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“Was ich den Juden war, wird eine kommende Zeit besser beurteilen ...”

Myth and Memory at Theodor Herzl's Original Gravesite in Vienna¹

Abstract

Theodor Herzl is mostly remembered as the founder of the Zionist movement and a significant forebear of the State of Israel, where his memory thrives today. This article posits Herzl's original gravesite in Döbling, Vienna, as instrumental to the construction of Herzl's legacy through the first part of the twentieth century, when it was used by Jewish community functionaries and Zionist organisations to mobilise a variety of political agendas. By contrast to Herzl's new burial site in Jerusalem, the now empty grave in Döbling constitutes a powerful alternative *lieu de memoire*, a counterbalance to the manner in which Herzl's life and memory are conceived in Israel.

Theodor Herzl (1860–1904) today enjoys the greatest familiarity in Israel, where he is called *chozeh hamedinah*, ‘the visionary of the state’. The city of Herzliya is named in his honour, and there is a Sderot Herzl (Herzl Boulevard) or a Rechov Herzl (Herzl Street) in just about every city, town and village in the country. Tel Aviv, Israel's cultural capital, is dubbed after the Hebrew title of Herzl's 1902 utopian novel *Altneuland*, in which he outlined his vision of a Jewish State.² Last, but certainly not least, Israel's vast national memorial complex in West Jerusalem, including Yad Vashem, its official Shoah memorial and museum, is named Har Herzl, Mount Herzl, atop which Herzl's mortal remains today lie under a sleek marble monument located in the national cemetery. Images of Herzl abound throughout the country, whether in iconic photographs such as his portrait hanging over David Ben-Gurion at the Declaration of Independence on 14 May 1948, or in graffiti found in the back streets of Tel Aviv's Neve Tzedek neighbourhood. At a symposium to mark the centenary of the publication of Herzl's momentous 1896 work *Der Judenstaat*,³ Israeli journalist and peace activist Uri Avnery characterised the omnipresence of this *fin-de-siècle* dramatist-cum-visionary as follows: “His picture hangs on our walls, but hardly anyone knows who he really was.”⁴

1 This article emerged from a postgraduate seminar held at Lancaster University in November, 2013, and a research seminar held at the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI) in March 2015. I thank all participants in Lancaster and Vienna for their thought-provoking contributions, as well as the anonymous reviewers of the first draft of this article for their pertinent and encouraging suggestions.

2 Theodor Herzl, *Altneuland*, Leipzig 1902.

3 Theodor Herzl, *Der Judenstaat: Versuch einer modernen Lösung der Judenfrage*, Leipzig/Vienna 1896.

4 Cited in Theodor Herzl Symposium Wien: 100 Jahre „Der Judenstaat“, Vienna 1996, 87.

Herzl: Man and Myth

The chasm between Herzl the man and Herzl the myth is vast, and the story of how an Austro-Hungarian feuilletonist, a literary dandy of modest renown based in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, became the figurehead of one of the most improbably successful yet deeply contested movements of the twentieth century, is a remarkable tale that has perennially captured the fascination of contemporaries and historians alike. Even the epithet most commonly attributed to Herzl – ‘founder of the Zionist movement’ – is not necessarily or completely accurate. As Walter Laqueur remarked in his seminal history of Zionism: “Zionism, according to a recent encyclopaedia, is a worldwide political movement founded by Theodor Herzl in 1897. Equally it might be said that socialism was founded in 1848 by Karl Marx.”⁵ The principle of a Jewish national movement, and the term ‘Zionism’, had already been developed years before Herzl’s *Judenstaat*. Jewish pioneers were establishing settlements in Palestine long before Herzl ever conceived of championing Jewish nationalism, while effective international action towards the establishment of a Jewish State did not get properly going until years after Herzl’s untimely death.

In fact, during his lifetime, Herzl’s ideas were often not taken seriously, and the man himself was frequently dismissed as an idealist and a dreamer, as a dramatist given to flights of fancy. Arthur Schnitzler, for example, one of Austria’s preeminent modern writers whom Herzl admired greatly, noted in his diary on 11 September 1894: “I actually do not tolerate Herzl too well; his ponderous speaking with those big eyes at the close of every sentence irritates me.”⁶ When, in 1897, Herzl published his play *Das Neue Ghetto* through his Zionist periodical *Die Welt*,⁷ addressing the hopelessness of the ‘Jewish Question’ in post-emancipation Europe, Schnitzler noted simply and sardonically: “Herzl novella for *Die Welt*. Disgust.”⁸ Although Herzl almost single-handedly mobilised the first mass-movement of Zionists in the Basel Congress in 1897, he quickly invited dismissive reactions from leading Zionists, too. Ahad Ha’am, for example, who went on to pioneer the Cultural Zionist movement, wrote in the aftermath of the Congress:

“Dr. Herzl, it is true, said in the speech mentioned above that ‘Zionism’ demands the return to Judaism before the return to the Jewish State. But these nice-sounding words are so much at variance with his deeds that we are forced to the unpleasant conclusion that they are nothing but a well-turned phrase.”⁹

Herzl’s nebulous persona, and the manner in which his myth has posthumously been elevated to become the very symbol of the Zionist movement and of the history of the modern State of Israel, has elicited widespread attention from admirers and detractors, contemporaries and successors.¹⁰ His life has been the focus of numerous

5 Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, New York 1972, 40.

6 Arthur Schnitzler, *Tagebuch 1893–1902*, Vienna 1989, 87.

7 Theodor Herzl, *Das Neue Ghetto*, Vienna 1897.

8 Schnitzler, *Tagebuch*, 265.

9 Ahad Ha’am, *The Jewish State and Jewish Problem*, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/haam2.html> (30 July 2015).

10 A collection of multifarious contemporary reactions to Herzl was published after his death by Tulo Nussenblatt, *Zeitgenossen über Herzl*, Brno 1929.

biographies,¹¹ he has been discussed in numerous works on Zionism,¹² and, in recent years, scholars, intellectuals and politicians have reflected on how Herzl's legacy – specifically the realities of Zionism going into the twenty-first century – compare to the life and work of the man himself.¹³ Herzl has further appeared in numerous works on the much-studied culture of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, constituting one of a trio of political figures whom Carl Schorske construed as generating Vienna's "politics in a new key".¹⁴ The trope underlying these examinations of Herzl – the man, not the myth – is that, in the words of Herzl biographer Amos Elon, "Herzl was also, perhaps first and foremost, a Viennese [...] Hungarian by birth, Jewish by religion, Austrian by naturalization, German by culture".¹⁵ As Ruth Klüger, the Viennese-born author, literary critic, and survivor of the Shoah, put it: "I know of course that Herzl was not a born Viennese, but spiritually he was Viennese. Vienna was the landscape that moulded him, and it is no coincidence that the novel *Altneuland* begins in a Viennese coffeehouse."¹⁶

This article proceeds from two premises. The first is that Herzl *the man*, and therefore his work, was fundamentally a product of his time, place and culture – the conflicted yet vibrant "ethnic cauldron", as Robert Wistrich termed it, of *fin-de-siècle* Central Europe, and of the cultural hotbed of Vienna in particular.¹⁷ The second is that Herzl *the myth*, as a construct of cultural memory, has been repeatedly and sometimes radically reconceived since his death, especially in Israel. Here I analyse a little-known site of memory relating to Herzl's life and legacy, namely his original burial site in the communal cemetery of Döbling, today Vienna's nineteenth district, where he lay buried from his death in 1904 until the reinterment of his mortal remains on Har Herzl in Jerusalem in 1949, and construes this site as instrumental to the creation of Herzl's myth and its eventual supplanting to Israel. Gravesites, as Philippe Ariès' pioneering work among others explored, constitute significant memorial sites in modern European culture, with urban cemeteries having since at least the Enlightenment been conceived as monumental spaces, as places to be visited, as shrines to great individuals through whose commemoration a sense of 'community' can be invoked.¹⁸ The burial sites of influential individuals lend themselves well to the mobilisation and enactment of memorial practices designed to invoke and consolidate political agendas.¹⁹ The interplay of name and fame, critical for the invocation of political narratives, and of the materiality of the body and the burial site, as Katherine Verdery remarked in her study of political (re-)burials, endow burial sites

11 Some of the most influential include Amos Elon, *Herzl*, New York 1975; Julius Schoeps, *Theodor Herzl 1860–1904: Wenn ihr wollt, ist es kein Märchen*, Wien 1995 and Shlomo Avineri, *Herzl: Theodor Herzl and the Foundation of the Jewish State*, London 2013.

12 Aside from Laqueur's above-cited *History of Zionism*, these include Jacques Kornberg, *Theodor Herzl: A Reevaluation*, in: *The Journal of Modern History* 52 (June 1980) 2; Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State*, London 1981; Yaacov Shavit, 'The "Glorious Century" or the "Cursed Century": Fin-de-Siècle [sic] Europe and the Emergence of Modern Jewish Nationalism', in: *Journal of Contemporary History* 26 (1991) 3/4: *The Impact of Western Nationalisms: Essays Dedicated to Walter Z. Laqueur on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday*; and Robert Wistrich, *Zionism and Its Religious Critics in fin-de-siècle Vienna*, in: *Jewish History* 10 (1996) 1.

13 For example the above-cited *Theodor Herzl Symposium Wien*, and an interesting reflection by Israel's former prime minister and later president, Shimon Peres, *The Imaginary Voyage: With Theodor Herzl in Israel*, New York 1999.

14 Carl Schorske, *Fin-De-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*, London 1980, 116.

15 Elon, *Herzl*, 7.

16 Cited in *Theodor Herzl Symposium Wien*, 17.

17 Robert Wistrich, *Laboratory for World Destruction: Germans and Jews in Central Europe*, Lincoln 2007, 31.

18 Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of our Death*, London 1981.

