

THE BUILT PATRIMONY OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN CARACAL

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Abstract

Caracal is the most important locality in the Romanați Plain, significant crossroads of the road and railway communication lines.

The Jewish community in Caracal defined its location in the first half of the 19th century, in dependence with the business there, downtown on Ulița Târgului that will later become Strada Mare. After the 1892 large fire, when some of the Jewish shops were burned to the ground, the houses were rebuilt, with downstairs stores and upstairs areas for living, good spaces for a flourishing business and craftsmen workshops.

Thanks to the nature of their traditional occupations and their places of origin, Jews have eased the European openness, the access to technique and renewal, civilization, interest in training and definitely an increase in their concern for education. Since they were a urban type population, they also contributed to the urban development of the locality and served as a model for the rural population in the same area. Likewise, they brought a huge contribution to the diversification of professions and implementation of the technologies for mechanized production.

Keywords: *Developing city, Jewish community, urbanity, representative civil patrimony.*

1. Locality description

1.1. General data of inclusion within the territory and natural environment

Caracal is the most important locality in the Romanați Plain, in the south-east of Oltenia, a significant crossroads of the road and railway communication lines that provides the connection north-southward along the Olt river valley and east-westward on the Craiova-Rosiori de Vede-Bucharest axle.

From a geological perspective, the city is located in the neogene area of the gaetic depression, of a lacustrine origin, which emerged in the superior Mesozoic, between the Carpathians and the Balkans while they were forming; it is a sub-unit of the Oltenia Plain. To be more exact, it is in the eastern side of the geographical sub-division called Câmpul Leu-Rotunda.¹

As far as the weather is concerned, this is temperate continental, with sub-mediterranean influences, blending itself in the area of yearly average temperature of 11.2 degrees Celsius.²

The more important waterways in the region are: Olt, which flows at circa 12 km away from the city, Teslui, an affluent that flows north-east of the city, while the centre is flown through by Gologan stream, locally known by the name of Caracal stream.

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The natural (spontaneous) vegetation is characterized by the association between the one of forest steppe (meadows alternating with forest) in the southern and western parts and river meadow that is present in the Teslui and Olt valleys. Currently, this has been mostly replaced with the agricultural crops. The same characteristics are shared by the fauna.

1.2. Evolution in time

The favorable geographical position has attracted living there even since paleolithic, thus providing its continuity in time and space. The numerous artefacts (stone tools, worship altars, antropomorphic plastic art, household dishes), found on the city territory or on the outskirts are the proof for this permanence.

During the Roman era, there was a high possibility that one of the villages between Romula – the capital of Dacia Malvensis and Sucidava – the main establishment on the Danube during the Roman and Roman-Byzantine times could have been found there.

Later on, Caracal was part of the villages belonging to Farcaș principality, a site that was mentioned in the documents back in 1247 and geographically identified in the area of Romanai. ³ The inclusion of Caracal village into the domain of the great boyars Craiovești, present in the document of constitution of Wallachia state, confirms the fact that this site was at that time permanent and important, even before its documentary references in 1538.

In 1640, catholic bishop Petre Bogdan Baksic was stating that the settlement had a number of 150 houses and over 700 people, which was putting it apart among those 3000 similar locations between the Carpathians and the Danube ⁴ and that *"you could see the old houses of ruler Mihai, the one who fought the sultan, but they are all ruined now except for the church that is in good condition."* ⁵

The foreign travellers also said that the settlement was a *trading city*. Thus, Pietro Deodato mentioned that *"at around 1640, at the Wednesday fair in Caracal, many foreign merchants were coming here and a large number of cattle were sold."* ⁶

The statistics of 1722-1728, also known under the name of *Conscriptia virmondiană (Austrian Conscription)*, recorded the fact that the locality had 167 households, with 835 people. ⁷

Even though the Austrian administration imposed by the peace treaty at Passarowitz (1718) did not succeed to obtrude itself and Oltenia was abandoned after thirty years, the presence though of the Austrians in that region opened new development horizons, brought incentives and opportunities that proved beneficial in the long term.

In the short term, this period was indeed extremely tempestuous. The Turkish influences are opposed to the Austrian-Hungarian economic interests, Russian interventions and discontent in population reached high level and took a personal turn....

Another foreign traveller, Frederich Wilhelm von Bauer ⁸ said about Caracal, after the trip he took to Oltenia in 1770, that *"it was a city and boyar residence, with three churches, an administrative office and a fair located in a valley."* ⁹ At that fair, also called 'local fair', an intense business life was taking place. ¹⁰

In the 1831 census, Caracal was part of Plasa Mijlocului that had 16 villages and 1924 families. The same census presents Bold district as belonging to the Caracal estate, an autonomous property of the city, with 181 households. ¹¹



Image 1: Caracal on the Specht¹² map, in 1790.

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Image 2: The Caracal railway in 1912.¹⁴



Image 3: Palace of Justice, built in 1896.¹⁵

The Union of the Romanian Principalities and the new administrative organization in 1864 will bring major changes in the city economic life, turning it into an important trade center, a status that is mirrored by its buildings.

The first representative building erected in Caracal was the Administrative Palace, whose construction started in 1870.⁷⁷

