

INTELLECTUALS AND CULTURE: CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE JEWISH ELITE IN THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN CONTEXT

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Abstract. This narrative unfolds a captivating historical tapestry of the Jewish elite in Arad, Romania, spanning various domains of influence. Focused on individuals like Aron Chorin, Ármin Éles, Ármin Wallfisch, József Stauber, József Károly, Sándor Károly, Nándor Szegő and Elemér Komlós, this account elucidates their pivotal roles in shaping the cultural, intellectual, and philanthropic dimensions of Arad's Jewish community. Through their contributions to music, journalism, economics, and philanthropy, these individuals became key figures in the city's historical narrative. The abstract encapsulates the essence of their collective impact, emphasizing the interconnectedness of their stories and the enduring legacy they forged in the rich tapestry of the history of Central Europe.

Keywords: Jews, elite, cultural contributions, journalism, philanthropy

As we use words to indicate things and ideas we need to work with clear statements expressing their essential nature. Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the elite as “the best of a class”, “superachievers”, “the socially superior part of society”, “a group of persons who by virtue of position or education exercise much power or influence” but also “members of the ruling elite”, “aristocracy”, “crème de la crème”, “royalty”, “upper crust”¹. By virtue of the first description, in this article we will use the term elite to picture the people who brought added value to society.

The Jewish history starts in the ancient Middle East and continues with many migrations throughout the world. In Europe, The People of The Book, had encountered a lot of turmoil and tremendous hardship. In his book *A History of Jews*, Paul Johnson details these struggles, listing the many time Jews were expelled from one region or another.² Thus, as newcomers, they were often seen as an alien element. Their religion was strange because they didn't even go to church. Their customs meant a lot of time spent with prayers and endeavours like studying the Torah which were dictated by faith and tradition.

When moving to a new place, Jews tried to have the same rhythm of life as they used to. In the Jewish religion the week starts Saturday, after the sunset, Sunday

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being the first day of work and it lasts until Friday with the preparing for the Shabbat and going to the synagogue after which the family, friends and the community become the main focus. This core of traditions and values, underline the importance of having certain facilities like a house of prayer in the nearby. For example, in 1717, when the first two legally recorded families³ settled in Arad, Romania, their concern was to establish such institutions as Chevra Kadisha, the burial society, to have a Jewish cemetery, a mikve (a ritual bath) and a place to pray. Thus, the families of Isac Elias and Marcus Mayer secure a protective letter from Lieutenant Baron Ștefan Cosa, Arad Citadel's commander. In German, the original document dubs them "Jews of the house and court" under Cosa's shield. Yet, hosting other Jews is prohibited, despite others like Colonel Horvát and Lieutenant Colonel Jurikovic following Cosa's lead, hosting Jewish families, as Ottó Lakatos notes. Arad's Jewish population grows, numbering 41 families in 1785. Jews, obligated to pay 120 florins, actually pay 180 for protection, a crucial service highlighted by Lakatos. Historical records reveal hostility, marginalization through overtaxation, Cosa's attempt to limit numbers, threats of expulsion for unpaid tolerance tax, and restrictions on rights. Hungarian historian Sándor Márki⁴ reports a 1745 order preventing "this Hebrew nation" from paying house tax with Catholics. Until 1770, Jews sustain themselves by distilling brandy in "trenches", facing challenges, paying separate rent, as per Lakatos. Customarily, religious Jews build a prayer house, then a synagogue and school as the community grows. Initial Jewish families in Arad, having a prayer house in The Serbian District of the city (Rácváros in Hungarian), set the foundation. We can observe a population with humble beginnings, economically challenged, highly isolated, struggling with menial work for survival.

The first superachiever the community had was the above mentioned Isac Elias⁵, or how the family still remembers him, the old Elias. On the initial page of the Jewish family records, we encounter the name Éliás Izsák, solidifying his role as one of the founding figures of the Jewish Community of Arad. A parallel narrative unfolds concerning the establishment of Arad's first Jewish institution, Hevra Kadisha (or Chevra Kadisha), which came into existence concurrently or possibly even before the community itself. Isac Elias appears as a probable founder in the year 1729, adding an interesting dimension to the early history of Arad's Jewish community.⁶ His son, Simon Elias becomes a great leader in the Jewish Community, being member of its administrative committee under the presidency of Ignatz Deutsch, a great political activist. In the "Aradi Közlöny" newspaper's April 23th 1930 edition, we can read about the importance of Ignatz Deutsch as the founder of the "Deutsch Ignac and Sons" enterprise in 1828. The endeavour became very successful and the family was ennobled. Part of the history regarding this interesting family is written in the "History of the Jews in Arad" from where we understand the details of their origins. "A conspicuous example is the Deutsch family; they did arrive to Arad before 1800, coming from Köszeg, Hungary. The father Avram, started commerce with grains, and the son Ignac (Eisik) amplified this business. Bernat, in the next generation, continued to expand the assets of the family, moving the site of the activity and the gravitational center to Pest. In 1838 Eisik Deutsch became the agent in Arad of the insurance company "Assicurazioni Generali" from Trieste (70 years later the writer Franz Kaffka

will be employed as procurist by the company), and in 1844 he is listed on the board of directors of the first bank in Arad".⁷