19 As explored by Richard Huntington/Peter Metcalf, *Celebrations of Death: The Anthropology of Mortuary Ritual*, Cambridge/New York 1979, 8-9.

with a potent “symbolic efficacy”, because “a corpse can be moved around, displayed, and strategically located in specific places. Bodies have the advantage of concreteness that nonetheless transcends time, making past immediately present.”²⁰

From the moment of his untimely death, the myth of Herzl began to be spun, lending itself readily to repeated reinterpretation and appropriation by the most diverse range of actors. Central to this creation of memory was the gravesite in Döbling, constituting – at least for the 45 years prior to his reinterment – a powerful and at times contested site of memory for the burgeoning Zionist movement and for Viennese, and European, Jewry more broadly. The multiplicity of responses to Herzl’s death, his grand funeral, the emergence of his gravesite as a site of pilgrimage in the years before the Shoah, and the theatrics of his reinterment in Israel, all evince the continual reappraisal of Herzl’s myth and memory that took place through the first half of the twentieth century. Herzl’s original grave-memorial, which stands in the Döbling cemetery to this day, is an under-studied and little appreciated artefact, the origins of which are wrapped in considerable and inexplicable mystery. However, as I here aim to demonstrate, it constitutes a significant if neglected site of memory, instrumental in the construction of Herzl’s myth and its relocation to Israel with his reinterment in Jerusalem, while simultaneously remaining today as testimony to another spatial and cultural context to Herzl’s life and work in contradistinction to his enduring legacy in Israel.

Herzl’s Death and Funeral, and the Birth of his Myth

Herzl was well aware of the mythical potency of his person and the potential for his influence to continue growing after his death, commenting after a speech he delivered in England on 15 July 1896: “I saw and heard my legend being born. The people are sentimental; the masses do not see clearly. I think that even now they no longer have a clear perception of me. A light fog is mounting around me, which could become the cloud in which I walk.”²¹ In his diaries, he sometimes referred to himself through analogy to influential personages from Jewish history and legend, such as to Moses (“I will tell the German emperor: Let us go!”),²² or to Shabbatai Tzvi, the seventeenth-century kabbalist who claimed to be the Messiah.²³ In full awareness of his declining health in the years following the foundation of the Zionist Congress, Herzl frequently reflected on his legacy and how this was likely to be conceived following his eventual death, commenting on 4 June 1902: “So, for example, in the field in which I spiritually achieved hardly anything [...] in the Jewish question I became world-famous as an agitator. As a writer, namely as a dramatist, I count for nothing, less than nothing. I am called only a good journalist.”²⁴ Most poignantly, Herzl reflected on his legacy just days before his death, while penning his literary testament (as cited in the title of this paper): “What I was to the Jews, a coming time will judge better than the vast majority of the present.”²⁵ Herzl was thus acutely aware of the gravity of his legacy and the portent of his death, as contemporaries post-

20 Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change*, New York/Chichester 2000, 27.

21 Theodor Herzl, *Theodor Herzls Tagebücher 1895–1904*, Volume 1, Berlin, 1922, 485.

22 *Ibid.*, 39.

23 *Ibid.*, Volume 2, 458.

24 *Ibid.*, Volume 3, 207.

25 Theodor Herzl – *Mein literarisches Testament* (4 July 1904), reprinted in: *Illustrierte Neue Welt*, June/July 1994, 11.

humously remarked that Herzl's death was the turning-point in his legacy, and the birth of his myth.²⁶

Theodor Herzl died of cardiac sclerosis on the evening of 3 July 1904 in Edlach, Lower Austria. He had stipulated in his will that he wished "a funeral of the poorest class, no speeches, no flowers. I wish to be buried in a metal coffin in the tomb of my father and to remain there until the Jewish people conveys my corpse to Palestine."²⁷ The funeral, held on Thursday, 7 July in Döbling, the leafy bourgeois suburb of Vienna near where Herzl had lived with his family, was anything but poor. The weekly *Wiener Bilder* described the occasion as "representing a pomp that was far more imposing than could have been offered by wreaths and speeches."²⁸ The funeral drew over 6,000 mourners from across Europe and from as far as the Orient and Russia, including literati and community leaders, while remaining in the words of the periodical *Ost und West* "in its entire essence and in its entire conception [...] a Zionist funeral."²⁹ Despite Herzl's explicit wishes, psalms were recited by Viennese Rabbi David Feuchtwang, a choir performed, and his then thirteen-year-old son, Hans, recited the mourners' *qaddish* at the graveside, as is customary in Jewish religious tradition. The ceremonies were led by the *chevra qadisha*, the 'holy society' tasked with performing the religious funerary rites, and by the board of the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde (Vienna's Jewish Community organisation, hereafter IKG). The funeral was therefore, as the *Wiener Bilder* put it, "nothing other than a religious ceremony."³⁰

Eyewitnesses stated that the scene at the cemetery was unlike anything usually seen at funerals in Vienna, consisting of a general "raging, weeping, screaming."³¹ Several of Austria's preeminent modern writers commented on the ponderousness of the funeral. Stefan Zweig claimed that "Vienna suddenly realised that it was not a pure writer or a mediocre poet who had died here, but one of those fashioners of ideas as rises victoriously in a country, in a people, only at unbelievable intervals."³² Siegfried Trebitsch called it "the greatest and most heart-wrenching funeral that I have ever attended."³³ It was the moment that Hermann Bahr later claimed to have understood the meaning of Zionism.³⁴ The IKG wrote in its bi-annual report that year:

"The board regards it as its duty to commemorate the deceased leader of the Zionists, Dr. Theodor Herzl, who through the force of his personality, through enthusiastic devotion to the ideas he championed, evoked a wide-reaching movement within Jewry. The memory of the immortalised was honoured through the staging of an honorary funeral and a commemorative service in the Leopoldstädter synagogue."³⁵

The enormity of his funeral, and the swathe of actors who were moved to such deep eulogisation of the deceased leader of the Zionist movement, indicate the impact that Herzl's death effected not only amongst his followers, but amongst Jews and even non-Jews across Europe and beyond. As the Canadian poet A.M. Klein remarked in an essay penned in 1931:

26 Nussenblatt, Herzl, 5.

27 Cited in Schoeps, Herzl, 200.

28 Dr. Theodor Herzl gestorben, in: Wiener Bilder, 13 July 1904, 5.

29 Theodor Herzls Krankheit, Tod und Begräbnis, in: Ost und West, Herzl-Nummer, August 1904, 629-630.

30 Dr. Theodor Herzl gestorben, in: Wiener Bilder, 13 July 1904, 5.

31 Cited in Schoeps, Herzl, 207.

32 Cited in Die Beisetzung in Wien, in: Illustrierte Neue Welt, June/July 1994, 14.

33 Die Schicksalsstunde Hermann Bahrs, in: Neue Freie Presse, 13 April 1934, 1.

34 Herzls Begräbnis, <http://www.univie.ac.at/bahr/node/28294> (27 July 2015).

35 Bericht des Vorstandes der israelitischen Kultusgemeinde in Wien über seine Tätigkeit in der Periode 1902–1903, Vienna 1904, 4.

“In no more than three decades, within the period of a single generation, Theodor Herzl has already become a legend and a symbol. He has won for himself so exalted a place in the Jewish heart that if canonization were a Hebrew practice the Jewish calendar would have already been graced with a Saint Theodor. Yet though Herzl is universally admired and his memory everywhere respected, few if any have been able to fathom his enigmatic personality, and he has remained a 19th century sphinx.”³⁶

The contradiction in the memory of Herzl ‘the legend’ and Herzl ‘the enigmatic personality’ which Klein was referring to was powerfully exemplified in his funeral, portending what would become a paradoxical memorial culture arising around Herzl’s gravesite in Döbling.

Herzl and Religiosity: the Paradox of his Funeral

Aside from the obvious discrepancy between Herzl’s stated wishes regarding his burial and the lavish memorial service which in fact took place, indicative of Herzl’s death as an abrupt and profound turning point in his commemoration and legacy, the religiosity of the funeral is striking. Herzl, as has been often remarked by his biographers and as is clear in his writings and correspondence, held a deep-seated distrust, even antipathy, towards the religious and social establishment of the Jewish community in Vienna, particularly as embodied by the IKG, while he himself was extremely secular in his outlook and lifestyle. Herzl, the German-speaking literatus and resident of Vienna’s pristine bourgeois suburbia, home to the city’s secular cultural intelligentsia of both nominally Christian and Jewish descent, notoriously did not have his son, Hans, circumcised.³⁷ This was highly unusual even for secular Jews, compounded by the fact that Hans later converted to Christianity. That Hans recited the *qaddish* at Herzl’s funeral – a profoundly religious rite emphasising the *zechut avot*, the “merit of the fathers” that is a cornerstone of the patriarchal Jewish faith – is therefore striking, because odd.³⁸ When, in December 1895, Vienna’s Chief Rabbi Moritz Güdemann visited Herzl at his home, he was shocked by the sight of Herzl lighting a Christmas tree, remarking upon the incident: “I was led into a large reception room and found there – imagine my surprise – a large Christmas tree! The conversation – in the presence of the Christmas tree – was halting and I soon took my leave.”³⁹ Recounting the scene in his diary, Herzl commented: “Well, I will not allow myself to be pressured! But I don’t mind calling it the Chanukkah tree – or the winter solstice?”⁴⁰ The Christmas tree, as Klaus Hödl explored, was a Central-European cultural innovation paradoxically with roots in Jewish households, a meaningful irony reflected upon in exhibitions in the Jewish

36 A.M. Klein, *Beyond Sambation: Selected Essays and Editorials 1928–1955*, Toronto 1982, 14.

37 Elon, Herzl, 93.

38 The religious background to the recitation of the mourners’ *qaddish* is discussed in detail in Rabbi H. Rabinowicz, *A Guide to Life: Jewish Laws and Customs of Mourning*, London 1964, 82–91.

