

Interpreting the Jewish Quarter

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ABSTRACT

The persecution, flight and murder of European Jews in the first half of the twentieth century and the profound social and political transformations that decisively affected European cities in the final decade of the 20th century have radically altered urban 'Jewish landscapes'. New stakeholders and institutions emerged with their own networks, goals and interests, and have constructed, staged and marketed 'Jewish culture' anew. The resultant Jewish spaces are being constituted in an urban space located at the intersection of ethnic representation, collective memory, and drawing on an imagined material culture, which includes architectural, physical and digital spaces (e.g. synagogues, Jewish quarters). This Europe-wide process is closely related to the delicate politics of memory and to discourses on the authenticity of cities. This article analyses how the image of 'Jewishness' plays an increasingly important role in the marketing of historical authenticity that cities and their tourism affiliates are undertaking.

KEYWORDS

Berlin, Budapest, heritage, images, Jews, quarter, space

A consensus emerges as to the meaning of the term *Jewish quarter* when examining the literature and research on the cultural and architectural reconstruction of these areas. The distinctive appearance of a Jewish population that resides or resided in the quarter affords it its 'Jewish' character. It comes to expression in different forms. Reviewing advertising of tourist sites of various European cities like Prague, Paris or Budapest, and debates on architectural and heritage protection, the term *Jewish quarter* recurs, sometimes associated with the images of the shtetl and in other cases synonymous with the Jewish ghetto. Some prominent examples include: 'Shtetls, Ghettos and Jewish Quarters: In many towns and villages, numerous buildings still survive in the old Jewish quarters or ghettos, where Jews either chose or were compelled to live in medieval times or later' (Gruber 2007: 9); 'compulsory residential quarter for Jews. ... Jewish Quarter is ... a residential area that evolves spontaneously' (*Encyclopaedia Judaica* 1971: 542–3); or 'traditional Jewish merchant quarter ... this quarter becomes the traditional residential area ... of one of the largest Jewish communities' (ÓVÁS Egyesület 2014).



These definitions presume the existence of a group that can be clearly distinguished by its customs, lifestyle and appearance and that leaves a material trace, a visible, identifiable mark on a given part of the city. The most easily recognisable Jewish residents of cities like New York, London and Antwerp are often members of strictly religious communities, whose appearance and practices differ noticeably from those of other residents, Jewish or otherwise, yet they often do not leave clearly material impressions on the cityscape. Even the synagogues in places like Williamsburg in New York City or Finchley in London are difficult to distinguish, as they often lack signage with identifiable markers, such as Hebrew words or signs that are visible from the street. Only the external appearance of the area's residents in their distinctive garb, language and accents possibly indicate that they inhabit the quarter, or certain streets in it. Although a large number of people who may declare themselves as Jews may live in a given area, this alone does not distinguish them in any way, as they may have a secular, cultural or other understanding of their Jewishness that renders them indistinguishable from others in an urban setting. Their identity may leave no visible marks on their given part of the city despite their residential concentration. Examples of this are District 13 in Budapest, also known as Újlipótváros, or Charlottenburg in Berlin (Gromova 2011), where large secular Jewish populations cannot be easily identified from the 'outside', but only by those within the group or who are aware of its presence. Thus, these areas constitute 'Jewish quarters' only for the informed resident or visitor. The *Jewish quarter* may be one of the most common phenomena in the towns and cities of continental Europe, particularly in post-socialist states, yet how should we interpret the term in places where a Jewish community no longer exists in any significant form, but whose memory and 'material impression', like an architectural heritage, remains? Or when the bygone presence of a Jewish community is only preserved in the memory of the city, but not the buildings themselves, as in the *Scheunenviertel* in Berlin? Given how the profound social and political transformations that decisively affected European cities in the final decades of the twentieth century have radically altered urban 'Jewish landscapes', one wonders what it is that 'makes a well-defined territory, predominantly inhabited by Jews, Jewish' (Brauch et al. 2008: 18).

