

Making a Home in Poland: Photographic Education and Practices in the *Landkentanish* Movement

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Abstract: *This article studies the photographic methods that the Poland-based Landkentanish (Yiddish for “knowing the land”) movement employed in the interwar period to promote Jewish culture and Poland as a home for the Jewish people. The movement wished to increase the exposure of Polish Jews to Poland’s diverse landscapes in order to strengthen their connection to the Polish land. It also aspired to create archives of local Jewish cultural heritage to attest to the long history of Polish Jewry and to the contributions that Jews had made to Polish society. After tracing the movement’s origins, this article explores the concentrated efforts that it made to provide its members with photographic knowledge and education. Analyzing the photographic sources and resources that the movement created, the exhibitions that it put on display, and its employment of snapshots, the article demonstrates how photography assisted the movement in realizing its key aims and objectives.*

Keywords: amateur photography; cultural heritage; ethnographic photography; Jews and photography; photographic education; photography and nationalism; sightseeing; tourism

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Fig. 1: Photographer unknown, “A Torah’s Shield, Tas from 1839 (From the Museum of the Jewish Community in Lvov)”. Reproduced from the magazine *Krajoznawstwo. Wiadomości ŻTK* 4, no. 30 (1938): 14. Halftone print.



Fig. 2: Photographer unknown, “The interior space of the [Great] Synagogue of Vilnius”. Reproduced from the magazine *Landkentsh* 2, no. 24 (1937): 9. Halftone print.



Fig. 3: Photographer unknown, “An Excursion of ŻTK’s Branch from Włocławek to Kazimierz”. Reproduced from the magazine *Krajoznawstwo. Wiadomości ŻTK* 2, no. 24 (1937): 14. Halftone print.

Introduction

What chain of events would bring together photographs of Jewish artifacts, synagogue architecture, and Jewish tourists, and to what end? (figs. 1–3).¹ The history of this juxtaposition begins in March 1923, when a group of Jewish academics and students from Warsaw set out to expand their familiarity with Poland’s geography and landscape, and unravel the country’s Jewish cultural heritage. To refer to the aim of this endeavor, they adopted the Polish word *krajoznawstwo*, which means “knowledge of the land.” Having named themselves Żydowskie Akademickie Koło Miłośników Krajoznawstwa (the Jewish Academic Circle of *Krajoznawstwo* Enthusiasts), they began organizing a range of activities, such as lectures, courses, and excursions, with the intention of creating opportunities for learning, discovery, and the exchange of information. As the initiative triggered the interest of other Jewish students and academics across Poland, in 1925 similar groups were established in Vilnius and Kraków, and in 1926 another one was founded in Lvov. Later that year, they all united to form a national organization under the name Akademickie Koło Miłośników Krajoznawstwa (Academic Circle of *Krajoznawstwo* Enthusiasts; hereafter, AKMK).² As the initiative also triggered the interest of non-academic Polish Jews, 1926 likewise saw the foundation of Żydowskie Towarzystwo Krajoznawcze (the Jewish *Krajoznawstwo* Organization; hereafter ŻTK). ŻTK’s establishment was fueled by a desire to involve in the enterprise as many Polish Jews as possible and by a wish to create an opportunity for student members of AKMK to continue being part of the initiative once they completed their studies.³ While AKMK largely focused on methodical research and ŻTK prioritized the popularization of Jewish tourism and sightseeing across Poland, the two organizations worked closely throughout their existence, and together they constituted the Jewish *Krajoznawstwo* movement in Poland.⁴ Leaders and members of the movement commonly referred to it by the Yiddish word *landkenthish* however, which is an exact translation of *krajoznawstwo*.⁵

In Poland and eastern Slavic countries of the early twentieth century, the term *krajoznawstwo* referred to the systematic collection of scientific data about a given area—such

¹ A similar version of this article appeared in Polish: Gil Pasternak and Marta Ziętkiewicz, “Mieć w Polsce ojczyznę. Fotografia w działalności żydowskiego ruchu krajoznawczego (1923–1939),” in *Odkrywanie “peryferii”: Historie fotografii w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej*, ed. Marta Ziętkiewicz and Małgorzata Biernacka (Warsaw: Liber pro Arte, 2017), 103–134.

² On the establishment and evolution of AKMK, see “Pięć lat (24.III.1923–24.III.1928),” *Wiadomości Krajoznawcze* 9 (1928): 1.

³ Henryk Seidengart, “Dziesięć lat krajoznawstwa,” *Krajoznawstwo: Wiadomości ŻTK* 1, no. 23 (1937): 14.

⁴ For discussions of AKMK’s stated interests, see “Od redakcji,” *Wiadomości Krajoznawcze* 1 (1926): 1; Władysław Lewin, “Założenie koła: Wspomnienia,” *Wiadomości krajoznawcze* 1, no. 22 (1933): 12. For a discussion of ŻTK’s declared interests, see A. H-t, “Nowe drogi naszego ruchu,” *Wiadomości ŻTK* 4, no. 12 (1933): 2. For a discussion about the relationship between AKMK and ŻTK, see “Wspólnymi siłami,” *Wiadomości ŻTK* 2–3 (1930): 5–7.

⁵ Throughout the article we capitalize the word *Krajoznawstwo* whenever we use it with reference to the name of the movement or one of its chapters. Conversely, we write *krajoznawstwo* in lower cases whenever we refer to one or more of the practices and activities associated with research into knowledge of the land.

as a country, province, or town—with the intention of elaborating knowledge concerning its social and cultural histories, natural environment, and human-made monuments.⁶ Mostly complying with this definition, the *Landkenthish* movement intended to fulfill four main aims.⁷ First, it wanted to gather and elaborate scholarly research about the Polish land, with special emphasis on Jewish history, culture, and folklore. Second, it wished to help protect the country's natural landscapes and preserve its cultural monuments, in particular those made by the Jewish community. Third, it aspired to popularize knowledge about *krajoznawstwo* as well as sightseeing activities and tourism. Fourth, it desired to encourage and facilitate visits to different parts of Poland, especially by secular and religious members of the Jewish community from big cities and local *shtetls* alike.

Leaders of the *Landkenthish* movement intended to accomplish these aims in order to secure the right of Polish Jews to live in Poland and be considered, in spite of their different cultural background, not as guests or members of a national minority but as equal members of Polish society. During a period in which the majority of Poles celebrated the emancipation of their perceived historical land while working toward the creation of a sense of a homogenous modern culture and a coherent national identity, the movement engaged its members in activities that, although apparently eclectic and unrelated, were nevertheless meant to advance its goals.⁸ Alongside giving lectures on diverse topics, such as physical and human geography, map reading, nature protection, art history, world history, world cultures, philosophy, and ethnography, the movement's leaders also put together talks about more specific and local subjects, including minorities in Europe, the history of Polish cities, Jewish folklore, and the history of Jewish art in Poland.⁹ Complementing this range of events, the movement organized nature retreats and hiking trips in the Polish mountains, cartography courses, trips to Polish towns and cities, kayak vacations, ski breaks, and sports camps. Specific concentrated efforts were made to inculcate photographic knowledge, skills, and abilities in movement members during these activities.

The movement leaders believed that by partaking in these and similar ordinary activities, Polish Jews would demonstrate their compatibility with the interests of modern European nations and evince their deep connection to the Polish land in which they had been living for centuries. In fact, the movement presented itself as one segment of a larger *krajoznawstwo* movement in Poland. Its formal constitution was virtually an exact copy of that which *Polskie Towarzystwo Krajoznawcze* (the Polish *Krajoznawstwo* Organization; hereafter, PTK) compiled for itself in 1925. Wishing to prevent the marginalization of Jews in Polish society,

⁶ “Krajoznawstwo,” in *Ilustrowana encyklopedia Trzaski, Everta i Michalskiego*, ed. Stanisław Lam, vol. 2 (Warsaw: Księgarnia Trzaski, Everta i Michalskiego, 1924), 1110.

⁷ The movement's aims (and objectives) were recorded when ŻTK formalized its constitution of May 8, 1932. See Article 4 in *Statut Żydowskiego Towarzystwa Krajoznawczego w Polsce z 8 V 1932 r.*

⁸ On the emergence of Polish nationalist sentiments during the interwar period, see Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 298–300.

⁹ Seidengart, “Dziesięć lat krajoznawstwa,” 19–22.

leaders of the *Landkentenish* movement merely expanded the scope of PTK's interests to cover the history and heritage of Polish Jews in the country as well.

In this article, we specifically examine the *Landkentenish* movement's extensive employment of photography and the concentrated efforts that it made to provide movement members with photographic education. The complex relationship between photography, nation-building, national belonging, patriotism, and national identity has been studied by various scholars and in relation to multiple geographies, states, peoples, cultures, and ethnicities.¹⁰ As we demonstrate, the leaders of the *Landkentenish* movement also recognized the contributions that photography could make to the task of giving material expression to the history, culture, and identity of the Jewish nation. In fact, they saw in photography one of the most significant and effective means that the movement could use to evince the deep-rooted historical connection between the Jewish community of Poland and the Polish land.

Although the *Landkentenish* movement persisted in its activities for over fifteen years, for historical reasons information concerning its activities and achievements is rather limited. ŻTK's archive and library were located in the organization's headquarters at 51 Królewska Street in Warsaw, and were most likely destroyed during the German occupation of the city during World War II. The archives of AKMK's and ŻTK's local chapters had possibly shared a similar fate. The loss of whatever documents these archives might have preserved means that any discussion or analysis of the *Landkentenish* movement is possible only through an external examination of the traces that it left behind in the public sphere. Frustratingly, no known source can provide any insight into the internal discussions or debates that its members might have engaged in behind closed doors; if any private evaluations of the movement's achievements or any reflections on its impact on the lived experience of Polish Jewry have ever been recorded, at present they would seem to be gone forever.¹¹ In preparing this article, we therefore mainly examined individual formal documents, ephemera, and photographic prints that we traced in archives and libraries across Poland. We also extracted information from news bulletins, booklets, and magazines that the movement published in Polish and in Yiddish both nationally and locally. Whereas the sparse scholarship on the movement tends to draw on materials disseminated by ŻTK, we have consciously sought to pay equal attention to publications produced by AKMK.¹² As these interrelated national organizations openly and explicitly drew

¹⁰ See, for example, Elizabeth Cronin, *Heimat Photography in Austria: A Politicized Vision of Peasants and Skiers* (Vienna: Phoainstitut Bonartes, 2015); Eugene M. Avrutin et al., eds., *Photographing the Jewish Nation: Pictures from S. An-sky's Ethnographic Expeditions* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2014).

