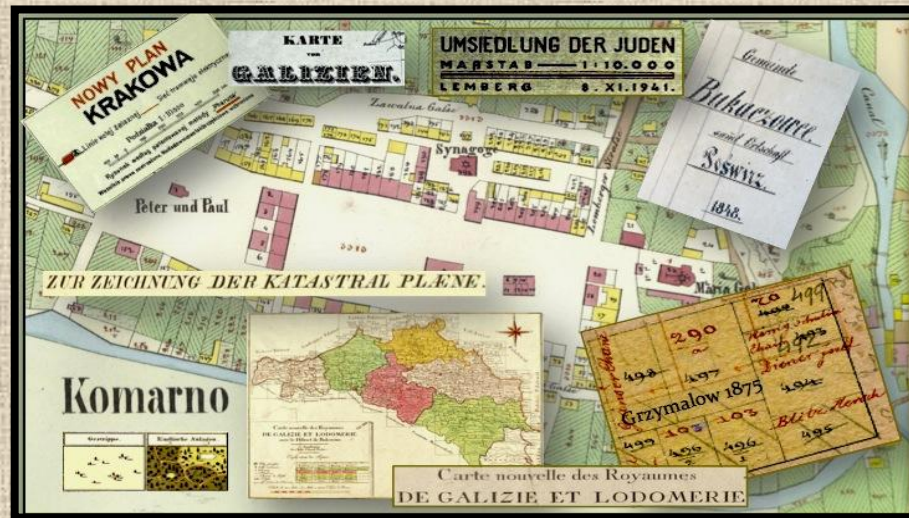


THE GALITZIANER

Volume 24, Number 1

March 2017



ANDREW ZALEWSKI	3	From the Editor's Desk
TONY KAHANE	4	Research Corner
JULIAN BUSSGANG	8	Progressive Synagogue in Lwów (II)
BÖRRIES KUZMANY	16	Brody: Images Telling the Story (III)
JAY OSBORN	21	Map Corner: Rozdół
MARK HALPERN	24	Researching Your Galitzianer Family
TALILA FRIEDMAN	32	Searching for Memories in Jezierna
ANN GLEICH HARRIS	36	How I Located a Jezierna Survivor
CONTRIBUTORS	38	Introducing the Advisory Board

Brody: Images Telling the Story

by Börries Kuzmany, Ph.D.
Austrian Academy of Sciences
Institute for Modern and
Contemporary Historical Research

THE THIRD PART of this series of articles approaches Brody from an iconic slant. Drawings and old postcards are often used to visualize a specific memory of the past, especially in media like the internet or in illustrated books. The arrangement or accompanying texts, however, usually appeal more to readers' feelings and

emotions than to historic reality. Recently, photo critic, Maya Benton, critically revised the pictures taken by Roman Vishniac, a famous photographer of Polish Jewry in the 1930s. She put the pictures into a historical context to show how images of a vanished past were used to construct memory and identity.

Brody actually was the Habsburg Empire's most Jewish city, with the number of Jews ranging between two thirds and three quarters of the total population. In the Jewish collective memory, this dominance is often reinforced by imagining Brody as a purely Jewish *shtetl*. With the help of a lithograph, a painting, and a postcard depicting Brody in Habsburg times, I want to demonstrate how Brody is represented and perceived as a Jewish urban space in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.



Carl von Auer's "The New Market"

The lithograph by Carl von Auer dating back to 1837 or 1838 is the oldest existing picture of Brody (*see illustration on page 16*). It shows the New Market, one of the city's best addresses, looking from north to south. Von Auer draws a striking social portrait of a city, which had seen its best times during the bygone Napoleonic period but was still Galicia's second largest town and the crownland's most important international trade junction at this time. We mostly see one or two-storied stone houses, which were rarely seen in this region in the 1830s, when wood was the main construction material even in town centers. Furthermore, the park looks well maintained and architecturally designed, with a pagoda in the center, and people enjoy strolling in the alleys. Moreover, a three-horse carriage indicates a certain wealth of the people sitting in it.

