

Budapest's Jewish Cemeteries – a Short Survey of their Art, Architecture and Historical Significance

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Budapest is one of the few European cities to have a substantial Jewish population since Roman times, attested by synagogues and gravestones. The first Jews arrived in the area of Budapest in the 2nd century C.E. together with the Roman legions. Jews reappeared in the Middle Ages during the 12th century on the southern side of the Buda Castle Hill and later on its northern tip, indicated by the largest medieval synagogue in Central Europe. A substantial number of medieval gravestones have survived. After the Ottoman Turkish occupation (1541–1686) new Jewish immigrants reappeared in the 18th century, close to the settlement in antiquity in Óbuda, what is today the 3rd District, from where they subsequently moved to Pest. In its heyday, around 1900, the Jewish population of Budapest made up 23.6% of the total population of the city.¹ Although decimated by the Holocaust and by emigration following the uprising in 1956, the Jewish community in Budapest is still vivid, counting some 80,000–100,000 souls.

There are six modern Jewish cemeteries in Budapest, and the informal cemetery of mass graves in the courtyard of the Dohány Street synagogue. Adjacent to the central Christian cemetery of Rákoskeresztúr there is the largest Jewish cemetery in Kozma Street, in which since 1868 over 300 000 Jews have been buried. It has a grand oriental-style Tahara house, constructed in 1891 and based on designs by Vilmos Freund, the architect of imposing neo-Renaissance Jewish palaces on Andrassy Avenue. The Kozma Street or Kozma Utca Cemetery contains the grave of the Jewish heroes of the 1848 Revolution, designed by Béla Lajta; the Holocaust Memorial, designed by Alfréd Hajós, who was Jewish, an architect and the first Hungarian Olympic champion! This cemetery is still in use and reasonably well kept. Some fallen old gravestones have been removed and the plot sold to new users.

Close to Kozma Utca Cemetery is Gránátos Utca Orthodox Cemetery, which was opened in 1922 on 5 hectares and contains 5 300 gravestones. Hassidic rabbis, Czitrom, Schmuk and Weiss, are also buried here. It is still in use.

Adjacent to the great Farkasréti Christian Cemetery is the still active Jewish section, founded in 1885 and containing 2 500 graves on 2.8 hectares.

Hidden between apartment blocks lies one of the oldest cemeteries of Budapest, the Csörsz Utca Cemetery, which is just 10 by 100 meters large and contains 1360 gravestones. A lane divides it into a male and a female section. The last burial took place after World War Two.

The Jewish cemetery in Óbuda is the cemetery of the first modern time Jewish settlement in Budapest. It contains the gravestone of Rabbi Mózes Münz and the memorial to the victims of the so-called *Fussmarsch*.²



Fig. 1 Béla Lajta, entrance gate to the Salgótarjáni Street Cemetery in Budapest, 1908–10

In the courtyard of the Dohány Street Synagogue, which was part of the Ghetto during the German occupation and was closed from October 1944 to January 18th, 1945 (the liberation by the Soviets), some 8,000–10,000 people out of the entire 70,000 inhabitants of the Ghetto died here. Due to war operations in the city, some dead could not be brought to Kozma Utca Cemetery and some 2 000 of them were buried in mass graves adjacent to the synagogue between the trees, on a territory of some 3 000 square metres. The synagogue's courtyard, a representative garden, was initially intended to give monumentality to the Heroes' Temple (1931), a small modern synagogue designed by architect László Vágó commemorating the Jewish heroes who died for the Hungarian fatherland in World War One. It is ironic how such an architectural gesture was invalidated by history. This compound contains the monument to the victims of forced labour and the great monument to the 600,000 Hungarian Holocaust victims.



