

**Social Networks, Demography, and Identity**  
**A Prosopographic Study of Vienna's Jewish Upper Class**  
**1800-1938**

In 2011, Georg Gaugusch published the first part of a monumental work on the genealogy of Jewish families from Vienna's upper bourgeoisie from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century until World War II, titled *Wer einmal war*.<sup>1</sup> The data of hundreds of Jewish families, tracked for up to 7 generations, offer an unprecedented opportunity to evaluate those sources from a social historical perspective.

This study aims to offer a first general outlook on social patterns of the Viennese bourgeoisie in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries based on the data collected by Gaugusch, with a particular focus on the historical context of the time. The aim is to offer a social-historical evaluation based on a sample group of several hundred individuals from Gaugusch's book, presenting the major questions that can be discussed based on the data, as well as a summary of statistical tendencies in various social developments such as name changes, conversions, marriage and birth related figures and more. Some of the topics will be discussed more in-depth than others, with added primary and secondary sources collected in archives and libraries, while others will be touched upon with an option to be evaluated further in future studies.

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<sup>1</sup> Georg Gaugusch, *Wer einmal war: Das jüdische Grossbürgertum Wiens 1800-1938*. (Vienna: Amalthea, 2011)

## **Who was Vienna's Jewish Upper Class**

Gaugusch's work was chosen as the prime source base for an extended prosopographic study, but in order to understand the specific social class chosen and its particular relevance for this study, it is important to briefly discuss Gaugusch's definitions of the two core terms crucial for his choice of individuals whose details are published in his book: Who was a Jew and who was part of Vienna's upper bourgeoisie?

Gaugusch points out in his book that neither the Jewish traditional definition of who is Jewish, namely the child of a Jewish mother, nor the Christian point of view of who becomes Christian, namely a person who is christened, can be the rule for defining who was or ceased to be Jewish in Vienna's 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Neither is a person's self-definition presented as the core factor of who was to be regarded as Jewish for the purpose of the study. In a social study the relevance of Jewish affiliation has to be defined in social terms, namely whether people in a certain society understood a person to be of some kind of Jewish affiliation. As an example Gaugusch presents Austrian author Hugo von Hofmannsthal, whose only Jewish ancestor was one Jewish grandfather who had converted to Christianity. Nevertheless, Hugo von Hofmannsthal was generally regarded as Jewish. That fact as well as his marriage to a Jewish woman, who had converted to Christianity, serves as evidence for Gaugusch's hypothesis that Jewish affiliation was more than an official membership in the Jewish community, and more than the religious belief a child grew up with. Nevertheless, the main criteria according to which Gaugusch decided to include families based on their Jewish affiliation, was whether in the years between 1800 and 1890 the majority of their members were part of the Jewish community. His emphasis and focus, however, is not membership in a communal organization, but much rather social

circles. He uses the terms *Milieu* and *Social Networks*, particularly family networks, which defined Jewish people of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with descent playing not the sole, but indeed a central role. Some of the most important scholars in the field of the history of Viennese Jews around the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, have studied the city's Jewish society along similar lines. Steven Beller, for instance, who published a cultural history of Viennese Jews of that time period, chose to use Jewish descent as the criteria of who was to be considered Jewish for his study.<sup>2</sup> This type of definition can be problematic because it could be associated with a racist undertone, implying that Jewish identity depended on genes or indeed a race. In this case, however, the reason for this definition is clearly social, namely the argument that in many cases assimilation in all its definitions including conversion, did neither change the social sphere the individuals were living in, nor the way many Jews or Christians saw them. In Beller's study converts as well as descendants of mixed marriages play a significant role in the argument that culture in Fin de Siecle Vienna was primarily produced and consumed by Jews. Without pointing out the Jewish affiliation of converts and people with some type of Jewish ancestor, the study might have looked somewhat different. In addition, it is crucial to include converts in the framework of a social historical study of this sort in order to understand the extent and possibly the main reasons and effects of those conversions. Marsha Rozenblit, in her groundbreaking work on the assimilation of Jews in Vienna from 1867 to 1914, also points out that the integration of Jews into larger society was a group phenomenon.<sup>3</sup> Jews generally tended to continue living in certain neighborhoods, work in specific professions, and socialize in their own circles, or as Rozenblit defines them: *networks*. Even Jews who converted to Christianity often

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Steven Beller, *Vienna and the Jews 1867-1938* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989)<sup>2</sup>

Marsha Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna 1867-1914: Assimilation and Identity* (New York: State University of New York Press, Albany, 1983)<sup>3</sup>

remained tied to the Jewish milieu, whether out of their own will, or as a result of the refusal by anti-Semites to accept them. Rozenblit claims that some of those converts returned to Judaism when they realized that conversion had become ineffective from a social point of view in light of growing anti-Semitism. This tendency is also reflected in Gaugusch's data, and a comparison of Rozenblit's conclusions from her general database with a sample from Gaugusch's work might lead to a better understanding of specific tendencies in the highest social classes.

