
Herbarium Polonorum (Heimatphotographie)

Elżbieta Janicka

Abstract: The main theme of the text is the wartime and postwar history of the area of the German Nazi extermination camp Treblinka II, seen from the perspective of the production of landscape – with a special focus on the identity aspect, i.e. the nationalization of nature and the naturalization of the nation. The argument refers to imaging conventions of nature and ethnographic photography, like the German *Heimatphotographie* and the Polish Fatherland Photography, that go along with landscape production. This paper also touches upon the issue of classification as the principle organizing the workings of the human mind as well as the uses made of classification in terms of cognition and identity – up to and including the deadly consequences thereof. Another crucial point of reference is the history of the herbarium as a form of organizing knowledge (Maria Sibylla Merian, Rosa Luxemburg, Szymon Syreński) and its connections with the visual arts (Krzysztof Jung, Alina Szapocznikow). The rich iconography illustrates the analyzed representation patterns, with particular focus on the axiosemiotics of Polish antisemitism, going back to its elitist forms in Jagiellonian Poland. The text summarizes fifteen years of the author's work on *Herbarium*, a photographic project carried out on the site of the former German Nazi extermination camp Treblinka II.

Keywords: antisemitism; *Heimatphotographie*; Holocaust; landscape; nature photography; environmental history; Treblinka; herbarium

This is an attempt at an explanation and justification of the photographic work entitled *Herbarium (Zielnik)* that I have been pursuing at the site of the former German Nazi extermination camp Treblinka II for the past fifteen years.

Gdzie wiatr zawiewa dymem z krematorium
I dzwoni w wioskach dzwon na Anioł Pański [...]
Ziemia zagłady, ziemia nienawiści,
Żadne jej nigdy słowo nie oczyści,
Taki się na niej nie zrodzi poeta.

Where wind carries the smell of the crematorium
And a bell in the village tolls the Angelus, [...]
Soil of annihilation, soil of hate,
No word will purify it ever,
No such poet will be born [there].

Czesław Miłosz¹

1 The above passage is followed by: "A gdyby nawet jeden był wezwany, / Z nami szedł razem do ostatniej bramy / Bo mógł być tylko między dziećmi z getta" ("For even if one had been called, he walked / Beside us to the last gate, for only / A child of the ghetto could utter the words") (Miłosz, 1957/1984, pp. 23, 29). I quote the English translation by Robert Hass from the article: Helen Vendler, *A Lament in Three Voices* (Vendler, 2006, pp. 93, 98).

I. At the Scene

Then

What was there in the beginning? We do not know. Before 1942 there were cultivated fields: an established culture of most probably potatoes or wheat. In 1942, agriculture ceded the place to another kind of culture, or production, encompassing several consecutive stages.

1942: the establishment by the Third German Reich of an extermination camp and the mass killing by means of gas chambers of Jewish citizens of Poland by Austrian and German Nazis assisted by their Ukrainian helpers. The digging of the mass graves and the massive inhumation of corpses. In thirteen months of activity – just over one year – Treblinka II became the main site of the industrial slaughter of Polish Jews, with at least 900,000 victims (see: Krzepicki, 1979; Glazar, 1995; Rajchman, 2011; Weinstein, 2008; Wiernik, 2003; Willenberg, 1989).²

1943: the mass exhumation and open-air burning of decomposing corpses alongside the continued extermination of Jews from occupied Poland and other European countries as well as several transports of the Roma and Sinti. The fire of Treblinka was visible from afar at night. Smoke, ashes and cinders along with the smell of burning flesh were incessantly spread by the wind all around.³ The rendered fat reconstituted itself on the glass of windows at the distance of several dozens of kilometers. A summary inhumation of ashes and other remains (hair, pieces of skin and flesh, teeth, dismembered skeletons, shattered bones) followed.

The first transport arrived at Treblinka on July 23, 1942. On August 2, 1943, the Jewish prisoners started an uprising. Less than seventy survived. Much more numerous were those who escaped, also before the uprising, but didn't manage to subsist on the so-called Aryan side. The camp stopped operating on November 17, 1943. At that time the core of the future Treblinka landscape was produced: layers of Jewish ashes mixed with other organic and non-organic remains. However, the story of this landscape formation was far from over. Anthropogenic tectonic movements and seismic shocks continued.

2 See also a volume containing one anonymous testimony alongside the testimonies of Abram Krzepicki (first edition), Dawid Nowodworski, Jakub Rabinowicz (?) (Wiatr et al., 2013, pp. 73–222). Dating back to 1942, the testimonies of Krzepicki, Nowodworski and Rabinowicz are contemporaneous with the events. Rajchman and Wiernik wrote their accounts in 1944 as survivors of the August 2, 1943, Treblinka uprising. Weinstein's text is also a quite early account, dating back to 1946 or 1947.

3 In October 1942 – that is, before the burning of corpses was implemented – the chief quartermaster at the military commandment of the General Government noted in the event logbook: "The OK [*Ortkommandantur*] Ostrów [Mazowiecka] reports that Jews in Treblinka were not buried in a sufficient way and consequently the air is being poisoned with an unbearable stench of carrion" (BA-MA Freiburg, RH 53-22/80 – entry dated October 24, 1942, KTB MiG, OQu). Ostrów Mazowiecka is located 25 kilometers north of Treblinka. The 1943 occurrences from Węgrów and Sokołów Podlaski – 35 kilometers south of Treblinka – are reported in Rusiniak, 2008, p. 19.

1944: the staging of a provisional farm by the commandment of the camp, with Ukrainian guards as the cast, on the ground which remained fenced, after the soil had been plowed and lupine planted. The Red Army entered the site in the summer of 1944.⁴ As for the farm, it was constructed from the bricks of the dismantled gas chambers. After the dismantling of the farm, the same bricks served to build three private houses in the neighboring village of Poniatowo.⁵

1945: the beginning of dynamic activity by the local and more distant Polish Christian population exploring the ashes and cinders, excrement and any other remnants of the victims in search of the phantasmatic “Jewish gold”. In the earliest postwar accounts – namely, those by Rachela Auerbach (Auerbach, 2012b, pp. 35, 66)⁶ and Mordechai Tsanin (Canin, 2018c)⁷ – the phenomenon was termed a gold rush (Auerbach, 2012a; Canin, 2018a). The state of affairs was being documented by the Central Jewish Historical Commission (Centralna Żydowska Komisja Historyczna, CŻKH), the Central Committee of Polish Jews (Centralny Komitet Żydów Polskich, CKŻP) and the Main Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland (Główna Komisja do Badania Zbrodni Niemieckich w Polsce), as well as by the government-controlled press, the Polish Cinematographic Chronicle (Polska Kronika Filmowa, PKF), in testimonies, reports from the police station in the nearby Kosów Lacki, and in judicial proceedings.

Polish Christians carried out the exploitation of the site mainly with basic agricultural tools. But the soil was also blown up with explosives when the guards charged with protecting the area joined the diggers (Rusiniak, 2008, p. 32; see also: Gross & Grudzińska-Gross, 2012; Reszka, 2019). As Martyna Rusiniak put it: “The actions of the seekers desecrated the memory of those murdered and, at the same time, testified to the seekers’ knowledge of the wartime history of the former camp”. Rusiniak describes the ongoing manoeuvres as “local memory”: “However, this was a rather particular memory, the memory of the local seekers that this place was the ‘Eldorado of Podlasie’” (Rusiniak, 2008, p. 93; see also: Borejsza, 2018).⁸ Rachela Auerbach called it the “Polish Colorado” and the “Polish Klondike”, as did the journalists of the local and central press. This living memory ought to be situated and seen in a continuum with the wartime

4 See a booklet by Vasily Grossman published in Polish the following year (Gros[s]man, 1945; English edition: Grossman, 2010). Grossman declares that he arrived on the site at the beginning of September 1944.

5 United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Poland Documentation Project, RG-50.225*0032, audio account of Jerzy Skarżyński and Eugeniusz Wójcik collected on March 12, 1998 (quoted in: Rusiniak, 2008, p. 33).

6 Auerbach’s “Oyf di felder fun Treblinka” was written in 1946 in Łódź, published the same year in *Dos Naye Lebn*, then republished the following year in Warsaw by the Central Jewish Historical Committee. It recounted an armed expedition to the site on November 7, 1945. Falsely represented in Roberta Grossman’s film *Who Will Write Our History* (2018) as Auerbach’s lonely trip, it was a joint endeavor of the Central Jewish Historical Commission and the state Main Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland. As a member of the Oneg Shabbat team in the Warsaw Ghetto, Rachela Auerbach collected Abram Krzepicki’s testimony from Treblinka as early as 1942.

7 Canin’s *Treblinka* was part and parcel of his *Iber shteyn un shtok: A rayze iber hundert khorev gevorene kehiles in Poyln*, which was published in 1952 in Tel Aviv and described the state of affairs on the ground either in 1946 or 1947.

8 I would like to thank Anna Sianko for having drawn my attention to Borejsza’s account.

social practices surrounding Treblinka II. The activity on the ground continued until the beginning of – if not the mid- – 1960s.

1964: With the living memory still being cultivated, the central authorities imposed a much less living memory upon the place and the people in the form of a commemorative installation by Franciszek Duszeńko, Adam Haupt and Franciszek Strynkiewicz.⁹ The team – composed of two sculptors, an architect, and a landscape architect, Danuta Oppenheim – won the contest held by the Ministry of Culture and Art in 1955 upon the initiative of the Social and Cultural Association of Jews in Poland (Towarzystwo Społeczno-Kulturalne Żydów, TSKŻ).¹⁰ The winning design encompassed both former camps: the forced labor camp Treblinka I (operating from the fall of 1941 to the summer of 1944) and the extermination camp Treblinka II (operating from July 23, 1942, to November 17, 1943), together with the so-called Black Road connecting the two sites.¹¹

Much can be said about the commemorative orchestration of the two former camps in terms of their mutual positioning. Contrary to historical facts, Treblinka I – with a multitude of minor crosses and one central major cross, complemented with a Via Crucis – was presented as a site of exclusively Polish Christian martyrdom¹² that preceded its “Jewish equivalent”. The commemorative orchestration of Auschwitz I and Auschwitz II Birkenau is an exact copy of this arrangement.

As far as the 17 hectares of the former Treblinka II are concerned:

The boundaries of the former camp were delimited by huge pillars of granite. The entrance gate was marked by two concrete blocks; through its center a paved road leads in the direction of the “ramp” – the railway siding. Concrete blocks leading to the “ramp” – an idea of Adam Haupt – represent symbolically the railroad. Near the “ramp” there are eleven blocks of

9 Strynkiewicz designed the symbolic execution wall in Treblinka I. Additionally, as a professor and head of the Artistic and Research Department of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, he was responsible for the realization of the commemorative design as a whole. Adam Haupt was an architect and Rector of the Higher School of Plastic Arts in Gdańsk, where Franciszek Duszeńko headed the Faculty of Sculpture. On the first – ultimately unrealized – commemorative design by Władysław Niemiec and Alfons Zielonko, see: Wóycicka, 2009.

10 “It was only at the end of the 1950s, under the distinct pressure of the trials of war criminals in West Germany and out of fear of the opinion of the West German prosecutor’s office delegation that visited the area of the former extermination center, that the decision was made to realize the monument-mausoleum project” (Szuchta, 2013, p. 36). Artur Paweł Zawadka, however, leaves his reader with the impression that the delay was caused by Jewish organizations in Poland and worldwide, which didn’t provide enough money fast enough. This he blames personally on Salo Fiszgrund, who was in fact one of the most active advocates for the project. In other words, fifty years after the events, Artur Paweł Zawadka, representing The Council for the Protection of Struggle and Martyrdom Memory (formerly The Council for the Protection of Struggle and Martyrdom Sites), abdicates any analytical approach to the archives of his home institution and to historical policies of the Polish state in the past. A spectacular, yet not isolated, example of loyalty among Poles despite political cleavages as far as Jews – living or dead – are concerned (see Zawadka, 2015).

11 Reinhart Koselleck carefully documented the commemorative complex, in which he included the then ex-istant Treblinka (village) railway station (possibly following Lanzmann). His photographic works may be seen on the website of the Bildarchiv Marburg. See <https://www.bildindex.de/document/que20173128?part=1>, for Treblinka II – <https://www.bildindex.de/document/que20173131?part=1>, and for Treblinka I – <https://www.bildindex.de/document/que20173134?part=1> (accessed August 20, 2019). I would like to thank Katrin Stoll for having drawn my attention to the work of Koselleck as a photographer, including the *Reinhart Koselleck. Erinnerungsschleusen* exhibition organized by the University of Bielefeld in the Bielefeld Kunstverein in 2018.

12 A monument to the Roma and Sinti victims of Treblinka I and Treblinka II was erected on the site of the former forced labor camp in 2014.



German aerial photograph of Treblinka II and surrounding areas taken after November 30, 1943 (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum – catalogue no. 04403, courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration, College Park)

Running across top to bottom is the regular railroad line, parallel to the concrete road for car traffic, form-poured in 1940–1941 on crushed stone from Kosów Lacki matzevot. Treblinka II is adjacent to a sidetrack leading to the gravel-pit next to the Treblinka I slave labor camp. The excavated pit is visible halfway along the left edge of the photograph. Along the eastern boundary of the camp (right-hand boundary, as pictured here), directly by the wire, a dirt road is discernable.



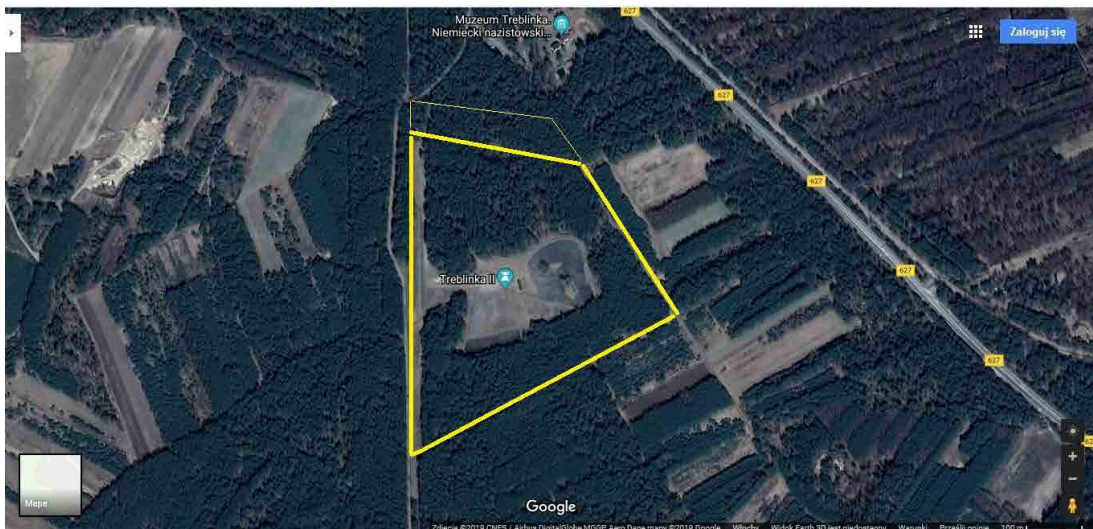
German aerial photograph of Treblinka II and surrounding areas, most probably taken later, but certainly before the Red Army entered the camp (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum – catalogue no. 04163, courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration, College Park)

Running parallel to the bottom edge of the photograph are the sidetrack and the western boundary of the Treblinka II camp. Visible along the eastern boundary are the dirt road and the parallel regular railroad line along with concrete road for car traffic, which branches off to buildings in the village of Wólka Okrąglik, captured in the mid-left of the photograph.



Site of the former Treblinka II camp around the time of the shooting of Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*. The *Shoah* film crew operated at the site in four instalments over the period between July 1978 and December 1981 (© by ARC, <http://www.deathcamps.org>)

The old dirt road is visible along the eastern boundary of the former camp, as is the lack of forest along both the eastern boundary and the eastern part of the southern boundary of the camp.



The same site in 2019 according to Google Maps

In 2020, the forest along the eastern boundary and the eastern part of the southern boundary was cut down. The thick outline marks the camp boundaries as commemorated by Adam Haupt. The discrepancy between the commemoration and the actual size of the camp concerns the northern boundary, which probably ran further north, as marked by the thin outline.



The entrance ticket featuring the Treblinka II commemoration by Adam Haupt, Franciszek Duszerko and Franciszek Strynkiewicz, completed in 1964 (*recto*) and the respective location of the Treblinka II and Treblinka I camps connected by the Black Road (*verso*) (Photo Elżbieta Janicka)

stones engraved with the names of the countries from which Jews were brought to the camp. Between the “ramp” and the monument there is the paved road which led to the gas chambers. On both sides of the road there are stones marking the site of the barracks where the victims had to remove their clothes. On the spot where the new gas chambers were situated a tall monument, designed by Franciszek Duszeńko, rises. It is built of large blocks of granite, arranged so as to remind one of the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem. The front wall gives the impression of being split in the middle. [...] In front of the monument there is an inscription: “NEVER AGAIN” in Polish, Yiddish, Russian, English, French and German [Hebrew was added in 2004 – E.J.]. [...] Behind the monument a rectangular depression represents symbolically the place where the corpses were cremated. It is a rectangular hole filled with melted black basalt forming irregular coagulations and blobs. Around this depression several dozen oil lamps are placed which, when lighted, remind that heaps of human corpses burnt on this spot. This monument was designed by Adam Haupt. An area of 22,000 sq. m. is covered with concrete and 17,000 granite stones of various sizes are situated on it. This concrete covers the ashes of people who were murdered here. [...] The stones represent symbolically the tombstones of a Jewish cemetery. (Kopówka, 2014, pp. 5–6)¹³

Such is my open-air operating theater in the most literal sense of both words.

Now

The reasoning of Duszeńko, Haupt and Strynkiewicz combined the notion of monument understood as a sculpture (understood in turn as a solid structure) with landscape architecture and spatial planning close to Katarzyna Kobro’s revolutionary redefinition of sculpture as the composition of space (see: Kobro & Strzemiński, 1931/1993). The same or similar school of thought manifested itself in the – ultimately unrealized – 1957 design of *The Road* monument for Auschwitz II Birkenau co-authored by Oskar Hansen, Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz, Julian Pałka, Lechosław Rosiński, Edmund Kupiecki, Tadeusz Plasota and Zofia Hansen, whose work elaborated on Oskar Hansen’s Open Form concept (see: Murawska-Muthesius, 2002; Pietrasik, 2010; Grzesiuk-Olszewska, 2019). Both teams perceived each of the places – Treblinka and Birkenau, respectively – as its own representation. At once as a signifier and a signified. Impossible to be represented or addressed otherwise than 1:1. The only possible map of the sites was the one identical with their territories. With practically no possibility of symbolization.

There are two invasive elements in the design for Treblinka II. The vertical structure commonly called and understood as “the monument”. And the horizontal slabs of concrete covering a great deal of the surface, laid there upon the insistence of Hersz Smolar (the communist commander of the Jewish uprising in the Minsk ghetto and one of the leaders of postwar Jewish life in Poland), whose urgent concern was to protect the bodily remains of the murdered (see: Rusiniak, 2008, p. 37). This very urge was shared by Adam Haupt. Both the structure and the slabs have a protective role. The former epitomizes the old ambitions of the monumental genre: dominating and defining space.

13 As for the actual placement of the respective parts of the historical camp – which does not correspond to what was thought to be the case and what Kopówka describes – see the works of Caroline Sturdy Colls (Sturdy Colls, 2013a, 2013b, 2015).

As such it attracts the main flow of visitors – be they official or not, collective or individual. It is at “the monument” where commemorative ceremonies take place and wreaths are laid.

In terms of perception, the “monument” blocks access to the concrete slabs. The concrete slabs, in turn, block access to the main layers of ashes and remains. All in all, the mission has been accomplished. Still, I find it perplexing that it is precisely “the monument”, moreover, its “less Jewish” side, that became the logotype of Treblinka as the Museum of Fighting and Martyrdom, whereas the concrete slabs pass unnoticed as a neutral support for the multitude of stones accompanying “the monument”,¹⁴ which, incidentally, was referred to as “the central object” already in the construction documents.

Made out of grey granite, “the monument” was designed by Franciszek Duszeńko in the form of a megalith. Specifically, in the form of a classical dolmen. The official materials of the Museum present it as a “symbolic tomb”. In fact,

dolmens are often called portal tombs due to the characteristic entrance to the tomb chamber. The entrance in question was formed by two vertical blocks covered with a third horizontal one, usually flat on the underside, constituting a kind of a lid. The term *dolmen* originates from the Breton language in which *tolmén* designates a stone table. As opposed to the corridor tombs recovered with a stone coat, in the case of the dolmens the tomb chamber was rarely covered. (Moore et al., 2011, p. 12)¹⁵

Megaliths were fundamentally ceremonial and burial sites, connected with the burning of corpses and often erected in accordance with knowledge of the revolution of celestial bodies, especially the Sun and the Moon. In Treblinka “the monument” was oriented.¹⁶

A megalith is a basic architectural form and there would be nothing to add to this except that megaliths and menhirs were an essential Nazi fascination.¹⁷ Their cult was emblematic for the Nazi invention of a tribal Germanic past. They were supposed to testify to the ancient character of so-called Nordic culture which resonated with the idea of the so-called Aryan race as a prehistoric source of culture. Megaliths were supposed to compensate for the Nazi inferiority complex stemming from the absence of Germanic architectural achievements equal to those of Egyptians, Greeks or Romans.

14 On the commemoration process see Radecka, 2013; Zawadka, 2015. I would like to thank Katarzyna Radecka, architect and professor at the Koszalin University of Technology, for having generously shared with me her findings contained on the DVD *Treblinka* (Radecka, 2011), which she edited.

15 Catalogue of the exhibition *Megality – kamienne giganty / Mega megaliths* at the Warsaw State Archeological Museum in October-November 2011. The catalogue was prepared by the Downpatrick Branch of the Young Archeologists Club.

16 In architecture, *orientation* is the placement of a structure on an East-West axis with the entrance towards the West and the main point of interest (for instance the Aron-ha-Kodesh, where the Torah scroll is kept in a synagogue) towards the East (in Latin *oriens*). Its opposite is *occidentation* (see Landsberger, 1957).

17 While commenting on Duszeńko's work, Adam Haupt specified that the eight-meter structure referred to the dolmens and menhirs, without mentioning, however, their potential connotations (see Haupt, 1961, p. 5).

They also fit the ideal of immortality, the aspiration to eternity and the millenarian vision of the universe, characteristic of Nazism.

Harmony between these edifices and their vicinity, together with the fact that they were made out of blocks of rock offered by nature as such, without the necessity of further processing, inscribed themselves into the ideal of respect for the environment, which the Nazis invoked even while constructing highways. (Rose, 2006, pp. 145–146)

Megalithic sites were declared Germanic cultural heritage and treated as Nazi holy places. Pertinent here is Nazi identity hysteria – especially shared by Heinrich Himmler and the SS – about Externsteine, Sachsenhain, Tannenberg. Nazi jealousy about Stonehenge (see the entries *Externsteine*, *Megality*, *Stonehenge*, *Tannenberg* in Rose, 2006, pp. 73–76, 144–147, 226–227, 239–240). “Herman Wirth, co-founder of the SS Department of the Ancestral Heritage (*Ahnenerbe*), advocated for recognizing the existence of a religion connected with megalithic tombs in the Stone and Bronze Ages” (Rose, 2006, p. 146). “However, ideological manipulation wasn’t limited to twisting facts; Himmler, with the approval and support of [Alfred] Rosenberg, surpassed himself and ordered to build a brand new place of a megalithic cult near Verden an der Aller” (Rose, 2006, pp. 146–147). And so forth.

How to reconcile that with the resemblance of the “oriented” Treblinka “monument” to the Western Wall of the Jerusalem Temple as declared by the designer? Divergent political pressures lacking coherence? Intentional subversion of the Nazi aspirations as in the case of Rapoport/Suzin’s Warsaw Monument to the Fighters and Martyrs of the Ghetto, built out of the stone intended by the Nazis for the erection of a monument to Adolf Hitler? Whatever the case, a pair of hands offering blessing figures on the western side of the stone lid of the portal megalith, whereas a seven-branched menorah is featured on the eastern side. Blessing hands are an emblem from the gravestones of the *kohanim*, descendants of the arch-priest Aaron, the main celebrants of the religious sacrificial services in ancient Israel. A seven-branched menorah, in turn, symbolizes the Second Temple, its destruction and – according to the redemptive version of the Zionist narrative – its symbolic reconstruction in the form of the state of Israel. At the time when “the monument” was being erected, the seven-branched menorah had already been an official symbol of Israeli statehood for more than fifteen years.

The blessing hands and the menorah are framed with a series of reliefs representing dismembered corpses at the climax of agony (twisted torsos, convulsively clenched fingers, open mouths, ex-orbited eyes).¹⁸ The reliefs occupy the northern, western, and southern sides of the stone lid. They are utterly at odds with the aniconism proper to

18 The reliefs are entitled: *Martyrdom*, *Women and Children*, *Struggle*, and *Survival*. Franciszek Duszeńko didn’t facilitate comprehension of his idea by calling the structure “the sacrificial altar” and declaring: “with time I’ve grown convinced [...] that the monument reliefs are a very important component of the dramaturgy of the whole site. They are a kind of a pier for our imagination, where their connection with the mass and the conventional character of the sign – the stone covering the graves – is the most essential element of the metaphysical construction of the entire area of the extermination camp” (cited in: Grzesiuk-Olszewska, 1995, p. 250).



MUZEUM WALKI I MĘCZENSTWA
W TREBLINCE

MUSEUM OF FIGHTING AND MARTYRDOM
IN TREBLINKA

MUSÉE DE LA LUTTE ET DU MARTYRE
DE TREBLINKA

DAS MUSEUM FÜR KAMPF UND MÄRTYRERTUM
IN TREBLINKA

МУЗЕЙ БОРЬБЫ И МУЧЕНИЧЕСТВА
В ТРЕБЛИНКЕ



ISBN 978-83-88761-46-1

The view of the western (“less Jewish”) side of Franciszek Duszeńko’s “central object” as the logo of the Museum of Fighting and Martyrdom in Treblinka, together with the logo of the Mazovia region (“Mazovia – the heart of Poland”), on the cover of the booklet: *Plan of Symbolic Stones*, edited by Edward Kopówka (Kopówka, 2014) (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



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Raport o stanie zachowania Miejsca Pamięci w Treblince w roku 2013
autorstwa Edwarda Kopówki i Joanny Zasłona jest dostępny na stronie:
<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B-2T-oahuSvWcTF1T0ZEUzRBZUk/edit?pli=1>

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The view of the western ("less Jewish") side of Franciszek Duszeńko's "central object" as the logo of the Museum of Fighting and Martyrdom in Treblinka with the opening days specified as "everyday besides Christmas and Easter", as appearing in the book: *Co wiemy o Treblince? Stan badań / What Do We Know About Treblinka? The Current State of Research*, edited by Edward Kopówka (Kopówka, 2013, p. 268) (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



The western side of the stone lid of the “central object”, the one visible from the Black Road and the former ramp, which today fulfills the function of the main entrance to the former death zone (*Totenlager*, historically called also the camp within the camp) – Treblinka II, August 8, 2020 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



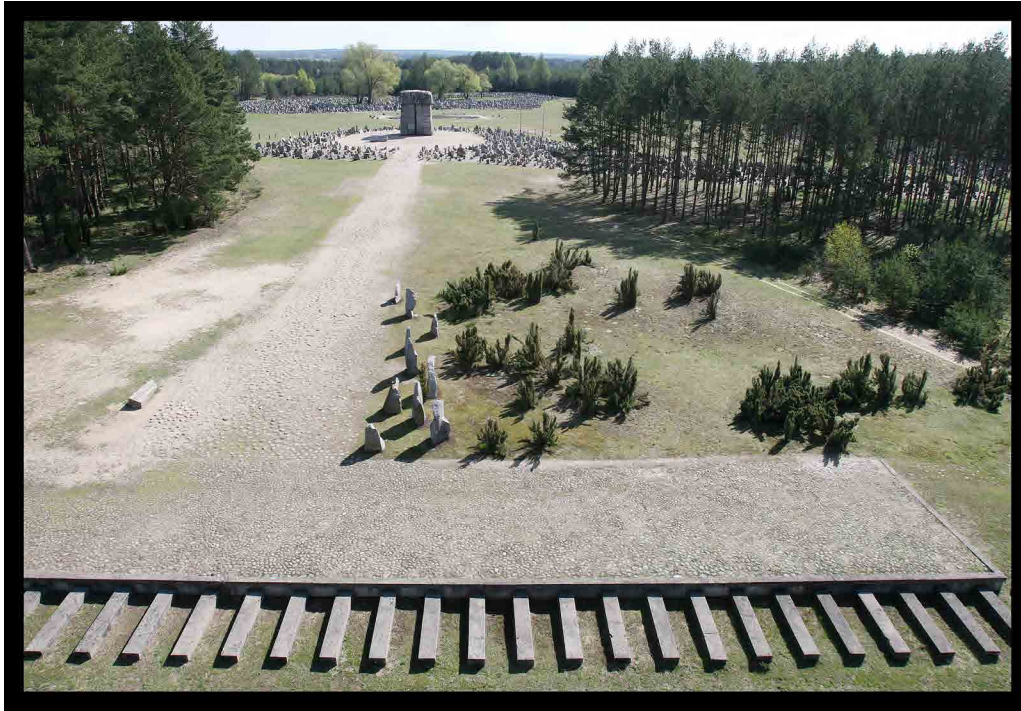
The eastern side of the stone lid, not visible from the Black Road and the former ramp, i.e. from today's main entrance to the former *Totenlager* – Treblinka II, August 22, 2020 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



The southern side of the stone lid – Treblinka II, July 26, 2020 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



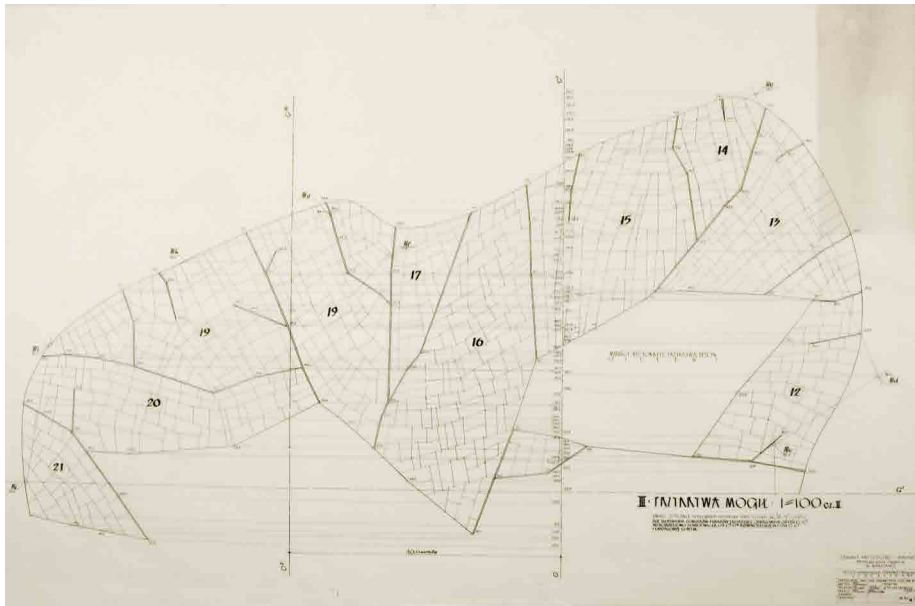
The northern side of the stone lid – Treblinka II, July 26, 2020 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



Symbolic railway track and ramp together with the cobblestone path leading to the “central object”. A symbolic open-air crematorium is visible by the willows behind it. The junipers in the foreground on the right don’t exist anymore. View toward the east – Treblinka II, April 19, 2007 (Photo by Piotr Tołwiński) (© by Piotr Tołwiński, courtesy of Piotr Tołwiński)

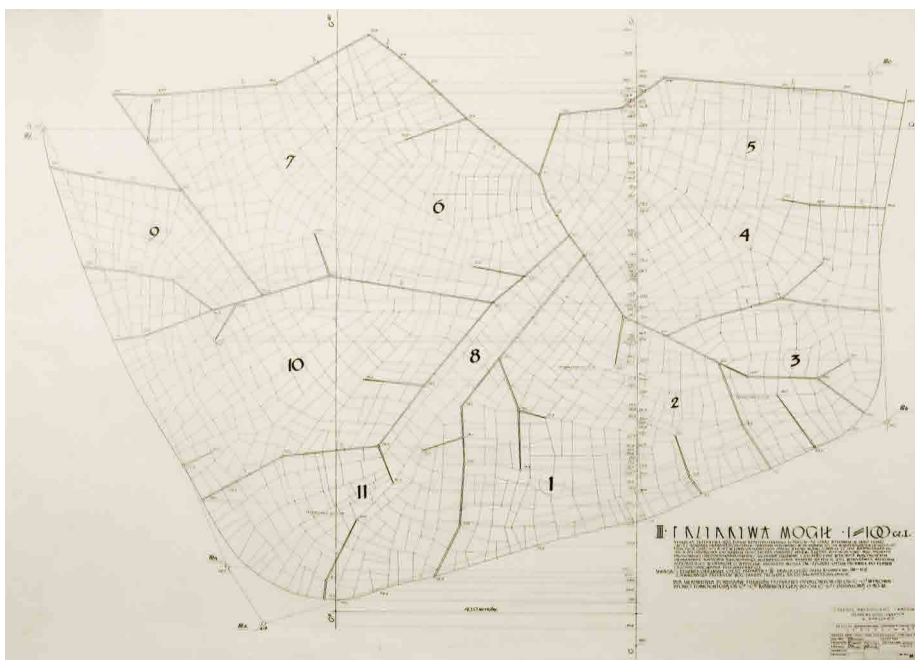


“Stones – symbolic matzevot – on the mass graves”. The official title given to the file by the Museum of Fighting and Martyrdom in Treblinka omits the existence of the concrete slabs, despite their clear visibility from a fire engine ladder used by the photographer. View toward the west – Treblinka II, April 19, 2007 (Photo by Piotr Tołwiński) (© by Piotr Tołwiński, courtesy of Piotr Tołwiński)

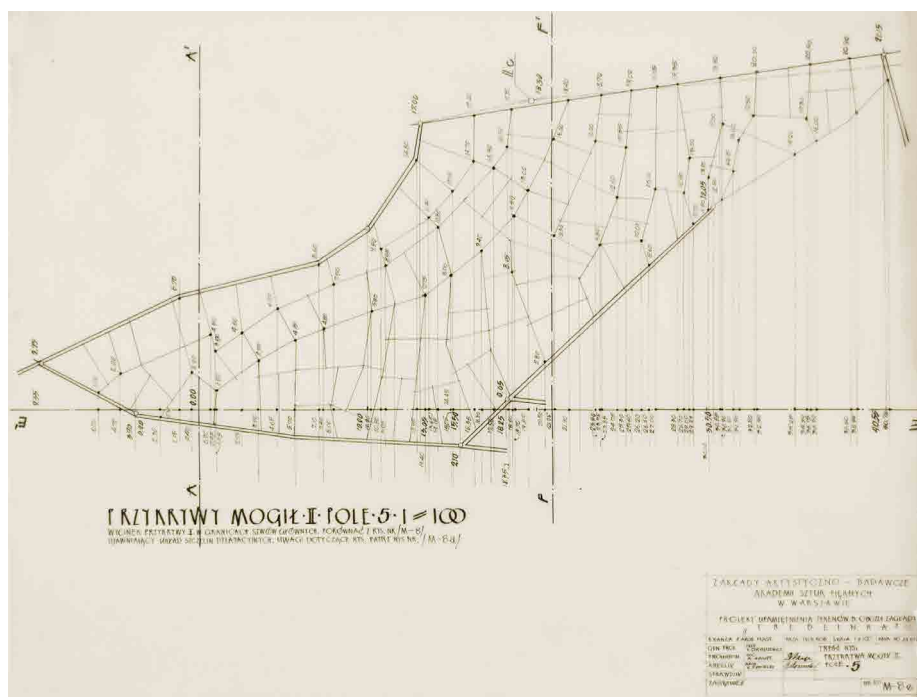
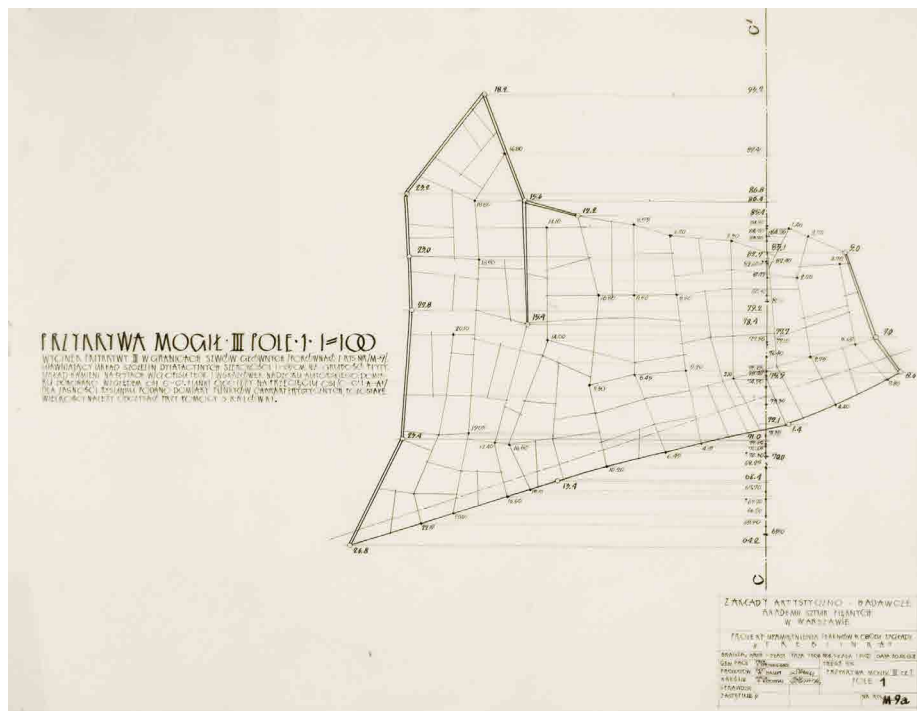


The third concentration of ashes and other remains is located in the eastern part of the former *Totenlager*. The C-C' axis corresponds to the east-west axis of "the monument".

