

A Jewel in the Crown: The Kraków 1856 Cadastral Map

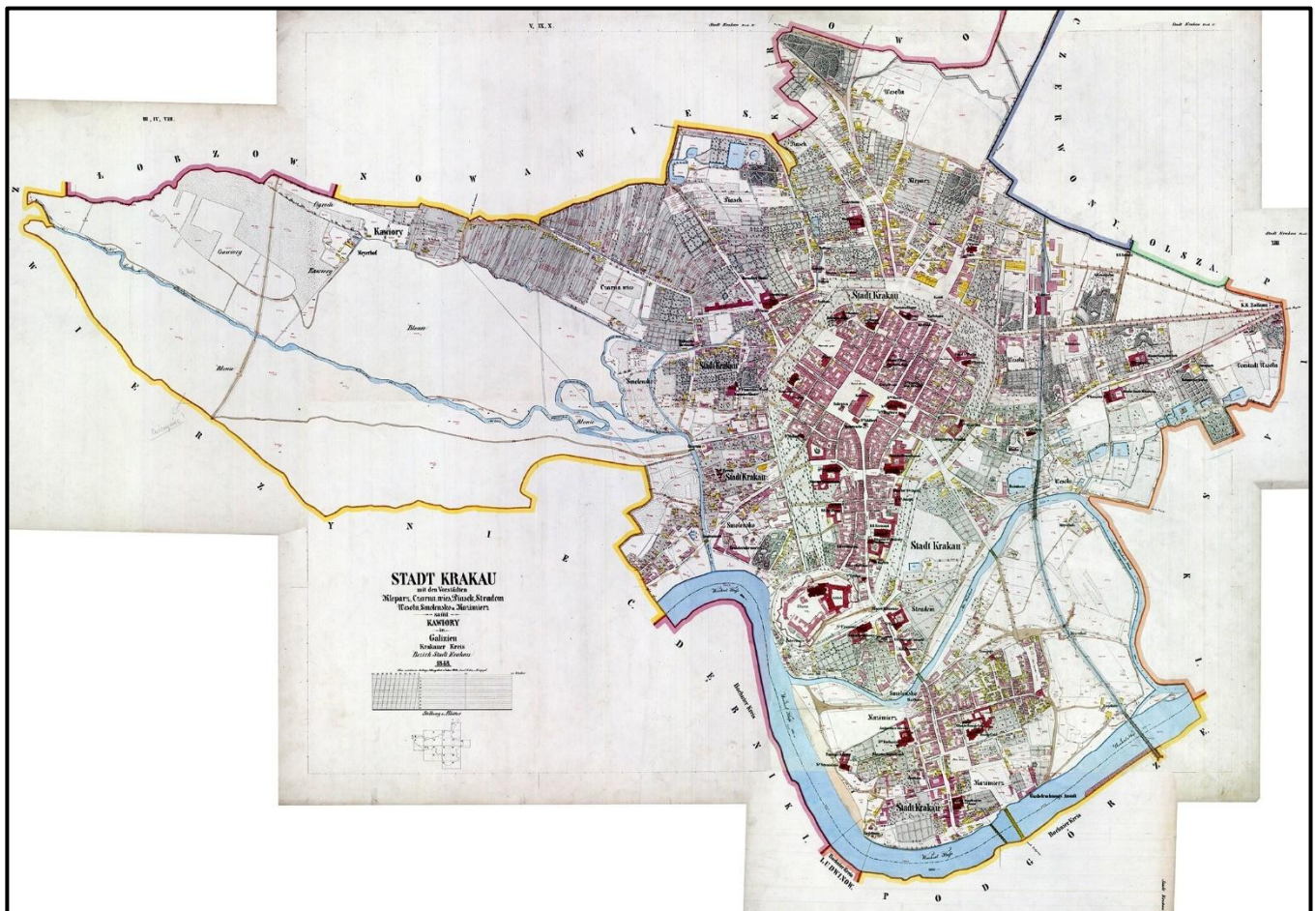
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THE FORMER FREE CITY OF KRAKÓW was newly Austrian when, just two years after a failed uprising in 1846, it found itself under scrutiny by land surveyors and tax officials, who measured and assessed every property in the new imperial acquisition. They returned several years later to check and revise their measurements, and then skilled cartographers created a sparkling mix of

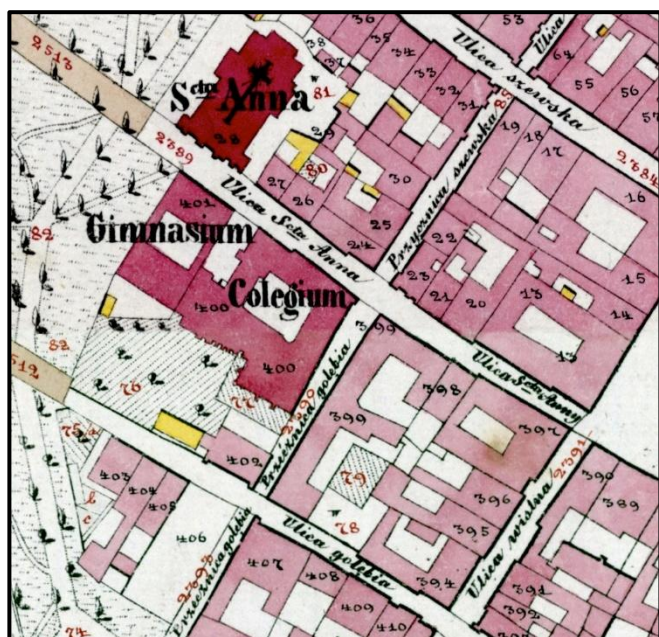
art and science: the 1856 cadastral map of Kraków.

