Synagogues in Ukraine

VOLHYNIA

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Volume 1

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Front cover of volume 1:
The Great Synagogue in Lutsk.
Photo by Henryk Poddębski, 1925. IS PAN, 23516

Frontispiece of volume 1:
The Great Synagogue in Iziaslav.
Photo by Solomon Yudovin, 1912–13. GMIR

Content of Volume 1

Preface

This book is devoted to the history and architecture of 39 extant and 302 vanished synagogues, situated in 23 cities and towns throughout the historical region of Volhynia in the northwestern region of the Republic of Ukraine.

Geographical and Historical Scope of the Book

By historical Volhynia we refer to the Volhynian province (*guberniia*) of the Russian Empire in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the majority of synagogues on this territory were built.

Since the tenth century Volhynia was part of Kievan Rus and constituted the Volhynian (later Halych-Volhynian) principality. In the fourteenth century its territory became part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and in 1569, when Lithuania united with Poland to form a commonwealth, Volhynia was transferred to the Polish Kingdom. During the second and third partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1793 and 1795, this territory was annexed by the Russian Empire and the Volhynian *guberniia* was created out of the entire Wołyń *województwo* and the western part of the Kijów *województwo* of the former Polish Kingdom.

After the First World War, the Russian Revolution of 1917, the short-lived Ukrainian People's Republic, the Civil War, and the Soviet-Polish War, in 1921 historical Volhynia was divided between the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Second Polish Republic. Its western, Polish, part constituted the Wołyń *województwo* (with its center in Łuck), while the Soviet part was divided between smaller administrative units: the Zhitomir (Volhynian), Korosten', and Shepetovka *okruga*, which existed form 1923 to 1930. In 1935 those *okruga* were re-established, but in 1937 they were transformed into the Zhitomir and Kamenets-Podol'skii *oblasti*.

With the outbreak of World War II in 1939, the western part of Volhynia was annexed by the Soviet Union and divided into Volyn' (with its center in Lutsk) and the Rovno *oblasti*, while its southwestern part was included in the Ternopol' *oblast'*, all three being part of the Ukrainian SSR. Under the Nazi occupation in 1941–1944 Volhynia in its entirety was incorporated into the Reichskommissariat Ukraine and formed part of the Wolhynien und Podolien Generalbezirk and Schitomir Generalbezirk. After the war, the previous Soviet *oblasti* were reconstituted, and in 1954 the Kamenets-Podol'skii *oblast'* was

renamed Khmel'nitskii *oblast'*. The Soviet administrative territorial division has been preserved since the independence of Ukraine in 1991, so that historical Volhynia is currently divided between the Zhytomyr, Khmel'nyts'kyi, Rivne, Volyn', and Ternopil' *oblasti*.

Methodology and Structure of the Book

This book includes three overview essays on the history of the synagogues in Volhynia, their architecture, and their ritual objects, which are followed by 23 geographical chapters, discussing each Jewish community in which at least one synagogue building is preserved.

The unique approach of this book is to immerse the preserved synagogues in the local context and study their history and architecture as parts of a townscape in which more synagogues and prayer houses existed over the centuries. Therefore, each chapter in this book is divided into two sections: historical and architectural. Vladimir Levin was mainly responsible for the former, while Sergey Kravtsov wrote the majority of the latter.

The historical section of each chapter focuses on the history of synagogues in a given town and does not intend to present a full-scale history of its Jews, nor a general local history. Nonetheless, each chapter provides the Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, and Jewish names of a town, lists territorial administrative units to which that town belonged during its history, presents statistics of the Jewish population in the town, and places it in its geographical context. Every chapter contains brief information on the establishment of the town, the first appearance of Jews there, and the fate of the Jewish population during the Holocaust. We also could not refrain from mentioning the most important facts and events of Jewish life of every town: what singled out this community and its outstanding personalities, even if they were not connected to the history of synagogues. The geographical names beside the introductory section are given in Polish, Ukrainian, or Russian, depending to which state it belongs today.