¹¹ Some detailed information about the constitution, activities, members, and financial affairs of AKMK's Kraków chapter is still available in the New Documents Archive at Jagiellonian University, object no. SII796. It is possible that other archives hold similar documents and photographic records concerning ŻTK and AKMK. At the time of the writing of this article, however, they might not yet have been catalogued or even identified as such.

¹² Previous studies about the movement include Samuel Kassow, "Travel and Local History as a National Mission: Polish Jews and the Landkentenish Movement in the 1920s and 1930s," in *Jewish Topographies: Visions of Space, Traditions of Place*, ed. Anna Lipphardt, Alexandra Nocke and Julia Brauch (Abingdon, UK: Ashgate, 2012), 241–264; Wanda Skowron, "Organizacje krajoznawczo-turystyczne żydowskiej mniejszości narodowej w Polsce w okresie XX-lecia międzywojennego," accessed January 1, 2017,

on each other's knowledge, resources, experience, and expertise, the popular and academic wings of the same movement cannot be fully understood in isolation from one another. Although it is true that ŻTK represented the movement's living heart, AKMK was certainly its soul. It laid down the movement's scientific foundations, determined the nature of many of its activities, and also infused them with the kind of knowledge and information that participants needed in order to help the movement achieve its four primary aims. Studying how the academic and popular factions of the *Landkentenish* movement employed photography to attest to the right of Polish Jews to a homeland in Poland, we reveal the movement's lesser-known contributions to the visualization of modern Jewish identity and to the development of Jewish photographic cultures in interwar Poland.

The Origins and Employment of *Krajoznawstwo* in the Polish Lands

The origins of *krajoznawstwo* date to early nineteenth-century Europe, when learned societies and the rising middle classes set out to maintain detailed records of the natural and cultural surroundings that were changing irreversibly owing to the rapid industrialization of the continent. Although members of the Polish nation carried out *krajoznawstwo* activities within the Polish lands to accomplish the very same mission, their interest in *krajoznawstwo* was largely motivated by deep national and patriotic sentiments.¹³ The Polish state, which was first established in the late tenth century, maintained its sovereignty until its territory and people fell under the control of the Russian, Austrian, and Prussian empires in 1795. Now the Polish lands repeatedly turned into theaters of war and battlegrounds of other but no less brutal armed conflicts.¹⁴ Polish monuments were destroyed and cultural products were looted on a regular basis. In this reality, those who still considered themselves Poles identified *krajoznawstwo* as a protective shield against the oblivion of Polish history and the complete annihilation of Poland's rich culture.¹⁵

Following Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), and the 1905 Russian Revolution that followed, the Russian Empire's grasp of the portion of the Polish lands it occupied started weakening. The visibility of Polish national consciousness had subsequently increased across this part of the country, leading, among other social changes, to the establishment of PTK in Warsaw in 1906.¹⁶ While the popularity of *krajoznawstwo* subsequently grew, narratives about the old Polish state and its cultural heritage gained more prominence following the emancipation of Poland and the foundation of the Second Polish

https://khit.pttk.pl/index.php?co=tx_foto_0; and Itzik Nakhmen Gottesman, *Defining the Jewish Nation: The Jewish Folklorists of Poland* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003), 166–167.

¹³ Aleksander Janowski, "Sprawozdanie z dziesięcioletniej działalności PTK," *Rocznik PTK* 8–10 (1916): 3–4.

¹⁴ Davies, *God's Playground*, 3–119, 196–201, and 256–290.

¹⁵ Aleksander Patkowski, "Sprawozdanie z działalności PTK za lat dwadzieścia," *Rocznik PTK* (1928): 6–9.

¹⁶ Janowski, "Sprawozdanie z dziesięcioletniej działalności PTK," 3.

Republic at the end of World War I.¹⁷ The people of the reunited Polish nation now desired to reformulate the distinctive nature and meaning of Polish national identity through the establishment of a coherent set of collective histories, customs, and traditions. *Krajoznawstwo* activities assisted them in securing a sense of national-historical continuity. Their passion to know the cultural history of their land, however, was also the product of anxiety vis-à-vis the possible mutability, even loss, of the distinct historical characteristics of Polish national identity. This anxiety stemmed from the existence of national minorities that lived within the Second Polish Republic but that actively sustained their national identities or even wished to establish a home for their own people in some parts of Poland.

Indeed, the delineation of the new national boundaries of the continent during the 1919 Versailles Peace Conference left Central and Eastern Europe as a multinational mosaic of languages, religions, ethnicities, and cultures. The presence of people of different national backgrounds within the territories allocated for control by other nations resulted in mutual hostility, nationalist sentiments, xenophobia, and the occasional emergence of political and territorial conflicts. In interwar Poland, those whom the authorities considered national minorities constituted approximately 30 percent of the population.¹⁸ As not all of them welcomed the rebirth of Poland with enthusiasm, Poles tended to see them as real threats to the stability of the Polish state and to Poland's national values. They found *krajoznawstwo* to be one practical way to remind the nation of its distinctiveness and unite it against this perceived foreign menace.

In focusing on the preservation and study of their perceived authentic history and cultural heritage throughout the partition of Poland and also during the interwar period, in effect the Poles marked out individuals of other national, ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds who lived in the country as strangers. Some such individuals decided to leave Poland and try their luck elsewhere in the world. Others accepted this reality and strove to assimilate into Polish society and adopt its culture. Some also intended to oppose national segregation through engagement with radical political ideologies such as communism. Others accepted this form of exclusion, either because they were still able to practice their own ways of life, or because they were hoping to become a majority nation in a homeland of their own one day.¹⁹

Such conservative and radical sensitivities appealed to many Polish Jews during the interwar period, but not to all. One alternative approach to the threefold question of home, culture, and national identity was put forward by educated secular Polish Jews who argued that Poland is the homeland of Poles and Jews alike, for, just like the Poles, the Jews of Poland with their distinct religion, culture, and customs had been deeply rooted in the Polish lands for centuries and had made invaluable contributions to the success of the country and all its

¹⁷ Davies, *God's Playground*, 279–290.

¹⁸ See the first and second national Polish censuses of September 30, 1921, and December 9, 1931, respectively: *Pierwszy powszechny spis Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z dnia 30 września 1921 roku: Mieszkania. Ludność. Stosunki zawodowe. Tablice państwowe* (Warsaw: n.p., 1927), 56; *Drugi Powszechny Spis Ludności z dnia 9 grudnia 1931 r.* (Warsaw: n.p., 1934), 15.

¹⁹ Jerzy Tomaszewski, *Mniejszości narodowe w Polsce w XX wieku* (Warsaw: Editions Spotkania, 1991), 35.

people.²⁰ Secular Jews elsewhere in Europe at that time voiced similar arguments concerning their long-lasting histories in the countries in which they lived and the valuable contributions they had made to the social environments around them. They saw themselves as members of the great family of Europe, and claimed their right to live with their countrymen as equals among equals. They desired to keep alive the story of the Jewish past and maintain the culture and folklore of their own people. But they wished to do so without detracting from the value of any other historical narrative, belief, or cultural tradition and without assuming any exemption from the duties and responsibilities expected of all the citizens of the states in which they lived. Polish Jews who stood for this political outlook believed that they had a particularly strong case. After all, the initial arrival of Jews in Poland correlated with the establishment of the first Polish state in the tenth century, which fully absorbed the Jews into Polish society and enjoyed great economic and cultural prosperity as well as political supremacy owing to the substantial contribution of Jews to the country's social, professional, and commercial interests.

Documenting the rich heritage and legacy of the Jewish community in Poland was not an easy task, however. As during the partition and rebirth of the state of Poland, the Poles strove to accumulate knowledge about the history and culture of the Polish nation, and only sparse records existed about the history and heritage of Polish Jewry. Although a few Polish scholars paid some attention to monuments created by Polish Jews, they did not necessarily acknowledge their Jewish origin but absorbed them into the list of Polish national achievements instead.²¹ They were often also unable to record the full scope of the monuments that Jews produced in the country, as rabbis and local community leaders usually guarded informative texts, artifacts, and significant buildings. Normally, they forbade access to non-Jewish Polish researchers because they could not necessarily understand their interests nor trust their intentions. Even when access was not an issue, however, only rarely were non-Jewish Poles able to read and understand Hebrew or Yiddish. If the Jews of Poland wanted to propagate knowledge about their lively history and culture in the country, they had to gather empirical records and do so largely by themselves.

The *Landkenthish* movement came into being out of this perceived necessity. Acknowledging the rise of Polish nationalism, the movement leaders were aware of its implications as regards the ability of the Jews to live as equals among the Poles without giving up their own culture and national identity. The movement was thus intended to establish means to educate Jews and Poles alike about just how long and lively the history of the Jewish community in the country was. On the one hand, the movement leaders hoped that Jews of virtually all walks of life would subsequently learn about the ethos of Polish Jewry. They wished to encourage the Jews of interwar Poland—whether religious or secular—to realize that they, and not only the Polish majority, had many reasons to take pride in their collective identity and background. Through provision of concrete education about the contributions that Jews made to the development of Polish society and their tangible and intangible cultural

²⁰ Gottesman, *Defining the Jewish Nation*.

