The Ringstrasse at 150 years

by JOSEPH LEO KOERNER

'THE CITY', WROTE Lewis Mumford, 'is a fact of nature, like a cave, a run of mackerel or an ant-heap. But it is also a conscious work of art, and it holds in its communal framework many simpler and more personal forms of art'.[1] The colossal artwork that is Vienna was founded on two natural facts: a river that flows past it and wooded hills that overlook it. Wide, swift and most often a disappointing brownish green, the Danube was for aeons a chief conduit of human migration between Europe and Asia. At Vienna, through a gap in its hills, the Danube funnels the whole twisted course of waters from the Alps and the Black Forest into the vast Pannonian Basin. Facing east with the river's flow and set apart from Western Europe by the ascending Wienerwald behind it, this city has stood exposed to the movement and conflict of peoples. In ancient times, as the military *castra* called Vindabona, it marked the border of the Roman Empire, repelling waves of invaders from the East. Abandoned by Rome and controlled successively by Lombards, Slavs and Avars, it became the border town between Austria and Hungary and the eastern bulwark of the Holy Roman Empire. Besieged in 1529 and 1683 by Ottoman Turks, and as seat of Catholic Habsburg rule pursuing battle against Protestant rebellion, the city endured as a fortress city, with eleven bastions, a surrounding mount and a wide glacis for defensive fire. In 1704 Emperor Leopold added a new outer line of fortifications – the Linienwall – to protect against attacks by Turks and anti-Habsburg rebels from Hungary. To gaze down at Vienna from the Wienerwald is to grasp these facts: hills as prospect and refuge, a mighty river flowing in branching arms toward the horizon and a human settlement built defensively in concentric rings around an ancient core.

Vienna was the last major European city to demolish its walls. Joseph II built roads, planted trees and put lanterns in the glacis and gave it to his subjects as their park; foreigners wondered why, given the city's housing shortage, no one built on this vast and pleasant land between the crowded old city and the burgeoning suburbs. But Vienna kept its walls even after they proved useless against Napoleon. The army deemed them necessary for defence – now not against foreign invasions, but against rebellious workers in the outer districts. Intervening in everyday life, the narrow-gated fortifications also formed a fitting monument to Vienna as bastion of Christian Europe against enemies new and old.

It thus came as a surprise when, on Christmas Day 1857, the *Wiener Zeitung* featured on its front page this directive of His Royal and Imperial Apostolic Majesty, Franz Joseph I:

33. Invitation to the opening of the Ringstrasse. 1865. Printed card. (Wien Museum, Vienna).

> It is My Will that the expansion of the inner city of Vienna be undertaken at the earliest possible moment, with due consideration to an appropriate link with the suburbs. In so doing, thought should be given to the regulation and beautification of My Residence and Imperial Capital. To this end, I approve the dismantling of the surrounding walls of the inner city as well as the dry moats around them.[2]

Ascending to the throne at eighteen years of age after the Revolution of 1848, Franz Joseph ruled as an absolute monarch, fighting nationalism and constitutionalism throughout his vast empire – Europe's largest country after Russia. But it was his personal will, exercised against resistance from the military, to turn his stronghold into a modern metropolis. This Christmas gift coincided with Franz Joseph's two other major urban initiatives: the regulation of the Danube and the construction of a pipeline bringing clean water from the high springs on the Rax and Schneeberg. Demolishing the city's walls, the young emperor endeavoured to facilitate the movement not of waters but of people. An international competition was held – the first ever of its kind – with specifications for everything from buildings and lots to requirements for ground levels, sewage, gas, water and flood protection. The jury displayed eighty-five scenes in a prize exhibition, and in 1859 an official plan appeared incorporating several winning proposals. Dominating the scheme was a broad tree-lined boulevard 57 metres wide and 5.7 kilometres long, including a new quay along the Danube Canal. It would circle the old city and feature parks, grand housing blocks, an imperial forum and new seats of government, culture and higher learning.

