

**SPHERE OF PROBLEMS CONCERNING DESTINATION OF A SMALL  
TOWN IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC  
(with case study)**

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**ABSTRACT.** A number of actually small towns refer to promotion of tourism as one of the main priorities of their development programmes. After the Czech Republic became a member of the European Union, the position of tourism in development of regions has strengthened considerably, together with desirable progress in preservation and use of cultural heritage and improvement in local budgets. The article deals with a particular case of reconstructed Jewish objects in a small town and problems concerning possibilities of their future and appropriate use.

**Key words:** Small town, micro-region, settlement system, destination management, region, Jewish monuments, Jewish cultural heritage, tourism, thematic tourism, experience tourism, use of monuments of a religious character.

**Theoretical insight into the problem – small town, destination, destination management**

Small and medium towns are an important element of the settlement system (see table No. 1)<sup>2</sup> of our territory. They belong to characteristic, historically determined features of our settlement, which has developed under specific natural and social conditions. Unlike development in other parts of Europe, the delay of the first as well as the second industrialisation stage was reflected in relative preservation of small medieval towns and municipalities. This feature was also emphasised by dispersed localisation of industrial plants in many centres. Due to the advanced agricultural background, dispersion of small towns and dense communication network, Bohemia and Moravia almost never appeared to be in a important imbalance in the past, and although the serious economic and environmental problems of our settlement are well-known, they seem to look picturesque or even idyllic from the viewpoint of quantitative comparison and due to their extraordinary cultural values.

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<sup>2</sup> The table does not provide the number of small towns actually, but it may help to create a picture of the structure of communities in the Czech Republic.

**Table 1****Size structure of municipalities in the Czech Republic**

<b>Size structure of municipalities in the Czech Republic</b>				
Municipality size (population)	Number of municipalities	Municipalities in %	Population	Population in %
up to 199	1 696	27.2	209 043	2.0
200 - 499	2 061	33.1	667 366	6.5
500 – 999	1 215	19.6	850 216	8.2
1 000 – 1 999	646	10.4	892 741	8.6
2 000 – 4 999	346	5.6	1 049 579	10.2
5 000 – 9 999	135	2.2	934 377	9.0
10 000 – 19 999	66	1.1	930 460	9.0
20 000 – 49 999	42	0.7	1 216 863	11.8
50 000 – 99 999	17	0.3	1 168 930	11.3
Above 100 000	7	0.1	2 413 437	23.4

Source: Opplová, M., Hrůza, J. Human settlements in the conditions of permanently sustainable development, 1996.

Naturally, small towns are not a single and versatile element of the settlement system, nevertheless this does not mean that they do not continue to be one – and in our conditions – a very frequent element of the system – with all their advantages and disadvantages and also with their specific problems that are really much different from those of big cities. If – in the case of big cities – there are attempts rather to release and limit their growth relatively, on the other hand in the case of small towns it is the support of their development that is desirable – the direction in which it should be done is a question then, however. A number of actually small towns refer to promotion of tourism as one of the main priorities of their development programmes. This idea is certainly progressive and creditable, nevertheless it does not seem to be very successful without destination management. It is a well-known fact that an overwhelming majority of foreign tourists end their visit and stay in the capital and the number of visitors to regions stagnates or it is even decreasing. Can this trend be stopped by successful destination management?

Destination management means a set of techniques, tools and measures used in co-ordinated planning, organisation, communication, decision-making process and regulation of tourism in a destination in order to achieve its sustainable development and preservation of competitiveness on the market.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Kirařová, A.: *Tourism destination marketing*, Prague 2005.

The destination management also includes the so-called management of the number of visitors, i.e. a set of management techniques and tools used by tourism associations to regulate flows of visitors and to affect their behaviour. In the following paper I will try to deal with an application of the main theses of the destination management in a small town where tourism seems to be, without any doubt, just a neutral branch.<sup>4</sup>

**Case study problems: small towns – reconstructed Jewish monuments**

1. Possibility of use of historic objects versus respect to cultural heritage in a small town
2. Low number of visitors – low incomes and great subsidies

*And issues that will not certainly be answered in the following paper (possible solutions are only outlined)*

3. *Is it possible to speak about destination management in connection with the problems dealt with? Does it exist in any form here?*
4. *Is it possible to make use of destination management here? How?*

**1. Possibility of use of historic objects versus respect to cultural heritage in a small town**

**Introduction**

Newly reconstructed Jewish objects in Heřmanův Městec certainly belong to important monuments in the micro-region of Heřmanův Městec<sup>5</sup> as well as the whole Pardubice region. They include the **Jewish synagogue, Jewish school, Jewish semidetached house and Jewish cemetery**. These central buildings of the Jewish town were declared to be cultural monuments as early as 1991.

