

JEWISH GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH IN THE MOLDOVAN NATIONAL ARCHIVES

by
Antonina A. Berzoy

INTRODUCTION

In the nineteenth century, author and historian Vasile Aleksandri stated that “the archives of a country are public property that deserves to be looked after with the utmost care.”

Archival documents are what truly reflect past events and form the most precious part of a people’s history and memory. The National Archives have the mission of both preserving this treasure of the people of Moldova and placing it at the disposal of researchers.

In Moldova, state institutions began the process of acquiring documents in 1815. The first documents, which lay at the foundation of the archives, are those of the chancellery of the senators, who played the leading role in the councils of Moldova and Wallachia. Also of major importance are the documents of the governor’s chancellery. Many other documents contribute as well to the archival fonds of the Republic of Moldova.

Over the years, as a result of additions, revision and careful selection, the holdings of the Moldovan National Archives have continually been enriched. At present, the archives contain approximately 1 million documents of historical importance. They serve as primary sources for the study of all aspects of Moldova’s multiethnic past as well as of the history of surrounding countries and their people. These documents, the oldest of which date from the fifteenth century, are included in 2,000 fonds and collections.

These fonds cannot be classified by ethnic or religious origins; therefore, we cannot speak about “Jewish fonds.” Historians believe that the appearance of Jews in the territory of the country coincides with the formation of the original Moldavian state in the fourteenth century and that some Jewish names are recorded in the governor’s decrees. Unfortunately, these documents are not kept in the National Archives of Moldova. Preserved documents, arranged in

chronological order, have been kept in Kishinev (contemporary Chişinău) since 1810. They allow us to see Jews in different capacities: as businessmen, workers, merchants, craftsmen and farmers. It is in the latter capacity that they became an integral part of Moldovan history.

ARCHIVAL HOLDINGS

The holdings of the Moldovan National Archives, by the nature of the institutions that created them and their contents, may be divided into the following fonds: administrative, economic, police, educational, sanitation, welfare, religious and personal categories.



Antonina A. Berzoy, director of the Moldovan National Archives, in her office in Kishinev, with pages from the archives’ collection of Yiddish newspapers, 1998

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The most important of these fonds are those containing information from all the bodies that created the documents: the administrative fonds. We focus on these fonds because of the many different types of documents they contain. These documents mirror various aspects of the social, economic and political life of the people who have lived and who currently live in Moldova.

To those who study the relations of the Moldovan state with other countries, the correspondence, circulars, decrees of the State Council, Foreign Office, Ministry of the Interior and other departments are of considerable interest. In addition, many documents from these fonds deal with the wars of Russia against Iran (1826–1828), Turkey (1877–1878) and Japan (1904–1905) and the Crimean War (1853–1856). Of great importance are the documents concerning World War I. These documents describe Moldovans giving shelter to war refugees; measures taken to combat hunger and epidemics of diseases; hospitals founded; and charity performances put on to help the wounded, sick and orphaned.

Other records contain summary reports, political information, statistics and notes reflecting the mood of the population during those periods.

Agriculture is one of the major themes that may be studied through the documents contained in the Moldovan National Archives. Materials cover the development of agrarian relations, agricultural situations during certain periods, peasants' grievances and continual fight for land, agricultural contracts, and the verdicts of commissions responsible for settling border disputes. These documents are all evidence of the application of agrarian reforms, especially in 1868 on land plots.

Valuable information can also be found in correspondence dealing with Moldovan peasants' grievances against the landowners and tenants, with descriptions of peasants' escapes from one land to another and even of attempted uprisings.

The archives shed some light on industrial development as well as agriculture. References to industrial units and other commercial operations contribute various dates and other valuable information to the documentary basis of Moldova's economic history.

Numerous documents in the archives deal with cultural life. They record such information as the founding of theaters; the opening of printing companies; and the functioning of schools and scientific, cultural, literary, musical and student organizations.

These fonds are formed by a large number of documents, including statutes, verdicts and organizational schemes (plans), which reflect a multitude of occupations and activities. The documents contain data regarding the development of production and technology, contracts, links between firms at home and abroad, and personal files.

