Synagogues in Lithuania

A·M

A CATALOGUE

Aliza Cohen-Mushlin

Sergey Kravtsov

Vladimir Levin

Giedrė Mickūnaitė

Jurgita Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė

Bet Tfila Research Unit
for Jewish Architecture
in Europe

Center for Jewish Art,
Hebrew University
of Jerusalem

Centre for Studies
of the Culture and History
of East European Jews

Vilnius Academy
of Arts

Vilnius Gediminas
Technical University

Sponsors of the Catalogue

Lithuanian State Science and Studies Foundation
Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania
The Cahnman Foundation

Directorate for the Commemoration of the Millennium of Lithuania

Content

Synagogue Architecture in Lithuania

Sergey R. Kravtsov

Synagogue architecture in Lithuania is an inseparable part of world cultural heritage, and comprises an important chapter in Lithuanian and Jewish architectural history. The built record of Jewish communities is still visible on the Lithuanian landscape. Despite massive losses caused by the Holocaust and purposeful Soviet neglect, there are more wooden synagogues and *batei midrash* in Lithuania than anywhere else in Europe. However, these structures are only a fraction of the former abundance of buildings which, though often modest, suited well the needs of particular communities, were accepted by neighbors and approved by authorities. The significance of synagogue architecture, once obvious to the members of this traditional society, has been irreversibly lost along with the human and material losses of these communities, and due to the lack of public interest. The present research gives us an opportunity to reveal and to present the visible vestiges of the built heritage traceable through the physical and archival evidence, and to explain how it was created, conceived, charged with meanings and served the Jewish communities in Lithuania.

Architecture is largely understood today as an activity of designing and constructing buildings, and in this respect Jewish architecture may be specified as that serving the needs of a Jewish community. Moreover, works of architecture are often perceived as works of art. This determines rules of judgment on architecture, since when meeting with an artwork, "intellectual reflection rescues itself from the *here* and *now*, revealing the Truth beyond the sensuous reality."[1] The architecture of religious buildings gives an idea of the truth sought by the believers. A place of worship, its physical shell, organizes the space for ritual and gives a visual expression of the religious group's concepts of their sacred history, its beginnings and milestones, prophesies and eschatology. In the case of Jewish places of prayer, a synagogue building, its space, liturgical appliances and decoration all point to one invariable and essential geographical place in sacred history, the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Believers connect this place with the sacrifice of Isaac, the construction of the Temple by King Solomon, its desecrations and restitutions, the advent of the expected Messiah, redemption, and other religious, ethical and cultural imperatives. Thus the Jewish congregation in its prayers departs from the *here* and *now* for the sake of the Jewish *there* and *then*, the group's ultimate truth. Accordingly, the architecture serving the Jewish community may be specified as the Jewish architecture after its teleology, the final spiritual destination.[2] Traditional Judaism understands this destination literally, assuming, for instance, that all the synagogues and *batei midrash* of

43

the Diaspora will be miraculously transferred to the Holy Land in messianic times.[3] In Lithuania the architectural expressions of distinctively Jewish devotion were numerous; they start with choosing east and southeast as the direction towards Jerusalem, the direction of prayer. Only for the architecture of Reform (Progressive) Judaism, unpopular in Lithuania, the impact of the Jewish traditionalist eschatology is not obvious, since this religious denomination replaced the messianic vision with that of a better world in which liberal ideas would triumph.[4]

Synagogue architecture, however, is not based solely – or even mainly – on eschatological aspiration. The shaping of synagogue architecture in a given place and time depends first on climate, building materials and traditions. This is especially so in Lithuania, where Jews lived for centuries, and where synagogue architecture had a long history, starting in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and benefited from the rich architectural experience of a vast country in which numerous Jewish communities, at times the world's largest Jewish population, dwelt. In the northern part of the Commonwealth, which today forms the Republic of Lithuania, synagogue design was adjusted to the severe climate, which demanded effective protection from harsh winters, requiring heating during a considerable period of the year. In this area wood was the perfect building material, because of its abundance and because of the vast experience in working with this medium in construction and decoration.

A wooden synagogue can be defined in folk, traditional, vernacular and professional terms, but in actuality it combines features of all of them. Wooden synagogue building was based on a well-tested tradition of log construction, with highly efficient details of notching. This tradition belongs to a vast region, embracing parts of today's Russia, Ukraine, Poland, the Baltic and Scandinavian countries, from where it crossed the Atlantic and spread throughout North America. The methods of spanning a log house in the Commonwealth, including Lithuania, followed western European   patterns invented and perfected within Gothic lore of skeleton structures. These roofs differed from those customary in Russia and among the Orthodox and Greek-Catholic churches of the Commonwealth, where ascending offset logs shaped the slopes. The roofs and wooden vaults of the wooden synagogues used the occidental methods of wooden Catholic churches with their vaults built into the roof trusses.[5] Thus, wooden synagogues combined diverse, oriental and occidental building traditions, adapting them to the needs of Jewish communities. Professional architects were clearly involved in the construction of many edifices, since their details corresponded to the classical orders, and sophisticated geometrical constructions would have been impossible without special training.

Besides the inevitable dependence on the local building tradition, the Jews had to adjust their sacred architecture to the demands of authorities. This matter was especially sensitive in the royal and ducal cities, where the Catholic Church, starting with the synod of Piotrków (1542), hampered construction of new masonry synagogues. It also entailed restrictions on their location, demanding that they be built far from the main market square and from Catholic churches, and from streets where the Church held its processions. The synagogues' height and exterior refinement were limited in those exceptional cases where new building permits were issued. In many cities owned by the nobles such restrictions were neglected, especially concerning wooden synagogues, which were overlooked – in contrast to the masonry ones – by the Catholic synods. This allowed Jews to make more favorable architectural arrangements in such towns, as a

result of agreements between noble magnates and Jewish communities who shared mutual economic interests. In many cases, noblemen donated building material and sponsored synagogues in their cities.

This situation changed with the partition of the Commonwealth and the expansion of the Russian Imperial rule over the Lithuanian lands. As the Jews were a new group in the Russian Empire, many legislative limitations were modeled on European patterns, including those of the Commonwealth. Some novelties were introduced in this field: the construction law of Nicholas I (r. 1825–55) ruled that a synagogue should not be closer than 100 *sazhens* (213.36 m) to any Christian church on the same street, and at least 50 *sazhens* from a church in another street.[6] In practice, this distance was drafted on town plans.[7] The building aspirations of the Jewish communities in this period suffered from persecutions of the Polish and Lithuanian nobility, which was punished for its participation in the anti-tsarist uprisings of 1830–31 and 1863. As the Russian authorities deprived the owners of the cities and estates of their ancestral properties, the Jewish population lost its traditional role in the country's economic life.[8] Furthermore, Jewish communities left without their former benefactors had to face a much more stringent Russian bureaucracy, and had less leeway with regard to the restrictions of the imperial authorities. The designing of synagogues was concentrated in the hands of the governmental provincial architects.[9] Approval of the synagogues' designs in the Kingdom of Poland was entrusted to the State Commission for Interior and Religious Affairs in force between 1815 and 1867. Upon the dissolution of the State Commission in 1871, this function became exclusive prerogative of the Department for Foreign (i.e. not Russian Orthodox) Religions at the Interior Office of the Russian Empire in St. Petersburg.[10] Designs for synagogues in the area under direct imperial jurisdiction were approved by the provincial authorities.[11] The cultural situation changed in the interwar decades in the Republics of Lithuania and Poland, between which the territory of today's Lithuania had been divided, and where the formal limitations on the synagogue architecture were abolished; at that time, building permissions were issued by local authorities on common grounds.

Under this long-lasting, changing but strong control, the synagogue architecture of Lithuania demonstrated great adaptability, as well as great conformity. This may be seen in the synagogues' layout; their composition of masses; their design; their exterior signage; their liturgical appliances and interior decoration; and their architectural style. These were not only visible formal features of an edifice, nor were these only qualities pertinent to particular periods, but also bearers of meanings conceivable by Jews and by their neighbors. The following discussion of synagogue architecture will follow these items.

Synagogue Layout

The prayer hall is the core of a traditional synagogue. One of the most characteristic features or popular concepts used in organization of the space of the masonry prayer-hall in Lithuania was the four-pier scheme. It suited the liturgical custom of the Ashkenazi Jews to place the *bimah* in the center of the hall. The four-pier arrangement is traceable to the late sixteenth century, and in the following centuries became a hallmark of Jewish sacred architecture in the Commonwealth. It was introduced for the first time probably in the Old Synagogue at the Polish city of Przemyśl (1592–94), questionably attributed to an Italian architect, Andrea Pellegrino Bononi.[12] It was a building with four heavy columns placed at the four corners of the central *bimah*. The columns carried a cubic arched

structure, supporting – together with the exterior walls – the barrel vaulting on the four sides of the prayer hall. The columns were crowned with Corinthian capitals that did not correspond to the proportions of the heavy shafts, which were akin rather to the Doric order. Apparently, the architect intended to employ the Corinthian order notwithstanding the structural requirements. This decision may reflect a known trend in European art, where the Temple of Jerusalem was presented as an exotic edifice of elaborate architectural order. It may have been borrowed from the twisted, so-called Solomonic Corinthianesque columns, which were thought to be derived from the Temple, and became a motif especially fashionable in the Catholic world at the time when the old St. Peter's basilica in Rome was under reconstruction.[13] Thus, the Solomonic idea, a programmatic reference to the Temple of Jerusalem, may have been present in the four-pier synagogue design as early as the late sixteenth century.[14] Other suggestions about possible meanings of this design include the influence of Byzantine architecture,[15] the Renaissance leaning towards a centric space,[16] architectural expression of the wooden tower from which biblical Ezra proclaimed his post-Babylonian prophesy (Neh. 8:4),[17] a reference to some unknown Italian pattern,[18] an answer to cabbalistic liturgical concepts,[19] and the introduction of the *Lekha Dodi* prayer in the sixteenth-century liturgy.[20]

This four-pier synagogue layout, also called a *bimah*-support,[21] a four-pillar tabernacle[22] or a clustered-column,[23] spread eastward, westward and northward, reached the Grand Duchy of Lithuania by the seventeenth century. By the end of the eighteenth century it was applied in a vast number of synagogues.[24] Most of these buildings assumed the Tuscan order appropriate to their massive, often octagonal piers surrounding the *bimah*, whereas only a few synagogues, like the one in Tarnów, bore Corinthianesque decoration similar to that in Przemyśl. This shift in synagogue design illustrates the neglect of the initial concept, and the emergence of new ideas as the *bimah*-support scheme spread to new locations. It was reinterpreted, as the inscription from 1772 on the central support in the synagogue of Tykocin testifies: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runs into it and is safe" (Proverbs 18:10).[25]

An important development of the four-pier layout occurred in the 1620s, when the first so-called nine-bay synagogues with equal vaulted bays started being constructed. These synagogues avoided the inconvenience of the *bimah*-support, where massive piers impeded the visual and acoustic contact between the congregation and the *bimah*.[26] The first known structures of the nine-bay type were the Great Suburban Synagogue of L'viv (1624–32), and the Maharsha Synagogue of Ostroh (Ostróg, ca. 1627).[27] These two spacious edifices (built by the same architect, apparently Jacomo Medleni)[28] repeated a hall layout with four octagonal piers, Composite capitals bearing a Doric abacus above the Corinthian acanthus, and retaining arches supporting nine equal bays of groined vaults. The inverse (Doric over Corinthian) usage of the order, and the nine-bay scheme of the ground plan, suggest that the architect employed a highly popular treatise by Juan Bautista Villalpando with its imagery of the Temple of Jerusalem presented as a nine-bay compound, adorned with a specific order featuring Doric elements over the Corinthianesque ones.[29] Actually, the further transfer of this concept by Jewish refugees from the Commonwealth to the Netherlands fully revealed its meaning in the Great Ashkenazi and the Great Portuguese Synagogues of Amsterdam (1670–71 and 1671–75 respectively).[30] In the nine-bay synagogues, the four columns probably symbolized the Levites: Moses and his brother Aaron treated as one unit, together with the sons of

Gershon, Merari, and Kohath, while the twelve perimeter wall bays stood for the twelve tribes of Israel, as proposed an explanatory scheme of the Temple by Villalpando (Fig. 1).[31] In the later Portuguese Jewish tradition, the four central columns were reinterpreted as four mothers of Israel.[32]

The first known four-pier synagogue in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was the Great Synagogue of Vilnius built in 1633.[33] This edifice combined high Tuscan columns reaching the spring of the vault, a characteristic feature of the nine-bay scheme, with central supports standing close together and the perimeter of the prayer hall spanned by barrel vaults with lunettes, like in the *bimah*-support synagogues.[34] Judging from this mixture of features pertinent to diverse architectural concepts, we may regard the Great Synagogue of Vilnius as a daring attempt to develop the *bimah*-support synagogue in the direction of more spacious four-pier layout.[35] Though the Vilnius scheme facilitated a grandiose design and an unprecedented span of the hall exceeding those of L'viv and Ostroh, it was not repeated elsewhere. Nevertheless, its seminal role as a four-pier model for the later synagogues of Lithuania should not be underestimated.

The four-pier scheme in all its variations, including a comparatively late modification with a large central bay, became highly popular in the seventeenth- to nineteenth-century synagogues of Lithuania. The number of four-pier synagogues reached about thirty, or almost one-third of all known preserved synagogue designs and renditions in the country. As the excessively massive *bimah*-support vanished from building practice, it was substituted by a four-pier layout with a smaller central bay, and lighter spanning constructions instead of heavy perimeter barrel vaulting. There were fourteen synagogues with closed-in piers, or nearly half of all four-pier synagogues in Lithuania.

The nine-bay scheme, which is found in the rest of the four-pier synagogues, underwent changes as well. Already around the mid-eighteenth century, a central bay cupola hidden under the roof became popular in the masonry and wooden synagogues of the Commonwealth. The masonry sail vaults, the longitudinal wooden barrel vaults, and finally the joisted ceilings, sometimes adorned with coffering, replaced the nine groined vaults.

