



ה מ ר כ ז ל א מ נ ו ת י ה ו ד י ת
THE CENTER FOR JEWISH ART
האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים • THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM



Expedition of the Center for Jewish Art to Romania September 2019



Previously unknown Hasidic Synagogue in Sibiu, found by the CJA researchers

**The expedition was made possible thanks to the generous support of
The Morris and Beverly Baker Foundation**



The expedition of the Center for Jewish Art to Romania took place in September 2019. The expedition surveyed synagogues, Jewish cemeteries, cemetery chapels, communal buildings, and ritual objects in central Wallachia and southern Transylvania. The expedition visited the following towns:

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The most important result of the expedition, along with the survey of 16 Jewish cemeteries and 7 synagogues, is the discovery of a previously unknown synagogue, for which we are grateful to Ms. Anda Reuben of Sibiu. We are also thankful to Ms. Alexandra Toma for her assistance to our team in Mediaș.



Sibiu

The expedition of 2019 began with a discovery. Ms. Anda Reuben, who researches Jewish life in Sibiu, showed us a previously unknown Hasidic synagogue, which has not been mentioned in any publication about Romanian synagogues!

Hasidic Synagogue

The synagogue of the Hasidic community was established in 1923, one block away from the orthodox Great Synagogue. Now the building is occupied by a workshop, but it is relatively well preserved.

Its eastern façade faces Pescarilor Street (Fig. 1). The interior placement of the Torah ark is stressed at the exterior by a large stucco arch and a round window. Two similar narrower arches embrace the lateral windows. Probably, the Tablets of the Law once topped the façade. Nowadays, the main entrance is cut through the place of the Torah ark. Several semi-circular arched windows are preserved on the side façades, while others were changed into a rectangular form.



1. Hasidic Synagogue in Sibiu, 1923. View from the southeast

In the interior, a rectangular former prayer hall is surrounded on three sides by a wooden women's gallery (Fig. 2). The gallery is supported by wooden columns. Similar columns support the wooden ceiling (Fig. 3). The original staircase leading to the women's gallery is situated in the



southwestern corner. The parapet of the women's gallery is decorated with small blind arches. The niche where the Torah ark was situated is partially preserved above the recently opened entrance door.



2. Hasidic Synagogue in Sibiu, 1923. Interior view towards west



3. Hasidic Synagogue in Sibiu, 1923. Wooden constructions supporting the ceiling.



Great Synagogue

Jews settled in Sibiu in the mid-19th century. There were 5 and 9 Jews in 1850 and 1857 respectively, and 168 Jews in 1869.¹ By the turn of the 20th century, however, the community was much larger and numbered 875 Jews in 1900 and 1,307 in 1910.² Such a large community needed a synagogue, which could reflect its size and prosperity.

The Great Synagogue in Sibiu was erected in 1899 according to the design of a Hungarian architect Ferenc Szalay. Although the synagogue is well preserved, it was not used for worship in the last 40 years. The small Jewish community today uses for prayer a room in the community building behind the synagogue (Fig. 4).



4. Great Synagogue in Sibiu, prayer hall in the community building.
Interior view towards the east.

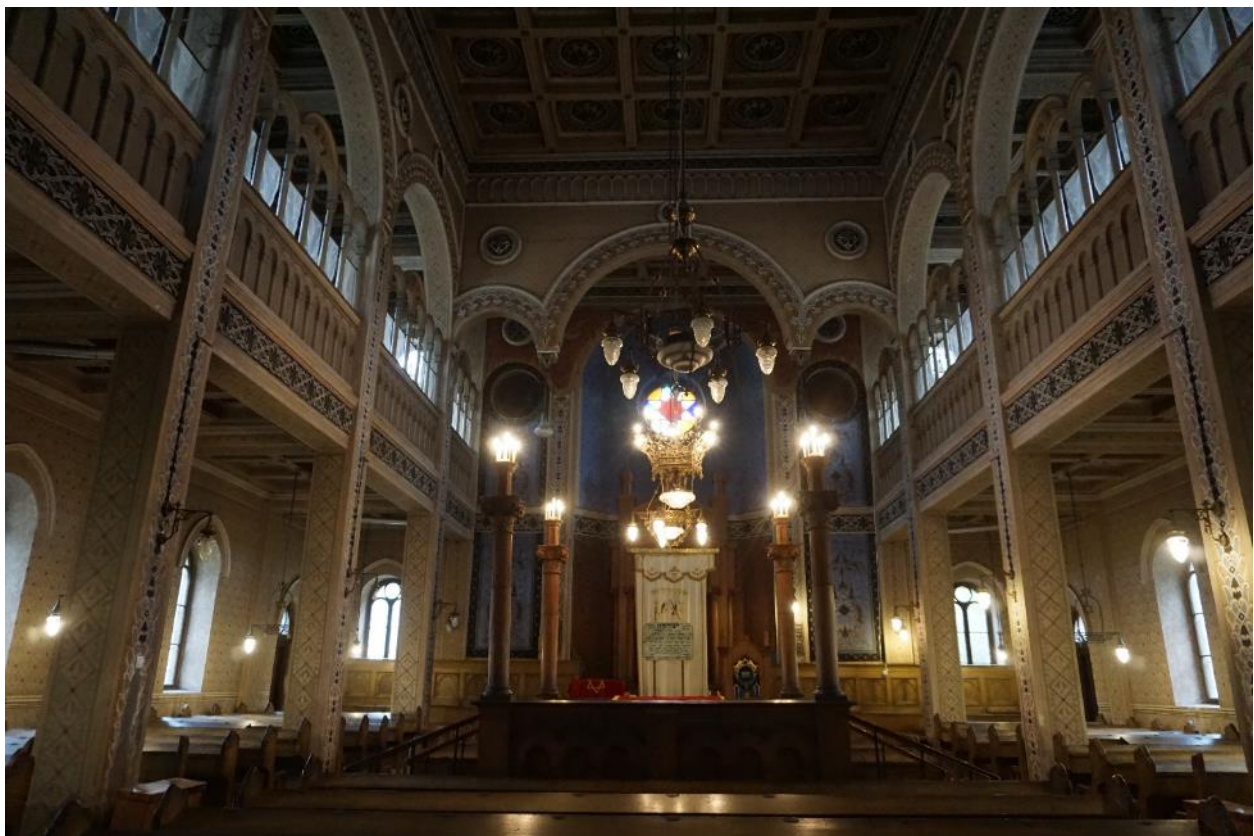
The Great Synagogue is a large building with an impressive western façade facing one of the main streets of Sibiu (Fig. 5). The façade features Neo-Romanesque decorations and is surmounted by the Tablets of the Law.

¹ Ladislau Gyémánt, *Evreii din Transilvania în epoca emancipării (1790-1867)* = *The Jews of Transylvania in the Age of Emancipation (1790-1867)* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedica, 2000), 237.

