







Sanok THE CHASSIDIC ROUTE



Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland was established in March 2002 by the Union of Jewish Communities in Poland and the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO).

Our mission is to protect and commemorate the surviving monuments of Jewish cultural heritage in Poland. The priority of our Foundation is the protection of the Jewish cemeteries: in cooperation with other organizations and private donors we saved from destruction, fenced and commemorated several of them (e.g. in Zakopane, Kozienice, Mszczonów, Kłodzko, Iwaniska, Strzegowo, Dubienka, Kolno, Iłża, Wysokie Mazowieckie). The actions of our Foundation cover also the revitalization of particularly important and valuable landmarks of Jewish heritage, e.g. the synagogues in Zamość, Rymanów and Kraśnik.

We do not limit our heritage preservation activities only to the protection of objects. It is equally important for us to broaden the public's knowledge about the history of Jews who for centuries contributed to cultural heritage of Poland.

One of the most important educational activities of our Foundation is the "To Bring Memory Back" program (www.PAMIEC.FODZ.PL) directed to students, with over 130 schools from all around Poland participating in it, and the multimedia Internet portal POLIN – Polish Jews Heritage (www.POLIN.ORG.PL), meant to present the history of the Jewish communities from 1,200 places in the country.

One of the major undertakings by the Foundation is the Chassidic Route project.

More information about the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland: www.fodz.pl www.PAMIEC.FODZ.PL www.POLIN.ORG.PL

Dear Sirs,

This publication is dedicated to the history of the Jewish community of Sanok, and is a part of a series of pamphlets presenting history of Jews in the localities participating in the Chassidic Route project, run by the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland since 2005. This pamphlet has been published thanks to the support of the Municipal Council of Sanok.

The Chassidic Route is a tourist route which follows the traces of Jews from southeastern Poland and, soon, from western Ukraine. 20 localities, which have already joined the project and where the priceless traces of the centuries-old Jewish presence have survived, are: Baligród, Biłgoraj, Chełm, Cieszanów, Dębica, Dynów, Jarosław, Kraśnik, Lesko, Leżajsk (Lizhensk), Lublin, Przemyśl, Ropczyce, Rymanów, Sanok, Tarnobrzeg, Ustrzyki Dolne, Wielkie Oczy, Włodawa and Zamość.

The Chassidic Route runs through picturesque areas of southeastern Poland, like the Roztocze Hills and the Bieszczady Mountains, and joins localities, where one can find imposing synagogues and Jewish cemeteries with gravestones dating back to the 18th, 17th or even 16th c. Many of those cemeteries have still been visited by the Chassidim from all over the world.

Within the frames of the Chassidic Route project, the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland supports local authorities and non-governmental organizations to protect and promote multicultural heritage of their communities. It also stimulates establishing firm partnership between sectors in favor of the development of profiled tourism, based on Jewish cultural heritage.

The Chassidic Route gives many places the opportunity to appear on the map of tourist attractions of Poland; apart from well-known Zamość, placed on the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites, there are many places on the Route, which are often omitted by tourists, unaware of their attractions.

On behalf of the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland, I would like to thank the authorities of the Town of Sanok for their support in publishing of this pamphlet.

We cordially invite you to join us on the Chassidic Route!

Monika Krawczyk | CEO



Why the "Chassidic Route"?

For centuries Poland used to be the homeland to many generations of Jews. An unprecedented development of Jewish culture, as well as religious thought and writing, took place in this country. Here in the 18th c. emerged Chassidism, one of the most important currents in Judaism ever. It gained particularly many supporters in eastern Poland, among others on the territories through which the Chassidic Route runs today.

It is traditionally believed that the creator of Chassidism (*chassid* stands in Hebrew for "pious") was Israel Ben Eliezer of Międzybóż (Medzhybizh) in the Podolia region (today in Ukraine), known as the Baal Shem Tov. The Chassidim believed that religiousness could not be limited only to strict observing of orders and bans of Judaism, and even that obeying of them in a too restrictive way could distance the man from God. Therefore they strongly emphasized the spiritual dimension of religion and the emotional experience of faith.

