1917 suggests an awareness of this impending collapse and the fallacy of the often-invoked fraternity of peoples it ostensibly represented. And though no-one could have foreseen the cataclysm of the Shoah which was to follow not forty years later, Güdemann's words conveyed a sense of foreboding about the state of inter-communal relations in Austria and the insecurity of the future. This apprehension was more explicit in the commentary of the IKG's 1928 report following the opening ceremony for the completed *beit tahara* at Tor IV, which took place 'with strong participation by representatives of state and city authorities':

Thereby a work has been completed that will still communicate to later generations how Viennese Jewry and its legal representatives, even in the most difficult times and under the greatest sacrifices, were concerned with the fulfilment of their religious duties and traditional piety towards their dead in a manner befitting the size and reputation of the Viennese Jewish community.³⁴¹

The 'difficult times' and 'greatest sacrifices' presumably refer to the twofold problems of widespread antisemitism and financial deficits plaguing the Viennese IKG in the 1920s, whereas the emphasis on legal grounding and government support reflects a political self-legitimation in the face of popular antisemitism which was

³⁴⁰ See for example *Freytag & Berndts Plan des Wiener Zentralfriedhofes, 1927*, ÖNB, Kartensammlung, KI 100515.

³⁴¹ *Bericht der israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Wien über die Tätigkeit in der Periode 1925-1928* (Vienna: Verlag der israelitischen Kultusgemeinde in Wien, 1928), 9.

characteristic of the IKG in these years.³⁴² The spatial anomalies of Tor IV thus reflect the tensions which characterised Vienna in this period, resulting in the growing introspection of the Jewish community and the proliferation of a variety of particularist interpretations of Jewishness amongst Vienna's Jews, reflected in and reflective of the divisions between various forms of religious orthodoxy, Unionism (patriotism to the Austrian state) and Zionism (Jewish nationalism) which characterised the IKG in this period.

The increasing introspection of the Jewish community marked itself in discussions surrounding Jewish-Viennese epigraphic practices, following from developments discernible at Tor I but manifesting themselves primarily at Tor IV. It was noted earlier that, as early as 1908, the IKG had requested of its members to include 'at least some Hebrew characters or words on the *matzevah*' and, where Hebrew was used, to submit this for proofreading to a special 'expert organ' of the IKG for the 'protection of the religious character of the cemetery'.³⁴³ This was in response to the increasingly secular character of sepulchral epigraphy in this period and the extent to which religious epigraphic practices, notably the use of the Hebrew language, were sharply declining. If this policy was in the 1900s formulated as a polite request, it became codified as strict regulation in the revised cemetery ordinance of 1927, which stipulated:

For the protection of the religious character of the cemetery, at least one Hebrew word must be included on each grave-memorial, and in the sections for the *Schomre Schabos* only Hebrew inscriptions are permitted. The

³⁴² As evident in repeated denunciations of antisemitism in interwar Vienna, for example *Bericht* [1924], 6-7.

³⁴³ *Bericht* [1908], 38-9.

inclusion of pictures, busts and other depictions on monuments is not permitted according to existing religious precepts.³⁴⁴

Schomre Schabos, literally the 'keepers of the Sabbath', referred to orthodox or strictly religious Jews, and reflected the growing tensions between secular and religious, or at least between liberal and orthodox, in perceptions of the cemetery as a Jewish-communal space, and in opinions regarding commemorative practices. By the late 1920s, a sizeable orthodox sub-culture had established itself in the IKG following the immigrant waves of the previous decade, which began to make demands on IKG policy and, more broadly, the religious and cultural self-reflection of the Jewish community. Practices that had been emerging for at least a century, including the rise of German-language epigraphy and the concurrent decline of Hebrew, the gradual decline in explicit religiosity, and the related rise in what was regarded as profane and un-Jewish symbolism, all became points of contention between different interest groups which have shaped the conflicted discourses surrounding the cemetery at Tor IV right into the present day. These conflicts were undoubtedly a reflection of the increasing contestation of the boundaries of 'Jewish' and 'non-Jewish', and of the performance of 'Jewish difference', then taking place amongst Austrian Jewry, as Lisa Silverman explored.

A similar conflict arose with the opening of the Central Cemetery's monumental crematorium in 1922 and the issues arising of whether or how Jews who chose to be cremated were to be laid to rest in the Jewish cemetery. The IKG remarked that 'there can be no doubt that exclusively the interment in the earth of the body befits Jewish religious law, and traditional and historical customs. Cremation counted and counts as un-Jewish', concluding, however, that 'it is contrary to the spirit of Judaism to force its followers to observe the religious-legal precepts' and that

³⁴⁴ *Auszug aus dem Tarif für Taxen und Gebühren, giltig ab 1. April 1927, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/I-II/FH/1/3.*

therefore such burials were allowed, merely 'without Rabbinical or cantoral functions'.³⁴⁵ The *chevra qadisha*, as the body responsible for upholding Jewish religious law regarding burials, agreed only to pick up the bodies for cremation and to grant them the final ritual wash, but not to carry out the interment itself.³⁴⁶ As much as this reflected the growing conflicts between what was regarded as 'Jewish' or 'un-Jewish' practice, and the resulting question of what should be allowed or forbidden at the Jewish cemetery, the IKG thereby continued to seek compromise, attempting to represent all of its members regardless of their stance on religiosity and orthodoxy in burial practice. This stance was reiterated in 1933, when it became known that many Jewish bodies, especially those to be cremated, were being collected by non-Jewish morticians. The IKG directorate complained in a letter sent to all hospitals, sanatoria and morgues in Vienna, bemoaning that the IKG was being robbed of the ability to administer the requirements of religious law for its deceased, including those to be cremated: 'there appears to be a misunderstanding in thinking that the IKG does not take responsibility for Jewish corpses intended for the crematorium', the letter stated, complaining that this constituted 'an encroachment in the competence and the realm of responsibility of the IKG'.³⁴⁷

The IKG in the interwar period evidently sought a middle road between the polarities of orthodoxy and reform, thereby seeking to satisfy all parties through compromise in accordance with its role as a unitary umbrella organisation for all Viennese Jews. The IKG reports demonstrate that these conflicts had their origins in the clamour then being raised by the orthodox membership by what they clearly perceived as challenges to the Jewish-religious nature of the cemetery, bearing in mind that despite the overall tendency towards greater secular or non-religious expression amongst Viennese Jewry at this time, the orthodox community had

³⁴⁵ *Bericht* [1924], 7.

³⁴⁶ *Bericht* [1928], 37.

³⁴⁷ *An die Direktionen der Spitäler, Sanatorien und Leichenbestattungsunternehmen*, 6 March 1933, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/I-II/FH/1/3.

numerically greatly increased. In 1924, when Tor IV had already been in use for seven years, but no master concept had yet been applied to its spatial layout or the construction of a new *beit tahara*, the IKG announced that 'the design of the new cemetery will *also* [emphasis added] take into consideration the legitimate wishes of all those from the orthodox and conservative side who in the course of time have presented them before the board of the IKG'.³⁴⁸ Although underlining the growing concerns of the orthodox members, the wording of this announcement, as in the term 'also', suggests that they were regarded as a minority whose wishes would merely be 'taken into consideration' alongside those of the majority in the design of Tor IV. The IKG's reconciliatory attitude in this period resulted in a compromise in 1928 in the form of a spatial sub-division of the cemetery, whereby 'in accordance with the wishes of orthodox community members, a new section enclosed by a hedge was opened in the new cemetery for the deceased who throughout their lives strictly observed the Sabbath'.³⁴⁹ These conflicts, however, resulted in the gradual adoption of more rigid regulations attempting to conserve, or enforce, particular interpretations of the Jewish-religious nature of the space, as reiterated in the legislation dating from 1928: 'For the protection of the religious character of the Jewish cemeteries and following a decision by the board, parties who wish to erect *matzevot* or add further inscriptions to grave-memorials are obliged to include at least one Hebrew word in the text'.³⁵⁰ These conflicts and the compromising attitude of the IKG demonstrate two important points about the interwar Jewish community: first the continued plurality of its membership, but second the growing conflict between orthodox and non-orthodox, the former going as far as segregating themselves spatially in their own section, a cemetery within a cemetery, as they also segregated themselves for the most part geographically in the Leopoldstadt, and socially in their own temples and religious factions. Altogether, these tensions underline the

³⁴⁸ *Bericht* [1924], 49.

³⁴⁹ *Bericht* [1928], 34.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 35.

increasingly fractured nature of the interwar IKG, as demonstrated powerfully by the epigraphy of the *matzevot* at Tor IV.

The Matzevot



Figure 1.18: *Matzevah* of Bernhard Wachstein (1868-1935), 3-4-9.

The proliferation of orthodoxy in Vienna in this period is reflected most strikingly in the number of Chassidic *ohelim* (literally 'tents'), the Rabbinical grave-houses, at Tor IV, mostly clustered around Section 21, the area sequestered for the *Schomre Schabbos* in 1928. In Chassidic practice, the *ohel* is a site of pilgrimage, as the Rabbis, also known as *tzadiqim* or 'righteous ones' are seen as a direct link to God with potential healing powers.³⁵¹ The belief in the *tzadiq's* healing powers and the potency of the burial site is derived from II Kings 13:20-1, which describes a dead man being resurrected when his body comes into contact with the prophet Elisha's bones. Chassidic *ohelim* worldwide are sites of pilgrimage for pious Chassidim, as evidenced by the burning candles and proliferation of prayer scrolls and exaltations left for the *tzadiqim* buried therein. Examples at Tor IV include the *ohel*, visually reminiscent of a tent in design, of Yitzchaq Meir Heschel of Kopitchnitz (1861-1936), the great-grandson of Rabbi Israel of Ruzhin whose offspring from Boyan we encountered at Tor I.³⁵² The most widely signposted *ohel* at Tor IV belongs to Yosef Engel of Skolye (1858-1919), who fled to Vienna during the First World War, a little white house adorned with numerous *Magenei David*.³⁵³ Yosef's epitaph is largely composed of epigraphic abbreviations, which in full spell out a familiarly complex and highly religious honorific, characteristic of the veneration of these influential Chassidic leaders:

The genius holy Rabbi, the paragon of the generation, RSCB"D [רשכב"ד,
Rabbi to all the children of the diaspora] CQS"T [כקש"ת, respect the sanctity
of his glorified name] MHVR"R [מהור"ר, our teacher and Rabbi the great
Rabbi] Yosef Engel ZZ"L [זצ"ל, may his righteous memory be a blessing]
RAB"D [ראב"ד, head of the fathers of the *beit din*, the Jewish religious court]
DQ"Q [דק"ק, from the Holy Community of] Cracow.

³⁵¹ The *tzadiqim* and their role in Chassidism are discussed in Gershom Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism* (translated by Ralph Manheim, New York: Schocken, 1996).

³⁵² *Ohel* of Rabbi Yitzchaq Meir Heschel of Kopitchnitz (1861-1936), 21-25-34.

³⁵³ *Ohel* of Rabbi Yosef Engel of Skolye (1858-1919), 4-18-70.

The inscription goes on to list, 'besides one hundred and one essays on the revealed and hidden', a reference to the 'revealed' texts such as the written *Torah* and the 'hidden' or interpretative texts such as the oral *Torah*, 'and commentaries on the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmud included in his writings', a few specific titles of his many Hebrew-language tractates and exegeses.

Such inscriptions, representative of the orthodox, or in this case specifically Chassidic, culture at Tor IV, underline two characteristics of the orthodox community: first their pronounced cultural insularity, whereby religion is fundamental and the most all-encompassing facet of their cultural and communal life, and second the powerful magnetism which these Rabbis exerted on their followers. This was particularly evident in interwar Vienna with Rabbi Israel Friedmann (1854-1933), the grandson of the Rabbi Israel of Ruzhin, whose person and congregation formed a focal point of Viennese orthodoxy in the 1920s, and whose *ohel* at Tor IV remains a site of pilgrimage to this day.³⁵⁴ His funeral in December 1933 was attended by thousands of Chassidim, constituting as Joachim Riedl described it 'a picture that one today would at best presume to see in Brooklyn or in Mea She'arim'.³⁵⁵ Due to their flight from Galicia during the First World War, numerous members of the Friedmann family, this influential Chassidic dynasty, ended up in Vienna and were buried in its cemeteries, including several at Tor I, which continued to serve as a burial ground alongside Tor IV during the interwar period.³⁵⁶ The esteem in which these gravesites were held by the Rabbis' followers is evident in the popularity of being buried adjacent, as demonstrated for example in the exclusively Hebrew-language epitaph of Guraryeh Hornstein (1855-1928), buried next to the *ohel* of the Boyan and Tshernovitz Rabbis at Tor I, commemorated as 'an innocent and upright man, fearful of almighty God, a righteous and pious peace-seeker' who 'found his

³⁵⁴ *Ohel* of Rabbi Israel Friedmann (1854-1933), 21-16-30.

³⁵⁵ Riedl, *Wien*, 78.

³⁵⁶ For example the *ohel* of Rabbi Yitzchaq Friedmann of Boyan (1850-1917) & Rabbi Menachem Nachum Friedmann of Tshernovitz (1868-1936), 52A-14-40A.

peace next to his excellent Rabbi from Boyan זצלה"ה [זצללה"ה, his righteous, holy and blessed memory, invoked in blessing, will live in the world to come]'.³⁵⁷

The radical orthodoxy proliferating in the interwar period not only threatened schisms amongst Viennese Jewry generally, but also amongst the orthodox community itself, as evident in the fiercely particularistic culture being emphasised in the epigraphy of these *ohelim*. A counterexample is the *ohel* of Meir Mayersohn (1861-1937), the last Rabbi in the Polish synagogue in Vienna's Leopoldstadt before the Shoah.³⁵⁸ He was a leading figure in the attempts to organise a political representative body of orthodox Jewry, in 1923 founding the party *Achdut Israel* (Unity of Israel) against the attempted secession of the orthodox from the IKG, which would in all likelihood have led to the fragmentation of the community, underlining once more the IKG's unique role as an umbrella organisation for the heterogeneous Jewish community, representing a fragile unity that was increasingly threatened by the schisms of the era.³⁵⁹ Mayersohn's inscription names him 'the great, genius, grand bastion and wise tower of the Jews (...) who served as Chief Rabbi for fifty years and in the city of Vienna for thirty-eight years as Rabbi for the Polish Community'.³⁶⁰ This reflects a powerful layering of communities of belonging – tacitly referring to Mayersohn's activity specifically in the Polish synagogue as well as his role in Vienna's IKG more broadly – albeit within an exclusively inner-Jewish context.

This layering of communities of belonging in sepulchral epigraphy, so common at Tor I, continued to be widely prolific at Tor IV, albeit that the communities being referenced began to shift, evincing a growing sense of inner-Jewish discourse. A representative example is the *matzevah* of IKG notable Jacob Osias Miseses (1857-1920):

³⁵⁷ *Matzevah* of Guraryeh Hornstein (1855-1928), 52A-14-41A.

³⁵⁸ Orthodox Jewry in Vienna in this time was broadly divided between the Schiffschul and the Polish Schul. See Adunka, *Veränderungen*.

³⁵⁹ Spitzer, *Zwischenkriegszeit*, 8.

³⁶⁰ *Matzevah* of Rabbi Meir Mayersohn (1861-1937), 21-13-30.

[Hebrew:] P"ן [פ"ן, Here lies buried] Mr. Yaqov Yehoshua Mieses born Yavar Uri, citizen of Przemyśl in Galicia, descendant of the people of Yehoshua (...) [German:] Here rests a noble, well-educated person, a good father, an exemplary character, a patrician scholar, Mr. Jacob Osias Mieses, Community- and Ritual-Councillor, President of the Chevra Qadisha from Przemyśl.³⁶¹

Along with the familiar division between the Hebrew and German language, and between synagogal and civic names, there is a further division here between classical and modern Hebrew names, Yaqov Yehoshua as opposed to Yavar Uri, representing not only the division between the Jewish and Austrian, but further between religious and ethnic conceptions of Jewishness ascendant in this period, especially common in Galicia.³⁶² Concurrently, the inscription not only references his immediate background in Galicia, but also more broadly his belonging to the 'people of Yehoshua', the Israelites, while the German inscription links his erudition and character with his prominent roles within the IKG. Such exclusively inner-Jewish epigraphy became increasingly evident at Tor IV, explicitly marking 'Jewishness' and belonging to the Jewish people, as in the example of Markus Duldig's *matzevah* (1863-1930) naming him 'a faithful Jew'.³⁶³ Such references to religious and/or ancestral communities of belonging, including specific places of origin, abounded in this era, with Vienna's IKG after all made up of descendants of immigrants from all over the Habsburg state. The common denominator for communal belonging at Tor IV continued to be primarily determined by Jewishness, yet by contrast to Tor I the concurrent layering within Austrian society began to decline following the collapse of the Habsburg state. The IKG constituted a powerful point of reference for belonging and community, evident for example in the *matzevah* of the eminent scholar of the Seegasse cemetery, Bernhard Wachstein, depicted in Figure 1.17 and naming him

³⁶¹ *Matzevah* of Jacob Osias Mieses (1857-1920), 6-2-32.

³⁶² This is what Klaus Hödl called the 'Zionisation' of Galician Jews in Vienna. Hödl, *Leopoldstadt*, 290.

³⁶³ *Matzevah* of Markus Duldig (1863-1930), 10A-1-1.

'director of the schools of the IKG of Vienna' and eulogising that he 'discovered mysteries of yore and revealed traces of vanished generations'.³⁶⁴ How significant his discoveries would prove to be would only become evident after the ravages of the Shoah.

The more inclusive layering of belonging in Jewish and Viennese or Austrian society continued nevertheless to be present, albeit decreasing in number, reflecting continued involvement and accomplishment within the First Austrian Republic. A striking example, entirely secular by contrast to most of its counterparts at Tor IV, with its Austrian titles and medical positions, constructing the Austrian state as a point of reference instead of the IKG, is the *matzevah* of the paediatrician Leopold Moll (1877-1933):

University Professor Hofrat Dr. Leopold Moll, Founder and Director of the Reich-Institute for the care of mothers and infants in Vienna, 1877 – 1933, a great doctor, a path-blazer for care in Austria. His whole life he dedicated in selfless labour to the prevention and treatment of illnesses amongst children. Countless numbers owe him and his teaching their life and health.³⁶⁵

The most striking affirmation of the new Austria as a point of political reference is evident on the *matzevot* of the *Bund jüdischer Frontsoldaten*, hereafter BjF, founded in 1932 in response to antisemitism and the rise in support of National Socialism in Austria.³⁶⁶ By 1935 the organisation, which had taken over custodianship of the First World War memorial at Tor I, boasted over 20,000 members, around ten percent of the Jewish population, making it the second-largest Jewish organisation in Austria after the Vienna IKG.³⁶⁷ Their dual activities of commemorating Jewish participation in the Austrian military while defending Jews from the increasing antisemitic attacks

³⁶⁴ *Matzevah* of Bernhard Wachstein (1868-1935), 3-4-9.

³⁶⁵ *Matzevah* of Leopold Moll (1877-1933), 3-4-6.

³⁶⁶ See the organisation's mission statement in Friedmann, *Drei Jahre*, 19-20.

³⁶⁷ Martin Senekowitsch, *Gleichberechtigte in einer grossen Armee: Zur Geschichte des Bundes jüdischer Frontsoldaten Österreichs 1932-38* (Militärkommando Wien: 1994), 8.

of the 1930s was demonstrative of the manner in which patriotism was mobilised as a defence measure in the last days before the Shoah. Despite the implicitly antisemitic policies of the Austrofascist regime of 1934-8, the BjF notably supported the regime, probably perceiving the Austrofascists as the final bulwark against National Socialism, joining the regime's political organisation, the *Vaterländische Front* (Fatherland Front), in 1933. However, the BjF simultaneously supported settlement in Palestine.³⁶⁸ This reflected a re-modelled version of identity similar to that which had prevailed in the Habsburg state, namely loyalty to both the Austrian state and to the Jewish people, as demonstrated in their mission statement: 'Loyalty to Austria and the protection of Jewry'.³⁶⁹ The *matzevah* of the organisation's founder reads simply, in German: 'Colonel Moriz Edler von Friedmann, born 20 February 1851, died 3 December 1932, Honorary member of the *Bund Jüdischer Frontsoldaten* of Austria'.³⁷⁰

A final reflection of the growing tensions between secular and religious, or between orthodox and liberal, constructions of Jewishness is evident in the symbolism and aesthetic design of the *matzevot* at Tor IV. Despite the legislative embargo in figurative representations in place from 1927 onwards, symbolism continued to abound, including all manner of representations of a non-religious, or not specifically Jewish, nature. Artistic examples include the palette and paintbrush on the *matzevah* of the artist Adolf Schwarz (1869-1926),³⁷¹ albeit that he was buried shortly before the new ordinances came into place, or later the lyre on the *matzevah* of the conductor Salo Geiger (1875-1932).³⁷² Truly ostentatious examples include the reproduction in cast iron of an entire factory complex on the *matzevah* of industrialist

³⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 7.

³⁶⁹ Friedmann, *Drei Jahre*, 24.

³⁷⁰ *Matzevah* of Moriz Friedmann (1851-1932), 15-3-29.

³⁷¹ *Matzevah* of Adolf Schwarz (1869-1926), 2-3-6.

³⁷² *Matzevah* of Salo Geiger (1875-1932), 14-14-35.

Moritz Mittelman (1862-1930),³⁷³ or the depiction in bronze of a sunrise over the *Staatsoper* on the *matzevah* of opera singer Elise Frei (1868-1926), including the inscription: 'only to beauty did I dedicate my life'.³⁷⁴ The emblem of the BjF, as a military insigne, could fairly be included in this list of profane symbolism.³⁷⁵ Of course, traditional religious symbolism such as the hands of the *Cohenim*,³⁷⁶ the jugs of the *Levi'im*,³⁷⁷ the *menorah*,³⁷⁸ and the *Magen David*³⁷⁹ continued to be widely used. Rarely, there were combinations of secular and religious symbolism, such as the hands of the *Cohenim* and the lyre on the *matzevah* of the composer Rudolf Braun (1869-1925).³⁸⁰

Tor IV was created in the ruptures following the First World War, reflecting the growing schisms within Vienna's interwar Jewish community and its overall retreat into insularity vis-à-vis the non-Jewish majority in Vienna. By contrast, the continued use of Tor I throughout this period reflected a counterbalance which allowed for the continuation of nuanced engagements with the concepts of 'Jewishness' and 'Austrianness' in the interwar period. Although most of the burials at Tor I after 1917 were additional interments in existing family plots, numerous prominent individuals were buried in the honorary plots of sections 5B and 6, as opposed to being buried in the new cemetery at Tor IV, such as Arthur Schnitzler as we explored at the beginning of this chapter. The area around the *beit tahara* thus continued to constitute a 'hall of fame' of Austrian Jewry through the interwar period, notably including a wide variety of individuals active in non-religious contexts, only nominally IKG members, whose fame was derived from their continued participation in Austrian culture. The *matzevah* of Chief Rabbi Moritz Gudemann, an honorary grave along

³⁷³ *Matzevah* of Moritz Mittelman (1862-1930), 9A-5-12.

³⁷⁴ *Matzevah* of Elise Frei (1868-1926), 3-4-3.

³⁷⁵ *Matzevah* of Moriz Friedmann (1851-1932), 15-3-29.

³⁷⁶ *Matzevah* of Jakob Kohn (1870-1929), 17-26-7.

³⁷⁷ *Matzevah* of Osias Garfunkel (1865-1937), 10A-6-35.

³⁷⁸ *Matzevah* of Ettie Kolb (died 1930), 6-2-63.

³⁷⁹ *Matzevah* of Karl Strauss (1856-1918), 3-8-2.

³⁸⁰ *Matzevah* of Rudolf Braun (1869-1925), 2-3-3.

the Ceremonial Avenue at Tor I, is indicative of the continued identification with and belonging in Vienna in its layered Hebrew-German epitaph reading:

[German:] Family of Chief Rabbi Dr. GÜdemann. [Hebrew:] P"ן [, Here lies buried] our beloved daughter Chanah Figlah N"E [ני"ע, her soul rests in Eden] known as [German:] Franzi GÜdemann, born 10 January 1896 [Hebrew:] 24 Tevet 656 [German:] died 24 February 1914 [Hebrew:] 28 Sh'vat 674, TNZB"ח [תנצב"ח, may her soul be bound in the bundle of life]. Our teacher and Rabbi, the Rabbi and AB"D [אב"ד, head of the *beit din*] Rabbi Moshe GÜdemann son of Yosef, Z"L [ז"ל, may his memory be a blessing], who stood guard for fifty-two years here in the community of Vienna. [German:] Dr. Moritz GÜdemann, Chief Rabbi of the Jewish community of Vienna, born Hildesheim 19 February 1835 [Hebrew:] 20 Sh'vat 595 [German:] died Baden 5 August 1918 [Hebrew:] 27 Av 678, TNZB"ח. The beloved daughter Sara Bona N"E known as [German:] Bona GÜdemann, born 5 October 1898 [Hebrew:] 19 Tishrei 659, died 24 September 1924 [Hebrew:] 25 Elul 684 TNZB"ח.³⁸¹

The GÜdemann's inscription is reminiscent of the style predominating in the later Habsburg years, indeed constituting a very late example of a *matzevah* from that era, emphasising the family's rootedness in Austria and in the city of Vienna, and succinctly layering their hybrid Jewish-Austrian identities through the mesh of Hebrew- and German-language nomenclature and epitaphs.

Loyalty to and reverence for the Habsburg state abounded throughout this era on the many soldiers' *matzevot* created in the years after the First World War is indicative of a largely nostalgic relationship to Habsburg culture specifically and to Austria more generally. These include the proliferation of titles, many of which had by the interwar period lost their practical meaning, and reflecting something resembling

³⁸¹ *Matzevah* of Franzi (1896-1914), Moritz (1835-1918) & Bona (1899-1924) GÜdemann, 20-1-33.

the tripartite identity as defined by Marsha Rozenblit. For example, the *matzevah* of Heinz Koch (1893-1915) reads:

[Hebrew:] P"ן [פ"ן, Here lies buried] Yekutiel son of Yitzchaq, Y"ן [י"ן, his soul departed] 23 Nissan 5675. [German:] Here rests our dear Heinz Koch, *Kadettaspirant* [a one-year volunteer in the armed forces] of Military Police Battalion 23 [a Hungarian battalion], civil servant of the *k.k. pr. Austrian Kredit-Anstalt*, honorary member of the *Neure Jehuda* ['youth of Judah', presumably a Zionist youth organisation], awarded with the Silver Medal of Bravery First class, born 7 April 1893 in Žatec/Saaz, Bohemia, fell before the enemy in the Carpathians on 7 April 1915 in loyal fulfilment of his duty to his emperor, his fatherland and his Jewish people.³⁸²

This Bohemian-born Jewish youth, a Viennese citizen fighting in a Hungarian battalion for the Habsburg state, whose loyalties lay with 'his emperor, his fatherland and his Jewish people', is representative of the profoundly intersectional Jewish culture which crystallised in Vienna, culminating in a constellation of identities which, unsurprisingly, was thrown into complete turmoil with the collapse of the world which had conditioned it. The continuity, amongst some segments of Vienna's Jews at least, of this complexly layered identity is evident in a reference to the bygone days of the Habsburg state on a *matzevah* from as late as 1941, when the destruction of Vienna's Jewish community was well underway, reading: 'Surgeon General Dr. Ignaz Kauder, Knight of the Order of the Iron Crown and of the Order of Franz Josef Etc. Etc. 1868 – 1941'.³⁸³ The titles, representing familiar networks of belonging, and the emphasis on the deep enmeshment in a world which no longer existed through the use of the phrase *Etc. Etc.*, indicate a deep nostalgic longing for an era characterised by inclusivity and prosperity at a time when calamity had broken in, and Vienna's Jewish population was being ruthlessly persecuted and their community destroyed.

³⁸² *Matzevah* of Heinz Koch (1893-1915), 76B-1-4A.

³⁸³ *Matzevah* of Ignaz Kauder (1868-1941), 76B-1-3.

1.6 Conclusion

In 1922, Hugo Bettauer (1872-1925), editor of the renowned liberal newspaper *Neue Freie Presse*, notorious for his liberal and at the time controversial views regarding, among other issues, sexual emancipation, published his satirical novel *Die Stadt Ohne Juden*, 'The City Without Jews'.³⁸⁴ Therein he described a fictional Vienna that had decided to deport its Jews and consequently experienced total economic, social and cultural collapse, resulting in the invitation of the Jews back to the grateful and jubilant city. Although the novel was inspired by the widespread antisemitic discourses of the time, its author could not have foreseen how closely this narrative resembled the fate which was to befall Vienna's Jewish community only sixteen years later, resulting not in a jubilant return, but in the wholesale exile and murder of Austria's Jews. The book was, at the time of its publication, enthusiastically received as an ironic and deeply humorous portrayal of Vienna's dependence on its Jews for its vibrant cultural life, a reflection of how deep the enmeshment of Jewish and non-Jewish culture was by the interwar period in Austria. Bettauer, who had converted to Christianity at the age of eighteen, was fatally shot by Otto Rothstock, an Austrian Nazi, in March 1925, who professed at his trial to have acted out of insane rage at the 'daubing Jew-pig' (*schmierenden Saujud*).³⁸⁵ Bettauer, a liberal journalist and author, a Christian convert of Jewish origin, a Viennese resident who held dual Austrian-American citizenship, was emblematic of the profound intersectionality of Viennese society which had arguably conditioned the city to become the literary and cultural metropolis it was by the early twentieth century. His murder as a 'Jew' at the hands of a Nazi, who perceived Bettauer's work and values as inherently 'Jewish', is indicative of the 'Jewish difference' with which Viennese society, despite the evident ethereality of this

³⁸⁴ Hugo Bettauer, *Die Stadt Ohne Juden: Ein Roman von Übermorgen*, (Vienna: Gloriette, 1922).

³⁸⁵ Cited in Riedl, *Wien*, 16.

category, increasingly became polarised in the interwar period, and of the destructive, murderous character of those who opposed what they perceived to be the 'Jewish' character in Viennese culture.

Vienna's Jewish cemeteries by the early twentieth century constituted sites of the most profound rootedness of the community in the social and cultural fabric of the city, simultaneously unique sites of inner-Jewish belonging and community that represented a remarkable degree of communal cohesiveness despite the many ruptures of the modern age. Throughout the preceding centuries, these sites were theatres for the negotiation of complex codes of belonging and identity, reflecting the persistent negotiation of Jewish belonging in Viennese society as they reflected the persistence, despite continuous recalibrations, of belonging in an inner-Jewish community. As sites of profound cultural enmeshment, they were to become the focus of egregious attacks and extreme contestation in the years of Nazi rule in the city, reflecting the cultural war that was waged to accompany the genocide of Vienna's, and Europe's, Jews.

בית העולם

Part II: The House of Eternity

Culture, Genocide, and the Struggles
over Vienna's Jewish Cemeteries,

1938 – 1945

קהלת יב' ה': כי-הלך האדם אל-בית עולמו, וסבבו בשוק הסופדים.

Man sets out for his eternal abode, With mourners all around the streets.

(Ecclesiastes 12:5)

תהילים מיטי י' – יב' : ויחי-עוד לנצח, לא יראה השחת. כי יראה, חכמים ימותו – יחד כסיל ובער יאבדו, ועזבו לאחרים חילם. קרבם בתימו, לעולם – משכנתם, לדור ודור, קראו בשמותם, עלי אדמות.

Shall he live eternally, and never see the grave? For one sees that the wise die, that the foolish and ignorant both perish, leaving their wealth to others. Their grave is their eternal home, the dwelling-place for all generations of those once famous on the earth. (Psalm 49:10-12)

Beit ha'olam (בית העולם), 'the house of eternity', is one of several generic terms in Hebrew for the Jewish cemetery, often appearing in Aramaicised form as *beit almin* (בית עלמין). The cemetery is the eternal abode because the grave – the destination of all the living – is the site of eternal rest and the inviolable property of the dead, the sanctity of which is a unique and important commandment of the Jewish faith. This belief is derived from the hope of bodily resurrection and of eternal life, as in Ezekiel 37:12: 'Thus said the Lord God: I am going to open your graves and lift you out of the graves, O My people, and bring you to the land of Israel'. Attacks upon Jewish graves in Europe date back many centuries, and represent not only an attack upon the religious sanctity of these sites, but also an attack on their enmeshment within European culture, as represented by their physical embedding in the European landscape. The struggles of Jewish communities over centuries, often in the face of direst persecution, to protect and salvage these spaces, underscore the significance of the cemeteries as the 'houses of eternity'.

2.1 Introduction

In February 1939 during his exile in Paris, Joseph Roth (1894-1939) noted laconically in his *Schwarz-Gelbes Tagebuch* that an unnamed prime minister had resigned following allegations of possessing a Jewish great-grandmother. 'With the Prussians there would be no such sloppiness', commented Roth:

There the great-grandmothers who might cause a disturbance are simply removed. And with careful Prussian thoroughness, there, in the land of the systematic, cemeteries were being vandalised long before Hitler. Oh, but it was not the intention, only the appearance. The intention was to check whether this or that great-grandmother had coincidentally retained some earthly presence. It does not do any harm to destroy the graves on which are written the names of future leaders.¹

Roth was referring to the resignation of Hungarian Prime Minister Béla Imrédy (1891-1946) who was forced by Regent Miklós Horthy (1868-1957) to step down from the mere allegation of having some Jewish ancestry. More cryptic is the connection implied by Roth between Imrédy's resignation, Germany, and the destruction of graves.² Roth – born in Galicia, a Habsburg legitimist whose cultural homeland was 'Austria' – was possibly referring to a similar scandal which had occurred in Austria less than a year earlier, by then known as the *Ostmark* following its annexation to the Third Reich.³ Various newspapers had reported that Johann Strauss the Younger (1825-1899), Vienna's celebrated 'Waltz King', was according to the Nuremberg

¹ Joseph Roth, "Schwarz-Gelbes Tagebuch" in Hermann Kesten (ed.), *Joseph Roth Werke* (Vol. 4, Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1976), 747.

² The reference to grave vandalism was, however, in no way cryptic, but a bleak reality of Germany's interwar history. See for example *125 Friedhofsschändungen in Deutschland 1923-1932: Dokumente der politischen und kulturellen Verwilderung unserer Zeit* (Berlin: Central-Verein Deutscher Staatsbürger Jüdischen Glaubens, 1932).

³ This name was in reference to the area's medieval status as a 'march' or protective borderland of the Holy Roman Empire, and was adopted by the Nazis in an attempt to undermine any sense of Austrian separatism or nationhood. On the historical transition of the concept of Austria, see for example Hans Rauscher (ed.), *Das Buch Österreich: Texte, die man kennen muss* (Vienna: Christian Braumüller, 2005).

Laws an 'eighth-Jew' through his paternal great-grandfather, Johann Michael Strauss (1720–1800) from Budapest. The ensuing scandal, affecting one of the most 'German' of German composers in the Nazi cultural repertoire, and a cornerstone of Viennese musical culture, was so great that even the Reich Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels (1897-1945) commented on it in his diary on 5 June 1938:

A smart-alec has discovered that Joh. Strauß is an eighth-Jew. I forbid making this public. Because first of all it is not yet proven, and secondly I do not feel like allowing all of German cultural heritage to be watered down like this. Ultimately we will only be left with Widukind, Henry the Lion and Rosenberg. That is somewhat too little (...) This is also the wish of the Führer.⁴

The response, ostensibly sanctioned by Hitler himself, was to remove from the marriage records of St. Stephen's parish the reference to Johann Michael as a 'baptised Jew', thereby erasing the composer's part-Jewish ancestry and making him fit for a 'German' audience.⁵ The grave of his Jewish ancestor was later destroyed.⁶

Roth, like many of his contemporaries in literary circles, understood more clearly than most what went lost in the twofold destruction of 'Austria', first in the Treaty of St. Germain and the dissolution of the Habsburg state, and later in the *Anschluss* or annexation to Germany: Roth saw Austrian culture as central to the

⁴ Ralf Georg Reuth (ed.), *Joseph Goebbels Tagebücher 1924-1945* (Vol. 3, Munich: R. Piper, 1992), 1221-2. Goebbels was here referring respectively to a Saxon duke from Charlemagne's time, object of a Nazi cult following, to a medieval duke of Saxony and Bavaria, and to Alfred Rosenberg, a Nazi ideologue.

⁵ Copies of the original marriage record and the forgery are kept in *Dokumente über eine Fälschung des Reichssippenamtes im Jahre 1941 mit der man die jüdische Ahnenreihe des Wiener Komponisten Johann Strauß vertuschen wollte*, Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstands, hereafter DöW, 06424.

⁶ Martha Keil, „... enterdigt aus dem jüdischen Friedhof“: Der jüdische Friedhof in Wien-Währing während des Nationalsozialismus“ in Karl Fischer & Christine Gígler (eds.), *Studien zur Wiener Geschichte – Jahrbuch des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Wien* (Vol. 61, Vienna: Verein für Geschichte der Stadt Wien, 2005), 15.

concept of Europe, 'and without Austria it [Europe] no longer exists'.⁷ The First Austrian Republic as a tiny, ethnically largely homogeneous state was almost as anathema to Roth's conception of 'Austria' as a provincial *Ostmark* forming part of a greater German empire. Knowing that it was Austria's historical heterogeneity, conditioned in the Habsburg state through its manifold peoples, which had given rise to its unique and influential culture, he also knew that under Nazi rule 'it shatters all the more surely, the more mendaciously and illiberally the conquerors employ the term Austrian culture'.⁸ This 'mendacious' use of the term 'culture' to suit their own ideological needs was characteristic of the Nazi project, 'not the intention, but the appearance', so for example in the eradication of a composer's problematic heritage. To Joseph Roth, the case of Johann Strauss was indicative of Nazi cultural policy in the widest sense, driven as much by calculation as it was by deadly fanaticism.

Culture and Genocide: Vienna as the Laboratory for the End of the World

Roth was not alone in perceiving in Viennese culture a paradigm of 'European' culture. That this paradigm of 'European' culture, moreover, was 'for the better, if not the best, part' a product of its Jewish population, was also observed by Stefan Zweig (1881-1942) in his autobiography *Die Welt von Gestern: Erinnerungen eines Europäers*, written shortly before his suicide in exile.⁹ The *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde* (hereafter IKG), also had a strongly developed sense of historical purpose and of its place in this multicultural city, being the first Jewish community worldwide to establish its own archive (1816), open a museum (1895), and begin writing histories of its culture and community, in part through the medium of its

⁷ Joseph Roth, "Totenmesse" in Kesten (ed.), *Joseph Roth Werke* (vol. 4), 730. The role of the literati in formulating notions of "Austria" and "Austrian culture", in lieu of widespread academic and political discourses on the subject, in the interwar period are the focus of William Johnston, *Der österreichische Mensch: Kulturgeschichte der Eigenart Österreichs* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2010).

⁸ Joseph Roth, "Huldigung an den Geist Österreichs" in Kesten (ed.), *Joseph Roth Werke* (Vol. 4), 735.

⁹ Stefan Zweig, *Die Welt von Gestern: Erinnerungen eines Europäers* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1952), 32.

cemeteries.¹⁰ Due to their origins from all over the Habsburg lands and beyond, the Viennese Jews of the First Austrian Republic created 'a cultural powerhouse whose great intellectual/spiritual [*geistige*] space replaced the geographical space' – that geographical space that had gone lost in the Treaties of St. Germain and Trianon and the dissection of Central Europe.¹¹ 'Jewish-Viennese culture' in the interwar period, despite or precisely because of the problems inherent in such a definition due to its 'intricacy and variability', as Albert Lichtblau argued, was operating in a European cultural and intellectual framework well ahead of its time.¹² The Nazis, too, were aware of Vienna's cultural enmeshment, as Adolf Hitler demonstrated in a much-cited expression of his contempt for the city:

The racial conglomerate represented by the imperial capital was repugnant to me, repugnant this whole mix of peoples of Czechs, Poles, Hungarians, Ruthenians, Serbians and Croats etc., but between all of these as the eternal bacillus of humankind – Jews and again Jews. For me this metropolis appeared as an embodiment of blood defilement [*Blutschande*].¹³

Lichtblau, among others, remarked that Vienna in this regard presented a unique case under National Socialism, certainly for the cities regarded as 'German' cities by the Nazis, and therefore an intriguing if difficult problem for the formulation of Nazi policy.¹⁴

¹⁰ See *Das Archiv der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde (IKG) Wien*, pamphlet, author's collection. Histories of Jewish Vienna began emerging as early as the mid-nineteenth century, such as Ludwig August Frankl, *Zur Geschichte der Juden in Wien* (Vienna: J.P. Sollinger, 1853) and later Alfred Franz Přibram, *Urkunden und Akten zur Geschichte der Juden in Wien – Erste Abteilung, Allgemeiner Teil 1526-1847* (Vienna: Braumüller, 1918). Similarly the earliest history examining the Jewish cemetery as a site of communal heritage was Gerson Wolf, *Die jüdischen Friedhöfe und die „Chewra Kadischa“ (heilige Brüderschaft) in Wien* (Vienna: Alfred Hölder, 1879).

¹¹ Herbert Rosenkranz, *Verfolgung und Selbstbehauptung: Die Juden in Österreich 1938-1945* (Vienna: Herold, 1978).

¹² Albert Lichtblau, "Integration, Vernichtungsversuch und Neubeginn: österreichisch-jüdische Geschichte 1848 bis zur Gegenwart" in Eveline Brugger, Martha Keil, Albert Lichtblau, Christoph Lind & Barbara Staudinger, *Geschichte der Juden in Österreich* (Vienna: Ueberreuter, 2006), 514.

¹³ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Munich: Zentralverlag der N.S.D.A.P., 1938), 135.

¹⁴ Lichtblau, "Integration", 522.

The very exceptionalism presented by Vienna's population and its mix of cultures resulted in the city becoming under Nazi machinations a 'laboratory for the end of the world', a testing site for the annihilation of the Jewish cultural world in Central Europe. I borrow the phrase, often-invoked in a variety of contexts relating to Austria, from Karl Kraus' characterisation of Austria as the *Versuchsstation des Weltuntergangs* at the outbreak of the First World War.¹⁵ Following the *Anschluß* in March 1938, Vienna became – for a short while at least, before the shift in focus towards East Europe – the locus of bureaucratic experiments in expropriation and deportation, a playground for hitherto insignificant Nazi policy makers whose ideas, germinated through several years of Nazi rule in Germany but trialled to unprecedented effect in this city against its huge and defenceless Jewish population, were soon rolled out across the Nazi state. This has been remarked by several historians: Doron Rabinovici in his examination of the IKG under the shadow of Nazi rule characterised the Viennese 'solution to the Jewish problem' as the 'trial run' for the 'Final Solution'.¹⁶ Thomas Albrich in his study of Nazi antisemitic policies in Austria called this an 'experimental field' for 'cumulative radicalisation'.¹⁷ Herbert Rosenkranz in his trailblazing work on the Shoah-era history of Vienna went even further in remarking:

The tendency of the Austrian, in particular of the Viennese, to improvise, rather than to be arrested to the scruples of the printed laws, provided the hotbed for uncountable individual initiatives constituting cases of precedence which were only retrospectively, if at all, legalistically cloaked.¹⁸

¹⁵ It was originally used in Karl Kraus, *Die Fackel*, Nr. 400-403 (10 July 1914), 2. Robert Wistrich used the phrase more generally in connection to the earlier cultural innovation, and later fatal persecution, of Central-European Jewry going into modernity. Robert Wistrich, *Laboratory for World Destruction: Germans and Jews in Central Europe* (University of Nebraska Press: 2007).

¹⁶ Doron Rabinovici, *Instanzen der Ohnmacht: Wien 1938-1945, Der Weg Zum Judenrat* (Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer Verlag, 2000), 34.

¹⁷ Thomas Albrich, "Vom Vorurteil zum Pogrom" in Rolf Steininger & Michael Gehler (eds.), *Österreich im 20. Jahrhundert* (Vol. 1, Vienna: Böhlau, 1997), 339.

¹⁸ Rosenkranz, *Verfolgung*, 12.

Contemporary Nazi statements provide a similar picture of Vienna's place in the formulation of the cultural and genocidal policies that were to go hand-in-hand in the Shoah. The *Reichstatthalter* (in Vienna uniquely combining the positions of mayor, though a titular mayor's office continued to exist, with the role of administrative representative of the Nazi Party¹⁹) Josef Bürckel (1895-1944) stated in 1938 that the *Anschluß* did not signify a 'loss of significance' for Vienna but the opposite, presenting a historical 'German mission', defined through 'our economy and trade and our culture and art'.²⁰ This prognostic statement foreshadowed the words of Baldur von Schirach (1907-1974), *Reichsstatthalter* in Vienna since August 1940, who stated in a public speech on 14 September 1942, in an unabashed admission of the expulsion of over a hundred thousand Jews from the city and the deportation to concentration and extermination camps of tens of thousands more:

If one were to reproach me that I deported from this city, which was once the European metropolis of Jewry, tens of thousands and again tens of thousands of Jews into the ghetto, I must answer: I see therein an active contribution to European culture.²¹

Far from constituting a covert operation, carried out by an elite group of radicals sworn to secrecy, the events in Vienna which were to culminate in the 'Final Solution' were, so Rabinovici, 'a social occasion the progress of which was reported in the newspapers, whose triumphs were celebrated in public raids, in orgies of violence, in pogroms such as in November 1938, with murder, arson and rape'.²² Far from being seen in the 'narrower' sense of the 'mere' surgical removal of an undesirable element of the Viennese population, as a microcosm of the genocide rolled out across Europe

¹⁹ See §8 of *Gesetzblatt für das Land Österreich*, 1939, Vol. 102, Nr. 500, on <http://alex.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/alex?aid=glo&datum=1939&page=1947&size=45>, accessed 10 May 2015.

²⁰ Botz, Gerhard, *Nationalsozialismus in Wien: Machtübernahme, Herrschaftssicherung, Radikalisierung 1938/39* (Vienna: Mandelbaum, 2008), 571.

²¹ Cited in Thomas Albrich, "Holocaust und Schuldabwehr" in Steininger & Gehler (eds.), *Österreich* (Vol. 2), 51.

²² Rabinovici, *Instanzen*, 14.

in subsequent years, the genocide perpetrated against Vienna's Jews was from the outset regarded as a cultural and a historical mission aimed at 'cleansing' Viennese culture and, thereby, at rendering a service to 'European' culture.

The Network of Agency In Nazi Vienna

Gerhard Botz, who spent many years compiling a comprehensive history of Vienna under National Socialism, described conditions during the Nazi takeover in Austria as a *tabula rasa*, a cleaner break than had been the case in Germany in 1933, following from several years of cumulative radicalisation in Germany, and therefore lending itself to a greater and swifter radicalisation in Vienna, explaining also the innovative role which Vienna was to play in the formulation of early Nazi policy towards Jews in the years 1938 and 1939.²³ This problematic notion of a *tabula rasa* should not be taken to mean that there was no popular antisemitism or empathy for National Socialism in Vienna prior to the *Anschluss*. On the contrary, many contemporaries, such as Viennese exile John Emanuel Ullmann (1923-2010) observed that 'to a large number of Viennese, Nazism was antisemitism; in fact, some German Nazis tried to tell them that there were other purposes to Hitler's regime as well'.²⁴ The virulence of Austrian antisemitism, and its impetus towards violence, has been remarked upon by scholars of fascism, too.²⁵ Yet Botz' characterisation of *tabula rasa* conditions in Vienna applies insofar as the Nazi takeover precipitated and facilitated the abolishment of all social and legal norms of behaviour in the Austrian capital and thereby resulted in a viscous popular outburst unprecedented anywhere else in the Third Reich. David Cesarani's recent biography of one of the principle executors of the 'Final Solution', Adolf Eichmann (1906-1962),

²³ Botz, *Nationalsozialismus*, 666-8.

²⁴ John Emanuel Ullmann, *The Jews of Vienna: A Somewhat Personal Memoir*, 1993, Leo Baeck Institute, hereafter LBI, AR 10682, 40.

²⁵ See for example Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (Cambridge University Press: 2005), 194.

paints a bleak picture of the cataclysmic conditions pervading Vienna in the spring of 1938:

All the anti-Jewish legislation extant in the Third Reich was rushed on to the Austrian statute book, including the Nuremberg Laws, which were formally introduced in May 1938. Hundreds of Austrian Jews committed suicide as terror and despair swept through the community.²⁶

This unprecedented outburst of violence, some particularities of which remained unique to Vienna, such as the notorious scenes of jeering hordes forcing their Jewish neighbours to scrub away Austrofascist graffiti from the streets, consisted according to Gerhard Botz:

mostly of symbolic acts and historic rituals aimed at the destruction of a sense of identity – humiliations, abuse and arrests – but there were also physical attacks, beatings murders and also robberies on a mass scale. It was as if the medieval pogroms had reappeared in modern dress.²⁷

This Viennese pogrom predated and portended the November Pogrom, the conditions being much the same.²⁸ Herbert Steiner, exile and later founder of the *Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes*, whose parents were murdered in the Shoah, remarked that the 'Final Solution' had its origins in this earliest pogrom and the dehumanisation of Vienna's Jews when they were forced to clean the streets.²⁹ This symbolic castigation can be seen as the redefining cultural boundaries, a central feature of the policies going in tandem with cultural genocide in the city, as will be discussed further shortly.

²⁶ David Cesarani, *Eichmann: His Life and Crimes* (London: Vintage, 2005), 62.

²⁷ Gerhard Botz, "The Dynamics of Persecution in Austria, 1938-45" in Robert Wistrich (ed.), *Austrians and Jews in the twentieth century: from Franz Joseph to Waldheim* (London: Macmillan, 1992), 202.

²⁸ See Botz, *Nationalsozialismus*, 71.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 127.

Gerhard Botz outlined a tripartite system of agency active in Nazi Vienna which facilitated the much more rapid radicalisation and, eventually, the innovation, which was to become characteristic of Vienna's brief but disastrous Nazi-era history, a system which can be seen at work in the appropriation and destruction of Jewish cemeteries examined in this chapter.³⁰ This system consisted of:

- 1) the so-called *halblegale* Austrian Nazis, who had joined the NSDAP before 1938, evincing their ideological predisposition to National Socialism, in collaboration with
- 2) the invading Germans and the Nazi system of bureaucracy that was gradually imported from Germany proper, and
- 3) the Austrian civilian population, including the many who joined the NSDAP after March 1938, and their 'eruptive' popular support for the Nazi regime, characterised through a blend of opportunism and fanatical zeal.

Botz significantly emphasised, pertinently for the examination of the Shoah-era history of the cemeteries which follows, that the anti-Jewish policy innovations of Nazi Vienna were not only carried out by Germans in Nazi institutions like the SS, Gestapo and NSDAP, but also by the Austrians and the 'organisational rationalisations "invented" by local bureaucrats'.³¹ Of course, the antisemitism and the radicalisation leading up to and facilitating the Shoah had roots as deep in Austria as the roots of its Jewish culture and population, and the policies initiated in Vienna under Nazi rule therefore need to be seen in light of their pre-Shoah context.³²

³⁰ *Ibid*, 11.

³¹ *Ibid*, 11.

³² The roots of antisemitism generally and of National Socialism in particular in Austria have been explored by Brigitte Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna: A Portrait of the Tyrant as a Young Man* (New York: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2010); P.G.J. Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria* (New York: Wiley, 1964); and Michael Wladika, *Hitlers Vätergeneration: Die Ursprünge des Nationalsozialismus in der K. u. K. Monarchie* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2005), among others.

Opportunism furthermore in this context does not suggest a lack of conviction in Nazi ideology – on the contrary, the opportunism of many agents during the Shoah was defined precisely through the framework of possibilities which Nazi rule conditioned to realise various ideological programmes.

The complex of non-Jewish agency involved in the formulation and execution of anti-Jewish measures in Vienna is paralleled by the well-documented and coerced complicity of the Jewish community in its own destruction.³³ The IKG's archive was forcibly closed in March 1938, after which many documents were confiscated by the SS and sent to the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (Reich Main Security Office, hereafter RSHA) in Berlin.³⁴ Adolf Eichmann's locally inaugurated *Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung* (Central Office for Jewish Emigration, hereafter *Zentralstelle*) used the information gleaned from the IKG's archive and library to facilitate the mass-expropriation of Jewish property in the city and the identification and forced emigration of the Jewish population.³⁵ To this end, from June 1939 he also insisted on upholding the IKG's legal status as a public body.³⁶ All administrative tasks of Austria's many Jewish community organisations were conglomerated under the Viennese IKG to allow them to administrate their holdings collectively and thus exploit them easier, while also offering the grounds to force foreign Jewish organisations to keep funnelling money into the IKG which was ultimately expropriated by the Nazis.³⁷ Eichmann's success in streamlining this process of expropriation and deportation in Vienna, involving the forced collusion of Jewish community leaders, resulted in his rapid promotion within the SS and the expansion of his 'Viennese model' across the Reich from 1939 onwards.³⁸ The term 'Viennese

³³ This is the principle focus of Rabinovici, *Instanzen*.

³⁴ *Das Archiv der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde (IKG) Wien*, pamphlet, author's collection.

