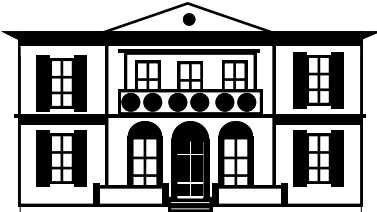


IN TOUCH

MAY 2014

www.afjmh.orgStephan Rollin
*Founder*Francesca Brunner-Kennedy
brunnerf@cox.net
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NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM

DR. HANNO LOEWY

The Jewish Museum Hohenems is reaching out in new dimensions with our latest exhibit. We are going back in time and presenting 700 years of Jewish history in the Habsburg empire! With the help of various lenders of precious artifacts and a load of sponsors that so generously support our work, we are able to look at the story of the "Habsburg Jews" – that in fact can be perceived as the "First Europeans." About 450 visitors came to the opening, many of them not even able to enter the overcrowded Salomon Sulzer auditorium in the old synagogue of Hohenems. This was a moving moment in the history of the museum. You will find details about our new exhibit on pages 6 through 11.

Our growing numbers of visitors are a challenge for us. We know we have good friends all over the world helping us to make Hohenems a good place for learning

about both the dark and bright sides of history, and the chances and challenges of today. Our friends help make the museum an inspiring space for those who want to preserve heritage and those who want to create the resources of the future.

The support we enjoy by our growing association in Hohenems and by you, the American Friends of the Jewish Museum Hohenems, is most encouraging. Stay tuned!

New Website is online!

It took a long time to work on this project behind the scenes, involving all the resources of the museum, Niko Hofinger in Innsbruck and our designers from "atelier Stecher" in Götzis. After more than 15 years, our website not only desperately needed "renovation" but a complete re-launch. We are grateful for the support of the American

Friends for this major enterprise that also was sponsored by the Federal government of Austria.

Based on a modern Content Management System we are now able to present all the activities and exhibitions, educational programs and resources, databases and information, and the direct links to the American Friends and to our "Verein" in a fresh new way. The online museum shop and the booking system for events now offer easy access even from a distance, and basic information is now also present in French, Hebrew, Italian and Turkish.

Please enjoy the new website. And if something might not work perfectly in the next weeks, please forgive us. As always: such a giant enterprise has to survive its "childhood diseases." We welcome your feedback, if

(Continued on page 2)

NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM (CONT)

(Continued from page 1)

something goes wrong or could look better. You can enter the English site directly through:


<http://www.jm-hohenems.at/en/>

Hohenems' Photographic Heritage

Thousands of photographs, both from private and public sources, are kept in our archives, forming a visual heritage of the Jewish community in Hohenems, Vorarlberg, Tyrol and Liechtenstein, their families and descendants and the Jewish quarter of Hohenems.

With funds from the Rothschild Foundation (Hanadiv) Europe in London we were able to digitize and preserve 4700 photographs so far that, according to individual decisions of donors and lenders, are integrated step by step into the new online database "hohenemsphotography" that went online with our new website. Please have a look to search for photographs of your family. We hope you find our new tool helpful.

The Hohenems genealogy database is also be-



Databases
Try a convenient search for ...

Genealogy
Hohenems Genealogy is an online genealogical database for the history and the present day of the Hohenems diaspora. This database contains information pertaining to Jews in Vorarlberg, Tyrol, and Liechtenstein, from 1617 into the 20th century, as well as to their descendants and family relationships—currently, a total of about 20,000 individuals. You are invited to search for families, genealogical trees, migration routes, and life stories.

Documents
The documents archive is recorded in a searchable catalog and can be researched online. Individual holdings can be viewed on site by prior appointment.

Photographs
The photographic database contains about 4,700 digitized photographs. They can be searched and viewed online.

Jewish Cemetery

Contact
Christian Herbst
Phone +43 (0)5576 73989-15
herbst@jm-hohenems.at ►

The databases available on the new website <http://www.jm-hohenems.at/en/>

ing enriched step by step with photographs and documents, now comprising data about more than 20,000 individuals connected to Jewish families from Hohenems, Vorarlberg, Tyrol and Liechtenstein. This ever growing resource not only enables family members to get connected with their past, but also helps us find new descendants all over the world, with an eye to the upcoming reunion in 2017. Please

see:
www.hohenemsgenealogy.at/en/

European Summer University for Jewish Studies, Hohenems July 6 – 11, 2014
It all runs in the family ... Jewish relations

“Psychopaths always fascinate me. I think it’s their cultural literacy and strong family values. Or is that Jews?” (Dr. House to Dr. Hadley, Season 6, Epi-

sode 11 of the television series *House*)

Is it only a stereotype or a social cultural reality that family has a particular significance in Judaism and Jewish life? Since the destruction of the temple, domestic life is a stronghold of tradition and identity: from the rituals of family purity to the sanctity of Shabbat. But also beyond of the realms of religion, family – as a

(Continued on page 3)

NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM (CONT)

(Continued from page 2)

relational space of migration and diasporic networks – is charged with meaning, influencing both Jewish history and its interpretation. Marriage relations and family structures not only secure the physical reproduction but also maintain a community of tradition that cannot part from both its tribal foundations and its universal pretensions.

