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THE STATE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON JEWISH CEMETERIES IN CENTRAL EUROPE. A NEW APPROACH

Abstract

Using various sources this paper collects information about archaeological research performed up to 2023 on Jewish cemeteries in Central European countries: Czechia, Lithuania, and Poland, discussing their nature, scope, methods, and state of post-excavation work. The determinants of fieldwork – religious and cultural factors, socio-political issues, as well as conservation and scientific factors – are indicated. The number of cemeteries in the region and their state of preservation is also described. Furthermore, the paper discusses the usefulness of archaeology for understanding many aspects of the life of Ashkenazi communities in the Middle Ages and modern times.

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INTRODUCTION

The centuries-old presence of Jewish communities in the lands of Central Europe has been an important component of the culture, politics, economy, and everyday life of the countries in the region. As a result of the enormous war losses, cemeteries often provide the only witness to the Jewish lives that existed in these territories in the past. They are an irreplaceable source of data not only about sepulchral culture but also about the community that created it, and whose remains they contain. For that reason, these sites have been, and continue to be, of interest to researchers representing many scientific disciplines, including archaeology.

The main subject of this article is the review of archaeological research of Jewish cemeteries that have been functioning in various countries

of Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the 21st century. Several different subjects related to this topic will be considered in this paper, concerning both the entire Central Europe and individual investigated necropolises. My study will focus on two following issues:


- the possibility of carrying out fieldwork of a different nature and scope concerning customary, religious, and legal conditions;
- an assessment of the current state of research on Jewish cemeteries in terms of the degree of work advancement, state of post-excavation work, and publications.

I am omitting here issues concerning Jewish funeral rituals based on archaeological discoveries. These are the main topics of Kalina Skóra's complementary article published in this volume.

My work aims to establish whether there has been any progress in this area over the past decades and to determine whether archaeological research directions and methods are being fully utilised to

KEYWORDS

- Jewish cemeteries
- burial customs
- Ashkenazi communities
- archaeological research
- Central Europe

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identify these necropoles. My task mainly consisted in collecting information on more recent fieldwork that generally took place after the year 2000, and on publications relating to these issues that appeared during this period.

The studies presented in the paper relate to cemeteries located in the territory of contemporary Poland, Czechia, and Lithuania. This limitation is the result of the lack of published data on archaeological research on Jewish cemeteries in other countries of the region: Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, and Slovakia, as ascertained by the search carried out for this paper. Consequently, many of the discussed issues mainly concern Poland.

The source basis for the study is the information contained primarily in archaeological, historical, and ethnographical publications, as well as unpublished archaeological materials, contemporary press articles, and information published on the websites of various institutions and associations.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND CUSTOMARY ASPECTS

It is assumed that the beginning of Jewish settlement in Central Europe dates to the early Middle Ages. Jews came to this area in the late Middle Ages from many different directions, especially from German-speaking countries, searching for better living conditions or fleeing persecution.¹ From the end of the 14th century, the situation of Jews in Western Europe rapidly deteriorated, and massacres and deportations continued. At the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries, most Jewish communities in Western European countries ceased to exist, which resulted in a direct translocation of Jewish settlement to the eastern reaches of the Polish Kingdom – to the Ruthenian lands of the Crown and the western voivodeships of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.² The further development of Jewish communities in the area meant that by the end of the 18th century, approximately 80% of the world's Jewish population lived in Polish lands.³ Until the outbreak of World War II, Poland was the largest centre of Jewish culture and spiritual life in Europe. Their population at that time was 3.5 million.⁴

In the Middle Ages and the modern period, Jewish settlement was shaped by legal regulations and socioeconomic factors, e.g., the notable royal privileges *de non tolerandis Judaeis* in Poland⁵ and

non recipiendis Judaeis in Slovakia,⁶ which limited their residence in certain areas. It was not until the second half of the 19th century that all prohibitions and decrees restricting the right of Jewish settlement and establishing necropoles were revoked.⁷ Settlement in each territory was possible with the permission of the ruler. With the granting of such a privilege, the Jews were at the same time designated land for the construction of houses and facilities related to their worship, and the needs arising from the organisation of the community.⁸ One such need was a cemetery, which occupies a leading position (before the synagogue and a ritual bath – *mikvah*) in the Jewish hierarchy of institutions important for the traditional Ashkenazi community. Having a burial place concluded the diaspora's period of organisation and gave it autonomy and independence from its home municipality.⁹

However, the founding of a new necropolis was not easy, because it required several conditions to be fulfilled. Among other things, a special permit had to be obtained¹⁰ and a considerable financial outlay was necessary. Funds were needed to purchase the land, to organise the burial space, e.g., to demarcate its boundaries (by building a fence or a wall), to erect the house of purification (*bet taha-
ra*) and the gravedigger's house, and later to maintain the cemetery,¹¹ such as rent for the use of the cemetery and additional fees for each gravestone displayed.¹²

The burial ground had, if possible, to be obtained through a commercial transaction.¹³ Often, however, Jews were not allowed to buy land, so they at least attempted to lease the plot for centuries, in the hope that they would later be able to purchase it. As these sites are intended to be the resting place of the dead until the coming of the Messiah and the resurrection of the dead,¹⁴ Jewish

⁶ See Borský 2005, 18.

⁷ Concerns the Polish land, Jagielski 1995, 174; Jagielski 2001, 67.

⁸ Cf. Tobiasz 2017, 73.

⁹ Jagielski 2001, 66.

¹⁰ Even though Jews were allowed to live in some places, they were not always allowed to set up a cemetery there, Borzumińska 2014, 75, footnote 27; see also Bałaban 1906, 4. Opposition was voiced not only by secular authorities but also by representatives of the Catholic Church or even Jewish clerical authorities, Bałaban 1929, 115.

¹¹ E.g., Cluse 2018, 146.

¹² Cf. the case of the 14th-century cemetery in Wrocław, Stawiarski 2010, 283.

¹³ In Poland, the oldest information on the acquisition of land for a Jewish cemetery comes from 1287 from Kalisz (Jagielski 1995, 169). The land was leased to the local municipality by the knight Rupinius, and the transaction was approved by the Duke of Wielkopolska Przemysław II, e.g., Stawiarski 2010, 274.

¹⁴ Jacobs 2008, 11.

¹ E.g., Fijałkowski 1995, 13-18; Zaremska 2011, 63-107.

² E.g., Zaremska 2011; Tobiasz 2017, 73.

³ Żebrowski 1995, 8.

⁴ Gruber et al. 1995, 15, 21.

⁵ Jagielski 2001, 66.

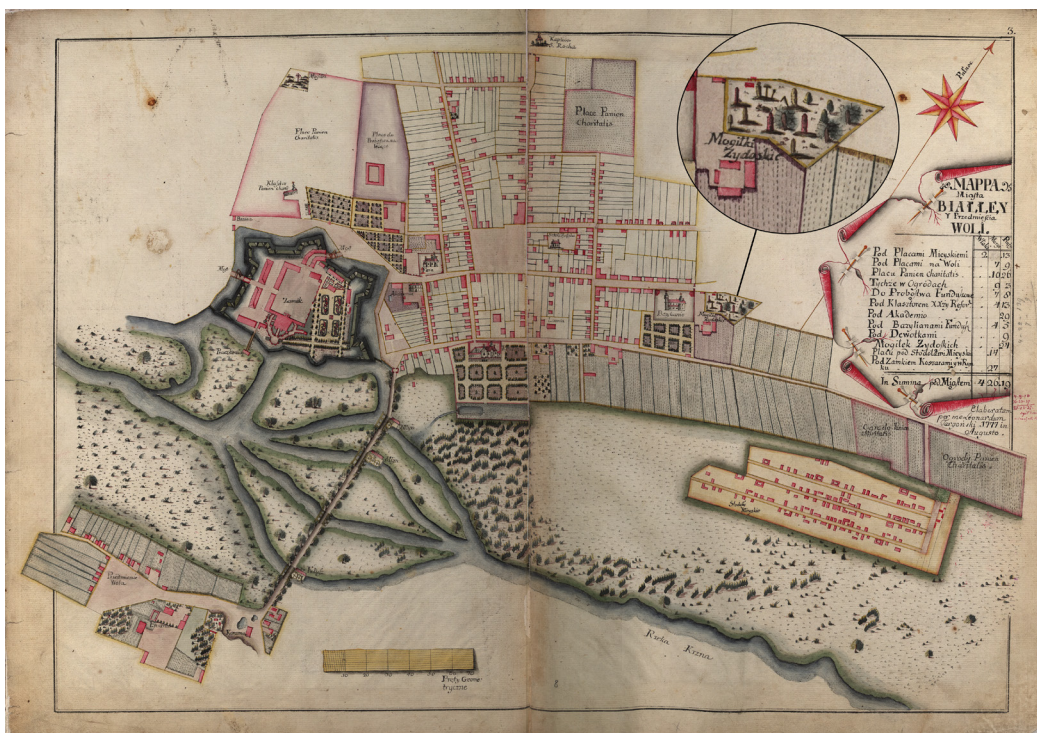


Fig. 1. *Mapa Miasta Bielley i Przedmieścia Woli* – map of the town of Biela Podlaska and suburb Wola (PL) from 1777, showing local Jewish cemetery (marked as *Mogilki Żydowskie* – ‘Jewish Graves’). Source: Targoński 1781, manuscript from the special collection of the Zieliński Library of the Płock Scientific Society.

cemeteries are often known as *beit olam* or ‘House of Eternity’¹⁵ (Fig. 1). In many communities it was not possible to accomplish the above requirements.¹⁶ For this reason, only early, powerful Jewish communities could afford to establish new necropolises. Therefore, the first burial places were founded mainly in larger towns, and already existing sites served the local population and the Jews of a whole region, which meant that some of the dead had to have been carried over very long distances.¹⁷ This was also because these influential communities, fearing the loss of prestige and funeral tax revenues, often even hindered the creation of cemeteries in smaller towns.¹⁸ Nevertheless, from the Middle Ages, Jewish graveyards were more frequently situated outside residential areas, usually placed on plots unsuitable for agriculture, such as forests, rocky or desolated hills, or marshes by rivers, as well as in unpopular locations, e.g. next to places of execution or dumping grounds.¹⁹ Consequently, transporting corpses to the nearest functioning *beit kvarot* (sometimes over long

distances) was not only a necessity but also a common custom in the Ashkenazi world even in the 20th century.²⁰ A significant increase in the number of new necropolises took place only in the second half of the 19th century.²¹ The size of the Jewish cemeteries varied, with the smallest plots measuring about 0.07 ha and the much larger metropolitan necropolises reaching 30–40 ha (e.g. in Warsaw at about 33 ha, in Łódź at 42 ha).²²

It can be concluded that the locations and types of Jewish necropolises in Central Europe are often a result of the historical circumstances of their creation.²³ The cemetery should be built following the rules of *halakha* (Jewish law).²⁴ The burial space of small rural communities (*shtetlekh*) was usually organised in traditional ways. Modern necropolises in the larger towns had more varied arrangements, as well as types of erected gravestones. Cities had larger and more diverse Jewish communities in modern times, including assimilated and reformed groups.²⁵ The functioning of the cemeteries was regulated both by the internal rules of the Jewish communities and by overarching state legislation.²⁶

The number and size of necropolises were also related to the history of the diaspora and its demographic

¹⁵ Jacobs 2008, 12. Other terms used for Jewish necropolises are, among others, *beit kvarot* ‘house of graves’ or *beit hachaim* ‘house of life’, Cemetery 2002-2021; Jagielski 2001, 66. The last phrase indicates that indeed in the Jewish worldview, the dead are by no means dead, they still belong to the community, Cluse 2018, 146; see Fenton 2021, 102-103.

¹⁶ Cf. Jagielski 2001, 66.

¹⁷ Cluse 2018, 152; e.g., considerations relating to medieval Silesia, Adamska 2018, 5, 8-18. Due to the need to bury the deceased within 24 hours from death, cemeteries had to be located within a range allowing to cover this distance and complete the ceremony at the appointed time.

¹⁸ Krajewska 1993, 15; Klimowicz et al. 2018, 29.

¹⁹ See Fiedler 1994, 42; Harck 2004, 30-32; Shokin and Migliori 2021, 18.

²⁰ E.g. Klimowicz et al. 2018, 29.

²¹ Steinová 2011, 137.

²² Bielawski 2022, 48.

²³ Gruber 2005, 33.

²⁴ For Jewish funeral rituals in Central European countries based on religious rules and archaeological finds see the article of Kalina Skóra 2023.

²⁵ See e.g., Gruber et al. 1995, 23; Klein 2019.

