

## Article

# The Tourism Potential of the Jewish Cultural Heritage in Bucharest

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**Abstract:** The field of tourism includes its own heritage, through which it is possible to valorize those components of the cultural environment and of the cultural heritage that truly have a touristic valence. The urban interventions in Bucharest during the communist period affected many central historical areas. However, a part of the Jewish architectural heritage continues to last, with the attention on it increasing in recent years with the awareness of its value. The aim of this study is to assess the tourist potential of the Jewish cultural heritage by using an index of tourist attractiveness and a set of values established as evaluation criteria; identifying the heritage values as well as the ways of its development and promotion within the cultural tourism in Bucharest, in the context of preservation, conservation and restoration; identifying new ideas, products or services, respectively improving existing ones.

**Keywords:** Jewish cultural heritage; tourist potential; cultural tourism; tourism product; niche tourism; heritage values; Bucharest



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## 1. Introduction

Heritage tourism is linked to cultural diversity—past or present, and ethnic minorities have become a significant part of the tourism industry. Heritage can be considered a modern use of the past according to the current cultural, social and economic realities [1], and cultural heritage is viewed as a leading determinant of tourist choices of travel destinations [2–5]. Thus, one of the branches of the modern tourism industry with the most dynamic development is cultural tourism, promoted through heritage sites, which is the main incentive for the development of specific tourism products [6].

In a study carried out in Syracuse, Italy, Corsale and Krakover pointed out that a cosmopolitan and multicultural historical city (Syracuse) specializes in cultural tourism and tends to develop niche products, including Jewish heritage tourism (J.H.T), in order to strengthen and diversify its status as an international cultural destination [7].

Along with cultural tourism, in recent years, ethnic tourism has benefited from continuous development. Numerous studies reveal the positive consequences of ethnic tourism [8–15], with tourists being often attracted by cultural diversity, which also leads to the growth of various tourism products and destinations [16–20].

Multicultural and ethnic tourism is found in those urban agglomerations that are a true mosaic of minority groups. The presence of minority populations has led to the emergence of the phenomena of borrowing cultural elements, or gradual assimilation. However, there are minority groups that have carefully preserved their traditions and passed them on from generation to generation, preserving their cultural identity at the institutional and social level. The best known in Europe are the groups of Jews and Turks. According to Yang and Wall, with the widespread integration of ethnic tourism worldwide, the “consumption” of this product has become “fashionable” [21].

Ethnic tourism is used by many countries to facilitate economic and cultural development but also to help conserve their heritage [21]. Ethnic tourists choose to experience primarily the practices and customs of another culture, which may involve shows, presentations and events or activities that portray or present the lifestyle of local communities.

In a broader perspective, this type of tourism includes the following several components: culture, heritage, anthropological background, urban aspects and other similar types of tourism.

If this type of tourism is properly planned and managed, it can be promoted as a form of sustainable tourism and can be used as a tool for preserving and conserving culture and heritage [22]. The introduction on the tourist market of several niche segments has become a common practice in the tourism industry, with almost every city developing a form of tourism packaged and directed to specific groups, with a specific message. One such example is multicultural and ethnic tourism, which involves addressing certain types of tourists.

Currently, cities, especially in Europe, are engaged in developing their Jewish heritage resources [23–26], as there is a growing worldwide trend towards preserving and developing Jewish heritage tourism [27–30]. Thus, the old Jewish quarters represent a first-hand tourist attraction, such as in Barcelona, where it is the El Call district, located in the middle of the Barri Gòtic, or in Madrid, the Lavapide district; in Prague, the old Jewish area, synagogues from Venice's ghetto or the antique judería of Toledo [31], in Vienna, the Judenplats district and in Berlin, the Jewish quarter Scheunenviertel. Paris has the most exclusive Jewish quarter in the Marais, one of the most expensive areas of the metropolis. In Bucharest, the megalomania of an uneducated president generated the policy of destroying everything that was old.

Bucharest continues to offer many cultural and historical attractions and testimonies of bygone times. During the communist period, urban interventions affected many central historical areas, changing names and even the street plot, but the fall of the communist regime did not bring with it a significant change of attitude regarding the architectural heritage, which was affected on one hand by the lack of funds for conservation and restoration and, on the other hand, by the economic pressure that has led to inappropriate real estate developments in these historic areas.

The Jewish community was in the interwar period the largest minority in Bucharest, representing almost 11% of the population. Another fact is related to the ancientness of the Jews in the area; the first testimonies dating before the 16th century, from the area near the royal court, where they worked as doctors or creditors. Over time, the involvement of the Jewish population in Romanian society has been quite important—whether we are talking about the Sephardim coming from southern Europe or the Ashkenazi from the north, with all the difficulties they had to face politically or socially. Corsale, quoting Streja and Schwarz, points out that “the south-eastern districts of Văcărești and Dudești were the heart of the religious and communal life, but Jews settled in all central districts of the city, especially in areas of intense economic growth, and were active in many fields, including commerce and trade, industry, finance, medicine and arts” [32,33].

Interventions during the communist period severely affected this neighborhood, shaken by anti-Semitic events before and during World War II. One of the most significant losses is the Spanish Grand Temple “Cahal Grande”, which burned during the legionary events of 1941. The temple, built in 1818 in Văcărești, was the most beautiful synagogue not only in the country but in southeastern Europe. Within a few decades, starting with the middle of the 19th century, several dozen synagogues and houses of prayer were being built, with a predilection around the Văcărești road.

Today, only a few survived the legionary rebellion of 1941, the earthquake of 1977, and, last but not least, the urban restructuring of the communist period. In most cases, the synagogues are owned by the Jewish Community of Bucharest, although there are still buildings that house other functions with private ownership. Of the synagogues left today, some have benefited from restorations and some are still in operation, either constantly or, due to the small number of parishioners, only on the occasion of large holidays.

At present, the traces of Jewish housing are no longer visible in many places. Beyond the specific character of houses with shops on the ground floor, generally located in the central or commercial areas, the Jewish architectural heritage in Bucharest refers to the

synagogue architecture, houses or banks owned by large Jewish owners, shops and schools, which are still clearly recognizable tourist assets [33–35]. It is remarkable not only that these buildings still exist, despite the demolitions, but also that most researchers or visitors to these places are non-Jews, people who want to know about and preserve the memory of Jewish Bucharest.

Knowing the Jewish built heritage is the first and easiest step for knowledge and understanding, and, implicitly, a chance to recover the spiritual heritage values, and, according to some authors, Jewish heritage preservation can be used to revive dialogue with a forgotten past that may also contribute to urban tourism development in the future [27].

## 2. Methodology and Research Approach

In order to approach this research topic, it was started from a strictly qualitative aspect. Through the study, the values that can be attributed to cultural heritage assets were determined, and those, in turn, support valorization through tourism.

Culture is an accumulation of information, religious beliefs, means of manifestation of traditional and modern arts, moral practices and customs, tangible and intangible assets preserved and transmitted from one generation to another [36]. Cultural heritage includes a very diverse range of assets that, for the most part, also have tourist values. In addition, by summing up a larger number of values, these assets can become brands for many tourist products, giving them originality, authenticity, attractiveness and better positioning in the tourism market.

The relationship between the concepts of “culture” and “heritage” sometimes makes it difficult to separate the two terms when referring to tourism experiences [37]. Thus, there is a long-standing debate in the literature about the definition and conceptualization of the notion of cultural / heritage tourism, due to the increasing complexity of the concepts of heritage, culture and tourism [38].