39 Cited in Albert Lichtblau, *Integration, Vernichtungsversuch und Neubeginn: Österreichisch-jüdische Geschichte 1848 bis zur Gegenwart*, in: Eveline Brugger/Martha Keil/Albert Lichtblau/Christoph Lind/Barbara Staudinger (eds.), *Geschichte der Juden in Österreich*, Vienna 2006, 460.

40 Herzl, *Theodor Herzls Tagebücher*, Volume 1, 328.

museums of Vienna and Berlin.⁴¹ This incident was as indicative of Herzl's bourgeois *fin-de-siècle* character as it was of the lack of religiosity and of Jewish religious traditions in the Herzls' Viennese household. Gudemann meanwhile went on to become one of Herzl's most embittered critics, publishing an influential treatise in 1897 condemning the Zionist movement.⁴²

By the time Herzl had convened the First Zionist Congress in 1897, and despite the enormous following the movement quickly accumulated in the following years, rabbis, especially orthodox, from all over Europe condemned Herzl and the Zionist movement, going as far as likening him and his following to Satan.⁴³ Ironically it was Rabbi Feuchtwang, the man who had led the religious service at Herzl's funeral, who later said of him: "Embitterment against the rabbis filled him and he saw in each one of them his enemy."⁴⁴ In *Der Judenstaat*, Herzl posed the question: "So will we ultimately have a theocracy? No!", and remarked concerning the rabbis: "We will know to keep them in their temples, as we will keep our professional army in the barracks."⁴⁵ Later, in *Altneuland*, Herzl created – and poured scorn on – the figure of Dr. Geyer, a former anti-Zionist who then became "more Palestinian than any of us [...] he is the national Jew" who preaches that "a non-Jew should not be accepted into our society."⁴⁶ Herzl's contempt did not stop with religious orthodoxy or nationalist intolerance, as he also lambasted in his diaries "the rich and the 'great men of Israel'" who failed the Zionist cause,⁴⁷ elsewhere employing terms that in other contexts would be considered antisemitic, such as "Geldjuden" (money-Jews),⁴⁸ and "anti-Zionist rich Börsenjuden" (stock-exchange-Jews).⁴⁹ As Jacques Kornberg remarked: "Herzl's anti-Jewish sensitivities surfaced – indeed sometimes exploded – well after he had become the keeper of Jewish sovereignty. He would employ terms such as 'Jewish vermin', Mauschel, against his Jewish detractors."⁵⁰ Herzl's antipathy to religious Jewry in general and to the successful socialites of Central-European Jewry in particular resulted in a deep rift with Vienna's IKG, which was in any case before the First World War dominated by political, religious and cultural factions that were strongly opposed to Zionism, albeit for different reasons. This was not to change until at the earliest the appointment of Vienna's first Zionist Chief Rabbi, Zwi Perez Chajes, in 1918.⁵¹ When, in November 1900, the IKG's president Alfred Stern offered Herzl a place on the board, a move calculated to bring Herzl under its control, Herzl remarked in his diary: "I of course declined and laughed at him."⁵² Only months previously, Herzl had noted in his diary, in the histrionic fashion that was typical of his writings: "I now know a good epitaph for me: 'He had too good an opinion of the

41 Klaus Hödl explicated the proliferation of the Christmas tree as characteristic of the interactive negotiation of culture between Jews and non-Jews, in Klaus Hödl, *Wiener Juden – jüdische Wiener: Identität, Gedächtnis und Performanz im 19. Jahrhundert*, Innsbruck 2006, 32-34. The core exhibition of Vienna's Jewish Museum places a strong emphasis on this fact as representative of Vienna's Jews' foundational role in what has become Viennese culture, while the core exhibition of Berlin's Jewish Museum includes a decorated Christmas tree standing behind a portrait of Herzl in a silent commentary on this incident.

42 Moritz Gudemann, *Nationaljudenthum*, Leipzig 1897.

43 Cited in Theodor Herzl Symposium Wien, 91-93.

44 Cited in Nussenblatt, Herzl, 64.

45 Herzl, *Der Judenstaat*, 100.

46 Herzl, *Altneuland*, 129.

47 Herzl, *Theodor Herzls Tagebücher*, Volume 2, 87.

48 *Ibid.*, 134.

49 Herzl, *Theodor Herzls Tagebücher*, Volume 3, 472.

50 Kornberg, Herzl, 231. This seemingly anti-Jewish antipathy was not uncommon amongst the secular Jewish intelligentsia of the time, as also remarked by Wistrich, *Laboratory*, 11.

51 Wistrich, *Zionism*, 107.

52 Herzl, *Theodor Herzls Tagebücher*, Volume 2, 490.

Jews.”⁵³ It seems no coincidence, therefore, that Herzl chose to have his father buried in a family plot – and by extension chose a plot for his own eventual burial – in a non-Jewish cemetery, outside the remit of the IKG.

Herzl's Choice of Burial Site: The Döbling Cemetery

The communal cemetery in Döbling opened in 1885, when the village had not yet been incorporated into the city of Vienna, following the closure of the inner-city cemeteries.⁵⁴ As already remarked, Döbling was an affluent bourgeois residential area, and thus its new cemetery came to reflect the pomp and prestige associated with its residents, as Hans Pemmer, a local historian and pioneer of historical conservation of Vienna's cemeteries, remarked in an early history of the cemetery.⁵⁵ Among the many predominantly secular bourgeois families buried at the site, there are numerous families with Jewish origins, such as the Wertheimstein, Todesco, Gomperz, Bettelheim and Kuffner families, comprising industrialists and patrons of the arts, including also the graves of the famed synagogue architect Jakob Gartner and the philosopher Wilhelm Jerusalem.⁵⁶ Their grave-memorials were designed by renowned contemporary architects, such as Max Fleischer, who also designed numerous prestigious works at the city's Central Cemetery.⁵⁷

The intermeshing of communities, of cultural and social milieus, and the complex networks of belonging comprising early-twentieth-century Vienna, whether these were defined in socio-cultural, ethno-linguistic or religious terms, was nowhere more evident than in the communal cemetery in Döbling, where the lines between 'Jewish' and 'non-Jewish' were blurry at best.⁵⁸ This is today still a communal cemetery without a religious denomination, although the majority of the graves, and hence the cemetery's overall façade, is predominantly Christian, as visibly accentuated through the preponderance of crucifixes on its grave-memorials. This is not a Jewish cemetery by Jewish religious criteria, though it is marked on official maps with a 'Jewish section'.⁵⁹ According to a report published by the IKG's cemetery office after the Shoah, "long before 1938, an agreement was reached between the IKG and the City of Vienna whereby a small section of the [Döbling] cemetery was used exclusively [sic] for the burial of Jews".⁶⁰ This section, on the eastern end of the cemetery, is not separated from the surrounding sections by a wall, and furthermore comprises both Jewish and Christian graves, while there are numerous Jewish – and

53 Ibid., 436.

54 See Isabella Ackerl, Vom Zentrum an den Stadtrand: Wiener Friedhöfe und ihre Geschichte, in: Isabella Ackerl/Robert Bouchal/Ingeborg Schödl (eds.), *Der schöne Tod in Wien: Friedhöfe, Grüfte, Gedenkstätten*, Vienna 2008, 41.

55 Hans Pemmer/Ninni Lackner, *Der Döblinger Friedhof: Seine Toten, seine Denkmäler*, Vienna 1947 (= Sonderheft der Zeitschrift *Wiener G'schichten* 1).

56 Many of these graves, including that of the Herzls, are today honorary graves under patronage of the city cemetery office. See the list in *Ehrenhalber gewidmete bzw. ehrenhalber in Obhut genommene Grabstellen im Friedhof DÖBLING*, https://www.friedhofewien.at/media/files/2011/ehreng%C3%A4ber%20d%C3%B6bling_56730.pdf (14 August 2015).

57 Pemmer/Lackner, *Der Döblinger Friedhof*, 32.

58 This blurring of lines has been the focus of intense debate in recent historiography of Viennese Jewry, as for example in Lisa Silverman, *Becoming Austrians: Jews and Culture between the World Wars*, New York 2012; and the above-cited Hödl, *Wiener Juden*.

59 See for example Döbling Detailplan, http://www.friedhofewien.at/media/files/2010/doebbling_25299.pdf (15 August 2015).

60 Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Wien: *Die Tätigkeit der israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Wien 1960 bis 1964*, Vienna 1964, 169.

Muslim, Chinese and other – graves scattered throughout the rest of the cemetery.⁶¹ The so-called ‘Jewish section’ is therefore neither exclusively Jewish, nor was it ever administered by the IKG, instead falling under the regulation of the city cemetery office. The pre-Shoah arrangement between the city and the IKG stipulated that graves could either be acquired “for the duration of the cemetery” or be repeatedly renewed for periods of ten years at a time.⁶² Should a lease no longer be renewed, “but also should a grave no longer be tended”, ownership reverted to the city who then liquidated the grave, as is common in non-Jewish sepulchral practice in Europe. In even liberal understandings of Jewish burial tradition, these graves were therefore entirely ‘un-Jewish’ in their conception, at least as far as ‘Jewishness’ is conceived in religious terms or by traditional norms.