In the course of 1990s, the plan to create an *open-air museum* of Jewish settlement in Heřmanův Městec was gradually formed: reconstruction of the Jewish cemetery, synagogue and the opposite building of a former Jewish school and their mutual connection. Other gradual possibilities of alterations of the former Jewish town appeared in ideas: reconstruction of a Jewish semidetached house as well as a few other dwellings, and creation of a remarkable complex of Jewish cultural monuments in the Czech country.

- Brief history of Jewish settlement

<sup>4</sup> If tourism does not affect the economic and social development in a destination but is its important complement, it is a neutral branch for the destination. (Kiráľová, A.: *Tourism destination marketing*, Prague 2005.)

<sup>5</sup> The micro-region of Heřmanův Městec lies on boundary line between districts of Chrudim and Pardubice. The territory of the micro-region now associates 11 municipalities (Heřmanův Městec, Hošťalovice, Jezbořice, Klešice, Kostelec u Heřmanova Městce, Načešice, Rozhovice, Svinčany, Uherčice, Vápenný Podol, Vyžice) with their 27 basic residential units that are in the territory of empowered authorities of Heřmanův Městec, Přelouč and Pardubice. The total area size is 7 471 ha and the total number of population is 7 530.

The first Jewish settlement in Heřmanův Městec was considerably documented as early as the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, nevertheless it cannot be excluded that Jews already came there at the turn of 14<sup>th</sup> century. The town lying at the road connecting Prague with Moravia and Čáslav with Chrudim provided the Jews settled there with fairly favourable business conditions. Their number grew gradually: in 1724 there were 277 of them living there, in 1826 the number was 492, and the highest number – more than 800 – in 1849. Later their number was decreasing because especially young Jews were leaving for economically more advantageous towns. Still, there were about 240 Jews living in Heřmanův Městec at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Jews and Christians lived together in the town quite well until the fateful year 1939. Nevertheless, both local Jewish community in 1940, and Jewish settlement in 1942 ceased to exist in Heřmanův Městec. Cruel events of the World War II meant liquidation of the whole Jewish community in Heřmanův Městec.

- Jewish monuments in the period between 1948 – 1989

As it may be supposed very easily, the attempts made in this period to reconstruct Jewish monuments were either miserable or of a rather opposite character than leading to their restoration. The synagogue remained in a condition basically unchanged in this period: flaking finish plastering from the outside, bare walls, torn floors, broken windows, destroyed doors from the outside. The former Jewish school (rabbi's home at the same time) was also in a rather poor condition; the cemetery was covered with overgrown plants, tombstones were partly devastated. The trend actually headed towards gradual liquidation of these monuments: existence of the synagogue, Jewish school as well as one of the largest and oldest Jewish cemeteries was endangered.

### **Jewish monuments and present time**

Work in the former Jewish part of Heřmanův Městec was commenced in 1992. In the period from 1992 to 1996 the Jewish semi-detached house was repaired; the complete reconstruction of the synagogue (1997 – 2001) and the Jewish school (1999 – 2001) followed in the next years. All specialised restoration work was then done by restorers with licences awarded by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic. Furthermore, the realisation work was consulted continuously with workers of Památkový ústav (Institute of Care for Monuments) in Pardubice and the cultural department at the then existing District Authority in Chrudim. The objective was to preserve as many original parts as possible so that the final appearance of buildings does not differ from their original condition.

Restoration of the aforementioned cultural monuments in such a short time horizon could not be completed, due to its economic demands, without financial subsidies received from the state. The state's share in the total costs (CZK 27 million) was nearly sixty per cent. Such a considerable subsidy from the state was enabled by the fact that Heřmanův Městec had successfully managed to join the

Programme of restoration of architectural heritage and the Programme of regeneration of urban conservation areas and urban conservation zones.

Nevertheless, preservation of the local Jewish cemetery, the reconstruction of which commenced as early as 1990, became quite a separate chapter. Local native people and protectors of Jewish culture removed the worst problems in person due to their work and enthusiasm.

