

RELIGION, CULTURE, SOCIETY

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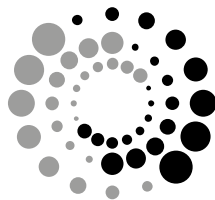
Yearbook of the MTA-SZTE Research Group
for the Study of Religious Culture
Szeged, Hungary

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Yearbook
of the MTA-SZTE Research Group
for the Study of Religious Culture

Edited by
Gábor BARNÁ and Orsolya GYÖNGYÖSSY



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NORBERT GLÄSSER*

“BLESS OUR KING,
WHO YOU SENT LIKE MOSES”

JEWISH RELIGIOUS INTERPRETATIONS OF LOYALTY
TO HUNGARIAN KING FRANCIS JOSEPH

Abstract: The Jewish community perception of Francis Joseph was determined by the duality of Jewish attitudes towards the religious traditions of Judaism and the modern ideals of nation. The crowned king was a pale reflection in this world of the glory of the Creator. He was also the guarantee of social order and the security of the Jews. Besides religious traditions the attitude towards Francis Joseph was also coloured by the role the ruler played in the late confessionalization process of the Jews and his symbolic gestures during the internal debates among the different trends. Neology and Orthodoxy attributed to the ruler’s merit besides their own institutionalisation, also the social integration of the Jews, the granting of equal civil rights and their acceptance as an established denomination. In this way Francis Joseph came to be regarded as a defender of the Jews, a deeply religious Catholic ruler. In contrast with Habsburg Austria, where the declaration of loyalty to the state was a manifestation of loyalty to the dynasty, in Hungary identification with the concept of the assimilative Hungarian cultural nation became a manifestation of loyalty to the nation. In the cultural memory of Neolog Jews 1848 is the symbol of becoming one with the modern Hungarian nation. Although the symbolic politics of independence appeared in Jewish public discourse, it was not directed against Francis Joseph but was intended to express belonging to the Hungarian nation within a system of multiple loyalties. The rabbis and publicists shaping Jewish symbolic politics based their position on the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867. The study examines the Hungarian Jewish adaptations of the Hungarian and Austrian image of Francis Joseph, the collective denominational memory and Judaism’s veneration of the ruler as a hierarchy of loyalties, as reflected in leading articles, news reports, homilies, small prints and prayer books.

Keywords: Habsburg, Francis Joseph, Jew, civil religion, state patriotisms, veneration of the king

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“We pray to You on the field of battle: Eternal God. [...] Bless our King, who you sent like Moses to show us the way, in Your mercy may the light of Your victory shine on him, may it curb his enemies.”

(Egyenlőség, 9 May 1915 / 1.
Simon Hevesi: Prayer after victory)

The Jewish community perception of Francis Joseph was determined by the duality of Jewish attitudes towards the religious traditions of Judaism and the modern ideals of nation. Just as Hungarian symbolic politics in the time of the Dual Monarchy was determined by the memory of 1848–49 and the debate over constitutional law, so the Jewish adaptation of Hungarian symbolic politics was shaped by the events of 1867, 1868–69 and 1895: its themes were drawn from the constitutional law milestones of emancipation, the Jewish Congress held under the auspices of Baron József Eötvös and the reception. The question of the image of the ruler held by Jews in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy is a story of “changes”. The religious interpretations of the crowned head had their origin in the Jewish interpretation of galuth,¹ the myth of the “royal ally”² and Judaisation of the veneration of rulers in Antiquity.³ Europe’s modernising society added nuance to the phenomenon.⁴ And the symbolic manifestations of feudal traditions in cases intertwined or clashed with the modern nation ideals. The study examines the Hungarian Jewish adaptations⁵ of the Hungarian and Austrian image of Francis Joseph, the collective denominational memory and Judaism’s veneration of the ruler as a hierarchy of loyalties⁶, as reflected in leading articles, news reports, homilies, small prints and prayer books

Reflection of the glory of the Everlasting

Veneration of the crowned head arose from the religious traditions of Judaism. In Orthodox Jewish communities, mainly in Galicia and Bukovina, appearing before the ruler with the Torah scrolls was part of the reception of the crowned ruler even during the First World War.⁷ It is in this context too that we can understand

1 Galuth = dispersion, diaspora. The concept originating from rabbinical literature refers to bitter scattering. In the Jewish vernacular in the 19th–20th centuries it is used for the period following the destruction of the second Temple in Jerusalem. RAVITZKY 2011; see also GLÄSSER 2015a 11, FÉNYES 2011.

