

GRAB, Arthur,

Shoe shop, 40 Kapellenstrasse

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CHRISTOPH SCHMID

Arthur Grab, born July 8, 1884 in Vienna, deported July 10, 1942 from Laupheim to Auschwitz, married **Luise Grab, née Laupheimer**, born March 17, 1882 in Laupheim, deported July 10, 1942 from Laupheim to Auschwitz.

- **Elsa Frieda Grab**, born March 16, 1911 in Laupheim, later immigrated to the USA.



Arthur Grab and Luise Grab, née. Laupheimer.

Luise Grab was born as Luise Laupheimer on March 17, 1882 in Laupheim. She was the youngest of eleven siblings, of which three died already at a very young age.

Their father, Michael Laupheimer, was a Jewish butcher. Throughout five generations, many of his family members had traditionally worked in this profession, which was particularly important for the community, considering its special dietary restrictions.

Ancestors on the paternal side can be traced back to the beginnings of the local Jewish community. It is likely that they had always lived in the house, which is now 30 Kapellenstrasse. According to a former counting method, the house used to be numbered 28.



House on 30 Kapellenstrasse in 2016 (Photograph: M. Schick)

As stated by Brigel and Schenzinger, the first prayer hall of the newly established Jewish community around 1730 was situated on the upper floor of the house. Later, a synagogue was built nearby as a separate place of worship.

Like her older siblings, Luise probably attended the Jewish Volksschule (grammar and lower secondary school), although she is not mentioned in any register and does not appear in any pictures. Only her older sister Mina is pictured in one of the class photos still preserved.

The children of the Laupheimer family did not have a long way to school, which was situated on Radstraße, so they were able to reach it within a few minutes. Back then they could certainly still walk in the middle of the road. At that time, however, the roads and paths were not paved yet, so especially in wet weather, they could expect their shoes to get very dirty. Many schools had therefore required children upon arrival to change out of their dirty footwear and in to clean shoes. This was most likely no different for schools in Laupheim in those days. There is no further information on the childhood of any of the siblings, including Luise.

The next event in her life that is known for sure is her marriage to Arthur Grab on June 7, 1910. Her husband was born on July 8, 1884 in Vienna, the Austrian capital, and thus originated from the former Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy, the so-called K.u.K.-Monarchie (Imperial and Royal Monarchy) that lasted until the end of World War I.

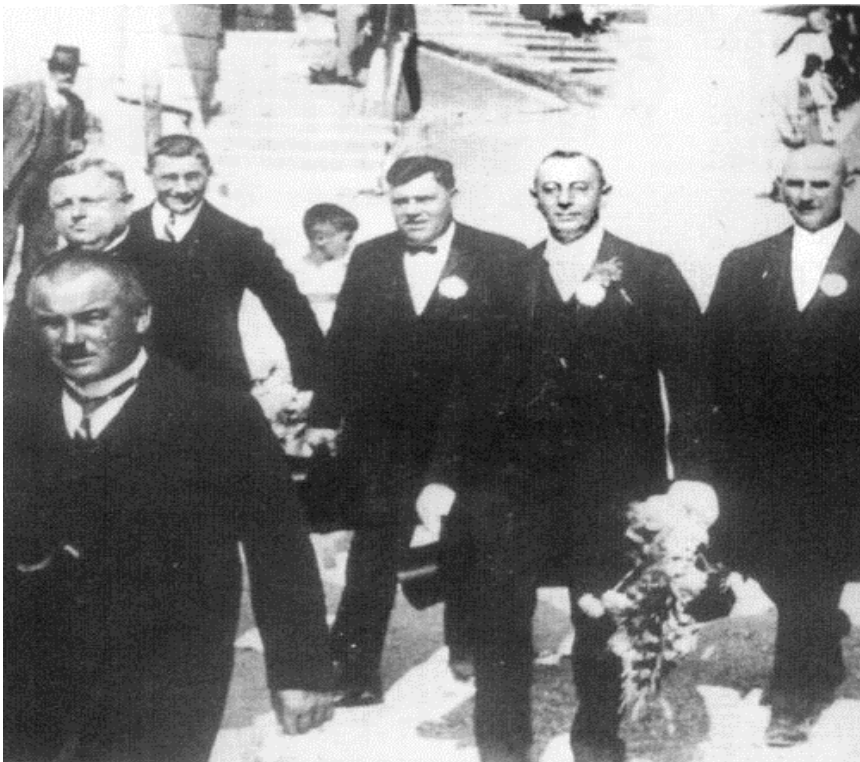
The reasons why he came to Laupheim still remain unknown. One possible reason could be the fact that by then, some very successful companies of mainly Jewish origin had established an extensive international network of trade relations and local branches. Arthur Grab's profession indicates such relations, since he always described himself as a salesman.