Not only the first half of the term 'Jewish quarter' demands investigation, but the second one too. 'Quarter', 'district' and 'area' are used interchangeably in this article. Jewish quarters vary significantly from place to place in their 'spatial, social, and material features ... reflecting

their evolution in distinct historical and urban contexts' (Gottreich 2010: 26). 'Quarter' has been one of the most problematised concepts in urban studies, and approached from diverse disciplinary and methodological perspectives (Schnur 2008). A sample of attempts to define a quarter illustrates this: 'Quartering means the spatial incorporation, segregation, differentiation, and administration of a group by race, national origin, class, religion, profession, or sexual orientation in a specific area of the city' (Abrahamson 1996: 25). 'In the sociological literature, a quarter is invested with two meanings: It is seen as either a community or an administrative unit' (Laguerre 2008: 6). 'The quarter is a large coherent composition of square and street. It is produced by the addition of street and place systems ... Characteristic of the individual quarters is the distinction by social classification of the majority of residents.' (Kajnar and Coulin 2004: 6). The various disciplinary definitions of the 'quarter' overlap, all viewing it as a clearly distinguishable unit of urban space, from a material or geographical as from a social, administrative or political perspective. But the complexity of the Jewish quarter, and particularly the Jewish quarter in Continental Europe, does not allow us to adhere exclusively to one disciplinary approach.

To map the 'temporal dimension' of the Jewish quarter, as well as the historical and memorial along with the geographical/spatial and economical/cultural aspects of it, requires an interdisciplinary approach that draws on the methods of urban anthropology. Situating the research on Jewish quarters in the field of urban studies highlights its relationship to issues like remembrance politics, ethnic representation and the preservation of architectural/cultural heritage. In this study, the Jewish quarter is understood as a kind of 'constructed Jewish space' identified by the coordinates of the politics of commemoration,¹ imagineering,² and tangible heritage. This stands in contrast to its conception as a 'cultural and remembrance (discursive) space', proposed by Diana Pinto (1996: 177–99; here p. 178), who coined the term Jewish space. In her study Pinto defined Jewish Space as a crisis of conscience of Western societies that started to emerge in the 1980s as they came to recognise the loss of their national Jewish communities. Filling the Jewish space represents an attempt by Western societies to integrate the memory and history of Jews and the Holocaust into their national culture, but does not presume or require the physical presence of Jews. While Pinto's formulation implies that Jewish participants play a role in constructing this cultural space, Michal Y. Bodemann emphasised clearly the dominant role of non-Jewish par-

ticipants in the development and production of 'Jewish space' in his use of the term *Judaizing milieu* (Bodemann 1996: 54). Ruth Ellen Gruber extended the concept of Jewish cultural space, integrating the definitions of Pinto and Bodemann in her own work published in 2001. She explores the virtual dimensions of Jewish space, and in viewing it as boundless makes the adequate description of the phenomenon even more difficult (Gruber 2001: 69):

I think of this 'universalisation' of the Jewish phenomenon and its integration into mainstream European consciousness, this emergence of a 'judaising terrain' and 'judaising milieu' in all their widely varied, conscious and unconscious manifestations, as a 'filling' of the Jewish space which encompasses the creation of a Virtual Jewishness, a Virtual Jewish World by non-Jews – 'Virtual Jews'.

Coordinates of Interpretation

Accordingly, the subject matter of this study is not the Jewish space defined vaguely by Pinto or by Bodemann and Gruber, but the phenomenon of the Jewish space related to the physical urban space and the specific architectural sites. Therefore, rather than exclusively focusing on the agents responsible for the constructing of Jewish space and on the virtual dimensions of this construction, this study chooses an alternative point of departure. It draws from thinking on the politics of remembrance, imagining and Jewish architectural heritage, and concentrates on an 'external' reading of the Jewish quarter, examining images that play a dominant role in the contemporary interpretation and re-infusion of 'Jewishness' in Jewish quarters.