The Haskalah⁸

Aron Chorin, born on August 3, 1766, in Weisskirchen (now Hranovice, Czech Republic), emerged from a background marked by material hardship and very humble beginnings. His early years were characterized by the challenges faced by an ordinary Jewish family of that time. In 1780, his family relocated to Deutschkreutz, where Aron embarked on Talmudic studies in neighboring Mattersdorf. Aron Chorin, along with his family, settled in Deutschkreutz in 1780, continuing his Talmudic studies in Mattersdorf due to the absence of a yeshiva in Deutschkreutz. Despite excelling as a Talmudic scholar, Chorin chose a trade career following the customs of the time after completing his studies.

Facing challenges in commerce, Chorin's mentor, Rabbi Jeremias of Mattersdorf, recommended him as a rabbi for the newly formed Jewish community in Arad, comprising only 352 members. Starting with an initial salary of 4 imperial florins, Chorin's role as rabbi evolved, with his salary increased to 5 florins after nine months in June 1790.

Chorin, as rabbi, observed the difficulties of the Jewish community in Arad and sought to help. Initiating changes in synagogue services to accommodate worshippers' fatigue after a day's work, he even permitted the consumption of sturgeon, a controversial decision that sparked the "fish controversy" in 1798, documented in his work "Imre No'am" (Words of Delight). This marked the beginning of Chorin's progressive thinking, aligning with the ideals of the Haskalah, the Jewish Enlightenment. Chorin faced opposition from conservative rabbis, leading to a summons before a rabbinic tribunal in Buda in 1805. Despite challenges, he returned to the Arad community, pausing his publications for a period. In 1807, he appealed to local authorities, resulting in the annulment of the rabbinic tribunal's sentence.

Known for his forward-thinking approach, Chorin's opinions were sought on religious matters. In 1821, the Grand Duchy of Baden sought his views on reforms, and in 1841, the Hamburg temple sought his advice on the use of a revised prayer book.

Chorin encouraged young Jews to learn a trade, acknowledging the difficulties they faced in becoming apprentices to non-Jews due to ethnic and religious discrimination. Throughout his life, he championed the needs arising from societal and religious changes, culminating in the construction of a synagogue and a Jewish school in 1827.

The year 1834 marked a significant milestone for Arad, with the inauguration of the synagogue and the city gaining the status of a royal free city. Chorin passed away on August 24, 1844, just three years after the synagogue's completion.

Aron Chorin's legacy reflects the values of the Haskalah, the Jewish Enlightenment, as he tirelessly worked to modernize and uplift his community, fostering connections across diverse communities. His funeral procession, marked by the tolling bells of all churches in the city, showcased the profound respect he earned.

His story intertwines with the broader intellectual movement of the Haskalah, emphasizing the pursuit of wisdom, education, and enlightenment among Central and Eastern European Jews.

The legacy of the Chorin name doesn't stop with Aron Chorin but continues with his children, spreading throughout many generations. We find a great eulogy on two pages, edited by Jakab Géza, in the Sunday number of *Aradi Közlöny*, of December 25, 1932. The author makes a detailed history of Aron Chorin's life, struggles and dedication towards the Jewish Community and the citizens of Arad. In gratitude for the rabbi's lifelong service, after Aron Chorin's passing, the community decided to have his statue in the Jewish cemetery. Jakab Géza explains the historical importance of the bust made by the sculptor Guttman Jakab from Arad, underlining the artist's worldwide reputation. "Guttman Jakab, sculptor, born Arad 1815, d. in the Döbling insane asylum in 1858 (according to others, 1861). Because his parents were poor, when his was 13 years old, (1828), he was apprenticed to a gunsmith in Arad. Freed in 1833, he went to Vienna on foot. Here he was employed by the gunsmith Márton Mayer and learned to chisel there. In 1834, he already worked as an independent engraver in Vienna. This year, a gunsmith exhibited a weapon on which the procession of the Argonauts was engraved at the Vienna Art Exhibition. This caught Prince Metternich's attention so much that he invited the simple engraver to his home and awarded him a scholarship to the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, at whose 1841 exhibition he already exhibited a bust of Metternich and a wax statue of the mythological Paris. Joseph II's wax profile plaque (today in the Museum of Fine Arts) won first prize." In 1843, he created a bronze statue of Salomon Rothschild, gaining an annual grant for studies in Rome. Expressing gratitude, he crafted the Rothschild house coat of arms in 1844. Before departing for Rome, he sculpted busts of Saphir and Bauerle in Vienna. From 1845 to 1850, he lived in Rome, describing its attractions in letters. Notable works during this period include the above mentioned marble tombstone for Áron Chorin and sculptures like Moses, Samson and Delilah, Psyche and Cupid, The Genius, and The Youth statue. In 1847, he exhibited a marble bust in Pest and later sculpted reliefs for Rothschild depicting the revolution. After a brief stay in Pest (1850-52) and London (1852-53), he moved to Paris. Notable works in Paris include Geres: The Faith, Hope, and Love group, and a marble bust of Swedish doctor Henrik Péter Ling. In Paris, he fell in love with Rachel, a French tragedian, leading to a tragic end in 1857 when he was brought to Pest with broken nerves and later to an insane asylum in Döbling, where he passed away in 1858.

