Does the Romanian Jew Exist?
A Historical Inquiry into Metaphors of Identity*

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MY INTENTION is to explore the hyphenated identity of the Romanian Jew, where the hyphenation emphasizes the ambivalent and oscillating nature of identity, as expressed in social constructivist theorizing. Modernization brought the quest for Jewish integration and the reactions have been multiple and different. However, four paths of integration may be identified: "readmitting Jews (as in England), integrating them (as in Austria and Prussia), emancipating them (as in Italy and France), or acculturating them (as in Russia)."[1] In turn, European Jewry encountered social changes and, in extremis, the Orthodox Jewry transformed themselves to the biggest imaginary ghetto, to the new and the old Promised Land, respectively, America and Palestine. Whichever path chosen, they aimed at fighting Jewish backwardness and celebrating an envisaged union in citizenship, be it imperial or national. Though, until the First World War, doppelgangers continue to come to towns and lost much of their Jewish identity: Jews were no longer barely Jewish. We ask today if they truly existed. Modernization brought the Jewish question to the forefront of European thinking as much as Jewishness brought modernization. "The Modern Age is the Jewish age, and the twentieth century, in particular is the Jewish Century. Modernization is about everyone becoming urban, mobile, literate, articulate, intellectually intricate, physically fastidious, and occupationally flexible."[2]

Starting from the hyphenated identities of the Jews inquired by other scholars, and from the puzzling issues of modernity and secularization, the present article entails the multiple layers of thinking about the Romanian Jew, as the question has been easily dismissed in the historiography concerning the Romanian nation. When I asked the writer Norman Manea, a German Jew from Bukovina who was deported to Transnistria for three years, and later emigrated to the United States, he answered: "inevitably [a Romanian Jew] exists."[3] Nevertheless, many others answered differently and hence, the question itself, "Does the Romanian Jew exist?" is an issue of research, rather than an assertion.[4]

I understand hyphenated identities and their social and political meanings as changing over time and space but here we focus on belonging and loyalty, two faces of the same coin. We find them as being deeply embedded in concepts and metaphors such as citizenship, purity/dirtiness, internal or external exile (prison and emigration), and political and religious conversion. There are different ways and processes of interplaying and overlapping identities, and religious and political conversions are but the most common ones.[5] Taking Romania as a case in point, different layers are to be reviewed: the Ottoman millet and Austro-Hungarian legacies, the borderland of cohabitation and religious confessions, communism and the metaphors of suffering, martyrdom and purity, previous layers all resonate with political theology. For a more comprehensive view regarding the representation of the "other" in the Romanian collective imagery the Jew resonates with the image of the Gypsy and the woman as the colonial, while the Saxons and Hungarians are more seen as the colonizer; Romanian is to be found to equally share the colonial and the colonizer dispositions. Hence, we aim at illuminating how Romanians answered cautiously or, at times, radically to concepts of Jewish belonging and loyalty, in a dialogue with the nation and with the "other." First, I look at the trajectory of the question and I legitimize its presence in historiographical inquiry, and then, drawing from other paths of emancipation followed by the European Jewry, I analyse the case of Romania, asking what constructed and what retracted the hyphenated identity of the Romanian Jew.

Hyphenated identity as a research issue is circumscribed to modern history, and even more so to the 19th century. Historians, however, have begun to address the matter only in the last decade. This is because, nowadays, the visibility of the Jewish identity is inherently linked with the Zionism project. The political vision born in Europe encountered both a failed project of cohabitation and an envisaged solution for the so long contemplated Jewish question. Even if Zionism is not widely accepted by European or by the Jewish world itself, none would contest that the creation of the state of Israel would have to be ascribed as one of the most important events of the 20th century for Europe.

Consequently, when the history of the Jewish question came to be written, retrospective thinking ultimately foiled it: both the Holocaust and the construction of the state of Israel represented the failure of their integration. In the aftermath of Second World War, the Holocaust became the central focus of the war in Western Europe. Memory replaced history as the only truthful testimonials belonging to the survivors. The newborn post-war generation was just as artificial as its memory. Indeed, when the Jewish world perished in the Holocaust, the new Jewish generation was merely imaginary as "they themselves do not suffer . . . they have taken up resistance in fiction."[6] Due to the Holocaust, again the Jewish identity suffered. It was then, in the 1960s that Friedlander spoke of the 'imaginary Jew' and Gomulka expelled student protesters from Warsaw as "infiltrated Zionists," who were actually the last Polish Jews after the massive emigration of the Polish Jewry in the 1950s.

