

Exploring History through Monuments

Pantheonization in Munich and Jerusalem

Yinon Guttel-Klein • Anastasia Hansch • Felix Kretsch • Nikolaj Kunkel

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(Intro Sunday Stroll)

Introduction

Ana: Hello, and welcome to today's podcast. My name is Ana and I am a history exchange student at LMU Munich. Originally, I'm a student from the University of Exeter, but this year I decided to come to Munich for two semesters. As a history student living in a new country and a new city, I knew that what I most wanted was to understand Munich's history from a German perspective. In my classes, I had begun studying public history, and quickly realized that the best way for me to learn about Munich was to learn about their monuments.

With so many monuments to explore, I decided to begin at Odeonsplatz, a very busy and frequently visited U-Bahn station. My intention was to start with the Residenz, an impressive palace that used to house Bavaria's Wittelsbach monarchs and sits in the center of the Old City. Of course, with the COVID-19 restrictions, I couldn't go inside. Instead, I opted to have a walk around the Hofgarten—this courtyard that is known for its beautiful landscaping and central location. And that's when I stumbled across the Kriegerdenkmal. I nearly missed it at first. It's kind of tucked away, sunken into the ground, in front of the Bavarian State Chancellery—a building that houses the offices of the head of the Bavarian government, the Minister-President. I was fascinated by its location and design and decided to research further. What I found was so interesting, and—believe it or not—it led me down a rabbit hole about all of Bavarian, German, and world public history, and specifically, pantheonization.

Pantheonization is a term used in public history to describe the transformation of certain objects, buildings, and sculptures into elements of memorial heritage of a community. I think it is one of the most interesting ways to explore and educate yourself about a new culture. On my journey, I met Felix and Nikolaj, two German history students, and I even got in touch with Yinon, a student from Jerusalem! In this podcast you'll hear about four

fascinating monuments, their history, and their connections to pantheonization. But let's not get ahead of ourselves. To begin, let's start with my discovery of the Kriegerdenkmal.

(Sunday Stroll)

The Kriegerdenkmal

So, here we are in the Old City of Munich and this whole area has quite a lot of foot traffic. People come to see the Residenz, Diana's Temple, and just underneath that road over there is the south of the Englischer Garten. This whole area is a place that not just Munich citizens come to enjoy, but also attracts quite a lot of tourists. Anything that you see here is significant because it was purposefully put-on display for lots of people to see.

The Kriegerdenkmal was opened in 1924, although it hadn't actually been finished yet—it was only really finished in 1928. It was inaugurated by Rupprecht Maria Luitpold Ferdinand, who was the son of the last Bavarian King. The monarchy, of course, was gone by then, toppled by revolutionaries in the wake of the First World War. Bavaria became a "Free State," a Freistaat. The Kriegerdenkmal was a war memorial built to commemorate the soldiers from the city of Munich who died in the First World War.

The Kriegerdenkmal, which in English just means "war memorial" is interesting in particular because it has such a specific design. The reason I barely saw it at first is because it's purposefully hidden, because it's designed to look like a crypt. So, it's sunken into the ground and surrounded by bushes and trees. But what's even more interesting is the artistic and architectural design of the monument. Monuments like this have far more artistic freedom than a building, for example. It doesn't really need to be a functional space. Unlike, say, the Residenz. They can just exist as a piece of commemorative art. The entire monument is designed to look like a crypt, which is a kind of walk-in grave. The crypt is built entirely out of limestone, a very specific type of stone called Muschelkalk. Muschelkalk was originally found and named by a German geologist and appears naturally in most of Germany and other parts of Central Europe.

