

Henoch Lapidus and Emanuel Bajgele

[They] were two well-known bookdealers who, due to their trade, played a respected role in Częstochowa. In the times when Jewish society concentrated exclusively on religious life, they were two providers of culture, by selling and promulgating prayer-books, *machzorim*, *sliches*, [Pesach] *haggudes*¹, [tractates of the] *Mishna* and *Talmud*, separate books of the Pentateuch, *tzitzis*² tassels, prayer-shawls, phylacteries, and gift articles of a religious significance for *barmitzvahs* and weddings, as well as various other items for holidays.

Henoch Lapidus had his book dealership at Stary Rynek 24. [He] was active in communal life as president of the *Hachnuses Orchim*.

Emanuel Bajgele had his book dealership at Stary Rynek 22 and, due to his proximity to Henoch Lapidus, he was his competitor. To Jewish boys and girls, Emanuel Bajgele would also lend out storybooks about the *Or Ha'Chaim*³, *Hersze'le Ostropoler*⁴ or *Efroim Greidiker*⁵. In that manner, he gained a large number of customers. He would not let a client out, haggling as much as he could and, when the customer left without buying anything, his wife would call him back, and even his mute daughter would help convince the client about the inexpensive antique that he had the opportunity of acquiring.

Henoch Lapidus was a different [sort of] person, as befits the president [of an organisation] - [the] prices [were] set and there was no point in negotiating. If a customer left without buying, that was it – “calling back” did not exist with him.

Emanuel Bajgele also had an affection for his clients. He would tenderly pinch a *barmitzvah* lad's cheek and show him the new books with bindings and gilded letters, and this filled the small *barmitzvah* fellows with enthusiasm⁶.

On the *Shabbosim* and holidays, both booksellers attended synagogue, and they felt like heroes and champions when they saw the new prayer-books, *machzorim* and books of the Pentateuch which had been purchased from them.

With the arrival of the Nazi forces, Jewish cultural life was ruined. First and foremost, they destroyed these two old bookstores which, for decades, had provided Częstochowa Jewry with religious articles.

¹ [TN: “*Machzorim*” are special prayer-books for the holidays; “*sliches*” (aka “*selichot*”) are booklets containing the special prayers of atonement which are recited during the High Holidays season and on fast days, and the *Peisach haggude* (aka *haggadah*) contains the liturgy recited at the table during the Seder.]

² [TN: Strings with which to make the special twined and knotted fringes which are attached to the four corners of prayer-shawl and the ritual four-cornered garment which orthodox men wear under their upper clothing. One can either buy the four-cornered garment and strings separately and attach them oneself or purchase the garment already with the tassels.]

³ [TN: Heb., “*The Light of Life*”; title of the book by Rabbi Chaim ibn Attar, a famous and sainted 18th century talmudist and kabbalist, by which the author is referred to.]

⁴ [TN: Prominent character in Jewish humour, based on an historical figure; *Hersze'le* was a prankster from Ostropol, who lived in poverty and targeted the rich and powerful, both Jew and Gentile.]

⁵ [TN: Jewish-Polish jester who was probably a historical figure. living at the end of the 18th century.]

⁶ [TN: As a *barmitzvah* boy is given presents and oftentimes in the form of money, one of the things a religious boy would have wanted to be given or to purchase with his money is new books.]