The memory of the Holocaust dissipated among the whole post-war generation. When the students from Paris chanted "We are all German Jews!" they confiscated the Jewish tragedy. Ever since, the post-war generation in Western Europe frequently tackled the issue of hyphenated identity, mostly through its links to decolonization and, in this context, as the epitome of the European failure to confront the Holocaust. For a while, the claim of the double allegiance of the Jews until the Second World War was forgotten.

Post-communist countries had a very intricate process coping with memory and coming to terms with the past; and suffering, trauma, and amnesia - in the terminology of Henri Rousso[7]—are still present in national mentalities. The concept of the Polish Jew has been also at the forefront of intense academic debates, especially starting with J. T. Gross's "Neighbors" and the discussions it entailed.[8] Starting with the question "Who is my neighbor?" Joanna Zylinska asks if the theological relation between Jews and Christians is translated into the social and political realm.[9] The tragedy of the Hungarians of Mosaic faith has been widely appropriated in the late aftermath of World War II. Although, a history of the Polish or of the Hungarian Jews started being written in the 1990s and the past has been confronted by a new generation of historians, Romania is exceptional in the Central European region due to its delayed effort in coming to terms with its past, as Tony Judt noted, ". . . [Romania had] hardly begun to think about its role in the Holocaust, this is not just because the country is a few years behind the rest of Europe in confronting the past."[10] No systematic studies have been conducted so far on this question of the hyphenated identity of the Romanian Jew perhaps due to difficulties extant in mapping common places in the Romanian and Jewish historiographies. Most of the works are centred on the history of the Jews in Romania or on the anti-Semitic attitudes of Romanian folklore or elite towards Jews. Despite growing interest for the study of identity in the Romanian intellectual field, there is no theoretical framework applicable to the study of hyphenated identity constructions in longitudinal perspective. The Jewish emancipation in Romania has been the core concept in tracking down the history of the Jews actively fighting or conversely, awaiting to be enfranchised. It goes without saying that Romania was the last country in Europe to enfranchise its Jewish population and that the enfranchisement via the 1921 Constitution proved to be no more than a decree, as it was long in coming but quickly retracted.

The analytical value of the concept of *colonialism* toward modern Romania in the workshop of history worth to be re-consider in the context of discussing alternative identities. Starting with the 1970s, in the height of social history, the critique towards modernity of Central and Eastern Europe and colonialism intrigued Western historians and a marginal but valuable literature appeared. When the paradigmatic shift towards a cultural history occurred, colonialism in Central and Eastern European space has been rediscussed. The reason why its usage did not become popular is two folded: on the one hand, post-communist countries went back into the national imaginary along with their historians, and, on the other hand, the world challenges

of the 1990s concerning the problematic relation between diversity, migration, and democracy re-imposed *national state* as a central concern and fetish *de-colonization*. The concept of colonialism has been used sporadically in some marginal historical works in the 1970s, but it has never been, since then, systematically explored. In the 2000s, the history of Poland and Ukraine until 1945 has been analyzed as colonial in the light of the German and Russian imperialism and from here starts Yohanan Petrovski-Shtern to inquire into the Ukrainian Jew as the anti-imperial choice. In the historical methodology, the concept of colonialism is coupled with the concepts of modernization and nationalism, like in the case of Soviet Union, to which the historians look through the lens of multiple modernities, neo-traditionalism or internal colonialism. Here, illuminating on the concept of colonialism coupled to the debate over Eastern European modernity, the fluid identities of the colonial and colonizer, emancipation and empowerment might contribute to the considerations of how the understandings over identity changes under imperial and Romanian nation building process. Therefore, a debate on the historiographical concept of *colonialism* in the case of Romania, in a long term and comparative perspective should be undertaken. So far the analysis into *colonial* has been carried at two different levels: first, by reference to the contemptuous Ostjuden, Gypsy, woman, and peasantry, subject to national agrarian and educational reforms[11]; second, by *emphasizing* on the advance of nationalism, like in the case of the colonization of Dobrogea. Aiming to reconsider the marginal historical works on the Romanian as colonial, in the present international debate on multiple modernities and contextualizes the case of Romania to the non-western world, the oscillating identity of the Romanian Jew is put into the historical context.