The map was huge—spanning 13 sheets at 1:2880 scale. When assembled into a single record, the physical map is nearly six feet square (almost two meters per side); we had to reduce the map by a factor of 10 to present it on this page. The paper map is too large to carry on a visit to the city, but the digital version is a valuable tool for historical research (see [Geshet Galicia Map Room](#)).

Elsewhere in this issue, we discuss the famous **Jagiellonian University** centered on *ulica Świętej Anny* (St. Anne Street) in the Old Town. When Kraków was surveyed, the 500-year-old institution was slated for closure, and its celebrated *Collegium Maius* assembly hall was threatened



with reuse as a grain store. But by the time the map was produced, reason had prevailed and the university was regaining its prominence as a seat of learning. The distinctive footprint of the *Collegium* building is shown on the map to the west of the main market square. After the 1856 survey, the university would expand with a new *Collegium Novum* and by taking over the facilities of a gymnasium and other buildings in the block.



A western section of Kraków's old town, showing the Collegium Maius near the Saint Anne church

For anyone interested in the Jewish cultural history of Kraków, the **Kazimierz district** is central to its residential and religious life. In 1856, Kazimierz was separated from central Kraków by a small branch of the Wisła River (Weichsel in German, Vistula in English) that cut through the south portion of the city (*see the map on previous page*)—travel between central Kraków and Kazimierz required crossing one of two bridges.

The “Jewish quarter” made up only a portion of the Kazimierz district, to the north of monasteries, brickworks, and several riverfront industrial works, all visible on the map. The presence of the Jewish community in Kazimierz

is indicated in several ways, not least of which is the street named “*ulica żydowska*” (sic) (Jewish Street), which led directly to the Jewish residential core.

The Jewish religious centers were all carefully drafted, although only one of the synagogues was clearly labeled. Comparing modern Kraków with the map, it is easy to locate Poland's oldest surviving synagogue, the fifteenth-century “*Stara Bożnica*,” as building number 853 at the end of the street still called Szeroka (“Broadway”)—today the building serves as a museum of Kraków's Jewish history and culture.

Another five **surviving synagogues** are visible as well: the Remah synagogue (from circa 1558) at no. 824; the Wysoka or “High” synagogue (circa 1563) at no. 794; Popper's synagogue (circa 1620) at no. 843; the Kupa synagogue (circa 1643) at no. 743 (and labeled “*Sinagoge*” on the map); and Isaac's synagogue (circa 1644) at no. 773. Kraków's beautiful Tempel was completed in 1862, six years after this map was drafted. Its location today is near the orchard plot no. 340 on the historical map.

Jewish cemeteries also figure prominently in the Kazimierz section of the map, each marked with the distinctive triangles symbolizing Jewish *matzevot* (grave markers). The old cemetery adjacent to the Remah synagogue, a key site of Polish Jewish religious veneration and heritage tourism, is outlined and numbered with land parcel 373. Very close by, in the middle of *ulica Szeroka*, there is a tiny Jewish burial ground which appears on very few tourist itineraries but is outlined on this map as parcel no. 377 (*see image on the top of next page*); the site is still preserved in Kraków today.

Not far to the northeast of these old cemeteries, and still within the Kazimierz district, is the “new” Jewish cemetery established in 1800, now

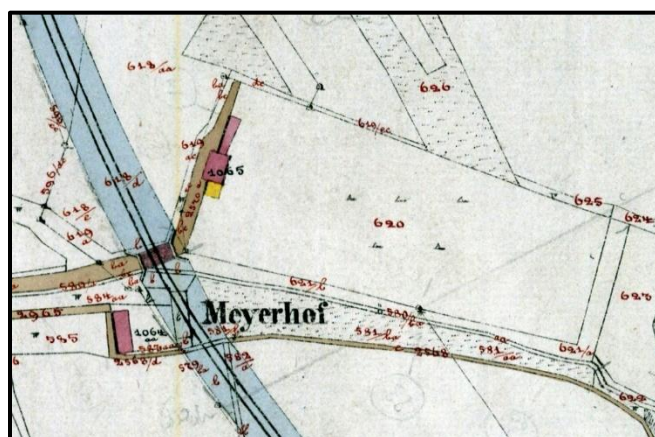


also known as the Miodowa cemetery for the street which ends at its entrance.

Austrian efforts to connect the newly acquired city of Kraków with the rest of Galicia are visible on the historical map, and they link the Jewish history of the city with the modern world. Rail lines were assembling quickly in Central Europe when the first cadastral survey of Kraków was made; in 1848 the city connected to the border city of Mysłowice to the northwest, offering an opportunity to reach Prussia or travel south to Vienna by train.

By the second survey and production of the drafted map, the line had been extended into the heartland of Galicia to the southeast; now Kraków was connected to Dębica, and in a few years the railroad would reach farther Przemyśl, Lemberg, and Tarnopol.

Rail passengers today still can see the Miodowa Jewish cemetery from their windows after crossing the Wisła River from the southeast and just before arriving at the historical station.



The new Jewish cemetery on the 1856 map, with the new railroad extension (in blue and black) passing by its southwestern corner.