²¹ Z. G., "Zabytki sztuki żydowskiej w Polsce," *Wiadomości Krajoznawcze* 12 (1928): 2; Szymon Zajczyk, "Poznajemy dawną sztukę Żydów polskich," *Krajoznawstwo: Wiadomości ŻTK* 1, no. 19 (1935): 4.

achievements across the country, leaders of the movement also hoped that Polish Jews would feel more closely related to the Poles and nurture emotional connections to the Polish land. Indeed, arguing that the particular characteristics of Polish Jews were a product of contact with their Polish neighbors and the Polish physical and cultural landscape, leaders of the movement considered it to be the movement's obligation to educate Polish Jews about Polish history, culture, geography, and landmarks.²² On the other hand, leaders of the movement also intended to incorporate its findings about Jewish history and heritage into Polish scholarship about the country's past. They believed that achieving this would help the Polish people recognize that the Jews are native residents of the Polish state just like themselves. They also thought that it would provide the Poles with knowledge about the strong historical ties between the Polish and Jewish nations, and lead them to understand the Jews not as rivals but as allies.²³

Photography in the *Landkenthish* Movement

Leaders of the *Landkenthish* movement recognized the contributions that photography could make to the practice and development of *krajoznawstwo* as soon as the movement emerged. Owing to the reliance of the photographic process on optics and chemistry, they considered the camera as a useful tool for the collection of accurate, scientific data. In the reproducibility of photographs, they recognized a convenient means for the dissemination and sharing of any knowledge gained through *krajoznawstwo* and its associated research activities. Leaders of the movement, therefore, aspired to embed the camera as an integral instrument in the Jewish *krajoznawstwo* researcher's toolkit as a means to facilitate the fulfillment of the movement's main objectives. They thus established a Photographic Section and tasked it:

1. To photograph monuments of historical and artistic value, ethnographic subjects, and folkloristic objects;
2. To gather, collect, and exchange photographs with similar organizations;
3. To generate and preserve photographs from excursions, which illustrate the social life of the organization and its activities; and
4. To provide photographic training and circulate photographic publicity materials.²⁴

At that moment in history, both easy-to-use cameras—such as the Leica and the Eka—and ready-to-use photographic materials—such as sensitized roll films and photographic paper—were readily available at affordable prices. A significant number of members of the

²² Lejb Wulman, "Własnym drogami," *Krajoznawstwo: Wiadomości ŻTK* 1, no. 23 (1937): 2.

²³ To that end, the *Landkenthish* movement encouraged its members to collaborate with Polish scholars whenever possible. See, for example, "S. Szymkiewicz, O współpracy z Redakcją 'Słownika Geograficznego,'" *Wiadomości Krajoznawcze* 2–3, no. 21 (1932): 2.

²⁴ M. Dancygekron, "Organizujemy koła i sekcje fotograficzne," *Krajoznawstwo: Wiadomości ŻTK* 2, no. 22 (1936): 8.

Landkientnisch movement were therefore already carrying cameras when engaging in field activities organized by AKMK and ŻTK. They were prompted to gather photographs of “folk types” (*typy ludowe*) and folk art, everyday and festive costumes, village houses and schools, markets and fairs, Catholic and Orthodox churches, inns, windmills, synagogues, and numerous other sights and objects capable of promoting knowledge about the Polish country, its people, and their cultures and traditions.²⁵ Movement members who were particularly committed to its scientific aims and objectives recognized, however, that not just any photograph captured during *krajoznawstwo* excursions was capable of recording detailed and meaningful data about the characteristics of a geographical terrain, the customs enacted by its residents, and the properties of its historically, culturally, and socially significant artifacts and monuments. Bronisław Raszkes, one of AKMK’s leaders, pointed out in an article that he published in *Wiadomości Krajoznawcze* (*Krajoznawstwo* News) in 1927 that:

[M]illions of tourists all over the world surrender to a creative frenzy, photographing virtually everything they encounter. They rightly understand that taking pictures can bring not only personal satisfaction but also a great benefit to humanity. In practice, however, their activity plays a much more modest role, because the production of hundreds of pictures of poor technical and aesthetic quality can benefit only those who produce cameras and those who sell film.²⁶

In a 1928 issue of the same magazine, an anonymous author raised similar concerns regarding the frivolous approach to photography and photographs that was being demonstrated by some movement members. One was the problem of “camera trips,” a growing phenomenon of *krajoznawstwo* excursions, where members apparently considered their mission accomplished as soon as they produced any photograph at the sites they visited. Another problem was that many of their photographs were group self-portraits.²⁷

To assist movement members with using the camera to promote the movement’s objectives and thus also to fulfill its main aims, both AKMK and ŻTK endeavored to provide them with technical photographic knowledge coupled with an understanding of the types of pictures that were needed from the field. The production of photographic records of local residents and their immediate environments required only a basic awareness of the significance of such sights, while the making of meaningful records of monuments and artifacts required greater attention to detail and sturdy photographic skills.

²⁵ “Kwestjonariusz dla krajoznawców,” *Krajoznawstwo: Wiadomości ŻTK* 1, no. 20 (1936): 10–13.

²⁶ Bronisław Raszkes, “Fotografja na wycieczkach,” *Wiadomości Krajoznawcze* 2 (1927): 1.

²⁷ The author voiced these concerns through a humorous story about a group of *krajoznawstwo* hikers in the Tatra Mountains (along Ścieżka nad Reglami), who went back to their hotel as soon as they had reached the Kalatówki Glade because they could not find any reason to stay in the area after they took their photograph against the backdrop of the landscape. See “Zakopane. Powieść poetycka (?!): Z oj-ajów uczestników kolonji zakopiańskiej ułożył Dorjan Dezerter,” *Wiadomości Krajoznawcze* 8 (1928): 3.

To improve the photographic abilities of movement members, AKMK and ŻTK designed a range of regional photography programs to deliver courses for excursion leaders and specialized training for camera operators. Because excursion leaders often served as site managers when in the field, they needed to understand the role and work of camera operators in order to be able to help meet their needs. To that end, highly popular photography courses for excursion leaders were organized across Poland throughout the movement's existence. In May 1928, for example, one five-week course organized by ŻTK's Photographic Section in Warsaw was fully booked so rapidly that the biggest and most active of ŻTK's photographic sections decided to run the course once again.²⁸ In total, over seventy members participated in the two courses. A selection of advertisements and ephemera suggests that the head of AKMK's Photographic Section, Fryderyk Malberg, was the main lecturer and instructor. Although it may not be possible to reconstruct in detail which topics he or his peers covered, an article that Malberg specifically addressed to excursion leaders in 1927 may shed some light on the content of the courses.

A large part of Malberg's article specifies that camera operators should be interested in the production of informative, detailed, and technically sound images. "In order to obtain good photographic results in the context of *krajoznawstwo*," Malberg explained, "it is not only important to take technically good pictures (in terms of exposure, sharpness, the processing of negatives, and the development of prints), but it is equally important to choose the topic."²⁹ To ensure the optimal conditions needed for the production of images of high technical quality, and to help maximize the duration of the time that camera operators could use to gather appropriately descriptive data in the field throughout the year, one must, according to Malberg, meticulously design their photographic activities, taking into consideration the changing nature and strength of light in different seasons. To guarantee that camera operators identify significant objects and record meaningful data, Malberg suggested they adhere to a strict method of processing sites of interest. According to his proposed method, camera operators would start the day photographing inside buildings found on the site, as later in the day weak light conditions would make it more difficult to produce detailed images. After capturing views of interior spaces, they would then turn their attention to the documentation of paintings, stained glass, sculptures, inscriptions, candleholders, and other similar objects. Next, they would move their cameras outside to capture pictures of the exterior of the buildings on site and of other objects such as monuments and wells. They would need to move from one object to another in a circular, progressive order so as to find themselves eventually in front of the object with which they began.

Specialized training sessions for camera operators were also organized throughout the movement's existence by AKMK's and ŻTK's photographic sections that operated in big cities such as Będzin, Kraków, Lvov, Łódź, and Warsaw. Between 1928 and 1937, ŻTK's Photographic Section in Warsaw organized eighteen courses, registering a total of 507

²⁸ Seidengart, "Dziesięć lat krajoznawstwa," 18.

²⁹ Fryderyk Malberg, "Organizacja pracy fotograficznej w Kołach Krajoznawczych," *Wiadomości Krajoznawcze* 5 (1927): 4.

participants. The exact program of studies cannot be fully reconstructed. One of the reports that the Warsaw chapter disseminated in 1938, however, reveals that by that year it offered eight-week courses that consisted of “theoretical lectures, practical training in the lab, and excursions for photographers.”³⁰ As Warsaw was the headquarters of ŻTK’s Photographic Section, it is likely that other chapters offered similar photographic training, even if on a somewhat smaller scale.

Another strategy that AKMK and ŻTK employed to attune camera operators to the movement’s aims and objectives was the publication of educational articles on photography. Appearing in the movement’s magazines, they were circulated virtually among all of its registered members. Reaching subsequently into small towns and cities in which dedicated photography sections did not exist, they were broadly designed to assist members in developing wide-ranging skills in photographic technique and visual data collection. In his above-cited 1927 article Bronisław Raszkes explained, for example, that “if photographs taken during excursions are to be of any value, their producers must have the goodwill, enthusiasm, and diligence needed for their making, but only by mustering a certain level of expertise will the results meet the intentions.”³¹ Raszkes intended his article as a means to help beginners avoid basic mistakes.³² He discussed the range of camera formats that movement members needed to use in the field in order to meet the differing requirements of research activities—from small-format 35 mm film roll, through medium-format 6x9 cm, to glass and celluloid plates in large formats of 9x12 cm and 10x15 cm. He introduced some of the most common cameras available on the market at the time, and described their advantages and shortcomings. He also explained which tripods and shutter types could facilitate the production of high-quality images and which filters may assist in recording more detailed, realistic results. Toward the end of his article, however, Raszkes reminded the readers that technical proficiency was but one of the skills that they needed to obtain in order to produce useful visual data. Another was an ability to operate across the full range of photographic genres, including exterior and interior architecture, landscape, ethnographic group portraiture, genre (scenes from everyday life), and reprography (copying documents, inscriptions, and artworks). Combining these skills would equip movement members with the ability to make informed choices of subjects and objects, and to capture them in high-resolution images that stress their characteristic features.

Yet, the lion’s share of ŻTK’s and AKMK’s magazine articles on photography were geared explicitly toward educating readers about how to employ such skills in the production of meaningful records of Jewish heritage. Opening his article on photography, Edward Herstein, for instance, explained that, “dispersed and hidden in remote corners of the country, treasures of Jewish art can be made accessible to the public by creating collections of rationally taken photographs.”³³ Herstein wanted to help movement members learn how to create photographic

³⁰ “Kronika Oddziału Warszawskiego,” *Krajoznawstwo: Wiadomości ŻTK* 1, no. 27 (1938): 20.

³¹ Raszkes, “Fotografja na wycieczkach,” 1.

