

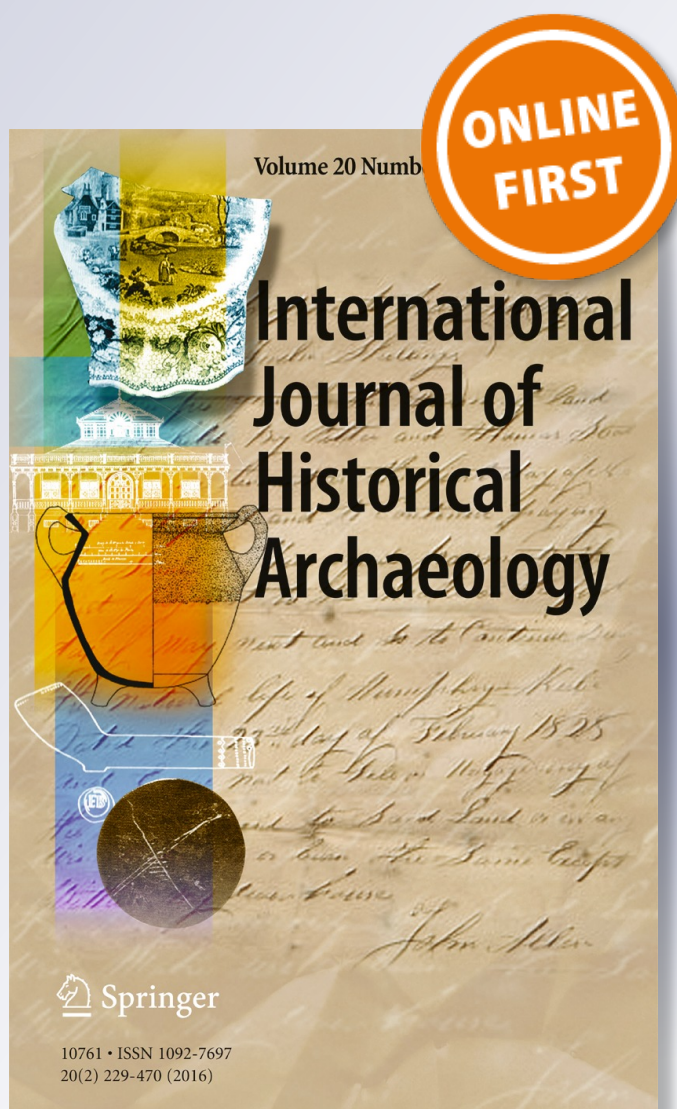
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Modern Class Society in the Making: Evidence from Palatinate Gravestones of the Nineteenth Century

Christoph K. Streb¹

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Abstract This study of nineteenth century gravestones of the Palatinate confirms sociocultural transformations, along the dimensions of social identity and ideological convictions, from rank society to a capitalist class society. Moreover, the sampled gravestones reveal the family as a decisive unit of social identity, with a simultaneous withdrawal into the private sphere. These findings contradict the usual historic narrative of that period and region and suggest a politically withdrawn, passive and disillusioned society that offered little, if any, opposition to an authoritarian state, as long as economic opportunities provided a chance for social ascent.

Keywords Gravestones · Nineteenth century · Identity · Ideology

Introduction

The material culture of burial and commemoration in the southwestern German region of *Pfalz* – henceforth referred to as the Palatinate – provides clear evidence of significant sociocultural transformations during the nineteenth century, thereby challenging prevalent interpretations of the historic record. The collected data shows a changing understanding of social identity over time, developing from the deceased being mortal and respected for individual achievements within a larger community to a secular person whose relatives and friends grieve their loss and express their emotions explicitly. Eventually, this understanding of identity developed towards individuality appearing to be secondary to the social status and aspiration of a family, who needs to constrain its emotions and tends to express its economic success and social status and/or aspirations via its choice of material and the size of the memorial. Furthermore,

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the changing choice of material and the size of the gravestones of the different social classes during the nineteenth century might be an indication of an evolving capitalist societal structure. This assumption can be understood as important material evidence of the sociocultural origins of class society in southwest Germany and resembles work by Binford (1971), Brown (1971), Hodder (1982) or Parker Pearson (1999).

Strikingly, with the exception of the Franco-Prussian War or World War One, direct references to key historic events and ideologies, for example, related to the French Revolution, *Vormärz*, or the liberal and democratic movement during 1848–49, are absent. This is surprising, as one could hypothesize that such political movements and events, highlighted in any historic account of that period, will impact on a society as on an individual's personal vita, thus also becoming materialized on a gravestone, similarly to the before mentioned armed conflicts. However, during the second half of the nineteenth century, differences in the choice of material, the size of gravestones and the increasing mentioning of occupation on them indicate the development of a capitalist class society and related ideology (cp. Clark 1987). In contrast to Reimers (1999) and Collier (2003), this would support Parker-Pearson (1982), Rugg (2000) or Burke (2006), who claim – with regard to ideology – that graveyards present an idealized, manipulated social configuration rather than being a mirror of past social realities (cp. Barnett and Silverman 1979).

In respect of the grave markers analysed for this article, this would provide strong support for the interpretation that this particular sample does not reflect social reality as well, but rather an idealized version of it. In this alternative reality, there appears to be no space for political events or struggles, or for ideological conflict, outside the socially acceptable. On the contrary, as this article will show, a personal retreat into the private sphere by, most notably, the family — a social unit clearly distinct from the public — seems to dominate observable transformations of identity and ideologies, as does a revival of religion, which is quite unexpected considering the often proposed secular nature of the nineteenth century. In this context, a graveyard can be understood as a *safe zone*, protected from the harsh realities outside, dedicated to private grief and commemoration, while at the same time emulating certain norms and conventions related to class affiliation and awareness, influencing forms of grief and commemoration, hence indicating a sociocultural trend (cp. Barnett and Silverman 1979).

This article uses the recent findings of a gravestone study conducted under the supervision of the University of Leicester (UK) in the southwestern German region of the Palatinate. The aim of this study was to identify in what ways the political and socioeconomic transformations during the *long nineteenth century* (Hobsbawm 1962, 1975, 1987) in the Palatinate are reflected in the data that can be collected from sampled gravestones of this period and region, especially concerning the transformations' impact on social identity and ideology. The primary method of analysis in this study is a diametric, frequency-based visualization of key dimensions regarding social identity and ideology, similar to the well-known battleship diagrams (e.g. Deetz 1996; Deetz and Dethlefsen 1967; Mallios and Caterino 2007). As the presented results will show, despite some deviations from an idealized chronological development regarding the historic record, the findings allow an interpretation along cultural symbols and actions that best fit the identity and ideology of a class society in the making. Such interpretation might hold the potential to provoke a renewed discussion regarding the impact of the so called *Biedermeier* period – characterized by society's withdrawal

into the domestic and the non-political during the aftermath of the Congress of Vienna – on German mentality. This might also apply to the German *Sonderweg* into the twentieth century, i.e. the former idea and ideology of Germany's *special path* of modernization, independent from and superior to, for example, Western democratic developments, relying on a reactionary, traditional elite and manifested in specific social mentalities and social classes (Blackbourn and Eley 1980; Wehler 1995).

The Historic Record: Socio-Cultural Transformations in Nineteenth Century Germany

Even though it is clearly an oversimplification, the nineteenth century in Germany can be summarized as marking the rapid transformation from a rank society into a class society. Taking the large amount of literature on this into consideration, and especially noting that there appears to be a general consensus, the following discussion of two seminal authors working on social transformations in Germany during this period illustrates why and how such classes developed. Both authors refer to the same phenomena, approach the subject from different angles, but reach the same conclusions nonetheless.

In his seminal contribution to the political and socioeconomic development in Germany during the nineteenth century, Wehler (1987, p. 4) especially describes the time between 1845 and 1849 as the *German Double Revolution* comprising a successful industrial and a failed political revolution. Importantly, the author stresses that, during these decades, German society experienced an irreversible and historically unique process of transformation with dubious outcomes. The society of the time identified with the early liberalism and spawned new political movements, parties and clubs that were anti-aristocratic, patriotic and demanded equality, freedom of speech and the press (cp. Wehler 1987, p. 5). The labour movement has its origins in early industrialization, but it took almost until the end of the nineteenth century before it could be distinguished as independent from the bourgeoisie. Besides a number of micro-level changes in people's daily lives, Wehler (1987, p. 4) highlights the rise of industrial capitalism and the advance of agrarian capitalism, which lead to the development of new social classes. This process was characterized by the effects of industrial revolution and market capitalism, both peaking in Germany during the mid-nineteenth century, the influence of liberalism, nationalism, and bureaucracy, as well as secularism, increasing market-conform education, and a growing market for publications and communication. Such developments had a direct impact on how people lived and worked, and especially the chances and opportunities for social ascent. For example, while the agricultural sector was still dominating, it lost relative relevance in terms of the new class of industrial workforce and later also white-collar employees. The characteristics of such new modes of work organization and circumstances determined new forms of social identity and ideology, resulting in the formation of new social classes.

Nipperdey (2013), another seminal author conducting historical research on this particular spatial and temporal subject, largely supports Wehler (1987). Most importantly, he validates the relevance and importance of the industrial and political revolution(s) before and during the *long nineteenth century*, as well as their impacts on social identities and ideologies. He begins his extensive study with the impacts that the

Napoleonic Wars and Napoleon's subsequent direct and indirect rule over large parts of Germany had on the country's modernization (Nipperdey 2013, p. 11). Napoleon's troops not only ended the 1,000-year reign of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nations and annexed the regions west of the River Rhine, but they also forced the remaining kingdoms in Germany to reform their antiquated political structures. These developments could only be superficially reversed after 1815, and their legacy became part of a complex interdependency of other factors.

After the events of the French Revolution, the partial occupation of Germany by French troops, and the forced modernisation of countries that sought to resist Napoleon's direct influence, the former rank society co-existed for some time with the newly formed classes who defined themselves in terms of the mechanisms, rules, demands, and merit principle of the capitalistic market economy. As Wehler (1987, p. 142) puts it, these processes took place beyond the control of, and often went unnoticed by, those forced into new social constellations. The gentry, usually accounting for less than 1 % of the total population at any time, had lost most of its titles, legal, political and economic advantages by the beginning of the nineteenth century. The bourgeoisie had already successfully enforced the merit principle, contrary to the gentry's birth right, as the leading system for social advancement and had become the politically leading and economically decisive social strata, recruiting itself from the new urban propertied, educated and, often, entrepreneurial class (Wehler 1987, p. 188). Nipperdey (2013, p. 255) confirms the decline of the gentry by first highlighting the rise of civil society and, second, the application of the merit system rather than social rank at birth and the beginning of a class society, in which status is determined by an individual's position within the economic production process and by the ownership of capital. On an individual level, Nipperdey (2013, p. 264) – importantly – observes that this civil society abandons the communal role of a person as found in the feudal society for a much more individualistic self-understanding. Nipperdey (2013, p. 266) hypothesizes that this individualization also provided a fertile ground for liberalism, nationalism, socialism, and identification with superior ideas and ideologies of all sorts of newly founded clubs, parties and organizations, which provided new orientations for the deracinated individuals seeking to define their social identities in this modern society. Again, such developments were mirrored by the emergence of new social classes, reflecting a new reality of life and related class awareness.