The issue of the hyphenated identity of the Jewish diasporas as a topic of historical research spans the centuries back to the Enlightenment and the era of forced religious conversions, when hyphenated representations intrigued people in their search for purity and God. Here we can find the whole history from *marranos* to the very notion of granting citizenship out of religious and ethnic ties, and so to speak, going back to Dreyfus. The hyphenated identity was imagined as well as refuted by modern Europe, where Jewishness, at times overlapping with the "other"—for example, being Gypsy, Black, or a woman—always had to stand the test of belonging. Modernity defined Jewishness differently: by nation, religion, ethnicity, race, or culture. But constructing belongings and loyalties beyond religion has been the quest of modernity. This is why Hanna Arendt[12] notes that the dividing line between medieval anti-Judaism and modern anti-Semitism was the result of an intended ghettoization of both Christians and Jews, in order to keep their spiritual and carnal purity, to separate baptism and Eucharist from the 613 mitzvot of the Tora and kosher food. The Modern period, however, dissolves ghettos, and brings Jews and Christians together to celebrate the new republic.

DOUBLE ALLEGIANCE came along with secularization. But secularization is Christian too, states Peter Berger. Indeed, it rose against the Christian church and can be named only in relation to Christianity. Secularization carried out its own way of conversion: assimilation, emancipation, acculturation, integration were all means used to convert the Jews. They all have their beginning in religious reform. When Europe was a Christian realm, Jewish conversion was envisaged; when Europe become imperial and national, Jewish conversion was also proclaimed. All in all, it had been a political conversion that followed the religious one. What was the case of Romania? Neither the Orthodox Church nor the Romanian national institutions succeeded in Jewish conversion until the 19th century. However, in later years they looked for their allegiance. Nevertheless, when Jewish conversion did happen, it was sporadic and individual. How should this be interpreted?

It was the Catholic reform in the 16th century and the Russian Orthodox reform in the 17th century which laid the foundation for secularization. Anticlericalism in France and anti-Catholicism in Germany, as well as the French revolution and the Berlin Jewish Enlightenment (Haskalah) at the end of the 18th century carried the new modern values of citizenship and state sovereignty,[13] which made it possible for the Jews to engage discourse and in the more refined French and German language to sustain their right of belonging and to assert their loyalty. In sum, they became actually French-Jews and German-Jews.

The Romanian nation did not face any reform, but faced challenges emanating from both reforms' refugees, the old believers of the Russian Old Orthodox Church in the Romanian Principalities and the protestant reformers in Transylvania. Ever since nation building, we are told that the history of the Old Kingdom of Romania proves the "natural" toleration by the Romanians. B. P. Hasdeu was the first to endorse this argument in the "History of the religious tolerance in Romania" in 1868. Furthermore, coexistence tells the history of the Romanian regions as peripheries of the old empires, a history that faded since the national one has been constructed. Here, the very case of Transylvania stands in contrast to the Romanian Principalities.

Transylvania was the residence of many reformists, as situated at the imperial periphery. It gave birth to Sabbatarians, Christians who kept the Sabbath, and were born out of the Unitarianism denomination—those who looked for God in biblical texts and rejected the divine nature of the Christ. In the second part of the 19th century they were largely converted to Judaism. Most of them chose to share the Jewish fate and lost their lives during the Holocaust, being deported on May 1944. Nowadays, the Sabbatarian survivors of the Holocaust reside in Israel as ultra-religious Jews and deny their Christian roots.[14] The story mirrors the fate of the Hungarian Jews and emphasizes the myriad of choices people faced in their search for God: Sabbatarianism, Unitarianism, Protestantism. Therefore, the story of Jewish integration into the world of the goyim (Hebrew plural for goy, non-Jew) is complementary to the story of religious reform and counter-reform which had shaken the Catholic regions. The Jews first became imperial, and later, Hungarians of Mosaic

faith. They took up the anti-imperial option, as did only a few of the Ukrainian Jews against the colonial choice of hyphenating their identity relative to Russia.

But the Romanians from Transylvania also took up their cause against colonialism.[15] At the beginning, were the clerks who had been exposed to the enlightened cultural milieus and social reforms taking place in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and who were supposed to shepherd the Romanian peasantry. That was the road taken by reformist ideas on the way to penetrating the rural, traditional Romanian world. Through their "marriage" with the Catholic Church, the Romanian elite gained access to the echelon of political power. In the fourth and fifth decade of the 18th century the clerks made room for intellectuals who formed a new leading class. The newcomers replaced religion with ethnicity in their attempt of defining the Romanian people. They started writing the Romanian language with the Latin alphabet and therefore the written Romanian culture was born.[16] By the use of language, they elevated their national cause to liberate the Romanians. Quite relevant to the argument is that only by language one can rise up against colonialism, as we will see in the following pages.