When it comes to the question of who were the members of the upper class among the Jews of Vienna, the definitions can be very subjective and diverse, particularly in the period around the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and early decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the number of Jews who were allowed to live in Vienna was very limited. Only wealthy and influential Jews were officially tolerated and received a special permission to reside in the city with their families and servants. This meant that at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Jewish population of Vienna was comprised of less than a thousand individuals, and every head of a household was probably considered of a relatively wealthy status. However, from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, when anyone was allowed to reside in the capital city of the Austrian Empire, thousands of new residents, including Jews, moved to Vienna. Within a century, from the early 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the population of the city increased tenfold to about two million, and the Jewish population increased to around 200,000.<sup>4</sup>

The first volume published by Gaugusch comprises 264 Jewish families. The second volume, which is to be published shortly, will expectedly have a similar amount of data. With a very

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Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna*, p.17<sup>4</sup>

rough estimate of an average of 20 individuals per family, this means that details of approximately 10,000 people are featured in the book. This would amount to 5% of the Jewish population if all of them had lived at the height of Vienna's Jewish population around the First World War. However, some of the individuals had already died by then, a relatively small number of them were not yet born. This even lowers the percentage. We do of course have to consider that the general Jewish population of Vienna was much smaller a few decades earlier, and before the mass immigration of Eastern European Jews probably also wealthier, but even if we consider a Jewish population of about 100,000, as was the case in the 1880s, the estimate of the share of Gaugusch's chosen families within the general Jewish population is still merely a few percentages, certainly within the top 10% of the population.

What did it mean though to be part of this high class and why was it significant? Gaugusch points out that by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Viennese upper class could not be defined purely according to the families' wealth. Not always do we have details about the actual financial situation of the families. Other criteria played roles in Gaugusch's choices to include families in his work. These criteria included ennoblement of families, as well as their networks with other families whose members were not ennobled themselves but played a significant role in the social lives of the Jewish nobility, such as through marriage. Not only wealth and nobility is a criteria in Gaugusch's work, but also high intellectual achievement and the life within a certain milieu, as part of the social circles of the Jewish upper class, even if sometimes the individuals only played a role to be associated with them, and on the other hand, even if individuals wanted to flee their Jewish heritage through conversion and continued to be considered part of it nevertheless.

## **Information Identification and Assessment**

The genealogical data provided by Georg Gaugusch in *Wer einmal war* offers at first sight limited and basic pieces of biographic and genealogical information of the given individuals, built around their birth, death, marriage dates and locations, number of children, name changes, conversion dates and location if applicable, and brief information on their professions. An in-depth analysis of that information, however, can offer a wide understanding of the history of the chosen society. In particular it serves as a basis for valuable statistical assessments. The table below illustrates the pieces of information and how they can lead to a better understanding of Viennese Jewish upper bourgeoisie from the late 18<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<b>Data</b>	<b>Examples of what the information can help us understand?</b>
First Name	Frequency of names, the use of Jewish names (bearing in mind that if the name stated in the source is not Jewish the person might still have had a Jewish name)
Last Name	Frequency of various forms of last names.
Changes of first or last name and the date of the name change	Frequency of name changes, indication whether family members changed their last name together. Were name changes related to career choices? Was there a relation between name changes and conversions? Were certain names more likely to be changed than others?
Male/Female	The category male/female can help in a statistical study to identify gender-related issues by comparing subjects in men and women's lives such as conversions, divorce, age at marriage, age at death, cause of death, second

	marriage etc. and identify similarities or differences.
Date of Birth	Helps to relate various personal events to the age of the person, such as marriage, death, age at childbirth – first child and last child, but also to general historical events and trends relevant for people who grew up as part of certain generations. The date of birth also helps to identify age differences between spouses.
Parents' names	Helps to track families when working with large computerized data, particularly to quickly trace siblings and follow family networks.
Place of birth	Offers information on migration patterns: who migrated from where, the place of birth also gives information on the various addresses of the parents who often moved between places between the births of several children
Date of leaving the Jewish religion, and date of Christening	Gives an indication of how many people (at least) left the Jewish religion in Viennese bourgeois society, how many of those stayed non-confessional, and how many entered another religious community. The date in relation to wedding dates might indicate whether the conversion was related to marriage. Unfortunately the given material does not give dates related to career changes, which could be useful, but nevertheless a link to the profession, which often is indicated, could be identified. The data might also give an indication whether couples converted together, whether people converted during the lifetime of their parents or later, and whether there