³² *Ibid.*, 1–3.

³³ Edward Herstein, “O technice inwentaryzacji fotograficznej,” *Wiadomości Krajoznawcze* 13 (1929): 2.

inventories, which he defined as “photographs alongside written descriptions of what they show and details that cannot be inferred from the photographs alone (such as object type, dimensions, scale, material, techniques, color, restoration, restoration process, author names, dates, inscriptions, and historical remarks).”³⁴ The inventorization of Jewish heritage also required, however, the ability to identify religiously and culturally specific objects, buildings, architectural features, and interior layouts.

On numerous occasions, the heads of ŻTK’s local chapters published statistics about the demographic characteristics of their active members. Report by report, they revealed that the *Landkentanish* movement, despite its stated intention to do so, had continuously failed to appeal to practicing religious Jews. Constituting approximately 80 percent of Polish Jewry in the interwar period, this group usually followed the word of local rabbis or Hasidic dynasties and was largely apathetic to national politics. Aware that many of their readers were secular Jews whose comprehension of Jewish culture, artifacts, and buildings might have been relatively minimal, or at least incomplete, authors often used their articles on photography as a means to convey knowledge and understanding of the variety of objects that needed to be taken into consideration. Herstein, for example, provided information about photographic exposure, processing, and other practical techniques that movement members should ideally have under control. But because obtaining optimal images of objects made of different materials requires different approaches, he focused on specific types of Jewish monuments and artifacts when explaining what equipment (cameras, lenses, tripods, backdrops, filters, light-sensitive materials) was needed to make high-definition, well-framed images of each of them. In the process, he effectively listed the kinds of objects that members might encounter during fieldtrips that would suit the movement’s aims.³⁵ Jars, bowls, glass designs, candleholders, and menorahs, he explained, should be photographed against white or black backgrounds to heighten contrast. Manuscripts, illustrations, paintings, drawings, and other graphics should be flattened under a glass. Fabrics need to be photographed with no shadows interrupting the view. Writing about rooms and interior designs, Herstein made the readers aware of wooden synagogues, the oldest type of Jewish heritage in the country. He also gave a detailed description of the traditional and most popular layout of synagogues, prompting readers to search and record specific elements, including the *bimah* and the *aaron kodesh*, “which is the main component in the synagogue, consisting of much artwork that must be recorded.”³⁶ The ceiling, sidewalls, women’s galleries, side rooms, entrances, and exits also needed to be recorded, as the architecture would often include various culturally specific elements, and paintings may cover the walls. “Pay attention to inscriptions,” Herstein instructed the readers, “but also search and record the names of the artist and donors that may be inscribed within wall paintings.”³⁷

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., 2-4.

³⁶ Ibid., 4.

³⁷ Ibid.

The mid-1930s offered the movement an opportunity to increase its photographic production across the country, as more and more members of the Jewish community owned their own cameras and took up photography either as a hobby or as a pastime. While subsequently many of them could contribute to the movement's photographic collections, the Great Depression and in particular its impact on Jewish–Polish relations hindered their ability to do so. To give some context, in 1926—the same year in which local Jewish *krajoznawstwo* initiatives in the country culminated in the establishment of the *Landkентnish* movement—the charismatic statesman Józef Piłsudski took power in a coup and became the de facto leader of Poland. His government attempted to assimilate Jews and other minority groups into the Polish state, without expecting them to give up their traditions or values. Continuing to restrict the entitlement of Jews to various social and political rights, it provided them nevertheless with the same protection that was granted to any non-Jewish Polish citizen by the law and constitution. It also allowed them to participate in Polish politics, contribute to Polish culture, establish themselves as an integral part of Polish society, and at the same time nurture their own traditions, religious beliefs, social organizations, educational institutions, and heritage. Jewish–Polish relations in Piłsudski's Second Polish Republic were therefore relatively healthy, functional, and stable.³⁸

This sociopolitical reality in itself might have provided members of the *Landkентnish* movement with the impetus to persevere in their endeavor to strengthen Jewish–Polish sociocultural relations and make Poland a home for the Jewish people. The Great Depression, which hit Poland in 1930, while affecting no official policies concerning the status of Jews in the country, led to their gradual isolation, as by law the Jews were still ineligible to receive unemployment benefits, and virtually any available jobs in the country were systematically offered to the Polish majority.³⁹ This condition had already taken its toll on the *Landkентnish* movement, lowering its budget and compelling its members to attend to more immediate necessities than the movement's sociopolitical aspirations. In 1934, however, Polish attitudes toward the Jews delivered another major blow to the movement when the Ministry of Communication suspended its entitlement to both individual and group train discounts, which members had enjoyed up to that moment just like members of any other local touristic organization. The movement leaders appealed the decision, but to no avail. The great majority of movement chapters became dormant and, with the exception of those located in big cities, were eventually liquidated.⁴⁰

In general, though even more so under these conditions, the movement's leaders understood that only some members might be keen to go on lengthy excursions or use their time in the field for the production of detailed inventories of the kind described by Herstein. An article that was published by Szymon Zajczyk in 1935 was thus meant to provide readers with

³⁸ Peter D. Stachura, *Poland, 1918–1945: An Interpretive and Documentary History of the Second Republic* (London: Routledge, 2004), 86–88.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁴⁰ A. Hoflat, "Dziesięciolecie. Szkic sprawozdania Zarządu Głównego," *Krajoznawstwo: Wiadomości ŻTK* 2, no. 24 (1937): 9.

a simplified understanding of objects that qualify as Jewish heritage and to encourage them to record those found in their own hometowns.⁴¹ Zajczyk explained the general principles of *krajoznawstwo* in simple language and stated that “anyone interested in old art could at least partly contribute to the enrichment of our knowledge about Jewish art.”⁴² He advised his readers to look out mainly for synagogues, which were the easiest structures to locate and access. Acknowledging what a time-consuming and troublesome activity full photographic coverage of a synagogue is, Zajczyk guided readers to take at least two wide-angle images.⁴³ One photograph needed to capture information about the characteristics of the building and its location in town. Zajczyk therefore advised readers to photograph the building’s exterior alongside its immediate surroundings. He used a photograph of a synagogue that he had taken in Janowiec upon Vistula as a means of illustration (fig. 4). The other photograph needed to record interior architectural elements, religious components, and some artifacts. Zajczyk, therefore, advised readers to photograph the layout of the interior space and aim to capture both the *aaron kodesh* and the *bimah* in one picture. He illustrated this with another photograph that he had produced himself, this time focusing on the interior space of a synagogue in Nowogródek (fig. 5). Even such relatively generic photographs, Zajczyk insisted, could still greatly contribute to the development of meaningful photographic data sets.⁴⁴



Fig. 4: Szymon Zajczyk, “Janowiec upon the Vistula (synagogue – on the left)”. Reproduced from the magazine *Krajoznawstwo. Wiadomości ŻTK* 1, no. 19 (1935): 4. Halftone print.



Fig. 5: Szymon Zajczyk, “Interior of a synagogue in Nowogródek (from 1648)”. Reproduced from the magazine *Krajoznawstwo. Wiadomości ŻTK* 1, no. 19 (1935): 5. Halftone print.

⁴¹ Zajczyk, “Poznajemy dawną sztukę Żydów polskich,” 4.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 4.

Photographic Realities and the Materialization of Home

The *Landkentenish* movement had striven to influence Polish Jews to develop a serious passion for *krajoznawstwo* photography throughout the time it operated. Although reports produced by the movement's various chapters across the country show that a relatively high number of members demonstrated an interest in photographic training, they and other sources also suggest that the movement was relatively short of skilled photographers and was limited in its ability to supply photographic equipment and technical facilities.⁴⁵

Movement reports and other writings of movement leaders also suggest that some members might have become enthusiastic about photography but perceived other *krajoznawstwo* skills and activities as more beneficial. In 1936, the head of ŻTK's Photographic Section, M. Dancygekron, proposed that members did not necessarily comprehend how photographs could help fulfill the movement's aims. He complained that "from among all the movement's sections, the one dedicated to photography is the least valued. Photography, as an important tool in *krajoznawstwo* work, is underestimated."⁴⁶ Giving examples of successful uses of photographs in propagating Jewish heritage and highlighting the contributions made by Jews to the societies around them, Dancygekron listed the books *Kultura i sztuka ludu żydowskiego na ziemiach polskich: Zbiory Maksymiliana Goldsteina* (*The Culture and the Art of the Jewish People in Polish Lands: The Maksymilian Goldstein Collection*) and *Die Juden in der Kunst* (*Jews in Art*).⁴⁷ He added, however, that "very often authors of these kinds of Jewish publications have to give up on the idea of including illustrations, only because they lack appropriate photographs."⁴⁸ Resonating with Dancygekron's observation that insufficient attention was being given to the importance of photographs in *krajoznawstwo* research, in 1937 Henryk Seidengart emphasized that:

[E]xcursion leaders should be able to operate a camera. An ability to record impressions, genre scenes, landscapes, etc. spotted during excursions is a skill equally important for the excursion leader as the ability to read maps and tour guides.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ "Sprawozdanie z działalności Krakowskiego Koła Miłośników Krajoznawstwa," *Wiadomości Krajoznawcze* 2 (1931): 5; "Rok pracy: Sprawozdanie z działalności zarządu oddziału łódzkiego za okres od 1.I.1932 do 1.I.1933," *Wiadomości ŻTK* 3, no. 11 (1933): 5; "Łódź: Sprawozdanie z działalności Łódzkiego Oddziału ŻTK w Polsce za okres 1.IV.1935-18.IV.1936," *Krajoznawstwo: Wiadomości ŻTK* 2, no. 22 (1936): 25.

⁴⁶ Dancygekron, "Organizujemy koła i sekcje fotograficzne," 7.

⁴⁷ Maksymiljan Goldstein and Karol Dresdner, *Kultura i sztuka ludu żydowskiego na ziemiach polskich: Zbiory Maksymiljana Goldsteina* (Lvov: Maksymiljan Goldstein, 1935); Karl Schwarz, *Die Juden in der Kunst*, 1st ed. (Berlin: Heine-Bund, 1928); 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: Löewit, 1936).

⁴⁸ Dancygekron, "Organizujemy koła i sekcje fotograficzne," 7.

