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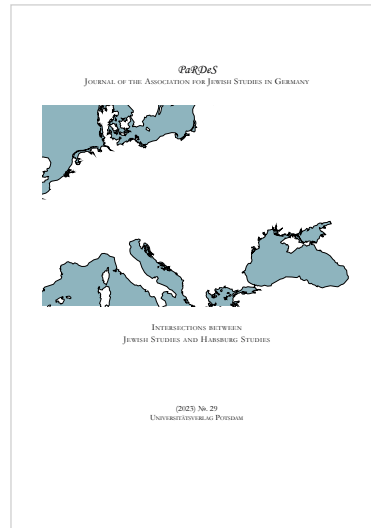
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Statt jeder besonderen Anzeige.

Granzgeburt geben wir hienüt Nachricht voo dem Ableben unneres innigstgeliebten unversesslichen Gatten, resp. Bruders, Vaters, Schwiegervaters und Grossvaters, des Herrn

David Herzl

Schwarzsee, geb. Altmannsdorf des I. Bezirkes

welches im 84. Lebensjahre nach einem langen wirkungreichen Leben Mitwoch früh den 8. Mai 1918 erfolgte.

Das Leichenbegängnis fand am 10. d. M. in aller Stille auf dem Zentralfriedhofe (Israel. Abteilung) statt.

Karoline Herzl geb. Luk, als Gattin.
Fritz Werner, Gustav Werner, als Söhne.
Adele Fuchs, Frieda Friese, Rosa Weinberger, Helene Lichtblau, Paula Hauser, Olga Fischer, als Töchter.
Salomon Herzl, als Bruder.
Architekt Leopold Fuchs, Dr. I. W. Friese, Sigmund Kleinberger, Isidor Lichtblau, Leutnant Richard Hauser, das. im Feld, Hugo Fischer, als Schwiegeröhnen.
Sämtliche Enkel.

Statt jeder besonderen Anzeige.

Vom tiefsten Schmerze gebeugt, geben wir allen Bekannten und Freunden die Nachricht von dem Ableben unneres teuren, unversesslichen Vaters, resp. Schwiegervaters und Grossvaters, des Herrn

Nathan Goldenberg

Grossgrundbesitzer und Kulturpräsident aus Buczyn, Galizien

welcher am 10. Mai 1918 im 71. Lebensjahre sanft entschlummet ist. Die Beerdigung findet Sonntag den 12. d. M. um 11 Uhr 15 Minuten vormittags auf dem Zentralfriedhofe (Israel. Abteilung, 1. Tor) statt.

Adolf Goldenberg, Isidor Goldenberg, Eva Baran geb. Goldenberg, Charlotte Margulies geb. Goldenberg, Frida Rosenbaum geb. Goldenberg, als Kinder.
Sämtliche Schwiegerkinder, Schwiegeröhnen, Enkel und Enkelinnen.

Uns getrocknetem Herzen geben die Unterzeichneten Nachricht von dem Ableben ihrer innigstgeliebten, unversesslichen Gattin, respective Mutter, Tochter, Schwiegertochter, Schwester und Schwägerin, der Frau

Gisela Löwy geb. Pfeifer,

welche Donnerstag den 4. Juni 1903 in der Blüthe ihrer Lebenszeit nach 19jähriger überaus glücklicher Ehe im 36. Lebensjahre selig und sanft entschlummet ist. Das Leichenbegängnis findet Freitag den 5. d. M., Nachmittags 3 Uhr, vom Trauerhause: IX., Berggasse 11 aus, statt.

Jacques Löwy jun., als Gatte.
Richard Löwy, Fritz Löwy, Paul Löwy, als Kinder.
Franz Pfeifer, Elizabeth Pfeifer, als Eltern.
Ilona Gyömrői, Miksa Pfeifer, Issó Pfeifer, Jozsef Petényi, als Geschwister.
Moris Löwy, als Schwiegervater.
Wilhelm Löwy, M. Manó Gyömrői, Josef Stauber, Carl Stein, als Schwäger.
Helene Löwy, Kathi Stauber, Fany Stein, als Schwägerinnen.

Statt jeder besonderen Anzeige.