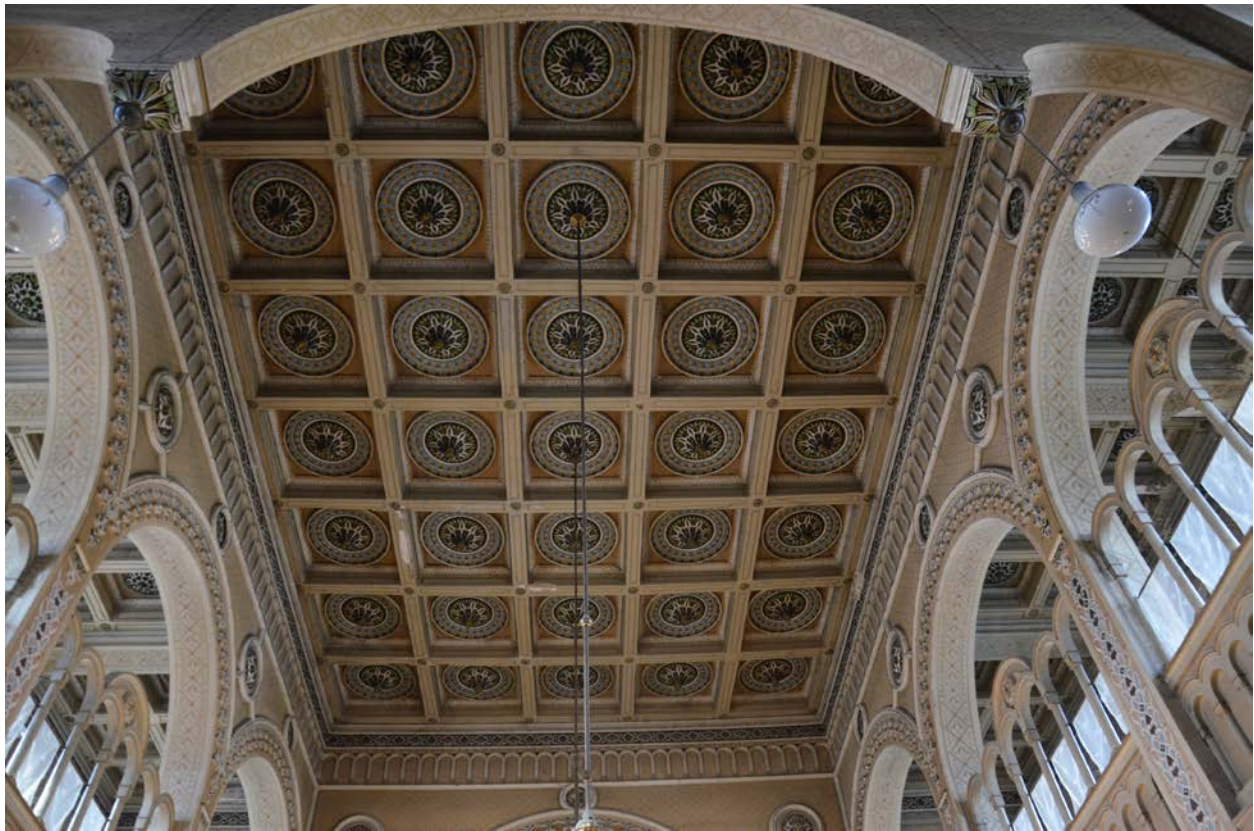
² Traian Rotariu, Maria Semeniuc, and Elemer Mezei, *Recensământul din 1900. Transilvania* (Bucharest: Editura Staff, 1999), 539; Traian Rotariu, Maria Semeniuc, and Elemer Mezei, *Recensământul din 1910. Transilvania* (Bucharest: Editura Staff, 1999), 521.



5. The Great Synagogue in Sibiu, 1899. Western façade



6. The Great Synagogue in Sibiu, 1899. Interior view towards east



7. *The Great Synagogue in Sibiu, 1899. Ceiling of the prayer hall*

The magnificent prayer hall expresses the taste of the Orthodox current among Hungarian Jews: the *bimah* is situated in the center of the hall (Fig. 6) and the women's gallery has a *mehitzah* – arches with curtains, which prevent men from seeing women (Fig. 7). Four wooden columns are placed at the corners of the *bimah*, a feature popular in Hungarian synagogues. The eastern wall of the hall is richly decorated with murals.

Old Jewish Cemetery

The Old Cemetery in the eastern part of Sibiu was established in 1855, with the emergence of an organized Jewish community in the city. It has currently about one hundred tombstones from the late 19th and early the 20th centuries (Fig. 8). Most of them are of a traditional form, made of sandstone and therefore hardly legible. Some of them feature depictions of Cohen's hands, Levite's jug, or a weeping willow. Several marble obelisks, characteristic of the Hungarian Jewish cemeteries bear the signature of the local tombstone maker, J. Roubischek.



8. Old Jewish cemetery in Sibiu

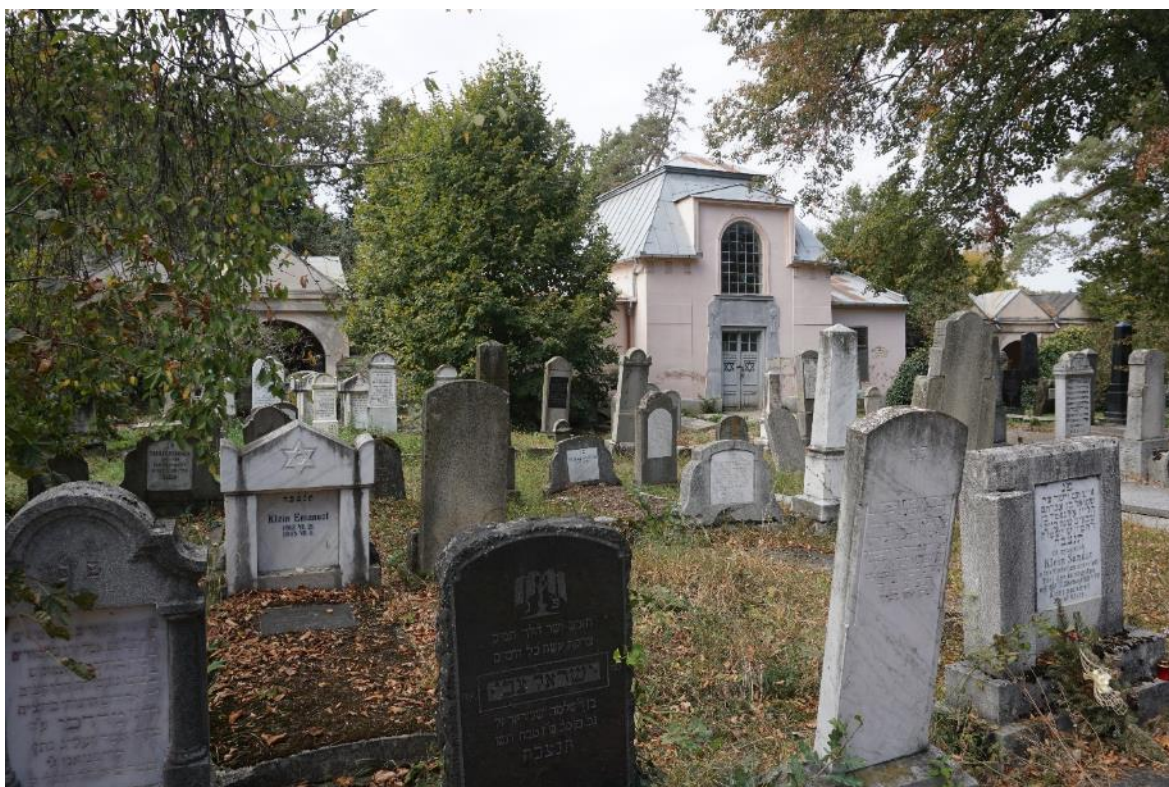
New Jewish Cemetery

The New Jewish Cemetery is a sector of the large municipal cemetery, founded in 1907 in the southern part of the city. The Jewish sector, surrounded by a fence is situated in the southernmost corner of the large municipal cemetery. A ceremonial hall, built simultaneously with other buildings in the municipal cemetery and in the same style of the beginning of the 20th century, is situated along the western border of the sector (Fig. 9). On its northern and southern sides, there are “arcades” for the richest graves.

There are about 500 tombstones in the cemetery, representing the mixed Jewish population of the city (Fig. 10). There are graves of traditional form with traditional Hebrew epitaphs, sometimes with acrostic; other bear German or Hungarian epitaphs. A dozen graves of the Jewish soldiers of the Austro-Hungarian army bear a depiction of a helmet and two sabres (Fig. 11). Romanian epitaphs appear only on gravestones from the period after WWII (Fig. 12).



