

THE BUILT PATRIMONY OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN CRAIOVA

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Abstract

The first attested evidence of Jews in Craiova comes from the middle of the 17th century. Archbishop Paul de Alep, in his work „Călătoriile patriarhului Macarie” (The trips of Patriarch Macarie) mentions the presence of some Turkish Jews in Craiova since the beginning of the 17th century. Later on, their number will steadily increase until around WWI. This community will bring a crucial contribution to the process of diversification in the local market, strengthening of the social division of labor, economic development of the city – back then, it was classified as a large ‘trade city’. At the onset of the 20th century, Craiova had three religious Jewish buildings and a community reaching almost 3,000 people. After that, their number has decreased.

The role of Jews, though, has been extremely important, not only economically, but also culturally, artistically and professionally. The built patrimony, the declared architecture monuments, all stand as evidence of the prosperity that this Community witnessed within the territory of Craiova.

Keywords: *Jewish community, built patrimony, synagogue, Jewish cemetery, representative civil patrimony.*

1. Background

As shown in the archaeological discoveries, a Geto-Dacian site existed in Craiova area between 400 and 350 B.C., identified under the name of Pelendava. Here, at the beginning of the 2nd century A.C., the Romans built a Roman castra, which constituted the hub of its later expansion. The site is mentioned in Tabula Peutingeriana – a map of the Roman Empire, drawn upon the initiative of Roman Emperor Caracalla and completed during Severus Alexander’s reign. The year of 225 (when this map was finished) is considered to be the date of the first documentary evidence of the oldest site in the present city area. At the end of the 15th century, Craiova was a trade city, on the property of the influent boyars Craiovești.¹

The first documents about Jews in Craiova are dated middle of the 17th century. Archbishop Paul de Alep, in his work „Călătoriile patriarhului Macarie” (The trips of Patriarch Macarie) mentions the presence of some Turkish Jews in Craiova since the beginning of the 17th century. The presence of Jews here will fully contribute to the process of diversification in the local market, strengthening of the social division of labor, economic development of the city, which was known as a large ‘trade city’. Salesmen, owners of small shops or great merchants, Jews left their definite mark on the social and economic dynamics of the city. They also played a great part in the cultural development of Craiova.

The community will increase in number up until the beginning of the 20th century as such:

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- in 1786, 40 Jews were registered in Craiova;
- in 1831, there were already 328;
- in 1838, there were 114 documented Jews, out of whom 27 foreign subjects (southerners);
- in 1860, the community had reached 495 people;
- in 1899, the number of Jews was 2891, the highest registered not only in Craiova but in the entire Oltenia;
- in 1920, Dolj, there were 2867 Jews, with 2728 permanent residents and 139 transients,² and in Craiova, there were sephardi heads of households. No exact data are known about the evolution of the community of ashkenazi, 'Evrei Leh", as they were calling themselves, most likely from their initial origin, emigrants from Poland.(In 1900, this ethnical group reorganizes and calls itself the 'Israeli-Romanian Community of Occidental Rite) ;
- in 1930, during the *General Census of Romanian Population on December 29, 1930*, a number of 2176 Jews was registered in Craiova;³
- in 1938, 2274 Jews were in Craiova.⁴
- in 1942, during the *General Census of Jewish background in Romania*, there were 1726 in Craiova.

In this city, both sephardi and ashkenazi settled here, but in separate communities and synagogues. Right now, the Community of Jews in Craiova is unitary, religiously and culturally speaking.

Jews had to deal with the wartime, deportation and then the communist regime – all these disturbed and weakened the community life. Thus, at the end of the 20th century, their number is extremely small:

- in 1992, there were 48 families in Craiova;⁵
- in 2001, there were 47 families in Craiova, with a total of 91 members;⁶
- in 2002, 37 Jews were registered in Craiova, meaning 0.01% of the population;⁷
- The total number of members registered with the Community of Jews in Craiova⁸ was 97 people in 2002.

At the present moment, the archives of the Community of Jews in Craiova mention 112 parishioners, where 55 are Jews, 30 assimilated and 27 non-Jews.

