

# HEBREW, ARAMAIC, YIDDISH AND JUDEO-SPANISH SOURCES CONCERNING THE HISTORY OF THE JEWS OF ROMANIA AND THE HISTORY OF ROMANIA\*

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## *General observations and the classification of sources*

This article explores the range of Hebrew, Aramaic, Yiddish and Judeo-Spanish sources that provide evidence on the history of Romania's Jewish communities. The original Hebrew documentary sources used in this article are personal, pertaining to rabbis learned in the Torah<sup>1</sup> and in Jewish law, or to congregations, associations, families. In the most cases, they are dated by the Hebrew calendar, although in some cases they also bear Julian or Gregorian dates together with the Hebrew one. Due to their internal origin, they contain information which is lacking in external sources. There are Hebrew sources written in Romania, and also Hebrew sources written in other countries, dealing with the history of the Jews of Romania. The Hebrew sources are documentary and literary.<sup>2</sup>

The documentary sources are direct – manuscript, printed, epigraphic. They include registers (*pinkasim*) of congregations, synagogues, professional associations, educational associations, associations for the study of the Torah and of the Talmud, of reading of the Psalms (*Thehilim*), of mutual assistance, and of burial associations; inscriptions from synagogues, inscriptions on various objects, and funeral inscriptions on monuments over tombs (*matzevoth*); private, commercial, and informative correspondence; various private and congregational acts; rabbinical diplomas (*hasmakhoth*) and documents concerning the employment of rabbis (*kithvey rabanuth*); contracts of sale of places in synagogues; rabbinical consultations (*She'eloth uTheshuvoth*, questions and answers, sometimes referred to as responsa literature); rabbinical accords for the publication of a book (*haskamoth*); title pages of books presenting the authors and their genealogy; forewords to books; notes printed at the end of books or

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<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew Bible, mainly the Pentateuch, and the Talmud.

<sup>2</sup> A presentation of the subject in the Romanian language can be found in Lucian-Zeev Herșcovici, "Problema utilizării izvoarelor ebraice pentru cercetarea istoriei evreilor din România în epoca medievală și modernă" [The Problem of Using Jewish Sources for Researching the History of Romanian Jews in the Medieval and Modern Era], in Liviu Rotman, Camelia Crăciun, Ana-Gabriela Vasiliu, eds., *Noi perspective în istoriografia evreilor din România* [New Perspectives in the Historiography of the Jews in Romania] (Bucharest: Hasefer, 2010), 48-73.

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written at the end of biblical, theological, philosophical, or literary manuscripts (*kolophon*); notes hand-written in books by their owners or by their readers; official announcements published in journals; loose leaves published by various groups or personalities; and archives of various religious, educational and Zionist institutions or associations. There are also bilingual sources in other languages, but with some parts in Hebrew, Yiddish, or Judeo-Spanish.

The literary sources include chronicles; historical, philosophical, and literary writings; personal diaries; accounts of travellers; sermons (*derashoth*); biblical and Talmudic commentaries which include allusions to the contemporary situation or to author's affiliation to a certain current; editions of prayer books – some of them in Hebrew only, others with translations in Yiddish, Judeo-Spanish or other languages – which include also information about contemporary society or about the editor and the translator; Hebrew, Yiddish and Judeo-Spanish journals published in Romania; and accounts and letters published in journals in these languages in other countries. Yiddish and Judeo-Spanish folklore is also mentioned.

*History of research on Jews in Romania*

The importance of Hebrew sources for the study of the history of the Romanians was observed by the scholar Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu in 1865, when he mentioned a fragment of the “Itinerary” of Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela at the end of the twelfth century discussing the Wallachians of the Pindus Mountains.<sup>3</sup> Research on Hebrew sources dealing with the history of the Jews of Romania and Romanian history began in the 1870s and continued through the 1880s, initiated by Jewish *maskilim* (proponents of the Jewish Enlightenment, or *Haskalah*, which called for increased secularisation and integration of the Jewish community in Europe) who were preoccupied by the study of Jewish history for practical purposes – by researching the Jewish presence in Romania in ancient and medieval times they aimed to demonstrate the right of the Jewish community to Romanian citizenship. This was a part of the polemics for Emancipation.<sup>4</sup> The first *maskil* of Romania interested in history was Jacob Psantir, an autodidact. He wrote in Yiddish and in Hebrew in the 1870s.<sup>5</sup> Later, in the 1880s, a new

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<sup>3</sup> Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu, “Relațiunea rabinului ovreescu Benjamin despre români” [The Relation of the Jewish Rabbi Benjamin about the Romanians], *Arhiva istorică a României* (Bucharest) 2 (1865): 25 (in Hebrew, based on the edition of Constantinus L’Empereur ab Oppick, Leyden, 1633, with Romanian translation; the Romanian translation only was republished in: B. P. Hașdeu, *Istoria toleranței religioase în România* [The History of Religious Tolerance in Romania] (Bucharest, 1868); new edition, by Stancu Ilin (Bucharest: Saeculum, and Chișinău: IEP Știința, 1992), 62-63.

<sup>4</sup> Lucian-Zeev Herșcovici, “Le mouvement de la Haskalah parmi les Juifs de Roumanie” (PhD diss., Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier, 2009), vol. 1, 751-821.

<sup>5</sup> Monica Brătulescu, “A Critical Approach to the Writings of Jacob Psantir,” *Shvut* (Tel Aviv) 16 (1993): 219-233; I. Kara (=Itzhak Schwartz-Kara), “Din trecutul istoriografiei evreilor din România:

generation of *maskilim* appeared, including the brothers Elias, Wilhelm and Moses Schwarzfild; Lazăr Șăineanu; Isac David Bally and Moses Gaster.<sup>6</sup> Although they were not historians, they had completed secondary school, and some of them had studied at university, albeit in other fields, such as philosophy, philology and administrative studies. Some had also attended a rabbinical seminary. In 1885, they founded *Societatea Istorică Iuliu Barasch* (the Historical Society of Julius Barasch),<sup>7</sup> and within this framework they began to research funeral inscriptions from the old Jewish cemeteries of Bucharest and Jassy, dating from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, and published some of them.<sup>8</sup> They also collected registers of Jewish congregations and associations, rabbinical responses to the Jews of the Romanian Principalities of the same centuries, old Hebrew books, fragments of Hebrew chronicles, and other documents.

However, this society remained active for less than three years. Between the two world wars, their activity was continued by Rabbi Meir ben Avraham Halevy, a Doctor of History, who edited and published Hebrew-language sources concerning the Jews of the Romanian Principalities and concerning the Romanian regions and people in his yearbook, *Sinai*, and later in other publications.<sup>9</sup> Rabbi Dr Meir A. Halevy published seventeenth- to nineteenth-

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Iacov Psantir, pionier al valorificării izvoarelor ebraice” [From the Past of the Historiography of the Jews in Romania: Iacov Psantir, Pioneer of the Capitalization of the Jewish Sources], *SAHIR* 2 (1997): 160-166.

<sup>6</sup> Israel Bar-Avi (=Doré Wertenstein), *Familia Schwarzfild: Beniamin, tatăl (1822-1897); Elias (1855-1915), Wilhelm (1856-1894), Moses (1857-1943), fiii* [The Schwarzfild Family: Benjamin, Father (1822-1897); Elias (1855-1915), Wilhelm (1856-1894), Moses (1857-1943), the Sons] (Jerusalem: Cenaclul Literar Menora, 1969); Lya Benjamin, ed., *Evreii din România în texte istoriografice: antologie* [The Jews in Romania in Historiographical Texts: An Anthology] (Bucharest: Hasefer, 2004); Măriuca Stanciu, *Necunoscutul Gaster: publicistica culturală, ideologică și politică a lui Moses Gaster* [The Unknown Gaster: Moses Gaster’s Cultural, Ideological, and Political Journalism] (Bucharest: Editura Universității din București, 2006); Moses Gaster, *Memorii (fragmente), corespondență* [Memoirs (Excerpts), Correspondence], ed. Victor Eskenasy (Bucharest: Hasefer, 1998); Carol Iancu, *Evreii din România (1866-1919): de la excludere la emancipare* [The Jews in Romania (1866-1919): From exclusion to Emancipation], 3rd rev. ed. (Bucharest: Hasefer, 2009), 439-450 (Name Index).

<sup>7</sup> *Analele Societății Istorice Iuliu Barasch*, 3 vols. (Bucharest: Societatea Istorică Iuliu Barasch), 1887-1889.

<sup>8</sup> Wilhelm Schwarzfild, “Învățați și scriitori evrei în Iași din timpurile cele mai vechi până în zilele noastre: schiță istorico-culturală” [Jewish Scholars and Writers in Jassy from Ancient Times to the Present Day: Historical-Cultural Sketch], *Anuar pentru Israeliți* (Bucharest) XIII (1890-1891): 43-76; Idem, “Familia Rokeah: notiță după inscripțiuni mormântale” [The Rokeah Family: Note after Tomb Inscriptions], *Anuar pentru Israeliți* XIV (1891-1892): 238-239; Idem, “Cercetări epigrafice” [Epigraphic Research], *Anuar pentru Israeliți* XVII (1895-1896): 50-62.