The Summer University 2014 will study the meaning of family in Judaism from various perspectives and disciplines: their formation in biblical and historical narratives, their function as a social network and a safeguard of the existence of a minority, as a space of generational conflict and struggle between forces of tradition and change. At the same time, the Summer University will explore the popular attribution, self-perceptions and role projections (like the “yiddishe mame” or Jewish mother) in various media but also in the discourse of Jewish studies itself.

The summer university Hohenems, now in its

sixth year, is a joint project of the universities of Munich, Basel, Salzburg, Vienna and Zurich together with the Jewish Museum Hohenems. It offers a specialized program for students of Jewish studies, in the fields of history and culture, literature and linguistics, religious studies and anthropology. Applications have to be sent to the University of Munich. The one-week interdisciplinary program provides the students the possibility to deepen their knowledge and to discuss ideas related to a certain topic of Jewish studies with an international group of scholars and in communication with fellow students from various German-speaking countries.

By joining the resources of the five participating universities the students are offered possibilities that go far beyond the scope of the single institutes and faculties. The former Jewish Quarter of Hohenems and the Jewish Museum offers an inspiring setting for this. The summer university also encourages collaboration between scholars and the museum on various levels.

Since 2009, the format of the summer university has followed the model of the successful summer courses established in Munich in 2005. Seminars, lectures, language courses and hands on workshops fit into a dense program, exploring a crucial subject (such as “migration,” “physical culture,” or “family”), allowing a multifaceted engagement with the most recent research and paradigms in Jewish studies. Participants write papers, and can be awarded with credits towards a degree from their respective university.

Stolpersteine in Hohenems

On June 30, 2014, nine “Stolpersteine” (stumbling blocks) will be installed to commemorate the last Jews of Hohenems who were deported between 1938 and 1941: Hans Elkan, Helene Elkan, Theodor Elkan, Gisela Figdor, Clara Heimann-Rosenthal, Frieda Nagelberg, Markus Silberstein, Sophie Steingraber-Hauser, and Louis Weil. The little cobblestone-sized memorials

present the names and dates right in front of the last homes of the victims in Hohenems.

The ceremony will be organized by the municipality together with the Cologne based artist, Gunter Demnig, who has installed many thousands of “Stolpersteine” in 500 towns in Germany and various European countries since 1992. School classes from Hohenems will also participate, thereby encouraging the young pupils to engage in the process and to remember the biographies. For more information about the Stolpersteine, please visit: <http://www.stolpersteine.eu/en/home/>

New publications

The First Europeans. Habsburg and Other Jews - A World before 1914

English Edition | Edited by Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek und Michaela Feurstein-Prasser | Mandelbaum Verlag: Wien 2014 | 184 pages | 30 × 23 cm | ISBN 978-3-85476-440-3.

(Continued on page 4)

NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM (CONT)

(Continued from page 3)

With contributions by Fritz Backhaus, J. Friedrich Battenberg, Mark H. Gelber, Erik Petry, Diana Pinto, Joshua Tepitsky, and others.



One hundred years after the outbreak of the First World War, the Jewish Museum Hohenems looks back in an exhibition on the world of the “Habsburg Jews:” on their experiences, their hopes for a European unification, and their illusions about the multi-ethnic Habsburg Empire. Their connections across borders and their mobility rendered them active mediators between cultures and regions, a dynamic element of European development. In their life stories, represented in the selected objects, all aspects of a past and dis-

appointed, abused, but still vibrant European hope are reflected. Catalog accompanying the exhibition in the Jewish Museum Hohenems from March 25 to October 5, 2014. Edition Museumstexte 03

The Jewish Quarter. A Walk around Hohenems

English Edition | Bucher Verlag | Hohenems
2013 | Broschur | 26
Seiten | 17 x 24 cm | €
2,90



The Jewish Museum Hohenems is part of a unique urban setting. This market town's former Jewish Quarter — Hohenems was granted city status only as late as 1983 following an initial attempt in 1333 — is both memorial land-

scape and lively center. Ever since the opening of the Jewish Museum in 1991, a process of revitalization has set in. Numerous buildings, architectural evidence of the former Jewish community, were restored and, with new functions, have become bridges between past and present. With this city guide as part of our Museumstexte series, it is our intention to introduce visitors not only to the history of the Quarter and its buildings, but also to its dynamic development. Here, the introduction of some of its inhabitants and their paradigmatic history is an integral part.