As far as their territorial distribution throughout Oltenia, here is the list:

- in Caracal – 1 person;
- in Râmnicu Vâlcea- 1 person;
- in Târgu Jiu-7 people;
- in Corabia- 0 person;
- in Calafat- 0 person;
- in Orșova -13 people;
- in Drobeta Turnu Severin - 7 people;
- in Craiova- 83 people.

2. The Jewish community in Craiova and its socio-economic evolution

In Craiova, around 1790, a Jewish institution of social assistance was operational; here, several personalities were involved, such as Isac Benvenisti, Elias Sabetay and Iacob Benevenisti.⁹

Another charitable institution is the one called *Erza Bezaroth*, which was granting scholarships to sephardic children and students.¹⁰

In terms of the Jews participation into the economic life of Craiova, it is worthwhile to mention that, during interwar times, Lazar Dunkelblum had a store known as „*Englezul*” (The Englishman). In Craiova, there was „*Moara lui Mendel*” (Mendel Mill), where tens of workers were employed. The equipment had been brought from Switzerland, and the mill was located in a seven-storey building. The Mendel brothers, great business people, have a large store, which operated until after 1948. Today, a part of the furniture in the ‘*Bijuteria*’ (The Jewel) store downtown Craiova and in the glassware store nearby come from this Mendel store.

‘Three out of the four big mills in Craiova were owned by Jews: Moise A. Mendel, Marcu Weiss, Adolf Weiss. During the 1907 uprising, all of them requested protection from the authorities, including the Romanian owner, Barbu Drugă.’¹¹

In the vicinity of the mill, there was the Mendelbaum bakery store, located in the Gipsy neighborhood, next to the Jewish one.

Among the personalities of the community, the name Iancu Zimel, attorney, stands out, as he was the Community President for 45 years.

A very often run-into name is Eschenazy, a family that gave Craiova two of the most important financiers at the end of 19th century and start of the 20th, and also medical doctors, attorneys, many intellectuals.

Names to be remembered include Dr. Singer, immigrant from Bohemia, MD at Dudu Monastery after 1850, a war surgeon at 1877; Dr Sigmund Singer, MD at Casa Asigurărilor Sociale (social security office), in 1926; Dr. Schobel, one of the first radiologists in Craiova; Corneliu Sabetay, Assoc Prof PhD., member of the Societies of Paediatric Surgery in France and Greece.

The son of Leon Eschenazy (a great personality in the community) became a Senior MD in the Israeli marine forces; MDs Swilinger, Safir, Erbach, Director of C.F.R. General Hospital, Dr. Sushman, Dr. Schwoah, the first urologist in the city, Dr. Galna, a former chorister at the Coral Temple, Dr. Sternberg. Another MD, Filip Eschenazy, emigrated to Israel, is working at the ‘Weizman’ Institute of Research.

There were also many Jews chemists, such as Schreiber, Copolovici, Nadler.

‘Very often the Jews were the only people in Craiova practicing certain jobs, namely slipper-makers, embroiders and umbrella makers. And Adolf Stern was the only employee at the only postal office in the city, Ghiță Popescu & Co. (1904).’¹²

The Craiova people still vividly remember the small manual workers in the past, like Leibovici the whitesmith, specialist in roofing and chimneys or Schlesinger, the shoemaker.

The great refuge from Basarabia and Bucovina brought to Craiova entire families of chemists (for example the Levi family), dentists from Cernăuți (Waisman, Levi who had an office of dental technicians or Leon).

At the end of the 50’s, a large number of the Craiova Jews left for good, and most of them settled in Israel. Their exodus ended in the year of 1964. Ever since, their number is gradually decreasing and the age average in the Jewish community is growing. Under such circumstances, the Community of Jews in Craiova has taken over the position of all communities in Oltenia, as the latter ones count no members any longer.

3. School, education, culture

School is a representative institution for the Jewish community. In Craiova, such institutions were opened, both for the Ashkenazi and for the Spanish rite Jews.