<sup>9</sup> *Sinai*, 5 vols. (Bucharest, in Romanian and Hebrew, some studies in German or French), 1928-1933, preceded by: *Sinai: Revistă pentru Studii Judaice* (Jassy), 1926-1927; Carol Iancu, “Chief Rabbi Meyer Abraham Halevy, Exegete and Historian,” *SH* 2 (2002): 287-305.

century funeral inscriptions from Jassy and Bucharest,<sup>10</sup> rabbinical consultations concerning the life of the Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews of Moldavia and Wallachia in the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries<sup>11</sup> and, in later years, fragments of the sixteenth-century chronicle of Rabbi Eliyahu Kapsali, *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, about Moldavia.<sup>12</sup> Today, the old Jewish cemeteries of Bucharest (eighteenth to nineteenth century) and Jassy (seventeenth to nineteenth century) no longer exist: they were destroyed in 1942-43 by order of the antisemitic dictator Ion Antonescu, who wanted to erase all evidence of the Jewish presence in Romania.<sup>13</sup> In the interwar period, Rabbi Dr Mathias Eisler of Cluj began to research the history of the Jews of Transylvania and published fragments of the register of the Jewish community of Alba Iulia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>14</sup> Today this register is preserved in a private collection, inaccessible to researchers; it was sold on 2 May 2013 by the auction house Kestenbaum & Co. of New York.<sup>15</sup> In 1928, Rabbi Jakab Singer published some funeral inscriptions for rabbis from the Jewish cemetery of his town, Timișoara.<sup>16</sup> In 1939, the historian Itzhak Schwartz-Kara published a list of registers of Jewish congregations and associations, published again by him in an enlarged form in 1996.<sup>17</sup> In this study, he mentioned other Hebrew, Aramaic, Yiddish and Judeo-

<sup>10</sup> Meir Abraham Halevy, "Kethovoth bathey-hakevaroth hayeshanim beJassy ubeBukarest" [Inscriptions of the Old Cemeteries of Jassy and Bucharest], *Sinai* 3 (1931): XVII-XXXIV.

<sup>11</sup> Meir Abraham Halevy, "Consultațiile rabinice ca izvoare de istorie" [Rabbinic Consultations as Sources of History], *Sinai* 1 (1928): 7-10. Other titles in the bibliography of Halevy's writings can be found in: Jean Ancel and Victor Eskenasy, *Bibliography of the Jews in Romania* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1991), 56-58, XXI.

<sup>12</sup> Meir Abraham Halevy, "Les guerres d'Etienne le Grand et d'Uzun Hassan contre Mahomet II d'après la *Chronique de la Turquie* du candiote Elie Capsali (1523)," *SAO* 1 (1957): 189-198.

<sup>13</sup> Adrian Cioflâncă, "Erasing Memory: The Destruction of Old Jewish Cemeteries in Bucharest and Iași During Ion Antonescu's Regime," *RIER* 1 (16-17) (2016): 318-333.

<sup>14</sup> Mathias Eisler, "Das Gemeindebuch von Alba-Iulia," *Sinai* 1 (1928): 11-16; Idem, "Aus dem Gemeindeleben der Juden in Alba-Iulia im 18. Jahrhundert," *Sinai* 2 (1929): 72-82; Idem, "Aus dem Privatleben der Juden von Siebenbuergen im 18. Jahrhundert," *Sinai* 3 (1931): 113-123. Observations and comparative materials can be found in Ana-Maria Caloianu, *Istoria comunității evreiești din Alba Iulia* [The History of the Jewish Community in Alba Iulia] (Bucharest: Hasefer, 2006).

<sup>15</sup> Kestenbaum & Company, Auction 58, Thursday, 2 May 2013 at 1 pm, <https://www.kestenbaum.net/auction/lot/auction-58/058-373> (the author would like to thank Dr Augusta Costiuc-Radosav, Babeș-Bolyai University, Moshe Carmilly Institute of Hebrew Language and Jewish Studies for this information).

<sup>16</sup> Jakab Singer, "Aus der Vergangenheit der Temesvarer Juden," *Sinai* 2 (1929): 96-98; Idem, *Temesvári rabbik a XVIII és XIX-ik században* [Rabbis of Timișoara in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries] (Seini: Wieder Jakab Könyvnyomdája, 1928).

<sup>17</sup> I. Kara, "Izvoare ebraice privind istoria evreilor din România" [Jewish Sources on the History of the Jews in Romania], *SAHIR* 2 (1996): 162-165. Fragments of some registers were published by Itzhak Schwartz-Kara under the pen-name Abraham Lachower, "Jewish Burial Associations in Moldavia in the 18<sup>th</sup> and the Beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries," *YIVO Annual* (New York) 10 (1955):

Spanish sources of the history of the Jews of Romania, mainly of Moldavia and Wallachia from the sixteenth to the beginning of the nineteenth century, including responsa literature, funeral inscriptions, travels notes and correspondence, along with short bibliographical notes.<sup>18</sup> The Romanian historian, Nicolae Iorga, also took an interest in Hebrew sources and searched for translations into Romanian for some of them.<sup>19</sup>

After World War II, some researchers began scholarly research into Hebrew, Aramaic, Yiddish, and Judeo-Spanish sources. An important field of research was that of funeral inscriptions. In 1965, the historian Lazăr Rosenbaum (Eliezer Ilan) and – after he was arrested for political (Zionist) reasons and left Romania – the Hebraist Athanase Negoită, a professor at the Theological Institute of Bucharest, prepared an edition of Hebrew inscriptions from the old Jewish cemetery of Bucharest, published in a collection of medieval inscriptions from that city edited by the historian Alexandru Elian.<sup>20</sup> The name of Lazăr Rosenbaum was erased for political reasons. This edition was based on older copies of Hebrew funeral inscriptions preserved in the archives of the Federation of the Jewish Communities of Romania. The scholar Itzhak Schwartz-Kara (I. Kara) published some funeral inscriptions from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries from the Jewish cemeteries in Piatra Neamț,<sup>21</sup> Dorohoi,<sup>22</sup> Botoșani<sup>23</sup> and Bacău<sup>24</sup> – and in 1994, together with the archaeologist Stela Chepte, he

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300-319. On the registers of the Jewish burial associations (*Chevra Qadisha*) in Romania, see also Ana-Gabriela Vasiliu, “Despre o structură comunitară: Hevra Kadiša” [About a Community Structure: Hevra Kadiša], in Anca Ciuciu-Tudorancea and Camelia Crăciun, eds., *Istorie și memorie evreiască: volum dedicat doamnei Dr. Lya Benjamin* [Jewish History and Memory: A Volume Dedicated to Dr. Lya Benjamin] (Bucharest: Hasefer, 2011), 71-85.

<sup>18</sup> Kara, “Izvoare,” 154-162.

<sup>19</sup> Nicolae Iorga, “Istoria evreilor în țerile noastre” [The History of the Jews in Our Lands], *AARMSI*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Series, XXXVI (1914): 170.

<sup>20</sup> Alexandru Elian, ed., *Inscripțiile medievale ale României. Orașul București, 1395-1800* [The Medieval Inscriptions of Romania. The City of Bucharest, 1395-1800] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1965), 444-465.

<sup>21</sup> I. Kara, “Inscripții ebraice din Piatra Neamț (1677-1800)” [Hebrew Inscriptions from Piatra Neamț (1677-1800)], *Mem. a. 1* (1969): 369-373. Commentaries by Pincu Pascal, *Obștea evreilor din Piatra Neamț* [The Community of the Jews from Piatra Neamț] [Piatra Neamț: Cetatea Doamnei, 2005], 16-30.

<sup>22</sup> I. Kara, “Vechiul cimitir din Dorohoi” [The Old Cemetery in Dorohoi], in Shlomo David, ed., *Generații de iudaism și sionism: Dorohoi, Săveni, Mihăileni, Darabani, Herța, Rădăuți-Prut* [Generations of Judaism and Zionism: Dorohoi, Săveni, Mihăileni, Darabani, Herța, Rădăuți-Prut] (Kiryat Bialik: Organizația Israelienilor Originari din Orașul și Județul Dorohoi, 1993), vol. 2, 16-30.

<sup>23</sup> I. Kara, “Inscripții ebraice din județul Botoșani” [Hebrew Inscriptions from Botoșani County], *Mem. a. 2* (1970), 523-531.

<sup>24</sup> I. Kara, “Avney zikaron” [Memorial Stones], in I. Voledi-Vardi, ed., *Kehilath Bacău, historyah yehudith mefu'ereth: sefer R(abi) Meir Eibschitz* [The Jewish Community of Bacău, a Magnificent Jewish History; Volume in Memory of R(abi) Meir Eibschitz] (Tel Aviv, 1990), 234.

published funeral inscriptions from the old Jewish cemetery of Jassy and some Hebrew inscriptions from synagogues in the same town.<sup>25</sup> The scholar Itzhak Schwartz-Kara mentioned other Hebrew and Yiddish sources, such as commercial correspondence<sup>26</sup> and various rabbinical consultations.<sup>27</sup> References to rabbinic consultations with Jews in the Romanian Principalities were also mentioned by other historians.<sup>28</sup> Notices and studies which mentioned Hebrew and Yiddish sources were published by Itzhak Schwartz-Kara in Romanian or Yiddish in the periodicals *Revista Cultului Mozaic* and *Bukarester Shriftn*, both published in Bucharest in the 1970s and 1980s. Itzhak Schwartz-Kara also introduced the method of comparative research of Hebrew, Aramaic and Yiddish sources concerning the history of the Jews of Romania and concerning Romania itself. Funeral monuments in Transylvania were studied by the scholars Lajos Erdély<sup>29</sup> and György Gaal,<sup>30</sup> and those in Bucovina and Northern Moldavia by the scholar Simon Geissbühler,<sup>31</sup> but mainly from an artistic point of view. Funeral monuments in Bucovina – together with those of Galicia – were studied in recent

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<sup>25</sup> I. Kara and Stela Cheptea, *Inscripții ebraice (Inscripțiile medievale și din epoca modernă a României). Orașul Iași* [Hebrew Inscriptions (Medieval and Modern Inscriptions of Romania). The City of Jassy] (Jassy: Academia Română. Filiala Iași, 1994, XXI), 136 pp. Review by Lucian-Zeev Herșcovici, “Hebrew Inscriptions in Romania and the History of the Romanian Jews,” *Shvut* (Tel Aviv and Beer Sheba) 4 (20) (1996): 247-250.

<sup>26</sup> I. Kara, “Yiddishe handels-korespondents fun Moldavye fun 1829-1847,” [Yiddish Commercial Correspondence of Moldavia of 1829-1847], *YIVO-Bleter* (New York) 44 (1972): 78-107 (published in Romanian also, “Din istoria comerțului moldovenesc între 1829-1847: o corespondență comercială inedită” [From the History of Moldovan Trade between 1829-1847: Unpublished Commercial Correspondence], *AIIA* 9 (1972): 475-494).

