

In Touch

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE
JEWISH MUSEUM HOHENEMS, INC.

ISSN: 1559-4866 • Spring 2026



www.afjmh.org

Stephan Rollin
Founder

Claude A. Rollin, Esq.
President

Nadia G. Follman
Vice-President

David Taenzer
Secretary-Treasurer

Trustees

Nicole M. Angiel

Andy Barth

Ronald Bernell

Francesca Brunner-Kennedy

Karla Galindo-Barth

Timothy L. Hanford

Hon. Susan Shimer

Monica Wollner

In Touch Editors:

Jennifer Shimer Piper

Jessica Piper

Please send your
In Touch articles to:
newsletter@afjmh.org

Visit us on the web:

Jewish Museum Hohenems:
www.jm-hohenems.at

American Friends of the
Jewish Museum Hohenems:
www.afjmh.org



Letter from the President

CLAUDE A. ROLLIN, ESQ.

Dear Friends and Supporters of AFJMH:

As I am writing this letter, Spring has emerged once again and with it a sense of hope and possibility, as budding trees, returning birds, and the first warm days of the season gently remind us that renewal is always within reach.

As you may know, at the end of March, **Hanno Loewy** retired from his position as Director of the Jewish Museum Hohenems after more than 22 years of outstanding service. Inside this Newsletter, you can find Hanno's farewell speech, delivered at a celebratory dinner in his honor on March 14th in Hohenems. The American Friends were pleased to support the celebration, and our organization was well represented there by our longstanding Trustee, **Sue Shimer**, and her daughter, **Jennifer Shimer Piper**, who serves us so ably as editor of the *In Touch* newsletter.

Hanno's successor, **Dr. Irene Aue-Ben-David**, comes to us from the Leo Baeck Institute in Jerusalem and assumed the directorship on April 1st. She is uniquely qualified to lead the museum, bringing scholarly expertise, a passionate commitment to memory and reconciliation, and a vision that is both deeply rooted in the museum's history and oriented toward its future. Our Treasurer, **Dave Taenzer**, and I recently had the opportunity to meet with Irene over Zoom, and we came away with full confidence in her leadership and great hope for the museum's future. We look forward to collaborating with her for many years to come.

Unfortunately, the devastating conflicts in the Middle East continue to cause immeasurable human suffering. Thousands of lives have been lost, countless others permanently altered by injury, and entire communities destroyed and displaced. In the United States, antisemitic, Islamophobic, and other hate-motivated attacks have risen sharply, in some cases resulting in deaths and the desecration of sacred spaces. The psychological toll of these events will undoubtedly weigh heavily for years — not only on those directly affected, but on the millions who have witnessed the tragedies unfold from afar.

The Jewish Museum Hohenems has built a lasting reputation as a place of memory, scholarship, and dialogue. Located in the beautiful Austrian town that was once home to a vibrant Jewish community, the museum preserves that history, explores its complexity, and builds bridges between cultures and generations. In challenging times such as these, the work of the museum — and of all who support it — becomes not merely important, but essential.

I became acquainted with the museum in 1998, when my parents brought our entire family to the first Reunion of the Descendants of the Jewish Families of Hohenems. I remember touring the museum — housed in a building that once belonged to my ancestors — with my young children, discovering so much about the former Jewish community and our family history. I deepened that knowledge at subsequent reunions in 2008 and 2017. The next reunion is scheduled for July 27–30, 2028 in Hohenems, and I will be bringing my children and grandchildren, just as my parents did nearly 30 years ago. I encourage you to mark your calendars and bring as many of your family members as possible to join us.

Wishing you and your family all the best,

Claude Rollin

President, American Friends of the Jewish Museum Hohenems

A Message from the New Director

IRENE AUE-BEN DAVID

Dear Friends of the Jewish Museum Hohenems,

It is my great honor to introduce myself to you as the successor of Hanno Loewy. Since April 1, 2026, I have been serving as the new director of the Jewish Museum Hohenems.

I arrived in Vorarlberg with my family at the end of February, moving from Israel just days before the outbreak of the recent war in the Middle East. The contrast between the two places could hardly have been more striking: while spring was unfolding here, the reality we had just left behind felt profoundly different. This experience has once again reminded me how deeply our present is shaped by fragile histories and shifting realities—an awareness that also informs my work.

I hold a PhD in history and studied sociology and education in Göttingen before moving to Jerusalem in 2004. Over the past decade, I served as director of the Leo Baeck Institute Jerusalem, a research institute dedicated to German-Jewish history and culture. My work there focused on connecting scholarly research with broader audiences, exploring how the past can speak to the urgent questions of our time, and creating programs that bring together diverse perspectives.

The Jewish Museum Hohenems is, to me, an extraordinary place. Thanks to the vision and dedication of Hanno Loewy and his team, as well as the ongoing support of many of you, it has become a space of encounter—where history is not only preserved, but actively engaged with, questioned, and shared. It is this spirit that I am deeply committed to continuing and further developing.

In the years ahead, I hope to strengthen the museum as a place of dialogue: between past and present, between scholarship and lived experience, and especially between the museum and the families whose histories are so closely connected to Hohenems. Your perspectives, memories, and questions are an essential part of this ongoing conversation.

I am therefore very much looking forward to meeting many of you in person—most notably at the next Reunion of the Descendants of the Jewish Families of Hohenems, which will take place from July 27–30, 2028. Until then, I warmly invite you to stay in touch, to share your thoughts, and to remain part of this unique and vibrant community.

With warm regards,

Irene Aue-Ben David



Irene Aue-Ben David
Copyright: Dietmar Pöschko



The team of the Jewish Museum Hohenems, March 2026
Copyright: Dietmar Walsler

Irene Aue-Ben-David

BY HANNO LOEWY



Irene Aue-Ben-David and Hanno Loewy
Copyright: Franziska Wöllner

In March we were pleased to welcome Irene Aue-Ben-David to Hohenems. Chosen by the international finding commission by unanimous decision she took over the directorate of the Jewish Museum on April 1.

