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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Nazi victims on the dissection table — The Anatomical Institute in Innsbruck

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ABSTRACT

Since Vienna University's 1997/98 inquiry into the background of Eduard Pernkopf's anatomical atlas, German and Austrian anatomical institutes have been forced to confront their past, particularly the widespread procurement of bodies of victims of National Socialism. This paper focuses on the Anatomical Institute in Innsbruck, which received bodies from an unusually broad array of sources: from prisoners executed at Stadelheim Prison in Munich, prisoners of war from three different camps, military personnel sentenced to death by martial courts, patients from a psychiatric hospital, and several bodies of Jewish Holocaust victims. As in other comparable cases, these bodies were used for scientific publications and medical teaching until long after the war.

The Anatomical Institute's collection is currently undergoing a detailed analysis in order to identify any human remains dating from the Nazi period. At the Institute of Histology and Embryology, recent research has led to the discovery of approximately 200 histological slides pertaining to at least five individuals who had been executed under the Nazi regime. In a number of cases, the specimens had been provided by Prof. Max Clara, head of the Leipzig Institute of Anatomy.

This study is based on an analysis of the Innsbruck Anatomical Institute's unusually detailed records and numerous documents from various archives, including files pertaining to an inquiry into the institute held after the war by the French occupation authorities.

1. Introduction

The mass murders committed for political, racist, and economic reasons under the Nazi regime provided numerous opportunities for the scientific exploitation of the victims. The often deadly experiments on concentration camp inmates, which stood at the center of the Nuremberg Medical Trial of 1946/47, came to epitomize the Nazis' contempt for humanity (Mitscherlich and Mielke, 1947). Even so, the extent to which unethical or outright criminal practices permeated science under the Nazi regime has only recently been acknowledged. Paul Weindling, the first to try to identify all the victims of Nazi medical experiments, has to date documented 15,754 individuals, with a further 12,008 pending verification. The deaths of at least 4,120 persons can be directly connected to medical research (Weindling, 2015; Weindling et al., 2016).

Although the creation of a collection of "Jewish skeletons" by the anatomist August Hirt at the Reichsuniversität Straßburg was included among the crimes adjudicated at the Nuremberg Medical Trial (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946–1949; Lang, 2013; Toledano, 2016, 2017), a closer examination of the history of anatomy under National Socialism took a long time to materialize. Within the field it was a well-known fact that during the war, thousands of bodies of victims of the Nazis had found their way to anatomical institutes. Even anatomists who had no sympathies for National Socialism tended to consider their continued use for anatomical teaching and research unproblematic, in Innsbruck as in other places.

In the postwar period, the anatomists' attitude concerning mortal remains from the Nazi period on several occasions led to conflicts at the Austrian universities of Graz, Vienna and Innsbruck. The discussions involved family members, victims' associations, and the authorities, and sometimes found their way into the press, thus reflecting Austrian society's diverging attitudes about the recent Nazi past. At the Anatomical Institute in Graz, which had received the bodies of 89 executed persons and of over one hundred possible "euthanasia" victims, Prof. Anton Hafferl (1886–1959) decided in January 1946 to secretly dispose of 44 bodies acquired in 1943 and 1944. When the mass grave was discovered in the summer of the same year, the resulting public outcry led to Hafferl's temporary arrest and the exhumation of the bodies, many

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of which were from executed members of the political anti-Nazi resistance. The Vienna Anatomical Institute also held on to the bodies received from the Vienna Criminal Court (Wiener Straflandesgericht) and other execution sites. Family members persistent enough to overcome the staff's stalling tactics had to search among numerous, often headless bodies in order to identify their loved ones. Eduard Pernkopf, who had directed the institute and served as dean and later rector during the Nazi period, continued to use these bodies for his famous atlas after his 1947 release from US internment and until his death in 1955 (Czech, 2015). Much later, in the 1990s, critical questions concerning the origin of the specimens used for Pernkopf's atlas impelled Vienna University to appoint a historical commission, which in a 1998 report documented the acquisition of approximately 4,000 unclaimed bodies from public hospitals—some of which had likely been victims of "euthanasia"—and more than 1,300 bodies of victims of the Nazi judicial system (Akademischer Senat der Univ. Wien, 1998). After the end of the war, the Innsbruck Anatomical Institute's body procurement practices became the subject of a criminal investigation by the French occupation authorities (discussed in more detail below), but this did not put an end to the continued use of victims' bodies well into the 1950s.[1] At the time of the Pernkopf Commission in the late 1990s, the director of the Innsbruck Anatomical Institute was Pernkopf's former assistant Werner Platzer, who had succeeded his teacher as editor of the *Topographische Anatomie* (Pernkopf, 1937–1960). Platzer denied allegations voiced since 1986 that many of Pernkopf's anatomical preparations had found their way to Innsbruck, and deflected questions regarding specimens originating from victims of the Nazi regime (Spann, 1998).[2] Thus, an opportunity to investigate the Nazi history of anatomy in Innsbruck much earlier, in the wake of the Pernkopf investigation, was missed.

This paper aims to provide an overview of the procurement and use of bodies of Nazi victims in Innsbruck in order to close this gap in the scholarship. It follows an earlier investigation by the principal author (in German), which was originally prompted by the discovery in the archives of the French Foreign Office of files documenting the 1946 inquiry by the French military in Innsbruck mentioned above (Czech, 2015). A research project directed by the senior author has since yielded many additional findings, which are presented here for the first time. In this context, as in other areas of Nazi persecution policies, a consensus is emerging that the victims should be individually identified and acknowledged (Lang, 2004; Hildebrandt, 2013b, 2013c; Weindling, 2015; Hildebrandt and Seidelman, 2017). It is against this backdrop that we have decided to follow these precedents and publish the full names of victims of Nazi crimes in order to acknowledge their individual identities, and to facilitate further research requiring precise historical facts. Readers from outside the medical field should be advised that they might find some of the reported facts concerning the anatomical use of body parts disturbing.

An important prerequisite for the proper acknowledgement of the victims is the detailed investigation of each anatomical institute—a task that has seen considerable progress during the last few years (Blessing et al., 2012; Redies et al., 2012; Schultka and Viebig, 2012; Schütz et al., 2013; Holtz, 2015; Alvermann and Mittenzwei, 2016; Hildebrandt, 2016a, 2016b; Toledano, 2016). By comparison to other institutes, the bodies used at the Innsbruck Anatomical Institute are well documented, with a detailed body register available for research.[3] Based on these and many other available sources, it is our aim to document the utilization of Nazi victims at the Innsbruck Anatomical Institute and thereby to contribute to the increasing scholarship regarding a critical history and ethics of anatomy (Seidelman, 2000a, b; Hildebrandt, 2006, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c; Seidelman, 2012; Viebig, 2012; Weindling, 2012; Hildebrandt, 2013a, 2016a). A more detailed account of the life stories of the victims and the reasons for their executions, however, must be left to future publications. The same applies to the results of a systematic examination of the Innsbruck Anatomical Institute's collection in order to identify all specimens dating from the Nazi period, which is currently undertaken by Christian Lechner and will be the subject of a forthcoming paper.