The belatedness of this undertaking facilitated modern Vienna's becoming – paradigmatically – a 'conscious work of art'. Franz Joseph had been inspired by the transformation of Paris under Napoleon III, but whereas Baron Haussmann cleared older settlements to create the new city (it was 'easier to get through to the inside of a pie than to cut away at the crust'),[3]

[1] L. Mumford: *The Culture of Cities*, New York 1938, p.6.
[2] Personal directive issued by Emperor Franz Joseph I to Interior Minister Baron Alexander von Bach on 20th December 1857; published in *Die Wiener Zeitung* (25th December 1857).
[3] G.-E. Haussmann: *Mémoires du Baron Haussman. Grand travaux de Paris*, Paris 1890, cited in P. Pinon, *Atlas du Paris haussmannien*, Paris 2002, p.55.
[4] *Neue Freie Presse* (2nd December 1878); cited in C.E. Schorske: *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*, Cambridge 1980, p.29.
[5] M. Freud: *Glory Reflected*, London 1957, p.27; S. Rosenberg: *Why Freud Fainted*, New York 1978, pp.101 and 144.
[6] A. Hitler: *Mein Kampf*, transl. R. Mannheim, Boston 1943, p.19.
[7] R. Wagner-Rieger: *Die wiener Ringstrasse, Bild einer Epoche; Die Erweiterung, Der Inneren Stadt Wien unter Kaiser Franz Joseph*, Vienna 1969; Schorske, *op. cit.* (note 4).
[8] A. Rossi: *The Architecture of the City*, transl. D. Ghirardo and J. Ockman, Cambridge MA 1984, pp.66–68 and *passim*.

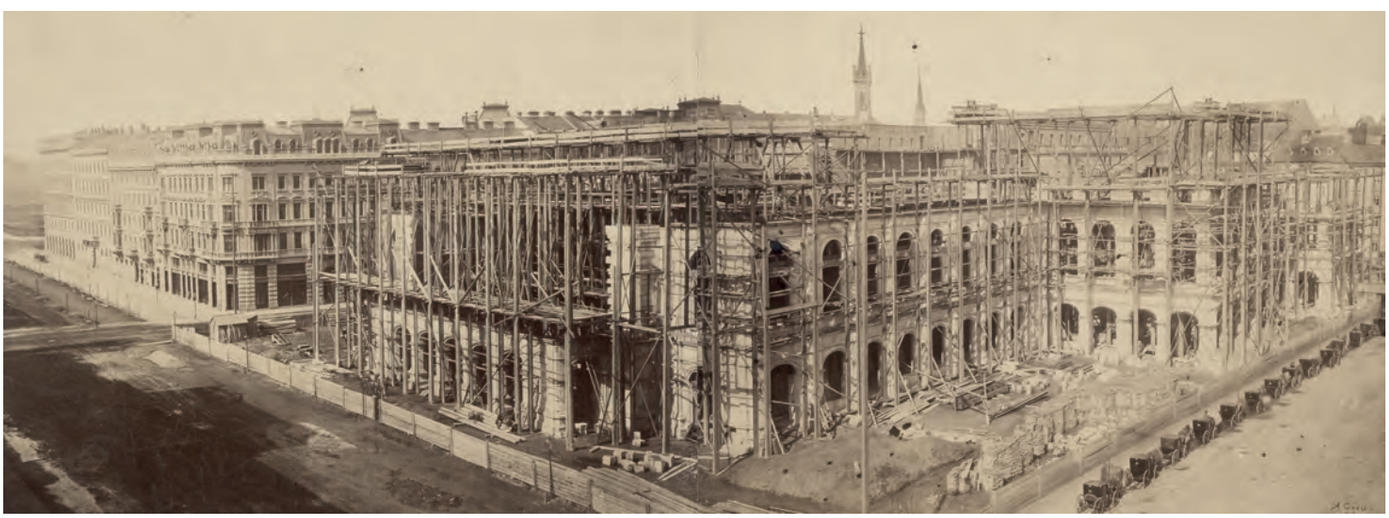
Vienna had a vast, empty tract of prime real estate on which to build. Starting late, it could build big and fast, using new materials and techniques, especially iron, reinforced concrete and ornament made of industrially cast cement. And it could realise itself all at once and deliberately as interface between old and new, defence and commerce, imperial stronghold and magnet city. To the bourgeoisie it seemed a fairy tale. 'The imperial command broke the old cincture of stone that for many centuries kept Vienna's noble limbs imprisoned in an evil spell', gushed the liberal *Neue Freie Presse*.[4] However one understood it, the boulevard – dubbed the Ringstrasse or the Ring – became central to how the city would be lived. Going 'to town' meant travelling from one of the outer districts across the Ring's ceaseless flow to Vienna's centre. Enclosed by traffic, that centre, with its winding, narrow streets and small-scale buildings, suddenly aged. Belted in and overshadowed by the larger *Prachtgebäude* ('buildings of splendour') on the Ring, edifices such as the Gothic St Stephen's Cathedral and Baroque Hofburg – symbols of altar and throne – withdrew from the expanding metropolis into a museum of the city's past.