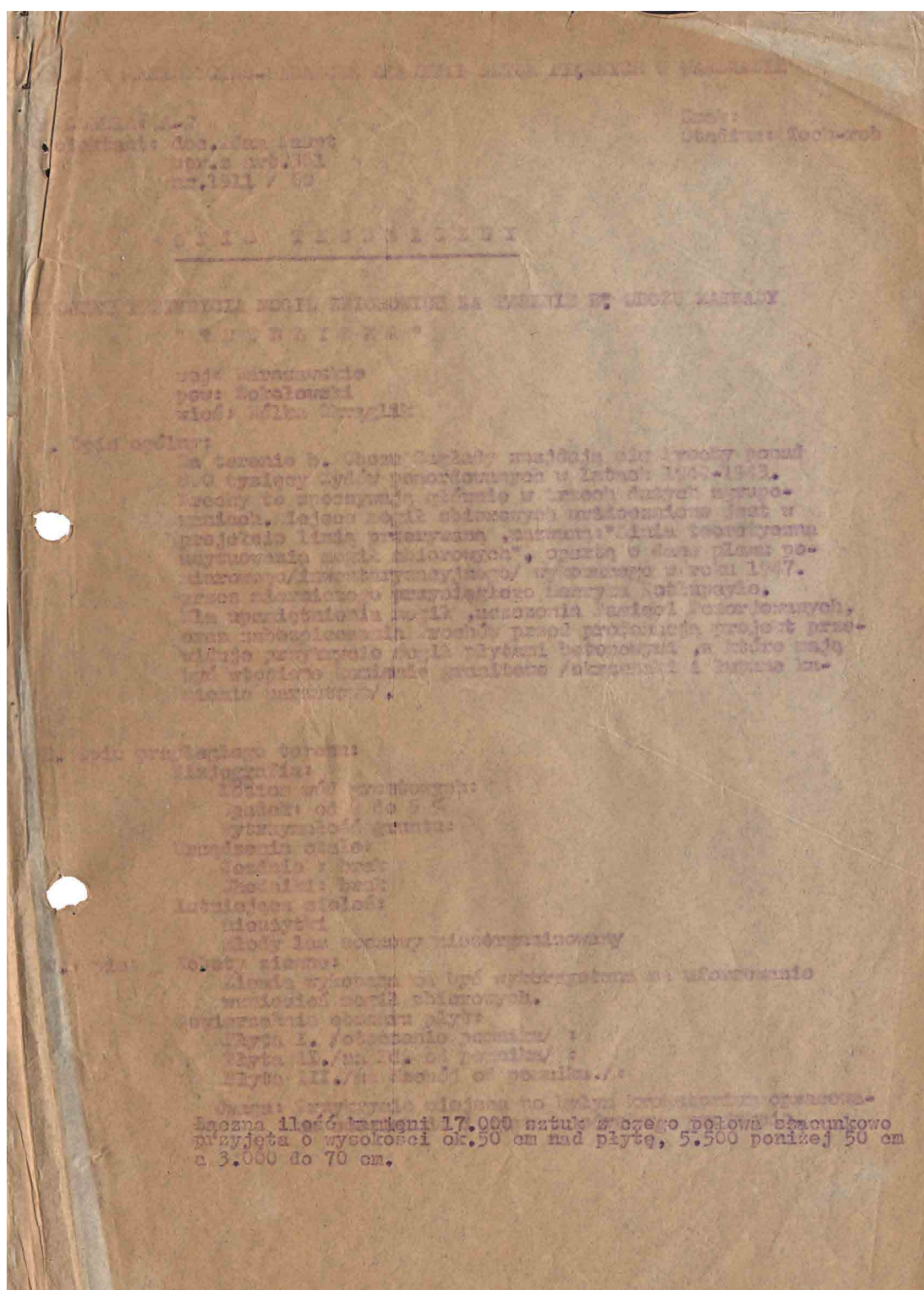
III Overlaying of the Graves, Part II. General arrangement drawing of the concrete slabs designed to cover the western part of the third concentration of ashes and other remains, divided into ten fields. Document specification reads: "Artistic and Research Unit of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. Design of the commemoration of the Treblinka former extermination camp site. Executive designer Franciszek Strynkiewicz. Designer Adam Haupt. Draftsman Henryk Kitowski. December 30, 1961" (Document from Adam Haupt's archive, cited after: Radecka, 2011)



III Overlaying of the Graves, Part I. General arrangement drawing of the concrete slabs designed to cover the eastern part of the third concentration of the ashes and other remains, divided into eleven fields. Document specification reads: "Artistic and Research Unit of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. Design of the commemoration of the Treblinka former extermination camp site. Executive designer Franciszek Strynkiewicz. Designer Adam Haupt. Draftsman Henryk Kitowski. December 30, 1961" (Document from Adam Haupt's archive, cited after: Radecka, 2011)



The second concentration of the ashes and other remains is located in the southern part of the former *Totenlager*. The A-A' axis corresponds to the north-south axis of "the monument".



Technical Description: A Design of the Overlaying of the Collective Graves on the Site of the Former Extermination Camp Treblinka by Adam Haupt (page 1) (Undated document from Adam Haupt's archive, cited after: Radecka, 2011)

Konstrukcja płyt

Płyta wykonana z betonu, grub. 12 cm. Obrzeża zewnętrzne płyty ujęte umieszczoną pod terenem ławą betonową wys. 45 cm szer. 25 cm. Płyta posadowiona na warstwie piasku / 5 cm / dla zabezpieczenia przed polegnięciem wywołanym przez obciążenie betonem przewiduje się podział płyty formą dylatacyjnymi sąsiadującymi powierzchnie nie większe jak 7 m kwadratowa. Ściśle łącznie od fur dylatacyjnych przewiduje się szerokość szczeliny o znaczeniu plastycznym / szerokość od 15 cm do 1,8 m / dla wytopienia szczelin głównych umieszczono na plan 6.30. "Linia teoretyczna szczelin głównych". Znaczącość formę posadzenia wyznaczać będzie projektant w ramach nadzoru autorskiego. Obrzeża płyty betonowej przy szczelinach głównych przewiduje się grubością 40 cm, a to dla wywołania wrażenia, że płyty mają znaczną grubość. Krawędzie płyty przy szczelinach głównych mają być ściśle ukośne / nie pionowe. Formę szczelin dylatacyjnych oraz rozmieszczenie kamieni określi autor projektu w ramach nadzoru autorskiego. Kamienie osadzone w płycie betonowej / średnio 1 kamień na 1 m kwadratowa posadowiona na piasku, a następnie w trakcie wykonywania płyty obetonowane. Jako kamienie przewidziane są okrągłości / kształtowane wydobyte z różnych kamieniołomów / dla uzyskania zróżnicowania kolorystycznego / oraz posadzone ukośnie / ukośno kamieni muratorskich. Wysokość kamieni ponad płytą od 30 do 70 cm. Ponadto przewiduje się wbetonowanie nowej ilości kamieni wystających na których będą wybrane napisy, wybitych lub pomalowanych w freblino. Ilość tych kamieni ukośnych się od ilości jako pola Insulator. Kamienie tego typu będą miały wysokość około 1,8 m i odpowiednie wielkie wymiary w rzucie poziomym.

Formowanie płyty :

Płyty betonowe mają być wrznięte lekko wypukłe terenem. W tym celu należy na ich obrzeżach wykonać łagodne wrzębienie / około 40 cm ponad otaczającą teren / o nachyleniu "stałym" około 1:2. Umieszczenie to ma mieć charakter naturalnego wypuklenia a więc nie należy stosować żadnych geometrycznych form. Umieszczenia / wypuklenia teren / należy w miarę możliwości wykonać przy najmniejszej nakładzie robót ziemnych. W tym celu jest wykonany projekt, przy czym dla oszczędzenia robót ziemnych, obrzeżenie nawet wysokości względnej wypuklenia od stron mniejszych okopanych. Przy formowaniu należy uważać na sposób odcinania spieków dla odpływu wody / 2.4.1. /.

Płyta na terenie zewnętrznych krawędziach nie być wtopiona w teren tzn. nie wchodzić pod teren / łagodać / czyniąc wrażenie jakby wyniesienia z ziemi.

Szczeliny z konstrukcyjną ujęto w rysunku konstrukcyjnym .

Generalny projektant:
prof. T. Młynkiewicz

Nadzorca budowlany:
mgr. inż. H. Gessler

Projektant:
inż. A. Haupt

Wzrost Inspektora:

Technical Description: A Design of the Overlaying of the Collective Graves on the Site of the Former Extermination Camp Treblinka by Adam Haupt (page 2) (Undated document from Adam Haupt's archive, cited after: Radecka, 2011)

Haupt specifies that "dry geometrical forms should not be applied", which is in stark contrast with the logic of the Berlin Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe by Peter Eisenman.

Page 1 of Adam Haupt's *Technical Description* reads:

"Province: Warsaw

County: Sokołów Podlaski

Village: Wólka Okrąglik

A. General description:

The site of the former Extermination Camp contains the ashes of over 800 thousand Jews murdered in the years 1940–1943. The ashes rest primarily in three major concentrations. The location of mass graves is marked in the design [blueprints] with a dotted line, described as "Theoretical Line of Mass Graves Location" and based on the data of the measurement (survey) plan drawn up in 1947 by sworn surveyor Henryk Kotłapayło. To commemorate the graves, honor the Memory of the Murdered, and protect the Ashes from profanation, the design envisions covering the graves with concrete slabs with embedded granite stones (rough-hewn stones and cleaved erratic blocks).

B. Description of adjacent area:

Physiography:

Ground waters level: [blank]

Downslope: 0 to 2%

Soil strength: [blank]

Fixed infrastructure:

Tarmac: none

Pavement: none

Existing greenery:

idle agricultural land

young pine forest, unorganized

C. [one unreadable word] Earthworks:

Dug-up soil is to be used to form elevations of the mass graves.

Size of the slabs area:

Slab I. (around the monument): [blank]

Slab II. (south of the monument): [blank]

Slab III. (east of the monument): [blank]

Note: Covering the area of the former crematorium [the remaining part of the sentence typed over with the words]: Total number of stones 17,000, of which approximately half protruding ca. 50 cm above the plate, 5,500 below 50 cm, and 3,000 up to 70 cm".

Page 2 of Adam Haupt's *Technical Description* reads:

"Slab structure

The slab is made of concrete, 12 cm thick. The external edge of the slab is enclosed by a concrete strip footing (45 cm high, 25 cm wide) placed underground. The slab is founded on a layers of sand (5 cm). To protect it from cracks caused by the contraction of concrete, the slab shall be divided by expansion joints ['expansion crevices' – J. O.], enclosing areas not larger than 7 m each. Apart from the expansion joints, the design envisions wide crevices for artistic purposes (15 cm to 1.8 m wide). To delineate the main crevices, the plan includes a 'Theoretical Line of Main Crevices'. The actual form of crevices will be determined by the designer during design supervision. The concrete slab edges adjoining the main crevices shall be thickened to 40 cm so as to suggest that the slabs are of considerable thickness. The edges of the slab next to the crevices should be beveled (not vertical). The form of expansion joints will be determined by the designer during design supervision. The stones fitted in the concrete slab (on average 1 stone per 1 square meter) will be founded on sand and then encased in concrete as the slab is poured. The stones to be used are rough-hewn granite blocks extracted from different quarries (to achieve varied hues) and, preferably, cleaved erratic blocks. The stones' height above the slab is from 30 to 70 cm. Apart from that, a number of taller embedded stones are envisioned, whereby names of outstanding Persons murdered in Treblinka will be carved. The exact number of those stones shall depend on the number given by the Developer. Stones of this type will be ca. 1.2 m tall and of respectively greater layout dimensions.

Slab formation:

The concrete slabs are meant to appear as slight rises in the landscape. To achieve this effect, a gentle elevation (some 40 cm above the surrounding ground, slope ratio of 1:2) should be introduced around the slab's edges. The elevation should have the character of a natural rise, so dry geometrical forms should not be applied. The elevations (rises in landscape) should be implemented with the least possible amount of earthwork. The entire design is guided by this spirit, and to limit earthwork, the relative height of the elevations is even lowered on less exposed sides. Finally, during slab formation, attention should be paid to preserving downslopes for water runoff (2%).

On its outers ridges, the slab is supposed to blend into the ground, meaning that it should merge into the landscape (gently), making it appear as if it was emerging from the ground.

The structural details are included in the structural drawing.

Executive designer: Prof. F. Strynkiewicz

Head of design studio: W. Gessler, MSc, Eng.

Designer: Dr A. Haupt [signature]

Developer's notes: [blank]"

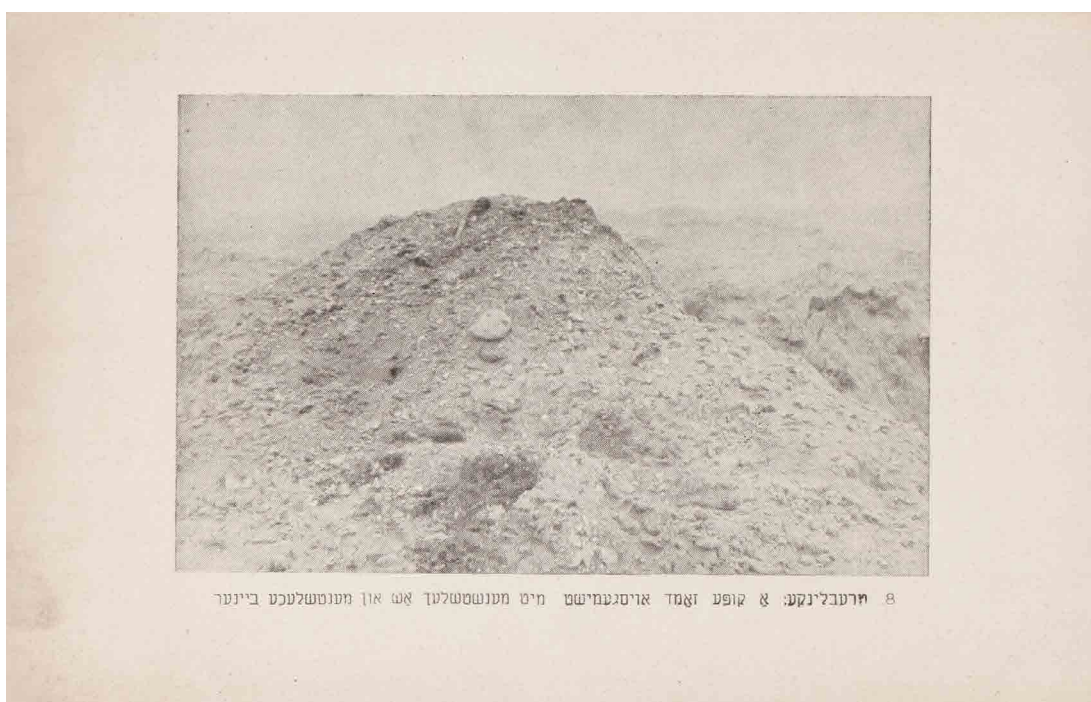
(Document translated by Jakub Ozimek)



The cover of Rachela (Roykhl) Auerbach's *Oyf di Felder fun Treblinka* [In the Fields of Treblinka]. The inscription at the bottom of the cover reads: Varshe, Lodj, Kroke 1947 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



What remains under the concrete. Photograph by Jakub Byk from Rachela (Roykhl) Auerbach's *Oyf di Felder fun Treblinka* from an interleaf between pages 16 and 17 (from the library of the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw). The caption in Yiddish reads: "Treblinka: a heap of human bones" (translated by Karolina Szymaniak) (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



What remains under the concrete. Photograph by Jakub Byk from Rachela (Roykhl) Auerbach's *Oyf di Felder fun Treblinka* from an interleaf between pages 80 and 81 (from the library of the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw). The caption in Yiddish reads: "A heap of sand mixed with human ashes and bones" (translated by Karolina Szymaniak) (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)

Judaism, where the portrayal of YHWH in any kind of human or concrete form is not encouraged and the prohibition applies mainly to sculpture. Instead, they remain in accordance with the Christian tradition of providing the spectacle of extreme suffering and massacred dead bodies, first and foremost of what Christians believe to be the body of God and the true Messiah. If the whole of this cacophony had to be interpreted in a coherent way the result would be a destruction-reconstruction axis of redemption. A theological and ideological appropriation. In a word, a rationalization of the Shoah.¹⁹

Otherwise, what is worth noticing is the permeability of the commemorative entirety. The area is clearly marked but animals and people are free to appear and circulate within it. The Treblinka site is the opposite of the tightly fenced and isolated (if not suffocated with concrete and other substances) area of the former Bełżec extermination camp. Haupt, Duszeńko and Strynkiewicz did suggest the directions to follow, but everyone – whether a human or an animal – is free to pursue their own course. In practice, the visitors rarely stray away from “the monument”, which – along with the mock-up cremation pit – usually contents them. In this sense, the “central object” plays the role of a lightning rod and an insulator in the opposite direction as well. It satiates and conciliates the living. At least most of them. This allows me to work in peace even at the height of the tourist season.

The concrete and the ground are the Real, the thing in itself. With no symbolization other than painstaking geodetic contour lines and meticulously calculated technical drawings – executed in the 1960s and newly revealed – of every single square centimeter of the concrete slabs and expansion joints designed by Adam Haupt. The latter are crevices conceived for evacuating the water and allowing the ashes and the concrete to “work”. Today they are used as passageways by lizards. Convinced that the concrete was poured at random, I had no idea that there was engineering thought and a designer behind every single turn and intersection, every single axis and curve. Was Adam Haupt a madman? He was an architect and engineer. He designed naval vessels and industrial forms serving the living. Here he served those whose fate he managed to escape himself. Years later he recounted in a disjointed, ungrammatical manner: “The soil was overturned here and there, the bones lay on top, there was a must, first, to protect it in order that they don’t desecrate it, since these are sacred graves. Second, [a must] to memorialize in such a way that nothing would be able to touch it, to use as simple means as possible, to avoid any showing off, because that would be inappropriate in relation to what had happened there” (cited in: Taborska, 2002). “In such a way that nothing would be able to touch it”, where the meaning of *touching* (*ruszyć*) stretches between *displacing* and *violating*.

On numerous occasions, Haupt stressed the simplicity of the Treblinka design: “The principle of our work was the greatest aloofness, avoidance of all flashiness. [...] We

19 None of the authors dealing with the Treblinka commemoration addresses any of these questions (see: Grzesiuk-Olszewska, 1995; Taborska, 2003, pp. 56–61).

decided to use the simplest materials. The ripped, non-processed stone, the raw concrete with visible imprints of formworks” (Haupt, 1961, p. 3). Indeed, the result looks raw and simple. The concrete slabs don’t even “look” at all in so far as they are rarely perceived and hardly ever commented upon. The narrative document entitled *Spis techniczny* (*Technical List*) that Haupt devoted to them, together with dozens of tracing paper blueprints, were not supposed to be seen. Their discovery by Katarzyna Radecka was a complete surprise to me. A kind of a shock, to be honest. Because of the immensity of the effort they represented. As if Haupt had invested in them all the impetus and surgical precision he was capable of. And as if they constituted an evidence of madness camouflaged with apparently impersonal rigor and discipline. Akin to a piece of concrete poetry.

II. *Heimat*

Archeology of the Project

Before *Herbarium* was *The Odd Place* (*Miejsce nieparzyste*, 2003–2004), a work encompassing three elements. The first one consisted of six photographs of the air above the former German Nazi extermination camps – Bełżec, Kulmhof am Ner (Chełmno nad Nerem), Majdanek, Auschwitz II Birkenau (Oświęcim-Brzezinka), Sobibór, Treblinka II – all of which remain in Poland, even though the country was moved considerably to the west at the cost of Germany as a consequence of WWII. Location constituted an important element of the wartime context and a crucial factor for the fate of the sites after the war. The second component of *The Odd Place* contained 13 recordings of the air over the abovementioned camps. Yes. It was precisely the air that I intended to register. The sound was secondary. What was primary was the air that enables the sound to take place at all, as no sound is possible in a vacuum. It was the materiality of the air that was at stake. Exactly the same went for the light. From its double character – its wave-particle duality – it was its materiality that mattered. The third element of the work was the title referring to the stamp: “Place in odd-numbered benches”, with which the administration of the University of Warsaw marked the grade transcripts of the Jewish students. The stamp in question epitomizes, in my opinion, the antisemitic policies and, more broadly, the antisemitic politics of the prewar Polish state.

The Odd Place was accompanied by a text: *Hortus Judeorum* (Janicka, 2006). Originally, *hortus iudaeorum* (Latin for “Jewish garden”) was the name given in Christian Europe to Jewish cemeteries, which most often were the only green space where Jews could stay without limitation and feel secure. I decided to redefine the concept of *hortus iudaeorum* (see: Bal, 2002) and use it – in its simplified orthographic form typical for the “Sarmatian Latin” of the Polish nobility – for designating the landscape of Poland as

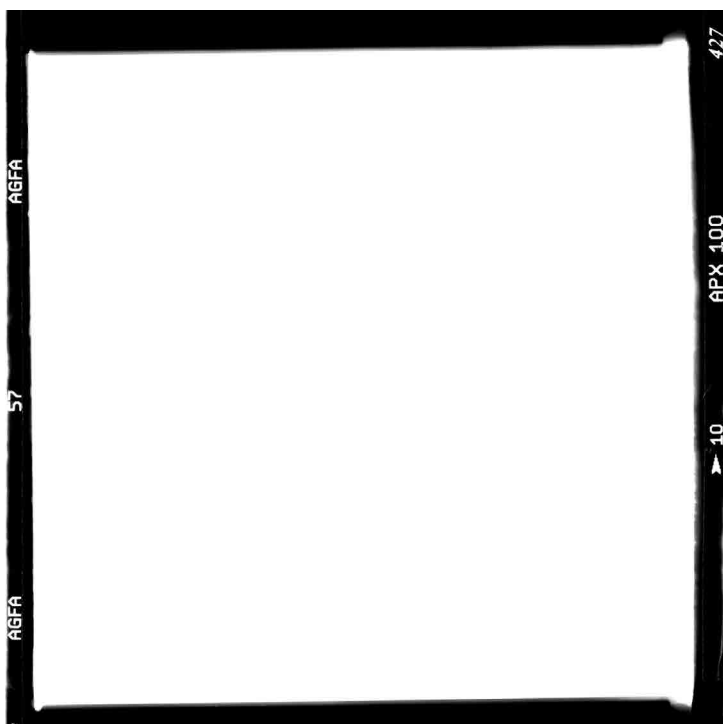
a Jewish cemetery, or rather as a sarcophagus that directly absorbed Jewish dead bodies and other remains. The ashes from Auschwitz were thrown into the Soła River at its junction with the Vistula, the ashes from Sobibór into the Bug River, the ashes from Kulmhof am Ner into the Warta/Warthe River. All three of them – the Vistula, the Bug and the Warta – crisscross the entire country. But Jews who were victims of German Nazi extermination camps are not the only ones to have no graves. Victims of the Polish hunt for Jews have no graves either. Like those killed earlier, be it by Germans or by Poles – civilians and in uniforms. Despite numerous postwar exhumations they mostly remain in unmarked places where they were deprived of life: along the roads, by the railway tracks, in the fields, in the meadows, in the forests, among dead animals, in orchards, in private gardens. That territory is impossible to delimit.

Hortus Judeorum addressed the question of Polish antisemitism and its criminal, murderous consequences. Of the Polish antisemitic imaginary – with its organic topics alongside the notion of the so-called sacred Polish soil – translated into practice and culminating in the current special (d)effect, which Polish society and culture cannot even acknowledge, let alone accept being responsible for. It also addressed the closely related question of the elements – air, water, fire, soil – and the landscape as a container of Jewish ashes and other remains. Having taken note of the processes of absorption, osmosis and recycling, I proceeded to analyze the act of breathing and suffocating (being asphyxiated) as well as that of eating and digesting – in their literal and symbolic senses. The subtitle of the text read *Respiratory and Nutritional-Digestive Reflections on the Margin of the Work "The Odd Place"*.

The problem of food (especially ecological food) was mentioned in the text together with the accompanying fantasies of health and purity. The project of purity was addressed, both as such and in its allowed – tolerated if not required – form of the ecological project. My intention was not to compromise the ecological project but to denounce its non-deconstructed forms that have the potential of fueling and legitimizing murderous endeavors, as was the case in the Third Reich and may be observed in the ideology of nationalism at large. In today's Poland, ecological poetics more often than not serves to obfuscate the fact and the consequences of the murder of Jews. And this takes place in everyday common discourse perceived as neutral. In other words, not perceived at all.

Just one example. The area of Treblinka is being patrolled by cows. Their omnipresence in the landscape is acknowledged by the road signs. Their milk goes to the dairy in Kosów Lacki. 2,500 Jews before the war. 85% of the population:

Also here – as in all the cities and towns of Podlasie – Poles hoped that Hitler would make them happy by liberating them from Jews. From Jews he did liberate them. The dregs of Kosów even took an active part in the destruction of Jews. As everywhere, here they also robbed and murdered their Jewish acquaintances who came to them to be hidden. (Canin, 2018b, p. 233)



Elżbieta Janicka, *Treblinka II*
(July 10, 2004), from the series
The Odd Place (2003–2004)



The Stamp (Pieczętka, 2008) by Elżbieta Janicka as part of the *Projekt Próżna* annual exhibition initiated in 2005 by Krystiana Robb-Narbutt and Krystyna Piotrowska then, after Krystiana's death in 2006, curated by Krystyna Piotrowska until the last show in 2012 – the backyard at 7/9 Próżna Street on September 14, 2008 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)

The inscription on the stamp reads “Place in odd-numbered benches”. The stamp comes from the grade transcript of Idess Biezuńska, student at the University of Warsaw before WWII. Biezuńska was one of the few who managed to survive the Holocaust. After the war – as Iza Biezuńska-Matowist – she became a renowned scholar and distinguished professor of history at the same university. I would like to express my gratitude to Włodzimierz Lengauer for making the document available to me.



The concrete road between Małkinia and Kosów Lacki, built by local Jewish slave laborers before the 1941 German Nazi invasion of the USSR. View toward Małkinia at the height of the forest path leading to the former camps, photographed in 1958 probably by Adam Haupt. In the background, one can notice the turn where the concrete road used to intersect with the railway tracks and the railway tracks used to bifurcate into the regular railroad and the sidetrack leading to both camps. The sidetrack no longer existed when the picture was taken. The regular railroad was dismantled after the 1989 collapse of the People's Republic of Poland (Photograph from Adam Haupt's archive, cited after: Radecka, 2011)



Zofia Lipecka, *Environs de Treblinka* 2007, oil on canvas, 130 x 195 cm (© by Zofia Lipecka, courtesy of Zofia Lipecka)

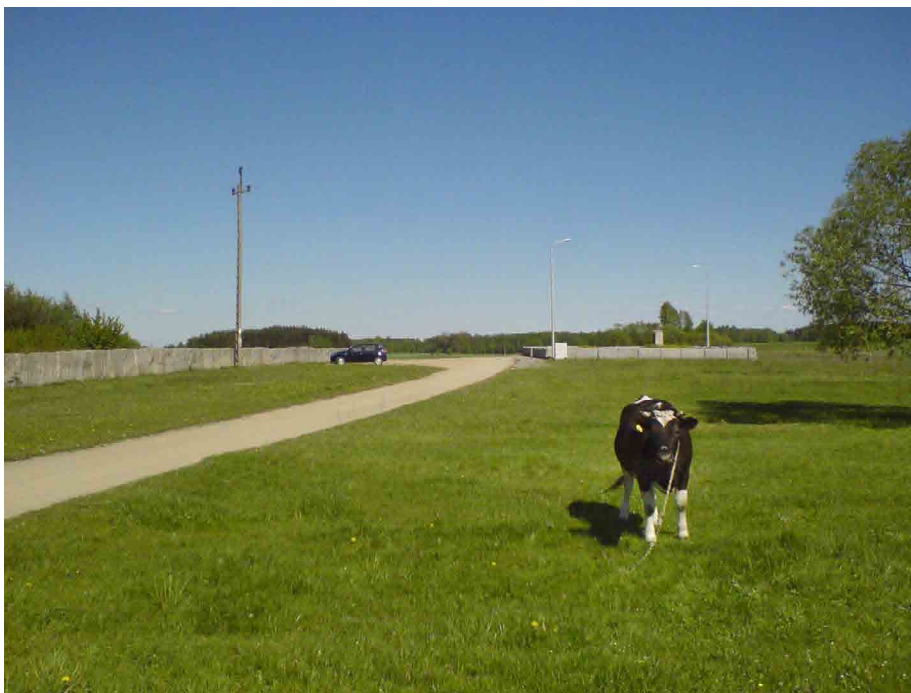
Zofia Lipecka's painting is based on her photograph taken on January 2, 2007, at Treblinka (village), featuring the view toward Małkinia. The trees on the right correspond to the location of the former Treblinka (village) railway station.



The same place three years earlier (detail). Treblinka signpost on the roadside with the warning signpost of a cow in the backdrop – Treblinka (village), July 10, 2004 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



View eastward from the inside of Bronisław Śleszyński's barn, where Jedwabne Poles burned alive Jedwabne Jews on July 10, 1941. The barn and its vicinity became a Jewish mass grave. The grey granite is part of the 2001 monument by Ewa Trafna and marks the contour of the barn – Jedwabne, August 22, 2007 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



The grey granite on the right side is part of the 2001 monument by Ewa Trafna and marks the contour of Bronisław Śleszyński's barn. On the left side of the road the overgrown regular Jewish cemetery, thoroughly robbed after WWII, is visible – Jedwabne, May 6, 2014 (Photo by Henryk Hollender) (© by Henryk Hollender, courtesy of Henryk Hollender)



Butter from the neighborhood of Treblinka and Jedwabne at a Warsaw grocery store – January 5, 2020 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)

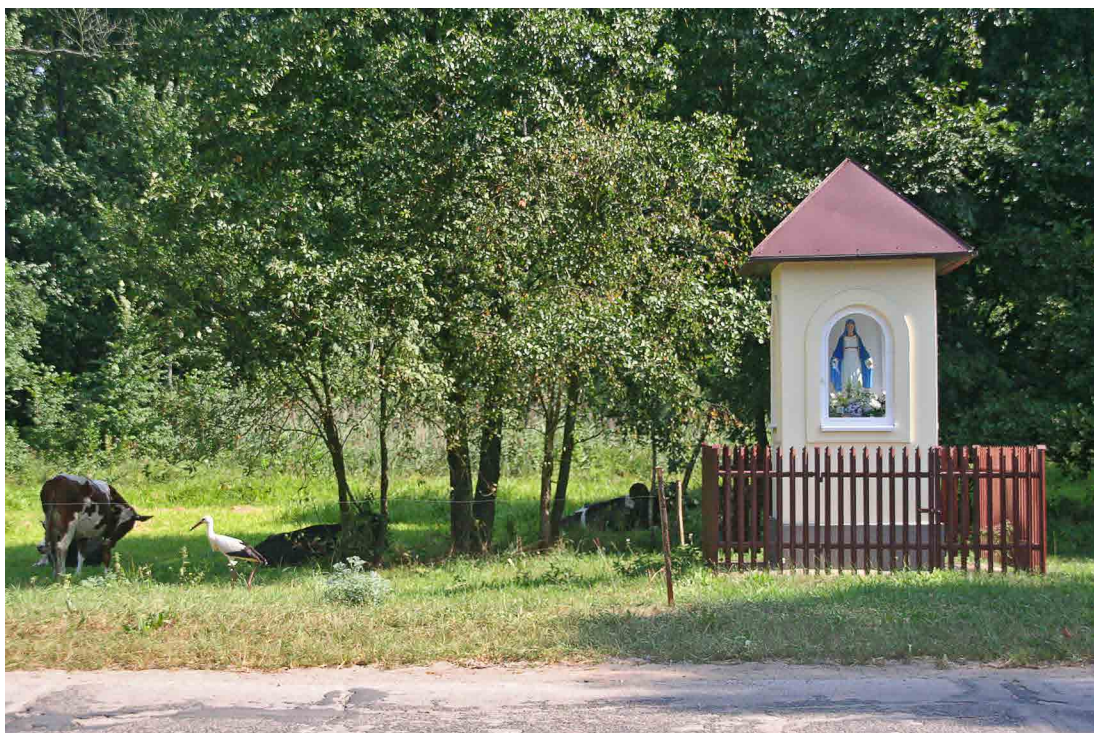


Grajewo's "masło łaciate extra" ("Piebald Premium Butter"). "Get to know good food: a natural product of Polish milk from cows fed with GMO-free feed" at a Warsaw grocery store – January 5, 2020 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)

Grajewo County encompasses villages and towns such as Goniądz, Grajewo, Jedwabne, Kolno, Radziłów, Rajgród, Szczuczyn, Stawiski, Wąsosz, Wizna, the sites of mass slaughter of Jews by Poles during WWII, more often than not by burning alive. The burning alive of Jedwabne Jews on July 10, 1941, was preceded by the burning alive of Radziłów Jews by Radziłów Poles on July 7, 1941. The Radziłów massacre, in turn, was preceded by the Wąsosz massacre, in a barn as well, on July 5, 1941.



The Kosów Lacki “extra butter from the Bug River Landscape Park” (8 kilometers from Treblinka II) at a Warsaw grocery store – January 5, 2020 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



The entrance to Grądy and Poniatowo villages, situated between Treblinka the village and Treblinka the extermination camp. Visible in the forefront is a concrete road built by local Jewish slave laborers before the 1941 German Nazi invasion of the USSR – August 19, 2017 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)

It is the very Kosów Lacki, a shtetl with an El Greco painting,²⁰ where one of the six secondary ghettos in the wartime Distrikt Warschau was established, whose matzevot were stolen to become the material for building the Black Road, whose farmers later fought the farmers of Prostyń, an important Catholic center of worship flourishing before the war. The Kosów Lacki farmers fought the Prostyń farmers over the property of, and the right to utilize and trade, the Jewish ashes from Treblinka (Canin, 2018b, pp. 235–236).

The Kosów Lacki milk products are tasty. In other words, the Kosów Lacki milk products are good. They are being sold as ecological food and advertised – directly on their wrappings – as coming from the Bug River Landscape Park (Nadbużański Park Krajobrazowy). If you object to their origin, you can buy the butter made out of the milk of the cows pasturing on the Jewish remains spread around Grajewo or Zambrów: the Maśło Ekstra Łaciate (“Piebald Premium Butter”) or Mlemix Zambrowski (“Zambrów Milk-Mix”), respectively. Their advertisements all claim: “made out of Polish milk”, “Polish product”, “naturally Polish”. The choice is yours. The Kosów butter from the Bug River Landscape Park is just cheaper than that from Grajewo in the Biebrza River Landscape Park (Biebrzański Park Krajobrazowy), where the milk from Jedwabne goes. In terms of *hortus iudaeorum*, Treblinka is not an exception but a case in point. I view it as a *pars pro toto*. But as this is the best I have ever tasted, it is with the Kosów Lacki butter that I cook and bake for the one who fed me with her own milk.

The Meadows of My Childhood

Drzewa mojego dzieciństwa przepłynęły ocean
i pozdrowiały mnie oschle z ekranu.
Polscy chłopci wdawali się w teologiczne spory
z jezuicką swadą, tylko Żydzi milczeli,
zmęczeni długim umieraniem.
Strumienie moich wakacji płynęły ostrożnie
przez nieznany sobie, obcy kontynent.
Wozy drabiniaste wiozły włosy zamiast siana
i skrzypiały ich osie pod puszystym ciężarem.
Jesteśmy niewinne, oświadczały sosny.

The trees of my childhood had swum across the ocean
and greeted me abruptly from the screen.
Polish peasants engaged in theological disputes
with Jesuitical eloquence, only Jews remained silent,
exhausted by their long dying.

20 In 1964, the painting *Saint Francis Bearing the Stigmata*, which hung in the presbytery of the parish church in Kosów Lacki, was first identified by art historians Izabella Galicka and Hanna Sygietyńska as having been painted either by El Greco himself or one of his pupils. According to later studies, El Greco's authorship is highly probable.

The streams of my summer holidays flew cautiously
through an unknown, foreign continent.
Wooden carts carried hair instead of hay
and their axles crunched under the fluffy burden.
We are innocent, the pines stated.

Adam Zagajewski²¹

For the first time the observations I later developed in *Hortus Judeorum* struck me all at once during a 2003 bus trip from Bełżec to Sobibór. I spent hours listening to the picaresque stories my fellow travelers – female and male – felt the urge to tell about the Holocaust from the Polish Catholic perspective, to the amusement of everyone – except for the bus driver, who didn't seem to participate in the general rejoicing. The stories were set in local towns and villages. Narol was represented by the story of a “sweet-sweet little Jewess (*Żydóweczka-istny-cymes*) with braids and a kid” raped and then killed alongside her infant in the forest. This story was told by a man, and a woman. The woman referred to the victim as a “cunning she-Jew” (*chytra Żydowica*), with admiration and anger in her voice competing to get the better of her. For Żółkiewka, the story was about the postwar hunt for Jewish survivors – public and spectacular as ever. For Izbica, the story of the postwar plunder of the Jewish cemetery was recounted by one of the perpetrators, a boy at the time, a future proud member of the Representative Honor Guard Regiment of the Polish Armed Forces. He kept a particularly vivid memory of the corpse or rather the hand bag of a Jewish woman. He called her an old Jewish woman (*stara Żydówka*). A small bag, as if for going to a ball. Small and empty. “Empty or not”, commented a middle-aged female passenger, “it was all for nothing. They keep governing us”. “Look at Balcerowicz”,²² an elderly male passenger added. All that accompanied with an extensive panoramic display, a continuous parade of the landscape. Made out of Jews. Stuffed with Jews. The instrument of murder and the product of murder. The idyllic landscape. The extermination garden Poland. Imposing. Overwhelming. Breathtaking.

While watching *Shoah* (Lanzmann, 1985) in a hotel room in the United States, Adam Zagajewski observed: “The trees of my childhood had swum across the ocean / and

21 The Polish original: Zagajewski, 1988, p. 50. A certified English translation of the poem *Oglądając „Shoah” w pokoju hotelowym w Ameryce* reads: “The trees of my childhood have crossed an ocean / to greet me coolly from the screen. / Polish peasants engage with a Jesuitical zest / in theological disputes: only the Jews are silent, / exhausted by their long dying. / The rivers of the voyages of my youth flow / cautiously over the distant, unfamiliar continent. / Hay wagons haul not hay, but hair, / their axles squeaking under the feathery weight. / We are innocent, the pines claim” (Zagajewski, 1991). It is difficult to understand why the translators decided to switch from the past simple tense to the present simple tense and to replace “the streams of my summer holidays” with “the rivers of the voyages of my youth”.

22 Leszek Balcerowicz – economist, before 1989 member of the ruling Polish United Workers Party, after 1989 prime minister and minister of finance, author of the neoliberal transformation of Poland, which was shielded by hate speech lavishly provided by the Polish intelligentsia and the Church and aimed against the millions of victims of the flamboyant neoliberalism à la polonaise (see: Ost, 2005; Kowalik, 2009; Gomułka & Kowalik, 2011; Gomułka, 2019). Having nothing to do with anything even remotely Jewish in real life, in the current Polish imagination Balcerowicz epitomizes a phantasmatic figure of the Jew.

greeted me abruptly from the screen". This is precisely the impression *Shoah* gives to a person socialized in Polish culture. No need to move to America. No need to move at all. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth didn't need to move. Birnam Wood moved for them just effectively enough. And thereby they recognized what they had long struggled to repress but never really forgot, which is who they were because of what they did. In Zagajewski's poem there is the pathos and terror of this very self-recognition that – in the Polish and East European context – proceeds via a recognition of Arcadia as a *locus horridus*.

Anna Markiel, whose father revealed the massacre perpetrated by the Poles against the Jews in his native Gniewczyna in 1942:

I felt secure there. [...] Then I felt like someone who had a sublime pitcher and suddenly saw it in bits. Even glued together, it will never be the same vessel. I fenced off my childhood memories from Gniewczyna. They are like a fairy tale to me, as if I never were there for real. This place – beloved, connected with my parents, where everything seemed beautiful – lost its innocence. The air smells differently to me, I feel a different wind in the trees, the paths are foreign to me. I even have a different stance toward people. (Markiel & Grochowska, 2012, p. 34)

Ewa Andrzejewska, having understood – without even learning exactly – what Poles did to Jews in Nowy Sącz: "The meadows ceased to be a safe and carefree place" (Andrzejewska & Sulej, 2011, p. 11). Rūta Vanagaitė, having discovered the Lithuanian perpetration of the Holocaust of Lithuanian Jews: "I cannot go to the cemetery to visit my parents because I keep remembering those places. I cannot lay flowers on their grave because I know that all over the country people are buried like rats" (Vanagaitė & Kącki, 2016, p. 21).

The danger doesn't come from the landscape. The danger is the landscape itself. The landscape is the danger. The landscape of the childhood. Of Zagajewski's childhood. Of my childhood. Of "our" childhood in the sense in which Dante spoke of "our life", *nostra vita*. The landscape "we" have literally been fed with. The landscape "we" have been made of up to the point where we are unable to tell ourselves from it. The danger is ourselves then. After all, what is it that what I am made of is made of? And whom is it made by? This is the *Das*, the Real, the question in question.

