

Was Jesus in the Wehrmacht? National-Religious Commemoration in Central Europe*

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Abstract

Jerusalem sites representing the Passion of Christ shape the landscape of Catholic Central Europe. Several architectural evocations of Jerusalem commemorate contemporary agony, namely local victims of the World Wars. Placing soldiers within the narrative of Christ's Way of the Cross serves a political-ideological agenda as well as a psychological need of local populations, giving meaning to the soldiers' deaths and placing them in a salvific context. In this paper two case studies, the Calvary of Klagenfurt and the Way of the Cross in Syców (Groß-Wartenberg), are presented to highlight this phenomenon.

[1] Jerusalem sites recreating the Passion of Christ shape the landscape of Catholic Central Europe.¹ This phenomenon of architectural evocations of the Christian holy sites in Jerusalem is known, at the beginning in small scale, as early as the 5th century.² In the Middle Ages, the Holy Tomb Aedicule was often represented, placed in the center of a central chapel evoking the Anastasis rotunda in Jerusalem.³ Later on, starting from the turn of the 15th century and mainly during the 17th and 18th centuries, sites known as Calvary Mountains (Kalvarienberge), situated on hills evoking the topography

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¹ The research project *Spectrum – Visual Translations of Jerusalem in Europe* at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (www.spectrum.huji.ac.il), studied this phenomenon,

of the Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, and Ways of the Cross (Kreuzwege), were built to recreate the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem.⁴

[2] However, it appears, that in several architectural evocations of Jerusalem it is not only the Passion of Christ that is commemorated, but also contemporary agony, namely local victims of the world wars. Those war commemorations in the context sites commemorating Christ's life and death are found in Central Europe in various shapes and matters. Common manifestations are engraved plaques, as in the Calvary of Mieders (Tyrol), attached at the entrance of the Calvary church or a monument on top of the

addressing questions of mobility in changing historical, religious, and spiritual conditions; the various factors that were instrumental in transporting Jerusalem abroad, at different times and geographical locations; the relation between model and evocation and more. For further examples and information on translations of Jerusalem in Europe see Gustaf Dalman, *Das Grab Christi in Deutschland*, Leipzig 1922; Ernst Kramer, *Kreuzweg und Kalvarienberg: Historische und baugeschichtliche Untersuchung*, Kehl-Strassburg 1957; Jan Pieper, Anke Naujokat and Anke Kappler, *Jerusalemkirchen: Mittelalterliche Kleinarchitekturen nach dem Modell des Heiligen Grabes: Katalog zur Ausstellung*, Aachen 2003 (Wissenschaftliche Schriften an der Fakultät für Architektur der RWTH Aachen, 3); Aleksander Radecki, *Przewodnik po kalwariach metropolii wrocławskiej*, Wrocław 2010; Ursula Röper (ed.), *Heiliges Grab – heilige Gräber. Aktualität und Nachleben von Pilgerorten*, Berlin 2014, as well as the comprehensive publication by Bianca Kühnel, Galit Noga-Banai and Hanna Vorholt (eds.), *Visual Constructs of Jerusalem*, Turnhout 2014.

² The earliest copy of the Tomb of Christ, known to the research so far, is the tomb aedicule of Narbonne, dating to the 5th century, forming the only three-dimensional visual evidence of the possible appearance of the Tomb Aedicule in Jerusalem in its Constantinian stage. See Jean Lauffray, "La Memoria Sancti Sepulcri du Musée de Narbonne et le Temple Rond de Baalbeck: Essai de Restitution du Saint Sépulcre Constantinien", in: *Mélanges de L'Université St. Joseph* 38 (1962), 199-217; André Bonnery, "L'édicule du Saint-Sépulcre de Narbonne: Recherche sur l'iconographie de l'Anastasis", in: *Les Cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa* 22 (1991), 7-42. I deal with this aedicule in my Master's thesis: *The Tomb Aedicule of Narbonne: A Representation of the Holy Land in Southern Gaul* (Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2013).