2 DUBIN 2014. 51–81.

3 DAMOHORSKÁ 2010.

4 DUBIN 2005. 29–30.

5 GERŐ 2016; SCHMIDL 2014. 80–82.

6 Cf. FÉNYES 2016.

7 Cf. DAMOHORSKÁ 2010. The Orthodox press also reported a similar practice – although as a historical

the Galician Hasidic Torah ornament, where the double-headed eagle is portrayed on the shield of David.⁸ The appearance of the Habsburg heraldic animal on the star of David was a symbolic tool for the expression of respect and homage to the crowned ruler. The connection made between respect for the crowned ruler and the Torah can be understood if placed in the context of religious tradition. The Torah carried by the delegations coming to express homage is an objectified symbol of the revealed Teaching. The liturgy and the literature on religious ethics can throw light on the question. Religious law prescribes a blessing when the king is seen: “Blessed are You our Everlasting God, King of the world, who gives of his glory to mortal man.” The Hebrew-Hungarian version of the festive prayer books (*mahzor*) in the series of prayer books published by József Schön and widely used in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy as the Neolog Jewish prayer book contains a prayer said for Francis Joseph, for the ruling dynasty and the homeland. This prayer was also found in everyday and Sabbath prayer books (*siddur*) and in prayer books for women (*tehines*). The Sabbath and feast day prayer said for the well-being of the state or the ruler raised the prayer said for the non-Jewish secular power into the dialogue conducted with the Everlasting. The prayers said during services were substitutes for sacrifices in the sanctuary. The prayer said for the ruler was therefore an important expression of the relationship between the Jews and the authorities. Prefigurations can be found in Antiquity. Pavla Damohorská regards it as the Judaisation of Egyptian and Roman non-Jewish practice. Variants of the *Hanoten teshuah* texts appearing from



Torah ornament from Galicia (OR-ZSE)

point of interest – in the case of the popes in Rome and the city's Jews.

⁸ Published in: *Sábosz Szombat-almanach az 5688. évre (1927/28)* [*Sabbath Almanac for the year 5688 (1927/28)*]. Somré Sábosz Bizottság kiadása, Budapest, 1927. p. 105

the 17th century showed the relationship between the community and the wider sociocultural system.⁹ The crowned ruler was a pale reflection in this world of the glory of the Creator. He was also the guarantee of social order and the safety of the Jews. This was expounded in a readily understandable way in Hungarian by S. Leo Singer Orthodox chief rabbi of Rimaszombat (now Rimavská Sobota, Slovakia) in his reworking of the *Chovot HaLevavot* published in 1907 under the title *Kötelességtan* [The Study of Duties]. Besides the religious precedents, it must not be forgotten that the premodern Jewish communities were under the protection of rulers or landowners. The Jewish citizens of modernizing monarchies could also hope for support from the ruler in their community affairs. In his handbook on religious ethics brought into line with the bourgeois world, Chief Rabbi Singer devoted special attention to respect for the crown and the authorities under the title of *K'vod haMalchut* (Respect of kingship). He deduced respect for the king from the Ethics of the Fathers (Pirkei Avot III. 2.):

“Pray for peace, salvation and a happy life for the king and the authorities, because if he was not feared, one [person] would swallow the other.”

The Mishna attributes the saying to Rabbi Chánina, the chief priest's deputy. Chief Rabbi Singer also gives the text a religious interpretation in *Kötelességtan*:

“Our sacred religion commands us to show grateful respect to the king and the authorities, because by providing equal justice they guard the peace of us all so that evil men do not disturb us in our useful work.”¹⁰

Besides the blessing to be said when seeing the crowned ruler, Chief Rabbi Singer also wrote about loyalty to the king. He deduced this from the Book of Proverbs. “Fear the Lord and the king and do not join with the rebellious.”¹¹ (Proverbs 24:21) Chief Rabbi Singer saw respect for the king as respect for the order of the country.