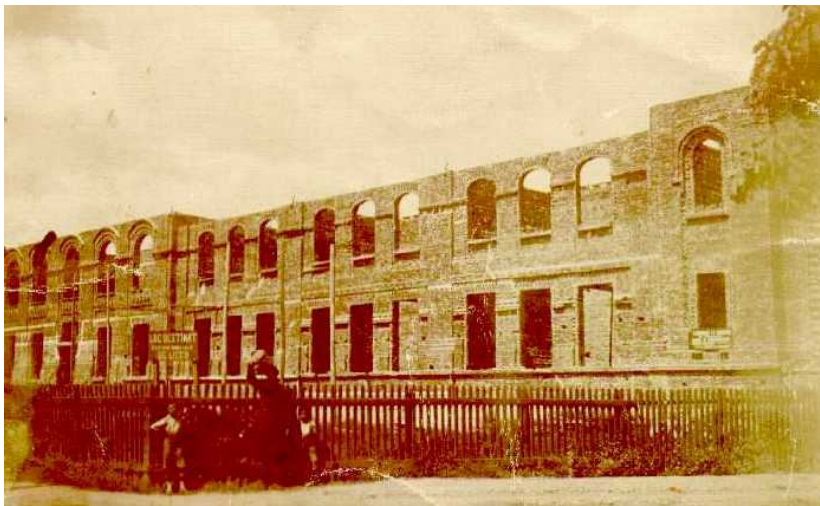


Image 4: The Ioniță Asan Gymnasium, under construction...¹⁶



Image 5:and in 2010.¹⁷

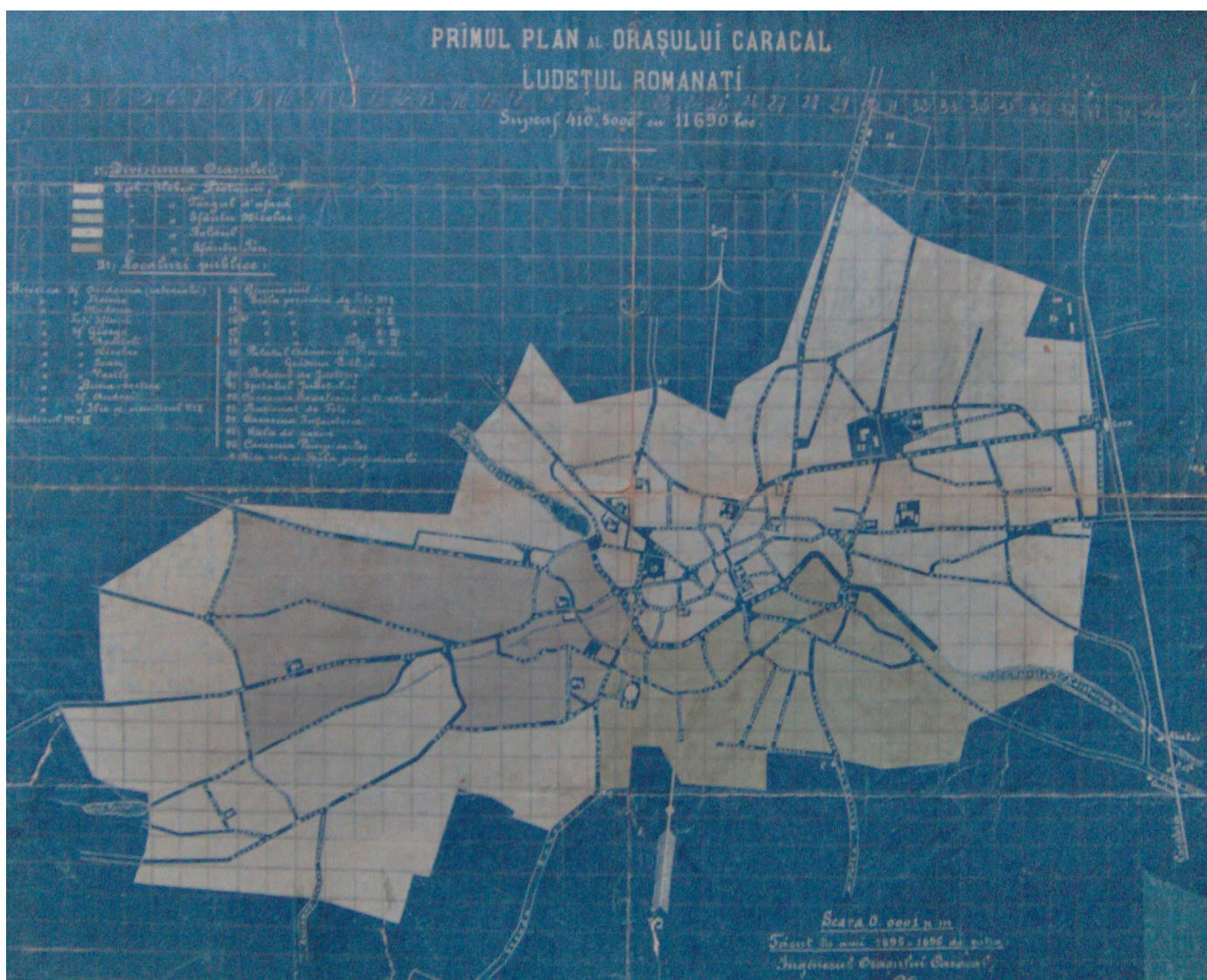


Image 6: The Plan of Caracal City at 1895-1896.¹⁸

The construction of the railway, first for the Turnu Severin - Craiova - Piatra Olt - Slatina - Pitești – Bucharest route (on May 9, 1878, the first express train was running from Vienna to Bucharest) and, later, from Râmnicu Vâlcea to Corabia between 1879 and 1889 (built by engineer Mihail Râmniceanu and engineer Popovici), has tremendously helped to the city development. The railway station, built in 1886 by engineer Popovici,¹⁹ was expanded in 1894 with a new wing, including a restaurant, a medical unit and a waiting hall.²⁰

On October 1, 1888, the Ioniță Asan Gymnasium was ceremoniously opened in an appropriate building; this impediment will be removed by the erection of a new building, between 1891 and 1892, following the blueprint of architect Săulescu.²¹

Between 1935 and 1937, the sewerage and water supply systems were built in the city, after a project designed by engineer Edgar Rusu²² and the railway station building, in 1937, having been designed by architect D. Boruzescu.²³

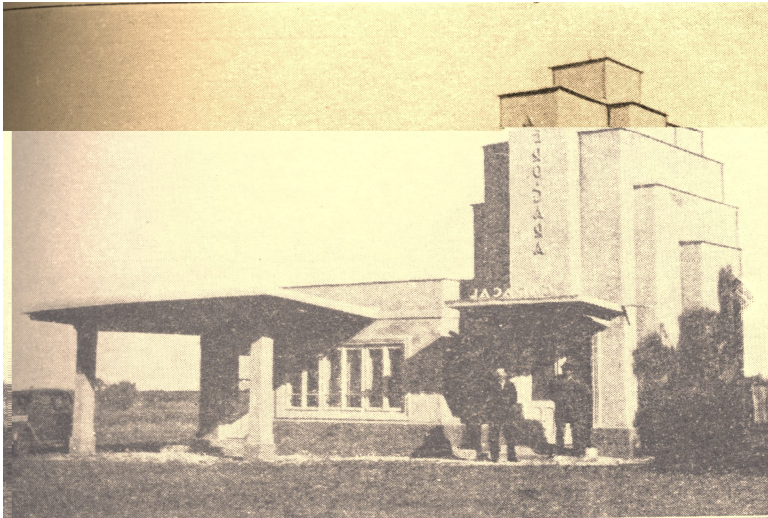


Image 7: Caracal Railway Station Building, 1937.²⁴



Image 8: The plan of Caracal City in 1939.²⁵

After 1945, the city will adjust itself to the new conditions, without though surpassing the prosperity of the previous times. The role of a trade center will be very much lessened within the new economic conditions, much more that the ,locomotive role' for the development will be taken over by the heavy industry.

The massive industrialization has not only attracted major investments and also the interest of population and migration to the new development centers. Amidst this competition, Caracal gave over the place to Slatina, a city that tied with it in the aluminum production and that claims its role of county capital. This situation has brought the advantage that constructions of an architectural and historical value have been maintained in a composition specific to this city, keeping its structure of the beginning of 20th century.

The aggressive systematization followed in the aftermath of the earthquake in 1977. It is an unfortunate thing that these interventions focused on the central area only. Practically speaking, this zone, built evidence and an environment value of maximum interest, was swallowed by the new Supermarket that borders the eastern side of the central plaza; the few buildings with no architectural value, saved from demolition, are hiding behind the blocks of flats.

