

Alfred Grotte

By Sara Soussan, Jewish Museum Frankfurt



Alfred Grotte, photo: Marcel Calef, <https://www.jta.org/2014/08/04/lifestyle/for-two-families-hanukkah-drawings-keep-ties-burning>

Alfred Grotte was an architect, academic, and author of numerous books and articles in specialist journals on synagogue architecture and Jewish culture in Silesia. He was born on January 12th, 1872 in Prague and murdered on June 17th, 1943 in Theresienstadt. He is credited with completing the 1905 restoration of the Maisel Synagogue in the former Jewish quarter of Prague in the then Czechoslovakia which today forms part of the Jewish Museum in Prague. Grotte travelled widely, was a prolific writer and was “*Pfleger der Kunstdenkmäler Schlesiens*” (Keeper of Silesia’s Art Monuments). Amongst his many roles, he was a board member of the Artistic Committee of the Jewish Museum of Breslau, the focus of his attention the protecting of artefacts. Whilst he had no sense of the devastation to come, and how some of his published work would ultimately end up being an important resource for the history of willfully destroyed synagogues or those that were desecrated and repurposed, here was a man who was both recording every details and looking at ways to encourage people to connect to the stories of buildings, objects and people.

Grotte understood the impact of Hitler coming to power and could see the real risk to communal property and created a collection catalogue of 1200 important objects.

Ultimately he was deported from Breslau in 1942 together with his family according to a post by Yad Vashem for their *Gathering the Fragments* campaign, to the Grüssau transit camp in Silesia and from there to Theresienstadt.

Literature (selection):

Umbau der Synagoge in Pinne, Kreis Samter in Posen (Reconstruction of the Synagogue in Pinner, Samter District in Poznan) written in 1913

Das Bürgerhaus in den Posener Landen (The Townhouse in Poznan) in 1932

Deutsche, böhmische und Polnische Synagogentypen vom XI. bis Anfang des XIX Jahrhunderts (Types of German, Czech and Polish Synagogues from the 11th to the beginning of the 19th century), Berlin or Leipzig 1915