

The History of Beethoven's Skull Fragments

PART ONE

WILLIAM MEREDITH

I. The Treatment of Beethoven's Body from March 26-29, 1827

Around 5:45 p.m. on Monday, March 26, 1827, Ludwig van Beethoven died at the age of fifty-six in his apartment in the Schwarzschanerhaus in Vienna after an illness of several months.¹ The death certificate recorded the cause of death as “Wassersucht” (dropsy); the actual cause or causes of the composer's death are still debated by medical experts and amateurs alike. In *Beethoven in Person: His Deafness, Illnesses, and Death*, the physician Peter J. Davies concluded that renal papillary necrosis and liver disease were the causes of Beethoven's death; his chapter on “The Cause of Beethoven's Death” contains a careful analysis of the various symptoms of the composer and theories related to their causes.² The Beethoven scholar Barry Cooper argued that “whether the liver disease was caused by his alcohol consumption is still disputed, but alcohol was probably a contributory factor.”³ The composer also suffered—at the time of his death—from severe lead poisoning, as has been revealed by heavy metals analyses of strands of his hair cut from his head on March 27 by Ferdinand Hiller;⁴ we do not know the source or date of the poisoning.

The composer, lawyer, and painter Anselm Hüttenbrenner and Beethoven's housekeeper “Sali” (Rosalie) were in the room at the moment of death.⁵ The fourteen-year-old Gerhard von Breuning had left about 5:15 p.m. to go home to meet his teacher.⁶ Stephan von Breuning, the composer's old friend whom he had known both in Bonn and Vienna, and Anton Schindler, his occasional voluntary secretary and friend, had gone to select a burial plot in the cemetery of, as the biographer Alexander Thayer describes it, “the little village of Währing.”⁷ (See Fig. 1.) The Währing cemetery was selected because Breuning's first wife, Julie von Vering (with whom Beethoven had played four-hand duets and who was the dedicatee of the pianoforte arrangement of the Violin Concerto) was buried there in the Vering family plot. Two men kept the deathwatch the first night. (Stephan von Breuning himself died six weeks after Beethoven and was buried a few graves further down from Beethoven in the Vering family tomb.)

On the morning of March 27, a private autopsy was performed by Dr. Johann Wagner, an assistant at the Pathologisch-anatomisches Museum in Vienna. Dr. Andreas Wawruch, Beethoven's primary doctor since December 1826, was in attendance.⁸ The temporal bones were sawed out and taken away for study; Gerhard von Breuning later reported that he had been told they were in the possession of the mortuary orderly, Anton Dotter.⁹ According to a Viennese rumor, Dotter sold the bones to a foreign physician.¹⁰ (Another unconfirmed rumor adds that the temporal bones ended up in London and were destroyed during a German bombing

attack on the city during World War II.) Whatever the truth of the matter, the bones are now lost. A second saw cut across the top of the skull is clear in the somewhat gruesome frontal photograph that was taken during the 1863 exhumation; Gerhard von Breuning reported that “In addition, the skull had been sawed through crosswise, as was usual in autopsies.”¹¹ (See Fig. 2, reproduced from Hans Bankl and Hans Jesserer's *Die Krankheiten Ludwig van Beethovens*.)¹² The official report of the 1863 exhumation of Beethoven (see below) states that “the sawing process . . . must have been handled in a very rough way” because “the seams [of the skull bones] did not close perfectly since numerous splinters had been lost.” As is clear from the autopsy report, Dr. Wagner also cut open the thoracic and abdominal cavities; he described the appearance of the lungs, liver, gall bladder, spleen, pancreas, stomach, intestines, and kidneys.¹³

We do not know who requested the autopsy or who authorized it; Beethoven's only surviving sibling, his brother Johann, who had been at Beethoven's bedside the day the composer died, must surely have been part of the discussion. We also do not know if the person or people who requested the autopsy were thinking of a request in Beethoven's own Heiligenstadt Testament of 1802.¹⁴ In the middle of this extraordinary document, Beethoven had instructed his brothers to make public the facts of his illness: “as soon as I am dead and if Dr. Schmid[t] is still alive, ask him in my name to describe my malady, and attach this written document [to his account] of the history of my illness, so that at least as far as is possible the world may become reconciled to me after my death—”¹⁵ Unfortunately, Dr. Johann Adam Schmidt, professor of anatomy and surgery and a professor of medicine at the Josephsakademie in Vienna and Beethoven's doctor since 1801, had died in 1809. Whether or not the request was used to justify the autopsy, Beethoven could never have imagined that his simple request for a *description* of his illness would result in an autopsy that would severely disfigure his skull. The request was mentioned, as discussed below, as a rationale for the first modern scientific study of the skull fragments in 1985.

The original Latin autopsy report appears in a new corrected translation in Peter J. Davies' *Beethoven in Person / His Deafness, Illnesses, and Death*.¹⁶ Gerhard von Breuning reported that, “Only when Beethoven's body was lifted out of the bed for performing the autopsy, did we realize what terrible bed sores he had. Throughout his agony he had seldom uttered a word of complaint.”¹⁷

Following the autopsy, Beethoven's thoracic and abdominal cavities were sewn up or closed in some manner that allowed later visitors to see both his chest and stomach. As is clear from photographs of the death mask, some type of material was used to patch in the gaps where the temporal bones of the skull had been removed.¹⁸ The top of the skull must also have been reattached or affixed in some manner. According to Ludwig Cramolini's and

Franz von Hartmann's accounts of their visits on March 27 and 28 (see below), a blanket or other type of covering (*Decke*) had been placed over the composer's entire body.

Those who came to view Beethoven's corpse after the autopsy on Tuesday, March 27, and on Wednesday, March 28—before it was dressed and prepared for the funeral—must have had strong stomachs. The entire head had been disfigured both by the removal of the temporal bones (the cuts were close to the bones protecting the eyes) and the rough saw cut across the top of the skull. As well, the cut through the chest and belly had been closed, the belly and chest were “completely blue,” and the corpse had a “strong cadaverous smell” (see below).

The death mask was taken by Carl Danhauser, his brother Joseph, and the animal painter Ranfil on Wednesday, March 28. In 1885 (or 1891) Carl wrote a statement testifying to the fact that the mask had been made on the morning of March 27 and that the three men had to shave the composer's beard prior to the casting.¹⁹ However, as Dr. Davies points out, the mask shows signs of being made post-autopsy; this conclusion is supported by the letter from Stephan von Breuning to Anton Schindler dated March 27 in which Breuning wrote, “Tomorrow morning a certain Danhauser wishes to take a plaster cast of the body [sic]; he says it will take five minutes, at most eight. Write and tell me whether I should agree. Such casts are often permitted in the case of famous men, and not to permit it could later be grieved as an insult to the public.”²⁰ Davies concludes that it was made “almost certainly on March 28.”²¹ The best existing copy of the Danhauser death mask is in the Historisches Museum in Vienna; two photographs of it appear on pages 382 and 384 of H.C. Robbins-Landon's *Beethoven / A Documentary Study*. Danhauser also made oil sketches of the head and hands that day. A color facsimile of one of the head oil sketches is given on page 31 of the 1970 bicentennial *Ludwig van Beethoven*.²² A lithograph was published of one of Danhauser's drawings for sale to the public (see Fig. 3); the caption reads “Beethoven drawn on his deathbed on March 28, 1827.” Carl also reported that they cut two locks of hair from Beethoven's temple (the flat regions on either side of the forehead), where it grew thickly.

In one important regard, Danhauser's drawing is fictional, though understandably so from a commercial viewpoint. As we know from the death mask, the 1863 photograph of the reconstructed skull, and the autopsy report, the top of the skull and the temporal bones had been sawed out on Tuesday, March 27; following the autopsy, the skull had to be put together in some manner for the remaining two days before the funeral while Beethoven's body lay in his apartment. Danhauser's drawing, however, shows no such damage and no indication of the manner in which the top of the skull was affixed: Danhauser simply imagined a leonine and romanticized head of hair for the print. (Hopefully, the position of Beethoven's right ear is also not accurate!)

In the absence of an accurate drawing or description of Beethoven's head after the autopsy, we do not know how the excisions of the temporal bones were compensated for, how the top of the skull was reattached, and if any material (gauze) or a cap covered the top of the skull. Surviving relics collected from Beethoven's coffin at the 1863 exhumation (see below), however, suggest that the skull may have been covered with some type of gauze-like material or cap, since small remnants of gauze-like material have been found in the envelope containing the relics along with over fifty strands of hair from Beethoven's head.²³ The extensive damage to the skull may also explain why Beethoven's head was “adorned with a wreath

of white roses, rest[ing] on a white silk pillow” after he was dressed for the funeral of Thursday, March 29.

No one recorded how many other visitors attempted or succeeded in visiting Beethoven's apartment on March 27, 28, and 29. On March 27 the tenor Ludwig Cramolini, who had sung “Adelaide” to Beethoven sometime in February,²⁴ came with an explicit goal:

On the 27th, after a rehearsal for A. Müller's operetta *Die erste Zusammenkunft*, I went, small scissors in pocket, to Beethoven's apartment, where I found Schindler, who had already turned away a great number of inquisitive people who wanted to see Beethoven; however, he let me enter. There I stood before the covered corpse, which according to the custom of that time rested on long planks laid on top of chairs. In the presence of an old woman, I believe Beethoven's housekeeper, who watched the corpse, I lifted the cover and quickly cut part of the hair from Beethoven's head²⁵ ... Then Schindler entered. I fell on his breast and cried.²⁶

Cramolini was hardly alone in his passion to collect the composer's hair: the souvenir snipping began at least two days before his death and even while he was conscious. Schindler cut off a lock on Saturday, March 24, to send to Ignaz Moscheles in London: “He is already dying, and before this letter is beyond the walls of the capital, the great light will have been extinguished forever. He is still fully conscious, however. ... I have just cut these hairs from his head and am sending them to you.”²⁷

Besides Cramolini, other important visitors on Tuesday, March 27, were the fifteen-year-old Ferdinand Hiller and his teacher Johann Nepomuk Hummel (Beethoven's friend), who had been fortunate to meet with the composer on March 8, 13, 20, and 23.²⁸ Hummel's wife, Elisabeth, was present on March 27; she had also been present on the visit the preceding Friday and had wiped Beethoven's sweat from his forehead several times, much to his relief.²⁹ On the first of those visits, the teenager had been able to answer Beethoven's “extraordinarily solicitous” inquiries about Goethe's health because the poet had “only a few days before ... written in my album” in Weimar. As mentioned above, Hiller too obtained a lock of hair on March 27 (now known as the Guevara Lock of Beethoven's Hair).³⁰ Curiously, Hiller did not write about this last visit to Beethoven's apartment in his 1867 memoir, though we are indebted to him for his detailed and poignant descriptions of his four visits to the living composer. (Hiller's other souvenir of his visits with Beethoven was a sketch leaf of the first movement of the String Quartet in C-sharp Minor, Opus 131, which was given to him by Schindler “several days after Beethoven's death, in Vienna, in 1827.”³¹) Hummel's wife also clipped some hair on this visit.³²

One of the more detailed accounts of Beethoven's lying in state comes from Schubert's friend Franz von Hartmann, who visited the next day, March 28:

Beethoven's room was sparsely furnished, and only the piano, which the English gave him as a present, and a very grand coffin stood out by virtue of their quality.³³ ... A bed had not yet been prepared for the lying in state and he still lay on the mattress of his bed. A blanket covered him, and a venerable old man, who looked to me more like a servant than an attendant, uncovered him for me. ... There was a celestial dignity about him, despite the disfiguration he is said to have suffered ... that I could not look at him long enough. ... Once below, I could have wept that I did not ask the old man to cut a few hairs for

me. Ferdinand Sauter, whom I had planned to meet there but missed, came out at that moment and I returned to the room with him. The old man showed him to us again, uncovering the breast too, which was already completely blue, as was the badly swollen stomach. There was already a strong cadaverous smell. We gave the old man a tip and begged him for a few of Beethoven's hairs. He shook his head and motioned us to be silent. We were going slowly and sadly down the steps when the old man called softly from the balustrade above that we should wait at the gate until three fops had left, who had stood tapping their swagger-sticks on their pantaloons while looking at the dead man. Then we went up once more; the old man came out of the door, his finger on his lips, and handed us the hair in a bit of paper. We left with a feeling of mournful joy.³⁴

By the morning of the funeral, the composer's corpse had been clothed and placed in a polished oak casket. A report on the funeral in the archives of the Vienna Supreme Court reads:

On the cover [of the coffin] was constructed a gilded cross. The head of the deceased, adorned with a wreath of white roses, rested on a white silk pillow. The face, framed with gray curls, was very lifeless because of the dissection. The folded hands grasped a wax cross and a large lily. And near the body a large lily was placed on the right side and on the left. Over the coffin was spread a coverlet half pulled back. The bier stood in the room in which he died, with the head facing the "composition room." There were eight candles burning on both sides of the coffin. On a table at the foot stood a crucifix and holy water for aspersion together with ears of corn. The good faithful servant Sali, the Master's maid, tirelessly received the many who wished to pay their last respects to the deceased. . . . Around noon [Andreas Zeller] stepped into the room and distributed to the invited guests rose bouquets with white silk stitches. They were placed on the left sleeve. Near 3 o'clock poems by Castelli and Seidl were given out as keepsakes. . . . At 3 o'clock the coffin was closed, carried down and placed in the court. The pall, ordered by Anton Schindler from the Second regiment, was spread over the coffin, the cross was adorned with a "very beautiful" wreath, and the Evangelical book and the "very beautiful" civic crown set up.³⁵

On the morning of the funeral, Gerhard von Breuning arrived with his father to cut off a lock of hair; in his 1874 memoir he reported: "Father had not allowed me to do this before the lying-in-state ended, in order not to spoil his appearance, but now we found that strangers had already cut off all his hair."³⁶ (Gerhard's account, however, conflicts with the report in the archives, which stated that Beethoven's head was "framed with gray curls.") In a later article from 1886 Gerhard was more accusatory: "When Beethoven was laid in state, unknown hands robbed him of all his hair."³⁷ The possible existence of a cloth cap or covering and the existence of the white rose wreath on the head may help explain Gerhard von Breuning's statements. It is more probable that all of the hair that was visible had been removed, not that Beethoven was bald (as has been frequently and logically assumed).

In an elaborate ceremony, the wooden coffin was carried first to the Trinitarierkirche (Trinity Church of the Minorites)³⁸ in the Alserstrasse. At times a military guard had to hold back the crowd, which was estimated to be as large as 20,000. Following the service in the Votivkirche, the procession moved to the Währing Cemetery. Since only the clergy were allowed to make speeches on consecrated

ground, the actor Heinrich Anschütz read Grillparzer's funeral oration at the gates of the cemetery: "... the last master of resounding song, the gracious mouth by which music spoke, the man who inherited and increased the immortal fame of Handel and Bach, of Haydn and Mozart, has ceased to be; and we stand weeping over the broken strings of an instrument now stilled."³⁹

Six days later (April 4), Schindler reported a remarkable development to Ignaz Moscheles in London: "I must still report to you that the grave digger of Währing, where he lies buried, visited us yesterday and told us that someone, in a note that he showed us, had offered him 1,000 florins C.M. if he would deposit the head of Beethoven at a specified location. The police are already engaged in an investigation of this matter."⁴⁰ More details concerning the incident appeared in the 1840 first edition of Schindler's Beethoven biography:

A few days after the funeral, M[r]. von Breuning received a notice from the wife of the sexton of Währing, that a considerable sum had been offered to her husband if he would bring the head of Beethoven to a place specified in Vienna. M. von Breuning, thinking that this information might originate in a mercenary motive of the sexton's, offered him money, which he, however, refused, assuring M. von Breuning that the intimation he had sent was nothing but the truth. On this account, M. von Breuning had the grave watched every night for some time.⁴¹

In his 1874 memoir Gerhard von Breuning added further details to Schindler's account:

There was a great deal of talk at that time to the effect that a reward had been offered for Beethoven's skull, and the rumor had spread so persistently that my father had discussed with Johann, Schindler, and Holz the advisability of lowering the coffin in reversed position, i.e., with the feet towards the outer wall. The idea was that, although watchmen had been engaged for the first few nights, they might doze off and it would be possible to tunnel under the wall and reach the head. Finally, the idea [of reversing the coffin] was dropped.⁴²

Extra precautions were indeed taken, however, to protect the skull, as became clear during the 1863 exhumation (see below).

Because of the loyalty of a sexton, the concern of Stephan von Breuning and Schindler, and the vigilance of the night watchmen, the grave remained undisturbed until 1863. As the official report of the 1863 exhumation notes, however, many people nonetheless believed a rumor that the skull "never got into the earth but was removed by unauthorized hands before the coffin had been closed." The first exhumation finally laid this rumor to rest.

II. The 1863 Exhumation of Beethoven's and Schubert's Graves

Many of the details concerning the 1863 exhumation were recorded in a documentary report titled *Actenmäßige Darstellung der Ausgraberung und Wiederbeisetzung der irdischen Reste von Beethoven und Schubert / Veranlasst durch die Direction der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde des österreichischen Kaiserstaates im October 1863* (*Documentary Description of the Exhumation and Reburial of the Earthly Remains of Beethoven and Schubert / Instigated through the Direction of the Society of the Friends of Music of the Austrian Capital-City in October 1863*) published by Carl Gerold's Sohn in Vienna in 1863. Most of the purely medical portions about

Beethoven in this extremely rare publication are transcribed in Bankl and Jesserer's *Die Krankheiten Ludwig van Beethovens (The Illnesses of Ludwig van Beethoven)*, along with a facsimile of the title page of the copy in the Wiener Stadt-Archiv. This issue contains the report's first complete English-language translation, which is based on the copy in the Beethoven-Haus, Bonn. Other details of the exhumation are revealed in the essay by Gerhard von Breuning included in this issue.⁴³

In 1863, at the instigation of Joseph Hellmesberger and Johann Krall, the board of directors of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde voted to exhume the graves of Schubert and Beethoven in order to prevent further decomposition and at the same time to establish their resting places in a "worthy manner" ("die irdischen Reste von Beethoven und Schubert vor dem Umsichgreifen weiterer Verwesung zu sichern und zugleich ihre Ruhestätten in einer würdigen Weise herzustellen").⁴⁴ In conjunction with the exhumation and reburial, extensive medical examinations of the skeletons were to be made. The costs of the exhumations were covered from the proceeds of a special concert that raised enough funds to alleviate any financial concerns for the Society. Accordingly, on Monday, October 12, 1863, the gravedigger, Anton Zehrnpenfening, set to work. It took eight hours to excavate Beethoven's grave because a "massive layer of bricks" had been built "directly above the earth that had been thrown onto the coffin at the burial." This layer of bricks was constructed in such a manner that a narrow space existed between the dirt on the coffin and the layer of bricks; the closer one got to the head of the coffin, however, the narrower the space. Guards were posted at the tombs on the evening of October 12. On Tuesday, October 13, at 9:45 a.m., after the remains of Beethoven had rested for thirty-six years, they were disinterred in the presence of thirty-two "board members of the Society and others."⁴⁵ The bones were examined by a professor of anatomy named Carl von Patruban, Dr. Standthartner (director of the board of the Gesellschaft), and Gerhard von Breuning. The skull was found to be fragmented into nine pieces, the petrosal parts of the temporal bones were confirmed as missing, and a part of the "crown" ("Scheitelgegend") was noted as missing in the official report. Six teeth, the left patella, some of the carpal bones of the wrist, some of the tarsal bones of the ankle, and some of the ribs were also missing. Measurements were taken of some of the longer bones of Beethoven and Schubert.