9. Ceremonial hall in the New Jewish cemetery in Sibiu, 1907



10. New Jewish cemetery in Sibiu



11. New Jewish cemetery in Sibiu. Grave of lieutenant Gustav Pollak of the Austro-Hungarian army, killed during WWI in 1916



12. New Jewish cemetery in Sibiu. Tombstone of Jules M. Wechsler, d. 1942, with an epitaph in Romanian language.



Jewish School

The building of the Jewish school was constructed in the 1920s in a property bordering the plot of the Great Synagogue. Currently the former school is used as a dwelling house, but many original decorative elements are preserved (Figs. 13, 14).



13. Jewish school building, 1920s



14. Staircase in the Jewish school building, 1920s



Mediaș

Mediaș is an ancient town to the north of Sibiu. The Jewish community of Mediaș was founded in the mid-19th century and numbered c. 700 in 1880. By 1900, the number of Jews diminished to 356.³ During World War II there were no mass deportations but under the Communist regime virtually all members emigrated to either Israel, the United States, or western Europe.

Synagogue

The synagogue in Mediaș was built in 1896. It combines elements of the Neo-Moorish and Neo-Romanesque styles (Fig. 15). The main, western façade of the synagogue faces Kogalniceanu St. and its side, southern façade faces Unirii St. The western façade is decorated by six pilasters shaped as octagonal towers each with a finial on top, dividing the façade into five sections. The central entrance door is preceded by a portico supported by four massive columns. The façade is decorated by round medallions with Stars of David; the Tablets of the Law are placed in its center, above the central window. The southern façade is more modest; it is also decorated by round medallions with Stars of David. The eastern façade is blank, pierced only by an oculus. A pavilion with large windows is attached to that façade with no connection to the synagogue's interior.

A building of the former Jewish school is attached to the northeastern corner of the synagogue (Fig. 16). Once it housed a *mikveh* which is currently destroyed. A house for the rabbi is situated in the northeastern part of synagogue's plot.

The prayer hall has a women's gallery on its three sides and a central *bimah*, and it is spanned by a barrel vault (Fig. 17). The eastern wall of the prayer hall is painted as a blue sky with stars. A wooden Torah ark is situated in the center. It has a form of a portal and is surmounted by the Tablets of the Law and an oculus. The gable of the ark is flanked by a painting of lions, looking towards the center. Behind each lion, a stylized palm tree, bending towards the center, is depicted. The lower part of the ark is flanked by the depictions of two large seven-branched *menorot*.

³ Rotariu, Semeniuc, and Mezei, *Recensământul din 1900*, 539. In 1910, there were 354 Jews, see Rotariu, Semeniuc, and Mezei, *Recensământul din 1910*, 521.



15. Synagogue in Mediaș, 1896. Western façade



16. Synagogue in Mediaș, 1896. View from the southeast



17. Synagogue in Mediaș, 1896. Interior view towards the east

Two identical sets of pictures appear in the lower tier of the side walls. They start on the eastern wall with paintings of Magen David and the Crown of the Torah. The eastern pier of the northern/southern wall has a “trptych” of two seven-branched *menorot* and the tablets of the Law, inscribed נר מצוה ותורה אור (“For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light,” Prov. 6: 23; Fig. 18). The central pier of the northern/southern wall has a “diptych” of two eternal lights, inscribed שמור נרי ואני אשמור נרך (Midrash Tehilim, 18). The western pier of the northern/southern wall also has a “diptych”: a goblet is inscribed כוס ישועות אשא (“I will take the cup of salvation,” Ps. 116:13); a laver is inscribed ארחץ בנקיון כפי (“I will wash my hands in innocence,” Ps. 26:6). The last pictures of the sets on the western wall are two identical but mirrored images of the Western Wall in Jerusalem, each inscribed כותל מערבי (The Western Wall, Fig. 19). The entrance door in the center is flanked by two identical but mirrored depictions of a shofar with an olive branch, inscribed תקע בשופר גדול לחרותנו (“Sound the great shofar for our freedom,” The Amidah Prayer).

Although entirely preserved, the building is currently in a dilapidated state and demands urgent repair and restoration.



18. Synagogue in Mediaș, 1896. Murals in the prayer hall, southern wall



19. Synagogue in Mediaș, 1896. Murals on the western wall



Collection of ceremonial objects in the synagogue

The Center for Jewish Heritage which occupies the former Rabbi's house has a well ordered collection of Jewish ceremonial objects, found in the synagogue. Most of the preserved objects are textiles: *tefillin* and *tallit* bags, four *parokhot*, and a *hupah* (Figs. 20–23).



20. Tefillin bag, 20th century



21. Tefillin bag, 20th century



22. Torah ark curtain, 20th century



23. Torah ark curtain, late 19th century



Old Jewish Cemetery

A small cemetery is situated at the outskirts of the town with 23 tombstones erected in the second half of the 19th century. The majority has the form of a traditional stela (Fig. 24).



24. Old Jewish Cemetery in Medias

New Jewish Cemetery

The new cemetery is placed near the Christian cemeteries. It is separated from the street by a ceremonial hall with two gates: one on the street side and another on the cemetery side (Fig. 25). The hall is used today as a workshop for production of tombstones, but a dedicatory plaque from 1924 is preserved (Fig. 26). It reads in German written with Hebrew letters:

ב"ה / קרן קימת / דיעזעס הויז בעשטיממט דעם דיענסטע / חייליגער פיעטא"ט וויא אויך דיא רונדמויער / אם בית
החיים וואורדען אלס וואהרצייכען / עוויג דאנקבארער ערינגערונג אן איהרע פריה / ענטשלאפענען טרייען פאטער
אונד אללגעמיין / בעווא"הרטען עדלען וואהלטא"טער / כ"ה נחמיה פייבל ציטראן ז"ל אונד / מו"ה ר' מנחם מענדל
ס'ג'ל דייטש ז"ל / פאן דערען זיא טיעף בעטרויערטען פאמיליען / ציטראן אונד דייטש / ערריכטעט אים יאהרע תר"פד
לפ"ק / תהי נשמתם צרורה בצרור החיים עם כל / שכני עפר השוכנים פה עם כל צדיקים / וצדקניות שבגן עדן
ולחיותם בתחית המתים / אמן