The bodies of Nazi victims did not only serve for the education of medical students but were also used as "material" for scientific research and publications by members both of the Anatomical Institute and of the Institute of Histology and Embryology. In Austria one has to distinguish between anatomical institutes and histological institutes. A distinct Histological Institute in Innsbruck was founded in 1873 and independently led by its own professor. Nine such publications have been identified so far, seven of which appeared between 1941 and 1943, one in 1952 and one as late as 1958.[4]

2. Sources for body procurement

Between the German annexation of Austria in March 1938 (the *Anschluss*) and December 1943, when the intake of bodies had to be stopped because the institute building was hit by a bomb (Fig. 1) and also due to capacity problems, the Innsbruck Anatomical Institute received a total of 199 bodies. Several groups stand out from amongst these deliveries: 59 bodies from executed prisoners at Stadelheim Prison in Munich (Table 1), 39 prisoners of war (mainly Russians from the prisoner of war camps Stalag XVIII C "Markt Pongau" in St. Johann im Pongau, Stalag XVIII C/Z Landeck, and the "Stalag Jenbach"; Table 2), two persons executed by order of the Innsbruck martial courts (Florian Perrasso[5] and Josef Happer[6]), one executed person from Lofer in Salzburg (Eugenius Wojtak[7]), seven bodies registered as "Jewish" (Table 3), and 20 bodies from the psychiatric hospital in Hall in Tyrol (Table 4).

This last group of bodies raises the question whether mortal remains of victims of National Socialist "euthanasia" killings were used at the Innsbruck Anatomical Institute. However, this appears unlikely for the following reasons: 17 out of the 20 were delivered before August 1941, when the centralized "T4 program" was still running and patients were being killed in designated extermination centers such as Hartheim near Linz. The remaining three bodies were delivered on November 4, 1941, November 28, 1942, and December 14, 1942. The overall mortality rate in the psychiatric hospital in Hall between 1939 and 1943 was higher than before the war: 7.3% compared to 4.4% in 1938, peaking in 1945 at 21%. Patients died from starvation and neglect, with rampant violence being an additional factor. However, a detailed investi-

[1] Institute of Anatomy of the University of Innsbruck, Body Register 1929–1950 (*Leichenbuch 1929–1950*, hereafter cited as Innsbruck Body Register or IBR). A second register, the "Register of Receipt and Assignment of Bodies" (*Leichen-Eingangs- und Ausgabe-Buch*), additionally contains information on the use of separate body parts. "Assignment" refers to handing out the body parts to students in the dissection course.

[2] Platzer to the Rector of the Leopold-Franzens-University Innsbruck, April 6, 1995 (with thanks to Prof. William Seidelman for providing the copy).

[3] See Footnote 1. In Munich, only fragments of the body register are preserved (Schütz et al., 2017).

[4] The first five were identified in Hildebrandt (2013b), another three in Brenner et al. (2014), and yet another is referenced in Erich Brenner, Sabine Hildebrandt, Andreas Winkelmann, Research Using Bodies of Victims of the National Socialist Regime at the Anatomical and Histological Institutes of Innsbruck: Identification of Victims (forthcoming).

[5] Innsbruck Body Register, entry no. 413.

[6] Innsbruck Body Register, entry no. 414.

[7] Innsbruck Body Register, entry no. 449.

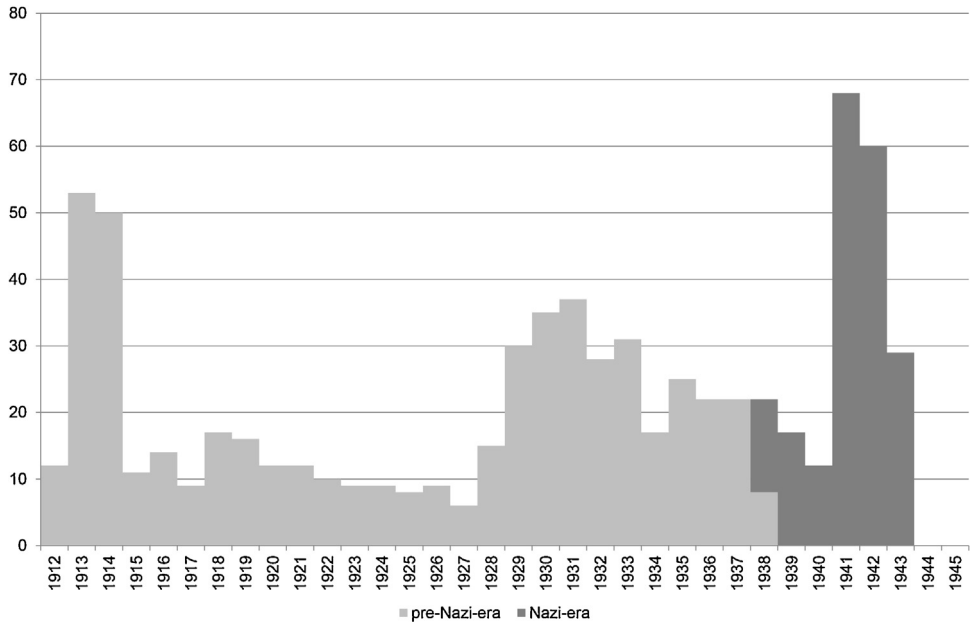

Fig. 1. Bodies delivered to the Anatomical Institute in Innsbruck.

gation of this institution has found no evidence for a systematic and intentional policy of mass killing (Perz, 2014).[8] Nevertheless, the circumstances of these deaths warrant a closer examination of the medical records and death certificates, which is currently underway.

Following a long-standing practice in many countries, the Innsbruck Anatomical Institute was legally entitled to receive bodies of executed individuals long before the Nazi period. In practice, however, such deliveries were rare given that capital punishment was abolished in ordinary penal cases after World War I until its reintroduction by the Austrofascist regime in 1934. The last official execution in Innsbruck before this temporary abolishment had taken place on April 19, 1879, when the peasant Johann Kreutzer, aged 30, from Kematen in Tyrol was executed for having strangled his 71-year-old mother for refusing him the rather modest amount of ten Kreuzer (10 kr; nowadays about 1,00 €) to buy tobacco.[9]

On August 1, 1934, 36-year-old Friedrich Wurnig, who had murdered the police major Franz Hickl, was executed following a military special trial.[9,10] However, his body was not forwarded to the Anatomical Institute. The first such case on record is that of Josef Eibl, aged 23, who was sentenced to death by the Innsbruck Court of Justice on January 14, 1938, for a spectacular murder and robbery. He was executed on February 9, 1938, in the courtyard of the Provincial Court.[9,11,12,13] His body was delivered to the Anatomical Institute that same day, where it was dismembered and preserved, the organs being removed and handed over to the Institute of Histology and Embryology (see below).[14] No documents exist concerning their further use or burial.

During the National Socialist period, the ever increasing number of death sentences became the main source of bodies for anatomical institutes throughout the German Reich. The legal basis for this was a decree by the Reichsministerium für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung (Reich Ministry of Science, Education and Culture) dating from February 1939. It awarded the bodies from the Stadelheim prison and execution site to the anatomical institutes of Munich, Erlangen, Würzburg, and Innsbruck (Mühlberger, 1998). Many of the convictions were for acts of political opposition or resistance, but ordinary offenses, too, were persecuted with the utmost severity. Especially in the cases of Eastern European and Soviet prisoners of war, foreign forced laborers, and Jewish victims, the context of persecution in which their lives ended is evident. They were often held in camps where appalling living conditions led to extraordinary numbers of deaths, on top of which they faced ferocious repression including the application of the death penalty for almost any offence.[15]

Among the group of people who were executed in Munich and transferred to Innsbruck, one was registered as Dutch (Pierre van Veen, see below), two were from Poland, one from Belarus, and one from Czechia; the rest of the victims were Germans or Austrians. In the cases of three bodies received from Munich, the Innsbruck Body Register states that a preliminary embalming (injection with Jores' solution) had already been carried out in Munich.[16] This supports the assumption that the bodies were usually collected in Munich by a staff member of the Anatomical Institute, as intended by the corresponding decree of the Reich Ministry of Science (Mühlberger, 1998, p. 59). In some cases the anatomists detected clear signs indicating the previous imprisonment of the executed persons. In the body of a 22-year-old laborer, delivered to the Innsbruck Anatomical Institute in late December 1941, they found, lodged in the esophagus, six slips of paper covered with writing, which the anatomists handed in to the Public Prosecutor.[17]

Military executions also yielded bodies for the Innsbruck Anatomical Institute. Florian Perrasso, aged 28,[5] and Josef Happer,

[8] Such intentional mass murders took place in many other psychiatric institutions, in Austria for example in Gugging and Mauer-Öhling in Lower Austria (Gazdag et al., 2017).