Born in Hildesheim she studied history in Göttingen and worked at the *Max Planck Institut für Geschichte*, where social history and Jewish studies became her primary interest. Concentrating her research on German Jewish history before 1938, from the advent of Jewish court factors like Jud Süß Oppenheimer to the academic career of Jewish historians, she eventually wrote her dissertation about Selma Stern. Portraying her as an example of modern Jewish historical thinking, she asked how to write German Jewish history in times of crisis, in a climate of exclusion and finally in Exile. After many years in the US, Selma Stern spent the last twenty years of her life in Switzerland.

Irene Aue-Ben-David's research in the archives in the US, Germany, Switzerland and Israel, led her to Jerusalem, where she became first closely connected with the Leo Baeck Institute, and in 2015 becoming its director for the next ten years.

Being primarily a research center (and an important library) under Irene Aue-Ben-David's directorate, the Institute opened its venues to more diverse audiences, reaching out by public events and programs, such as the international project "Library of Lost books", that connected the Leo Baeck Institutes in Jerusalem and London to both academic scholars and school groups in Israel, Great Britain and Germany. Tracing – by means of a global citizen science project – the fate of 5,000 lost books, once held by the *Hochschule der Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Berlin, interested individuals and groups were invited to join in a process of reconstruction, devoted to the heritage of liberal values of a once flourishing German Jewry. The results were presented in various exhibitions, both online and onsite, that connected audiences with each other in the digital space too.

Besides that, the Institute became involved in prominent activities and conferences aiming to remember the German-Jewish heritage outside of Europe and various projects funded by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*, as well as activities dedicated to Austrian Jewish history, such as the interviews, undertaken by the Austrian Heritage collection project,

organized in collaboration with the *Vienna Wiesenthal Institute*, the *Österreichischer Gedenkdienst* and *erinnern.at*.

Irene Aue-Ben-David developed Leo Baeck Jerusalem into a vivid bridge between Germany and Israel, confronting the growing pressure on NGOs in Israel and a political climate of repression of liberal ideas and collaboration between the Jewish and Palestinian components of society.

She brings to Hohenems her great knowledge and spirit, new and fresh ideas, and she will continue the development of the museum as a lively hub of inspirational and thought-provoking exhibitions, programs and debates.

We all look forward with great expectations and we wish Irene Aue-Ben-David all the best for the future.

"SERVICES TO THE REPUBLIC"

Hanno Loewy, Director of the Jewish Museum Hohenems, receives the Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Art

22 awards presented to 22 Austrians by Federal President Alexander Van der Bellen for their services to the Republic: "Rest assured: The honor is entirely mine."

Remarks by Deputy Cabinet Director Markus Langer on the presentation of the Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Art to Hanno Loewy: "Director Dr. Hanno Loewy has led the Jewish Museum Hohenems since 2004 and developed it into an internationally recognized institution. He is actively committed to interreligious dialogue and promotes understanding between different cultures and religions. His dedication to an open and tolerant society is evident in his work at the museum as well as in public statements and initiatives."

More information:

<https://www.bundespraesident.at/aktuelles/detail/ehrenzeichen-an-die-vielen>



Hanno Loewy receives the Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Art, From Left to right Dori Schmidauer, President Alexander Van der Bellen, Hanno Loewy, Copyright: Peter Lechner/HBF

EVERYTHING FORGOTTEN

by Dinah Ehrenfreund

On 27 January 2026, International Holocaust Remembrance Day, the exhibition “Everything Forgotten” by the Jewish Museum Vienna in collaboration with the Jewish Museum Hohenems was officially opened by Barbara Staudinger, Director of the Jewish Museum Vienna, together with Hanno Loewy, Director of the Jewish Museum Hohenems, and Albert Posch, President of the Administrative Court. The curators Daniela Pscheiden (Jewish Museum Vienna) and Dinah Ehrenfreund (Jewish Museum Hohenems) presented the exhibition before Andreas Kranebitter, Head of Research at the Documentation Centre of the Austrian Resistance placed it within a contemporary political context and warned against new forms of historical repression. Finally, Barbara Novak, Acting City Councillor for Finance, Economy, Labor, International Affairs and Digital Affairs, spoke and emphasized society’s responsibility in dealing with remembrance and forgetting.



Opening of the exhibition at the Jewish Museum in Vienna. From left to right: Andreas Kranebitter, Hannes Sulzenbacher, Barbara Novak, Barbara Staudinger, Hanno Loewy, Albert Posch, Dinah Ehrenfreund, Daniela Pscheiden. (Copyright: www.nafezrerhuf.com)

The exhibition explores various aspects of forgetting, ranging from trauma to liberation, from erasure to self-empowerment. It is on display at Judenplatz in Vienna until September 17th and with adaption and intervention in the permanent exhibition here at the Jewish Museum Hohenems beginning in November 2026.

A catalogue accompanying the exhibition was published featuring an essay by Aleida Assmann and contributions from the curators.

HANNO LOEWY RECEIVES THE GRAND DECORATION OF HONOUR OF THE STATE OF VORARLBERG

by Franziska Völler

On March 19, 2026, the feast day of Vorarlberg's patron saint, Governor Markus Wallner honored prominent figures from Vorarlberg for "exemplary contributions to society." The recipients, he said, had dedicated themselves to the well-being of their fellow citizens and the society of our state in a wide variety of fields, both professionally and often on a voluntary basis, expressing his gratitude and appreciation. At the ceremony in the Montfort Hall, Wallner presented a total of nine state awards and one federal award.

It is a tradition in Vorarlberg to highlight individuals who have made exceptional contributions to society on the feast day of the state's patron saint. "This day provides a fitting occasion to thank people who are committed to the community and social cohesion with outstanding dedication," the Governor told the assembled guests. Wallner also thanked the many family members and relatives who had come: "Extraordinary commitment always involves a great deal of time. The understanding shown by those close to him deserves our gratitude and appreciation."

Hanno Loewy was honored with the following words: "Hanno Loewy has developed the Jewish Museum Hohenems into an internationally recognized institution and, with innovative exhibitions and educational projects, has provided important impetus for tolerance and a culture of remembrance. His commitment to an open society and the communication of history and identity is visible far beyond Vorarlberg."

Congratulations from the team at the Jewish Museum Hohenems!



