JEWISH MONUMENTS IN SLOVENIA

A report for

The United States Commission
for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad

by Ruth Ellen Gruber and Samuel D. Gruber
Jewish Heritage Research Center
November 1996
Updated April 2003

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The primary research for this survey was carried out in Slovenia in September 1996 by Ruth Ellen Gruber with the valued assistance of Slovenian experts in the field. Particular thanks go to Mitja Ferenc of the Cultural Heritage Office of the Slovenian Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia, who coordinated the preliminary groundwork and organized on-site visits at that time. The report also includes updated material on several sites from February 2003.

The authors are grateful for the assistance and contributions of Marina Zupancic, of the Cultural Heritage Office of the Slovenian Culture Ministry; Darij Humar, of the Institute for the Conservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage, Nova Gorica; Dr. Sonja Hoyer, of the Intercommune Institute for the Conservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage, Piran; Uros Lubej, of the Institute for Conservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage, Ljubljana; Janez Mikuz, then Director of the Institute for the Conservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage: Documentation Department, Maribor; Franz Kuzmic, of the Prekmurje Museum in Murska Sobota, and Irena Krajac Horvat, of the municipal government in Lendava, as well as other staff members of the above institutions, the Regional Museum of Maribor, the Regional Museum of Ptuj, the Regional Archives of Ptuj, and the Regional Study-Library in Murska Sobota.

Thanks, too, go to the late Mladen Svarc and his mother, Mrs. Alexander Svarc, of the Jewish Community of Slovenia, both of whom passed away since the Report was originally completed. We also thank Klara Stanic and express gratitude to Andrej Kozar Beck, the current president of the Slovenian Jewish community, and to Rabbi Ariel Haddad, Matja Ravitz, and Tadija Dobaj.

The authors thank the Honorable Warren L. Miller, Chairman of the United States Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad, and his predecessor Michael Lewan, and Jeffrey L. Farrow, the Commission's Executive Director, and his predecessor, Joel Barries for their support of this work. They express special thanks to Stane Mrvic, who was Director of the Cultural Heritage Office of Slovenian Ministry of Culture when the Survey was carried out, and to Miklavz Borstnik, who at the time was First Secretary of the Embassy of the Republic of

Slovenia in Washington, D.C.

I. THE JEWS OF SLOVENIA: AN HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

Slovenia formed part of the former Yugoslavia from 1918 until it seceded from the Yugoslav Federation in 1991 and won its independence during a brief, 10-day war. Bordered by Italy, Austria, Hungary and Croatia, and with a narrow stretch of coast along the Adriatic Sea, Slovenia is roughly the size of Israel, encompassing 20,000 square kilometers.

The Slovenes, a Slavic people, first appeared in the region in the latter part of the 6th century. Most of present-day Slovenia was ruled by the Habsburgs until the post-World War I dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Slovenia's present borders encompass territory that historically formed parts of Habsburg-dominated Carniola (central Slovenia), Styria, and Carinthia, as well as Hungary and Italy.

It is likely that there was a Jewish presence in the region in antiquity, when several Roman towns, such as Emona (near the site of today's Ljubljana), flourished. Chance archeological finds, such as an oil lamp inscribed with a menorah found in a cave near Skocjan and probably dating from the fifth century, confirm that Jews were present in the region at that time.[1]

There is no evidence, however, for continuity between this fifth-century relic and the twelfth century, when new Jewish settlers are known to have arrived in the region -- some coming from Central Europe (many seeking refuge from the Crusaders) and others from Italy.[2] Jewish communities existed in many towns from the 12th or 13th century throughout the territory of present-day Slovenia. Jewish communities are known to have existed during the Middle Ages in the present-day Slovene towns of Piran, Koper, Izola, Ljubljana, Maribor, Radgona,

---

[1] This lamp is in the collection of the Museo Civico Trieste. See *Jews in Yugoslavia* (Exhibition Catalogue), (Muzejski Prostor, Zagreb, 1989), 73. See also Attilio Degrassi, "Le Grotte Carsiche nell'eta' Romana" in *Le Grotte d'Italia*, October-December 1929, 11, 13; and Timotej Knific and Milan Sagadin, *Pismo Brez Pisave,* (Slovenian National Museum, Ljubljana), 29, 68.

[2] *Jews in Yugoslavia, op. cit.* 1989, 73; see also Yakir Eventov, *A History of Yugoslav Jews: from Ancient Times to the End of the 19th Century* (Tel Aviv, 1971), 9.

Slovenj-Gradec, Olmos, Celje and Ptuj. Most of these ghettos had well organized communal and religious organizations. Jews here in the medieval period were engaged in trade and money lending, and documents indicate that Jews in Styria also owned property, including houses, vineyards, fields and mills.[3] This prosperity ended on March 18, 1496, when, pressured by the nobility, the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian signed an edict ordering the expulsion of Jews from Styria and Carinthia. The order went into force on January 6, 1497. In 1515, the Jews were also expelled from Ljubljana.[4]

Under the Habsburgs, Jews were expelled from almost everywhere in the region beginning in the late 15th through the early 18th centuries. Many Jews fled to neighboring territories in Habsburg-ruled Italy and western Hungary, although some managed to settle in Slovenian villages.[5] Expulsion orders were renewed several times over the centuries, the last time in 1828. Restrictions on Jewish settlement and business remained in force until 1861.[6]

Only in 1808, with the Napoleonic conquests and the creation of the Illyrian Provinces of the French Empire, was it possible -- briefly -- for Jews to settle again in Slovenia. Few did, however, and reversion of the territories to Austrian rule in 1815 cancelled this possibility. In 1817, the Emperor Francis II forbade Jews from settling in Carniola.

Relatively few Jews moved back in the late 18th, 19th and 20th centuries.[7] Jews settled again in Carniola only in the latter part of the 19th century. In the census of 1880, 96 Jews are listed, with the number increasing to 146 in 1910. Widespread anti-Semitism stopped further growth of the Jewish community. In the late 18th century, meanwhile, a small number of Jews moved to

---

[3] *Jews in Yugoslavia*, *op. cit.* For detailed information on Medieval Jewish settlement and history in Slovenia, see also see the articles in Fris, Darko (ed). *Review for History and Ethnography/Judovski Zbornik*. Maribor, 2000

[4] *A History of Yugoslav Jews, op. cit.*, 10.

[5] *Jews in Yugoslavia, op. cit.*, 73.

[6] *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Vol. 15, 466.

[7] For a description of the tiny Jewish presence in one of the communities where they settled, the town of Ajdovscina, see Giuseppe Bolaffio, "Un Piccolo Nucleo Ebraico in Aidussina ai Confini della Venezio Giulia" in Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, ed., *Gli Ebrei a Gorizia e a Trieste tra 'Ancien Regime" ed Emancipazione* (Del Bianco Editore, Udine, 1984), 47-50.

what is now the Slovenian region of Prekmurje, then a part of Hungary, settling in the towns of Murska Sobota, Beltinci and Lendava. This region became the main Jewish center of what is today Slovenia.

Unlike other places in Central Europe where Jews were periodically expelled and then readmitted, Jews did not return to the Slovenian settlements and the ghettoes were not renewed. For this reason there are few identifiable Jewish monuments in Slovenia today.

In a few towns, such as Piran, Maribor and Ljubljana, street names still give an indication of the area of Jewish settlement. Sites of former Jewish quarters are known in other towns, including Ptuj and Koper. In Maribor, the remains of a medieval synagogue were identified, and the building was restored. Several medieval Jewish tombstones or fragments have been found. And doubtless, some older structures that once served the medieval Jewish population also survive in other localities. In addition, the later 18th and 19th century Jewish communities in Prekmurje have left more modern traces. Communities in Lendava and Murska Sobota flourished until the Holocaust.

