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The Jewish Quarter in Nowy Wiśnicz

The former Jewish quarter (16th to 20th century) of Nowy Wiśnicz (henceforth: Wiśnicz, Yid. ווישניצא Vischnitsa) has so far only been mentioned on a few occasions and with little precision, in the books by Stanisław Fischer (1927/28), Mieczysław Książek (1976, 1979, 1988, 1990), and Adam Bartosz (1992). The last decades saw a handful of publications regarding this subject. The first one to touch upon it was Iwona Zawidzka, who described the cemetery and gave a brief account of the town's history. She was followed by Elżbieta Ostrowska, who focused on relations between Christian and Jewish inhabitants of the town from the 17th to the 19th centuries. Adam Bartosz, Stanisław Fischer, Mieczysław Książek and Iwona Zawidzka incorrectly ascribed the lack of any photographic record of both synagogues and the public buildings to having been demolished by Germans during the Nazi occupation. I. Zawidzka[1] mentions an essay by Julia Goczałkowska[2] in which the author describes what she refers to as the Wiśnicz "Jerusalem."

The present article is an extended and improved version of an earlier publication, originally printed in the *Architectural and Town Planning Quarterly*.[3] The author returned to this matter after having obtained new information and having conducted additional research in archives but firstly and fore mostly in the field. This research allowed for an in-depth analysis of source and photographic materials as well as for an attempt at reconstructing the former Jewish quarter.

The source materials which proved invaluable for this article were particularly the various handwritten documents of the Wiśnicz municipality: town council records from 1622 onwards,[4] commune head court records,[5] administrative journals[6] and the minutes of town council meetings.[7] Equally important were the cadastral maps from 1904, 1977 and 2000, absent from the previous publication,[8] which were compared with the map drawn up in 1847 and with the information obtained from the land register for Nowy Wiśnicz.[9] Of no less value were wartime documents preserved in Vad Yashem, rela-

[1] Zawidzka 1987: 8.
[2] Goczałkowska 1862.
[3] Szlezynger 2001.
[4] APKr, deposited records from Wiśnicz, IT 2046 *Liber Inscriptionum.*
[5] APKr, file no. 161–165.
[6] APKr, file no. UMW 1–46.
[7] APKr, file no. IS 30/7: 10, 44, 104 ff.
[8] Szlezynger 2001.
[9] ArchSRB.

tive to the expatriates from Nowy Wiśnicz, and those concerned with the foundation of a labourers' department by the Wiśnicz Jewish Council Board.[10]

The Jewish Historical Institute is in possession of copies of the abovementioned materials as well as emigration documents from the years 1946–1948.[11] The State Archive in Cracow has documents which prove the existence of a Jewish social self-help group in Wiśnicz, in the years 1940–1942. There are also highly interesting mentions of Wiśnicz in the post-war correspondence kept in the archive of the Voivodeship Conservator of Monuments in Kraków. [12]

As an additional source, the author obtained handwritten accounts by former inhabitants of Wiśnicz: Marian Drożdż[13] and Józef Wiener,[14] both currently in their 90's. Their memories, albeit highly valuable, would require verification. Mr. Wiener, who was 16 years old in 1942, sent a letter to the author in 2005, concluded with a dramatic description of *a perished world which vanished into thin air*.

The Jewish quarter seems to have been of little interest to photographers, as only three photos of it survive. The Museum in Bochnia displays two photographs, also used by I. Zawidzka.[15] The author has a slightly damaged piece of photographic film (developed on a glass plate) which is the original of the blurred postcard published by Zawidzka. The photograph was taken by Czesław Wyrwa, a professional photographer from Wiśnicz, around 1910. Another surviving photograph showing wooden houses in Nowa street in the Jewish quarter comes from a private collection and it was rented for an exhibition in the regional museum in Wiśnicz.[16] The third photograph,[17] a panoramic shot taken from the penitentiary during the war, does not show the southern part of the town. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum[18] has a few portrait shots of the inhabitants of the Jewish quarter, taken among wooden architecture in the years 1940–1941. We can also find a few photographs in the archives of in Yad Vashem.[19] The Bochnia Museum has two oil paintings linked with Wiśnicz; both from the 1930's, entitled respectively: *Portrait of Rabbi Rubin* and *Nowy Wiśnicz – A Side Street*.

Daily newspapers[20] reported fires, riots, and even about one case of conversion into Christianity. On March 21, 1869 the Dominican Basilica of the Holy Trinity in Kraków saw *the baptism of Abraham Finger from Wiśnicz, a relative of the rabbi, converted into the Catholic faith* [...] *godparents Countess Marcelina Krasicka and General Kruszewski*.[21]

[10] http://www.yadvashem.org 2010.
[11] ŻIH, file no. 108, 117, 211, 347.
[12] ArchWKZ.
[13] Drożdż 2004; 2010.
[14] Wiener 2005.
[15] Zawidzka 1987: 1, 50.
[16] Drożdż 2010.
[17] NAC, online archive, viewed 11.12.2010.
[18] http://www.USHMM.org, viewed 06.08.2010.
[19] http://collections.yadvashem.org/photosarchive/en-us/78857.html, viewed 20.06.2011.
[20] *Czas*, no. 129, 165, 166, 169, 178, 184, 232; *Przyjaciel Ludu*, no. 21 and *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, no. 25, series 2 (8).
[21] *Czas*, no. 165 [20.03.1869]: 2, and no. 166 [21.03.1869]: 2.

The first to show scientific interest in the Wiśnicz cemetery was Meir Bałaban. A number of tombstones were photographed and appeared in the album published in the 1980's by Monika Krajewska.[22]

A few years later Zawidzka mentioned the builders of the matzevot covered with inscriptions which were still legible by that time.[23] The Provincial Office in Kraków has archived[24] mentions of attempts to enclose and secure the cemetery undertaken from 1960 onwards by the Social and Cultural Society of Jews in Poland (henceforth: SCSJP).

The earliest mentions of the Jewish community in Wiśnicz come from the 16th century. Together with Brzesko, it was part of a larger administrative unit known as the *ziemstwo* of Kraków and Sandomierz.[25] The Jewish people used to inhabit what is now Stary Wiśnicz, which had been founded in the 14th century by the Kmita magnate family, or the *suburbium*, the servants' settlement. A Jew from Wiśnicz by the name of Bieniarz conducted business transactions with the owner of the castle and grounds, Erazm Barzi, and the Monier family rented an inn in Leksandrowa.[26] On November 23, 1605 the king Sigismund III issued a decree[27] expelling Jews from Bochnia for allegedly having desecrated the host, together with the local miners in 1600.[28] In February 1606, Sebastian Lubomirski invited Jews to settle in an already existing colony. Ten years later the private town was granted urban rights, which were extended on January 24, 1622 when Stanisław Lubomirski (the son of Sebastian) *allowed people of various extraction to settle in the town called Wiśnicz*[29]. The privileges granted ensured the well-being of those living off trade: staple right for wine, copper and iron combined with the obligation to use the trade route from Hungary which ran through Wiśnicz, three major fairs per year, weekly fairs on Tuesdays.[30] The prosperous town gradually attracted all the inhabitants of the settlements around it. Wiśnicz was also the hometown of the famed Talmudist Elijah ben Loeb, who continued to live and work there until his departure for Germany in the late 17th century (he died in Fulda in 1720), and whose commentary on the Jerusalem Talmud was reprinted many times after its first publication in Amsterdam in 1710.[31]

From the 16th century Polish magnates encouraged Jews to come to the towns they funded, as a business competition for the bourgeoisie of the royal-funded towns. In 1635 the voivode residing in Żółkiew, Stefan Daniłowicz, allowed to replace the existing wooden synagogue with one made of stone collected from the fields belonging to the *Hetman* (second-highest military commander after the monarch).[32]

On March 22, 1692 the Lvovian archbishop Konstanty Lipski granted permission to the Jews of Żółkiew to expand their synagogue, and King Jan III Sobieski allowed for

[22] Krajewska 1982.
[23] Zawidzka 1987: 27–36.
[24] ArchWKZ, files from 1960–1980.
[25] Bałaban 1912: 266; Leszczyński 1994: 70.
[26] APKr, file no. 989, k. 9, 85.
[27] Cała, Węgrzynek, Zalewska 2000: 32, Zawidzka 1987: 8.
[28] Fischer 1927/28: 7; Bartosz 1992: 9.
[29] BUJ MSS 972/21 and 3436.
[30] APKr, IT 2046, card 8.
[31] http://www.library.upenn.edu/exhibits/cajs/exhibit1996/LawandLore.html, viewed 01.07.2011; Bartosz 1992: 86.
[32] Piechotkowie 1999: 283.

stone to be gathered from his own land.[33] A few years earlier, in 1687 he allowed Piotr Beber, *a royal architect, residing in Żółkiew, to draw up a design of the synagogue* and in 1689 he granted the local community a significant loan from the royal treasury to build a stone temple.[34] The more quickly a new town was populated, the wealthier it would become, and the presence of Jews guaranteed a boost in the economy.