The central focus of the monument is the Fallen Solider, a bronzed statue who serves to symbolize the young men who lost their lives. The rest of the crypt is covered with inscriptions, like this one here, which shows two lines of graves. You can see this other one

here, where rows of soldiers are marching purposefully straight towards the graves. A lot of the inscriptions try to denote strong symbolism of death and sacrifice. The most interesting of these inscriptions, however, are inside of the crypt. Each of these inscriptions speaks about the soldiers. This one here says, “they will arise,” and another says, “our fallen.” These, along with the picture inscriptions, all give quite an interesting insight into the design behind the crypt. They were designed to evoke sympathy. Passers-by might stop at the monument, take a minute to reflect on the lost soldiers, and pay their respects. But my analysis of the Kriegerdenkmal would not be complete if this is where I finished it. This explanation is kind of the most superficial understanding of the war memorial. Because, and I think this can be said for all public works of art, there is sometimes a contrast between what the artist intends for the piece to say, or in this case, what the government intended for the monument to say, and the meaning that’s absorbed by its audience. And I think this is particularly true for pieces of public history.

For the Kriegerdenkmal, the intention at first appears to be one of sympathy for these fallen soldiers. There’s lots of symbolism of death, of youth, and the memorial is quite solemn—it’s built of very basic shapes and is sunken into the earth. Despite that, it only commemorates the soldiers of war, but, as I’m sure you know—the soldiers are not the only victims of war, and especially not of World War I. What about civilians? Women? Children? In this way, it almost glorifies a death at the hands of a nation’s enemy. That’s why I said the written inscriptions are themselves so interesting. A phrase like “they will arise” invokes a lot of pride, and “our fallen” denotes a certain amount of ownership for the dead—it puts a serious focus on their birthplace, or at the very least their home. The monument very pointedly decides not to commemorate all soldiers of World War I. And it doesn’t even focus on German soldiers—only Bavarian and Munich soldiers are recognized here. It’s very niche for a war that killed so many and destroyed so much.

The artist of the memorial to the Fallen Soldier was a man named Bernhard Bleeker, an artist from Münster. Bleeker was fairly well renowned; he had been commissioned to sculpt various memorials before and after the Fallen Soldier. So, he seemingly dedicated time to this supposed anti-war memorial. Despite this, only years later he designed portrait sculptures for Adolf Hitler. Even when we talk about the type of limestone used it becomes clear that this monument is decidedly Bavarian in nature. It simultaneously glorifies war and promotes patriotism—two ideas which, together, become quite nationalist and militarist. The location of the monument is also somewhat loaded with militarist sentiment. While in the

present the Hofgarten is primarily dedicated to landscaping and architecture, it was also used as army barracks in the nineteenth century. The Hofgarten was, historically, a place of military leadership. Over time, the contextual surroundings, both symbolically and physically, change the meaning of a monument. In the early twentieth century, the memory of the Hofgarten would still be one of a military establishment, with strong ties to loyalty to the Crown.

These decisions are so meaningful in a monument, because it presents itself as an almost objective piece of education. That doesn't mean that public history is not useful as a method of education, but I think it's important to use a critical eye when looking at monuments like the Kriegerdenkmal. There is little to no signposting around the monument, and it is not until you step inside, and read the inscriptions, that it becomes really clear what the monument is. Because of this, the city takes no real personal responsibility for retelling the story of the Kriegerdenkmal. Viewers are not given a twenty-first century view of what we now know to be a rather militarist monument. Instead, they are asked to uncritically respond to the Kriegerdenkmal in the same way that viewers almost a hundred years ago would have done. Public history doesn't ask for engagement with the creator's message in the same way that perhaps academic history does, which is why it is so important to understand the influence pantheonization has on cultural memory.

(Sunday Stroll)

After looking at the monument, I got really inspired to look at other models of pantheonization. Wanting to know more, I went to the most reliable of sources—Facebook. I was determined to find another like-minded student who was studying this topic. I quickly got in touch with Felix, who has lived in Munich for years, and knows the city well. He asked me to meet him near Theresienwiese, where he had something to show me.

The Bavaria Statue and the Hall of Fame

Ana: Hi Felix. Nice to meet you! So, can you tell me a little bit about what are we looking at?

Felix: Hi Ana, first of all: welcome to Munich! I am happy to show you a very special place in the city. We are here at the Theresienwiese, right outside of the old city center where the

famous Oktoberfest takes place every year. You surely heard about it! On that hill over there you see a complex of two buildings: the Bavaria Statue and the “Hall of Fame,” called Ruhmeshalle in German.