II. SLOVENIAN JEWRY TODAY

Today, in April 2003, the Slovenian Jewish community numbers 130-150, though communal leaders estimate that there are two or three times that number of people with Jewish ancestry living in the country. Most Slovenian Jews live in Ljubljana.

A Jewish organization existed in Ljubljana after World War II, but it was weak and carried out almost no social, cultural or religious functions. This changed radically in the late 1990s. Supported by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the community obtained a meeting room and began program activities.

Communal development was further galvanized when Ariel Haddad, a rabbi who is the director of the Jewish museum in Trieste, Italy, assumed the informal role of rabbi for the community in 1999. Trieste is little more than an hour's drive from Ljubljana.

In 2002, a team of Jewish and non-Jewish scholars produced a high-quality, scholarly, annotated Slovenian-Hebrew edition of the Passover Seder (ritual dinner ceremony) text, the Haggadah. It was financed primarily by the Slovenian government and the Joint Distribution Committee.

In January 2003, the community took another step in its revival when it inaugurated a synagogue – the first synagogue to function in Ljubljana in nearly 500 years. A month later it officially inaugurated Haddad as Chief Rabbi of Slovenia and took possession of a Torah scroll.

III. PROPERTY RESTITUTION

According to Jewish community officials, as of early 2003 there were no outstanding issues of communal property restitution in Slovenia. After World War II, decisions on the disposal of Jewish communal property in then-Yugoslavia were taken by the Federation of Jewish Communities in Yugoslavia. As elsewhere in the country, the Federation sold off abandoned and/or damaged synagogues and other property in places where the Jewish community had been annihilated. Some of these sites were destroyed; others were left standing. (Only two synagogues were in operation in Slovenia in the years prior to the Holocaust, those in Lendava and Murska Sobota. The Lendava synagogue was left standing, while that in Murska Sobota was demolished in the 1950s.) Jewish communal officials did, however, express concern that the former Ceremonial Hall of the cemetery in Nova Gorica was used for improper purposes (see below).

The question of ownership of private material assets that belonged to Jewish Holocaust victims who left no heirs remained unresolved. In 2003, Jewish community officials said the community was attempting to research ownership and possibly file claims on more than 1,000 properties. Some of these included industrial and other commercial sites that were owned before World War II by Jews who did not live in Slovenia.

IV. MONUMENTS

1. LJUBLJANA

Much of what remains of Jewish heritage in present-day Slovenia is memory etched in stone -- or in place names.

In Ljubljana, Slovenia's charming capital on the Ljubljanica River, two narrow streets in the town center -- Zidovska ulica (Jewish street) and Zidovska steza (Jewish Path) -- mark where the medieval ghetto stood. Jews were expelled from Ljubljana in 1515, but the streets are still known by the Jewish names even though few Jews have ever returned to settle in Ljubljana.

Jews may have settled in Ljubljana as early as the end of the 12th or beginning of the 13th century. The 17th-century Slovenian historian, Janez Vajkard Valvasor, wrote that Jews in the town renovated their synagogue in 1213 after a fire destroyed the previous building.[8] Some historians, however, doubt that there was such an early settlement, given the fact that not only had Ljubljana itself just been founded but also that Jewish settlement was mentioned only toward the end of the 13th century in other towns, such as Maribor.[9]

According to Uros Lubej, of Ljubljana's Institute for the Conservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage, the medieval Jewish quarter had about 30 houses, most likely consisting of two stories with the upper part constructed of wood. These were consolidated over time into the present 13 or 14 structures. The entrance to the ghetto was probably at the site of present-day Jurcicev trg (Jurcicev Square), and the bridge opposite the ghetto was the oldest connection between the two parts of Ljubljana on the opposite sides of the river. In medieval times, the river, to which Zidovska ulica runs parallel, did not have an embankment (it was built in 1913) and thus the

[8] *Jews in Yugoslavia, op. cit.*, 74.

[9] See Vlado Valencic, *Zidje v Preteklosti Ljubljane* (Park, Ljubljana, 1992).

level of the houses was one story lower.[10]

Judging from architectural evidence, the peak Jewish population in the Middle Ages may have been 300 people.[11] They were mainly bankers, merchants, artisans and also farmers, and the community had a Jewish school and *Beth Din* (rabbinical court).[12]

Zidovska ulica and Zidovska steza meet in an intersection in the middle of what is today one of Ljubljana's most picturesque and fashionable downtown areas. Located just off the river, it is an area filled with boutiques and cafes, some of them with outdoor tables with umbrellas. (figures 1-3)

Nothing is left of the original appearance of the quarter except the placement of the streets, and no excavation has been done to see what is left from the medieval period. There are no maps of the area before the 16th century.[13] Most of the buildings today are Baroque (17th century) structures on medieval foundations, with many of the facades from the 19th century. Some have dates carved over the doors, including 1846 (Number 3 Zidovska steza) and 1838 (No. 6 Zidovska steza).

Number 4 on Zidovska steza is believed to have been the site of the synagogue. After 1515, there was a Christian chapel on the site until the end of the 16th century. Today the building is a dwelling with business premises on the ground floor. The building, with a late 19th century facade, is set back from the curb and dates from after damage in an earthquake in 1895.[14] (figure 4 shows its appearance in 1996).

A few Jews settled in Ljubljana in the 19th century, but the community never grew to any

---

[10] On-site interview with Uros Lubej from Ljubljana's Institute for the Conservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage, Sept. 4, 1996.
[11] *ibid.*
[12] *Jews in Yugosalvia, op. cit*.
[13] On-site interview with Uros Lubej.
[14] *ibid.*

appreciable size. Before World War I, there was a strong anti-Semitic element, which expressed itself in the local media with calls for all Jews to be expelled.

There is a small Jewish section in Ljubljana's municipal cemetery; Zale (figures 5-10). It is a small rectangular plot, set off from the rest of the cemetery by a yew hedge about 1.5 meters high on three sides and a wall on the fourth. Its iron gates are marked with Stars of David along with Hebrew and Slovenian designation indicating the Jewish cemetery (figure 6). The Jewish cemetery is the only individual cemetery separated by religion from the main one where Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox and Muslims are all buried together.

A Jewish cemetery was established in 1926, but it (and its graves) was forced to move to the present location in 1964, because the authorities wanted to build a monument on the original plot of land.[15]

The layout of the present cemetery is the same as the original.[16] The size and simplicity is a testimony to the small size of Slovenian Jewry. There are two dozen or so marked graves (some for more than one person), all arranged around the perimeter of the cemetery on a white gravel base which surrounds a grassy lawn with trees. Almost all the graves are very simple, with a headstone and then a lower horizontal section (a slab or a stone curb-high enclosure), just stating the name of the deceased and date of death. One tomb marks the grave of an unidentified Jewish World War II victim. Many Jews, who were in mixed marriages, are buried in the main part of the cemetery with their families.

In the center of the cemetery is a small Holocaust monument erected in 1964. It is a horizontal, rectangular slab whose inscription says "Remember the Jews, fallen soldiers and victims of Fascism 1941-1945." It also includes the Menorah shield of Israel, with the word "Israel" in Hebrew (something that was very daring in 1964) (figure 7)

---

15 *ibid.*

Most of the Jews in Slovenia today live in Ljubljana. The Jewish community offices are in a large office block just outside the city center. It is here, too, that the first synagogue to function in Ljubljana in nearly 500 years was inaugurated in January 2003.

The new synagogue is located in a transformed suite of rooms in the office block. The tiny sanctuary has a modern, built-in wooden Ark, and a section of exposed stone representing the Western Wall of Jerusalem. One wall also is decorated with an inlaid stone sculptural representation of a Star of David. A light, openwork, wooden trellis sets off a women's section to one side of the room. There is also a good-sized function room attached to the sanctuary.