The closest and the most familiar annihilates itself here, alongside the sense of security and the sense of identity of oneself with oneself, an identity which up to that point was unproblematic. This is *das Unheimliche*: the radically identical experienced as the radically different, the radically identical recognized in and as the radically different. And the radical identity of the two. The radically safe recognized in and as the radically threatening. An uprooting, in a word. A radical eradication. Existential and essential in kind. A liberation, too. Not in the sense of freeing of oneself from oneself – that is not possible – but in the sense of taking control by oneself over oneself. Taking possession of oneself by oneself. No more barren fear. No more counter-productive

escapes. An unspeakable relief. Mental and emotional energy released towards the Real, once again in the Lacanian sense of the word. The meadows of “our” childhood are impossible to retrieve in any other way.

To me this is what the lines of *Canto Primo* are about today:

Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,
ché la diritta via era smarrita.
(Dante, 1991, p. 26, ll. 1–3)

Mi ritrovai – stubbornly understood as: I got lost – means literally: I found myself. If not: I found myself again/back. And so, I found myself. Since the straight way was lost. Does this not correspond with the recommendation of Nachman from Bracław: “Don’t ask the way from someone who knows it. Otherwise you won’t be able to lose it”? *Ni Dieu, ni maître*. (Unless *Gott mit uns*). In the forest. We find ourselves. With ourselves. One on one.

Ahi quanto a dir qual era è cosa dura
esta selva selvaggia e aspra e forte
che nel pensier rinova la paura!
Tant’ è amara che poco è piu morte.
(Dante, 1991, p. 26, ll. 4–7)

Yes. *Nostra vita* – if it is retrievable at all – is impossible to retrieve any other way.²³

From *Hortus Iudaeorum* to *Herbarium Polonorum*

I was a bomb, though a harmless bomb – the detonator was missing. Treblinka had been the detonator; that afternoon I exploded with sudden, devastating violence. How else can I put it? Treblinka became real, the shift from myth to reality took place in a blinding flash, the encounter between a name and a place wiped out everything I had learned, forced me to start again from scratch, to view everything that I had been working on in a radically different way, to overturn what had seemed most certain and, above all, to allocate to Poland, the geographical heart of the extermination, the crucial place it deserved. Treblinka became so real

23 While referring to the rivers of tears converging in hell, Jacqueline Risset, a congenial French translator of Dante, stated: “One thinks of a terrible map of Europe one can still see in Auschwitz, where a secret network seems to have taken the place of a known railway network: all the capitals figure there with their names but they are not mutually connected with one another – the one and only line connects them all, one after another, to the central point of the network, marked with the name AUSCHWITZ” (Risset, 1991, p. 9). For a long time, I considered this position illegitimate and irrelevant. Today, I think that there is no other way of addressing social and cultural heritage. Not because the Holocaust was its unavoidable consequence but precisely because it was possible to avoid. I probably wouldn’t have started thinking about it if it weren’t for the spectacular figure of Marie Depussé, my teacher at the Denis Diderot University Paris VII (with dog). It was Madame Depussé who inflicted upon us the study of the whole of Dante’s work in a bilingual version and to that end organized classes with Madame Risset.

that it could not wait; I was gripped by a powerful sense of urgency that day, one I would continually live with from that moment on [...].

Claude Lanzmann²⁴

Apart from the conceptual progression, there is a basic, technical, logistic – so to speak – tie between *The Odd Place* and *Herbarium*. The first photographs of Treblinka plants that I took date back to July 10, 2004. At the time they had nothing to do with any systematic work, let alone with any conceptualization. I went to Treblinka to take pictures and effectuate recordings for *The Odd Place*. By pure chance – purity looming large in the air – this was the anniversary day of the 1941 burning alive of the Jews of the town of Jedwabne by the Poles of the town of Jedwabne. I went to Treblinka for the air and for the soil, neglecting everything else as secondary, as fake theatrical scenery, part and parcel of a commemorative set (Treblinka I, Black Road, Treblinka II) which, as a whole, I suspected of all possible betrayals. The only thing I trusted was the air and the soil. And the concrete.

When I saw what was going on there – on the concrete slabs – taking pictures turned out to be stronger than me. It was sudden. I suddenly realized that I was surrounded by plants. Silent and discreet in appearance, impossible not to be noticed, in fact. They were growing all around. Not as flowery massifs or within assemblies of greenery but one by one. Right on the concrete. Perfectly common and average. Easily identifiable. Entirely exposed. Self-evident. Transparent. To the bone. They didn't resemble question marks. They were exclamation marks. In the flesh.

I had to do with a fractal, a sample of the Real. With time, going there, being on the ground, scrutinizing its constitutive elements by means of taking pictures became a mental and emotional compulsion. A cognitive addiction. Retrieving and scrutinizing ecstatic summers and summer ecstasies of one's – and thus of "our" – childhood is not a minor task. For a long time, I proceeded beyond language, without conceptualizing and without being able to conceptualize what I was doing. But visually I knew precisely what I wanted to say and tried hard to articulate it the best I could. Then – progressively – came the ability of verbal clarification.

While shopping in a grocery right next to the project where I live, I noticed out of the corner of my eye a row of careful photographic representations of the plants of "our" childhood. It was a display of a line of herbal teas: *Zielnik Polski*. In other words: the Polish Herbarium. In Latin: *Herbarium Polonorum*. The very same herbarium idea which was translated – still in Latin – into the concepts of *hortus siccus* (dry garden), *hortus hiemalis* (winter garden), *hortus mortuus* (dead garden). At the conceptual level, then, I found myself stretched between the *Hortus Iudaeorum* and the *Herbarium Polonorum*. At the literal level, however, both concepts referred to one and the same living and dead – living dead – universe. Signifiers of these signs were constituted by – were

24 Lanzmann, 2012, pp. 473–474.



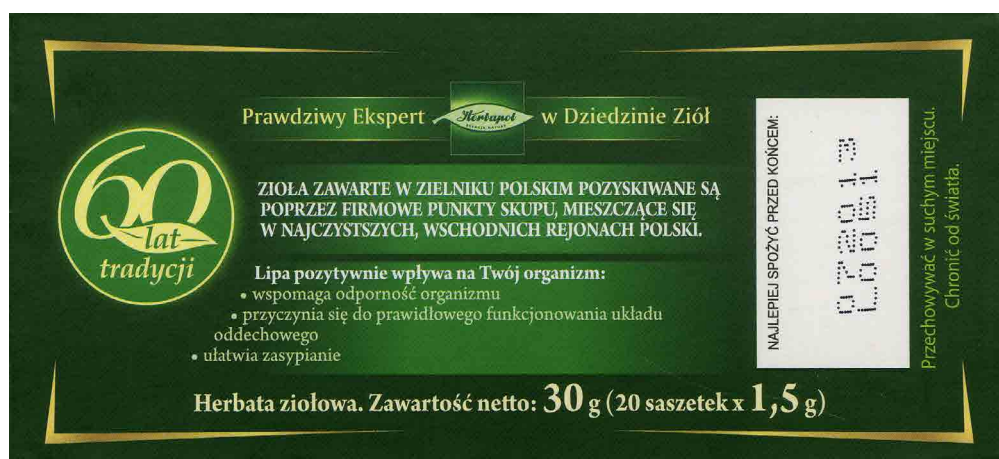
A line of herbal teas called *Zielnik Polski* (Eng. *Polish Herbarium*, Lat. *Herbarium Polonorum*) in the author's kitchen – Warsaw, January 5, 2020 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



"*Zielnik Polski*. Linden [flowers]. *Tiliae inflorescentia*. 100% of linden. The essence of nature. Recommendation of the Nałęczów Resort, est. 1817" – a 2013 *Zielnik Polski* box from the author's archive (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



"Zielnik Polski. Linden. Producer: 'Herbapol-Lublin' S.A., 25 Diamond Street, 20-471 Lublin, Poland, www.herbapol.com.pl" – the side of a 2013 *Zielnik Polski* box from the author's archive (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



"60 years of tradition. The herbs contained in *Zielnik Polski* are sourced through our own collection points located in the purest, eastern parts of Poland" – an advertising slogan on a 2013 *Zielnik Polski* box from the author's archive (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)

"Linden has a positive influence on your organism[, it]:
 – supports immunity
 – contributes to the correct functioning of the respiratory system
 – facilitates falling asleep".

made of – one and the same material reality. They were fractals of the landscape of Poland.

Then occurred a dialogue. Easter of 2012. April 6. On site. Between someone for whom it was the first time and someone for whom it was a regular practice to come and stay there for hours. Between a woman and a man. Between a cultural anthropologist and a library scientist. Between a professor and a doctor. For the former it was the shock of her life.

Professor: O, willows here?!

Doctor: Nothing more common than willow trees in Mazovia.²⁵ A willow is an emblem of the region.

Professor: Uhm, I expected palms.

Doctor: Palms?!

Professor: Palms.

Doctor: And cedars of Lebanon?²⁶

Professor: Yes – [their sense of irony definitely was not the same.] – Yes. Willows are not endemic here.

Unable to wrap her mind around it, she returned to the issue while having a last look at the place before leaving:

Professor: It must be the willows from the psalm.²⁷

Around her neck, she wore a cross with The Crucified. On his head, he wore a kippa. The latter brought this exchange from the former camp within the former camp – *Toten-lager*, the zone of death – and offered it to me in the guise of a gift.²⁸

25 Mazovia (Mazowsze) is a region situated in the heart of Poland, with Warsaw as its capital. It is commonly identified with the willow tree, Łowicz folklore, and the music of Frédéric Chopin (born in Żelazowa Wola) drawing on the local folk tradition. After 1945, this iconic set became an emblem of so-called genuine Polishness, succeeding the imaginary of the so-called Polish Borderlands (Kresy). The shift in question resulted from the geopolitical reconfiguration of Poland once it ceased to be a colonial oppressor of Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine, which, in their turn, were incorporated into the USSR (this time, however, as distinct national republics). The elements of the Mazovian symbolic triad are as inseparable as they are interchangeable. In the dominant Polish imaginary there is no noticeable affective difference between willow trees, Chopin's mazurkas, and Łowicz's paper cuttings (of carefully silenced Jewish origin). Suffice it to mention the role of the willow tree in the iconography of Polish symbolic export products: the "Mazowsze" State Folk Ensemble of Song and Dance and the International Chopin Piano Competition, famous for its winners, such as Martha Argerich or Krystian Zimerman, and its losers, such as Ivo Pogorelić. The best known monument to Chopin – the one in the Warsaw Łazienki Park by Wacław Szymanowski (designed in 1904, unveiled in 1926, destroyed by the Germans in 1940, rebuilt in 1958) – features the composer sitting under a willow tree. Aware of the identity-forming potential of the willow tree, Mariusz Łukawski, a professor at the Władysław Strzemiński Łódź Academy of Fine Arts, would warn his students: "If you don't work hard enough, you will end up fabricating willows and ancestors' bones out of plaster and papier mâché for living". He meant by that an augmented – owing to the ancestors' bones – version of souvenirs from Poland.

26 The Doctor was referring to the line "The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon" (Psalm 92:12, <https://biblehub.com/psalms/92-12.htm>).

27 The Professor was referring to Psalm 137, *By the Rivers of Babylon*. In the original Hebrew version reference is made to the poplar. However, the best known and the most literarily powerful Polish translations (*Psalterz floriański*, Jan Kochanowski's translations from *Psalterz Dawidów* or Jakub Wujek's version) refer to the willow and it is the willow which was retained by the local Jewish – Yiddish and Polish – poetic traditions, as in the work of Hadasa Rubin and Bożena Keff, respectively.

28 Henryk Hollender, personal communication, letter to the author from April 9, 2012.

Of course, I was familiar with this kind of imaginary being an emblem of domination and submission. A token of violence and exclusion. A code of communication between “Polish hosts” and “Jewish guests”. A language of subtenancy as a category of the Polish dominant culture. Hanna Mortkowicz-Olczakowa wrote about Franciszka Arnsztajnowa, a poet:

Through a call to action, to work on the Polish fallow land, she wanted to cut the bleeding knot of Polish-Jewish conflicts. She created lofty metaphors of the cedars of Lebanon which, transplanted amidst spruces of the North, persist, replenished with their power and sap. In the name of the wanderers, “strays”, she confessed her love for the Polish homeland-mother, despite the fact that the latter at times became a cruel stepmother and pushed away children “of foreign blood and flesh”. (Mortkowicz-Olczakowa, 1960, p. 1, cited after: Skrzypek et al., 2006, p. 10)

Arnsztajnowa perished in the Warsaw Ghetto. Mortkowicz-Olczakowa’s father, Jakub Mortkowicz, a publisher of the canon of interwar Polish literature and a benefactor of writers, took his own life before the war, leaving as his only message the line: “I have never been a tradesman and shall not die like one” (Olczak-Ronikier, 2004, p. 178). Mortkowicz-Olczakowa definitely was well aware of what she was talking about.²⁹

I knew about that just as I knew about the means of naturalizing cultural constructs such as the nation:

[I]t is clear that inherited landscape myths and memories share two common characteristics: their surprising endurance through the centuries and their power to shape institutions that we still live with. National identity, to take just the most obvious example, would lose much of its ferocious enchantment without the mystique of a particular landscape tradition: its topography mapped, elaborated, and enriched as a homeland. [...] And landscapes can be self-consciously designed to express the virtues of a particular political or social community. (Schama, 1995, p. 15)³⁰

I knew, then, about the means of naturalizing cultural constructs such as the nation. I had studied antisemitic hate speech which used the rhetoric of the organic, all that antisemitic propaganda full of botanical and zoological topoi. *Blut und Boden*, of course, I knew. But the Professor was a cultural anthropologist researching a society and culture co-responsible for the Holocaust, in the middle of which it took place. I had no

29 Jakub Mortkowicz’s granddaughter writes about her grandmother, Janina Horwitz-Mortkowicz, and mother, Hanna Mortkowicz-Olczakowa, Jakub Mortkowicz’s wife and daughter: “[O]ne’s self-preservation instinct told one not to stop and summon up the memories, but to keep going forward without looking back. [...] Throughout their lives they had emphasised their Polishness and they refused, or were unable, or did not know how, to identify the practical and psychological problems that resulted from their Jewish heritage. [...] During the occupation the fear of death probably affected them less than the humiliations they suffered” (Olczak-Ronikier, 2004, p. 306).

30 See also Edensor, 2002. Unfortunately, Schama avoids any criticism of Polish national landscape myths. His description of the Treblinka memorial has for a point of reference the memorials of Polish martyrdom at the hands of the Soviets that started proliferating after 1989, among them the one of Giby: “Its [Treblinka’s] numberless graves, like the memorial of Giby, are marked by unworked standing stones” (Schama, 1995, p. 26). Schama appears to suggest that the Treblinka design (1955) actually imitates the Giby design (1991), whereas exactly the opposite is true. The structure of this juxtaposition reproduces the antisemitic pattern of the equation of “two totalitarianisms” underlying the so-called double genocide theory. (In 2017, crosses were added to the rocks at Giby. This was done with consent from the author of the original design, Andrzej Strumiłło.)



Treblinka II willows. View to the west – April 6, 2012 (Photo by Henryk Hollender) (© by Henryk Hollender, courtesy of Henryk Hollender)

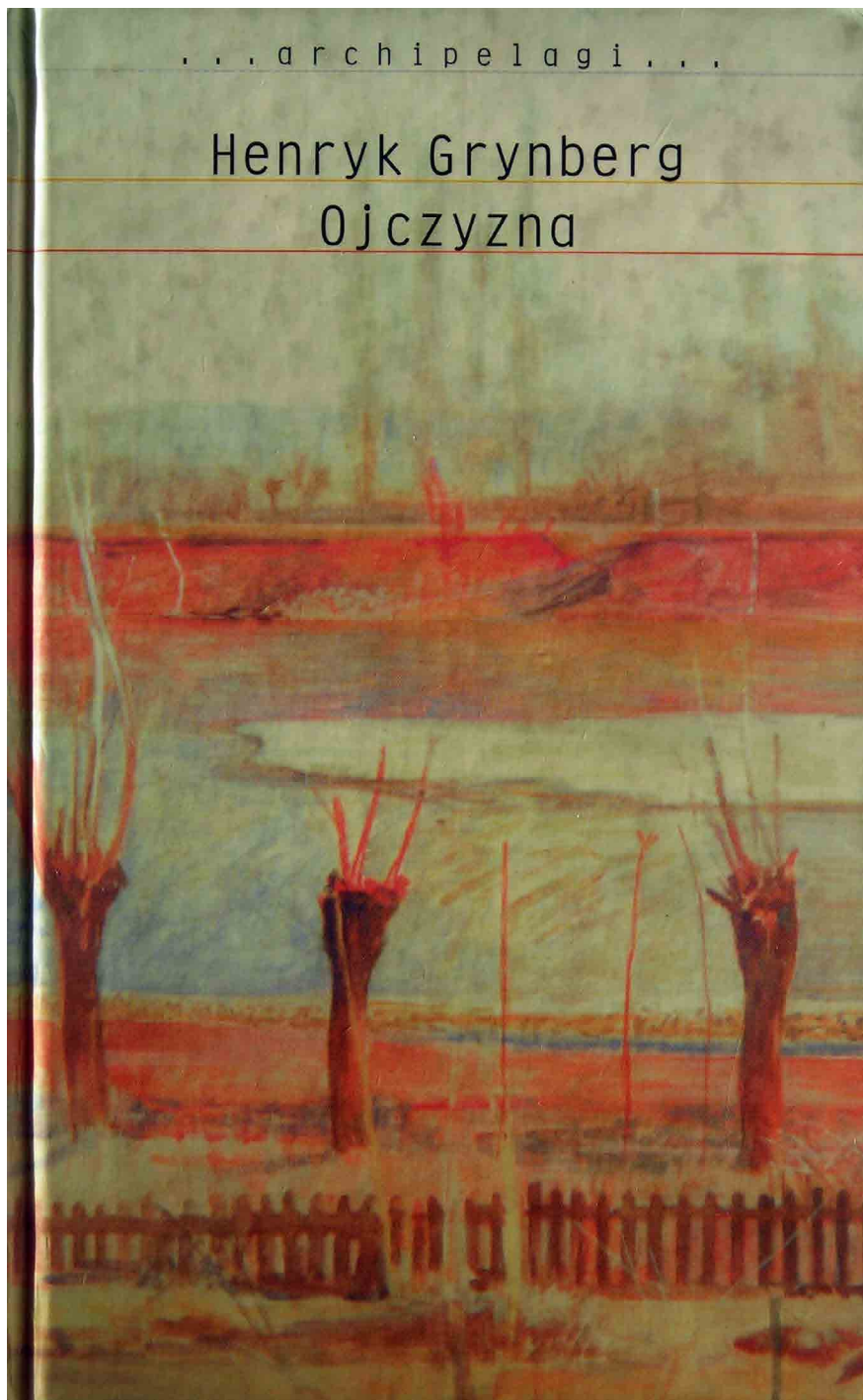


Treblinka II willows. View to the east. Photo by Eustachy Kossakowski. Postcard from the 1960s (from the collection of the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw)

The reverse side of the postcard reads, in Polish, English, French, German and Russian: "Treblinka. Extermination camp of 800,000 people from the countries of occupied Europe. 'Ruch' Publishing Bureau, commissioned by the Council for Protection of the Struggle and Martyrdom Monuments".

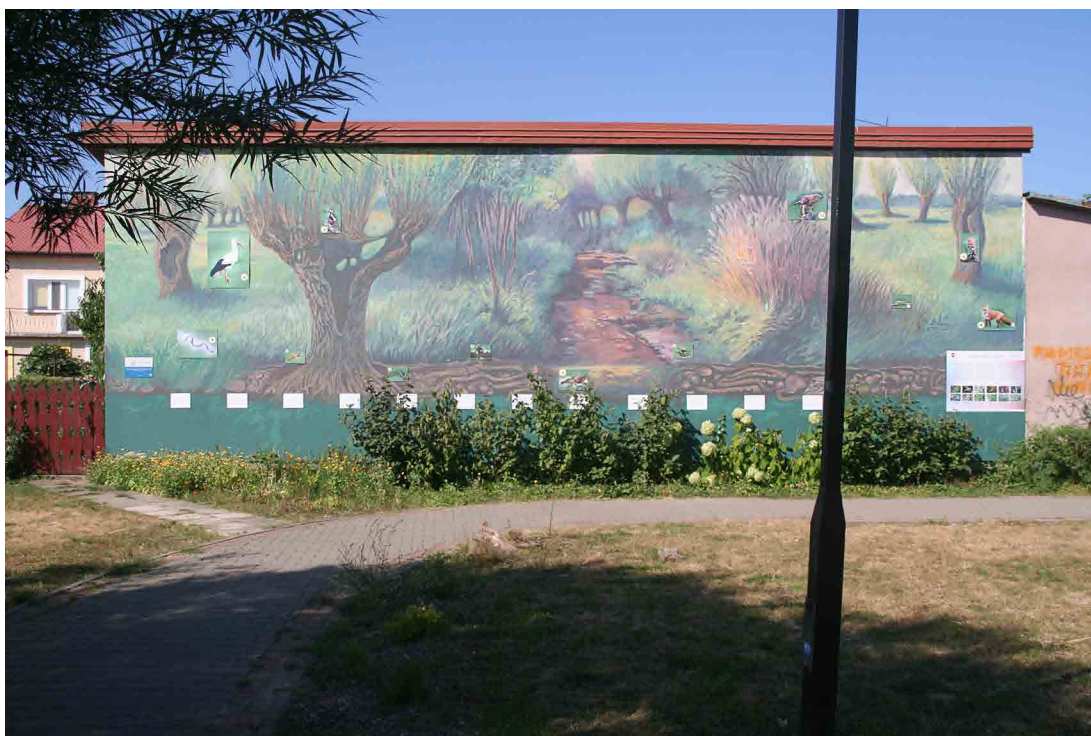


Boxes of Łaciate ("Piebald") milk – "Polish by nature" – with drawings by Andrzej Mleczko, popular Polish humorist, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of Grajewo dairy. The surname of the humorist translates as *little milk*. The milk brand Łaciate [piebald] refers to the *łaty* [markings] associated with a black-and-white cow called *krasula* and considered archetypally Polish (cf. the Wiktionary article: "krasula", 2019). In his drawings, the cartoonist invokes the icons of the Polish imaginary of which the willow is an essential element. The *krasula* on the left says to the mole: "I produce Łaciate, I choose only the best blades of grass". The *krasula* on the right says to the stork: "This is my way of celebrating the anniversary of Łaciate", her markings make up the inscription "25 Years". The presence of the archetypally Polish landscape is self-evident and transparent. The cartoon *krasula* feels no need to refer to it when addressing the stork and the mole.



The willows from Jacek Malczewski's painting *Krajobraz znad Wisły* [Landscape from the Vistula] (1904) on the cover of the book: Henryk Grynberg, *Ojczyzna* [Fatherland], (Grynberg, 1999). Cover design by Maciej Sadowski (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)

← Meanwhile, it is difficult to shake the feeling that the mole appears straight out of Czesław Miłosz's poem *The Poor Christian Looks at the Ghetto* (*Biedny chrześcijanin patrzy na getto*, 1945) and the stork – from Abraham Sutzkever's hymn, in fact hymnic lamentation, *Zu Poyln* (1946), in which a crucial role is played by the storks from *An Exile's Hymn at Sunset on the Sea* (*Hymn o zachodzie słońca na morzu*, 1863) by Juliusz Słowacki. The stork also plays a significant role in Judaism, as indicated by the bird's Hebrew name: *chasida*, plural *chasidim*. Interestingly, the *krasula* – the producer of milk that is "Polish by nature" – feels compelled to explain herself before both the mole and the stork.



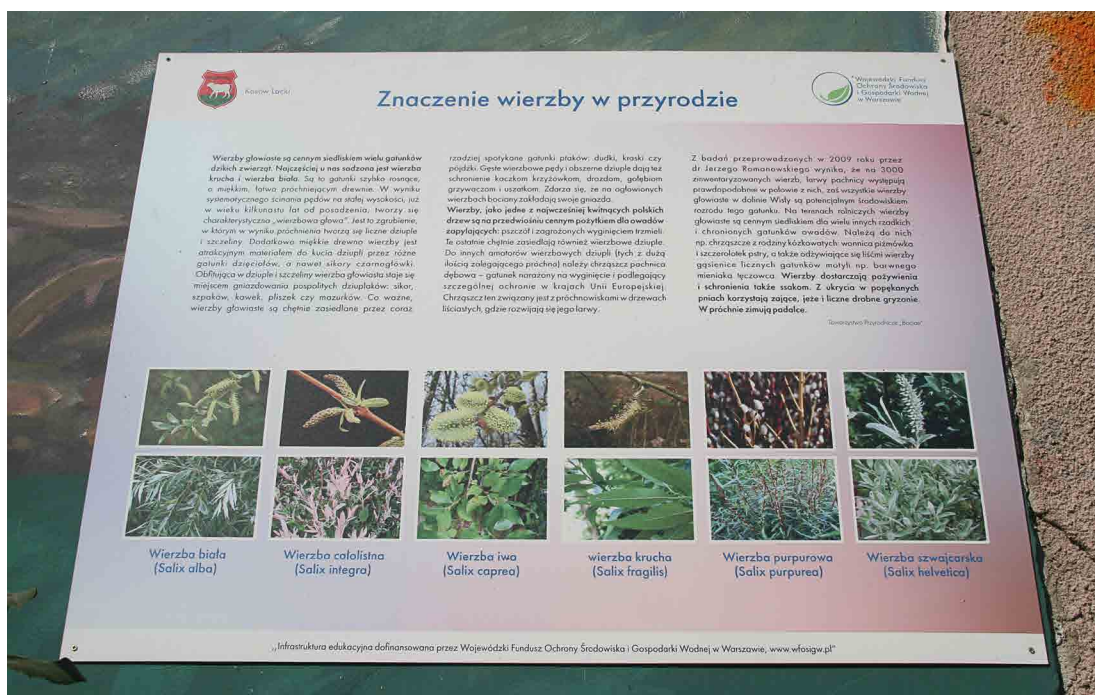
Mural entitled *Meaning of the Willow in Nature*, adorning “The Willow Nook” behind the former synagogue. In the upper left corner a real-life willow branch is visible – Kosów Lacki, August 22, 2020 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



“The creation of the environmental-ecological education mini park ‘The Willow Nook’ in Kosów Lacki funded by the Regional Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management in Warsaw” – Kosów Lacki, August 22, 2020 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



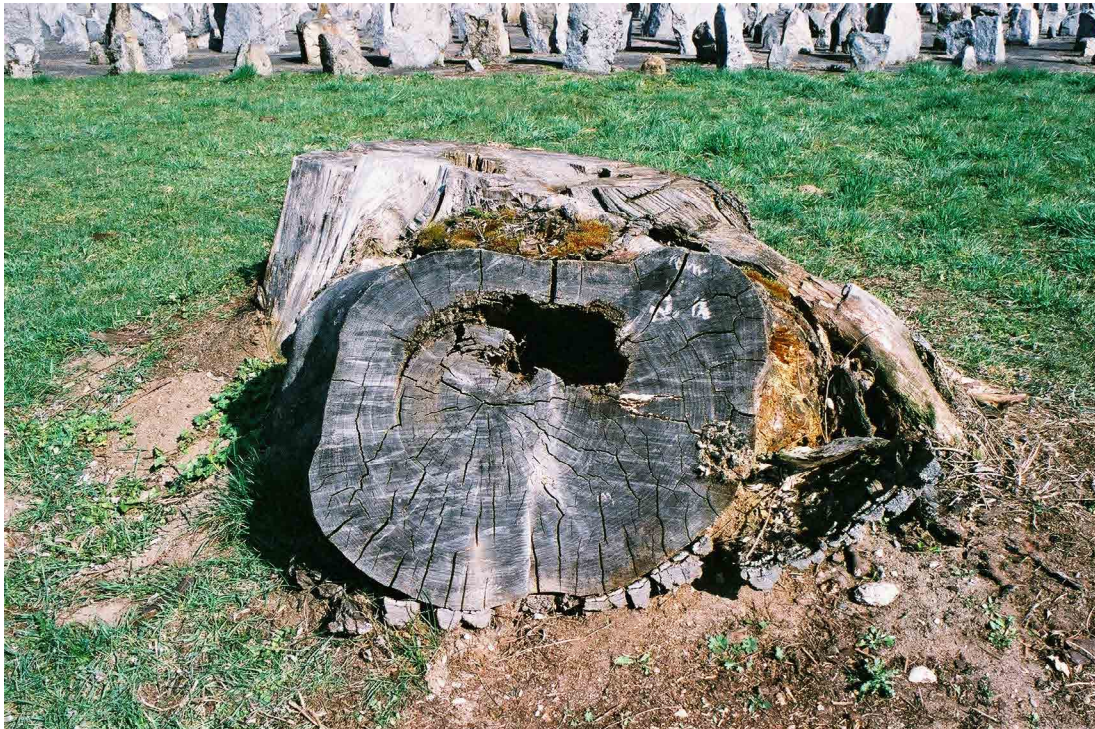
Detail of the mural *Meaning of the Willow in Nature* – Kosów Lacki, August 28, 2020 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



Information board *Meaning of the Willow in Nature*, authored by “The Stork” Environmental Association – Kosów Lacki, August 22, 2020 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)

“Knotted willows are a valuable habitat for many species of wild animals”. Among them are birds, often on the verge of extinction. “Willows are some of the Polish (!) trees to blossom the earliest; as such, they are a valuable source of nectar to the pollinating insects. [...] Willows also provide food and shelter to mammals. The cracked trunks are a refuge for hares, hedgehogs and many small rodents. The rot is the wintering place of blindworms”.

Apart from the unambiguous national identification of the willow, there is no other phantasmal content here.



Trunk of a willow felled by a hurricane on the night of August 6 to 7, 2010 – Treblinka II (former *Totenlager*), April 4, 2014 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



A newly planted willow – Treblinka II (former *Totenlager*), April 26, 2019 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



A willow branch – Treblinka II (former *Totenlager*), April 4, 2014 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



A palm leaf fallen off a wreath – Treblinka II (former *Totenlager*), July 13, 2019 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)

doubts that the murderous imaginary, the main instrument of the murder, was widespread, never delegitimized and never fought against. But I think I believed (I trusted?) in the hypocritical – class and classist – *modus operandi* of the Polish intelligentsia. I was wrong.

From an encyclopedia, I learned that the antonym of *endemic* is... *cosmopolitan*. Examples of living organisms considered as cosmopolitan? (Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, n.d.). Mice. The migratory rat (i.e. the brown rat). The fly. Lice. The road from *Hortus Judeorum* to *Herbarium Polonorum* has been travelled. The idea and the task of *Herbarium* have been established.

III. Nature

See Under “Culture”

To what extent was greenery part of the scene and to what, if at all, part of the commemorative design? The document *Opis techniczny* [Technical Description] elaborated by Danuta Oppenheim – at least the version that has survived in Adam Haupt’s archive – pertains exclusively to Treblinka I and postulates the plantings of birch trees and juniper bushes. As far as Treblinka II is concerned, I tend to think that Oppenheim took into consideration what was already there – namely the willows – without designing major changes. Such was the spirit of the school of thought to which the whole team seemed to belong: allowing the place to express itself as it is, with minimal intervention or organization. In any case: the greenery is there. And all the greenery which is there is a cultural production. A kind of a staging. A *mise-en-scène* of such concepts or ideal types (Max Weber) as: the forest, the meadow, the secluded, isolated place. None of which correspond to what Treblinka was.

A few remarks about the last of the abovementioned notions. The plantings were implemented or rather applied on the ground only subsequently to the 1964 erection of “the monument”. Some of them most probably after the release of Claude Lanzmann’s 1985 documentary *Shoah*, in which one can savor – apart from a majestic parade of milk cows across the railway track – a slow travelling of the camera, sweeping extensively through a field of potatoes, which before the very eyes of spectators becomes an alignment of boulders – with no transition. The stones are those marking the south border of the former camp. In fact, on its east and south sides, the border of the camp ran across arable land.

Franciszek Ząbecki, traffic superintendent at Treblinka (village) railway station, located 5 kilometers from Treblinka II (see also Ząbecki, 1977) and Berek Rojzman, survivor of Treblinka II, were univocal about it in a conversation with Gitta Sereny:

"We had been warned that the approaches to the camp were strictly off-limits and guarded. But actually there was a road of sorts that passed the perimeter of the camp – you see, there were fields all around it belonging to peasants who... oh yes... continued to work their fields throughout the existence of the camp. So it wasn't as off-limits, or as guarded as all that – ever".

("Oh yes", said Berek Rojzman, "they worked there all right". – "But then, they saw everything that was going on?" I asked. Both he and Pan Ząbecki seemed surprised at my surprise. "Of course they did", they answered. "They were there all day".) (Sereny, 1974, p. 152)³¹

According to the commander-in-chief of Treblinka II:

[H]undreds of soldiers and civilians used to come up to our gate, stand along the fences, gawk, and try to buy things off us because it was known that there was all this stuff around. For a while we even had planes circling around overhead and flying low so that they could watch what was going on. I rang through to HQ about that finally and they told us to shoot at them. So we did, and that stopped that. But we never could stop the others – not quite, ever. They saw dead Jews on the ground and being carried away from the station. They photographed them. The whole place stank to high heaven from kilometers away. For two weeks after coming through there – or "visiting" there – many used to say they couldn't eat. (Sereny, 1974, p. 239)

This is what makes me think that the greenery might have been added *ex post* to serve as a curtain in order to produce a retrospective effect of an isolated place.

127,000 hectares of ground had to be legally expropriated to enable the execution of the official state commemoration. The expropriation represented 40 percent of its costs. "The lots were bought from 192 owners originating from the villages of Grądy, Prostyn, Wólka Okrąglik and Maliszewa Nowa" (Zawadka, 2015, p. 39). As well as from Poniatowo. Already this fact alone signifies that Treblinka II – apart from the strict territorial delimitation of the camp and the camp within the camp (*Totenlager*) – was not an isolated place. Not only in spatial terms. One of the permanent concerns of the "masters of the situation" (Władysław Szlengel) was masking the camp from the gaze of those using the nearby Małkinia–Kosów Lacki section of the Ostrów Mazowiecka–Sokołów Podlaski road, and from the passengers of the regular trains passing by the railway track parallel to the road. Such was the intention but no efforts ever succeeded.

The masking system was never tight and high enough. Later on, also because of the fire and the smoke. And what could be attempted to be hidden from sight couldn't be hidden from smell or hearing. Abraham Jakub Krzepicki, a member of the *Waldkommando* who worked outside the camp and provided the material to the *Zaunkommando* charged with dissimulating the site, testified:

The air was filled with shouts and smells. A heavy stench of rotting bodies and burning flesh spread for miles around. The workers in the woods could hear the cries of the women and children, like the squeaking of chickens or of pigs in a slaughterhouse. At times we thought we could hear deeper voices, the voices of men bellowing like oxen in a slaughterhouse. (Krzepicki, 1979, p. 127)

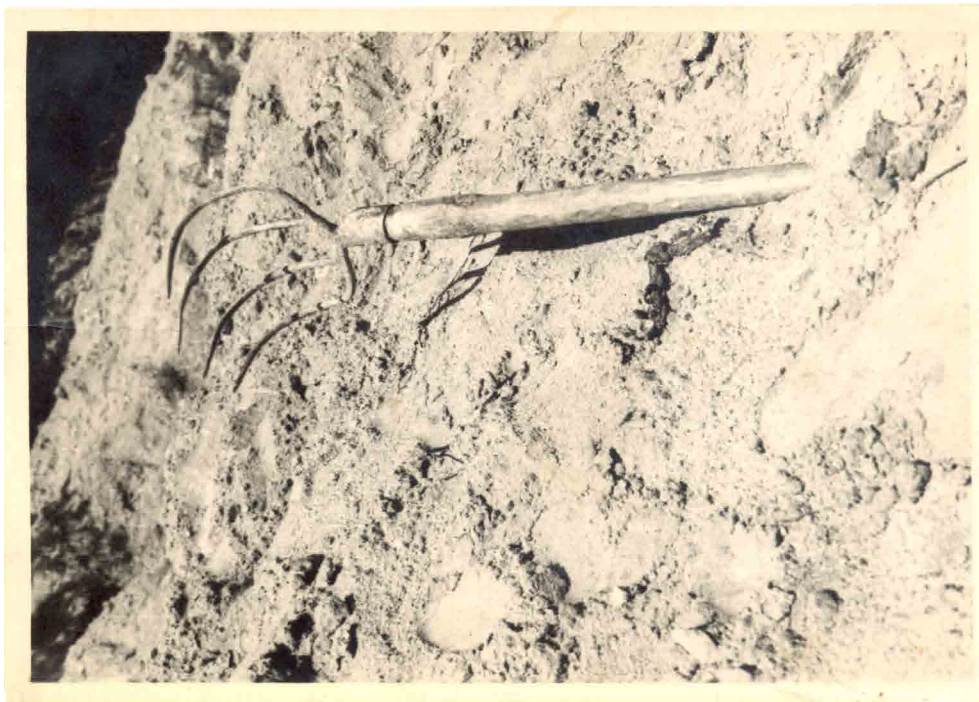
31 Sereny arrived at Treblinka in winter 1972, together with Berek Rojzman (survivor), Franciszek Ząbecki (railwayman and member of the Home Army), Wanda Jakubiuk (translator), and an anonymous driver.



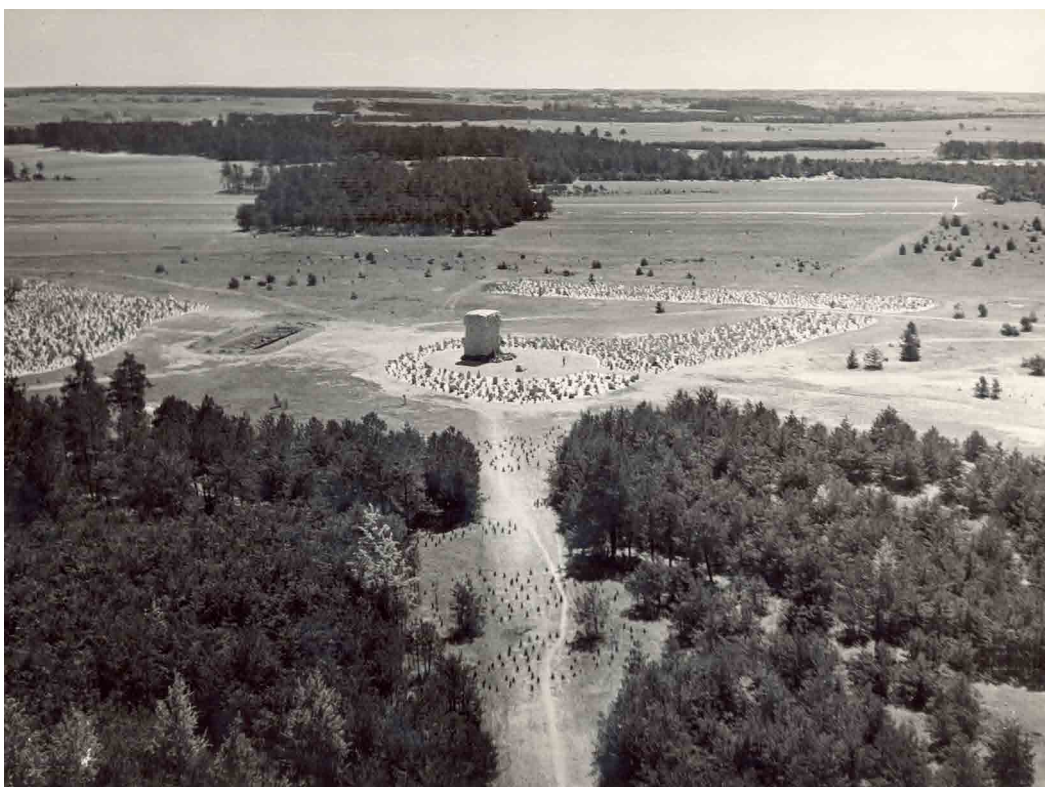
Exemplary poetics of *Heimatphotographie* applied to the area of the former Treblinka II extermination camp. View from inside the death zone (*Totenlager*) with the exploited ashes in the foreground. Second half of the 1940s. Picture taken by an unknown photographer accompanying one of the expeditions of the Central Jewish Historical Commission (Centralna Żydowska Komisja Historyczna, CŻKH) (Photo from the collection of the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw)



An armed soldier accompanying one of the expeditions of the Central Jewish Historical Commission watches the sheaves in the fields while standing on a pile of exploited ashes with visible skulls and bones. Second half of the 1940s. Picture taken by the same unknown photographer as above (Photo from the collection of the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw)



Caption on the reverse (written in pencil): "Treblinka / first commission / donor / Ms Roma Byczuk".
Photographer unknown (Photo from the collection of the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw)



Area of the former Treblinka II extermination camp at the unveiling of the commemorative complex in 1964. In front of the "central object", on its axis, a human silhouette is visible which gives an idea of the scale and proportions of the entire complex. The open character of the *Totenlager's* vicinity is still maintained (Photo by Franciszek Fuchs) (Photo from the collection of the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw)

According to Vasily Grossman's inquiry on the ground, the scream was audible in the neighboring village of Wólka Okrąglik. "[A]ll-penetrating [...], piercing bones, boring through skulls and souls". "[T]hose screams that penetrated wooden walls, that pierced the earth and the sky" (Grossman, 2010).