Wehler (1987, p. 65) identifies the slow beginning of industrialization since approximately 1775 and a final revolutionary breakthrough at the end of the 1830s and beginning of the 1840s, which reached maturity, as well as economic and sociopolitical sustainability by 1873–9. In his opinion, the rise of class and the decline of rank society is again the main outcome of this development. Wehler (1987, p. 241) pays specific attention to the rising working class, social proletarianisation and pauperism, which is closely linked to the rise of capitalism. For Germany, this meant that the economic, social, political, cultural, and ideological characteristics of this class were only in their early stages before 1848. Only after the breakthrough of the industrial revolution during the two following decades did class crystallise as a sociocultural and politically distinct factor. The working class soon encompassed unskilled and skilled labourers. For them, the factory was more than just a place of production; it was understood as a social community and the dominion of the owner, who exercised strict, patriarchal and autocratic control and sovereignty over the workforce, extending far into the

private sphere (Wehler 1987, p. 244). According to Nipperdey (2013, p. 178), after 1850, Germany's industrialization process peaked, with the national product doubling until 1870, by which time Germany had not only drawn level with other industrialized nations, but was about to surpass them. Entrepreneurs played a key role; they integrated their Protestant work ethic into their economic endeavours, and daily lifestyles, which were characterized by their mistrust and aversion of the gentry with its symbols and hedonistic lifestyles. The gentry's lifestyle was in sharp contrast with the bourgeois focus on family, modest spending and general asceticism (Nipperdey 2013, p. 208). As the overarching economic ideology and paradigm, capitalism became dominant in all aspects of life (cp. Nipperdey 2013, p. 178), resulting in new social class configurations.

Wehler (1987, p. 459) notes a remarkable consolidation of the churches in Germany after 1815, especially after the dramatic secularization experience in 1803. It appears that the end of the Napoleonic Wars triggered a revived need for spiritualism after the difficult years that could be interpreted as a "test of faith." The Catholic Church was revived spiritually and consolidated the power of the Pope. Protestants were challenged by internal liberalism. However, neither faith provided answers to the increasing pauperism and social inequality challenges, as well as the increasing agnostic trend among all the social classes. Nipperdey (2013, p. 403) confirms that, for the duration of the nineteenth century, the churches maintained important – political, cultural and social – power. Despite forced modernization due to the pressure of secularization, the churches maintained their influence – also in the private sphere. They even found themselves instrumentalized by an indifferent state for which moral education and obedience to a higher authority were expedient.

Identity and Ideology in the Research Context of Burial and Commemoration

Not only are gravestones conveniently and non-intrusively accessible artefacts that are often easy to date and provide much data (Bashford and Sibun 2007; Tarlow 1997, 1999, 2005), they can also tell us about socio-cultural changes in the past and even about society in the present (e.g. Baugher and Winter 1983; Mytum 2006, 2009; Veit 1999). Ariés (1976) points out that burial practices allow many tangible and intangible insights about the deceased, the bereaved, and the societies in which they are embedded. Collier (2003, p. 728) suggests that the "memorialization of individuals reflects society's attempts to deal with death. In an effort to create a kind of symbolic immortality, relatives attempt to create a memorial that displays, in a favourable way, who the deceased was [...]. The choices family members make over inscriptions, which reveal an attitude toward death through the summation of a life, are both personally meaningful and socially normative." Deetz and Dethlefsen's (1967) and Deetz's (1977) work drew the attention of a number of scholars, who tested his theories, largely confirming his theories and often adding new perspectives and additional data (e.g. Baugher and Winter 1983; King 1985; Veit 1999). In their literature review of articles published in *Historical Archaeology* between 1967 and 2003, as well as in *Northeast Historical Archaeology* between 1971 and 2004, Veit et al. (2009) show that, however, very few publications focus on gravestones – a trend reflected in other journals for the

discipline, which is only changing slowly. The research and publications by organizations and projects, such as the *Association for Gravestone Studies* in the US, the *Cemetery Research Group* located at the University of York in the UK, and the project *RIP* at the University of Luxembourg, are notable exemptions that help promote the topic and extend our knowledge. This is despite the warning by Joseph (2009) suggesting that although the influence of the seminal works by Dethlefsen and Deetz (1966) has inspired historical archaeologists, the multidisciplinary of cemeteries and mortuary art might prove too big a challenge.

More recent scientific research deals with a number of issues concerning the sociocultural information that can be gained from gravestones. Reimers (1999, p. 147) considers funerals and graveyards as a whole as “communicative symbolic actions for construction of ethnic and cultural identity,” also in the active construction of individual and social identities. Reimers cites Ariés (1976), van Gennep (1960) and Myerhoff (1984) to underline the roles of burial rituals in creating a collective identity. Collier (2003, p. 727) supports this by claiming that the graveyards of any period can be perceived as replicas of past cultural patterns reflecting the historical record, especially when concerning people’s changing social identity over time. In doing so, she also refers to the seminal works by Seale (1998) and Tuchman (1994). The bereaved try to remember the dead by allowing them the same social position in death as in life. According to Collier (2003), this also includes the changing institutional perspectives on life and death by, for instance, regarding individuality in a society such as the transition from modernity to postmodernity.

According to Mytum (2004, 2006), the eighteenth century’s spread of individual, permanently marked burial places reflects global changes in social relationships and changing attitudes in a world of increasing material consumption. Without identifying any one major reason for this change, Mytum (2006) claims that increased economic opportunities, increasing material consumption, individuality and the need to permanently express social status form an overarching topic. Cannon et al. (1989, p. 438) discuss several cases in detail, hypothesizing relationships between certain mortuary practices, such as certain gravestones and socioeconomic change characteristics, individual and class status, which includes competition and status aspirations, and even the role of fashion in how people express mourning. In this sense, any recordable dimensions of burial and commemoration could be linked to a changing social identity over time.

Since the call for a historical archaeology of capitalism (e.g. Leone et al. 1987; Leone 1995, 1996; Leone and Potter 1999), researchers have had to acknowledge the political dimension of their work (Hamilakis 2012). Lukács (1971) already claims that it is the historian’s task to unravel modern class-based ideologies, including slavery, sexism, and racism issues, as well as other forms of exploitation. In this sense, Parker-Pearson (1982, p. 110) states that “the material expression and objectification of idealized relationships formulated about the dead by different individuals and groups within society” are more a form of social manipulation than a snapshot of social reality. Rugg (2000) transfers this right to the death, burial and commemoration field by emphasizing that cemeteries and burial grounds of any kind are always also public and political, actively shaping collective identity and ideology.

This paradigm seems to be confirmed by the work of McGuire (2003), who correlates commemoration practices, with changes in ideology (cp. Cipolla 2011, p. 151). From an ethnohistorical perspective, Gorman and DiBlasi (1981) research

mortuary ideology concerned with religious, social and economic factors during the eighteenth and nineteenth century in South Carolina and Georgia (U.S.). Interestingly, they propose a direct link between gravestone iconography and ideology. Gorman and DiBlasi (1981, p. 80) first define variables concerning the factors under scrutiny and thereafter correlate them statistically with certain motifs, thus significantly confirming and advancing the seminal work of Deetz and Dethlefsen (1967) by means of a processual archaeological perspective.

More recent research, such as that by Mallios and Caterino (2011), seeks to combine past research efforts into a more complex understanding of how symbols work in relation to mortuary ideology. Mallios and Caterino (2011, p. 431) refer to the work of Veit (2009) when mentioning that, during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, symbols like skulls on gravestones had been associated with fear and awe of death and its inevitability. Later, cherubs symbolise the belief in an afterlife, and urns and willows reflect the mourning of the bereaved, an interpretation recently being challenged by the work of, for example, Heinrich (2014). Such studies are contrasted with, but linked to, the works of McGuire (2003), as well as of Leone and Potter (1999), that refer to capitalism and ideologies that enable exploitation.

Research Background

Dethlefsen and Deetz (1966), Deetz and Dethlefsen (1967) and Deetz (1996) are usually cited as some of the first gravestone studies that apply seriation and stylistic changes over time to draw conclusions about the changing attitudes towards death in New England during the observed timeframe. Most notably, they use battleship diagrams to track changes in gravestone design over time. This research subject, and sometimes the analytical method as well, had many followers, such as Crowell (1981), Crowell and Mackie (1990), Baugher and Winter (1983) and Stone (1991), although these authors did not necessarily follow their structuralist approach. A few authors, such as Cannon et al. (1989) and McGuire (2003), take a Marxist position, while Tarlow (1999, 2012) even includes personal emotional aspects (cp. Cipolla 2011, p. 150). Even today, many of these studies have the application and use of tables, matrices, graphs and diagrams in common, which are used to visualize and reveal diachronic changes in certain aspects and dimensions of death, burial, and commemoration found on gravestones. Cannon et al. (1989, p. 440) use battleship diagrams to illustrate trends in the shapes of monument design. Tarlow (1999, p. 57) uses matrices, tables, and diagrams to organise key gravestone features and to underline her argumentation. The exact same analytical method can be found in the seminal work of Mytum (2004, 2006, 2009). One example of this method, proving its relevance and value for related research even today, is found in Mallios and Caterino (2011). The authors apply the same technique to determine gradual changes in the design, size and choice of gravestone materials of in Southern California during the nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries. The identified patterns are then compared and matched with historical data in order to draw conclusions about the changing mortuary attitudes and practices, as well as the environmental, cultural, and economic reasons of these changes. Thus, the recent example of Mallios and Caterino (2011), but also the aforementioned seminal examples, can serve as a blueprint for this study's data analysis.