	was a tendency to convert in a particular era.
Place of Christening	Might give an indication on whether Jews were more likely to convert in certain areas and districts or in which churches Jews were likely to convert
Return to Judaism	Gives an indication on how many converts decided to return to Judaism. Other information on marriage, career, and historical events might explain the reasons for low or high figures in this category
Deportations during the Nazi era	Can provide information on the Viennese Jewish high society's fate during WWII, did they largely manage to escape with the help of their money and standing, or did they share the exact same faith as all other community members? The date, place, and cause of death can offer further information in this category.
Date of Death	Generally provides the information on the person's age at death, or other details when related to historical events such as the Holocaust. The date of death can also lead to the <b>age at death</b> . This again offers information on statistic details on average life expectancy of the Jewish high society can be compared to poor people, non-Jews, or even between male and female. Can also indicate child mortality.
Place of Death	Often offers information on the person's home town or district shortly before death. This can also indicate migration patterns. Note: often people died in hospitals and not at home



Cause of death	Offers information on most common causes of death, diseases, suicide rates, etc.
Date of funeral	Indicates the interval between death and funeral
Place of burial/cremation	Offers information on the type of burial and at times whether it was conducted according to Jewish customs and in Jewish cemeteries.
Husband/Wife	Offers information on marriage trends and networks
Wedding date	Offers information on age at wedding and subsequently of interval between marriage and becoming parents.
Place of wedding	Can indicate why a place of wedding was chosen, such as groom's or bride's hometown?
Wedding registration	Indicates whether the marriage was registered with the Jewish community and therefore likely conducted according to Jewish tradition between Jewish partners.
Number of children	Can offer statistics on the number of children per family.
Birthdays of children	Can offer information on the age people had their first child and until which age women gave birth as well as the intervals between the children.
Divorce	Divorce rates.
Second (or third) Marriage	Information on second marriages and children resulting from them
Academic title	Information on the level of education and profession: note: missing information on a title does not

	necessarily mean that the person did not have one.
Profession	Information on a person's career, which can be related to several other available details such as conversion, age of marriage, children (relation to the economic and social situation of a family), professional patterns and trends of several generations of Jewish high society in Vienna.
Father' profession	Indicates whether children followed their father's profession. Note: in several cases the bourgeois women also had a profession – mostly shop owners

### **Methodological problems and challenges of using this specific genealogical data**

The data might contain mistakes: Author Georg Gaugusch quotes an acceptable ratio as 1%, in this case 16 mistakes in the 1600 digits of information from 100 people.

Missing information does not mean that a particular situation did not exist. For instance, missing information on children, does not mean that a person did not have children; missing information on a person's conversion does not necessarily mean that he or she did not convert. Therefore statistical conclusions cannot be exact, but can possibly offer trends or an indication of how many people converted "at least", bearing in mind that there might have been more.

The current volume contains only family names from A-K, the inclusion of the next volume to be published, might change some results.

Gaugusch's work features an estimated data of at least 10,000 individuals. The volume is written in text form and in order to conduct a quantitative analysis the data had to be entered into an excel database, which was very time consuming. Hundreds of names and thousands of information digits have been entered and assessed, but the scope of this study can only evaluate a sample of close to 600 individuals. A larger sample group can be assessed at a later stage.

### **The Evaluation of the Sample Group**

#### **Name Changes**

41 individuals in the samples changed their last names, which corresponds to close to 8%. It is noteworthy that in an earlier smaller sample of around 300 individuals the percentage was nearly the same. This fact makes shows that the sample seems to be fairly representative.

In most cases the members of the same family changed their names to the same last name, often on the same date. A good example for this is given with ten members of the Bauch family who together changed their last name to Bach on May 22, 1872. They included Josef Markus Bauch with six of his children and three nephews. Other siblings followed a few years later and also changed their names to Bach. Also in other families, family members sometimes followed others after years, such as in the case of Rosa Hermine Abeles, who changed her last name to Abel six years after changing her sons' names, who were still children at the time.

Only seven out of 41 people who changed their names in the sample group were female, which means that of the individuals who changed their names 83% were men.<sup>5</sup> In some cases the persons who changed their names did so before their wedding and their wives then took on their new names. However, in the cases in which the men were already married, there isn't any indication that their wives also changed their names. The few women who did change their last names according to Gaugusch's data, did so together with their siblings at a relatively young age, such as the sisters Margarethe and Alice Bauchwitz when they were seven and five years old, or, as in the case of Rosa Hermine Abeles, after the death of their husbands in order to bear the same name as their children, who had changed their names.