Merely one year later, on March 16, 1911, Luise gave birth to her only child, her daughter Elsa, just one day before her 29th birthday. Therefore, once again, three generations lived together in this old house for a short period of time. The mother and father of the many siblings died in 1913 and 1921 respectively and are buried at the nearby cemetery.

Later a note revealed that Elsa Laupheimer had contributed to a celebration in the newly built gymnasium on Bühler Straße. Due to World War I, Arthur Grab returned to Austria once more. On July 15, 1915, he was called up to serve in the Austrian army in St. Pölten near Vienna where he was allocated to the K.u.K. reserves telegraph battalion. During his military service, he was promoted several times, first, to the position of private, then to the rank of corporal and finally to platoon leader. He participated in battle in the Carpathian Mountains and near Montello in Italy. For his contribution, he received numerous military decorations, such as the Medal for Bravery, the Iron Cross and the Karl Troop Cross. In

November 1918, Arthur Grab was discharged from military service and returned to his family in Laupheim.

In the following period, he pursued a speedy acquisition of German citizenship. His membership in several associations indicates that he had long been deeply rooted in the town's social life. The fact that he belonged to an old-established family probably helped him to become part of the local society. The most important of his numerous memberships and offices was most likely his role as treasurer of the committee of local fairs. During World War I, he had become a member of the Reich Federation of Jewish Front Soldiers. For the latter, he actively helped organize the annual commemorative ceremonies in Laupheim in cooperation with the participants of World War I who were mostly Christian.



Arthur Grab at a State Celebration Parade in 1928, second from right, with a bouquet

The 1920s, which was the time of the Weimar Republic, seem to have been once again a normal and relatively secure period for the family.

According to the childhood memories of a former neighbor, every Saturday morning, which is the religiously significant Jewish Shabbat (fam. Shabbes), Jewish men dressed in festive clothes, and gathered in front of the house to talk and exchange the latest news.

During the time of Passover in spring, Luise Grab generously distributed the widely loved Mazzah out of her kitchen window. These baked pieces made of unleavened dough were also appreciated by non-Jewish children. The children in the neighborhood knew only too well how easily they could reach the kitchen window, using the steep stairs on the side of the house.

Even the newspaper advertisement in the Laupheimer Verkündiger in 1925, which was supposed to assist in the search for the missing little dog Flock, can be considered an everyday occurrence, compared to the afflictions and horrors of times to come.

In the basement of the tall four-story building, next to the butcher's shop of her brother Sigmund, a shoe shop was established where Luise largely managed the selling. That is why, according to former neighbors, she was commonly known as Schuhluise in town.

The shop primarily sold a range of well-known shoe brands like Wörishofer and above all the quality brand Salamander, as can be seen from several advertisements of that time, which were partially written in rhyme.

Arthur Grab worked as an accountant for the company Gebrüder Obernauer (Obernauer brothers). Power of attorney was conferred upon him on May 9, 1924, and a few days later it was announced in the local newspaper Laupheimer Verkündiger. In addition, he ran a textiles trade for which he had applied for a trade license that is still well preserved to this day. This indicates that the family was not in a solid financial position, especially during the difficult years right after World War I. They and several others apparently did not experience as rapid a financial recovery as many other Jewish families.

