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Renovation of the Jewish cemetery in Klosterneuburg completed

03 Dec 2020

At the end of 2020, the restoration work on the Jewish cemetery in Klosterneuburg reached completion: On 2 December, the work was approved in the presence of representatives from the Jewish Community Vienna, the Federal Office for the Protection of Monuments, the Fund for the Restoration of the Jewish Cemeteries in Austria (Cemeteries Fund), and the Committee for the Preservation of the Jewish Cemetery in Klosterneuburg.

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Over the past three years the cemetery – which was created in around 1873, covers an area of approx. 4,000 square meters and accommodates 652 graves – was renovated and secured in three phases with funds from the Cemeteries Fund and the Province of Lower Austria. The Cemeteries Fund provided three quarters of the total funding of around 600,000 euros, with the province of Lower Austria providing one quarter.

Together with the Federal Office for the Protection of Monuments, a restoration concept was drawn up to prevent the cemetery from falling further into a state of disrepair. Following the approval of the work, the cemetery will be handed over to the local community of Klosterneuburg for upkeep in spring 2021. The willingness of the municipality to ensure a cemetery's future upkeep for a period of 20 years is a prerequisite for the provision of restoration funding by the Cemeteries Fund.

The President of the Jewish Community Vienna, Oskar Deutsch commented: *“Caring for graves plays a major role in Judaism. It is an essential religious and moral duty to restore the dignity of those buried at Klosterneuburg cemetery and to restore the peace of the dead. This has now been made possible with the help of the Fund for the Restoration of the Jewish Cemeteries in Austria and with the participation of the Province of Lower Austria. I would like to thank all the institutions involved for their support and good collaboration”.*

The President of the Federal Office for the Protection of Monuments, Dr. Christoph Bazil stated: *“I am delighted about the successful cooperation between all those involved. Thanks to the initiative of the Jewish Community, the financial support of the Cemeteries Fund and the Province of Lower Austria and the expert assistance of the Federal Office for the Protection of Monuments, the restoration of the cemetery in Klosterneuburg constitutes a further important step towards the preservation of the Jewish cemeteries in Austria”.*

Hannah Lessing, Secretary General of the National Fund of the Republic of Austria and the Fund for the Restoration of the Jewish Cemeteries in Austria, is pleased that another cemetery could be restored: *“It is important that this major restoration project has now been completed. For the future, the long-term preservation of the Jewish cemeteries lies with the local people, the communities and associations. A further goal will be to provide more education together with existing initiatives in order to anchor the Jewish cemeteries more firmly in the collective consciousness”.*

The Fund for the Restoration of the Jewish Cemeteries in Austria was established with the National Council in 2010 to save more than 60 Jewish cemeteries throughout Austria from falling into ruin. So far, about 7.3 million euros of federal funds have been paid out for the restoration of 13 Jewish cemeteries in Austria. Klosterneuburg is the sixth Jewish cemetery in Austria that has now been fully renovated.