²⁶ Bielawski 2022, 48; see also Rozmus 2015.

growth, although this process may have occurred in different ways. Due to the development of settlements and the filling of burial spaces,²⁷ it was often necessary to add the soil layer above previous graves, leaving an appropriate distance between them.²⁸ Efforts were also made to extend the range of the existing cemeteries by purchasing the adjacent land.²⁹ If this was not possible, a new cemetery could be established in another location. This led to a situation where it was not uncommon for a single community to have two or more burial sites over the centuries.³⁰ Leaving the existing *locus sepulturae Judaeorum* and occupying a new one may also have occurred in specific situations – primarily as a result of factors that destabilised the functioning of the community (e.g., its liquidation), or the reorganisation of the urban space in connection with the development or change of spatial organisation in a given area.³¹ Thus, the creation and disappearance of communal burial places reflected the processes of increasing population density and local urbanisation.³²

One of the most characteristic elements of Jewish necropolises in Central Europe is the presence of grave-stones (*matzevot*) made of stone or wood, in the form of vertical slabs. Their function is to commemorate the deceased and indicate the burial site. Their shape and forms are diverse depending on the place and time.³³

NUMBER AND STATE OF PRESERVATION OF JEWISH NECROPOLES IN CENTRAL EUROPE

Table 1 contains estimates of the number of Jewish necropolises in the countries of Central Europe in their current borders. This compilation was based on several documents and publications from the years 1994–2021:

- a report prepared in 2010 for the Parliamentary Assembly, Committee on Culture, Science, Education, and Media of the Council of Europe;³⁴

²⁷ Bielawski 2020, 18-19.

²⁸ See Jagielski 2001, 67; Cemetery 2002–2021; Cemetery 2007, 538; Schlesinger 2008, 13; Jacobs 2011, 16.

²⁹ E.g., key information on the history and extent of the cemeteries in medieval Cologne, Regensburg, and Prague, Stawiarski 2010, 271-273, or in Lesko (Poland) in the 17th-19th centuries, Trzeciński 2010, 13-15.

³⁰ Cf. Jagielski 1995, 174; Gruber 2005, 33.

³¹ Stawiarski 2010, 275-277, 281.

³² See Jacobs 2011, 14.

³³ E.g., Jagielski 2001, 68; see also Wodziński 2010. I would like only to signal here the existence of *matzevot* as specific elements of ancient necropolises in the region. Their documentation and stylistic, iconographic, and symbolic analysis is a separate, broad topic that has rich literature. In Poland, for example, this subject is currently being dealt with primarily by Leszek Hońdo, Anna Michałowska-Mycielska, Dariusz Rozmus, Jan Sygowski, Andrzej Trzeciński, and Marcin Wodziński. For selected examples from metropolitan cemeteries in various European countries, see Klein 2019.

³⁴ De Bruyn 2012.

- open-access database of European Jewish cemeteries prepared by the ESJF European Jewish Cemeteries Initiative in the years 2019–2021, as an EU-funded project;³⁵
- information collected until 2023 and disseminated by the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies as a result of the International Jewish Cemetery Project;³⁶
- reports of the United States Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad regarding Czechia,³⁷ Poland,³⁸ and Ukraine³⁹ based on research in the 1990s;
- data provided by the Slovak Jewish Heritage Centre, documented since 2001;⁴⁰
- a list of cemeteries in Poland as of the end of 1994, based on materials collected by Jewish organisations, headed by the Union of Jewish Religious Communities in the Republic of Poland, together with the American Jewish Heritage Council of the World Monuments Fund;⁴¹
- a document of the Polish Supreme Audit Office on activities undertaken in 2016–2019 by various national institutions and offices to protect the material cultural heritage of national minorities;⁴²
- the publication that was created as part of the 'Project of Marking Jewish Cemeteries in the Republic of Poland', implemented in 2017 with funds from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.⁴³

According to the analysed data, the number of registered cemeteries varies from a dozen in Estonia to more than 2,500 in Ukraine. These values, depending on the different sources and research methods used, show considerable fluctuations over the last three decades. This applies especially to Poland, where the existence of 1,008 to 1,578 cemeteries was recorded, and Ukraine, where between 692 and 2,563 cemeteries were recorded. This information is primarily the result of archival queries and field verifications carried out by national institutions and offices, or on the initiative and with the participation of organisations and international associations.⁴⁴

³⁵ ESJF 2023; Survey 2023.

³⁶ Eastern Europe 2023.

³⁷ Gruber and Myers 1994, based on field research in 1991–1993, and publications to the beginning of 1995.

³⁸ Gruber et al. 1995, based on surveys in 1991–1994.

³⁹ Gruber 2005, based on study from 1995 until about 2000.

⁴⁰ Jewish Cemeteries 2023.

⁴¹ See Bergman and Jagielski 2012, 480.

⁴² NIK 2020.

⁴³ Rymkiewicz 2021b.

⁴⁴ Such actions are following current recommendations on practices for verification and documentation of Jewish

Table 1. Number of Jewish cemeteries in Central Europe.

Country	Total number of Jewish cemeteries	Source
Czechia	1142	de Bruyn 2012, 17, Appendix.
	1146	Eastern Europe 2023.
Lithuania	245	de Bruyn 2012, 17, Appendix.
	364	Eastern Europe 2023.
	213	Survey 2023.
Poland	1008	Gruber et al. 1995, 15-16, 87-142, Appendix III.
	1056	Bergman and Jagielski 2012, 482.
	1272	de Bruyn 2012, 17, Appendix.
	1142	NIK 2020, 39, Infographic no. 5.
	1151	Rymkiewicz 2021b, 10-11.
	1578	Eastern Europe 2023.
	1168	Survey 2023.
Belarus	385	Eastern Europe 2023.
	401	Survey 2023.
Estonia	11	de Bruyn 2012, 17, Appendix; Eastern Europe 2023
Latvia	84	de Bruyn 2012, 17, Appendix.
	115	Eastern Europe 2023.
Slovakia	415	de Bruyn 2012, 17, Appendix.
	508	Eastern Europe 2023.
	693	Jewish Cemeteries 2023.
	451	Survey 2023.
Ukraine	692	Gruber 2005, 97-132, Appendix III.
	895	de Bruyn 2012, 17, Appendix.
	2563	Eastern Europe 2023.
	1323	Survey 2023.

However, the estimates provided may differ from the actual, real number of Jewish cemeteries

cemeteries, e.g., Klimowicz et al. 2018; Zyskina and Fischel 2020; Rymkiewicz 2021a; Shokin and Migliori 2021.

in the area. This is true for most countries in the region and is mainly due to changes in the course of national borders over the centuries, especially after 1945, as a result of the post-Yalta division of Europe. For example, pre-World War II Poland included within its boundaries much of present-day Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine. At the same time, there was a 'change of nationality' of historic buildings in common historic areas.⁴⁵ This also applies to Jewish burial places. It is estimated, for example, that within the Second Polish Republic (*Druga Rzeczpospolita*), there were about 2–2.5 thousand Jewish cemeteries, of which only about 60% are located in the territory of modern-day Poland. At the same time, about 200 new cemeteries 'appeared' because they were located on the lands incorporated into Poland in the north and west (in Pomerania, Prussia, and parts of Silesia).⁴⁶

These are sites of varying degrees of preservation, including those with surviving (at least some) above-ground elements and those no longer visible on the surface. In many cases, only traces of the original burial place were revealed, and some of them were practically non-existent.⁴⁷ A good example of the current state of preservation of the graveyards is data collected by the National Institute of Cultural Heritage in Poland in 2018. Of the 1,151 Jewish necropolises recorded, 36% have largely preserved relics of the former cemetery (*matzevot* and their fragments, *matzevot* support blocks, grave framing, fragments of fencing, relics of *ohalim*, halls of mourning or post-war memorial elements), 17% have only slight traces preserved, 21% of cemeteries are completely devoid of historic material, and 26% have been permanently transformed, i.e., built-up or covered by road infrastructure.⁴⁸ These include both still-functioning cemeteries and those officially closed for burial purposes, as well as those of medieval origin but with an unknown contemporary location.⁴⁹

There are various reasons why many medieval and modern necropolises have not survived to the present day. The most important are vandalism or looting of gravestones, destruction, and liquidation of cemeteries over the centuries. These processes took place in two ways: as a result of human actions or due to natural factors,⁵⁰ and began already in the Middle Ages. However, the greatest destruction occurred as a result of Nazi persecution of the Jews

⁴⁵ NIK 2020, 5.

⁴⁶ See Bergman and Jagielski 2012, 472.

⁴⁷ E.g., Gruber et al. 1995, 31; Bielawski 2020.

⁴⁸ Rymkiewicz 2021a, 16.

⁴⁹ See Bielawski 2020, 5-6.

⁵⁰ Bielawski 2020, 13.

from 1933, the events of World War II, and during the communist era. Warfare and changing socio-political systems contributed to the destruction of many historical monuments in various European countries. As a result of these events, the legacy of previous generations or other nations was rejected, contested, destroyed, and not properly protected.⁵¹ The extermination of most of the Jewish population (*Shoah*) in Central European countries and the post-war emigration of many survivors meant that pre-war communities no longer existed, and their necropolises have lost their previous guardians. Therefore, the presence of the Ashkenazi cemeteries was often forgotten, and, sometimes, denied.⁵²

For example, in Poland, the culmination of negative attitudes and actions toward the Jews and Jewish heritage, including burial sites, occurred in the 1960s. It was not until the following decades that the policy in this area changed. Although the decisions and actions taken by the authorities in the 1970s and 1980s did not stop the progressing destruction of cemeteries (at that time mainly on the initiative of the state administration and enterprises), they did limit the process. It was only in the 1990s, after the change of political system and government in Poland, that the Jewish communities were reactivated and the act on the relationship between the state and Jewish religious authorities was passed (Polish: *Ustawa [...] o stosunku Państwa do gmin wyznaniowych żydowskich w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, which entered into force in 1997). As a result, conditions were created to protect the necropolises in terms of ownership and conservation.⁵³ Since then, a lot of activities have been undertaken to register necropolises, document them, improve their state of preservation, commemoration, and revitalisation, and disseminate knowledge on this subject.⁵⁴ One of the most important and best-known organisations involved in the protection of the monuments of Jewish culture in present-day Poland is the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage created in 2002. Caring for cemeteries is one of the Foundation's key priorities.⁵⁵

⁵¹ NIK 2020, 5.

⁵² E.g., Krajewska 1989, 27; Gruber 2005, 32.

⁵³ Bielawski 2020, 67-158; Bielawski 2022, 58-60.

⁵⁴ In addition to research and scientific events, analyses, and conservation programs, various cultural and social initiatives, educational and popularisation projects are also carried out at various levels – local, national, and international. The results of these activities are numerous publications, websites, databases, educational paths, conferences, and festivals, see e.g., Gruber 2012, 17-18; Litwin 2012, 36-49; Klimowicz et al. 2018; Zyskina and Fischel 2020; Rymkiewicz 2021b; JHG 2021; ESJF 2023.

⁵⁵ E.g., Krawczyk 2012a; Litwin 2012.

Most graveyards, which remained abandoned and neglected, without clearly marked boundaries or descriptive or commemorative markers, were in the past and still are subject to a variety of threats, from natural deterioration to vandalism, pollution, and nearby development. Many sites have already been transformed for different uses: industrial, agricultural, residential, or recreational. Some of them have become overgrown with wild vegetation. In some cases, their area served as a sand mines. One of main causes of the loss and destruction of Jewish burial sites was the destruction and removal of gravestones or treating them as valuable building material (especially stone *matzevot*).⁵⁶ Although the situation of the Ashkenazi necropolises has improved in the last three decades, they are still characterised by varying states of preservation, varying levels of protection, different legal status, and levels of maintenance. Regardless of whether relics are visible or not existing on the surface, 'Houses of Life' remain forever the resting places of the dead, because they contain human remains. From the perspective of archaeology, they are archaeological sites.

DETERMINANTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK

Jewish rituals accompanying the dying and death, and the way of treating the funeral space are closely related to the Jewish religion. The most important in this respect seems to be the doctrine of physical, not only spiritual, resurrection, and the relation between the living and the dead body. Since both the body and the soul of the deceased will be resurrected, the corpse must also remain intact until it decays naturally. It must be afforded great respect, care, and attention.⁵⁷ The element of continuity, i.e. the belief that both the space of the Jewish cemetery and all its elements belong to the deceased, is also important.⁵⁸ In this approach, a grave is the inalienable property of the dead person, whose rest should not be disturbed until the end of this world.⁵⁹ This has implications for the sense of permanence of all burial space and the attitude to the grave. Since each individual grave is inviolable, their accumulation, i.e., the cemetery, is inviolable as well.⁶⁰ It becomes literally, not just metaphorically, a place of eternal rest.

⁵⁶ E.g., Gruber et al. 1995, 16, 31; Bielawski 2020; Bielawski 2022.

⁵⁷ Cf. Jacobs 2008, 13; Fenton 2021, 102-105.

⁵⁸ E.g., Mroczkowska 2016, 125.

⁵⁹ Cluse 2018, 146; see also Mroczkowska 2016, 125.

⁶⁰ Woronczak 1993, 6.

On the other hand, Judaism considers death impure,⁶¹ and the impurity leads to the physical distancing of Jews themselves from the cemetery as a place containing dead human remains. For that reason, it is more important to know the cemetery's location and extent than the boundaries of a single grave.⁶² The necropolises almost always were treated as isolated and liminal spaces,⁶³ which were not visited every day. Therefore, the borders of a cemetery should be clearly marked by a shallow ditch, or embankment, and with a fence or a wall.⁶⁴ Judaism also forbids the desecration of cemetery grounds. For this reason, among others, Jews sought to establish cemeteries away from inhabited areas.

