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## Jewish Cemeteries, Synagogues, and Monuments in Slovenia

Samuel D. Gruber

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

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# **JEWISH CEMETERIES, SYNAGOGUES, AND MONUMENTS IN SLOVENIA**



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

**2005**



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UNITED STATES COMMISSION  
FOR THE PRESERVATION OF AMERICA'S HERITAGE ABROAD


October 31, 2005

## Message from the Chairman

One of the principal missions that United States law assigns the Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad is to identify and report on cemeteries, monuments, and historic buildings in Central and Eastern Europe associated with the cultural heritage of U.S. citizens, especially endangered sites. The Congress and the President were prompted to establish the Commission because of the special problem faced by Jewish sites in the region. The populations that had once cared for the properties were annihilated during the Holocaust. The atheistic Communist Party dictatorships that succeeded the Nazis throughout most of the region were insensitive to American Jewish concerns about the preservation of the sites. Properties were converted to other uses or encroached upon by development. Natural deterioration was not counteracted. Vandalism often went unchecked.

This report identifies and discusses Jewish cemeteries, synagogue buildings, and Jewish monuments located in the Republic of Slovenia. I hope that the report will encourage preservation efforts and assist American Jews of Slovenian descent to connect with the last remnants of their heritage in Slovenia.

The Commission is also required by U.S. law to seek assurances from the governments of the region regarding the protection and preservation of these cultural heritage properties. I am pleased to note that the Governments of the United States and Slovenia entered into a Commission-negotiated agreement regarding the protection and preservation of certain cultural properties in 1996. The agreement covers the sites identified in this report.



Warren L. Miller  
Chairman

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The assistance of the following is also appreciated:

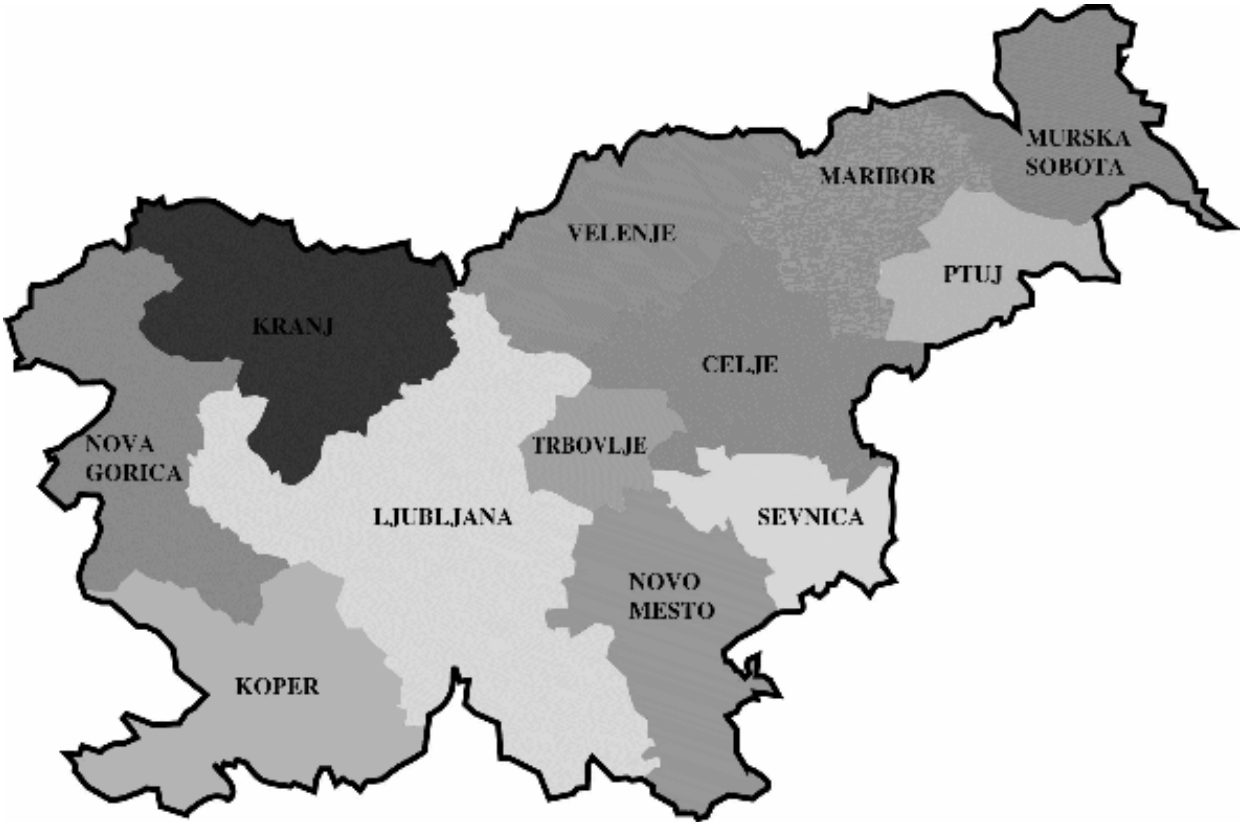
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# Map of Slovenia



## I. Slovenia's Jewish History

What is now the Republic of Slovenia formed part of Yugoslavia from 1918 until it seceded from the Yugoslav Federation in 1991. Bordered by Italy, Austria, Hungary and Croatia, and with a narrow stretch of coast along the Adriatic Sea, Slovenia is roughly the size of Israel, encompassing 20,000 square kilometers.

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

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

There is no evidence, however, of continuity between this fifth-century relic and the twelfth century, when new Jewish settlers are known to have arrived in the region. At the time, some came from North Central Europe (many seeking refuge from the Crusaders) and others came from Italy.<sup>2</sup>

Jewish communities existed in the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> century in many towns throughout the territory of present-day Slovenia. The communities are known to have existed as ghettos during the Middle Ages in the present-day Slovene towns of Piran, Koper, Izola, Ljubljana, Maribor, Radgona, Slovenj-Gradec, Olmos, Celje, and Ptuj. Most of these ghettos had well-organized communal and religious organizations.