A walk around the Jewish Quarter and along Christians' Lane, passing synagogue and church, the count's Renaissance palace, and Gründerzeit structures from around 1900, leads us through 400 years of history and the present: a time span that has been marked by migration and coexistence, conflicts and prejudices, success and persecution, upheavals and departures. Their traces are still per-

ceivable in today's cityscape.

Visitors to the Jewish Museum and the city, natives and immigrants, they all are hereby offered a gateway to the center of Hohenems, which has always been characterized by polarities, between palace and market, between commoners and counts, between Jews and Christians, between those who are already here and those who have newly arrived. Hohenems has once been the only community in Europe whose main streets were called “Christians' Lane” and “Jews' Lane.” Nowadays, other immigrants and minorities are at the fore of public interest and leave their own mark on the urban center. This guide through the Jewish Quarter and the historic city center is meant to enhance the ability to better navigate through these spaces, to better manage in every conceivable sense.

The Grüninger Dossier

Since January 2014, Alain Gsponer's movie

(Continued on page 5)

NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM (CONT)



The Grüninger Dossier ©C-films, Zurich

(Continued from page 4)

about Paul Grüninger is being shown in the cinemas in Switzerland and Austria. Paul Grüninger, Swiss police officer in St. Gall until 1939, helped more than 3000 Jews in 1938 to escape into Switzerland, acting against the orders he received from Bern. Producer of the film is *c-films* in Zurich, headed by Peter Reichenbach, a descendant of both the Hohenems' Reichenbachs and Brettauers, and member of our academic board.

The Jewish Museum consulted the film production with historical information, docu-

ments and photographs. Together with the municipality of Hohenems, we had the pleasure to host the Austrian premiere in the Cineplexx theatre in Hohenems, with 350 guests, among them the director and the producers, various actors, the cameramen and set designer of the film, and Ruth Roduner-Grüninger, the granddaughter of Paul Grüninger. It was a remarkable opening event that helped the film to have a good kick-off in Vorarlberg.

Cinemas in Vorarlberg now offer screenings for school classes. These performances often are

combined with guided tours along the border on the old Rhine, organized by the Jewish Museum Hohenems. The educational department of the museum now offers a new guided tour program, inviting groups to learn more about the story of escape both in the permanent exhibition and on location along the border between Austria and Switzerland, only 20 minutes by foot from the museum. Confronting biographies of refugees and helpers, some of them risking their own future in this enterprise, we help to make the subject of escape and refuge a vivid memory – as

much as a reference to current debates in Europe about refugees and asylum.

Exhibition cooperation and travelling

Again one of our exhibitions is travelling. Our show *Entirely Pure! Total Immersion. Jewish Ritual Baths* with photographs by Peter Seidel is now shown in Catalonia, Spain. The Jewish Museum of Girona is not only hosting our exhibition until September, it is also proudly presenting the beautiful medieval mikvah of the town, that was just recently identified.

Our exhibition, a cooperation with the Jewish museums of Frankonia, Frankfurt and Vienna, has successfully been travelling for more than three years, and was shown already in Hohenems, Frankfurt, Fürth, Vienna, Erfurt, Andernach, Zülpich, Crailsheim and Rosenheim. Further venues in Augsburg, Speyer and other locations are already planned.

(Continued on page 6)

NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM (CONT)

(Continued from page 5)

News from the staff

In February 2014, Judith Niederklopper-Würtinger joined our staff part-time in the education department. She is a studied archeologist and worked for several years in museum education in various museums. To-

gether with Angelika Purin, she is now organizing the guided tours, workshops, educational programs and materials of the Museum – while Tanja Fuchs takes a break of a year, due to her second baby. Hello Magda! Congratulations to Tanja and you and your family!