“Anyone who does not respect or evades the laws of his country; who tries to exempt himself in any way from his obligations to his country; who stirs up inequality among the citizens of his country rather than promoting and strengthening peaceful cohesion, not only sins against the clear law of our religion but is also a dishonest person who not only deserves the Lord's punishment but also the scorn of his fellow citizens.”¹²

⁹ DAMOHORSKÁ 2010. 7. 12–13, 17–20.

¹⁰ SINGER 1907. 210.

¹¹ SINGER 1907. 211.

¹² SINGER 1907. 211.

In his book Chief Rabbi Singer draws a picture of the ruler legitimated by God.¹³ This premodern ruler stood outside society, but nevertheless manifested its order. In Hungary the Löw family of rabbis was highly influential in shaping modern Jewish symbolical politics. The prayer book published by Immanuel Löw in Szeged in 1903 under the title *Imádságok zsidók számára* [Prayers for Jews] included two Hungarian-language versions of the prayer to be said for the king.¹⁴ Both prayer texts represented the structure of society, from the king to the praying “congregation”. They asked for God’s blessing for the representatives of power, for the nation, the town and the community. Immanuel Löw cited the *Ethics of the Fathers* and the *Book of Proverbs*. In the published prayer texts the concepts of the king (Francis Joseph), the Hungarian nation and the homeland were intertwined. This was the case for the prayer variants of both the “1848” veteran rabbi, Leopold Löw and his son Immanuel Löw.

From the myth of the “royal ally” to historical experience

In the course of the 19th century in the Jewish communities modern nation ideals and social changes had to be reconciled with the traditional frames of Judaism. The representation of interests at court, that is, the institution of *stadlanut* and respect for the crowned ruler were part of European Jewish community traditions. However, with modernity the institution itself changed. The premodern ruler, outside society and legitimated by divine right entered the social processes, the persons acting as *stadlan*, representing the community at the court of the ruler and familiar with the customs and relations of the outside Christian community, acting as spokesmen, changed: they became suppliers to the imperial and royal court or learned men at home in modern politics and secular sciences.¹⁵ The Jewish group strategies that were taking shape in the early 20th century became institutionalised after the split that occurred at the Jewish congress convened in Hungary in 1868–69 with the aim of achieving a uniform denominational political representation.¹⁶ The attitude towards Francis Joseph was also coloured not only by religious traditions but also by the role the ruler played in the late confessionalization process of the Jews and his symbolic gestures during the internal debates among the different trends.¹⁷ Neology and Orthodoxy attributed to the ruler’s merit besides their own institutionalisation, also the social integration of the Jews, the granting of equal civil rights and their acceptance as an established

13 Cf. HAHNER 2006.

14 Löw 1903. 44–47, 47–48.

15 KATZ 1999. 216, 231–232, 234–235, 289–290; FROJIMOVICS 2008. 126–127.

16 Cf. KATZ 1999. 229, 233, 243–252.

17 *Egyenlőség* 25 November 1916. 5–7. I. Ferenc József tettei és nyilatkozatai a zsidóság ügyeiben. [Actions and declarations of Francis Joseph I on Jewish causes.]

denomination. In this way Francis Joseph came to be regarded as a defender of the Jews, a deeply religious Catholic ruler.

The myth of the “royal ally” may have been a further community topos behind the historical experience: it was an important theme of 20th century Jewish historiography, both in its historical depth and in the evolution of Jewish political thinking. The historiographer’s problem of the “royal ally” arose from the historian Salo Wittmayer Baron who was born in Galicia during the time of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and was further developed by his student Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi. In his interpretation, the “myth of the royal ally” offered the Jews consolation and hope.¹⁸ We also find numerous examples in Hungarian history and symbolic politics of the royal authorities and national leaders opposing anti-Semitic attacks affecting the community with positive gestures towards the Jews.¹⁹

An example of one such gesture is the visit made to the Holy Land by Francis Joseph in 1869, reported among others in the illustrated family paper *Vasárnapi Ujság*. As apostolic Hungarian king, the ruler was also king of Jerusalem.²⁰

“The king put on his field marshal uniform and pinned the order of Saint Stephen on his chest while the other members of his entourage also changed into parade dress. Now only a narrow ridge of hills separated them from the destination of the ride. At the top of this ridge the first delegation from the city met us: the Hungarian Jews of Jerusalem bearing a tricolour banner with the inscription: ‘Long live the emperor and Hungarian apostolic king Francis Joseph. Long live the nation. The Hungarian, Moravian and Czech Jewish community.’ – Then, of course, one delegation after another followed, until the travellers were surrounded by a crowd of thousands welcoming us with shouts and cries.”²¹

According to contemporary reports, during his entry the emperor and king kissed the Torah that was brought before him.