According to Gerhard von Breuning, "The main goal was, of course, the retrieval of the skulls' . . . and aroused the highest interest among phrenologists and lay people alike because of the striking difference between the two skulls." Gerhard continued with a gendered interpretation of the thickness of the bones that has often been discussed in the Beethoven-Schubert literature: "They [the skulls] seemed to reflect the characteristics of the composers' works. The walls of Beethoven's skull exhibit strong density and thickness, whereas Schubert's bones show feminine delicateness."⁴⁶

Breuning's linking here of the physical characteristics of Beethoven's and Schubert's bones to their music and a later statement in his 1886 essay ("Under the mighty, broad forehead, Beethoven's powerful, serious face has an expression of strength and defiance, traits that are also evident in his works") reveal that he too had been influenced by phrenology. One of the central tenets of phrenology, a widely popular system of beliefs originating in the theories of the Viennese physician Franz Joseph Gall (1758-1828), was that it was possible to read the bones of the skull as a reliable index of a person's psychological disposition and tendencies. In Gall's words, "From the formation of the bones of the head, until

the most advanced period of life, the form of the internal surface of the skull is determined by the external form of the brain: we can then be certain of the existence of some faculties and propensities . . ."⁴⁷ Apparently many Beethoven lovers believed in phrenology: in the first edition of his 1840 biography of Beethoven, Schindler wrote, "Since it would not be uninteresting to many admirers of Beethoven to learn the conformation of his skull, and the state in which the organs of hearing were found, I insert the following particulars from the report made after the dissection of the body by Dr. Johann Wagner. . . . The circumvolutions of the brain . . . appeared twice as deep as usual, and much more numerous. The skull was throughout very compact, and about half an inch thick."⁴⁸ In his 1886 essay, Breuning found further support for phrenology's accuracy in the fact that, as Wagner's autopsy report revealed, "the convolutions of Beethoven's brain had been twice as deep and more numerous than normal." Breuning also cited Schaffhausen's conclusion that "great mental achievements of humanity always correspond to a highly developed organization, such as the brain."⁴⁹

"Several small pieces of clothing" were found on both composers' skeletons. Additionally, remnants of footwear, particularly a piece of a sole, were discovered in Beethoven's grave. In Schubert's grave were found two pieces of the comb that held back the originally "luxuriant" locks of the composer's hair so that the artificial garland could be placed on the head (pieces of the garland were also found). Nails from the coffins were collected from both graves. According to the 1863 report, "all these objects were carefully collected; the members of the administration took individual parts of the remnants of clothing and the wood of the coffin of Beethoven as well as of Schubert, parts were given over [*überlassen*] to the few persons present at this serious act who were obviously moved by strong feelings. Most of these remnants, however, were put aside and for the time being looked over by Dr. v. Breuning." Schubert's brother was given Schubert's hair to take home. (Significantly, the report is silent on the fact that some of Beethoven's hair was found and was also given to at least one of the "few persons present at this serious act who were obviously moved by strong feelings.")

Given the scientific interest in the skulls, the committee in charge of the exhumation decided to discuss whether or not the skulls should be immediately reburied with the rest of the skeletons in the new coffins. Breuning later reported: "The commission had to consider the question of whether or not it was justifiable to put the skulls with the rest of the skeletons into the coffins right then and there, and thus to withdraw them forever from further scientific examination." The officials in charge decided to not rebury the skulls for the time being for two reasons. First, the committee had invited the photographer J. B. Rottmayer and the sculptor Alois Wittman to make photographs and clay models of the skulls, and though the men were present, the work could not be done that day. Second, the committee wanted to entertain the question of whether or not the "two precious relics, having been taken from the soil, should be kept permanently in proper surroundings and a worthy place that would closely reflect the grand activity of the spirits that lived in these bony dwellings. Nothing could seem more appropriate for this purpose than the first musical organization of Vienna and of the Austrian empire that had already existed in the days of both composers and that would possess within a few years a new facility that would be worthy to keep the two remains." In Beethoven's case, there was an additional reason: "since two essential components of the skull [the sawed-out petrosal sections]

have never been put into the grave and in case these components would ever be found, they could only be reconnected with the other components of the skull if the latter is properly kept.” Schubert’s brother had no objection, and so the commission decided to discuss this possibility with the management, in the meantime putting Beethoven’s skull pieces in the care of Gerhard von Breuning and Schubert’s skull in the care of Standthartner.

Thus, later in the day on October 13, the skeletons, except for the skulls, were laid out in the new metal caskets as naturally as possible. Beethoven’s vertebral bones were fastened together with twine; Schubert’s were not because only four to five pieces had been located. Once the laying out of the skeletons was completed, the lids to the coffins were soldered on, the seal of the Society affixed to the lids, and the coffins were transferred to the chapel of the cemetery. Standthartner kept the key to Beethoven’s coffin and Dratschmiedt kept the key to Schubert’s. The remaining pieces of the coffins were locked up in the administrative office of the Society to prevent them from being taken; Breuning took “what was left of the clothing . . . to be carefully examined for possible parts of bones.” The first section of the report is dated “Vienna, October 13, 1863” and signed by Breuning, Dratschmiedt, Helfert, and Standthartner.

In his 1874 memoir, Breuning wrote openly of his emotional reactions to having Beethoven’s skull pieces by his bedside: “What stormy feelings passed through my mind evoking such powerful memories, as I had possession of that head for a few days, cleansed from it bits of dirt, took plaster casts of the base of the skull for Professor Romeo Seligmann, kept it by my bedside overnight, and in general proudly watched over that head from whose mouth, in years gone by, I had so often heard the living word!”⁵⁰ In his 1886 article Breuning less poetically reported that “I, however, took Beethoven’s skull [to my home, and] senior physician Dr. Standthartner took Schubert’s skull for safekeeping . . .”⁵¹

At the meeting of the Society administration on October 15, it was decided that the skulls should be reburied “with everything that belonged to the actual skeletons” and with the other bones after being photographed, cast in plaster, and measured. The extracted clothing, footwear, and remains of the wood coffin were to be buried in separate zinc boxes. On Friday, October 16, and Tuesday, October 20, J. B. Rottmayer photographed the skulls from the front and side in the presence of Breuning and Standthartner. (The photograph of Beethoven’s skull in profile is apparently lost.) In the period between Saturday, October 17, and Wednesday, October 21, Alois Wittmann made “plaster models of the skulls that had been assembled in their natural positions over a clay mold.” Breuning assisted with the models, reporting in his 1886 essay, “I filled in the missing parts of Beethoven’s skull with clay as much as possible.”⁵² Breuning did not specify here which parts of the skull were missing at this point in time; earlier in the essay he had stated that “Beethoven’s skull . . . lacks the temporal bones and the connecting joints between the mandible . . .” Schubert’s skull was worked on from noon of Saturday, October 17, through the afternoon of Wednesday, October 21; Beethoven’s was worked on from the afternoon of Monday, October 19, to the afternoon of Wednesday, October 21, “in a specially arranged location that was locked to anyone not part of the event.” The skulls were returned home at night for safekeeping; however, both skulls had to remain at the special location for one night each because they were enveloped by the clay models (Schubert’s on Sunday, October 18, and Beethoven’s on Monday, October 19).

During the evening of Tuesday, October 20, Dr. Franz Romeo Seligmann took measurements and made drawings of the skulls (“Sehr eingehende und vielfältige Messungen an dien Beiden Schädeln und theilweise Abzeichnungungen einzelner besonders interessanter Partien derselben hat Professor Dr. Romeo Seligmann in den Abendstunden des 20 auf 21 Octobers”).⁵³ According to Gerhard von Breuning, “Professor Dr. Romeo Seligmann used the opportunity to make plaster models of the part of Beethoven’s skull that included the base of the brain and sections above the eye sockets. Those models, made in my home, have so far not been used.”⁵⁴ (A photograph of one of Romeo’s casts can be seen on the website of the Beethoven-Haus.) (See Fig. 4 for a painting of Romeo Seligmann; a photograph appears in the translation of Bankl and Jesserer in this issue.) “In the same way,” the dentist Dr. Carl Faber recorded the teeth of both men while Standthartner and Breuning were present; “it is expected that the results of these examinations will be shared with the scientific world.” Furthermore, the soil that had been removed was carefully examined and several fragments of small bones were discovered.

Since the lining of the new graves and the construction of the new stones appeared to be near completion, the committee decided that the skulls should be put back into the coffins at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, October 22. Small zinc cases were ordered to hold the remnants of the coffins and the clothing from the same company who had made the coffins, A.M. Beschorner. Around twenty people gathered on Thursday morning for the ceremonies. Beethoven’s coffin was opened first, and the “components of the skull were put at the appropriate place,” the additional bone fragments that had been found were all put in the coffin, and the small boxes were deposited between the shin and calf bones. At 9:05 the coffin was closed, the key was removed and given by Dr. Standthartner to be kept in the archives of the Society, the soldering was completed, and another seal of the Society was affixed. The work on Schubert’s coffin commenced at 10:10 and was completed in ten minutes. The second half of the official report, which reports on these actions, is dated “Vienna, October 22, 1863,” and is signed by Breuning, Dratschmiedt, Helfert, Hellmesberger, Schön, and Standthartner.

On Friday morning, October 23, the remains of both composers were reburied in newly constructed vaults in the Währing Cemetery. Copious details concerning the reburial are given in the third section of the report. The third and final section, dated “Vienna, October 23, 1863,” is signed by Bauer, Becker, Breuning, Dratschmiedt, Helfert, Hellmesberger, Herbeck, Krall, Parmentier, Schön, and Standthartner.

Almost immediately after the reburial, Gerhard von Breuning received a letter of complaint from Professor Hermann Schaaffhausen in Bonn, who protested that he would not have hesitated to travel to Vienna in order to take measurements of the bones for his own research. Unbeknownst to Schaaffhausen, however, some of the bones had escaped reburial.⁵⁵ Two large pieces and eight small fragments had not been returned to the new coffin. At some point in 1863 these fragments were given over to Romeo Seligmann for his skull collection.

How did the fragments end up in Romeo Seligmann’s collection? According to a codicil to the will of his son Adalbert dated February 25, 1944, “My father, who according to Wälcker’s letter was at that time one of the leading authorities in this field, was carrying out the scientific examination of Beethoven’s skull fragments. Since the small box [containing the bones] has been made specifi-

cally to match the measurements of the bone fragments, they are without doubt genuine parts of Beethoven's skull that were given over [*überlassen*] to my father for his skull collection that was very well known at that time." The letter referred to in the codicil was from Hermann Welcker, Professor and Director of the Anatomical Institute at the University Halle from 1876-1893, and was part of the estate of Romeo Seligmann. According to Adalbert Seligmann (who had inherited the bone fragments after his father's death in 1892), Welcker's letter was still inside the box with the bones in 1944. After Adalbert's death in 1945, his nephew Tom Desmines took physical possession of the small metal box in 1946; sometime prior to 1970 he misplaced the letter, and it is now lost.⁵⁶ I will turn to the critical question of who the "someone" was who gave Romeo the bones at the end of this essay.

III. The 1888 Exhumation

In 1888 the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde was involved with the municipal authorities in Vienna in the second exhumation of Beethoven's grave, this time to move the casket to the "Grove of Honor" of the Central Cemetery (Zentralfriedhof) in Vienna.⁵⁷ The move was part of a larger effort to centralize Vienna's many cemeteries in one location. The Währing Cemetery had been closed in 1873 (in 1925 it was to be transformed into a "Schubert-Park" and the two famous empty tombs of Beethoven and Schubert were left intact).⁵⁸ Planning for the transfer of Beethoven's remains dated back at least to 1886, as Breuning states in his essay on "The Skulls of Beethoven and Schubert" (see this issue, pages 58-60). Breuning himself favored an alternative proposal, a "beautiful idea," that a large church be built on the site with a mausoleum that would contain the bones of Beethoven and Schubert. The two composers would thus remain historically connected to Währing, and the "new Währing church would remain the place of pilgrimage for thousands of people whose lives have been enriched by their music." Breuning lamented that the idea did not find enough resonance among the influential because of the lack of a "persistent champion," and in June 1888 the remains of both composers were relocated.

A drawing of the exhumation at the Währing cemetery issued as a free insert by the *Wiener Tagblatt* shows one man removing the lid of the coffin while seventeen guests and two policemen watch. (See Fig. 6.) The men are dressed "in dark clothing" ("schwarzer Kleidung"), as was requested in the printed invitation of those invited to attend the reburial, which, however, took place the following day, June 22. (See Fig. 5.)⁵⁹

Once again, the exhumation provided medical specialists an opportunity to examine Beethoven's bones, although this time for only twenty minutes. This extraordinary limit forced the doctors to concentrate on the skull bones alone. A report of the examination, which occurred on June 21, 1888, was issued by Dr. A. Weisbach, Dr. C. Toldt, and Dr. T. Meynert and published as a supplement to the reports of the Vienna Anthropological Society; an English translation by Andrew Newell and Erna Schwerin appears in Davies' *Beethoven in Person*.⁶⁰ The report bluntly begins: "the external circumstances [of the examination] were highly unfavorable."

Despite the restricted time limit given them, the doctors were able to measure the skull bones they found in the coffin and compare them to the 1863 plaster cast. From their investigations, four conclusions were drawn:

(1) "The plaster cast of Beethoven's skull, prepared by the sculptor Alois Wittman in the year 1863, can, from the point of view of the parts of the face, be considered completely accurate, and therefore a reliable basis for further investigations of the latter. ... With regard to the accuracy, on the other hand, of the relationships within the cranial vault and in particular those relating to length, breadth, height and contour of the occipital region, serious reservations have to be raised about the plaster cast. ..."

(2) "There can be no real objection to the authenticity of the skull fragments found in the coffin. ..."

(3) "It is an undeniable fact that Beethoven's skull agrees in no way with our concepts of beauty and harmony of form. The hitherto quite pathetic quibbling and fault finding which we have seen from time to time lack any basis in fact. ..."

(4) "Regarding the interior of the cranium and the quality of the interior surface of the cranial bones we have no significant findings to report. Just the same we are able to state that the *Juga cerebri* and the *Impressiones digitatae* are only moderately developed. This is also apparent in the plaster cast of the left half of the anterior cranial fossa which Professor Romeo Seligmann prepared on the occasion of the first exhumation of Beethoven's mortal remains in 1863 and which he kindly made available to us. ..."⁶¹

Unfortunately, no list I am aware of exists of the people who took part in the exhumation on June 21 or the reburial on June 22. The Society appears to have mailed out invitations only to the June 22 reburial, which may explain the fact that only a small number of men are illustrated in the *Wiener Tagblatt* drawing. While it seems probable that Gerhard von Breuning and Romeo Seligmann attended at least one of these occasions, there is no direct evidence I am aware of to document their presence. Included in Romeo's estate, however, is an engraved copy of the speech that was read at the reburial (see the translation in this issue), which suggests that he may have been present.

Though not issued as one of the four conclusions, the authors did note that pieces of the occipital bone were missing: "The base and the apex of the squamous portion are missing."⁶² Though he had been given two large fragments of the skull fifteen years earlier, Romeo Seligmann apparently did not reveal his possession of the missing pieces to the three researchers.

IV. A Brief History of the Seligmann-Rosenthal-Kaufmann Families

Ever since the bone fragments were given to Dr. Romeo Seligmann for his skull collection in 1863 by an unknown person, they have remained in the family. Upon Romeo's death in 1892, the fragments were inherited by his only child, Adalbert (known by family and friends as Albert) Seligmann. Upon Albert's death in 1945 (see his will included in this issue), the bones were left to his cousin Adolphine Rosenthal, grandnephew Thomas (Tom) Desmines (née Rosenthal), and grandniece Alma Rosenthal. The bones were held for them by Emma von Mérey, Albert's "best and only friend,"⁶³ and transferred to Tom in 1946. Alma died in 1990 and Tom in 1993, at which point the fragments were inherited, as per the instructions in Tom's will, by Paul Kaufmann of Danville, California. At the end of his life, Tom suffered from dementia and Paul was responsible for all his financial matters and medical care; because of concern for the safety of a rectangular medium-sized metal box that contained a smaller pear-shaped box holding the bones as well as other treasures, Paul took physical possession of

the larger box in Vence, France, in 1990 and brought it to the United States.

Before turning to the story of the family's collection of Beethoven's bones and Goethiana, short biographies of the central characters in the four generations are given here to serve as preface to the story.

