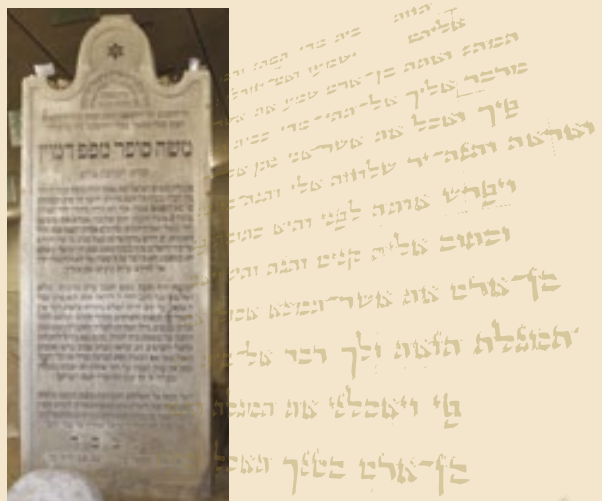


For them, Sofer remains one of the leading authorities of Jewish religious law and a symbol of the fight against reforms that have fundamentally affected traditional Jewish life. Each year hundreds of Jews come from all over the world to pray at his grave, particularly on the anniversary of his death.

At the end of 1990s the Bratislava Jewish community decided to completely refurbish the tomb and its surroundings. The resulting memorial is recognised as a fine example of modern sacral architecture, both meeting the requirements of Halakha (the collective body of Jewish religious law) and being appreciated by the general public. It is a dignified resting place for Chatam Sofer and other respected Jewish leaders, as well as a new monument in the Bratislava cityscape.

Chatam Sofer tombstone



Coin details

Denomination: 10 euro

Material: Ag 900/1000

Cu 100/1000

Weight: 18 g

Diameter: 34 mm

Incuse edge inscription: "RABÍN – UČENEC – SUDCA – UČITEĽ"
("Rabbi – Scholar – Judge – Teacher")

Mintage: limited to a maximum of 20,000 pieces
in BU and proof quality

Designer: Pavel Károly

Engraver: Dalibor Schmidt

Producer: Kremnica Mint

On the obverse side of the coin the design is set in a triangular field and depicts a part of the townscape of Bratislava at the time of Chatam Sofer. To the left there is the denomination "10 EURO" in two lines, and to the right the national emblem and the year „2012“. The country name "SLOVENSKO" is written in the upper part. Beneath the townscape are the stylised initials of the coin's designer, Pavel Károly, and the mintmark of the Kremnica Mint.

The reverse side features a portrait of Chatam Sofer, again in a triangular field, together with a Torah scroll and a seven-branched candelabrum. The name "CHATAM SOFER" is written on the left-hand side and its Hebrew version on the right-hand side. The dates of his birth and death, 1762 and 1839, appear in the lower part of the field.



Chatam Sofer 250th anniversary of the birth

Silver Collector Coin



Chatam Sofer, known also by the name Moshe Sofer (or Moses Schreiber in German), was a leading Orthodox rabbi, teacher, judge and scholar. He was born on 24 September 1762 in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, and his exceptional abilities were apparent even as a child. His father was a Torah scribe (the surname Sofer/Schreiber in fact means „scribe“), and Chatam Sofer himself studied the Torah, Talmud and Hebrew before becoming ordained as a rabbi. After working in Prostějov, Boskovice, and Strážnice (all towns in what is now the Czech Republic) and Mattersdorf (now Mattersburg in Austria), in 1806 he accepted the position of chief rabbi in Pressburg (today the Slovak capital Bratislava), where he worked and lived until his death on 3 October 1839.

His lifetime saw many social changes that affected European Jewry. The traditional structure of the Orthodox Jewish community started to break up under pressures to assimilate and against the advances of the nascent Reform movement. Chatam Sofer was a key figure in Orthodox Judaism. His outlook is summed up by his frequently quoted saying: “That which is new is forbidden by the Torah”. It was in this



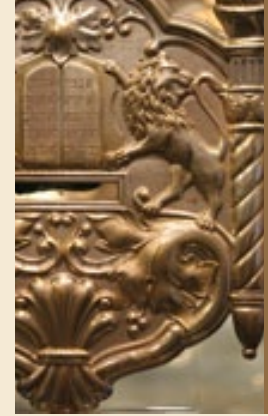
Townscape of Bratislava at the time of Chatam Sofer

spirit that he led a yeshiva in Bratislava which would rank among the most influential centres of Orthodox rabbinical training in Europe. Its outstanding teaching ensured that the rabbis it produced were of a high calibre. The yeshiva remained active until 1939, led by the descendants of Chatam Sofer. After World War II, it reopened in Jerusalem, where it still operates today under the name Pressburg Yeshiva.

Chatam Sofer left a wealth of literary works, including numerous commentaries on the Torah and Talmud (this is the origin of his name Chatam, an acronym of Chidushei Toras Moshe, meaning the „Seal of

the Scribes“). In his autobiographic work he reflected on the siege of Pressburg by Napoleon’s troops, and he also wrote religious poetry. All his works were published posthumously. Chatam Sofer was also an esteemed rabbinical judge, whose decisions were respected as authoritative by the Jewish community.

Chatam Sofer was buried at the oldest preserved Jewish cemetery in Bratislava, which dates from the 17th century. Although the cemetery ceased to be used for burials after 1847, it was carefully maintained. At the beginning of the 1940s the then government decided to dismantle the cemetery in order to allow strengthening of nearby embankments and the construction of a tunnel. Most of the graves were relocated to a mass grave at the New Orthodox Cemetery. Only 23 graves in the „rabbinical section“ were left untouched. The site was walled around and covered with a concrete roof, leaving access to the graves through an iron manhole cover. Nevertheless, the grave of Chatam Sofer was still visited by many orthodox Jews from around the world.



From the collection of the Museum of Jewish Culture Bratislava, and the interior of the Museum

Chatam Sofer Memorial