The "Lumina" (light) School was attested in 1865, firstly as a primary school then went to become a distinguished high school. In 1859¹³, the schoolmaster Benjamin Grafstein was acknowledged; after 1860, the private institute managed by Emanuel Gross was opened, which enrolled children of either religious belief or rite and where they learned from books written by Spirescu, Grigore Tocilescu, Grigore Scraba and Gorjan.¹⁴

In 1877, the commercial Israelite school had 75 Romanian and 8 Jewish students enrolled. The school closes in 1897 due to financial reasons and it will provide courses for primary school only, under the supervision of Max Hauser.

Between 1899 and 1901, the community of western rite, led by President Ignat Samitca, will open a canteen for poor children.

In 1919, there were 114 students enrolled at the Jewish school.

During the 1921-1922 school years, there were 113 students, under the supervision of principal A. Weismann. Later, his duties were taken over by S. Braunstein-Mibaşan, Al. Hector, Ana Zimel, Al. Cohen and M. Stăureanu (author of Latin dictionaries). The school had both Romanian and Jewish teachers.

The Israelite "Lumina" high school was closed in 1941. During the war, the "Lumina" hall was turned into a space for "Goebbels Haus" and only after 1990 it was retroceded. From the information that the Community has provided to us, this property is located in Calomfirescu Street and included in the patrimony of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Romania.

In Craiova, since the middle of the 19th century, there has been a library, bookstore and more printing houses, a contribution from Iosif, Ralian and Ignat Samitca,¹⁵ Lazăr Şeineanu and David Benevenisti.

*"There were professions where the Jews held supremacy, such as typographers – they were helping raise the cultural level in the area, by printing books and offering free books to students in the countryside. Two of the large four printing houses in the country owned by Jews were in Craiova – Ralian and Ignat Samitca's (1835), and David Benvenisti's (1876)."*¹⁶

It is worthwhile mentioning the contribution brought by journalists as Andrei Bart, Ion Fîntînar, Aurel Cernea, Baldovin Demetrescu, Lizica Lupan, Biluta Liberman, Avram Rozenstein, Nicolae Rozenfeld, Lulu Solomon, Hera Steinberg, Lazar Schinderman, Sarina Zavodnicu, Radu Sommer, Solomon Avram, Ştefan Voicu or by writers Felix Aderca and Constantin Şeineanu.

The members of the Jewish community were promoted and supported by men of culture, such as George Sorin Singer (director of Aius Publishing House), Albert Zimber, journalist Ştefan Ardeleanu (Ştefan Ardeleanu published in the magazine of Jewish Communities in Romania - *Realitatea Evreiască*).

In the artistic world, the list of names includes people from theatre - Alexandru Braun and wife Tanţi Braun, Hary Eliad, Tudor Danetti, Neda Harjeu, technical directors at the National Theatre Max Akerman (left to Israel) and Paul Somer (left to Germany), actors Eichard Rang and Lucille Chevalier. A special case is Leo Baimer, professional piano player; when settled in Israel, he switched to his profession of engineer and became an internationally renowned personality in robotics.

In 1998, within the Faculty of Letters and History in Craiova, opened the Centre of Studies and Research in History, Culture and Civilization of Jews in South - Eastern Europe, upon the initiative of Ion Pătroiu, Prof. PhD, presided by Engineer Mircea Ivănescu, Prof. PhD, Rector of University in Craiova and Executive Director Ion Pătroiu, Prof PhD. At the same time, the Department of History at the Faculty of History, Philosophy and Geography initiated the major in "*Hebrew History, Language and Literature.*" The teaching body comprised both Jewish teachers: teaching assistants Albert Zimblor or Ady Schwartz and also others, such as teaching assistant PhD Emilian Cornițescu (University of Bucharest), teaching assistant PhD Petre Semen (A.I. Cuza University in Iași), Ion Pătrașcu Prof PhD in Craiova.

4. The built patrimony

Similar with any human site, Craiova itself went through numerous changes, both nature and human related – set ablaze, different administrations and rulers, modifications, additions and restructurations.