<sup>27</sup> I. Kara, “Consultațiile rabinice ca izvor istoric” [Rabbinic Consultations as a Historical Source], *Europa XXI* (Iași) 1-2 (1992-1993): 166-169.

<sup>28</sup> Shlomo Leibovici-Laiș, “Pagini de istorie a evreilor în Responsae rabinice” [Pages of Jewish History in Rabbinic Responsae], *SAHIR* 2 (1997): 48-58; Lucian-Zeev Herșcovici, “Yedioth al hayehudim hasefaradim beWalakhyah bemeoth 16-17 besifruth hash-uth shel hathekufah” [Information about Sephardic Jews in Wallachia in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries in the Rabbinic Responsa of That Period], in: *Divrey haKongres haolamy hasheminy lemadaey hayahaduth* Vol. 2: *Tholdoth am Yisrael* [Proceedings of the Eighth World Congress of Jewish Studies. Vol. 2: The History of the Jewish People] [Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1982], 71-76.

<sup>29</sup> Lajos Erdély, *Régi Zsidó temetők művészete* [Art of the Old Jewish Cemeteries] (Bucharest: Kriterion, 1980).

<sup>30</sup> György Gaal, *A Házsongárdtól a Kismezőig. Kolozsvári sírkertek a XIX-XX. századból* [From Házsongárd to Kismező. Tomb Gardens in Cluj-Napoca from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century] (Cluj-Napoca: Exit, 2016).

<sup>31</sup> Simon Geissbühler, Ovidiu Morar, *Jewish Cemeteries of Bucovina: An Illustrated Book for Tourists and Against Forgetting* (Bucharest: NOI Media Print, w. y.); Simon Geissbühler, *Like Shells in a Shore: Synagogues and Jewish Cemeteries of Northern Moldavia* (Bern: Projekt 36, 2010).

years by scholars such as Meir Wunder,<sup>32</sup> Felicia Waldman<sup>33</sup> and Maria Nicolaev.<sup>34</sup> The epigraphist and archaeologist, Professor Silviu Sanie of Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Jassy, studied the Jewish cemetery of Siret, Bucovina, in a systematic scholarly manner and published a book on its artistic and epigraphic aspects.<sup>35</sup> The scholar Silviu Sanie researched other Hebrew funeral inscriptions of Moldavia up to the mid-nineteenth century, as well as Jewish monuments of ancient Dacia.<sup>36</sup> Hebrew sources from ancient Dacia were also studied by the archaeologist Nicolae Gudea.<sup>37</sup> Recently, the historian Daniel Dumitran, together with a group of students of the “1 Decembrie 1918” University of Alba Iulia, began to study the Jewish cemetery of this town, which has been in use from the eighteenth century until the present day and to restore its funerary monuments.<sup>38</sup> Among the students who are active in this field, PhD candidate Sidonia Olea is also deserving of mention.

Among the historical sources published in the latest decades of the twentieth century, we mention a series of volumes of documents and literary fragments concerning the Jews of Romania which includes some Hebrew and Yiddish sources in Romanian translation. Publication of this series began in 1986, and to date, three volumes out of five have been published. Its editors are Victor Eskenasy, Mihai Spielman, Lya Benjamin and Ladislau Gyémánt (concerning the Hebrew documentation they were helped by the scholar Itzhak Schwartz-

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<sup>32</sup> Meir Wunder, *Hod veadar: sridey omanuth yehudith beGalitzyah*. Vol. 1: *Galitzyah hamizrachith* [Grandeur and Glory: Remnants of Jewish Art in Galicia. Vol. 1: Eastern Galicia] (Jerusalem: Institute for Commemoration of Galician Jewry, Jerusalem Center for Documentation of Diaspora Heritage, 2005).

<sup>33</sup> Felicia Waldman, “History Carved in Stone: The Jewish Cemeteries of Southern Bukovina,” in Francisca Solomon and Ion Lihaciu, eds., *Terra Judaica: literarische, kulturelle und historische Perspektiven auf das Judentum in der Bukowina und in Galizien / Literary, Cultural and Historical Perspectives on Bukovinian and Galician Jewry* (Konstanz: Hartung Gorre Verlag, 2020), 365-380.

<sup>34</sup> Marina Nicolaev, in Carol Iancu, ed., *Evreii din Hârlău și împrejurimi: istorie și memorie* [The Jews of Hârlău and Surroundings: History and Memory] (Jassy: Editura Universității Alexandru Ioan Cuza, 2021).

<sup>35</sup> Silviu Sanie, *Dăinuire prin piatră: monumentele cimitirului medieval evreiesc de la Siret* [Everlasting in Stone: The Monuments in the Jewish Medieval Cemetery in Siret] (Bucharest: Hasefer, 2000).

<sup>36</sup> Silviu Sanie, “Elemente iudaice sau iudaizante în interferența etno-culturală din Dacia și Moesia Inferior” [Jewish or Judaizing Elements in the Ethno-Cultural Interference of Dacia and Lower Moesia], *SAHIR* 1 (1996): 1-27; Idem, “Inscriptions and Images on Tombstones as Historiographic Sources,” *SJ* 7 (1998): 117-122; Idem, “Quelques considérations sur le symbolisme funéraire judaïque dans l’est de la Roumanie, jusqu’à la moitié du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle,” in Carol Iancu, ed., *Permanences et ruptures dans l’histoire des Juifs de Roumanie, XIX<sup>e</sup>-XX<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Montpellier: Université Paul Valéry, 2004), 81-90.

<sup>37</sup> Nicolae Gudea, “The Jews in the Roman Dacia,” *SJ* 2 (1993): 162-166; 7 (1998): 199-202; 8 (1999): 278-284; 14 (2006): 407-411.

<sup>38</sup> Daniel Dumitran, Călin Șuteu, and Tudor Borșan, *Istorii în piatră: cimitirul evreiesc din Alba Iulia* [Stories in Stone: The Jewish Cemetery in Alba Iulia], Pt. 1 (Cluj-Napoca: Mega, 2014).

Kara).<sup>39</sup> Some Hebrew documents and literary sources on the relations between the Jews of the Romanian Principalities and Palestine in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries have been published in Romanian translation.<sup>40</sup> Some literary fragments about the Carpatho-Danubian region in the tenth to twelfth centuries were also published.<sup>41</sup> Some fragments of sixteenth-century Hebrew chronicles concerning the Romanian countries and territory have been published in Romanian translation, and others are awaiting publication.<sup>42</sup>

The historian Itzhak Schwartz-Kara has published bibliographic studies on Hebrew printing in Moldavia and Wallachia up to the year 1900,<sup>43</sup> and the bibliographer Itzhak Yosef Kohn has published studies on Hebrew printing in Transylvania, Bucovina and Bessarabia.<sup>44</sup> Kohn has also published short notes on the rabbis of Transylvania, the authors of Hebrew casuistic writings and Torah commentaries, and the authors of Hebrew philosophical and non-religious books, together with bibliographic notes.<sup>45</sup> An encyclopaedia listing the rabbis of the Romanian territories, including information on some of their writings, was

<sup>39</sup> *Izvoare și mărturii referitoare la evreii din România* [Sources and Testimonies Regarding the Jews in Romania] (Federația Comunităților Evreiești din România, Centrul de Istorie, 1986-1999). Vol. 1: *Antichitate-1700* [Antiquity-1700], ed. Victor Eskenasy (Bucharest, 1986; 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed., Hasefer, 1995); Vol. 2, pt. 1: *1700-1750*, ed. Mihai Spielmann (Bucharest, 1988); Vol. 2, pt. 2: *1750-1800*, eds. Lya Benjamin, Mihai Spielman, and Sergiu Stanciu (Bucharest: Hasefer, 1990); Vol. 3, pt. 1: *1801-1829*, eds. Ladislau Gyémánt and Lya Benjamin (Bucharest: Hasefer, 1999); Vol. 3, pt. 2: *1830-1849*, eds. Ladislau Gyémánt and Lya Benjamin (Bucharest: Hasefer, 1999).

<sup>40</sup> Lucian-Zeev Herșcovici, "Legături ale evreilor din Moldova și Țara Românească cu Palestina (Eretz Yisrael) în secolele XVI-XVIII" [Connections of the Jews of Moldova and Wallachia with Palestine (Eretz Yisrael) in the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Centuries], *SAHIR* 13 (2016): 17-63; Idem, "Portul Galați în literatura ebraică și idiș de călătorie din secolele XVII și XVIII" [The Port of Galați in Hebrew and Yiddish Travel Literature from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries], *Danubius* 35, 2 (2017): 21-39.

<sup>41</sup> Lucian-Zeev Herșcovici and Eugen Pentiuc, "References to the Carpatho-Danubian Region in Hebrew Sources of the 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Centuries," *Romanian Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem) I, 2 (1987): 5-17.

<sup>42</sup> Eugen Glück, "Izvoare ebraice despre români" [Jewish Sources about Romanians], *MI* XVII, 9 (1983): 24-25; Idem, "Unele informații privind istoria României cuprinse în izvoarele ebraice medievale" [Some Information on the History of Romania Contained in the Medieval Jewish Sources], *RI*, Serie nouă, 1 (1990): 335-345; Idem, "O cronică ebraică despre români" [A Jewish Chronicle on the Romanians], *Crisia* 22 (1992): 261-264; Lucian-Zeev Herșcovici, "Cronicari ebraici, istorie românească: interesul unor istorici evrei europeni din secolul al XVI-lea pentru istoria românilor și a perimetrului românesc" [Jewish Chroniclers, Romanian History: The Interest of Some European Jewish Historians from the 16<sup>th</sup> Century for the History of the Romanians and of the Romanian Perimeter], *SAHIR* 14 (in press).

<sup>43</sup> I. Kara, "Hade fus hayvri beRomanyah ad shenath 5660" [The Hebrew Printing in Romania Until 5660 (1900)], *Kiryath Sefer* (Jerusalem) 45 (1970): 287-298; 61 (1986-1987): 333-344.

