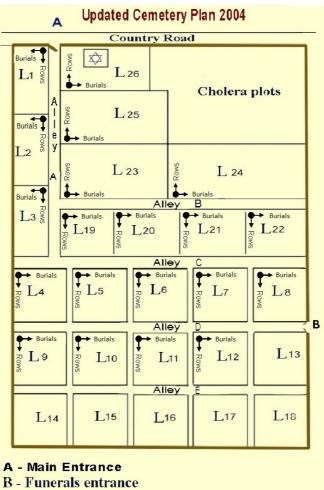# The RADAUTZ Jewish Cemetery in RADAUTZ, ROMANIA

Map of cemetery: http://hauster.de/data/LotByLot.pdf

The town of Radautz

Radautz[1] (in the Austro-Hungarian original, Radauti in Romanian today, Radevitz in Yiddish) lies in the southern part of the Bukovina district, which was once part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and is part of Romania today. The town was founded in the 14th century, and it had some Jewish population starting in the 15th. The Jewish community was at its height on the eve of WWII, when it numbered about 9,000 out of the 40,000 residents of the city at that time. After the war the community never regained its former strength, and it now consists of just a few people.

The cemetery

The Jewish cemetery of the town of Radautz is situated about 4 kilometers from the city – on the way to the village of Marginea. It was founded in 1831, when the number of Jews in the

locality was about 370, by the then ritual slaughterer and spiritual leader of the community – Ephraim ben Jacob Goldschlager. Unfortunately, the slaughterer Goldschlager was also the first person to be interred there – he died in the cholera epidemic that year. The cemetery was enlarged to its present dimensions in 1921.

The cemetery is divided into 26 sections of different sizes, and it also contains a ritual purification facility and several vaults of rabbis. It also has several family vaults. Paths separate one section from another. Some of them are clearly defined, while others so badly as to obliterate completely the boundaries between sections. As regards the number of graves in each section, some are still completely empty, some are small sections with only several dozens of tombs, and some are as big as section 23, which has 17 rows, with about 80 graves in each – and about 1,250 burial places all told.

The headstones in the cemetery are of different kinds. There are headstones made of hard stone, beautifully carved, which have stood the test of time for 150 years or more; there are headstones made of limestone, part of which crumbled a little with time; headstones of concrete and plaster which are badly deteriorated - and finally headstones made of tin, completely rusted now, and undecipherable, of course. There also are splendid marble headstones dating from the second half of the 20th century.

The text written on the headstones is different for each period. On the old headstones there is Hebrew writing only and the Hebrew date only, and no last names. Later there are a few last names written in Hebrew. Later still there are last names and non-Hebrew names (as well as the traditional Hebrew text), first on the back of the stone only, later the stone itself, on its lower part. Later still there is the Gregorian date of death, and even date of birth. As the community deteriorated you may find mistakes in Hebrew dates and Hebrew spelling, and even stones written in Romanian only.

Generally, the cemetery is in a pretty good shape, although it has suffered from the ravages of time. Although there is a watchman on behalf of the community, marble plates, candle holders and so on have been stolen. Part of the fence of the cemetery has been fixed, thanks to the project of conservation and documentation.

The project of conservation and documentation

Mickey Rostoker was the first to systematically document part of the cemetery. He took images of about 250 headstones and submitted them to JewishGen JOWBR in the early 2000s.

In 2004 a group of former Radautz residents and their offspring got together with the intent to conserve part of the material and spiritual values of the community. A detailed account of its activities in phase I of the project can be found in https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/radauti/Radautz-Site/ designed by Bondy Stenzler. Documenting the cemetery is the principal activity so far, and at the site mentioned above there is already available an early and partial version of the database. Also available at the site there is an extended bibliographical list of information sources about the Jewry of Bukowina in general, and Radautz in particular, and about the project of restoration and conservation of the main synagogue of the town.

Main outcome of phase I was a revised burials list in JOWBR, holding 5,604 entries, accompanied by 252 images, submitted in 2009.

Apart from phase I documentation project a few steps have been taken for improving the general state of the cemetery, using money donated by former residents of Bukowina: the holes in the fence surrounding the cemetery have been fixed, tools have been bought, trees and bushes have been cleared, while leaving massive trees in place.