The Kaufmann family tree is distinguished by a large number of important doctors, magistrates, scientists, and artists who have been traced back to the seventeenth century. One of the oldest family portraits still in the family is an engraving of the regally-wigged Caspar Christian Seligmann (1652-1711), a Bürgermeister of the city of Zittau at the turn of the eighteenth century (see Fig. 7). A hand-written genealogy (see Fig. 8) sketched on a small piece of paper by Thomas (Rosenthal) Desmines encapsulates the recent family tree: Ernestine Mendel (cousin of Gregor Mendel, father of genetics) married Isaak Seligmann and had four children: Romeo (1808-92), Franz (1810-89), Therese ("Betty," 1813-89), and Leopold (1814-97). Romeo married Thérèse Countess Kolowrat-Herberstein of Moltke, and the couple had one child, Adalbert (1862-1945). Betty married Adolf Auspitz; the couple had one daughter, Caroline ("Lina," d. 1918). Lina was married to Dr. Emanuel Kohn (d. 1901) and had one daughter, Adolphine (1871-1967), known as "Ada" and by the family nickname "Miau." Ada, who had a doctorate in botany, married Dr. Emil Rosenthal (1863-1928) in 1894 and bore two children, Alma (1898-1990) and Thomas (1902-93). Alma married a German-American named George Kaufmann (1902-1985) in 1932, and the couple had one son who lived, Paul (b. 1936), the current owner of the bones. Paul married Joan O'Shaughnessy (b. 1935) in 1959; they have one surviving child, Lynn Griffith (b. 1968). Their son, Mark (b. 1966), died at the age of nine from a brain aneurism. Lynn has twin daughters, Alexa and Ashley (b. 1994). Thomas Rosenthal, who informally changed his name to Desmines in the 1930s (it was legally changed in 1948), was unmarried and left no known descendants.

Franz Romeo Seligmann was born on June 30, 1808, in Nikolsburg, Moravia, today the Czech Republic (his name is recorded as Abraham Romeo). His father Isaak was a respected doctor, as were his two brothers. According to a 1937 letter from his great-grandniece Ada, Romeo was Catholic: "O. Romeo, O. Leop. waren kath. O. Franz evangel." ("Uncle Romeo and Uncle Leopold were Catholic, Uncle Franz Protestant").⁶⁴ In 1825 after completing his work at the gymnasium in Nikolsburg, the seventeen-year-old Romeo moved to Vienna.⁶⁵ He had already studied Arabic, Persian, and Turkish at the Nikolsburg gymnasium; in Vienna he earned a degree with a dissertation titled "De re medica Persarum" that was the first translation of the first half of Abu Mansur Muwaffaq al-Harawi's tenth-century treatise *Kitab al-abniyya 'an Haqiq al-adwiya* (*The Book of Remedies*). The dissertation was published in Vienna in 1830; excerpts of the second half of the treatise were published in 1833 along with a German booklet titled *Über drei höchst seltene persische Handschriften* (*Concerning Three Extremely Rare Persian Manuscripts*). Al-Harawi's treatise contains 585 remedies, 466 of which were derived from plants. After extensive research in Paris, Italy, London, and Berlin in 1846 and 1857, Romeo determined that the treatise was the oldest prose work in modern Persian and prepared a complete translation that was published in 1860: *Codex Vindobonensis sive medici Abu Mansur ... liber fundamentorum pharmacologiae*.

Keenly interested in the history of medicine and racial anthropology, Romeo also studied art history. In 1838 he published a treatise titled "Götter, Satyrn, Faune" ("Gods, Satyrs, Fauns") that discussed the development of human races in relationship to the representations of human form in ancient art works. Romeo became qualified as a university teacher after spending time as a docent for the history of medicine and later was named as professor in this subject. A specialist in the treatment of cholera, he was also interested in ethnographical research (particularly of Peruvian skulls). (His brother Leopold had brought him a collection of skulls from around the world from a trip he made in 1857-59 on the ship *Novarra*.) In 1864 Romeo published an article on the cultural and historical significance of burials ("Über Begräbnisse in culturhistor. Beziehung"), which must have had special resonance since he had been given the Beethoven skull fragments in late 1863. On August 20, 1848, Romeo was made "Professor Extraordinarius" and in June 1869 "Ordinarius." He retired from the Institute for the History of Medicine in Vienna in 1879.

As a student, he was a frequent guest in the so-called "silbernen Kaffeehaus" in the Plankengasse, where he developed friendships within a circle of friends that included the composer Franz Schubert, the historical painter and illustrator Moritz von Schwind, the dramatist and lawyer Eduard von Bauernfeld, the poet and playwright Franz Grillparzer, the lawyer and poet Franz von Schober, the poet, philosopher, and physician Ernst von Feuchtersleben, and many other prominent artists of the day.⁶⁶ Members of the circle, including Romeo, are illustrated in a famous drawing by Moritz von Schwind of a *Schubertabend* at the home of Josef van Spaun; in the drawing Romeo is in the back row, sixth from the right (see Fig 9).⁶⁷ (The reproduction used here belonged to Albert, who identified many of the people in an accompanying chart.) An edition and commentary of thirty-three letters from Feuchtersleben to Romeo was published by Albert Seligmann around 1909; that edition contains a facsimile of a sketch of the faces of Romeo and Feuchtersleben that Albert based on Schwind's drawing (see Fig. 10). Romeo himself was a gifted amateur artist. Included in the Kaufmann Foundation Archives are two of his drawings, a self-portrait drawn in 1838 (see Fig. 11) and a pencil drawing of a classical bust.⁶⁸

In 1834 Romeo became the doctor, lifelong friend, and advisor to Goethe's daughter-in-law, Ottilie von Goethe (1796-1872; see Fig. 12), and her two sons Wolfgang and Walther. The texts of fourteen of the many letters she wrote to Romeo are reprinted in Albert Seligmann's *Ein Bilderbuch aus den alten Wien* (see below). Over their friendship of almost four decades, Ottilie showered Romeo with gifts, including presents from her father-in-law, books, presents from her winter trips to Italy, and hand-made items such as needlepoint. Though many of these items were stolen by the Nazis during WWII (discussed below), a significant number remain in the family.

Romeo died on September 15, 1892, and was buried in an honorary grave in the Döblinger Friedhof. Theodor Gomperz's obituary (see the appendix) paints a warm portrait of a humanist and scholar who amply deserved the nickname "The Wonderful." Over two hundred items from Romeo's *Nachlass* are found in the Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek; among the items are medical documents about Ottilie von Goethe and 170 letters from Feuchtersleben and others. Some of the material was given to the library in 1916 (presumably by Romeo's son Albert), and the

remainder was purchased at an auction as part of Albert's *Nachlass* in 1946.

Albert Seligmann, Romeo's only child, was born on April 2, 1862; his father was fifty-three at the time. As the only child of an older father who was a famous scientist, doctor, collector of skulls, and author, Albert grew up in a unique environment. In his memoir about being raised amid Goethiana, famous visitors, and medical specimens, Albert compared his strict home life to the playful one he experienced in the home of the widow of Moritz Hartmann (the poet and politician who had died in 1872) and her young son. She arranged gymnastics and dancing for a circle of children of the same age; in the evenings she organized performances of plays such as Theodor Körner's *Vetter aus Bremen* and *Nachtwächterm* in which the roles were divided among the children. They even founded what Albert described as an "involuntarily humorous" periodical called *Die Musen* (*The Muses*) to which Albert contributed "literary" pieces (his quotation marks) and illustrations. Such entertainments were a welcome relief:

This atmosphere of refined enjoyment of life was a most pleasant experience for me in contrast to the somewhat strict bourgeois life at home where, being a single child, I had no interaction with siblings or relatives of the same age. My mother, who used to spend much time in caring devotion with me, accepted my childish silliness, but my elderly father, even though he loved me, was for me primarily an authority figure whose mere presence was enough to dampen my childish doings. I hardly saw him except for meals and then only through the open door of his study working in mysterious candle light among tomes, papers, and skulls—"just like Dr. Faustus," as [the family friend and professor of classical philology] Theodor Gomperz used to say.⁶⁹

Although his grandfather and father were physicians, Albert grew up to become a conservative art critic and a gifted and well-known artist (though old-fashioned in his allegiance to realistic and natural representation). He attended gymnasium in Vienna and enrolled in art academies in Vienna and Munich. In Munich he studied with Carl Wurzinger (1817-83) and Christian Griepenkerl (1839-1916) and was the most well-known pupil of Alexander von Wagner (1838-1919).⁷⁰ Albert's most famous painting is "Der Billrothsche Hörsaal" ("Billroth's Lecture-Room"); painted in 1890, today it is part of the collection of the Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna. His work ranged from painted or engraved portraits (Wolfgang and Walther von Goethe, Eduard Hanslick, Theodor Billroth, Johannes Brahms), illustrations for books, symbolic compositions (such as his oil painting "Der Kreislauf," ["The Cycle"]), historical paintings ("Verkündung der pragmatischen Sanktion" ["Announcement of Pragmatic Sanction"]), landscapes, and caricatures. His paintings, drawings, and graphics are found in the Wiener Hofburg ("Verkündung der pragmatischen Sanktion"), Palais Erzherzog Friedrich, Albertina, and the Vienna Schubert Museum. His oil portrait of his aunt Therese, painted in 1883, was inherited by the Kaufmanns, as well as several drawings and engravings. See Fig. 14 for a photograph of Albert in his studio.

As a young man he was a member of the circle of friends around Theodor Billroth (1829-94), considered by many to be the leading German surgeon of the late nineteenth century. Albert directed, acted in, and was responsible for the decorations and designs of many social and theatrical events in the surgeon's house. The surgeon played second violin and viola and was close friends with Brahms and Hanslick. Also friendly with Billroth's young assisting

doctors, Albert proposed to one of Billroth's assistants that he paint the surgeon in the midst of his co-workers in the Hörsaal. Albert began making studies for the painting in 1888 and completed it two years later. The painting was part of an exhibit of Albert's collected works in 1903 and was later obtained by the II. Chirurgische Universitätsklinik.

Albert's memoir of the rich artistic, literary, and historical experiences of his youth were published as *Ein Bilderbuch aus dem alten Wien: Denkwürdigkeiten und persönliche Erinnerungen in Bild und Wort* (*A Picture Book from Old Vienna: Memorabilia and Personal Memories in Pictures and Words*) in 1913.⁷¹ This beautiful volume contains full-page color reproductions of seven art works either containing Romeo Seligmann or of pictures that belonged to the family as well as black-and-white reproductions of twelve drawings by Albert (including of Moritz von Schwind, Wolfgang and Walther von Goethe, Theodor Billroth, Johannes Brahms, and Eduard Hanslick, among others). The volume also contains twenty-nine smaller illustrations by Albert. See Fig. 15 for a sketch of several faces, including Brahms, that Albert made in preparation for a larger drawing for the *Bilderbuch*.

A newspaper announcement of his seventy-fifth birthday (1917) states that he had been awarded medallions for numerous exhibits in Europe and America, and that he was at that time the director of the Wiener Frauenakademie, where he also taught.⁷² (Albert had co-founded the institution with the Austrian artist Tina Blau [1845-1916].) According to the announcement, he was also the author of "a row of much-read books." Among these books is a 1910 collection of his essays on *Kunst und Künstler von gestern und heute* (*Art and Artists from Yesterday and Today*).⁷³ The essays were written, as Albert described his stance, from the perspective of a "practicing expert" rather than that of a statistician, historian, philosopher, or sensitive man of letters. The lively essays focus on Impressionism and its forerunners, Max Klinger, Gustav Klimt, Aubrey Beardsley, Ferdinand Waldmüller, Moritz von Schwind, the Secession, and many other topics. He wrote art criticism for the *Neuen Freien Presse* from 1903-38. (See Fig. 16 for a photograph of him in the 1930s.)

When Germany annexed Austria in 1938, Albert was seventy-six; though he had Jewish ancestors, he was apparently registered as a Roman Catholic and remained in Vienna through the war. Albert died there on December 13, 1945.⁷⁴ The Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek contains over 1,500 items from Albert's *Nachlass*, which it purchased at auction in 1946. Among the materials are travel diaries, approximately 1,450 letters, and twenty-five volumes of clippings of his feuilletons and art criticism. Albert's will (see translation this issue) directed his lawyer to auction many of his possessions, though it was careful to delineate what would go to his closest surviving relations.

Albert's grandnephew Tom Desmines (1902-93) became the next person who had physical possession of the fragments, though legally they were jointly owned with his mother and sister while they were alive. Tom was a self-described bohemian in the truest sense of the word, and his mother feared he would never quite find his way in the world. In a letter from August 24, 1928, she presciently told his sister Alma, "Various small changes in the house were made & lots of things begun & not finished by Tom, as usual. He is really difficult to manage & I am rather afraid he wont [sic] get on remarkably well as I had hoped. But he has many friends & he is amiable & attentive to strangers, so it may be all right."⁷⁵

Trained as an electrical engineer, Tom worked in that field before moving to Vienna in the fall to live with Albert and earn a degree at the university. Despite his training, his great love seems to have been music. An amateur violist, he loved to play string quartets and was accomplished enough to perform works by Beethoven, Mozart, and Haydn.⁷⁶ (See Fig. 17.) In early 1938 he fled to Paris, where he unofficially adopted a new last name, “Desmines.” He was mobilized as an engineer in the infantry by September 22, 1939⁷⁷ (see Fig. 18), and was captured by the Germans on May 20, 1940; he spent the war in Stalag II/D, a prisoner of war camp in Stargard Szczecinski (during WWII in Germany, today in Poland).⁷⁸ A detailed list of Tom’s belongings dated November 12, 1942, contains only one non-clothing item: “1 Geige 3 Bogen” (1 violin 3 bows). Ada contacted him through the Red Cross in January 1942; only one of her letters to him while he was in the camp survives, perhaps because it refers obliquely to the “souvenirs of our little poet.”⁷⁹ He was evacuated or released from the camp on May 6, 1945, and quickly made his way through the American lines.⁸⁰

After the war Tom was hired by the U.S. Army as an engineer and then as a translator at the Nuremberg Trials from April 10 through August 10, 1946. (See Fig. 19.) In 1948 Tom, his mother Ada, and his sister Alma and brother-in-law George Kaufmann purchased two stories of a house in Vence for Ada to live in that had been built at the beginning of the century. After the trials, Tom first worked in a garage, then in a textile factory, and as a teacher of English and German in Vence from 1949 to at least 1953. Tom later joined Ada in Vence and lived there until he had to be placed in a nursing home in Vence because of advancing dementia and declining health. Upon Tom’s death in 1993, his entire estate was bequeathed to Paul Kaufmann of Danville, California.

Paul Kaufmann was born in Honolulu, Hawai‘i on March 5, 1936, and attended the Punahou School. From 1953-57 he attended the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut, and received a Bachelor of Science in General Engineering. From 1957-61 he served as an officer in the Coast Guard. In 1959 he married Joan O’Shaughnessy, whom he met in New York City. Joan, who was born in Manhasset, Long Island, received a degree in economics from Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg, Virginia. In 1961 the couple moved to Palo Alto, California so that Paul could attend the Stanford Graduate School of Business, where he received a MBA in 1963. Joan supported the family during this period as a writer and researcher at the Stanford Research Institute. Since 1963, she has been a homemaker and steadfast community volunteer, currently of the Assistance League of Diablo Valley. (See Fig. 20.) Paul’s careers in the business world have involved paper and plastic packaging, environmental consulting and engineering, and walk-in healthcare clinics. He is currently president and CEO of Wellness Express Healthcare, senior consultant and on the advisory board of Applied Process Technology, senior consultant to MFG, past chairman and board member of CMTA, and is a founder and member of the advisory board of Golfspan.com. Paul, a businessman and entrepreneur, is outgoing and gregarious; Joan is a keenly astute and intuitive observer of human nature who is deeply committed to her husband, daughter, granddaughters (see Fig. 21), and community. Both passionately love art and music; Joan studied piano for many years. Proud of his dual German and Austrian ancestry, Paul marvels at the remarkable history of his family over the past two centuries, especially its connections to Goethe and Beethoven.

V. Description of the Skull Fragments and Metal Box in 1990

When the Kaufmanns took the pear-shaped box into their possession in 1990 for safekeeping, it contained two large skull pieces (well photographed in color in Bankl and Jesserer) and eleven small to tiny skull pieces, all wrapped in tissue.⁸¹ This accords only roughly with the description of them in the supplement to Albert’s will that is dated February 25, 1944: “The contents consist of 8 fragments of skull bones, 2 bigger ones and 6 smaller ones.” The six smaller pieces had obviously broken in the intervening years.

One of the two larger pieces is glued together today. (See Fig. 22.) The first physicians to study the bones in the twentieth century, Hans Bankl and Hans Jesserer, first saw them in 1985; they described what are two pieces today as three pieces. When they received them in February of that year, however, two of the pieces were apparently not glued together, because Tom had measured the weight of each one separately in grams (see below). Bankl and Jesserer must have glued (or reglued) the matching pieces together because they shown glued together in the color photographs in their 1987 book. (As discussed below, a letter from 1970 states that Tom “has two respectable pieces of the skull . . .”)

The fragment that Bankl and Jesserer describe as no. 1 is a “central part of the occipital bone with the occipital protuberance and the occipital crest, external and internal, respectively, as well as the sulci for the transverse sinus on both sides.” (The occipital bone is the bone at the back bottom of the skull.) The two fragments that are glued together (their nos. 2 and 3) are “part of the left parietal bone, running from the sagittal sulcus—that is, median—to the fringes of the margo squamosis.” (The two parietal bones are at the top back of the skull.) For more information on these parts of the skulls, see the excellent website <<http://www.csuchico.edu/anth/Module/skull.html>>; in the illustrations the occipital bone is light green and the parietal bones are purple.)

As mentioned above, in his will Albert stated that “the small box has been made specifically to match the measurements of the bone fragments.” This statement, however, has not been confirmed and may not be accurate. While it is true that the two large pieces (the glued-together piece and the other large piece) can be made to fit into the box with only the smallest amount of room to spare, the larger piece must be laid on its side and tilted at a slight angle to fit. (See Figs. 23 and 24.) The second large piece must then be nestled next to it, but also on its side. According to Paul Kaufmann’s recollection of the first time he opened the box and saw the bones in 1990, they were arranged within the box in this manner, but pieces of tissue had been wrapped around them and cushioned them within the box. All of the small to tiny pieces had been laid in the bottom.