The industrial revolution of the nineteenth century led to another noticeable shift relating to all the synagogues with interior supports: massive piers gave way to slender metal columns, cast or rolled. For instance, in Marijampolė, in the *Hakhnasat Orḥim* Synagogue at 5 Butlerienės Street (Valerii Rybarskii, 1899),[36] the metal columns acquired a balustrade below and a decorative grill-work on top, all accentuated with dark paint, spatially framing the *bimah*. However, this trend was not uniform; it depended on technical, economic and aesthetic considerations of particular communities and architects. In many places, the massive supports were constructed anew or renovated in the nineteenth century.[37]

A considerably smaller group of six synagogues possessed only two interior supports placed across the hall, in most cases at the rear of the *bimah*. Little known beyond Lithuania, this layout raises questions concerning its meaning. As it was accompanied in Utena with a persistent motif of two columns in the synagogue's exterior decoration, we may cautiously suggest that it might refer to Jachin and Boaz, the two pillars standing to the left and right at the porch of Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 7:21). It is possible that the Lithuanian synagogues borrowed their two-pier scheme from the seventeenth-century Great Synagogue of Minsk, where such piers supported the women's section.[38]
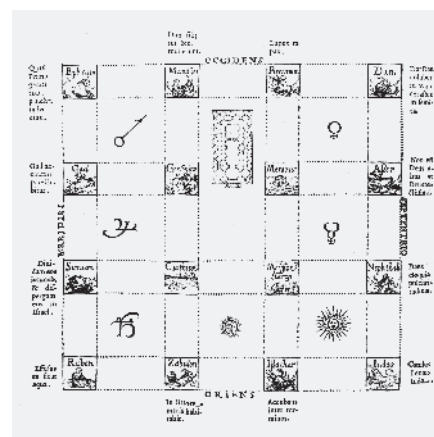
1. Juan Bautista Villalpando, chart showing symbolism of the Temple of Jerusalem. (After Ioannes Baptista Villalpandus and Hieronymus Pradus, In Ezechielem explanationes et apparatus urbis ac templi Hierosolimitani. Commentarii et emaginibus illustratus opus...*, vol. 2 [Rome, 1604], 470)*
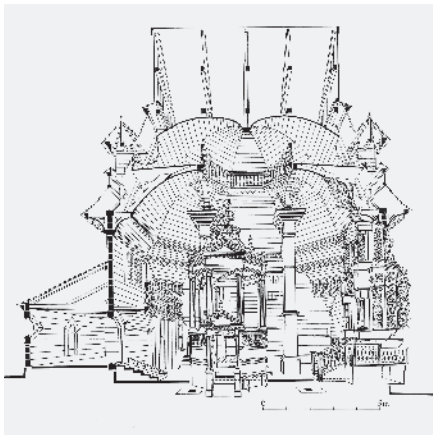
2. Wooden synagogue in Valkininkai, perspective cross section.
(After Maria and Kazimierz Piechotka, Bramy Nieba. Bóżnice drewniane na ziemiach dawnej Rzeczypospolitej *[Warsaw, 1996], fig. 90)*

There were several other interior arrangements, limited to a modest number of applications, whether borrowed from the nineteenth-century European practice of synagogue design or home-bred. An imported scheme was the basilical plan, with a high nave and lower and narrower aisles, and women's galleries installed in the rear, lateral or on three sides of the hall. Sometimes, galleries were combined with the four central piers, preserved from an older structure or newly designed (the Great Synagogue of Kalvarija and the Choral *Taharat Ha-Kodesh* Synagogue of Vilnius respectively). In Vilnius the four massive piers coexisted with the slender supports of the galleries, alluding to both the "native" four-pier layout and the basilical plan of the Progressive synagogues imported from the West, thus giving a visual expression of progress merged with venerable tradition. By and large the impact of Progressive synagogue interior arrangements was limited and superficial. For instance, the central location of *bimah*, an old custom in Ashkenazi synagogues, remained a standard, while the Progressive design of a *bimah* shifted eastwards and connected to the Torah ark is known in the *Taharat Ha-Kodesh* Synagogue in Vilnius, the *Ohel Yaakov* Synagogue in Kaunas and the design for a synagogue in Utena by Antanas Matulis (1933).[39] The least successful original local trial was the design for the synagogue in Krekenava (Keraitis, 1927), where three transverse aisles were separated by rows of three posts, including those erected in front of the entrance door and the Torah ark.[40]

The layout of the wooden synagogues deserves special attention. The oldest known wooden synagogues of Lithuania belonged to the so-called Białystok–Hrodna group, including synagogues of Hrodna (Polish Grodno, Lithuanian Gardinas) and Voŭpa (Polish Wołpa) in Belarus, Janów Sokolski, Końskie, Nowe Miasto on the Pilica River, Suchowola and Zabłudów in Poland, and Jurbarkas, Šaukėnai and Valkininkai in Lithuania, built in the eighteenth century.[41] Their prayer halls were spanned with multi-tier octagonal cove domes, supported by interior pillars or tied to the roof construction. The most elaborate synagogues, like those of Valkininkai (Fig. 2) and Voŭpa combined two types of prayer hall layout: the four-pier, and another one, void of interior supports. The latter type was deeply rooted in wooden synagogue building; it implied a flat ceiling or a barrel vault in older synagogues, and an octagonal cove dome traceable to its first known example of Hvizdets (Polish Gwoździec) (before 1729, in today's Ukraine). Hypothetically, an octagonal dome alluded to the Dome of the Rock, which tops the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, and – erroneously conceived as the Temple of Solomon – was a recognizable messianic symbol in Jewish art at least from the sixteenth century.[42] Another theory affiliates these domes with the Tabernacle in the wilderness, the tent in which the Ark of Covenant reposed.[43] Despite the diversity of meanings of the Temple as a solid structure, and the Tabernacle as a portable sanctuary, the synagogue domes, including those of Valkininkai and Voŭpa, might refer to both, as the Tabernacle prefigured the Temple in typological thought. Unlike the *bimah*-support and nine-bay masonry synagogues, the central piers of Valkininkai and Voŭpa bore only the lowest of the towering domes, cut in the center, and exposing the upper ones, "miraculously" hovering above the *bimah* (in fact, tied to the roof construction). The octagonal openings in the ascending domes were framed with wooden balustrades and festoons, set in illusionist proportions which visually enlarged the height of the vaulting.

While synagogues with interior supports represent the largest group, the prayer halls void of such supports distinguished less than half of the Lithuanian synagogues. Most halls

without supports were comparatively small rooms, spanned by flat ceilings. However, a few halls, including the older ones of the Great Synagogues of Marijampolė and Kėdainiai, were spacious, and spanned with an octagonal cove dome and wooden barrel vault respectively, built into the roof construction, like in many wooden synagogues. At times, the synagogue decorators exploited the centrality of the dome, depicting at its apex an eagle or Leviathan which alluded to the Almighty's protection, or inscribing a set of verses that praised life,[44] thus alluding beyond the architectural references of the visible shape.

All prayer halls, those with supports and those without, larger and smaller, are characterized by similar ratio between their length and breadth. The majority of halls were square or almost square. The broad halls, in which the breadth exceeded the length, constitute about one third of the all known synagogues and are twice more frequent than the long halls. This statistics shows a clear preference for comparatively long eastern and western walls. This can be explained neither by the urban situation of the synagogues, as happened at times in Western Europe,[45] since the synagogues in Lithuania regularly stood detached from neighboring houses, nor by ancestral relationship with the ancient "broad house" synagogues of the Holy Land,[46] which were totally forgotten in the Middle Ages and not yet excavated when the Lithuanian synagogues were built. Alternatively, this trend is explicable by the communities' desire to increase the number of highly respectable and expensive seats by the eastern wall facing Jerusalem. A better acoustic and visual connection for women assembled at the western, rear side was another benefit of a broader hall. The prevalence of square and broad halls reflects the seminal role of the Jewish community in the design process, working with the architect, to whom a broad hall would have been unfamiliar in sacred buildings other than synagogues.

The oldest synagogues in the Commonwealth comprised only a prayer hall, a modest lobby and auxiliary annexes, like the sexton's dwelling, and were compact structures.[47] The later synagogues acquired vestibules, women's sections, staircases, prayer rooms of particular associations and guilds, libraries and even communal prisons, which were built simultaneously or grew later around the prayer hall. All these premises were attached to the hall on its western, southern and northern sides. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the most typical arrangement of the auxiliary premises included the central men's vestibule, southern and northern prayer or auxiliary rooms, and a staircase leading to the first-floor women's section. The men's entrance to the prayer hall, but not to the synagogue building, was regularly from the west, as *halakhah* demands that all who enter should face the Ark and the direction of prayer.[48]

Women's presence was seriously considered in the synagogue architecture. Though the *halakhah* demands only a quorum of ten adult men, it is believed that women's attendance in the synagogues of the Commonwealth increased from the second half of the sixteenth century. As early as 1575, "a beautiful women's gallery" was mentioned in the wooden synagogue of Przemyśl,[49] and the Nachmanowicz Synagogue of L'viv was supplied with a women's section during its reconstruction in 1595, on the thirteenth year of its existence,[50] and with an additional one after 1609.[51] It is unclear whether the women's sections were built simultaneously with the core of the Great Synagogue of Vilnius; they certainly existed when the synagogue burned down in 1748, and were repeatedly reconstructed.[52]

The earliest known women's sections were built west of the prayer hall, above a vestibule, and were accessible by exterior open stairs. A solid wall separated these rooms
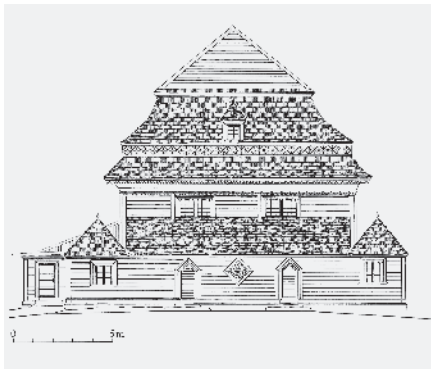
3. Wooden synagogue in Valkininkai, western façade. (After Maria and Kazimierz Piechotka, Bramy Nieba. Bóżnice drewniane na ziemiach dawnej Rzeczypospolitej *[Warsaw, 1996], fig. 469)*
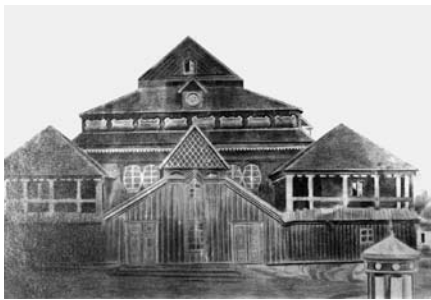
4. Wooden synagogue in Vilkaviškis, view from west. (Photo: Vytautas Kazimieras Jonynas, 1936. KPCA, Neg. Nr. 2506)

from the prayer hall, and a number of latticed openings served mainly for acoustic connection. For the first time in Isaac's Synagogue in Krakow (1638–44) the prayer hall and the women's section at its rear were spanned by one vault, and separated only by a light arcade.[53] In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the women's annexes were built on the southern and northern sides of prayer hall when the growing communities necessitated additional rooms, and their openings were cut through the walls towards the hall. In rare cases, these new openings replaced the original tall windows of the prayer hall, as happened in Ostroh. In other places, like Slonim, an interior women's section at the rear of the hall was introduced. In some later structures, as in the Great Synagogue of Kalvarija after World War I, the community decided to remove the women's annexes, their openings were bricked up, and a gallery was newly built along the southern, western and northern walls of the prayer hall. The western, first floor location of the women's sections was the most popular arrangement, found in every synagogue in Lithuania. Many women's sections not only occupied the first floor above the entrance area; they protruded into the rear of the hall, resting on a row of slender columns or cantilevers. The number of such "balconies" exceeded more than twice that of synagogues with northern or southern women's annexes; this ratio illustrates the communities' desire, mainly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to preserve the integrity of the interior space and exterior mass, instead of expanding the synagogue. Three synagogues in Kalvarija (the Great Synagogue), Šiauliai (the Great *Beit Midrash,* 1895–98), and Vilnius (*Taharat Ha-Kodesh*, 1902) were designed with interior galleries on southern, western and northern sides, while the Choral *Ohel Yaakov* Synagogue in Kaunas was designed with galleries in the aisles, like in European Progressive synagogues, inspired in their turn by Protestant sacred architecture.[54] A number of synagogues, including the wooden *kloyz* of the Burial Society in Plungė (1931) and several *kloyzn* in Vilnius lacked a women's area entirely.

The degree of isolation of the women's galleries differed greatly from synagogue to synagogue. The more pious, traditionalist communities preferred to install lattices in the openings, while the more "progressive" ones in large cities like Vilnius and Kaunas used no barriers to visually isolate women from men.

Composition of Architectural Masses
The composition of architectural masses as seen mainly from the exterior of a synagogue, differed from other types of sacred building. The synagogue exterior clearly expressed the distinctiveness of a Jewish place of prayer in largely Christian urban landscape. During the existence of the Commonwealth, this difference was predetermined by the limitations imposed by the Catholic Church mentioned above. For instance, the building permit for the synagogue of Vilnius from 1633 decreed that "its top should not rise above the height of dwelling houses, and it should not be similar to Catholic and Orthodox churches."[55] Moreover, rabbinic commentary dating from 1788 opposed the architectural models of the Gentiles.[56] The synagogue buildings were distinguished mainly by their mass, much less exquisite and lofty than those of Christian churches.

Some synagogues were arranged in a single elongated rectangular mass, where the prayer hall occupied the eastern part of the building, and western part housed the rest. The earliest known example of such compact massing in the Commonwealth is the synagogue of Pińczów, built about the turn of the sixteenth century.[57] In other synagogues,
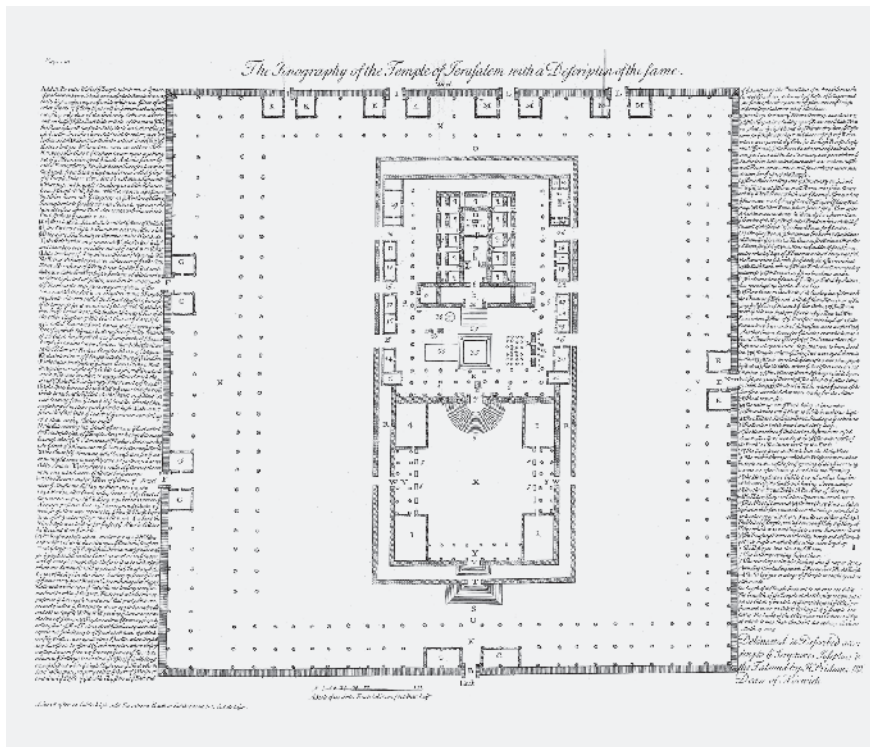
5. Humphrey Prideaux, The Ichnography of the Temple of Jerusalem with a description of the same. *(Imprint London, 1725)*

the extensions grew beyond the original compact mass, and were added or removed according to communal needs. These annexes rarely broke two major rules: first, that they not be attached to the most important, eastern wall of the synagogue, which could only have a projection for the Torah ark, and second, their height rarely exceeded the sills of the windows of the hall, to let daylight in. Thus a synagogue surrounded with extensions assumed a pyramidal composition of masses, not necessary symmetrical, but impressive and picturesque.

