

# Young Jews in northern Moldavian interwar high schools

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ANCA FILIPOVICI

**T**HE POLITICAL act of unifying the Romanian provinces in 1918 led to the doubling of the country's size and its population, but it was only a "temporary moment of glory",<sup>1</sup> because the social, political and economic transformations Romania went through after World War I resulted in a series of dilemmas and contradictions that represented true challenges for the interwar governments. Greater Romania, which had been affected by the destruction of the war, was supposed to be home to populations with different cultural and political heritages, which made them difficult to manage. The new Romanian state was also supposed to embark on a rapid process of modernisation and national unity consolidation through reforms and the creation and promotion of a Romanian culture that would secure a place on the international scene for an Eastern European state that was lagging far behind the West. Education policy, as a smaller branch of cultural policy, thus became the central element in the modernisation effort of the Romanian state. In this context, school education was carried out on two directions, one aimed at forming a quality general culture, the other at instilling high moral principles, both of them conceived in a profoundly national spirit. From an institutional point of view, the superior secondary education, the interwar high school, became a key element in training the future intellectuals committed to modernising the country. The main source of this training was secondary education, regardless of whether the future intellectuals would obtain their degrees in Romanian or foreign universities.<sup>2</sup>

In interwar Romania, this level of education was regulated according to the principles of the Liberal government through the law of 1928 initiated by dr. C. Anghelescu, the main reformer and Minister of Public Education between 1918 and 1937 (with a few interruptions). The law and its effects were debated and criticised and suffered a few changes in the period analysed, without departing

from its guiding principles. High school was thus conceived as a school for selecting the future elites, but the general knowledge provided as defined in the same intellectualist terms used in the previous century, with a limited degree of harmonisation between the training of the students and the new socio-economic context. Unlike the conception of Romanian education policies, the selection process in Western countries targeted not only the students' intellectual abilities, but their skills and character as well. The aim was to transmit a "total culture" that would shape men of action, not simply "men of the book".<sup>3</sup> The regulations governing Romanian education had nothing in common with the Western ones, while the implementation of norms and new programmes was accompanied by confusion. The students had serious difficulties in adapting to these transformations, which sometimes resulted in poor grades. Therefore, the law of interwar Romanian secondary education did not produce the desired effect, despite its deeply reformist intentions.

Until the adoption of this law, the Ministry of Public Education had a different priority that targeted all levels of education: the unification of Romanian education with the aim of achieving the spiritual unity of the people.<sup>4</sup> Schools for minorities were allowed and even encouraged after the unification, together with a gradual Romanisation of education. After the Liberal government led by Ion I. C. Brătianu assumed power in January 1922, the schools in the newly-joined provinces came under the jurisdiction of the state, which meant an acceleration of Romanisation, according to the liberal "cultural offensive" policy. For instance, in 1918, there were ten state high schools and three municipal high schools for girls in Bukovina. Of these, only the one in Câmpulung Moldovenesc was Romanian, while the Rădăuți high school had a Romanian form; in all the other institutions teaching was done in German. The high schools based on the Austrian model gradually disappeared, and new Romanian high schools were established in Siret, Gura Humorului or Vatra Dornei.<sup>5</sup> Romanisation of education was not an issue in the Northern Moldavian cities in the Old Kingdom, because the existing high schools functioned according to the Romanian regulations imposed by the 1864 law of education. By contrast, the minorities in historical Bukovina were faced with a series of strongly contested centralisation measures. The Bukovinian Jews expressed their strong opposition to the Romanisation of schools, as they had established here a modern system of education since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; for them, schools were important elements in defining Jewish identity, as they reflected "the social physiognomy of the Jewish-Romanian world".<sup>6</sup> The most affected Jews were those in Northern Bukovina, who, alongside the Germans, represented the majority students in higher education. The demands of the community regarded the preservation of Hebrew schools in Cernăuți, as the community members believed that this

centralising policy was openly antisemitic. By contrast, the Romanians, who represented the majority only in the primary schools in the area, considered that this “cultural offensive” was an opportunity for “conquering” the urban space where the high schools were situated, in order to finally replace foreign elites with the local Romanian ones.<sup>7</sup> The situation was less tense in Southern Bukovina, a region also falling within the scope of the present study, where the Romanian population was predominant. The counties in this region were considered the cradle of “ancient memories”,<sup>8</sup> Suceava being a centre of the Romanian spirit that was supposed to penetrate the city of Cernăuți, much too preoccupied with “daily formalism”.<sup>9</sup>

The young Bukovinian Jews who wanted to enrol in secondary education in the first years after the Union primarily chose “Eudoxiu Hurmuzachi” High School in Rădăuți and „Ștefan cel Mare” High School in Suceava, where German forms existed for a few years. Certainly, one can find Jewish students in the Romanian forms in all high schools in Northern Moldavia, this being in fact the category analysed in the present study. The Jewish Modern Private High School was established in Suceava in the academic year 1919-1920, and the “Z. Weinstein” Jewish Gymnasium in Rădăuți,<sup>10</sup> two institutions dissolved less than a second later because of the pressure of the authorities.

