

The Jewish Cemetery as Jewish and Non-Jewish Local Cultural Heritage in a Rural Hungarian Settlement

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ABSTRACT

The starting point for the present study is the thematization of the concept of “Jewish cultural heritage” and, in this context, the outlining of the role and position of cemeteries in Jewish tradition. The case study focuses on the Hungarian village of Apc, which was home to a Jewish community of just over a hundred people before World War II. After the Holocaust, only a few survivors returned to the settlement; some of them emigrated, while others remained in Apc for the rest of their lives. In recent decades, what has become of the cemetery, one of the most important sites for the former Jewish community of Apc? This paper explores the process of the heritagization of the local Jewish cemetery, one of the activities carried out by the Together for Apc Association, a civil society initiative launched two decades ago. In 2003, the dilapidated and abandoned “Israelite cemetery” was the first of the settlement’s deteriorating assets to be declared as local cultural heritage. With the involvement of various actors from the local community (volunteers and local entrepreneurs), and in contact with Jewish organizations (the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities, the Foundation for Hungarian Jewish Cemeteries), the cemetery was restored over a period of two years and was “inaugurated” in 2006 in the presence of a rabbi, a cantor, a Jewish secular leader, Holocaust survivors and members of the local society. In the fifteen years since then, care has been taken to ensure that the achievements are sustainable and maintained, and the cemetery has been kept open not only for the descendants of the Jewish community but for all interested parties. But the salvaging of the Apc Jewish cemetery is not only an example of the preservation of the built heritage of a single community: while for the village residents it forms part of their local identity, for the Jewish organizations it represents part of their Jewish identity. What happens when two communities stake a claim to the

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heritagization of the same site? As a shared goal, or “cause,” the “bipolar” process of the heritagization of the Jewish cemetery in Apc has provided an opportunity for dialogue, collective thinking, and problem solving between Jewish and non-Jewish society, even if the various heritagization goals, coming from different directions, have in many cases generated tensions.

KEYWORDS

Jewish cemetery, Hungarian rural community, civil society organization, local identities, Jewish cultural heritage, Jewish-non-Jewish coexistence, dialogue

INTRODUCTION

On January 26–27, 2023, to coincide with International Holocaust Remembrance Day, a two-day online masterclass was held on the latest findings of Jewish cemetery research in Hungary. The event was organized by institutions (the Jewish Theological Seminary — University of Jewish Studies, and the Centropa Foundation) that are in leading the way in terms of the registering, rehabilitating, and sustainable protection of Jewish cemeteries in Hungary, as well as their scholarly research. The presentations delivered at the conference, and the widespread interest they elicited, seem to reflect the trend in recent decades — especially since the accession of several East Central European countries to the European Union in 2004 — whereby abandoned Jewish cemeteries in the region have increasingly attracted the attention of researchers, national and international civil society organizations (CSOs), and local activists.¹

After World War II, in the vast majority of Hungarian settlements it was generally only the cemetery that survived from among built infrastructure that had a Jewish religious function.² Cemeteries can be interpreted not only as places of remembrance for survivors and descendants but also as material historical sources reflecting the Jewish communities that once formed an integral part of local society: “In the absence of the destroyed congregation

¹The keynote speaker at the conference was Ruth Ellen Gruber, director of Jewish Heritage Europe, who, besides the preservation of Jewish cemeteries, emphasized the aspects of sustainability and visitability. Viktória Bányai and István Balogh shared their thoughts on the source and heritage value of cemeteries, while several case studies focusing on cemeteries in particular settlements or regions were presented. For further details on the presentations made at the conference, see <https://or-zse.hu/mesterkurzus-a-temetokutatasrol-a-tortenetek-nyomaban/> (accessed February 8, 2023).

²This claim is illustrated by the work of Viktor Cseh, which takes into consideration the Jewish heritage of several rural settlements (CSEH 2021). Zsuzsanna Toronyi reports on the sale and demolition of synagogues (TORONYI 2010), while Rudolf Klein reports on their renovation in order to fulfil secular functions (KLEIN 2022). The importance of cemeteries in Jewish memory is also reflected in the fact that Ruth Ellen Gruber, an expert on the subject, places cemeteries at the very top of the list of Jewish sites of remembrance in Central and Eastern Europe, also taking into account their role in Jewish tradition, pointing out that Jewish cemeteries are “the most common tangible remnants of Jewish culture in Eastern and Central Europe” (GRUBER 2010:6). Kadish’s Western European example illustrates a similar fact (KADISH 2015:190).



archives, birth registers, and family documents, cemeteries have become the last relics of the annihilated Jewish communities and can be considered as a special source for their history” (BALOGH – BÁNYAI 2020:30). This notion, however, is the starting point not only of scholarly research but also of the many local initiatives that regard the members, culture, and traditions of the former Jewish community as a part of their own past, and that interpret the cemeteries they have inherited as their *own cultural heritage* as well as the cultural heritage of this community.

In the present study, I examine the (sub-)activities of a local CSO that was founded in 2003 in the rural Hungarian settlement of Apc and that launched its activities with the renovation of the town’s dilapidated Jewish cemetery. Situated in the Selyp Basin in Heves County, and with a population of around 2,500, Apc was the site of a project carried out between 2004 and 2006 by the Together for Apc Association (known since 2017 as the Together for Apc Civil Society Organization), the outcome of which — the rehabilitation of the Jewish cemetery — has been maintained in the fifteen years since.

Along with two other settlements in the region, Zagyvaszántó and Lőrinci, I began research in the town of Apc in 2017, using the techniques of historical ethnography and the *oral history*. At that time, I was interested in how the local elderly residents recalled the culture of the Jewish community of Apc (approximately 120 inhabitants between 1920 and 1941; see Table 1 for details) as well as everyday encounters and coexistence among Jews and non-Jews (TÓTH 2020). It already became clear from the interviews that the Jews of Apc, who were mainly engaged in commerce, had contributed in many ways to the economy of the settlement, and that frequent interactions with Jews — and the “cultural otherness” they represented — was an integral and natural aspect of life for the predominantly Roman Catholic majority population. Hence, the location, and indeed in many cases also the function and operation, of the Jewish built infrastructure within the settlement, such as the synagogue, the kosher butcher, the ritual bath (*mikveh*), or the cemetery, were not unknown to those who were sharing their recollections. As a result of this experience, the Jewish cemetery of Apc became the focus of my research, and subsequently, having studied the work of the Together for Apc Association, a definitive branch of it.

Jewish cemeteries are important sites of social remembrance, and their investigation is significant for several disciplines. The historian focuses on the study of the gravestone inscriptions and symbols in order to learn about the traditions of past communities and to record their specific features; the scholar of Judaistics aims to raise awareness of the heritage value of cemeteries (BALOGH – BÁNYAI 2020); while “the primary contribution of the ethnographic/anthropological perspective is that it focuses on other social frameworks of the concept of

Table 1. Changes in the Jewish population of Apc between 1920 and 1949, based on census data

	1920	1930	1941	1949
Total population	2,445	2,946	2,978	3,151
Jewish population	121	116	120	12
proportion of the Jewish population within the settlement	4.9%	3.9%	4.1%	0.4%



heritage, or — lacking a better word — on its ‘bearers’” (FEJŐS 2005:42).³ The last of these disciplines asks why and how different social actors regard a particular cemetery as heritage.

In what follows, after a brief overview and some examples of the possible interpretative dimensions of Jewish cultural heritage, I attempt to show the importance of burial places within Judaism and to outline *why* and *how* Jewish cemeteries are a crucial part of the universe of Jewish cultural heritage today. In the case study that provides the framework of the paper, I seek to answer the questions of what motivates a local non-Jewish CSO to care for the cemetery of the former local Jewish population; how the CSO interacts and cooperates with Jewish organizations to achieve its goals; how its efforts resonate with the broader and narrower society; and, finally, how it manages to ensure the sustainability of its achievements.

POTENTIAL INTERPRETATIONS OF THE CONCEPT OF JEWISH CULTURAL HERITAGE

In many places in the literature, cultural heritage theorists maintain that the definition of cultural heritage is multifaceted and diverse, and that its semantic content always depends on how it is used and applied by social actors, and on the contextual systems in which researchers interpret what are always unique practices.⁴

The concept becomes even more “fuzzy” (SONKOLY 2016) when it is placed in the context of what is truly heterogeneous Jewish culture, which takes different forms from country to country, and even from region to region. With respect to Hungary, Zsuzsanna Toronyi provides a historical overview of when the Jewish community, in the broader sense, began to advocate for the preservation of the various types of Judaica and “Jewish elements” of the built environment that are defined as heritage by the “central” Hungarian Jewish congregation. “The inventory and survey of movable and immovable property in Hungary was unprecedented until this heritage suffered destruction on a massive scale, when a significant proportion of buildings, books, documents, and religious objects were destroyed and lost” (TORONYI 2010:7). Besides Toronyi, Rudolf Klein also outlines the challenges that the political system raised in terms of surveying and cultivating Jewish heritage in the second half of the 20th century (TORONYI 2010; KLEIN 2022:93–100).

The political restructuring in the last decades of the 20th century, the gradual process of dealing with the traumas of World War II and the Holocaust, and the articulation of common European values and the expansion of the European Union, allowed (and led to) the creation of a series of Hungarian and international non-profit organizations, foundations, and projects that

³Sándor Borbély and Lídia Ágota Ispán also highlight the characteristic features of the anthropological approach: “Research in heritage anthropology encompasses the examination of the cultural logic of heritagization: What is the selection process applied to select heritage? Who is involved in it? What are the purposes or functions for which the heritage is used? (...) In other words, how does heritage function as an instrument of power” (BORBÉLY – ISPÁN 2019:11).

