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## The synagogue in Zhovkva: history and architectural development

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**Abstract.** In this article I consider historical development of construction of the stone synagogue in Zhovkva, one of the largest synagogues in Eastern Europe. Concerning its spatial and design solutions, it demonstrates the two structures typical for the Ukrainian synagogues built in Halychyna and Volyn. These are characterized by a supporting bema and a nine-field construction. Replacement of the first constructive scheme for the second one clearly emphasizes the advantage of the latter, which has been widespread in the Ukrainian lands.

**Keywords:** Zhovkva, Jews, synagogue, prayer hall, women’s courtyard, Aron Kodesh, supporting bema, nine-field scheme.

**UDC:** 726.3 (477.4)

### 1. Introduction

The synagogue in Zhovkva is the most representative of the sacred Jewish objects still kept in Ukraine. A lot has been written on it, though it is yet unclear whether it is an authentic Renaissance-Baroque building or rather a memorial to pseudo-historical restorations.

Now that the synagogue is undergoing another restoration, it would be relevant to investigate its architectural development. The studies known up to now have not highlighted its architectural and construction history. In particular, the basic works “Pamiętki miasta Żółkwi” by Sadok Barącz (1852) [1] and “Dawna Żółkiew i jej żydzi” by Jakób Schall (1939) [2] have considered its structure only in a historical context. Though both of these historians have touched upon different architectural points, they described just structures which they saw at the moment (Barącz in the middle of the 19th century<sup>1</sup> and Schall in 1930s). No one of them has got deeper in its architectural development. The first attempt to analyze the planning and spatial structures of the Zhovkva synagogue has been done by a German architect (of a Jewish origin) Alfred-Israel Grotte in his monograph devoted to the architecture of synagogues [3]. However, he has regarded the building as having already its final shape, too. Without resorting to the analysis of particular construction stages, Grotte has considered the Lviv Great Suburb synagogue (‘Peredmis’ka’ in Ukrainian) and the Zhovkva one as being of the same type. The works by Sofiia Bokalo [4] and Eva-Janina Sadowska [5] have complemented the previous studies of the synagogue with its states related to the Second World War, the Soviet period, and the modern times. One should separately mention Kazimierz and Maria Piechotkowie [6] who have dedicated their long lives to the studies of architecture of synagogues. In fact, their researches on the synagogue in Zhovkva represent the first professional work on this building, though they have noticed no signs of its restructuring, too.

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<sup>1</sup> Sadok Barącz was a Dominican, an Armenian by origin. He stayed in the Zhovkva Dominican monastery in 1842–1845.



**Fig. 1.** Interior of Łańcut synagogue (1761) as it appears in the drawing by Zygmund Vogel (1797). Jakób Schall has put this image into his book, with the following caption: “*The interior of Zhovkva synagogue before its reconstruction (in the early 19th century), according to the image by Kokulyus*” [www.pinakoteka.zascianer.pl/Vogel](http://www.pinakoteka.zascianer.pl/Vogel)

The architects-restorers at the Institute “Ukrzakhidproektrestavratsiya” (Ukrainian Regional Specialized Research and Restoration Institute; of which abbreviated name “Ukrzakhidproektrestavratsiya” has a literal meaning ‘Institute for Designing and Restoration in the Western Ukraine’), who have conducted the studies of the synagogue in 1980s, draw their attention to the two construction periods. The first is erection of a body of the main prayer hall, with a parterre women’s gallery, and the second marks completion of the western body of the synagogue [7]. In all the publications, both scientific and popular, the Zhovkva synagogue appears as a bright example of a mixed Renaissance-Baroque Jewish sacred object of a defensive type. It includes a typical attic with loopholes and powerful buttresses, nine-field prayer hall (including nine fields of vaults), and a Baroque Torah niche. This is what the construction of the synagogue was in the middle of the 19th century and, in general, what it remains today. However, the author of the present work has conducted her own researches that give us firm grounds to claim that this structure differs from what has been originally built in the end of the 17th century.

The impetus for this study has been a drawing of interior of the synagogue published by Schall in his work mentioned above, which has had the following signature: “Interior of the Zhovkva synagogue before its reconstruction (in the early 19th century), according to the image (podług obrazu) by Kokulus” [2] (see Fig. 1). Schall has somehow attributed the authorship of this drawing to a certain ‘Kokulus’. However, all the searches for a name ‘Kokulus’ in different sources from the 19th century have failed. If one goes to the heart of this last name, then the only consistent name found has been ‘Kokuliar’, although he worked as a professor at the Warsaw Academy in the first half of the 19th century. As a matter of fact, the author of the drawing was Polish painter Zygmund Vogel. The drawing has been made in 1797, and it shows the interior of the Łańcut synagogue built in 1761, rather than that of the Zhovkva one. The spatial organization of the synagogue’s architecture depicted in the drawing is completely different than that of the present Zhovkva synagogue. A bema that represents a focus of the author’s intention is not simply a cathedra standing alone among four columns, but an architectural element integrated into a space of the prayer hall. Here the bema is a structural element, which serves as a support in the form of



**Fig. 2.** Western wall of the main prayer hall in the synagogue of Zhovkva: photo taken in 2008.

four columns closed together, and this will be referred hereafter as a 'supporting bema'. Then the question arises why Schall attributed this image to the Zhovkva synagogue, without mentioning a word about the appropriate spatial pattern, including the supporting bema? It seems that someone (probably, the same 'Kokulyus') has prompted him to change the depicted planning and the spatial structure of the Zhovkva synagogue towards the

original one. That is why the researcher put that drawing in his book, along with its analogue (the interior of the synagogue in Łańcut), imputing the former to the Zhovkva synagogue. And as a historian, not an architect, he did no comments on the relevant architectural features, and their changes. A similarity of interiors of the two synagogues is observed in the western wall of the prayer hall. This consists in a rhythm of window openings, with segmental archs of women's gallery on an empors, some general features of the main entrance, and a location of the niches of ner tamid (a sanctuary lamp with eternal flame). However, there exist some differences in the interiors. In particular, the same west wall of the Łańcut synagogue has five windows, with the central one being located on the axis; whereas the Zhovkva synagogue has six windows (see Fig. 2). Moreover, the windows of the prayer hall depicted in the drawing have rectangular arches, rather than semicircular, as is the case with the Zhovkva synagogue. A number of similar features of these two buildings built in different times suggest an idea of adoption: the construction of the Łańcut synagogue (1761) must have been adopted from the earlier Zhovkva one (1687), which has originally had a supporting bema.