More interface than area, the Ring (Fig.35) nonetheless drew the Viennese into its course. Sigmund Freud walked it daily, counterclockwise, at a military clip, stopping at Café Landtmann for Tafelspitz and Gugelhupf. Interpreting his dreams while he marched, this unsung explorer of the human soul understood his path – in his hometown – around the vanished walls symbolically, as akin to Hannibal's unsuccessful encirclement of the walls of Rome.[5] In 1900, Arthur Schnitzler had his stream-of-consciousness novella (the first ever) begin and end on the Ring; the five acts of Karl Kraus's mammoth *Last Days of Humanity* circulate around 'Ringstrassekorso, Sirk-Eck;' and to the young Adolf Hitler, who came to Vienna from the Upper Austrian provinces in 1908 'to be something', the 'whole Ringstrasse seemed [. . .] like an enchantment out of "The Thousand-and-One Nights"'.[6] In 1938, Hitler had his motorcade circumnavigate the Ring before declaring Austria part of Germany – he delivered

35. Parliament with Rathaus and Burgtheater under construction, by an unknown photographer. c.1882. (Wien Museum, Vienna).

the speech from the balcony of the Hofburg to the swastika-waving multitudes jamming the Ring and Heldenplatz. After the War, a nuanced understanding of the Ring's history developed through the monumental labours of Renate Wagner-Rieger and through Carl Schorske's masterpiece, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*.[7] And due to the aesthetic and ideological arguments this boulevard sparked, the Ring remained a vital object of architectural and urbanistic debate, inspiring important interpretations by, for example, Aldo Rossi and Manfredo Tafuri.[8]

In 2015 Vienna celebrated the 150th anniversary of its famous street with a flurry of exhibitions.[9] Engaging most of the city's key museums, these shows commemorated the festive opening of the Ring on 1st May 1865 (Fig.33). On that occasion, the emperor took his annual May Day ride by coach from the Hofburg across the canal to his Rococo Lusthaus in the Prater woodlands, this time beginning on the newly finished pavement of the Ring. Still a giant building site (Fig.34), the street's flanks had to be masked



34. Construction of the Opera, by Andreas Groll. 1865. Photograph. (Wien Museum, Vienna).

[9] These exhibitions included: *Der Makart der Musik. Carl Goldmark, Paradekomponist der Ringstrassenzeit*, Musiksammlung Wienbibliothek, Adolf Loos Räume (13th February to 27th November 2015); *Bau-, Dekor- und Ziersteine des Naturhistorischen Museums*, Naturhistorisches Museum (11th March to 31st December 2015); *Wien. Die Perle des Reiches. Planen für Hitler*, Architekturzentrum Wien (19th March to 17th August 2015); *Zu modern für die erste Reihe – Die Baugeschichte der Secession*, Secession (19th March to 10th October 2015); *Die Ringstrasse. Ein jüdischer Boulevard*, Jüdisches Museum Wien (25th March to 4th October 2015); *Vom Werden der Wiener Ringstrasse. Visionen – Dokumente – Berichte*, Wienbibliothek im Rathaus (30th April to 13th November 2015); *Die Ringstrasse des Proletariats. Ein Gegenentwurf*, Karl Marx-Hof – Waschsalon Nr. 2 (21st May 2015 to 24th March 2016); *Wien wird Weltstadt. Die Ringstrasse und ihre Zeit*, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (22nd May to 1st November 2015); *Der Ring. Pionierjahre einer Prachtstrasse 1857 bis 1865*, Wien Museum Karlsplatz (11th June to 4th October 2015); *Klimt und die Ringstrasse*, Belvedere, Unteres Belvedere (3rd July to 11th October 2015).

