

Jewish wedding ring



- Date of production 19th/20th century
- Dimensions height: 6 mm, diameter: 22 mm, weight: 2.49 g
- ID no. MNS/3655/S
- Museum [Nowy Sącz District Museum](#)
- Subjects [multiculture](#), [daily life](#), [religion](#)
- Technique [niello](#), [engraving](#)
- Material [gold](#)
- Object copyright Nowy Sącz District Museum
- Digital images copyright public domain
- Digitalisation RDW MIC, Małopolska's Virtual Museums project
- Tags [judaika](#), [ślub](#), [biżuteria](#), [złotnictwo](#), [Żydzi](#), [3D](#), [wielokulturowość](#), [obrzędy](#), [3D plus](#), [domena publiczna](#)

The ring was purchased for the museum collection in 1998 in one of the antique shops in Sącz. According to the owner of the shop, the ring was found among other objects hidden in one of the houses in Nowy Sącz during the war.

The exhibit has a great historical value, as only a few similar objects could be found in Polish museum

collections.

The ring was made of a flat strip of gold, four times broken in its frontal part. The square fields thus created are decorated with engraved thin, close lines placed in the corners. In the central field the Hebrew letters *Mem and Tet* are engraved, the abbreviation for *Mazel tov* meaning “good luck.” In the rear part the strip of the ring slightly protrudes on its external side and is marked with a partially engraved illegible signature. According to religious orders, Jewish wedding rings were modest and had no precious stones, for a bride should not have the impression that the object she receives is of high value. In this way the differences in wealth between the man and the woman were blurred. The ring was not put on the ring finger, but on the index finger of the right hand, as this finger was believed to be the most important. While putting on the ring, the groom recited the following marriage formula: “Behold, thou art consecrated to me according to the law of Moses and Israel.”

Elaborated by Edyta Ross-Pazdyk (Nowy Sącz District Museum), © all rights reserved

Remember about the temple, “Mazel Tov!”

The motif of decorating Jewish wedding rings with a model of a building appeared as early as the Middle Ages. The top represented either a house to be shared by a young married couple, or – as in the case of the [ring](#) presented on our website – a symbolic depiction of the Holy Temple of Jerusalem. The destruction of the Holy Temple is a recurring motif throughout the entire wedding ceremony. Also, the famous custom of breaking a glass by the groom is connected with it (Good luck!) and the sound of “ – מזל טוב :The exclamation by the gathered, “Mazel Tov!” (Hebrew breaking glass are the first associations connected with a Jewish wedding ceremony. In fact, a traditional Jewish wedding is a very solemn and joyful event with a deep spiritual significance (for a religious Jew, the joy felt because of a wedding means mitzvah, i.e. one of the religious duties). It consists of two stages: *erusin* and *nisuin*; it also has a civil and legal character. The customary breaking and subsequent crash of a wedding glass by the groom is intended to commemorate the destruction of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. This act reminds everyone that even in moments of exultation one should not forget about the destruction of Jerusalem and the desire to return to the Promised Land

Elaborated by the editorial team of Małopolska's Virtual Museums,



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See also:

[Jewish wedding ring](#)

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“Harei at mekudeshet li b'taba'at zo k'dat Moshe”

In keeping with tradition, the groom puts on the ring on the finger of his bride as a symbolic confirmation of the marriage contract (*ketubah*). The ring must be modest, without precious stones. The bride should not have the impression that the object she receives is of high value; it was feared that this impression could prove to be erroneous. According to ancient tradition, the wedding ring should only represent a value of no less than one prutah (the smallest antique coin). The ring was not put on the ring finger, but on the index finger of the right hand, as this finger was believed to be the most important. While putting on the ring, the groom recited the following marriage formula: *Haraj et mekudeszet li ba-tabaat zu ke-dat Mosze we-Israel* (Behold, thou art consecrated to me according to the law of Moses and Israel). From that

moment on, the marriage was considered to be concluded and binding.

In the last decades, the act of putting the ring (by a bride) on the finger of the groom (to be more precise: a wife being just wed to her husband) is becoming increasingly popular. Some people raise objections to this ceremony, as for those not familiarised with Jewish traditions it can look as though the wife is returning the ring which she had just received. Nonetheless, there is no legal basis for forbidding this new custom.

Except for marriages concluded within the reformed Judaism, the woman does not repeat the words recited earlier by the man.

Sometimes the woman recites the abbreviated version of the formula which is as follows: “You are wed to me by this ring.”

Moreover, the majority of the objects being previously in the possession of a husband or a wife later become the property of the entire family, whereas the ring belongs to the wife exclusively.

Elaborated by Kinga Kołodziejska (Editorial team of Małopolska's Virtual Museums),



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