The sample data offers information on the profession of 28 of the individuals who chose to change their last names, amounting to close to two third. The majority, over half of them, worked in trade and business related professions, the other smaller half is split among civil servants on the one hand and free professions, with a clear focus on artists who engaged with the public as musicians, writers, and actors, on the other.

Name changes were conducted in all decades starting from the 1870s until the turn of the century, becoming fairly rare in the following decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in those later decades also being conducted on an individual basis rather than with a large number of family members. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, when a large family, such as the Bauch/Bach's decided to change their name together, this pushed up the statistics, and

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In an earlier smaller sample the ratio of men and women who changed their last names was slightly different, <sup>5</sup> amounting to 87.5 vs 12.5%. The larger the sample is the more exact the results are expected to be. However, the results of the smaller and larger sample are fairly close, both amounting to over 80% vs. under 20% as a relatively representative and significant figure in this case.

therefore figures of name changes in the sample seem to reflect joint decisions of families rather than historical events which would have caused them to conduct the change.

15 Out of 41 individuals, close to 40% of those who changed their last names, also left the Jewish religion.<sup>6</sup> However, the vast majority of converts in the sample, around 90%, did not change their last name.<sup>7</sup> The total number of conversions is also significantly higher than the number of Jews who changed their names. 129 people in the sample left the Jewish religion, amounting to around 25%, more than three times the figure of those who changed their names. This shows that the Jewish bourgeoisie were more likely to leave their religious affiliation, at least officially, behind, than to change their family names.

### Conversions

At least 129 individuals, 25% of the sample, left the Jewish religion. 67 of them, amounting to over 50% of converts, joined the Catholic faith, almost all the Roman Catholic Church, three the Old Catholic Church. At least 13 converts from Judaism, amounting to 10%, joined the Evangelical denomination, and 30, about 23%, left the Jewish religion and might have not joined any other faith. This partially reflects conversion statistics presented by Anna L. Staudacher for Viennese Jewish society as a whole after 1868. According to her figures 50% of converts joined the Roman Catholic religion, a third the Evangelical denomination, and another third remained non-confessional, an option they did not have before the inter-confessional laws of 1868. Before that 85% of Jewish converts in Vienna had joined the Roman Catholic religion.<sup>8</sup> It should be noted at this point, that conversion in ennobled

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In an earlier sample of half the size this figure amounted to 50%.<sup>6</sup>  
In smaller samples this figure was not as large, amounting to two thirds or three quarters, but nevertheless in <sup>7</sup> all samples the clear majority of converts did not change their names.  
Staudacher, Anna L, *Jüdisch-protestantische Kovertiten in Wien 1782-1914* (Frankfurt am Main: Europäischer <sup>8</sup> Verlag der Wissenschaften:2004), p.6

families before the 1848 revolution was significantly higher than in the sample which includes also individuals until the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, many of them not ennobled. In his work on ennobled Jewish families before 1848, Hanns Jäger-Sunstenau argues that 74%, 86 out of 115 Jewish families, converted to Christianity.<sup>9</sup>

The number of female and male converts, including those who only left the Jewish religion without necessarily joining another faith, was close to equal in the sample with 67 men closely followed by 62 women. This figure roughly corresponds to generation male-female relations of Jewish apostates from all social backgrounds in Vienna. Marsha Rozenblit presents 53.3% vs. 46.7% male-female ratio between 1870 and 1900, with an increase to over 50% on the female side in later years.<sup>10</sup>

Out of the known professions of the converts the majority, amounting to two third, were trade, business and industry related. A third of the converts who worked in that sector were industrialist, followed by wholesale traders and bankers. Free professions such as physicians or lawyers were nearly equally represented among converts as officials working in the army or diplomacy, amounting to roughly one sixths of those converts whose profession is known. Considering that in trade related professions and in free professions Jews did not face legal restrictions, it is unlikely in most cases that legislation played a role in conversions. Of the civil servants, including diplomats and army officials, about half converted before emancipation, probably in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, at a time when conversion was still a condition for Jews to be accepted in those professions. The other half of the converts working in civil service converted in the last years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the years before