News from the board and the “Verein”

Jutta Berger, president of the “Association for the Promotion of the Jewish Museum Hohenems,” was elected chairwoman of the “Trägerverein,” the legal body of the Museum

composed of the State of Vorarlberg, the municipality of Hohenems and the Association. The Association is growing and offering various services to their members. In the fall the association will organize an excursion to Morocco and its historical and contemporary traces of Jewish life. ❖

THE FIRST EUROPEANS, HABSBURG AND OTHER JEWS—A WORLD BEFORE 1914

DR. HANNO LOEWY

One hundred years after the outbreak of the First World War, Europe has plunged anew into a deep crisis. More than ever, the development of joint institutions and values seems contended. Thus, the idea of Europe is called into question both from within and without: While the acting European institutions take on a life of their own, a European public voice that might control those institutions is still far away from materializing. While there is Europe-wide agreement among populist detractors of “Europe,” friends of the European project are unable to find a common language. Even

more debatable is the issue of whether Europe—at a time of more reluctant than fervent coalescence—still represents those same universalistic ideas that have shaped its history.

Ideas that have not prevented Europe’s crises and catastrophes, but have kept emerging anew from these repeated catastrophes—from the Thirty Years’ War through the war from

1914-1918 all the way to the reality of Auschwitz.

Post-1945 Europe was informed by a “Never again!” that at the same

(Continued on page 7)



A view of the exhibition “The First Europeans” ©Walser

THE FIRST EUROPEANS (CONT)



A view of the exhibition "The First Europeans" ©Walser

(Continued from page 6)

time pitted two competing ideological and geopolitical camps against each other—a constellation that ultimately handed the idea of Europe a paradox success when it overcame the "European division" in 1989. However, the political success of the "European project" is accompanied by its intellectual impotence. Instead of answering to the challenges of a global economy with a notion of shared values, with ideas of inclusion and openness, Europe reinvents itself as a fortress, as a project of isolation and fear.

One hundred years after the onset of the First World War, the Jewish Museum Hohenems counters this self-righteous and complacent refusal to contemplate a Europe for the future with a look back

into the past. We unfold an associative panorama of the Jewish world of the Habsburg Empire, the empire that fell apart in 1914—with the start of a war that had its claim to be a just and patriarchally ruled

"multiethnic empire" pop like a balloon. In this "multiethnic empire," Jews were present in all dominions and regions—and had been at home there for many centuries: not least, in particularly impressive numbers, in the empire's more eastern provinces, in Galicia and Bukovina, which were gripped by competing national movements. The Jews' lifeworlds had been shaped by their connections across all those European regions within the Habsburg Empire, but also far beyond it through migration and family relationships, through cultural exchange, through education and commerce. Thus, they were at the same time local patriots, ardent "Habsburg" loyalists, Europeans, and cosmopolitans.



Bernard Purin, the director of the Jewish Museum in Munich, discussing matters with collector Ariel Muzicant (the former president of the Jewish community of Vienna) ©Walser

Hence, the First World War thrust not only the Europeans into pointless battles against each other, European Jews now found themselves on all fronts of this war. People who for the longest time had been connected through family relationships across all nations and empires, who had tried to promote

(Continued on page 8)

THE FIRST EUROPEANS (CONT)

(Continued from page 7)

transnational political ideas and utopias, and who now served their countries and armies as if there existed nothing but them—they, more than anybody else, were torn between universal and particular affiliations. If it is, therefore, possible to talk about the Habsburg “multiethnic empire” only as an illusion, then this was still as fertile an illusion as few others have ever been. Jewish merchants and beggars, rabbis and inventors, peddlers and bankers, railway pioneers and artists, laborers and political visionaries have moved in its contradictions—and across its changing territories. And they kept transcending these borders and contradictions, physically and mentally.

All these tensions form the multifaceted image of a transnational society on the eve of the First World War; a society that, as a reality, founded on its contradictions, and at the same time epitomizes a utopian potential in current debates around the future of Europe. Its critical appraisal is not meant to evoke false nostalgia, but rather to

sharpen the “sense of opportunity” (Robert Musil’s “*Möglichkeitssinn*”). Such dimensions can be revealed especially through observation of objects related to the history of the “Habsburg Jews” between Lake Constance and Bukovi-

these past hopes and illusions might give rise to new fantasies about Europe before any productive contemplation is crushed between populist anti-European sentiments and “power concentration,” bureaucratic routine and economic “realism.”

only by showing us a multitude of unknown details and aspects, but by enabling new intriguing ways of looking at it. With his architecture, Martin Kohlbauer has cast the exhibition into an enchantingly beautiful form. Roland Stecher and Thomas Matt have



Museum Director Hanno Loewy with curator Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek and the collectors Jemima and David Jeselsohn and Ariel Muzicant, who contributed to the exhibition (from left to right) ©Walser

na, southern Germany and Italy. Hundred years after the onset of the “European Civil War,” all aspects of a past, disappointed, abused, and still vibrant European hope are reflected in the history of these objects’ genesis, their use, and their interpretation. We hope that looking at

Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek initiated this challenging project and has created, in cooperation with Michaela Feurstein-Prasser, an in many ways surprising exhibition. Together, they have enriched our view of this sunken world and of its by no means lost potential not

skillfully designed the exhibition’s visual introduction to the public as well as this catalog. On behalf of the Jewish Museum Hohenems, I wish to thank them as well as all the numerous contributing authors of this volume. We also wish to express our

(Continued on page 9)

THE FIRST EUROPEANS (CONT)

(Continued from page 8)

deepest gratitude to the lenders, museums, archives, and private collectors as well as to the sponsors, foundations, and donors who have made this exhibition possible through their generous support, among them the American Friends of the Jewish Museum Hohenems, The David Berg Foundation in New York, the

Rothschild Foundation Europe (Hanadiv) in London, and the Jacqueline and Marc Leland Foundation in London. ❖



Mayor Richard Amann welcoming guests in the packed Salomon Sulzer Auditorium ©Walser

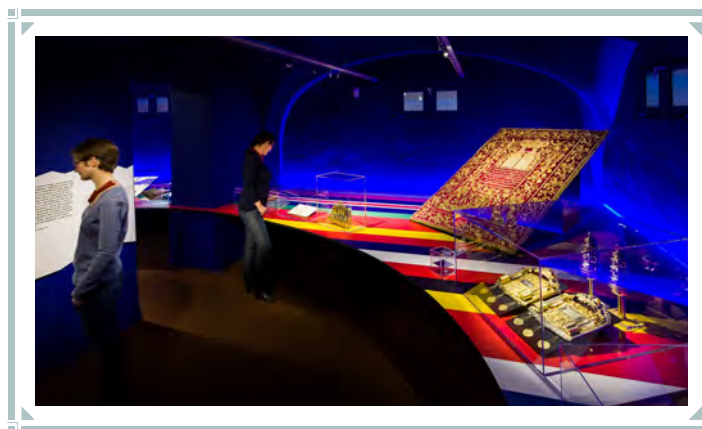
MY SOJOURN TO VISIT WITH THE FIRST EUROPEANS

URI TAENZER

It didn't seem right. The prospect of another celebration of the opening of a major JMH exhibition without the presence of at least one AFJMH emissary. Still, it took some steadfast encouragement from members of our re-energized Board of Trustees (and U.S. Airlines convenient week-end schedule of direct flights out of Philadelphia to and from Zurich) for me to decide to go.

What I saw and what I experienced in Hohenems from March 22-23 can only be described

as truly inspirational. I was deeply moved by the warm reception, which was extended to me and, more importantly, by the appreciation which was conveyed by Hanno Loewy and by the museum staff and the many local fans of the Museum for the support we, the American Friends, provide to the Museum. My having made such an unexpected trip for this singular occasion on behalf of AFJMH was clearly welcomed by the very significant number of museum devotees I encountered.



The first visitors in the exhibition "The First Europeans" ©Walser

The new exhibition, aptly called *The First Europeans*, is quite impressive. It features an extraordinary collection of 41 rare Jewish historical objects gathered from

museums and private collections in Europe, England, Israel and the United States. Much thoughtfulness went into the selection of

(Continued on page 10)

MY SOJOURN WITH FIRST EUROPEANS (CONT)

(Continued from page 9)

each of the rare items represented so as to invoke similarities between the heterogeneous community of Habsburg-era Jews, whose

es of aggressive nationalism that invariably made Jews objects of prejudice and hatred. Efforts comparable with the Habsburg era to integrate Europe took hold

World before 1914 published in both a German and English version is indispensable for a deeper understanding of the complexities of Jewish life, survival and ulti-

Heimann-Jelinek and Michaela Feurstein-Prasser, who created the exhibition, describe the theme, which they also reprised in their talk to an overflow audience at the Solomon Sulzer Hall on Sunday morning, March 23. Other scholarly articles by historians Diana Pinto, Eric Petry, Joshua Teplitsky, J. Friedrich Battenberg, Fritz Backhaus, Mark H. Gelber and Martin Kohlbauer (who was the architect for the exhibition) round out these volumes. A catalog with explanations of the historical relevance of each object and its full-page photograph follows. The impressive task of translating the enormous volume of material from German to English (and vice versa) fell to Lilian Dombrowski (of Raanana, Israel).