⁴⁹ Seidengart, "Dziesięć lat krajoznawstwa," 18.

The movement's inability to support the development of each of the photographic sections that operated across the country coupled with its unsuccessful attempt to influence enough members to consider photography as one of the most significant research instruments in *krajoznawstwo* activities certainly limited its capability to accomplish its aims fully. While the economic impact of the Great Depression, alongside the instability it brought to Jewish–Polish relations, was no doubt a significant factor in this process, by the mid-1930s Poland's economy had rebounded and the *Landkenthish* movement gradually increased its activities. It was at that very moment, however, in March 1935, that Piłsudski passed away and anti-Semitic Polish political parties began pressuring the government to place restrictions on the social mobility of Polish Jews. To a large extent, this dramatic turn of events led to the deterioration of the *Landkenthish* movement, as the many new anti-Semitic policies that were adopted by the state rapidly led to violent attacks on Jews and Jewish property, shuttering any dreams about Jewish–Polish coexistence in the near future. Throughout its existence, the movement nevertheless counted some significant achievements that could not have come to fruition at all had it not promoted photographic practice, knowledge, and education. Such achievements included its elaboration of photographic sources and resources, its organization of public photographic exhibitions, and its development of a Jewish mass photographic culture. Each of these facilitated scholarly and public engagement with the movement's ideology.

Sources and Resources

Beginning with the establishment of the movement, its leaders expressed the ambition to develop a series of monographs about Jewish cities and towns that would become the movement's "pride and merit."⁵⁰ The production of such guides was important to the movement, as they could enable *krajoznawstwo* enthusiasts and interested members of the public to obtain important knowledge about the country's history, material cultures, and cultural characteristics. The movement's efforts in this area centered on the incorporation of information about the cultural heritage of Polish Jews into common and scientific publications about Poland and the Polish nation. The aim was to make both Jews and Poles aware of their entwined history and cultures.

In the movement's relatively short life span, it facilitated the publication of some such guides, two of which included photographic illustrations. One was the 1935 book *Przewodnik po żydowskich zabytkach Krakowa* (*Guide to Jewish Monuments in Kraków*).⁵¹ Initiated by the Kraków chapter of the *B'nai B'rith* organization, it was written by the founder of Polish-Jewish historiography, Majer Bałaban, and illustrated with twenty-four photographs taken by members of the local AKMK chapter. The guide described Jewish life in the city and in the Jewish district

⁵⁰ "Referat p. D-ra L. Wulmana n. t.: 'Zasadnicze zadania pracy Ż.T.K.," *Wiadomości ŻTK* 1, no. 16 (1934): 2.

⁵¹ Majer Bałaban, *Przewodnik po żydowskich zabytkach Krakowa* (Kraków: Stowarzyszenie "Solidarność-B'nei B'rith" w Krakowie, 1935).

of Kazimierz. But as it mainly focused on social and cultural history, the guide primarily popularized knowledge about Kraków's local synagogues, Jewish cemeteries, and the Jewish art and artifacts that they preserved. Photographs in the guide served both as records of these sites and their identifiers, as well as a means to indicate their location in the city. The photographs' adherence to the scientific visual methodology that the *Landkientnisch* movement particularly encouraged is striking. Some pages feature high-definition images of the exteriors and interiors of synagogues, pictures of their position in relation to the surrounding environment, and specific descriptions of distinctive architectural features (figs. 6–8). Similarly, documenting the Kraków Jewish community's long-lasting life in the city, the guide includes some wide-angle photographs of two local Jewish cemeteries accompanied by additional images focusing on individual tombstones that give details about members of the community and attest to their Jewish identity (figs. 9–10). Other pages in the guide display photographs of Jewish artifacts by themselves or incorporated into pictures of the *aaron kodesh* in local synagogues (figs. 11–12). The fact that the guide was written in Polish suggests that it was intended for Jews and Poles alike.



Fig. 6: Photographer unknown, “The prayer room in the Old Synagogue”. Printed in Majer Bałaban’s 1935 book, *Przewodnik po żydowskich zabytkach Krakowa*. Silver print. Courtesy of the Historical Museum of Kraków, item: MHK596-8-VII.

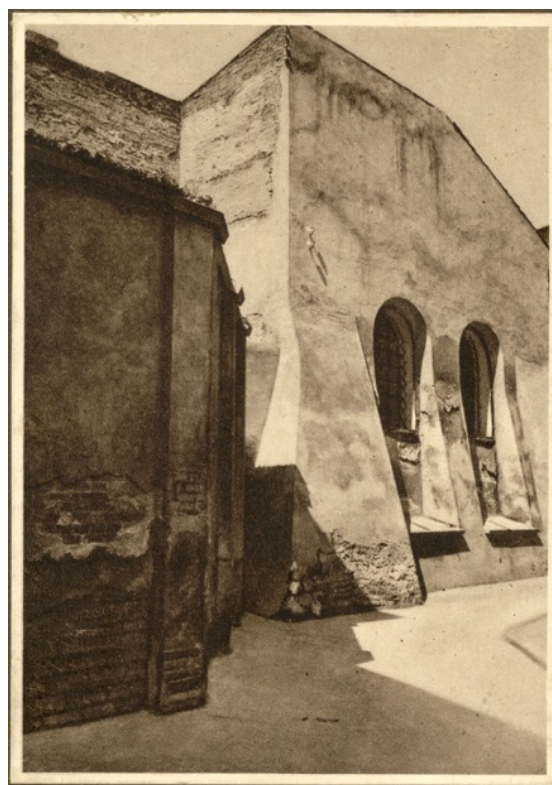


Fig. 7: Photographer unknown, “Poper Synagogue”. Printed in Majer Bałaban’s 1935 book, *Przewodnik po żydowskich zabytkach Krakowa*. Silver print. Courtesy of the Historical Museum of Kraków, item: MHK596-10-VII.

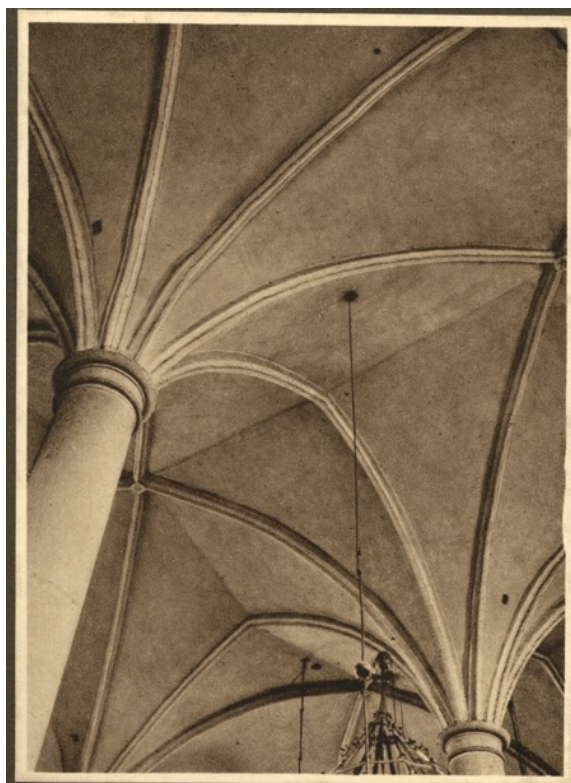


Fig. 8: Photographer unknown, “A fragment of the vault in the Old Synagogue”. Printed in Majer Bałaban’s 1935 book, *Przewodnik po żydowskich zabytkach Krakowa*. Silver print. Courtesy of the Historical Museum of Kraków, item: MHK596-7-VII.



Fig. 10: Photographer unknown, “Eliezer Ashkenazi’s tombstone at the Remuh cemetery”. Printed in Majer Bałaban’s 1935 book, *Przewodnik po żydowskich zabytkach Krakowa*. Silver print. Courtesy of the Historical Museum of Kraków, item: MHK596-17-VII.



Fig. 9: Photographer unknown, “A group of tombstones of the family of Moses Isserles at the Remuh cemetery”. Printed in Majer Bałaban’s 1935 book, *Przewodnik po żydowskich zabytkach Krakowa*. Silver print. Courtesy of the Historical Museum of Kraków, item: MHK596-16-VII.



Fig. 11: Photographer unknown, “A baroque curtain [parochet] in the Old Synagogue”. Printed in Majer Bałaban’s 1935 book, *Przewodnik po żydowskich zabytkach Krakowa*. Silver print. Courtesy of the Historical Museum of Kraków, item: MHK596-9-VII.



Fig. 12: Photographer unknown, “The *aaron kodesh* in the Remuh Synagogue”. Printed in Majer Bałaban’s 1935 book, *Przewodnik po żydowskich zabytkach Krakowa*. Silver print. Courtesy of the Historical Museum of Kraków, item: MHK596-15-VII.

In 1939, a local chapter of ŻTK published a similar guide under the title *1000 Yor Vilne (1,000 Years of Vilnius)*.⁵² Written in Yiddish by Zalmen Szyk, at the time the head of ŻTK’s Vilnius chapter, it featured over sixty-five photographic prints (some photomontages), which were mainly reproduced from ŻTK’s collection. Szyk’s was the first publication presenting not only the history of Poles or Lithuanians in Vilnius, but also giving an insight into the centuries-old Jewish presence in the city, which non-Jewish publications of this type tended to marginalize. His guide was meant to be published in two volumes, but the outbreak of World War II put an end to the continuation of this and other similar projects.

⁵² Zalmen Szyk, *1000 Yor Vilne* (Vilne: Gezelshaft Far Landkentsh in Poyln, 1939).