The research conducted by Kazimierz Przyboś seems to prove that the voivode Stanisław Lubomirski owed his immense wealth to high interest loans as well as to foreclosure of indebted properties, likely with the help of a private army.[35] Jews rendered invaluable services to the magnate when it came to finances and banking, and therefore they were protected, also by judicial laws.[36] A few of them are known by name: Finkiel, Salomonowicz and Samuel Lewkowicz, who rented mills in Lipnica.[37] The latter used to borrow money from Lubomirski's court architect, an Italian known as Maciej Trapola.[38] Royal towns witnessed occasional pogroms which were gain-motivated but often they aimed at eliminating competition. They were carried out under the guise of revenge for apparent ritual killing (in the 18th century in Sandomierz pogroms were supported by the Catholic clergy and the Krakovian bishop).[39]

The construction of the synagogue sometime between 1624 and 1638 marked the beginning of the Jewish quarter in Wiśnicz, and the community, which in 1765 included several towns such as Brzesko, Czchów, Niepołomice and Limanowa as well as numerous villages, had 2380 members.[40] In the 18th century it was one of the largest and most significant Jewish community in the region of Małopolska, with as many as 150 villages from the area belonging to it.[41]

Not surprisingly, Wiśnicz too had its share of anti-Semitic feelings and incidents. One such case, which reflects the religious conflict following the Swedish invasion, was documented in a decree issued in 1678 by Helena Lubomirska.[42] It forbade Jews to dwell or rent houses in the main square pushing them to live solely in Żydowska ["Jewish"] Street, which connected the cemetery to the main square, and which is mentioned for the first time in a document from 1637: *domum suam in platea Iudeorum.*[43] Such a prohibition proves that prior to it Jews lived in other parts of Wiśnicz too. It also must have been a fundamental factor leading to the creation of the Jewish quarter in the southern part of the town. The densely built-up area was around 150 m long and 300 m wide (492 by 984 ft). The area of 4.5 ha (11 acres) was more or less 1/9 of the entire town, which those days spread over 42 ha (104 acres). The author's research seems to evidence that the Jewish quarter was located in the south-west part of town, along Żydowska Street (today: Kazimierza Wielkiego), delineated in the north by the southern frontage of the

[33] Osiński 1933: 20.
[34] Mańkowski 1948: 4.
[35] Przyboś 1992: 27–41.
[36] Chomecki 1972: 417–422.
[37] APKr, file no. 161, card 96.
[38] APKr IT 2046, card 199.
[39] Musiał/Buttroni 2003.
[40] Bartosz 1992: 16, 86.
[41] EJL: 1449.
[42] APKr, MS file no. 989, card 689.
[43] APKr, dep. file 161, card 45 v.

main square, in the east by Lipnicka street, and in the south by the river Żabi Potok and Pogodna Street. The contemporary Nowa Street became gradually wider and wider until it became a sort of market place, and around 1900 it "tore through" the line of houses by the southern frontage of the main square.

The inventories of the Wiśnicz county from 1712 and from the late 18th century list tax registers of houses, some along with the owner's name: around 200 in the *Catholic town*, and around 70–80 in the *Jewish town*, mainly in Lipnicka and Nowa streets. Butchers' shops and market stalls ran in very similar proportions: 20 to 6.[44]

The inventories help us re-create the history of the local population. The homes were predominantly made of wood and their number changed over time. In 1786 the *Catholic town* had 186 households, while *the settlement of the Jewish citizens in the town of Wiśnicz* had 79, and in 1790 the numbers were up to 200 and 75 respectively, and two years later to 204 and 70. The sources seem to point to a decline in the number of households and presumably also in the number of their inhabitants. It was likely caused by the Jewish people moving to the old Christian quarter, where they would gradually settle. The proportions changed over time. The cadastral map from 1847 lists a total of 421 houses in Wiśnicz, out of which 65 were located in the Jewish quarter, 8 of them made of stone, along with a 17th century synagogue and a school. The source data evidence the greatest development of the town to have happened between the late 18th century and the 1850's. In 1843 the population reached 3983 people.[45] The growth of the community which flourished in the 18th century was thwarted by the restrictive Austrian law in the following century, and a disastrous fire in the 1870's further contributed to its decline.

But before the tragic incident took place, the town saw a riot among the Jewish population. From a letter dated February 1, 1863, written by Teodora Giebułtowska to her brother, Father S. Giebułtowski:[46] *Because there was already an uprising in Wiśnicz, a riot of the local Jews against the authorities and the armed forces, and what happened was that at noon, by the way during a service, police officers and town guards were shooting at Jews. And the Jews threw sticks, cart wheels, etc., they fought back and even tried to disarm them, at which they soon failed. This lasted a few hours, among screaming and shouting, as they do. My dear, you say it's down to some sort of patriotism. But you are in the wrong. It was some private matter among the Jews*. The day preceding the huge fire in Wiśnicz, on July 3, 1863, the distinguished painter Jan Matejko drew a few sketches of wooden architecture in the town; his letter containing his impressions of the town survives.[47] The press quoted an eyewitness of the tragic fire in July: *among narrow, muddy streets, under crooked, dilapidates houses, Jews swarmed ceaselessly, clad in rags, and the clamour went on until late that night (...) among thunder and lightning and in raging wind* […] *crowds of Jewish women and children ran in lamentation towards Nowy Wiśnicz; the wind carrying clouds of feathers from torn quilts, the stench, the clouds of dust and smoke getting in the eyes, burning.*[48] The Kraków daily *Czas* had

[44] APKr, IT 2046, 272–277; AGAD, APP, file no. 65/1–26.

[45] APKr, OMW 15–17; *Słownik Geograficzny* 1893: 608.

[46] Serafińska 1957: 110. The translation attempts to preserve the somewhat chaotic tone of the original letter.

[47] Tarnowski 1897: 62–63.

[48] *Przyjaciel Ludu*, no. 21: 334–336.

a different take on the event: *As officially reported, a terrible fire broke out yesterday in the town of Wiśnicz, and spread as far as to Stary Wiśnicz. Over 300 houses burnt down and more than 500 families are left homeless. Some bread was sent in from Bochnia, but the people who suffered are in need of quick support, which they hope to get from Kraków. The majority of those who suffered in the fire are Jewish.*[49] *On arrival of the telegram informing of the fire in the town of Wiśnicz, the local Jewish community headed by Mr. Salomon Deiches* [philanthropist, member of the Kraków town council, died in 1883 – PSS], *known for his zealous involvement in the welfare of his community, and lately also for his generous gift for the new hospital in Kazimierz, and with the support of Mr. Marek Blatteis have started to collect money for the most urgent needs of the fire victims. They promptly collected 25 hundredweights of bread along with other foods, but as it was Saturday, Jews were unable to dispatch these products, which task was relegated by the mayor Mr. Seidler to a municipality official Mr. Trylski, town carts and fire trucks were borrowed for this purpose.*[50] Following the request of the central administrative body (Komisja Naczelnicza w Krakowie) and the Ministry of State money was being collected for this cause in the whole Austrian monarchy.[51] In the 1870's there were a number of arsons, and perhaps these facts can be linked together.[52]

The 1868 painting by Aleksander Kotsis visualizes the tragic effects of the fire. It depicts a Jewish family who suffered in the incident, dressed in traditional attire, standing in front of ruined houses and a remaining cellar.[53] The painting is not strictly speaking a historical document.[54] The figure of the wanderer with a bundle on his back, led by a boy, could symbolize the hopelessness of the fate of all fire victims in those days. The painting was exhibited at the Society of Friends of Fine Arts in Kraków, which was mentioned in a Warsaw weekly by Michał Bałucki.[55] It was purchased for 300 Austro-Hungarian gulden by Juliusz Zaleski from Paris.[56]

Following the fire, a brochure by the social activist and writer Ludwika Leśniowska was being distributed, and all the revenue from its sale was going to the victims.[57] The decline in economy which followed was certainly reinforced after the Jewish grain merchants had moved from Wiśnicz to Bochnia.[58] A significant part of the Jewish population of the town (who by then constituted almost 50% of the overall population) settled in Bochnia and Tarnów.[59] Some of them moved to Brzesko, but tragically a fire broke out there too and it consumed the little town on July 17.[60] The community in Wiśnicz was in close relations with the one in Bochnia from the very moment of its foundation in 1869.[61]

[49] *Czas*, no. 150 [5.07.1863]: 3.
[50] *Czas*, no. 151 [7.07.1863]: 3.
[51] *Czas*, no. 184 [14.08.1863]: 3.
[52] Beck 1884: 6.
[53] Catalogue of the Auction House "Sztuka" 1997, ill. 27.
[54] Zanoziński 1953: 24.
[55] *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 25, series II (8) [20.06.1868], t. 1: 296.
[56] *Czas*, no. 129 [6.06.1868]: 2.
[57] Leśniowska 1863.
[58] Kiryk 1980: 439.
[59] Fischer 1967: 48.
[60] *Czas*, no. 178 [7.08.1863]: 3.
[61] APKr, file no. ZMB-22; Zawidzka 1992: 9.

