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Commemorative Signs for Nazi Era Victims across Space and Time – DERLA Kärnten/Koroška

In official narratives, Austria was seen for decades as the first victim of Nazi Germany that had to participate in national socialist felonies. A remembrance of “dutiful” soldiers who gave their lives in the “fight for their fatherland” (Kühnel 2022, 199) is over-represented in public space, while the persecuted victims of national socialism are little remembered. The Austria-wide digital platform DERLA, the Digital Memorial Landscape, established in 2023, makes all memorials to the victims of the Nazi era (as well as didactic material) available on the Internet. The analysis of the information collected on this platform makes it possible to add new findings to academic literature. This article focuses on bilingual Carinthia, provides an insight into new memorials for the victims of national socialism, and compares the Carinthian memorial landscape both spatially and geographically.

Keywords: memory culture, political education, national socialism, digitalisation.

Spominska obeležja za žrtve nacizma skozi prostor in čas – DERLA, avstrijska Koroška

Država Avstrija je desetletja uradno veljala za prvo žrtev nacistične Nemčije, ki je bila v sodelovanje pri nacionalsocialističnih zločinih prisiljena. V javnosti je tako občutno bolj prisoten spomin na vojake, ki so zgolj »opravljali svojo dolžnost« in padli »v boju za domovino« (Kühnel 2022, 199), medtem ko je spomin na žrtve pregona nacionalsocialističnih oblasti precej bolj omejen. Zahvaljujoč digitalni platformi DERLA, t. i. digitalni spominski krajini, vzpostavljeni leta 2023, so vsa obeležja za žrtve nacizma v Avstriji (skupaj z didaktičnim gradivom) sedaj dostopna na spletu. Analiza informacij, zbranih na tej platformi, omogoča vnos novih ugotovitev v znanstveno literaturo. Članek, ki se osredotoča na dvojezično avstrijsko Koroško, ponuja pregled novih spominskih obeležij za žrtve nacionalsocializma in koroško spominsko krajino proučuje z geografskega in prostorskega vidika.

Ključne besede: kultura spomina, politična vzgoja, nacionalsocializem, digitalizacija.

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1. The Carinthian Memory Discourse

In Kärnten/Koroška – Carinthia, there is a war memorial in almost every municipality, most of which commemorate the fallen soldiers of the First and Second World Wars and the *Kärntner Abwehrkampf* (the Carinthian defence campaign against SHS troops, 1918–1919). These war memorials are always located in prominent places: they have been erected in market squares, at municipal offices, in the immediate vicinity of or inside churches, and quite frequently at or near cemeteries. As they are often the only signs of remembrance in many communities, they characterise the (local) image and structure the (memorial) space through their prominent location. According to Kühnel (2022, 195), there is no way around them. The First and Second World Wars became dates in the German nationalist Carinthian memory discourse that were legitimised and given meaning by the *Abwehrkampf* and held together by the ideological cement of heroism and loyalty to the homeland. Peter Gstettner described this remarkable interweaving of discourses by coining the term the Carinthian “troika of memory” (Gstettner 2012, 105). This situation in the southern bilingual province of Carinthia is naturally intertwined with the related discourse in Austria as a whole, where two narratives predominated for a long time, reinforcing each other. One narrative emphasised the victim status of Austria. In official narratives, Austria was seen as the first victim of Nazi Germany, having to spinelessly participate in national socialist felonies. The second commemorated the “dutiful” soldiers who gave their lives in the “fight for their fatherland” (Kühnel 2022, 199). Although the “victim thesis” and its related duty fulfilment postulate have seen a decline in legitimacy since the 1980s due to internal contradictions and historical research refutations, a prevailing culture of remembrance in Carinthia still portrays Austria as a victim of Nazi occupation. This culture uncritically engages with contentious content found on omnipresent war memorials and other Second World War commemorative symbols (Kühnel 2022, 200). Furthermore, Kühnel asserts that these war memorials serve primarily as symbols for the rehabilitation of former *Wehrmacht* soldiers, referencing Uhl’s work on the shift from the victim myth to a co-responsibility thesis (Kühnel 2022, 201). However, it could be different: if the memorials to the fallen were to critically examine the role of the *Wehrmacht* and its soldiers, they could even enrich the historical-political discourse, but in the form of a website, they merely perpetuate a narrative of the past that trivialises persecuted victims and exculpates the perpetrators (Kühnel 2022, 201).

