

PŁOCK

The history of Płock goes back to the eleventh century, when its location on the crossroads of two major trade routes determined its strategic, political and economic importance. In 1237, Płock was the first town in the Mazovia region to receive a municipal charter. The Płock Jewish community, dating to the early thirteenth century, was one of the oldest in Poland. The Jews were initially engaged in money-lending; but, after King Zygmunt August granted them economic rights in 1555 equal to those of other citizens, they became involved in trade and crafts.

The first synagogue was established in 1534 and served a community of 600 strong. After the partitions of the Polish Commonwealth, Płock passed first under Prussian and then Russian rule. By the beginning of the twentieth century, Jews were employed in commerce, clothing and metal industries, food processing and printing. Płock was a stronghold of the Jewish socialist Bund, the Zionist Socialists and the Po'alei Zion (workers of Zion) movements. Płock's prominent Jewish citizens included the Yiddish writer Sholem Asch and two important Zionist leaders, Nahum Sokolow and Yitzhak Gruenbaum; the latter, who served in the Polish Parliament, was the most popular Jewish political leader in interwar Poland.

Soon after the Germans occupied the city on September 9, 1939, they imposed a ghetto. Two major deportations, on February 20 and February 28, 1941, nearly wiped out the Jewish community. Only some 100 Jews survived. A handful of Jews settled briefly in Płock after the war.