Those who researched the Jewish quarter in Wiśnicz earlier seem to have overlooked a very important fact from its history, namely that Wiśnicz was a vibrant centre of Hasidism in the late 18th century.[62] It was the seat of Rabbi Shlomo Halberstam (1847––1906), the son of Rabbi Myer Noson Halberstam (1827–1855), and a grandson of the famous Hasidic Rebbe Chaim Halberstam (1797[9]–1876) known as the *Divrei Chaim*, the founder of the Sanz Hasidic dynasty.[63] Shlomo Halberstam was earlier the rabbi of Bukowsko in 1864, Oświęcim in 1879 and in 1880 he came to Wiśnicz, where in the following year he set up a large yeshiva and *breathed new life into the community*[64] (unfortunately it is not known where it was located). According to Krystyna Samsonowska, he was in office from 1880 and then again in 1892.[65] According to David Assaf, the Hasidic yeshiva in Wiśnicz was the most important after the one founded in Sochaczew by Abraham Bornstein (1839–1910).[66] In 1882 the Jewish population, and perhaps also the yeshiva, was augmented by those who survived the cholera epidemic in the surrounding area.[67] With the new arrivals the numbers grew: in 1890 there were 2278 Jewish inhabitants in Wiśnicz (out of the total of 3791 people). Unfortunately for Wiśnicz, in 1892 Rebbe Halberstam and his yeshiva moved to Bobowa (Bobov), where he became the founder of the famed Bobov dynasty.[68] After his departure he was replaced in office by Naftali Rubin (1845–1939), the son of rabbi Nachman from Korczyn[69] and the son-in-law of Yechezkel Shraga Halberstam (1813–1898), in whose community in Sieniawa (Shinova) he lived and studied. His wife and Yechezkel's daughter was called Hannach Malka.[70] Prior to moving to Wiśnicz, he was a rabbi in Kalwaria, and his deputy in 1897 was Alter Nebenzahl. According to Samsonowska's research, in 1910 Jews constituted 48% of the population in Wiśnicz, and their community in that period can be considered medium size. The Halberstam family had their own houses of prayer in Wiśnicz as late as in the interwar period.[71]

After World War I the Jewish community never regained its former glory, with only 1812 members in four towns: Dołuszyce, Gierczyce, Łapczyca and Sobolów; the community was also weakened by an internal conflict,[72] and its size was further reduced. It was also a time that saw anti-Semitic violence: *it is reported from Kłaj and Wiśnicz that yesterday anti-Semitic incidents took place there*.[73] In the 1925 and 1928 elections for the town office the orthodox and Zionist representatives won all the seats, whereas the progressive fraction, independent candidates and the Bund won none.[74] Later in the interwar period, Zionist movements were thwarted by rabbis. Samsonowska mentions

[62] Węgrzynek 2000: 48.
[63] http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Orthodoxy, viewed 29.06.2011.
[64] EJL: 1449, 2011.
[65] Samsonowska 2005: 120.
[66] Assaf 2006: 34.
[67] Kaczmarczyk 1904: 18.
[68] Bałaban 1914: 190.
[69] Samsonowska 2005: 115, 212.
[70] http://www.loebtree.com/habes.html, viewed 14.07.2011.
[71] Samsonowska 2005: 102.
[72] EJL: 1449.
[73] *Czas*, no. 494 [6.11.1918]: 2.
[74] Samsonowska 2005: 192, 203.

a Trade Association active in that period, presided by Chaskiel Lebenzahl, and a library of the "Miriam" association founded in 1920.[75]

We know that in 1926 and 1932 the post of Rabbi was occupied by Naftali Rubin, and with time it was assumed by his son Chaim. This was met with criticism and accusations of nepotism.[76] In the 1930's the post belonged to Izrael Hager. We also know that the Jewish inmates in the Wiśnicz prison (who had their own separate cell for prayer) were looked after by Chaim Baruch Rubin.[77] His son Shmuel, a grandson of Naftali, was probably also destined to become a Rabbi; born in Wiśnicz, he was a student at the yeshiva and died during the Holocaust in 1942.[78] The rabbi's salary depended on the size and wealth of the community he presided upon. In 1927 it amounted to 3,100 Polish złoty, which was relatively little.[79]

In the interwar period the Wiśnicz Jews travelled to the Tzadik's court for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and perhaps they were also present at the wedding ceremony of Nechama Golda, the daughter of Grand Rabbi Ben Zion Halberstam (1874–1941). The Bobov Rabbis also visited the Wiśnicz Jews in those years.[80] The number of Catholics in the local parish in the years 1918–1939 reached around 4300 and it was fairly constant, the number of Jews amounted to 2100, but in the years 1932–1933 it decreased to 1100; perhaps the decline can be attributed to the crisis in economy.[81] In his memoirs, Jan Klimowski names a few shop-owners whose businesses were located in the main square in the interwar period, he also provides a rough map of the square.[82] Jews were in charge of horse transportation between Bochnia and Wiśnicz. They were also active in trade, esp. of leather; many worked as coachmen. They usually inhabited old, one-story houses with tar-paper roofs, a relatively smaller number of intelligentsia lived in the main square, such as the attorneys Fragner and Ferber.[83] The preserved documents also name Baruch W. Fechtner as the head of the community in that period.[84]

An interesting painting, showing a man wearing a prayer shawl and bowed over a holy book and described as a "portrait of a rabbi," was purchased by the Museum in Bochnia in 1986 from Katarzyna Nowicka from Nowy Wiśnicz.[85] It was considered to have been a study for a bigger painting. According to the authors of the exhibition catalogue,[86] the painting shows Rubin, the last rabbi in Wiśnicz. As the author presumes, it is the most illustrious member of the rabbi dynasty, Naftali Rubin. It was made by Jan Kotowski (1885–1960).

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[75] Samsonowska 2005: 249.

[76] *Nowy Dziennik*, 03.03.1932.

[77] APKr file no. SKKrWś 350, WW-1, UW-II.

[78] http://yadvashem.org, viewed 20.06.2011, the file was filled in on 18.03.2009 by his friend Moshe Meir Einhorn.

[79] APKr, file no. StBo II 30.

[80] Zawidzka 1987: 24.

[81] http://parafiawisnicz.pl, viewed 01.07.2011.

[82] http://www.nw.com.pl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1314&Itemid=257, viewed 30.06.2011.

[83] http://www.parafiawisnicz.pl, viewed 01.07.2011.

[84] APKr, file no. SKKRWś 350: 254.

[85] Inventory no. MB-AH/4361.

[86] Rostworowski 1989: 66, no. 507.

After the arrival of Germans in 1939, forced labour was introduced. By 1940 number of Jewish inhabitants reached 3000, as people sought refuge in the town. Two documents related to the support from Joint survive. The first one, dated February 1, 1940, states: *the expelled people, in the number of 120, who were brought to us, did not receive any support.* The other one reports: *The Jewish Council Board in Wiśnicz herewith informs that on May 18, 1940 it decided to create a labourers' department by the Jewish Council.*[87]

In the years 1941–1942 in the nearby village of Kopaliny a kibbutz farm functioned with the permission of the German police. It was run by a Zionist conspiracy, and while in the daytime young people farmed the land, in the evenings they gathered to listen to lectures. Among the speakers was Juliusz Feldhorn (1901–1943), a famous author, poet and essayist, and also Józef Wulf and Szymon Dranger.[88] The farm had its own information bulletin based on monitoring the BBC. The organization haD a scouting character and it was linked to the centre-right. Its aim was to prepare the young people to leave for Palestine. When their existence became threatened due to the locals gossiping, the members moved to the Kraków ghetto, and Feldhorn to Swoszowice: *Liebeskind said: there is nothing to regret. Kopaliny was a dream, we'd have to wake up anyway. It could have lasted one more week, maybe two.*[89]

On February 4, 1941 the Germans issued a decree regulating leaving the town, by virtue of which one could only leave with a permit. Failing to present a valid permit was punishable by a very substantial fine of 1,000 Polish złoty.[90] A few families were hiding Jews [Łączyński, Golonko, Świątek], and the local clergy were involved in helping: Father Józef Kozieja, Father Józef Białka, Father Jan Wolanin. They issued forged baptism and marriage certificates, in their sermons they encouraged people to help Jews, they also "hired" young Jews as altar boys.[91] Hillel "Antek" Wodzisławski organised partisan groups in the area.[92]

Józef Wiener was the only Jew in Stary Wiśnicz to have survived the war in hiding, and he left Poland in 1948. All his family perished in the Holocaust. Those murdered in Stary Wiśnicz in 1941 were: his father Szymon, a farmer, born in 1880 in Wiśnicz, the husband of Sabina Silberman, born in 1882 in Bochnia, and their 7 children born in Wiśnicz: Tratek, born in 1925, Hinda, born in 1925, Nichcia, born in 1922, and Rafael, born in 1930.[93] In 2008 Józef filled out the cards pertaining to the last three siblings: Regina, born in 1922, Sije, born in 1934, and Wowka, born in 1919. The latter was deported from Wiśnicz and died in the Płaszów concentration camp.[94]

The Nazis formed a ghetto in Bochnia and on August 22, 1942 they imprisoned all the local Jews. In Wiśnicz most likely there was a selection, and some of the people were executed between 22 and 25 August. The expulsions began on 24 August in Bochnia:

[87] ŻIH, file no. 108.

[88] Zimmerer 2004: 97.

[89] Zimmerer 2004: 104.

[90] http://parafiawisnicz.pl/, viewed 20.06.2011.

[91] ArchRCP, http://parafiawisnicz.pl, viewed on 20.06.2011.

[92] Biberstein 1985: 245.

[93] The Yad Vashem Central Database of Shoah Victims Names, http://www.yadvashem.org/wps/portal/IY_HON_Welcome, viewed 07.2011, files: 2087566, 2087534, 2087488, 2087472, 2087432, 2087553 respectively filled by Josef Wiener.

[94] http://www.yadvashem.org, viewed 15.06.2011, by Josef Wiener dated 25.06.1991.

