

Synagogues in Lithuania

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A C A T A L O G U E

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Note: no synagogue buildings survive in the towns the name of which begins with “N” and “O”; therefore, the alphabetical order of entries starts with “Pakruojis”.

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A C A T A L O G U E



Pakruojis | פּאַקראָײַ

Pokroje in Polish

Pokroi [Покрой] in Russian

Pokroy [פּאַקראָײַ] in Yiddish

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Pakruojis is a town in northern Lithuania on the banks of the Kruoja River, 40 km east of Šiauliai. Its name was first mentioned in 1531, and it was granted town rights in 1631.

The Jewish settlement in Pakruojis began in the early 18th century. Tombstones from the middle of the 18th century were preserved in the Jewish cemetery.¹

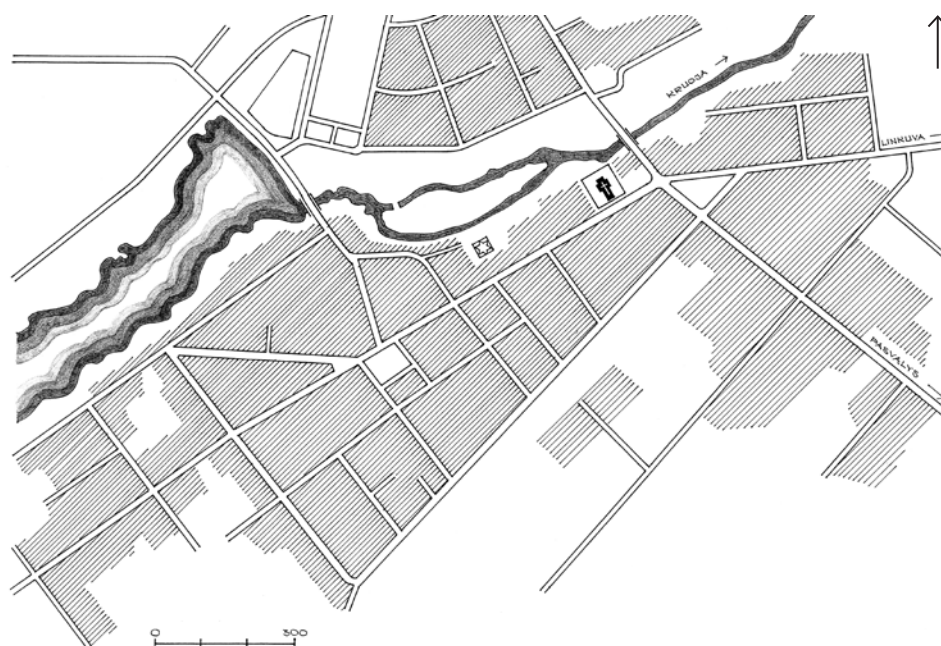
Meetings of representatives of the communities of the *Biržai galil* in *Vaad Medinat Lita* were sometimes held in Pakruojis.² A wooden synagogue was erected in 1801.³

In the 19th century a masonry *shtibl*, also called the tailors' *shtibl*, as well as the second wooden synagogue, were built nearby, forming a *shulhoyf* (Figs. 1–3). These synagogues possessed valuable ritual objects (Figs. 4, 5).

Pakruojis was burnt down in 1879 and 1886, but its old wooden synagogue was not harmed.⁴ The Pakruojis Jews had especially good relations with the owner of the town, Baron Hermann von der Ropp. All the Jewish population of Pakruojis was present at his funeral in 1894, and the local rabbi read a eulogy over the deceased in German.⁵

In the early 1920s, a formal Jewish community with a board of five was established.⁶ In the interwar years, there was a Hebrew school, two Jewish libraries and a branch of the Jewish People's Bank.⁷

At the beginning of the Nazi occupation, on July 10 or 31, 1941, the Jewish men were concentrated in the synagogue and later murdered in Morkakalnis. The Jewish women and children



Pakruojis town plan, 2008

✚ Catholic church
☒ wooden synagogue