Two symmetrical pavilions flanking the main front of a synagogue constitute a remarkable scheme of synagogue massing, hardly explainable by utilitarian requirements. Its beginnings are traceable to the second half of the eighteenth century; it was definitely present in the synagogue of Włodawa, presumably designed by Paolo Antonio Fontana (1696–1765) and built about 1774.[58] The majority of such synagogues were erected in the vicinities of Hrodna and Białystok, and in Masovia; they were scattered over the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Volhynia and Podolia; we find such pavilions in the masonry synagogues of Jonava, Kaunas and Šėta, and in the wooden ones of Valkininkai (Fig. 3) and Vilkaviškis (Fig. 4). In the Piechotkas' opinion, their massing was influenced by the composition of noblemen's palaces and manors with their corner alcoves.[59] An alternative inspiration for this composition might be the theoretical reconstructions of the Jerusalem Temple, popular in pre-Enlightenment Europe, where the porch flanked with side chambers is broader than the sanctuary (Fig. 5).[60] These reconstructions followed the layout of the Herodian Temple known from the Mishnah: "The porch projected fifteen cubits to the north, and fifteen cubits to the south, and this was called the chamber of the slaughter-knives, for there they used to keep the knives. The sanctuary was narrow

51

behind and wide in front, and it was like to a lion, as it is written, 'Ho, Ariel, Ariel,[61] the city where David encamped'; as a lion is narrow behind and wide in front so the sanctuary was narrow behind and wide in front" (Middot 4:7).[62] Hence, the flanking pavilions on the synagogues' front could refer not only to the elitist secular culture of the Commonwealth, but bear certain religious and Jewish meanings as well. The reference to the imagery of the Herodian Temple is applicable also to the shouldered, T-shaped ground plan of synagogues, which became popular in the nineteenth century. Such plans are found in the Great *Beit Midrash* of Jonava (mid-nineteenth century, rebuilt after fires of 1896 and 1905), the Hasidic *kloyz* in Kaunas (1880), and in Balberiškis (Izidorius Kuodis, 1938); in the Great Synagogue of Utena side annexes were added in the late 1930s.

The heavy, dominant mass of the prayer hall was often crowned with an attic wall in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This was dictated by the royal, clerical and municipal demands to protect the roof of a synagogue from fire, or, alternatively, to save the city from eventual blaze spreading from synagogue, where – to the disapproval of the authorities – the candles were always lighted.[63] Sometimes, like in the Great Synagogue of Lutsk, the attic wall was demanded to provide the synagogue with a defensive by-function.[64] Moreover, the low attic walls of the synagogues could not compete with or be similar to the steep gables and belfries of churches. Such synagogues were covered with saw-tooth sunken roofs; the annex roofs were saw-tooth or lean-to. It was only towards the end of the seventeenth and in the eighteenth century that the synagogues could afford high gable roofs, which held up better under rain and snowfall. Their gables often acquired a Baroque curtain-like scalloped shape, well suited to their high mansard roofs (originally, in church architecture, such gables corresponded to a basilica with a higher nave and lower aisles). Some old synagogues, initially crowned with attic walls, were reconstructed to assume a gable roof; the Great Synagogue of Vilnius might have undergone such a transformation in 1794.[65] In the first half of the nineteenth century triangular Neo-Classicist gables became popular, and in the second half figured exotic gables, which concealed ordinary gable roofs behind them, became preferable to the simpler ones of the previous period.[66] Hipped, half-hipped and half-gabled (gambrel) roofs were less impressive, reminiscent of secular building rather than sacred architecture. The most inventive were the eighteenth-century builders of wooden synagogues, who enhanced the skyline of high, multi-tier synagogue roofs with bulbs and concave slopes. Statistically, the gable roofs were an absolute majority, while about one third of all the roofs were hipped; half-hipped roofs constituted less than four percent, and half-gabled roofs were rare indeed in Lithuania.

As shown in the introductory essay by Vladimir Levin in this volume, windows played an important role in the synagogue architecture, not limited to the function of lighting. The windows of the prayer hall often numbered twelve, thus referring to the Tribes of Israel and implying a powerful eschatological message. This concept might be based on the cabbalistic Book of the Zohar with its idea of the "upper synagogue," a divine prototype existing in Heaven (Zohar, Pekudei, 221a).[67] The windows of the prayer hall were tall, in most cases round-headed or segment-headed, in contrast to the common fenestration of dwelling houses. The windowsills were raised high above the floor to avoid distracting the worshipers. The oculi, often placed at the top of the Torah ark, accentuated the direction of prayer. Unlike the prayer halls, the other parts of the synagogue were lit by smaller windows, often of more restrained contour, segment-headed or rectangular.

Due to the different fenestration in the western two-storey and eastern parts, such synagogues became almost iconic in the nineteenth century.[68] Architectural historian Samuel Albert calls this type of structure "a split-storey synagogue."[69] Though unpopular in scholarly literature, this term reflects a real phenomenon in the synagogue architecture in Lithuania and beyond, especially within the Pale of Settlement of the Russian Empire.

The entrance doors to the synagogues were strictly specified either for men or for women. The men's entrance often occupied the center of the main, western façade, whereas the women's doorways were removed to lateral positions in the main or side façades; other options were also popular. Traditionally, the doors opened inward, like in a dwelling house. However, a fire in 1856 in which many Jews perished[70] led to a mass "revision" and reconstruction of synagogue doors in the provinces of Augustów, Lublin, Płock, and Warsaw in 1857–58 on the initiative of the Polish Interior Office.[71] Since then all synagogue doors opened outwards for safety reasons, while many synagogues, especially the wooden ones, added emergency exits from the prayer halls, a feature unthinkable in older times. These new doorways were regularly combined with the westernmost windows of the hall. In the interwar years some communities used such doorways as main entrances to their "cold" synagogues, and transformed the old dark vestibules into storerooms, as happened in Pakruojis.[72]

6. Semion V. Gorskii, design for a synagogue in Skuodas, façade, 1867.
(KAA, F. I-473, Ap. 1, B. 3698, L. 10)

Exterior Signage of Synagogues

The synagogue building did not need any exterior sign to be identified in towns of the Commonwealth, where everyone knew everybody else, and questions like "are you Jewish?" and "is this a synagogue?" were senseless. Jewish signage appeared only in the nineteenth century as a reflection of Western social and architectural patterns, which were meant to identify the "temples" of diverse rites. The most popular signs were the Tablets of the Law, the Star of David (significantly later),[73] the two columns of Jachin and Boaz, and exterior inscriptions. These signs expressed the Jewish identity of the structure, and a certain openness to the exterior world. In this respect the Tablets of the Law were preferable for those communities which tended to address their neighbors, since the Tablets bore the moral code common to Jews and Christians. The Tablets, featuring rounded upper rims, were placed either on the apex of the synagogue's western gable, as for example in Eišiškės, or, rarely, inside the gable, as designed for the Great *Beit Midrash* in Telšiai (1861) and the *Taharat Ha-Kodesh* Synagogue on Novaia Street in Vilnius (1877).[74] However, even this manifestation of Jewish religion was unwanted at times by the authorities: it was crossed out in the design proposed for the Skuodas Synagogue by architect Semion Gorskii in 1867 (Fig. 6).[75] The Star of David often appeared in plaster decoration or a glazing pattern, and was sometimes proposed as a crowning finial to the building in order to differentiate it from the sacred edifices of other religions, as was customary in large cities of Western Europe.[76] In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Hebrew inscriptions sometimes adorned the main façade of a synagogue. The verse כי ביתי בית תפילה יקרא לכל העמים ("For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples," Isaiah 56:7), was inscribed above the entrances to the "progressive" Choral synagogues *Taharat Ha-Kodesh* in Vilnius and *Ohel Yaakov* in Kaunas. This verse bore a universal meaning, acceptable by Christians as well. Another inscription, in Utena, appealed mainly to the Jews: מה טבו אהליך יעקב משכנתיך ישראל ("How fair are your tents, O Jacob, your dwellings, O Israel," Num. 24:5), since it is the
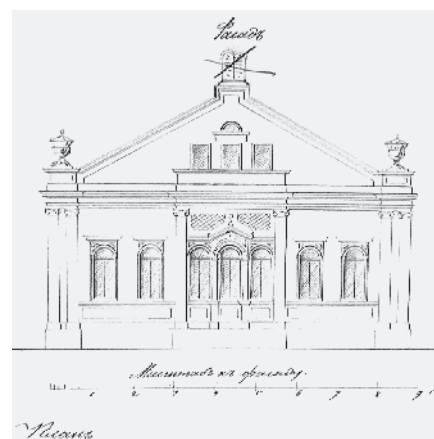
7. Torah ark in an unidentified synagogue in Vilnius. (After Leyzer Ran, Jerusalem of Lithuania, *vol. 1 [New York, 1974], 110)*

8. Torah ark in the wooden synagogue in Kelmė. (Photo, 1938. KPCA, Neg. Nr. 2080)

opening verse of the prayer pronounced when entering a synagogue. Some exterior Hebrew inscriptions or shields merely named the particular house of prayer and its generous donor: a *kloyz* in Utena bore a shield reading: אהל יצחק מאיר שארפשטיין מאמריקה ("Tent of Yitzḥak Meir Sharpstein from America);"[77] several *kloyzn* in the Vilnius *shulhoyf* had their names written above the entrances. The interior signs and inscriptions, starting with a customary verse above the entrance to the prayer hall: זה השער לה'' צדיקים יבאו בו ("This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous will enter through it," Ps. 118:20), was addressed exclusively to the members of Jewish community. The meanings of the inscriptions and decoration inside the prayer hall went far beyond those of exterior signs.

Liturgical Appliances and Interior Decoration

The most meaningful appliances of the prayer hall were the Torah ark and the *bimah*. The ark was not merely a repository for the Torah scrolls used during worship. It stood in the center of the eastern wall, and pointed to the sacred destination also by its decorative elements and inscriptions. The oldest known Torah arks of the Commonwealth from the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were restrained Renaissance or Mannerist stone constructions, sided by colonnettes or pilasters, crowned with straight, triangular or broken pediments, topped with finials, flanked with ornate "wings" and adorned with carving and inscriptions, which most frequently referred to the Crown of the Torah. These compositions possibly originated from representations of the Ark of Covenant and the Temple of Jerusalem, rooted in medieval art or even that of Late Antiquity.[78] At times, depictions of the Menorah and the Shewbread Table decorated the doors of the repository for the Torah scrolls, as was the case in the Remah and the High Synagogues of the Kazimierz suburb in Krakow, unequivocally linking the ark to the Tabernacle in the wilderness and the Temple of Jerusalem.[79] From the second half of the seventeenth century the arks tended to adopt the composition and decoration of Baroque altars of Catholic churches. The Torah arks of the Great Synagogue and an unidentified synagogue in Vilnius, originating in the eighteenth century, exemplify this phenomenon (Fig. 7).[80]

However, in the eighteenth century these early types of ark gave way to Baroque multi-field and multi-tier trabeated wooden compositions based on a sinuous and stepped ground plan, which remained in fashion well into the 1930s (Fig. 8).[81] Their columns and pilasters were accompanied with rich carving, subordinate to a number of themes. The columns' shafts were often twisted, thus pointing to the columns of St. Peter in Rome as a visual source. Many wooden arks were decorated with a spiraling vine, a motif borrowed from the Christian art of altars and iconostases, and also used in the title pages of Hebrew books. Artists of the arks obviously disregarded the Christological meaning of wine in ecclesial lore, and probably charged it with the meanings of Israel (Ps. 80:8–11). The multiple tiers of Torah arks allowed for the installation of three crowns, which pointed to the fourth, superior crown mentioned in Mishnah: "Rabbi Shimon said: There are three crowns: the Crown of the Torah, the Crown of Priesthood, and the Crown of Kingship; but the crown of good name excels them all" (*Avot* 4:13). Another vocative element was the Tablets of the Law, which linked the Torah ark to the Ark of the Covenant. The Tablets of the Law were mostly connected to the ark.[82] Rampant lions, griffins or unicorns – proxies of the biblical Cherubim sitting on the Ark of Covenant – often supported the Tablets.[83] Presentations of hands arranged for the Priestly Blessing (Num. 6:23–27) and vessels for ritual rinsing of hands also surmounted the

Tablets of the Law. Leviathan and the Wild Ox, which were primordially created and which will be slain for the righteous attending the eschatological feast appeared in the arks of Kėdainiai and Valkininkai (Fig. 9).[84] The Torah ark was commonly topped with an eagle, single- or double-headed, which referred not only to earthly reign, but also to the Kinship of David from which the Messiah will come, and to divine power, and thus bore the Ineffable Name of the God of Israel.[85] The eagle's insignia included the *shofar* (ram's horn) and *lulav* (palm frond) in the Torah ark of Valkininkai (Fig. 9), and the *etrog* (citron) and palm frond in Šaukėnai (Fig. 10). These attributes allude to the coming of the Jewish Messiah, when God will rule the universe according to Zechariah's prophesy (Zech. 14:16).[86] Of the three crowns mentioned by Rabbi Shimon, the Crown of the Torah was placed over the repository of the Torah, the Crown of the Priesthood over the Priestly hands, and the Crown of Kingship over the topping eagle.[87]

Especially elaborate were the wooden carved arks in Jurbarkas (Fig. 11), Kelmė (Fig. 8), Kėdainiai, Marijampolė, Pakruojis, Prienai, Šaukėnai (Figs. 10, 12), and Vilkaviškis (Fig. 13), known to us only from photographs and descriptions. Their abundant floral openwork and polychrome ornamentation presented an image of the Garden of Eden, as the Trees of Life and Knowledge were carved there symmetrically. Their floral environs were populated by a plenitude of animals, birds and fantastic creatures. According to Bracha Yaniv's analysis of the ark in Druia – one of the masterpieces of this type from 1774–75, signed by Tuviyah ben Israel Katz of Kamajai – the ascending order of the Leviathan, a sea monster, fish, snake, cat, dove, bird, starling, tame goose, wild goose, stork, raven, small cattle, large cattle, gazelle, horse, field animals, lion and bear fairly corresponded to the textual sequence of *Perek Shirah* (Chapter of Singing), a popular compilation, mainly from the Psalms, which contained words of praise to the

9. The upper part of Torah ark in the wooden synagogue in Valkininkai (Photo: Szymon Zajczyk, ca. 1936. After Maria and Kazimierz Piechotka, Bramy Nieba. Bóżnice drewniane na ziemiach dawnej Rzeczypospolitej *[Warsaw, 1996], fig. 118)*

10. Torah ark in the wooden synagogue in Šaukėnai. (Photo, 1930s. NMKČDM, Neg. Nr. 18128)
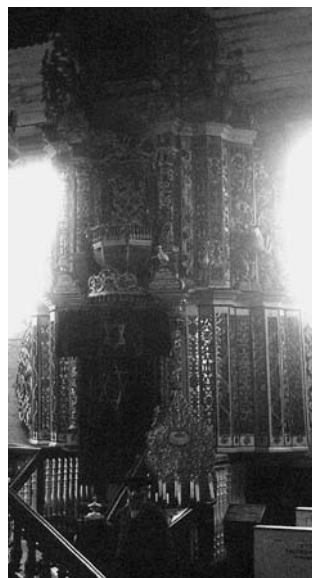
11. Torah ark in the wooden synagogue in Jurbarkas. (Photo, 1930s. KPCA, unnumbered)

12. Torah ark in the wooden synagogue in Šaukėnai (Photo, 1936. KPCA, Neg. Nr. 469)

13. Torah ark in the wooden synagogue in Vilkaviškis. (Photo, 1939. KPCA, unnumbered)

14. Ruins of an unidentified synagogue in Vilnius. (Photo, 1945. Yad Vashem Archives, no. 222C01)

15. Bimah *in the wooden synagogue in Val-kininkai. (Photo Szymon Zajczyk, ca. 1936. After Maria and Kazimierz Piechotka,* Bramy Nieba. Bóżnice drewniane na ziemiach dawnej Rzeczypospolitej *[Warsaw, 1996], fig. 169)*

Creator spoken by His creatures.[88] The upper tier of the ark in Druia included Tablets of the Law and the Ineffable Name, inscribed in glass and set in front of a window. This feature echoed the design of some Baroque altars in Catholic churches in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, where a stained glass or a sculpted dove set in front of a window signified the Holy Spirit.[89]

Parallel with these wooden arks, another type of masonry Baroque Torah ark developed in the synagogues of Čekiškė,[90] Linkuva,[91] Telšiai,[92] Vilnius (Fig. 14)[93] and Žagarė.[94] Like their wooden counterparts, these brick and plastered trabeated, multi-field and multi-tiered structures were based on a stepped sinuous ground plan. This Baroque composition remained in fashion as late as 1900, as can be seen in the synagogue of Čekiškė constructed after 1887.