According to Heidmarie Uhl (2003), a “hierarchy of memories” in Austrian “landscapes of remembrance” can be recognised, for example, by the fact that memorials to the fallen in the First and Second World Wars are mostly present in the centre of towns and villages. If, according to Heidmarie Uhl, a “hierarchy of memories” in Austrian memorial landscapes can be recognised by the fact that memorials to the fallen of the First and Second World Wars are mostly

present in the centre of towns and villages, while the memory of the victims of resistance and persecution can often only be found on the peripheries of public space, at remote crime scenes or in cemeteries (Uhl 2003, 5), this also applies in particular to bilingual Carinthia with its minority of Carinthian Slovenes. However, the presence of this – in many ways resistant – minority brought with it its own dynamic: in the 1970s, the Association of Carinthian Partisans (*Zveza koroških partizanov*) initiated almost 40 monuments in memory of fallen partisans – mostly in cemeteries in southern Carinthia. These have been described in detail in several publications in recent decades (see, for example, Sturm 1987; Retzl 2006; Linasi 2010; Mohar 2018). After this “remembrance offensive” by the Association of Carinthian Partisans, it took until the 2010s for various organisations of the ethnic group to erect memorials for “their” group of victims again – a time when other groups of victims in Carinthia were also (belatedly, but nevertheless) increasingly granted public commemorative space. The hierarchy of remembrance regarding the presence of memorials to the fallen and defence fighters compared to memorials to persecuted victims of national socialism nevertheless remains clear in Carinthia.

The victims’ specific life stories were also pushed into the background for decades; their memories and stories were only shared in private. These stories were not compatible with the societally superimposed narrative that Austria had been the victim of a Nazi invasion and national socialism had been forced upon it (Wutti 2017, 18). The biographies of victims of national socialism remained outside the perception of the majority society in Carinthia for decades; only in the last 25 years have publications been dedicated to them. These address Nazi history in different regions and victim groups (for example, Lauritsch 2000 for Jews in Wolfsberg; an overview of Nazi victims by Baum et al. 2010; Pirker & Profunser 2012 for the victims in the Upper Drau valley; or Entner 2014 for Carinthian Slovenes) and have slowly brought public attention and recognition to the painful experiences of Nazi victims. However, as Gerald Lamprecht underscores, “For ever larger sections of society, digital media are [now] the central window into the world; what is not seen, read, heard or remembered there remains outside of perception, it is forgotten” (Lamprecht 2024, 7). In this respect, we need a digital platform to bring together all the extensive knowledge already available about memorial sites and victim biographies in Carinthia and beyond, thus counteracting the inequality in the discourse on remembrance. At the same time, the digital processing of the memorial landscape, its places, and actors offers new possibilities for analysis.

2. DERLA – The Digital Memorial Landscape

The Digital Memorial Landscape (DERLA) is an Austria-wide documentation and mediation project the aim of which is to document all signs of victim

remembrance and the terror of national socialism in Austria by means of text and photographs, thus making the development of the Nazi culture of remembrance from 1945 to the present day visible and comprehensible on the following website: www.erinnerungslandschaft.at (as of now, the platform's content is only available in German).

The concept for DERLA originated at the Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Graz and was developed in cooperation with ERINNERN:AT under the direction of Gerald Lamprecht. The starting point for the project was the realisation that many aspects of Austria's Nazi history have been researched in the last 30 years and that more and more civil society initiatives are committed to keeping the memory of national socialist tyranny and its victims alive. Nevertheless, it remains unclear whether the accumulated knowledge on the historical events and the associated memories will also be comprehensible for the next generation if real encounters with contemporary witnesses are no longer possible. The idea of making the memory landscape that has been developing since 1945 accessible via the Internet arose from considerations about new and contemporary forms of historical-political educational work on the history and culture of remembrance of national socialism. The project pursues two parallel goals: firstly, to provide documentation of all manifest signs of remembrance of Nazi victims, including a description of how these have changed over the decades; secondly, to offer educational modules on the same website that encourage a (school-based) discussion of these memorials.

The digital memorial landscape of the province of Carinthia as realised in this project comprises around 240 memorials to resistance and persecution in Carinthia, which are described in their history and documented photographically. The platform for Carinthia went online in May 2023. Each place of remembrance is described in its historical context: the online platform provides information about the initiators of each memorial, any redesigns or remodelling and associated controversies, and has biographies of Nazi victims associated with the site. Photos of all the memorials, one close-up and one of the surrounding area, give an impression of the design and the surroundings. The address and GPS data enable easy access. Each of the documented memorial signs has been categorised according to victim group and type of memorial sign. This enables users to use the filter and search functions to browse the website according to their specific area of focus.

In addition to the documentation of all memorial signs for victims of national socialism, DERLA also offers an Archive of Names. This section of the website is a collection of biographical data and short biographies of those who are mentioned by name on the memorials. The Archive of Names therefore has an informative function, but it can also be categorised as a virtual memorial. For Carinthia, 782 short biographies have been uploaded to the website so far, which means that only some of the province's victims of national socialism are

represented here for the time being, but the digital archive can and should be expanded in the near future.

