

RECONSTITUTION OF AN ABSENCE: THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF ALBA IULIA IN THE CONTEXT OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

Interest in the history and heritage of Jewish communities in Central and Eastern Europe in recent decades¹ has not passed Romania by, although the institutional dimension of the interest, reflected in the degree of success of study programmes or established publications, seems to have been on a downward trend lately. On the other hand, somewhat paradoxically, in the conditions of a continuing demographic decline, the heritage side tends to come to the forefront, being often a component of urban development strategies, sometimes driven by the initiatives of non-governmental organisations or restoration programmes carried out with the support of the heritage department within the Federation of Jewish Communities in Romania. However, the consideration of Jews in the discourse on heritage or memory retrieval does not invariably arouse favourable opinions, even in intellectual circles, while among the wider population the degree of amnesia, indifference or ignorance is very high. It is not the intention of this study to establish a relationship between the realities of the present and the reluctance towards Jews reflected in the legislation of the modern Romanian state, or between the relevance of current attempts to capitalise on heritage in areas where Jewish communities were more open during the Emancipation period towards modernisation and integration, compared to areas where these communities have largely retained the status of marginal groups. What we intend is to propose a research method that responds to the major difficulty posed by such an investigation: that of the need to reconstruct an absence.²

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¹ Marta Duch-Dyngosz, "Jewish Heritage and Cultural Revival in Poland," in Naomi Seidman, ed., *Oxford Bibliographies in Jewish Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), online version accessed on 15.11.2021, <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199840731/obo-9780199840731-0213.xml>. For a more ample debate on the issue, see Ruth Ellen Gruber, *Virtually Jewish: Reinventing Jewish Culture in Europe* (Berkeley - Los Angeles - London: University of California Press, 2002), 1-23.

² The issue was addressed by the international conference *Urban Jewish Heritage: Presence and Absence*, organised in Krakow in 2018 by the University of Birmingham – Ironbridge International Institute for Cultural Heritage and by the Foundation for Jewish Heritage, during which a first version of the present text was presented.

A situation commonly encountered in this European space, the absence or quasi-absence of the Jewish communities, in full development until the Second World War, had as a consequence, in many cases, the loss of specific features of the urban area inhabited by them, through the systematisation policy of the communist regime.³ The “socialist reconstruction” of cities, by resorting to patterns and by the tendency to homogenise, leaves no more room for diversity. In the 1970s and pronouncedly in the 1980s, the “densification” policy aimed at transforming areas with a pre-existing urban network through a more rational use of lands.⁴

In the case of Alba Iulia, the city saw applied both the socialist reconstruction, by systematisation of the “Platoul Romanilor” district based on the micro-rayon model, and the densification policy, which started to be implemented in the “old town” area even before this policy was legislated by the Systematisation Law of November 1, 1974. Thus, the 1969 detailed plan for the systematisation of the old town provided for the reconstruction of the central area, keeping the existing buildings of special value, which were to be supplemented with new endowments of urban interest and with housing constructions.⁵ The documents of the time do not include among these valuable constructions those belonging to the Jewish community, and not only because the most important of them did not have (as those that have survived do not have even today) the status of historical monuments, but also because their significance was not compliant with the ideology of the regime. The only reference in the systematisation project to the area where the Jewish community buildings were concentrated had a seemingly neutral wording, but which reflects, from the present perspective, the solution implemented: that of the almost complete anonymisation of the area.⁶

³ For the chronology of the urban evolution in Romania during this period, see Nicolae Lascu, “Modernizare și distrugeri în istoria postbelică a orașelor românești” [Modernisation and Destruction in the Post-war History of Romanian Cities], *HU* III, 1-2 (1995): 171-177. For general evolutions in the European states under Soviet influence until early 1960s: Irina Tulbure, *Arhitectură și urbanism în România anilor 1944-1960: constrângere și experiment* [Architecture and Urbanism in 1944-1960 Romania: Coercion and Experiment] (Bucharest: Simetria, 2016), 16-56.

⁴ Tulbure, *Arhitectură și urbanism*, 155-157. For a case study on the densification policy: Ioana Rus-Cacovean, “Urban Planning in the Area of Alba Iulia Fortress in the Years 1965-1988: Completed Projects and Abandoned Proposals,” *AUA hist.* 24, I (2020): 196-202.

⁵ Daniel Dumitran, “Identitate pierdută? Proiecte de sistematizare urbană a orașului Alba Iulia după anul 1918 (I)” [Lost Identity? Urban Systematisation Projects of the City of Alba Iulia after 1918 (I)], *AUA hist.* 22, II (2018): 222-242.

⁶ “Legătura către nord este realizată pe traseul străzii Tudor Vladimirescu, ale cărei fronturi arhitecturale sunt determinate de noi blocuri de locuințe.” [The connection to the north is made on the route of Tudor Vladimirescu Street, whose architectural fronts are determined by new blocks of flats.] *Ibid.*, 236.

The choice for the city of Alba Iulia as the object of a case study is explained by the paradox it illustrates: the city with the oldest well-established Jewish presence in historical Transylvania⁷ preserves today very few testimonies to this presence in terms of built heritage. The explanations are multiple, one of the most important being related to the urbanistic policy of the communist regime. Others may be discussed, such as the predominantly Orthodox religious orientation of the community,⁸ which has led to the preservation of its essentially marginal character, or the more modest urban and architectural development of the city in the late modern period, related to its rather minor role as an economic, cultural and artistic centre. The demographic data is illustrative: If until the civil emancipation of Transylvania's Jews in 1867, Alba Iulia was the city with the largest Jewish population, immediately after this date Cluj surpassed it, registering clearly superior growth trends in the following decades, and the city of Târgu Mureş also imposed itself as a pole of superior attraction around 1900.⁹ The consequences of these factors can be seen even today, by the place the Jewish issue occupies in the discourse on local heritage and in the development strategy of the city. On the other hand, the methodological suggestions this study proposes – to capitalise on information from a documentary source through a method of topographic analysis – we believe to be appropriate in the context of a volume dedicated to new approaches in the sphere of historical research.