On the top of the small pear-shaped box, the name “Beethoven” was scratched or etched into the metal by Romeo (the identification of the handwriting came from his son Albert). See Fig. 25. On the bottom of the box is pasted a small rectangular label with a decorative border and an inscription in Albert’s hand (see the illustration in the translation of Bankl and Jesserer in this issue); the ink is degraded but it was successfully transcribed by Dr. Roland Grassberger,⁸² who was asked to assist by Bankl and Jesserer (see below; they call it an “etiquette”):

Schädelfragmente von Beethoven / letzte Uebertragung 1864
[sic] / u. ein darauf bezüglicher Brief von / H. Welcker, Prof u
Direktor des Anatom Insituts / in Halle a.d. Saale (“Fragments

of Beethoven's skull / last transference [of] 1864 [sic] / and a letter in reference to them by / H. Welcker, Professor and Director of the Anatomical Institute / in Halle an der Saale").

This original label probably dates from around 1928 (see below).

Among the loose papers in the larger metal box Paul Kaufmann and I discovered a second label, which was written by Albert around February 25, 1944 (see Fig. 26):

Schädelfragmente Beethovens von der / Exhumierung 1863 nach Brief von Prof. Welcker / meinem Vater, der an der Untersuchung beteiligt / war, für s[eine]Schädelsammlung überlassen[.] / gehört nicht zu den von Hrn. M. E. Gramm / erworbenen Gegenstände, soll mögli[chst] / verkauft od[er] versteigert werden. / A. F. S[eligmann] ("According to a letter from Prof. Welcker, the Beethoven skull fragments from the 1863 exhumation were given over to my father, who took part in the investigation, for his collection of skulls[.] [They] do not belong to the items purchased by Mr. M. E. Gramm, should if possible be sold or auctioned. A. F. S[eligmann].")⁸³

The second label corrects the inaccurate date of 1864 for the first exhumation, clarifies that they had been given over to Romeo, and notes that they are not among the objects purchased from Albert by Gramm.

An inventory of the contents of the larger metal box in Tom's characteristic hand lists all the items he had stored in it (see Fig. 27). The second item is "box Beethoven skullbones." Some of the other items listed are an egg cup from the ship Novarra, a small Chinese lock and key, a Tanagra, Goethe pencil ("Stelomine") and leads, a round red box containing small to tiny cut (intaglio) stones with beautiful images of Greek and Roman statues (these were souvenir gifts from Otilie von Goethe to Romeo), a small Egyptian bronze ("Pharao?"), small bronze phallus, silver spoons, gold chains and coins, a meerschaum pipe from Archduke Albrecht (1817-95), and money from Austria, France, and the United States. Fig. 28 shows the larger metal box that originally held the small box containing the skull fragments and an arrangement of some of the other objects originally found in it.

VI. The History of the Beethoven Skull Fragments and the Goethiana Collection from 1928-1946

When Paul and Joan Kaufmann inherited the estates of Paul's mother Alma in 1990 and his uncle Tom in 1993, they preserved everything they considered to be of historical significance. Particularly important are hundreds of letters that document the history of the family from the end of the nineteenth century through the end of the twentieth century. When Alma (Paul's mother) moved to the United States in the late 1920s, she began to save all of the correspondence she received from her mother, brother, and other relatives in Europe. Since I began working with the Kaufmanns in 1999, we have sorted and organized the letters by date as best as possible (not all are dated and in many cases the individual pages of the multi-page letters were not kept together). While Alma's half of the epistolary history is missing, Ada's and Tom's letters constitute a rich and fascinating source. My initial goal in perusing the letters was to discover anything written about the skull fragments. Surprisingly, we have only located one indirect reference to something concerning the skull fragments prior to Tom's possession of the bones in

1946, though we are continuing to examine the material. Ada did leave a detailed picture of what happened to the family's Goethe treasures kept at the family home in Traunkirchen, Austria; part of that history is included here because it is not yet clear where the bone fragments were kept between 1936, when Albert transferred some of his Goethiana to Traunkirchen, and 1945, when he died in Vienna, and the bones were kept by one of his close friends to give to his descendents.

The one indirect reference occurs in an undated letter from Ada to Alma written the day that Alma's father, Emil Rosenthal, died in an accident (1928). (See Fig. 30 for a photograph of Ada in 1928.) Ada wrote, "There have been to[o] many visitors here as you could see by the cards I sent. . . . Uncle Albert's stay was short, but we had a pleasant long evening, & he spoke about all his treasures in Vienna & how interesting so many of his things are & that he wants to put numbers on them & write notices attached to each saying from whom they came etc. only now in Weimar he read about various gifts of Brn. Otilie to Uncle of which he had known nothing before." Several of Albert's "notices" still exist on items belonging to the Kaufmanns; as mentioned above, two exist that describe the bones. The other surviving ones are attached to (1) a pipe table that belonged to Franz von Schober, came from the lodgings he shared with Schubert, and was given to Romeo perhaps in 1841⁸⁴ (see Fig. 29); (2) a fine oil painting that is a copy of a portrait "supposedly of Crato v. Crafftheim" (1519-1585);⁸⁵ (3) a beautiful wooden box that belonged to Goethe's granddaughter Alma von Goethe (see Fig. 28); (4) a small carved wooden Buddha that is a replica of the famous statue in Kamakura; and (5) a small wooden urn. Albert also cataloged his art collection; many of the pieces and his catalog itself are lost.

Over the centuries the different branches of the family had built up a remarkable collection of treasures of Europe's artistic and cultural heritage. One of the oldest that remains in the family is a 1570 edition of the Meistersinger Hans Sachs' collection of poetry, the monumental *Sehr Herrliche Schöne und wahrhaffte Gedichte (Very Exquisite, Beautiful, and Genuine Poems)*. During the nineteenth century, Romeo added substantially to the family's rich collections. Soon after he arrived in Vienna, Romeo became a member of the larger Schubert circle (as discussed above). A small table that belonged to Franz von Schober, Schubert's friend, is still in the family; the top of the table contains fifteen egg-shaped depressions to hold pipes. Romeo was also the doctor, friend, and advisor of Goethe's daughter-in-law Otilie von Goethe (1796-1872) and her two sons. According to a handwritten note in the family archives, "Romeo had an affair w. Goethe's daughter-in-law Otilie[.] She had several[.]" (Otilie's husband August von Goethe, whom she married in 1817, had died in 1830.) An undated letter in German from Ada Rosenthal (Romeo's great-grandniece) to her daughter Alma from 1936 inventories some of the family's rich collection of Goethiana:

Concerning Goethe is to be noted that we have no Goethe letters, only from Otilie and her sister Ulrike v. Pogerisch, from Walther & Wolf v. Goethe, the two grandsons.⁸⁶ From Goethe himself is a page from an album without a signature & a paving invoice that Goethe had signed as minister in Weimar. Furthermore, there is a pencil that belonged to him, a ring that he wore & which U[n] Albert wears, the trestle of a table [Tischgestell] that is now here and is covered with letters under a glass plate & a drawing Auseris Christicolae, which is mentioned in Riemer & reproduced & is the most

valuable of the collection [see Fig. 32]. Everything else is for us of great value, but has no great market-value . . . Among these items are: Alma v. Goethe watercolor by Seidler, Goethe's death mask, drawing by Preller, a page from Kestner (the husband of Werther's Lotte), pictures of Otilie, of Ulrike, Wolf v. Goethe, Hammerspurgstall, of Kriehüber, Mrs. Jameson friend of Otilie, an engraving of Otilie & a painting of pansies by Alma v. G. — presents [given] to U[n]cle Romeo, most with dedications to him, likewise a box full of antiquities, a Tanagra,⁸⁷ gems, Egyptian things [see Fig. 28], Etruscan, Pompeian, which Otilie gave to uncle in the course of over 40 years of friendship. The bust of Goethe by Trippel arrives on August 5. Everything, the beautiful vitrine that is also from Goethe, looks very superb & everyone notices how particularly festive it is, I have placed and arranged it beautifully & U[n]cle Albert was very pleased.

Prior to 1936, the family treasures had been divided between a house in Traunkirchen in which Ada lived and Albert's apartment in Vienna. The apartment held the Goethe treasures given to Albert's father Romeo and his uncle Leopold by Otilie von Goethe. The main drawing room in the house was called the "Goethezimmer" ("Goethe room"; see Fig. 33) and contained artworks depicting the Goethe family, artworks by them, and documents signed by members of the Goethe family. Albert labeled the back of the photograph in Fig. 33 "Mein Goethezimmer (bis 1936)" ("My Goethe room [until 1936]"). Because of increasing fears about the objects' safety as the Nazis rose in power as well as other concerns, Albert transferred many of them to Ada in Traunkirchen. He also drew her a detailed map of how the Goethe pictures should be displayed and described all the paintings in detail. Ada took great care to follow his directions and, as noted above, Albert was pleased with her work. Photographs of the interior of the house in Traunkirchen taken after the transfer of Goethiana document that it was indeed a "wonderful, intimate museum," as one visitor described it. Even without the Goethe family pictures, Albert's apartment in Vienna at Garringtongasse 22 (Vienna IX) was regarded as containing "artistic and cultural value" because of "the furniture and other household items"; in May 1943 Albert obtained a letter from the Institute for the Preservation of Monuments attesting to the fact that the apartment should not be requisitioned by the Housing Office for this reason.

Because the Seligmann family included members who had been of Jewish heritage, the family and its treasures proved to be in grave danger after Hitler announced the annexation of Austria on March 13, 1938, in the heart of Vienna in what is known as the "Anschluss." A chilling announcement of the annexation printed by the *Austria-Nachrichten* (see Fig. 34) was mailed to Ada Rosenthal at the family home in Traunkirchen on April 8, 1938, by an unknown person. The announcement may have been mailed to Ada because she was on an extended trip to Italy, India, and Cairo at that time. The special flyer begins, "We all vote with a 'Yes!' Comrades of the mountains! The day of freedom has dawned for Austria. The dream that we have all fought and suffered for with a passionate heart, a united Germany, has become a reality. Our leader Adolf Hitler has led us from need and oppression to light and joy." It ends, "One people — one Reich — one leader! Heil Hitler!"

On March 14, the day after the Anschluss, a clearly disturbed Ada wrote her daughter Alma a long letter in which she was able to speak freely since she was in Bombay. The bad news had clearly reached her and she worried about whether or not her son Tom

had succeeded in obtaining his rightful French citizenship ("the Germans will not want to do without him as cannon-fodder"). She wanted Tom to come to Traunkirchen in May to talk about everything, noted that many books in Traunkirchen had to be boxed and hidden because they were no longer allowed, and ominously concluded that she would be fine as long as she had her pension and they left the house in Traunkirchen alone. The last sentence of the letter reads, "I am very unhappy about the loss of our home country." After the date written at the end of the letter, she added: "nun ist ganz Oesterreich 'Märzgefallene'" ("now all of Austria has become *Märzgefallene*").⁸⁸ Another letter in the family archives from April 6, 1938, contains the news that Tom had disappeared an unspecified time ago. Ada, who had been divorced in 1910 and now had both her children living abroad, was left to save the house in Traunkirchen and its treasures on her own.

A letter from a Mrs. Nancy Fennel to Alma Kaufmann from October 7, 1938, details some of the arrangements Ada made to safeguard some of the family's treasures:

Here we are, back in the U.S., and while the entire trip was very interesting, we are really glad to be back—felt we were only a few jumps ahead of war all the time, but the last few days were really hectic, as fare [sic] as a real danger was concerned . . . Of my little visit to your Mother [in the first half of August],⁸⁹ I shall write later; . . . The house at T[raunkirchen] is just like a wonderful, intimate museum; I was sorry we had to run along so fast, but my even going that way seemed to be very much frowned upon by the other party with us . . . We brought with us your Goethe Letters, and the Hans Sachs; a few other keepsakes, about which I shall write in detail, and about which I want you to tell me. . . . How I wish I could have stayed longer with your Mother; we could have had a wonderful time, talking over the treasures she has. Another question. She is afraid that at any moment all those the [sic] Goethe relics may be confiscated (she is really living, Alma in a sad state of terror, tho she may not want me to say so to you) and I feel reasonably certain that Dr. [Carl] Schreiber [a Goethe expert on the faculty at Yale], who is in Weimar each summer, in charge of the English-German School there, would be able to get them away, and it seems to me that it would be better to have them in Yale or some other such place, than in danger of being confiscated or lost or destroyed. . . . It is good that Tommy's all right, tho' I could get little information, other than that he is in the French Navy [sic].⁹⁰

As if there were not enough already bad news, Ada found out that her home in Traunkirchen (named "Semper Parata," "Always Prepared") had been ordered to be destroyed along with several others by the Nazis to widen a road. The destruction of the house made the safe disposition of all the treasures imperative. Ada was already planning to flee Austria but could not take her possessions with her for several reasons: as she was to explain later to Alma and Tom in a letter of January 21, 1939, she would have had to have them appraised by a "Schützmeister" and pay 100% of their value, there would be the risk that they would be seized as German treasures, and she would have to pay for the packing and shipping. Instead, in November or December 1938 Ada decided to send her daughter's portion of the family's important belongings to the parents of her son-in-law Georg(e) Kaufmann, who lived in Rheingonheim, Germany: "As they are Aryans I can send the things to them & there is no danger, probably, of their being taken away from them." On January 12, 1939, she sent Alma a postcard in which she informed

her that Susanne and Peter Kaufmann had at first acquiesced to her request but then written that they had no room. Ada ignored their reply, telling Alma: I “intend to send your things & furniture there all the same & at worst pay for storage in some place in Ludwigshafen, the nearest bigger place.” On January 30 she wrote to Alma telling her that the house was half-demolished and that “about 15 boxes and trunks and about 20 pieces of furniture, pictures & carpets” were just then being shipped to the Kaufmanns. They arrived in mid-February and Susanne wrote to say that they had agreed to store everything in their house. By mid-April, however, they changed their mind and informed Alma that “they must be disposed of as soon as possible.”

On June 14, 1939, Ada fled Austria to England via Switzerland.⁹¹ In a letter of June 17 to her daughter Alma, she told her about the distribution of the family’s belongings in some detail and gave her detailed instructions. Alma’s part of the inheritance was in Germany with her parents-in-law. A number of items that Ada considered Tom’s inheritance had already been sent to Paris for safekeeping:

... with these proofs & your or George’s order to send the things off to wherever you wish & by what (ship) line you tell her to, Mrs. Susan will manage to send the things off. I would advise you that it should be done now because you can never tell if Aryans & foreigners will be allowed to dispose freely of their own property. As to furniture you know what you have to expect: ... a vitrine (from Baroness v Goethe), a small round table with a glass top (from Weimar which was the property of Wolfgang v. G) ... The name of Goethe is on no account to be mentioned or it might easily and probably happen that the “Denkmalschutz” would prevent it leaving what they consider God’s own country. I was therefore very upset with your lawyer friend’s letter to the U.S. Consulate of B. because that name occurred in it & I have been trying to obliterate it everywhere! Tom has notes in Uncle Albert’s handwriting giving proofs of origin of various things. The pictures, photos, etchings etc. are in Paris & should remain together, your climate [in Hawaii] would not be good for them & I consider them & some of the contents of the vitrine which I also managed to send to Paris, Tom’s property & heritage from my family. One of the boxes contains the bust of Goethe by [Alexander] Trippel,⁹² you have the proof it was given to Uncle Leopold by Wolfgang von Goethe/the grandson) among the letters which Mrs. Fennel brought to you.⁹³ ... The portrait of Aunt Minna by [Carl Heinrich] Rahl [1812-65] is our best picture—it must be only mentioned as a family picture & the painter not named or it will not be let out of the trap. ... Goethe’s own sketch (Anseres Christocolae)⁹⁴ & Alma’s portrait by Louise Seidler [an 1832 portrait of the five-year-old granddaughter of Goethe, Alma] are in Paris thank goodness. ...⁹⁵

At the end of August 1939, Alma’s husband George made a trip to England, Paris, and then on to Germany to try to attend to the boxes; while there he was arrested by the Germans and held for several months. A postcard from Ada to Alma from January 15, 1940, communicates, “As to the furniture I know no less than you where to store it at the least possible risk & in the cheapest way; that was chiefly why I sent it to Susanne when I had to decide at short notice.” Ada’s decision to send the majority of the Goethe-related pictures to Paris, a decision that she made based in part on the belief that Hawai’i’s weather and insects would be harmful for them (she was especially obsessed that the Hans Sachs volume would fall prey

to termites) and in part on the opinion that they were part of Tom’s inheritance, would have disastrous effects.

A letter from Tom to his sister from August 29 and 31, 1939—mere days before England and France declared war on Nazi Germany for invading Poland on September 3—included the information that a general mobilization was expected momentarily. Realizing that he too would soon be called up, Tom sent his mother and sister information about the arrangements he had made up to that point about the objects Ada had sent to Paris. His letter to Ada does not survive; in the letter to Alma, he wrote, “In case Ada is also lost here are the addresses.” Tom recorded the names of the people entrusted with the treasures, their addresses, and a description of what they were stored in (though not *what* had been stored where). He also informed her that “Uncle Albert’s book *Tagebuch aus d. alten Wien* is a place-guide to the souvenirs.”⁹⁶

Tom was indeed mobilized after the declaration of war, was captured in 1940, and spent the war in a German prisoner of war camp. After he was released in May 1945, Tom discovered that the Nazis had seized the most important cache, those items that had been given for safe-keeping to Madame d’Ora.⁹⁷ In a letter penned over several days from July 12-15, 1945, Ada shared the news with Alma,

... no news whatsoever from Uncle Albert or Aunt Lotte. Tom is very unhappy that our Goethe souvenirs, the few jewels & all his documents etc. have been stolen by the Germans. The letters you have are now the only existing claims we can put up as to our family connection with the great man. I hope they are safe, as you told me they were, away from greedy termites. ... And now the great day of France le 14 Juillet, is over & — no news from Tom. He is crestfallen on account of the loss of the Goethe souvenirs & that is why he is shy to write.

The valuable Goethe pen-and-ink drawing, the Goethe album leaf, Seidler’s beautiful pastel of Goethe’s granddaughter Alma, Alma von Goethe’s own charming drawing of pansies, and the majority of the Goethiana were seized by the Nazis and have not reappeared to date. Almost all of the beloved “Goethe Wall” was dispersed.

