

## **CULTURAL HERITAGE AS A BASIS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM (AS EXEMPLIFIED BY A SMALL TOWN IN CENTRAL EUROPE)**

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**Abstract.** *The purpose of the study has been to identify the elements of cultural heritage of Hasids in Lelów. A landscape heritage inventory method has been used and a variety of attractions and objects have been identified attributed to traces of everyday life of David Biderman's dynasty Hasids. Attractions from among seven groups of physical classification were identified, namely: environmental objects; archaeological objects; monuments of architecture and urban planning; historical places of remembrance; museums, archives and collections; folk culture facilities and centres; and modern facilities (established after 1945), including events. In addition to the landscape heritage inventory an interview was also used to obtain information. It was found that the core of local and regional tourist product is the annual pilgrimage of Hasids to the tzadik David Biderman's grave, which is the largest and most glaring proof of Lelów's multiculturalism, similarly to the festival of Polish and Jewish culture (Festival of Ciulim and Cholent) organized since 2003. Cultivating traditions of this lineage in the annual celebrations involving thousands of foreign guests is unique on the scale of Central Europe, or at least Poland, a cultural and social event, stimulating the development of tourism.*

**Keywords:** *Ciulim, Cholent, Festival, Hasids, Lelów.*

### **Introduction**

Cultural heritage is a resource of tangible things (artefacts, places, natural and cultural areas) and intangible values (historical, religious, scientific, artistic, custom, folklore), protected and transmitted to subsequent generations and important for the preservation of a society's identity, its development and shaping the sense of civilisational community. Elements of cultural heritage constitute the basis for political, social and cultural development of a society, thus defining its identity (Oigenblick & Kirschenbaum, 2002; Poria et al., 2006;

Maoz, 2007; Wight & Lennon, 2007; Biran et al., 2011; Podoshen & Hunt, 2011).

The area of Central Europe was inhabited by the Jewish community from the late Middle Ages. The largest diaspora was located in the areas of today's Belarus, Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine, where the Jewish community represented over 10 % of the total population. The co-existence resulted in spontaneous mixing of cultures. The modern cultural heritage of Jews in Poland and neighbouring countries plays an important role in building a multicultural society in which different groups, customs and religions exist side by side.

Cultural heritage is successfully used in the strategies of tourism development. The elements of cultural heritage are often cited as tourist attractions that form the basis of leisure- and recreation-related tourism or education (Poria et al., 2003; Kowarik et al., 2016; Fajer et al., 2016), including as part of the so-called dark tourism (Miles, 2002; Stone & Sharpley, 2008; Causevic & Lynch, 2011; Kang et al., 2012; Wight, 2016; Płomiński & Bakota, 2017). Adaptation of the elements of cultural heritage in tourism usually refers to large objects or groups of objects, and is rarely the domain of small towns.

The purpose of the study is identify the elements of cultural heritage of Hasids in Lelów (in a small town in the south of Poland), its modern interpretation and investigation of its possible use in the development of tourism.

## **Research methods**

The study area is a small town in the south of Poland (Fig. 1). It is a village in the rural district of Częstochowa, located in the north-eastern part of Silesian province, about 35 kilometres east of Częstochowa.

Lelów has long been characterized by its multiculturalism because of the town's Polish and Jewish residents. The oldest mention of the presence of Jews in Lelów, which can be found in the inspection report, dates from the late 16th century. It is a document in which the church authorities expressed their outrage when the Lelów starost took a part of hospital land with the intention of using it for a Jewish cemetery (Poniewierska et al., 2005).

The privileges awarded to Jews meant that their number on the territory of Lelów increased. In the 17th and 18th centuries the Jewish community in Lelów received privileges from the following rulers: Władysław IV (1633), Jan Kazimierz (1649), Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki (1669), Jan III Sobieski (1695) and Stanisław August Poniatowski (1766). It is worth mentioning that the seats of the rabbi and the kahal were located in Lelów too (Poniewierska et al., 2005).