The study on which this article is based, aims to research the sociocultural transformations the mainly Christian population of the Palatinate experienced during the *long nineteenth century*, a specific time frame referred to by seminal works of authors such as Hobsbawm (1962, 1975, 1987), Kocka (2002) and Osterhammel (2007, 2009), who defined this as the time between the French Revolution (1789) and the start of the First World War (1914). The spatial dimension of the Palatinate – i.e., the applied and relevant borders – is, however, difficult to specify. These borders changed during the considered timeframe; as a region, the Palatinate's exact borders are ambiguous to this day. Before 1792, what is currently known as the Palatinate, belonged to the *Kurpfalz*, which is a territorially highly fragmented and volatile construct (Kohnle 2011). During the French Revolutionary Wars, large areas to the left of the Rhine River were annexed between 1792 and 1797 and became officially French in 1801 as a result of the Treaty of Lunéville (Hersche 1973). Until 1815, most of the Palatinate was part of the Département du Mont-Tonnerre (*Département Donnersberg*), named after the Palatinate's highest point, or the Département Bas-Rhin. After Napoleon's defeat, the Palatinate became part of the newly formed *Bayerischer Rheinkreis* under the rule of the Kingdom of Bavaria, which later became a member state of the German Empire (*Deutsches Reich*) under Prussian predominance (Geiger et al. 1981). These borders were maintained until the end of the First World War, covering most of the *long nineteenth century*. Together with an area which is currently part of the German state *Saarland*, the borders are approximately congruent with today's Palatinate. It needs to be stressed here that the term “borders” in this case can only be used figuratively, as the Palatinate only describes a regional construct. Figure 1 shows the Palatinate as a Bavarian province in 1900 and as part of the German state of *Rheinland-Pfalz* as it is today, organised into several districts and general regions of Nordpfalz, Vorderpfalz, Südpfalz and Westpfalz. This comparison shows that there is a significant overlap between the two maps, which allows defining a spatial dimension. Hence, for the purpose of sampling, the region Palatinate will be defined within the borders of the

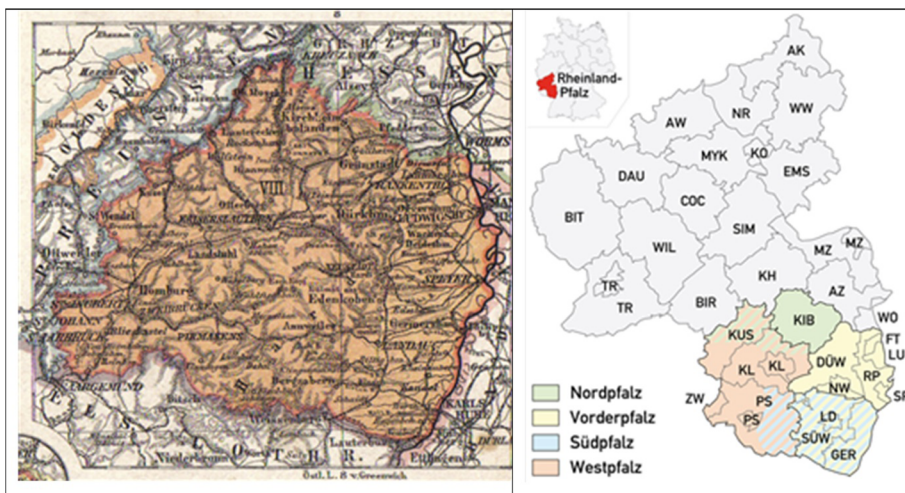


Fig. 1 The Palatinate around 1900 and today (Source: <http://de.wikipedia.org>)

Bayerischer Rheinkreis, as indicated in Fig. 1, as this is slightly larger than today and theoretically allows for more data collection options.

Regarding actual data sampling and collection, a more detailed research strategy is required. Strangstad (2013) serves as a suitable introduction and general guideline that can be adapted according to one's specific needs. First, the available data need to be assessed, which means that graveyards with a suitable gravestone population need to be identified. Unfortunately, only a very small number of gravestones that can be dated within the *long nineteenth century* survive in the Palatinate. The exact reasons for this can only be speculated; however, the following issues probably had a strong impact on the available sample: first, poorer social classes, usually the majority of the population, might not have had permanent grave markers, or at least not made of durable material, until relatively recently in modern history. These people might never have had commemoration by means of a gravestone, or, if they did, and it was made of wood, iron or even sandstone, many might have decayed already. Second, graves are reused after a government-regulated period of time, which differs per graveyard. Once a family abandons a grave, the gravestone is removed and usually destroyed, unless the authorities find reasons to preserve it. Last but not least, locals in the Palatinate repeatedly report major graveyard clearings during the 1960/70s when many old graves, especially in churchyards, were completely dismantled. In many cases, the gravestones were not considered worth preserving or recording.

These are just hypotheses why the available sample in the Palatinate, especially in the countryside, is extremely small, compared to the number of gravestones found in other countries. During the data collection, the author did not come across any well maintained graveyard with a representative sample. Moreover, while governmental historical preservation agencies sometimes record single gravestones of interest and archive them, others, usually of less elaborated design and presumably erected by lower classes, are neglected. In order to avoid any bias as far as possible and to also gain a more extensive and complete sample, the researcher was forced to travel to and screen older graveyards in the region, hoping to find surviving old gravestones. These explorative excursions were often without result, or the grave markers were weathered beyond recognition.

Hence, the resulting sample can be most closely described as an opportunity sample, irrespective of the graveyard type and/or Christian denomination, because no other, more strategic, sampling procedure would have produced acceptable results. Moreover, bias towards larger graveyards or cities, such as Kaiserslautern where there is a larger sample, had to be avoided. The researcher attempted to cover urban, suburban and rural areas within the described borders of the Palatinate. It needs to be added that the gravestones in any graveyard, irrespective of denomination, are remarkably "homogenous": without further knowledge of the deceased's denominational background, it is very difficult to distinguish such, which is why the sample is treated as a representation of the general Christian population of that period, irrespective of denomination.

Older Jewish gravestones, whether in separate cemeteries or included in Christian ones, are numerous and omnipresent in Germany, as they are in the Palatinate (although their preservation condition varies). However, these were not considered as part of the sample for this study, for the following main reasons: first, even though the Jewish community was well represented and integrated in the Palatinate during the *long nineteenth century*, they were at any time only a minority of about 1–3 % of the total population

(Barkai 1985, p. 301). Second, even though the influence of Jewish culture is historically relevant in Germany to this day, this minority's differences with those of the Christian majority, concerning customs regarding death, burial and commemoration, require the sample to be limited to the latter. From a broader perspective, this might appear to be an oversimplification of the socio-cultural realities at any time and place. However, not only would the consideration of detailed differences in religion and denomination go well beyond the scope of this study, it is also doubtful whether, given the sample size, any additional value could be added regarding the dimensions under scrutiny.

Considering all of the above mentioned limitations, and in order to still gather a strong sample, old and new maps of the Palatinate, information from private collectors, photographers, volunteer organisations interested in or responsible for old cemeteries, as well as specific publications by volunteer organisations (e.g., BHU 2007) and governmental historical preservation agencies (e.g., in the state of Rheinland-Pfalz, the *Generaldirektion Kulturelles Erbe* in Mainz) were consulted. With this information, the municipalities, cities and general areas in the Palatinate could be identified that not only still had graveyards with at least some examples of old gravestones from the period of interest, but which also promised, due to their historic significance or their catchment area, to collect valuable and representative data. Figure 2 provides an

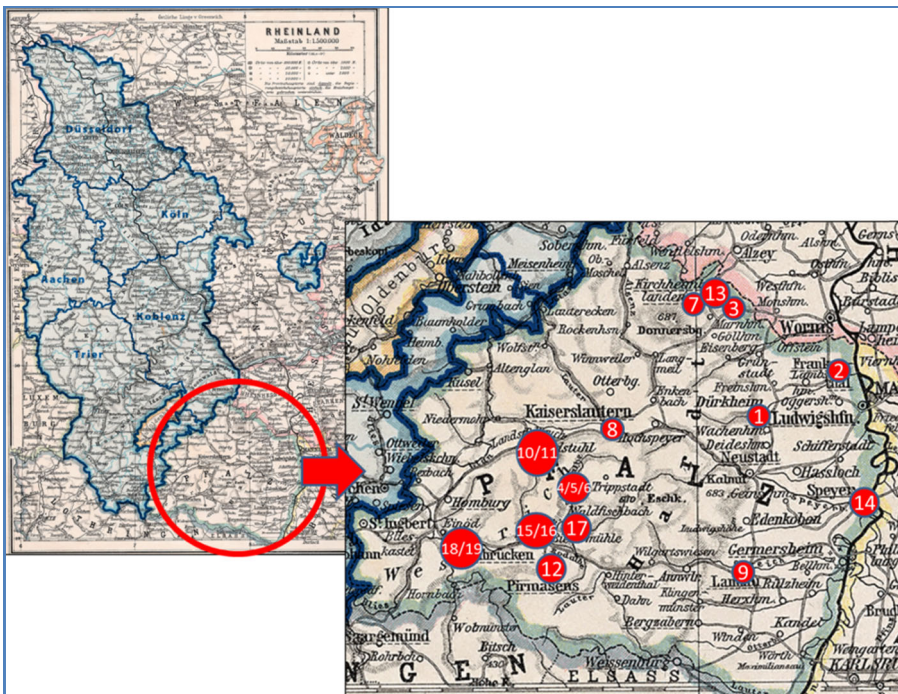


Fig. 2 Selected graveyards in the Palatinate (1905 map adapted from <http://commons.wikimedia.org>) 1: Bad Dürkheim; 2: Frankenthal; 3: Gausersheim; 4/5/6: Horbach (village church, old and new graveyard); 7: Kirchheim-Bolanden; 8: Kaiserslautern; 9: Landau; 10/11: Landstuhl (old graveyard at city centre and the new graveyard); 12: Pirmasens; 13: Rittersheim; 14: Speyer; 15/16: Thaleisweiler-Fröschen (village centre and abandoned graveyard Meisenbach); 17: Waldfishbach-Burgalben; 18/19: Zweibrücken (city centre and suburban)

overview of the selected 19 cemeteries within the borders of the Palatinate during 1905. As can be seen, an attempt was made to achieve a geographically well-balanced coverage of the total Palatinate.