The Chassidim gathered around the tzadikkim (*tzadik* stands in Hebrew for "righteous"), charismatic spiritual leaders, each of whom proposed a special way of coming closer to God, concrete methods of studying of the Torah and other religious writings, as well as celebrating of rituals. In the 19th c. the rank of a tzadik became hereditary, which led to establishing entire dynasties of the tzadikkim, taking their names from the towns, where their courts were located.

On an anniversary of death of a tzadik (*yortzait*), the Chassidim gather around his grave with belief that on such a day the soul the tzadik visits the place. They pray and leave at the grave *kvitlech*, small pieces of paper with written requests. This tradition is still vivid and the Chassidim from all around the world still come to the graves of tzadikkim in Lizhensk, Lublin, Dynów, Ropczyce or Rymanów.

There were courts of tzadikkim in Cieszanów, Dębica, Dynów, Lesko, Leżajsk (Lizhensk), Lublin, Przemyśl, Ropczyce, Rymanów and Tarnobrzeg (or, more precisely, in nearby Dzików). The most important center of Chassidism in Poland was Lizhensk, where the famous Tzadik Elimelech lived. In other localities of the Route only small groups of the Chassidim, affiliated to tzadikkim from other towns and villages, used to live. This, however, does not downgrade the appeal of the relics of Jewish heritage located there.



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The Chassidic Route – Places of Interest:

BALIGRÓD – a cemetery established at the beginning of the 18^{th} c.

BILGORAJ – a cemetery established in the 19th c.

CHELM – a so called "new synagogue" from the beginning of the 20th c.; a cemetery established in the 15th c., one of the oldest surviving Jewish cemeteries in Europe.

CIESZANÓW – a synagogue from the end of the 19th c.; a cemetery established in the 19th c.

DEBICA – a synagogue erected probably at the end of the 18^{th} c.; a cemetery established at the turn of the 17^{th} and 18^{th} c.

Dynów – a cemetery from the end of the 18th c. with the grave of Tzadik Zvi Elimelech Shapiro of Dynów (1785–1841).

JAROSŁAW – two synagogues from the 19th c. and a cemetery established at the beginning of the 18th c.

KRAŚNIK – a complex of two synagogues from the 17^{th} and 19^{th} c.; a so called "new cemetery" established around 1850.

LESKO – a synagogue erected in the 17th c. and a cemetery from the 16th c., one of the oldest surviving Jewish cemeteries in Europe.

LEŻAJSK (LIZHENSK) – a cemetery established in the 17th c. with the grave of Tzadik Elimelech of Lizhensk (1717–1787), a place of pilgrimages of the Chassidim from all over the world.

LUBLIN – the *Yeshivat Chachmei Lublin* (the School of the Wise Men of Lublin) erected in 1930 as the biggest Jewish religious school in the world; a so called "old cemetery" established in the 16th c., with the grave of Tzadik Jacob Isaac Horovitz, called "The Seer of Lublin" (1745–1815); a so called "new cemetery" established at the beginning of the 19th c.

PRZEMYŚL – a so called "new synagogue" erected at the beginning of the 20th c.; a so called "new cemetery" established at the beginning of the 19th c., the biggest Jewish cemetery in Podkapackie province.

ROPCZYCE – a cemetery established in the 18th c.

RYMANÓW – a Baroque synagogue and a cemetery with the grave of Tzadik Menachem Mendel of Rymanów (1745–1815).

SANOK – a synagogue of the *Yad Charuzim* society, build in the 19th c.; a synagogue erected in the 1920's; a so called "new cemetery" established in the 19th c.

TARNOBRZEG – a cemetery established at the beginning of the 20th c. with the grave of Tzadik Eliezer Horovitz of Dzików.

Ustrzyкi Dolne – a cemetery established in the 18th с.

WIELKIE OCZY – a synagogue from the beginning of the 20th c.; a cemetery established in the 18th c.

WŁODAWA – a Baroque synagogue complex from the second half of the 18th c.