Fig. 2 Béla Lajta, Tahara House in the Salgótarjáni Street Cemetery in Budapest, 1908–10

The cemetery in Salgótarjáni Street

Historically and artistically the most important modern-time Jewish cemetery of the region is the Salgótarjáni Utca Jewish Cemetery, on some 55 hectares, established in 1874 and closed for burials in the 1950s. This cemetery is adjacent to the monumental Christian Kerepesi Cemetery on Fiumei út, where great sons and daughters of the nation are buried. The Salgótarjáni utca is a side street of Fiumei út, a gesture which hints to the minority status of the Jews, as their cemetery is hidden behind the main street leading to the Eastern Railway Station (Keleti). However, inside the Jewish cemetery the hint to minority status vanishes, as grandiose gravestones and mausolea made of marble and often black Swedish granite line up the lanes along lush vegetation. Interestingly, the cemetery contains some older gravestones relocated from other places during the great regulation of the city in the 1870s and 1880s. They make the mid-19th century Jewish breakthrough even more evident.

In this cemetery the assimilated Jewish economic and cultural elite was buried, which contributed to the blooming *Gründerzeit* economy of Habsburg Hungary and to Hungarian modernity in culture. The graves of great Jewish families represent a funeral counterpart to their secular architectural activities, the construction of the great avenue

called Andrassy út, inhabited mostly by the Jewish aristocracy.³

While roughly a counterpart to other great European metropolitan Jewish cemeteries of the period – Berlin-Weißensee or the Jewish section of Père-Lachaise in Paris, or other Jewish cemeteries in Hungary – this cemetery differs from all of them in terms of the entrance gate, the layout and the graves.

The outside surprises the viewer: there is no hint to the Jewish denomination, or even to a cemetery. The entrance gate, designed by Béla Lajta, lacks any codified Jewish symbol: no Tablets of the Law, no six-pointed star, and probably most importantly, no oriental style, which was almost obligatory for entrances to Jewish cemeteries of the period in Hungary.⁴ In terms of size and richness the entrance gate building, created in the heyday of the Budapest Jewish Community (1908–09), represents a stark architectural understatement: it is an undecorated, closed mass covered with stone, with a large pointed arch on the upper floor and a similar one on the ground floor and castle-gate grid (fig. 1). Windows are very small, also with pointed arches above the gate, like eyes over a mouth. This rough, vertical volume containing the caretaker's flat is covered with a simple hip roof, like a bastion. The medieval touch was prompted by the fashion of Finnish National Romanticism in Hungary between 1905 and 1910.⁵



Fig. 3 (left) The main lane (“cardo”) of the Salgótarjáni Street Cemetery in Budapest

Fig. 4 Baron Hatvany-Deutsch family grave, Salgótarjáni Street Cemetery in Budapest, 1913

Passing the austere entrance gate, one gets to a forecourt. In front towers the *beit tahara*, also a work by Béla Lajta, today lacking the roof and dome, completely gutted with only the perimeter walls standing, but even as a ruin still impressive. To the right, one glimpses some graves buried into the lush vegetation, behind a wrought iron fence also designed by Lajta. The *beit tahara* (fig. 2) is more monumental than the entrance gate, with some Hebrew inscriptions, crying-tree motifs carved into the white marble with a slight oriental touch due to the battlement. Instead of the steep hip-roof of the gatehouse, here a dome and a play of different materials soften the building: two completely closed windowless side projections covered with rough stone, some of them stretching out from the wall surface by a couple of centimetres, dispatched in an irregular manner. Between the side projections, slightly recessed in the middle section, towers the central entrance topped by three little windows which are framed with white marble. Above them the wall – here brick masonry – closes again.