The upper tier of the arks in Linkuva, Žagarė and Čekiškė included Tablets of the Law, and in Linkuva and Žagarė – the Ineffable Name, inscribed in glass, set in front of, and illuminated by the eastern oculus, similar to the wooden ark of Druia.[95] The decoration of the masonry Torah arks was limited mainly to architectural details. However, the ark of Čekiškė was naively painted. Its murals presented a new set of subjects: these were the Twelve Tribes of Israel, ordered according to their mothers, and placed from right to left in sequence of seniority. The presentation of the Tribes of Israel bore both eschatological and Zionist meanings, a reference to the gathering of the Diaspora in the Land of Israel. In this respect it was quite logical to place the signs of the Tribes on the ark virtually facing Jerusalem. The tribe of Benjamin appears in Čekiškė as a wolf under a starry sky and an "old" moon, an iconography which followed closely that of the Tribe of Benjamin proposed by Ephraim Moses Lilien (1874–1925), who was called "the first Zionist artist."[96] This kind of adoption became possible as naïve artists sought for visual sources in popular art produced by professionals, in realistic depictions of animals and landscapes of the Holy Land.[97]

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Neo-Classicist stylistics influenced a group of Torah arks, including those of Wyszogród, Staszów, Fordon, Płońsk, and Kępno in Congress Poland. These were evenly divided into fields and trabeated tiers, adorned with porte-fenêtres and windows.[98] The model of an ark for the synagogue of Salantai belongs to this group.[99] As Zajczyk and the Piechotkas say, this type of composition referred to the elevation of the Temple of Jerusalem.[100]

The Torah ark was thus a focus linking the worshipers with the essential points of the Jewish religion, its sacred sources and eschatological destination. The construction of such an ark was a matter of sophisticated craft and rigorous craftsmen's ethics, and was carried out by Jewish artisans. In many cases ethical considerations forbade the master from signing his work, and the names of Shimshon son of Judah Leib in the ark in Prienai[101] and Tuviyah son of Israel Katz of Kamajai carved into the arks in Druia and Jurbarkas (Fig. 11)[102] were comparatively rare cases, for most arks remained unsigned. By contrast, memoirs from Pakruojis retained an image of the anonymous master of the ark as a poor, uneducated person, slowly working for minimal wages and fed by local Jews.[103]

The importance of the *bimah* was second to the Torah ark. The oldest *bimot* known from Ashkenazi illuminated manuscripts were rectangular, high and supported by slender pillars. The free-standing *bimot* of the Commonwealth adopted rectangular, dodecagonal and octagonal shapes. They were framed with masonry or metal railing and canopies, like their predecessors from the German Lands and Bohemia. The artistic rendition

of the *bimah* became more elaborate as time went by, and many elements which first appeared in the design of the Torah ark were gradually transferred on the *bimah*. This holds true first of all in relation to the aforementioned twisted columns, promoted by Gianlorenzo Bernini in St. Peter's Baldacchino (1624–33), which became especially popular in the Catholic countries of Europe. Its "dolphin back" canopy indirectly inspired a number of Baroque *bimot*, including those in Valkininkai (Fig. 15) and the Great Synagogue of Marijampolė.

Some free-standing *bimot* of Lithuanian synagogues assumed unusual, inventive shapes. For instance, the eighteenth-century rectangular *bimah* of the Great Synagogue of Vilnius initially featured twelve Corinthian columns and curved ribs, attributed to Johann Christoph Glaubitz (ca. 1700–67).[104] This composition may have been inspired by Villalpando's imagery of the Temple with its Corinthianesque order, symbolism of Twelve Tribes, and curved buttresses.[105]

Another instance was the octagonal *bimah* of the wooden synagogue in Jurbarkas (Fig. 16), which was crowned with a cupola topped in its turn with a fenestrated drum and an onion dome.[106] This *bimah* combined structural elements familiar from many other synagogues, but in a highly inventive manner.

In Jurbarkas (Fig. 17) the ceiling of this canopy was decorated with a central medallion containing a crowned, double-headed Russian Imperial eagle invested with scepter and orb, and encircled with an inscription: כנשר יעיר קנו על־גוזליו ירחף יפרש כנפיו יקחהו ישאהו על־אברתו: ה' בדד ינחנו ואין עמו אל נכר ("Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that hovers over its young, He spread His wings and caught them, He carried them on His pinions. The Lord alone guided him, and there was no foreign god with him," Deut. 32:11–12),[107] a subject known from the vault paintings of synagogues in Khodoriv (1714) and Smotrych (1746, both in today's Ukraine).[108] A naïve "Lithuanian" landscape painted in the ceiling of the canopy and on its cupola framed this image. Stars and moon lit the landscape, planted with coniferous and leaf-bearing trees animated with birds, giving a vivid response to the highest patronage proclaimed in the central medallion. The exterior sides of the cupola bore abbreviations: דמשק (*damesek*, דע מי שהוא קונך, "Know who is your creator"),[109] שיילת (*shayelet*, שויתי ה, לנגדי תמיד, "I have set the Lord continually before me," Ps. 16:8), שרלת (*sharlat*, שלום רב לאוהבי תורתך, "Those who love Your law have great peace," Ps.118:165), and others, symmetrically placed, but barely visible in the photographs. Some of the readable formulae, like *damesek* and *sharlat*, sounded as names of costly fabrics, damask and scarlet virtually decorating the sacred place; two other customary abbreviations of this kind are known from other locations: סמוט (*samut*, סור מרע ועשה טוב, "Shun evil and do good," Ps. 34:15), and אטליס (*atlas*, אך טוב לישראל אלהים, "Surely God is good to Israel," Ps. 73:1). These abbreviations are known from the murals of the Old-New Synagogue of Prague, the synagogue of Boskovice (Czech Republic), and the wooden synagogue of Yabloniv (in today's Ukraine).[110] The closest known analogue is the wooden synagogue in Hrodna, where the lower register of the cove in its prayer hall was painted with a similar naïve landscape and inscribed with such abbreviations.[111]

Later octagonal *bimot* in Pakruojis and Panevėžys, very similar to one another, were crowned by carved cusped pediments, bearing the Divine Name and Stars of David.[112] Their columns bore Corinthianesque capitals, and the shafts of the Pakruojis *bimah* were spiral-fluted, thus disclosing their relationship to the Solomonic order of St. Peter's.
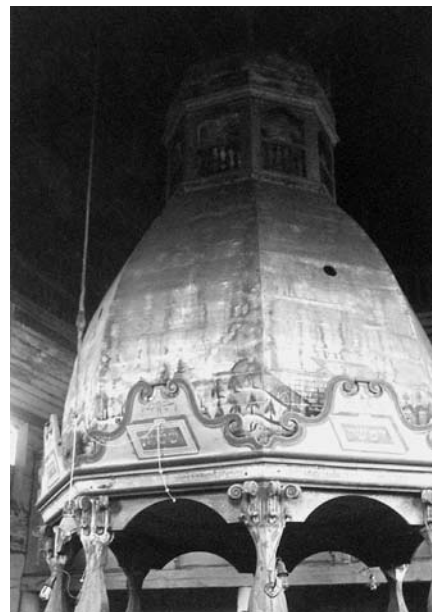
16. The bimah *in the wooden synagogue in Jurbarkas. (Photo, 1930s. KPCA, unnumbered)*

17. The ceiling of the bimah *in the wooden synagogue in Jurbarkas. (Photo, 1936. KPCA, Neg. Nr. 1176)*

Some synagogues of Lithuania were decorated with paintings on their walls and vaults, a custom which cannot be detached from a broader geographical context. In the synagogues of the Commonwealth, painting flourished at least from the mid-seventeenth century, as the oldest preserved fragments from Krakow show, as well as works by Polish Jewish artists in Moravia.[113] A numerous group of wooden painted synagogues emerged in the late seventeenth and throughout the eighteenth century in Ruthenia and Podolia. It included synagogues of Berezdivtsi, Hvizdets', Yabloniv, Kamyanka Bus'ka, Khodoriv, Min'kivtsi, Mychalpil', Smotrych, and Yaryshiv (in today's Ukraine). Their abundant decoration has been studied only partially so far, as the monuments burned down, and essential archival photographs were rediscovered only in the 1990s. It these synagogues, the panels inscribed with prayers occupied the eye-level register of the walls, with the exception of the Menorah and the Shewbread Table. These were painted on the southern and northern walls respectively in the synagogues of Hvizdets', Kam'yanka Bus'ka and Yabloniv, and thus hinted to position of these appliances in the Tabernacle and the Temple of Jerusalem. The figurative representations occupied the upper register of the walls and the vaults. Such subjects as the Lord's hand, the Tree of Knowledge, the Ark of Covenant, the Tablets of the Law, a Leviathan encompassing a city, a Wild Ox, the four species of *Sukkot*, the burning city of Jerusalem, signs of the Zodiac and numerous depictions of animals, birds, plants and fantastic creatures covered these surfaces closely. This imagery originated from Ashkenazi Jewish visual art, which can be traced back to book illuminations of medieval Rhineland.[114] The meaning of some depictions is clear even when not accompanied with inscriptions, and has already been mentioned in the decoration of the Torah arks, while the others are obscure, and thus the decorative program as a whole cannot be trustworthily interpreted. This type of synagogue decoration, though loosely specified, is believed to have reached the Grand Duchy from outside; it appeared in the wooden synagogue of Mahiloŭ (Mogilev) on the Dnieper River in 1740. It also traveled with Jewish artists from Ruthenia to Germany, and surfaced in the wooden synagogues of Horb am Main, Bechhofen, Kirchheim and Unterlimpurg.[115] In the Commonwealth it received some new subjects and underwent certain compositional changes, surviving into the nineteenth century.

Whereas some magnificent wooden synagogues in Lithuania, like that of Valkininkai, were scantily painted, if at all, other synagogues suggest a relationship to the Ruthenian and Podolian patterns. The oldest paintings are known only from written descriptions: master Yoḥanan made them in the upper register of the eastern wall in Prienai in 1782.[116] Although the imagery from this synagogue is traceable to the synagogues of Ruthenia, there the paintings were located higher, mainly in the domes, and not necessarily in the proximity of the Torah ark.

The oldest example of paintings retained in a photograph is known from Kėdainiai. The octagonal cove dome of its Great Synagogue (after 1784) was painted with a rampant lion and, supposedly, a unicorn above the Torah ark. A similar dome in the Great Synagogue of Marijampolė was decorated as a starry sky with a dominant Star of David, musical instruments referring to Psalm 150, the four animals mentioned in *Pirkei Avot*, and a view of burning Jerusalem. Whereas the starry sky, the four animals and the view of Jerusalem were common in older monuments, the Star of David and the numerous musical instruments were comparatively new subjects in synagogue painting. Multiple musical instruments appeared on the door of the Torah ark at Zelva in 1750–1800,[117] and

became popular in paintings of synagogues of central and Eastern Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.[118] They were painted in Apatov's Synagogue, Gamarski's *Kloyz* and Lukiškės *beit midrash* in Vilnius.[119] This subject should not be confused with another, also involving musical instruments: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion. Upon the willows in the midst of it we hung our harps" (Ps. 137:1–2), a motif known from synagogues in Przedbóż (ca. 1760), Yaryshiv (1780), and Grojec (the first half of the nineteenth century).[120] Musical instruments hanging on willows were present in the reported interwar paintings of the synagogue in Žagarė.[121] Presumably, the repertoire of synagogue painting in Lithuania had its roots in that of the Commonwealth, and acquired new subjects in unbroken communication within the Ashkenazi Jewish artistic milieu.

It benefited also from the naïve art of local painters. Their work is exemplified by the wooden synagogue of Pakruojis, where a "Lithuanian" landscape (similar to that painted on the ceiling of the *bimah* canopy in Jurbarkas) encircled the entire dome, decorated by an anonymous folk artist in 1895.[122] The painter acted as a true artist within a living tradition: he combined the well-tested subjects with such modern ones as a train driven by a steam locomotive, and tables with books and vases.

Concluding the review of interior decoration found in the broader context of historical geography to which Lithuania belongs, we may confirm that its subjects originated from the riches of Jewish art, anchored in medieval book illumination. These subjects surfaced in the synagogue paintings of the Commonwealth in the seventeenth century, and their repertoire continuously broadened through the following period. As in synagogue decoration elsewhere, the location of particular subjects did not follow any rigid canon. Their relative positions were often stipulated by the textual sequence, as was the case with animals referred to in *Pirkei Avot* and *Perek Shirah*, and especially when it conveyed a hierarchy, like Rabbi Shimon's pronouncement on the four crowns. Certain spatial relations between the subjects were established within the sacred built prototype, as with Jachin and Boaz, Menorah, and the Shewbread Table. In the case of the Tribes of Israel, the sequence was stipulated by the seniority of the biblical protagonists. In the lands of the former Grand Duchy, including today's Lithuania, the meaningful figurative subjects, well known from the paintings on the walls and especially domes of southern synagogues, were concentrated on the magnificent carved Torah arks, *bimot*, the upper registers of the walls and lower tiers of the cupolas. Thus most of the interior surfaces remained void of decoration, whereas the evocative nodes – the Torah ark, the *bimah*, and the eastern wall – were articulated by means of sculpture, painting and light, while paintings seldom appeared on the western wall, separating the prayer hall form the women's section. It is possible that artistic freedom was limited by mundane restriction such as shortage of funds or even a short ladder, as Lemchenas suggested for the synagogue of Pakruojis.[123] Notwithstanding, the Lithuanian synagogue interiors were strikingly clear, ordered and soberly concentrated on their dominant liturgical elements.

The Style and Meaning of Lithuanian Synagogues in Historical Perspective
Masonry synagogue architecture in Lithuania is traceable back to the seventeenth century, the oldest being the Great Synagogue of Vilnius. It was a unique edifice as to scale and interior design. However, it included many features undoubtedly linking it to the Baroque epoch: its central space, its elaborate and meaningful *bimah,* its Torah ark and

the stucco decoration of the vaults. Many exterior features of this synagogue have been lost through the centuries, and it is impossible to judge them from the preserved visual evidence. The later, eighteenth-century synagogues of Marijampolė and Kėdainiai, as well as that of Vilijampolė/Slobodka in Kaunas, allegedly built by an Italian architect, give an idea of a Baroque exterior. These were robustly articulated with pilasters, which divided the synagogue façades into even bays, with stringcourses breaking them into tiers. The returned impost moldings emphasized junctions between the pilasters and stringcourses, charging the façades with Baroque dynamism.[124] As was mentioned, this expression was supported with the curtain-like shape of the gable in the cases of Marijampolė and Vilijampolė/Slobodka. The synagogue architects, who were undoubtedly Christians, for Jews could not participate in the masons' guilds, eagerly employed local means of that period. In Kėdainiai, they closely followed the particular shape of the local Calvinist Church, its basket arches bridging between the pilasters. Together with other Baroque elements, including the four-pier layout, segment-headed windows, barrel and cove domes, *bimot* and Torah arks, this repertoire would mark the recurrence of the Baroque expression, its survival and revivals in the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century.

The Baroque as the prevailing style was followed by Neo-Classicism in the aftermath of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, under the Russian rule, as the stylistic change more or less coincided with the partition of the Commonwealth. This shift was stipulated by the taste of the nobility, the court of the last ruler of the Commonwealth Stanisław August Poniantowski (r. 1764–95), and the Russian court of Catherine the Great (r. 1762–96) and her successors. Whereas the nobles followed European patterns mainly for the needs of their manors, and seldom for reconstruction of private towns, the stylistic preferences of Russian monarchs had a decisive impact on architectural and urban policies of the absolutist empire.