Testimonies to the existence of the Jewish community

The first building that marked the presence of the Jewish community in Alba

⁷ The term *post quem* for the establishment of a Jewish community in Alba Iulia could be considered as the privilege granted by Prince Gabriel Bethlen, in 1623, whereby the Sephardic Jews from the Ottoman Empire were invited to settle in Transylvania, multiple commercial, legal, fiscal and religious liberties being ensured. Moshe Carmilly-Weinberger, *Istoria evreilor din Transilvania (1623-1944)* [History of Jews in Transylvania (1623-1944)] (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1994), 53-55.

⁸ After the 1868-1869 Jewish Congress of Pesta, the community in Alba Iulia adopted the Orthodox orientation, and since 1886, the *Status quo ante*, the change not affecting its Orthodox character. Ana-Maria Caloianu, *Istoria comunității evreiești din Alba Iulia (sec. XVII-1948)* [History of the Jewish Community in Alba Iulia (17th Century - 1948)] (Bucharest: Hasefer, 2006), 62-63.

⁹ In 1866, there were 934 Jews registered in Alba Iulia, 776 in Cluj and 418 in Târgu Mureş. In 1869-1870, Alba Iulia had 1,221 Jews, Cluj 3,008, and Târgu Mureş 773. In 1900 there was recorded the highest count of the Jewish population in Alba Iulia (1,647 inhabitants), in the same year in Cluj being recorded 4,747 Jews, and in Târgu Mureş 1,701. By the end of the inter-war period, Alba Iulia recorded a slight decrease (1,558 inhabitants in 1930), while Cluj recorded an increase of almost four times over (16,771 in 1941), and Târgu Mureş more than three times (5,693 in the same year); for 1941, there is no data referring to Alba Iulia. Ladislau Gyémánt, *Evreii din Transilvania în epoca emancipării (1790-1867)* [Jews in Transylvania in the Emancipation Era (1790-1867)] (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2000), 29-30, 441 (for the data referring to 1866 and 1869-1870); Árpád E. Varga, *Erdélyi etnikai és felekezeti statisztikája* [Ethnic and Denominational Statistics of Transylvania], online version accessed on 30.11.2021, <http://www.kia.hu/konyvtar/erdely/erd2002/abfel02.pdf>, <http://www.kia.hu/konyvtar/erdely/erd2002/cjfel02.pdf>, <http://www.kia.hu/konyvtar/erdely/erd2002/msfel02.pdf> (for the data referring to the other years).

Iulia, still the most representative to this day, was erected during the time of Rabbi Ezekiel Paneth (1823-1845), a prominent figure of Transylvanian Jewry in the nineteenth century.

Originally from Bielitz (Silesia, now *Bielsko-Biała*, Poland), he studied in Lipnik and Prague, then in Linsk (Galicia, now *Lesko*, Poland), where he approached Hasidism under the influence of Menaḥem Mendel of Rimanov and other Hasidic personalities in the region. He was a Rabbi in Ostrik (*Ustrzyki Dolne*, Poland, 1807-1813) and Tarczal (Hungary, 1813-1823). For the dignity of Chief Rabbi of Transylvania, he was chosen from three candidates recommended by the Rabbi of Bratislava, Mosheh Sofer. He studied Kabbalah and wrote a compendium of *respona* on religious matters (*Şeelot Uteşuvot, Mareh Iehezkel*, published posthumously in 1875). His son, Menahem Mendel, became a Rabbi of the community in Dej, where he erected a synagogue and founded the only Transylvanian Hasidic dynasty. Probably by his care, an *ohel* (mausoleum for saintly persons) was erected over his father's grave in 1879.¹⁰

The synagogue named after him, *Mareh Yezekiel*, was built in the north-western part of the privileged city, on a parcel of land leased for 99 years by the Roman Catholic Episcopate¹¹ near the place where the Orthodox community had built its own church, a few decades prior. Previously, the Sephardim and Ashkenazi in Alba Iulia had used wooden synagogues, whose condition, already precarious at that time, caused them to disappear in time. Inaugurated in 1840, the Old Synagogue of Alba Iulia was the first walled synagogue in Transylvania. Rudolf Klein classifies it among the burgher house (town house) synagogues.¹² It is similar, perhaps not accidentally, to the synagogue in Tarczal, but also to the one in Mád, in terms of exterior architecture, the marginal location (at the time of construction) in relation to the central area of the city, representing another similarity (fig. 1-2).¹³ It combines Baroque and neoclassical architectural elements and consists of a nave bordered on the west by a vestibule (*ulam*) superimposed by a gallery with seats for women, provided with a wooden railing (*mehița*), as a witness to Orthodoxy. The Holy Ark (*Aron-Ha kodesh*) is located on the east wall and the *bimah* in the middle of the assembly hall. According to the same Rudolf Klein, who discusses the interpretation of Salamon Korn, the spatial dichotomy created by the position of the *bimah*, separated by the Torah Ark, reflects the

¹⁰ Michael K. Silber, "Paneth, Yehezkel," accessed on 30.11.2021, https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Paneth_Yehezkel.

¹¹ Caloianu, *Istoria comunității evreiești*, 210.

¹² Rudolf Klein, *Synagogues in Hungary 1782-1918: Genealogy, Typology and Architectural Significance* (Budapest: Terc, 2017), 620. See also Aristide Streja and Lucian Schwarz, *Sinagoga în România* [The Synagogue in Romania] (Bucharest: Hasefer, 2015), 240-241, where it is described as a small type synagogue.

