

The Synagogue in Klimontów

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"Synagoga w Klimontowie (Woj. Tarnobrzeskie)"

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The Klimontów synagogue is important among brick synagogues in Poland; it is so largely because of the state of its preservation. It needs a little restoration and conservation work to regain its old appearance. Little scholarly work has been done on it¹; the reason being the time of the synagogue's construction in the mid 19th century as well as the overall scarcity of comprehensive studies on the architecture of brick synagogues in Poland. Also, the sources are limited. My research yielded only the correspondence of the Klimontów County Office [*gmina*] with the

superior authorities.² However, the analysis of these materials allows understanding two important issues: the role of the authorities in undertaking decisions concerning the synagogue's construction, and the importance of the year 1851 and Mr. Sobkowski's participation in its construction. A Polish inscription on the front wall of the building, difficult to decipher, contains information about these issues.

The beginning of Jewish settlement in Klimontów can be linked with the town's founding in 1604 by the Podlasie *Voivode* Zbigniew Ossolinski. As in most private towns, Jewish settlement apparently found no serious impediments. Klimontów remained a private town until 1869; it was not granted the privilege of *de non tolerandis Iudaeis*. Also, we have no evidence of serious conflicts between Polish and Jewish populations during the whole existence of the local Jewish community.

A 1633 statistic informs about the size of Jewish settlement: in the town of 530 there were 129 Jews; 11 Jews and 22 Christians died that year as a result of an epidemics.³ Since the mid 17th century the town gradually declines; at the same time, a large influx of the Jews begins. In 1727, the Sandomierz archdeacon Dominik

¹ Essentially, there is one brief entry by Jerzy Z. Łoziński and Tadeusz Przytkowski in *Katalog zabytków sztuki w Polsce. Powiat sandomierski* [Catalog of the Historical Art Objects in Poland. Sandomierz District] (Warsaw, 1963), vol. III, fasc. 11, p. 19. The synagogue is mentioned by W. Kukliński, *Miasto prywatne Klimontów i jego kościoły* (Sandomierz, nd., p. LI), and by the anonymous author of *Opis historyczno-statystyczny miasta Klimontowa* (Sandomierz 1851, the manuscript stored in the parish archive in Klimontów). In September 1978, the Office of Designs at the State Bureau for the Preservation of Historical Artifacts [Państwowe Przedsiębiorstwo Pracownie Konserwacji Zabytków, henceforth PKZ; its regional chapter, WKZ] in Sandomierz prepared survey documentation of the synagogue, and the Office of Photography, its photographic documentation. In 1979, the Office of Scientific-Historical Documentation prepared architectural-historical documentation. These documentations, executed on the initiative of the Province's Curator of Historical Artifacts [Wojewódzki Konserwator Zabytków, WKZ], are stored in the Office for the Documentation of Historical Artifacts of the WKZ in Sandomierz, the PKZ library in Kielce, and in the Klimontów Town and County Office, the project's sponsor. We shall add that in 1952 Przytkowski took photographs of the synagogue and the Jewish cemetery in Klimontów, which are their oldest iconographic documents; they are held at the Institute of the Arts of the Polish Academy of Sciences [PAN] in Warsaw. [Editor's Note: See two of these 1952 photographs in Miriam Weiner's *Jewish Roots in Poland*, pages 162 and 419].

² Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych in Warsaw [The Main Archive of Old Documents, henceforth AGAD]: Centralne Władze Wyznaniowe w Królestwie Polskim [The Central Religious Authority in the Kingdom of Poland], vol. 1497, Akta Komisji Rządowej Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego dotyczące się Gminy Żydowskiej w Klimontowie Województwie Sandomierskim (1820-1862); Rząd Gubernialny Radomski I [Government of Radom Gubernia, henceforth RGR], vol. 10835, unnumbered page; RGR II, vol. 4096; vol. 5626; Wojewódzkie Archiwum Państwowe w Kielcach [State Archive of Kielce Province, henceforth WAPK], Urząd Wojewódzki Kielecki I [The Office of Kielce Province, henceforth UWK], vol. 3354, unnumbered page; vol. 3193, unnumbered page.