A change in the original structure of the synagogue in Zhovkva has been confirmed by our field researches conducted in July 2008 together with the architect-restorer Oleh Rybchynskyi. These have yielded sensational results: there are clear traces of large reconstructions of the building. First of all, inorganic arch shoes of the semicircular window arches are flaring on the facades. This testifies their lowering that is caused by lowering of the vault of the main hall. One can also easily notice lowering of the hall on the roof storey, where the crenelle is too elevated above the arch. Even a naked eye can take notice that the axes of the extreme windows on each wall do not coincide with the axes of the vaults. This evidently shows that changes have happened to the footing and the constructional structures of the prayer hall (with a single supporting bema being replaced by four ones). This is also supported by pilasters, which are cut into walls with no 'ligation', while the antas do not play any constructive part. Later origin of manneristic portals (Fig. 3) located on the front facade is proved by a plaster with a paint found under already shaped ornaments, as well as by some more facts.



**Fig. 3.** Synagogue in Zhovkva. Western facade: photo taken in 2008.

Three specific dates of restorations of the Zhovkva synagogue are known in the history of its construction: the first two have occurred after the big fires of 1724 and 1833 [2,8], and the third after destruction by German Nazis in 1941. The first date is likely related to pure development (up-building of premises of the synagogue), and the other to reconstruction of the entire building. Judging from the Schall's analogue of the synagogue

interior peculiar for the times before the reconstruction and distinct traces of the reconstruction found by us, the works performed in 1830s were so substantial that they had completely changed the original three-dimensional structure. The following repairing and restoration works, including those conducted in the early 20th century, did not affect the constructive solution itself. It is only combined architectural and archaeological researches that can suggest how the Zhovkva synagogue looked like before 1724 (i.e., initially) and how much it changed since the construction works of those days. The results of the fragmentary excavations performed in 2001 have revealed that the western and southern annexes were built in different times, and the buttresses were erected later on [9]. There is little hope for a success of any archival searches, for the building-related cases of the Lviv District (where, quite possibly, any materials on the Zhovkva synagogue could have been stored) have burned during the fire taking place in the Town Hall in 1848.

The present work is aimed at unravelling the building history of the Zhovkva synagogue. It is based on the indirect tips by Schall and the drawing by Vogel, as well as full-scale investigations conducted by us.

## **2. On the history of Jewish community in Zhovkva**

The earliest statement concerned with Jews in Zhovkva has survived in the records of Zhovkva pinkas book and it dates from 1593 [2]. Obviously, these entries are associated with the Jews of Glinsk, a successor of the prince town Schekotyn, of which urban traditions have been continued by Zhovkva. In 1594, Zhovkva received Magdeburg rights. It was located on the soils of Vynnyky village that bordered with the then town Glinsk. Given the national composition of its population, Zhovkva was a typical town of Halychyna in the early 17th century, where Poles, Ruthenians and Jews inhabited, and where Armenians and Tartars arrived somewhat later (near 1612) [1].

In 1600, the then owner of Zhovkva and a Belz governor Stanislav Zholkievskiy permitted Jews to build a house of prayer. In the northern part of the town he assigned "a separate area and street for building a brewhouse, malthouse, cellars, bathhouse, and a swimming pool for cleaning their bodies (mikvah) according to the Law" [2]. Already in 1601 a Jewish Street was marked in Zhovkva, which was inhabited by Jews [2], although the synagogue was built by them much later. By 1626, the Jewish community of Zhovkva was affiliated, being only a marginal part of a qahal corresponding to the Lviv community [10].

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In 1603, the King Zygmunt III confirmed the location of the town performed by the Lviv Keeper Stanislav Zholkievskyi, and gave the settlement the Magdeburg law [11]. Along with the locating privilege, the town was allowed to carry out fairs four times a year and two weekly local trade fairs [11]. The King equalized Zhovkva in its rights with the other Magdeburg-law towns built by the ideal model, Zamość and Sharhorod, thus freeing Zhovkva from various fees and taxes, in return of which the merchants and artisans originated from the other towns were permitted to trade freely in Zhovkva [1, 12]. Such favourable conditions were attracting Jewish merchants to this newly founded town. Here those Jews found a shelter that fled from ethnic massacres and various discriminating restrictions imposed in many other towns [2]. In order to reduce pestering of the town by settling Jews, a Zhovkva Keeper Regina Herbut Zholkievska issued in 1619 a special decree: every Jew who wished to settle in Zhovkva had to pay 50 hryvnia for building of town fortifications and was obliged to labour some time, on a par with other residents. Through the joint efforts of all the inhabitants, the town in 1621 was surrounded by defensive walls with four gates, one of which was called the Jewish Gate [2]. This fact evidences both notable numbers of Jews in the town of that time and their position.

As evidenced by a record in the Lviv pinkas book, in 1624 a synagogue has appeared in the acres by Aaron Moshkovych, though the first rabbi was appointed only in 1626 [2]. This synagogue was wooden. The Zhovkva Jews inhabited 21 houses in 1628 and 88 houses in 1680. The Jewish Street where the synagogue stood included some other main Jewish buildings: a ritual bath with mikvah (a pool of rain and spring water) <sup>2</sup>, a house of rabbi, Beit Midrash (a school with a library and a prayer hall), hekdesch (a hospital), shhita (a place for slaughtering of birds), and Jewish stands. The hospital, which was mentioned in the records of the 17th and 18th centuries, was located near a Great Synagogue.