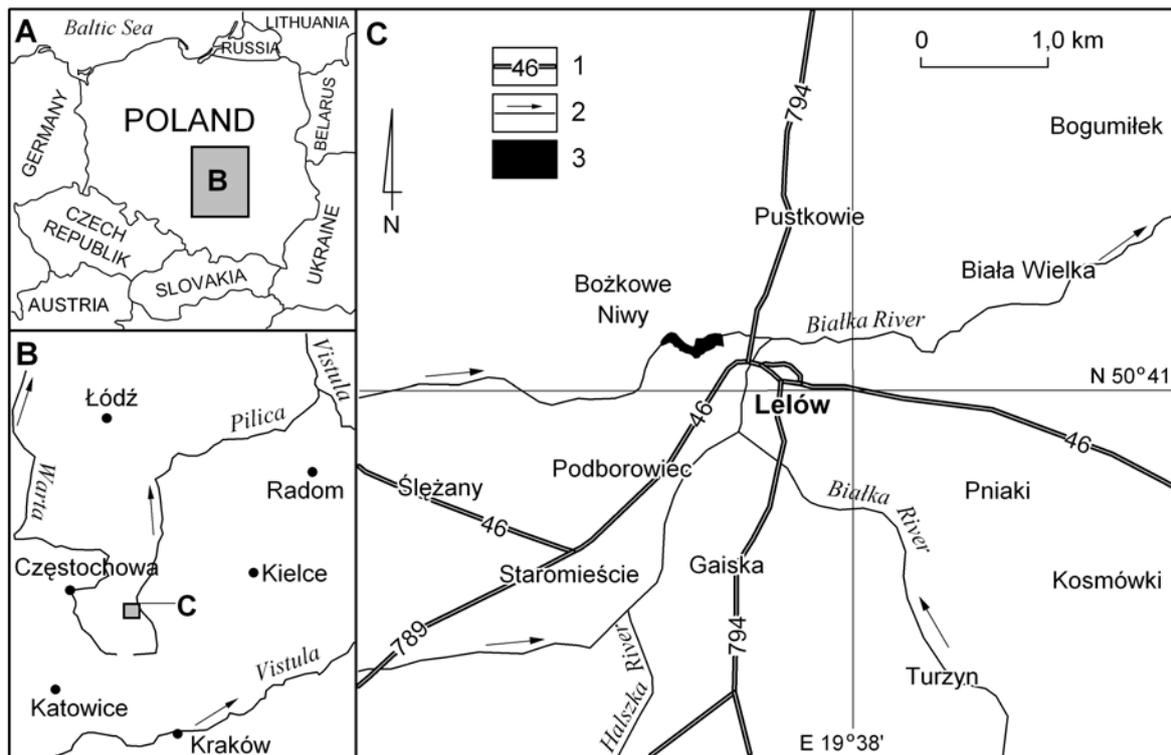


Fig. 1. Location of research area:

1 – major roads, 2 – surface watercourses, 3 – water bodies (source: own work)

The method used in identifying the elements of cultural heritage of Biderman's dynasty Hasids on the territory of Lelów is the landscape heritage inventory.

The landscape heritage inventory is a method of research based on stocktaking of sightseeing objects and attractions from nature. The spatial scope of the landscape heritage inventory has been limited to Lelów – a small village in southern Poland. The temporal scope of the landscape heritage inventory covers the chronology of Biderman's dynasty history in this town. The landscape heritage inventory was taken with regard to the sightseeing objects and attractions in eight groups of physical classification:

- natural environment,
- archaeological objects,
- monuments of architecture and urban planning,
- historical places of remembrance,
- technological monuments,
- museums, archives, collections,
- folk culture facilities and centres,
- modern facilities (established after 1945) and events.

## Research results

As part of the landscape heritage inventory, selected attractions from among seven groups of physical classification were identified, namely: environmental objects; archaeological objects; monuments of architecture and urban planning; historical places of remembrance; museums, archives and collections; folk culture facilities and centres; and modern facilities (established after 1945), including events (Fig. 2). The only inventory group without attractions and objects identified on the territory of Lelów was technological monuments.