The exhibition deals with the culturally and economically multifaceted so-called "Habsburg Jews" who were able to establish transnational networks by virtue of their economic mobility and linguistic uniformity prior to WW I.

(Continued on page 11)



Uri Tanzer, Richard and Anni Amann, Landesrat Harald Sonderegger, and speaker Anton Pelinka (from left to right) ©Walser

dreams of establishing an integrated economy and a more tolerant society were at least partially realized, only to be dashed in 1914 with the advent and tragic outcome of the Great War. The Habsburg multinational state, in the long run, did not prove able to restrain the forc-

post WW II with the creation of the European Union. This construct is yet again being challenged by political and economic strains, precisely one hundred years later. Examination of a beautifully written and illustrated 185-page book, *The First Europeans, Habsburg and Other Jews - A*

mate emancipation in a hostile environment which was central Europe, beginning with the Middle Ages until 1914. Hanno Loewy provides the reader with a succinct introduction to the dramatic history which underlies the exhibition. Renowned Vienna-based curators, Felicitas

MY SOJOURN WITH FIRST EUROPEANS (CONT)

(Continued from page 10)

The opening program in the Salomon Sulzer Saal (formerly the Hohenems Synagogue) also featured prominent speakers including Dr. Hanno Loewy, Burgermeister Richard Amann, Harald Sonderegger, Landesrat for Culture, Bregenz and Dr. Anton Pelinka, Professor, Central European University, Budapest. Professor Pelinka's speech argued that only

a supra-national state, like the European Union, not succumbing to the forces of narrow-minded nationalism, guarantees freedom and safety for all, not least Jews.

Although I found each of the historical items included in the exhibition to be uniquely meaningful, the huge 1832 portrait of The Baroness Cecille von Eskeles by Friedrich von Amerling

was among the most overpowering. To get a better perspective on the exhibition and the opening program please visit <http://tinyurl.com/qcmqbtu>.

A visitor to this exhibition cannot help but admire the "Habsburg Jews" whose success in commerce (e.g. railroads, commerce and banking) stimulated a brief era when central

Europe was a bit more unified and civilized. In many ways the exhibition also celebrates the rich cultural and religious legacy we inherited from these visionaries. ❖

ANGELUS KAFKA

PETER BARBER

Peter Barber is a descendant of Angelus Kafka through his daughter Elisa (1823-1896). The author of books on map history, diplomatic history, the history of London and the history of Italian Swiss immigration, he has been Head of Cartographic and Topographic Materials at the British Library since 2001.

Angelus Kafka is one of the lesser-known rabbis of Hohenems. He was in effect on probation throughout his three years (1830-1833) and he was unhappy there, though he tried not to show it. His ambition had driven him to apply, because he was probably flattered at the prospect

of becoming a 'Oberrabbiner' or Chief Rabbi, of Tirol. It came at a high price, however. The community leaders were increasingly secular-minded and as a result of unfortunate experiences with his predecessor they were cautious about him. They kept him on a tight rein, even forbidding him to live in the rabbi's house. The Habsburg authorities in their turn were suspicious of him because he had applied for the job and been appointed behind their backs. Both sides felt he had to prove himself, but their expectations of him were different: the Jewish communi-

ty expecting to get value for money and so a rabbi who would act as religious teacher as well as leading services, while the authorities wished for a person who would, like a Catholic parish priest, represent central authority. At a personal level, Angelus himself was unhappy at being separated from all but the youngest of his eight children who were being boarded with relatives in Bohemia because the community had made it clear it would not pay for their upkeep. Moreover he felt starved of intellectual stimulation in a very provincial town, which was separated by high

mountains from the lively cultural life to which he had had access in his Bohemian homeland.

Yet Angelus overcame these obstacles. Concealing his own feelings from his community, he launched a charm offensive. The community elders were assuaged by his good manners, his readiness to combine his religious duties with those of teacher at the Jewish school (which his predecessor had refused to do) his outstanding talent as a preacher and the introduction of liberal reforms to the liturgy, notably a choir and the

(Continued on page 12)

ANGELUS KAFKA (CONT)

(Continued from page 11)

occasional sermon in German. These changes also pleased the secular authorities, who were keen to elide Christian and Jewish religious forms. He pleased them even more by composing a Christian-style catechism – an anathema to orthodox Jews. This set out the fundamentals of the Jewish faith, in a way that underplayed its important differences from Christianity, while at the same time teaching civic virtues – above all, loyalty to the Habsburg dynasty. The same philosophy also found reflection in the stirring sermon that Angelus delivered on the occasion of the Emperor's birthday in 1831.