³ For example in Eichstätt, see Helmut Flachenecker, "Das Schottenkloster Heiligkreuz in Eichstätt", in: *Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktinerordens* 105 (1994), 65-95; Michael Schmidt, "Neues Aychstättisches Jerusalem: Das Heilige Grab in der Kapuzinerkirche von Eichstätt: Bau und Ausstattung", in: *Jahrbuch der Bayerischen Denkmalpflege* 58/59 (2004/2005) (2007), 19-43; and in Augsburg, see Georg Kempfer, "Das Grab Christi im Bistum Augsburg", in: *Jahrbuch des Vereins für Augsburger Bistumsgeschichte* 4 (1970), 117-125; Renate Mäder, "'...dem Grab Christi gantz ähnlich und gleich': Die Tradition von Heilig-Grab-Bauten in Augsburg",

Calvary Mountain, as in Arzl near Innsbruck. In the Cathedral of Freising, a sculptural group of the Entombment of Christ is at the centre of the commemorative chapel dedicated to the priests of the local seminar, who died in Second World War.⁵ And the war memorial in St. Maximilian church in Augsburg was built in 1960 in place of a former holy grave chapel.⁶

[3] In this paper, with the case of the Calvary of Klagenfurt, I wish to focus on one of the most remarkable examples for the integration of modern commemoration and the Passion of Christ in the context of a representation of Jerusalem. With the example of the Way of the Cross in Syców (Groß-Wartenberg) I would like to show the broader patterns of this phenomenon in yet another example.

[4] The 1742 Calvary of Klagenfurt (Fig. 1), with its symmetrically ordered fourteen Stations of the Cross and a baroque church, dominates the southern slope of the so called *Kreuzberg* hill.

in: *Barfuß vor St. Max. Von der Klosterkirche der Franziskaner zur Pfarrkirche St. Maximilian. Katalog zur Sonderausstellung im Diözesanmuseum St. Afra*, ed. Melanie Thierbach, Augsburg 2013, 60-70.

⁴ Justin E. A. Kroesen, *The Sepulchrum Domini through the Ages. Its Form and Function*, Leuven 2000; Amilcare Barbero, *Atlante dei sacri monti, calvari e complessi devozionali europei*, Novara 2001; Michael Rüdiger, *Nachbauten des Heiligen Grabes in Jerusalem in der Zeit von Gegenreformation und Barock. Ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte architektonischer Devotionalkopien*, Regensburg 2003.

⁵ The sculptural group of the *Grablegung* is dated to 1492 and according to sources was part of a larger Holy Grave ensemble.

⁶ Franz B. Weißhaar, "Das neue St. Max und das Werk von Franz Nagel", in *Barfuß vor St. Max: Von der Klosterkirche der Franziskaner zur Pfarrkirche St. Maximilian*, ed. Melanie Thierbach, Augsburg 2013, 116-129, esp. 125.



1 Klagenfurt Calvary Mountain, 1742. Re-modelled in 1954 and dedicated as the state memorial of Carinthia in 1959 (© Spectrum - Drorit Zilberberg)

Through a clear axis connecting the Calvary church with the main city church, St. Egid, it leaves a strong mark on the city-scape. In the 1950s, the niches and the representation of the holy tomb, which stood at the centre of the complex, were collapsing after years of neglect. This led to the initiative to revive this landmark of the city. Since at the same time there was a public move to erect a central place of commemoration for the fallen of the two world wars, the site was reborn as the state memorial of Carinthia. According to the initiators, no other location in the city of Klagenfurt was more suitable to function as a commemoration site than the Calvary mountain, since it offers a "respectful place for reflection and devotion".⁷

[5] Subsequently, in a public decision-making-process, the proposition to completely remove the Stations of the Cross and instead erect a new, modern commemoration site was discarded. Instead, it was decided to combine the already existing Stations of the Cross with the memorial. The holy tomb chapel was declared by a committee of experts to be "künstlerisch wertlos",⁸ of no artistic value, and therefore removed. In its place a commemoration chapel was erected. In 1954 a competition was launched for a renewal of the surrounding chapels and the proposal by the local artist Karl Bauer (1905-

⁷ Josef Jaritz (Amtsrat Ing.), Tätigkeitsbericht des Bauausschusses des Vereins der Freunde der Gedächtnisstätte am Kreuzbergl, 26. April 1959, Archiv der Diözese Gurk, Klagenfurt, APA Benefizium Kreuzbergl, Beilage 2, 2.

