

PIK Jakub (1816-1897), optician, promoter of knowledge, social activist, charity and patriotic activist. He was born on 12th March 1816 in Częstochowa, the son of Szaja (-1848), a trader, and Hinda née Michałowicz (-1845).

In 1834, he attended the four-year Warsaw Rabbinical School and, after graduating, he worked in a Warsaw optical grinding workshop called the "Institute", run by M.O. Bachmann (ul. Podwale 22). In 1844, he managed the Institute and, in 1845, he became its owner. He moved it into the Pac Palace (ul. Miodowa 15) and, in 1848, into a building at ul. Miodowa 4. In 1847, he was awarded the honorary title of "Warsaw Optician and Mechanic". He also sold medical equipment and provided medical treatment devices, "free of charge, just for a small donation into the moneybox for orphans".

In 1855, he travelled around western Europe to familiarise himself with the devices of well-known optical and mechanical workshops. In 1860, he published a brochure entitled "*O doborze używania szkieł ocznych*" ["*On the Use of Optical Lenses*"]. On the order of the Government Commission for Internal and Spiritual Affairs, in 1865, he published a work entitled "*O probierzu stumiarowym do wódek i spirytusu*" ["*On the 100-Measure Standard for Vodka and Spirits*"].

In 1869-1874, he established the Gabinet Fizyczny [Physical Office], which also housed astronomical and chemical instruments, as well as collections of minerals, insects, birds and anatomical preparations. Visits were free of charge and, in the office, teachers from private Warsaw high schools conducted classes for young people. In exhibitions in Europe and America, his products were awarded twenty-six medals and letters of commendation. He published articles in "Gazeta Lekarska", in which he discussed healing devices. He taught about seventy optical mechanics and popularised Polish terms for foreign names.

After the dissolution of the Piarist Order (1864), he took part in the saving of national relics from a nearby monastery. Among the items he stored was the urn containing the heart of Stanisław Konarski, which he passed on to the Piarist College in Kraków.

For over thirty years, he served as a carer for poor members of the Jewish community. He contributed large sums towards Warsaw philanthropic causes and, in 1863, in support of the uprising. He was a very popular figure in Warsaw, his name finding its way into poems and songs.

He died on 11th January 1897 in Warsaw and was buried in the Warsaw Jewish Cemetery on ul. Okopowa. He was buried next to his wife (sector 26, row 9, grave Nos. 5 and 6).

In 1845, he married Mina née Rozen, 1 vel. Płońsk. They had three sons and two daughters:

- Michał, to whom, circa 1886, he handed over the business
- Felicjan (born Filip Maks)
- Seweryn (in 1877, in Częstochowa, married Filipina Goldman of Aniołowa)
- Eugenia (1861–), married surname Felzenhardt
- Jetta, married surname Lewińsk.

S. Konarski, *Jakub Pik*, PSB, vol. XXVI, pp. 219–220.

Wiesław Paszkowski