Jews in the towns in the medieval period were engaged in trade and money lending. Documents indicate that Jews in Styria also owned property, including houses, vineyards, fields and mills.<sup>3</sup>

Prosperity ended on March 18, 1496, when, pressured by the nobility, the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian signed an edict ordering the expulsion of Jews from Styria and Carinthia. The order went into force on January 6, 1497. In 1515, the Jews were also expelled from Ljubljana.<sup>4</sup>

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

<sup>2</sup> *Jews in Yugoslavia, op. cit.* 1989, 73. See also Yakir Eventov, *A History of Yugoslav Jews: from Ancient Times to the End of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (Tel Aviv, 1971), 9.

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

<sup>4</sup> *A History of Yugoslav Jews, op. cit.*, 10.



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

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

Relatively few Jews moved back in the late 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>7</sup> Some settled again in Carniola only in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the census of 1880, 96 Jews are listed with the number increasing to 146 in 1910. Widespread anti-Semitism stopped further growth of the Jewish community. Meanwhile, in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, a small number of Jews moved to what is now the Slovenian region of Prekmurje, then a part of Hungary, settling in the towns of Murska Sobota, Beltinci, and Lendava. This region became the main Jewish center of what is today Slovenia.

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

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

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<sup>5</sup> *Jews in Yugoslavia, op. cit.*, 73.

<sup>6</sup> *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Vol. 15, 466.

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

## **II. Slovenian Jewry Contemporary Snapshot**

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

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

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

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

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

### **III. Property Restitution**

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

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

## IV. Monuments

### 1. Ljubljana

Much of what remains of Jewish heritage in present-day Slovenia are names etched in stone or still used to identify places.

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

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

According to Uros Lubej of Ljubljana's Institute for the Conservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage, the medieval Jewish quarter had about 30 houses, most likely consisting of two stories each with the upper part constructed of wood. These were consolidated over time into the present 13 or 14 structures.

The entrance to the ghetto was probably at the site of present-day Jurcicev trg. (Jurcicev Square). The enclave was across the street from a bridge that was the oldest connection between two parts of Ljubljana on the opposite sides of the river. In medieval times, the river, to which the street Zidovska ulica runs parallel, did not have an embankment (it was built in 1913). Thus, the level of the houses was one story lower.<sup>10</sup>

Judging from architectural evidence, the peak Jewish population in the Middle Ages may have been 300.<sup>11</sup> The people were bankers, merchants, artisans, and farmers. The community had a Jewish school and Beth Din (rabbinical court).<sup>12</sup>

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

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<sup>8</sup> *Jews in Yugoslavia, op. cit.*, 74.

<sup>9</sup> See Vlado Valencic, *Zidje v Preteklosti ljubljane* (Par, Ljubljana, 1992).

<sup>10</sup> On-site interview with Uros Lubej from Ljubljana's Institute for the Conservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage, Sept. 4, 1996.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Jews in Yugoslavia, op. cit.*

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

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

A few Jews settled in Ljubljana in the 19<sup>th</sup> century but the community never grew to any appreciable size. Before World War I, there was a strong anti-Semitic element, which expressed itself in the local media with calls for all Jews to be expelled.

There is a small Jewish section in Ljubljana's municipal cemetery, Zale (Figures 5-10). It is a small rectangular plot set off from the rest of the cemetery by a yew hedge about 1.5 meters high on three sides and a wall on the fourth. Its iron gates are marked with Stars of David along with Hebrew and Slovenian designation indicating the Jewish section (Figure 6). This section is the only area separated by religion in a cemetery in which Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox, and Muslims are all buried together. The Jewish section was established in 1926, but it was moved to its present location in 1964 because the authorities wanted to build a monument on the original plot of land.<sup>15</sup>

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

A small Holocaust monument erected in 1964 is in the center of the cemetery. It is a horizontal, rectangular slab with an inscription that reads, "Remember the Jews, fallen soldiers and victims of Fascism 1941-1945." It also includes the Menorah shield of Israel, with the word "Israel" in Hebrew -- something that was very daring in 1964 during the atheistic Communist Party era (Figure 7).

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<sup>13</sup> On-site interview with Uros Lubej.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

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

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

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

## **2. Slovenian Istria**

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

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

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

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

Trieste, now in Italy, is the only city in Istria where there was a Jewish community after the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>19</sup> But traces of Jewish history still remain in some smaller settlements.

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<sup>17</sup> *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 9, 1100.

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

<sup>19</sup> *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, *op. cit.*

### 3. Piran

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

There is mention of a Jewish community here in 1483,<sup>21</sup> and Jewish settlement may have begun a century earlier.<sup>22</sup> Jews were not confined to a ghetto in Piran until 1714, but, even before that, they tended to live around what is still called Zidovski trg. -- Jewish square, a small space in the heart of the old town. It is entered through two low archways and surrounded by evocative multistory buildings similar to the ghetto architecture in Venice.<sup>23</sup> The buildings on Zidovski trg. are mainly Baroque on top of medieval foundations (Figures 11-15).

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

### 4. Koper

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

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

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<sup>20</sup> J.A. Cuddon, *The Companion Guide to Yugoslavia* (Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1984).

<sup>21</sup> Roth, *op. cit.*

<sup>22</sup> On-site interview with Dr. Sonja Hoyer of the Intercommune Institute for the Conservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage, Piran, Sept. 3, 1996.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Eventov, *A History of Yugoslav Jews, op. cit.*, 12.