⁴Without aiming to be exhaustive, I include a few examples of the literature on this subject: HARTOG 2000; BLAKE 2000; HUSZ 2000; SONKOLY 2000, 2005; LOWENTHAL 2004a, 2004b; SONKOLY – ERDŐSI 2004; FEJŐS 2005; GYÖRGY 2005a; WESSELY 2005; ASHWORTH et al. 2007; TAMÁSKA 2011; SONKOLY 2016.



were established to document and actively preserve the heritage of European Jews.⁵ The “Jewish renaissance” at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries (MARS 2001; PAPP 2004; VINCZE 2009), and the collective rearticulation of historical grievances and responsibilities, also led to the pluralization of the nature and “owners” of Jewish heritage (FROJIMOVICS et al. 1995; GRUBER 2010; PERCZEL 2007; CSEH 2021).

This pluralism may explain the fact that the definition of Jewish (cultural) heritage either does not appear explicitly on the websites of the above-mentioned organizations, or is formulated merely by way of illustrations, typically referring to elements of the built environment. The only exception to the websites I investigated was *Jewish Heritage Europe* — an expanding web portal that collects news, information, and resources on Jewish monuments and heritage across Europe — which categorizes Jewish heritage as the “legacy of all aspects of Jewish history — religious and secular.”⁶

According to this broad definition, any tangible or intangible cultural element that has been part of the life of Jewish communities at some time in the past is considered Jewish cultural heritage. Thus, the category goes beyond built objects, since in the former Jewish quarters (ghettos) of many European cities, intangible aspects of local Jewish culture — gastronomy, rituals, traditional dress, music, dance, etc., are also selected (i.e., heritagized) — alongside synagogues, cemeteries, ritual baths, etc. Presented as authentic heritage, these selected cultural elements are not only used for brand building but can also form the foundations of tourism. One of the most striking examples are the attractions in Krakow’s Kazimierz district (Fig. 1), which have often been criticized for their questionable authenticity and market orientation.⁷

Jewish cultural heritage is an integral aspect of tourism in several cities in Hungary. Besides Budapest’s long-established “Jewish quarter tours,” the most recent example is Kőszeg, where, following the renovation of the synagogue in 2022, thematic walks are now organized focusing on the everyday life and material relics of former Jewish community.⁸ The organizers of the walks make different selections from among the “heritagizable” elements of the local community’s past, with the aim of “creating and providing an enjoyable experience” for participants (GYÖRGY 2015b:130). Another recent example is a project aimed at presenting the Jewish past of Szeged, which, in connection with the city’s famous Baumhorn Synagogue, implicitly promotes the justifiably renowned synagogue architect Lipót Baumhorn (1860–1932) as a “brand” (Fig. 2).⁹

Today, Jewish heritage tourism in Hungary is associated most clearly with the northeastern part of the country. Before the Holocaust, northeastern Hungary was home to several Orthodox

⁵To mention just a few examples: European Jewish Heritage (EJH), the European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage (AEPJ), Centropa, Zachor — Foundation for Social Remembrance, Jewish Heritage of Hungary Public Endowment. For a list of these, see GRUBER 2010:332–333.

⁶The inaugural meeting of Jewish Heritage Europe. *Bratislava Statement*, <https://jewish-heritage-europe.eu/bratislava-declaration/>, accessed February 10, 2023.

⁷On the Jewish Quarter in Krakow, see <https://discovercracow.com/krakow-jewish-quarter/>, (accessed February 10, 2023). For a critical reading of the heritagization concept, see KLEIN 2022:92. For a striking contrast to the bustle of the Jewish Quarter in Krakow, see YOUNG 2004.

⁸*Jewish life, Jewish memories — A walk in the footsteps of the Jews of Kőszeg*, <http://oroksegnapok.gov.hu/seta/446> (accessed February 10, 2023).

⁹*Jewish Heritage of Szeged*, <https://zsidoorokseg.szegedvaros.hu/> (accessed February 10, 2023).





Fig. 1. Symbols of Jewish culture as a means of legitimizing “the brand” in the Kazimierz district of Krakow (Photos by Katalin Balogné Tóth, 2017)

Jewish communities, including Hasidic¹⁰ communities. These Hasidic communities were grouped around a so-called wonder rabbi (*rebbe*) with spiritual energy, whose graves, such as those in Nagykálló and Bodrogkeresztúr, continue to be places of pilgrimage even today. Under the slogan “Let’s search for the past,” the Unified Hungarian Jewish Congregation (EMIH), in cooperation with the local community, has made huge investments in this region in recent years. A pilgrimage house has been created by renovating the former rabbinical house in Mád, and the *Footsteps of Wonder Rabbis* has been established, incorporating ten settlements and the pilgrimage sites and graves of former “wonder rabbis.” Furthermore, “pilgrims can learn about

¹⁰Born in Ljubavichy, a small town in the former Russian Empire, this Jewish religious movement respects tradition while placing great emphasis on the emotional experience of prayer and spirituality.





Fig. 2. The legacy of Lipót Baumhorn – The synagogue in Szeged is both a functioning house of prayer and a museum space (Photos by Katalin Balogné Tóth, 2023)

the life of the miraculous rabbis, the legends associated with them, the history and traditions of the former Jewish inhabitants of the respective settlements, their role in the region, and the breathtakingly beautiful Tokaj-Hegyalja wine region.”¹¹

Bence Illyés documents the world of Hasidic pilgrims year by year; a travelling exhibition of his photographs has been hosted in several cities in Hungary. Referring to the former Hasidic miracle rabbis, the exhibition was given the title *Pilgrims of Miracles*.¹² In 2019, Illyés published a flyer to promote the exhibition concept, featuring Hasidic pilgrims visiting Bodrogkeresztúr (Fig. 3).

The interpretation of Jewish cultural heritage in Hungary is further complicated by the fact that today Hungary boasts the largest and most diverse Jewish society in Central and Eastern

¹¹*Footsteps of Wonder Rabbis*, <https://csodarabbikutja.hu/hu/madi-csoda/zarandokut> (accessed February 10, 2023).

¹²The initiative has also created a Facebook community, where the artist regularly shares pictures, and related stories, from the pilgrimage: https://www.facebook.com/csodakvandorai?locale=hu_HU (accessed June 19, 2023).





Fig. 3. Hasidic pilgrims in Bodrogkeresztúr (Bence Illyés, 2019)

Europe, which, rather than being homogeneous, is divided into different trends.¹³ In this lively and dynamic context, conflicts and rivalries may inevitably arise among the various Jewish microsocieties (also) in relation to the heritagization of a segment of the past, fueled by divergent present-day readings of a shared past (NORA 2003:4; GYÁNI 2016:35–49). One telling example is the *Hungarian Jewish Heritage Route in Eastern Hungary*, which can be regarded as an alternative to the *Footsteps of Wonder Rabbis*, and which is linked to the umbrella organization of Neolog Jewry, the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities (MAZSIHISZ). The goals of the project, which encompasses five locations, are “to create tourist attractions extending beyond settlement borders, ensuring that Jewish cultural and historical heritage is preserved and presented in a comprehensible way; to provide excellent hospitality; to stage high-quality events; to generate more overnight stays; and to create jobs for local residents. The project sites preserve the cultural and spiritual heritage of the Hungarian Jewish population.”¹⁴ Hanna Mónika Mezei offers an alternative perspective in the possible interpretation of (local) Jewish cultural heritage when, via the example of the Kiskunhalas synagogue — which is still in use today — she raises the question of how an individual local Jewish congregation recognizes as heritage a site that is part of both community and religious life. The author explores “the potential function [of the building itself] in the life of the town, its status as local cultural heritage, and the role it plays in remembrance. (...) how the town’s inhabitants relate to it, what kind of community of remembrance forms around the synagogue, and what role it thus plays in the development of the local community of remembrance” (MEZEI 2022:125).

¹³Here I would like to make a fleeting reference to the schism of Hungarian Jewry in 1868/69 (neology, orthodoxy, *status quo ante*), following the book by Jakov KATZ (1999). After change of political regime in 1990, the ideological pluralization of Judaism continued in Hungary with the (re)emergence of Hasidic communities and the arrival of reform movements.

¹⁴Hungarian Jewish Heritage Route in Eastern Hungary, <https://zsidooroksegutja.hu> (accessed February 10, 2023).



While in rural Hungary this question can be interpreted only in the context of county seats and a few smaller towns (Kiskunhalas, Szentendre, Érd — since typically small Jewish communities still exist only here), in Budapest several synagogues with a long history are still functioning according to their intended purpose, making it important to conduct this kind of case studies there. All the representative examples mentioned above were initiatives by the Jewish community. Besides these, however, a number of other local initiatives might also be mentioned, where, inspired by what has been described above, non-Jewish communities are discovering Jewish monuments in their own neighborhoods that they regard as a part of their own cultural heritage due to their “secular or sacral” content. In short, the definition of Jewish cultural heritage can only be approximated through the conjunction of motives such as “nostalgia,” “a desire to conserve,” “an intent to preserve for posterity,” “the obligation of remembrance,” “social responsibility,” “identity definition and strengthening,” “touristic goals,” “musealization,” and “profit making.”

THE PLACE OF THE CEMETERY IN JEWISH TRADITION: THE JEWISH CEMETERY AS CULTURAL HERITAGE

Care for the dead and the maintenance of cemeteries are considered the greatest charitable deeds (*mitzvah*) in Judaism, since tradition holds that a living person who does a “good deed” for the dead expects nothing in return and is thus doing good selflessly (OLAH 2001). Care for the deceased, burial, the design of cemeteries, the carving of gravestones, and visits to the cemetery are all regulated by various Jewish legal rules and traditions (OLAH 2009:140–153, 194–195; RAJ 2007:37–51). For all such purposes, Jewish communities maintain a separate institution called the Jewish Sacred Society (*Chevra Kadisha*), the establishment of which precedes that of the synagogue. Cemeteries in operation today still come under the authority of the *Chevra*, while those not in use belong to the Preserving Rural Cemeteries Group of the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities.