Location

104 km N of Łódź
 52°33' / 19°42'
 Voivodship: Płock

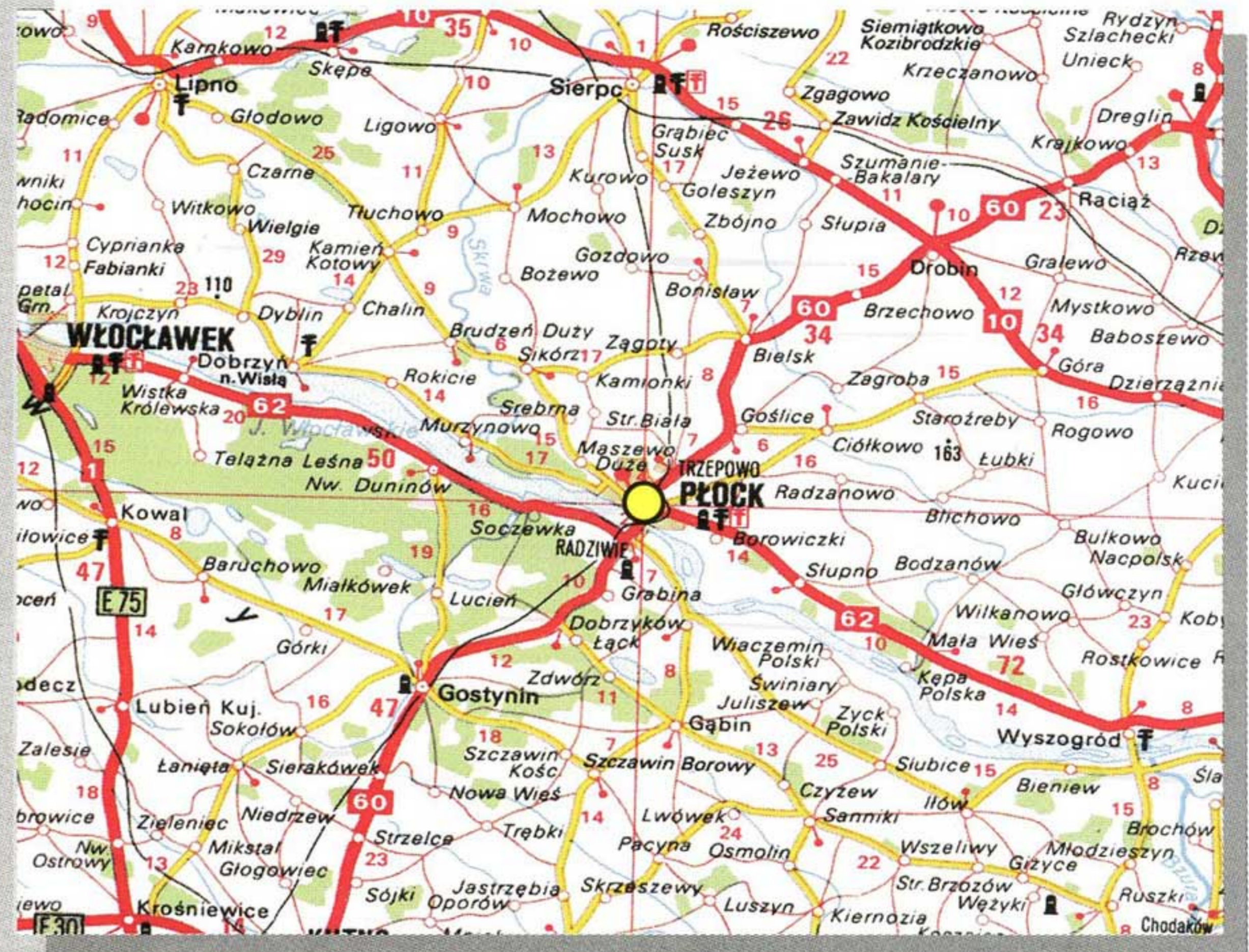
General Population, 1939

30,000 (33% Jewish)