[9] *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, February 9, 1938, "Eine Hinrichtung in Innsbruck", p. 12.

[10] *Tiroler Tageszeitung*, April 23, 1947, "Der Frauenmörder von der Mühlauer Brücke heute hingerichtet – Die erste Justifizierung in Innsbruck in der zweiten Republik".

[11] *Vorarlberger Tagblatt*, January 5, 1938, "Zum Tode verurteilt", p. 3.

[12] *Vorarlberger Tagblatt*, January 10, 1938, "Hinrichtung", p. 6.

[13] *Agrarische Post*, January 15, 1938, "Todesurteil gegen einen Raubmörder", p. 10.

[14] Innsbruck Body Register, entry no. 290.

[15] For example, based on the "decree concerning criminal justice against Poles and Jews" (*Verordnung über die Strafrechtspflege gegen Polen und Juden*) from December 4, 1941 (Schütz et al., 2017).

[16] Innsbruck Body Register.

[17] Innsbruck Body Register, entry no. 404; Innsbruck Register of Receipt and Assignment of Bodies.

Table 1
Bodies of persons executed at Stadelheim.

IBR no.	Date of delivery	First name	Surname	Age	
310	14.02.1939	Karl	Klocker	34	
325	13.02.1940	Josef	Wieder	23	
326	21.02.1940	Gottfried	Hartmann	28	
353	17.05.1941	Johann	Gruber	39	
357	23.07.1941	Anton	Thalmeier	33	
358	26.07.1941	Ludwig	Rutzendorfer	58	
359	26.07.1941	Josef	Bakalarz	22	
361	23.09.1941	Karl	Břich	28	
364	04.10.1941	Bruno	Krawczyk	21	
385	16.11.1941	Georg	Stockmeyer	31	
386	16.11.1941	Jan	Oblamski	21	
387	16.11.1941	Kasimir	Starzak	19	
398	30.11.1941	Johannes	Fleischmann	42	
399	30.11.1941	Josef	Becher	47	
402	12.12.1941	Johann	Wojcik	41	
404	21.12.1941	Gottlieb	Sinn	22	
408	08.02.1942	Franz Xaver	Meier	29	
409	08.02.1942	Erhard	Seiler	20	
416	19.04.1942	Jakob	Siminski	30	
420	10.06.1942	Eduard	Wojcik	24	
421	10.06.1942	Johann	Pressl	29	
422	10.06.1942	Franz	Hütteneder	26	
424	19.06.1942	Christoph	Schwing	42	
431	18.07.1942	Eugen	Heinlein	28	
432	08.08.1942	Valerian	Dombrowyn	24	
433	08.08.1942	Johann	Salwach	19	
436	20.09.1943	Michael	Mühlbauer	37	
437	20.09.1942	Karl	Mühlbauer	38	
438	20.09.1942	Fritz	Mühlbauer	31	
439	20.09.1942	Andreas	Lewczyk	33	
442	11.10.1942	Henryk	Lada	20	
443	11.10.1942	Wladislaw	Ozigblonski	21	
444	17.10.1942	Stanislaus	Ziarkowski	23	
445	17.10.1942	Josef	Beinstein	29	
446	17.10.1942	Josef	Zyla	32	
447	17.10.1942	Anton	Witek	17	
448	17.10.1942	Georg	Kraus	30	
451	05.11.1942	Stefan	Keri	29	
452	05.11.1942	Adalbert	Kalkus	50	
459	26.12.1942	Franz	Barcik	22	
460	26.12.1942	Frantisek	Wiacek	21	
464	14.01.1943	Johann	Klancnik	22	Biographical Traces 2
465	14.01.1943	Johann	Walser	44	
468	23.02.1943	Johann	Moser	37	
469	05.03.1943	Josef	Lederer	31	
473	16.03.1943	Pieter	van Veen	44	
474	16.03.1943	Erich	Tscheber	34	
475	21.03.1943	Josef	Ruppaner	41	
477	13.04.1943	Josef	Kobi	25	
478	13.04.1943	Josef	Kiener	48	
480	24.04.1943	Wladislav	Pytlas	30	
481	24.04.1943	Josef	Hager	33	
482	24.04.1943	Ceslav	Baran	22	
485	04.05.1943	Erwin	Czanek	39	
486	04.05.1943	Josef	Köhler	21	
487	11.05.1943	Franz	Mauracher	58	
488	11.05.1943	Joseph	Reischenböck	53	Biographical Traces 3
489	20.05.1943	Thaddäus	Lesniewski	22	
491	28.05.1943	Therese	Müller	57	

aged 22,[6] were both executed in Innsbruck in the Paschberg quarry (also called Amras quarry) (Warenski, 2013; Müller, 2014).[18] Perrasso was evidently executed by a shot to the head from the side or from behind, since the body register states that his facial skull was to be macerated whereas his "braincase [was] destroyed." On May 15, 1942, his father was informed that Perrasso had been buried on May 7, 1942 in the Western Cemetery in Innsbruck; in actual fact, three of his limbs were being used as late as May 18, 1942, for the dissection course.[19] Happer, on the other hand, was probably killed by one or more shots to the chest, since the body register stated that "the trunk [was] unfit for use". His limbs were used in the institute's dissection course during the academic year 1943/44. There is no information concerning a burial.

Two months after their deaths, the dean of the Innsbruck Medical Faculty informed the Salzburg chief of police that the Anatomical Institute insisted on their right to the bodies of individuals executed

[18] *Tiroler Tageszeitung*, January 30, 2013 [http://www.tt.com/Tirol/6058938-2/erst-jetzt-bekannt-in-amras-gab-es-ns-exekutionen.csp, accessed November 12, 2018]; (Müller, 2014).

[19] Innsbruck Register of Receipt and Assignment of Bodies.

Table 2
Bodies of prisoners of war.

IBR no.	Date of delivery	from	First name	Surname	Camp number	Age	
367	08.11.1941	Stalag XVIII C	Andrei	Schaschkow	49243	19	
368	08.11.1941	Stalag XVIII C	Alexander	Rujew	48043	22	
369	08.11.1941	Stalag XVIII C	Ivan	Vashenko	47395	21	
370	08.11.1941	Stalag XVIII C					
371	08.11.1941	Stalag XVIII C	Josef	Lampika	2021	31	
372	08.11.1941	Stalag XVIII C					
373	08.11.1941	Stalag XVIII C					
374	08.11.1941	Stalag XVIII C	Kirill	Silin	48045	32	
375	08.11.1941	Stalag XVIII C	Nikolai	Kolomiets	47261	33	
376	13.11.1941	Stalag XVIII C			64377		
377	13.11.1941	Stalag XVIII C					
378	13.11.1941	Stalag XVIII C					
379	13.11.1941	Stalag XVIII C	Alexandr	Kuznezow	88750	33	
380	13.11.1941	Stalag XVIII C					
381	13.11.1941	Stalag XVIII C					
382	13.11.1941	Stalag XVIII C	Wassily	Matrwejew	21144	21	
383	13.11.1941	Stalag XVIII C					
384	13.11.1941	Stalag XVIII C					
388	23.11.1941	Stalag XVIII C	Iwan	Daz	1860	32	
389	23.11.1941	Stalag XVIII C					
390	23.11.1941	Stalag XVIII C					
391	23.11.1941	Stalag XVIII C					
392	23.11.1941	Stalag XVIII C					
393	23.11.1941	Stalag XVIII C					
394	23.11.1941	Stalag XVIII C					
395	23.11.1941	Stalag XVIII C					
396	23.11.1941	Stalag XVIII C					
397	23.11.1941	Stalag XVIII C					
401	09.12.1941	Stalag XVIII C/Z	Michail	Kelerow	48034	23	
411	15.02.1942	Stalag XVIII C/Z	Schalwa	Podscharschwin	47647	28	
412	03.03.1942	Stalag XVIII C/Z	Wasilli	Sawinko		32	
417	29.04.1942	Stalag XVIII C/Z	Andrei	Mania	47731	24	
418	16.05.1942	Arb.Kdo. H.V.23	Uschan	Dschulagiaze	47685	22	Biographical Traces 4
419	22.05.1942	Stalag Jenbach	Serimey	Poddubski		27	
423	17.06.1942	Stalag Jenbach	Iwan	Toltschew	41127	28	
425	27.06.1942	Stalag Jenbach	Fedor	Gorbunow	41192	23	
427	02.07.1942	Stalag Jenbach	Vasilije	Lawlinski	4082	37	
428	01.07.1942	Stalag XVIII C/Z	Myo	Mikajlica	2604		
479	14.04.1943	Stalag XVIII C/Z	Klementiy	Yavdoshchuk	7205	35	