For actual data collection, the size, shape, decoration, and textual content of gravestones were considered, including the demographic and biographical information, symbols, and epitaphs (cp. Mytum 2004), as long as they were part of the grave marker. No archival data were consulted, as this study's intention was to "let the stone speak." A gravestone recording form was applied, which, regarding its layout and structure was directly based on the standard available on www.scottishgraveyards.org.uk, which reflects this study's UK-based research context. An effort was made to identify the full population of available stones at each site that matched the sample criteria, if the total number of markers were below 25, or not much more. If there were significantly more gravestones at one site, no more than approximately 35 stones would usually be randomly sampled. This method avoided some sites having a quantitative bias compared to others and ensured a balanced overall sample, as each site was represented by a relatively comparable number of stones. In total, 19 graveyards were sampled and 352 gravestones recorded. Table 1 shows how many gravestones could be collected at each location.

Despite the detailed data collected from the gravestones, elaborate quantitative statistical methods of analysis were inappropriate given the relatively small sample size. Furthermore, an analysis can only address dimensions, such as social identity, ideology, and especially emotion, with certain limitations. Much of the data collected

Table 1 Overview of locations and number of recorded gravestones

#	Location	Gravestones
1	Bad Dürkheim	25
2	Frankenthal	27
3	Gauersheim	10
4	Horbach (church)	4
5	Horbach (old)	10
6	Horbach (new)	1
7	Kirchheim-Bolanden	23
8	Kaiserslautern	53
9	Landau	10
10	Landstuhl (old)	20
11	Landstuhl (new)	21
12	Pirmasens	30
13	Rittersheim	12
14	Speyer	25
15	Thaleischweiler-Fröschen (village)	9
16	Thaleischweiler-Fröschen ("Meisenbach")	24
17	Waldfishbach-Burgalben	5
18	Zweibrücken (centre)	36
19	Zweibrücken (suburban)	7
	Total	352

are qualitative in nature, such as the epitaphs and the meaning of symbols. Hence, the researcher's subjective interpretation can be neither eliminated nor ignored. Consequently, it was necessary to combine — where needed and appropriate — simple frequencies and statistics with a more qualitative analysis of what could be found. First, all the collected data were transferred to a spread sheet organised per gravestone, which includes the various recorded dimensions as described and exemplified by the detailed example given in the *Gravestone Recording Form* (SG 2014). This spreadsheet provided a great deal of specific data that required processing for further analysis. Some information gained from the gravestones turned out to be either so infrequent, or ubiquitous, within the sample that no deductions could be made regarding the issues under scrutiny in this study. For instance, almost no gravestone can be identified as being in its original position in the cemetery. Hence, this and other precise localizing information, such as orientation, cannot be used to make reliable deductions from this fairly small sample. The same holds for a stonemason's mark, painted surface, variations in lettering and inscription techniques that occur too infrequently in this sample to be considered. Similarly, virtually all stones show at least the family name, given name, birthdate, and date of death — unless the inscription has been destroyed and/or has worn away. Consequently, such data are also not considered in the detailed analysis.

A second spread sheet was used for further data processing and aggregation. First, not many gravestones erected precisely between 1789 and 1800 could be added to the sample. To compensate for this, a summarizing category was created in which all the stones indicating erection before 1800 were included. This encompassed stones from the first and second halves of the eighteenth century, regardless of their actual date. This was necessary and possible, as there would otherwise not have been a sufficient sample of pre-1800 stones. In addition, all the eighteenth-century stones depict very distinct and almost typical stylistic, symbolic, and textual characteristics, which allowed them to be placed into one general, summarizing category and at least a general deduction to be made about pre-1800 gravestones. Another concession was necessary regarding the date sample timeframe. To gain at least some indication of the important changes at the beginning of the First World War, stones dated until the 1918 were also added to the sample. Consequently, 10-year time segments were selected — in keeping with, for instance, Mytum (2006) and Mallios and Caterino (2011) — regarding the observable changes over time, starting with pre-1800 and ending with 1910–18. Gravestones without an identifiable erection date, but which clearly fell into the 1800–50, or 1850–1900 category because of certain design features, were subcategorised accordingly, resulting in additional columns in the figures below.

Regarding the stone types and other materials, the memorial class, associated features, as well as symbols, sculptures, etc., only the most recurring categories were considered, with the residual summarized into the *Other* category. It is noteworthy here that the categorization for material was rather oversimplified, as is common in the related literature. All stone material qualifying as “hard stone” was categorized as granite, regardless of more precise typology. Inscriptions indicating ideologies focus on specific recurring factors, such as a reference to a certain class or societal rank, the nation state, military service, or government service. Explicit mention of a doctoral degree, aristocratic rank, an occupation requiring high education, or craftsmanship, are expressions of class consciousness, while explicit mentions of military service or death during war indicate ideologies regarding the nation state and the military. To provide a

better grasp of the differences in the gravestone dimensions, only the height was selected as a distinct factor and categorised into five main clusters, ranging from very small (<50 cm) to “monuments” (>300 cm).

Changing Dimensions of Sampled Gravestones over Time

An increasing number of gravestones were recorded in each decade, with a major increase in the period from 1891 to 1910 (see Fig. 3). While this could be due to the rather incomplete overall surviving population of earlier 19th century gravestones in the Palatinate, this finding corresponds with the results in Tarlow (1999), Mytum (2006) and Mallios and Caterino (2011), who, in their respective studies, indicate the general growth of external commemoration since the start of the eighteenth century and mention the increasing number of surviving gravestones during the nineteenth century.

Within this overall sample, the gravestones undergo a consistent change regarding their dimensions over time. Figure 4 shows that individual graves became relatively less common in the Palatinate during the nineteenth century and that more graves were used to bury two or more people. This general trend is only briefly interrupted between 1851 and 1860 and apparently stagnates after 1900.

The overall clear decrease in individual burials during the considered time frame could at first sight be interpreted as due to economic pressure, or to a decrease in the commemoration of the individuality of the deceased and/or of the bereaved in the Palatinate during the nineteenth century. However, as further data will show, this decrease coincides with a more expansive choice of material and an increasing number of family graves, which are often large, lavishly designed and decorated (cp. Veit and Nonestied [2008, p. 112ff]. Hence, economic constraints appear to have been less of an issue during the entire mid-nineteenth century (cp. Mallios and Caterino 2011). One

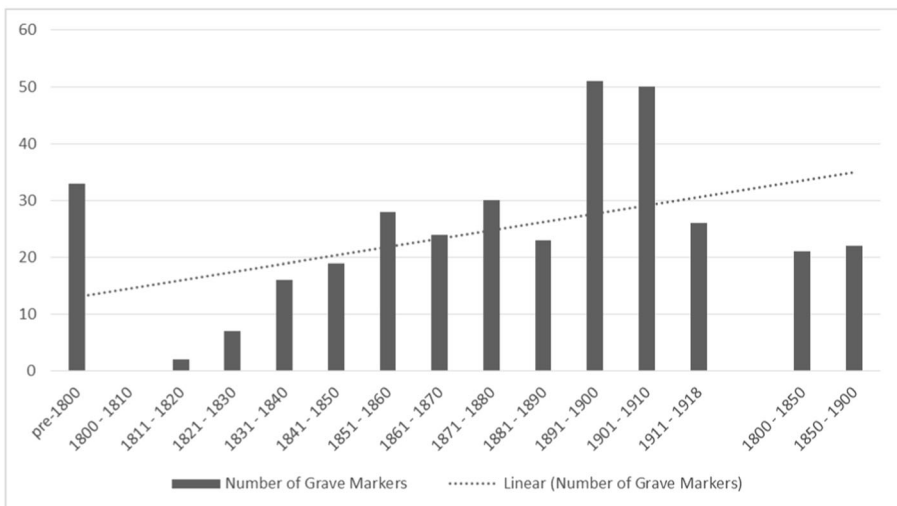


Fig. 3 Chronological distribution of the total sample (columns “pre-1800,” “1800-50,” and “1850-1900” refer to gravestones whose dates can only be estimated)

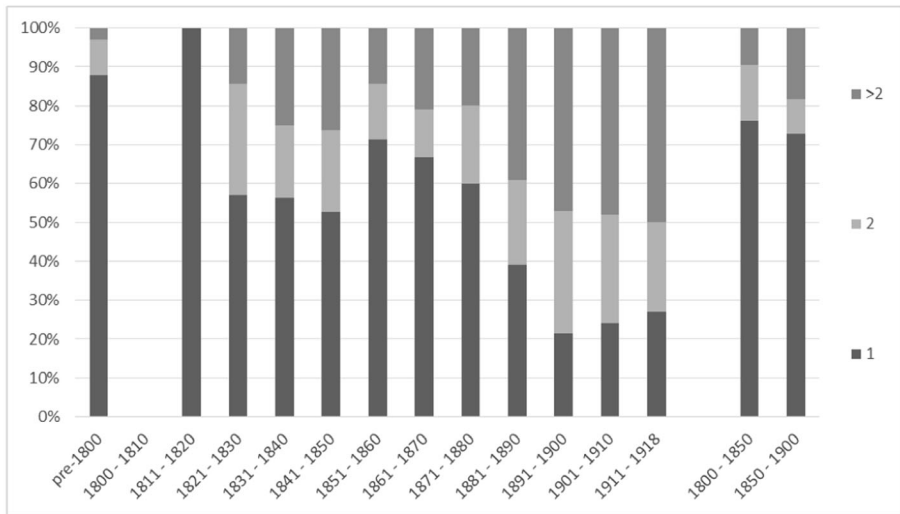


Fig. 4 Chronological distribution of gravestones according to number of occupants (columns “pre-1800,” “1800-50,” and “1850-1900” refer to gravestones whose dates can only be estimated)

should, however, keep in mind that, what appear to be upper-class grave markers, are more likely to survive simply because they might have been more numerous to start with, are made of more durable material, and are kept, paid and maintained by the family for a longer period of time. Moreover, heritage organizations are more likely to consider these gravestones worth preserving, even after their usage, simply because of their more sophisticated design and/or historically important family names. Hence, one needs to be careful when transferring conclusions from such a sample to the economic situation of the overall population. Nevertheless, economic data for that period in Germany indicate a boom phase between 1850 and 1857, with only a brief downturn between 1857 and 1859 (e.g., Wehler 1995, p. 94f). The increasing use of family graves continues throughout the nineteenth century, especially after the economic situation in the Palatinate had improved at the start of industrialization during the late second half of the nineteenth century and with the entrepreneurial boom between 1866 and 1873 (cp. Günther-Arndt and Kocka 1991; Weidmann 1986). Consequently, the observed change probably indicates the increasing relevance of the family as a defining social unit, its specific social standing, and its representation in terms of social identity. This change is similar to developments observable from Victorian gravestones of the time (cp. Veit and Nonestied 2008).