Hanno Loewy Receives the Grand Decoration of Honour of the State of Vorarlberg from, Governor Markus Wallner, Copyright: State of Vorarlberg/Alexandra Serra

Good-Bye from Hanno

This was Hanno's good-bye speech at the celebratory dinner on March 14 in Hohenems, Austria. He delivered this in German; this is his English translation

Dear friends,

To be honest, I'd really rather crawl under the table today and wait until it's all over. But you deserve a few words from me. A thank you for the greatest gift one could imagine. Hohenems and you.

We live in crazy times, and every day they get crazier. And right now, I can't think of any other place in the world where I could endure these crazy times. To be honest, I can't really endure them here either. But maybe we can at least stand up to them here. Amid the autocrats, criminals, and "people's chancellors," the would-be kings in Moscow and Washington, in Budapest, Istanbul and Jerusalem. And perhaps someday in Vienna as well?

This Hohenems—the place and the metaphor—represents the most precious thing that keeps us alive. A self-awareness on the border, a productive in-between, the acknowledgment of contradictions and ambiguities.

Thirty-two years ago in February, my dear Astrid and I sat on a bench in the snow. Before us lay the Hohe Freschen, behind us the Emser Hütte on the Fluhreck. Of course, we knew nothing yet of our future here. But we had a vague sense of having arrived, or at least a longing to return. Something was palpable here that I hadn't known like this in Frankfurt. An unpretentious passion for a museum that stood on an imaginary border, between belonging and feeling like an outsider—that place where, if we're honest with ourselves, we're all actually trying to settle in. In this colorful gathering of people, one could sense a deep seriousness and a sense of irony. Years before the museum enshrined this contradictory ambivalence of irritation and integration in its first mission statement.

In fact, Hohenems never let us go. Reinhard Matz's "Unsichtbare Lager," which brought us here in 1994, was followed by many of our Frankfurt exhibitions, first friendships, and at some point Johannes Inama called me and asked if I'd like to open an exhibition again. That was in early 2003, and I was sitting in Frankfurt, not quite sure where life was taking us.

A few months later, on the right day, I glanced at the job listings in Die Zeit. You know the rest of the story.

But we must try to understand it. The "rest of the story."

In any case, I have repeatedly tried to understand this incredible story. Beyond the fact that the last 22 years have been, for me personally, an adventure and a challenge every day, a joy, and sometimes also a drama and a fear of loss, sometimes a balancing act on the edge of the abyss, and often enough a lot of fun.

So what is Hohenems? What does this place mean? Where are we here?

Hohenems is European history and the present in a nutshell. And it simultaneously embodies "the Jewish condition" in a nutshell.



A toast from Hanno Loewy



Astrid & Hanno Loewy



Hanno Loewy

Hanno's celebration photos courtesy of Dietmar Walsler, Hohenems

GOOD-BYE FROM HANNO

A place at and on all borders. When the Jewish community was founded, Hohenems did not belong to Austria. Only to later, proverbially, become the Jewish suburb of St. Gallen. Families resided here who had long since scattered to all corners of the world through every possible form of migration. And who turned the relationship between periphery and metropolis on its head. Later, all of Vorarlberg no longer wanted to belong to Austria, but to Switzerland.

But by then, many Vorarlbergers also wanted to get rid of their Jews. And they succeeded in doing so, at least for the time being. And while the mayor at the time put the last Jews on the train heading east, thousands arrived in the opposite direction. And the border between Hohenems and Vorarlberg became the place where thousands of lives were decided. A border that for many truly meant a new life. A story with a contemporary meaning that will continue to keep me busy.

The curiosity with which Vorarlberg plunged into the Jewish Museum adventure 50 years later had to do not only with phantom pain, not only with fantasies of reconciliation, and not only with Hohenems' national pride. But with the awareness that this concerns all the pressing issues of our time. And with posing them to everyone in a way that is both radical and inviting: About coexistence and human rights, about Europe and diversity, about migration, flight, and asylum, about the question of how we want to live.

And the museum did not pose these questions alone. If there is a museum community anywhere that spans the entire world, it is the Hohenems diaspora; it is the descendants of Jewish families who meet regularly somewhere in the world. And since 1998, every ten years in Hohenems as well. It is also—and especially—you who give us the strength to address those very questions and topics that Jewish museums have come to fear a little. For example, the rampant abuse of concern for Jewish life, which



Hanno Loewy & Michael Köhlmeier



Jennifer Shimer, Sue Shimer-Rosenthal & Evelyne Bermann in dialogue with Hanno Loewy



Standing Ovation for Hanno

Hanno's celebration photos courtesy of Dietmar Walsler, Hohenems

GOOD-BYE FROM HANNO



Günther Reis (CEO of Collini) & Hanno Loewy



Astrid & Hanno Loewy

Hanno's celebration photos courtesy of Dietmar Walser, Hohenems

some use to distract from their own racism, and the return of unchecked, nationalist power politics. And not least, the fear of facing the tragedy of Israel and Palestine. This land, torn apart by dual nationalism, into which my parents fled for safety. This trap into which we have all allowed ourselves to be driven and lured, by true enemies and false friends.

The Jewish Museum is a precious place for exploring our present. To be able to talk about all of this so relaxed and curious, so open and respectful with one another, so ambiguous and sometimes even lovingly—I wouldn't know where else. Jews and Muslims, Christians and agnostics, Israelis and Palestinians, leftists and FPÖ mayors.

I am grateful to all of you for this time, for all the shared intellectual and sensory—and sometimes highly political—adventures. To the greatest team in the world, to you curious and politically alert locals as well as the Hohenems diaspora, to the many dedicated people in the Friends' Association, and to all the many friends and supporters who made our exhibitions and our program possible. And last but not least, our board, which admittedly couldn't always conjure up quite as much money from city and state coffers as we would have liked (and I'll spare you the total of the debts from recent years, for which a solution has yet to be found), but which nevertheless always stood by us, even when our bold program irritated some. And who selected the wonderful Irene Aue-Ben-David and lured her to Hohenems. Irene—with whom I have shared the pleasure of a handover for the past two weeks, which gave us both the feeling: this is going to be something. Some new things are coming, and the spirit remains alert and alive. And it will continue to grow, into the new and the unknown.

This sense of something new and wonderful that exists only in Hohenems—it clearly drew me, it drew us, twenty-two years ago, like a magnet.