[a]The names were adapted according to the German spelling in the camp records, where available.

Table 3
Bodies of Jewish victims.

IBR no.	Date of delivery	First name	Surname	Age	
430	11.07.1942	Kurt (Israel)	Neufeld	51	
440	25.09.1942	Martha (Sarah)	Mehab	50	
441	25.09.1942	Elisabeth (Sarah)	Mehab	51	
450	22.10.1942	Recha (Sarah)	Mayersohn	72	
456	08.12.1942	Gertraud	Levy, née Müller	70	
457	08.12.1942	Max	Levy	75	
492	10.11.1943	Theresia (Sarah)	Reich	77	Biographical Traces 1

in Salzburg. The transports were to be carried out by train, using crates provided by the institute.[20] Despite this intervention, only one such case was subsequently registered: the body of Eugenius Wojtak, an 18-year-old Pole, was sent from Lofer in Salzburg to Innsbruck on October 31, 1942, having been executed by hanging.[7]

In addition, the bodies of seven persons of Jewish descent were taken over by the Innsbruck Anatomical Institute, establishing a direct link to the Holocaust (Table 3). Kurt Neufeld and the sisters Martha and Elisabeth Mehab committed suicide by hanging, Gertraud and Max Levy died from an overdose of sleeping pills,[21] and Recha Mayersohn's cause of death was registered as "heart paralysis after heart defect (Phanodorm!)", which also suggests suicide.[22] This rise in the number of suicides is an indicator of the despair caused by the antisemitic persecution during this time throughout the German Reich, including in Tyrol.[23] The last entry before the end of the war, Theresia Reich, refers to a 77-year-old Jewish woman whose body was delivered in October 1943, after she had died at the Reichenau labor camp on her way to Auschwitz (Biographical Traces 1).

[20] Dean of the Medical Faculty of Innsbruck, Franz Josef Lang, to the Salzburg chief of police, July 15, 1942 (Goller and Tidl, 2012).

[21] "*Suicid durch 4g Veronal*"–Veronal® (Barbital) was the first soporific agent in the group of barbiturates and until the 1960s was frequently mentioned in the literature as a suicide method.

[22] Phanodorm® (Cyclobarbital) is a barbiturate that was widely used as a soporific agent. It was–and continues to be–used as a means of suicide.

[23] For more details on the wave of suicides among Jews following the *Anschluss*, see Botz (1988), pp. 98-105, and Moser (1978), pp. 177-8.

Table 4
Bodies from the Psychiatric Hospital in Hall in Tyrol.

IBR no.	Date of delivery	First name	Surname	Age
289	20.01.1938	Josef	Widmoser	76
297	04.07.1938	Franz	Taxacher	41
301	21.09.1938	Valentin	Holzer	68
307	02.01.1939	Josef	Leuprecht	31
308	12.01.1939	Maria	Streng	65
311	18.02.1939	Marianna	Hoppichler	66
323	07.11.1939	Johann	Noll	83
324	31.01.1940	Ernestine	Heiss, née Müller, wid. Weber	59
327	16.03.1941	Franz	Folie	34
329	01.06.1940	Alois	Altenmarkter	67
330	18.05.1940	Maria	Dietze, née Paul	57
331	01.07.1940	Fortunat	Pötsch	84
339	30.01.1941	Karoline	Haller	65
342	28.02.1941	Theresia	Faurek	85
344	27.03.1941	Hedwig	Waldner	79
347	15.04.1941	Agathe	Grabher, née Herre	75
360	30.07.1941	Rosa	Bentele (Rentele?)	74
366	04.11.1941	Anton	Messner	78
455	28.11.1942	Katharina	Rüsch	83
458	14.12.1942	Anton	Gutleben	81

3. An early enquiry into the Innsbruck Anatomical Institute

Documents of the French occupation authorities show that the delivery of bodies to the Innsbruck Anatomical Institute during the war became the object of comprehensive investigations in the early post-war period, which unearthed quite a number of interesting details. The first hint, contained both in a 1945 publication by the French Information Service on war crimes and in a private letter to an occupation officer stationed in Innsbruck, came from a Catholic priest who had been a prisoner at the Buchenwald concentration camp. He alleged that a collection of more than 2,000 specimens had been sent from Buchenwald to the University of Innsbruck (Aronéanu, 1945).[24] The priest was Heřman Josef Tyl (1914–1993), the later prior and abbot of the Premonstratensian Monastery of Tepl/Teplá (Czech Republic) who was arrested in 1942 and deported to Auschwitz, where he worked as a hospital aide, and later in 1943 to Buchenwald (Nováková, 2013). Most probably these "specimens" were histological specimens and the recipient was therefore the Institute of Histology and Embryology (Fig. 2).

Although Tyl's allegations included specific details (see below), the authorities did not follow them up. Only two years later, when the suspicion arose that mortal remains of citizens of the Allied forces had been used for scientific purposes, did the affair take a new turn. Following information received from a US professor, the Ministry of Justice in Paris wrote to the Health Division of the French occupation administration in Tyrol concerning the suspicion that the Anatomical Institute had "issued instructions to obtain bodies of absolutely healthy persons who had, in full health, been gassed, hanged, or shot for that purpose." At the time, however, no further investigations were launched, even though the information implied that war crimes might have been committed. Only when the Belgian Repatriation Mission approached the French occupation authorities with the demand to help them find the remains of an (allegedly) Belgian citizen executed in Stadelheim were things set in motion.[25] The results of the investigations were rather embarrassing for those responsible at the Anatomical Institute, Felix Sieglbauer and Gustav Sauser. Pieter van Veen – the person in question[26] – had been beheaded in Munich on March 15, 1943 at the age of 43. Unfortunately, the existing documents reveal very little about the circumstances of his death or his background – except that he was not of Belgian but of Dutch nationality, and that he had been convicted as an allegedly "dangerous habitual criminal". Immediately after the execution his body was transferred to the Anatomical Institute, where it was preserved in formalin (Fig. 3).[27,28]

Fig. 2. The Innsbruck Anatomical Institute after the bomb hit in December 1943. (Photo: Medical University of Innsbruck).

After the war Felix Sieglbauer (1877–1974) remained head of the institute (a post he had held since 1918) until he was dismissed in 1946 due to his Nazi ties (NSDAP membership no. 7,889.365, admitted on March 1, 1939) (Oberkofler and Goller, 1999). Neither he nor his successor, Gustav Sauser (1899–1968), had worried about the provenance of the bodies delivered to the institute during the Nazi era, nor had they thought to inform the occupation authorities about bodies from that period remaining in storage. Thus the body of Pieter van Veen was dissected by students as late as the winter term of 1947/48, more than two and a half years after the end of the war and only a few weeks prior to the French investigations.[29] In June 1947, Sauser had pointed out the lack of bodies for educational and research purposes to the Federal Ministry of Social Administration and declared his willingness to fetch them from wherever they were available (Mühlberger, 1998).