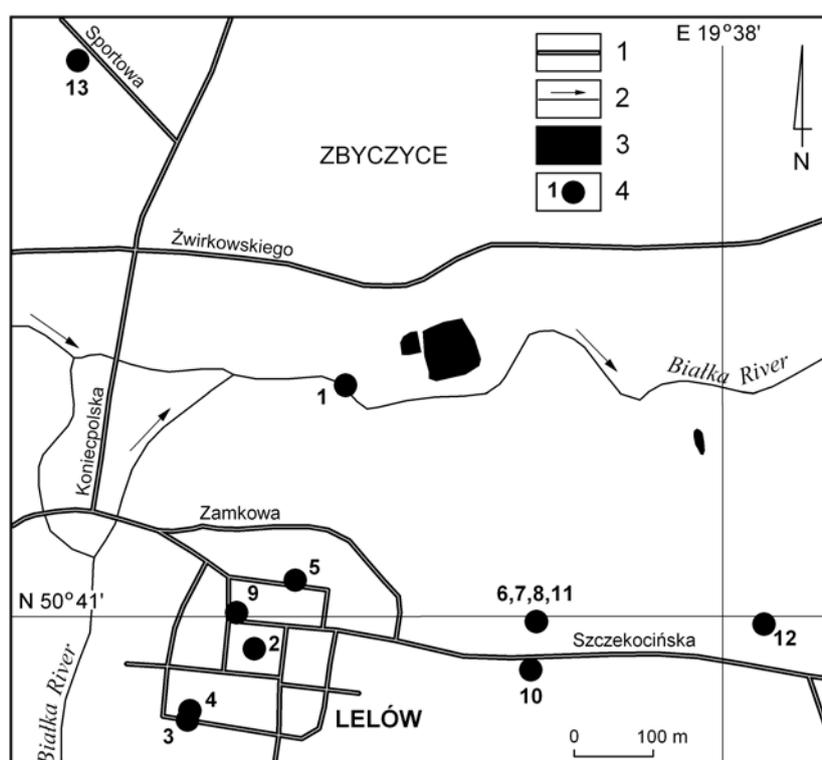


Fig. 2. **Elements of the cultural heritage of Biderman's dynasty Hasids in the area of Lelów:** 1 – major roads, 2 – surface watercourses, 3 – water bodies 4 – inventoried objects and attractions related to the cultural heritage of Biderman's dynasty Hasids (1 – Białka river used for recreation by tzadik David Biderman; 2 – pieces of foundations of Jewish shambles on the market in Lelów in Partyzantów Street; 3 – House of prayer in Ogrodowa Street; 4 – ohel of tzadik David Biderman opposite the house of prayer; 5 – St Martin's Church in Lelów at 8 Klasztorna Street with a plaque commemorating victims of Hitlerian barbarity; 6 – Local Cultural Centre in Lelów at 31 Szczekocińska Street; 7 – Chamber of Lelów Region Tradition at 31 Szczekocińska Street with Jewish diorama; 8 – Walenty Zwierkowski Historical and Cultural Society of Lelów at 31 Szczekocińska Street; 9 – Lelowianka Restaurant at 28 Partyzantów Street with Jewish cuisine dishes; 10 – Ciulim Inn at 22 Szczekocińska Street with Jewish cuisine dishes; 11 – location of Festival of Ciulim and Cholent in the years 2003-2005 at 31 Szczekocińska Street; 12 – location of Festival of Ciulim and Cholent in the years 2006-2013 at 41 Szczekocińska Street; 13 – location of Festival of Ciulim and Cholent in the years 2014-2016 at 1 Sportowa Street) (source: own work)

In the group of objects related to the natural environment, the Białka river has been distinguished with its recreational attraction emphasized in the context of baths taken by tzadik David Biderman (Source: Sefer Migdal Dawid (Wieża Dawida), Piotrków 1930).

In 2011 archaeologists from Wrocław found pieces of foundations of Jewish shambles on the market in Lelów (50 40'59.748"N, 19 37'29.409"E), which were commercial premises of the Jewish population. During excavations Hanukkah dreidels were also found, which were used in the traditional Jewish gambling game during the holiday of Hanukkah.

Monuments of urban planning and architecture are represented by the mikveh and kosher house. In the 1990s the building of a cooperative of the disabled (3 Ogrodowa Street) was adapted to suit the needs of the house of prayer (50 40'56.408"N, 19 37'25.836"E), in which in 2002 a mikveh was built. In the back rooms of the house of prayer another mikveh is located together with a kosher house, but they have lost their original character.

Historical places of remembrance located in Lelów are monuments, graves, commemorative plaques and epitaphs. They are represented above all by the ohel of tzadik David Biderman (50 40'56.946"N, 19 37'25.856"E), next to which are also matzevahs. Of lesser importance is a plaque on the house of prayer commemorating tzadik David Biderman and the Jews of Lelów. In addition, in 2010, on the pillar of the fence gates of St Martin's Church in Lelów (50 41'2.796"N, 19 37'31.81"E), a plaque with the added names of Jews of Lelów commemorating "victims of Hitlerian barbarism, who were the first to sacrifice their lives on the altar of their homeland in Lelów on 3rd and 4th September, 1939" (8 Klasztorna Street) was placed.