The Jewish community expects to use this synagogue as a temporary prayer room until it has the resources to find and obtain a permanent, stand-alone building or apartment.

2. SLOVENIAN ISTRIA

Slovenia has a narrow, 47 kilometer (30 mile), strip of Adriatic coastline at the northwestern part of the Istrian peninsula, just south of the Italian city of Trieste. The main towns on the Slovene coast are Koper, Izola, Piran and Portoroz.

Except for the Napoleonic period when it formed part of the short-lived Illyrian Provinces from 1809-1814, Istria was ruled by the Habsburgs from the 14th century until the end of World War I, when it was granted to Italy over the protests of the newly formed Yugoslav state, known as "The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes." Yugoslavia was awarded most of Istria and other Italian-held territories (including what is now western Slovenia) after World War II, and in 1954 it received almost all the rest of the peninsula, except for the city of Trieste and a strip of coast immediately to the north of that city. It was this settlement that incorporated the part of Istria which now forms part of Slovenia. (Croatia today encompasses most of what was Istria.)

---

[16] *ibid.*

Jews from Germany and elsewhere settled in the Istrian peninsula in the 14th and 15th centuries, and Istria is where a mysterious false Messiah, Asher Lemlein, made a sudden -- and brief -- appearance in 1500-1502.[17]

Protected by local rulers, Jews in Istria were mainly traders, bankers and money-lenders. Many settled there in the 15th century to take the place of Tuscan money-lenders, who were expelled from the region in 1451. Jews generally flourished in this role until the mid-17th century, when the institution of Church-run "monti di pieta" (pawn shops) drove them out of the money-lending business.[18]

Trieste, now in Italy, is the only town in Istria where there was a Jewish community after the middle of the 18th century.[19] But traces -- memories -- of Jewish history still remain in some smaller settlements.

2.1 PIRAN

Piran is a charming little medieval port on an elongated triangle-shaped spit of land poking into the Gulf of Trieste at the southern end of Slovenia's coast. English travel writer J.A. Cuddon called it "one of the most beautiful small towns on the whole coastline."[20] Conquered by Venice in the late 13th century, Piran retains a Venetian air, with fine examples of Venetian-gothic architecture and an early 17th-century church tower above the main square and port. The tower is virtually a copy of the bell tower of St. Mark's in Venice.

There is mention of a Jewish community here in 1483,[21] and Jewish settlement may have begun a century earlier.[22] Jews were not confined to a ghetto in Piran until 1714, but even before that

---

17 *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 9, 1100.

18 *ibid*. See also Cecil Roth, *History of the Jews in Italy* (JPS, Philadelphia, 1946), 124.

19 *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, *op. cit*.

20 J.A. Cuddon, *The Companion Guide to Jugoslavia* (Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1984).

21 Roth, *op. cit.*

22 On-site interview with Dr. Sonja Hoyer of the Intercommune Institute for the Conservation of Natural and Cultural

they tended to live around what is still called Zidovski trg -- Jewish square, a small space in the heart of the old town, which is entered through two low archways and surrounded by evocative, multistory buildings, similar to the ghetto architecture in Venice. [23] The buildings on Zidovski trg are mainly Baroque on top of medieval foundations. (figures 11-15)

In the 1980s, the area underwent considerable renovation, and the entire quarter surrounding the square was renamed "The Jewish Square Quarter" ("Kare Zidovski trg"). During the renovation, two newer, probably late 19th century, buildings were removed from Zidovski trg to create a more open space.[24] Nothing remains of the original medieval aspect of the buildings, which today are painted in light pastel colors. The Church of St. Stephen adjoins Zidovski trg (forming part of its north side), and some historical sources say it was built on the site of the medieval synagogue.[25] (figure 12)

2.2 KOPER

Koper (known in Italian as Capodistria), just south of Trieste and the Italian border, is a very beautiful port that was ruled by Venice from 1278 to 1797. The town has a distinctly Venetian air with its wealth of fine buildings such as the 13th/14th-century governor's palace, the 15th-century Cathedral and a 15th-century loggia on the main square.

Ruled by Austria until 1918, Koper passed to Italy after World War I and became part of Yugoslavia after World War II. Jews were known to live in Koper in the late 14th century. The first Jewish money-lending bank was opened in Koper in the 1380s.[26]

The former Zidovska ulica (Jewish street), is a short, narrow, slightly curving street of five

---

Heritage, Piran, Sept. 3, 1996.
[23] *ibid.*
[24] *ibid.*
[25] *ibid.*
[26] Eventov, *A History of Yugoslav Jews, op. cit.*, 12.
[27] Information provided on site by Mitja Ferenc of the Cultural Heritage Office of the Slovenian Ministry of Culture.

houses perpendicular to Cevljarska ulica. The street today is known as Triglavska ulica; earlier it was called via Formi, and before that was Zidovska ulica. (figures 16, 17) The second house on the right on Cevljarska ulica from the intersection with Triglavska is believed to be the site of where the synagogue may have been.[27]

3. NOVA GORICA (ROZNA DOLINA)

When new borders were drawn after World War II, the town of Gorizia, north of Trieste, was awarded to Italy. Its suburbs went to Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav part (now in Slovenia) became a new administrative center called Nova Gorica (New Gorizia).

Gorizia came under Austrian rule in 1500. It remained a Habsburg possession until 1918 with the collapse of the Empire after World War I. Jews probably lived in Gorizia from the 13th or 14th century. Many were bankers and money-lenders. Ferdinand I expelled the Jews from Gorizia in 1534, and the expulsion order was renewed repeatedly, but Jews were deemed so vital to the economic life of the town that local officials pressured the Imperial authorities to lift the ban.[28] In 1624, Ferdinand II granted the rank of *Hofjude* (Court Jew) to Joseph Pincherle of Gorizia.[29]

A ghetto was established in the town in 1698.[30] During the ghetto period, Jews in Gorizia began involvement in a flourishing silk industry. An official census in 1764 counted 256 Jews -- 127 men and 129 women, most of them working in the silk industry or as pawnbrokers, merchants, rag and ironmongers, and other occupations.[31] Jews who were expelled in 1777 from small

---

[28] Altieri, Orietta, "Note per una Storia Demografica degli Ebrei a Gorizia" in Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, ed., *Gli Ebrei a Gorizia e Trieste tra "Ancien Regime" ed Emacipazione*, (Del Bianco editore, Udine, 1984).
[29] For details see Maddalena Del Bianco Cotrozzi, "Gli Ebrei di Gradisca ed i loro Privilegi" in Zorattini, *ibid*.
[30] Cusin, Silvio G., and Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, *Friuli Venezia Giulia Jewish Itineraries* (Marsilio, Venice, 1998, 50. See also Roth, *op. cit*. 337, 328.
[31] Altieri, Orietta, "La Comunita' Ebraica di Gorizia: Cenni Storici," in *La Speranza: Attraverso l'Ebraismo Goriziano*, (Venice, 1991).

towns ruled by Venice "in the name of order and good governance" moved to Gorizia.[32] In 1788, the Jewish community comprised 270 people -- about 4 percent of the town's total population.[33] Even at its height, the community numbered under 350 people. Few Jews remained in Gorizia on the eve World War II -- those in the town, mainly elderly people, were deported to Auschwitz on Nov. 23, 1943.[34]

Most of the Jewish sites of Gorizia-Nova Gorica, including a synagogue built on the site of an earlier prayer house in 1756 (later renovated in 1894) and the former ghetto on todays via Ascoli, are located in the Italian section.[35] The synagogue was in use until 1969, when the Jewish community formally dissolved for lack of numbers and was incorporated into the community of nearby Trieste. In 1978, the Trieste Jewish community presented the synagogue to the Gorizia Municipality, with the proviso that it be restored and used for Jewish themed cultural activities. The building was fully restored by regional and municipal authorities and reopened in 1984. It became the home of a local Association of Friends of Israel. A small museum of ritual objects and memorabilia was established on the ground floor. In 1998 the municipality sponsored an expansion and overhaul that added historical panels, didactic information, multi-media installations and a separate room devoted to Gorizia's most famous Jewish native, Carlo Michelstaedter, an early 20th century poet, painter and philosopher who committed suicide in 1910.