They are expelling Jews from Bochnia, i.e. they took 6000 people by train to an unknown destination […] *on Saturday, that is two days ago, they began exterminating the Jews in Bochnia, and they are finishing it today.*[95] On 25 August over 6000 people were transported to the extermination camp in Bełżec [Belzec], but the ghetto was not "liquidated," as the German term went, until January 1944.[96] In those days the Nazis executed around 500 women, children and old people in a nearby forest; the few survivors left a testimony of that mass murder.[97]

Bochnia has traces of the exiled Jews from Wiśnicz; one of them is a tomb from August 1942. The inscription tells us that the man buried there was rabbi Mojżesz Wolf, *a spiritual guide of the Wiśnicz congregation.*[98] Among those killed in Nowy Wiśnicz we find the name of the *shochet* Szlomo Rubinsztejn, born in 1880.[99] A Wiśnicz rabbi Aron Lipschutz, born in Kraków, the son of Nosson Dov and Alta Chaya[100] with his wife Miriam, the daughter of Nathan Aron Wolf, neé Bochner, age 29, both died in a camp following deportation. Perhaps it is his name that is carved out on the plaque of a monument[101] in the Wiśnicz cemetery.

A small number of those who managed to save their lives returned to Wiśnicz. In October 1945 Wiśnicz saw another pogrom (the scale of which remains unknown to us), and perhaps the survivors were taken care of by the Krakovian Committee for survivors [Krakowski Komitet dla Ocalałych]. Other places which witnessed anti-Semitic violence in that period were Lipnica Murowana and Łapanów.[102] Following the war, new residents gradually destroyed the quarter of *the old Jewish town* and in 1959 the Treasury of the People's Repulic of Poland seized all private plots of land.

The brief account of the history of the Jewish quarter is followed by a description of its architecture, both its historical and the surviving parts.

In accordance with the rules of the Catholic Church (repealed in Galicia by the Emperor Joseph II), the synagogue was located at a distance from the church, in the opposite south-west end of the town.[103]

It was the centre of the community life: it was a place of prayer and religious discussion but it was also the centre of jurisdiction and occasionally it provided accommodation for travellers. Gradually many other buildings were built nearby: a school, a rabbinic house and court, a mikveh, a hospital, and a shelter.[104]

The earliest sources (1638) name a small synagogue situated in former Leksandrowska street (presumably close to the river Leksandrówka): *in platea Lexandrowska sitam est quo nunc synagoga eorundem est erecta.*[105] In a document accompanying a trade transaction in 1649 another synagogue is mentioned: *a house located in Żydowska street*

[95] Bojarkowa 2003: 42.
[96] Podhorizer-Sandel 1958: 30, 89; Bartosz 1992: 86.
[97] Jaffa 1988: 25–29 and 121–123 (Bronia Koczicki-Spira).
[98] Zawidzka 1992: 71.
[99] Yad Vashem file 787545, filled by his daughter on 18.12.1956.
[100] Yad Vashem file 13392, filled by son Berisch Lipschutz in 1992.
[101] The monument is discussed in detail on p. 33.
[102] APKr, file no. 9; Kiryk 1980: 488.
[103] Schorr 1991: 14.
[104] Bergman 2009: 24–25.
[105] APKr, file no. 161: 93.

[...] *second of the synagogue.*[106] A small 17th century synagogue which survived the disastrous fire is mentioned by Mieczysław Orłowicz, a popular author of guidebooks. We do not know what it looked like but it might have been fairly important from the point of view of both history and art, since the Orłowicz rarely paid much attention to synagogues.[107]

Based on pre-war memoirs, Fischer lists one synagogue made of stone and two made of wood. One of the latter, large in size and located in the main square, burned in the 1863 fire, and the other one in 1942.[108] The scarcity of information does not allow us to identify the wooden buildings. It seems improbable that the synagogue would have been located in the main square, there are no testimonies or indications of it, although there is a stone synagogue in the main square in Brody Koniecpolskie, and in many towns, e.g. in Bobowa, synagogues were built close to the square.

It is probably the 17th century synagogue that is visible in the film recovered by the author, but the purpose of larger buildings can only be guessed at with some degree of probability. In today's Nowa street, there used to stand a small two storey building with a visible slant on the south-east side, covered with a pitched roof and a pronounced tall entrance door at its axis, on the south. In the 1847 cadastral map we can see a stone building in this location, therefore it may well have been the 17th century synagogue. It is similar in structure to the one in Brzesko (from the end of the 19th century), which was built by an unknown architect. The Brzesko community was traditionally connected to the one in Wiśnicz ever since the 16th century, and it was subordinated to it between the 18th until the early 19th century.[109]

The author discovered an interesting post-war correspondence. The head of the State Archive in Poznań, a historian born in Wiśnicz, Dr. Kazimierz Kaczmarczyk (1878––1965), wrote a letter dated September 10, 1947, to the Conservator of Monuments in Kraków regarding the synagogue (which he dated as 17th century): *located at the back of the old synagogue built in the 19th century, it was not destroyed during the war, its doors and windows are broken and it should be preserved and entered on the list of monuments, and the municipality board should be asked to protect it and prevent it from being pulled down.*[110] Thus prompted, on October 28, 1947, the conservator wrote to the county administrative office in Bochnia asking: *whether there is in Wiśnicz a stone synagogue from the 17th century and what is its condition?*[111] Next, on behalf of the voivode he ordered the Bochnia administration to *urgently extend protection over the 17th century stone synagogue and to secure its windows and doors* and he ordered that the rightful owner be found so that the building could be included on the list of protected monuments.[112] Unfortunately what ended up on the list on May 19, 1947, were the premises of a former monastery, and there were no other entries in the period between 1946 and 1950.[113] The interest of the Conservator office only accelerated the demolition of the

[106] APKr, file no. 162: 193.
[107] Orłowicz 1914: 333.
[108] Fischer 1967: 8, 46.
[109] Bergman, Jagielski 1996: 27.
[110] APKr, file no. KK 13: 737.
[111] ArchWKZ.
[112] APKr, county office files, file no.T-8/VI, 44, no. 68.
[113] ArchWKZ.

synagogue, considered useless by the locals, other than a source of building material and liberating a valuable area in the centre of the town.

Dr. Kaczmarczyk visited Wiśnicz during the summer holidays and his notes reveal that there were no synagogues there the following year: *2.07.1948. The new stone synagogue has been dismantled, wheat grows there. Next to the new temple, there remain fragments of walls from the one constructed in the first half of the 17th century; there are no traces of the altar or the Torah, same with stone doors from the 17th century* […] *the rabbi's house in Sandecka street was pulled down too* […] *destroyed the long house of Henneberg, once a hotel with a restaurant in Sandecka street* […] *Henneberg [was] a good man, a philosopher, the deputy of the rabbi for many years.*[114] According to the interview conducted by the author in 2005 with Witold Goc and Władysław Hyrc, who used to work for the county administration in those years, the synagogue was probably pulled down between September 1947 and July 1948 in order to obtain building material (and maybe also in search of treasures).[115] On October 13, 1949 the conservator dr. Józef E. Dutkiewicz stated in a handwritten note: *it has been witnessed that the temple is no more.*[116] Unfortunately the town council files from the period 1945–1955 are missing, and we cannot establish exactly when the edifice was destroyed. The author believes that the site of the synagogue is now occupied by a parking bay. It was probably the synagogue where the precious liturgical canvasses mentioned in the exhibition catalogue in Lwow came from: *item 59. Curtain from the Torah ark; middle section covered with rich golden embroidery; frame made of red material with a golden floral pattern and yellow gold-woven silk material. 17th century. Length 2200 mm, width 1350 mm, Wiśnicz Israelite collection, item 60: Torah curtain with the middle section made from yellow-golden material with an embroidered vase with a crown and on the vase an inscription in Hebrew. 17th century. Length 1950 mm, width 1140 mm, item 61: curtain made of red and golden brocade, framed with green and silver floral material, in the middle section a golden embroidered cartouche with an embroidered inscription on green, topped with a crown. 17th century. Length 1980 mm, width 1290 mm, Wiśnicz Israelite collection.*[117]

The author believes that the buildings of the community were located within a square formed by plots number: 138, 137, 108, 109 and 110, between the former Żydowska Street and Nowa Street.[118] The first and biggest plot belonged to Berl Wolf (as of 20.03.1874). Gerson Wolf (1823–1892) wrote a number of publications concerning (among other places) Wiśnicz: *Josefina* (Vienna 1890) and *Historische Skizzen aus Österreich-Ungarn* (Vienna 1883).[119] According to Marian Drożdż, smaller buildings were erected near the synagogue – a hospital and a school – and a square was formed there too, which opened towards Żydowska Street. The plots belonging to the Jewish community [no. 101 and 104], in Berka Joselewicza street near the Żabi Potok river, became the site of a mikveh and on the plot no. 179 a funeral home was built.

[114] APKr, file no. KK13: 777.
[115] Szlezynger 2001: 390.
[116] ArchWKZ.
[117] Catalogue 1894, items 59–61, pp. 9–11.
[118] ArchSRB, plot 30 K.w. 36121/1.
[119] http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=236&letter=W, viewed 10.06.2011.

Baron Maurycy Hirsch founded another school in 1891, a public 3-year school.[120] The County Court in Bochnia decided on February 27, 1959 that the plot no. 138 was to become property of the state. In the 1970's it was used by the state leather manufacturer, and in 1972 it was divided further. One of the buildings raised on it was a fire station.