The demands of the Bukovina Jewish minority were heard in the Parliament through the voices of the Jewish deputies and senators, especially in the context of the debates surrounding the law on the organisation of private education introduced by dr. C. Anghelescu in 1926. For instance, the Cernăuți independent deputy, Beno Straucher, proposed that Jewish schools should be allowed to decide on their language of instruction and on the fact that the teaching of Judaism should be done by competent people.<sup>11</sup> Besides, the only demanded acknowledged by the Romanian authorities was the one referring to the language of instruction, as the interdiction concerning the establishment of pedagogic and superior Jewish schools was still maintained, and the obstacles regarding the exams at the end of the academic year and the publicity rights were still enforced.<sup>12</sup>

In this context, the vast majority of young Jews in Northern Moldavia – both in the Old Kingdom and Bukovina cities – attended Romanian high schools. In the area analysed, secondary education had begun with the 19<sup>th</sup> century gymnasiums. Superior secondary education emerged gradually after 1918, when the gymnasiums were transformed into high schools or new high schools were established. For the young people of Botoșani, Dorohoi and Baia counties, who were willing to go to school, the system of education provided eight bi or trilingual high schools according to categories, four of which were secondary schools for girls.<sup>13</sup> Among them, “A. T. Laurian” High School was the only one

that had had superior forms since 1868.

In the north-Moldavian Bukovina counties, there were seven high schools addressed the education needs of the youth<sup>14</sup>; added to these, one should mention the Jewish Modern Private High School that functioned for eight years. The most important education institution in the area was the Suceava „Ștefan cel Mare” High School. The network of Northern Moldavian high schools was thus composed of sixteen institutions where both Romanians and minority students could learn and prepare for their future university training.

The profile of the interwar Jewish school population attending these institutions was determined by analysing the data from school yearbooks, completed with information taken from transcripts of records and graduation certificates taken from the high school dossiers in the Botoșani and Suceava county archives. The quantitative analysis was done distinctly: on the one hand, we took into consideration the Moldavian students in the Old Kingdom counties, while on the other, those in the Bukovinian counties. Although the entire area considered was part of Northern Moldavia in the interwar period, we cannot overlook the fact that Bukovina had been under Austrian domination for one and a half centuries, a fact reflected both in the demographic structure and in the issues concerning school and education.

Although we did not find any comprehensive data for analysing the school population in the North-Moldavian high schools of the Old Kingdom, but we can outline the main tendencies based on the existing information.<sup>15</sup> In analysing the yearbook tables, we did not add up the students belonging to different religious denominations divided by academic years, because the majority of students were enrolled in different high school years until graduation. The data regarding the students' religious denomination show, in all high schools analysed, a predominance of Orthodox students (an average of 61%), which reflects the confessional structure of the area. The students belonging to the Mosaic faith represented a fairly large proportion (37-38%), while the proportion of other confessions (Catholic, evangelical, etc.) represented no more than an average of 1-2%.<sup>16</sup> The numerical variation of the students in different academic years followed the same trend both for majority students and those of Mosaic faith. The maximal and minimal limits were given by the high schools for girls. Overall, the highest numbers of Jewish girl students were enrolled in the “Carmen Sylva High School” during the 1921-1922 academic year, which represented 50% of the total number of students,<sup>17</sup> while in the following year, as well as in 1928, “I. G. Duca High School enrolled just one Jewish girl (see Table 1).