Culture of Remembrance

Since the 1980s, Jewish museums and memorial places have been established in numerous larger cities and even in smaller ones, and synagogues and cemeteries have been renovated. Beyond the physical (re)construction of the architectural heritage of Jewish communities, these structures have been integrated in the cityscape and the cities' self-image. This phenomenon is embedded in the larger process of coming to terms with the history and legacy of National Socialism in Germany (Fischer and Lorenz 2009; on the term *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* see Dudek 1992: 44 ff.), specifically in the phase of this process

described by Aleida Assmann (1999: 145) as *Vergangenheitsbewahrung*, the preservation of the past. The fundamental issue in this phase, which started in the 1980s (Frei 1996), was the question of what to preserve. While grappling with this, established institutions laid the groundwork, in the form of rules and frameworks, for the subsequent phase of *Erinnerungskultur*, the culture of remembrance (Assmann 2013). The German historian Hans-Günter Hockerts defined *Erinnerungskultur*, which emerged in the 1990s, as ‘a loose collective term for the entirety of the non-specific scientific use of the history by the public’ (Hockerts 2002: 41). The British anthropologist Sharon Macdonald conceptualised this approach and described the field of the culture of remembrance as one in which history manifests itself as ‘heritage’ both normatively and discursively, as interplay of material traces of the past and symbolic practices of the present (Macdonald 2009). As she pointed out, cultures of remembrance are always the result of negotiations in the public sphere that are based on the tensions between individual experience and collective memory, politically and socially desired commemoration, popular narratives and scientific representations of history. This conceptualisation reflects the complex practices that constitute *Erinnerungskultur* and helps to map the motivation and interests of the various agents involved in the construction of Jewish space. In the present article, *Erinnerungskultur* describes the assemblage of practices and strategies of various agents shaping the commemoration on the Holocaust and Nazi-past in the urban public space.

During the 1990s new Jewish spaces emerged at the intersection of ethnic representation and collective memory. Those constructing and staging ‘Jewish culture’ in this new urban space drew on their own institutions and networks to introduce a new set of ideas and interests (Brauch et al. 2008: 19). They worked to rehabilitate the material architectural heritage (Gantner and Kovács 2008) of communities, such as their synagogues or Jewish schools. In other cases, new monuments or museums were built.

Buildings of architectural import were renovated or re-appropriated for a new purpose, such as the Rashi House in Worms, a former synagogue converted into a museum. The materiality – namely the special characteristics of these architectural sites (*bimah* in the synagogue, Hebrew letters, etc.) – and the history of Jewish quarters, synagogues, ritual baths (*mikvot*), cemeteries and similar places function to legitimate the ‘Jewishness’ of cultural and memorial spaces that are constructed around them (Gantner and Kovács 2008).

The City

Globalisation has shifted cities and metropolises all over the world into the foreground and elevated a subset of them into the category of 'world cities' (Hannerz 1993: 67–84). European cities, like their Asian, North and South American counterparts, compete with each other to become preeminent centres of economic and cultural exchange, and by extension of tourism as well. The ethnic and cultural diversity of these cities, and its effective representation, plays an important role in this competition. It constitutes a form of capital (Zukin 1996), part of a symbolic economy, broadcasting the city's image and accruing to it concrete economic advantages by, for example, increasing tourism, attracting creative industries, and promoting capital flow. To succeed, cities have attempted 'self-culturalisation', shaping themselves and their individuality to appear most favourably (Mahnken 2008: 235–54; Reckwitz 2009: 2–43). This is manifested in the renovation and reinterpretation of quarters of the city, the staging and promotion of events, the fashioning of an image unique to the city, and the marketing of its cultural and – most prominently – architectural attractions. Cities consciously cultivate a brand and communicate it to the world, adopting an approach similar to that of marketing consumer products (Balderjahn 2004). Their branding efforts profit from the creation of museum districts and the reconstruction of ethnic quarters. Contemporary urban research approaches this phenomenon using two analytic approaches: one defines urban space as a stage on which cultural diversity and social differences are not simply present but are represented again and again in the most different of forms (Kaschuba 2000: 5–7); the other focuses on discursive changes to cityscapes (Mattisek 2009), and the political, economic and city-planning factors that influence them. In both analytical approaches the concept of urbanity is central to understanding the role of ethnic and cultural diversity (Welz 1996), particularly as a strategy of representation in which ethnic diversity is regarded as a strategic factor, and with whose aid the city can better attract tourists and capital (Zukin 1996). Those pursuing this strategy can be easily identified: entrepreneurs, city politicians, artists and tourists. Through their everyday cultural and symbolic practices, these all contribute to the materialisation and symbolisation of ethnic and cultural diversity (Biskup and Schallenberg 2008; Hannerz 1996). For Jewish quarters, the implication is that alongside their function in facilitating remembrance, ethnic-exotic expectations play an essential role in turning them into commercial districts.