³⁵ Cesarani, *Eichmann*, 63.

³⁶ *An Herrn Oberregierungsrat SS-Obersturmbannführer Krüger*, 12 June 1939, DöW, 09887.

³⁷ *An den Reichskommissar für die Wiedervereinigung Österreichs mit dem deutschen Reich*, 4 December 1939, DöW, 09887.

³⁸ Cesarani, *Eichmann*, 8.

model' was used as early as November 1938 by Hermann Göring (1893-1946) in reference to how well anti-Jewish policy was functioning and progressing in the city, while suggesting it be expanded Reich-wide.³⁹ Although some historians, such as Gerhard Botz, have argued that Eichmann's initiative has been greatly exaggerated, and that he was merely acting upon the ideas of his superiors and of Jewish community leaders doing their best to limit the suffering of those in their charge, Eichmann's model nevertheless served as a template for the eventual dispossession and deportation of wide swathes of European Jewry.⁴⁰ As Cesarani surmised:

In Vienna, with the assistance of hapless Jewish communal officials, Eichmann perfected the techniques of forced emigration. He heartlessly presided over a machine that stripped Jews of their rights, robbed them, and left them humiliated, impoverished refugees.⁴¹

Doron Rabinovici appropriately defined the IKG and its functionaries during this period as 'powerless agencies' (*Instanzen der Ohnmacht*), oxymoronically playing on the idea of having agency without any decision-making power.⁴² This interplay of agency and the role of initiative in the formulation of anti-Jewish policy is fundamental to understanding Vienna's Shoah-era Jewish history, while of special interest in this chapter is the extent to which the IKG, while genuinely representing an increasingly 'powerless agency' in these catastrophic years, nevertheless found limited means to exert its influence in its rapidly diminishing sphere of activity, significantly in its cemeteries.

Culture, Memory and Genocide

Raphael Lemkin (1900-1959), who originally coined the term 'genocide' and later helped formulate the term in the UN Convention on the Prevention and

³⁹ Botz, *Nationalsozialismus*, 524.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 337-9.

⁴¹ Cesarani, *Eichmann*, 363.

⁴² Rabinovici, *Instanzen*, 35-6.

Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, distinguished genocide from mass murder through the inclusion in the former of a cultural dimension inherent to the deliberate destruction of a group, a distinction which he based on the recent experience of the Shoah.⁴³ His understanding of cultural genocide, however, was defined solely in terms of annihilation, whereas the Nazi cultural project in Vienna was evidently more complex.⁴⁴ As Elizabeth Anthony and Dirk Rupnow discussed in their study of the Seegasse cemetery's history in the early 1940s, the treatment of the cemeteries, and of Jewish heritage more broadly, by Nazi and non-Jewish agencies during the Shoah represented 'a web of intersecting and at times colliding interests and demands (...) which determined the treatment of Jewish property and objects and Jewish culture during the Nazi period', a process which was far from uniform in both motives and ramifications. A recurring aspect of the various policies formulated and enacted during the Shoah was the conservation of certain aspects of culture or, as in the case of the cemeteries, of particular cultural spaces, for the purposes of 'continuing to use them for racially motivated anti-Jewish research and propaganda'.⁴⁵ Rupnow elsewhere critiqued the assumption prevalent in much of the historiography of the Shoah that 'the National Socialists had not only planned in the long-term for the total physical annihilation of European Jewry, but also the erasure of the evidence of their crimes and their victims from *history and memory*' – the italics in the original underlining the implied distinction between *history and memory* and *annihilation*.⁴⁶ Thereby, Rupnow argues, 'the function of memory within the framework of genocide

⁴³ The original draft including the term 'cultural genocide' under Article I can be found under *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, <http://www.preventgenocide.org/law/convention/drafts/>, accessed 8 January 2015.

⁴⁴ Lemkin's definition itself proved to be so complex in practice that it was eventually dropped from the final draft of the convention. The issues surrounding this, and its consequences, are discussed in Dirk Moses, "Raphael Lemkin, Culture, and the Concept of Genocide" in Donald Bloxham & Dirk Moses (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies* (Oxford University Press: 2010).

⁴⁵ Elizabeth Anthony & Dirk Rupnow, "Wien IX, Seegasse 9: Ein österreichisch-jüdischer Geschichtsort" in Jim G. Tobias & Peter Zinke (eds.), *Beiträge zur Deutschen und Jüdischen Geschichte* (Vol. 5, Nuremberg: Institut für NS-Forschung und jüdische Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts, 2010), 107.

⁴⁶ Dirk Rupnow, *Vernichten und Erinnern: Spuren nationalsozialistischer Gedächtnispolitik* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2005), 12-13.

itself is hardly considered beyond the assumption of a planned “murder of memory”.⁴⁷ This theory of a ‘murder of memory’ is what for example Aleida Assmann in her iconic work on memory termed the Nazis’ attempted ‘mnemocide’.⁴⁸

This assumption is evident in the only monograph on the history of the Seegasse to date, Traude Veran’s *Das Steinerne Archiv*, in which she portrayed Nazi policy in Vienna as aimed exclusively at the total excision of Jews and the memory of Jews on the city. To some degree this is true, when considering the fanatical zeal with which local politicians pursued the realisation of a *judenreine Stadt*, a ‘Jew-free city’, and the widespread destruction of Jewish cultural heritage that accompanied forced migration, deportation and finally murder. Veran interpreted the Nazi-era construction plans for the *Donaukanal* area in combination with the gradual destruction of the Seegasse in terms of the ‘mnemocide’ theorem outlined above: ‘Thus, physical annihilation was to be followed by the annihilation of memory’.⁴⁹ By contrast, Rupnow put forward the thesis – which he later demonstrated practically through the example cited above of the Seegasse – that Nazi policy clearly intended the preservation of the memory of European Jewry, albeit through a memorialisation of its own choosing and manipulation, as in the planned Central Jewish Museum in Prague.⁵⁰ Genocide was thereby coupled with its own preservation in memory: ‘Jewry was to be musealised, yet had to be preserved as an argument and therefore as historical fact’.⁵¹ This is not to say that the Shoah did not constitute a ‘mnemocide’ of a very particular kind: millions of individuals were denied not only life, but also form, burial, a memory and a name. And yet the various abuses of sites of Jewish heritage during the Shoah, conditioned by the various agendas of the agents

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 15.

⁴⁸ Aleida Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume: Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1999), 336.

⁴⁹ Traude Veran, *Das Steinerne Archiv: Der Wiener jüdischer Friedhof in der Rossau* (Vienna: Mandelbaum, 2002), 150. This is almost identical to how Assmann defined ‘mnemocide’ above.

⁵⁰ Rupnow, *Vernichten*, 14.

⁵¹ Dirk Rupnow, *Judenforschung im Dritten Reich: Wissenschaft zwischen Politik, Propaganda und Ideologie* (Vienna: Nomos, 2011), 19.

involved, were tied in with a deeper project of cultural revision aimed at excising the 'Jewish' elements of European culture, as this chapter will show in regard to the case in Vienna.

Summary

This chapter analyses the complex interplay of Jewish and non-Jewish agency, whether born from initiative or coercion, of a wide swathe of institutions and individuals caught up in the murderous machinations of the Nazi regime and in the competing drives towards annihilation and preservation of the cemeteries during the Shoah. Across the Third Reich, Jewish cemeteries constituted some of the only sites of Jewish heritage to survive National Socialism, indeed undergoing surprisingly diverse experiences during this period.⁵² Their treatment at the hands of local (Austrian) and foreign (German) institutions during the Shoah – which has been widely explored with regards to the Seegasse and Währing cemeteries, and is almost entirely unexplored with regards to the Central Cemetery – is explored in this chapter through a case-by-case study of each cemetery to allow the specificity of each case to be analysed while examining the common threads tying these cases together. As no comprehensive history of all the cemeteries has been undertaken to date, the chapter begins in section 2.2 by briefly examining the prelude to and formulation of centralised policies towards the Jewish cemeteries. It demonstrates how the November Pogrom and the escalation of co-ordinated, and ultimately genocidal, anti-Jewish measures in the Third Reich correlated with the formulation of centralised initiatives regarding sites of Jewish heritage such as the cemeteries. While these point towards gradual centralisation of policy across the Third Reich which would, without a doubt and given more time, have resulted in the total effacement of traces of Jewish history such as the cemeteries from German and Austrian cityscapes, this

⁵² As remarked by Andreas Wirsching, *Jüdische Friedhöfe in Deutschland 1933-1957, Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 1. Heft (January 2002), 1.

section also establishes the extent to which local Austrian administrative policies of expropriation and destruction often antedated and anticipated the formulation of Reich-wide policies, a trend that recurs throughout each case study.

Sections 2.3 and 2.4, on the Seegasse and Währing respectively, draw on the dynamic, extensively researched by Dirk Rupnow, that during the era of Nazi rule there was a widespread and concerted attempt to establish 'an anti-Jewish field of study' as a discipline in its own right, spearheaded in universities and research institutes, which promoted 'an engagement with Jewish history and culture as well as with the so-called 'Jewish question' from a decidedly antisemitic perspective'.⁵³ Rupnow demonstrated that the 'institutionalisation of the study of Jewish history in Germany took place parallel to the expulsion and murder of German and European Jewry', both projects often driven by the same individuals.⁵⁴ Thereby Jews – along with their cultural and material heritage – were to be preserved as an object of study and, significantly, as a historical *Feindbild* or image of the enemy, even as Jews themselves were being targeted for physical extermination. This dynamic clearly informed the policies adopted towards the Seegasse and Währing cemeteries discussed in this chapter, whereby material artefacts and human remains in these sites were to be expropriated for the purposes of racist scientific analysis, whereas the cemeteries as urban spaces would eventually most likely have succumbed to total annihilation. Moreover, the policies both proposed and enforced regarding the Jewish cemeteries involved a highly complex network of agency, the entanglement of which will be analysed in depth in these sections with particular regard to the remarkable degree of initiative shown by local Viennese institutions during the Shoah. Their crimes have been extensively studied by Rupnow, Tina Walzer, and in post-Shoah institutional inquiries, but my analysis goes further in demonstrating that the various attempts to destroy, expropriate, or selectively preserve the cemeteries,

⁵³ Rupnow, *Judenforschung*, 13.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 18.

in part or in full, tie into a historical tradition with deep roots in Vienna, which furthermore were to influence city council policies and the discourses surrounding Jewish cemeteries well after 1945. This argument draws on an in-depth study published in 2004 by the *Wien Museum* exploring how erasure and (re-)construction have throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries facilitated the construction of particular historical narratives in Vienna, in particular the construction of nostalgic notions of 'Old Vienna', which the authors attributed to 'Vienna's intimate relationship, sometimes exaggerated into the pathological, to its own glamourised past'.⁵⁵ From the nineteenth century onward, destruction, construction and selective preservation were at the heart of political projects of legitimisation in Vienna, a particularly important dynamic that will be explored especially by reference to the Seegasse in this chapter.⁵⁶

Andre Gingrich discussed the widespread support for the Nazis amongst anthropologists in Germany and Austria, interpreting this as motivated primarily by opportunism to make themselves useful to the Nazi regime, but underscored by the widespread roots within pre-Nazi anthropology in these countries of racist and antisemitic thinking, ultimately leading to the marriage of physical (or, as understood at the time, racial) and cultural anthropology.⁵⁷ The anthropologists' opportunism in taking advantage of the conditions under National Socialism to conduct their misanthropic research is especially evident in the Shoah-era history of the Währing cemetery, which suffered various acts of desecration on the initiative of local Austrian

⁵⁵ Wolfgang Kos & Christian Rapp (eds.), *Alt-Wien: Die Stadt, die niemals war* (Vienna: Czernin, 2004), 8.

⁵⁶ As explored in Reinhard Pohanka, "Stadtplanung 1848-1918 in Wien und Budapest: Legitimation und Nationalismus" in Kos & Rapp (eds.), *Alt-Wien*, 71.

⁵⁷ Andre Gingrich, "The German-Speaking Countries" in Fredrick Barth, Andre Gingrich, Robert Parkin, & Sydel Silverman (eds.), *One Discipline, Four Ways: British, German, French and American Anthropology* (University of Chicago: 2005). Rupnow also portrayed the involvement of academics and scholars in antisemitic research as largely motivated by opportunism. Rupnow, *Judenforschung*, 313.

scholars and scientific institutions.⁵⁸ This ties in with the phenomenon explored by Rupnow of the widespread popular interest in antisemitic 'Jewish' research in this period, as at Vienna University, where numerous dissertations were written in the period 1938-45, many of which concurred with the statements of senior Nazi officials cited above in underlining Vienna's special place in the history of the 'Jewish question', and therefore its special place in its 'solution'.⁵⁹ The analysis of the cemeteries, and of Währing in particular, conducted here proceeds from this premise that the initiatives executed in the cemeteries were underpinned by an implicit understanding of the depth of enmeshment and the leading role of Jews in Austrian culture by 1938, and that these initiatives therefore constituted deliberate projects in the forcible separation of these categories in the attempt at creating an 'Aryan' culture and society – a process which Botz described simply as the 'Nazification' of Austrian society.⁶⁰ The discussion on Währing is furthermore augmented by an examination of the extent to which the IKG intervened in the destructions and exhumations taking place there in the early 1940s. The IKG's intervention represented not only an attempt to preserve the religious sanctity of the human remains in this site, but moreover the documentation and discussion of what was to be preserved offers a crucial insight into the IKG's attitude towards its own history and culture, and on what it consequently saw as worthy of preservation – albeit under indescribable duress and in the knowledge that little, if anything, could be salvaged.

Much of the historiography of Vienna's Jewish cemeteries during the Shoah has focussed on the Seegasse and Währing cemeteries, while little or no research has appeared on the Jewish sections of the Central Cemetery or even on the fate of the Central Cemetery during the Second World War in general. Tor I was expropriated by the city council on 26 March 1942, with all burials to cease from

⁵⁸ The opportunities presented by Nazi politics of annihilation are explored in Dirk Rupnow, *Aporien des Gedenkens: Reflexionen über >Holocaust< und Erinnerung* (Freiburg: Rombach, 2006), 81.

⁵⁹ These dissertation projects are listed and discussed in Rupnow, *Judenforschung*, 316-7.

⁶⁰ Botz, *Nationalsozialismus*, 315.

December of that year.⁶¹ The cemetery was to be liquidated after a ten-year deadline, so after December 1952.⁶² Tor I therefore only survived by historical circumstance, explaining the absence of large-scale destructive Nazi activities there during the Shoah by contrast to the other Jewish cemeteries, notwithstanding the severe destructions resulting from the November Pogrom and by stray Allied bombs. The absence of any concrete policies regarding Tor I largely exclude this cemetery from the following analysis, except where relevant. Suffice it to say that the case of Tor I is demonstrative of the most sweeping plans for destruction initiated under Nazi rule. Simultaneously, the absence of anthropological or conservationist interest in this cemetery, especially compared to the interest shown in the older cemeteries in the Seegasse and Währing, testifies to the peculiar relationship evident amongst Viennese institutions to the notions of historicity and historical value – in other words, it would seem that Tor I, which by 1938 was ‘only’ 59 years old, was not invested with the same sense of historicity and value which made Vienna’s older Jewish cemeteries and the material artefacts therein so interesting for Nazi anthropologists.

Tying in with the comparatively scarce attention on the Central Cemetery is the overwhelming focus on Nazi policy during this period, with far less attention having been paid to the IKG’s policies, which were considerably more dynamic than has hitherto been suggested. As Gustav Cohn (1881-1943), a Rabbi in Leipzig who was later murdered in Auschwitz, noted in 1930 on the significance of Jewish cemeteries: ‘Nothing was more difficult for the Jews in their restless history than when they, coerced by external forces, had to relinquish their burial grounds’.⁶³ The lengths to which Vienna’s Jewish community, severely persecuted and on the brink of total annihilation, went in order to salvage its houses of eternity underscores

⁶¹ *Deposition made by Dr. Loewenherz (in preparation for Eichmann trial)*, 35, Joseph Loewenherz Collection, Box 1, Folder 5, LBI, AR25055.

⁶² *Die Wahrheit ist unbesiegbar*, Archiv der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Wien, hereafter AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/Rest/1/1.

⁶³ Gustav Cohn, *Der jüdische Friedhof: Seine geschichtliche und kulturgeschichtliche Entwicklung mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der ästhetischen Gestaltung* (Frankfurt am Main: Franzmathes, 1930), 6.

Cohn's assessment of the value of the Jewish cemetery. The IKG's activities, moreover, extended beyond simply the preservation of Jewish heritage, as discussed earlier: section 2.5, concerning Tor IV, draws on a range of largely unexamined materials to reveal the extent to which this space became recalibrated as a site of Jewish life amidst the extinguishing of Jewish life in Vienna during the Shoah, including poetry, diaries and photography. In other parts of Europe, the treatment and living conditions of the Jewish population in the early 1940s was so lethal that, beyond basic survival, little heed was paid to non-vital issues such as the proper care for the dead, as in the Warsaw ghetto, where the deceased were often left deliberately anonymously in the street so that their relatives could continue to use their ration cards as long as possible.⁶⁴ A 1942 memorandum to the Jewish Council in Warsaw noted that 'basic rule of ethics and tradition in regard to a deceased Jew, which had been practised by the People of Israel for thousands of years, have been broken in a very short period of time'.⁶⁵ By striking contrast, the IKG, although basically constituting what Rabinovici termed a 'powerless agency', certainly becoming increasingly powerless as the Shoah intensified and progressed, nevertheless found the means not only to uphold its traditions and safeguard, wherever possible, its spaces of religious and cultural heritage, but even managed for a short time at least to recalibrate the cemetery at Tor IV as a centre of buzzing activity for those Jews who remained in Vienna in these years, for a brief while transforming this site of death into a 'house of life'. Leonard Ehrlich examined the papers and legacy of Benjamin Murrelstein (1905-1989) and Josef Löwenherz (1884-1960), the former a Rabbi and the latter a leading functionary in the IKG appointed its president by Eichmann in March 1938, demonstrating that their bad post-war reputations, which became 'paradigmatic for the actions of the *Judenräte* [Jewish councils established by the Nazis] altogether', were distorted and

⁶⁴ See Jack Klajman & Ed Klajman, *Out of the Ghetto* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2000), 16-17.

⁶⁵ *Memoriale do Przewodniczącego Rady Żydowskiej*, 31 March 1942, Museum of the History of Polish Jews, core exhibition.

exaggerated, instead opining that, as Rabinovici discussed, they acted for the most part under duress and, where they could, in the interests of their community.⁶⁶ This becomes particularly evident with an analysis of the activities of the IKG leadership at Tor IV. Moreover, the attempts by the IKG leadership to catalogue and preserve the community's cultural heritage, as Rupnow suggest, could even be said to constitute a form of resistance.⁶⁷

Historian Herbert Rosenkranz noted with reference to Vienna's Jewish community during the Shoah that 'during the process of its dissolution, a community's feelings of piety circle all the more around the "good place" – the cemetery – though the case of Vienna stands in obvious opposition to the more desperate situation for example in the Warsaw ghetto described above.⁶⁸ This is not to say that conditions in Vienna were not fundamentally and increasingly deplorable: the vast majority of the people, the records of whom are analysed in section 2.5, were ultimately deported and murdered. Moreover, two particular policies of the Nazi state, namely first the return of urns containing ashes of cremated victims from the concentration and labour camps, and second the forced interment of people classed as Jews by the Nuremberg Laws but not considered Jewish by the IKG, not only represented gross violations of the religious and communal values of the IKG and its cemeteries, but furthermore led to a forced and radical reinterpretation of the notions of tradition and community evident in the cemeteries themselves. This recalibration of Tor IV is indicative of a redefinition of Jewish-Viennese communal culture and identity which was to have more or less explicit ramifications well into the post-Shoah history of the cemetery and of the community more broadly, as explored in Part III. Altogether, the complex network of agency involved in the desecrations and destructions of the

⁶⁶ Leonard Ehrlich, *Geschätzt und gescholten. Benjamin Murrelstein in Wien 1938-1943*, in: S.I.M.O.N. – Shoah: Intervention. Methods. Documentation. 13 May 2008. <http://simon.wvi.ac.at/index.php/swl-reader/36-geschaetzt-und-gescholten-benjamin-murrelstein-in-wien-1938-1943>, accessed 27 February 2015.

⁶⁷ Rupnow, *Aporien*, 89.

⁶⁸ Rosenkranz, *Verfolgung*, 202.

Jewish cemeteries during the Shoah, comprised to a large degree of local Viennese institutions acting on their own initiative, and the traumatic responses of what little remained of the Jewish community to this unprecedented catastrophe, resulted in deep rifts between the small remnant of the dispossessed and largely destroyed Jewish community and the largely indifferent non-Jewish majority in Vienna, who for the most part rejected any responsibility for its complicity in Nazi crimes, after the end of the Shoah. In this conflict, the Shoah-era history of the cemeteries was to propel these severely desecrated spaces into a perennially divisive and painful position in post-war discourses on National Socialism and the Shoah.

2.2 Prelude: The Formulation of Policy on the Cemeteries

By contrast to the rapid formulation of policy regarding Jewish individuals and Jewish property in the first months of Nazi rule in Austria, no such overarching policy was formulated regarding the Jewish cemeteries until at least 1940. There is no precise data or statistical evidence of acts of vandalism perpetrated against Vienna's Jewish cemeteries during the early years of Nazi rule, though these were apparently frequent. Ernst Feldsberg (1894-1970), the director of the IKG's cemetery office during the Shoah and himself a survivor, noted in later years that 'the destruction of these cemeteries was carried out by Austrians, by Austrians who especially in the years 1938 and 1939 wanted to prove their loyalty to National Socialism through their desecration of the memory of the dead'.⁶⁹ Until the beginning of widespread and state-sanctioned expropriations and destructions of the cemeteries in the early 1940s, their history thus ties into the general phenomena of the popular and so-called 'wild' actions which characterised Vienna in the short period before the November Pogrom and which, certainly in intensity, distinguished it from other cities

⁶⁹ *Das tragische Schicksal der jüdischen Friedhöfe*, undated, AIKGW, uncatalogued. Draft for an article by Feldsberg published in much shorter form in *Aufbau*, 16 March 1951.

in the Third Reich. The November Pogrom was the first instance of state-sponsored and organised violence against the cemeteries, as part of the overall destruction of Jewish religious and cultural spaces and their excision from German and Austrian cityscapes. The pogrom, which had been preceded in Vienna by the seizure of over 40,000 apartments where Jews lived, resulted in 27 fatalities of over 90 Reich-wide, around 6,540 arrests of 20,000 Reich-wide, with 3,700 Viennese Jews sent to Dachau. There had been 95 synagogues and prayer rooms in Vienna before 1938, of which 94 were destroyed in the pogrom.⁷⁰ The apex of the violence aimed at the cemeteries, which included the desecration of countless *matzevot*, was the destruction of the *betei tahara* or ritual funerary halls at Tor I and Tor IV using heavy artillery.⁷¹ This employment of heavy-duty military equipment demonstrates the state-organised nature of the pogrom by contrast to its characterisation in Nazi propaganda as a spontaneous popular uprising – albeit that a large part of the non-Jewish population certainly did spontaneously participate in and condone the pogrom.⁷² At Tor IV, only the roof structure of the *beit tahara* was left standing. The rest had to be demolished due to the danger of collapse, while all interior installations were destroyed by the SS. The *beit tahara* at Tor I was completely ruined, and was eventually torn down altogether in the 1970s. Through 1939, there was no further official action taken on the part of local or national authorities regarding the cemeteries.

Following the Battle of France in 1940, the *Amt Rosenberg*, so named after its progenitor Alfred Rosenberg (1893-1946), in Berlin set up the *Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg* (Reichsleiter Rosenberg Taskforce) to plunder all manner of

⁷⁰ See Cesarani, *Eichmann*, 64 & 71, and *Bericht des Präsidiums der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Wien über die Tätigkeit in den Jahren 1945-1948* (Vienna: Verlag der israelitischen Kultusgemeinde in Wien, 1948), 36.

⁷¹ *Aktennotiz*, 3 June 1954, AIKGW, uncatalogued.

⁷² Botz, *Nationalsozialismus*, 515-20.

cultural property, particularly belonging or relating to Jewry, in Nazi-occupied territories.⁷³ Whatever was deemed unnecessary or worthless was to be destroyed.⁷⁴ This demonstrates the gradual formulation of a centralised Nazi policy vis-à-vis Jewish material and cultural heritage in Europe, which aimed on the one hand at the expropriation of useful materials which served either the war effort or Nazi cultural propaganda, or simply the wealth of individuals and the state, on the other hand earmarking whatever remained of Jewish-European heritage for destruction – in other words what Rupnow termed the dual policy of ‘annihilating and remembering’ (as in the title of his work *Vernichten und Erinnern*, though his usage of the latter term conforms more closely to the English ‘preserving’). Various initiatives in Austria however predated these German initiatives and culminated in the formulation of local, proactive policies towards Jewish-Austrian heritage, particularly in the cemeteries. The ‘*country of Austria*’ as defined in the Law on the Reunification of Austria with the German Reich, March 18 1938, represented an ‘administrative unit in the process of liquidation’ which nevertheless continued to govern until the end of March 1940. This included formerly Austrian ministries such as the *Ministerium für innere und kulturelle Angelegenheiten* (Ministry of Interior and Cultural Affairs) which played a leading role in the formulation of Nazi cultural policy towards Jewish heritage.⁷⁵ As will also be seen in the section on the Währing cemetery below, this administrative continuity in local Austrian governance and their involvement in the expropriation and/or destruction of Jewish heritage both precedes and postdates the Shoah.

On 25 January 1940, a good six months before the establishment of the *Einsatzstab* in Berlin, Vienna’s city council (then acting under the Nazi term *Reichsgau*) informed the IKG that ‘due to a decree by the Ministry of Interior and

⁷³ Rupnow, *Vernichten*, 223.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 224.

⁷⁵ See *Land Österreich als Teil des Deutschen Reiches: das Gesetzblatt für das Land Österreich 1938-1940* on ALEX Historische Rechts- und Gesetzestexte Online, http://alex.onb.ac.at/rgb_info.htm, accessed 12 January 2015.

Cultural Affairs, every change in Jewish cemeteries (especially to the gravestones) is to be made dependent on the approval of the state administration of the Reichsgau Vienna', in particular 'every change in the cemeteries which represents a significant alteration of the objects present therein'.⁷⁶ This decree was enshrined in a revised IKG Cemetery Ordinance as §13, whereby unsound *matzevot* were to be laid flat on the grave pending restoration or, where this was not possible, were to be stored 'within the Central Cemetery in a suitable area'.⁷⁷ In a letter from 12 February 1940, the Ministry of Interior and Cultural Affairs further informed all *Landeshauptmänner*, the Austrian heads of the provinces, and the administration of the *Reichsgau* Vienna, that:

(...) concerning any redeployment [*Verwertung*] of the gravestones in Jewish cemeteries and the liquidation of Jewish cemeteries, the relevant cemetery ordinances concerning the closure of cemeteries apply. Where such ordinances do not exist, a period of ten years before the liquidation of the cemeteries is to be observed, after which it may be assumed that no disadvantage or danger to public health is to be feared through such liquidation. This period may be shortened following ministerial consultation. The reuse (sale) of a liquidated Jewish cemetery requires ministerial consent. Nothing stands in the way of the collection and redeployment of gravestones in liquidated Jewish cemeteries, so long as no private legal or conservationist considerations are of special importance.⁷⁸

These initiatives green-lighted the eventual liquidation – and therefore terminal destruction – of these sites of Jewish heritage, while simultaneously placing an embargo on any potential change or redeployment of the material artefacts contained

⁷⁶ *Brief an Herrn Aufseher Theodor Schreiber*, 25 January 1940, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/II/FH/2/2. This letter went to every cemetery warden; Schreiber was the warden in Währing. An example of the barrage of bureaucracy this decree induced is the *Genehmigung: An die Israelitische Kultusgemeinde – Friedhofsamt*, 23 May 1940, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/II/FH/2/2.

⁷⁷ *Friedhofsordnung*, undated, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/II/FH/2/2.

⁷⁸ *Verwertung von Grabsteinen jüdischer Friedhöfe in der Ostmark*, 12 February 1940, DÖW, 12.775.

therein.⁷⁹ This demonstrates an awareness of the potential value of the *matzevot* – whether culturally, financially or materially – whereby the cultural aspect was to become decisive for Nazi policy in ensuing years, as the specific sequence of events in the cemeteries analysed below demonstrates. In any case, this correspondence – dating from early 1940 and thereby antedating both the establishment of the *Einsatzstab* in Munich and the final liquidation of the Austrian administrative system – reveals that the formulation of administrative policy regarding the exploitation of Jewish heritage for propagandistic purposes was already being discussed within local Austrian polity before their complete annexation into the Nazi administrative system and the centralisation of policy towards Jewish heritage in the Nazi state.

In a further demonstration of the initiative shown by local Austrian institutions, on 15 December 1940 Vienna's city council stopped honouring its contracts regarding the maintenance of Jewish graves in city cemeteries not administered by the IKG, such as the Döbling communal cemetery. This predated by more than a year the decision of 20 February 1942 by the *Deutscher Gemeindetag*, the assembly of German municipalities, to annul all such contracts for the maintenance of Jewish graves 'considering that the maintenance of the graves of Jews by the municipalities is no longer compatible with the stance of the Third Reich towards Jewry and with the relationship of the municipalities to the state'.⁸⁰ This wording indicated the intensification and centralisation of genocidal measures against European Jewry and the consolidation of central authority within the Nazi state which had occurred by this point.⁸¹ The Viennese city council's response to the *Gemeindetag*, informing it that Vienna had already ceased honouring these commitments in December 1940,

⁷⁹ The observance of pre-Nazi German laws concerning the liquidation or re-use of former cemeteries furthermore represents the downright bizarre respect sometimes shown by the Nazi state for legal procedure, as observed by Wirsching, *Jüdische Friedhöfe*, 2-3.

⁸⁰ *An die Herren Oberbürgermeister der Städte mit mehr als 500,000 Einw.*, 20 February 1942, Bundesarchiv [Deutschland], hereafter BArch, R36/2101.

⁸¹ Mark Roseman, *The Wannsee Conference and the Final Solution: A Reconsideration* (London: Folio Society, 2002), xii.

demonstrated not only their commitment to Nazi ideology, but also their innovativeness in formulating Nazi policy towards Jewish heritage.⁸² Shortly thereafter, on 16 March 1942, the *Gemeindetag* met to discuss the 'question of the closure and confiscation of Jewish burial sites'. Should a Jewish community organisation not voluntarily put their cemetery up for sale (where voluntarily should be understood as 'of their own accord', considering that Jewish communities had no say in the matter), they could be quasi-legally forced to do so according to the *Verordnung über den Einsatz des jüdischen Vermögens* (Decree on the Deployment of Jewish Property) of 3 December 1938. 'In such cases, the city would have to step in as the buyer'.⁸³ The Viennese city council had already proactively discussed the 'Aryanisation' of the city's Jewish cemeteries almost two years previously, in October 1940, again demonstrating how policy in Vienna regarding these sites of Jewish heritage often preceded the formulation of a centralised policy in Nazi Germany more generally.⁸⁴

Vienna's city council acted quickly on this new decision of the *Gemeindetag*. On 26 March 1942, Tor I was expropriated by the city and, as discussed earlier, was earmarked to be planed after a ten-year deadline.⁸⁵ On 15 July 1942, IKG President Josef Löwenherz was informed by Eichmann's *Zentralstelle* that Tor IV had been similarly earmarked for expropriation by the city council. Löwenherz requested a respite from this move, at least momentarily, since 'the cemetery constitutes the sole burial site not only for the religious Jews, but also for the non-religious Jews and Jews living in mixed marriages', an argument which swayed the *Zentralstelle*

⁸² *An den Deutschen Gemeindetag*, 18 March 1942, BArch, R36/2101.

⁸³ *Ausschnitt aus den Mitteilungen des Deutschen Gemeindetages, 16.3.1942 – 18. Verträge über den Erwerb jüdischer Friedhöfe*, BArch, R36/2101.

⁸⁴ *Aktennotiz über die Vorsprache des gefertigten Leiters der isr. Kultusgemeinde bei Herrn U'stuf. Brunner am 17. Oktober 1940, 12 Uhr mittags*, 4, Joseph Loewenherz Collection, Box 1, Folder 3, LBI, AR25055.

⁸⁵ *Die Wahrheit ist unbesiegbare*, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/Rest/1/1.

officials.⁸⁶ This coalesced with the general importance which Tor IV, as the only cemetery in active use, was increasingly adopting in these years. Währing had already been forcibly sold to the city council on 21 February 1942, predating the 16 March meeting of the *Gemeindetag* by several weeks, with various destructive projects initiated by local institutions already underway by this point.⁸⁷ These instances all demonstrate the extent to which policy was being initiated in Vienna before being rolled out across the Third Reich, and the complex entanglement of local agents and institutions with the bureaucratic machinery of the Third Reich resulting in the various abuses of Jewish heritage in the city which ensued. A rather more complex process of expropriation was evident in the Seegasse.

2.3 Seegasse

In a succinct article on the Seegasse as an ‘Austrian-Jewish site of history’, Elizabeth Anthony and Dirk Rupnow explored the cemetery as a site that has been almost entirely ‘covered over’ by its Shoah and post-Shoah history, highlighting the ‘repression of the traces of Jewish history in Vienna’, but also the ‘convoluted ways through which these traces were preserved at all through the “Third Reich”’.⁸⁸ Through analysing the body of correspondence relating to the cemetery, Anthony and Rupnow extrapolated the entanglement of various institutions, mostly consisting of offices of the Vienna city council, and their conflicting agendas regarding the liquidation or preservation of this site of Jewish heritage. These agendas followed one of three broad lines of argumentation:

⁸⁶ *Deposition made by Dr. Loewenherz (in preparation for Eichmann trial)*, 38, Joseph Loewenherz Collection, Box 1, Folder 5, LBI, AR25055.

⁸⁷ *An das Friedhofsamt der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde*, 10 August 1951, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/FH/108/8.

⁸⁸ Anthony & Rupnow, “Wien IX”, 2.

- 1) the wish to liquidate the cemetery to make room for a playground (as originally proposed by the *Schulamt* or school board and the *Planungsbehörde* or planning authority);
- 2) the wish to preserve the cemetery in full or in part as a site of cultural heritage (supported by the *Institut für Denkmalpflege* or Institute for Historic Preservation, in conjunction with the city council's *Kulturamt* or Department of Culture); and
- 3) the wish to exploit the historical and material heritage of the site for racist scientific research (as suggested by the Departments of *Raumforschung* or Spatial Research and of Anthropology at Vienna University).⁸⁹

The third approach, in particular, embodied the general tendency of Nazi policy towards what Rupnow termed *annihilating and preserving* – the selective preservation of Jewish heritage for propagandistic and (pseudo-)scientific purposes, in conjunction with its otherwise widespread effacement from the mental and physical landscape in Europe – as well as the kind of incrimination of anthropological institutions in Nazi crimes as explored by Andre Gingrich. I use the term 'pseudo-scientific' only in brackets, since these streams within academia were, for the most part and despite their often flawed and biased premises, legitimate scientific endeavours in the eyes of their protagonists, whereby the prefix *pseudo* tends to obfuscate the widespread social and political sense of legitimacy which such endeavours enjoyed.⁹⁰

The local attempts to liquidate the cemetery for the purpose of a schoolyard ultimately failed due to the long-term plans of a fourth group of agents, namely the Hitler Youth, Gestapo and SS, both their local representations in Vienna as well as

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 5-9.

⁹⁰ As discussed in Rupnow, *Aporien*, 71.

their central leadership in Berlin, and due to the short-term necessity of maintaining a Jewish retirement home and hospice at the site.⁹¹ In terms of analysing the network of complicity of local and foreign agency involved in the expropriation and destruction of the cemeteries, however, the involvement of the various ministries and institutions outlined above and their attempts to destroy, confiscate or preserve the land and the material artefacts thereupon are highly informative. Much of the relevant materials pertaining to this chapter of the cemetery's history have been covered by Anthony and Rupnow. The following section provides a summary of this work with supplementary material and comments in addition to their findings. More importantly, it situates the discussion of the Seegasse as a site of (Jewish-)Viennese heritage within its pre-Shoah context, with a special focus on the discursive argumentation employed in evaluating the site for its cultural and historical significance, furthermore setting the background for the post-Shoah discussions which will be analysed in Part III.

Background: Preservationist Measures before the Shoah

The two volumes published by Bernhard Wachstein (1868-1935) on the Jewish cemetery in the Seegasse, without which much of this heritage would have been irrevocably lost in the destructions of the Shoah, was the result of several years of restoration activities in the cemetery.⁹² This restoration work, carried out between 1908 and 1912, was initiated and conducted by the IKG, yet supported by the *K. K. Amt für Kulturelle und Historische Denkmale* (the Imperial-Royal Office for Cultural and Historical Monuments), demonstrating an increased interest amongst Jewish and non-Jewish cultural and historical specialists alike in the space as a record of and

⁹¹ Anthony & Rupnow, "Wien IX", 4.

⁹² Bernhard Wachstein, *Die Inschriften des alten Judenfriedhofs in Wien* (Vienna: K. u. K. Hof- und Universitäts-Buchhändler, 1912).

monument to Viennese and Jewish-Viennese culture and history.⁹³ The Historical Commission of the IKG appointed Wachstein, then the IKG librarian and a local historian, to appraise and catalogue the cemetery and its gravestones, on the basis of which necessary restoration work was planned and conducted, work for which Wachstein was most qualified considering his excellent skills in Hebrew language and epigraphy. In a letter to the IKG, dated 12 June 1909, the Office for Cultural and Historical Monuments wrote that the site 'is of great picturesque effect and can therefore rightly be called a culturally significant sight [*Sehenswürdigkeit*] of Vienna', on the basis of which the office was 'gladly ready to support the respected board [of the IKG] in their efforts to maintain the cemetery and its gravestones'.⁹⁴ This is significant not only due to the ready involvement of a public institution in the financial and conservational investment in a site of Jewish heritage as simultaneously and explicitly a Viennese site of heritage, but also for this involvement at a time when social and political antisemitism was rife in Vienna, indeed when Vienna was under the governance of an antisemitic mayor, Karl Lueger (1844-1910).⁹⁵ Moreover, the language is very conspicuous, for example in characterising the cemetery as 'of great picturesque effect': this was mirrored in other publications of the time, as we shall examine shortly, yet stood in crass contradistinction to the terms through which the cemetery was characterised in debates over its value and fate during Nazi rule in the city. However, such language also elucidates contrasting opinions between the Jewish and non-Jewish agencies involved in the restoration, the former deeply concerned with the cultural and sacral nature and history of the space, the latter rather with its surface impression and effect on the cityscape.

⁹³ The records of the restoration work are stored in *Akt Grabsteine Seegasse (betr. die Restaurierung der Grabsteine) 1902-1912*, Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, hereafter CAHJP, AW/1719.

⁹⁴ *Brief vom K.u.K. Amt für Kulturelle und Historische Denkmale an den Vorstand der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde*, CAHJP, AW/1719.

⁹⁵ An excellent discussion of the relationship between Jewish culture at the beginning of the last century and the growing antisemitism in Viennese society at the time can be found in Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna*.

During the course of the restoration work, niches were created in the walls surrounding the cemetery to incorporate the gravestones of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries that had been recently discovered.⁹⁶ During these years, the cemetery was photographed a number of times, partly for the purpose of creating a permanent exhibition at Vienna's Jewish museum.⁹⁷ The surviving photographs demonstrate that either the photographer or the curators of the exhibition were aware of the semiotic effect of the photographic medium, with for example one particular image reproduced under different levels of exposure, one copy inscribed with the name of the cemetery, another even coloured by pencil as though to accentuate the atmospheric qualities of the space itself, depicted in Figure 2.1. These photographs, and the museum exhibition, underscore the significance invested in the cemeteries as sites of heritage by the Jewish community, and the growing interest in the conservation and research of such sites at the time. Significantly, the cemetery was also photographed in 1904 by a non-Jewish chronicler of 'old Vienna', August Stauda (1861-1928), whose oeuvre of over 3000 photographs represents one of the earliest and most extensive documentary engagements with sites of historical and aesthetic interest in the city.⁹⁸ That Stauda's work constitutes 'a comprehensive but not evaluative store of knowledge' is representative of the extent to which the Seegasse cemetery, and by extension the historical roots of the Jewish community, had become embedded in historical consciousness in the city by the early twentieth century – despite widespread popular antisemitism.⁹⁹ This benevolent engagement, partly antiquarian or, as in Wachstein's case, genealogical and historical, posits a striking contrast to

⁹⁶ They were the subject of a subsequent publication of Wachstein's. Bernhard Wachstein, *Hebräische Grabsteine aus dem XIII.-XV. Jahrhundert in Wien und Umgebung* (Vienna: K. u. K. Hof- und Universitäts-Buchhändler, 1916).

⁹⁷ There is a range of surviving photography, including photographs of the exhibition itself, in *Fotosammlung Seegasse*, Jüdisches Museum Wien, hereafter JMW, 2522-3, 3217, 3311 *et al*, and in *Fotosammlung Seegasse*, CAHJP, AU-191.

⁹⁸ These are contained in *Wien 9, Seegasse 9* as part of the August Stauda collection, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Bildarchiv, ST 1688-91Je F, ST 1689, ST 1690 F *et al*.

⁹⁹ Stauda's work is explored in Susanne Winkler, "Die 3000 Wien-Ansichten des August Stauda: Ein Wiener "Alt-Stadt"-Dokumentarist um 1900" in Kos & Rapp (eds.), *Alt-Wien*, 109.

the racist scientific interests which were to come to the fore from various institutions under Nazi rule. The inner-Jewish engagement with this site of heritage represents the Jewish community's celebration of its history and culture as well as its self-legitimation as an integral part of the history of the city, just as the external involvement of agents like the Office for Cultural and Historical Monuments or photographers like August Stauda represent its legitimation from without. As such this fits a Viennese historical trend as explored by Reinhard Pohanka, who argued that such 'efforts of the historians and the archaeologists of the time' were not merely a matter of 'academic curiosity', but also constituted 'national' projects 'reflecting society and acting as carriers of its disposition'.¹⁰⁰

Image removed from electronic version for copyright reasons – TC

Figure 2.1: *Wiener Friedhof XI Seegasse*, Fotosammlung Seegasse, JMW, 2523.

Annihilation vs. Preservation: Negotiation of Policy under Nazi Rule

As with Vienna's other Jewish cemeteries, the Seegasse appears to have escaped official scrutiny in the first years of Nazi rule in the city. This changed on 3

¹⁰⁰ Pohanka, "Stadtplanung", 74.

June 1941, when Robert Körber (1896-?),¹⁰¹ the head of the city school board, indicated in a letter to one of the board's departments his interest in expropriating the Jewish retirement home in the Seegasse to accommodate a school boarding house following 'the resettlement of the Jews' living on the site, and mentioning specifically 'its large garden', the cemetery, which 'would be particularly amenable' for use by local schoolchildren.¹⁰² This euphemistic use of the word 'garden' presented a discursive annihilation of the cemetery to precede its physical annihilation and recurred throughout the correspondence of the school board and planning authority.¹⁰³ By 10 July 1941, the plan had taken concrete shape in a call by the planning authority to create a playground on the site following the expulsion of the remaining Jews and the liquidation of the cemetery.¹⁰⁴ On 25 July 1941, however, the city council's Institute for Historic Preservation threw a spanner in the works by voicing its opposition to these plans on the basis of the cemetery's 'documentary interest' from a 'historical as well as cultural point of view'.¹⁰⁵ On 19 September 1941, Andreas Tröster (1900-?)¹⁰⁶ from the planning authority weighed in with his opinion that the cemetery was 'not comparable to any of our artistic epochs', that the inscriptions were 'without a doubt well employed as ornamental script' yet that the cemetery presented 'for the study and history of our people an otherwise completely unrelated and therefore worthless affair'.¹⁰⁷

This first round of correspondence elucidates the central conflict underlying the treatment of Jewish heritage in the city amongst local administrative authorities,

¹⁰¹ Although I was able to identify this man, his records are missing from the city *Gauakten*, as discussed further below.

¹⁰² *Abschrift, an die Abteilung I/6, im Auftrag: Dr. Körber*, 3 June 1941, Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, hereafter WStLA, A3 (1. Reihe) – Transaktionen: Schachtel 148: Tr9 betreffend Jüdischen Friedhof in Wien 9, Seegasse 9, Alsergrund, E2 894.

¹⁰³ As also noted in Anthony & Rupnow, "Wien IX", 5.

¹⁰⁴ *Spielplatz im 9. Bezirk*, 10 July 1941, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv / Archiv der Republik, hereafter ÖStA/AdR, Reichsstatthalter in Wien, Kt. 300.

¹⁰⁵ *An den Reichsstatthalter – Planungsbehörde*, 25 July 1941, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Tröster's personnel and denazification records are also missing, as discussed further below.

¹⁰⁷ *An Herrn Regierungspräsident Dr. Dellbrügge*, 19 September 1941, ÖStA/AdR, Reichsstatthalter in Wien, Kt. 300.

indicative of broader questions of culture shaping Nazi policy in Vienna during these decisive years. Specifically, the impetus arose from the camp, represented here by the school board and planning authority, that for matters of expedience, and out of a basic opportunism facilitated by the evolving anti-Jewish legislation of the time, wished to expropriate the land for their own purposes, whereby the irrevocable destruction of the site and its material artefacts would have occurred as an incidental, though not undesirable, by-product of this expropriation. In the interim period, support for the liquidation of the site was also voiced by the mayor, Philipp Wilhelm Jung (1884-1965), coinciding with the city council's expropriation of part of the Währing cemetery for construction of an air-raid bunker.¹⁰⁸ The objections raised by the Institute for Historic Preservation, the successor institution to the office that had between 1908-12 contributed to the cemetery's preservation, are notable in that its insistence upon a Jewish cemetery's cultural and historical value to the city of Vienna as a 'culturally significant sight' is analogous to pre-Shoah policy. This policy plainly did not concur with Nazi ideology regarding Jewish culture and its place within 'German' (or in this case Viennese) culture. Up to this point, the debate oscillated between two simple binary positions: destruction or preservation. As further agents – in particular the academic – became entangled in the debate, this picture was complicated, with the notable characteristic that the IKG was completely powerless in this decision-making process, at least until later.

On 20 September 1941, the city's Department of Culture drafted a memo based on various documentary sources to demonstrate the unique and valuable historical character of the Jewish cemetery in the Seegasse, including for example Bernhard Wachstein's work from the early twentieth century, aimed at strengthening the case for the cemetery's preservation. This included among others: local historian Leopold Donatin's 1904 work *Der Alsergrund einst und jetzt*, attributing to the

¹⁰⁸ *Amts-Erinnerung*, 10 April 1942, WStLA, A3 (1. Reihe) – Transaktionen: Schachtel 148: Tr9 betreffend Jüdischen Friedhof in Wien 9, Seegasse 9, Alsergrund, E2 894.

Seegasse a 'picturesque view' and comparing it to the Prague Jewish cemetery; geographer Hugo Hassinger's 1916 work *Kunsthistorischer Atlas der k.k. Reichs- und Hauptstadt Wien*, naming the Seegasse 'one of it [Vienna's] most picturesque corners'; and geologist Alois Kieslinger's 1934 article *Gesteinskundliche Untersuchungen*, promoting research on the Seegasse cemetery in lieu of surviving contemporaneous Christian cemeteries and gravestones.¹⁰⁹ The language employed in these examples is notably similar to the language used by the Office for Cultural and Historical Monuments in 1909, cited above, while the comparison of the Seegasse to the famous old cemetery in Prague is a recurring motif transcending the Shoah on both ends.¹¹⁰ In early October, the office of the *Reichsstatthalter* in Vienna announced that the *Reichsleiter* (not specifying which one, though the later involvement of the RSHA in Berlin suggests it was *Reichsführer-SS* Heinrich Himmler, 1900-1945, or one of his adjutants) 'tends toward the conclusion to turn this Jewish cemetery into a playground', but requested further evidence of its potential value.¹¹¹

Various institutions thereafter rapidly voiced their opinions, beginning on 15 October 1941 with the Department of Spatial Research at Vienna University who informed the office of the *Reichsstatthalter* that a liquidation of the 'historic cemetery' would be 'thoroughly undesirable', but that if this were to occur there should at least be a 'careful documentation' of the site, with the 'most important gravestones' to be donated to the city's historical museum.¹¹² Three days later, the Department of Anthropology at Vienna University wrote that the skeletal remains and epigraphy in the Seegasse were 'anthropologically' interesting for research.¹¹³ On 25 November 1941, Dr. Lothar Loeffler (1901-1983) of the Racial Biology Institute at Königsberg

¹⁰⁹ *Amtsvermerk: Schrifttum zum Jüdischen Friedhof in der Seegasse*, 20 September 1941, ÖStA/AdR, Reichsstatthalter in Wien, Kt. 300.

¹¹⁰ As also noted in Anthony & Rupnow, "Wien IX", 6 & 11.

¹¹¹ *An Dr. Tröster*, ÖStA/AdR, Reichsstatthalter in Wien, Kt. 300.

¹¹² *An den Reichsstatthalter in Wien*, 15 October 1941, *ibid.*

¹¹³ *An die Reichsarbeitsgemeinschaft für Raumforschung*, 18 October 1941, *ibid.*

University, who by his own admission had been conducting research on exhumed skeletal remains of Jews in East Prussia 'for years' and became director of the newly founded Racial Biology Institute in Vienna less than a year later, argued in favour of a 'scientific evaluation of the skeletal remains' in the Seegasse, as was also being planned in Währing at the time.¹¹⁴ These interventions, broadly arguing for a preservation of at least the material artefacts – comprising both gravestones and human remains – in the cemetery, were of course not intended out of any philosemitic considerations, but by openly racist motivations for the furthering of Nazi anthropological research being spearheaded at the time by various academic and scientific institutions. Though these schemes were never realised in the Seegasse, some of these local institutions were later to become complicit in the desecration of human remains in Währing, among other places, in pursuit of their racial science, as is discussed further below. This represents the third group of agency involved in these debates over the Seegasse, typifying the evolving Nazi policy which Rupnow located as emerging within the binary of *annihilating and preserving* – namely the group who advocated a selective preservation of Jewish heritage for propagandistic scientific purposes.

Finally, on 27 November 1941, the Department of Culture launched a lengthy appeal in a letter to the office of the *Reichsstatthalter*, arguing for the preservation of the cemetery on the following grounds:

The Jewish cemetery in the Roßau is of enormous significance to the history of the city as it is the oldest cemetery in Vienna. Art-historically, too, it occupies a remarkable place as it consists of artistically good, and to a large degree of valuable, gravestones. In the context of other old Jewish

¹¹⁴ *An den Reichsstatthalter in Wien – Planungsbehörden*, 25 November 1941, *ibid.*

cemeteries, in particular the famous cemetery in Prague, it is deserving of trans-regional significance.¹¹⁵

The letter called the cemetery 'a many centuries-old open-air museum', and referred from a 'legal standing' to the contracts of 1672 and 1785 between the Jewish community and the City of Vienna ensuring its eternal preservation. In addition, on 3 January 1942, the Institute for Historic Preservation submitted to the office of the *Reichsstatthalter* nineteen high-quality photographs 'from the Jewish cemetery in Vienna, IX, Seegasse, of conservational interest as a historical document'.¹¹⁶ These photographs are strikingly similar to those created thirty years previously during the restoration works in the Seegasse, underlining the efficacy of this visual medium in capturing the aesthetic and historic aura of the space.

On 15 January 1942, Tröster from the planning authority wrote a summary of this on-going discussion for the office of the *Reichsstatthalter*, on the basis of the above-cited consultation with these various institutions – though with a blatant bias towards the openly antisemitic arguments for, at best, a selective preservation of material artefacts for purposes of scientific research. He indicated that it 'turns out that the Jewish cemetery in the Seegasse, which should form the primary space for the playground, contains material valuable for various scientific studies'.¹¹⁷ Citing that the Institute for Historic Preservation and the Department of Culture opposed the liquidation of the cemetery due to its 'historical and cultural' interest, he also relayed the recommendation of the Department of Spatial Research at Vienna University that 'the most important stones should be given to the *Wien Museum*, while exact measurements and photographic documentation of the cemetery and its archaeological finds should be conducted'. He cited the University's Department of Anthropology's recommendation that the 'skeletal material' should be conserved and

¹¹⁵ *An den Reichsstatthalter in Wien als Planungsbehörde*, 27 November 1941, *ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *An den Reichsstatthalter in Wien als Planungsbehörde*, 3 January 1942, *ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *An Herrn Regierungspräsident Dr. Dellbrügge*, 15 January 1942, *ibid.*

sorted according to the 'inscriptions upon the gravestones' with the intent of discerning 'successive generations in familial relationships', a practice that the department was simultaneously developing for their exhumations in Währing. Tröster concluded that, due to the war, the cemetery should be preserved for the time being, but added crucially that 'it is not tolerable that a Jewish cemetery be admired as a special memorial while Aryan cemeteries are unceremoniously passed over'. Tröster emphasised again that only scientific interest should determine policy, 'even if this research relates to Jewry. Precisely the exact research of Jewry allows the clear discernment of the enemy while allowing positive conclusions on one's own peoplehood'.