³ W. Kukliński, *op. cit.*, pp. XXXVI, XXXVIII.

Lochman after visiting Klimontów parish noted: "*Iudaei in hoc oppido manent plurimi habentes Synagogam*".⁴ In 1764-1766, the territory of the Klimontów Roman Catholic parish (i.e. the area larger than that the town itself) was inhabited by 336 Catholics and 340 Jews.⁵ These numbers illustrate the size of Jewish settlement in the town that already in the mid 17th century was dominated by Jewish population. This situation would remain until 1942, the deportation and destruction of the Klimontów Jewry.

In the mid 19th century, i.e. the time of building the synagogue, it was recorded that "the majority of inhabitants worked in crafts, then in agriculture and industry;" also "tidiness [*okhedostwo*] of Jews working in trade and crafts" was observed.⁶

Establishing the exact date of the beginning and completing the synagogue's construction is difficult because of the character of the sources. Jerzy Z. Łoziński and Tadeusz Przytkowski indicate 1851 as the year when the synagogue was completed, probably linking this date with the inscription at its front facade.⁷ However, the anonymous author of the town's statistical-historical description, written in Klimontów in 1851, notes that the synagogue "is under construction".⁸ This information, compared with the data in the Klimontów town records for the years 1857-1865 allow the assumption that 1851 should be regarded as a year when the construction had been carried on. Among these records we find schedules, compiled in the years 1857-1866, pertaining to the lists of housing

premiums [*składka kwaterunkowa*].⁹ They contain the names of real estate owners, and list the buildings specifying the material used in their construction and their value determined by the Fire Association [*Towarzystwo Ogniowe*]. In 1857-1865, the Jewish community owned a rabbi's wooden house, one wooden and one brick school, and a wooden hospital. The 1857 schedule lists the synagogue but omits the information about its value and construction material. Such information is provided for religious buildings owned by the Roman-Catholic parish. In 1865, the budget of the Jewish community shows the sum of 60 silver rubles allocated for purchasing candles for the synagogue.¹⁰ This is the first such information in the community's financial reports. It is possible, however, that the question of the dates of the beginning and completion of the synagogue's construction may be answered by researching the 19th century control reports on the Roman Catholic parish in Klimontów. Since the Jews were the only non-Catholics within its territory, this information may have been recorded. However, these documents, stored in the archives of the diocese in Sandomierz have not been made available to this author.

We know more about the activity preceding the synagogue's construction. The work started in the 1840s. In 1846, the Government of the Radom Gubernia [*Rząd Gubernialny Radomski*], in its memorandum to the Governmental Commission of Internal and Religious Affairs [*Komisja Rządowa Spraw Wewnętrznych i Duchowych, KRSW*] presented an "*anshlag*" [budget] of the anticipated expenses of building a brick synagogue in Klimontów, which the local Jews declared to cover from their own contributions. This budget did not survive. Before sending the memorandum out, there was a meeting with the head of Sandomierz district, where the synagogue's blueprints, sketches, as well as the list of expenses and the allotment of contributions were discussed. It was stressed that the local, district and province authorities did not have objections against the project.¹¹ Also in 1846, the memorandum, plans, and the *anshlag* were sent

⁴ The Archive of the Metropolitan Curia in Cracow, "Visitatio realis et personalis ecclesiarum parochialium [...] in quatuor decanatus archidiaconatus sandomiriensis [...] per me Dominicum Lochman UID canonicum cathedralem cracoviensem, archidiaconum sandomiriensem anno 1727 [...]", vol. AV 22, p. 242.

⁵ Bolesław Kumor, *Spis ludności diecezji krakowskiej prymasa M. J. Poniatowskiego z 1787 roku*, in "Archiwa, Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne", (Lublin, ISSN #0518-4766), 1977, vol. 35, p. 260.

⁶ WAPR, RGR I, vol. 2364, p. 7; *Opis historyczno-statystyczny miasta Klimontowa*, unnumbered page.

⁷ J.Z. Łoziński, T. Przytkowski, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

⁸ *Opis historyczno-statystyczny miasta Klimontowa*, unnumbered page.