In the introduction, I referred to the source value of the design of Jewish cemeteries (which are also known as the “house of life,” or *beth chaim*), the gravestones, the Hebrew/Yiddish/Hungarian/German inscriptions, and the sacral and secular symbols that appear on them. Importantly, the fate of the cemeteries “has always followed the fate of the communities. If the Jewish population of a country or a region has been eradicated, sooner or later the cemetery suffers the same fate (...). The fate of the cemeteries is inextricably linked to the history of the town” (RAJ 2007:40).

The activities of international organizations have highlighted an intensive focus on cemeteries over the last thirty years, given their role in heritagization and the maintenance of tradition(s). Of the 550 articles published on the portal *Jewish Heritage Europe* between October 2015 and January 2023, for example, a total of 316 dealt with the exploration, restoration, cleaning, maintenance, and care of European Jewish cemeteries, along with related educational projects.¹⁵ This proportion of over 50 percent would appear to confirm the increased interest in cemeteries. The European Jewish Cemeteries Initiative (ESJI), a major player on the international scene, was established in 2015 with the aim of preserving Jewish cemeteries in Central and

¹⁵For the reviewed articles, see <https://jewish-heritage-europe.eu/news/> (accessed February 10, 2023). Of the 316 articles on cemeteries, only six concern Hungary.



Eastern Europe (ZYSKINA – FISHEL 2020). The organization also places great emphasis on educating different generations and the local non-Jewish community, in the belief that “Jewish cemeteries, synagogues, schools and other buildings are not only significant to Jewish religious and cultural life, but to the whole community. They continue to represent an integral part of villages and cities in which they are found, even when the Jewish communities responsible for their construction are no longer present” (ZYSKINA – FISHEL 2020:16). The above-mentioned Centropa Foundation, which is also active in Budapest, contributes to this education-oriented concept by organizing an annual international competition for students to produce short films about local Jewish cemeteries.¹⁶

We know from the history of research into Jewish cemeteries in Hungary that the importance of saving cemeteries, gravestones, and inscriptions for the preservation of the Jewish past has been increasingly recognized since the middle of the 19th century (TORONYI 2010). Nevertheless, in the second half of the 19th century and the early 20th century, the Hungarian Jewish population used cemetery inscriptions and old graves (which provided evidence of “ancientness”) as a tool in its apologetic narrative emphasizing social assimilation and belonging to the Hungarian nation, rather than for the purposes of scholarly understanding (BALOGH – BÁNYAI 2020).

At the end of the 20th century, several album-like compilations were published, mainly with a visual orientation (e.g., ERDÉLYI 1980; WIRTH 1985), although “during the period of the change of regime, research into the history of former Jewish communities began in more and more places throughout the country, while the volumes published since then have dealt more intensively with cemeteries. This change in attitude was first perceptible in terms of the illustrations, also due to the fact that cemeteries remained the last bearers of remembrance after the demolition and transformation of synagogues, congregation schools, shops, and homes in rural areas” (BALOGH – BÁNYAI 2020:30).

Research has been facilitated by the fact that many Jewish cemeteries have been subject to scholarly investigation in the last thirty years (e.g., MAJDÁN 2004; ÁBRAHÁM 2006; KORMOS 2010, 2012, 2016; Tóth 2014;¹⁷ BÁNYAI et al. 2022); databases¹⁸ have been established within the framework of various projects; the mapping and recording of identified cemeteries¹⁹ is ongoing; amateur cemetery research groups have been established; and the photographic documentation of cemetery motifs and epitaphs is now also promoting popular artistic representations (BORSI – ILLYÉS 2022).

As István Balogh put it in 2011: “Saving cemeteries largely depends on local communities. However, no significant progress can be expected until they feel a sense of ownership towards Jewish cemeteries. Researchers and dedicated conservation work have a major role to play in raising such awareness” (BALOGH 2011:64). Péter Tamás, head of the Preserving Rural Cemeteries Group, Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities, underlined that the group typically

¹⁶International Youth Competition “Local Jewish cemeteries,” Centropa, <https://www.centropa.org/hu/hir/zsido-temetok-nalunk-nemzetkozi-ifjusagi-verseny> (accessed February 10, 2023).

¹⁷The volume is illustrated with photographs by Zsolt Károly Nagy, which were the subject of a small exhibition at the Museum of Ethnography with the title “*Since we lost you...*” *The Jewish Cemetery on Salgótarján Street* (September 20, 2015 – February 20, 2016).

¹⁸Viktória Bányai provides a researcher-oriented summary on cemetery research and databases: <https://www.hebraisztika.hu/site/pageprocess.htm?id=307> (accessed February 10, 2023).

¹⁹*Israelite Cemeteries*, <http://www.izraelitatemetok.hu> (accessed February 10, 2023); *Jewish Cemeteries in Hungary*, <https://zstm.hu/> (accessed February 10, 2023).



cooperates with local governments, churches, or church-affiliated organizations, CSOs, and the Jews in the countryside. Furthermore, the secular leaders of rural congregations, who hold the cemeteries in their own counties dear to their hearts, are continuously contributing to the work of the group through their networks of contacts (Péter Tamás, group leader, Preserving Rural Cemeteries Group, Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities; February 23, 2022).

According to Esther Zyskina and Alexandra Fishel, authors of the ESJF guide *Jewish Cemeteries in the Classroom*, “cultural heritage is the legacy that a group of people leaves behind for the generations that follow. Tangible heritage can consist of magnificent sites like palaces, fortresses, or religious complexes, but also ordinary dwellings, or artefacts, and books. Intangible heritage recognizes and protects customs, knowledge, and languages. (...) Heritage always belongs to the communities that recognize it as their own” (ZYSKINA – FISHEL 2020:17–18). Taking this definition as my starting point, I now examine how, in the process of saving the Jewish cemetery of Apc, civilians are creating a shared “symbolic universe” (WESSELY 2005:6) that conveys multiple meanings for Jews and non-Jews alike.

CASE STUDY: CIVILIANS FOR SAVING THE JEWISH CEMETERY IN APC

During my study of the Jewish cemetery in Apc — as a Jewish cultural heritage site — I carried out fieldwork collection on four occasions, made four structured interviews (with Gyula Hegedűs, president of the Association; Péter Tamás, head of the Preserving Rural Cemeteries Group, Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities; András Oblath, head of the — now defunct — Foundation for Hungarian Jewish Cemeteries [MAZSIT] that supported the initiative; a local civilian contracted by the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities), recorded a biographical interview with the only local Jewish resident, and carried out extensive online research on the Association’s social media sites and website, as well as in the online archives of the local newspaper (*Apci Hírek*).²⁰

The activities of the Together for Apc Association, its definition of cultural heritage, and the context of the heritagization activities

The Association was founded in 2003 with a membership of eleven people, which eventually expanded to between thirty-five and forty activists. Due to breaches of transparency, the membership was restructured in the first half of 2010, when it fell to fifteen people. In 2020, the Association became the Together for Apc Civil Society Organization, while its core community and activities were retained.²¹

²⁰I was able to follow the process of heritagization only indirectly and retrospectively by reconstructing the works and inauguration ceremony by means of sources and interviews (and was already unable to interview many of those who participated in the activity). In this study, I focus specifically on what motivated the Association, and although I also discuss issues of heritage preservation, the extent to which local non-Jewish society outside the Association’s circles is open to the inclusion and legitimization of the Apc Jewish cemetery as local heritage requires further systematic research that takes into account ethical considerations. The local society is certainly divided on the issue, while the “direction” of the division is influenced, for example, by personal acquaintance with former local Jews, the positive/negative qualities attributed to them, as well as positive/negative stereotypes about Jews in general.

²¹This is evidenced by the Association’s website, where their achievements and the maintenance of those achievements are documented, and where resources relating to village history are regularly published: <https://www.facebook.com/kozosenapcert.egyesulet> (accessed February 10, 2023).



According to the organization's 2003 statutes, the Association carries out public interest activities in the following areas: (1) cultural activities; (2) the preservation of cultural heritage; and (3) environmental protection. The Association has its own website, on which it keeps track of its goals, the respective project planning, and project implementation.²²

Although the statutes include the goal of safeguarding local *cultural heritage*, they do not provide a precise definition of what the membership and leadership understand by this. However, drawing on his experience over the past two decades, the president of the Association, Gyula Hegedűs, described the concept in the interview I conducted with him: "Cultural heritage is everything that bears the imprint of the rich history of our settlement, everything that continues to exist in some form, although not in the same way as when it was created. This includes the steam mill, the 'Owl's Castle,' the ancient home of the Szentiványi family, the church fence, the church, many Jewish houses, and the Jewish cemetery itself" (Gyula Hegedűs, president, Together for Apc Association/Together for Apc Civil Society Organization; January 10, 2022).

Once established, the Association carried out a survey of the settlement's built cultural assets (selected and defined as cultural heritage), and, after an assessment of their condition, it was decided that the first project should be the renovation of the local "Israelite cemetery." According to Gyula Hegedűs, there were several reasons for starting the Association's activities with the restoration of the Jewish cemetery: the fact that the Jewish cemetery — the dilapidated state of which was distressing to many people at the time — was located within the public Roman Catholic cemetery; the fact that local Holocaust survivors, who regularly returned to the village, were unable to get into the cemetery; and the board's shared view that the former Jewish community was part of the history of Apc that should also be known to later generations.

By 2023, the Association had been implementing its heritagization and heritage protection activities for exactly twenty years. It has been involved in the heritagization of the local (former) steam mill, the cultural center (the ancestral home of the Szentiványi family [CSAJÁNYI 2019]), the fence of the Catholic church (which is attributed to the Hussites), and the Fountain of Beauties, as well as the establishment of a World War II and Holocaust memorial, the creation of the so-called Fűzkút Memorial Park, and the installation of tourist information signs throughout the settlement. To maintain the results of these heritagization activities, the Association organizes various thematic events, such as a reunion for the descendants of the Szentiványi family and the Homecoming Meeting of Former Residents of Apc.²³

The first objective: tidying up the Jewish cemetery

When the "authentic bearers of culture" are no longer present, the values they embodied and represented in the past can continue to be values for the local society and can thus become the motivation to rediscover and maintain lost elements of tradition and identity, to preserve the memory of former bearers of culture, and to initiate dialogue both within their own communities and with other communities (CARMEL et al. 2020:22). The Association sees the former Jewish community as the bearer and embodiment of a specific ("authentic") cultural knowledge — based on a lifestyle involving adherence to religious laws and drawing on traditions and

²²Statutes of the Together for Apc Association, September 29, 2003, in the possession of Gyula Hegedűs.