General Population, 1994

126,325

PLOTSK, PLOTZK



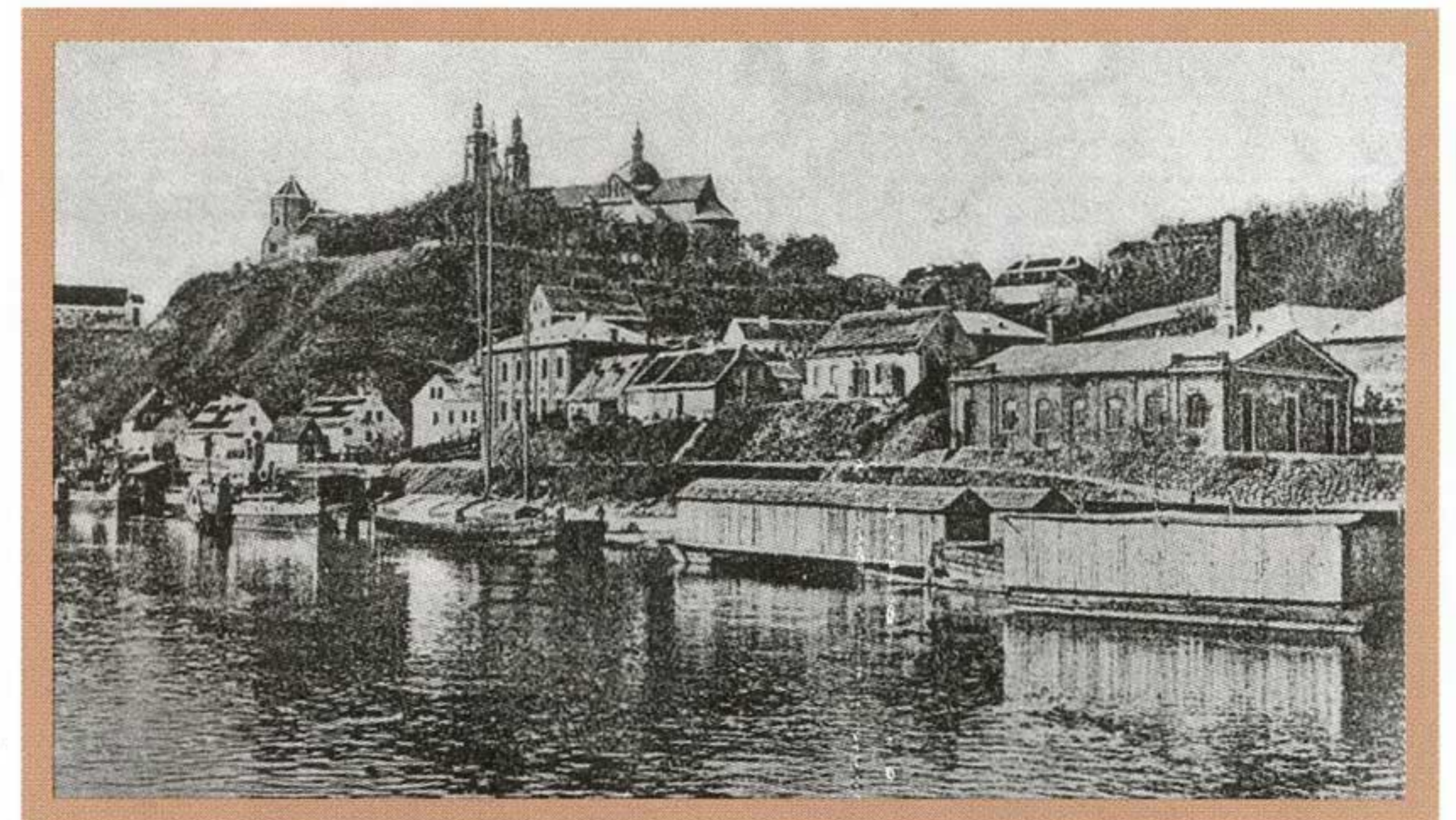
SYNAGOGUE

ul. Kwiatka 7
 Synagogue dates from 1810.
 Current use: abandoned factory.