⁸ Jaritz, Tätigkeitsbericht des Bauausschusses, 4.

1993) was chosen, for it succeeded, as the initiators stated, "to combine the events of the Passion with the events of the war in a most unobtrusive manner".⁹

[6] Since then, the stations are no longer dedicated according to the traditional theological canon, but instead to different victim groups, who were active at time of war. This is how, for example, the sixth station of the cross, traditionally dedicated to Veronika, is now commemorating the "caring nurses during the war"; the tenth station, is no longer literally dedicated to the event of Jesus being stripped of his garments, but to those who were "deprived of their property and homeland"; and the station now commemorating "the betrayed and disappointed" is replacing the one traditionally dedicated to the kiss of Judas.

[7] When looking closer at the mosaics, alongside the representations of the Passion of Christ, illustrations of contemporary victims of war are revealed. The stations thus are not only literally dedicated to those modern groups of local victims, but also the mosaic depictions in the niches carry an iconography of contemporary heroes. Moreover, not only groups at the "home front" are commemorated through the Passion, but also combat soldiers are associated with the victimisation of Christ, while the battle field at the background forms the setting for the scene. As will be outlined, Wehrmacht soldiers are represented here as martyrs, as innocent victims, in an identification with Christ's suffering, freeing them of any form of aggression or injustice.

[8] This can be seen for example in the third station, portraying Jesus' first fall (Fig. 2).

⁹ Jaritz, Tätigkeitsbericht des Bauausschusses, 5. About the artist see *Karl Bauer: Gleichklang im Einklang: Ausstellung zum 100. Geburtstag, 28.4.-30.7.2005*, eds. Rotraud Bauer and Hannelore Ulrich, Graz 2005; Bauer, Rotraud (ed.), *Karl Bauer (1905-1993). Ein Lyriker der modernen Malerei*, Klagenfurt 1995; https://austria-forum.org/af/AEIOU/Bauer%2C_Karl (accessed March 26, 2017).



2 Jesus' first fall, mosaic by Karl Bauer, 1959, third station of Klagenfurt Calvary Mountain (© Spectrum - Neta Bodner)

The dedication reads "to those who have fallen at the battlefield". A man, wearing a helmet, is holding the cross for Jesus, who has fallen to the ground. At Jesus' knees, stuck in earth, is a spade with a short handle, standard equipment of the German army, next to it lays a helmet. Spade, helmet as well as uniform place the scene on the Wehrmacht side of the front. Together with the dedication of the station to those who were killed in the battle, it is clear that the man is an infantry soldier. He is portrayed as a martyr, carrying the cross, sharing in Jesus' suffering. The spade is an indicator for a soldier's grave, while the helmet functions here as a tombstone, as it was indeed practiced at soldiers' burial sites during the war.

[9] This reading applies also to the seventh Station of the Cross, representing the second fall (Fig. 3).



3 Jesus' second fall, mosaic by Karl Bauer, 1959, seventh station of Klagenfurt Calvary Mountain (© Spectrum - Neta Bodner)

The station is dedicated today to "those who fell at sea". Here, a compassionate man wearing a navy cap is helping Jesus by holding the cross while gazing at him, who has fallen to the ground. The scene shows a navy related theme, which is appears in the distance of the blue background. The passion scene in the image's foreground communicates with the depiction at its background through a repetition of the motive of the cross: the cross is seen carried by Jesus and the soldier, while at the background, the shape of a cross is formed by white lines of spindrift appearing in the sea.

[10] In the ninth station (Fig. 4), dedicated to "those who have fallen in air battles", the tension between the two narratives of victims - that of Christ and that of the soldiers - is visible in the third fall.