[24] Archives des Affaires étrangères (La Courneuve), AUT 3122, 22/14, Le Messager de la Haute-Savoie, Thonon-les-Bains to "Mon Capitaine", February 19, 1946.
[25] Archives des Affaires étrangères, AUT 3122, 22/14, Haut Commissariat de la République Française en Autriche, Mission de Contrôle, Section Sécurité, Service Sûreté Tyrol, Fournier to Chef de la Section Sécurité, August 17, 1948.
[26] Archives des Affaires étrangères, AUT 3122, 22/14, "Liste des corps provenant de la Prison de Muncih-Statelheim [sic] et enyovés à l'Institut Anatomique d'Innsbruck", February 19, 1948.
[27] Archives des Affaires étrangères, AUT 3122, 22/14, Haut Commissariat de la République Française en Autriche, Mission de Contrôle, Section Sécurité, Service Sûreté Tyrol, Sauer to Chef de la Section Sécurité, February 16, 1948.
[28] Innsbruck Body Register, entry no. 473.
[29] Archives des Affaires étrangères, AUT 3122, 22/14, Haut Commissariat de la République Française en Autriche, Mission de Contrôle, Section Sécurité, Service Sûreté Tyrol, Sauer to Chef de la Section Sécurité, February 16, 1948.

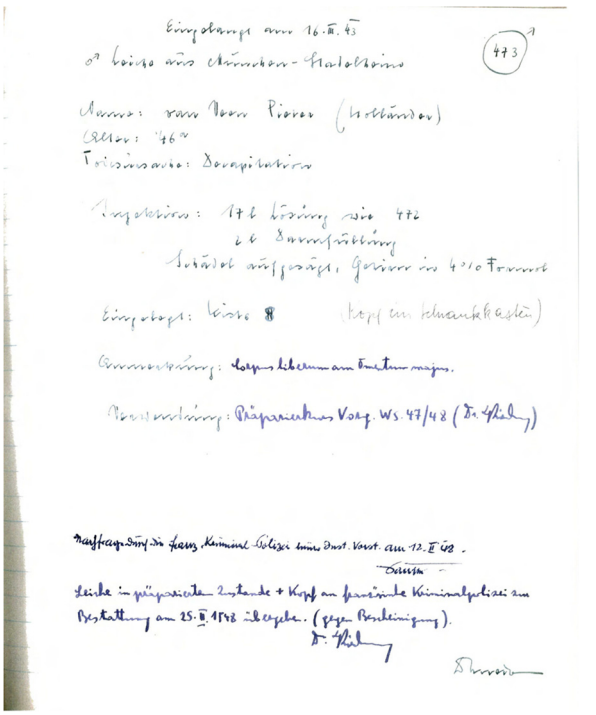

Fig. 3. Page from the Innsbruck Body Register for Pieter van Veen. (Photo: Medical University of Innsbruck).

In 1948, the university was forced to admit that not only the mortal remains of Pieter van Veen were kept at the Anatomical Institute, but other bodies from the Nazi era which might have been those of Nazi victims or Allied citizens as well. In a letter to the dean of the Medical School (who was none other than the head of the Anatomical Institute and the Institute of Histology and Embryology in personal union, Gustav Sauser), the head of the French Control Mission expressed his severe displeasure about the fact that neither the institute nor the university had seen fit to inform the occupation authorities, demanding an immediate and detailed explanation of this "extraordinarily serious affair" and implicitly threatening everybody involved with dire consequences.[30]

Eventually, the investigations of the French Military Security unearthed facts that went well beyond the scope of the original suspicions. As we have seen, since 1939 the Anatomical Institute in Innsbruck had not only received ever larger numbers of bodies of persons executed in Stadelheim for political and other offenses, but also from prisoner-of-war camps (see also Table 2: Bodies of Prisoners of War). In 1943, Sieglbauer had to put a stop to these practices since the morgue of the institute was filled to capacity, and a direct hit in the course of the first major Allied air raid on Innsbruck on December 15, 1943 had made the storage of further bodies even more difficult. Sieglbauer told the French authorities that he had refused to take further deliveries from Munich because he had been sent the body of a 17-year-old adolescent — however, the only recorded victim of that age, Johann Salwach, had already been executed in August 1942, rendering this explanation implausible.[31]

The institute had until then received close to sixty bodies from the Stadelheim execution site and preserved them for teaching and research. (By comparison, between 1918 and 1937 the institute had received on average 18 per year, among them only one body of an executed person; see also Fig. 3). The names and other information were recorded, so that in many cases it is possible to trace the use not only of whole bodies, but even of individual body parts.[32] According to staff members, the macerated bones had not been disposed of after dissection; rather, they had been reassembled into whole skeletons and stored.[33]

By contrast to the victims of the judicial system, the identification of 39 bodies procured from three prisoner-of-war camps proved much more difficult — so far the names of only 19 persons could be ascertained (see also Table 2). In the camp in Landeck (Stalag XVIII C/Z) – which provided seven bodies – about four to five thousand prisoners of war were assigned to the construction of a railway line, the majority of them from the Soviet Union. The first body of a prisoner of war who was transferred from the Landeck camp (Stalag XVIII C/Z) to the Anatomical Institute was Mikhail Kelerow (camp number 48034),[34] deceased on December 8, 1941; another six soon followed (see also Table 2). Three further bodies came from the camp in Jenbach, probably also Soviet soldiers. From the camp in St. Johann/Pongau (Stalag XVIII C), 28 bodies had been transferred within only fifteen days, however without any information revealing their identities; the camp identification number was noted in the Innsbruck Body Register in just ten cases. This posed a problem for the French authorities since these bodies might have been those of missing French citizens who were being searched for by their families. At the end of the war, this question might still have been possible to solve, but this chance had been missed due to the failures of the university as well as those of the occupation forces.[35] Sieglbauer admitted to the French security forces that the medical faculty or possibly even the dean himself had sought to get bodies from the prisoner-of-war camps and that certainly their origin was known. As for himself, however, he denied having ever taken note as to where the bodies received by his institute came from or having been responsible for their acquisition, and he claimed total ignorance concerning the content of the Geneva Convention and its provisions with regard to the treatment of prisoners of war, including in the case of death.[36]

When Gustav Sauser took over the institute from Sieglbauer, who retired both because of his age and for political reasons (Oberkofler and Goller, 1999), there were still about thirty bodies dating from the Nazi era in storage. Until the French authorities started their investigations – and even thereafter – these bodies were routinely utilized for dissection courses. As late as February 1948 the investigators still found thirteen such bodies, among them that of Pieter van Veen. Sieglbauer explained to the French officers that he had always seen the bodies as "scientific material",

[30] Archives des Affaires étrangères, AUT 3122, 22/14, Délégué Général, Chef de la Mission de Contrôle to the dean of the Innsbruck Medical School, February 18, 1948.

[31] Archives des Affaires étrangères, AUT 3122, 22/14, "Liste des corps provenant de la Prison de Muncih-Statelheim [sic] et enyovés à l'Institut Anatomique d'Innsbruck", February 19, 1948. The last body of an executed person was delivered from Stadelheim on May 28, 1943: Innsbruck Body Register, entry no. 491. According to information provided by Mathias Schütz, Johann Salwach was actually 19 years old, but this was not known to Sieglbauer at the time.

[32] Innsbruck Body Register; Innsbruck Register of Receipt and Assignment of Bodies.