⁹ WAPR, RGR I, vol. 10835, unnumbered page, "Rozkład składki kwaterunkowej na mieszkańców miasta Klimontowa na rok 1857 uformowany", compiled between 8/22 and 9/9, 1857; The schedules for subsequent years, *ibidem*, vol. 4096, p. 4.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, vol. 4096, pp. 12-14.

¹¹ AGAD, Centralne Władze..., vol.1497, pp. 39-41.

from the Department of Industry and Crafts to the Department of Religions with a note, important for the synagogue's outlook today: "The presented plan, especially in regard to the building's outside appearance, did not conform to the standards of good proportions; also, proposed covering the roof with shingles [*gonty*] was against the regulations. For these reasons the plan and the *anshlag* have been revised".¹² As a result, the amended list of expenses was returned to the Government of the Radom Gubernia. The initial sum of 2743 silver rubles, 13.3 kopecks assigned for the construction was increased to 4435 rubles, 6.25 kopeck, and the building was to be covered with tin. To assure collection of this sum, the Department of Religions obliged the provincial authorities to take from the Jewish population declarations that it would cover the higher bill. This was the condition for starting the construction work.¹³ For that purpose, following the practice of Jewish communities, a committee for the building of the synagogue was established in Klimontów. We have no information about its activity.¹⁴ The members of the community spent a total of 30,000 Polish zlotys on the building of the synagogue.¹⁵ We note that the community built the synagogue using local resources. The work had not been put up to contract, a common practice at that time.¹⁶

The Klimontów synagogue was built in the 1850s, a part of the wave of rapid development that took place in Jewish communities. Its effect was taking down old wooden houses of prayer, and erecting new, brick ones.¹⁷ The beginning of this wave could be already seen in the 1830s, when the dilapidated wooden bathhouse and the kosher slaughterhouse were replaced with brick buildings.¹⁸ The poor state of the old synagogue (it was probably the one mentioned by Dominik Lochman in 1727) for which repairs in 1843-1844

and 1846 consumed substantial sums of money, was likely the reason for building a new brick one.¹⁹ The community's financial effort was apparently redirected towards this goal, since from 1846 the budget does not mention expenses for repairing the synagogue.

Very little can be said about the synagogue's history in the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Between 1867-1906, the portion of budget assigned to the synagogue was limited to providing candles and heating.²⁰ Only once in 1893, an unspecified repair of the synagogue cost 291.5 silver rubles.²¹ In the interwar period, the Klimontów Jewish community was socially active. It was dominated by orthodox parties: the Agudah and the Mizrahi. Because of the number of members paying dues and the value of the property, Klimontów was counted among small communities in the Kielce region. The community financial records do not show larger sums allocated towards restoration of the building, which allows the assumption that the concern of the kehilla and the community was limited to its immediate maintenance.²²

September 1939 started the last chapter in the history of the Klimontów synagogue. As a result of the deportations of the Jewish population from neighboring villages, and Viennese Jews from the Ostrowiec ghetto, the number of Jews in Klimontów grew from 3100 to 4000. In October and November 1942, the Klimontów Jews were deported to the death camp in Treblinka and to the Sandomierz ghetto.²³

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 40.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 41.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 89.

¹⁵ *Opis historyczno-statystyczny miasta Klimontowa*, unnumbered page.

¹⁶ "Dziennik Urzędowy Guberni Radomskiej" for the years 1843-1861.

¹⁷ S. Zajczyk, *Bóżnica w Kępnie "Biuletyn ŻIH"*, 1962, no. 43-44, p. 63.

¹⁸ AGAD, *Centralne Władze...* vol. 1497, pp. 8-21. This happened in 1836-1838.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 27, 36.

²⁰ WAPR, RGR II, vol. 4096, p. 4, 12-14, 22v-25; vol. 5008, p. 4; vol. 5354, p. 2v; vol. 5861, p. 2v; vol. 6099, unnumbered page; vol. 6419, unnumbered page.

²¹ *Ibidem*, vol. 5626 p. 4.