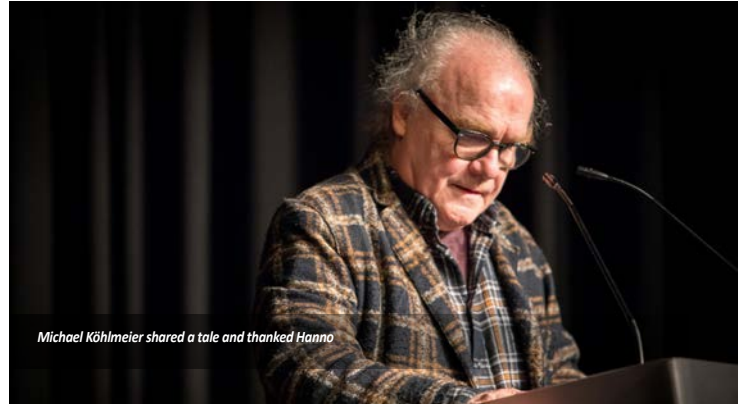
When I showed Astrid the job ad in *Die Zeit*, she didn't say no. Instead: give it a try. She (and my kids, too) had to let the museum take a little piece of me for many years—I owe her that, and now I owe you, Astrid, that back with interest. And that's why we're disappearing for three months starting April 1st. And you, just don't try to reach me during that time.

Many of you have already gotten used to the long credits at the end of our exhibition openings. I'll spare you that today. I can't thank all of you personally. Otherwise, you won't get anything to eat until midnight.

HANNO'S CELEBRATION: AN EVENING OF GRATITUDE



Brigitte Plemel, President of the Patrons of the Jewish Museum Hohenems, hosted the first half of the program



Michael Köhlmeier shared a tale and thanked Hanno



Eva Häfele shares her memories with Hanno



Romuald Kopf expressed his gratitude with a song by Hermann Leopoldi



Elisso Gogibedashwill (violin) and her mother Cecilia Gogibedashwill (piano)



Isabella Pincsek (piano) accompanies Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek in her tribute to Hanno, which was announced by Jutta Berger (host of the second half)



The staff of the Jewish Museum Hohenems surprised their long-time director with a cover of Tom Traubert's "Klaglied" by Daniel Kahn (Tom Waits' Waltzing Mathilda in Yiddish).

Hanno's celebration photos courtesy of Dietmar Walsler, Hohenems

#OHNEANGSTVERSCHIEDENSEIN PRESENTATION OF THE DOCUMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT 2022–2024

by Franziska Völlner

On Thursday, January 19, 2026, the documentation and evaluation of the project #OhneAngstVerschiedenSein (Being different without fear – quote by Theodor W. Adorno, 1951) during the years 2022 to 2024 was presented at the Jewish Museum Hohenems to representatives of the press and an interested audience.

In addition to providing a comprehensive insight into the development, content, and working methods of #OhneAngstVerschiedenSein, the presentation also clearly highlighted the continuing high demand for extracurricular educational programs addressing antisemitism and (antimuslim) racism in Vorarlberg.

Following the welcome by Director Hanno Loewy and words of thanks to partners and sponsors, Education Councilor Barbara Schöbi-Fink first addressed the importance of collaboration between extracurricular educational programs such as #OhneAngstVerschiedenSein and schools.

“School is a place where societal developments are immediately evident. Especially in times of multiple crises, teachers need reliable support—support that is professionally sound, practical, and provided in cooperation with strong partners,” Schöbi-Fink emphasized. “External partnerships expand schools’ scope for action: they bring expertise, proven methods, and additional perspectives to educational work—and thereby also ease the burden of everyday school life.”

Building on this, Provincial Councilor Daniel Allgäuer also underscored the importance of cross-departmental collaboration: “Prevention and social cohesion are most successful when education, integration, and civil society work together—with clear roles and professional offerings.”



From left to right – State Councilor Daniel Allgäuer, State Councilor for Education, Barbara Schöbi-Fink, Anita Niegelhell (Head of Cultural Education at the JMH), Franziska Völlner (Head of #OhneAngstVerschiedenSein), and Director Hanno Loewy
Copyright: Land Vorarlberg

Education addressing anti-Semitism and racism as a concrete support initiative

The project #OhneAngstVerschiedenSein takes a critical stance against antisemitism and antimuslim racism and offers workshops for children and youth, as well as professional development training for educators and youth leaders in both school-based and extracurricular educational settings. The central guiding principle, as emphasized by Anita Niegelhell, Head of Cultural Education at the JMH, is to strengthen participants’ ability to engage in dialogue and to instill confidence in taking action—especially in areas where topics such as identity, social inequality, experiences of discrimination, and emotionally charged or controversial issues can cause anxiety and distress in a school like setting.

Building on this, Franziska Völlner, Head of #OhneAngstVerschiedenSein, also emphasized the importance of approaches to democratic education. Holistic and sustainable awareness-raising regarding social inequalities and diversity in Vorarlberg, as well as empowering participants to actively engage in and participate in social discourse, were identified as central goals of the programs and formats.

Accordingly, in addition to children, young people, and multipliers in school and out-of-school education, the project explicitly targets the entire Vorarlberg community—driven by the conviction that everyone is needed to effectively counter antisemitism and racism.

Evaluating the offerings and formats provides impetus for action

The external evaluation of the #OhneAngstVerschiedenSein programs, conducted by Eva Häfele in April and May 2024, confirms the high professional quality and impact of the educational work. At the same time, it provides concrete recommendations for further development.

Key feedback—such as regarding thematic differentiation, the expansion of partnerships, and the continuous adaptation of formats—has already been addressed and is gradually being incorporated into ongoing work. This ensures that the programs and formats of #OhneAngstVerschiedenSein will continue to be developed in a needs-oriented manner in the future and will be sustainably anchored at the Jewish Museum Hohenems.

The presentation of the evaluation results underscores the commitment not only to have good intentions regarding measures but also to develop them in an effective and transparent manner.