This takes us to Brody's inhabitants. Von Auer presents a predominantly Jewish city; except for the people in the carriage, one of the three men on the left edge, and one promenader in the forefront, all people are clearly marked as Jews by their clothing. And we cannot even be sure as to whether the non-Jewishly dressed inhabitants are Gentiles, because many followers of the *Haskalah* preferred to dress in western clothing. Strikingly, all those identifiable as Jews are presented as poor, wearing ragged clothes. The men on the outmost left and right edges look particularly deplorable, whereas those wearing a *shtreimel* (Yiddish, a fur hat worn by Hasidic men) and the two women look a little better off.

Von Auer's lithograph is entitled "The New Market in Brody." Thus, from the outset it does not refer to a Jewish place or subject. However, the city's public space is obviously dominated by Jews, which suits a town well where more than 85 percent of the population was Jewish in the 1830s. Von Auer thus caught a rather realistic

picture of Brody in this period, showing a wealthy city with poor Orthodox and Hassidic Jews.

Isidor Kaufmann's "Friday Evening in Brody"

Even more than von Auer, Isidor Kaufmann presents Brody as an entirely Jewish urban space, if in a totally different manner. Kaufmann (1853-1921) was born in Arad (now in Romania) and later moved to Vienna for his artistic studies. Since the 1890s he became increasingly interested in Eastern European Jewish piety and undertook extended journeys to the Empire's eastern provinces to portray traditional Jewish life. The tableau "Friday Evening in Brody" is undated but was most likely painted in the months after his trip to eastern Galicia, including Brody, in summer 1904 (*see illustration on the next page*).

Kaufmann presents Brody as a typical East European *shtetl*. To be more precise, he depicts it in the way Western-assimilated Jews imagined the *shtetl*, with only Orthodox and Hassidic Jews roaming the streets. Pious men and boys follow the path towards the illuminated synagogue, which sits above all the houses and symbolizes the centrality of religion in all spheres of life. Kaufmann reinforces this by adding a dome, which Brody's Great Synagogue never actually possessed, and by pretending that the building is on a hill or somehow elevated, which was not the case in reality. No women or girls are to be seen, because they are supposed to be at home to prepare for Shabbat. The *shtetl's* roads are unpaved and the detached houses are only one-storied. The blurry figures and the smooth yellowish-brown colors of the entire tableau evoke a mystic and exotic atmosphere in an allegedly more authentic Ashkenazi Jewry.



Władysław Kocyński's *Goldgasse*

The last image I want to discuss is a postcard from the early twentieth century depicting the *Goldgasse*, Brody's main street connecting the city's two main squares (*see illustration on the next page*). It is undated, but must have been taken in the years right before the First World War. Dating from the same period as Kaufmann's tableau, we once again see a totally different city. There are no Jews; at least, nobody who could be identified as such by his appearance. All men, again there are no women in the picture, are properly dressed in a modern way and pose for the photograph. The author of the postcard, thus, staged an image of the urban space he deliberately composed

without Jews. On the basis of many other photographs, we know that traditional Jewish clothing was not uncommon in Brody in the last years before the First World War. The photographer is unknown, but it was produced and sold by Władysław Kocyński, owner of a Polish stationery company in Brody, who presumably desired to present his hometown as he wanted it to be perceived. Postcards had become extremely popular at the beginning of the twentieth century and allowed the spread of visual impressions of a place to which most people would never go. Generally, postcards followed a common iconic set-up; however, the producer of the postcard decided which picture would and should be representative for a given city.



"Brody. Ulica Złota" (postcard, 1911)

We see a modern Central European town with two-storied, or in the case of the building on the left hand side, even three-storied houses, telegraph cables and electric street lightening. Special attention should be drawn to the tallest building in the street, the Hotel Bristol. It was opened in 1909 in Art Nouveau style and was arguably the most comfortable place to stay in the city. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century it was in vogue to name upper class hotels after the English city of Bristol; in Vienna, right next to the opera house, a luxurious Hotel Bristol opened in 1892. Thus, Brody wanted to join this European trend and tried to emulate the empire's capital. This hotel was then and now the highest building

in the *Goldgasse* and can be easily recognized as the prominent "Hotel Brodnitzer" in the novel *Radetzky March* by the Austrian Jewish writer Joseph Roth. When Isaac Babel arrived in Brody with Semen Budyonny's Red Cavalry in the summer of 1920, he was very much impressed by the Hotel Bristol, where he perceived remnants of a vanishing Western civilization in war-destroyed Brody.