The burial process was governed by different instructions and laws with basic elements that have remained unchanged over the centuries.⁶⁵ For Ashkenazi Jews, the manner of dealing with death and the rites of mourning were defined primarily in the 16th century.⁶⁶ In the 19th century, there was a change in previous customs under the influence of the civilian sanitation and order regulations introduced at the time. Over time, some of these practices were discarded, while others remained as new elements of traditional Jewish behaviour.⁶⁷

To summarise, according to Jewish law, the cemetery – and any Jewish burial place – are regarded as holier than the synagogue. For Jews, the care of cemeteries is an essential religious and social responsibility.⁶⁸ Treating the cemetery ground in any other way than as a sacred resting place for the dead is unacceptable. A plot designated for a cemetery may not be used for any other purpose, and a single grave cannot be reused.⁶⁹ The burial site retains its sanctity, even if it is devoid of tombstones and other visible grave markings. The Talmud prohibits any transfer of a grave, and a corpse cannot be moved from the place where it is buried. Once a grave has been closed, it is

strictly prohibited to reopen it. Mass graves must be regarded the same way as cemeteries.⁷⁰

Therefore, any interference in the space of necropolises is forbidden. It is possible only in very strictly defined circumstances. This applies to exhumations, which are permitted, *inter alia*, if the remains are to be buried in the Land of Israel; if the first grave was to be temporary; if the grave is in danger of being destroyed or is located outside the cemetery.⁷¹

In addition to these religious considerations, legal aspects are also important. Jewish cemeteries, like other cultural and religious sites or heritage monuments, are subject to legal protection, which is reflected in constitutional, administrative, civil, and criminal provisions.⁷² In Poland, the principles and values enshrined in the Constitution concerning the protection of freedom of conscience and religion, the principle of equality, and the principles of legality and the rule of law in the activities of public authorities are of key importance.⁷³

The principles arising from Jewish law and tradition are the basis for the functioning of the Committee for Preservation of Jewish Cemeteries in Europe, based in London since 1992. This organisation was established to ensure that religious law regarding Jewish burials is observed throughout Europe. It intervenes to prevent work in those areas that are incompatible with this viewpoint. Currently, the only active Central European members of the Committee are Lithuania and Ukraine.⁷⁴ In Poland, an analogous function is performed by the Jewish Rabbinic Commission for Cemeteries that has been functioning since 2002.⁷⁵ It was set up to supervise the work carried out on Jewish necropolises and to protect them within their historical (i.e., pre-war) boundaries. In the 20 years since its creation, it has been the main institution – apart from the heritage conservation offices – deciding on the scope and possibilities of archaeological research on these sites. According to the Commission's guidelines, only non-invasive methods of field research are considered compatible with Jewish

⁶¹ It is considered impure, for example, to touch a corpse and a grave. Such impurity, involving body and soul, is considered a sin committed against God, Róžański 1879, 174-175.

⁶² E.g., Bar-Levav 2002, 18-19.

⁶³ E.g., Bar-Levav 2014, 6.

⁶⁴ Jagielski 2001, 67.

⁶⁵ Jacobs 2008, 13. About traditional Ashkenazi funeral customs e.g., Goldberg-Mulkiewicz 1986; Puch 2003; Kameraz-Kos 2006, 119-125; Wilczura 2010; Unterman 2014, 66-67.

⁶⁶ These are the studies *Shulchan Aruch* and *Mapah* by Moshe Isserles. These regulations, published in Kraków in 1578, were widely accepted and were binding for most branches of Jewry for the next centuries, Hońdo 2016, 234 and footnote 5.

⁶⁷ Some of these are included in the law collection of Solon Ganzfried (died 1886), *Kicur Shulchan Aruch*, which was also recognised by all Ashkenazi Jews, Hońdo 2016, 235.

⁶⁸ E.g., Gruber 2005, 31; Schlesinger 2008, 12.

⁶⁹ E.g., Cemetery 2007, 538; Bednarek 2020, 176-177.

⁷⁰ E.g., Schlesinger 2008; de Bruyn 2012, 6; also, Bielawski 2005; Bednarek 2020, 176-177.

⁷¹ Bielawski 2005; Bednarek 2020, 176.

⁷² On the legal aspects of the protection of Jewish cemeteries in Poland mainly: Urban 2006; Cebula 2011; Krawczyk 2012b; Bednarek 2020; Bielawski 2020.

⁷³ E.g., Bednarek 2020, 23.

⁷⁴ CPJCE 2020.

⁷⁵ Komisja Rabiniczna 2017; Kajalidis 2022. Initially, it functioned as an advisory body at the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland. Currently, it operates within the Union of Jewish Religious Communities of the Republic of Poland. In addition to traditional cemeteries, the Commission deals with mass graves and Jewish burials outside the boundaries of necropolises, as well as with extermination camps.

tradition. To reconstruct the historical boundaries of the graveyard or to identify the burial zone, the following are recommended: a search for pre-war maps, analysis of aerial photographs, including wartime photographs, GPR surveys, and LIDAR data analysis, as well as on-site verification. Archaeological research is permitted only in exceptional cases, in consultation with the Commission, and under the rabbinical supervision of the Commission member.⁷⁶ The guidelines for work in the burial space among others prohibit digging in the ground, burying bones without due authorisation, opening graves, excavating stones and tombstones (*matzevot*), uprooting trees and shrubs, digging under cemetery fencing (owing to presently unknown original boundaries).⁷⁷

All these rules follow the orthodox approach to the halachic law, which is reflected in a restrictive attitude to the opportunity and manner of carrying out archaeological work.⁷⁸ They limit it significantly. Basic excavations (including surveys) and drilling of invasive nature, i.e., interfering with the substance of a monument, are not allowed, due to the danger of damaging the site and disturbing the bones of the dead. According to Jewish beliefs, such activities may have eschatological consequences. Therefore, methodical exploration within the Jewish necropolis, especially within its burial level, is not allowed. It is rarely allowed to disturb the upper layers of the ground, e.g., younger levelling layers, or excavate trenches unrelated to the functioning of the cemetery, or even modern topsoil. Consent to these activities is expressed only to determine the location of burials or to determine the presence of bones within the grave pit.⁷⁹ The key idea is to prevent damage to potential shallow-dug graves. Jewish law dictates that the soil filling and covering of the grave belongs to the deceased and therefore no soil may be moved, as this would cause distress to the deceased and would be considered as being stolen from him/her.⁸⁰

On the other hand, non-invasive research methods are recommended because they allow for discovering, identifying, and recording archaeological

⁷⁶ Commission guidelines, see Komisja Rabiniczna 2017; Bednarek 2020, 596-600, Appendix P; Rymkiewicz 2021a, 23-24; Rozmus 2022, 183.

⁷⁷ Bednarek 2020, 598-600, Appendix P; Rymkiewicz 2021a, 23-24. These indications have been considered, among others in the newest project of the National Heritage Institute in Poland of marking the boundaries of Jewish cemeteries and reconstructing their fencing, Rymkiewicz 2021a, 14, 21.

⁷⁸ Cf. a statement by Alexander Schwarz, member of Rabbinic Commission in Poland, lecture "Practical application of Jewish law in research at cemeteries and burial grounds of Holocaust victims" at the Faculty of Archaeology, University of Warsaw, 23.02.2023.

⁷⁹ See Bielawski 2020, 157-158.

⁸⁰ Schlesinger 2008, 7.

monuments without interfering with the ground layers.⁸¹ Therefore, the aim of research should be to maximise the usefulness of such tools in the investigation process. One of the recommended methods is LIDAR analysis, which leads to the detection of preserved micro-levelling operations on cemeteries; unfortunately, LIDAR analysis may yield positive results only in areas not transformed during and after World War II. Archaeological surveys and archaeological research using ground penetrating radar (GPR) may report inaccurate data from source queries, mostly regarding the precise extent of the burial ground.⁸² However, GPR is useful to confirm or exclude the presence of graves.⁸³ The conduct of such work should always be carried out in a scientific manner and by qualified and experienced persons, following current archaeological research methodology.⁸⁴

The handling of discovered remains of the Jews is a separate issue. Because – as already mentioned – in Judaism, the bones of the dead 'remain sacred and inviolable,' they must be buried in the ground. This precludes 'leaving them above ground level.'⁸⁵ Such an understanding of Jewish tradition and law imposes the need to bury the excavated individual bones from Jewish graves in a safe protected area, preferably in a Jewish cemetery,⁸⁶ to avoid their desecration. This applies to remains removed from the ground in any circumstances, e.g., during construction work, but also as a result of archaeological excavations. In addition, carrying out any kind of scientific tests on Jewish human remains, including study and laboratory analyses of osteological material and its scientific development after the completion of field research, is also considered contrary to the principles.⁸⁷ According to tradition, the removal of even a single bone from the soil – its place of rest – is strictly forbidden, as it would cause deep pain to the soul and spirit of the deceased.⁸⁸ Removing objects placed in graves together with corpses is also considered an act of desecration.⁸⁹

These assumptions impose strict rules of professional conduct on archaeologists. They also enforce significant limitations on the cognitive process at all stages of research – field, analytical, and compilation.

⁸¹ See Oniszczyk et al. 2020, 10.

⁸² Rymkiewicz 2021a, 15.

⁸³ Zdeb and Adamiec 2019.

⁸⁴ In Poland: Misiuk et al. 2020; Oniszczyk et al. 2020. Methods of cemetery research and principles of handling human remains, Misiuk et al. 2020, 32-34, 36-37.

⁸⁵ From the guidelines of the Rabbinical Commission for Cemeteries, Bednarek 2020, 596.

⁸⁶ Schlesinger 2008, 9.

⁸⁷ Schlesinger 2008, 6, 9.

⁸⁸ Schlesinger 2008, 6.

⁸⁹ Bielawski 2020, 154.

This currently precludes the possibility of gaining much valuable information about past Jewish communities, their material culture, and living conditions, which would be possible through research and the application of modern scientific methods on human bones and various finds retrieved from the cemetery.

The difficulty or lack of possibility to perform traditional archaeological work (of an invasive nature) on Jewish cemeteries (both of Ashkenazi and Sephardic origin), or in carrying out specialised analyses (anthropological and DNA) and problems with the storage of human bones are not always entirely accepted by the scientific and conservation societies. These problems are present in the international discourse.⁹⁰ The controversy surrounding these issues stems from the different approaches of researchers and Jewish Orthodox organisations to the cemetery space and the remains of the dead (science and knowledge versus eschatology and tradition). The archaeological fieldwork frequently provoked opposition and intervention from representatives of these organisations, which often resulted in the suspension of further research at the necropolises. Such problems have arisen in various European countries (Czechia, England, Germany, Spain) and in Israel itself.

These are very sensitive issues, requiring above all understanding the arguments of both parties, the limits of their claims, and the responsibilities for heritage from the public domain.⁹¹ Treating the dead with respect and human dignity is fundamental in this discussion as well. In this context, it is worth quoting the arguments of Max Polonovski: *Archaeology does not destroy old cemeteries on the basis of scientific superiority over rituals. It is important to remember that archaeologists intervene before construction projects erase the rich layers of information about the past. They act for the public benefit, in the name of the society which asks for the protection of common knowledge.*⁹² It comes down to the conclusion that cemeteries should not only be seen as a vector of identity but also as an important part of heritage and places of universal knowledge, because the past belongs to all.⁹³

CURRENT STATE OF PUBLICATION⁹⁴

In Poland, the archaeology of Jewish necropolises was put on the research agenda primarily by

the historian and archaeologist Paweł Fijałkowski, whose studies (published from the 1980s to 2014) drew attention to this issue,⁹⁵ placed it in the national scientific discourse, and ultimately popularised this theme.⁹⁶ The data collected by Fijałkowski on cemeteries excavated archaeologically until 1992 are still the basic source of information on the subject, and sometimes – as in the case of the work on the oldest Jewish cemetery in Lublin⁹⁷ (Fig. 2) and Lutomiersk – currently almost the only sources available. It is to this author that we also owe an overview of various aspects of the Jewish funeral rites as observed in the light of archaeology for the first time. Fijałkowski's studies are complemented by the unpublished works of Małgorzata Hajduk⁹⁸ and of Małgorzata Pisarkiewicz.⁹⁹

The results of fieldwork carried out at three Jewish cemeteries in Poland have been published in the form of independent articles by Wojciech Bis and Wiesław Więckowski (the cemetery in Węgrów),¹⁰⁰ by Beata Borowska-Strugińska (the cemetery in Brześć Kujawski),¹⁰¹ and by Marek Piotrowski (the cemetery in Wyszogród)¹⁰² (Fig. 3). Works on other sites, both those performed many years ago (e.g., in Cedynia, Oborniki, Rogoźno, and Śrem)¹⁰³ and in the last three decades (e.g., in Biała Podlaska, Kazimierz Dolny, Kraśnik, Warsaw-Bródno, and Włodawa),¹⁰⁴ are known from unpublished archaeological materials, websites, or in the form of brief notes in the literature. Some of the archaeologists' activities, including more recent ones (e.g., in Gniezno), are mentioned, for instance, in the books of Krzysztof Bielawski¹⁰⁵ and of Dariusz Rozmus.¹⁰⁶ The medieval and modern funerary practices of the Ashkenazi

⁹⁵ I exclude here the archaeology of the Holocaust and mass grave surveys.