In the Commonwealth, Neo-Classicism arrived from two directions. First, it was imported by the French-trained architects invited by the enlightened noblemen. This trend is represented by the reconstructed Vilnius cathedral and Town Hall designed by Laurynas Gucevičius (Wawrzyniec Gucewicz, 1753–98).[125] The second trend depended on Palladian architecture, fashionable in Britain.[126] The adoption of Neo-Classicism in the Commonwealth and its aftermath was not dogmatic, and even architects trained in France, like August Kossakowski (1737–1803), were enchanted by the Vilnius Baroque, and succeeded to reconcile it with classicist principles.[127]

Neo-Classicism was imported to Russia in the 1760s, and had a strong French orientation until 1780. About that year the empress became tired of "normal" Neo-Classicism with its laws and science. For her new project in Tsarskoe Selo she wanted "a Greco-Roman rhapsody," and from the mid-1780s, the Palladian Neo-Classicism of Anglo-Italian orientation, with its round-headed arches, cupolas and rustications became a dominant trend.[128] Thus Neo-Classicism in Russia lost its universalist appeal, so loved by thinkers of French Enlightenment, quite early, and adjusted to varied cultural situations. Elements of Gothic Revival were also welcome in court architecture (Tsaritsyno, 1775) and beyond it, including the newly gained lands in the west.[129] Later, in the first three decades of the nineteenth century, Neo-Classicism in Russia acquired a greater monumentality together with somberness, a lapidary expression of plain walls, sometimes accompanied with Egyptian and Ancient Roman motifs of interior decoration, referring to the French

Empire Style. The triumphant mood of the "Russian Empire Style" was inspired by the victory of Russia over Napoleon, and by the European openness of its elite.[130]

The influence of Russian architecture grew in Lithuania from the late eighteenth century, due to imperial administrative control. The Governor's Palace of Vilnius (architect Vasilii Stasov, supervisor Karol Podczaszyński, 1824–34) is its most impressive example, featuring boldly plain wall expanses, an octastyle Ionic portico, Doric colonnades and pedimented windows adorned with the under-sill engaged balustrades. Gorgeous colonnades could hardly be elements of the synagogue architecture in Russia, where Neo-Classicism was appreciated also for its expression of hierarchies. In the words of a short guide to architecture (1789): "It is possible to build a wonderful structure even without orders. Columns belong exclusively to important, public buildings and to Tsars' palaces, and even here one has to apply them with forethought."[131]

Unlike in the Russian Empire, the Neo-Classicist synagogue architecture of European countries, mainly France, Germany, and the Habsburg Empire, reflected the benefits of Emancipation: monumentality, which signified a greater Jewish visibility in the urban landscape, and a novel and enlightened style, accepted by the entire society. This style was especially suitable for Reform Judaism, as it emphasized the communities' thirst for the universal values.[132] Of all these, only formal stylistic features were applicable to the Jewish architecture in Lithuania.

Neo-Classicism in Lithuania did not follow any specific western patterns in the synagogue architecture. Unfortunately, many structures which were built from the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, and supposedly bore Neo-Classicist features, did not survive in their original shape. The earliest firmly dated architectural plans are known from the synagogue in Aleksotas (1825). The landlord and sponsor of the synagogue, Józef Godlewski commissioned a plan, but the Governmental Commission of the Kingdom of Poland proposed an alternative design, which it considered "really beautiful," prepared earlier for a synagogue in Filipów. Moreover, the commission had no normative model for a synagogue at that time.[133] The plans depict a very modest wooden "temple," a kind of a four-column prostyle with a stepped gable. Further Neo-Classicist designs are known from the Vilnius Užupio Street Synagogue (1841),[134] the Great *Beit Midrash* of Panevėžys (Semion Gorskii, 1851)[135] and the synagogues in Zarasai (1860)[136] and Telšiai (1861 and 1866).[137] All these were humble structures, with plain or rusticated wall surfaces often articulated by a rusticated plinth, pedimented windows, and Italianate voussoirs. They were covered with hipped or gabled roofs, adorned with acroteria. The synagogue in Zarasai and the Great *Beit Midrash* of Telšiai (1861), both designed by Semion Gorskii, were the most ornate among them. In both designs pilasters with returned impost moldings and depressed panels divided the walls into even bays. In Zarasai the first floor women's area was articulated as a mezzanine with lateral half-gables and central gable. In Telšiai the doorway and fenestration somewhat resembled Palladian patterns; the western gable included Tablets of the Law, and, as in the design for Zarasai, was articulated with balls and acroteria. The side façade with its symmetrical eastern and western pedimented bays conceal the interior division of the synagogue space for the sake of exterior integrity. In these synagogues, the nine-bay interior layout and application of pilasters illustrates the survival of the Baroque into the second half of the nineteenth century, and its merger with Neo-Classicist means. The plot plans of synagogues in Vilnius (Užupio), Zarasai and Telšiai (1861) show the

impact of a Neo-Classicist urban approach and a concern for symmetry of built elements facing the street that was unknown in the old *shulhoyfn*.

In the 1830s a new trend surfaced in Russian architecture. This was the inauguration of a Neo-Byzantine style recruited to replace Neo-Classicism, which no longer satisfied Nicholas I, who saw it as related to western liberties harmful to his empire. Like other European nations disappointed with Enlightenment dogma, Russia should rather appeal to its usable past, presenting itself as the successor to Byzantium. Its Neo-Byzantine architecture, best exemplified by the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow (Konstantin Thon, from 1831) was parallel to such western European phenomena as Romantic Historicism in the Hapsburg Empire, the *Rundbogenstil* in Germany, and the Gothic Revival of August Reichensperger's Cologne Circle and Augustus W.N. Pugin in England. Unlike its European counterparts, the Russian Neo-Byzantine style was based on a very narrow ideology, devised in 1833 as the guiding principle of the regime by its minister of education Sergey Uvarov "Autocracy, Orthodoxy and Nationality." Within this triad, the non-Russian-Orthodox rites employed this style for their sacred buildings only in rare cases, presumably when they desired to express their loyalty and patriotism. Another version of Russian romantic nationalist style, based on pre-Peterine Muscovian architecture and designs by Ivan Petrovich Ropet (1845–1908), was created after the assassination of Alexander II in 1881 (the memorial Church of the Savior on Blood in St. Petersburg, Alfred Parland, 1883–1907), and circulated throughout the Empire from Warsaw and Helsinki to Port Arthur.[138] Despite the theoretical support of the "Russian style" in discussions surrounding the designs of the choral synagogues in St. Petersburg (1872–79)[139] and Kharkiv (1909, in today's Ukraine),[140] and even the willingness of the renowned poet and Jewish disputant in the St. Petersburg case, Judah Leib Gordon (1830–92),[141] only scarce formal traces of such style can be found through the synagogues of the Russian Empire. Such "Russian" references may exist in the ogee arches of synagogues at Golta, Kremenchuk (both in Ukraine), Hrodna (1902–5)[142] and Viduklė in Lithuania (1870, Fig. 18),[143] for the ogee silhouette was considered "truly Russian" in architectural practice in the western borderlands of the Empire.[144] Interestingly, a domical vault over Apatov's Neo-Classicist synagogue in Vilnius[145] was interpreted as a Byzantine feature in the early twentieth century: "An original synagogue with a little Byzantine cupola in the center was built in the early [18]60s," stated an article on Jewish Vilnius.[146]

The Neo-Byzantine was only one of the stylistic options in the Russian Empire of Nicholas I. Neo-Classicism, which was long supported by the academy in its "Neo-Greek" or "Pompeian" versions, as well as the "Gothic," were still available.[147] As the classicist forms became associated with the absolutist regime of Nicholas I, the "Gothic" increasingly expressed a tender and sensitive privacy, open to the charms of dreams and nature. However, from the mid-nineteenth century, its application shifted from nobles' manors and mainly rural Russian-Orthodox churches to the urban churches of western rites, mainly Protestant, and to library and study interiors. At the same time, variations of the academic styles including Roman, Renaissance, Baroque, and the styles of Louis XIV, XV and XVI were associated with education, science, humanism and philanthropy and the material and cultural richness of patricians. From the outset, the application of Oriental styles – "Moorish," "Chinese," and "Japanese" – was minor in Russia, limited to bathhouses, smoking rooms, tea stores and mosques.[148] Nevertheless, the Neo-Moorish

18. Synagogue in Viduklė, view from southwest. (Photo, 1936. KPCA, Neg. Nr. 1791)

style, more and more popular in synagogue architecture in Europe, penetrated the Kingdom of Poland in 1840s,[149] and did not escape public attention in Russia in 1870s.[150]

In this cultural situation, the Jews in Lithuania, as elsewhere in the Russian Empire, remained with largely foreign (non-Russian-Orthodox) means for synagogue architecture. "Gothic" pointed arches became quite popular; aside from its occidental expression, "Gothic" might refer to the "antiquity" of the Jewish religion, without connoting classical antiquity, but rather indicating a hoary past.[151] Moreover, the stylistics of late nineteenth and early twentieth century synagogues in Lithuania are notable for their eclecticism. "Gothic" pointed fenestration sat side-by-side with such Romanesque, Renaissance and Baroque features as arched bands, lisenes, pilasters and shaped pediments in scores of synagogues designed and built from the 1860s to the beginning of World War I.[152] In the design for the Synagogue on Novaia Street in Vilnius (Mieczysław Strebejko, 1877), a moderate oriental flavor was added to the occidental, Gothic style.[153] Such stylistic heterogeneity did not exceed the measures of eclecticism allowed in Russian architecture of the late nineteenth century, especially that of the apartment houses; it followed conventional historicist semantics. However, it was adjusted to Jewish architecture, and bore a certain "Jewish" meaning expressed in its foreign, even exotic, occidental and oriental details of decoration, combined with elements of local Baroque. This very eclecticism of architectural language may well be recognized as "Jewish," because it was widely believed that the Jews did not possess any particular architectural style of their own, and had to borrow diverse styles from the nations among whom they dwelt through their history.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the synagogues in Lithuania, as well as many public and dwelling houses adopted the so-called "brick style," a low-cost, rationalist architecture of muted expression, promoted mainly by the St. Petersburg Institute of Civil Engineers.[154] Its main feature is unplastered brickwork decoration, occasionally polychrome. Notwithstanding its rationalism, the "brick style" followed historicist conventions, featured the same eclecticism and bore the same meanings as "plastered" architecture.

Another possibility of conveying Jewish identity through architecture was seen in the wholesale application of oriental styles. This derived from the conception of the Jews as the "Asians of Europe." Invented in late eighteenth-century Prague, the "Moorish style" was reconfirmed in Bavarian designs from the 1830s, those of Berlin, Mainz and Warsaw of 1840s, developed in works by Ludwig von Förster for Vienna and Budapest in the 1850s, and thereafter became extremely popular throughout Central Europe until the 1890s. In later decades the influence of oriental stylistics faded in European countries: its advantage of a clear-cut, "pure" Jewish style as an expression of a proud otherness became its main hindrance with the growth of anti-Semitism and with a general withdrawal from historicist conventions. In the Russian Empire, and particularly in Lithuania, the application of oriental styles for synagogue architecture met with a number of difficulties. First, being Jewish was not something to boast of in a country where Jews had not been officially emancipated. Second, the Russian Empire with its volatile southeastern border was very sensitive to any attempts of constructing architectural identities through using the terms of the Orient.[155] And third, the Jews of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were historically an occidental population, incorporated into Russia with its gains in the west, and belonged by their origins to Ashkenazi,

German Jewry. This identity was further emphasized by strategies of other Jewish groups such as the Karaites, who "certified" their oriental origins and did not hesitate to align with an oriental lifestyle.[156] Because of these reasons, the oriental style reached the synagogues of Lithuania only at the beginning of the twentieth century, after the construction of the Great Choral Synagogue of St. Petersburg (1883–93). The first synagogue of similar style in Lithuania was the Choral Synagogue *Taharat Ha-Kodesh* in Vilnius (Daniel Rozenhauz, 1902–8), built later than the Neo-Moorish Choral Synagogue of Yelisavetgrad (1897), and almost simultaneously with those of Minsk and Samara. Its oriental overall style featured an *iwan* portico of Islamic architecture, bold horizontal stripes for the street façade, rose windows and interior capitals inspired by Alhambra; it was enriched by classicist means of Palladian "thermal" windows. The tripartite division of this window in the porch was used to set up two engaged columns, topped as minarets, referring to Jachin and Boaz. Its style, its location on a city thoroughfare and a lofty cupola signified the respectable embedding of the Jewish community in the townscape. However, after Vilnius became a part of the Polish Republic, it appeared that the move was not favored. The city guide stated: "The new Choral Synagogue […] has lost every connection with the tradition of Jewish synagogues in Poland, and is a banal, international structure with pretentions of the 'Moorish style'."[157] The Choral Synagogue of Vilnius was followed by those in Šiauliai (1906),[158] pierced with horseshoe windows, and Simnas (apparently early twentieth century) with its "brick style" horizontal yellow stripes on a red background, a hallmark of oriental expression. The oriental trend surfaced also in the interwar synagogues of Švėkšna (L. Prosinskis, 1928) and Kaunas (P. Taročkovas at 36 Sodų St., 1929). The latter design was adorned with dramatic pointed openings, in contrast to nineteenth-century European synagogues which were modeled on Moorish architecture with round-headed and horseshoe arches.