As the field research as well as archived documents and old maps proved, in the second half of the 19th century another synagogue was built. It was much larger, and perhaps the old one, which was directly near it, had turned out too small for the growing Jewish population.[121] According to Bartosz and Zawidzka, it was built in 1870, but the author is of a different opinion. It must have been constructed before or after the fire in 1863, at the latest before 1869, the year the community in Bochnia was formed. Following the fire which destroyed 36 houses, a group of around 200 people left Wiśnicz and settled in Bochnia, where in 1860 the Austrian authorities had repealed the law from 1605 – *de non tolerandis Judaeis*.[122] Subsequently in 1869 they formed a new community and built a cemetery and one synagogue (surviving to this day albeit rebuilt). Therefore it is hardly probable that a huge synagogue should have been built in 1870 for the relatively few Jews who had survived the Wiśnicz fire.[123] The new synagogue was so sizeable because it must have been rendering services to those who moved to Bochnia (perhaps even temporarily) but still had to return to Wiśnicz for religious matters such as funerals. Some Jews returned after a few years, as in 1870 their population reached 5852 people,[124] with two synagogues and a few houses of prayer listed as: *1. Boznycia wielka (Big synagogue), 2. Boznycia mała (Small synagogue), 3. Pinkas Wolf, 4. Aron Lipszytz, 5. Isak Zahnwirth, 6. Isak Korngut, 7. Michał Mendler*.[125] According to Michalewicz research the Jewish community was relatively big, but he incorrectly points to one synagogue.[126]

The author was able to discover the location of the big synagogue and to describe its architectural features only thanks to the data found in land registers, field research, two photographs and the painting by Stanisław Klimowski. It is the only synagogue with any surviving photographic record.

The big synagogue was located in a street parallel to Lipnicka and Żydowska (today it is called Nowa Street), with its façade facing the former Żydowska Street. Next to the town hall and the parish church, it was one of the three dominating elements in the town panorama until 1948. It was surrounded by low one-storey white-washed wooden buildings of the "Israelite quarter," close to the Żabi Potok river. The author found out that as of March 20, 1874, the plot of land in question belonged to the local Jewish community.[127] The building was oriented, even though this requirement was not always easy to meet due to the existing architecture. The analysed iconography seems prove that the synagogue was 18 m (59 ft) tall, up to the roof ridge. The painting by Stanisław Klimowski (1891–1982) entitled *Mienie żydowskie* [Jewish property], was made secretly, according to the family. The painter's hideout was in the loft of a building which housed

[120] APKr, file no. UMW-32 (1933).
[121] Szlezynger 2001: 380–393.
[122] Zawidzka 1995: 146.
[123] Fischer 1967: 45.
[124] Michalewicz 1995: 72, tab. 1, pos. 11.
[125] APKr, file no. UMW-7, from 19.07.1870.
[126] Michalewicz 1995: 88, tab. 2, pos. 101.
[127] ArchSRB, plots no. 109 and 110; Lwh 499.

a Jewish bakery, and which was directly opposite the temple.[128] After an analysis the author concludes that the painting displays the northern part of the façade as well as two neighbouring houses. The painter immortalized the view of an empty square with heaps of abandoned furniture soon after the deportation in August 1942.

The synagogue stood out in size. Its pitched roof was fairly flat and covered most likely with tin. It towered over the neighbouring buildings also when it came to interesting details such as selvedges, and tall arched windows. The top part of the western façade reached higher than the roof, and it was tri-partite, divided by selvedges and horizontally by a cornice to form two uneven levels. The lower level had big round windows in varied sizes, decorated with colourful window panes visible in the painting. The windows were situated over the three arched doors in each of the three spans. The upper level, judging by Klimowski's painting, was shaped like a triangular abutment with a high window on its axis. The side spans of the façade were shorter. The façade was richly decorated and divided symmetrically.

The southern façade, decorated with projections from the west, had three windows on two storeys and a separate entrance leading to the balcony for women. The eastern façade had a round window in the middle section (as a rule) to mark the place where *aron ha-kodesh* was kept; the side spans had tall arched windows.[129] The window was facing toward Jerusalem, as the rabbinic tradition dictates: *and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem*,[130] and the recommended 12 windows [which we can only assume in the case of Wiśnicz – PSS] were meant to commemorate the Twelve Israelite Tribes.[131] All the windows except for those on the façade were tall and arched, and inside the building they reached the ceiling. We find similar features in synagogues built in the second half of the 19th century, among other in Działoszyce and Wielkie Oczy near Lubaczów (1910), and a triangular tympanum can also be seen in the temples Grybów (1909) and Koronowo.[132]

A slightly smaller, two-storey wide annex which can be seen in one of the photographs north of the synagogue, measuring approximately 8 x 8 m (26 x 26 ft), might have been the main seat of the community. Klimowski did not paint it, because his easel was placed to the south-west. According to Drożdż, this was where *holy writings* were kept, perhaps register manuscripts and other documents.

The synagogue was built on a rectangle which measures approximately 12 x 21 m (40 x 69 ft). Other places where we can find synagogues built on rectangles of similar size are: Działoszyce 16.7 x 23.7 m (55 x 78 ft), Dąbrowa Tarnowska 15 x 24 m (50 x 77 ft), Kielce 20 x 29 m (66 x 95 ft), Sejny (1857) 18.95 x 25.8 m (62 x 85 ft) and Żarki (1870) 16.2 x 39.6 m (53 x 130 ft).[133]

The interior might have been lowered down by a few steps, which would reflect the words of the psalmist: *Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord.*[134] The interior – "depths" were a wide three-nave hall of prayer with a groin vault supported on

[128] Published by Bartosz 1992: 86.
[129] Piechotkowie 1996: 17.
[130] *Dan*. 6: 11.
[131] Jedlińska 2009: 18.
[132] Bergman, Jagielski 1996: 50, 60, 144,151; Wilczyk 2009: 154, 186, 614.
[133] Wilczyk 2009: 138, 212, 218, 426, 516, 656.
[134] Psalms 130: 1.

four columns; the gallery for women resting on columns and with a common vault with the room for men. The religion required that men and women should pray in separate seating areas.[135] The women's entrance had its own separate inner staircase, and it was located on the southern side. Usually this entrance and sometimes an outer staircase are found on the western side, as it is for example in the Izaac Synagogue in Kazimierz in Kraków.[136] In Wiśnicz the spatial planning was typical for most community synagogues in the 19th century: the axis lying east-west, the women's section on the western end and in the second floor over the men's vestibule, with one or two inner staircases; this matter was raised among others by Trzciński.[137] In the middle of the prayer hall there were 3 or 4 steps, 5–6 m (17–20 ft) wide, elevating the *bimah*, and the *aron ha-kodesh* was on the eastern wall.[138]

The synagogue had a very rich interior, the visitor remembered a huge menorah and colourful light coming in through the windows which brought to mind stained-glass windows (like in the temples in Bojanów and Chodorów):[139] *the interior lighting was toned down quite significantly by the stained-glass windows reaching almost to the vaulted ceiling, I didn't notice any transparent glass panes. The background of the interior was similar in character to some Christian* [Catholic] *Gothic churches.*[140]

The interior with its typically 19th century longitudinal construction can be compared to the 19th century synagogues located in Działoszyce (after 1852, designed by Felicjan Antoni Frankowski, in ruins) and in Dąbrowa Tarnowska (1865, designed by Abraham Goldstein).[141] Its design is also redolent of the large Big Synagogue in Jarosław, built in 1811 on an almost square rectangle measuring 24.5 m x 25 m (80 x 82 ft) with four columns and the *bimah* in the middle and a groin vault, totally rebuilt after 1963, as well as of the Old Synagogue in Tarnów which did not survive.[142]

Under the Austrian rule, the architects employed by the *kaiserlich und königlich* (Imperial and Royal) government were: Franciszek Dundaczek, Włodzimierz Krzyżanowski, Aleksander Gebauer and Karol Zaremba, the Wiśnicz design could also be tentatively attributed to the already mentioned Abraham Goldstein.[143] It needs to be pointed out at this point that, except for a few exceptions, buildings from the 19th and 20th centuries had not been considered for conservation until the 1970's. Historians seemed to show no interest in them whatsoever, which can be witnessed in the catalogues of art monuments published in that period. The archive research conducted by the author confirms that the 19th century synagogue was pulled down between 1943 and 1948, and field research proved that 2-storey houses are located on its site now.

A larch wood house located in Kazimierza Wielkiego Street, which is currently under demolition [2011 – PSS], is believed to have been the rabbis' house.[144] The painter

[135] Kolatsch 1991: 58.
[136] Samkowie 1995: 25.
[137] Trzciński 2010: 49.
[138] Fischer 1967: 63; Wiener 2005.
[139] Piechotkowie 1996: 257; Wilczyk 2009: 86.
[140] Drożdż 2004.
[141] Bergman, Jagielski 1996: 37; Wilczyk 2009: 134, 154.
[142] Bergman, Jagielski 1996: 51; Wilczyk 2009: 196–197.
[143] *Schematyzm* 1881: 485.
[144] Zawidzka 1987: 19.