Our approach in the historical sections of the chapters is to focus on the unique historical features of each community, putting aside everything that is common and typical. Thus, we deliberately avoided economic history and did not mention that in every urban community the majority of the Jews were employed in trade and crafts. Indeed, according to the 1897 all-Russian census, 39 percent of the Jews in the Volhynian *guberniia* engaged in trade and 35 percent in industry (the majority of them in crafts).[1] We deliberately left aside cultural and educational history. All communities had a large number of ḥadarim – Jewish traditional religious single-teacher private schools in which ca. three-quarters of all Jewish children of school age learned in the late nineteenth century.[2] All large communities had one or more modern Jewish schools in the late nineteenth century (43 in the entire *guberniia* in 1898),[3] and such schools existed almost everywhere in the interwar period. We deliberately did not deal with political and institutional history, since almost in every significant town the Zionist

movement emerged in the last years of the nineteenth century, and the Jewish socialist movement (especially the Jewish Labor Bund) appeared in the early twentieth century. In the interwar period, Zionism with its diverse branches and youth movements was predominant in Jewish politics in the Polish part of Volhynia, while the Soviet authorities and the Yevsektsiia (Jewish sections of the Communist Party) dealt a mortal blow to non-communist Jewish political activity, independent organizations, and religious life in its Soviet part. We also largely omitted information on community rabbis, except for the most famous or those who played a role in synagogue history.

Those interested in more detailed histories of the Volhynian Jewish communities may turn for further reading to many publications, available in a variety of languages. First and foremost is *Pinkas ha-kehilot*, edited by Shmuel Spector and published by Yad Vashem in Hebrew in 1990.[4] Many of its entries were translated into English and can be found on the Internet.[5] Secondly, almost every community in the western part of Volhynia is commemorated in a memorial book (*yizker-bukh*, *sefer zikaron*), written and published by its former residents who survived the Holocaust and found themselves outside the Soviet Union. The efforts to commemorate in writing the perished communities in Volhynia began at the end of World War II, in April 1945, when the first issue of a periodical *Yalkut volhyn: osef zikhronot ve-teudot* was published in Tel Aviv, under the editorship of Arie Avatiḥi, Ḥaim Ben-Tsiyon Ayalon and A. Zamir. In the 1950s and 1960s those and others activists edited at least 43 memorial books in Hebrew and Yiddish.[6] Parts of them can be found in English translations, especially on the JewishGen website.[7] Third, there are several Jewish encyclopedias, especially *Rossiiskaia evreiskaia entsiklopedia*, available on the Internet,[8] a three-volume English-language *Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust*,[9] the *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*,[10] and an internet project, Virtual Shtetl, in Polish, English, as well as Belarusian, German, Hebrew, and Russian.[11]

The architectural section of each chapter provides a detailed description of every preserved synagogue building. These descriptions elucidate the urban location of the synagogue, the composition of its built masses, materials, and constructions of the edifice; they characterize the synagogue's façades (elevations), interior layout, decoration, major liturgical appliances, furniture, and fixtures. The descriptions also analyze the architectural style(s) of each edifice and its architectural typology and iconography, that is, its relationship to established spatial and iconic patterns popular in synagogue architecture and in the broader scope of compatible buildings.

In certain cases, destroyed synagogues are reconstructed and described in detail, based on archival drawings, photographs, and verbal descriptions, as if they were standing before our very eyes. These cases on the whole relate to outstanding edifices which attracted the attention of researchers since the late nineteenth century, and without which the architectural history of synagogues in Volhynia cannot be comprehended. These descriptions are integrated into

1. Volhynia on the map of Central-Eastern Europe.

ВОЛЫНСКОЙ ГУБЕРНІИ

Съ показаніемъ почтовыхъ и большихъ проѣзжихъ дорогъ, станцій и разстоянія между оными верстъ.

Сочинена

по новѣйшимъ и достовѣрнымъ свѣденіямъ,
1820го года
въ С^{тъ} Петербургѣ

GU

z oznacze
i o

naupo

2. *Volhynian* guberniia *in 1820.*

...BERNII WOŁYŃSKIEY

...iem pocztowych i partykularnych dróg, stacyi
...dległości wiorst między onemi.

Ułożona podług
...yszych i naydokładnieyszych wiadomości.
Roku 1820
w St. Petersburgu

OBIAŚNIENIE ZNAKÓW.

- Miasto Gubernialne
- ——— Powiatowe
- Miasteczko
- Wieś
- Wioska
- Karczma
- Stacya pocztowa
- ～ Główna pocztowa droga
- ～ Gubernialna pocztowa droga
- ～ Powiatowa pocztowa droga
- ～ Wielka droga partykularna
- Granica Imperii
- ——— Gubernialna
- ——— Powiatowa
- Komora

OBIAŚNIENIE GRANIC.

od A do B Królestwa Polskiego
—B do C Państwa Austryackiego
—C do D Gubernii Podolskiey
—D do E ——— Kijowskiey
—E do F ——— Mińskiey
—F do A ——— Grodzieńskiey

ИЗЪЯСНЕНИЕ ЗНАКОВЪ.