⁹⁶ Fijałkowski 1984; Fijałkowski 1985; Fijałkowski 1988; Fijałkowski 1989; Fijałkowski 2003; Fijałkowski 2014.

⁹⁷ See Hoczyk 2012, 167, 175-176; Niedźwiadek 2019; further literature there.

⁹⁸ Hajduk 1993.

⁹⁹ Pisarkiewicz 1999.

¹⁰⁰ Bis and Więckowski 2017.

¹⁰¹ Borowska-Strugińska 2005.

¹⁰² Piotrowski 1987; Piotrowski 2017.

¹⁰³ E.g., respectively: Budzyńska 1976; Delekta 1932; Cnotliwy 1989, 211-215; Hensel and Hilezer-Kurnatowska 1980, 403-404; Dzieduszycki and Fogel 1979.

¹⁰⁴ Accordingly: Gosik-Tytuła et al. 2000, 31-32; Józwiak 2008; Zabytki 2022; Bis 2011; Banasiewicz-Szykuła et al. 2018, 62.

¹⁰⁵ Bielawski 2020, 153-158.

¹⁰⁶ Rozmus 2022, 136-158. The book covers important issues connected with Judaic archaeology, its scope and origins, and mainly with cemetery research methods, the legal and customary conditions for such activities, as well as sepulchral art. Unfortunately, the fieldwork of archaeologists on medieval and modern necropolises in Central European countries is presented in the form of short, introductory remarks.

⁹⁰ Among others: Polonovski 2010; Polonovski 2015; Colomer 2013; Kobyliński 2023, 214-220; further literature there.

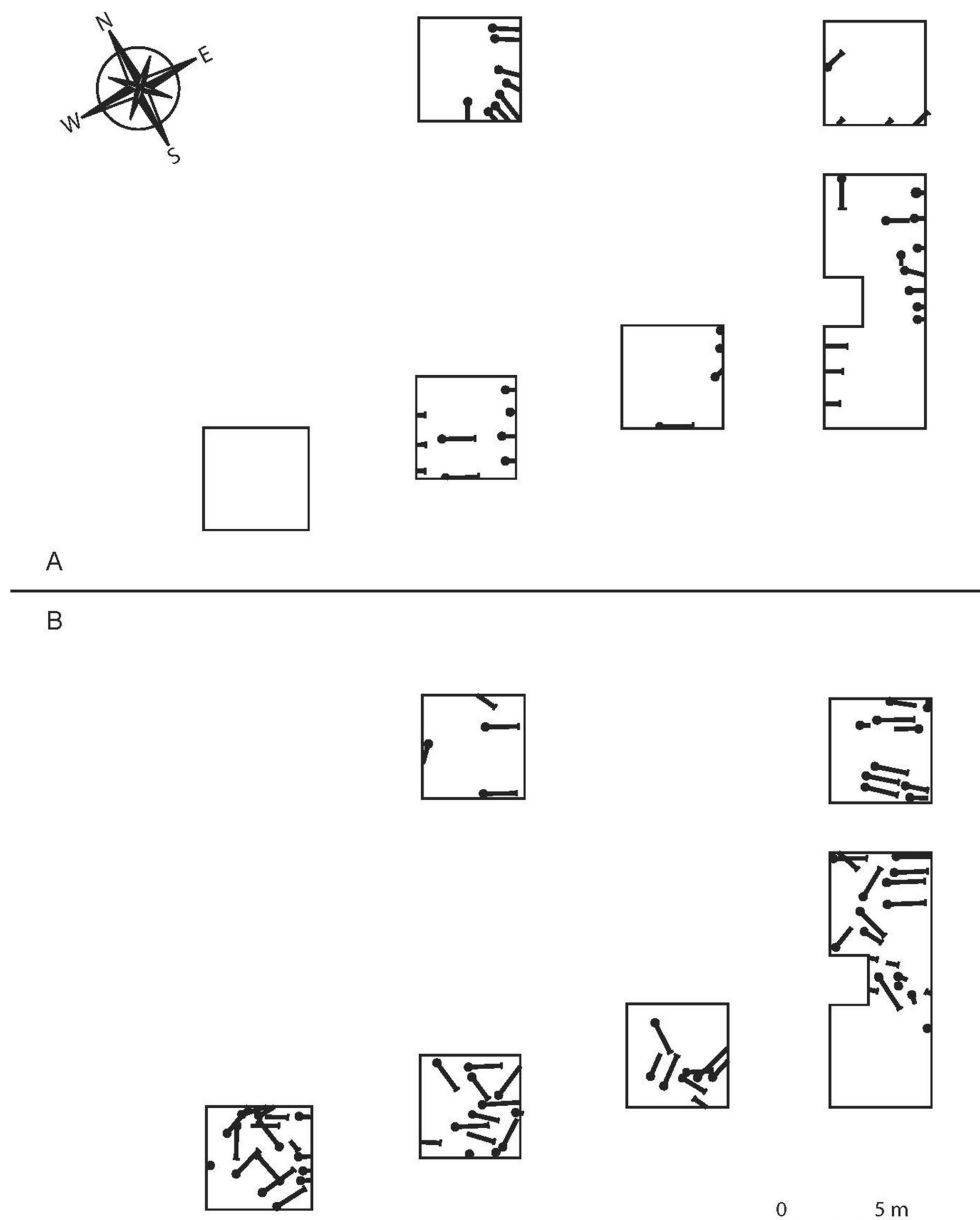
⁹¹ Colomer 2013, 336.

⁹² Polonovski 2010, 172.

⁹³ See Polonovski 2010, 172, 174.

⁹⁴ For archaeologists an indispensable source of knowledge about Jewish necropolises are monographs and studies devoted to them by historians and art historians. The number of such publications is huge for the region, and it is impossible to list them here. I only cite publications that mention archaeological research.

Fig. 2. Lublin-Kirukt hill (PL), fragment of discovered Jewish cemetery from the 16th-18th century: A – first phase of graves from the 16th century; B – second phase of graves (under 0,9 m from the surface) from the 17th-18th century. Source: Fijałkowski 2014, 66-67, figs 2-3. Digital processing: T. Witkowska.



community, documented by material as well as written and ethnographic sources, are the main subject of studies by Dagmara Adamska,¹⁰⁷ Małgorzata Pisarkiewicz,¹⁰⁸ Kalina Skóra,¹⁰⁹ Zdzisław Skrok,¹¹⁰ and Barłomiej Stawiarski.¹¹¹

In Czechia, the key archaeologists working on this category of sites and authors of academic publications are Tomasz Cymbalak and Veronika Staňková,¹¹² Zdenek Dragoun,¹¹³ Blanka

Mikulková,¹¹⁴ Jiří Orna,¹¹⁵ Jaroslav Podliska,¹¹⁶ and Michaela Selmi Wallisová.¹¹⁷ Tereza Holasová's unpublished study was based on material from earlier excavations (from 1998).¹¹⁸ Basic data consists also, among others, of articles by Zdeněk Čižmář, Miroslav Šmíd,¹¹⁹ and Rudolf Procházka.¹²⁰ The aforementioned research concerns Jewish cemeteries located in several towns: two in Prague (the Jewish Garden and at Bartolomějská Street) (Figs 4 and 5), and one each respectively in Brno,

¹⁰⁷ Adamska 2018.

¹⁰⁸ Pisarkiewicz 1998; Pisarkiewicz 1999.

¹⁰⁹ Skóra 2016.

¹¹⁰ Skrok 1991; Skrok 1994.

¹¹¹ Stawiarski 2010.

¹¹² Cymbalak 2011; Staňková 2013; Cymbalak and Staňková 2014; Cymbalak et al. 2015; further literature there.

¹¹³ Dragoun 2000; Dragoun 2002; Dragoun 2003; further literature there.

¹¹⁴ Mikulková 2011.

¹¹⁵ Orna 2009.

¹¹⁶ Podliska 2011.

¹¹⁷ Wallisová 1998; Selmi Wallisová 2009; Selmi Wallisová 2011.

¹¹⁸ Holasová 2019.

¹¹⁹ Čižmář and Šmíd 2000, 94-95.

¹²⁰ Procházka 2000, 87-89, 129.

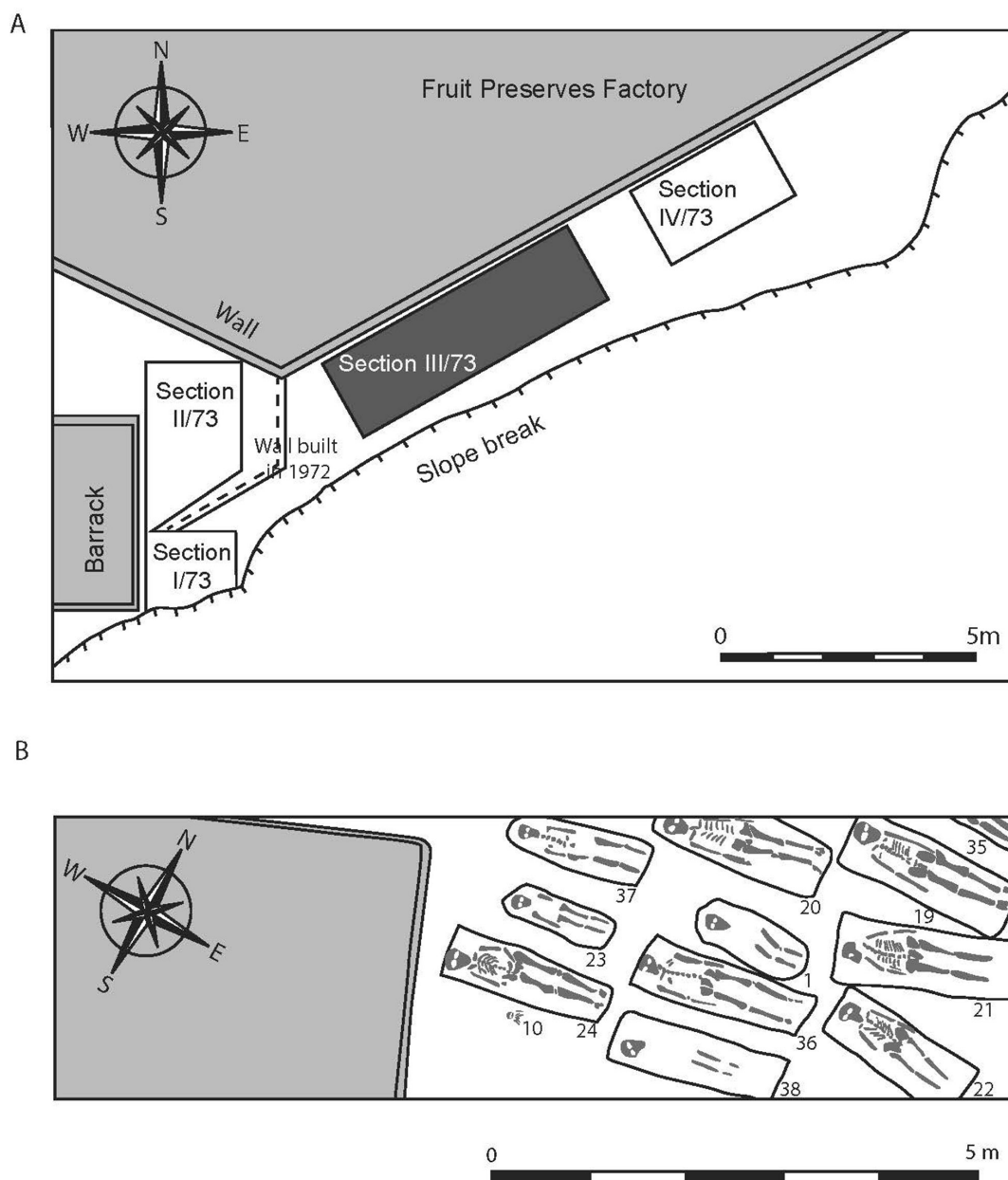


Fig. 3. Wyszogród (PL), fragment of discovered Jewish cemetery from the 16th century: A – situation sketch of the research area; B – section III/73 and revealed graves; 1-38 – numbers of graves. Source: Piotrowski 1987, 217, fig. unnumbered. Digital processing: T. Witkowska.

Pilsen, Prostějov, and Slavkov near Brno. Recently, a part of the necropolis in Přeřov was excavated, but the course and results of these investigations have not yet been made public.¹²¹ The reconstruction of burial customs based on archaeological finds is discussed, for example, by Josef Unger.¹²² This state of archaeological research on Jewish necropolises in Czechia, as well as the lack of such investigations in Slovakia, is confirmed by Roman Grabolle's preliminary description.¹²³ In Lithuania, there is information about the excavations conducted by Robertas Žukovskis in the Vilnius Šnipiškės Jewish Cemetery¹²⁴ (Fig. 6).

Data gathered on Central European Jewish necropolises is included in Table 2. The basic sources of information were archaeological publications in the form of articles in journals, as well as chapters in collective monographs. They mainly concern field research carried out in the past (until 1998) and the late-medieval necropolis in Prague, explored in 2014. Some of the archaeological works (e.g., those conducted in Biała Podlaska, Gniezno, Krasnystaw, Zamość) are known from short references in the literature.¹²⁵ Information of interest was found in unpublished materials, including reports on fieldwork in the form of typescripts (about cemeteries in

¹²¹ The information on this subject in email messages from Tereza Holasová (22.02–06.03.2023).