Following another appeal by the Institute for Historic Preservation on 5 March 1942, which once more cited the Seegasse's 'likeness to the old Jewish cemetery in Prague',¹¹⁸ a meeting was scheduled for 10 April 1942 between Körber of the school board, Tröster of the planning authority, and Dr. Viktor Schneider (1894-?) as representative of the Department of Culture, to resolve the issue once and for all.¹¹⁹ The meeting, during which 'the known arguments were again repeated', was dominated by Körber who 'began to argue excessively antisemitically'.¹²⁰ His arguments have already been analysed by Anthony and Rupnow, who emphasised Körber's dismissive attitude towards Vienna's Jews, who were at this stage in the full throes of open deportation and murder, and whose rights Körber declared 'null and void'.¹²¹ Of further interest considering the revaluation of Jewish culture and of the cemeteries as sites of Jewish heritage in the city is Tröster's argument that 'most of the stones no longer stood on their original places', that 'many stones from other cemeteries were brought to the Seegasse' and that 'the overwhelming majority of the

¹¹⁸ *An den Reichsstatthalter in Wien*, 5 March 1942, *ibid*.

¹¹⁹ The full minutes of the meeting, from which I cite hereafter unless otherwise stated, are recorded in *Amts-Erinnerung*, 10 April 1942, WStLA, A3 (1. Reihe) – Transaktionen: Schachtel 148: Tr9 betreffend Jüdischen Friedhof in Wien 9, Seegasse 9, Alsergrund, E2 894.

¹²⁰ Anthony & Rupnow, "Wien IX", 8.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, 8-9.

stones were newer (seventeenth and eighteenth centuries)'. Therefore the only things worthy of preservation 'from a scientific point of view' were 'the historical data on the stones' and 'from an anthropological point of view' the 'potential skeletal remains'. This demonstrates that Tröster was aware at least superficially of the history of the cemetery as researched by Wachstein, among others, and underlines the policy predominating in Vienna in the early years of the 1940s which saw value in the data contained within the cemeteries, but not in the cemeteries as sites of heritage, or even of beauty, themselves. This display of familiarity with and abuse of Jewish historiography furthermore represents a kind of intellectual 'Aryanisation', as discussed elsewhere by Rupnow.¹²² Körber concurred with Tröster's views, stating that 'according to National Socialist thinking, the Jews are an intrusive, Asiatic and criminal human material, whose gravestones are not an atmospheric feast for the eyes, but at most an insult to the German eye', thereby repeatedly and explicitly parodying the characterisation of the cemetery as 'of great picturesque effect' and 'a culturally significant sight' of thirty years earlier. He continued that the 'gravesites of Rabbis, Talmudists and usurers cannot be granted any venerability in National Socialist Germany', reminding Schneider of the Department of Culture that 'academia also had to acknowledge the enormous caesura of 1933 (1938) and liberate itself from the previous stupidity of humanism and equal rights for all people'.

A disturbing facet of Körber's on-going tirade was a line of argumentation that continued to be followed, at least implicitly – and fortunately unsuccessfully – by Vienna's city council for years after the end of Nazi rule, namely that 'cemeteries were traditionally always created outside of urban spaces. If the city grew out around them then they lost all rights to existence or preservation. The living should not constantly be reminded of the dead'. Beyond these 'fundamental' issues, he also insisted that the Seegasse was

¹²² Rupnow, *Judenforschung*, 156-9.

neither a cemetery preserved in its original form, nor a 'picturesque corner' of Vienna, but a former burial site largely built over with apartment blocks, on the main site of which a garden has emerged, upon a part of which in confined space over 1000 stones were amassed that are now wildly overgrown. This unremarkable thicket can hardly be classed as a 'sight to be seen in Vienna' which due to some 'sense of piety' should be granted protected status. The space shortage in Vienna and in National Socialist Germany simply forbids the luxury of a tasteless preservation of an 'open-air museum' for Jewish gravestones, especially when this valuable land can be made useful again for the heavily tuberculosis-affected German youth.

The ostensibly undesirable aesthetic of these 'overgrown' spaces – largely a result in all the Jewish cemeteries of the inability of the rapidly diminishing Jewish community to tend to these spaces – and the 'usefulness' of the land, arguments used as justification for liquidating Jewish cemeteries in favour of playgrounds and living spaces, were echoed in various projects, whether realised or simply proposed, by Vienna's city council from the late 1940s until as late as the 1970s.¹²³ Although this scheme of the city school board and planning authority was never realised, it presents a direct precedent and a complication of the city council's complicity in Nazi crimes perpetrated against sites of Jewish heritage in the city which extend well beyond the Shoah, which will be discussed in the latter part of the thesis.

The Aftermath: A Curiously Viennese Story

One consequence of the attempted intervention by the Department of Culture and of Viktor Schneider personally on behalf of the Jewish cemetery, not explored in the post-war histories by Traude Veran or Anthony and Rupnow, was Schneider's treatment following his lone stand, both during the remaining years of Nazi rule and

¹²³ The argument of the undesirability of such 'overgrown' spaces, their dilapidation often occurring as a direct result of National Socialist policies and the extermination of Jewish communities in the Third Reich, was increasingly used as a pretext for their destruction on the German side of the Reich, as explored by Wirsching, *Jüdische Friedhöfe*, 20.

thereafter. Less than two weeks after this meeting, the school board under Körber's direction wrote a letter of complaint to Schneider's superior in the Department of Culture, recommending his castigation.¹²⁴ The letter repeated much of the arguments and wording of Körber's tirade during the meeting eleven days previously, emphasising the contrariety of preserving a Jewish cemetery or, as the letter put it, of 'a former burial site of Rabbis and usurers', with National Socialist ideology. It clarified that the claim of the cemetery's intrinsic value was not in question – there could well be material of 'scientific and anthropologic' interest there. The problem lay with Schneider's arguments, that not only spoke of the beauty, age and piety of the place, but also the legal contracts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as arguments for protecting the site. Along with the familiar modes of antisemitic discourse from Körber's arguments cited above, an important facet of the letter is the insistence that

this site of gathered and piled gravestones, surrounded by high apartment blocks, neither genuine nor well-tended, but in reality abandoned and overgrown into wilderness, can only by Jews in their intrusive, sentimental adulation of all things Jewish be described as a cultural or scientific feast for the eyes or even as a picturesque vista. For me as a National Socialist it seems a special dictate of the moment to remove a Jewish cemetery in the inner city of Vienna, now in the moment when the German people stands in the fateful fight for existence against the criminal world Jewry (...)

This statement, which correlated with contemporary references such as by Baldur von Schirach cited above to the 'Final Solution' then being carried out, in Vienna as elsewhere, represents the most extreme form of genocidal and 'mnemocidal' intent, at least as far as the total removal of the last vestiges of Jewish heritage from the face of the cityscape was concerned. The letter concluded that

¹²⁴ *An Herrn Stadtrat Ing. Blaschke*, 21 April 1942, WStLA, Volksgericht, A1 – Vg Vr-Strafakten: 4290/45 (Josef Körber, geb. 10.9.1896).

'such reports and concepts' as put forward by Schneider 'only damage the reputation of the city administration, especially when such points of view are presented to the highest offices of the Reich as the opinion of the city administration', here referring to the *Reichsstatthalter* as representative of the NSDAP in Vienna and the RSHA in Berlin. The letter called upon unspecified action to be taken against Schneider, and suggested that the Department of Culture would agree 'that the soonest possible liquidation of the Jewish cemetery is a political necessity'. The position taken by the school board here, moreover, reflected microcosmically the interplay between local (Viennese) and central (German) agency, as well as a curious mixture of acting from conviction as opposed to expedience, as references to the 'reputation of the city administration' make clear – such arguments resound in Austrian political debates surrounding the country's desecrated Jewish cemeteries to this day.

The conclusion of the plenary meetings regarding the Seegasse was that 'there are no more doubts about acquiring the Jewish retirement home through the City of Vienna and, after removal of the Jews, employing this space for the sake of a school boarding house or other public purpose'.¹²⁵ However, the plan was abruptly halted by the Gestapo, who noted that the 'Jewish retirement home is indispensable for those Jews who for various reasons cannot be evacuated', noting furthermore that the property had already been 'sold', meaning expropriated, to the SS.¹²⁶ The SS concurred with this position on 25 August 1942.¹²⁷ An internal memo of the school board on 17 November 1942 noted that 'the building at Seegasse 9 has according to the *Reichsführer*-SS been assigned to the *Waffen*-SS by the Reich Finance Ministry, meaning that the issue of creating a school boarding home in this building can be

¹²⁵ *Liegenschaftsamt, an den jüdischen Auswanderungsfonds*, 13 July 1942, WStLA, A3 (1. Reihe) – Transaktionen: Schachtel 148: Tr9 betreffend Jüdischen Friedhof in Wien 9, Seegasse 9, Alsergrund, E2 894.

¹²⁶ *An die Gemeindeverwaltung des Reichsgaues Wien*, August 1942, DöW, 12.775.

¹²⁷ *An den höheren SS-und Polizeiführer*, 25 August 1942, *ibid.*

viewed as terminated'.¹²⁸ Although, ultimately, the cemetery was 'Aryanised' by Berlin-based Nazi institutions, who were thus responsible for its subsequent desecration, the involvement of these local Viennese institutions represents first of all the kind of initiative displayed repeatedly by local institutions in the formulation and execution of anti-Jewish policy in the city, and furthermore a significant discursive and policy-shaping precedent for controversial actions of the city council in the immediate post-war period. Furthermore, it represents the gradual emergence of scientific investigations into Jewish culture which, as Rupnow demonstrated with regard to Germany, transformed Jews entirely into the objects, no longer subjects, of research and knowledge, as part of a targeted programme of antisemitic, genocidal policy.¹²⁹ The involvement of the Department of Culture and the Institute of Historic Preservation was characterised by a notable absence of antisemitism, even if their arguments in favour of cultural and historic preservation restricted themselves, as Anthony and Rupnow remarked, to the cemetery's 'city- and art-historical significance'.¹³⁰

In light of the inevitable destruction of the cemetery, IKG president Löwenherz – by then acting merely as the *Judenältester* or 'Elder of the Jews' – on 6 May 1943 wrote a request to the Gestapo to remove the *matzevot* to a safe location, to which the Gestapo acquiesced.¹³¹ Traude Veran cited testimony relating that a group of IKG members spent many days physically carting the *matzevot* to a car in the street and transferring them from there to the cemetery at Tor IV, where they were buried to best preserve them.¹³² Some of the men involved were Jewish workers employed by Dr. Viktor Christian (1885-1963) from Vienna University to conduct the exhumations

¹²⁸ *Hauptabteilung Schulwesen*, 17 November 1942, WStLA, A3 (1. Reihe) – Transaktionen: Schachtel 148: Tr9 betreffend Jüdischen Friedhof in Wien 9, Seegasse 9, Alsergrund, E2 894.

¹²⁹ Rupnow, *Judenforschung*, 18.

¹³⁰ Anthony & Rupnow, "Wien IX", 12.

¹³¹ *An die Friedhofsverwaltung!* 6 May 1945, Joseph Loewenherz Collection, Box 1, Folder 4, LBI, AR25055.

¹³² Veran, *Archiv*, 153.

at Währing, as discussed below. The removal of the *matzevot* to Tor IV took place between 10 May and 24 August 1943.¹³³ Veran noted:

The incentive to clear the cemetery originated with the IKG and was received positively by the Gestapo, although the underlying motives were very different: the Jews wanted to rescue their gravestones from destruction, the Gestapo and SS by contrast wanted to see the cemetery disappear.¹³⁴

The exact sequence of events remains unknown, with some *matzevot* still missing to this day. This event represents in any case the last desperate attempts by a community pushed to the brink of annihilation to salvage what little it could of its heritage and the memory of its ancestors. On 25 May 1943 the last 122 inhabitants of the retirement home were deported, the majority to Theresienstadt concentration camp.¹³⁵

The struggle between the school board and planning authority against the Department of Culture remains a curious story of local Viennese administrative quarrelling, not to mention complicity in crimes against Jews and Jewish heritage, in part left unexplained to this day. Regarding the peculiar case of Viktor Schneider, Veran merely commented that his application to (re-)join the NSDAP in 1943 was rejected on account of his 'intervention on behalf of Jewish cultural heritage'.¹³⁶ Anthony and Rupnow refer to the fact that Schneider had already been a member of the NSDAP from 1931 to 1933, and highlight the extreme ambiguity of his career during the Nazi period – on the one hand being praised as a 'competent and temperamentally impeccable civil servant', on the other being denounced again in 1943 for a similar intervention on behalf of the Jewish cemetery in Währing.¹³⁷

¹³³ *An das Friedhofsamt der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde*, 10 August 1951, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/FH/108/8.

¹³⁴ Veran, *Archiv*, 153.

¹³⁵ Anthony & Rupnow, "Wien IX", 10.

¹³⁶ Veran, *Archiv*, 152-3.

¹³⁷ Anthony & Rupnow, "Wien IX", 12.

Schneider's post-war testimony is also ambiguous. He had attempted to re-join the party in June 1938, and again in June 1942, but was rejected both times.¹³⁸ After the war, he was investigated under §11 of the Prohibition Act, the paragraph pertaining to leading Nazi functionaries, but was acquitted on 21 October 1946.¹³⁹ The extent of his adherence to Nazi ideology, and the reasons for his intervention on behalf of Jewish cultural heritage, came to light in an otherwise petty incident in February 1946 involving a complaint against him by a colleague in the city council, which however made explicit reference to his Nazi past. The subsequent investigative report found:

He counts in his department as an outspoken maverick who in the most fanatical fervour defends the interests of his portfolio (care and protection of cultural heritage). Under National Socialism he experienced recurring professional difficulties since he in candid fashion and out of interest for cultural heritage stood up for the preservation of Jewish cemeteries, and was consequently reprimanded on 30 September 1941.¹⁴⁰

The IKG significantly intervened on behalf of Schneider in this matter to testify to his good character.

Schneider himself commented on his past that he acted for the 'preservation of Austrian cultural heritage' and, in reference to his relationship to the NSDAP, that he was 'surely in [their] bad books and had – which really would not come as a surprise – many black marks'.¹⁴¹ He claimed to have only joined the party relatively late – though 1931 was early by most people's standards – and then only because he 'like so many historians and publishers' was convinced of the historical injustice of Versailles and St. Germain. Finally, he claimed to only have attempted to rejoin the party due to the expedience for his cultural work, adding: 'To what extent I advocated

¹³⁸ As evident in his personnel files, *An den Herrn amtsführenden Stadtrat der Verwaltungsgruppe 1*, WStLA, M. Abt. 202, A5 – Personalakten 1. Reihe: Dr. Viktor Schneider.

¹³⁹ WStLA, Volksgericht, A1 – Vg Vr-Strafakten: 2250/45 (Viktor Schneider, geb. 12.11.1891).

¹⁴⁰ *An den Herrn amtsführenden Stadtrat der Verwaltungsgruppe 1*, 27 May 1946, *ibid*.

¹⁴¹ *An das Personalamt der Stadt Wien*, 4 March 1946, *ibid*.

the preservation of the Jewish cemeteries, of course without success, because nobody helped me, can be testified to by Dr. Ernst Feldsberg in the Jewish community, who even cautioned me to be more careful'. He claimed to have 'despised the [Nazis'] cowardly abuse of power against defenceless people', which explained why he 'endeavoured to help the Jews whom I otherwise did not consider very highly'. In summary, Schneider appears to present the astonishing case of a man who, despite his overall adherence to certain principles of National Socialism and a self-professed if mild antipathy towards Jews, nevertheless opposed the destruction of a site of heritage which he, and by implication his department, regarded significantly and rather uniquely not only as Jewish but also as Austrian.

Regarding the other two principle actors in this local and peculiar Viennese story, Körber and Tröster, there is unfortunately a lack of evidence to elucidate their backgrounds and the consequences of their agitation for destroying the cemetery. Although I managed to identify Körber as Robert Körber, born 1896, his personnel and denazification files are missing.¹⁴² Regarding Tröster from the planning authority, this was evidently Andreas Tröster, born 1900, whose denazification folder however contains the wrong files.¹⁴³ Missing and misplaced files are an unfortunate but not uncommon occurrence with Nazi records in Vienna. Tröster had been a member of the NSDAP since 1932 and had enjoyed, according to an unpublished report into city planning under Nazi rule, 'certain contacts to public institutions and individuals in leading positions' well before the *Anschluss*.¹⁴⁴ A leading figure in Nazi city planning in Vienna, he was:

at least as severe as those monumental planners who wished to erase the Leopoldstadt [Vienna's unofficial Jewish district] (...) this projected eradication

¹⁴² Personal correspondence between ÖstA/AdR and Tim Corbett, 5 February 2015.

¹⁴³ WStLA, Volksgericht, A1 – Vg Vr-Strafakten: 2282/49 (Andreas Tröster, geb. 13.8.1900). Contains the denazification records for one Hugo Kreuter.

¹⁴⁴ Siegfried Mattl & Gottfried Pirhofer, „Gross-Raum Wien“: *Stadt- und Regionalplanung als Element Imperialer NS-Politik*, unpublished report on a project for the *Zukunftsfonds der Republik Österreich*, cited by kind permission of the authors (Vienna: 2010), 248.

was not simply 'collateral damage' but a functionally argued and positive indirect consequence of infrastructure planning. Completely interrelated were the concepts of geography with racism, the destruction of Jewry and a new *Volkstum* [peoplehood].¹⁴⁵

Altogether, the brief but destructive Shoah-era history of the Jewish cemetery in the Seegasse from 1941 to 1943 highlights the convoluted network of agency involved in the cultural destructions of National Socialism, but also the paradoxical motives and interests underlying their involvement. While ultimately the fate of the cemetery was decided by the extraneous forces of the highest Nazi echelons in Berlin, the entanglement of local Viennese institutions displays the opportunism of minor Nazi city officials, but also their very real genocidal fanaticism regarding the eradication of Jewish cultural heritage. The role played by Viktor Schneider, on the other hand, represents a bizarre complication of this picture and the survival through this era of a genuine interest among some non-Jewish agencies in preserving Jewish heritage as simultaneously Austrian heritage, an issue that was to become more conflicted than ever after 1945. Finally, the involvement of academic institutions in the appraisal and abuse of the material heritage of the cemetery to further racist and antisemitic causes represents the coupling of opportunism and zeal of Nazi policy which was to have a far deeper impact upon the Jewish cemetery in Währing.

2.4 Währing

Much of the Shoah-era history of the Währing cemetery has been covered by Viennese historian Tina Walzer.¹⁴⁶ Walzer's work aims primarily at a factual documentation of the processes of expropriation and desecration occurring under

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 138.

¹⁴⁶ Her most comprehensive work on the history of the cemetery is Tina Walzer, *Der jüdische Friedhof Währing in Wien: Historische Entwicklung, Zerstörungen der NS-Zeit, Status Quo* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2011).

Nazi rule, including an analysis of the agency involved. The underlying intention of her work is to highlight the shortcomings of post-war Viennese and Austrian polities in addressing their complicity in and compensating for the various destructions suffered by the cemetery. One facet of her work that is particularly poignant from a political standpoint, and interesting from a historical standpoint, is the embedding of Nazi-era policies into a pre- and post-Shoah context of policy vis-à-vis the cemetery, whereby she demonstrates that attempts to expropriate or even to liquidate the cemetery were by far not limited to the Nazi years. The following section expands on Walzer's work to locate the history of expropriation and desecration of the Währing cemetery within the broader context of Nazi policy towards the Jewish cemeteries in Vienna, while offering furthermore a qualitative assessment of the cultural and historical ideologies of the abuses of this site of Jewish heritage, as well as of the IKG and its attempts within its restricted capabilities to salvage what it saw as essential to Jewish-Viennese culture and history.

Background: Annihilation vs. Preservation before the Shoah

Whereas the Seegasse elicited widespread antiquarian and preservationist interest at the beginning of the twentieth century and going into the Nazi era due, primarily, to its age and consequent perceived historicity, the younger cemetery at Währing was instead recreated as a park. Having been closed since the 1870s following the opening of a new Jewish section at the Central Cemetery, the IKG decided to commission a landscape architect to redesign the Währing cemetery in 1903.¹⁴⁷ In order to finance this project, the IKG relied heavily on donations from its members, appealing to them to donate for the sake of their ancestors' graves and for the pious reason of protecting the property of the dead for all eternity.¹⁴⁸ Walzer demonstrated, however, that this plan for the transformation of the cemetery also

¹⁴⁷ Statistical and historical internal report of the IKG on Vienna's Jewish cemeteries, 23 November 1939, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/I-II/FH/1/1.

¹⁴⁸ *Rundschreiben*, CAHJP, AW-1460.

arose, 'aside from reasons of piety', from the necessity to defend it against the city council's 'repeatedly occurring wishes' to destroy this space, in part or in full, as had been done with most of Vienna's non-Jewish historic cemeteries by this time.¹⁴⁹ The first such impetus was a proposal in 1892 to liquidate both the Jewish cemetery and the adjacent communal cemetery, the *Allgemeine Währinger Friedhof*, in favour of an expansion of the public transportation system.¹⁵⁰ This plan was eventually realised for the communal cemetery in 1923, following the exhumation of the remains buried there and their reinterment at the Central Cemetery, sparking heavy protests amongst the local population for this 'eradication of the glamorous history of Vienna'.¹⁵¹ This demonstrated once more how destruction and selective preservation underpinned the creation of a hegemonic narrative of Viennese history long before the Nazi era, not always in accordance with the views and attitudes of various segments of the city's population.¹⁵² The IKG reacted to the concurrent proposal to liquidate the Jewish cemetery through recourse to Jewish burial custom, citing the eternal inviolability of the cemetery as a 'House of Eternity' in Jewish tradition and as the sole property of the deceased. Upon a further proposal by the city council in 1902 that would have eradicated the Jewish cemetery through the construction of a new street, the IKG this time launched an appeal on remarkably pragmatic grounds, whereas the underlying motive of preserving the cemetery remains self-evident, arguing 'that there is no need for the planned street, and that its creation would in a disadvantageous manner overload the already traffic-plagued crossing of the Nussdorferstrasse and the Döblinger Hauptstrasse with the inner and outer Gürtelstrasse'.¹⁵³ This was the point at which the IKG decided, in order to save the

¹⁴⁹ Walzer, *Friedhof*, 21. On the recreation of the city's other cemeteries as parks, see for example Hans Markl, *Alt-Wiener Friedhöfe* (Vienna: Sonderheft der Zeitschrift »Wiener G'schichten«, Vol. 2, December 1947).

¹⁵⁰ Walzer, *Friedhof*, 21.

¹⁵¹ Wolfgang Kos & Christian Rapp, "Raum 5. Demolierungswut und Abschiedschmerz: Stadtveränderungen zwischen 1870 und 1914" in Kos & Rapp (eds.), *Alt-Wien*, 399.

¹⁵² As discussed by Pohanka, "Stadtplanung".

¹⁵³ *Antrag der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde vom 10 August 1902*, CAHJP, AW-1460.

cemetery from these recurring attempts at expropriation, to recreate the space as a public park. Walzer cited yet another city council proposal in 1914 which would again have resulted in the cemetery's destruction, namely the planned extension of the Hasenauer Strasse diagonally across the Jewish cemetery, demonstrating that even after its transformation as a public park, such plans continued to be hatched.¹⁵⁴

The IKG concluded a contract with the landscape architect J.O. Molnár in 1903 stipulating the parameters of the cemetery's new design and its continued maintenance.¹⁵⁵ This involved the creation of paved paths and benches between the grave sections, as well as maintenance work including the removal of redundant growths, the cleaning of drainage channels, the gravelling of the paths as necessary in the spring, and other work. Thus Währing was recreated as a tranquil green space within the inner city, with the express intention of 'preserving the venerable physiognomy of the cemetery' but also, evidently, of ensuring its continued preservation, the costs being carried entirely by the IKG and its membership.¹⁵⁶ The manicured appearance of the cemetery before 1938 is recorded in contemporary photography.¹⁵⁷ In addition to the cemetery's revamped physiognomy, transcriptions of the *matzevot* at Währing began to be catalogued by IKG historians and archivists, albeit fragmentarily and prone to error, over the course of the ensuing decades.¹⁵⁸

The preservation project in Währing differs substantially from the case in the Seegasse, for two reasons. First, Währing was recreated as a green space not out of explicit regard for its historicity, as had been expressed in the restoration of the Seegasse, but primarily from the intent to uphold its religious character as the

¹⁵⁴ Plans reproduced in Walzer, *Friedhof*, inlay.

¹⁵⁵ *Allgemeine und spezielle Bedingungen für die Erhaltung der gärtnerischen Anlagen am Währinger Friedhof*, CAHJP, AW-1460. The specifics of this project are more elaborately detailed in Walzer, *Friedhof*, 38-56.

¹⁵⁶ Statistical and historical internal report of the IKG on Vienna's Jewish cemeteries, 23 November 1939, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/I-II/FH/1/1.

¹⁵⁷ See for example *Fotosammlung Währing*, CAHJP, AU-244, and *Fotosammlung Währing*, JMW, 853-66, 884-5, 2462-71 *et al.*

¹⁵⁸ Walzer, *Friedhof*, 23-5.

inviolable property of the dead. This is telling of contemporary attitudes towards historicity and the value in historical spaces, suggesting that sites of the modern era were, by comparison to attitudes today, not especially highly valued at the beginning of the twentieth century, the recording of the *matzevah* inscriptions notwithstanding. Second, though presumably following from this valuation of historicity, the preservation of Währing was entirely initiated and financed by the IKG, constituting therefore essentially an inner-Jewish affair, not supported, as was the case in the Seegasse, by official polity in Vienna. In fact, where the city council was involved in discussions over the cemetery's future, its involvement was primarily restricted to the attempted expropriation of the space, raising questions about its historical, and present, responsibility for the restoration of the space, as addressed explicitly in Walzer's work.

Desecration and Preservation during the Shoah

As was generally the case with Vienna's Jewish cemeteries, Währing received little official attention in the first years of Nazi rule in the city and, according to Walzer, suffered relatively little vandalism, possibly due to its geographical seclusion.¹⁵⁹ The first large-scale destructions, however, initiated and executed by the city council, preceded the formulation and enactment of a city- and Reich-wide policy of 'Aryanisation' of the Jewish cemeteries by several months. In July 1941, the city council confiscated the south-eastern corner of the cemetery, some 2500 m², for construction of an air-raid bunker.¹⁶⁰ Concerning the human remains of an estimated 2000 people buried at the site, the city council planned to simply cart away the churned-up bones together with the soil. In response to this desecration of human remains, unfathomable in Jewish tradition and to the relatives of the deceased, Ernst Feldsberg, director of the IKG's cemetery office, requested permission from the

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 57.

¹⁶⁰ *An das Friedhofsamt der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde*, 10 August 1951, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/FH/108/8.

Gestapo to salvage the remains dug up during construction of the site with the help of three IKG members. The Gestapo approved the request and, according to Feldsberg's post-Shoah testimony, this small group of IKG members 'for two weeks daily and under life-threatening conditions collected bones from under the mechanical excavators and laid them into the large boxes provided'.¹⁶¹ These were reinterred in a mass grave at Tor IV, section 22. The *matzevot* on the site suffered great, largely irreparable damage, having been simply discarded in heaps on the adjacent sections of the cemetery, where they still lie to this day. The bunker was never completed, the excavated site instead being used by the fire brigade as a provisional pond for use during air raids.¹⁶² This incident and the fate of this site became issues of great contention in the decades after the Shoah.

A large part of Walzer's work focussed on the minutiae of exhumations carried out at Währing, both by the IKG and by anthropologists at Vienna University and Vienna's *Naturhistorisches Museum*.¹⁶³ The IKG planned in the summer of 1941, partly in response to the desecration of the south-eastern portion of the cemetery and partly in anticipation of the planned anthropological expropriation of human remains in the cemetery, to exhume what Walzer simply termed 'prominent Rabbis and other notables significant for the history of the Vienna IKG'.¹⁶⁴ On 21 October 1941, the IKG drew up a list of individuals, sometimes including whole families, to be exhumed from Währing and reinterred at Tor IV, section 14A.¹⁶⁵ The prominent individuals' names, listed alphabetically, were underlined, their credentials were cited, sometimes with wives or children listed alongside. This action underlines once more the piety with which the IKG attempted to preserve, wherever possible, the sanctity of these

¹⁶¹ *Die Wahrheit ist unbesiegbar*, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/Rest/1/1.

¹⁶² Walzer, *Friedhof*, 71.

¹⁶³ The narrative of events is covered in Walzer, *Friedhof*, 61-71, while the complete lists of exhumations, both planned and realised, are reproduced in the appendices, 137-96.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 61.

¹⁶⁵ *An die Amtsdirektion der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde, Wien*, 8 May 1950, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/FH/108/8. All following citations are from this list.

houses of eternity, 'at a time', as Jewish-Viennese exile Robert Pick wrote, 'when the ashes of literally uncounted Jews were being shovelled out of Hitler's crematories on a 24-hour schedule – and the handful of Jews in Vienna could no longer doubt the imminence of their own end'.¹⁶⁶ The credentials attributed to the individuals to be exhumed moreover underline their value to the heritage of the community and the importance of preserving their remains, suggesting also the self-understanding of cultural worth of the IKG. An examination of this list allows for a qualitative assessment of the IKG's selection criteria – established under extreme duress and with a very limited scope for preservation – for whosoever it considered most worthy of preservation, thereby facilitating an insight into the community's self-perception and evaluation of its own culture and heritage. One can only speculate whether the IKG would have acted similarly had the plans to carry out exhumations at the Seegasse come to fruition, or had there been similar desecrations at the Central Cemetery – if yes, this would also have posited an interesting comparison of the chosen individuals considering the vastly different socio-cultural and -economic makeup of the people buried in Vienna's various Jewish cemeteries. As it is, we have this insight only with the IKG's exhumations at Währing.

Thirty-six prominent men were listed, and two prominent women, fifty-five people altogether including family members. The people listed included, in my categorisation:

- 1) businessmen, philanthropists and/or noblemen;
- 2) *shtadlanut* or community representatives from before the institutionalisation of the IKG in the 1850s;
- 3) political activists from the 1848 revolution;

¹⁶⁶ Robert Pick, *The Vienna of the Departed*, *Commentary*, Nr. 16 (1953), 156.

- 4) IKG notables from the secular sphere (such as secretaries and board members);
- 5) religious notables (such as Rabbis or religion teachers);
- 6) cultural notables; and
- 7) people notable for some other outstanding achievement.

The first group included ten notables, such as Michael Lazar Biedermann (1769-1843), characterised on the list as 'court jeweller, founder of the Biedermann bank, [and] co-founder of the synagogue in the Seitenstettengasse', and Israel Hönig von Hönigsberg (1724-1808), among other things 'the first ennobled Jew', whose family *matzevot* we analysed in Part I. This group further included renowned names such as Arnstein, Königswarter and Todesko, as well as both of the prominent women included in the overall list, namely Elise Herz née Lämel (1788-1868), 'founder of the Kindergarten in Jerusalem', and Fanny Jeiteles née Barach (1797-1854), who 'willed her entire estate to the IKG hospice and for charities for an alms-house and for the equipment of impoverished brides'. The second group consisted of four men who, among other things, acted as representatives of Viennese Jewry during the era of 'toleration', such as Salomon Edler von Herz (1743-1825), named as 'wholesaler and representative of the Viennese tolerated Jews'. The third group included two men who fought for civil rights during the 1848-49 revolutions, namely Moritz Hartmann (1821-1872), a 'member of the Frankfurt parliament' who showed 'particularly exceptional participation in the freedom-fighting of 1848', and Dr. Adolf Kolinsky (died 1848), a 'candidate for the Rabbinate' who 'fell as a freedom fighter in the battles of the revolution of 1848 in the Renngasse'. The fourth group included seven functionaries of the IKG in a secular dimension, while the fifth group included eleven religious functionaries or Rabbis of the IKG or individuals otherwise renowned for their religious activities, such as David Wertheim (1739-1817), his wife Leonore (died

1817) and son Samson (1778-1817). David was the 'grandson of the notable Samson Wertheim and founder of the new *chevra qadisha*'. The sixth group included two men who could be called cultural notables in a broader sense, such as Isak Löw Hofmann von Hofmannsthal (1759-1849), the 'grandfather of the writer Hugo von Hoffmannstal [sic]'. The seventh and final group included two men notable for other achievements, namely Josef Szanto (died 1873), who 'became the first [Jewish] army chaplain in 1866', and Dr. Edmund Schwarz (died 1862), 'corvette captain of the Austrian navy [who] participated in the circumference of the earth on board the frigate *Novara*' in 1857-9.

I created these categories on the basis of the credentials assigned to these people by the IKG. However, there is obviously a considerable degree of overlap between them. This categorisation nevertheless serves as a snapshot not only of the constellation of Jewish-Viennese culture and community in the century spanning from the 1780s to 1880s, but also of the retrospective valuation of this culture and community by the rapidly disappearing Jewish community of the 1940s. In summary, this list includes community leaders and political activists, Rabbis and other religious notables, noblemen, entrepreneurs, cultural and literary notables and philanthropists. The wide spread of secular and religious functionaries, including prominent individuals whose repertoire of accomplishment combined the secular and the religious, is representative of the strong enmeshment of the Jewish population within Habsburg society in its time, with a particularly vested interest in progressive politics in the city and state, alongside the maintenance of a strong if diverse Jewish-communal cohesiveness. The general absence of women from this list speaks to the prioritisation of male notables by an exclusively male board in the IKG at the time, but is also a reflection of the diminished role which (Jewish) women played in public life in this pre-emancipatory era – with some obvious exceptions. Finally, the relatively small number of individuals whose cultural impact extended beyond the Jewish

community, including here also Isak Löw Hofmann von Hofmannsthal, whose prestige is to a large degree simply derived from that of his grandson, is explicable in an era during which Viennese Jewry was still overwhelmingly legally, socially and culturally ostracised. The *matzevot* of those exhumed by the IKG at Währing were all subsequently destroyed, save for those of Isak Noa Mannheimer (1793-1865), examined in Part I, and Eleazar Horowitz (1804-1868), the only two *matzevot* that were brought along with the remains to the Central Cemetery. However, the inscriptions were transcribed and are stored to this day in the IKG archives.¹⁶⁷

The wide swathe of Jewish-Austrian intelligentsia and cultural protagonists buried at Tor I paints a rather different picture – making the absence of interest in Tor I during the Nazi era all the more striking. That there was so little scientific interest in Tor I is probably a result of the stated ambitions of Nazi-friendly anthropologists who wanted samples of remains from whole generations of families, as will be discussed shortly, making the older cemeteries more lucrative targets for their planned exhumations. Moreover, the lack of attention again suggests a lack of interest in Tor I as a newer site of heritage, owing to the popular notions and valuations of historicity prevailing in Vienna at the time.

Währing was officially ‘bought’ by Vienna’s city council on 21 February 1942, significantly predating by a couple of weeks the *Deutscher Gemeindetag* meeting of 16 March cited earlier during which the proposal for the Reich-wide expropriation of Jewish cemeteries by the local city councils was put forward.¹⁶⁸ After the Shoah, a myth was perpetuated in official documentation and scholarly literature that Vienna’s city council’s re-designation of the site as a *Vogelschutzgebiet* or ‘bird sanctuary’

¹⁶⁷ These are all contained in the file AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/II/FH/3/1.

¹⁶⁸ *An das Friedhofsamt der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde*, 10 August 1951, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/FH/108/8.

saved the cemetery from destruction.¹⁶⁹ Aside from the crass desecrations of the cemetery which obviously contradict this narrative, Walzer further debunked it through recourse to the city plans to transform the Jewish cemetery into parkland through the liquidation of the cemetery and its annexation to the adjacent Währinger Park, itself created following the 1923 liquidation of the communal cemetery at the site.¹⁷⁰ Walzer demonstrated conclusively that this myth was entirely a post-Shoah fabrication to serve as a rejection of responsibility for the desecration of the cemetery.¹⁷¹ In fact, Vienna's city council had demonstrated its proactive policy of expropriating and eradicating sites of Jewish heritage in the city well before any Reich-wide policy on this subject had been agreed. The same was true of the anthropological exhumations carried out in Währing during these years, exemplifying the policy of selective and distorted preservation of Jewish materials which stood in contradistinction to their otherwise total eradication from the physical cityscape.

Viennese Institutions and Historical Culpability

Dirk Rupnow demonstrated the extent to which the 'Final Solution' created 'entirely new possibilities for conservation and musealisation' which were exploited by numerous anthropological and biological institutes in Germany and Nazi-occupied Europe, naming many different actors across the Third Reich responsible for launching the initiatives to collect and research the human remains of their victims.¹⁷² In his overall analysis, however, Rupnow tended to understate the extent of the desecrations carried out in Vienna and the initiative shown by local institutions, in particular the *Naturhistorisches Museum* (hereafter NHM).¹⁷³ Internal investigations

¹⁶⁹ Perpetuated most commonly in general literature on Viennese cemeteries, such as Isabella Ackerl, Robert Bouchal & Ingeborg Schödl (eds.), *Der schöne Tod in Wien: Friedhöfe, Gräfte, Gedächtnisstätten* (Vienna: Pichler, 2008), 116, but also for example in Veran, *Archiv*, 151.

¹⁷⁰ Walzer, *Friedhof*, 58.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*, 88-90.

¹⁷² Rupnow, *Vernichten*, 290-9.

¹⁷³ Vienna is only briefly mentioned in Rupnow, *Vernichten*, 299. This imbalance is, however, more comprehensively redressed in Rupnow, *Judenforschung*, 331-3, which included a discussion of the

carried out by the NHM in the 1990s revealed that there had been incentives to carry out exhumations in Jewish cemeteries locally in Vienna from as early as 1939, long before the Reich Institute for the History of the New Germany in Munich founded its project for the collection of remains and artefacts in the summer of 1942:

The first stimuli to carry out digs in Jewish cemeteries were made as early as the spring of 1939 by Dr. Richard Pittioni [1906-1985, professor of archaeology at Vienna University] to the anthropological department [of the NHM] in his role at the time as the director of the regional museum of the Burgenland in Eisenstadt, who submitted a corresponding proposal to director Dr. Hans Kummerlöwe in the Ministry [of the state scientific museums in Vienna] that August.¹⁷⁴

Along with the destruction of the south-eastern portion of the cemetery and the 'Aryanisation' of the remainder in February 1942, the exhumations carried out at the site beginning in August 1942 must therefore be seen in the context of local initiatives, enabled by the specific circumstances of radicalisation in Nazi-occupied Austria at the time of the 'Final Solution'. A thorough investigation into this Shoah-era entanglement and complicity in Nazi crimes did not take place in Austria for many decades after the event.

As cited above, the minutiae of the NHM exhumations were comprehensively covered by Walzer, therefore this section on Währing will conclude with a brief summary of these events. Ernst Feldsberg wrote in 1951 that the purpose of the exhumations was for 'the research into the degeneration of Jewry', Währing being of particular interest:

now well-researched involvement of the NHM and Vienna University in anthropological excavations in Währing, as well as similar projects initiated in the Burgenland.

¹⁷⁴ Maria Teschler-Nicola & Margit Berner, *Die Anthropologische Abteilung des Naturhistorischen Museums in der NS-Zeit: Berichte und Dokumentationen von Forschungs- und Sammelaktivitäten 1938-1945* (Vienna: Naturhistorisches Museum, 1998), 5.

because it consisted almost exclusively of individuals graves. The members of entire families were exhumed to prove from the examination of the skeletons that the degeneration of the Jewish race continually progresses. Therefore, entire generations were exhumed.¹⁷⁵

Internal correspondence of the anthropological department of the NHM stated that the exhumations constituted 'unpostponable work' since the skeletal remains would be a 'valuable enrichment of the museum's collection' and would serve as a 'valuable basis for contemporary race-biological research'.¹⁷⁶ Along with the involvement of the NHM, the project was further spearheaded by Viktor Christian, since 1933 a member of the NSDAP, since 1938 a member of the SS, and since 1939 dean of the Faculty of Philosophy of Vienna University, who had proposed a similar initiative for the Seegasse, as mentioned earlier.¹⁷⁷ Christian repeatedly emphasised that the study of Jews went hand-in-hand with the 'solution' of the 'Jewish problem'.¹⁷⁸ Simultaneously, the NHM was involved in the anthropological examination of thousands of internees in internment and concentration camps across Austria and occupied Czechoslovakia.¹⁷⁹ Josef Wastl (1892-1968), since 1932 member of the NSDAP and since 1938 director of the anthropological department of the NHM, who oversaw such activities, was concomitantly commissioned with the creation of a special exhibition entitled *The Physical and Mental Appearance of the Jews* for which the entire collection of Vienna's Jewish Museum had been expropriated.¹⁸⁰

In this sordid affair, the IKG was once again forced into complicity with the crimes being perpetrated against it. On 5 April 1943, the IKG cemetery office was given 'authorisation [read: given the order] for the exhumation of about 300 corpses

¹⁷⁵ *Namenstafeln auf die Gräber der aus dem Währinger Friedhof exhumierten Familien*, 17 April 1951, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/1/3.

¹⁷⁶ Teschler-Nicola & Berner, *Anthropologische Abteilung*, 5.

¹⁷⁷ On Christian's biography, see Rupnow, *Judenforschung*, 319-20.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 323-4.

¹⁷⁹ Teschler-Nicola & Berner, *Anthropologische Abteilung*, 8.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 18.

which will be specified by (...) Dr. Viktor Christian for the purpose of anthropological research'.¹⁸¹ Altogether, about 500 graves were opened, the corresponding *matzevot* destroyed.¹⁸² Those exhumed included members of well-known Jewish-Viennese families of nineteenth-century high society such as Wertheim, Russo, de Majo, Arnstein, Biedermann, Hönigsberg, Königswarther, Hofmann von Hofmannsthal and many more.¹⁸³ Austrian historian Martha Keil, who spoke with some of the survivors of the IKG who had been forced to carry out this work, wrote that they were deeply traumatised by this ordeal.¹⁸⁴

Viktor Christian was initially dismissed from the University in 1945 but, after appeal, was reinstated, whereupon he retired on a full pension.¹⁸⁵ His doctorate was renewed by the University in 1960 in recognition of his 'contributions' to the field.¹⁸⁶ Josef Wastl was initially dismissed from the NHM in 1945, was classed as a 'lesser offender' (*Mindestbelasteter*) and received a full pension. From 1949 until his death he was publicly appointed as a court expert on hereditary biology for paternity testing.¹⁸⁷ As in the Seegasse, the brief but destructive Shoah-era history of the Jewish cemetery in Währing is inextricably linked to the initiatives and actions of local Viennese institutions, but, unlike in the Seegasse, these institutions managed to realise their plans, leading to devastating, often irreversible damage inflicted on this site of heritage, as well as the vile desecration of human remains.¹⁸⁸ This desecration furthermore constituted a severe violation of the religious sanctity of this space of the dead in Jewish tradition, yet the culprits not only for the most part escaped unencumbered, some were even rewarded for their 'contributions' to anthropology in

¹⁸¹ *Enterdigung aus dem jüdischen Friedhofe, Wien, 18., Semperstraße 64, 5 April 1943, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/II/FH/4/1.*

¹⁸² *Aktennotiz, 3 June 1954, AIKGW, uncatalogued.*

¹⁸³ *An die Amtsdirektion der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde, 17 April 1951, AIKGW, uncatalogued.*

¹⁸⁴ Keil, "„... enterdigt“", 18.

¹⁸⁵ Rupnow, *Judenforschung*, 339.

¹⁸⁶ *Personalakt Christian, Viktor, Archiv der Universität Wien, PH PA 1034.*

¹⁸⁷ Teschler-Nicola & Berner, *Anthropologische Abteilung*, 16.

¹⁸⁸ The reports cited throughout this section include graphic details that I do not wish to reproduce here.

ensuing decades. Währing, understandably, now constitutes the single most contested site of Jewish heritage in the city and a perennial sore spot highlighting the deep divisions characterising the relationship between Viennese Jewry and the city of Vienna to this day.

2.5 Tor IV

As discussed earlier, the expropriation of Vienna's Jewish cemeteries was already being considered as early as October 1940, although the city council agreed, following an appeal by IKG President Löwenherz, that Tor IV needed to remain open and under IKG control for continued burial at the site, at least as long as there were Jews living and dying in Vienna.¹⁸⁹ These burials included:

- 1) Jews who died in Vienna during this period,
- 2) people classed as Jews under the Nuremberg Laws who were forced to be buried at Tor IV following a decree by the city council in the summer of 1941, and
- 3) the burial of urns containing ashes of Jewish concentration camp victims, at least until the wide-scale introduction of crematoria in the killing sites.

Although the city agreed in general to maintain the status quo on Tor IV for the time being, it attempted to annex the hitherto unused plot of land on the north-western side of the cemetery (nowadays the corner of section 23) to the adjacent Protestant cemetery. In a decisive move indicative of the IKG's attempts, contrary to its overall position as a 'powerless agency', to protect its spaces wherever it could, thirty

¹⁸⁹ *Aktennotiz über die Vorsprache des gefertigten Leiters der isr. Kultusgemeinde bei Herrn U'stuf. Brunner am 17. Oktober 1940, 12 Uhr mittags, 4, Joseph Loewenherz Collection, Box 1, Folder 3, LBI, AR25055.*

deceased people who had no relatives in Vienna to choose a specific burial plot, and fifteen urns from concentration camps, were buried there to make the ground unviable for expropriation. These graves, which today still stand isolated in an as yet largely unused part of the cemetery, received honorary *matzevot* after the Shoah in recognition that 'these 45 deceased and murdered people after their deaths so to speak saved a part of the Central Cemetery'.¹⁹⁰ The IKG's retention of administrative control over Tor IV did not, however, mean that the cemetery remained unscathed since, as discussed earlier, it became the target of heavy vandalism during the November Pogrom, when the *beit tahara* and its furnishings were heavily damaged or destroyed.

By the outbreak of war in September 1939, the number of Jews and people classed by the Nuremberg Laws as Jews who had been forced into exile by Eichmann's cynical system numbered around 125,000 people, of a total number of around 200,000 defined by the Nazis as Jews in Austria.¹⁹¹ The exiles were for the most part well-situated community members, while the remainder were often very old, very young, ill, or simply destitute.¹⁹² For those who remained, Tor IV continued throughout the Shoah to serve as their only remaining burial ground, yet Tor IV was also to be radically reinterpreted as a Jewish-communal space in the course of the early 1940s, shaped as much by the impositions of the Nazi city administration as by the transformative practices of the Jewish community members. Whereas the histories of Vienna's other Jewish cemeteries in these years were predominantly shaped by extraneous and largely hostile forces, with the IKG playing a negligible role where it had any influence at all, the situation at Tor IV was rather more dynamic. Considering the evident opportunism and competition in the Nazi administration and amongst its followers, Tor IV was subject to similar machinations

¹⁹⁰ *Die Tätigkeit der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Wien 1960 bis 1964* (Vienna: Verlag der israelitischen Kultusgemeinde in Wien, 1964), 170.

¹⁹¹ Botz, *Nationalsozialismus*, 342.

¹⁹² *Ibid*, 621.

and intrigues as all other 'Jewish' spaces within the city – however, as one of the last spaces still administered and used exclusively by Jews, it became, in contradistinction to its role as a site of death, the focus of life for Vienna's dwindling Jewish population, at least for a couple of years in the early 1940s. Such activities encompassed Jewish community members working and socialising in the cemetery, children using it for recreational space, and empty plots even being used to cultivate vegetables, as will be explored in the following section. This dynamic is evident in Jewish cemeteries elsewhere in the Third Reich.¹⁹³ The diaries of the philologist and Shoah survivor Viktor Klemperer (1881-1960), for example, offer a detailed and fascinating account of the use of their cemetery by Dresden's dwindling Jewish community, constituting a strikingly similar case study to the Shoah-era activities at Tor IV.¹⁹⁴

Life in the House of Death

The use of Tor IV as a recreational space for Vienna's Jews following their escalating deprivation and marginalisation in the first years of Nazi rule is mentioned in various sources, such as autobiographies. Ruth Klüger, for example, a teenager during the Shoah and today one of Vienna's best-known survivors, mentions laconically that 'the Jewish cemetery was our park and playground'.¹⁹⁵ In November 1940, the IKG prepared a photo album documenting the *Hachshara* ('preparation'), the training of youth for agricultural work and life in *kibbutzim* following the

¹⁹³ As in the various case studies explored in Hubertus Fischer & Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn (eds.), *Gärten und Parks im Leben der jüdischen Bevölkerung nach 1933* (Munich: Verlagsbuchhandlung, 2008). Outside of the Third Reich, similar recalibrations of Jewish spaces have been explored, as for example in Kenneth Helphand, "Ghetto Gardens: Life in the Midst of Death" in Julia Brauch, Anna Lipphardt & Alexandra Nocke (eds.), *Jewish Topographies: Visions of Space, Traditions of Place* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

¹⁹⁴ Victor Klemperer, *Ich will Zeugnis ablegen bis zum Letzten: Tagebücher 1942-1945* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1995).

¹⁹⁵ Ruth Klüger, *Weiter Leben: Eine Jugend* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 1992), 59. A similarly brief anecdote can be found in Gertrude Schneider, *Exile and Destruction: The Fate of Austrian Jews, 1938-1945* (Westport: Praeger, 1995), 52.

anticipated and desired emigration to Palestine.¹⁹⁶ According to *Yad Vashem*, where the album is kept today, this training ‘was organized by the emigration department of the Jewish community’, with the album consisting of ‘information about vocational training’ and ‘photographs from a summer camp, showing youths aged 10-14, at work in the fields’. There is no mention of the Central Cemetery in the *Yad Vashem* notes on the album, however, suggesting that whoever catalogued the album was not from Vienna and did not know that this was a cemetery. The redeeming Zionist narrative infusing the album is evident for example in the image reproduced in Figure 2.2, which states that ‘if we spend our time today with work, we are already building our future’ and that ‘through work the road leads upward’, a reference to *Aliyah* or emigration to Palestine which literally translated means ‘ascent’.¹⁹⁷ The text also refers specifically to the *Grabeland*, the ‘graveland’. This was a plot of land on the cemetery, unused then and to this day, between section 18K and the Simmeringer Hauptstraße, used as recreational space and for the *hachshara* activities of the IKG during the Shoah. It is pictured in Figure 2.3, its location evident in relation to the ruined shell of the *beit tahara* on the left. About 150 adults and 200 youths were working there on agricultural courses in the summers of 1940 and 1941, wearing blue and white uniforms, the Zionist colours.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ *Wien, Austria, An album prepared by the Jewish community in Wien in November 1940 and dedicated to Hachshara, vocational training*, Yad Vashem Photo Archive, hereafter YVFA, <http://collections.yadvashem.org/photosarchive/en-us/11834.html>, accessed 19 January 2015.

¹⁹⁷ This sentiment was also expressed in an article by the *Jüdische Nachrichtenblatt* from 19 July 1940, cited in Rosenkranz, *Verfolgung*, 245.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 272.

Image removed from electronic version for copyright reasons – TC

Figure 2.2: *Wien, Austria, Summer 1940, Youths working in a field*, Item 19 of 50, YVPA, http://collections.yadvashem.org/photosarchive/en-us/11834_33519.html, accessed 19 January 2015. The text reads:

Text: Even the school-aged youth is being employed for serious work / Holiday Vocational Course / for the school-aged children aged 10-14 / for the first time in the summer holidays of 1940. / Course song: (from the melody: *Wozu ist die Straße da, zum Marschieren*) / If we spend our time with work today / We are already building our future / “Work-Order-Harmony” above all else / The catchphrase for our curriculum vitae / Today handicraft workshop / Tomorrow *Grabeland* / That is very healthy / And trains our hands / So we want to cheerfully sing this song / Because through work the road leads upward.

Image removed from electronic version for copyright reasons – TC

Figure 2.3: *Wien, Austria, A group of Jewish girls playing in a field*, Item 25 of 50, YVPA, http://collections.yadvashem.org/photosarchive/en-us/11834_34209.html, accessed 19 January 2015.

Aside from the *Grabeland*, empty plots at Tor IV were also used during the Shoah for the cultivation of vegetables and keeping animals, such as a goat.¹⁹⁹ This is also documented in the IKG's 1940 photo album.²⁰⁰ By *halachic* provenance, as laid out in the *Schulchan Aruch*, the most widely espoused code of Jewish law, one may not derive benefit from the grave or anything attached to it.²⁰¹ The IKG's cemetery ordinance still in use through this period also explicitly states in §16 that planting 'fruit trees' on graves was forbidden, yet evidently necessity outweighed

¹⁹⁹ *Gemüseanbau Neufriedhof*, CAHJP, AU/1490.

²⁰⁰ *Wien, Austria, The beloved goat of the participants of the agriculture course in the Jewish community's vocational training school*, Item 1 of 50, YVPA, http://collections.yadvashem.org/photosarchive/en-us/11834_31141.html, accessed 19 January 2015, and *Wien, Austria, Tomatoes at the Jewish community's vocational training school affiliated with the immigration office*, Item 50 of 50, *ibid*.