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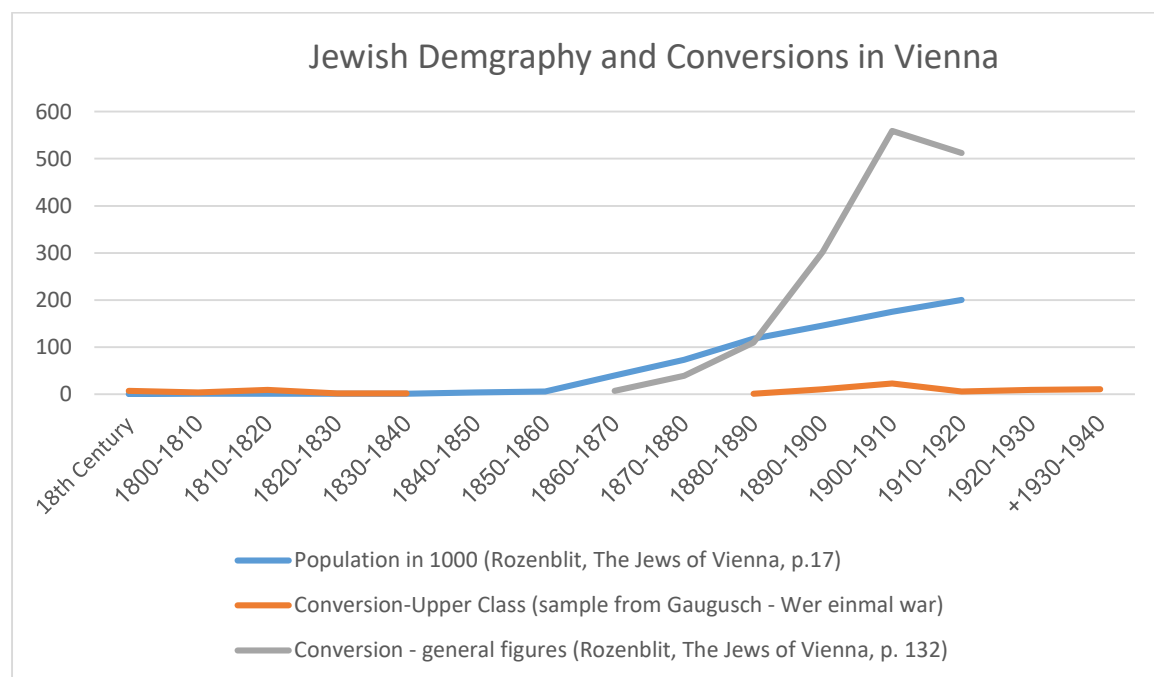
Jäger-Sunstenau, Hanns, *Die geadelten Judefamilien im vormärzlichen Wien* (Phil. Diss. Wien 1950), p. 65<sup>9</sup>  
Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna*, p. 136<sup>10</sup>

World War I. Legally they did not need to convert for professional reason at that time anymore. Therefore, legislation was an unlikely reason for them to convert. Socially, however, they might have well hoped for better acceptance in their professional fields.

Comparing the decades from the early 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the highest number of conversions were conducted between 1900-1910. Of all the converts in the sample, whose date of conversion is known, more than a quarter converted in that decade. Certainly it might play a role that the Jewish population of that time was much larger than several decades earlier, but in the following decade the population was still on the rise while conversion figures plummeted in relation to the decade after the turn of the century. A comparison of this sample with the population growth of Vienna puts the growing conversion figures into perspective, or, in other words, it can show in how far conversion figures developed in accordance with demographic developments, or in how far other reasons might have affected certain changes in conversion figures. In addition, a comparison to the conversion figures of Jews in Viennese society as a whole, not restricted to the sample of Vienna's upper class taken from Gaugusch's book, can show whether conversion figures in the high society of Vienna's Jews developed as they did among Viennese Jews from other social classes.

The chart below shows a steady growth of conversions in the late decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with a particularly sharp increase among Vienna's Jewish population from all Jewish classes in the last decade of the century, reaching its height in both the high class as well as Vienna's Jewish population in general in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and decreasing thereafter. All in all both the population as well as conversion increased throughout the years but it seems that in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century conversions increased

disproportionately among all classes. This tendency is also reflected in Anna L. Staudacher's work, in which she argues that the first of two major conversion waves in the last 200 years rose in the decades before World War II, as a result of growing anti-Semitism promoted by the Christian social movement.<sup>11</sup> The peak was in 1906 with 643 conversions in Vienna.<sup>12</sup> The second wave of conversions reached its peak in 1938, the year of Austria's Anschluss to the German Reich.



Marriage as a motif for conversion is only indicated in 5 out of 129 cases of conversion. In those cases the person converted shortly before the wedding. One additional couple converted shortly before their marriage in Church, but the fact that they converted both from Judaism shows that the reason for their conversion must have been one other than

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Staudacher, Anna L, *Jüdische Konvertiten in Wien 1782-1868* (Frankfurt am Main: Europäischer Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2002), p.16<sup>11</sup>  
 Statistisches Jahrbuch der Stadt Wien für das Jahr 1906, 24. Jg. (Wien: 1908), p. 370<sup>12</sup>



marriage. In all other cases the time gap between conversion and marriage is several years, in some cases decades, too long to offer any direct relation between the two events.