Imagineering a ‘Jewish Quarter’

Most European cities that have a Jewish quarter are home to Jewish communities of at best a small size. In many places, the everyday experience of Jews and non-Jews living side-by-side is not present in any form other than historic records. Only the *tableaux*, the groups of images, containing fractures and splinters of the past, have remained. The imaginary, as Paul Ricoeur (1994) conceives of it, is a projected image that produces a constructed and wished reality. It draws on what is already in circulation in the local culture and is mediated through discourse and narration (Johansson 2012: 3613). The images themselves are results, as Hans Belting (2001: 213) put it, ‘of pure personal or collective symbolization’ which, when projected on former neighbourhoods in which Jews had lived, attribute to these physical locations the characteristic of both having been and continuing to be *Jewish*. There are many agents involved in creating an imaginary of, in imagineering, the Jewish quarters of Budapest and Berlin, as the project ‘Jewish spaces – historical and symbolical landscapes in Budapest and Berlin’ demonstrated. A team of researchers conducted interviews and participant observation between 2010 and 2012 in both cities, visiting and analysing cultural events, guided tours, festivals and exhibitions organised in the cities’ respective ‘Jewish quarters’. Given the complex nature of the imagineering process, we interviewed a broad spectrum of agents involved in the marketing of city culture, such as tour organisers, the organisers of the Berlin and Budapest Jewish festivals, employees of the municipality responsible for each city’s ‘branding’ efforts, as well as journalists.

The most conspicuous example of imagineering a Jewish quarter is in Budapest.³ The old Jewish quarter began to grow during the 1850s, as did religious, social and philosophical differences. These tensions became visible in the form of three buildings in this densely populated space of little streets: the Dohány Street Neologue synagogue, which was completed in 1859; the Orthodox synagogue, built in 1911; and the Rumbach Street synagogue, designed by Otto Wagner and built in 1869. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Quarter was home to everyone from university professors and rabbis to Jewish proletarians, as well as members of the lower middle class such as shopkeepers, artisans, tailors, clerks, chandlers, agents, brokers, redcaps and students.

But the Jewish quarter in the Hungarian capital is not only a physical place with historical architectural settings – it is also a narrative

space. The Quarter was described and discussed many times especially in Hungarian literature in the last hundred years. These narratives and the produced images became part of the public discussion about the Quarter. The images produced in these narratives shape the perception of the Jewish quarter in the present day even as it blurs how we understand the establishment and development of the quarter within the city. Until the end of the 1990s, the old Jewish quarter in the middle of the city (Terézváros of today) was a picture of decay. Jewish institutions and their buildings, like the Dohány synagogue, remain, although the area's social and demographic composition has changed. The Jewish population formed and shaped the district until the Second World War, and in the decades following the war the number of Jewish inhabitants decreased rapidly, leaving the district to its 'fate'. The district decayed after 1945 and the buildings remained unrecovered for decades (Ladányi 2004: 233–49).

At the same time, Újlipótváros, the inner part of the 13th district, called New Leopold Quarter, has had a significant Jewish population from the time of its establishment to the present day. Újlipótváros, built at the beginning of the twentieth century in the place of a former mill row, can be considered as the continuation of the downtown area Lipótváros (Leopold Quarter). This is the only area of Budapest that experienced growth in the number of Jewish inhabitants after the 1920s (Komoróczy and Frojimovics 1999: 462). It was primarily Jewish intellectuals, freelancers and private clerks who moved into the new district; thus, in contrast to the traditional Jewish quarter, this new neighbourhood was home to those who had more recently achieved their current status. Nowadays it boasts a diverse and large number of Jewish inhabitants (Ladányi 2004: 233–49); young Jewish intellectuals as well as the elderly are represented there, in contrast to the predominantly aging Jewish population of the old quarter.