Table 1. Minimal and maximal limits of the proportion of Jewish students in

## Botoșani and Dorohoi

| High school                 | Period    | Minimal annual no. of Jewish students | Minimal annual percentage of Jewish students | Maximal annual no. of Jewish students | Maximal annual percentage of Jewish students |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| A. T. Laurian <sup>18</sup> | 1922-1940 | 24 (1934-1935)                        | 30%(1934-1935)                               | 81(1922-1923)                         | 55(1922-1923)                                |
| Carmen Sylva <sup>19</sup>  | 1919-1924 | 5 (1923-1924)                         | 20%(1923-1924)                               | 90(1921-1922)                         | 50(1921-1922)                                |
| I. G. Duca <sup>20</sup>    | 1922-1939 | 1 (1922-1923; 1928-1929)              | 7%(1922-1923; 1928-1929)                     | 37(1926-1927)                         | 44(1926-1927)                                |
| Regina Maria <sup>21</sup>  | 1923-1940 | 15 (1934-1935; 1939-1940)             | 32%(1934-1935; 1939-1940)                    | 55(1937-1938)                         | 41(1937-1938)                                |

A general analysis of the students' social origins based on the school yearbooks showed that the dominant group came from merchant families (30%), followed by artisan families (24%), civil servant families (20%), families of intellectuals (19%) and farmers (3%). The merchant families were predominantly Jewish, which showed the interest of Jewish families for their children's education, who were enrolled in all Moldavian high schools until the end of 1930s.

Analysing the nominal lists of graduates in the main Botoșani high schools - „A. T. Laurian” and „Carmen Sylva” – we can observe that approximately 39% of the total number of 1326 graduates between 1918 and 1940 were Jewish. Therefore, the percentages indicating the religious denomination of the school population was maintained at the graduate level, although the number of Jewish students continued to drop after 1933.

The Orthodox students enrolled in the Bukovinian high schools in Northern Moldavia (an average of 66-67%) gradually became predominant after 1918, due to the Romanisation of provincial schools.<sup>22</sup> The Jewish students, enrolled in all high schools, represented an average of 24%, the differences in numbers between the Romanian and the Jewish students being much larger in Bukovina than in Botoșani and Dorohoi. By contrast, if the proportion of students belonging to other religion denominations was 1-2% in Bukovina, the Catholic and evangelical students taken together represented an average of 11-12%, a

fact that reflected the foreign influences during the occupation. The maximal and minimal limits also showed that the Jews represented a maximum average percentage of 20% in the total number of students, the exception being the percentage of 46% reached during 1935-1936 at “Dragoș Vodă” High School in Câmpulung Moldovenesc (see Table 2).

Table 2. Minimal and maximal limits of the proportion of Jewish students in Suceava, Siret, Câmpulung Moldovenesc

| High school                   | Period    | Minimal annual no. of Jewish students | Minimal annual percentage of Jewish students | Maximal annual no. of Jewish students | Maximal annual percentage of Jewish students |
|-------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| Ștefan cel Mare <sup>23</sup> | 1918-1939 | 1(1918-1919; 1920-1921)               | 1% (1918-1919; 1920-1921)                    | 39(1923-1924)                         | 24%(1923-1924)                               |
| Doamna Maria <sup>24</sup>    | 1931-1938 | 20(1932-1933)                         | 25%(1932-1933)                               | 42(1935-1936)                         | 46%(1935-1936)                               |
| Lațcu Vodă <sup>25</sup>      | 1924-1938 | 12(1924-1925)                         | 13%(1924-1925)                               | 34(1927-1928)                         | 22%(1927-1928)                               |
| Dragoș Vodă <sup>26</sup>     | 1921-1939 | 12(1934-1935)                         | 34%(1934-1935)                               | 46(1931-1932)                         | 21%(1931-1932)                               |

Based on the information in yearbook statistics, we notice the overwhelming proportion of Orthodox students in the “Ștefan cel Mare” High School (82.35%), which indicates the role played by Suceava as the centre of Romanisation in Bukovina. More similar percentages representing the proportion of the two religious denominations can be found at the “Regina Maria” High School for Girls, where there were 49.68% Orthodox girls and 35.82% Jewish girls.

The fact that here functioned for a while the only Jewish high school in the south of the region is probably not accidents. The Jewish Modern Private High School was established immediately after the war, in 1919, with the agreement of the authorities and in accordance with the Treaty of Minorities that Romania was a part of. The school functioned in the building of the Suceava Jewish Community that also took responsibility for ensuring the necessary funds for this institution.<sup>27</sup> The Suceava high school was certainly affected by the change in the perspective concerning the education for minorities after the liberal government assumed power in 1922; the high school disappeared in 1928. Based on the enrolment records from the Suceava country archive,<sup>28</sup> we see that this school started classes with the first grade, A and B, comprising 78 students. A new grade was added every year until the primary school structure was completed.