In January 1933, the National Socialist German Worker's Party (NSDAP), led by Hitler, took over power. It can be assumed that soon after, the family's modest livelihood was put in jeopardy. Already on April 1, they had to endure uniformed men lingering in front of their small shop on Kapellenstrasse, as well as in front of other Jewish shops. This was part of the boycotts taking place throughout the Reich in order to hinder customers from entering Jewish shops. At the same time, they wanted to intimidate the shop owners.



WER
SALAMANDER
SCHUHE
SCHENKT
SCHENKT
GUT

Alleinverkauf für den Bezirk Laupheim:
Schuhhaus Laupheimer.

Güte, Form und Eleganz,
für die Straße, für den Tanz,
für Gesellschaft, für die Tour,
„Salamander“ hat sie nur!
Alleinverkauf für Bezirk Laupheim
Schuhhaus Laupheimer.



Berühmt

durch die tadellose Passform
 durch die vorzügliche Qualität
 durch die große Auswahl in Formen
 durch die Preislagen von Mt. 11.00,
 12.50, 14.50, 16.50

Reichste Auswahl in Winterwaren

Alleinverkauf:

Schuhhaus Laupheimer, Laupheim, Telefon 65

Grösste Auswahl

Allerbeste
Qualitäten

und ganz fabelhaft
niedrige Preise

Machen auch Sie von unserem
Jahrmärkte-Angebot Gebrauch.

Salamander
Alleinverkauf
der Marke

Schuhhaus Laupheimer

Advertisements by the Laupheimer shoe shop in the 1920s

In a letter written shortly afterwards, on June 12, 1933, Arthur Grab announced his resignation from two committees. The still preserved letter is first and foremost addressed to a friend in order to avoid a forced exclusion from the committees. He writes:

"My dear friend Alfons!

In the enclosed documents you will find that I am resigning from my position in the Kneipp Verein [Club practicing water therapy invented by Sebastian Kneipp] and at the same time I withdraw my membership from the club. The reasons for my decision are not directed against you personally, rather are linked to political circumstances.

On this occasion, I would like to kindly ask you where I should take the files and the remaining cash of the children's festival committee as Gleichschaltung will also take place in this committee. Consequently, I do not wish to be asked to leave and prefer to have this matter settled.

I hope that we can still talk things over some time. I do remain your sincere friend, Arthur Grab."

At that time, he at least received a polite answer with words of gratitude and appreciation. Yet, how heartfelt the feelings behind the words were cannot be taken from the words themselves. The subject of the letter was the "voluntary resignation from the Executive Planning Committee for the State Celebration to strengthen regional identity."

Further on it says:

"...the committee took notice hereof with great regret and asked me as well to express our gratitude for and recognition of all your years of voluntary work for the general good and especially for the benefit of our youth. We wish you a quick recovery from your severe illness (...) We will certainly regret the absence of your active, tried and true, hands-on work."

The conspicuous aspects of this letter are the special emphasis that it puts on a voluntary resignation and the remark about a severe illness that is not mentioned elsewhere. Wording of this type was quite readily employed to hide the underlying reasons for exclusion and discrimination.

Arthur Grab must have experienced those proceedings as brutally and painfully being crowded out and expelled from the societies and committees that he had contributed to for many years with great passion and which had surely brought him joy and given him a sense of belonging. Thus, all that was left were his memberships in purely Jewish associations for which he showed loyalty until the most difficult of times.

It seems as if the shoe shop on the first floor served as the most important, perhaps the only source of livelihood, although the threat of losing it was growing constantly. On Sundays, in particular, they had to witness the rowdy marches of publically known Nazis of the so-called Österreichische Legion (Austrian legion), who were housed on a factory site in the neighboring village Burgrieden. During those days, they were marching and rioting along Kapellenstraße where most of the residents were Jewish.