Despite different prohibitions of those times, Zhovkva Jews bought homes in different parts of the town, including in the Rynok (the very centre of the town) and the outskirts [2], to open their shops and stands. Their social and cultural life was concentrated around the synagogue. Already in 1640, Zhovkva's landlords had allowed the Jews to open a religious school (a so-called yeshiva) under the synagogue, where the Talmud was studied. Such known persons as Mendel (from Zhovkva itself), Eliezer Favir, Benjamin Ozer, and Ehuda ben Israel taught at that school [5].

In the second half of the 17th century, Zhovkva became filled with Lviv Jews [13]. In 1687 King Jan III Sobieski, a grandson of Hetman Stanislav Zholkievskyi, confirmed the rights granted to the Jewish community of Zhovkva by his predecessors. The Zhovkva Jews were allowed to freely engage in various crafts, though real estates could be only bought with permission of the castle. The privilege also affirmed the right to have a cemetery and a stone synagogue. In 1693, Jan III permitted to build a bathhouse in the town for public funds, with a ban to build more than two of them in Zhovkva: one municipal and the other for the Jews. This privilege was confirmed by the King August in 1740 [14]. In 1735 the Jewish community erected a hospital, a qahal house and Beit Midrash, which was stone-built and older from the Great stone synagogue [2]. Just in this time a Zhovkva Jew Iser Markovych was a Marshal of the local Zemstvo [13].

Till 1765, the Jewish community of Zhovkva numbered more than 1,500 adults, and owned more than 270 houses. In 1778, at the time when the Austria annexed these lands, there were 100 houses of Jews in the heart of the town [2]. A near-Rynok housing development was almost

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<sup>2</sup> *Mikvah* was long located on the ground between the house of Lazebnyk and the later wall of Dominican monastery, which stretched out to the Jewish Gate.



entirely in the hands of Jews. There lively bidding was being conducted. The street that led from the Rynok towards the synagogue turned into a market. It had got the name “Jewish Market” (Juden Marktplatz) on the cadastre map of Zhovkva dated from 1854 (see Fig. 4) [15].



**Fig. 4.** The synagogue, the entrenchment (*Israeliten Friedhof*), and the Jewish Market (*Juden Marktplatz*) in the Zhovkva cadastre from 1854 (taken from the Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine in Lviv).

Zhovkva was a cradle to Hebrew printing, the oldest on the territory of Ukrainian lands. According to the privilege granted by Jan III Sobieski, the craft was founded in 1690 by a Jew Uri Febus ha-Levi, who had earlier arrived to Zhovkva from Amsterdam. Each book that came out of this printing house had to indicate the name of Didych (a principal landlord and a title given by a King’s privilege) of Zhovkva, besides the town name itself. Descendants of Uri Febus ha-Levi owned the printing house in Zhovkva until the end of the 18th century. In 1788, there lived a printer Mojzes Drucker and a bookbinder Zelik Buchbinder in the town of Zhovkva [1, 2].

At the end of 1890, Zhovkva was inhabited by 7143 people. 53% of this total number were Jews (3783 people) [16]. The number of Jews in the town had decreased after the First World War. According to the census conducted in 1921, the Jews accounted 3,718 persons (47%) of the total number of 7867 inhabitants [17]. During almost twenty next years the number of residents had increased, although the percentage of Jews decreased: in 1939 there were 4,270 Jews (38% of the total number of 11,100) [18]. Like with many other Jewish communities in the Eastern Europe, the life of a prosperous Jewish community in Zhovkva was interrupted by the World War II. Today the synagogue is the only survived witness of the extinct world of one of the largest communities coexisting in Christian Zhovkva over 300 years.

### **3. The history of construction of the stone synagogue and the main construction stages**

The erection of the stone synagogue in Zhovkva is associated with the King Jan III Sobieski, although the question itself was raised much earlier. The initiator of the stone building was Aaron Moshkovych, the owner of the synagogue house or the land where it stood. Increasing numbers of the faithful had led to attempts to get permission to build a larger sanctuary. On June 18, 1635, the then Didych of Zhovkva, Stanislav Danylovych, a grandfather of Jan III, had allowed to build the stone synagogue instead of the old wooden one: “I allow to build a new temple in the same place, on a wooden or stone foundation, as they wish, according to the custom of arranging these things,

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of which erection I will neither object to, nor prevent taking stones from my lands” [2]. However, a new synagogue had not been built at that time. Instead, the Jews built up a number of houses, taking advantage of the permission. In 1664, Jan Sobieski, the then Didych of Zhovkva, confirmed the privilege concerned with the construction of synagogue. And again the erection did not begin. In 1678 and 1687, Jan III repeated his permission, these times as a king.

It took more than half a century from the moment when the first privilege had been granted for the stone synagogue in Zhovkva to be built. Apparently, the main obstacle was the political situation: ruining of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth (*Rzeczpospolita* in Polish) in the second half of the 17th century, of which beginning was marked by the Kozak war of 1648. The erection of the synagogue had begun only after the royal privilege granted in 1687. It was this year that the synagogue was dated in a Report by Zhovkva County Office to the Governor-General Office, which referred to the total number of synagogues in 1827 [19]. However, there is also a known privilege by the Lviv Archbishop Jan Lipskyi from 1692, which reads “to build a stone synagogue from the very foundation, on the street nearby the Jewish Gate, at the same place where ... an old wooden temple stood, in accordance with our permission, and lest it surpass the Roman-Catholic church...” [1]. This would obviously deny the fact that the synagogue had been built in 1687. On the other hand, Lipskyi could give his permission *post factum*, when the building had been about completed. Notice also that the privilege clearly emphasized a defensive purpose of the synagogue: “in order that the Jews could be kept safe and have a storehouse during firing or invasion...” [20].