In the 1904, in the *Művészet* magazine's first number, we find a big article about Guttman Jakab, signed by Naményi Lajos. The title says: "Egy elfelejtett magyar szobrasz" (A forgotten Hungarian sculptor). The article has images of Chorin's statue and other notable works.

In *Aradi Közlöny* newspaper, Jakab Géza gives us a detailed view of the Chorin's family. "His wife, Rebekka, presented him with three sons and four daughters, who respectively went away from Arad. Only his first-born son József Chorin remained here, who, after graduating from the medical faculty of the Budapest University of Science, opened his clinic in the former Szabadság square, today's Weisz-féle house. His life was rich in benefactions, but uneventful. His son, the

grandson of the chief rabbi, the senior Chorin Ferenc, with whom the family's career continues, was also born in Arad, in the apartment on the first floor of today's Uránia Palace, on May 11, 1842. He studied law in Budapest and at foreign colleges, where he became a nationally renowned scholar. In 1867, he opened his law office in Arad and soon became involved in the social and especially political currents of the time. The great respect for the Chorin name and Ferenc's excellent abilities quickly catapult him on his path to political success."¹⁰ Senior Chorin Ferenc was a well known economist and politician, active in Arad as well as Budapest and other parts of Hungary. In his hometown, he edited the political daily *Alföld* on behalf of the opposition. „In 1902 he founded the National Association of Manufacturers, which he developed into six majors. In 1903 he took the leading role in the delegation to the Forendiház's, representing the interests of Hungarian industry with extraordinary energy and expertise”.¹¹ From the same source we find out that he got baptised. He died on January 20th 1925 in Budapest.

The well-documented Magyarization process further transformed the Elias family name into Éles, and as a result, the grandson of Isac Elias adopted the name Ármin Éles. We can see that he walks on the footsteps of the Elias family. Ármin Éles was making a name for himself by being one of the founders of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Arad, alongside other Jewish individuals such as Pál Wallfisch, Ferenc Grünwald, and Tivadar Ottenberg.¹²

Organising the Youth

Born on December 18, 1820, Wallfisch rose to prominence as one of the city's most influential merchants. Serving as the inaugural president of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Arad, he left an enduring impact. According to Ottó Lakatos, he stood out as "one of the leading authorities in the commercial world of Arad,"¹³ actively engaging in all civic movements and fervently supporting cultural initiatives. Wallfisch consistently prioritized the public good over his personal opinions, maintaining a relentless commitment to these causes. As a national economist, his meticulous approach set him apart. In collaboration with Vilmos Bettelheim¹⁴, Wallfisch played a pivotal role in establishing the "Hungarian-Jewish Organization" and the "Israeli Youth Organization of Arad." Additionally, his contributions extended to the realm of economic discourse, evident in his noteworthy articles published in various Arad publications, particularly in Hungarian and German languages, such as "Alföld" and "Arader Zeitung."

Born on April 21st 1850, Ármin Wallfisch was the son of the well known economist. He walked on his father's footsteps understanding economic issues and writing in journals.¹⁵ His activity spread from Arad to Timișoara, encompassing German, Hungarian and French languages. He was a money exchange facility owner in Arad¹⁶. On top of that we see him as a banker at the local branch office of the Austro-Hungarian Bank in Arad¹⁷.

His activities ranged from taking part in the city's legislative authority committee to the Israelite community representative body.¹⁸ His intellectual endeavor extends to various translations of fictional works from French to Hungarian for publications in Budapest in 1878, as well as for the *Alföld* newspaper in 1882.

Additionally, he worked for the German newspapers in Timișoara and Arad, starting from 1868, this time translating from Hungarian to German. He signed with pseudonyms like A. Weil and W. A. He died on March 3rd 1915.

The Crown of Journalism

József Stauber (Nagydoroghi), a newspaper editor born on February 1, 1871, in Nagydorog, graduated in law from Budapest University of Science. Initially, he served as an internal staff member for the publication *Szabad Szó* and later for the *Pesti Napló*¹⁹ journal.

By 1897, Stauber had assumed the role of responsible editor at *Aradi Közlöny*. In just a few years, he transformed the newspaper into one of the most prominent dailies in the region.