Franciszek Ząbecki reported that the death trains were also audible from afar: "Not because of the noise of the train, but because of the cries of the people, and the shooting" (Sereny, 1974, p. 151). And countless testimonies attest that Jewish corpses were scattered all along the railway tracks leading to Treblinka, as in the photographs by Hubert Pfoch. Pfoch, an Austrian socialist and a Wehrmacht soldier, documented the massacre at the Siedlce railway station (70 kilometers from the Treblinka railway station) on August 22, 1943, and noted in his diary:

"When at last our train leaves the station", Pfoch wrote, "at least fifty dead, women, men and children, some of them totally naked, lie along the track. [...] Eventually our train followed the other train and we continued to see corpses on both sides of the track – children and others. [...] When we reach Treblinka station the train is next to us again – there is such an awful smell of decomposing corpses in the station, some of us vomit. The begging for water intensifies, the indiscriminate shooting by the guards continues..." (Sereny, 1974, p. 159)

Unquantifiable Parameters

Apart from its quantifiable parameters, Treblinka was not an isolated place either economically or axiologically. "Henryk, in tears, confessed to me that in one night, playing poker between trains, he lost \$50,000 – a fantastic sum at the time" (Lanzmann, 2012, p. 479)³² – Claude Lanzmann says about Henryk Gawkowski, the Polish engine driver from Małkinia, a church choir member, who would conduct the trains of death to the gates of Treblinka II and beyond – inside the camp – to the unloading ramp. As Richard Glazar, a survivor, put it:

The entire region is in chaos, and at the center of it all, hidden behind its sandy ramparts, among forests at a bend in the Bug River, is Treblinka. It draws speculators from as far as one hundred kilometers away. But the vagabonds who make their timid appearance here among the trees, to be discovered by an eager guard, are only the last link in the chain. The big speculators are sitting at home in Warsaw and Lublin, where there are even supposed to be special organizations who send their people with truckloads of goods out to the huts of Treblinka. The entire region, far and near, sucks blood out of this greedy slaughterhouse. It is in their direct interest to keep Treblinka going, to keep its valuable byproducts flowing – money, gold, diamonds. (Glazar, 1995, p. 105)

Exactly the same went for the Warsaw Ghetto and the others ghettos as well as for the Holocaust at large. "To put it differently: Jews were robbed prior to, during and after the Holocaust" (Kwiet, 2019, p. 57).

32 Lanzmann included none of that in his documentary. At the same time, he chose the frame with Gawkowski's portrayal for the poster advertising *Shoah*, subsequently reused on the cover of the DVD edition.

Another part of the same question is the alimentary question. The one which was visible to the naked eye and blatant from the very beginning. As Calel Perechodnik put it in a letter to his wife one year after she had been killed by gasing at Treblinka:

Yes, I know perfectly, your body, your most marvelous body which I kissed so many times, the Germans burnt it and utilized it as a natural fertilizer. Perhaps it is just on your ash that the potatoes I am consuming grew up, perhaps [it is on your ash that] the rye grew up for the bread I am now eating.

I don't want to think about it; otherwise, I would quickly become crazy, but I want and I have to think about it. (Perechodnik, 2004, p. 256)

Perechodnik wrote his letter on August 19, 1943, before the long-term, systematic Polish exploitation and trade of Jewish ashes started. Poles also “wanted and had to think about it” but from a different perspective. So that the curtain of greenery dissimulates this also: the entanglement, most intimate there can be, of the participants of the murder with the murdered.

However, numerous indicators counter the carefully worked out illusion of physical isolation. Past and present. At the end of July, the harvesters are blocking the forest roads and all day long I am taking pictures in their deafening noise. In spring and in fall, the forest scents are mixed with the smell of manure fertilizing the fields eclipsed by the trees. An interesting reversal is to be noticed. Whereas in the past what was being unsuccessfully masked with the tree branches was the camp, what is being unsuccessfully masked with the tree branches in the present are the fields. Also the road-side signs prohibiting the picking of mushrooms are more than telling. They appear in the forest every year in the second half of August. Together with diligent mushroom pickers.

If we consider nature in its primal state, the transformation – including removal – of nature, and the re-introduction of nature in a place where – just a moment ago – there was none as three stages of a process, the splendid Treblinka nature is nature of the third degree. But there is a qualitative difference. A difference of essence. The addition of greenery within and around the area of the former Treblinka II camp finishes up the process of shaping, the anthropogenic transformation of an entirely anthropogenic site. Greenery is a final nail in the absence of a coffin.

The cultural landscape may be understood as a real, material object. One of its definitions reads: “The cultural landscape is fashioned out of a natural landscape by a culture group. Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape the result” (Sauer, 1996, pp. 309–310). This is not a fitting description of the case under consideration. Culture indeed is an agent and the result is cultural landscape, but the medium is... cultural landscape as well. This is a landscape which is anthropogenic in a double sense. First, it is made by human beings. Second, it is made out of human beings. Not random human beings but culturally categorized and segregated human beings. On the one hand, Austrians, Germans, Ukrainians, Poles as the subject. Jews as



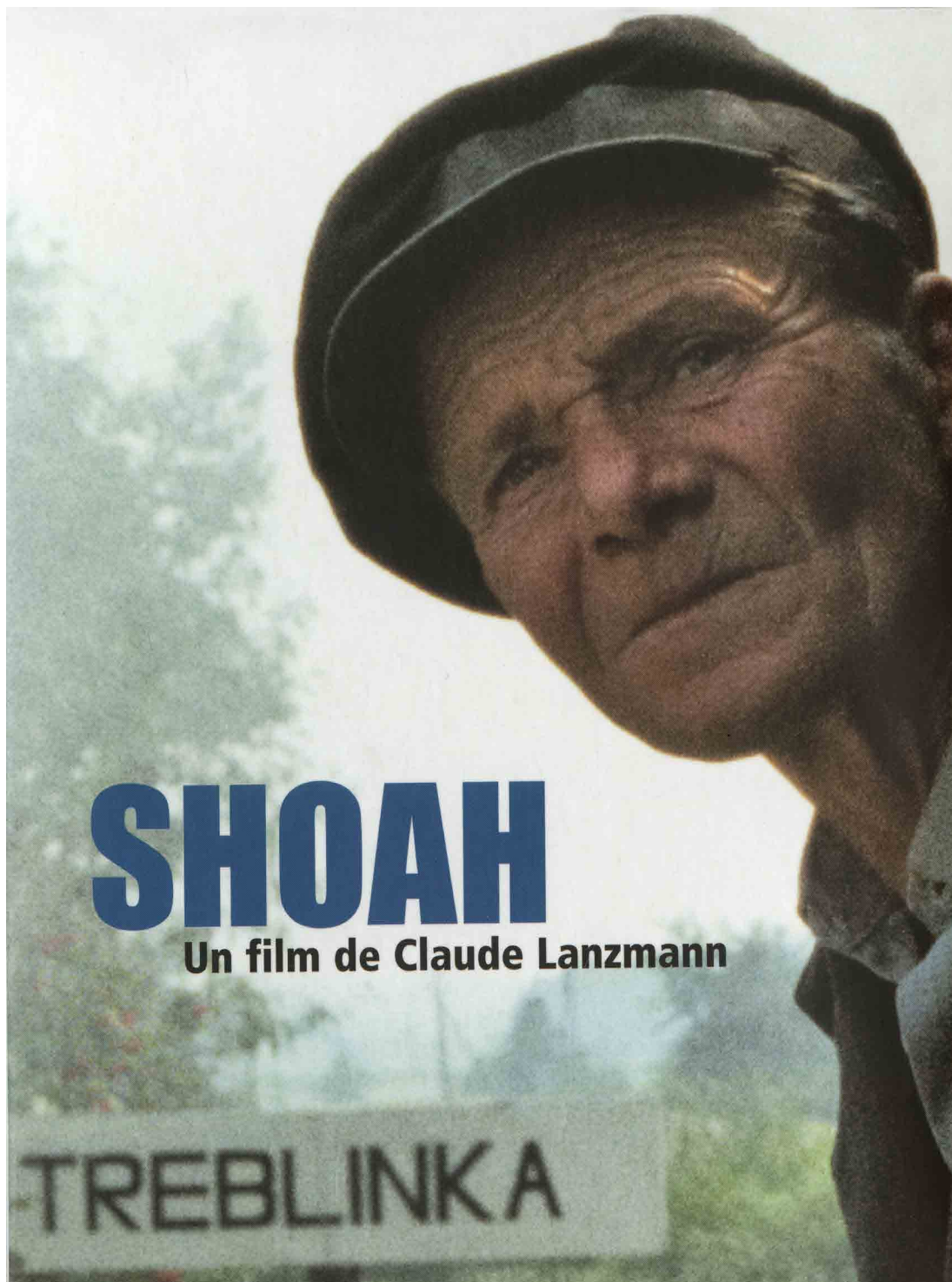
A "No Mushroom Picking Allowed" signpost – Treblinka II, September 7, 2014 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



Treblinka II, September 7, 2014 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



Treblinka II, September 7, 2014 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



The original poster for Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985) reproduced on the DVD box. The still frame from the film features Henryk Gawkowski from Małkinia, the Polish engine driver who conducted the death transports into Treblinka II (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)

the object on the other. Treblinka's nature is, therefore, a doubly cultural kind of nature. A nature of doubly cultural origin. Culture as nature. With all the ensuing consequences. Any attempts at addressing it in a depoliticized way are thoroughly illegitimate because – literally – groundless.

Naturgarten

Classification is the foundation of an ideal group identity where a group is radically opposed to a counter group.³³ More often than not, this opposition is naturalized and translated into moral categories.

The benefit of classification – the sense of security which results from reinforcing the sense of identity – is felt most strongly precisely when an incarnation of the difference is indicated. Throughout Polish history, this function was attributed to the Jews, *the organizers* of the Polish system of distinction from the Middle Ages. (Tokarska-Bakir, 2008, p. 632)

The Christian system of classification, distinguishing the own/foreign, useful/useless, pure/impure, superposed itself in Europe onto archaic classifications that prescribed, here as well as everywhere else, not only “what was good for eating” but, first and foremost, “what was good for thinking”. (Tokarska-Bakir, 2008, p. 349)

This system of elementary classifications prescribed a Christian way of thinking about oneself (a Human Being) and the Jews (namely someone between Another Human Being and a Not Entirely Human Being) (Tokarska-Bakir, 2008, p. 349).³⁴

The bearer and reproducer of the classifications with the help of which the Group describes itself and the world is their language with its abundance of metaphors. These metaphors act by means of discreet but suggestive associations in order to impose their particular definitions of reality. (Tokarska-Bakir, 2008, p. 347)

At least at the same level as the language – if not at the level of the framework – I would place the imaginary. In any case, there is no meaning without value. The semiotic is axiological. And it is the axiosemitic which prevails.

Landscapes are culture, before they are nature; constructs of the imagination projected onto wood and water and rock. [...] But it should also be acknowledged that once a certain idea of landscape, a myth, a vision establishes itself in an actual place, it has a peculiar way of muddling categories, of making metaphors more real than their referents; of becoming, in fact, part of the scenery. (Schama, 1995, p. 61)

And much more than solely a part. Those who got the shock of their life while seeing the “trees of their childhood” in *Shoah* couldn't agree more. What they saw was nothing

33 “Affirmation of the Group is achieved through the praising of its ‘purity’, most efficiently achieved by the display of its negation – an Anti Group. [...] The security guarantee for the Group is created by its separation from the Anti Group, conducted in terms of settlement planning, the circulation of the alimentary products and the matrimonial exchange” (Tokarska-Bakir, 2008, p. 345).

34 Joanna Tokarska-Bakir summarizes here the research results presented in: Kenneth Stow, *Jewish Dogs: An Image and Its Interpreters: Continuity in Catholic-Jewish Encounters* (Stow, 2006), Claudine Fabre-Vassas, *La bête singulière. Les juifs, les chrétiens et le cochon* (Fabre-Vassas, 1994), Anton Blok, *Honour and Violence* (Blok, 2001).

else than Arcadia as *locus horridus*. To be accurate: what they saw was not an originally idyllic and familiar place only subsequently transformed into a *locus horridus* but a place only potentially idyllic and familiar at the beginning which required the murder to become an actually idyllic and familiar place. Arcadia presupposed the death of Jew as its very condition of possibility.³⁵ As a nobleman landowner from Ceranów, right next to Kosów Lacki, put it:

it was a foreign polyp preying on our organism that, due to our clumsiness, we were unable to get rid of. The surgery was carried out by Hitler [...]. I couldn't hide the feeling of satisfaction when I rode through our de-Jewed towns and when I saw that the disgusting, sloppy Jewish ruins with the inseparable goat ceased to disfigure our landscape. (Górski, n.d., sheet 74)

The salutary surgery consisted in a categorial purification applied on the ground. Classification was made flesh. Together with conceptual purity – translated into natural and moral terms – also beauty, health and familiarity were achieved. Things came into order. What was became identical with what should be. The relief experienced by the Polish nobleman resembles a chiliastic ecstasy. Salvation takes place in the sphere of the axiosemitic, which prevails over reality, rendering it meaningless, even if Górski also described the murder of Jews and the Polish participation in it.

The Professor from the Professor–Doctor conversation shares the conviction that – as a result of the Holocaust – the unfamiliar was extracted from the familiar and discarded in a single, clearly delimited, separate place. Everything – as is always the case – is translated into natural and moral terms. Hence her shock upon discovering the quintessence of the familiar (willows) where she expected to see the quintessence of the unfamiliar (palms). Here we are, in the middle of the imaginary *Naturgarten*, characteristic of the naturalization of the nation and the nationalization of nature.

Already in 1900, Willy Lange, one of the main theoreticians of the art of the garden, called for the identification of the “national style” in garden architecture. The *Naturgarten* that he postulated was to be designed in accordance with the laws of nature. In the 1930s, his views were permeated by racist ideology. In the national-socialist magazine *Deutsche Kulturwacht*, Lange argued that formal style gardens, characteristic of the Alpine race, were a danger to the Nordic race. He also claimed that a superior stage of cultural development can be reached only by those peoples who are rooted in the soil; therefore, nomadic peoples, such as Jews or the Roma, would never reach the same stage of development as Germans. [...] “Thus”, he wrote, “our gardens become German if the ideas for design are German, especially if they are borrowed from the landscape in which the garden is situated” [as cited in: Wolschke-Bulmahn & Gröning, 2002, p. 77]. [...] Moreover, in “German style” gardens, only plants considered as endemically German were supposed to grow. Plants of foreign origin could find themselves there only if they resembled endemic species. These maneuvers were served by a discipline called plant sociology, which developed in Germany at the end of the 19th century. In 1936, Albert Kraemer, one of its promoters, argued:

“But we still lack gardens that are race-specific, that have their origins in nationality and landscape, in blood and soil [*Blut und Boden* – E. J.]. Only our knowledge of the condition of the home soil and its plant world (plant sociology) enable and oblige us to design

35 For Arcadia as a place of bucolic leisure and a place of primitive panic see Erwin Panofsky, 1955.

blood-and-soil-rooted gardens” [as cited in: Wolschke-Bulmahn & Gröning, 2002, pp. 79–80]. (Małczyński, 2018, pp. 68–69)³⁶

The willow from the Professor–Doctor conversation is an axiosemiotically object *par excellence*. Since purity looms large in the air, it will do us no harm to reaffirm that it is pure representation, a phantasm. Its cultural nature – so to speak – leaves no doubt. Constructed and functioning through opposition to the imaginary, phantasmatic palm, it is an element – if not an emblem – of the mental and emotional system producing, legitimizing and naturalizing antisemitic exclusion and violence. It is an instrument of murder, drenched in Jewish blood. It has nothing to do with the willows growing in the middle of the middle of Treblinka II (*Totenlager*). And it has everything to do with them. And everything to do with everything else. The nature of cultural origin was produced by the axiosemiotically, therefore it cannot be dissociated from the axiosemiotically.

Is not Treblinka today – is not today’s Poland – a fulfilment, an ideal type, of the racist definition of a garden having its source in the nation and the landscape, in the blood and the soil? Except that – despite originating in categorial purity as initial ambition – this particular garden has nothing to do with categorial purity. Quite the opposite. The blood and the soil in question are Jewish. Thus the moral panic displayed by the Professor. Fundamental at its core. And as such constituting the topic of my work. As Henryk Grynberg put it: “Poland without Jews? There will never be such Poland now. They are in this soil and air forever. As for Poles who cannot reconcile themselves to it, if it’s any comfort, I can assure them that it is not easy for Jews either” (Grynberg & Subbotko, 2011, p. 18). During the Jedwabne debate, the Polish diaspora in New York City did everything in its power, waving apotropaic slogans: “Zionist beasts hands off Poland”, “Holocaust myths hide Jewish crimes”, “Jews killed millions of Poles”, “Get your ashes out of Poland” (Grynberg, 2012, p. 36).³⁷ In vain.

Kalos und Kagathos

Beautiful and good. Beautiful as good. And the other way around. Naturalized as well. Greenery in Treblinka – in its masking, dissimulating and ornamental functions – has its wartime story. The notion of a concentration garden was formulated by Marcin Świątlicki in the 1990s. (In the case of interest to us we should talk about an extermination garden.) The practice, however, preceded the conceptualization by a few dozen years. Well known are the Nazi plans for a city-garden Auschwitz (see Czyżewski, 2001; see also: Brüggemeier et al., 2005). But there was also a spontaneous garden project for Treblinka II:

36 See also the garden- and landscape-related bibliography in Małczyński’s book.

37 “Today, a patriotic Polish writer couldn’t title a novel *Ashes*, let alone *The Ash and the Diamond*. Perhaps, then, the cry *Get your ashes out of Poland* designates something more than vulgar antisemitism? Before the war, antisemites (and not only antisemites) were convinced that Jews threatened Polish identity. And in this respect little has changed” (Grynberg, 2012, p. 38).

[T]hey root through everything in sight. And they've even taken people away from the workshops and assigned them to the dumpers. New commando units have been formed, and they leave the camp, under guard, to load gravel, cinder, and other building materials. By the time the next transport arrives Treblinka will look like a park; Lalka [Kurt Franz, deputy commander and then commander-in-chief of the camp – E. J.] is supposed to have recently made this pronouncement. (Glazar, 1995, pp. 102–103)³⁸

Jankiel Wiernik reported that the entrance of the new gas chambers was decorated with “baskets of flowers on either side” (Wiernik, 2003, p. 60). But Treblinka gardening went far beyond the functional need of misleading the victims. Apart from a vegetable garden at the northeastern border of the camp, in its part occupied by the perpetrators there was a flower garden surrounding the ZOO, separate from the ZOO itself:

I was constructing an enclosure of birchwood, a low fence around the flower garden where animals and birds were also kept. It was a quiet, pretty spot. Wooden benches were scattered around for the convenience of the Germans and Ukrainians. (Wiernik, 2003, p. 81)³⁹

Richard Glazar:

The building blocks of Treblinka consist of a wild mix of forms and colors. Hanging over the main gate is a carved wooden globe with a compass. The SS insignia cut across it. The guardhouse is decorated with carvings. [...]

And you can probably imagine what the headquarters looks like! The grey of asphalt lane is enclosed with a border of matt-white limestone. The shimmering yellow of sand-covered walks and pathways is edged with beds of multicolored stone – a kaleidoscope. (Glazar, 1995, p. 142, 141)

Aesthetic sensitivity and receptivity to nature were attested in several accounts of the perpetrators in general and perpetrators of the “Holocaust by bullets” (Patrick Desbois) in particular:

Many remembered the sight of trees, plants and flowers. They recalled sounds and smells. [...] One perpetrator spent some time explaining to the court the lasting impact a particular flower had on him. (Kwiet, 2019, p. 46)

In some places, the murderers preferred sites that they described in war crimes investigations and trials as “Kuschelgelände”, gently undulating slopes – translating as “intimate”, “cozy”, even “cuddly” – on which to murder Jews. (Kwiet, 2019, p. 44)

The commander-in-chief of Treblinka II was Hauptsturmführer Franz Stangl, an Austrian Nazi, previously one of the executors of the T4 Euthanasia Program, then the commander-in-chief of the Sobibór extermination camp. He defined himself as one of the “Catholic SS officers” (Sereny, 1974, p. 275). Awarded an official commendation as

38 “More dead and half dead in the cattle cars than ever before. Only a few stir at all. Nonetheless, the SS select a few of them to replenish the decimated ranks of the work crews – so that they'll have more slaves for the extensive rebuilding and expansion of Treblinka, so that the SS Treblinka Special Commando will have proof of its vast accomplishments, so that for the next transports the path from the train station will lead past beds of flowers through a parklike setting to the ‘bath’” (Glazar, 1995, p. 114).

39 In the Polish version at the end of the cited passage there is a sentence absent from the English version: “Spokój i cisza zalegały to miejsce”, meaning “Calm and silence reigned in this place” (Wiernik, 2003, p. 31).

the “best camp commander in Poland” (Sereny, 1974, pp. 228–229), he worked hard like a genuine Franz the Builder “trying to create a special space: gardens, new barracks, new kitchens, new everything; barbers, tailors, shoemakers, carpenters” (Sereny, 1974, p. 200). He enjoyed fresh vegetables cultivated in Treblinka’s vegetable garden – “we grew them ourselves” (Sereny, 1974, p. 170). (He mentioned especially the cauliflowers.) He was proud of the Kurt-Seidel-Strasse, an 800-meter two-lane concrete road he ordered to be built inside the camp in front of his windows, along which in the spring of 1943 flowers and evergreen shrubs was planted (Ziesing, 2004). Decades later he kept praising the enchantments of the Treblinka ZOO (a deer, foxes, pigeons, two peacocks): “We had any number of marvelous birds there [...] and benches and flowers. [...] It is difficult [...] to describe it adequately now, but it became really beautiful” (Sereny, 1974, p. 166), he confessed. After the uprising of the inmates, “[h]e intended to rebuild Treblinka, better than ever” (Sereny, 1974, p. 248).⁴⁰ Being a matter of classification, beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

While referring to the idea of an extermination garden, I definitely do not subscribe to Zygmunt Bauman’s argument in his *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Bauman, 1989). Bauman associated the idea of gardening and garden logic with modernity which – in turn – he burdened with the responsibility for the extermination of people with disabilities and for the extermination of Jews.⁴¹ Bauman didn’t take into consideration that the extermination of people with disabilities aroused opposition on the part of the Christian Churches and was interrupted, whereas the extermination of Jews was carried out without any opposition until the very end of Nazi rule and – at least in Poland – pursued after the collapse of Nazism and the end of the Nazi occupation of the country. By doing so, Bauman downplayed antisemitism. He ignored the parallelism of the exterminatory evolution of what he considered to be different types of antisemitism – if not its opposed types, however absurd it may sound: the so-called premodern (theological) antisemitism and the so-called modern (ideological) one. He ignored the Christian origin of antisemitism and its primary, primeval framework constituted by Christianity. He also spared the authority of the Catholic Church and other Christian Churches.⁴² Finally, he ignored the epistemological, aesthetical and ethical implications

40 The love Stangl nourished for the beauty of nature accompanied him in remote Brazil: “The house, pink and white, with bright flowers in the yard, is incongruously reminiscent of the Austrian countryside [...]. On the wall of the living room hangs a pleasant painting of an Austrian landscape; on the TV stands a vase of dried Alpine flowers” (Sereny, 1974, p. 41).

41 Bauman’s argument is also counterfactual, since according to the Nazi garden architects, proponents of the “endemically German” *Naturgarten*: “The gardens created in such a spirit were supposed to be characterized by irregularity and to adapt to the surrounding landscape. Cutting out and pruning back the plants was considered a token of anthropocentrism and therefore forbidden” (Małczyński, 2018, p. 69). As already mentioned, the gardens maintained in a “formal style” – in other words: French-style gardens – were supposed to be typical for the “Alpine race” and constitute a threat to the “Nordic race”.

42 And wrongly so. While addressing the murder of people with disabilities, Sereny writes: “[T]here can be no doubt whatever that Hitler – nothing if not realistic – was, and in fact remained until the very end, perfectly aware of the power of the Catholic Church in Germany. [...] It is true that the war had begun, providing the camouflage under which Hitler had predicted in 1935 that he would ‘resolve this question’. But even the war

of human thinking stripped of the critical imperative. An imperative articulated by modernity.

IV. Representing

As a post-Marxist and a post-structuralist, Foucault recommended not to pay attention to the signifier, i.e. to the representation. Before re-legitimizing the question of representation at a higher level with the concept of the *dispositif*, the philosopher stated:

The meanings given to plants by humans were perceived as their integral features. The new “natural history”, born in the mid-17th century, separated the world of things from the world of signs. [In other words, new natural history detached the signified from the signifier – E.J.] As Foucault writes: “All the language deposited upon things by time is pushed back into the very last category” [Foucault, 2002, p. 142]. It is as a result of this “purification”, which stripped objects of their meanings, that the problem of representation was born. Bare things were laid out on the table or placed under the microscope: they started being measured, observed and systematized on the basis of their external features. It is in this context that herbaria started being created and functioning. “The documents of this new history are not other words, texts or records, but unencumbered spaces in which things are juxtaposed: herbariums, collections, gardens” [Foucault, 2002, pp. 142–143] (Mańczyński, 2018, p. 186)

While entering the megalithic Treblinka sundial for the first time, I got the impression of stepping into the interstice between the thing and its representation. Every time I go there, I step and pace – or rather crawl – in between.

Representation is mediatization. It is all about construction or – to put it in a Marxist perspective – production. In the framework and on the grounds of representation nothing is neutral. What is constructed/produced is questionable and should be questioned. As representation is a boggy, shaky ground, permanent doubt and suspicion render it – if not more safe and stable – at least more under control. Or less beyond control. This is the place I strive to remain in. As far as *Herbarium* is concerned, then, several decisions have to be problematized, explained and justified.

The Choice of Photography

Why representation rather than abstention from (re)action? And why photography? While travelling from Bełżec to Sobibór – between the Narol terminus and the Włoda-

could not have been considered sufficient to deflect the attention of the Churches from this dark undertaking which could not in the long run remain hidden” (Sereny, 1974, p. 63).

At the same time the abovementioned Franz Stangl at each stage of his career paid attention to the teachings and recommendations of the Catholic Church, which included: the exhortation to help the Nazis issued by Cardinal Theodor Innitzer (archbishop of Vienna), the prewar and wartime teaching of the Pope, and – last but not least – the exemption obtained from his confessor in order to enter the ranks of the NSDAP and the SS. After the war, the functionaries of the Catholic Church protected him and helped him escape from Europe and justice.

wa terminus – I watched through a bus window a distant and moving landscape. In Treblinka the landscape was close and still. And there was no window. I could touch it. I had it at my fingertips. In other words: it moved, then it stopped. I was no longer positioned in front of it or towards it but within it. Inside of a freeze frame. Moreover, I was part of it. Without intermediary instances. Reaching for a camera meant reaching for an intermediary. Instituting an intermediate instance. The instance in question was made out of glass. A glass I had to look through. The operation resembled the act of restoring a window. Recreating a distance. Which it actually was. But it involved distance not in the sense of a layer of insulation but of a layer of problematization.

What made me reach for a camera was the will of restoring the *principium individuationis*, too. Telling the object from the subject is a basic cognitive requirement. The very condition of the possibility of cognition. Reaching for a camera – a human construction/production inseparable from its human constructor/producer and operator – is an act of constructing/producing the object and the subject. Alongside the establishment of the object and the subject, the optical dispositif establishes the distance between the two, allowing its decrease or increase and all the other cognitive gestures.

The *principium individuationis* I had in mind was the very same one that Claude Lanzmann attacked so violently:

Though I know how to see, though I am gifted with a rare visual memory, the spectacle of the world, or the world as spectacle, always relates for me to an impoverishing dissociation, an abstract separation that forbids astonishment, enthusiasm, de-realizes both object and subject. [...] There was an incredible shock in Treblinka, with its endless consequences, triggered by the meeting of a name and a place, by the discovery of this accursed name on ordinary road signs and train stations as though, over there, nothing had happened. [...] Lastly, the mythic animal that appeared in the beam of my headlights just outside the Patagonian village of El Calafate, piercing my heart with the obvious fact that I was in Patagonia, that at this very moment Patagonia and I *were true together*. This is incarnation. (Lanzmann, 2012, pp. 527–528)

“To be true together”. “To become true together”. Incarnation, according to Lanzmann, is when the subject – in the face of the object – may talk about “notre commune présence” (Lanzmann, 2009, p. 192), i.e. “our common presence”, which was translated into English – in a risky yet revelatory / revelatory yet risky way – as “our mutual presence” (Lanzmann, 2012, p. 179).

Confronted with the task of writing on *Herbarium*, I realized that hardly anything of the fifteen years of my experience on the ground was able to pass through the barrier of verbalization, unless I espoused the inspired language of incarnation and revelation. The one Claude Lanzmann falls back on in his book whenever he is brought to talk about Treblinka. For ontological reasons, this was not possible for me. (*Ontological* doesn’t mean *ontic*. But still.)

Over the course of my work, not only were incarnation and revelation present, they were predominant, and almost laid claims to exclusivity. Every time I realized that,

I immediately repressed it as illegitimate. The awareness imposed upon me a separation from the experienced object and from the experiencing subject, i.e. from myself. Awareness meant a categorical imperative of maintaining the thing and its possible (*sic!*) representations within the field of reflection. Thus, even if incarnation and revelation – both operating under the mode of immersion – prevailed, my text pertains to “the spectacle of the world or the world as spectacle” and reports the reflected [*zreflektowane*] that I mostly generated *ex post*. The ontological parameters, as it happens, preordain that I have the right to talk about my experience of Treblinka in terms of incarnation only in the most literal alimentary-digestive sense of the word. The ontological is political.

For *Herbarium* – as for *The Odd Place* – I chose analog photography, to which Zbigniew Dłubak’s formula applies: “Photography comes into being beyond our reach as the contact of matter [substance] with matter [substance]” (Dłubak, 1973/2013, p. 156). In its core, analog photography is a combination of the immediate and the intermediate. The immediate consists in phenomena such as contact, touch, imprint, trace. The intermediate consists in the phenomenon of reflection. In this regard, one might say, the immediate–intermediate principle corresponds to the double character of light. The corpuscular – material, substantial – definition of light corresponds to the contact aspect of photography. Whereas the definition of light as a wave corresponds to the reflective aspect of the photographic medium.

Abstract notions – including the very notion of the notion – originate from physical, tangible phenomena (Derrida, 1972, English edition: Derrida, 1974). Photography is a reflective medium which, following the establishment of the subject, enables its re-establishment at a level that I would call reflected, underpinned with reflection. The same reflection that constitutes a thin protective film enabling the human kind to exist (subsist?) in the environment of essence and existence, necessity and contingency. The protection is not definitive but it is real. Nothing to do with anesthesia or escape. If I was able to start and carry out a systematic and methodical vivisection of the landscape, it is because I was protected (armed?) with the optical dispositif of my camera.

Another advantage of a photographic herbarium is that it doesn’t require the destruction of plants. At the same time, like every means of representation, photography reifies whoever/whatever appears in front of the camera. Yet like every medium, and even more than the non-mechanical media (due to the ostensible visibility of its technical aspect), photography is a practice and a meta-practice, a mediatization and a treatise on mediatization at once. Its self-analytical and self-critical potential counterbalances its reifying effect.

The photographic dispositif is an object, or rather a set of objects, but has nothing to do with objectivity.⁴³ Instead of being called “the objective”, as it is in certain languages, its lens should be called the subjective. Objects called machines have nothing objective about them. They are human creations resulting from and responding to human needs, serving human interests, formatted according to the parameters of human perception. A perception which is also a medium, constructed and formatted by psychophysiology and culture. And a treatise on mediatization as well. Another one. And I don’t even mean here the properties of the light-sensitive support, which I had the opportunity to address in my works ascribed to medium art (*medializm*). In the case of *Herbarium*, what is in front of the lens is an object being a cultural construction/production too. A nature of cultural origin. The whole process is therefore stretched between all these intermediations and its outcome – namely the photographs – between the documentary and the interpretative. With the interpretation pertaining not just to the end result of the process but starting with the process and forming its constitutive part throughout.

***Heimatphotographie* – the Polish Version**

There is no history of photography without *Heimatphotographie*. Codified in Germany at the beginning of the 20th century, then incorporated into the state propaganda apparatus under the Third Reich,⁴⁴ on the eve of WWII, it delighted the Polish professional photographic milieu with Jan Bułhak at the head. In 1935, immediately after its German promoter Paul Lüking left Poland, Bułhak translated and published the *Heimatphotographie* manifesto and started preaching the Polish Fatherland Photography (*pol-ska fotografia ojczysta*):

Today’s Fatherland Photography without doubt originates from trends of healthy nationalism permeating the whole Europe, from the desire of knowing, visualizing, showing, then multiplying, elevating, developing, enriching everything that is one’s own, national. Today’s photography voluntarily harnesses itself for the service of the imperial idea, for the service of the idea of the state tightly united with the nation and the fatherland. (Bułhak, 1938a, p. 3)

The definition of the nation adopted by the movement was ethno-religious, which meant it was rigorously exclusionary. The essence of Polishness, threatened by foreign elements and by modernity, was epitomized by Polish Catholic nobility, deservedly owning and mercifully watching over the peasant slaves of various Christian denominations

43 The Polish version of the text refers to the fact that in Polish the lens is called “the objective” (*obiektyw*). The author observes that it should be called “the subjective” instead.

44 Its origins date back to the *Heimatschutzstil* – a visual style connected with the ideal of preservation of the Fatherland landscape, itself rooted in neoromanticism and early European ecological concepts combined with the national idea. Its aesthetics didn’t shy away from politics. The *Heimatschutzstil* current created the image of a Fatherland landscape by means of albums and other photographic publications based on the assumption that some types of scenery and themes are specifically national. Its early example is the album *Die Entstellung unseres Landes* (1908) by Paul Schultze Naumburg, an architect, painter and publicist, who joined the NSDAP in 1930 as a prominent advocate of Nazi architecture and a leading critic of modernism (Schultze Naumburg, 1908; see Leśniakowska, 1994).

in the idyllic scenery of the so-called Polish Borderlands (*Kresy*), consisting of Lithuania, Belarus and western (sometimes also eastern) Ukraine.

As far as Bułhak is concerned:

As a head of the city photographic archive in Vilnius, he photographed the Jewish district and the Jewish cemeteries, as well as Belarusian and Lithuanian huts. The otherness, however, constituted a problem for him. In the eyes of Bułhak, a Jew was now a “long-bearded patriarch” [Bułhak, 2003, p. 27], now part and parcel of the following description – drawn up during WWII – “The town was miserable, over-Jewed and, like everything else in our country, brought into decline by the rule of the occupiers” [Bułhak, 2003, p. 34]. The artist’s reasoning demonstrates that the attractive myth and the repulsive stereotype are nothing but the obverse and the reverse of ethnonationalism.

Bułhak confected images of otherness in order to justify Polish superiority. [...] The latter, in turn, was supposed to originate from intimacy with the soil that remained thoroughly Polish and noble, as Bułhak described it in a passage resembling countless other:

“Particular species of insects dwell on certain species of trees, certain areas of forests and fields are the ground where particular types of animals live. In the same manner, tightly interwoven complexes of plant and human life emerged. One of those innate complexes is the specific Polish psycho-biological organism having no analogue in the whole Europe – a rural manor together with the person of a Polish nobleman dwelling in it in the Borderlands. [...]

Not as a stray parasite, who chooses the source of maximum profit, did he establish himself on the soil and administer it. [...] He became a master in the best sense of this notion, a master of a birth-giving, abundant and beautiful soil. Such masterhood inspires righteous and good feelings [...]. These are feelings that can be given exclusively by tradition and race, this great word too often downplayed nowadays with reference to human beings, while [being] treated very seriously with reference to animals. [...] Over centuries the nobleman was alone in defending the Fatherland and driving back its enemies. Neither the peasant nor the townsman, let alone the German craftsman-merchant or the Jewish salesman-intermediary participated in this” [Bułhak, 1936, pp. 5, 12–13]. (Janicka & Żukowski, 2016, pp. 34–36)⁴⁵

Setting in motion the propaganda of *Heimatphotographie* Polish style, Bułhak didn’t spare criticism to his own way of proceeding before he received the revelation: “As a Polish artist I was wrong because I was too exclusive, not aware enough of the Polish Cause, Polish Soil, Polish Past” (Bułhak, 1938b, pp. 11–12). He apologized for having utterly forgotten – while thinking about the landscape – “its Polish truth, the fact that it is all ours and Polish” (“Sprawozdanie ze Zjazdu Delegatów”, 1937, p. 205). From then on, in his texts and photographs, he depicted Poland as a nation-state, which at the time it was not. It needed the Holocaust and subsequent ethnic cleansings to become one. By representing Poland as Poland for Poles, Bułhak subscribed to the point of view that what was not Polish and not Catholic was “a foreign polyp preying on our organism” and “disfiguring our landscape”, as the already-quoted nobleman from the vicinity of Treblinka put it. In other words, a damaging element to be excised. The sooner the

45 These passages were omitted in the English translation of the book published the same year by the same publisher.

better. The representation of Poland as Poland for Poles worked here as a means of producing Poland for Poles, encouraging, if not urging, its coming into being.

My contact with *Heimatphotographie* – personal in kind, so to speak – occurred in Kielce, the city of the most famous, however not isolated, post-Holocaust pogrom. When I got there in October 2010, the building at 7 Planty Street, where the carnage began, housed the headquarters of the Kielce branch of the Polish Photographic Society.⁴⁶ Inside, the visitors could admire the achievements of the Kielce School of Landscape (Kielecka Szkoła Krajobrazu) and help themselves to a leaflet authored by its doyen. Claiming that the Polish program of patriotic photography actually preceded the German *Heimatphotographie*, Paweł Pierściński stated:

The Polish land is a particular region, different from other countries and, at the same time, it is generously equipped with cultural traditions [original phrasing – E. J.] as well as harshly affected by history that is intertwined with the fate of the nation. Artists pay special tribute to the Suffering Fatherland by documenting the beauty of their land. [...] KIELCE LAND IS A MONUMENT TO THE POLISH LANDSCAPE. This land constitutes a separate value among the landscapes of the world. [...] The land of the Holy Cross [from the Mountains of the Holy Cross at the heart of the region – E. J.] receives all its children. The graves of insurgents and partisans fighting for national liberation multiply and the cemeteries border on the anonymous graves. (Pierściński, n. d., pp. 1, 5, 9)⁴⁷

In case anyone wondered about the origin of these anonymous burial sites, the author hastened to specify: “We have the right to be proud of belonging to our Fatherland” (Pierściński, n. d., p. 9). Pride. Belonging. The Fatherland – free or not, but necessarily suffering. All that is far behind me. But to leave behind, without a closer examination, the slaughter resulting from it would be legitimizing and perpetuating its logic.