ZAMOS \acute{c} – a famous Renaissance synagogue erected at the beginning of the 17th c.; a so called "new cemetery" established in 1907.



A Hanukkah lamp

The new cemetery, matzevot

Containers for the Book of Esther scrolls

Sanok, a town in Podkarpackie (Subcarpathian) province, is located on the San River and is currently inhabited by over 40,000 people. It is visited by many tourists who want to see the Historical Museum in the Sanok castle with a priceless collection of icons and the world's largest gallery of paintings by Zdzisław Beskiński. In the town one can also visit the biggest Polish ethnographic open-air museum and take part in numerous cultural events, like operatic and jazz music festivals, film reviews or folklore fairs (including the famous Icons Fair), as well as taste the regional cuisine.

The Beginning of the Town

The first written information about Sanok dates back to 1150 and can be found in the Hypatian Codex, which says that *there came the* (Hungarian) *king across the mountains and occupied Sanok, and captured its posadnik*. As the post of *posadnik* was at the time equal to the one of a Polish *komes* (a state town commander), one can conclude that Sanok must have already been a seat of an administrative unit and probably an important center of Halych-Volhynia. The town is also mentioned in other chronicles of the time, like in the one from 1205, which says that Sanok was the place of a meeting of King Andrew of Hungary and the Ruthenian Princess Anna, and from 1231, saying that Prince Alexander went to Sanok – *the Hungarian gate*.

At the time, Sanok was located on the Horodyszcze hill, to the northwest of the present town. In the middle of the 13th c., it was decided that it would be moved to the place where the castle stands today, probably as a result of damage caused by a Mongolian raid. In 1339, Prince George II of Halych-Volhynia granted the town with Magdeburg rights. After the Polish King Casimir III had captured Halych-Volhynia in 1344, Sanok was incorporated into the Kingdom of Poland.

Even before that, Sanok, located close to the Polish-Hungarian border, was a major trade center. A route from Hungary along the San to the princely city of Przemyśl ran through Sanok and further east to Halych and Lviv. It is probable that already at that time, Jewish merchants had arrived in the town.

The Beginning of the Jewish Community in Sanok

According to tradition, the first Jews settled in Sanok (which they called *Sonik, Sanik* or *Sanuk*) in the first half of the 14th c. *The Memorial Book of Sanok and the Sanok Region*, published in Jerusalem, says that *it is the truth that there were signs found on the graves on the Sanok Posada quarter cemetery from Casimir III era, and that a settlement had been there before*. However, the first official document about settling of Jews in Sanok was the *General Charter of Jewish Liberties*, known as the *Statute of Kalisz*, developed by Casimir III for the occupied Ruthenian territories in 1367. It gave Jews freedom of trade and migration as well as legal protection of the State and the right to remain outside general jurisdiction (they came under royal courts and not under town ones).

The earliest reference to the presence of Jews in Sanok dates back to June 8th, 1470, and says about their paricipation in an 8-day-long fair starting before the Christian feast of Pentecost. Although Jewish names can be found already on a list of Sanok craftsmen from 1514, it was not until the end of the 16th c. that references on an organized Jewish community appeared. At the time, the Sanok Jews were officially subordinated to the nearby community of Lesko. In 1570, there were 17 Jewish families out of the total number of 200 families living in Sanok. According to documents, Jews of Sanok worked as wine and corn merchants, furriers, tailors and tanners. They were also bankers and leaseholders. The



A Torah crown

Kiddush cups

The new cemetery, the gate

number of Jews in Subcarpathia grew systematically throughout the 16th c., and the region became a significant economic nad cultural center of the Polish Jewry.

Like many other European towns, also Sanok got the *de non tolerandis Judaeis* right, which prohibited Jews from settling within the town walls and at the same time protected Christian merchants from the Jewish competition. However, the ban was not strictly observed, as at the time many Jews were owners of tenement houses, including those located at the Market Square. It was the reason for a court trial, filed in 1676 by Stanisław Sarnowski, the bishop of Przemyśl, against the mayor and the councilmen of Sanok. The town representatives were accused of allowing Jews to own houses in the center of Sanok, which they bought from Catholics, of letting them work during Catholic holidays, sell alcohol and enter the Town Hall, which was all contrary to the Crown Tribunal law. This shows how strong the position of the Sanok Jews was, despite the right limitating their economic role, and how profitable to the other citizens the Jewish presence had to be.