1.3. Social, economic and political conventions

The city of Caracal, as any human settlement, is the built result of the action and interaction of forces of various origins and directions, during different time periods, which overlap each other, make layers, join together and mix themselves into a whole. Its geographical position has lured the settlement of a permanent population and also the economic interest of certain political forces, which interfered with its time evolution.

After a long period of time, the Turkish and, later on, the Greek influences were dominant in the economic life (mainly trading); but, starting with the 18th century, the interventions of the local boyars, the protectionist policies of the Austrian Empire and the Russians seem to prevail.

This resulted into the peak flourishing of the city, which extended until the inter-war times. Following the change of post-war political regime, the directions of the economic policy of the communist state threw Caracal into a dark corner, where trading activities stopped being a welfare source. Luckily, the city with a strong urban infrastructure and an urbanized population preserved its status from the old times.



Image 9: The plan of Caracal²⁶ city in 2007.

The post-december evolutions, which could have created the requirements for the city economic, re-launching, have not brought the much desired wellbeing, as it can be easily noticed. The lack of political and legislative coherence, as well the population inertia is a few of the causes that have hindered this re-launching. But, at the urban level, there was noticed a reorientation to selective investments; and the old constructions, which are part of the built and historic patrimony, were rehabilitated and restored.

2. The evolution of the Jewish community in Caracal

The presence of the Jews on the territory of Romania, with its ups and downs, may be considered a permanent thing, starting maybe with the Romans, along with Turks and Greeks, until the end of the 19th century – a time when the Jewish community started and grew up in Caracal. Very likely, the first Jews who reached Caracal were from the southern merchants, who were enjoying advantages and protection from the consulates (the last 25 years of the 18th century) and belonged – as Austrian citizens – to the activity circle of the Austrian and Hungarian agents.

There are documents about the presence of Jews in Caracal starting with 1838²⁷, where 27 southern Jews were registered. They were keeping their stores together with the other foreigners, in the *local fair*, where an intense trading activity was taking place.

In his Monography, Ștefan Ricman was thus describing the stores of the foreign merchants: *“most of the stores in Ulița Târgului look like the Turkish ones, with the stand out in the street, covered above by a window shutter, a roof to protect them against the rain and the sun. At night, the stand was closing, the shutter let down and the iron wire grating, fixed up on the inside with a long spike nail, was pulled across.”*²⁸

As a location within the locality, *Ulița Târgului* started in Cadrilater (central area) and was going north-east. At the end of the year 1892, a great fire destroyed a large part of those eight or ten stores in *Ulița Târgului*.²⁹

The evolution of the Jewish community until around the WWI witnessed an increase, according to the relevant statistics. In 1860, there were 17 Jews registered; their number goes up to 211 in 1899 and in 1912, it reaches 234.³⁰ That was the peak for the prosperity of the Jewish community in Caracal, as the years following were characterized by a permanent decrease in number.

2.1. Circumstances to encourage the Jews settlement in Caracal

Besides the advantages they were having as southerners, the Jews were attracted into that area, during the 19th century, by several opportunities, where the top ones are the following:

- The favorable geographical location for trade development;
- The existence of a population originated in the rural areas, at the beginning of urbanization and the concentration of a large number of rich boyars and merchants, holding economic, financial and political power, willing to witness an urban development and have full access to education and culture;
- The crafts and light industry were still fresh, so there was enough room for the special abilities of the Jews;
- The politics of King Carol, to develop and organize the territory, also included this locality and was providing access to a national infrastructure under construction;
- The existence of more powerful Jewish communities in the neighborhood areas (Craiova, Corabia, Calafat...).

2.2. Growth and dissolution of the community

The building of the Jewish community in Caracal has been firstly supported by the trading, and the areas that they were living in were in a close connection to downtown, a strong business hub. They have not limited themselves to this type of activity, as they also had medical doctors, chemists, dental doctors or teachers among them – honorary citizens who played an important role in the city life.

Thus, in 1874, Ralian Samitca and Teodor Macinca were opening in Caracal a branch of the *Samitca*³¹ publishing house in Craiova. Later on, namely between 1893 and 1899, Isac Barat opened a bookstore and his publishing house, in Caracal.³² Isac Barat was the President of the Jewish community in Caracal.

At the same time, in 1892, there was mentioned a name - Solomon Teitelbaum,³³ whose store in Caracal was trading jewels or watches (luxury items back then), a visible proof that the trading activities of them were more and more diverse. The Jewish merchants are the ones who bring and trade the famous sewing machines Singer, which will soon be seen in any dowry of any girl in the neighborhood.

The list of names of Jewish merchants and traders in Caracal include Rubin, Moscu and Haschel Benaroyo – grain traders; Wolf Basen- trade of textiles and clothing; Moscovici Elea- manufacturing store; the Haber brothers – traders of wines (they had been wounded in the war); M. Barat – stationery trading (two brothers, the company founders, died in the war); Marcel Grunberg-merchant; I. Segal-merchant; Simion Schwalb-merchant; Snap-merchant.³⁴

In 1894, in Caracal, there were registered 11,123 Romanian citizens, 434 subjects of other countries and 133 stateless people. From the religion point of view, there were 11,217 Orthodox, 209 Catholics, Protestants, Lutherans, 32 Mahometans, 230 Mosaics and 2 of other religious background.³⁵

Even though a large part of the population was still illiterate, the Jewish community was caring much about education and studies – in 1897, they opened an Israelite private school, led by Buium Lupu. Since the school did not have a permit to authorize its functioning, it was later closed and its students were taken over by the *Ioniță Asan* Gymnasium, along with the Romanians. Starting with 1896, the first public library was opened within the Gymnasium; 1,600 volumes in its stock of books came from boyar Nică Barbu Locusteanu, a first class revolutionary at 1848;³⁶ and in 1912, the Gymnasium will also benefit from the financial aid provided by the Romanati deputy, Romanian diplomat Nicolae Titulescu.³⁷

At 11 Plevnei Street, in 1905, the religious communities in Caracal opened, as a cultural institution, the Mosaic Confessional Sanctuary, which operated under the management of Carol Clein. The 25 students were coming twice a week to study the mosaic religion – until 1916, when the Sanctuary was closed.³⁸ The construction that was housing the Mosaic Confessional Sanctuariat was in the immediate vicinity of the Synagogue, which had been built shortly before, in 1902. The building is still standing today, at 2 Sergeant Grigore Ion Street. *"In 1942, the Department of Internal Affairs approved by the Order nr. 58775/1942, that Simon Scheifeștein, a Jewish Rabbi, come from Craiova to Caracal, along with his family, and settle here and fulfill his mission."*³⁹ For 52 years, the Sephardic Jew Simon Schleifștein officiated the services here. Later on, the care of the Synagogue, as well as the Jewish graveyard at 188 Mihai Viteazul Street (former C. Filipescu), was left to his son, Robin Schleifștein.