¹³ Klein, *Synagogues in Hungary*, 168-170, 174-177. The first one was erected in 1779 or 1795, the second one in 1795.

situation of the Jews in exile, separated from Jerusalem (fig. 3, a-b).¹⁴

Rabbi Abraham Friedman (1845-1879), a supporter of Jewish emancipation endeavours and the introduction of modern education, continued his predecessor's organisational work by establishing an Israeli boys' primary school (1850) with German as the teaching language until the last decade of the century, when the Hungarian language was adopted. In 1874, an own building was erected, opposite the Old Synagogue, where there was also a ritual bath (*mikvah*).¹⁵ During the same period, a second synagogue was built in the vicinity, the New Synagogue or the Spanish Synagogue (completed in 1883), initially intended for the Sephardic Jewish community, but which was later used by the whole community (fig. 4-5).¹⁶ If we take into account that in the vicinity of the Old Synagogue was the Rabbi's house, we have the image of the centre of the community life of the Jews from Alba Iulia, fully integrated in the urban geography of the city.

The demographic growth in the second half of the nineteenth century and the important role it played in the city's economy and, on the other hand, the recognition of equal civil rights (in 1867) and the equality of the Jewish religion with Christian confessions (in 1895) and, last but not least, the adoption of the Hungarian language, explains the integration of Jews into the dominant urban community. However, the city retained a distinctive note, given by the more modest Jewish houses and the shops of Jewish merchants.¹⁷ That note disappeared due to the policy of urban systematisation during the communist regime, which irreparably affected the urban individuality of the city. Concurrently, the decline of the Jewish community was so radical that today it has fewer families than we can assume had settled in Alba Iulia at the invitation of Prince Gabriel Bethlen. The difference is that the majority of them are mixed families, in which the Hebrew language is no longer known and even less transmitted.

Towards the rediscovery of the Jewish heritage of Alba Iulia

Barely visible, even ignored by most of the inhabitants, the Jewish architectural and urban heritage of Alba Iulia is today reduced to the building of the Old Synagogue and the enclosure of the Jewish cemetery, which, for most people, are

¹⁴ Ibid., 61.

¹⁵ Gyémánt, *Evreii din Transilvania*, 92-95; Caloianu, *Istoria comunității evreiești*, 284-291, 294-297. The school operated with a few interruptions due to the opposition of the local community, the longest one being between 1854 and 1857.

¹⁶ Caloianu, *Istoria comunității evreiești*, 211.

¹⁷ This distinctive note was highlighted in extremely coarse, not at all admirable touches by Nicolae Iorga, at the beginning of the last century: "Leneș și urât, târându-și abia zilele de azi până mâne, stă jos orașul, o băltoagă de evreime." [Lazy and ugly, hardly dragging along just to last the day, the city lies down, a puddle of Jewry.] N. Iorga, *Neamul românesc în Ardeal și Țara Ungurească la 1906* [The Romanian People in Transylvania and Hungary in 1906], edition by I. Opreșan (Bucharest: Saeculum I.O., 2009), 145.

not related to the history of the Jewish community here. That which is to blame is the same period of the communist regime, which promoted the forced industrialisation and implicitly the modification of the demographic structure of the city, this fact leading to the loss of the memory of the community's existence. It is also illustrative that neither of the two objectives is on the list of historical monuments, despite their importance. Only in recent years has the municipality joined the effort of the community for the restoration of the Old Synagogue, carried out with the financial support of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Romania, the action being completed in the autumn of 2017, when the synagogue was re-consecrated. Since then, it has once again been able to host major religious ceremonies of the community, as well as cultural events with impact on non-Jewish audiences.

However, several documentary and topographical sources from the first half of the twentieth century offer the possibility of reconstructing the area inhabited by the old Jewish community of Alba Iulia. One of these sources is the list of Jewish properties in Alba Iulia declared confiscated in 1941, based on decree-law no. 842 of March 28, in the context of the anti-Semitic legislation promoted by the Antonescu regime. According to the decree-law, all the urban properties belonging to Jewish individuals or companies passed into state patrimony, to be administered by the National Centre for Romanianisation.¹⁸ The document prepared by the City Hall of Alba Iulia, authenticated on June 24, 1941 by the signature of the secretary of the Orthodox Jewish Maternal Community of Alba Iulia, Geza Ernester, presents a complete inventory of Jewish properties, with the mention of the address, the name of the owner, the topographic numbers, the description and destination of each property.¹⁹ Of the total of 244 properties, the majority (225) belonged to individuals, and the rest to the Jewish community, the sacred society Hevra Kadiša and other companies or economic units.²⁰ Some of the registered private properties had already been expropriated on the basis of decrees issued in 1940, prohibiting Jews from possessing mills,

¹⁸ *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 74, March 28, 1941, online version accessed on 30.11.2021, <http://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/22857>. For the context of issuance of the decree, see Caloianu, *Istoria comunității evreiești*, 140-143.

¹⁹ *Tablou cuprinzând imobilele urbane proprietatea evreilor persoane fizice sau societăților evreiești cari intră deplin drept în patrimoniul Statului Decret Lege No. 842 publ. în Mon. Of. 74-941* [Table Containing the Urban Properties Owned by Jewish Individuals or Companies that Rightfully Pass to State Patrimony, Decree-Law No. 842 Published in the Mon. Of. 74-941], 7 fol. r-v, Fund X, no. 37, Arhiva Centrului pentru Studiul Istoriei Evreilor din România "Wilhelm Filderman" [Archive of the Centre for the Study of the History of Romanian Jews "Wilhelm Filderman"], Bucharest (henceforth cited as CSHRJ-WF Archive).