The Döbling cemetery reflects the secular bourgeois culture of Vienna’s *fin-de-siècle* to such an extent that it is no longer generally useful or sometimes even possible to distinguish between ‘Jewish’ and ‘Christian’, or ‘Jewish’ and ‘non-Jewish’ practices in its sepulchral culture. Many of the gravestones in Döbling are demarcated with neither Jewish nor Christian symbolism, and most are entirely inscribed in German. The symbolism abounding from the era of the *fin-de-siècle* includes heraldry,⁶³ the use of noble titles, furthermore linking into the commemoration of patriarchal family dynasties,⁶⁴ the use of professional and academic titles,⁶⁵ and symbolism breaking entirely with Jewish tradition, such as the larger-than-life-sized statue of the businessman Heinrich Munk, right next to and staring down on Herzl’s grave (though it was created slightly earlier – Munk’s grave can be seen in Figure 3).⁶⁶ Some gravestones were explicitly marked with Jewish symbolism, such as most commonly the Star of David,⁶⁷ the blessing hands of the Cohenim,⁶⁸ or the common Hebrew epitaph TNZB”H (תנצב”ה), an abbreviation of “may his/her soul be bound in the bundle of life”, in reference to I Samuel 25:29.⁶⁹ In several cases, individuals of various generations within the same family were Jewish and Christian, their gravestones consequently marked with both Stars of David and crucifixes, and with a mix of Hebrew, German and other inscriptions.⁷⁰ It does not seem coincidental that Herzl chose this cemetery to create his family grave. Yet it does seem striking that the IKG, with whom he had such a conflicted relationship, took over the funeral to such a degree that it became, as cited above, a ‘religious ceremony’, organised and therefore conditioned by the IKG. This paradox was also powerfully encoded in the gravestone erected there.

61 As remarked also by Martha Keil, Floridsdorf, Döbling, Simmering: Jüdische Friedhöfe in den Außenbezirken, in: Martha Keil/Elke Florisch/Ernst Scheiber (eds.), *Denkmale: Jüdische Friedhöfe in Wien, Niederösterreich und Burgenland*, Vienna 2006, 60.

62 Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Wien: *Die Tätigkeit der israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Wien 1960 bis 1964*, 169.

63 For example on the gravestone of Leopold Wertheimstein (1801–1883) and family, Section I1.

64 For example the epitaph “resting place of the baronial family of Eduard von Todesco” on the gravestone of Eduard Ritter von Todesco (1814–1877) and family, Section I1.

65 For example on the gravestone of Wilhelm Jerusalem (1854–1923) and family, Section I6.

66 Gravestone of Heinrich Munk (1824–1903) and family, Section I1.

67 For example on the gravestone of Leopold Auspitz (1876–1897) and family, Section I1.

68 For example on the gravestone of Franziska (1846–1913) and Ernst (1842–1914) Loewit, Section I2.

69 For example on the gravestone of Julie Kohn (1850–1914) and family, Section I4.

70 For example the gravestone of Adolph Engel Edler von Jánosi (1820–1903) and family, Section I1.

Herzl's Gravestone: Encoding, and Decoding, the Paradox



Figure 1: Gravestone of Jacob (1835–1902), Jeanette (1836–1911) & Theodor (1860–1904) Herzl, Döbling cemetery, Section II. © Tim Corbett

The Herzl family's original gravestone in the Döbling cemetery, depicted in Figure 1, is a tall headstone framed by two limestone pillars and a limestone lintel, altogether measuring roughly 260 centimetres by 140 centimetres, encasing two black marble panels upon which the memorial inscriptions are incised in gold lettering. The grave, a family plot intended for up to four bodies, is surrounded by six short bollards designed to enclose the grave on both sides with chains, though these are no longer present. The bollards surround a capstone covering the grave, upon which stands a wrought-iron flowerbox. On the two bollards immediately in front of the gravestone stand two wrought-iron containers, possibly intended for flowers or candles. The gravestone is decorated on either side of the lintel with a Star of David, with six further Stars of David incised on the bollards surrounding the grave, totaling eight. The inscription consists of a 110-word eulogy in German and Hebrew. The typeface used for the German-language inscription is *Desdemona*, an art-nouveau design that emerged in the 1880s and reflects the progressive tastes of the *fin-de-siècle*.⁷¹ The aesthetic design of the gravestone was therefore consistent with the general design of the Döbling cemetery, significantly complementing its secular, bourgeois character. Photographs from before the Shoah reveal that the grave has remained largely unchanged, with the exception of an additional inscription added after the reinterment of the family's remains in Jerusalem.

71 See Kate Clair/Cynthia Busic-Snyder, *A Typographic Workbook: A Primer to History, Techniques and Artistry*, Hoboken 2005, 175.

הערצל	Herzl
Jacob Herzl geb. 14. April 1835 gest. 9. Juni 1902	Jacob Herzl born 14 April 1835 died 9 June 1902
Jeanette Herzl geb. 28. Juli 1836 gest. 20. Februar 1911	Jeanette Herzl born 28 July 1836 died 20 February 1911
Dr. Theodor Herzl Sohn von Jacob und Jeannette Herzl Geb. 7. Mai 1860 Gest. 3. Juli 1904	Dr. Theodor Herzl son of Jacob and Jeannette Herzl Born 7 May 1860 Died 3 July 1904
פינ הר"ר בנימין זאב הערצל ז"ל ולד ביום ב' ט"ו אייר שנת תרע"ד לפ"ק ונפטר ביום א' כ' תמוז שנת תרע"ד לפ"ק	P'N HR'R Binyamin Ze'ev Herzl Z'L born on Monday 15 Iyar in the year 620 LF'Q and died on Sunday 20 Tamuz in the year 664 LF'Q
תע"ב"ה	TNZB'H
In diesem Grab wurde am 3. Juli 1904 Dr Theodor Herzl zur letzten Ruhe bestattet. In dem gleichen Grabe ruhten seine Eltern Jacob und Jeanette Herzl Am 14. August 1949 wurden die sterblichen Überreste Dr Herzls und seiner Eltern exhumiert und, dem Wunsche Dr Herzls entsprechend, nach Israel überführt.	In this grave on 3 July 1904 Dr. Theodor Herzl was laid to rest. in the same grave his parents rested. Jacob and Jeanette Herzl On 14 August 1949 the mortal remains of Dr. Herzl and his parents were exhumed and, according to the wish of Dr. Herzl, were brought to Israel.

Figure 2: Inscription, left, and translation, right, of Herzl's gravestone. © Tim Corbett

The inscription lists Herzl and his parents in descending order of age (father, mother and son), although his mother died most recently, offering their names and dates of birth and death in the German language and the Gregorian calendar, Theodor moreover being attributed the title “Dr”. Theodor is the only one to receive a Hebrew-language eulogy calling him, by contrast to the German name “Theodor”, by the Hebrew names “Binyamin Ze’ev”. This is a common practice in Jewish-European culture which emerged in the early modern period, in which individuals receive both a civic name, usually drawing from a European-cultural pool of names, and a synagogal name, usually drawing from a Hebrew-Biblical pool of names. Herzl himself played on this division in his writings, generally signing his name as “Dr. Theodor Herzl”, though for example in articles relating to his Zionist activities signing his name simply as “Benjamin Seff”, in crude German rendering of the Hebrew names.⁷² This was in agreement with the editors of the *Neue Freie Presse*, with whom Herzl was employed, who politically opposed his Zionist ambitions and therefore objected to Herzl using his real name in Zionist publications.⁷³ This division between civic and synagogal names appears rather traditional, yet notably a more traditional or religious rendering of the name would not have been “Binyamin Ze’ev Herzl”, but rather the patronymic “Binyamin Ze’ev ben Yaqov”. Nevertheless, the differences in connotation arising from the nomenclature are indicative of differences in the memories of Herzl generally, as we shall also see by reference to the new grave in Jerusalem later. Similarly, a facet of the Hebrew inscription that at first glance appears strikingly religious is the Hebrew honorific HR”R, an epigraphic abbreviation literally

72 As in Mauschel, in: Die Welt, 15 October 1897, 1.

73 As Herzl remarked in his diaries Herzl, Theodor Herzls Tagebücher, Volume 2, 43.

meaning “the great Rabbi” (הר"ר / הרב רבי), as well as the abbreviation Z”L, meaning “his name is invoked in blessing” (ז"ל / זכר לברכה), a tacit reference to Proverbs 10:7. Such Hebrew inscriptions with their religiously-derived honorifics were common in Vienna in this period, routinely used on honorary graves of IKG notables to denote their importance to the community, whether for religious or secular functions.⁷⁴ Yet the implied religiosity jars with Herzl’s secular values, as also with his often-remarked dismissiveness towards the Hebrew and Yiddish languages.⁷⁵ This incongruence is compounded in the spelling of the family name in Yiddish fashion as הערצל, with the ‘e’ in Herzl substituted with an ‘ע’. Notably, the spelling on his new grave in Jerusalem, and the spelling of his name in Israel in general, conforms to the modern Hebrew transliteration הרצל.

The incongruence of religiosity and language in the inscription powerfully reflects the incongruence of the burial of the man construed as the father of Jewish nationalism in a non-Jewish cemetery, and altogether marks this site as a poignant example of the ethereality and malleability of memory in general, and of Jewish identity in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna in particular. It also underlines in symbolic fashion the shifting nature of the memory of Herzl, particularly in its spatial, temporal and cultural transposition from *fin-de-siècle* Vienna to modern Israel, as we shall see when we turn to his new grave towards the end of this paper. A final oddity are the two mistakes in the inscription. The first is the spelling of Herzl’s mother’s name as Jeannette in the tenth line, although she is elsewhere in the inscription twice referred to correctly as Jeanette – in the line added after her death in 1911 and in the inscription added after the family’s reinterment in 1949. The second mistake is Theodor’s birthdate given as 7 May in the Gregorian calendar and 15 Iyar in the Hebrew calendar, when in actuality he was born on 2 May / 10 Iyar. The repetition of the mistake in both the Gregorian and Hebrew calendars suggests that this was the result of misinformation on the part of the author of the inscription, rather than an oversight on the part of the mason.

A Persisting Enigma: Who Authored the Gravestone?

The background to this gravestone, including the identity or identities of both the architect(s) of the memorial and author(s) of the inscription, remains bizarrely steeped in mystery. Herzl originally had his father, who died in June 1902, buried in a provisional grave in the Döbling cemetery, but then had him reinterred into the grave under discussion a year later, little over a year before his own death, as he explained in a diary entry from 16 May 1903:

“I considered the Sinai affair [the negotiation with the British government to create a Jewish settlement in Al-Arish] for so accomplished that I did not want to purchase a family plot anymore at the Döbling cemetery, where my father provisionally rests. I now hold the affair for so failed that I have already been to the district court and purchased plot Nr. 28 [sic, it was actually plot Nr. 30].”⁷⁶

⁷⁴ The gradual appropriation of traditionally religious honorifics for use in secular contexts is discussed in Bernhard Wachstein, *Die Inschriften des alten Judenfriedhofs in Wien*, Band 1, Vienna 1912, XXXVIII.