Ana: They are very impressive. How old are they? And what’s the story behind them?

Felix: Well, the Statue and the Hall of Fame were finished in 1850 and therefore are about twenty years older than the State of Germany itself. Those buildings were a prestige project of the Bavarian state. As you might know, it had been an independent kingdom till the German unification of 1871. To set this monument apart from other Bavarian monuments—which often were designed to look as similar as possible to the famous Parthenon Temple in Athens—the nineteenth-century architects combined the two most influential styles of their time: Neo-classicism and German romanticism.

Ana: Sounds interesting! So, how are these styles represented?

Felix: On the one hand, the complex has got an obvious neo-classicist influence: as you can see the Ruhmeshalle looks like a Greek temple and the Bavaria Statue like a giant roman sculpture. Actually, it is the first colossal statue since the Roman Empire collapsed in the sixth century. On the other hand, there are romanticist-Germanic elements of the Statue like the bearhide, the oak wreath over there, and sword. The Statue is very big—more than 18 meters high, weighs about 87 tons, and is also hollow which means you can climb up to its head over a set of stairs. The architects even had to build a new foundry because they did not have enough capacities to smelt bronze till then.

Ana: It looks like a lot like the little statue on top of the Diana Temple I walked by earlier.

Felix: That’s true, it’s nearly the same motive. The big difference is that the one on the Diana Temple is about 250 years older.

Ana: So why is this one so big?

Felix: Well, the giant bronze statue is a female personification of Bavaria. So, it was built to distinguish the kingdom and its identity from powerful neighbors, especially the German-speaking empires of Prussia and Austria-Hungary. And to do that they tried to make it as impressive as possible. During a time when the German unification movement with its famous female motive “Germania” was on the rise, the Bavarian counterpart was a strong statement of independence and nationalism—some may say “Bavarian exceptionalism”—to build such a monument.

Ana: And what about the Hall of Fame?

Felix: The Ruhmeshalle is similar in this regard. It's full of busts of philosophers, scientists, and generals. Maybe you know its "bigger brother," the Walhalla near Regensburg?

Ana: I do. It also looks like a big Greek temple and is probably the most important place for pantheonization in Germany.

Felix: Exactly, but there is one big difference: the Walhalla was built for all Germans, the Hall of Fame in Munich just for famous Bavarians. Just another example for Bavarian nationalism of the 1850s. But it gets even more interesting: The king ordered that the Ruhmeshalle also had to include busts of people from non-Bavarian regions as a symbol of unity and integration. An example would be Franconians or Swabians whose territories Bavaria annexed in the years after the Napoleonic Wars. Here in the center, we have got the Franconian physicist Georg Simon Ohm who discovered the groundbreaking Ohm's law about resistances in electric circuits. There is also a bust to honor the British-American officer and inventor Sir Benjamin Thompson (Count Rumford) who saved Munich from destruction during the war of 1796 and discovered the principles of thermodynamics. And over here on the right there is another Franconian you may know, the probably most famous German painter: Albrecht Dürer.

Ana: Fascinating! And do you know anything about how this mix of nationalism and pantheonization influenced other sites in Munich like the Field Marshals' Hall? I have walked past it now a couple of times now and would really like to hear more about it.

F: Well, yes, it is an impressive building. I am not an expert on the Field Marshals' Hall, but a friend of mine is. I could call him, if you want.

A: That would be fantastic. Thank you!

(Sunday Stroll)

The Field Marshals' Hall

Ana: Hey Nikolaj, how are you? Thank you so much for meeting with me.

Nikolaj: Yes, sure, no problem. I talked to Felix lately and he told me you were fascinated by examples of pantheonization in Munich.

Ana: Yes, after he told me about the Bavaria Statue and Walhalla, he thought it was helpful for me to talk to you about my research, since you're doing research on the Field Marshals' Hall.

Nikolaj: If you're interested in pantheonization, the Field Marshals' Hall is definitely an interesting monument to look at.

Ana: Do you have any time to talk with me about it?