Both the sermon and the catechism were printed, the catechism proving quite popular and going through several revised editions over the next 50 years. They brought Angelus to the attention of the authorities as a Habsburg loyalist in tune with the ideology of an Austria dominated by the reactionary Prince Metternich. Angelus never looked back. He left Hohenems in 1833 to become a district rabbi, or *Kreisrabbiner*, the Jewish equivalent of a bishop in the Habsburg Empire, of

the Prachiner Circle, living in Breznice, close to where he had been born.

Within two years he was the *Kreisrabbiner* of Pilsen and Klattau, perhaps the most important Jewish position outside Prague itself. Until 1848 he continued to reap the rewards of his compliance, using his eloquence to persuade his coreligionists to accept their lot in repeated sermons praising the Emperor, his family and the imperial authorities.

While condemning what he considered to be the outrageous behaviour of Jewish revolutionaries such as Karl Marx he also firmly opposed what he considered the obscurantism and superstition of the increasingly influential Chassidim who looked to the rigid adherence to the detailed tenets of the Talmud to be found in the Stettls (or Jewish communities) of Poland for their inspiration. He clearly enjoyed his role at the centre of the community, conducting religious examinations for couples before marrying them, leading funerals and acting as judge in civil and religious matters.

All the while he begged the authorities to be al-

lowed to live in the increasingly prosperous town of Pilsen, instead of the country village of Svihov, where the district rabbis were expected to reside, and to be paid by the state so as to allow him to act independently of the leaders of the Jewish community – and so as to earn enough to provide for his ever-increasing family, which by 1837 had grown to 12 children. At the same time he laid out his thoughts on the proper training and duties of a district rabbi. Though some Habsburg officials accused him of being self-serving, others recommended that he should indeed be treated as a state employee with a salary and status to match.

It would nevertheless be wrong to dismiss Angelus as being totally self-serving with more than a whiff of insincerity. He was born in 1791 in the small village of Oldrichov just outside Pisek in Bohemia where the Kafkas had been the sole tolerated Jewish family since 1648. From the start he lived on the cusp be-



Title page of Angelus Kafka's book

tween the traditional and the new. His pious mother brought him up in a traditional way in a Yiddish-speaking environment. To be a poor Jew in Bohemia was to live a life hemmed in by restrictions imposed by the authorities on almost all aspects of one's existence and enforced, within the over-crowded street where Jews were usually confined, by the wealthy communal leaders. But his father Markus seems to have been something of a rebel. He had rejected his traditional status as a Jew protected by the nobility, seeing his future as tied to the Emperor

(Continued on page 13)

ANGELUS KAFKA (CONT)

(Continued from page 12)

who in the course of the 1780s had enacted a series of liberalization measures for Jews and Protestants within his dominions. It seems to have been Markus who decided that his oldest son should be known by the officially, authorized, semi-Christian form of his name rather than as Anshel, the name with which Angelus signed himself in Hebrew. His father was also probably the driving force in sending Angelus, in obedience to a law that most Jews largely ignored, not only to the traditional

cheder, or Jewish religious school, but also to a state primary school where he became the first of his family to learn correct and fluent German. He may well have displeased his father by studying to be a rabbi in Prague in around 1810, successfully obtaining a rabbinical diploma with the approval of the leading rabbi of Prague, Samuel Landau.

He married Marie Lederer, who came from a community in a small village near Pilsen, in 1814. It seems that, following his father's

death in 1816 and probably compelled by financial necessity, he may unsuccessfully have tried his luck as a businessman until his mid-thirties when from 1823 he worked for four years as a teacher in Osek. Here he lived a few doors away from the ancestors of Franz Kafka, who were almost certainly cousins. Indeed one of his children was born in the house of Franz Kafka's great grandfather while Angelus was away working as rabbi in the small community of Wällisch-Birken (Vlachovi Brezi) in Southern Bohemia in 1827. This branch of the family was to take pride in the rabbi's success and one of Franz Kafka's uncles was named Angelus after him.

Undoubtedly the young Angelus continuously experienced a venomous anti-Semitism from the majority Christian population. Less than 50 years before his birth, the entire Jewish population had been expelled from Prague at short notice and his own lifetime was punctuated by spates of anti-Semitic mob violence. Only Emperor Joseph II, who died a year before Angelus's birth, had taken firm, if

limited, action to curb such excesses and Angelus and many of his contemporaries regarded Joseph's successors as the only barrier against widespread pogroms. Though he dreamed of greater tolerance, Angelus firmly believed that the price of such relative security as he and the Jewish community enjoyed had to be unconditional loyalty to the authorities, which would be forfeited by any sign of dissent or demand for greater toleration.