The former Zidovska ulica (Jewish street) is a short, narrow, slightly curving street of five houses perpendicular to Cevljarska ulica. The street today is known as Triglavska ulica; earlier it was called via Formi, and before that was Zidovska ulica (Figures 16, 17-18). The second house on the right on Cevljarska ulica from the intersection with Triglavska is believed to be the site of where the synagogue was located.<sup>27</sup>

## 5. Nova Gorica (Rozna Dolina)

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

Gorizia came under Austrian rule in 1500. It remained a Habsburg possession until 1918 when the empire collapsed after World War I. Jews probably lived in Gorizia from the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> century. Many were bankers and money-lenders. Ferdinand I expelled the Jews from Gorizia in 1534, and the expulsion order was renewed repeatedly, but Jews were deemed so vital to the economic life of the town that local officials pressured the imperial authorities to lift the ban.<sup>28</sup> And in 1624, Ferdinand II granted the rank of Hofjude (Court Jew) to Gorizia's Joseph Pincherle.<sup>29</sup>

A ghetto was established in Gorizia in 1698.<sup>30</sup> During the ghetto period, Jews in the town became involved in a flourishing silk industry. An official census in 1764 counted 256 Jews -- 127 men and 129 women, working in the silk industry or as pawnbrokers, merchants, rag and ironmongers, and other occupations.<sup>31</sup> Jews who were expelled in 1777 from small towns ruled by Venice moved to Gorizia.<sup>32</sup> In 1788, the Jewish community comprised 270 people -- about four percent of the town's total population.<sup>33</sup> Even at its height, the community numbered under 350 people.

Few Jews remained in Gorizia on the eve of World War II. Those in the town, mainly elderly people, were deported to Auschwitz on November 23, 1943.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Information provided on site by Mitja Ferenc of the Cultural Heritage Office of the Slovenian Ministry of Culture.

<sup>28</sup> Altieri, Orietta, "Note per una Storia Demografica degli Ebrei a Gorizia" in Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, ed., *Gli Ebrei a Gorizia e Trieste tra "Ancien Regime" ed Emacipazione*, (Del Bianco editore, Udine, 1984).

<sup>29</sup> For details see Maddalena Del Bianco Cotrozzi, "Gli Ebrei di Gradisca ed i loro Privilegi" in Zorattini, *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Cusin, Silvio G., and Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, *Friuli Venezia Giulia Jewish Itineraries* (Marsilio, Venice, 1998), 50. See also Roth, *op. cit.*, 337, 328.

<sup>31</sup> Altieri, Orietta, "La Comunita' Ebraica di Gorizia: Cenni Storici," in *La Speranza: Attraverso l'Ebraismo Goriziano*, (Venice, 1991).

<sup>32</sup> Roth, *op. cit.*, 416.

<sup>33</sup> Altieri, "Note per una Storia Demografica," *op. cit.*, and Annie Sacerdoti and Luca Fiorentino, *Guida all'Italia Ebraica*, (Marietti, Genoa, 1986) 164.

<sup>34</sup> Altieri, "La Comunita' Ebraica di Gorizia: Cenni Storici," *op. cit.*



Most of the Jewish sites of Gorizia, including a synagogue built on the site of an earlier prayer house in 1756 (later renovated in 1894) and the former ghetto of today's via Ascoli, are located in the Italian section.<sup>35</sup> The synagogue was in use until 1969, when the Jewish community formally dissolved for lack of numbers and was incorporated into the community of nearby Trieste. In 1978, the Trieste Jewish community presented the synagogue to the Gorizia Municipality with the proviso that it be restored and used for Jewish-themed cultural activities.

The building was fully restored by regional and municipal authorities and reopened in 1984. It became the home of a local Association of Friends of Israel. A small museum of ritual objects and memorabilia was established on the ground floor. In 1998, the municipality sponsored an expansion and overhaul that added historical panels, didactic information, multi-media installations, and a separate room devoted to Gorizia's most famous Jewish native, Carlo Michelstaedter. He was an early 20<sup>th</sup> century poet, painter, and philosopher.

Gorizia's historic Jewish cemetery is on the Slovenian side of the border, in the suburb of Rozna Dolina (Rose Valley or Valdirose in Italian) a few hundred yards from the main border crossing point. The site is roughly triangular, encompassing 5,652 square meters enclosed by a thick masonry wall. One part of the wall has a red-tiled upper surface.

The cemetery is set in a beautiful location: a low-lying spot with gentle green wooded hills in the background. The site is separated from the former ceremonial hall by a little stream.

The main entrance is an iron gate with a menorah motif, located at the base of the triangle, near the ceremonial hall. A secondary entrance is near the top point of the triangle via a gate in the wall. It is reached by a footbridge over the stream (Figures 19-30). A highway overpass parallels the gated base of the triangle, affording a good view of the site from above.

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

The cemetery has been mapped in detail to show topography and also the position of each gravestone and monument. Each of the grave markers has also been photographed.

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<sup>35</sup> On Gorizia's Jewish quarter, see Silvio G. Cusin and Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, *Friuli Venezia Giulia Jewish Itineraries* op. cit. 48 ff.

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

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

Sources cited by Vivian and by Darij Humar from the Institute for Conservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage at Nova Gorica break down the legible local inscriptions on the stones into four periods:<sup>38</sup>

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

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

THIRD PERIOD: 1732 to 1828: Sixteen stones transferred from the old cemetery to the current cemetery in 1881.

FOURTH PERIOD: From 1829 to the present: Approximately 900 stones, with inscriptions in Hebrew and Italian, or only in Italian. The last burials are from World War II. There are also graves in memory of Auschwitz victims.

Most of the stones are low (some knee-high or lower) gray markers carved from local sandstone with flat rectangular or square faces and rounded tops. Some are very thick, presenting a massive three-dimensional form. For most, the only decoration is the epitaph and date of death framed within a border. A very few of the older stones have slightly more elaborate shapes, some with scalloped curves. Erosion is taking its toll and many of the stones are barely legible. Many have numbers carved on them from the 1876 or the 1932 censuses.

One of the older stones, near the top point of the triangle at the back of the cemetery, has an unusual form. It is a round ball on a low cylindrical base vaguely resembling a turban. The epitaph is on the round base. In a 1972 article in a Yugoslav magazine, Dusan Ogrin noted that this stone resembled the gravestones of men in Muslim cemeteries.<sup>39</sup>

Among the few gravestones with decorative carving are those of several members of the Morpurgo family, which originated in Maribor. The stones show the Morpurgo family emblem of Jonah in the mouth of the whale (Figures 27, 28). The Morpurgos were the most important and, at one time, the most numerous Jewish family in Gorizia.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Vivian, "Il Cimitero Israelitico di Nova Goriza" *op. cit.*

<sup>38</sup> On-site interview with Darij Humar, Sept. 3, 1996, which is the source of most of the information in this section.