²² WAPK, UWK, vol. 1563, p. 243; vol. 1753, unnumbered page; vol. 1763, p. 133. According to the report by the elder (*starosta*) of the Sandomierz District, in 1925, the community had one synagogue, two prayer houses and one rabbi. This situation lasted during the whole interwar period (*ibidem*, vol. 1765, pp. 12, 30, 55, 63-64; vol. 2600, unnumbered page; vol. 2598, unnumbered page; vol. 2597, unnumbered page; vol. 2602, unnumbered page; vol. 3354, unnumbered page; vol. 4318, pp. 34, 38).

²³ A. Rutkowski, *Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej* [Martyrdom, Resistance and Destruction of the Jewish Community of Radom

During the war the synagogue gradually deteriorated. After the war, its interior underwent minor changes while the building was adopted for a vegetable and fruit purchasing center and warehouse, the function it serves until now. In 1959, by the court order, the ownership was transferred to the state treasury (*skarż państwa*).²⁴ The documentation and inventory work that started in 1978 is connected with the project of adopting the synagogue for the local cultural center.

The Klimontów synagogue is located in the eastern part of the town. Its front (western) facade faces a small square adjacent to the market square. The back (eastern) elevation borders with the property presently belonging to a school. The schoolyard was a once a Jewish cemetery; in the 1950s there were still about 50 *matzevot*; some of them originating from the end of the 18th century.²⁵ The synagogue once occupied the central place in the complex of Jewish ritual buildings, and was the main building of the Jewish part of the town. Next to it there were the rabbi's house and the *mikvah*.

Presently, the synagogue is a stucco building of bricks bonded with lime-based mortar, with no basement. It is oriented, rectangular in form, topped with a low tin-covered hip roof. The building is on a rectangular plan measuring: the facade, 14.36m., the east elevation, 14.61m., the south and the north elevations, 27.32m. Fronting the facade is a four-column Ionic monumental portico crowned with a wooden pediment. The remaining three elevations have pilasters and semicircular windows. Two vestibules on either sides of the main entrance are adjacent from the west to the single-spaced prayer hall. On the second floor, above the vestibules, there is the women's gallery.

The prayer hall occupies the center of the synagogue. It is an auditorium set on the plan of a semi-rectangle measuring: the western side, 12.36 m; the eastern side, 12.58; the southern and

the northern sides, 13.63 m. A concrete floor, whitewashed walls, and a panel ceiling determine the present outlook of the space. In the centre of the ceiling's eastern wall there is a polychromy above the *Aron HaKodesh*, consisting of a crown and two tablets with the Hebrew text of the Ten Commandments. On either sides of the tablets there is a medallion with the image of a lion and a deer. Below the tablets, there is a relief with two stone lions placed above a small semicircular niche. On the eastern wall there is another medallion, set centrally above the women's gallery, with an illegible Hebrew inscription. A painted strip separating the ceiling and the panels, and a painted decoration surrounding the missing candelabra complete the decoration of the hall. On the eastern wall, traces of Hebrew inscriptions can be seen from under the contemporary paint.

On the first floor, a semicircular vaulted doorway leads into the synagogue, whose floor is below the street level. On the floor, there are traces of a tiling. To the right, there is a vestibule that formerly served as a *cheder* or a *kehilla* room. One of the windows is walled up. Through the peeling ceiling, the planks of the framing can be seen. The left vestibule is presently used as the office of the purchasing center. These two vestibules and the hallway dividing them are separated from the prayer room by the brick wall; its left part has two niches.

A high parapet with shaped balusters supporting a shaped banister separates the women's gallery on the second floor from the prayer room.

A wooden framing with rafters supports the synagogue's roof covered with tin; on its west side there is the wooden frame of the wooden pediment.

The three-sectional facade is fronted by a Ionic portico with four columns supporting the entablature with a shaped molding that runs around the building. The facade is crowned with a wooden pediment with a triangular paladian window. The shafts of the columns are of plastered bricks, the bases and capitels, of stone. The columns are positioned on small brick plinths. Between the columns, on both sides there are plastered traces of the supports of the former stairs leading to the women's gallery. The faces of the stairs show traces of rustication. In front of the women's entrance which is presently walled up, there are remains of a wooden construction. The second floor windows and the women's

District During the German Occupation], in "Biuletyn ŻIH", 1955, no. 15-16, pp. 93, 164.