36. The domes of two museums, with the gilded chimneys of the Parliament in the foreground, 2015. Photograph by Nora Schoeller. (From A. Fogassy, ed.: *Vienna's Ringstrasse: The Book*, Ostfildern 2015).

by tents and garlanded stage-prop obelisks. Part of the Ring had already been inaugurated in 1864 at the return of Austrian troops from their victory in the Second Schleswig War. Such jubilance was rare in Vienna. In 1859 Franz Joseph suffered his gruesome defeat at Solferino, and in 1866 Prussia and Italy defeated Austria, forcing its split into an independent Kingdom of Hungary and a reduced, constitutionally governed Austrian Empire sometimes called Cisleithania. As Robert Musil put it in his ironic treatment of Viennese schoolbook history, 'although the Austrians had of course also won all the wars in their history, after most of them they had to give something up'.[10]

Military disaster shaped the Ring. The army was granted an arsenal, two huge barracks, a protective field around the Hofburg and the wide-thoroughfare itself, which was advantageous to counter-insurgency, but it lost its grip on most of its erstwhile glacis. The street fell to the liberals. Economically ascendant and empowered by Austria's new constitution, they turned the Ring into an extended monument to their aspirations. 'In the liberal epoch', wrote a contemporary historian, 'power passed, at least in part, to the bourgeoisie; and in no area did this attain fuller and purer life than in the reconstruction of Vienna'.[11] Although it ran through the seats of Habsburg authority, the Ring connected these to the sites of bourgeois advancement through culture and learning: museums, the Opera, concert halls, exhibition spaces, the University, the stock exchange, technical institutes, etc.

The colour photographs by Nora Schoeller in *Vienna's Ringstrasse: The Book* capture beautifully the present glory of this ensemble (Figs.36 and 37).[12] Her rooftop panoramas reveal a pleasing consistency of scale and density. Public and private buildings are all of a piece: imposing but never colossal and richly clad in ornament. Spires, cupolas and pediments peak above a dense tree canopy, their stylistic diversity evoking a city developed over the *longue durée*. This illusion is harder to maintain on the ground. The Ring's buildings tend to press up against the street that, with its rush of trams, buses, cars, fiacres, bicycles and pedestrians, steals the show and offers few good views (Fig.38). But in real life, as much as in Schoeller's photos, the urban landscape gives the illusion of having been formed slowly and organically. Most visitors and many Viennese think the Votivkirche (dedicated in 1876) is a medieval cathedral like St Stephen's, only purer in its Gothic design. Gottfried Semper's Burgtheater (1888) looks contemporary with Racine and Molière, and the huge twin museums of art and natural history (1889 and 1891) resemble some gigantic Renaissance palace. Patinated and set off against distinctly modern buildings, these diverse edifices recede into the broad category of the old, yet in the brief period of their erection they looked aggressively new – more Disney's Epcot than Rome.

This spectacle of historical styles was the conscious goal of the Ring Street's planners. Today it stands as the world's greatest instance of Historicism in architecture. Flourishing in the late nineteenth century, Historicism attempted to recreate, repurpose and purify past styles and techniques. Its commitment was double: it sought to gather, classify and study historical examples, and pass these on through historically oriented pedagogy. Like the other historicisms that made the nineteenth century (in Alois Riegl's words) 'the historical one',[13] such research pursued the mystery of origins. Because humans are quintessentially historical beings, the thinking goes, whatever

[10] R. Musil: *The Man without Qualities*, transl. S. Williams, ed. B. Pike, New York 1995, p.12.

[11] H. Friedjung: *Oesterreich von 1848 bis 1860*, Stuttgart and Berlin 1912 (3rd ed.), II, 1: pp.427–28; cited in Schorske, *op. cit.* (note 4), p.45.