Figure 5 illustrates the relative changes in the choices of stone materials for gravestones. Sandstone, a material abundant in the Palatinate, but which has little resistance against weathering, dominated for most of the nineteenth century. From 1811 to 1830, gravestones also feature marble, usually a more expensive material, but which literally disappears by the 1830s. The exact reasons for this disappearance can only be hypothesized. Again, this could be interpreted as an indication of the strained economic situation following the Coalition Wars, which lasted until the 1840s (e.g., Wehler 1987), and which included a food shortage, increasing prices, and decreasing incomes. On the other hand, the lack of marble might simply be due to a change in fashion and taste, as it is unclear whether the economic situation affected everyone similarly. Similar

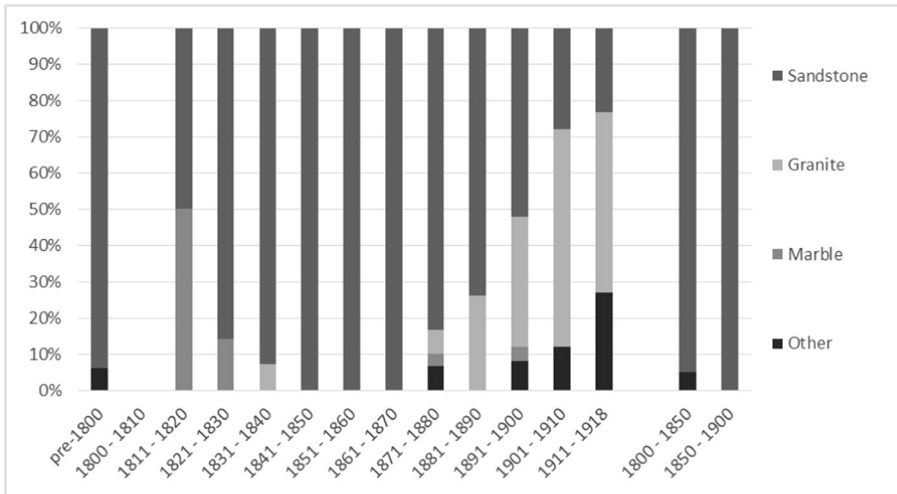


Fig. 5 Chronological distribution of gravestones according to main material (columns “pre-1800,” “1800-50,” and “1850-1900” refer to gravestones whose dates can only be estimated)

to Mallios and Caterino’s (2011) findings, the data show that at the peak of the industrialisation and the related improvements in technology required to process harder stone, granite became increasingly widespread from 1871 onwards and the dominant material after 1900.

Although data for the Palatinate is lacking at the moment, it is safe to assume that granite was more expensive than the omnipresent sandstone, surely far more durable. This might provide insights into the need of the bereaved to preserve their

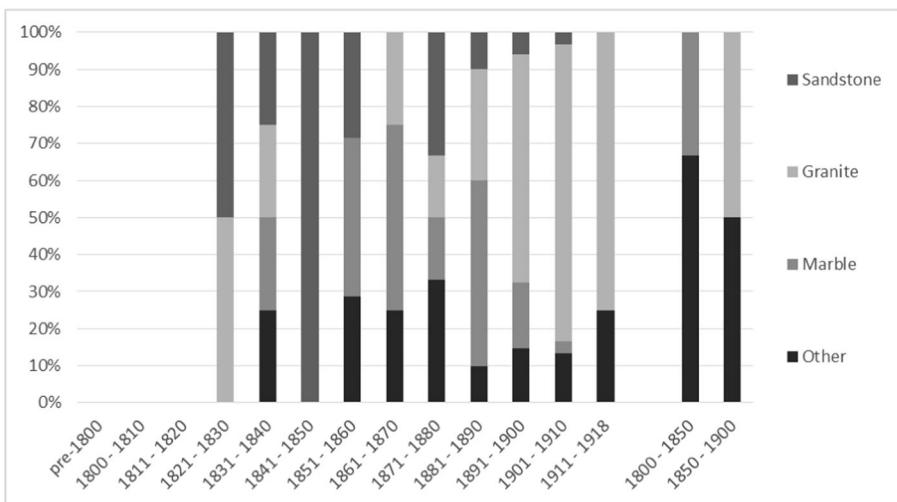


Fig. 6 Chronological distribution of gravestones according to secondary material (columns “pre-1800,” “1800-50,” and “1850-1900” refer to gravestones whose dates can only be estimated)

commemoration for a long time and, on the other hand, into their wish to do so by means of a material that signals a higher social status.

Similarly, the secondary material choices regarding stone also show a strong shift towards granite (Fig. 6) in about the same time horizon, thus supporting the assumption that certain technological possibilities and skills, such as steam-powered pneumatic drills and the massive extension of the railroad network in Germany around that time, were a prerequisite to utilise granite (cp. Mallios and Caterino 2011). Steam-powered tools allowed hard granite stone to be cut and modelled, which had been extremely difficult before when using conventional stonemason techniques, while the railroad allowed transportation of granite to more distant and previously inaccessible regions.

Figure 6 may support the relevance of exhibiting social status via economic power, because marble was used as a secondary material even in economically difficult times. Moreover, once this became technologically feasible, granite in turn replaced marble as the main secondary choice of stone material on gravestones, even though it was the most expensive choice. Since the secondary material applications on the gravestones are usually rather small, and thus cheaper, they might in difficult times have been a compromise in terms of the urge to indicate status. At the start of the 1850s, there appears to have been a growing need to express economic potential, spending power and maybe even fashionable taste – as shown by the increasing use of marble.

The same interpretation might be possible for the observation that eventually marble was replaced by granite, a comparatively modern and expensive material, again permitting to show social status, related class affiliation and awareness toward the end of the nineteenth century, which is similar to findings by, for instance, Cannon et al. (1989) regarding social aspiration. Similarly, bronze, and briefly porcelain, were used as an additional material during the same timeframe (Fig. 7). Again, one can only speculate about the reasons for these changes. It is unclear whether such secondary material applications saved cost, or were meant to indicate a higher class status, taste and/or fashion. Without further archival records, the final price of a grave marker is difficult to determine, as the price of a gravestone does not only depend on the material, but also on its elaboration, i.e. the more details and non-standard applications it has, the more expensive the final product, irrespective of the actual material costs.

Interestingly, the trend towards having an additional material on the gravestone, no matter how expensive or inexpensive, was not identified in pre-1830s sample. Only during the 1830s, did iron dominate, briefly complemented by porcelain during the 1860s, only to be almost completely substituted by bronze from the 1880s onwards. As Mallios and Caterino (2011) do, the sudden increased use of porcelain, instead of iron or bronze, during the 1860s could be attributed to the German unification wars in 1864, 1866, and 1870/71, during which the use of certain materials might have been restricted.

In literature, the grave marker size is usually used as a reliable indicator of the desire to express social identity, class affiliation, and awareness, as well as simply status (e.g., Collier 2003). Figure 8 shows the selected size categories with regard to height. Although clear developments and trends cannot be deduced from just this graph, it appears that smaller stones become less common from the end of the eighteenth century until the mid-nineteenth century, a time when gravestones between 101–200 cm are the dominant category. However, after this, smaller markers become more numerous again, while larger grave markers and even monument-size ones are also increasingly present. While the latter

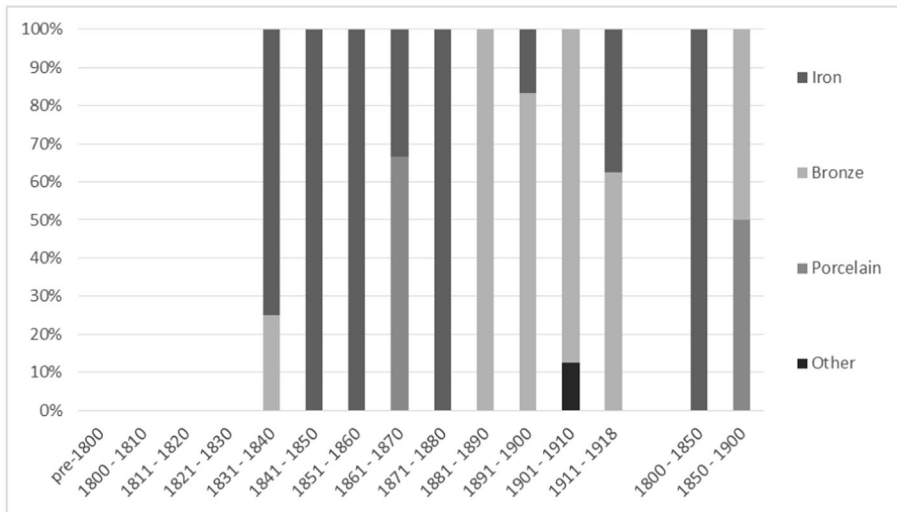


Fig. 7 Chronological distribution of gravestones according to other materials (columns “pre-1800,” “1800-50,” and “1850-1900” refer to gravestones whose dates can only be estimated)

correspond to the increased need to indicate social status and economic power by means of a certain material choice and representative size, the continued large proportion of medium-size stones and the increasing share of smaller ones during the second half of the nineteenth century appear confusing at first. Given the historic background and economic data as, for example, described in Wehler (1987, 1995) and Nipperdey (2013), as well as the link between the grave-marker dimensions and economic factors,

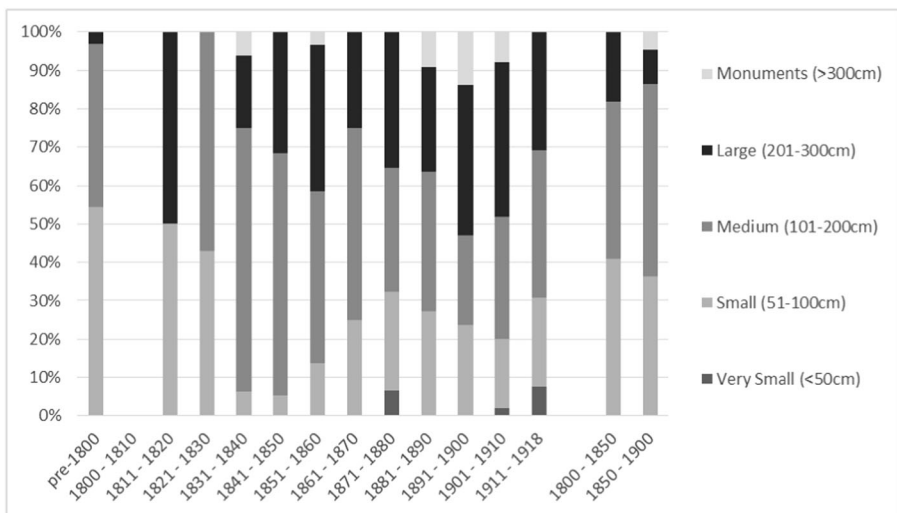


Fig. 8 Chronological distribution of gravestones according to size (height) (columns “pre-1800,” “1800-50,” and “1850-1900” refer to gravestones whose dates can only be estimated)

as described in Mallios and Caterino (2011), the question is: What possible explanation could there be for this variety?