The boxes sent to Susanne met a mixed fate, since they could not be mailed to Hawai’i after the declaration of war in 1939. Alma wrote Tom on July 16, 1945, to share partially correct news received from her sister-in-law Marie Kaufmann: “Our furniture had reached Auvers in 1940 but as George was held in a concentration camp in Kleve + nothing could be shipped overseas, it was sent back after the invasion of Belgium by the Nazis to the Mannheimer Paketfahrt Co. I was still able to send money in those days to G.’s parents to pay for transport costs + get it out. Marie wrote that all papers concerning this was [sic] taken from her (by the Nazis I presume) but that the furniture was with their mother Susanne in the Parish House at Münchweiler.”⁹⁸ Communication with Germany was very difficult in the months following the war; by October 15, 1945, Ada still did not know what had happened to the boxes sent to Susanne: “Have you i.e. George had news from Susanne? I do hope she is all right and that some of our things have been saved—fancy the value of the linens, silver, porcelain & carpets now! You could buy houses for them & all our stolen treasures!” In April or May of 1946 Tom was finally able to visit in person and report back to Ada, who passed on the news to her daughter:

Our things have been sadly neglected & a lot might have been saved—I dare say this Marie K. did her best but it just wasn’t good enough. If you could see the list of my treasures, Alt

Wien, Meissen, Überfang-Gläser etc. sold for about 1 Mk! each. Delft, Wedgwood (copy of the Portland vase!) etc. all at such ridiculous prices. If they had been smashed well & good, but that they might have been saved & weren't is a bit hard to swallow! Of course, you needn't tell me that it is downright wrong to hanker after merely material things when I have you all alive & well—but a small private museum, the result of 3 & even 4 generations of collecting which I wished to pass on to the 5th & 6th (Pauli) all gone—these worries pop up after the big anxieties have been smoothed down. ... Well, the big Cotta edition given to O. [Uncle] Leopold by Baronin Otilie is there—that is something!⁹⁹ And out of old grandfather Rosenthal's belongings there is the etching by Kriehüber of Rachel, the famous actress.¹⁰⁰

An affidavit from the Mannheimer Paketfahrt-Gesellschaft dated July 23, 1946, states that George Kaufmann had contracted with them to send the boxes to America in 1940, that they were not able to do so because of the war, that the boxes were ordered to be unloaded and auctioned by the Nazis in 1942, and that the contents consisted “for the most part of antique objects and that among these were not only antique pieces of furniture, but also antique paintings and pictures and other household items.” Only the furniture and some other items kept by Susanne escaped auction and eventually came to Alma.

After the war ended, it was difficult to contact or obtain news of the family's relatives in Vienna. A letter from October 15, 1945, from Ada to Alma and George reads, “From Vienna what news Tom gets is bad—Uncle Alberts [sic] best & only friend Miss Emma von Mérey seems to have died—I do not know when or how, nor if there is any news about Uncle Albert—These zones are very awkward and I do not know if the Garnisongasse is Russian or not.” On December 13, 1945, Albert died in Vienna. News of his death only reached Ada, Tom, and Alma in early January. His death hit Ada particularly hard, given the destruction of her home in Traunkirchen, the loss of the family treasures that had connected her to two centuries of her heritage, and her war-time exile from Austria. On January 14, 1946, she lamented to Alma, “The last link with the old generation is now gone, my last real blood-relation & I feel utterly floating, like a bit of torn off seaweed in this ocean of life.”¹⁰¹

In his 1943 will and its codicils, Albert had provided complicated directions for the disposition of the various items of his estate. Because he assumed that at “the time of my death and probably for some time after that it won't be possible to contact my few still living relatives,” he instructed that part of the estate be turned over to the German engineer (Gramm) who had prepaid for it, the remaining part should be auctioned, and the balance be used to settle the estate, give some to his housekeeper, and maintain the family burial plot. Albert directed that “Any surplus left after payment of fees shall be sent to Mrs. Alma Kaufmann, Hawaii.”

Albert's “best friend” Emma von Mérey proved to be very helpful on several fronts as the estate was gradually settled. She herself apparently received a Stradivarius violin from Albert.¹⁰² She also kept several items for Alma and Tom that were not handled by the lawyer executing the estate. A letter to Alma from Ada from February 1, 1946, reads, “you see, we are ‘making use’ of [the parcels you send] & Tom may need Mrs. Spitzer's help in Vienna with placing objects from Uncle Albert—if there are any. Fräulein von Mérey is alive, I am glad to say, that Uncle Albert did not live longer than she did—that would have been a real loss for him.” An undated letter

to Alma notes, “You ought to send her [Mérey] a parcel as she has done a lot to help poor Uncle Albert & is still trying to save some things for us & has a box for you with souvenirs from Uncle Albert—I do not know what it contains.” The box is mentioned in the will, where it is described as “a small polished wooden box” with a carved view of Hallstatt on the cover, “containing several pieces of family memorabilia.”¹⁰³ In the supplement to the will dated February 25, 1944, Albert described, for the first time, the small metal box containing Beethoven's skull fragments, commenting that the letter that authenticated them “had only been found very recently.” The supplement concludes, “In case this small box should be among my estate, I ask my executor to include it, after it has been appraised, with the objects listed on pages 1 and 2 under B in my last will, and to be put up for sale.” Though Albert had directed his lawyer to sell the bones, Mérey kept the metal box of Beethoven's skull fragments and gave it to Tom sometime in 1946.

VII. The History of the Skull Fragments since 1946

After Albert's death in December 1945, the estate was executed by his lawyer, although the survival of Albert's cousin Ada, grandnephew Thomas Desmines, and grandniece Alma Kaufmann altered some of the will's directions. Tom told his sister that he had requested that some items not be auctioned because of the problems with wildly fluctuating currencies. Among the items that were not auctioned according to the directions in the will were the skull fragments. Although they legally belonged to the three surviving heirs, Tom kept physical possession of them until 1990 and acted as if they were his property alone to dispose of or treat as he saw fit.

In a letter in German to Alma of February 4, 1987, Thomas told his story of his receipt of the fragments:

Concerning the Beethoven skull fragments is to be said: Prof. Romeo Seligmann was an anthropologist and had a well-known collection of skulls. Beethoven was buried in 1827 in the Währing Cemetery. In 1863 B. was exhumed. Albert Franz Seligmann, the son of Prof. Romeo, with whom I lived in Vienna in 1937-38,¹⁰⁴ said to me concerning the B. skull fragments, ‘they were given [*überlassen*] to my father by the Exhumation-Committee for his skull collection.’ After the death of A. F. S. I received the box with the fragments from Fräulein v. Mérey, who was a friend of A. F. S. in Vienna in 1946? Of course I have a great deal of writings and photos to the subject [the last three words in English].

Tom received the original box with the first label glued to the bottom (called an *Etikette* by Bankl and Jesserer), two large fragments and an unknown quantity of smaller pieces (ten survive today), a second label from around 1944, and several supporting documents.

In the mid-1960s Tom gave one of the smaller fragments to the Calcutta-born Austrian pianist Jean-Rodolphe Kars when the young man was in his teens. News of the gift became public in November 1968 when London's *The Daily Telegraph* published a brief article on the twenty-one year-old pianist's Queen Elizabeth Hall debut. The review ends, “Kars owns a piece of Beethoven's skull, given him a few years ago by a descendant of the doctor who removed it after the composer's death in 1827 in an attempt to find the cause of his deafness. ‘The trouble is,’ Kars admits, ‘that nobody seems to believe it.’”¹⁰⁵

The Daily Telegraph story inspired Dr. Victor Goodhill, Professor of Surgery at the University of California-Los Angeles, to try to track down the fragment in February 1969. Dorothy Huttenback of The Music Guild of Los Angeles put him in contact with Kars' agent, Christopher Hunt, who in turn supplied him with Kars' address in Paris. In his letter to Mr. Kars of May 27, Goodhill wrote, "It would appear from the newspaper account that you do indeed have in your possession portions of Beethoven's temporal bone which is one of the skull bones. This would be of tremendous interest to me because of my rather unusual involvement in Beethoven's deafness, both as an ear surgeon and as an amateur violinist. I have been speculating, as have many other otologists, about Beethoven's deafness for many years. If you do indeed have in your possession a piece of Beethoven's skull, it should prove of tremendous importance, not only to musical history, but to medical history."¹⁰⁶ On June 24, Goodhill was mailed a letter from Kars' mother, Dr. Mila Kars. Explaining that her son was on tour, she wrote that she had "decided to step in for him and explain to you the whole matter, concerning Beethoven's skull. All the more so, as I am a doctor and therefore in a better position to do so than he would be. First of all, to put things right: My son does indeed possess a piece of Beethoven's skull, but it is not from the temporal bone. Most probably from the neighbouring occipital region." She gave a brief history of the fragments' transmission, including "Dr. R. Seligmann who assisted at the exhumation as an anthropological expert, was given some of the remaining fragments. They are now in the possession of his great grand nephew: Mr. Tom Desmines / 'Semper Parata' / 06 VENCE / France." She added, "Mr. Desmines, very much interested in music himself, kindly presented my son with a small piece." Apologizing for the confusion over the identity of the bones, she volunteered, "If, however, you think that those skull fragments in possession of Mr. Desmines might still be of interest to you, I am sure he will most readily let you see them and give you any further information you might require for your research."¹⁰⁷ No further documentation exists in the family archives on the Goodhill request, including whether or not he was allowed to inspect the fragments.

Further requests to examine the fragments came the next year from two otolaryngologists at the University of Colorado Medical Center, Kenneth Stevens and William Hemenway. The August 10, 1970, issue of *Time* reported, in a short article titled "Beethoven's Ears," that Stevens and Hemenway had argued in an article published in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* that the composer's deafness was probably caused by cochlear otosclerosis. The article concludes, "Without examining the composer's temporal bones, no one can be certain. ... Stevens and Hemenway conclude that 'perhaps in a forgotten cellar in Vienna, a small formalin-filled jar holds the answer.'"¹⁰⁸ Somehow Stevens, who mistakenly believed that the skull fragments in Desmines' possession were the lost ear bones, came into telephone contact with a friend of Desmines named Mariel Boname. Mariel and her husband rented the top floor of the Vence home for a period of time.

An extended draft of a letter from Boname to Stevens from November 3, 1970, details her work on their behalf. The exact date of the initial contact between Boname and Stevens is unknown, but on September 3, 1970, Stevens mailed her a letter confirming an earlier phone conversation as well as a signed agreement. The letter begins,

It was certainly a pleasure talking to you on the telephone, and I certainly hope that this will be the beginning of some

fruitful work not only for you and your friend in France, but for all lovers of Beethoven. Enclosed you will find a copy of the article which was published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* as well as the statement concerning the use of the information that you requested. The entire idea of possibly being able to examine Beethoven's temporal bones is something that was beyond our imagination at the time that we wrote the article."¹⁰⁹

In the agreement, Stevens and Hemenway promised to "handle with the strictest confidence any information provided to us by Mrs. Robert Boname. At no time would any of the information be published without the written consent of her or one of her agents. Any information obtained would be used strictly for advancement of medical knowledge and would be handled as privileged information by the people involved."¹¹⁰ Boname's informative draft is spread across five pieces of stationery of different sizes from the Montagu Beach Hotel in Nassau, the Bahamas. Though the draft is undated, it states that it was written on Tom's sixty-eighth birthday, which was November 3, 1970.

[p. 1 recto] "Dr. Stevens,

Two months since you wrote your gracious note with its enclosures and high time that I acknowledged it. There are several reasons for the delay. I/we left the States before hearing from you—and rather disappointed at that—and it took some time for your letter to catch up with me & then I wanted to wait for something to report before answering.

2) More time was required for me to making initial the appropriate approach. which whereupon she contact and case the conversation into place suddenly became much easier & more complicated than expected.

3) Not only had sister Alma seen the *Time* article & sent it to Tom—holder of the treasure (except that he has taken to keeping the bones ~~it there~~ in the a bank vault) but,¹¹¹ she was here on a visit too when I arrived and upon learning that I was in contact with you, wrote a startling rough draught of a letter Tom was supposed to sign & send you asking for a fabulous some of money. I explained that

[p. 2 recto] there really wasn't any money to ask for at the moment but ~~that~~ if any evolved as a result of Tom's cooperation I was sure that Drs. Stevens & his associate would split with him on a fair basis. She has gone back to California (maybe Honolulu) and I don't know if she is going to try to contact you or not. Probably not since she has plenty of other things to worry about — and Tom has the bones.

4) That he has two respectable pieces of the skull (& some smaller ones from the jaw) but there is absent a little third piece that he gave away years ago to a young pianist who carries it with him on his concert tours — of which one must be now in progress — since his father reports ~~the bone unfindable~~ absence of son & bone at present. Tom is convinced that piece is unimportant for diagnostic purposes. The pianist's mother was a doctor & at the time of the gift made her own diagnosis of Beethoven's deafness on the basis of one of the larger pieces only (the one that has the a sort of print of an ear in relief on the inner surface)[.] Tom thinks I should not tell you what that diagnosis was so as not to prejudice you own freedom of judgment.

[p. 3 recto] 5) When I arrived on the scene he had already been in touch with a Swedish scientist who lives part of each year in this area & is skilled in making moulds (thinking a mould better than photographs)[.] Having already met him myself in the past

I did not hesitate to call him in Marseille where he said (a month ago) that he could indeed ~~do the work~~ make moulds of the bones if ~~& where~~ we brought them to him but he agreed with me that ~~all three pieces should~~ we should wait until the third piece could be borrowed back. ~~So we're~~ we're still waiting, with Tom checking from time to time to see if it[']s come "home." When it does, I may be back in the States (I had hoped to take the molds with me) & our doctor may or may not still be around.

6) ~~In the mea~~

While the "Beethoven year" ticks away toward ~~an end~~ its end & a lowering, perhaps, in public interest.

[p. 3 verso] 7) In the meantime however, Tom consented to get the bones out for me to photograph, which I have done with only tourist equipment, & as I hoped, he took some of his own which he showed me yesterday. [See Fig. 35 for one of the photographs.¹¹²] Much better than mine but not clearly focused & he assures me he can & will do better. So I am not to mail this until I get the results days after tomorrow.

8) In the meantime also, Tom has been most communicative about how he & ~~an~~ his illustrious ancestor — got the pieces in this first place. Now that my memory is refreshed I feel rather better about the whole thing. I now also have a good color photo of a portrait of this Dr. Romeo Seligmann & one of the citation on the satin lid of the box containing a 1st prize medal awarded him by the French government for his work in anthropology. He had an outstanding collection of skulls from around ~~the world~~ & which his far travelling brother

[p. 4 recto] helped collect. We have pictures of the ~~sail~~ Caravel in which he sailed & an egg cup from the ship is also among Tom's memorabilia. Incidentally Romeo's mother was Mendel¹¹³ — first cousin of the inheritance "law maker" — The Romeo portrait was painted by his son "Uncle Albert" whose notation kept in the little egg-shaped tin box with the bones, Tom has copied & I have photostated, along with Romeo's sketch of the place of the little

[p. 4 verso] bones in the jaw. Under my nose & Over my protest Tom ~~threw~~ shook the some tiny crumbs & "dust" from the tissue in which these were wrapped, right out into his garden — with a blythe "dust to dust" comment. But I made him keep the bigger crumbs — after all — after all these years — — —

But if I am taking up your time with these extraneous details it is because I am supposing that what with pictures and/or molds and maybe an eventual trip over here, you do establish something of further of scientific interest —

[p. 4 verso left margin] I think we have enough circumstantial material of general interest (I have not [p. 4 recto left margin] tried to show & tell all) for a story that could bring you & Tom a pecuniary

[p. 2 recto left margin] award. I don't know how Time might go about a case like this (I'm afraid Alma wouldn't be as interested in the genealogy relative past & present) but before the year is out i.e., as soon as you can say a 'yes, this is interesting,' if ever, I think Time should be informed

[p. 5 recto] a sequel of their March [sic] issue is in the offing. Tom is now quite willing for this, & for me to be the go-between (in preference to Alma — who has always been calico cat to his gingham dog)[.] I now have permission to tell you anything you want to know except his name & address & even

[p. 5 verso] that may be divulged after the story — if there ever is a story — comes out. — is completed. As you may judge from a

ravelled sleeve photographed in color — Tom could use a little extra income in his old age! (Today is his 68th birthday)[.]”

An additional sheet of paper in Boname's hand contains a chart of the recent family tree and three bits of documentation about the bones:

[a.] Beethoven traced from writing by Prof. Romeo Seligmann on the lid of this metal box [b.] Fragments of skull of Beethoven after transfer in 1864 [sic] from small cemetery where was originally buried—in 1827—to the main cemetery of Vienna.[sic]—with a letter referring to the medical examination of the skull by anthropologist Wäliker, best known german a. of period — Tom has had [“had” was inserted later above the line] the letter and thinks it is still in his position possession but presently unfindable. [c.] The above quotation is copied from the label stuck to the bottom of the box in the handwriting of A.F.S. (Romeo's son). This is an expanded translation of the Photostat which also shows sketch (found in box) of jawbone with small pieces in place presumably done by Romeo.

Apparently, negotiations with *Time* did not progress as desired. In December 1970 Mariel wrote to Beela Booth, wife of Windsor Peyton Booth, chief of the news service at the National Geographic Society, to find out if they might have any interest in the story. The reply came quickly:

You're getting this—for me—early thank you [for the Christmas presents] for I must let you know pronto that the 'the matter' you discussed in your last letter is not for the Geographic. It's not the kind of scoop they scoop, and, with your restrictions, they wouldn't have time to even settle on some first publication rights (for which they would pay) for a geography-oriented article. And there is always many a month, or year sometimes, between purchase and publication. I checked with Win to be sure. He will say nothing, but advises you by all means to continue your contact with Time. Personally I should think Life has more room for pictures, but Time will know. Papers (NYT?) also pay for a good story someone else writes, but very low pay comparatively.¹¹⁴

With the close of Beethoven's bicentennial year, Boname's attempts to publicize the survival of the fragments and earn Tom some money apparently came to naught. The inquiries do, however, appear to have stimulated Tom to do some research on the history of the skull fragments on a trip to Vienna in early 1971. In a letter of April 17, 1971, to his sister Alma, he wrote (in German): “[I] was in the Goetheverein; [I] discovered in the Rathaus, in a small pamphlet of the anthropological institute that Romeo Seligmann was entrusted with the research on Beethoven's skull—and that 2 pieces were missing. Whether he simply took them or said to the Commission, ‘may I be permitted to keep them for my skull collection,’ and the gentlemen [replied] in response: ‘Yes, however, don't speak about it,’ that was naturally not to be discovered.”¹¹⁵ (Tom's statement is somewhat curious since he knew that the label on the box stated that the bones had been “given over” to Romeo.)