Phase II of the cemetery documentation project was conducted in 2016 to 2021. It included acquiring images of handwritten vital records from Radautz city archive, indexing them, and integration of information with phase I data. At the end of this phase a revised burials list was created in JOWBR, holding 11,457 entries, 3,589 images, and enriched information regarding most of phase I entries.

The raw material

The burial data of the cemetery is based on four kinds of sources: photographs of headstones, burial maps, partial cemetery index, death records and birth records in which death was also recorded. In the following paragraphs we shall describe each source in detail.

Photographs of headstones: in the spring and summer of 2005 Bondy Stenzler, with the welcome help of his wife Sidi, photographed about 3,600 headstones in the cemetery, sections 1 through 23. Sections 24 to 26 were only very partially photographed. In all, about 5,700 photographs were processed. In many cases more than one photograph was taken for each headstone; from different angles, concentrating on a certain part, photographing the back of the stone if it contained additional information. The pictures were taken with a digital camera, using quite high resolution, so each picture has a volume of 1.5-2 Mbytes. Using the high resolution made the deciphering of the photographed data easier, especially on those headstones that are in bad shape. In some cases, the headstones had to be cleaned first with a brush - and this too was done by Bondy and Sidi. Out of the pictures of headstones about 3,600 names were deciphered, the overwhelming majority of which are Hebrew (name of the deceased and of his/her father), some of them contain the foreign name as well (first name and family name). A negligible minority of the stones has only Latin lettering, especially from the middle of the 20th century onwards. The overwhelming majority of the names on the headstones occurs also on the burial maps, and a great part of them (those written in Latin only) in the index too. Furthermore, the pictures of the headstones are a unique source for about 360 names written on memorial tablets – as part of other peoples' stones, especially of those who perished in the Holocaust in Transnistria and elsewhere. The repository of headstone images also holds those previously taken by Mickey Rostoker, as well as few other people who contributed images of their ancestors' headstones. Of special interest are B/W headstone images taken by the late Mr. Efron back in 1960, provided to this project by courtesy of the Center for Jewish Art at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. See http://cja.huji.ac.il*.*

Maps of the cemetery: there is a map of the whole cemetery and there are maps for each section. In certain cases, there are two maps for one section, with (minor) differences between them. On the map of the cemetery there is a separate section in which the cholera

victims were buried – with no headstones and no map of the section. The maps were filled by hand, some of them in pencil, by several writers - all of them anonymous. The name of the deceased is written in Hebrew in the usual way "Elazar ben Aharon HaKohen", and sometimes (especially in the 20th century) in Latin (first and last name). For some of the names written in the map in Latin script the foreign version is used as, for instance, Sally instead of Sara. In a small number of cases the date of death also was written on the map. The systematic listing on the map was almost completely discontinued in the middle of the 20th century, and only few burial data has been entered since. The writers' personal feeling is that the maps were first made in the first half of the 20th century, listing the graves of the cemetery, and using no other sources. This assumption is substantiated by pictures showing headstones which have fallen; though according to the map those tombs are supposed to be full, the names of the deceased aren't filled in. The maps were photographed by Bondy Stenzler in summer 2005, using a hand-held digital camera, under far from optimal lighting conditions - but using high resolution. The maps of the big sections were photographed piecemeal (with some overlapping) - to make possible the deciphering of every name.

Partial index of the cemetery: During the years 2001-2003 the late Ms. Tania Grinberg, the Jewish community's secretary, made a partial index of the cemetery. The index is written in Latin script and listed according to the ABC of last names. It contains the following columns: last name, first name, Gregorian date of death, section, row, number in the row, number of death certificate, notes. The index contains some 2,850 names, about 18 names on every page. In very many cases, only the name and the section number are spelt out. The writers assume that the main source of the index is the names written on the maps in Latin letters. (Ms. Grinberg knowing no Hebrew, she couldn't read Hebrew names.) Besides, starting in the 1940s, there occur detailed lists of deaths - accompanied by number of death certificate. This data was probably taken from the community's archives. A special subgroup of this group consists of names without burial place (section and row). No parallels of this kind of lists were found - either in photographs of the ground or in the maps - and it is doubtful if those listed are buried in Radautz. The names listed in the index are written using German spelling mostly, and Romanian in the rest (especially towards the end of the period). The index too was photographed by Bondy Stenzler in summer 2005, using a hand-held digital camera, under far from optimal lighting conditions - but using high resolution.