Conversion affected all families of the sample. One of the largest conversion ratios can be found in one of the lines of the Arnstein family, with at least 25 out of 37 individuals who left the Jewish religion in that family.

Although most families in the sample show several members who converted, family members generally did not convert together, but often years apart. This partially confirms scholar Anna L. Staudacher's claim that particularly after 1867 family members generally did not convert on the same date. One exception in the sample is the Ritter von Adler family in which four siblings were converted in their childhood on the same day in 1898. Staudacher's claim that before 1867 families did convert together on the same date has not yet been proven in this sample.

After 1868, when freedom of religion was passed as part of the inter-confessional Laws in Austria, Christians were allowed to convert to Judaism, including Jews who had converted to Christianity and wanted to return to the Jewish religion. In the sample assessed here, only 5 out of 129 Jewish converts returned to Judaism, that's less than 4%. Staudacher showed in her study that in the first two years after 1868, 87 Jews returned to Judaism, but most of those Jews belonged to the lower, poorer social class.<sup>13</sup> This can be confirmed in the sample taken from Gaugusch's genealogical data, in which only a few cases of returnees to the Jewish religion can be found. Therefore, the upper class was less likely to return to the Jewish religion than poorer classes.

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Staudacher, *Jüdische Konvertiten*, pp. 289-290.<sup>13</sup>

## Cremation

At least 25 out of 530 individuals in the sample were cremated rather than buried after their death, which amounts to almost 5%. According to the sources available in Gaugusch's work, less than half of them left the Jewish religion in their lifetime. 9 of the individuals who were cremated were members of the same Abeles family. This might hint that families might have decided on such matters together. About two thirds of the individuals who were cremated were men, seven of them had doctoral titles and their professions ranged from the business sector to law, medicine, and academia. At least nine of them, which amounts to over a third, had changed their last names during their lifetime. Because cremation is generally considered to stand in opposition to Jewish traditions, it is worthwhile to learn more about the motifs behind choosing cremation over burial. Documents of the communal Viennese archives held at the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People shed more light on these motifs, offer data for comparison, and another point of view on the role these cremation figures played in the Jewish community.<sup>14</sup>

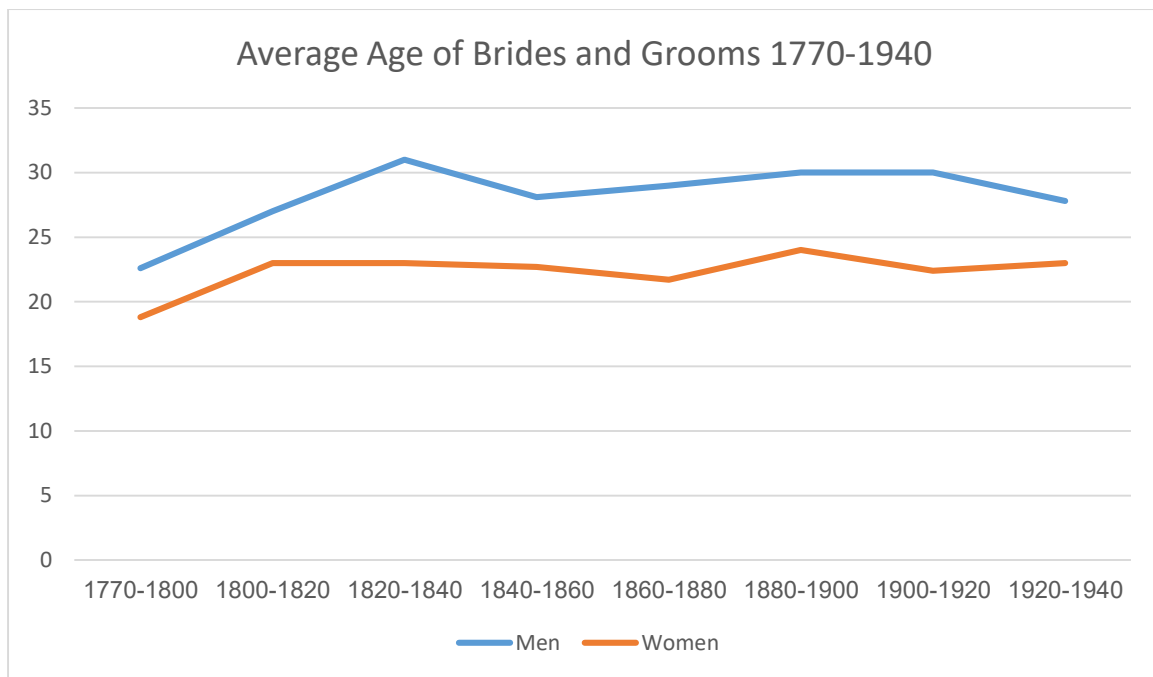
The clear majority of the cremations in the sample were conducted from the 1920s up to the early 1940s, mostly, however, throughout the 1930s. This reflects developments that are also evident in the protocols of the Jewish communal leadership and rabbis at the time. In 1922 the Viennese city council established a crematorium and promoted cremation as a modern hygienic funeral method. Although the Christian social party opposed the establishment of the crematorium out of their own religious and traditional standpoint, they could not prevent it from being built and used by the Christian population. Neither did the Jewish community have a say in their members' choices, whether they opted for the