²⁰ Of these, two properties, located in Mihai Viteazul Square and George Coșbuc Street, were owned by the Commercial Bank, and in the third one, located on General Eremia Grigorescu Street, operated the Cluj branch of Transilvania Bank. *Tablou*, fol. 3v, 4v.

factories in the food sector or rural properties.²¹

The main community buildings (the two synagogues, the Rabbi's house, the Jewish school and the house intended for community clerks) were located on Regiment 24 Dorobanți Street, and on Vasile Alecsandri Street, in the area of the Jewish cemetery, there was the house of the cemetery caretaker and another one for poor Jews.²² The charitable aims of the Hevra Kadiša society were reflected in the two houses owned by it on Morii Street, which served as an asylum for the elderly, a house for poor Jews, administered by the Jewish Community, also being recorded there.²³ These charitable aims motivated the unsuccessful intervention of the management of the Hevra Kadiša society in the autumn of 1941 to the National Centre for Romanianisation within the Ministry of National Economy – State Undersecretariat for Colonisation and Evacuated Population, for the exempting of its properties from the provisions of the decree.²⁴

Regiment 24 Dorobanți and Regiment 5 Vânători Streets, representing the northern and southern segment of the main artery of the city, as well as George Coșbuc and General Eremia Grigorescu Streets, residential areas in the city's old centre, formed the urban sector with the most private Jewish properties (about 27% of the total) (fig. 6-7). Mihai Viteazul Square completed the area of Jewish presence in the centre of the city.²⁵ Most of the properties here were provided with commercial areas (shops), and four were storeyed buildings. Among them stood out, and still stand out, the so-called "Gisella Palace" and the building in its vicinity, properties of Andrei and Filip Glück, on the north side of the square (fig. 8, a-b). The commercial role (shops and warehouses) also characterised some of the properties located on Regiment 24 Dorobanți and

²¹ This is about the factories and mills located on Vasile Alecsandri (owners Edith and Vilma Glück), Regiment 24 Dorobanți (owner Ludovic Samuel) and Unirii streets (owners Isac Herman and Sidonia, born Altmann), as well as an agricultural farm on Eternității Street (owner Iuliu Jonas) and the three properties on the Platoul Romanilor, assimilated to rural properties given that they had land cultivated with vines (owners Carol Tanner, Berl Tanner and Iuliu Jonas). Ibid., fol. 2v, 6r and 4r, 5v. In the case of the alcohol factory on Fabricii Street, owned by Iuliu Jonas, it is mentioned as tabulated in the name of Dr Ioan Popa and his wife; the two also appear as beneficiaries of another property owned by Iuliu Jonas on Regiment 5 Vânători Street, where there also was, according to the record, a cemetery for poor Jews. Ibid., fol. 4r and 6v-7r. In the case of the former property owned by Gizela Dr Ostfeld, born Nathan, on General Eremia Grigorescu Street, the name of the new owner is not mentioned. Ibid., fol. 4r.

²² Ibid., fol. 6r and 2r.

²³ Ibid., fol. 5r.

²⁴ Fund VI, no. 405, fol. 2 r-v, CSHRJ-WF Archive. Mentioned here were the buildings of the society and that of the Jewish community on Morii Street, another building of the society on Călărășilor Street, bought for the purpose of setting up a hospital, the buildings on Vasile Alecsandri Street administered by the Jewish community, another building of the society on Regiment 5 Vânători Street and the building on Regiment 24 Dorobanți Street assigned to the same community to serve as housing for its clerks. For the evolution of the lawsuit, see Caloianu, *Istoria comunității evreiești*, 141-143.

²⁵ *Tablou*, fol. 3r-5r, 6r-v.

Regiment 5 Vânători Streets, while George Coșbuc and General Eremia Grigorescu Streets had almost exclusively the residential character they have kept until today. Instead, the properties on Vasile Alecsandri Street outlined an area of more modest Jewish houses, but also of the Jewish cemetery, functional since the seventeenth century.²⁶ Those on Călărășilor Street, bordering the Regiment 24 Dorobanți Street, had similar characteristics.²⁷ Comparison with the situation of the commercial companies registered in the register of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Alba County from the fourth decade²⁸ confirms the majority positioning of the Jewish companies in the areas of maximum commercial desirability from Mihai Viteazul Square and Regiment 24 Dorobanți and Regiment 5 Vânători streets, although the names of their owners correspond in quite a few cases to those registered in the 1941 list. The disappearance of some of the companies that had started operating in previous decades or the change of their owners, on the other hand, is explained by the first effects of anti-Semitic legislation.

The use of the cadastral plan of the city from the beginning of the twentieth century²⁹ allowed the application of the georeferencing method for the general cartographic reconstruction of the urban sector with more compact Jewish habitation in the old city centre, located between Regiment 24 Dorobanți Street in the north, Mărăști Street in the east, the intersection of Regiment 5 Vânători and General Eremia Grigorescu Streets in the south and Mihai Viteazul Square in the west (fig. 9-10). Thus, we reconstructed the exact position of the missing buildings, among the most important being the properties of Andrei and Filip Glück, as well as those of Vilma and Edit Glück, located on General Coandă Street,³⁰ and the New Synagogue and the Jewish School, on Regiment 24 Dorobanți Street. The reconstitution led to the identification of a total number of 42 still-existing buildings, representing just over half of the 78 buildings listed in

²⁶ Ibid., fol. 2r-v. For details, see Daniel Dumitran, "Jewish Cemeteries of Romania: Alba Iulia Case Study," *AUA hist.* 19, II (2015): 238-245.

²⁷ *Tablou*, fol. 3r.

²⁸ *Tablouri despre firmele comerciale existente la 6 sept. 1930 și înscrise între 6 sept. 1930 - 6 sept. 1940* [Tables on Existing Commercial Companies as of September 6, 1930 and Registered between September 6, 1930 - September 6, 1940], fund Camera de Comerț și Industrie din Alba Iulia [Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Alba Iulia], no. 58/1930, Serviciul Județean Alba al Arhivelor Naționale [Alba County Service of the National Archives]. I extend special thanks to Mr Valer Moga for providing this document.