Windows were broken and blatant intimidating messages defaced the fronts of houses of Christian families' who showed themselves still willing to live together with neighbors of other religions.

On August 6, 1935, Luise's daughter Elsa married Philipp Bock, a merchant from Göppingen. In the following years, her name no longer appears in the municipal register of Laupheim. Therefore, it can be assumed that Elsa had moved to Göppingen to live with her husband. Soon after, the couple immigrated to the US and thus managed to escape persecution and murder at the hands of the Nazi regime. From the USA, Elsa participated in the negotiations for reparations after World War II, to claim compensation for the property loss of her family. It seems as if many attempts had been made to rescue her parents, who were supposed to join them in the US. However, none of these attempts were successful.

In May 1937, Arthur Grab tried to return to his hometown Vienna in order to support his sister in a family emergency. At first the Oberamt (an administrative institution that existed until 1934) ignored his oral as well as written requests and then denied them without providing any reason, although he had emphasized that he had never been active in politics, and pointed to the fact that, as a front soldier, he was fully aware of his obligations towards his home country.

At the same time, the pressure to hand over the shop to a non-Jewish owner constantly increased. Yet, Arthur and Luise Grab apparently withstood the pressure, at least for a while.

However, with the increase of public violence that had its temporary peak with the destruction of the synagogues not far from their home during the night of November 9 to 10, 1938, their resistance eventually weakened. Luise found out that her brother Sigmund Laupheimer, who had been deported to Dachau for so-called protective custody, was beaten to death in the concentration camp.

In December, they received a letter from the Nazi Bürgermeister Marxer, which could only be interpreted as an immediate threat.

The reason that was given for the order to close the shop revealed that it had to happen in order to prevent destruction at the hands of the sender and his fellow party members.

ARTHUR GRAB, LAUPHEIM



Tuch-Versand – Sämtliche Stoffe für Damen und Herren – Anfertigung von Knaben-, Burschen-, Herren-Anzüge und Mäntel nach Maß – Leibwäsche-, Bettwäschestoffe, sämtl. Aussteuerartikel, Vorhänge – Herren- u. Damenleibwäsche aller Art u. nach Maß
 Fernsprecher Nummer 365 – Bank-Konto: Gewerbebank Laupheim – Postscheck-Konto Stuttgart Nummer 28842

Laupheim (Württ.), den 28. Mai 1937.

An das
 Württ. Oberamt
 Laupheim

Sehr geehrte Herr Oberamt, ich habe den Wunsch, eine Reise nach Österreich / Wien zu machen. Ich bin seit dem 27. Januar 1937 in der Reichswehr dienend und habe meine Dienstzeit am 27. Januar 1937 beendet. Ich habe meine Dienstzeit am 27. Januar 1937 beendet. Ich habe meine Dienstzeit am 27. Januar 1937 beendet.

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Letter from Arthur Grab to the Oberamt of Laupheim, dated May 28, 1937.

Abschrift

Bürgermeisteramt.

Laupheim, den 16. Dezember 1938

Herrn

Artur G r a b, Schuhgeschäft

L a u p h e i m .

Betreff: Schliessung Jhres Geschäfts.

Beil. : 0.

Zur Vermeidung unliebsamer Zwischenfälle ersuche ich Sie in Jhrem eigensten Interesse, Jhr Geschäft unverzüglich zu schliessen.

Der Bürgermeister:
(gez.) Marxer.

Letter from Bürgermeister Marxer to Arthur Grab, dated December 16, 1938

Consequently, the shop's closure was inevitable. Only a few days later, the order was given to stop the traffic of goods.

The stories of former neighbors make clear that Luise Grab gave shoes to several people she knew, among them also non-Jewish families, so that those shoes would not fall into the hands of those who would unjustly take over the shop.