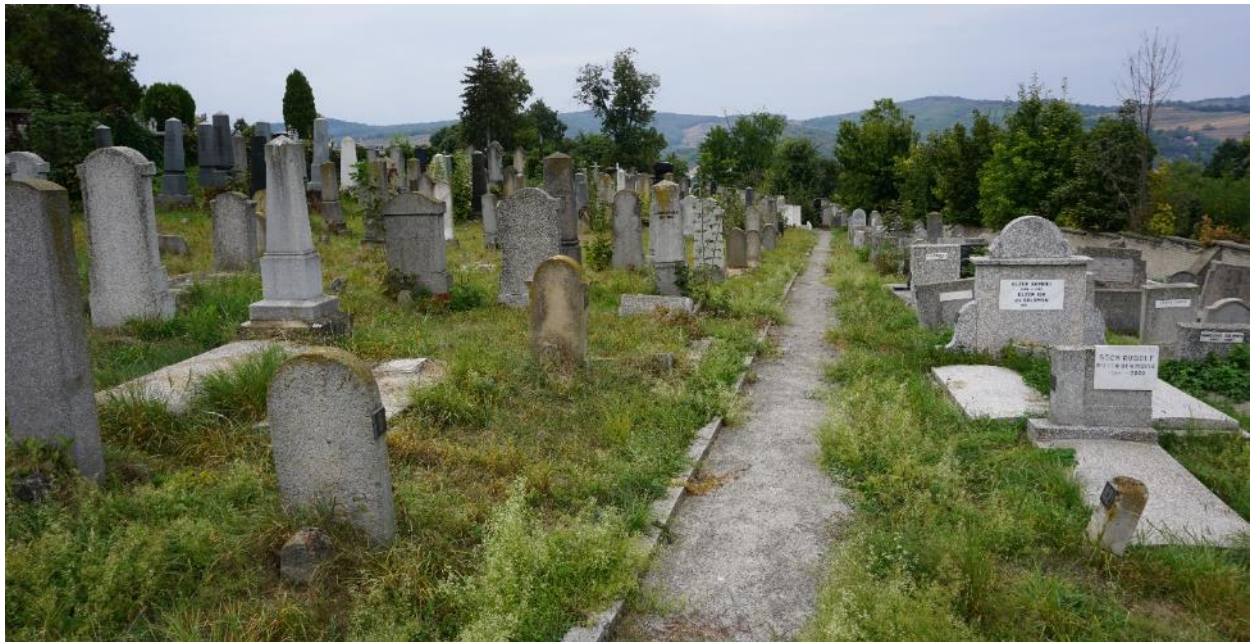


25. Ceremonial hall at the New Jewish Cemetery in Medias, 1924



26. Interior view of the ceremonial hall at the New Jewish Cemetery in Medias, 1924

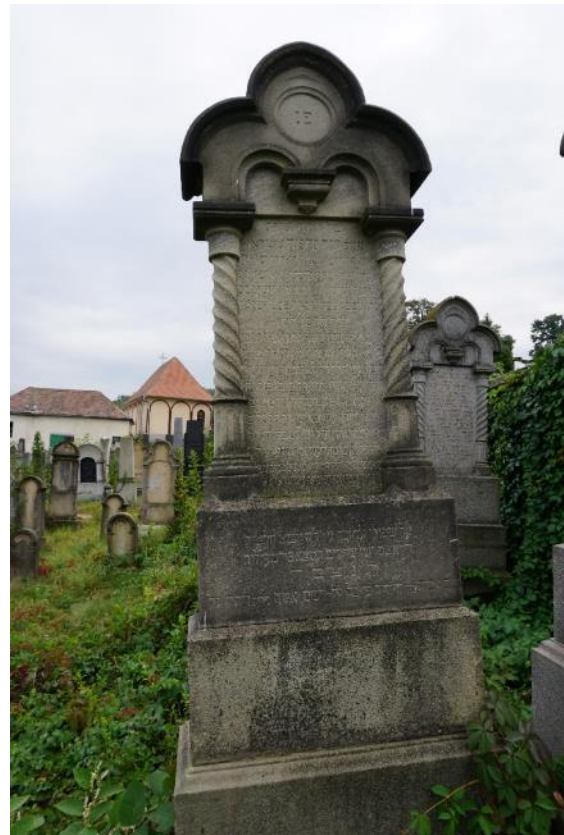
There are several hundreds of gravestones in the cemetery, the majority of which are typical for Hungarian Jewish cemeteries (Fig. 27). The most prominent tombstone of black marble for Haya Pesia Lebovitch was made in Budapest, by the tombstone maker Arnold Kohn in 1913 (Fig. 28). Obelisks from the same workshop we surveyed during the expedition of 2017 in Braşov, which was also supported by The Morris and Beverly Baker Foundation.



27. New Jewish Cemetery in Medias



*28. Tombstone of Haya Pesia Lebovitch,
d. 1913. Made by Arnold Kohn in Budapest*



*29. Tombstone of Haya Nehama Zitron,
d. 1907*



A modest monument to the victims of the Holocaust decorated with a stylized *menorah* was erected already in 1947 in the lower part of the cemetery, at the central pathway (Fig. 30). The Hebrew text includes verses from the *Av ha-rahamim* prayer introduced into Ashkenazi liturgy after the Crusades, which called upon God to “avenge the spilled blood of His servants.”



30. New Jewish Cemetery in Mediaș, monument to the victims of the Holocaust, 1947



Arpașu de Sus

Arpașu de Sus is a small village between the Carpathian Mountains and the River Olt. 12 Jews lived there in 1900 and 19 – in 1910.⁴

The Jewish cemetery of Arpașu de Sus occupies a small plot in the middle of the junction of two streets (Fig. 31). It is surrounded by a wooden fence without a gate. Five tombstones are currently standing in the cemetery, all but one illegible.

The only legible headstone marks the grave of Golda Libe Schwarz, whose Hungarian name was Giza. She died at the age of 21. The tombstone has a traditional Hebrew epitaph and a short German one; its upper part is decorated with a depiction of a willow – very common image on Jewish and non-Jewish graves in Transylvania.



31. Jewish cemetery in Arpașu de Sus

⁴ Rotariu, Semeniuc, and Mezei, *Recensământul din 1900*, 543; Rotariu, Semeniuc, and Mezei, *Recensământul din 1910*, 525.

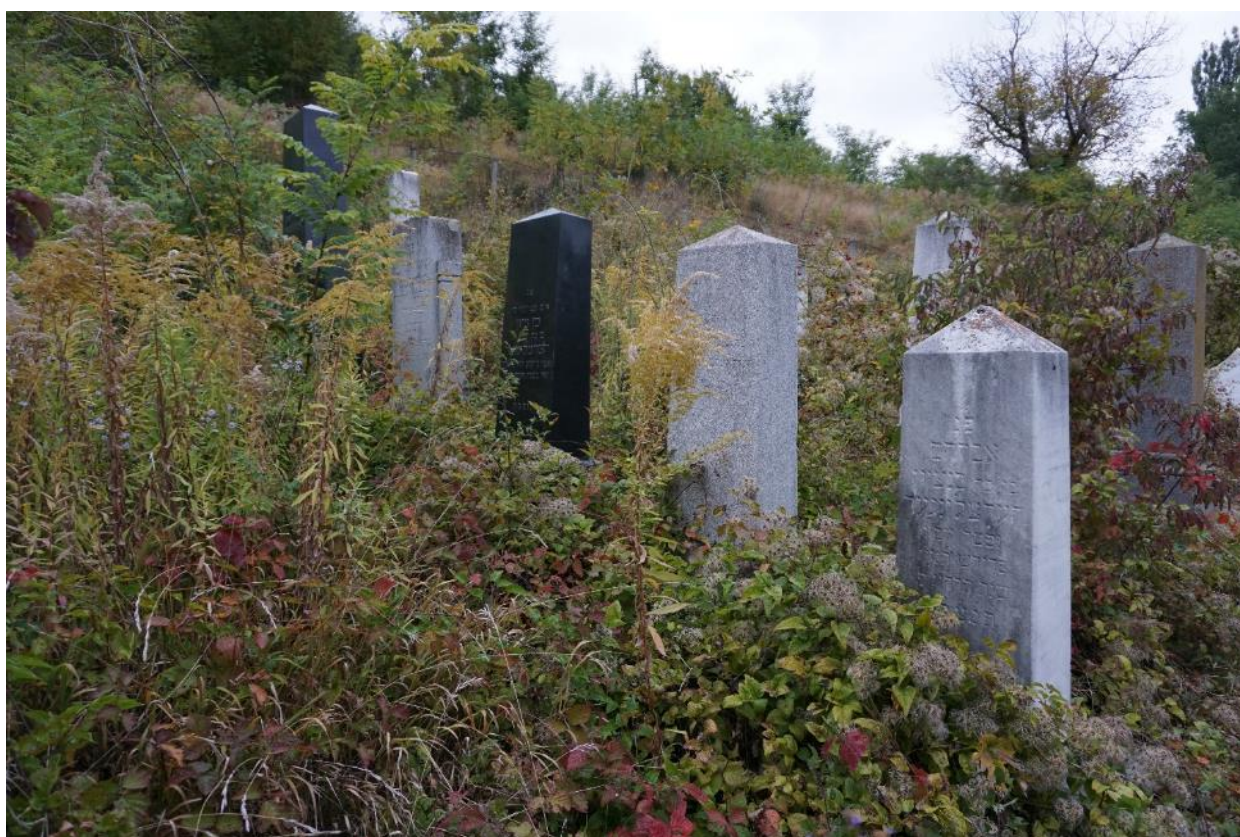


Dumbrăveni

Dumbrăveni is a large village, where 116 Jews lived in 1900 and 170 – in 1910.⁵

The Jewish cemetery of Dumbrăveni is situated on a slope of a hill near the Christian cemetery, completely overgrown by bushes (Fig. 32); about one hundred tombstones are preserved. The most recent one stands close to the entrance gate. Erected in 2011, it marks the grave of the Simon Family, the members of which were buried here in 1964, 1970, 1995, and 2011. The epitaph is written in the Romanian language.