<sup>44</sup> For a list of the studies of Itzhak Yosef Kohn (Kohen, or Cohen) on the Hebrew printing, see Ancel and Eskenasy, *Bibliography*, XXVI (Hebrew pagination).

<sup>45</sup> Itzhak Yosef Kohn, "Hayetzirah hayehudith beyvrith" [Jewish Literary Works in Hebrew], in *Pinkas Hakehilloth. Romanyah* [Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities. Romania], eds. Theodor Lavi-Loewenstein and Jean Ancel (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1969), vol. 1, LXVII-LXXXIII (Hebrew pagination); Idem, *Chakhmey Transylvanyah 5490-5704 (1630-1944)* [Sages of Transylvania 5490-5704 (1630-1944)] (Jerusalem: Makhon Yerushalayim, 1989).



published in 2012.<sup>46</sup> A book on the history of Hebrew printing in Northern Transylvania was published by Professor Maria Radosav of Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca.<sup>47</sup> Studies and bibliographies concerning the Yiddish press in Romania have been published by Nathan Mark,<sup>48</sup> Itzhak Korn,<sup>49</sup> Wolf-Vladimir Tamburu<sup>50</sup> and Augusta Costiuc Radosav,<sup>51</sup> while David Bunis,<sup>52</sup> Raoul Siniol<sup>53</sup> and Alexandru Avram<sup>54</sup> have published studies on the Judeo-Spanish literature and press. Some Hebrew documents on the activity of Rabbi M. L. Malbim in Bucharest (between 1858 and 1864) were published by the former Chief Rabbi, Dr Moses Rosen<sup>55</sup> and historian Jacob Geller.<sup>56</sup>

In the next section, we present funeral monuments with their Hebrew inscriptions as sources on the history of the Jews of Romania.

*Jewish cemeteries, funeral monuments, and funeral inscriptions*

Funeral inscriptions contribute to the reconstitution of the communal and religious history, of the history of emigration, and of genealogy and family

<sup>46</sup> Baruch Tercatin and Lucian-Zeev Herşcovici, *Entziqlopedyah leyahaduth Romanyah bemeoth ha-16 –ha-21* [Encyclopaedia of Romanian Judaism in the 16<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> Centuries] (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 2012), 3 vols.; Baruch Tercatin and Lucian-Zeev Herşcovici, *Prezențe rabinice în perimetrul românesc, secolele XVI-XXI* [Rabbinic Presences in the Romanian Perimeter, 16<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> Centuries] (Bucharest: Hasefer, 2008).

<sup>47</sup> Maria Radosav, *Livada cu rodii: carte și comunitate evreiască în nordul Transilvaniei, secolele XVIII-XX* [Pomegranate Orchard: Book and Jewish Community in Northern Transylvania, 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries] (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, 2007).

<sup>48</sup> Nathan Mark, *Sifrut yiddish beRomanyah (Ieraboth yithonuth) mireshitah vead 1972* [Yiddish Literature in Romania (Also Including Journalism) from its Beginning until 1972] (Haifa: Omanuth, 1973).

<sup>49</sup> Itzhak Korn, *Yiddish in Rumenye* [Yiddish in Romania] (Tel Aviv: Avoka, 1989).

<sup>50</sup> Vladimir-Wolf Tamburu, *Yiddish-prese in Rumenye* [Yiddish Press in Romania] (Bucharest: Kriterion, 1977).

<sup>51</sup> Augusta Costiuc-Radosav, *Vocile unei istorii neterminate: presa idiș din spațiul românesc extra-carpatic 1855-1900* [The Voices of an Unfinished History: Yiddish Press from the Romanian Extra-Carpathian Space 1855-1900] (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut & Mega, 2014).

<sup>52</sup> David Bunis, "Pyesa di Yaakov Avinu kun sus izus (Bucharest, 1862): The First Judezmo Play?" [Play about Our Father Yaakov With His Sons (Bucharest, 1862): The First Judezmo Play?], in Tamar Alexander et al., eds., *History and Creativity in the Sephardi and Oriental Communities* (Jerusalem: Misgav Yerushalayim, 1994), 201-252.

<sup>53</sup> Raoul Siniol, *Momente sefarde: cu prilejul jubileului de 250 de ani al comunității sefarde din București* [Sephardic Moments: On the Occasion of the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Sephardic Community in Bucharest] (Jerusalem, 1980).

<sup>54</sup> Alexandru Avram, "Judeo-Spanish Journalism," *Romanian Jewish Studies* I, 1 (1987): 21-25.

<sup>55</sup> David Moshe Rosen, "Pereq miparashath Malbim beBukarest (Ieor mismakhim rishonim vekithvey-yad chadashim)" [A Chapter in the Malbim Affair in Bucharest (in Light of the First Documents and of New Manuscripts)], in Menahem Zohori and Arie Tartakover, eds., *Haguth yvrit beEvropah* [Jewish Thought in Europe] (Tel Aviv: Yavneh, 1969), 376-410.

<sup>56</sup> Jacob Geller, *HaMalbim: maavaqo beHaskalah ubeReformah beBukarest 1858-1864* [The Malbim: His Struggle against the Enlightenment and Reform in Bucharest 1858-1864] (Lod: Orot Yahaduth HaMaghreb – Institute of Research and Publication of Sephardic Rabbinic Writings, 2000). Review by Şlomo Leibovici-Laiş, in *SAHIR* 6 (2001): 337-339.

history. They provide useful information, although it can be limited and needs to be complemented with information from other sources. A funeral inscription typically mentions the name of the deceased person, his/her family connection, sometimes his/her origin and his/her occupation, and the date and the circumstances of death. One may also find mention of the function, qualities and title of an important figure such as a communal leader, rabbi, physician, or president of an association, enabling the researcher to more easily reconstruct their biography.

The tradition of burying the dead in cemeteries has existed since antiquity. The Jewish cemeteries of Romania are located near the town they served, but outside of it. The dead were buried in the courtyard of a synagogue only rarely and under special circumstances, such as the three tombs from the nineteenth century found in the courtyard of the Great Synagogue of Jassy, built circa 1670. This was probably a result of the *halakhic* (according to Jewish religious law) interdiction against *kohanim*<sup>57</sup> coming in contact with the deceased lest they are made impure. The burial was organized in conformity with *halakhic* law. In Romania, the earliest Jewish cemeteries located in special areas probably existed in the sixteenth century, but they did not survive. The oldest known Jewish cemetery, preserved until its destruction in 1943, was that of Ciurchi district in Jassy, which existed from the first decades of the seventeenth century. The old Jewish cemetery of Bucharest, on Sevastopol Street, opened at the beginning of the eighteenth century but was destroyed in the Holocaust. In Transylvania, the oldest preserved cemetery is that of Alba Iulia, dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Some burial monuments with inscriptions from the eighteenth century were discovered in the late nineteenth century in Piatra Neamț, Roman and Bacău, but many of these were destroyed and used in construction, paving or embankments, only to be discovered once again in those locations.

There are two types of burial monument or tombstone used by Eastern Europe Jews in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries: standing stones, set in a vertical position (*matzevoth*; singular: *matzevah*<sup>58</sup>) and lying stones, set in a horizontal position.<sup>59</sup> There are also small chapels (*ohalim*; singular: *ohel*, tent), built on the tombs of the *tzadikim* (singular: *tzadik*, righteous) or *admorim* (singular: *admor*, a concatenation of *adoneinu*, *moreinu*, *rabeinu* – our master, our teacher, our rabbi), both of which are titles for Hassidic rabbis. The *ohel* is

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<sup>57</sup> Considered to be the descendants of the priests of the Temple of Jerusalem. Prohibition of Kohen defilement by the dead: *Shemoth* / Leviticus 21, 1.

<sup>58</sup> *Bereshith* / Genesis 35, 20.

<sup>59</sup> Marcin Wodziński, "Tombstones," in *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, ed. Gershon David Hundert (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), vol. 2, 1887-1891; "Written in Stone: The Art and Meaning of Rohatyn's Jewish Grave Makers," accessed 10 September 2021, <https://rohatynjewishheritage.org/en/culture/written-in-stone/>.

frequently visited by the *chasidim* (followers) of that rabbi, who come to pray at his tomb: in the Hassidic tradition, the *tzadik* is considered more a saint after his death than in his life.

An element that must be considered in researching a Jewish cemetery as a complex is its size, in relation to the date it opened and the approximate number of Jews living in the town or settlement at that time. A large cemetery indicates a note of optimism: the Jews hoped that they would remain in that locality untroubled for a long time.

The funeral inscriptions are written in Hebrew. Later funeral inscriptions are written in Hebrew and in another local language – in Romanian in the Old Kingdom; in German or Romanian in Bucovina; in Hungarian, German or Romanian in Transylvania. The appearance of texts in the local language points to the influence of modernization and indicates a degree of sociocultural integration. Nevertheless, texts in the local language never appear instead of the Hebrew text. Usually, the Hebrew text appears on the side of the burial monument, and in the case of a *matzevah*, the inscription in the local language is written on the other side. There are also cases in which the two texts appear on the same side of the monument.

Another aspect which must be considered is the stone used for the monument, which offers an indication of the material situation of the deceased and of his/her family. For example, a funeral monument of granite is an indication of a good economic situation, because it is an expensive stone.