Walking through or around the *beit tahara* one finds oneself on a little square, from which an eastward lane figures as a *cardo* (fig. 3) of the cemetery and a less expressed northern lane leads to the western perimeter lane with large graves/mausolea lined up along the fence, which divides the Jew-

ish cemetery from its Christian Kerepesi neighbour. Along the *cardo* at the intersection with the *decumanus* where the *cardo* narrows, one reaches the grave of Vilmos Freund (1846–1920) protruding into the intersection and thus making it visible from the entrance. Freund was one of the most important architects of the Andrassy út (avenue);⁶ on his grave a bow-compass and a triangle signal his profession. Further to the east are the old, translocated gravestones. At the northern end of the *decumanus* one glimpses one of the grandest monuments of the cemetery, the mausoleum of the Baron Hatvany-Deutsch dynasty, industrialists and patrons of modern Hungarian literature and the arts.⁷ This grandiose monument borders the northern perimeter wall of the cemetery along with other dignitaries' graves (fig. 4). A white marble Greek Doric temple in *antis* is the centrepiece of a major composition, flanked symmetrically by two staircases that lead to the side walls of the little temple, where the massive iron doors lead the visitors into the interior and to the graves.

Apart from the Greek, mainly Doric order, other historic styles were used less often. The Zsigmond Bródy family monument uses Egyptian architectural elements. Two columns with papyriform bell-shaped capital flank the entrance and similar columns are repeated twice, first after the front columns and once more in the interior around the plaque



Fig. 5 Béla Lajta, Schmidl Sándor family grave, Kozma Street Cemetery, Budapest, 1902



Fig. 6 Béla Lajta, Gyula Sváb family grave, Salgótarjáni Street Cemetery in Budapest, 1907

with the names of the deceased. Through the lateral walls, decorated with papyrifrom flowers and perforated with high and narrow windows, sunlight comes in.

Graves in the oriental or Moorish style are few, although this was the “official Jewish style” for synagogues and *tahara* houses. Apparently, upper middle-class Jews buried

here refused the customary concept of Jews as “Asians of Europe”. They were true Europeans, ardent followers of the Enlightenment tradition, torchbearers in a very traditional country.⁸

Besides the historic importance, gravestones designed by architect Béla Lajta represent the Salgótarjáni Street Cemetery’s main artistic significance. These gravestones are unique pieces of Jewish art in the early 20th century. Lajta was probably the most original architect in the country after the death of Austrian-Hungarian Ödön (Edmund) Lechner, the founder of the so-called “Hungarian style”. Lajta, suffering from an incurable disease, devoted a good part of his opus to funeral art from the Secession period onward.

Apart from the oriental style of synagogues, related vaguely to some supposed Jewish identity, the first real pan-European artistic movement with Jewish relevance was the Secession, both the Viennese and its Hungarian counterpart.⁹ In both cases the percentage of Jewish patrons, critics and architects was very high¹⁰. In this context Lajta is a key figure in relating the Jewish tradition – religious symbols and structural principles – to early 20th century architecture in Central Europe. His gravestones brought Jewish funeral art into the limelight.¹¹

The relationship between Jews and the art of the Secession/Art Nouveau was special. Carl Schorske maintained that the political aspirations of the emerging middle classes were largely suppressed in the conservative Habsburg Empire, and their frustration found its outlet in the arts.¹² Although Schorske glosses over the role of Jews in the modernity of the Habsburg Empire, his observations apply to the Jewish high middle class too, even more so as this class was doubly excluded, not only as members of the bourgeoisie but also as non-Christians. For Hungary and Hungarian Jews the Secession meant even more: the allegiance to the Hungarian cause in the struggle of national independence. Still, gentile reaction to this allegiance was ambiguous, sometimes explicitly hostile.

Károly Kós, a leading figure of the group *Fiatalok* (Young ones), complained in his article “Nemzeti művészet” (National Art)¹³ that he could hardly find proper Hungarian architects in the country, emphasising that architects were mostly of foreign origin, usually German or Jewish. He himself was born as *Kosch* to a Saxonian family in Transylvania. Some others were even more disturbed by the Jewish cultural influence. (By 1900 the proportion of Jewish students at the Technical University rose to 44.46%.) Jenő Kismarthy Lechner, Ödön Lechner’s conservative nephew, went further by labelling the new style to be Jewish-like (*zsidós*)¹⁴. It provoked a heavy Jewish reaction from Ármin Beregi, a Jewish community activist.¹⁵ Some other Jews also protested, mentioning Lajta as an archetypical Hungarian architect, whose Hungarian loyalty must have been beyond any doubt.