At the beginning of the 19th century, actions of reorganizing and planning of the street network, implementation of some urban equipment were initiated. The main roads are paved with artificial whinstone, Yvoir sandstone or porphyry brought from Switzerland, France or Belgium. Sidewalks are applied and straightways built on the road border.

In 1854, the public lightning was introduced – the lamps were working on rapeseed oil; in 1858, they were replaced with kerosene oil lamps. In 1887, the Theodorini Theatre was already using the electrical light bulbs, and in 1896, the city opened its own power plant (with AEG equipment). Thus, Craiova becomes the first city in the country driven by internal combustion engine electricity.

Still in 1896, the services of urban public health were introduced and various public utility facilities built. At the end of the 19th century, an intense activity of urban renewal was taking place, public utility facilities or representative private residencies erected, parks and gardens arranged and opened to the public.

The new buildings, erected by French, Italian, German or Romanian architects, followed various stylistical influences, such as Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Neo-classical, Romantic, and Romanian. In the architectural plastics, specific to Muntenia, the European eclecticism prevails, mainly the French academism.

The list of the representative buildings in Craiova includes the following:

- Casa Băniei, a monument of medieval architecture and the oldest civil construction in Craiova, built at the end of 15th century by boyars Craiovești; in 1699, ruler Constantin Brâncoveanu rebuilt it;
- The building of Colegiul Național Carol I, erected between 1895 and 1896, after blueprints drafted by architect Toma Dobrescu;
- Jean Mihail Palace, built between 1899 and 1907, following the blueprints of French architect Paul Gottereau, at the request of Constantin Mihail. The materials were of the best quality. The valuable stucco, partly in gold, the luminaries, Venice mirrors, painted ceilings, the chandeliers in Murano crystal, pillars, the Carrara marble stairs, the walls upholstered in Lyon silk, boardings, furniture in style,

hardware, all will create an ambience of elegance and evident refinement. The Palace was covered in slates and equipped, from the very beginning, with electrical installations and central heating.¹⁷

- Banca Comerțului (Trade Bank) (today, the seat of the City Hall of Craiova Municipality) was designed by architect Ion Mincu and completed in 1916 by architect Constantin Iotzu. The building has an interior rich in stuccos, stained glass, Venetian mosaics and fences in wrought iron;

- The Gogu Vorvoreanu Houses, currently the seat of Metropolitan Church in Oltenia, were built after the designs of architect D. Maimarolu;

- The former Administrative Palace, presently the seat of the Prefect's Office and County Council of Dolj was built by architect Petre Antonescu, around WWI, between 1912 and 1913;

- The Vălimărescu House was erected in 1892, after blueprint of French architect Albert Galleron, who also designed the Athenaeum Palace in Bucharest;

- With assistance from King Carol I and Queen Elisabeta, "Sf. Dumitru" Biserica Domneasca (Princely Church) was rebuilt from the ground by architect Andre Lecomte de Nouy, between 1889 and 1893 and painted by French Menpiot and Bories. The dedication ceremony took place on October 16, 1893;¹⁸

The "Nicolae Romanescu" Park in Craiova is the third natural park in Europe, as far as its surface area. The park spreads out on 96 hectares and it was executed since 1900, upon the initiative of then-mayor of Craiova, Nicolae Romanescu. It is the largest and best-known park in the city. Located in the southern part, where Unirii Calea ends, is also called Bibescu Park – the reason is that it is placed on a land bought by the City Hall in Craiova in 1853 from Iancu Bibescu, Grigore Bibescu's brother; also, Bibescu House, one of the houses belonging to the ruling family, is in the middle of this piece of land. Bibescu decided in 1899 to plan the park for rest and recreation purposes. In 1900, during the International Exhibition in Paris, the project was awarded the golden medal; one year later, the works started under the supervision of the French landscape architect Emil Redont, helped by his brother Jules Redont and by Emil Pinard.

