

Map Corner

Historical Maps Research Update

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GESHER GALICIA'S ONLINE MAP ROOM was created in 2012 and now has more than 350 digitized and interactive historical maps of the Kingdom of Galicia and its regions and settlements. This number includes almost 250 cadastral maps of individual cities, towns, and villages, which sounds like a lot but represents less than 4% of the named places in the 1900 Austrian census of Galicia. Given the cost and effort to acquire, process, and display these maps, we have to be selective about which ones to include in our collection.

Although the [Map Room](#), especially the [cadastral maps section](#), includes a range of interesting maps, our focus has always been primarily on the ancestral places of Gesher Galicia's mostly Jewish membership. In this article, I will give a brief overview of how our map research criteria have changed over the years. I will also update readers on the many maps we have recently gathered from the archives and are currently processing for display in the Map Room.

Evolving Strategies

During the first years of the Map Room, cadastral map requests were included along with requests for all other types of records as part of specific town projects funded by Gesher Galicia members. This approach of asking for anything and everything about a given town proved challenging

because maps and other records are often organized within different specialist areas of the archives, each with its own inventory methods and administration. In addition, many times useful maps weren't found, which could be disappointing for those who were funding the town projects. Although almost every settlement in Galicia was surveyed and mapped by the Habsburg administration, wars and government upheaval meant that many of those maps did not survive.

After the first few years of the Map Room, we began making map requests separately. That is, they were not part of other record requests and not part of member-funded town projects. We also began contracting with local, independent research specialists, who could interface with the archives and oversee map scanning in Poland, or do the scanning themselves with their own equipment in Ukraine. These specialists apply the key image-quality criteria we need for digital map assembly. The result is a more time- and cost-effective process.

In addition, we shifted the priorities of map study and acquisition to coordinate with broader long-term Gesher Galicia research projects, giving geographical context to those projects and giving project leaders the opportunity to direct map investigations toward lesser known but important topics.

Current Strategies

About a year and a half ago, we changed our cadastral map research strategy again. Our goal was to improve the Map Room's coverage of cities, towns, and villages that are most relevant to the majority of Jewish descendants. To determine relevance, though, we needed an objective and quantifiable approach.

So, we turned to a historical statistical survey of the population of the Habsburg Empire produced from the 1900 census and organized by settlement. We ranked this large dataset in two ways: first, by the number of people in each place who identified

as Jewish (*Konfession: israelitisch*), and second, by the percentage of Jews in the total population of each place. This analysis has proved fruitful and will likely continue to serve as our core approach to prioritizing map research for the near future.

Of course, quite a few of the places with large Jewish communities were already represented by cadastral maps in our collection, but the analysis helped confirm the historical importance of many other places and included some surprises as well. We set our town selection criteria at either a minimum of 1,800 Jewish residents or a minimum of 40% Jewish residents in the entire settlement. Excluding towns for which maps were already present in the Map Room, we came up with a practical search list of 77 towns across Galicia. Orders were placed in mid-2024 through our representatives in Poland and Ukraine, and then, the lengthy archive review and response process began.

Some map scans took a few months to arrive; others took more than eight months. A few maps turned out to be useless for genealogists, and more than a few have simply been lost to time and history. But overall, the research was productive, and our map graphics editor, Vasyl Yuzyshyn, is already assembling (a process we call “digital stitching”) the new map sheets into full map images for the Map Room. Below I provide the status of our map acquisitions by town.

New Cadastral Maps: Western Galicia

Cities, towns, and villages in what was the western half of Galicia during the Habsburg era are now mostly found in southeastern Poland. Historical records, including cadastral maps, from these areas are normally preserved in the Polish archives, especially the state archives in the former Galician cities of Przemyśl, Kraków, Rzeszów, and Bielsko-Biała. The Polish archives search engine (www.szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl/en/strona_glowna) is an excellent tool, which not only identifies maps

by archive and record number, but in some cases (currently for the Przemyśl and Kraków archives), also includes reduced-resolution images of individual map sheets. These images allow us to assess the completeness and suitability of each map for family history research and, in the rare cases where more than one map is available, to judge which would be the best.

After reviewing the available maps online from the towns we selected, we requested a total of 23 map scan sets from three Polish archives. Of these, 20 arrived, and 19 were deemed suitable for the Map Room. Strangely, one of the maps we received is of an *eastern* Galician town, **Wojniów**.