The primary research involved unstructured personal interviews with travel agents and local guides, as well as with local stakeholders (associations) relevant to the topic. Field observations were also made to correlate the information obtained with the reality on the ground, as well as for obtaining a better knowledge of the analyzed subject.

The secondary research was implemented by processing data and information from existing official websites, travel agencies and associations, consulting the list of historical monuments, using various databases, to which are added statistical data taken from the National Institute of Statistics (<http://www.insse.ro>, accessed on 9 March 2022) for the formulation of some final findings.

The maps were made in the ArcGIS program, version 10.6.1, by the author, in Bucharest, Romania, using open-source data from OpenStreetMap, vector data in polygon type shapefile layers for buildings and polyline for the street plot. Moreover, the attractions of cultural, historical and tourist interest of the Jewish community were mapped, using as a basemap the map from OpenStreetMap, available for ArcGIS, and the boundaries of the Jewish quarter in the interwar period versus those of today. In the end, two maps were exported, a general one, at the level of Bucharest, of the traces of the Jewish community, and one at the level of the Jewish Quarter.

The development of heritage tourism assumes the existence of tourism potential that, through its attractiveness, aims to ensure the integration of an area, region or country in domestic and international tourist circuits, in order to valorize this heritage and satisfy the motivations of tourism participants. Mayo and Jarvis considered that attractiveness can be defined as the perceived ability of the destination to deliver individual benefits [39]. In the specialized literature, the tourism potential of specific cultural assets is mainly focused on aspects linked to their value as a heritage asset, from a historical, architectural and artistic perspective [40–44].

The identification, inventory and knowledge of all the components of tourism potential, their grouping in space and then their qualitative and quantitative evaluation, are

necessary in order to establish the development opportunities, the forms of development and the priorities of valorization in tourism that they can generate [45].

The main elements of analysis for the delimitation of areas with tourism potential take into account the following aspects: (a) existence of tourism resources, varied in structure, volume, dimensions and tourism value; (b) concentration of tourism resources in the territory, which determines a certain particularity of this territory; (c) the specifics and dimensions of some components of the tourism potential, and d) the qualitative and quantitative characteristics of the tourism resources, which confer a tourism function. These elements lead to outlining some criteria for the delimitation of tourist areas, which regard the heritage as a whole, and which point out its essential and complex elements [45,46].

In practice, several directions for calculating the tourist attraction coefficient have been outlined, which also have some common methodological elements [47–49]. One such method, for example, is that of the simple arithmetic average, which is based on the analysis and taking into account the components of natural or anthropic tourism potential, and the tourism function generated by these resources (cultural tourism, niche tourism, etc.).

Thus, the tourist attractiveness index is calculated, according to some specialists [45,47–49], taking into account the following three categories of elements (factors): the potential offer (natural and cultural-historical resources, practicable tourist activities); the secondary offer (access and accessibility, the material base, the general picture) and the technical resources (potential and means of action, integration into national and international development programs) [47].

The tourist attractiveness index has an important role in determining the tourism value of some regions, areas, tourist resorts or tourist attractions and in establishing (along with other elements) the opportunities and priorities for valorization in tourism [45,47–49].

In the evaluation of the tourist attractiveness index of some cultural heritage tourist attractions, the major components (criteria) of anthropic tourist resources are taken into account; these groups of factors of attractiveness can be divided into component elements that constitute a lower level of tree (subcriteria) [47–49].

In the structure of each element that is part of the Jewish cultural heritage tourist offer, the following factors were included and analyzed: (A) anthropic tourist resources: ethnic quarter, memorial monuments; synagogues and temples; museums; ethnic cemeteries; cultural life, and (B) the technical-material base: food structures for tourism: restaurants, bars, etc., classic or specific (with traditional dishes).

The qualitative and quantitative levels of these components can be assessed using different scales with 3 or 5 scalar intervals. The scale of 3 values is considered acceptable, taking into account the possibility of more objective evaluation of the quality of analyzed components.

The main element that determines the potential and attractiveness of cities to tourists is the architectural value, particularly the one of the historical buildings [2–5]. Architectural value, as well as local urban spaces, is also unique and may enhance the tourist attractiveness of a city [50,51]. The Jewish heritage product embraces a set of specific elements listed in descending order of their appearance as follows: Jewish quarter, synagogues, Jewish museums, memorials and Jewish cemeteries [24,28]. Based on the specialized literature [52], it is appreciated that the component elements of the tourism product participate in a differentiated way in establishing its functionality.

The structure of each element includes a certain number of sub-elements, hierarchically differentiated and appreciated on a scale of values between 0 and 3, depending on quality, originality and competitiveness [48]. The four scalar intervals refer to the following aspects: 0 = for the non-existence of the factor or very low intensity in time and space, unfavorable factor due to physical and moral degradation, pollution, etc.; 1 = low intensity, non-competitive internationally; 2 = satisfactory quality, limited national and international interest; 3 = originality, notoriety, favors the development of international tourism. Within the methodology for evaluating the degree of tourist attractiveness of the elements com-

posing a Jewish cultural heritage tourism product, the global attractiveness index was defined [48], calculated based on the following mathematical formula:

$$q = \sum_{i=1}^m q_i \times P_i \quad (1)$$

where  $q$  = the global index of tourist attractiveness;  $i = 1, 2, 3, \dots$  —number of elements;  $m$  = number of elements taken into account;  $q_i$  = the participation coefficient of each element in establishing the tourism functionality;  $P_i$  = the partial index of attractiveness whose element “ $i$ ” is calculated according to the following formula:

$$P_i = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^n V_{ij}}{n_i} \quad (2)$$

where  $V_{ij}$  = the value assigned to each sub-element “ $j$ ” within the element “ $i$ ”;  $n$  = total number of sub-elements.

As the value of the sub-elements falls in the range 0–3, it results that the field of existence of the two indices of attractiveness will fall within the same limits, with the following meanings: for the range 0–1 the tourist offer is not significant; for the interval 1–2 the tourist offer has limited value; for the interval 2–3 the tourist offer has a high value, with the area being internationally competitive.

Based on the methodological tools presented, it is possible to evaluate the elements and parameters for each type of tourist attraction. For each cultural heritage tourist attraction, the representative elements for the tourism potential and for the development perspectives were analyzed, according to evaluation criteria described in part 4. The qualitative approach to the tourism potential allowed the identification of the main directions of its valorization.

### 3. Identifying the Tourist Places of Interest of the Jewish Cultural Heritage

The subject of this research was approached from a limited perspective, of what was considered more relevant from a tourism point of view, not being included here places and prominent personalities of the Jewish community in Bucharest, which are treated in other broader materials. Following the information and data obtained, as well as field observations and interviews, a number of attractions of interest to tourism were identified and selected, in order to outline a tourism product.

They are divided into the following several groups: The Jewish Quarter of Bucharest is considered a symbolic space (here being the most representative place of the religious institutional system and also a space where Jewish culture is present in a commercial way for both Jews and tourists, as well as for locals); followed by synagogues, museums, memorials, cemeteries, cultural life (theater, cultural and artistic events) and gastronomy. These are briefly presented below.

**Jewish Quarter.** Although the boundaries are debatable (Figure 1), the Jewish Quarter is today only a small part of what used to be the Jewish quarters in Bucharest. The Jewish community itself was very diverse, with people from the Ottoman Empire [53], Spain, Poland or Ukraine.

In 1941, the 102,018 Jews living in Bucharest represented 11% of the city’s population, but at the last census, in 2011, only 1333 still lived in Bucharest (Figure 2). The exodus to Israel or the West began due to persecution during the Antonescu regime and communism [35], and the beginning of work for the Civic Center, in conjunction with the extensive process of emigration of ethnic Jews to Israel, which led to the removal of the last enclaves inhabited by the Jewish population in the center of Bucharest [54] (Figure 3).