<sup>39</sup> Ogrin, *op. cit.*

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

At the time of the 1876 gravestone census, some 139 of the 692 graves listed were of the Morpurgo family, followed by 127 from the Gentili family, 80 from the Luzzatto family, 56 from the Pincherle family, 37 from the Senigaglia family, 34 from the Bolaffio family, 23 from the Jona family, 17 from the Richetti family, 10 from the Dorfles family, seven from the Michelstaedter family, six from the Reggio family, five from the Pavia family, two from the Windspach family, and one each from the Schnabl and Schonheit families.<sup>41</sup>

Carved decorations on the graves include a few Levite pitchers. One stone fragment lying on the ground near the main entrance bears a winged head, like an angel, as seen on some Sephardic graves (and also in Christian iconography) (Figure 29).

The most famous person buried in the cemetery is Carlo Michelstaedter, who was born in 1887 and committed suicide in 1910. His posthumously published works are considered important as precursors of existentialism.<sup>42</sup> A simple upright stone, like a post with a curved back, bearing simply his name and dates of his birth and death, marks his grave. It is next to the grave of his father, Alberto, a businessman who lived from 1850 to 1929. Alberto's simple mazzevah bears the carving of a Levite pitcher and a lengthy epitaph in Italian with a briefer Hebrew text underneath (Figure 25).

Italian sources say the cemetery was used until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by other communities in the vicinity, in particular Gradisca.<sup>43</sup> It is abandoned but relatively well cared for with grass cut several times a year. The main threat appears to be from erosion. In the mid 1980s, the whole area was flooded when the stream separating a ceremonial hall from the cemetery overflowed its banks, but the stream was canalized and this threat is believed to no longer exist.

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

## 6. Maribor

Situated on the Drava River near today's border with Austria, Maribor gradually grew up around a fortress castle built probably in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Today, Maribor is a lively university town and

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<sup>41</sup> Vivian, "Il Cimitero Israelitico di Nova Goriza" *op. cit.*

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

<sup>43</sup> Sacerdoti and Fiorentino, *op. cit.*, 166. See also Silvio G. Cusin and Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, *Friuli Venezia Giulia Jewish Itineraries*, *op. cit.*, pp 67-68.

<sup>44</sup> Conversations with members of the Slovenian Jewish community, Feb. 28, 2003.

regional center which retains a wealth of striking medieval and Baroque architecture dramatically situated on the river. Its recently restored medieval synagogue is one of the few from that era in Central Europe and is one of Slovenia's most important Jewish relics.

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

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

The Regional Museum in Maribor displays the gravestone of Maribor's first known rabbi, Abraham, who died in November 1379.<sup>47</sup> The 109 centimeter-high gravestone was made from a much older Roman gravestone with traces of Latin lettering on the back and one side. The stone consists of three major fragments and there is much repair work on one side. From the different calligraphy styles, it appears as if the main fragments may, in fact, come from at least two different stones (Figure 31).

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

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

The synagogue's earliest appearance and date are unknown. (Something of its late Gothic form can be surmised, however. It may have resembled the Altneushul of Prague in overall appearance.) The structure was remodeled on several occasions, at least twice before 1450 and, perhaps, once following an earthquake that severely damaged the town walls in 1348.

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<sup>45</sup> *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol 11, 992.

<sup>46</sup> *Jews in Yugoslavia*, *op. cit.*, 74.

<sup>47</sup> Angelo Vivian gives the date as Sept. 12, 1379, corresponding to Rosh Hashana. See Vivian, "Le iscrizioni ebraiche di Ptuj e Maribor," in *Egitto e Vicino Oriente*, 4 (1981), 92.

The original structure was rectangular in plan. On the lowest level, it appears to have been divided into two aisles by two square piers. This created a double-nave plan of the sort familiar from the Romanesque synagogue in Worms (Germany) and the Gothic synagogue in Prague (Czech Republic).

This plan type was used, however, for many non-Jewish building types, such as civic halls, monastic buildings, and churches. It is also found in the basement levels of many medieval buildings where cellar vaulting was preferred for structural support and fireproofing. Whether the double-nave plan was originally repeated in the upper level of the Maribor building is unclear.

When the Jews were expelled and their institutions destroyed, the synagogue was bought by a local judge, Bernardin Druckher. In 1501, he converted it into a church dedicated to All Saints. (It was common for synagogues to be converted into churches with this name and for Jewish streets to be renamed All Saints Street.) Druckher's name is carved into the frame of a window in the northern wall. The building functioned as a church until the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, when many churches and monasteries were closed as a result of Joseph II's nationalization of the Catholic Church.

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

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

The sanctuary is entered from the west. A large niche set into the masonry of the east wall, presumably for the Ark, is the only physical evidence of the Jewish use of the building. This niche was probably framed with some sort of carved stone or stucco architectural feature. It would have been approached by steps. Two tall lancet windows with Gothic tracery are set in the east wall flanking the central niche. These have been recently rebuilt, as one could only posit their original form from earlier photographs. Above the niche, a small round window provides further illumination (Figure 38).

The empty synagogue was used for exhibitions in the 1980s but the building was shut because of unsettled ownership rights. In the early-mid 1990s, town authorities began a years-long reconstruction effort that was later halted due to funding problems. The delay, however, enabled researchers to carry out detailed studies on the building's construction.

The restored synagogue was inaugurated in April 2001 as a cultural center administered by the Regional Museum in Maribor. The intent is to establish a Jewish museum and Slovene Jewish heritage center in the building. Curators would like to purchase the small building adjacent to the synagogue for this purpose. In 2002, about 16,500 people visited the synagogue.

A so-called "Jewish Tower", built in 1465 as part of the town fortifications is now a photographic gallery. It is near the synagogue across an empty space where the medieval Jewish cemetery is believed perhaps to have been. Its only relation to Jews is that it was next to the ghetto and thus used in the defense of that part of town (Figure 40).

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

The surrounding neighborhood of the medieval ghetto, Zidovska ulica, is an area of quaint, pastel-colored Baroque houses on medieval foundations. It is slowly becoming the site of fashionable shops, boutiques, cafes, and galleries (Figure 39).