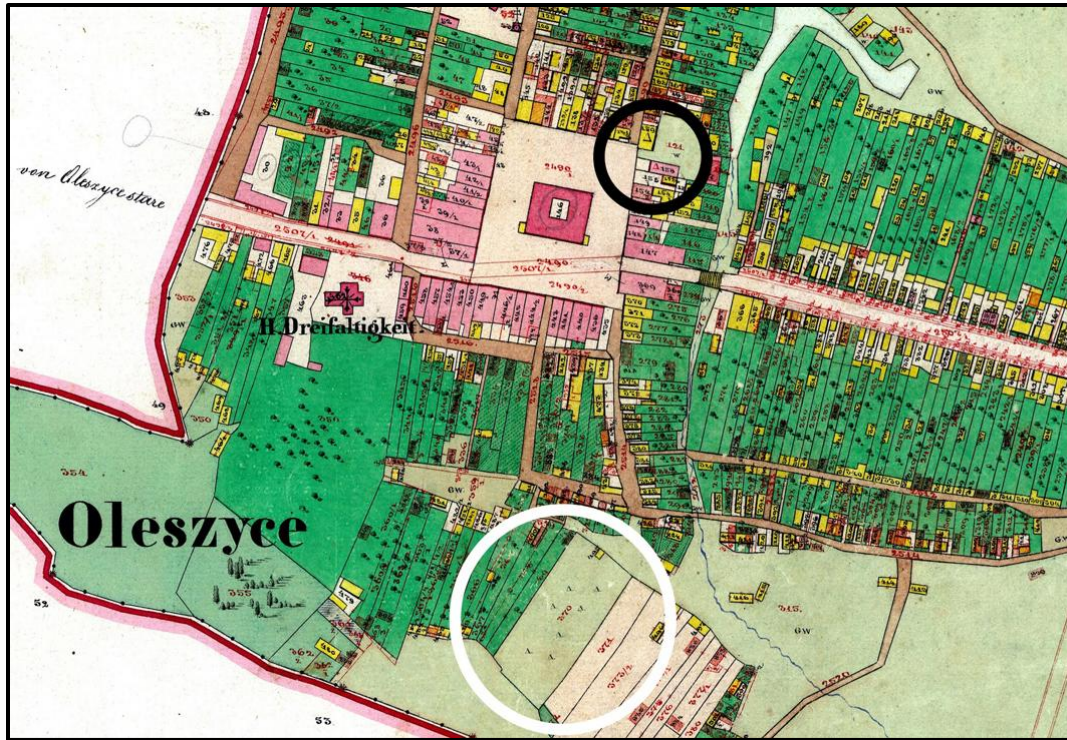
The following are the towns from western Galicia whose new maps have already been posted to the Map Room: **Bystre**, near Baligród; **Cieszanów**, near Lubaczów; **Dubiecko**, near Dynów; **Dukla**, near Rymanów; **Grodzisko**, near Strzyżów; **Klasno**, the Jewish town adjacent to the salt city of Wieliczka; **Lipsko**, adjacent to Narol; **Niebylec**, near Strzyżów; **Oleszyce**, near Lubaczów; **Rozwadów**, now a suburb of the steel city of Stalowa Wola, (two maps, including one showing the large village of Chazewice); **Sieniawa**, near Leżajsk; **Szczucin**, near Tarnów (two maps); **Wielkie Oczy**, near Radymno; and **Załubińcze**, near Nowy Sącz.

Recently acquired western Galician maps now in the queue for assembly include **Bukowsko**, near Sanok, and **Frysztak**, near Jasło.

As noted, one of our newly acquired and posted maps from western Galicia is a cadastral map of Oleszyce, a town featured in an article by Gesher Galicia member Shlomo Katz in the [June 2025](#) issue of *The Galitzianer*. An excerpt of this map is displayed on the following page.

New Cadastral Maps: Eastern Galicia

Map research on settlements in former eastern Galicia, now located mostly in the three westernmost



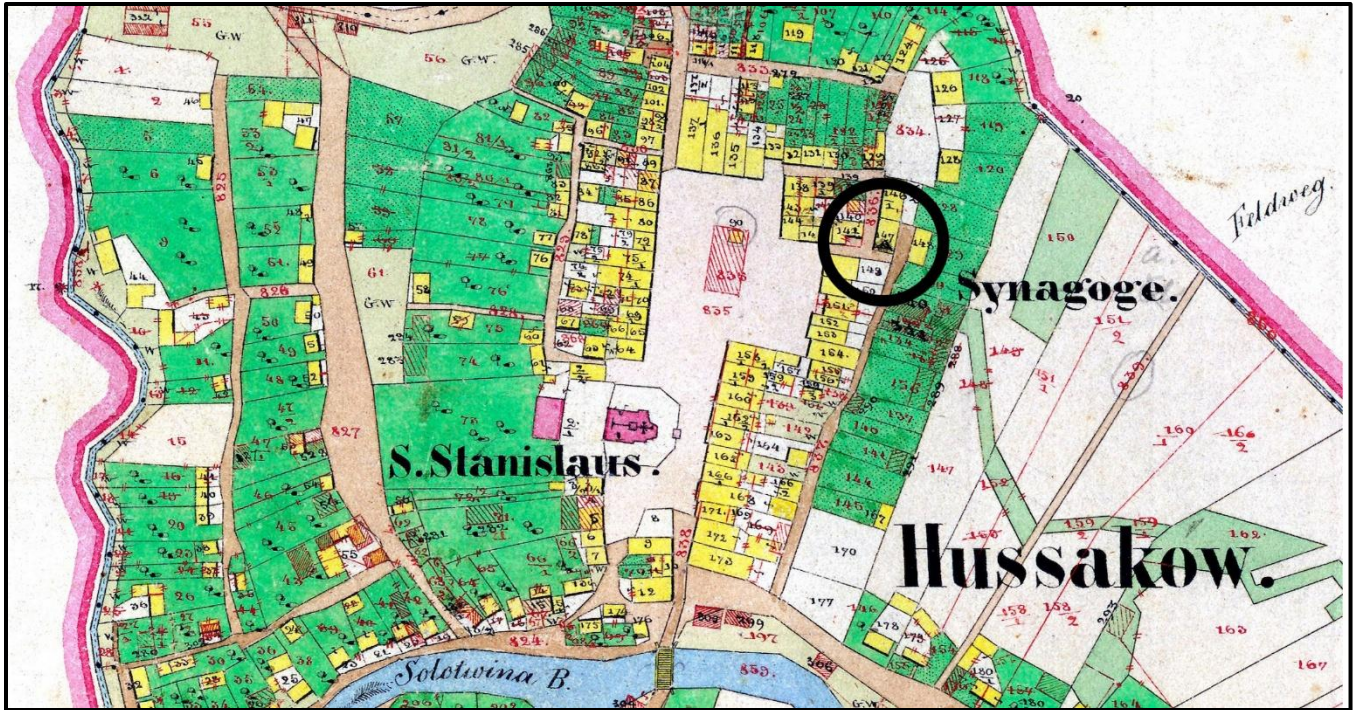
An excerpt from the 1854 cadastral map of central Oleszyce, showing a compact market square and annotated with a black circle around the synagogues and a white circle around the Jewish cemetery