Both districts, the old Jewish quarter and Újlipótváros, represent a Jewish space to contemporary residents. Several literary works, articles and memoirs have referenced these areas of the city as Jewish quarters. The Hungarian Jewish magazine *Szombat* organised a roundtable discussion about this topic in 2008 and regularly discusses *Újzséland* (New-jewland), as the quarter is called. In anti-Semitic literature published before the First World War and in the interwar period, these districts were also closely associated with the notion that they possessed a distinctly *Jewish character* that was imparted by its inhabitants and structures, both sacred and secular buildings, and those who frequented them. Both areas have retained their association with the image of a

'Jewish quarter' in the collective memory. However, beginning with the public debate surrounding urban development in 2000, the old Jewish quarter has increasingly been thought of in conjunction with the Eastern European Jewry of before the Holocaust, Jews of the 'shtetl' and 'ghetto'.

In the early 2000s, real estate investors developed an interest in the area of the old Jewish quarter. Some of the buildings in the district date from the beginning of the nineteenth century and are therefore protected. UNESCO designated the area as a World Heritage site in 2002, extending to it a degree of protection, and legitimising the claim that it represented an outstanding example of cultural heritage, of the 'Jewish quarter'. Many of those in 7th District, including business owners and event organisers as well as residents have found that its identification as a 'Jewish quarter' has made the area more valuable. In 2004, to protect the quarter from demolitions, a number of Budapest residents and activists, including various artists and intellectuals established a group named PROTEST, organising demonstrations and flash mobs against the unregulated sale and demolition of protected sites and the construction of buildings in the area. In 2006, the group proposed to ICOMOS (2007) that inspections be performed to determine how much of the quarter, which had been declared a world heritage site, was endangered by demolitions and property development. Their radical move turned the attention of the media to the Quarter and spurred a debate that popularised the quarter as a 'shtetl' or a kind of medieval 'ghetto', which contrasts with the historical reality of the area. As a result of these discussions and actions, an imagined, historically non-existent Jewish Quarter had been created, strongly reminiscent of an idyllic Eastern European Jewish small town from the beginning of the twentieth century (Gantner and Kovács 2007).

The resulting fragmented images that arose in public debates surrounding the area came to shape public perception of the quarter, as evident in a number of cultural events like the annual Jewish Summer Festival (2014), the programme of which features the following images: Klezmer, Hasidism, Kabbala, Yiddish, Jewish traditional Food, and the quarter itself with the synagogues and small streets. On the basis of the images, the commonplace of a bygone 'desired' past takes shape: the vanished Eastern European Jewish culture.

While the visible 'Jewish' sites in this area legitimised its image as a 'shtetl', the area of Újlipótváros mentioned above remained 'untouched' by the imaginering process, evidenced in its absence from maps of Jewish quarters in Central Europe, despite its substantial

Jewish population. Although it qualifies as a Jewish quarter under the colloquial use of the term, its 'Jewishness' is not visible and thus not legitimised by visible architecture and events.