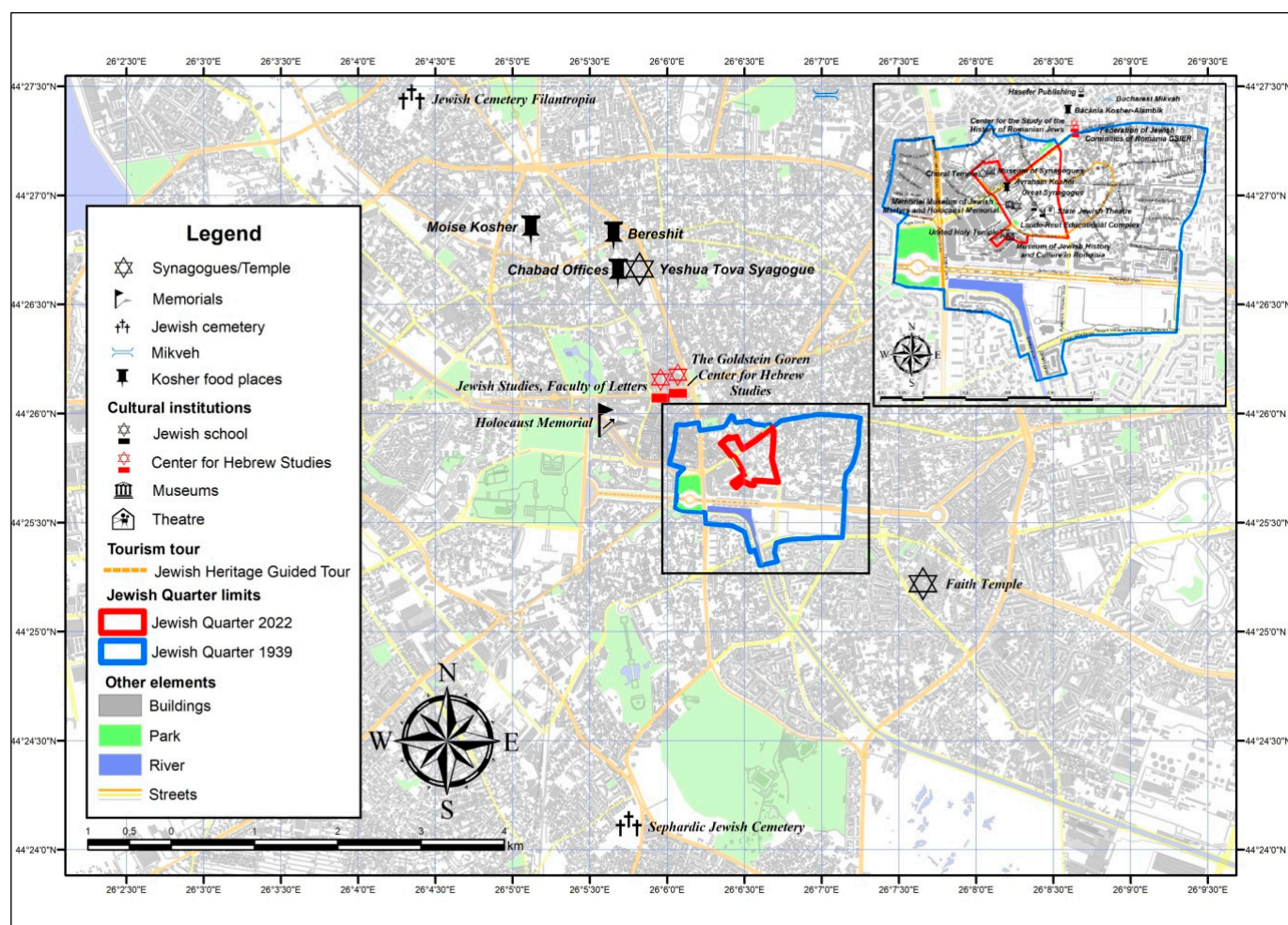


Figure 1. Delimitation of the Jewish Quarter (1939/2022) within the city of Bucharest. Source: author, 2022.

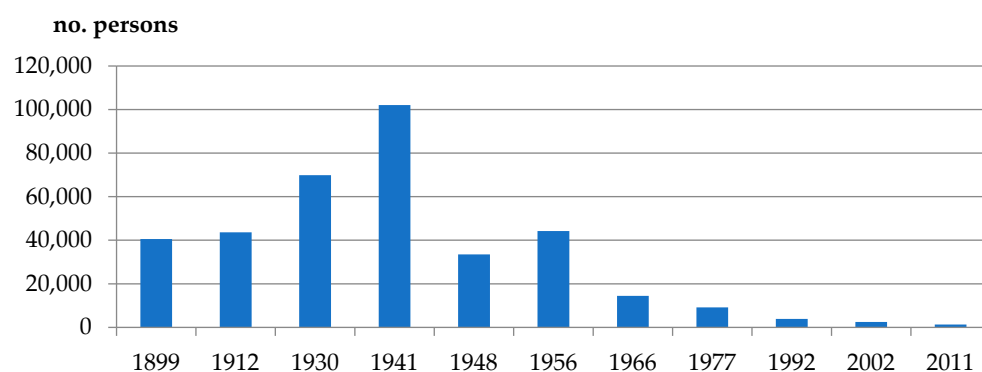
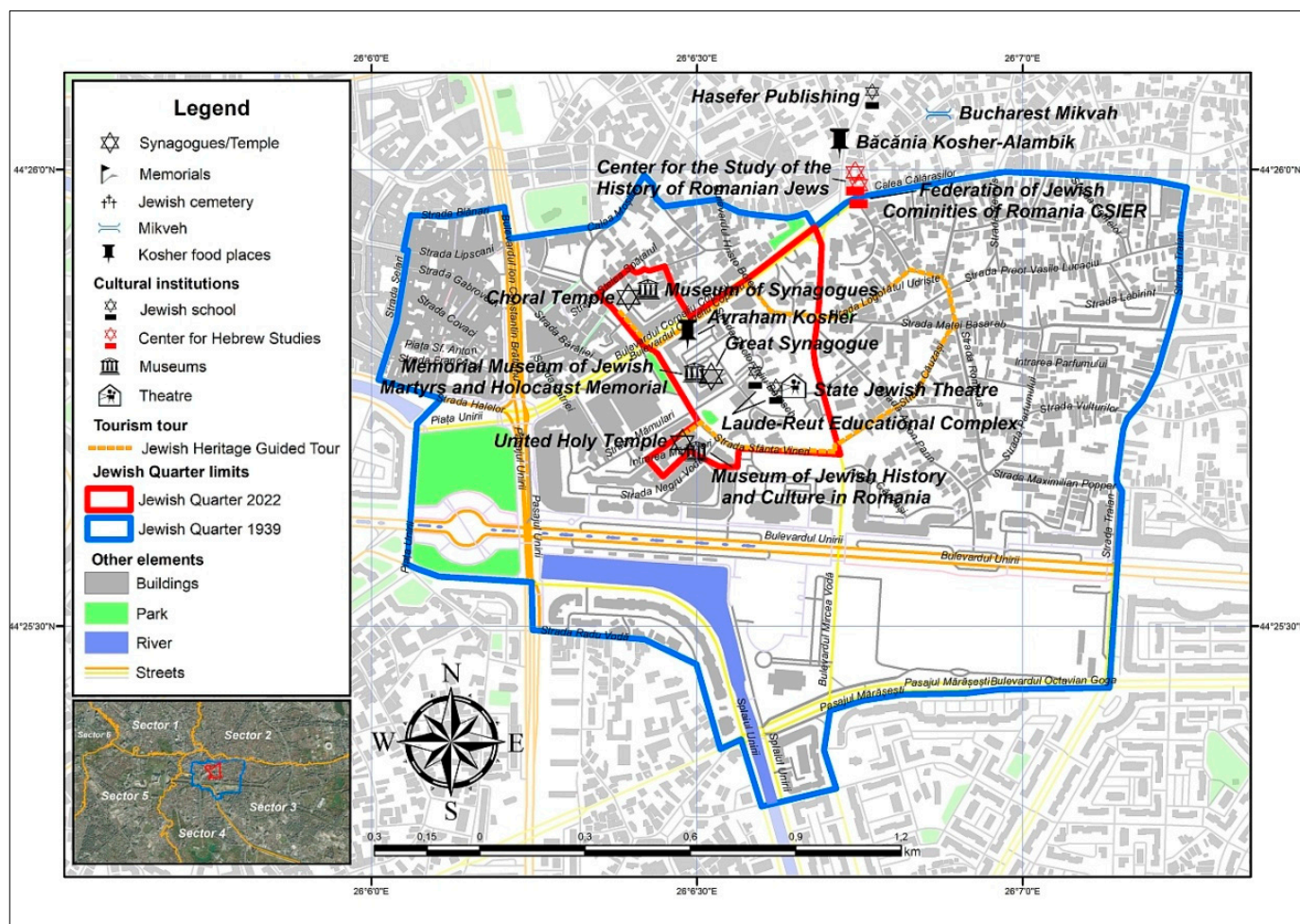