Continuation as a project from 2025 to 2027

To continue providing reliable support to schools and educational institutions, the Vorarlberg State Government has approved funding #OhneAngstVerschiedenSein from 2025 through 2027, amounting to up to 67,000 euros per year. Up to 7,000 euros will be provided by the Department of Education, with the remaining 60,000 euros split equally between the Department of Social Affairs and Integration and the Department of Science and Continuing Education.

News from the Museum: Exhibitions and Projects

“ES WERDEN LEBEN DEINE TODTEN” RESTORATION OF THE JEWISH CEMETERY (PART 1)

BY RAPHAEL EINETTER, MA

“As old as the Jewish community itself”¹

The history of the Jewish Cemetery in Hohenems dates back to the year when the first letter of protection was issued. In the twelve “Conditiones und Bedingnußen”², authenticated with a seal by Count Kaspar of Hohenems in 1617, Jewish families were permitted to practice their religion from the very beginning, although not in public. In addition to the establishment of a synagogue and a school, this also included the allocation of a specific site where burials could take place. This site was located far from the settlement area of the time on a slope of the Schwefelberg (Sulphur Mountain), which was later described by Rabbi

Aron Tänzer in his book *The History of the Jews in Hohenems* as “extremely unfavorable mountainous terrain, which [...] is also permeated by groundwater at a depth of barely 1½ meters.”³ Even though the oldest gravestones in this area have largely not been preserved to this day due to conditions that made it all too easy for the grave markers to topple over or sink into the ground, the Jewish community remained at this site in the following centuries. The cemetery, which is repeatedly mentioned in later letters of protection as a designated burial site, remained unchanged in type and size until the acquisition of the Imperial County of Hohenems by Habsburg Austria in 1765. Three years “after the first Imperial-Royal

Austrian administration took office,”⁴ Tänzer further assessed that the cemetery was renovated and expanded for the first time. He explained this by the increased demand resulting from population growth and identified the expanded area beneath the existing burial ground. It is difficult to assess today what effect this development had on the durability of the gravestones. However, it is noticeable that relatively few gravestones have survived in this area in particular. Most date from the late 18th century, some from the early 19th century. The oldest gravestone that can still be identified today commemorates the couple Schendel and Moses Kauschele Moos, who died in 1749 (ancestors of nearly all Hohenems descendants).

The phases of the cemetery's expansion

Based on a special source, it is also possible to draw conclusions about the people buried in the cemetery from the roughly one hundred years prior, as Bernhard Purin noted in the quarterly journal “Montfort”⁵ back in 1989. His research was based on the tax registers of the Imperial County of Hohenems, in which the burial fees to be paid were meticulously recorded by the treasurer up until 1766. Two guilders had to be paid per person for a burial; for children, half the fee was charged. This did not change until the Imperial County of Hohenems ceased to exist and the new administration instead decreed an annual flat fee of five guilders. During the Habsburg era, the cemetery was enclosed by a wall for the first time in 1773. Thirty years later, the burial area was doubled once again, for which the Jewish community of the Hohenems paid 250 guilders for the neighboring property. The construction work was carried out by the Hohenems-based Christian builder Anton König, and came to a total of six hundred guilders.⁶



Tombstone of Schendel and Moses Kauschele Moos after restoration, 2024.
Photo: Raphael Einetter

¹ “So alt wie die Judengemeinde selbst,” see: Aron Tänzer, *Die Geschichte der Juden von Hohenems und im übrigen Vorarlberg*, Merano 1905, p. 396.

² Letter of protection, Count Kaspar of Hohenems, 04.04.1617, see: Collection of the Jewish Museum Hohenems, A 1650.

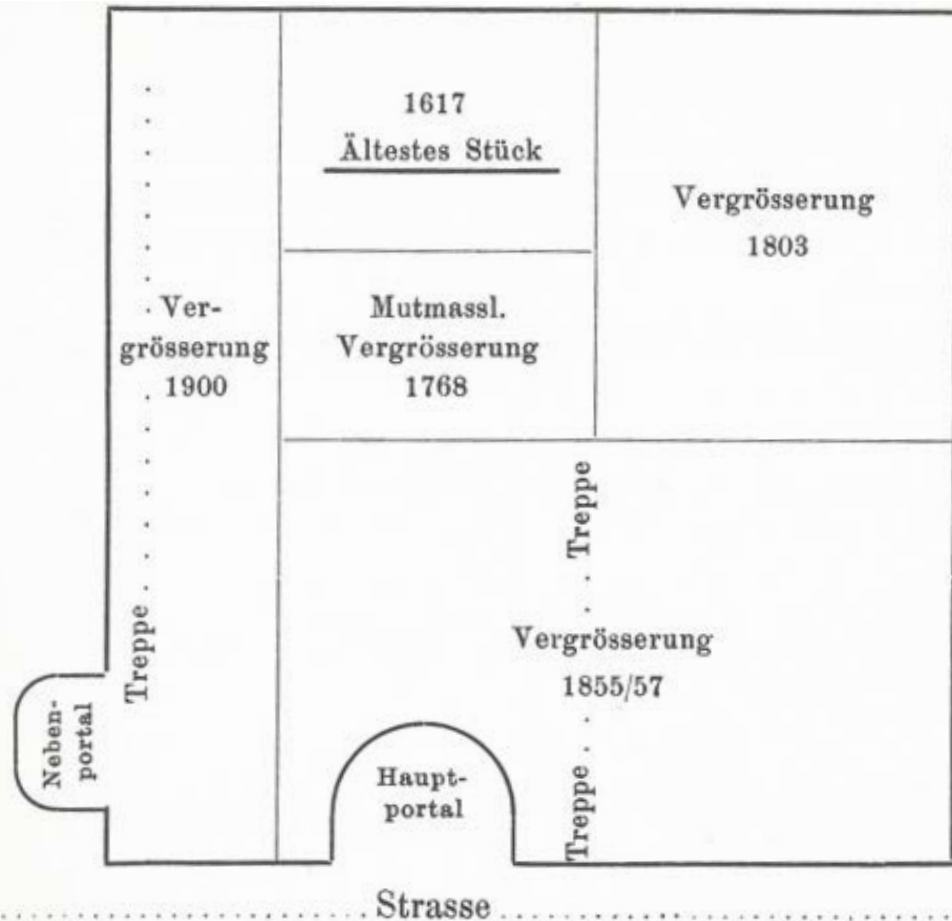
³ “höchst ungünstiges bergiges Terrain, das [...] auch noch von Grundwasser in einer Tiefe von kaum 1½ Meter durchzogen”, see: Tänzer, *Geschichte der Juden von Hohenems*, 1905, p. 396.

