

Map Corner

Rediscovering Old Jewish Cemeteries in Galicia

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THE LINKS BETWEEN genealogy and physical heritage are well known, and they have been written about in the pages of this journal many times over the past 25 years. In 1993, less than five years after Poland and Ukraine regained their independence, the first page of the first issue of the *Galitzianer* mentioned that most of the members of the blossoming Gesher Galicia organization were interested in travel to the former lands of Galicia, with some members having already visited.

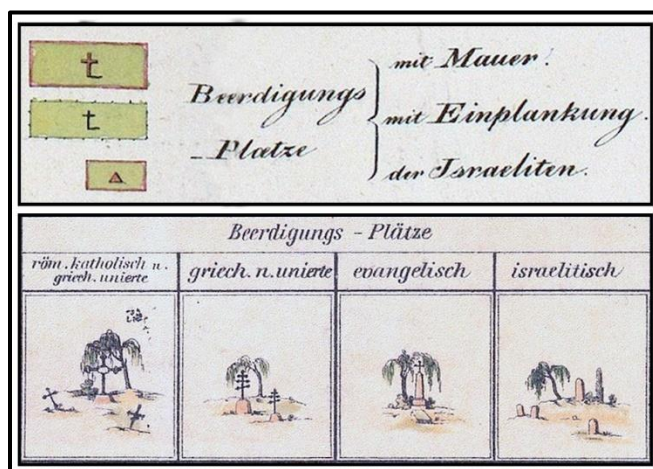
The benefits of linking genealogy and heritage flow both ways: family records research, coupled with property records and historical cadastral maps, can identify where in modern towns our ancestors lived, and physical traces of those ancestors in neighborhoods and cemeteries are sometimes discovered during on-site visits and in discussions with locals. The article by Deborah Schultz on page 25 of this issue highlights how heritage volunteers working in Kalush, Ukraine, (formerly Kalusz) have helped to make *matzevot* (tombstones) in the Jewish cemetery there accessible to researchers for documentation and interpretation, and how genealogical data is needed to help identify the deceased described in the carved epitaphs.

Shultz also identifies another key issue in family history research: locating historic cemeteries after decades without Jewish community caretakers. As

she notes, damage by Nazi and Soviet authorities during and after WWII has left many regional Jewish cemeteries unrecognizable, known only to a small number of elderly locals. Even in Kalush, where the cemetery still retains many of its pre-war *matzevot*, locating the site is a challenge for foreign visitors. Historical cadastral maps can be a valuable aid in discovering these old cemeteries.

Jewish Cemeteries on Cadastral Maps

Several articles in the Map Corner series over the past three years have illustrated Jewish cemeteries on historical cadastral maps, including the 1825 and 1877 maps of Obertyn in the March 2016 issue. Skilled surveyors and cartographers in the nineteenth century used a geographically consistent but evolving scheme for indicating Jewish cemeteries on maps, usually a symbolic triangular outline (sometimes shaded pink) or later, a more picturesque rounded rectangle reflecting the shapes of *matzevot* seen on-site. These symbols contrast with the variety of crosses commonly used to depict Christian cemeteries. Two of many imperial map legends are excerpted here to show the official symbols from the early and late nineteenth century.



Two different styles of standardized symbols for cemeteries on imperial cadastral map legends from the nineteenth century

In practice, there was much more variation in how cemeteries were identified on Galician cadastral maps, especially on initial field sketches produced by surveyors as they walked entire towns and villages making measurements of property boundaries. Jewish cemetery indicators range from a simple hand-written text label to a single triangle to more "artistic" depictions. A small sample of typical cemetery outlines and symbols is included on this page, and the large collection of historical maps in the Gesher Galicia Map Room makes a useful laboratory for further study.