²⁰¹ This is elaborately laid out in halachic treatises. See for example Joseph Karo (ed.), *Schulchan Aruch – שולחן ערוך – Die Halacha – Jore Dea: Lehre der Weisheit* (Vienna: Beit Talmud Thora, 2005), 263.

tradition in this case.²⁰² Many of the surviving photographs, as in the *Yad Vashem* album, and diaries, as we shall examine now, portray the *Grabeland* in a positive light, as a place of tranquillity and enjoyment in what was otherwise a harrowing present with a direly uncertain future. It should be noted in reference to the optimistic Zionist narrative of the *hachshara* that most of the Jews remaining in Vienna at this time – and therefore most of the people pictured in these photographs – could not emigrate and eventually fell victim to the murderous machinations of the Nazi state. The false illusion of these summer activities is compounded by the glorification of work in the *hachshara* programme cited above, so grimly reminiscent of the *Arbeit Macht Frei* maxim of the Nazi extermination camps.

Possibly the most detailed record of Jewish life lived, among other places in the city, at Tor IV during the Shoah was diary kept between January and November 1941 by Kurt Mezei (1924-1945).²⁰³ Kurt was a young man who not only wrote a diary through the early 1940s but also clandestinely kept a camera with which he recorded the life then lived by and the crimes being committed against Vienna's Jewish population.²⁰⁴ Some photographs exist showing Kurt and other youths at the *Grabeland* in 1944.²⁰⁵ Kurt first mentioned the cemetery on 20 April 1941, when he drove out 'for the first time this year' to meet a number of people, with whom he 'played cards', describing the day as 'generally quite nice, if also rather boring'.²⁰⁶ *Fad* or 'boring' is a term he used repeatedly through the summer of 1941 to describe his days there.²⁰⁷ At the latest by 21 June, Kurt had evidently been employed to work at the cemetery by the IKG's cemetery office, headed at the time by Ernst Feldsberg.

²⁰² *Friedhofsordnung*, undated, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/II/FH/2/2.

²⁰³ See Dieter Hecht, "Jüdische Jugendliche während der Shoah in Wien: Der Freundeskreis von Ilse und Kurt Mezei" in Andrea Löw, Doris L. Bergen & Anna Hájková (ed.), *Alltag im Holocaust: Jüdisches Leben im Großdeutschen Reich 1941-1945* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2013).

²⁰⁴ As documented for example in *Wien Novemberpogrom 1938*, <http://www.doew.at/erinnern/fotos-und-dokumente/1938-1945/novemberpogrom-1938/wien>, accessed 19 January 2015.

²⁰⁵ For example *Sommer 1944 Grabeland*, JMW, 20740.

²⁰⁶ *Tagebuch von Kurt Mezei*, 2. Heft, 20 April 1941, JMW, 4465.

²⁰⁷ As noted also on 22 June 1941, *ibid.*

On this day, Feldsberg met him in the arcades near the entrance to Tor IV and told him that he was 'indispensable as a worker' and therefore 'could not possibly join the holiday group', meaning the *hachshara* group at the *Grabeland*.²⁰⁸ The work Kurt was employed to conduct included harvesting peas, scything graves, piling hay, watering crops and, when the weather was bad, tidying up the ritual objects in the *beit tahara*.²⁰⁹ At this stage, the old provisional *beit tahara* was clearly in use again, as Kurt specifically differentiated it with 'the destroyed *beit tahara*'.²¹⁰ This type of work was also recorded in the IKG's 1940 photo album, as for example in Figure 2.4. Nevertheless, Kurt repeatedly mentioned shirking work in order to play ball games with other work committees at the cemetery, to socialise and take photographs, or simply to lie in the shade and read or snooze.²¹¹ During the course of the summer, he seemed to have become quite infatuated with Edith, a girl who also spent her days at the cemetery, as he noted on 13 July: 'Among other things going for a walk in the cemetery. Edith very very adorable today (...) Edith very charming, mostly going hand-in-hand with her'.²¹² On 16 July, he mentioned going into the

children's dayroom, where they stormily invite me to stay and sit with them. I of course acquiesce to the invitation gladly and sit together with Weiss, Fritz Löwe, Jäger, Österreicher, Steinbach, and naturally with Edith. In some stupid game, where the girls pick a boy and vice versa, I am chosen most frequently (...) and naturally am picked first by Edith, who is very adorable. [I stayed] Until circa 5 o'clock with the children, where [I] feel entirely like an assistant.²¹³

²⁰⁸ 21 June 1941, *ibid*.

²⁰⁹ As discussed for example on 22 June, 3 July, 6 July 1941 *et al, ibid*.

²¹⁰ 16 July 1941, *ibid*.

²¹¹ For example on 22 June, 6 July, 14 July 1941 *et al, ibid*.

²¹² 13 July 1941, *ibid*.

²¹³ 16 July 1941, *ibid*.

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Figure 2.4: *Wien, Austria, A boy and a girl holding spades, Summer 1940*, Item 5 of 50, YVPA, http://collections.yadvashem.org/photosarchive/en-us/11834_31493.html, accessed 25 January 2015. The caption reads: 'Like in the most wonderful summer freshness'.

Kurt's diary paints a surprisingly normal picture of a summer spent frolicking outside, full of activity and socialising. Tor IV had evidently become, for this very short time at least, a haven away from the brutal realities of life in Nazi Vienna. That the cemetery, a site of death, had become a space of Jewish life amidst its slow strangulation and effacement from the rest of the city was reflected in the fact that from 16 April 1941 the entrance was to receive the yellow *Magen David* otherwise reserved for Jewish collective flats in the city.²¹⁴ The work at the cemetery appeared at times as more pretence than necessity, perhaps in the full awareness that ostensible employment at the cemetery offered a semblance of normal life to IKG members, particularly the youth, still living in Vienna at this point, not to mention a reason to forestall their deportation. Kurt himself seemed to have been aware of this,

²¹⁴ *An die Kanzlei Neuer Friedhof*, 16 May 1942, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/II/FH/2/2.

becoming progressively tardier and less industrious as the months went by. On 15 September 1941, he remarked in note-form:

In the morning of course too late at the Central Cemetery. Gave cigarettes to Reichmann and the subject was closed. The whole day at the *beit tahara* where cutting wood, or rather supposed to be cutting wood. There is hardly any work being done. (...) At 4pm went to the *Grabeland* where first in the dayroom with music (accordion: Hansl Pories, harmonica: Flocki, Rico) then until 6.30pm on the field playing ball, very nice again.²¹⁵

Besides his descriptions of life at the *Grabeland*, of particular interest in Kurt's diaries are the few instances where he remarked upon the impact of Nazi policy on the community and its cemeteries. On 22 August 1941, he noted laconically: 'Going scything, and among other things also unloading bones again (for the last time)'.²¹⁶ This casual anecdote presumably, considering the date, referred to the exhumations then being carried out at Währing during the course of the excavation of its south-eastern portion discussed earlier, tying in also with Kurt's references to meetings with Feldsberg almost every day during these weeks. His casual tone is in marked contrast to the horror with which Feldsberg perceived this task, reflecting perhaps that Kurt in his youth had psychologically adapted to conditions under Nazi rule and a life lived largely in a cemetery during this period. Nevertheless, Kurt's references to death and burial were generally so short and cryptic that it is difficult to deduce any emotional reaction within them. On 25 September 1941, for example, he described collecting the body of a woman who had committed suicide. He wrote that Feldsberg was 'happy' with Kurt's help in collecting the body, and stated that 'the spell is broken, he would now employ me for *Leichenwaschen* etc'.²¹⁷ *Leichenwaschen* refers to *tahara*, the ritual washing of the corpse before burial, a task undertaken by

²¹⁵ *Tagebuch von Kurt Mezej*, 3. Heft, 15 September 1941, JMW, 4465.

²¹⁶ 22 August 1941, *ibid.*

²¹⁷ 25 September 1941 *ibid.*

the *chevra qadisha* and regarded as extremely pious work. That Feldsberg, director of the cemetery office and a religious Jew, would have been happy about Kurt getting involved in this pious work is self-evident, but it remains inscrutable why this should have broken a spell.

The only instance when Kurt recorded an explicit discussion of the external influence upon life at the *Grabeland* was on 8 September 1941, when the workers remained 'until 5pm in our room where the introduction of the yellow badge was vibrantly politicised and debated', though this remains again little more than a sober observation.²¹⁸ Kurt's cool, brief documentation of life at Tor IV stands in stark contrast to the sense of desperation and horror conveyed by a chalk marking on the *matzevah* of a Rabbi, reading: 'pray for us, good Rabbi. Dear God should help us and let a miracle occur'.²¹⁹ This example serves as a reminder of the overall horror of this period, even for those who managed – at least temporarily – to escape deportation, and who obviously spent their time at the cemetery in quiet desperation. Reactions to these circumstances could well have been subjectively quite variable, and I would be careful to read too much into the ostensible flippancy with which Kurt described the summer of 1941 at Tor IV. Nevertheless, it suggests that, for a very short time at least, the cemetery became the focal point of communal life for the city's last remaining Jews, even a place of blissful escape from the realities of the Nazi persecution of the Jewish population. Kurt himself managed to survive in hiding until April 1945. On 11 April, just hours before the Red Army invaded the city after a siege lasting several days, Kurt and eight other Jews were massacred by an SS-unit in their hiding place in the Förstergasse in the second district. His sister Ilse (1924-1945) had died in an Allied bombing raid on the city a few weeks earlier, his father

²¹⁸ 8 September 1941, *ibid.*

²¹⁹ Cited in Guido Knopp, *Hitlers Helfer* (Munich: Bertelsmann, 1998), unpaginated.

had already been murdered in Auschwitz.²²⁰ The memorial erected at Kurt's burial place will be discussed in Part III.

Politics of Death: Forced Burials at Tor IV

The sobriety and matter-of-factuality of Kurt's accounts, in combination with the tranquil images and descriptions of the *Grabeland* in 1940-41 should not mislead to the conclusion that life at Tor IV was not intruded upon by the realities of the persecution and murder of Europe's Jewish population gathering pace in these years. Two aspects of the Nazi genocide affecting Tor IV in particular presented calamitous infringements on Jewish religious custom which were to have an impact well beyond the end of the Shoah, namely the interment of cremated remains of Shoah victims and the interment of people classed as Jews by the Nuremberg Laws but not recognised as such by the IKG. Beginning with the mass arrests of Jews during the November Pogrom, and continuing until the wide-scale construction of crematoria in the concentration camp network, it was common practice to return urns containing the ashes of victims back to their respective home communities from the concentration and forced labour camps.²²¹ This practice was undertaken by order of Heinrich Himmler, who initially did not want remains interred at the scene of the crime, a policy that was to change according to expedience with the escalation of the Nazis' genocidal project in subsequent years.²²² In the years between 1938 and 1942, altogether 1136 urns were sent to Vienna's IKG, the larger part from Buchenwald concentration camp, all of which were buried at Tor IV.²²³ David

²²⁰ *Das Massaker in der Förstergasse*, <http://www.erinnern.at/bundeslaender/wien/unterrichtsmaterial/arbeitsblaetter-gedaechtnisort-des-ns-terrors-in-der-israelitischen-abteilung-des-wiener-zentralfriedhofs/Arbeitsblatt%20Massaker%20in%20der%20Foerstergasse.pdf>, accessed 25 January 2015.

²²¹ Rosenkranz, *Verfolgung*, 163.

²²² As cited for example in a letter from Dachau with the returned ashes of Abraham Königsberg (1901-1942), *An Israel.-Kultusgemeinde*, 30 July 1942, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/II/FH/1/1.

²²³ *An das Friedhofsamt der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde*, 10 August 1951, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/FH/108/8.

Cesarani noted in his account of Eichmann's years in Vienna that there was no doubt what this flood of human remains signified: 'Horrible stories about the treatment of Jewish prisoners in Dachau reached Vienna daily, accompanied by the urns containing the ashes of those who had already perished there'.²²⁴ Victor Klemperer, a Shoah survivor from Dresden, described at length the policies impacting on the Jewish cemetery there, in most respects identical to those happening at Tor IV. After witnessing the burial of urns on 10 August 1942, he fittingly described these murders and the return of the remains in urns as 'the total annihilation of form' (*der vollkommenen Gestaltvernichtung*).²²⁵ Klemperer, otherwise entirely irreligious, as abundantly clear in his diaries, thereby pertinently if unconsciously highlighted the sacrilegious nature of this practice, namely the theft not only of the victims' lives, but also of their forms, their material remains and, therefore, the theft of their burial and resurrection – an issue that surfaced repeatedly and poignantly in post-Shoah Jewish sepulchral epigraphy. Aside from constituting *chuqat hagoy* (a non-Jewish practice) in Jewish tradition, burning the body is considered an affront to creation since humans are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). Moreover, since resurrection is taken literally in orthodox interpretations of Ezekiel 37, 'cremation is thus a denial of the belief in bodily resurrection'.²²⁶

Indeed, the cremation of the victims in general and consequently, in the early stages of the genocide at least, the question of what to do with the remains sent back to the communities, were discussed at length by Rabbis both during and after the Shoah.²²⁷ Rabbi Menahem Mendel Kirschbaum (born 1895, murdered 1942? in Auschwitz) wrote in the introduction to his response on the issue how 'bereaved families requested Rabbinic guidance concerning the proper procedures of mourning,

²²⁴ Cesarani, *Eichmann*, 68.

²²⁵ Klemperer, *Zeugnis ablegen*, 202.

²²⁶ For a discussion of the *halachic* and historic origins of this discussion, see Rabbi H. Rabinowicz, *A Guide to Life: Jewish Laws and Customs of Mourning* (London: Jewish Chronicle, 1964), 26-8.

²²⁷ The issue is for example contextualised historically in relation to the pre-Shoah discussions surrounding cremation in Ernst Roth, *Zur Halachah des jüdischen Friedhofs*, *Udim*, Vol. IV (1973), 114.

burial, and memorial' in such cases.²²⁸ Among the twelve provisions expounded by Kirschbaum, he stipulated that the container of ashes should be treated as a coffin, that the ashes should be buried in a coffin if possible, that the container should be wrapped in a prayer shawl with burial shrouds enclosed 'to evince belief in resurrection despite the absence of the corpse', and that 'the same mourning procedure that applies to exhumation from a provisional to a permanent grave should also apply to the interment of ashes'. Although he stated that 'burying the ashes is not equivalent to the duty of burying the dead', these provisions aimed to provide the same respect and religious care to those whose remains had been cremated against their will as would be shown to any other Jew.

The second infringement, after the forced interment of cremated remains, on the religious and communal nature of the space at Tor IV was the forced interment of people classed as Jews by the Nuremberg Laws but not recognised as such by the IKG. This was a facet of the general problem of identification, both for the Nazi regime and the Jewish community, as a consequence of generations of conversions and intermarriages and of the evidently fluid identity categories which generally characterised Vienna before the Nazi takeover, as evident in the flow of people in and out of the Jewish community organisation in these years. Over 1500 people defined as Jews by the Nuremberg Laws joined the IKG in 1938-39, probably in the hope that Jewish organisations would help them to emigrate – whereas by contrast over 6000 left the IKG in the same period, for the most part made up of spouses defined as 'Aryan' according to the Nuremberg Laws.²²⁹ This demonstrates the complex historical fluidity of communities on the one hand by contrast to the increasingly polarised division between Jews and non-Jews as a result of Nazi policy on the other. This contrived polarisation was further reflected in the makeup and

²²⁸ Rabbi Menahem Mendel Kirschbaum, "On the status of deceased Jewish prisoners' ashes returned by the Nazi government to the bereaved families (after Kristallnacht, 1938)" [1939] in Robert Kirschner (ed.), *Rabbinic Responsa of the Holocaust Era* (New York: Schocken, 1985), 55-6.

²²⁹ Lichtblau, "Integration", 529.

policies of various aid organisations, with for example the IKG and its international supporters caring mainly for those defined as *Glaubensjuden* – religious Jews, or Jews by faith – while for example the Catholic Church focussed its aid on the so-called ‘non-Aryan Christians’.²³⁰ According to Nazi definition and counting, there were 91,530 *Volljuden* (‘complete Jews’, defined by descent alone, elsewhere also called *Rassejuden* or ‘racial Jews’) in May 1939, of whom 79,919 were *Glaubensjuden* (defined as both *Volljuden* and members of the IKG), representing the constructed division between Jews by faith and descent and Jews by descent alone, the latter group proving particularly complicated.²³¹

The impact of this discursive construction of racial categories on the burial practices at Tor IV became evident on 15 July 1942, when Eichmann’s *Zentralstelle* once more informed IKG President Löwenherz that the cemetery was to be expropriated by the city, as had been attempted in 1940. Löwenherz again persuaded the authorities to abstain from this measure for the time being since, as he put it, ‘the cemetery constitutes the only burial site not only for religious Jews [*Glaubensjuden*] but also for irreligious Jews [*Nichtglaubensjuden*] and for Jews living in mixed marriages’.²³² At first, the IKG was evidently following a policy of effectively including those not adhering to the Jewish faith but descendant from Jews in a broad definition of belonging in the Jewish community, presumably, so the letter’s timing implies, to justify the preservation of Tor IV under IKG control. Within a couple of weeks, however, on 28 July 1941, the IKG received notification from the *Städtische Bestattung*, the municipal funerary office, regarding burial of so-called ‘*glaubensloser Rassejuden*’, ‘irreligious racial Jews’.²³³ In light of the IKG’s objections on the grounds that this definition included converts, apostates and others whom the IKG

²³⁰ Botz, *Nationalsozialismus*, 527-8.

²³¹ Lichtblau, “Integration”, 530.

²³² *Deposition made by Dr. Loewenherz (in preparation for Eichmann trial)*, 38, Joseph Loewenherz Collection, Box 1, Folder 5, LBI, AR25055.

²³³ *An die Israelitische Kultusgemeinde*, 28 July 1941, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/1.

did not consider Jewish, the municipal funerary office suggested that a specific section be set aside for them at Tor IV. Consequently, on 27 August 1941, the office of the *Reichsstatthalter* decreed 'that the burial of irreligious Jews in Jewish cemeteries cannot be refused. (...) For the burial of irreligious Jews, gravesites on an area behind section 20A as determined by the director [of the municipal funerary director] are to be handed over'.²³⁴

This decree represented the kind of hegemonic intrusion upon the physical space of the cemetery which rendered the IKG entirely powerless and, therefore, compliant to the wishes of the Nazi city administration. However, it did raise a fraught discussion into the *halachic* provisions surrounding the cemetery as a Jewish-religious space. Consequently, the IKG by necessity found innovative ways within its severely restricted manoeuvring space to accommodate the decree while limiting its impact on the perceived religious character of the cemetery. The IKG decided that, although the morgue would have to be used to prepare burials, a '[religious] function may under no circumstances be held' for the burial of what it perceived as non-Jews.²³⁵ It further stipulated that relatives could, if they wished, have the body interred in an existing family grave – but only if the individual in question was irreligious – so not a convert to another religious denomination. A memorandum from 24 September 1941 clarified:

Due to a decree by the *Reichsstatthalter* in Vienna (...) people who do not belong to the Jewish religious community are to be buried in our cemeteries, if they count as Jews according to the Nuremberg Laws. Therefore not only irreligious Jews but also Catholics, Protestants and Jews belonging to other faiths are to be buried in our cemeteries.²³⁶

²³⁴ *Aktennotiz*, 27 August 1941, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/II/FH/3/2.

²³⁵ *Aktennotiz*, 27 August 1941, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/II/FH/3/2.

²³⁶ *Aktennotiz*, 24 September 1941, *ibid*.

The language of this memorandum, which explicitly stated that, unlike the 'irreligious Jews', those belonging to other faiths could only be buried in the designated sections of Tor IV, reflects the quagmire of definitions over who counted as Jewish or not, and at times also the adoption by the IKG of Nazi discourse regarding such definitions. In general this reflected a forced engagement with a – at heart racist – categorisation of communal belonging drawn in sharp distinction between Jews and non-Jews, whereby the IKG's engagement with this question was complicated by its own religious definitions. This issue of categorisation, which had 'vexed the Nazis ever since they came to power', was according to Mark Roseman conditioned by 'a disparate muddle of religious and 'racial' criteria', as plainly evident in these decrees.²³⁷ Moreover, this conflict followed on the heels of and reproduced some of the discourse of the disagreements of the interwar period regarding the separation of orthodox and non-orthodox graves at Tor IV, while foreshadowing the conflicts over the definition of who was allowed to be buried in the Jewish cemetery – and therefore the underlying question of who counted as a Jew – which continue within the IKG to this day. The memorandum indicated that a separate morgue was to be installed, with separate palls and biers, for the burials of, as it stated, 'Jews belonging to other faiths'. It forbade benedictions for the Christian dead.

The first such burial took place on 25 September 1941.²³⁸ Altogether, 765 such burials took place at Tor IV between 1941 and 1945 – some of the appertaining *matzevot* are analysed in Part III.²³⁹ For the most part, these burials were confined to section 20A.²⁴⁰ Significantly, there was no (re-)interpretation of the *Halachah* to accommodate for the so-called 'racial Jews' or for non-Jewish spouses and their children, all of whom were persecuted as Jews by the Nazis, since according to

²³⁷ Roseman, *Wannsee*, 81-2.

²³⁸ *An das Friedhofsamt der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde*, 10 August 1951, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/FH/108/8.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰ *Dienstordnung für die Durchführung der Beerdigungen glaubensloser Juden*, 2 September 1941, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/FH/3/2.

orthodox understanding non-Jews, including children born of non-Jewish mothers, may never be buried in a Jewish cemetery. Even the creation of a separate section is deemed inadmissible, so the post-Shoah consensus, 'since the entire cemetery, even the unused part, has a unitary character'.²⁴¹ As mentioned above, this enforced burial was to provide fertile ground for conflicts between the IKG and the families of bereaved people, as between orthodox and non-orthodox positions, which continue to this day. These will be discussed in Part I.

Mass-Destruction in the Final Days of the Shoah

In the last months of the Shoah, beginning in November 1944, altogether about 35,000 Jewish-Hungarian forced labourers were deported to the territory of the present Republic of Austria for construction of last-ditch defensive fortifications, many of whom died as a consequence of their appalling treatment.²⁴² This employment of Jewish forced labour so late in the war represents the pendulum swing of Nazi anti-Jewish policy between direct murder and murder through labour, although forced labour always represented only a temporary reprieve from extermination.²⁴³ The employment of tens of thousands of Jewish forced labourers accounts for a large number of anonymous mass graves spread across the Austrian landscape at the end of the Shoah. Altogether 445 Jewish Hungarians were buried at Tor IV, 284 in mass graves, 161 in graves of four people per grave.²⁴⁴ Some of these were buried at the time of death, while some were reinterred from mass graves around Vienna and eastern Austria in the years immediately following the Shoah.²⁴⁵ Today these form part of a network of memorials in the cemetery commemorating the Shoah in all its local details, accounting also for the sudden and numerous occurrences of

²⁴¹ Roth, Halachah, 114-5.

²⁴² Lichtblau, "Integration", 535.

²⁴³ Roseman, *Wannsee*, 79-80.

²⁴⁴ *An das Friedhofsamt der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde*, 10 August 1951, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/FH/108/8.

²⁴⁵ *Bericht* [1948], 46.

Hungarian-language epitaphs at Tor IV. The establishment of mass graves was presumably a widespread practice in Abrahamic times, offering the possibility of fulfilling the *met mitzvah* or 'commandment of the dead' in providing a burial place for 'the propertyless and for strangers', as mentioned for example in II Kings 23:6.²⁴⁶ The creation of mass graves at Tor IV in the closing days of the Shoah, when hundreds of often unknown Jewish forced labourers were perishing in and around Vienna, thus represented the fulfilment of its religious duty by the IKG and in some sense also the parallel of an ancient biblical practice.

On 12 March 1945, in the final days of the war, the *beit tahara* at Tor I, which had been deliberately blown up on 10 November 1938, was hit by stray Allied bombs targeting the railway lines running along the western perimeter of the cemetery.²⁴⁷ Altogether, this bombing resulted in an estimated 168 craters and 2250 destroyed graves at Tor I and Tor IV, the heaviest damage occurring at Tor I, which had otherwise largely survived the Shoah unscathed. The roads in the cemetery were totally impassable, with post-war reports suggesting that there had been fighting in the cemetery itself.²⁴⁸ This devastation, an indirect result of the war of extermination unleashed by the Third Reich, was the last major incident in the Jewish cemeteries, rendering Tor I a desecrated site of Jewish heritage as contested as all the other Jewish cemeteries in the city after 1945.

Amidst all the death and destruction which characterised the history of the Jewish cemeteries during the Shoah, the practices which briefly transformed Tor IV from a house of death into a house of life are amongst their most fascinating and least-analysed stories. Many writers and poets dealt with the experience of persecution and exile during the Shoah through recourse to the theme of graves and

²⁴⁶ See also Roth, Halachah, 97.

²⁴⁷ *An das Friedhofsamt der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde*, 10 August 1951, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/FH/108/8.

²⁴⁸ *Bericht* [1948], 46.

cemeteries, providing a glimpse into the cemetery as a site of Jewish culture and life during this horrific time. For example Franz Werfel (1890-1945), a Prague-born immigrant to Vienna who went into exile to the United States, wrote a poem titled *Der gute Ort zu Wien*, in reference to a common Yiddish name for the cemetery as a 'good place'. The Yiddish-Ashkenazi character of the poem is underlined by reference to the *yortzeit*, the anniversary of death when it is customary in Ashkenazi practice to visit the grave and light a candle for the deceased. Werfel was here evidently describing Tor IV as it became a refuge for Vienna's Jews in this dire time of persecution:

The *Volksgarten*, the *Stadt* and the *Rathaus* parks / Their springtime had never been so strong / It is forbidden to the Jews of Vienna / Whose only green grows with the dead. / In the hour that the city pales / before the midday burden on Sundays / One crowds shyly in the trams / Out to the half-forgotten ancestors. / In the times of the fathers long withered, / The cemetery was called the "Good Place". / Now, as a haven from cowardly hordes, / It has become a good place once more. / On its paths and avenues / There is a great coming, great going, / As though all those buried here, / Had a *yortzeit* in these days.²⁴⁹

Viennese-born poet Alfred Werner (1911-1979), who also went into exile in the United States, in his poem *Alter jüdischer Friedhof*, further extrapolated the retreat into tradition, religion and into the *yidishkayt* or Jewishness as perceived in the quiet solemnity and piety of the Jewish cemetery, piety here being underscored by the Germanised Hebrew term *Chassiden* ('the pious', noun):

Did not you live freer, purer / hearing God, obeying God / in the law that no-one knowingly / foolishly would have transgressed (...) Here, at the cemetery

²⁴⁹ Franz Werfel, "Der gute Ort zu Wien" in Miguel Herz-Kestranek, Konstantin Kaiser & Daniela Strigl (eds.), *In welcher Sprache träumen Sie? Österreichische Lyrik des Exils und des Widerstands* (Vienna: Theodor Kramer, 2007), 516.

of the *Chassiden* / I sense a peace unknown / yet deeply related to the heart /
Give us, Lord, peace!²⁵⁰

The Jewish cemetery had evidently become, if it had not already been so, a sacred site of the most profound inner-Jewish significance, the site of community and ancestry and in communion with God. Its profound and profoundly altered significance after the Shoah, as evident in these brief poetic samples, have made Tor IV into one of the most poignant Jewish spaces in the present cityscape, as will be analysed in the following chapter.

2.6 Conclusion

Austrian author Alfred Payrleitner, in the foreword to an edited volume on the history of Jewish-Austrian culture published in 1988 and appropriately titled *Voll Leben Und Tod ist diese Erde* ('This Earth is full of Life and Death'), remarked that, had it survived in one form or another, the 'old Austria' may well have resulted in 'a downright symbiotic combination of its various backgrounds into a new total culture [*Gesamtkultur*]' – what Joseph Roth and other contemporaries before the Shoah had seen as a microcosm of 'Europe'.²⁵¹ Yet this somewhat nostalgic view of Austria's Habsburg past cannot undo the rupture caused by National Socialism and its murderous enterprise, coupled with and driven by the perverted cultural and scientific practices whose origins lay as much in this 'old Austria' as they were enabled by its annexation to Nazi Germany. The result was a post-Shoah Austrian society that is often characterised in terms of physical and psychological trauma. Regarding Austrians and Jews, and the rift between them left in the absence of what the Shoah destroyed, Payrleitner commented: 'Destroyed symbioses mostly end with the

²⁵⁰ Alfred Werner, "Alter jüdischer Friedhof" in *ibid*, 519.

²⁵¹ Alfred Payrleitner, "Vorwort" in Wolfgang Plat (ed.), *Voll Leben und Tod ist diese Erde: Bilder aus der Geschichte der jüdischen Österreicher (1190 bis 1945)* (Vienna: Herold, 1988), 14.

damaging of both parts. The Shoah was also a form of self-mutilation. One can sense it, wherever one looks'.²⁵² In the same volume, historian Wolfgang Plat commented that 'the absence of the Jews makes of Vienna a 'provincial city' that survives on the nostalgic longing for a never-returning past'.²⁵³ Joseph Roth had anticipated this cultural murder-suicide with remarkable foresight as soon as Austria was annexed into the National Socialist state, writing: '600 years of Habsburg could not be extinguished by the stupidity of the leftist dogmatists or by the rightist Alpine morons. Now they have been. Someone from Braunau has done it. He has *verlinzert* Austria, and so it is lost' – referring to Linz, the provincial capital of Upper Austria where Hitler grew up.²⁵⁴

This chapter analysed the Shoah-era history of Vienna's Jewish cemeteries, their treatment by various networks of agency in this period, and the cultural agendas underlying this treatment. It established the degree to which the desecrations they suffered were conditioned by the Nazi takeover of Austria, were often driven and sanctioned by German institutions operating within the Third Reich, but were to a large extent initiated and executed by local Austrian institutions and individuals, many of which escaped culpability after the war. It demonstrated that the competing projects of annihilation and selective preservation transcend the Shoah, as evident in Jewish and non-Jewish initiatives surrounding the cemeteries throughout the twentieth century, albeit that the genocidal – or at times 'mnemocidal' – intent dominated these projects during the Shoah. The IKG operated in a hitherto under-researched sphere of activity in these years, characterised by the selective preservation of material artefacts and human remains deemed important by its leadership, and witnessing the short-lived transformation of the cemetery at Tor IV – a site of death – into a site of life, and specifically a site of Jewish life, which for a

²⁵² *Ibid*, 14.

²⁵³ Wolfgang Plat, "Die Juden haben uns doch furchtbar behandelt", in *ibid*, 79.

²⁵⁴ Roth, "Totenmesse", 730. This 'provincialised' Vienna was also predicted by Zweig, *Die Welt von Gestern*, 33.

brief while flourished there despite the community's marginalisation and eradication elsewhere within the city. Altogether, however, the Shoah represented the single most traumatic event in the history of this community, its destructions in the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries notwithstanding, and the history of persecution and cultural eradication experienced in Vienna from 1938 to 1945 was to cause deep and lasting conflicts between Jews and non-Jews in a wider sense, and on issues of control and value in the cemeteries more specifically, in the decades that followed.

בית הקברות

Part III: The House of Sepulchres

Culture, Memory, and the Contestation
of Vienna's Jewish Cemeteries,

1945 – Present Day

נחמיה ב' ג': מדוע לא-ירעו פני, אשר העיר בית-קברות אבתי חרבה, ושעריה אכלו באש

Why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?
(Nehemiah 2:3)

Jewish burial sites have since antiquity been ancestral spaces, beginning with the burial of Abraham's family in the field of Machpelah outside of Hebron (Genesis 23:19-20, 25:9 and 47:30; ancestral burial sites also occur in Joshua 24:33, Judges 8:32, II Samuel 19:38, 21:14, II Kings 9:28 *et al*). Burial with one's ancestors has since time immemorial been held in such high esteem that in the *Tanach* phrases such as 'to lie down with my fathers' (ושכבתי, עם-אבתי) and 'to be gathered to my kin' (אני נאסף אל-עמי) stand as a euphemism for dying (Genesis 47:30, 49:29, Judges 2:10, II Chronicles 16:13 *et al*). Indeed, not to be buried with one's ancestors was regarded as a severe punishment (as in I Kings 13:22). *Beit haqvarot* (בית הקברות, note the linguistic archaism of the feminine declension) literally means 'the house of sepulchres', and thus constitutes the most literal designation of the cemetery in the Hebrew language, yet its origins lie rooted in the far more profound context of ancestry and heritage which is so central to Jewish religion and culture. Throughout their centuries-long persecution in the diaspora, the cemetery – the place of their fathers' sepulchres – remained the most potent site of memory to the Jewish people, and its connotations with piety, community and ancestral heritage were deepened all the more after the desecration of these sites that accompanied the attempted annihilation of this people.

3.1 Introduction

65,000 people, roughly a third of Austria's Jewish population along with thousands defined as Jews by the Nuremberg Laws, fell victim to the Shoah.¹ The remainder, over 120,000 people, had managed to flee or been forced to emigrate. An estimated 300 mass graves in eastern Austria, containing an unknown number of bodies, bear witness to the mostly Jewish-Hungarian victims of the death marches towards the end of the Shoah, massacres which none of the local non-Jewish population can deny they witnessed first-hand.² Of 95 synagogues and prayer rooms in Vienna before 1938, 94 were destroyed in a pogrom which was not only witnessed but actively participated in by the local non-Jewish population.³ Josef Löwenherz (1884-1960), the coerced leader of Vienna's Jewish community during the Shoah, later observed in a private letter: 'Over the most illustrious memories of Jewry and the Jews here lie ashes and death'.⁴ 1.3 million Austrian men, about eighteen percent of the population, served in the *Wehrmacht* during the Second World War,⁵ while 550,000 Austrians, about eight percent of the population, joined the Nazi Party.⁶ As Michael Mann, among others, repeatedly emphasised, Austrians were significantly overrepresented in Nazi organisations.⁷ Thomas Albrich reckoned that some 40 percent of the staff and 75 percent of commandants in Nazi concentration

¹ Gerhard Botz, "The Dynamics of Persecution in Austria, 1938-45" in Robert Wistrich (ed.), *Austrians and Jews in the twentieth century: from Franz Joseph to Waldheim* (London: Macmillan, 1992), 207, 211 & 213.

² Thomas Albrich, "Holocaust und Schuldabwehr" in Rolf Steininger & Michael Gehler (eds.), *Österreich im 20. Jahrhundert* (Vol. 2, Vienna: Böhlau, 1997), 52-3.

³ *Bericht des Präsidiums der israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Wien über die Tätigkeit in den Jahren 1945-1948* (Vienna: Verlag der israelitischen Kultusgemeinde in Wien, 1948), 36.

⁴ Cited in Evelyn Adunka, *Die vierte Gemeinde: Die Wiener Juden in der Zeit von 1945 bis heute* (Vienna: Philo, 2000), 28.

⁵ Bertrand Michael Buchmann, *Österreicher in der deutschen Wehrmacht: Soldatenalltag im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2009).

⁶ Heidemarie Uhl, "The Politics of Memory: Austria's Perception of the Second World War and the National Socialist Period" in Günter Bischof & Anton Pelinka (eds.), *Austrian Historical Memory & National Identity* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1997), 71.

⁷ Michael Mann, *Fascists* (Cambridge University Press: 2004), 207, and Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (Cambridge University Press: 2005), 196, 214, 224 et al.

and extermination camps were Austrian.⁸ Simon Wiesenthal (1908-2005) estimated that about half of the six million Jewish victims of the Shoah had been murdered by Austrians.⁹

In April 1947, the reconstituted *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde* (hereafter IKG) counted 9400 Jews living in Vienna, including concentration camp survivors; *rémigrés* (those forced into exile during the Shoah who chose to return), and a rapidly fluctuating number of Jewish Displaced Persons who were shuttled continuously through the city by the Allied administration.¹⁰ The proportion of Jews in Austria to Jewish Austrians remaining abroad in the early 1950s was about 1:10.¹¹ These numbers, however, are not absolute since they are based solely on membership in IKG. Many *rémigrés* had not been IKG members before 1938 and/or did not register with the IKG after 1945. As Jacqueline Vansant noted in her work on *rémigré* identity, this obscurity of numbers ‘underscores the diversity of the Jewish population within Austria as well as the problematic nature of the label “Jewish”’.¹² This had been true of the Jewish population of Austria before 1938 and continued to be so after 1945. As elsewhere in Europe, the 69 Jewish cemeteries which survived the Shoah within the borders of Austria constituted some of the last remaining sites of Jewish heritage following its widespread effacement from the cultural and physical landscape.¹³ Robert Pick, an exile who returned in 1953, wrote that a visit to the cemetery was mandatory for *rémigrés*, since it was ‘very much present in the lore of the Vienna Jews. It was the one place common to them all’.¹⁴ The cemeteries – the

⁸ Albrich, “Holocaust”, 41.

⁹ Tom Segev, *Simon Wiesenthal: The Life and Legends* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2010), 192.

¹⁰ Adunka, *Gemeinde*, 56.

¹¹ *Die Tätigkeit der israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Wien in den Jahren 1952-1954* (Vienna: Verlag der israelitischen Kultusgemeinde in Wien, 1955), 124.

¹² Jacqueline Vansant, *Reclaiming Heimat: Trauma and Mourning in Memoirs by Jewish Austrian Reémigrés* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001), 13.

¹³ As observed by Wolfgang Plat, “Die Juden haben uns aber furchtbar behandelt: Erfahrungen einer Dokumentationsarbeit” in Wolfgang Plat (ed.), *Voll Leben und Tod ist diese Erde: Bilder aus der Geschichte der jüdischen Österreicher (1190 bis 1945)* (Vienna: Harold, 1988), 79.

¹⁴ Robert Pick, *The Vienna of the Departed*, *Commentary*, Nr. 16 (1953), 153-4.

'places of their fathers' sepulchres' – took on great significance following the Shoah as the last, contested sites of memory of an almost entirely annihilated culture.

The Jewish cemeteries were entirely omitted in the literature on Viennese cemeteries of the immediate post-war, when Austrian historians engaged in a project to claim a sense of identity transgressing the recent history of fascism, war and genocide, 'rediscovering' old Vienna through the medium of its cemeteries.¹⁵ Later histories, where they did mention the desecration of Jewish cemeteries, obfuscated the causes or subsumed these under the damage caused by Allied bombing of the city. A 1985 history of the Central Cemetery mentioned the 'clear space where until very few years ago the *beit tahara* [ritual funerary home] stood' at Tor I, without mentioning that it was blown up by Nazis and their supporters during the November Pogrom.¹⁶ A 1994 history published by the city cemetery office related the history of the city's cemeteries to the destructions of various wars from the Battle of Vienna in 1683 to the Second World War, without however mentioning the targeted destruction of Jewish cemeteries during the Shoah.¹⁷ A 2004 history of Viennese cemeteries absurdly claimed that the Seegasse 'survived the catastrophe of the Holocaust as though through a miracle', characterising both the Shoah and the partial survival of this space – with no mention of the severity of its desecration – in naturalistic terms that entirely mask the role of agency.¹⁸ A history published by the city cemetery office as recently as 2000 laconically characterised the many memorials to the crimes of National Socialism, Jewish and non-Jewish, as 'memorials to the memory of the bad times'.¹⁹ This is a general phenomenon in Austria, identified by discourse analysts and political scientists, of circumscribing the crimes of National Socialism

¹⁵ For example Hans Markl, *Alt=Wiener Friedhöfe* (Vol. 2, Vienna: Sonderheft der Zeitschrift »Wiener G'schichten«, December 1947).

¹⁶ Hans Havelka, *Zentralfriedhof* (Vienna: Jugend & Volk, 1985), 57.

¹⁷ *120 Jahre Zentralfriedhof* (Vienna: MA43, 1994).

¹⁸ Werner Bauer, *Wiener Friedhofsführer: Genaue Beschreibung sämtlicher Begräbnisstätten nebst einer Geschichte des Wiener Bestattungswesens* (Vienna: Falter, 2004), 216.

¹⁹ Franz-Josef Barta, *Der Wiener Zentralfriedhof: Ein Friedhof für alle Religionen* (Vienna: MA43, 2000), 33.

metaphorically, thereby diverting attention away from the agency in and hence culpability for these crimes.²⁰ Finally, and perversely, such publications often characterise the dilapidation of the Jewish cemeteries – a result of the destruction wrought during the Shoah, exacerbated by the obstruction of restitution processes by successive Austrian governments– as picturesque sites, ‘like an overgrown garden which visualises the evanescence of all earthly things’.²¹ Vienna’s destroyed Jewish cemeteries epitomise the erasures of Jewish-Austrian history and the denials of post-Shoah Austrian society – these desecrated sites of memory have become the most poignant arenas of contestation over Austria’s present conflicted relationship to its Jewish and Nazi pasts, as this chapter explores.

‘There were never any Jew-Pogroms in Vienna’: Austrian Politics and Society after 1945

Dirk Rupnow remarked caustically that Austrian historical memory only begins in May 1945, albeit with the awareness that this was preceded sometime by the age of Mozart and Maria Theresia.²² As a critical evaluation of a mainstream Austrian ‘collective memory’, an issue among others which this chapter will explore, this wry observation is a useful point of departure. Developments of the last two decades, however, have led to a greater contestation of Austrian historical memory following which, as Peter Utgaard wrote, there are two versions of Austria’s past, the first defined by ‘Habsburg glory’, the ‘tourist Austria’ with which visitors are so quickly entrapped, the second defined by ‘collapse’, ‘war’ and ‘racist annihilation’.²³ Austria’s largely destroyed Jewish heritage held an important, even central, position in both

²⁰ Teresa Distelberger, Rudolf de Cillia & Ruth Wodak, “Österreichische Identitäten in politischen Gedenkreden des Jubiläumsjahres 2005” in Rudolf de Cillia & Ruth Wodak (eds.), *Gedenken im „Gedankenjahr“: Zur diskursiven Konstruktion österreichischer Identitäten in Jubiläumsjahr 2005* (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2009).

²¹ Barta, *Zentralfriedhof*, 37.

²² Dirk Rupnow, *Aporien des Gedenkens: Reflexionen über >Holocaust< und Erinnerung* (Freiburg: Rombach, 2006), 173.

²³ Peter Utgaard, *Remembering and forgetting Nazism: Education, National Identity, and the Victim Myth in Postwar Austria* (New York: Berghahn, 2003), 1-2.

facets of Austrian history, while the Jewish cemeteries arguably became the most potent sites of memory in which the contestation over these memories have been played out.

May 1945 was construed as a *Stunde Null*, a 'zero hour', in the negotiation of Austrian historical consciousness. Thereafter, the recent past was selectively forgotten, while Austria engaged in a project of reinvention, becoming a 'belated nation' and a 'nation by consensus'.²⁴ This collective and selective amnesia resulted in Austria no longer being understood as a part of the 'German nation', a feeling widespread before 1938 that had been instrumental in Austria's complicity in National Socialism.²⁵ This rupture facilitated the construction of the collective memory of Austria as a victim, and not a perpetrator, of National Socialism, a myth that has persisted in part into the present day.²⁶ This 'victim myth' was initially based on the 1943 Moscow Declaration, which stated [1] that Austria was 'the first free country to fall a victim to Hitlerite aggression', but continued [2] that 'Austria is reminded, however that she has a responsibility, which she cannot evade, for participation in the war at the side of Hitlerite Germany'.²⁷ The first part of this statement became foundational for the construction of an Austrian collective memory of the recent past and of a new national identity.²⁸ It was cited in Austria's Declaration of Independence of 27 April 1945 which, as Hans Rauscher remarked, constituted a 'self-representation as a victim without any complicity'.²⁹ This victim myth allowed

²⁴ Ruth Wodak, Rudolf de Cillia, Martin Reisigl & Karin Liebhart, *The Discursive Construction of National Identity* (Edinburgh University Press: 1999), 49.

²⁵ Ruth Wodak, Peter Nowak, Johanna Pelikan, Helmut Gruber, Rudolf de Cillia & Richard Mitten, »*Wir sind alle unschuldige Täter*«: *Diskurshistorische Studien zum Nachkriegsantisemitismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1990), 10.

²⁶ See for example the relatively recent publication by a state-funded organisation, Gottfried-Karl Kindermann, *Austria – First Target and Adversary of National Socialism 1933-1938* (Vienna: Österreichische Kulturvereinigung, 2002).

²⁷ *The Moscow Conference; October 1943*, <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/moscow.asp>, accessed 10 March 2015.

²⁸ See Günter Bischof, "Introduction" in Bischof & Pelinka (eds.), *Memory*, 4.

²⁹ Hans Rauscher (ed.), *Das Buch Österreich: Texte, die man kennen muss* (Vienna: Christian Braumüller, 2005), 431.

Austria's Nazi history, the crimes committed by Austrians, and the victims of these crimes – including a staggering number of Austrian Jews – to be largely effaced from memory. The second aspect of the Moscow Declaration, addressing Austria's 'responsibility' for its 'participation' in the crimes of National Socialism, was thereafter no longer repeated.³⁰ As a result, the process of 'denazification' in Austria was quickly abandoned, resulting in the reintegration of more than half a million former Nazis into the social fabric and political landscape and in concessions made to them in a bid to canvass their crucial votes.³¹ This process came at a detrimental cost to the real victims, in particular to Austria's Jews, and aimed as Ruth Wodak *et al* have demonstrated to establish 'Austria's complete sovereignty, but also to reject any legitimate demands for compensation of Nazi victims'.³²

The equation of National Socialism and the Shoah with Germany meant moreover that Austria's long history of antisemitism could be belittled while post-Shoah antisemitism was allowed to flourish, as evident in the words of leading politicians.³³ Vienna's Deputy Mayor, Leopold Kunschak (1871-1953), said in September 1945 that 'the Polish Jews should not come to Austria, but we Austrians do not need the others either! (...) I was always an antisemite and am one today still!'³⁴ Karl Renner (1870-1950), President of Austria, said in 1946 that 'we will certainly not allow a new Jewish community to come here from East Europe and establish itself while our own people need work'.³⁵ Such antisemitic sentiments were complemented by the re-writing of history, as evident in an infamous article written by

³⁰ Brigitte Bailer, "They were all Victims: The Selective Treatment of the Consequences of National Socialism" in Bischof & Pelinka (eds.), *Memory*, 103-4.

³¹ Brigitte Bailer-Galanda & Wolfgang Neugebauer, *Incorrigibly Right: Right-Wing Extremists, "Revisionists" and Anti-Semites in Austrian Politics Today* (Vienna: DöW, 1996), 6. See also Dieter Stiefel, *Entnazifizierung in Österreich* (Vienna: Europaverlag, 1981).

³² Wodak *et al*, *Identity*, 59.

³³ Albrich, "Holocaust", 54.

³⁴ Cited in *Unsere Stadt! Jüdisches Wien bis Heute* (Vienna: Jüdisches Museum Wien, 2013), 20.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 20.

the Mayor of Vienna Theodor Körner (1873-1957) in 1947 in response to allegations of mistreatment of Jews both during and after the Shoah:

It is stated once and for all that, apart from the excesses planned by the Nazis in the period of their rule over Austria, there were never any Jew-Pogroms in Vienna (...) because the Viennese is a citizen of the world and therefore from the outset not an antisemite. Antisemitic tendencies are totally foreign to him today, too. Stories to the contrary are deliberate lies or mindless chatter.³⁶

The falsity of this statement is plain. David Brill, President of the IKG, therefore unsurprisingly characterised the early post-Shoah atmosphere amongst the tiny community of survivors as follows: 'All of us who live here are seized by revulsion towards the present and the future, which is downright hopeless here'.³⁷

In this context, a significant meeting of Austrian ministers took place on the inauspicious date of 9 November 1948, the tenth anniversary of the November Pogrom, to discuss the property 'Aryanised' or stolen from those exiled or murdered during the Shoah which remained in Austrian hands.³⁸ The discussion was punctuated with openly antisemitic statements from across the political spectrum, with members of the Austrian People's Party (conservative party, hereafter ÖVP) claiming that Austria had played no role in the Shoah, and members of the Austrian Socialist Party (hereafter SPÖ) decrying the ostensible Jewish influence on American policy and within Austria. Minister of the Interior Oskar Helmer (1887-1963) of the SPÖ uttered the now infamous phrase which came to characterise Austria's post-Shoah restitution policy vis-à-vis the Jewish community: 'I say one should draw the matter out' (*daß man die Sache in die Länge zieht*) – in other words to practise a policy of obstruction in order not to have to compensate the victims of persecution and to maintain ownership over ill-gotten properties. This policy was pursued for

³⁶ "Das Märchen vom Antisemitismus in Wien", *Wiener Zeitung*, 9 February 1947, 1.

³⁷ *Unsere Stadt*, 20.

³⁸ The following cited from the original transcript in Rauscher (ed.), *Österreich*, 455.

many years, to great profit for non-Jewish Austrian society, and to the great detriment of the survivors of the Shoah. That same evening, Chancellor Leopold Figl (1902-1965), who had been present at the meeting, attended the memorial event for the anniversary of the November Pogrom in the synagogue in the Seitenstettengasse, where he stated: 'Be assured that the Austrian government has from the beginning made it its mission to move everything to help the spirit of humanity, justice and morality to a new breakthrough in our state'.³⁹ In reality, Austrian government policy meant that the remaining, returning or newly arriving Jews – survivors of the genocide – were left totally dependent on a destitute Jewish community organisation which in turn relied entirely on international aid.⁴⁰ Robert Knight summarised the situation in the late 1940s as follows: 'there was no future in Austria for the Jewish community; anti-semitism – contrary to the assertions of Austrian politicians – was as strong as ever; Jews driven out of Austria after the Anschluss (union) should not return; and emigration to Palestine was the only answer'.⁴¹

Antisemitism is a key concept to the study of post-Shoah Austrian society which, as Ruth Wodak commented, 'cannot be simply reduced in content to the 'Final Solution', or in chronology to the years 1938-1945, or in geography to Germany'.⁴² The virulence of antisemitism in Austria before, during and after the Shoah is an often-remarked phenomenon. As psychoanalyst Rudolph Loewenstein (1898-1976) argued, a legal ban on antisemitism is only effective where it results in a 'regulation of thought', otherwise it simply forces antisemitism underground.⁴³ This is how antisemitism continued to proliferate in Austria after 1945, publicly taboo and yet

³⁹ *Unsere Stadt*, 42.

⁴⁰ Bailer, "Victims", 105.

⁴¹ Robert Knight, "'Neutrality', not Sympathy: Jews in Post-war Austria" in Wistrich (ed.), *Austrians*, 220.

⁴² Wodak et al, »*Wir sind alle unschuldige Täter*«, 20.

⁴³ Rudolph M. Loewenstein, *Psychoanalyse des Antisemitismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1967), 165.

occasionally resurfacing throughout political, social and media discourse.⁴⁴ This new antisemitism was abstract in the absence of a large Jewish population, constituting an 'antisemitism without Jews'.⁴⁵ One facet of this new antisemitism was a fear of revenge relating to the prosecution of war criminals and the restitution of stolen property, yet this also reflected older antisemitic stereotypes of Jewish vengefulness and greed.⁴⁶ Another recurring stereotype in post-Shoah Austrian society concerned 'those "who do not let bygones be bygones" and/or those who live abroad and "agitate"'.⁴⁷ This *Feindbild*, which came to great prominence in the Waldheim Affair, as discussed shortly, relies on the enemy being both powerful and evil, leading in turn to a rejection of personal guilt and the proliferation of the self-stylisation as a 'victim'. These tropes are evident throughout the restitution debates which form a focal point of this chapter.

The IKG's activity reports from the 1950s and 1960s elucidate what Austria's negligible Jewish community had to deal with in these years, such as the rabble-rousing in local Austrian newspapers.⁴⁸ This antisemitic discourse, which formed the backdrop to issues such as the restitution debates in post-Shoah Austrian society, was sometimes accompanied by violent expressions of antisemitism. The synagogue in the Seitenstettengasse was defaced in the night of 1 January 1960, marking the beginning of an era of widespread neo-Nazi agitation in Austria, including numerous bomb threats.⁴⁹ Since then, all Jewish institutions in Austria have been under police guard.⁵⁰ Most gravely, antisemitism in Austria resulted in a string of fatal attacks, perpetrated often by Palestinian terrorists but also by local neo-Nazis, peaking in the

⁴⁴ Knight, "Neutrality", 220.

⁴⁵ See Michael John & Albert Lichtblau, *Schmelztiegel Wien – Einst und Jetzt: Zur Geschichte und Gegenwart von Zuwanderung und Minderheiten* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1990), 343.

⁴⁶ Wodak et al, »Wir sind alle unschuldige Täter«, 22-3.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 27.

⁴⁸ See for example *Tätigkeit* [1955], 28-31.

⁴⁹ *Die Tätigkeit der israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Wien 1960 bis 1964* (Vienna: Verlag der israelitischen Kultusgemeinde in Wien, 1964), 52.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 53.