## **7. Ptuj**

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

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

Jews lived in Ptuj from at least the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The first documentary evidence dates from 1286. It records the sale of a house to a Jakob and his wife, Gnanna, for forty silver marks. Four Christians and four Jews were listed as witnesses to the sale. A well-preserved gravestone of Asher David Bar Moshe dating from 1303 also survives and is displayed in the regional museum. The gravestone, possibly reworked from a Roman grave monument, is a massive upright rectangular block on a pedestal-like base with the epitaph framed by a raised border. An iron ring is embedded on top of the stone (Figure 42).

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

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

The provincial archives in Ptuj include several documents testifying to the medieval Jewish presence in the town, including that first mention of the sale of a house in 1286. Jews had their own judge; the first mentioned was named Andre Walher in 1333. A town statute of 1376 dealt with the rights and position of Jews in the town. In addition to mentioning the Jewish judge, it forbade Jews to run taverns and to engage in trade. The law also regulated money lending, the principal activity of Ptuj Jews.<sup>48</sup>

A Judengasse (Jewish Street) was first mentioned in Ptuj in 1344. Christians also lived here at the time.<sup>49</sup> It was last mentioned as a Judengasse in 1429 and was already known as Allerheiliggasse (All Saints Street) in 1441, indicating that the Jews may have left Ptuj for the most part by that time.<sup>50</sup> The site where the street was located is today a rather wide but angled street named Jadranska. It leads down toward the river from the main square (Figure 41), where a 15-foot-high Roman funeral monolith from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, beautifully carved with a scene of Orpheus and his lute, stands in front of a graceful bell tower.

The buildings on Jadranska Street are mostly two-story dwellings with 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> - century façades in pastel colors. The synagogue, sited at what today is a dwelling at Jadranska 9, was turned into All Saints Church around 1441 or earlier. This church can be seen in a painting of the town by Franz Josef Fellner done in 1766, but by 1786 the church also was gone. In 1840, the site is known to have been occupied by a home.<sup>51</sup>

## 8. Prekmurje

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

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

Jews settled here from Hungary in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, many from around the town of Zalaegerszeg, not far across today's border. They went first to Lendava, close to what is today's border, then to Beltinci, a town 20 kilometers away, and then to Murska Sobota, about 10 km

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<sup>48</sup> *Germanica Judaica*, *ibid*, 652.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*, 652.

<sup>50</sup> Arye Maimon, Mordechai Breuer and Yacov Guggenheim, eds. *Germania Judaica*, Band III, 1350-1519) (J.C.B. Mohr, Tubingen, 1995), 1097-8. Information also supplied at the Provincial Museum in Ptuj.

<sup>51</sup> Information supplied by the Provincial Museum.

from Beltinci.<sup>52</sup> Their numbers swelled to some extent after an 1817 decree by Emperor Francis II which barred Jews from living in Carniola (central Slovenia).<sup>53</sup>

By 1793, 60 Jews lived in Prekmurje. In 1831, 207 lived in the region, most of them in Murska Sobota. In 1853, some 383 Jews lived in the region, 180 in Murska Sobota and 120 in Lendava. The peak Jewish population of Prekmurje was in 1889, when 1,107 Jews lived there. Many were merchants, innkeepers, and bankers.<sup>54</sup>

The area was occupied by the Hungarians in World War II and more than 460 Jews, most of them from Murska Sobota, were deported to Auschwitz in 1944. The main deportation was of 328 people in April 1944. About 65 survived.<sup>55</sup>

## 9. Lendava

Lendava is a small town close to the Hungarian border dominated by a hilltop castle. The town's Jewish monuments constitute the most important in Slovenia along with those in Maribor and Nova Gorica. They include a 19<sup>th</sup> century synagogue building (Figures 43-49), a 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century building that once housed a Jewish school (Figure 50), and a cemetery founded in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with a ceremonial hall and a monument to local Holocaust victims (Figures 51-56).

Jews from Hungary settled in Lendava around 1773, according to the first documented evidence. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, they gathered to pray at the home of innkeeper Bodog Weisz. In 1837, the community rented a house for use as a prayer hall. The facility had 50 seats -- 30 for men and 20 for women. In 1843, the community rented and, then, purchased another building which became their first real synagogue.<sup>56</sup>

Construction on a new synagogue began in 1866.<sup>57</sup> This building, recently restored as a local cultural center, still stands in the heart of town at Spodnja ulica 5. It is a boxy, rectangular, brick structure with a peaked roof. The corners are decorated with slightly raised flat pilasters.

Heavily damaged by the Germans, the building was sold to the town after the war by the Jewish Federation of Yugoslavia. It was then used as a warehouse. Work began in 1994 to renovate it for use as a cultural center. An exhibition on local Jewish history was installed in what had been the women's gallery. Town officials wanted most of the interior to look like a functioning synagogue and, at one point, they appealed to the few remaining Jews in the town to donate

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<sup>52</sup> Information supplied by Franc Kuzmic of the Prekmurje Museum in Murska Sobota, Sept. 6, 1996 and see his article "Naselitev Zidov v Prekmurju in Njihov Razvoj do Konca Prve Svetovne vojne" in *Evangelicanski Koledar*, 1993 (Murska Sobota), 120-123.

<sup>53</sup> *Jews in Yugoslavia, op. cit.*, 74.

<sup>54</sup> Kuzmic, *op. cit.*, interview and article.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.* and also Drago Novak, Ivo Resnik and Herman Sticl, *Pomniki nob v Slovenskih Goricah in Prekmurju* (Pomurska Založba, 1985), 329-331.

<sup>56</sup> Kuzmic, *op. cit.*, interview and article.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*



whatever ritual objects or other material they had to the museum.<sup>58</sup>

The only original interior decorative elements remaining in the building are six fluted cast iron columns supporting the rebuilt gallery (Figures 46, 47), stairway railings, and a small niche in the stairwell. A one-time circular (rose) window over the Ark has been changed into an arched window. Two arched side windows (which exist on the south side only) have been lengthened and enlarged (Figure 44). The third window on the south side has apparently been left at its original shape and size. There is also an arched window over the door in the west façade (Figures 42, 43, 46).