¹²² Unger 2006, 138-140; Unger 2016.

¹²³ Grabolle 2013.

¹²⁴ Žukovskis 1998; Žukovskis 2000.

¹²⁵ Accordingly: Gosik-Tytuła et al. 2000, 31-32; Bielawski 2020, 157-158; Gofub et al. 2019, 11; Banasiewicz-Szykuła et al. 2017, 14-15, 34-35.

Fig. 4. Prague, The Jewish Garden (Hortus Judaeorum) (Czechia), fragment of discovered Jewish cemetery from 1254-1478: A – plan of the revealed graves; B – one of the graves in wooden coffin and with stone plates on eyes. Source: Cymbalak et al. 2015, 156, fig. 7; 158, fig. 9.

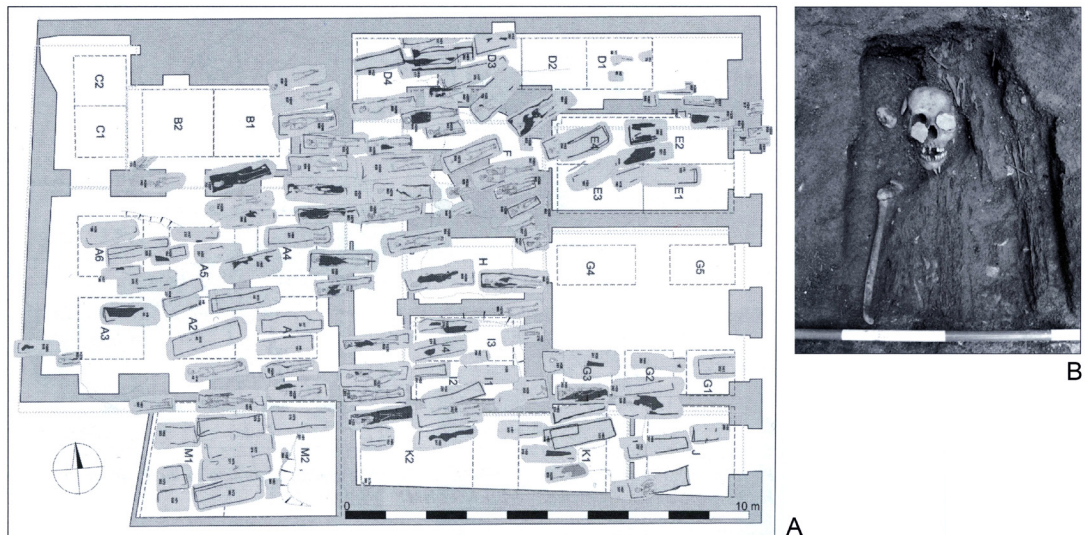
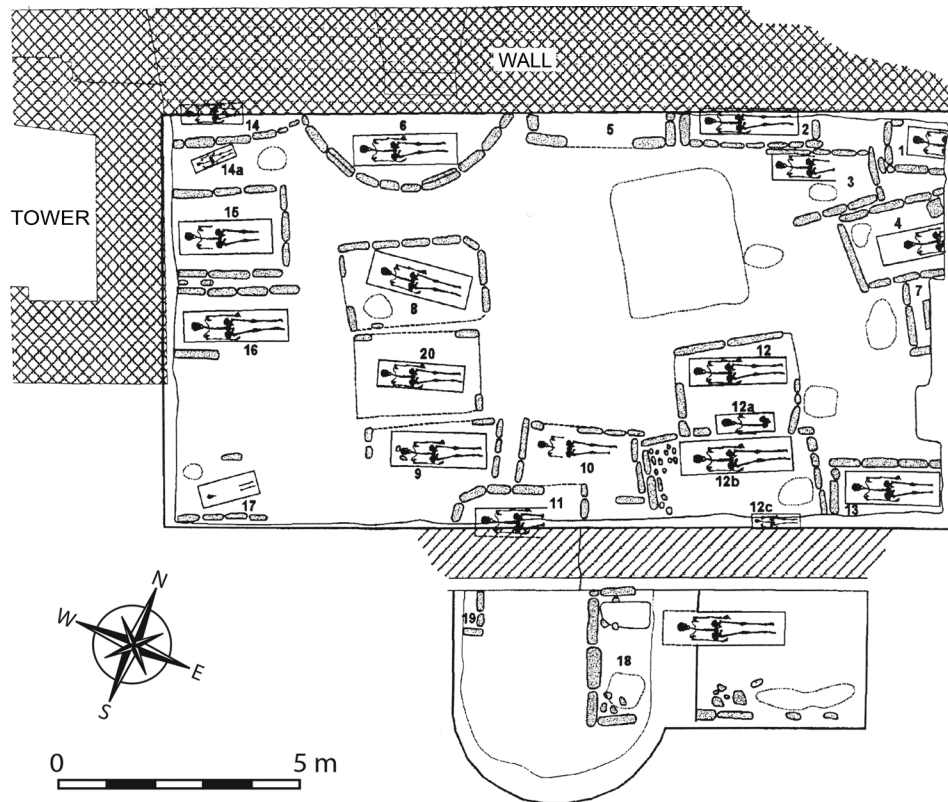


Fig. 5. Prague-Bartolomějská Street (Czechia), fragment of discovered Jewish (?) cemetery from the 10th century: 1-20 – numbers of graves; graves in stone castings. Source: Dragoun 2002, 238, fig. 3. Digital processing: W. Bis.



Bełżyce,¹²⁶ Chodel,¹²⁷ Kamienna Góra,¹²⁸ Kazimierz Dolny,¹²⁹ Lubartów,¹³⁰ Lublin-Kirkut,¹³¹ Maków Mazowiecki,¹³² Warsaw-Bródno 2011,¹³³ and Winnica-Połaniec¹³⁴) (Figs 7, 8, and 9) and in one

bachelor thesis (Prostějov¹³⁵). Some data on the discoveries made at several sites have been posted on the websites (regarding research in Warsaw-Bródno in 2022¹³⁶ and about Krańnik).¹³⁷ In some cases I owe data directly to the authors of the research (Grodzisk Wielkopolski, Lubartów, and Ostrów Mazowiecka).¹³⁸ These widely unknown research results constitute a significant part of the recorded

¹²⁶ Matyaszewski 2006.

¹²⁷ Mitrus et al. 2016.

¹²⁸ Pansiewicz 2015.

¹²⁹ Józwiak 2008.

¹³⁰ Niedźwiadek 1998.

¹³¹ Tkaczyk 2013; Tkaczyk 2014; Tkaczyk 2015a; Tkaczyk 2015b; Tkaczyk 2016.

¹³² Henrykowski 1992.

¹³³ Bis 2011.

¹³⁴ Twarowska 1986; Twarowska 1987.

¹³⁵ Holasová 2019.

¹³⁶ Warszawa Prace na Bródnie 2022.

¹³⁷ Zabytki 2022.

¹³⁸ Accordingly: Paweł Pawlak, Rafał Niedźwiadek, and Robert Ryndziejewicz.

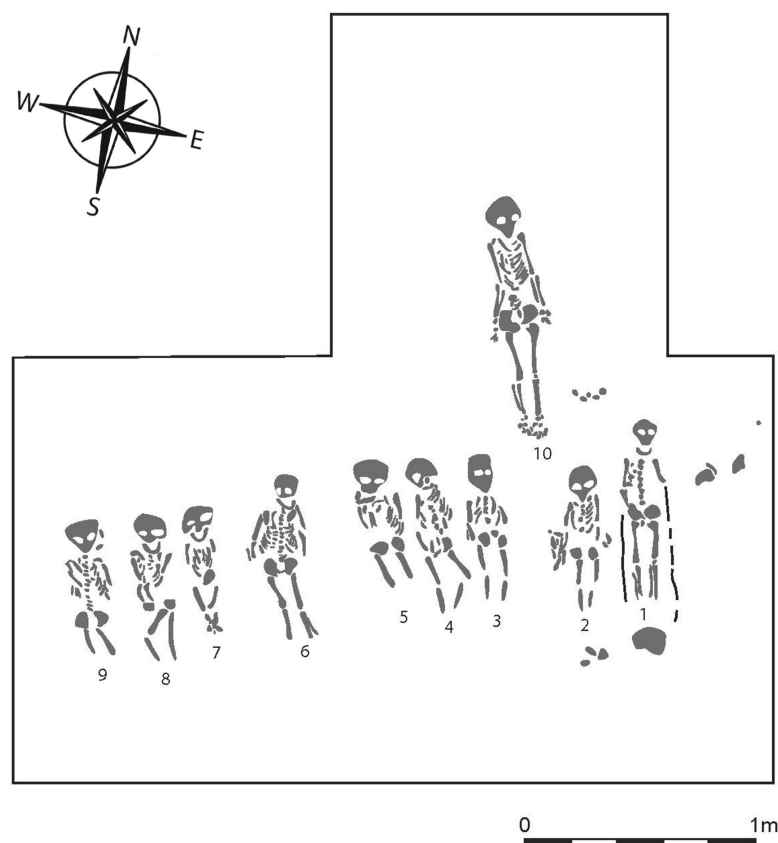


Fig. 6. Vilnius, Šnipiškės Jewish Cemetery (LT), fragment of discovered necropolis from the 17th century: 1-10 – numbers of graves. Source: Žukovskis 2000, 64, fig. 4. Digital processing: T. Witkowska.

discoveries. They have generally been conducted in the last 25 years.

The variation of content and quality of the research results regarding individual cemeteries is a separate issue. Of relevance are studies published to date describing the results of archaeological research in more detail. Such studies have been conducted in the Brześć Kujawski, Lublin-Kirkut, Lutomiersk, Węgrów, and Wyszogród cemeteries in Poland, and the Jewish Garden and Bartolomějská Street cemeteries in Prague, Czechia. These studies provide the most valuable data for understanding funeral customs practiced by the Jewish communities in this part of Europe. They include not only information about graveyards (their history, location, and arrangement), graves (their number, orientation, and appearance), and human remains revealed, but also on different archaeological finds (e.g., animal remains, ceramic artefacts, gravestones, metal items, and textiles). Unpublished materials dedicated to the necropoles, especially those excavated in Prostějov and Warsaw-Bródno in 2011, are of similar, high value, confirming the need for the dissemination of their results.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ This situation may partly change following the publication of the articles in this volume of "Fasciculi Archaeologiae Historicae".

A significant proportion of the collected publications are brief reports noting that archaeological work has been carried out or recording basic data of the discoveries made (Białystok, Brno, Cedynia, Dobrzyń nad Wisłą, Rogoźno, Sanok, Siemiatycze, Slavkov near Brno, Śrem, Vilnius, Wąwolnica-Zarzeka, Włodawa, Wrocław). These publications are often concise and do not provide a base for comparative analyses and verification of the results. Limited information refers to the sites investigated both a long time ago and quite recently.

To assess the state of research, it is important to be able to verify information about previous findings, already widespread in the literature, by re-analysing discoveries and acquired artifacts and implementing modern research methods. However, in several cases, including some very important sites in Poland (i.e., Brześć Kujawski, Lublin-Kirkut, and Lutomiersk), it is currently impossible to access complete records of the original field documentation or to see the assemblages of finds. They have either been lost or their current whereabouts are unknown. The situation is worse with regard to research conducted at a different scale and by different researchers in Cedynia, Oborniki, and Rogoźno. The amount of information about these necropoles is extremely scarce, and for the reasons

Fig. 7. Bełżyce (PL), fragment of discovered Jewish cemetery from the second half of the 16th – beginning of the 19th century: A – situation plan of the research area; green line – border of the necropolis reconstructed in 1992; red line – verified extent of the necropolis; P. 1-P. 3 – numbers of graves; B – grave no. 2; C – grave no. 2 (detail), burial with traces of a metal item on the skull and a ceramic fragment in the eye socket. Source: Matyaszewski 2006, fig. 3; photos 5-6. Digital processing: W. Bis.