46 The miniature bookshop inside offered, among other goods, *Dedal: A Holy Cross Region Magazine of Culture and the Arts* (*Świętokrzyski Magazyn Kulturalno-Artystyczny “Dedal”*). Its 2006 issue number 2(209) carried the title “Poles and Jews Together in Culture” (“Polacy i Żydzi razem w kulturze”), with a damaged Torah scroll displayed upside down against the Polish flag on its front cover. The whole composition was carefully photographed by none other than Paweł Pierściński. The back cover was adorned with an oil painting representing the 1946 Kielce pogrom in the making: Jews already killed or still alive but being beaten to death at 7 Planty Street, supervised by a fiddler on the roof, or rather on the balcony of the building, hosting at the time the tiny Kielce Jewish Community. As I am writing these words, the magazine lies in front of me on my desk. It starts with a statement by John Paul II about love that emanates from the cross in the context of the Kielce pogrom. It finishes with a recipe for Jewish cuisine specialties, a declaration of Jewish gratitude towards the so-called Polish Righteous Among the Nations (“I don’t think we, Jews, would have been capable of such sacrifice if such tragedy hit another nation”) and a collection titled “Shmontzes: Oy-Vey, or Jewish humor” (“Szmoncesy. Aj waj, czyli humor żydowski”). Example. A Christian in a confessional: “I conned a Kike [Żydek]. Is this a sin?” The priest’s reply: “Son, this is a miracle!” There is also a paper on the Holocaust, an interview with the then director of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw and – for the sake of symmetry – another one, with a journalist denying the Polish perpetration of the Kielce pogrom. We are not spared prewar photographs featuring a Jewish girl wearing a Polish folk costume. Nothing is missing. The periodical was financed by the Polish Ministry of Culture. Identified as a foreigner, I was sold it at double its price with the comment: “Impossible to con you people”. A “you” plural. It probably had something to do with the fact that I protested and bargained after I was asked to pay three times the original price.

47 According to the author, the text summarizes his reflections collected in two monographs: Pierściński, 2004, 2005.

Herbarium as a Principle

A herbarium is a collection based on typology, *eo ipso* classification requiring selection and segregation (Eco, 2009).⁴⁸ Discrimination, in a word. *Discriminatio* means “I differentiate”, “I distinguish”, “I tell apart”. The principle of discrimination is a property of human thinking. The condition of its very possibility and – at the same time – a lethal danger, a deadly threat extending up to and including the destruction of its biological support: the human being. Human beings dwell in this interstice as they dwell in the interstice between the thing and its representation. Differentiation is the reverse of identification and *vice versa*. The trans-categorical – a hybrid of the identical and the different – is qualified as monstrous.

Classification is a matter of belonging to a category impossible to conceive otherwise than in opposition to a counter-category. Categorization constitutes the very principle of notions such as purity and impurity. Purity is belonging. Impurity is non-belonging. The pure/impure opposition

prescribes – or rationalizes – the shape of the dichotomous division of human communities, sometimes it also constitutes the construction principle of social hierarchies. [...] The range of application of this notion [or rather of this opposition – E. J.] shows how strongly two orders are entangled in human imagination: the biological and the social, the natural and the cultural. (Geremek, 1987, p. 175)⁴⁹

Mary Douglas discovered that there was nothing natural about the pure/impure opposition. Dirt is a cultural construction:

[B]iologists have thought that dirt, in the form of bodily excretions, produces a universal feeling of disgust. They should remember that there is no such thing as dirt; no single item is dirty apart from a particular system of classification in which it does not fit. (Douglas, 2002, p. XVII)

Purity and impurity are not descriptive but normative categories. In other words, dirt is in the eye of the beholder.

As already mentioned, the purity/impurity opposition produces subsequent oppositions, such as beauty/ugliness, taste/distaste, superiority/inferiority, familiarity/strangeness, safety/danger. Purity and impurity – the matrix of these oppositions – are perceived as mutually exclusive. As often as they are naturalized, they are essentialized as... good and evil. In other words, as moral categories. Evil is assigned the position of a danger, a threat. And then it is externalized. Deemed threatening and alien, it is defined as that which must be eliminated in the name of security, familiarity and purity seen as a moral and aesthetic aim. An aim justifying everything as – at worst – a lesser evil.

48 See especially chapters 10. “Lists of Mirabilia”, pp. 153–163; 11. “Collection and Treasures”, pp. 165–199; 12. “The Wunderkammer”, pp. 201–215; 13. “Definition by List of Properties versus Definition by Essence”, pp. 217–229.

49 Geremek refers to the works such as Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and Its Implications* (Dumont, 1980) and Louis Dumont, David Francis Pocock, “Pure and Impure” (Dumont & Pocock, 1959).

Security, familiarity, purity, innocence, beauty, health. Morphing one into another. Interchangeable. Conceived as natural and moral at the same time. Translated into the idea of an idyllic landscape. While the Kosów Lacki milk products are advertised as coming from the Bug River Landscape Park, the *Zielnik Polski* herbal teas tempt the potential buyer: “The herbs contained in Polish Herbarium are sourced through our own collection points located in the purest, eastern parts of Poland”. Certified true and exact by: Herbapol-Lublin S.A., 25 Diamond Street, 20-471 Lublin, Poland. All that is a matter of classification with categorial purity at its source.

Classification, typology, belonging to a category. This is what underlies the idea of a collection (see Elsner & Cardinal, 1994; Pomian, 1990). And *Herbarium* is one. This also is where the place called Treblinka stems from. It is not by chance that, apart from establishing a new system of botanical taxonomy, Linnaeus was among the first to differentiate “human races” on the basis of skin color. It was difficult to opt for a more heavily burdened principle than the herbarium principle. Once my choice was made, something had to be done. Countermeasures had to be taken. Simultaneously with action, I had to take counteraction.

V. Toward a Hybridization

Purity and danger. Purity as danger. Purity is danger. Striving to remain aware of it at all stages of the operation, I tried to follow everything which could lead to a hybridization of the typology, to a de-tightening of classificatory rules. My aim was to introduce some air into an (air)tight system, an (air)tight order which – as a principle – led to the (air)tight containers whose foundations are palpable to a barefoot walker under a thin layer of grass in the bright glade of Treblinka. My first decision was related to the principles organizing the material. I decided to deviate from a typical herbarium order (synchronic presentation by taxonomic ranks: phylum, class, order, family, genus, species) and opted for a different kind of regime, combining the linear and the circular, the diachronic and the synchronic. The succession of images follows the succession of months and days, whereas the years – while mentioned – have no influence on the order.

I didn't have my mind, or eyes, set on any distinct herbarium model. Be it photographic or not. I knew Maria Sybilla Merian's drawings and paintings – translated into black-and-white and color copperplates – beginning with her three-volume *Blumenbuch* (1675–1680), through the two volumes of *Der Raupen wunderbare Verwandlung und sonderbare Blumen-Nahrung* (1679, 1683), to *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium* (1705) (Zemon Davis, 1997). I studied Stanisław Wyspiański's *Herbarium* (1896), which consists of his drawings executed in the meadows in the vicinity of Kraków but

also in the very city center: the Botanical Garden, the Franciscan and Dominican gardens, the green belt of Planty surrounding the Old Town, the rocks of the Dragon's Den (Gołubiew et al., 2007). I examined Eliza Orzeszkowa's *Herbarium* (1887–1898) containing dried plants from the Grodno region (see Kielak, 2004) – a collection commented on by the writer in the spirit of classist and colonial nationalism close to the poetics of *Blut und Boden*. At the Łódź Film School I attended Lech Lechowicz's classes on 19th-century British photograms of nature and 19th-century British nature photography. Later on came the *Neue Sachlichkeit* current with the monumental photographic collection of plants by Karl Blößfeldt (see Blößfeldt, 1929, Blossfeldt, 1929). Then Roman Kobendza's *Botanical Notebook* (1930–1952) emerged, executed with a large format camera on glass plates in the successive sections of the Botanical Garden of the University of Warsaw (Kobendza & Sokołowska, 2012).

There also was Rosa Luxemburg's *Herbarium* (1913–1918) with natural plants (Luxemburg, 2009) and, much closer to it than one could have surmised, Alina Szapocznikow's *Herbarium – Self-Portrait* (1971) and *Herbarium I–XIV* (1972) (Gołubiew & Rottenberg, 1998, pp. 106–112; Filipovic et al., 2011, pp. 16–19, 72–73, 200). Szapocznikow's first work was composed of a polyester cast of an adult female body consumed by cancer. Her own body. The second one was constructed out of a polyester casts of an adult male body, which belonged to her adopted son. In both cases the originally three-dimensional casts were pressed, reduced to two dimensions, and fixed to polychrome wood. Szapocznikow was a survivor of the Pabianice ghetto, Łódź ghetto, Bergen Belsen concentration camp (where she was deported via Auschwitz) and Theresienstadt. As an assistant of her mother, a physician (pediatrician), she spent that time among dying and dead bodies. In *Herbarium* she spoke about the body from her experience. Andrzej Wajda, usually deaf and blind to reality, universalized *Herbarium* but also qualified it as a “ferocious and astonishing trace [*groźny i zdumiewający ślad*]” (Wajda, 1996), which it actually is.

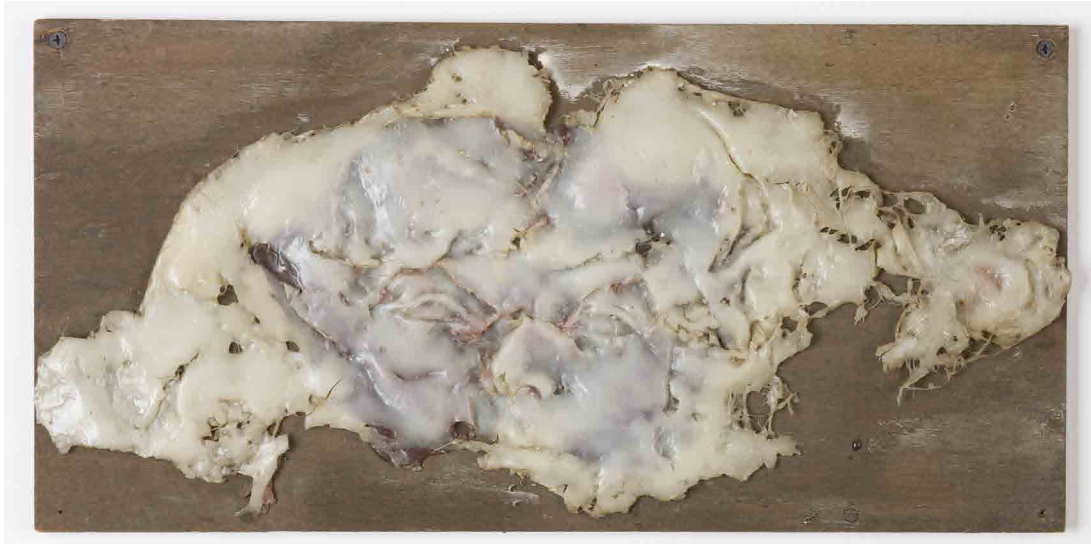
Matrons

I was encouraged in my intent to de-tighten the systematization system (*sic!*) by the example of two women. Maria Sybilla Merian and Rosa Luxemburg. Merian represented plants together with insects at different stages of their development. She was a naturalist and mimetist born and raised in the tradition of still life:

But Maria Sibylla Merian had something else in mind when she did her insect studies from life. The moths and caterpillars of her *Raupen* did not just add to the “lively” (“*lebendig*”) quality of flower pictures, as in the bouquets and wreaths painted by her stepfather Marrel and his student Abraham Mignon. [...] Time moved in her pictures not to suggest the general transience of things or the year's round of the most precious blossoms, but to evoke a particular and interconnected process of change. Her insects were not placed to convey metaphorical messages, as was the practice of many still-life painters and specifically of her stepfather's Utrecht teacher, Jan Davidsz de Heem (the butterfly as the symbol of the resurrected soul, the fly as the symbol of sinfulness, and so on). (Zemon Davis, 1997, p. 149)



Alina Szapocznikow, *Herbarium – Self-portrait* (1971). Polyester, polychrome wood, 81 × 52 × 5 cm. Property of Ceres Franco (Photo by Jola Gola) (© Jolanta Gola, courtesy of Jolanta Gola)



Alina Szapocznikow, *Herbarium XI* (1972). Polyester, polychrome wood, 24 × 38 × 2 cm, inventory no. MNK II-rz-1666. Property of Galerie Loevenbruck (Photo by Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie / National Museum in Kraków) (© by Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie, courtesy Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie). I would like to express special thanks to Hervé Loevenbruck and Alexandra Schillinger



Caption on the reverse (written in pencil): "Cut hair with skin. June 18, 1947". Area of the former Treblinka II extermination camp. Photographer unknown (Photograph from the collection of the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw)

Merian's work is seen as part of the handicraft tradition of those women who dealt with science without academic training. As a botanist and entomologist, Merian advocated for a change in the prevailing Aristotelian classificatory system and a search for new elementary criteria of classification. In her own work

[t]he subsequent arrangement of pictures seemed to fit no contemporary classificatory criteria, botanical or entomological. Common plants did not precede clover plants followed by bushes and trees, as they did in a traditional herbalist ordering; woody plants were not separate from herbaceous ones, as they were in a newer proposal; similar fruits and flowers were not bunched in a row. [...] Nor were the several insects she treated outside the "order of Lepidoptera" (as Linnaeus would later call it) in a group by themselves: bees and wasps, caddisflies, flies, and thrips were often undergoing metamorphosis in the same picture with moths and butterflies, because Merian observed their caterpillars or maggots feeding on the same plants.

Merian's goal was simply ill-served by boundary classifications. Her subject was a set of events – "you'll find in this volume more than hundred transformations [*Verwandlungen*]", she said in 1683 – and to represent them properly meant crossing the line between orders and putting the plant and animal kingdoms in the same picture. (Zemon Davis, 1997, pp. 153–154)⁵⁰

Natalie Zemon Davis stresses the transgressive element of Merian's singular narratives and calls her "an artist scientist", "an artist-naturalist who had previously resisted all systems of classification", "a woman who could not be pinned down" (Zemon Davis, 1997, pp. 168, 164, 166, respectively).⁵¹ Moreover, "Merian evidently regarded her books as the continuation of her handwork and observation" (Zemon Davis, 1997, p. 205).

Rosa Luxemburg's estate, in turn, includes eighteen copybooks, seventeen of which contain 370 carefully collected, dried and identified plants. They constitute a herbarium she worked on since May 1913. Imprisoned in Berlin, Wronki, Breslau and out of prison. The cover of the next to last copybook in the series bears the inscription: "Copybook

50 "Yet even while lacking the logic of classification, her sequence was not 'tumultuous'" (Zemon Davis, 1997, p. 154). While working on her *opus magnum*, "[s]he took out time from supplying paintings to her engravers [...] and did paintings at a price for a book by someone else" (Zemon Davis, 1997, p. 178). The book was Georg Everard Rumpf's work devoted to crustaceans, shells, and minerals of Amboina. "They were done in Rumpf's expository style, not hers: rows of shells, crabs, or crystals with letters and numbers referring back to the text. *D'Amboinische Rariteikamer* was published in 1705, the same year as her own book, and shows the extent to which her way of representing nature was a choice, not a matter of skill or habit. [...] Deepening the break with classification was the presence in six pictures of a lizard, snake, frog, or toad" (Zemon Davis, 1997, pp. 179, 180).

51 "Intentionally or not, the work undertaken by European naturalists from Linnaeus' times in European colonies, endorsed the colonial project. 'One by one, the planet's life forms were to be drawn out of the tangled threads of their life surroundings and rewoven into European-based patterns of global unity and order. The (lettered, male, European) eye that held the system could familiarize ('naturalize') new sites/sights immediately upon contact, by incorporating them into the language of the system' [Pratt, 1992, p. 31]. Pratt suggests that this vision of the world is simultaneously 'innocent and imperial', helping European economic expansion by doing nothing more violent than naming and classifying [Pratt, 1992, pp. 33–34]. Merian's *Metamorphosis* is surely part of the early stages of this project of European looking and describing. But her ecological eye and hand leave much space for Surinamese insects and plants to flourish in local terms and relations" (Zemon Davis, 1997, pp. 180–181). Merian conserved the local nomenclature. The African and Amerindian slaves whom she temporarily possessed during her two-year stay in Surinam are often referred to in her descriptions, which are full of the realities of the Dutch slavery system in Surinam. Her comment on *Flos pavonis*, peacock flower, addresses exploitation, inhumane treatment of the slaves – male and female – suicide as a means of avoiding the slave status, abortion as a mean of not reproducing it. Merian stated: "I listen to African women", which, according to Zemon Davis, undermined the established order of a colonial encounter (Zemon Davis, 1997, p. 186).

seventeen / Breslau Strafgefängnis / October 13, 1918 – ". She was assassinated on January 15, 1919. The last copybook is no less meaningful. Luxemburg entitled it *Geologische und Botanische Notizen (Breslau)*:

It contains a fragment of *Das natürliche System* from the textbook *Sylabuss der Vorlesungen über spezielle und medizinisch-pharmazeutische Botanik* by A.W. Eichler, published first in 1876 in Kiel, then in 1880 in Berlin. Rosa Luxemburg used the Berlin edition from 1880. [...]

On November 24, 1917, she wrote about her geological studies in a letter from the Breslau prison to Luise Kautsky (Karl Kautsky's wife): "Geology has absorbed me entirely, it incredibly interests me and renders me happy. I am frightened at the thought about how short that life of mine is, how much one could learn [if it lasted longer]". (Luksemburg, 2009, p. 370)⁵²

I am not sure if my studies belong to the area of geology that gives happiness. But I, too, am frightened.

As for Luise Kautsky, in her free time (from being Karl Kautsky's wife) she was a politician and Berlin city councilor for the Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany (Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, USPD). Deported as a Jew during WWII, she died in Auschwitz in 1944. As for Rosa Luxemburg's *Herbarium*, it became an object of interest of forensic medicine in search of her dead body. As a potential source of her DNA. A stupefying connection to Alina Szapocznikow's way of thinking about a herbarium as remaining in tight connection with bodily remnants, if not as identical with them.

Rosa Luxemburg is a matron of my work also as a master of critical thinking. This doesn't mean that she didn't share some of the beliefs or mental habits of her time, especially related to her Polish background – contrary to what tends to be thought in Poland. They are visible in her correspondence with Leo Jogiches, to take one example. However, it is her analytical skills that prevailed in her *opus vitae*. She was first and foremost aware of the threat that capitalism, combined with identity politics, constituted for the emancipation of the human species as well as its very existence and co-existence with the ecosystem. The same Rosa Luxemburg I was taught to hate for holding views similar to those quoted below:

My compatriots reproach me that I don't want the independence of my fatherland! But I don't want the killing. I don't want blood. [...] If, for example, after huge bloodshed a free Poland finally came into being, it would certainly be capitalist-clerical. And what would be the benefit of that for the oppressed? If in such a Poland the people were even guaranteed a decent existence, the devotion and conservative temper of our people would guarantee that such a Poland would become a fortress inaccessible to the socialist idea.⁵³

52 Untitled editor's comment.

53 These words were put into Rosa Luxemburg's mouth by Jan Stępień in his monodrama *Róża [Rosa]* (2009, cf. Stępień, 2010). They reproduce, almost verbatim, an analysis by Stanisław Stonina, head of a four-year Polish school, founded and financed by workers extracting oil in Schodnica, Galicia. Associated with the Polish Socialist Party (Polska Partia Socjalistyczna, PPS), Stonina shared his insights with the editors of the London-based *Przedświt [Predawn]* journal, in a letter dated January 3, 1901. The letter, whose original is held at Warsaw's Archive of Modern Records (Archiwum Akt Nowych, AAN, ref. 305/VII/35 podt. 10, fols. 1–2), was later published by Jerzy Targalski Senior (Targalski, 1973, pp. 57–58).



Maria Sybilla Merian, *Malva and Stages of Development of the Grizzled Skipper* – copper engraving colored with watercolor and gouache, from the collection of Kunstkabinett Strehler (courtesy of Anna Król from the Manggha Museum of Japanese Art and Technology in Cracow)



Maria Sybilla Merian, *Cassia and Stages of Development of an Opsiphanes Genus Butterfly* – copper engraving colored with watercolor and gouache, from the collection of Kunstkabinett Strehler (courtesy of Anna Król from the Manggha Museum of Japanese Art and Technology in Cracow)



Salix alba, or the white willow, from copybook four (June 1–8, 1913) of Rosa Luxemburg's *Herbarium* (1913–1919) (*Akta Róży Luksemburg* fonds from the collection of Archiwum Akt Nowych in Warsaw, originally in the Archive of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party [Archiwum KC PZPR])

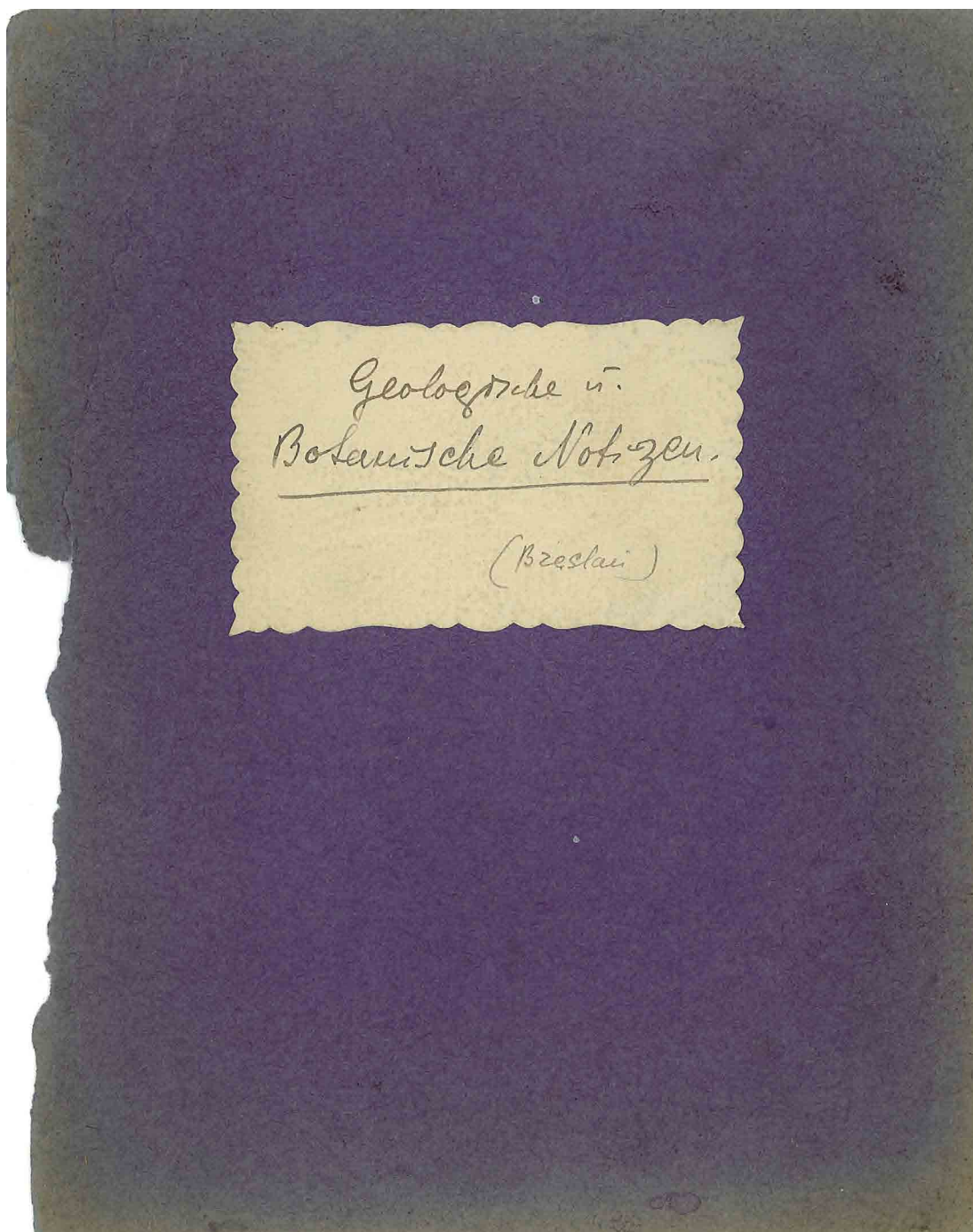


Bruelweide
(*Salix fragilis*)
Fam: Salicaceae

Salix fragilis, or the brittle willow, from copybook five (June 10–20, 1913) of Rosa Luxemburg's *Herbarium* (1913–1919) (*Akta Róży Luksemburg* fonds from the collection of Archiwum Akt Nowych in Warsaw, originally in the Archive of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party [Archiwum KC PZPR])



Salix cinerea, or the grey willow, from copybook nine (July 9–31, 1913) of Rosa Luxemburg's *Herbarium* (1913–1919) (*Akta Róży Luksemburg* fonds from the collection of Archiwum Akt Nowych in Warsaw, originally in the Archive of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party [Archiwum KC PZPR])



Geological and Botanical Notes (Breslau) – the cover of copybook eighteen of Rosa Luxemburg's *Herbarium* (1913–1919) (*Akta Róży Luksemburg* fonds from the collection of Archiwum Akt Nowych in Warsaw, originally in the Archive of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party [Archiwum KC PZPR])

In her criticism of the Polish national idea – at that time also called the national tradition or nationalism (and nowadays referred to as patriotism) – Rosa Luxemburg pointed to a crucial continuum:

the “national tradition” in [...] today’s Poland, becomes [...] a vessel for all types of reaction, a natural shield for counter-revolution. [...] Mistreated by history, the Polish national idea moved through all stages of decline and fall. Having started its political career as a romantic, noble insurgent, glorified by international revolution, it now ends as a national hooligan – a volunteer of the Black Hundreds of Russian absolutism and imperialism. (Luxemburg, 1976, p. 181)

When analyzing the stance taken by the Polish Socialist Party (Polska Partia Socjalistyczna, PPS) leadership, she pointed to “an absolute identity of its advice and political views with those of the National Democracy”:

Comparing the stance of the National Democracy with the stance of Mr. Daszyński demonstrates for all to see the special class function which, due to historical circumstances, is performed by nationalism in our society. [...] Even Mr. Świętochowski, who’s grown bald in his “liberalism”, fancies that [...] “we” had our uprisings and our bourgeoisie has to weep for half a century over our fatherland’s grave, so socialism is out of place among us. [...] Nationalism has become the general emblem of reaction.⁵⁴ (Luxemburg, 1906, p. 3)

Luxemburg was beheaded by other – German – patriots just after WWI came to an end. She barely saw the 1918 dawn of a free Poland, bathed in the blood of Jews and that of other minorities. But she knew. Her words turned out to be true with reference to post-WWI capitalist and clerical Poland. They turned out to be true with reference to post-WWII – formally socialist – Poland. They remain true with reference to post-1989 Poland, capitalist and clerical again. Cultural patterns act with the strength of compulsion. They work like the laws of physics until they are identified, addressed and fought against. Luxemburg identified the pattern. One hundred years later in her native Poland this is still remembered. And repaid with hatred.

Transgressing

It were Merian and Luxemburg who encouraged me to watch what surrounded me more broadly and break the rules. This is why some plants appear in *Herbarium* twice. At the flower and the fruit stage. At the same time, for some plants some stages may not be represented. This is the case of the flowering poppy. The closest I managed to get to it was the day when I saw a poppy petal burning alive – literally transforming into ashes – on the scorching concrete of Treblinka. I didn’t have the reflexes to document the process. I watched the spectacle of evanescence, overwhelmed and transfixed.

54 Ignacy Daszyński (1866–1936) – leader of the Polish Socialist Party, considering himself, and considered by others, to be a social democratic politician. Aleksander Świętochowski (1849–1938) – writer, publicist, historian and philosopher, one of the doyens of the faction of the Polish intelligentsia which defined itself as liberal and progressive. Towards the end of his life, a proponent of the National Democracy.

Breaking the rules also meant extending the initial herbarium project to include a bestiary, an ossuary and a lapidary, according to the natural/cultural realities of the site. Realities that, indeed, are to be seen, examined, described and reflected on not only through a botanical but also through a zoological lens. As for the bestiary, wasn't a ZOO erected within the area of the camp in the image and likeness of the Ark of Noah?⁵⁵ Is not that place today full of birds for which the SS had a particular affection? The photo album that humanity has inherited from Kurt Franz, Treblinka II deputy commander and then successor to Franz Stangl, features a fox's muzzle. Similar to the one that greeted Teresa Alter (T. C. Masson, 2016) and us, her family and friends, at the entrance of the former camp. As for the deer from the ZOO, I can see the shadows and hear the hoofbeat of their successors while taking pictures. The ground trembles for a while as they pass. I also encountered their skulls in the south part of the former *Totenlager*. There were two. An adult and a baby. Hence an ossuary.

The ossuary encompasses distinct fragments of animal skeletons and bone splinters of human origin. One human tooth as well. However – from the point of view of the “masters of the situation” – the living being to whom the tooth belonged was not considered, or murdered as, a human being. Universalist categories were accessible to him/her and his/her peers only conditionally. If at all. Should I have said then: bone splinters of Jewish origin and a Jewish tooth? Am I reproducing the gesture of exclusion when doing so? Especially since qualifying them as human – “Humans dealt this fate to humans”⁵⁶ – would obfuscate, if not erase, the realities of the murder and serve the interests of the complicit societies and cultures. Whatever the case, the misfit bones in the form of splinters are at the core of the ossuary. Some of them white because not touched by fire, some of them black from being burnt. The ossuary documents the confusion of the human with the animal. But while comparing the state of the remains we can see the difference in the treatment reserved to them. Posthumous indifference towards the animal remnants versus wartime Nazi and postwar Polish aggression towards the human ones because they were defined as Jewish.

55 For some of the painted representations of the Arch of Noe see Eco, 2009, pp. 153–161.

56 Motto to Zofia Nałkowska's *Medallions* (rendered as “People dealt this fate to people” in the English translation, see Nałkowska, 2000, p. V). Henryk Grynberg and Marek Zaleski debated whether humans dealt this fate to humans (see Zaleski, 2000) or humans dealt this fate to Jews (Henryk Grynberg – see Grynberg, 1984a), whereas Kinga Dunin stated that – as far as the Polish participation in the Holocaust is concerned – Poles dealt this fate to Jews, if not Poles to humans (Dunin, 2004).

Zofia Nałkowska's 1946 formula “Humans dealt this fate to humans” initially had a revolutionary potential. However, Polish dominant culture benefited from it to erase the identity of the victims. Therefore, in Poland there can never be enough of reminding that “the ashes were definite and Jewish, and the crime was not ‘against humanity’ but against Jews” (Grynberg, 1984b, p. 133). “Today we know for sure that the subject and the object of this sentence have a different scope of meaning than it seemed to us and than we would wish” (Gross, 2003, p. 119). “The critique of humanist universalism as false universalism remains in force wherever universalization is not accompanied by distinct indication of the victims' identity and of the sources, mechanisms and socio-cultural legitimacy of antisemitism. That triggers the necessity of delegitimizing not only antisemitism but also the culture that legitimizes it. In other words, this critique remains in force everywhere universalization proceeds without indicating the unequal conditions of access to universality” (Janicka, 2014–2015, p. 182).

A Treblinka survivor testifies:

The limbs of the cadavers burnt on the grates generally didn't disintegrate. Burnt heads, legs, bones etc. had thus to be separated. Then the ash brigade had to shatter them with special wooden clubs resembling iron shovels for mashing the gravel while building roads. Other tools also resembled those used in working with sand and stones. Next to the heaps of ashes were deployed wire nettings with fine meshes: shattered ashes were sifted through in the way one separates the sand from the gravel. What didn't pass through the meshes was shattered again. Sheets of metal spread out nearby served to [accomplish] this. [...] Eventually, the "ready" ash had to be pure, without a tiniest bone and as delicate as cigarette ash. (Rajchman, 2011, p. 61)⁵⁷

An identical – one to one – set of utensils was used by postwar Polish explorers and exploiters of the Treblinka deposits. Besides regular agricultural tools, as already mentioned. The processing effectuated after 1945 by Poles in five other former extermination camps was no different.

Following the idea of hybridization, the project also includes a conversatorium: a collection or an accumulation of dialogues that I overheard over the concrete. Maintained in the genre of cold antisemitic hate speech, they constitute a living memory of the site in particular and of the Holocaust in general. As a genre they may be related to the "Jewish cabaret" – Kabaret Treblinka – whose members, having lost their families in the gas chambers and about to be gassed themselves, performed in the extermination camp in 1943 before the highly amused SS staff and the Jewish inmates, who had lost their families in the gas chambers and were about to be gassed themselves (for a change).⁵⁸ Like the "comic" sketches from the historical "cabaret", the present exchanges refer to the realities of the place, beginning with the majestic Professor–Doctor overture. But there were also other conversations.

57 The existing English translation of Rajchman's testimony (Rajchman, 2012) mentions ovens; in reality, bodies were burnt outdoors on large grates made from railway tracks. See also the story of the *Forschungstation der Aktion Reinhardt* in Kulmhof am Ner and the *Sonderkommando 1005* in charge of erasing the traces of the bodies of the murdered Jews (Spector, 1990).

58 "At evening roll call Lalka announces a new plan for our entertainment: 'Now that we're not working on Sunday afternoons, we'll have a little amusement, maybe a little cabaret – with music, singing, skits, boxing'" (Glazar, 1995, p. 122). See also Jankiel Wiernik, 2003, pp. 72–73, 77–78. Artur Gold's Treblinka slave orchestra was famous locally, as were the spontaneous multi-voice concerts improvised by the Ukrainian guards watching over the territory from the shooting towers at night. (I heard the story about the orchestra on September 23, 2020, from the owner of Agro, a business situated on the site of the old Jewish cemetery, at 23 Szkolna Street in Kosów Lacki. The owner hails from the village of Guty. He was born in 1948 but had heard about the orchestra from his mother and sister. His family owned a field right next to the extermination camp.)

VI. Forget-Me-Nots

Niezapominajki
to są kwiatki z bajki!
Rosną nad potoczkiem,
patrzą rybim oczkiem.

Gdy się płynie łódką,
śmieją się cichutko
i szepcą mi skromnie:
“Nie zapomnij o mnie”.⁵⁹

Children song to the lyrics by Maria Konopnicka
(1842–1910) often sung by Simcha “Kazik”
Rotem (1924–2018)

Since 2002, on May 15 we celebrate in our country the Polish Forget-Me-Not Day. [...] We all know this [...] little plant.

The Zbąszyń News, 2015⁶⁰

It was August 2005. Warsaw. I was running. As always. Already late. Two women were standing at the United Nations Roundabout (Rondo ONZ). Two tourists from abroad. In sport shoes indicating most likely the United States. They held a map, both of them together, and turned it in all directions fighting against the wind. I used to live on Śliska Street. I used to live on Platynowa Street. I knew the neighborhood like the back of my hand. Every single curbstone. Every single crevice in the wall. It couldn't take much time. That was why I asked.

It was not my question. But it was her answer. In Polish. With a diction that nobody has if they don't really have to.

“We lived at 25 Twarda Street. Daddy [*tatus*] had his practice at Ogrodowa Street. He also was imprisoned at Pawiak. My name is Teresa. Klara, actually. Klara Teresa. And this is my daughter. Simone”.

I didn't know but I learned. I had an *ucho szmalcownika*, a blackmailer's ear. Infallible. Death-dealing. I recognized her.⁶¹ *Rozpoznałam ją*.

59 A rough translation reads as follows. Stanza 1: “Forget-me-nots / are little flowers from a fairy tale! / They grow by a little brook, / They look around with a little fish eye”. Stanza 2: “When you go by boat, / they softly laugh / and modestly whisper: / ‘Do not forget me’”.

60 Michalczak, 2015.

61 *To recognize* in wartime Polish didn't mean “to identify somebody from having encountered them before” but “to identify somebody as Jewish”. *Recognizing* those who struggled to survive on the Aryan side was a murderous antisemitic social ritual, practiced individually and collectively, for money and in a “disinterested” way. Those who did it for money, jewellery or other valuables were called *szmalcownicy*. *Szmalcownictwo* constituted an informal but popular and lucrative wartime profession. The blackmail consisted in the alternative: money or death (by means of handing over to the Polish police or German authorities). Both forms of *recognition*, “disinterested” or for money, constituted a lethal danger to the victims. The former triggered the latter. Stripping Jews of money, jewellery or other valuables was not a minor crime. It meant depriving them of any chance of survival. In order to benefit from the Polish “helping business”, Jews needed considerable financial

As she later explained: “The Aryan side. [...] This was an extremely dangerous place for Jews” (T. C. Masson, 2016, p. 8). “Every person we encountered could be a dangerous enemy who could betray us immediately” (T. C. Masson, 2016, p. 47). I was born on the Aryan side. On the Aryan side I was raised. In broad daylight. Darkness before my eyes. In the noise of the crossroad. The deafening beating of my heart. I tightly gripped the human being standing in front of me. Teresa’s embrace was equally strong. It was about the same issue that was two different issues – so different they will never converge – that we burst out crying.

Simone was born in Canada. She grew up in the United States. The journey to Poland was her first contact with Europe, although it was undoubtedly from here that the old-fashioned golden ring on her ring finger came. This was the wedding ring of her grandmother Hanka – Bubele, Bubu – who raised her when Teresa had to run away. Teresa has fought a war ever since she turned two. Against the Germans. Against the Poles.⁶² For six years. On the front line all the time. She won.

The price of that victory, of my very existence, so hard fought and hard won, is not negligible; it is paid by me, throughout my life, with pain, and paid too by all those who love me now and in the past, [...] and most of all my daughter [...]. (T. C. Masson, 2016, p. 37)

Teresa won the war. Then she had to run away.

[A]ll in the vain work and unsuccessful service of the work of denial and the endless and very hard labor of trying to suppress the irrepressible thrust of thoughts, feelings and images that were not successfully eliminated even after a lifetime of trying to ban them forever. (T. C. Masson, 2016, p. 13)

She had been running away for quite a long time. She was sixty-five when she had an accident:

I remember nothing of this and nothing much of the next three months in the hospital, except for the experience of the paranoid episode in which I was lost for three or four days, trapped inside the terror and images of the Umschlagplatz. (T. C. Masson, 2016, p. 14)

This is when she decided to go there, which is to say – come here.

Between a fried egg with buckwheat groats and a black cat lapping up kefir from a cap on the table, I saw a postcard. Written on June 24, 1940. Sent one day later. From Warsaw to New York. With a cry for help. *Lieber Bruder*. Deutsches Reich. Deutsche Post OSTEN. Two green stamps with Hindenburg. Sender Szajna Roza Fuleder. 25 Twarda Street, apartment 12. The Germans ordered the creation of the ghetto some three months later. Twarda Street found itself in the so-called small ghetto. Two years later,

resources. As a little girl, Teresa had to confront male and female *szmalcownicy*, sometimes her age, in wartime Warsaw and in the countryside.