[12] *Vienna's Ringstrasse: The Book*, edited by Alfred Fogassy, with texts by Monika Faber, Jochen Martz, Siegfried Mattl, Frederic Morton, Andreas Nierhaus and Eva-Maria Orosz and photographs by Nora Schoeller. Translated by Jack Altman. 265 pp. incl. 280 col. + b. & w. ills. (Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern, 2015), €58. ISBN

37. View over the Burgtheater to the museums and the Palais Epstein am Burgring, 2015. Photograph by Nora Schoeller. (From A. Fogassy, ed.: *Vienna's Ringstrasse: The Book*, Ostfildern 2015).

we are and whatever we will become derives from what we originally were. In architecture, this meant that a building's form and ornamental style should derive from that building's historical origins. Thus on the Ring, with perfect programmatic clarity, Parliament (1883) is in the Greek Revival style because legislative democracy was born in Athens (Figs.39 and 40); City Hall (also 1883) is late Gothic because the trade capitals of the Burgundian Netherlands gave birth to municipal self-governance; and the Burgtheater is early Baroque because that era saw the happy alliance of the three estates (clergy, courtiers and commoners) in their shared love of theatre.[14] Architects understood that the forms of government and culture had changed since their point of origin, but new construction and manufacturing techniques enabled historical styles to be mass-produced and attached as cladding to buildings of a functional design. In the case of the Renaissance-style University, an especially bitter dispute arose over whether the new activities of scientific experiment, as well as learning's orientation towards the future, were served by older forms.

People came to feel stifled by history. They fretted over the strange inability of their era to represent itself in its own terms. 'By excess of history life becomes maimed and degenerate, and is followed by the degeneration of history, as well'.[15] Written in 1873, in the midst of the Ring Street's formation, Nietzsche's diagnosis and the *Lebensphilosophie* of Schopenhauer that underwrote it hit a nerve among younger Viennese artists, poets and thinkers. For them the venerable forms of the new boulevard seemed a 'cloak under which a hatred of present power and greatness masquerades as an extreme admiration of the past'.[16] Forming groups with names like Jung Wien and the Secession, yet feeling themselves tragically epigonal, they preached the ideal of forgetting.

The debates about the Ring Street buildings had greater consequences for the history of architecture than did the buildings themselves. These debates crystallised what would become the two main directions in urban planning. They pitted Camillo Sitte, critic of the rational efficiency in city design, champion of urbanism on a human scale and precursor of the Garden City Movement, against Otto Wagner, prophet of an architectural modernism developed from new methods of construction, especially through

38. 'Opernkreuzung': street intersection next to the Opera (background left), by Wolfgang Thaler. 2014. Photograph. (Wien Museum, Vienna).

978–3–7757–3773–9.

[13] A. Riegl: 'The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin', transl. K. Forster and D. Ghirardo, *Oppositions* 25 (1982), p.28.

[14] Schorske, *op. cit.* (note 4), p.37.

[15] F. Nietzsche: *The Use and Abuse of History*, transl. A. Collins, Indianapolis 1949, p.12; on Nietzsche's view of history and the Ring Street, see A. Nierhaus: 'Of the Use and Abuse of History for Building', in Fogassy, *op. cit.* (note 12), p.56.

[16] Nietzsche, *op. cit.* (note 15), p.17.

39. Dr Karl Renner-Ring with the Parliament, Rathaus and University, 2015. Photograph by Nora Schoeller. (From A. Fogassy, ed.: *Vienna's Ringstrasse: The Book*, Ostfildern 2015).

an aesthetic development of iron.[17] Most of the controversies hinged on the question of ornament and whether the epoch was capable of creating for itself a new style of decoration. Wagner's disciples joined forces in creating the Secession, Vienna's maverick venue for displaying new directions in painting, sculpture, architecture and design. City planners refused permission for the Secession's building on the Ring, so the 'cabbage head' – Vienna's nickname for the famous golden-domed building of Joseph Maria Olbrich's design (1898) – was built two blocks away, at the edge of the Naschmarkt and with an oblique view of Baroque Karlskirche. Otto Wagner too set his masterpiece, the Postsparkasse (1906), back from the ring, its marble-clad concrete structure facing off against the empty pomp of the new War Ministry (1913) across the boulevard. In hindsight, however, the rupture between Historicism and modern architecture was less absolute than it seemed. As Andreas Nierhaus cogently argues in *Vienna's Ringstrasse*,[18] the buildings constructed on this boulevard inaugurated a collective 'destruction of form' out of which the 'modern' could be born.[19]