4 Jesus' third fall, mosaic by Karl Bauer, 1959, ninth station of Klagenfurt Calvary Mountain (© Spectrum - Neta Bodner)

Jesus is stretched out on the ground, while a young man in a blue-grey outfit holds the cross with both hands, looking upwards to the event unfolding in the sky. The young man, can be identified by his uniform as a Flakhelfer, an anti-aircraft auxiliary. A duality lies in the scene in the upper part of the mosaic, which is moving between rays of light and birds, possibly vultures, on the one hand and Flak searchlights and allied airplanes on the other hand.

[11] It can be concluded that the three falls represent the three arms of the Wehrmacht: army, navy, and air force. The Roman soldiers known from traditional Ways of the Cross are replaced here by Wehrmacht soldiers. Yet, in contrast to traditional depictions of the falls, where the Roman soldiers appear as aggressive and indifferent to the suffering of Christ, here the soldiers are coming to Jesus' aid, as if he was their fellow comrade, helping him carry the cross and looking towards him with compassion.

[12] A curious example for how the specific political-historical context of Austria in the 1950s was translated into religious imagery, is the eleventh station, dedicated "to the victims of war captivity", portraying the nailing of Jesus to the cross (Fig. 5).



5 Nailing Jesus to the Cross („To the prisoners of war“), mosaic by Karl Bauer, 1959, eleventh station of Klagenfurt Calvary Mountain (photograph: public domain)

The mosaic depicts Jesus, stretched out on the cross while a muscular man with a bald head and what seems to be a goatee beard is about to hit the nail into Jesus' palm with the hammer he holds in his right hand. At the background is a post and a barbed wire, clearly in a reference to a prisoners of war camp. The man's facial features, his bald head, the hammer, and the red-dominated colour plate all allude to the fact that this is a representation of Lenin and communist Russia. The depiction is reminiscent of the iconography of Russian propaganda, often showing Lenin in profile or half profile with his jaw bones emphasized. As common in such propaganda posters, Lenin is often portrayed in a powerful act similar to the figure in the mosaic. The hammer, which is one of the symbols of Communism, often accompanies these images of Lenin, which creates an immediate association to the hammer held by the man in the mosaic.

[13] In 1954, when the mosaics were placed in the Stations of the Cross, there were still Austrian prisoners of war in the Soviet Union and the issue was an open wound in Austrian society. Yet, it appears that this mosaic also illustrates a personal fate, that of the artist, Karl Bauer. In 1942, at the age of 37, he joined the Wehrmacht, after working as a freelance illustrator in a Munich newspaper. In 1943 he was taken prisoner in Tunisia and was sent to a POW camp in Texas. Three years later, he returned home to his wife and daughter in Klagenfurt. The subject of the "Heimkehrer", the home comer,

must have occupied the artist, since it appears often in his work. Quite a striking example is his painting from 1984, showing a man coming home to his wife and little girl.¹⁰ On the chest of the returning man one can identify the letters "P" and "W", which stand for Prisoner of War.

[14] The Calvary of Klagenfurt has to be seen in light of the political situation of the 1950s. The emphasis on refugees, the POW theme, the fear of the atomic bomb, all those issues can be explained by the time it was erected. One also should consider that powerful pressure groups, such as refugees, financed and thus influenced their own representation within the Calvary mountain. The visual programme of the mosaics clearly follows the Austrian perception and political dogma known as the "Opferthese", claiming the status as the first victim of National Socialist aggression.¹¹

[15] Furthermore, the message of those mosaics is emphasised by the processive character of the Way of the Cross. A believer that walks a traditional Way of the Cross is meant to remember not only the events of the Passion of Christ, but also to take their relevance for his own life into consideration. What kind of message would be engrained into the mind of the believer that walks this particular Way of the Cross?