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

Near the synagogue is the former Jewish school. It functioned until the 1920s. It is a fairly nondescript looking building built in the official Habsburg style (Figure 50). The building is long and low and consists of only a ground floor and raised roof (attic). Reconstruction of this building also began in the 1990s.

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

A Chevra Kadisha (Jewish burial society) was formed in Lendava in 1834. It purchased land for a cemetery near the village of Dolga Vas. The land was fenced in 1880.<sup>59</sup>

Today, the cemetery is on a main road facing a broad vista of farm fields, a few hundred meters from the Hungarian border. The cemetery is surrounded by a chain link fence. Entry is through a ceremonial hall.

The hall was restored when the cemetery was repaired following an incident of vandalism in 1989 in which 43 gravestones were damaged. The hall has a big arched central door flanked by two arched windows. It is painted pale yellow with a red tile roof (Figure 51). Inside is a plaque commemorating the Jewish cemetery in Beltinci, which ceased operations around the turn of the century (some of its stones may have been moved to Lendava). The plaque also commemorates prominent members of the local community from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

There are some 176 gravestones. About 40 are from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>58</sup> Information supplied on-site by town official Irena Krajac Horvat, Sept. 6, 1996.

<sup>59</sup> Kuzmic, *op. cit.*, also material provided by Mitja Ferenc.

Most of the rest are from the 20<sup>th</sup><sup>60</sup> (Figures 52-56). Many of the newer stones are made from black marble and are in generally good condition. A number of them, however, have had the laminated photograph of the deceased removed (Figure 54). There are relatively few graves with sculptural decoration. The older stones, which appear to be carved from local sandstone, show severe erosion. The faces on many are totally obliterated (Figure 55). The one unusual carving is a winged head, badly eroded on a stone, the epitaph of which has been totally obliterated (Figure 56).

There are several inscriptions commemorating Auschwitz victims, and in the middle of the cemetery there is a Holocaust memorial to Prekmurje Jews erected by four survivors in 1947 (Figure 52). It is a simple, rectangular horizontal memorial stone with a sculpted tree on the left side.<sup>61</sup>

Despite the incident of vandalism in 1989, there does not appear to be any threat of recurrence. The cemetery is well maintained with the grass cut regularly. The main threat to the cemetery appears to be erosion. It has already taken its toll on a number of stones.

## 10. Murska Sobota

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

The town was the home of Slovenia's largest Jewish community between the two world wars. The first synagogue was in a private home and was mentioned in 1860. That building existed until it was destroyed in 1995. A synagogue designed by Lipot Baumhorn (1860-1932), the Budapest-based architect who was modern Europe's most prolific synagogue architect, was built in 1907-08 and demolished in 1954.<sup>62</sup>

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

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<sup>60</sup> Information supplied by Mitja Ferenc.

<sup>61</sup> See Novak et al, "Pomniki," *op. cit.*

<sup>62</sup> Kuzmic, *op. cit.* On Baumhorn see Carol Herselle Krinsky, *The Synagogues of Europe* (MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1985) *passim*; and more recently Ruth Ellen Gruber, *Upon the Doorposts of Thy House: Jewish Life in East-Central Europe, Yesterday and Today*. (John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1994), 139-184. Also, *Baumhorn Lipot építész 1860-1932* (Budapest: Jewish Museum, 1999), the catalogue to an exhibition on Baumhorn's work held at the Jewish Museum in Budapest in 1999. A picture of the Murska Sobota synagogue appears on pg 17.

The town's Protestant community tried to secure the synagogue around 1951 for use as a church. Local Jews were amenable to the plan, but no response came from the Federation of Jewish Communities in Belgrade, and the building was demolished.<sup>63</sup> Today, a modern apartment block stands on the site.

The Jewish cemetery, at the corner of Malanova and Panonska streets, dates from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was, reportedly, very overgrown, and untended following World War II, although in a photograph from that period it did not look too bad. It was demolished in the late 1980s with the approval of the Jewish Federation in Belgrade. According to Franc Kuzmic of the Prekmurje Museum, some 38 stones were standing at the time and 30 of them were auctioned off. The town chose eight of the more elaborate stones of differing types to create a simple -- but striking and dignified -- memorial to the town's murdered Jews.

The site, a rectangular plot with a housing development on one side that encroaches on some of the cemetery, is a grassy park dotted with trees. In the middle, seven stones have been arranged in a semi-circle facing benches (Figure 57). At the street, under a big weeping willow, stands a fine black marble stone. This is the gravestone of Edmund Furst, president of the Murska Sobota Jewish community who died in 1929 (Figure 58). On the rear of the stone is written that this is a Jewish cemetery and memorial park to the victims of Fascism and Nazism.

In 1990, Kuzmic put together a book on the history of Jews in Prekmurje. He also organized a small permanent exhibit on Jews at the local museum, which opened in 1997. It includes portions of Torah scrolls from the Baumhorn synagogue as well as a Hebrew-Hungarian prayer book and a few ritual items.<sup>64</sup> (A small number of Jews were believed still to live in Murska Sobota in April 2003.)

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<sup>63</sup> Kuzmic, *op. cit.*

<sup>64</sup> See the museum catalogue: *Katalog Stalna Razstava, Pokrajinski Muzej. Murska Sobota, 1997.*

## V. World War I Cemeteries With Jewish Graves

### 1. Stanjel

Stanjel is a pretty little hilltop village about 30 kilometers to the southeast of Ljubljana. In the valley below, behind railway tracks are the haunting remains of an Austro-Hungarian World War I military cemetery. The cemetery was once extremely grand, with a broad central alley leading from imposing gates up to a massive Greek-temple style monument bearing the inscription in Latin, "To the best sons, the Homeland gives thanks," with row after row of gravestones/crosses on either side. The cemetery was designed by a military architect, Oberleutnant Joseph Ulrich, and is believed to have been built with the labor of Russian prisoners of war. Nearby were a military hospital and a rail line that transported wounded soldiers.