²³For more information, see the official website of the Municipality of Apc, <https://apc.hu/index.php/civil-szervezetek/> (accessed June 10, 2023).



customs that are experienced as part of everyday life — but which is no longer present in the settlement. From a present-day perspective, they regard the *destroyed* community in an idealized way to some extent, stating that the reality the Association aims to save in the present was “their” world in the past; it is a world they cannot recreate, thus they are endeavoring to save traces of it and integrate them into their own world.

For Gyula Hegedűs, the local Jewish population is not just part of a shared past but is also a group in local history to which the local community owes much in the present. The president’s narrative conveys a respect for cultural pluralism, which he reinforces with the criteria of authenticity and traditionalism in relation to Judaism.

“In the same way that the Roma population is an integral part of the settlement, the settlement must also continuously carry with it the Jewish population, regardless of the fact that there is no Jewish community in Apc today. The cemetery is surrounded by a stone wall within the settlement’s public cemetery and has a separate entrance. Another thing that makes it particularly important to us is that our research in the Salgótarján archives [Hungarian National Archives, Nógrád County Archives — K. B. T.] revealed that the Jewish cemetery in Apc was built before the public cemetery that surrounds it. This is why we thought, and continue to think, that the Jewish cemetery represents ‘something traditional,’ because we know that there were many Jewish families living in Apc who greatly contributed to the prosperity of the settlement, especially in economic terms. The Jewish community, like the Roma community, belongs to the history of the village, and we must not forget it”²⁴ (Gyula Hegedűs, president, Together for Apc Association/Together for Apc Civil Society Organization; January 10, 2022).

Discussing the possible interpretations of cultural heritage, Constantine Sandis examines the mechanisms of remembrance that are inseparable from heritage, and the related ethical dilemmas (SANDIS 2014). This approach is particularly important in terms of the subject of the present paper, since “witness testimony is essential for the reconstruction of the atrocities of World War II, the Holocaust, and Communism, which impose the duty of remembrance on survivors” (SONKOLY – ERDŐSI 2004:10).

We know from the works of historians and the recollections of eyewitnesses that there were members of the non-Jewish community who were involved in saving lives during the Holocaust, although the majority were bystanders or, worse still, perpetrators (HILBERG 1992). My interview with Gyula Hegedűs revealed that the president of the Association not only acknowledges this fact (“These houses were locked up during the war, after the local Jews had been deported, and at night they were looted by the people of Apc. They caused huge destruction” [Gyula Hegedűs, president, Together for Apc Association/Together for Apc Civil Society Organization; January 10, 2022]) but also feels that people must take responsibility for the actions of their “forebears” by doing good deeds in the present. This also illustrates how, and to what extent, the different processes of heritagization are related to the construction of remembrance, by means of which “people themselves decide about the things they want to remember and about the things they don’t, but also, collectively, about what should remain valid and be preserved in the future” (ASSMANN 2016:43).

²⁴This interview excerpt is a sensitive example of an individual/group involved in heritagization trying to substantiate the motivation behind heritagization — by depicting it as “objective history” — with academically convincing arguments. In this case: the village of Apc belonged and belongs to Heves County, thus — according to information contained in the archives — the Nógrád County Archives do not contain any documents on the Jewish cemetery in Apc.



Once the Association's decision was made, preparations began in the form of an accurate assessment of the condition of the cemetery and the respective documentation. At the time the work started, the cemetery was surrounded by a crumbling wall and closed off by an iron gate, and only two of the gravestones were still standing. After drawing up the budget, the Association submitted an application for a "Saving the characteristic assets of a settlement" grant from the National Civilian Fund and contacted the municipal council and local contractors. Aware that the achievement of their goal required specialist expertise and a profound knowledge of the culture, the board contacted the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities and the Foundation for Hungarian Jewish Cemeteries, who provided relevant assistance in addition to financial support.

Actors, sites, contacts

The preservation and "re-utilization" of heritage can result in positive socioeconomic change by bringing together various stakeholders. Not only does this allow for the representation of multiple perspectives but it also provides access to a wider range of funding, while establishing a more solid social basis for the project (CARMEL et al. 2020:32). This also explains why heritage studies widely discuss heritage as a social process that encompasses social production by individuals and groups via their interactions with one other (APAYDIN 2020:93).

As I emphasized earlier, I believe that a local (non-Jewish) society can highlight the Jewish aspects of its past and consider them as its own present-day heritage without the selected cultural elements losing their Jewish features. Moreover, as we can see from this case study, the very aim of the organization initiating the heritagization is to find in the present "something traditional," "something authentic," that is represented by Judaism, in order to preserve it for the future. To achieve this goal, it initiated a dialogue with other (Jewish) actors who may be of help in this respect. However, this dialogue did not take place only with the intention of importing and exporting cultural knowledge, since everyone wanted to "profit" from the cooperation.

The following chart (Fig. 4) summarizes the actors, sites, and contacts that shaped the workflow for the refurbishment of the Apc Jewish cemetery, and that continue to supply the required strategic resources for its maintenance.

According to the chart, the site is divided into "actors" and "receivers/recipients", since "the existence and fate of cultural heritage ["the case" — K. B. T.] is shaped and formed in the course of continuous dialogue between two partners" (GYÖRGY 2005a:7–8).

The group of actors contains the actors within the locality — that is, the Association itself (the initiator), local volunteers, and entrepreneurs that support the creation and maintenance of heritage through their resources. However, even with their combined resources they did not have sufficient financial and intellectual capital to launch the project, thus they contacted Jewish organizations: the owner of the cemetery, the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities (and within it the Preserving Rural Cemeteries Group), as well as the Foundation for Hungarian Jewish Cemeteries, who had an interest in turning the initiative into a project due to their cultural links. They carried out the work together, which is important since this strategy brings together people with different expertise, pools resources, and increases transparency (MANNON 2010:21).



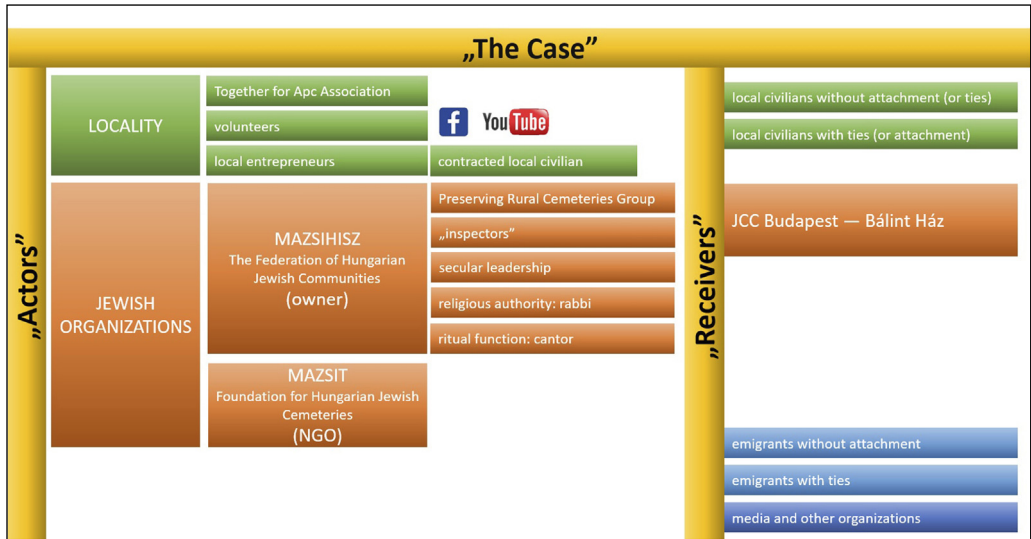


Fig. 4. Site, actors, and contacts in the heritagization of the Jewish cemetery in Apc

The project closed with a representative, ceremonial event, to which the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities, as the authentic bearer of culture, delegated a secular leader, a religious authority (rabbi), and an individual to carry out ritual functions (cantor). By means of this gesture, it recognized — that is, authenticated — the results of the work as Jewish cultural heritage before the general public, ensuring the sustainability of this heritage by contractually guaranteeing further cooperation. A contract was concluded for the maintenance of the cemetery, first with the Association and subsequently with a local civilian affiliated with the Association. The Association supervises the maintenance, receives the cemetery inspectors sent by the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities at least twice a year, documents the work carried out annually, and reports it on social media.

The other major group of participants in “the case” are the “recipients.” At the level of locality, these are the civilians who either have some kind of connection to the cultural heritage, or who are merely “passively” interested. At the level of Jewish organizations, the recipients include the JCC Budapest — Bálint Ház,²⁵ which has taken note of the Association’s activities. The recipients also include former residents whose relatives are buried in the cemetery, as well as former residents with no Jewish affiliation, who recognize the cemetery as a local cultural heritage site, as well as “cemetery tourists,” who visit the site out of pure curiosity. Finally, the interested media can also be included within this category.

²⁵Operating since 1994, the institution organizes community programs, film screenings, study sessions, conferences, and concerts, with a focus on Jewish culture. For further details see: <https://balinhaz.hu/rolunk-2/csapatunk> (accessed February 10, 2023).