[16] The Calvary of Klagenfurt is an overwhelming example of the appropriation of a Jerusalem site as a place of war commemoration, yet it is not the only one. Another example is the Way of the Cross in Syców, former Groß-Wartenberg in Lower Silesia, which was erected in 1923 with fourteen stations commemorating the Passion of Christ. It was commissioned by Beda Hahn, Catholic archpriest and episcopal commissar in Groß-Wartenberg, sculpted by the artist Bruno Tschötschel from Breslau,¹² and consecrated by the Franciscan priest Richard Behr from Carlowitz, with a dedication to the memory of the fallen soldiers.¹³ On that occasion it was emphasised that it

¹⁰ See *Karl Bauer: Gleichklang im Einklang: Ausstellung zum 100. Geburtstag, 28.4.-30.7.2005*, ed. Rotraud Bauer and Hannelore Ulrich, Graz 2005, fig. 24: *Heimkehr* (Homecoming), 1984, oil on canvas, 100 x 130 cm.

¹¹ Bertrand Perz and Heidemarie Uhl, "Gedächtnis-Orte im 'Kampf um die Erinnerung': Gedenkstätten für die Gefallenen des Zweiten Weltkrieges und für die Opfer der nationalsozialistischen Gewaltherrschaft", in: *Memoria Austriae I. Menschen - Mythen - Zeiten*, eds. Emil Brix, Ernst Bruckmüller and Hannes Stekl, Vienna 2004, 545-579.

¹² Maciej Łagiewski and Piotr Oszczanowski, *Bruno Tschötschel (1874-1941). Wrocławski Wit Stwosz XX wieku*, Wrocław 2012.

¹³ Krzysztof Zielnica, "Prozession nach dem Markusberg", *Groß Wartenberger Heimatblatt*, July/August 2008, 3-4.

would be very reasonable to remember the fallen by erecting Stations of the Cross, since "through the devotional contemplation of these stations we remember the way of suffering that our fallen fathers and brothers went, during the war".¹⁴

[17] The establishment of this Way of the Cross fixated a long pilgrimage tradition, documented already at the beginning of the 17th century, of walking on the day of St. Mark the Evangelist from the Sts. Peter and Paul church to the Markusberg, where a chapel dedicated to the Saint and a cemetery are located.¹⁵ Pilgrimage to St Mark church and walking the new Way of the Cross were much more than a religious experience. This yearly gathering was a social event with a political dimension, providing a rare opportunity for families and friends, separated by a new border that had cut through the pre-war district, to come together. After the First World War, following the Versailles treaty, Germany was obliged to give parts of the region of Groß-Wartenberg to the re-established Poland. According to reports by contemporaries, this act caused much frustration, hostility and tension around the new border.¹⁶ Thus the Way of the Cross in Groß-Wartenberg was erected in a contested area, at a time when borders were shifted and redefined. In this situation, such a site could function as a nationalistic symbol, claiming the place as German territory.

[18] Yet those two aspects, meaning the erection of a Way of the Cross with the intention to commemorate the fallen soldiers and its function as a cross-border gathering place, are not the only political manifestations of the Groß-Wartenberg Way of the Cross. Although also other stations in this Way of the Cross follow the same pattern, the relief of the third Station of the Cross, commemorating Jesus' first fall (Fig. 6), provides an especially interesting testimony of the contemporary political situation.

¹⁴ Zielnica, „Prozession nach dem Markusberg“.

¹⁵ Angela Scholz, "Erinnerungen an das Markusfest", *Groß Wartenberger Heimatblatt*, April 1959, 3-4.

¹⁶ Detlev von Reinersdorff-Paczensky und Tenczin, "Die Abtretung eines Teiles des Kreises an Polen auf Grund des Diktates von Versailles", in *Groß Wartenberg Stadt und Kreis: Beschreibung des niederschlesischen Kreises bis zum Jahre 1945*, ed. Karl-Heinz Eisert (Altdorf Württemberg: Heimatkreisorganisation Groß Wartenberg, 1974), <http://www.gross-wartenberg.de/sukgw/s315.html> (accessed on March 26, 2017).