Though Tom appears to have shared the remaining Goethe treasures in Venice with visitors on many occasions (as is clear in entries to the guest books), it is not known how often he showed the bones to visitors. Besides the Boname letters just discussed and the Jesserer letters that are discussed below, I have discovered only one other reference to the bones that indicates that Tom shared them. In a copy of a collected edition of Shakespeare's works from 1825, a brief note signed “Kenny & Rachel” is stuck inside the front cover.

In the note Kenny thanked Tom for loaning him the volume so that he could finish a school assignment. Rachel added her signature next to Kenny's and added: "P.S. Say hello to Beethoven!" Rachel Barahal and her cousin Ken Hill were teenage visitors to Tom's home in late December 1971, the year that Tom had researched the bones in Vienna. I asked Rachel to describe the experience and she sent me the following description in September 2005:

It was around New Year's 1972 when I touched Beethoven's bones. Having just turned thirteen, I was in an awkward stage between childhood and adolescence, shy and withdrawn, but also yearning to be recognized and gain a sense of place in the world. My cousin Kenny and I were on Christmas break from our Swiss mountain boarding school, visiting my parents in the south of France. My folks were spending part of their sabbatical leaves there. My mother, a violinist looking for a viola player to complete a quartet, was given the name of an older gentleman, Tom Desmines. We were all invited to Tom's house in Vence to make his acquaintance.

Entering Tom's house was like entering a ragtag museum of sorts. The first thing that I noticed was the dust—on every surface, in every crack, permeating the air, it seemed. Papers and books were piled everywhere, but what most interested me were the objects—statuettes, busts, old clocks, rocks, etc. After being seated in an area least cluttered by these charming artifacts, my parents and Tom entered an animated conversation about music, art, and Tom's life. In the course of this discussion, Tom made the first of several trips upstairs from whence he brought back various *extra* special artifacts for us to view. One, as I recall, was an oblong stone from India or Egypt. At first it looked like nothing unusual, hard and unyielding as any rock, but then Tom demonstrated to us how the stone actually *moved*. I was fascinated! It occurred to me that this man was nothing less than a magician.

But the true magic was brought forth in the form of a smallish paper bundle, which Tom carefully unwrapped as if it were about to yield a delicate and delicious pastry. Inside the crumpled paper were some nondescript bone fragments. Tom explained that they were skull bones that his father, a surgeon, and his uncle, a scientist, had stolen from Beethoven's grave. He must have seen my eyes open wide, because he then gently handed the bones to me to hold. Suddenly I was no longer an invisible thirteen-year-old nobody, but the temporary custodian of the encasement to one of the most brilliant musical brains of all time! Intent on allowing as much genius to permeate my skin, I cherished that moment like none other and vowed never to wash my hands again. Well, of course I did have to wash my hands eventually, and I still can't get a decent tune out of my banjo, but I am still grateful to Tom Desmines for allowing an invisible girl to touch the bones of greatness and deliver her from obscurity.

Like the teenage Stephan von Breuning who longed for a lock of the composer's hair and the teenage Ferdinand Hiller who succeeded in obtaining a substantial one, Rachel was subtly transformed by her chance encounter with Beethoven's physical body.

Six years later, the small piece that Tom had given to Jean-Rodolphe Kars was unexpectedly returned to him. In 1976 Kars experienced a "strong conversion" (he was of Jewish origin) and was baptized a year later as a Roman Catholic in the Sacred Heart Basilica of Montmartre, Paris. In an email from early September 2005, Kars wrote me: "I don't possess any more the piece of Beethoven's skull fragment since 1978. In fact, freshly baptised [sic], I wanted to

submit to the rule of the Catholic church who recommends to keep no human 'relics' except those of persons who have been officially canonized by her. For a moment, I was even tempted to try to put the fragment under earth, like for funerals. But then, I thought I was morally obliged to send it back to the one who so generously gave it to me. Tom received it and sent me a letter to thank me for that." In 1978 Kars became a Catholic priest.

In the mid-1980s the next serious attempt to study the bones for scientific purposes was initiated by a Viennese professor. On December 20, 1984, Helmut Wyklicky, University professor at the Institut für Geschichte der Medizin der Universität Wien, wrote to Desmines requesting that Tom allow Dr. Hans Jesserer to see and evaluate the bones in person. Wyklicky had met Desmines years earlier when he had come to the institute to research the Seligmann family. Wyklicky closed the letter by stating, "Forgive me for troubling you with a request after such a long time, however I still remember your visit to the Viennese institute ever so clearly and was obliged to you at the time for many communications and *bonmots* because you come from the Seligmann family line and could bear first-hand witness to cultural history."

On December 28 Tom replied; a draft of the letter communicates that a friend, Gerda Windisch, will be in Vienna in the first week of February and that he will give her the box with the skull fragments to pass on to Wyklicky. A piece of paper also dated December 28, 1984, contains tracings of the three largest bones and the box in Tom's hand; he also transcribed the label pasted to the bottom of the box and wrote that the name Beethoven on the cover was in the hand of Romeo.

The drawing reveals that the three pieces were all separated in December 1984. Tom traced each one onto the tracing paper and also gave their weight: the piece of occipital bone weighed "ca. 18.5 gr.," the larger piece of left parietal bone weighed "ca. 16 gr.," and the smaller left parietal piece weighed "ca. 3 gr." (Bankl and Jesserer reglued two pieces before they had the fragments photographed.)

Tom did not, however, send along either the Welcker letter (which presumably was still missing) or the second label prepared by Albert sometime around February 25, 1944. This turned out to be fortunate, as Jesserer went to great trouble to transcribe the original label from ca. 1928. He sent Tom a letter on April 26, 1985, in which he sent a transcription of the first label (see above).

In this letter Jesserer also asked Tom:

- (1) What is your opinion of this text?
- (2) Do you know something about the H. Welcker letter mentioned here (he was a famous expert on skulls and specialized in the skulls of famous people—like Schiller)? In your opinion, with whom was he corresponding?
- (3) And finally: who was Fräulein von Merey, who gave the fragments to you? In the Vienna telephone book, there are people with this name; are they relatives?

Although Tom often kept drafts of his replies to Jesserer's letters, none exists of his response of May 3, 1985. The Welcker letter appears to have been missing since at least 1970, when Mariel Boname was trying to publicize the bones' existence.

Welcker's biography clearly suggests why he was involved with the research on Beethoven's skull fragments. Born April 8, 1822, Hermann Welcker began his medical studies in Bonn in 1841 and completed them in Geissen in 1851. (See Fig. 36.) He was an assistant physician at the Geissen medical clinic from 1850-53, a Privatdozent and prosecutor at Geissen,¹¹⁶ became prosecutor and Professor Extraordinary at Halle an der Saale in 1859, was pro-

moted to Professor Ordinarius in 1866, and in 1876 also became director of the Anatomical Institute. He retired in 1893 and died in Winterstein in 1897. Besides his writings on microscopy, histology, biology, and anatomy, he also published articles on anthropology and ethnology, including several general articles on skulls as well as individual studies of Dante's skull (1862), Schiller's and Kant's skulls (1883), and Raphael's skull.¹¹⁷ In 1883 Welcker investigated the skull said to be Schiller's, which had been dug up in 1826 along with twenty-two others and declared to be Schiller's because it was the largest. Welcker declared that it was not his; Schiller's original grave was reopened in 1911 and a second skull was then declared to be original. The question is still unresolved, though DNA research could possibly answer the question.

On January 1, 1985, Wyklicky wrote back to say that he was delighted that they were resuming their friendship begun fifteen years ago and that Desmines was willing to allow the bones to be studied for scientific reasons. He promised to treat the relics as Desmines had requested and to return them as soon as possible. He added, "Perhaps it would interest you that Beethoven himself wished one of his doctors, Johann Adam Schmidt (1759-1809), to publish a report on the nature of his illness after his death. Since Schmidt died many years before Beethoven, this wish had to remain unfulfilled. However, Schmidt was a professor and the secretary of the Medical-Surgical Joseph's Academy, which, as you know, was housed in the building that is now the medical historical institute. Should a publication result, under these conditions I would forcefully plead that the report be published by the institute, so that Beethoven's wish would be fulfilled."

On March 18, 1985, Jesserer himself wrote to Desmines to thank him for loaning the fragments, give him a preliminary report, and ask additional questions. He reported that he was interested in the bones because he wished to explore the possibility of Beethoven having suffered from Paget's disease, which can lead to deafness; this interpretation had not been previously considered. In this letter he reported that the bones did not help resolve this question and asked if Desmines knew who had written the paper label on the bottom of the box. Tom replied on March 29, but a draft of the reply does not exist. Jesserer wrote Desmines an additional five letters between October 23 and March 16, 1986. In the last letter he sent Desmines hand-marked illustrations of the top of the skull identifying the location of the two larger fragments and told him that their report (which he included a copy of) would hopefully be published in an upcoming issue of the *Beethoven-Jahrbuch* published by the Beethoven-Haus in Bonn. Although a new volume of the *Beethoven-Jahrbuch* series was indeed planned, it never appeared; what would become the last volume (10) had already been published in 1983.¹¹⁸ Bankl and Jesserer's research, however, appeared the very next year, 1987, in their book *Die Krankheiten Ludwig van Beethovens* by the Verlag Wilhelm Maudrich in Vienna. The skull fragments and extensive illustrations appeared on pages 103-14 (translated in this issue with kind permission of the publishers).

That same year Alma, living in San Francisco, corresponded with her brother about the history of the bones, apparently in response to questions from Mr. and Mrs. Norumasa and Kikuyo Yoshida. Tom supplied the information quoted above in the letter of February 4, 1987; Alma typed out a draft of the following declaration based on his letter for the Yoshidas on February 12 and gave them a clean copy on February 15:

San Francisco, Feb. 12, 1987. Information re the Relics of Ludwig van BEETHOVEN's Skull Bones owned by Alma B. Kaufmann's brother Thomas Desmines of 'Villa Semper Parata' 464 Avenue Joffre, VENCE 06140 France. (The Relics are kept in Mr Desmines Safe at the Société Générale, 10 Ave. de la Résistance[,] VENCE, 06140 France along with documentation and photographs[.]

Our Great Grand-Uncle Prof. Dr ROMEO SELIGMANN was also an anthropologist and owned a collection of skulls of famous people. LUDWIG van BEETHOVEN died in 1827 and his body was buried in a then suburb of Vienna, Austria in the Währinger Friedhof. In 1863 his remains were exhumed for reburial in a more distinguished cemetery. [sic] At that time Professor Seligmann was given the Beethoven Skull for his collection. However our Uncle was especially only interested in the Ear Bones of the skull because of Beethoven's deafness.

These relics were left to Prof Seligmann's only son Adalbert Franz SELIGMANN who died in 1945 in Vienna. Uncle Albert in turn, along with many other things and from whom we inherited musical instruments and the unique BEETHOVEN Relics was especially interested in my brother who was also a musician and historian. My brother, Thomas Desmines was still a prisoner of war at the time of Uncle Albert's death. He served in the French Armed Forces, was liberated from Camp in North Germany by the American Troups and later served as an Interpreter for the U.S. Army at the Nürnberg Trials. Some time during 1946 he was in Vienna to claim some of our inheritance including the box with Beethoven Ear Bones, several musical instruments, books, etc. Most of our family possessions and treasures and property was lost through the bombings and theft during the wars. Alma B. Kaufmann.¹¹⁹

A second unsigned draft of the statement was also found in the Kaufmann family papers; the only significant difference is that Alma said that the relics were kept in the safe "along with Documentation from the University of Vienna, Austria."

On March 7 Tom wrote Alma a follow-up letter that contains some additional information: "Concerning Beethoven: on the cover of the box in which the fragments are contained is written 'Beethoven' in the handwriting of Romeo Seligmann; he was a university professor and the founder of the medical historical institute of the university, etc. etc. with that is [the authenticity of] the fragments certified. Two years ago Professor Jesserer borrowed the fragments because he wanted to research whether Beethoven became ill from Paget's disease. According to his research, that was not the case—he had reported that to Bonn. To want to profit from the B. skull fragments I find very shocking."¹²⁰ Unfortunately, Alma's letters to Tom were never saved, so the context of his reply is unknown. Given Tom's dire financial straits and physical condition, however, Alma may have passed along a question about the bones' worth from the Yoshida's.

As mentioned above, three years later (1990), because of Tom's dementia and failing health, the bone fragments were removed from the safe in Vence by his legal and medical guardian Paul Kaufmann and brought to the United States.

The collaboration between the Kaufmann's and the Ira F. Brilliant Center for Beethoven Studies began in 1999 as an outgrowth of a desire to confirm the authenticity of a lock of Beethoven's hair purchased by several members of the American Beethoven Society

in December 1994 at an auction in Sotheby's, London. Dr. Alfredo ("Che") Guevara, an urologist in Nogales, Arizona, contributed the lion's share of the funds; other donations came from Ira and Irma Brilliant, Tom Wendel, and Caroline Crummey. Although what became known as the Guevara Lock of Beethoven's Hair has excellent provenance that can be traced—with one significant gap—to the apartment in Vienna where Beethoven died, the Beethoven Center—in collaboration with the author Russell Martin, who was writing a book on the lock—wished to obtain a DNA match between the Guevara Lock (specifically, between a few hairs that still had the roots attached) and the skull fragments, whose existence had been made known by Bankl and Jesserer in 1987. The attempt moved forward on two fronts. Dr. Guevara generously sacrificed a few individual strands with hair bulbs from his remaining portion of the lock to be tested at Dr. Marcia Eisenberg's laboratory at Lab-Corp, Inc. in the Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. (DNA tests destroy whatever material is being tested.) Unfortunately, no genetic DNA results were obtained from the hair bulbs. However, Beethoven's mitochondrial signature was retrieved from the hair itself, which would allow for a match if material could be obtained from the bones, whose location was unknown. On the second front, Russell Martin hired a researcher in France to locate Albert's heir, who is mentioned, though not by name, in Bankl and Jesserer's book. The researcher discovered that Tom had died in 1993 and that his estate had been inherited by Paul Kaufmann.

The discovery shocked everyone, since the bone fragments had been in Danville, approximately forty miles from the Center, since 1990, when Paul had taken them for safe-keeping from Tom's bank vault in Vence. A phone call to the Kaufmanns from Russell confirmed the researcher's report, and the Kaufmanns kindly agreed to a visit from Ira and Irma Brilliant, the Brilliant's son Robert, and myself on August 6, 1999. As it turned out, the Kaufmanns were also entertaining doubts about the authenticity of the skull fragments, which Paul had only heard hinted about from family members and which he had never seen prior to 1990. Just as it was known that Ferdinand Hiller had visited Beethoven before his death and while he lay in state, and that Hiller's son had attested to the hair's authenticity in 1883, so it was known that Romeo Seligmann had studied the skull bones at Gerhard von Breuning's home during the 1863 exhumation and his son, Albert, had attested to the authenticity of the bone fragments. The only way to resolve the issue was to try to obtain a DNA sample from the bones. Because we were considering testing the bones for DNA and also because we wanted to protect them from further accidental chipping, on my second visit to the Kaufmann's home Paul and I—wearing gloves—transferred them from the metal box to plastic bags that were then stored in new larger containers with ample packing.

During the fall, the Kaufmanns decided to proceed with the DNA test and Dr. Eisenberg agreed to undertake the new test. At the end of January 2000, Paul and I flew to Raleigh, North Carolina, and met with Dr. Eisenberg to discuss the project. Paul left one of the largest of the smaller pieces for testing. Unfortunately, Dr. Eisenberg's team was not successful in its attempt to extract a reliable result from the 183-year-old bone. Given the remarkable rate of advances in the field since the 1990s and the probability that the field would continue to advance at a rapid pace, a decision was made to put any further tests on hold for the time being.

Meanwhile, the Seligmann-Rosenthal-Desmines-Kaufmann correspondence remained to be organized and examined for any evidence related to the history of the bones while in the custody of

these four generations. Besides letters from the 1830s to the late 1980s, death announcements, certificates, hand-written genealogies, four visitor albums, hundreds of letters, and other material provide some of the context of the history of the family and its treasures. Unfortunately, Tom's "bohemianism" was at odds with everything archivists and historians hold dear. Critical pieces of paper, such as Welcker's letter (discussed above) and Romeo's drawing of the bones, were misplaced before 1970 and have not been located, despite extensive searches through every scrap of correspondence and every page of Tom's book collection. Unlike his sister, Tom did not save letters sent to him, which would have helped fill in his discussion of the fragments with his sister. It also seems likely that other items may have been destroyed during the war. At this point in time, the historical record seems to be irreparably incomplete.

As an amateur violinist who loved classical music, Tom clearly valued and understood the significance of the fragments. At the same time, he was not their most faithful guardian: he gave away one piece in the 1960s to Jean-Rodolphe Kars and, as is recounted in Mariel Boname's letter from 1970, once blew bits of bone dust into his back yard with a cavalier "dust to dust" quip. He mislaid the authenticating letter from Dr. Welcker, as well as the drawings, perhaps of jaw bones, prepared by Romeo. He also repeatedly misrepresented the documentation that stated that the bones had been "given over" to Romeo, preferring instead to state that Romeo had stolen them. In his defense, however, he did not normally keep the fragments at the rather untidy house he lived in with Ada (till her death) that was frequented by many friends and visitors, but safe in a bank vault. Despite being in desperate financial conditions in 1987, he deemed exploitation of the bones for money "shocking"; even Albert had instructed his lawyer to sell the bones after his death as part of the estate.

Paul Kaufmann, on the other hand, has been a faithful steward, carefully packing, moving, and preserving everything that he thought might be valuable for the history of the bones. In an email, Paul explained, "My parents were of Austrian and German birth. The music of Beethoven was part of our household, and I believe we had all of the composer's music that was available on 78" records. The famous notes that begin Beethoven's 5th Symphony were the same featured notes used by my mother in a whistle to get my attention to come home when I was out playing with other boys in Hawai'i. Today, my parents and my ancestors would be so very proud to know that we are pursuing the validation of the skull bones, with the goal of making them available for all to see in the future."