The Jewish community in Craiova used to be a strong one, including top intellectuals and economic strength, brilliantly proved in this atmosphere of urbanity. Under such circumstances, the quality Jewish built stock was concentrated in the central area, of a maximum visibility, with commercial value, namely Unirii Calea. The moment of restructuration of the central part of Craiova, during the 80's, a large part of this stock was demolished – there was a quick, remorseless action, as the owners had left their houses long time ago, in search for countries with a political regime to match their needs or with the destination Israel.

a. The Synagogue

In Craiova, at the beginning of the 20th century, there were three Jewish religious buildings: The Spanish synagogue, Sephardic Synagogue and Ashkenazi Synagogue. Two of them are no longer there.

a.1. The Sephardic Temple, 2 Horezului Str.

A charter in 1792, provided by Constantin Șutzu refers to a place purchased that year by the Sephardic Israelite community at Horezu monastery, as being the party of buyer. The Jewish Havra was erected on that piece of land.¹⁹

In a document, enforced by C.A.Ipsilante, voivode of Wallachia, a Jew man is mentioned, by his name Leibu, owner in the Horezu Monastery Street, by the Jewish Havra,²⁰ which suggests that the area was lived in by the Jewish community at that time.



Image 1: The location and fragments still standing of the Sephardic Synagogue wall.

The first synagogue of a Sephardic rite was built here. The financial aid for its erection came from Mosi A. Mendel. A great fire at the end of the 19th century burned and destroyed the Community archives. A large part of the recovered archive is now at the Federation of the Jewish Communities in Romania. In the aftermath of the earthquake on March 4, 1977, the Sephardic Temple in 2 Horezului Street went through an irreversible deterioration. Later on, the building was abandoned and demolished. Its altar was rescued and installed in the current Synagogue. At present, the land, with no buildings erected on it, is in the middle of a dispute – in 2008, a new ownership title was issued and the land was assigned to a different person.



Image 2: The land without any buildings, waiting the end of trial.



Image 2: View from Unirii Calea. The Coral Temple is across the street.

a.2. The Coral Temple.

In 1832, the Ashkenazi community purchased a piece of land, in 5 Horezu Street, to build a religious site. Erected in 1832, the Coral Temple was initially meant for the Ashkenazi Jews, but later, the Sephardic or the German-speaking Jews were accepted to join, after they had escaped from Bucovina. On the exterior, the original building had small towers of a Moorish influence, which were lost during restoration. In 1887, architect Birkental reconstructed the building, thus the architectural identity was dropped. After being damaged during the earthquake on March 4, 1977, the Coral Temple went under repairs in 1982.

On the Synagogue façade in Horezu street, there is a built-in plaque to commemorate the 53 Jews who had served during the 1913, 1916-1919 wars; six of them were medical doctors.

Inside the Temple, there is another commemorative plaque, put up by the President of the Community of Jews in Craiova, attorney Iancu Zimel, after the 1982 restoration.

This building is not included in the List of Historical Monuments compiled by the Department of Culture.

Today, the official seat of the Community of Jews in Craiova is here, and all the buildings are functional, in a very well maintained condition.

a.3. The Spanish Synagogue



Image 3: The Coral Temple in Craiova, 5 Horezului Street. Facade detail.

The third synagogue in Craiova, currently demolished, is in Piața Veche. Following the 1977 earthquake, the entire Craiova downtown was included in an ample program of urban restructuring, resulting into demolishing of many 19th century buildings and erection of the current Civic Centre, with block apartments, downstairs stores and spacious pedestrian places.



Image 4: A commemorative plaque on the façade, an homage paid to the holocaust victims.



Image 5: The commemorative plaque to honor the WWI heroes.



Image 6: Perspective along the street, towards Unirii Calea, with the building.



Image 7: Ensemble perspective along the street, towards Unirii Calea.

b. The Jewish Cemetery



Image 8: The entrance portal to the Jewish Cemetery.



Image 9: The Cemetery main entrance and the funeral monument of Iosif and Ralian Samitca.



Image 10.