²⁴ The Office of the State Notary in Sandomierz, real estate register no. 3059, established on May 2, 1964, p.2; the judgement of August 24, 1959, the District Court in Sandomierz.

²⁵ I owe this information to T. Przykowski (*Zbiory ikonograficzne Instytutu Sztuki [PAN] w Warszawie*, microform no. 54220-54223, photograph from 1952.)

doorway are decorated with stone plaques. In the plaque above the entrance, there is an inscription containing the name Sobkowski and the date 1851. On the street level, there is the main doorway with semicircular top.

The four-partition south and north elevations have parallel layout. A shaped molding runs at their tops. The sections are separated by flat pilasters with windows between them. The southern elevation pilasters have no shaped arches. The windows preserved traces of woodworking; they have been partially walled up in contemporary times. In the southern wall, there is a newly made doorway.

The eastern elevation is two-sectional, divided by a flat pilaster, with a shaped molding at the top. Both windows have been recently walled up; in the left one, a stone arch crowning the window has survived.

A deteriorated brick sill runs in the lower part of the north, east and south walls.

The Klimontów synagogue, like other buildings of this kind, served several functions in Jewish community. Above all, it was the main center of religious practice but it was also a center of social life. Here the laws were made public, the issues of concern for the Jewish community were discussed. However, the building's spatial layout and design were determined by its main religious function.

As already mentioned, the synagogue's main space was the prayer hall with a *bimah*, usually located in the center. From that elevated place, during Saturday morning prayers, with only men present, the Torah was read and the commentaries to liturgical texts were read. The Klimontów synagogue's *bimah* has not survived; the floor shows barely visible traces of where it was. At the eastern wall, there was the *Aron HaKodesh*. We do not know what it looked like. Probably a small niche below the relief with two lions served as the niche for the altar cabinet where the scrolls were stored. The altar cabinet was decorated with paintings, some of which survive. In the center, at the highest place under the ceiling of the synagogue, so that everyone could see, there are two tablets with the Hebrew text of the Decalogue. They told pious Jews about their duties towards the God and fellow man. In the medallions in either side of the tablets there are images of a lion and a deer. They illustrate the Talmudic admonition that one should be fast like

a deer and strong like a lion.²⁶ The whole eastern wall was once covered with Hebrew liturgical inscriptions; the evidence are the traces of letters and fragments of Hebrew sentences visible under contemporary paint. In the wall separating the prayer room and the vestibules there are two niches, possibly the places for a water well and a collection box.

On the first floor, on either side of the hallway leading to the prayer room, there are two smaller rooms. The southern one either housed a religious school or was a kehilla room while the northern one was likely used as a foyer.

It is well known that only men partook in religious services; women witnessed from the women's part of the synagogue called *babinets* which was a gallery on the second floor. It was probably separated from the prayer hall with a grid. Religious and social prescriptions also required separate entrances for men and women. In Klimontów, the outside stairs on either sides of the main entrance, not preserved today, led to the *babinets*.

The elevations merit exceptional attention, considering the synagogue's state of preservation. They are modest but have well-balanced proportions and fine stonework details; the columns' bases and crown especially add to the interesting outlook of the building. Possibly, this was a result of the discussion at the Department of Industry and Crafts, caused by the fact that the earlier project "did not confirm to the standards of good proportions." The elevations which determine the synagogue's overall appearance are an interesting example of classicist style in which the synagogue was built. Judging from the state of their preservation, they have not been altered. The traces of a Hebrew inscription that once informed about the building's function: "This is no other than the house of God, this is the gate of heaven"²⁷ are preserved on the facade. Another inscription in Polish, indicating Sobkowski's participation in the project, is important for the time of the synagogue's construction in a town like Klimontów.