[33] Archives des Affaires étrangeres, AUT 3122, 22/14, Haut Commissariat de la République Française en Autriche, Mission de Contrôle, Section Sécurité, Service Sûreté Tyrol, Fournier to Chef de la Section Sécurité, February 19, 1948.

[34] Innsbruck Body Register, entry no. 401.

[35] Archives des Affaires étrangeres, AUT 3122, 22/14, Haut Commissariat de la République Française en Autriche, Mission de Contrôle, Section Sécurité, Service Sûreté Tyrol, Fournier to Chef de la Section Sécurité, February 19, 1948.

[36] Archives des Affaires étrangeres, AUT 3122, 22/14, Haut Commissariat de la République Française en Autriche, Délégué Général, Chef de la Mission de Contrôle to Haut Commissaire de la République Française, Vienna, March 8, 1948. In April 1941, the curator of Innsbruck University, Richard Knöpfler, had sent a letter of complaint to Stadelheim Prison because the Innsbruck Anatomical Institute had only received three bodies from there in the two preceding years: Bundesarchiv Berlin, R 3001/21478, 56.

never entertaining the idea of regarding them as human remains.[37] His successor Gustav Sauser took a very similar approach, which meant that the French authorities could not take any action against Sieglbauer without incurring the risk of discrediting Sauser as well.

In light of their initial investigations, the French authorities considered different possibilities for criminal sanctions. It soon became clear that the university staff could not legally be held responsible for the victims' deaths, whose bodies they had accepted after the fact. This stood in contrast – for example – to the aforementioned situation in Strasbourg, where August Hirt ordered the murder of 86 Jewish prisoners in the Struthof concentration camp near Natzweiler (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946–1949; Lang, 2013; Toledano, 2016, 2017). One option considered was to accuse them of covering up crimes according to the Austrian Penal Code; however, such a charge would have required the rather difficult proof of intent. "Desecration of corpses", on the other hand, could not be considered a punishable crime in this context, since the educational and scientific utilization of bodies (including those of executed persons) was common international practice. Punishment for disregarding the orders of the Allied occupation forces would have required that such an order existed – to their displeasure, however, the French authorities found out that before 1948 nothing had been done on their side to inspect the Anatomical Institute or, at least, to demand information on Allied nationals. Thus the only remaining option was prosecution for "activities against the interests of the Allied authorities", but this was considered legally too weak by the prosecution office. Moreover, suitable candidates for an indictment were lacking. Although Gustav Sauser had played a rather inglorious role in the affair, an indictment was deemed inopportune since he himself had been persecuted under the Nazi regime.[38] Having been a close friend of Kurt Schuschnigg (head of Austria's authoritarian government from 1934 until its overthrow in 1938 by the Nazi Anschluss),[39] in 1938, Sauser had to spend two months in prison for political reasons and lost his position as director of the First Anatomical Institute in Vienna, where he had succeeded Julius Tandler after his death in 1936 (Arias, 2004).

Sieglbauer, as head of the institute during WWII and a former member of the NSDAP, was in principle a better candidate for prosecution; he was, however, already 77 years old, and it was moreover to be feared that, if tried, he would implicate his successor as well. The public prosecution department furthermore expressed concerns that a trial would not be well received in the medical community and even by the general public, and that the French occupation forces risked a major loss of face in case of an acquittal or a mild sentence.[40] Not least due to his advanced age, the consequences for Sieglbauer were finally limited to a reprimand by the head of the French Control Mission who, nonetheless, regarded the utilization of bodies of prisoners of war (though not that of persons executed in Stadelheim) as a violation of the Geneva Convention amounting to a war crime and therefore suggested further inquiries.[41] The Ministry of Justice in Paris demanded the resumption of the investigations in May 1948, not being convinced that the first suspicion – that the anatomists in Innsbruck had been involved in the murder of the prisoners of war – had been entirely refuted. Only after further investigations, which did not produce any new results, did the French authorities regard the matter as closed.[42]

The mortal remains of Pieter van Veen were cremated and buried in the Western Cemetery of Innsbruck on February 25, 1948. By order of the French authorities, this was also to be done with the other bodies from the Nazi era.[43] However, it cannot be conclusively determined if, and in what manner, these were indeed buried. In the case of Pieter van Veen, which had originally triggered the French investigations, it was documented that parts of the body were utilized for the beginners' dissection course even after the recorded handover date of February 25, 1948. They were issued for the beginners' dissection course on December 22.[44] Only five further entries out of the 59 bodies from Stadelheim contain the reference (slightly varying from case to case) "dissected body + head delivered for burial to the French criminal investigation police on March 22, 1948."[45] If the entries in the body register are correct – and there is nothing to indicate the opposite – this means that evidently not all body parts remaining at the institute were handed over to the French authorities. Concerning the 39 prisoners of war, a handover to the French authorities was recorded in only four cases. Even then, in at least one of these cases further use of the body was documented in later years (in the winter term of 1950/51). The most recent documented use of a body from the group of prisoners of war took place in the dissection course for beginners during the winter term of 1956/57.[46] The great majority of the bodies of doubtful origin (according to the existing documents a total of 44) remained at the institute even after the French investigations had finished. The only indication of burial in the body register is the crossing out of the respective body's number which, however, is missing in some cases.[47] Moreover, it should be noted that even when a burial did take place, this is not proof that no preserved parts of the body remained at the institute.

4. The use of victims' body parts in other institutes in Innsbruck

In early 1946, as mentioned above, a private letter was addressed to a French occupation officer in Tyrol containing information about the use of prisoners' bodies for scientific purposes in Innsbruck.[48] The sender (probably a journalist from *Le Messager de la Haute-Savoie*) reported the already mentioned account by former Buchenwald prisoner Heřman Josef Tyl: "at the end of October 1943 [. . .], a complete collection of healthy organ specimens comprising over 2,000 specimens had to be sent to the University of Innsbruck. These specimens were valuable because they came from absolutely healthy people who had been either hanged or sent to the cremation furnaces" (Aronéanu, 1945). Tyl was almost certainly referring to histological sections, and not macroscopic (anatomical)

[37] Archives des Affaires étrangeères, AUT 3122, 22/14, Haut Commissariat de la République Française en Autriche, Mission de Contrôle, Section Sécurité, Service Sûreté Tyrol, Fournier to Chef de la Section Sécurité, February 19, 1948.

[38] Archives des Affaires étrangeères, AUT 3122, 22/14, Haut Commissariat de la République Française en Autriche, Mission de Contrôle, Section Sécurité, Service Sûreté Tyrol, Fournier to Chef de la Section Sécurité, February 19, 1948.

[39] Archives des Affaires étrangeères, AUT 3122, 22/14, Haut Commissariat de la République Française en Autriche, Mission de Contrôle, Section Sécurité, Service Sûreté Tyrol, Fournier to Chef de la Section Sécurité, February 19, 1948.

[40] Archives des Affaires étrangeères, AUT 3122, 22/14, Haut Commissariat de la République Française en Autriche, Mission de Contrôle, Tribunal Supérieur, Parquet, "Note sommaire sur l'affaire de l'Institut anatomique", February 20, 1948.

[41] Archives des Affaires étrangeères, AUT 3122, 22/14, Haut Commissariat de la République Française en Autriche, Délégué Général, Chef de la Mission de Contrôle to Haut Commissaire de la République Française, Vienna, March 8, 1948.

[42] Archives des Affaires étrangeères, AUT 3122, 22/14, Le Délégué Général, Chef de la Mission de Contrôle, Nadau (Adjoint), to Haut-Commissaire de la République Française en Autriche (Comité Exécutif), Vienna, August 27, 1948.

[43] Archives des Affaires étrangeères, AUT 3122, 22/14, Haut Commissariat de la République Française en Autriche, Délégué Général, Chef de la Mission de Contrôle to Haut Commissaire de la République Française, Vienna, March 8, 1948.