Thrice repeating of Danylovych’s privilege by Jan III Sobieski had given birth to a legend that the King funded the synagogue. In particular, A. Schneider wrote that King contributed significantly to its construction [21]. In fact, the King did not help financially, though did give the permission and building materials, and lent the community 8,000 gold coins [2]. Due to the involvement of Jan III to the building, the synagogue was called as Sobieski’s School (or Foundation), *die Sobieski Schul*. By the way, Zolochiv synagogue was also called as Sobieski’s Foundation for the similar reasons [22]. While it was said in the King’s permission about allotting of stone, the synagogue was built with both stone and brick. For the building to be erected, some ‘factory’ must have been created that probably produced bricks of its own and was led by an architect-builder.

It is now firmly established by the historical science that the author of the Zhovkva synagogue is Petro Beber, an architect of German origin who has been working in Zhovkva in 1685–1694. At the time, he also rebuilt the Zhovkva Castle, in addition to erecting the Renaissance Zhovkva Town Hall (1687)<sup>3</sup> and the stone house with attic in the *Zamok* [23]. Beber was a royal builder (or “plasterer”) at the court of King Jan III. He was also known to complete the Korniaht Tower in Lviv (1695) [24, 25]. To my opinion, he could indeed be the author of the project of the synagogue and the architect who managed the construction in the beginning. However, the construction had to be finished by another builder because of long duration of the work. This could have been some builder from the Lviv Guild<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> The name of the architect, Petro Beber, was discovered during disassembling of the Town Hall in 1832. See: B. Nakopalo. New researches of an old Zhovkva Town Hall. *Bulletin of the Institute “Ukrzahidproektrestavratsiya”*, Part 15. Lviv, 2005, P. 86.

<sup>4</sup> The Guild book in 1685 and 1710 contains the following: Stanislav and Voytsekh Zychlyvyi, Jan Pokorovych, Martyn Gradovskyi, Lavrentiy Prykhylnyi, Kryshtof Vypravnyi or Francysk Vyhidnyi. See: M. Kowalczyk. *Cech budowniczy we Lwowie za czasów polskich (do roku 1772)*. Lwów, 1927, S. 81.

Thus, the stone synagogue in Zhovkva appeared in 1687–1692 in the place of the more ancient wooden synagogue, at the northern part of the town walls and near the gate called Jewish. This part of downtown was the lowest. Though the synagogue was grand, still it was not visible in a representative panorama of the town. Like other sacred buildings of those times, it had powerful walls (the thickness of  $\sim 2.0$  m) and solid doors, which could serve as a reliable shelter from attackers.

#### 4. The first stage of construction (1687–1692)

A view of the original synagogue building can be hypothetically reproduced basing on the analysis of contemporary analogues and later materials. Like the other stone synagogues of the 17th century, the Zhovkva one was also remarkable for a large cubic body with large windows. At the southern facade and throughout its length, a parterre women's courtyard (or Ezrat Nashim) was



**Fig. 5.** Interior of Zhovkva synagogue. Views of the eastern and southern walls. Windows of the parterre women's gallery: photos taken in 2008.

built. It was joined with the men's hall by six small distinctive windows meant for hearing prayers rather than for visual purposes (see Fig. 5). These windows were laid simultaneously with the erection of the main body. They have been saved to this day, though are laid with stone from outside. In carrying out its function, the windows were placed high enough in a deep prayer hall for women (the level of floor paved with bricks was equal to 2.15–2.18 m, while the level of brick riprap was 0.24–0.30 m) [9]. The commu-

nity had to have a separate permission to built women's prayer halls. Therefore, these were most likely built shortly after erecting the main body. The other ancient synagogues were built in the same manner, including the Lviv ones: "Zolota Roza" ("Golden Rose" in English), 1582, and the Great Suburb synagogue, 1632<sup>5</sup>.

The main body of the Zhovkva synagogue was a spacious prayer hall based on a square design. Traditionally it was deepened, which was due to governmental regulations not to exceed Roman Catholic churches. On the other hand, this was a religious requirement based on the Psalm "Out of the depths I have cried unto Thee, O Lord" (Psalm-book, 129). The floor level of the prayer hall was made deeper by a few steps (now it is raised up to the level of threshold). The hall was overlapped by eight fields of vaults (four cruciform and four basket-like for the extreme and medium vaults, respectively) resting on arch walls, which leaned against a powerful central support. The latter was formed by four circular-section stone columns connected in the upper part.

<sup>5</sup> The women's galleries of the Lviv synagogue "Zolota Roza" were finished from 1595 to 1609. The permission to build the womens's prayer halls of the Lviv Great Suburb synagogue was given in 1635, three years after the main body had been erected. See: O. Boyko. The synagogues of Lviv.





**Fig. 6.** Synagogue in Zhovkva. Fragment of blind-arcade belt under the windows of the prayer hall: photo taken in 2008.

In the midst of these columns there was a bema<sup>6</sup>. This supporting bema accented a centric planning and spatial structure of the prayer hall. A reduced spatial field of the bema, formed by four closed-in columns, gave the impression of a spacious and light interior of the synagogue, as noted by Szymon Zeichyk [26]. The inter-pillar space looked like a chapel covered by baldachin, to which stairs led.