The first grade of the secondary school structure was created in the academic year 1923-1924; the high school had all the eight grades in 1926. According to the nominal list of students based on the enrolment records, we can see that there were 68 students attending the superior secondary structure during 1923 and 1928. Of them, 63 were Jews of Mosaic faith, four belonged to other minorities, one was a Romanian Orthodox. The majority of the students came from families of merchants in urban areas (63%).<sup>29</sup>

As we have mentioned before, after the adoption of the Law on private education, the only concession granted by the Romanian authorities was the permission to use Hebrew in Jewish schools. The regulation according to which the graduates could not receive diplomas recognised by the state, thus being denied admission to university, was maintained in the case of secondary schools.<sup>30</sup> This accounts for the small number of Jewish students attending superior secondary education in the Suceava high school,<sup>31</sup> compared to the number of Jewish students attending inferior secondary education (gymnasium) at the same institution. The two classes that graduated high school in 1927 and 1928 numbered 14 students.

A few yearbooks of the Romanised high schools in Southern Bukovina include data about the religious denomination of some graduates. Thus, of a sample of 1456 students from 4 high schools,<sup>32</sup> 69% were Orthodox, 21% were Jews, 10% belonged to other denominations. We can see that the proportions of graduates show notable differences in favour of Romanian Orthodox students. Nevertheless, there were some antisemitic manifestations during the baccalaureate exams organised between 1925 and 1928, when a few nationalist voices demanded the limitation of candidates belonging to Jewish faith. The baccalaureate organised in the summer of 1926 took place in an extremely tense atmosphere culminating in the well-known death of student David Falik in Cernăuți.<sup>33</sup> Antisemitism could be observed at the time not only during the baccalaureate exam, but also in the classrooms of Moldavian schools. The memoirs of Moses Rosen, who became the Romanian chief rabbi in 1948, a student at the “Nicu Gane” High School in Fălticeni at the time of the Cernăuți incident, are relevant in this respect. The audacity to challenge the Romanian justice system of those times with reference to the Falik case cost him his freedom, as the antisemitic teacher Dan Protopopescu had Rosen expelled from school, falsely accusing him of “lèse-majesté”. After arrests followed by interventions of the Romanian Jewish leaders, Moses Rosen returned to his high school, where he had to endure new insults from the literature teacher; the fourteen year old young man conferred that classes became “genuine torture” for him.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, according to the high school yearbook of 1929-1930, Moses Rosen graduated and passed his baccalaureate exam organised in Dorohoi in the fall of 1930.

The case of the future rabbi is not singular. The interwar school environment was often overshadowed by material hardships, difficult to implement legislative changes and, sometimes, antisemitic attitudes on the part of teachers or colleagues directed towards the Jewish students. School antisemitism was also mentioned in the monographs dedicated to these institutions, albeit in a rather veiled manner.

Overall, however, one can argue that the Jewish students were integrated – either voluntarily, or forced by circumstances – to integrate in the Romania system of education, learning in a culturally-charged environment focused on cultivating Romanian history and values. School and extracurricular activities, minutely presented in the yearbooks describing school celebrations and conferences on patriotic issues, the organisation and content of libraries (where Romanian literature was predominant), the participation of students in the school papers, where they learned about the country's history and culture, were indicators of a minutely conceived process of Romanisation. The proof of the fact that integration in the Romanian secondary system of education was the dominant attitude of the vast majority of young Jewish students attending Moldavian high schools is given not only by the large numbers of students who attended the high schools in the area, but also by the statistics compiled at the end of each academic year. For instance, we see that the Jewish students attending the “A. T. Laurian” High School in Botoşani at the level of superior secondary education were rewarded with prizes for their academic performance every year.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, Jewish names appeared annually in the list of students who obtained remarkable results in the baccalaureate exam.<sup>36</sup> Another relevant example is that of the Jewish student Schieber David, who was the only one to receive the qualification “very well” in the baccalaureate exam organised in June 1933 by “Dragoş Vodă” High School in Câmpulung Moldovenesc. And the list of examples could go on.

A large number of these high school graduates went on to university, thus completing their intellectual training. Their significant presence in universities caused a series of antisemitic manifestations organised by Romanian students in the interwar period, asking for the introduction of *numerus clausus* for the Jews. Their demands in the fourth decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century no longer represented a desideratum. But, out of the mass of Jews who surpassed all these obstacles, emerged a category of individuals who were became of Romanian intelligentsia, thus shaping, together with the Moldavian Romanians, the contribution of the province to the intellectual fabric of the country.