During the WWI, the Jews in Caracal fought along the Romanians and supported the army, both financially and by direct participation in the war. The commemorative plaque inside the Synagogue lists the names of the Jews who lost their life in the WWI.



Image 10: The Teodoru Houses, 2011.⁴⁰



Image 11: The Plaza and the former Caracal Hotel (in the background), 2011.⁴¹

The Association of Cooperative Business of Romanati, which was including 48 cooperatives in the county, was initiated in February 1922 and operated in the Teodoru houses, under the leadership of Ștefan Ionițoiu. In 1924, he will be replaced by Ștefan Ricman.⁴² Jewish remarkable citizens are to be found at around 1927 in public positions, such as: representative of the Department of Public Health, medical doctor N. Porumbski or Maria Șt. Ricman, the representative of the vocational education.⁴³

The census in 1930, considered one of the most exact one, registered a number of 118 Jews in Caracal.

The documents at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Caracal (1931) mention the drugstore of Maria Ricman at 52 Regele Carol Street and the dental office of I. Federmayer at Carol I Street.⁴⁴

The list is completed with the bookstores: Curuia, Sache Pavlovici, Librăria Isac Barat,⁴⁵ as well as the clothing store belonging to Ignat Perl...⁴⁶

During the Antonescu governmental leadership, the Jews were subjected to privations specific to the historic moment – some of their properties were confiscated, such as the stationery office of Mauriciu Barat, wine storage of Habăr Leopold or the clockmaking store of Marcel Grember, which had been opened since 1927.⁴⁷ Likewise, some were detained in the prison in the Libertatii Street, near the Palace of Justice. Others were sent to forceful labor units in Deva or worked at building the railway Caracal Bucharest (the new rail route).⁴⁸

In spite of all these, *“between 1940 and 1942, the population of Jewish origin contributed with various donations, to fit out the people in the army.”*⁴⁹ In 1943, four Jewish people in Caracal were benefitting from cards for free access to food, due to the fact that the Jewish soldiers were active in the Romanian army.⁵⁰

After 1944, along with the change in the economic and political environment, the city of Caracal, left without its main economic activity – trading – has entered a dark corner, and the wellbeing of the previous times was only sweet memories for the older ones. The wholesale trading with agricultural products was absent from the list of activities permitted by the new regime, and the retailing went under the state monopoly. A difficult period of time for the entire Romanian nation followed: nationalization, collectivization, forceful industrialization – all the above have coerced the population adjusts to the recent labor relations, and accepts a change in the professional area. This process has not been at all selective, as the Jews had to go through the same hardships as the rest of the population.

The most difficult moment was for the merchants when they had to be clerks or sale assistants (Elea Moscovici-merchant-clerk; Lia Schnit- grains merchant; Solomon Schnaps- merchant-clerk; Hari Besen –clerk; Vili Besen- merchant; Moise Blum- merchant; Sim Leibovici- clerkr; Erna Ghinsberg- clerk Jean Gros- clerk; Eti Gheorghe- clerk; Fani Naiberg- clerk; Aurel Milan- clerk; Lupu Blum- merchant-clerk; Milan- grains merchant).

After the state of Israel was constituted, many of them emigrated. Some others left for good much later from the country or to other localities.

As far as the range of the professions embraced by the Jews, even after the WWII, we can mention: watch/clockmaker - Lazăr Schwalb, Simon Schwalb and Marcel Ghinsberg; jeweller, Iosif Sleifeștein; Lola Ghinsberg, fashionista and Lazăr Aron beltmaker; Aron Leibovici, who had a mechanical shop; Gina Ghinsberg and Poldi Sleifeștein, engineers; Rubin Sleifeștein- accountant and Simon Sleifeștein- rabbi; Paul Pesch- sportsman-table tennis; Falia Aron-agent and Henri Bîzu- teacher.

Some of them have changed their residence place in the country, leaving after they had graduated college and been relocated for professional purpose, got married or followed other job opportunities made available to them. The names of the Jews who stayed in the country are as such (but not limited): Jose Blum-engineer PhD at Fundeni Institute, Bucharest; Zisu Aron – journalist in Pitești; Pușa Schnit- journalist in Bucharest or Heman Blum, who left for Botoșani, who was a male underwear manufacturer.⁵¹

In 1950, Avram Bernat, a sephardic Jew from Ardeal settled himself in Caracal, and he was one of the few survivors from the Auschwitz labor camp.

Currently, the Jewish Community in Caracal was broken up, leaving only three Jews – one man and two women.

A special role was played within the Jewish community in Caracal, same as ever, by the people who were involved in the medical assistance and care. Thus, in the 1853 alman, Natan Kernbach (or Chernbach) was recorded as “*medical doctor at Romanai*”. He got his diploma in surgery in Pesta in 1838 (senior surgeon) in 1838, la Pesta; he returned to the country the same year (or in 1842);⁵² in 1850-1851, another “*doctor*” of the Romanai county shows, by the name of Josif Suhamel, who had become master in surgery at Pesta, and who was appointed oberdirector of the army hospital. Still then, there was David Nassel, master in surgery at Vienna in 1846, about whom we know that he was dismissed in 1861 from the position of surgeon of Romanati county; in 1860, Anton Andreevici, graduate of the Medical School in Bucharest was mentioned in the position of surgeon assistant in the Romanati county.⁵³

During 1901-1904, there worked here veterinary doctors like Hugo Bauman – county veterinary doctor and P. Avramovici, city veterinary doctor.⁵⁴ The doctors were appointed by order and validated by a high royal decree.⁵⁵

Later, between 1938 and 1948, the medical staff was including Porn Leopold (also a radiologist for the medical unit in Brastavăț), a hospital radiologist,⁵⁶ and Ricman Vasile, a medical doctor at C.F.R. (Romanian Railway) and the Industrial High School.⁵⁷

For the inter-war period of time, private offices was a current practice; thus, we can mention the offices of MD Porn (specialized in Paris) for internal medicine, obstetrics and gynaecology, women diseases, venereal disease, X-ray. Similarly, there were dental offices in the city, such as: dr. Feodor Mayer- dentist, Rupnievschi Kazimir dentist, dr. Blebea Samoil- dental surgeon (at 287 G. Grigorescu Street), dr. Federmayer I.- dentist (Carol I Street), Ostrovschi Olga- dental office (Carol I Street).⁵⁸

From the information made available by Profesor Henri Bîzu,⁵⁹ dental technician Micu Leibovici, doctor Lea Schmidt, chemist assistant Mona Sleifeștein and doctor Pern, there were people of a Jewish background who also carried out medical activities during the post-war times, under the communist regime.