All that is left are: the massive stone pillars of the gates, carved art deco-style with 1915 and, 1917 inscribed in it; the huge, temple-like monument; and about five scattered grave markers, including two twisted rusty iron crosses. The rest is an apparently empty field (Figure 59).

Two of the gravestones are of Jewish soldiers. One is of Dezso Steiner, who apparently was from Hungary. The other is the grave of Solomon Gerschow, a Russian, who, possibly, was a prisoner of war. Each is marked with a Star of David (Figure 60).

### 2. Kidricevo

At Kidricevo, a few kilometers from Ptuj, is another World War I military cemetery that has only a few remaining gravestones. Only one of the remaining stones commemorates a Jew. It marks the burial place of Isidor Lowy, who died in August 1916. The stone is decorated with a Star of David and Decalogue (Figures 61, 62).

## VI. Photographs



**Figures 1, 2. Ljubljana.** Zidovska ulica and Zidovska steza meet in an intersection in the middle of what today is one of Ljubljana's most picturesque and fashionable downtown areas. **Top:** Zidovska steza looking toward the river embankment from Zidovska ulica. **Bottom:** Zidovska steza looking toward intersection with Zidovska ulica.





**Figures 3, 4. Ljubljana. Top:** Zidovska ulica. **Bottom:** Reputed site of former synagogue on Zidovska steza.





**Figures 5, 6. Ljubljana.** There is a small Jewish section in Ljubljana's municipal cemetery, Zale. **Top:** Site of Jewish cemetery behind hedge within municipal cemetery. **Bottom:** Gates to Jewish cemetery.



**Figures 7, 8. Ljubljana. Jewish cemetery. Top: Holocaust memorial. Bottom: Several gravestones.**





**Figures 9, 10. Ljubljana. Jewish cemetery. Top:** Several graves. **Bottom:** Grave from 1932.



**Figures 11, 12. Piran.** The buildings on Zidovski trg. are mainly Baroque on top of medieval foundations. **Top:** Entrance to Zidovski trg. **Bottom:** Front of church of St. Stephen next to Zidovski trg., said to be site of former synagogue. The narrow passage to the right leads to the piazza next to Zidovski trg.





**Figures 13, 14. Piran. Top:** Zidovski trg. (piazza ebrei). **Bottom:** Zidovski trg., with arched window (right) of church.





**Figure 15. Piran. Top:** Zidovski trg. with arched window (right) of church.

**Figure 16. Koper. Bottom:** The former Zidovska ulica (Jewish Street) is a short narrow, slightly curving street of five houses perpendicular to Cevljarska ulica. The street today is known as Triglavska ulica; earlier it was called via Formi, and before that was Zidovska ulica.



**Figure 17. Koper.** The former Zivdovska ulica (Jewish street), is a short narrow, slightly curving street of five houses perpendicular to Cevljarska ulica. The street today is known as Triglavska ulica; earlier it was called via Formi, and before that was Zidovska ulica.



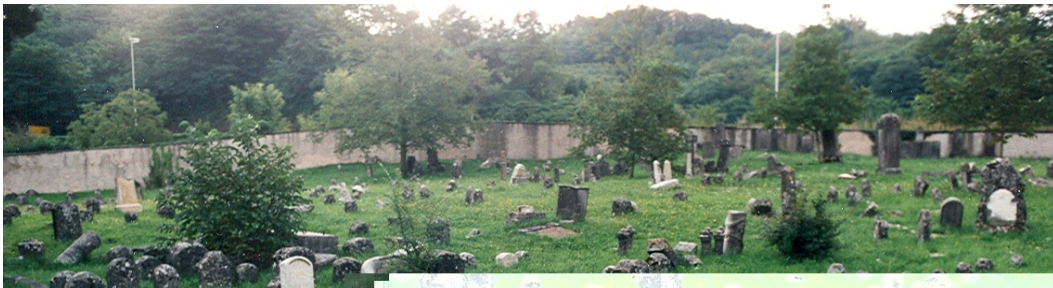
**Figure 18. Koper.** Building believed to be on site of former synagogue.



**Figures 19, 20. Nova Gorica (Rozna Dolina).** The Jewish cemetery is a roughly triangular or slightly lozenge-shaped site encompassing 5652 square meters, enclosed by a thick masonry wall, one part of which has a red-tiled upper surface. **Top:** Gate. **Bottom:** View from a distance



**Figures 21, 22. Nova Gorica (Rožna Dolina).** Jewish cemetery. Restored former ceremonial hall and gate. The ceremonial hall was originally built in 1928 and was in ruinous condition after World War II. The Jewish community of Gorizia (Italy) gave it to the municipality of Nova Gorica in 1977 in return for guarantees that the Nova Gorica municipality would maintain and care for the cemetery. The hall, which was basically a shell, was restored in the late 1980s.



**Figures 23, 24. Nova Gorica (Rozna Dolina).** Jewish cemetery. Most of the stones are low grey *mazzevot*, with flat rectangular or square faces and rounded tops. For most, the only decoration is the epitaph and date of death, framed within a border. Erosion is taking its toll, and many are scarcely legible. Many of the stones have numbers carved on them -- probably from the 1876 or 1932 census. **Top:** Older section. **Bottom:** Newer section.





**Figures 25, 26. Nova Gorica (Rožna Dolina). Jewish cemetery. Top:** Grave of philosopher and painter, Alberto Michelstaedter, who lived from 1850 to 1929. His simple *mazzevah* bears the carving of a Levite pitcher, and a lengthy epitaph in Italian with a briefer Hebrew text underneath. **Bottom:** Uncovering a fallen gravestone from 1915.



**Figures 27, 28. Nova Gorica (Rozna Dolina).** Jewish cemetery. Among the few tombstones with decorative carving are tombs of several members of the important Morpurgo family (which originated in Maribor), which show the emblem of Jonah in the mouth of the whale. **Top:** Grave of Benedetto Morpurgo. **Bottom:** Grave of Ettore Morpurgo.





**Figures 29, 30. Nova Gorica (Rozna Dolina). Jewish cemetery. Top:** One fragment of stone lying on the ground near the main entrance bears a winged head, like an angel, as seen in some Sephardic tombs. **Bottom:** Grave of journalist Carolina Luzzatto.