⁷⁵ Herzl repeatedly voiced this dismissiveness, as in Herzl, *Theodor Herzls Tagebücher*, Volume 1, 195 & 351 f., believing that German would be the ideal language for his Jewish State. Indeed, German was the absolute lingua franca amongst Vienna’s Jews before the First World War, with Yiddish only becoming popularised in the interwar period and Hebrew only after the Shoah. See *Illustrierte Neue Welt – Eine Zeitschrift mit Tradition*, in: *Die Gemeinde*, 29 March 1996, 31.

⁷⁶ Herzl, *Theodor Herzls Tagebücher*, Volume 3, 429.

Unfortunately, the records of the city cemetery office pertaining to the Döbling cemetery, although they survive from 1903 onwards, make no mention of the Herzl grave – or consequently of the origins of the gravestone – in the indices of the years 1903 or 1904, the years of Jacob’s reinterment and of Theodor’s interment.⁷⁷ Puzzling too for such an artistically designed grave-memorial of the *fin-de-siècle*, especially for such a prominent individual, is the absence of an attribution to its architect. Many of the contemporaneous memorials in Döbling, and elsewhere in Vienna’s cemeteries, were designed by prominent architects of the era, and correspondingly included a signature engraving, yet no such signature is evident on the Herzl grave. The German-language Wikipedia article on Oskar Marmorek, the Viennese architect, Zionist and friend of Herzl’s, lists as part of his oeuvre the “grave-memorial of Theodor Herzl (presumably), 1903”, but without citations or evidence.⁷⁸ It is not listed as one of Marmorek’s works, which included numerous grave-memorials, in the entry of the *Architektenlexikon* published by the Vienna Architekturzentrum.⁷⁹ I discussed the case with Marmorek biographer Markus Kristan, a curator at the Albertina museum and a specialist in Viennese architecture, who also could not find evidence for authorship of the Herzl grave, though he assumes it was not Marmorek’s work since, according to Kristan, Marmorek “would surely have tried to make this public”, and since the grave-memorials Marmorek did design were all similar to each other yet different from Herzl’s.⁸⁰ Kristan directed my attention towards a letter from Herzl to Marmorek, dated 3 November 1903, in which he thanked Marmorek “for the grave-memorial design”, stating that “I have chosen the one with the two trees of life”, a reference to *etz chaim*, a popular motif in Jewish sepulchral epigraphy at the time.⁸¹ While the timing, and the reference to the Döbling cemetery in the archival record, would certainly suggest that Herzl was referring to a gravestone erected for his father, the description bears no resemblance to the actual gravestone on the site. In our correspondence, Kristan posed the pertinent questions: “It would still be interesting to know: if Marmorek did not design the Herzl-grave, then who did? Who ‘took away’ this ‘commission’ from Marmorek?” This remains a mystery.

It is generally customary in Jewish sepulchral culture to erect the gravestone on the first anniversary of death. Yet the reinterment of the remains of Herzl’s father Jacob from one grave to another raise the question of which anniversary this could have been – June 1903, a year after Jacob’s death, or May 1904, a year after Jacob’s reinterment, and only weeks before Theodor’s death? In either case, had Herzl himself commissioned the gravestone, he made no mention of it in his otherwise expansive diaries. One possible scenario, which I consider the most likely hypothesis, is that the gravestone, or at least the Hebrew portion of the inscription commemorating Theodor Herzl, was commissioned by the IKG. That I have not found any records in the IKG archives pertaining to the Herzl grave is disappointing, but not unusual considering its fragmented nature in the aftermath of the Shoah – if indeed the IKG had anything to do with the creation of the gravestone in the first place, or kept records of the fact. This hypothesis is supported by three salient points:

1. According to its own records, as cited earlier, the IKG organised an ‘honorary funeral’ for Herzl, led by its board and the *chevra qadisha*, which contemporary

77 Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, I.3.2.213a.B2, Friedhofsindex.

78 Oskar Marmorek, http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oskar_Marmorek (14 August 2015).

79 Oskar Marmorek, <http://architektenlexikon.at/de/385.htm> (27 July 2015).

80 Personal correspondence between Markus Kristan and Tim Corbett, 7 November 2013.

81 Central Zionist Archives, WV 1903/5 E, Wien XIX., Döblinger Friedhof, Isr. Abt. I/1/Gruft 30: Entwurf eines Grabmales im Auftrag Theodor Herzls.

- newspapers regarded as a religious ceremony. From the moment of his death, and despite their strained relationship, the IKG evidently had a vested interest in honouring Herzl's memory, an interest that was to grow enormously in the next decades, as we shall see shortly.
2. The style of the inscription closely parallels the manner in which the IKG generally commemorated its notables on contemporaneous honorary graves in the older Jewish section of the Central Cemetery. From the mid-1890s, the IKG financed the creation of honorary graves for what it called "distinguished, especially notable men of the Vienna Community",⁸² which over the ensuing years came to include rabbis,⁸³ cantors,⁸⁴ religion teachers,⁸⁵ community notables,⁸⁶ and fighters for Jewish legal emancipation.⁸⁷ These mostly included inscriptions much like that on Herzl's grave: bilingual in German and Hebrew, distinguishing between an individual's civic (German) and synagogal (Hebrew) names and between their secular (German) titles and honorary (Hebrew) titles of rabbinical origin.
 3. Herzl's father received a simple, German-language epitaph while Herzl's more complex epitaph included two mistakes, as discussed earlier. Herzl's mother, Jeanette, lived for several years after her son's death and must have noticed the mistakes, as presumably the gravestone was erected and/or the inscription was authored long before her death in 1911. It seems unlikely that she would have misspelled both her own name and the birthdate of her son. She can therefore safely be ruled out as the author of the inscription. The same goes for Herzl's estranged wife, Julie. A strikingly absent figure in the expansive biographical literature on Herzl, she was not buried in the Döbling grave. She died three years later, on 10 November 1907, and was cremated, an increasingly common practice amongst secular Jews in the early twentieth century.⁸⁸ Her ashes, so the story goes, were misplaced by one of her children, and so she was not reinterred along with the rest of the family in Jerusalem.⁸⁹

Herzl's Grave as a Site of Pilgrimage in the Interwar Period

It is striking that the man remembered as the founder of the Zionist movement and today idolised as the founding father of the Jewish state and a significant forebear of Vienna's IKG should have been buried in what was essentially a non-Jewish cemetery. This paradox reflects powerfully Herzl's *fin-de-siècle* Viennese character as well as his conflicted relationship to Judaism and to mainstream Jewish society as embodied in Vienna in the umbrella organisation of the IKG. From the moment of his death, Herzl was appropriated as a Jewish figurehead in a much broader fashion than he had been perceived during his lifetime, when the young Zionist movement was still a minor and

82 Bericht des Friedhof-Comités, in: Bericht des Vorstandes der israel. Cultusgemeinde in Wien über seine Tätigkeit in der Periode 1890–1896, Wien, 1896, unpaginated.

83 For example the gravestone of Adolf Jellinek (1820–1893), Chief Rabbi of the IKG, plot 5B-1-2.

84 For example the gravestone of Salomon Sulzer (1804–1890), Chief Cantor of the IKG, plot 5B-1-1.

85 For example the gravestone of Samuel Hammerschlag (1826–1904), Sigmund Freud's childhood religion teacher, plot 20-1-84.

86 For example the gravestone of Salomon Rosner (1848–1905), IKG board member, plot 20-1-95.

87 For example the gravestone of Adolph Fischhof (1816–1893), leader of the 1848 revolution in Vienna, plot 5B-1-3.

88 This issue and its contestation by religious factions in the Jewish community were discussed in Bericht der israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Wien über die Tätigkeit in der Periode 1912–1924, Vienna 1924, 7.

89 This Day in Jewish History 1889: A Zionist Makes a Very Unfortunate Marriage, in: Ha'aretz, <http://www.haaretz.com/jewish/features/premium-1.662801> (25 June 2015).

widely contested faction within the political spectrum of the IKG. The incongruence of Herzl's epitaph with his self-professed values, as well as the glaring mistakes on the part of the unknown author(s) contained therein, thus work as a powerful metaphor for how Herzl's myth became divorced from the man himself, transforming his tomb into a vehicle for political mobilisation. Herzl's popularity continued to grow immensely in the years following his death, as Zionism became a burgeoning force within the IKG. Largely in response to growing ethnocentrism and antisemitism in Austrian society following the First World War, Zionist factions went on to consistently win about a third of the IKG vote throughout the interwar period.⁹⁰ 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 from Vienna, making *aliyah* between 1920 and 1935.⁹¹



Figure 3: Memorial march of circa 6,000 Viennese Jews to the grave of Theodor Herzl in the Döbling cemetery, 23 May 1948. © Bildarchiv Austria

In this context, Herzl's gravesite in Döbling became a major site for the mobilisation of his memory by and in support of Zionist organisations.⁹² Numerous Zionist organisations in Vienna were named after Herzl,⁹³ as were Zionist events,⁹⁴ which

90 See the election results in Bericht [1924], 3-4; Bericht der israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Wien über die Tätigkeit in der Periode 1929-1932, Vienna 1932), 3; Bericht des Präsidiums und des Vorstandes der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Wien über die Tätigkeit in den Jahren 1933-1936, Vienna 1936), unpaginated.

91 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> (18 November 2014), 3-5.