[44] Innsbruck Register of Receipt and Assignment of Bodies.

[45] Innsbruck Body Register; Innsbruck Register of Receipt and Assignment of Bodies.

[46] Innsbruck Body Register; Innsbruck Register of Receipt and Assignment of Bodies.

[47] Innsbruck Body Register; Innsbruck Register of Receipt and Assignment of Bodies.

[48] Archives des Affaires étrangères, AUT 3122, 22/14, Le Messager de la Haute-Savoie, Thonon-les-Bains to "Mon Capitaine", February 19, 1946.

specimens. The addressee was therefore most likely the Institute of Histology and Embryology, headed since 1939 by Jürg Mathis (1900–2005) (Huter, 1969). Mathis was dismissed in 1945 because of his ties to the Nazi regime (Goller and Oberkofler, 2003). Gustav Sauser became the successor of both Sieglbauer and Mathis, initially (in 1945) taking over the Institute of Histology and Embryology, and – after the retirement of Sieglbauer in 1946 – also the Anatomical Institute (Sauser, 1958), heading both institutes in personal union until his death in 1968. When the French Authorities started to investigate the "Institut d'Anatomie" in 1948, they were probably not aware of the fact that during the Nazi era these had been two separate institutes, therefore failing to investigate the histological collections.

As late as 1980, Prof. Eugen Olbrich, a former assistant of Prof. Sauser and from 1968 to 1973 director of the Institute of Histology and Embryology, used histological specimens derived from Nazi victims for student examinations. According to an eyewitness, these specimens were kept in an old-fashioned wooden box containing hundreds of histological preparations used for examinations. *"All of them had a yellowed paper label on the right side, which Olbrich usually asked his candidates to read aloud. Quite often it read 'decap.' The professor's question: 'What does 'decap.' mean?' was usually met with ignorance and a shake of the head. 'Well, those are the specimens derived from persons who had refused to perform military service and such who had been convicted of subversion of national defense and been executed for their crimes during the Nazi era in Tirol', the professor explained; not being able to answer this question, however, did not mean that the candidate had failed the test"* (Brezinka, 2007). When Christoph Brezinka *"at that time prepared an article for the student newspaper MedPress and asked the dean whether he would countenance an honorable burial of these specimens, his face darkened – 'let that go, I'll talk to Olbrich', he rasped; I did not pursue the issue further, and the 'decap.' specimens no longer turned up in examinations"* (Brezinka, 2007).[49]

A recent investigation at the Institute (now Division) of Histology and Embryology resulted in the identification of approximately 200 microscopic tissue preparations (slides) pertaining to at least five individuals who had been executed during the Nazi period. The slides are contained within a collection of several thousand others, dating from before, during and after WWII. In several of these cases, the source can be clearly identified as the Leipzig Anatomical Institute under the direction of Prof. Max Clara. Clara had sent, for example, finished specimens pertaining to a 39-year-old individual, but also blocks of preserved organs for further histological processing. Several publications from the Innsbruck Institute of Histology and Embryology published during the National Socialist period mention that bodies of executed persons were used in research. For some of these body parts, the respective authors acknowledged as the source Prof. Max Clara in Leipzig, confirming this connection.[50]

The provenance of the other specimens found is still unclear, however, and it is also not certain that the recently discovered specimens contain those mentioned in the witness account quoted above, since the latter bear the label "*hinger.*" (*hingerichtet* or executed), not "decap." for "decapitatus/decapitated." Further analysis is necessary to determine, if possible, other sources. It is also unlikely that they were obtained from the bodies delivered to the Anatomical Institute from Stadelheim. First, in many cases, especially from the years 1942 and 1943, too much time (up to seven days) had passed for histological processing (this should take place as soon as possible, at most within 24 h of death). Second, the main (anatomical) Innsbruck Body Register mentions only one case in which body parts were handed over to Jürg Mathis at the Institute of Histology and Embryology (concerning a man who was executed in Innsbruck in February 1938, prior to the *Anschluss*).[51]

Fig. 4. Memorial plaque (Stolperstein) in Meran/Merano for Theresa Reich (1866–1943). Auschwitz is erroneously named as the place of death. (Foto: Manfred K./CC BY-SA 3.0).

The members of the Institute of Histology and Embryology clearly did not depend on the Anatomical Institute for the procurement of body parts or specimens, but used their own networks for this purpose; a detailed analysis of these sources is still pending, including the question of the provenance of the "examination slides", and the possible delivery of the histological specimens from Buchenwald mentioned above.

The Institute of Forensic Medicine, too, in several cases was involved in the scientific exploitation of Nazi victims.[52] For reasons that remain unclear, the first body delivered to Innsbruck from Stadelheim (of Karl Klocker, see Table 1), was transferred to the Anatomical Institute via the Institute of Forensic Medicine on February 14, 1939.[53] Since the decree assigning the bodies of executed persons to the institutes of anatomy was not issued until four days later (Mühlberger, 1998), it is possible that this first body from Munich was delivered based on a local initiative, perhaps facilitated by personal contacts. In two further cases there is evidence that the Institute of Forensic Medicine took over body parts for its own purposes. The entry concerning Georg Hartmann, executed in Stadelheim on February 21, 1940, contains the following comment: "The skin tattoos are to be forwarded to the Institute of Forensic Medicine." In 1942, the head of Franz Mair was handed over

[49] If this account is correct and the specimens were indeed marked with the label "decap." for "decapitated", they must have come from individuals who had died under the guillotine. This would exclude a connection to the delivery from Buchenwald alleged by Tyl.

[50] Erich Brenner, Sabine Hildebrandt, Andreas Winkelmann, Research Using Bodies of Victims of the National Socialist Regime at the Anatomical and Histological Institutes of Innsbruck: Identification of Victims (forthcoming).

[51] Innsbruck Body Register, entry no. 290.

[52] On the history of forensic medicine under National Socialism, see Herber (2002).

[53] Innsbruck Body Register, entry no. 310; Innsbruck Register of Receipt and Assignment of Bodies. The Institute of Forensic Medicine in Innsbruck attracted attention in 1989 in connection with the case of the Jewish dentist Mordok Halsmann from Riga, who had died under mysterious circumstances in the Zillertal in 1928, and whose head was still being kept at the institute. The institute's director, Prof. Henn, doggedly refused to surrender the head for burial until eventually the interment could take place in 1991, see Neugebauer (1998).

Fig. 5. Joseph Reischenböck (1890–1943) was executed for his resistance against the Nazi regime. His body was used until at least 1949 at the Innsbruck Anatomical Institute. (Photo: DÖW).

to the same Institute for unspecified experiments.[54] Further body parts went to the Institute of Neurology ("two limbs: nerve-muscle preparation for Neurology, penis for Neurology summer term of 1946") and, as late as 1965, to the Clinic for Surgery the "right auricle via Dr. Tschikof to Prof. Wilflingseder for a transplantation model of the auricular cartilages").[55] The head of Fritz Mühlbauer, executed in Munich in February 1942, was handed over to an unnamed French surgeon "for dissection" (*für Präparation*) on March 21, 1949. The most recent utilization of bodies from Stadelheim for dissection courses occurred in February 1951.[56]

5. Conclusion

The history of anatomy during National Socialism is deeply intertwined with the regime's policies of repression and persecution. The persecution of Jews and political opponents, the application of capital punishment even for minor offences, and the exploitation of prisoners of war and civilian forced laborers opened up manifold opportunities to procure human bodies in numbers that in many cases exceeded the actual demand. The Innsbruck Anatomical Institute, as we have shown, was no exception. It received bodies of executed political opponents, victims of the extension of the death penalty to political and economic offenses, and of common criminals alike; those of foreign nationals convicted on the grounds of excessive regulations designed to maintain the Nazi regime's power over populations deemed "racially inferior"; of prisoners of war who had died under the catastrophic conditions reigning in the camps; and of Jewish victims of persecution.