The contents of bank fonds contribute information about procedures for opening accounts, and rules for extending credit, dealing with investments and certain exemptions from debt. The collection of accounts of different firms and private

№	Фамилия, имя и отчество.	Вре розы
1829		
39	Швербуер Манса Мана-Иванов	28 Сен
52	Швербуер Фаса Мана-Иванов	28 Сен
77	Швербуер Ласа Мана-Иванов	28 Сен
60	Швербуер Мана Мана-Иванов	28 Сен
61	Швербуер Мана Мана-Иванов	28 Сен
70	Швербуер Мана Мана-Иванов	28 Сен
1838		
35	Швербуер Мана Мана-Иванов	28 Сен
31	Швербуер Мана Мана-Иванов	28 Сен
23	Швербуер Мана Мана-Иванов	28 Сен
41	Швербуер Мана Мана-Иванов	28 Сен
46	Швербуер Мана Мана-Иванов	28 Сен
55	Швербуер Мана Мана-Иванов	28 Сен
72	Швербуер Мана Мана-Иванов	28 Сен
144	Швербуер Мана Мана-Иванов	28 Сен
131	Швербуер Мана Мана-Иванов	28 Сен
149	Швербуер Мана Мана-Иванов	28 Сен
139	Швербуер Мана Мана-Иванов	28 Сен
144	Швербуер Мана Мана-Иванов	28 Сен
168	Швербуер Мана Мана-Иванов	28 Сен
213	Швербуер Мана Мана-Иванов	28 Сен
205	Швербуер Мана Мана-Иванов	28 Сен
222	Швербуер Мана Мана-Иванов	28 Сен
224	Швербуер Мана Мана-Иванов	28 Сен
46	Швербуер 1839 Мана Мана-Иванов	28 Сен
79	Швербуер Мана Мана-Иванов	28 Сен

Alphabetical list of births in Kishinev, 1829–1857 (not all years)

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workshops (which existed until 1944) attracts one's attention by the variety it has to offer. Reports on profits and the number of the employees are in some cases the only written records of these organizations' activities left to us.

Police fonds contain a considerable number of files written during the period 1821 to 1944. The documents in these fonds contain syntheses, political information and memoranda about the people's mood during various periods. The documents dealing with the political situation in the country—such as the preparation for and the outbreak of the Balkan Wars and World War I and the roles that various organizations played in the sociopolitical and spiritual life of the country—are of particular interest.

The documents in these fonds allow one to become acquainted with the procedures for issuing passports, passport control, issuing soldiers' leaves in towns and the administration of prisons. There are also numerous reports and inventories concerned with population censuses, taxation, currency rates, official orders, patents and observations of foreigners.

Educational fonds concern different schools, gymnasiums (high schools) and lyceums (associations providing public lectures). Documents from this category address the

development of educational establishments and cultural institutions, the circulation of publications and the organization of cultural activities. Documents in the archives show both the dynamics of the students' lives and the profiles of the schools where they were educated.

The fonds of institutions of higher education are also well worth researchers' attention. Personal documents and official correspondence exist that concern numerous highly qualified specialists known not only within the country but also far beyond its borders. These people played an important part in the development of science and national culture in Moldova.

Religious fonds help us to learn about various aspects of a particular church or synagogue's participation in the people's political, economic, social and cultural life. Many documents have to do with the population and history of localities.

Personal fonds come from people who, by their political, social or cultural activities, have distinguished themselves in various spheres. The Moldovan National Archives have nearly 400 personal fonds. They belong to writers, artists, musicians, scientists and other prominent people. Documents from these fonds are remarkable for their large variety of themes. Researchers can find individuals' biographies as well as learn about different aspects of their activities.

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Visitors may come to our archives and perform research work themselves, but they must bring their own translators and be prepared to spend days, not hours. It is also possible to arrange

for our archivists to conduct the research, however, with payment due at the time of the request (payable in Moldovan currency at the archives).

Another alternative is to hire a professional researcher or firm to do the work. However, the researcher must have a notarized letter of authorization to do research on another person's behalf.

The Moldovan National Archives hope to be able to offer their own research service (by mail) to foreigners in the near future. At this time, we do not have a bank account for foreign currency or any way for foreigners to transfer funds to us in payment for research services; however, we hope that this situation will improve in the near future.