We can also see from the postcard's caption that people accepted Brody's multilingualism and even perceived it as a typical feature of their city. Producing postcards with captions in two languages was quite common in Galicia and the Habsburg Monarchy in general, as postcards are intended to be bought by visitors not necessarily being familiar with the local language. This would explain the caption in German, the empire's *lingua franca*. However, I would argue that the "trilingualism" (German, Polish and Ukrainian) of this *Goldgasse* postcard was chosen intentionally to distinguish Brody from other cities.

Yet, one of Brody's most important languages was certainly missing: Yiddish. Even though the city's Jewish elite, heavily influenced by the *Haskalah*, was quite favorable towards standard German and sent their children to the German Kronprinz-Rudolf high school in the town, Yiddish was definitely the most common language among Brody's lower strata. Farther away from the city's wealthier streets, Yiddish signboards and inscriptions were certainly frequently found. However, as the Austrian constitution perceived Jews solely as a confessional minority, Yiddish never gained any legal status. Without doubt, Władysław Kocyan could have decided to add a Yiddish caption to his postcard, but Yiddish had a low reputation; furthermore, it would have obviously contradicted his choice of a photograph that lacked any identifiable Jews.

Comparing these three images, we can observe three different representations of the same city: von Auer drew Brody as a major Jewish city; Kaufmann turned it into a traditional *shtetl*; and Kocyan photographed a modern urban space not identifiable as Jewish. Eventually, Kaufmann's image was the most successful. The Austrian Jewish writer Joseph Roth, arguably the city's internationally best-known son, most strikingly uses Brody's *shtetl* image in his literary essay "The Jewish Town," published in 1927. Even though he does not explicitly mention the town's name, the description of the city's layout makes it clear that he had his birthplace in mind. Roth draws a picture of petty and medium traders as well as craftsmen employed in rather poorly paid, religion-related jobs, referring hereby to the ubiquity of religion for *shtetl* dwellers.

On today's mental maps, Brody is largely remembered as a Jewish hamlet because of its huge Jewish majority and its deep poverty. Both notions are true for the turn of the twentieth century. However, collective memory seems to ignore several features that do not allow us to classify Brody as the embodiment of a *shtetl*, at least not before the middle of the nineteenth century. By numbers of inhabitants (fluctuating at around 20,000 people), Brody was much bigger than a hamlet. The city's mercantile elite was engaged not only in local or regional, but in international trade; and the strong attachment of Brody's upper strata to enlightened ideas, turned Brody into one of the few strongholds of the *Haskalah* in Galicia. Nevertheless, Kaufmann painted Brody as the epitome of the Eastern European Jewish *shtetl* life, and if we look at illustrated publications or the internet, his interpretation seems to be widely adopted.

Editor's note: *This article was originally published by Börries Kuzmany as "Brody Always on My Mind: the Mental Mapping of a Jewish City." East European Jewish Affairs 2013, 43:162-189. Reprinted*

with permission of Taylor & Francis Ltd. The last installment in this series will be published in the June 2017 issue of the Galitzianer.

The author's new book, Brody: A Galician Border City in the Long Nineteenth Century, has been recently published. For more information see:

<http://www.brill.com/products/book/brody-galician-border-city-long-nineteenth-century>

THE GALITZIANER

Are you looking for the last issue or any of the prior ones published since 1993?

Past issues are available on the website in the "**Members Portal**." Please login and then click on the icon of "The Galitzianer Archive."

On this redesigned webpage, you can use the search engine for terms of interest or simply browse the *Galitzianer* Archive.

THE 37TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON JEWISH GENEALOGY

Don't forget to register for the annual conference, held this year in **Orlando, Florida (July 23–28, 2017)**.

Gesher Galicia is planning several events: from the Gesher Galicia SIG workshop and luncheon to individual presentations.

Stay tuned for the announcement in the *June Galitzianer*.