Under the windows, the high walls of the prayer hall were decorated by a blind-arcade belt of the Tuscan Order, which divided the walls in the vertical direction (see Fig. 6). Such a decoration was characteristic of Renaissance and Baroque synagogues built in Halychyna and Volyn in the 17th and 18th centuries (the towns of Rzeszów, Lviv, Lisko, Dobromyl, Łańcut, Ostroh, Brody, etc.). The arch walls of the prayer hall of the ancient Zhovkva synagogue were based not on pilasters but on a large profiled cornice. A centricity underlined by the bema located just in the middle, was an original idea for solving a space and made a religious ritual more distinct [27]. According to observations by Zeichyk, this architectural organization was characteristic of Renaissance synagogues of Kraków, Kieleck and Lublin, and of the Ruthenian provinces [26]. The first example of synagogues of this type is considered to be the synagogue of Maharshalschul (Lublin, Poland) built in 1567 [26, 28, 29]. In 1594, a synagogue with a supporting bema emerged in Przemyśl (an architect Bononi; see Fig. 7) [30, 31]. Although the prayer hall of the latter was elongated, according to the pattern of ancient synagogues, and was overlapped by a system of tubby vaults with a form takedown (without arch walls), the synagogue had already a centred composition<sup>7</sup>.

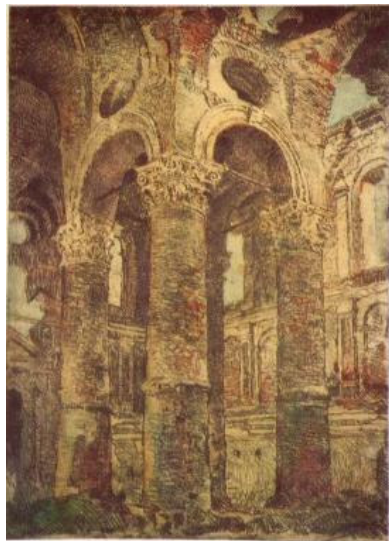
The prayer hall of the Zhovkva synagogue revealed an axial composition typical of synagogues: a bema was located in between the entrance gate in the western wall and Aron

<sup>6</sup> *Bema* in Hebrew means a cathedral on dais in the shape of a gazebo or chapel, which is designed for reading *Torah*.

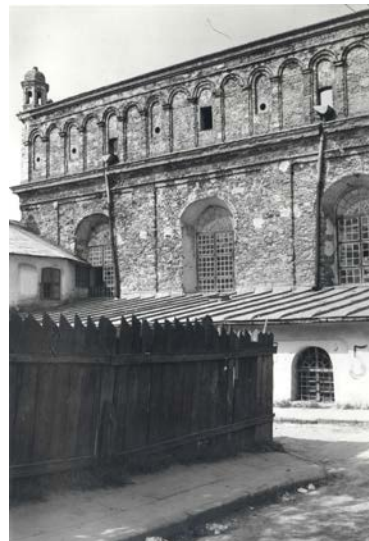
<sup>7</sup> According to our researches, the synagogues with the supporting bema were characteristic of Volyn and Ruthenian provinces of the 17th and 18th centuries. In the 17th century, such synagogues were built in Lutsk (1624–1628), Pinsk (1640), Slonim (1642), Novogrudek and Tykotyn (1648), Rzeszów (Novomis'ka synagogue, 1686, and Staromis'ka synagogue, 1705–1710). In the 18th century, similar synagogues were built in Perevirsk, Volodymyr, Matiyiv (Lukiv, 1781). A supporting bema integrated into the planning and spatial structures of the whole building was also typical of the synagogue in Stepan' (Volyn, the 18th century), which was overlapped by a single field of barrel-shaped vault.

Kodesh in the eastern one. Notice that the deep Torah niche laid down during the construction of the synagogue is preserved till now.

Hence, according to our considerations, the first phase of construction of the Zhovkva synagogue had been completed by the construction of the main body of the men's prayer hall and the women's prayer parterre hall at the southern wall. The wall was covered by span roofs, with crests perpendicular to the wall, traces of which can be seen in the photo of the interwar era (the collection on the Institute of Arts of the Polish Academy of Sciences<sup>8</sup> – see Fig. 8). The prayer hall with the central supporting bema was overlapped by eight fields of two types of vaults resting on arch walls.



**Fig. 7.** Supporting bema of the synagogue in Przemyśl (1594; from the collection by T. Lyamey).



**Fig. 8.** Southern wall of the synagogue, with traces of demolished span roofs of the synagogue annex: from the collection by S. Kravtsov (Jerusalem).

## 5. The second stage (1724–1726, 1741)

The fire that happened in 1724 apparently triggered further building of the synagogue. Most likely, the work was concerned with the construction of western body with the synagogue premises, an entrance hall (pulisz), and a women's gallery above them. Somewhat later origin of the western synagogue premises was confirmed by outfit surveys, which had revealed traces of later building of the women's gallery at the western wall of the prayer hall (Fig. 9<sup>9</sup>). So, after 1724 the big cubic body of the prayer hall was covered with two porches – parterre southern and shallow western ones. Both were deepened, with stone stairs leading to them. Two tiers of stretched western premises were overlapped by brick barrel-shaped vaults with form takedowns that were lit through the round windows on the first floor and were semicircular on the second one. The women's prayer halls on the empora were connected with the main prayer hall by six windows hewed through, which had camber arches (Fig. 2). The existence of these windows was later showed up

<sup>8</sup> IS PAN (Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk). The picture granted by S. Kravtsov.

<sup>9</sup> One can readily see a seam between the masonries of the 17th and 18th centuries, with different brick sizes (27x14x6 and 28x12x7 cm<sup>3</sup>, respectively) and different mortars (the lime granules from the 17th century are smaller, while those from the 18th century larger, with a finer sand).

by different inclinations of glyphs and different parts of segmental camber arches, as well as by that they undercut the completion of a blind-arcade belt (see Fig. 2 and Fig. 10). Three large windows were shortened by means of blocking them off in the bottom parts. There were two entrances to the main prayer hall in the western wall, which were decorated with white-stone Baroque portals [32]. The main entrance located on the axis was accented by a Renaissance cartouche. The portal has been preserved to this day. Setting of the portal against the aperture of door opening with segmental jumper strap, which was not integral (Fig. 11), may indicate of transfer of that portal from other buildings. In the measuring scheme by A. Grotte dated by the early 20th century (see Fig. 12), the thicknesses of walls of the southern and western annexes that appeared in a small time interval, was almost identical (~1.20 m). However, archaeological excavations from 2001<sup>10</sup> told us of different times of their erection. The exit to the roof was arranged in the western synagogue's body, in the mass of wall, which was continuation of the southern wall of the main prayer hall (Fig. 13).



