

REPORTS

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THE DECEASED OF THE INTERWAR PERIOD NOW TANGIBLE FOR RESEARCH

The Vienna City and Provincial Archives have completed an important digitization project: The recording of deceased persons of the interwar period. The responsible city councillor Veronica Kaup-Hasler explains: “The period between the two world wars was marked by a series of major economic as well as political crises. Poverty, disease and increasing violence characterized society at the time and can also be found in the historical sources of the period. The Vienna City and Provincial Archives have created over half a million records on people who died in Vienna during the interwar period. For example, the dead of the Palace of Justice fire can be traced, as can the Jews who died in 1938. I congratulate the employees of MA8 on this outstanding achievement.”

Project to record deceased persons of the interwar period

An extensive project begun by the Vienna City and Provincial Archives during the Corona pandemic has now been completed. Within three years, the register of deceased persons from 1919 to 1927 and the index of coroners’ records from 1928 to 1938 were recorded by name. The resulting approximately 523,600 records on deceased persons in Vienna cover the entire interwar period and offer a rich source for scientific and genealogical research. The data can be conveniently queried in the archival information system and the corresponding files can be ordered online.

The coroners’ records as a source of individual fates

A search in the Vienna Archival Information System (WAIS) can determine whether a person you are looking for actually died in Vienna. If the name appears in a full-text search by first and last name, there is a good chance that a coroner’s record is also available for this person.

The coroner’s record contains the personal data of the deceased person, such as last place of residence, place of death, date of death, cause of death, date of burial and cemetery. These details about the death in Vienna provide important clues for further biographical research. The first steps for this can now be taken conveniently online.

Only in the rarest of cases are the tragic circumstances of death documented in the official records. The coroner’s inquest is limited to the medically ascertainable facts. Historical events nevertheless reveal larger contexts behind the individual fates. For example, the “Anschluss” to the German Reich in 1938 led to a series of suicides, which are also reflected in this source. One well-known case is that of Egon Friedell, who died by jumping out of a third-floor window on 16 March 1938 when two SA men tried to gain access to his flat.

Important archival records for research in social history

In their entirety, the coroners’ records are a valuable source of social and medical history that allow important conclusions to be drawn about the lives and deaths of the Viennese population in the interwar period. They allow analyses of infant and child mortality and the spread of (pulmonary) tuberculosis, and can also be evaluated for unusual causes of death such as murder, suicide or accidents.

A source with special features

The more than 500,000 records contain not only the death data of Viennese citizens known by name. More unusual entries can also be found in the files, such as 71 entries on unidentifiable bones, mostly from the area of former cemeteries, and eight entries on skeletonized skulls, as well as 34 unidentified floaters that are recorded. Transfers of the deceased, exhumations and the merging of graves are also recorded. Burials in paupers’ graves (“Freileichen”), which are otherwise difficult to prove, are now also detectable.

List of the deceased (1920–1927)

The register of the deceased covers the period from 1868 to 1942; the pages of the register are available online as more than 81,000 digital copies. The entries from 19 December 1919 to the end of 1927 are recorded by name. The names of the deceased, the date of death and the age were entered, making the person clearly identifiable for research. For further information on the person you are looking for, the coroners' records are available below. By stating the name and date of death, the coroner's report can be ordered for inspection in the reading room.

The extent of this source can be seen, for example, in the case of the dead of the Palace of Justice fire in 1927. In the register of the deceased, there are countless entries for 15 July 1927 for the total of 85 demonstrators killed and the four dead policemen. The names of the deceased – with causes of death such as “shot in the thigh”, “bleeding to death”, “shot in the pelvis, bleeding to death”, “shot through the heart”, “crushed skull (hoofbeat?)” – fill entire pages.

Link to entry: Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, Friedhofsbücher und Sterbeverzeichnisse, B1 – Verzeichnis der Verstorbenen: Band 58
http://wais.wien.gv.at/archive.xhtml?id=Stueck++09E0C146-D0B8-45C8-8502-97ACF-43FACF9#Stueck__09E0C146-D0B8-45C8-8502-97ACF43FACF9

Index of the death inspections (1928–1938)

The digitized index of the coroner's inquest opens up access to the inquest's findings and grave instructions and consists of chronologically and phonetically ordered entries on deceased persons from 1928 to 1938. The index contains the name of the deceased person, the month and year of death, the cemetery and the type of grave, as well as the so-called JA (journal article) number according to which the files are ordered and filed.