1970s and early 1980s.⁵¹ One form of antisemitism repeatedly takes is the vandalism of Jewish cemeteries, usually correlating with significant dates such as the anniversary of the November Pogrom.⁵² Earlier attacks were largely limited to graffiti, which was easier to rectify,⁵³ but from the 1980s onwards a new wave of vandalism targeted the *matzevot*, even smashing open crypts and coffins.⁵⁴ As Evelyn Adunka stated in an evaluation echoed by many historians of Jewish heritage, 'the destruction of Jewish graves cannot be described merely as violence to objects or property, its intention is rather to rob Jews of their past and to denigrate their religion'.⁵⁵

As early as 1957, the Federal Republic of Germany formulated a permanent arrangement, active to this day, whereby the federal and state governments together pay for the maintenance of the country's Jewish cemeteries in cooperation with local Jewish communities.⁵⁶ This tripartite model is often referenced in Austrian restoration debates, as German efforts to come to terms with the past are often compared to the absence of such efforts in Austria. The perennial short-comings of the Austrian government led IKG President Emil Maurer (1884-1967) to observe that 'by comparison to Germany it is precisely goodwill that is lacking in Austria'.⁵⁷

'Home and not at home': The (Re-)Establishment of the IKG after 1945

In 1945, the sense that Jewish life in Austria had permanently come to an end was almost ubiquitous. Most of those who had survived in Vienna did not intend to stay, while most who had survived abroad did not intend to return.⁵⁸ Tom Segev, in

⁵¹ Adunka, *Gemeinde*, 452-9.

⁵² Adolf Diamant, *Geschändete jüdische Friedhöfe in Deutschland 1945 bis 1999* (Potsdam: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 2000), 87.

⁵³ For example a series of explicitly Nazi vandalisms at the synagogue and Tor IV in the summer of 1977, as reported in "Neofaschistische „Heldentaten“", *Die Gemeinde*, 1 September 1977, 3.

⁵⁴ There were over thirty such cases in 1991, as on 3 September when *matzevot* were destroyed and graves dug up in the Jewish sections of the Central Cemetery. See "Jüdischer Friedhof Verwüstet", *Der Standard*, 5 September 1991, 12.

⁵⁵ Adunka, *Gemeinde*, 48.

⁵⁶ Andreas Wirsching, *Jüdische Friedhöfe in Deutschland 1933-1957, Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 1. Heft (January 2002), 35-40.

⁵⁷ Cited in Adunka, *Gemeinde*, 187.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 25.

his biography of Simon Wiesenthal, listed reasons why people stayed or returned after 1945: some had no viable alternative, some wanted to rebuild their past lives, some waited for restitution deals (which often never materialised) or for the economic and security situation to improve in Israel to emigrate there – yet more than anything, Segev opined, the few like Wiesenthal who stayed did so because, despite everything, they were deeply rooted in Austrian culture, their lives having been conditioned in the residual multicultural climate of the Habsburg state: Vienna was their cultural home.⁵⁹ This was also evident in Jacqueline Vansant's study of *rémigré* literature, which highlighted the paradox between Austria as a homeland alongside the burning sense of homelessness as a result of antisemitism and the Shoah.⁶⁰

Vienna, as a neutral city in the Cold War, became a way station for the emigration of Jewish Displaced Persons from East Europe and the Soviet Union. Roughly 300,000 Jews had passed through the city by 1955, with another 17,000 passing through from Hungary following the crushing of the uprising in 1956.⁶¹ Between 1968 and 1986, about 270,000 Russian Jews passed through the city, primarily emigrating to Israel,⁶² and again in 1995 over 10,000 Jews from the former Soviet Union passed through Vienna.⁶³ Without these waves of migration, which in each case resulted in small numbers of Jews settling in Vienna, the IKG would have ceased to exist. The new community is, despite its diminutive size, manifestly heterogeneous, made up of immigrants from all over Europe and Asia, reflecting religious views ranging from ultra-orthodox to atheist, and a political spectrum ranging from far left to far right.⁶⁴ Its totally new makeup means that it must be regarded as a new community in its own right – Vienna's fourth Jewish community – only nominally the successor to the pre-Shoah community. This is underlined by

⁵⁹ Segev, *Wiesenthal*, 82-3.

⁶⁰ Vansant, *Heimat*.

⁶¹ Adunka, *Gemeinde*, 159.

⁶² *Ibid*, 374.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 381.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 17.

contradistinction to the vast diaspora of circa 120,000 Jewish Austrians and their uncounted descendants living abroad.⁶⁵ In this context, and in the context of the widespread antisemitic antipathy in Austrian society explored earlier, Michael John and Albert Lichtblau remarked that contemporary Jewish identity in Vienna 'oscillates between the poles of Vienna and Israel, equanimity and fear, depression and resistance', or simply 'home and not at home'.⁶⁶

The IKG exclaimed in its first post-Shoah activity report that its predecessor had only been concerned with catering to the religious needs of Viennese Jewry, while the new IKG was concerned, due to the 'present political situation', with all the 'life interests' of Viennese Jewry.⁶⁷ In 1964, the IKG powerfully proclaimed its hegemony over all Jewish affairs, religious and secular, claiming to be the only 'legitimate representative of the Jewish population (...) in all walks of life, so not only in religious matters'.⁶⁸ This self-understanding was highly significant to the development of the Jewish community in Vienna after 1945, and was to have deep and conflicted effects on the relationship between the city's Jewish population, as amorphous as it had ever been, and the IKG leadership. The assumption of hegemonic powers by this exclusive organisation was conditioned by the abhorrent treatment of the destitute Jewish survivors after 1945 by Austrian society and government, and yet this hegemony was not uncontested, and resulted in many controversies concerning the sense of Jewish community, and belonging therein, many of which most poignantly played themselves out in the Jewish cemeteries. One of the principle tasks adopted by the newly reconstituted IKG concerned restitution, without whose efforts the Austrian government would undoubtedly have resisted restitution more successfully than it eventually did.⁶⁹ The preservation of Jewish

⁶⁵ Albrich, "Holocaust", 59.

⁶⁶ John & Lichtblau, *Schmelztiegel*, 392.

⁶⁷ *Bericht* [1948], 5.

⁶⁸ *Tätigkeit* [1964], 51.

⁶⁹ *Bericht* [1948], 8.

heritage was characterised as 'above all a *religious* duty' (emphasis in original).⁷⁰ The IKG became one of the most important lobbying groups for the restitution and maintenance of sites of Jewish heritage in post-Shoah Austria, while this simultaneously afforded the IKG significant influence in defining the forms which preservation and commemoration in these communal sites of memory were to take.

Since the Shoah, a negative identification with Jewishness arose amongst Europeans of Jewish descent, an enforced feeling of group belonging, of feeling as part of a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* or a 'community of fate', as Jewish-Viennese *rémigré* and IKG member Timothy Smolka (born 1938 in London) remarked in an interview: 'Our feeling towards Jewry/Judaism was actually defined by antisemitism'.⁷¹ The growth of an 'ethnic' or hereditary sense of Jewish peoplehood, which ties into and partly explains the unprecedented Zionism of the post-Shoah IKG, was conditioned as much by the experience of one's own or one's parents' persecution by the Nazis as it evidently was by popular antisemitism in post-Shoah Austrian society. However, this sense of group belonging has also led to a deeply problematic paradox within, as Smolka elaborated: 'I grew up in the consciousness that we were a Jewish family, but not religious. This led to the result that my brother and I did not count as Jewish to the Jewish community and did not belong, but were Jewish enough for the antisemites'.⁷² This paradox plagues Vienna's loosely defined Jewish population to this day, reflected in the deeply contested politics between the IKG as the communal umbrella organisation and the porous collective which makes up the city's Jewish population.

Helga Embacher, in her work on the reconstitution of Jewish life in Austria after 1945, remarked that the newer immigrants, who form the bulk of the IKG

⁷⁰ *Tätigkeit* [1964], 220.

⁷¹ John & Lichtblau, *Schmelztiegel*, 392.

⁷² *Timothy Smolka*, <http://www.centropa.org/de/biography/timothy-smolka>, accessed 28 January 2014.

membership today, became 'the carriers of Zionism and of orthodoxy in Austria'.⁷³ Just as Zionism characterises the political philosophy of the post-Shoah IKG,⁷⁴ its religious policies are characterised by orthodoxy, resulting in exclusive and exclusionary understandings of Jewishness which however conflict with parts of Vienna's Jewish population. Such 'orthodoxisation' is a growing and contentious issue in twenty-first century Jewish society the world over.⁷⁵ Its roots in the Viennese IKG date back to the very first years after the Shoah and the appointment of a new Chief Rabbi, Akiba Eisenberg (1908-1983), originally from Šúrovce/Súr/Schur (modern Slovakia). He was characterised during his accession to the post in September 1948 as the one who would 'rebuild a space of Jewish faith and creation from the rubble of the ruins'.⁷⁶ His accession speech, which outlined every facet of what was to become the IKG's post-Shoah policy, addressed 'every Jew', spoke of Jewry as 'my people', expressed the intention to be 'united in one single religious community of souls', to 'create the bridge which crosses over the dizzying abyss between the past and the future', and addressed 'the question of the Land of Israel' as 'the solution to the problems of the Jews in the *Galut*, the diaspora. This speech reflected the Religious Zionist philosophy of the *Mizrachi* movement to which Rabbi Akiba belonged, its philosophy underpinning both the religious and political doctrine of the post-Shoah IKG: loyalty to the *Thora*, meaning the strictly orthodox interpretation of Jewish religious law (*Halachah*), and to the State of Israel.⁷⁷ According to this philosophy, the emancipation of European Jewry has failed, and

⁷³ Helga Embacher, *Neubeginn ohne Illusionen: Juden in Österreich nach 1945* (Vienna, Picus, 1995), 72.

⁷⁴ As made explicit in speeches by its leadership and in its activity reports. See for example *Tätigkeit* [1955], 20-1.

⁷⁵ This was noted Europe-wide at the *Analysing Jewish Europe Conference* hosted by the JDC in Berlin in October 2013. Some country-specific results from these studies have already been published, as for example Julia Bernstein, *"Once in a while kosher, once in a while Shabbat": A Study on the Identities, Perceptions, and Practices of Children of Mixed Marriages in Germany* (Oxford: JDC, 2014). This phenomenon has been more briefly explored with regard to the Viennese IKG in Adunka, *Gemeinde*, 460-8.

⁷⁶ All following citations from "Oberrabbiner Dr. Akiba Eisenberg", *Die Gemeinde*, September 1948, 7.

⁷⁷ Embacher, *Neubeginn*, 186.

could only result, as Austrian-Israeli Shoah survivor Pinchas Lapide remarked, in one of three possibilities: retreat into the ghetto ('we will forthwith be 150% Jewish'), emigration to the USA or Israel, or surrender of the Jewish self.⁷⁸ Austrian Shoah survivor Ruth Klüger similarly remarked that in Austria, as elsewhere in Europe, the Jewish population responded to the pressures of enforced group belonging either through the disappearance of its members through irreligiosity or through the fortification of an exclusive Jewish community through orthodoxy, resulting in a schism between larger, amorphous Jewish populations standing vis-à-vis smaller, closed orthodox community organisations.⁷⁹ This galvanisation is reflected by the stagnation in numbers of officially registered IKG members in recent decades, despite the growing number of Jews living in Vienna, from circa 9000 in 1951 to circa 7000 in 2001, the last time a census regarding religion was conducted.⁸⁰ This dynamic of political Zionism and, especially, religious orthodoxy was to become extremely divisive within the IKG, resulting in perennial tensions which were to be played out controversially in the Jewish cemeteries.

The orthodoxy of the IKG's Rabbinate after 1945 was complemented by the orthodoxy of its leadership, as most significantly embodied by Ernst Feldsberg (1894-1970).⁸¹ Feldsberg was appointed head of the cemetery office in November 1938, becoming a significant actor in the Shoah-era IKG until his deportation to the Theresienstadt concentration camp in November 1943. Having survived and returned to Vienna in 1945, Feldsberg first resumed the leadership of the cemetery office, before being elected Vice President of the IKG in 1953, and finally President in 1963. Throughout his career, he remained deeply involved with Vienna's Jewish

⁷⁸ Pinchas Lapide, "Das Wesen des Judentums" in Plat (ed.), *Tod*, 116.

⁷⁹ Cited in *Theodor Herzl Symposium Wien: 100 Jahre „Der Judenstaat“* (Vienna: IDA, 1996), 179-80.

⁸⁰ *Bevölkerung nach dem Religionsbekenntnis und Bundesländern 1951 bis 2001*, https://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/bevoelkerung/volkszaehlungen_registerzaehlungen/bevoelkerung_nach_demographischen_merkmalen/index.html, accessed 28 January 2014.

⁸¹ All biographical information from Adunka, *Gemeinde*, 241-6.

cemeteries, and profoundly influenced their recent history. He was buried at Tor IV.⁸² No individual better encapsulates the continuities but also ruptures between the old IKG and the new, just as no individual played as decisive a role in the recent history of Vienna's Jewish cemeteries. Yet Feldsberg's policies and his legacy, particularly those guided by his orthodox understandings of Jewish peoplehood, customs, and culture, were to prove extremely divisive.

Changing Tides: The Austrian Political Landscape after Waldheim

The 1980s marked a watershed in Austrian society. The catalyst for this was the evidence uncovered that the former Secretary General of the United Nations and Austrian presidential candidate, Kurt Waldheim (1918-2007), had by contrast to his public biography been a member of the SA and of the *Heeresgruppe E*, a division of the Wehrmacht that had committed numerous atrocities in the Balkans during the Second World War.⁸³ The public row which followed, the controversy today known as the 'Waldheim Affair', spurred by the involvement of American media and the World Jewish Congress, was sensationalised by Austrian media as the country's struggle against the insidious interference in Austrian affairs of 'foreign elements', by implication 'World Jewry'.⁸⁴ The campaign year 1986 was thus characterised by a new boom in openly antisemitic agitation in Austria.⁸⁵ The unfathomable levels of public antisemitism accompanying the scandal were incredible considering that there were only a few thousand Jewish people living in Austria at the time, making a negligible 0.1 percent of the total population.⁸⁶ And yet the Waldheim Affair became a turning point in which various segments of Austrian society, as well as institutions

⁸² *Matzevah* of Stella Feldsberg (1899-1949) & family, 15-12-35. All *matzevot* cited in this chapter, unless otherwise stated, are located at Tor IV, though for data protection reasons it is often impossible to reference the exact locations of *matzevot* dated after 1945.

⁸³ Wodak *et al*, »*Wir sind alle unschuldige Täter*«, 64-6.

⁸⁴ Richard Mitten, "New Faces of Anti-Semitic Prejudice in Austria: Reflections on the 'Waldheim Affair'" in Wistrich (ed.), *Austrians*, 252.

⁸⁵ Bailer & Neugebauer, *Right*, 19.

⁸⁶ *Bevölkerung nach dem Religionsbekenntnis und Bundesländern 1951 bis 2001*, https://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/bevoelkerung/volkszaehlungen_registerzaehlungen/bevoelkerung_nach_demographischen_merkmalen/index.html, accessed 28 January 2014.

outside of Austria, began to reflect more critically on Austria's past and to challenge the long-accepted myth of its victimhood. Waldheim embodied the fallaciousness of the post-war Austrian national narrative.⁸⁷ He was, as Heidemarie Uhl commented, 'no exception; he was the archetype'.⁸⁸ The founding of the Green Party in 1986, the first major party to insist on Austria's complicity in war and genocide, a stance since adopted by the SPÖ and deeply dividing the ÖVP, marked this change in the political landscape.⁸⁹ The Green Party has since become a major player in the debates surrounding the restoration of Austria's Jewish cemeteries. The shifts in Austrian society were punctuated by landmark moments such as the (re-)opening through public funds of Vienna's Jewish Museum in 1993, reflecting, as Steven Beller remarked, 'a greater appreciation fostered for the Jewish side to Austria's cultural heritage'.⁹⁰ In 1991, Chancellor Franz Vranitzky publicly declared Austria's complicity in the Second World War and the Shoah before the Austrian parliament, and in 1994 President Thomas Klestil publicly apologised before the Israeli Knesset for Austria's shared guilt in the Shoah.⁹¹ The 1990s were to witness enormous changes in engagements with Austria's Jewish cemeteries, underlining the significance of these desecrated sites of memory in the post-Shoah political landscape.

Summary

This chapter investigates the discourses surrounding Vienna's desecrated Jewish cemeteries, and their restitution, restoration and permanent preservation, in the context of the consolidation of the Second Austrian Republic, the development of a new Austrian political culture, and the re-establishment of Jewish life in the Austrian

⁸⁷ As remarked by Hella Pick, *Guilty victim: Austria from the Holocaust to Haider* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 165.

⁸⁸ Uhl, "Politics", 81.

⁸⁹ Arnd Bauerkämper, *Das Umstrittene Gedächtnis: Die Erinnerung an Nationalsozialismus, Faschismus und Krieg in Europa seit 1945* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2012), 219.

⁹⁰ Steven Beller, *A Concise History of Austria* (Cambridge University Press: 2006), 297.

⁹¹ Gertraud Diendorfer (ed.), *Gedächtnis und Gegenwart: Historikerkommissionen, Politik und Gesellschaft* (Vienna: Studienverlag, 2003).

capital in the aftermath of the Shoah. This is a story of pronounced rifts: first the rifts between Jewish and non-Jewish narratives in Austrian civil and political society; second the rifts of discourse and memory before and after the Waldheim Affair; and third the rifts between collective and familial/individual memories. 'Individual memory' relates to the realm of personal experience and its transmission through testimony and anecdote, resulting in familial and individual narratives which may last only for a few generations, whereas 'collective memory' is the conscious construction and enactment of a historical narrative for a particular group designed to confer meaning onto the past and to engage the participants of the group in a performative community of remembrance.⁹² Whereas the former is ethereal and multifarious, the latter, due to its function of consolidating group dynamics through the construction of an accepted narrative, repeatedly enacted in commemorative practices, is by far easier to quantify. In this chapter, the cemeteries are analysed as sites of a two-fold contestation of memory: first, I argue, the cemeteries were constructed as sites of a particular 'Jewish' collective memory which in many important respects contravened the establishment of rivalling 'non-Jewish' collective memories of the past; second, the construction of a 'Jewish' collective memory espoused by the IKG often conflicted with the familial and individual memories of Jews and people descended from Jews who were buried in the cemeteries. Borrowing the term loosely from Pierre Nora, these 'sites of memory' after 1945 became 'bastions' of a 'privileged memory' – the memory of Austrian Jewry, or at least of the IKG – which, without the 'commemorative vigilance' of the post-Shoah era which this chapter will explore, would soon have been swept away.⁹³

⁹² I here borrow the terms as used by Wulf Kansteiner, *Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies*, *History and Theory*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (May, 2002). The terms were originally coined by Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (originally published 1950, this edition University of Chicago Press: 1992).

⁹³ Pierre Nora, *Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire, Representations*, No. 26 (Spring 1989), 12.

In the early decades after the end of the Shoah, Vienna's Jewish cemeteries became the focus of intense political contestation. Section 3.2 analyses this contestation from the late 1940s to the early 1980s, beginning with the protracted restitution negotiations between the newly reconstituted IKG and the City of Vienna over the cemeteries in Währing and at Tor I, and the manner in which the resulting settlement of 1955 came to frame the constellation of ownership and control over these cemeteries in the following decades. The settlement exemplifies how the city council acted in the interest of maximising the real estate it could win out of the former 'Aryanisation' of Jewish properties while minimising the costs which restitution would entail. The IKG, meanwhile, acted in the interest of preserving as much of its real estate – and the cultural heritage associated with it – as possible within its limited financial and political means, resulting in significant concessions made to the city council over the Währing cemetery in return for concessions over the cemetery at Tor I. These concessions were to become the source of much contestation by other IKG members, Jewish organisations, and descendants of Jews living abroad. The IKG therefore found itself in the 1950s in an impossible quandary between the recalcitrance of the city government on the one hand and the bitter criticism of the community it was supposed to represent on the other. The final part of the section analyses the restoration of the cemetery in the Seegasse in the 1970s and 1980s as an early example of successful compromise between the IKG and the city council which foreshadowed restitution negotiations in the early twenty-first century.

Thereafter, the situation surrounding the Jewish cemeteries reached an uneasy status quo and largely disappeared from public discourse. The gaze turned inward, with the Jewish cemeteries, especially Tor IV, becoming introspective sites of memory to the Jewish community, divorced from the public discourse and collective memory of the Austrian Republic. Philippe Ariès opined that, by the late twentieth century, death had been entirely banished to the home and the hospital, while 'the

cemetery remains the place of memory and visits'.⁹⁴ Tor IV, the main burial site of Vienna's post-Shoah Jewish community, fulfilled this function as the principle site of familial and individual mourning and remembrance. Yet the Shoah had added another dimension to the memorial culture examined by Jay Winter: the 'invocation of the dead' at the cemetery took on a profound new meaning when it included the millions who had been denied a life and a grave.⁹⁵ As James Young discussed, the memory of the victims was adopted as the memory of the community and of their descendants; the Shoah became 'a vicarious past', and the cemetery a principle site for enacting its commemoration.⁹⁶ This is the focus of section 3.3, which analyses the cemetery at Tor IV as the focal point of both individual practices of mourning and of the construction of a collective 'Jewish' memory of the Shoah.

Section 3.4 analyses the conflicts at Tor IV surrounding burial and commemoration, beginning with the formulation of new cemetery ordinances in the 1950s which prescribed strict orthodox practices while granting full and unmediated custodianship of the cemetery to the IKG and its Rabbinate. The impact of these regulations are examined with reference to the epigraphy of the *matzevot* at Tor IV, which evidences both the construction of new codes of identity for Vienna's Jewish community and the IKG's attempts to regulate and determine what forms this identity should take. This section demonstrates the narrow and exclusive definition of Jewish community that has come to dominate at Tor IV, expressed through the resurrection of archaic religious traditions in epigraphy and commemoration alongside the introduction of novel or foreign practices not seen in Vienna before the Shoah. The section concludes by examining cases in which the cemetery ordinances were, however, subverted or even contravened, often representing continuities with pre-

⁹⁴ Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of our Death* (translated by Helen Weaver, London: Allen Lane, 1981), 577.

⁹⁵ Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge University Press: 1998), 227.

⁹⁶ James Young, *At Memory's Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art And Architecture* (Yale University Press: 2000), 1.

Shoah practices in identity and commemoration. In this context, we shall briefly revisit Tor I to see how this cemetery continued to be a site chronicling the enmeshment of a fluid sense of Jewish community within Viennese society after the Shoah, posing a counterbalance to Tor IV.

The conclusion of preliminary restitution settlements between the IKG and the City of Vienna concerning Vienna's Jewish cemeteries in the 1950s, and the enforcement of strict religious codes of practice by the IKG at Tor IV in the 1950s and 1960s, resulted in an uneasy status quo surrounding the cemeteries, until the rupture of the Waldheim Affair. The 1990s witnessed a new and profound engagement in Austrian society with its Nazi past and its destroyed Jewish heritage, while pressure mounted on the Austrian government over its shortcomings in compensating its wartime victims and restoring stolen property.⁹⁷ The restitution settlements of the 1950s were increasingly viewed as having ended unfavourably for the victims of the Shoah.⁹⁸ Finally, an agreement was signed between the United States and Austrian governments on 17 January 2001 which led to the compensation, however belated, of survivors of the Shoah, and kick-started renewed debates over Austria's desecrated Jewish cemeteries.⁹⁹ Section 3.5 examines these debates with specific reference to the cemetery in Währing, arguably the most contested Jewish site of memory in Austria, to disentangle the complex network of agency at work therein and to understand how these debates continue into the present day to challenge existing narratives of Austria's deeply conflicted relationship to its Nazi and Jewish pasts.

Dirk Rupnow, in his collection of essays on the aporiae of memory, remarked: '*Das Erinnern* [memory / remembrance / the act of remembering] cannot reconcile

⁹⁷ Josef Aicher, Erich Kussbach & August Reinisch (eds.), *Decisions of the Arbitration Panel for In Rem Restitution* (Vol. 4, Vienna: Facultas, 2011), 10-12.

⁹⁸ Brigitte Bailer, "Ohne den Staat weiter damit zu belasten...": Bemerkungen zur österreichischen Rückstellungsgesetzgebung, *Zeitgeschichte* 11/12 (Nov/Dec 1993), 367-81.

⁹⁹ Murray Gordon Silberman, "Austria" in David Singer & Lawrence Grossman (eds.), *American Jewish Yearbook* (Volume 102, New York: American Jewish Committee, 2002).

and cannot heal ruptures, but can only maintain the consciousness of that rupture'.¹⁰⁰ As this chapter elucidates, the memory of the Shoah in Austria has since 1945 been deeply divided between Jews and non-Jews, despite the continuing ethereality of these categories, while the enactment of memory – through the erection of memorials, the commemoration of memorial dates, and the discussion of sites of Jewish heritage – has deepened the consciousness of the rupture originating in the abyss of the Shoah. It is within this deep and painful rupture that the real memory work of post-Shoah Austrian society is performed, and we find this performance located most poignantly and most potently in the Jewish cemetery, the 'House of the Fathers' Sepulchres'.

3.2 Restitution Part I: Before Waldheim

In the final days of the war, Tor I was devastated by over 250 bombs in errant Allied aerial attacks, which had aimed at the railroad nearby.¹⁰¹ The post-Shoah IKG invested significant resources into its restoration 'as a dignified burial site'.¹⁰² Tor I, which had been forcibly closed by the Nazi city administration in 1942 with the aim to eventually liquidate the cemetery completely, was re-opened for burials in March 1946.¹⁰³ Although Tor IV ultimately became the main burial site of the post-Shoah IKG, Tor I remains in use to this day for interment in existing family plots. Yet, in those early years, Tor I remained a heavily desecrated site under nominal ownership of the City of Vienna, as did the cemetery in Währing.

Tactics of Delay: The Early Restitution Cases 1945-1955

On 31 December 1948, the IKG filed a claim with the Austrian Restitution Commission against the City of Vienna, demanding the return of numerous

¹⁰⁰ Rupnow, *Aporien*, 36.

¹⁰¹ *Bericht* [1948], 46.

¹⁰² *Tätigkeit* [1955], 77.

¹⁰³ *Bericht* [1948], 46.

properties, including the Währing cemetery, which had been expropriated on 25 February 1942 by the city council and remained in its possession after May 1945.¹⁰⁴ This was part of a package of claims the IKG filed against various institutions in the years after the end of the Shoah. The IKG unambivalently declared its position at the beginning of what would become a protracted negotiation process over restitution, stating that ‘the Austrian Jews are not moved by feelings of hate and revenge, and are ready to help in the construction of a new Austria’, but that ‘this is in no way synonymous with a lenient disposition towards the Aryanisers’.¹⁰⁵ The IKG’s claim initially stipulated a deadline of 14 days, but the court – the Restitution Commission of the Vienna State Court for Civil Law – gave the city council until 1 March 1949 to react.¹⁰⁶ What followed was a string of motions on behalf of the city council, though mostly with agreement from the legal representation of the IKG, for deadline extensions, ostensibly because ‘by then a restitution settlement will have been reached’. The first such motion was filed on 29 March 1949, and was repeated on 12 August 1949, 28 December 1949, and 6 June 1950, the time lapse of each extension getting progressively longer.¹⁰⁷ On 24 February 1951 the city council filed a memo with the court noting that ‘the settlement negotiations with the IKG have not been concluded yet’ because to date the IKG had ‘failed to submit a mutually agreeable settlement proposition’.¹⁰⁸ On 18 October 1951, almost three years after the original claim was submitted, the city council stated that it had discontinued the negotiations because the IKG had ‘not submitted a response to the settlement proposition of the city council’.¹⁰⁹ The very next day, the IKG responded that the settlement was ‘dependent on the clarification of preliminary questions and has therefore not been

¹⁰⁴ *An die Rückstellungskommission beim Landesgericht für ZRS Wien*, 31 December 1948, Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, hereafter WStLA, Landesgericht f. Zivilrechtssachen, A29 – RK: 6 RK 488/55.

¹⁰⁵ *Bericht* [1948], 18.

¹⁰⁶ *Beschluß*, 27 January 1949, WStLA, Landesgericht f. Zivilrechtssachen, A29 – RK: 6 RK 488/55.

¹⁰⁷ *An die Rückstellungskommission beim Landesgericht für ZRS Wien*, 29 March 1949, 12 August 1949, 28 December 1949 & 6 June 1950, WStLA, Landesgericht f. Zivilrechtssachen, A29 – RK: 6 RK 488/55.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 24 February 1951.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 18 October 1951.

concluded'.¹¹⁰ Thereafter, the negotiations stalled interminably, despite pressure from the US government.¹¹¹ In an internal letter dated 17 April 1953, Ernst Feldsberg, recently elected Vice President of the IKG, described the inaction of the city council as a 'tactic of delay', yet also criticised the technical department of the IKG for its lack of initiative, warning that the IKG membership would soon begin complaining about the unacceptable status quo affecting the Währing cemetery in particular.¹¹²

Währing was in a deplorable state, exacerbated by its retention by the city council and the consequent lack of care to protect the site, which was to have a negative impact on its condition lasting into the present day. By contrast, the IKG reported in May 1954 that it had conducted a considerable amount of restoration works in the other cemeteries in its care across Austria, independently of the stagnating restitution talks and the recalcitrance of the government.¹¹³ The IKG stated that this work 'was not yet completed', expressing the hope 'that the means which we will receive from the restitution process will lead to the final rectification of all the Nazi damages'. In some cases, most significantly in Währing, these means have not materialised until today. In a separate negotiation with the Ministry of the Interior in 1954 relating to Jewish cemeteries nationwide, the IKG claimed that the full restoration of the cemeteries to their pre-Shoah conditions was impossible, since the graves had been for the most part levelled and the grave registers destroyed or lost.¹¹⁴ Therefore, the IKG demanded indemnification for the desecrations suffered from which 'the restoration of the cemeteries as *Kultstätte* [shrines or sacred sites] would follow' in the form of a physical demarcation of the cemeteries and the erection of a memorial plaque, with local IKGs taking responsibility for the care of those sites of memory in their vicinity. Vienna's IKG, for example, administers the Jewish sites in

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 19 October 1951.

¹¹¹ As noted in Albrich, "Holocaust", 72.

¹¹² *An die Amtsdirektion*, 17 April 1953, Archiv der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Wien, hereafter AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/3/1.

¹¹³ "Die jüdischen Friedhöfe in Österreich", *Iskult-Presse-Nachrichten*, 25 May 1954, 5.

¹¹⁴ *Aktennotiz*, 3 June 1954, AIKGW, uncatalogued.

Vienna, Lower Austria and the Burgenland. Since the IKG insisted that the liquidation of former cemeteries was untenable due to the religious inviolability of the graves as 'Houses of Eternity', there was no option but that 'the cemeteries will be preserved as shrines'.

A settlement was concluded regarding the Währing cemetery on 4 July 1955.¹¹⁵ The city council returned the cemetery, among other properties, to the IKG, and made significant concessions on the administration of Tor I, for which the IKG in return agreed to relinquish the destroyed south-eastern portion of the Währing cemetery, as well as among other properties a circa 70,000m² parcel of unused land behind Tor IV. The city council compensated the IKG for these financially. The agreement contained a clause relating to the relinquished portion of Währing, stating that 'the IKG declares, in the case of any re-designation of this site for construction purposes through the City of Vienna, that it will bring no further claims against the City of Vienna', which was to cause a great deal of contention within the Jewish community in coming years. The settlement, essentially a compromise for the protection of Tor I at the expense of the desecrated south-eastern section of Währing, was treated at the time by both the city council and the IKG as closure on the Nazi-era confiscation and desecration of the cemeteries, and for a long time led to an uneasy status quo. Yet underlying concerns regarding the restoration of the desecrated cemetery itself were not addressed, and resulted in continuing conflicts within the Jewish community, and between the IKG and the city council, in coming years, as will be explored further in the final section of this chapter.

The settlement granted the IKG full control over Tor I. The limits between the Jewish and non-Jewish sections of the surrounding Central Cemetery, which had never been demarcated with a physical barrier, were set at a one-metre distance

¹¹⁵ *Öffentliche mündliche Verhandlung vor der Rückstellungskommission beim Landesgericht für ZRS Wien*, 4 July 1955, WStLA, Landesgericht f. Zivilrechtssachen, A29 – RK: 6 RK 488/55.

from the end of the Jewish graves, 'so that visitors to the graves are granted the ability to pay their respects on Jewish territory'.¹¹⁶ The city retained control over the entrances at Tor I and Tor XI, on either end of the Jewish cemetery, and the paths leading from it, which were to remain open for visitors on Saturdays, too. Tor I is therefore not subject to the orthodox restrictions enforced at Tor IV, with visitors coming to Tor I even on Shabbat and on Jewish Holy Days and men usually not covering their heads. The agreement annulled the existing cemetery regulation of 1891, according to which the IKG contributed to the administrative financing of the Central Cemetery. Significantly, this also meant the abrogation of the clause which allowed the city, in the event of the liquidation of the Central Cemetery, to liquidate Tor I, meaning that the inviolability of the cemetery was finally legally ensured. Ernst Feldsberg later wrote that this achievement was 'one of the most important and highest duties', a 'holy duty' to ensure that 'the liquidation of the cemetery will nevermore come into question'.¹¹⁷ Finally, the Jewish soldiers' graves at Section 76B were henceforth tended by the city from public funds. The IKG had requested from the city as early as 1952 to take care of the soldiers' graves for which it no longer had adequate resources.¹¹⁸ The status of Tor I was therefore settled, at least insofar as ownership and basic preservation were concerned, with the city's custodianship of the war graves constituting an important precedent for preservation measures. Meanwhile, the concessions made over Währing were to transform this cemetery into the most perennially contested site of Jewish heritage in Austria.

The Jewish Cemeteries as Sites of Inner-Jewish Contestation

The 1955 settlement divided the responsibility for Austria's remaining Jewish cemeteries between the country's various re-established Jewish communities,

¹¹⁶ All following citations from *Beschied des Vertreterkollegiums*, undated (presumably 1955), AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/3/1.

¹¹⁷ "Die Wahrheit ist unbesiegbar", *Die Gemeinde*, 31 July 1964, 1.

¹¹⁸ *An den Magistrat der Stadt Wien Abteilung 43 – Friedhöfe*, 19 June 1952, AIKGW, uncatalogued.

following which Vienna's IKG administers 39 Jewish cemeteries: 25 in Lower Austria, 9 in the Burgenland, and 5 in Vienna (including the Floridsdorf cemetery not analysed here).¹¹⁹ Between 1955 and 1964 the IKG spent 3.5 million Schillings on cemetery repairs.¹²⁰ This figure is indicative of the importance invested in the restoration of the cemeteries. However, the IKG was – and still is – hampered by a major lack of workforce and resources, affecting even day-to-day administrative duties surrounding burial. In the early 1960s, the IKG complained that volunteers were required for even the most routine tasks such as *tahara*, the ritual preparation of corpses for burial.¹²¹ If the IKG could not even muster adequate resources for the day-to-day running of a cemetery, it evidently could not perform the necessary work to restore or maintain all the cemeteries in its care. In 1960, the Austrian government passed a law granting a one-time payment of 30 million Schillings and an annual payment of 900,000 Schillings to the IKG, the first time in Austrian history that the IKG was supported from government funds, and a precedent for restitution in the form of financial support.¹²² However, this law was not only, at least until the twenty-first century, unique, it was also totally insufficient to even begin the extensive work necessary to restore Austria's destroyed Jewish heritage. The reticence of the Austrian government in offering such support despite its role in the destruction of Austria's Jewish heritage – frequently contrasted to the situation in the Federal Republic of Germany, which began implementing such schemes as early as the 1950s – was remarked upon in the IKG's activity reports, which implied that Austria's 'victim myth' and a general will to forget the recent past were at the heart of the problem.¹²³

Despite its obvious impotence in the face of the enormity of the Nazi destructions and the unwillingness of the Austrian public to assist in remedying this

¹¹⁹ *Tätigkeit* [1964], 176.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 178.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, 180.

¹²² *Ibid*, 250.

¹²³ *Ibid*, 251.

damage, the IKG came under frequent and often unjustified attack from its own members and descendants of people buried in its cemeteries from abroad in the 1950s and 1960s. One example, which elicited a venomous response from the IKG, came from a Professor Fischer in Miami, dated 26 March 1951.¹²⁴ Opening the letter with the words printed in block capitals: 'HONOUR THE DEAD!' he continued: 'It is not my responsibility, now 20 years out of Europe, to maintain the grave which was entrusted to you', referring to his father's grave at the Central Cemetery, one of those destroyed by errant Allied bombs in early 1945. Fischer appealed to various aspects of Jewish identity and ethics, holding the IKG responsible for the condition of the cemeteries, and ending with the observation that he was a Protestant, thereby suggesting that the protection of the inviolability of Jewish graves was the IKG's, and not his, responsibility. The IKG's cemetery office reported this attack in an internal memo to Feldsberg, remarking sardonically:

Professor Fischer, Commander of the Order of the Crown, emigrated from Europe 20 years ago, and may have slept through the seven years of Hitler, or at least have lived them so well that he only saw the good. In his limitless nonsense, [he] forgot even to mention which grave he was writing about.¹²⁵

The IKG directorate replied to Fischer curtly: 'We ask you to acknowledge that we on principle reject discussion on Jewish ethics and morality, on Jewish tradition and religious responsibility, with people of other faiths who used to belong to our religious community'.¹²⁶

In 1958, the IKG came under public attack about its apparent neglect of Jewish cemeteries in an article in the Jewish-Austrian journal *Heruth*.¹²⁷ In response, Feldsberg wrote an article acknowledging that émigrés abroad as well as IKG

¹²⁴ *An den Präsidenten der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Wien*, 26 March 1951, AIKGW, uncatalogued.

¹²⁵ *An Herrn Dr. Ernst Feldsberg*, 23 April 1951, AIKGW, uncatalogued.

¹²⁶ *An Herrn Prof. Dr. Fischer*, 16 May 1951, AIKGW, uncatalogued.

¹²⁷ *An die Amtsdirektion*, 11 November 1958, AIKGW, uncatalogued.

members repeatedly complained about the deplorable state of the cemeteries.¹²⁸ He remarked that such critics did not take into account the scale of destruction inflicted upon the IKG under National Socialism and that the small remainder of Viennese Jewry was old, destitute and so 'spiritually and physically broken' that they were in no state to maintain these sites with the respect that they deserved. He referred to the dependency of the IKG on international Jewish organisations for its existence and mentioned that it was thoroughly occupied with caring for the poor and the ill. He continued: 'Everyone forgets to take a look at themselves, whether each one of them within the limits of their means has made voluntary sacrifices (...) They criticise and believe that through this criticism they can ease their guilty conscience'. The only task the Jews living in Vienna could perform, he insisted, was 'to pay a visit to all those who are really dead because they have been forgotten', thereby underscoring memory through reference to the dictum so often heard in relation to Austria's Jewish cemeteries – *tot ist, wer vergessen ist*, 'they are dead who are forgotten' – this act of remembering thereby being elevated to the highest form of piety. He referred to the widescale destruction of the Nazi era and the efforts undertaken by the IKG – often alone – to rectify this. He levied particular criticism at those 'who emigrated, who reintegrated themselves into the economy abroad and arrived at wealth. Why have none of these tens of thousands of Jews sacrificed anything for the preservation of the cemeteries in which their family members are buried?' This argument emphasised the imbalance between the Jews who remained in Vienna and the far greater number who remained abroad, albeit unfairly suggesting that the latter had all prospered, which was certainly not always the case. This argument is striking for once again underlining the poignancy of the Jewish cemetery as the 'place of the fathers' sepulchres', a site of ancestry and rootedness, demanding the attention and respect of the descendants, even if they lived abroad. 'One must make sacrifices', he

¹²⁸ This and following citations from *Das tragische Schicksal der jüdischen Friedhöfe*, 1958, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/2/1.

wrote, 'in order to preserve a Jewish *Kultstätte* [shrine or sacred site], which will remain a *Kultstätte* for all, also for those who emigrated, for all times'. Only towards the end of the article did he refer to the 'efforts (...) to secure contributions from the state and the city council in the framework of restitution in order to preserve the Jewish cemeteries', thereby suggesting that criticism might more usefully be directed against the society which had caused the destruction.

The frequency of attacks by the 'many Jews in Vienna and also former Viennese who live abroad and only come here to visit' was the subject of an interview Feldsberg gave for a local newspaper.¹²⁹ Although it went unpublished, the transcript formed the basis of a draft for another article, *Vergessene Gräber* ('Forgotten Graves'), which he told Wilhelm Krell (1902-1973), the General Secretary of the IKG, was intended to ensure 'that people will cease to constantly reproach me, of all people, about the state of the cemeteries'.¹³⁰ The article was aimed at 'foreign Jews' and their 'attacks' on the IKG.¹³¹ It began with an exegesis on Biblical burial customs in which Feldsberg characterised the commemoration of the dead, as in the piety shown towards their burial, as central to Jewish culture. The blame for the deplorable condition of Vienna's Jewish cemeteries he assigned first of all to the City of Vienna, who he said should

finally, after almost 15 years, live up to their moral responsibility towards the victims of persecution through the provision of financial means, since it was exclusively Austrians who on 10 November 1938 all over Austria destroyed the houses of worship, the religious sites and the *betei tahara* [ritual funerary halls] of the Jewish cemeteries, it was Austrians who desecrated the memory of the dead and devastated the cemeteries.

¹²⁹ *Die vergessenen Gräber: Ein Interview mit Vize-Präsident Ernst Feldsberg*, 11 September 1959, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/2/1.

¹³⁰ *An Reg. Rat Wilhelm Krell*, 13 October 1958, AIKGW, uncatalogued.

¹³¹ This and all subsequent citations from *Vergessene Gräber*, undated, AIKGW, uncatalogued.

Feldsberg then made an argument which still resounds in the debates surrounding the restoration of Austria's Jewish cemeteries today:

The affirmation of this culture [Jewish-Austrian culture] which Austria professes repeatedly and at every opportunity, at home and abroad, remains before the civilised world merely lip-service so long as destroyed houses of worship, destroyed *betei tahara* and destroyed cemeteries implicate the *Kulturschande* [cultural outrage] of the Nazis.

He continued, however, that descendants of Austrian Jewry, too, were responsible for the restoration of the cemeteries. He went on to list some of the enormous costs that cemetery maintenance already taxed from the coffers of the IKG, totalling close to a million Schillings per annum for each of the years 1956, 1957 and 1958, adding that the IKG was responsible for cemeteries not only in Vienna, but also in Lower Austria and the Burgenland. Feldsberg pointed out that the IKG had published an ad in the Jewish-American paper *Aufbau* – costing 200 Dollars – to appeal for donations, and received only 180 Dollars, so not even enough to cover the ad.¹³² Such rows between the IKG and Jewish individuals and their descendants, at home and abroad, resurfaced periodically in the years to follow, demonstrating how the cemeteries constituted perennial sites of inner-Jewish contestation.

'Burning-Sites': The Restoration of the Seegasse

None of the Viennese cemeteries had been as heavily desecrated as had the Jewish cemetery in the Seegasse, with scarcely any grave-memorials remaining to even indicate that this had once been a burial site. However, as had been the case in the early 1900s and again in the early 1940s, the perceived historicity of the site attracted the attention of numerous agents, Jewish and non-Jewish, who took an interest in this site of Jewish heritage, and the subsequent attempts to restore the

¹³² The original appeal was titled "Die jüdischen Friedhöfe in Wien", *Aufbau*, 16 March 1951, 25.

Seegasse, were to set an important precedent which informs the continuing restoration debates today. In 1945 the Jewish retirement home at Seegasse 9, along with the attached buildings and the desecrated cemetery, which had been 'Aryanised' during the Shoah, were returned to the IKG.¹³³ Until the early 1950s it served, along with the former *Rothschild Spital*, as a home for Shoah survivors. As the *Rothschild Spital* had suffered heavy bombing during the war, the IKG from 1953 onwards used Seegasse 9 as both retirement home and hospice.¹³⁴

On 4 December 1947, the *Bundesdenkmalamt*, the Federal Office for Historic Conservation, the successor to the Institute for Historic Preservation, wrote to the IKG in response to a newspaper article in the *Wiener Zeitung* about the destruction of the Seegasse cemetery.¹³⁵ The letter reminded the IKG of how the institute 'had committed itself strongly to the protection of the cemetery during the war', and enquired whether the IKG intended to restore the cemetery. The IKG replied thanking the *Bundesdenkmalamt* for its efforts and stating: 'It is encouraging and refreshing to hear from people at this time who during National Socialist rule – possibly even at risk of their safety – summoned the courage and the humanity to concern themselves with such venerable Jewish cultural memorials'.¹³⁶ Considering the conflicted restitution cases of the following years over other sites of Jewish culture in the city, this was a remarkable gesture from a federal office, representing a striking continuity with its isolated efforts to protect Jewish heritage during the Shoah. The cemetery office of the IKG certainly considered restoring the cemetery, and on 11 March 1948 announced its plans to enclose the site with a fence, to transform it into a lawn and to erect 'a worthy plaque with a suitable inscription'.¹³⁷ Whatever *matzevot* could be salvaged were to be transferred to a stonemason for repair upon estimation of the

¹³³ *Tätigkeit* [1964], 135.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, 136.

¹³⁵ "Eine halbttausendjährige Begräbnisstätte zerstört", *Wiener Zeitung*, 13 July 1947, 2.

¹³⁶ *An das Bundesdenkmalamt*, 8 January 1948, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/AD/33/5.

¹³⁷ *An das Friedhofsamt*, 11 March 1948, AIKGW, uncatalogued.

cost, although the cost was likely to be great due to the severe deterioration of the stones, and it was not clear from where the funds were to be drawn. A meeting of the cemetery office a month earlier had noted that many of the *matzevot* were buried at Tor IV, meaning that the possibility of salvaging and restoring them to the Seegasse was being discussed as early as the 1940s.¹³⁸

The kind of restoration being proposed here – the physical demarcation of the site and the erection of a memorial plaque – is how destroyed Jewish cemeteries were often commemorated after the Shoah when full restoration was impossible, thus preserving the sanctity of the gravesites while commemorating the destruction of the cemetery. The IKG spent much time, effort and money in these years transforming provincial cemeteries, especially around Lower Austria, in this manner.¹³⁹ Of course, even cemeteries that no longer contain *matzevot* and where the graves can no longer be distinguished still count in Jewish religious law as sacred spaces.¹⁴⁰ Yet a cemetery preserved purely as a memorial space no longer requires the kind of administration or maintenance that a ‘proper’ cemetery does. The remodelling of the Seegasse in this fashion suggests that despite the intention to restore the cemetery, the IKG initially viewed the cemetery as essentially beyond repair.

By contrast to Vienna’s other Jewish cemeteries, there was some Austrian media interest in the Seegasse from the earliest years after the Shoah. The 1947 article in the *Wiener Zeitung* cited above characterised it as representing ‘not only an estimable memorial to the piety of the Jewish people for its dead, but also in its gravestones half a millennium of history of Viennese Jewry’.¹⁴¹ This was an unusual, because benevolent, acknowledgement of a site of Jewish heritage for this period, albeit that the article attributed the destructions of the cemetery to the SA and the

¹³⁸ *Protokoll der Sitzung der Friedhofskommission*, 19 February 1948, AIKGW, uncatalogued.

¹³⁹ *Tätigkeit* [1964], 191-5.

¹⁴⁰ Ernst Roth, *Zur Halachah des jüdischen Friedhofs*, *Udim*, Vol. IV (1973), 116.

¹⁴¹ “Eine halbttausendjährige Begräbnisstätte zerstört”, *Wiener Zeitung*, 13 July 1947, 2.

'brown regiment'. This was not entirely untrue, albeit that the site was eventually confiscated by the SS and not the SA, but suggested in a manner typical of Austrian discourse at the time that the destructions of the Shoah were entirely the result of 'the Nazis', obfuscating the complicated involvement of local institutions in the confiscation and desecration of Jewish property during the Shoah. Such engagements with this site of Jewish heritage were remarkable not only for the time in which they were published, but also for their uniqueness by contrast to the otherwise mostly negative coverage of Jewish cemeteries at the time. They underline the notion explored in Part II that the Seegasse elicited a unique fascination from both within and without the Jewish community, possibly due to the great sense of age and historicity associated with the site.

The IKG retirement home and hospice at the Seegasse were closed in 1970 following the opening of a new facility in the nineteenth district.¹⁴² Following over a year of the kind of internal disputes which accompanied any larger sales of IKG properties in the post-Shoah period, the antiquated hospital, including the grounds of the cemetery, were sold to the city council for 20 million Schillings. These disputes oscillated between the pragmatism born from the IKG's perennial financial problems and the desire of certain sectors of the IKG's membership not to cede property, especially property containing important sites of religious and cultural significance, to the city council, whom they did not trust to treat these sites of heritage with the respect they deserved. As a case in point, it later took pressure from the IKG as well as the governments of Israel and the USA to protect the grounds of the cemetery in the course of the demolition of the hospice and the construction of a new city retirement home on the site, pressure which meant the site stood empty for several years, with construction of the retirement home only beginning in 1978.¹⁴³

¹⁴² Adunka, *Gemeinde*, 354.

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, 356.

The first efforts at restoring the site following its sale to the city council were undertaken by Josef Toch (1908-1983), a historian and IKG member, a socialist who had been active in the resistance during the Shoah and had previously fought on the side of the socialists in the Spanish Civil War.¹⁴⁴ Toch poetically characterised the condition of the cemetery in the 1970s in his personal notes: 'A great history – a small present. A great shadow',¹⁴⁵ and elsewhere as 'a wasteland overgrown with weeds where no more gravestones are to be seen'.¹⁴⁶ He asked himself the poignant question: 'Problem: To restore the cemetery as it was (...)?' It should conceal nothing and yet project peace' (underlined in the original),¹⁴⁷ thereby addressing a significant problem arising in the aftermath of cultural genocide, namely how one should go about restoring cultural heritage while preserving the memory of its destruction. The intensity of Toch's fascination is discernible in his notes, and was voiced in an appeal he wrote to the IKG in the 1970s linking this site to the broader history of the Shoah in the city:

Every Jew must observe painfully that on those *Brandstätten* [literally 'burning-sites'] where once stood Jewish places of worship, there is no indication of their prior existence whatsoever. (...)

Could it be any different, when it is precisely those who through their numbers alone could have urged for the rectification of this bad situation – the 250,000 [sic] Austrian Jews before 1938 – have themselves been eradicated? How miniscule is the number and the power of those who returned or those who settled here after 1945 by comparison!

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 337.

¹⁴⁵ *Die Seegasse*, undated, Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes, hereafter DöW, Nachlaß Josef Toch, 51.173/123.

¹⁴⁶ Cited in Traude Veran, *Das Steinerne Archiv: Der Wiener jüdischer Friedhof in der Rossau* (Vienna: Mandelbaum, 2002), 164.

¹⁴⁷ *Die Seegasse*, undated, DöW, Nachlaß Josef Toch, 51.173/123.

Now, however, that they have built themselves a new existence, they need to be told that they owe it to themselves to uphold the memory of their predecessors and their achievements and institutions. (...)

This task should be taken on by all the IKGs in Austria – even if the *Brandstätten* have in the meantime been sold or built upon. If the new owners do not wish to allow this, then relevant decrees can be issued by the city administrations, regional councils and, if necessary, also by the federal government.

Toch's arguments echo those made by Feldsberg fifteen years earlier that Austrian society and Austria's Jewish community were both responsible for the worthy preservation of destroyed sites of Jewish heritage, the former from historical culpability, the latter for reasons of piety towards their ancestors, many of whom had been murdered in the Shoah. His appeal to various levels of government – municipal, regional and national – foreshadowed the institutional 'jurisdiction quarrel' which has become characteristic of the Austrian restoration debates in recent years, as has the argument surrounding the remnants of the largely destroyed Jewish community who can no longer maintain their sites of heritage autonomously as they once did.

The attacks against the IKG concerning the deplorable conditions of the cemeteries also occasionally originated from outside the community. For example, the *Bezirksjournal Alsergrund*, the district newspaper of Vienna's ninth district where the Seegasse lies, published an article in April 1977 entitled *Anrainer von Spitalsruine in der Seegasse belästigt!* ('local residents adjacent to hospital ruin molested!').¹⁴⁸ Referring to the ruins of the retirement home, the article stated that the site, including the adjacent cemetery, was being used to dump rubbish, hence 'molesting' local residents, even as the article stated that it was local residents themselves who were dumping the rubbish. The article, a polemic befitting a tabloid,

¹⁴⁸ "Anrainer von Spitalsruine in der Seegasse belästigt", *Bezirksjournal Alsergrund*, April 1977, 1.

exclaimed that 'the apparent disinterest of the IKG is baffling', and that the IKG and the city council should come to some agreement over the site as local residents could not be asked to put up with these conditions any longer. Toch reproduced the entire article in the IKG's official press organ, *Die Gemeinde*, with a poem connoting the cemetery as a 'House of Eternity':

In the garden, behind the walls, / One may tremble in reverence. / Eternally
for the dead, / Thus it is commanded, / The peace in the cemetery must last. /
We wish to maintain the site, / Design the cemetery as a memorial, / To
protect ourselves / In coming years / From holding Vienna's Jews in
disdain...¹⁴⁹

His response was accompanied by a statement from the *Vereinigte Jüdische Wahlblock*, a voting bloc within the IKG, highlighting the hypocrisy of holding the IKG responsible for the abuse by local, non-Jewish residents of a desecrated site of Jewish heritage: 'Surely you share our opinion that not 'the apparent disinterest of the IKG' is cause for bafflement, but rather your view that there are local residents – citizens of the ninth district – who are molested by the fact that they defile Jewish religious sites'.