After the time of wars that struck Poland in the 17th c., a new legislation was introduced to rebuild the country. Numerous privileges granted to the Jewish people in the second half of the 17th c. and in the beginning of the 18th c. led to the creation of many new communities and to the development of the old ones. In the 18th c., the Jewish community of Sanok grew thanks to the rights issued by kings Augustus II (in 1720) and Augustus III (in 1754). At the time, the Sanok Jews became independent from the religious community of Lesko.

The earliest reference to a synagogue in Sanok dates back to 1697. It was a wooden building, which burnt in 1718. Constructing of a new synagogue began in 1720, when Jews obtained the permission

to establish a cemetery (the so-called "old cemetery" in Jagiellońska St.; it is said that the earliest burials took place there in the times of Casimir III, but there is no evidence of that). The Sanok Jews were also allowed to build new houses, shops and workshops as well as to sell alcohol and establish destilleries.

Under Partitions

After the first partition of the Kingdom of Poland by Russia, Prussia and Austria in 1772, Sanok was incorporated into the Austrian Empire. As of 1780, the local Jews already had two synagogues, including a brick one. A Jewish middle school was opened in the town with the consent of Emperor Joseph II in 1806.

Sanok entered the period of the Galician authonomy as a poor town. It was not until the end of the 19th c. that its economic situation started to improve. Many Jewish and Christian families earned their living with temporary jobs and appartments rental. At the end of the 19th c., the local corn, cattle and wood trade as well as clothes production were dominated by Jewish merchants. After discovering oil deposits in Subcarpathia, Jews began and developed its output in the region. Their importance in the economy of Sanok grew along with the rise of their role in the cultural life of the town. In 1907, Dr. Artur Goldhamer, a Jew, was elected Deputy Mayor of Sanok.

The Jewish community always attached much importance to education. From 1870, the Sanok Jewish community financed a school attended by 80 students. In 1909, Zwei Abt founded a school, which in 1911 had 77 students. The Israelites' Religious Community ran five cheders (religious primary schools



A mezuzah

The new cemetery, a matzeva

The new cemetery, the monument

for boys). Sanok was also an important center of the Jewish writing. From 1910 until the outbreak of World War I, the "Volksfreund" magazine was published and edited by Adalbert Schönbach. There were three printing houses in the town, owned by Markus Amster, Dawid Weinfeld and Mendel Muszel (in whose printing house the "Volksfreund" was printed).

World War I

Before World War I, the economic situation of the town was good enough to transform part of workshops into small factories, as was the case of the brickyard of Leib Brand and Mechel Stein, the factory of building materials of Dawid Kolber, and the shoes factory of Abraham Pinkas. Leib Pinczowski provided the army and the Landwehr (the defence forces) of the Austro-Hungarian Empire with leather for shoes. Monas Szancer and Mojżesz Szancer ran two soap factories, and Leibisz Birndorf and Dawid Herzig – two soda water factories.

The outbreak of World War I eneded the development of Sanok. Jews were among the first civillian victims of the front. During a temporary Russian occupation of the town in 1914 the Jewish shops and houses were plundered by soldiers. Following the next years the situation of the Sanok inhabitants dramatically worsened; apart from the Russian troops, also pillages by the Austro-Hungarian army made life a misery.

In 1918, the Austrian authorities carried out a poll to estimate the war losses. It turned out that Jews in Sanok suffered the most: the owner of a metal store Estera Rabner (losses estimated by 87,200 Krones), butcher Isaak Rein (67,280 Krones), Iser Silberman (49,500 Krones), and the owner of a can-

vas store Jakub Majer Malametz (51,540 Krones). Losses between 10,000 and 40,000 Krones were declared by 57 families, among them 51 Jewish ones. Also during a hard time of the turn of 1918 and 1919, there were social unrests and pillages in the town.