- Current use of repaired monuments

At present, all Jewish monuments in Heřmanův Městec are repaired. The synagogue serves to be a cultural place for organisation of exhibitions, concerts and social events; the Cyrany gallery is created in the Jewish school. In the gallery exhibition hall, painters and sculptures of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, who are connected with Eastern Bohemia, introduce themselves. The level of works created by many of them exceeds the regional limits and a number of them achieve European reputation. This valuable and comprehensive unit of the modern fine art was transferred to the town within a short time after its festive opening in 2001. Also the cemetery is opened to be visited by interested visitors upon request.

- Problem of use of repaired monuments of a religious character

Nevertheless, the extent in which a multi-purpose use of repaired monuments is possible and suitable is a rather serious issue. In Heřmanův Městec itself, it is discussed how to combine the respect to sacral buildings and their wider use in the social life of the town. The combination itself of the reminder of Jewish settlement and creation of the cultural centre may appear to be problematic from the religious viewpoint.

Nevertheless, the monument without any use becomes dilapidated much faster and is on the way to become devastated again. Finding a new function of repaired buildings is usually complicated, however, above all due to two reasons contrary to one another:

- the owner should take into account the original purpose of the building,
- the repaired buildings should be used due to economic and other reasons, however.

Both requirements cannot always be met at the same time.

The Town Council in Heřmanův Městec managed to reconstruct the aforementioned buildings very carefully. Not only their architectural beauty but also the spirit of the past has been preserved. The town has obtained very precious cultural, historic and tourist immovable property, nevertheless the problem of the controversial use of buildings is currently very topical.

The Jewish monuments in Heřmanův Městec are not an isolated example in this context.

## ***2 Low number of visitors – low incomes and great subsidies***

Heřmanův Městec is a small town, however, and use of all reconstructed cultural monuments is not as great as it should be and as the monuments should

naturally deserve. Use of the synagogue as a cultural stand may appear to be problematic in some cases, installation of the Cyrany gallery is pride of the town, but the number of visitors – especially in the winter season – is much below its value, and although the value and the unique character of the Jewish cemetery are also admired by visitors of Jewish origin even from abroad, the Jewish monuments in Heřmanův Městec still await their re-discovery. If the Town Council manages to create the remaining parts of the former Jewish neighbourhood as they plan, it would certainly be beneficial for the numbers of visitors.

The management of Heřmanův Městec realises that use of the reconstructed buildings is necessary, above all from the economic point of view. The number of visitors coming to see them in the aforementioned winter half of the year decreases, at the same time the costs of their operation increase. For further periods, it will therefore be necessary to prepare such long-term programmes as well as occasional events that will attract as many visitors to see them as possible.

It is not a current task for the given municipality of the Pardubice region, however, but also for others, where valuable cultural monuments are found. It is only their popularisation to the general public that can help the region to leave the last position in the table of tourist attractiveness in the nation-wide scope.<sup>6</sup>

It would also be necessary to instil a positive attitude to monuments into the general public as for the time being it seems to be more or less a matter of middle or old generation. This would improve preconditions not only for their current commercial use but also for their survival in the historical knowledge of the municipality.

The numbers of visitors to the reconstructed monuments in the period from 2001 till 2004 may be seen in the following tables and charts.

**Table 2**

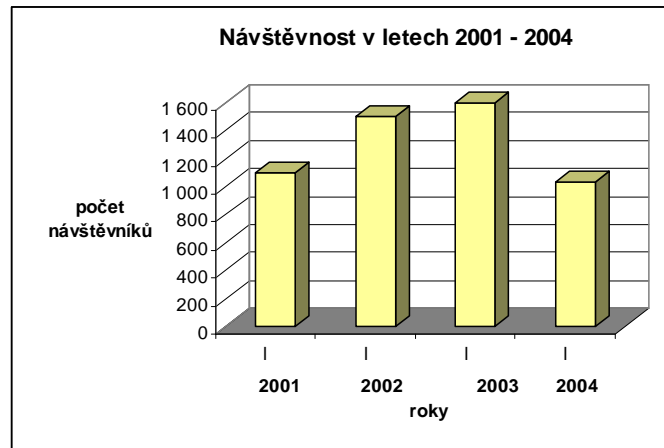
**Numbers of visitors to reconstructed Jewish buildings: the Cyrany gallery and synagogue (2001 – 2004)**

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004
Number of visitors (absolute numbers)	1 100	1 500	1 600	1030

Table No. 2 and chart No. 1 show relatively low numbers of visitors that in fact did not exceed 2000 people in any year. The considerable drop in 2004 was caused due to the gallery being closed temporarily during the winter months.