The religious reform imposed in Russia by the mid 17th century had a top-down orientation as opposed to the Catholic reform and had the unintentional effect of a schism. It aimed at revising some of the more ritualistic aspects to bring it more into accordance with the Greek Orthodox ritual, and large masses of Russians did not accept the changes and sought refuge in the remote imperial peripheries and by emigrating to Western Europe and to America. When Peter the Great took power, the layers of the modern reforms, he introduced, found fertile ground even if not as fertile as compared to the West, where modernization stared more than a century ago. His years of ruling advanced secularization. At the beginning of the 18th century, Starovers (old believers), designated as *lipoveni*, found refuge in Moldavia and spread to Maramureş, Dobrogea (later to become a part of Romania) and Bucharest. Arguments also split old believers into three sects, among which were popovcy - those who recognized the orthodox priests, and were largely to be found in Romania. An interesting case to point out is the case of the scoptsy. They are a group which mutilates themselves to reach the state of purity before Adam and Eva had been expelled from Eden, and were to be found in Bucharest. They faced the same allegations of blood libel as the Jews did among the Christians.[17] As in the case of Sabbatarianism, the scopyts argue for the vast diversity milieu which the world of reform and counter reform encountered.

Who was **the Romanian Jew?** Romania did not encounter religious reform and on the same par, apostasy had also been exceptional. According to the estimations of Arthur Ruppin, the number of Jewish converting to Christianity was no more than 1500, while Hungary encountered roughly 20 thousand between 1867 and 1917. By the time of the Holocaust, the number increased to 45 thousand (estimates grew to 61546) in Hungary and between 3 and

5 thousand in Romania. Conversion was as sporadic as it was individual in the case of Romania and the converts strongly resonate with notorious cases such as that of Heinrich Heinen, who took to conversion as easy as a cloth to be worn to enter high society, or with the apostasy of a self-hating Jew. In the first instance, Lazar Saineanu and Hariton Tiktin converted to enter Romanian society. Though, they died in Paris and Berlin, respectively, neither succeeded in their integration. One of the greatest industrial entrepreneurs, Max Auschnitt, also choose conversion when he fell in love with a Christian woman and the nationalization of properties threatened his riches. But stigma of apostasy was not inherited as it proves when at least their father was an apostate as was the case of Vasile Alecsandri, Cezar Boliac, A. D. Xenopol. They become notorious for their anti-Semitic writings and political discourses. The Romanian nation was as weak in religious conversions as it later proved to be in swaying political affiliations.

Soon after A. C. Cuza secularized church properties and promised citizenship to the Jews who had lived in Romania more than ten years, he was dismissed and the Romanian state married the church. Per the 7th article of the Romanian Constitution citizenship was to be granted only to Christians. After the war of independence which was fought between the years 1877–1878, Romania opted for the individual emancipation of the Jews due to the significant pressure from the granting powers. Until the First World War no more than 5 or 6 thousand of Jews, approximately, including the 883 who fought the war of 1877–1878, received Romanian citizenship.

We have to note the intimate relationship between religion and nationalism, and modernity and religious reforms. Religiosity revived at that time, as Romania was on the way to modernization and to acquire unitary national conscience. Here, the peasant question was crucial to answer. Mainly an agrarian society, Romania had an elite with a French worldview and an overwhelming peasant population. Therefore, the emancipation of the Jews was not the only desire of the state. The need for urgent emancipation was more and more required by peasantry. Significant debate regarding how to modernize the country in order to ensure its survival has taken place ever since the Romanian state was founded. Romania imagined that there were steps to be taken on the way to modernization and the Jewish emancipation was supposed to be the last one. Only when the peasants became modern, mobile and literate, could the Jewish question be answered. Interestingly enough, it was not until the First World War when the first wave of modernization reached Romanian territory.

In 1841, Nicolae I asked Max Lilienthal to integrate the Jews into public schools for a proper secular as well as religious education. The Jews from the Pale of Settlement answered ambiguously toward integration but it was in 1864 when the first generation of intellectuals of Jewish origin appeared. They were among those who further took up the Jewish question and found ways to further the reforms of the tsarist regime. In the course of their emancipation, resentment and exclusion rose

but the way taken by the Jews to become Russians when they immigrated to towns from the Pale of Settlement could not be reversed. It was both the Jews and Goys who gave up old purities in order to cherish the new ones, the modern belonging of citizenship. It was not that they stopped encountering hardships, but it was that the new hardships of their life were both modern and Russian. There, in Moscow and St. Petersburg, the Soviet Jew was born. The Hungarian Jew of Mosaic faith was the result of the granting of citizenship in 1867 but it was the capstone of centuries of privileges given to the Jews, such as those which existed in the time of Stephan Bathory.