On November 9, 1939, the anniversary of the destruction of the synagogues (Night of Broken Glass), Arthur Grab and twelve other Jewish men were taken into protective custody by the police of Laupheim. They were released on November 25. However, Luise was made to live through her brother's cruel fate of the previous year once again.

During the difficult times of persecution, Arthur Grab grew into the position of spokesperson and head of the now small and heavily beleaguered Jewish community. He was considered a trusted representative by the Nazi authorities. The term "trust", however, could not be applied to the Nazis. They were never concerned with cooperation based on trust, but merely sought an easy implementation of arbitrary measures with the help of a contact person.

A photo from that time shows Arthur Grab standing in front of the rabbinate building. It was taken after the synagogue had been destroyed, which can be seen from the timber and beams put down on the other side of the road where the synagogue had once stood. Quite peculiar about the picture is the fact that the shutters on the first floor of the building were

already closed during daytime, probably even permanently. In all likelihood, the reason for that was the growing danger.

Der Landrat in Biberach.

Biberach, den 22. Dezember 1938.

Nach der Verordnung des Beauftragten für den Vierjahresplan vom 12. November 1938 haben Juden ab 1. Januar 1939 als Unternehmer im Einzelhandel, im Handwerk und im Marktverkehr **endgültig auszuschneiden**. Auf Grund einer Besprechung mit den für die Ausschaltung der Juden zuständigen Stellen verfüge ich, daß

das Schuhgeschäft ST Laupheim/in Laupheim

unverzüglich abzuwickeln ist. Es darf ab sofort aus diesem Geschäft kein Warenverkauf mehr stattfinden. Die allgemeine Bestandsaufnahme der Forderungen, Schulden, Warenvorräte usw. hat auf 27. Dezember 1938 zu erfolgen. Zum Sachverständigen für die Abwicklung des obenstehenden Geschäfts bestelle ich

Der für die Abwicklung des Geschäfts zu ernennende Abwickler wird im Einvernehmen mit den Kreiswirtschaftsberater in Bälde mitgeteilt werden. Irgendwelche bei der Abwicklung des Geschäfts entstehende Fragen sind, wenn sie nicht von dem zuständigen Abwickler geklärt werden können, über den Herrn Bürgermeister an mich zu richten. Ich werde diese Anfragen gegebenenfalls an die zuständigen Stellen weiterleiten.



Order from the district administrator of Biberach, dated December 22, 1938



Arthur Grab in front of the former rabbinate building

On this special picture (on the right) Arthur Grab is depicted inside the house in which a prayer hall had been set up for some time already. After the destruction of the synagogues in the night of November 9, 1938, it served as a replacement for the destroyed place of worship.

The picture shows him reading out or reciting from an open book while wearing a prayer scarf and a kippah. Thus, it is probably the only picture in the long history of the Jewish community in Laupheim that captures someone praying or performing an act of worship. Given that the picture was taken in times of great hardship and persecution, it is even more meaningful. Since Arthur Grab can be considered the last head of the house in which the first prayer hall was situated around 1739 when the community began to develop, the picture once more links the very beginning of Jewish life in Laupheim with its end. Therefore it is safe to say that the picture has a highly symbolic meaning.



In October 1941 Arthur and Luise Grab had to leave their house on Kapellenstraße. Just like all Jewish men and women, they already had to adopt the additional surnames Israel or Sara and to wear the yellow Jew's Star clearly visible on the outside of their clothing.

They had been assigned one of the wooden huts in the camp of shacks located in the Wendelinsgrube (Wendelin sand and gravel pit). They had been built long ago and had originally served as free accommodation for families in need.

It is said that shortly before their expulsion, Luise Grab had walked along the wall of the Jewish cemetery trying to look over the top. The Nazi authorities had long since refused entry to the Jewish cemetery. The height of the wall made it impossible for Luise to see the cemetery. According to Luise's daughter, a compassionate non-Jewish neighbor, however, brought large bricks from his nearby garden and placed them in front of the wall so that she could stand on them. Therefore, Luise was at least able to look at the graves of her parents for one last time and bid farewell.