Figure 2. Demographic evolution of Jews in Bucharest (1899–2011). Source: processed data according to the Censuses of the Romanian population, 1899–2011 and according to the data of the partial Census from 1948.

Lately, there has been a revival of the old Jewish quarter. The museums of the Jewish quarter can be visited, housed in the renovated buildings of the Choral Temple and the Great Synagogue and also in the renovated building of the Holy Union Temple (since 1978, the museum of the Jewish community, today under the name of the “Nicolae Cajal” Museum of Jewish History and Culture in Romania). In the same area, old connections are reborn between former Jewish buildings and memorials as follows: the new Alexandru Șafran square and the Memorial of the Jewish Victims of the Pogrom in Bucharest (behind the Great Synagogue), the building of the State Jewish Theater, the building of the new

Jewish high school “Laude-Reut” or the Center for the Study of the History of the Jews in Romania, “Wilhelm Filderman”.



**Figure 3.** Distribution of tourist attractions in the delimited perimeter of the Jewish Quarter (1939/2022). Source: author, 2022.

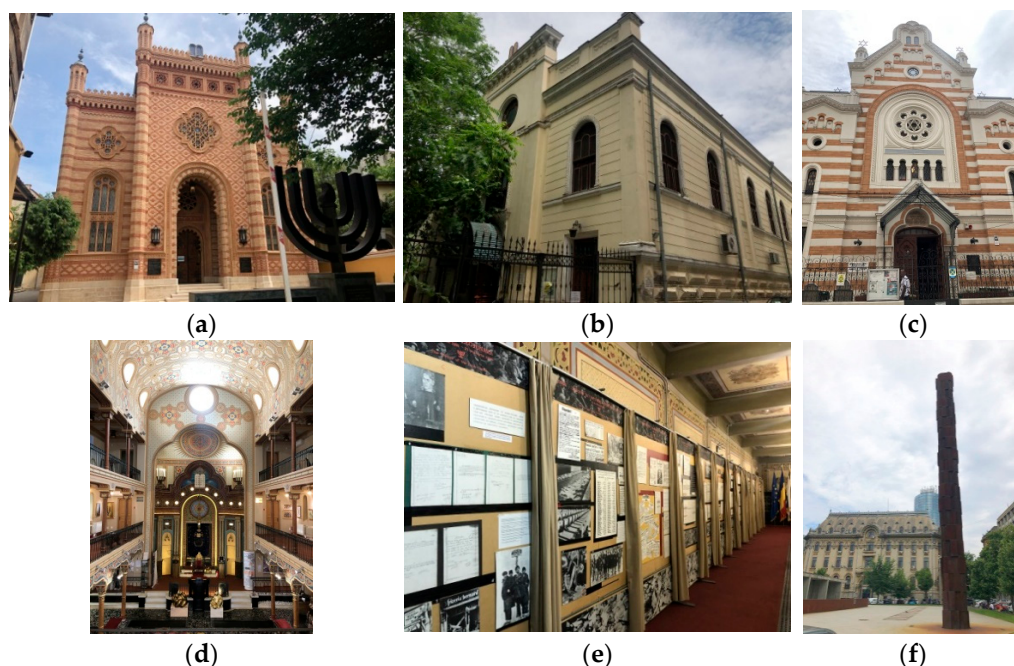
**Synagogues/Temples.** Historic synagogues are heritage sites and, as such, are a resource for tourism [55]. **Choral Temple** in Bucharest is a synagogue of the Jewish Community in Bucharest, being the largest mosaic place of worship in the city. It has an area of 700 m<sup>2</sup>, two floors and a basement. The building was built between 1864 and 1866 and was renovated between 1932 and 1945. It is the most famous tourist attraction, being also a place of worship frequented by the Jewish community. The structure of the project was designed by two Viennese architects; the temple was built in the Moorish-Byzantine style, and it is a faithful copy of the Temple in Vienna. At the beginning of 2008, new works of consolidation, conservation and restoration of the temple were realized. In the courtyard, in front of the temple, there is an impressive monument, built in memory of the Holocaust in Europe. The Choral Temple in Bucharest has been included on the list of historical monuments in the category of historical monuments of national or universal value (Figure 4a).

**Great Synagogue** is a synagogue built in 1846, with an area of 715 m<sup>2</sup>. Since 1991, it has hosted the Memorial of the Jewish Martyrs, and the organization of religious events is prohibited. The synagogue was originally known as the Polish Synagogue, being built at the initiative of Ashkenazi Jewish communities of Polish origin and it is the only place of worship to be built by this community. The architecture of the synagogue is in the neoclassical style. The transformations produced in 1903 following a series of interventions



gave the building the shape we can still admire today. In the period 2004–2007, the building was renovated again only on the outside. The synagogue was reopened in 2007 and it can now be visited (Figure 4b).

**United Holy Temple** was built in 1836 and has an area of 305 m<sup>2</sup>, a ground floor and two levels. It has a façade with Moorish, Romanesque and post-Byzantine elements. Starting in 1978, in this building was built the Museum of History of the Jews of Romania, redesigned and reopened in 2019 under the name of the Museum of History and Culture of the Jews of Romania. The Holy Union Temple can be visited and has been included on the List of historical monuments in the category of historical monuments of national or universal value (Figure 4c,d).



**Figure 4.** (a) Choral Temple and the menorah monument; (b) Great Synagogue; (c) United Holy Temple; (d) inside of the United Holy Temple; (e) Holocaust Museum, inside of the Great Synagogue; (f) the Holocaust Memorial. Source: author, 2022.

**Yeshua Tova Synagogue**, also known as the Mogoşoaiei Bridge Synagogue, was built in 1840 and has an area of 295 m<sup>2</sup>, and is designed in the Moorish style. It is currently the oldest synagogue in Bucharest. Above the entrance, there is an ornament where the Ten Commandments are written. At the same time, the synagogue underwent several restoration works, and in 2007 a special inauguration took place with traditional prayers and dances. Moreover, above one of the main entrances, you can see a stone representation of a seven-armed chandelier and also the Star of David. Today, this synagogue is still functional and can be visited.