Soon the question of Secession and Jewishness reached high politics. In 1902, Baron Gyula Wlassits, minister of culture, forbade the use of Hungarian Secession for public buildings. By 1905 Lajta would move away from folklore Secession and adopt elements of Scandinavian National Romanticism, exemplified by the entrance gate to the Salgótarjáni Street Cemetery. Still, Lajta never entirely gave up

the surface ornamentation in his opus, which may be related to wall painting of Polish and Moravian synagogues from the 16th to the 18th centuries. Synagogue wall painting created an independent layer over the bearing structure, something Secessionist architects also used to do. This surface treatment became the main objection of Christian architects, who following Carl Schnase's theories from the 19th century saw in it "Jewish insincerity".¹⁶

Thus, Lajta's special role, and his funeral opus in particular, was to link Secession to the Jewish tradition, as the official ban on Secession art was ineffective in a Jewish cemetery considered to be a private matter of the Jews, a place where they could display what they wanted, regardless of the expectations of their "Christian brethren".

The first major piece of Lajta's funeral opus is the Schmid monument (fig. 5), created in 1902 following Lechner's folksy style with a set of Jewish symbols never seen before in a combination displayed on this building: cherub wings, mugs of Levites, poppies and six-pointed star made of Hungarian heart-like honey-cakes, suggesting the symbiosis of Hungarians and Jews. The small mausoleum made of glazed blue ceramics decorated with mosaics follows the tradition of *ohels*, small buildings – literally tents – built over the graves of great rabbis, albeit in a bourgeois setting: a rabbi, a person with achievement in Jewish studies, is replaced by a Jewish banker, a person with another type of achievement, who would, nevertheless, also make the world a better place in the eyes of Jewish liberals. The cherub wings represent a clear reference to Solomon's Temple, which is a stark overstatement.

The Gyula Sváb family grave (1907) signals a clear departure from the Hungarian folklorist Secession (fig. 6). Playing with colour and layers was replaced by tectonics and the sculptural character by a material that is paradigmatically tectonic, Swedish granite. We may wonder what caused this sea change in Lajta's funeral opus and his opus in general. Was it disenchantment in Lechner's efforts to create artificially an architectural national identity? Or just a cautious move of a Jew who realized the Lechnerians had gone too far in freehanded compilations of Hungarian folklore? Lajta himself ventured to Transylvania, the arcadic place of Hungarian cultural tradition,¹⁷ and doing so he re-established tectonics over decoration, a lesson he drew from Transylvanian vernacular architecture. The graves of his middle period are marked by this strong tectonics.

The József Bródy family grave (1910) is a par excellence exercise in tectonics (fig. 7). The horizontal, massive gravestone is surrounded by six columns, topped by an architrave, circumscribing a semicircle, all in black, polished Swedish granite. Unobtrusive surface decoration – suns, six-pointed stars – is confined to the heavy, almost Romanesque cushion capitals.

Soon Lajta would depart from proto-modern classicism – both in secular and funeral architecture. His secular opus would take the direction of modernism;¹⁸ his funeral opus would attempt to accommodate some principles and elements of 16th–18th century Jewish burial tradition.

The grave of Vilmos Bächer (1913) is Lajta's late piece of Jewish funeral art (fig. 8). After monumental mausolea that celebrate emancipation, this gravestone returns to pre-eman-



Fig. 7 Béla Lajta, József Bródy family grave, Salgótarjáni Street Cemetery in Budapest, 1910