The development of collections of data sets about Jewish heritage in Poland contributed substantially to the *Landkenthish* movement's stated goals of establishing the historical nature of the Jewish presence in the land, facilitating the study of this heritage, and subsequently generating a stronger sense of Jewish affiliation with the land as home. To advance the production of such collections, in 1927 AKMK established the Komisja do badania zabytków żydowskich (Commission to Research Jewish Monuments), tasking its members to create a detailed photo-based inventory of Jewish monuments across the country and publish scholarship that would at least partly draw on, and incorporate some of the records created.⁵³

One of the Commission's first initiatives was to produce a photographic inventory for a catalogue of the collection of the Mathias Bersohn Museum of Jewish Antiquities in Warsaw. The project resulted in 110 photographs. The Commission sold copies to popularize the museum's collection, stress its research potential, and help cover the project's costs.⁵⁴ Commission members also undertook a few research expeditions. In the summer of 1930, they examined and photographed synagogues and Jewish cemeteries in the cities of Zamość and Szczebrzeszyn, and a year later they did the same with synagogues and Jewish cemeteries in Bogoria, Pińczów, Raków, and Wodzisław. The Commission's activities in Zamość and Szczebrzeszyn were funded by the editors of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, which was published in Berlin between 1928 and 1934. In exchange for their financial aid, they asked for the right to use some of the pictures in one of the *Encyclopaedia's* many volumes that they were compiling. As the publication of the *Encyclopaedia* ceased shortly after Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party rose to power, the photographs from Zamość and Szczebrzeszyn were never printed. Nevertheless, the collaboration between the Commission and the editorial team of *Encyclopaedia Judaica* indicates the level of recognition that the Commission earned. It also demonstrates the influence that its work began to have on the narration of the history of the Jews in Poland beyond the circle of ŻTK and AKMK members, and even beyond the boundaries of Poland itself. The other pictures taken during the Commission's excursions in 1930 and 1931 were later used to illustrate scholarly articles in *Wiadomości Krajoznawcze*. For example, in 1933 Szymon Zajczyk, who was one of the Commission's members, published an article about the history and architecture of the synagogue in Pińczów, which he discussed as one example of a well-preserved Renaissance-style building in Poland while examining the architectural transformation of synagogues in the country across time.⁵⁵ To focus the readers' attention on one part of the building that maintained its original design, he used a photograph of the building's southeastern exterior that he took during the Commission's expedition to the town (fig. 13). He also used a photograph of the interior space, which focused on the *bimah* as an example of an element that had remained the same and which therefore could represent visually a Renaissance-style *bimah* in Poland (fig. 14).

⁵³ "Komisja do badania zabytków żydowskich," *Wiadomości krajoznawcze* 9 (1928): 8.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*; see also Z. G., "Zabytki sztuki żydowskiej w Polsce," 2.

⁵⁵ Szymon Zajczyk, "Bożnice renesansowe w Polsce. I. Bożnica w Pińczowie," *Wiadomości Krajoznawcze* 3, no. 24 (1933): 4–7.

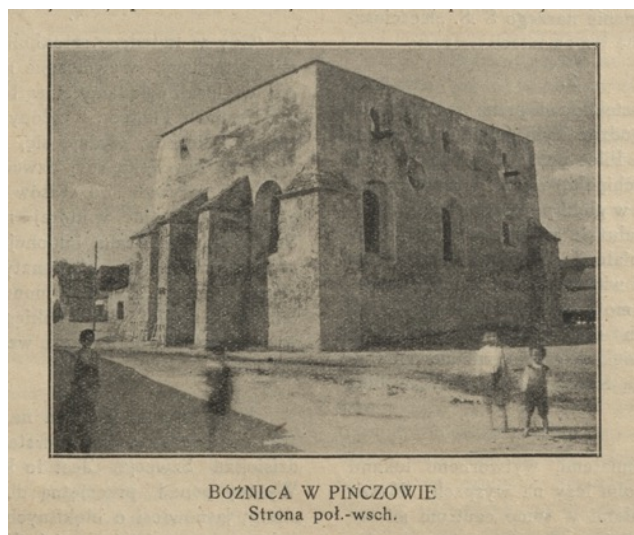


Fig. 13: Szymon Zajczyk, “Synagogue in Pińczow: Southeast view”. Reproduced from the magazine *Wiadomości Krajoznawcze* 3, no. 24 (1933): 4. Halftone print.

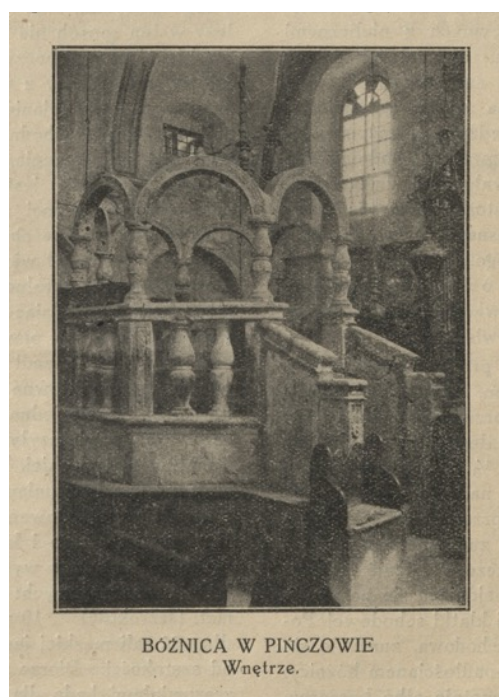


Fig. 14: Szymon Zajczyk, “Synagogue in Pińczow: Interior”. Reproduced from the magazine *Wiadomości Krajoznawcze* 3, no. 24 (1933): 5. Halftone print.

Perhaps ŻTK’s main achievement was the relatively steady publication of magazines that provided a platform for movement members and scholars to disseminate knowledge about activities and new research. For similar reasons, however, ŻTK had also endeavored to develop photographic archives and collections. For its supply of pictures, it mainly relied on photographs taken during courses and excursions by members of ŻTK’s photographic sections and also on the initiative of individual members. Yet, ŻTK and AKMK actively encouraged collaboration and the exchange of photographs between their members and with others, most importantly with the Yiddish Scientific Institute (IWO, today more commonly known as YIVO) in Vilnius. ŻTK had therefore also absorbed into its archive numerous prints of pictures from external sources, and it occasionally employed them in articles. One particularly rich example is Otto Schneid’s article on the history and design of old Jewish synagogues in various parts of Poland, which features nine photographs from multiple sources.⁵⁶ Even though ŻTK’s approach to photography may seem more eclectic when compared to that followed by AKMK, ŻTK’s reproduction and circulation of the photographs that fell into its hands increased the visibility of Jewish heritage in Poland and thereby assisted it with asserting its presence within the visual field of the Polish nation.

⁵⁶ Otto Schneid, “Yidishe Kunst in Bild,” *Landkenthish* 3, no. 25 (1937): 1–4.

Public Exhibitions

The organization of photographic exhibitions across Poland was one of the activities that the movement carried out virtually on a regular basis. Two of the most documented exhibitions took place ten years apart. One was AKMK's 1927 photographic exhibition in Kraków.⁵⁷ The other was ŻTK's 1937 *Jubilee Photographic Exhibition* in Warsaw.⁵⁸ The former was a national exhibition featuring the work of movement members from around the country. The latter was intended to be national but, as unforeseen circumstances prevented this plan from coming to fruition, in the end it featured only works made by members of the Warsaw chapter.⁵⁹ The two exhibitions were split into sections, each dedicated to a different type of photographic practice. "Jewish monuments," "ethnography," and "landscape" featured in both. The 1937 exhibition also included an additional section, "*fotografika*," which, broadly speaking, featured artistic photographs. In some exhibitions, judges were selected to evaluate the quality of works in relation to the standards required by each photographic genre. In such cases, prizes were awarded for the best photographs in each category and also for the photograph or photographic series that impressed the judges more broadly, regardless of its particular category. In other cases, judges were instructed to award prizes for the photographs that they considered to be the best overall. Despite their differences, the exhibitions' general similarities in terms of subject categories and organization indicate that a scheme for photographic shows was relatively well-established among members of the *Landkientnisch* movement across the country.

According to a review of the 1927 exhibition published by Józef Bester, "the aim of these kinds of exhibitions is to draw attention to the diversity and multitude of works in this field, and to the rich and unlimited search for new approaches."⁶⁰ Bester's mentioning of the winners in each of the exhibition's categories sheds light on the nature of the works that they featured. Edward Herstein from Warsaw won the first prize under the category of "Jewish monuments" with his pictures of a synagogue in Wyszogród. As only a few ethnographic photographs were submitted, no first prize was given in the "ethnography" category. The judges noted the achievements of Elias Lew from Warsaw, however, who presented an ethnographic photograph under the title *At the Country Fair* showing a group of Jewish men and women shopping for chicken at the marketplace (fig. 15). Presenting pictures of the Tatra Mountains, Gabryś Rozenblum of Łódź won the first prize in the "landscape photography" category. The first prize for the best photograph in the whole exhibition was awarded to Jakub Joniłowicz from Vilnius. Titled *Dunajec River Gorge in the Pieniny Mountains*, his photograph featured a vista captured from the top of the Sokolica, including one of the most well-known symbols of the Pieniny Mountains: the relic pine tree (fig. 16).⁶¹

⁵⁷ Józef Bester, "Wystawa fotograficzna Koła Krakowskiego," *Wiadomości Krajoznawcze* 13 (1928): 5–6.

⁵⁸ M. Dancygekron, "Wystawa Fotograficzna," *Krajoznawstwo, Wiadomości ŻTK* 1, no. 23 (1937): 32.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Bester, "Wystawa fotograficzna Koła Krakowskiego," 5.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* Note that by mistake Bester's text identified the winner as Jakub Joselewicz instead of Jakub Joniłowicz.



Fig. 15: Eljasz Lew, “At the country fair”. Reproduced from the magazine *Wiadomości Krajoznawcze* 13 (1928): 5. Halftone print.



Fig. 16: Jakub Joniłowicz, “Dunajec River Gorge in the Pieniny Mountains”. Reproduced from the magazine *Wiadomości Krajoznawcze* 2, no. 14 (1929): 1. Halftone print.

The *Jubilee Photographic Exhibition* opened on January 24, 1937, at ŻTK headquarters on Królewska Street in Warsaw. With three hundred works on display, it was put on in celebration of the organization’s tenth anniversary a few months earlier in 1936 (fig. 17). This time, judges awarded three prizes without taking into consideration specific exhibition categories.⁶² E. Poznański and M. Gałązka shared the first prize.⁶³ Poznański presented folk types, while Gałązka showed seaside landscapes and genre scenes as well as folk types. Compared to the 1927 exhibition, the novelty of the 1937 show was its inclusion of *fotografika*.⁶⁴ Coined by the renowned Polish photographer Jan Bułhak in the second half of the 1920s, the term denotes photographs that were consciously made through dialogue with artistic values and aesthetic ideologies and, most importantly, with the aim of revealing photography’s innate qualities as an art form.⁶⁵

⁶² Dancygekron, “Wystawa fotograficzna,” 32.