The fiercest debates raged less around the Ring's public buildings than around private housing. Then, as now, Viennese lived in rented flats in large apartment houses. The new residences on the Ring were predominantly lavish apartment blocks, with stores and offices at the ground level and rental units in the floors above. Some of these buildings were single private palaces of the super-rich, but most housed wealthy families in leased units, usually in the prestigious *Nobelétage* on the first and second floors. The formal model for such buildings were the aristocratic palaces in the old city, with their ornament, heraldry and rank-based elevation (servants on the mezzanine, reception rooms on the high first floor and living quarters above). In the new 'rental palaces' of the Ring, the façades trumpeted social rank, but impersonally. The *Nobelétage* could be subdivided into several apartments, upper floors were the domicile not of servants but of the merely well-to-do and the crests above the monumental doorways were made-up ones, ennobling of all but pertaining to no one in particular.

It was this mix of aristocratic pretence and bourgeois anonymity that drew the wrath of Vienna's most formidable critic. Writing in 1898, Adolf Loos compared the Ring to the cardboard and canvas villages built by Prince Potemkin to fool his sovereign, Catherine the Great. 'These Renaissance and Baroque palaces are not even constructed from the materials they appear to be. Some pretend to be of stone, some of plaster. They are neither. Their ornamental features, their corbels, wreaths, cartouches and dentils, are cast in cement and pinned on'.[20] According to Loos, the deceit was moral in nature: 'Even the ordinary man who has rented a parlor-plus-sleeping-cubicle right at the top feels a *frisson* of lordly grandeur and feudal magnificence when he looks at the house where he lives from outside'. People deceive and are deceived, and this deception stems from shame: people are ashamed of being bourgeois. From the noble standpoint which these buildings affect, to be bourgeois means being next to nothing. 'Poverty is no disgrace', concludes Loos: 'We should stop feeling ashamed'.[21] After they ate the forbidden fruit, the eyes of Eve and Adam were opened 'and they knew that they were naked' (Genesis 3:7). The ethical begins with shame, and through shame ethics entered architecture in Vienna.

Loos broached the most vexing question: how to live? In the era of the Ring, Vienna became a magnet city, drawing to itself immigrants from throughout the sprawling multi-ethnic Danube Empire. Even the ruling Habsburgs were, in their way, outsiders, residing in Vienna late in their history and as itinerant monarchs with alternative seats elsewhere in Europe. Native 'Austrians' – Alpine peoples from the dynastic territories of the Habsburgs – were perennially suspicious of their swollen, cosmopolitan capital. In Vienna, homemaking became *the* dream that

[17] G.R. Collins and C.C. Collins: *Camillo Sitte: The Birth of Modern Urban Planning*, New York 1986; O. Wagner: *Modern Architecture: A Guidebook for His Students to this Field of Art*, transl. and ed. H. Mallgrave, Santa Monica CA 1988.

[18] Catalogue: *Der Ring. Pionierjahre einer Prachtstrasse*. Edited by Andreas Nierhaus. 288 pp. incl. numerous col. ills. (Wien Museum and Residenz Verlag, Vienna, 2015), €29. ISBN 978–3–7017–3367–5.

[19] Nierhaus, *op. cit.* (note 15), p.65.

[20] A. Loos: 'The Potemkin City', *On Architecture*, transl. M. Mitchell, Riverside 2002, p.27.

40. View overlooking the Volksgarten and Parliament, by an unknown photographer. 1882. (Albertina, Vienna).

41. Todesco Palace, ballroom, 2015. Photograph by Nora Schoeller. (From A. Fogassy, ed.: *Vienna's Ringstrasse: The Book*, Ostfildern 2015).

preoccupied the city's greatest minds. Pioneering architects and designers such as Wagner, Loos, Josef Hoffmann and Josef Frank, as well as artists such as Gustav Klimt and Kolomon Moser, endeavoured above all to fashion a new form of human dwelling. The Secession's exhibitions were at bottom experiments in *Raumkunst*: a new art of the interior space of home. Although not professional architects, Vienna's two most famous sons were deeply involved in this task. From 1925 to 1928 the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein laboured on the design of a house for his sister Margaret, creating on Kundemanngasse what remains the most astonishingly modern of all Viennese interiors. And, first on the Ring and then on the nearby Berggasse, Freud created for the practice of psychoanalysis a unique interior space, part antiquities museum, part private domicile, where people who 'suffer principally from reminiscences'[22] could find relief through the talking cure.

