<p>50°40′N 18°50′E, 143.7 miles SW of Warszawa. Cieszowa (German <em>Czieschowa</em>) is a village in the administrative district of Gmina Koszcin within Lubliniec County, Silesian Voivodeship in southern Poland approximately 2 mi N of Koszcin, 7 mi E of Lubliniec, and 30 mi N of the regional capital Katowice. The village population is 288.<br />
Polish text and <a href="http://www.kirkuty.xip.pl/cieszowa.htm">photos</a>. Cieszowa village, mentioned in books early as 1305, is one of the oldest municipalities in Koszcin and probably one of the oldest in Silesia. The time of the settlement of Jews is unknown, but in the 14th century, the Jewish community had a school and cemetery. One of the oldest wooden synagogues built in 1753 years (or earlier) was demolished in 1911. A 1911 wooden house for the rabbi also housed the Jewish school. The last rabbi died in 1871 -- Samuel Schloschof. In 1855, Cieszowa's population was 476 of whom eighteen were Jews. Jewish population grew mainly during the reign of Frederick the Great, who drove all the Jews out with ten days notice except in two towns. They could only settle in Upper Silesia near the border with Poland. Paradoxically, after five years, all the Jews from Upper Silesia were back to the cities. Only in four villages of Silesia were they allowed to continue living, including Cieszowej because there were old Jewish cemeteries. In the eighteenth century, Jewish families were the most numerous. In the second half of the 19th century, when Jews were freer to settle legally in different locations, the population in Cieszowej steadily and rapidly decreased. In 1830, 43 resident Jews; in 1845-28, 18 in 1861, and in 1894, only four Jews. Since 1905, Cieszowa had no Jews. In a vast number of archival documents, the Catholic parish in Sadowie that also was owned Cieszowa for centuries never mentioned religious intolerance. In 1908 the synagogue and the rabbi's house were sold. In the early twentieth century priest Karol Urban, Sadowiejskie parish pastor and a great explorer and chronicler wrote in "Oberschlesische Heimat" (1909 onwards) and in "Der Landbote - Lublinitzer Kreis-Kalender" about both the Catholic Church of St. Marcina built in 1751 and the Jewish cemetery from 1751, and of the old Jewish cemetery and synagogue in historic Cieszowej. Father Urban wrote about in the synagogue Cieszowej as follows: "On the edge of the village, close to the Jewish synagogue facing the road. This is a large wooden building with [?], covered [?]roof. On the south side by the road leading to the porch of this house of prayer. From the west side, external stairs lead to the loft for women." Synagogue - according to researchers - was built in the first half of the eighteenth century and the building was built a little earlier than the 1751 wooden Catholic church, probably by the same designer whose name known. The synagogue serves the [Jews] living in the eastern part of the district and areas located far to the south and east of Cieszowej. "The building was timber-framed structure, 19 cubits long and 11 cubits wide. The house of worship of special historic significance. The interior of the synagogue was decorated beautifully and there were a number of historical relics and the ornamentation includes brass chandeliers from the eighteenth century and cast brass with the initials of Frederick the Great. On one engraved was an eagle, Austrian. In an ornate, wooden cabinet was still kept at the beginning of the twentieth century, a very old parchment roll [torah]." Urban also speaks of inside the old wooden synagogue and a matzevot dated from the mid-17th century.</p>
CEMETERY: Apparently, the Jewish community owned a magnificent funeral hearse, funeral equipment, and old gravestones transferred from the cemetery to keep them from destruction. In 1908, Karol Urban wrote about the cemetery: "In addition the synagogue and the rabbi's home are witness to Cieszowej Jewish life thriving here for centuries. About one kilometer's distance from the village in the Jewish cemetery located on the hill and surrounded by [?] plot. The cemetery is far older than the synagogue. According to tradition now six hundred years."

One record shows that in January 1690 the Jews paid tax for the cemetery of seventeen ?śkich talar. Research also reveals that matzevot mention the year 1650 and describes in detail the "memorial stone" of October 1780 and on: "R. Eljakim Getzes the son of R. Nathan Natas." Inscription on short matzevot for both men and women found "eternal peace". One of the matzevot says: "Here lies learned Gerson R. Mannes, son of Rabbi Nathan Nata R. U. s. Przedbierz, died on Wednesday, 11 December 5545 year." In 1917 in the cemetery in Cieszowej were still a great number of well-maintained matzevot.

Fr. Karol Urban, who became the owner of the synagogue and the rabbi's house in 1908 in a sense assumed responsibility for the safety of the Jewish cemetery. In 1911 the unexplained demolished synagogue and house of Rabbi, and probably in 1917, the land passed into the hands of new owners. They cemetery survived WWI and II, but the gravestones slowly lost their former splendor to erosion, but the cemetery and took almost all sandstone gravestones stand on the graves of those to whom they were dedicated. After years of neglect, thanks to the involvement of good people in recent years - including young people from the local middle school - the cemetery site was restored. Some matzevot were restored; and an inventory of the surviving tombstones was made. Then, in mid-August 2008, Poland was hit with violent storms and floods, killing and injuring dozens of people, destroying buildings, breaking power and telephone lines. The Jewish cemetery that survived so long also suffered destruction.

US Commission No. POCE000111

Cemetery: W of Cieszowa. 1991 population: 1,000-5,000 with no Jews.


Regional: region Konserwator, Zabytkow Czestochowa, ul. Domagalskich 2, tel. 49265.

The earliest Jewish community dates from the first half of the 18th century. The unlandmarked Orthodox cemetery probably dates from second half of the 18th century. The rural agricultural isolated flat land is reached by turning directly off a public road with no sign. The area of the cemetery is about. 5 square ha. Access is open to all with no wall, fence or gate. Within the limits of the cemetery are no structures. 100 to 500 gravestones, 20 to 100 not in original locations and 50%-75% toppled or broken, date from 1780 to 20th century. The carved limestone and sandstone multi-stone monuments, finely smoothed and engraved stones, or flat-shaped and rough stones have Hebrew and German inscriptions. The location of removed stones is unknown. There are no known mass graves. The municipality owns property, used solely as a Jewish cemetery, that occupies the same area as in 1939. The property located in an agricultural area is visited by local residents rarely. The cemetery was not vandalized in the last ten years. No maintenance or care.

Jan Pawet Woronczak, Sandomierska Str. 21 m 1, 02-561 Warsaw, tel. 49-54-62 completed survey on November 9, 1991. He and Jerzy Woronczak based this information on site visit and interviews in 1987.