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Chronicles of Vienna:  
The Construction of Urban Memory in Daniel Spitzer's "Wiener Spaziergänge."

Today's predominant image of Vienna is that of a city enamored with its past, an image that can be traced back to travelogues from the period around 1800. If travelogues, and thus outsiders' views of Vienna, have reinforced this image, what have insiders' symbolic representations of Vienna contributed to this city's urban memory? My goal in this talk is to distill one insider's voice from late-nineteenth century Vienna—that of the journalist and writer Daniel Spitzer who wrote a weekly newspaper column entitled "Wiener Spaziergänge" from 1865 to 1892. By analyzing some of Spitzer's city texts, I intend to show that his Vienna is a forward-looking community, one that stops defining itself through its ties to the Habsburg crown and looks ahead, building on its past rather than preserving it.

Daniel Spitzer published his first "Wiener Spaziergang" in June 1865 in the local insert of the Viennese newspaper *Die Presse*. His column contained an unorthodox mix of thoughts on the tax on dogs, on Prussian ministers, and on daring theater performances, a first indication of the wide range of topics he would cover in the nearly thirty years that followed. Almost every week he took up another seemingly random aspect of Viennese urban life, recording, as William Johnston put it in *The Austrian Mind*, "the foibles and spoliation of the city." Spitzer's continuous musings on the city's everyday life, on theater, politics, economic issues, and even the weather, open a panoramic view of Vienna's cultural history in the late nineteenth century and show how a fairly new medium at the time fostered new forms of urban memory. The newspaper format enabled and required Spitzer to record the city's day-to-day changes and to engage his readers—Vienna's urban bourgeoisie—in a long-term dialogue about the city as not just an aesthetic but also as a social space.

Spitzer wrote his chronicles of Vienna at a time when Emperor Franz Joseph and his city planners were transforming the Habsburg capital on a grand scale by carrying out the *Ringstrasse* project. In this urban renewal project, which started with the Emperor's edict in 1857, the medieval city walls were razed and replaced with a grand boulevard that was lined by a number of public buildings and private dwellings, thus radically changing the face of Vienna. Spitzer participated in the aesthetic discussions surrounding the project, but he never stopped writing about the politics of a larger city. By including both the center and the periphery in his verbal walks through Vienna, Spitzer fostered an integrative vision of the city and emphasized that a city is less constituted by its monuments than by its people.