DERLA also offers a mediation portal that provides a range of options for educational work. There are two types of educational modules: those that involve taking groups of learners to individual memorials and engaging with them and their surroundings on site, and those that can be used in the classroom or other learning spaces. Both share an educational approach that seeks to promote learning through discovery and aims to enable people (and explicitly not just students) to develop individual approaches to the regional and national culture of remembrance. The mediation modules invite people to familiarise themselves with the memorial landscape through site visits and exploration, thus enabling them to take steps towards understanding the development of remembrance since 1945. DERLA thus offers concrete assistance in dealing with Nazi history and its aftermath, moving beyond learning from history books. It encourages the individual reconstruction of history, critical scrutiny, and the adoption of multiple perspectives. In concrete figures, there are 16 Carinthia-specific educational modules available at www.erinnerungslandschaft.at, as well as six without a specific local reference that can be used across provinces. Together with the programmes that have been and are currently being developed in other federal states, DERLA forms an accessible educational platform for teachers.

Furthermore, Paths of Remembrance were also created specifically for DERLA, which make the memorial landscape of individual victim groups comprehensible and digitally accessible. Six Paths of Remembrance are available for Carinthia. These paths focus on the late remembrance of euthanasia victims, memorials to Carinthian Slovenes, and memorials to the destruction of Jews, making the associated memorial landscape comprehensible.

3. The Diversity of Commemorative Signs

The memorial landscape of Nazi victims also manifests itself in artistic interventions, street names, gravestones, stumbling blocks, memorial plaques, and even summit crosses on mountains, making the memorial landscape particularly diverse. All these signs of remembrance are part of the public way of dealing with the Nazi past and analysing them provides information on the development of the public attention that has been paid to individual groups of victims in various phases since 1945. These signs of remembrance are not static but are subject to constant change. This is reflected on the one hand in the remodelling of and additions to existing memorials, and on the other hand, in newly unveiled memorials. In this respect, the website DERLA platform is regularly added to and updated.¹

The variety of memorial signs revealed by DERLA offers a wide range of starting points for research and mediation. The digital memorial landscape makes

it possible to compare a multitude of data and facts alongside aesthetic, temporal and spatial factors in a digital space. This enables pedagogical work to provide in-depth learning experiences through discovery and research. The memorials in Carinthia have already been well researched in specialised scientific texts (see, for example, Fein 1975; Sturm 1987; Retzl 2006; Danglmaier & Stromberger 2009; Mohar 2018). Something similar will be attempted here, with a focus on spatial and temporal factors.

4. The Carinthian Memorial Landscape after 2010

Digital data processing also enables new analyses. By the end of 2023, a total of 232 memorial signs in Carinthia had been entered into the DERLA platform. The extensive data shows that 100 of these memorials were erected after 2010. If the numerous individual stumbling blocks (*Stolpersteine*)² are disregarded, this leaves 55 memorials that have been newly erected in Carinthia since 2010.³ In terms of the quality of these memorials, a distinction can be made, for example, between memorial plaques, memorial sites, artistic interventions, streets, or public squares named after victims, monuments, and memorial stones.

4.1 Memorial Plaques

Of 55 commemorative signs, which have characterised the memorial landscape in Carinthia since 2010, 22 belong to the memorial plaques category, which is the largest category in terms of number. Memorial plaques are simple plaques, e.g., informational boards, which are attached to walls. Two of them are portraits by the artist Manfred Bockelmann with informative text: a portrait of Otto Zeichner, a Jewish student at the HAK Klagenfurt/Celovec, and a portrait of Terezija Mičej, a Carinthian Slovene who supported the resistance, at the Carinthian Provincial Archives.

4.2 Memorial Sites

Five new memorial sites were set up after 2010, although these are of a very different nature in terms of quality: the Bleiburg/Pliberk Place of Remembrance, where several monuments to various historical events from different places in Bleiburg/Pliberk were brought together at this location and placed on pedestals of different heights. In this way, they were all brought to one level, with the added motive of removing the hierarchisation of the memory of different groups of people. A memorial to the resettled Carinthian Slovene families and other victims of national socialism in the municipality of Bleiburg/Pliberk was also created. Four empty plinths on the square are a reminder to preserve peace in the future. This memorial site is not without controversy: although the new

memorial site with the empty plinths is a forward-looking initiative in the name of peace, it should be noted that peace can by no means be achieved by equalising perpetrators and victims and concealing their roles. As Hajnalka Nagy and Julia Hammer have commented, this promotes the Austrian population's defence of its historical responsibility and strengthens the victim myth, which determined Austria's official approach to the Nazi era for many decades.