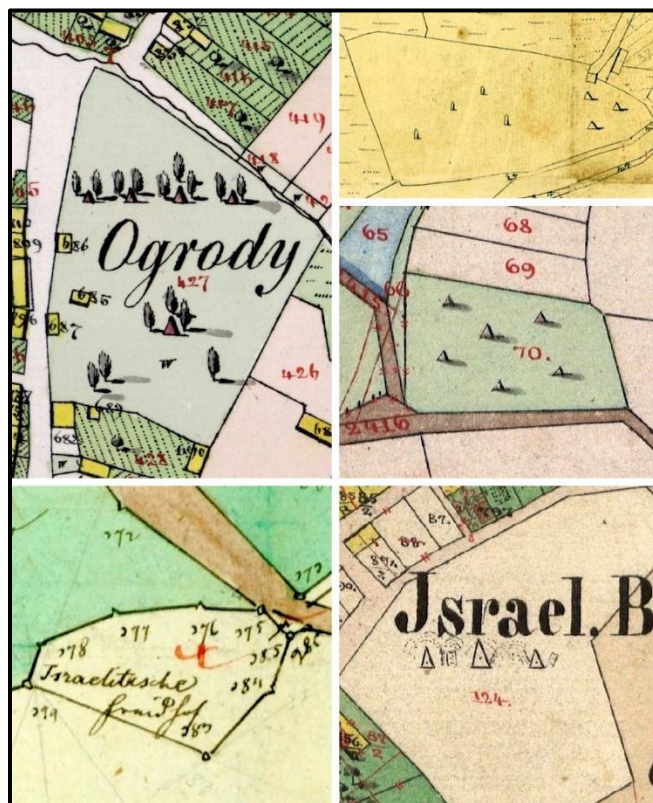
Triangular symbols were also used to indicate other features on maps, which can lead to confusion. As shown in the figure on page 33, similar symbols were used to represent synagogues, trigonometric survey markers placed on buildings or on open land, and even agricultural fields planted with hops, with the shape mimicking the distinctive conical shape of hop bines.

Since cemeteries were community property, the boundaries of cemeteries of all faiths were carefully documented in the tax records for each settlement, with historical maps highly detailed and accurate for the year of the survey. The Map Room collection includes many maps which show later property changes in red ink, some of which include extensions to Jewish cemetery boundaries.

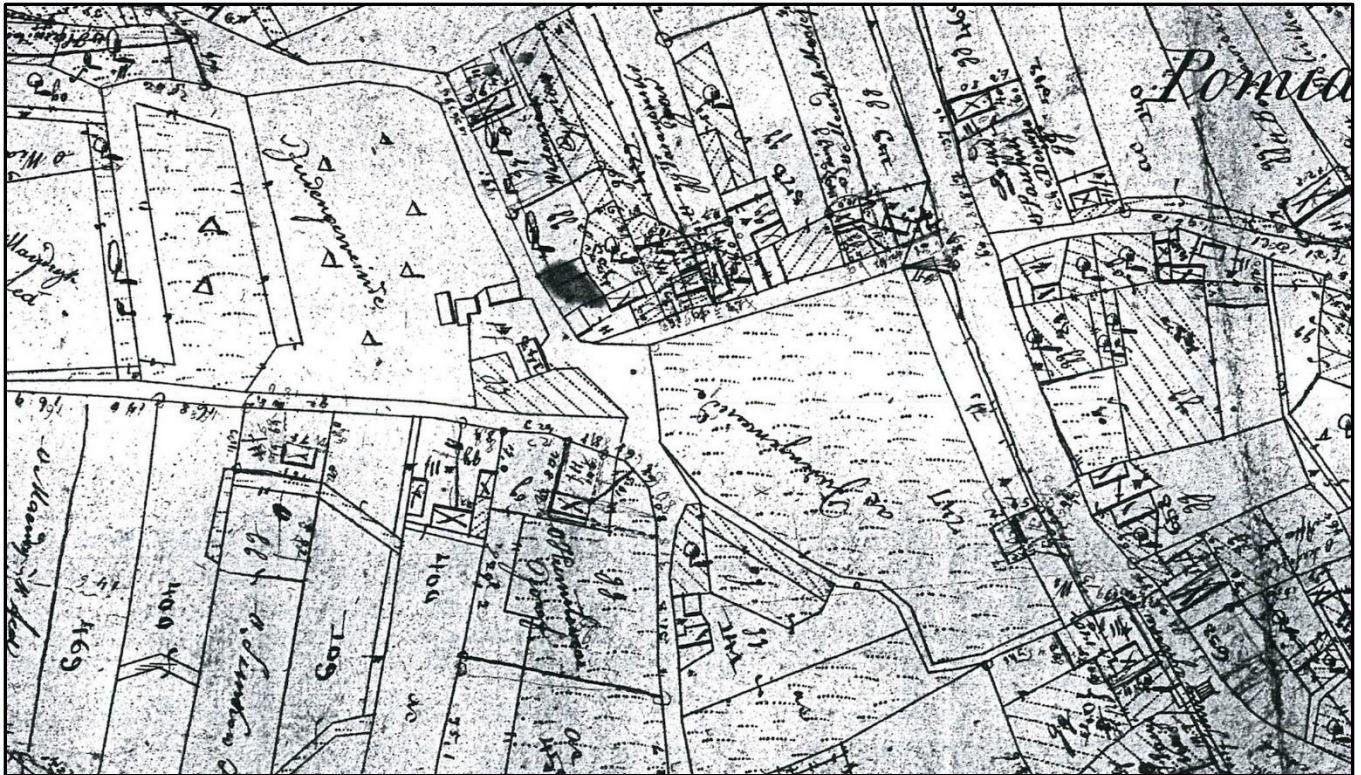
The Kałusz Map

Defects in surviving historical maps sometimes frustrate family historians hoping to use them to support various types of research: sheets missing for key parts of a town, property records gone that would have linked vital records to land and building parcels, maps missing annotations, or only wildly inaccurate field sketches surviving. But many such maps can still serve other research purposes, including locating cemeteries. The Kałusz map, shown on the following page, is an excellent example.