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<sup>6</sup> E.g. in 2004, monuments administered by the Institute of Care for Monuments in Pardubice were only visited by 394,000 people, i.e. by 58,000 less than in 2003. As a result, the earnings achieved were lower by 10 % as well.



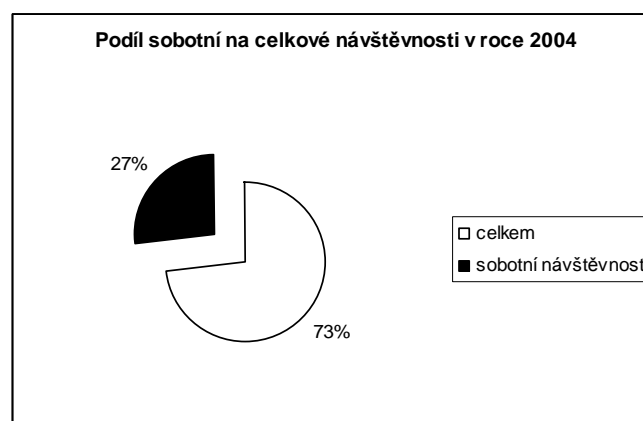
**Chart No. 1: Numbers of visitors to the reconstructed Jewish buildings (2001 – 2004)**

Table No. 3 and following charts show an interesting, relatively high share of the number of Saturday visitors and the fact that in the case of sightseeing, most visitors select both buildings – Synagogue as well as the Cyrany gallery.

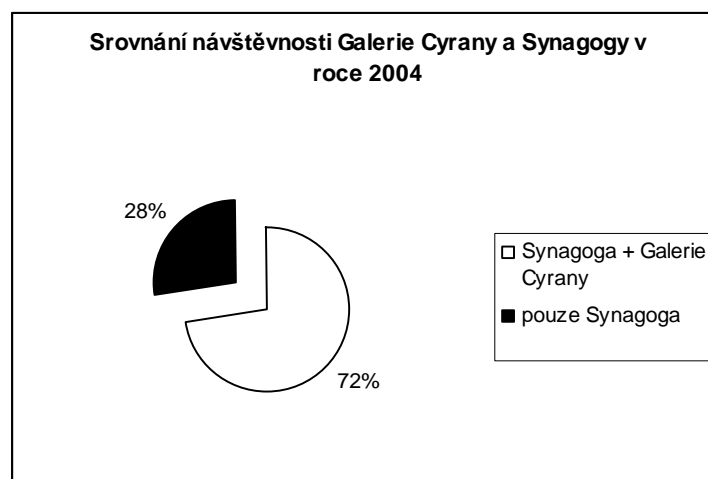
**Table 3**

**Detailed specification of the numbers of visitors to the Cyrany gallery and the synagogue (2004)**

Total	Children in this number (under 15)	Saturday visitors	Synagogue + Cyrany gallery	Synagogue only
1 030	157	379	746	284



**Chart No. 2: Share of Saturday visitors in the total number (in %) (2004)**



**Chart No. 3: Comparison of the numbers of visitors to the Cyrany gallery and Synagogue (2004)**

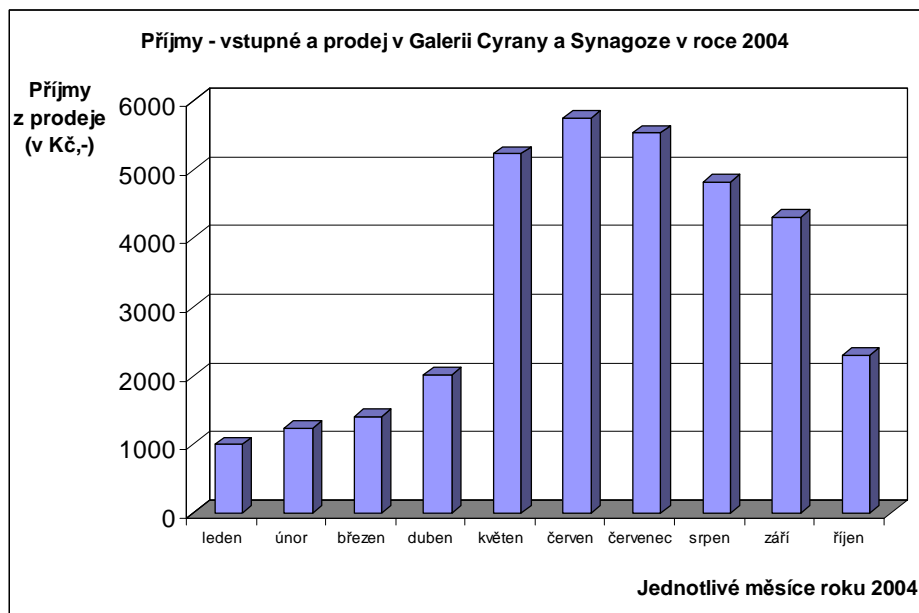
Incomes from the admission tickets as well as sales in the investigated buildings may be monitored in following table No. 4 and chart No. 4. It can be easily deduced how large subsidies the town must provide with respect to the reconstructed monuments if annual operation costs are in the approximate amount of CZK 180,000. The considerably lower number of visitors above in the winter part of the year is clear from the table.