In tiefster Beerdnng geben wir Nachricht von Ableben unneres innigstgeliebten Gattin, resp. Mutter, Grossmutter und Schwiegermutter, der Frau

TONI REICH

welche Samstag den 11. Mai 1918, 4 Uhr früh, nach langem, schwerem Leiden im 58. Lebensjahre sanft verschiede ist.

Die Beerdigung über neuen Verbleibens findet Montag den 14. d. M., 11 Uhr vormittags, auf dem Zentralfriedhofe (Israel. Abtdl.), I. Tor, statt.

Moris Hermann Reich, als Gatte.
Anna Herzog, Rosa Löwenherz, Saba Löwy, Bronka Jakobus, Lida Reich, als Töchter.
Leontari Dussel, Dr. David Herzog, Dr. Heinrich Löwenherz, Johann Löwy, Dr. Ludwig Jakobus, als Schwiegeröhnen.
Hectoria und Leon Weinberger, als Brüder.
Anna Reich, als Schwiegermutter.
Robert und Fritz Herzog, Richard Löwenherz, Lily, Irene Jakobus, als Enkelkinder.
Und sämtliche Schwäger und Schwägerinnen
Man bitter, von Kranzspenden und Handlensbesuchen abzusehen.

- 1) Obituary of David Herzl, Neue Freie Presse, Vienna, 12. 5. 1918, p. 20, Source: ANNO/Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.
- 2) Obituary of Nathan Goldenberg, Neue Freie Presse, Vienna, 12. 5. 1918, p. 20, Source: ANNO/Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.
- 3) Obituary of Gisela Löwy, née Pfeifer, Neue Freie Presse, Vienna, 5. 6. 1903, p. 18, Source: ANNO/Österreichische Nationalbibliothek. Members of the family have mostly modern German and Hungarian first names. One brother changed his German family name Pfeifer to the Hungarian Petényi.
- 4) Obituary of Toni Reich, née Weinberger, Neue Freie Presse, Vienna, 12. 5. 1918, p. 20, Source: ANNO/Österreichische Nationalbibliothek. Her Yiddish name was Toybe. The family members have mostly German family names and modern German first names.

Between Legibility, Emancipation, and Markers of “Otherness”: The Habsburg Empire and the Names of Jews

by Johannes Czakai¹

Abstract

The article analyzes the interdependences between the history of the Habsburg Empire and the names of its Jewish inhabitants. Until today, these names tell stories about this close relationship and they are an everlasting symbol of this era. By focusing on names, this paper shows how state policies towards Jews shifted over time, and how the perspective on names and name regulations can be a tool to connect and investigate both Habsburg and Jewish studies.

1 Introduction

Between 1785 and 1805 several laws and edicts ordered the Jews in the various provinces of the Habsburg Empire to adopt hereditary family names: 1785 in Galicia, 1786 in Bukovina, 1787 in almost the entire empire, and 1805 in newly annexed Western Galicia.² This Habsburg endeavor, which targeted only Jews, predated similar laws for Jews in other countries by almost two decades. In contrast to the naming laws in the German lands, which were predominantly influenced by the emancipation discourse of Napoleonic France, the Habsburg naming policy is often seen in a more unfavorable light. These regulations are repeatedly portrayed as emperor Joseph II’s desire to “assimilate” Jews into the naming system of a Christian majority culture, to turn them into agents of

¹ I would like to thank the Martin Buber Society of Fellows at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem for the valuable support that contributed significantly to the completion of this article.

² For a comprehensive list, see Johannes Czakai, *Nochems neue Namen. Die Juden Galiziens und der Bukowina und die Einführung deutscher Vor- und Familiennamen 1772–1820* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2021), 80–81.

“Germanization”, or even to brutally eradicate Jewish identity and tradition.³ However, a more thorough analysis of these names and their history challenges these old narratives. It enables us to give a more nuanced insight into a modernizing empire, its contradictory policies, and its diverse inhabitants.