Nikolaj: Of course. Before we get started just a quick question: How much do you know about it anyway?

Ana: I don't know a lot so it wouldn't hurt if you could give me just a short introduction.

Nikolaj: Okay, so let us start at the beginning. In 1841, the Bavarian King Ludwig/Louis I ordered the construction of a monument to commemorate the accomplishments of the Bavarian Army. It should be placed next to the Residence of the royal family in Munich, the Wittelbacher dynasty. The architect was Friedrich von Gärtner. And since Felix told me you've seen it before, I've got one question for you: Does the architecture of the monument look typically German to you?

Ana: No, it kind of looks more Southern European, maybe Italian.

Nikolaj: Yes, that's a good observation. King Louis I wanted the monument to look like a monument from Florence that dates back to the Renaissance era. The monument is called Loggia de Lanci. But at the same time, he didn't just want a copy of it, so the architect changed a few details. So, the monument was finished in 1845. Back in the day there were only two statues exhibited, today there are three. And the third is technically not a statue but a monument in itself, also dedicated to the Bavarian Army. Also, the lions you can see left and right of the stairs have been added later.

Ana: So, who do the statues show?

Nikolaj: The original ones show two famous military leaders from Bavaria's military history. The first: Johann of Tilly. He was a nobleman born in the Spanish Netherlands who led the army of the Catholic League. Later, during the Thirty Years' War [between 1618 and 1648] he was in command the troops of the Holy Roman Empire as a Field Marshal. The second one shows Carl Philipp of Wrede. He joined the Bavarian Army in 1792 and had an impressive career. He was even raised to nobility for his military accomplishments. After he

left the army in 1815 he became a politician. He also reached the rank of Field Marshal at the end of his career.

Ana: Sorry, can you go back for a second: what's the Catholic League?

Nikolaj: The Catholic League was basically an alliance of Catholic princes in the Holy Roman Empire who fought against Protestant princes.

Ana: So, the monument is called Field Marshals' Hall because the statues do actually show former field marshals of the Bavarian Army?

Nikolaj: Exactly! And here we can see an explicit example of pantheonization. Like in the Hall of Fame Felix told you about, we can link this pantheon to prominent Bavarian military leaders. We could even say that this is actually a Bavarian *lieu de mémoire*—at least, it used to be back in the day.

Ana: And what is that?

Nikolaj: A *lieu de mémoire*?

Ana: Yes.

Nikolaj: Literally translated it means “place of memory.” If you look at it from a historical angle, you could describe it as a concept of historiography. This concept has been invented by a French historian named Pierre Nora in the 1970s. Due to the big changes that happened in France during that time he was afraid that France could lose its national memory. And to protect this very memory, he came up with this concept and used it to describe places, people, dates, and events that he considered crucial for French history.

Ana: What happens if the people decide that of these places are no longer of importance to them?

Nikolaj: Well, in that case this place or this person stops being a *lieu de mémoire*, since having an importance for the people is the key requirement. But I think we're losing the topic here. If you're interest in pantheonization, I would recommend that we focus more on the interwar period and the early days of the Third Reich.

Ana: Why that?

Nikolaj: Munich as a city played an important role for National Socialism, so you can find a lot monuments that are in one way or the other connected to the Third Reich.

Ana: So, why exactly Munich?

Nikolaj: Firstly, Hitler's political party, the NSDAP—which is short for National Socialist German Workers' Party—with which he took over power in Germany in 1933 was actually founded in Munich in 1920. Well, founded may be the wrong word it already existed, but it was known as DAP—German Workers' Party—and they just changed the name to NSDAP. But the more important point here is the fact that Hitler's first attempt to take over power took place in Munich and was stopped at the Field Marshals' Hall. In November 1923, he decided to follow the example of Mussolini and his so-called "March to Rome," which happened in 1922, and tried to take over the power in Germany. As a first step for that he rallied his supporters in Munich to take over the city and therefore Bavaria.

Ana: Really interesting. But how did the coup end in 1923?