⁴ “nach dem Amtsantritte der ersten k. k. österreichischen Administration”, see: Tänzer, *Geschichte der Juden von Hohenems*, 1905, p. 396.

⁵ Bernhard Purin, „Der Hohenemser Judenfriedhof im 17. Und 18. Jahrhundert“, in: *Montfort. Vierteljahresschrift für Geschichte und Gegenwart Vorarlbergs* (41), Volume 3/4, Dornbirn 1989, p. 232–238.

News from the Museum: Exhibitions and Projects (Cont'd)

“ES WERDEN LEBEN DEINE TODTEN”



The current layout of the Hohenems Jewish Cemetery with its various stages of expansion. Map from Aron Tänzer, *Die Geschichte der Juden von Hohenems und im übrigen Vorarlberg*, Merano 1905, p. 397.

For several years, the newly opened cemetery plot was used in a very irregular manner, at times even alternating with the existing grounds. The new section also contains two of the three documented graves of rabbis whose deaths in Hohenems are considered certain. While the gravestone of Samuel Ullmann (1740–1824) can still be found today, that of his successor, Israel Lissa (1766–1829), has not been preserved. Even Aron Tänzer was unable to provide precise details regarding the burial site of the third rabbi, Juda Löb Ullmann (1716–1796), who certainly died in Hohenems. Either way, the predecessor of his son Samuel Ullmann died before the cemetery was expanded in 1803, as

described. It can therefore be concluded that in Hohenems, unlike at some other cemeteries such as those in Hamburg-Altona⁷, Berlin-Mitte⁸, or Eisenstadt⁹, no separate sections were designated for rabbis. Nor were girls and boys who did not reach religious maturity buried separately from the other deceased, as sometimes practiced elsewhere.

Although most of the documented children's graves in Hohenems are located in the cemetery section established in 1803, they are scattered across various areas and only occasionally lie side by side. This situation did not change even after the cemetery was expanded again between 1855 and 1857, as the gravestones of some children are still

mixed in with those of adults. In the lower section greater care was taken to assign grave sites chronologically by row and from top to bottom. On the other hand, exceptions to this rule seem to have been made for the creation of a row of honor. Along the path crossing the center, the impressive large double graves of the Rosenthals were soon built, which immediately catch the eye even with a fleeting glance from today's cemetery forecourt. In the surrounding area, several former community leaders, doctors, influential merchants, teachers, and other dignitaries were also buried.

As before, the construction work for this cemetery expansion was carried out by Christian craftsmen from Hohenems, this time by Johannes Wehinger and Johann Klien¹⁰. The cemetery had now reached its westernmost extent.

However, “a further expansion, thorough renovation, and redesign of the cemetery” shortly before the turn of the century around 1900 “proved to be an undeniable necessity”¹¹, as Aron Tänzer reported during his active time as rabbi in Hohenems. In particular, he mentioned Iwan Rosenthal, a partner in the Gebrüder Rosenthal company, who had distinguished himself in this expansion and renovation. The plans by the Swiss architect Wendelin Heene included an expansion of 6.5 meters to the north of the existing cemetery, which was intended to create space for a hundred additional graves. The entrance area was also redesigned. Instead of the previous small entrance gate, which was integrated into the newly erected wall, a wide and large portal was created with the new hall. In addition to the stairs, which were also newly constructed as part of the expansion, the installation of a drainage system behind the mountain-side wall is particularly noteworthy. This created an important prerequisite for the preservation of the gravestones. The

⁶ Tänzer, *Geschichte der Juden von Hohenems*, 1905, p. 397f.

⁷ Michael Studemund-Halévy/Gaby Zürn, *Zerstört die Erinnerung nicht. Der Jüdische Friedhof Königstrasse in Hamburg*, Hamburg 2002, enclosed map.

⁸ Gideon Böss, “Grosse Hamburger Strasse. Blick durch den Zaun”, in: *Jüdische Allgemeine*, www.juedische-allgemeine.de/allgemein/blick-durch-den-zaun/ (last accessed: 23.01.2024).

⁹ Johannes Reiss, *Hier in der heiligen jüdischen Gemeinde Eisenstadt. Die Grabinschriften des jüngeren jüdischen Friedhofes in Eisenstadt*, Eisenstadt 1995, p. XIII.

¹⁰ Tänzer, *Geschichte der Juden von Hohenems*, 1905, p. 398.

¹¹ “eine weitere Vergrößerung, gründliche Renovierung und Umgestaltung des Friedhofes [...] als eine unabwiesbare Notwendigkeit”, see: Tänzer, *Geschichte der Juden von Hohenems*, 1905, p. 398.

News from the Museum: Exhibitions and Projects (Cont'd)

“ES WERDEN LEBEN DEINE TODTEN”

work, carried out by Hohenems-based builder Bernhard Peter, was rounded off by planting several trees.¹²

The Jewish Cemetery in the Early 20th Century

In 1901 Aron Tänzer reported on all these stages of construction in his book “Der israelitische Friedhof in Hohenems”. During and after the construction work, he studied the existing gravestones, also using preliminary research conducted by Leopold Reichenbach, a member of the municipal council. The result, which also was to be published in 1905 as an updated version in the more comprehensive work on the history of the Jews in Hohenems, consisted not only of the numbering of the gravestones themselves, but also in the creation of a cemetery map and register. This was an achievement of inestimable value, considering that some of the stones that Tänzer was still able to document have since disappeared completely. After Tänzer left, the method of counting and maintaining the map was continued, resulting in the conservation of burial records up to 1938.

Following this expansion, it took several more years before the first person was buried in the recently constructed section of the cemetery in September 1912. The honorable man who was laid

to rest there was not only outstanding for his achievements as a textile manufacturer, mayor of the local Jewish community, and head of the Jewish religious community. Anton Rosenthal was, in fact, also the brother of the aforementioned Iwan, who was responsible for the renovation and expansion of the cemetery. The smaller stone, made of black granite, also continues the row of honor next to the larger double grave of his parents. Fifteen years after Anton Rosenthal, his wife Charlotte was also buried there. The couple lived together for nearly half a century in their villa in the center of Hohenems, which was built in 1864 according to the plans of the Swiss architect Wilhelm Kubly. In 1991, the villa became home to the Jewish Museum Hohenems.