92 Similar stations from Herzl's life emerged in this period as sites of memory and pilgrimage for followers of the Zionist movement, such as the spa in Franzensbad/Františkovy Lázně, discussed in Mirjam Triendl-Zadoff, Nächstes Jahr in Marienbad: Gegenwelten jüdischer Kulturen der Moderne, Göttingen 2007, 191.

93 As for example the Herzl Club, the Verband der Herzl-Zionisten, Revisionisten und Judenstaatler, and the Zionistischen Jugendgemeinschaft Histadruth Hanoar Hazioni "Brith Herzl". A complete list of Zionist organisations was drawn up pending their liquidation after the Nazi 'Anschluß', see Österreichisches Staatsarchiv/Archiv der Republik, ADR ZNsZ Stiko Wien, 31-W 2, Schlußbericht, Der Reichskommissar für die Wiedervereinigung Österreichs mit dem Deutschen Reich.

94 See for example Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, A/W 3172, Programm fuer den am 06.12.1908 stattfindenden Theodor Herzl-Abend.

moreover often included official visits by delegates to the Herzl grave, as at the opening of the eleventh Zionist Congress in September 1913.⁹⁵ The grave itself became a trademark for the Zionist movement, appearing for example in an artistic rendering with a transcript of the Hebrew-language epitaph, including the incorrect date of birth, on a postcard of the Jewish National Fund, presumably dating before 1938.⁹⁶ The so-called *Herzl-Grabgang*, a neologism used in contemporary sources translating literally as ‘Herzl grave-walk’, became a popular pilgrimage to the Döbling cemetery that by the 1920s was undertaken by hundreds of followers of the Zionist movement.⁹⁷ As Herzl’s grave thus became a central site for staging support for the Zionist cause, it simultaneously became a scene for the mobilisation of oppositional political factions. After a *Herzl-Grabgang* in May 1931, for example, some members of the Revisionist (right-wing) *Zionistische Studenten* complained that they had been barred by what they called ‘Palestinian pioneers’ from bearing the blue-and-white flags of their movement, the ‘pioneers’ – from the context obviously Labour (left-wing) supporters – only allowing red flags at the event.⁹⁸ At the same event, some twenty Nazi students heckled and shouted abuse at the procession, following which the police had to protect them from the enraged crowd of Zionists.⁹⁹ Notably, the *Neue Welt*, cited above, reported on these two incidents separately, while together they underline the political contestation, galvanisation and mobilisation underlying the visits to Herzl’s grave in this volatile period. The *Herzl-Grabgang* was even continued during the Shoah, as Herbert Rosenkranz wrote: “An almost ghostly oppressive spectacle was the annual Grabgang to Herzl’s memorial in the Döbling cemetery, once a proud affirmation of the Zionists of Vienna. On 15 July 1941, at 9 o’clock in the morning, fifteen people attended [...]”, including Josef Löwenherz, the coerced Jewish community leader during the Shoah, and other Jewish community functionaries.¹⁰⁰



Figure 4: Zionist graffiti on the back of Herzl’s gravestone. © Tim Corbett

95 Der XI. Zionistenkongress in Wien, in: *Jüdische Zeitung*, 5 September 1913, 1.

96 Jüdisches Museum Wien, Nr. 4841, untitled.

97 As remarked in Nussenblatt, Herzl, 64.

98 Mißliches vom Herzl-Grabgang, in: *Die Neue Welt*, 8 June 1931, 6.

99 Hakenkreuzkrawall beim Herzl-Grabgang, in: *Die Neue Welt*, 8 June 1931, 6.

100 Herbert Rosenkranz, *Verfolgung und Selbstbehauptung: Die Juden in Österreich 1938–1945*, Vienna 1978, 275.

A hitherto unremarked, and therefore presumably unnoticed, yet captivating feature of the gravestone is an array of etchings on the reverse side, portrayed in Figure 4, incised in the years before the Shoah by the many Zionist pilgrims who visited the site.¹⁰¹ These etchings were made in a space measuring no more than 55 centimetres between the gravestone and the cemetery fence, the spatial confinement visible in Figure 3. Figure 5, meanwhile, to which we shall return in more detail shortly, evinces that the graffiti used to cover the frontal surfaces of the grave-memorial, too. The frontal etchings were presumably effaced during on-going restorative works in the cemetery in subsequent decades, the graffiti on the reverse presumably surviving – fortunately for posterity – due to oversight. The graffiti consists essentially of a loose collection of personal names, place names, and dates, mostly but not exclusively rendered in Hebrew script both formal and cursive, with dates offered in both the Hebrew and Gregorian calendars. For example, a column down the left-hand side of the memorial reads in formal Hebrew characters, from right to left and top to bottom: MKN / (לודז) / טננבום ת'ר"פ' / שלמה / (???) / פינסק / בריסק / חלוצי / דרור / דרור. This translates as: “*Dror* [Hebrew, freedom; spelled with diacritics] / pioneers / Brisk [Yiddish, Brest] / Pinsk / [unintelligible] / Shlomo / Tennenbaum [spelled with diacritics] / 680 [Hebrew calendar; 1920 in the Gregorian] / (Łódź) / MKN”. *Dror* was a Zionist Socialist movement which originated in Kiev shortly before the First World War before moving to Poland with the advent of Bolshevism, finally being subsumed under the *En Harod* kibbutz movement in the latter 1920s.¹⁰² The first part of the graffiti message therefore translates more generally as something like: “the pioneers [*chalutzei*, meaning early émigrés to Palestine] of the *Dror* movement from Brisk/Brest and Pinsk”, while the second part, which may or may not be related to the first part, is the signature of one Shlomo Tennenbaum from Łódź, who visited the grave in 1920, 680 in the Hebrew calendar. It is unclear to me what the letters MKN, rendered in Roman block capitals, signify.

The remaining graffiti is similar throughout, listing names and origins, mostly in Hebrew, such as “Belizovsky and Hatzruni, pioneers from Odessa”; “the pioneer [sic, no *sofit* in the Hebrew] Ze'ev Alerek from Białystok”, who visited on 1 April 1921 (or 1924?); “Kaganovich and family from Łódź”, who visited on 16 August 1920 (including the Roman characters HEH, which are unclear to me); or the Roman-character rendering of “L. LASK”, who visited on 19 September 1920. These signatures are interspersed with other, random etchings such as a *Magen David* and the alone-standing name “Israel”. Figure 5 reveals similar graffiti etched on the bollards at the front of the memorial, since then erased, in a mix of Hebrew and Roman script, including the comparatively early date 1916. I discovered this photograph on the English-language Wikipedia entry for Theodor Herzl, and managed to track it down to its owners in Tel Aviv.¹⁰³ Aviva Rosset explained that the picture portrays her mother Drora, born in Warsaw in May 1920, and grandparents Miriam (Mania) and Avraham (Albert), the couple with the baby seated to the left (Avraham is standing in the middle behind Miriam). The family was en route to Palestine in 1921, when they were delayed in Vienna for three months due to the Arab revolts then taking place in Palestine and the dangerous situation on the ground as a result. The identities of the other individuals in the photograph are unknown, while the approximate date of the

101 Credit is due to Béla Rásky for this discovery, who had the imagination to take a peek in the dark recess behind the gravestone. I also thank Thyago Ohana for his technical wizardry at photography in this tight space.

102 *Dror*, <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Dror> (28 July 2015).

103 The image was available at the time of writing under Herzl's grave in 1921, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodor_Herzl#/media/File:Herzl_grave_1921.jpeg, (14 September 2015).

image – spring 1921 – is estimable due to the age of Aviva’s mother.¹⁰⁴ I conducted a sample survey of some Viennese newspapers for the dates mentioned, which broadly coalesce around the years 1920–1921, such as the Jewish *Wahrheit* and *Wiener Morgenzeitung*, as well as the non-Jewish *Wiener Zeitung*, to see whether any major Zionist activities or events were mentioned, but with no results. What the graffiti, and the photograph supplied by Aviva Rosset, demonstrate, in any case, is the attraction of Herzl’s grave-memorial in the interwar period as a magnet of Zionist pilgrimage, predominantly of the *chalutzim* – early pioneers – from Eastern Europe making the difficult journey to start a new life in British Mandatory Palestine. The gravesite evidently effused a meaningful aura, combining the legacy of Theodor Herzl and the influence of his memory with the burgeoning attraction of the Zionist cause in the interwar period. This parallels in a striking manner the Chassidic practice of pilgrimage to the *ohelim* or grave-houses of *tzadikim*, the ‘righteous’ wonder-rabbis, constituting a powerful political counterpoint to a deeply religious-orthodox practice, with further parallels in the modern State of Israel.¹⁰⁵



Figure 5. קבר הרצל 1921. © Aviva Rosset

¹⁰⁴ Personal correspondence between Aviva Rosset and Tim Corbett, 14 August 2015.

¹⁰⁵ The Chassidic practice is discussed in David Assaf, *The Regal Way: The Life and Times of Rabbi Israel of Ruzhin*, Stanford 2002, 321–324, while pilgrimage to sites of Jewish and/or Zionist memory in Israel are discussed throughout in Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition*, Chicago 1995.

Herzl's Reinterment and the (Re-)Birth of his Myth in Israel

Like much of the factual history of the gravestone, there is little documentary evidence of its relevance and/or influence as a site of memory during the Shoah, aside from the above-cited continuation of annual visits by the leaders of Vienna's rapidly dwindling Jewish community. In fact, there is little documentary evidence altogether of the fate of the Döbling cemetery, which after all represented the breadth and depth of communal and cultural enmeshment of Viennese society before the Shoah, to a significant degree made up of individuals of Jewish origin. Tina Walzer, cataloguing Austria's Jewish sepulchral heritage to survive the Shoah, listed the Döbling cemetery as "partially" destroyed.¹⁰⁶ However, the Jewish graves in Döbling were subject to Austrian civil law and not Jewish religious law, meaning that both before and after the Shoah they could be and were in the event of expiration of contracts liquidated. Moreover, many of the Jewish graves, including that of Theodor Herzl, survived, suggesting that there was no official policy within the National Socialist city government targeting the Döbling cemetery as other Jewish cemeteries in Vienna were targeted. It may appear strange that such an iconic and evidently internationally renowned (Jewish) site of memory survived the cultural genocide of the Nazis unscathed, and yet this coalesces with the overall piecemeal destructions of Jewish heritage occurring in this relatively short-lived era of Vienna's history, during which the Nazis and their helpers, despite their murderous intent and the breath-taking scale of their genocide, were not entirely successful in excising Vienna's Jewish heritage from the face of the city.¹⁰⁷ Without a doubt, however, and given more time, the Döbling cemetery and Herzl's grave would also have fallen victim to their machinations.