Gorizia's historic Jewish cemetery is on the Slovenian side of the border, in the suburb of Rozna Dolina (Rose Valley -- Valdirose in Italian) a few hundred yards from the main border crossing point. It is a roughly triangular site encompassing 5,652 square meters, enclosed by a thick masonry wall, one part of which has a red-tiled upper surface. It is set in a beautiful location, a low-lying spot with gentle green wooded hills in the background. The site is separated from the

[32] Roth, *op. cit.*, 416.
[33] Altieri, "Note per una Storia Demografica," *op. cit.*, and Annie Sacerdoti and Luca Fiorentino, *Guida all'Italia Ebraica*, (Marietti, Genoa, 1986) 164.
[34] Altieri, "La Comunita' Ebraica di Gorizia: Cenni Storici," *op. cit.*
[35] On Gorizia's Jewish quarter, see Silvio G. Cusin and Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, *Friuli Venezia Giulia Jewish Itineraries* op. cit. 48 ff.

former Ceremonial Hall by a little stream. The main entrance is an iron gate with a menorah motif, located at the "base" of the triangle (or shortest side of the lozenge), near the Ceremonial Hall. A secondary entrance is near the "point" of the triangle via a gate in the wall which is reached by a footbridge over the stream. (figures 19-30) A big highway overpass parallels the gated "base" of the cemetery, affording a good view of the site from above.

There are approximately 900 tombstones, some of which were found outside the current walls of the cemetery and some of which were brought to the present site from the earlier, older cemetery, in 1881 and moved inside the present cemetery walls during road construction in the 1980s. A census of stones was made in 1876, at which time 692 were noted. This list was updated over the years, and a later census in 1932 counted 878 stones. These lists are kept in the archives of the Jewish community in Trieste. They also contain notations which give biographical information about some of the people buried in the cemetery, as well as transcriptions or translations of some of the epitaphs.[36]

The cemetery in its present state has been mapped in detail, to show topography and also the position of each tombstone and monument, and each of the grave markers has been photographed.

According to Angelo Vivian, citing a list of tombstones made at the time of the 1876 census, the earliest tombstone in the cemetery dates from 1371 but does not represent a local burial. Instead, the monument to "Regina, daughter of Zerach, wife of Benedetto" was brought from Maribor to Gorizia in 1831 by Salomon Luzzatto.[37]

Sources cited by Vivian and by Darij Humar from the Institute for Conservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage at Nova Gorica break down the legible local inscriptions on the stones into

[36] For detailed information on the cemetery and these census counts, see M. Elisabetta Loricchio, "Valdirose il cimitero perduto", in *La Speranza*, *op. cit.*, Angelo Vivian, "Il Cimitero Israelitico di Nova Goriza" in Zorattini, (ed.), *op. cit*. 91-98, and Dusan Ogrin, "Zidovsko pokopalisce v Novi Gorici: pomemben spomenik pokopaliske kulture", in *Srecanje*, No. 35/36, 1972, 33-40.

[37] Vivian, "Il Cimitero Israelitico di Nova Goriza" *op. cit*.

four periods:[38]

-- FIRST PERIOD -- 13th-15th centuries: one inscription from 1406 (Levi Joshua of Isach, a stone found in 1865 in the atrium of a house in piazza del Duomo), and one from 1450, probably commemorating a member of the Morpurgo family.

-- SECOND PERIOD -- 16th-17th centuries: one inscription from 1617 honoring a member of the Jona family on a stone found in a house in the town, and one inscription from 1652 on a stone which Vivian notes is believed to be the oldest identified stone from the current cemetery.

-- THIRD PERIOD -- The years 1732-1828: sixteen stones transferred from the old cemetery to the new or current cemetery in 1881.

-- FOURTH PERIOD -- From 1829 to the present: Approximately 900 stones, with inscriptions in Hebrew, Hebrew and Italian, or simply Italian. The last burials are from during World War II, and there are tombs in memory of Auschwitz victims.

Most of the stones are low -- some of them knee-high or lower -- grey markers (I was told they were carved from local sandstone), with flat rectangular or square faces and rounded tops. Some of them are very thick, presenting a massive three dimensional form. (In this, they are somewhat reminiscent of the older gravestones in the Jewish cemetery in Sarajevo.) For most, the only decoration is the epitaph and date of death, framed within a border. A very few of the older stones have slightly more elaborate shapes, some with scalloped curves. Erosion is taking its toll, and many are scarcely legible. Many of the stones have numbers carved on them -- from the 1876 or 1932 census.

One of the older stones, near the "point" of the triangle at the back of the cemetery, has an unusual form -- a round ball on a low cylindrical base, vaguely resembling a turban. The epitaph

[38] On-site interview with Darij Humar, Sept. 3, 1996, which is the source of most of the information in this section.

is on the round base. In a 1972 article in a Yugoslav magazine, Dusan Ogrin noted that this stone resembled the gravestones of men in Muslim cemeteries.[39]

Among the few tombstones with decorative carving are tombs of several members of the important Morpurgo family (originating in Maribor – called "Marburg" in German), which show the Morpurgo family emblem of Jonah in the mouth of the whale. (figures 27, 28) The Morpurgos were the most important (and at one time the most numerous) Jewish family in Gorizia.[40] At the time of the 1876 tombstone census, some 139 of the 692 tombs listed were of the Morpurgo family, followed by 127 from the Gentilli family, 80 from the Luzzatto family, 56 from the Pincherle family, 37 from the Senigaglia family, 34 from the Bolaffio family, 23 from the Jona family, 17 from the Richetti family, 10 from the Dorfles family, seven from the Michelstaedter family, six from the Reggio family, five from the Pavia family, two from the Windspach family and one each from the Schnabl and Schonheit families.[41]

Carved decoration on the tombs include a few Levite pitchers, and one stone fragment lying on the ground near the main entrance bears a winged head, like an angel, as seen in some Sephardic tombs (and also in Christian iconography) (figure 29)

The most famous person buried in the cemetery is Carlo Michelstaedter, the philosopher, poet and painter born in 1887 who killed himself in 1910 by shooting himself in the head. His posthumously published works are considered important as precursors of existentialism.[42] Carlo Michelstaedter's grave is marked by a simple upright stone, like a post with a curved back, bearing simply his name and dates. It is positioned next to the tomb of his father, Alberto, a businessman who lived from 1850 to 1929. Alberto's simple *mazzevah* bears the carving of a Levite pitcher, and a lengthy epitaph in Italian with a briefer Hebrew text underneath. (figure 25)

---

[39] Ogrin, *op. cit*.

[40] On the Morpurgo family see Edgardo Morpurgo, *La Famiglia Morpurgo di Gradisca sull'Isonzo, 1585-1885* (1909); and *Encyclopaedia Judaica,* vol. 12, 348-351.

[41] Vivian, "Il Cimitero Israelitico di Nova Goriza" *op. cit*.

[42] *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 11, 1497-98. See also Gallarotti, Antonella, "Ricordare Attraverso la Carta: Carlo Michelstaedter," in *La Speranza,* op cit, 87 ff. Also see the web site www.michelstaedter.it.

Italian sources say the cemetery was used until the end of the 19th century by other communities in the vicinity, in particular Gradisca.[43]

The cemetery is abandoned but relatively well cared for, with grass cut several times a year. The main threat appears to be from erosion. Apparently, there is no threat from vandalism. In the mid 1980s, the whole area was flooded when the stream separating the ceremonial hall from the cemetery overflowed its banks, but the stream was canalized and this threat is believed no longer to exist.