⁶³ The winners’ first names were not included in the announcement; Polish journals and magazines of that period most often printed initials only when referring to an individual, whether an author or the subject of an article.

⁶⁴ “Otwarcie wystawy fotograficznej w ŻTK,” *Nasz Przegląd* 28 (1937): 14.

⁶⁵ Jan Bułhak, “Emancypacja fotografii artystycznej w Polsce,” *Fotograf Polski* 10 (1927): 202–205.



Fig. 17: Photographer unknown, “Photomontage – from the photography exhibition”. Reproduced from the magazine *Landkenthish* 1 (1937): 12. Halftone print.

While the movement made no concentrated effort to train members in the art of *fotografika*, displaying *fotografika* made by Polish Jews still assisted fulfilling its aims and objectives. The interwar period was a time of remarkable development for amateur photographic practices in Poland. Dedicated photographic societies were established, professional journals started to appear, and photographic exhibitions opened to the public regularly. The practice of most Polish photographers was, however, primarily geared toward embellishing the recently emancipated home country and strengthening the nation’s sense of itself.⁶⁶ Jewish photographers who managed to establish their position within Polish photographic circles usually represented assimilated Jews who paid virtually no attention to Jewish culture.⁶⁷ Only rarely did other Polish Jews who took an interest in artistic photography have opportunities to present their work in public. The exhibitions organized by the *Landkenthish* movement were among such opportunities. In displaying *fotografika* created by

⁶⁶ Jan Sunderland, *Pierwsza polska wystawa fotografii ojczystej: Katalog wystawy* (Warsaw: n.p., 1938–1939).

⁶⁷ Janina Mierzecka and Benedykt Jerzy Dorys can be named as examples.

Jewish practitioners alongside *krajoznawstwo* imagery, they materialized a link between Jewish material cultures of the past and those made in the present at the same time as they asserted the interest and active involvement of Polish Jews in the Polish nation's cultural sphere.

Whereas more focused research about the movement's exhibitions may no longer be possible, the information that survives suggests that they helped position the world and culture of Polish Jews in the Jewish and Polish public spheres. Putting on display images on Jewish themes, scenes, and monuments, they brought to view the history and traditions of Polish-Jewish communities. Also featuring popular and symbolic vistas of the Polish landscape, they gave visual expression to the deep connection and commitment that movement members felt toward the land. Installed in a range of physical spaces in Poland's big city centers, the exhibitions provided the photographs with numerous opportunities to awake in Jews interest about their heritage and the Polish land, and stimulate Poles to reconsider their knowledge about the connection of Jews to Poland. Indeed, Otto Schneid, at the time the head of IWO's art department, wrote in a review of the 1937 *Jubilee Photographic Exhibition* that photography was capable of drawing the spectator's attention to realities that would have otherwise gone unnoticed. According to Schneid, the works of Dancygekron, Bromberg, Rubinsztein, Poznański, and others who participated in the show made a greater impact on their viewers than any modern painting could have made, as through their camera lenses they revealed the actual surrounding world in all its complexity.⁶⁸ The ability of photographs from the movement's exhibitions to trigger curiosity in Poles and Polish Jews was further amplified by their occasional appearance in exhibition reviews that spread throughout the country via prominent Polish- and Yiddish-language newspapers, including *Hajnt* (Today), *Unzer Express* (Our Express), *Literarische Bleter* (Literary Pages), and *Nasz Przegląd* (Our Review).

Popular (Jewish) Photographic Culture

Similar to the *Landkientnisch* movement's utilization of photographic exhibitions, the movement printed photographs in its various dedicated magazines as a means to increase engagement with the Polish countryside and promote interest in the traces of Jewish heritage that were dispersed within its landscapes.⁶⁹ Serving as the movement's main platforms for the promotion of knowledge exchange, these magazines brought interested parties and academic and amateur *krajoznawstwo* enthusiasts into dialogue about practical, theoretical, and historical information. They thus also reproduced some photographs of Jewish artifacts and monuments, of Polish landscapes, and also of members of the movement and the activities that they carried out across the country.

⁶⁸ Otto Schneid, "Fotografi's," *Landkientnisch* 1, no. 23 (1937): 12.

⁶⁹ For more information about other uses of photographs in the Jewish illustrated press in interwar Poland, see Lucjan Dobroszycki and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Image Before My Eyes: A Photographic History of Jewish Life in Poland, 1864–1939* (New York: Schocken Books, 1977), 22–31.

While the exhibitions installed by the movement largely focused on photographs that adhered to the scientific approach to photography that it advocated, the great majority of photographs in the magazines were in fact akin to snapshots. Rather than articulating any professional, scientific photographic aspiration, they showed enticing sights that movement members took while participating in organized excursions and touristic activities. As such, they merely transmitted visual information about the characteristics of the regions and landscapes visited by the members, immediate impressions of the main sites and landmarks that they encountered, and casual descriptions of the *krajoznawstwo*, touristic, and sightseeing activities in which they took part. Group portraits that members took of themselves during excursions were also common.

One of AKMK's earliest uses of snapshots appeared in a 1927 issue of *Wiadomości Krajoznawcze* within an article about AKMK's first summer camp, which was organized in July and August of the same year (fig. 18). One photograph features the July group posing for a portrait against the open balcony of a hostel in the village of Rytro in the Beskids Mountains, where the group stayed. Another photograph shows a similar view of the August group. The other two photographs were taken during excursions in the region. One shows movement members hiking on a trail in the Pieniny Mountains. The other features a group of nearly thirty men and women in swimsuits, who were organized into three rows on the bank of the Poprad River.⁷⁰ Together, these snapshots gave visual expression to the sociability characterizing *krajoznawstwo* activities and provided some insights into their nature.

An early example of ŻTK's use of snapshots in one of its own magazines appeared in an article in a 1930 issue of *Wiadomości ŻTK*, which otherwise featured only a few photographs throughout its short life span. Printed on the front page alongside the headline "ŻTK's First Guesthouse in Zakopane," the photograph showed a wooden house in a tranquil-looking environment (fig. 19).⁷¹ The article stated that ŻTK had secured a long-term rental agreement for the property. A detailed description of the guesthouse followed, explaining that alongside electricity, running water, and a bathroom the guesthouse had more than twenty rooms, several terraces, and a dining room capable of accommodating about 120 people. Explaining that movement members were now able to visit one of the most renowned and fashionable resorts in the Tatra Mountains in the south of Poland at significantly low cost, the article stated that this was "a new, glorious chapter in ŻTK's history, proving its vital and intensive activity."⁷² The photograph of the guesthouse covered nearly half of the page, enabling the readers to examine the property and anchor its written description to its visual presentation.

⁷⁰ "Kolonie letnie Kół Krajoznawczych w Rytrze nad Popradem," *Wiadomości Krajoznawcze* 5 (1927): 6.

⁷¹ J. R., "Pierwszy dom wycieczkowy Ż. T. K. w Zakopanem," *Wiadomości ŻTK* 4 (1930): 1.

⁷² *Ibid.*



Fig. 18: "AKMK's summer camps in Rytrze upon the Poprad River". Reproduced from the magazine *Wiadomości Krajoznawcze* 5 (1927): 6. Half-tone print.



Fig. 19: Photographer unknown, “ŻTK’s Holiday House in Zakopane”. Reproduced from the magazine *Wiadomości ŻTK* 4 (1930): 1. Halftone print.

Other examples of snapshots and group portraits included in articles can be easily found elsewhere in the movement’s magazines. A 1934 issue of *Wiadomości ŻTK*, for example, published a report from a ski trip in the Tatra Mountains.⁷³ The text was accompanied by two snapshots, one showing skiing equipment *in situ*, and another featuring a general view of the mountains. A 1937 issue of *Krajoznawstwo: Wiadomości ŻTK* printed a report about an excursion to the Beskidy Mountains.⁷⁴ About half of the first page of the report features the group of hikers having lunch in nature in a forest they were crossing during the trip (fig. 20). Another relatively large photograph is of the mountains, and the last photograph in the report features the group hiking along the landscape, with one individual behind the other walking in a straight column (fig. 21). Another, particularly rich example is a 1938 special issue of *Krajoznawstwo: Wiadomości ŻTK* dedicated to kayaking.⁷⁵ Similar to the other magazine issues, this issue printed a variety of snapshots. Some were images of the cityscapes, landscapes, and monuments that members of the movement came across while kayaking. Other images featured the members themselves, transporting kayaks, learning how to use them, and breaking through miles of Polish rivers (fig. 22). Still others showed them eating in nature, and featured close-up depictions of their meal (figs. 23–24).

⁷³ “Z wiosennej wędrówki narciarskiej w Tatrach,” *Wiadomości ŻTK* 1, no. 16 (1934): 8–10.

⁷⁴ Mieczysław Orłowicz, “Wycieczka w Beskidy Huculskie,” *Krajoznawstwo: Wiadomości ŻTK* 1, no. 23 (1937): 9–12.

⁷⁵ *Krajoznawstwo: Wiadomości ŻTK* 2, no. 28 (1938) = *Numer kajakowy*.



Fig. 20: Photographer unknown, “The Hutsulian Beskidy Mountains: Lunch in the forest”. Reproduced from the magazine *Krajoznawstwo. Wiadomości ŻTK* 1, no. 23 (1937): 9. Halftone print.



Fig. 21: Photographer unknown, “In the Hutsulian Beskidy Mountains”. Reproduced from the magazine *Krajoznawstwo. Wiadomości ŻTK* 1, no. 23 (1937): 12. Halftone print.



Fig. 22: Rotsztejn, Untitled. Reproduced from the magazine *Krajoznawstwo. Wiadomości ŻTK* 2, no. 28 (1938): 9. Halftone print.



Fig. 23: Photographer unknown, “Like at a boarding house”. Reproduced from the magazine *Krajoznawstwo. Wiadomości ŻTK* 2, no. 28 (1938): 2. Halftone print.



Fig. 24: Photographer unknown, “...quite a decent meal...”. Reproduced from the magazine *Krajoznawstwo. Wiadomości ŻTK* 2, no. 28 (1938): 2. Halftone print.