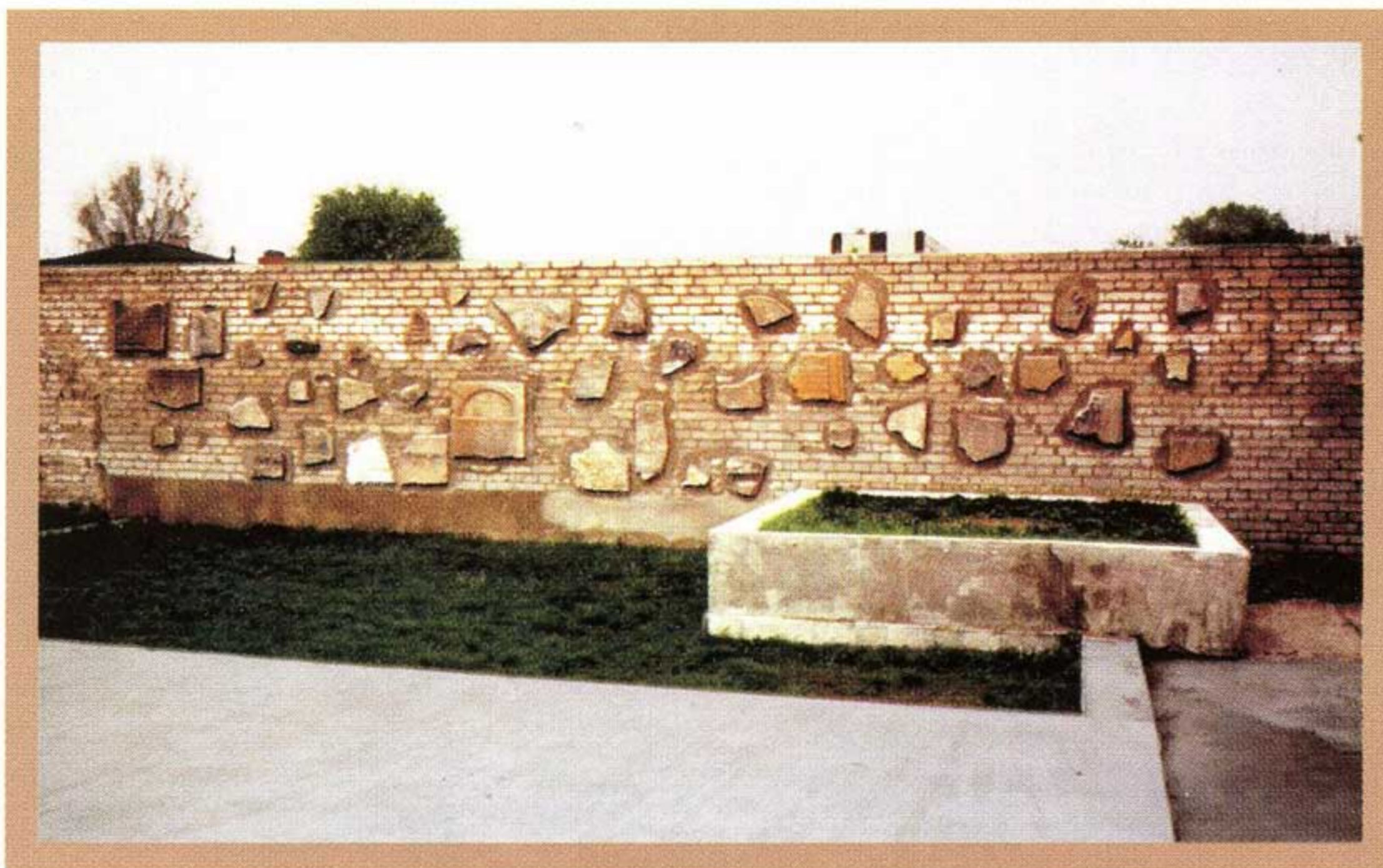
■ Synagogue, ul. Kwiatka 7

1



■ Płock, c. 1917

2



■ Remnants of Jewish cemetery, ul. Mickiewicza, 1994

3

JEWISH CEMETERIES

ul. 3 Maja 3

Cemetery, dating from the 1700s.

Completely destroyed.

Current site use: high school.

ul. Mickiewicza (formerly ul. Sportowa)

Cemetery (dating from 1845) was heavily damaged; several tombstones remain, and additional fragments are encased in a memorial wall.