Stauber played a crucial role in journalism associations, serving as the vice-president of the Association of Rural Journalists and later as the president of the National Association of Journalists. His influence extended beyond journalism as he took charge of Aradi Nyomda (printing press) and assumed the role of editor-in-chief for the owner of *Aradi Közlöny*.

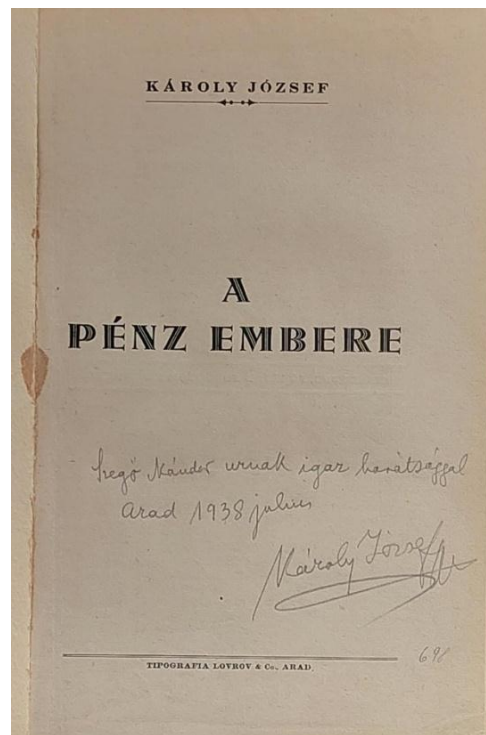
In 1910, József Stauber received the title of Nagydorogh, becoming a Hungarian nobleman. For two decades, he served as an elected member of the legislative authority committee for the city of Arad. Additionally, he held a position as an elected member of the inaugural city council established under the Romanian administration. Throughout his career, Stauber fervently championed the aspirations of the Transylvanian Hungarian Party through the pages of his newspaper.

With such a career, it is not surprising that when he died his fellow journalists at *Aradi Közlöny* were flooded with messages of condolence from both Hungarian and Romanian newspapers, especially from ethnic minority newspapers such as *Temesvarer Zeitung* or *Nagyvárad Napló*. The first pages of number 204, from Thursday, September 1st, 1932, were dedicated to the memory of the great journalist, whom his colleagues called a jewel, the crown of journalism.

Throughout its extensive existence from 1885 to 1940, the *Aradi Közlöny* newspaper fostered a diverse community of journalists spanning various religions and ethnicities, many of whom are also documented in the Romanian-Hungarian Literary Lexicon. The inclusive roster of Arad journalists and writers of Jewish descent is extensive, with contributions found in multiple daily newspapers like *Jövő* and *Uj Kelet*. Notably, *Aradi Közlöny*, known as a breeding ground for journalists, played a pivotal role in shaping two of the era's most renowned authors.

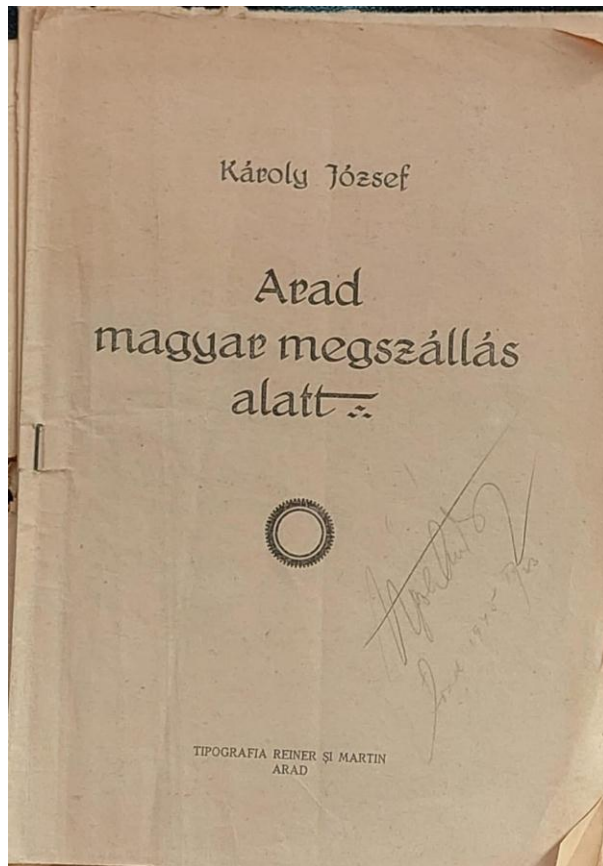
The Stauber family, along with Heinrich Salgo, played a crucial role in the administration of the printing house that left an indelible mark on the journalistic landscape of Arad. József Stauber, as detailed in the *Magyar Könyvszemle* from 1907, served not only as the editor-in-chief of the paper but was responsible for the printing and distribution too.

The esteemed *Aradi Közlöny*, referred to by Mózer István as the "most representative newspaper of the city", became a platform that nurtured talents like Károly József and Károly Sándor, two brothers who would go on to shape Arad's literary and journalistic scene.