Vienna, despite the almost total destruction of its indigenous Jewish community, became a way-station in the aftermath of the Shoah for hundreds of thousands of predominantly Jewish Displaced Persons making their way west from the shattered lands of Central and Eastern Europe, for the most part hoping to end up in Palestine or the United States.¹⁰⁸ The Zionist ambition of emigration to Palestine reached its greatest momentum amongst the remaining Jews of Vienna following the cataclysmic destruction of Jewish life in Europe and the perceived hopelessness of a future for Jews on the broken continent.¹⁰⁹ In this context, the "Herzl grave-walks" resumed immediately after the end of the Shoah, as depicted in Figure 3, and in September 1948 ownership of Theodor Herzl's grave was formally relinquished from the city cemetery office to the IKG to ensure its "worthy preservation".¹¹⁰ Finally, following the uneasy truce at the end of the First Arab-Israeli War, Israel's War of Independence, in the summer of 1949, one of the new state's first acts was the fulfilment of Herzl's dying wish to transfer his remains and the remains of his parents to the new Jewish State. This was to be the last major event concentrated on Herzl's gravesite in Vienna, after which the site largely disappeared from popular memory and was eclipsed by the new gravesite on Har Herzl in Jerusalem.

106 Tina Walzer, *Jüdische Friedhöfe in Österreich und den europäischen Ländern*, in: Claudia Theune/Tina Walzer (eds.), *Jüdische Friedhöfe: Kultstätte, Erinnerungsort, Denkmal*, Vienna 2011, 10.

107 On Nazi policies towards Jewish cemeteries in Vienna, see for example Elizabeth Anthony/Dirk Rupnow, *Wien IX, Seegasse 9: Ein österreichisch-jüdischer Geschichtsort*, in: Jim Tobias/Peter Zinke (eds.), *Beiträge zur Deutschen und Jüdischen Geschichte 5*, Nürnberg 2010, and Tina Walzer, *Der jüdische Friedhof Währing in Wien: Historische Entwicklung, Zerstörungen der NS-Zeit, Status Quo*, Vienna 2011.

108 Evelyn Adunka, *Die vierte Gemeinde: Die Wiener Juden in der Zeit von 1945 bis heute*, Vienna 2000, 159.

109 As remarked by Robert Knight, *Neutrality, not Sympathy: Jews in Post-war Austria*, in: Robert Wistrich (ed.), *Austrians and Jews in the twentieth century: from Franz Joseph to Waldheim*, London 1992, 220.

110 *Das Grab Herzls in der Obhut der Gemeinde*, in: *Die Gemeinde*, September 1948, 4.

In his seminal 1896 work *Der Judenstaat*, Herzl had remarked: “We have cradles, we have graves, and it is well-known what the graves are to the Jewish heart. The cradle we shall take with us – therein slumbers rosily and smiling our future. Our dear graves we shall have to leave behind – I believe that we acquisitive people will have the hardest time separating ourselves from them.”¹¹¹ Herzl thus succinctly highlighted the centrality of the *met mitzvah*, the commandment for the eternal and respectful preservation of the peace of the dead, to Jewish, even secular Jewish, culture. The profundity of the eternal grave underlay Herzl’s wish to be reinterred in Israel, as did, quite possibly, his ambition to be remembered in posterity in the state which he had no doubt would eventually arise after his death. Herzl was exhumed on 14 August 1949 in a ceremony that, like his funeral 45 years before, was entirely organised and conditioned by the IKG.¹¹² His coffin, cast in metal in accordance with his wishes for eventual reinterment, lay in state for two days in the synagogue in the Seitentetengasse in Vienna, the only one of the city’s major synagogues to survive the November Pogrom, where it was visited by an estimated 150,000 people.¹¹³ During the final ceremony before Herzl’s remains were collected by a special delegation from Israel, Vienna’s new Chief Rabbi Akiba Eisenberg, an adherent of the Religious Zionist *Mizrachi* movement, compared Herzl’s reinterment with the Biblical story of Moses bringing the bones of Jacob from Egypt to the Land of Israel, and compared the 45 years without Herzl following his death, including the years of the Shoah, to the 40 years the Israelites spent in the desert.¹¹⁴ Significantly, he referred to Herzl not by his civic name Theodor, but by his synagogal name Benjamin Seew (in German-language rendering).¹¹⁵ Herzl’s life, work and memory were thus mobilised for and subsumed under a Biblical narrative of survival and peoplehood while Herzl the man, as he himself had done in his diaries, was elevated into a pantheon of deliverers of the Jewish people from captivity and exile into the Promised Land. Among the numerous articles published by the IKG in the wake of the exhumation ceremony, one statement was directed at Herzl personally: “It happens according to your will, to your honour, to the honour of Israel and for the praise of the Almighty, so that your precious remains may find their eternal peace in the hallowed soil of the dreamed-of state.”¹¹⁶

Herzl’s remains, and those of his parents, were transferred from Vienna to Israel aboard the specially named El Al aircraft *Herzl* on 16 August 1949, and were buried the following day in a grand ceremony attended by tens of thousands of people in what was to become the national memorial site at Har Herzl in Jerusalem, also known as *Har HaZicharon*, the Mount of Remembrance. The choice of burial site in Jerusalem, after all the location of Mount Zion and the centre of the Jewish faith and of the mythical Jewish historical narrative, was indicative of the appropriation of Herzl’s memory to legitimate the Zionist narrative of the new state.¹¹⁷ Israel today maintains Jerusalem as its undivided national capital, much to the chagrin of the Palestinians, who seek to establish their own state with Jerusalem, or at least a part of Jerusalem, as its capital, underlining the political capital of locating Israel’s national memorial complex there. Of course, the symbolic gravitas of Jerusalem to Jewish

111 Herzl, *Der Judenstaat*, 72.

112 Herzls Abschied von Wien, in: *Die Gemeinde*, September 1949, 12-13.

113 Photographs of the event, including Isidor Schalit’s visit as Israel’s special envoy for the exhumation of Herzl and his parents, are reproduced in Adunka, *Die vierte Gemeinde*, inlay between 240 f.

114 Theodor Herzls allerletzter Weg, in: *Die Gemeinde*, September 1949, 4.

115 Abschied von Herzl in unserem Tempel, in: *Die Gemeinde*, September 1949, 2.

116 Herzls Abschied von Wien, in: *Die Gemeinde*, September 1949, 12 f.

117 See Idith Zertal, *Israel’s Holocaust and the Politics of Nationhood*, Cambridge 2005.

culture is so profound that it hardly needs justifying. At Herzl's funeral in 1904, for example, David Wolffsohn, Herzl's friend and successor to the presidency of the Zionist Congress, recited Psalm 137: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning."¹¹⁸ Yet, as happened so frequently in the activities commemorating Herzl after his death, Herzl's own wishes were not taken into account. He had actually wanted to be buried in Haifa, the city he envisaged as the capital of a cosmopolitan, inclusive and – perhaps most importantly – secular state.¹¹⁹ Herzl's attitude to Jerusalem tallied with his lukewarm attitudes towards Jewish tradition in general, and his hostile attitudes towards Jewish religion in particular, as he remarked in his diary on 31 October 1898, in a sardonic twist on Psalm 137: "When I henceforth remember you, Jerusalem, it will not be with pleasure", referring in part to the pestilence of the city at the turn of the last century, but also to his experience of the "inhumanity" and "hatred" of the place,¹²⁰ and of the pervasive religious "superstition from all sides", which were anathema to Herzl.¹²¹

Katherine Verdery, in her work on reburial in post-socialist societies, remarked that the enterprise of reburial involves "treating former heads of state as quasi-religious relics. These cases almost invariably indicated struggles over the form of the polity: how much territory it should have, whether it should be a monarchy or a republic."¹²² The religiosity of the commemorative events surrounding Herzl's burial and reburial are indicative not only of the synthesis – or at times conflicts – of religious and political agendas amongst his followers, first in Vienna's Jewish community and later in the young Jewish State, but further reflect the kind of sacralisation of politics which became a widespread trademark of political movements in the twentieth century. Herzl's canonisation as a Founding Father figure, moreover, and especially the stage-setting of his memory at the national military and memorial complex in Jerusalem, furthermore reveal the perennial contestation of the boundaries, physical and political, of this new state, much as the creation of this memorial site was designed to assert certain boundaries and inculcate a sense of permanence and security in the shaky decades following independence. Finally, Herzl's reburial and the sacralisation of the new national cemetery embodied the Zionist belief in the conclusion of the Jewish exile and life in the diaspora with the return to Israel, Herzl's remains serving viscerally as legitimation of his vision and of the new Jewish State. *Har Herzl/Har HaZicharon*, designed around the memory of this man whose grave forms its focal point, has become the principle burial site for the nation's leaders as well as for the thousands of soldiers and civilians killed in the numerous and on-going conflicts following the foundation of the state. As Maoz Azaryahu concluded: "Infused with the Zionist myth of national revival and restoration, and embedded into the symbolic fabric of Israeli independence, Mount Herzl assumed a distinguished place in the emerging sacred topography of Israeli nationhood."¹²³ Herzl's myth has been entirely reinvented in Israel – and thereby totally dislocated from its origins in suburban Vienna.