**Fig. 9.** Traces of rebuilding of wall of the western synagogue's body: photo taken in 2008.



**Fig. 10.** View of the western wall. Blind-arcade belt cut by chopped holes of the women's gallery: photo taken in 2008.

Now it is unknown whether the Zhovkva synagogue contained an attic, which hid a folded roof, or it was covered by a four-backfall roof. If it was really built by P. Beber, then we could assume that it did have an attic and the latter was similar to the attic of the Zhovkva Town Hall or the near-Rynok royal building No 13 built by him, too. The Town Hall with an attic was recorded in two watercolours of the early 19th century, by an unknown artist and by a topographer E.-K. von Kronbah (Fig. 14) [33], while the near-Rynok stone building was depicted on a lithography by Zhykhovych (the middle of the 19th century – see Fig. 15). According to Jakób Schall, the old

<sup>10</sup> According to preliminary dating, the western annexes and the buttresses originate from the second half of the 18th century. See: Archive of the Institute “Ukrzakhidproektrestavratsiya”, Lo-60-12. Report on the results of archaeological and architectural researches of the synagogue in 1962, and of the adjacent territory in Zhovkva (Lviv region) in 2001. The Archaeological Rescue Service of the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv. The Institute of Archaeology. O. Osaulchuk and V. Shyshak.



**Fig. 11.** Attached white-stone main-entrance portal with a cartouche: photo taken in 2008.

Zhovkva synagogue had an attic and, moreover, it contained forms<sup>11</sup> and loopholes, and later was remade according to a pattern typical of the Renaissance Kraków attic (i.e., without a crown) [2]. In the panorama of Zhovkva by Kronbah (1826), the building located approximately in the place where the synagogue must have been, is shown under high roof with a break. If the synagogue really had an attic, then the artist would have surely fixed it. At least beginning from the middle of the 18th century, high Baroque roofs covered a majority of ancient synagogues. In particular, this was peculiar of the Lviv Great Suburb synagogue till 1870 (see Fig. 16)<sup>12</sup>.

The second stage of development of the Zhovkva synagogue was probably completed in 1726. Actually, it was this year that the prince Jakub Sobieski confirmed the privilege by Jan III on the maintenance of

synagogue, which must have been associated with the completion of the construction works. It seems that after that the synagogue took on a look of a Baroque building, with two synagogue annexes. The name of a builder who carried out the reconstruction at that time is still unknown but, given the close contacts of Zhovkva and Lviv, it might have been someone from the Lviv Mason Guild<sup>13</sup>.

Some construction works in the synagogue were also carried out in 1740s. This may be claimed by another privilege, complying with the request by the next Zhovkva Didych, Mikhal Kazymyr Radyvyl, and given by the Lviv Archbishop Ignacy Wyzhyskyi in 1741. The privilege says that, in the future, the community may not perform any construction work on the synagogue without permission of the Roman Catholic church, even if the synagogue fell down [2]. I do not rule out that a high Baroque roof was then built upon the synagogue, through which it dominated in the town landscape, which caused dissatisfaction of Catholic authorities. In 1746, Radyvyl had confirmed the privilege by Jan III concerning maintenance of the synagogue [2].

After completion of the construction work in the first half of the 18th century, the synagogue building had a shape of mixed Renaissance and Baroque styles. The main body was covered by a high roof with a break. A number of annexes adjoined the body: a parterre annex from the south and an annex with more than one storey from the west, both under folded roofs. Besides the

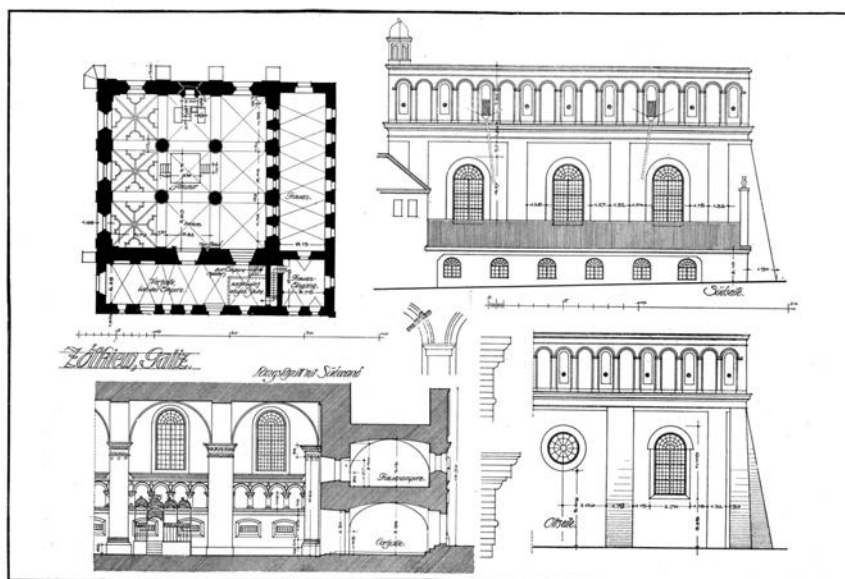
<sup>11</sup> The availability of the forms is questionable, because there is no known synagogue with such defensive elements.

<sup>12</sup> After the reconstruction of Lviv Great Suburb synagogue designed by M. Gerl in 1870, it had risen by one tier, which was illuminated through large round windows. See: O. Boyko. The synagogues of Lviv.