2.3. Characteristics of the Jewish community in Caracal

Broadly speaking, the Jewish community in Caracal had the following characteristics:

- The creation of the Jewish community is simultaneous with Romania's becoming a modern state;
- This community's existence spreads out on circa two centuries. During this time, only half of it will witness a coherent and active community, with a significant number of members;
- The central economic activities of this community are traditional, firstly related with trading or retailing (small merchants). This will not at all involve a strict limitation, since the performing of such activities with a major intellectual contribution – publishing house, health system/medical doctors, dentists, chemists; education, teaching staff – are all activities where the members of this community used to be 'pioneers', at least at a local level;
- The community has never been too numerous; at its peak, it was counting 200 members;
- In terms of location in the city, the Jewish neighborhood claimed the central area, where the business was really good;
- The relationships they entered with the other residents have attracted much respect and very often they were considered to have an exemplary moral conduct to look up to.

2.4. Values promoted by the Jews at a local level

Thanks to the nature of their traditional occupations and their places of origin, Jews have eased the European openness, the access to technique and renewal, civilization, interest in training and definitely an increase in their concern for education. Since they were a urban type population, they also contributed to the urban development of the locality and served as a model for the rural population in the same area. Likewise, they brought a huge contribution to the diversification of professions and implementation of the technologies for mechanized production.

It is worthwhile mentioning that the Jews, by their conduct, have contributed to changing the local mentality, creating certain opportunities of openness and communication with the outside groups

(whether another ethnical group or members of another community), as well as reforming the attitude towards women.

One of the outstanding features of the community is that they are extremely faithful to their adoptive country, good citizens, deeply involved in solving the problems of the communities they live in. To support this, there is their active participation in the war situations, where they set themselves apart. Also, it is a very well known fact that they remain affectively attached to the places they lived in and are true friends.

The human and intellectual values that they promote, in spite of the hardships they went through during their existence, make them a nation worthy of respect. The dissolution of the community after the war was hard felt by their neighbors.

3. The built Jewish patrimony

3.1. General characteristics

The Jewish community in Caracal defined its location in the first half of the 19th century, in dependence with the business there, downtown on Ulița Târgului that will later become Strada Mare.

After the 1892 large fire, when some of the Jewish shops were burned to the ground, the houses were rebuilt, with downstairs stores and upstairs areas for living, good spaces for a flourishing business and craftsmen workshops.

Thus, the Jewish neighborhood will be left with a few houses only, in Vasile Alecsandri Street, away from the central zone, hiding behind blocks of flats.

The demolition-related documents⁶⁰ drafted on this occasion provide information of great interest. Of all the area to be demolished, there were only two Jewish properties: the building at 53 Olteniței Street, lot 1, owned by Moscovici Giugea, built in 1852 and the house of Henri Bîzu, at 53, lot 2. The plans included in these documents comprise essential information regarding how the interior space was organized, used and structured.



Image 12: Strada Mare, as pictured in the epoch photos and recalled in the collective memory.⁶¹



Image 13: The Jewish district (here is Olteniei Street) before the demolition in 1979.⁶²

Fișa imobilului

Situat în orașul CABACAL str. Olteniței Nr. poziție 59
 proprietar MOȘCOVICI GIUGEA nr. 53

Plan de situație

DATE PRIVIND FOLOSINȚA ȘI STRUCTURA CONSTRUCȚIILOR

LOCUINȚA		ANEXE GOSPODĂREȘTI	
Nr. de familie	1	Nr. de persoane	1
Nr. de nivele	2	anul construcției	1852
Starea construcției	terafacare	Starea construcției	terafacare
Structura de construcție	scărmică	Structura de construcție	scărmică
fundatiș	scărmică	fundatiș	scărmică
pereții	scărmică	pereții	scărmică
planșee	lemn	planșee	lemn
sarpanta	lemn	sarpanta	lemn
invelitoare	tablă	invelitoare	tablă
pardoseli	scindură	pardoseli	scindură
finisaje	interioare+exteriore	finisaje	interioare+exteriore
Instalații interioare		Instalații interioare	
încălzire centrală		încălzire centrală	
încălzire cu sobe	terocotă - 2 buc.	încălzire cu sobe	terocotă - 2 buc.
instalații gaze		instalații gaze	
instalații sanitare	achiziție+rode boxe	instalații sanitare	achiziție+rode boxe
Dimensiunile nivelelor		Dimensiunile nivelelor	
	A. dest. m.p.	A. utila, m.p.	
Subsol locuibil	51.80	47.76	
subsol ne locuibil	51.80	38.88	
parter (A)	51.80	39.88	
etaj (C)	51.80	39.88	
mansardă			
Dependințe	10.40	7.09	

Image 14: Pos.59 House of Moscovici Giugea.⁶³

Fișa imobilului

Situat în orașul CABACAL str. Olteniței Nr. poziție 58
 proprietar BÎZU HENRI nr. 53

Plan de situație

DATE PRIVIND FOLOSINȚA ȘI STRUCTURA CONSTRUCȚIILOR

LOCUINȚA		ANEXE GOSPODĂREȘTI	
Nr. de familie	1	Nr. de persoane	4
Nr. de nivele		anul construcției	
Starea construcției	terafacare	Starea construcției	terafacare
Structura de construcție	scărmică	Structura de construcție	scărmică
fundatiș	scărmică	fundatiș	scărmică
pereții	scărmică	pereții	scărmică
planșee	lemn	planșee	lemn
sarpanta	lemn	sarpanta	lemn
invelitoare	tablă	invelitoare	tablă
pardoseli	scindură	pardoseli	scindură
finisaje	interioare+exteriore	finisaje	interioare+exteriore
Instalații interioare		Instalații interioare	
încălzire centrală		încălzire centrală	
încălzire cu sobe	terocotă - 2 buc.	încălzire cu sobe	terocotă - 2 buc.
instalații gaze		instalații gaze	
instalații sanitare	achiziție	instalații sanitare	achiziție
Dimensiunile nivelelor		Dimensiunile nivelelor	
	A. dest. m.p.	A. utila, m.p.	
Subsol locuibil	55.00	45.02	
subsol ne locuibil	55.00	42.34	
parter	55.00	42.34	
etaj	55.00	42.34	
mansardă			
Garaje 1967	15.95	11.83	

Image 15: Pos.58 House of Bîzu Henri.⁶⁴

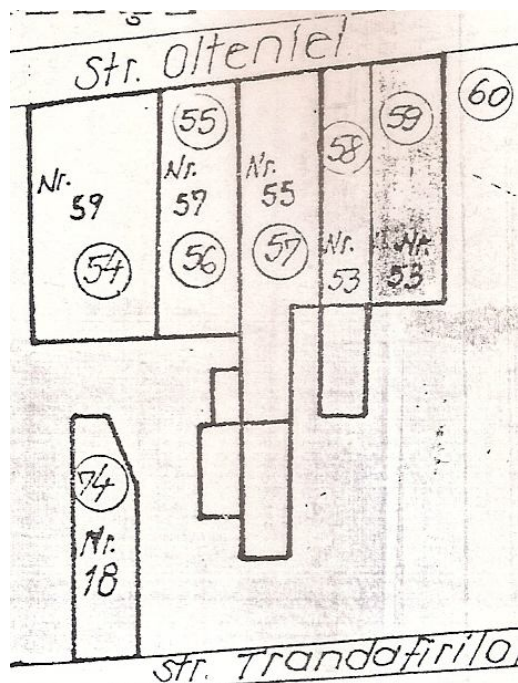


Image 16: Extract from documentation for demolition, the house of Moscovici Giugea.⁶⁵