Lelów is also regarded as a folk culture facility and centre with its workshops in Jewish songs, dance, papercuts (Fig. 3) and cuisine, held in the Local Cultural Centre (50 41'0.826"N, 19 37'48.282"E). A similar role is played by the activity of the Walenty Zwierkowski Historical and Cultural Society of Lelów (50 41'0.826"N, 19 37'48.282"E). An important manifestation of the contemporary interpretation of the cultural heritage of Hasids in the area discussed is the presence of two restaurants serving Jewish dishes, i.e. Ciulim Inn, with such dishes as cholent and kreplach, and Lelowianka Restaurant, with such dishes as cholent and traditional Jewish goose meat dishes – goose gizzard stew ("*gęsi pipek*" in Polish) and stuffed goose neck ("*gęsie pipki*" in Polish).

The category of museums, archives and specialist collections includes the Chamber of Lelów Region Tradition (50 41'0.826"N, 19 37'48.282"E) with a room in memory of the Jews of Lelów, which also houses a diorama on the subject of Jews.



Fig. 3. Papercuts – example of Jewish art (photograph by D. Bakota, A. Płomiński)  
(source: own work)

The town is renowned for its modern cultural and religious events: Jorcajt and the Festival of Ciulim and Cholent, which are enjoying increasing popularity of residents, visitors and tourists. The Festival of Ciulim and Cholent has been held in different locations: in the years 2003-2005 at 31 Szczekocińska Street (50 41'0.826"N, 19 37'48.282"E); in the years 2006-2013 at 41 Szczekocińska Street (50 41'0.648"N, 19 38'2.445"E); and in the years 2014-2016 at 1 Sportowa Street (50 41'24.8"N, 19 37'17.177"E).

### Discussion of research results

Lelów became popular among Jews in the 18th century thanks to David Biderman. He founded a Hasid dynasty, which was based on Judaism and Kabbalah. Thus he made Lelów one of the centres of Hasidism (Poniewierska et al., 2005). He died in 1814 and was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Lelów. Since that moment his grave has become a place of visit for thousands of Jews, especially on the anniversary of his death (Skrzypczyk, 2008).

Before World War II, Jews accounted for more than 50 % of the population of Lelów. Therefore, in this village located near Częstochowa there were two Jewish cemeteries. The first, built in the 16th century, was located in front of the synagogue (where tzadik David Biderman was buried). Then, the second Jewish cemetery was established near Białka river at the beginning of the 19th century.

When in the spring of 1943 the last Jews of Lelów were sent to the concentration camp in Treblinka (with only seven Holocaust survivors), both cemeteries were closed down on the order of the German authorities (October 1943) (M. Skrzypczyk, personal communication, November 10, 2016).

Hasidic Jews have been coming to Lelów to the tzadik David Biderman's grave for many years. The date of the celebration is moveable, because it is calculated according to the lunar calendar. In 2016, the year 5777 began according to the Jewish calendar (counted from the creation of the world, which according to Jewish orthodoxy dates back to 3761 BC) (“Dziennik Zachodni”, daily, 2016).

Until the outbreak of World War II, Hasidic Jews made pilgrimages on a regular basis. Regular visits to the grave resumed in 1990, when in 1988 – thanks to the initiative of the Nissenbaums Family Foundation – David Biderman's grave was found. It is also noteworthy that the Hebrew University of Jerusalem confirmed the authenticity of the buried tzadik's remains (Bryła, 2006). His grave is located in a separate part of a commercial pavilion in Ogrodowa Street and is a destination of pilgrimages of Jews from all over the world.

In 2009, the Hasids who came to Lelów had double reason to celebrate. In December 2008, the State Treasury, by way of a notarial deed, took over the land where the tzadik's grave is located from the Local Cooperative and granted it to the Jewish Religious Community in Katowice. The participants in the negotiations on the recovery of a Jewish cemetery by the Jews included the Silesian province governor (who represented the State Treasury) and Rabbi Simcha Krakowski (a descendant of tzadik David Biderman). It is worth mentioning that the State Treasury paid PLN 603 000 to the Local Cooperative, and the remaining PLN 200 000 – in the form of a donation – was provided by the Foundation of Hasidic Jews which attended to the Jewish cemetery (after its previous assignment by the Jewish Religious Community). Thus Hasidic Jews regained the whole area which before the war was the property of the Jewish community of Lelów, including the building which housed the synagogue. Currently a ritual bath is located there (“Dziennik Zachodni”, daily, 2009).