**Table 4**

**Income – admission tickets and sale in the Cyrany gallery and the synagogue (2004)**

Month (2004)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct
Incomes from sales (in CZK)	997,-	1233,-	1409,-	2017,-	5234,-	5754,-	5538,-	4818,-	4313,-	2297,-





**Chart No. 4: Incomes – admission tickets and sales in the Cyrany gallery and synagogue (2004)**

**Application of methods of the destination management – outline of the solution.**

**3. Is it possible to speak about destination management in connection with the problems dealt with? Does it exist in any form?**

The fact that the “destination” may include more municipalities, regions or micro-regions may complicate the destination management. Local self-government authorities, representatives of the local population, academic community, commercial chambers, representatives of businessmen etc. should participate in the destination management. In this context, it includes above all the following activities:

- territorial development planning
- issuing of permits to carry out business activities, and inspections of the same later
- regulation in the field of the environment, or in other fields, if any
- participation in initiatives of various associations
- activities within development of tourism<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> E.g.: An association of municipalities of the Heřmanův Městec micro-region is an investor in the cycle-paths project in the territory of its interest. The project objective is to provide both visitors to the region and the local population as well as the population of nearby Pardubice and Chrudim with a possibility of spending their free time and becoming familiar with their close surrounding area in a form that is as

- creation of initiatives for education of representatives of state administration and local self-governments, businessmen as well as local population in the sphere of tourism
- operational management of activities connected with tourism<sup>8</sup>

The answer to question No. 3 is therefore as follows: *The question is whether or not to speak about the destination management at all. Strictly speaking, probably yes. It functions somehow here, but most probably quite chaotically and only on a basic level.*

#### **4. Is it possible to make use of destination management here? How?**

As already indicated, the destination management may not be carried out separately (e.g. only within one municipality), such approach could not certainly result in any solution, especially in the case of a destination where the tourism is just a neutral branch. It is above all necessary to apply a region development methodology and mutual interconnection of all entities that may participate together in tourism within a territory. At the same time it is understood that entities that compete with one another will not probably be the ideal partners. **Co-operation** is necessary and needed, however.

Let us indicate a possible methodology of the destination management within a territory.<sup>9</sup>

- detailed definition of conditions important for development of tourism in the region and determination of the weak points of the system, requiring immediate practical solutions
- proposal and realisation of particular measures to remove main obstacles of development of tourism
- detailed analysis of the existing comprehensive offer within the region
- analysis of possible markets, and definition of potential target groups on the local and foreign market on the basis of parameters given by the analysis and the offer in the region
- creation of a proposal of the basic tourist product and a system of its marketing on the basis of these information groups, i.e. supply and demand

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natural as possible, which cycling certainly is. The cycle-paths are led in accordance with the approved territorial plan of regional cycle-paths in the district of Chrudim. They are linked to already indicated cycle-paths of the micro-region called Podhůří Železných hor (Foot of the Iron Mountains). A direct link is ensured through the aforementioned micro-region to the cycle-paths of the Bohdaneč micro-region and above all to main long-distance route No. 24 – Labská passing through the northern part of the Pardubice region. To the south, a direct link to cycle-paths of micro-regions called Železné hory (Iron Mountains) and Centrum Železných hor (Iron Mountains Centre) is ensured. Another important long-distance route passes through the territory of these two micro-regions, i.e. route No. 1 – Prague ([www.sweb.cz/heřmanoměstecko/](http://www.sweb.cz/heřmanoměstecko/))

<sup>8</sup> Kirařová, A.: *Tourism destination Marketing*, Prague. 2005

<sup>9</sup> In no case can the aforementioned facts be understood to be a definite overview.