The *style moderne*, as Art Nouveau was called in Russia, which virtually succeeded historicism around the turn of the twentieth century, had very limited impact on synagogue architecture, and did not rupture the continuity of the historicist approach in Lithuania. Its circulation was limited by its initial non-historicist character and "decadent" connotations. Its traces can be found in the initial design for the Choral *Taharat Ha-Kodesh* Synagogue in Vilnius (1901),[159] and in the Torah ark in the Great Synagogue of Kalvarija reconstructed after World War I, in a late, "Egyptian" version of the *style moderne*.[160]

By contrast, the following wave of Neo-Classicism was quite influential. Being a historicist stylization only at its beginnings, it grew into a powerful trend which abandoned the vitality of the *style moderne* for the sake of a new rationalism and clarity of artistic expression.[161] It was not an exclusively Russian development, being paralleled in the intellectual and artistic movement of the West, but the Russian impulse given by the *Mir Iskusstva* (World of Art) association, the numerous fashionable works by first-class architects and lively public discussion should not be discounted. Indeed, the leading Neo-Classicist architects of Vilnius (then under Polish rule), Stefan Narębski and Paweł Wędziagolski, were educated in St. Petersburg. Despite attacks on their programmatic universal art by critics who considered the sixteenth-century Italian architect Giacomo Vignola "the major saboteur and Russificator of Polish architecture," Neoclassicism remained highly influential in Vilnius throughout the 1920s, its impact diminishing in the following decade.[162] This style was also eagerly employed in Kaunas. It became popular in synagogue architecture in the Vilnius Region and the Republic of Lithuania.[163]
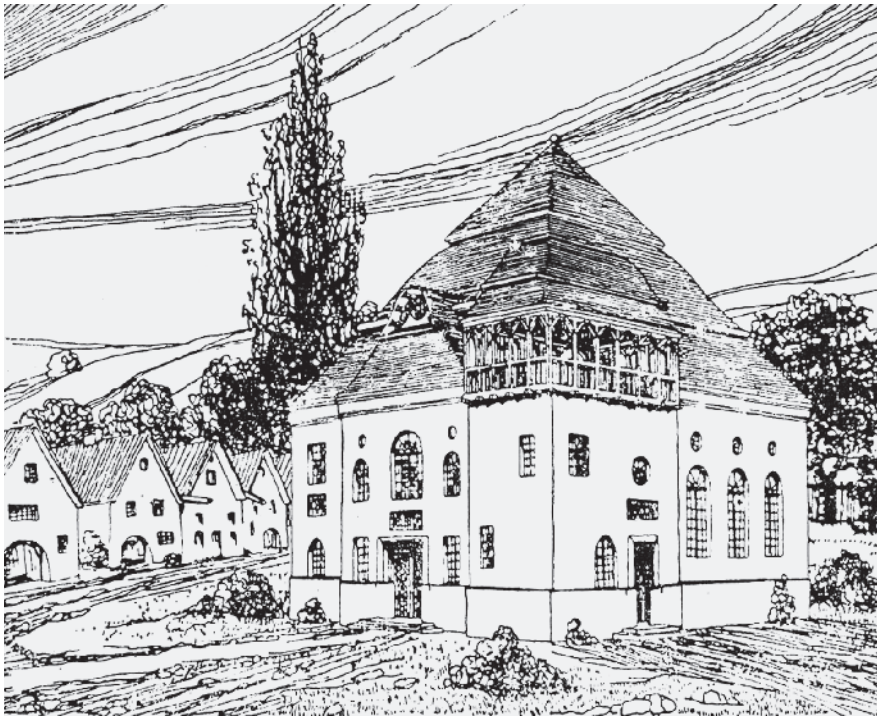
19. Józef Awin, a synagogue for a Polish town, 1909. (After Almanach Żydowski, *ed. Leon Reich [L'viv, 1910], plates not paginated)*

The approach to architectural form was not uniform in these projects. While the designs for Anykščiai and Salantai made use of rustication and gigantic order,[164] later works expunged any architectural order from their repertoire, and tended towards a greater formal simplicity. Neo-Classicist architecture of those decades was not totally opposed to the emerging modernist, international architecture: on the one hand, the logic and clarity of Neo-Classicism was akin to the rationalist approach of modernism, while on the other, interwar modern architecture was eagerly using classical means when a certain effect of solemnity and monumentality was needed. Thus, the yeshiva in Ukmergė was given vertical glazed strips and a socle of multiple projecting brick stringcourses from the modernist vocabulary, together with a Neo-Classicist triangular gable and symmetrical fenestration of the main façade.[165] Alternatively, the synagogue in Ramygala was pierced with modernist rectangular windows of broadened proportions arranged in Neo-Classicist overall scheme.[166] Unlike the modest architecture of the early 1920s, which reflected the hardship of the postwar reconstruction, the modernist Neo-Classicist synagogue in Biržiai was equipped with gigantic coupled pilasters, round-headed windows and a very low hipped roof, all reminiscent of totalitarian architecture of the 1930s.[167]

The new wave of Neo-Classicism in the early twentieth century had a specific Jewish dimension in synagogue architecture. This was instigated by the archaeological discovery of the ancient synagogue in Kfar Bar'am (fourth century C.E.) in Upper Galilee. Its style, characteristic of late antiquity, spurred anew the debate about a genuine Jewish style, and even promoted the creation of a peculiar theory deriving ancient Greek architecture from that of the Semitic peoples.[168] This development – together with a broader American trend – inspired the Neo-Classicist approach to synagogue architecture in the USA around the turn of the century.[169] As Arnold W. Brunner, an American architect

with German-Jewish roots wrote in 1907, "with the sanction of antiquity it [the 'classic' style] perpetuates the best traditions of Jewish art and takes up a thread, which was broken by circumstances, of a vigorous and once healthy style."[170] The Jewish aspects of ancient classical architecture were popularized by a prestigious Hebrew magazine *Ha-Shiloaḥ*, edited by Joseph Gedaliah Klausner (1874–1958). However, the question to what extent the synagogue architecture in Lithuania was influenced by this way of thinking requires further investigation.

Another important though not very fruitful trend in synagogue architecture was the so-called "native style,"[171] a version of national romanticism of the first decade of Polish independence. It surfaced in the architecture of village Catholic churches of the 1920s as a compromise between the architects' thirst for modernity and their fidelity to tradition and concern for the cultural landscape.[172] It was close to the "cottage style,"[173] applicable mainly, though not exclusively, to the architecture of residence. The best example of the "native style" in synagogue architecture was an unrealized design by Antoni Adam Filipowicz-Dubowik[174] (1926) for a synagogue at 44 Subačiaus Street in Vilnius.[175] This project immediately brings to mind an earlier conceptual proposition of a "synagogue for a town in Poland" (1909, Fig. 19)[176] by a well-known Jewish architect and theoretician, Józef Awin (1883–1942), educated in L'viv and Munich, and active in L'viv. Awin vigorously rejected the historicist styles of the nineteenth century, whether Neo-Gothic, Neo-Moorish, Neo-Renaissance or Neo-Baroque, as irrelevant for Jewish architecture. Instead, he promoted the common style of the local architecture customary before the nineteenth century – a style which kept to the constraints imposed on the Jews in the past, and bore a flavor of the "inherent" Jewish art which had allegedly survived in the ghettos for centuries. In Awin's opinion this Jewish style could be sensed by a visitor in the traditional urban milieu, and the architect's duty was to convey this sense to the public. After Awin, decoration as such must be downplayed, modernized and altered, nonetheless retaining a lot in common with its prototypes.[177] Thus Awin's pioneering designs, like those of Filipowicz-Dubowik, were no longer a slavish and eclectic copying of historical forms, but an attempt to construct a contemporary Jewish style, "native" to the townscape of the Commonwealth's successor, that should be seen as a part of quest for the "native style" shared equally by all peoples, including the Jews liberated from the imperial yoke.

Another possibility of Jewish integration into the Lithuanian cultural milieu is evident in the application of Lithuanian folk motifs in interior decoration of synagogues in Šaukėnai,[178] Vištytis and Žagarė.[179] It is unknown whether Lithuanian or Jewish carpenters executed wooden decorative elements, but their designs originated from local lore, and were appropriated for the embellishment of synagogues by the Jewish community.

Such a usage of vernacular decorative motifs might be seen as a local "folk" variation of Expressionism or Art Deco. Alternatively, the wooden synagogue in Kurkliai (Povilas Jurėnas, 1935) illustrates another version of Expressionism, free of any folk means, but invested with triangular "crystal" forms and asymmetrical composition of masses, characteristic of modernist architecture and typical of the international circulation of this style.

Tragically, the inspirations of the Jewish communities and the architects they hired were cut short by World War II, and cannot be traced further on. The story of the destruction and reconstruction of particular edifices is given in the entries of this *Catalogue*.

In conclusion it may be said that despite many oppressive restrictions, synagogue architecture in Lithuania was plenteous, variable and meaningful. The interior design of the synagogue, its decoration, inscriptions and meanings answered the in-group demands, were subordinate to the ethics, aesthetics, liturgy and teleology of the community, and largely hidden from the exterior spectator. The interior synagogue layout and the design of its components were rooted in a broader area settled by the Ashkenazi Jewry. The artists of the Commonwealth introduced innovations and altered earlier forms, producing new regional types and subtypes, sustainable for long spans of time, as happened to the four-pier plan of the prayer hall and the composition of the Torah ark. They charged and recharged the visible forms with new significance comprehensible in and by the Jewish realm. The synagogue exterior, its massing, signage and architectural style were based on understandings with the non-Jewish authorities, in dialogue with neighboring groups and spoke to all parties. Thus architectural style in the age of competing classical, romantic and modernistic architectural concepts assumed varied meanings referring at times to the universal and timeless (Neo-Classicism), to a hoary past ("Gothic"), to the Golden Age of the Commonwealth (Baroque and the "native style"), to biblical and medieval times spent by Jews in the milieu of other Semitic peoples (Neo-Moorish), to oscillation between the a-historical and retrospective (*style moderne*), and once again universal, focused on the "here" and "now" (modernism and Expressionism). Architectural style could also express foreignness and otherness ("Gothic" and Neo-Moorish), relatedness to the local usable past (Neo-Baroque), affiliation with the Russian Empire and its (largely non-Jewish) legacy, and sharing cultural values with the re-emerging nations ("native style," folk motifs). Thus the architectural style of the synagogue conveyed notions of "always," "then" and – more rarely – "here and now." It proposed a number of formulae for Jewishness in architecture, from the "pure" Neo-Moorish to an eclectic compilation of "pedigreed" styles of the peoples among whom the Jews had wandered. Seldom did the synagogue exterior quote elements of Jewish eschatology, like Jachin and Boaz, and the widened front of the Herodian temple. The semantic dichotomy of the synagogue, with its interior consistently expressive of the final Jewish destination, and its exterior of highly variable signification, is itself a marvel of sophisticated meaning-making. It is difficult to agree with those scholars who interpret it as a manifestation of a Jewish double-consciousness.[180] The interior arrangement was traditionally the highest priority of the Jewish community, a haven in a hostile surrounding world, while the exterior could be negotiated and compromised for the sake of the very right to possess a synagogue. This dichotomy was far more profound than the Jewish Enlightenment maxim, "Be Gentile outside and a Jew at home."[181] The Jewish strategy in formulating the synagogue style was rather akin to the Evangelical parable: "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Luke 20:25), which is good advice on how to survive under the imperial yoke. The appearance of the synagogue was negotiated by architects, authorities, politicians, Jewish and non-Jewish intellectuals, but also the founders of the synagogue and the building committee, and thus by the community itself. It provided Jews and non-Jews with a channel of cultural communication, a bridge, at times narrow and shaky, giving a hope of mutual understanding. The *Catalogue* of Lithuanian synagogues and houses of worship proves that this virtual bridge is still available for movement in both directions.

N o t e s

1 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, transl. T. M. Knox (Oxford, 1998), 8; Annabel Jane Wharton, "Jewish Art, Jewish art," *Images. A Journal of Jewish Art and Visual Culture* 1 (2007): 29–35, esp. 29.

2 Sergey R. Kravtsov, "Reconstruction of the Temple by Charles Chipiez and Its Applications in Architecture," *Ars Judaica: The Bar-Ilan Journal of Jewish Art* 4 (2008): 25–42, esp. 25.

3 Babylonian Talmud, *Megilah* 29a; for more on the connection of Diaspora synagogues with Jerusalem, see Sergey R. Kravtsov, "A Synagogue in Olyka: Architecture and Legends," in: *Jewish Cultural Studies*, vol. 1, *Jewishness: Expression, Identity, and Representation*, ed. Simon Bronner (Oxford, 2008), 58–84, esp. 74–76.

4 Louis Jacobs, *The Jewish Religion: A Companion* (Oxford, 1995), 343, 415–417.

5 Maria and Kazimierz Piechotka, *Bramy Nieba. Bóżnice drewniane na ziemiach dawnej Rzeczypospolitej* (Gates of Heaven: wooden synagogues in the lands of the old Commonwealth) (Warsaw, 1996), 34–36.

6 See imperial decree of June 26, 1844, in Vitalii Levanda, *Polnyi khronologicheskii sbornik zakonov i polozhenii, kasaiushchikhsia evreev, ot Ulozheniia Tsaria Alekseia Mikhailovicha do nastoiashchego vremeni, 1649–1873* (Complete chronological collection of laws concerning Jews, from the Codex of the Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich till the present, 1649–1873) (St. Petersburg, 1874), 569.

7 For instance, it was stipulated in the design for a synagogue in Šiauliai that the synagogue should not be closer than 84 *sazhens* from the Orthodox church, and its fence should not be close than 66 *sazhens* to that of the church (KAA, F. 473, Ap. 1, B. 4217).

8 Israel Bartal, *The Jews of Eastern Europe, 1772–1881*, transl. Haya Naor (Philadelphia, 2005), 85.

9 Eleonora Bergman, *Nurt mauretański w architekturze synagog Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej w XIX i na początku XX wieku* (Moorish trend in synagogue architecture of Central-Eastern Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) (Warsaw, 2004), 91–92.

10 Małgorzata Omilanowska, *Spis rysunków architektonicznych z akt Komitetu techniczno-budowlanego Ministerstwa Spraw wewnetrznych w Centralnym Panstwowym Historycznym Archiwum w St. Petersburgu. Królestwo Polskie* (List of architectural drawings from the Records of the Technical and Construction Committee under the Ministry of Interior Affairs in the Central State Historical Archives in St. Petersburg. The Kingdom of Poland) (Warsaw, 2003), 5–6; Maria Łodyńska-Kosińska, *Katalog rysunków architektonicznych z akt centralnych władz wyznaniowych w Archiwum Głównym Akt Dawnych w Warszawie* (Catalogue of architectural drawings from the records of the governmental offices for religious affairs in the Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw) (Warsaw, 1981), 7.

11 Ya. I. Gimpelson, *Zakony o evreiakh: Sistematicheskii obzor deistvuiushchikh zakonopolozhenii o evreiakh s razyasneniiami pravitelstvuiushchego Senata i Tsentralnykh pravitel'stvennykh ustanovlenii* (Laws on Jews: Systematic review of actual laws on Jews including instructions by the ruling Senate and central governmental institutions) (St. Petersburg, 1915), 716.

12 Maria and Kazimierz Piechotka, *Bramy Nieba. Bóżnice murowane na ziemiach dawnej Rzeczypospolitej* (Gates of heaven: masonry synagogues in the lands of the old Commonwealth) (Warsaw, 1999), 175–79.

13 For the twisted columns of St. Peter's, see John B. Ward-Perkins, "The Shrine of St. Peter and its Twelve Spiral Columns," *Journal of Roman Studies* 42 (1952): 21–33.

14 Sergey R. Kravtsov, "Juan Bautista Villalpando and Sacred Architecture in the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 64, 3 (2005): 312–39, esp. 318–19.

15 Majer Bałaban, *Zabytki historyczne Żydów w Polsce* (Historical monuments of Jews in Poland) (Warsaw, 1923), 60.

16 Szymon Zajczyk, "Architektura barokowych bóżnic murowanych w Polsce (zagadnienia i systematyka materiału zabytkowego)" (Architecture of Baroque masonry synagogues in Poland, problems and systematics of the heritage), *Biuletyn naukowy, wydawany przez Zakład Architektury Polskiej i Historii Sztuki Politechniki Warszawskiej* 4 (Warsaw, 1933): 190–91.

17 Rachel Wischnitzer-Bernstein, *Architecture of European Synagogues* (Philadelphia, 1964), 115.

18 Helen Rosenau, "The Synagogue and Protestant Church Architecture," in *The Synagogue: Studies in Origins, Archaeology and Architecture*, ed. Harry M. Orlinsky (New York, 1975), 314.

19 Piechotka, *Bramy Nieba. Bóżnice murowane*, 76–77.

20 Tobias Lamey, "Die Stellung des polnischen Steinsynagogenbaus in Europa im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert – Versuch einer Annäherung," *Aschkenas. Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur der Juden* 14, 2 (2004): 415–46.

21 Maria and Kazimierz Piechotka, *Wooden Synagogues* (Warsaw, 1957), 30–33.

22 Carol H. Krinsky, *Synagogues of Europe: Architecture, History, Meaning* (Cambridge, MS, 1985), 11.

23 Thomas C. Hubka, *Resplendent Synagogue: Architecture and Worship in an Eighteenth-Century Polish Community* (London, 2003), 67.