62 “I am thinking here of superb literary creations like Jerzy Kosiński’s *The Painted Bird*; of course, he was not a good or a nice man; he was not a *mensch*; I spoke with him, I know [...]. But what he wrote, though false as to his own past, was uncannily accurate as a description of what had occurred in Poland in those sad and bizarre times” (T. C. Masson, 2016, p. 17).

before Yom Kippur, they were standing at the Umschlagplatz.⁶³ Roza. Her husband Josef. Next to them, their last daughter to remain alive, Hanka. In a coat. With her daughter Teresa – Klara at the time – five years old. Hidden on her back under the coat. “Small children were totally useless, therefore totally expendable, even more at risk than old people” (T. C. Masson, 2016, p. 15):

In my mind [...] there is a weird silence as I see my grandfather standing tall in front of the table, his face carved in stone, his chin up as if he were looking beyond. My grandmother stands next to him, looking much smaller. Then a sudden, very loud burst of gunfire, and my grandmother drops. I must have moved up on my mother's body to see because my perspective is higher. My grandfather picks her up, her head lolls, and I feel my mother scream and wail. Then, a soldier began to hit my grandfather with the butt of his rifle to move him away from the table and into the thick column of people moving slowly, I now know, to the trains to Treblinka, my mother's whole body twisted and screamed out with pain that I felt with every cell of my body. [...]

My mother always said that the worst moment of the war to her was the choice between trying to save me or running to the aid of her beloved parents. I know this was that tortured moment for her that she could never put aside or escape from. At that moment when her entire body screamed in despair, I felt that scream. (T. C. Masson, 2016, pp. 15–16)⁶⁴

63 The Warsaw *Umsiedlungsaktion* or *Grossaktion* was part of the *Aktion Reinhardt*, the industrial extermination of Poland's Jews by the Germans and their helpers. The *Grossaktion* started on July 22, 1942, after the ghetto had been surrounded by Lithuanians, Latvians and the Polish police. At the very beginning, the prisoners of the ghetto were taken to the Umschlagplatz from their places of residence. After about one week, the procedure was taken over by the Germans and their Ukrainian assistants, as the Jewish Service of Order, initially forced by Germans to conduct the roundup, didn't execute the German orders rigorously enough. Then, still in the first half of August, the selection started being conducted directly at the Umschlagplatz, where everyone had to assemble. It is not impossible, however, that Teresa refers to the fourth stage of the *Grossaktion* – the encirclement (*kocioł*) – since the families Fuleder and Alter were deported at that time; even though, given their social capital and material status, they most probably had been equipped with the necessary authorizations to stay temporarily alive. Moreover, Teresa uses the term “Great Selection” and mentions an additional, specific order. Such an order was promulgated on September 5, 1942, after seven weeks of continuous mass deportations of Warsaw Jews to Treblinka II gas chambers.

The encirclement was targeted precisely against those who had been previously authorized to stay alive together with their families (slave laborers, physicians and nurses, functionaries of the Jewish Council and its institutions, as well as the Jewish Service of Order). The so-called Great Selection or Great Reduction – a selection within a selection, a reduction within a reduction – was conducted at several checkpoints improvised in different places all around the Umschlagplatz. The picture Teresa remembered – the heat, the crowd, the deadly fear, people being shot, parents striving to smuggle their children or abandoning them – couldn't be more accurate. In the face of the Great Reduction it often enough happened that ghetto prisoners killed their beloved ones and took their own lives. The female doctors from the children's hospital poisoned to death the babies they had under their care and gave morphine to the older children in order to prevent them from being aware when they would be shot in their beds by the Germans and their Ukrainian, Lithuanian and Latvian assistants. Roza Ripin-Fuleder, Teresa's grandmother, was most probably among the 2,648 people shot dead during the *kocioł*. 60 others committed suicide. 339 died a so-called natural death due to the inhumane conditions of detention, more often than not in the open air, in the city block delimited by Smocza, Gęsia, Zamenhoffa, Szczęśliwa Streets and the Parysowski Square. 54,269 people were deported to Treblinka. All that during the five days of the encirclement alone.

The encirclement (*kocioł*) occurred between September 6 and September 11, 1942. That year Yom Kippur fell on September 21. This is when the Germans decided to end the Warsaw *Umsiedlungsaktion* by executing the vast majority (2,020 out of 2,400) of the functionaries of the Jewish Service of Order. The encirclement fell between Leil Selichot and Erev Rosh Hashana leading up to the High Holidays. This is probably why Teresa's memory associated the described events with Yom Kippur.

64 This was a typical experience among those who survived the encirclement (and other deportations). Henryk Makower, a physician of the Jewish Service of Order, after having lost all his family there, remained encased for the rest of his life in a similar moment: “I justify my behavior in front of myself, I know that such were the realities, but back then I had only the feeling of despair and didn't think at all. Two sleepless nights and two days of ultimate nervous tension after seven weeks of deportations and three years of war, it is hard to imagine. In

Before Yom Kippur 1942 there were other days of the *Grossaktion*, the Great Action. In the first period, most probably still at Twarda Street:

I remember steel-grey hair, prominent cheek bones, dark eyes, a sad beautiful face, scratchy clothes. That was my grandmother, my mother's mother; it was a dark space, with rough boards and dirt on the floor. I suppose, now, that it was my grandparents' hiding place, where we all lived together. Old people and children did not have work cards for slave labor in the factories; they had to stay in hiding all the time, and would immediately be brutally murdered if found. This hiding place was below the floor boards of a building because I remember being shushed to keep absolutely still: I remember the feeling of being transfixed with fear and hearing boots and banging above, sometimes screams of pain and fear. [...] All I remember of my grandfather at that time is someone very big who had to squeeze and stoop to come in through the opening. But I do remember him later, vividly, at the Umschlagplatz. (T. C. Masson, 2016, p. 12)

And there was yet another day. Teresa's father, Hanka's husband was Eljasz Alter, Elek, a physician (a ticket of life), at that time probably in the last headquarters of the Jewish hospitals: at the Umschlagplatz. The remainder of Alter and Fuleder families was taken care of by Elek's brother Badza (Jewish Service of Order, another ticket of life), who bent over backwards. Teresa remembered Badza from before the war throwing her up sky-high and catching her cheerfully. From after, she remembers him exclusively as terrorized.

That day, too, my Uncle Badza came running and my mother and father, taking me along, rushed off in a panic after him, toward a thick column of people being herded with whips, by armed guards, to a waiting train. My grandparents (my father's parents) and my mother's sisters and their husbands, all my aunts and uncles, except for Uncle Badza, had been taken and were being loaded into the waiting cattle car of the train. They all had suitcases or heavy bundles of possessions with them. [...] My father and uncle Badza stood nearby and cried quietly; there was nothing they could do. Then my Uncle Badza rushed off, saying he knew what to do. And we never saw him again. (T. C. Masson, 2016, p. 19–20)

Over Earl Grey tea and apple pie (russet apples, raisins, shortbread, crumble, walnuts), I saw in a picture the face of Roza (25 Twarda Street, apartment 12), who, on the cast iron sheet of the kitchen stove, made toast out of old bread soaked in imitation coffee for her granddaughter Teresa – Klara at the time. French toast, it was called. A ghetto delicacy. I saw Elek. I saw the Fuleder sisters: Hanka, Rut and, particularly beloved to Hanka, Ester. (It was after Ester that Simone was given her Hebrew, second name. "She, too, is a survivor" (T. C. Masson, 2016, p. 37). Simone Esther. Not Ester. Ester did not survive.) In three-piece suit, straightened out and indeed tall, against a photographic atelier's backdrop, painted in a mysterious thicket and gothic ruins, remained, looking into the camera, Josef, the grandfather of Teresa – Klara at the time – owner of an estate in Golub Dobrzyń, where she was born.

any case there is no doubt that, as a son and brother, I failed that great life exam. [...] Not only is this a black stain on my life that thus far had been honest and decent, but it is also a permanent remorse afflicting me at any moment when I see my dear faces before my eyes. I see them often during the daytime, during sleepless nights, in my dreams" (Makower, 1987, pp. 125, 127).

Teresa and Simone stopped coming during the Great Recession when the house in California owned by Teresa and her wife Deborah was foreclosed by a bank that had taken over their bank. As a lawyer, Teresa became a tireless advocate for the home owners fighting the foreclosures of their houses, yet another social group incapacitated by turbocapitalism, which she hated. Turbocapitalism alone would have sufficed. But there was more. It was two in one. She didn't let that go even for a while. Her answer would be one and the same.

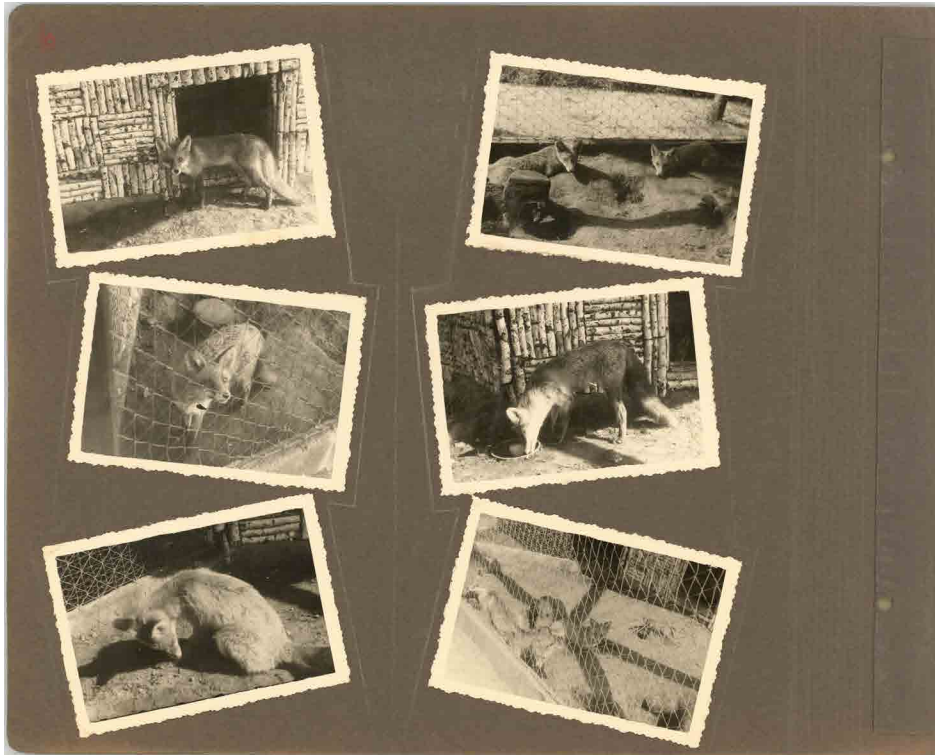
"I can't come. It's the Deutsche Bank".

Jeffrey did come. From New Zealand. Simone's father. Teresa's erstwhile husband. An expert in Sanskrit and Freud. An animal rights activist. Born and raised in the United States. Family from Bukhara. Without any ado, he asked about 25 Twarda Street, despite already knowing that it didn't exist. We spent most of the time right there, in the clutter of the United Nations Roundabout. Jeff was in Poland for a very short time, he didn't want to get distracted by non-essential things. He wanted to understand something he understood anyhow, as he loved Teresa and Simone.

They themselves came only when Teresa started getting worse, weaker. In late fall 2014. They were three. Teresa. Simone. Deborah. In Warsaw the opening was soon to take place of something announced as the Museum of History of Polish Jews, then renamed the Polin Museum. The Poland Museum. At first, Teresa thought this was a joke. Once inside, however, downstairs where the main exhibit had been set, from the one being recognized, she became the one who recognizes. She said: "I do recognize. This is Poland. The Poland we escaped without even waiting for the Kielce pogrom. The very same. It hasn't changed at all".⁶⁵ Simone had with her a kaddish, laic version, on a sheet printed from the Internet. The sheet came in useful. Assuredly, this was not the first kaddish to be said in this place, underground.⁶⁶

65 "Just before the opening night we crossed paths with a young man who worked for the Museum, and when we explained that my mom had returned to Warsaw for the opening, that she survived the Warsaw Ghetto as a child, we were told that we would not be allowed to attend the opening reception, they could not, after all, be expected to extend invitations to 'all the survivors', who might return, wishing to attend" (S. E. Masson, 2016, p. 3).

66 Apart from the last headquarters of the Judenrat, the tenement at 38 Zamenhofa Street also used to exist in the present location of the POLIN Museum – i.e., POLAND Museum. There were at least two prayer houses in the courtyards of the tenement. "Chone Shmeruk, a literary historian who spent part of his childhood in this building, remembered one prayer room, owned by Kotsk Chasidim, and another maintained by a group of tailors [see Shmeruk & Adamczyk-Garbowska, 1998]. [...] It is possible that one of the prayer rooms described by Shmeruk remained in the building after the Nazi invasion and the creation of the ghetto. Such a prayer room was visited in this tenement in January 1943, five months after the Gross Aktion Warschau, by Hillel Seidman, a historian, Judenrat official and Orthodox Jewish community activist. Seidman was invited to see this location by a group of yeshiva students, who led him through a series of attics and locked rooms in the neighboring buildings before getting to the tenement at no. 38, where, through an entrance hidden in an oven, he entered an underground bunker. It was fully supplied, and at that time had access to water and electric power; religious studies continued inside [see Seidman, 1998, pp. 180–188]. It is almost certain that this bunker was destroyed three months later, shortly after the outbreak of the Ghetto Uprising. On the first day of the fighting, on April 19, 1943, the tenement was burned down by the Nazis; it is known that many people died inside [see Schieb et al., 2006, p. 526]" (Matyjaszek, 2016, pp. 24–25). During the 1942 Gross Aktion Warschau, the ghetto prisoners hid – and prayed – also in the headquarters of the Judenrat.



Foxes held captive at the ZOO inside Treblinka II as photographed by SS Untersturmführer Kurt Franz, deputy and then successor to Treblinka commander-in-chief SS Hauptsturmführer Franz Stangl, probably in 1943. Leaf six of Kurt Franz's photographic album (from the collection of Staatsanwaltschaft Düsseldorf, courtesy of Landesarchiv Nordrhein-Westfalen – Abteilung Rheinland – RWB 18244a_0006). Special thanks to Katrin Stoll



First of the six pictures from leaf six of Kurt Franz's photographic album – Treblinka II, probably 1943 (Photo by Kurt Franz) (from the collection of Staatsanwaltschaft Düsseldorf, courtesy of Landesarchiv Nordrhein-Westfalen – Abteilung Rheinland – RWB 18244b_0033). Special thanks to Katrin Stoll



A fox at the entrance of the former extermination camp – Treblinka II, October 30, 2014
(Photo by Simone Esther Masson) (© by Simone Esther Masson, courtesy of Simone Esther Masson)



Klara Teresa Alter with daughter Simone Esther Masson (on the right) and Elżbieta Janicka (on the left) – Treblinka II, October 30, 2014 (Photo by Deborah Kenoyer) (© by Deborah Kenoyer, courtesy of Deborah Kenoyer)



Simone Esther Masson's tattoo – Oakland, CA, March 21, 2020 (Photo by Jaime Beth Levy)
(© by Jaime Beth Levy, courtesy of Jaime Beth Levy)



Forget-Me-Not flower shop by the road leading to Treblinka – 14 Nurska Street, Małkinia Górna, July 15, 2020
(Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



Shop-sign for Forget-Me-Not flower shop ("Forget-Me-Not / Flower Shop and More") – 14 Nurska Street, Małkinia Górna, July 15, 2020 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)

Teresa wanted to bid farewell to her family. To at least give it a try. Throughout her lifetime, she hadn't managed. We went to the Umschlagplatz. We went to Treblinka. By the entrance, on the path, in the middle, a fox was sitting absorbed in a thorough toilet. He ignored our coming. He didn't disturb himself. Finally, however, he got up. He looked at us long. Very long. He made a few leisurely steps toward the forest edge. He stopped. He examined us carefully one more time. Then he paced in a stately, dignified way into the thicket along the north border of the former camp.

On the way Simone wanted to know if forget-me-nots grew there. I said they did. Truthfully.

"Will you show me?"

"They grow there in spring. It is the end of October now".

Forget-me-nots were Hanka's favorite flowers. Their sight contained everything and everyone. Her parents Roza and Josef. Her sisters Ester and Rut. Golub Dobrzyń, the Fuleders' estate. Kutno, the family summer house. The studies in Liège because of the *numerus clausus* in Poland. (In Liège, Hanka met Elek. This is where they fell in love.) Also the Alter family, then, owners of an estate in Pławno. And Pławno. And even 25 Twarda Street, apartment 12, remembered as the happy times, still, for everyone was alive, was there. And further on... the roundup. And the rest.

When the fox receded, Simone's decision was taken.

"Then show me the place where they grow when it is spring".

This was the last time that we met. Teresa died less than two years later by the San Francisco Bay. According to her will, her ashes were scattered into a creek leading to the Pacific Ocean.

Before they left, I eyed a tattoo on Simone's shoulder. A swallow holding in its beak a little stem of tiny pale blue flowers with a yellow middle. And one word below. In Polish. *Niezapominajki*.

Forget-me-nots are little flowers from a fairy tale.

VII. Another Sample

Lapidarium

The penultimate part of the whole project is a lapidarium, which may be seen as a legacy of Rosa Luxemburg's merger of the botanical and the geological (the organic and the mineral). But yet another argument may be adduced at this junction. Krzysztof Jung's artistic legacy has been made public online recently. A visionary of body art, Jung

also practiced drawing, painting and left behind a photographic archive containing mostly photographic sketches and studies. Years ago, in the catalogue of his posthumous retrospective, I came across a picture of him taken by Wojciech Karpiński on August 16, 1991 (Sitkowska, 2001, p. 211). Wearing flip-flops (an important detail because of the kind of contact with the ground they allow), a camera in his hands, Jung is kneeling among the stones on Treblinka concrete. Most probably in the back part of the former *Totenlager*.

The observation of nature inspired his most important body-art works. His passion for insects, amphibians and reptiles, with whom he shared his life and flat, was well known, and Treblinka is a genuine *vivarium*, harboring a variety of them. Especially the concrete and the crevices separating individual concrete slabs are cherished by the amphibian and reptile public. During all these years I have wondered what Krzysztof Jung, so sensitive to the vibrations of the animate world, saw through the lens of his camera. What kind of place did he encounter? I finally found that out thanks to the newly established website.

Jung's journey to Treblinka resulted in five photographic studies (Jung, n.d.). Two of them are formal variations on the theme of the landscape captured with the eye of a sculptor or a spatial designer. Two other seem to be taken at random. In one of them what seems to be the most important – the menorah from the megalith – appears far to the left of the frame, which destabilizes the gaze and the whole process of perception. The second one seems deprived of a focal point entirely. This impression lasts until the spectator marks out and starts examining the center of the composition. Both pictures turn out to be constructed around plants – usually perceived as too common and average to deserve to be a center of anything: a sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*) and a dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) in the blowball stage. The last of the studies consists in a portrayal of a dark major stone encircled by several bright minor ones. The scene – like a fractal – repeats the main commemorative pattern: a megalith surrounded by smaller blocks. In other words, Krzysztof Jung granted the organic and the mineral equal status, finding them equally constitutive of the site. His artistic choices related to nature didn't use to miss the point. Having such predecessors, I couldn't be more sure and certain of my own gesture.

The material connection of the lapidarium to the site is immediate. This is so because of the gravel pit operated by the forced labor camp Treblinka I and situated between the two camps. And because of the wartime Black Road connecting them. And because of the shape of the postwar commemoration. All these parts of the present landscape involve stones – a raw material, which while naturally immobile, is culturally movable and eagerly displaced. The stones in question are of disparate origin. The one closest to the site is the gravel from the nearby pit. It served as the foundation for the Black Road, whose name derived from the color of the gravel, vividly distinguishing itself from the surrounding “shimmering yellow sand”, to quote Richard Glazar (Glazar,

1995, p. 142).⁶⁷ The pavement of the Black Road, however, consists of stones originating from a slightly more remote neighborhood: Kosów Lacki, the town of the already-mentioned dairy, a former shtetl outlived by its El Greco.⁶⁸ The most common field granite dominates. In Latin one would say *granites arvus*. The material was not entirely raw. The stone blocks were polished and carved before being shattered into pieces. Their exact source were the Kosów Lacki Jewish cemeteries, the old one on Szkolna Street and the new one by the road to Sokołów Podlaski. None of them formally exists today, despite the fact that the dead remain in their places. Difficult not to see it as a postwar Polish contribution to the annihilation endeavor inaugurated by the Germans during the war.⁶⁹ In other words, the Black Road is made out of Jewish gravestones (matzevot).

One person who hasn't realized it yet is the director of the Museum of Fight and Martyrdom in Treblinka Edward Kopówka, who claims in his scientific paper: "The stones were picked up in the neighboring fields" (Kopówka, 2013b, p. 54). Which can be true if we qualify Jewish cemeteries as fields, as was largely the case in postwar Poland. To be entirely honest, Edward Kopówka is not a specialist in the history of the Treblinka II extermination camp. He is an expert in the history of the Treblinka I slave labor camp. However, this doesn't seem to help, either. While describing the liquidation of the labor camp, he states clearly:

67 Vasily Grossman states: "Cinders and ashes were taken outside the camp grounds [of Treblinka II – E.J.]. Peasants from the village of Wólka [Okraglik – E.J.] were ordered to load them on their carts and scatter them along the road leading from the death camp to the labor camp. Child prisoners with spades then spread the ashes more evenly. Sometimes these children found melted gold coins or dental crowns. The ashes made the road black, like a mourning ribbon, and so the children were known as 'the children from the black road' (Grossman, 2011). Grossman's reconstruction of the events (first published in: Gros[s]man, 1945, p. 27) is not exact. In reality, the farmers from Wólka Okraglik and other villages – together with their children, whom I had the opportunity to meet and talk to as well – systematically exploited the fields of ashes of Treblinka II but already after the departure of the Germans.

At the end of the 1990s, The Council for the Protection of Struggle and Martyrdom Sites commissioned the analysis of the samples of soil from the so-called Black Road. There was a suspicion that it may contain human ashes, but the examination did not detect the presence of organic remains" (Zawadka, 2015, p. 52).

Grossman's Treblinka account may be found also in *The Black Book*, which he co-edited with Ilya Ehrenburg (Ehrenburg & Grossman, 2002; Grossman, 2002). What is often not mentioned, for instance in the article on *The Black Book* from YIVO Encyclopedia (Ro'i, 2010), is that the original version of publication – as Ehrenburg and Grossman conceived it – omitted those materials collected by the Jewish Antifascist Committee which addressed Lithuanian and Ukrainian participation in the Holocaust. Similarly in *Life and Fate* (Grossman, 2006), in the account of the Holocaust by bullets in his native Berdyczów/Berdychiv/Barditshev, Grossman spared its Ukrainian participants – both civilians and in uniform – and charged the Germans with exclusive responsibility for the murder. The same pattern – an operation sparing the non-German actors – manifests itself in his Treblinka account.

68 The spirit of El Greco proceeded to accompany the film crew shooting *Shoah*. Lanzmann said about one of his Polish interlocutors, Bronisław Falborski from Koło, that he looked as if he'd stepped out of an El Greco painting (cf. Bikont, 1997, p. 12).

69 "There were two Jewish cemeteries in Kosów: an older one, dating back at least to the 18th century – in the area of the then Kosów Ruski, and a new one – in the south of Kosów Lacki. Both were destroyed to the core during WWII" (Canin, 2018b, p. 239, note 201). The rhetoric of the note is typical of Polish antisemitic discourse, which carefully omits the identity of the perpetrators in the cases where Poles were involved in the crimes against Jews. Another variant consists in attributing entire responsibility for a given crime to Germans, thus erasing its Polish context. This rhetoric began to disappear after the 2000 Jedwabne debate, then became legitimate again after the 2004 accession of Poland to the European Union. The notes to Canin's book were written by three authors. I managed to establish that Ewa Koźmińska-Frejlik was not the author of note 201. On the Jewish cemeteries of Kosów Lacki see also *Zagłada cmentarzy żydowskich* [The annihilation of Jewish cemeteries] by Krzysztof Bielawski (Bielawski, 2020, pp. 37, 47).

The Poles were locked in a barrack, whereas the area occupied by the Jews was encircled by the SS and the guards. All the Jews were ordered to go outside the barracks and lie down on the ground face down. In the Jewish part of the camp, there were at the time around 550 people, including women and children. Around 17 people were singled out as essential professionals and retained in the camp. The remaining [Jewish – E. J.] inmates were led to the forest and shot there. (Kopówka, 2013b, p. 59)

As a result: “The mass graves were commemorated with 112 one-meter high concrete crosses and the individual graves with 12 further crosses” (Zawadka, 2015, p. 46). After all, as Edward Kopówka writes, during the liquidation of the camp “Also around 20 Polish prisoners were shot, including women and children” (Kopówka, 2013b, p. 60). And perhaps this is why Director Kopówka patronizes the installation of further crosses – “Today the number of crosses has grown to 140” (Kopówka, 2013b, p. 60) – just as he welcomes the *Via Crucis* pilgrimages of Polish youth and other religious practices onto the grounds of Treblinka I.

The originators of the Black Road were German and Austrian Nazis. Its construction was accomplished by Jewish inmates from the forced labor camp Treblinka I. According to the German order, they were supposed to lay the pieces of gravestones so that the inscription faced the ground. But some managed to do the opposite. I strived to document the result of all these anonymous attempts that turned out to be “successful”, while keeping in memory all those – uncounted and no longer countable – that failed.

Laying the slivers and bigger pieces of the matzevot face up was an act of insubordination at the risk of immediate death. A gesture of revolt undertaken for its own sake. An intent to leave a message without the tiniest hope that it would be recognized as such and received by an integrally hostile surrounding milieu (see Krzepicki, 1979, p. 126). This refers directly to the Polish context of the Holocaust. The German Nazi *modus operandi* considerably differed from the local Christian – Polish Catholic – tradition of destroying Jewish cemeteries and recycling matzevot. I mean the custom of laying them face up in order to make them visible. Why did Germans mind what was ordinary to Poles? “Maybe the Hebrew letters irritated them? Paradoxically, this insured that the matzevot are splendidly preserved. Sometimes their painted colors have even survived” (Baksik & Kowalska, 2012, p. 41).

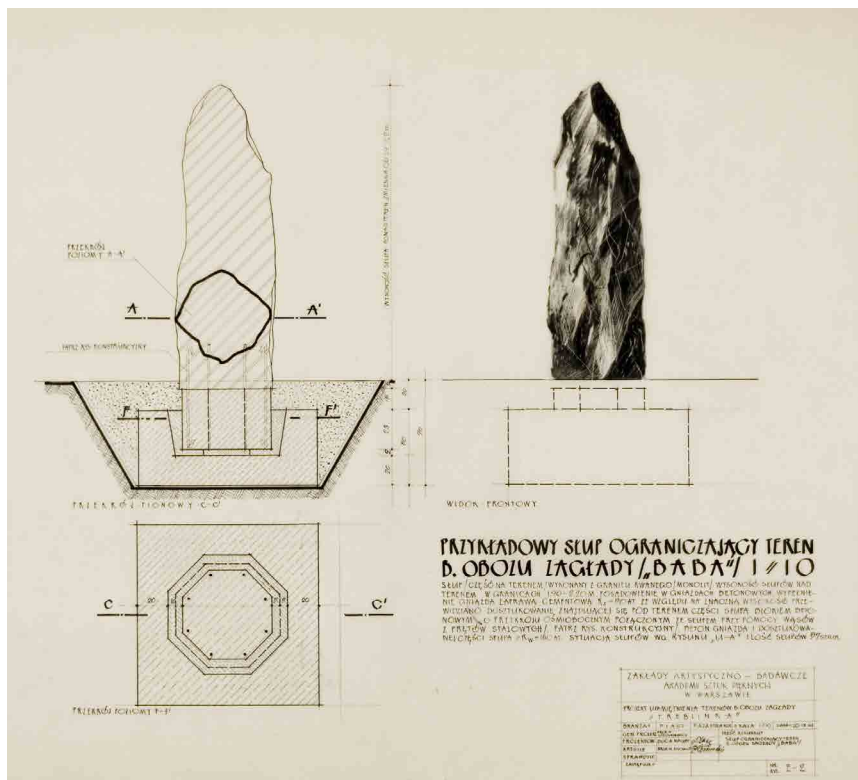
The extermination of Jews is usually described in terms of mass killing. This description, though not false, is burdened with the risk of obfuscating the fact that the mass killing required the individual killing of every single person defined as Jewish in whatever way by whomever of Christian background. We thus have to constantly be watchful and incessantly problematize the way we think about the extermination. Or, more straightforwardly, we have to think about the extermination in a pendular way. Passing from the collective to the individual and the other way around. While perishing individually, Jews – like their German and Polish enemies – were well aware that they were targeted as a collectivity defined from the outside according to different but concordant criteria (be they theological, ideological or biological). All of them were cultural –

Dostawy kamienia do cmentarza zbiorowego zamówione do dnia 12. XII. 1961		12. XII. 61.
ROGRZEWICA	grauit	+ 50 t + 20 t) 70
~~W.~~ M. WISNIOŁA	kwarcyt	200 t + 20 t) 220 ? (60)
WIERKINIA	portland	(40 t)
STRZEBŁÓW	grauit	200 t 300 t) 500 (50)
STRZELIN	grauit	200 t
KSIĘGNIKI	baran	(40 t)
SUWAŁKI	obornik	40 t (320) 200
ZIMNIK	grauit	20 t
PRZEDPORÓWA to przewidywany K/PIŁAWA GÓRKA (STACJA KOLEJOWA)	grauit	100 t
~~SUWAŁKI~~ SUWAŁKI	~~SUWAŁKI~~ KOCIE + BY NA RAMPE	1300 . -

28 000 km² pokrycia
= okruszyn - (100 t)

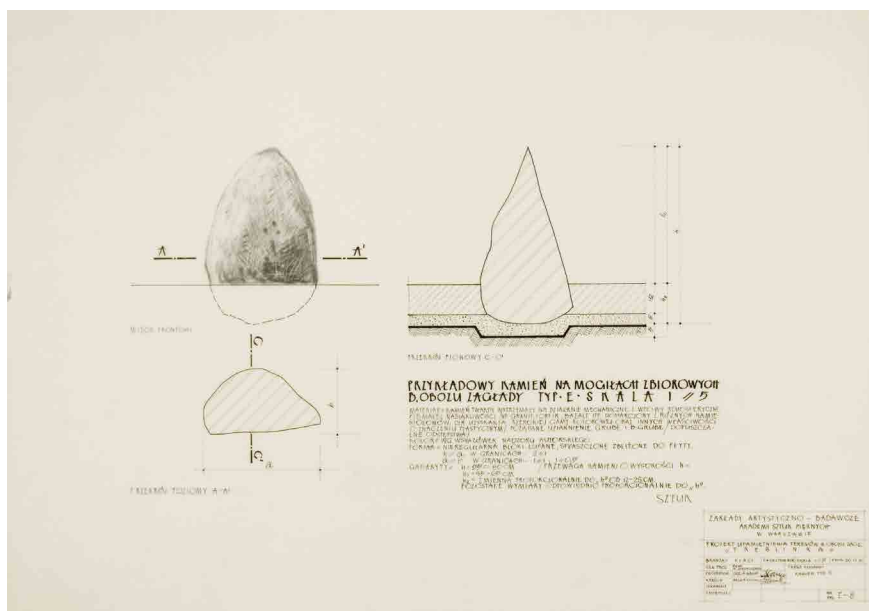
$$\begin{array}{r}
 1860 \text{ t} \\
 - 100 \text{ t} \\
 \hline
 1760 \\
 1190 \\
 \hline
 = 570
 \end{array}$$

Deliveries of the stones for the overlaying of the collective graves, handwritten by Adam Haupt, dated December 12, 1961 (Document from Adam Haupt's archive, cited after: Radecka, 2011)



Haupt calls the pillar using the word *baba*, a Turkic borrowing in Polish (from *balbal* meaning "grandfather, ancestor", cf. "baba II", n.d.) referring to the anthropomorphic stone stelae, found in kurgan burials spanning geographically from Prussia to Mongolia and temporally across three millennia ("Kurgan stelae", 2020).

Exemplary Pillar Delimiting the Site of the Former Extermination Camp ("Baba"). Document specification reads: "Artistic-Research Unit of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. Design of the commemoration of the former Treblinka extermination camp site. Executive designer Franciszek Strynkiewicz. Designer Adam Haupt. Draftsman Henryk Kitowski. September 20, 1961" (Document from Adam Haupt's archive, cited after: Radecka, 2011)



Exemplary Stone Over the Mass Graves of the Former Extermination Camp. Type E. Document specification reads: "Artistic-Research Unit of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. Design of the commemoration of the Treblinka extermination camp site. Executive designer Franciszek Strynkiewicz. Designer Adam Haupt. Draftsman Henryk Kitowski. September 20, 1961" (Document from Adam Haupt's archive, cited after: Radecka, 2011)



Model of the stones distribution by Adam Haupt photographed probably by Adam Haupt in 1960
(Photo from Adam Haupt's archive, cited after: Radecka, 2011)



Concentration of ashes and other remains in the southern part of the former *Totenlager*, photographed in 1963 probably by Adam Haupt. The stones have just been placed. The concrete is about to be poured. Visible in the background is the third concentration, surrounding the willows (Photo from Adam Haupt's archive, cited after: Radecka, 2011)



Consecutive stages of the work photographed in 1963, probably by Adam Haupt. In the foreground the concrete is about to be poured. Right behind this, the concrete slab is ready (Photograph from Adam Haupt's archive, cited after: Radecka, 2011)



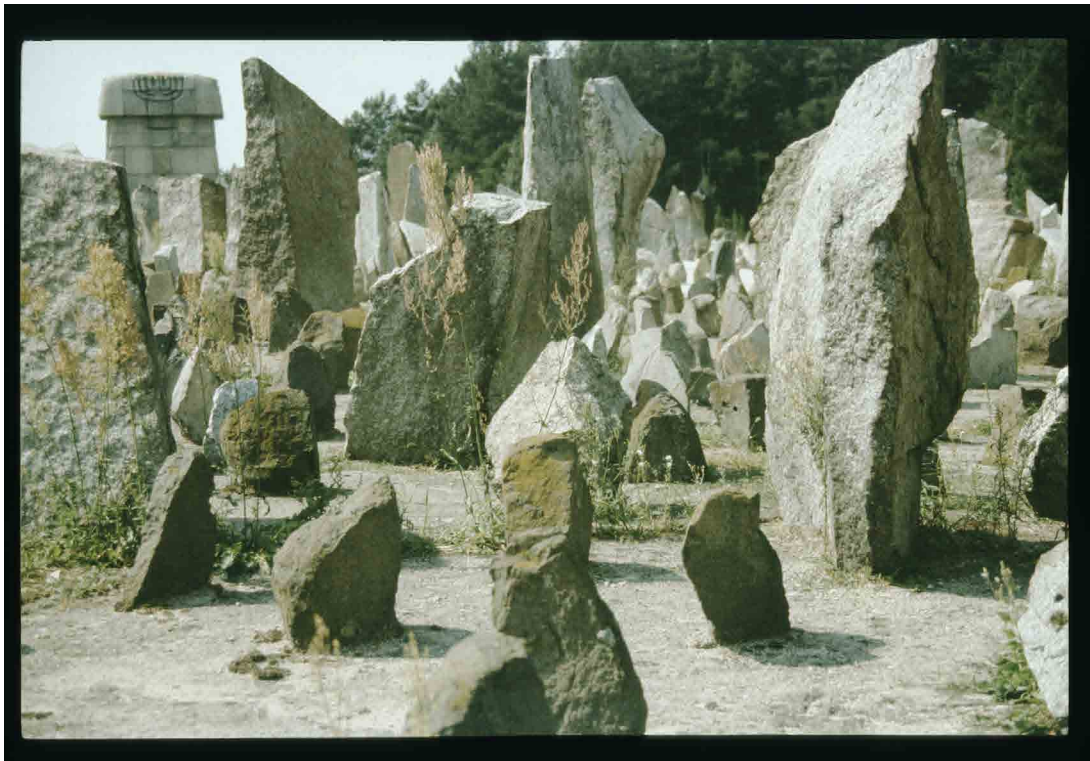
Krzysztof Jung – Treblinka II, August 16, 1991 (Photo by Wojciech Karpiński) (© by Wojciech Karpiński, courtesy of Wojciech Karpiński). Special thanks to Dorota Krawczyk-Janisch



Treblinka II willows on August 16, 1991. View to the east (Photo by Krzysztof Jung) (© by Dorota Krawczyk-Janisch and Wojciech Karpiński, courtesy of Dorota Krawczyk-Janisch and Wojciech Karpiński)



Stones from between the former "infirmary" (*"Lazarett"*; the Treblinka *"Lazarett"* was the place of individual killing of the persons unable to go down the consecutive stages of the road to the gas chambers on their own) and the location of the gas chambers, halfway along the camp's southern border – Treblinka II, August 16, 1991 (Photo by Krzysztof Jung) (© by Dorota Krawczyk-Janisch and Wojciech Karpiński, courtesy of Dorota Krawczyk-Janisch and Wojciech Karpiński)



Rumex acetosella, or field sorrel – Treblinka II, August 16, 1991 (Photo by Krzysztof Jung) (© by Dorota Krawczyk-Janisch and Wojciech Karpiński, courtesy of Dorota Krawczyk-Janisch and Wojciech Karpiński)



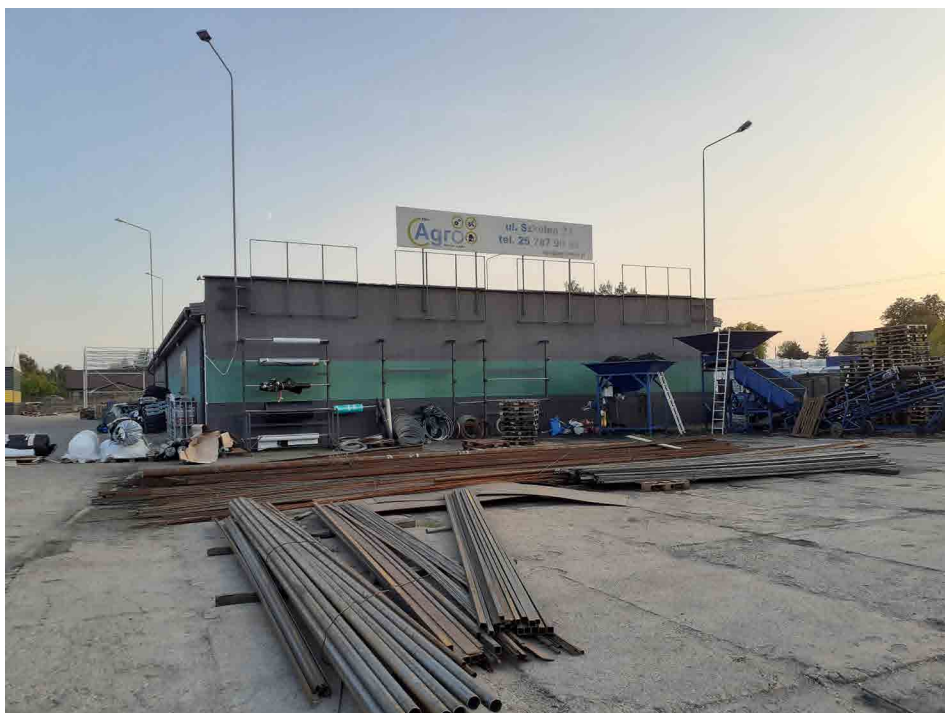
Taraxacum officinale, or the common dandelion – Treblinka II, August 16, 1991 (Photo by Krzysztof Jung) (© by Dorota Krawczyk-Janisch and Wojciech Karpiński, courtesy of Dorota Krawczyk-Janisch and Wojciech Karpiński)



