

## **JEWISH SEPULCHRAL HERITAGE IN SILESIAN VOIVODESHIP DIVIDED BY THE BORDERS SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

In the area of the contemporary Silesian Voivodeship, until the period of Hitler's terror<sup>1</sup>, a few hundred religious buildings functioned in about 47 fully organized Jewish communities<sup>2</sup>. These were cemeteries, pre-funeral homes and synagogues accompanying them, as well as prayer houses and mikvehs. They were managed by Jewish communities, oftentimes distinct from each other in many respects. Apart from urban Jewish communities of Gliwice, Bytom and Katowice, among others, Jews formed smaller village concentrations in such towns as Łazy, Zaborze and located in the south, Rajcza. Upper Silesia is also an area where communities in which conservative Jews prevailed coexisted with qahals, who promoted the ideas of Haskalah and assimilation with non-Judaic environment. Jews of particular communities inhabiting the contemporary Silesian Voivodeship until the Second World War, also functioned in different sociocultural environments, which was a result of the location of communities on territories of different, nonexistent these days, countries. During their func-

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<sup>1</sup> The author, treating the start of the Nazi terror as the dividing line, understands the term differently for different parts of the voivodeship. In the part of the Silesian Voivodeship which belonged to German Reich in the interwar period, she assumes November 1938 as the start of the terror, and in particular the so-called events of Kristallnacht. However, for the rest of the voivodeship, she assumes the moment of the outbreak of the Second World War on 1 September 1939 as the start of the Nazi terror.

<sup>2</sup> According to the author's calculations, in the contemporary space of the Silesian Voivodeship, presumably 47 Jewish communities functioned in the interwar period, that is communities having (at least) a cemetery and a common place of prayer.

tioning, for the longest period of time, Jewish communities belonged to one of the three countries: the Kingdom of Prussia, the Russian Empire and the Austrian Empire<sup>3</sup>. After the formation of the Second Polish Republic, most of the area of the contemporary Silesian Voivodeship was incorporated into this newly created country, whereas the remaining part, belonged to German Reich. The laws and privileges in these political units were also different. It seems that political transformations occurring in this area were one of the key incentives shaping the functioning of Jewish religious communities. However, they were not the only incentives. The author, based on preliminary analysis regarding the objects, distinguished factors which hypothetically had a significant influence on the variation of physiognomy of religious objects in the study area. These are:

- nature of settlement (city/village),
- dominant religious confession in the religious community (conservative /Reform),
- degree of assimilation of Jewish population with the dominant socio-cultural patterns in the local community.

These cemetery complexes will be verified in the further analytical part of the article. The aim of the article is the characterization of differences in the physiognomy and distribution of Jewish religious objects in the Silesian Voivodeship on the example of cemeteries. The analysis of selected cemetery complexes provides a huge amount of information about the former functioning of Jewish communities and their spatial variation in the given area. The material concerning Jewish religious objects is relatively most detailed in terms of burial spaces, which, despite destructive processes, constitute clear elements of Jewish material culture in the landscape. The same cannot be said about the rest of the groups of objects, whose number can be described as marginal<sup>4</sup>.

Burial spaces comprise an important link of geographical analysis, which is stated in detail by, among others, L. Kong (1999) in the work "Cemeteries and Columbaria, Memorials and Mausoleums: Narrative and Interpretation in the

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<sup>3</sup> Considering the issue in detail, these were: the lands of the Kingdom of Poland connected by personal union with the Russian Empire in years 1815–1832, and after 1832, being an integral part of Russia, lands being an integral part of the Kingdom of Prussia, lands being part of the Austrian Empire, as well as the lands remaining under Austrian rule.

<sup>4</sup> Field surveys conducted by the author in the Silesian Voivodeship in the years 2015–2016 revealed the existence of only 14 buildings which used to be synagogues out of about 53 synagogues existing at least until 1938. To this day, the relics of only individual prayer houses and mikvehs have preserved (among others, in Będzin, Bytom, Jaworzno, Bielsko-Biała, and Częstochowa).

Study of Deathscapes in Geography". Synthetic works raising the subject of burial from a geographical perspective are still rare, for instance, the work of A. Długozima (2011), and oscillate mainly around tourism geography, such as works of J.J. Lennon and M. Foley (2000), S. Tanaś (2013). The issue concerning Jewish cemeteries of the Silesian Voivodeship has not been raised within the scope of spatial study by researchers covering the subject of the Jewish material legacy and the history of the followers of Judaism on the Polish territory. There emerged monographs regarding single necropolises, for example, by L. Hońdo (1995, 2004, 2012), presenting the results of performed inventories. There are numerous articles presenting the history of objects (sometimes only in the popular scientific scope) and selected issues associated with them, for example, a conservation issue, written by K. Domański (1994, pp. 218–223), R. Garstka (2008), A. Kwiecień (1992), I. Rejduch-Samkowa (1985, p. 108), D. Rozmus and S. Witkowski (2003), R. Skoczek (2012, pp. 395–406), M. Wodziński (1999a, pp. 10–11, 1999b, pp. 57–67). Only D. Rozmus (2015, pp. 99–111) analysed in detail the impact of universal religious law on the Jewish cemetery space, however, he did not describe the issues from the perspective of a territory unit, basing on the analysis of only selected necropolises, and thus limiting his considerations to the convention of a case study. The conclusions presented in the work were based on the results of the prospection of 49 cemeteries and 18 objects by the cemetery (mainly pre-funeral homes) in the Silesian Voivodeship which was carried out by the author. In order to acquire information, a query in the Documentation Department of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw was conducted, through which data from archival materials and published works were obtained. The studies were performed in years 2015–2016.