It is possible that this “three-tailed” development of gravestone sizes might indicate the society’s increasing division into separate classes during industrialisation and the market economy ideology’s impact on an increasing number of social aspects. The data could thus imply that the elite could not only afford expensive materials, but that they also chose large gravestones. Disregarding the general economic situation, which until the end of the 1840s was rather difficult and only improved significantly after 1850, the poorer classes might have chosen more durable materials to satisfy their need for a long-lasting commemoration and to emulate the upper classes (cp. Cannon et al. 1989; Wilkie and Bartoy 2000), although they could not compete on size. Consequently, while choosing a more luxurious and durable material, the poorer classes compromised on the actual gravestone dimensions. The data cannot reveal whether this was perhaps a form of conscious understatement and, hence, a statement of one’s own class awareness and confidence. Whatever the case, since granite had become a more common material, the elite might have been trying to set themselves apart through the sheer size of their gravestones. The general idea of a development from simple grave markers to actual monuments distinguished by their size and material corresponds to Veit and Nonestied’s (2008) findings. Moreover, it is potentially possible to identify the emergence of a capitalistic class society in the making, with its inherent classes, competition, awareness and economic gaps.

Figure 9 provides an overview of the memorial classes. Despite the variety of gravestone types, the dominance of the headstone during the larger part of the nineteenth century is clear. While it appears that, at any given time, there were a high number of unconventional, individualistic memorials – ranging from obelisks to chest tombs – it becomes apparent that, from the 1830s onwards, the family grave gained a relative share.

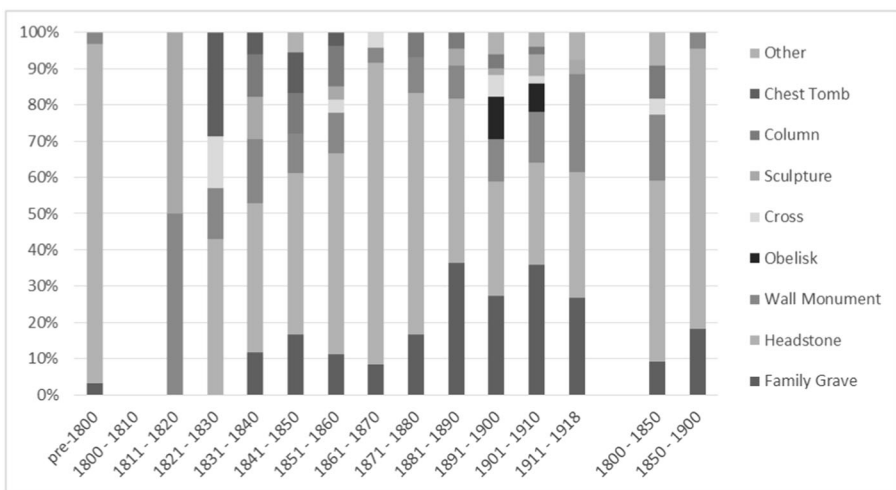


Fig. 9 Chronological distribution of gravestones according to memorial class (columns “pre-1800,” “1800-50,” and “1850-1900” refer to gravestones whose dates can only be estimated)

Together with the increasing percentage of graves with more than two bodies (as described), this trend toward family graves could indicate the family's increasing relevance as a decisive social unit, even beyond life. Given that some headstones also commemorate families, this observation cannot be underestimated, because it is again a strong indication of a changed understanding of social identity in terms of the family, its status in society and an individual's status within the family.

Figure 10 shows the chronological distribution of these gravestones' associated features. The sharply increasing number of gravestones with kerbstones, which clearly mark a grave and separate it from others, is clear. According to Tarlow (2000, pp. 230), this indicates a growing need for individual space and individual ownership. Combined with the growing share of family graves, it can be hypothesised that while the family became the dominant frame of reference in terms of social identity, it also became important to ensure this social unity and to ensure others understood its boundaries. This could be interpreted as a clear distinction between the "inside" as the family and the "outside" as the rest of society.

As can be seen in Fig. 11, religious symbology (such as crosses in all their variety, Jesus or Mother Mary portraits, angles, cherubs, etc.) increased sharply during the 1820s and again after the 1840s. Military-related symbols (such as iron crosses, helmets, medals, etc.) are most frequent during times of conflict and war, most notably during and directly after the Napoleonic Wars, the Coalition Wars, the German unification wars during the 1860s and early 1870s and the time directly before and during the First World War. Symbols related to personal identity, such as portraits or family crests, decreased notably after 1900. Symbols of mortality (such as skulls and bones, hourglass, etc.) decreased at the start of the nineteenth century, and experienced a revival after 1900, potentially due to the tremendous loss of human life in armed conflict, such as during the First World War. Emotional symbols (such as hearts,

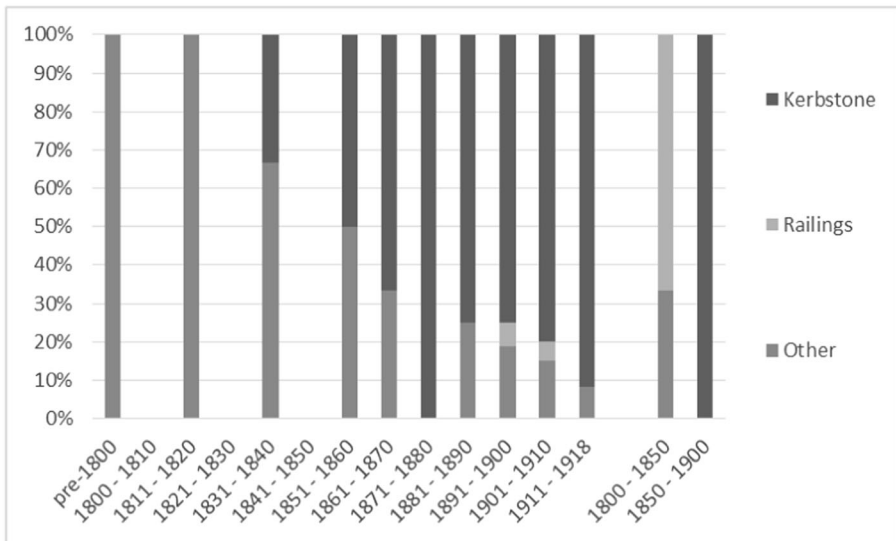


Fig. 10 Chronological distribution of gravestones according to further associated features (columns “pre-1800,” “1800-50,” and “1850-1900” refer to gravestones whose dates can only be estimated)

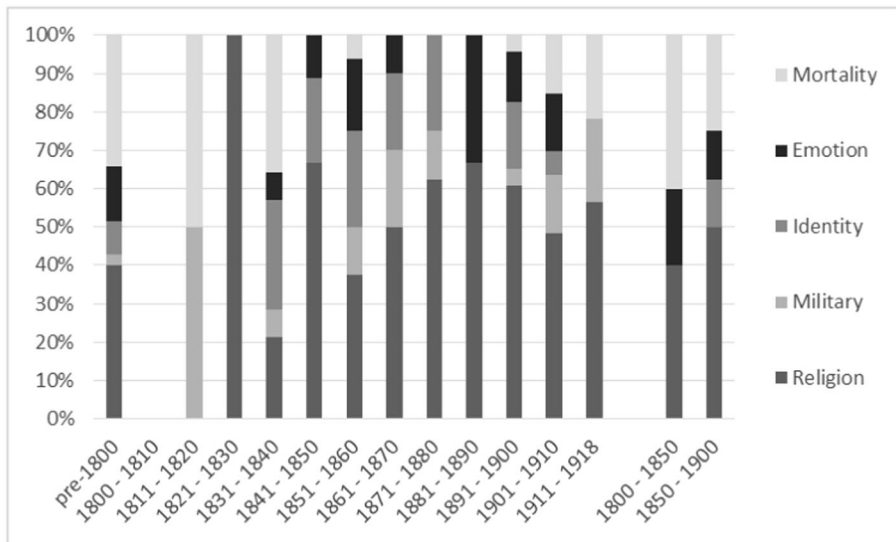


Fig. 11 Chronological distribution of gravestones according to symbols (columns “pre-1800,” “1800-50,” and “1850-1900” refer to gravestones whose dates can only be estimated)

grieving statues, etc.) are only briefly relevant during the end of the nineteenth century. However, in terms of symbology, the only reliable deduction from this date is the clear increase in religious symbols during the course of the nineteenth century, which is surprising, considering the secular nature of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. However, this does confirm the slow return of the church’s influence during the course of the nineteenth century, as indicated in Wehler (1995) and Nipperdey (2013).

Further inscription details are shown in Fig. 12. In this respect, it is remarkable that over the course of the nineteenth century, issues such as birthplace, place of death, explicit mention of relatives, and the position of the deceased within the family slowly became less common, while occupation and religious references increased. While occupation shows a steady increase, religious reference experiences a low point during the 1840, only to bounce back during the following decades, which supports the mentioned development of religious symbols.

In terms of the above issues and given the above-mentioned role of the family as a social unit of identity, the observed changes are remarkable. It appears that while family became more relevant, the individual’s individuality began to matter relatively less. Interestingly, from 1811 to 1820 gravestones show no religious reference, while this became more common again thereafter. As an indicator, occupation might, in a capitalistic society, be related to class in general, but also more specifically to the *Bildungsbürgertum* – a bourgeois, educated social class emphasizing enlightenment and humanist ideals, but nonetheless conscious of its distinguished social position. In a society in which education and economic achievements are critical for an individual’s social identity and ideology, it seems obvious that this also had to be represented in

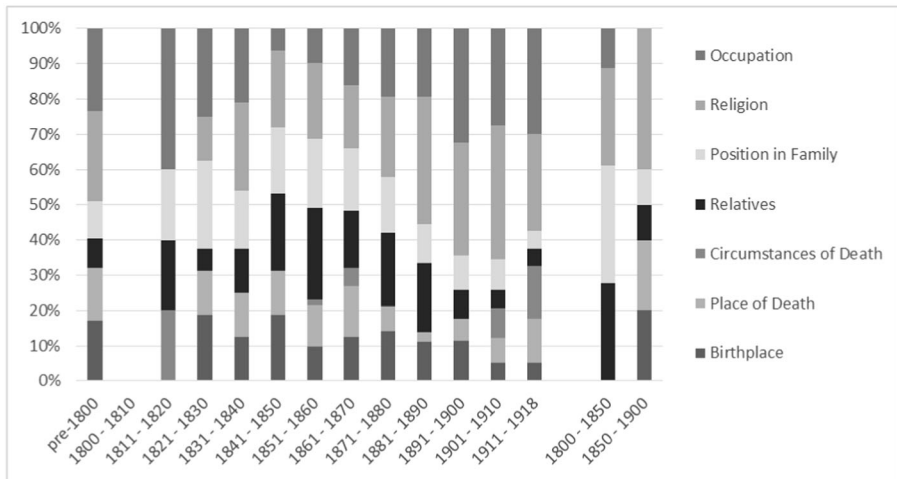


Fig. 12 Chronological distribution of gravestones showing other inscriptions (columns “pre-1800,” “1800-50,” and “1850-1900” refer to gravestones whose dates can only be estimated)

death. Social and/or economic status might thus also reflect the family as a whole.