- co-operation of all interested entities – public administration, businessmen, laic public as well as experts, citizens – on local, regional and central level
- targeted concentration of the system with possible solution alternatives (*not with their fragmentation*)
- etc.
- *People, money and destination management*

A working group consisting of experts with experience in the field and with knowledge of the region potential must be created to implement the project.

The funds to finance the tourism plans may be obtained from the municipality office. It is necessary to create organisation structures required by tourism; e.g. to create an institution that would be responsible, within municipal self-government, for development of tourism and that would also build up a local authority for tourism, tourism associations, and would ensure participation in the regional tourism association. The municipality must ensure such trade policy, which would prospectively ensure the optimum structure of entities making offers for tourism. Successful development of tourism in the region depends on mutual co-operation of the population, self-government, medial and service providers. Jobs, incomes of companies, municipality and citizens, improvement of infrastructure and environment are beneficial to positive development of tourism.

All leading countries in the field of tourism have already transferred to sale of their regions in the form of complex products focused on individual target groups (e.g. senior tourism, spa tourism, etc.). Due to this reason it is a market survey in individual regions, an exact definition of potential target groups and their plans as well as creation of concrete marketing plans that is of decisive importance for all national and regional marketing organisations in preparation of new products.

### **Conclusion**

The vision from the beginning of 1990s begins to be fulfilled in Heřmanův Městec: reconstruction of the Jewish cemetery, synagogue and former Jewish school with renewal of the original condition, adaptation of the synagogue for exhibitions and concerts, creation of a cultural *stand* in the town ...

Each visitor with a feeling for history, art, Czech country and Jewish culture must be addressed by this unique secluded place. The successfully reconstructed Jewish monuments of a Czech *country town* at the foot of the Železné hory (Iron Mountains) are certainly worth visiting. Numbers of visitors are low, however, and economic benefits are nor worth mentioning; furthermore the Town Council must deal with the existing discrepancies concerning a suitable use of the monuments after reconstruction. Therefore it may be supposed that inclusion in the destination management is justified.

Let us have a look at the possibilities offered from the viewpoint of target groups of potential visitors:

- The town is located at the foot of the Železné hory, some 5 km from the bordering line of the Protected Landscape Area of the Železné hory (i.e. all visitors to this area may become a target group of potential visitors).

- The town lies close to the caravan site called Konopáč and is approximately 12 km from the recreational zone of Seč – Kraskov (holidaymakers from these area are therefore another target group).

- The town lies approximately from Lázně Bohdaneč (spa town; seniors – spa patients being the target group).

- Possibilities provided for thematic tourism (target groups – local as well as foreign visitors interested in Jewish culture – use of world-wide interest in Jewish culture)

- Use of the ever-increasing interest in the experience tourism (a quite unique complex of Jewish buildings in rural regions of the Czech Republic would be created by completion of the peaceful zone of the former Jewish town)<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless the municipality will not cope with this problem all by itself, co-operation is an entirely necessary part of the destination management. At present, only formal partnerships exist and the manner of permanent communication and co-operation between the public administration, businessmen and citizens in the field of tourism has not been settled. No methodology to manage tourism in regions has been created, which should be changed in the near future, however, as the position of tourism in development of regions has become considerably improved and desirable development in preservation and use of cultural heritage and improvement of local budgets have occurred after our accession to the European Union.

Perhaps this would also be the way not only<sup>11</sup> for reconstructed Jewish monuments of Heřmanův Městec – to combine the respect to the cultural heritage and at the same time, to *open* these buildings for tourism and for exploring tourism.

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<sup>10</sup> This list is naturally also incomplete ...

<sup>11</sup> In the micro-region, there are a number of cultural historic monuments that support attractiveness of the territory from the viewpoint of tourism. The offer contains the total number of 44 registered immovable cultural monuments. In addition to the registered monuments, there are also a number of buildings here, which complete the character and appearance of individual settlements. The largest concentration is – without any doubt in Heřmanův Městec (urban preservation zone), and also at Jezbořice, Svinčany, Kostelec u Heřmanova Městce, Hošťalovice and Vápenný Podol. ([www.sweb.cz/heřmanoměstceko/](http://www.sweb.cz/heřmanoměstceko/)).

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### Supplement:



**Picture 1: Jewish synagogue and Jewish school in town Heřmanův Městec** photo:  
Monika Brychtová

ŠÁRKA BRYCHTOVÁ



**Picture 2: Jewish cemetery** in town Heřmanův Městec (winter 2006) photo:  
Šárka Brychtová