The surviving cadastral sketch is undated, but stylistically we can place it in the middle of the nineteenth century. It is imperfect geographically, but it is clearly based on an earlier map drafted from survey measurements. Large portions of former Kałusz have changed significantly since the map was created, even in what was a dense downtown about 150 years ago, but key roads and waterways still permit relatively easy visual alignment and scale of the map to the modern town. A serious defect for family historians is the lack of house numbers on buildings in the downtown area, where most Kałusz Jews would have lived. These numbers would likely have been indicated on a high-scale map of only the downtown area, now lost. Fortunately, anyone wanting to use the surviving map for planning a heritage and history visit to Kalush can still find sites of interest.



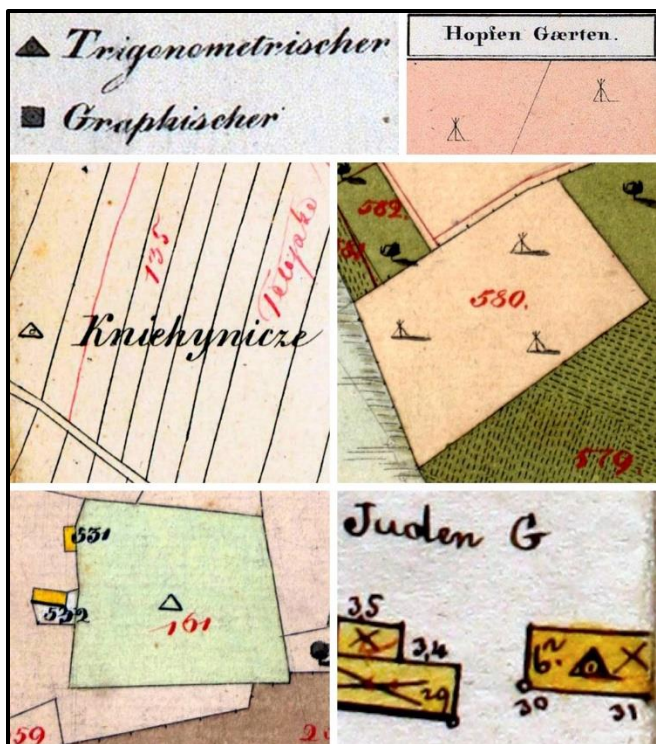
Examples of Jewish cemeteries represented on historical maps (clockwise): Sokołów Małopolski 1853, Bolechów 1878, Głogów 1849, Żurów 1876, and Leżajsk 1853



The Jewish cemetery in Kalush at upper left on an undated historical cadastral map



The same section of modern Kalush seen in a satellite view (sourced from a 2019 DigitalGlobe image and 2019 Microsoft map data)



Examples of confusing map symbols, clockwise from left center: two types of triangular survey markers, two examples of hop field markers, a synagogue marker, and a cemetery marker

Using historical map legends and other maps as examples, it is easy to locate the Jewish cemetery as it appeared in the mid-nineteenth century on the Katusz map. The site is marked with eight triangles on two parcels, and is found about a kilometer northwest of the original downtown, across a fork in the Sivka River (labeled both Siwka and Swica on the map). Confirming its purpose, the cemetery also has a label indicating it belongs to the Jewish community (*Judengemeinde*, in German). Once we are focused on this location on the map, we see that there is another land parcel, adjacent to the cemetery and to a major road, that also belonged to the Jewish community. This parcel may have been reserved for a future extension of the cemetery or for another purpose, but there is no modern evidence of any later Jewish community use. Today it is the location of the large apartment buildings described in Schultz's article.

The current boundary of the Kalush Jewish cemetery aligns reasonably well with its outline on the historical map. Also visible on the map are later revision hash marks on parcel divisions within the cemetery, indicating that the community consolidated these pieces into a single parcel sometime after the original survey. Other changes may have been made from the time of the map survey and revision up to World War II, but without later maps or records, those changes are invisible to us. It is perhaps enough that this historical map can help lead us to find, study, and preserve this Jewish cemetery as a house of eternity.

FACES of GALICIA



Philipp (1883–c. 1943) and Jeanette (1891–c. 1943) Landesberg (born and probably murdered in Galicia) with their daughters Marta (1912–1998) and Klara (1913–2009). Courtesy of Jonathan Naor, Marta's grandson.