2 Fluid Names

The very existence of the name regulations seems to prove that Jews and non-Jews lived in completely different cultural spheres, in which all Christians had a first and a family name, while Jews did not. However, in the early modern period, the supposed dividing border between Jewish and non-Jewish naming systems was less distinct than is often portrayed – although there were differences. In general, the naming culture of Central and Eastern European Jews was fluid. Next to the secular name, Jewish men had a religious name, while hereditary family names were not yet common.⁴ Instead, Jews were often known under changing nicknames referring to their fathers, religious functions, occupations, or places of origin. Some of these names turned into hereditary (proto-)family names, especially among rabbinical and elite families (like Horowitz, Margulies, and Wertheimer) or in populous communities like Prague and Vienna. Still, nicknames as well as first names changed with situations, sources, and languages – and a person could be known under several names, like the Viennese “me’ir ben rav meshulam segal”, “Mayr Jud,” or “der alte Mayr.”⁵

However, a similar – but not identical – fluidity can be found among non-Jews. Although in theory the system of a fixed first and a hereditary family name was common among Christians, its actual use diverged in the multicultural empire and depended on factors like class and linguistic background. Especially peasants in rural areas did not use or sometimes even know their

³ For example, Stanislaw Grodziski, “The Jewish Question in Galicia: The Reforms of Maria Theresa and Joseph II, 1772–1790,” in *Focusing on Galicia: Jews, Poles, and Ukrainians, 1772–1918* (Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry 12), eds. Israel Bartal, and Antony Polonsky (London/Portland, OR: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1999), 61–72, here 71.

⁴ Alexander Beider, “Names and Naming,” in *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, ed. Gershon David Hundert (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2008), 1248–1251.

⁵ Bernhard Wachstein, *Die Inschriften des alten Judenfriedhofes in Wien: 1. Teil 1540(?)–1670* (Vienna/Leipzig: Braumüller, 1912), 54, 447; Alexander Beider, *Jewish Surnames from Prague (15th–18th Centuries)* (Teaneck, NJ: Avotaynu, 1994), 2–5

existing hereditary family, instead using only first names or nicknames in everyday life.⁶

Accordingly, on the eve of the naming regulations, the naming systems of the inhabitants of the Habsburg Empire were in general diverse. An analysis of these naming cultures helps to scrutinize the perceived dichotomy of Jewish and non-Jewish spheres, without denying that actual differences existed. They help us to ask *where* exactly these differences mattered and *who* perceived them.

3 The Name Regulations of the 1780s

The introduction of name regulations exclusively for Jews was closely connected to the emergence of the Habsburg Empire. During the reign of Maria Theresa (1717–1780, reigned since 1740) and her co-regent and heir, Joseph II (1741–1790, reigned since 1765/1780), the Habsburg Empire evolved from an amalgamation of dispersed territories to a centralized state.⁷ Over the course of its expansion and modernization, hitherto local knowledge had to be turned into information that could be directly accessed by the state. In other words, the central bureaucracy had to convert space, nature, and humans into “legible” data.⁸ Accordingly, the implementation of the censuses 1770–72 in the empire and 1776 in Galicia was accompanied by instructions towards the general population not to change their names.⁹

However, the first name legislation exclusively for Jews – the regulations demanding that Jewish inhabitants of Galicia (1785) and Bukovina (1786) adopt hereditary family names – went further. Both crownlands had only recently been annexed from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1772) and Moldova (1775). In order to incorporate these formerly foreign territories into the empire, the Habsburg administration built new bureaucracies and introduced numerous new laws, especially for Jews, who had a different legal status than

⁶ Anton Tantner, *Ordnung der Häuser, Beschreibung der Seelen: Hausnummerierung und Seelenkonskription in der Habsburgermonarchie* (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studien-Verlag, 2007), 95–100; Ágoston Berecz, *Empty Signs, Historical Imaginaries: The Entangled Nationalization of Names and Naming in a Late Habsburg Borderland* (New York, NY: Berghahn, 2020), 260–263.

⁷ Pieter M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (Cambridge, MA/London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016), 16–50.

⁸ James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1998).