The tombstones of the 1920s and 1930s mainly mark the graves of the representatives of the local families Heilper, Herzlinger, and Weissburg.



32. Jewish cemetery in Dumbrăveni

⁵ Rotariu, Semeniuc, and Mezei, *Recensământul din 1900*, 539; Rotariu, Semeniuc, and Mezei, *Recensământul din 1910*, 521.



Micăsasa

The village of Micăsasa was home for a very small Jewish community, which numbered 26 Jews in 1900 and 32 in 1910.⁶

The Jewish cemetery of the village Micăsasa is situated next to the Christian cemetery, but the access to it is through a private house (Fig. 33). 28 tombstones are fully or partially preserved, all made of sandstone (Fig. 34). Those legible were erected in the 1920s-1930s and have only traditional Hebrew epitaphs. This fact points to the very low level of acculturation and high level of fidelity to the Jewish tradition in this small rural community.



33. Jewish cemetery in Micăsasa



34. Two tombstones in the Jewish cemetery in Micăsasa

⁶ Rotariu, Semeniuc, and Mezei, *Recensământul din 1900*, 551; Rotariu, Semeniuc, and Mezei, *Recensământul din 1910*, 533.



Porumbacu de Jos

Porumbacu de Jos is a small village on the shore of the River Olt. 14 Jews lived there in 1900 and 19 – in 1910.⁷

The Jewish cemetery of Porumbacu de Jos is situated at the exit from the village toward Scoreiu and it borders the road. It is completely overgrown by bushes.

A small plot with a half-destroyed brick fence contains 17 preserved tombstones, only part of which are legible. The oldest stone marks the grave of Rebeka Grünfeld, who passed away in 1880 (Fig. 35). It is a double stela with two columns of a Hebrew epitaph ending in two German lines. The grave of her younger relatives, Enta (Jetti) and Benjamin Grünfeld, who died in 1909, is inscribed in Hebrew and Hungarian, demonstrating the changing direction of Jewish acculturation (Fig. 35).



35. Tombstone of Rebeka Grünfeld (1880) in Porumbacu de Jos



36. Tombstone of Enta (Jetti) and Benjamin Grünfeld (1909) in Porumbacu de Jos

⁷ Rotariu, Semeniuc, and Mezei, *Recensământul din 1900*, 555; Rotariu, Semeniuc, and Mezei, *Recensământul din 1910*, 537.



Ucea de Jos

Ucea de Jos is a medium-size village on the shore of the Olt River. There were 16 Jews in 1900 and 13 in 1910.⁸

Its Jewish cemetery is part of a private backyard in the vicinity of the Christian cemetery. There are 19 tombstones in the cemetery (Fig. 37). In the way characteristic to Transylvania, the stones from the second half of the 19th century are traditional stelae with a rounded upper part, while the stones of the early 20th century are obelisks. Almost all gravestones have epitaphs both in Hebrew and Hungarian.



37. Jewish cemetery in Ucea de Jos

⁸ Rotariu, Semeniuc, and Mezei, *Recensământul din 1900*, 211; Rotariu, Semeniuc, and Mezei, *Recensământul din 1910*, 201.



Sighișoara

Sighișoara is a charming town in central Transylvania, where only 179 Jews lived in 1900 and 217 – in 1910.⁹

Synagogue

The synagogue in Sighișoara, built in 1911, is a modest Neo-Romanesque building, facing the street with its main, northwestern façade (Fig. 38). The façade is crowned by the Star of David and not with the Tablets of the Law, which is rare in Transylvania. The decoration of the main entrance door echoes that of the Torah ark inside the prayer hall.

The prayer hall is spanned with a barrel vault, painted as a starry sky. The hall is lit by eight windows: two in the southeastern wall, flanking the Torah ark, and three in the side walls, which are partially blocked by the wooden women's galleries. An oculus is placed above the Torah ark. A wooden square *bimah* is situated in the center of the hall. The Torah ark is flanked by two painted palm trees, inscribed with the verse "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon" (Ps. 92:12).



38. Synagogue in Sighișoara, 1911

⁹ Rotariu, Semeniuc, and Mezei, *Recensământul din 1900*, 423; Rotariu, Semeniuc, and Mezei, *Recensământul din 1910*, 405.

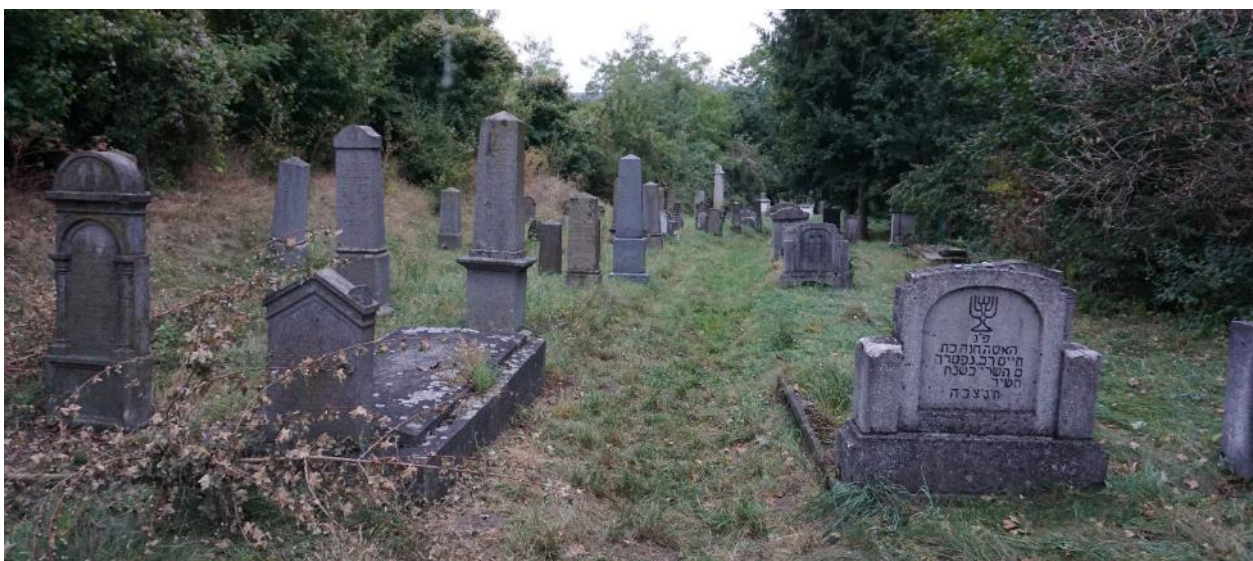


Jewish Cemetery

The Jewish cemetery of Sighișoara is situated on a slope at the southern entrance to the town, near the Christian cemetery. There are about 300 tombstones from the late 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries (Figs. 39, 40). The latest graves are from the 1980s. In the middle of the cemetery stands a monument to 23 Sighișoara Jews who perished in the Holocaust. The epitaph in Romanian and Yiddish thanks the Soviet Army which “liberated people from Hitler’s yoke” (Fig. 41).



39. Jewish cemetery in Sighișoara



40. Jewish cemetery in Sighișoara



41. Holocaust monument in the Jewish cemetery in Sighișoara, c. 1950



Alba Iulia

Alba Iulia is the oldest Jewish settlement in Transylvania, where Jewish presence was recorded in the late 16th century. In 1653, the region's code of laws required all Jews in Transylvania to live exclusively in this town. Until 1879, the rabbis of Alba Iulia were considered to be the chief rabbis of all Jews in Transylvania. The Jewish population of Alba Iulia increased from 150 Jews in 1785 to 264 in 1838 to 1,586 in 1910 (14% of the total population) and 2,070 in 1947. As a result of the Jewish emigration during the Communist era, only 45 Jews remained in the city in 2003.¹⁰

Synagogue

The Ashkenazi synagogue of Alba Iulia is the oldest synagogue in Transylvania, built in 1840. In 1938 it was reconstructed and two years ago, in 2017, it was significantly renovated (Fig. 42).