## Notes

1. Irina Livezeanu, *Culturii și naționalism în România Mare, 1918-1930*, București, Humanitas, 1995, p. 16.
2. This study refers exclusively to the superior secondary education in theoretical high schools. This choice is motivated by several reasons. The 1918 Union marks a new stage in the evolution of Romanian education. High schools are created in many cities, either by transforming the existing gymnasiums or by building special institutions. Therefore, access to secondary education as stepping stone for university attendance is much easier. Gymnasiums, which represented inferior secondary education, were the interwar transition between primary school to high school, the subjects largely repeating the information acquired in primary education. We only refer to theoretical high schools because they were a required step before attending specialized high education. Secondary education focused on commerce, agriculture, arts and crafts was designed for students who wanted to learn particular skills for the job they wanted to pursue upon graduation. This does not mean that some of these graduates did not attend university. Their number was however limited – representing the exception rather than the rule – so these institutions were not included in the present analysis.
3. Ștefan Bârsănescu, *Politica culturii*, Iași, Polirom, 2003, ediția a 2-a, pp. 180-181.
4. C. Angelescu, „Evoluția învățământului primar și secundar în ultimii 20 de ani”, in N. Peneș, *Dr. C. Angelescu, reformator al învățământului românesc*, Buzău, Editgraph, 2008, pp. 192-193.
5. \*\*\*, *Anuarul învățământului secundar din România pe anul 1924-1925*, București, Tipografia Curții Regale, 1925, p. 12.
6. Liviu Rotman, *Școala israelito-română (1851-1914)*, București, Hasefer, 1999, p. 14.
7. Livezeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 95.
8. I. Simionescu, *Orașe din România. Cu 62 figuri*, București, Cartea Românească, 1925, p. 113.
9. *Ibidem*, p. 242.
10. Daniel Hrenciuc, *Continuitate și schimbare: integrarea minorităților naționale din Bucovina istorică în Regatul României Mari*, vol. 1, Rădăuți, Septentrion, 2005, p. 140.
11. Claudia Ursuțiu, *Senatori și deputați evrei în Parlamentul României (1919-1931)*, Cluj-Napoca, Efes, 2006, p. 175.
12. *Ibidem*, p. 178.
13. In Botoșani county: „A. T. Laurian” High School, „Carmen Sylva” Secondary School for Girls, „I. G. Duca” High School for Girls. In Dorohoi county: „Gr. Ghica” High School for Boys, „Anastasia Bașotă” High School for Boys, „Regina Maria” High School for Girls. In Fălticeni, Baia county: „Nicu Gane” High School for Boys, „Principesa Elena” Secondary School for Girls.
14. In Suceava county: „Ștefan cel Mare” High School for Boys, „Doamna Maria” High School for Girls; in Rădăuți county: „Eudoxiu Hurmuzachi” High School for Boys

and a High School for Girls; in Gura Humorului, „Principele Carol” High School for Boys; in Câmpulung Moldovenesc, „Dragoș Vodă” High School for Boys; in Siret, „Lațcu Vodă” High School for Boys.

15. Data in the religious affiliation of the students was not available for the following institutions: „Anastasiu Bașotă” High School in Pomârla, „Grigore Ghica” High School in Dorohoi and „Principesa Elena” High School in Fălticeni. In the case of „Nicu Gane” High School, only data about the number of graduates taken from various monographs was available. Author Mioara Gafencu mentioned in her 2004 monograph the partial loss of the high school archive during the Second World War, when everyone took refuge in Blaj.
16. The 1930 population census recorded the following proportions of people of Mosaic faith: 36,6% in Botoșani and 36,7% in Dorohoi.
17. As the data for „Carmen Sylva” High School refer to a short period, it is possible that this limit might have been surpassed after the academic year 1923-1924.
18. Data processed based on the *Yearbooks of „A. T. Laurian” High School in Botoșani*, between 1916 and 1940, completed by transcripts of records from the D.J.A.N. Botoșani, „A. T. Laurian” Botoșani High School Fund.
19. Data processed based on the *Yearbooks of „Carmen Sylva” High School for Girls in Botoșani*, between 1922 and 1939, completed by transcripts of records from the D.J.A.N. Botoșani, „Carmen Sylva” High School for Girls in Botoșani Fund.
20. Data processed based on the transcripts of records at the D.J.A.N. Botoșani, „I.G.Duca” Modern Institute Private High School for Girls in Botoșani.
21. Data processed based on the transcripts of records at the D.J.A.N. Botoșani, „Regina Maria” High School for Girls in Dorohoi.
22. No data was available regarding the religious affiliation of students in the high schools of Rădăuți and Gura Humorului.
23. Data processed based on the *Yearbook of „Ștefan cel Mare” High School*, between 1921 and 1939.
24. Data processed based on the *Yearbook of „Doamna Maria” High School in Suceava*, between 1926 and 1938.
25. Data processed based on the *Yearbook of Siret State High School*, between 1921 and 1938.
26. Data processed based on the *Yearbook of „Dragoș-Vodă” High School in Câmpulung Moldovenesc*, between 1920 and 1939.
27. Gheorghe Giurcă, *Istoria învățământului din Suceava*, Suceava, Tipografia SC Rof SA, 2004, p. 247.
28. D.J.A.N. Suceava, *Suceava Jewish High School Fund (1919-1948)*.
29. Besides the 39 sons of merchants, other students attending high school included: 3 sons of civil servants, 4 sons of intellectuals, 4 sons of artisans, 11 students whose parents had different occupations, 2 students whose parents were unemployed.
30. Carol Iancu, *Evreii de la emancipare la marginalizare (1919-1938)*, București, Hasefer, 2001, p. 130.
31. A total number of 108 students were enrolled in the first gymnasium grade during the time when superior secondary education was organised, between 1923 and