Carved ornaments usually appear in the upper part of the monument, but occasionally in the lower part. Some also bear decoration in the form of a border around of the inscription. The decorations represent special elements connected with Jewish symbolism,<sup>60</sup> and tend to be based on Jewish religious themes of biblical origin. Two hands, upright with palms forward, indicates that the deceased man was a Kohen, considered a descendant of the *Kohanim*, the priests of the ancient Temple of Jerusalem, whose function was to make blessings. A jug pouring water indicates that the deceased man was a Levy, considered a descendant of the Tribe of the Levites; the duty of a Levy in the Temple of Jerusalem was to pour water for a Kohen to wash his hands before he makes a blessing. One also finds zoomorphic symbols connected to the name of the deceased man or woman, emphasising their correspondence to those personal names. The presence of a lion indicates that the deceased man was called Aryeh, Yehudah (or: Yehuda), Leib, Lipot or Leon. In the Old Testament, the lion was the symbol of the Tribe of Yehudah (Judah). The presence of a wolf indicates the name Zeev, Wolf, Wilhelm, Farkaş or Lupu; the wolf was the symbol of the Tribe of Benyamin (Benjamin). The presence of a stag indicates the name Zwy, Naftaly

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<sup>60</sup> Ellen Frankel and Betsy Platkin Teutsch, *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Symbols* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1992), 207-222.

or Naftule, Herman, Herșcu, Hirsch or Cerbul, and symbolises the Tribe of Naphtaly (Naphtali). A bear indicates the name Dov, Ber, Bercu, Berman or Ursul. The presence of a bird indicates that the deceased woman was called Tziporah or Feiga; usually, the bird is depicted in flight, a symbol of the soul and passing into Paradise. These symbolic names of animals that in the Hebrew Bible, each with a special character with Kabbalistic aspects, are often used as first names among Ashkenazi Jews. A small twig on a funeral monument indicates a child's tomb. There are also cases of curious zoomorphic representations of fantastic animals, such as gryphons or unicorns, among others – a theme studied by the epigraphist Professor Silviu Sanie.<sup>61</sup> The borders surrounding the text of the inscriptions are usually rectangular in form and represent garlands of plants. Imaginary designs of the Temple of Jerusalem, sometimes in the form of a vaulted arch or a rectangular doorway, represented by some lines, and the Menorah – the candelabrum with seven arms of the Temple of Jerusalem, are engraved on some tombstones.

The funeral inscriptions are in two parts. The first part is a stereotype formula, abbreviated by initials. At the beginning of an inscription, on a special line, the abbreviation with the Hebrew letters פ (*pei*) and נ (*nun*) is written, standing for the expression *poh nitman* (here is buried). At the end of the inscription, the initial Hebrew letters ה נ צ ב ת (*thaw, nun, tzadeh, beith, hei*) are inscribed, to represent the phrase, *Thehyi nishematho / nishemathah tzerurah bitzeror hachayim* (May his/her soul be bound up in the bond of everlasting life). The special text of the inscription includes a characteristic of the deceased: if he was a man, that he was learned in the Torah, a righteous and honest man; if a woman, that she was a devoted, honest and diligent woman. If the deceased was a child under the age of 13 (a minor in Jewish law, who would not have undertaken their *bar-mitzvah* initiation ceremony), it is mentioned that he or she was of a young age. The name of the deceased is followed by the name of his/her father, noting that he was their son (*ben shel* [name of father]) or daughter (*bath shel* [name of father]). If the deceased was not just a simple disciple of the Torah, but also participated in other religious or economic activity, this would be noted in the inscription. If he was a rabbi who had disciples, or a Hassidic rabbi, titles such as *harav* (rabbi), *rabeinu* (our rabbi), *moreinu* (our teacher), *admor* (*adoneinu, moreinu, rabeinu* – our master, our teacher, our rabbi) or *kadosh* (saint) are mentioned. If the deceased was a physician, the title *rofe* is mentioned. If the deceased was the son or daughter of a rabbi, the title “rabbi” is usually mentioned after the father's name. In the case of a woman who was the wife of a rabbi, the name of her husband and the fact that he was a

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<sup>61</sup> Silviu Sanie, “Contribuții la cunoașterea morfologiei stelelor și simbolismului funerar iudaic în estul României” [Contributions to the Knowledge of the Morphology of the Stela and the Jewish Funerary Symbolism in Eastern Romania], *SAHIR* 5 (2000): 56-86.

learned or a scholar of the Torah is usually inscribed. In the case of someone who had come from another place and settled in the locality of the cemetery – or who had arrived in this locality for some other reason and died and was buried there – it was usual to mention his or her place of origin. If a Sephardic Jew was buried in a cemetery of a community with a majority of Ashkenazi Jews, the epithet *hasefarady* is mentioned. Some titles are in an abbreviated form; for example, the Hebrew letter ר (rabbi, lord or Mr). Sometimes, the distance between words, also abbreviated, is not clear, passing from one line to another, and the sense must be understood from the context.

After the presentation of the deceased, the day, month and year of death is given in the Hebrew calendar. In some cases, the day of the week in which the person died is mentioned, mainly in cases where the death occurred on a *Shabath* (Jewish sabbath, from Friday evening through to Saturday evening – defined by the appearance of three stars in the sky). Another important aspect is the mention of the date if the deceased died on the first day of a month (*Rosh Chodesh*), on any feast day (*Rosh Hashanah*, *Yom Kippur*, *Pesach*, *Shavuoth*, *Sukkoth*, *Purim*, *Chanukah*), on a day of *Chol Hamoed* (working days in the middle of the festivals *Pesach* and *Sukkoth*) or on a day of fast (*Tisha beAv*, 17 Tammuz – a month in the Jewish calendar – and others). If the burial could not be on the day of the death, it was usual to mention that it took place on the next day – or, in the case of somebody who died in another locality while travelling, the inscription may note the difference between the date of death and the date of burial. The year of the death is mentioned in the Hebrew calendar, based on the Mosaic era (measured from when Moses delivered the Ten Commandments), but in a short form (*lifrat qatan*, lit. the minor era) in which the millennium is not mentioned.

In some inscriptions, due to age and natural weathering, the date, inscribed in Hebrew (which uses letters for numerals), may have deteriorated, potentially leading to errors in reading it and generating confusion. For this reason, the date must be read with care and attention and other local and chronological aspects must be considered. It should also be mentioned in any record that the date is unclear, illegible or has deteriorated.

Some inscriptions in the Jewish cemetery of Alba Iulia illustrate these assertions. We thank Professor Daniel Dumitran for his permission to access, copy and translate these inscriptions.

Inscription M 4 is on the tomb of a man, Asher ben Yehuda, who died on 10 Shevat (5)590 (26 January 1820). He is described as “*degel machaneh*” – “the flag of the camp”, meaning he was considered an excellent man of the Jewish community. The original Hebrew expression is *degel machaneh Yehudah* (flag of the camp of Yehudah).<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> *Bamidbar* / Numeri 2, 3.

**Complete Hebrew text:**

פ(ה) נ(טמן)  
 דגל מחנה כבודו (הרב)  
 אשר ב(ו) ה(רב) יהודא  
 נפ(טר) ונק(בר) ביום י' חודש  
 שבט תק"פ לפ(רט) ק(טן)  
 ת(הי) נ(שמתו) צ(רורה) ב(צרור) ה(חיים)

**Transliteration:** *Poh nitman/ degel machaneh kevodo harav/ Asher ben harav Yehuda/ niftar weniqbar beyom 10 chodesh/ Shevat shenath 580 lifrat qatan/ Thehiy nishematho tzerurah bitzeror hachayym/*

**Translation:** Here is buried the flag of the camp, the respected Rabbi Asher, son of Rabbi Yehuda, deceased and buried on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month Shevat year 580 of the minor era. May his soul be bound up in the bond of everlasting life.

Inscription M 62 is on the tomb of a child, Sinay ben Yitzchaq, mentioning that “*harakh beyamim*” (he lived few years) and died on 4 Nisan (5)601 (26 March 1841).<sup>63</sup>

**Complete Hebrew text:**

פ(ה) נ(טמן)  
 הרך בשני(ם) הילד סיני  
 ב(ו) ה(רב) יצחק שנפט(ר) ונקב(ר)  
 ד' ניסן שנת תר"א לפ(רט) ק(טן)  
 ת(הי) נ(שמתו) צ(רורה) ב(צרור) ה(חיים)

**Transliteration:** *Poh nitman/ harakh beshanim hayeled Sinay/ ben harav Yitzchaq sheniftar weniqbar/ 4 Nisan shenath 601 lifrat qatan/ Thehiy nishematho tzerurah bitzeror hachayym/*

**Translation:** Here is buried one of few years, the child Sinay, son of Rabbi Yitzchaq, deceased and buried on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan, in the year 601 of the minor era. May his soul be bound up in the bond of everlasting life.

Inscription M 73 is on the tomb of a woman. The inscription mentions that she was “*yishah chashuvah wetzenuah umiuchedeth, marath Feiga bath harabeinu hatzadiq min Beltz*” (an important and honest and devoted woman, Mrs Feiga, daughter of our righteous rabbi of Beltz). She died on the eve of the *Shabath* (Friday evening), 6 Teveth (5)590 (1 January 1830). Special mention is made of the fact that she was the daughter of the *admor (tzadik)* of Beltz, Galicia, and probably moved to Alba Iulia. Only the date of death is mentioned; because she died on *Shabath*, it is likely she was buried on the Sunday.

**Complete Hebrew text:**

פ(ה) נ(טמנה)  
 אשא  
 חשוב(ה) וצנועה  
 ומיוחדת מ(רת) פיגא  
 בת הרבנו הצדיק מן

<sup>63</sup> *Devarim* / Deuteronomium 28, 54; *Mishley*/ Proverbs 4, 3.

בעלץ ז(כר) צ(דיק) ל(ברכה) נפטר  
 יום ע(רב) ש(בת) ק(ודש) ו' טב(ת) תק"ץ  
 ל(פרט) ק(טן)  
 ת(הי) נ(שמתה) צ(רורה) ב(צרות) ה(חיים)

**Transliteration:** *Poh nitmenah/ yisha/ chashuvah wetzenuah/ umiuchedeth marath Feiga/ bath harabeinu hatzadiq min/ Beltz zekher tzadiq livrakhah nifterah/yom erev Shabath Qodesh 6 Teveth 590/ lifrat qatan/ Thehiy nishemathah tzerurah betzeror hachayym/*

**Translation:** Here is buried an important and honest and devoted woman, Mrs Feiga, daughter of our righteous rabbi of Beltz of blessed memory, she died on the eve of the holy Shabath, 6 Teveth 590 of the minor era. May her soul be bound up in the bond of everlasting life.