## **2. TOMBSTONES OF JEWISH CEMETERIES AS A SOURCE MATERIAL IN SPATIAL ANALYSES**

Without a cemetery, Jewish community cannot gain full independence. It belongs to the basic objects usually owned by every fully organized religious community, being an enclave in the space dominated by religious dissenters. The importance of necropolises in the structure of Jewish community is stressed by, among others, M. Nosonovsky (2009, p. 241), who points out, however, that it constitutes a subsequent link in the community hierarchy of buildings in relation to the dominant position of the synagogue. Nevertheless, as a result of political determinants, burial grounds can gain a superior significance in the Jewish community. An example constitutes the functioning of the Jewish communities

on the territory of the former Russian Empire in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, where, among others, large-scale secularization and Holocaust caused cemetery and burial ceremony themselves to become the most important pillar of Jewish community, as S. Charny (2009, p. 262) asserts. Thus, assuming possessing a necropolis by a given group of religious followers as the criterium deciding upon their formal status (as a religious community), an approximate number of qahals which functioned in the study area before the outbreak of the Second World War was defined<sup>5</sup>. On the basis of the number of towns within the Silesian Voivodeship in which there are Jewish cemeteries, it can be concluded that there were about 47 religious communities (although there existed a total of 64 Jewish cemeteries<sup>6</sup>). Jewish burial customs were preserved in the form of material legacy – particular elements of cemetery complexes. The author subjected them to analysis, among others, due to the effects associated with the functioning of the Jewish necropolis as two-plane burial space. It comprises both sacrum and profanum for the followers of Judaism, as O. Goldberg-Mulkiewicz (2000, p. 9) points out, which is expressed in its physiognomy. The cemetery territory combines two worlds: the dead, to whom it becomes *beit olam* (house of eternity) and the living, who consciously form the space, keeping in mind that it is *beit moed I col hai* (the final place for all the living), and thus it becomes in a sense *beit chaim* (house of life) (Tomaszewski and Żbikowski 2001, pp. 66–67, Wiśniewski 2009, pp. 97–98). Numerous conditioned by religion and culture detailed rules of conducting burial ceremonies change necropolis, as R. Parciack (2012, pp. 31–32) explains, “into an area of significance in terms of social order, reflecting the life of community, its structure, values and approach, which it assumes towards the essence of life and death”.

Among necropolises of the Silesian Voivodeship, in the area of 46 objects, tombstones called matzevas have been preserved. Facing the lack of archival documentation, they are often a basic source of information about Jewish communities inhabiting towns of the Silesian Voivodeship until the Second World War. The notion of matzeva itself has a very broad spectrum, exceeding far beyond the traditional definition of it as being a vertical straight stele with a Hebrew epitaph and a symbolic bas-relief. Necropolises, in terms of this element of cemetery, vary substantially within the Silesian Voivodeship, in

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<sup>5</sup> Regardless of whether a given Jewish community ended its activities during the Second World War or earlier, for instance, in the interwar period.

<sup>6</sup> This is due to the fact that in some villages Jewish communities founded more than one cemetery as a result of filling up the first burial place. This took place in Będzin, Bytom, Cieszyn, Gliwice, Lelów, Mysłowice, Pilica, Sosnowiec, Szczekociny, Żarki.

particular with regard to the languages of inscriptions, which is an interesting subject of analysis, taking into account the claims that the language of inscriptions constitutes a cultural indicator showing attachment not only to a given language but also loyalty towards the nation (Mythum 1994). Multi-lingual inscriptions on tombstones of Jewish cemeteries were the subject of analysis, among others, in the M. Nosonovsky's studies (2013, pp. 119–120, 124–125) on the 17<sup>th</sup>-century Judaic necropolis located in Jamaica (Hunts Bay). He identified not only two- but also trilingual inscriptions (Hebrew-English-Spanish/Portuguese), which according to him attest to the identity of the buried. The identifications were multidimensional in nature: as a religious community (Hebrew), family (Portuguese/Spanish), and state community (English). On Polish territory (within contemporary limits), bilingual inscriptions were probably used from the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>7</sup>. F. Wiesemann (1992, p. 30) states that, on the German territory, inscriptions in the national language began to appear on tombstones in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The researcher emphasizes, however, that despite the fact that Hebrew was replaced by German in epitaphs, extremely orthodox communities still functioned. For instance, in Burgpreppach in Lower Franconia, until the liquidation of the Jewish community in 1942, the Jews followed conservative funeral customs in terms of the tombstone art. An exemplification of this type of cemetery has been documented by the author also in the area of Silesia. Apart from the traditional language of epitaphs – Hebrew, which is common in all Jewish cemeteries, during the inventory within the study area, inscriptions in German and Polish were recorded<sup>8</sup>. On the developed by the author map (fig. 1), a division of the voivodeship into two main parts is seen, which clearly correspond to the course of political borders existing after 1815 (until the outbreak of the First World War). The first, covering the area incorporated into the Russian Empire, is almost exclusively Hebrew-speaking in terms of inscribed epitaphs. Tombstones with German inscriptions in a small number occurred in the Jewish cemetery in Sosnowiec at Gospodarcza Street, where the author found one type of such a matzeva placed on the grave of a child who died in 1883.

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<sup>7</sup> In the Jewish cemeteries of the Silesian Voivodeship, the author did not find any bilingual inscriptions older than the 19<sup>th</sup> century (their vast majority comes from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century). She did not find older epitaphs of this type in the works of other researchers regarding other Polish regions either.

<sup>8</sup> During the analysis, the author did not take into account memorial plaques placed in cemeteries after the Second World War commemorating, for instance, the victims of the Holocaust, or cenotaphs.