42. Synagogue in Alba Iulia, 1840. View from the northwest

¹⁰ Gyémánt, *Evreii din Transilvania în epoca emancipării (1790-1867)* = *The Jews of Transylvania in the Age of Emancipation (1790-1867)*, 236; Ladislau Gyémánt, "Alba Iulia," in *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, ed. Gershon David Hundert (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Alba_Iulia.



The synagogue is a Baroque building, facing the street with its western façade. The façade is flanked by two pairs of Doric pilasters; the main entrance decorated by a triangular pediment is surmounted by an oculus. The entrance door for women at the southern façade is decorated by a semicircular pediment.

The interior is decorated by similar pilasters (Fig. 43). A prominent wooden Torah ark stands in the center of the east wall. A canopy on four Corinthian columns precedes the ark, which is decorated with wooden carved figures of lions holding the Tablets of the Law (Fig. 44).

A marble bimah in the center of the hall is a nice piece of Baroque stone carving (Fig. 45). Four Ionic columns accentuate its four corners, serving as a model for the *bimah* in the Great Synagogue of Sibiu (see above).

The women's section is situated in the western part of the building, above the vestibule and the small prayer room. It opens to the prayer hall as a balcony supported by two Doric columns. A space under the staircase to the women's section is said to have been used as a communal prison.



43. Synagogue in Alba Iulia, 1840. Interior view towards the east



44. Synagogue in Alba Iulia, 1840. Torah ark



45. Synagogue in Alba Iulia, 1840. Bimah



Jewish Cemetery

A large cemetery of Alba Iulia is the oldest Jewish cemetery in Transylvania. It includes two distinct sections. The old section is dominated by the *ohel* of Rabbi Yehezkel Paneth (d. 1845, Fig. 46). It consists of tombstones of the late 18th and the first half of the 19th centuries. All are of traditional stelae form, some containing images and well written Hebrew script (Fig. 47).

The new section on a hill contains typical obelisks of the late 19th and early 20th centuries made by tombstone makers from Alba Iulia (S. Stef, K. Quillmann), as well as from Arad (Brothers Rózsa) and Mediaș (Klingenspohr) (Fig. 48). Many of modern tombstone are inscribed with the mother's name of the deceased which demonstrates the influence of Kabbala, for mother's name is obligatory in Kabbalistic formulas. Four large mausoleums are situated near the entrance of the cemetery (Fig. 49). They are preserved intact, including dry wreaths kept there from the time of the last funerals before WWII.

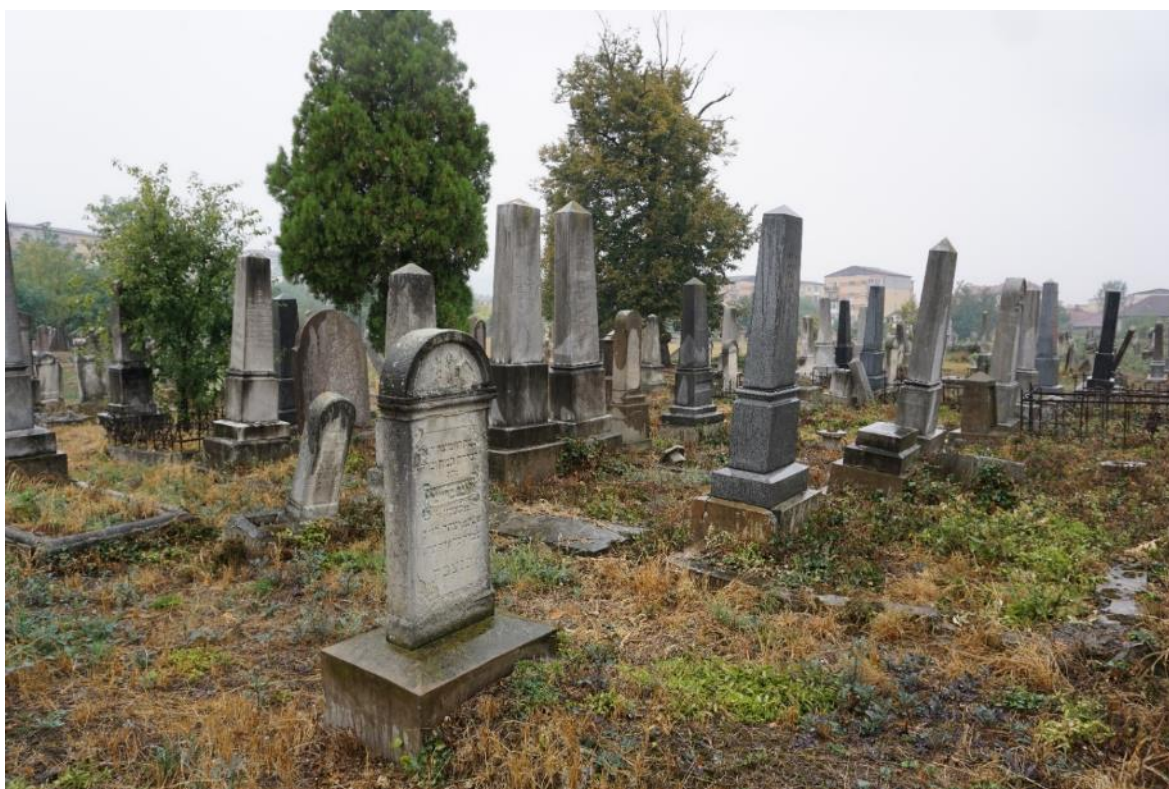
A modest ceremonial hall was built in 1874, according to a stone dedicatory plaque in its wall (Fig. 50). The gates to the cemetery were constructed in 1907.



46. Jewish cemetery in Alba Iulia. Ohel of Rabbi Yehezkel Paneth, d. 1845



47. Jewish cemetery in Alba Iulia. Tombstones of the 1820s



48. Jewish cemetery in Alba Iulia. Tombstones of the early 20th century



49. Jewish cemetery in Alba Iulia. Mausoleums of the early 20th century



50. Ceremonial hall in the Jewish cemetery in Alba Iulia, 1874



Sebeș

Jews settled in the small town Sebeș in the 1860s, and in 1869/70 their number reached only 33.¹¹ By 1900 the Jewish population increased to 109 and by 1910 to 120 persons.¹² Small Jewish cemetery in Sebeș is situated outside the town, adjacent to the cemetery of the Seventh Day Adventists. Its territory is surrounded by wire. There are about 20 tombstones dating from 1909 to 1944 (Figs. 51, 52). Two of them mark graves of the members of the Izrael family.



51. Jewish cemetery in Sebeș, obelisks of the 1910s



52. Jewish cemetery in Sebeș, stelae of the 1940s

¹¹ Gyémánt, *Evreii din Transilvania în epoca emancipării (1790-1867)* = *The Jews of Transylvania in the Age of Emancipation (1790-1867)*, 237.

¹² Rotariu, Semeniuc, and Mezei, *Recensământul din 1900*, 35; Rotariu, Semeniuc, and Mezei, *Recensământul din 1910*, 29.



Vințu de Jos

Vințu de Jos is a village near the town of Sebeș. The Jewish community there existed already in the early 19th century: a Jewish school teacher Hersh Samuel was registered in 1813.¹³ In 1900 the community numbered 117 and in 1910 – 123 persons.¹⁴

The Jewish cemetery is situated in the proximity of other cemeteries, Orthodox, Catholic and Adventist. Like in many small places, the entrance to the cemetery is through a private house, although a small ceremonial hall still stands at the entrance, facing the street. Judging from its architectural style, the building was erected at the beginning of the 20th century (Fig. 53).