Outside of town, halfway to the Westbahnhof, the train station that was about to become the last stop in their homeland, Arthur and Luise Grab had to move into shack No. 10.

As the representative of the Jewish community, Arthur Grab approached the local authorities with the urgent request to set up access to electricity and water before winter would come.

This request was denied, despite the fact that most of the officials involved must have known Arthur Grab rather well from his previous function in the municipality.

By the end of November, he was assigned a tragic duty. He had to help with the first deportation, which was at the time still being covered up (by allowing people to carry household items in their railway carriage) as a resettlement measure.

In midwinter of 1941/42, the last Jews of Laupheim were forced to hand over all their woolen and fur garments. At the time, all of them lived in either the poorly equipped camp of shacks in the Wendelinsgrube or the convalescent home which had been set up by force in the former rabbinate building. The list of all collected items, dated January 16, 1942, bears Arthur Grab's signature. It is the last preserved document confirming his function as nominal representative

*Auszug aus der Niederschrift über die Beratungen des Bürgermeisters
mit den Ratsherren der Stadt Laupheim vom 17. Oktober 1941*

Bürgermeisteramt Laupheim

§ 144

Zusammenlegung der hiesigen Juden

Der 1. Beigeordnete F. teilt mit, daß nunmehr die Umsiedlung der Juden in die Wohnbaracken in der Wendelinsgrube durchgeführt ist. In diesen Baracken wohnen nun 31 Juden, 28 seien im jüdischen Altersheim und 2 Personen seien in der Wohnung, die zum israelitischen Leichenhaus gehört. 2 Baracken in der Wendelinsgrube seien noch leer und zur Unterbringung der 8 Juden, die voraussichtlich von der Stadt Stuttgart übernommen werden müssen, vorgesehen.

Der Vertrauensmann der jüdischen Kultusgemeinde, Arthur Israel Grab, habe nun bei ihm (dem Vorsitzenden) angefragt, ob die Stadt nicht einen Zuschuß zu den Kosten der Einrichtung der elektrischen Beleuchtung in den Wohnbaracken und zu den Kosten der Einrichtung der Wasserleitung und anderer kleiner Einrichtungen gewähre. Dem Gesuchsteller habe er keine Aussicht auf eine derartige Beihilfe gemacht.

Der 3. Beigeordnete, die Ratsherren und Wirtschaftsbeiräte sind einmütig der Auffassung, daß diesem Gesuch der Juden nicht entsprochen werden kann.

Entschließung des 1. Beigeordneten als Stellvertreter des Bürgermeisters: das Ansuchen abzulehnen.

Protocol of the meeting, dated October 17, 1941

A former customer of the shop still remembers a letter written by Luise Grab from the Wendelinsgrube. According to her, Luise wrote about the inhumane conditions in the camp, about a lack of food, and despair. She asked for food, which was then brought by friends. Moreover, Luise Grab expressed the suspicion that other people considered undesirable by the Nazis would soon also be included in the persecutions. She said about herself and the people in the camp: "We will be moved and we don't know where they are taking us".

In the next and penultimate deportation, Arthur and Luise Grab also appeared on the list. It was initially planned for June 1942, but was delayed for unknown reasons. The few lines from the Gestapo in Stuttgart, to the district administrator of Biberach, decided between life and death.