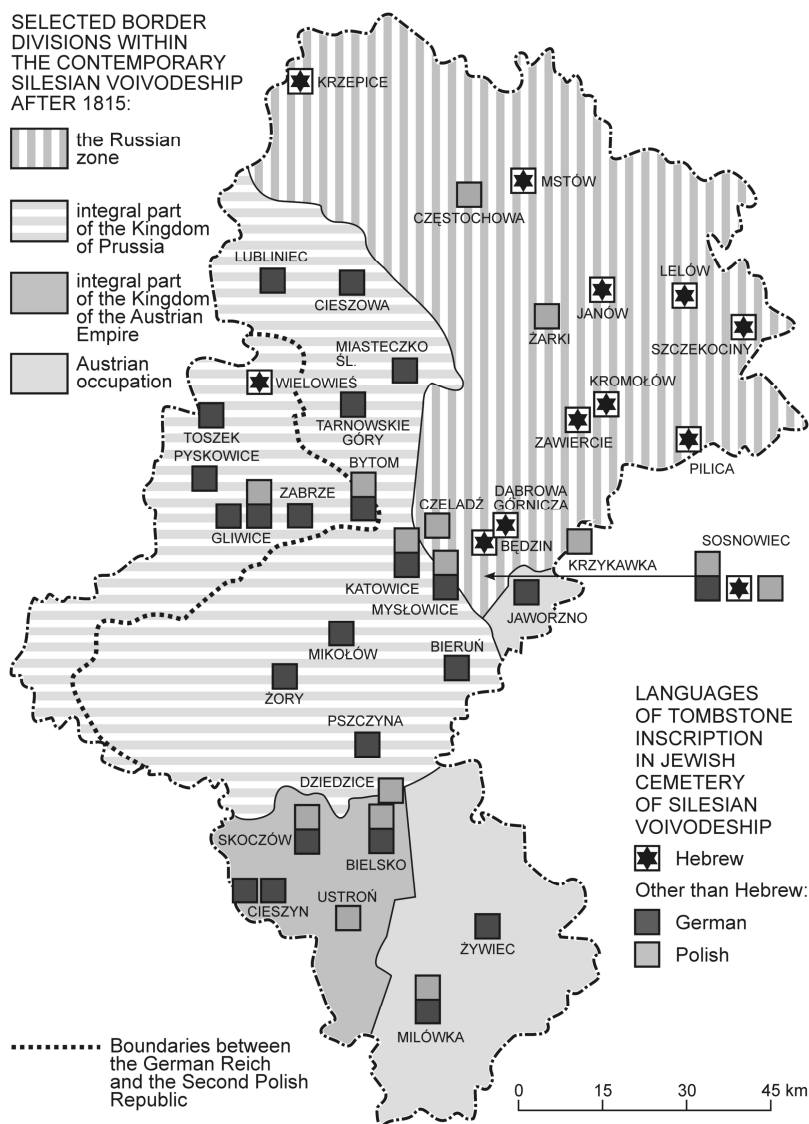


Fig. 1. Languages of tombstone inscriptions in Jewish cemeteries of Silesian Voivodeship  
Source: own elaboration

Similarly, in the cemetery in Będzin, there were probably a few tombstones written in German Gothic script, which is confirmed by R. Garstka (2008, p. 13). Diffusion between the Jewish centers situated on different sides of the borders was therefore surprisingly limited in terms of the language of inscriptions. In this part of the study area, there are also inscriptions in Polish, which come from the

interwar period (Częstochowa, Czeladź, Krzykawka, Żarki)<sup>9</sup>. Numerous inscriptions in German occur in the parts of the Voivodeship which belonged to the Kingdom of Prussia, the Austrian Empire and the lands which remained under Austrian rule (fig. 1). Polish epitaphs in the cemeteries in Gliwice, Bytom, Katowice and Bielsko-Biała are located mainly on the monuments over the post-war graves. Moreover, modern tombstones usually have only Polish-language inscriptions. In turn, within the Jewish cemeteries in Ustroń, Milówka, Skoczów and Czechowice-Dziedzice, using Polish-language inscriptions was common in the interwar period, that is, when these towns belonged to the Second Republic.

The author has identified two ways of the use of the inscription in German:

- 1) tombstone having only a German inscription,
- 2) tombstone having a double inscription (Hebrew-German):
  - a) Hebrew and German inscriptions on the same side of the tombstone (usually in the upper part of the matzeva, there is a Hebrew inscription, and below there is a simplified German version of the inscription),
  - b) Hebrew inscription on the front of the tombstone and German counterpart on the back side of the matzeva.

According to the author, by analysing the frequency and placement of certain inscriptions on the tombstones, the religious character of the Jewish community can be inferred. Limiting the use of the Hebrew epitaphs in favor of German ones was characteristic for the assimilated Jewish communities, the so-called progressive communities. Leading a modern lifestyle, they rejected traditional forms of writing, rich in religiously marked wording. In addition, the Prussian authorities introduced the obligation to speak German and adopt names and surnames in this language by the Jews (Spyra 1999, p. 14). Compared with the neighboring cemeteries, the Jewish cemetery located in Wielowieś stands out in this regard, and its spatial character is a reflection of the claim that the cemetery is a place of reproduction of the community as a whole, even though it may also have internal divisions forming segregation zones (Rugg 2000, pp. 262–263). In the area of the Jewish cemetery in Wielowieś, despite more than 100 preserved tombstones, there was no tombstone having German inscriptions. Moreover, within the cemetery, there are only traditional and very standardized forms of steles. This shows that the Jewish community established in the rural area, throughout the time of its functioning, remained probably very conservative, perhaps not being subject to the influence of Reform Judaism. After the Second World War, in 1945–1948, there occurred the recommendations, and even orders

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<sup>9</sup> R. Cieśla (1997, p. 288) states that in the cemetery in Krzepice there is a matzeva having an inscription in Polish (not found by the author).

of local authorities of some cities (such as, Żory or Bielsko-Biała) concerning the removal of German inscriptions from tombstones in the cemeteries (Walerjański 2006, p. 162). Fortunately, in most cases, their implementation failed. Traces of such activities, however, are visible in the cemeteries, for example, in Żory, where in some of the tombstones German inscriptions were hacked off (fig. 2), leaving only the Hebrew inscription.