Antonina A. Berzoy was born in 1951 in the village of Kochuleya in Moldova. In 1974, she graduated from the State University in Kishinev with a degree in philology. In 1976, Ms. Berzoy became an archivist in the Research Department of the Moldovan National Archives. In 1988, she was appointed chief of the Research Department. In 1992, she was appointed vice-director, and since July 1, 1995, she has served as director of the archives. Ms. Berzoy is the author of numerous articles about the Moldovan National Archives.



■ Jewish cemetery in Kishinev; tombstone of Nota Aizik (died 1932), son of Moishe, 1959

The following libraries and archives in Moldova have many important documents and manuscripts that would be of interest to researchers of Jewish family history. There are many other smaller repositories with equally interesting material. The addresses in the right-hand column are the same institutions as listed in the left-hand column, but written in the Moldovan language. The country/city code for Moldova/Kishinev is 373/2.

LIBRARIES IN MOLDOVA

PLACE/Address	Telephone	PLACE/Address
NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MOLDOVA 78, 31 August Street 2012 Kishinev Republic of Moldova	22-51-11	Biblioteca Națională a Moldovei Str. 31 August, Nr. 78 Chișinău 2012 Republica Moldova
CENTRAL SCIENTIFIC LIBRARY OF THE MOLDOVAN SCIENTIFIC ACADEMY 1 Stefan Cel Mare Avenue 2001 Kishinev Republic of Moldova	26-42-79	Biblioteca Centrală Științifică a Academiei Științe a Moldovei Bul. Ștefan cel Mare, Nr. 1 Chișinău 2001 Republica Moldova
SCIENTIFIC LIBRARY OF MOLDOVA STATE UNIVERSITY 60 A. Matievich Street 2009 Kishinev Republic of Moldova	27-07-89 25-12-10	Biblioteca Națională Universitarii de stat a Moldovei Str. A. Matievici, Nr. 60 Chișinău 2009 Republica Moldova
I. MANGER JEWISH LIBRARY 4 Renashteriy Avenue 2005 Kishinev Republic of Moldova	22-15-02	Biblioteca Evreiască "I. Maier" Bul. Renasterii, Nr. 4 Chișinău 2005 Republica Moldova

ARCHIVES IN MOLDOVA

PLACE/Address	Telephone	PLACE/Address
Archives of Ancient Acts 82, 31 August Street Kishinev 277012 Republic of Moldova	23-71-53	Arhiva Actelor Stării Civile Str. 31 August, Nr. 82 Chișinău 277012 Republica Moldova
Moldovan National Archives 67b Gheorghe Asachi Street Kishinev 277028 Republic of Moldova	73-58-27	Arhiva Națională a Republicii Moldovei Str. Gheorghe Asachi, Nr. 67b Chișinău 277028 Republica Moldova

Source: The above lists were provided by Antonina A. Berzoy, director, Moldovan National Archives.

Январь 1992 г. № 1 (45)

Газета евреев Молдовы и Одессы

НАШ ГОЛОС

НАКОНЕЦ-ТО!

111 голосами «за» при 25 «против» и 13 воздержавшихся Генеральная Ассамблея ООН отменила позорную резолюцию № 3379, признававшую сионизм одной из форм расизма.

Рухнула идеологическая ограда, на протяжении 16 долгих лет подпиравшая коммунистические и неонацистские нападки на евреев и Государство Израиль.

Кще раз честь и хвала жителям Хайфы, которые в 1975 году, когда СССР вместе с арабскими странами добился принятия резолюции № 3379, перенесли улицу ООН в улицу Сионизма!

О претворении в жизнь Указа Президента Республики Молдова от 12 августа 1991 года «О мерах по обеспечению развития еврейской национальной культуры и удовлетворению социальных нужд еврейского населения Республики Молдова»



ПРАВИТЕЛЬСТВО РЕСПУБЛИКИ МОЛДОВА

ПОСТАНОВЛЕНИЕ

от 9 декабря 1991 г. № 682

г. Кишинев

(См. стр. 2—3)

“Our Voice,” a local Jewish newspaper published in Kishinev, announcing a regulation (#682, dated December 9, 1991) whereby the government of the Republic of Moldova authorized the development of Jewish national culture and public assistance for local Jews, 1992

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From left, Aleksander Roman (then director of the Moldovan National Archives), Mitru Gitsiu (then chief of the Department of State Archival Services in Moldova) and Miriam Weiner sign a contract of agreement to publish the archival holdings in Moldova, 1993.

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