The Ceremonial Hall was originally built in 1928 and was in ruinous condition after World War II. The Jewish community of Gorizia (Italy) gave it to the municipality of Nova Gorica in 1977 in return for guarantees that the Nova Gorica municipality would maintain and care for the cemetery. The hall, which was basically a shell, was reconstructed in the late 1980s. (figures 21, 22) A simple structure with a small side part attached to a larger main building, yellowish walls and a red tile roof, it is still owned by the municipality, which rents it out as a cafe. There is no plaque to indicate its original function. Members of the newly active Jewish community in Slovenia have expressed concern that the former Ceremonial Hall is being used for an inappropriate purpose. They cited rumors that the café serves as a roadhouse and, possibly, even a brothel.[44]

4. MARIBOR

Situated on the Drava River near today's border with Austria, Maribor, known as Marburg in German, gradually grew up around a fortress castle built probably in the 11th century. Today, Maribor is a lively university town and regional center which retains a wealth of striking medieval and Baroque architecture dramatically situated on the river. Its recently restored

[43] Sacerdoti and Fiorentino, *op. cit.*, 166. See also Silvio G. Cusin and Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, Friuli Venezia Giulia Jewish Itineraries, op cit., pp 67-68.
[44] Conversations with members of the Slovenian Jewish community, Feb. 28, 2003.

medieval synagogue is one of the few synagogues from that era in central Europe and is one of Slovenia's most important Jewish relics.

This town in Styria was the stronghold of Slovenia's medieval Jewish population. A Jewish community is first mentioned in Maribor between 1274 and 1296, but Jews probably settled in Maribor much earlier than that. Jews in Maribor prospered as artisans, bankers, money-lenders and merchants, trading mainly in cheese, wine, wood and textiles. Their commercial interests extended to Italy, Hungary and Moravia, and they also owned fields, vineyards and houses as security on loans.[45] The success of the Jewish community of Maribor in the 15th century is attested to by the request of several Catholic families to convert to Judaism, something unheard of in most parts of Europe.[46]

Noted Rabbi Israel Isserlein (1390-1460), one of the foremost rabbis in Germany in the 15th century, lived in Maribor for about 20 years and held the title "Chief Rabbi of Styria, Carinthia and Carniola" between 1427 and 1435.

The Regional Museum in Maribor displays the medieval tombstone of Maribor's first known rabbi, Abraham, who died in November, 1379.[47] The 109 centimeter-high tombstone was made from a much older Roman tombstone, with traces of Latin lettering on the back and one side. The stone consists of three major fragments, and there is much repair work on one side. From the different calligraphy styles, it appears as if the main fragments may, in fact, come from at least two different stones. (figure 30)

Emperor Maximilian I's 1496 decree expelling the Jews from all of Styria by Jan. 6, 1497 included the Jews of Maribor, most of whom made their way to Venice and Hungary. Some, like the Morpurgo family -- who took their name from the German name of Maribor, Marburg -- went to Split, and more importantly, to Trieste, Gorizia and Gradisca, where they prospered.

---

45 *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol 11, 992.

46 *Jews in Yugoslavia*, *op. cit.*, 74.

47 Angelo Vivian gives the date as Sept. 12, 1379, corresponding to Rosh Hashana. See Vivian, "Le iscrizioni ebraiche

The Jewish quarter in Maribor lies in the old town near the south-west corner of the town walls, above the Drava River. The area is still known as Zidovska ulica (Jewish Street) (figure 38), and it is here that the remains of a synagogue were identified. (figures 32-37) This building, thought by the excavators to have measured 16.50 x 12.80 meters, post-dates 1190 as it abuts a wall of that date. (Excavations into the foundations of the building uncovered foundations of river stones possibly dating from Roman times.) Numerous fragments of stone with carved Hebrew inscriptions were found during the excavations. It remains to be determined if these inscriptions relate to the building, or are fragments of gravestones removed to the spot at a later date – a Jewish cemetery in Maribor was first mentioned in 1367.

The synagogue's earliest appearance and date are unknown. (Something of its late Gothic form could be surmised, however, and it may have resembled the Altneushul of Prague in overall appearance.) The structure was remodeled on several occasions -- at least twice before the year 1450 -- once perhaps following an earthquake that severely damaged the town walls in 1348. The original structure was rectangular in plan, and on the lowest level it appears to have been divided into two aisles by two square piers, creating a double-nave plan of the sort familiar from the Romanesque synagogue in Worms (Germany); and the Gothic synagogue in Prague (Czech Republic). This plan type was used, however, for many non-Jewish building types, such as civic halls, monastic buildings, and churches. It is also found in the basement levels of many medieval buildings where cellar vaulting was preferred for structural support and fire-proofing. Whether the double-nave plan was originally repeated in the upper level of the Maribor building is unclear.

When the Jews were expelled and their institutions destroyed, the synagogue was bought by the local judge Bernardin Druckher, who in 1501 converted it into a church dedicated to All Saints (it was common for synagogues to be converted into churches with this name, and for Jewish streets to be renamed All Saints St.). Druckher’s name is carved into the frame of a window in the northern wall. The building functioned as a church until the late 18th century, when many

---

di Ptuj e Maribor," in *Egitto e Vicino Oriente*, 4 (1981), 92.

churches and monasteries were closed as a result of Joseph II's nationalization of the Catholic church.

In the early 19th century, the building was sold and turned into a storehouse by the local merchant Anton Altman. The building was divided horizontally into two parts. In the second half of the 19th century, the gothic arches were demolished and the upper part of the building was converted into a dwelling. Pictures from the 1970s show it with rectangular, small-paned windows, a chimney, and what looks like a television antenna.

When used as a church, the upper room was an open hall, apparently vaulted with multi-rib vaults springing from the side walls, and the entire building was probably surmounted by a steep wooden roof. An annex was built against the north side of the building, possibly for women. Restoration work, completed in 2001, followed this model.

The sanctuary is entered from the west. A large niche set into the masonry of the east wall, presumably for the Ark, is the only physical evidence of the Jewish use of the building. This niche was presumably framed with some sort of carved stone or stucco architectural feature, which would have been approached by steps. Two tall lancet windows with Gothic tracery are set in the east wall flanking the central niche. These have been recently rebuilt, as one could only posit their original form from earlier photographs. Above the niche, a small round window provides further illumination. (figure 37)

The empty synagogue was used for exhibitions in the 1980s, but soon the building was shut because of unsettled ownership rights. In the early-mid 1990s, town authorities began a years-long reconstruction effort that was held up by funding problems. The delays, however, enabled researchers to carry out detailed studies on the building’s construction. The restored synagogue was inaugurated in April 2001 as a cultural center administered by the Regional Museum in Maribor. The intent is still to establish a Jewish museum and Slovene Jewish heritage center in the building. Curators would like eventually to purchase the small building adjacent to the synagogue for this purpose.

In 2002 the synagogue was visited by about 16,500 people.

The so-called "Jewish Tower", a tower built in 1465 as part of the town fortifications (now a photographic gallery), is near the synagogue across an empty space where the medieval Jewish cemetery is believed perhaps to have been. Its only relation to Jews is that it was next to the ghetto and thus used in the defense of that part of town. (figure 39)

The empty space between the synagogue and the Jewish Tower is bordered by a wall overlooking the river on one side and a modern building (one of the few in the vicinity) with a gallery, cafe, etc., on the other. In the middle grows a large tree that shades the public plaza.

The surrounding neighborhood of the medieval ghetto, Zidovska ulica, is an area of quaint, pastel-colored Baroque houses on medieval foundations that is slowly becoming the site of fashionable shops, boutiques, cafes and galleries.