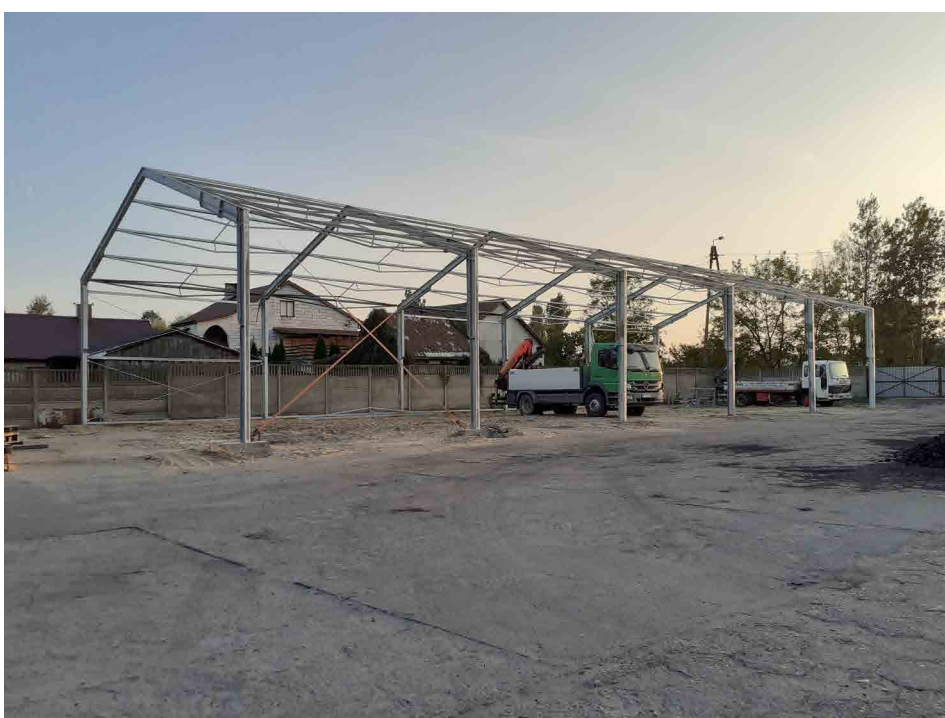
Arie (1) – Black Road, August 14, 2011 (Photo by Henryk Hollender) (© by Henryk Hollender, courtesy of Henryk Hollender)



Arie (2) – Black Road, August 14, 2011 (Photo by Henryk Hollender) (© by Henryk Hollender, courtesy of Henryk Hollender)



The front part of the Kosów Lacki old Jewish cemetery. Robbed of the matzevot on German orders during WWII, after the war it was turned by Poles into the Municipal Cooperative (Gminna Spółdzielnia, GS) with a bakery and a beer bottling plant, currently in private hands – Kosów Lacki, 23 Szkolna Street, September 23, 2020 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka). Special thanks to Maria Cyranowicz and Zbigniew Chłus for their tremendous help in gathering material at the site of the old cemetery



The back part of the Kosów Lacki old Jewish cemetery. The back entrance, visible on the right, leads out into Towarowa Street, which borders the old cemetery from the west – Kosów Lacki, 23 Szkolna Street, September 23, 2020 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka). Special thanks to Maria Cyranowicz and Zbigniew Chłus for their tremendous help in gathering material at the site of the old cemetery



The Kosów Lacki old Jewish cemetery. View from behind the back entrance on Towarowa Street. The white building, visible across Szkolna Street, is the prewar Kosów Lacki school. Today it shelters Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński Elementary School. The nameplate is visible on its front, southern wall. On the right side of the white pillar closest to the center of the picture is the steeple of the Roman Catholic Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Kosów Lacki, 23 Szkolna Street, September 23, 2020 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



The “Stefan Kardynał Wyszyński Elementary School” nameplate on the front, southern wall of the school building facing the Kosów Lacki old Jewish cemetery. Born in the nearby Zuzela village (in the vicinity of Treblinka as well), Wyszyński was the postwar leader of the Catholic Church in Poland. At the time of the postwar pogroms he refused to denounce the Christian myth of Jewish ritual murder (the blood libel) as a lie and remained silent during the subsequent antisemitic witch hunts and purges of the country in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s – Kosów Lacki, 1 Polna Street, September 23, 2020 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



The gate of the Kosów Lacki new Jewish cemetery. Robbed of matzevot on German orders during WWII, after WWII, it was dug through spontaneously and "afforested through community action" (*zalesiony w czynie społecznym*) by Poles. The gate of the cemetery is located in what remains of its northern wall facing Kosów Lacki – the southern outskirts of Kosów Lacki by the old road to Sokółów Podlaski ("past the roundabout by the CPN gas station" [*za rondem przy CPN-ie*]). The station is still in business, unlike the Central Operator for Petrol Products (Centrala Produktów Naftowych, CPN). The language of the locals preserves the memory of this iconic emblem of People's Republic of Poland and its economic order. September 12, 2020 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka). Special thanks to Henryk Hollender for his tremendous help in gathering material at the site of the new cemetery in the summer



One of the three remaining hinges on the only existing pillar (the right one) of the Kosów Lacki new Jewish cemetery gate. The gate is located near the northeastern corner of the cemetery – the southern outskirts of Kosów Lacki by the old road to Sokółów Podlaski ("past the roundabout by the CPN gas station" [*za rondem przy CPN-ie*]), September 23, 2020 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka). Special thanks to Henryk Hollender and Ewa Lewandowska for their help in gathering material at the site of the new cemetery in the fall



“Soplica (with an aromatic hazelnut note). The art of tradition for generations”. The noble slaveholder Soplica family together with its Soplicowo manor – as imagined in Adam Mickiewicz’s epic *Pan Tadeusz* (1834) – are emblems of so-called genuine Polishness – the southern outskirts of Kosów Lacki by the old road to Sokołów Podlaski (“past the roundabout by the CPN gas station” [za rondem przy CPN-ie]), November 28, 2020 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



“Durex. 1 natural rubber latex condom” – the southern outskirts of Kosów Lacki by the old road to Sokołów Podlaski (“past the roundabout by the CPN gas station” [za rondem przy CPN-ie]), November 28, 2020 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



An alley preserved or created by Polish Christians on the north–south axis in the western part of the new Jewish cemetery, parallel to its western border. The alley might suggest the existence of a second gate closer to the northwestern corner of the cemetery. To the left, visible through clearings, is the old road to Sokołów Podlaski. The clearing ahead leads to “the roundabout by the CPN gas station” [*rondo przy CPN-ie*]. The western border of the cemetery runs between the road and the alley. View to the north – the new Jewish cemetery, southern outskirts of Kosów Lacki, November 28, 2020 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



The lay of the land in western part of the new Jewish cemetery. The convexities probably correspond to individual burials. View from the cemetery alley to the east – the southern outskirts of Kosów Lacki, November 28, 2020 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



The lay of the land in eastern part of the new Jewish cemetery. The concavities visible in the center of the frame and further to the right probably correspond to the digging done by Poles. These should not be confused with enormous mass graves, which are also present in the cemetery but which I was unable to visualize well enough in a photograph. View to the west – the southern outskirts of Kosów Lacki, November 28, 2020 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)

“According to a report by Czesław Zawadzki, nom de guerre ‘Gozdawski’, head of intelligence for District XII of the National Armed Forces (Narodowe Siły Zbrojne, NSZ), a number of 100-meter-long pits were dug at the cemetery in Kosów Lacki to bury the bodies of individuals who died or were killed during transport to the German Nazi death camp in Treblinka” (Ziontek, 2016, as cited in: Bielawski, 2020, p. 47). In all probability – in keeping with the common practice – those buried included also victims of the hunt for Jews, killed both at the time Zawadzki wrote his report and later on.



The southeastern corner of the new Jewish cemetery. View to the west – the southern outskirts of Kosów Lacki, November 28, 2020 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



A barn, 1939–1945 (close-up) – Przysucha, a town in Mazovia region, 21st century (Photo by Łukasz Baksik)
(© by Łukasz Baksik, courtesy of Łukasz Baksik)



A barn, 1939–1945 (detail) – Przysucha, a town in Mazovia region, 21st century (Photo by Łukasz Baksik)
 (© by Łukasz Baksik, courtesy of Łukasz Baksik)



A barn, 1939–1945 (establishing shot) – Przysucha, a town in Mazovia region, 21st century (Photo by Łukasz Baksik)
 (© by Łukasz Baksik, courtesy of Łukasz Baksik)

including the pseudo-objective and pseudo-scientific racist utopias. Whatever the definition, the bearers of the stigmatizing category were to be erased – biologically and culturally. This is what they had the opportunity to witness during the Aktion Reinhardt while looking at the German Nazi and Polish Catholic furor of destruction – going far beyond murder and theft – aimed at each trace of their existence, individual and collective. The Holocaust is a situation when death is not enough.

The Black Road is a treatise on all the dimensions of the annihilation: biological and cultural, individual and collective. Letters, syllables, some words, one name. They connote the individual character of the gesture of revolt: an individual decision and behind it, an individual existence exposing itself to the risk of immediate non-existence. At the same time, they refer to the individual abnegation characterizing the adopted form of expression. Individuals stripped of names expressing themselves through the remains of the names of others who are unknown to them. Of course, this way of expression was a choiceless choice (Lawrence L. Langer, see Langer, 1991, p. 26). The only way of articulation at hand in a universe based on the negation of the principle that “Every person has a name” (Zelda Mishkovsky). And this is precisely why adopting this form of expression – where an individual abdicates while inscribing himself/herself into a collective – is burdened by the ultimate risk of confirming the rules dictated by the oppressor who imposes an identity on the victim regardless of the victim’s self-identification.

The pieces of matzevot laid front upward form a constellation of messages. Their authors were unified and united in a solidarity which was at once forced and chosen.⁷⁰ We do not know who they were. Religious Jews practicing Kiddush ha-Shem? Bundists giving their lives for the Jewish nation? Zionists dying for *Am Yisrael Chai*? Right wing? Left wing? Members of the intelligentsia wanting to belong to a non-existent Polish community based on citizenship and deceiving themselves that “Poland are not they”, Poland are not Poles, Poland is not Poland (see Landau-Czajka, 2015)? We can assume that they were men. Rather young, but not necessarily. Rather not communist internationalists, since those mostly fled into the USSR, and were the only ones to survive, despite the ordeal they endured alongside other citizens and non-citizens of the Soviet republics.

The weapon of the weak is a weak weapon. The weavers of the stone carpet of the Black Road managed to intercept and appropriate the means of their oppressors and of their oppression for their own purpose as far as they could. Their protest and their revolt remained in vain. At the same time, this entanglement of the unknowns is chaotic and unarticulated only ostensibly. In fact, this is not an absence of a message. This is a message. Coherent and precise. A testimony to a crime and a portrayal of a criminal, antisemitic civilization. Empirical evidence and an accusation. An interpellation imprinted in the ground by those being erased from its surface.

70 As for the act of choosing what is imposed by the enemy in the history of East European Jews, see *Fateless*, a novel by Imre Kertész (Kertész, 1975), and *Sonnenschein*, a movie by István Szabó (Szabó, 1999).

Signature

We filmed in Treblinka in all seasons [...]. Inside the camp itself, I filmed the slabs and the stones for days, from every conceivable angle, unable to stop, running from one to another, looking for some new angle, with my cinematographer, Dominique Chapuis, climbing onto the slippery stone roof of the tall blockhouse symbolizing the gas-chambers, trying to get a 360° panorama to give a sense of the whole site at sunset [...]. Chapuis, or before him Lubtchansky or Glasberg, would say to me, “Why are you still filming stones? [You’ve already got ten times too much of them], I never had too much of them, in fact I hadn’t filmed them enough, and I had to return to Treblinka to film more.]

Claude Lanzmann⁷¹

Finally, the last part of the lapidarium is the postwar commemorative project involving one megalithic structure and 17,000 smaller stones together with the granite blocks marking the border of the former extermination camp. Unlike the local stones (i.e., matzevot) of the Black Road, they are implants from afar: mostly granite but also syenite, quartzite, porphyry, basalt, sandstone and perhaps some limestone.⁷² As for the granite, the initial plan referred to the beige-pink Finnish granite or the black Swedish granite-labradorite. The idea, however, was abandoned for financial reasons. As a result, the granite stones are grey and come from a formerly German part of Poland: Rogoźnica (Gross Rosen), Strzeblów (Ströbel), Strzelin (Strehlen), Żimnik (Kalthaus). Like the syenite from Przedborowa (Schönheide). Or the basalt from Księginki (Kerzdorf). The quartzite originates from central Poland: Wiśniówka near Kielce. The porphyry is from Lesser Poland: Miękinia. Their list, handwritten by Adam Haupt, has survived until today. As for the limestone and sandstone, I haven’t managed to establish their origin. Like several stones of the Black Road, some of the stones distributed throughout the concrete bear inscriptions. Names are carved into them but no longer the names of individuals. They are in Polish and denote the cities and towns from which the Jews murdered in Treblinka came.⁷³ But some are not this kind of names. They are the signature of the murderer.

71 Lanzmann, 2012, p. 485. The closing sentence in brackets is translated by myself from the French original (Lanzmann, 2009, p. 504). Where Lanzmann talks about the stones, the English translator is talking about footage. The end of the translation reads: “You’ve already got ten times too much footage. I never had too much, in fact I hadn’t shot enough footage, and I had to return to Treblinka to film more”.

72 “[...] a small number of little black basalt stones was supposed to symbolize the children who were murdered there together with their caretaker, teacher and master – Korczak” (Radecka, 2013, p. 312). Of course, Hersz (Henryk) Goldszmit, known as Janusz Korczak, was not the only Jewish educator who didn’t abandon his foster children and his foster children were not the only Jewish children murdered in Treblinka. Eventually, the grey granite stone dedicated to “Janusz Korczak and the children” was unveiled in 1978, after the initially discussed project of a stone hall of fame of sorts had been abandoned. The Janusz-Korczak-and-the-children stone and the one dedicated to the Martyrs of the Warsaw Ghetto, separate from the stone bearing the inscription “Warsaw”, are the only “individual” commemorations of particular groups of victims that are to found in the death camp site.

73 Initially, “[t]he names of the localities from which at least one thousand Jews had been deported to the Treblinka extermination camp were carved on the major (130) stones. In 1998, subsequent localities were added upon a proposal from Benjamin Meirtchak, general secretary of the Association of Polish Jews in Israel. At present, 221 stones bear the names of countries and localities” (Zawadka, 2015, p. 45). Apart from the stones in the concrete slabs, “boulders bearing the names of the countries from which the victims came: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, France, Greece, Yugoslavia, Germany, Poland, the USSR, were situated near the symbolic ramp. An eleventh stone with the inscription ‘Macedonia’ was apposed in 2008” (Zawadka, 2015, p. 45).

One of the inscriptions reads... Jedwabne. The Jedwabne Jews were not gassed in Treblinka. On July 10, 1941 – more than one year before Treblinka started operating (on July 23, 1942) – they were gathered by their Polish neighbors onto Jedwabne market square in front of the church. Then, after a day of torture, they were driven to a nearby barn and burnt alive. By Poles. When I got to Treblinka for the first time, on July 10, but in 2004, the name of Jedwabne was erased or rather covered, hidden under a thick layer of grey paint. A few years later it was carefully restored with black paint quite visible from afar. Together with other similar names and cases, such as Radziłów, Grójewo, Kleszczele or Goniądz. In literature, this is called Jedwabne denial, the Polish version of Auschwitz denial (negationism). Jedwabne denial (*klamstwo jedwabieńskie*) doesn't consist in the negation of the fact of the Jedwabne massacre and other similar ones. It consists in the negation of their Polish authorship.

Concentrated on the developments on the concrete, I didn't notice the moment of the restoration. A picture I took of the inscription covered with the grey paint dates back to September 9, 2014. The change, then, must have been contemporaneous or posterior to the victory of the Polish far right that took over the presidency and the government one year later and adopted Jedwabne denial as state doctrine. The name of Jedwabne, however, was never removed from the official booklet of the Museum of Fighting and Martyrdom. Its 2009 and 2014 editions are identical in this respect (Kopówka, 2009, p. 13, 2014, p. 14). Before the 2000–2001 countrywide Jedwabne debate, this inscription was a lie. But what is it now, after the Polish perpetration of the Jedwabne massacre became known worldwide? Can it be a lie in a world where everyone knows the truth? Or is it a confirmation and an affirmation of Polish participation in the German exterminatory endeavor? The present visualization – the way it looks – definitely fits this second option.

The imperative to stress the Polish contribution and to inscribe it into the bigger picture of the Holocaust brings attention to what the official conceptualizations remove from sight. Namely: the antisemitic continuum. The Black Road – produced by the German Nazi regime – is not an isolated artifact, not an exception but a case in point. It is to be situated within a wide range of antisemitic practices characteristic of Christianity. Especially since this very kind of annihilation kept being carried out in postwar Poland. (In postwar Zamość, for instance, the destruction of two local Jewish cemeteries included the exhumation of the corpses and their public burning.) The robbed matzevot were dragged all around the country. “Could it be because the Jews, left to die and murdered by their neighbors, were buried in any odd place? Perhaps these matzevot scattered about Poland have wandered in search of their dead?”, Jan Tomasz Gross wonders (Gross, 2013, p. 35). According to him, the matzevot might be in their proper place of rest now, given the fact that the country has refused to face its past: “The result backfired, and instead of disappearing, the Jews will remain with generations upon generations [of Poles – E. J.]” (Gross, 2013, p. 36).



The Jedwabne stone at Treblinka II, September 7, 2014 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



The Jedwabne stone at Treblinka II, April 26, 2019 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



The Radziłów stone at Treblinka II, June 12, 2016 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



The Grajewo stone at Treblinka II, June 12, 2016 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)

The Jedwabne stone allows one to see the concrete slabs, which I didn't target visually as a separate, distinct subject, in a new light. Their presence in the photos – discreet and apparently accessorial – is in fact an omnipresence. At the level of visualization they are not central but they are – literally – fundamental. This turns out to reflect the structure of the narrative of the Holocaust within which the Polish presence – discreet and accessorial in appearance – is consequently downplayed if not totally ignored, whereas in reality, it constituted the functional framework within which the German Nazis operated, and not the other way around. Interpretations aside, it is only now, while working on this text, that I realize that these 22,000 square meters of concrete covering the vast Treblinka meadow constitute a visible trace, an evidence as well as an unintended memorialization of the Polish context of the Holocaust.

VIII. A Close Call From Afar

While enumerating my sources, I failed to mention Szymon Syreński's imposing herbarium in five volumes (1,584 pages) from the turn of 16th and 17th centuries (1580–1610) (Syreński, 2017b). Its magnitude, scientific exactitude and beauty became the fame and glory of the most ancient Polish university, one of the most ancient in Europe: Universitas Jagiellonica Cracoviensis – Jagiellonian University in Kraków. Szymon Syreński, Syrenius, a physician and botanist, was one of its most renowned professors. I knew Syrenius' *Herbarium* from school as a monument of the Renaissance and science – called now and then the Polish Renaissance and Polish science. I knew, then I forgot. It was only while working on the conclusion to this text that I remembered it. I hastened to the National Library. I immersed myself in the five volumes of epistemological and aesthetic delight.

Originally, the masterpiece was designed in eight volumes. The last three being devoted to... minerals and animals. Syrenius died during the impression process. So did the executor of his will, Gabriel Joannicy, the physician of Anna Vasa, called the “queen of Polish botany”, since she – granddaughter of King Sigismund the Old and sister to King Sigismund III Vasa – was the one to finance the publication of the five volumes. Volumes six to eight were lost but I enthusiastically savored the existing ones – all for finding at the end of the series the treatise... *O Żydziech rzecz krótka* [A Short Piece About Jews]. Articulated in the most sublime Polish, it is four pages of cold hate speech, of quintessential antisemitic hatred, fueled by the Christian belief in Jewish deicide and its subsequent serial imitation: the ritual murder. The treatise's subtitle reads: “Testimonies of serious and credible authors to the ferocious cruelty of unfaithful Jews against

Christian children that they perpetrate once a year by virtue of an ancient and enraged resolution, collected by Doctor Szymon Syreński, a Cracow physician”.⁷⁴

The parts of the treatise are the following: “Jewish Murders of Christian Children”; “St. Simon of Trent”; “Causes of the Cruelty”; “Expulsion of Jews”; “A Necessary Warning”; “Jewish Liberties”; “Where They [the alleged liberties – E. J.] Come From”; “For What Purpose Is Christian Blood Needed by Jews”; “They Killed a Child in Cracow”; “In Lithuania” [both constitutive components of the Commonwealth, Poland and Lithuania, are targeted – E. J.]; “St. Ambrose’s Condemnation of [the Emperor – E. J.] Theodosius”;⁷⁵ “His [St. Ambrose’s – E. J.] Letter”; “God Abhors the Synagogue”; “Company of Jews”; “Cruelty Against the Christ” [“the true Messiah”, as the text doesn’t neglect to specify]; “Second Story”; “Cruelty against Christians”. *Ad secula seculorum*. Amen.

Syreński was a serious scientist. He knew that Jews were forbidden from consuming blood – be it animal or human. From this he deduced that... they needed it for other purposes. His argument is full of meticulous data, erudite citations and detailed references. Among those denouncing the Jewish threat are Jews themselves – submitted to tortures or... baptized. Baptized Jews. Sounds familiar. In the Middle Ages and Renaissance – exactly as today – baptism didn’t transform a person of Judaic denomination into a Christian. From the very beginning it resulted in a Jew, “albeit” (or “even if”) a baptized one. Why, then, would even scholars tend to believe in the existence of anti-Judaism if abandoning Judaism didn’t remove the stigma and invalidate the hatred towards its former believers? This was not anti-Judaism. This was antisemitism which had nothing to do with the formal denomination of a person perceived as Jewish by the dominant group. Exactly as in the case of the 15th-century Spanish Catholic rule of *limpieza de sangre*.

It is impossible to cease being a killer of God in the eyes of the “masters of the situation”. (The only way is if Christians ceased to be the “masters of the situation” or the “masters of the situation” ceased to be Christians without absorbing subsequent non-religious mutations of antisemitism along the way. In other words, the source of antisemitic oppression lies with antisemitic culture. The next problem is the institution of the “masters of the situation”, i.e. the very principle of domination.) Syrenius describes massacres of Jews stemming from the Christian belief in Jewish deicide. Beating, tortures, burning alive. He legitimizes antisemitic violence as a justified method against Jews unwilling to stop being Jews (a “mission impossible” anyhow, as in the case of any double bind, see Bateson et al., 1956). The pagination of *Herbarium* being con-

74 “O srogim okrucieństwie niewiernych Żydów / którym się na działkach Chrześcijańskich / z dawnego y wściekłego postanowienia / co rok pastwią / świadectwa / z poważnych i wiary godnych pisarzów / przez D. Szymaona Syreńskiego / Medyka Krakowskiego / zebrane” (Syreński, 2017a, p. 1536).

75 “Ambrose, referring to a prior incident where Magnus Maximus [Theodosius – E. J.] issued an edict censuring Christians in Rome for burning down a Jewish synagogue, warned Theodosius that the people in turn exclaimed ‘the emperor has become a Jew’, implying that if Theodosius attempted to apply the law to protect his Jewish subjects he’d be viewed similarly [see Nirenberg, 2013, pp. 117–118]” (“Ambrose”, 2019).

secutive, *A Short Piece About Jews* is its part and parcel. Did the author count Jews among plants, minerals, animals? Nowhere does he explain his classificatory decision. Apparently, he participated in the same social and cultural self-obviousness and self-certainty as his readership constituting the elites of the Commonwealth and its illustrious academia. *Plus ratio quam vis*, as inscribed in Collegium Maius, the university's oldest surviving building, in use for centuries already in the times of Syrenius.

Founded by Casimir the Great in 1364, the Jagiellonian University began to develop by annexing parts of the Cracow ghetto in accord with the will of King Władysław Jagiełło (starting in 1400). As a consequence of the royal and Church policies, resulting in subsequent persecutions and pogroms, Jews had to consent to their own expulsion by declaring it voluntary. They were expelled first from the area they initially were allowed to settle in, i.e. the Cracow ghetto (1469), then from the city altogether (1495). Among the "voluntary" acts of that period was also the one in which Jews forfeited their right to practice any craft and engage in retail within the city limits, thus depriving themselves of livelihood (1485) (Zaremska, 2011). The 1485 parchment is proudly displayed and addressed by humanists and museologists as the earliest document written in Hebrew to have been preserved on Polish soil. I remember the day I was urged to admire this monument of the Golden Age and *Paradisus Iudaeorum* in the Kazimierz Old Synagogue, transformed into a museum (of an extinct race?). The exhibit looked magnificent. The glass cabinet resplended. The lighting was phenomenal. I didn't entirely understand what I was looking at but I understood enough to feel like an idiot.

The Jagiellonian University developed and flourished together with its Ogród Profesorski. The Professorial Garden in question – equipped with a sundial and a set of professorial busts in robes and mortarboards – is framed with the emblematic buildings of Collegium Maius, Collegium Minus, Collegium Medicum and Jagiellońska (Jagiellonian) Street.⁷⁶ Would the willow expert Professor feel uprooted in this Professorial Garden as well? The Jagiellonian University has never found it appropriate to take a position vis-à-vis its antisemitic past and origins. The Cracow pogroms – one every generation – and the everyday, ritualized antisemitic violence of Christian students have never been integrated into the dominant narrative. King Władysław Jagiełło, the victorious chieftain from Grunwald/Tannenberg, who expelled Jews, not from the city (yet) but from this specific piece of land, for the sake of academic development, watches over his endeavor from a nearby 20th-century monument.

Syrenius, Syrrenius, Sacranus in Latin means "originating, coming from Oświęcim". In Oświęcim Market Square, there is a commemorative plaque to Szymon Syreński, Syrenius (1540–1611). The plaque reads: "The creator of the first herbarium in Poland (1613), Medicine Doctor of the Padua University, Professor of the Jagiellonian University, the physician of Cracow's poor. To the eminent scientist humanist – his native town

76 See Matyjaszek, 2019 – especially the introduction and the first part "Kraków: Wytaczanie przestrzeni żydowskiej", pp. 7–136.

Grebowie Melanpyron zowia :
 Mły / Krowia pszenica także / albo
 czarna mianuemy : przeto że bydłu
 rogatemu bywa przyjemna pasza /
 y nie szkodliwa : y że sie z pszenice sta-
 żonej rodzi / iako y Łokół / ieno nie
 jest szkodliwa iako Łokół /
 głowy nieobraża. Pretu na łokieć
 wzwyż / dwie albo trzy różeczki pa-
 ra pochodzące z boków puszcza : na
 których listeczki długie / szuple / o-
 strospiczaste / ciemno zielone : a w
 wierzchu gąszeń kłacie albo kłasy że-
 rotie / miazgiste / y na pozór wdzięcz-
 ne / pełne listeczków y kwiecia / od
 spodu tu wierzchowi pochodzące-
 go / które niż rostkwiną / pomieś-
 ną z listeczkami rumianemi / Isną sie.
 a gdy sie rostkwiną / żółtey barwy
 napoły z rumianą. Tę gdy opadną /
 listki rumiane w zielone sie odmie-
 niają : aż kwiecia skupinki cienkie y
 obgierne / w których nasienia do-
 statek / pszenicznemu podobnego /
 iedno mniejszego / czarnawego.

Wskazy

Rosną między pszenica y żytem :
 y z tad rozumieją gospodarze / że zbo-
 żu bywaia Łaża. Pierwsza nie tak
 naszym pospolita / iako wtóra. W
 Zelandii / w Holandii / we Fran-
 cii / w Anglii y w Niderlandzich
 stronach / a ile pierwsza / sieia.

Przyrodzenie.

Jest przyrodzenia rozgrzewiają-
 cego y odwilżającego.

Moc y skutki.

Oley. Nasienia oley / przelutsky go y na ogniu
 przysmażywszy / w prásach wybić : kto-
Knoty. w rozgi suche pomazuiac / miasło krowe
 do kągancow / y miasło świec / wzywaia.
Wsom. Wsom pokazonym bywa lekarstwem / nasa-
 mazuiać nim. Plin.
Wolacza. Także bolaczkom nabrzmiałym / Ziele y
Fom. nasienie / plastuiac / wzyteczne.
Chropo- Chropowatość ciała spada y gładkie
watoseć

czyni nim namazuiac. Dios.

Oley ten podobny skutkami y smakiem
 Logowemu / albo Sesamowemu : Przeto
 gdzie tego ziela dostatek maia / oleia z niego
 niczytko do sroiecentia / ale do omaszczenia po-
 traw wzywaia.

Także / gruczołom twárdym na żyłach
 pierzych. Toż

Wsom boleciacym z przymiotem / oleiem
 namazuiac. Albo nasienie w wodzie / albo w
 mleku wazac / a ciepło plastuiac. Tab.

Gruczo-
łom.

Wsom

Rozładek.

Tych Rzy krowich / kłada ich iestże niekto-
 trzy dwarodzie / ale że nie sa żadnego wzy-
 etu / okrom do paszy bydłu / opuścili smy ie.

Lenica / albo Lnicznik / Rozdział 150.

Pseudomyagrum, Chamæ-
linum.

Glachsdotter / Leindotter.



Lnicznik albo Lenica / różge ma-
 na łokieć gąszeń. Liścia D-
 zerowego / który farbowni-
 kiem y Sinilem drudzy zowia. Na
 wierzchu

O ZYDZIECH RZECZ KROTKA.

O progiu okrucieństwie niewiernych Żydów / którym się na działkach
 Chrześcijańskich / z dawnego y wściekłego postanowienia / co rok
 pastwiz / świadectwa / z poważnych y wiary godnych pfarzów /
 przez D. Symoná Syrenskiego / Mędyka Krakowskiego /
 zebrano.

Złosiłmi Żydowie dziesiątki niewinne
Chryścijańskie; z darowego i okrutne-
go postanowienia co rok zabijała i
i hamiebnie mordowała: także na co tys niewin-
nych Żydów wybrodła; świadectwo zaś dawnych
iako i młodszych Żydów i Żydówek nam wprawdzie

Sołtars w 7. listkach historyi Kościoła
ney w Dobziale 16. piśmie: Jż za Konsulow
Honoriusz Cesarz dżiesiarz króć / Theodor
sius / w mieście nazwanym Jmestear /
miedzy Chalcodonem / Aniochio miastę w
Syrjey / Jżdziż dziecia / Chrześciański pśe
n / krzż pśyzwiazali / ż żmieszt / i napastwie
wys / si ch wile żartow / i smiechow / nado
niec / tż blugo ono bili / ż w mario. Storo co
Cesarzom / sę przy / i pisac ko
zali oney krany stare / m / aby / mch os
gno swowolnego pōstępek / i żb / niech dos
fedy / one pokarali. Ż tż Jżdziż za niestę
chne niecnocy swone karanie słusne do
mieśli.

Piśko Theodor w Theatrum żywość
 ludzkiego / 3 godnych widary ludzi pobania /
 krótych on tam pomyślowi : Ji niemierni
 żydowie Roku Pańskiego 1234. w Atoe
 dwiatu mieście Angielskim. Zas Roku 1261
 w Niemiecim mieście / Forchheimie : Roku
 1285. w Mnichu w Szwabskiej ziemi :
 Roku 1287. w Niemie Szwabskiej
 mieście : Roku 1300. w Werßbachu w Thu-
 ringim Roku 1401. w Dießdorwie Szwab-
 skim mieście : Roku 1494. w Tinnawieru
 Węgzech : Roku 1575. w Tidenie na
 granicy Włoskiej / dziecięta kłania i wiesz-
 sła spikłami pokładowali / y krewo wytoś
 czyli / część na krzyże przybiłali y pomor-
 dowali.

E. Syn
mon Te
deafci.
M Tridencie tym porzadzkiem ci lozro-
wie y zlozynicy dytali albo Skatowali / takto
Filip Jatur Bergomski Ziskontk; tchze wy-
znania wypisali / Dyściakło Symoná w
dom Simuela żyda przyłubziwszy / do bus-
zanice ie / tey / a / k meki Pánfley /
zaniesili / y postawili na swym oltarzku / y
rozciągnawszy przywiązali / y chusteczka syse-
le zaciągali / y naprzod nożycekami cos ins-
zego / potem policzył prawy wyskrzydłani /
potem ofierami żelazkami tak igłami tak bluz-
go ciałko tłoli / krewno wycażając / óno dize
ciałko niewinne skontale / Nastędek mar-

two ciasto/ w rzece piebla pod bujnice ta
baca/ wyrzucił/ które gdy rodzicy nalezli/ y
do staroży Jana de Salis słáchtica Wra
ciańskiego znieśli/ z piwnych puzycyn na
Zydy wpadało podobieństwo: którzy wiaści
na matę/ poymici się puzynali: y wyszy se
z miast wywołali y wypędzili. A dżie
ciasto pogrzebione/ sárás poszedł cudami
stynać/ tak jeści wstawilo szeroko po swie
cie. Dla tego Trydenyey na jego pámata
ke kościół zbudowali/ i kedy ciasto niewinne
go meczennika pielgrzymom y gościom ołá
żowane z wesołością bywa.

W Tirmarwie w Węgrzech/ Żydowie stę-
szy wzięci na mięk/ y dobrze ciągniemi/ o szta-
rech przypuszczających tego okłuczeństwo powie-
dali.

1. Alby stara vchvale / ale / tajemna / y
tylko przyednim starzym wiadoma wykona-
li / y idno dyjele chryscianstie co r^oz vme-
zione ostrowali / cina krorych los pad^o te. a
teko sam roztu / cina wiadomy byl los pad /
tako sami wzynawali.

2. Ji to; starego podania tak rozumie-
sa; iż krew chryścijańska; przy żydowstwie o-
brzezaniu; na stanowienie krwie; jest lekar-
stwem i odświeżeniem.

3. Ji dána w table albo w napoju Ch-
rzesciádnem / do tednania miłości y przyja-
źni / dżironie teſt pomocna.

4. Waprzeciwko Prawie plynieniu / Pro-
rennu żydowski narob / W bázro podlegly / ze-
krew bázro wżecozna i amiefa.

Alle pziecie ciż zydowie Roku Pánstkiego / wypas
1523. dziesiątko zamort wali á drugie w dzenie
Wosingu / y dla tego ich 30. spalono / y w syz. zydow.
kie zyd 3 Wegier wyspedzono: iáko y 3 An
gley Roku 1295. y 3 Hispániey Roku 1495
iáko Pánatleon w swey Chrobie w spoma
niach dla takichże misenot y obrócenistw.

Niedrby było y innym żydom są z honorem
są do bołom przyłożono / peronieby sie byli
do tychżetatemnic przysnali / do których dru-
dzy po nich ; ale ich tylko prosto pytano / a
oni w nieostrojnie skąrości / y nie sie gorześ
gę niedomyślatace mówili / że to tak w i-
grzyfku y w pitaństwie pobroino było.

Niech to wważają sobie wielcy panowie
 Polscy / ktorzy niewiernych żydów bronia / z
 nimi ci / mylą / kupiectw / arendy / spolne

Przebra
 G. potrze
 bna.

Przyczy-
ny ośru-
cienstwa

Wypre
Dzie
dydom.

Przeſtro-
gą potrze-
bna.

आई

Bożnice
sie Bog
brzydli

dniego żołnierskiego ludu/ że zapalono Bo-
żnice: a to za powodem Biskupim. Kazales
stracić drugich/ a Biskupowiś kazal Bożni-
ce budować. Nie jest to słusna takiego ro-
zgniewania przyczyna/ aby dla spalania bu-
dowania/ całą surowie lud miał być kłany.
A tym teście mniej/ że Bożnice spalono nie-
budowałyś mrocie/ dom niepobożności/ sa-
lenstwa przechowa. / które Bog sam po-
cepił. Tak bowiem czytamy / wez uśła
Jeremiasz Prorok / mówi sam Pan w z.
A wezynie domowi/ kiedy rozmyślane jest imie
moje nad nimi/ w którym wy macie nadsze-
cie / y mieszałem dom / daj wam y Oyeom
wafym / ałom wezynie / Silew. A odrus-
ce was od obliżności mojej / iabom obdu-
cil oye rośle / rośyśko pokolenie / Silem.
A ty nie modl się za ten lud / y nie pros im o
miłosierdzie / y ani przysięgaj do mnie za nie-
mi / bo cie nie wysłucham. Oto Bog za-
kazuje modlić się y prosić za tymi / Cesarz /
których sie wy rozmyślane / Jakiż
nas będzie mogli Chrystusowi / którzy
z żydów / przeciwko Chrystusowi / wojne
wiedziemy / A takież sie nie porwa po-
tworzy / żydowie / którzy y Chrystusa / fałszywe-
mi świadeczo / znawarzyli / A takież sie
potwarzy / nie / zysca / a / y / kol. Bożkich
rzeczy / klamliwi / Te wezynie / żyd / n / wygra-
na / nad / kosciołom / Bożym / a / co / wywieśtwo
nad / ludem / chryścian / a / To / w / sile / Ce-
sarz / niewiernikom / To / świętość / Bożni-
cy / A / jako / Bożni / Policz / lud / ży-
dowski / te / wrocz / kosc / między / swois / święt.
A / ci / którzy / rozumie / że / naszym / prawom / nie-
pobliżli / tak / że / praw / grzechami / być / roz-
umie / teraz / sie / bda / że / takie / miedzy / którzy
sie / y / praw / Rzym / z / deymować / mają.

To pot / nius y dobrze.