VIII. Conclusion: Who Gave Romeo Seligmann the Fragments?

If Albert Seligmann and perhaps Dr. Welcker were correct—and there is no evidence to suggest that he/they are not—who gave the fragments to Romeo Seligmann? My theory is that it was none other than Gerhard von Breuning. If it was not Breuning, it must have been another member or members of the committee who had Breuning's agreement to remain quiet about the arrangement. The theory is based on the following arguments; the first strikes me as the strongest and most important.

- (1) At the end of his 1886 essay included in this issue, Breuning argued, “How important and interesting for science it would be if these skulls remained available for further, more thorough investigation. They should be accessible in a museum, an art gallery, or a library. *The two composers would be better honored by such an action than by the usual internment of their skulls in tombs*” (italics mine). This statement by Breuning is unambiguous: in 1886 he clearly believed that the entire skulls should not be reburied when they were dug up for the second exhumation. If he believed and had argued the same point in 1863, he seems to have lost the case in the discussion on October 15 of that year.
- (2) In the period between October 13 (when Beethoven's grave was opened and the skull pieces removed) and October 22 (when most of the pieces of the skull were placed into the new casket), Breuning had Beethoven's skull at his own home for safekeeping. When work or research was being conducted on them, at least two members of the committee were present. Breuning and Standthartner were both present on October 16 and 20 while Rottmayer photographed the skulls; Breuning, Standthartner, and Helfert took turns being present when Wittman made the clay models of the skulls from October 17-21; and Standthartner and Breuning were present when Romeo measured both skulls and made drawings and Faber studied the teeth of the two composers on October 20. The skull pieces were apparently at all times either in Breuning's possession or under the eye of two or more members of the committee, meaning that Breuning was the only person who was ever alone with the fragments.
- (3) Breuning brought the “components of the skull”—presumably now cleaned of the clay used for the skull model—to the laying out of Beethoven's remains in the new coffin on October 22. Though the report is silent on this point, I presume that, being a physician, he was given the task of laying the skull fragments in the new coffin. If he had not been the person who gave Romeo the bone fragments, he would surely have noticed the two large pieces *newly* missing from the back and left side of the skull. If he had noticed that two of the nine pieces were missing and was concerned or opposed, he would presumably have had an opportunity to bring the matter to the attention of the other members of the committee.
- (4) It seems significant to me that the two large pieces of the skull that would be given to Romeo came from the very back of the skull and the back left side. While we do not know how the skull was laid into the coffin, it is probable that it would have been arranged with the pieces “face up” (as a head would normally face in a coffin). Such a position would help obscure the fact that two pieces were missing.
- (5) The 1863 official report is not accurate about the discovery of Beethoven's hair in the coffin and the fact that some of it was given away. Such a deliberate inaccuracy suggests that the authors may also not have been completely accurate when they stated that “everything” except Schubert's hair and the pieces of cloth and coffin given to spectators were to be reburied. Given the detailed reporting on the other objects found in the coffins (small pieces of clothing, remnants of footwear, linen, Schubert's artificial garland and combs, coffin nails, wood shavings) and the fact that Breuning was present at the giving away of “remnants of clothing and the wood of the coffin” to “the few persons present at this serious act who were obviously moved by strong feelings,” the omission of the fact that Beethoven's hair was found—and given away—may well have been intentional, since it would have put the Society in a bad light. The people who kept the fragments of cloth and pieces of the coffin clearly valued them as relics (since they were “strongly moved”), but to outsiders it could easily have looked like more souvenir hunting. It was a different matter with Schubert's hair: the Committee decided that Schubert's brother should not be asked to return it. Clearly, this was a calculated and considered way of explaining the situation; rather than saying that Schubert's brother was *given* the hair to keep, the Committee wrote that they did *not* ask him to return it, which also spared them from rebuke.
- (7) The skull fragments were stored in a small box that had, according to Albert, been expressly made for them. Similar boxes were ordered for the fragments of Beethoven's clothing and shoes that were also given to Breuning for safekeeping. Since Breuning brought the filled boxes to the reburial, it seems most likely that Breuning was somehow involved in the fragments' eventual placement in a similar metal box.
- (8) One other aspect of the pear-shaped box merits attention, as it too may indicate something of the history of the fragments. As mentioned above, although Albert stated that the box had been made to hold these bones, the two large pieces only fit into the box when they are laid on their side at an angle in one particular manner. The larger bone, especially when wrapped in tissue, comes exactly to the top of the box when it is completely shut; the smallest pieces of bone probably resulted from improper storage. For this reason, I do not believe that a metal smith would have designed the box in this shape and dimensions if he had known what was going in it and what the actual dimensions of the objects were. Surely a box that would have been circular and slightly larger than the larger piece would have been more logical since the two pieces, wrapped in tissue, could have been stored flat on top of each other. It may well be that Breuning, or whoever ordered the boxes, requested shapes that would accommodate the fragments of cloth and shoe, and a surplus box was requisitioned for an unanticipated purpose. Given the official agreement to return all the skull pieces to the grave, Breuning may not have been able to give the true dimensions and shapes of the fragments to the metal smith.
- (9) When the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde was again involved in the exhumation of Beethoven in 1888, they only allowed the medical specialists twenty minutes to examine the bones, which led the researchers to complain that the “circumstances were highly unfavorable.” Something must have motivated the new committee to limit the amount of time so drastically. Were they afraid that a more extensive examination might implicate

the Society for having created the circumstances under which the fragments were removed in 1863? Or, were they worried that additional fragments might disappear?

Perhaps Breuning did not lose the argument on October 15, 1863, about the reburial of the skulls. Of all the people involved in the exhumation, he held a unique position, having been Beethoven's friend as a teenager. His word and moral authority in this regard must have carried special weight. Perhaps the Committee agreed to an undocumented compromise. Perhaps Breuning himself was allowed to keep the two large fragments, but the matter was not to be made public.

This possibility is close to one of Tom Desmines' speculations. As mentioned above, in 1971 Tom had wondered whether Romeo asked the Committee, "may I be permitted to keep them for my skull collection," and the gentlemen [replied] in response: "Yes, however, don't speak about it," that was naturally not to be discovered." Tom may have been correct that it was Romeo who asked the Committee for the fragments and that the Committee agreed on the condition that the "giving over" should not become public. It seems more likely, however, that Breuning acted on his own, and he later gave the box to Romeo.

If Breuning were involved, it might also explain the fact that the metal box never had a proper or appropriate label. As mentioned above, Albert stated that his father had lightly scratched Beethoven's name onto the cover. The absence of a label makes perfect sense in the light of the other little metal boxes designed to hold the fragments of clothing and shoes: since they were intended to be reburied, they did not require labels. Since the contents of this little box had to be kept confidential, there was no need for Gerhard von Breuning or Romeo to mark it.

Whether Breuning or Romeo asked the Committee for permission to keep back some of the fragments, Breuning must have been involved, especially since he returned not nine but seven pieces of skull to the coffin. Indeed, if secrecy were a key component of any agreement, Romeo Seligmann apparently kept his word, since, to date, no letters, writings, or statements from Romeo himself have been located concerning the circumstances of how he obtained the fragments. Since Welcker's letter appears to be permanently lost, we are left for the moment with Albert's statement in his will that Welcker had written that the fragments from the 1863 exhumation had been *überlassen*—given—to Romeo. It is important to note that Albert only discovered the letter from Welcker in 1944 ("Going through the letters of my father's estate recently, a letter was found ..."). Thus, when Tom recalled that his uncle had told him in 1937 or 1938 that the bones had been given to Romeo by the committee, Albert must have gained that knowledge from some other source, perhaps even in a conversation with his father. (It also seems highly improbable to me that Albert did not ask his father *who* had given the bones to him.) Such a supposition is supported by the fact that the original label, which probably dated from around 1928, misstates the date of the first exhumation as 1864 and does not state that Romeo was involved in the exhumation.

At least two mysteries remain to date. The first concerns the nature and timing of the contacts between Dr. Welcker and Dr. Romeo Seligmann in late 1863. Did Romeo seek Welcker's assistance or vice versa? Why did Welcker write a letter authenticating the fact that Romeo had been involved in the exhumation since that fact was documented in the official report? Did other documents exist except the letter of authentication that Tom Desmines

misplaced? Welcker's and Romeo's surviving papers need to be combed through for any documentation about their contacts.

The second mystery concerns the label on the bottom of the box, which, as can be seen in the photo on page 67, is badly faded. Bankl and Jesserer had to go to great pains to decipher it. None of the other surviving labels in Albert's hand are faded. The second label for the box, which dates from around 1944, is fresh. What caused the degradation to the ink on the first label? What caused the brown stains? Was the damage caused by the conditions under which it was stored or hidden during the Nazi period in Vienna from 1938 to 1945? Given the fact that Ada and Albert were vehemently anti-Nazi, it seems improbable that they would not have taken special measures to safeguard the fragments from confiscation. Indeed, had the Nazis seized the fragments, it would have been a propaganda coup of the first magnitude, given Joseph Goebbels' extensive exploitation of Beethoven's imagery and music in support of the Third Reich. Goebbels would have been able to return the fragments to Germany, perhaps even to the Beethoven-Haus in Bonn, whose director during the war, Ludwig Schiedermaier, was passionately arguing that Beethoven's Fifth was a "call to war, a challenge, a call to battle stations" for the German nation under Hitler's rule.¹²¹ Instead, thanks to Albert Seligmann and Emma von Mérey, the skull fragments remained quietly within the family.

(Part 2 will be published in the Summer 2006 issue of the Journal.)

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Fig. 22. Photograph of the largest skull fragment that consists of two pieces glued together (photograph by William Meredith, © The Ira F. Brilliant Center for Beethoven Studies)



Fig. 24. Photograph of the largest skull fragment in the metal box in which they had been stored (photograph by William Meredith, © The Ira F. Brilliant Center for Beethoven Studies)



Fig. 23. Photograph of the largest skull fragment in the metal box in which they had been stored (photograph by William Meredith, © The Ira F. Brilliant Center for Beethoven Studies)



Fig. 25. The lid of the pear-shaped box with Romeo Seligmann's "Beethoven" identification (photograph by William Meredith, © The Ira F. Brilliant Center for Beethoven Studies)

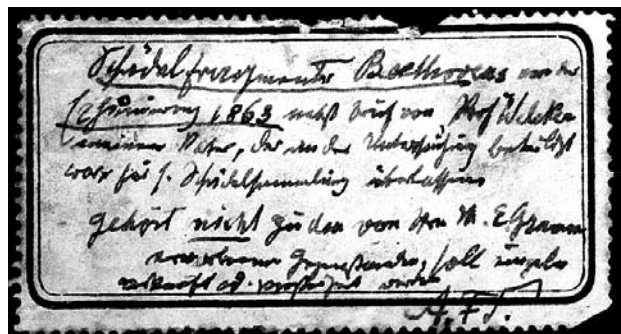


Fig. 26. Photograph of the second and later label describing the fragments (from the Kaufmann Foundation Archives)

Notes

- ¹ The name of the building, “The House of the Black-Robed Spaniards,” refers to the Benedictine monks for whom the convent was originally built between 1687-1727. The building was turned over to the military by Joseph II and in 1781 was sold to Joseph Ignaz Sigmund, who turned it into a large apartment complex. Beethoven moved into the building in 1825. His apartment was on the third floor (European second floor) and faced the Glacis. The building was torn down in November 1902 and objects from Beethoven’s apartment (doors, locks, etc.) were given to city collections. See Felix Czeike, *Historisches Lexikon Wien*, 5 vols. (Vienna: Kremayr & Scheriau, 1997), 5:177. For photographs of the rooms in Beethoven’s apartment and the building, see Peter Potschner’s *Das Schwarzspanierhaus / Beethovens Letzte Wohnstätte* (Vienna: Paul Zsolnay Verlag, 1970). Vienna’s city fathers have been remarkably cavalier about recording the location of and preserving Beethoven’s most important dwellings: the museum in the Pasqualati House is not in Beethoven’s apartment, which is currently rented out; similarly, no one knows in which house Beethoven lived in Heiligenstadt when he wrote his famous Testament in 1802.
- ² Peter J. Davies, *Beethoven in Person: His Deafness, Illnesses, and Death* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2001), 207-16. Dr. Davies was a physician who specialized in internal medicine and gastroenterology.
- ³ Barry Cooper, *The Master Musicians: Beethoven* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 349. Beethoven’s strange companion and helper Anton Schindler discussed Beethoven’s heavy alcohol use in his biography, blaming it primarily (and most probably inaccurately) on the second violinist of the Schuppanzigh Quartet, Karl Holz. Schindler, who had a grudge against Holz for several reasons (what I might call “friend-jealousy” among them), dated the harmful influence of Holz on Beethoven’s alcohol use solely to the years 1825-26. Schindler accused Holz of being a “Phaeacian,” that is, like the Phaeacian princes of the *Odyssey* who “ate and drank, and held perpetual banquet.” See *Beethoven as I Knew Him / A Biography by Anton Felix Schindler*, ed. Donald W. MacArdle, trans. Constance S. Jolly (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), 302-04. Davies concluded, “Suffice it to say here that he exposed himself to the jeopardy of severe liver disease through his regular consumption of substantial amounts of alcohol” (*Beethoven in Person*, 179).
- ⁴ The heavy metals tests were conducted separately by Dr. William Walsh at the HRI & Pfeiffer Research Center in Naperville, Illinois, and Dr. Walter McCrone of the McCrone Research Institute, Chicago, Illinois. Dr. Walsh’s result was also confirmed at tests at the Argonne National Laboratory. For brief descriptions of these tests, see the website of the Beethoven Center. Dr. Davies discusses the relationship of the lead poisoning to Beethoven’s final illnesses on pp. 211 and 214, discounting plumbism as a cause of the renal papillary necrosis and Beethoven’s terminal coma.
- ⁵ The identity of the woman in the room has been debated. On June 5, 1860, Anselm Hüttenbrenner told Thayer that “Carl’s mother” (Johanna van Beethoven, Kaspar Karl’s wife) had been in the room. In a letter to Thayer of August 20, 1860, he contradicted himself, reporting that it was “the wife [Therese] of Johann van Beethoven, property owner and pharmacist.” However, Gerhard von Breuning, who was also present that afternoon, said that the woman was Sali, and Thayer reported that Johanna herself later complained that no one had informed her Beethoven was dying until after his death. For a recent summary of this debate as well as an excellent discussion of the events surrounding the composer’s death, see Christopher Gibbs, “Performances of Grief: Vienna’s Response to the Death of Beethoven,” in *Beethoven and His World*, ed. Scott Burnham and Michael Steinberg (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 232-35.
- ⁶ See Thayer’s notes on his conversation with Hüttenbrenner in Gibbs, 233.
- ⁷ *Thayer’s Life of Beethoven*, edited by Eliot Forbes, rev. ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 1051. Hereafter: Thayer-Forbes.
- ⁸ Wawruch wrote a report on the final period of Beethoven’s life that describes the composer’s ailments and treatments. The report, “Ärztlicher Rückblick auf Beethoven van Beethovens letzte Lebensperiode” (“Medical Survey of Ludwig van Beethoven’s Last Life-Epoch”), is dated May 20, 1827, and was first published on April 30, 1842, in the *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater und Mode*.
- ⁹ Gerhard von Breuning, *Memories of Beethoven*, ed. Maynard Solomon, trans. Henry Mins and Maynard Solomon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 106.
- ¹⁰ Davies, 105.
- ¹¹ Gerhard von Breuning, “The Skulls of Beethoven and Schubert,” 59.
- ¹² Hans Bankl and Hans Jesserer, *Die Krankheiten Ludwig van Beethovens* (Vienna: Verlag Wilhelm Maudrich, 1987).
- ¹³ Davies, 103. The translation was made by Dr. John Horan.
- ¹⁴ The location of this document in March 1827 is not known. See *Ludwig van Beethovens Leben von Alexander Wheelock Thayer*, ed. Hermann Deiters and Hugo Riemann, 2nd. ed., 5 vols. (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1910), 2:332.
- ¹⁵ Thayer-Forbes, 304, but amended slightly.
- ¹⁶ Davies, 102-03.
- ¹⁷ Breuning, *Memories*, 107.
- ¹⁸ See especially p. 384 of H.C. Robbins-Landon, *Beethoven / A Documentary Study* (London: Macmillan, 1970); the saw cut across the top of the skull must have been made immediately above a large pockmark visible in both the life mask of 1812 and the death mask.
- ¹⁹ *Beethoven / A Documentary Study*, 396-97. Danhauser actually wrote that it was early in the morning on March 26, but it is clear from the context that we would consider it the morning of March 27. The statement was apparently written by the eighty-year-old Danhauser in 1885 and was notarized as authentic on May 19, 1891, by Dr. Peter Gasser.
- ²⁰ A facsimile and transcription of the letter appear in Anton Schindler, *Beethoven as I Knew Him*, ed. Donald MacArdle, trans. Constance S. Jolly (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), 329-32. The original letter is in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin—Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Mus. ms. autogr. Beethoven 36, 79.
- ²¹ Davies, 89.