Among the many news items Francis Joseph’s attitude towards the cause of modern rabbi training was of special significance for the history of memory. The dynasty also supported the demand for a school on the part of the modern Jewish trend that was loyal to the state and wished to integrate into the majority society, and in 1850 Francis Joseph used the tolerance tax arrears collected in 1849 to set up the “Jewish Education Fund”. The Jüdisch-Theologische Seminar opened in 1854 in Breslau by the Maskilim in Germany later served as a model for the

18 DUBIN 2014.

19 GLÄSSER – ZIMA 2015a. 176, 178-179, 182.

20 On Austro-Hungarian Jewish art historical memories of the visit to the Holy Land made by Francis Joseph, see: ARAD 2015.

21 *Vasárnapi Ujság* 28 November 1869. 660. Tárház – A király Jeruzsálemben. [Treasure-house – The king in Jerusalem.]

establishment of a modern Jewish education institution in Hungary.²² The visit by the ruler that legitimated the institution was later commemorated a number of times in the gazette of the National Rabbi Training Seminary set up in Budapest:

“His Majesty the king honoured the national rabbi training institute with a visit in the second month of its existence. Our institution’s gazette records the fact of this manifestation of royal grace as follows: ‘We note with great emotion that already in the first weeks of its existence, on 15 November 1877, His Majesty Francis Joseph I, our most gracious king, honoured us with a visit. His Majesty most graciously enquired about the progress of the institution, he visited the synagogue, the departments and the library, asked searching questions of the teachers and students, and together with his entourage that included His Excellency Ágoston Trefort minister for religious affairs and education, expressed his utmost satisfaction and on leaving most graciously assured us that he will continue to extend his high protection to the national rabbi training institute.’...”²³

The Orthodox-Neolog divide was one of the spectacular breaking points in the question of rabbi training. In the matter of the Talmudic schools and the Orthodox rabbis, papers representing the opinion of the Orthodox Office strove to emphasise both their separate position and the recognition they received from the ruler. The communities and the Orthodox Jewish publicists reinterpreted the events of the royal visits as the ruler’s recognition of traditional Jewish religiosity.²⁴ The rabbi of Balassagyarmat, Áron Dávid Deutsch (1812–1878) was among the Orthodox leaders of the *Taylung* (split) at the time of the 1868–69 Jewish Congress. He also took part in the talks with Francis Joseph.²⁵ In 1894, as another declaration of the king, he had engraved on a marble commemorative tablet the words the ruler addressed to the Balassagyarmat Orthodox delegation that came to express its respects.

“I accept with gratitude the assurance of the respect and unwavering loyalty of the Nógrád County Jewish community. Religious difference does not form a dividing wall in my feelings for my peoples.

22 Cf. FROJMOVICS 2008. 90–95.

23 BÁNÓCZI 1888. [53.]

24 *Zsidó Híradó* 20 September 1894 / 1–2. A balassa-gyarmati esemény – írta: Viador [The Balassagyarmat event – written by: Viador]; *Zsidó Híradó* 20 September 1894 / 2–4. Zsidók a király előtt. Külön tudósítónktól [Jews before the king. From our special correspondent]; *Zsidó Híradó* 20 September 1894 / 4. A király köszönete – írta: Ráth Károly, főpolgármester, Bp. [The king’s thanks – written by: Károly Róth, Mayor, Budapest], cf. the case in Késmárk [Kežmarok] of the conflict between the Lord Lieutenant and the community: *Zsidó Híradó* 9 September 1898 / 1–2. A király megengedte. – Viador. [The king allowed it. – Viador.]