1928.

32. „Ștefan cel Mare” High School, „Lațcu-Vodă” High School, „Dragoș Vodă” High School, „Regina Maria” High School.
33. Daniel Hrenciuc, *Dilemele conviețuirii: evreii în Bucovina (1774-1939)*, Iași, Tipo Moldova, 2010, p. 285.
34. Moses Rosen, *Primejdii, încercări, miracole*, București, Hasefer, 2001, pp. 17-20.
35. Several Jewish students obtained prizes for their academic achievements between 1923 and 1932: Rozen Șloim, Pîram Șloim, Katz Lazăr, Abramovici Anton, Meirovici Iacob, Seidman Jean, etc. Student Abramovici Bruno received the qualification „exceptional” during the academic year 1931-1932.
36. Jewish students such as Haimer Samoil, Katz Lazăr, Marcovici Mauriciu, Rapaport Avram, Herșcoviciu Leon, Landau Moses Șloim, Abramovi Bruno, Seidman Jean, etc. obtained average grades above 7 in the baccalaureate exam between 1926 and 1937.

### **Abstract**

Young people’s education in the period following World War I represented a key element in completing the unification process. That is why the Romanisation (the attempt to instil a distinctively Romanian character) of schools in the newly-joined provinces was a priority for interwar governments. High schools occupied a special place in this process, as they were a primary means of training the future intellectuals and specialists needed by the new Romanian state. Considering these premises, the present study aims at reconstructing the profile of the Jewish school population attending the Northern Moldavian high schools, at the same time analysing the way in which this minority was integrated in the Romanian institutional framework of the schools situated in this area.

### **Keywords**

Secondary education, Romanisation, Jewish school population, Northern Moldavia



# Orthodox Judaism and Neolog Judaism. A parallel of the two Jewish communities in Timișoara

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ILDIKO GALERU

**F**OUND AT THE border of two empires, Timișoara (Hungarian Temesvár, German Temeschwar, Serbian Temišvar) has managed to build an identity of its own, gaining its well-deserved renown through ethnical and cultural diversity.

A research into the Timisoara community is a fascinating domain, full of surprises. Mentioned sporadically in medieval sources, and then in the official documents of Habsburg authorities, the Jews settled in Timisoara, hoping to find a better living. The history of the Timisoara community crosses 4 uninterrupted centuries under the various rulers of the city. The integration of Banat into Greater Romania opens a special chapter into the history of Timisoara Jews. Mostly Hungarized, they had to face the new modern requirements, but also had to adapt to the conservative Romanian society.

It was possible for communities of multiple religions (Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, Calvinist, Mosaic, Mohammedan), to live together thanks to the

## **I. The Evolution of the Community from the beginnings until the Unification of 1918**

**I** 1. FROM THE CASTRUM Temesiensis to the Königliche Freistadt – the settlement of Jews in Timișoara and their evolution until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The attempts to determine the zero year of the Jews' presence in Timișoara have stumbled upon lack of documents. However, the first traces of Jewish presence in Banat, found in archaeological sites and dating from the 2<sup>nd</sup> -3<sup>rd</sup>