



Abstract:

So their names may be remembered . . .

Founded during the opening of the Thirty Years' War, a Jewish rural settlement existed near the Austrian-Moravian border. Until 1671, this settlement was located in the village of Weithersfeld in Lower Austria. Then, because of the Order of the Expulsion of the Jews issued by the emperor Leopold I, the settlement was transplanted to Schaffa, a village just on the other side of the border, in Moravia. This community survived into the 20th century, until it was extirpated during the Shoah.

Although there appeared several extensive publications during the last several years dealing with the history of the *Landjuden* of Lower Austria in the Early Modern Period, these studies did not avail themselves of the sources pertaining to this settlement which are used in this study.

Over the last few years, the author has explored the books, records, and documents of Lower Austrian land-dominions (*Grundherrschaften*), focusing on the county of Hardegg / dominion of Riegersburg, and collected available evidence and notes on the Jewish population, all of them regrettably quite brief. These are mostly German-language annotations of single incidents in accounting records and logs which, when reviewed in context, can provide a helpful overview of the everyday life of the Jewish minority of the border region. Based on the above mentioned documents, and especially with reference to the project *Austria Judaica*, the heretofore unknown names and lives of Jewish families in the village of Weithersfeld are brought back into memory.

The personal details as well as the information provided on trade, lease, toll, and rental agreements and, amazingly enough, on real property holding, including the property sales contracts (*Hauskaufverträge*) in Weitersfeld until 1671, were taken from the original records and documents of the county of Hardegg. The study also explores the available information on economic conditions and business transactions on both sides of the border into the early 1800s.

The execution and practical implications of two imperial decrees, the eviction order by Leopold I in 1671, and the *Judenseparation* ordered by Charles VI for Moravia in 1726/1728, are documented using the records of the respective dominions. The original settlement plan of Schaffa, dating to 1728, is also included.

There are no original Jewish sources available, either for the county of Hardegg or the Moravian Dominion of Frain. Therefore, the research for this work is based exclusively on documents and records created by the ruling administration, different *Hofstellen* (Court Offices) and dominions, and, among these, mostly records and accounting books (*Herrschaftsbücher*) of the county of Hardegg. As no administrative records of the dominion of Frain seem to be extant before 1794, the information on individual people decreases and eventually ceases to appear in the documents once the Jewish families moved to Schaffa.

By its very nature, such a compilation of facts, casual interactions, and personal names cannot represent a "*chronicle*" in the sense of a cogent history. However, it is hoped that this reliably sourced publication, given that it contains rather hard-to-access material, will be of valuable assistance for further comparative research.

Keywords : Medinot Ashkenas, Judenseparation, Landjuden, real property, Weitersfeld, Schaffa.

Alfred Damm

Weitersfeld / Schaffa.

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