The analysis of the archival materials and the field survey suggest that the roof framing with unique rafters is original; so is the construction of the pediment. The window woodwork at the attic

²⁶ S. Zajczyk, *op. cit.*, p.79, n.25.

²⁷ Quoted by W. Kukliński (*op. cit.*, p. LI); it is a fragment of Genesis 28:17.

is preserved. Also, the tin cover of the roof, which was one of the conditions of its construction, is original.

The analysis of the preservation of the Klimontów synagogue suggests that its walls and internal layout have survived unaltered. All permanent elements of the building: the prayer hall, the women's gallery, the kehillah room, the roof framing and cover are intact. The war's destruction and the post-war construction work to adopt the building for a fruit and vegetable warehouse caused that only the movable elements were destroyed: the *bimah* and the *Aron ha-Kodesh*. The stairs leading to the women's part were dismantled and the door was walled up; the polychromy with inscriptions was painted over and the windows were partially walled up; in the southern wall, a doorway was made; also the molding running on the side walls and the arches on the window framings were destroyed. Yet these changes do not decrease the synagogue's artistic values. With minor restoration work, there is a good chance of bringing the synagogue back its original appearance.

The synagogue, once a landmark of the Klimontów Jewish quarter, as well as of the town as a whole, today is the sole trace of Jewish presence in the town. The construction of a brick building with a monumental four-column portico, in a town that in the mid 19th century had most of its buildings of wood, testifies to the importance of the Klimontów Jewish community, its prosperity and dynamism. It shows, along with the community's economic ability, its desire to mark its presence in the town where at the time of the synagogue's construction the only monumental brick buildings were the collegiate church (which also served as a parish), and the Dominican church and abbey, both developed and expanded in the previous period. No wonder that contemporary Klimontowians regarded the synagogue as the "jewel" of the town.²⁸ This notion is justified by the building's architectural values, not eradicated by the war's destruction and post-war remodeling. The synagogue stands today in its original spatial layout and form, with good proportions and correct architectural details.

Its design is a synthesis of traditional synagogue architecture and the architectural trends of the time. The general construction plan: a rectangular layout with a single-space, nearly

²⁸ *Opis historyczno-statystyczny miasta Klimontowa*, unnumbered page.

square prayer hall; a separate vestibule on the floor level; and a women's gallery on the second floor with a separate entrance, follows a long tradition in designing this type of buildings reaching back to the Renaissance or even Middle Ages.²⁹ In Kielce region, we see a similar interior layout in the synagogues erected in the 18th century: in Chęciny, Szydłów, Połaniec, Pińczów, et al.³⁰ These features related to religious requirements were also preserved in buildings constructed in the 19th century, for example the synagogues in Kępno, Nowy Korczyn, Radom.³¹

Moral and religious tradition that prescribed separate entrances for men and women, in Klimontów brought forth an interesting, unique architectural design. The entrance to the women's part leads through two pairs of stairs on either side of the main entrance. Apparently they were built after erecting the four-column portico. This may be surmised from the finished bases of the columns immured in the stairs' face walls.

The design work on the project started in 1840s. In architecture, this was still the period of the classicist style, which was also promoted by the authorities; many buildings both secular and religious were built in this style. The classicist trend, striving to achieve a sense of harmony, balance and peace, found its full realization in Klimontów synagogue. We discern it in the four-

²⁹ Alfred Grotte, *Deutsche, böhmische und polnische Synagogentypen von XI bis Anfang des XIX Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Der Zirkel, 1915). 104 pp.

³⁰ Jerzy Baranowski, *Synagoga w Chęcinach* [The Synagogue in Chęciny], in "Ochrona Zabytków", 1959, Vol. 12, #3-4; Adam Penkalla, Jerzy Szczepański, *Żydowskie budowle instytucyjne w miastach guberni Radomskiej w połowie XIX w.* [Jewish Public Buildings in the Towns of Radom Gubernia in the mid-19th Century], in "Biuletyn ŻIH", 1977, no 101 pp. 77-83; A. Kubiak, *Żydowska architektura zabytkowa w Polsce*, in "Biuletyn ŻIH", 1953, no. 2-4, pp. 121-170; WAPR, RGR, vol. 4363, p. 104, a rare description and a horizontal projection of the synagogue in Połaniec by Jan Lasota, the master builder of Sandomierz district, made on April 6, 1857.