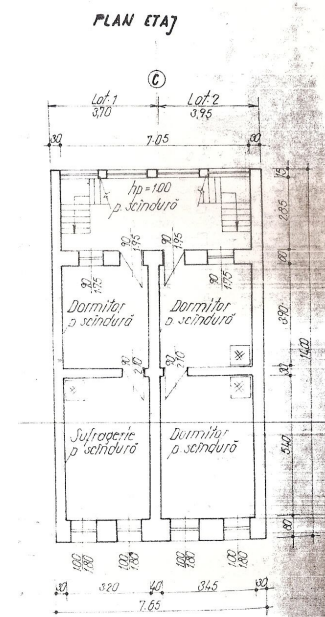
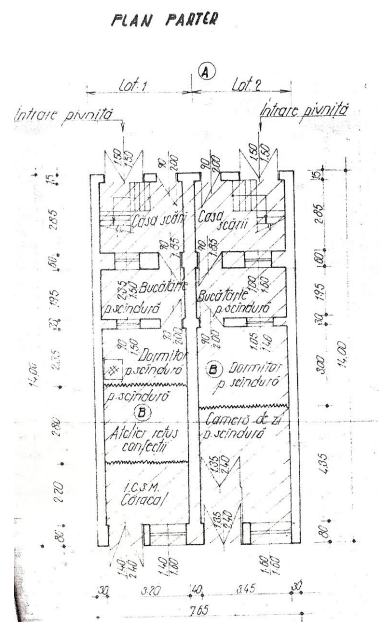


Image 17: Plan of the ground and first floors.⁶⁶

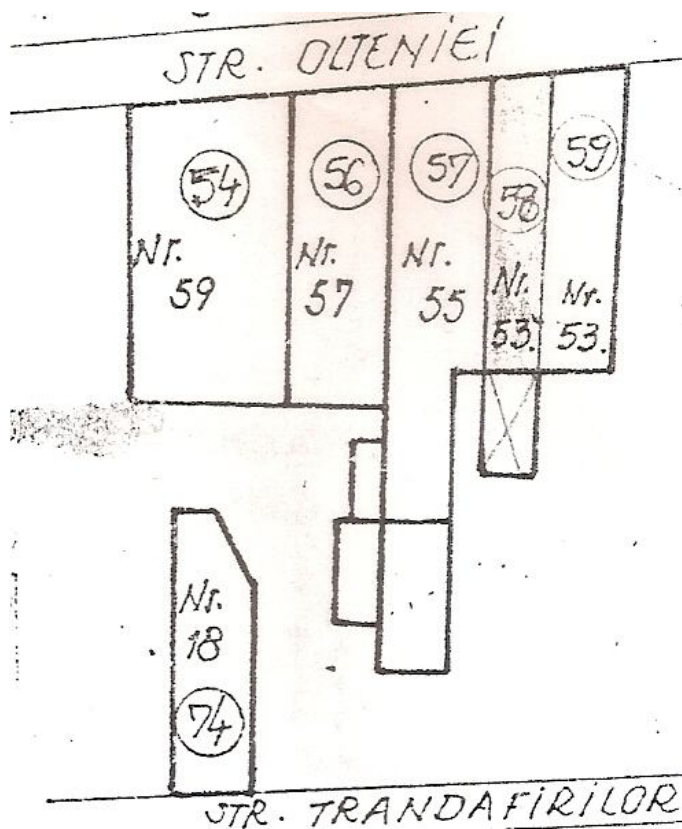


Image 18: The house of Bîzu Henri, in Olteniei Street, before demolition.⁶⁷



Image 19.



Image 20.

In Vasile Alecsandri Street, behind the block of flats built in the 80's, a few constructions survived and they had been associated with the Jewish merchants.⁶⁸



Image 21



Image 22

The successive changes of the property legal status does not provide conclusive data about the builders of these constructions, but the similarity between the ground floor-first floor patterns between the above image and the houses of Moscovici Giugea and Bîzu Henri, demolished in 1978, are an evident proof of its origin.⁶⁹

3.2. Representative patrimony

3.2.1. The Synagogue – 2 Grigore Ion Street

In 1902, the Synagogue was built in the central zone of the city, the Jewish district. On the marble plaque rigged up on its front side, we read the following text: "Built in the year of 1902, month of July the 2nd, following the approval of the committee made up of President I. Perl, Vice-president H. Kornbah, Auditor I. Veintraub, Cashier D. Retter, Secretary I. Zober, Members A. Mihailovschi, S. I. Leibovici, A. Veintraub".

The property also has a land of 695 sqm in area,⁷⁰ at 2 sergent Grigore Ion Street, in the immediate vicinity of Plevnei Street and Palace of Justice. On this piece of land, there is another construction belonging to the Jewish community, besides the Synagogue.



Image 23: The Synagogue in Caracal, frontage, facing the serg. Grigore Ion Street, photo taken in the fall of 2010.⁷¹



Image 24: The commemorative plaque fixed up on the frontage includes data on the year of building and the names of the remarkable citizens who brought their contribution to the construction.⁷²



Image 25, 26: The Synagogue in Caracal-images from inside.⁷³

The construction, withdrawn from the street alignment, was built from bricks, with a number of storeys equivalent with a storeyed building. The roof is made in plate sheet, and the exterior carpentry work is doubled by solid window shutters. In terms of architecture style, this construction belongs to the local neoclassical style, as its exterior looks modest.

Unlike the exterior, the interior is richly decorated, with painted walls and high quality furniture. Unfortunately, the passing of time and lack of regular maintenance have left visible marks, mainly in the interior. The infiltrations from the pluvial water have affected both the plastering and the interior decorations.

Currently, the Synagogue is included in the 2004 List of Historical Monuments, under code OT-II-m-B-08738.

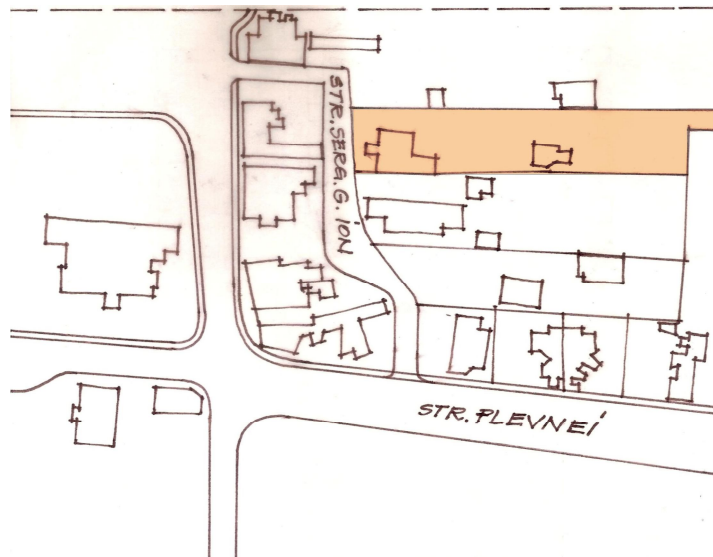


Image 27: The site plan with the location of the Synagogue.⁷⁴

3.2.2. The Jewish Cemetery, 188 Mihai Viteazul Street



Image 28: The Jewish Cemetery, 188 Mihai Viteazul Str., the entrance gate.