In Berlin the designation *jüdisches Viertel* (Jewish quarter) is to this day affixed to the area behind Alexanderplatz, where Jewish refugees settled at the end of the First World War, fleeing the civil war in Russia and the Ukraine and the disintegration of the Habsburg Empire (Brinkmann 2005). The majority of them intended to stay in Berlin for just one or two months in the hope of emigrating, and therefore chose the cheap accommodation located behind Alexanderplatz, the *Scheunenviertel*, which was known as the former ghetto of Eastern European Jews. Following the Second World War, the majority of the buildings in this area were demolished, and today their presence can be found only in the literature about the city's inter-war Jewish community. The *Scheunenviertel*, however, continues to live in the consciousness of the city of Berlin as a Jewish quarter. Moreover, the imaginary of the *Scheunenviertel* is projected onto a neighbouring quarter called Spandauer Vorstadt, an area where tours for tourists are organised and literary readings are held. A culture industry has established itself among the remaining original buildings and one or two of the streets have adopted traces of the area's Jewish heritage, like opening restaurants bearing Jewish-sounding names. One establishment has used the newly restored building of a former Jewish girls' school to house a kosher restaurant. The Spandauer Vorstadt was never perceived as a Jewish Quarter in the decades since the interwar period. Although large numbers of Jewish inhabitants had lived there and some buildings from that time remain, such as the former girls' school, the area was characterised largely by the diversity of its inhabitants. Catholics, Protestants and Jews of working-class backgrounds lived there before the Second World War, and so it was known primarily as a rather 'proletarian' district (Wilke 2009: 123–37). But the existence of some buildings formerly occupied by the Jewish community, their *visibility* and the continued *knowledge* about their Jewish past, has supported and legitimised the imagineering process of the quarter. Thus it could happen that the physically no longer existing *Scheunenviertel*, demolished after 1945, with its various images has been projected onto the Spandauer Vorstadt. The *Scheunenviertel* appears on more than one tourism website as Berlin's Jewish quarter, the sociologist Michel Laguerre has devoted a separate chapter to it (Laguerre 2008: 37–61), and the urban regeneration of this area has served as a model for the further development of Budapest's Jewish quarter (Borgstädt-Schmitz 2005: 5–11).

Interviews with various stakeholders in Berlin paint a different picture of the city's Jewish quarter. They reveal the *elasticity* of the term 'Jewish quarter' and the variety of ways it may be interpreted, as opposed to the homogenous image often associated with 'Jewish quarter', which the stakeholders have also had a hand in producing.

The interview excerpts below illustrate different possible ways of understanding the Jewish character of the city's Jewish quarter. The interviews were conducted during the spring of 2011 in Berlin with, among others, the deputy director of the Jewish Museum, the owner of the tours company 'milk&honey tours', and an employee of the Visit Berlin marketing agency.

Interviewer: Does Berlin have a Jewish quarter?

Respondent 1: Apart from the historical dimension I don't really see it that way. I myself live at Nordbahnhof [an area not far from Spandauer Vorstadt], and the Spandauer Vorstadt [historic centre] was a kind of Jewish quarter, [and today it has] the Beth Cafe and the Leo-Baeck-Haus [both affiliated with Jewish institutions in the city], and you see a reflection of Jewish life there, that the Police are always guarding the buildings. But I don't really consider that a Jewish quarter, but rather more of a 're-initiation', a re-institutionalisation, one which I can't experience in my everyday.

Respondent 2: I would say no...

Respondent 3: I would make a differentiation. Tourists would think that there is [a Jewish quarter]. I of course know that there isn't one, or in the form in which it's depicted, perhaps it existed in the Middle Ages. There always was an area to which Jews were drawn, the Bayerische Viertel or some such. A Jewish quarter must have had cultural institutions, like a theatre, and stores to supply it. The Spandauer Vorstadt [historic centre] was once a beggars' quarter, and for that reason Jews were at that time also residents there. So naturally as a tourist you still find traces of Jewish life, but no longer on the scale that tourists would like. It's similar to what you find with regard to the Nazi period But [today] there aren't the real centres of power from the Nazi period, or a ghetto in the sense of a medieval quarter. The Jüdenhof [a residential complex dating to the Middle Ages] no longer exists in Berlin ...