Inscription M 90 is on the tomb of another woman, Leah bath Yaaqov Hakohen. She died on 26 Cheshwan (5)604 (19 November 1843). The inscription mentions that her father was a Kohen. The verb is used in the present tense. The last line has deteriorated, but is clear that it was the standard formula, *Thehiy nishemathah tzerurah bitzeror hachayym* (May her soul be bound in the bond of everlasting life).

**Complete Hebrew text:**

פ(ה) נ(טמנה)  
 אשא חשובה מ(רת)  
 לאה בת כ(בוד) ה(רב) יעקב  
 הכהן שפטר ונ(קברת)  
 ביום א' כ"ו לחדש  
 חשון שנת תר"ד  
 לפ(רט) ק(טן)  
 ת(הי) נ(שמתה) צ(רורה) ב(צרות) ה(חיים)]

**Transliteration:** *Poh nitmenah/ yisha chashuvah marath/ Leah bath kevod harav Yaaqov/ HaKohen sheniftereth weniqbereth/ beyom rishon 26 lechodesh/ Cheshwan shenath 604/ lifrat qatan/ [Thehiy nishemathah tzerurah betzeror hachayym]*

**Translation:** Here is buried an important woman Mrs Leah, daughter of the respected Rabbi Yaaqov HaKohen, who died and is buried on Sunday 26th of the month Cheshwan, year 604 of the minor era. [May her soul be bound up in the bond of everlasting life].

Inscription M 81 is on the tomb of a man, Moshe mi-Lublin, who came to Alba Iulia from Lublin, Poland and died in Transylvania on 26 Tammuz (5)500 (21 July 1740). We may observe some stylistic differences between this eighteenth-century inscription and those from the first half of the nineteenth century.

**Complete Hebrew text:**

פ(ה) נ(טמן)  
 איש ישר הקר כ(בוד)  
 משה מלובלין ז(כרונ) ל(ברכה)  
 שהלך לעולמו יום

בכ"ו תמוז ת"ק לפ(רט) ק(טן)  
ת(ה)י נ(שמתו) צ(רורה) ב(צרור) ה(חיים)

**Transliteration:** *Poh nitman/ iysh yashar hayaqar kevod/ Mosheh mi-Lublin zikhrono livrakhah/ shehalakh leolamo yom/ be-26 Tammuz 500 lifrat qatan/ Thehiy nishematho tzerurah betzeror hachayym/*

**Translation:** Here is buried a righteous man, dear respected Mosheh of Lublin blessed be his memory, who passed away on the 26<sup>th</sup> day of Tammuz in the year 500 of the minor era. May his soul be bound up in the bond of everlasting life.

Another inscription from the eighteenth century is dated 6 Cheshwan (5)490 (29 October 1729), *Shabath* (Saturday). The date is not completely clear, but may be supposed to be the date mentioned. This inscription is on the tomb of a man whose name was probably Barukh, but the name has also partially deteriorated. It is possibly the oldest funeral monument in the Jewish cemetery of Alba Iulia. The date of this inscription is important from a chronological viewpoint, as it may indicate that this cemetery was operating in 1729. However, the partial deterioration of this inscription makes it impossible to assert that with certainty.

#### Complete Hebrew text

פ(ה) נ(טמן)  
האישי הישר בר[?]... בן ר(בי)  
... א ... אורה (?) טובים  
נפטר ו' לח(דש) חשון (?)  
שנת תע"כ (?) ת(ה)י נ(שמתו) צ(רורה) ב(צרור) ה(חיים)

**Transliteration:** *Poh nitman/ hayish hayashar Bar... (Barukh?) ben rabi/ ... A ... orah (?) tovyiym/ niftar 6 lechodesh Cheshwan (?)/ shenath 490. Thehiy nishmatho tzerurah betzeror hachayym/*

**Translation:** Here is buried the righteous man Bar(ukh?) the son of Rabbi ... A ... of good family, died on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of the month Cheshwan (?), in the year 490. May his soul be bound up in the bond of everlasting life.

#### *Other Hebrew inscriptions*

In addition to the funeral inscriptions, there are also Hebrew inscriptions on objects of worship, on other objects, and in synagogues. Some of these are bilingual: Hebrew-Romanian, Hebrew-Hungarian or Hebrew-German. Some are written in Yiddish. There are also inscriptions in synagogues on the Holy Shrine, or Torah Ark (*Aron HaQodesh*), on the drapes that surround it (*parokheth*), or on the covers of Torah scrolls. The name of the donor (or the person in whose name the object was donated), the reason for the donation and the date of the donation are typically mentioned. Some murals depicting historic and holy towns also have short inscriptions with the name of the town.



*Title pages of religious books, notes at their end, rabbinical accords for the publication of books*

These sources may be compared with the information from funeral inscriptions. They present the author of the book and help the researcher to reconstitute his biography and the genealogy of his family, as well as the sociocultural history of the Jewish communities. These sources also offer information on the position of the author at the date of the publication of the book and his relationship to some of his contemporaries: rabbis who were commentators and casuists on the Torah, teachers in Jewish schools, Hebrew writers, and various other important Jewish figures, such as Moses Montefiore, a banker, activist, philanthropist and Sheriff of London who was well known in the second half of the nineteenth century. In addition, these sources provide information about the attitude of the author – and of the figures who wrote the accord for publication of the book – towards contemporaneous currents and events in the Jewish world. These sources also provide information on the history of the Hebrew printing.

*Rabbinical consultations (Responsa literature/ She'eloth uTheshuvot)*

Another source is the collections of rabbinical consultations (*She'eloth utheshuvot* – questions and answers) published by rabbis who authored these answers or by their sons and nephews in special volumes or in manuscript form.<sup>64</sup> There are volumes of well-known casuist rabbis of other places – the Ottoman Empire, Poland, Hungary and the German States, among others – which also include consultations dealing with the Jews who resided in Romanian territory, following Halakhic questions asked by rabbis, *dayanim* (judges at various rabbinical courts), community leaders, and simple Jews of the Romanian Principalities who wanted to know Halakhic rules. These documents date from the sixteenth century onwards. Well-known casuist rabbis of Romania were active in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as well, answering questions put by rabbinical courts and from various Jews in Romania. Their decisions were accepted based on their high reputation as scholars of the Torah, although it was not compulsory to do so. In some difficult cases, the same question was sent to two rabbis. If their answers differed, the two sides might accept a compromise or ask a third rabbi.

Among the casuist rabbis of the Ottoman Empire consulted by the Sephardic Jews of Wallachia in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries we have records of Shmuel (Samuel) de Medina (*RaShDaM*) and Yitzchak Adarby, both of Salonika, in a case in which each of them gave a different answer; Yosef ibn Lev (*MaHaRiVaL*); Yosef Karo, author of the book *Shulchan Arukh* (The Table Set); Aharon ben Yosef Sason; Yom Tov ben Akiba Tzaalon; and Eliyahu ben Benyamin Halevy, among others.

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<sup>64</sup> See footnotes 27 and 28.

Among the casuist rabbis of Poland consulted by the Ashkenazi Jews of Moldavia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, we know of Benyamin Aharon ben Avraham Solnik, Meir ben Gedalyah of Lublin, Yoel ben Shmuel Sirkis and Menachem Mendel Krochmal, among others.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Ashkenazic Jews of Bucharest consulted Rabbi Moshe Schreiber-Sofer (*Chatham Sofer*) of Pressburg (Bratislava).

One of the nineteenth-century casuist rabbis of Romania consulted by the Jews of Moldavia was Yosef Landa(u), president of the rabbinical court of Jassy. His consultations were published in the volume *Birkhath Yosef* (The benediction of Yosef). Other casuist rabbis of Moldavia who published their consultations were Moshe ben Pinchas of Focșani, Sadigora (Sadagura), Bârlad, Aharon Moshe Taubes (Toybisch) and Ury Faivel Schraga Taubes (Toybisch) of Jassy. The structural statutes (*Regulamentul Organic*, 1831) permitted the Jews to hold trials in a civil court, but many preferred that the issue be judged by a rabbi (*dyn Torah*) if the trial was between two Jews.

In the first half of the twentieth century, the rabbinic courts continued to judge economic trials, mainly if the trial was between two religious Jews, involved questions of civil and family law, or involved questions concerning communal and religious life based on Halakhah. Among the casuist rabbis who published volumes of rabbinical consultations in the first half of the twentieth century were Aryeh Leib Rosen (Eythan Aryeh) of Moinești and Fălticeni, Betzalel Zeev Shafran (*HaRaBaZ*) of Bacău, Chayym Mordechay Roller of Târgu-Neamț, Yehudah Leib Tzirelson of Chișinău and Meshulam Rath of Cernăuți, among others.

In Transylvania, two well-known casuist rabbis in the first half of the nineteenth century were Yechezkiel Paneth (Maareh Yechezkiel) of Alba Iulia and Chayym Paneth of Tășnad.

The casuist rabbis of Romania can be found in a biographical dictionary of Romanian rabbis.<sup>65</sup>

The rabbinical consultations are important as direct juridical documents, although they only document jurisprudence, expressed via the decisions of independent rabbis, in particular cases. They do not indicate statistical dates, but may be used for comparative generalization. They are useful for reconstructing the history of the economy, and for studying the history of Jewish social, religious and family life. The rabbinical consultations cannot replace information given by other sources, but may complement it. The decisions of casuist rabbis may have been used as precedents by other rabbis if they were studied and accepted.