The memorial site for Elisabeth Fritz in Petschnitzen/Pečnica falls into this category (for detail, see section 5.3 below), as do the partisan bunker at Arichwand/Arihova peč and the Stalag XVIII A Wolfsberg camp road memorial:

An information board was erected on the site in 2013, displaying historical photos, a map of the former camp and a text introducing the historical context in German, French, English and Russian. In 2022, the area was completely remodelled into a larger and more eye-catching memorial with seating. The information board from 2013 was integrated into the memorial ensemble.

In 2022, the Memorial Kärnten/Koroška Association, together with the Kärntner Landeskrankenanstalten-Betriebsgesellschaft, also erected a memorial for euthanasia victims in the Klagenfurt/Celovec Geriatric Day Clinic's park, in the immediate vicinity of the former rear building of the infirmary of the *Gaukrankenhaus* Klagenfurt, where murders took place from 1939 as part of the so-called Nazi euthanasia programme.

Seven rooms, mostly lecture halls or seminar rooms, in the Diocesan House in Klagenfurt/Celovec, which were named after victims of national socialism in 2014 by the Catholic Church of Carinthia and the then director of the house, Dr. Josef Marketz, can be categorised as religious resistance.

4.3 Memorial Crosses

The memorial crosses for civilian bombing victims at the old Vorderberg/Blače cemetery constitute a special group among the new memorials erected after 2010: the Austrian Black Cross placed a memorial plaque on the rear wall of the old Vorderberg/Blače cemetery in 2018. It reminds us that the village cemetery was located there until 1977 and that 6 civilian bomb victims from the Second World War are also buried there. They died on 8 February 1945 and are mentioned by name on five metal crosses in various places in the cemetery.

4.4 Permanent Artistic Interventions

Four memorial signs can be categorised as permanent artistic interventions in terms of their aesthetic form. Three of these are located on the site of the former Loibl North concentration camp: the names of the victims sprayed in black letters on the concrete shell of the wash barracks at the former Loibl/Ljubelj

North concentration camp, The Return of the Stones art installation by Georg Planer, and the sculpture by Seiji Kimoto in memory of the Loibl North concentration camp. The Memorial Clock, designed by Marko Lipuš, is located in Bad Eisenkappel/Železna Kapla.

4.5 Public Places

Since 2010, five streets or public squares in Carinthia have been named after victims of national socialism: three of them in Villach (a square and a street named after Maria Peskoller and a path named after Gisela Tschofenig, two women in the resistance), a street in Spittal/Drau was named after Walter Porges, a Jew, and a street in St. Kanzian/Škocjan was named after Anton Kutej, a Carinthian-Slovene priest.

4.6 Monuments

Nine new monuments have been erected since 2010. These include the 20-metre-long walk-in sculpture by artist Hans Peter Profunser as a memorial to the victims of national socialism in the Upper Drau Valley, which was erected by the kuland Association in 2012, the memorial to murdered Jehovah's Witnesses in Techelsberg/Teholica ob Vrbskem jezeru, as well as seven memorials initiated by Slovene and bilingual associations as a reminder of the history of Carinthian Slovenes' suffering. These include: the memorial to the deportation of Carinthian Slovenes at Klagenfurt Ebenthal railway station (*Zveza slovenskih izseljencev* (Association of Resettled Slovenes), 2012), the memorial in memory of the deportation of Carinthian Slovenes at Lake Aichwald/Dobniško jezero (Jepa-Baško jezero Slovene Cultural Association, 2022), the memorial to victims of war and violence in Latschach/Loče (a work of art by Valentin Oman, 2010), the memorial to victims of national socialism from the municipality of Rosegg/Rožek Association (*Erinnern Rosegg/Rožek se spominja*, 2011), the memorial dedicated to victims of national socialism from Zell Pfarre/Sele fara (Initiative group Hlipovčnik/KPD Planina Sele, 2015), the memorial for victims of national socialism in Feistritz im Rosental/Bistrica v Rožu (Slovene Cultural Association (*Slovensko prosvetno društvo Kočna*), 2010), and the stela for the victims of national socialist justice for the courthouse in Klagenfurt/Celovec (Memorial Kärnten-Koroška Association, 2013).