<sup>13</sup> Jan Vyhodnyi, Joseph Uchtyvyi, Valentine Hodnyi, Joseph Bzhuh, Martyn Godlevskyi, or Wojciech Dembovskyi. See: M. Kowalczyk. Cech budowniczy we Lwowie. S. 82.



women's galleries on the empora, various synagogue buildings were located in the western body and an exit to the attic floor was arranged in the mass of its wall. The interior of the synagogue of that time preserved a Renaissance architectural structure.



**Fig. 12.** Synagogue in Zhovkva. A scheme, southern and eastern facades, and a longitudinal section. Measurements of the early 20th century: after A. Grotte [3].

## 6. The third stage and the restoration and reconstruction works of 1830s

When the new Austrian government came to power at the end of the 18th century, the works on eliminating town fortifications and reconstructing different buildings for administrative agencies began in Zhovkva, like in other towns in Halychyna. Then the walls from the Lviv Gate and Jewish Gate were partly disassembled, the Zamok Castle was adapted to being a prison, and plans appeared to rebuild the Town Hall. A project of reconstruction of the latter was even created in

1820 [33]. It was only at the end of the 19th century that the restoration works on the historic buildings began in the town. Then the Zverynetska Gate was restored by the architect Yu. Zahariievych [34], together with some walls in the Castle, the Rynok buildings, etc.

Large fire that happened in Zhovkva in 1833 heavily damaged the synagogue, among some other town buildings such as a parish Roman Catholic Church with a bell tower, a bell tower of the Vasylian Church, and a part of the Rynok stone buildings. The remedial works on the synagogue were substantial, in spite of the assertion by Schall that only facades of the temple were restored in the fourth decade of the 19th century [2]. These works covered the whole edifice, including interference into its constructive scheme. This scope of works obviously needed great resources



**Fig. 13.** Empora in the wall of western synagogue's body: photo taken in 2008.



**Fig. 14.** Fragment of a watercolour by E.-K. von Kronbah that depicts Zhovkva, 1823. A building under high roof with a break is identified as the synagogue (Lviv Historical Museum).

Given a small distance and close contacts of the communities, a builder could adopt something related to the Lviv synagogue, of which planning and spatial structures had justified themselves from the constructive viewpoint. It is believed that the Lviv Great Suburb synagogue started a new constructive scheme of the prayer hall, in which nine identical vaults of arch walls rested on four pillars moved apart [29]. The first half of the 17th century was also a time when the Ostroh synagogue appeared. It was built according to the same spatial and planning schemes. The Zhovkva synagogue also belongs to that type, in what refers to the reconstructed building, but not the original one. If one forms a chronological series of nine-field synagogues, then the synagogues built in Sambir (1732), Brody (1742), Peremyshliany (1747), Chervonohrad (1800), and Lviv (the Great Suburb one, 1801) stand before the Zhovkva synagogue (1830s).

The construction of the synagogue in Belz (1839–1845) falls around the time of reconstruction of the Zhovkva synagogue. The Belz synagogue had represented a pseudo-

and had to be conducted according to some projects developed in advance.

A large space of the prayer hall, on which the overlapping was based upon the central support, demanded more reliable supporting and structural systems. Therefore, the four columns moved apart were a perfect solution. The dimensions of the main hall of the Zhovkva synagogue ( $\sim 20.25 \times 20.25 \text{ m}^2$ ) are approximately equal to those of the Lviv Great Suburb one ( $20.10 \times 19.28 \text{ m}^2$ ) raised in 1632.



**Fig. 15.** Rynok Square in Zhovkva as it appears on the engraving by Zhyhovych from the middle of the 19th century. The stone building adjoining the Square, with an attic, represents a so-called "royal building"; the architect and builder P. Beber.

defensive structure characteristic of the 17th and 18th centuries (Fig. 17), with nine-field spatial and planning schemes [35, 36]. Perhaps, it was because of the attic typical for ancient fortress architectures that the author of numerous guidebooks Mieczyslaw Orlovich made it older, referring it to the 17th century [37]. The renowned culture-historian Vladyslav Antonyevych [38] and the architect-theorist Julian Zaharyevych [39]

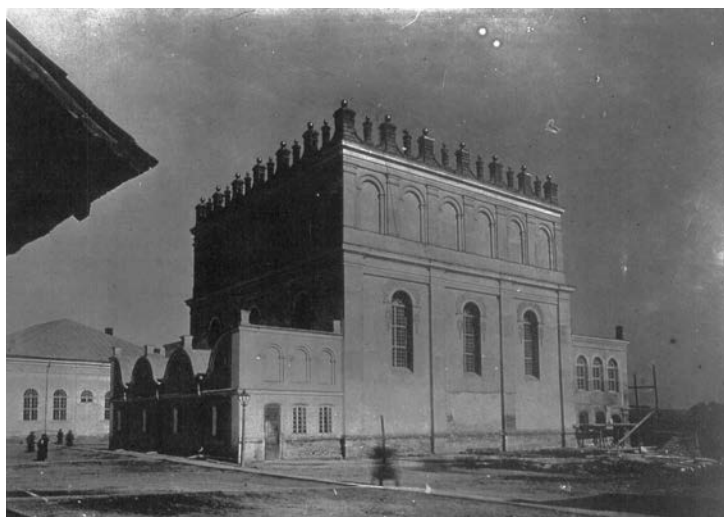




**Fig. 16.** Great Suburb synagogue in Lviv on the engraving by Perner (1772). According to: D. Zubrytskyi, *Chronicle of the city of Lviv*. Lviv, 2006

noticed that the Belz synagogue's architectonics was borrowed from the Zhovkva one. Placing of similar attics on the main bodies of the Belz and Zhovkva synagogues suggests some considerations. It is quite likely that the reconstruction of the Zhovkva synagogue and the construction of the Belz one were made by the same architect, who used the same architectural and structural schemes in the both buildings and gave them expressive defensive features. Nonetheless, these synagogues differed in style: the Zhovkva one still represented an old building with the Renaissance elements, while the Belz synagogue was built according to the classicist style prevailing at those times. A large-scale and well-thought-out reconstruction of the Zhovkva synagogue evidences of indisputable professionalism of the architect, and the same is true of the construction of the Belz one.