6 Jesus' first fall, third station of the Way of the Cross at Groß-Wartenberg (Syców), 1923. On the left: photograph from the *Illustrierter Beobachter*, 29 October 1932; on the right: photograph of current state (© Renata Wojciechowska, Towarzystwo Świętego Marka w Sycowie)

In the National Socialist newspaper *Illustrierter Beobachter* from 1932, a photo of the third Station of the Cross is depicted (accompanying a serial novel about an agent in Soviet Russia). The relief is published with the following caption:

On St. Mark's hill at Groß-Wartenberg, within close distance to the Polish border, on German soil, a Way of the Cross is leading towards the local cemetery. In the depiction of Christ's way of suffering, the pursuers, who torture the Saviour and nail him to the cross, are depicted as German soldiers with steel helmet, sidearm and puttee.¹⁷

[19] The relief shows Jesus falling on a rock, his crown of thorns is thrown to the ground in front of him. In his hands he holds what could be *arma Christi*, the instruments of the Passion, perhaps a mace or a scourge. A soldier in modern uniform, wearing a distinctively German helmet, is pulling a rope enlacing Christ's body. The soldiers' facial and bodily expressions are very strict; his features are emphasised, especially his cheek bones and jaw. A second soldier, at the upper left corner of the relief, embraces the cross while holding a rope in his right hand and looking sideward. It is difficult to

¹⁷ "Auf dem Markusberg bei Groß-Wartenberg, in unmittelbarer Nähe der polnischen Grenze, auf deutschem Boden, führt ein Kreuzweg nach dem dort liegenden Friedhofe. Auf den Darstellungen des Leidensweges Christi sind die Häscher, die den Heiland quälen und ans Kreuz schlagen, als - deutsche Soldaten mit Stahlhelm, Seitengewehr und Wickelgamaschen dargestellt", *Illustrierter Beobachter*, October 29, 1932, 1048.

determine whether the soldiers are torturing Jesus or actually helping him rise. The somewhat strict manner in which they act, might be simply a reflection of soldierly demeanour rather than cruelty. Considering the historical context and the dedication of the Stations of the Cross to the memory of the fallen German soldiers, an anti-German reading would be counterfactual. The community of Groß-Wartenberg was under German rule until after the Second World War. The people of Groß-Wartenberg, although influenced by the Polish language and maintaining close relations with their Polish neighbours, had a strong national commitment to their "Vaterland".¹⁸ If so, the question remains, why the National-Socialist *Illustrierte Beobachter* would have so radically misinterpreted the relief. Behind this false claim must stand a political agenda; it follows the desire to insinuate that Polish actors in that area were provoking German sensitivities. It seems as if the paper attempted to stir up nationalistic and anti-Polish emotions amongst its readers.

[20] Adding to the ambiguity is the state of the relief today (Fig. 6). The soldier's figures have been remodelled and deprived of their German characteristics, mainly their uniform. The trousers of the soldier in the foreground have been awkwardly shortened, so have the sleeves. Instead, the soldier now wears a tunic, typical of a Roman legionnaire. Also the dagger has been removed and the helmet has been adjusted to fit the soldier's new identity. It is not clear when those changes have been made, although an answer to this question could solve the confusion surrounding the role of the German soldiers in this context. The last known restoration of the Stations of the Cross took place in the 1990s. Considering the approach towards the relief, as represented by the *Illustrierter Beobachter*, it is possible that the remodelling of the soldiers took place at a much earlier stage, possibly during the Third Reich.

[21] Placing contemporary soldiers into the Passion of Christ is already a political statement, yet the fourth figure, appearing at the upper right corner of the relief, adds another dimension. It is a bearded man wearing a flat hat. His facial features are somewhat grotesque; enlarged eyes, nose and lips, his teeth are sticking out. His hands are raised up in front of his chest in a protest of innocence. The figure is portraying a striking difference to the clear, sharp facial features of the German soldiers. This iconography resembles the anti-Bolshevik propaganda of the time.

¹⁸ Detlev von Reinersdorff-Paczensky und Tenczin, "Die Abtretung eines Teiles des Kreises an Polen auf Grund des Diktates von Versailles", in *Groß Wartenberg Stadt und Kreis: Beschreibung des niederschlesischen Kreises bis zum Jahre 1945*, ed. Karl-Heinz Eisert (Altdorf Württemberg: Heimatkreisorganisation Groß Wartenberg, 1974), <http://www.gross-wartenberg.de/sukgw/s315.html> (accessed March 26, 2017).