Facts about the Jewish cemetery of Apc

The Jewish cemetery²⁶ (Fig. 5) is separated by a wall from the surrounding Catholic cemetery, which, according to both the literature and interviews, suggests that coexistence between Jews and non-Jews was mostly harmonious.²⁷ In the words of the president of the Foundation for Hungarian Jewish Cemeteries, “It is certain that the Jews and the majority population were on good terms before the war, since the cemeteries were interconnected” (András Oblath, president of the Foundation for Hungarian Jewish Cemeteries; September 13, 2022).

The cemetery has been in use since the beginning of the 20th century and covers an area of 266 square meters. It currently includes 23 identifiable gravestones (*matzevah*) with inscriptions in both Hungarian and Hebrew, with Hungarian inscriptions becoming increasingly frequent. Jewish gravestones are typically rich in symbols (RAJ 2007:47–49), as can be seen even in this small cemetery, mainly in the form of religious emblems and animal or plant motifs. These tell us not only about the individuals themselves (e.g., their profession or descent), but also about their place in the community. After the Holocaust, Imre Reich was the only survivor to be buried here, and although the cemetery has since been unused, descendants living abroad were regular visitors in the years before the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

Whether due to the complexity of the symbolism or the fact that some of the inscriptions on the gravestones are exclusively in Hebrew, the study of Jewish gravestones requires a great deal of expertise. In the course of my research, I found that reading and interpreting the grave inscriptions, according to the Association’s philosophy, would increase the credibility of heritage preservation efforts, since the goal is to keep the memorials in the cemetery, and what is known about them, as close to the “originals” as possible (KARLSTRÖM 2013:142).

²⁶During the Holocaust, the archives and collections of sacral objects of many Jewish communities (mainly in small towns and settlements) were partly or completely destroyed, thus the resources that might have provided a more profound understanding of the communities’ past are unavailable, or scarcely available, in public collections (as a rule, objects and documents of significant value as sources turn up at auctions or in family collections). According to the current state of research, the Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archives has only one photograph of the Apc Orthodox community dating from 1950 (<https://collections.milev.hu/items/show/29875>, accessed June 10, 2023), while the Heves County Archives of the Hungarian National Archives informed me that they found no documents on the Apc cemetery among the files in the Heves County Jewish Cemetery Archives. In *Egyenlőség* [Equality], the main media outlet of the Neolog Jews, I found two references to the settlement of Apc, neither of which referred to the cemetery (the Orthodox press is being processed). Although the research is not finished, the lack of researchable documents makes it impossible to outline the source-based history of the cemetery at present. Thanks to the activities of the Association, the Jewish cemetery of Apc has been included on several maps: *Izraelita Temető* [Israelite Cemeteries], <http://www.izraelitatemetok.hu/index.php/apc/> (accessed February 10, 2023); *Zsidó Temetők Magyarországon* [Jewish Cemeteries in Hungary], <https://zstm.hu/> (accessed February 10, 2023).

²⁷This is reinforced by the written memoirs of Holocaust survivor Jenő Buchwald, available online. Survey regarding the history of the Orthodox community in Apc, conducted by Dr. Jenő Buchwald, 1962, Item ID: 9365705, Yad Vashem Documents Archive; <https://documents.yadvashem.org/index.html?language=en&search=global&strSearch=apc&GridItemId=9365705> (accessed January 31, 2023).





Fig. 5. The cemetery in fall 2022 (Photo by Katalin Balogné Tóth)

The work process²⁸

The work lasted for around two years, representing a total of 1,200 volunteer hours, according to Gyula Hegedűs. Thanks to a network of contacts, an initial capital of HUF 250,000 was raised, which was then followed by further donations. The implementation of the work process (Fig. 6) raises several questions in terms of religious criteria. Was it ethical (i.e., compatible with the aspiration to authenticity) to work on the Jewish *holy* day, the *Sabbath*, for example (a valid question, if this was the only day on which most of the volunteers were available)? Was smoking permitted in the cemetery? Was it permissible to eat in the cemetery — a requirement in the case of hard physical labor? What was to be done with the gravestones and vegetation in the cemetery, and how?

It is clear from the interviews that the Association's volunteers endeavored to comply with the religious rules as far as possible — to the extent that these rules were *known* and *interpreted* — although these were obviously symbolic gestures rather than strict behavioral strategies on their part (e.g., they did not smoke in the cemetery, nor did they consume pork products). “We knew that there were special criteria. We asked the Foundation for Hungarian Jewish

²⁸The photos published here were provided by the president of the Association, although most of them are available in the Association's Facebook photo archive: https://www.facebook.com/kozosenapcert.egyesulet/photos_by (accessed May 31, 2023) and on Youtube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRvNSip4_BY&t=2s (accessed May 31, 2023).





Fig. 6. Work begins on tidying up the cemetery (Photos provided by Gyula Hegedűs)

Cemeteries to let us know the main rules. We did not want to ‘desecrate’ the cemetery. To keep it very simple, we were working in the cemetery area, and we were told that it was inappropriate to smoke there. There were fifteen of us there on each occasion, some of them heavy smokers. So these individuals would go outside the stone wall to smoke. Or again, we typically worked from eight in the morning until two in the afternoon. At lunchtime, we had to give people something to eat, usually very simple food. I wondered whether they’d be happy with bread and dripping. They said yes to everything except pork fat. Poultry, things like that. We ate bread and dripping with onions. We tried to play by the rules. We didn’t want to violate any rites” (Gyula Hegedűs, president, Together for Apc Association/Together for Apc Civil Society Organization; January 10, 2022).

András Oblath, president of the Foundation for Hungarian Jewish Cemeteries, recalled how they instructed the Association’s volunteers before they started work. His words convey his trust in the volunteers, and the fact that the Association’s work was primarily intended to satisfy the conscience of the former Jewish community and his own conscience: “We went there to see the cemetery, because it’s often the case that laypeople incompetently remove gravestones from where they’re standing and lean them up against a wall or somewhere else, while the person the gravestone belongs to is lying there underneath them. So we looked at the whole site to see what could be done with it. And we gave them instructions. We made sure they didn’t move the gravestones and that they took care to keep everything the way it was. Not to suit us, but because

they wanted to do everything right. They were absolutely partners in this respect” (András Oblath, president, Foundation for Hungarian Jewish Cemeteries; September 13, 2022).

Péter Tamás, head of the Preserving Rural Cemeteries Group, Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities, also confirmed that the Association took the necessary steps to ensure that its volunteers had the knowledge they required to carry out the work. “When they volunteered, we made a contract with them and helped them. We gave them every support. It’s appropriate to consult religiously competent people before tidying up a cemetery, and this is true even when it’s not a Jewish cemetery. And that’s what they did” (Péter Tamás, team leader, Preserving Rural Cemeteries Group, Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities; February 23, 2022).

There is no way to verify whether work took place on Saturdays; even the interviewees themselves made ambivalent, elusive statements about this.²⁹ According to the president of the Association, although they were aware that Saturday was a day of rest according to the Jewish religion, work still took place on that day, because they would not have been able to recruit volunteers otherwise. According to the president, they had to choose between obeying the religious laws, thereby jeopardizing the preservation of the cemetery, or disregarding them. According to my interviews with representatives of Jewish organizations, either they were unaware when the work was taking place, or they considered that religious laws did not apply in the case of a disused cemetery. Although the “truth” remains unclear, one can certainly draw the conclusion that working in cemeteries on the *Sabbath* or holidays is an extremely complex and sensitive issue.

After the work was completed in 2006, a public press event was held (on a summer Sunday) to inaugurate the cemetery, in cooperation with Jewish organizations and in accordance with Jewish traditions and norms of behavior, which was essentially a presentation to the public of the Association’s first major project. “The event was advertised in advance in the press and individual invitations were sent out. Rules for attending the ceremony were also set in advance. Women were to wear scarves, and men either hats or *kippahs*, and other such rules. The rules were stated in the invitations. I suggested to prominent individuals from the Federation that although it was fine for us to set out these rules in advance, I couldn’t guarantee that everyone would observe them. I even said to them that if this is what makes or breaks the ‘party,’ then let’s not do it!” (Gyula Hegedűs, president, Together for Apc Association/Together for Apc Civil Society Organization; January 10, 2022).

Although the president of the Association tried his best to ensure — at least temporary — harmony among the different customs and traditions, he was always aware that the celebration had its risks. While the Association had its achievement behind it and aspired to meet all the expectations of the authentic bearers of culture — visiting former residents and representatives of Jewish organizations — they had no way of knowing whether they would succeed. And as the number of “tipping points” increased as the preparations progressed, it was impossible to predict whether the local attendees would wittingly or unwittingly jeopardize the shared goal of the ceremonial inauguration of the cemetery.

²⁹We know of a recent example of a non-Jewish CSO that organized the tidying up of a Jewish cemetery in a rural area during the major holiday in the autumn (when work is forbidden, as it is on *Shabbats* — Saturdays). The initiative could be followed on social media; official Jewish organizations denounced the open violation of Jewish religious laws by the participants and the lack of prior consultation.



The inauguration event as a “rite of passage”³⁰

Following the preparatory phase, which was not without its tension and anxiety, the inauguration of the Apc Jewish cemetery took place on Sunday, July 2, 2006. The Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities delegated a rabbi and cantor, while Tamás Suchman,³¹ the then vice-president of the umbrella organization of the Hungarian Jewry, was also present (Fig. 7). Gyula Hegedűs considered himself honored to receive the delegation, believing that



Fig. 7. Participants in the inauguration ceremony, from right to left: Dávid Waktor, survivor; Tamás Suchman, vice-president of the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities; Gyula Hegedűs, president of the Association; Tamás Verő, rabbi; Tamás Biczó, cantor; and András Oblath, president of Foundation for Hungarian Jewish Cemeteries; as well as members of the local community (Photo provided by Gyula Hegedűs)

³⁰Israelite Cemetery of Apc, uploaded by József Tóth, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRvNSip4_BY&t=2s (accessed February 10, 2023).