**Faith Temple Hevrah Amuna**, also called the Faith Synagogue, was built in 1926 and has an area of 289 m<sup>2</sup>. The style of the building is predominantly modernist and modest and it is currently insufficiently maintained. Services are still organized here, although the Jewish population in the area is very small. Remarkable to this building is its interior and the central ornament, represented by a circular decorative motif with the Star of David. The temple was included on the list of historical monuments in the category of architectural monuments representative of the local cultural heritage.

**Museums. Museum of Jewish history and Culture in Romania** is located inside the United Holy Temple, a building declared a historical monument and was founded in 1978. The museum is offering visitors the opportunity to learn about the history of the Jewish community in Romania, its origins, growth, contribution and influence on the Romanian culture, economy and political life.



**Holocaust Museum** is located inside the Great Synagogue since 1991. Moreover, there is an excellent and very interesting exhibition dedicated to Jewish martyrs, which contains many exhibits, newspaper clippings and photographs that record the state of the Jewish ethnic group during WWII. Guided tours are available for this museum (Figure 4e).

**Museum of Synagogues, Mosaic Worship and Religious Life** is located on the second floor of the Choral Temple; this museum is part of the Jewish Museum Complex in Bucharest.

**Memorials. The Holocaust Memorial in Romania**, which commemorates the more than 250,000 Jews who died as a result of their deportation to Transnistria in 1941, is a monument inaugurated in 2009 and located in an area designed to remember the visitors of the martyred Jews (Figure 4f). The ensemble was built on a land area of 2894 m<sup>2</sup>, on the site of a former green space, the public domain of the Municipality of Bucharest. In addition to the Central Memorial, the complex includes the following five sculptures: the Memorial Column, the Via Dolorosa, the Wheel of the Roma, the Star of David and the Epitaph. **The monument in memory of the victims of the Holocaust**, in the form of a menorah, is located in front of the Choral Temple, and **the area designed to commemorate the martyred Jews** is located outside the Great Synagogue.

**Jewish cemetery. Jewish Cemetery Giurgiului** is the largest of the three Jewish cemeteries that still exist in Bucharest and the second largest in Romania, after the one in Iași. Giurgiului Cemetery is crossed by a railway line, which divides it into two distinct parts. On one side, is the old cemetery, inaugurated in 1929–1930, with artistic funerary monuments. On the other side, there is the new cemetery, added in 1945. On an area of 140,000 m<sup>2</sup>, there are 35,000–40,000 graves, some of which belong to Holocaust victims and Jewish soldiers and heroes from Romania.

**Jewish Cemetery Filantropia** was inaugurated in 1865 and has a rich history, with important personalities of the Jewish community being buried here. On the surface, the cemetery is the second Jewish cemetery in Bucharest, measuring about 94,000 m<sup>2</sup>, of which 80,000 m<sup>2</sup> are occupied by baroque monuments. All the monuments inside the cemetery are impressive, although the vast majority have suffered severe damage due to weather. Several monuments are part of the categories of public monuments, respectively, memorials and funerary monuments, and have been included in the list of historical monuments in the category of historical monuments representative of the local cultural heritage.

**Sephardic Jewish Cemetery**, also known as the Spanish Cemetery, was inaugurated in 1865. It has an area of about 4–5 ha and contains 10,300 graves. In the cemetery are some of the tombstones transferred from the former cemetery on Sevastopol Street (the oldest Jewish cemetery in Bucharest, from the 17th century), which was dismantled during the Holocaust under the Antonescu regime. Here is also an obelisk, a monument in memory of the Sephardic Jewish soldiers who fell for Romania in the First World War.

**Cultural life.** The Jewish community in Bucharest is extremely lively and active. It organizes for members of all ages both educational activities (seminars, conferences, round tables, courses) and recreational ones (parties, trips, participation in international meetings), keeping alive the Jewish tradition.

**State Jewish Theater** was founded in 1941 as the Barașeum Theater, given that Jewish actors were no longer allowed to play in Romanian theaters. The theater generally operates in Yiddish and is the first professional Yiddish theater in the world, having in Romania 146 years of existence and of uninterrupted activity. It is also one of the few such theatrical institutions in Europe. The shows that are organized here are also sought after by Jewish tourists from all over the world.

**Festivals.** Several such international cultural events are organized every year, such as the following: Bucharest Jewish Film Festival—BJFF; Bucharest Shalom Jerusalem! Festival; Yiddish Language and Culture Festival; TES FEST Yiddish International Theater Festival.

**Artistic groups/ensembles/bands** active in the Jewish cultural field are the following: Hora Bucharest—Israeli and traditional Jewish dance group, Bucharest Klezmer Band—traditional Jewish music, Hazamir Choir of the Bucharest Jewish Community and

the Bucharest Jewish Community Center and the Choir of Children of the Jewish Community Center Bucharest.

**Kosher food places.** Jewish cuisine refers primarily to the culinary traditions that Jews around the world have. Among the places where kosher food is served are the following: Avraham Kosher Restaurant-Cafe, Bereshit Restaurant-Grocery, Moise Kosher House Restaurant-Grocery, Shabbat Dinner RSVP, Kosher Grocery and others.

It is also worth noting the presence of **Mikveh** (a bath used for the purpose of ritual immersion in Judaism to achieve ritual purity) in Bucharest. There are the following two such functional baths: Bucharest Mikvah, within the Jewish Community Center and Mikvah of Bucharest located in District 2 of Bucharest.

#### 4. Results of Evaluation of Tourist Offer of the Jewish Cultural Heritage

After identifying and selecting the tourist places of interest for cultural tourism, a series of characteristics were outlined that directly express the tourism values of the cultural assets.

A previous analysis of the cultural heritage assets in Romania, with the aim of realizing an inventory, identification and classification, carried out by the author after a consistent experience in cultural tourism research in Romania, has led to the realization of a complex set of 22 values, applied to the natural and cultural heritage, through which a better appraisal of the heritage assets is made [56], from which a set of the following 13 values, suitable for the types of tourist attractions considered, were selected for current research and used as evaluation criteria: (a) Historical and documentary value; (b) Identity and inheritance value; (c) Architectural or artistic value; (d) Esthetical value; (e) Tourist and recreational value; (f) Monument value; (g) Religious and spiritual value; (h) Museum value; (i) Educational and formation value; (j) Emotional value; (k) Symbolical value; (l) Commemorative value; (m) Memorial and author value (Figure 5).

The adapted methodology, proposed by the author, regarding the tourism potential of the Jewish cultural heritage aims to represent a useful element in the outline of new tourism development strategies in the medium and long term. However, overall, this methodology only provides a low, medium and even high-level assessment. Analyzing heritage tourism comparatively with the other types of natural, respectively, cultural heritage, tourism one can also establish its own set of values in the analysis and evaluation of the existing tourism assets, especially since in this case too, one can remember a historical value, identity value, associative and use value, etc.

The existence of a system of heritage values more easily determines the importance of a heritage asset, shows its true value as a whole but also through the elements that compose it and determines its protection status; the more values it holds, the more vulnerable it becomes to the passage of time. Thus, the proposed system of heritage values has the role of influencing urban development policies, giving tourism importance to this heritage. The more a cultural or natural asset has more heritage values, the more it will need better integration in the context of modernizing a city. A large number of such values will determine that a cultural asset is more difficult to demolish and declassify for economic interests, to make a maximum profit for certain terrain. Then, its economic exploitation will be more closely supervised to reduce any constructive or ornamental degradation.