4.7 Memorial Stones

Since 2010, two new memorial stones have been erected in memory of the victims of Nazi euthanasia. After a long discussion, there was a proposal to rename Dr.-Franz-Palla-Gasse and Hiessgasse in Klagenfurt/Celovec or to install additional

plaques. These plaques would provide information on the role of the streets' namesakes during the Nazi regime. Both *Primarius* Dr. Franz Palla, head of the surgical department, and his colleague from the gynaecology department, *Primarius* Dr. Viktor Hieß, were advocates of the German legacy and supported the German euthanasia program between 1940 and 1945. However, the city of Klagenfurt decided to take a different, third path in 2022: it unveiled memorial stones in Dr.-Franz-Palla-Gasse as well as in Hiessgasse, both in the immediate vicinity of the clinic, the former crime scene. The memorial stones are aesthetically reminiscent of information boards but are monolithic blocks in their form and draw attention to the problematic street names under the heading "In memory of the victims of medicine without humanity". They are similar in content but focus on the person in question. The last paragraph on the memorial stone in Dr.-Franz-Palla-Gasse reads:

The City of Klagenfurt regrets the naming of the streets after Franz Palla and Viktor Hieß and, with this memorial stone, is making a public apology for the previous concealment of this shameful and punishable medical practice. In memory of the victims who suffered physically and emotionally from these medical interventions throughout their lives, the perpetrators of such crimes should never again be honoured, and the victims should never again be forgotten.

4.8 Resistance Memorials since 2010

Since 2010, five memorials have been dedicated to political resistance, two of which concern street names (the Maria-Peskoller-Weg and the Gisela-Tschofenig-Weg in Villach/Beljak). This category also includes a memorial plaque at the Klagenfurt *Landhaus*:

In 2014, a memorial plaque was placed in the arcade of the Carinthian *Landhaus* in front of the large coat of arms hall in memory of six former members of the *Landtag* and National Council who were murdered because of their political activities during national socialism. The Carinthian governor Peter Kaiser and the president of the provincial parliament Reinhard Rohr unveiled the memorial plaque together.

A memorial plaque to Dr. Alois Karisch was erected in Wolfsberg:

Born in 1901, the law graduate became secretary of the Christian Social Party of Carinthia. Due to his activities in the Fatherland Front, he was deported to Buchenwald concentration camp during the Nazi regime. Alois Karisch survived the national socialist era and was later district governor of Wolfsberg and a member of the provincial parliament.

His quote on the memorial plaque reads: "I never bowed to national socialist terror". Political resistance has apparently been granted publicity since 2010,

and the number of prominently placed and publicly visible memorials in this category is above average.

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Six memorials that have been erected since 2010 also showcase victims of national socialism who supported the Carinthian partisan resistance:

- Two memorial plaques commemorate Terezija Mičej, her portrait on the outer wall of the Carinthian Provincial Archives, clearly visible to the public, and the memorial plaque for her and her mother in St. Veit im Jauntal/Šentvid v Podjuni. The young woman supported the partisan resistance with medical supplies, writing utensils, and information – she was a very active member until 1944 and acted as a courier under the code name Jelka. She and her mother were arrested and brutally interrogated in June 1944. In January 1945, the 22-year-old was sentenced to death. The sentence was carried out a few days later (Entner 2014, 326).
- At the end of April 2015, a three-part memorial made of white marble was erected in front of the vicarage to commemorate the more than 40 victims of national socialism in the municipality of Zell/Sele. The victims' names, along with their birth and death dates, were engraved on a horizontal block, while a bronze sculpture by Valentin Oman was placed on a vertical marble block. Beneath it, a bronze plaque reads: “*Posvečeno selskim žrtvam nemškega nacionalnega socializma*” (Dedicated to the Nazi victims from Zell/Sele).
- In 2010, an artistic memorial to victims of national socialism was erected in Feistritz im Rosental/Bistrica v Rožu at the instigation of the initiative *Geben wir ihnen einen Namen* (Let's give them a name). It consists of two figures in front of an outline of these figures; below is an information board with the inscription: “In memoriam Aleksander-Lekš Einspieler *17. 7. 1912 + 6. 5. 1944, Florijan-Flora Križnar *14. 5. 1914 + 6. 5. 1944, Žrtvi nacizma” (Victims of the Nazi regime). The memorial is one of the newest partisan memorials in Carinthia and one of the few to stand in a public space outside a cemetery. Here, however, only the partisan names – Lekš and Flora –, imply that the individuals in question were active in the resistance.
- On 8 May 2010, the partisan bunker on Arichwand/Arihova peč was renovated to mark the 65th anniversary of the liberation. It is a place of remembrance in the middle of southern Carinthian nature, accessible only by foot.
- In 2014, seven rooms in the diocesan centre in Klagenfurt were named after people who were murdered by the national socialists because of their Christian beliefs. One meeting room is named after Josefa Sumper, who was a parish housekeeper in St. Egyden/Šentilj. The information board in the meeting room directly mentions that Josefa Sumper was active in the partisan resistance. In conclusion, it should be mentioned that this is the only one of the five memorials erected in inhabited areas since 2010 that openly mentions partisan resistance.

5. The Carinthian Memorial Landscape in Geographical Space

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The memorial landscape of victims of national socialism manifests itself in artistic interventions, street names, gravestones, stumbling blocks, memorial plaques, and even summit crosses on mountains – the memorial landscape is diverse.