Nikolaj: Bavarian authorities were aware of Hitler's plans and expected him. Hitler and his supporters were marching to the Field Marshals' Hall where the Bavarian authorities were already waiting for him. Hitler's coup ended in a gunfight that cost the life of 20 people; 16 of them were supporters of Hitler.

Ana: And the other 4?

Nikolaj: They were members of the Bavarian police force. When you visit the residence of the Wittelsbach dynasty next to the Field Marshals' Hall you can still see a commemorative plaque to remember these policemen. Well, after Hitler took overpower legally in 1933 the Field Marshals' Hall was turned into a place of cult and worship for National Socialism. At the east side of the building, they set up a monument to commemorate the 16 party members that died in 1923. Basically, it was a standing plaque which had their names engraved. This was a rather obvious attempt to create a specific pantheon, in this case for the so-called "blood witnesses" of Nazi movement, as they were called officially. The stele was guarded day and night by a guard of honor made out of members of the Waffen-SS, and everyone who passed along the stele had to make the Hitler salute. So basically, similar to what had been done earlier with the Hall of Fame at the Theresienwiese, just with a different group of people to commemorate and a different political agenda.

Ana: What happened to this Nazi monument?

Nikolaj: After the end of World War Two, the Americans dismantled the plaque because it had played a crucial role in Nazi propaganda. Interesting here is that they actually didn't dismantle the Field Marshals' Hall itself.

Ana: So, there also has been a de-pantheonization of the Field Marshals' Hall after 1945? That is really interesting!

Nikolaj: Yes, I would see it like that, too. And now that I think about the topic, there's something I heard about that might also be of interest to you. I met this guy called Yinon from Israel during an online class, and I remember that he once mentioned something about a monument on a German graveyard in Jerusalem. Apparently, it was built in commemoration for soldiers of the Wehrmacht, which is kind of weird.

Ana: Definitely weird, but it also sounds really interesting. Do you think you can put me in touch with him?

Nikolaj: Absolutely, I can see what I can do.

(Sunday Stroll)

The Templar Cemetery in Jerusalem

Ana: Hi Yinon, how are you? Your friend Nikolaj from Munich told me that I should talk to you about an interesting German memorial site in Israel.

Yinon: Hi Ana. Yes, Nikolaj said that you're curious about German pantheonization and commemoration. The truth is that he is right! We have a fascinating German commemorative site—*lieu de mémoire*—here in Israel which raises quite a few thoughts about commemoration and pantheonization. In fact, I am very happy to see that your curiosity led you from Germany to Israel. But it seems to me that your journey is more geographical than conceptual, because you didn't come to just any place in Israel but to a neighborhood in Jerusalem called "The German Colony." So, in a sense we are still in Germany!

Ana: Isn't that a little weird? Why is there a German colony in Israel? Is this a neighborhood of German Jews?

Yinon: Well, not really. This neighborhood was not established by Jews, but by a very special German community. Inspired by apocalyptic religious ideology, 2,000 members of a German-Christian sect known as the Templars came to live here in Palestine during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They were Pietists with a Lutheran Church background. Their roots are not in Bavaria, but in the neighboring Württemberg. But even

when they were far from Germany, they remained very loyal to their homeland. An interesting fact is that when the Nazis came to power many of the Templers joined the Nazi party and even established a party branch in Jerusalem.

Ana: Very interesting! So, we have a community of thousands of Germans living under British Mandate, which begs the question: what happened during World War Two when Germany and Britain were fighting one another?

Yinon: In 1943, the Templers were deported by the British Mandate forces as enemy aliens, and many subsequently joined the Wehrmacht, SS, and other units of the Nazi regime. The Mandatory authorities confiscated their property which, after the establishment of Israel, became state property—all but the little cemetery on Emek Refaim Street in the capital. One might think that this is an old story, and not necessarily relevant today, but one can also see how this history is reflected in the public space because, like any cemetery, the Templer cemetery is a memorial site, reflecting beliefs, values, and aspirations of the community.

Ana: So, what happened to the cemetery?

Yinon: Descendants of the Templers see to it that the cemetery, which is usually closed to the public, is cared for, and they visit it every year. What's interesting is that in the 1960s, descendants of the sect put up a central monument at the burial ground, mentioning members who had died during their army service in World War Two.