The 20th century also marked a turning point in the birth rate of the Jewish community. In the forty years leading up to the forced liquidation of the Hohenems Jewish Community, there were only half as many newborns as there were funerals throughout Vorarlberg. Furthermore, as in the decades before, families continued to migrate to other cities and countries, leaving behind only a “very small community that lived on nothing but memories,” as the last head of the community, Theodor Elkan, stated in a letter in 1931.

Alongside Moritz Federmann, a long-serving senior teacher who died in 1916, and Nanette Landauer, the owner of the



The grave of Anton and Charlotte Rosenthal.
Photo: Dietmar Walser, Hohenems.



War Memorial at the Hohenems Jewish Cemetery in memory of seven soldiers.
Photo: Dietmar Walser, Hohenems.

¹² Tänzer, *Geschichte der Juden von Hohenems*, 1905, p. 398ff.

¹³ “Ganz kleine Gemeinde, die nur noch von den Erinnerungen lebt[e]”; Theodor Elkan, letter to the Praiseworthy Association of Sabbath Friends (“Löbl. Verband der Sabbathfreunde”), 09.05.1931, see: *Collection of the Jewish Museum Hohenems*, A 183.

¹⁴ Oskar Ernst, *Hohenems Genealogie*, www.hohenemsgenealogie.at/gen/getperson.php?personID=I2277 (last accessed: 22.01.2024).

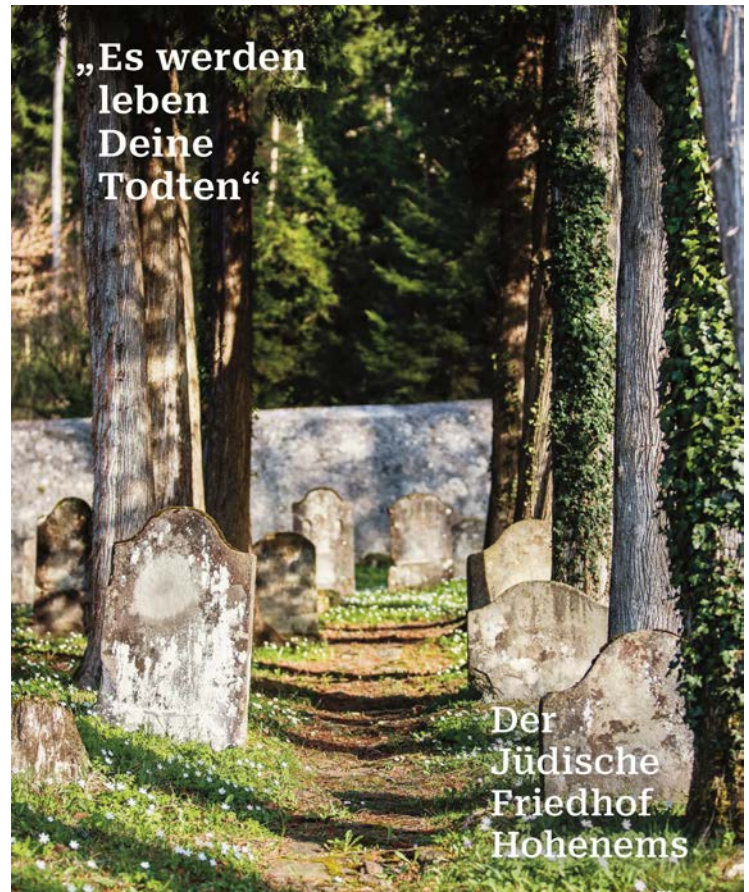
News from the Museum: Exhibitions and Projects (Cont'd)

“ES WERDEN LEBEN DEINE TODTEN”

Frohe Aussicht inn who was buried in 1936, several soldiers are also buried there. Even though the battlefields of World War I were located far away from Hohenems, some Jewish combatants were nevertheless treated in military hospitals in Vorarlberg. They mostly came from Bohemia or Galicia and, after their deaths, found their final resting place in the nearest Jewish cemetery. A memorial stone between the two entrance gates commemorates these seven “heroes” today. If they ever existed at all, none of the individual gravestones of the men buried far from their homeland can be found today.

Only the last name inscribed on the monument is an exception: it commemorates Oskar Ernst, who returned from the war wounded on July 24, 1915, having previously lived in Vorarlberg for about ten years and operated fashion department stores in Bludenz, Feldkirch, and Bregenz. Ernst soon volunteered for medical service at the Bregenz City Hospital, for which he was awarded a medal of honor in 1916. He died on July 7, 1919.¹⁴ His family, who continued to live in Bregenz, buried him two days later in Hohenems and accordingly also provided a headstone. Since this gravestone became lost after World War II and could not be located by his eldest daughter Irma, she decided to install a new one. During restoration work in 2011, the original gravestone was finally rediscovered, which is why Oskar Ernst is the only person mentioned by name three times at the cemetery.¹⁵

In the next issue of this newsletter, you will find the second part of this chapter from the 2024 book on the Jewish Cemetery in Hohenems. It will focus on the history beginning with the so-called “Anschluss” of Austria to Nazi Germany and look into how the cemetery endured in the years that followed.



„Es werden leben Deine Todten“ Der Jüdische Friedhof Hohenems. Edited by Raphael Einetter, on behalf of the Association for the Maintenance of the Jewish Cemetery in Hohenems and the Jewish Museum Hohenems | with a photo essay by Julie and Dietmar Walser | Hohenems 2024.

¹⁵ “Read more in the article by his great-granddaughter Lara Boccuzzi: InTouch, November 2024, p. 10, https://www.afjmh.org/pdf/2024-11_newsletter.pdf (last accessed: 14.04.2026).

WEB PLATFORM FOR THE JEWISH MUSEUM WINS THE DIGBIZ AWARD 2026

Written by: Anita Nigellhell/Franziska Völler

On February 5, 2026, the school’s internal Digital Business Award 2026 was presented at the HAK Bregenz — as part of a lively trade fair featuring a jury, business partners, and numerous guests.