5.1 Commemoration of the Persecution of Jews

The analysis of the memorials for Jewish victims of national socialism entered in DERLA shows that Jews in Carinthia are commemorated almost exclusively in larger towns: in Klagenfurt/Celovec, Wolfsberg, Spittal, Hermagor/Šmohor, and Wolfsberg. The small town of Sankt Andrä im Lavanttal is the only outlier, where a memorial plaque for three Jewish citizens in the community has been in the Generation Park in the town centre since 2022; it commemorates the married couple Lothar and Hildegard Auerbach and their trainee Gerhard Gadiel, who ran a remote farm. With the *Anschluss* in 1938, the farm was aryanised – Lothar Auerbach and Gerhard Gadiel were taken into Gestapo custody in Klagenfurt during the November pogrom and deported from there to the Dachau concentration camp. After his release in Dachau, Lothar Auerbach was able to reach England with his wife and three children, and the family survived the Holocaust. Gerhard Gadiel, on the other hand, was later arrested again, deported to the East, and murdered (DERLA 2023a).

The map of remembrance also shows stumbling blocks for Jewish victims of national socialism in Klagenfurt/Celovec and Wolfsberg. The provincial capital of Klagenfurt/Celovec stands out with memorials at the site of two (former) Jewish institutions. Firstly, there is a memorial at the site of the former Jewish prayer house. It was located in Platzgasse and was vandalised during the November pogroms of 1938. DERLA tells us that nobody was interested in reactivating it after 1945. The building was provisionally used as a residential building and later as a car repair shop until it was finally demolished. In 1987, a group formed who wanted to commemorate the extermination of the Jewish community in Klagenfurt. After much hesitation, the city supported the project and unveiled a memorial stone on the site of the Jewish prayer house on the 50th anniversary of the November pogrom in 1988. In 2015, two stelae with photos and information were added to the left and right of the stone in an extension to the memorial, and a square was created in front of the memorial with a Star of David embedded in the ground for better visibility (DERLA 2023b). DERLA also provides information on changes to memorials, extensions, and new contextualisation over time. The second Jewish institution in Klagenfurt documented in DERLA is the Jewish cemetery in St. Ruprecht. There are two memorials to Nazi victims: a memorial plaque on the outer wall next to the entrance and a grave inscription in memory of five murdered family members of Adolf Preis.

5.2 Commemorative Signs for Fallen Allied Soldiers

Memorials to fallen Allied soldiers in Carinthia are concentrated in the towns of Klagenfurt/Celovec, Spittal an der Drau, and Wolfsberg. In the west of Klagenfurt/Celovec, near the university, is the only independent British military cemetery in Austria, where around 600 British Allied soldiers are buried. At the Annabichl cemetery in Klagenfurt, there is a British military cemetery with 50 graves, and there is also a memorial to Soviet soldiers at this cemetery. There were Stalag camps in Spittal an der Drau and Wolfsberg, where the mortality rate of Soviet prisoners of war was strikingly high. The Soviet prisoners of war who died in Wolfsberg were buried in mass graves at the St. Johann camp cemetery, while those who died in Spittal an der Drau were buried in two mass graves in Aich and Tangern near the town. These burial sites were later marked with memorials. Another memorial to Soviet prisoners of war can be found in Villach's central cemetery. The bodies of 114 Soviet citizens who died as prisoners of war and forced labourers are buried here. Initiated by the Soviet occupation authorities, the memorial in the form of an obelisk made of dark stone with a golden Soviet star and an inscription is similar in form and aesthetics to the obelisks on the mass graves in Aich and Tangern near Spittal an der Drau and at the St. Johann military cemetery near Wolfsberg.

It is indicative of the hierarchy in the Carinthian memorial landscape described above that although deserters are commemorated on individual monuments, there is no specific memorial sign for deserters and victims of Wehrmacht justice in Carinthia.

5.3 Commemorative Signs at Sites of Nazi Terror

In the last two decades, various memorials have been erected at sites of Nazi terror. Previously, the burdened Nazi history of these places had mostly been concealed. Since 2008, the Memorial Kärnten/Koroška Association has commemorated the victims of Nazi justice in Klagenfurt/Celovec at an annual memorial event. In 2013, a stela for them was unveiled directly in front of the side entrance to the provincial court in Klagenfurt/Celovec, commemorating 47 people who were sentenced to death during national socialism for their resistance activities in this building. The names of the 47 people murdered can be found on a 2.30-metre-high serpentine stone, which symbolises a guillotine. The last line refers to other victims who are as of yet unidentified (DERLA 2023c). Since 2015, a memorial plaque has commemorated the former headquarters of the *Gestapo* in Klagenfurt Castle; before, this central Nazi crime scene had not been publicly marked as such. Both memorials were erected on the initiative of the Memorial Kärnten/Koroška Association and are inscribed in the two national languages, German and Slovene. However, there is no memorial sign at the site of the former execution site at Kreuzbergl, an execution site of military

justice in Klagenfurt/Celovec, so the crime scene there can be described as an unmarked memorial site (DERLA 2023d).