Fig. 8 Béla Lajta, grave of Vilmos Bächer, Salgótarjáni Street Cemetery in Budapest, 1913

ipation modesty and shape: a simple stele with a semi-circular ending. The surface of its eastern side is lightly decorated. In the upper half of the stele a smaller stele in relief frames the inscription "Dr. Bächer Vilmos, 1850–1913", surrounded by floral decoration, i. e. poppies in different stages, from completely closed to open, growing out of a vase. The western side carries Hebrew inscriptions like tra-

ditional Jewish graves with justified lines of text, covered completely according to the *horror vacui* principle, unseen on post-emancipation gravestones¹⁹. Lajta's surface synthesises the traditional Ashkenazi decoration, Hungarian Art Nouveau and Wiener Werkstätte.²⁰ This symbiosis was the message not only of Lajta's gravestones, but the whole cemetery: Jews and gentiles together making the world a better place. While late 19th century graves emphasized Jewish acculturation and adoption of gentile artistic styles and manners, Lajta's opus signals a rebirth of Jewish consciousness, expressed in his hybrid formal language. History has invalidated this idea, but the Salgótarjáni Street Jewish Cemetery bears witness to an optimistic era, the last one of unlimited Enlightenment optimism, before the irrationalism was followed by the World Wars and the Holocaust.

In spite of its high artistic and historical value the Salgótarjáni Street Jewish Cemetery is in a desolate state. At the moment it looks romantic with some crumbled stones and fallen trees, uncontrolled growth of grass and weeds, but in the long run it is destined to vanish. Its condition is aggravated by looting, during which specialised gangs dismantle the gravestones and mausolea to get hold of the golden teeth of the deceased. Some other gangs loot the stones and sell them to workshops manufacturing Christian gravestones. The State proved to be a bad owner, the fences are incomplete, the keepers inefficient and there is generally little interest in its preservation. If no action is taken, in a few years these unique pieces of Jewish art will be gone forever.

Zusammenfassung

Budapest und seine großen jüdischen Friedhöfe

Budapest ist eine der wenigen europäischen Städte mit einer markanten jüdischen Bevölkerung seit Römerzeiten. Die ersten Juden kamen mit den Römerlegionen im 2. Jahrhundert und hinterließen Synagogen und Grabsteine. Im Mittelalter (13. Jahrhundert) kamen weitere Juden und besiedelten die südliche Seite des Buda-Schloss-Hügels und zogen später

auf den nördlichsten Zipfel mit der größten mittelalterlichen Synagoge in Zentraleuropa. Nach der osmanisch-türkischen Besetzung (1542–1686) kamen im 18. Jahrhundert neue jüdische Immigranten, die sich in der Nähe der antiken Siedlung in Óbuda niederließen. Dieser Bereich stellt heute den drittgrößten Bezirk Budapests dar. Anschließend besiedelten sie das Zentrum der ungarischen Hauptstadt. Obwohl durch den Holocaust und Emigration nach dem Aufstand im Jahr 1956 dezimiert, ist die jüdische Gemeinde in Budapest noch lebendig und zählt heute 80 000–100 000 Mitglieder.

In Budapest gibt es zur Zeit sechs moderne jüdische Friedhöfe: (1) Der orthodoxe Friedhof in Rákoskeresztúr; (2) der orthodoxe Friedhof ins Csörsz utaca, (3) der neologe Friedhof in Farkasrét; (4) der neologe Friedhof in Óbuda; (5) der neologe Friedhof in Rákoskeresztúr und (6) der Friedhof in Salgótarjáni utca. Nummer 5 und 6 sind die größten, mit der sich diese Präsentation im Detail beschäftigt.

Der Friedhof in Rákoskeresztúr ist noch in Betrieb und wird angemessen gepflegt, hingegen verschlechtert sich der Zustand des Friedhofs in Salgótarjáni utca, der 1874 eröffnet und im Jahr 1950 geschlossen wurde, zunehmend. In diesem Friedhof wurde die wirtschaftliche und kulturelle Elite beigesetzt, die während der Gründerzeit ihren Beitrag im Bereich der Wirtschaft und Kultur geleistet hat. Die Gräber der großen jüdischen Familien repräsentieren einen Ausdruck ihrer weltlichen architektonischen Aktivitäten, wie der Bau der großen jüdischen Allee namens Andrassy út und der Bau von Újlipótváros, dem neuen jüdischen Viertel im 13. Bezirk.