Some of the information contained in the rabbinical consultations is of relevance to Romania's economic history. One such area relates to handicrafts:

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<sup>65</sup> See footnotes 45 and 46.

which crafts may be practiced and under what conditions; the organization of craftsmen into guilds; the right of the craftsmen of a town to exclusivity, i.e. rules forbidding Jewish craftsmen from other localities practicing the same craft in that town; working methods; product prices; and rulings forbidding competition between Jewish craftsmen. Another area concerning economic life which crops up in the rabbinical consultations is that of commerce, both internal and foreign. These sources deal with commercial routes and their uncertainty; the distance between localities; imported and exported goods; prices; associations of merchants – sometimes between Jewish merchants only, sometimes between Jewish, Christian and Muslim merchants; and even cases of merchants who have been murdered. The third area of economic life found in the rabbinical consultations is the financial field, pertaining to money-lenders, money-changers and loans with interest, including the murder of money-lenders by their debtors (usually Jewish money-lenders killed by non-Jews who took credit from them with no intention to repay the debt). The information on economic aspects of life that can be found in the rabbinical consultations represents an important source on the history of the Jewish community, and also on the history of the Romanian Principalities. In the first case, the consultations are central to the study of this group; in terms of the broader history of Romania, their importance depends on the aspect history being presented.

Other fields of investigation touched upon in the rabbinical consultations include community organisation and family life; the functions of leaders; the position of the rabbi in the community; kosher food and the appointment of kosher butchers; the form of tax collection; family relationships; marriages and divorces; the rights of the husband, of the wife, and of the children; inheritance and the division of goods by inheritors; the study of the Torah and the education of children (*Talmud Torah*); the rites of prayer and synagogue life; charity and doweries for the poor and for orphaned daughters of the community (required in order marry); the problem of recognition of a deceased person who died far from his home and of the right of his widow to marry again; aspects of the funeral rite and the maintenance of the Jewish cemetery; and questions concerning the relationship to Eretz Yisrael, the Land of Israel. The rabbinical consultations of the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century are important for understanding of the history of the foundation and the organization of the Jewish communities of Romania in their modern form, including the addition of norms of Halakhic law to the civil law of the state.

One important observation concerning the rabbinical consultations is that the questions are all in Hebrew, but sometimes the documentation includes testimonies in Judeo-Spanish or in Yiddish, in accordance with the parties' origins as members of the Sephardi or Ashkenazi communities. Generally, the rabbi's answer would be in Hebrew, including some parts in Talmudic Aramaic. To understand the historic context, it is necessary to research not only the

question, but also the answer. In this way it is possible to discover not only isolated facts, but also the forms in which the norms of Halakhic law – Sephardic or Ashkenazic – were applied in Romania. Furthermore, by studying the *Even haezer* (rock of help – questions put to casuist rabbis by other rabbis due to their difficulty), it is possible to learn about the relations between certain casuist rabbis of Romania and those of other countries.

### *Registers*

Some of the 74 registers (*pinkasim* in Hebrew; *catastife* or *condici* in Romanian) mentioned in the list compiled by the scholar Itzhak Schwartz-Kara<sup>66</sup> have been lost. In recent decades, some registers have been rediscovered. Among the registers considered lost, some were stolen and smuggled out of Romania or out of Israel, and have since appeared in catalogues of auction sales of manuscripts and rare books. This was the case with the aforementioned auction of the nineteenth-century register of *Chevra Qadisha* (Sacred Society) of the Jewish Orthodox community of Cluj, auctioned in February 2021 by Kestenbaum & Co. The register was probably stolen; it was subsequently returned to the Jewish community of Cluj-Napoca.<sup>67</sup>

The preserved and partially published registers reveal information about the social and religious history of the Jews in Romania, and on their participation in the local economic life. These registers belonged to various kinds of association, such as professional guilds (*chavurah shel baaley-melakhah*); associations for the study of the *Talmud*, for the group reading of the *Thehilim* (Psalms), or for the education of children (*Talmud Torah*); associations for the burial of the dead (*Chevra Qadisha* or *Sacra*) which also had social, communal, and educational aspects; or synagogue, such as *Sinagoga Mare*, the Great Synagogue of Bucharest.

Such registers typically start with a preamble which includes the date of its opening, the date of the foundation of the association, and its statutes. The statutes list the members of the society; their rights and duties, including the dues to be paid by its members (*bărbânta* in Romanian); who could be a member and

<sup>66</sup> Kara, “Izvoare,” 154-162.

<sup>67</sup> Andrea Ghiță, “Registrul din veacul XIX, retras de la licitația din New York, ar fi exponatul central al muzeului evreilor din Cluj – interviu cu istoricul Ladislau Gyémánt” [The 19<sup>th</sup> Century Register, Withdrawn from the New York Auction, Would Be the Central Exhibit of the Jewish Museum in Cluj - Interview with the historian Ladislau Gyémánt], *Babel*, 25 February 2021, <https://babel.ro/2021/02/registrul-din-veacul-xix-retras-de-la-licitatia-din-new-york-ar-fi-exponatul-central-al-muzeului-evreilor-din-cluj-interviu-cu-istoricul-ladislau-gyemant/>; Eadem, “Intervenția WJRO a fost esențială pentru retragerea Pinkasului clujean, de la licitația din New York – interviu cu Gideon Taylor, președinte executiv WJRO” [WJRO Intervention Was Essential for the Withdrawal of Pinkas from Cluj, from the New York Auction - Interview with Gideon Taylor, WJRO Executive President], *ibid.*, <https://babel.ro/2021/02/interventia-wjro-a-fost-esentiala-in-retragerea-registrului-evreiesc-clujean-de-la-licitatia-din-new-york-interviu-cu-gideon-taylor-director-executiv-wjro/>.

the conditions of membership; the timing and structure of elections and who was eligible to stand; the structure of the committee; the names of the president and of the treasurer; and details of who was responsible for preserving the register and insuring its content was accurate. All these details were written in Hebrew, but might include some phrases in Aramaic, Yiddish or Romanian written using Hebrew letters.

In order to strengthen the statute and demonstrate that it was established in full concordance with Halakhic rules, certain rabbis were invited to sign in register as an indication of their approval. One example is the signature of Rabbi Avraham Yehoshua Heshel (*Apter Ruv*) in some registers of guilds of Jewish craftsmen – tailors, hatters, bootmakers – in Jassy at the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>68</sup>

The guilds were a form of organization but also a symbol of solidarity among Jewish craftsmen. Theoretically, craftsmen were supposed to conduct themselves like brothers, based on Halakhic law, in order to ensure a profit for every Jewish craftsmen of the town and eliminate professional competition. The number of local craftsmen was limited. It was forbidden for “foreign” craftsmen – those who came from other towns – to work in the same profession, in order to avoid competition and prevent loss of profit among the local craftsmen. The statutes of the guilds also inform us about the position of apprentices, journeymen and salaried workers. Each statute mentions how, and under what conditions, a journeyman may become a master craftsman with full rights in the guild. Professional innovations were forbidden without the agreement of the masters of the guild. If one of the guild’s members needed a loan, usury was forbidden.

The statutes in the guild registers also give information about aspects of socio-religious life. The members of a guild had equal religious rights and celebrated the feasts together. A prosperous guild might build a synagogue in which its members held prominent places and were honoured with *aliyah le Torah* (invitation to read a chapter of the Torah) in the morning prayers for the *Shabbath* and feasts. Guild members had special plots in Jewish cemeteries and were buried close to each other. Guild statutes stated obligations such as mutual assistance, visiting sick members, helping impoverished members (including the widows and orphans of deceased members) and burying deceased members. In addition to the statutes, the register would typically mention guild events, including those held in the town and those involving members’ families, such as birth and circumcision ceremonies (*berith-milah*), *bar-mitzvah* (coming-of-age) ceremonies, marriages and deaths.

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<sup>68</sup> Eliyahu Feldman, *Baaley melakhah yehudim beMoldavyah* [Jewish Artisans in Moldavia] (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1982), 195 ff.; Avraham Yehoshua Heshel, *Yigeroth haOhev Yisrael* [Letters of the Ohev Yisroel (Love for Israel)] (Jerusalem: Makhon Siftey Tzadikim, 1999), 30, no. 12.

The registers of the religious and educational associations also include statutes listing the obligations of the members, as well as organizational and social aspects. The registers of educational associations (*Talmud Torah*) include information about the education of children, the study of the Torah and methods of learning, the payment of teachers (*melamedim*), and about the dues paid by the parents. The registers of religious associations contain information about religious life, manners, traditions and their preservation; the organization of Torah lessons for adult members of the association; and on special group readings of the *Thehilim* (Psalms), as well as the regular services in the synagogue. The registers of burial associations (*Chevra Qadisha*) mention the rights and obligations of members, and also the deaths and burials organized by the association. The registers of the synagogues provide valuable chronicles of the ceremonial events that took place; the names of the rabbis, cantors, and employees of the respective synagogue – and, occasionally, disputes between them; the religious and educational activities organized by the synagogue; and any donations made to the institution.

The information found in registers thus represents an important source on local Jewish history, on the social and religious life of the communities, on the history of Halakhic law, on Jewish religious education, and on the history of the community's synagogues. The social history of the Jewish guilds is comparable with that of the Christian guilds. The registers mostly date from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, though there are also some – from religious, educational and burial associations – from the first decades of the twentieth century. In later years, they took the form of modern registers. The guilds of craftsmen of the Old Kingdom were dissolved in the 1860s, in a move towards a more modern capitalist free-market economy. Once the guilds were dissolved, their registers ceased to serve a function and were no longer used.

*Personal, inter-institutional and commercial correspondence*

Personal letters and inter-institutional and commercial correspondence represent a direct historical source. The information found in Hebrew, Yiddish, Judeo-Spanish and German correspondence written using Hebrew letters includes details about the author of the letter as well as contemporary events. These letters include correspondence between rabbis, Jewish intellectuals – some of them *maskilim* and other writers and political activists, Hebraists, Yiddishists, Ladinists – and various private letters to various Jewish communities, organizations, and institutions. They represent a useful source of knowledge on the biographies of rabbis, community activists and various Jewish leaders, as well as the spiritual and political currents which existed in Jewish society at that time.