Fig. 2. The Jewish cemetery in Żory. The instance of a tombstone with destroyed German inscription  
Source: author's photo

Among the cemeteries in which tombstones have been preserved to this date, the author chose 25 Jewish cemeteries<sup>10</sup>, whose space she decided to analyse in terms of the presence or absence of relief scenes on the tombstones. The analysis was made on the basis of her own inventory materials for cemeteries located in: Tarnowskie Góry (101 tombstones), Wielowieś (86 tombstones), Cieszowa (43 tombstones), Żarki (148 tombstones), Żywiec (114 tombstones), Bielsko-Biała (134 tombstones), Pszczyna (91 tombstones), Cieszyn (100 tombstones), Żory (61 tombstones), Bieruń (33 tombstones), Zawiercie (Daszyńskiego Street – 192 tombstones and Kromolów – 100 tombstones), Bytom (128 tombstones), Gliwice (old cemetery – 69 tombstones). Inventory materials prepared by other researchers for cemeteries in: Sosnowiec – Gospodarcza Street (313 tombstones)<sup>11</sup>, Sławków (288 tombstones) (Hońdo 2004), Jaworzno (174 tombstones),

<sup>10</sup> The selection of cemeteries on the basis of quantitative criterium – the number of preserved tombstones was crucial.

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.sztetl.org.pl/pl/pwk/?obj\\_id=1865,cmentarz-zydowski-w-sosnowcu-ul-gospodarcza-](http://www.sztetl.org.pl/pl/pwk/?obj_id=1865,cmentarz-zydowski-w-sosnowcu-ul-gospodarcza-) (January 2016).



Pilica (290 tombstones) (Hońdo 1995, 2004; 2012, pp. 55–259), Będzin (192 tombstones) (Garstka 2008), Gliwice (new cemetery – 431 tombstones)<sup>12</sup>, Krzepice (516 tombstones)<sup>13</sup>, Katowice (614 tombstones)<sup>14</sup>, Częstochowa (1647 tombstones), and Zawiercie-Kromołów (665 tombstones)<sup>15</sup> were also used. The author determined the percentage of the tombstones of the given cemetery taken into consideration for the analysis that have a bas-relief, and which part is devoid of any symbolic motifs carved. The author is aware that this sort of analysis is subject to a large margin of error due to significant losses of substances of stone and cast iron caused by devastation that occurred during the period of Hitler's terror and war. Despite this obstacle, however, it was decided to make estimates. The results are shown on the map (fig. 3).

Spatial distribution shows a clear advantage of cemeteries in which tombstones are poor in reliefs in the areas included in the 19th century in the lands which formed an integral part of the Kingdom of Prussia and the Austrian Empire. Limitation of relief scenes on the tombstones (especially on the matzevas) is the result of the influence of the culture of German Jews, who, while creating their communities in the spirit of the Reform<sup>16</sup>, introduced changes not only to the liturgy. Among the changes introduced by the Reform Jewish communities, the most visible ones these days concern sacral buildings: synagogues and elements of cemetery complexes. For example, obelisks with pyramid-shaped tops located in the urban Jewish cemeteries in Upper Silesia (among others in Bytom, Katowice, Mysłowice, and Gliwice) in many cases have an identical form to the tombstones in Berlin-Weissensee Jewish cemetery (Rütenik et al. 2013, pp. 40–41). Simple, decorated handcrafted matzevas, which were in use for decades, began to be replaced, especially in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, by tombstones inspired by sepulchral art of the Christian religion. Some were copies of tombs that could be found in the Protestant cemeteries, sometimes even neighboring with Jewish cemeteries, which was the case, for instance in Zabrze<sup>17</sup>. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Reform Judaism in

<sup>12</sup> [http://cemetery.jewish.org.pl/list/c\\_83](http://cemetery.jewish.org.pl/list/c_83) (January 2016).

<sup>13</sup> [http://cemetery.jewish.org.pl/list/c\\_81](http://cemetery.jewish.org.pl/list/c_81) (January 2016).

<sup>14</sup> [http://cemetery.jewish.org.pl/list/c\\_82](http://cemetery.jewish.org.pl/list/c_82) (January 2016).

<sup>15</sup> [www.gidonim.com/he](http://www.gidonim.com/he) (January 2016).

<sup>16</sup> The process of losing a specific “Jewish character” by the cemeteries as a result of assimilation was covered by F. Wiesemann (1992, p. 30).

<sup>17</sup> The Jewish cemetery in Zabrze (founded in 1871) is adjacent to the Evangelical-Augsburg cemetery founded in 1868. Both cemeteries are separated by the common stone wall (Majewska 2016, p. 54).

architecture drew from the existing then Western European trends in sepulchral art, and therefore matzevas in the neoclassicist, and later Neo-Moorish form, began to appear also in Jewish cemeteries<sup>18</sup>.

