

A Life Between Worlds: Leon Volovici
(Abstract)

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A presentation of the life of Leon Volovici (1938-2011) using as a starting point his volume, *De la Iași la Ierusalim și înapoi. Pornind de la un dialog cu Sandu Frunză* (2007). Volovici was born, raised, educated and worked for the first part of his life in Iași at the Institute of Literary History and Linguistics where he became one of the leading literary historians of the '70s and 80's in Romania. Though deeply attached to the Romanian language and culture, because of the deterioration of life in Romania, he immigrated to Israel in 1984. He worked for half a decade at the Yad Vashem archive, before moving to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem where, overcoming the difficulties inherent in adjusting to a new country and culture, he was able to successfully continue his work on Romania and Jews during the interwar period.

The study then focusses on the Jews of Iași, beginning with the interwar era, continuing with the life of the local Jewish community, identity issues, the Iași pogrom of June, 1941 and the resulting trauma, the "alluvial" anti-Semitism that manifested itself in different circles after the Holocaust, the immigration to Palestine/Israel of almost all of the surviving members of Jewish community of Iași, and the nostalgia of these immigrants for the land of their birth. Finally, the article discusses the relationship of the historian with the past especially in post-totalitarian societies. Leon Volovici was a man of several worlds and multiple identities which successfully blended. It was a life lived intensely in a delicate balance between two different worlds.