Walerian Kasprzyk (1912–1992) depicted another house in his 1938 painting entitled *Nowy Wiśnicz – A Side Street*, a house which the author of this article believes to have been another house referred to by the locals as a "rabbi's house".[145] In the foreground of the painting we can see a Hasidic Jew clad in a black coat, wearing white stockings and a fur *shtreimel*. The author's investigation revealed the said house to be located at 3 Lipnicka Street, taken over by the town in 1959.[146] In 1884 it belonged to Abraham and Helen Blasenstein. Made of stone, one storey, built on a rectangle with three vaulted cellars and the same number of axes as the house in the painting, it was built in the 19th century. Originally it probably had a characteristic elaborate wooden roof with dormer windows, nowadays it is fairly simple after having been rebuilt. It cannot be ruled out that this house, neglected quite badly in 1938, could have housed a Tzadik community in the years 1881–1892, and that it could have had its own prayer hall. It was situated on the opposite end of the quarter from the orthodox synagogue.[147]

The Jewish cemetery is mentioned as early as 14 June 1641, when Christian youth went there gallivanting during Sabbath.[148] In town documents from the 17th and 18th centuries the cemetery serves as a landmark,[149] located near the town gate, which was being watched by a Jewish guard.[150] It had been traditionally established on an elevation, on a hill in the southern part of the town, in close proximity to the Jewish quarter, at its south-west outskirt. Before 1939 it grew towards the south-west to finally reach the total surface of 1.86 ha (4.6 acres). For over 300 years (until September 1942) people were buried there, even from places as distant from Wiśnicz as Czchów, Gdów, Kłaj, Lubomierz, Lusławice, Melsztyn, Niepołomice, Wiatowice, Żegocina, etc.[151] The cemetery has two gates: one on the southern elevated side, and one on the northern side. The steep slope with a few streaks and a wet ground with a lot of bushes and young trees make it impossible to penetrate most of the area today. Even in 1845 Julia Goczałkowska complained about the marshy ground in the north: *which traveller coming this way did not get stuck in the eternal swamp by the Jewish cemetery in Wiśnicz*?[152]

The cemetery was closed on January 7, 1964 along with fourteen other Jewish cemeteries in the Kraków voivodeship.[153] It was entered on the list of historical monuments in the region of Małopolska under the number A-327.

The devastation began during the Nazi occupation. Dr. Kazimierz Kaczmarczyk wrote in July 1948: *The cemetery* [...] *once surrounded with a stone wall, today abandoned, some 1500-2000 tombstones with inscriptions are still here* [...] *some were taken away in 1944, especially marble stones, here and there used as pavement slabs in town* [...] *the oldest tombstone was from 1786, it was overturned together with carved columns. They should be taken a Jewish museum. A sandstone plaque from 1852 on the cemetery house is painted with whitewash. Near the synagogue as few marble stones*

[145] Museum in Bochnia, oil on canvas, 59.5 x 48, file no. MB-AH/11.
[146] ArchSRB, plot no. 88/1.
[147] Wodziński 2010: 77.
[148] APKr, file no. 161: 175.
[149] APKr, file no. 163: 800.
[150] APKr, file no. 162: 273–274.
[151] APKr, Bochnia, file no. OMW-3, file IV and V.
[152] Goczałkowska 1845: 56.
[153] ArchWKZ, files 1960–1976.

brought by the Germans, who ravaged the cemetery in 1944 [...] *Cemetery house partly ruined*.[154] Tombstones made of marble had been taken away by the Germans, and those made of sandstone were used to fill the foundations of homes after the war, sometimes they would be carved and used as tombstones on the Catholic cemetery.[155] What was left of the once flourishing Jewish community were around 1500 matzevot, in the 1980's only 300 (including a few from the 17th century with very rich ornamentation[156]), and by now one can see barely 50.

From 1959 until the 1980's the southern part of the cemetery was used by the Bochnia regional road office for burning pitch and storing aggregate. To prevent such use of the holy ground, the SCSJP and the Jewish Congregation in Kraków petitioned in 1960: *In the face of the devastation of the historical Jewish cemetery in Wiśnicz, which is the most valuable such object in the region* [...] *we believe the security and conservation measures postulated to be justified* [...] *and the proposed project of rehabilitating the Jewish cemetery as right and proper*.[157] The conservator Dr. Hanna Pieńkowska applied in vain for financial support at the Department of Municipal Services of the voivode's office in Kraków.

35 photographs showing tombstones were taken by Andrzej Pollo in 1966.[158] In February 1975 local scouts from Wiśnicz [The Jan Matejko section formed by the secondary school of arts – PSS] alarmed the Kraków Conservator pointing to the dramatic condition of the matzevot: *if the historical tombstones (not many of them surviving by now) in the Jewish cemetery in Wiśnicz are of high artistic value, as we think they are, we are kindly asking the conservator to urge the county officials in Nowy Wiśnicz to secure the area with a fence, so that the tombstones do not get destroyed completely. Our section promises to take care of this historical monument before it falls into ruin*.[159] On February 14, 1975 the Conservator addresses the county office in Wiśnicz to *politely point out to the fact that the old Jewish cemetery is not secured, which makes it prone to devastation* […] *asking to surround the historical area with a mesh fence*.[160] *The neglect of this site became the more evident when after 1980 the funeral house was destroyed. Built circa 1851 north of the cemetery gates, it used to be the place where bodies were prepared for burial, and stone masons, who worked right next to it, sought shelter there in bad weather*.[161] It was a one-storey building, made of stone and covered with a pitched roof.

It was only in 1983 that the brothers Abusch and Josef Hirsch commemorated the anniversary of their parents' death by founding a fencing and reconstructing one ohel. From the files filled out by Abusch we can learn that his mother Rosa-Reizl (the daughter of Mindel Kornfeld and Zeew Wolf Bergman, born in Gorlice in 1889), was shot to death in the Bochnia ghetto on April 29, 1943, their father Szymon Hirsch, the son of Eliahu Jicchak and Itel Perlmuter, an owner of a grocery in Wiśnicz, perished during the war

[154] APKr, file no. KK 13, p. 803.
[155] Zawidzka 1987: 28.
[156] Zawidzka 1995: 144.
[157] ArchWKZ, files 1960–1975.
[158] MHKr, file no. 204–239 VII.
[159] ArchWKZ, files 1960–1975.
[160] ArchWKZ.
[161] Zawidzka 1987: 39.

as well.[162] The marble plaques on the walls of the ohel bear inscriptions in Polish and Hebrew: *Founders of the fence and the renovation of the cemetery Abusch and Josef, the sons of Szymon and Róża Hirsch from Nowy Wiśnicz, residing in the USA* [in Polish] and *The ohel of rabbi Abraham Jehusz...* [in Hebrew]. They also set upright a number of fallen tombstones.

Today, this old cemetery is very in a very poor condition. The few surviving matzevot have undergone further devastation compared to the state they were in the photographs taken in the 1960's and 80's. According to the president of the Jewish Community in Kraków, Tadeusz Jakubowicz, on July 22, 2010 the Wiśnicz prison authorities signed an agreement regarding clearing the necropolis, but so far no progress has been made [07.2011 – PSS].

Around the year 1980, the Hirsch brothers founded another monument in the northern part of the cemetery. The stone plaque bears inscriptions both in Polish and Hebrew, commemorating the rabbis buried there whose tombstones were destroyed: *For the eternal memory/ here were buried/ among others/ rabbis who held a holy duty: Great Rabbi Hirsz Cwi Horowic* [1726–1778 – PSS], *the son of Master Rabbi Jakub/ grandson of the Great Samuel from Nikolsburg* [Mikulov in the Moravian region in today's Czech Republic – PSS], *may the memory of the saintly be for blessing, Great Rabbi Natan Lipszyc, may the memory of the saintly be for blessing/ Great Rabbi Naftali Rubin, may the memory of the saintly be for blessing, who died in the month of Nisan (5)699 since Creation* [in Hebrew; March 1939 – PSS]. *Fry for him who left and will not return, may his soul be tied in the knot of life. The Jewish cemetery in Nowy Wiśnicz [is] the place many generations of Polish Jews were laid to rest, [it is also] the only preserved monument of the culture of the Jewish nation. The oldest tombstones come from the early 15th century. According to Jewish sources, it was founded in the 11th century and was used until 1942. Among those buried here are rabbi Hirsch Horowitz, the son of Jakub, the grandson of rabbi Schmelke from Nikelsburg, Rabbi Nuta Lipszyc, and rabbi Naftali Rubin who died in March 1939* [in Polish, original spelling of names preserved].

On an elevation, by a partly destroyed tombstone with the inscription: "Here lies Rabbi Cwi, a great man…" [the rest of the inscription is illegible – PSS] three new tombstones of bright granite from Strzegom were placed, perhaps in 2009. Hebrew inscriptions are devoted to the dead: "local rabbi Menachem Nachum...", "Dawid Salomon Zalman..." and "Szmuel Aszer Zelig...". A monumental memorial composed out of broken tombstones was founded by the Hirsch brothers in the southern section of the cemetery, in the place where pitch used to be burnt.

The ruined cemetery remains in contrast with the one in Bochnia, which was funded in 1873 (the last burial of Samuel Landwirth on 15.06.1945), and which is much smaller and well-preserved with 700 tombstones in relatively good condition.[163]

The author attempted to save the destroyed elements of the old Wiśnicz from oblivion. He deemed it necessary seeing as, beginning from 1863 when the fire devoured wooden houses and synagogues, followed by the destruction of stone synagogues during World War I, fragments of Jewish heritage gradually disappeared from the panorama of

[162] http://yadvashem.org, viewed 01.07.2011. Two files filled out 12.11.1979 and 03.12.2009 regard the mother.