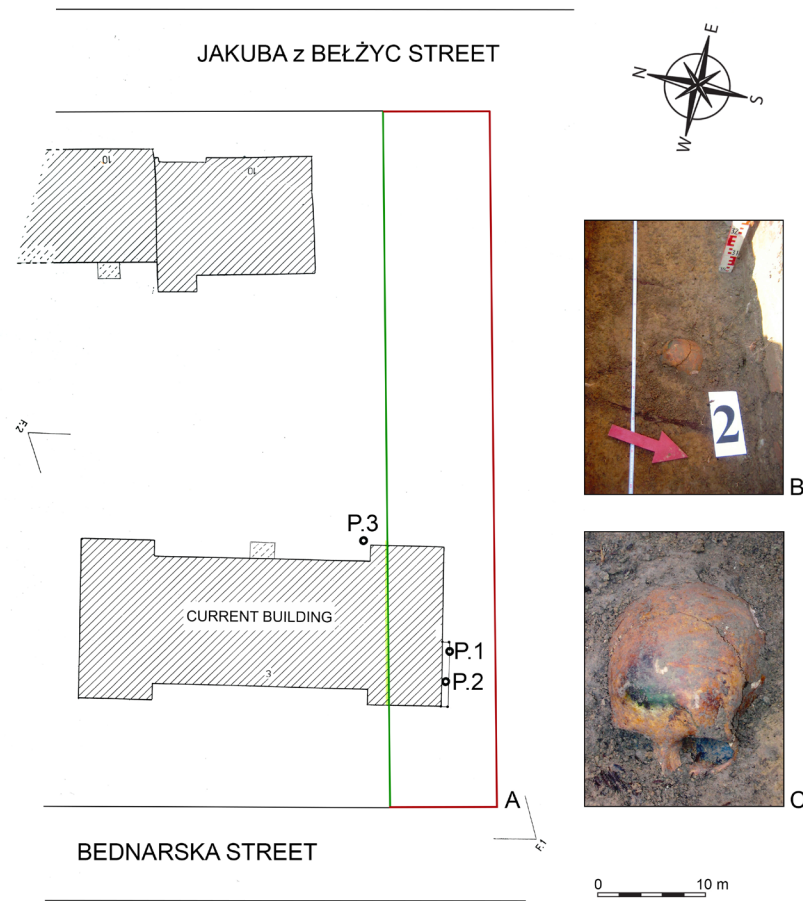


Fig. 8. Chodel (PL), fragment of researched Jewish cemetery from 1872 – the 20th century, archaeological magnetic survey (scale 1:500): interpretation of the results, layout of the strongest magnetic field anomalies, and location of trenches: a – archaeological trench; b – dirt and debris; c – lines of magnetic anomalies; d – current roads; e – range of magnetic surveys; f – extent of geodetic parcel no. 2153; g – visible earth embankment; h – course of former road; A – regular sequence of anomalies; B – enclosed space. Source: Mitrus, Piotrowski, and teams 2016, map 10/2016.

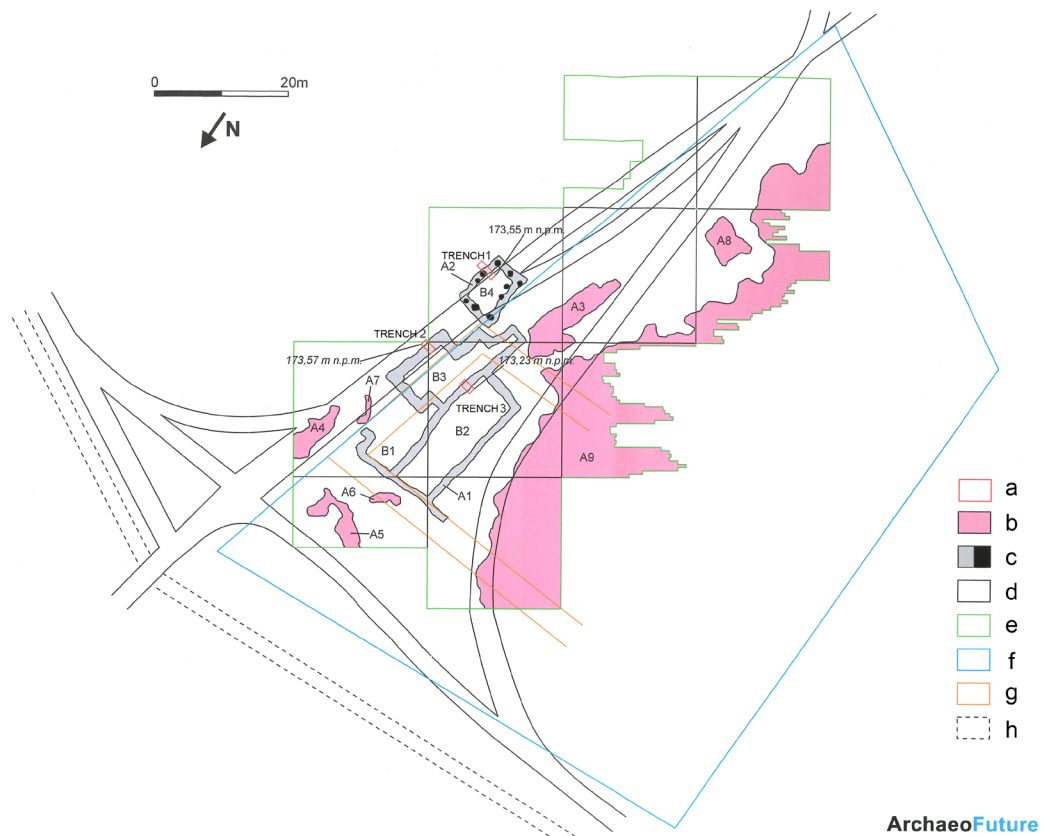




Fig. 9. Chodel (PL), fragment of researched Jewish cemetery from 1872 – the 20th century, archaeological surveys: A – grave in trench 1; B – grave in trench 2. Source: Mitrus, Piotrowski, and teams 2016. Photo: D. Włodarczyk.

mentioned above, the chances of filling the gaps and changing this situation seem slim.

In addition to the discussion of the results of field research, several papers presenting the results of anthropological analyses of human remains have been published, based not only on materials from ancient research but also those obtained in recent decades. Some of these papers have appeared in print (from Lublin-Kirkut,¹⁴⁰ Dobrzyń nad Wisłą,¹⁴¹ Brześć Kujawski,¹⁴² and from the oldest cemetery in Prague¹⁴³), while the rest remain in typescripts (from Warsaw's Bródno in 2011,¹⁴⁴ Brześć Kujawski,¹⁴⁵ Dobrzyń nad Wisłą,¹⁴⁶ Prostějov¹⁴⁷). The advantage of such papers is the inclusion of numerous collections in the analysis – collections coming from long-established burial sites located in different regions: in Mazovia and Kuyavia in Poland, and in the Olomouc region in Czechia. They allow us to grasp the differences between the analysed communities based on the features recorded on the skeletal material.

¹⁴⁰ Modrzewska 1955.

¹⁴¹ Kozłowski and Florkowski 1996.

¹⁴² Riegerová 1979a; Riegerová 1979b.

¹⁴³ Kuželka 2002. This is an important case in the method of conduct toward Jewish human remains: an agreement with the chief rabbi of Prague, Efraim Sidon, was set up and the exhumation of 88 skeletons and their anthropological analysis could be performed, with the assistance of Alexander Putik, a member of the Jewish community and historian at the Jewish Museum of Prague. Before they were reburied, many observations could be made, Polonovski 2015.

¹⁴⁴ Szymański 2011.

¹⁴⁵ Borowska-Strugińska 2004.

¹⁴⁶ Iwanek 1991; Kamińska 1991.

¹⁴⁷ Šínová 2019.

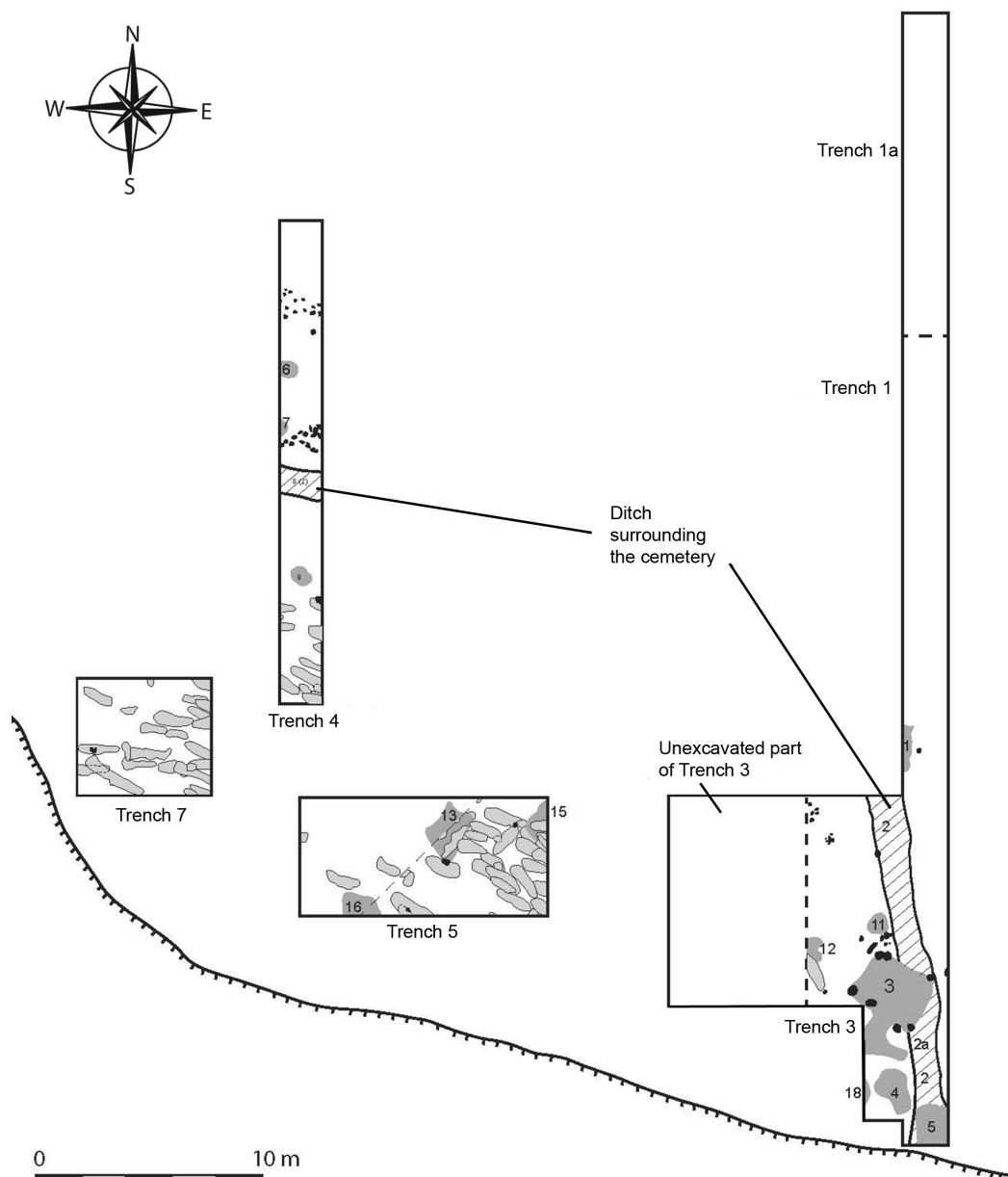
CURRENT STATE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Despite many limitations mentioned in the previous paragraphs, archaeological work of a different nature has been and continues to be carried out on this category of sites (see data in Table 2). This list has been created based on the information available at this stage of work on the subject. A complete list could be created in the future, as a result of a query in all institutions supervising archaeological research on Jewish necropolises in each of the countries of the region. The gap in knowledge concerning Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Slovakia, and Lithuania requires further verification. It is possible that contemporary works have been carried out there using non-invasive methods, but their results have not been disseminated.¹⁴⁸ These are long-term tasks intended for a team of researchers. Despite these shortcomings, the presented data should be treated as a preliminary attempt to approach the issue of archaeological research on Jewish cemeteries. The selection omitted research carried out in concentration camps and places of mass murder of the Jewish population, outside the areas of necropolises. These very complex issues, although related, require separate studies.

According to the collected information, archaeological excavations so far have been performed at least

¹⁴⁸ In the case of Jewish cemeteries in Belarus, Lithuania, Slovakia, and Ukraine, for example, some projects involving their registration and conservation have been carried out in recent years, see e.g., <https://jewish-heritage-europe.eu/cemeteries/>. However, I did not find any information about the archaeological works being performed there, including those accompanying such activities.

Fig. 10. Winnica (PL), fragment of discovered Jewish (?) cemetery from the 14th/15th-19th century or from the 15th-16th century, and the remains of the settlement from the 13th century: light grey – graves; dark grey and black – early medieval remains; 1-18 – numbers of early medieval objects. Source: Twarowska 1986, site 4, summary plan; Twarowska 1987, site 4, summary plan (no. 46/87). Digital processing: T. Witkowska.



on 45 cemeteries in the countries of Central Europe.¹⁴⁹ Most of the investigated sites (37) are located within the borders of today's Poland, 7 are in Czechia (including 2 in Prague itself), and one is in Lithuania. In 4 cases, their cultural and ethnic identification is uncertain due to enigmatic sources about the site provenance and the discoveries made (in Górsko and Rogoźno) or difficulties in determining the religious affinity of the buried people (in Prague – Bartolomějská Street, and in Winnica) (Figs 10 and 11).

¹⁴⁹ For example, in Poland, in the last few years, there were some very famous cases of the destruction of Jewish necropolises, publicised by the media: in Maszewo near Goleniów, in Pińczów, in Poznań, and in Swarzędz (accordingly: Krzemińska 2017; Maszewo koło Goleniowa 2017; Bednarek 2020, 389-391; Sałwacka 2018; Danielewicz 2016). Unfortunately, it is not known whether archaeologists carried out the works in these areas after notifying the relevant heritage conservation services. Therefore, these sites have not been included in the list.

The necropolises where archaeological research was carried out constitute a small percentage of all Jewish burial sites registered within the borders of individual countries, constituting only about 0.3% in Lithuania, 0.5% in Czechia, and 1.8% in Poland, so our knowledge about Jewish cemeteries gained on such a modest basis is rather limited and narrow.