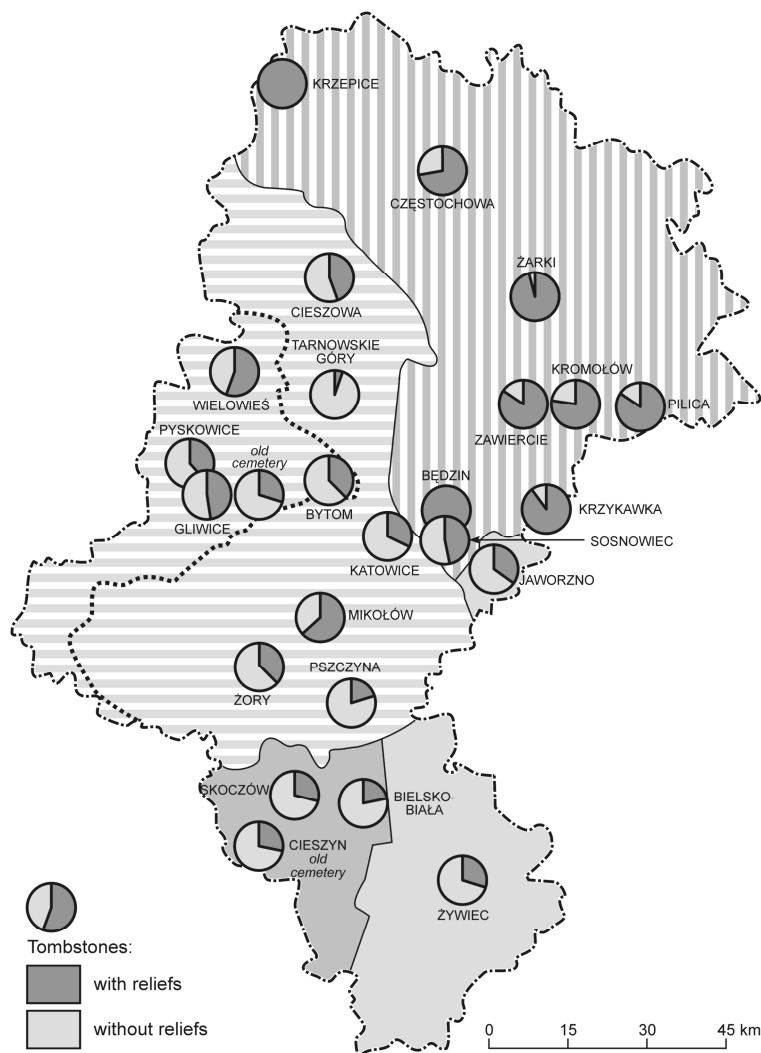


Fig. 3. The presence of reliefs or the lack of them on the tombstones of Jewish cemeteries of Silesian Voivodeship  
Source: own elaboration

<sup>18</sup> Changes in the Jewish religious architecture of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, in particular, in the context of the synagogues are raised, among others, by E. Bergman (2004).

### **3. CEMETERY DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGES IN THE ORGANIZATION OF THE BURIAL SITE**

Arvin wrote: “walking in the cemetery, we come in contact with the history stuck in the soil, plants and stone”<sup>19</sup>. Indeed, it is true because the cemetery is a treasure trove of knowledge about the community that managed it. The source of information for historical research are not only epitaphs carved in the tombstones. To be able to determine as accurately as possible the religious and cultural basis as well as economic status of a particular Jewish community during the period of its operation, not only an attempt of separate analysis of individual components of the cemetery complex should be undertaken. The space of the cemetery should also be treated as a holistic unit, in which one can see the differences in relation to other cemeteries.

Lining up the tombstones in rows certainly occurred in most cemeteries to make the most economical use of burial space. However, alleys do not always constitute the elements of the Jewish cemetery complex. In Pilica and Żarki, there function only provisional passages between the tombstones, which have been trodden as a result of the necessity to move around the cemetery. Wide communication routes began to be included within the study area cemeteries that were established from the second half of the 19th century on. The author suspects that laying out the alleys was mainly associated with taking into consideration the new rules of burial space planning. This is supported by the distribution of cemeteries in which the author recorded the existence of alleys (fig. 4). They occur mainly in the part of the voivodeship which was inhabited largely by, presumably, German progressive Jews (the area belonged to the Kingdom of Prussia and the Austrian Empire until the outbreak of the First World War). It is possible, however, that the cemetery alleys had also a strictly religious significance. L. Hońdo (n.d., p. 4) points out that the wide alleys, called “priests' paths”, enabled persons from the priestly family to enter the cemetery premises. Owing to this, they could avoid ritual impurity while visiting the graves of loved ones.

The turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the time when, in the developing centers of Upper Silesia, in addition to other urban elements, cemeteries were subject to significant changes. At that time, the cemeteries with a clear system of burial plots and alleys began to replace the cemeteries of disordered internal structure and almost chaotic system of burials. These changes can be seen in the Jewish cemeteries within the study area.

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<sup>19</sup> <http://lubimyczytac.pl/cytat/81452> (04.01.2016).