Herzl's new tomb atop *Har Herzl* is a sleek, black marble affair, incised in golden lettering with an exclusively Hebrew-language inscription which reads: "Binyamin

118 Keil, Floridsdorf, Döbling, Simmering, 62.

119 Theodor Herzls allerletzter Weg, in: Die Gemeinde, September 1949, 4. Haifa was posited as the future capital in Herzl, *Altneuland*, 63. Robert Wistrich commented that Herzl's vision in *Altneuland* was essentially "carried over from Austro-liberalism to find a new mode of expression in humanistic Zionism", *Laboratory*, 231.

120 Herzl, *Theodor Herzls Tagebücher*, Volume 2, 212.

121 *Ibid.*, 214.

122 Verdery, *Dead Bodies*, 17.

123 Maoz Azaryahu, *Mount Herzl: The Creation of Israel's National Cemetery*, in: *Israel Studies* 1 (1996) 2, 47.

Z'e'v Theodor Herzl / son of / Ya'qov and Janet / 10 Iyar 620 – 20 Tamuz 664 / He was brought from Vienna to Jerusalem / for eternal rest / on 22 Av 709.” The absence of the German language, the foregrounding of Herzl’s synagogal over his civic name, the spelling of his surname in modern Hebrew fashion ה-ר-צ-ל, the use of the traditional patronymic *ben* (son of), and the exclusive rendering of dates in the Hebrew calendar, all represent the complete absorption of Herzl’s persona into a Hebrew culture and Israeli national narrative, while eschewing the more religiously connoted epigraphy of his former Viennese grave, such as the common eulogy of Biblical origin תנצב"ה and the honorific of rabbinical origin הר"ר. Amos Elon remarked that “much of what has been achieved by Herzl and his successors – and the price paid for it – is actually visible from the vantage point of Mount Herzl”.¹²⁴ Herzl’s new gravesite enjoys views ranging from the hills of Jerusalem to Tel Aviv, beyond to the Mediterranean and off into the desert, while all around lie the lands cultivated by the Zionist pioneers. Yet the site also stands directly adjacent to Yad Vashem, commemorating the cataclysm of Europe’s Judeocide, and the graves of those who fell in Israel’s bitter conflicts with its Arab neighbours. As Jackie Feldman remarked, on *Har Herzl* “the link constructed by Zionism between the Holocaust, the founding of the State of Israel, and her struggle with her Arab neighbors/enemies is lived as embodied experience”.¹²⁵ This narrative etched in the hills of Jerusalem is a far cry indeed from the future that Herzl imagined for his people and his state. However, this narrative also holds true for Herzl’s family, which collectively had a tragic end: two of his children and his only grandchild committed suicide, while his remaining daughter was murdered in the Shoah. None of his family ever made it to Palestine/Israel, though today his entire family has been reunited in death on *Har Herzl*.¹²⁶

Concluding Remarks: Differing Memories, or Dislocated Memories, Between Vienna and Israel?

Herzl’s grave in Jerusalem is today a focal point for enacting Israel’s Zionist narrative of the modern Jewish experience, a fact that made documenting the gravestone for this research problematic.¹²⁷ Aside from the internal, national commemorative events that so frequently take place there, the site was also visited, for example, by US President Barack Obama accompanied by Israeli President Shimon Peres and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in March 2013.¹²⁸ This was a powerful affirmation of the successes of the Zionist cause by one of the world’s most powerful leaders, and a striking example of the perennial efficacy of the gravesites of political leaders as magnets for the enactment and affirmation of discourses of political power. Meanwhile, the original gravesite in Vienna, though well-preserved, has been almost totally

124 Elon, Herzl, 410.

125 Jackie Feldman, *Between Yad Vashem and Mt. Herzl: Changing Inscriptions of Sacrifice on Jerusalem’s „Mountain of Memory“*, in: *Anthropological Quarterly* 80 (2007) 4, 1148.

126 Herzl Family Finds a Final Resting Place, in: *Ha’aretz*, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/features/this-day-in-jewish-history/this-day-in-jewish-history-herzl-family-finds-a-final-resting-place.premium-1.482550> (6 December 2012).

127 I could not gain access to the site due to on-going military parades when I visited in 2012, and my friend Shai Cotler ran into a similar problem when he drove to Jerusalem to photograph the site for the purposes of this article – he was not allowed access, either, but one of the IDF soldiers on guard did take some photographs on his behalf. Credit is therefore due to Shai – as to that soldier.

128 President Obama, President Peres and Prime Minister Netanyahu Visiting Herzl’s Grave, *Har Herzl*, Jerusalem, March 2013, in: *Ha’aretz*, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/obama-visits-israel-live-blog-obama-visits-israel-day-three.premium-1.511254> (22 March 2013).

eclipsed from popular and historical memory, the small number of occasional visitors to the site notwithstanding.¹²⁹ Although the grave has since 1948 been the property of the IKG in Vienna, it is maintained as an honorary grave of the City of Vienna, which handles both the financing and execution of conservationist and restorative measures for the graves in its care. I noticed in writing this article that a correction had been made to the inscription sometime in the period between May 2012 and August 2014, as evident from the date signatures on two of my own photographs. During this period, the incorrect date of birth – 7 May – had been amended to read, correctly, 2 May, through a simple extension of the incision at the base of the number “7” to read “2”. Figure 1 depicts the more recent view of the grave. The Hebrew date, 15 Iyar, remains incorrect. Considering the mystery surrounding the origins of the gravestone and the inscription, including these glaring mistakes, I was intrigued about who had made this correction, and why, so I enquired at the administrative office of the Döbling cemetery, who redirected me to the central office of the city cemetery authorities. There I was informed that no record of the change had been logged, which suggests that, following a ‘routine inspection’ of the honorary graves, the error was reported directly to the municipal stonemason who was then commissioned to make the necessary correction.¹³⁰ Did some private visitor to Herzl’s grave – perhaps an admirer or history enthusiast – notice the error and notify the city cemetery authorities? In any case, this latest mystery at Herzl’s original gravesite underlines the obscurity into which his humbler Viennese origins have fallen, and the enigma surrounding the man’s origins vis-à-vis the pervasiveness of his posthumous myth in Israel.

Amos Elon commented that Herzl’s memory is “a lengthening shadow that diffuses as the years go by”, though his shadow continues to cast a “spell” over Israelis today.¹³¹ A.M. Klein more elaborately commented:

“He left a legacy greater than the millions of the Rothschilds; he had left a heritage that was Palestine. His monument is more lasting than bronze, and it is not situated in the cemetery of Vienna. In the conscience of his people is it engraved; and in the tombstone standing in the heart of Israel is written this message, a message that is at one and the same time an inheritance and a last will and testament, a legacy of words – *Wenn ihr wolt, ist es kein marchen* [sic] – if you will it this is no fable.”¹³²

Although writing this before the Shoah, the establishment of the State of Israel and Herzl’s reinterment in Jerusalem, Klein succinctly highlighted the ephemerality of Herzl’s ‘tombstone’ as a metaphor of his legacy, while we can retrospectively also understand this ‘ephemeralisation’, to coin a term, as analogous to the relocation of Herzl’s memory to Israel, and the consequent dislocation of his memory at its source in Vienna. Katherine Verdery explained that “a dead body’s symbolic effectiveness does not depend on its standing for one particular thing, however, for among the most important properties of bodies, especially dead ones, is their ambiguity, multivocality, or polysemy”, continuing:

129 A photographic exhibition on Jewish life in Vienna today, for example, includes an image of the grave in Döbling being visited by a handful of older individuals. Josef Polleros, *Heute in Wien 2012: Fotografien zur jüdischen Gegenwart von Josef Polleros*, Vienna 2012, 69. In my numerous visits to the grave in recent years, by contrast, I have never once seen it visited by another person.

130 Personal correspondence between Städtische Friedhöfe and Tim Corbett, 12 August 2015.

131 Elon, Herzl, 410.

132 Klein, *Beyond Sambation*, 20.

“Dead bodies have another great advantage as symbols: they don’t talk much on their own (though they did once). Words can be put into their mouths – often quite ambiguous words – or their own actual words can be ambiguous by quoting them out of context. It is thus easier to rewrite history with dead people than with other kinds of symbols that are speechless. Yet because they have a single name and a single body, they present the illusion of having only one significance. Fortifying that illusion is their materiality, which implies their having a single meaning that is solidly ‘grounded,’ even though in fact they have no single such meaning.”¹³³

Herzl’s tomb in Jerusalem represents precisely such a singularity of narrative meaning, despite the evident polysemy of Herzl’s memory, serving both left and right, secular and religious agendas in Israel today. As a tomb for a ‘founding father’, functioning simultaneously as a potent political site of memory, it is thus thoroughly comparable to similar sites of memory such as Lenin’s mausoleum in Moscow or Atatürk’s in Ankara, both of which, moreover, were sites of reburial of deep political significance. Meanwhile, Herzl’s empty tomb in Vienna stands as an oddity, a historical anomaly, a memorial to the ‘founding father’ of Israel located in a most unlikely location, in a modest and most importantly non-Jewish cemetery dating from the *fin-de-siècle*, in a quiet and little visited suburb of this quaint Central-European capital. Its early-twentieth-century usage as a site of Zionist pilgrimage and agitation offers a pertinent case study of the practices through which Herzl’s myth was forged following his death, while its passage into obscurity – as a site of non-memory, perhaps – following the foundation of the State of Israel and the transferral of Herzl’s remains to Jerusalem in 1949 invites consideration on the incongruity between Herzl’s myth today and the origins of the man in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna.

133 Verdery, *Dead Bodies*, 28 f.

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Quotation: Tim Corbett, Was ich den Juden war, wird eine kommende Zeit besser beurteilen...
Myth and Memory at Theodor Herzl's Original Gravesite in Vienna, in: S:I.M.O.N. – Shoah:
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