³¹Tamás Suchman (1954–2023), a founding member of the Hungarian Socialist Party, later minister, member of parliament, and vice-president of the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities between 2005 and 2007.



the presence of authentic cultural figures, who were also embodiments of the sacrality of that culture, would lend legitimacy to the Association's work, while its commitment to preservation would be completed by their presence. This feeling was enhanced by the fact that several former residents, including Holocaust survivor Dávid Waktor, and the president of the Foundation for Hungarian Jewish Cemeteries, András Oblath, also spoke at the event. Many members of the local Roman Catholic population also expressed interest. The fact that it was a significant event in the life of the village is suggested not only by the interest shown by local residents but also by the fact that the local television channel produced a half-hour documentary that was then shared online (not to mention the presence of Hatvan Television, one of the most popular cable television channels in the county, and the national channel Duna TV). Thanks to the short film, all the speeches, including those made by the rabbi and the vice-president of the Federation, were also made available.

The inauguration, as a "rite of passage," was, by definition, also a kind of trial for the Association, and especially for its public representative, Gyula Hegedűs. I have already made some observations about the role of Jewish cemeteries within Judaism, but I think it necessary to add here that it is not customary to place or plant flowers on the graves in these graveyards (OLÁH 2009:149).³² The members of the Association did not have his particular piece of information before the inauguration, and for the public event they planted flowers on the graves, according to their own tastes and customs³³ (Fig. 8). As Gyula Hegedűs recalled, "the only problem was that the cemetery was full of flowers. When the rabbi saw it, he said there would be no inauguration. He turned away, ready to leave. Then a member of the delegation went after him and told the rabbi that he couldn't just leave people there. I also went up to him. 'Rabbi, can you see how many people there are here?' There were hundreds of people everywhere, who'd all come to the event. 'I can't tell all these people that nothing's going to happen.' The flowers weren't taken away just then. But he made us promise to remove them within a week" (Gyula Hegedűs, president, Together for Apc Association/Together for Apc Civil Society Organization; January 10, 2022).

So different elements of tradition clashed during the heritagization process, which produced tensions among the social actors involved in heritage creation at the very moment this heritage was being presented. On the one hand through the work it had offered, and on the other hand by means of its own ritual (the planting of flowers), the non-Jewish community had adopted as its own the Jewish heritage that had once been part of the village and the locality. The way in which the official representatives of Judaism are (or were) able to relate to the fact that others also "lay claim to" the heritage of the former Jewish communities is a fascinating and highly sensitive question. In this case, the representatives of the Jewish community accepted the work that had been invested — as a gesture of adoption — but not the Christian cultural element, the planting of flowers, as this meant that the cemetery, as a community and religious site (the heritage), was torn out of its original context. By way of compromise, the goal of preserving the legitimacy of the heritage and achieving a common goal overrode the "violation" of the

³²Rather than flowers, they place a stone on the grave, which is traditionally explained by the fact that in the Middle East graves had to be protected against wild animals; furthermore, life must be separated from death, and flowers are a symbol of life.

³³On the presence of flowers in Christian cemeteries, see BALASSA 1982:149–151.





Fig. 8. The cemetery on the day of the inauguration (Photo provided by Gyula Hegedűs)

traditional element, thus the ceremony could be implemented in full according to the original scenario (Fig. 9).

Rabbi Tamás Verő, who is currently rabbi of the Frankel Leó Street Synagogue in Budapest, used biblical quotations to emphasize the exemplary initiative of the Association in his speech, stressing that, through the project, a small segment of Jewish life was being returned to the present: “These stones are a witness to us. Every stone in this cemetery is a witness to the fact that not everything has been lost in action. (...) Looking around, we are witnesses to a remarkable activity that can serve as an example for many other towns and villages. The survival of a tiny space in which traces of Jewish life can still be found, beautified, and returned to the people of today.”³⁴

Tamás Suchman, vice-president of the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities, pointed out that the Jewish people who were deported from Apc had been known to many of those present, and that the restoration of the cemetery partly commemorated them and partly

³⁴Excerpt from the inauguration speech by Rabbi Tamás Verő, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRvNSip4_BY&t=2s, 3 minutes 21 seconds, accessed February 10, 2023.





Fig. 9. During the inauguration (Photos provided by Gyula Hegedűs)

honored the survivors who returned: “I consider what Mr. Hegedűs has achieved, with the help of Mr. Oblath, to be extremely important, because there are countless people here who once lived with the Jewish people of Apc. They attended funerals here in the 1940s, and they went to school together. This is an example to be followed, a message to be followed. (...) On behalf of the survivors and the visitors who once lived here, I would like to thank you for what has been done at individual, community, and society level, and for your presence, on behalf of the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities.”³⁵

At the end of the event, a reporter invited several of the survivors who were present to share their feelings about returning to Apc and about the “ceremony.” A descendant of Imre Reich, the only person to be buried in Apc after the Holocaust, spoke of his attachment to the village with joy and amazement (Fig. 10): “I grew up here as a child; my grandparents and great-grandparents lived here. They were deported from here, they died here, and their graves were here, then the graves were knocked down and they couldn’t be found inside the cemetery because they’d been demolished. And we didn’t think we’d ever see it restored again and done so

³⁵Excerpt from the inauguration speech of the vice-president of the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities Tamás Suchman. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRvNSip4_BY&t=2s, 15 minutes 51 seconds (accessed February 10, 2023).





Fig. 10. The family of Imre Reich share their thoughts with a reporter from the local television channel (Photo provided by Gyula Hegedűs)

beautifully — I'm really moved and I'm fighting back my tears because I can hardly believe that it's happened. (...) We are so grateful. I still can't quite believe it.³⁶

The above-mentioned disagreement, which may only have been apparent behind the scenes, did not stop the handful of Apc residents from receiving public recognition from the authentic bearers of culture that was an indispensable condition for the fulfilment of the Association's goal. Although this goal had been set by the Association, it became a common cause, since a wide audience from the local community not only watched the inauguration but afterwards joined in the celebration of the shared moment when the Apc Jewish cemetery was brought back to life in the framework of a tea party with representatives of the Jewish community (Fig. 11).

Whose cultural heritage is it anyway?

Cultural heritage is a social phenomenon that is not without internal contradictions, and at its various levels it is imbued with a variety of meanings (SONKOLY 2016). It means one thing to the

³⁶Excerpt from an interview with Mrs. László Rezsónak at the inauguration, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRvNSip4_BY&t=2s, 33 minutes 07 seconds (accessed February 10, 2023).





Fig. 11. Locals and descendants – an encounter between different worlds at the tea party following the inauguration (Photos provided by Gyula Hegedűs)

Association’s non-Jewish volunteers and to the religious and secular delegates of the Jewish organizations, another thing to activists in Jewish CSOs and visiting Holocaust survivors, and yet another thing to their descendants and the non-Jewish local population.

“It is difficult to imagine the formation and maintenance of identity without the stories that give meaning to events in one’s past and one’s life. (...) Stories that convey individual identity reveal that personal destiny always unfolds within a larger framework: beyond the history of the family and the local community, the influence of the national versions of history and culture is also perceptible” (KESZEI 2021:91).

I conducted a biographical interview with Ferenc Gyémánt, which provided an example of “how personal destiny always unfolds within a larger framework.” Ferenc openly acknowledges that he is the only Jewish person in Apc and is married to a non-Jew, Roman Catholic woman. He spent his childhood in a neighboring town. Although he was aware that he had relatives in Apc, it was only after visiting the refurbished cemetery that he was confronted with the fact that his relatives were buried there. The discovery came as a shock to him, and by his own admission it would never have happened if the Association had not made the cemetery accessible to visitors. It was then that Ferenc rethought his decision to be buried next to his parents in the cemetery of the nearby town of Pásztó. He considered the possibility of being buried in the Jewish cemetery in Apc, so that he and his Roman Catholic wife could be buried in the same ground, even if not in the same grave. He was touched by the Association’s activities,



even though he only learned of them later: “I admire them. Whenever they post something on Facebook, I always add the comment ‘Thank you very much.’ Even my Catholic wife adds a ‘Thank you’ (Ferenc Gyémánt [1948], resident of Apc; September 9, 2022) (Fig. 12). Ferenc’s experience and thought processes provide an example of how heritagization and heritage preservation can have a direct impact on human lives.

The “post-ceremony” life of the cemetery: the question of sustainability

The inauguration of the cemetery can (also) be interpreted as a “rite of passage” because it led to numerous awards, including the Podmaniczky Prize in 2007, and opened many doors for the Association (Fig. 14). Gyula Hegedűs was invited to talk on various media channels³⁷ about the ongoing work, and, more importantly, about what had motivated him to take on the leadership of the project. One particularly important moment was when the leadership of the Association was invited to JCC Budapest — Bálint Ház, where Hegedűs was asked to give a presentation. Answering questions after the presentation, he stressed that one of the main



Fig. 12. Facebook-post on August 23, 2021, on the ongoing maintenance of the Jewish cemetery (Photos from <https://www.facebook.com/kozosenapcert.egyesulet>, accessed March 28, 2023)

³⁷They were invited to appear on programs such as *Unokáink sem fogják látni* [Our grandchildren will never see it] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GTE1tfqI7yc&t=28s> (accessed March 28, 2023) and on Radio Szent István.

motivations for the work of the Association was a sense of responsibility towards the past and towards the new generations:³⁸ “The main question was about what motivated a Catholic group to tidy up a Jewish cemetery. I explained there, too, that the goal was to record and preserve the results of our research for posterity, and that posterity would decide whether it was interested or not. We wanted to give them the opportunity. We wanted to save it for posterity, that’s all. A lot of people asked: ‘Weren’t there any material motives?’ No. I’d be lying if I said we didn’t receive any financial support, because we contacted the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities and the Foundation for Hungarian Jewish Cemeteries, but that’s not what motivated us” (Gyula Hegedűs, president, Together for Apc Association/Together for Apc Civil Society Organization; January 10, 2022).