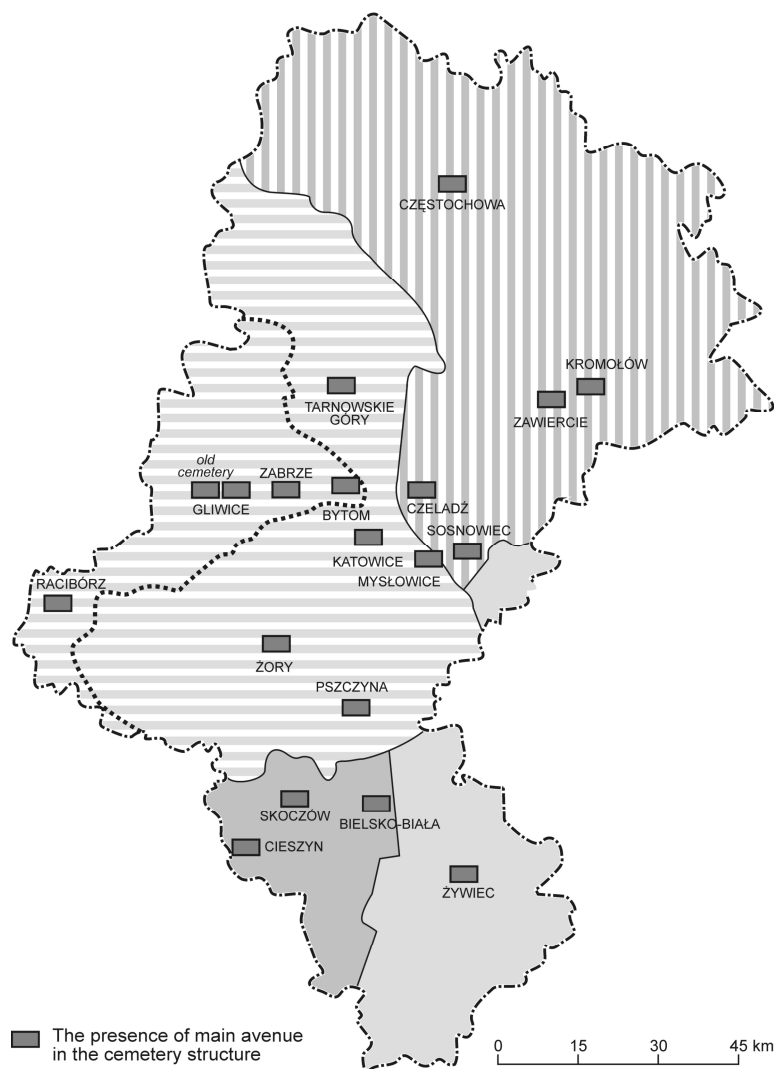


Fig. 4. The presence of the main avenue in the structure of Jewish cemeteries of Silesian Voivodeship  
Source: own elaboration

Together with the composition of the cemetery, the nature and role of the development accompanying the objects was subject to change, as well. *Bet tahara* is also known as “purification house” because, inside it, the members of the Chevra Kadisha brotherhood performed the ritual washing of the body and prepared it for the last passage. Every, even liberal, Jewish community sought to build it. It took a permanent place in the structure of municipal institutions,

although its functions were subject to change. While in Orthodox Jewish communities pre-funeral homes served primarily the purpose of the fulfillment of religious duty, in the communities of Reform Judaism, more emphasis was placed on the sociocultural role. *Bet tahara* was perceived there rather as a representative, worthy place for the last farewell of the deceased<sup>20</sup>.

Out of 64 Jewish cemeteries of the Silesian Voivodeship which existed to the time of Hitler's terror, at least 43 certainly had pre-funeral homes. The author determined the location of 40 objects in relation to the areas of cemeteries. The acquired data allowed for the conclusion that almost all of them were located on the border of the burial area, near the road leading to the cemetery. It was the most practical solution. It was the pre-funeral home where the funeral procession was leaving from. They were built on the periphery of the cemeteries for yet another reason. Part of the building was often designed for the apartment of the caretaker of a cemetery. The burial area was a space considered as unclean, therefore a residential building had to be outside its territory. A house wall was enough; it acted as an insulator protecting from the unclean land (Woronczak 1993, p. 6). Few objects, usually established at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, were separated from the burial ground with free space designed for economic purposes (eg. Gliwice, Bielsko-Biała), or they were even located in the center of the cemetery complex (Cieszyn). What was also noticeable at that time was an increase in the significance of pre-funeral homes in the structure of cemeteries. The institution of *bet tahara* led by the Chevra Kadisha brotherhood, next to the rabbinate, was among the most important institutions of the Jewish community. Particularly, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, funeral brotherhoods were monopolists in the funeral services in many religious communities. Income obtained from burials was significant<sup>21</sup> and could constitute the key revenue for municipalities. Therefore, brotherhoods' headquarters were taken care of, so that they were not only humble objects resembling sheds. Similarly to the synagogues, they were to be more representative. Pre-funeral homes were also built thanks to the foundations

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<sup>20</sup> In the memorial book of the Jewish community of Katowice, the following description of the pre-funeral home of the local pre-war Jewish community was contained: "in turn, the cemetery in Katowice had a wonderful funeral hall, decorated with vases, in which the body was laid before burial. It was said that the pre-funeral home was an edifice which from the inside looked like a theater with a stage formed by the rows of seats set for the mourners in a semicircle" (JewishGen: *Katowice...*).

<sup>21</sup> One piece of evidence of the power possessed by the burial fraternity is a record in the memorial book of the Jewish community of Sosnowiec about a lawsuit initiated against Chevra Kadisha members in Sosnowiec around 1908. They demanded extremely large sums of money for organizing burials (JewishGen: *The Book of Sosnowiec...*).

of wealthy families, which allowed for the construction of buildings that appeared to be the evidence of the great industrial fortunes (eg. Gliwice). Changes in locating these objects also resulted from changes in the way of the cemetery planning. Particular attention was paid to the relationship between the pre-funeral home and the main alley of the cemetery, which more and more often was taken into account during the planning of the burial plots. The basis of the cemetery complex began to be a clear composition axis, and a pre-funeral home positioned at its end became a dominant feature of the landscape of the entire system. Here, reference can be made to figure 5, which graphically shows an example of a thought-out position of the cemetery object in the spatial planning (Bielsko-Biała). A reverse variant is positioning the pre-funeral home in such a way that the location of the building can be considered as not corresponding to the poorly developed spatial layout of the Jewish cemetery (Żarki).