25 KATZ 1999. 232.

You too can therefore count at all times on my royal grace and protection.”²⁶

The transformation of a declaration by the king interpreted as a gesture of protection into a community memory was a more general practice. The Tarnopol community also had engraved on marble in gold letters in its school building the message that the king addressed to the Jewish delegation in Balassagyarmat. The *Zsidó Híradó* held this up as an example to be followed by Orthodoxy in Hungary.²⁷

In this frame of interpretation the gestures of the religious Catholic ruler became symbolic answers given to the Neolog efforts for unification, that can also be observed on the occasion of the royal visit to Pozsony (now Bratislava, Slovakia) that coincided with the anniversary of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary. The photo showing the moment when Akiba Schreiber (1878–1960), Orthodox chief rabbi of Pozsony blessed the Hungarian king, was published as a postcard. What gave the occasion its significance is that it took place outside the official programme that included a meeting with the Neolog delegation, at the initiative of the king and respecting the blessing obligatory under religious law. The news was also published in the Neolog paper *Egyenlőség*.

“In front of the Orthodox temple [...] Chief Rabbi Akiba Schreiber speaking audibly and in fluent Hungarian, translated the traditional blessing that he had pronounced in Hebrew, that the king heard with emotion, and those around him concluded with the ‘amen’. The king’s stop in front of the Orthodox temple was practically outside the programme, a further fact that increases its significance. On the occasion of this royal visit a special honour was also bestowed on one of our brethren: Lajos Mensch is the name of the tradesman who was personally introduced by Archduchess Izabella to His Majesty. The king praised him for his very fine work.”²⁸

While Orthodoxy used the events in Pozsony to show its separation from the Neolog trend and the recognition given by the ruler, the Neolog trend, by publishing the

26 *Zsidó Híradó* 25 October 1894 / 9. Hírek - A király szavai márványban. [News – The king’s words in marble.] The community’s commemorative tablet in Balassagyarmat can be found in the material of the Ipoly Region Jewish Collection and Exhibition Room (Hunyadi u. 24.) <http://magyarzsido.hu/images/unit3/kep-03-02.jpg>

27 *Zsidó Híradó* 25 October 1894 / 9. Hírek – A király szavai márványban. [News – The king’s words in marble.] The list of particular examples ends with the case of Makó – that points beyond the general denominational practice for church building under the Dual Monarchy of placing a commemorative tablet – where the community originally from Makó placed a tablet with an inscription in Hebrew commemorating the role played by Rabbi Mózes Hauer in having the synagogue built, emphasising that Francis Joseph I personally gave permission for construction of the Orthodox synagogue.

28 *Egyenlőség* 6 June 1909 / 2. Hírek – A király Pozsonyban. [News – The king in Pozsony.]

Orthodox news represented the recognition by society and the ruler of the Jewish denomination as an indication of its cohesion and essential unity.

In the press debates during the period of the dual monarchy, the yeshivas and the Orthodox rabbis were often accused of being unpatriotic and disloyal. Orthodoxy and the Talmudic school in Pozsony represented the official line of the Orthodox institutional system in Hungary. For this reason news of the occasion was given special prominence in papers close to the Orthodox Office. The appearance in the press of patriotic sentiments loyal to the king was embedded in respect for the heads of the Schreiber dynasty in Pozsony. The Orthodox press devoted special attention to events of the institution. Greetings to Akiba Schreiber from his students included the toposes of loyalty to king and country, and steadfast faith.

“We see the activity of Your Reverence as the greatest guarantee for the constant flourishing of our recognised and famous institution. Because we believe that in the soul-soothing shade of the “Schreiber” family tree we can best quench our thirst for knowledge, drawing on the life-giving sources of our sacred teachings. We therefore beg the wise and omnipotent Lord to allow our Most Reverend Director, the pride of us all, to reach the extreme limit of man’s age in the best health of body and mind, to the further glory of our institution. And may He give you, Mr Deputy Director, strength, health and endurance so that you may be active in our institution for many years in the spirit that shines in the bright motto on our institution’s banner: God, Country and King!”²⁹

The religious interpretations kept alive through the chain of generations further strengthened the positive view of the ruler. Predominant among the religious models were the Talmud and Mishnah prefigurations of the exile.³⁰

Hierarchies of loyalty

Emancipation and their undertaking of a role in society made it possible for Central European Jews to identify with the modern ideals of nation.³¹ They also included various expectations of loyalty, loyalty conflicts and hierarchies of loyalty.³² Among the Jews of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy there was a difference between Habsburg Austria and Hungary in the forms of loyalty to the state. In the Central European states the Jews who had won civil

²⁹ *Zsidó Híradó* 16 March 1899 / 9. Hirek – A pozsonyi jesiba. [News – The Pozsony Yeshiva.]