The visits of Hasids to Lelów can already be treated as tourism industry, with the inhabitants of Lelów providing the visitors accommodation which is booked by the Foundation of Hasidic Jews of Lizhensk. A host entertaining Hasids, during Shabbat, must agree to perform simple activities for the guests, for example turning lights on and off or turning the tap on.

The celebration starts on Friday (after sunset). At this time the Hasids say Shabbat prayers. After these rites, which take several hours, they go to sleep. Saturday is also a day of the celebration, when the Hasids focus on deep prayer. On the tzadik's grave they put small pieces of paper with their requests

(kwitlech). At dusk they have havdalah (the ceremony of separating the Shabbat time from the weekday). The last day of celebration is Sunday. In addition each Hasidic Jew visits the tzadik's grave, because they believe it will give them strength for the next year.

The Hasids coming to the tzadik's grave have inspired the residents of Lelów to organize an event which would restore the memory of the pre-existing Polish-Jewish friendship. Thus the initiative of a festival that would allow the meeting of these two different yet close cultures was born. Therefore – according to the well-known Polish saying "the way to one's heart is through one's stomach" – the decision was taken to organize the festival, in which the leading role was played by two dishes – cholent and ciulim (M. Skrzypczyk, personal communication, November 10, 2016).

Getting to know the history of these dishes, which the name of the Polish-Jewish festival is derived from, is as important as the organisation of this event. The tradition of making Jewish cholent was linked to Shabbat, when Jews did not perform daily work. For the period of celebration they had other people, of no Jewish descent, do it, who took the responsibilities of the household members. The ingredients of cholent, which was prepared before the Shabbat (on Friday), included, among others, beef, potatoes, beans, barley, garlic, onion, goose fat, salt and pepper. It was roasted in bread ovens. The residents of Lelów, however, created their own dish, which was made in a similar way to the one of Hasids. It was ciulim, which was primarily based on potatoes, pork ribs, onion, lard and specific spices (mainly salt and pepper). The dish was consumed by the residents of Lelów at Christmas and Easter. It was taken out of the oven directly before consumption, just after returning from church. This custom was to prove great piety (Bakota & Płomiński, 2016).

The Festival of Ciulim and Cholent has been organized since 2003 (at the last or penultimate weekend of August). It was first initiated by Jerzy Szydłowski (the then head of the commune of Lelów). The place where the celebration was launched was the Local Cultural Centre in Lelów. It was a closed meeting attended by the Self-government of the Commune of Lelów and the Jewish community which was in the majority. The ceremony started with joint lighting of a menorah (which was customary in the following years too), i.e. a seven-branched candelabrum used in the liturgy of Judaism (Cała et al., 2000). The celebration of the 1st Festival of Ciulim and Cholent, which was attended by 120 people, was accompanied by the performance of a klezmer band from Cracow and school bands from Lelów and Częstochowa. After the artistic part it was time for tasting many dishes, including Lelów ciulim and Jewish cholent (Roden, 1996; Bryła, 2006).

From year to year the Festival of Ciulim and Cholent has been attracting more and more tourists. At the beginning it was a small event, whereas at present it has a nationwide, or even worldwide, scope. At the end of the 2nd half of the 1st decade of the 21st century during the Festival Lelów was visited by 5-6 thousand people. Next, in the years 2012-2016 each year even 10 thousand people came to Lelów (E. Molenda, personal communication, December 20, 2016).

In the years 2003-2005 it was a one-day event celebrated on Sunday. In 2006, due to the increasing number of visitors coming to Lelów wanting to learn about Jewish culture, the format of the event changed to two days (Saturday and Sunday). The first day of the festival was a day of Polish culture and the second one a day of Jewish culture. Since 2013, it has been a three-day festival (Friday to Sunday). The organizers of the event are the Commune of Lelów, the Local Cultural Centre in Lelów and the Walenty Zwierkowski Historical and Cultural Society of Lelów (E. Molenda, personal communication, December 20, 2016). From the information listed on the posters of each edition of the Festival of Ciulim and Cholent in the years 2007-2016, it appears that the media sponsors involved in the event in order to publicize it were the following: Polish Television channel TVP3, NTL, TVS, Orion Television in Częstochowa, Polish Radio Katowice, *Dziennik Zachodni* daily, *Gazeta Myszkowska* weekly, *Gazeta Wyborcza* daily, *Życie Częstochowskie* daily, *Kurier Jurajski*, *Kurier Zawierciański*, *City Poster*, *Tygodnik Regionalny 7 Dni* weekly, *Nowa Trybuna Częstochowska* weekly, Laboratorium Reportażu (Laboratory of Documentaries) and Jurajski Serwis Turystyczny (Jurassic Tourist Service). It is also noteworthy that in the years 2003-2016 the venue of the event also kept changing. At first it was celebrated in the seat of the Local Cultural Centre, from 2006 in the school square in Szczekocińska Street, and since 2015 at the sports stadium in Sportowa Street (Bakota & Płomiński, 2016).