tradition burial at the Jewish cemetery or the modern, cheaper option of cremation. The communal records show a sudden rise of cremations of Jewish deceased, a higher percentage among the total Jewish population than among the sample of Viennese high society. In 1930 cremation of Jewish bodies was estimated to be around 8% with over 200 cases, but at certain times, such as February 1924, communal representatives mentioned numbers as high as 20%. The reasons were diverse. One of them was stated as financial because cremation was cheaper than the community's high burial taxes. In the sample taken from Georg Gaugusch's data, this reason probably played less of a role considering the status and wealth of most families represented in the data. This explains why the percentage figures among them are slightly lower than the total of the Jewish community. Other reasons for choosing cremation, however, affected them as well, including a belief that cremation was more hygienic, that it was part of a modern era, and possibly also a lack of awareness that cremation was problematic from a religious or traditional point of view. This was expressed in the protocol of the communal committee meeting in April 1924, which stated that even people who undoubtedly had a Jewish self-awareness decided to opt for cremation in the case of their death. The concept that cremation was un-Jewish, so the protocol, did not get through to the members of the community. Rarely did communal leaders speak about a clear religious prohibition to burn bodies of deceased Jews. The argumentation was much more drafted around the concepts of "untraditional" and "un-Jewish". The strategy of dealing with this development was repeatedly discussed throughout the 1920s and 1930s, but generally it resulted in a lack of interference from the side of the community. Zwi Perez Chajes, chief rabbi of Vienna from 1918 until 1927, also stated that if somebody was convinced that cremation was the right thing to do, it was his private issue. He decided, however, that in order to discourage people from cremation,

communal functionaries such as rabbis, cantors, and choirs were not allowed to officiate at a burial ceremony of a person who had been cremated. In his later years, Chajes had already realized that this strategy didn't serve as a deterrence, but rather angered the families of the deceased who had been cremated and distanced them from the community even further. In 1931, therefore, this procedure was re-evaluated by the communal rabbis and it was decided that it was up to the rabbis whether they would officiate at ceremonies before and after cremation, though not at the crematorium itself.

### Marriage and Children

The sample group offers information on the ages of brides and grooms on their wedding day from the late 18<sup>th</sup> until the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Women tended to get married in their early twenties, men in their late twenties. Most women got married at age 21-22, while most men at age 28-30. The chart below shows the development of marriage age from the late 18<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century among men and women in the sample group. After a first rise in the age of brides and grooms in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the age remained fairly stable in the early twenties for women and the late twenties for men.



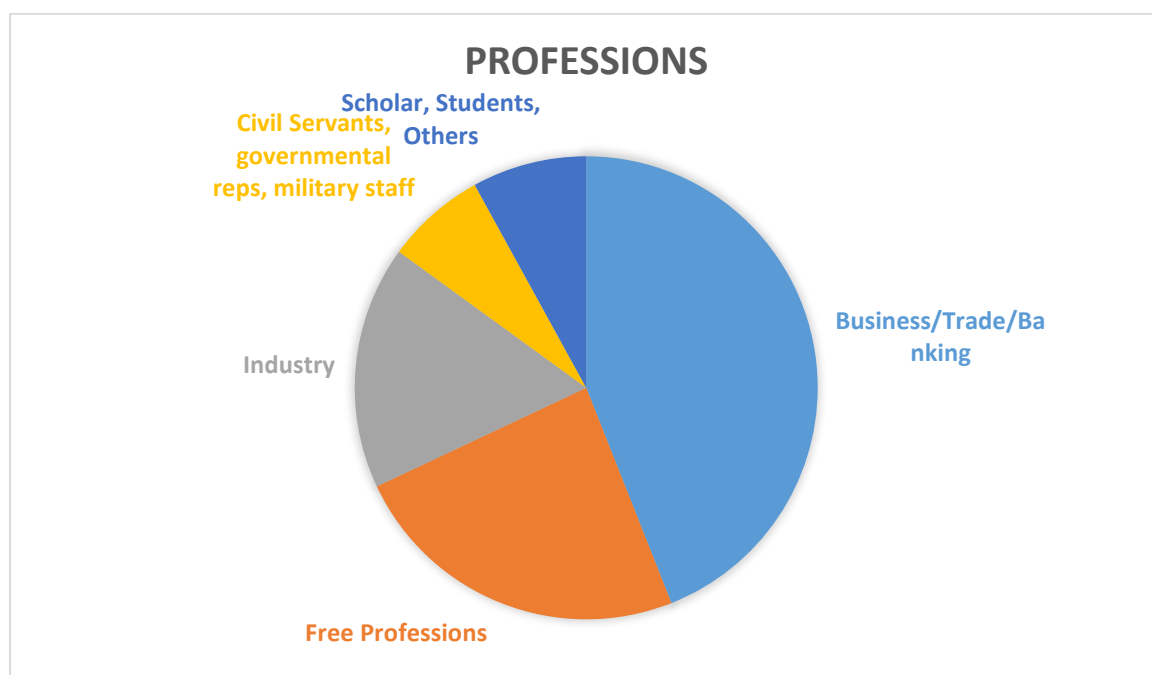
Of the women who got married about two third are known to have wed in a religious Jewish ceremony, about 8 percent in the Catholic Church, about 3 percent in other churches, and about 4 percent in civil weddings. In about 20% of the marriages it is not clear which type of wedding ceremony was performed. Among men the figures are very similar. Also there at least two third are known to have wed in a Jewish ceremony, over three percent at the Catholic Church, six percent in civil weddings and in just over 20 percent of weddings there is no information on the type of ceremony.