The branding of the city in relation to an ethnic product, specifically in connection with Jewish heritage and Jewish quarters, is illustrated in the use of *Jewish Budapest* or *Jewish Berlin* in their Internet advertising. The perception of the cities' Jewish quarters as authentic historical sites and exotic ethnic districts draws on the existence of the remaining buildings that still bear visible and identifiable marks of their Jewish past, features that relate both to architecture and commemoration (e.g. plaques). The result is that Jewish quarters of both

Budapest and Berlin have become brands associated with ‘fixed results’. The similar outcome in both cities, despite their different histories and traditions, is noteworthy. The nostalgic reflection on the now destroyed Eastern European Jewish culture and its deployment as resource, a kind of pool for ‘Jewishness’ from which to draw, characterises them both. This phenomenon was already investigated in the 1990s (e.g. Gruber 2002; Murczyn-Kupisz and Purhla 2009; Šiaučūnaitė-Verbickienė and Lempertienė 2007), and has persisted, becoming a fixed *result*, rather than fading with time. It is evident, for example, in the form of the small wooden figures of a traditional-looking Jew in the shop at the entrance of the Dohány synagogue in Budapest.

The three elements that comprise the essence of the ‘fixed’ results of Jewishness and Jewish quarters are the image of the shtetl combined with that of the Holocaust, particularly on display in Berlin, along with a melancholic, yet nostalgic recollection of the myth of peaceful cohabitation of Jews and non-Jews at the turn of the century (Gantner and Kovács 2007).

Certainly, further empirical research is needed on these *results*, and on how they might change and develop in the future. But for the moment, these images present a homogeneous picture of Jewish quarters, thereby masking the heterogeneity of past and present Jewish life and culture in these cities. The Budapest ‘Negyed6/Negyed7’ festival represents an exception to this. It was started by a recently established Jewish NGO, Marom, in 2009, and consciously departs from the three elements mentioned above when grappling with how to present the city’s Jewish heritage. Although the cultural space Marom fashions during the festival also relies on its proximity to sites of Jewish and architectural note, it engages in an exchange with them, reflecting on their past and present uses and the private histories of its former inhabitants. This happens in various forms during the festival, including inter alia performances and guided tours. The answer to the question of why a Jewish subcultural festival has evolved in this space can be found first of all in its physical characteristics: central location and atmospheric buildings. Second, the Old Jewish quarter of Pest is known as a religious, traditionalist place. Therefore the festival also seeks to reinterpret various elements of the Jewish tradition in accordance with contemporary, generational demands, offering up a lively, vibrant and *existing* urban Jewish culture for view.

Concluding Remarks

The contemporary Jewish nature and the ethno-cultural character of the Jewish architectural heritage remaining in European cities are primarily determined by the politics of commemoration, economic interests and city-branding efforts. The once functional buildings (e.g. synagogues), knowledge about them, the fact that they played an important role in the life of a community, as well as the images related to the community, all function to legitimise these parts of the city as an ethno-cultural, in this case specifically Jewish, space. The legitimising effect of architectural heritage produces images of *Jewishness* that underpin perceptions of these districts as a 'Jewish Quarter'. These quarters are products of the symbolic topography and historical map of each city, which are created, on the one hand, by efforts to commemorate their Jewish residents and the history of the Holocaust and, on the other hand, by those promoting urban culture and tourism. This, however, communicates a very homogeneous picture of the local Jewish culture, reflecting elements selected at the discretion of these actors, and not reflecting the possible diversity of self-understandings that comprise the existing urban Jewish culture.

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Notes

1. *Erinnerungspolitik* and *Erinnerungskultur* represent a complex of political, social and cultural – and particularly, of course, historical – factors that relate in this context to the memory and memorialisation of the Holocaust. The former emphasises their political dimensions and the latter focuses on their cultural ones.
2. ‘Imagineering’ refers in the context of this article to a differentiated discourse and practice field, in which, above all, professionalised actors are generating specific images, narratives and symbols. On imagineering, see Färber (2011: 303–41); on urban imagineering, see Appadurai (1998).
3. The Elisabeth (Erzsébetváros) and Theresa (Terézváros) Quarters are official separate local districts in Budapest, namely the 7th and the 6th, divided by King Street. The old Jewish quarter is situated in the inner parts of both districts, but mainly in the 7th, where all three synagogues, marking the area symbolically, are located. Thus we refer to this very quarter, comprising parts of two administrative districts, as *one*, since King Street is not a physical border. The other so-called Jewish quarter we refer to means the inner parts of the 13th district, called New Leopold Quarter.

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