With time, the range of "specialities" offered to participants during the festival also increased. Apart from ciulim and cholent these included crayfish, *gęsie pipki* (stuffed goose necks), *gęsi pipek* (goose gizzard), tzimmes, home-baked bread, goose lard, kugel, carrot cake, challah, matzah, Jewish style carp and trout, plum vodka of Lelów, and kosher dishes (Bakota & Płomiński, 2016).

In the years 2007-2016 (this period is covered by the sources of the Local Cultural Centre – LCC), during the day of Jewish culture performances were given, among others, by the bands playing at the LLC in Lelów, groups from Chmielnik (a Jewish dance show), the winners of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd edition of the Children's and Young Adults' Jewish Song Competition, Leopold Kozłowski (referred to as "the last klezmer of Europe") and klezmer bands, such as Chmielnikers, Sholem, Eliezer Mizrachi, Max Klezmer Band, Klezzmates, NeoKlez and Tempero.

The programme of the event, in the period covering the years 2007-2016, included not only artistic performances, but also a photo exhibition on Jewish subjects by Leszek Pilichowski and Karol Fatyga; exhibitions by students of the Secondary School of Fine Arts in Częstochowa (entitled: "Inspired by the Jewish culture" and "Wherever I go, I always make my way towards Jerusalem"); an exhibition of children's and young adults' competition works "Lelów – a meeting place of cultures"; an exhibition entitled "Jewish papercuts" (by Marta Gołąb, Ilona Kotaszevska and Grzegorz Dudała); a photo exhibition "Dancing with God", which showed pilgrimages of Jews to Lelów; a photo exhibition by Daniel Pacha entitled "Neighbours who are no longer here...", a photo exhibition by Krzysztof Krzemiński entitled "On the road" and Jewish dance workshops. Of great interest was also the exhibition "Anne Frank – History for today", dedicated to Anne Frank (a young Jewess), whose diary, a testimony to the terrible days of the Holocaust, has become a global bestseller (E. Molenda, personal communication, December 20, 2016).

In addition, it is worth mentioning that since 2013 on Fridays films on Jewish subjects have been screened. In 2013, the film by Rama Burshtein "Fill the void" was shown (the film tells the story of eighteen-year old Shira, who after the death of her elder sister has to find her place in the Hasidic community again); in 2014 it was a film entitled "The Jewish Cardinal" (directed by Ilan Duran-Cohen, a biography of the cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger coming from a family of Polish Jews); in 2015 "Zero Motivation" (directed by Talya Lavie; the film is a portrait of an Israeli military unit, where women do military service), and in 2016 "Self Made" (directed by Shira Geffen; the film tells the story of two women – one Israeli, the other Palestinian – whose lives intersect at the border checkpoint) (E. Molenda, personal communication, December 20, 2016).

## **Conclusions**

1. Lelów is an example of a town characterized by a multicultural nature resulting from centuries-old tradition of the coexistence of Poles and Jews, which was typical of many villages and small towns in central Europe.
2. On the territory of Lelów a number of attractions and objects related to the former presence of Biderman's dynasty Hasids have been inventoried, which prove the permanence of cultural heritage cultivated in the conditions of multiculturalism, dialogue and tolerance.
3. Elements of cultural heritage can serve as a basis for developing a strategy of tourism in small towns, and Lelów with its objects and attractions related to Biderman's dynasty Hasids is a case study confirming this thesis.
4. Evidence of the tourist attractiveness of Lelów is the thousands of visitors interested in thematic events related mainly to the short-term, annual stay

of Hasidic Jews in the town, and an occasional interest in tourist attractions in the remaining period of the year.

5. The growing interest of tourists in Lelów could be enhanced through the implementation of the concept of a Central European Hasidic tourist trail with numerous villages, e.g. in South-Eastern Poland and in Ukraine.

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