53. Jewish cemetery in Vințu de Jos, ceremonial hall

There are about 60 tombstones, dating from the middle of the 19th century to 1962 (Figs. 54, 55). Many Hebrew epitaphs from the early 20th century contain no mention of the year when the deceased passed away, only the day and the month. The day and the month are important for saying

¹³ Gyémánt, *Evreii din Transilvania în epoca emancipării (1790-1867)* = *The Jews of Transylvania in the Age of Emancipation (1790-1867)*, 239.

¹⁴ Rotariu, Semeniuc, and Mezei, *Recensământul din 1900*, 67; Rotariu, Semeniuc, and Mezei, *Recensământul din 1910*, 57.



the Kaddish and other prayers, while the year has no meaning in the Jewish tradition. A tombstone of 1937 has a signature of its maker, Steiner, from the city of Arad, which shows the connections between the communities of Transylvania even after its “unification” with Romania.



54. Jewish cemetery in Vințu de Jos, stelae of the late 19th century



55. Jewish cemetery in Vințu de Jos, obelisks of the early 20th century



Târgoviște

The Jewish community of Târgoviște was a relatively small one, numbering 551 in 1930. 75% of Jews fled the town in 1940-1941 and did not come back after the war.¹⁵

Synagogue

The synagogue in Târgoviște was built in 1905–1912, as stated in the dedicatory plaques in the vestibule. The synagogue is situated in the middle of a housing block and is not seen from the street. Its exterior features the Brâncovenesc Revival style, i.e. the national style of the late 19th and early 20th-centuries in Romania, based on the architecture of the late 17th and early 18th centuries, at the age of Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu, the last native Romanian ruler of Wallachia. The usage of the national Romanian style defined the Jews as part of the Romanian national project and part of the Romanian society (Fig. 56).



56. Synagogue in Târgoviște, 1905–1912

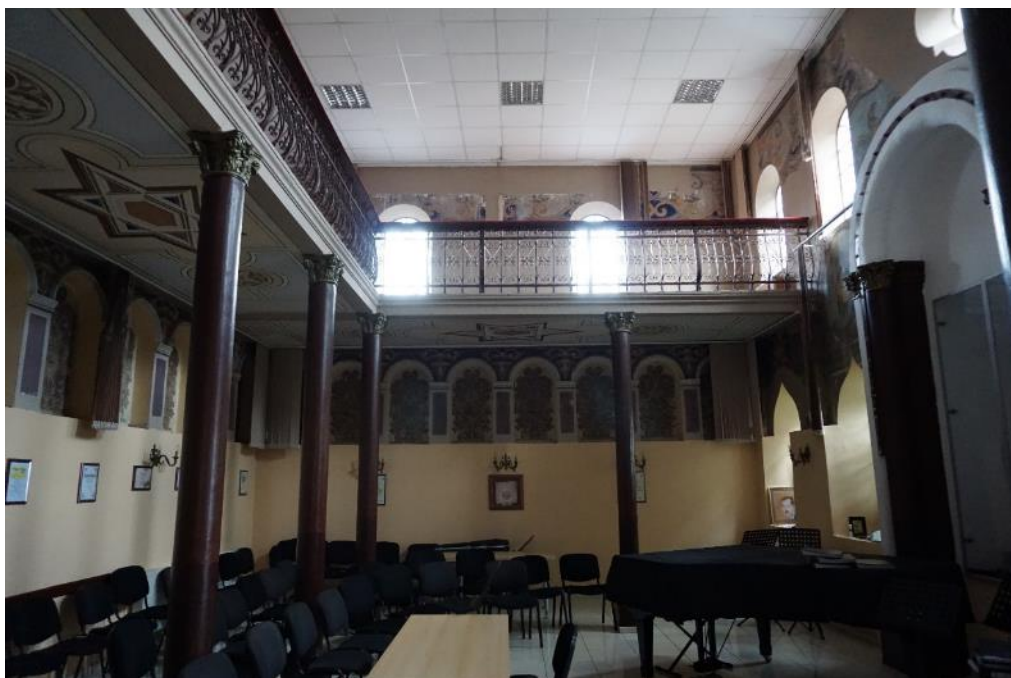
¹⁵ *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Romaniyah*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1970), 124–25.



The interior was decorated by wall paintings in the Brâncovenesc Revival style, which is partially preserved (Fig. 57). The murals include also Jewish symbols as the Stars of David (Fig. 58). The eastern wall with a prominent Torah ark was decorated in a special way, featuring medallions with flowers and depictions of eagles (Figs. 59, 60).



57. Synagogue in Târgoviște, 1905–12. Interior view towards the east



58. Synagogue in Târgoviște, 1905–12. Interior view towards the north



Currently the former synagogue serves as a concert hall of the local music school. It is carefully restored and well maintained.



59. Synagogue in Târgoviște, 1905–12. Painting of flowers on the east wall



60. Synagogue in Târgoviște, 1905–12. Painting of an eagle on the east wall

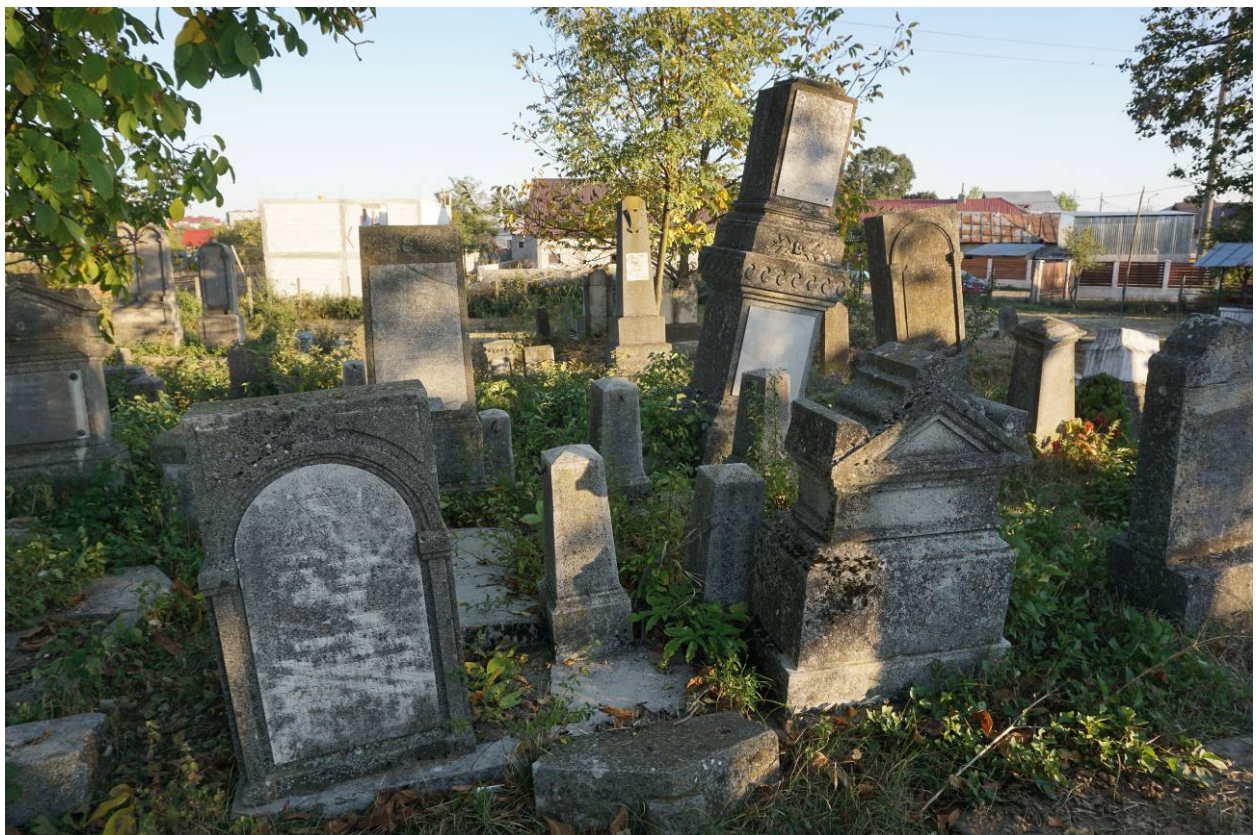


Jewish Cemetery

The Jewish cemetery of Târgoviște is situated at the outskirts of the town, behind neighborhood populated by Roma people (Fig. 61).