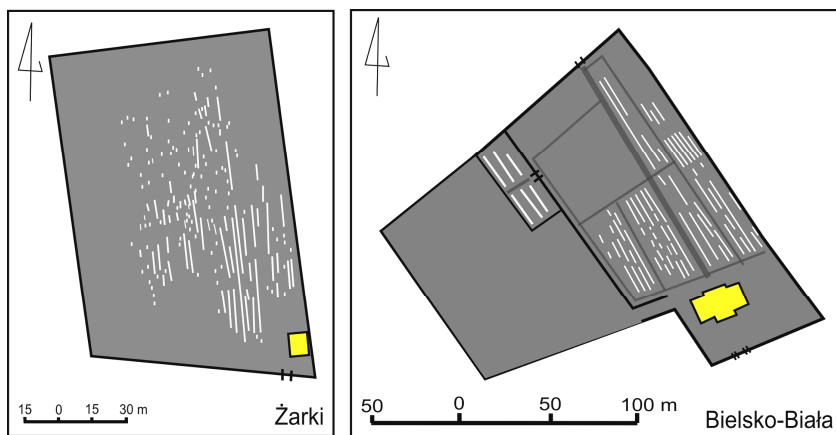


Fig. 5. Examples of the pre-funeral homes locations in the Jewish cemeteries  
Source: own elaboration

Completely or partially, buildings accompanying 18 Jewish cemeteries still exist. Their locations are shown in figure 6. Among the existing buildings, in the case of three cemeteries, their image is incomplete. This is the case in Skoczów-Wilamowice, Krzykawka, near Sławków and Zabrze. In all these Jewish cemeteries, *bet tahara* buildings are non-existent. To date, there have survived there only residential buildings, that is the former houses of gardeners/caretakers. It is worth noting that the objects by the cemetery which still exist today form two clear clusters on the map of the voivodeship. The bigger one is located in its central part within the range of the Silesian-Dabrowa conurbation. The second one is a region which, in the years 1815–1918, was an integral part of the

Austrian Empire. The author believes that such a distribution of existing buildings to a lesser extent results from the political history of the area. It is clearly noticeable that the objects that have survived are mainly the ones in the largest former and modern urban centers. Probably pre-funeral homes built on their territory are objects characterized by a larger area and more robust construction than in the areas of small shtetls, therefore they were more likely to survive.

The author divided the study area cemetery buildings into the following categories:

1. Individual buildings:
  - 1.1. Single-function objects (pre-funeral home),
  - 1.2. Multifunction objects (pre-funeral home/mortuary/administrative rooms/carriage house/residential rooms/storage rooms),
2. Building complexes (separate pre-funeral home and buildings, eg. residential).

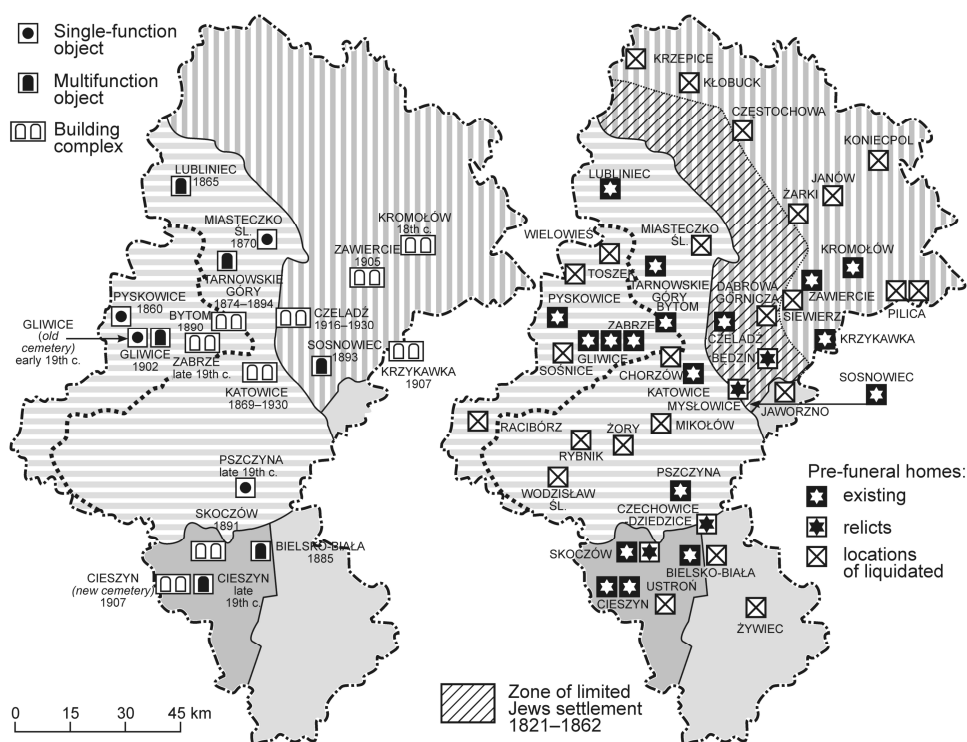


Fig. 6. Pre-funeral homes of Jewish cemeteries in the Silesian Voivodeship

Source: own elaboration

According to this division, a map showing the distribution of the particular types of construction in the voivodeship was drawn up (fig. 6). It includes all the objects, also non-existent now (eg. Miasteczko Śląskie), on which information is known in terms of their architecture and function. Given the nature of urban centers in which the objects were built, it can be assumed that impressive single multifunction buildings remained the domain of large cities, where a circle of Jews turning to the ideas of Reform Judaism expanded the fastest, reaching a significant voice in organizational matters of the municipality. When a single building is located at the cemetery which was founded in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, it can be assumed that it was a traditional *bet tahara* having only rooms for preparations for the funeral ceremony (eg. Gliwice – old cemetery). This is indicated by a small cubic capacity of the building. However, after 1850, customs began to change. Bigger buildings designed for not only the pre-funeral home but also apartment for the caretaker, among others, started to be built. It was a solution being in a slight contradiction with the tradition of separating the space reserved for the living and the space reserved for the dead. The evolution in cemetery buildings is tangible evidence of religious changes taking place within the communities themselves. Urban communities started to be increasingly subjected not only to the Haskalah but also to the new emerging lifestyle of German Jews, who were strongly associated with the confession of Reform Judaism.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The author showed the variation of cemeteries in the voivodeship on the basis of analyses of particular elements of the cemetery complexes. Territorial location of particular communities, and therefore their functioning in various political, social and cultural conditions was one of the main factors shaping the physiognomy of religious objects. Differences were also the aftermath of discrepancies in terms of religion, namely the functioning of both conservative and liberal communities.