[163] Zawidzka 1992: 17.

Wiśnicz, replaced by new structures. As the Holocaust survivors get advanced in age and ultimately pass away, little will be known and left of the community, other than the ruined matzevot and the alleged rabbinic house.

The author believes that it would be advisable to create even a small exhibition documenting the life of the Jewish community before 1939 and its tragic fate during the Nazi occupation. The 19th century synagogue ought to be remembered either by a plaque with its silhouette, or perhaps even in the form of a hologram which could be exhibited in the museum in Wiśnicz. Such an exhibition could also display objects of everyday use, thus being a way of bringing back to life this *murdered nation*.[164]

ABBREVIATIONS

AGAD, APP – Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych, Warszawa [Central Archives of Historical Records]: Archiwum Publiczne Potockich [Public Archive of the Potocki].

APKr – Archiwum Państwowe w Krakowie [State Archive in Cracow].

ArchRCP – Archiwum Parafii Rzymsko-Katolickiej pod wezwaniem Wniebowzięcia NMP w Nowym Wiśniczu [Archive of the Roman Catholic Parish of the Ascension of the Holy Virgin Mary in Nowy Wiśnicz].

ArchSRB – Archiwum Sądu Rejonowego w Bochni [Archive of the District Court in Bochnia]. Department of Land Registers.

ArchWKZ – Archiwum Wojewódzkiego Konserwatora Zabytków w Krakowie [Archive of the Voivodeship Conservator of Monuments].

BUJ – Biblioteka Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego [Library of the Jagiellonian University], Kraków.

EJL – *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust*, Seredina–Budapest 2001.

NAC – Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe w Warszawie [National Digital Archive in Warsaw].

ŻIH – Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego [Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute], Warszawa.

DOCUMENTS

APKr, file no. IT 2046: *Liber inscriptionum, causarum, actionum, controversiarum... ab anno 1622 ad annum 1765 Officii Proconsulis et consulum civitatis Wisnicz ab anno 1632*.

APKr, file no. 161: *Acta Advocatialia et scabinorum Oppidi Visnicz ab anno 1634.*

APKr, file no. 162–165: *Liber Off. Proc. et cons., protocolum acta adv. et scab. Oppidi Wiśnicz*.

APKr, file no. 989: *Regestr y summariusz różnych przywilejów, 1754.*

APKr, file no. SKKRWś 350, WW I, UW II: *Akta więzienia w Wiśniczu.*

APKr, file L 56/29.03.39.

APKr, file no. WUIiP 9, *Akta Wojewódzkiego Urzędu Informacji i Propagandy*.

APKr, file no. KK-13, *Spuścizna rękopiśmienna prof. dr. Kazimierza Kaczmarczyka* [*The manuscripts of Professor Kazimierz Kaczmarczyk*].

APKr, file no. IS 30/7, 10,44, 102, 104 (1867–1924): *Zespół Akt magistratu Nowego Wiśnicza*; APKr, file no. UMW 1–46: *Protokoły rady miasta Wiśnicza, Akta budowlane, finansowe*.

[164] Katzenelson 1986.

APKr, file no. OMW 11, 12, 15, 16, 17: *Akta stanu cywilnego Izraelickiego Okręgu Metrykalnego w Wiśniczu*, years 1814–1942.

APKr, file no. ZMB, *Akta Starostwa Powiatowego w Bochni*.

Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych [Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw], Archiwum Publiczne Potockich [Public Archive of the Potocki] (AGAD APP), file no. 65/1–29: *Inwentarze i rachunki hrabstwa wiśnickiego 1785–1807*.

Archiwum Parafii Rzymsko-Katolickiej pod wezwaniem Wniebowzięcia NMP w Nowym Wiśniczu [Archive of the Roman Catholic Parish of the Ascension of the Holy Virgin Mary in Nowy Wiśnicz] (ArchRCP).

Archiwum Wydziału Geodezji Starostwa Powiatowego w Bochni [Archive of the Department of Land Surveying of the county office in Bochnia], cadastral maps of Wiśnicz.

ArchSRB: Wiśnicz Nowy – private plots: Lwh 361:30, Lwh 527: 137,138; Lwh 614: 88/1; property of the Jewish community: Lwh 499: 109, 110, 104, 108, 152/2, 179, 101/2; Lwh 543: 107; Lwh 575: 91/1.

ArchWKZ, the register of real estate of historical value in the Voivodeship of Małopolska, MS., files containing correspondence regarding Wiśnicz, 1947–2010 (no file numbers or pagination).

Author's archive, written testimonies of Marian Drożdż (2004, 2010) and Józef Wiener (2005).

BUJ, MSS 972/21 and 3436 (the privilege granted to Wiśnicz by the King Sigismund III).

NAC, file no. 1-U-7831-36, 35 (photographs).

Yad Vashem Archives: file no. 6331883(list of Jewish victims in Wiśnicz Nowy, April 1, 1940, Destination of transport Wiśnicz Nowy, Bochnia, Krakow, Poland: microfilm; file no. 10012, item number: 6331391, signature: the president of the Wiśnicz community, secretary: Ida Offner, 19.04.1940 r. nr V53/40 P to Amerikan [!] Joint Distribution Kommitee [!] Kraków, addressed to Prof. Biberstein, signature by secretary Simchowicz, president Abraham Friedmann.

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ŻIH, files no. 108, 117, 211, 347–348.

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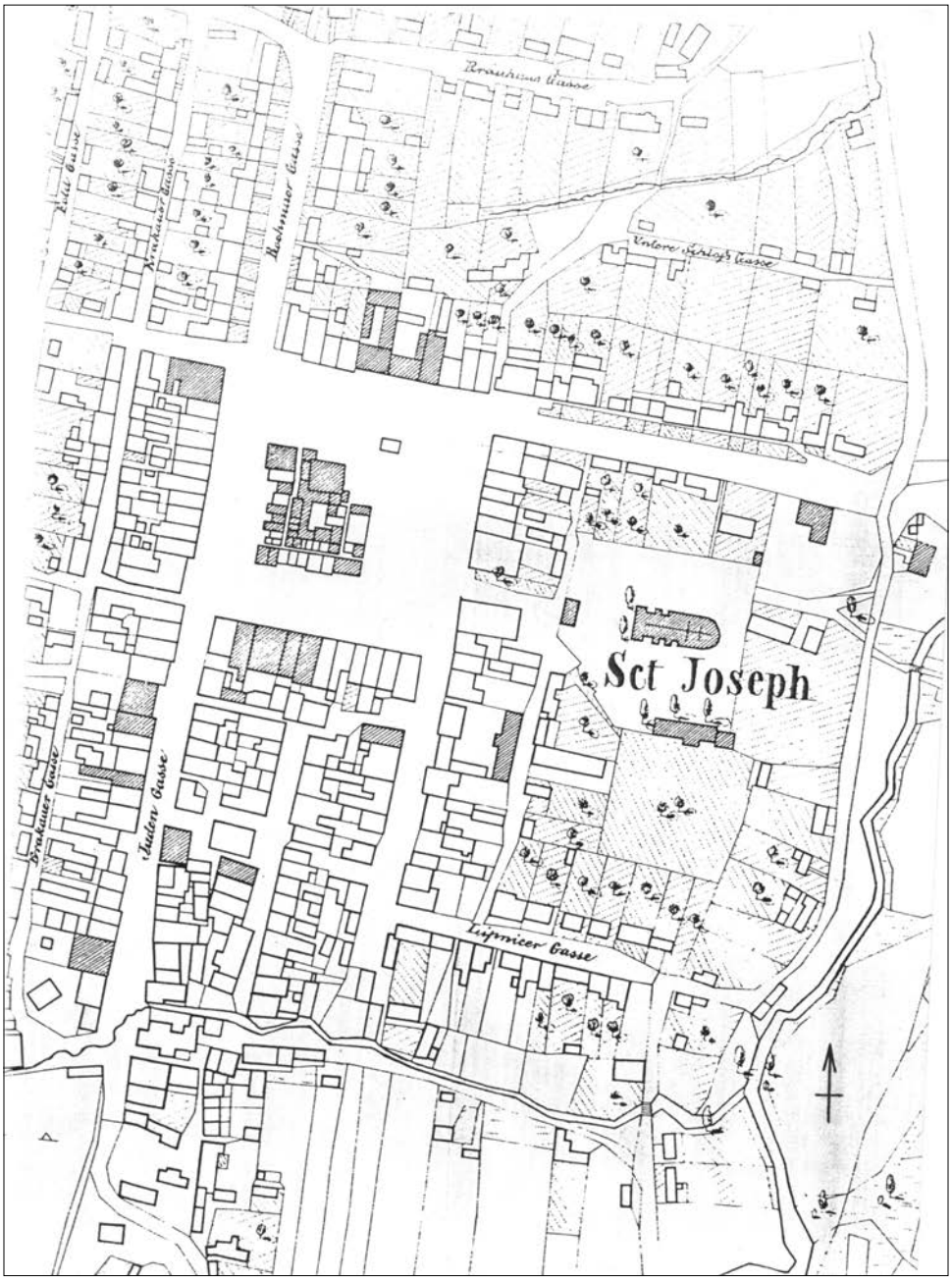


Fig. 1. Cadastral map of Nowy Wiśnicz from 1847, original in scale 1:2880, APKr O/Bochnia.