Following the presentation of the heritage, András Oblath, president of the Foundation for Hungarian Jewish Cemeteries, subsequently returned to Apc on several occasions, when he was invited to attend other programs by the Association. Thus, like the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities, he followed the way in which the heritage was maintained, which he acknowledged in the course of our conversation as follows: “Their attitude is very positive. I’d go as far as to say it couldn’t be more positive. There’s nothing more beautiful than reconciliation, than bringing people together, not just among religions or nationalities, but also among individuals. As Catholics, they considered this to be important, that this was the way to move in the direction of reconciliation among people. Their way of thinking is that the people they did it for used to be residents of Apc. These people used to live there, along with their families. If they have no descendants, they deserve the honor of having their memory cherished. It’s not about repentance but about wanting to do the right thing. By doing this they set an example to the locals of how to do something for the village. They want to commemorate a slice of the village” (András Oblath, president, Foundation for Hungarian Jewish Cemeteries; September 13, 2022).

Sustainability is often discussed in literature on the subject of cultural heritage dilemmas. Daniela Angelina Jelinić and Sanja Tišma point out in their study that the concept of heritage sustainability is extremely complex, since there are many aspects to sustainability that can be interpreted only in light of the legacy of heritage conservation projects. And although there are several arguments for ensuring the sustainability of heritage (strengthening of identity, community cohesion, as well as aesthetic, educational, and scientific values), implementation is often affected by centralized decisions (JELINIĆ – TIŠMA 2020:79).

After the event, the Association stated that it would maintain what had been achieved, although this depended — and still depends — not only on them but also on the local government’s willingness to help, the smoothness of long-term cooperation with Jewish organizations, and receipt of the financial resources they provide (Fig. 13).

Both Péter Tamás and Gyula Hegedűs confirmed that the Association had a contract with the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities (now with a private individual connected to the Federation), which guaranteed that the Jewish organization would provide an annual grant in return for photographic documentation of the cemetery’s current condition twice a year (in early spring and late fall). “At one time, the CSO did it. I didn’t have a problem with this,

³⁸The concept of “future generations” emerged at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, in the context of the preservation of natural and cultural heritage, and increasingly included the notion of intergenerational responsibility (HARRISON 2020:25).





Fig. 13. The cemetery in 2007, one year after the inauguration (Photo provided by Gyula Hegedűs)

but now it's been handed over to a private individual. He does it, but it's maintained just the same. We ask for photographic evidence from time to time, to monitor the state of the cemetery. We need to see whether it's overgrown or not, as we provide some kind of support. From the photos, we can assess the quantity and the quality of the work. The amount of support always depends on the size of the cemetery. We receive the photos online, and we keep a record of the cemetery, so we can search back through the photos over several years" (Péter Tamás, team leader, Preserving Rural Cemeteries Group, Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities; February 23, 2022).

An inspector from the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities photographs all the contracted cemeteries in the area, and as Apc is his last stop, he shares his experiences with Gyula, who noticeably has a competitive spirit when it comes to the others (Fig. 14): "We're proud that our cemetery can be visited. The place is neatly kept. The grass is properly mown. The graves are covered with pine needles. The entrance has been nicely done. Every year, in the spring and fall, a young gentleman comes to take photographs of the cemetery. He starts at Balassagyarmat, then goes to Szirák and Pásztó, then Apc. On these occasions, he always says how lovely it looks. Whenever he comes, he telephones, and he shows us what the other cemeteries look like. Although Péter Tamás always says that cemeteries live in their own environment, it's still important for us to keep it as tidy as possible. And we do" (Gyula Hegedűs, president, Together for Apc Association/Together for Apc Civil Society Organization; January 10, 2022).





Fig. 14. A sign for visitors reading “Entrance to the Israelite cemetery.” In the background, Gyula Hegedűs inspects the condition of the cemetery (Photo provided by Gyula Hegedűs)

Maintenance takes place four to five times a year, after which the Association shares the current condition of the cemetery with its followers on its social media page. About 7 percent, roughly forty of the Association’s community of 532 followers, regularly respond to these posts.

The contract with the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities now stipulates that the cemetery must not be opened on holidays, and that no maintenance can be carried out on these days. The provisions of the contract are so specific — once again emphasizing the importance of respect for Jewish tradition — that they even stipulate the extent to which the vegetation may be cut.³⁹ However, this is a potential source of conflict in terms of heritage maintenance, since the Association often unwittingly exceeds the permitted amount when prioritizing its own aesthetic

³⁹The reason for this was stated graphically by the Dutch rabbi Simon Philip de Vries (1870–1944): “The deceased is returned to the earth. The takes the deceased into its lap. The natural process of decay takes place there; the material returns to dust once again (...). Disturbing the peace of the dead is an emotionally intolerable thought for the Jews, something to terrify the living. The earth belongs to the dead, it is their eternal resting place. No other human has power over it. And what grows there also belongs to the grave. It is not to be used or profited from. The grass that grows there, even if it is regularly mowed to keep the grave well-kept, is merely raked up and collected somewhere in a corner of the cemetery” (VRIES 2000:340).



considerations. “I always tell them [the inspectors] that they can come at any time of year, because they’ll find everything in order here. Not just inside, but outside, too. But then once the gentleman took his photo when we’d just heavily trimmed the ivy that surrounds it. And then I got a call from the Federation, saying, ‘Mr. Hegedűs, this is not what’s in the contract!’ I felt really bad, because, as I’ve already said, a lot of visitors and descendants of people who lived in Apc want to visit the Jewish cemetery, and if we don’t cut the vegetation, they can’t. You know, ivy has a habit of spreading, and it was unattractive, really unattractive. And it made it hard to get in. Ivy needs to be kept in check because it’s rooted in the wall, that’s all there is to it” (Gyula Hegedűs, president, Together for Apc Association/Together for Apc Civil Society Organization; January 10, 2022).

In May 2023, I took part in the ongoing tidying of the cemetery, while Péter Demus, the local contractor of the Federation and a volunteer for the Association, was mowing the lawn and picking up the trash (Fig. 15) (it was then that I realized it was a problem in the Catholic cemetery that there weren’t enough trash cans, so — presumably the owners of the graves near the Jewish cemetery — were throwing the cellophane and other waste from their own graves “over the wall”). With respect to thinning out the vegetation in the cemetery, Péter Demus also stressed that, according to his contract, he is “only permitted to cut the grass and must leave other greenery untouched,” but he did not know the exact reason for this. As far as I can tell, the



Fig. 15. Maintenance work being carried out in the Jewish cemetery in May 2023 (Photo by Katalin Balogné Tóth)



Jewish cemetery has no particular significance for him; he merely considers it important that, since the cemetery is there, “it’s simply good for the village as a whole” that he keeps it tidy, along with the other areas designated by the head of the Association (Péter Demus, volunteer, Together for Apc Association/Together for Apc Civil Society Organization, and the caretaker contracted by the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities; May 8, 2023).

The opening of cemeteries and other heritage sites to tourists and visitors is a crucial way of putting them on the cultural (and physical) map, keeping them in the public eye — and in some cases generating revenue (CARMEL et al. 2020:66). While ensuring sustainability remains a challenging task, despite minor disagreements of this kind it can be argued that the Jewish cemetery fulfils its function as a cultural heritage site. A map in the Apc public cemetery clearly shows, alongside the locations of 23 graves (Fig. 16), that the Jewish cemetery is an integral part of the public cemetery, and an information board in front of the fence guides visitors through the history of the Jewish population of Apc (Fig. 17). Various Internet sites clearly indicate that it is open to descendants and visitors by appointment (Figs. 18–19), and these visits are later documented in the local press (Fig. 20).

Furthermore, heritage preservation “requires developing sustainable and cross-generational models in which local Jewish heritage becomes part of local historical heritage, by which its

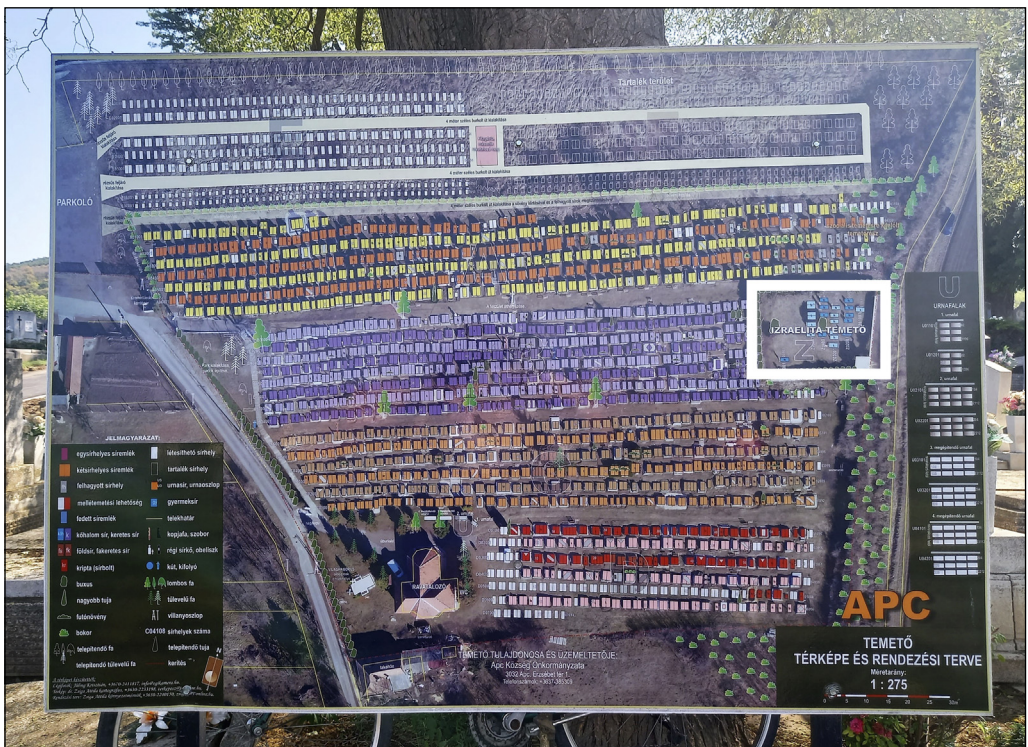


Fig. 16. An information board in the Apc public cemetery showing the position of the Jewish cemetery (in the white rectangle on the right of the map) (Photo by Katalin Balogné Tóth, 2022)





Fig. 17. The information panel placed at the entrance to the Jewish cemetery by the Association, with brief history of the Jewish population of Apc (Photo by Katalin Balogné Tóth, 2022)

shared ownership makes the responsibility for its protection a collective, partnered effort” (ZYSKINA – FISHEL 2020:12).