Although the field of tourism has not clearly and comprehensively established its own heritage, determined by certain values—there is only a sum of methodologies related to the approval of land use and urban planning; establishing heritage values is important in suggesting a method of documentation and analysis of values to discern what is or is not heritage, and determines the possibilities of economic valorization. Not all heritage assets should also have the status of monuments, but they can support any local economy [46].

Historical and documentary value	⇒	Cultural asset conditioned by the old age, given by the period when it becomes known; it can start from the primitive period up to the contemporary period;
Identity and inheritance value	⇒	Cultural asset that defines an urban or rural community, an architecture style, artistic or traditional style, a natural or cultural landscape, all being elements forwarded for the benefit of future generations, etc.;
Architectural or artistic value	⇒	A cultural asset that belongs to a certain style of architecture and art;
Esthetical value	⇒	Cultural assets that, through their beauty, create admiration, positive feed-back, appreciation and can turn people into constant visitors of such places and assets;
Tourist and recreational value	⇒	Cultural assets can become a development source for niche tourism types, more and more demanded by many tourist categories. The discovery, visitation and recreation side of these assets is more and more demanded;
Monument value	⇒	Cultural assets can present characteristics with different degrees of importance but also with several gathered values that can bring about the status of monuments, with different ranking categories, with an official recognition;
Religious and spiritual value	⇒	Cultural asset that is an institute that practices religious cults or that refers to a set of ideas and feelings that characterize a people, ethnic group from the point of view of the spiritual life, of the specificity of its culture;
Museum value	⇒	Cultural assets, more vulnerable, can be kept as exhibits, in museums. Museums are the most trustful institutions in the presentation of the human and natural history, of the collective memory;
Educational and formation value	⇒	Both types of assets can contribute to the gathering of new theoretical and practical data, on the education and professional level. From knowing each asset, something can be learnt or something can be corrected at spiritual or educative level. Any monument or museum, collection or memorial house can have such a value through well organized actions;
Emotional value	⇒	Cultural assets that can determine a diversity of affective feelings of medium intensity and short duration, expressing the experience of contemplation and positive feelings of joy, satisfaction in front of these places;
Symbolical value	⇒	Cultural asset that represent indirectly (conventionally or in the virtue of an analogical correspondence) an object, a being, a notion, an idea, a quality;
Commemorative value	⇒	Cultural asset that offers a celebration of the memory of a personality, of an event, historical place; the nature monuments with an old age can have commemorative value;
Memorial and author value	⇒	Cultural asset having most often the status of a monument, built in the memory of an event or a personality. Also, it can include cultural assets created by artistic or cultural personalities.

**Figure 5.** The set of values used as evaluation criteria for cultural heritage components. Source: Bogan et al., 2021 [56].



In addition to the heritage components that are the subject of this study, the presence of elements that are part of a competitive tourism product is also considered, such as the following: Jewish cultural life, which includes theaters, international ethnic festivals, as well as ensembles and artistic formations, which have an impact on the tourist offer. A second element that has been taken into account is the presence of restaurants and grocery stores that serve or sell specific foods, kosher, to tourists of Jewish origin (among others), whose number has been growing lately.

The results of the evaluation of the heritage elements (as well as of the other components of the tourist offer of Jewish cultural heritage tourism products) according to the applicable value from the set of values for each sub-element are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Evaluation of the components of the tourist offer of the Jewish heritage tourism product.

Components of the Tourist Offer	Assigned Value	Partial Attractiveness Index (Pi)
I. Jewish Quarter		
Historical and documentary value	2	1.80
Identity and inheritance value	2	
Architectural or artistic value	2	
Esthetical value	1	
Tourist and recreational value	2	
II. Synagogues/ Temples		
Historical and documentary value	3	2.85
Identity and inheritance value	3	
Architectural or artistic value	3	
Esthetical value	3	
Religious and spiritual value	2	
Monument value	3	
Tourist and recreational value	3	
III. Museums		
Museum value	2	2.00
Educational and formation value	2	
Emotional value	2	
Tourist and recreational value	2	
IV. Memorials		
Symbolical value	2	1.66
Commemorative value	2	
Emotional value	2	
Educational and formation value	2	
Monument value	1	
Tourist and recreational value	1	
V. Jewish cemetery		
Commemorative value	2	2.00
Memorial and author value	2	
Emotional value	2	
Monument value	2	

Table 1. Cont.

Components of the Tourist Offer	Assigned Value	Partial Attractiveness Index (Pi)
VI. Cultural life		
Theater	3	1.75
Festivals	2	
Art ensembles and bands	1	
Other cultural events	1	
VII. Kosher food places		
Restaurants	2	2.00
Grocery	2	
GLOBAL ATTRACTIVENESS INDEX (qi)		2.00

The values calculated and assigned for the sub-elements of the cultural heritage components of the tourism product, using the evaluation criteria from the set of 13 values described above, were used to obtain the attractiveness indices according to the calculation method described in the methodology.

These assigned values are based on the author's subjective judgment. These are given subjectively and arbitrarily [24] and rated on a scale of values between 0 and 3, depending on their quality, originality and competitiveness.

The analysis highlights the fact that the component elements of the tourism product participate differently in establishing its degree of attractiveness (Figure 6). Thus, for the **synagogues/temples** component, the highest maximum scores, respectively the calculated value 3, were assigned for its sub-elements (every single synagogue), resulting in a value of a partial attractiveness index of 2.85, being thus the most representative component of the tourist offer. This fact can be explained by the very good condition of conservation and restoration of these buildings, their antiquity and architecture and the fact that they also host museums and memorials, which gives them real tourist value and turns them into potential base points for creating an original tourism product. Corpas and Castillo emphasize that tourism at synagogues can be seen to be a very specific type of cultural tourism for Jewish heritage [57]. Some of them are classified as historical monuments in the category of monuments of exceptional national value, a representative for the Romanian civilization at a global level.

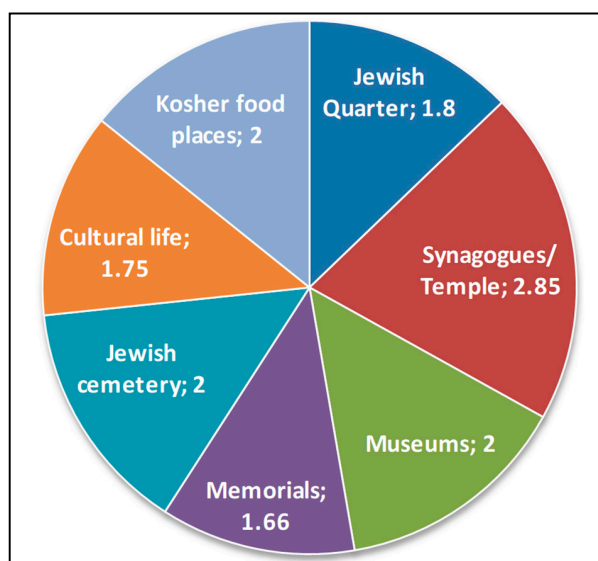


Figure 6. The participation of each component element in the Jewish cultural heritage tourism product.

Not surprisingly, the **museums** component is also representative for the tourist offer, with a partial attractiveness index of 2.00. These tourist attractions are among the most sought after by tourists in increasing numbers, as well as by lovers of the history of Jewish communities and their origins in Romania. They also offer, in addition to museum exhibitions, temporary events with various themes.