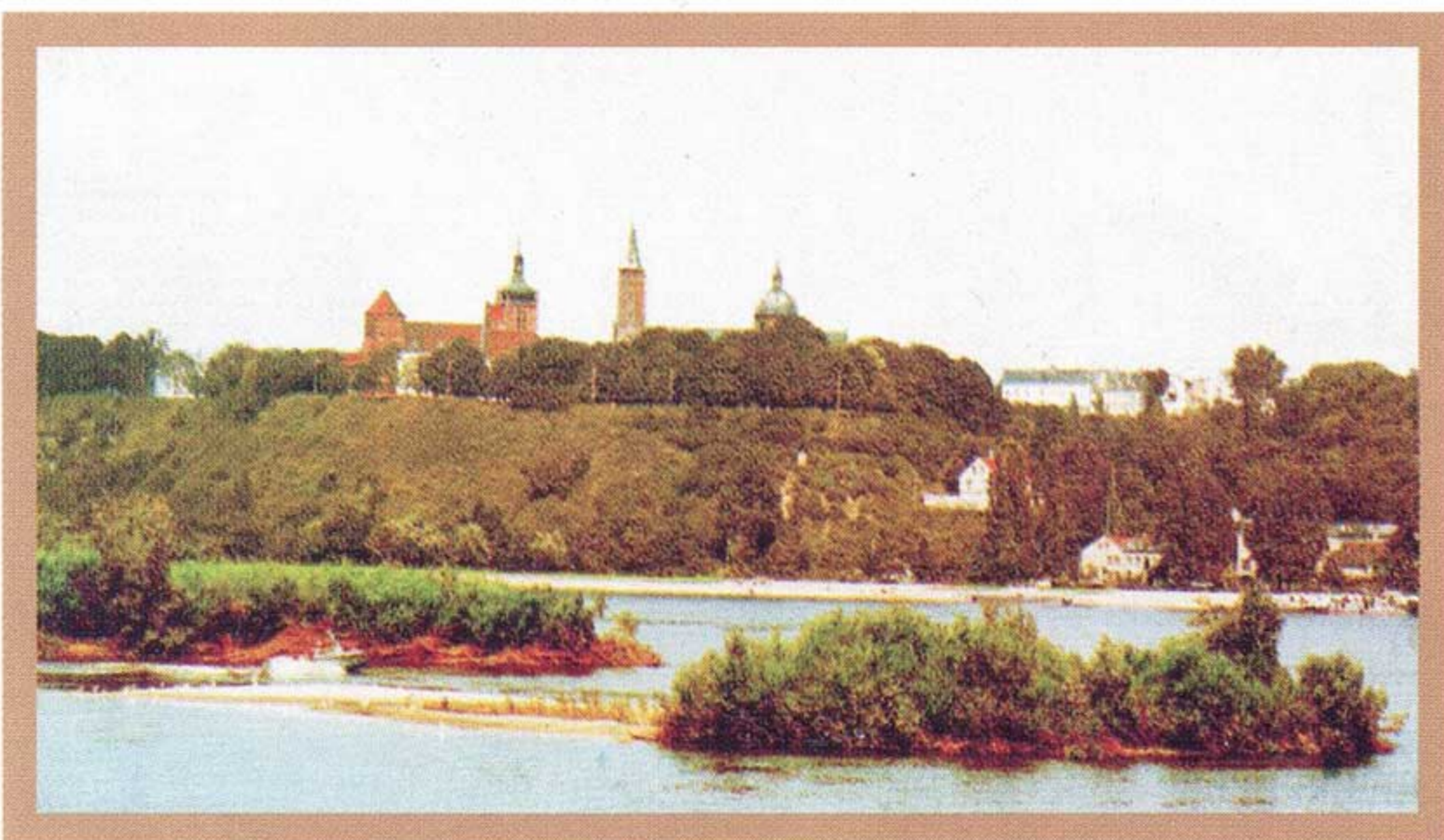
HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL

ul. Mickiewicza (Jewish cemetery)

Memorial to Holocaust victims from Płock who were killed in the camps.

DEPORTATIONS

Działdowo, Treblinka, Sobibór, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Bełżec.



■ Płock today

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SELECTED READING

Benoit-Lapierre, Nicole. *Le Silence de la memoire: A la recherche des juifs de Płock* (The Silence of Memory: In Search of the Jews of Płock). Paris: Plon, 1989. (F)

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Greenspan, S. *Yidn in Plotsk* (Jews in Płock). New York, 1960. (Y)

Horn, Yosef, ed. *Plotsk; bletlekh geshikhte fun idishn lebn in der alter heym* (Płock; Pages of History of Jewish Life in the Old Hometown of Płock). Buenos Aires: Sociedad de Residentes de Płock en la Argentina, 1945. (Y)



■ Entrance to Jewish cemetery, ul. Mickiewicza, 1994

5



■ ul. Grodzka, c. 1917

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Przedpeński, Jan. *Żydzi płocky, dzieje; martyrologia 1939–1945* (The Jews of Płock: History, Martyrology, 1939–1945). Płock: Fraza, 1993. (P)

Trunk, Isaiah. *Di geshikhte fun di yidn in Plotsk, 1237–1657* (The History of Jews in Płock, 1237–1657). Warsaw: Yidisher Visnshaflekher Institut, 1939. (Y)

BIBLIOGRAPHIC SOURCES

CAHJP; EDRD; EJ; GA; GUM3; GUM4; GUM5; GUM6; GYLA; HSL; JE; JGFF; JHT; LDL; LDS; LVY; PHP4; PJH; RJHS; SF