Several memorials in Carinthia are categorised on the DERLA platform as places of remembrance for concentration camp victims. One is a memorial plaque for victims of the Dachau concentration camp at the Bad Bleiberg cemetery, which since 1998 has commemorated three citizens of the municipality who were murdered in the Dachau concentration camp. Another is a memorial to Elisabeth Fritz in Petschnitzen/Pečnica near Finkenstein/Bekštanj. This memorial consists of a wooden bench with *Kauz-Kreuz/Kauzov Križ* carved in large letters and a large carved *Marterl* – a covered wooden cross with a statue of Jesus, to which two information boards are attached. On the upper one, in the gable of the cross, is written (in German): “In Petschnitzen, Mrs Fritz told a Hitler joke. It took her to Ravensbrück, from where she never returned.” The information plaque below reads in German and Slovene:

Memorial plaque on the cross: in memory and remembrance of Elisabeth Fritz (4 July 1880 – 15 September 1943). The last owner of the *Kauz-Keusche* in Petschnitzen. She was denounced by close relatives, subsequently deported and murdered by the Nazis in the Ravensbrück women’s concentration camp near Berlin in September 1943 (DERLA 2023e).

This memorial sign was therefore placed at the home of a person who was murdered in a concentration camp following denunciation, the initiative for which came from a private individual.

There were also two concentration camps in Carinthia, both of which were subcamps of the main Mauthausen camp in Upper Austria. One of them, the Lendorf/Dhovše concentration camp, was set up on the outskirts of Klagenfurt, the other on the Loibl Pass to provide labour for the construction of the Loibl Tunnel. On the outer wall of today’s Khevenhüller Austrian army barracks, on the site of which the Lendorf/Dhovše concentration camp was located, there is now a memorial plaque commemorating the concentration camp at this location. There are several memorial plaques, artistic interventions, and installations on the site of the former concentration camp at Loibl/Ljubelj on the Austrian-Slovene border.

5.4 Commemorative Signs for Specific Groups of Victims

The hierarchy in the memorial landscape in Carinthia is also evident in the fact that there are no signs of remembrance for some groups of victims and their history of persecution is therefore not visible. This gap affects Roma/Romnija and Sinti/Sintize, for example, but also homosexual victims of national socialism. The names of individual victims in these groups are commemorated on collective name memorials, such as the Memorial of Names in Villach or the

Memorial to the Nazi Victims of the Upper Drau Valley at Greifenburg railway station.

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With regard to memorials to forced labourers, it is significant that these are increasingly to be found on Carinthia's geographical outskirts: a symbolic burial site for Ukrainian forced labourers at the Feffernitz cemetery in Feistritz an der Drau, a memorial plaque for Soviet forced labourers at the Bad Bleiberg cemetery, a memorial stone for deceased prisoners of war in the Malta Valley, or two information boards on forced labour during the construction of the Drau power plants in Lavamünd – these memorials were created at places where forced labourers were deployed. A huge forced labour camp directly in Klagenfurt/Celovec, in the Waidmannsdorf district, is still an unmarked place of remembrance. Excavation work for the planned new indoor swimming pool in Klagenfurt/Celovec is currently taking place at the former camp site, and historical relics have also been found. It remains to be seen whether and how the history of the site will be commemorated in the area of the new indoor swimming pool.

In contrast to those for forced labourers, memorials for the victims of Nazi euthanasia focus on the central region of Klagenfurt/Celovec – these came from all regions of Carinthia and are commemorated where they were murdered or deported to extermination, in the provincial capital.

5.5 Collective Signs of Remembrance

Collective memorials can be found predominantly in the northern parts of the traditionally Slovene-speaking region of Carinthia – the northernmost of these memorials is the memorial to the victims who fell for the cause of a free Austria at the Annabichl cemetery in Klagenfurt/Celovec, which has been expanded in recent years with decentralised elements at the cemetery. Significantly more than half of these memorials were erected by Carinthian-Slovene or bilingual associations and initiatives: for example, a bilingual project group invited artist Valentin Oman to create a memorial for all victims of war and violence as an appeal for international understanding in Latschach/Loče; it was erected at the cemetery there in 2010. The *Rosegg erinnert/Rožek se spominja* Association erected a memorial to all victims of national socialism from the municipality of Rosegg/Rožek in 2011. In Bad Eisenkappel/Železna Kapla, a memorial clock was recently erected in 2022, which lists the names of the Nazi victims of the municipality in a continuous loop on the clock face. This was created in cooperation between the Zarja Bilingual Cultural Association Forum and the artist Marko Lipuš. In Greifenburg, the kulant Association has created a memorial that commemorates Nazi victims in the Upper Drau Valley by name. The Monument to the Names in Villach is certainly special: it was originally set up as a temporary memorial as part of a school project and only later took on a permanent form opposite the town museum.