In November 1918, the Polish independence organizations of Sanok took over rule from the Austro-Hungarian administration and established paramilitary troops. At the time, Polish-Ukrainian fights took place in Galicia.

The Interwar Period

During the interwar period (1918–1939), Sanok lived a certain economic boom connected with the activity of factories in the town and with incorporating it into the Central Industrial Region of Poland. However, that development was stopped in 1929 by the world economic crisis. Unemployment and poverty escalated social unrests. The effects of the crisis struck also the Jewish community.

Between 1918 and 1924, the famous Rabbi Meir Shapiro was active in Sanok; he was a great Jewish social and religious leader, a Member of Parliament of the first term and a member of the Agudat Israel Party, which united Orthodox Jews. He founded later the *Yeshivat Chachmei Lublin* (the School of the Wise Men of Lublin) – at the time the biggest Jewish religious school in the world. Meir Shapiro established the *Bnai Torah* Yeshiva in Sanok. In the 1930's, building of a rabbinic school began, which was to stand between the Market Square, Zamkowa St. and Cerkiewna St., next to the "small" Sadiger Synagogue (belonging to the Chassidim who supported the tzadikkim of the Sadiger dynasty). The constructing works were interrupted by the outbreak of World War II.

World War II and the Holocaust

As of 1939, about 5,400 Jews lived in Sanok, making 30% of the town's population. After capturing Sanok, Germans burnt three synagogues, a printing house and a library. About 1,000 Jews were deported over the San, which was the border between the German and the Soviet occupation zones. Other Jews were sent to forced labor, among others in a quarry located between Sanok and the village of Trepcza, and to cleaning and paving streets.

In 1941, on the area of the former Sanok Jewish quarter (bordered by Łazienna St., Sobieskiego St., Zamkowa St., and Św. Michała Sq.) a ghetto was established and Jews from nearby villages were resettled there. It is estimated that 8,000 people (some sources say about 10,000–13,000 people) were imprisoned in the ghetto. There was also a second ghetto in Sanok, bordered by Kręta St. and Zgody St., with about 1,000 people. It was probably affiliated with the forced labor camp of Zasław, located about 7 km east from Sanok. A labor camp of the Kirchoff company was established in the nearby village of Trepcza; it existed until 1943. In summer of that year, Nazis liquidated both Sanok ghettos and the camps in Trepcza and Zasław.

On September 10th, 1942 most of Jews from the Sanok ghettos were taken away to the Zasław camp. It is estimated that in the camp and in a nearby forest about 4,000 people were killed, out of 10,000–15,000 who were transferred there. The rest of prisoners were transported to the death camp in Bełżec. On September 14th, 1942 the Nazis announced that Jews who managed to hide until that time could come back to the Sanok ghetto. About 300 people believed that and after coming of hiding they were immediately executed or taken away to concentration camps. In October 1942, two other transports of the Zasław prisonners were sent to the death camp in Bełżec.

It is estimated that only 10% of the Sanok Jews survived the war, most of them in the Soviet Union.

Traces of Presence

Only two of six prewar Sanok synagogues still exist. The "small" Sadiger Synagoue (Klaus Sadogora, Sadygierer Klojz), a Chassidic memento built behind the northern frontage of the Market Square during the interwar period, stands in 10 Rynek St. After the war, the interior of the synagogue was rebuilt and currently serves as a seat of the State Archive. The second surviving synagogue stands in 5 Franciszkańska St.; it used to belong to the Yad Charuzim Handicraft Society (yad charuzim means in Hebrew "the hand of the dilligent") and was erected in 1897. After the post-war conversion, only tracks of an arched-framed window remind of the former function of the building. Other traces of the Jewish presence in Sanok are tenement houses of the Ramer, Weiner and Eichel families, built in the main streets of the town: Kościuszki and Jagiellońska.

In the past, there were two Jewish cemeteries in Sanok. The so-called "old cemetery" was established in 1720 and was located in the current Jagiellońska St. During World War II, it was completly destroyed by Germans. The second cemetery, called "the new", is in Kiczury St. According to the Sanok inhabitants, Germans used matzevot from both cemeteries to pave streets. There is no gravestone left from the old cemetery and about 50 matzevot have remained at the new one.