The Jewish Cemetery nr. 3 is located on the plot nr. 103 in the district II – reserved since the expropriation of the city estate.⁷⁵ In 1845, the Caracal estate belonged to the residents, churches and the city. Thanks to the agrarian reform law in 1864, a number of 109 people (most living in the city suburbs) were put in possession of land for house building and garden on the same lands that had been secularized in December 1863 – on that occasion, the land for the Jewish cemetery had been reserved.⁷⁶

A chapel was built here, of small dimensions (circa 6x12 m), at the ground floor, with bricks walls and covered in plate sheet, meant for the funeral ceremonies and rituals. The plan is symmetrical: the central area that generates this symmetry is for the ceremony; on the right side, there is a ritual area; on the left side, access from exterior, there are two rooms for the intendant. The carpentry work in wood has massive window shutters – it is in a bad condition, the walls are covered in dampness and the plastering is fallen off here and there.



Image 29: The cemetery chapel. View from the street.⁷⁷



Image 30: View from the cemetery.⁷⁸

The lack of a regular maintenance is visible, mainly in the interior where the ceilings are tainted, and the religious symbols decorating the ceiling are damaged. The rooms have wooden covering, and the furniture in the ceremony room is in bad condition. The entrance and exit doors are glass panels doors, and some of them are broken and not replaced with new ones.



Image 31: The cemetery chapel – images from inside.⁷⁹



Image 32: Simon Schwalb, clockmaker, deceased on 29.05.1962.⁸⁰



Image 33: Lazăr Schwalb, clockmaker, deceased on 6.06.1967.⁸¹



Image 34: The grave stone of Isac Silberman, 1883.⁸²

The cemetery land has a 3458 sqm in the area, with an opening of 25-30 m. This area is connected on its side a plov of agricultural surface of 1.54 ha. These surfaces, which are found recorded in the Agricultural Register 59/63, were given the property right in 2002, in compliance with the Act 1/2000. The current address is 188 Mihai Viteazul Street, former Constantin Filipescu. Nowadays, the land allotted to the cemetery is enclosed with a fence made of prefab concrete panels and the gates are metallic.

For Jews, the cemetery plays even a more important than for other nations – this is a written history book, it is the proof of their existence. Some of the stones have engraved not only names and dates, but also the profession of the deceased. For examples, the Schwalbs have four stones, two women (Iozeфина Schwalb, deceased on 6.06.1929 and Sofia Schwalb, deceased on 23.07.1940) and two men,

where the profession of clockmaker is mentioned (Simon Schwalb, clockmaker, deceased on 29.05.1962 and Lazăr Schwalb, clockmaker, deceased on 6.06.1967).

The same mentions are displayed on the following funeral monuments: chemist Moise Naftalis, b.28.10.1907 – d. 27.09.1959; doctor Lea Schmidt b. 10.10.1900; Moscu Moise Benarioiu, senior cashier.

Among the oldest monuments in the cemetery, there are the ones belonging to Isac Silberman in 1883 and Ilie Steiner, in 1898, which provide us information about the time when the cemetery started to be used, i.e. after 1880.



*Image 35: Grave stone:
Chemist Moise Naftalis.⁸³*



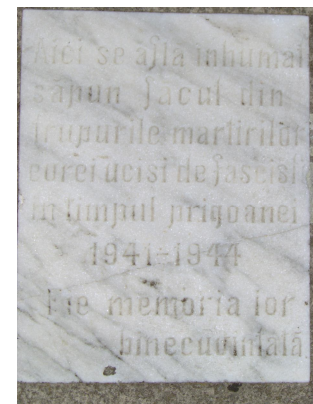
*Image 36: Grave stone:
Doctor Lea Schmidt.⁸⁴*



*Image 37: Monument grave for the
collective memory.⁸⁵*



*Image 38: Grave stone of Ilie Steiner,
1898.⁸⁶*



*Image 39: Monument grave for the
collective memory.⁸⁷*

In this cemetery, there are two monument graves for the collective memory: Guberek Marko Nony-born in Poland, 1919, survivor of Holocaust and an anonymous grave where they buried soap made

from the bodies of the Jewish martyrs, killed by the fascists' persecution during 1941-1944. They are definitely the most significant graves in the cemetery.



Image 40: Funeral monuments degraded in time or vandalized.⁸⁸

Some documents state that the number of the registered graves is of circa 120, but a spot inventory in the fall of 2010 revealed only 103. It is possible that some of them be so much damaged that they were overlooked – the truth is that very many of them are in a bad condition and need repairs.

4. Conclusions

The Jewish community in Caracal, with a confirmed history of almost two centuries, has had an evolution symultaneous with the city's, where Jews proved to have an exemplary urban behavior.

The contribution of this community to the development of the locality has constantly acknowledged and appreciated by the local population, being a model to look up to.

Once the city stopped to hold a commercial value, the Jewish community entered into a stage of dissolution, searching and identification of new opportunities of survival and development on other lands, in the country or abroad. The Jewish community in Caracal was dissoluted, and there are now only three people living in the city – two women and a man. Its patrimony has entered under the jurisdiction of the Jewish community in Craiova, which in its turn has taken over the duties of all the communities in Oltenia, since the situation in Caracal has not been singular.

The Cemetery and the Synagogue were the only ones preserved from the built Jewish patrimony – the latter is classified as a Historical Monument. As far as the civil built patrimony, transferred so many times as a property right, has been practically anulled by demolition, following the urban restructuration at the beginning of the 80's.

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Endnotes

¹ Dincă, Dana Roxana, Vera Grigorescu and Sabin Popovici. *Monografia Municipiului Caracal*. Pitești: Editura Tiparg, 2007.

² Iagăru. 2001:19.

³ Olteanu. 1997: 230; Diploma Ioaniților, DRH, B Țara Românească, veac, XIII, XIV, XV, B, (1247-1500): 2.

⁴ *** *Călători străini despre Țările Române* vol. V. București, 1970: 208.

⁵ Bălașa, 1986: 114.

⁶ *** *Monografia județului Olt*. Brașov, 1974 : 91.

⁷ Papacostea. 1998 : 53.

⁸ Bauer. *Memoires historiques et geographiques sur la Valachie*. Frankfurt & Leipzig, 1778.