²⁹ Gyulafehérvár DN.IX.7.a.i., no. 2616/914; DN.IX.8.a.e., no. 2615/914, Primăria Municipiului Alba Iulia [Alba Iulia City Hall]. The plans used, completed on March 23, 1914, represent sections of sector IX of the cadastral plan of the city (*Bitofadomb*) [Gallows' Hill] (Arhiva Oficiului de Cadastru și Publicitate Imobiliară Alba [Archive of the Office for Cadastre and Real Estate Publicity of Alba County], w. no.).

³⁰ Both were storeyed buildings, and in the second there were also the offices of the Alba Iulia Police Headquarters. *Tablou*, fol. 3v.

1941.³¹ Of these, two belonged to the Jewish community (Old Synagogue and Rabbi's House), three to companies and economic units (Hellia Boot Factory, Construction Company Urbana SA of Cluj and Dreher Beer Factory of Oradea), the rest being private houses. All of them are now part of the old city centre, built in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with some buildings being included in the list of historical monuments. The residential character associated with the higher value of this urban ensemble explains the significant degree of preservation, in contrast to the areas with a more pronounced commercial character, where the share of demolition was incomparably higher. The area of the central square and of the former Regiment 24 Dorobanți Street suffered the consequences of the systematisation projects of the last period of the communist regime, being targeted by the plan of erecting the new civic centre of the city.³² Similarly, far fewer buildings have survived on the more peripheral streets (Vasile Alecsandri, Ampoi), with the notable exception of the perimeter of the Jewish cemetery, which is why they were not included in the present reconstitution attempt.

The identity of the preserved buildings does not assert itself on the observer as a specific Jewish one, because the buildings fit the same architectural styles characteristic of the houses of members of the dominant Hungarian community (until 1918). The disappearance of the old owners probably led, in most cases, to the rupture of the relationship between the history of the houses and the personal history of their inhabitants.

Description of the method used

The georeferencing process offers the possibility of reconstructing buildings existing in the past with the help of a reference cartographic background. From a theoretical point of view, georeferencing an image involves its alignment to a defined coordinate system, and mathematically speaking, through an operation of translation and/or rotation of the system of coordinates of the image (which numbers the columns and rows of cells starting with the one in top left) onto the system of coordinates in which this process is being performed.

The problem boils down to solving systems of equations and finding coefficients that apply to each pixel of the image to make it correspond to a certain geographical position, defined by a pair of mathematical/geographical coordinates. Specifically, the user provides as input elements points on the image map whose coordinates he knows, and the program applies an algorithm depending on the number of points inserted.

Assuming that three points from the required set of coordinates are computed on GIS (Geographic Information System) or CAD (Computer Aided

³¹ Two of the buildings registered in the list are not found with topographic numbers in the cadastral plan.

³² Daniel Dumitran, "Addenda to an Exhibition: About Urbanism and Heritage in the City of the Union," *AUA hist.* 24, 1 (2020): 277, fig. 37, 279, fig. 39.

Design) platforms, this action will generate a system of six equations with six unknowns, which is compatible determined, provided that the points are not collinear. The perfect insertion of the points through their coordinates on correct positions will have repercussions in the validation of the transformation, but one or more punctuation errors can have as an effect the distortion of the map and uncertainty of the degree of error.³³ In this sense, it will be necessary to establish a fourth point, thus reaching a system of eight equations with six unknowns, which will be solved through the method of least squares.

The location in the new system will be within the respective error tolerance; practically, the position of the points will be in a circle with the radius of the error in question. The sum of the squares of the errors is called the mean squared error, which highlights the distances from the georeferenced control points to the coordinates specified for them.³⁴ The lower the residual error calculated by the software, the more accurate the georeferencing.

There are several possibilities for framing content elements within the representation (map or plan) depending on the surface of the coverage area, the presence or absence of coordinate sets on the representation (topographic or geographical grid), the number of sections of the plan sheets that complete the cartographic panel used in the research, the use of vector entities with polygonal geometry built on the contact limit of the content elements of the sections of the plan sheets with the map frame, etc.³⁵

Since in the present study the cartographic source consisted of cadastral plan sections elaborated in the early twentieth century, lacking the presence of geolocators (sets of coordinates), we decided that the most appropriate method of spatial transcription of old data is to determine some control points caught in a cartographic tandem (which brings together old cadastral plans and images rectified in a network reflecting the present), the cartographic materials being temporally delayed by more than a century.

In other words, we used the plan sheets elaborated in 1914 in relation to images rectified in a network (orthophotoplan), in order to extract at least four common points to achieve affinity, a condition for preserving parallelism and implicitly for cancelling any suspicions related to possible distortions of the old plan sheets. The implementation of the georeferencing process was done by coupling or merging the centres of the grid cells corresponding to the old cadastral plans with the spatially coincident positions corresponding to the

³³ Alexandru Mircea Imbroane, *Sisteme Informatice Geografice* [Geographic Information Systems], vol. I, *Structuri de date* [Data Structures] (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2012), 150.

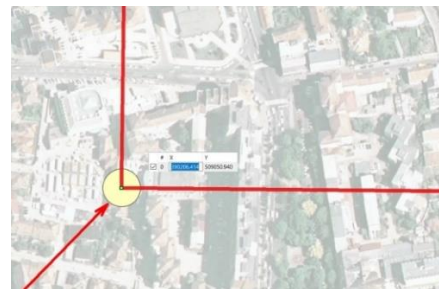
³⁴ Mircea Băduț, *GIS Sisteme Informatice Geografice – fundamente practice* [GIS Geographic Information Systems – Practical Basis] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Albastră, 2004), 76.

³⁵ Tudor Borșan et al., “Metodologia de punere în practică a georeferențierii utilizând transformarea afină” [Methodology of Implementation of Georeferencing Using Affinity], *Revista Pangeea* 15 (2015): 72.

orthorectified image.