⁹ Tantner, *Ordnung der Häuser*, 113; see also Czakai, *Nochems neue Namen*, 170–173.

non-Jews. Regarding the significant local Jewish populations, the Habsburg administration had two main objectives: first, to prevent an increase of Jews in the provinces by restricting marriages or deporting poor families, and second, to deprive Jewish self-autonomous bodies of their political and financial powers – especially their ability to collectively raise taxes. The written registration of every individual and the accompanying introduction of fixed family names made the hitherto anonymous masses “legible” and turned them into governable and taxable individuals. In this light, the new names were an administrative attempt to undermine Jewish autonomous communal structures and subject them to state authority, while simultaneously gaining direct state access to the Jewish population of the provinces to control their taxes, their legal status, and their demographic growth.¹⁰

Furthermore, the name regulations highlight certain aspects of the reforms of Joseph II and his desire to transform Jews into “useful” subjects. This is apparent in the name edict of 1787, which was aimed at almost the entire empire. The 1787 edict demanded that the Jewish population in the hereditary lands as well as in Hungary and Transylvania adopt a “German” first name and a “permanent” family name.¹¹ The use of German had several goals: the language was gaining increasing importance as the unifying language of higher administration in the empire, as a language of education, as well as a carrier of a “civilizing mission” towards the eastern provinces, which were perceived to be backward.¹² At the same time, German was a means to combat Yiddish (and Judeo-German). Being the vernacular of the vast majority of Central and East-Central European Jews, Yiddish was perceived as an obstacle towards modern education and enlightened thinking, while its Hebrew letters posed difficulties for the German-speaking administration. In order to suppress Yiddish first names, the *Hofkanzlei* (Court Chancellery) published a list of 120 male and 40 female first names in standardized German spelling (like Gabriel and

¹⁰ Czakai, *Nochems neue Namen*, 116–185. After the annexation of “Western Galicia” in 1795, a similar name regulation for Jews was implemented in 1805.

¹¹ The edict is printed in: Alfred F. Pribram, ed., *Urkunden und Akten zur Geschichte der Juden in Wien: Erste Abteilung, Allg. Teil, 1526–1847 (1849)* (Vienna/Leipzig: Braumüller, 1918), 582–584.

¹² Larry Wolff, *The Idea of Galicia: History and Fantasy in Habsburg Political Culture* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2010), 13–62; Dirk Sadowski, *Haskala und Lebenswelt: Herz Homberg und die jüdischen deutschen Schulen in Galizien 1782–1806* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010).

Rosalia) that Jews were allowed to use.¹³ On the other hand, the edict did not impose German family names. Apart from the prohibition to further use or adopt common Yiddish nicknames or place names, the linguistic source of the new family names was not restricted.

The regulations show that the state authorities did not intend to forcefully "Germanize" the Jewish population in an anachronistic pre-national sense. German names were predominantly an administrative necessity. Paradoxically, despite the problems these German names later caused in non-German nationalistic contexts (which I will discuss in more detail below), they were originally an expression of the demand to reduce dividing boundaries and align Jews to some extent with the non-Jewish population, no matter of which religious, cultural, or linguistic background.¹⁴

4 Between Constraint and Agency

The name regulations and their implementations are not only a source for the cultural history of Habsburg bureaucracy, but also a source to investigate the possibilities of Jewish agency. In the early modern period, Jews were aware of their scopes of actions and fought against discriminatory restrictions. Also, in 1787 Jewish dignitaries in Bohemia protested against several aspects of the early drafts of the 1787 edict and had the chance to slightly influence the legislature. Their concern was primarily the restriction of first names, as will be shown below, while the implementation of family names was less disputed.¹⁵

Except for Galicia and Bukovina, almost no comprehensive research has been conducted on the actual registration process in the provinces. However, the archival absence of protest notes as well as the scattered research literature suggests that the means was not met with much or even any resistance.¹⁶ In fact, many family names that were registered in 1787 had been used by Jews before (like Kohn, Fränkel, Liberles, Polak, Bloch, Schlesinger), or were German adaptations (Levi turned into Löwy, Löwenstein, Löwenherz and

¹³ Printed in: Příbram, *Urkunden und Akten*, I, 584–585.

¹⁴ Czakai, *Nochems neue Namen*, 186–222.

¹⁵ Wenzel Žáček, "Eine Studie zur Entwicklung der jüdischen Personennamen in neuerer Zeit," *Jahrbuch der Gesellschaft für Geschichte der Juden in der Čechoslovakischen Republik* 8 (1936): 309–97, here 321–322.