The author distinguished two types of physiognomy of Jewish cemeteries:

1. Characteristics of the physiognomy of objects typical of the conservative communities,
2. Characteristics of the physiognomy of objects typical of the Reform communities.

They were listed in a tabular form showing the main differences between necropolises.



Table 1. Variation of physiognomy of Jewish cemeteries divided into two types of Jewish communities functioning in the study area

Physiognomic characteristics of cemeteries of Jewish conservative communities	Physiognomic characteristics of cemeteries of Jewish progressive communities
Typical of the area that formerly belonged to	
the Kingdom of Poland	the Kingdom of Prussia
Cemetery	
<p>Lack of clear division into rows, row layout may occur, but it is relatively irregular, lack of clear division of the cemetery into burial plots</p> <p>Lack of representative alley</p> <p>Burials at the cemetery conducted according to the order resulting from religious restrictions and tradition: there can be division into separate zones of burial for women and men</p> <p>Burials of priests (cohens) in the first rows – traditional order of burials</p> <p>Rare occurrence of children's tombstones, location of children's tombstones among adult graves, no separate burial plots for children</p> <p>Ohels of tzadiks/rabbis can stand out in the cemetery space</p> <p>Tombstones located on the east-west axis, or slightly deviating from the east-west axis</p> <p>Rich sculpture decoration of tombstones; rich symbolism, unprofessional, handicraft funerary art</p> <p>Mostly the traditional form of tombstones, cylindrical tombstones</p> <p>No planned plantings in the cemetery, chaotic, wild, and unplanned green area</p> <p>Cemetery is not adjacent to a heterodox necropolis</p>	<p>Clear division into rows of tombstones, clear regular distribution of tombstones, division into burial plots occurs</p> <p>Representative alley</p> <p>Burials at the cemetery conducted, to a lesser extent, according to the religious criterium and tradition; division into male and female burial plots disappears; common occurrence of family tombs</p> <p>Burials of people of merit for the community or representatives of wealthy families in the first and representative rows</p> <p>Separate burial plots for children, usually in the first, front burial plots of the cemetery, frequent marking of children's graves</p> <p>Division into zones of burial according to certain religious congregations (Orthodox, Reform) may occur in the cemetery</p> <p>Tombstones located not only on the traditional east-west axis but also on the north-south axis</p> <p>Poor sculpture decoration of tombstones, simplified symbolism</p> <p>Presence of obelisks, impressive tombs, rectangular and chest tombstones</p> <p>Green area is an important component of the cemetery complex, numerous planned plantings, tree alleys, green area – well-groomed and taken care of</p> <p>Cemetery may be adjacent to the Christian necropolis</p>

Buildings in the cemetery complex	
Modest building of the pre-funeral home, rarely including residential rooms for the gravedigger/guardian, single function building, separation of the pre-funeral home from the guardian's apartment through the creation of a building complex Random location of buildings, lack of connections with the composition layout of the necropolis	The pre-funeral home mostly includes the apartment of the gravedigger/guardian and utility rooms, brick building, representative, multifunction building Planned location of the buildings, a clear composition relationship between the pre-funeral home and the course of the alleys

Source: own study.

The author's proposal regarding the division of the Jewish cemeteries into the two groups, according to their physiognomic characteristics is reflected, among others, in the studies by Ziątkowski (2012, pp. 36–37), who, in the area of Upper Silesia, observed characteristics of a “borderland”, and precisely the suspension between the “German” (Western European) model and a “Polish” (Eastern European) model, taking into account the characteristics of Jewish communities functioning in this area in the 19th century. Jewish communities of particular towns were in many cases very different internally. Starting from the day of the partitions (the late 18th century) in the study area, Hasidic communities marked their presence, bringing into the particular communities new forms of religious life: a kind of cult of *tzadiks*, a different way of leading prayers. Groups of Jews representing Rabbinic Judaism, the most traditional, based solely on the Torah and the Talmud, so-called current of *mitnagdism*, distinguished themselves in the communities. They were opponents of Hasidism, then regarded as orthodox, just as Hasidim today (Lewalski 2013, pp. 71–72). In the communities, next to the supporters of tradition, there also appeared *maskilim* – progressive Jews, whose milieu was shaped through the influence of the Haskalah.

Therefore, in the Silesian Voivodeship, apart from the communities which seemed to have almost fully functioned in the conservative<sup>22</sup> or Reform spirit, there was a number of communities which, in terms of physiognomy of religious objects (including some cemeteries), the author could define as “intermediate” structures. The communities which, in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, underwent a specific process of cultural transformation, whose ma-

<sup>22</sup> Particularly within the Kingdom of Poland, where, as reported by Lewalski (2013, pp. 67–68), the Jews established closed and isolated communities, there functioned a conservative community model.

nifestations were the changing forms and layouts of particular institutional elements – including the cemetery and synagogue, belong to this category. This was the case, for example in Zabrze, whose synagogue before the reconstruction exhibited features of a traditional, classicist synagogue in terms of its style<sup>23</sup>. In turn, after the reconstruction in 1898, it was an impressive building combining the Neo-Romanesque and Moorish features, equipped with two onion towers. Similar changes occurred within the space of the cemetery, in which grand tombs began to appear, representing through their forms the then trends in Christian, and not traditional Jewish, sepulchral art.

The issue of spatial variation of objects of Jewish religious heritage requires in many respects conducting more detailed research. The author in her discussion focused on the synthetic analysis concerning the entire study area. It is necessary to undertake archival analyzes for a better understanding of the specifics of the particular cemetery objects and fully define their character, for instance the religious character.

*Translated by Małgorzata Wojciechowska*

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<sup>23</sup> The image of the synagogue in Zabrze, before the reconstruction was published by Z. Gołasz (2012, p. 328).

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