The Yad Charuzim synagogue \rightarrow

In 1988, the new Jewish cemetery was cleaned up by the Nissenbaum Family Foundation, which also erected a monument commemorating Jews killed during World War II. The inscription on the plaque says: *Please bow your head to this monument and remind in veneration the martyrs who died for the country and faith, for dignity and freedom of all people – against bestiality of the genocidal racism. May their remains rest in peace!*

A large and interesting collection of Judaics from the Sanok Ethnographic Open-Air Museum (3 Traugutta St.) is one of the most important mementoes of the local Jewish community. It contains menorahs (seven-branched candelabra), Hanukkah lamps, fine containers for the *Book of Esther, Torah* crowns and rimmonim (ornaments of the *Torah* scroll). One can also see yads (pointers used during the *Torah* scroll reading in the synagogue) and Kiddush cups (used for the blessing recited over wine to sanctify the Shabbat). The most various and exquisite are besamin boxes (openwork tins with spices). Also the Sanok Historical Museum (3 Zamkowa St.) owns an interesting collection of Judaics, and its most precious element is the *Torah* scroll with an ornamental breastplate. The Museum library owns also numerous Jewish religious books.

Arkadiusz Komski

Famous Jews of Sanok:

Benzion Katz (1907-1968)

a Hebrew poet, a Jagiellonian University graduate and the President of the Tel-Aviv University, literary critic, translator.

Szmuel Pipe (?-1941)

ethnographer, regional activist, author of works on the Jewish folklore of the Sanok region.

Kalman Segal (1917-1980)

writer and poet in Yiddish and Polish, radio reporter. He presented in his output the life of the Polish--Jewish-Ukrainian society of the pre-war Sanok.

Meir Szapiro (1887-1933)

rabbi, co-creator of the Agudat Israel Party, founder of the *Yeshivat Chachmei Lublin* (the School of the Wise Men of Lublin), the biggest Jewish religious school in the world.

Activities for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage.

Thanks to the successful partnership between the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland, Jewish organizations from abroad and the Sanok authorities, the monuments of Jewish culture, which survived the war, are today in a relatively good condition. Hopefully, the remaining traces of the Sanok Jewish community will remind the future generations about the multicultural past of the town for many years.

The Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland takes up many activities to involve the Sanok inhabitants in looking after the multicultural heritage of their town. Currently, funds are being raised in order to publish an album with photographies showing the Judaics from the collection of the Sanok Ethnographic Open-Air Museum. Two of the Sanok schools (the Tadeusz Kościuszko Primary School No. 3 and the School Complex No. 3) participate in the "To Bring Memory Back" educational program, created and implemented by the Foundation.

Within the program, youths discover the multicultural past of their locality, the history of the Sanok Jews as well as Jewish tradition and culture. They also carry out public events, thanks to which the

results of their work become available for the inhabitants. The pupils of the Tadeusz Kościuszko Primary School prepare a map of the Jewish traces in Sanok and a photographic and painting exhibition devoted to the Jewish culture. The students of the School Complex No. 3 collect materials on the Jewish settling in the Sanok region and learn about the history of the Sanok Jews and their fates during World War II.

On the initiative of a writer Janusz Szuber and the Municipal Public Library, a conference for the general public devoted to the writer and poet Kalman Segal took place in Sanok on



"The bench of Kalman Segal"

October 26th and 27th, 2007; it was entitled *Between Two Worlds: On Kalman Segal*. As a part of the event, a bench in memory of the artist was unveiled in the Sanok Market Square.

We hope that soon in Sanok there will be further activities carried out, meant to remind the inhabitants and tourists about the history of Jews, who for centuries co-created the social character of the town and contributed to its cultural and economic development.



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Information and educational materials on the Jewish culture are available on the website of the "To Bring Memory Back" program www.PAMIEC.FODZ.PL and on the Internet portal POLIN – Polish Jews Heritage www.POLIN.ORG.PL

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