Though, America was the only place on earth where Jews felt both Jewish and American as well. One-third of the Jews from northern Romania emigrated by the end of the 19th century. As true as it is, many were refugees from Galicia and others from more eastern Russian provinces; it is also true that Jewish Orthodox communities fell in love with the American dream. "America offered full membership without complete assimilation. . . . Liberalism, unlike nationalism and Communism, was not a religion and could not offer a theory of evil or a promise of immortality."[18] Another third of the Jewish population was dreaming of Zion. The first Zionist congress actually took place in Focsani in 1882, 17 years earlier than the one in Basel which is largely attested to be the first. By 1899, 136 Zionist associations existed in the Old Kingdom of Romania. Ezra Mendelsohn emphasizes that it is the very case of peripheries and multi-ethnic space that give the impetus to the Zionist project.[19] Another third continue to live mainly in northern Moldavia, Transylvania and Bucharest, waiting to be enfranchised. Contrary to Western countries and to the Russian world, Romania held a memory of ghettoes even though ghettoes never existed on its land. That was a constructed memory of purity- ethnic and religious.

It is told that Grigorescu's painting, "The Jew with the Goose" represents the Jew who came to Bucharest to ask for Jewish rights and brought a goose as a gift. Both for the peasantry and Jewry, emancipation could come only by learning to speak, write and make demands in the Romanian language. But the quest for peasant emancipation had been taken up by the political elite while the Jewish cause remained to be defended solely by themselves. Learning the language for the sake of promoting their own rights has been the quintessential condition for integration into empires or into nations ever since. It was the brilliant speech of Adolphe Cremieux in 1846 that removed More Judaico from the French legislation. It was the public debate between Moses Mendelsohn and Johann Casper Lavater from 1763-1764, which defended the rights of the Jewish nation besides simply their freedom to express their religious denomination. At the same time, it was also language that deceived the right of belonging. Once the borders shifted after the World War I, the German-speaking Jews or Russian-speaking Jews were seen as just as much disloyal as colonial after the new political configuration gave room to nation states. Hence they have been accused of cosmopolitanism and treachery ever since. Belonging stands for loyalty, both to God and to nation.

Language remains the main impetus of integration, as it has the power to enchant national myths with ancient roots. Nonetheless, nations soon discovered that blood was more ancient and in turn disenchanted mere words. The peasantry and Jews started going to school and afterwards to the state army. Those Jews who learnt to speak Romanian in order to carry out their cause of enfranchisement became Romanians. Wilhelm Filderman choose not to build a Jewish party so as to not be confused as a national minority, but chose instead to advocate through the Union of the Jewish Inhabitants among the Romanian politicians and published a paper called the "Romanian Israelite" to advocate for integration inside Jewish communities.

It is as true that the Ashkenazi Jews were scorned because of the way they spoke Romanian, as it is true that the main Romanian folklorists and linguists were Jews. It was as hard for them to trust the Romanian state, as it was for them easy to fall in love with the Romanian language. As easily as they were expelled from the country, it was as hard for them to forget to love in Romanian. They tried integration with the most legitimated request: speaking, writing and dreaming Romanian.

The cases of expelling were just as sporadic as instances of conversion. Though, they were symptomatic. In 1885, following the protests to defend Jewish rights against the state's abuses, Moses Gaster was exiled. He was one of the greatest folklore writers and a professor of Romanian language and literature, fighting for Jewish emancipation and integration into Romanian society, but without also losing their own religion, as the philosophy of Emancipation efficiently formulated by Moses Mendelsohn may be read in his celebrated correspondence to J.C. Lavater[20]. Even without holding citizenship, a passport was granted to him by the Romanian authorities. While the fact that Romania was his native land was largely ignored, his expulsion was thoroughly documented. Being as in love with Romania as David Rosenthal was, he later confessed that the exile sorrowed him deeply. Benjamin Fundoianu also left Romania for Paris in disappointment and was deported to Auschwitz in 1944. Meanwhile, Wilhelm Filderman continued to negotiate the enfranchisement of the Jews with liberals in the government. Despite his dream coming true after the First World War, he was deported during the Holocaust, as a consequence of his intervention in favour of the other deported Jews. In the 1990s, when Norman Manea spoke out about his Jewishness and his own deportation to Transnistria, he ceased to be seen as Romanian.