**Figures 31, 32. Maribor. Top:** The medieval tombstone of Maribor's first known rabbi, Abraham, who died in November 1379, together with fragments from another early *mazzevah*. **Bottom:** Also on view are architectural fragments from the presumed synagogue.





**Figures 33, 34. Maribor.** The synagogue, sited in the former Jewish quarter next to the town's defensive walls and turned into a church by the year 1501. In recent years, excavation and restoration of the building has attempted to recover the original form of the synagogue and to restore its medieval appearance. **Top:** North façade. **Bottom:** East façade.



**Figures 35, 36. Maribor. Synagogue.**  
**Top:** Detail of north façade. **Bottom:**  
Detail of north façade with new entrance  
stairs and door.





**Figures 37, 38. Maribor. Synagogue. Top:** Interior after creation of “women’s gallery,” a modern invention which must now be removed. **Bottom:** Main hall, view of east wall with rebuilt lancet windows and oculus above presumed location of Ark.



**Figures 39, 40. Maribor. Top: Zidovska ulica. Bottom: “Jewish Tower”.**







**Figures 41, 42. Ptuj. Top:** Jadranska ulica, which leads down toward the river from the main square, is on the site of the former Judengasse. **Bottom:** The tombstone of Asher David Bar Moshe, dating from 1303 (?) is displayed in the Provincial Museum. The stone is possibly reworked from a Roman grave monument.





**Figures 43, 44. Lendava. Synagogue. Top:** West façade with view of church spire in background. **Bottom:** West façade with new door.



**Figures 45, 46. Lendava. Synagogue. Top: South and east (in shadow) façades. Bottom: East and north façades.**



**Figures 47, 48. Lendava. Synagogue. Top:** Interior with reconstructed women's gallery looking west. **Bottom:** Looking east.



**Figures 49, 50. Lendava. Top:** Synagogue seen from former Jewish school. **Bottom:** Former Jewish school. Plans are to restore it as a dance center.



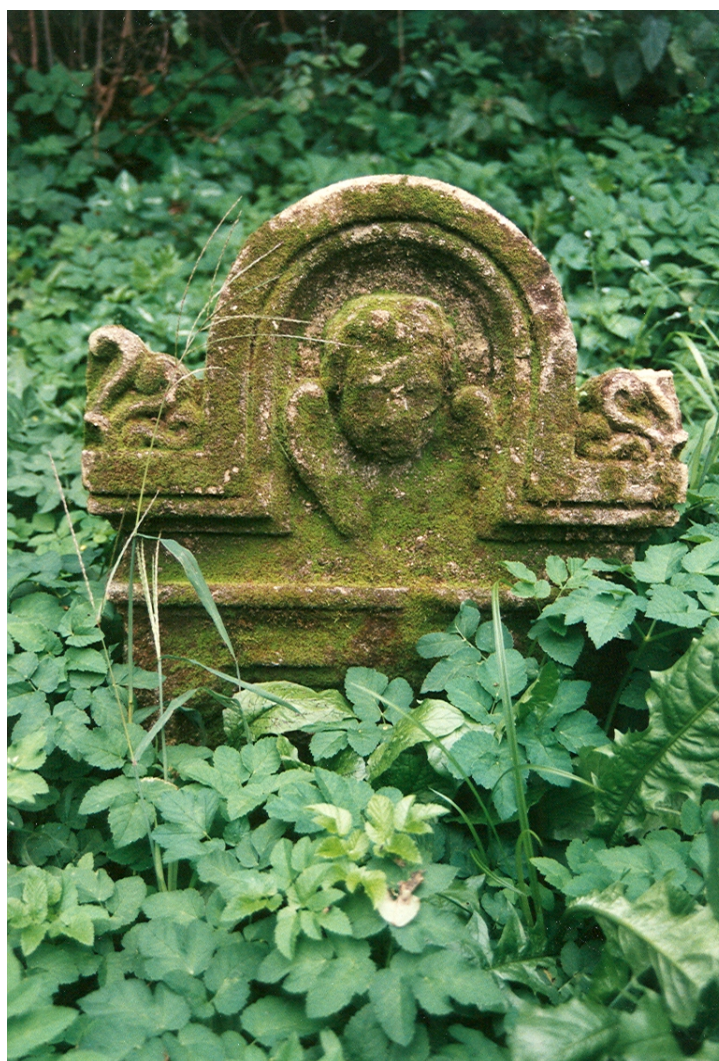
**Figures 51, 52. Lendava. Jewish cemetery. Top:** The cemetery ceremonial hall has a big arched central door flanked by two arched windows and is painted pale yellow with red tile roof. **Bottom:** Path and benches.



**Figures 53, 54. Lendava.** Jewish cemetery. There are some 176 tombstones, about 40 from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, most of the rest from the 20<sup>th</sup> century. **Top:** In the middle of the cemetery there is a Holocaust memorial to Prekmurje Jews erected by four survivors in 1947. **Bottom:** Many of the newer stones are of black marble and in generally good condition. A number of them, however, have had the laminated photograph of the person removed.



**Figures 55, 56.** Lendava. Jewish cemetery. **Top:** Examples of typically eroded stones. **Bottom:** There are relatively few tombs with sculptural decoration. The one notable carving is a winged head, very eroded, on a stone whose epitaph was totally obliterated.







**Figures 57, 58. Murska Subota. Top:** Eight stones from the demolished Jewish cemetery were used to create a Holocaust memorial in the late 1980s. The site is a grassy park (the dead are still buried there) dotted with trees. In the middle, seven stones have been arranged in a semi-circle, facing benches. **Bottom:** At the street, under a big weeping willow, stands a fine black marble stone. It is the tombstone of Edmund Furst, president of the Murska Sobota Jewish community, who died in 1929.



**Figures 59, 60. Stanjel. Austrian World War I military cemetery. Top:** View of gate posts. **Bottom:** Surviving Jewish gravestones.



**Figures 61, 62. Kidricevo.** Austrian World War I military cemetery. **Top:** Front gate. **Bottom:** Surviving Jewish gravestone.

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