The beginning of archaeological activity at this type of site can be dated back to the 1920s and 1930s, when excavations were initiated in Oborniki, Rogoźno and Prague – Bartolomějská Street. More systematic research was conducted in the post-war period, while the most recent research has taken place over the past few years: in Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, in Ostrów Mazowiecka, in Přerov, in Warsaw-Bródno, and Warsaw-Okopowa Street (on the two latter sites, research is still in progress). Some cemeteries were excavated over many seasons, often by different

teams of researchers; this took place mainly in the 20th century, and concerned Brześć Kujawski, Dobrzyń nad Wisłą, Lublin-Kirkut, Lutomiersk, Rogoźno, as well as the Jewish Garden in Prague (up to 2014). Fieldwork after 2000 was usually limited to short, one-season activities (e.g., Bełżyce, Biłgoraj, Gniezno, Grodzisk Wielkopolski, Kazimierz Dolny, Pilsen, Slavkov near Brno, Włodawa, Zamość). Whereas before this conventional time boundary (i.e., until 2000) field research in Poland and Lithuania was more often carried out using standard methods (excavations), in recent years it has been limited to work that does not damage the inside of graves (non-invasive survey) and using geophysical methods (e.g., in Krasnystaw, Lubartów, Ostrów Mazowiecka, Włodawa). Sometimes, when this stage of work turned out to be insufficient to identify the site, supplementary surveys were carried out (in Chodel, Kamienna Góra, Zamość, and Warsaw-Bródno in 2011). Generally, the type of archaeological investigations conducted in these two periods is closely linked to the absence and later activities of the Orthodox organisations overseeing work on Jewish cemeteries in Central Europe, i.e., the Committee for Preservation of Jewish Cemeteries in Europe, and the Rabbinic Commission for Cemeteries in Poland.

The remains of Jewish necropolises have rarely been the main focus of fieldwork. This has been the case more often in the last twenty years and has concerned only rescue excavations in the area of urban development (e.g., in Gniezno, Kazimierz Dolny, Lubartów, Warsaw-Bródno in 2011, and Węgrów).¹⁵⁰ In most cases, however, the need to excavate a Jewish cemetery occurred accidentally, during archaeological works with different aims, usually archaeological investigation of older relics, e.g., early medieval fortified settlements (in Górsko, Lublin, Rogoźno, and Śrem), an early medieval cemetery (in Lutomiersk), a late medieval fishing suburb (in Vilnius), or urban development (in Prague). Occasionally, it was the result of a contemporary natural disaster – a landslide of a riverside escarpment (in Dobrzyń nad Wisłą and Wyszogród). All of these fieldworks or incidents led to the unexpected discovery of human remains located in the ground. Recently, other directions of field research have also been initiated, such as the determination of burial sites boundaries (in Chodel, Krasnystaw, Ostrów Mazowiecka, Siemiatycze, Zamość), or limited archaeological works during the renovation of necropolises and restoration of tombstones (in Białystok, Warsaw-Bródno, Warsaw-Okopowa street), as well as the identification of Jewish mass graves within

¹⁵⁰ In these cases, exploration was carried out until the upper level of the grave pits was exposed, without examining the interior of the graves.



Fig. 11. Winnica (PL), selected discovered graves: A – grave no. 51 in trench 5 with triangular padlock; B – grave no. 55 in trench 5; C – grave no. 62 in trench 7 with the coin from 1537. Source: Twarowska 1987, photographic documentation.

cemeteries (such activities have been carried out in Kamienna Góra, Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, Wąwolnica-Zarzeka, and Wrocław).

Until the end of the 1980s, the discovery of Jewish burial places was usually mentioned in publications on the margin of the main discoveries. This fact can probably be related to the underestimation or even omission of material remains from eras younger than the 13th century, which were later the domain of historical archaeology, gaining more interest only since the 1950s in Poland. On the other hand, proper research of Jewish cemeteries and the dissemination of such results were not well perceived due to the general political situation at that time, and the overall negative attitude towards Jews.¹⁵¹ At present, however, the relatively rare publication of information

¹⁵¹ More about this in the section: 'Number and state of preservation of Jewish necropolises in Central Europe'.

about such discoveries is probably due to the fact that traditional archaeological research in Jewish cemeteries has become a cultural taboo, subject to not only religious but also institutional prohibitions. Violation of these norms often results in strong reactions and interventions by representatives of Jewish organisations supervising any work in this category of sites. Meanwhile, it can be assumed that in many cases archaeological excavations uncovering the relics of a Jewish necropolis, and the graves forming it, was an unintentional action, as in the case of Biała Podlaska, Brno, Grodzisk Wielkopolski, Krasiczyn, Kraśnik, Maków Mazowiecki, Pilsen, and Włodawa. Identifying the religious affinity of a necropolis found accidentally, especially of a site unknown from other sources (like in Winnica), or with an undetermined location (in Prague and Vilnius) as Jewish is possible often only with the progress of the work and based on the presence of specific artifacts.

In general, the state of recognition of most of the analysed cemeteries is fragmentary at best. Most often, from a few to several dozen graves were discovered in 15 cemeteries in total. In most cases, it is impossible to state what part of the necropolis was examined. Only in Lutomiersk was almost the entire cemetery excavated, revealing the largest number of burials (about 1,200). Many graves were also identified during the works in Brześć Kujawski (504), in Prague – within the Jewish Garden (401), and in Lublin (about 250). Fewer than 100 graves were recorded in Winnica (75), Slavkov near Brno (68), Vilnius (more than 52), Węgrów (50), Wyszogród (49), Prostějov (43), Brno (25), and Prague – Bartolomějská Street (20). In 16 cases, it is not known how many graves were uncovered. Only in the case of the Jewish Garden in Prague and Lublin was the approximate original extent of the necropolis determined. One of the borders of Warsaw's Bródno cemetery was established during research in 2011. Likely, the outermost parts of cemeteries in Bełżyce, Grodzisk Wielkopolski, Kraśnik, Maków Mazowiecki, Pilsen, and Slavkov near Brno were also discovered.

Chronologically, Jewish cemeteries are mostly modern sites, functioning from the 16th century (in Bełżyce, Brześć Kujawski, Lubartów, Lublin, Śrem, Wyszogród, Vilnius) and from the 17th or 18th century (e.g., in Dobrzyń nad Wisłą, Grodzisk Wielkopolski, Krasiczyn, Kraśnik, Maków Mazowiecki, Přerov, Prostějov, Sanok, Węgrów, Warsaw's Bródno cemetery), or even later (Biłgoraj, Chodel, Gniezno, Krasnystaw, Kamienna Góra, Wąwolnica-Zarzeka). The observations made therefore mainly concern this period. Only seven of the investigated cemeteries have an earlier chronology. These are sites located in

Czechia: the Jewish Garden (founded in 1254 and in operation until 1478), in Brno (probably from the 13th-14th century), and in Pilsen (from the 15th to the middle of the 16th century). The next four, situated in Poland, probably date back to the late Middle Ages: in Winnica (14th/15th or 15th century), in Wyszogród (15th century), in Oborniki (15th/16th century), and in Kazimierz Dolny (the end of the 15th or beginning of the 16th century).

The time of functioning of the cemeteries is based on the literature on the subject. They were in operation for a minimum of 85 years (in Wrocław, Gwarna Street), a maximum of 500 years (probably Brześć Kujawski, Dobrzyń nad Wisłą, Krasiczyn, Slavkov near Brno, Śrem, Wyszogród), usually about 150–200 years. The archaeological dating of the examined part of the cemeteries (including Dobrzyń nad Wisłą, Górsko, Krasiczyn, Kraśnik, Rogoźno, Włodawa) was determined by the researchers themselves, usually by the analysis of movable artifacts, mainly ceramic vessels and their fragments found in graves (see Table 2).

As some publications indicate, padlocks are of particular interest among the finds obtained in Jewish graveyards.¹⁵² They are specific to the funeral rites of Ashkenazi communities. Other categories of artifacts – with the exception of gravestones – are rarely recorded in the necropoles analysed, due to the widespread lack of grave goods. This makes such archaeological finds, including pottery, glass, other metals, or textiles all the more valuable. They represent an important source of information about the material culture of past societies. However, they are often overlooked in publications. These items discovered, *inter alia*, in the Jewish Garden, Brześć Kujawski, Kraśnik, Lubartów, Lublin, Prostějov, and Węgrów¹⁵³ have been briefly characterised. However, most of these studies remain in typescripts.

As mentioned before, there have been few anthropological studies of selected assemblages of human bones excavated from Central European necropoles, of which only four have been published. Due to the currently prevailing approach of excluding such analyses, these materials are extremely important for learning about the general and individual health of Jewish past societies. Anthropology allows comparisons between different

¹⁵² Skrok 1991; Skrok 1994; Fijałkowski 2014, 74-78; Skóra 2016. See also Czwojdrak 2009; Kowski et al. 2014 (two publications about padlocks, which are loose finds, without archaeological context).

¹⁵³ Respectively: Cymbalak and Staňková 2014; Cymbalak et al. 2015; Borowska-Strugińska 2004; Borowska-Strugińska 2005; Wichrowski 1995a; Niedźwiadek 1998; Tkaczyk 2013; Holasová 2019; Bis 2011. More details about different categories of finds, see article by Kalina Skóra 2023.

populations; it can also provide important information about migrations, numbers of inhabitants, and history of persecutions with statistics and paleopathological data.¹⁵⁴ Therefore, the dissemination of these results, based on the studies of already-excavated individuals, should be a priority for expanding the basic biological profile and the picture of living conditions of Ashkenazi communities in the Middle Ages and in post-medieval times.¹⁵⁵

CONCLUSIONS

Cemeteries are the most authentic, and often sole testimony to the centuries-long history and existence of Jewish communities in the territory of Central Europe. They survived even where no other traces of Jewish life remained. However, only a small percentage of cemeteries existing in the analysed area has been studied archaeologically so far – 45, i.e., less than 3% of the total, of which the majority (as many as 37) is in Poland. The results of many have been reported in the form of short articles, which are the only available so far, or mentioned on the margins of other discoveries. The others remain unpublished. A significant limitation in the knowledge on the subject was influenced by the principles of fieldwork, in force for the last 25 years in most countries of the region. They originate from the regulations of the Jewish religion regarding burials, the treatment of the remains of the dead, and the area of cemeteries in general. This translates into the quality and quantity of information obtained about them. Knowledge about the past world of Jewish communities in this part of the continent, created on such a small resource, is therefore extremely modest and fragmentary.

All the more so, while respecting the applicable religious and moral norms, it is important to make the most of the opportunity offered by archaeology and its cooperation with the exact sciences. This applies in particular to the necropolises that have already been examined and the materials obtained from them, including those that have not been sufficiently studied (e.g., from Brno, Lublin, Lutomer-sk, Pilsen, and Vilnius), or the results of which have not been fully disseminated (e.g., from Cedynia, Dobrzyń nad Wisłą, Přerov, and Winnica). Archaeological sources subjected to comprehensive, modern documentation and reconstruction techniques

as well as multidisciplinary analytical studies can provide a lot of information inaccessible in other ways (which is confirmed, for example, by studies on the Jewish Garden cemetery in Prague). These research methods (especially GPR, ALS, archaeometry, anthropology, and genetics) are excellent tools to expand our perception of the burial space or the biostructure of the buried population. Only on such a broad and detailed basis will further comparative analyses of Jewish necropolises and burial rites in different parts of Central Europe be possible.

The preparation of specialised publications of the results of archaeological research may be one of the most comprehensive studies of Jewish cemeteries, contributing to the enrichment of knowledge about the still least known aspects of the life of Ashkenazi Jews in the Middle Ages and modern times, especially about their everyday life, origin, mobility, and funeral customs. Archaeological research can prove to be an extremely useful instrument in this respect, combining science and faith.

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DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

¹⁵⁴ Polonovski 2015.

¹⁵⁵ See the newest DNA analyses of teeth from skeletons unearthed in Erfurt, Waldman et al. 2022.

Table 2. List of registered Jewish cemeteries investigated archaeologically in Central European countries, and main information about sites.