Über die kulturelle und historische Bedeutung hinaus legen die jüdischen Friedhöfe, mit zum Teil herrlichen von dem Architekten Béla Lajta (geborener Leitersdorfer) entworfenen Grabsteinen, ein Zeugnis der architektonischen Geschichte des Landes ab. Lajta war eine führende Person der ungarischen sezessionistischen und proto-modernen Architektur. Er litt seit seiner Kindheit an einer unheilbaren Krankheit, dadurch wurde sein Interesse an der Grabkunst gesteigert. Sein Grabstein repräsentiert einen Meilenstein der ungarischen Jugendstilarchitektur und frühen Moderne.

¹ Counting the baptised Jews who somehow remained Jewish in their thinking and attitude, this number was close to 300 000 souls.

² On Eichmann's request for 40 000 Jewish workers, Jews in Budapest were forced to march towards the Austrian border, but died during the long, exhausting march.

³ See in detail Fredric BÉDOIRE, *The Jewish Contribution to Modern Architecture 1830–1930*, Jersey City 2004.

⁴ The great Jewish cemetery in Kozma Utca announces its presence with a very large tahara house with ogival arches and battlements.

⁵ This style was partly justified by the Finnish-Hungarian kinship, the intense communication of Finnish architect Akseli Gallen-Kallela (born Axél Waldemar Gallén) and

the Hungarian group of *Fiatalok*, led by Károly Kós, born Karl Kosch, who rejected the widespread Hungarian Secession cultivated by numerous Jews – clients and architects alike – on grounds of its supposed Jewish character. See Rudolf KLEIN, "Juden und die Sezession – Ein kurzer Überblick über Architektur und Gesellschaft in Kakanien", in: Aliza COHEN-MUSHLIN, Hermann SIMON und Harmen H. THIES (eds.), *Beiträge zur jüdischen Architektur in Berlin* (Kleine Schriften der Bet Tfila-Forschungsstelle für jüdische Architektur in Europa, vol. 2), pp. 100–112.

⁶ Andrassy Avenue, initially called Sugár út, was the first great avenue of Budapest, leading from the central historic core to the city park. As Fredric Bédouire has shown, Jew-