Thereafter, the city council repeatedly urged the IKG to begin restoration of the cemetery, which was to precede the construction of a new city retirement home, and yet the financial aid which the city council promised failed to materialise.¹⁵⁰ By this point the hospital ruins had been demolished and construction of the retirement home was underway. Pressure increased on both the city council and the IKG from late 1982, when the new retirement home residents began moving in and complained of the psychological trauma of the sight of the desecrated cemetery, whereupon eventually the board of trustees of the retirement home itself agreed to raise the

¹⁴⁹ *Anrainer von Spitalsruine in der Seegasse belästigt!* DöW, Nachlaß Josef Toch, 51.173/123.

¹⁵⁰ Veran, *Archiv*, 164-5.

capital to begin restoration.¹⁵¹ Traude Veran described the restoration process, of which a significant part was carried out personally by the IKG's General Secretary Avshalom Hodik: the stone fragments were recovered from their burial sites in the Seegasse and at Tor IV, they were identified and, where possible, restored, and were then re-erected at their place of origin, embedded in concrete casings.¹⁵² Through this tedious and complicated procedure, about a quarter of the original stones could be replaced, and the cemetery was finally reconsecrated on 4 September 1984.

A number of *matzevot* were still buried in the Seegasse itself, which are being exhumed at the time of writing. Tina Walzer has claimed that their recovery was impeded by the IKG because 'the Jewish community, which considers itself to be orthodox, was always against digging at the cemetery and refused to allow research at the site for decades'.¹⁵³ The clearing of Section 26 at Tor IV, where the bulk of the Seegasse *matzevot* were buried in 1943, has uncovered all existent *matzevot* at the site.¹⁵⁴ Many fragments still lie in the open in Section 26, depicted in Figure 3.1. These are clearly beyond repair, and in 2007 were marked with a plaque explaining their origins and citing the significance of the Seegasse as one of 'the only still existent cemeteries of the Biedermeier era' and therefore one of 'the oldest [cemeteries] in Europe'. Section 26 remains an unused plot immediately adjacent to the former provisional *beit tahara*, which today houses the workshop of the stonemason Schreiber. It is one of many smaller memorial sites at Tor IV, which since 1945 has become the most profound and complex Jewish site of memory in the post-Shoah Austrian landscape.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*, 165.

¹⁵² *Ibid*, 167.

¹⁵³ Cited in *Vienna finds lost Jewish Tombstones*, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-23270355>, accessed 11 July 2013.

¹⁵⁴ Veran, *Archiv*, 168-9.



Figure 3.1: Fragments of *matzevot* at Tor IV, Section 26, originally from the Seegasse.

3.3 Tor IV Part I: Contested Memories

Various memorials have been erected by successive Viennese and Austrian governments at the Central Cemetery, in particular in Section 40, commemorating the atrocities committed under National Socialist rule in Austria.¹⁵⁵ One of the oldest, inaugurated on 1 November 1948, is a memorial cross with a plaque reading: 'To the victims of Nazism who died for Austria'. This reflects the trend dominating the first fifty years after the end of Nazi rule whereby Nazism was discursively disconnected from Austria, Austrians were stylised collectively as victims of Nazism, and those who died ostensibly died for their belief in Austria. The use of Christian symbolism, moreover, reflects a Catholic construction of national identity correlating to the effacement from memory of hundreds of thousands of non-Christian Austrians persecuted by their countrymen. All Austrian victims of persecution, as Heidemarie Uhl demonstrated, were thereby subsumed under the category of 'resistance' whereby 'resistance' was stylised to be an expression of 'patriotic-legitimist' sacrifice

¹⁵⁵ All following citations from *Gedenkkreuze und Gedenksteine: 1110, Simmeringer Hauptstraße 234/Zentralfriedhof Tor 2 Gruppe 40*, http://www.nachkriegsjustiz.at/vgew/1110_simmeringerhptstr_gruppe40.php, accessed 16 April 2015.

for the nation of Austria.¹⁵⁶ The coupling of nationalistic and sacral language to connote Austrian 'victimhood', alongside the discursive construction of National Socialism as a 'German' project, was underlined in a memorial for an urn brought from the Buchenwald concentration camp and erected in Section 40 on 1 November 1954, reading: 'The earth interred here from the German-Nazi concentration camp Buchenwald is sanctified by the blood of our comrades who were murdered there'. Another, more extensive memorial erected in Section 40 in 1975 and containing urns from ten concentration camps – including Auschwitz, where over ninety percent of the victims were Jewish – reads simply 'they died for Austria'. This is what, as recently as 2000, was extenuatively called the collection of 'memorials in memory of the bad times' in a publication of the city council's cemetery office.¹⁵⁷ This language obfuscates the nature of the crimes committed under National Socialism, sublimates the relationship of victims and perpetrators and, last but not least, eclipses the memory of Austria's Jewish victims and the singular nature of the Shoah. Such constructions of memory underline James Young's point that to focus solely on how a society 'represses' memory 'is to lose sight of the many other social and political forces underpinning national memory' – in this case, the collective construction of an Austrian victim narrative.¹⁵⁸

The entrance to the Jewish cemetery at Tor IV is marked with a sign reading: 'The Jewish Community of Vienna / This cemetery is a site of memory / Sports and other leisure activities are to be refrained from! / For reasons of piety and the protection of the uniqueness of the site we ask for understanding'. This sign underlines the unique character of Tor IV as a site of memory and community, a site exhibiting what James Young termed 'collected memory': 'the many discrete

¹⁵⁶ Heidemarie Uhl, *Zwischen Versöhnung und Verstörung: Eine Kontroverse um Österreichs historische Identität fünfzig Jahre nach dem „Anschluß“* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1989), 132-142.

¹⁵⁷ Barta, *Zentralfriedhof*, 33.

¹⁵⁸ James Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (Yale University Press: 1993), xi.

memories that are gathered into communal memorial spaces and assigned common meaning'.¹⁵⁹ Patricia Steines listed some of the memorials at Tor IV in her work *Hunderttausend Steine*, concluding that Tor IV 'mirrors the recent past vividly', yet this brief work, the only history of the Jewish sections of the Central Cemetery to date, simply catalogues some of these memorial sites without going into the origins of the memorial projects, or into the history of the cemetery administration in the post-Shoah years altogether.¹⁶⁰ The following section evaluates the encoding of this site of memory, of the 'collected memory' gathered there in the form of numerous, almost uncountable, individual memories, and of the 'collective memory' which by contrast the IKG and its institutions attempted to construct. Memory of the Shoah has become a central feature of the cemetery, as evident in the Hebrew epigraphic abbreviation YMS"U (ימשי"ו, 'may their names be struck out') appearing on countless *matzevot* and memorials. This phrase, derived from Exodus 17:14 and Deuteronomy 25:19 ('I will / you shall utterly block out the memory of Amalek from under heaven'), represents the integration of the Shoah into a meaningful historical narrative of the persecution of the Jewish people, creating a closed circle from Biblical tradition through history and into the present day.¹⁶¹ However, this construction of a meaningful historical narrative also served to underline the sense of 'Jewish difference' underscored in the collective memory being invoked at Tor IV, often deeply contested and underlining the potency of the cemetery as the site where Jewish identity and memory after the Shoah continued to be negotiated.

In Memoriam *Inscriptions and the Recalibration of the Matzevah as Yad Vashem*

The earliest *matzevot* to commemorate the persecutions during the Shoah were placed on the graves of those who died in the years 1938 to 1945, in all

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, xi.

¹⁶⁰ Patricia Steines, *Hunderttausend Steine: Grabstellen großer Österreicher jüdischer Konfession auf dem Wiener Zentralfriedhof Tor I und Tor IV* (Vienna: Falter, 1993), 266.

¹⁶¹ See its invocation in "Tod ist, wer vergessen ist", *Die Gemeinde*, November 1948, 8.

likelihood only erected after the event. An example of explicit reference to the trials of the Nazi era is the *matzevah* of the IKG functionary Emil Adler (1865-1941), whose predominantly Hebrew-language eulogy extols 'how much [he] toiled for the good of [his] community', yet below this reads: 'Marker to the dear soul of the virgin Qreisl, daughter of Mr. Shmuel Adler, ז"ל [י"ג], may his memory be a blessing, from Proverbs 10:7], א"י [ע"י, killed by the hand of] the evil empire on foreign soil, TNZB"ח [תנצב"ח, may her soul be bound in the bundle of life, from I Samuel 25:29]'.¹⁶² This refers to Emil's daughter Gertrude or 'Gretl' (Qreisl) who was murdered on 23 October 1943 in Auschwitz.¹⁶³ This *in memoriam* inscription is a powerful indictment of National Socialism, the 'evil empire', which deported defenceless people to their deaths in foreign lands. A similar indictment can be found on the *matzevah* of *Kommerzialrat* Adolf Nimhin (1867-1943), which states: 'noble was man, helpful and good – Goethe', a rewording of Goethe's original text from *Das Göttliche* ('The Divine', 1783): 'noble be man, helpful and good'.¹⁶⁴ This quotation – subtly transformed through its translation into the past tense – is an equally powerful and moreover poetic indictment of the failure of humanity during the Shoah, while at the same time emphasising, also in connection with Adolf's arch-Austrian title, his enmeshment within Austrian and German-language culture.

The most widespread forms of commemoration of the victims of the Shoah at Tor IV – as in Jewish cemeteries worldwide – are the uncountable *in memoriam* inscriptions commemorating murdered individuals, who never found a grave, on the *matzevot* of their relatives and friends. Their sheer number speaks to the scale of the genocide which left no family unaffected, moreover representing the recalibration of the function of the *matzevah* as no longer just a memorial to the people buried at the gravesite, but by extension a memorial to their murdered family and friends, whose

¹⁶² *Matzevah* of Emil Adler (1865-1941), Tor I, 6-19A-9A.

¹⁶³ *Gertrude Winter (Adler)*, <http://www.geni.com/people/Gertrude-Winter/6000000025890164006>, accessed 15 January 2015.

¹⁶⁴ *Matzevah* of Adolf Nimhin (1867-1943), 20A-1B-68.

remains were otherwise denied a burial site and a memorial. The post-Shoah *matzevah* as a material artefact thus constitutes a *yad vashem* – a ‘memorial and a name’ – in more sense than one, restoring the names and the memorials to those whom the Nazis and their followers attempted to obliterate from memory. Most *in memoriam* inscriptions are to be found on existing *matzevot* marking actual burial sites, usually of relatives of the murdered victims, but there is no *halachic* prohibition on placing a purely memorial stone where there is no grave, as indeed happened often after the Shoah.¹⁶⁵ One such example is the *matzevah* in the arcade of the front courtyard at Tor IV, dedicated to the Blumenthal and Czollak families, individually murdered in Brussels, Berlin, Auschwitz and Buchenwald.¹⁶⁶

Some of these inscriptions are extremely brief, possibly due to the absence of concrete information, such as on the *matzevah* of Rudolfine Stern (1873-1931), about whose husband Samuel it simply states ‘deported 1942’.¹⁶⁷ The *matzevah* of Miriam (1922-1980) and Leopold (1917-1983) Schreiber names *in memoriam* ‘mother Josefine née Guttman’ and ‘children Sari, Margit, Arthur, Lili, Zoli’, who ‘died in concentration camps’ suggesting several, possibly unknown, killing sites.¹⁶⁸ Some inscriptions include the details, where known, of the sites or the manner of death, such as the *matzevah* of Josef Vogel (1874-1927) which names *in memoriam* Lotti ‘died Paris’, Maria Vogel-Buchheim ‘Auschwitz’, Natalie ‘Auschwitz’, and Norbert ‘shot dead in France’.¹⁶⁹ Their father Josef’s eulogy, written in the interwar period in obliviousness to the calamity to come, states: ‘your name is extolled through the mouths of those who know you, your great gift your descendants will name in praise’. This represents the idea, implicit and profound in Jewish epigraphy, that ‘the beneficent man will be remembered forever’ by his descendants (Psalm 112:6),

¹⁶⁵ Ernst Roth, Zur Halachah des jüdischen Friedhofs II, *Udim*, Vol. V (1974-5), 97-8.

¹⁶⁶ Blumenthal and Czollak families memorial (1940-4), arcade right of the entrance.

¹⁶⁷ *Matzevah* of Rudolfine Stern (1873-1931), 14-15-49.

¹⁶⁸ *Matzevah* of Miriam (1922-1980) & Leopold (1917-1983) Schreiber, 2-(?).

¹⁶⁹ *Matzevah* of Josef Vogel (1874-1927), 3-28-29.

underlining the murder of memory which accompanied physical genocide in the murder of this man's children. When we compare these to the *in memoriam* inscriptions at Tor I, we find they contrast even more starkly due to the largely optimistic narratives of enmeshment in Austrian society evident in the pre-Shoah epigraphy there. For example, the *matzevah* of Josef Löwner (1849-1932), which names him as 'the first Jew who belonged to the Viennese court as a judge', names *in memoriam* his wife Rosa who 'died 6 September 1942 in Theresienstadt', and their son Ernst who 'perished in Poland'.¹⁷⁰ These *matzevot*, both at Tor I and Tor IV, evidently underwent a shift in mnemonic intent after the Shoah, previously embodying the proud enmeshment of Austrian Jewry within Austrian society, later decrying its murderous effacement. Many pre-Shoah *matzevot* thereby became surrogate grave-memorials, or *yad vashem*, for those who found no grave.

The generational ruptures in memory embodied in these *in memoriam* inscriptions are distinctly pronounced on the *matzevah* of Rosa (1876-1947) and Otto (1913-1980) Spennadel.¹⁷¹ Rosa was a survivor of the Theresienstadt concentration camp,¹⁷² while Otto was one of the people who helped Ernst Feldsberg salvage human remains from the Währing cemetery during the desecrations taking place there in 1941.¹⁷³ Their epitaph combines memory of the First World War, of the Shoah and of exile in a triple *in memoriam* inscription, indicative of the sweeping and tumultuous changes experienced by Austrian Jewry within only a few generations: 'Jakob Spennadel, fell in the World War 1916, Friedrich Spennadel, died 1944 in the Buchenwald concentration camp' and 'in memoriam, Elsa Spennadel, 7 February 1911 – 2 December 1987'. Elsa, who died long after the Shoah, evidently died in exile and was buried abroad – this type of *in memoriam* inscription thereby

¹⁷⁰ *Matzevah* of Josef Löwner (1849-1932), Tor I, 20-16-62.

¹⁷¹ *Matzevah* of Rosa (1876-1947) & Otto (1913-1980) Spennadel, 19-3-11.

¹⁷² Gertrude Schneider, *Exile and Destruction: The Fate of Austrian Jews, 1938-1945* (Westport: Praeger, 1995), 191.

¹⁷³ *Die Wahrheit ist unbesiegbar*, draft for an article in *Die Gemeinde*, 1964, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/Rest/3/1.

underlining the significance of the cemetery as a place of ancestry and family. Such geographic references abound on Vienna *matzevot*, underlining the worldwide exile of Jewish Austrians which preceded and accompanied the Shoah, as on the *matzevah* of Philipp Broch (1872-1936) commemorating his wife Laura (1879-1945) and son Erich (1904-1956), both buried in Hartsdale, New York.¹⁷⁴ Alongside the many references to the victims, references to National Socialism – to the perpetrators – are also not uncommon, such as references to ‘bestial Nazi persecution’,¹⁷⁵ to ‘the evil and cursed Nazis’,¹⁷⁶ or simply to the ‘National Socialists’.¹⁷⁷

A unique reference to a Shoah-related death is the Hebrew-language *in memoriam* inscription to Max Baum (died 1940): ‘who was killed in the Shoah AQH”S [עקה”ש, for the sanctification of the Holy Name] when the ship *Arandora Star* which he was travelling on was sunk’.¹⁷⁸ The *Arandora Star* was a passenger ship requisitioned by the British navy during the war and used to transport among others interned ‘alien Germans’ – including Jewish-Austrian refugees – to Canada. It was sunk by a German submarine on 2 July 1940. The term *Shoah* used here, usually appearing in Hebrew inscriptions, is the most common name given to the genocide on Viennese *matzevot*, although occasionally the term *Holocaust* is also used.¹⁷⁹ More arcanelly, the period of 1938-1945 is also referred to in Hebrew as ‘the years of terror’ (שנות האימה)¹⁸⁰ and ‘the years of emergency’ (שנות החירום).¹⁸¹ The abbreviation AQH”S (עקה”ש, ‘for the sanctification of the Holy Name’) represents the resurrection of a medieval discourse of martyrdom to commemorate the victims of Nazi persecution, reflected in a common Hebrew epitaph after the Shoah which reads: ‘This stone is also a *matzevah* for [name(s)], HY”D [הי”ד, may God avenge

¹⁷⁴ *Matzevah* of Philipp Broch (1872-1936), Tor I, 20-24-217.

¹⁷⁵ *Matzevah* of Osias Schwarz (1894-1939), 21-41-57.

¹⁷⁶ *Matzevah* of Moshe Gelber (1856-1944), 22-49B-1.

¹⁷⁷ *Matzevah* of Minna Pixner (1919-2003), 17-(?).

¹⁷⁸ *Matzevah* of Shlomo (died 1984) & Chanah (died 2008) Ratner, (?).

¹⁷⁹ For example on the *matzevah* of Chana Urach (1907-1990), (?).

¹⁸⁰ For example on the *matzevah* of Chanah bat Menachem (died 1998), 21-(?).

¹⁸¹ For example on the recreated *matzevah* of Rabbi Meir Almaš (1767-1841), 14A-13-13.

his/her/their blood], who was/were killed in the Shoah AQH'S and was/were not granted arrival in a grave of Israel'.¹⁸² The significance of the *matzevah* as a *yad vashem*, a 'memorial and a name', is here combined with the notion of martyrdom, meaning to die for the sake of one's Jewish faith, as well as expressing the sacrilege of being denied a proper burial in Jewish tradition, in a 'grave of Israel'. This discourse of martyrdom was most pronounced in the *matzevot* of Jewish-Hungarian forced labourers.

En Route with the Martyrs of Israel: The Matzevot of the Jewish-Hungarian Victims of Forced Labour and Death Marches

A great number of memorials at Tor IV commemorate the Jewish-Hungarian forced labourers who perished or were murdered in Austria towards the end of the Shoah.¹⁸³ A representative example, succinctly encapsulating the fate of so many, is the *matzevah* of Chanah bat Yehuda (died 1945), whose civic name I cannot discern as the epitaph is solely inscribed in Hebrew.¹⁸⁴ It reads: 'Our dear mother Chanah daughter of Yehuda [illegible name, possibly surname], murdered in the storm of the Shoah on 21 February 1945', and thereafter lists the following names: Fried Laszlo Ladislaus, Gardos Josef, Gardos Vilma, Füredi Laura, Grünblatt Anna, Fülör Ilona, Weissner Rosa, Krausz Gyozö, Kraus Samuel. All of these, except Laura Füredi, Ilona Fülör and Samuel Kraus appear on a list of 24 'deportees buried at the central Jewish cemetery in Vienna' drawn up in Budapest in January 1946.¹⁸⁵ They were further identified on a list of 17 people killed in a bombing raid on Vienna in February

¹⁸² For example on the *matzevot* of Elisabeth Goldstein (died 1979), 21A-(?), of Shlomo (died 1984) & Chanah (died 2008) Ratner, (?), of Chanah bat Menachem (died 1998), 21-(?), *et al.*

¹⁸³ Albert Lichtblau, "Integration, Vernichtungsversuch und Neubeginn: österreichisch-jüdische Geschichte 1848 bis zur Gegenwart" in Eveline Brugger, Martha Keil, Albert Lichtblau, Christoph Lind & Barbara Staudinger, *Geschichte der Juden in Österreich* (Vienna: Ueberreuter, 2006), 535.

¹⁸⁴ *Matzevah* of Chanah bat Yehuda (died 1945), 22-(?).

¹⁸⁵ *Bécs - ben a központi zsidó temetőben elhantolt deportáltak névjegyzéke*, Holocaust Memorial Center Budapest (hereafter HDKE), Nevek/T-34 Bécs.

1945.¹⁸⁶ Evidently, they were part of a group of forced labourers who were killed while working in the *Imperial Feigenkaffeefabrik* in Alxingergasse 64 in the tenth district, which was struck by the first strafing attack on Vienna on 20 February.¹⁸⁷ Whether they are buried here is not clear, so this *matzevah* represents the blurring of functions between individualised memorial stones and generalised Shoah memorials which came to characterise the *matzevot* at Tor IV in the years following the Shoah.

Numerous mass graves in eastern Austria containing the remains of Jewish Hungarians were exhumed and the remains reburied at Tor IV.¹⁸⁸ This was a matter of principle for the IKG, who insisted that only reinterment in a Jewish cemetery could ensure the inviolability of the grave,¹⁸⁹ as stipulated by Jewish religious law.¹⁹⁰ The recovery of the remains of murdered forced labourers and their reinterment in the 'nearest Jewish cemetery' was a demand which the IKG put to the state in the course of the restitution negotiations in the early 1950s.¹⁹¹ Just as it is highly doubtful that the urns returned to the IKG from concentration camps in the early years of the Shoah contained the ashes of the individuals they were attributed to, so it is possible, in the absence of positive identification of the bodies, that the *matzevot* commemorating murdered forced labourers were only placed at Tor IV on the assumption that the bodies of the individuals in question were buried or reinterred there. In any case, these constitute a large corpus of Shoah-memorials in the cemetery today, replete with diverse forms of commemoration of both the victims and of the crimes of the perpetrators. Representative of the many Jewish-Hungarian forced labourers worked to death or murdered in the closing days of the Shoah is the

¹⁸⁶ *Wienben elhunyt deportáltak névjegyzéke*, HDKE, Nevek/T-36 Bécs.

¹⁸⁷ *Bombenkrieg – Dienstag, 20. Februar 1945*, <http://wien-vienna.at/geschichte.php?ID=158>, accessed 25 February 2015.

¹⁸⁸ *Bericht* [1948], 46.

¹⁸⁹ *Tätigkeit* [1964], 181.

¹⁹⁰ Joseph Karo (ed.), *Schulchan Aruch – שולחן ערוך – Die Halacha – Jore Dea: Lehre der Weisheit* (Vienna: Beit Talmud Thora, 2005), 263.

¹⁹¹ *Aktennotiz*, 3 June 1954, AIKGW, uncatalogued.

matzevah for an unknown victim, placed after 1945, which reads in Hebrew and German:

[Hebrew:] P”N [פ”נ, Here lie buried] the bones which we took from a grave by the road, these are the dead bones of a Jew of whom we do not know the name, who was killed A”Y [א”י, by the hand of] the evil Nazis YM”S [ימ”ש, may their names be struck out], HY”D [ה”י, may God avenge his blood] – TNZB”H [תנצב”ה, may his soul be bound in the bundle of life].

[German:] Unknown martyr, victim of National Socialism, murdered in the year 1945 in St. Margarethen, Burgenland, exhumed and reburied by the Jewish Community of Vienna.¹⁹²

The inscription refers to both the anonymous victim and the perpetrators, and includes the phrase ‘may their names be struck out’ discussed earlier. The Shoah is thereby integrated into an ancient narrative of Jewish history, whereby the Nazis are likened to the Amalekites, the most insidious Biblical enemy of the Israelites, and the Jewish Hungarians are portrayed as martyrs to underscore this new narrative of Jewish difference underlying commemoration at Tor IV. Exile and deportation are common themes on the *matzevot* of Jewish-Hungarian forced labourers, yet the most striking is the religious language of martyrdom.

Representative of many such memorials is the *matzevah* of Miriam Schindler (died 1944), which reads: ‘In the years of the Shoah she was en route together with the other martyrs of Israel, HY”D [ה”י, may God avenge his blood], she obtained a grave of Israel, may she rest and be granted her destiny at the end of days’.¹⁹³ Miriam – by contrast to so many – ‘obtained a grave of Israel’, meaning that she was assured her inviolable burial in a Jewish cemetery, unlike so many who were ‘en

¹⁹² *Matzevah* of Unknown Martyr (died 1945), 22B-(?).

¹⁹³ *Matzevah* of Miriam Schindler (died 1944), 20-(?). This is probably Josefine Schindler, buried 3 July 1944 in 20B-3-48 according to the IKG database. The date is a near match to the date of death, 30 June (9 Tamuz), the sections match, as do the ages. The last line is from Daniel 12:13.

route', meaning those in the forced labour columns and death marches who were buried in mass graves. The Jewish-Hungarian forced labourers are here collectively subsumed under the category 'the martyrs of Israel'. Altogether, this network of Jewish-Hungarian memory is indicative of the deep rupture caused by the Shoah, which tore apart whole families and led – at least at Tor IV, where these Jewish-Hungarian memories were so often mobilised– to the retreat of Jewish individuals and families into a particularist sense of Jewishness, characterised by the return to religion and the resurrection of Biblical narratives of persecution and exile.

The Archive of Jewish History: The IKG Memorials and the Establishment of a Collective Memory

The decimated Jewish community sold many of the properties painstakingly won back in restitution cases, mostly comprising empty plots where synagogues had stood before the November Pogrom, to finance the restoration of Tor IV and the construction of various memorials at the cemetery.¹⁹⁴ One of the earliest communal memorials, depicted in Figure 3.3, was a collective *matzevah* for the victims of the Förstergasse massacre of 11 April 1945, during which an SS-unit murdered nine Jews who had been in hiding there.¹⁹⁵ The memorial consisted of a wall inscribed with the names of the nine victims which, according to the IKG report, was also conceived to symbolise 'the six million victims of the Jewish people'.¹⁹⁶ The memorial, the first of several simultaneously expressive of individual and collective memories of persecution, was unveiled on 13 November 1955.¹⁹⁷ Chief Rabbi Akiba Eisenberg is depicted at the unveiling in Figure 3.2. The inscription reads:

¹⁹⁴ *Tätigkeit* [1955], 78.

¹⁹⁵ *Das Massaker in der Förstergasse*, <http://www.erinnern.at/bundeslaender/wien/unterrichtsmaterial/arbeitsblaetter-gedaechtnisortedes-ns-terrors-in-der-israelischen-abteilung-des-wiener-zentralfriedhofs/Arbeitsblatt%20Massaker%20in%20der%20Foerstergasse.pdf>, accessed 25 January 2015.

¹⁹⁶ *Tätigkeit* [1955], 35.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 117.

בית הקברות - The House of Sepulchres

[Hebrew:] P"ן [פי"ן, Here lie buried] nine martyrs murdered for the sanctification of the Holy Name A"Y [עי"י, by the hand of] the murderers, the Nazis Y"ס [ש"י, may their names be struck out] on 29 Nissan 705 HY"D [ה"י, may God avenge their blood].

[German:] Here rest nine martyrs who were murdered on 12 April 1945 by the Nazi thugs immediately before the liberation.¹⁹⁸

The original text, penned by the technical department of the IKG, employed the word 'Jews' instead of 'martyrs'.¹⁹⁹ Ernst Feldsberg, then the Vice President of the IKG, objected to the word 'Jew' on the basis that 'all of those buried in our cemetery are Jews', and replaced the word with the far more religiously loaded term 'martyrs'.²⁰⁰ Kurt Mezei (1924-1945), whose diary and photographs we examined in Part II, is the only victim who received a eulogy, written entirely in Hebrew, reading: 'The dear boy, full of awe, Yeshayahu Yosef the martyr, son of Maor HaLevi, his pure soul departed on 29 Nissan 705'. This epitaph was also added by Feldsberg, who complained that 'one cannot without further ado omit the grave-inscription of Kurt Mezei, who was a really strictly religious boy (...) I am of the opinion that one should write the full text of a grave-inscription.'²⁰¹ This explains, alongside the use of the term 'martyrs' in the general inscription, the highly religious character of Kurt's epitaph.

¹⁹⁸ Memorial for the nine victims of the Förstergasse massacre of 11 April 1945, 8A.

¹⁹⁹ *An H. Vicepr. Dr. Feldsberg*, 16 June 1955, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/1/5.

²⁰⁰ *An die Technische Abteilung*, 21 June 1955, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/1/5.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

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Figure 3.2: *Enthüllung der Grabgedenkstätte für die Opfer der Förstergasse, DöW, 9973/4.*



Figure 3.3: Memorial for the nine victims of the Förstergasse massacre of 11 April 1945.

As often happens in cases of commemoration of a group of victims – I think for example of the Scholl siblings, Hans (1918-1943) and Sophie (1921-1943), who have become symbolic representatives for all the murdered members of the White

Rose and of resistance more generally in Germany – Kurt Mezei’s inscription indicated how he, and later also his sister Ilse (1924-1945), were to become symbolic representatives of the victims of the Förstergasse, and of Vienna’s murdered Jews more broadly.²⁰² The Austrian Holocaust Memorial Service, for example, today maintains the ‘Geschwister Mezei Fonds’ in their name.²⁰³ A memorial plaque was hung at the Förstergasse itself on 12 April 1954.²⁰⁴ The plaque was renewed and rededicated on 14 April 1960, in a ceremony during which youths were reported to shout *Heil Hitler* and display the Nazi salute from a neighbouring house.²⁰⁵ This is not an uncommon occurrence at memorial events in a city still deeply riddled with antisemitism, as I have personally witnessed at such events.

The largest communal memorial created at the cemetery was announced at the annual commemoration of the November Pogrom in 1953, which took place at the destroyed *beit tahara* or ritual funerary hall, depicted in Figure 3.4. Speaking to 1800 participants, IKG President Emil Maurer proclaimed ‘that the destroyed *beit tahara* will be remodelled into a memorial site for the Austrian-Jewish victims of National Socialism’, while simultaneously being restored as a functioning *beit tahara* for the cemetery.²⁰⁶ The initial intention, which was ultimately not realised at the *beit tahara*, though a similar memorial was later created in the foyer of the synagogue in the Seitenstettengasse, was to ‘engrave the names of all our victims and martyrs in the walls of our precious hall to commemorate them for eternity’. The project quickly became deeply controversial within the IKG, with critics stating that the ruin of the destroyed *beit tahara* could simply be preserved in its present condition as a

²⁰² This is evident also in literature about Vienna’s Shoah victims. See for example Dieter Hecht, “Jüdische Jugendliche während der Shoah in Wien: Der Freundeskreis von Ilse und Kurt Mezei” in Andrea Löw, Doris L. Bergen & Anna Hájková (ed.), *Alltag im Holocaust: Jüdisches Leben im Großdeutschen Reich 1941-1945* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2013).

²⁰³ *Geschwister-Mezei-Fonds*, <http://www.gedenkdienst.at/index.php?id=506>, accessed 28 February 2015.

²⁰⁴ *Gedenktafel: 1020, Förstergasse 7*, http://www.nachkriegsjustiz.at/vgew/erinnerungszeichen_wien.php, accessed 9 June 2012.

²⁰⁵ “Förstergasse: Niemals Vergessen!”, *Die Gemeinde*, 29 April 1960, 12.

²⁰⁶ *Tätigkeit* [1955], 32-3.

memorial since a smaller, functional *beit tahara* would amply serve the needs of the community, while the money earmarked for this project could better be spent on cultural and educational projects to benefit the community.²⁰⁷ The project was estimated to cost a great deal, with up to five million Schillings being set aside for the restoration of the building in 1962.²⁰⁸ The disputes within the IKG coupled with the financial problems faced by the community in the early 1960s meant that work on the project was not begun until the spring of 1967.²⁰⁹ At a speech on *Rosh HaShanah* in 1967, Feldsberg loosely paraphrased the words of Chief Rabbi Moritz Güdemann (1835-1918) from the opening ceremony of Tor IV fifty years previously, discussed in Part I,²¹⁰ proclaiming: 'The archive of Jewish history is the cemetery. The cemetery is not a site of death, not a site of transience, but the 'House of Life''.²¹¹ In his own words, he continued: 'As mute as the cemeteries are (...) they convey a very loud language for those, who continue living the life of father and mother, which everyone should understand. And because we believe that we understand this language, we have renovated and adapted the *beit tahara*'. This statement profoundly underlined the significance of the Jewish cemetery as a site of memory after the Shoah: it is a 'House of Life' because it is the archive of Jewish history, the record of the life of the community, but the 'House of Sepulchres' is also the site of ancestors, whose memory carries all the more gravity following the unprecedented genocide perpetrated against them. The restored building is depicted in Figure 3.5.

²⁰⁷ As discussed in Adunka, *Gemeinde*, 257-8.

²⁰⁸ *Tätigkeit* [1964], 21.

²⁰⁹ "Die Zeremonienhalle eingeweiht", *Die Gemeinde*, 27 December 1967, 3.

²¹⁰ Cited in *Der neue israelitische Friedhof in Wien und seine Bauten – Denkschrift* (Vienna: Israelitische Kultusgemeinde, 1928), 11.

²¹¹ Cited in Adunka, *Gemeinde*, 258.

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Figure 3.4: *Kundgebung der IKG vor der zerstörten Zeremonienhalle, 8 November 1853, DöW, 9971/3.*



Figure 3.5: Restored *beit tahara* at Tor IV.

The restored *beit tahara* was inaugurated in a grand ceremony on 17 December 1967, under participation of Chief Rabbi Akiba Eisenberg, Mayor Bruno Marek (1900-1991), Ernst Feldsberg, who by then was the president of the IKG, and 600 guests.²¹² *Die Gemeinde*, the IKG's official press organ, characterised the event as a 'moving festivity for the restored "House of Life" at Tor IV'.²¹³ Mayor Marek emphasised the 'great and sadly often unthanked contributions' of Vienna's destroyed Jewish community to the city's culture, science and economy, and spoke of the many for whom Tor IV was intended as a burial place, yet who 'far from their familiar surroundings had to die a horrible death in concentration camps and gas chambers'. Feldsberg addressed the wearisome restitution negotiations with the government of Austria, which had finally acquiesced in 1960 to a once-off payment of thirty million Schillings – a 'cheap' price for its 'burning guilt'. This lump sum was hardly sufficient to carry out the restoration required in Austria's desecrated sites of Jewish heritage, the restoration of the *beit tahara* alone costing almost a sixth of that sum, the rest being quickly used up in projects such as the reinterment of Jewish bodies from mass graves. To the critics of the restoration project, Feldsberg pointed out that the demolition of the ruins alone would have cost two million Schillings.

During his speech, Feldsberg called for a minute's silence for the Jewish victims of the Shoah, for the non-Jews who died fighting against the Nazis and their followers, and for the soldiers of the Israeli Defence Forces (hereafter IDF) who had fallen in the recent Six-Day War 'for their fatherland and for the cause of the Jews'. This combined commemoration of the victims of the Shoah and of fallen IDF soldiers was demonstrative of the pervasive Zionist atmosphere in Vienna's post-Shoah Jewish community, which regards the State of Israel and its military as a necessary protection from antisemitism and the spectre of a new Holocaust, thereby also

²¹² *Zeremonienhalle: 1110, Simmeringer Hauptstraße 244/Zentralfriedhof/Neuer jüdischer Friedhof (Tor 4)*, http://www.nachkriegsjustiz.at/vgew/erinnerungszeichen_wien.php, accessed 9 June 2012.

²¹³ This, and all following citations from the event, cited in "Die Zeremonienhalle eingeweiht", *Die Gemeinde*, 27 December 1967, 3.

underlining the sense of 'Jewish difference' which became a characteristic feature of the collective memory being invoked by the IKG. This was further underlined with the erection in the year 2000, adjacent to the *beit tahara*, of a memorial for the fallen soldiers of the IDF.²¹⁴ Feldsberg's thoughts finally returned to the cemetery, where every grave and every building belongs to the dead, and where 'all the gravestones in the cemetery combine to one house of piety', reiterating that 'with the inscriptions on its memorials and gravestones, this house constitutes the archive of the Jewish community'. Therefore the 'House of Sepulchres' had to be preserved for all time as a 'House of Eternity'. The ceremony closed with a collective recitation of the mourners' *qaddish*. Notably, the poem *Der gute Ort* by Franz Werfel (1890-1945), discussed in Part II, was reproduced in full in accompaniment to *Die Gemeinde's* report on the event. Written during the Shoah, it postulated the cemetery as the focal point of Jewish life and culture in a history marked by persecution, and emphasised once again the sense of 'Jewish difference' exacerbated by the experience of the Shoah: 'Do you always forget the commandment / which encumbers you Israel!?! / You must leave to the lands that hate you / your graves, as a vagrant'.²¹⁵

A moving aspect of the redesigned *beit tahara* is the inclusion of four colourful stained-glass windows below the dome, depicted in Figures 3.6-9, which on sunny days cast their reflections across the inside of the hall. The windows were funded by donations from 26,000 Jewish Austrians living abroad, exiles who never returned home, and were designed by Heinrich Sussmann (1904-1986), an artist and Shoah survivor.²¹⁶ Feldsberg characterised the depicted scenes in the four windows as follows: *Engel tragen die Menorah zur Glorie* ('angels carry the *menorah* to glory'), symbolises freedom; *Zerstörung der Tempel* ('destruction of the tempels'), depicting

²¹⁴ Memorial to the soldiers who died fighting for the Israeli Defence Forces 1948-1998, next to the *beit tahara*.

²¹⁵ Franz Werfel, "Der gute Ort zu Wien" in Miguel Herz-Kestranek, Konstantin Kaiser & Daniela Strigl (eds.), *In welcher Sprache träumen Sie? Österreichische Lyrik des Exils und des Widerstands* (Vienna: Theodor Kramer, 2007), 516.

²¹⁶ Adunka, *Gemeinde*, 258.

a yellow *Magen David* alongside the burning *Torah* and *tallit*, symbolises the November Pogrom but also that the spirit of Judaism overcame the onslaught; *Theresienstadt*, depicting a smokestack surrounded by walls, represents the Theresienstadt concentration camp, since the donations were organised by the same committee who also maintained the Jewish cemetery at the former camp; while *Todeslager* ('death camps'), depicting a smokestack, barracks and barbed wire, is representative of all the extermination and concentration camps. Inside the foyer of the *beit tahara* is a plaque naming various concentration camps, ghettos and killing sites, and reading in Hebrew and German 'Remember – Never Forget', a pertinent allusion to the dual Biblical admonition of Jewish memory discussed by Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi.²¹⁷ The plaque was made from imported olive-wood from Israel.²¹⁸

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Figure 3.6: *Engel tragen die Menorah zur Glorie*.²¹⁹

Figure 3.7: *Zerstörung der Tempel*.

Figure 3.8: *Theresienstadt*.

Figure 3.9: *Todeslager*.

²¹⁷ Josef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (University of Washington: 1982), 5.

²¹⁸ Adunka, *Gemeinde*, 258.

²¹⁹ This and the following three images of the windows, located in the *beit tahara* at Tor IV, reproduced from Steines, *Steine*, 257-8, since I was not able to get clear photographs myself.

Numerous smaller memorials at Tor IV reflect the accrual of 'collected memory' at Tor IV, illustrative of the scale of the Shoah and the recalibration of Tor IV as the focal point of collective and collected Jewish-communal memory in Vienna. An exhaustive list exceeds the scope of this chapter, however, so in the following we will examine only a few pertinent examples. The *chevra qadisha*, refounded in March 1946,²²⁰ in 1948 announced its plans 'to preserve for all times the memory of those martyrs of Viennese Jewry who died for their faith during the Nazi era', noting, however, that 'the modest means which are available to the *chevra qadisha* allow the realisation of this decision only in stages'.²²¹ The first step was the creation of symbolic *matzevot* for murdered IKG functionaries, inscribed with the words: 'Remember what Amalek did to you – do not forget', a composite of Deuteronomy 25:17 and 25:19. This recurring reference to Amalek, the Biblical nemesis of the Jews, and the dual admonition which we have already encountered – to remember and not to forget – is indicative of the construction of a post-Shoah Jewish-historical narrative, as discussed in a *Gemeinde* article which linked Amalek with the persecutions of antiquity, the torture chambers and pyres of the Spanish Inquisition, the expulsions of modernity and finally the 'campaign of extermination of the Hitlerite madness'.²²² This narrative was interpreted according to 'the mission' which 'the Jewish people have to fulfill', namely to bear the 'light of freedom and humanity' which was given to the Jewish people on Mount Sinai – the *Torah*. This construction of a meaningful historical narrative to make sense of the genocide became characteristic of IKG commemoration, while the religious framing of this narrative, indicative of the orthodoxy which has become equally characteristic of the IKG, was translated into the mission statement that 'the Jewish faith calls for a life that must be lived to understand [this faith]' – in other words a Jewish life lived according to Jewish

²²⁰ Adunka, *Gemeinde*, 31.

²²¹ "Tod ist, wer vergessen ist", *Die Gemeinde*, November 1948, 7.

²²² *Ibid.*

(orthodox) tradition and in communion with Jewish peoplehood, all of which constitute central facets of the IKG's self-understanding after the Shoah.

On 15 February 1962, the *chevra qadisha* decided to erect 'simple gravestones at the gravesites of the Jewish martyrs of the concentration camps whose urns of ashes were buried at Tor IV'.²²³ It is highly doubtful whether the ashes returned to the IKG in over 1000 urns during the Shoah belonged to the deceased individuals, considering the careless and industrialised disposal of their victims' corpses in the Nazi concentration camps.²²⁴ The function of these *matzevot* can therefore more properly be understood as *yad vashem* – memorials and names for those who were robbed of life and form and received no burial, a large number of which can be found in Sections 21 and 22. In the 1990s, the *chevra qadisha* undertook a similar initiative which resulted in the creation of simple, uniform *matzevot* for the many burials of the period 1938-39, presumably including the many suicides of the era, which had previously been unmarked. It is not always clear which *matzevot* commemorate graves that went unmarked, and which graves contain urns, though sometimes one can guess from circumstantial evidence. Jakob Lubczer (1896-1940) from Linsk/Lesko/Leskow (today Poland), for example, died on 16 January in Buchenwald but was not buried at Tor IV until 18 February, suggesting that this was a case of burial of an urn.²²⁵

The *matzevot* of those forced to be buried at Tor IV as *Rassejuden* or 'racial Jews', so-called under the Nazi legislation which forbade their burial in 'Aryan' cemeteries and therefore forced their burial at Tor IV, segregated in the fenced-off plot in Section 20A, were often demarcated with Christian symbolism, as for example

²²³ *Tätigkeit* [1964], 20.

²²⁴ See for example Claudia Theune, "Gewalt und Tod in Konzentrations- und Vernichtungslagern: Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Archäologie" in Günter Morsch & Bertrand Perz (eds.), *Neue Studien zu nationalsozialistischen Massentötungen durch Giftgas: Historische Bedeutung, technische Entwicklung, revisionistische Leugnung* (Berlin: Metropol, 2011), 64-76.

²²⁵ *Matzevah* of Jakob Lubczer (1896-1940), 21-40-36.

the *matzevah* of Yuana Hilde Ryvarde (1899-1943).²²⁶ Along with a cross, her inscription eulogises: 'Her heart broke far from home on 8 November 1943 of longing and desperation'. Yuana was murdered in Auschwitz, this grave containing the urn of ashes returned to the IKG.²²⁷ A more peculiar case is the *matzevah* of Josef Brüll (1889-1941), which states that he 'rests in God', and is adorned with both a cross and a *Magen David*.²²⁸ Brüll, a veteran of the First World War, was officially unaffiliated with any denomination but converted to Catholicism in 1939 shortly after his forced resettlement from his native Innsbruck to Vienna.²²⁹ Why his *matzevah* should include both Christian and Jewish symbolism is unclear, though it suggests an embracing of both facets of his background. The remaining *Rassejuden* graves are today fenced off from the surrounding Jewish sections. They are often wildly overgrown in the summertime and are therefore clearly not maintained in the manner that surrounding sections are. They are signposted with plaques reading:

In this cemetery there are some sections (...) where on order of the Nazi regime in the years 1941-1945 persons were buried who according to the Nuremberg racial laws were considered Jewish, though they were not Jewish according to Jewish religious law. About three-quarters of them were Christian; therefore some gravestones bear crosses. About one quarter were persons without denominational affiliation. Under the threat of deportation several of these persons put an end to their own lives. All persons buried here regardless of difference of denomination were victims of Nazi racial hatred. A commemorative stone on Section 18K honours their memory. May they rest in peace!²³⁰

²²⁶ *Matzevah* of Yuana Hild Ryvarde (1899-1943), 14-16-22.

²²⁷ *Opfer Mariahilfer Straße – Hilde Yuana Ryvarde*, <http://www.erinnern-fuer-die-zukunft.at/maps/mariahilferstr47.pdf>, accessed 2 December 2013.

²²⁸ *Matzevah* of Josef Brüll (1889-1941), 20E-1-4.

²²⁹ *Josef Brüll*,

<http://www.hohenemsgenealogie.at/en/genealogy/getperson.php?personID=I2084&tree=Hohenems>, accessed 15 January 2015.

²³⁰ Plaque commemorating the burial of people persecuted as Jews under the Nuremberg Laws, 19K.

The memorial mentioned in the signage, and depicted in Figure 3.10, reads:

In this earth between the autumn of 1941 and the spring of 1945, on the orders of the National Socialist regime, around eight hundred people were buried who were counted as Jews according to the "Nuremberg Laws", who however were not members of the Jewish religious community. Most of them were Christians, some were without faith. For years they lived under constant threat. Some of them ended their own lives to escape deportation. (...)

All those buried here belong to the community of suffering of those, divided by religion, united in death, victims of the National Socialist racial mania.

May they rest in peace!

These plaques underline the IKG's attitude toward the burial during the Nazi era of people whose Jewish identity was questionable, if at all applicable, commemorating them as fellow victims of Nazi persecution while clearly demarcating them as not belonging to the same community of victims. This is underlined in the lack of maintenance of these gravesites, and as such represents a facet of the complicated and contentious politics of belonging played out at the cemetery.



Figure 3.10: Memorial for the people persecuted as Jews under the Nuremberg Laws, 18K.

Contested Memories at Tor IV

Jewish cemeteries have become a repeated target of violent antisemitic agitation in the decades after the Shoah as some of the most obvious 'Jewish' spaces in the post-Shoah European landscape to groups in mainstream society whose intentions towards the Jewish community are hostile, and for whom the cemetery represents a target for expressing their antisemitism.²³¹ Post-Shoah Jewish cemeteries have also become sites of inner-Jewish contestation, a fact felt most poignantly in Vienna at Tor IV, not only the most profound site of memory for Vienna's Jewish community, but also the most conflicted site of the negotiation of community and communal belonging after the Shoah. In 1991, a memorial was unveiled on the site adjacent to the *beit tahara* containing buried *Sifrei Torah* (*Torah* scrolls) that had been damaged during the November Pogrom by Nazis and their sympathisers, depicted in Figure 3.11.²³² Designed to resemble a torn *Sefer Torah*, the memorial is inscribed in Hebrew with an elegy usually recited on Tisha B'Av, the day of mourning for the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, while in German it reads: 'Here on 17 Sivan 5747 (14 June 1987) were buried the remains of the *Torah* scrolls that during the "Kristallnacht" were desecrated, torn and burnt by Nazi hordes, *Chevra Qadisha* Vienna, June 1991'. The memorial was funded by the *chevra qadisha* and produced by the stonemason Schreiber.²³³

²³¹ A pertinent example was discussed in "Neofaschistische „Heldentaten“", *Die Gemeinde*, 1 September 1977, 3.

²³² Memorial for destroyed *Sifrei Torah*, next to the *beit tahara*.

²³³ "Einweihung eines Gedenksteines auf dem jüdischen Friedhof", *Die Gemeinde*, 30 August 1991, 64.



Figure 3.11: Memorial for destroyed *Sifrei Torah*, next to the *beit tahara*.

A controversial aspect of the unveiling ceremony was the reference made to ‘divisive sources’ within the community and the link constructed between the destruction of *Sifrei Torah* during the November Pogrom, apostasy, and the breaking of the Tablets of the Law on Mount Sinai.²³⁴ Chief Rabbi Paul Chaim Eisenberg stated that ‘we Jews could do little to prevent the attacks against our *Torah* by enemies’, but that ‘we simultaneously should never be guilty of defiling our *Torah* as it happened through the worship of the Golden Calf’. While the former statement was a clear reference to the Nazis, the latter implicitly referred to the *Or Chadasch* or ‘New Light’ movement, a liberal Jewish organisation founded in Vienna in 1990.²³⁵ Their mission statement published in *Die Gemeinde* a few months earlier was accompanied by a note from the editors stating that, while all groups within the IKG had the right to publish announcements in the paper, ‘*halachic* considerations’ were exclusively the preserve of the Rabbinate.²³⁶ This was further accompanied by a note from Chief Rabbi Eisenberg stating that the ‘prayer sessions of the *Or Chadasch*, in which men and women sit together, women can take on prayer functions, and instruments may be played on Holy Days, do not correspond to the *Halachah*’ and

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁵ Their mission statement can be viewed on their bilingual German-English website under אור חדש, http://www.orchadasch.at/pages/e_main_home.htm, accessed 7 March 2015.

²³⁶ “Generalversammlung der „Or-Chadasch Bewegung für fortschrittliches Judentum““, *Die Gemeinde*, 22 July 1991, 28.

that the IKG should not recognise the *Or Chadasch* movement since this ‘endangers’ the IKG.²³⁷ By this he meant that the differences between the liberal and orthodox positions threatened the unity of the IKG as an umbrella organisation – while simultaneously stating that the orthodox position was the only correct position. The somewhat cryptic remarks made by the Chief Rabbi at the unveiling ceremony can therefore be understood as directly associating the destruction of *Sifrei Torah* by the Nazis with the ‘apostasy’ of the liberal Jewish community, whom he compared to those who worshipped the Golden Calf in Exodus chapter 32. This comment is particularly problematic when considering that the *Or Chadasch*, like the rest of the IKG, are made up largely of Shoah survivors, former exiles, and their descendants. In 2012 the *Or Chadasch* appealed to the Austrian government to be recognised as a separate religious community in protest over their marginalisation by the orthodox leadership of the IKG.²³⁸ Such negotiations are on-going at the time of writing. This was not an isolated incident, and reflects the deep divisions in the post-Shoah IKG engendered by the orthodoxy of its leadership.

3.4 Tor IV Part II: Contested Identities

Jacqueline Vansant highlighted a common theme amongst *émigrés*, many of whom, regardless of their prior self-identification, felt that their belonging in the Jewish community had been made a *fait accompli* by National Socialism, and for whom the memory of the six million Jewish dead had become a ‘moral imperative’ to remember.²³⁹ Pierre Nora similarly pinpointed how memory was mobilised by non-practising Jews in the absence of a personal history of and connection to Judaism: ‘In this tradition, which has no history other than its own memory, to be Jewish is to

²³⁷ “Stellungnahme des Landesoberrabbiners”, *Die Gemeinde*, 22 July 1991, 28.

²³⁸ *Liberale Juden wollen eigene Kultusgemeinde*, http://religionv1.orf.at/projekt03/news/1204/ne120412_liberalejuden.html, accessed 23 March 2013.

²³⁹ Vansant, *Heimat*, 145.

remember that one is such'.²⁴⁰ The constant invocation of the boundary between Jewish and non-Jewish was complicated by the orthodoxisation of the IKG in the aftermath of the Shoah, by contrast to the large and amorphous group of individuals of various self-identifications who had all through the experience and the memory of the Shoah been made members in the community of victims, the *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* or 'community of fate' that today encompasses the broadest definition of Jewishness in Europe. The resulting conflicts between the IKG, as the self-appointed sole representative of Viennese Jewry, and this amorphous population who count themselves or are counted as Jews, were continuously played out at Tor IV, as the site not only of historical memory but also of present-day community. The IKG and its institutions administering the cemetery, especially in the early decades under the tutelage of Ernst Feldsberg, devised new cemetery ordinances prescribing practices following strictly orthodox interpretations of Jewish religious law, thereby enforcing definitions of community that were highly exclusive – including to former IKG members, people who considered themselves Jews, often including Shoah survivors, and the relatives and descendants of people who defined themselves or were defined as Jews. This led to profound conflicts within the 'community', if one can use such a singular term in this context, even leading in a number of cases to the IKG being brought before civil courts by its current or former members. The cemetery came to reflect a starkly Jewish-particularist and religious-orthodox character, as the analysis of the *matzevot* and their epigraphy in the following section reveals. Yet the cemetery also became a site of subversion, all of which represents not only the changing makeup of Vienna's post-Shoah Jewish community, but also the contestation of its leadership by its perennially heterogeneous membership.