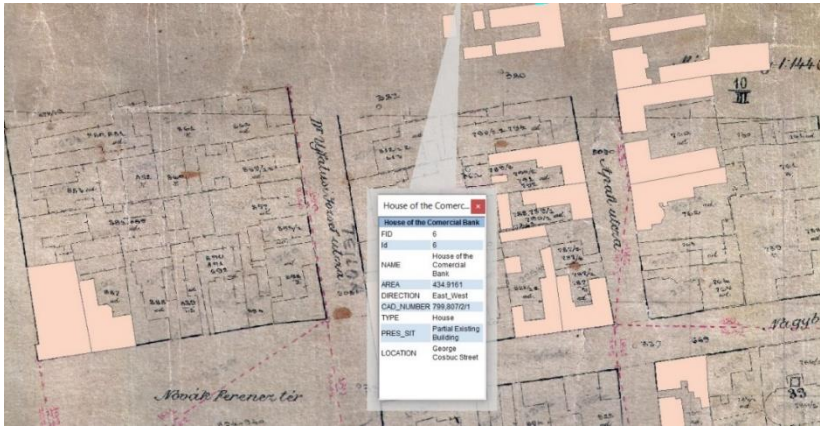
Overlapping of cartographic materials.



Application of control points in the georeferencing process.

After rectifying the rasters, a phase that offers the complete picture of georeferencing by determining and recognising the transformation parameters, the images can still be used independently or can be joined by the mosaicking process, however not before cutting them with the help of vector masks (polygons). The finalisation of the georeferencing process, possibly mosaicking, offers a free way to the process of vectorisation, or transformation of raster data into vector data; practically, an abstraction of the real world takes place by using graphical primitives (point, line, polygon) as discrete elements of representation,

action corroborated with populating the attribute database.



Vectorisation of raster entities and populating the descriptive database.

Conclusions

The possibility of reconstituting the heritage of the Jewish community raises the question of the importance given to it today. Considered “a multicultural city, where different histories and cultures intersect,”³⁶ it would be expected that the capitalisation on such a heritage would be a priority objective. Indeed, the Integrated Urban Development Strategy (2014-2023) lists, among the “buildings and properties defined as objectives of national interest” the Jewish synagogue and cemetery,³⁷ and the list of historical monuments of the city includes “the former ‘Gisella’ Palace”.³⁸ Even a project in the field of Urban Regeneration is targeted towards the arrangement of a “Jewish memory cemetery,” with an implementation period of 2015-2023.³⁹ With regard to residential areas, there are no intentions to intervene, only insofar as they have been taken into account by the projects with a more general wording proposed in the Cultural Heritage programme of the same field, i.e., Urban Regeneration: modernisation and renovation of all historic and landmark buildings in Alba Iulia municipality (implementation period 2014-2023), as well as the inventorying and mapping of each heritage building in Alba Iulia and the operationalisation of the Heritage

³⁶ *Strategia Integrată de Dezvoltare Urbană Alba Iulia 2014-2023* [Integrated Urban Development Strategy Alba Iulia 2014-2023], 299, accessed on 30.11.2021, https://www.apulum.ro/images/uploads/fisiere/SIDU_ALBA_IULIA_2014-2023_consolidat_23_octombrie_2017.pdf.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 301. The diversity of the buildings included here, from Maieri II church, dating from the eighteenth century, to some buildings of the communist period (Trade Union Culture House) and the recent period (Principia Museum), but also the ambiguous status of this category relativises the significance of this list.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 300.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 389.

House (implementation period 2018-2023).⁴⁰ Previously, the Local Urbanism Regulation (2012 re-update) included among the proposals for classification as historical monuments the Jewish synagogue and the cemetery, but also several urban ensembles, including those on Regina Maria and Frederik Mistral streets.⁴¹ None of these projects or proposals have been put into practice, the last list of historical monuments from 2015 not making any progress compared to the 2010 list.⁴² On the contrary, irreversible interventions have occurred recently, even in areas with buildings targeted for classification. The protected urban ensembles of category B, included in the area covered by our study, remained those on Coşbuc, Primăverii, Teilor and Trandafirilor Streets, to which are added a few houses on Regina Maria Street. But beyond this status, which does not ensure their preservation in the conditions of the absence of the owners' initiative, there are no real projects to capitalise on them in their own urban context. The only proposal undertaken in the new form of the Integrated Urban Development Strategy for 2021-2030 (under elaboration) reflects the memorial value of the house that belonged to Camil Velican, the first Romanian mayor of the city after the union of Transylvania with Romania. The current extremely low share of the Jewish population and the disappearance, through systematisation, of the urban sector that illustrated its economic role explains, in part, the absence of interest in reconstituting this sequence from the history of the city. Becoming an obliterated page of urban memory, it can still be revived⁴³ by associating the topographical information analysed in this study with that offered by documentary and epigraphic sources regarding the Jewish cemetery (cemetery plans, burial records, funerary inscriptions).⁴⁴ The contradiction between the Jewish funerary area that still exists today and the quasi-absent urban one can thus be diminished, in favour of a real emphasis on the cultural diversity that characterised the city of Alba Iulia in the past.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 382-383.

⁴¹ Other ensembles, close to the area analysed above, are those on Mihai Viteazul and Octavian Goga Streets, to which are added a number of houses located on Calea Moţilor and Decebal Streets. *Municipiul Alba Iulia. Regulament Local de Urbanism. Reactualizare 2012* [Alba Iulia Municipality. Local Urbanism Regulation. Re-update 2012], 123-124, accessed on 30.11.2021, https://www.apulum.ro/images/uploads/fisiere/RLU_PUG_Alba_Iulia_2014.pdf.

⁴² Ibid., 127-129; *Lista monumentelor istorice 2010 – Municipiul Alba Iulia* [List of Historical Monuments 2010 – Alba Iulia Municipality]; *Lista monumentelor istorice 2015 – Judeţul Alba* [List of Historical Monuments 2015 – Alba County], 20-26, accessed on 30.11.2021, <https://patrimoniul.ro/images/lmi-2015/LMI-AB.pdf>.