The cemetery chapel, constructed in 1932, disappeared after WWII and its place is marked by a marble plaque. There are about 200 tombstones in the cemetery, many of them lying on the ground. Several marble obelisks were made in Bucharest by the masters S. Goldeanu, L. Martinis, and J.Th.Frister, the works of which we have documented in other cities of Romania (Fig. 62, 63).

The grave of Herman Kornhauser, who was killed by the Germans in 1917 and decorated posthumously with the Virtutea Militară (Military Virtue) medal serves as a place for ceremonies with the participation of local state and military officials (Fig. 64).



61. Jewish cemetery in Târgoviște



62. Tombstone of I.L. Braunstain, d. 1918.
Made in Bucharest by J.Th. Frister.



63. Tombstone of Elie Braunstain, d. 1926.
Made in Bucharest by J.Th. Frister.



64. Jewish cemetery in Târgoviște, tombstone of Herman Kornhauser, d. 1917



Pitești

Jews settled in Pitești in the early 19th century. In 1899, there were 875 Jews who constituted 5.6% of the total population of the town. In the 20th century, the number of Jews significantly diminished to 450 men and women in 1947.¹⁶

Synagogue

The synagogue in Pitești was constructed in 1920–1924 at one of the central squares of the town (Fig. 65). It is a large building facing the square with its northern façade. The architectural style of the synagogue could be defined as Neo- Brâncovenesc elements in an Art Deco setting. Thus the building looks simultaneously as modern and as anchored in the Romanian history. The size of the synagogue and its prominent position in the cityscape signify the important place of Jews in the life and economics of Pitești.



65. Synagogue in Pitești, 1920–1924. Northern façade

¹⁶ Pinkas ha-kehilot: Romaniyah, 1:216.



Jewish School

A new tree-story building for the Jewish school in Pitești was constructed in 1926–1927 at a plot adjacent to the plot of the synagogue. It is situated at the corner of two main streets of the town. The façades of the building feature Neo-Baroque elements and has no stylistic connection to the nearby synagogue building (Fig. 66).

The former Jewish School is declared a protected historical monument and currently houses a restaurant.



66. Jewish school building in Pitești, 1926–1927

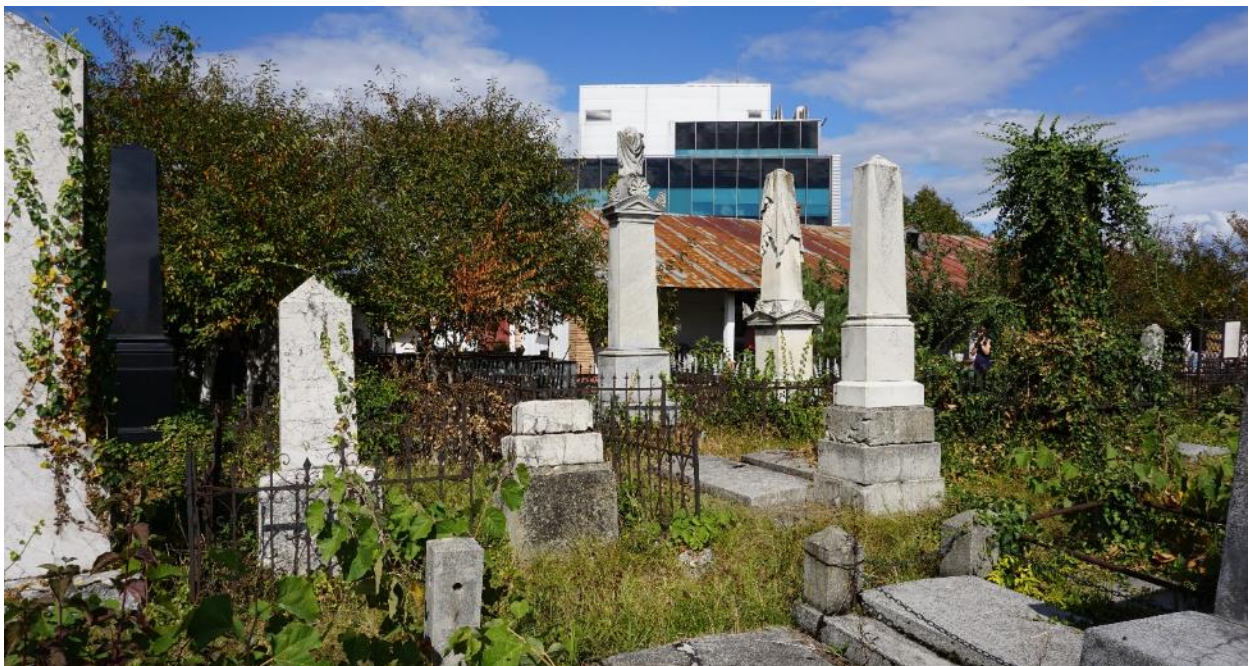


Jewish Cemetery

The cemetery is surrounded by a high wall and entered through a ceremonial hall which today serves as a dwelling for the caretaker and his family (Fig. 67). There are about 500 gravestones from the late 19th to the early 21st centuries. Many obelisks of the early 20th century are quite impressive (Fig. 68). Some of them were made in Bucharest.



67. Jewish cemetery in Pitești, ceremonial hall



68. Jewish cemetery in Pitești



The cemetery demonstrates the high degree of Romanian acculturation of the Jews of Pitești: even epitaphs on the stelae of traditional form from the late 19th century already include texts in the Romanian language (Fig. 69).

At the entrance to the cemetery, there is a Holocaust memorial, the inscription of which states that soap made of Jewish dead bodies by the Germans is buried there (Fig. 70). Similar “soap graves” could be found in many cemeteries in Romania, e.g. in Braila, which was documented last year with the generous support of The Morris and Beverly Baker Foundation.



69. Jewish cemetery in Pitești, tombstone of Solomon Caragaleanu, d. 1918



70. Jewish cemetery in Pitești, the Holocaust memorial, 1975



Râmnicu Vâlcea

Râmnicu Vâlcea is a town on Rivet Olt, at the foot of the Carpathian Mountains. Jews apparently settled there in the 14th century, but the community was always very small. Some influx of Jews took place in the 19th century and in 1899 the community numbered 245 people. In the 20th century, the number of Jews constantly decreased.

The plot for the new Jewish cemetery was bought in 1891.¹⁷ It is situated next to the Catholic cemetery and across the road from a large Romanian Orthodox cemetery. There are about two hundred tombstones in the cemetery, dated from the late 19th century until the late 20th century (Fig. 71).



71. Jewish cemetery in Râmnicu Vâlcea

The names of tombstone makers show interesting connections between the Jews of Râmnicu Vâlcea and other parts of Romania. There are two tombstones made by Goslar who had a workshop

¹⁷ *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Romaniyah*, 1:241.



in Râmnicu Vâlcea and later extended his firm to Craiova – a large Romanian town 120 km to the south of Râmnicu Vâlcea. After Romania annexed Transylvania in 1918, tombstones made in Transylvanian towns of Sibiu (by J. Roubischek, see Old Cemetery in Sibiu above) and Arad (by Vilhelm Frank and Brothers Rozsa, Figs. 72, 73) appeared in the cemetery in 1918, 1924, and 1930. The annexation of Bukovina allowed for an appearance in Râmnicu Vâlcea of a tombstone by a master from Czernowitz, Moskaliuk. Another tombstone made by the same master we documented in Gura Humorului during the expedition in 2010, also supported by The Morris and Beverly Baker Foundation.



72. Broken tombstone of Moshe Ha-Levi, d. 1918. Made by Vilhelm Frank in Arad



73. Tombstone of Fany (Frima) Markovici, d. 1930. Made by Brothers Rózsa in Arad