5. PTUJ

An extremely beautiful town dramatically situated above the Drava River just 25 kilometers from Maribor, Ptuj occupies a site that has been inhabited since prehistoric times. During the ancient Roman era it was a strategic outpost and fortress at a ford across the Drava. Known as Poetovium, it became a prosperous Roman city extending along both sides of the river. Invading Huns destroyed it in the fifth century, and the site was then settled by Slavs who had migrated into the region.

The more modern history of the town stems from the first part of the 12th century, when Archbishop Conrad I rebuilt it. Ptuj became a center of the wine trade (the surrounding region is still one of Slovenia's most famous wine-growing regions) and a mint was established there in 1225. Less than a century later, a bridge was built across the Drava.

Jews lived in Ptuj from the second half of the 13th century and possibly earlier. The first documentary evidence dates from 1286 and records the sale of a house to the Jew Jakob and his wife, Gnanna, for the sum of forty silver marks. Four Christians and four Jews were listed as witnesses to the sale. Jews in Ptuj must have had communal organizations including a cemetery by around that time or a little later, as the well-preserved medieval tombstone of Asher David Bar Moshe, dating from 1303 (?), survives[48] and is displayed in the Regional Museum. The gravestone, possibly reworked from a Roman grave monument, is a massive upright rectangular block on a pedestal-like base, with the epitaph framed by a raised border. An iron ring is embedded on top of the stone. (figure 41)

Also displayed in the museum are fragments of half a dozen other old gravestones, with vigorous inscriptions. The Institute for Conservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage also has a fragment of a Jewish tombstone that was found in 1994 during rescue archeology excavations of the foundation of a 17th century Capuchin monastery outside town (now the site of a parking lot). The stone, about 16"x 10"x 6", had been used as building material. According to Dr. Ada Yardini of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, the fragmentary inscription reads:

"here was/were bu[ried]
Hanina (?)
Lady Hanna"

The Provincial archives in Ptuj include several documents testifying to the medieval Jewish presence in the town, including that first mention of the sale of the house in 1286. Jews had their own judge, the first mentioned being Andre Walher in 1333. The town statute of 1376 dealt with the rights and position of Jews in the town. In addition to mentioning the Jewish judge, it forbade Jews to run taverns and carry out trade and regulated money-lending, which was the

[48] This is sometimes dated 1103, but 1303 is the more likely and believable date. See Zvi Avneri, ed., *Germania Judaica, Band II, von 1238 bis zur mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts* (J.C.B. Mohr, Tubingen, 1968), 651. In "Il Cimitero Israelitico di Nova Gorica, *op. cit*., Vivian notes two tombstones in Ptuj from 1327 and 1343, but does not note the date 1303. See A. Vivian, "iscrizioni ebraiche," *op. cit*.

principal activity of Ptuj Jews.[49]

A *Judengasse* (Jewish Street) was first mentioned in Ptuj in 1344. Christians also lived here at the time.[50] It was last mentioned as a *Judengasse* in 1429 and was already known as Allerheiligengasse (All Saints Street) in 1441, indicating that the Jews may already for the most part have left Ptuj by that time.[51] The site where it was located is today a rather wide but angled street called Jadranska, which leads down toward the river from the main square (figure 40), where a 15-foot-high Roman funeral monolith from the 2nd century, beautifully carved with a scene of Orpheus and his lute, stands in front of a graceful bell tower. The buildings on Jadranska Street are mostly 2-story dwellings with 17th, 18th and 19th century facades in pastel colors. The synagogue -- sited at what today is a dwelling at Jadranska 9 -- was turned into All Saints Church around 1441 or earlier. This church can be seen in a painting of the town by Franz Josef Fellner done in 1766, but by 1786 the church also was gone. In 1840, the site is known to have been occupied by a normal house.[52]

6. PREKMURJE

Slovenia's Prekmurje region comprises the northeast corner of the country, bordering on Austria to the northwest, Hungary to the northeast and Croatia to the southeast, with the Mura River forming a natural boundary with the rest of Slovenia to the southwest. (Prekmurje means "across the Mura.") The landscape is flat or slightly rolling farmland at the edge of the Pannonian plain, bordered by low hills. The region is noted for its vineyards, wetlands and ceramics.

Prekmurje formed part of Hungary until the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918. It was occupied again by Hungary during World War II. The history of its Jews therefore fits the

---

[49] *Germanica Judaica, ibid*, 652.

[50] *ibid*., 652.

[51] Arye Maimon, Mordechai Breuer and Yacov Guggenheim, eds. *Germania Judaica*, Band III, 1350-1519) (J.C.B. Mohr, Tubingen, 1995), 1097-8. Information also supplied at the Provincial Museum in Ptuj.

[52] Information supplied by the Provincial Museum.

pattern of that of Hungarian Jews.

Jews settled here in the late 18th century from Hungary, many of them from around the town of Zalaegerszeg, not far across today's border. They went first to Lendava, close to what is today's border, then to Beltinci, a town 20 kilometers away, and then to Murska Sobota, about 10 km from Beltinci.[53] Their numbers swelled to some extent by Jews fleeing to Prekmurje after a decree in 1817 by Emperor Francis II which barred Jews from settling or living in Carniola (central Slovenia).[54]

By 1793, 60 Jews lived in Prekmurje; 207 lived in the region in 1831, most of them in Murska Sobota. In 1853, some 383 Jews lived in the region, 180 in Murska Sobota and 120 in Lendava. The peak Jewish population of Prekmurje was in 1889, when 1107 Jews lived in the region. By and large, Jews were merchants, innkeepers, bankers, etc.[55]

The area was occupied by the Hungarians in World War II, and more than 460 Jews, most of them from Murska Sobota, were deported to Auschwitz in 1944. The main deportation was of 328 Jews in April 1944. About 65 Jews survived.[56]

6.1 LENDAVA

The Jewish monuments of Lendava, a small town close to the Hungarian border dominated by a hilltop castle, constitute the most important in Slovenia along with those in Maribor and Nova Gorica. They comprise a 19th-century synagogue building (figures 42-48), a 19th or early 20th century building that once housed a Jewish school (figure 49), and a cemetery, founded in the 19th century, with a ceremonial hall and a monument to local Holocaust victims. (figures 50-

---

[53] Information supplied by Franc Kuzmic of the Prekmurje Museum in Murska Sobota, Sept. 6, 1996 and see his article "Naselitev Zidov v Prekmurju in Njihov Razvoj do Konca Prve Svetovne vojne" in *Evangelicanski Koledar*, 1993 (Murska Sobota), 120-123.

[54] *Jews in Yugoslavia, op. cit.*, 74.

[55] Kuzmic, *op. cit.*, interview and article.

[56] *ibid.* and also Drago Novak, Ivo Resnik and Herman Sticl, *Pomniki nob v Slovenskih Goricah in Prekmurju* (Pomurska Zalozba, 1985), 329-331.

55)[57]

Jews from Hungary settled in Lendava around 1773 (when there was the first documentary evidence). At the end of the 18th century local Jews gathered to pray at the home of the innkeeper, Bodog Weisz. In 1837, the community rented a house for use as a prayer hall, which had 50 seats -- 30 for men and 20 for women. In 1843, the community rented and then purchased another building, which was their first real synagogue.[58]

Construction on a new synagogue began in 1866[59] and this building, recently restored as a local culture center, still stands in the heart of town at Spodnja ulica 5. It is a boxy, rectangular brick structure with a peaked roof. The corners are decorated with slightly raised, flat pilasters.