24 The *bimah*-support synagogues of that period were built in Lutsk (1626–28, today in Ukraine), Tarnów (ca. 1630, Poland), Pinsk (1640, Belarus), Slonim (1642, Belarus), Navahrudak (1648, Belarus), Tykocin (1648, Poland), Łęczna (1648–1655, Poland), Nový Bykhaŭ (last quarter of 17th century, Belarus), Nowy Żmigród (late 17th or 18th century, Poland), Luboml (late 17th–early 18th century, Ukraine), Rzeszów (1705–1710, Poland), Kutno (second half of 18th century, Poland), Dukla (1758, Poland), Łańcut (1761, Poland), Przysucha (1764–1777, Poland), Lukiv (Maciejów, 1781, Ukraine), Ruzhany (Belarus), Rymanów (Poland), and Opoczno (Poland; these three originate from the late 18th century); see Eleonora Bergman, and Jan Jagielski, *Zachowane synagogi i domy modlitwy w Polsce. Katalog* (Preserved synagogues and prayer houses in Poland. A catalogue) (Warsaw, 1996), 40, 117, 135; Aleksandr Lokotko, *Arkhitektura evropeiskikh sinagog* (Architecture of European synagogues) (Minsk, 2002), 79; Piechotka, *Bramy nieba. Bóżnice murowane*, 264, 267, 270, 332, 345–346; Szymon Zajczyk, "Architektura barokowych bóżnic," 194.

25 Samuel A. Arthur Cygielman, *The Jews of Poland and Lithuania up to the Middle of the Seventeenth Century in Paint, Stone and Parchment* (Jerusalem, 2006), 16.

26 Rachel Wischnitzer, "Mutual Influences between Eastern and Western Europe in Synagogue Architecture from the Twelfth to the Eighteenth Century," in *The Synagogue: Studies in Origins, Archaeology and Architecture*, selected and introduced by Joseph Gutmann (New York, 1975), 285–94.

27 Both cities are located in today's Ukraine.

28 Kravtsov, "Juan Bautista Villalpando," 322.

29 Ioannes Baptista Villalpandus and Hieronymus Pradus, *In Ezechielem explanationes et apparatus urbis ac templi Hierosolimitani. Commentarii et emaginibus illustratus opus...* (Rome, 1596–1604).

30 Kravtsov, "Juan Bautista Villalpando," 317–32.

31 Ibid., 315, 329.

32 Mordechai Arbell, *The Jewish Nation of the Caribbean: The Spanish-Portuguese Jewish Settlements in the Caribbean and the Guianas* (Jerusalem, 2002), 141.

33 Zajczyk, "Architektura barokowych bóżnic," 194. See Vilnius entry.

34 Piechotka, *Bramy nieba. Bóżnice murowane*, 79–80.

35 Kravtsov, "Juan Bautista Villalpando," 322.

36 Marijampolė entry, Fig. 32.

37 See e.g. Kaunas entry, the descriptions of the Neviazher *Kloyz,* the Hasidic *kloyz*, and the synagogue at 30 Vaisių St.

38 See research on the Great (Cold) Synagogue of Minsk by Vladimir Pervyshin, 1995, CJA Archives. Two columns standing on a transverse axis of the narthex and probably referring to Jachin and Boaz were mentioned in a number of Catholic churches in Poland; see Jerzy Kowalczyk, "Elementy Świątyni Salomona w kościołach nowożytnych w Polsce" (Elements of Solomon's Temple in the Modern Time churches in Poland), in *Jerozolima w kulturze europejskiej* (Jerusalem in European culture), eds. Piotr Paszkiewicz and Tadeusz Zadrożny (Warsaw, 1997), 395–406, esp. 399.

39 See relevant entries.

40 LCVA, F. 1622, Ap. 4, B. 1254 (Krekenava entry, Fig. 10).

41 Piechotka, *Bramy Nieba. Bóżnice drewniane*, 62–70.

42 Kravtsov, "A Synagogue in Olyka," 74–75; Shalom Sabar, "Messianic Aspirations and Renaissance Urban Ideals: The Image of Jerusalem in the Venice Haggadah, 1609," in *The Real and Ideal Jerusalem in Jewish, Christian and Islamic Art*, ed. Bianca Kühnel, *Jewish Art*, 23. 4 (1998): 295–312.

43 Piechotka, *Bramy Nieba. Bóżnice drewniane*, 129–30; Hubka, *Resplendent Synagogue*, 93–94.

44 Such set of inscriptions was found in the cove dome of the wooden synagogue at Šaukėnai. See Marija Rupeikienė, *A Disappearing Heritage: The Synagogue Architecture of Lithuania* (Vilnius, 2008), 57, fig. 30a.

45 For instance, the greater breadth of the hall was stipulated by the plot for the Wagenstraat Synagogue at Hague, built in 1842–44; see Edward van Voolen and Paul Meijer, *Synagogen van Nederland* (Zutphen, 2006), 87.

46 Ruth Jacoby and Rina Talgam, *Ancient Jewish Synagogues. Architectural Glossary* (Jerusalem, 1988), 14, 17; Ze'ev Yeivin, "The Synagogue of Esthemoa," in *Ancient Synagogues Revealed*, ed. Lee I. Levine (Jerusalem, 1981), 120–22.

47 Piechotka, *Bramy nieba. Bóżnice murowane*, 99.

48 *Shulḥan Arukh*, Oraḥ ḥayyim, 150: 5; Israel Meir Hacohen, *Mishnah Brurah*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 2005), 61–62.

49 Arie Menczer, ed., *Przemyśl Memorial Book* (Tel Aviv, 1964), 53.

50 Majer Bałaban, *Żydzi lwowscy na przełomie XVIgo i XVIIgo wieku* (Jews of L'viv at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries) (L'viv, 1906), 68–70.

51 Sergey R. Kravtsov, *The Turei Zahav Synagogue in L'viv* (Petersberg, 2010), forthcoming.

52 Piechotka, *Bramy nieba. Bóżnice murowane*, 224.

53 Ibid., 99, 129–33.

54 Cf. Rosenau, "The Synagogue and Protestant Church Architecture," 309–15.

55 Algė Jankevičienė, *The Great Synagogue of Vilnius* (Vilnius, 1996), 6.

56 Yeḥezkiel ben Yehuda Landa, *Noda be-yehuda. Sheelot u-tshuvot be-arbaa ḥelkei shulḥan arukh* (Known in Judah. Responsae in four parts of *Shulḥan Arukh*), vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 1969), no. 18.

57 Piechotka, *Bramy nieba. Bóżnice murowane*, 139.

58 Ibid., 369–70. The Hebrew date 5534 (1774/75) was inscribed in the old Torah ark as either the year of construction of the synagogue or of the Torah ark.

59 Ibid., 320. This concept was coined by Kazimierz Mokłowski, *Sztuka ludowa w Polsce* (Folk art in Poland) (1903), 424–43.

60 The porch broader than the sanctuary of the Temple is known from theoretical reconstructions by Constantin L'Empereur (1630), Thomas Fuller (1650), Claude Perrault (1678), Humphrey Prideaux (1715), and Bernard Lamy (1720).

61 "Ariel," Hebrew אריאל literally means "lion of God," and is synonymous for Jerusalem.

62 Cf. Rachel Wischnitzer, "Maimonides' Drawings of the Temple," *Journal of Jewish Art* 1 (1974): 16–27.

63 Siergiej Krawcow [Sergey Kravtsov], "Stanisławów w XVII-XVIII wiekach: układ przestrzenny i jego symbolika" (Stanisławów in the 17th and 18th centuries: spatial composition and its symbolism), *Kwartalnik Architektury i Urbanistyki* 1 (1995): 3–20, esp. 17.

64 Mathias Bersohn, "Żydowska bóżnica w mieście Łucku" (A Jewish synagogue in the town of Lutsk), in *Sprawozdania Komisyi do badania Historyi Sztuki w Polsce* (Proceedings of the Commission for Research in Art History in Poland)*,* vol. 5 (Cracow, 1896), 87–89.

65 Jankevičienė, *The Great Synagogue of Vilnius*, 27.

66 For instance, the triangular gable designed by Piotr Serbinovich in 1895 for the Great *Beit Midrash* in Šiauliai was substituted with a shaped one in the final rendition.

67 Thomas C. Hubka, "Jewish Art and Architecture in the East European Context: The Gwoździec-Chodorów Group of Wooden Synagogues," in *Polin*, vol. 10, *Jews in Early Modern Poland*, ed. Gershon D. Hundert (London, 1997), 141–182, esp. 169; idem, *Resplendent Synagogue*, 147.

68 For the representation of a synagogue typical in the Commonwealth see e.g. Book 4 of the epic *Pan Tadeusz* by Adam Mickiewicz.

69 Samuel Albert, "Architectural Diversity in Ukraine: A Split-Storey Synagogue," lecture at the thirteenth World Congress for Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, August 2003.

70 The author was unable to locate this event.

71 Draft of a letter of the State Commission for Interior and Religious Affairs composed between November 20, and December 2, 1856. See Łodyńska-Kosińska, *Katalog rysunków,* 9–10; Maria and Kazimierz Piechotka, "Żydowskie drewniane budowle kultowe w świetle akt centralnych

władz wyznaniowych z lat 1815–1870" (Jewish wooden ritual structures in the light of the documents from the years 1815–1870), *Kwartalnik Urbanistyki i Architektury* 3–4 (1987): 227.

[72] Interview with Monti (Menachem) Kremer, 10 August 2004, CJA Archives.

[73] Hebrew מגן דוד, literally "the Shield of David," the term loosely referred to in Psalms 18:30, 35, where it is a reference to God. On the symbolism of the Shield of David, see Gershom Scholem, *Magen-david: toldotav shel semel* (The Star of David: History of a Symbol) (Ein Harod, 2008).

[74] See Telšiai and Vilnius entries.

[75] Rupeikienė, *A Dissapearing Heritage*, 139 and fig. 112. Semion Venediktovich Gorskii (1817 – after 1885), from 1843 a scribe and from 1850 to ca. 1883 a treasurer of the Commission of Construction and Roads of the Kaunas Province used to work as a draughtsman. Gorskii made designs for synagogues in Kaunas, Panevėžys, Plungė, Skuodas, Šiauliai, Telšiai and Zarasai; for his professional biography see Nijolė Lukšionytė-Tolvaišienė, *Gubernijos laikotarpis Kauno architektūroje. Svarbiausi pastatai ir jų kūrėjai (1843–1915)* (The period of the Kaunas Province in the city's architecture (1843–1915). Major buildings and their authors) (Kaunas, 2001), 160.

[76] A Star of David was designed as a finial in projects for the Choral Synagogues of Kaunas and Vilnius: see KAA, F. I-473, Ap. 1, B. 4012 (Kaunas entry), and LVIA, F. 382, Ap. 1, B. 2096 (Vinius entry).

[77] Yad Vashem Archives, no. 198AO8 (Utena entry, Fig. 2).

[78] Piechotka, *Bramy nieba. Bóżnice murowane*, 82; Ilia Rodov, "The Development of Medieval and Renaissance Sculptural Decoration in Ashkenazi Synagogues from Worms to the Cracow Area," Ph.D. thesis (Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2003), 430–31.

[79] Ilia Rodov, "The Development," 354–66.

[80] Piechotka, *Bramy nieba. Bóżnice murowane*, 225; Rupeikienė, *A Dissapearing Heritage*, 76–77.

[81] Piechotka, *Bramy nieba. Bóżnice murowane*, 302–09.

[82] See note of Rabbi Ḥaim Tchernowitz on the *Ohel Yaakov* Synagogue in Kaunas entry. Chaim Tchernowitz, *Pirkei Ḥayim* (Autobiography) (New York, 1954), 160.

[83] Bracha Yaniv, "The Cherubim on the Torah Ark Valances," *Assaf* 4 (1999): 155–70.

[84] This prophesy in Isaiah 27:1 is explained in Babylonian Talmud (Bava Batra 74b), and recited in *Akdamot Milin,* the first day prayer of the Feast of Shavuot.

[85] Boris Khaimovich, "The Jewish Bestiary of the Eighteenth Century in the Dome Mural of the Khodorow Synagogue," in Wolf Moskovich et al., eds., *Jews and Slavs Series,* vol. 7 (Jerusalem, 2000), 130–87, esp. 133–38; Ilia Rodov, "The Eagle, Its Twin Heads and Many Faces: Synagogue Chandeliers Surmounted by Double-Headed Eagles," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 37 (2004): 77–129.

[86] Bracha Yaniv, "The Sun Rays on Top of the Torah Ark: A Dialogue with the Aureole, the Christian Symbol of the Divinity on the Top of the Altarpiece," in *Interaction between Judaism and Christianity in History, Religion, Art, and Literature*, eds. Marcel Poorthuis, Joshua Schwartz and Joseph Turner (Leiden, 2009), 485.

[87] Rare examples of all four crowns are stone arks, one from 1623–24 and another built in place of the former in 1704, in the Old Synagogue in Worms. See Ilia Rodov, "The King of The King of Kings: Images of Rulership in Late Medieval and Early Modern Christian Art and Synagogue Design," in *Interaction between Judaism and Christianity in History, Religion, Art and Literature*, eds. Marcel Poorthuis, Joshua Schwartz, Joseph Turner (Leiden, 2009), 465.

[88] Bracha Yaniv, "Praising the Lord: Discovering a Song of Ascents on Carved Torah Arks in Eastern Europe," *Ars Judaica: The Bar-Ilan Journal of Jewish Art* 2 (2006): 83–102.

[89] Such altars are known in churches of Kražiai and Prienai, see Trojana Račiūnaitė et al., *Barockführer durch Litauen* (Vilnius, 1997), 55, 64, and in the Cathedral (former Jesuit Church) of Hrodna. In their turn, these compositions were inspired by the throne of St. Peter sculptured by Gianlorenzo Bernini in 1657–66; see Yaniv, "The Sun Rays," 488.

[90] Čekiškė entry, Figs. 13–16.

[91] Yad Vashem Archives, no. 202EO4 (Linkuva entry, Fig. 2).

[92] NMKČDM, Neg. Nr. 16378 (Telšiai entry, Fig. 10).

[93] Yad Vashem Archives, no. 219DO1, 222CO1.

[94] Yad Vashem Archives, no. 210AO5 (Žagarė entry, Fig. 1).

[95] Aistė Niunkaitė-Račiūnienė, "Hidur micva ir puošnumo siekis tradiciniame Lietuvos žydų mene" (*Hidur mitsvah* and the endeavor for splendor in the traditional art of Lithuanian Jews), *Kultūrologija* 14 (2006): 294–319, esp. 300.

[96] Morris Rosenfeld, *Lieder des Ghetto*, translated from Yiddish by Berthold Feiwel with drawings by E.M. Lilien (Berlin, 1902); Ruthi Ofek ed., *E. M. Lilien: The First Zionist Artist* (Tefen, 1997). Lilien's work was not the only model for the murals in Čekiškė.

[97] This observation holds true also for the synagogue of Virbalis with its poster-style lions on both sides of the ark, see KPCA, unnumbered.

[98] Piechotka, *Bramy nieba. Bóżnice murowane*, 309.

[99] Yad Vashem Archives, no. 210BO8 and Salantai entry, Fig. 4.

[100] Szymon Zajczyk, "Bóżnica w Kępnie" (Synagogue in Kępnio), *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki i Kultury* 7 (1939): 150–67; Piechotka, *Bramy Nieba. Bóżnice murowane*, 309.

[101] See Prienai entry.

[102] Yaniv, "The Sun Rays," 490. Other known authors of wooden arks, whose activity in Lithuania is not proved, were Ber son of Israel of Uzlany, and Khatskel (Ezekiel) of Raków, see Piechotka, *Bramy Nieba. Bóżnice drewniane*, 99.

[103] Chackelis Lemchenas, "Pakruojo medinė sinagoga" (Wooden synagogue in Pakruojis) in *Darbai ir polėkiai: Kalbininko Chackelio Lemcheno 90-osioms gimimo metinėms* (Works and aspirations. Dedicated to the 90th anniversary of philologist Chackelis Lemchenas) (Vilnius, 1994), 101–07, esp.101.