Ożen-
stwo
nad Ch-
rystusem

Ale niebezpieczny / tego jest moc ob za-
cnych ludzi / popisana / dla / chrońenia
sie / żydowskiego / towarzysztwa. Co / sie
ekanie / niebezpieczności / przeciw / Chrystusowi / pias-
wodziemu / Messasowi / Pise / Tomasz / Pa-
ter / archa / Barabary / few / Paryżu / ieden / Chre-
ścianin / zastrawił / żyd / kate. Ułomias / czy-
wystupic / obical / mu / krament / który / miał
na / bliska / Wielkanoc / użyć. Żyd / en / Sa-
krament / wrzucił / w / cieł / pełny / wrzacego
oleju / y / wody / bluznierskimi / słowy / nigrów / a-
tas. Wzalo / sie / w / onym / kosc / dżięci / a / na
dobnustent / dżi / wna / chyb / ościa / ofe / szi /
ktora / go / żyd / dżi / w / w / chram / i / a / ce
sie. Pater / y / n / co / żyd / i / a / y / dżi / w / w / y / sie
rzechom / nie / s / t / y / a / n / y / m / b / i / e / a / m / a / c / e / o / o / n / y / m
ob / r / u / c / i / e / n / s / t / w / i / e / o / y / e / o / w / y / m / k / u / m / a / l / n / e / k / i / e / m / d / z / i / e
cia / e / k / u / w / y / p / o / w / i / e / d / z / a / o / z / b / i / e / y / s / i / e / l / u / d / u / g / w / a / l / a /
Biskup / Sakrament / nas / w / i / e / t / y / do / kosc / i / o / l / a /
w / e / c / i / w / i / e / z / a / n / i / o / s / t / i / Żyd / i / e / r / a / s / i / e / y / z / m / e / k / a / p / o / s /
ch / r / y / s / t / y / Żyd / n / t / s / m / i / e / t / o / w / a / d / z / o / n / y / T / a / l / a

A / co / y / potym / z / o / b / a / Chrystus / będzie / mowil /
C / i / e / s / t / a / t / o / r / z / e / c / z / i / e / y / e / w / o / l / a / w / i / a / t / a / d / l / a / Żyd / o / w
w / o / n / i / e / b / e / s / p / i / e / c / z / n / s / t / w / o / i / d / z / i / e / K / t / o / j / s / i / e / m / a
z / a / B / o / z / n / i / c / a / d / e / y / m / o / w / a / c / Chrystus / kt / o / r / e / g / o
z / a / b / i / l / i / k / t / o / r / e / g / o / s / i / e / z / a / p / i / s / e / l / i / C / y / B / o / g / O / t / c / e
b / a / d / z / i / e / s / i / e / o / t / y / c / h / d / e / y / m / o / w / a / l / k / t / o / r / y / a / n / i / O / y / e
o / a / p / r / i / s / m / i / a / a / n / i / S / y / n / a / p / r / i / s / i / e / l / i / K / a / d / z / o
/ o / b / i / e / C / e / s / a / r / z / u / a / l / b / o / m / i / z / a / s / i / e / m / i / e / g / r / a / d / z / i / e
m / i / o / s / o / b / i / e / T / o / w / i / e / n / i / e / s / i / e / b / e / d / z / i / e / w / o / l / n / o
p / o / p / i / a / r / w / i / e / m / i / n / i / e / n / i / e / w / o / l / n / o / n / a / t / o / p / r / z / e / s / p / a / e
t / y / p / a / t / r / z / y / c / T / o / S / A / m / b / r / o / z / y /

A / w / s / i / a / k / o / j / n / i / e / t / y / l / k / o / s / p / o / l / k / o / w / a / l / e / y / r / o / z / T / o / m / a / s
m / o / w / z / Żyd / y / k / a / z / i / s / i / e / S / A / m / b / r / o / z / y / c / h / r / o / n / i / c / i / r / z / y / s / t / w / o
w / k / a / z / a / n / i / u / Żyd / o / w / s / k / i / e / s / i / e / t / o / w / a / r / z / y / s / t / w / a / Żyd / y /
c / h / r / o / n / i / c / m / a / n / y / k / t / o / r / y / c / h / y / r / o / z / m / o / w / a / t / i / e / s / t / w / i / e / l / a
s / i / e / p / o / m / a / z / a / n / i / e / B / o / c / i / s / t / w / k / a / s / i / e / w / l / u / d / z / i / w / e
b / r / a / d / a / t / a / w / d / o / m / y / s / i / e / w / d / z / i / e / r / a / t / a / w / c / h / o / b / z / a / n / a
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w / s / y / A / t / o / m / a / n / o / w / a / t / i / e / s / t / w / i / e / m / w / a / d / a / a / l / e
z / a / s / t / a / z / a / t / e / s / t / w / i / e / B / o / i / n / y / y / p / r / o / b / i / e / m / P / a / n / a / y
z / b / a / w / i / e / c / i / e / l / a / n / a / s / e / g / o / n / a / r / a / t / u / s / i / p / r / z / e / s / t / a / d / o / w / a
l / i / y / s / t / a / r / o / c / i / n / y / m / s / o / d / e / m / p / o / c / e / p / i / l / i / g / o / T / a /
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T / o / z / m / i / l / o / s / c / i / y / z / p / o / l / k / o / w / a / n / i / a / k / i / e / w / i / e / C / h /
r / e / s / c / i / a / n / s / k / i / e / y / z / b / a / w / i / e / n / i / a / n / i / e / p / e / r / n / n / e / g / o / t / y / c / h /
k / t / o / r / y / c / h / s / o / b / i / e / n / a / s / w / a / s / t / r / o / n / e / Żyd / o / w / i / e / o / z / a / n / i / a
t / a / a / l / b / o / n / a / p / o / s / t / u / g / e / z / a / c / i / a / g / n / a / w / t / e / c / h / p / r / z / e / s
m / o / w / e / z / a / m / k / n / a / l / a / b / y / k / a / d / z / y / t / o / r / o / s / t / w / a / s / i / e / y
o / b / r / u / c / i / e / n / s / t / w / a / Żyd / o / w / s / k / i / e / g / o / z / h / i / s / t / o / r / i / y / y / t / n / a /
w / s / y / y / S / A / m / b / r / o / z / e / g / o / w / p / o / m / i / n / i / e / w / r / a / z / y
w / s / y / o / b / s / p / o / l / k / o / m / s / i / e / z / Żyd / y / h / a / m / o / w / a / l / y / a / b / y
d / a / l / e / y / l / u / d / z / i / n / i / e / w / i / e / r / n / i / z / l / u / d / u / C / h / r / e / s / c / i / a / n / s / k / i / e /
g / o / n / i / e / w / y / t / r / z / y / k / a / l / i / y / k / o / s / c / i / o / l / a / C / h / r / y / s / t / u / s / o / w / e
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m / a / t / a / w / o / l / a / c / p / o / c / y / n / i / e / n / a / d / z / i / e / t / e / m / a / t / o / z / e / p / r / z / e /
z / e / n / m / i / a /ł / b / y /c / z / a / c / h / o / w / a / n / y / D / a /n / o / m / u / g / o / l / a / t / i / e
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s / i /e / Żyd / a / y / z / k /i /e /g /a /m /i / a /l /i /

T / u / j / p / o / d / r / o / b / P / a / n / s / i / 1330. w / G / i / s / t / r / o / z /
w / i / e / Żyd / o / w / k / a / t / r / z / e / z / o / n / a / p / o /k /a /w /y / s / i /e / z / b / r /a /c /o-
w / a / s / w / a / k /l /e /d /z /a /r /o /w /a / Ż / y / d / o / w / k /a / p /r /o /f /o /n /a
a /b /y / d /o / n /i /e /y / w /s /t /a /p /i /ł /a / r /z /e /c /z / i /e /y / B /o /i /e / s /i /e
B /o /g /a / s /w /e /g /o / y / d /l /a / t /e /g /o /m / s /i /e / o /b / s /p /o /l /e /c /z /n /o
s /c /i /z / Żyd / y / o /b /l /a /c /z /y /ł /a / A / Żyd / o / w / k /a / t /e /y / r /z /e /c /z /e /
z /e / c /i /e / d /l /a / w /y /s /t /e /p /k /o /w / z / b /o /i /n /i /c /e / w /y /r /z /u /c /o /n /o /
d /l /a / t /e /g /o /s / s /i /e / d /o / C /h /r /e /s /c /i /a /n / r /d /a /ł /a /b /y /c / w /o /ł /a
n /i /e /y / s /w /e /y /w /o /ł /e /y / p /a /t /r /z /y /c / b /y /ł /o / R /z /e /c /z /e / c /h /r /z /e /z /o
n /a / P /o /m /i /n /i /s / k /i /e /d /z /i /e / S /a /k /r /a /m /e /n /t / o /d / C /h /
r /e /s /c /i /a /n /i / k /u /p /t /o /n /y / w / b /o /i /n /i /c /y / k /l /o /ł /i / a / t /a /m
p /r /z / t /y /m / b /y /ł /a / y / p /ł /a /c /z / d /z /i /e /c /y / s /t /y /k /a /ł /a / z /a /
s /t /r /a /f /y /ł /a / m /i /e / k /r /z /y /w /d /a /ł / w /o /z /r /u /s /y /ł /o / m /i /e / b /u /d /o /
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g /ł /a / y / m /i /ł /o /s /i /e /r /d /z /i /e /m / z /e / c /h /r /z /t /o /m / o /t /r /z /y /m /a /ł /a /
z /a /s /t /y /k /e /l /i / n /i /e /k /t /o /r /y / t /y /c /h / r /o /z /m /o /w /o / d /a /n /o / z /n /a /c /
z /s /i /a /f /e /c /i /u / J /a /n /o /w /i / k /t /o /r /y / Żyd / y / k /a /z /a /ł / w /i /s /i /a /c /
n /a / m /e /k /e / z /a /d /e /n / s /i /e / Żyd / a /n /i / Żyd / o / w / k /a /ł / n /i /e
p /r /z /

Druga
Kortia

przyznał Kazano sukac oney niewiasty co
przedala Żydom Sakrament : dogoniono
ia / y gdy sie przyznala / spalono. Po stal krol
żołnierze do Elezara starszego Żydowskiego
radzac / aby wrocilszy Sakrament / chrzest
S. przyal / a przy zdrowiu zostal. Radzila
Elezarowej krolowa / aby meza swego do
tegoz wiodela. Żyd rzecze jenie : Badi stales
ama moia Marydo : vmierac za prawde /
zaraz na lomo Abrahimowym siebzieny. Je
wielki napalono / azaby sie vlekl / y przyznali /
tiedy jeden sie tym nie wzrusyl / drugie Żydy
w ogien powrucano : Elezar suchem oczy
ma patrzywszy ttedy sone w ogien wrucano /
powiedziac ze nie niechcial przeciwko pra
wde mowic / test takse spalony. On staret
Żydowski wotpliwosc czynil by to byla chry
stona nie ze zlosci powiedziala. Dla tego y
kaplanowi / iey gardle pogrosono / testby sie
Sakrament nie nalazl. Niewiasta pelna na
dziecie / postem y modlitwa sie przygotowa
wszy / z wradem do Boznicz poszedly y dlugo
sukawsky / nalazla swiatosc one sktem za
kryta / w robek wwiniona / na czterech miey
scach vkrwawiona. Pise to Kranszus w 8
kiesiach Zist. Wandalskiej / Rozd. 8.

Test sie czemu w tej historii przypatrzyc /
a osoblwie Żydowskiej twardosci / je sie nie
przyznala / y tym sobie wiare jednala. Ale
kto chce tego sila czytac / czytaj ksiege For
talicium fidei. Nieprzyznala sie oni. pomni
e chenskie przed kilka lat.

Ożenien
stwo na
Chryścian
any.

Test to czynia Chrystusowi Panu / azaj
nie woznia tego Chryścianom : Azaj nie
w nasych oczach ich morderstwa dzieciinne
Dziwocze wo 12. lat ze wsi Czech pod
Warka na drodze wieczorem poimawsky po
rzekli / krew wytoczyli / Roku 1601. dnia 17
Maja. Woyciecha Chyrt dwulecie dzieci
we wsi Podgorzu w Chyryma za 30. gzy
wien kupiwszy w Chelmiskiej ziemi / Jakub
bek Żyd z Żydy swemi Kazimierskimi wme
czyli Roku 1606. w Marcu / y raczke mu a
noske wznowiwszy dol wode podzame
czel Martusowski podzucili. Drugiego
Woyciecha z Winar z Podlaska czworlecie
go / od Żydow / jed rokiem 1600. zamordo
wanego / Kardynal Nacielowski na pocz
tku swego Biskupstwa Krakowskie w trun

nie cynowej v S. Janu w Lublinie polozył.
W Wilnie na przedmiesciu Symon pieles
nie pachole / od Żydow Roku 1589. wme
czon. We Zwoleniu roku 1607. lecie dzieci
Chryścianki w bogiey z Żydziety gralo : wy
strzygli mu Żydy miesa na trzech mieyscach
pod goleniami / y dali dwa selagi aby niepl
kalo. Stalo sie y v Tarnowa cos okolo Ro
ku 1598. ale zaglaskeli zlotem. R v Stasfo
wa Roku 1610. albo 1611. ale niemial zto
sil lat. lat 3. Adam Salecki Theolog /
Krakowski Professor / tamieczny Pleban / aby
sie to bylo staralo. W Kłodawie Donat
praeleant y z siostra Dorota siedmletnia w
wielki piacet od Żydow porzezani / za Augu
sta Xrola Roku 1547. y wsciwie v Ra
monikow zakonnych pochowani : y tysiacy
ciacy innych / swiadeza ze Żydy co rok dzie
cie Chryścianskie zamordula. F. Sixtus
Senen. Biblioth. sancte l. 2. verb : Traditio
nes. Martinus Polonus lib. 4. sub Eugenio
3. Bonifinius lib. 4. dec. 5. Fortaliciu Fi
dei lib. 3. considerat 7.

Wajac sie oni y na wielk. hy moge
nie tylko ono za Jeki Cesarza zamordowa
nie Aneyostkiego Biskupa Anasazego sro
moeni / Niesfora w 12. albo za Ro
zofsa 90. ty. dy Chryścian
now / mordowanie / bo wieznie tanto wy
kupowali y zabili : ale y ono Gniezniena
fle 1609. Alastoru ich nassie / o tym
mowi o kierech osminacie stracono. Nie
dzito Żydem / maia po sobie prawo : tak
wierza / tak czynia. Kina trzykroć na dzien
Chryścian : swiadezy swiety Jeronim na
Rozdial 5. Izaiasa : dla tego by radzi zeby
wyciekla krew Chryścianska by o raz wysyla.
Namyc y my po sobie prawo / aby Żyd jeden
pod gardlem / sadney rzeczy / na wzgarde wi
ry Chryścianskiej / wnie sie niewazył.

Alle tak sa niesfor. w Żydy / ze by nago
rzej woznili / tedy z ch spriawiebliwosc byc
niemozu choc dala to temu to owemu / a ono
przeicie wysytko sie im sucho odrze. W Pana
Boga kazdy grzech odniesie karanie : dla te
go tez o niekarnosc Żydowsta / y nam sie
Chryścianom dostawa. O tym teraz do
lyc. Zapisal sie / iny papier.



Omyli

"A Short Piece About Jews

Testimonies of serious and credible authors to the ferocious cruelty of unfaithful Jews against Christian children that they perpetrate once a year by virtue of an ancient and enraged resolution, collected by Doctor Szymon Syreński, a Cracow physician.

Jewish Murders of Christian Children

That malignant Jews by virtue of an ancient and cruel resolution each year kill and disgracefully murder Christian children, and also, what they use this innocent blood for – we are assured by the testimony of both ancient and younger Historians.

Socrates [of Constantinople – J. O.] in book seven of Church History, in Chapter 16, writes: That under the Consuls Honorius Emperor, tenth time [Honorius' tenth consulate – J. O.], and Theodosius, in a place called Inmestar, between the cities of Chalcedon and Antioch in Syria, Jews tied up and hanged on a cross a Christian child they had kidnapped, and after a moment's torment with mock and laughter, they eventually beat it until it died. As soon as the Emperors got news of this, they had orders issued to the aldermen of that land to find the perpetrators of this perverse deed and crime and punish them. And so, Jews were rightfully punished for their preposterous wrongdoings.

Writes Theodor [Zwinger – J. O.] in *Theatrum Vitae Humanae*, quoting credible men, whom he references therein: That the unfaithful Jews, in the year of Our Lord 1234, in the English city of Nordwik [Norwich – J. O.], then in the year 1261 in the German city of Forcheim [Forchheim – J. O.], in the year 1285 in Mnich [Munich – J. O.] in the land of Bavaria, in the year 1287 in Bern the Swiss city, in the year 1303 in Werszanch [Weißensee – J. O.] in Thuringia, in the year 1401 in Dichehow [Dinkelsbühl? – J. O.] the Swabian city, in the year 1494 in Trnawa [Trnava – J. O.] in Hungary, in the year 1575 in Trident [Trent – J. O.] on the Italian border, tortured innocent little children, some with pins to draw blood from them, others they nailed to crosses and murdered.

St. Simon of Trent

In Trent, in the same way, those rogues and villains tormented to death a little child, as was described by Philip Jacob of Bergamo [Jacob Philip Foresti of Bergamo, Jacobus Philippus De Bergamo – J. O.], a historian of their own denomination: Having lured little child Symon to the home of Samuel Jew, to the synagogue, on the night of Lord's Passion, and having stood him on their altar and spread him, they tied him to it and tightened a kerchief around his little neck, and using scissors, they first carved off something else and then his right cheek; afterwards they pricked the little body with sharp iron needles, drawing blood, until the innocent little child gave his last breath. Finally, they tossed the little dead body into a rapid creek running past the synagogue; when the parents found the body, and took it to the alderman John [Giovanni – J. O.] de Salis, a Brescian nobleman, for certain reasons the suspicion was cast on the Jews, who, having been put to torture, confessed, and were all of them anathemized and expelled from the city. While the little child, right after burial, became venerated for its miracles, so that his fame spread far and wide. Due to this, the people of Trent built a church in his memory, where the little body of the innocent martyr is with reverence presented to pilgrims and guests.

Causes of the Cruelty

In Trnava in Hungary, elder Jews, when put to torture and well pressed, spoke of four causes for the cruelty.

1. To fulfil a resolution that is ancient but secret and known only to most eminent elders for a Christian child to be tormented to death and sacrificed each year by those whose lot is drawn, and that year it was the Trnavians who had drawn the lot, as they themselves confessed.
2. Because they understand, from old accounts, that Christian blood is an excellent medicine for stopping the blood after the Jewish circumcision.
3. Because when administered to Christians in food or drink, it is unusually helpful in winning their love and friendship.
4. They understand this blood to be very useful against hemorrhage, to which the Jewish nation is very prone.

Expulsion of Jews

Why it is those same Jews who in the year of Our Lord 1523 murdered a small child, and another one in Bossing [Bösing / Pezinok – J. O.] and because of that, 30 of them were burnt [in 1529 – J. O.], and all Jews were expelled from Hungary, as they were from England in the year 1295 and from Spain in the year 1495 [thus in the text; in fact, the decree in question was promulgated in 1492 – J. O.], as Pantaleon mentioned in his Chronicle, for just this kind of misdeeds and cruelties.

Had those Jews under Honorius had their sides burnt, they would probably confessed the same secrets that the others confessed after them; but they were simply asked straightforwardly and they persuaded the careless aldermen, who did not suspect anything worse, that what they had done was simply in frolic and drunkenness.

A Necessary Warning

May this be a warning to the great Polish lords who defend the unfaithful Jews, have joint toll, tenancy or merchant operations with them"

"or lease out to them and give over their Christ's-blood-redeemed subjects into slavery and disgrace for Jews to torment and oppress – against the laws of the Crown, of which they are supposed to be guardians and executors. Don't they create opportunity for Jews to commit such murders, so that they can most easily find Christian children for slaughter, when they make Jews lords of their properties and leasehold estates? Don't they know that Jews add such ghastly seasoning to those gifts of spices that they offer, believing that this wins them the love and favors of Christians?

Jewish Liberties

As concerns the Jewish rights and liberties that were by some incaution thrown in the Crown Statutes [the co-called Łaski's Statute, the first codification of law in the Kingdom of Poland; it included the provisions of Statute of Kalisz of 1264, endowing Jews with certain liberties – J. O.]; if one were to look into whence they came: these are not laws but rather defects and a disfiguration of our laws. Indeed, Alexander King [Alexander Jagiellon, who adopted the Statute – J. O.] understood this and for this reason, to shift the guilt away from himself, he announces that he does not reestablish those laws with any new confirmation but merely allows for them to be written in only to protect himself in his defense against the Jews.

Where They [the liberties – J. O.] Come From

It is well known from our Chronicles that our Polish Assuerus [Ahasuerus; Old-Testament-derived epithet denoting a king insidiously beguiled by Jews and doing the Jewish bidding; it is a reference to the Christian perception of the narrative from the Scroll of Esther, read by followers of Judaism during Purim celebrations; according to the Scroll, owing to the entreaties of Ester, wife of the Persian king Ahasuerus, the monarch revoked his consent to the plan of his counsellor Haman, whose goal was to exterminate all Jews inhabiting the Kingdom of Persia; in consequence of Esther's intervention, Haman was exposed and killed, and his place at the court taken by Mordechai, Esther's foster father; the Polish king referred to here is Casimir III the Great – E. J.], having abandoned his lawful wife Adelaide, daughter to Heinrich the margrave of Hesse, gave preference to Hesterka [Esther] Jewess and had two sons with her (in Kromer in Twelve [in Book 12 of Martin Cromer's *De origine et rebus gestis Polonorum libri XXX*, Basel 1555 – J. O.]), and some daughters, who followed her mother in keeping the Jewish faith. It is, then, owing to this mistress of flattery that those cursed Jewish laws are made, in the name of Bolesław, who had been dead for centuries [the Statute of Kalisz was signed by the then ruler of Kalisz, Prince Bolesław the Pious, Casimir extended its scope to the entire kingdom; using a lie about a Jewish lover of the Polish king (cf. Shmeruk, 1985), Syrenius implies that the Statute was forged to begin with – E. J.]; their holes are clearly manifest everywhere but most of all when they [Jews – J. O.] defend themselves with the Pope, who [allegedly] forbids that any difficulties be met by the Jews for using Christian blood, but name neither the Pope nor the Papal decree. And is it not a great error that a Jew accused of murdering a Christian child cannot be considered guilty without a testimony from three Jews and three Christians? Who in their right mind will believe that an unfaithful Jew would ever give testimony against another Jewish scoundrel? And what is even less just, if a Christian should fail to prove a Jew's fault, then the punishment that the Jew was supposed to suffer has to be borne by the Christian. We thus see clearly the kind of marvels that this law brings forth.

For What Purpose Is Christian Blood Needed by Jews

That it is forbidden for Jews to consume blood, this we know – and we do not allege that Jews use human blood in food or drink, but we do say that they apply the blood of Christian children on top of their medicines (or rather magic and superstitions), and apparently they feed it to the Lords to use this magic to win their favors, as we conclude from their confessions made under torture. And that is why when a Lord gets involved with Jews, it is difficult for him to free himself.

They Killed a Child in Cracow

But the futility of this defense was revealed after only 50 years when the same cruelty and villainy was committed. For under King Jagiełło [King of Poland 1386–1434 – J. O.], the Jews who lived in Kraków at the time also murdered gruesomely a little child; and when Father Budek the preacher accused them of that to all and sundry during the sermon [on March 29, 1407 – J. O.], the plain folk, fevered with the severity of that cruel deed, threw themselves on Jews, plundered and burnt their homes, and afterwards the Jews were banished to Kazimierz, as the Polish Chronicles [*Annales seu cronici incliti regni Poloniae* by Jan Długosz; Długosz was born in 1415 – J. O.] attest.

In Lithuania

Brodawka ["Wart"] Jew, a toll collector, also dared to commit the same cruelty, as told to me by His Noble Lord Sebastian Ligeza, Deputy Master of Pantry for Sandomierz [a mid-tier honorary title – J. O.], and for that he had to flee the Polish Crown, leaving behind all his belongings [flee the Kingdom of Poland for the Grand Duchy of Lithuania – J. O.].

The aforesaid stories might be enough to see that here, too, those Jewish lunacies happen each year to Christian children; for having achieved superiority almost everywhere, they can obtain most easily, by betrayal or by purchase, innocent Christian children for their cruelties. All of which we should attribute to those Lords who pay no heed to either God's judgement or the laws of the Fatherland, which forbid any partnerships with Jews, and to satisfy their gluttony, make Jews their comrades, even to the greatest detriment and peril of Christian blood.

St. Ambrose's Condemnation of Theodosius

If St. Ambrose were alive, what words of admonition and reprimand wouldn't he use for such gross inappropriateness, if he had no leniency for Theodosius Emperor, the Lord of the entire world, when the Emperor ordered, allegedly for the sake of justice and discipline, to punish Christians for burning down a synagogue [in 388 in the city of Callinicum, today's Syrian city of Raqqa – J. O.]! How, then, could he have patience for our Lords, who scorn human and God's laws and are, almost all of them, not ashamed to associate themselves with Jews and take their side against Christians and therefore against Christ? Let us just listen to what he writes to the Emperor.

His Letter

It is written, I quote: "'That I spoke of your testimonies before Kings, and was not ashamed' [modified quote from Psalm 119:46 – J. O.]. And therefore the silence of the priest ought to displease your Clemency, and his freedom to please you. For you are involved in the risk of my silence, but are aided by the benefit of my freedom. In the cause of God whom will you listen to, if not to the priest, at whose greater peril sin is committed? Who will dare to tell you the truth if the priest dare not? Shall I, then, keep silence in the cause of God? Let us, then, consider what I have to fear. A report was made by the military Count of the East [Governor of Antioch and head of the Eastern Diocese, where Callinicum was located – J. O.]"

Page 1538 of Szymon Syreński's *Herbarium* reads:

"that a synagogue had been burnt, and that this was done at the instigation of the Bishop. You gave command that the others should be punished, and the synagogue be rebuilt by the Bishop himself. There is no adequate cause for such a commotion, that the people should be so severely punished for the burning of a building, and much less since it is the burning of a synagogue, a home of unbelief, a house of impiety, a receptacle of folly, which God Himself has condemned".

God Abhors the Synagogue [Syrenius' subtitle interceded into Ambrose's letter – J. O.]

"For thus we read, where the Lord our God speaks by the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah: 'And I will do to this house, which is called by My Name, wherein you trust, and to the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh, and I will cast you forth from My sight, as I cast forth your brethren, the whole seed of Ephraim. And do not pray for that people, and do not ask mercy for them, and do not come near Me on their behalf, for I will not hear you' [Jeremiah 7:14]. God forbids intercession to be made for those. How will Christ be able to help us who fight for the Jews against Christ? Further, into what calumnies will they not break out, who by false witness calumniated even Christ? Into what calumnies will not men break out who are liars even in things belonging to God? Will you give this triumph over the Church of God to the Jews? This trophy over Christ's people, this exultation, O Emperor, to the unbelievers? This rejoicing to the Synagogue, this sorrow to the Church? The people of the Jews will set this solemnity among their feast-days. And whereas they deny that they themselves are bound by the Roman laws, and repute those laws as criminal, yet now they think that they ought to be avenged, as it were, by the Roman laws. And what will Christ say to you afterwards? It is a serious matter to endanger your salvation for the Jews. Who is to avenge the Synagogue? Christ, Whom they slew, Whom they denied? Will God the Father avenge those who do not receive the Father, since they have not received the Son? Consult, O Emperor, your own advantage, or suffer me to consult mine. For you it is possible to change for the better, for me it is not possible to hide the truth" [Parts of St. Ambrose's Letter to Theodosius as to the burning of the Jewish synagogue (Letter 40), quoted after: Ambrose, 1896]. That was St. Ambrose.

Company of Jews

And indeed, St. Ambrose tells us to shun not just partnerships but even conversations with Jews, in Sermon 17 we are told to shun the company of Jews and that even a conversation is a great blemish. For they cunningly sneak between people, invade the homes, enter the offices and courtrooms [*wchodzą na ratusze*] and pester the ears of the judges and officials, and the more shameless they are, the more they can achieve. This is not a new fault of theirs but an entrenched evil. For we know it was long ago that they harassed our Lord and Savior in court, and condemned him by alderman judgement [a reference to the trial of Jesus held by Pontius Pilate: Syrenius suggests that the high court of the Roman governor of Judea was in fact manipulated by Jews to the point of becoming an obedient tool of their interests – E. J.]. In court, then, the Jews may oppress innocence, betray mysteries, condemn Lord's glory.

It is out of love and mercy for the Christian blood and [his worries about the] uncertain salvation of those whom the Jews enchant to take their side or force into servitude that he [St. Ambrose – J. O.] made his speech: so that all people, having been frightened by the Jewish villainy and cruelty in the stories, heeded St. Ambrose's warning, restrained themselves from any partnerships with Jews, and so that unfaithful people would not continue to scorn the Christian folk and would not bring shame and disgrace to Christ's church because of the actions of Christians themselves.

Up Until This Point Syrenius

[The following portion of the text was probably penned by Gabriel Ioannicy, Syrenius' friend and the executor of his last will, whose task – apart from taking care of Syrenius' family – was to see to it that *Herbarium* was published. Like Syrenius, Ioannicy died before the printing was complete. Consequently, it is also possible that the closing part of the text was written by yet another person. Nevertheless, *A Short Piece About Jews* remains consistent in terms of ideology. From the point of view of discourse analysis one can say that the actual author of the text is the dominant culture which speaks through its bearers – E. J.]

Cruelty Against the Christ

But there is infinite abundance of this [other accounts – J. O.] written by decent people to [make one] avoid Jewish company. As concerns blasphemy against Christ, the true Messiah: Writes Thomas the Patriarch of Barbaria that in Paris one Christian pledged his clothes with a Jew. Having no means to buy them back, he [in other accounts of these events, which were alleged to take place in 1290, the borrower was a woman – J. O.] promised to bring the Sacrament [the Host – J. O.] which he was to receive at the coming Easter. The Jew threw the Sacrament into a cauldron full of boiling oil and water, mocking it with blasphemous words. A most fair tiny child [*dzieciqtko nadobniusierkie*] appeared in the cauldron, who avoided, with strange agility, the hooked stick that the Jew was using to try and draw it. His Jewlings saw this, and astonished at these marvels, they ran to their mother to tell her about their father's cruelty towards the little child. A crowd of people gathered; the Bishop took the Sacrament rightfully to the church, the Jewlings and their mother took baptism. When the Jew was led to his death, he asked for a Talmud, hoping to be saved by it. He was given the books but the fire rose from the wood which had been prepared and consumed the Jew along with them.

Second Story

Around the year of Our Lord 1330, in Güstrow, a baptized Jewess, having met her sister-in-law Eleazarowa [Eleazar's wife – J. O.] Jewess and been invited to visit her, said: 'I am afraid of my God and that is why I have separated myself from the Jewish community'. The Jewess replied: 'You were expelled from the synagogue for your misdoings and that is why you went to the Christians, so that it's easier for you to do as you please'. Says the baptized one: 'Do you remember when you bought the Sacrament from a Christian woman, took it to the synagogue and then pierced it? I was there as well and I heard a child's cry. I was mortified by the harm, I was moved by the miracle; I ran away from you and hastened to a church, and I received mercy along with baptism'. Some people heard this conversation and informed Prince John [John II, Lord of Werle-Güstrow – J. O.], who had Jews tortured. Not one Jew or Jewess"

Page 1539 of Szymon Syreński's *Herbarium* reads:

"confessed. Orders were issued to find the woman who had sold the Sacrament to the Jews; she was chased down, confessed, and was burnt. The king sent soldiers to Eleazar the Jewish elder, advising him to return the Sacrament and accept baptism and [thus] to keep his health. The queen advised Eleazar's wife to persuade her husband to do so. The Jew told his wife: 'Be staid, my Mathilde: if we die for the truth, we shall soon sit at the bosom of Abraham'. A huge fire was made so that they would be frightened and confessed. When none of them was moved, other Jews were thrown into the fire. Eleazar looked with dry eyes as his wife was thrown into the fire, saying that he didn't want to say anything other than the truth, and [then] was burnt as well. This Jewish steadiness caused doubts whether the baptized one might have spoken out of spite. That is why both the priest and herself were told that, under pain of their deaths, the Sacrament had to be found. The woman, full of hope, having prepared herself with fasting and prayer, went with the officials to the synagogue, and after a long search, found the holy thing behind glass, wrapped in a hem, covered in blood in four places. Thus writes Kranzyus in 8 Books of Vandal History [Albert Krantz, *Vandalia, sive Historia de Vandalorum vera origine, &c.*, Cologne 1518 – J. O.], chapter 8.

There is much to be observed in this story, especially the Jewish resolve, that they do not confess, and this wins them trust. But who wants to read a great deal about this, let them read the book *Fortalicium fidei* [by Alphonsus de Spina – J. O.] – They do not confess, we remember Bochnia from a few years back [following an accusation of desecrating the Host, the Jewish community of Bochnia was expelled by decree of King Sigismund III Vasa in 1605 – J. O.].

Cruelty Against Christians

And if they do that to Christ the Lord, why wouldn't they do it to Christians? Don't they commit before our eyes their child murders? A little girl of 12 years, from the village of Czechr next to Warka, they did apprehend in the evening from the street, cut her and drew her blood in the year 1601, on 17 May. In the village of Podgorze, in the land of Chełm, having bought Wojciech Ożerka, a 2-year-old child, from his stepfather for 30 grzywnas [an amount of silver equivalent to 6 kilograms or 13 pounds – J. O.], Jakubek ["Little Jacob"] Jew, along with his Jews of Kazimierz, tormented [the child] to death in March of 1606, and having cut off his little leg and arm, they planted the body down by the water by the Markus Castle. Another Wojciech, a four-year-old from Winary in Podlachia, murdered by Jews before the year 1600, was laid to rest in a tin casket at St. John's in Lublin by Cardinal Maciejowski, at the beginning of his Bishopric in Cracow. In Vilnius, in the suburbs, Symon, a five-year-old boy, was martyred by Jews in the year 1589. In Zwoleń, in the year 1607, in the summer, a child of a destitute Christian woman was playing with Jewlings – Jews carved some meat out of the child in three places below the shin and gave it two shillings so that it would not cry. Something happened also next to Tarnów round the year 1598 but they silenced it with gold. And around Staszów in the year 1610 or 1611, but there was no force to enact the punishment that Father Adam Fałęcki, Theologian, a Cracow Professor and local Parish Priest, demanded. In Kłodawa, Donat of six years and his sister Dorota of seven years were butchered by Jews on Good Friday in the year 1547, under King Augustus, and received proper burial at the church of the Canon monks. [Those events] and a thousand of thousands of other ones are evidence that each year Jews will murder a Christian child. F. Sixtus Senen. Biblioth. Sanctae, l. 2. verb: Traditiones [Sixtus of Siena / Sixtus Senensis, *Bibliotheca sancta ex praeceptis Catholicae Ecclesiae auctoribus collecta*, Venice 1566, Book 2, entry: Traditiones – J. O.]. Martinus Polonus lib. 4. sub Eugenio 3 [Martinus Polonus, *Chronicon pontificum et imperatorum*, Book 4, about Pope Eugene III – J. O.]. Bonfinius lib. 4. dec. 5 [Antonio Bonfini / Antonius Bonfinius, *Historia Pannonica: Sive Hungaricarum Rerum Decades*, Basel 1568, Decade 5, Book 4]. *Fortalicium Fidei* lib. considerat 7 [Alphonsus de Spina, *Fortalicium Fidei*, Lviv 1469, Book 7].

They are prone to great misdeeds as well: this is attested not only by the shameful murder of Antiochian Bishop Anastasius under Phokas Emperor [Patriarch of Antioch Anastasius II was killed in 609, allegedly by Jewish insurgents – J. O.] in Nikephoros in 18.44 [Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Book 18, Chapter 44 – J. O.], or the murder of 90 thousand Christians by Jews under Chosroes, for they bought prisoners cheaply and killed them [in 614 Persian king Chosroes II / Khosrow II conquered Byzantine-controlled Jerusalem, the Jewish denizens of the city allegedly bought the Christian captives from the Persian invaders and slew them – J. O.], but also by their 1609 invasion of the Monastery in Gniezno, for which eighteen of them were executed. This is not odd of Jews, they have laws for themselves: as they believe, they do. They curse Christians three times a day, as attested by St. Jerome in reference to Chapter 5 of Isaiah [Hieronymus, *Commentari in Esaiam*, Book 5 – J. O.], and they would gladly see all Christian blood spilt at once. But we, too, have our laws for ourselves to make sure no Jew, under pain of death, will ever dare do a single thing to disrespect the Christian faith. But the Jews are unfortunate in that no matter how wrong their deeds, justice can never reach them: although they hurt one person or another, they get away with everything. God punishes all sins, that is why we Christians are also punished for Jewish impunity. Enough about that now. The blank paper is filled”

(Translated from the Middle Polish by Jakub Ozimek)

Oświęcim 1984”. Native town. Oświęcim. Oszpicin. Auschwitz. *Le hasard fait bien les choses*. And all’s well that ends well. The Jagiellonian University is flourishing. The city of Oświęcim is proud. Plants survived to prosper. So did Polish antisemitism. Only the Jews of Poland did not. But no need to devote specific separate chapters of natural history to them anymore, since they were – finally – incorporated into it and became an indistinct part of its object.

From the 21st century to the Renaissance. Five centuries back. Syrenius’ work. A close call from afar. How easy it is to imagine the previous five centuries all the way to the first forms of Polish statehood to be recognized by Christian Europe – after the baptism of the prince and of his subjects, encouraged with fire and sword. *Longue durée* and time compression at once. Before touching them I never surmised that both could be touched. That they were tangible. But in fact they are. Exactly like cultural patterns. “A closed-loop recycled material is defined as a material that is extracted from the production system and is returned to the same production system, eventually after a recycling treatment” – thus speaks the Internet.⁷⁷ And such is the case of antisemitism and its victims. From *Herbarium* to *Herbarium* it comes full circle. A closed circuit. So far with no way out.

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The Treblinka *Herbarium* is a present account from a former site of the Holocaust. Stemming from a basic documentary ambition, at a literal level and at a meta level it reflects what the Holocaust was: a cultural production. Multilayered and therefore complex – but not complicated. Part and parcel of an antisemitic continuum. In this sense my work is aimed against the environmental history of the Holocaust when practiced as a strategy of avoidance, which in Poland is more often the case than not. Whereas it shouldn’t be the case at all, as a comprehensive reading of Syrenius’ *opus vitae* teaches us – among many other things, if not among (almost) every thing. Cultur-

⁷⁷ <https://context.reverso.net/t%C5%82umaczenie/angielski-polski/closed-loop>, accessed 01.10.2019. The text quoted is a European Commission decision: European Commission, 2002, p. 16.

al patterns which made the Holocaust imaginable and possible are plainly visible and easily readable all across the dominant culture. They are also inscribed in what we tend to perceive as nature. Rooted in the past and extending into the present in a country which employs almost all its social and cultural energy to defuse its own potential for reassessment and change.

We must not hastily generalize. On this one point I agree with the majority. We must not hastily generalize because this way, we might overlook something. Or someone. I took my time, then, and today it is with full conviction that I put forward my assessment.

The whole of Poland. On Jewish ashes. All hopped up on that speed. Loaded. Like a barn.

Summer 2019 – Summer 2020

Translated by Jonathan Brent with the assistance of the author



Caption on the reverse (written in pencil): "Treblinka. Extermination camp right after the liberation (ashes)"
(Photo by Jakub Byk) (from the collection of the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, reference TRE 029, formerly 6221)



Caption on the reverse (written in pencil): "Treblinka extermination camp right after the liberation (ashes)"
(Photo by Jakub Byk) (from the collection of the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, reference TRE 030, formerly 6449)



Treblinka II, June 19, 2016 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)



Treblinka II, June 25, 2016 (Photo by Elżbieta Janicka)

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Herbarium Polonorum (Heimatphotographie)

Abstrakt: Osnową tekstu jest wojenna i powojenna historia terenu niemieckiego nazistowskiego obozu zagłady Treblinka II z perspektywy produkcji krajobrazu – ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem aspektu tożsamościowego, czyli unarodowienia natury i naturalizacji narodu. Wywód odnosi się do towarzyszących tej produkcji konwencji obrazowania w fotografii przyrodniczej i krajoznawczej, takich jak niemiecka *Heimatphotographie* i polska fotografia ojczysta. Poruszone zostało też zagadnienie klasyfikacji jako zasady funkcjonowania ludzkiego umysłu wraz z jej zastosowaniami poznawczymi oraz/lub tożsamościowymi – do morderczych konsekwencji włącznie. Ważny punkt odniesienia stanowi ponadto historia zielnika jako formy organizacji wiedzy (Maria Sibylla Merian, Róża Luksemburg, Szymon Syreński) oraz jej związki ze sztukami wizualnymi (Krzysztof Jung, Alina Szapocznikow). Bogaty materiał ilustracyjny odnosi się do analizowanych sposobów reprezentacji ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem aksjosemiotyki polskiego antysemityzmu, sięgając do jego elitarnych form w Polsce Jagiellonów. Tekst podsumowuje piętnaście lat pracy autorki nad projektem fotograficznym *Zielnik* na terenie byłego niemieckiego nazistowskiego obozu zagłady Żydów Treblinka II.

Wyrażenia kluczowe: antysemityzm; *Heimatphotographie*; Holokaust; krajobraz; fotografia przyrodnicza; historia środowiskowa; Treblinka; zielnik



Article No. 2266

DOI: 10.11649/slh.2266

Citation: Janicka, E. (2020). *Herbarium Polonorum (Heimatphotographie)*. *Studia Litteraria et Historica*, 2020(9), Article 2266. <https://doi.org/10.11649/slh.2266>

This is a translation of the original Polish-language article entitled *Herbarium Polonorum (Heimatphotographie)*, which was published in *Studia Litteraria et Historica*, 2020(9), Article 2266. <https://doi.org/10.11649/slh.2266>.

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The preparation of this work was self-financed by the author.

Competing interests: The author is a member of the Editorial Team of the journal.