A copy of „A pénz embere” (The money man) by József Károly, signed: „with true friendship to Mr. Szegő Nándor, Arad 1938, July”. From M. Szegő personal archive.

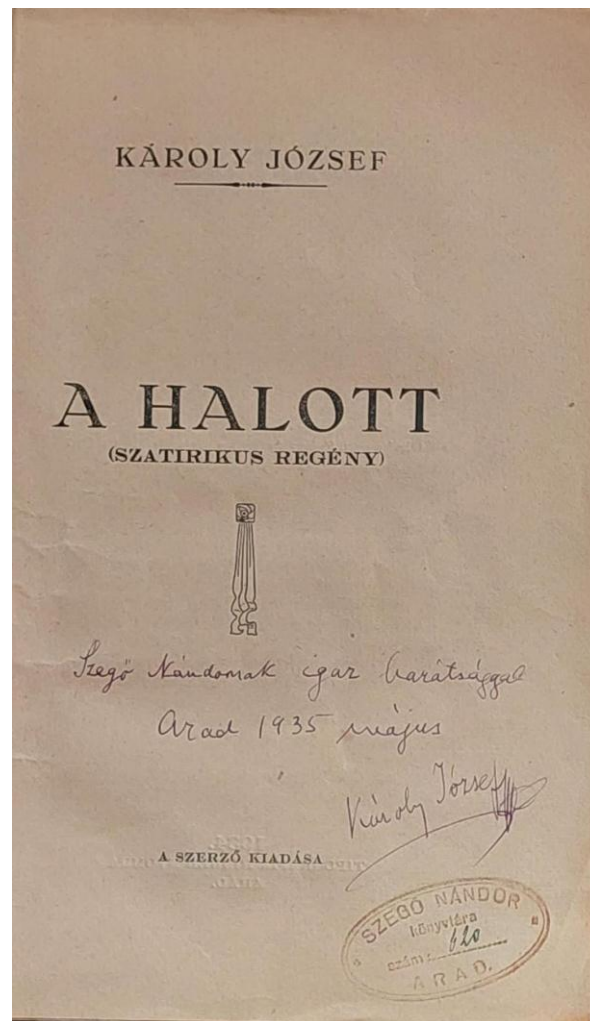
Károly József, the elder brother, was born on August 28, 1886, into a family struggling with poverty. Graduating from a real profile school in 1904, József initially aspired to become a teacher but found his calling in journalism. His debut at *Aradi Közlöny* marked the beginning of a four-year editorial stint before expanding his career to newspapers in Oradea and Budapest.



A copy of „Arad magyar megszállás alatt” (Arad during the Hungarian occupation) by Károly József. From M. Szegő personal archive.

The Romanian-Hungarian Literary Lexicon, published by Kriterion Publishing House in 1991, detailed Károly József's transition from journalism to life as an independent author. While some accounts suggest his retirement from journalism in the 1920s, others place him in Berlin, collaborating with German newspapers and earning acclaim as a German translator.

In 1927, "A nagy torunlat" (The Great Turn) appeared at the Corvin I. Lányi Könyvnyomdai Műintézete Publishing House, marking a significant literary milestone. His satirical novel "A halott" (The Deceased), published in 1934, showcased József's multifaceted talent. Other works, including "A pénz embere" (The Money Man) and "Napoleon házasi", a play in three acts performed on the Arad stage, added to his diverse literary legacy.



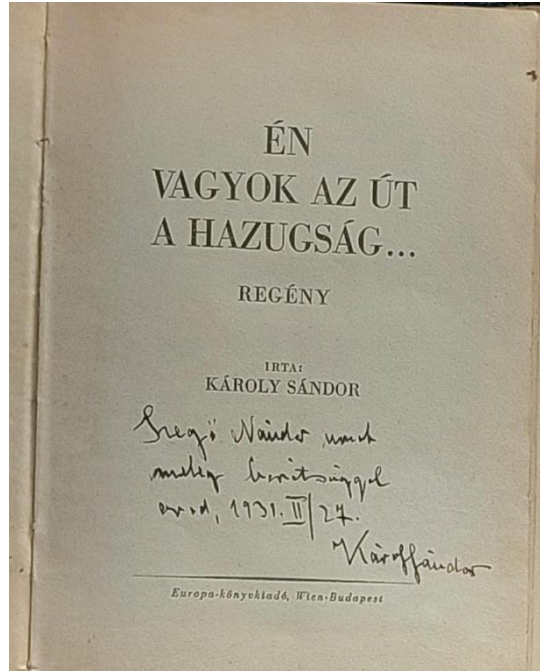
A copy of „A halott” (The Deceased) by József Károly signed: „with true friendship to Szegő Nándor, Arad 1935, May”. We can also see the stamp of Nándor Szego's library. From M. Szegő personal archive.