Ana: Wow, a commemoration of Wehrmacht soldiers in the heart of Jerusalem is really unexpected! Is there also a monument to soldiers from the First World War? Are they similar?

Yinon: Well, the fallen of World War One have their own monument in the cemetery, which was erected between the wars and mentions all the names of the dead and the places where they fell. The monument to the fallen of World War Two is different. But, aware of the sensitivity of the matter, the designers of the World War Two-monument used deliberately ambiguous wording. The wrote: "In memory of the more than 450 dead and of those who fell in 1914–1918 and 1939–1945."

Ana: It sounds very complex. But at this point I'm starting to understand that every commemoration and every pantheonization is complex.

Yinon: Yes, you're absolutely right. And yet we are talking about a very unique case. It is unique because it is one of the only monuments outside Germany that commemorates the

soldiers of Nazi Germany's army, and it is located in the capital of Israel, no less. This monument is so special because it tells a story of a very great complexity. Every commemoration entails complexity, politics, and struggle over power, just as any monument is based on dialogue and negotiation of memory. But here the sensitivity reaches its peak when in the heart of the Jewish homeland stands a physical representation that respects those who took part in the extermination of the Jewish people. You have heard about the crimes of the Wehrmacht, haven't you?

Ana: Mh, and these memory conflicts continue?

Yinon: Absolutely. This sensitivity, as well as the struggle for historical representation, also gave their signals in local and national politics, as legislators and public representatives tried to remove the monument through legislative action. Luckily for us, this did not happen.

Ana: You know? Throughout this journey I'm beginning to understand that the memory of the dead is actually a living and breathing thing. In fact, constantly moving both chronologically and geographically, memory has no boundaries. This has been clear at all the sites: the Kriegerdenkmal, the Bavaria Statue, the Field Marshals' Hall, and now the War Memorial on the Templer cemetery in Jerusalem. This is what makes the study of public history and the comparison of public memorials so exciting.

Yinon: I think you are right, and this is a fascinating representation of the concept you mentioned earlier—pantheonization—because it puts it in the context of history and relativity. Each community creates a pantheon for itself—a space that respects and commemorates the people who are important to it. But it is subject to ongoing negotiation. Because when the next community arrives the game reopens, and the important people become less important, partially important, and perhaps quite the opposite: they become infamous. Then, if we want, a de-pantheonization can occur. So, the memory sites, *lieux de mémoire*—physical and non-physical—always change, as history changes, as countries change, and perhaps, simply, as people change, and generations pass.

Ana: After learning so much about the history of pantheonization, I decided it was time to reflect on what I'd learned. *Lieux de mémoire*, as Yinon called it, can very importantly shape cultural memory and cultural heritage. The physical ties that monuments give us to history allow us to connect with the past, but they can also manipulate how we understand it. The Kriegerdenkmal, an initially unassuming, sympathetic monument, turned out to be a militarist

icon that still stands in the heart of Munich. The Bavaria Statue and the Ruhmeshalle, which overlook the Theresienwiese field, which fills with thousands of people every year for Oktoberfest. Even just regionally, monuments are built so purposefully to represent the intentions of the state. Even de-pantheonization, like I talked about with Nikolaj, can represent power changes. The de-pantheonization of Nazi monuments by the Allied forces is representative of the Western force that would dictate not just Germany's future, but the future of the world during the Cold War. And Yinon's input was incredibly valuable. It showed me that pantheonization is not a German phenomenon but exists across the world. In Jerusalem, the cemetery represents memory conflicts. There are struggles for cultural, political and public representation that manifest themselves in monuments, plaques, and statues all over the world. These physical representations of history are not objective pieces of education but are an illustration of the context of their time.

While my initial aim of this journey was to just learn a little bit more about the city I lived in, I ended up down a rabbit hole, and uncovered the deeper meaning and secrets of the monuments and statues that sit on every corner of every city around the world. Thank you for listening to this podcast.

(Sunday Stroll)