Earlier we examined how the signage at the entrance to Tor IV underlines the cemetery's special status as a memorial site. This signage also denotes the space as

²⁴⁰ Nora, *Memory*, 16.

the principle burial ground of the Jewish community, spatially segregated from the remaining Central Cemetery and marked by explicitly religious rules. A notice, adorned with numerous *Magenei David* or Stars of David, informs visitors that: 'On Saturdays and on Jewish Holy Days the cemetery is closed! / For religious reasons men can only enter the cemetery with their heads covered! / Cycling is forbidden at the cemetery! / There is no thoroughfare to other cemeteries!' These signs were Ernst Feldsberg's idea, who also authored them. In the autumn of 1955 he noted in an internal memo:

Visitors at Tor IV (and not only people of other faiths) are visiting the cemetery without head-coverings. One demands of us that we have respect for the religious requirements of other churches. How would the Catholic Church react if Jews, who for religious reasons permanently wear head-coverings, kept these on when they entered a church? It is not permissible that people appear at funerals who do not have head-coverings, nor is it permissible to visit Tor IV without a head-covering. (...) I am repeatedly petitioned by visitors of the cemetery to install a sign at the entrance to the cemetery whose text politely beseeches visitors for religious reasons to enter the cemetery with a head-covering.²⁴¹

He noted that this should be made plain to the employees at the cemetery, too, who frequently appeared at funerals without head-coverings, a situation he found 'preposterous'. In January 1956 he noted that the porter was to be directed to

politely beseech all parties to respect the religious commandment for covering the head. The porter has little skull-caps available which can be lent to people who appear at the cemetery without head-coverings. Should a male person despite the polite reminder of the porter nevertheless enter the cemetery without a head-covering, this fact is to be reported to the [cemetery] chancellery immediately [underlined in original]. The chancellery is entitled to

²⁴¹ *An die Amtsdirektion*, 12 October 1955, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/1/5.

request the help of the police in this case since such a case constitutes a knowing religious disturbance which is to be criminally prosecuted.²⁴²

Feldsberg claimed that the installation of the signage was 'extremely urgent', lamenting:

I am repeatedly attacked from orthodox side to finally ensure that at our rituals the religious commandments are respected in the same manner as at the Catholic rituals in other cemeteries. What would happen to a Jew who dared leave his hat on his head at the church by Tor II? We demand the same right of respect at Tor IV.²⁴³

Tor IV in the 1950s was moulded as a space in the image of a new post-Shoah community, represented on all levels by the IKG, to be an exclusive, inner-Jewish space following orthodox customs and reflecting orthodox interpretations of Jewish communal belonging and of the Jewish faith.

The Construction of Jewish Peoplehood in the Cemetery Ordinances

In 1951, Feldsberg wrote to the IKG's cemetery office requesting investigation into specific questions surrounding the Shoah-era history of its cemeteries, especially of the burial of 'those deceased (...) who racially counted as Jews', meaning people classed as Jews under the Nuremberg Laws whose burial in the Jewish cemetery had been forced by the Nazi city administration.²⁴⁴ After this first mention of 'those deceased (...) who racially counted as Jews', Feldsberg solely employed the term *Nichtglaubensjuden*, 'irreligious Jews', to designate these people, a term originally coined by the Nazi administration, as discussed in Part II, constructing Jewishness in hereditary terms. By the time of his inquiry, some 140 of the 765 people forced to be buried as Jews at Tor IV during the Shoah had already been exhumed and reinterred

²⁴² *An das Friedhofsamt*, 5 January 1956, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/1/5.

²⁴³ *An die Technische Abteilung*, 8 March 1956, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/1/5.

²⁴⁴ *An das Friedhofsamt der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde*, 10 August 1951, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/FH/108/8.

in other cemeteries at behest of their families, a powerful rejection of this Nazi-enforced Jewishness on their deceased relatives.²⁴⁵

That same month, Feldsberg wrote an internal memo which outlined what he thought should be the IKG's stance on the issue of burial of 'non-Jews' – which was to quickly become a complicated category – in Jewish cemeteries, following a row over *halachic* regulations between the world-renowned Rabbi Leo Baeck (1873-1956) in London and the orthodox Rabbi Yechiel Yaakov Weinberg (1884-1966) in Montreux, Switzerland. The issue specifically revolved around non-Jewish spouses who wished to be buried together with their Jewish spouses, with Rabbi Weinberg insisting that non-Jews were under no circumstances allowed to be buried in Jewish cemeteries.²⁴⁶ Feldsberg lauded Baeck's appraisal that there is no clear stance on the issue discernible in Jewish scripture, referring to Baeck's esteemed reputation as justification for his authority on matters of religious law, and rejecting Rabbi Weinberg's strict orthodox interpretation of Jewish customs. Feldsberg stated that Weinberg's arguments 'reflect the intolerance of orthodoxy with which I do not engage anymore on principle'. However, elsewhere in the memo he stated that the availability of communal cemeteries in Vienna meant that 'the IKG must cling to the tradition that only the faithful can be buried in our cemeteries', and that mixed couples who wished to be buried together should be buried in communal, non-Jewish cemeteries. So while his sympathies ostensibly lay with the liberal views of Rabbi Baeck, and he was openly contemptuous of both Rabbi Weinberg's views and his person, Feldsberg's conclusion on policy sided entirely with Weinberg, arguing for the strict prohibition on burial of 'non-Jews' – however these were to be defined – in Jewish cemeteries.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁶ *An die Amtsdirektion*, 10 May 1955, AIKGW, uncatalogued.

The issue of mixed marriages between Jews and non-Jews, the linguistic division of which should not mislead to underestimating the obscurity of these categories, constitutes a perennial problem in post-Shoah *halachic* debates. Ernst Roth, in his influential work on *halachic* issues appertaining to the Jewish cemetery, remarked that 'one hears very often that the non-Jewish spouse – despite many inconveniences – persevered by the side of their Jewish spouse [during the Shoah], meaning it would be appropriate that both should be buried at the Jewish cemetery'.²⁴⁷ Yet Roth concluded that this was impermissible because non-Jews may not be buried in Jewish cemeteries, a fact he claimed is not open to discussion, including for children born of a non-Jewish mother, so including those who may have been persecuted as Jews under National Socialism, may be perceived as Jews by mainstream society, and may consider themselves as Jews, but are not considered as such by orthodox interpretations of *Halachah*. Some communities created separate sections for the burial of mixed-marriage couples in their cemeteries, but Roth rejected even this compromise 'since the entire cemetery, including the unused parts, has a unified character'.²⁴⁸ Such debates clearly echo the conflicts surrounding Tor IV in the interwar period, and yet, as the following developments demonstrate, the post-Shoah IKG was far less prone to compromise than its predecessor.

In September 1956, the family of Anna Fuchs, who had passed away earlier that summer, sought to have her urn buried in the grave of her husband (died 1921) at Tor IV.²⁴⁹ The family's lawyer remarked that 'Mrs. Anna Fuchs had for familial reasons converted to Catholicism, but had according to my enquiries (...) done everything to stand by persecuted Jews' during the Shoah. Moreover, 'before she died, it was her deepest wish to be interred in the grave of her beloved husband at

²⁴⁷ Roth, *Halachah* [1973], 114.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 115.

²⁴⁹ *An Direktor Dr. Ernst Feldsberg*, 3 September 1956, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/1/5.

Tor IV'. He closed by stating that 'to fulfil this wish was surely commanded by piety'.

Feldsberg replied:

1) The burial of *Nichtglaubensjuden* [irreligious Jews] in the Jewish cemetery is prohibited. The cemetery of the IKG is a religious cemetery. The right of disposition over the graves located in this cemetery lies solely with the IKG in Vienna who is the owner of the land. 2) Even if Mrs. Anna Fuchs had belonged to Jewry, the burial of her urn in the Jewish cemetery could not take place because the burial of ashes of a deceased *Glaubensjuden* [religious Jew] is possible only if the corpse is first brought by the IKG before cremation to the IKG's cemetery and is ritually washed.²⁵⁰

Feldsberg concluded that he understood the 'reasons of piety' for wishing her burial at Tor IV, but claimed that he stood 'before imperative religious stipulations which can under no circumstance be contravened'. The language of his response, especially by reference to the internal memos cited above, is conspicuous for explicitly differentiating between *Glaubens-* and *Nichtglaubensjuden*, and by suggesting that Anna Fuchs did not 'belong to Jewry'. There are no further records in the IKG archive pertaining to this case, suggesting that the petition was dropped and that Anna's ashes were not buried with her husband.

Following on the heels of these developments in 1955-6, Feldsberg noted in an internal memo in early 1957 that he believed it was 'really urgently necessary to make a cemetery ordinance (...) to enact final regulations regarding the burial of the *Konfessionslosen*', those 'without confession', essentially a synonym for 'irreligious Jews'.²⁵¹ Two months later, he took the liberty of drawing up such an ordinance and requested the IKG's cemetery office to review it and to submit any 'ancillary

²⁵⁰ An Dr. Victor Deutsch, 5 September 1956, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/1/5.

²⁵¹ An das Friedhofsamt, 21 March 1957, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/2/1.

suggestions'.²⁵² Feldsberg's proposal incorporated several novelties by contrast to the pre-Shoah ordinances, as follow:

§3 All *Glaubensjuden* ('religious Jews') were to be buried in individual graves.

§4 Burial in the Jewish cemetery was to occur 'strictly according to the Jewish rite'.

§5 Only *Glaubensjuden* could be buried in Jewish cemeteries.

§6 The burial of urns could only take place if the IKG had collected the corpse, conducted the *tahara* (ritual washing) and placed it in a coffin. Urns collected directly from the crematoria would not be buried, and no religious ceremony was permitted to take place with the burial of urns.

§7 *Glaubensjuden* and *Nichtglaubensjuden* were not to be transported at the same time by the city funerary office, who collected the corpses.

§9 Musical accompaniment, either at the house of the deceased or at the cemetery, was forbidden.

§11 The IKG was to take full administrative charge of the burials, with the *chevra qadisha* only being granted control over the process of *tahara*.

§17 Interment in existing graves could only take place with immediate relatives such as parents, children or siblings, but not with in-laws, and therefore each plot could only be sold to an individual, not to a family, to ensure the uniformity of blood relations.

§19 The IKG would create a special section for *Fromme*, meaning observant, orthodox Jews as in the Yiddish word *frum*, separated according to gender, consisting solely of individual graves without the possibility of additional burials in the graves of relatives. Furthermore,

²⁵² *Ibid*, 20 May 1957.

'the allocation of gravesites in the section for *Fromme* follows the assessment by the IKG of the religious history of the individual to be buried'.

§22 'The erection of grave-memorials, fences and the laying of cover plates are subject to authorisation by the IKG'.

§24 'The inscriptions to be applied to the gravestones require the approval of the IKG. The inclusion of images, emblems or other profane symbols (such as notes, treble clefs, symbolic flames etc.) is forbidden. Exceptions to this prohibition are the inclusion of the jug of the *Levi'im* and the blessing hands of the *Cohenim*'.

§25 'Every gravestone must contain at least two Hebrew characters. Gravestones in the section for *Fromme* may not contain German texts, only the name may be written in German [sic] characters'.²⁵³

These sweeping changes to the topography of the cemetery and the practices surrounding burial fell into two broad categories: first the enforcement of orthodox religious regulations, representing in part resurrections of older traditions and in part traditions hitherto unseen in Vienna, and second the strict regulation, along orthodox lines of interpretation, of who could be buried where in the Jewish cemetery, if at all, and consequently who was counted as a member of the Jewish community. The language of the document was decisive to this second issue. This was evident in the use of the terms *Glaubensjude* ('religious Jew') and *Verstorbenen jüdischen Glaubensbekenntnisse* ('deceased of the Jewish faith', §3, 5, 7 and 15), used to denote those who were counted as members of the Jewish community, as opposed to *Nichtglaubensjude* ('irreligious Jew', §7), implying those of Jewish descent who, however, were not considered members of the Jewish community, defined in this case by religious orthodoxy. The gravity of these changes to the regulation of Tor IV

²⁵³ *Entwurf einer Friedhofsordnung*, 20 May 1957, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/2/1.

was underlined through the emphasis, enshrined in §11, that the IKG had the sole authority in deciding who could be buried where, if it all, how their graves were to be allocated and designed, and what was allowed to be included on the *matzevot* of the deceased. The enforcement of strict orthodox interpretations of burial customs and, by extension, of *Halachah*, was underscored by the creation of a separate, gender-segregated section for *Fromme*, the regulation of which lay directly in the hands of the IKG's orthodox Rabbinate. What followed were a series of conflicts surrounding the enforcement of these strictly orthodox regulations.

The Construction of Jewish Peoplehood Contested: The IKG on Trial

In October 1957, a memo circled within the IKG by Ernst Feldsberg discussed the outcome of a case in which the IKG had sued one Harry Opler in a dispute about Opler's wish to bury his father at Tor IV, and in which the presiding judge had ruled in favour of the IKG.²⁵⁴ The IKG's records reflect that the case was mirrored by an internal dispute on the matter between the Rabbinate, under direction of Chief Rabbi Akiba Eisenberg, and the IKG administration under direction of Ernst Feldsberg. Eisenberg argued in favour of burial at Tor IV of all those who counted as Jews according to orthodox interpretations of *Halachah*, whether 'Fromme', faithful Jews or not, while Eisenberg opined that only those who were *both* Jewish by orthodox definition – by descent – *and* faithful – by practice – should be buried in the Jewish cemetery. The judge struck down the Chief Rabbi's opinion, stating that:

The views of a religion teacher are not suitable to amend state and legal regulations. (...) So if a long and elaborate justification were necessary to assess the question whether irreligious people are allowed to be interred in Jewish cemeteries, it is already clear that there is no clear law in the Jewish faith on this matter. Since in Jewish religious issues everyone can themselves

²⁵⁴ All following citations from *An die Amtsdirektion*, 25 Oktober 1957, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/1. The case files were at the time of writing inaccessible under Vienna's archival data protection laws.

interpret religious law according to their opinion, and the opinions of religion teachers are not law, (...) it is self-evident that it is not up to the leading personalities of the IKG to interpret the Jewish religious laws as they see fit.

Feldsberg noted following this citation that, according to an 1868 law still in effect in Austria, interment in family plots could not be barred, but reiterated: 'The burial of irreligious, former Jews or of baptised, former Jews in the Jewish cemetery is forbidden.' Moreover, he stated that 'contrary decisions of the Rabbinate can change nothing in these legal provisions'.

A month later, November 1957, the family of Friederike Fleischer, who had died in 1942 and was buried at Tor IV in Section 18K, the section for *Rassejuden* or 'racial Jews' created during the Shoah, requested that she be reinterred in the grave of her husband and son in Section 9, as had been her final wish.²⁵⁵ This suggests that the decision to bury her in the *Rassejuden* section, rather than in the existing family plot, had been made by the IKG at the time. Feldsberg replied:

I regret very much to have to inform you that from religious considerations only very important reasons can influence the decision to exhume a corpse. One of these reasons is the transferral of the corpse to Israel. Reinterment of corpses in a grave in the same cemetery or in other cemeteries in Austria are not allowed. Against these laws of faith no decisions can be made.

Considering the widespread dis- and reinterments in Jewish cemeteries throughout the 1950s and 1960s and the deeply contested politics of burial taking place within the IKG at this time, it is safe to conclude that this was a diversion tactic by Feldsberg, whose real aim was to prevent the burial of someone he considered a *Nichtglaubensjude* in one of the ordinary plots of the IKG's cemetery. As in the case of Anna Fuchs, the absence of further records in the IKG archive suggests that the petition was dropped and that Friederike was not reinterred in her husband's grave.

²⁵⁵ An Gustav Springer, 4 December 1957, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/1/5.

Shortly thereafter, in February 1958, Feldsberg reported that the district and state courts of Vienna had ruled that 'such persons who unregistered from their religious community at an administrative centre of primary authority can be refused a burial in a Jewish cemetery'.²⁵⁶ However, he also cited an exception to this ruling, §12 of the law of 25 May 1868, RGBI. 49, which decreed that 'a religious community cannot refuse the proper burial of one of its members in its cemeteries if [among other exceptions] it concerns burial in a family grave'.²⁵⁷ This constituted a loophole which could technically compel the IKG to bury any relatives of people already interred at Tor IV, regardless of the IKG's views on their belonging in the religious community, leading Feldsberg to claim that 'only the crypts count as family plots. All other graves count only as individual graves'.²⁵⁸ In light of this development, moreover, he drafted a new cemetery regulation in March 1958 which stipulated:

The graves provided by the IKG for burial primarily count as individual graves. Additional interment in these graves can only take place with approval of the IKG, which in such cases will have to take into account the existing religious prescriptions. The graves do not therefore count as family plots in the sense of the law of 25 May 1868, RGBI. 49. Art. 12.²⁵⁹

This is clear evidence that the new cemetery regulations were designed to be compatible with Austrian law while upholding Feldsberg's strict regulations regarding burial in the IKG's cemeteries. Gravesites were henceforth to be nominally as well as legislatively defined as individual graves in a ploy to circumvent the Austrian laws concerning *Beisetzungen*, interment in existing family graves. In his memo, Feldsberg emphasised the urgency of this regulation since he feared 'that we will

²⁵⁶ *An die Amtsdirektion, das Friedhofsamt, das matrikelamt, und an die Abt. f. Bevölkerungswesen*, 20 February 1958, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/1/5. The case files were at the time of writing inaccessible under Vienna's archival data protection laws.

²⁵⁷ *In Beziehung auf Begräbnisse*, <http://alex.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/alex?aid=rgb&datum=1868&page=129&size=45>, accessed 28 February 2015.

²⁵⁸ *An die Amtsdirektion, das Friedhofsamt, das matrikelamt, und an die Abt. f. Bevölkerungswesen*, 20 February 1958, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/1/5.

²⁵⁹ *An das Friedhofsamt*, 24 April 1958, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/1/5.

very soon have a trial again in which family members of other confessions will refer to the fact that, on the basis of this law, they wish an additional interment in a family plot'. On 21 May 1958, Feldsberg complained to the cemetery office because the forms for *Beisetzungen* were still not being used, suggesting that the cemetery office was conducting *Beisetzungen* as and when they were requested.²⁶⁰ He asked whether the cemetery office were 'aware of the implications of their neglect to complete these forms', stating that 'we will one day be sentenced by the court to inter *Nichtglaubensjuden* in our family plots (...) We will not be in a position to make clear to an Austrian court that family plots, even if they are family plots, do not count as family plots'.

The burial in Jewish cemeteries of individuals whose belonging to the Jewish community is contested is part of an overall pattern of *halachic* discussions in post-Shoah Europe indicative of disputes between orthodox and liberal, or between exclusive and inclusive, positions within European Jewish communities today. Regarding the reform of cemetery practices, Ernst Roth in his influential treatise stated that 'the cemetery is a communal institution. For every contested change the agreement of all those involved must therefore be sought'.²⁶¹ On the one hand, Roth remarked on the absurdity of maintaining tradition for the sake of tradition, stating that 'not everything that was declared prohibited later, during the struggle against reform, had been forbidden before', and yet on the other hand he declared that 'naturally the new prohibitions are also to be recognised with deference'.²⁶² Such ostensibly reasonable argumentation, reminiscent of Feldsberg's argumentation in the case of the dispute between Rabbi Baeck and Rabbi Weinberg discussed earlier, needs to be handled with caution. Roth was claiming, very much like Feldsberg, to agree with the arguments of reformists who pointed out that orthodox interpretations

²⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 21 May 1958,.

²⁶¹ Roth, *Halachah* [1974-5], 111.

²⁶² *Ibid*, 112.

of *Halachah* were not necessarily traditional or historical, but were in some cases modern inventions, and yet he ultimately represented the unequivocal position that such prohibitions needed to be respected without question. Simultaneously, the view expressed that the cemetery is a Jewish-communal institution, any change to which requires the agreement of each and every member, essentially handed the power of veto to any member who objected to change, and thereby enforced a strict status quo that from the outset precluded reform. Such an approach to the negotiation of the cemetery as a communal institution was at loggerheads with the IKG's successful policy of the early twentieth century of seeking compromise which allowed its cemeteries to reflect the full diversity of tastes and traditions of its membership, and to negotiate the sometimes competing interests of reform and tradition.

The experience of the Shoah shook the issue of individual belonging within the Jewish community, and of the community within Austria, down to its very foundations, challenging these very categories of 'Jewish' and 'Austrian' in a manner that resonates in communal, societal and academic discourses to this day. In the deep rift left by the genocide, a new leadership emerged within Vienna's IKG which seized the opportunity to enforce strict and hegemonic ideas concerning Jewish community, religion and peoplehood, with wide-ranging repercussions. Looking back at the restitution negotiations concerning the exhumation of bodies from mass graves, Feldsberg had insisted even in this case on defining who counted as a Jew for the purpose of reinterment. He stated that only those 'who were of the Mosaic faith' could be reinterred since 'racial theory no longer applies. Therefore, whosoever counted according to the Hitlerite laws as a Jew, but was not Jewish by religion, would not be considered for reinterment in a Jewish cemetery'.²⁶³ This exclusion affected not only those who were 'not Jewish by religion', people of other faiths who had been persecuted as Jews by the Nazi regime, but also 'irreligious' people who

²⁶³ *Aktennotiz*, 3 June 1954, AIKGW, uncatalogued.

may well have considered themselves, or been considered by their families, as Jews – albeit not religious, or orthodox, in outlook. While it is certainly desirable to eradicate the racist categories of Jewishness that had culminated in the Shoah in the first place, the post-Shoah IKG's policy defining belonging in the Jewish community, still legally united under one umbrella organisation, is also deeply contentious, for it excludes people who may well consider themselves Jewish – albeit not religious, or orthodox – including those who were persecuted as Jews and their descendants, many of whom have developed a form of Jewish identity along the lines of belonging in a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*, a 'community of fate', in the aftermath of the Shoah.²⁶⁴

The related issues of burial and belonging in the post-Shoah Jewish community has found its way into fictional literature, as in the 2003 novel *Letzter Wunsch* ('Last Request'), by Russian-born Viennese writer Vladimir Vertlib. In a fictional, post-Shoah Jewish community in Germany, the protagonist's father is denied a Jewish burial because he had converted, along with his Christian mother, under the auspices of a 'heretical' Reform Rabbi before the Shoah. Regarded by non-Jewish Germans as a Jew, by Israelis as a German, and in the local IKG as a *goy*, the man ends up being laid to rest in international waters by his despairing son, who eulogises: 'The earth has brought you no joy. Not that of your land of birth, not that of Eretz Israel nor the hallowed earth in which mother lies. I hope I am acting in your interest when I make the sea to your cemetery, your House of Life'.²⁶⁵ Although setting his fictional novel in Germany, the encounters described by Vertlib are strikingly similar to the reality of contemporary Jewish life in Vienna, his adopted home city. Vertlib kindly discussed his novel with me when I wrote to ask him whether he was aware of some of the cases discussed in this chapter and the striking similarity to Vienna's Jewish community. He replied that the novel was in fact inspired by a case in Regensburg, Germany, which took place around the year 2000.

²⁶⁴ As currently being researched in studies such as Bernstein, "Once in a while kosher".

²⁶⁵ Vladimir Vertlib, *Letzter Wunsch* (Munich: DTV, 2003), 381.

However, he also wrote that, although it was in no way his intention to write a *roman à clef* or a novel implicitly discussing the situation in Vienna, he did intend to 'discuss the Jewish identity and burial issue in Germany and Austria after 1945'.²⁶⁶ The novel is a moving portrayal of the ambivalences and difficulties of Jewish identities in post-Shoah Europe, while significantly underlining once more the gravity of the Jewish cemetery as a space in which these ambivalences are continuously negotiated.

The Impact of the Cemetery Ordinances and the Encoding of a New Communal Identity in Post-Shoah Jewish-Viennese Sepulchral Epigraphy

The changes to the cemetery ordinances, coupled with the radically altered cultural makeup of Vienna's (re-)established Jewish community, resulted in profound shifts in the encoding and reflection of identity and community in post-Shoah Jewish-Viennese sepulchral epigraphy. In a similar dynamic to that examined earlier in the section on memory at Tor IV, these codes emerged in the tensions between the prescriptive norms of IKG-enforced practices, as enshrined in the ordinances, and individual engagements with Jewishness, religiosity and belonging (or not) in post-Shoah Viennese/Austrian society. This differentiation between communally prescribed and individually chosen codes of identity and belonging were, of course, not necessarily antagonistic, indeed often complemented each other, yet there is ample evidence at Tor IV of conflicts between official conceptions of acceptable norms of self-representation and individual deviations from, even subversions of, these norms. The following section traces these patterns through an analysis of the post-Shoah *matzevot* at Tor IV, paying special attention to the epigraphy inscribed thereupon in relation to the restrictive ordinances analysed earlier. First, this analysis focusses on the (re-)constitution of communal belonging, examining in particular the IKG as a powerful point of reference in the sepulchral epigraphy. A case of special interest is the proliferation of Chassidic gravesites, and specific practices associated

²⁶⁶ Personal correspondence between Vladimir Vertlib and Tim Corbett, 6 October 2013.

with these, correlating with the general orthodoxisation evident in the post-Shoah IKG while nevertheless reflecting a distinct and unique cultural codex at Tor IV. Finally, the analysis turns to the subversion of norms in sepulchral epigraphy, often reflecting continuities with the more heterogeneous trends evident in pre-Shoah Jewish-Viennese epigraphy. At this stage, a comparison is also drawn to Tor I, the continued use of which after 1945 reflects a division of labour between Tor IV as the strikingly more orthodox cemetery, and Tor I as its corresponding liberal, sometimes even secular, counterpart.

What is immediately evident in the post-Shoah epigraphy at Tor IV is the multicultural makeup of the new Jewish community, as reflected in the wide array of languages employed, a stark contrast to the near-ubiquity of Hebrew and/or German in Vienna's older Jewish cemeteries. Russian occurs quite commonly, as a good half of the IKG membership has roots in the former Soviet Union.²⁶⁷ Hungarian is also evident, owing largely to the influx of Jewish Hungarians after the revolution in 1956.²⁶⁸ More uniquely, the *matzevah* of Yuda Arslan Saydun (1895-1965) contains a Hebrew-Turkish inscription, the Turkish part reading: 'A merchant from Istanbul, Yuda Arslan Saydun, rests here, he had many friends while he was a merchant, he had nobody when he passed away'.²⁶⁹ The numerous English-language inscriptions usually relate to members of the pre-Shoah community who went into or were born in exile. For example, the *matzevah* of Chana Urach (1907-1990) names her the 'deeply loved mother of Dr. Margit Korn, Melbourne – Australia'.²⁷⁰ The mixed German-Hebrew eulogy of Helene Hirschler (1934-2007) includes the single English-

²⁶⁷ For example on the *matzevah* of Leonid Bluvstein (1937-2009), 14-(?).

²⁶⁸ For example the *matzevah* of Maximilian Vergesslich (1914-2007), 1-(?).

²⁶⁹ *Matzevah* of Yuda Arslan Saydun (1895-1965), 14-(?). Turkish inscription kindly translated by Emin Devrim Fidan.

²⁷⁰ *Matzevah* of Chana Urach (1907-1990), (?).

language word 'survivor'.²⁷¹ A succinct example of exile and return is the *matzevah* of Edith Herzlinger (1916-2009), reading 'Vienna – Cambridge – New York – Vienna'.²⁷²

The IKG's omnipresence as a hegemonic force in the cemetery is paralleled by its obvious role as a powerful point of reference for the community in the epigraphy of the *matzevot*. An example of a religious function in the IKG can be found on the *matzevah* of Benzion Hirsch (1893-1969), naming him 'Vice President of the *chevra qadisha*',²⁷³ while an example of a secular role can be found on the *matzevah* of Alfred Kohn (1908-1964), naming him 'administrator of the hospital and retirement home of the IKG', and incidentally also including the powerful and recurring epitaph in Jewish-Viennese epigraphy: 'only he is dead who is forgotten'.²⁷⁴ The mix of references to religious and secular functions within the IKG is evidence of this institution's wide-ranging functions for and hegemony over Jewish-communal life.

Vienna's post-Shoah IKG has only had two Chief Rabbis to date, Akiba Eisenberg and his son, the present-day Chief Rabbi Paul Chaim Eisenberg. Rabbi Akiba's strict Religious Zionist legacy, which had a significant impact on the development of a homogeneous orthodoxy within the post-Shoah IKG, was emphasised upon his death in an obituary in the *Gemeinde*, in which he was quoted: 'I must ring the alarm bells and in the name of the Lord proclaim: my people is perishing without realising it! Today on the Sabbath of comfort I say to you: there is no comfort without children raised in the spirit of Judaism'.²⁷⁵ The obituary stated that Rabbi Akiba's life work 'was conditioned by his love for the Jewish people and for Zion'. Rabbi Akiba was one of the most significant personalities in the post-Shoah IKG, and one of its most crucial policy-makers in matters of religion. His *matzevah*, located amongst the graves of numerous prominent members of the new community

²⁷¹ *Matzevah* of Helene Hirschler (1934-2007), 12A-(?).

²⁷² *Matzevah* of Edith Herzlinger (1916-2009), 10-(?).

²⁷³ *Matzevah* of Benzion Hirsch (1893-1969), 18A-(?).

²⁷⁴ *Matzevah* of Alfred Kohn (1908-1964), (?).

²⁷⁵ "Oberrabbiner Prof. Dr. Akiba Eisenberg", *Die Gemeinde*, 1 May 1983, 4.

next to the *beit tahara* in Section 7, is therefore a highly significant memorial.²⁷⁶ In Hebrew he is called, befitting traditional orthodox epigraphic practice: 'MOH"R [מוה"ר, our teacher, the Rabbi] Akiba Z"L [ז"ל, may his memory be a blessing] B"R [ב"ר, son of] Chaim Eisenberg Z"L, Chief Rabbi here in Q"Q [ק"ק, the Holy Community of] Vienna', while in German he is called – rather idiosyncratically by Austrian standards of title-giving – 'Chief Rabbi Professor Dr. Akiba Eisenberg'. This is followed by a Hebrew-language eulogy constructed around the acrostic ל-ז-א-ג-ל ('Akiba Z"L'):

His work as a Rabbi was holy work and his leadership was done in faith / His voice – like an outstandingly gifted speaker – appealed to the loftiest heights of Judaism / His arms he stretched wide open to the poor and needy / A faithful husband to his wife and devoted father to his children he was all of his days / His love for the people of Israel and his country knew no boundaries / His good memory from amongst his relatives and the members of his community / Will never depart and they will always weep bitterly at his death.

As with Chief Rabbis of previous generations, some of whom we encountered in Part I, Rabbi Akiba's eulogy layers his place within 'his community' (קהלתו) with his standing in 'Judaism/Jewry' (יהדות). His community is further layered with 'the people of Israel' (עם ישראל). Yet where *am Israel* might traditionally have meant 'the Jewish people' in the sense of a religious community, and prior Chief Rabbis' eulogies might have set this in relation to the City of Vienna or belonging in Austria in one form or another, Rabbi Akiba's eulogy puts the 'people of Israel' in direct relation to 'his country' (ארצו), implying the Land of Israel. The eulogy, although layering different networks of belonging, therefore does so within an exclusively inner-Jewish context – the Jewish community in Vienna, the Jewish people, the Jewish religion, and the Land of Israel – befitting the ideology of Religious Zionism.

²⁷⁶ *Matzevah* of Rabbi Akiba Eisenberg (1908-1983), 7-13-1.

Complementing this is the *matzevah* of his wife, Eva Eisenberg (1920-2011), who according to the prescriptions of the cemetery ordinances was buried separately from her husband, in an adjacent plot, with her own *matzevah*.²⁷⁷ The Hebrew-language eulogy is constructed around the acrostic ל-א-ה-ע-ה ('Leah A" H [ע"ה, peace be upon her]'), reading:

P" N [פ" נ, Here lies buried] our dear mother, a virtuous woman / wife of the Chief Rabbi Akiba Eisenberg / Mrs. Leah daughter of Meir, A" H (...) To her parents, she was loyal and dedicated / A capable wife who in her heart always trusted her husband / Her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren benefited from her love / To the community of Vienna she was valued and respected / Her descendants mourn her death and continue in her path.

Leah is solely remembered by reference to her parents, husband, and children, receiving the epitaph 'a capable wife' (אשת חיל, from Proverbs 31:10). The creation of an individual grave with its own *matzevah*, as well as the archaic gender role conferred upon her by both the content and the language of the inscription, constitutes a resurrection of strictly religious and highly traditional commemorative practices that had become uncommon in Jewish-Viennese epigraphy by the early twentieth century.

The impact of the strict regulation of *matzevah* design and inscription as laid out in the cemetery ordinances is evident in the simplicity and uniformity of a large number of *matzevot*, albeit that the mass-manufacturing of headstones and an obvious regression in the opulence of design and inscription is readily observable in cemeteries across Europe in the last decades. The impact of the ordinances is also evident, however, in the application of orthodox practices such as the strict allocation of one gravesite with one *matzevah* per person, in various sections at Tor IV. Characteristic examples are the side-by-side graves of the married couple Willy and

²⁷⁷ *Matzevah* of Eva Eisenberg (1920-2011), 7-13-2.

Malvine Katz (died 1897 and 1971 respectively), depicted in Figure 3.12. Each *matzevah* contains the simple, by today near-ubiquitous epigraphic abbreviation P”N (פ”נ, ‘here lies buried’) and the names of the deceased in Roman characters with the dates of death in the Gregorian calendar. The omission of the dates of birth is a Jewish epigraphic tradition that had partially disappeared by the early twentieth century. Willy’s *matzevah* is adorned with the blessing hands of the *Cohenim*, befitting his surname Katz, a derivative of the Hebrew-language Q”TZ (ק”צ, *Cohen Tzadiq*), whereas its omission from the *matzevah* of his wife indicates that she was not of priestly origin. Such *matzevot*, representative of a large number of *matzevot* at Tor IV, evince a more conservative and traditional style of individual commemoration that is, moreover, explicitly Jewish and implicitly religious in character.



Figure 3.12: *Matzevah* of Willy (died 1987) & Malvine (died 1971) Katz, 7-(?).

The regulation of the inscriptions demanded by the cemetery ordinances evidently goes in tandem with these insular expressions of community. The cultural reconfiguration of Vienna’s Jewish community, coupled with the surge in its orthodox makeup, is evident in emerging epigraphic trends that represent at once a return to more archaic forms of religious expression of life and death and the introduction of

epigraphic novelties, as for example in the emergence of the epigraphic abbreviation NLB"O (נלב"ו, 'he/she passed away to his/her house of eternity').²⁷⁸ The conformity in *matzevah* design conditioned by the ordinances is especially obvious in the *matzevot* funded by the *chevra qadisha*, marked as such by reference to the organisation in the inscription, for those individuals who either had no relatives or whose families could not afford a *matzevah*. A representative example, depicted in Figure 3.13, is the *matzevah* of Paul Morgenstern (died 1986), which reads simply: 'here lies buried [P"ן] Paul Morgenstern, died 25 May 1986, *chevra qadisha*, 1987'. Such *matzevot* are evidently erected on the *yortzeit*, the first anniversary of death.



Figure 3.13: *Matzevah* of Paul Morgenstern (died 1986), (?).

²⁷⁸ As for example on the *matzevah* of Shlomo (died 1984) & Chanah (died 2008) Ratner, (?).

'The Sepulchre of Elisha': Ohelim and Chassidic Practices in the Jewish Cemeteries

The most idiosyncratic *matzevot* of Vienna's post-Shoah Jewish sepulchral culture, in design, inscription and in the practices surrounding these sites, both at Tor I and Tor IV, are the *ohelim* or grave-houses of Chassidic Rabbis, albeit that their origins in Vienna's Jewish cemeteries predate the Shoah. The adulation of these leaders of orthodox sects continuing into the present day, including those who died a century or more ago, is evident in the practices surrounding the *ohelim* of these deceased Rabbis, such as the *ohel* at Tor I belonging to Rabbi Yitzchaq Friedmann of Boyan (1850-1917) and Rabbi Menachem Nachum Friedmann of Tshernovitz (1868-1936).²⁷⁹ The door is today affixed with an obviously modern coded lock and a plaque, reading in Hebrew:

BS"D [בס"ד, With God's help]²⁸⁰ / LACB"י [לאחב"י, To our brothers the children of Israel] who come to prostrate themselves in the *tziyun* [grave-marker] of righteousness, ZYA"A [זיע"א, its righteousness protect us, Amen] / To open this the following steps should be performed: (...)

VY"R [וי"ר, And God willing] the gates of mercy will open to you to receive your prayers and you will be saved. / Please place your *quittel* in the place provided and keep the place clean.

The *ohel* is evidently a site for pilgrims to pray and leave prayer-notes (the *quittel* mentioned above) to the deceased Rabbis. The *quittelles* usually ask for healing or for prosperity on behalf of relatives, as in Chassidic tradition the Rabbis are regarded as constituting a direct link to God, a tradition derived from the story of the sepulchre of Elisha in II Kings 13:20-1. The number-lock and the sign on the *ohel*, written in Hebrew, evidently speak to an insider community of believers since, although the instructions for how to open the door (which I omitted above) are clearly stated, the

²⁷⁹ *Ohel* of Rabbi Yitzchaq Friedmann of Boyan (1850-1917) & Rabbi Menachem Nachum Friedmann of Tshernovitz (1868-1936), Tor I, 52A-14-40A.

²⁸⁰ Printed at the beginning of texts, whether on plaques, on pages of a book, or online, in orthodox practice.

assumption is that only those in command of Hebrew – and therefore only community insiders – will be able to gain access.

At Tor IV, the *ohel* of Yosef Engel (1858-1919) of Skole/Skolye, a town in Galicia and the name of this dynasty of Rabbis, is evidently a renowned site of pilgrimage.²⁸¹ There are signposts all over the cemetery stating in Hebrew: 'To the grave-marker [*tziyun*] of ADMO"R [אדמו"ר, our holy lord, teacher and Rabbi] of Skolye'. The most famous Chassidic Rabbi buried at Tor IV is Rabbi Israel Friedmann (1854-1933), the grandson of the synonymous Rabbi Israel Friedmann of Ruzhyn (1796-1850), the patriarch of a number of influential Chassidic dynasties such as Sadigorah, Boyan and Chortkov, some of whom we encountered in the *ohelim* of the interwar period.²⁸² Israel Friedmann (the younger) and his religious following formed a focal point of Viennese orthodoxy in the 1920s. His funeral in December 1933 was attended by thousands of Chassidim, 'a picture', as Joachim Riedl put it, 'that one today would at best presume to see in Brooklyn or in Mea She'arim'.²⁸³ The cultural makeup of his followers, and the significance of his *ohel* as a site of pilgrimage, is evident in the inscription on the door, reading in Hebrew, Yiddish, German and English: 'It is requested of all who pray – for the respect and holiness of the place – to close the door upon leaving the holy *ohel*'.²⁸⁴ When I visited the *ohel* on a sunny day in 2014, the room, depicted in Figure 3.14, was full of the acrid smell of burning candles, a flame still burning in the corner, evidence that this site, which is equipped with cupboards to store candles and prayer books, is a popular site of pilgrimage.

²⁸¹ *Ohel* of Yosef Engel of Skolye (1858-1919), 4-18-70.

²⁸² Steines, *Steine*, 91.

²⁸³ Joachim Riedl, *Jüdisches Wien* (Vienna: Christian Brandstätter, 2012), 78.

²⁸⁴ *Ohel* of Rabbi Israel Friedmann (1854-1933), 21-16-30.



Figure 3.14: *Ohel* of Rabbi Israel Friedmann (1854-1933), 21-16-30.

Although the Chassidic *ohelim* represent a unique sub-culture in Vienna, whose followers moreover are not limited to the Vienna IKG but evidently come from far and wide, they are reflections of the growing orthodoxisation, the increase in orthodox practices, at the cemetery at Tor IV. The cemetery has been recalibrated as a site of renewed orthodoxy and pilgrimage, an undoubtedly religious site by contrast to the cemeteries of the early twentieth century, reminiscent of the poem *Alter jüdischer Friedhof* by Alfred Werner (1911-1979) discussed in Part II.²⁸⁵

²⁸⁵ Alfred Werner, "Alter jüdischer Friedhof" in Herz-Kestranek, Kaiser & Strigl (eds.), *In welcher Sprache träumen Sie?*, 519.

Subversions of Prescribed Norms and Continuities with pre-Shoah Practices

Despite the increasing restrictions on *matzevah* design and inscription in the cemetery ordinances, some *matzevot* at Tor IV, particularly those of the cultural and intellectual elite, continued to display epigraphic traits that at once defied these regulations while simultaneously tying in with established traditions from previous generations in other cemeteries. For example, the *matzevah* of the internationally renowned opera singer Emanuel List (1891-1967) includes a musical score, expressly forbidden in the cemetery ordinances, complementing his Austrian title *Kammersänger*.²⁸⁶ The common epigraphic abbreviations P"ן and TNZB"ח, so often used at Tor IV partly from common practice but also to fulfil the requirement of the inclusion of at least two Hebrew symbols, are absent on this *matzevah*, which is instead inscribed with the Hebrew word שלום ('peace') – a parallel to another cultural celebrity's *matzevah*, that of Arthur Schnitzler (1862-1931) at Tor I.²⁸⁷ The *matzevah* of the renowned actress and director Stella Kadmon (1902-1989) reads in exclusively German language: 'Theatre Director, Professor Stella Kadmon, 1902 – 1989, owner of the Golden Decoration of Honour for Services to the State of Vienna and the Silver Medal of Honour of the Federal Capital of Vienna'.²⁸⁸ This is an increasingly rare example in Jewish-Viennese epigraphy of an individual being lauded entirely by reference to her standing for secular accomplishments in mainstream Austrian society – the many Jewish intellectuals and cultural notables in contemporary Austrian society notwithstanding, who after all still form only a very small number amongst Vienna's Jewish population. Stella's *matzevah* is nevertheless marked with a *Magen David* encasing the abbreviation P"ן.

In this respect, Tor I continues to pose a striking contrast to Tor IV as a site of Jewish-Viennese memory, one construed in more fluid, cultural terms than the

²⁸⁶ *Matzevah* of Emanuel List (1891-1967), 1-1-61.

²⁸⁷ *Matzevah* of Arthur Schnitzler (1862-1931), Tor I, 6-0-4.

²⁸⁸ *Matzevah* of Stella Kadmon (1902-1989), 16A-13-5.

explicit orthodoxy that has come to characterise Tor IV. *Rémigré* Robert Pick, in his account of his visit to the Central Cemetery in 1953, wrote of the Ceremonial Avenue that it 'used to be something like the hall of fame of Vienna's Jewry'.²⁸⁹ It continued to hold this honorary function in the years after the Shoah, as in the case of Alois Pick (1859-1945), a doctor and long-term president of the IKG in the interwar period who was originally buried in July 1945 in Section 8A at Tor IV, but was moved in July 1946 to an honorary grave in Section 6 at Tor I, in the row containing numerous individuals of significant merit to Vienna's pre-Shoah Jewish community.²⁹⁰ Similarly, the renowned writer Friedrich Torberg (1908-1979) was buried next to Arthur Schnitzler in the same row of Section 6 as Alois Pick.²⁹¹ Tor I succinctly evidences the transitions of Jewish-Austrian identity, or at least the identity of a part of the Jewish-Austrian population, through the ruptures of the twentieth century – ruptures that include progressive change, for example the emancipation of women, as well as trauma, most obviously the Shoah. A pertinent example is the *matzevah* of Walter (1908-1974) and Erna (1916-2003) Wodak, whose lives were explored in a biography locating them in the context of Jewish-Austrian exile and remigration.²⁹² Erna's father, the Rabbi Aron Mandel (1869-1929), is commemorated in German as 'Professor Dr. Aron Loeb Mandel, Rabbi of the IKG Vienna – Favoriten Synagogue', and in Hebrew:

The wise Rabbi, complete in his attributes and his deeds / Rabbi Aharon
Yehuda HaLevi / Rabbi BBHQ"ן [בבית הכנסת, in the synagogue of] Favoriten /
Faithful shepherd to his community for thirty years / He guided it in grace, his
words were the path of faith / He instructed his pupils in the best logic and in
the spirit of dissemination / He aroused enthusiasm in their hearts for the love

²⁸⁹ Pick, Vienna, 154.

²⁹⁰ *Matzevah* of Alois Pick (1859-1945), Tor I, 6-0-1.

²⁹¹ *Matzevah* of Friedrich Torberg (1908-1979), Tor I, 6-0-3.

²⁹² Bernhard Kushey, *Die Wodaks: Exil und Rückkehr, eine Doppelbiographie* (Vienna: Braumüller, 2008).

of their religion and their people / He died in good reputation at the age of sixty / To the sorrow of his family and his community.²⁹³

This is typical of the kind of layering of communities which we have encountered frequently, referencing both his secular and religious roles as Professor and Rabbi. His daughter Erna, by contrast, is commemorated simply as 'Dr. Erna Franziska Wodak née Mandel', whereas Walter is a little more elaborately named 'Dr. Walter Wodak (...) Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Secretary General for Foreign Affairs, Professor at the University of Vienna'. This *matzevah* represents the enmeshment of such Jewish-Viennese families within both the Jewish community and within Viennese and Austrian society, in this case significantly transcending the rupture of the Shoah.

In summary, Tor IV has arguably become the most powerful site of memory and community to the post-Shoah Jewish community in Vienna, rivalled perhaps only by the synagogue and community centre in the Seitenstettengasse. It has become a truly inner-Jewish space, administered exclusively by the IKG who exercise tight control over practices at the site. This, however, also underlines its unintended function as a site of contestation within the inner-Jewish dialogue continuously unfolding in this space, leading to continuous renegotiations of belonging, community and what it means to be Jewish in Vienna in the years after the Shoah. While Tor IV remains such a conflicted site of inner-Jewish dialogue, the years following the Waldheim Affair and the increasing scrutiny of mainstream Austrian narratives and collective memory resulted in the explosion onto the memorial landscape of another site of memory, embodying the contestation of dominant non-Jewish narratives of Austrian society: the Jewish cemetery at Währing.

²⁹³ *Matzevah* of Rabbi Aron Mandel (1869-1929), Walter (1908-1974) & Erna (1916-2003) Wodak, Tor I, 5B-0-7.

3.5 Restitution Part II: After Waldheim²⁹⁴

The Waldheim Affair resulted in the novel and profound introspection of Austrian society regarding its Nazi history and its involvement in the destruction of its Jewish cultural heritage. This was accompanied by a surge in engagements – political, academic and public – with Austria's Jewish heritage and with the restoration of its Jewish cemeteries. For example, a grassroots initiative founded in 1991 by non-Jewish Austrian citizens called *Verein Schalom* engaged volunteers to spend many hours over the following years clearing and documenting Austria's Jewish cemeteries.²⁹⁵ This demonstrates a trend emerging in the 1990s of recovering Austria's Jewish history and (re-)integrating Jewish-Austrian culture into Austrian history. The Jewish cemeteries were thereby reconceived as important sites of memory – of more than merely inner-Jewish memory – the upkeep of which has increasingly been adopted as the responsibility of non-Jews. The dominant ideology accompanying this trend is evident in the title of the only history of the Jewish sections of the Central Cemetery published to date, Patricia Steines' *Hunderttausend Steine: Grabmale großer Österreicher jüdischer Konfession* or 'Hundred-Thousand Stones: Grave-Memorials of Great Austrians of the Jewish Faith'.²⁹⁶ Pre-Shoah Austrian Jewry is thereby (re-)integrated into an Austrian national and cultural narrative, focussing on the intelligentsia and the revered, who were and are often invoked for their 'contributions' to Austrian culture. Commemorative projects surrounding the cemeteries are often accompanied by statements by Austrian politicians bemoaning the dilapidation of Jewish cemeteries, or by pledges of these

²⁹⁴ Parts of this section have been published in an earlier form as "Contested Memories and the Restoration of the Jewish Cemetery of Währing, Vienna" in Ruth Wodak & David Seymour (eds.), *Contested Memories: The Holocaust in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Routledge, 2015).

²⁹⁵ The result was the booklet *Wegweiser: für Besucher der jüdischen Friedhöfe und Gedenkstätten in Wien, Niederösterreich, Burgenland, Steiermark und Kärnten* (Vienna: Verein „Schalom“, 1999).

²⁹⁶ Steines, *Steine*.

politicians to restore these sites, even though these pledges have rarely resulted in action.²⁹⁷

The following section demonstrates how the desecrated cemetery in Währing has become a flagship for the debates surrounding the restoration of Austria's Jewish cemeteries, signalling deeper engagements with Austria's historical Jewish heritage and the shifting discourses surrounding Austria's self-perception of its past and present. The absence of a consensus up to the time of writing demonstrates how the media-political discourses revolving around this small Jewish cemetery continually co-create, adapt or attempt to negate the memory of Austria's Nazi and Jewish pasts. In these discourses, Währing, its condition in the summer of 2013 illustrated in Figure 3.15, has become arguably the most powerful and contested site of memory in the present Austrian memorial landscape.



Figure 3.15: The Jewish cemetery in Währing, 2013.

²⁹⁷ For example Erwin Pröll & Ernst Schreiber, "Wider der Gleichgültigkeit" in Patricia Steines, Klaus Lohrmann & Elke Forisch (eds.), *Mahnmale: Jüdische Friedhöfe in Wien, Niederösterreich und Burgenland* (Vienna: Club Österreich, 1992), 8.

Background: The Untenable Status Quo of the 1950s

In 1953, Ernst Feldsberg warned during the restitution negotiations that the IKG membership would soon begin complaining about the unacceptable status quo at Währing.²⁹⁸ He suggested that the recently founded umbrella organisation of Austrian IKGs should ‘attack the City of Vienna, which tolerates the fact that a cemetery under its administration is desecrated in such an irreverent manner’, and reiterated that ‘the IKG relentlessly sacrificed itself to preserve this cemetery. The City of Vienna in the National Socialist era (...) destroyed, devastated and desecrated the cemetery’. He concluded that ‘it is the moral duty of the City of Vienna to restore this cemetery’. Feldsberg finally pointed out that ‘we cannot even fence off the cemetery because we do not know where the wall would have to be erected. As is known, in the course of the settlement negotiations the excavated site will be offered to the City of Vienna as compensation’. This correspondence delineates all the arguments on the part of the IKG which underlie discussions surrounding the restoration of the Währing cemetery continuing to this day: the untenable dilapidation of this desecrated site of Jewish heritage, the historical culpability – and hence present responsibility – of the city council, and the necessity to involve all levels of administrative and political authority to satisfactorily resolve the situation.

In an early example of media attention to the site, the dilapidation of the cemetery was grotesquely sensationalised in an article in the *Neuer Kurier* on 30 April 1955 called *Grüfte offen, Särge aufgebrochen* (‘Graves open, coffins smashed open’).²⁹⁹ The subtitle exclaimed: ‘The targets are gold teeth, jewellery and zinc / Adolescents come night and day’. The article decried the ‘band of adolescents’ who it claimed came to the cemetery to ‘open the coffins, search for rings and other jewellery, which one did not want to take from the dead at their burial, or to break

²⁹⁸ All following citations from *An die Amtsdirektion*, 17 April 1953, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/3/1.

²⁹⁹ “Döbling: Grüfte offen, Särge aufgebrochen”, *Neuer Kurier*, 30 April 1955, 3.

gold teeth out of the skulls'. It made no mention of the recent history of the desecration of the cemetery, including the fact that so many graves lay open because of the desecrations of the *Naturhistorisches Museum* and other local institutions during the Shoah, while suggesting through the use of the present simple tense that the destructions caused by youths were a constant recurrence. Feldsberg reacted to the article by pointing out that only on one occasion had a group of teenagers opened metal coffins and sold metal parts, but were consequently detained by the police.³⁰⁰ Regarding the allegations of gold and jewellery buried at the site, he remarked that 'I myself have exhumed about 500 graves in this cemetery, graves of members of the richest families. Not once did I find a ring, a gold tooth or other jewellery.' Thereby having refuted the implicitly antisemitic content of the article, the notion that even in death Jews were laden with gold, he concluded that 'it is out of the question that this band found valuables there. The *Neuer Kurier* knows this and yet through these reports encourages other criminals to do the same at other cemeteries'. Feldsberg called on the city council to erect a wall, as had been discussed during the restitution negotiations, on the part of the cemetery expropriated during the Shoah, which is where the vandals were breaking into the cemetery. Following the restitution settlement, the city council indeed erected a wall after the IKG had exhumed and reinterred the last human remains at the site.³⁰¹ This case displayed not only the recalcitrance of the city in taking active steps to protect sites of Jewish heritage in the aftermath of the Shoah, and the knock-on effects this recalcitrance had on the further dilapidation of this site, but also the negative, even antisemitic, nature of media engagements with this site in the decades after the Shoah. The problems, however, persisted. In 1957, for example, Feldsberg complained to the police because vandals repeatedly desecrated the cemetery.³⁰²

³⁰⁰ *An die Amtsdirektion*, 4 May 1955, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/1/3.

³⁰¹ *Beschied des Vertreterkollegiums*, undated (presumably 1955), AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/3/1.

³⁰² *An das Polizeikommissariat Währing*, 28 October 1957, AIKGW, uncatalogued.