Károly József's journey ended in his passing in Arad in 1960. The amalgamation of conservative and progressive ideas in his life is evident in his writings, forming a substantial body of literary work that has stood the test of time. The stories of Károly Sándor and Károly József, intricately woven with Arad's cultural fabric, reflect the enduring spirit of a community dedicated to literature and journalism.

Károly Sándor emerged as the younger sibling, born on March 27, 1894, and shared the same financially strained upbringing. His educational journey was marked by limited schooling, just two grades of secondary education. Encouraged by his father, Klein Lajos, he explored various trades, ultimately finding his calling as an

apprentice printer under the guidance of Józef Stauber, who was a highly respected member of the Jewish Community of Arad.

From the humble beginnings of a typographer's apprentice, Károly Sándor's journey led him to contribute to the pages of *Aradi Közlöny*. Following in the footsteps of his older brother, Károly József, both siblings pursued commendable journalistic careers. However, Sándor's literary endeavors proved to be more expansive and varied.



A copy of „Én vagyok az út a hazugság” (in English it would be: „I am the way, the lie”) by Sándor Károly signed by the author: „with warm friendship to Mr. Szegő Nándor, Arad 1931, II/27” From M. Szegő personal archive.

Mózer István, in the preface to "Bitter Salt" ("Keserűsó", 1975), immortalized Károly Sándor as one of Arad's greatest enthusiasts. Despite numerous opportunities to venture beyond the confines of his hometown, Sándor chose to stay, captivated by the streets and buildings of Arad. His writings, described as a manifestation of a dreamy soul, resonated with the older generation, who fondly recalled his articles. In his foreward, Mózer István also talks about the time Károly Sándor spent in Austria, France and Italy, emphasizing that he lived an year in Milano, where he was employed. From the same source we find out that he became a war correspondent in the First World Conflagration. He went to various theaters of operations such as Galicia, Serbia, Italy, submitting news for various publications.

Among Károly Sándor's notable works is the science fiction novel "The 500th Floor," published in Hungarian in 1969. This visionary piece, exploring the construction of a skyscraper as a symbol of global peace and cooperation, remains

firmly in the realm of science fiction. His creativity extended to other works like "Tüzes trón" (The Throne of Fire), showcasing the depth and diversity of his literary contributions.

The legacy of Arad's Jewish community, as chronicled in the history published by the Minimum Publishing House in 1996, stands as a testament to the impact of individuals like Carol Balla, Joan Aszodi, Ladislau Földes, and Géza Pilisi. These former Arad Jews, including Károly Sándor and his brother contributed significantly to the city's literature and culture, leaving an enduring mark in those times.

The composer Ferdinand (Nándor) Szegő, was born in 1894 in Szerencsen, Hungary. His parents were József and Deutsch Rózsa. He embraced an artistic path under a stage name derived from his birth name Ferdinand. This diminutive moniker, far from being a fleeting alias, became a lasting identity that accompanied him throughout his entire life.

Szegő Nándor's application form which was a part of the Military Certificate. Among other things it states his parents names, his birth year and place and that his address in 1918 was in Budapest. From M. Szegő personal archive.

Imbued with a passion for music, Ferdinand Szegő alias Nándor Szegő or Szegő Nándor (in the Hungarian name form) commenced his journey as a composer in 1910 after receiving formal musical training. He married Olga Stern and had two sons. His younger son, László, became a pianist and a composer, first in Budapest, Hungary, then in the United States of America, namely in Washington DC and Los Angeles.

Born January 14, 1927, in Arad, Romania, Szegő László stepped on his father's footprints early on. By the time he arrived in Budapest he was already well capable and established in his artistic performance. There he collaborated with famous artists like Rácz Vali (Csak egy ici-pici) and Karády Katalin (Egy szemvillanás), both a successful Hungarian singers and film actresses. They are both remembered and honoured by Yad Vashem - The World Holocaust Remembrance Center in Jerusalem, as Righteous Among the Nations.²⁰

From the *Új Szó* newspaper, November 12th 1950, we find a note about László's performance that ought to be broadcasted on November 15th on Petöfi radio²¹. The performance was given by radio dance band with Elemér Matrai singing and László Szegő playing the piano. All his activity in Hungary was under the Szegő László name which he changed to Leslie Szegő when he arrived in the United States of America. He died in Los Angeles.

In 1927, Nándor Szegő, in collaboration with Elemér Komlós and lyricist Andor Kardos, presented his operetta titled "Szerencsekerek" (Wheel of Fortune)²² in Arad, marking a significant milestone in his creative career. The artistic nature of his work, becoming synonymous with his musical identity.