*Verzeichnis der Woll- und Pelzsachen, die von den
Laupheimer Juden abgeliefert wurden*

Landratsamt Biberach: Reg.-Nr. 7613

Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland,
Jüdische Kultusvereinigung Laupheim

Durch die Sammelstelle der unterzeichneten Bezirksstelle der Reichsvereini-
gung bzw. Jüdischen Kultusvereinigung sind folgende Gegenstände zur Ablie-
ferung gelangt:

Gegenstand:	Stück / Paar	Gegenstand:	Stück / Paar
a) Damenpelzmäntel	2	o) Leibbinden	6
b) Pelzjacken	–	p) Kopf- und Ohrenschützer	2
c) Pelzwesten	–	q) Brust- und Lungenschützer	1
d) Männer-Sport- und -Gehpelze	2	r) Puls- und Kniewärmer	3
e) Pelzmützen	3	s) Unterwesten	–
f) Pelzdecken	5	t) Pullover und Strickjacken	9
g) Pelzmuffen	8	u) Wollhandschuhe	2
h) Pelzkragen	22	v) Wollstrümpfe und Socken	36
Pelzgefütterte und wollgefütterte		w) Wollunterhosen	2
i) Männerschuhe	–	x) Wollunterhemden und -jacken	7
k) Overschuhe	–	y) Wollschals	5
l) Handschuhe	3	z) Wolldecken	13
m) Skier mit Stöcken	–		
n) Ski- und Bergstiefel	–		

Sonstige Gegenstände:

2 Paar Bettschuhe	4 Zipfelmützen
1 Fusack	1 Tuchmütze
1 Katzenfell	1 Paar Damen-Schlüpfen
1 wollene Hausjacke	6 Pelzreste

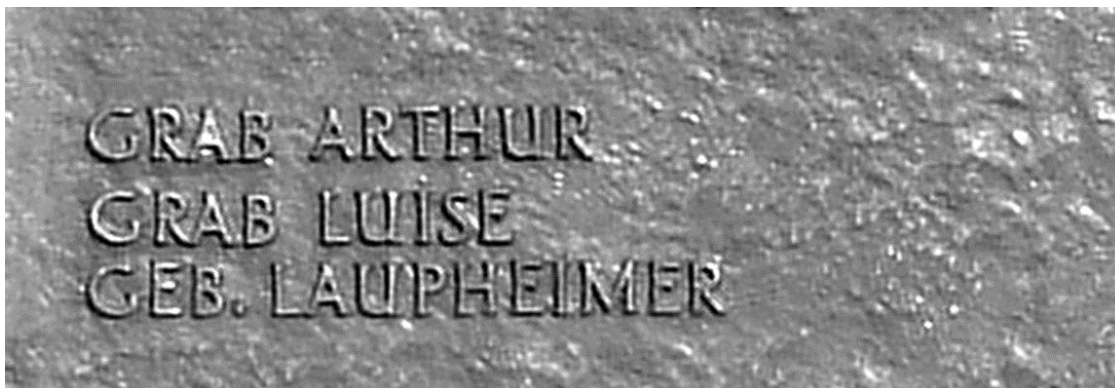
Laupheim, 16. Januar 1942

Jüdische Kultusvereinigung Laupheim
Der Vertrauensmann
Arthur Israel Grab

Vorstehend benannte und abgelieferte Gegenstände auf ihre Stück- resp.
Paarzahl geprüft und für richtig befunden zu haben bescheinigt
Laupheim, 16. Januar 1942

On July 10, two days after Arthur Grab's 58th birthday, they both had to get on the train at Laupheim Westbahnhof. With them, their friend Kalman Wallach and ten people, most of whom were elderly people housed in the nearby nursing home in Heggbach, were also on the train.

At first, they were transported to the collection and transit camp in Stuttgart and three days later they were brought Auschwitz with other Jews from Württemberg.



According to an annotation, Arthur and Luise Grab perished already on the way to the large concentration and extermination camp. This information is indeed uncertain because no one will have verified it more precisely at that time. Nevertheless it could also be true considering that both of them

were already weakened and broken by the preceding long period of suffering in the camp of shacks in the Wendelinsgrube and the inhumane conditions in the collection camps and deportation trains, especially during winter.

Along with all the other Jews, who were victims of Nazi persecution, that is why the names of Arthur and Luise Grab neé Laupheimer are listed on the big commemorative plaque at the entrance of the Jewish cemetery, only a few steps away from the house where they had once lived.