³¹ S. Zajczyk, *op. cit.*; Leszek Samocki, *Nowy Korczyn, Synagoga*, Kielce 1971 (manuscript in the library of PP PKZ in Kielce). A description and a map of the Radom synagogue, WAPR, Dykcja Ubezpieczen w Radomiu, vol. 2, p. 609 (The map was reprinted in *Przewodnik po wystawie kartograficznej pt. "Archiwa w służbie społeczeństwa, nauki, gospodarki narodowej"*, ed. H. Kisiel, Radom 1979, il.).

column Ionic portico; its expression are the side elevations divided with flat pilasters and topped with a shaped molding, and the plaques on the facade. In Klimontów, especially important are the elaborate bases and capitels of the columns. The care of detail suggest that they were copied from a pattern book; this gives an excellent credit to the artisan. Equally elaborate are stone plaques, however, the carving of the stone lions at the eastern wall is of a much inferior quality. The material of the stone details allows the assumption that they were executed in Kunów stone workshop, active in the 19th century. It is possible that Jewish stoneworkers whose presence in Kunów is registered in the town documents, participated in these works.³²

The Klimontów synagogue's style draws upon the rectangular temple of the antiquity surrounded with a colonnade, with the walls divided by pilasters, and with a portico in front of a three-sectional facade; it mirrors the designs of religious buildings that were promoted in architectural pattern books. The same style is found in designs of parish churches by Piotr Aigner.³³ According to Aigner's monographer, Tadeusz Stefan Jaroszewski, these designs were used by less independent provincial architects who usually adopted Aigner's general layout.³⁴ Perhaps this was also the case in Klimontów, especially since Aigner's works were promoted by the authorities.

Judging from the very vague sources, the work on the project started locally. The first meeting was held at the head's of the Sandomierz district. Then it was discussed at the Department of Industry and Crafts of the KRSW. The decisions made there affected the synagogue's ultimate appearance. The designer, or rather designers of the synagogue remain unknown. Since the first design was developed locally, the author should be sought in the circle of the head of the Sandomierz district. Jozef Suchocki (1795-1852), the Sandomierz district master-builder, who wrote of himself that he designed and built houses and churches in the Sandomierz and Opatow areas, could have been somehow involved in the work.³⁵ Another possible group of people were officials at the Department of Industry and Crafts of the KRSW. Sobkowski, whose name is so prominently commemorated on the building's facade, had an important although unknown in particulars role in the work. In the town documents from the mid 19th century, Jan Sobkowski appears as a "mason"; he also was the owner of estates and land in Klimontów.³⁶

The Klimontów synagogue, depreciated by missing interior decoration, destroyed during the last war, and adapted to its new function did not lose its artistic, and above all, historical value. Changing back its function can help restoring its former appearance; considering the building's state of preservation, this seems to be an urgent necessity. Further scholarly investigation of 19th century brick synagogues will probably uncover new values of the Klimontów synagogue.

(The translator would like to thank Prof. Gerald Bernstein of Brandeis University for help in translating architectural terms.)

³² Wojewódzkie Archiwum Państwowe w Tarnobrzegu z siedzibą w Sandomierzu, Akta Miasta Kunowa [The Tarnobrzeg Provincial State Archive in Sandomierz, The Documents of the Town of Kunów], vols. 43-45.

³³ *Budowy kościołów część pierwsza zamykająca cztery projekta kościołów parafialnych różnej wielkości w dziewięciu tablicach przez Piotra Aignera [...] wydane* (Warszawa, 1828), especially the designs on the plates 5 and 6.

³⁴ Tadeusz Stefan Jaroszewski, *Chrystian Piotr Aigner 1756-1841*. (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1965), pp. 41, 203, 205-207.

³⁵ WAPR, RGR, I, vol 1877, the personal file of J. Suchecki.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, vol. 1835, unnumbered page; vol. 6851, unnumbered page.