Residing in Arad, Nándor Szegő continued to contribute to the musical landscape by immersing himself in the composition of dance music. His foray into this genre yielded several compositions that garnered popularity, affirming his enduring influence in the realm of musical creation.²³

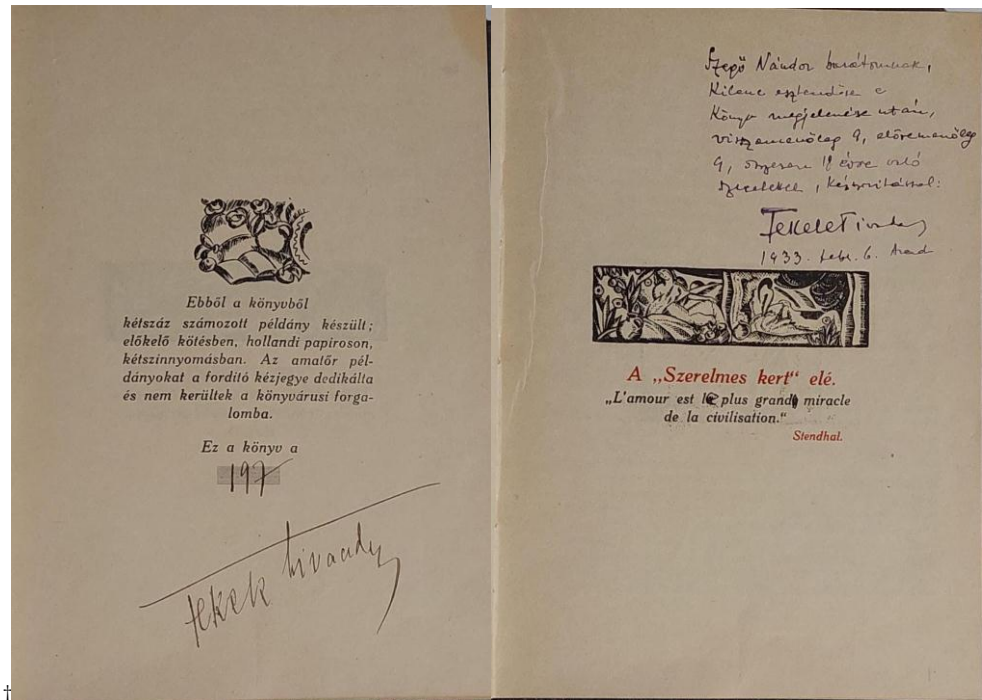
Born on July 6, 1894, in Arad, composer Elemér Komlós commenced his musical journey in 1908. Over the years, his compositions found a place in the sheet music market, earning recognition and prizes in various competitions. Among his notable stage works were "Fireworks", a three-act operetta co-authored with Jenő Gárdonyi in 1920, followed by "Her Majesty's Lieutenant", another operetta in collaboration with Jenő Gárdonyi, in 1923. His creative endeavors extended to "Bodyguard Love", a song play co-authored with Nándor Kállai, staged in Nagyvárád and directed by Miklós Erdélyi in 1925.

In 1927, Komlós, in collaboration with Andor Kardos and Nándor Szegő, presented the operetta "Wheel of Fortune". The following year saw the staging of "Roses of Love", a revue operetta written by Ferenc Galetta, in Timișoara, directed by Mihály Szendrey. These productions featured prominently in the programs of major Hungarian troupes in Transylvania.

Notably, Elemér Komlós' wife, Böske Szabó, also hailed from Arad and embarked on a career as an actress. Making her stage debut in 1915 with Mihály Szendrey's troupe in Arad, she later worked as an operetta actress in Nagyvárád and Bratislava for one year each. The artistic collaboration and shared passion for the stage formed a significant part of their lives, contributing to the rich cultural tapestry landscape of the regions where their works were showcased.²⁴

Fekete Tivadar belonged to the same cultural and ethnic circle. He was born on November 2nd 1894 in Pécssett. According to the *Hungarian Jewish Lexicon*, "After graduating from the Pécs Foréal School, he continued his studies at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Budapest. He started his career as a newspaper editor at *Pécsi Napló*, then worked in Szeged, Nagyvárád and Arad. His works: *Song about two*

death masks (book of poems), *Love garden* (anthology of Romanian poets), *Skin of Princess Genovera* (short story), *Cinderella: Miss Montecarlo* (operetta). He lives in Timisoara²⁵ One of the most remarkable things is that *Love garden*, the anthology of Romanian poets was published only in 200 copies. The number 197 was given to his friend Nándor Szegő, who gave it the number 210 in his personal library.



“Szerelmes kert” (in English it would be: “Love garden”) by Fekete Tivadar signed by the author. The text in Hungarian says: „Two hundred numbered copies of this book were made; in outstanding volumes, on Dutch paper, and in two-colour printing. The amateur specimens were dedicated by the author's handwriting and were not included in the bookshop's circulation. This book is from M. Szegő personal archive.