Heavily damaged by the Germans, the building was sold to the town after the war by the Jewish Federation of Yugoslavia and was used as a warehouse. Work began in 1994 to renovate the building for use as a cultural center which was also to have an exhibition on local Jewish history in the women's gallery. Town officials wanted the interior to look like a functioning synagogue, and at one point authorities in charge of the restoration project appealed to the few remaining Jews in the town to donate whatever ritual objects or other material they had at home to the museum. They also (unsuccessfully) asked Jewish communities in the Hungarian towns of Zalaegerszeg and Szombathely to contribute items.[60]

The only original interior decorative elements remaining in the building are six fluted cast iron columns supporting the rebuilt gallery (figures 46, 47), plus stairway railings and a small niche in the stairwell. The one-time circular (rose) window over the Ark has been changed into an arched window. Two of the arched side windows (which exist on the south side only) have been lengthened and enlarged. (figure 44) The third (left hand) window on the south side has been

[57] See the web site http://www.sinagoga-lendava.net/index.htm
[58] Kuzmic, *op. cit.*, interview and article.
[59] *ibid.*
[60] Information supplied on-site by town official Irena Krajac Horvat, Sept. 6, 1996.

left at apparently its original shape and size. There is also an arched window over the door in the west facade. (figures 42, 43, 46)

Funding for the restoration came from the municipality. (Work on the restoration slowed to a standstill in the late 1990s, when construction began on a large, modern, new Hungarian Culture Center nearby, which was designed by prominent Hungarian architect Imre Makovec in a style using Hungarian national element.) The synagogue building now hosts concerts, exhibits, readings, and the like.

Near the synagogue is the former Jewish school, which functioned until the 1920s, a fairly nondescript looking building built in the official Habsburg style. (figure 49) The building is long and low, consisting of only a ground floor and raised roof (attic). Reconstruction of this building also began in the 1990s.

The two structures are located off the main street of town, with the Hungarian-style Baroque church steeple clearly visible behind. The street leading north from the rear of the synagogue has a short row of charming low, steep-roofed houses. Nearby are some fine examples of early/mid-19th century houses, but there is also a modern shopping center directly opposite the back of the synagogue, and the new Hungarian culture center also makes a sharp contrast with the older buildings.

A *Chevra Kadisha* (Jewish burial society) was formed in Lendava in 1834 and purchased land for a cemetery near the village of Dolga Vas, just outside town. The land was fenced in 1880.[61] Today, the cemetery is on a main road facing a broad vista of farm fields, a few hundred meters from the Hungarian border. The cemetery is surrounded by a chain link fence, and entry is through a ceremonial hall, which was restored when the cemetery was repaired following an incident of vandalism in 1989 in which 43 tombstones were damaged. The ceremonial hall has a big arched central door flanked by two arched windows and is painted pale yellow with a red tile

[61] Kuzmic, *op. cit.*, also material provided by Mitja Ferenc.

roof. (figure 50) Inside is a plaque commemorating the Jewish cemetery in Beltinci, which ceased operation around the turn of the century (some of its stones may have been moved to Lendava), as well as prominent members of the local Lendava community from the early 20th century. There are some 176 tombstones, about 40 from the second half of the 19th century with most of the rest from the 20th century.[62] (figures 51-55) Many of the newer stones are of black marble and in generally good condition. A number of them, however, have had the laminated photograph of the person removed. (figure 53) There are relatively few tombs with sculptural decoration. The older stones, which appear to be carved from local sandstone, show very bad erosion, with many faces totally obliterated. (figure 54) The one unusual carving is a winged head, very eroded, on a stone whose epitaph was totally obliterated. (figure 55)

There are several inscriptions commemorating Auschwitz victims, and in the middle of the cemetery there is a Holocaust memorial to Prekmurje Jews erected by four survivors in 1947. (figure 52) It is a simple rectangular horizontal memorial stone with a sculpted tree on the left side.[63]

Despite the incident of vandalism in 1989, there does not appear to be any current such threat (of course one can never be sure). The cemetery is well maintained, with the grass cut regularly. The main threat appears to be erosion, which has already taken a high toll on a number of stones.

6.2 MURSKA SOBOTA

Murska Sobota is the main town of the Prekmurje region. The site was occupied in prehistoric and Roman times, and the medieval town was destroyed in the mid-17th century during the Turkish advance on the region. Today the town resembles a provincial Hungarian town, with considerable new construction.

Murska Sobota was the home of Slovenia's biggest Jewish community between the two world

[62] Information supplied by Mitja Ferenc.

wars. The first synagogue, in a private home, was mentioned in 1860. That building existed, in bad shape, until it was destroyed in 1995. A synagogue designed by Lipot Baumhorn (1860-1932), the Budapest-based architect who was modern Europe's most prolific synagogue architect, was built in 1907/08 and demolished in 1954.[64]

The Baumhorn synagogue was fairly modest in comparison to some of the architect's other designs. He made use of pointed, almost gothic style windows, as well as architectural ribbing as decoration. Inside, slim columns supported a women's gallery, and the *bimah* (reader's platform), in Neolog fashion, was at front just before the Ark, which was set in a decorative tabernacle backed by a surmounting arch at the level of the women's gallery, which spanned the entire east wall.

The town's Protestant community tried to secure the synagogue around 1951 for use as a church. Local Jews were amenable to the plan, but no response came from Jewish Federation authorities in Belgrade, and the building was demolished.[65] Today, a modern apartment block stands on the site.

The Jewish cemetery, at the corner of Malanova and Panonska streets, dates from the 19th century. It was reportedly very overgrown and untended following World War II (though in a xerox of a photo from that period it did not look too bad), and it was demolished in the late 1980s. The municipality asked the Federation of Jewish Communities in Belgrade what to do with the cemetery, and, according to Franc Kuzmic, of the Prekmurje Museum, the Federation said if it was in bad shape and there were no more Jews living in the town, they could demolish it. (A small number of Jews were believed still to live in Murska Sobota in April 2003.) According to Kuzmic, some 38 stones were standing at the time, and 30 of them were auctioned

---

63 See Novak et al, "Pomniki," *op. cit*.

64 Kuzmic, *op. cit*. On Baumhorn see Carol Herselle Krinsky, *The Synagogues of Europe* (MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1985) *passim*; and more recently Ruth Ellen Gruber, *Upon the Doorposts of Thy House: Jewish Life in East-Central Europe, Yesterday and Today.* (John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1994), 139-184. Also, *Baumhorn Lipot epitesz 1860-1932* (Budapest: Jewish Museum, 1999), the catalogue to an exhibition on Baumhorn's work held at the Jewish Museum in Budapest in 1999. A picture of the Murska Sobota synagogue appears on pg 17.

65 Kuzmic, *op. cit*.

off. The town chose eight of the more elaborate stones of differing types and created with them a simple but striking and very dignified memorial to the town's murdered Jews on the site of the cemetery.

The site, a rectangular plot with a housing development on one side that encroaches on some of the former cemetery territory, is a grassy park (the dead are still buried there) dotted with trees. In the middle, seven stones have been arranged in a semi-circle, facing benches. (figure 56) At the street, under a big weeping willow, stands a fine black marble stone -- the tombstone of Edmund Furst, president of the Murska Sobota Jewish community who died in 1929. (figure 57) On the rear of the stone is written that this is a Jewish Cemetery and Memorial Park to the victims of Fascism and Nazism. It is a fine monument, though it might, of course, have been better to have left the cemetery standing and to have cut the grass and cared for it. The town, however, must be applauded for having put up the memorial.

In 1990, Franc Kuzmic put together a book on the history of Jews in Prekmurje. He also organized a small permanent exhibit on local Jews at the museum, which opened in 1997 and includes portions of Torah scrolls from the Baumhorn synagogue as well as a Hebrew-Hungarian prayer book and few ritual items. [66]

7. WORLD WAR I CEMETERIES WITH JEWISH GRAVES

7.1 STANJEL

Stanjel is a pretty little hilltop village about 30 kilometers to the southeast of Ljubljana. In the valley below, behind the railway tracks, are the haunting remains of an Austro-Hungarian World War I military cemetery. The cemetery was once extremely grand, with a broad central alley leading from imposing gates up to a massive Greek-temple style monument bearing the inscription in Latin, "To the best sons, the Homeland gives thanks", with row after row of

[66] See the catalogue for the museum: *Katalog Stalna Razstava, Pokrajinski Muzej*. Murska Sobota, 1997.

gravestones/crosses on either side. The cemetery was designed by the architect Oberleutnant Joseph Ulrich and is believed to have been built with the labor of Russian prisoners of war. Nearby was a military hospital and a rail line that transported wounded soldiers.

