CALL FOR PROPOSALS

AUSTRIAN STUDIES 24 (2016): JEWS AND AUSTRIAN CULTURE

What it means to be Jewish in Austria is deeply rooted in the past, but also continues to evolve. Although confronted with antisemitism, Austrian Jews ranging from strongly assimilationist to ardently Zionist drove and supported some of the most well-known ideas and movements of modern culture, whether these were aimed at the conservation of tradition or at forging innovation. Many scholars remain fascinated by Jews’ participation in high culture and modernism around the fin-de-siècle: the works of Arthur Schnitzler, Sigmund Freud, and Stefan Zweig, to name only a few, continue to mark the landscape of international popular culture. And in recent years, commentators have noted a ‘re-invigoration’ or even ‘rebirth’ (Hope Herzog) of Jewish culture in Austria. They draw attention to high-profile authors and cultural figures whose activities often centre around Vienna (Robert Menasse, Robert Schindel, Eva Menasse, Doron Rabinovici, Ruth Beckermann, Matti Bunzl), as well as to institutional renewal that draws upon the cultural history of Austria’s Jews in new and challenging ways (for example, the renovation of the Jewish Museum in Vienna, the Jüdische Kulturwochen, the Jewish Museum in Hohenems and the Jewish History Institute in St Pölten).

Antisemitism past and present continues to be an emotive and problematic factor in Austrian public discourse, as was amply demonstrated by the controversies surrounding the renaming of the Karl-Lueger-Ring in Vienna as Universitätsring in 2012/13, and the establishment of the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies as an international documentation and research hub for studies on Jewish persecution and antisemitism. Recent violent attacks on Jews in France and Denmark have raised awareness in Austria of antisemitism as a Europe-wide problem, lending increased urgency to discussions within Austria itself.

As Austrians engage with their Jewish past and present, the need for public debate and scholarly discussion of Jewish cultural studies and identity politics continues to grow. In the light of these developments, Austrian Studies 24 (2016) invites proposals for papers dedicated to investigating manifestations and negotiations of Jewish culture and Jewish difference in the Austrian context. Although discussions of contemporary Austria are particularly welcome, contributions on under-researched aspects of the rich and varied Jewish past of the Habsburg lands from the eighteenth century onwards are also invited. Contributors are encouraged to show their awareness of the shifting boundaries of what is or was considered Jewish (and by whom) at any particular point in Austrian history.

Topics could include:

• case studies of individual works or writers, artists and cultural figures
• case studies of Jewish communities and their cultural interactions
• definitions of ‘Jewish’ and ‘Austrian’ culture – how are we to conceive of the relationship between these two categories? What new questions can we ask to help us understand their limitations?
• Investigations of how using Jewish difference as an analytic category (that is, as the dialectical, hierarchical framework that encompasses the relationship between the socially constructed categories of “Jew” and “non-Jew”) help us avoid essentializing our understandings of what is “Jewish” in Austrian culture. How does Jewish difference intersect with other analytic categories such as gender and class to help us understand and interpret the history and culture of Jews in Austria?
• The purchase of the past on the present, in particular in post-1945 Austria
• Memorialization, documentation and public display of Jewish life and culture in Austria before and/or after the Holocaust
• Comparison of Austrian and German Jewish culture, history, traditions.

Expressions of interest, including a provisional title and a proposal of no more than 300 words should be sent to Deborah Holmes d.c.holmes@kent.ac.uk and Lisa Silverman silverld@uwm.edu by 15 May 2015. The submission deadline for articles is 15 November 2015 for publication in autumn 2016. Austrian Studies is a peer-reviewed yearbook published in English under the auspices of the Modern Humanities Research Association. It adheres to the MHRA style guidelines (www.mhra.org.uk)