Death and birth records: in 2016 Edgar Hauster took images of Radautz vital registers at the city archive. This relates to Birth, Marriage and Death records of Radautz, as well as surrounding villages, in the 1857 to 1929 years range. Prior records are not available at that archive, and later ones may not be released to the public according to current law. Following this, Martina Hauster prepared searchable indices for all these records. See http://czernowitz.blogspot.com/2016/12/the-radautz-vital-records-index.html for details. These vital records are hand-written, using German old font until the end of WWI, and later using Romanien. Very little information is provided in the early-period records (death date, name and surname, gender, age, cause of death). Additional information is provided in later periods (burial date, address, names of parents, marital status). The death registers of this period contributed about 7,500 death records to the project, and the birth register added about 1,700 birth records in which the death of the newborn was noted.

Analyzing the 3 information sources of phase I

In principle, the pictures of the tombs are the fullest and most abundant source of burial data, and probably also the most accurate of all three. In reality, some of them have been hard to decipher, for one or more of the following reasons: part or whole fall of a headstone, part deterioration (of headstones made out of concrete or soft stone), sinking of the stone into the ground, trees making the text invisible, peeling paint, non-optimal lighting conditions, non-optimal photographing angle, spots and sediments on the stone etc.

The second-best source is the maps of burial sections. Because of the (natural) incompleteness of the data of the maps their main function was to support evidence of the pictures. This support takes one or several of the following forms: adding a family name if it wasn't written on the headstone, adding of non-Hebrew first names, date of death (if it wasn't deciphered from the headstone). In addition, the photographer's route was "tracked" using the "Date Taken" field of each image metadata. This tracking has made possible the completion of names in cases in which the headstones had been completely destroyed and not photographed -but had still been in good shape when the map was made - therefore the name of the deceased occurred on the map. Regarding the sections not yet photographed - the maps are the best source of information. Even though, over 60 headstones for which images are available weren't located on the maps.

The third-best source of information is the burial index. Its basic incompleteness (it doesn't contain any names written in Hebrew only), spelling mistakes, double entries on the one hand and missing entries on the other - all this render it less than optimal. Nevertheless, this source has been used for completing information in quite a few cases (in addition to the pictures and maps) of one or more of the following: adding non-Hebrew first names, date of death (if not deciphered from the stone), and additional information drawn from the notes. Above all, as mentioned above, the index added names that don't occur in the maps and photographs.

Integration of vital records information of phase II into the database

In principle, death date equality and other vital information similarity were the criteria for phase II vital record match with phase I entries. These matches enriched phase I entries with significant information such as surname, age, mother name etc. On the other hand, significant number of vital records did not find their match due to many reasons, such as lack of sufficient information, headstone text mistakes and others. The case of child mortality is of special interest. Babies and children mortality was enormous in those days according to the vital records, but a headstone was found for few dozens of such children only, for unknown reasons.

Principles of listing

In view of all the above, it has been decided to adopt an inclusive attitude in listing the data. That means all accumulated data from different sources on every deceased person shall be written down. This relates both to data occurring in one source and not in others (last name for example), and data occurring in markedly different forms in the different sources, especially in the columns of first name and last name.

The justification for this is that it allows every searcher to reach all information using the data that he knows. For example: a person whose first names are Ya'akov-Eliezer is listed under them on the Hebrew part of the tombstone. In the non-Hebrew part (if it exists) he might occur as Jakob (German spelling) or Iacob (Romanian). The whole information in this case will be written down thus: Ya'akov-Eliezer / Jakob / Iacob.

In addition, in many cases there is less-than-sufficient evidence to support merge of information from the various sources into a single person entry. Separate entries were created in such cases. Same rule was used for most of the dead babies and children, having no headstone. We hope that future acquired information, as well as specific family research may rectify these duplications. All these no-match entries were added to the database, causing the number of phase I entries to double in phase II.

Deciphering the data, cross-referencing it, and writing it down in the database have been performed in 2006 - 2007 (phase I) and 2019 – 2021 (phase II) by Yossi Yagur, assisted by his wife Miriam.

[1] See "Radautz – a Jewish community in growth and decline" by Israel Margalit (Postilnik); 1990; Hebrew; Published by the organization of former Bukowina Jews in Israel