- Городъ Губернской
- ——— Уѣздной
- Мѣстечко
- Село
- Деревня
- Корчма
- Почтовая станція
- ～ Главная Почтовая дорога
- ～ Губернская Почтовая дорога
- ～ Уѣздная Почтовая дорога
- ～ Проѣзжая большая дорога
- Граница Государственная
- ——— Губернская
- ——— Уѣздная
- Таможенная Застава

ИЗЪЯСНЕНИЕ ГРАНИЦЪ.

Отъ А до В Царства Польскаго
—В до С Имперіи Австрійской
—С до D Губерніи Подольской
—D до Е ——— Кіевской
—Е до F ——— Минской
—F до А ——— Гроденской

E

D

Skorodnoe Скородное
Kudnia wierzchnia Кудня верхняя
Proska Żełońska Проска Желонска
Sławeczno Славечно
Wieledniki Вѣледники
Kuliki Кулики
Norynsk Норинскъ
Owrucz ОВРУЧЬ
Rudnia Ozeranska Рудня Озеранска
Kłoczki Клочки
Chrystynówka Христиновка
Botruny
Narodycze Народичь
Chabno Хабно
Nowaki
Eugino Лугино
Waśkowicze Васьковичи
Sarnowicze Сарновичи
Radogoszcz Радогощь
Iskorość Искорость
Wygow Выговъ
Mogilno Могильно
Xawerow Ксаверовъ
Uszomir Ушомиръ
Bondarówka Бондаровка
Lasoszczyzna
Simony Симони
Kasparówka
Bobryk Бобрикъ
Kianka Кіянка
Kirnka Кирнка
NOWGRAD ВОЛЫНСКЪ
Niesołon Несолонь
Sokołow Соколовъ
Puliny Пулины
Czernichow Чернiховъ
Wilsk Вильскъ
Studenica Студеница
ŻYTOMIERZ ЖИТОМИРЪ
Deneszy Денеши
Gwozdziarnia Гвоздярня
Now. Miropole Ромáновъ
Kamień Каменъ
Polonne Полонное
Czudnow Чудновъ
Kodnia Кодня
Piątki Пятки
Zarubince Зарубинцы
Krasnosielka Красносѣлка
Lubar Любарь
Januszpol Янушполь
Ozadowka Озадовка
Berdyczow Бердичевъ
Krasnopol Краснополь
Raygrodek Гайгородокъ
Białopole Бѣлополье
KONSTANTINÓW КОНСТАНТИНОВЪ
MACHNOWKA МАХНОВКА
Ułanow Улановъ
Pilawa Пилява

3. Jewish communities of Volhynia.

● **Turiisk** — *Communities discussed in geographical entries*

· Lukiv — *Communities mentioned in the book*

····· — *Contemporary state borders*

— *Border of the Volhynian guberniia ca.1900*

UKRAIN

Liubeshiv

Ratne

Nesukhoizhi   Stobykhva   Lyshnivka

Chortoryisk

Luboml   Lukiv   **Kovel**

Turiisk   Sokil

POLAND

Volodymyr-Volynskyi   Oziutychi

Klevan

Lutsk   Olyka

Pavlivka   Mlyniv

Korythytsia

Sofiivka   Dubno

Horokhiv   Torhovytsia

Berestechko

Radyvyliv   Shumsk

Brody   **Kremenets**

UKRAINE   Pochaiv

Lviv   **Vyshnivets**

Ternopil

Pinsk

Stolin

E

Vysotsk

Dubrovytsia

Volodymyrets

Sarny

Ovruch

Norynsk

Olevsk

Narodychi

Stepan

Luhyny

Leonivka

Berezne

Korosten'

Horodnytsia

Ushomir

Didkovychi

Shpaniv

Velyki Mezhyrichi

Hannopil

Rohachiv

Khoroshiv

Rivne

Korets

Novohrad-Volynskyi

Yarun'

Chervonoarmiisk

Krasnostav

Kamyanka

Korostyshiv

Slavuta

Ostroh

Baranivka

Zhytomyr

Kuniv

Shepetivka

Romaniv

Ivnytsia

Myropil

Kozyn

Sudylkiv

Kamin'

Troianiv

Lishchyn

Izyaslav

Chervone

Polonne

Chudniv

Kodnia

Bilohorodka

Stara Kotelnia

Lanivtsi

Yampil

Liubar

Berdychiv

Pavoloch

Ostropil

Bilozirka

Starokostiantyniv

Volochysk

Khmel'nytskyi

historical part of the individual geographical chapters. Conversely, reconstructions and descriptions of preserved synagogues at the stage of their prosperity and grandeur, on the basis of documentation, as well as information about their consequent physical reconstruction, are included in the architectural section of the chapter.