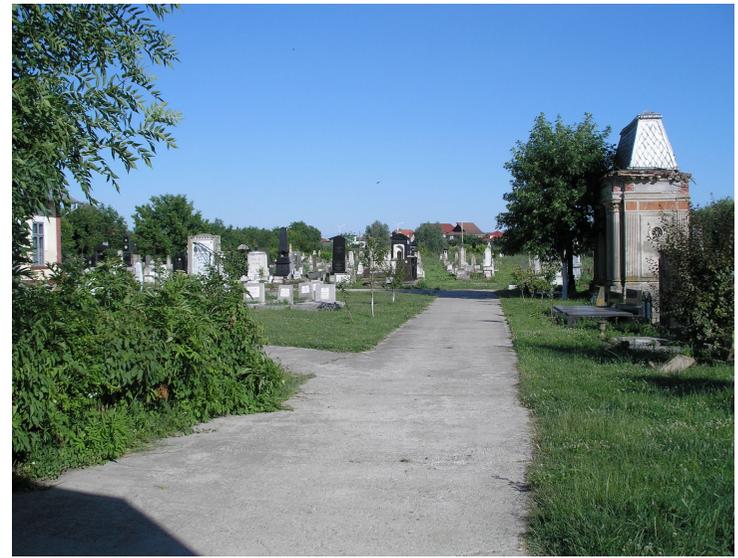


Image 11: The funeral monument of Iosif and Ralian Samitca.



Image 12.



Image 13.

It was set up by the Sephardic community in the 19th century and is located on the city outskirts, in 209 Bucovăț Street.

The land for the cemetery has a total surface area of 37 000 sqm and is registered as a property in the real estate cadastral book of Craiova commune, a donation made by boyar Caravan Sofia. The graves cover only a part of this land.

The cemetery was managed and taken care of by the Community of Jews in Craiova, and it was used for burial, irrespective of the rite. At a later date, a mortuary was built there.

In the Jewish cemetery in Bucovăț Street, along with the graves of the Sephardic, Ashkenazi or refugees from Basarabia, there are numerous monuments erected in the memory of the fallen ones: Russian, Polish, as well as of other religion (catholics).

In 2010, following the deluge that flooded the entire surface of the cemetery, the mortuary was so much damaged that it needed reconstruction works.

The cemetery is still functional, but it must be maintained and guarded on a regular basis.

Monuments included in the List of Historical Monuments, compiled by the Department of Culture: the Funeral monument of Iosif and Ralian Samitca, DJ-IV-m-B-08431. This monument is located on the main alley, at the entrance into the Jewish cemetery.



Image 14: The funeral monument of Iosif and Ralian Samitca, DJ-IV-m-B-08431.



Image 15: Old funeral stones in the Jewish cemetery.

C. The civil built patrimony



Image 16 : Unirii Calea in Craiova, an old card.



Image 17: Unirii Calea, today, after the planning of the central city area.

c.1. Eskenazy House, 1 Știrbei Vodă Blvd, half of the 19th century, DJ-II-m-B-08125.



Image 18.



Image 19.



Image 20.



Image 21.

A property of the Eskenazy family, the building was erected in the middle of the 19th century and is located in 1 Știrbei Vodă Blvd.

Currently, it is considered a historical monument and is included in the List of Historical Monuments, compiled by the Department of Culture, with code DJ-II-m-B-08125. Unfortunately, no archive images have been yet identified.

c.2. Eskenazy House, 42 Unirii Calea, end of 19th century, DJ-II-m-B-08144

The property of Eskenazy family, the building was erected at the end of the 19th century and is located at 42 Unirii Calea; it is a construction in a left-right row housing, and structured with first floor and second floor, after a symmetrical plan.

On the first floor, there are two spaces with commercial activity, separated from the main entrance that provides the access, through a gangway, to the symmetrically placed spaces on the second floor, as well as to the interior yard. What is specific for this construction is that it was built by and for two owners, as shown by the mailbox – the left one, number 44, belonged to Boicescu House. Both sides of this building are included in the List of Historical Monuments (LHM)/2010 at position 339, code cod DJ-II-m-B-08145 and position 338, code DJ-II-m-B-08144, respectively.