¹⁶ Lenka Matušiková, "Namensänderungen in jüdischen Familien im Jahre 1787 am Beispiel der jüdischen Gemeinde Kanitz (Dolní Kounice)," *Judaica Bohemiae* 34 (1998): 107–25.

others). Although the majority of the newly registered family names in the empire was linguistically German (among the most common family names in Hungary were Schwarz, Weiß, Klein, Groß, and Deutsch), Jews had – at least in theory – the possibility to adopt names of any linguistic origin, resulting for example in the retention of Czech names like Jelinek and Kafka, which had already been used by Bohemian Jews before 1787.

In Galicia, most of the new names were not chosen by their Yiddish-speaking bearers but appointed by Austrian officials. They invented thousands of names, mostly using German nouns (like Baum, Feder, and Winter) or creating compound names (like Goldenberg, Wolkenfeld, or Lichtmann). Despite this imbalance of power, there are also scattered traces of Jewish agency, which highlight that the process was more diverse than previously known. Some Jewish dignitaries, like Dov Ber Birkenthal (1723–1805) or R. Zwi Hirsch Rosanes (d. 1804), deliberately chose family names that they used both in the inner-Jewish and in the non-Jewish sphere. Some got the help of Austrian authorities in order to register their desired name or to prevent rivals from getting theirs. There were successful as well as rejected attempts to register Yiddish or place names that the 1787 edict prohibited, while poor widows or servants often did not adopt a family name at all. Although probably most Galician Jews were indifferent towards the means, their newly registered names turned out to be a valuable instrument in dealing with Habsburg state authorities. They could be used to prove legal statuses in documents, while fake names helped their bearers to hide their identities.¹⁷

5 Aftermath and Later Name Changes

Joseph II's reform policy granted Habsburg Jewries certain rights, but still no full emancipation. In the first decades of the 19th century, Jews in Bohemia recognized that the ongoing restriction of their first names embodied that inequality. In 1828, they began a longstanding legal fight against the discriminatory limitation of first names and for their right to bear names, which the authorities inconsistently perceived as "Christian," like Ludwig and Emilie. Although in 1836 the *Hofkanzlei* in Vienna finally acquiesced to their demand, it took until the December Constitution of 1867, which granted equal rights to

¹⁷ Czakai, *Nochems neue Namen*, 273–369. For an onomastic analysis of the names, see Alexander Beider, *A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from Galicia* (Bergenfield, NJ: Avotaynu, 2004).

all male citizens of the Austrian half of the empire, for Bohemian Jews to be free to choose the first names of their children.¹⁸

While first names could be changed in every generation, the predominantly German family names remained. As the historian Ruth Kestenbergladstein (1910–2002) stated: “The Jews thus entered the age of nationality struggles afflicted with German names.”¹⁹ Due to the emergence of national ideologies often (but not exclusively) based on linguistic origins, names became ethnically charged symbols. Thus, their linguistic “otherness” could become an obstacle to Jewish participation in newly emerging national spheres. For example, in Hungary a nationalizing state elite sought to reshape names of places and people in order to turn them into elements of Magyarization. This Hungarian cultural nationalism exerted a strong pull on the non-Magyar middle bourgeoisie.²⁰ Jews, especially the Hungarian-speaking middle class in the cities, were by far the biggest group among the non-Magyars that changed their family names into Hungarian ones. In this process, for instance, Löwy became Lukács, Pfeifer became Petény, and Weinberger became Szöllősi.²¹

While name changes in Hungary were publicly promoted and even facilitated, other national movements were less inviting. The Polish national movement, for example, was more antisemitic. Accordingly, petitions by Jews to change their family names into Polish ones were much scarcer. Instead, name change petitions by Jews in Lwów/Lemberg aimed mostly at their first names. The main objective was to remove Yiddish names and adopt names that were common both in German and in Polish.²² In Vienna, the motivation for name change petitions was either baptism, a ridiculous meaning of a family name, or that names could be perceived as too “Jewish.” By being turned into less “visible” names – like Leibisch Mendel Schnupftaback changing his name to

¹⁸ Žáček, “Jüdische Personennamen,” here 334–397. For a similar analysis of Prussia, see Dietz Bering, *Der Name als Stigma: Antisemitismus im deutschen Alltag 1812–1933* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1987), 63–105.