[104] Piechotka, *Bramy Nieba. Bóżnice murowane*, 225; Vladas Drėma, *Dingęs Vilnius* (Lost Vilnius) (Vilnius, 1991), 291. Johan Christoph Glaubitz was active in Vilnius and its environs from 1737 and earned his reputation by rebuilding the major public buildings of Vilnius after the 1737, 1748 and 1749 fires. For his professional biography, see K. Čerbulėnas, "Jonas Kristupas Glaubicas" (Johan Christoph Glaubitz), in *Lietuvos architektūros istorija* (The history of Lithuanian architecture), vol. 2, *Nuo XVII a. pradžios iki XIX a. vidurio* (From the early 17th till the mid-19th century), eds. Algė Jankevičienė et al. (Vilnius, 1994), 50–52.

105 Villalpando's treatise and imagery were highly popular in Lithuania, as follows from its usage in the title page of *Divi titularis partii Casimiri insigne virtutum hieroglyphicis emblematum figuris adumbratum* by Hieronymus Bildziukiewicz (Vilnius, 1610), the layout of the Camaldolese Monastery in Pažaislis by Pietro and Carlo Puttini and Giovanni Battista Frediani, 1662–1712 (see Mindaugas Paknys, *Pažaislis. Menas ir istorija* [Pažaislis: art and history] [Vilnius, 2005]), and murals of the Church of St. Teresa in Vilnius (see Tojana Račiūnaitė, *Vizijos ir atvaizdai. Basųjų karmelitų palikimas* [Visions and images. The heritage of Discalced Carmelites] [Vilnius, 2003], 222–37).

106 Rupeikienė, *A Disappearing Heritage*, 60.

107 KPCA, Neg. Nr. 1174, 1175, 1176.

108 Rodov, "The Eagle," 77–129.

109 Bracha Yaniv, Zohar Hanegbi and Shalom Sabar, *Hebrew Inscriptions and Their Translations* (Jerusalem, 1988), 3.

110 See Arno Pařik, Dana Cabanová and Petr Kliment, *Prague Synagogues* (Prague, 2000); Olga Sixtová and Daniel Polakovič, *Boskovice Synagogue* (Prague, 2002), 27; Leopold Wierzbicki, "Bóżnica w miasteczku Jabłonowie nad Prutem" (Synagogue in the town of Yabloniv on the Prut River), *Srawozdania Komisji do Badań Historii Sztuki w Polsce, Polskiej Akademii Umiejętności* 4 (1889): 45–51.

111 Piechotka, *Bramy Nieba. Bóżnice drewniane*, 199–205.

112 Rupeikienė, *A Disappearing Heritage*, 90.

113 Sixtová and Polakovič, *Boskovice Synagogue*, 23–24; Bracha Yaniv, "Wall Decoration in Stone- and Brick-Built Synagogues in Eastern Europe – the Later Layer of the Seventeenth Century," lecture at the First Congress of Jewish Art in Poland, Kazimierz on the Vistula River, October 27, 2008.

114 Hubka, *Resplendent Synagogue,* 91–92.

115 David Davidovicz, *Wandmalereien in alten Synagogen. Das Wirken des Malers Elieser Sussman in Deutschland* (Hameln, 1969), passim.

116 Ch. Goldbergaitė, "Prienų žydų sinagogoga" (The Jewish synagogue in Prienai) (not dated), Pauliaus Galaunės archyvas (Paulius Galaunė Archive), APGN, MS R-1504. See Prienai entry.

117 Yaniv, "Praising the Lord," 84.

118 Boris Khaimovich, *The Work of Our Hands to Glorify: Murals of Beit Tfilah Benyamin Synagogue in Czernowitz* (Kyiv, 2008), 47.

119 See Vilnius entry.

120 Piechotka, *Bramy Nieba. Bóżnice drewniane,* 145; Khaimovich, *The Work of Our Hands,* 62, 64. Khaimovich mistakenly attributes the painting of Yaryshiv to the synagogue of Min'kivtsi; cf., Vernadsky Central Scientific Library, Academy of Science of Ukraine, Kiev, Department of Manuscripts, 278–473–1017.

121 Yad Vashem Archives, no. 211AO4 (Žagarė entry, Fig. 3).

122 See Pakruojis entry, Figs. 9–14.

123 Lemchenas, "Pakruojo medinė sinagoga," 101.

124 This architectural device, common in the architecture of central and eastern Europe, and called in German *Verkröpfung*, is little known in English speaking countries, and has no specific term in English.

125 For Gucevičius' professional biography and artistic legacy, see *Laurynas Gucevičius ir jo epocha* (Laurynas Gucevičius and his epoch), eds. Rasa Butvilaitė and Vidmantas Jankauskas, Acta Academiae Artium Vilnensis 32 (Vilnius, 2004).

126 Stanisław Lorenz and Andrzej Rottermund, *Klasycyzm w Polsce* (Neo-Classicism in Poland) (Warsaw, 1984), 9–16.

127 Andrzej Baranowski, "Lietuvos TSR Architekturos Klausimai, VI (II), Wilno 1979," [review] *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki* 2 (1980): 215–20, esp. 218–19.

128 Dmitri Shvidkovsky, "Catherine the Great's Field of Dreams: Architecture and Landscape in the Russian Enlightenment," in *Architectures of Russian Identity: 1500 to Present*, eds. James Cracraft and Daniel Rowland (Ithaca, 2003), 51–65, esp. 54–55.

129 Wojciech Boberski, "Architektura ziem I zaboru rosyjskiego (Architecture of the areas annexed by Russia at the first partition)," in *Kultura i polityka. Wpływ polityki rusyfikacyjnej na kulturę zachodnich rubieży Imperium Rosyjskiego (1772–1915)* (Culture and politics. Influence of the politics of Russification on culture of Western borderlands of the Russian Empire, 1772–1915), eds. Dariusz Konstantynów and Piotr Paszkiewicz (Warsaw, 1994), 43–74, esp. 49, 51–52, and 68–69.

130 N.A. Samoilova, "Arkhitektura pervoi treti XIX veka (Architecture of the first third of the 19th century)," in *Vseobshchaia istoriia arkhitektury* (Universal history of architecture), ed. B. M. Mikhailov, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1963), 338–63, esp. 348.

131 Quoted after Evgenia Kirichenko, *Russkaia arkhitektura 1830–1910-kh godov* (Russian architecture of the 1830s–1910s) (Moscow, 1982), 20.

132 Dominique Jarrassé, *Synagogues: Architecture and Jewish Identity* (Paris, 2001), 137–41.

133 Kaunas entry, Fig. 11; Łodyńska-Kosińska, *Katalog rysunków*, 19; Piechotka, *Bramy Nieba. Bóżnice drewniane*, 159.

134 Vilnius entry, LVIA, F. 937, Ap. 1, B. 3218.

135 KAA, F. 473, Ap. 1, B. 1162, L. 4 (Panevėžys entry, Fig. 13).

136 KAA, F. 473, Ap. 1, B. 2806, L. 3 (Zarasai entry, Fig. 1).

137 KAA, F. 473, Ap. 1, B. 2937, L. 12–13, and KAA, F. 473, Ap. 1, B. 3652 (Telšiai entry, Figs. 2, 13).

138 Piotr Paszkiewicz, "W cieniu tronu i ołtarza. Polityka imperialna Rosji i jej aspekty rusyfikacyjne (fazy i przejawy)," (In the shadow of throne and altar. Imperial policy of Russia and its russification aspects [phases and manifestations]), in *Kultura i polityka. Wpływ polityki rusyfikacyjnej na kulturę zachodich rubieży Imperium Rosyjskiego* (1772–1915) (Culture and politics. Influence of the politics of Russification on the culture of the western borderlands of the Russian Empire, 1772–1915), eds. Dariusz Konstantynów and Piotr Paszkiewicz (Warsaw, 1994), 21–23; Richard Wortman, "The 'Russian Style' in Church Architecture as Imperial Symbol after 1881," in *Architectures of Russian Identity: 1500 to the Present*, eds. James Cracraft and Daniel Rowland (Ithaca, 2003), 101–16.

139 Vladimir Levin, "The St. Petersburg Jewish Community and the Capital of the Russian Empire: an Architectural Dialogue," in *Jewish Architecture in Europe*, eds. Aliza Cohen-Mushlin and Harmen H. Thies (Petersberg, 2010), forthcoming.

140 Marian S. Lalewicz [Lialevich], "Otzyv komissii sudei po konkursu proektov zdaniia khoralnoi sinagogi v g. Khar'kove (Opinion of the jury on the competition proposal for the building of the Choral Synagogue in Kharkiv)," *Zodchii* 40 (1909): 395.

141 Levin, "The St. Petersburg Jewish Community," passim.

142 Anatolij Kułagin, "Styl rusko-bizantyński w architekturze Białorusi (The Russian-Byzantine style in the architecture of Belarus)," in *Architektura*

XIX i początku XX wieku (Architecture of the 19th and early 20th centuries) (Wrocław, 1991), 161.

143 Rupeikienė, *A Disappearing Heritage,* 139–40.

144 Maria Kałamajska-Saeed, "Cerkiew w Boćkach. Problemy rebizantyzacji" (Church in Boćki. Problems of re-Byzantization), in *Kultura i polityka. Wpływ polityki rusyfikacyjnej na kulturę zachodnich rubieży Imperium Rosyjskiego (1772–1915)* (Culture and politics. Influence of the politics of Russification on culture of western borderlands of the Russian Empire, 1772–1915), eds. Dariusz Konstantynów and Piotr Paszkiewicz (Warsaw, 1994), 161–75.

145 See Vilnius entry.

146 David Maggid, "Vilna" (Vilnius), in *Evreiskaia entsiklopediia* (Jewish encyclopedia), vol. 5 (St. Petersburg, 1910), 590.

147 Kirichenko, *Russkaia arkhitektura*, 20.

148 Ibid., 99–101.

149 Bergman, *Nurt mauretański*, 88–89.

150 Vladimir Levin, "The St. Petersburg Jewish Community."

151 Bergman, *Nurt mauretański*, 35.

152 These include synagogues of Alytus (1911), Jonava (ca. 1896), Joniškis (the Red Synagogue, 1911), Hausman's Synagogue (design from 1865) and the New *Beit Midrash* (before 1881) in Kaunas, Krekenava (1880–83), Panevėžys (the Torah Society Synagogue, 1910), Pušalotas (1913), Šėta (1905), Šiauliai (design from 1871), Šilalė (late 19th century) and Žasliai (1896) (see relevant entries).

153 LVIA, F. 382, Ap. 1, B. 1097 (see Vilnius entry); Rupeikienė, *A Disappearing Heritage*, 129.

154 Kirichenko, *Russkaia arkhitektura,* 159–69.

155 Lauren M. O'Connell, "Constructing the Russian Other: Viollet-le-Duc and the Politics of an Asiatic Past," in *Architectures of Russian Identity: 1500 to Present*, eds. James Cracraft and Daniel Rowland (Ithaca, 2003), 90–100.

156 Dan D. Y. Shapira, "Polish Sarmatism and 'Jewish *szlachta'*: Some Reflections on a Cultural Context of the Polish-Lithuanian Karaites," *Journal of Black Sea Studies* (Karadeniz Araştırmaları) 20 (2009): 29–43.

157 Juliusz Kłos, *Wilno: Przewodnik krajoznawczy* (Vilnius: guide to local lore) (Vilnius, 1923), 184; Bergman, *Nurt mauretański*, 45.

158 KAA, F. 473, Ap. 2, B. 237 (Šiauliai entry, Fig. 13).

159 See Vilnius entry.

160 Kalvarija entry, Fig. 15.

161 Grigorii Isaakovich Revzin, *Neoklassitsizm v russkoi arkhitekture nachala XX veka* (Neoclassicism in Russian architecture of the early 20th century) (Moscow, 1992), 135–36.

162 Dariusz Konstantinów, *Wileńskie Towarzystwo Artystów Plastyków, 1920–1939* (The Vilnius Society of Plastic Artists, 1920–39) (Warsaw, 2006), 113–88.

163 Neo-Classicist projects and renditions of that period are known from Anykščiai (A. Katerfeldas, reconstruction of 1922), Biržiai (M. Lurje, 1938), Kaltinėnai (1938), Krekenava (Keraitis, 1927), Panevėžys (M. Stanevičius 1927), Ramygala (K. Germanas, 1931), Salantai (reconstruction of 1926), Ukmergė (Žurauskas, 1938) and Utena (Antanas Matulis, 1933) (see relevant entries).

164 See relevant entries.

165 See Ukmergė entry.

166 Ramygala entry, Fig. 1.

167 Biržiai entry, Figs. 10, 11.

168 "Sztuka żydowska doby hasmonejskiej" (Jewish art of the Hasmonean period), anonymous review of a publication by Rubin Hart, *Chwila* (1-6-1924): 2.

169 Samuel D. Gruber, *American Synagogues: A Century of Architecture and Jewish Community* (New York, 2003), 27–29.

170 Arnold W. Brunner, "Synagogue Architecture," *The Brickbuilder* 16.3 (March 1907): 37; quoted in Gruber, *American Synagogues*, 29.

171 "Styl swojski" in Polish.

172 Stefański, *Polska architektura sakralna*, 126.

173 "Styl dwórkowy," in Polish.

174 Antoni Adam Filipowicz-Dubowik (1865–1930) designed scores of apartment houses and Catholic churches in today's Lithuania and Belarus; two synagogues in Žasliai were built after his designs; on his professional biography see Nijolė Lukšionytė-Tolvaišienė, "Vilniaus architektai (1850–1914)" (The architects of Vilnius, 1850–1914), in *Europos dailė. Lietuviškieji variantai* (European art. Lithuanian versions), ed. Aleksandra Aleksandravičiūtė, Acta Academiae Artium Vilnensis (Vilnius, 1994), 258–60.

175 See Vilnius entry and Piechotka, *Bramy Nieba. Bóżnice murowane*, 443; Rupeikienė, *A Dissapearing Heritage*, 162–63.

176 "Bożnica dla misteczka w Polsce (Synagogue for a town in Poland)" in *Almanach Żydowski* (The Jewish almanac), ed. Leon Reich (L'viv, 1910), unpaginated plates.

177 Oskar Aleksandrowicz, "Do naszych ilustracji" (About our illustrations), in *Almanach Żydowski*, ed. Leon Reich, 245; Józef Awin, "O naszej kulturze estetycznej (On our esthetic culture)," *Wschód* 44 (1909): 4–5.

178 ŠAM, SEK 90784/D-T 5311.

179 See Vištytis and Žagarė entries.

180 Krzysztof Stefański, "Między Wschodem a Zachodem. Uwarunkowanie wyboru formy architectonicznej w budownictwie synagogalnym XIX wieku" (Between East and West. Substantiation of the choice of architectural shape in synagogue construction of the 19th century), in *Eklektyzm i eklektyzmy. Materiały ogólnopolskiego seminarium naukowego. Muzeum Historii Miasta Łodzi, listopad 1992* (Eclecticism and eclecticisms. Proceedings of the All-Polish scientific seminar. Museum of History of the City of Łódź, November 1992) (Łódź, 1993), 25–26; Olga Bush, "The Architecture of Jewish Identity: The Neo-Islamic Central Synagogue of New York," *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 63. 2 (June 2004): 180–201, esp. 182. On stylistic controversy see Bergman, *Nurt mauretański,* 84–86.

181 This line was written in 1866 by Judah Leib Gordon in his poem "Awake My People" ("הקיצה עמי"). See also David Biale, "A Journey between Worlds: East European Jewish Culture from the Partitions of Poland to the Holocaust," in *Cultures of the Jews*, ed. David Biale, vol. 3, *Modern Encounters* (New York, 2002), 104–05, 135.