Image 22: Entrance detail with the two LHM identification plates.



Image 23 : The access gangway to the two houses and interior yard.



Image 24: Eskenazy House, LHM identification.



Image 25: Eskenazy House.

c.3. „Englezu”/“The Englishman” House, 80 Unirii Calea, the 19th century, DJ-II-m-B-08160



Image 26.



Image 27.



Image 28.



Image 29.

The "Englezu"/ "Englishman" House is a construction erected in the 19th century, located in 80 Unirii Calea. Here is where Lazar Dunkelblum had the store „Englezul”/”Englishman”.

It is made in brick, similar with other constructions along the Unirii Street, with left-right row housing to the firewall, three-storey (basement, first and second floors) and a symmetrical plan.

The symmetry axle is marked by the entrance gate, through the gangway, which also provides access to the interior yard. Above it, there is a spacious balcony, adorned with a wrought iron railing. It is a sad thing that both the rich façade decoration and carpentry work have been aggressively ignored, which resulted into the depreciation of the artistic quality of the façade and the tasteless replacement of the carpentry work with PVC or even of the gate with a plate sheet. It seems that the recovery of these values subjected to destruction is no longer possible.

Currently, it is considered a historical monument and is included in the List of Historical Monuments, compiled by the Department of Culture, with code DJ-II-m-B-08160 and is thus identified.

c.4. Zwilling House, 88 Unirii Calea, end of the 19th century, DJ-II-m-B-08164

The construction was built at the end of the 19th century and is located in 88 Unirii Calea. It has three levels – basement, first and second floors, meant for living, with access through the gangway, also to the interior yard.

The style is characteristic to that time, namely eclectic, with a rich ornamentation of the facade towards the boulevard and delicate details, careful carpentry work and hardware, artistically performed. The bridge is spacious, well-lit and ventilated by decorative skylights. At the pavement level, the basement ventilation can be noticed. The entrance itself is done through the gangway, as an elegantly covered platform, with marble stairs and sculpted doors.

Today, it is considered a historical monument and is included in the List of Historical Monuments, compiled by the Department of Culture, with code DJ-II-m-B-08164.

The never-wanted interventions irreversibly spoil that architectural qualities of this construction.



Image 30: Zwilling House, historical monument.



Image 31: Zwilling House, façade detail along the street.



Image 32: Zwillinger House, facade towards Unirii Blvd.



Image 33: Zwillinger House, entrance detail.



Image 34: Zwillinger House, access through gangway and to the interior yard.

c.5. Mendel House, 41 Frații Buzești Street, beginning of the 20th century, DJ-II-m-B-08012.



Image 35: 41 Frații Buzești Street, location free of constructions.



Image 36: 41 Frații Buzești Str.; considering the vegetation, the building was demolished many years ago.

The property of Mendel family, the construction was erected at the beginning of the 20th century and located at 41 Frații Buzești Street.

Even though it is presently considered a historical monument and is included in the List of Historical Monuments, compiled by the Department of Culture, under number 201, code DJ-II-m-B-08164, the building was demolished, and the number 41 only had a vacant land.

No photographs or blueprints of the monument were identified.

c.6. Doctor Mendel House, 27 Bărnuțiu Simion Str., end of the 19th century, DJ-II-m-B-07940.

Doctor Mendel House is a construction built at the end of the 19th century and is located in the central area of Craiova Municipality, at 27 Bărnuțiu Simion Street.

It is presently considered a historical monument and is included in the List of Historical Monuments/2010, compiled by the Department of Culture, position 120, code DJ-II-m-B-07940.

Even though the inclusion in the above list provides a certain degree of protection, the building requires qualified maintenance and restoration works.

The small, visible interventions do not comply with the initial nature of the building, as they are minor and necessary but done inappropriately.



Image 37.



Image 38.



Image 39.

5. Conclusions

The previous examples prove how the Jewish community lived and built in Craiova, mainly at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th, a peak period of its development in this city.