[22] A closer look at the mosaics at the Stations of the Cross in the Klagenfurt Calvary revealed an interesting visual interpretation of the traditional scenes; the suffering of Christ is integrated with the suffering of the various victim groups within the society with an emphasis on the fighting soldiers during the war. Jesus is being placed in combat scenery, while the traditional depiction of the Roman soldiers is replaced by representations of compassionate *Wehrmacht* soldiers. Furthermore, motives of war, such as helmets, barbed wire, and flak search lights, are accompanying or replacing the scenes of the *Via Dolorosa*. But beyond the scenery it is the comradery by the *Wehrmacht* soldiers that integrates Jesus into their world. The emphasis on the new role of this Calvary, by the dedication of the station and by the strong military and political iconography contradicts the stated intention by the creators of the Calvary to guarantee that the Passion story stays in the foreground.¹⁹

[23] Jerusalem reproductions carry a long tradition as places of religious contemplation and commemoration. Therefore, it seemed like a natural place for a war memorial at the same site, thus adding another commemorative layer. Nevertheless, in the Klagenfurt Calvary the modern aspect has become so overwhelming that it replaces the original function of the site. Important in that regard is the fact that the patrons of the site refer to it exclusively as "Landesgedächtnisstätte" and not as a Calvary mountain, disregarding its religious significance and its long prior history.

[24] One might think that since the 1950s, the memory culture – also in Austria – has changed, and such a commemoration site could not be erected nor accepted in our days. On the other hand, Klagenfurt's deputy mayor, Albert Gunzer, in his announcement of renovation of the site in 2010, stated: "it is important that our sites of memory will be held in a proper state for those who come after us. [The gratitude goes] ... to all those, who continue to work in the spirit of the initiators of the year 1954."²⁰ In most other places, since the 1980s, the *Wehrmacht*'s victims have come to stand at the centre of commemoration.²¹

¹⁹ Jaritz, Tätigkeitsbericht des Bauausschusses, 5.

²⁰ Aichbichler/Zeitlinger, "Landesgedächtnisstätte am Kreuzbergl wird saniert: LR Dobernig: Würdiges Denkmal für die Opfer der Kriege bleibt erhalten", http://www.ktn.gv.at/300816_DE-News-News_Archiv.?newsid=15499&backtrack=300816 (accessed on August 5, 2015).

²¹ Astrid Erll, "Cultural Memory Studies: An Introduction", in: *Cultural Memory Studies. An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, eds. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (= *Media and cultural memory Medien und kulturelle Erinnerung* 8), Berlin / New York 2008, 1-15.

[25] Notably, every year in October, the union of the friends of the "Landesgedächtnisstätte" performs a memorial service at this location, with the participation of the Austrian army as well as clergy. Gunzer also describes the Calvary as the calling card (*Visitenkarte*) of Klagenfurt.²² Therefore, it is important to understand the Calvary in Klagenfurt as a contemporary commemorative site in relation to the social-political background and memory culture of the state of Carinthia. The "Landesgedächtnisstätte" can be seen to serve as a place of nationalist nostalgia.

[26] Both examples, Klagenfurt and Groß-Wartenberg show that implanting contemporary *Zeitgeist* into the context of Christ's Way of the Cross, does not only serve a political-ideological agenda, but also a psychological need of the local population. The identification of the soldiers with the suffering of Christ gives meaning to their sacrifice and places their death in a salvific context. The commemoration of suffering can best be achieved through one's own world of terms and visual vocabulary. The integration of a memorial within the Way of the Cross serves this purpose. The sorrow of the community during war is illustrated through the most iconic form of suffering, which is that of Jesus Christ. We can also understand the erection of a war memorial close to Christ's empty tomb, as the expression of a wish to grant the soldiers, and their families, the hope of salvation. Further research of similar examples will deepen our understanding of the motivation of the initiators and enrich the study of the role of Jerusalem sites in Europe, not only as religious sites, but also as places of social interaction and political expression.

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²² Aichbichler, „Landesgedächtnisstätte am Kreuzbergl wird saniert.“

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