The ideology reflected in the gravestones’ inscriptions is closely related to these above issues (Fig. 13). Unsurprisingly, and similar to symbology, military-related, and nation-state-related inscription appears most often in times of conflict and war, for instance, right after the Coalition Wars, the German Wars of Unification and during the First World War. References on gravestones to the government, but especially to class and rank, and usually expressed by means

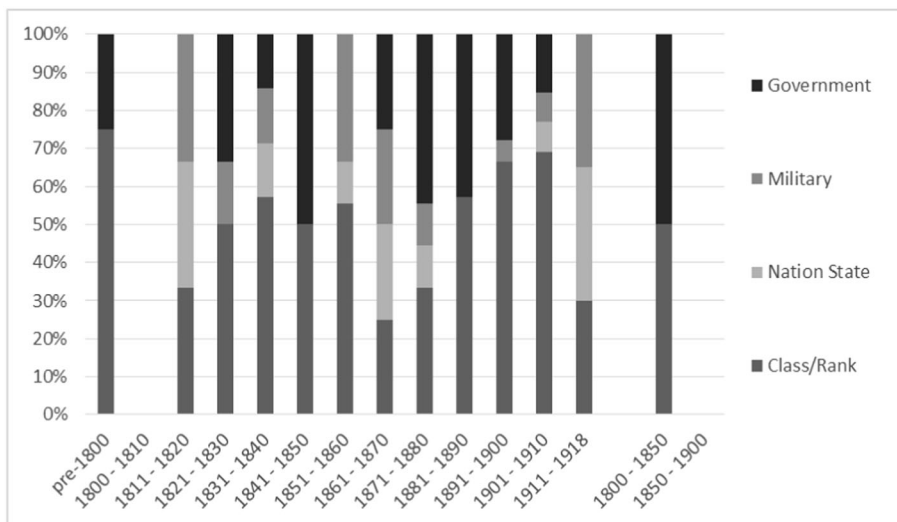


Fig. 13 Chronological distribution of gravestones depicting ideology-related inscription items (columns “pre-1800,” “1800-50,” and “1850-1900” refer to gravestones whose dates can only be estimated)

of occupation and education steadily became more frequent during the nineteenth century with the exception of, roughly, the period between 1851 and 1870. This might undoubtedly be another attempt by all classes to show distinction and superiority beyond, or besides, their economic means. As the second German Empire consolidated, the liberal Palatinate slowly became more aligned with the government's nationalist and capitalist ideology.

Interpretative Findings Based on Exemplary Gravestones

From the general data across all the sampled gravestones at multiple graveyards, it was possible to deduce and hypothesize a sort of archetypical development of gravestone design in the nineteenth century Palatinate: From a very generalized perspective, pre-1800 gravestones appear to largely be headstones made only of sandstone for a single occupant, which is of a small or a medium size, depicting elaborate decoration, mortality and religious symbols, with inscriptions emphasising the deceased's achievements, and if applicable, also rank. Unfortunately, very few of these survive in the Palatinate.

Figure 14 shows grave-marker 20 at the old Landstuhl cemetery. Today, the memorial is set into the graveyard's surrounding wall. However, it appears to originally have been a freestanding headstone, which means any inscriptions or designs on the back are no longer visible. It was erected 1757 for *Elisabetha Zerlauthin*. Made of sandstone, the gravestone shows elaborate, almost opulent decorations, notably a skull and an hourglass – two symbols commonly associated with mortality. Most interestingly, the inscription does not just provide



Fig. 14 Old Landstuhl Cemetery (grave-marker 20)

the name, the dates of her birth and death, but elaborates on the person and her remarkable achievements.

The German inscription is translated as follows:

*“Here
lies buried
the most
reputable Mrs.
Maria Elisabetha
Zerlauthin née
Kuhnin who on 6
March 1757, God bless,
went to rest with the Lord / Her
Christian memento as a
peculiar first accessory of
the newly in Landstuhl onset
brotherhood of the Holy Rosary /
May her dear soul rest in
Peace. Amen”*

It is noteworthy that the following are not visible: her date of birth, birthplace, husband, or relatives. The inscription focuses only on her death and her memorable achievements, here clearly of a religious nature, since numerous religious references conclude the inscription, including her support of a Christian brotherhood. Nonetheless, the inscription marks true respect and even a level of emotion and hopes for her soul. Bodily decay and death are seen as logical and acceptable facts, while the soul is believed to be with God. However, following Heinrich's (2014) argumentation, one should be very careful when making such statements about eighteenth century gravestones, as the applied ornamentation and symbolism might be due to fashion and consumer choice rather than to religion and related perceptions of life and the afterlife.

Another example of a pre-1800 gravestone is shown in Fig. 15: This example, perhaps originally set into the cemetery's chapel wall, besides symbols of mortality



Fig. 15 Bad Dürkheim (grave-marker 20)

(skull and bones, hourglass), shows what could be a family crest with a millwheel, representing the deceased's occupation and, presumably, guild membership. The otherwise rather plain memorial reads:

“Memendo (sic) Mori

Here

rests in God the

in lifetime honourable and respected

Mr. Johann Petterlang,

citizen and mill-master

here in Dürkheim /

He was born

in Alzey 1696

15 July

and died 1761

1 June

his age being 64 years

10 months, two weeks

and three days /

His eulogy text was taken

from Ps. XXXIX:6-7”

Besides the religious reference, the deceased's occupation, citizenship, birthplace, and lifespan are mentioned. This can be interpreted as a sign of utmost respect and commemoration, especially as he was a guild-master, which says much about this man's rank and status in life. Again, one person's life achievements are expressed, as well as respect from and commemoration by his peers.

At the start of the first half of the nineteenth century, well after the French Revolution, yet still under the direct influence of the Napoleonic Wars and Coalition Wars, and during times of poverty and starvation in many regions in the Palatinate (e.g. Weidmann 1986), gravestone designs changed dramatically, although not necessarily as one would expect. Although sandstone and one-person headstones are still dominant, marble becomes popular as secondary material choice, as do granite and bronze applications. The gravestones become slightly bigger (often medium-sized), and the trend is towards two or more occupants per grave. Furthermore, the variety of memorial classes reaches a peak, now also showing a greater number of sculptures, wall monuments, (broken) columns, and even chest tombs (although these are usually for the gentry). Despite this variety, the more individual and lavish decorations observed on pre-1800 stones are replaced by more rational, simple and clear designs. An almost standard choice of memorials is evident, even though the variety within each memorial class is still high. In addition, kerbstones and railings are used as additional features. Religious symbols are virtually absent during the first two decades of the nineteenth century, only starting to return during the 1820s. The amount of military and nation state symbology on gravestones, which is usually due to the influence of the war during or just before the period, is remarkable. The inscription usually no longer shows detailed, summarising obituary-style text, as on pre-1800 markers. However, far more personal details – such as a maiden name (if applicable), place of birth and death, family members, and often very emotional accounts of the bereaved's love, loss, and grief – appear, underlining the high emotion ratio. Combined with the increase in size, the more expensive choice of secondary material and general increase in variety of memorial classes, it seems that, despite the poverty and starvation in many parts of the Palatinate during the first half of the nineteenth century, at least those who erected the sampled gravestones had a strong need to express individuality, social status, as well as their emotions. Clearly, it was important to show that one could afford more expensive materials and a larger stone. However, given the level of emotion often invested, this appears to have also been a sign of love, loss and grief. On the other hand, in line with the secular nature of the late eighteenth century, religious symbology and references appear to be completely absent, as are the pre-1800 expressions of mortality on gravestones. It can be argued that all of this indicates the impacts of

secularism, rationalism, and individualism – which would be in accordance with the sociocultural climate of the time, during which emotion was strongly and often explicitly expressed by means of symbols and in text. These issues appear to prevail, even in times of general hardship. However, one again needs to be careful with such conclusions: Although, there appears to be no direct indication of the levels of poverty and starvation during specific times (cp. Günther-Armdt and Kocka 1991), this is very likely due to the poorer social classes affected by these developments either being unable to afford a grave marker of any kind, or at least not of durable material that survived long enough to be sampled.

Figure 16 shows grave-marker 7 in Landau cemetery. It is a freestanding sandstone memorial with a cube inscribed on both the front and back. On the top is a simple sculptured sandstone urn. Besides this, the memorial shows no other symbols or ornamentation. The inscription on the front is cursive and translates as follows:

“Elisabeth von Braunn

Born 26 September 1762

Died 1 January 1819

For the true friend and second

mother of our four children was erected this

memorial of love

her brother



Fig. 16 Landau Cemetery (grave-marker 7 from 1819)

Sebastian Franz von Braunn

Prussian-Bavarian General Major Commander of the

city and fortress Landau, Knight of the Royal

French Legion of Honour and

her sister in law

Auguste Elisabeth von Braunn née

Mayer”

This is an interesting example of the previously mentioned features of an early nineteenth century gravestone in the Palatinate. The birth and death dates are mentioned, and a deep emotion, especially – explicitly – love expressed. Furthermore, the relatives (especially those who erected the memorial) are prominently mentioned, with full title, rank and implicit social status. It is almost as if the bereaved built a memorial to commemorate their loss and achievements, rather than to commemorate the deceased. Sebastian Franz von Braunn appears to have had an eventful military career as a member of the Prussian-Bavarian forces and as a member of the Knight of the French Legion of Honor, an order personally established by Napoleon in 1802. Even in 1819, after the defeat of Napoleon, Von Braunn did not mind openly declaring his past service with the French forces.