Tikkun Olam²⁶

We can not talk about the superachievers without mentioning Eliz Fischer or the Neuman Family because they were always careful to share their wealth with others less fortunate. We highlight here Ferenc Neuman`s contribution to saving the Jewish community of Arad. The influential connections he possessed played a crucial role in safeguarding our community from the threat of annihilation. Post-war documents

brought to light the role he undertook in preventing the complete evacuation of Arad's Jewish population. This discreet and astute effort, carried out quietly and with minimal attention, proved instrumental in the community's preservation.²⁷

On the path that leads from the entrance and forks to the left of the old Jewish cemetery of the Neologian rite in Arad, there is an imposing funerary monument both in size and in elegance. It speaks of the person to whose honor it was raised. There are four columns on which rests a roof that protects, as it were, the plinth in the middle, a symbol of the care shown by Eliz Fischer towards the orphan girls. A lady like any other, a relatively simple person who enjoyed the luck of wealth, Eliz Fischer decided to help the girls left without family by building an orphanage.

The "Fischer" palace located between Revoluției Boulevard and Episcopiei Street is one of the most important historical landmarks of Arad. A large part of the city's inhabitants were born precisely in the imposing building that still serves the community of Arad as a maternity hospital. It belonged to this lady of financial power who made substantial donations to charity.

In 1921, the newspaper *Új Kelet* informed its readers about this very wealthy woman, over 90 years old, who in 1905 left real estate worth 300 thousand crowns to the community for the establishment of an orphanage for Jewish girls.²⁸ What's more, when one of the girls got married, she was provided with a small dowry with which she could start her new life.

The exploration of the Jewish community in Arad provides a nuanced understanding of the significant contributions made by individuals across various domains. Through their endeavors in music, journalism, economics, and philanthropy, these community members not only left an indelible mark on Arad but also enriched the broader cultural and intellectual landscape. The stories of Nándor Szegő, Elemér Komlós, Aron Chorin, József Stauber, and others reveal a tapestry of resilience, creativity, and commitment to community-building. The interconnectedness of their lives underscores the vibrancy and unity that characterized Arad's Jewish elite, showcasing a collective commitment to the prosperity and well-being of their community.

References

¹ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/elite>, accessed March 2023

² Johnson, P., *A History of the Jews* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), passim.

³We can find more details in Lakatos, O., *Arad Története* (Arad: Gyulai István nyomása, 1881), vol. II, 79.

⁴ Márki, S., *Aradvármegye és Arad Szabad Királyi Város Monographiája* (Arad: Kiadja a Monographia-Bizottság, 1895), 757-758. Another book that also deals with these aspects is Glück, E. et alii, *Istoria Evreimii Arădene* (Tel Aviv: Editura Minimum, 1996), 24.

⁵Szegő, M., "The Chorin's Community", in *Administrație românească arădeană, studii și comunicări din Banat-Crișana*, Vol. XVII, ed. D. Sinaci, S. Bulboacă (Arad: „Vasile Goldiș” University Press, 2022), 438.

⁶ Glück, E., (1996), 39.

⁷ Glück, E., (1996), 27.

⁸ The Jewish movement of enlightenment

⁹ Újvári, P., *Magyar Zsidó Lexikon* (Budapest: A Magyar Zsidó Lexikon Kiadása, 1929), 327.

¹⁰ Jakab, G., “Az Aradi Chorin - család regénye”, *Aradi Közöny* 300 (1932): 36.

¹¹ Újvári, P., (1929), 171.

¹² Újvári, P., (1929), 62.

¹³ Lakatos, O., (1881), vol. III, 92.

¹⁴ Szegő, M., “Contribuția evreilor arădeni la educația comercială și economia din zona Banat-Crișana – secolele XVIII-XIX”, *Restituiri Bănățene* XI (2023): 163-164.

¹⁵ Glück, E., (1996), 5.

¹⁶ Lakatos, O., (1881), vol. III, 92.

¹⁷ Kormos, A., *Pénzügyi Compass 1912-1913* (Budapest: Apollo Irodalmi és Nyomdai Részvénytársaság, 1915), vol. II, 39.

¹⁸ Szinnyei, J., *Magyar írók élete és munkái* (Budapest: Kiadja Hornyánszky Viktor, 1914), vol. XIV, 1414.

¹⁹ Újvári, P., (1929), 805.

²⁰ <https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/pdf-drupal/hungary.pdf>

²¹ „A rádió tánzenekar játszik, Matrai Elemér énekel, Szegő László zongorázik.“ (The radio dance band plays, Elemér Matrai sings, and László Szegő plays the piano.)

²² XXX, “Az aradi színházi iroda hírei”, *Aradi Közöny* 54 (1927): 4.

²³ Schöpflin, A., *Magyar Színművészeti Lexikon* (Budapest: Kiadja: Az Országos Színészegyesület és Nyugdíjintézete, 1931), vol. IV, 195.

²⁴ Schöpflin, A., (1929), vol. IV, 480.

²⁵ Újvári, P., (1929), 268.

²⁶ In Hebrew Tikkun Olam means to repair the world. It encompasses many ideas like to make good deeds, to help people (regardless of their social status, religion, ethnicity or income)

²⁷ Glück, E., (1996), 4.

²⁸ Glück, E., (1996), 44.