The architectural description of each synagogue is accompanied by its measured drawings, by archival and recent photographs, and by artistic representations. Recent architectural drawings published in this book were commissioned by the Center for Jewish Art at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in the 1990s and 2000s, as part of the larger effort to document the remnants of the Jewish visual heritage in the former Soviet Union. The visual evidence for the historical appearance of Volhynian synagogues was retrieved from collections in Austria, Israel, Poland, Russia, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the USA. Significant efforts were invested in identifying archival photographs. As a result, attribution of many historical photos has been improved regarding their subject, date, and authorship; a certain number of unidentified photographs were referred to specific synagogues.

The goal of this book is not only to expose the synagogues as units of built heritage, but also to interpret them as monuments of culture, as mediators of meanings. Above all, these meanings were imbued in the built form by architects and decorators. They are seldom explained in contemporary texts; more often they are conveyed through the artistic vocabulary customary among professionals. These meanings are often re-interpreted by the users of the synagogue and its beholders, and thus new significations are created within a living Jewish community and its non-Jewish milieu. Therefore, in the multiethnic, multi-religious, and even further divided society of a Volhynian town there is no single meaning for a synagogue. In some cases, stories told about the same synagogue in diverse milieus are similar, but at other times they are ultimately disparate. For these reasons, the methodology of present architectural research seeks to confront all known narratives: the professional architectural, the Jewish, and that of the neighbors.[12] Such multiple reference aims not only at providing an all-round view of the synagogue as an artistic and cultural phenomenon; it is also instrumental in constructing a Jewish place of memory in the Volhynian townscape. Memory is transmitted not only through professional historiography. Therefore, in addition to the conventional historical-architectural approach to the synagogues and their history, we also attempt to analyze the folkloristic and belletristic narratives about the same buildings, according to the rules of these genres. In all these cases, our interest is focused on the meaning of a synagogue in the narrator's eyes, rather than on "the historical kernel" of his narrative.

One of the sources of Jewish legends relating to many Volhynian synagogues is *Di yidishe etnografie un folklor* by Avrom Rekhtman[13] a member of Solomon An-sky's ethnographic expedition of 1912–13. This expedition recorded in photography, sound, and word the vanishing traditional Jewish world in the Kiev, Volhynia, and Podolia provinces. One of organizers of An-sky's expedition was

Iona Moiseevich Machover, a lawyer residing in Kiev and working closely with Baron Vladimir Gintsburg, who financed the entire enterprise.[14] To our great surprise and honor, Iona Machover is that very John M. Machover (1880–1971) who posthumously made possible for us the present study – publication of a book on synagogues in Volhynia. Due to the generosity of the J. M. Machover Charitable Trust we feel that we are to some extent closing the circle of Jewish studies inaugurated a century ago.

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Notes on Transliteration and Geographical Names

The transliteration of Hebrew generally follows the rules of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*: "ח" is transliterated as "ḥ," "ה" – as "h," and "צ" – as "ts." All Hebrew words are given according to the modern Israeli norm, and not in the Ashkenazi pronunciation common in eastern Europe. The transliteration of Yiddish follows the YIVO system, while the transliteration of Russian and Ukrainian that of the Library of Congress, omitting diacritical signs.

All geographical names in the text of the book are given in their current Ukrainian, Polish or Russian forms, according to the current state belonging. An exception has been made for Kiev, which has become normative in English. However, we omitted apostrophes for transliteration of the Ukrainian "ь" in the frequently used geographical names in order to make reading easier.

Maps and Plans

Each city or town chapter is accompanied by a topographical map of the vicinity. These maps were published by the Polish Military Geographical Institute in the 1920s. The individual town plans, showing the synagogues and other important elements of the urban space, were prepared for this edition by Zoya Arshavsky at the Center for Jewish Art.

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