L IKE CONVERSION, the phenomenon of hyphenation was rather individual. It all started with David Rosenthal, the Austrian Jew born in Budapest who participated in the 1848 Romanian revolution. It continued with Moses Gaster, Ronetti Roman, W. Filderman, Mihail Sebastian and with the whole Jewish generation which immigrated to Israel from the 1950s until the 1970s and never ceased to speak, to think and to love in Romanian.

From the ghetto of the Pale of Settlement we remember the poem of the Polish poet Itzhak Fefer telling about his old origins and new belonging. "So, what of

I've been circumcised/ With rituals, as among the Jews?/ Field winds have tanned my middle-sized,/ Pale, dreaming feet to darker hues."[21] Half a century later Mihail Sebastian always thought that the identity given by being born at the Danube is an inborn right, as much as his Jewishness.[22] Another half of a century passed, and in New York, Norman Manea haunted by a past place and a past time that will never go away confessed the same, as the Danube comes as a metaphor to the Bukovina-born writer. And how can one be more close to the truth if not by metaphors?

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Notes

1. Yohanan Petrovski-Shtern, *The Anti-Imperial Choice. The Making of the Ukrainian Jew* (New Haven &London: Yale University Press, 2009). 3
2. See the Introduction to Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004).
3. Norman Manea, interview by the author, audio recording, New York, June 9, 2009.
4. Maria Ghitta, "L'écrivain et son identité ou 'comment peut-on être écrivain roumain juif,'" *Transylvanian Review,* 2 (2009): 125.
5. Mark Lilla, conference on *The Conversion Ideal and the Conversion Society*, The Macmillan Lectures on Religion, Politics and Society, Yale University, New Haven, April 2009.
6. "Among Jews they constitute a strange but widespread category, one that has not yet found a name. They are not religious, at least most of them; in vain they cherish Jewish culture, possessing only its sorry relics. They have not performed their apprenticeship to Judaism under the gaze of the Other. Neither ethnic nor denominational definition nor the Sartrian scheme could suit them—they are the unwavering Jews, yet armchair Jews, since, after the Catastrophe, Judaism cannot offer them any content but suffering, and they themselves do not suffer . . . they have taken up resistance in fiction. The Judaism they invoke enraptures and transports them magically to a setting in which they are exalted and sanctified. For these habitues of unreality, more numerous than one might suppose, I propose the name "imaginary Jews." Alain Finkelkraut, *The Imaginary Jew* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994)*,* 15.
7. Henri Rousso, *The Haunting Past. History, Memory, and Justice in Contemporary France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 86.
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14. Shay Fogelman, "Discovering Europeas non-Jews who kept the Faith," *Haaretz,* November 3, 2011, available online at http://www.haaretz.com/weekend/magazine/discovering-europe-s-non-jews-who-kept-the-faith-1.387208 accessed November 10, 2011.

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16. Keith Hitchins, *Afirmarea naţiunii: mişcarea naţională românească din Transilvania 1860–1914 (*Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2000).

17. Moses Gaster, *Memorii, Corespondenţă*, commented edition by Victor Eskenasy, Hasefer, Bucharest, 1998, 45; Constantin Argetoianu, *Pentru cei de mâine, amintiri din vremea celor de ieri*, vol. II (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1991).

18. Yuri Slezkine, 207.

19. Ezra Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

20. M. Samuels, *Memoirs of Moses Mendelsohn, the Jewish Philosopher; Including the Celebrated Correspondence, on the Christian Religion, with J.C. Lavater, the Minister of Zurich* (London: Applegate, Stamford Street, 1825).

21. Itsik Fefer, untitled poem, translated by John Hollander.

22. Mihail Sebastian, *De două mii de ani. . .*, cu o prefaţă de Nae Ionescu; *Cum am devenit huligan* (Bucharest: Editura Humanitas, 1990), 222.

Abstract
Does the Romanian Jew Exist?
A Historical Inquiry into Metaphors of Identity*

The present paper sets the scene for the debate on the hyphenated identity of the Romanian Jew. If recently similar works are carried out for Central and Eastern European countries, the question of the Romanian Jew has not been yet touch upon. Here too, the question stays as an issue of research rather than an assertion. A historical inquiry is undertaken in order to look for the preconditions and contexts that might facilitate the understanding of how identities become fluid under the religion reforms, nationalism and modernity and what changed in the senses over belonging and loyalty in the Romanian nation building process.

Keywords
Romanian Jew, hyphenated identity, religious reforms, modernity