This approach had kept his community safe and enabled Angelus to prosper to a limited extent until the revolution of 1848-9 briefly brought full emancipation to the Jews of the Habsburg Empire. Though personally welcoming some aspects of increased liberty, this new world of apparently unfettered freedom unsettled Angelus as much as it did the Catholic conservatives in Vienna. If the conservatives scented republican chaos, Angelus sensed religious chaos and atheism. He foresaw the end of the centuries-old rural communities – such as Hohenems – and the abolition of district rabbis as the

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The former synagogue of Hohenems ©Peter Barber

ANGELUS KAFKA (CONT)

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newly-liberated Jews threw off the chains of religion and the restrictions of communal life in the Czech villages and emigrated to the anonymity and better-paid jobs of industrializing cities like Prague, Brno and above all Vienna.

Once the conservatives had re-asserted themselves over the revolutionaries later in 1849, Angelus persuaded the authorities to summon a general assembly of representatives of the Jewish communities of Bohemia in 1850. Though officially intended to discuss future organization of the Jews of Bohemia and Moravia, the authorities hoped it would restore as far as possible the structures if not all the restrictions that had prevailed before 1849. There was vigorous debate in which, characteristically, Angelus did not take part, preferring to work behind the scenes. At first the reformers seemed to be successful, but within months the old structures, with district rabbis, were reinstated.

Angelus's last years were tranquil, freed from the pressure to maintain his children and presum-

ably contented. He inaugurated a new synagogue and school in Pilsen, where he was now permitted to live, in 1859. His wife Marie died in 1861. The Jews of the Habsburg Empire received full and lasting emancipation in 1867 and the next year Angelus finally retired as district rabbi. He continued to live in comfort in the rabbi's house, looked

fitting from the rapid industrialization undergone by Pilsen in those years.

Angelus Kafka died in May 1870 and was given a grand funeral and an imposing tomb. Perhaps because he was the only rabbi to be buried in Pilsen, he acquired a somewhat unjustified reputation for piety and his tomb became a place of

ants were scattered through the world. Three of his children, including Mathilde, immigrated to the USA where one of her sons, somewhat improbably, became a photographer in Honolulu. The descendants of his son Simon (b. 1821- 1895) flourish throughout the USA. Of his European descendants, another grandson, Hugo Salus (1866-1909), was a



The Sulzer House in Hohenems where Angelus Kafka lived (as photographed in 2013): the rabbi's house occupied the space in the foreground of the picture ©Peter Barber

after by his widowed daughter, Mathilde Mandl, amidst a community that was growing by leaps and bounds, bene-

sanctuary and prayer for the dwindling and fearful Jewish community of Pilsen during the Second World War. His descend-

leading German-Jewish poet in Franz Kafka's Prague and his son, Vaclav Salus (1909-

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ANGELUS KAFKA (CONT)

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1953), became a founder of the Trotskyite party of Czechoslovakia, a secretary to Trotsky and one of the last victims of Stalin. Other grandchildren led less spectacular lives as teachers, art dealers, journalists, actors and writers, as well as successful businessmen in Vienna and Prague. ❖

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at the Jewish Museum Hohenems

The Newsletter of the
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The Jewish Museum of Hohenems, as a regional museum, remembers the rural Jewish community of Hohenems and its various contributions to the development of Vorarlberg and the surrounding regions. It confronts contemporary questions of Jewish life and culture in Eu-

rope, the diaspora and Israel - questions of the future of Europe between migration and tradition. The museum also deals with the end of the community of Hohenems, the regional Nazi history, the expulsion or deportation of the last members of the community, anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. Along with these fragmented lines of regional and global history, it is also devoted to the people and their histories and maintains a relationship to the descendants of Jewish families in Hohenems around the world.

The permanent exhibition in the Heimann-Rosenthal Villa, which was built in 1864, documents the history of the Jewish community in Hohenems which existed for over three centuries until its destruction during the era of the Nazi regime. The museum offers annually changing exhibitions and an extensive program of events. ❖



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During the first meeting of the descendants of Jewish families from Hohenems in 1998, the idea to found the American Friends of the Jewish Museum Hohenems, Inc. emerged. The association unites the numerous descendants living in America and supports the Jewish Museum of Hohenems in various ways.

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Any additional contribution you could make would be very much appreciated and

thus enable the American Friends to continue to make important contributions to the Museum at Hohenems as well as to other endeavors designed to contribute to knowledge of the Hohenems Jewish Community as it was when our ancestors lived there.

❖