oblasts of Ukraine, is more challenging than in Poland. Only two archives in this area preserve Galician cadastral maps: the Central State Archive in Lviv (TsDIAL) and the oblast archive in Ternopil (DATO), neither of which has an online public inventory of its maps. TsDIAL is currently the primary map archive in western Ukraine. (For some years, DATO has been unable to scan large-format paper map sheets.) Although the Russian war of aggression has put additional stress on Ukrainian government resources and staff, TsDIAL continues to operate, and we have had some excellent map finds there during the past few years.

Again, working from our population criteria but without knowledge of map availability, we requested information from TsDIAL about maps for 54 towns. Unfortunately, maps for about a quarter of the requested locations are not available in the archive—some may exist at DATO, but most are probably lost. We selected 42 maps for scanning. Although scanning at TsDIAL is more labor intensive than in the Polish archives, the work was completed in a reasonable amount of time.

After reviewing the scans, we rejected 18 maps for a variety of flaws, mostly because the surviving map sheets were missing key parts of the towns. Even for the remaining 24 maps, there are missing sheets and damaged sections, because a significant number of the cadastral maps at TsDIAL are "working" versions that were taken into the field in the 19th or early 20th century for survey updates, and the final updated maps have been lost. On the plus side, the responsiveness of TsDIAL to our request meant that we were able to get many of these maps into our assembly queue, and quite a few are already online in the Map Room.

The following are the eastern Galician towns whose new maps have already been posted to the Map Room: **Biały Kamień**, near Złoczów; **Busk**, also near Złoczów; **Gliniany**, near Busk; **Hussaków**, near Mościska; **Jezierzany**, near Czortków (two maps); **Kamionka Strumiłowa**, near Busk; **Krakoviec**, near Jaworów; **Niemirów**, near Rawa Ruska; **Podkamień**, near Brody; **Podkamień**, near Rohatyn; **Przemyslan**, near Bóbrka; **Radziechów**, near Krystynopol; **Rawa Ruska**, near Żółkiew;



An excerpt from the 1853 cadastral map of central Hussaków, annotated with a black circle around the synagogue

Strzeliska Nowe, near Rohatyn; **Szczerzec**, near Pustomyty; **Tartaków**, near Sokal; **Turka**, near Boryslaw; **Złoczów**, near Podhorce; and **Żydaczów**, near Chodorów.

The map for the eastern Galician town of **Wojniłów**, near Kałusz, has also recently been posted to the Map Room. As mentioned earlier, this map unexpectedly came to us with our acquisitions of western Galician town maps.

The following are the eastern Galician towns whose new maps are still in the assembly queue: **Jezierna**, near Tarnopol; **Mosty Wielkie**, near Bełz; **Ottynia**, near Kołomyja; **Sassów**, near Złoczów; and **Smorze**, near Turka.

A good example of one of our new eastern Galician maps is the 1853 cadastral map of Hussaków, pictured above. The town, known today as Husakiv, is in the Lviv oblast of western Ukraine, very close to the border with Poland. In 1900 Hussaków was a small town of only 1502 total residents, with the Jewish community comprising nearly half the

population. So, while only 733 Jews lived in Hussaków in 1900, proportionally almost every other house would have been inhabited by a Jewish family.

Looking Forward

The same population-based strategy described in this article for map acquisitions can be used in the future. We would simply select towns by lowering the threshold for number and proportion of Jews. We could also substitute the 1900 census with censuses from other decades.

In addition, we will likely hunt for some alternate archive sources that we have encountered in past research and that members of Geshet Galicia have shared with us from their own archive visits. Finally, other research projects undertaken by the Geshet Galicia board and volunteers will continue to drive new and interesting map investigations in the future.