A century and a half later, the Ring remains Vienna's dominant feature. A polyhedron rather than a circle, it is experienced as a broken axis.[23] Always bending a bit down the way, it causes us to try to remember what segment comes next, and whether to walk the circumference or take a shortcut through the inner city. Unavoidable, the Ring's arena spreads into the streets far behind it. All the city's main axes led to the Ring, yet all end in its flow without crossing it. Vienna's centre turns in perpetual motion around a core. The Ring's buildings all face this motion, but because one is oneself always mobile, one only experiences them in passing as mere 'aspects of life':[24] music here, art there and a coffee perhaps along the way. The many sculpted monuments that flank the Ring have no place from which to be contemplated. Ignored and isolated, they stare at each other across the constant river of traffic: Schiller at Goethe, Maria Theresia at Prince Eugene. Despite its historicist façades and storied past, the Ring resists remembrance.

Amnesia comes too easily, hence the importance of anniversaries. And of all the facts that were forgotten, none is as significant as the impact of Jewish Vienna on the history of the Ring. The key contributions of Jewish entrepreneurs, bankers, builders, architects and denizens to the street's development was unmentioned in Schorske's copious account and remained only marginally represented in most of this year's exhibitions. Happily, it was the subject of a small but indispensible exhibition *Ringstrasse: A Jewish Boulevard*, held at Vienna's Jewish Museum. Accompanied by an extensive catalogue,[25] this belated acknowledgement was foreshadowed by recent popular publications, notably Edmund de Waal's *The Hare with Amber Eyes* (2010) and Anne-Marie O'Connor's *Lady in Gold* (2012). The show built its story of the 'Jewish Ring' into the longer history of Viennese Jewry. Allowed – in 1848 by Franz Joseph's decree – to found a community in the city after centuries of pogroms, expulsions and interdicts, Jews were permitted to own property by 1860, and they received full rights in the liberal constitution of 1867, two years after the Ring's opening. Fiercely loyal to the emperor, the ascendant Jewish merchant class recognised in the multi-ethnic Habsburg Empire a relatively safe alternative to the nascent nationalisms that, in their equation of a country with a people, or *Volk*, spelled trouble for a people without a homeland, such as the Jews. (It was in the face of Anti-Semitism in Vienna that, in 1897, the Austrian journalist Theodor Herzl invented Zionism.) The Jews were not only the pivotal early investors in Ring Street property; their palaces were some of the jewels of the boulevard and their vanguard dreams of homemaking underwrote the designs of Hoffmann and Loos and the paintings of Klimt, Egon Schiele and Oskar Kokoschka.

In 1938, those dreams turned into nightmares. Almost immediately Jews were evicted from their homes and either driven into exile or murdered in death camps in the East. After the War, Vienna's Jewish survivors were not invited back nor were their homes returned to them. Although their palaces still bear their names – Todesco (Fig.41), Schey, Königswarter, Goldschmidt, Ephrussi, Lieben, Auspitz, etc. – Vienna forgot, or chose to forget, who these persons were and what became of them. Although designed to celebrate the power of history, the Ring has been chronically forgetful, a river Lethe circulating around the Danube capital. Happily, the street's 150th anniversary has brought some of this past to light.

[21] *Ibid*., p.28.
[22] S. Freud: 'On the Psychical Mechanism of Historical Phenomenon (1892)', *Early Psycho-Analytic Writings*, ed. P. Rieff, New York 1963, p.40.
[23] See G. Pirhofer: 'Gang über den Ring', in Nierhaus, *op. cit.* (note 18), pp.23–37.
[24] Schorske, *op. cit.* (note 4), p.36.
[25] Catalogue: *Ringstrasse: Ein jüdischer Boulevard*. Edited by Gabriele Kohlbauer-Fritz. 344 pp. incl. numerous col. + b. & w. ills. (Jüdisches Museum Wien and Amalthea Signum Verlag, Vienna, 2015), €29.95. ISBN 978–3–85002–915–5.