One unusual aspect in the case of the Innsbruck Anatomical Institute is the fact that over the seventy years since the end of WWII these issues escaped public scrutiny despite targeted inquiries on two separate occasions, namely the investigation by the French occupation authorities in 1948 and the research done by Vienna University's "Pernkopf Commission" in 1997/98. These opportunities were mainly missed because the attitude of the anatomists in charge after 1945 did not markedly differ from their predecessors, seriously hampering the French plans to prosecute those responsible. The "Pernkopf Commission," in turn, relied on misleading information provided by Pernkopf's former assistant Platzer, and failed to pursue the issue with the insistence that would have been required.

Biographical Traces 1: Theresia Reich

On October 10, 1943, the arrival of the body of Theresia Reich was registered at the Innsbruck Anatomical Institute. According to the preserved documents, she had died of heart failure and bronchopneumonia.[57] She is almost certainly identical with Teresa Reich, born in 1866, who was deported from her hometown Meran/Merano to the detention camp of Reichenau in Innsbruck on her way to Auschwitz. A memorial plaque in Meran for Teresa Reich (Fig. 4) wrongly indicates Auschwitz as her place of death. In reality, she must have died in Tyrol before she could be deported to Auschwitz.

Reich was arrested together with 24 other Jewish citizens of Meran on September 16, 1943 by the infamous "Schintlholzer group."[58] Among the arrested Jews, almost half were over 70 years old, one man was 83. The youngest was a seven-year-old girl. They were interrogated by the local Gestapo chief and robbed of their valuables before being deported to Reichenau that same evening (Geiger, 2004). The camp, which usually held about 500 prisoners, was erected in an open area between Innsbruck and Hall in Tyrol, consisting of wooden barracks and a barbed wire fence. Mainly used by the Gestapo as a slave labor and concentration camp, from 1943 it was also used for Jewish prisoners. Four of the group of 25 deportees from Meran died at Reichenau.[59]

[54] Innsbruck Body Register; Innsbruck Register of Receipt and Assignment of Bodies.
[55] Innsbruck Body Register, entry no. 475; Innsbruck Register of Receipt and Assignment of Bodies.
[56] Innsbruck Body Register, entry no. 475; Innsbruck Register of Receipt and Assignment of Bodies.
[57] Innsbruck Body Register, entry no. 492; the entry gives the name as "Reich Theresia (Sarah)", with "Theresia" being the German notation; all references based on her descent from Meran, South Tyrol, use the Italian notation "Teresa". The entry, furthermore, states that her body was delivered from Hall in Tirol, but this is likely a mistake.
[58] The arrest list gives her birth date as January 25, 1868 (Geiger, 2004), but according to another source it was January 25, 1866, which is in accordance with the information in the Innsbruck Body Register: http://www.nomidellashoah.it/1scheda.asp?nome=Teresa&cognome=Reich&luogo_ARR=Merano&giorno_n=25&id=6435 [accessed November 12, 2018].
[59] Amtsrat Sokopf, Amtsbescheinigung der Städtischen Friedhofsverwaltung Innsbruck, 20 July 1945 (Geiger, 2004; Steinhaus, 1994).
[60] Innsbruck Body Register, entry no. 464.
[61] "Urteil des Volksgerichtshofs in der Strafsache gegen Josef Reischenböck aufgrund der Hauptverhandlung am 30. Oktober 1942", DÖW 19.793/148.
[62] Innsbruck Body Register.
[63] Innsbruck Body Register, entry no. 418.
[64] DÖW 20.000/c110.
[65] Innsbruck Body Register, entry no 485.

Biographical Traces 2: Johann Klancnik
Johann (Iwan) Klancnik,[60] son of a Carinthian Slovene and a German-speaking mother, was a train dispatcher in the Gastein Valley (Salzburg province). Over a longer period, he stole valuables from suitcases. The Salzburg district court acting as *Sondergericht* sentenced him to death based on the "Regulation against parasites" from 1939; the fact that he belonged to the Slovene minority certainly did not work in his favor. On January 8, 1943 he was executed in Stadelheim at the age of 22. His body served as "material" in the dissection course of 1943/44. No information is available regarding a burial of his remains.

Biographical Traces 3: Joseph Reischenböck
Born 1890 in Salzburg, Joseph Reischenböck was headmaster of a secondary school in Salzburg. After the Anschluss, he was removed from his post because of his Christian Social orientation, but could remain as a teacher. In the spring of 1941, shortly before the German attack on the Soviet Union, he joined the communist resistance. Until his arrest by the Gestapo in January 1942 (Fig. 5), Reischenböck was engaged in the production of pamphlets dealing with subjects such as the service of Catholics in the communist party or attacks on tanker trains with burning arrows. In his defense, he claimed that it was the fear for the lives of his two sons at the front that had compelled him to join the Communist Party and attempt to stop the war against Russia. The court sentenced him to death for aiding the enemy and for high treason. The death sentence was carried out in Stadelheim on May 7, 1943.[61] The Body Register of the Anatomical Institute documents in detail how Reischenböck's body was anatomically exploited over several years, evidently without being restrained by the French investigations and the resulting scandal. The accuracy with which the institute's staff kept records concerning the use of individual body parts contrasts starkly with the tenacity with which the origin of the mortal remains and the victims' fates were ignored: parts of Reischenböck's body were used in the topography course of the winter term of 1946/47, in both the dissection course for beginners and for advanced students in the winter term of 1947/48, and as late as December 22, 1948, in the dissection course for beginners.[62]

Biographical Traces 4: Uschan Dschulagiaze
The carpenter Uschan Dschulagiaze[63], who had been born in the Georgian SSR in 1920, was taken prisoner of war on August 5, 1941 in Berdychiv, Ukraine by the German forces. He was transferred to Stalag XVIII B in Spittal/Drau and was assigned to the labor battalion H.V.23, *Heeresbauamt* (army building authority), in Landeck on November 22, 1941. According to his personnel card, Dschulagiaze died from "pulmonary tuberculosis with wet pleurisy and cardiovascular system insufficiency" on May 15, 1942. His body was transferred to the Innsbruck Anatomical Institute the next day, where it was used for examinations by Prof. Sauser in the winter term of 1946/47. Parts of the body were later used for the beginners' dissection course during the academic year 1956/57. According to an entry dating from February 12, 1957, several others of his body parts were macerated. No information is available regarding the whereabouts of these specimens or a possible burial of the remains.

Biographical Traces 5: Erwin Czanek
Erwin Czanek was born in 1906 in Karlsbad. In 1943 he was tried together with his brother Karl before the *Sondergericht* in Eger. The prosecution accused the two brothers of having hoarded fabrics in their tailor shop, selling them at inflated prices or exchanging them for rationed goods. Erwin Czanek was additionally accused of having listened to the BBC and to Swiss radio stations. Moreover, the brothers were classified as "half-Jews". Karl Czanek was sentenced to six years in prison, while his brother Erwin received a death sentence. Erwin was executed in Stadelheim on April 30, 1943.[64] His body arrived in Innsbruck on May 4, 1943 and was used for teaching purposes until long after the end of the war; the last entry in the body register dates from January 13, 1947. There is no information on his burial.[65]

Author contributions statement

Herwig Czech performed archival and literature research, analyzed the relevant sources, wrote the first draft (in German) and edited the final text. Erich Brenner is principal investigator and coordinator of the research project "Die Innsbrucker Anatomie im Dritten Reich" (The Innsbruck Anatomical Institute in the Third Reich). He digitized and analyzed the handwritten Innsbruck Body Register in order to identify individual victims, and took part in the drafting and editing of the final text.

Ethics statement

Dr. Czech and Dr. Brenner declare that no human subjects were used for researching this article.

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