The next conflict was triggered by the abdication of the desecrated south-eastern corner of the cemetery to the City of Vienna. The settlement of 1955, as explored earlier, stipulated that ‘the IKG declares, in the case of any re-designation of this site for construction purposes through the City of Vienna, that it will bring no further claims against the City of Vienna’.³⁰³ Feldsberg saw this as a fair price to pay for the requisition of ownership over Tor I and the abrogation of financial responsibilities towards the city for this land. Just four years later, the city council redesignated the land at Währing and began construction of an apartment block on the site. This final destruction of that section of the cemetery sparked a great controversy within the IKG. Feldsberg published an article in *Die Gemeinde* in an attempt to assuage the members’ anger and to forestall any ‘whispering campaign’, stating that the last bodily remains were moved and that no more graves existed at the site.³⁰⁴ However, Tina Walzer remarked that, as late as 2002, an inquiry by the cemetery office of the IKG found that the wall separating the apartment block from the cemetery had cut through and destroyed an unknown number of graves.³⁰⁵ The city council decided in May 1962 to name the apartment block *Arthur-Schnitzler-Hof* after the ‘important Austrian writer on the occasion of his hundredth birthday’.³⁰⁶ The motive of the city council appears to have been benevolent in wishing to recognise a great and influential Austrian writer of Jewish heritage, although the minutes of the meeting make no reference to this heritage. However, the choice seems – at least in hindsight – distasteful in connection to a site of such shocking and repeated desecrations of Jewish mortal remains. Under pressure from the IKG, owing to the

³⁰³ *Öffentliche mündliche Verhandlung vor der Rückstellungskommission beim Landesgericht für ZRS Wien*, 4 July 1955, WStLA, Landesgericht f. Zivilrechtssachen, A29 – RK: 6 RK 488/55.

³⁰⁴ “Der Alte Währinger Friedhof”, *Die Gemeinde*, 26 June 1959, 5.

³⁰⁵ Tina Walzer, *Der jüdische Friedhof Währing in Wien: Historische Entwicklung, Zerstörungen der NS-Zeit, Status Quo* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2011), 85.

³⁰⁶ *Sitzung vom 2. Mai 1962*, WStLA, Gemeinderat, B25/2. Ex. – Gemeinderatsausschüsse: GRA III für Kultur.

coercement of the city council in retaining and building over this site, the city council granted a number of the flats in the new building to Jewish families.³⁰⁷

The dispute flared up again when in June 1964 Simon Wiesenthal published an article accusing the IKG of squandering its properties, suggesting that the IKG was deliberately preventing the (re-)establishment of Jewish life in Austria.³⁰⁸ He further incinuated that the IKG had sold the land at Währing on the cheap, and that the city had then capitalised on it by rededicating the land for construction purposes, all of which proved, according to Wiesenthal, 'that Jewish communal property was badly administered'. He referred to cities like Berlin and Milan which had invested in the re-establishment of Jewish culture, whereas in Vienna 'not even the cemeteries in the remit of the IKG were put in order'. The rest of the article consisted of a diatribe against the IKG, whom he labelled as 'anti-democratic and dictatorial', asking 'what politics were doing in the IKG' as a religious organisation. He said the IKG should be 'in the truest sense of the word a community, in which every Jew feels at home', instead of a political interest group. In a separate open letter, Wiesenthal bemoaned that he had been stylised as the *Kultusgemeindejäger*, the 'IKG-hunter', an allusion to his fame as the 'Eichmann- or Nazi-hunter'.³⁰⁹ Generally, Wiesenthal characterised the restitution dynamics in Austria, of which the case at Währing was a prime example, as a 'second Aryanisation' – the forced sale of Jewish property to the Austrian government.³¹⁰

Feldsberg responded in an article in *Die Gemeinde* that Wiesenthal could not possibly know about the IKG's properties and how they had been dealt with in the legal proceedings of 1948-55, and that Wiesenthal never mentioned in his article the many properties successfully restituted to the IKG, focussing only on spaces such as

³⁰⁷ *Die Wahrheit ist unbesiegbar*, draft for an article in *Die Gemeinde*, 1964, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/Rest/3/1.

³⁰⁸ "Haben wir Hochhausgrundstücke zu verschenken?", *Der Ausweg*, June 1964, 1.

³⁰⁹ "Simon Wiesenthal: Ein offener Brief", *Der Ausweg*, June 1964, 4.

³¹⁰ Adunka, *Gemeinde*, 269.

the south-eastern corner of Währing which had been surrendered in compromise with the city council.³¹¹ Wiesenthal had claimed that the IKG had been forced to exhume the last remains at the site in order to sell the land. Feldsberg retorted that the facts were turned on their head, namely that the IKG had insisted upon the exhumation as a condition for relinquishing this land. Feldsberg reiterated that the agreement to relinquish the south-eastern corner was in exchange for the cost-free ownership of the cemetery at Tor I, which he proudly claimed as a great achievement on behalf of the IKG. In other words, he stated that there was no question of the IKG squandering Jewish property; that the deal had been made with the IKG's best interests at heart. This dispute was part of what Feldsberg perceived as the repeated and 'massive' attacks by Wiesenthal against the IKG which he felt were particularly egregious since they were never accompanied by even 'one word of recognition for [its] achievements'. Feldsberg claimed that Wiesenthal was damaging the reputation of the IKG, thereby providing fodder for 'Nazi-friendly' newspapers. He went so far to imply that Wiesenthal paid only 'lip service' to Jewry and Judaism. Evidently, the argument had taken on the character of a vendetta at this stage. This public bust-up did little for the reputation of Austrian Jewry in this difficult time. Ultimately the IKG retaliated with the takeover, described by the Israeli embassy as 'carried out with great cunning', of Wiesenthal's documentation centre, a move obviously inspired by the vendetta against Wiesenthal.³¹² Wiesenthal's protests surrounding the construction of the *Arthur-Schnitzler-Hof*, however, which were echoed by many supporters within the IKG, yielded concrete results when the city council awarded a further 500,000 Schillings in compensation to the IKG.³¹³

³¹¹ "Die Wahrheit ist unbesiegbar", *Die Gemeinde*, 31 July 1964, 1.

³¹² Segev, *Wiesenthal*, 179.

³¹³ *Ibid*, 275.

Emerging Discourses after Waldheim

For a long time following this embarrassing scandal, there was little public discourse surrounding the Jewish cemeteries, with the exceptional case in the Seegasse discussed earlier. Some tremors were felt in Austrian media in the 1980s, coinciding with the Waldheim Affair, reflecting the tide of introspection beginning in Austrian society at the time, with articles on the cemeteries in ensuing years commonly including pictures of their disgraceful condition, mentioning the negative image of Austria this conveyed to foreign visitors and deploring the reluctance of Austrian politics to take initiative in these issues.³¹⁴ An article published by Patricia Steines in *Die Gemeinde* in 1991 reflected the tectonic shift taking place in Austria at the time with regards to Jewish history and heritage.³¹⁵ The cultural message underlying this interest was evident in the narrow focus on the rich and the famous, underlined by Steines' reproduction of the entire list of those 'important personalities' exhumed by the IKG in 1941, which she called the 'Who is Who' of the Währing cemetery. In terms of the 'significance and purpose' of this research, Steines mentioned the rapid deterioration of these sites and the need to document them for academic purposes, but mainly emphasised the revitalisation of the history of the 'significant personalities' of this community and its 'prosperity' which was broken during the Shoah. Such research activities were described in a 1998 article in *Die Gemeinde* as contradicting the hitherto prevalent narrative that 'all the Jews immigrated from Galicia and became rich'.³¹⁶ While it is laudable that such narratives were increasingly questioned, the 1990s nevertheless constructed new narratives that were no less problematic and are themselves often criticised today.

³¹⁴ For example "Verwilderte und verwachsene Gräber", *Die Presse*, 10 December 1984, 9; "Tod ist, wer vergessen ist", *Profil*, 21 March 1988, 74; "Unheimliche Begegnung", *Wochenpresse*, 17 November 1989, 60.

³¹⁵ "Der alte Währinger Israelitischer Friedhof", *Die Gemeinde*, 17 May 1991, 19.

³¹⁶ "Der jüdische Friedhof im Währingerpark", *Die Gemeinde*, January 1998, 33.

These projects were not solely academic in nature, and were often permeated with more or less explicit lobbying for the restoration of desecrated sites of Jewish heritage. This is evident for example in a poster project conducted around the Währing cemetery, an early engagement with its history preceding the more sustained research of later years, which stated: 'sadly a continuous and lasting maintenance is still lacking'.³¹⁷ Such maintenance, it continued, was desirable because 'on the one hand the character of the cemetery must be preserved, and on the other there is the obligation to commemorate and remember the deceased and their descendants, the victims of the Holocaust'. Another project in 1996, conducted by Tina Walzer, led to *Der Standard* and *Die Presse* running stories on the historical value but present-day dilapidation of the cemetery.³¹⁸ These cases demonstrate how grassroots action, historical research and resulting media coverage mobilised public and political discourse surrounding sites of Jewish heritage in Austria. A whole string of publications have since appeared, documenting Vienna's and Austria's Jewish cemeteries, with the focus most often on Währing as one of the most profound but also the most dilapidated sites of (Jewish) memory in Austria.³¹⁹

A significant turning point in the history of restitution in Austria occurred on 17 January 2001 with the signing of the 'Agreement between the Austrian federal government and the government of the United States of America on the settlement of questions concerning reparations and restitution for victims of National Socialism',

³¹⁷ Claudia Theune & Tina Walzer, *Entwicklung – Zerstörung – Status Quo in Der Währinger jüdischer Friedhof – Ein Ort der Erinnerung?*

http://histarch.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/ag_histarch/images/Bilder_Theune/Bilder_Waehri nger_Friedhof/Bilder_Posterausstellung/PosterWaehri ngerFriedhof.pdf, accessed 27 February 2015.

³¹⁸ "Eine „neue“ Geschichte der Wiener Juden", *Der Standard*, 06 February 1996, 7; "Gräber und Testamente bringen neues Wissen", *Die Presse*, 06 February 1996, 8.

³¹⁹ Such as Martha Keil (ed.), *Von Baronen und Branntweintern: Ein jüdischer Friedhof erzählt* (Vienna: Mandelbaum, 2007); Tina Walzer, Michael Studemund-Halévy & Almut Weinland, *Orte der Erinnerung: Die jüdischen Friedhöfe Hamburg-Altona und Wien-Währing* (Hamburg: ConferencePoint, 2010), and others cited above.

the Washington Agreement for short.³²⁰ The agreement stated, alongside the principle issues of individual compensation and communal restitution, that 'Austria will provide additional support for the restoration and maintenance of Jewish cemeteries, known or unknown, in Austria'.³²¹ This wording is vague, given the federal structure of the Austrian political landscape and the unquantified term 'additional support'. The cemeteries were thus left in limbo, resulting in a deadlock in the implementation of restoration works that continues to the time of writing.

Municipal or Federal? The 'Jurisdiction Quarrel'

The Währing cemetery falls under the jurisdiction of three political entities: the district council, the city/state council and the federal parliament. The resulting 'jurisdiction quarrel' regarding which entity is responsible persistently obstructs the implementation of restoration work.³²² Until 2006, the clause of the Washington Agreement concerning cemeteries was not further debated or acted upon. Then, the city council's role, historically and contemporarily, in the desecration and restoration of Währing took centre-stage. Following a council meeting in June, various newspapers reported that Michael Häupl (SPÖ), Mayor of Vienna, had rejected the involvement of the city council in restoring Währing, since Häupl claimed the federal government was responsible in the wording of the Washington Agreement.³²³

The council's role in the desecration of Währing is a divisive topic. After the Wannsee Conference in January 1942, the cemetery was put up for sale, the profits as usual in the 'Aryanisation' process going not towards the owner, the IKG, but in

³²⁰ *Abkommen zwischen der Österreichischen Bundesregierung und der Regierung der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika zur Regelung von Fragen der Entschädigung und Restitution für Opfer des Nationalsozialismus*, BGBl III, 121/2001, http://de.nationalfonds.org/docs/BGBl_III_Nr_121_2001.pdf, accessed 22 April 2013, hereafter Washington Agreement.

³²¹ Washington Agreement, 712.

³²² The term *Kompetenzstreitigkeit* was used for example by Eva Glawischnig-Piesczek (Green Party), *Stenographisches Protokoll, 11. Sitzung des Nationalrates der Republik Österreich, XXIV. Gesetzgebungsperiode, Donnerstag, 22. Jänner 2009*, http://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/VHG/XXIV/NRSITZ/NRSITZ_00011/fnameorig_151050.html, 200, accessed 23 April 2013, hereafter SP/11.

³²³ "Jüdischer Friedhof – Sanierung verschoben", *Kurier*, 30 June 2006, 11.

this case towards the expansion of the Theresienstadt concentration camp. The buyer was the city council, who signed the contract with Adolf Eichmann's office on 25 February 1942.³²⁴ The Nazi newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter's* Vienna edition had cheerily declared 'Vienna's recreational area secured forever', citing city council plans to eliminate the cemetery and transform the space into a park.³²⁵ Such plans occurred with the pre-Shoah council, too, as discussed in Part II, demonstrating its 'repeatedly occurring wishes' to destroy this space in part or in full, before, during and after the Shoah.³²⁶ The IKG's transformation of the cemetery into a park in 1903 was an early proactive measure to stop the council redesignating the site.³²⁷ The council's reticence in restituting the site to the IKG after 1945, and its insistence on ownership of the expropriated south-eastern portion, testifies to the post-Nazi council's wish to redesignate the site for other purposes. Plans drawn up in the crucial period 1945-55 reveal attempts to replace the cemetery with a playground, netball court, pond and drinking fountain.³²⁸ This is how defunct Christian cemeteries have been remodeled in the city, nevertheless attacking the Jewish cemetery's function as a 'House of Eternity'. The site was referred to as the 'former Jewish cemetery' in plans drawn up as late as 1985.³²⁹ These examples demonstrate how destructions in Währing, attempted and actual, pre- and post-date the Shoah. The continuing rejection of financial responsibility by the council does not address the issue of historical culpability. Its reticence in funding restoration can be read simply as reluctance to invest its own funds, as opposed to those of the federal government, towards restoration.

³²⁴ Walzer, Studemund-Halévy & Weinland, *Orte*, 8.

³²⁵ "Wiens Erholungsgebiet für immer gesichert", *Völkischer Beobachter*, *Wiener Ausgabe*, 9 January 1942, 5.

³²⁶ Walzer, *Friedhof*, 21.

³²⁷ *Antrag der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde vom 10 August 1902*, Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, AW-1460.

³²⁸ 19., *Alter Israel. Friedhof – Gärtnerische Ausgestaltung*, AIKGW, A/VIE/IKG/III/Präs/Rest/3/1.

³²⁹ Walzer, *Friedhof*, inlay.

Following the city council's abdication of responsibility for restoring Währing in June 2006, the discussion was taken up in the federal parliament. Barbara Prammer (SPÖ, 1954-2014), First President of the parliament, visited the cemetery shortly thereafter, a significant precedent of a senior Austrian politician publicly recognising the desecrated cemetery.³³⁰ Following this visit, historian Tina Walzer together with Educult, a Vienna-based organisation for education and culture, set up an initiative for Währing, the mission statement containing all the tropes evident in the publications of subsequent years, emphasising:

- 1) the cemetery as a cultural monument,
- 2) the cemetery as a site of interest for Jews and non-Jews, Austrians and non-Austrians alike, and
- 3) political lobbying to secure funds to restore Währing as a site of cultural and historical heritage.³³¹

This reflects the development of a wider and transnational dimension, as both the actors in and target audience of the discourse included Jews and non-Jews, Austrians and non-Austrians. The initiative, which for example organised school projects relating to the history of the cemetery, was sponsored by various public funding bodies, the state and federal offices of culture and education, the IKG, the Green Party and various historians. 2006 therefore marked a watershed during which campaigns were driven by a collective of politicians, educational institutions and historians. The target audience included citizens, tourists, politicians and schoolchildren. Währing continued throughout to be the focal point for the discourses surrounding the restoration of Jewish cemeteries. Initiatives, books and articles on

³³⁰ Tina Walzer, "Der Jüdische Friedhof Währing: Historische Entwicklung, Aktueller Zustand, Perspektiven", in Eva Maria Bauer & Fritz Niemann (eds.), *Währinger jüdischer Friedhof: Vom Vergessen Überwachsen* (Vienna: Educult, 2008), 18.

³³¹ *Initiative Währinger jüdischer Friedhof – Über diese Initiative*, http://www.waehring-friedhof.at/ueber_diese_initiative.html, accessed 23 April 2013.

Währing emphasised the historical and cultural importance of this place in a positive manner rather than focussing on the negative aspect of guilt concerning Austria's Nazi past and responsibility for the desecration of the cemetery. This argumentation served as an incentive for restoring the cemeteries as well as justification for spending public money. A characteristic example is the conclusion to an article by Walzer, stating: 'Jewish cemeteries number among the last remaining sites of Jewish life in Austria and testify to a vanished world, to the past of this state and to a substantial aspect of the history of Austria'.³³²

On 8 July 2007, volunteers from the American embassy arrived in Währing to cut back the overgrowth in the cemetery, a necessary conservationist measure undertaken regularly by volunteers. The *Kronen Zeitung* reported that this constituted an 'embarrassing sensation' for the city, as foreigners were voluntarily tending to an issue that the city council was adamant to ignore.³³³ It cited the city council's claim that, according to the Washington Agreement, the federal government and not the City of Vienna was responsible for the cemetery's restoration. The article concluded: 'One thing is clear, namely that tourists with Jewish backgrounds are regularly appalled when they, on the search for their roots, find such a grave-*Gstätt'n*', the last word meaning in Austrian dialect an untended meadow, a play on the word *Grabstätte* or 'grave-site'. This comment reveals the effect of the external gaze on the debate, as Austria's reputation became as significant a factor in drives towards restoration as any ostensible cultural value of the cemeteries – or atonement for the horrendous treatment of Jewish Austrians by their non-Jewish countrymen. This attitude also reflects, however, the assumption that only Jews care about these

³³² Tina Walzer, "Die jüdischen Friedhöfe in Österreich: Zustand, Entwicklung, Perspektiven", in *Zeit & Ewigkeit: Erhaltung religiöser Kulturgüter, Beiträge zur 21. Tagung des österreichischen Restauratorenverbands*, eds. Christa Hoffmann & Anke Schäning (Vienna: ÖRV, 2009), 117.

³³³ "Jüdischer Friedhof als kulturelles Erbe für Wien nicht interessant?", *Kronen Zeitung*, 10 July 2007, 19.

spaces. Considering the plethora of agents nowadays fervently involved in these debates, this view is not borne out.

Consequently, Walzer stepped up her lobbying for political awareness of the issue. Citing numerous international reports on Währing following Prammer's visit and the volunteering of US embassy employees, she questioned the commitment of Vienna's and Austria's respective governments to take a stand on the issue.³³⁴ Martha Keil, of the Institute for Jewish History in Austria, similarly cited the recent media attention but the fact that no action was being taken on a political level to implement restoration.³³⁵ The following year, Prammer contributed a short piece to an Educult-published work in which she pledged parliamentary assistance towards the restoration of the cemetery. Austrian president Heinz Fischer (SPÖ) also contributed a piece in which he referred to the great 'contributions' of the families buried in Währing.³³⁶ By 2007, politicians and parties, even the president himself, had addressed the issue and pledged assistance, while a growing number of foreign agents, Jewish and non-Jewish, participated in the discourses surrounding Währing.

A hurricane hit Vienna in early 2007, further destroying formerly intact *matzevot*. After more international media coverage, the city council donated 120,000 Euros to clear some of the paths in Währing, with a lot of the work nevertheless still being carried out by volunteers. Walzer wrote the following year that the winter and subsequent spring had all but undone this work, suggesting that a real and permanent solution needed to be found.³³⁷ In November of that year, Ariel Muzicant, President of the IKG, was cited in an article by *Die Presse* reminding the readers that

³³⁴ Tina Walzer, "Bund oder Land? Ein weiteres Jahr im Streit um die Erhaltung des jüdischen Friedhofes Währing", DAVID, <http://david.juden.at/kulturzeitschrift/70-75/75-walzer2.htm>, accessed 23 April 2013.

³³⁵ Keil (ed.), *Von Baronien*, 16.

³³⁶ Bauer & Niemann (eds.), *Friedhof*, 8-9.

³³⁷ Walzer, "Friedhof", 19-21.

Austria pays from public funds for the preservation of soldiers' graves from the Second World War. He commented:

In the absurd case this means that the grave of an SS-man is tended, but the 350,000 [graves of] Jews whose descendants were murdered have to take care of themselves. We do not only want to solve the question of the Währing cemetery, we want a contractual arrangement that regulates all 62 [sic] cemeteries. (...) In Germany the federal states have taken this over completely. We need a round table with federal states, city councils, federal government and the IKG³³⁸

Nine days later, *Die Presse* reported that the federal government had again announced its intention to resolve the restoration issue, but called the agenda put forth 'very vague'. Muzicant, infuriated, called this a 'downright breach of contract' and reiterated: 'Now the 7000 Jews remaining in Austria should also tend the 350,000 graves of their ancestors? After those, who until 1938 had tended the graves, were robbed, murdered and expelled?'³³⁹

Muzicant directly addressed the issue of historical responsibility, a topic avoided by initiatives in previous years, referring to the fact that the *chevra qadisha* and IKG since 1945 did not have the means to tend all the graves of what was prior to its destruction in the Shoah a vastly larger and more resilient IKG. Responsibility in his view therefore fell on the government, whether federal or municipal, due to its historical share in the destruction of the once self-reliant IKG. Several crucial points arose from this flurry of discourse. This was a damning statement by a leading figure in the IKG on an issue that had been reawakened by the signing of the Washington Agreement but blown up to even greater proportions by the reciprocal and persistent political lobbying and media coverage of 2006-7. This created something of a national and even international scandal, focussed largely on Währing, and putting

³³⁸ "Jüdische Gemeinde verdoppeln", *Die Presse*, 6 November 2007, 15.

³³⁹ "Erhaltung jüdischer Friedhöfe: Vage Regierungszusage", *Die Presse*, 15 November 2007, 14.

pressure on various levels of Austrian governance to create an enduring solution. The reference to Germany, which since 1957 funds the preservation of Jewish cemeteries through a combination of federal, state and IKG contributions, constituted another transnational parallel as well as an embarrassing rebuke to the Austrian state for not going as far as Germany in addressing its historic responsibility.³⁴⁰ Austria had for years maintained its victim myth by conferring onto Germany alone the responsibility for the Shoah. The comparison to Germany was a damning indictment of Austria's continuing neglect of historical responsibility, one felt acutely by Austrian survivors of the Shoah who knew all too well what role Austrians had played in their persecution. This comparison *cum* condemnation of Austrian policy by virtue of how Germany has dealt with its Nazi past has become another trope in Austrian political lobbying on the restoration issue.³⁴¹

Guilt versus Shame: The Parliamentary Debates

The parliamentary debates resulting from this flurry of discourse revealed an important dynamic. Aside from various parties employing the debate as a platform to promote their own agendas and to attack their rivals, various historical and moral links were established by the speakers reflecting the oscillation of Austrian political society between a 'guilt culture' and a 'shame culture'. These concepts, introduced into anthropology by Ruth Benedict and applied to the historical engagement with National Socialism by Thomas Kühne, differentiate between 'guilt' as derived from 'absolute standards of morality', which confers a genuine sense of wrong-doing on the basis of individual conscience, and 'shame' as a societal norm of morality whereby only the outing of responsibility leads to the recognition of wrong-doing.³⁴²

³⁴⁰ The German case is comprehensively covered in Wirsching, *Jüdische Friedhöfe*.

³⁴¹ See for example the comparison of Währing and a restored cemetery in Hamburg-Altona in Walzer, Studemund-Halévy & Weinland, *Orte*.

³⁴² Thomas Kühne, *Belonging and Genocide: Hitler's Community, 1918-1945* (Yale University Press: 2010), 29. The original concepts were outlined in Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese culture* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1946).

Guilt cultures place the onus of responsibility on the individual and his/her actions, while shame cultures obfuscate individual through collective guilt, though Kühne emphasised that both modes are present to varying degrees in every society. The parliamentary debates reflected both a genuine feeling of historical wrong-doing (guilt) and the desire to preserve Austria's reputation (shame). The debates began when the Green Party submitted petitions calling for a solution to the cemetery in Währing³⁴³ and later for all Jewish cemeteries in Austria to be restored with public funds.³⁴⁴

When the petitions were debated in parliament the following January, Eva Glawischnig-Piesczek (Green Party) made the 'moral argument' (her term) that as a direct result of the Shoah the descendants of those buried in Austria's Jewish cemeteries can no longer tend the graves of their ancestors without government support, and the 'political argument' (her term) that Währing is one of the last Biedermeier cemeteries in Europe. She followed these 'guilt' arguments with the 'shame' argument (my interpretation) that Austria made 'an international laughing stock' of itself when foreign volunteers tended to an issue that Austrian society largely ignored.³⁴⁵ She referred to the state's tending to veterans' graves, including Wehrmacht and SS graves, suggesting that these funds could be extended to include Jewish cemeteries. Political expedience, international reputation and economic benefits derivable from tourism were factored in, as the Jewish cemeteries are part of Austria's cultural heritage, the implication being that they have a wider appeal than merely to a Jewish audience. The subsequent inter-party discourse evinced the tactic employed by each party, except the Greens, whereby they ostensibly took a stand on

³⁴³ *PETITION – betreffend Erhaltung des jüdischen Friedhofs Währing*, 19/PET XXIII. GP, 9 July 2007, http://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/VHG/XXIII/PET/PET_00019/fname_083790.pdf, accessed 23 April 2013.

³⁴⁴ *ANFRAGE der Abgeordneten Glawischnig-Piesczek, Freundinnen und Freunde*, 4007/J XXIII. GP, 3 April 2008, http://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/VHG/XXIII/J/J_04007/fname_105955.pdf, accessed 23 April 2013.

³⁴⁵ SP/11, 200.

the issue while playing out party-political conflicts of interest. The Greens, supported by the SPÖ, put forward a proposal, borrowing arguments from historians and IKG representatives of previous years, whereas the ÖVP and the Austrian Freedom Party (hereafter FPÖ) used the debate to attack the SPÖ-led city government.

The FPÖ was the only party which completely rejected such proposals.³⁴⁶ This is unsurprising as the FPÖ notoriously campaigns against perceived outsiders in Austrian society and does not shy from xenophobic, antisemitic and anti-Islamic rhetoric in its politics. Jörg Haider (1950-2008), who led the FPÖ during its coalition with the ÖVP from 1999 to 2006, had decried the Washington Agreement as going too far. He employed cryptic antisemitic remarks in suggesting that Austria was being coerced by the 'East Coast', an allusion to American Jewish organisations and their apparent influence on world affairs.³⁴⁷ Despite the political infighting evident between the other parties in these debates, what emerges on the level of historical consciousness is an attempt to place Austria in the context of its Nazi past with regards to its Jewish present: in short, to create a consensus. The FPÖ is the exception, catering to the xenophobic, 'Eurosceptic', increasingly anti-Islamic and perennially antisemitic views of a considerable part of Austria's voting population. At the time of writing, it holds 25.8 percent of the vote in Vienna and 17.5 percent in the federal parliament, making it the third-largest party in Austria.³⁴⁸ Its opposition to the consensus-building evident in the discourse of Austria's other major parties represents the divisions in historical attitudes in Austria and the difficulties these present to a consensus being obtained.

Following the statement by the FPÖ, Peter Westenthaler of the Austrian Future Alliance (*Bündnis Zukunft Österreich*, hereafter BZÖ) took the floor, attacking

³⁴⁶ SP/11, 203.

³⁴⁷ Silberman, "Austria", 440-1.

³⁴⁸ *Gemeinderatswahl Wien 2010*, <http://www.sora.at/themen/wahlverhalten/wahlanalysen/grw-wien10.html>, accessed 23 May 2013; *Nationalratswahl 2008*, <http://www.sora.at/themen/wahlverhalten/wahlanalysen/nrw08.html>, accessed 23 May 2013.

the SPÖ for the shortcomings in Mayor Häupl's administration, and claiming it was 'their' government in 2001, and not the SPÖ, who had signed the Washington Agreement.³⁴⁹ A month later, a parliamentary press release declared that the BZÖ was backing the tripartite financial model, thereby putting itself officially behind the commitment to devising a final restoration agreement.³⁵⁰ The BZÖ, a splinter party although holding seats in the federal and various state governments, was founded in 2005 by Haider following a schism in the FPÖ. Westenthaler, like Haider, has on occasion found himself embroiled in legal cases, for example employing anti-Islamic rhetoric.³⁵¹ That the BZÖ, the brainchild of Haider and a considerably right-wing party, put itself entirely behind the restoration of a Jewish cemetery is something of an about-turn for its image and could be viewed as an attempt to distance itself from the antisemitic credentials of its former brethren in the FPÖ. This furthermore reflects a trend in Austria in recent years where the *Feindbild* is increasingly shifting from the Jew to the Muslim.³⁵² Westenthaler was obviously, considering Haider's opposition to the Washington Agreement, generously reinterpreting history by claiming that the BZÖ in any way takes credit for the agreement. In fact, the international condemnation of Haider's succession to the coalition in 1999 contributed to the wish of the dominant ÖVP to sign the deal, not to mention that Haider himself lived on a 1500-hectar property that had been 'Aryanised' from Jewish owners and then sold to his grand-uncle at a 'throwaway price'.³⁵³ The leadership of the BZÖ perhaps realised that desecrated sites of memory by their very presence ignite more controversies in the long run than if they are, as happened in Germany, simply restored.

³⁴⁹ SP/11, 204.

³⁵⁰ *Parlamentsskorrespondenz Nr. 118 vom 25.02.2009*, http://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/PR/JAHR_2009/PK0118/, accessed 23 April 2013.

³⁵¹ See for example *Westenthaler und die Halbmonde*, <http://news1.orf.at/060908-3675/index.html>, accessed 23 April 2013.

³⁵² Rudolf de Cillia, "„Ich bin verliebt in mein Österreich“: Die diskursive Konstruktion österreichischer Identität in zwei Gruppendiskussionen" in de Cillia & Wodak (eds.), *Gedenken*, 163-4.

³⁵³ Stuart Eizenstat, *Unvollkommene Gerechtigkeit: Der Streit um die Entschädigung der Opfer von Zwangsarbeit und Enteignung* (Munich: Bertelsmann, 2003), 358-9.

In January 2010, a parliamentary press release stated that a parliamentary majority, excluding only the FPÖ, had agreed to the tripartite model, and that a national fund was to be set up to begin work.³⁵⁴ By November, the framework for the funds had basically been agreed. In their closing statements, three parties (Green Party, SPÖ and ÖVP) referred explicitly to the Shoah and the Second World War, with all five parties declaring the historical significance of this bill. The FPÖ, despite having voted against the bill, allowed itself to observe that ‘this has taken ten years, despite all declarations to its importance and how essential it is for Austria and Austria’s reputation in the world’, underlining its concern with Austria’s shame over Austria’s guilt.³⁵⁵ The most interesting statement was made by the BZÖ, claiming ‘that the crimes of the twentieth century do not only relate to our state but also exist in other countries in the EU’, explicitly referring to the crimes, alleged and actual, of the Beneš decrees in Czechoslovakia, the AVNOJ decrees in Croatia and the Huda Jama massacre in Slovenia.³⁵⁶ Thereby Austria’s long overdue assumption of responsibility for its historical crimes was relativised against crimes committed against ethnic Germans and/or Austrians in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. This relativisation calls into question the sincerity of the BZÖ’s commitment to Austria’s coming to terms with its Nazi past, as it also displayed the tendency of ‘setting German war crimes against Allied atrocities’ which, as a DöW study into right-wing extremism in Austria demonstrated, is one of the pillars of revisionist thinking in Austria.³⁵⁷ The BZÖ’s interest in restoration was therefore highly pragmatic: to protect Austria’s international image and to differentiate itself from the FPÖ who had resisted every attempt to negotiate an agreement.

³⁵⁴ *Parlamentsskorrespondenz Nr. 27 vom 21.01.2010*,
http://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/PR/JAHR_2010/PK0027/, accessed 23 April 2013.

³⁵⁵ *Stenographisches Protokoll, 83. Sitzung des Nationalrates der Republik Österreich, XXIV. Gesetzgebungsperiode, Mittwoch, 17 November 2010*,
http://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/VHG/XXIV/NRSITZ/NRSITZ_00083/fname_201894.pdf, 81, hereafter SP/83, accessed 22 April 2013.

³⁵⁶ SP/83, 90.

³⁵⁷ Bailer & Neugebauer, *Right*, 25.

The final draft of the law for the creation of a national fund draft was voted in on 17 November 2011.³⁵⁸ In 2012, the federal government and IKG were pressing ahead with restoration works, despite resistance from various municipal councils, notably in Vienna. This was the focus of an appeal by the Green Party in March 2012, commending councils in the Burgenland for their commitment while criticising Vienna for resisting this work.³⁵⁹ However, by the time of writing, restoration works appear to have stalled again, with nothing having changed in the status quo at Währing. The status of the restoration works can be viewed on the IKG's website.³⁶⁰ This on-going debate does not mean that the issue can be protracted forever: the conservationist assessment of the cemetery at Währing is that the damage is increasingly irreversible, and there as little as ten to twenty years remain before the *matzevot* have decayed beyond repair. This leads to the question, as conservators Martin Pliessnig and Barbara Riedl asked, to what extent the 'diverse existent traces of secondary interferences, that have so dominantly inscribed themselves on the material of the cemetery, should form a part of the future memorial'.³⁶¹ The question, in other words, is to what Währing should be a memorial – to the pre-Shoah glory of Viennese Jewry, or to post-Shoah Austrian denial and neglect? Despite the tendency of conservation initiatives to emphasise the former, it seems increasingly unlikely that the two can be disentangled. Währing will therefore likely remain Austria's most contested site of Jewish memory for the foreseeable future.

³⁵⁸ The full draft of the law is published under *Beschluss des Nationalrates*, http://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/VHG/XXIV/BNR/BNR_00304/fname_199642.pdf, accessed 23 April 2013.

³⁵⁹ *Anfrage der Abgeordneten Albert Steinhauser, Freundinnen und Freunde*, 1 March 2012, http://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/VHG/XXIV/J/J_10907/fnameorig_245421.html, accessed 23 April 2013.

³⁶⁰ *Sanierung der jüdischen Friedhöfe Österreichs*, <http://www.juedische-friedhoeefe.at/>, accessed 19 June 2015.

³⁶¹ Martin Pliessnig & Barbara Riedl, ןימלע-תיב [sic] – *Haus der Ewigkeit?* in *Der Währinger jüdischer Friedhof – Ein Ort der Erinnerung?* http://histarch.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/ag_histarch/images/Bilder_Theune/Bilder_Waehri nger_Friedhof/Bilder_Posterausstellung/PosterWaehri ngerFriedhof.pdf, accessed 27 February 2015.

3.6 Conclusion

יהושע ד' ז': והיו האבנים האלה לזכרון, לבני ישראל – עד-עולם.

And so these stones shall serve the people of Israel as a memorial for all time

(Joshua 4:7)

This chapter examined how the significance of the Jewish cemeteries as sites of heritage, of ancestry, and of memory was deepened profoundly by the rupture of the Shoah. As some of the only remaining sites of Vienna's vast pre-Shoah Jewish heritage, and simultaneously some of the only inner-Jewish spaces in the post-Shoah Austrian landscape, the cemeteries became all the more ardently invested in as memorial sites, their stones standing mutely to 'serve the people of Israel as a memorial for all time'. And yet, as Josef Hayim Yerushalmi commented, 'not the stone, but the memory transmitted by the fathers, is decisive if the memory embedded in the stone is to be conjured out of it to live again for subsequent generations'.³⁶² Memory is dynamic, constituting the link between the present and the past, the ancestral link so significant to Jewish culture, especially following its widespread effacement in the Shoah. The *matzevot* are meaningless if the ancestral ties they infer are not continuously revived in memory. The cemeteries, in this view, are operative spaces for the performance of this memory work, conjuring up the memory of the past in dialogue with the present to create meaning for the future. Yerushalmi commented that there appears to be a crisis in Jewish memory, as though Jews today 'seem to await a new, metahistorical myth'.³⁶³ At the cemetery in Tor IV, we see the attempts to (re-)construct such a metahistorical myth through the invocation of ancestry and the creation of a narrative reaching from the *Torah* across the abyss of the Shoah and into the present day. Here, the cemetery has truly become 'the Place of their Fathers' Sepulchres'. As Ernst Feldsberg repeatedly

³⁶² Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 10.

³⁶³ *Ibid*, 98.

stated in reference to a *matzevah* inscription in Währing: 'Those are dead who are forgotten / We do not forget the dead! / The past remains / Connected through the present with the future!'³⁶⁴ Moreover, engagements with Vienna's Jewish cemeteries have deepened considerably, extending well beyond the small post-Shoah Jewish community to include a complex network of agency comprising local and foreign, Jewish and non-Jewish agents, taking an interest in the cemeteries for political, cultural, religious, touristic and other reasons, reflecting once more the deepened significance of the cemeteries as urban spaces in Vienna's memorial landscape.

Simon Wiesenthal once commented that 'the Nazis lost the war, but we lost the postwar period', a sentiment which holds true at least for the compensation of the victims of National Socialism, although it is not clear which 'we' Wiesenthal was referring to – the Jewish community, the community of victims more generally, or Austrian society.³⁶⁵ Despite the later turnaround in Austrian attitudes towards the past and the consequent policies of its government regarding compensation, this tardy restitution was woefully inadequate: only half of the promised payments had been made by 2008, by which time many survivors had passed away, leading critics to remark that, as in the early days after the Shoah, restitution seemed to have been "drawn out" not only by coincidence'.³⁶⁶ The arguments by successive Austrian governments since 1945 that there were no sufficient funds for restitution and compensation have revealed themselves retrospectively as falsehoods, since the Austrian government in those early days spent some 36 million Schillings compensating the 'victims' of denazification.³⁶⁷ The history of restitution in Austria can thus be viewed as an extension of the history of Nazi crimes, what Günter

³⁶⁴ *Vergessene Gräber*, undated (presumably 1958), AIKGW, uncatalogued. The first time he cited this was in "Tod ist, wer vergessen ist", *Die Gemeinde*, November 1948, 7.

³⁶⁵ Cited in Segev, *Wiesenthal*, 9.

³⁶⁶ Rudolf de Cillia & Ruth Wodak, "Restitution: Yes, but..." in Ruth Wodak & Gertraud Auer Borea (eds.), *Justice and Memory: Confronting Traumatic Pasts: An International Comparison* (Vienna: Passagen, 2009), 203.

³⁶⁷ Bailer, "Victims", 108.

Bischof described in 1997 as 'one of the darkest, most immoral, and least known chapters of Austrian post-war history'.³⁶⁸ The efforts towards restitution since 1997 will never compensate for the many victims who died before being acknowledged. Similarly, no amount of hand-wringing over the Jewish cemeteries can undo the permanent damage that was caused to them, not only under Nazi governance, but by the better part of a century of resistance by Austrian governance and society to rectify this damage. Viennese Shoah-survivor Ruth Klüger's observation that 'there is always a wall between the generations, but here there is barbed wire, old, rusty barbed wire', is thus reminiscent of the irreconcilability of the past and the present, like the old, rusty barbed wire that encloses the Jewish cemetery in Währing.³⁶⁹

Vienna's Jewish cemeteries have since their creation served as ancestral sites of memory, as sites of memory for the Jewish community and the peaks and troughs of its long and tumultuous history in Austria. Ever the 'Place of their Fathers' Sepulchres', their poignancy as sites of memory has become most profoundly accentuated in the aftermath of the Shoah, as Viennese poet Gertraude Portisch (born 1920) eloquently surmised in a poem on ancestry and the Jewish cemetery:

We / We are / We are here / We are here as memory. / Why do you weep? /
The names that you see are eternal. / How small is your faith! / We guard the
secrets, yours too! / We are the beginning and the end. / In our lap sleeps
time. / Weep no more and know: / There are other walls / from other times /
with other names / in other scripts. / They too are unforgotten – eternal.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁸ Bischof, "Introduction", 9.

³⁶⁹ Ruth Klüger, *Weiter Leben: Eine Jugend* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 1992), 72.

³⁷⁰ Gertraude Portisch, "Prag – Der jüdische Friedhof I" in Herz-Kestranek, Kaiser & Strigl (eds.), *In welcher Sprache träumen Sie?*, 380.

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Vienna's Jewish cemeteries are some of the most potent sites for the construction, negotiation and contestation of memory of Austria's Jewish heritage, and all the profound achievements and ruptures associated therewith, to survive in the present cityscape. These sites evince the perennially powerful discourses concerning culture, community and belonging both within the Jewish community and within Viennese and Austrian society that continue into the present day. They continuously invoke the question as to what memories or narratives are unfolding in these sites, shaped by the multilateral engagements with them by a complex network of agency, Jewish and non-Jewish, local and foreign, national and transnational.

A powerful illustration of the conflicted narratives invoked by engagements with the Jewish cemeteries in the present day is the contrast posed between Tor I and Tor IV, the two largest and most frequently visited Jewish cemeteries in Austria. Numerous restoration projects, large and small, spurred by a wide array of Jewish and non-Jewish actors, have taken place at Tor I in the last quarter of a century, underlining the recognition of its profound cultural and historical significance as a site of Jewish, Viennese and Austrian memory, and transforming it into one of the best-preserved and most accessible Jewish cemeteries in Austria. To date, the City of Vienna has restored the 39 honorary graves in its care at Tor I, including the prominent graves at the entrance to the Ceremonial Avenue of notables such as Adolph Fischhof (1816-1893) and Salomon Sulzer (1804-1890) discussed in Part I.¹ One of the most impressive projects has concerned the restoration and on-going preservation of the memorial to the Jewish soldiers of the First World War in Section 76B by the *Österreichisches Schwarzes Kreuz* (ÖSK), a veterans' organisation dedicated to maintaining soldiers' graves in Austria and the graves of Austrian

¹ *Zentralfriedhof Tor I*, <http://www.juedische-friedhoefe.at/index.php?id=50>, accessed 29 April 2015.

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soldiers abroad.² An unusual and conspicuous event took place at the memorial on 27 June 2006, organised by Vienna's *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde* (IKG) and the Vienna Military Command of the Austrian Armed Forces. The event was attended by 180 officers and soldiers of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) in coordination with a group called *עֵדִים בְּמַדְיָם* ('Witnesses in Uniform'), founded to educate IDF soldiers about European Jewish history and the destruction of European Jewry which takes its participants on tours of sites of Jewish heritage and persecution in Europe.³ The event featured speeches by the heads of the visiting delegations, a recitation of the mourners' *qaddish* by Vienna's Chief Rabbi Paul Chaim Eisenberg, the lighting of a memorial flame by a Shoah survivor, and the performance of the Austrian and Israeli national anthems, as depicted in Figure 4.1.

Image removed from electronic version for copyright reasons – TC

Figure 4.1: *Gedenkfeier für die im Ersten Weltkrieg gefallenen und im Holocaust getöteten jüdischen Soldaten Wiens, 27 June 2006, photographs kindly provided by the ÖSK.*

² Martin Senekowitsch, *Ein Ungewöhnliches Kriegerdenkmal: Das jüdische Heldendenkmal am Wiener Zentralfriedhof* (Vienna: Militärkommando Wien, 1994).

³ Martin Senekowitsch, *Ich hatt' einen Kameraden, Österreichisches Schwarzes Kreuz Kriegsgräberfürsorge*, Vol. 123, Nr. 2 (2006).

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The memory of the Jewish soldiers who fought for the multicultural Habsburg state a century ago were thereby mobilised through appeal to two states and their respective armies, the Second Austrian Republic and the State of Israel, both of which were founded after the Second World War and the Shoah, and both of which struggle profoundly with the negotiation of their national identities in the ethereality of their continuity with a national past. This event highlighted the continuing permeability of Jewish-Viennese identity and memory, which was here (re-)integrated into an Austrian political and historical narrative while simultaneously the 'Jewishness' of the site was adapted to an Israeli political and historical narrative. The invocation of Jewish-Viennese memory in the context of the Habsburg past in the name of the Second Austrian Republic and specifically by the Austrian Armed Forces is highly ambiguous considering the problematic history of the state and its military and their historic entanglement in Austrofascism and National Socialism, the Austrian Armed Forces having also been one of the main opponents to the recently created but deeply contested Memorial for the Victims of Nazi Military Justice in Vienna. Despite the porousness of the memory invoked at Tor I, however, the restoration and maintenance of grave-memorials of Jewish cultural personages and the repeated annual commemorative events for the Jewish soldiers of the Habsburg army held by the ÖSK evidently function to invoke the cemetery as a site of both Jewish and Viennese or Austrian memory, performed by both Jewish and non-Jewish agents.

By contrast, recent memorial projects at Tor IV continue to emphasise a particularist sense of Jewishness and Jewish belonging, as in the memorial to the fallen soldiers of the IDF, erected adjacent to the *beit tahara* in 2000 and depicted in Figure 4.2. A powerful contradistinction of patriotism to the soldiers' memorial at Tor I, this reflects the present-day IKG's conflicted sense of belonging, torn between Austria and Israel. The memorial, conceived for the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the State of Israel, was designed to replicate the contours of the new

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state, with the Palestinian territories demarcated therein, framed by 24 Hebrew given names, male and female, symbolic of the fallen soldiers.⁴ The inscription includes a reference to II Samuel 1:23, 'They were swifter than eagles, They were stronger than lions', a common epitaph on Jewish war memorials which can also be found on the soldiers' memorial at Tor I. The memorial is accompanied by two photomontages of the IDF inside the *beit tahara*. The performance of memory and the concurrent ambiguity of Jewish-communal belonging evident at these memorials at Tor I and Tor IV illustrates that memory is evidently still evolving in Vienna's Jewish cemeteries, while the divisions between an inner-Jewish discourse, particularly those reflecting the IKG's Religious Zionism, and broader societal discourses attempting to (re-)integrate Austria's Jewish heritage, remain deeply pronounced.



Figure 4.2: Memorial for the fallen soldiers of the IDF, 1948-1998, next to the *beit tahara*.

⁴ "Ein Denkmal für die gefallene Zahals", *Die Gemeinde*, June 2000, 4.

Conclusion

This thesis has presented Vienna's Jewish cemeteries as sites of conflicted constructions and negotiations of Jewish communal belonging and cultural identity in Viennese society. Drawing on and complementing an evolving literature on Jewish history in Central Europe, I have attempted to demonstrate how 'Jewishness' has been historically negotiated in Vienna's Jewish cemeteries in an interactive relationship with a concomitantly negotiated sense of 'Viennese' and/or 'Austrian' culture and society. The Jewish cemeteries, as physical sites in the urban landscape, and as sites of remarkable continuity in an extremely anfractuous historical meta-narrative, have both facilitated the expression of these historically negotiated patterns of belonging while constituting sites of their perennial contestation. They have moreover undergone significant recalibrations in popular imagination as social spaces through the course of their history. Part I illustrated the emergence of the four Jewish cemeteries in the Viennese cityscape in the context of the city's long and tumultuous passage from the medieval into the modern era, focussing on the thousands of *matzevot* contained in these sites as material and cultural artefacts of profound significance for the construction and negotiation of a sense of community and of patterns of belonging in Jewish and/or Viennese society. This attempt to reflect both the heterogeneity of the *matzevot* as well as the *longue durée* of their historical development allows for new insights into the complex evolution of Jewish-Viennese sepulchral culture and, by extension, the significance of the cemeteries as sites of culture, memory and community reflecting the enmeshment of successive Jewish generations in the social, cultural and political fabric of an emerging Viennese society. This was most pronounced in the emergence of a cultural elite of largely Jewish background who played a definitive role in the formation of Viennese and Austrian culture more broadly. This history of the development of individual and communal patterns of culture and belonging was decisive for the cemeteries and their history under National Socialism, in the context of the Shoah and the systematic destruction of Jewish peoples and cultures in Europe. Part II demonstrated how the

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cemeteries, as some of the most profound physical testaments to the historical and cultural enmeshment of Viennese society, therefore presented themselves as significant theatres for the destructive revision of Viennese culture that was to accompany physical genocide during the Shoah. Moreover, this section revealed the recalibration of the cemeteries as sites of a profound inner-Jewish discourse of belonging and heritage, as bastions of memory when this memory was threatened with extermination. Although not unique in the history of the city with its manifold instances of violent persecutions of Jews and destructions of Jewish sites of heritage, the Shoah both through its magnitude and its ponderous presence in living memory constitutes the most profound rupture in the modern history of the cemeteries as of Vienna's Jewish history more broadly. Part III located the surviving Jewish cemeteries in the context of the painful re-establishment of Jewish life in Vienna after the Shoah and in relation to the problematic constructions of national and historical narratives in the Second Austrian Republic. This final part of the thesis reflected numerous schisms in the fabric of post-Shoah Austrian society, in the broad division between Jewish and non-Jewish narratives of the recent Nazi past, as well as in the deep conflicts within the new emerging Jewish community, demonstrating that belonging in the present and memory of the past are deeply contested both in inner-Jewish discourses as in broader societal discourses in Austria more generally.

This thesis presents the first integrated narrative covering all of Vienna's Jewish cemeteries, including an analysis of the thousands of *matzevot* contained therein, and their histories from the Middle Ages to the present day. The limitations of time and space in the presentation of this work necessarily entailed a precise focus on a small number of salient connections across this long history, to the neglect of others. The analysis of the *matzevot*, the most important and original facet of this work, pragmatically focussed on a range of examples illustrating the development of codes of belonging and community. This sepulchral epigraphy deserves much greater study in the future, which could facilitate a more sustained quantification as

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well as the inclusion of more varied thematic facets such as the development of personal and familial discourses of commemoration vis-à-vis the communal discourses analysed here, or of the gendering of commemoration, a topic which I touched on in this work but which would be deserving of a sustained analysis in its own right. Such a microcosmic study as this would moreover lend itself well to numerous comparative analyses, which could take the form of a comparison between Jewish, Christian or other sepulchral cultures, of a transnational comparison of Jewish cemeteries, or of a comparison between rural and urban Jewish cemeteries, for example, as this study evidently focussed on an exceptionally large and affluent community. The history of desecrations and destructions could be embedded within a broader analysis of grave vandalism, grave robbery and iconoclasm, for example, as well as within comparative analyses of cultural genocides in other contexts. To name a last, but not final, example, the Jewish cemeteries as sites of memory could be embedded, or reintegrated as it were, into a broader memorial study of the Viennese cityscape, this fascinating canvass of evolving narratives and memories which was the starting point for my interest in this research in the first place.

This thesis offers a compressed picture of a long and convoluted history defined through incessant vicissitude, of which discontinuity and the successive ruptures of modern Austrian and Central European history are as characteristic as is the evident longevity and deep enmeshment of Jews and Jewish culture within this history. I have emphasised throughout this work the persistent mutability of the patterns of culture and belonging in Vienna and in Vienna's Jewish community, and of the perception and encoding of the cemeteries as social spaces and 'Jewish' spaces in popular perception, in an attempt to allow for an open and nuanced engagement with the notions of Jewish and Viennese culture and their construction and negotiation in the Jewish cemeteries. We end, therefore, not with a final conclusion, but rather with a snapshot or a 'status quo' of Vienna's Jewish cemeteries as they stand in 2015, in the knowledge that the manifold social, political

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and historical discourses surrounding these spaces will continue to develop into the future. As Austria grapples today with its conflicted histories of cultural genesis alongside cultural genocide, faced with perennial issues of immigration and social change and the challenges these pose to the country's social cohesion and national self-understanding, the city's grand yet partially still dilapidated Jewish cemeteries evidently continue to exert a powerful presence in politics and society, as sites of negotiation and contestation of Jewish belonging in modern Austria and of the role and meaning of Austria's Jewish history in the present day. These houses of death remain as some of the most significant houses of life, as testaments to the life of Jews in Vienna, to survive into the present day, as houses of eternity, providing for Vienna's Jews the mnemonic and physical link between the past and the present, here, in the houses of their fathers' sepulchres.

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Pereyra, Sara (died 1746).

Wertheim(er), Rabbi Shimshon (Samson) (1658-1724).

St. Marx

Fromm, Joseph (1803-1855).

Kotschy, Josef (1790-1858).

Lemberger, Josef (1782-1858).

Mayer, Elisabeth (1815-1859).

Schönmann, Anna (1802-1859), Maria (1814-1870) & Mathias (1799-1874).

St. Stephen's Cathedral

Himlreich, Iacoben (died 1570), fourth gravestone to the left of the porch.

Khobler, Ernest Sewastian (date unknown), fourth gravestone to the right of the porch.

Lindtner, Wolffgang (died 1556) & Lindtnerin, Juliana (died 1561), second gravestone to the right of the porch

Müllner, Achatzy (died 1539) & Bluemb, Wolff (died 1570), seventh gravestone to the right of the porch.

Prugl, Walburch (died 1573) & Georg (died 1609), fifth gravestone to the right of the porch.

Tor I

Adler, Emil (1865-1941), 6-19A-9A.

Bauer, Moritz (1840-1905), 19-1-83.

Bloch, Heinrich (1841-1903), 7-30-44.

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- Fischhof, Adolph (1816-1893), 5B-1-3.
- Fleischer, Max (1841-1905), 5B-35-85.
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Schnitzler, Arthur (1862-1931), 6-0-4.
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Tor IV

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bat Menachem, Chanah (died 1998), 21-(?).
bat Yehuda, Chanah (died 1945), 22-(?).
Blumenthal and Czollak families memorial (1940-4), arcade right of the entrance.
Bluvstein, Leonid (1937-2009), 14-(?).
Braun, Rudolf (1869-1925), 2-3-3.
Brüll, Josef (1889-1941), 20E-1-4.
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