³⁰ GLÄSSER 2015b 19.

³¹ DUBIN 2005. 29–30.

³² CIEGER 2016, FENYVES 2016.

rights identified with the modern nation ideals, albeit within differing frames. Habsburg Austria was organised on the basis of political, dynastic principles, consequently in the Austrian part of the Monarchy at the state level there was no nationalism in either the ethnic or the linguistic and cultural sense. Austria’s Jewish citizens were able to remain loyal to the state without having to accept any particular national identity. In contrast with Habsburg Austria, the Hungarian political elite defined Hungary as a nation state and its Jewish inhabitants adopted the dominant Hungarian concept of nation based on language and culture.³³ Throughout the period of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy Hungarian public discourse was shaped by the debate on constitutional law.³⁴ In the case of the image formed of Francis Joseph, that debate was conducted as “*kuruc*”-type³⁵ Hungarian symbolic politics. Lajos Kossuth and his Hungarian followers opposed the Compromise reached between the Dynasty, the liberal Hungarian nobility and part of the Austrian citizenry. The rabbis and publicists who shaped Hungarian Jewish symbolic politics stood on the ground of the Compromise. Those opinion-shaping veteran revolutionaries who saw in the Compromise of 1867 the restoration of constitutionality, the ordering of the relationship between the nation and the ruler could also be found in other groups of society.³⁶ In Neolog cultural memory 1848 is the symbol of the melding together of the modern Hungarian nation. Although the symbolic politics of independence appeared in Jewish public discourse, it was not directed against Francis Joseph but was intended to express belonging to the Hungarian nation within a system of multiple loyalties. The “*kuruc*”-type national and the royalist state patriotic discourse were present side by side in the Neolog and Orthodox press throughout the period. Nevertheless, in the case of conflicting loyalties, respect for the king legitimated by religious models prevailed.³⁷ A good example of this is the Orthodox Jewish news of the death of Lajos Kossuth.³⁸ The series of articles emphasised acceptance of the Compromise and loyalty to the king: “we continue to struggle among the flower of the nation with unflinching strength and perseverance and with the tried and tested sentiments of loyalty to the king and respect for the constitution.”³⁹ They summed up the question of Orthodox Jewish patriotism. The publicists sought justification for loyalty to

33 Cf. ROZENBLIT 2001. 4, 9.

34 GERŐ 2016, VOCELKA – VOCELKA 2016.

35 A concept that has its roots in the 17th–18th century Principality of Transylvania, that was given new relevance in the second half of the 19th century within the frames of the modern constitutional monarchy and the Hungarian national ideal. It comprised opposition to the Habsburgs, and Protestant anti-Catholicism, the latter as a symbolic criticism of the power constellation within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

36 Cf. PÉTER 2004. 546–584; in Hungarian folklore: LANDGRAF 2016.

37 Cf. Lipót Löw: 1567, 1667, 1767 és 1867! Tartatott a Koronázás napján, 1867 [1567, 1667, 1767 and 1867! Held on Coronation day, 1867]. Cited in: HÍDVÉGI 1999. 136–144, Löw 1923. 6.

38 *Zsidó Híradó* 29 March 1894 / 1–2. Gyászkeret nélkül. [Without a mourning border.] [By:] Viador, *Zsidó Híradó* 22 March 1894 / 2–3. Kossuth a zsidókért. [Kossuth for the Jews], *Zsidó Híradó* 16 June 1898 / 12. Hírek – Kossuth reminiszenciák. [News – Reminiscences of Kossuth.]