⁴³ See in this regard interesting suggestions by Katie McClymont, “‘That Eccentric Use of Land at the Top of the Hill’: Cemeteries and Stories of the City,” *Mortality* 21, 4 (2016): 378-396.

⁴⁴ For the facilities offered by the GIS methodology in historical research, see Donald A. DeBats and Ian N. Gregory, “Introduction to Historical GIS and the Study of Urban History,” *Social Science History* 35, 4 (2011): 455-463.

CORRESPONDENCE OF NAMES OF STREETS AND SQUARES MENTIONED IN TEXT AND ILLUSTRATIONS⁴⁵

Until 1918	During inter-war period	Current name
Novák Ferencz Square	Mihai Viteazul Square	Iuliu Maniu Square
Apafy - Szentmihály Street	George Coșbuc Street	George Coșbuc Street
Bethlen Gábor Street	General Eremia Grigorescu Street	Primăverii Street
Csűrők Street	Vasile Alecsandri Street	Vasile Alecsandri Street
Lépes Street	Regiment 24 Dorobanți Street	Tudor Vladimirescu Street
Malom Street	Morii Street	Morii Street
Nagyboldogasszony Street	Regina Maria Street	Regina Maria Street
Ompoly Street	Ampoiului Street	Petru Dobra Street
Setány Street	General Coandă Street	Frederic Mistral Street
Széchenyi Street	Regiment 5 Vânători Street	Ferdinand I Boulevard
Szentimre Street	Călărașilor Street	Călărașilor Street
Ujfalusi József - Alvinczi Street	Nicu Filipescu Street	Teilor - Trandafirilor Street
Vajda - Kiszgörög Street	Mărăști Street	Mărăști Street
[?]	Fabricii Street	Miron Costin Street

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1. The synagogue in Mád (Hungary). Source: Rudolf Klein, *Synagogues in Hungary 1782-1918. Genealogy, Typology and Architectural Significance* (Budapest: Terc, 2017), 158.

Fig. 2. The synagogue in Tarcal (Hungary). Source: Klein, *Synagogues in Hungary*, 169.

Fig. 3. a. The Old Synagogue of Alba Iulia at the beginning of the twentieth century. Source: Sorin Arhire, "Comunitatea evreiască" [The Jewish Community], in *Alba Iulia: memoria urbis* [Alba Iulia: The Memory of the City], ed. Laura Stanciu et al. (Cluj-Napoca: Mega, 2018), 229. b. The interior of the Old Synagogue in Alba Iulia, before the restoration. Credits: Daniel Dumitran, 2013.

Fig. 4. The New Synagogue in Alba Iulia at the beginning of the twentieth century. Credits: Remus Baciu Collection, today in the possession of the National Museum of the Union of Alba Iulia.

Fig. 5. The New Synagogue in Alba Iulia in the 1980s, shortly before its demolition. Credits: Alba County People's County Fund, file no. 12/1984, fol. 6v, Alba County National Archives Service.

Fig. 6. Alba Iulia city plan, 1900, detail. Credits: Colecția de documente [Collection of Documents] Fund, no. 7406, Arhiva Muzeului Național al Unirii din Alba Iulia [National Museum of the Union of Alba Iulia Archive] (henceforth cited as NMUAI Archive).

⁴⁵ We have not identified the location of Unirii and Eternității Streets in the inter-war period.

Reconstitution of an Absence: The Jewish Community of Alba Iulia

Fig. 7. The plan of the interwar city Alba Iulia, detail. Credits: Colecția de documente Fund, no. 7407, NMUAI Archive.

Fig. 8. a. Gisella Palace in the early twentieth century. Credits: Remus Baciú Collection, today in the possession of the National Museum of the Union of Alba Iulia. b. Current image. Credits: Daniel Dumitran, 2015.

Fig. 9. Cartographic representation of Jewish buildings in the centre of Alba Iulia city, according to the cadastral plan of 1914.

Fig. 10. Cartographic representation of the Jewish buildings in the centre of Alba Iulia city, according to the current situation.

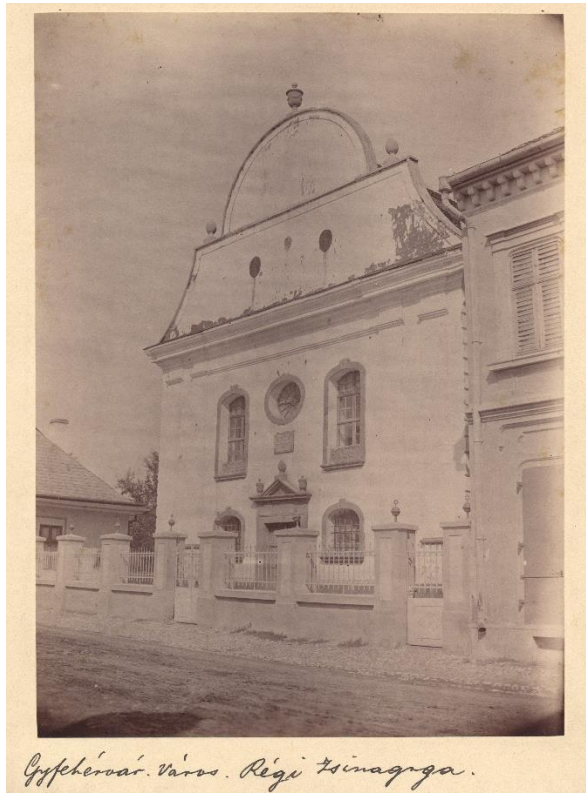


Fig. 1. The synagogue in Mád (Hungary).



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Reconstitution of an Absence: The Jewish Community of Alba Iulia



a



b

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b. The interior of the Old Synagogue in Alba Iulia, before the restoration.