Inter-institutional correspondence refers to that between two Romanian Jewish institutions, or between Romanian and foreign Jewish organizations, such as the Alliance Israélite Universelle, the World Zionist Organization or Berith Yvrith Olamith (World Association of Hebraists); organizations of Yiddish

speakers, such the political socialist organization Bund (Union) or the pro-communist YKUF; organizations of Judeo-Spanish speakers; Jewish support organizations such as Joint; religious associations; and rabbinical and Hassidic courts. It was the custom of the Jewish communities, including those in Romania, to correspond in Hebrew, as well as in the vernacular – Yiddish or Judeo-Spanish – which was often the language in which the authors of the letters were most fluent.

Commercial correspondence, which might be in Hebrew, Yiddish or Judeo-Spanish, offers information about the local economic life, primarily among Jews.

Hebrew, Yiddish and Judeo-Spanish correspondence is important mainly for understanding the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Some letters have been published in various collections, studies, historic books and biographies. Other letters, which exist in manuscript form only, are preserved in various archives in Romania, Israel and other countries.

*Narratives of travellers (travelogue literature) and Hebrew foreign chronicles*

Information about the Carpatho-Danubian area appears in Hebrew travelogues and chronicles dating back as far as the tenth century. Examples can be found in the book *Yosippon*, probably compiled by the author from other sources or from the stories of travellers, such as merchants or Torah students.<sup>69</sup> Later information appears in the eleventh-century commentary on the Talmud by Rabbi Shelomoh Yitzchaki (RaShI); in the Itinerary of Rabbi Benyamin of Tudela and in the Itinerary (*Sivuv Olam*) of Rabbi Pethachiyah of Regensburg, both from the twelfth century;<sup>70</sup> and in a reference by Rabbi Moshe Tzaku ben Chizkiyahu dating from the thirteenth century.<sup>71</sup> These references do not indicate the presence of a local Jewish community, but they do show that there were Jewish travellers who visited the Carpatho-Danubian area and described it.

In the sixteenth century, information about the Romanian people (Wallachians) and Romanian territory appears in Hebrew chronicles written by authors from various countries, such as Avraham Zacuto, Eliyahu Kapsali, Yosef Hakohen and Mosheh Almosnino (Sephardic Jews), and David Ganz of Prague, who was Ashkenazi.<sup>72</sup> In the seventeenth century (1626), references by the writer Gershon ben Eliezer Ideles appear in Yiddish, later translated into Hebrew, concerning the route from Central and Eastern Europe to Palestine. A more detailed presentation of this route is provided by Simchah Hess of Zolozin, who travelled to Palestine in the year 1764. Descriptions of this route are also provided by Jewish travellers from Poland and Ukraine in the eighteenth century, the last

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<sup>69</sup> This book is an anonymous summarized translation of the writings of Josephus Flavius, with certain additions. The anonymous author lived in Southern Italy.

<sup>70</sup> See note 41.

<sup>71</sup> *Izvoare și mărturii*, vol. 1, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 10, no. 6.

<sup>72</sup> See note 42.

of them being Rabbi Nachman of Breslav. There is an interesting account from 1620 in the forward to the book *Metzaref lechokhmah* by Rabbi Yosef Shelomoh Delmedigo of Kandia, published in 1628, telling of the presence of a Jewish Kabbalist in Jassy.<sup>73</sup>

Some Karaite Hebrew writings from Cetatea Albă (*Yir Halevanah*), Bessarabia, dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are also worthy of mention; they may be related to Hebrew documentary sources of the Jews of Jerusalem and Hebron from the same period. Through them, we also learn of the Karaite Jews of Bessarabia.<sup>74</sup>

There are also modern travelogues and memorialistic literature in Hebrew, Yiddish and Judeo-Spanish which are important for understanding the general historic picture. Some of the memorialistic writings are the work of Israeli ex-diplomats who served in Bucharest in the Communist period; others are by former paratroopers in the British army who were dropped into Romania during World War II. These writings offer information about the Holocaust, the history of Zionism and the history of Israeli-Romanian relations.

#### *Newspaper articles*

Hebrew, Yiddish and Judeo-Spanish newspaper articles appear around the middle of the nineteenth century, for example, in journals published in Romania or articles in newspapers from other countries. These articles represent important sources of information about the situation of the Jews of Romania and of Romania itself. Various subjects are dealt with in articles about the Jews of Romania, such as their legal status; position in the economy; the social, cultural, and religious life; the community's internal political organization – including that of the Zionist movement; the process of modernization and the Haskalah movement; the process of integration and assimilation; the relations of the Jews of Romania with various Jewish organizations and personalities in other countries; the Holocaust's impact on Romanian Jews; their situation in the Communist period; and the problem of emigration in various periods to Israel, the USA and other countries. The Hebrew, Yiddish and Judeo-Spanish press of various historical periods published information about the general situation of Romania that is also interesting. Among the Prussian, Austrian and Russian Hebrew journals and reviews which published letters and articles sent from Romania in the second half of the nineteenth century were *Hamagyd*, *Yvri Anokhy*, *Hamelitz* and *Hashachar*, among others. Letters and articles from Romania also appear in some Yiddish periodicals published in Poland and Russia, such as *Hatzefirah*, and Judeo-Spanish periodicals published in Turkey, such as *El Tiempo*. General information is combined with local information.

<sup>73</sup> Herșcovici, "Legături ale evreilor din Moldova și Țara Românească," 27-29, 33-40.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 30-33; Eliyahu Feldman, "Chakhamim qaraim beYir Halevanah bemeah ha-16" [Karaite Sages in Yir Halevanah (Cetatea Albă) in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century], *Tarbiz* (Jerusalem) 38 (1969): 61-74.



Such information also exists in Hebrew, Yiddish and Judeo-Spanish publications from Romania itself. Romania's first Yiddish journal was *Koroth Haithym* (Chronicle of the Times), published in Jassy around the time of the Crimean War. The most important Yiddish newspaper in Romania was *Hajoietz* (The Adviser) of Bucharest. The assimilationist movement was barely represented in the Hebrew, Yiddish and Judeo-Spanish publications, in contrast to the *Haskalah* and Jewish national movements, which were well represented in the Hebrew press. In the Yiddish press, the Yiddishist movement was well represented in religious, Zionist and socialist publications, and later in Communist publications. The Judeo-Spanish publications sometimes reflected the modernist perspective of the organization *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, and sometimes leaned more towards the Sephardic-Hispanic and Jewish nationalist points of view. Hebrew, Yiddish and Judeo-Spanish publications are thus also useful for understanding the history of ideas in the Jewish world.

After the foundation of the State of Israel, the Israeli Hebrew press also published articles on Israeli-Romanian relations, on the situation in Romania, and on the Jews who lived there. The authors of the articles were sometimes Jews of Romanian origin, sometimes Israeli journalists sent to Romania, sometimes commentators. Publications in Yiddish and Judeo-Spanish, and some publications in Hebrew outside of Israel and outside of Romania, continued to appear in the Jewish Diaspora, and sometimes they published articles concerning Romania and about the Romanian Jews.

It is also worth mentioning the Yiddish and Hebrew press in Communist Romania, with publications such as *YIKUF Bleter* (Yiddish) and, later, *Revista Cultului Mozaic* (Review of the Mosaic Religion), published in three languages: Romanian, Yiddish and Hebrew. This latter was oriented towards foreign consumption, as evidenced by the difference between the articles published in Romanian and those published in Yiddish or in Hebrew only. However, these articles are useful for understanding of the evolution of the orientation of the Communist leadership concerning the "Jewish question" and Romanian-Israeli relations, as well as offering insights on the relationship between Romania and the West.

#### *Belles Lettres (fiction)*

Fiction, an indirect narrative source, was created by both Hebrew and Yiddish writers of Romania, and by those of other countries who wrote about Jewish life in Romania. Romanian-Jewish themes began to be cultivated in Hebrew and Yiddish literature from the middle of the nineteenth century, and continued beyond this time. These sources represent a useful addition to our understanding of the general historical picture, although they do not deliver accurate information. Among the many Hebrew and Yiddish texts of Romanian Jewish writers, it is worth mentioning the poems of Benyamin Zeev Wolf Ehrenkranz, in Hebrew and in Yiddish; the Hebrew poems of Mordekhay Strelisker; various

Hebrew writings by Mathithyahu Simchah Rabener; the Hebrew stories of Moshe Orenstein; the Yiddish satirical plays of Avrum Goldfaden; the Hebrew novel *Dimaath ashuqym, o hayehudim be-Romanyah* (The tear of the persecuted, or the Jews of Romania) by David Yeshayahu Silberbusch and the volume of memoirs by the same writer, who lived in Romania for a short period and maintained relations with his Romanian friends after leaving; a Hebrew novel by Peretz Smolenskin, who lived in Bucharest for a short period; the Hebrew literary evocations of Menachem-Mendel Braunstein (Mibashan); the Yiddish novel *The Book of Paradise* by Itzic Manger; the Hebrew satirical novel *Any, Shtrul mi-Galuthaniyah* (I, Strul from Galuthanyah) by Moshe Maur, concerning the emigration of Romanian Jews to Israel; a novel about the Holocaust, by the Hebrew Israeli writer Aharon Appelfeld, born in Bucovina; and the Yiddish poems of Jacob Groper and Meir Charatz, the latter also a translator of Mihai Eminescu's Romanian poetry into Yiddish. Among the writings of the Hebrew and Yiddish writers who did not live in Romania, we mention the novel *The wandering stars* by Sholom Alechem, about the Yiddish theatre of Romania; the Hebrew poem "*Yir haharegah*" (The town of the massacre) by Chayym Nachman Bialik, about the Kishinev pogrom of 1903; some Hebrew stories by Shmuel Yosef Agnon on Hassidic themes of Romania; and a story by Zalman Shazar about the Hasidism of Buhuși. There are also works of fiction by authors of other generations and by contemporary Israeli writers.

#### *Conclusions*

In our opinion, the use of the Jewish sources written in Hebrew, Aramaic, Yiddish and Judeo-Spanish is necessary if researching the history of the Jews of Romania. The systematic use of these sources is an important aspect of contemporary and future study of the Jewish history of Romania. These sources are also useful for researchers of the history of Romania. Of course, it raises problems by comparison between these sources and other sources; in such situations, the solution must to be found by comparative analysis of the sources.