Figure 17 shows another example of a gravestone from the first half of the nineteenth century, obviously designed for more than one person and very simply



Fig. 17 Gauersheim Cemetery (grave-marker 1 from 1841)

designed. There are no symbols on this stone, the back and half of the front inscription are no longer readable, but what can be seen appears to be rather emotional:

“In

memory of his

___friend

and memory of

his wife

Frederika _abel

Born in Albisheim

26 June 1794

Died in Gauersheim

26 April 1841

Dedicated in love

by

Jacob Rittersbach”

Again, love, friendship and loss are explicitly expressed, and the name of the bereaved husband appears. Figure 18 shows grave-marker 8 in Frankenthal (erected in 1855) in comparison. Clearly visible is the marble portrait/relief as well as the relative larger size, compared to earlier gravestones, as well as what could be described as a neo-gothic design. The inscription is very simple, stating only the name and the dates of the deceased's birth and death. This would allow the conclusion that after the mid-nineteenth century, inscriptions became more standardised, providing less detailed and individual information. Expressions of love, loss and grief become standardised in phrases and formulae, if they are present at all.

Figure 19 shows an example of a family grave of granite with a bronze relief and an engraved portrait of Jesus. Erected in 1871, this example illustrates the new simplicity of inscription concerning individual details, as well as the trend towards mentioning higher education and government occupation (here, for instance, “Dipl.Ing”, a high academic engineering degree). Reference to the military appeared to only play a role in times of direct conflict, but not before or after, as the examples of Figs. 20 and 21, from the German-French War and World War One respectively, show by the application of the *Iron Cross*.



Fig. 18 Frankenthal Cemetery (grave-marker 8 from 1855)

Figure 22 shows a very good example of material choices, lavishness, dimensions, symbology and inscriptions on a late nineteenth century family grave – especially the social, industrial elite. Figure 23 shows another grave marker that, while much less elaborate and lavish, clearly represents the same commemoration practices.

In both examples, granite with bronze application is the preferred material choice. The dimensions are monumental. The family patriarch is prominently mentioned.



Fig. 19 Kirchheim-Bolanden Cemetery (grave-marker 22 from 1871)



Fig. 20 Bad Dürkheim Cemetery (grave-marker 13 from 1870)

Inscriptions referring to individuals usually only comprise the name, birth and death dates, sometimes the places where these persons were born and died and, if applicable, their higher degrees, official occupation or honorary positions. Any religious formulae, if present, are of a general nature, i.e., not specific to any deceased individual.



Fig. 21 Horbach (New) Cemetery (grave-marker 5 from 1916)



Fig. 22 Kaiserslautern Cemetery (grave-marker 19 from 1894)

In general, and despite such elite examples, gravestones appear to have become more industrialized and standardized, are mostly made of black granite – or what often is referred to as granite – and only provide the bare minimum of information about the deceased, with almost no expression of ideology. While it might be a stretch to call these memorials “cold” and “impersonal,” they lack the emotional depth and individuality of the first half of the nineteenth century. Figure 24 provides an example of an average granite headstone of a deceased person not from the elite.

Based on these observations – and as described based on the statistical data above – it can be hypothesized that because granite became more affordable, also for the middle class and the *Bildungsbürgertum*, the industrial elite sought to distinguish themselves



Fig. 23 Kaiserslautern Graveyard (grave-marker 20 from 1887)



Fig. 24 Horbach (New) Cemetery (grave-marker 1 from 1909)

by means of size, building monument-style family graves, painting an almost dynastic picture of the head of the family. While information about individuals on such stones is generally also limited to military rank and higher education (e.g., doctoral titles) and occupation, expensive and lavish bronze applications do not necessarily express any level of individuality. The gravestones of the final years of the nineteenth century are a strong example of an industrial, capitalist class society in which, on the one hand, the equalising forces of improved living standards have created a middle class, but, on the other hand, ownership of capital and economic success have become the defining social factor and have created a new elite.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study is only a first attempt to understand the knowledge to be gained from the Palatinate cemeteries. Based on data gathered from the grave markers alone it appears not to be possible to answer the question whether the observed changes are the result of specific socioeconomic transformations, social aspiration, and emulation or simply fashion. Interpreting the described findings with regards to a capitalist class society, however, is apparent and permits numerous hypotheses for further study. It is also clear that such interpretations should be pondered, given that the sampled gravestones do not accurately reflect the political and sociocultural realities at the time of their erection, because it is impossible to control which original grave markers actually survived.

At first sight, the findings based on this particular sample of nineteenth-century grave stones in the Palatinate correspond to the historic, sociocultural assessment of that time, which the seminal works of Wehler (1987) and Nipperdey (2013) exemplify. Once analysed in more detail, however, they provoke interpretations that indicate a

much more complex reality with regard to social transformation and its impact on the materiality of death, burial, bereavement and commemoration. Thus, the data simultaneously allow an understanding of the graveyard as a snapshot of past social realities and as an ideological tool. For example, the sample does not provide information about the political and ideological struggles, or how people actually felt in the face of death and loss, thus challenging work such as that of Reimers (1999) and Mytum (2004, 2006). More likely, gravestones appear to be the result of sociocultural norms and conventions that probably represented socially acceptable and idealised ways of commemoration, thus supporting works in the direction of Parker-Pearson (1982) and Rugg (2000) and, to a certain extent, also the dynamic agency theories of Hodder (1995) and Wilkie and Bartoy (2000). Less explicit sociocultural developments of the nineteenth century that nonetheless might have had a strong impact on commemoration might partly explain these observations, culminating in the hypothesis of the graveyard as a *safe zone* that is separate from reality, while still subject to certain social norms and conventions.

Referring to the historic record might permit some new interpretations, though. Nipperdey (2013) dedicated a chapter to the daily life developments and changes of the German people during the nineteenth century. Most notably, he describes how the need for a private sphere and the functional differentiation of many aspects of life – especially within the family – becomes “normal,” expressed, for instance, in the way people organised their homes (Nipperdey 2013, p. 130). Individual family members had more privacy, while the family retreated from the public sphere into the living room, as the new, patriarchally organized, center of family life, spending time with music, handicraft and the education of children (Krüger 1979). Diligence, honesty, loyalty, conscientiousness, modesty, and – to a certain degree – also religiousness became the core values. Public contact, however, would become more formalised and dealings with the government highly bureaucratized (Bernhard 1983).

The general sociocultural phenomenon of retreat into the private sphere that occurred between approximately 1815 and 1848 is called *Biedermeier* (cp. Bark 2001). This period was characterized by its proverbial *Gemütlichkeit*, conservatism, simplicity, domestic, and sometimes even religious family values and ideals, as well as its apolitical attitude. *Biedermeier* is often understood as a direct result of and escape from the political, social and cultural effects of the Congress of Vienna (1814–15) and the European Restoration, in which people – disappointed by politics, oppression and the revival of aristocratic forces – turned away from these, escaping into the private sphere. Within their homes they could still control their lives and seek to exclude the harsh realities of life. This stood in sharp contrast to the ideals, values and goals of the *Vormärz* movement with its radical, liberal, revolutionary, and – most importantly – very political ambitions (Bernhard 1983). Unsurprisingly, this is a phenomenon only found in Germany, Austria, and Scandinavia around this time, due to the unique history of these countries and the impact that the Carlsbad Decrees of 1819 had in terms of censorship and oppression of liberal forces (cp. Günther-Arndt and Kocka 1991). Although *Biedermeier* as a term and definable epoch is controversial, its social and cultural impact on Germany during the nineteenth century has been established and is sometimes even noticeable to this day.

Indeed, this appears to correspond to the findings and interpretations about the Palatine gravestone sample summarized in this article. It appears as if a brief period of relative individual and emotional freedom, expressed on gravestones right after Napoleon's defeat, was swiftly replaced by the shock and disillusion spread by the reactionary forces of the

Ancien Régime, which engaged in a decade-long process of political and ideological oppression and censorship, forcing people into the safety and calm of the private sphere. Together with the emergence of the class society during the second half of the nineteenth century, the two phenomena might account for the observable changes in the gravestones.

However, if this were the case, it would mean that only some sociocultural phenomena had a strong impact on deeper levels of private life and thus were expressed in bereavement and commemoration. These sociocultural phenomena would, for example, be the new emphasis on family and on the private sphere owing to the political oppression and constraints, as well as the new economic possibilities industrialization and the growing capitalist class society offered. Alternate ideologies, such as individuality and equality outside and above the strict class thresholds of the political system of the Second German Empire, for example, the liberal ideas of the *Vormärz* movement with its federalist and democratic values, culminating in the March Revolution of 1848–49, especially in the Palatinate (Kreutz 2007), appear to have found no reference in bereavement and commemoration. This lack is especially true towards the end of the nineteenth century, which is in contrast with what a layman might expect to find in grave markers of that time, considering the historic narrative as it is propagated in Germany.

What concluding statement can be made about the possible interpretation of the analyzed materiality? The deceased in these graves and/or the people who commemorated them were neither revolutionaries, or patriots, or nationalists. They were people deeply concerned with their privacy, family and peace. When – thanks to the success of capitalism in Germany – economic opportunities arose and the overall quality of life improved, they took advantage of the boom years and were interested in economic accession and status, irrespective of their class. Adhering to social conventions and norms was apparently important and accepted, even if it meant their personal freedom was restricted and that democratic and liberal ideas had to be abandoned under the rule of a new emperor. The current historic narrative in Germany portrays the nineteenth-century Palatinate as democratic and liberal avant-garde. However, the findings presented here would allow for the hypothesis of a reclusive and disillusioned people. They appear uninterested in politics, accepting the advantages of capitalism and German unification under a new emperor unquestioningly, as long as this does not threaten their *Gemütlichkeit* at home or their socioeconomic status aspirations. Given the role with which historians have usually credited the bourgeoisie in respect of ending the rank society and promoting a merit system, which was one of the key elements of economic growth during the nineteenth century, their actual laissez-faire attitude might cast a dark shadow on the social reality of the time. This foreboding is especially relevant given Germany's role during the outbreak of the First World War and eventually the Second World War, which is often critically discussed under the theme of the German *Sonderweg* (Blackbourn and Eley 1980; Wehler 1995). The withdrawal into the private sphere and the simultaneous uncritical acceptance of and contribution to a class society, dominated by a new and growing capitalist and nationalist elite, provokes the demand for further research to help broaden our understandings of the Palatinate during the nineteenth century, as of the ideological paradigms that might be prevalent until today.

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