- 22 *Ludwig van Beethoven / Bicentennial Edition 1770-1970*, ed. Joseph Schmidt-Görg and Hans Schmidt (Bonn: Beethoven-Archiv, 1970).
- 23 These relics are currently part of a collection in the United States; more information about them will be published in a forthcoming issue. Two different kinds of fabric are found today in the envelope; besides the gauze-like material, there is also a dark brown material to which short hairs are attached. It is important to state that there is no evidence I am aware of at this time as to the original locations of the two different types of fabric on Beethoven's corpse.
- 24 Cramolini dated his visit December 15-16, 1826, but Peter Clive argues that it was in February: see his *Beethoven and His World: A Biographical Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 79.
- 25 "eine partie Haare von Haupte Beethovens"
- 26 *Die Erinnerungen an Beethoven*, ed. Friedrich Kerst, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Julius Hoffmann, 1935), 2:235.
- 27 *Letters to Beethoven and Other Correspondence*, trans. and ed. Theodore Albrecht, 3 vols. (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), letter no. 469, 3:200.
- 28 English translations of Hiller's accounts are found in *Beethoven / A Documentary Study*, 387-89.
- 29 Thayer-Forbes, 1047.
- 30 An inscription on the back of the frame of the locket in the hand of Paul Hiller, Ferdinand's son, states that "This hair was cut off Beethoven's corpse by my father, Dr. Ferdinand v. Hiller on the day after Ludwig van Beethoven's death, that is, on 27 March 1827, and was given to me as a birthday present in Cologne on May 1, 1883." That lock, the subject of Russell Martin's *Beethoven's Hair* (New York: Broadway, 2000), has been successfully tested for the composer's mitochondrial DNA signature.
- 31 The sketch leaf (Skizzen Verzeichnis 384) is part of the Whittall Collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. The information comes from an inscription on the leaf signed by Hiller. The inscription identifies the sketches as coming from the quartet and the leaf as a present from Schindler that was given "einige Tage nach dem Todt des Meisters, in Wien, im 1827 / Ferdinand Hiller." I would like to thank Ray White of the Music Division of the Library of Congress for his assistance with providing a copy of the inscription.
- 32 Gibbs, 278, endnote 63. The information on Hummel's wife owning a lock comes from Karl Benyovsky, *J.N. Hummel: Der Mensch und Künstler* (Bratislava: Eos, 1934), 154.
- 33 According to Cramolini, Baron Eduard von Lannoy, Joseph Hüttenbrenner, and others were responsible for selecting a coffin that would be worthy of the composer. See *Erinnerungen an Beethoven*, 2:236.
- 34 Robbins-Landon, 392-93.
- 35 Thayer-Forbes, 1052-53.
- 36 Breuning, *Memories*, 107-08.
- 37 Gerhard von Breuning, "The Skulls of Beethoven and Schubert," 59.
- 38 For a history of the church, see Czeike, *Historisches Lexikon Wien*, 5:478. Joseph II gave the church to the Minorites in 1784.
- 39 Gibbs, 243. Footnote 75 discusses the different variants of the text of the speech.
- 40 The text of the entire letter appears in *Letters to Beethoven*, letter no. 477, 3: 214-17.
- 41 Translation of this passage from *The Life of Beethoven, including the Biography of Schindler, Beethoven's Correspondence with his Friends, Numerous Characteristic Traits, and Remarks on His Musical Works*, Edited by Ignace Moscheles. ... To Which is Added the Life and Characteristics of Beethoven from the German of Dr. Heinrich Döring (Boston: Oliver Ditson, [18??]), 132. For the original German in the first edition of Schindler's biography, see Anton Schindler, *Biographie von Ludwig van Beethoven* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1840), 194.
- 42 Breuning, *Memories*, 109.
- 43 Another English translation of the Gerhard von Breuning's *Aus dem Schwarzspanierhaus* by John Luis Miller (Ashland, Oregon) can be found on the web at <www.eaglesweb.com/PDF/schwarzspanierhaus.PDF> (1989, revised 2002). It also includes an excellent biography of Gerhard published after his death in 1892 as "To the Memory of Dr. Gerhard von Breuning" ("Separate Printing No. 3 (1893) of the 'Med.-Chir. Central-Blatt.' Vienna III/1").
- 44 Bankl and Jesserer, 89.
- 45 Breuning, "Skulls," 59. See the translation of the report for a partial list of those in attendance.
- 46 Bruening, "Skulls," 59.
- 47 See the excellent introduction to the history of phrenology, including an important letter by Gall, at John van Whyse's "The History of Phrenology on the Web" at <<http://pages.britishlibrary.net/phrenology/overview.h>>.
- 48 *Life of Beethoven*, 132.
- 49 Breuning, "Skulls," 60.
- 50 Breuning, *Memories*, 118.
- 51 Breuning, "Skulls," 59.
- 52 Breuning, "Skulls," 59.
- 53 Bankl and Jesserer, 94.
- 54 Breuning, "Skulls," 59.
- 55 Gerhard von Breuning misspelled Shaaffhausen as Schaffhausen. See Davies, 118, footnote 9, and 120, footnote 23.
- 56 According to an undated page of notes written by hand by Mariel Boname, "Tom has the letter [from Wälker] and thinks it is still in his possession but presently unfindable." She added the word "had" after "Tom has," perhaps indicating that he was unable to find the letter. Bankl and Jesserer reported that the letter was missing in 1987. Kaufmann Family Foundation IA.MB. ca.11.3.70.
- 57 Heinrich Kralik, *Das Buch der Musikfreunde* (Zürich: Amalthea Verlag, 1951), 164-65. Given his access to the Gesellschaft's archives, Kralik's history of the Society is unfortunately uninformative on its role in the two exhumations; he devotes a single, mostly Society-congratulatory paragraph to each one.
- 58 Photographs of the grave and the original tombstone as they exist today may be seen at: <<http://www.lvbeethoven.com/MeetLvB/AustriaViennaGraves.html>>.
- 59 Though it is impossible to confirm the identity of the men in the drawing, the fourth man from the right (excluding the two policemen) clearly resembles photographs and drawings of Romeo Seligmann.
- 60 Davies, 112-16.
- 61 Davies, 115-16.
- 62 Davies, 112.
- 63 Letter of Oct. 15, 1945, in the Kaufmann Foundation Archives (VIB.AR.10.15.45).

- ⁶⁴ Kaufmann Foundation Archives AR 11 or 12.18.37. The undated letter discusses the question of Paul Kaufmann's baptism.
- ⁶⁵ Information on Romeo's medical history is taken from the biography by Wurzbach in *Biographisches Lexikon der hervorragenden Ärzte aller Zeiten und Völker*, ed. August Hirsch (Berlin: 1932), 34: 50; this biography reproduced at <http://www.univie.ac.at/medizingeschichte/seligmann_biographie.htm>.
- ⁶⁶ *Aus Briefen von Ernst Frhn. V. Feuchtersleben 1826-1832*, ed. A. F. Seligmann (Vienna: Hugo Heller & Co., 190?), 10-11. A copy of this book from the Paul and Joan Kaufmann Collection is signed "Albert" and dated "Wien Dez. 1909."
- ⁶⁷ The original drawing is in the Schubert museum in Vienna.
- ⁶⁸ The drawing is labeled by hand by Romeo's youngest brother: "Selbstportrait meiner Bruder Romeo gezeichnet im Jahre 1838. Wien, den 25. Marz [sic] 1893[.] Leopold von Seligmann ..."
- ⁶⁹ Adalbert Seligmann, *Ein Bilderbuch aus dem alten Wien* (Vienna: Deutsch-Österreichischer Verlag, 1913), 144. Translation by Dr. Hannah Liebmann.
- ⁷⁰ Much of the information in this paragraph is drawn from R. Buchberger's essay "Der Billrothsche Hörsaal im Wiener Allgemeinen Krankenhaus Gemälde von Adalbert F. Seligmann," *Wiener klinische Wochenschrift*, Sonderabdruck aus 78. Jahrg. (1966), nr. 48, pp. 853-56. The copy of the article in the Kaufmann Foundation Archives contains an inserted mimeographed correction on p. 9 about the identity of Viktor Böttcher, one of the figures in the painting.
- ⁷¹ The original edition, published in Vienna by the Deutsch-Österreichischer Verlag, consisted of a run of 300 numbered copies and an unknown quantity of unnumbered copies; the first fifty are printed on special paper and with a more elaborate binding. Albert's loose corrected page proofs and a hand-corrected copy are found in the Kaufmann Foundation Archives.
- ⁷² A clipping in the Kaufmann Family Archives; the publication information was cut off.
- ⁷³ The volume was published by Carl Konegen in Vienna. Albert describes himself as an "ausübender Fachmann."
- ⁷⁴ It was difficult to find out news about Albert in the months after the war in occupied Vienna. His grandniece Alma Kaufmann first heard of his death in a telegram sent to her in Honolulu on January 11, 1946; grandnephew Tom Desmines, who was working for the U.S. Army, requested a United States military government inquiry and sometime after January 22 was informed that his uncle had died.
- ⁷⁵ Kaufmann Foundation Archives AR 8.24.1928 (undated).
- ⁷⁶ Letters of January 18, 1946 ("I expect to play Beethoven quattours [sic] next Monday and Haydn etc. too"), February 24, 1947, and December 9, 1947 ("played quartets Haydn Beethoven last Saturday"), in the Kaufmann Foundation Archives (IVC.TD.1.18.46, 2.24.47, 12.9.47). According to Anabel Barahal (who played quartets with him in the 1970s), he was only a "mediocre" player (phone conversation of September 3, 2005).
- ⁷⁷ Kaufmann Foundation Archives TD 9.22.1939.
- ⁷⁸ He was known under the name Rosenthal while a prisoner (no. 40177), but Ada wrote to him in French.
- ⁷⁹ Letter of June 30, 1942, in the Kaufmann Foundation Archives (VIC.AR.6.30.41).
- ⁸⁰ Kaufmann Foundation Archives AR 6.8.45.
- ⁸¹ Dr. Clyde Snow, forensic anthropologist, stated that the little pieces were also skull pieces in a first-hand examination.
- ⁸² Grassberger was a retired professor of the Criminological Institute of the University of Vienna. Letter of April 26, 1985, from Hans Jesserer to Tom Desmines; Kaufmann Family Archives VID.HJ 4.16.85.
- ⁸³ I am very grateful to Dr. Heidi Melas and Dr. Hannah Leibmann for their transcription and translation of the second label.
- ⁸⁴ I would like to thank Michael Lorenz for his transcription and translation of this etiquette: "Pfeifentisch / aus dem Besitz von Franz v. Schober, — meinem / Vater überlassen als Sch. seine Wiener Wohnung / aufgab. Der Tisch befand sich in Sch.[obers] Wohnung / als er sie mit Schubert teilte, ist also Zeuge / häufiger Schubertiaden gewesen. / A[lbert] F[rantz] Seligmann" ("Pipe table owned by Franz v[on] Schober, — it was given to my father when Sch[ober] left his Vienna dwelling. The table was found in Sch[ober's] dwelling that he shared with Schubert, is also evidence thereby of the frequent Schubertiades.") I am also grateful to Dr. Lorenz for sharing an article written by Albert Seligmann on the table, in which he explains his rationale for the date of the gift: "Feuilleton / Die Letzten aus dem Schubertkreis / Persönliche Erinnerungen von A. F. Seligmann. II.*," *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, March 29, 1936. Albert did not mention the label in his article, which may suggest that it was added after 1936. Albert met Schober in the summer of 1872 when he visited Vienna.
- ⁸⁵ I would like to thank Heidi Melas and Hannah Liebmann for their transcription and translation of this etiquette: "Angeblisch: Crato v. Crafftheim / der Leibartz von Ferdinand I. / Maximilian II. U. Rudolf d. II[.] / wahrscheinlicher Artzt u. Apotheker / od. dgl. Gute Arbeit vom orig. Portr. / nachgedunkelt." ("Supposedly: Crato v. Crafftheim, the personal doctor of Ferdinand I, Maximilian II, and Rudolf II, even more likely doctor and pharmacist or similar. Good work [done] from original portrait[.] darkened."). The portrait is one of a pair of very similar copies. The other is a copy of a Rembrandt self portrait that is in Vienna. Neither painting is signed.
- ⁸⁶ The family archives still contain twelve letters of Otilie von Goethe, five from her son Wolfgang von Goethe (1820-1883), six from her son Walther von Goethe (1818-1885), and four from Ulrica von Pogwisch, Otilie's sister (d. 1875).
- ⁸⁷ Tanagras are small terracotta figures that were found in the Hellenistic tombs of the city of Tanagra, the leading city of Eastern Boiotia (the part of eastern central Greece to the north and northwest of Attike). The site of the ancient city is unoccupied today and preserved as a historic archeological site. The figures were found in great quantities in the 1870s and forgeries quickly came on the market to compensate for the paucity of originals. The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts hosted an exhibit of originals in 2004; for illustrations see <http://www.mbam.qc.ca/en/expositions/exposition_45.html>.
- ⁸⁸ This term referred to people who joined the Nazi party only after it came to power in March 1933 out of fear, conformism, opportunism, etc. rather than an intense commitment to the goals of Nazi party.
- ⁸⁹ The date of the visit comes from Mrs. Fennel's signature in the house guest book.
- ⁹⁰ Unsigned typed letter in the Kaufmann Family Archives (VIB. NE.10.7.38).
- ⁹¹ Her departure date from Vienna and arrival date in Switzerland are stamped in her "Deutsches Reich" passport.

- ⁹² According to the Web Gallery of Art (which contains a photograph of the marble version of the bust), “Trippel’s best-known work today, the bust of Goethe, came about after the sculptor met the poet in Rome in 1786. Prince Christian von Waldeck, then staying in Rome, commissioned Trippel to do a model of the bust. The portrait shows the 38-year-old Goethe in the style of a classical portrait bust. During the work, Trippel told the client: ‘The hair is long and hangs down very loosely, making from the front the shape of an Apollo head.’ The marble execution of the Goethe portrait, dated on the back by Trippel to 1789, was passed by Prince Christian as a present to his brother Prince Frederick, ruler of Waldeck, who installed it in the stairwell of his palace in Arolsen.” See the Trippel entry at <<http://www.wga.hu/index1.html>>
- ⁹³ A letter in the hand of Louisa Stadelman reads, “The Baroness Otilie von Goethe had in her last will determined that the Bust in Plaster of Goethe (her father-in-law) made by Trippel in Tome 1787 should be given to Mr. Dr. Leopold Seligmann; Baron Wolfgang von Goethe after the death of his mother had sent him this Bust with a letter through me 1892 confirming this[.] Louisa Stadelman / being 32 years in the family / of Baroness Otilie von Goethe. / Vienne 30th September 1893.” Original in the Kaufmann Family Archives along with a note from Leopold Seligmann (VIA.LS.9.30.1893).
- ⁹⁴ Goethe made the drawing, which depicts geese at the foot of a cross at a post-station in Zwodaus (Svatava, today in the Czech Republic), on May 19, 1810. It is reproduced in A. F. Seligmann’s *Ein Bilderbuch aus dem alten Wien* (Vienna: Deutsch-Österreichischer Verlag, 1913) on a sheet between pp. 64 and 65. It is no. 172 in volume VIb of *Corpus der Goethezeichnungen*, ed. Gerhard Femmel (Leipzig: VEB E.A. Seemann, 1971). The description is on pp. 61-62 and the facsimile is on an unnumbered page in the latter half of the volume.
- ⁹⁵ Reproduction of the Seidler appears between pp. 18-19 in *Ein Bilderbuch aus dem alten Wien*. Another Seidler pastel of Alma von Goethe is in the Goethe-Museum-Düsseldorf.
- ⁹⁶ Kaufmann Foundation Archives TD 8.29&31.1939.
- ⁹⁷ Undated affidavit in pencil in Tom’s hand in the Kaufmann Foundation Archives.
- ⁹⁸ Kaufmann Foundation Archives AK 7.16.1945.
- ⁹⁹ Twenty-one of the thirty numbers in the edition remain in the family (*Goethe’s sämtliche Werke in dreißig Bänden*, 1857-58). There is no inscription from Otilie or ownership mark from Leopold.
- ¹⁰⁰ Kaufmann Foundation Archives AR 5.31.1946.
- ¹⁰¹ Kaufmann Foundation Archives AR 1.14.1946.
- ¹⁰² In a letter to Alma from August 22, 1946, Tom wrote, “As to Strad there is no doubt that Albert since ages intended her, his best lady friend, to have it, but I will *tater le terrain* [test the lay of the land], whether she will not leave it to us when she dies, as she is much older than we are, or even lend it as I play the violin etc. She is very pious and the church, *hat einen guten Magen* [has a big appetite], that is the only danger I can see in the matter.” Kaufmann Family Archives TD 8.22.1946. No other reference or documentation related to the instrument has been located to date.
- ¹⁰³ According to the will, Alma was also to receive Albert’s personal documents, a prayer book from his grandmother, receipts about the family burial plot, the statement declaring his apartment to be of artistic and cultural value, and the “refusal of the German Reich Chamber for Graphic Art” to grant Albert membership.
- ¹⁰⁴ There is a discrepancy about the date of Tom’s stay in Vienna with Albert. A postcard postmarked October 5, 1936, to Alma from Ada states, “Tom is installed with Uncle Albert & everything seems to be o.k. so far. I do hope he will succeed in getting this degree — it would be such a disappointment — & I almost hope that no offers for jobs will turn up until he has finished his studies.” (Kaufmann Family Archives VIB.AR.10.5.36.) Tom left Vienna on an unknown date, perhaps in early 1938.
- ¹⁰⁵ Copy of the article from the Kaufmann Family Archives.
- ¹⁰⁶ Original signed copy of the letter in the Kaufmann Family Archives (IA.VG.5.27.69).
- ¹⁰⁷ Unsigned typescript of the letter in the Kaufmann Family Archives (IA.MK.6.24.69), evidently forwarded to Tom with Goodhill’s original letter.
- ¹⁰⁸ *Time*, August 10, 1970: 44.
- ¹⁰⁹ Signed original in the Kaufmann Family Archives (IA.Stevens.9.3.70).
- ¹¹⁰ Signed original in the Kaufmann Family Archives (IA.Stevens.9.3.70).
- ¹¹¹ First version of this section: “but when she learned I was in contact with you, ...”
- ¹¹² The packet of photos is in the Kaufmann Family Archives.
- ¹¹³ First version of this section: “Romeo married a???”
- ¹¹⁴ Signed original in the Kaufmann Family Archives (IA.BB.12.70.undated).
- ¹¹⁵ Kaufmann Family Archives VID. TD letter 4.17.71.
- ¹¹⁶ Prosectors either prepare or dissect cadavers for demonstrations of anatomy.
- ¹¹⁷ For an extensive bibliography of his writings, see Welcker’s entry at <www.whonamedit.com>.
- ¹¹⁸ The last volume, which covered the years 1978-1981, was published in 1983. It was edited by Martin Staehelin.
- ¹¹⁹ Original letter from the Kaufmann Family Archives (IA.AK.2.15.87). Alma signed this draft of the letter and at the bottom wrote in hand, “Inf. Given to M^r + M^{rs} Yoshida 2/15/87.”
- ¹²⁰ Original letter from the Kaufmann Family Archives (IA.TD.3.7.87).
- ¹²¹ David Dennis, *Beethoven in German Politics 1870-1989* (New Haven; Yale, 1996), 166.