Numerous articles in the movement's magazines stressed that neither casual snapshots nor carefully composed commemorative group portraits could contribute to *krajoznawstwo* research, arguing that, in fact, their production detracts from the movement's scientific mission.⁷⁶ Yet the movement employed precisely such photographs to disseminate information about its organized activities. In this capacity, the photographs served two key purposes.

First, snapshots and group portraits helped the movement attract new members. Recruitment was one of the main ongoing challenges that movement leaders faced from the movement's establishment to its very end. They intended to enlist not only individuals with diverse interests but also of different social statuses and with different educational backgrounds. The scientific side of *krajoznawstwo* was not as appealing to the masses as was the possibility of meeting and mingling with new people, touring in idyllic landscapes, or going on skiing and kayaking holidays. From the perspective of the movement leaders, infusing the masses with a desire to leave their cities and *shtetls* was a necessary first step. Having done so, they believed, newcomers would establish strong bonds with other members and join the movement in order to spend more time in their company.⁷⁷ Later, they hoped, new recruits would gradually and naturally become infected with a craze for *krajoznawstwo*, as their immersion in the Polish landscape would prompt them to develop an interest in the geography and history of the sites that they visited and in the monuments and communities that they encountered during excursions. Light-hearted holiday snaps communicated a sense of the innate pleasures of *krajoznawstwo*, framing it simply as a fun-packed series of activities.

Second, snapshots and group portraits helped the movement inform members and potential new recruits how exactly excursions and *krajoznawstwo* activities were facilitated on a practical level. At the time, the implications and realities of *krajoznawstwo*, even in its simplified manifestation in the form of mere sightseeing or tourism, were often unknown to the great majority of the Jewish community. Those who might not yet have joined the movement or participated in its activities would have not necessarily known what there was to do away from their familiar environment nor how they were to satisfy their basic human needs when away from their home environment. Snapshots captured during trips and excursions helped readers of the movement's magazines visualize what it would be like out in the field.

Indeed, snapshot photography was mainly meant to serve the movement as an instrument of propaganda. The proliferation of casual photographs of its members seen engaged in *krajoznawstwo* activities alongside others that implied their association with a range of locations across Poland had additional results, however. Such photographs documented the movement's successful immersion of Jewish subjects in Poland's physical and cultural landscapes and in exploratory activities concerning Jewish heritage. Furthermore, in displaying group portraits alongside images of the pleasant moments that members of *Landkenthish* chapters spent together in the field, they also visualized the movement as a unit of social and

⁷⁶ Raszkes, "Fotografja na wycieczkach," 3.

⁷⁷ Henryk Seidengart, "O metodę pracy krajoznawczej," *Krajoznawstwo: Wiadomości ŻTK* 4, no. 26 (1937): 3.

cultural unity. It is perhaps mostly through the *Landkentenish* movement's development of this popular photographic culture that it acquired a tangible and coherent form of existence.

The *Landkentenish* Movement's Demise and Legacy

The *Landkentenish* movement had most likely already ceased its activities several months before Germany invaded Poland in September 1939.⁷⁸ In December 1938, *ŻTK* released a special issue of *Krajoznawstwo: Wiadomości ŻTK*.⁷⁹ Dedicated to Lvov, it featured snapshots of the city's landscapes alongside photographs of Jewish cemeteries, Jewish tombstones, synagogues, and religious Jewish artifacts, which were captured in line with the scientific approach to photography that the movement had cultivated. The issue made no comments or predictions as regards the future of the movement. Those who produced it had most likely not known that it was going to be the last issue that the movement would ever publish, and possibly also the last formal document that it would circulate among the public. Given the significant rise in Polish nationalist and anti-Semitic sentiment in the late 1930s, and in light of the introduction of the many restrictions imposed by the Polish state on Polish Jews, it is also reasonable to imagine that movement members were not surprised that no subsequent issue of *Krajoznawstwo: Wiadomości ŻTK* ever arrived.

Although, historically speaking, the *Landkentenish* movement never achieved its ultimate goal, in the long run its employment of photography as a means to facilitate its ideological aspirations contributed to the fulfillment of many of its explicit and more implicit aims. Photographs of Jewish monuments immortalized and popularized at least some traces of the long history and rich heritage of the Jews of Poland. Snapshots of landscapes captured virtually throughout the country described its topography alongside some of its distinct features. Photographic exhibitions and the reproduction of photographs in magazines exposed Jews and Poles to images from around the country, inculcated knowledge about *krajoznawstwo*, demonstrated the connection of Jews to the land, and enabled Jewish amateur photographers to insert their works into the cultural sphere. Group portraits and touristic snapshots concurrently wrote their Jewish subjects into the Polish landscape and inserted into the public environment images of Jews that characterized them as modern Europeans.

While it seems no longer possible to obtain copies of the majority of the photographs that the movement produced, those that survive in one form or another, coupled with the photographic literature that members of the movement published in *ŻTK* and *AKMK* magazines, can still be used to elaborate studies of Jewish history and expand the scope of knowledge concerning the

⁷⁸ It is known that Lejb Wulman, the last head of *ŻTK*, left Poland for New York in 1939. It is also well known that between the beginning of World War II and virtually until his execution by the Germans in 1944, renowned historian and movement member Emanuel Ringelblum established the underground group *Oneg Shabbat*, which gathered a vast collection of documents, testimonies, diaries, drawings, paintings, and photographs related to the nature and experience of everyday life in the Warsaw Ghetto. As much as anyone can assume, other leaders and members of the *Landkentenish* movement also escaped from the country before the war or shared the fate that the majority of Polish Jews encountered when Germany occupied Poland.

⁷⁹ *Krajoznawstwo: Wiadomości ŻTK* 4, no. 30 (1938) = *Numer lwowski*.

historical relationship of Jews to photography. On the one hand, further analysis of the movement's photographic literature and practices can deepen scholarly understanding of the sociopolitical relationship between Jews and Poles in interwar Poland, as they provide additional historical insights into the complex dynamics between the two groups. The photographs circulated by *ŻTK*'s and *AKMK*'s magazines demonstrate that at least some members of Poland's Jewish community were actively seeking out ways to make known their sincere patriotic sentiments toward the Polish state with its geographical and cultural landscapes. The related writings published in the same magazines suggest that their efforts did not assist them in altering traditional Polish perceptions of the Jews and that, in this respect, they did not meet with success. On the other hand, further analysis of the movement's photographic literature and practices can broaden our comprehension of the ways in which Polish Jews conceptualized or understood the role that photography could play in national projects and in nation-building at the very same time in which those European nations who felt secure in their homelands had virtually already taken it for granted.

Yet, the photographic materials that we discussed above must not be seen as relevant only to the condition of Polish Jews in the interwar period. In fact, they have been equally relevant to the living circumstances of Poland's Jewish community ever since. Already when World War II ended, it became clear that despite the suffering that the Germans inflicted on both Polish Jews and non-Jewish Poles the latter did not intend to accept the former group as equal members of the Polish nation. Owing to its promise of human equality, Soviet communism appealed to some politically involved Jewish subjects before as well as during the war. In the postwar period, non-Jewish Poles therefore considered Polish Jews responsible for the establishment of communist rule in the country. Jews who returned to Poland encountered subsequent new waves of anti-Jewish violent acts that lasted until 1946. Inasmuch as Poland officially remained under communist control until 1989, however, the great majority of its Jewish citizens opted to hide their background for the majority of this period. No longer trusting social, cultural, or political change to improve the experience of members of ethnic minority groups, many of them in fact continued hiding their Jewish heritage despite conspicuous indications in the 1980s that the Soviet Union and its communist system were weakening beyond repair. Neither the appearance of a great Polish interest in the ways of life of Polish Jews, nor the gradual re-emergence of a culturally thriving Jewish community in Poland of the same period convinced them to change their minds—and possibly with good reason.⁸⁰

Indeed, the 1980s showcased a significant number of conferences, ceremonies, exhibitions, performances, broadcasts, and book publications relating to the history and culture of Polish Jews.⁸¹ Polish political leaders and public figures, however, began reiterating the old question of

⁸⁰ For additional information about the so-called renaissance of Jewish culture in Poland of the 1980s, see also Ruth Ellen Gruber, *Virtually Jewish: Reinventing Jewish Culture in Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 49.

⁸¹ For their organization of rich public events and for their persistent efforts to strengthen Polish–Jewish relations, three initiatives are particularly noteworthy. In 1983, the Nissenbaum Family Foundation was established in Warsaw with the aim of salvaging traces of Jewish culture of the interwar period, including the renovation of Jewish cemeteries and the public dissemination of information about Jewish history and heritage in Poland. In 1987, Warsaw also saw the establishment of the Shalom Foundation, which proclaimed its dedication to resuscitating, commemorating, and preserving the cultural wealth of Polish Jewry that was annihilated during World War II. Lastly, in 1988 the Jewish Culture Festival in Kraków was organized for the first time and has

the belonging and loyalty of the Jewish community to the Polish nation at the same time. It is not surprising, then, that a significant number of Poles of Jewish heritage still preferred to keep the knowledge of their Jewish identity to themselves.

Following the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the gradual deterioration of the Eastern Bloc, the 1989 establishment of the Third Polish Republic as a democratic Polish state has, at least officially, secured the democratic equality of the Jewish community in the country. The expression of the process culminated in the 1995 founding of a museum dedicated to the history of Polish Jewry, which received formal support from Polish President Aleksander Kwaśniewski in 2005 and opened to the public in 2013 as POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in the living heart of the city of Warsaw—right in the center of its old Jewish district. But considering the lessons offered by the history of the Jews in Poland, some members of the community are still afraid to speak of their Jewish identity to this very day.

Admittedly, the Polish and Jewish experiences and collective memories of World War II and the communist era have added additional layers of complication to the history of Polish–Jewish relations. That Polish Jews have not yet been fully accepted by non-Jewish Poles as legitimate members of the Polish nation remains a fact, however. The photographic literature and records that the *Landkenthish* movement left behind must thus also be understood as the relics of the history and heritage of many of the Jews who live in the country in the present day.

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since then become one of the most celebrated events in the country as well as the most significant festival of Jewish culture worldwide.

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