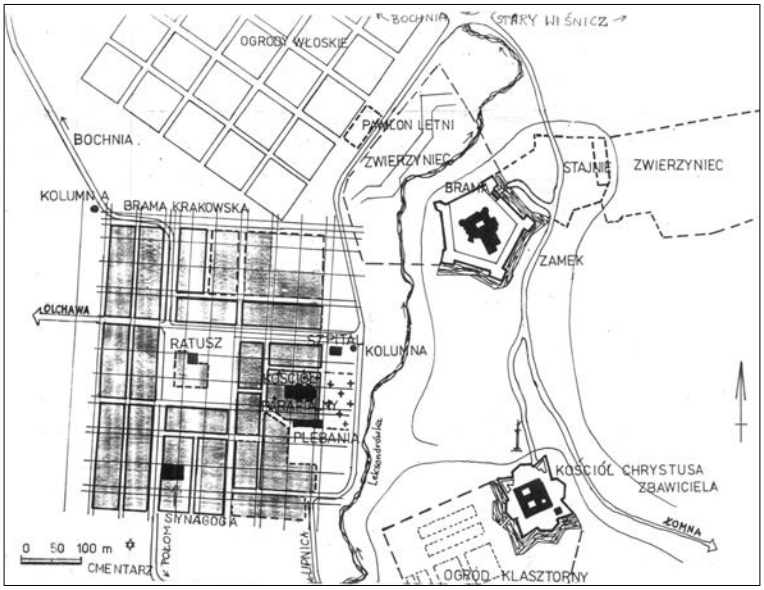
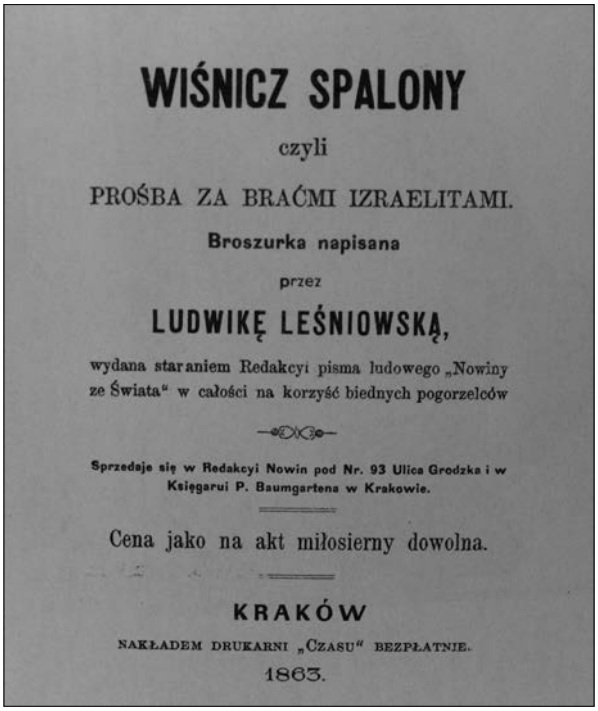


Fig. 2. A reconstruction of the town on the basis of the 1847 cadastral map. Ed. author.



WIŚNICZ SPALONY

czyli

PROŚBA ZA BRAĆMI IZRAELITAMI.

Broszurka napisana

przez

LUDWIKĘ LEŚNIOWSKĄ,

wydana staraniem Redakcyi pisma ludowego „Nowiny ze Świata" w całości na korzyść biednych pogorzelców

Sprzedaje się w Redakcyi Nowin pod Nr. 93 Ulica Grodzka i w Księgarni P. Baumgartena w Krakowie.

Cena jako na akt miłosierny dowolna.

KRAKÓW

NAKŁADEM DRUKARNI „CZASU" BEZPŁATNIE.

1863.

Fig. 3. L. Leśniowska, Wiśnicz spalony czyli prośba za braćmi Izraelitami [Wiśnicz destroyed by the fire, or a request for the Israelite brothers], title page, Kraków 1863.

Fig. 4. A. Kotsis (1836–1877), *Pogorzelcy w Wiśniczu* [*Survivors of the Fire in Wiśnicz*], 1868, oil on canvas, 56 x 71 cm, private collection. Reproduction from the catalogue of the auction house *Sztuka*, Kraków 1997, il. 27.

Fig. 5. Nowy Wiśnicz. Panorama of the town from before 1910, the fragment showing the synagogue. Film (developed on a glass plate) in private collection. Photo by Cz.Wyrwa.

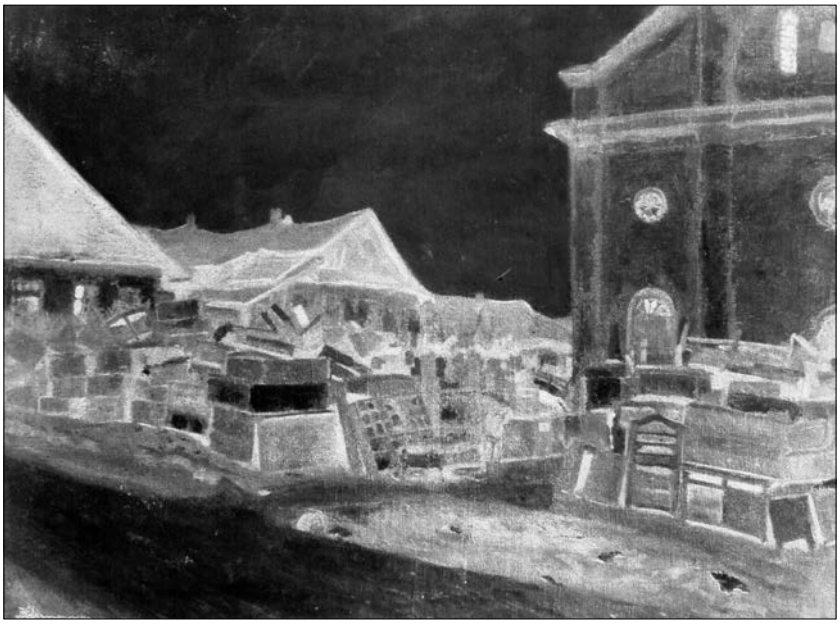


Fig. 6. St. Klimowski, *Mienie żydowskie* [*Jewish property*], 1942, oil on canvas, 75 x 100 cm, private collection. Photo by M. Sadza.

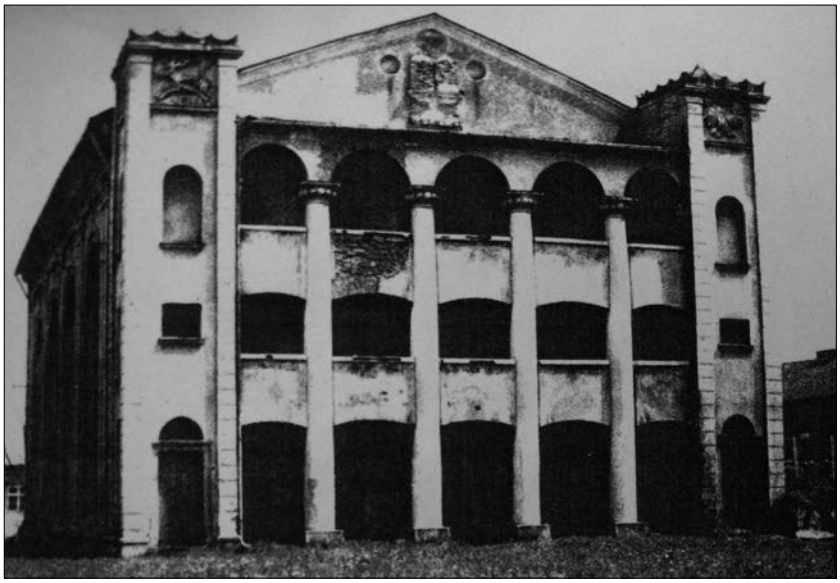


Fig. 7. Dąbrowa Tarnowska, Synagogue (1865), 2007. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulica_Berka_Joselewicza_w_Dąbrowie_Tarnowskiej.

Fig. 8. Nowy Wiśnicz. The presumed "Rabbi's house," 3 Lipnicka Street. Photo by author (2010).

Fig. 9. Nowy Wiśnicz. The funeral home (1851), dismantled, 1966. Photo by A. Pollo.

Fig. 10. Nowy Wiśnicz. The Jewish cemetery, matzevot. Photo by author (2011).

Fig. 11. Nowy Wiśnicz. The Jewish cemetery. The monument (1980) dedicated to the rabbis whose tombstones were destroyed. Photo by author (2010).

Fig. 12. Nowy Wiśnicz. The Jewish cemetery. The monument (ca. 1960) constructed out of broken tombstones. Photo by author (2011).

Fig. 13. Nowy Wiśnicz. The Jewish cemetery. The ohel funded by the Hirsch brothers (1980's). Photo by author (2011).

Fig. 14. Nowy Wiśnicz. The Jewish cemetery, a.) the tombstone of rabbi Cwi and b.) three new tombstones (2009) made of bright granite from Strzegom. Photo by author.

Fig. 15. Nowy Wiśnicz. The Jewish cemetery, tombstones; one bearing an inscription on its back side. Photo by author (2011).