**Jewish cemeteries**, with a rich history, tombs of important figures of the Jewish community and monuments classified as historical monuments in the category of monuments of national value, are also a representative component of the cultural tourism product, with a partial attractiveness index of 2.00, which puts them on an equality with museums.

**The Jewish Quarter** scored slightly lower, based on the evaluation criteria taken into account, compared to the other components, with a value of partial attractiveness index of 1.80, although many of the tourist attractions are concentrated here (synagogues, museums, memorials, theaters, buildings, etc.). The explanation consists in the fact that the perimeter of the current neighborhood is very small, with buildings in different stages of degradation, thus offering a lower level of attractiveness, compared to other areas of Bucharest. Some buildings within this perimeter have been classified as historical monuments in the category of monuments of national value. However, private tours include a larger perimeter than the one currently delimited, towards the limits of 1939.

The commemorative **memorials**, with a special symbolic and emotional value, in addition to their educational character, have a partial attractiveness index value of 1.66, relatively high, indicating a real tourism potential, which proves that they can be valorized in guided tours. Although the calculated value of the sub-elements was higher than 1 for the monument value, for the tourist and recreational value evaluation criteria was chosen the unit value was 1. In general, most of these memorials, intended to commemorate martyred Jews, are slightly included in tourist routes to be visited, are often ignored by guides, are not being signaled enough to be visible, and, at the moment, are very little valorized through tourism.

**Cultural life**, through its cultural events, can become an important part of the strategy of attracting tourists to other cultural heritage components, as well as knowledge of Jewish culture, obtaining a value of a partial attractiveness index of 1.75 through its sub-elements. Jewish cultural events manifested through the internationally renowned theater, international festivals, but also other cultural events, offer numerous benefits for the Jewish cultural heritage tourism product and the existing community, including increased visits and expenses, repeated visits from year to year, and verbal recommendations to acquaintances through the acquired experiences, thus being able to contribute to the impulse and self-sustained growth, on the whole, of the cultural tourism of Jewish heritage.

**Kosher food places**, through their presence, complete the visitors' experience by offering specific Jewish dishes of very good quality, thus completing the tourist offer. They obtained a value for the partial attractiveness index of 2.00.

**Global attractiveness index value** is situated at the median limit between the two intervals established for the evaluation of the tourist potential, respectively, interval 1–2 (a tourist offer has limited value) and interval 2–3 (a tourist offer has high value and is internationally competitive), having a value of 2.00, which can be considered as a high value and can be appreciated as being at the lower limit of international competitiveness.

Under these conditions, the Jewish cultural heritage tourism has all the chances to exceed the current level of development and to become a type of tourism increasingly sought after and appreciated by various categories of tourists. It may take in the future more complex forms of spatial organization as follows: identity tourism areas, itineraries and tourist routes and thematic networks. Prospective thinking needs to imagine tomorrow's customers, their profiles, their behaviors and expectations.

Poor valorization of this potential can be determined by the following number of factors:

- Indifference and lack of financial support in terms of cultural heritage, which, although it lost a lot during the communist period, still faces losses, almost daily;
- Non-involvement of the local administration and lack of strategies for niche tourism;



- A deterioration, in the field of cultural services, of spiritual and religious values, of opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge and educational training, as well as of leisure and aesthetic values;
- Insufficient promotion.

## 5. Discussion

Some acknowledgments must be made regarding the valorization through tourism of historical and cultural heritage and also a critical reflection on the appropriateness of such an approach to Jewish heritage sites in Bucharest.

First of all, it is important to point out that tangible and intangible cultural heritage are fragile in its protection and dissemination, and it needs tourism promotion, in order to gain national or even international fame, to show and enhance its value and to make it visible to society.

The deeply problematic notion of “valorization through tourism” (i.e., commodification and monetization) raises several issues. Thus, on the one hand, this type of valorization is suspected of wanting to exploit the cultural heritage solely for commercial interests, which some specialists, such as historians, art historians or architects, naturally oppose with all their might. On the other hand, there are different ways in which “valorization” is understood and used. If the term is used without a clear definition, that will cause a profound mistrust of the specialist sciences. Thus, “a conferring of value upon something” and “the act of making something valuable or useful” meanings of this term were used in this article.

The valorization of cultural heritage can be a very confusing concept because of the value of cultural heritage. It is necessary to distinguish between the intrinsic value of cultural heritage, which is its common memory, common history for a group of people and for society and its instrumental value, which means what cultural heritage is useful for, the economic value that cultural heritage assets produce, which can take the shape of tourism.

The still largely unexpressed tourism potential of Jewish cultural heritage within the development of tourism in Bucharest, along with ongoing and planned practices of revitalization and commodification of Jewish heritage, makes this study appropriate at the moment, and an approach to Jewish heritage rediscovery in Bucharest, including the revitalization and restoration of formerly neglected and decaying neighborhoods and Jewish memorial monuments, is opportune.

Both positive and negative aspects can be identified [23,32,58]. When a majority group, for various reasons, has the power and chance to decide which aspects of heritage should be emphasized and promoted, including ethnic minority heritage, the problems of authenticity, commodification and participation occur [59–62]. This implies that Jewish communities are not always able to keep a central role in decision-making related to the management and promotion of their heritage [32].

The commodification of Jewish sites has been critically analyzed by some authors [63–65], also unrestrained commercialization of Jewish-related sites in Poland and Germany raised significant negative reactions in the Jewish world [65], but, at the same time, rehabilitation and revitalization of Jewish heritage in many European cities have turned decaying and forgotten neighborhoods into vibrant and cosmopolitan urban spaces [19].

Tourism promotion plays a very important role in terms of increasing the visibility of a tourism product, which leads to better knowledge of it, economic growth and benefits for locals. Cultural heritage does not yield a direct financial gain [29,66]. Obviously, the product must have enough tourism potential to attract tourists. Several authors [67–69] define tourism potential as the evaluation of supply, demand, competition, market trends and the characteristics, or “vocation”, of territory for tourism activity. Its existence, together with a correct valorization and proper promotion, will lead to the recognition of the tourism product at the national level, but especially at the international level [70].

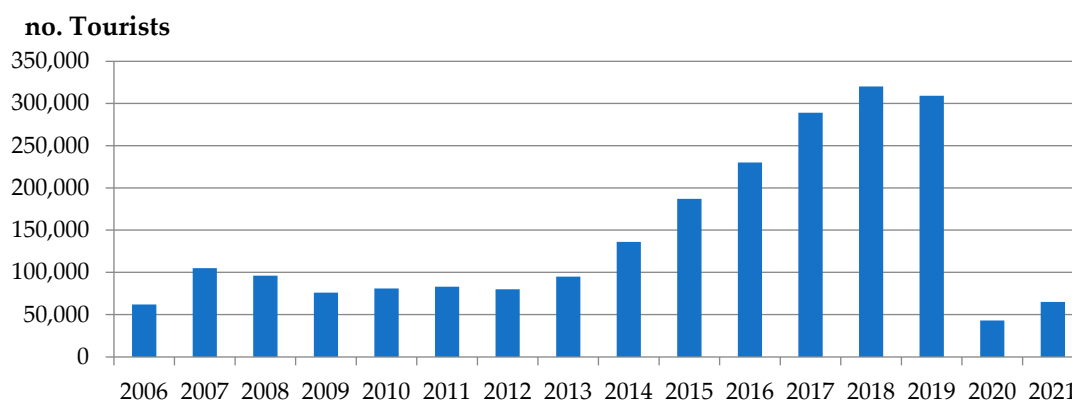
Ethnic minority groups, present in urban centers, have preserved their traditions very well, conserving their cultural identity at the social and institutional level, thus encouraging multicultural and ethnic tourism.