Links to the sources: example of full text search

Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, Friedhofsbücher und Sterbeverzeichnisse, B1 – Verzeichnis der Verstorbenen

http://wais.wien.gv.at/archive.xhtml?id=Ser+++++00000655ma8Invent#Ser____00000655ma8Invent

Index of the death inspections:

Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, Totenbeschreibamt, B2 – Totenbeschau: Index
http://wais.wien.gv.at/archive.xhtml?id=Ser+++++00000355ma8Invent#Ser____00000355ma8Invent

Mortuary findings:

Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, Totenbeschreibamt, A1 – Totenbeschaubefunde; Grabanweisungen

http://wais.wien.gv.at/archive.xhtml?id=Ser+++++00000356ma8Invent#Ser____00000356ma8Invent

Picture credits

Alban Berg: Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, Totenbeschreibamt, A1: 36648/1935

Tote des Justizpalastbrandes: Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, Friedhofsbücher und Sterbeverzeichnisse, B1 – Verzeichnis der Verstorbenen: Band 58, 3. August 1927

Mag. Hannes Tauber, MA
 Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv
 Vienna, Austria

Verzeichnis der Verstorbenen

vom 3. August 1927.

Juli

15. H o r n a c e k Johann, Selbstergehilfe, 29J., 13., Sampogasse 9, gest. 1., Parlament, Bruststeckschuss. (Lg. obd.)
- M o r a w e t z Karl, Maschinenwärter, 60J., zust. Wien, 13., Hütteldorfer Strasse 187, gest. 1., Parlament, Verblutung, Oberschenkelsschuss.
- P r i x Franz, Bäckergehilfe, 42J., 9., Sobieskygasse 37, gest. 1., Parlament, Kopfschuss.
- S l o v a c e k August, Maschinenschlosser, 24J., zust. Wien, 5., Margaretenstrasse 136, gest. 1., Parlament, Beckenschuss Verblutung. (Lg. obd.)
- I n g u s Rudolf, Techniker, 33J., 8., Sanettystrasse 1, gest. 1., Parlament, Bauchschuss, Leberzerreissung.
- S c h w e i z e r August, Huf- und Wagenschmiedgehilfe, 39J., zust. Wien, 11., Ehangasse 17, gest. 1., Parlament, Bauchschuss, Beckenschuss, Verblutung.
- K ü n i g Johann, Buchdruckergehilfe, 46J., zust. Wien, 5., Ein-siedlergasse 54, gest. 1., Parlament, Schuss in den Schädel
- S p u s t e r Richard, Hutformendrehler, 22J., zust. Wien, 16., Roseggergasse 6, gest. 1., Parlament, Schuss durch das Herz.
- J a h n Ferdinand, Bäckergehilfe, 45J., zust. Wien, 14., Gold-schlagstrasse 138, gest. 1., Parlament, Schädelzertrümme-rung, Hufschlag?
- E o l z e r Anna, Haushalt, 31J., zust. Wien, 11., Simmeringer Hauptstrasse 201, gest. 1., Parlament, Schuss in den Schä-del.
- S t a u f e r Karl, Wehrmann, 24J., zust. Wien, 17., Johann Nepomuk Vogl-Platz 8, gest. 1., Parlament, Bauchschuss, Ver-blutung.
- B a y e r l Rudolf, Hilfsarbeiter, 20J., zust. Wien, 3., Wäl-lischgasse 4, gest. 1., Parlament, Durchschuss der rechten Schulter, Verblutung.
- K r a n f u s s Karl, Sattler, 41J., zust. Wien, 20., Traunfels-gasse 6, gest. 1., Parlament, Bauchschuss, Leberzerreissung.
- P l e f k a Robert, Klncooperator, 38J., zust. Wien, 15., Costa-gasse 11, gest. 1., Parlament, Kopfdurchschuss.
- Z i e l a k Karl, Tischlergehilfe, 44J., 10., Dampf-gasse 22, gest. 1., Parlament, Kopfschuss, Schädelzertrümmerung.
- S t a n e k Adele, Vater: Franz St., Tischlergehilfe, 14J., zust. Wien, 7., Lerchenfelder Strasse 35, gest. 1., Parla-ment, Streifschuss der Stirne, Schädelberstung.
- H a b l Viktor, Schlossergehilfe, 18J., zust. Wien, 10., Van der Nüll-Gasse 33, gest. 1., Parlament, Schädelsschuss.
- B a s t i e r Alois, Handelsangestellter, 28J., zust. Wien, 9., Türkenstrasse 24, gest. 1., Parlament, Brustschuss.
- B e n d i k Matthias, Schlossergehilfe, 56J., zust. Wien, 16., Sportplatz 12, gest. 1., Parlament, Armschuss, Verblutung.
- P o s c h Karl, Hilfsarbeiter, 32J., zust. Wien, 16., Brüssel-gasse 49, gest. 1., Parlament, Beinsschuss, Verblutung.
- K a d a n k a Adolf, Handelsangestellter, 26J., zust. Wien, 17., Lacknergasse 41, gest. 1., Parlament, Kopfschuss.
- F i s c h e r Karl, Schlossergehilfe, 21J., zust. Wien, 17., Palffy-gasse 17, gest. 1., Parlament, Kopfschuss.
- W i s h a r t Josef, Geschäftsdienner, 21J., zust. Wien, 10., Inzersdorfer Strasse 16, Durchschuss des Halses, Verblu-tung.
- F r a n z e Karl, Mechanikerlehrling, 15J., zust. Wien, 5., Fen-digasse 15, gest. 1., Parlament, Herzschuss.