The main features of these constructions are as such: they use valuable locations (similar value at the moment of building), durable materials, brick structures and interior large spaces; the investment was carefully monitored, to gain maximum for minimum and still preserve quality. The constructions located in good commercial areas had a space for the shop downstairs and the upstairs floor for human living.

The constructions lived in by families with no direct economic activities were using large pieces of land and did not have a strong representation nature.

The interest for the architecture object is diminished, as it is for the one for its specifics; thus, we will see townsmen houses that are characteristic for that time.

The aesthetical issues have been approached at the detail level, a decoration for the facade.

On the other hand, such constructions have survived in time, as a great attention has been paid to solidity.

Starting from these conclusions, it is easier to understand how the Jews became so quickly the promoters of modernism during the inter-war times. At that time, the first Jewish architects emerged, and their number constantly grew, as did their involvement into the Romanian architecture production.

Illustration List: photographs taken by author, 2011.

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Endnotes

¹ The economic power of the Craiovești at that time was given by over 100 villages (182 real estate goods). This force provided a such a strong status of political autonomy, so that the rulers could not hold on their throne in the absence of an alliance with this true boyar dynasty. In the meantime, some of the Craiovești boyars were elected rulers: Neagoe Basarab (1512-1521), Radu de la Afumați (1522-1529), Radu Șerban (1602-1611), Matei Basarab (1632-1654), Constantin Șerban (1654-1658), Șerban Cantacuzino (1678-1688) or Constantin Brâncoveanu (1688-1714).

Emerged in the last decades of the 15th century, Marea Bănie de Craiova, which became the second political institution (after the Court), in a relatively short period of time. At its beginnings, Bănia was a local, village-type institution, derived from the region community. When Neagoe Basarab became a ruler, in 1512, the Great Ban takes over the territory in the right hand side of Olt River, along with the ruling duties, and where they will draft documents that were similar to the Court ones.

In the second half of the 16th century, Marea Bănie goes through a crisis, due to the aggressive attempts of Turks to impose their ruling in Wallachia. Marea Bănie will reach again its top status during Mihai Viteazul's reign.

Craiova, at that time, witnessed a strong development; contemporary documents present the city as an important political and military centre.

Craiova will put itself aside in the Romanian politics of centralization as a positive factor, while providing to the Court a faithful boyar body and strong armies, present during the great events related to Union of the three Romanian provinces.

In 1593, Mihai was elected ruler of Wallachia, and the high office of Great Ban goes to Preda Buzescu. During the Middle Ages, Craiova had a large military and strategic role, as it was a place of military forces regrouping and site of launching the anti-Ottoman actions. There was an army in Craiova, mad available to the Great Ban, made up of the military force of the peasants in the boyars domains, high officers in Banie, freed peasants and paid warriors.

apud "Istoria Craiovei ". Accessed on May 4, 2012. <http://memorielocala.aman.ro/files/istoria.html>.

² Dongorozi, 1930: 156-173

³ The general census of the Romanian population, on December 29, 1930, published in vol.II Bucharest, 1938.

⁴ Nicolae, 1998: 52.

⁵ Otovescu, 2002: 47.

⁶ The data have been taken from the Register of Vital Records of the Jewish population, belonging to the Jewish community in Craiova, entered on 31.XII.2001.

⁷ The census results on March 18, 2002 for Craiova

http://www.edrc.ro/recensamant.jsp?regiune_id=1407&judet_id=1408&localitate_id=1409

⁸ Otovescu, 2002: 4.

⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁰ Idem: 43.

¹¹ Bălăican, Delia: 9.

¹² ibidem.

¹³ Otovescu, 2002: 47.

¹⁴ ibidem.

¹⁵ Nicolae, 1998.

¹⁶ Bălăican, Delia: 9

¹⁷ " 10 imagini representative pentru Craiova veche ". Accessed on May 4, 2012. <http://zeceintop.ro/10-imagini-representative-pentru-craiova-veche/>

¹⁸ <http://www.sfantuldumitru.com/>

¹⁹ Anghel, 2001: 18.

²⁰ Ibidem.