Multicultural and ethnic tourism can be very beneficial, viewed from the following two perspectives: that of tourists, because they come into contact with new cultures, traditions and people; tourists are often motivated by their desire to see and experience things that they do not have in their familiar environment [17], and that of ethnic communities, because they significantly increase their incomes, promote their culture and thus preserve themselves over time. Archer and Fletcher consider that involving local communities in tourism is likely to promote the economy [71]. The valorization of the existing potential can be performed primarily through the active involvement of the authorities (which currently does not exceed by far the stage of intention) in the restoration, conservation of cultural heritage and promotion of the tourism potential of the area.

The introduction of several niche segments to the tourism market has become common practice in the tourism industry. Jewish heritage tourism is a cultural niche product offered to visitors in many European destinations [24,28,32]. This is the reason why we propose that the tourist offer of Jewish cultural heritage tourism products needs to be included in tourist packages with greater diversity, which should also include niche tourism, so that the tourist has the opportunity to know and carry out more tourist activities.

A visit to one of these destinations can be extremely advantageous, both for tourists who are curious and eager to enrich their knowledge, but also for the visited ethnic communities, who can benefit financially from small tourist investments. Tourists, on the other hand, will gain many unique experiences at the cost of one, as opposed to the cultural tourism of a single nation; they will have the opportunity to try novelties in the field of traditional gastronomy, or the way of celebrating various customs or festivals.

Jewish descendants who want to connect with their historical legacy present a growing opportunity for tourism in Europe [72]. Before the pandemic, Israel was one of the most important sources of foreign tourists spending their holidays in Romania (Figure 7). Romania is one of the traditional destinations sought by Israelis at present, city breaks in Bucharest being in the top of the preferences for these tourists.



**Figure 7.** Evolution of arrivals in Romania of tourists from Israel (2006–2021). Source: National Institute of Statistics.

In the current tourism industry, all the factors participating in the support and development of this field (economic units, family associations, individuals, state representatives directly or indirectly involved in tourism) must know the national and international trends on which to base cultural tourism planning. Often, national and international trends coincide, which makes developments positive on multiple levels [22].

Overall, there have been many shortcomings in the materials published for promotion over time, so Romania does not currently have a clear, well-defined tourist destination position, and the funds allocated are insufficient, government initiatives are not transparent

enough or known to the private sector and public administrations, and the impact and efficiency of the implementation of promotion programs, participation in fairs and exhibitions are not carefully monitored and evaluated, according to criteria of economic efficiency [46].

In essence, the promotion includes the following major activities: participation in fairs, profile exhibitions, the printing of general and thematic brochures, creation of websites on the Internet and advertising in the media (radio, TV, international stations).

The online environment and especially social media, are relevant for tourist activity because it is an industry based on the transmission of information and the promotion of offers. In an innovative paper regarding sieving tourism destinations, Krakover and Corsale show that “attractions not listed on social media sites are not only hard to find but also devoid of previous visitors’ recommendations and scaling” [73].

Regarding the promotion of the Jewish cultural heritage in Bucharest on social media, it is quite diverse and common nowadays. Moreover, thanks to social media, not only that physical tours have started to be organized, but also online ones and tourists are becoming even more interested in those activities, being able to find out information just with a click. In addition, according to Krakover and Corsale, promoting appropriate and appealing narratives, including intangible heritage, could enhance the significance of minor tangible attractions and spread the interest and benefits coming from visitors [73]. Conti and Moriconi point out that cultural tourists actively collaborate by offering opinions on tourist destinations [74].

Following the interviews conducted for this research, it was determined that an important role in promotion is played by associations that organize physical tours or monthly online tours, as they are coordinated by experienced guides who are able to provide the most useful information about a synagogue or temple. For people passionate about Jewish history, this type of promotion is the most useful way to gain knowledge about Jewish culture. Therefore, associations need to be increasingly more creative about promotion and, very importantly, not repeat themselves from one tour to another.

At the level of tourism companies, the Jewish cultural heritage is not sufficiently promoted, as emerged from the interviews taken by the author, but these tourism companies have Jewish circuits in their composition or, as in the case of promotion through associations, are organized guided tours by bus or even walking with a guide. At the same time, tourism companies can promote the Jewish cultural heritage, especially through social media, by providing various information through advertisements on specially created sites, for the purpose of promotion, or by brochures offered to tourists at the end of a guided tour.

Given the importance of tourism promotion, there is the issue of its efficiency, namely, the few funds allocated that need to be spent properly, in well-organized campaigns in terms of the target group, means used, materials disseminated, etc. In an effective promotion, in order for the promotion to be useful, it is first necessary to take advantage of the Jewish buildings that are still in operation and for those that have a moderate degree of degradation to be restored by allocating funds.

From the point of view of promotion, it is necessary to invest in the online media, which is the environment most accessed by the general public. In addition to the tourist associations that organize guided tours in an online environment, an intense campaign is needed to present the potential of each building. Moreover, the most important events regarding Jewish cultural activities can be broadcast live on the most important television stations to create a link between the public and the Jewish culture regarding traditions, customs, dances, gastronomy and tourist attractions.

In recent years, the concept of “traveling to see different places” has started to lose its meaning due to the globalization process, thus urban tourism management must find new ways of promoting, of offering tourist services that transform the urban area into a different, unique place [75].

One thing is certain: the fact that Jewish cultural heritage tourism is constantly evolving, especially nowadays, when it turns out that the world has begun to be much more interested



in the lives of Jews compared to previous years. Corsale considers that Jewish heritage tourism is a niche segment that gradually turning into a mass tourism experience [76].

## 6. Conclusions

Jewish Quarters are a real cultural attraction; they are often valorized through tourism and due to their elements of ethnic cultural heritage, gain by promotion a national or even international fame, valorization of this heritage being important for many societies [22,77]. They have always attracted the attention of a wide range of stakeholders, developing specific tourism that often involves, in addition to culture, ethnic tourism. Russo and Romagosa also highlighted the potential of the Jewish quarters as a means for local and regional development [78].

Based on an inventory of cultural heritage, each country has created its own system for classifying cultural heritage based on accumulated cultural assets and values [46,56]. The process of inventorying cultural assets and of evaluating them in terms of tourism must lead to the diversification of tourist attractions [79]. Thus, a series of facilities can be developed to support tourism and diversify tourist activities.

Very often, it is supported the idea that any attraction or cultural or natural asset can become a tourist attraction, determined by the fact that it can arouse a certain curiosity. In reality, according to some authors, tourists are interested in traveling and paying for those tour packages that offer them the opportunity to visit and live an authentic and unique experience [80,81]. This fact explains why large tourist flows are oriented towards visiting special cultural assets with a reputation gained over time.

In recent decades, the attention of cultural managers has also focused on lesser-known cultural places that are representative of a particular urban community. A route containing the values of the Jewish cultural heritage of Bucharest will bring to light a culture animated by a strong faith, a desire to excel and a need for beauty; a culture that has left its mark on society as an engine of evolution and well-being.

In order to ensure the quality of the cultural and tourist services offered, it will be necessary, at all times, to take into account the particularities and exigencies of the present cultural heritage and those of the local community, in order not to harm the components of the cultural environment. Given that public resources are limited, the support for cultural tourism, in all its forms of manifestation, will have to increasingly rely on the private sector.

This study can be complemented by future development of research focusing on the visits of tourists and consumers of Jewish cultural heritage. Their motivations and expectations, as well as choices and impressions related to their experiences and different aspects of Jewish culture, can thus be compared.

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