The graduating students of class 5adb presented innovative final projects—ranging from digital educational games and loyalty apps to web platforms for the cultural sector.

First place went to a web platform for the Jewish Museum Hohenems. The platform offers a customized solution for the efficient and straightforward scheduling of external staff. In the case of the museum, this primarily concerns the numerous dedicated cultural educators who offer guided tours and workshops for children, teenagers, and adults at the Jewish Museum.



From left to right – Franziska Völlner, Anita Nigellhell, Raphael Einetter, David Kathrein, Luca Raffainer, Ömer Yenidede and Martina Steiner, Copyright: HAK Bregenz

We would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank David Kathrein, Ömer Yenidede, and Luca Raffainer for their ideas, their creative implementation, and their commitment to our platform, and we warmly congratulate them on their success at the DigBizAward.

News from the Museum: Exhibitions and Projects (Cont'd)

REPORT ON JEWISH ORIENTAL STUDIES AS REFLECTED IN THE EXHIBITION “DIE MORGENLÄNDER”

BY DINAH EHRENFREUND

The current exhibition “Jewish Orientalists. Scholars and Adventurers in Search of the Self in the Other” (running from November 16, 2025 to October 4, 2026 curated by Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek and Dinah Ehrenfreund) examines the complex role of German-speaking Jewish scholars in the establishment of Oriental studies in the 19th and early 20th centuries. At its heart lies the thesis that these researchers did not perceive the Orient primarily as an exotic ‘Other’, as characterized by classical European Orientalism according to Edward Said, but rather as a space of their own cultural interconnectedness and search for identity. Through the analysis of the biographies of prominent figures such as Abraham Geiger, Ignaz Goldziher, Ludwig Borchartd and Max von Oppenheim, the exhibition illustrates how the study of Islam and the Arab world often served as a means of Jewish emancipation and self-affirmation. Thus, the “Golden Age” was received as a model for a coexisting Jewish-Islamic culture in Al-Andalus, which stood in clear contrast to contemporary Christian anti-Semitism.

The curatorial achievement lies in the nuanced portrayal of the ambivalence of these historical figures. On the one hand, they are honored as pioneers of modern religious and linguistic studies, who laid new scientific foundations through their linguistic expertise and cultural sensitivity. On the other hand, the exhibition critically highlights their entanglement in imperialist power games and colonial projects. The staging of the Nefertiti bust – on the one hand as a sober plaster reproduction symbolizing colonial appropriation, and on the other in a pop-cultural make-up interpretation – serves as a central medium for negotiating the tension between scholarly interest, cultural appropriation and ironic deconstruction.

A key aspect of the exhibition is the portrayal of the tragic end to this era. Persecution under National Socialism led to the abrupt cessation of this research work; many of the protagonists were expelled, murdered or driven to suicide by the pressure. This is exemplified by the fates of figures such as Hedwig Klein or the Schnebel couple. Nevertheless, the exhibition also highlights utopian potential, in particular the vision of a binational Jewish-Arab society, as pursued by researchers associated with Brit Shalom.



Nefretete as shown in the exhibition „Die Morgenländer”
Copyright: Dietmar Walser

The reception of the exhibition in the specialist and daily press (including FAZ, taches, taz, St. Galler Tagblatt, WOZ, Der Standard, NZZ and ORF) has been largely positive, with critics praising the successful interweaving of personal history with broader historical narratives. Whilst some media outlets emphasize the exhibition’s emotional and sensory accessibility, others acknowledge its political relevance to today’s debate on identity and conflict resolution. Critical voices, however, point to occasional didactic oversimplifications or gaps in contextualization. Overall, the exhibition is received as an important contribution to coming to terms with a forgotten aspect of the history of science and as a provocative impetus to question the essentialist narratives of contemporary conflicts between Jews and Muslims.

We are delighted to announce that this exhibition will be taken over in November 2026 by the Jewish Museum in Vienna.



At the opening of the exhibition “Die Morgenländer”, November 16, 2025, Hohenems,
From left to right: Dr. Barbara Schöbi-Fink, Dr. Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, Martin Kohlbauer, Dr. Hanno Loewy, Dinah Ehrenfreund,
Copyright: Dietmar Walser



Dinah Ehrenfreund and Dr. Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, the curators of the exhibition “Die Morgenländer” at the opening in Hohenems on November 16, 2025, Copyright: Dietmar Walser.

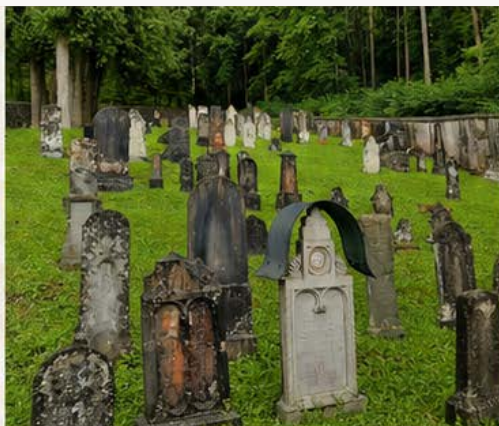
SAVE THE DATE

REUNION 2028

Reunion of the Descendants of the
Jewish Families of Hohenems

JULY 27-30, 2028

HOHENEMS, AUSTRIA





ARE THERE STORIES YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE IN YOUR NEWSLETTER?

Please email us (jennsp500@gmail.com) and offer suggestions or even better yet, let us know that you want to write a story. We would appreciate your work!



Your tax-deductible donations are welcome; we now have 3 ways to donate. Please pick the easiest one for you:



By Zelle:

Send your donation via Zelle using the **Zelle ID: donations@afjmh.org**

Please include your email address in the "Notes" field.

You can also scan the QR code with your smartphone to donate via Zelle.

By Mail:

Send a check to:
**AFJMH, P.O. Box 237
Moorestown, NJ 08057-0237**

Please use the donation slip and return envelope included in this newsletter.

By PayPal:

Visit our website and click the PayPal button on the donation page:

<https://www.afjmh.org/donations.html>