In 1778, the cartographer Friedrich Bauer – an Austrian General who was working at that time for the Russian tzar –receives a request for two atlases (to include maps, along with explanations and data); one was for Moldova and the other one for Wallachia; for Moldova, he will do the maps only and for Wallachia the written part only.

⁹ Lică, 1994:7. apud Istoria României, vol.III. București, 1964: 58.

¹⁰ Otovescu, D. s.a., op.cit., 2002:67.

¹¹ Donat. 1999 : 64.

¹² Sursa: Harta lui Specht, 1790-extras.

¹³ Donat. 1999: 64.

¹⁴ Sursa: colecția Muzeul Romanăiului.

¹⁵ About this, Nicolae Iorga was saying in 1905: "the massive frontage is visible, all disproportionate, of a double house, where the representatives of the goddess with the scales impart justice, and this goddess is on top of the heavy frontage of the small building." The construction was extended in 1927.

¹⁶ Dincă. 2007: 55.

¹⁷ Source: photo taken by the author.

¹⁸ Dincă. 2007: 92.

¹⁹ AND-Olt. *Fond Sfatul Popular Caracal*. dos 719/1959 fila 1.

²⁰ ANR. Ministerul de Interne-Direcția Administrative. dos.206/1878.

²¹ Crăciun, Pătru. *Monografia Liceului nr.1din Caracal.80 de ani de la înființare*. Craiova, 1968 : 11.

²² Iveleanu. 1937: 27.

²³ Idem:117.

²⁴ Dincă.2007: 141.

²⁵ Dincă. 2007: 97.

²⁶ Dincă. 2007: 97.

²⁷ *Izvoare și mărturii referitoare la evreii din România*, vol. III/2. București: Editura Hasefer, 1999: 240.

²⁸ Ricman. 1928:129.

²⁹ Filiala Arhivelor Statului, județul Olt, Fondul a Oficiului Perfect de județ Romanăi. 3(1892): 18.

³⁰ Donugorozi. 1930:158.

³¹ Nicolae. 1998:28.

³² In 1907, the Printing House of Isac Barat will have printed the newspaper of the Conservative Party, Lupta.

³³ Otovescu. 2002:68.

³⁴ Idem: 69-70.

³⁵ Dincă. 2007:185.

³⁶ Crăciun. 1968:11.

³⁷ Filiala Arhivelor Statului, județul Olt, Fondul a Oficiului Perfect de județ Romanăi. 18 (1897): 59.

³⁸ Dincă,2007:156, apud Ștefan Petrescu, *Școlile din zona Caracal*. Craiova,1999: 327; Nicolae, Andrei, Gh. Părnăuță, *op. cit.*: 361.

³⁹ Dincă. 2007: 192.

⁴⁰ Source:photo taken by the author.

⁴¹ Source:photo taken by the author.

⁴² AND- Olt. *Fond CCI*. dos.10/1948: 48.

⁴³ Ricman. 1928: 215-217.

⁴⁴ AND-Olt. *Fond. CCI*. dos. nr.72/1931: 151.

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- ⁴⁵ *Monografia municipiului Caracal* : 121, apud AND- Olt. *Fond CCI*. dos. 77/1931:18.
- ⁴⁶ Ricman. 1928: 118.
- ⁴⁷ Dincă. 2007: 123, *apud* AND- Olt. *Fond Sfatul Popular Caracal*. dos. 5/1950: 261.
- ⁴⁸ information received from Prof. Bizu
- ⁴⁹ Otovescu,2002: 70, apud, *Activitatea centrelor evreilor din România*. București: Editura Alma Tip, 1998.
- ⁵⁰ Otovescu,2002: 189.
- ⁵¹ Professor Bîzu is one of the three members of the Jewish community who is currently living in Caracal; the information he has provided proved very useful for this paper.
- ⁵² Dincă, 2007:243.
- ⁵³ Idem: 257 apud Constantin, Gheorghe. *Istoria medicinei pe plaiurile române*. Craiova, 1999:111.
- ⁵⁴ AND-Olt. *Fond Spitalul Orășenesc Caracal*. dos.5/1901: 42.
- ⁵⁵ AND-Olt. *Fond Spitalul Orășenesc Caracal*. dos. 3/1919: 132.
- ⁵⁶ Dincă, 2007:261, apud AND-Olt, *Anuarul Medical al României pe anul 1938*; AND-Olt. *Fond Primăria Orașului Caracal*. dos. 595/1938: 48.
- ⁵⁷ Dincă, 2007:261 apud AND. *Fond Spitalul Orășenesc Caracal*. dos. 32/1943 : 15.
- ⁵⁸ Idem: 262 *apud* Constantin Gheorghe, *op.cit*: 145.
- ⁵⁹ Professor Bîzu is one of the three members of the Jewish community who is currently living in Caracal.
- ⁶⁰ The demolition documentation was compiled by CJP Olt, Designing Unit in Slatina, project 1727- Olteniei Street, approved by decree issued by the State Board nr. 467/1979.
- ⁶¹ Dincă,2007:57.
- ⁶² Extract from *Project 1727-Olteniei Street*, CJP Olt, Designing Unit in Slatina, approved by decree issued by the State Board nr. 467/1979.
- ⁶³ Extract from *Project 1727-Olteniei Street*, CJP Olt, Designing Unit in Slatina, approved by decree issued by the State Board nr. 467/1979.
- ⁶⁴ Extract from *Project 1727-Olteniei Street*, CJP Olt, Designing Unit in Slatina, approved by decree issued by the State Board nr. 467/1979.
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- ⁶⁷ Extract from *Project 1727-Olteniei Street*, CJP Olt, Designing Unit in Slatina, approved by decree issued by the State Board nr. 467/1979.
- ⁶⁸ Source:photo taken by the author.
- ⁶⁹ Source:photo taken by the author.
- ⁷⁰ City Hall of Caracal, Registration of Buildings, 1977-1987.
- ⁷¹ Source:photo taken by the author.
- ⁷² Source:photo taken by the author.
- ⁷³ Source:photo taken by the author.
- ⁷⁴ Source:a draft after the cadastral plans.
- ⁷⁵ *Vremea*, year II, nr.17/18 of August 1929; AND- Olt, Fund of City Hall in Caracal, files.10/1944. The City Hall of Caracal, a response to the Memorandum of the Department of National Economy, the Stock Inventory Unit, registration nr. 6742, on 23 X 1944.
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- ⁷⁷ Source:photo taken by the author.
- ⁷⁸ Source:photo taken by the author.
- ⁷⁹ Source:photo taken by the author.
- ⁸⁰ Source:photo taken by the author.
- ⁸¹ Source:photo taken by the author.
- ⁸² Source:photo taken by the author.
- ⁸³ Source:photo taken by the author.
- ⁸⁴ Source:photo taken by the author.
- ⁸⁵ Source:photo taken by the author.

⁸⁶ Source:*photo taken by the author.*

⁸⁷ Source:*photo taken by the author.*

⁸⁸ Source:*photo taken by the author.*