

Handout

Use of DNA and Modern Technologies in Holocaust Historiography and Family Research

***Historiography** is the examination of how a specific topic is studied by historians, including the particular sources, techniques, and theoretical approaches, and how the methodologies influence the writing of history, and changing interpretations of historical events.

From Encyclopedia Britannica: “critical examination of sources, the selection of particular details from the authentic materials in those sources, and the synthesis of those details into a narrative that stands the test of critical examination.”

History is what happens. Historiography is how to make sense of it.

* **What is a Microhistory?**

An attempt to claim the experiences of individuals and how they interacted with one another as well as the broader economic, demographic, political and social structures around them, as a contrast to perceiving them as data points. Involves a combination of archival research and interviews to understand an event or events on a small scale, and then perhaps scale up to a meso- or macro- context – looking at individual pixels on a screen to better recognize the whole.

* **Can We Write a Microhistory?**

What can these results tell us about the Piotrków Ghetto?

Dynamics of the First Ghetto in Occupied Europe

The Ghetto was porous and allowed movement of Jews and non-Jews (testimonies corroborate this)

The local population was tolerant enough to allow a known Jewish child born in 1943 to survive, both during and after the War – Polish-Jewish Relations

The local population identifying as “Catholic” contained individuals with Jewish roots.

Bibliography

- The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945*, Volume II: Ghettos in German-Occupied Eastern Europe (USHMM 2012). Format: Hardback 1682w photos, 23 maps. ISBN: 9780-253-355997.
 - Testimonies of the USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive <https://sfi.usc.edu/vha>
 - Testimonies at the Jewish Historical Institute (AZIH), Warsaw
 - *Ghetto Żydowskie W Okupowanym Piotrkowie*, Rządowska A., Feldman D., Piotrków Trybunalski Biblioteka Piotrków 800, 2014 (In Polish)
 - Jewish Historical Institute (AZIH) Ringelblum Archives <http://www.jhi.pl/en/blog/2014-10-08-ringelblum-archive>
 - *A Tale of One City: Piotrkow Trybunalski*. Edited by Ben-Giladi. (New York: Shengold Publishers, in cooperation with The Piotrkow Trybunalski Relief Association in New York, 1991). 494 pages. <https://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/Piotrkow/Piotrkow.html>
 - *Piotrkow Trybunalski ve-ha-sevivah sefer zikaron*. Edited by Yaakov Maltz, Naftali (Lau) Lau. (Tel Aviv: Aroysgegebndurk dem Redaktsyekomitet fun der Pyetzkowwer Landsmanshaft in Yisroel = Former Residents of Piotrkow Trybunalski in Israel, 1965). 1, 192 cols.
 - *Słownik Geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego* (1880-1902), VIII, pp. 182-183: 'Piotrków'.
 - *Pinkas HaKehilot of Poland*, Vol. 1 (1976), pp. 182-183: 'Piotrków Trybunalski'.
 - *Encyclopedia of Jewish Life* (2001), pp. 994-996: 'Piotrkow Trybunalski'.
- © 2024 Debra J. Kaplowitz