The Association’s goal is to carry out further research, give presentations at the local cultural center and school, and organize a thematic walk that integrates former Jewish buildings. In order to turn these buildings into a “living heritage,” the Association’s leadership has made an inventory of the shops and homes of former Jewish families in Apc, which indicates that the heritagization target is concentrated along the main road (*Fő út*) and its surroundings, as this is where the former synagogue was located and where the homes of Jewish families were largely concentrated. Among the listed buildings is the one-storey house of Márton Jungreis (Fig. 21), grandfather of the Jungreis family (Fig. 19), the unique character of which is illustrated by the fact that it appears along with the church on the first color postcard of Apc. During the 20th century, it served several functions and is currently being used as a warehouse. According to the head of the Association, the building is “heritage salvaged from the past,” which is why, as he underlines, “we are constantly thinking about how it might be renovated, for example by creating a village hall. There are currently two or three CSOs in Apc working on this project.





Fig. 18. Gyula Hegedűs and members of the Jungreis family from Israel standing next to the information panel in 2018 (Photo provided by Gyula Hegedűs)

The municipality is skeptical, because it doesn't believe that the CSOs will be able to maintain it" (Gyula Hegedűs, president, Together for Apc Association/Together for Apc Civil Society Organization; January 10, 2022).

The Association is ambitious to develop achievable solutions of major significance that help embed heritage sites in the local economy and promote them as investments in long-term value protection, especially education. Gyula Hegedűs, and (now) the CSO's core community, see the involvement of the younger generations as its most pressing challenge. He expresses his, and the CSO's, regret that they often encounter a lack of interest among the younger generations and his wish to increase the organization's proactive stance against indifference.

SUMMARY: IS THERE SUCH A THING AS JEWISH CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE HUNGARIAN VILLAGE OF APC?

"The choice for Jews, as for non-Jews, is not whether or not to have a past, but rather — what kind of past shall one have," wrote Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, the renowned American scholar of Jewish culture and history, in *Zakhor*, his book on Jewish history and remembrance (YERUSHALMI 1982:99). The choice he refers to branches off in many directions — what do people, regardless of their religious affiliation, do with a heap of old stones that they know in fact to be far more than that? And is it something they even want to know?





Fig. 19. Members of the Waktor family in the Jewish cemetery in Apc in 2015 (Photos provided by Gyula Hegedűs)

In this article, I have outlined the activities of a local CSO, whose membership gave a positive response to this question. The study has shown that the Together for Apc Association sees the Jewish community of the settlement — a community that was once thriving but that was annihilated during the Holocaust — as the bearer and embodiment of a specific (“authentic”) cultural knowledge, rooted in a way of life in which religious laws, traditions, and everyday customs were observed. The Association’s image of the *destroyed* community is shaped by two factors: on the one hand, the fact that the Association attributes much of the economic development of the village in the 19th and 20th centuries to the local Jewish population, and, on the other hand, the Association’s personal relationship with some of the survivors (such as Dávid Waktor, who spoke at the inauguration) and their descendants.





Fig. 20. A report by the Together for Apc Association in the August 2015 edition of the Apc local government newsletter (<https://apc.hu/wp-content/uploads/ujzag/Apci%20H%C3%ADrek%20%C3%9Ajs%C3%A1g%202015%20augusztus.pdf>, accessed June 14, 2023)

The members of the Association are confident in their own local, non-Jewish (Catholic and/or secular) identity, which they acknowledged and declared throughout the process of heritagization. This confirms that elevating “the Jewish object” into their own heritage, in keeping with their own perspectives, does not mean that they wish to assimilate to the members of the observant Jewish society. They emphasize that, in historical reality, Jews and Catholics lived together in the settlement, and that although the local Orthodox Jewish community strictly observed its religious laws and the laws governing its way of life, it was integrated in the local society. Despite their different customs and traditions, members of the Jewish and non-Jewish societies met at many points in their daily lives — evidence of this being the integration of the Jewish and Catholic cemeteries.

The Together for Apc Association therefore made the decision to define the history of the former local Jewish population as an integral part of its own past, and to identify its only





Fig. 21. Postcard from 1910 showing the home of Márton Jungreis. According to the history of the settlement and the Association, it was the first building in Apc to have electricity and mains water. (Postcard provided by Gyula Hegedűs)

remaining trace, the representation of “something traditional,” as local cultural heritage. In doing so, it treats “the case” as a shared goal, all the while maintaining a distance between the world of “us” and the world of “them.” Consequently, the decision raises the question of how Jewish organizations are able to relate to the fact that the heritage of the local Jewish community (an “object” still officially owned by Jewish organizations) is also claimed by a local non-Jewish community (and not only that, but also appears in a proactive role in heritagization), simply because of its “local” character.

There are hundreds of abandoned Jewish cemeteries in Hungary, in which the condition of the graves and gravestones is deteriorating due to lack of ownership. Because of the low level of state funding allocated for this purpose, the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities is



unable to maintain these cemeteries on its own and is increasingly dependent on local initiatives. This explains why, in the case study, the Association was able to cooperate with several Jewish organizations in connection with the Jewish cemetery of Apc. Although in the “bipolar” heritagization process, saving the cemetery was seen as a shared goal, the case study revealed obvious and/or latent tensions in two respects. The Jewish religion, based on law and practice, also regulates the form and maintenance of cemeteries, as well as acceptable behavior in them, raising the following kinds of questions: is it acceptable to work in the cemetery on Saturdays (*Sabbaths*)? Is it permitted to smoke there, or to eat while working (and if so, what)? How should the cemetery be properly maintained? What can be done, and how, with the gravestones and the vegetation in the cemetery? If there are rules, do they apply to non-Jewish volunteers? These were just some of the questions that the Association encountered during the process.

While it seems certain that the Association tried to acquire, and comply with, the specific cultural knowledge required for the work — thus certainly felt it important to make gestures towards the Jewish community — it was not always able to implement this knowledge (which explains why flowers were planted on the graves for the inaugural ceremony). We have also seen examples of where volunteers were aware of the respective Jewish custom but overrode it, in keeping with their own line of reasoning (if there is no work on the *Sabbath*, there will be no volunteers; if the ivy is not cut, it is difficult, or even impossible, to get into the cemetery). Even while endeavoring to show respect for the other culture, these examples of “overriding” probably occurred because the Association was not pushing for the heritagization process on religious grounds but to strengthen local identity and the “local” character of the cemetery. According to the recorded interviews, the planting of the flowers and the pruning of the ivy generated palpable tensions, in which both sides had to be open to compromise. Noticeably, however, the interviewees were ambivalent about working on Saturdays. This may be down to the fact that the Jewish organizations may not have been aware of when the work was performed (social media presence was far less important twenty years ago than it is today), although it is also possible that, in the interview situation, they did not want to cast the otherwise helpful Association in a bad light.

After approximately twenty years, it seems that the social actors involved in the case study — through their attitude towards the Apc Jewish cemetery, their concern for it, and their focus on sustainability — have not only made the former site of remembrance for local Jewish people a place of social remembrance, but have also created the opportunity for descendants to visit their family’s graves and for interested visitors to gain an insight into the life of a rural Jewish community that no longer exists. Last but not least, the work process, the shared goal, and “the case,” have not only enhanced cohesion among the local residents but have also promoted interdenominational interactions and interactions among “cultural others” through the involvement of Jewish organizations. The Jewish cemetery has become part of the local cultural heritage for non-Jewish residents, while it is also a site of Jewish cultural heritage for all those who are religiously/culturally connected to Judaism. Thus the question can justifiably be posed once again: does Jewish cultural heritage exist in the Selyp Basin? The answer to this question is yes, although it is important to add that this material has also become local heritage with a Jewish dimension.

Hungarian society as a whole is characterized by the fact that the traumas of the 20th century — and in particular the Holocaust, its antecedents, and its consequences — remain unspoken and unresolved. Members of both Jewish and non-Jewish society are voicing and articulating



what happened to the communities that are no longer there to care for their own cemeteries. “*They* have been exterminated,” is, at the same time, “*we* have been exterminated.” Without relativizing the memory of the victims and the pain of their descendants, it is important to stress that trauma and repression, while incomparable, are present on both sides. Over the past twenty years, Jewish cemeteries in many other settlements have been tidied up by local CSOs with the help of Jewish organizations, as a recent report by the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities shows.⁴⁰ Approaching the 80th anniversary of the *extermination*, Jewish cemeteries, as the only sites of remembrance and commemoration in many places, rightly demand attention today. Each abandoned Jewish cemetery is a trace of a former community, the heritage of Jews and non-Jews alike. Saving them is an opportunity to encounter the *Other*, to understand and learn the language of the *Other*, which is a condition for talking through and alleviating our existing traumas.

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⁴⁰The tidying of rural Jewish cemeteries is well underway, June 16, 2023, https://mazsihisz.hu/hirek-a-zsido-vilagbol/mazsihisz-hirek/javaban-zajlik-a-videki-zsido-temetok-rendbetetele?fbclid=IwAR0_FIQCD9ZlrPea3R2QLVFBgCC11w63s901eGi9nu2JaV-1oEO-Ig8ghv8 (accessed June 19, 2023).



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