¹⁹ Ruth Kestenbergladstein, *Neuere Geschichte der Juden in den böhmischen Ländern, Erster Teil, Das Zeitalter der Aufklärung 1780–1830* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1969), 69.

²⁰ Berecz, *Empty Signs*, 6.

²¹ Tamás Farkas, “Jewish Name Magyarization in Hungary,” *AHEA: E-Journal of the American Hungarian Educators Association* 5 (2012): 216–32.

²² Maria Vovchko, “‘This Name Befits Better for Presentation of my Person’: Change of Names and Surnames by the Jews of Galicia in the Late 19th – Early 20th century,” in *Drohobych Regional Studies*, 17–18 (Drohobych: Kolo, 2014), 217–34 (Ukrainian).

become a Schmidt – they enabled their bearers to evade the growing antisemitism of the *fin-de-siècle*.²³

At the same time, legends and fictitious historical narratives emerged about the creation of Jewish family names, which were based on a new perspective: the originally administrative and civilizing means was now interpreted as an act of brutal oppression and eradication of cultural identity.²⁴ This narrative arose from and nurtured national sentiments in the provinces – German family names in predominantly non-German environments were now perceived as a “foreign, Germanic marker”²⁵ and contributed to the perception of a forced cultural Germanization of the Habsburg East. Simultaneously, family names of Jews – real and invented – became a target for antisemitic jokes, while alleged names from the East were used as codes for a perceived Jewish infiltration.²⁶

6 Conclusion

The names of the Jews in the Habsburg Empire are as diverse as their origins. The findings from Galicia indicate how fruitful it is to study the actual implementation of the naming regulations and Jewish reactions elsewhere. So far, we still lack comprehensive research and too little is known to draw a complete picture of the name adoption process throughout the empire. Much more research is necessary to understand the different processes between Vienna and Trieste, in rural Hungary and Silesia, among elites and peddlers. But it is clear that the study of Jewish reactions, of similarities as well as clear differences in the choice of names, offers insight into Jewish agency and self-positioning. It can widen our understanding of the different Habsburg Jewries and their interaction with the state. Furthermore, it enables us to compare

²³ Anna Lea Staudacher, “... bittet um die Bewilligung zur Änderung seines Zunamens’: Der Namenswechsel von ausgrenzenden Namen der Häme und des Spottes bei Juden und Nichtjuden in Wien zum Fin-de-siècle,” *Österreichische Namensforschung* 34, no. 1–3 (2006): 159–82, here 172.

²⁴ Johannes Czakai, “Of Bug Crushers and Barbaric Clerks: The Fabricated History of Jewish Family Names in Karl Emil Franzos’ ‘Namensstudien’ (1880),” in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 67, no. 1 (2022): 39–54.

²⁵ The Polish original reads “piętno obce, germańskie,” see Majer Bałaban, *Dzieje żydów w Galicyi i w Rzeczypospolitej Krakowskiej 1772–1868* (Lwów: Połoniecki, 1914), 44.

²⁶ See also Bering, *Der Name als Stigma*.

their choices and circumstances with the name adoption process that began in German lands only twenty years later.

During the 19th century, both the Jewish and the non-Jewish public began to have an idea of what a "Jewish" name looked like. Due to the absence of other visible markers of difference, Christian anti-Judaism, national movements, and modern antisemitic agitation sought to turn the names of Jews into markers of "otherness" – alleged onomastic borders that could not always be logically or consistently maintained. Accordingly, the further research of these attempts as well as the handling of Habsburg Jewries with their inherited names offers new perspectives on the diverse society and national movements of the late Habsburg Empire.

The focus on the name – a supposed commonplace shared by all humans, ranging between basic necessity and powerful symbol of belonging or distinction – allows us to challenge established narratives and question alleged boundaries and antagonisms. Names enable us to see the diversity of Jewries and the various relationships between Jews and the state, Jews and non-Jews, and Jews amongst each other, as well as the importance of languages and cultural affiliations. Many of the family names that were created in the 1780s exist until today and still shape the way we remember the Habsburg Empire. They are footprints – remnants of the complexity of a multilingual empire.