29 of nearly 400 people in the sample group, who got married, were divorced. That amounts to just over 7 percent.

The average number of children the individuals in the sample group had was three, ranging from 0 to over 14, with a large group of parents of two or three children. The average age of first time mothers in the sample group was just under 24 years, the average age of first time fathers was slightly over 30.

## Professions

The sample group evaluated offers a good overview of the main professions represented in the Viennese Jewish upper class. The majority of individuals in the sample group taken from Gaugusch's book were businessman, many of the wholesale traders. If managers of business related companies, stockholders, and company owners are added to this group they amount to nearly 37 percent of the professionals. If the bankers, amounting to around seven percent are added to this groups, this business-related section becomes even larger. The second largest group comprises the free professions, including lawyers, physicians, authors, and musicians, with around 24 percent, followed by industrialists amounting to roughly 17 percent. Civil servants, politicians and military staff were represented among in the sample group with close to seven percent. Most of the remaining individuals were students or scholars in various fields. It should be noted, that although clearly underrepresented, nine of the professionals in this sample group were women, primarily in the business and free professions sector, in professions such as actresses or shop owners.



## Conclusion and Ideas for Further Research

The large size of genealogical data published in Georg Gaugusch's books offers an unprecedented opportunity to learn about the lives of Vienna's Jewish high society from the late 18<sup>th</sup> until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The scope of this research project allowed only for a taste of the wide ranging options that can be learned from the data. The topics chosen here were name changes, conversions, burial choices, marriage & children, as well as an overview of professions represented in the group. The data sample showed that mostly men changed their last names, families tended to change their names to the same last names, but a wealthy Jew in 19<sup>th</sup> century Vienna was much more likely to leave the Jewish religion than his last name. As opposed to name changes, conversions was conducted fairly equally by men and women. They peaked in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Viennese Jewish society generally as well as in its highest class particularly. The reasons for those conversions were less likely to have been legal restrictions or marriage, but rather the aspirations that conversion would prove as an advantage socially and professionally. After 1868, when legislation had made conversion to Judaism legal, a number of Jews decided to return to Judaism. The figures in this study, together with a comparison to previous studies, show that poorer classes were more likely to return to the Jewish religion than the high class.

Also when it came to burial choices, the figures in this study, compared to archival material, show that poorer classes were more likely to opt for cremation in the 1920s and 1930s than the high class as it was a cheaper option than burial. However, other factors such as the issue of hygiene and insufficient knowledge of the Jewish traditional opposition to cremation, resulted in the cremation of around 5% of the Jews who died in Vienna's high

society, including some who were considered to having strong sentiments towards Jewish tradition.

Other topics, including age of marriage, number of children, and the main professional fields represented in Vienna's Jewish high society were touched upon in this study. By enlarging the sample group and assessing the genealogical data provided by Gaugusch further and more in-depth, the conclusions reached can be much wider-ranging, more exact, and more detailed. One of the main challenges and opportunities of working with a much enlarged database, which would go beyond the scope of this study, would be to follow up relationships and networks of the Viennese Jewish upper class, and get a better understanding of how the *milieu*, a term defined by several historians for a specific social sphere, was created and how it functioned in a city that was then one of the largest and best organized centers of European Jewry.



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