- ish developers' impact was significant, not only in terms of percentage – over 90 % of plots were owned by them –, but also in terms of architectural language and some Jewish motifs (see BÉDOIRE, *op. cit.*, pp. 153–206).
- ⁷ Lajos Hatvany, 1880–1961, supported talented modernists morally and when needed also financially. The most important protégés included poets Endre Ady, Árpád Tóth, Attila József, etc. He himself fled Hungary twice, first after the fall of the Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919 and second in 1938 when the far right gained ground and introduced the so-called Jewish laws restricting property and the personal freedom of Jews. The famous family art collection was put into state deposit in the safe of the National Bank. Later this collection left Hungary with the so-called Gold Train that was eventually taken over by the allied forces in Austria and ended up in American hands, decorating the homes of American officers, if not sold to connoisseurs.
- ⁸ Whether their services to the Hungarian nation were entirely solicited or not is an open question. Late 18th century Hungarian gentry invited Jews in order to foster trade and industry, but as soon as they realized that they had set the genie free many attempts were made to reverse Jewish emancipation, actually achieved only in the wake of the Holocaust in the so-called Jewish Laws between World Wars One and Two.
- ⁹ See Rudolf KLEIN, “Secession: *un goût juif?* – Art Nouveau Buildings and the Jews in some Habsburg Lands”, in: *Jewish Studies at the CEU V, 2005–2007, 2009*, pp. 91–124.
- ¹⁰ In numerous Hungarian cities one can identify an over-proportionately large number of Jewish owners of Art Nouveau buildings.
- ¹¹ Jewish involvement in secular architecture in the Habsburg Empire and its successor states (disregarding synagogues, cemeteries and Jewish community buildings) can be divided into four distinct phases: (1) Early phase, from the mid-19th century until the early 1890s, when Jews appeared almost exclusively as patrons and urban developers, with certain architectural preferences or details reflected in actual buildings or just their interiors (the Ringstrasse in Vienna, Andrásy út in Budapest); this is the phase which can be found in the late free-style grave-stones in the Kozma utca and Salgótarjáni utca cemeteries; (2) Secession from 1897 until about 1905, when Jews emerge as architects, particularly in Hungary and Croatia; this is the period when the “Jewishness” of architecture is first discussed publicly and also the time of early Lajta gravestones; (3) Late or geometric Secession and proto-modernism, from about 1905 to 1920, when Jewish thinking facilitates the acceptance of abstraction and primacy of space over material; into this phase Lajta's later funeral opus fits; and (4) early modernism, from 1920 to 1944, when Jewish-born architects played a significant role, a phase that rarely appears in Hungarian Jewish funeral art.
- ¹² Carl E. SCHORSKE, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna – Politics and Culture*, New York 1981.
- ¹³ In: *Magyar Iparművészet* (1910), pp. 141–157.
- ¹⁴ The most prominent Hungarian Jewish architects were: Henrik Böhm & Ármin Hegedűs, Zoltán Bálint & Lajos Jámbor (Frommer), Lipót Baumhorn, Albert Kálmán Körössy, Tibor Szivessy, Dávid and Zsigmond Jónás, Marcell Komor & Dezső Jakab, Lajos Kozma, Géza Márkus, Zsigmond Quittner, Ernő Román, Artúr Sebestyén, László Vágó & József Vágó, Emil Vidor, Béla Löffler & Samu Sándor Löffler; after World War One: Lajos Kozma, Alfréd Hajós. At the top stood the famous Bauhaus émigrés such as Fred Forbat and Marcel Breuer as well as the modern artist László Moholy-Nagy.
- ¹⁵ Beregi wrote: “In the 1890s Ödön Lechner, our great teacher of architecture initiated the ‘Hungarian architectural style’. His receptive pupils have improved it to its present perfection. As quite a number of young Hungarian modernist architects are Jews or ex-Jews, Jenő Lechner labeled the modern style as Jewish-like [zsidós], at a meeting of architects and engineers in 1908. This is how the Jewish question emerged in Hungarian architecture (...)” (see Ármin BEREGI, in: *Zsidókérdés, asszimiláció, antiszemitizmus*, ed. by Péter HANÁK, Budapest 1984, p. 47.
- ¹⁶ Carl Schnaase originally wrote about Islamic art and its insincerity vis-à-vis the straightforwardness of Greco-Christian art based on visual representation and architecture based on displaying the tectonic principle (see C. SCHNAASE, *Geschichte der bildenden Künste*, 2nd ed., Düsseldorf 1869, p. 404). Due to rich surface decoration the same argument was transferred to Secession.
- ¹⁷ Transylvania, today part of Romania, was a multi-cultural place; German, Hungarian and Romanian traditions interacted. However, what rendered this place different from other regions of historic Hungary was relative isolation – the absence of Habsburg influence, even no Ottoman Turkish occupation and therefore a long-standing, uninterrupted cultural continuity, the ‘clean well’, as emphasised by many historians. Jewish presence was quite slight in this closed region, and impact almost null.
- ¹⁸ Some of his buildings, as for instance the apartment block in Népszínház utca (1911), would anticipate post-World-War-One modernism.
- ¹⁹ Hebrew inscription, if present at all, on graves of emancipated Jews is subordinated to the inscriptions of the host nation, Roman or Cyrillic, as in the case of the aforementioned Sándor Sváb monument.
- ²⁰ His *mélange* was adopted by his followers for synagogues, as for instance the Kazinczy Street synagogue in Budapest, and for some secular buildings.