39 *Zsidó Híradó* 5 April 1894 / 8. Hírek – Kossuth Lajos temetése. [News – Funeral of Lajos Kossuth.]

the king in the founding community memory, the texts of Holy Scripture.⁴⁰ This offered the common basis for common interpretation capital both inwards and towards the Christian outside world.⁴¹ The Orthodox press regularly published stories, folkloristic writings, texts full of miraculous elements about the gestures made by Francis Joseph as ruler towards the Jews, and his greatness.⁴² These also appeared in the Neolog *Egyenlőség*.⁴³ Francis Joseph looked on himself as protector of the unity of his peoples and empire and defender of peace among the denominations. Francis Joseph called the Jews his people, the Jews of Galicia and Bukovina used the acronym *kireh* (kayzer yarum hodo) to refer to him.⁴⁴ The role of patron extended to the dynasty was also reflected in Orthodox news items.⁴⁵ The Neolog Jewish weekly paper *Egyenlőség* published in Budapest also attributed the peace among the peoples and denominations of the Monarchy to the dynasty, presenting it as an institution above nations and religions that alone bore responsibility for preserving the unity of the Empire. Prefigurations of this topos can be sought in publications marking anniversaries of the ruler and under the patronage of members of the ruling family, as well as the texts of prayers said for the well-being of the ruler and the state, and in religious explanations regarding loyalty to the authorities.⁴⁶

With the Enlightenment and the emergence of modern political civil consciousness, Jewish synagogue speeches reflecting on major events of the majority national history and adaptations of the symbolic politics of the surrounding world within the frame of Judaism also appeared. On the name day and birthday of the ruler, and at religious services as part of the rites for anniversaries in the life of the ruling family⁴⁷ the synagogue sermons of many rabbis reflected on similarities in Holy Scripture and in the events of the Compromise. Immanuel Löw's funeral oration at the death of Francis Joseph portrayed him as a contemporary biblical king.

40 *Zsidó Híradó* 12 January 1899 / 2–5. A biblia a király, állam és a fensőbbiség iránti engedelmességről. – K.A. [The Bible on obedience to the king, state and authorities. – K.A.]

41 *Zsidó Híradó* 30 August 1900 / 2. A király iránt való hűség. [Loyalty to the king.]

42 A few examples: *Zsidó Híradó* 15 November 1894 / 4–5. A Mártonnapi audenczia [The audience on Martin's day]; *Zsidó Híradó* 24 November 1898 / 9. Hírek – Márton ludak [News – Martin's geese], *Zsidó Híradó* 20 May 1897 / 1–2. Pozsonyi királyfogadás [Royal reception in Pozsony], *Zsidó Híradó* 16 September 1897 / 8. Hírek – A király köszöntése [News – Greeting the king].

43 *Egyenlőség* 25 November 1916 / 5–7. I. Ferenc József tettei és nyilatkozatai a zsidóság ügyeiben. [Actions and declarations of Francis Joseph I on Jewish affairs.]

44 Yarum hodo an expression applied to the king. Approximate meaning: Glory be to His Majesty, cf. BÍRÓ 2013. 37, SCHMIDL 2014, REDEN 1989. 63.

45 *Zsidó Híradó* 27 October 1898 / 9. Hírek – Albrecht főherceg és a szentesi rabbi [Archduke Albrecht and the rabbi of Szentes], *Zsidó Híradó* 3 February 1889 / 9. Hírek – Felekezeti béke [News Denominational peace].

46 Cf. UNOWSKY 2006; DAMOHORSKÁ 2010.

47 On the Catholic aspects, see BARNA 2016.

“Our great king loved those who spoke the truth. He bore the title of King of Jerusalem and followed the teachings of Solomon. [...] The holy crown is a brilliant jewel: it radiates a supernatural light that inspires reverence and also love, attachment and self-sacrificing devotion to the wearer of the crown”.⁴⁸

In Habsburg Austria, just as in Hungary, all the Jewish trends identified with the aims of the Monarchy in the world war. Neology placed individual actors from the royal family in Hungarian symbolic politics. Prayer texts for the ruler Francis Joseph and/or Kaiser Wilhelm together with their portraits also appeared on the prayer postcards published as First World War propaganda.⁴⁹ These postcards recorded the identification of the Jewish middle classes with the Central European war aims.⁵⁰ The home, the synagogue and the battlefield became places where the Jewish propaganda of the Monarchy represented integration. The propaganda postcards for New Year bore home and synagogue scenes with images of civilians, soldiers and the ruler, expressing loyalty and commitment, and showed Jews integrated into society. The collection donated to the Hungarian Jewish Museum by Vilmos Kohn in 1923 includes a postcard published in Vienna, with an Orthodox father blessing his soldier son on Sabbath eve. The family’s room is decorated with a portrait of Francis Joseph. The German-Hebrew text refers simultaneously to the Jewish liturgical new year, the blessing and the expected victory.⁵¹



Hungarian Jewish patriotic badge
(Private collection of Ákos Bíró)

⁴⁸ Löw 1923. 14, 20-21.