All that is left are the massive stone pillars of the gates, carved art deco-style with the years 1915 and 1917, the huge temple-like monument, and about five scattered grave monuments, including two twisted rusty iron crosses. All the rest is empty field. (figure 58)

Two of the grave stones are of Jewish soldiers, one, Dezso Steiner, apparently from Hungary and one, Solomon Gerschow, a Russian (possibly a prisoner of war), each marked with a Star of David. (figure 59)

7.2 KIDRICEVO

At Kidricevo, a few kilometers from Ptuj, is, as at Stanjel, a World War I military cemetery that has only a few remaining gravestones. Only one of these remaining stones commemorates a Jew, marking the burial place of Isidor Lowy, who died in August, 1916. The stone is decorated with a Star of David and Decalogue. (figures 60, 61)

V. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Altieri, Orietta. "Note per una Storia Demografica degli Ebrei a Gorizia" in Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, ed., *Gli Ebrei a Gorizia e Trieste tra "Ancien Regime" ed Emacipazione*. Del Bianco Editore, Udine, 1984.

Altieri, Orietta. "La Comunita' Ebraica di Gorizia: Cenni Storici" in *La Speranza: Attraverso l'Ebraismo Goriziano*. Venice, 1991.

Baumhorn Lipot Epitesz 1860-1932. (Exhibition Catalogue). Jewish Museum, Budapest, 1999

Bulfoni, Claudio. *Il Ghetto di Gorizia*. (Catalogue of exhibition, April 11-18, 1996). Associazione Amici di Israele, Gorizia, 1996.

----------. *La Sinagoga di Gorizia*. Associazione Amici di Israele, Gorizia, 1996.

Cotrozzi, Maddalena Del Bianco. "Gli Ebrei di Gradisca ed i loro Privilegi" in Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, ed., *Gli Ebrei a Gorizia e Trieste tra "Ancien Regime" ed Emacipazione*. Del Bianco Editore, Udine, 1984.

Cuddon, J.A. *The Companion Guide to Yugoslavia*. Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1984.

Cusin, Silvio G. and Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini. *Friuli Venezia Giulia Jewish Itineraries*. Marsilio, Venice, 1998.

Degrassi, Attilio. "Le Grotte Carsiche nell'Eta' Romana" in *Le Grotte d'Italia*, ott.-dic. 1929.

Encyclopaedia Judaica. Keter, Jerusalem, 1992.

Eventov, Yakir. *A History of Yugoslav Jews*. Hitahdut olej Yugoslavia in Israel, Tel Aviv, 1971.

Fris, Darko (ed). *Review for History and Ethnography/Judovski Zbornik*. Maribor, 2000

Gallarotti, Antonella. *Un Itinerario Ebraico nel Centro Storico di Gorizia*. Associazione Amici di Israele, Gorizia, 1996.

----------. *La Piccola Gerusalemme sull' Isonzo*. Associazione Amici di Israele, Gorizia, 1996.

Germanica Judaica, Band II and III. J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) Tubingen, 1968, 1995.

Gruber, Ruth Ellen. *Jewish Heritage Travel: A Guide to East-Central Europe*. John Wiley & Sons, New York 1992, 2nd edition 1994.

---------. *Upon the Doorposts of Thy House: Jewish Life in East-Central Europe, Yesterday and Today*. John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1994.

---------. *Virtually Jewish: Reinventing Jewish Culture in Europe*. University of California Press, Berkeley, 2002.

Horvat, Irena Kranjc, and Janez Mikuz. *The Synagogue in Maribor from Past to Future*. Brochure, Pokrajinski Muzej Maribor, 2001.

Jews in Yugoslavia (Exhibition Catalogue). Muzejski Prostor, Zagreb, 1989.

Katalog Stalna Razstava, Pokrajinski Muzej. Murska Sobota, 1997.

Krinsky, Carol Herselle. *Synagogues of Europe*. The Architectural History Foundation and the MIT Press, 1985.

Knific, Timotej and Sagadin, Milan. *Pismo Brez Pisave.* Slovenian National Museum, Ljubljana.

Kuzmic, Franc. "Naselitev Zidov v Prekmurju in njihov razvoj do konca prve svetovne vojne" in *Evangelicanski Koledar 1993*. Murska Sobota, 1993.

La Speranza: attraverso l'ebraismo Goriziano (catalogue of exhibition organized by Istituto per gli Studi

Ebraici della Mitteleuropa which ran July 7 - Oct. 20, 1991). Edizioni della Laguna, Venice, 1991.

Loricchio, M. Elisabetta. "Valdirose il cimitero perduto" in *La Speranza: attraverso l'ebraismo Goriziano*. Edizioni della Laguna, Venice, 1991.

Mlinaric, Joze. "Jews of Maribor until Their Banishment from the City in 1496." Informational material, Pokrajinski Muzej Maribor, 2001.

Morpurgo, Dott. E. *Inchiesta sui Monumenti e Documenti del Veneto interessanti la storia religiosa, civile e letteraria degli Ebrei*. Tipografia Domenico del Bianco, Udine, 1912 (reprint Edizione Brenner, Cosenza, 1996).

Novak, Drago, and Ivo Oresnik and Herman Sticl. *Pomniki nob v Slovenskih Goricah in Prekmurju*, Pomurska Zalozba, 1985.

Ogrin, Dusan. "Zidovsko pokopalisce v Novi Gorici: pomemben spomenik pokopalske kulture," in *Srecanje*, No. 35/36, 1972, 33-40.

Roth, Cecil. *History of the Jews in Italy*. JPS, Philadelphia, 1946.

Sacerdoti, Annie and Fiorentino, Luca. *Guida all'Italia Ebraica*. Marietti, Genoa, 1986.

Stanic, Stane. *Slovenia*. Flint River Press, London, 1994.

Tos, Marjan. "The Synagogue in Maribor". Informational material; Pokrajinski Muzej Maribor, 2001.

Treasures of Yugoslavia, An encyclopedic touring guide. Yugoslaviapublic, Belgrade, 1982.

Valencic, Vlado. *Zidje v Preteklosti Ljubljane*. Park, Ljubljana, 1992.

Vivian, Angelo. "Le iscrizioni ebraiche di Ptuj e Maribor," in *Egitto e Vicino Oriente*, 4 (1981), 249.

----------. Iscrizioni e manoscritti ebraici di Ljubljana, in *Egitto e Vicino Oriente*, 5 (1982), 93-141

----------. "Il Cimitero Israelitico di Nova Goriza" in Zorattini, Pier Cesare Ioly (ed.). *Gli Ebrei a Gorizia e a Trieste tra "Ancien Regime" ed Emancipazione*. Del Bianco Editore, Udine, 1984, 91-98.

Zidovski Tempelj -- Sinagoga (Jewish Temple -- the Synagogue in Maribor). Zavod za Varstvo Naravne in Kulturne Dediscine Maribor, 1994.

Zorattini, Pier Cesare Ioly (ed.). *Gli Ebrei a Gorizia e a Trieste tra "Ancien Regime" ed Emancipazione*. Del Bianco Editore, Udine, 1984.

WEB SITES

www.jewishcommunity.si The Web Site of the Slovenian Jewish Community

www.michelstaedter.it Information on Carlo Michelstaedter

www.sinagoga-lendava.net/index.htm Web site of the synagogue at Lendava