No.	Cemetery			Research			Total number of discovered / identified graves				Source
	Locality	Voivodeship / Region	Dating	Date	Type	Aim	Group I ≥101	Group II 51–100	Group III 1–50	Group IV 0 or unknown	
CZECHIA											
1	Brno – Uhelné Street	South Moravian Region	13 th c.–1454 (?)	1984–1988	archaeological supervisions	town development			25		Procházka 2000, 87–89, 131.
2	Pilsen – Pobrežní	Western Czechia	15 th c. – 1 st half of the 16 th c.	2006–2007	rescue excavations	town development			19		Orna 2009.
3	Prague – The Jewish Garden (<i>Hortus Judaeorum</i>)	Central Czechia	1254–1478	1970; 1978; 1997–2000; 2008–2014	rescue excavations; archaeological surveys	town development	401				e.g., Wallisová 1998; Selmi Wallisová 2009; Selmi Wallisová 2011; Cymbalak 2011; Podliska 2011; Staňková 2013; Cymbalak and Staňková 2014; Cymbalak et al. 2015.
4	Prague – Bartolomějská Street (?)	Central Czechia	10 th c.	1936	archaeological supervisions	town development			20		e.g., Dragoun 2000; Dragoun 2002; Dragoun 2003.
5	Přerov – Wurmova Street	Olomouc Region	18 th –20 th c.	2020	rescue excavations	unknown				unknown	unpublished – information from T. Holasová
6	Prostějov	Olomouc Region	17 th –18 th c.	1998	rescue excavations	town development			43		Čížmář and Šmíd 2000, 94–95; unpublished bachelor thesis – Holasová 2019.
7	Slavkov near Brno	South Moravian Region	14 th (?) – middle of the 18 th c.	2010	rescue excavations	town development		68			Mikulková 2011.
LITHUANIA											
8	Vilnius – Šnipiškės Jewish Cemetery	Lithuanian Lake District	end of the 16 th c.–1831	1996; 1998	archaeological surveys	town development			>52		e.g., Žukovskis 1998; Žukovskis 2000

No.	Cemetery			Research				Total number of discovered / identified graves				Source
	Locality	Voivodeship / Region	Dating		Date	Type	Aim	Group I ≥101	Group II 51–100	Group III 1–50	Group IV 0 or unknown	
			Whole cemetery	Discovered part								
POLAND												
9	Bełżyce	Lublin Voivodeship	2 nd half of the 16 th c. – beginning of the 19 th c.		2006	archaeological supervisions	insulation of the foundations of a healthcare facility building			3		Matyszewski 2006.
10	Biała Podlaska	Lublin Voivodeship	17 th (?)–19 th c.		1999	archaeological supervisions	construction of town thermal system			5		Gosik-Tytuła et al. 2000, 31–32.
11	Białystok – Rabbinical Cemetery (Bagnówka)	Podlaskie Voivodeship	1752–1890		2010	archaeological supervisions	street renovation; construction of sanitary sewage systems			13		Karczewska et al. 2015, 103–106; Karczewski forthcoming.
12	Biłgoraj – Konopnickiej Street	Lublin Voivodeship	1 st half of the 19 th c.–20 th c.		2016–2019; 2022	archaeological supervisions	restoration of the cemetery and renovation of the matzevot				unknown	Szpek 2022.
13	Brześć Kujawski	Kuyavian–Pomeranian Voivodeship	16 th –20 th c.		1971–1975	rescue excavations	construction of a swimming pool	504				Riegerová 1979a; Riegerová 1979b; Hajduk 1993, 72–73; Pisarkiewicz 1999, 12–19; Borowska-Strugińska 2005.
14	Cedynia	West Pomeranian Voivodeship	2 nd half of the 17 th c.–18 th c.		1975–1976	excavations	exploration of the Jewish cemetery			24		Budzyńska 1976.
15	Chodel	Lublin Voivodeship	1872–20 th c.		2016	non-invasive; archaeological surveys	determination of cemetery boundaries			3		Mitrus and Piotrowski et al. 2016; Banasiewicz-Szykula et al. 2017, 10.
16	Dobrzyń nad Wisłą	Kuyavian–Pomeranian Voivodeship	16 th –20 th c.	2 nd half of the 17 th – 18 th c.	1971; 1988–1991	rescue excavations	landslide of the river slope			35		Iwanek 1991; Kamińska 1991; Hajduk 1993, 74–76; Kozłowski and Florowski 1996; Fijałkowski 2014, 62.
17	Gniezno – Chrobrego Street	Greater Poland Voivodeship	1850–20 th c.		2006	archaeological supervisions	town development				unknown	Bielawski 2020, 157–158.

No.	Cemetery			Research			Total number of discovered / identified graves				Source
	Locality	Voivodeship / Region	Dating	Date	Type	Aim	Group I ≥101	Group II 51–100	Group III 1–50	Group IV 0 or unknown	
18	Górsko (?)	Greater Poland Voivodeship	after 1836 (?) post-medieval (?)	1948	excavations	exploration of an early medieval fortified settlement (?)			several graves		Hensel 1953, 127; Hajduk 1993, 78-79.
19	Grodzisk Wielkopolski – Żwirki and Wigury Street	Greater Poland Voivodeship	17 th –20 th c.	2011	archaeological supervisions	construction of a bus lay-by			ca 4		Pawlak 2012, 39; information from the author of the survey.
20	Jedwabne	Podlaskie Voivodeship	2 nd half of the 18 th c.–20 th c.	2023	non-invasive	identification of relics of German field fortifications from 1944/1945 and their impact on the potential destruction of the graves				0	Karczewski forthcoming.
21	Kamienna Góra	Lower Silesian Voivodeship	19 th –20 th c.	2014; 2015	non-invasive; archaeological drillings and surveys	determination of mass grave location within cemetery			>6		Pansewicz 2015; Bielawski 2020, 156-157.
22	Kazimierz Dolny	Lublin Voivodeship	end of the 15 th c. or beginning of the 16 th c.–middle of the 19 th c.	2004	archaeological supervisions	structural protection of the school building				unknown	Józwiak 2008, 3 and footnote 5.
				2008	archaeological supervisions	modernisation of the school playground			>3		Józwiak 2008.
23	Krasiczyn	Podkarpackie Voivodeship	16 th (?)–20 th c. 2 nd half of 17 th c.–18 th c.	1988–1989	rescue excavations	construction of a park fence and establishment of a vegetable garden			11		Sosnowska 1989; Sosnowska and Jurezyk 1989; Hajduk 1993, 79-80; Fijałkowski 2014, 62-63.
24	Krasystaw	Lublin Voivodeship	after 1850 – 20 th c.	2018	non-invasive	determination of cemetery boundaries				unknown	Golub et al. 2019, 11.
25	Kraśnik – Ogrodowa Street and Strażacka Street	Lublin Voivodeship	2 nd half of the 17 th c. – beginning of the 19 th c.	1994	archaeological supervisions	construction of town plumbing system			6		Wichrowski 1995a; Wichrowski 1995b; Wichrowski 1999, 16-17; Zabytki 2022.
				2002	archaeological supervisions	reconstruction of streets and utility networks				0	Wichrowski 2002.

No.	Cemetery			Research			Total number of discovered / identified graves				Source	
	Locality	Voivodeship / Region	Dating		Date	Type	Aim	Group I ≥101	Group II 51–100	Group III 1–50		Group IV 0 or unknown
			Whole cemetery	Discovered part								
26	Lubartów	Lublin Voivodeship	end of the 16 th c. – beginning of the 19 th c.		1998	archaeological supervisions	revitalisation of the town park, a so-called Jordan's park				unknown	Niedźwiadek 1998.
27	Lublin – Kirkut hill	Lublin Voivodeship	ca 1541/1555 – 1830	16 th c. – 1 st half of the 19 th c.	1946; 1968; 1974–1976	excavations; rescue excavations (in 1976)	exploration of an early medieval fortified settlement	ca 250				e.g., Fijałkowski 1988, 4–10; Fijałkowski 1989, 26–28; Hajduk 1993, 81–84; Banasiewicz-Szykuła et al. 2010, 60–62; Hoczyk 2012; Fijałkowski 2014, 63–70; Niedźwiadek 2019; Niedźwiadek and Rozwałka 2020.
					2012–2013; 2015–2016	archaeological supervisions	repairing the cemetery wall	0			0	Tkaczyk 2013; Tkaczyk 2014; Tkaczyk 2015b; Tkaczyk 2016.
28	Lutomiersk	Łódź Voivodeship	1 st half of the 18 th c. – 20 th c.		1949–1950; 1953; 1955	archaeological supervisions	construction of stairs and pavement in the cemetery area				0	Tkaczyk 2015a.
29	Maków Mazowiecki	Masovian Voivodeship	2 nd half of the 18 th c. – 19 th c.		1992	archaeological supervision	construction of the foundations of a building	ca 1200				e.g. Fijałkowski 1988, 11–26; Fijałkowski 1989, 29; Hajduk 1993, 85–86; Fijałkowski 2014, 70–78.
30	Oborniki	Greater Poland Voivodeship	15 th /16 th c. – ?		1926	excavations (?)	exploration of an early medieval settlement complex			ca 7		Henrykowski 1992; Fijałkowski 2014, 78–79.
31	Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski	Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship	17 th –20 th c.		2014; 2023	non-invasive	determination of mass grave location within cemetery					e.g., Hensel and Hilezer-Kurnatowska 1980, 237–238; Hajduk 1993, 86–87.
32	Ostrów Mazowiecka	Masovian Voivodeship	3 rd decade of the 18 th c. – 20 th c.		2021	non-invasive	determination of cemetery boundaries	649				information from R. Ryndziejewicz (the author of the survey)
33	Rogoźno (?)	Greater Poland Voivodeship	1 st half of the 16 th c. – 18 th c.	post-medieval	1931; 1957; 1978–1979; 1982	rescue excavations; verification surveys	exploration of an early medieval fortified settlement			>3 **		Deleka 1932; Cnotliwy 1989, 206–215; Hajduk 1993, 91–92; Hensel and Hilezer-Kurnatowska 1995, 403.
34	Sanok – Jagiellońska Street	Podkarpackie Voivodeship	ca 1720–beginning of the 20 th c.		1967	archaeological supervision	town development (?)					Komski et al. 2014, 50–52, and footnote 5.

No.	Cemetery			Research			Total number of discovered / identified graves				Source
	Locality	Voivodeship / Region	Dating Whole cemetery	Date	Type	Aim	Group I ≥101	Group II 51–100	Group III 1–50	Group IV 0 or unknown	
35	Siemiątycze – Kościuszki Street, Polna Street	Podlaskie Voivodeship	18 th –20 th c.	2015; 2017	non-invasive	determination of cemetery boundaries				unknown***	Bednarek 2020, 394-397; Karczewski forthcoming.
36	Śrem	Greater Poland Voivodeship	16 th –20 th c.	1967	rescue excavations	exploration of an early medieval fortified settlement				unknown****	e.g. Dzieduszycki and Fogel 1979, 36, 43; Hajduk 1993, 93-95; Fijałkowski 2014, 80.
37	Warszawa – Bródno	Masovian Voivodeship	18 th –20 th c.	2010; 2011 from 2021	non-invasive; archaeological surveys non-invasive; rescue excavations	determination of cemetery boundaries restoration of the cemetery and renovation of the matzevot, searching for A. Stern's grave			10		Bis 2011. Lenarczyk, Sugalska and Wager 2022; Warszawa Prace na Bródnie 2022.
38	Warszawa – Okopowa Street	Masovian Voivodeship	1806–21 st c.	from 2020	non-invasive; rescue excavations	recording of the cemetery (district I and IX); restoration of the cemetery and renovation of the matzevot				unknown	Lenarczyk and Laszczkowski 2022; Sugalska 2022; Wągner 2022.
39	Wąwolnica – Zarzeka	Lublin Voivodeship	ca 1826–20 th c.	2017	non-invasive	determination of mass grave location within cemetery				unknown	Wąwolnica 2017.
40	Węgrów	Masovian Voivodeship	17 th –20 th c.	2011; 2012	non-invasive; rescue excavations	town development			50		Bis and Więckowski 2017.
41	Winnica* (?)	Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship	14 th /15 th c. – 19 th c. or 15 th –16 th c.	1986–1987	rescue excavations	exploration of an early medieval settlement complex		75			Twarowska 1987; Twarowska 1988; Hajduk 1993, 89-91; Fijałkowski 2014, 79-80.
42	Włodawa	Lublin Voivodeship	unknown	2017	archaeological supervisions	construction of telecommunication infrastructure			2		Banasiewicz-Szykuła et al. 2018, 62.

No.	Cemetery			Research				Total number of discovered / identified graves				Source
	Locality	Voivodeship / Region	Dating		Date	Type	Aim	Group I ≥101	Group II 51–100	Group III 1–50	Group IV 0 or unknown	
			Whole cemetery	Discovered part								
43	Wrocław – Gwarna Street	Lower Silesian Voivodeship	1771–1856		2013; 2017	rescue excavations; verification surveys	town development	ca 200				Kichler 2017.
44	Wyszogród	Masovian Voivodeship	15 th (?)–19 th c.	16 th c.	1963; 1971; 1973	rescue excavations	landslide of the river slope			49		IA 1974, 276; Piotrowski 1987; Fijałkowski 1988, 27–33; Fijałkowski 1989, 30–32; Hajduk 1993, 85–86; Fijałkowski 2014, 80–82; Piotrowski 2017.
45	Zamość – Partyzantów Street and Kiepury Street	Lublin Voivodeship	end of 16 th c. or beginning of 17 th c. – 20 th c.		2016	non-invasive; archaeological surveys	determination of cemetery boundaries				unknown	Banasiewicz-Szykula et al. 2017, 14–15, 34–35.

(?) – cultural identification of cemetery uncertain.

* – in Fijałkowski's publication (2014, 79–80), the locality is listed as Polaniec; the correct current location is Winnica village, Polaniec commune, Staszów county, Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship, site no. 4 – cemetery and settlement.

** – in Cnotliwy 1989, 206–215, the publication mentions 3 graves.

*** – in Bednarek 2020, 394, is the information: 'numerous human remains' have been unearthed.

**** – according to Dzieduszycki and Fogel 1979, 43, 'very numerous graves' were discovered on the site.

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