⁴⁹ See MILEV items Nos. Hu HJA K361; Hu HJA K393; Hu HJA K262; Hu HJA K709.

⁵⁰ Cf. GLÄSSER – ZIMA 2015b, PENSLAR 2013. 152.

⁵¹ Sabbath evening family scene: the head of the family blesses the soldier sons. Hungarian Jewish Archive, No.: Hu HJA K361, in the MILEV database: <http://collections.milev.hu/items/show/31928>



Prayer for the ruler, First World War propaganda postcard for the Jewish New Year (MILEV)

The Francis Joseph of community memory

In his prayer the Pest rabbi Simon Hevesi compared Francis Joseph to Moses who led the Jews in their wandering in the wilderness.

“On the eve of battles we pray to you: Everlasting God, Lord of Hosts who gives strength to the people. [...] Bless our King, who You sent like Moses to show the way, may the light of Your victory shine on him in Your mercy so that he curbs his enemies.”⁵²

This appeared on the front page of *Egyenlőség* in May 1915 after the victory at Gorlice. The Francis Joseph image in the Judaised royalist, state-patriotic discourse followed the time view of the liturgy and the homilies. It sought parallels in the founding memory. It showed the essential identity between Francis Joseph and the kings of Scripture. This was overlaid with the image of the king based on Hungarian historical memory of the Compromise and the positive experience of contemporary Jews. News of the death of Francis Joseph written by Illés Kaczér can be interpreted in the same frame.



First World War propaganda postcard: Orthodox family head blesses his soldier sons.
Portrait of the ruler in the background (MILEV)

52 *Egyenlőség* 9 May 1915 / 1. Hevesi, Simon: Ima a győzelem után [Prayer after victory].

“With the mourning of six hundred years the Habsburgs are burying the great-hearted Habsburg in Vienna, and throughout the country, in small Jewish temples the mourning cries of four millennia are heard. This is worthiest and most dignified: it accompanies the king’s funeral carriage most fittingly. [...] This mourning is even higher as reverence than all that was placed at his feet for seventy years. [...] They are giving him their everything. That up to now was due only to our own great men. With love, from their hearts, out of childish devotion. Out of gratitude. They are sobbing for him their sorrow of four thousand years.”⁵³

The modern rabbi training seminaries were important institutions of Jewish social integration. A plaque still preserves the memory of the visit made by Francis Joseph to the Rabbi Training Institute established in Pest in 1877. Following the death of Francis Joseph, with the approval of King Charles IV the institute adopted the name of the deceased ruler, a step that the weekly *Egyenlőség* presented as the assertion of Neolog interests.

“With this fact, unparalleled among Jewish scholarly colleges anywhere in the world, King Charles IV made it possible for the noble memory of his departed predecessor to live forever in the history of Hungarian Jewry and for one of the most important denominational public institutions of Hungarian Jews to share in the light and shelter radiating from the glorious memory of great rulers. The achievement of this uplifting result is largely the merit of *Dr. Mór*, chairman of the *National Jewish Office*”.⁵⁴

In Jewish interpretations between the two world wars the period of Francis Joseph became a lost golden age,⁵⁵ while at the same time the Jewish denomination reinterpreted state patriotic veneration of the king and national politics that used Christian elements, within its own religious frames, drawing on the language and community memory of Judaism. In contemporary and commemorative speeches Francis Joseph assumed the figure of a scriptural king who came to resemble the great figures in the canon of Jewish memory because of the community experience of the attainment of social and denominational equality that occurred during his reign. This interpretation was reinforced by the social and political changes after the First World War that in the memory voiced by community forums appeared as a gradual social erosion of equality within new frames.

53 *Egyenlőség* 2 December 1916 / 7. A zsidó gyász. – Kaczér Illés. [Jewish mourning – Illés Kaczér].

54 *Egyenlőség* 17 February 1917 / 12. Hírek – I. Ferenc József Országos Rabbiképző-Intézet. [News – Francis Joseph I National Rabbi Training Institute].

55 See GLÄSSER – ZIMA 2015c.

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