5.6 Signs Commemorating Resistance by Carinthian Partisans

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Memorials to the partisan resistance are mainly located in the bilingual south of Carinthia, where the resistance was strong and battles were fought. Most of them were initiated in the early 1970s by the Association of Carinthian Partisans (*Zveza koroških partizanov*), an organisation made up of descendants of former partisans.

Looking at the digital map of Carinthia as a whole, it is noticeable that the memorials to the partisan resistance in this province are by far the most numerous. Spatially, however, they are in the periphery, in larger and smaller towns in the rural bilingual area of southern Carinthia, in the vast majority of cases in cemeteries, sometimes on private land on farms and in wooded areas. Some, such as the partisan bunker on the Arichwand/Arihova peč, can only be reached on foot after a long hike. Because of their location, it is hardly surprising that the presence of the Carinthian partisans in the southern Carinthian memorial landscape is not well known outside of this region.

5.7 Commemorative Signs for Carinthian Slovenes

The Carinthian Slovene artist Valentin Oman has created several monuments that can be categorised as collective memorials, but also monuments that clearly refer solely to the Carinthian Slovene victim group. For example, the memorial in memory of the deportation of Carinthian Slovenes at Lake Aichwald/Dobniško jezero in 2022 or the memorial to the deportation of Carinthian Slovenes at Ebenthal/Žrelec railway station in 2012, which was initiated directly by the Association of Resettled Slovenes (*Zveza slovenskih izseljencev*), as well as the memorial to the deportation of Carinthian Slovenes at Radsberg/Radiše in 1996. Other memorials specifically commemorate individuals from the minority, such as the memorial plaque for Angela Piskernik in Klagenfurt/Celovec or the memorial plaque for Maks Černic at the Augsdorf/Loga vas cemetery. The memorial plaque commemorating the deportation of Carinthian Slovenes from Ferlach/Borovlje was initiated by a municipality and its mayor, which is still very rare.

6. Summary

With the DERLA platform, the memorial landscape is available at a low threshold and offers a variety of approaches for (scientific) analysis and educational work. The memorial landscape of victims of national socialism manifests itself in artistic interventions, street names, gravestones, stumbling blocks and memorial plaques. Nevertheless, a hierarchy of memories is clearly evident when it comes

to incorporating spatial dimensions: monuments of soldiers as heroes are still over-represented in public and highly visible places, while the memorials to the victims of national socialism have only moved into Carinthia's centres since 2010. Of the 55 memorials that have characterised the memorial landscape in Carinthia since 2010, 22 belong to the memorial plaques category, which is the largest category in terms of numbers. Other categories of memorials erected since 2010 vary in quality. It should be mentioned here that only one of the five memorials erected in inhabited areas since 2010 openly mentions partisan resistance – in all the others, there is no indication of armed resistance by the partisans. DERLA offers not only temporal analyses, but it also makes spatial analyses possible: while commemoration of Jewish victims of national socialism in Carinthia can only be found in cities, collective memorials are predominantly found in the north of the traditionally Slovene-speaking region of Carinthia – and more than half of them were erected by Carinthian-Slovene or bilingual associations and initiatives. Memorials to the partisan resistance are mainly located in the bilingual south of Carinthia, where the resistance was strong and battles were fought. Most of them were initiated by the Association of Carinthian Partisans (*Zveza koroških partizanov*) in the early 1970s. Commemorative signs in memory of victims in whose installation the public sector, e.g. municipalities, played a significant role, are still very rare. At this point, development continues, and it remains to be seen how the landscape of remembrance will change in the next decade, who will organise events, and in what form. Only concrete activities surrounding the memorial signs bring them to life and promote public discourse about historical events and their significance in the present.

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Notes

- ¹ The website of DERLA platform (www.erinnerungslandschaft.at).
- ² The artist Gunter Demnig commemorates the victims of the Nazi era by placing brass memorial plaques in the pavement in front of their last chosen place of residence. These *Stolpersteine* (stumbling blocks) have been placed in twenty-one European countries so far, including Austria/Carinthia.
- ³ For exactly 50 of the 232, it has not yet been possible to determine the exact year of installation. However, it is highly likely that these are all much older memorials and were not placed after 2010.