Fig. 4. The New Synagogue in Alba Iulia at the beginning of the twentieth century (the building to the right of the image, in the distant plan).



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Reconstitution of an Absence: The Jewish Community of Alba Iulia



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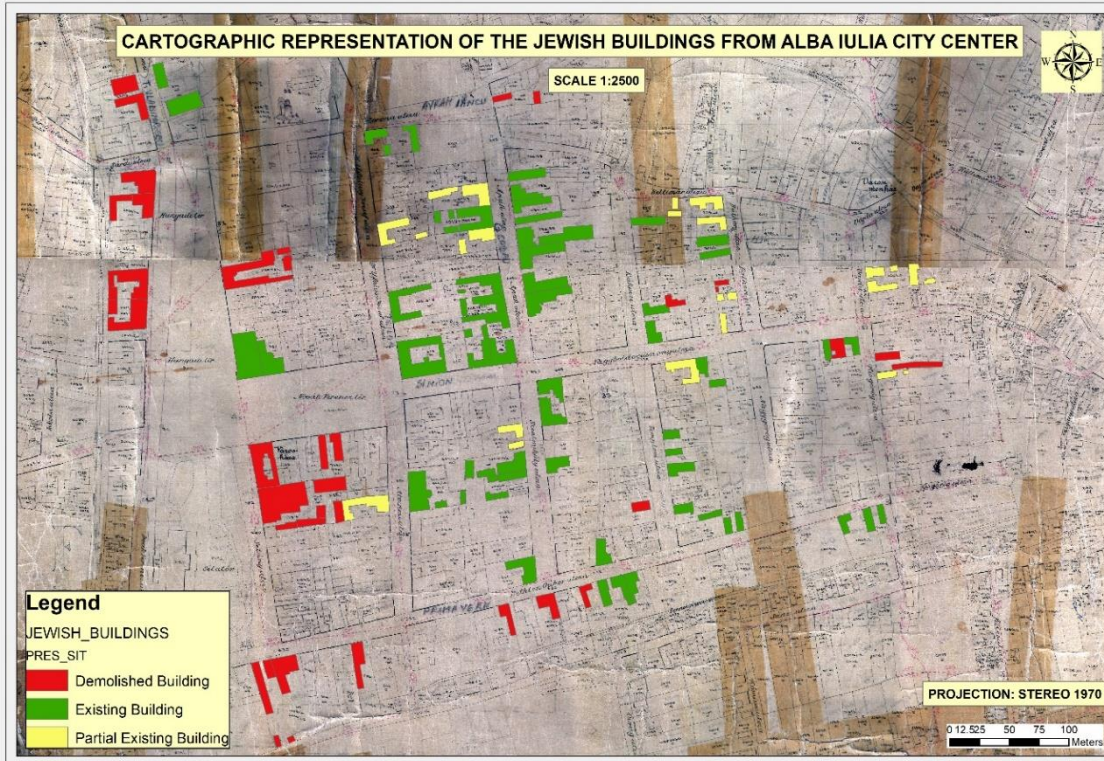


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Reconstitution of an Absence: The Jewish Community of Alba Iulia

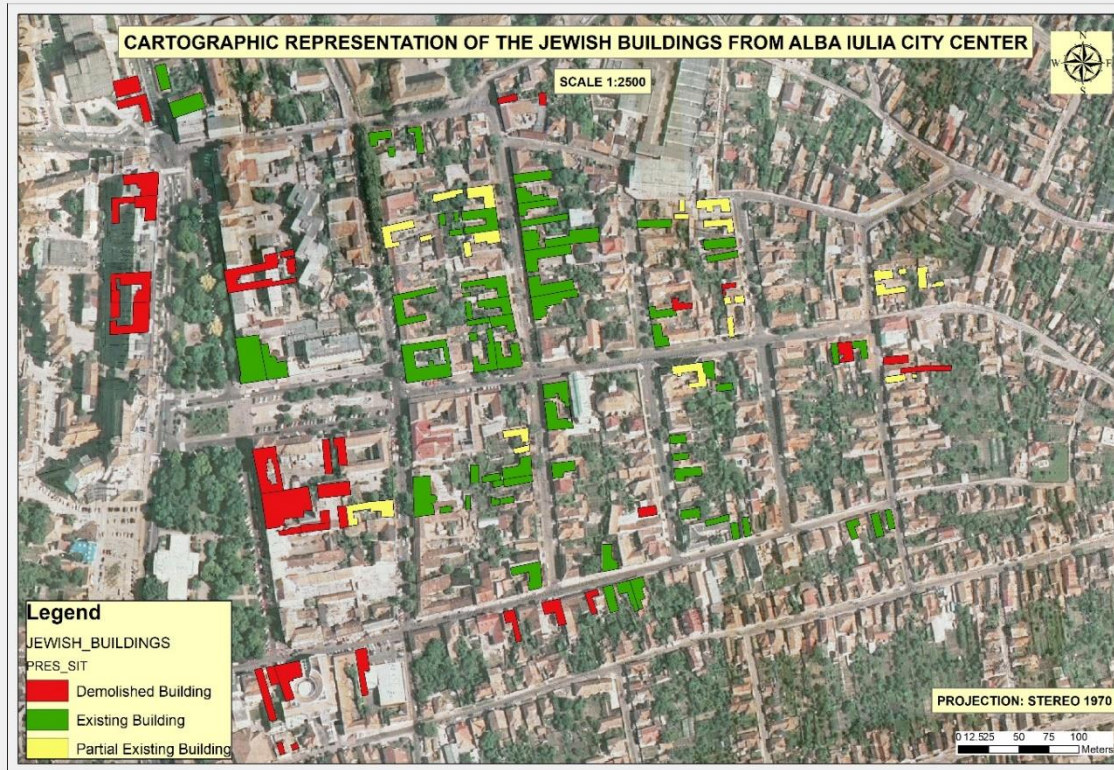


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