Vincent Ravskyi Senior could be the author of the Belz synagogue. In 1848, he reconstructed the monastery of Dominican Sisters in Belz [40]. It is possible that this work was performed by Ravskyi after he raised the synagogue. The interests of Ravskyi Sr. in the historical styles were also apparent in his neo-Gothic church of Sacre Coeur Sisters (1860) built in Lviv [41]. The reconstruction



**Fig. 17.** Synagogue in Belz (1845). A view from the southeast. The northern annex has been reconstructed in 1912; the southern one is still not reconstructed: photo taken in 1918 (Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk IS PAN neg. No 184904).



**Fig. 18.** Synagogue in Zhovkva. Southern facade. Openings in the windows reveal signs of lowering: photo taken in 2008.

of the Zhovkva synagogue could also be a result of work of someone from the Construction Administration of the Zhovkva District, in particular, an engineer Peter Peschkettl or an architect Ludwig Mayer, who then worked in that administration [42]. Knowing the restoration trends prevailing in the contemporary Europe, the architect considered as his rights and duties creating a more interesting building and decorating it with some Renaissance and Baroque

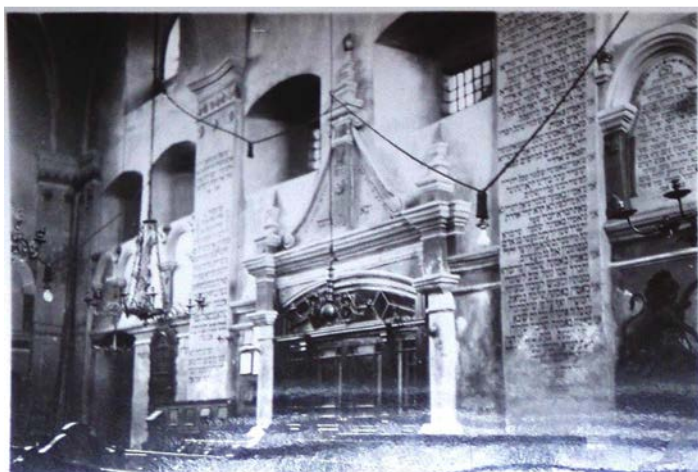
elements which the building had not before. In order to arrange the attic, the high initial body of the prayer hall, which obviously had a high roof destroyed by fire and a vault damaged, was lowered. These changes are easily read after careful inspection: all the large window openings contain traces of lowering (see Fig. 18 and Fig. 19). As I have already mentioned, the traces of lowering of the hall are observed on the roof storey, where the crenelle is too elevated above the arch. The change in the supporting and construction structure of the prayer hall (a single-bearer changed by a four-bearer structure) and the corresponding change in the vaults (eight of different sizes by nine of identical sizes) caused a situation when the axes of the extreme windows on each wall did not coincide with the axes of the vaults (see Fig. 10 and Fig. 20). The semicircular window arches shaped by bricks set edgewise were typical of the 19th century. Moreover, all the window openings retained classicism features inherent to the 19th century.



**Fig. 19.** Traces of lowering of a window on the northern facade: photo taken in 2008.



**Fig. 20.** Fragment of interior of the synagogue that includes an extreme window, of which axis does not coincide with the axis of the vault: photo taken in 2008.



**Fig. 21.** Western wall of the synagogue in Zhovkva with the main entrance: photo taken in the interwar period.

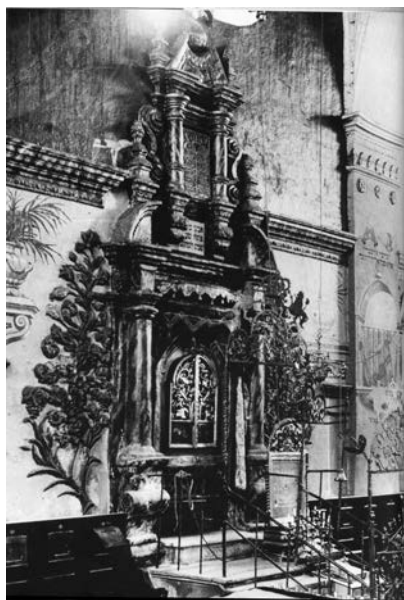
The new nine-field scheme imposed the walls of the prayer hall to be divided into three parts. The pilasters, with the width of 129–134 cm, divided every wall into three equal parts. Their functions might not have been only plastic but also constructive. On the other hand, the anta served a decorative rather than structural role, aligning among the window-piers. One could guess later origin of the pilasters issuing from

the fact that they were cut into the wall, with no ligation and with dentils inserted. The use of brick of the Austrian period could be another evidence of the hypothesis. The masonries of the walls (the 17th and 18th centuries) and the pilasters (the 19th century) differ by both bricks and mortars. During the reconstruction, the pilasters and the columns were decorated by rosettes with palmettes. The fields of the vaults were decorated by formed geometric patterns, with rosettes located at the intersection of ribs and on the booms of arch walls.

The mixed Renaissance and Baroque interior became more distinct through the introduction of new pseudo-Baroque elements. The portal of the main entrance was decorated by brick columns and a high gable, which ended among the empora windows (see Fig. 21). Aron Kodesh with the ancient niche was decorated still more luxuriantly. It acquired the appearance of a two-tier Baroque portal flanked with small half-columns and completed with a gable with a Hebraic inscription. Two luxury stems with leaves and flowers of acanthus made more distinct its uniqueness and framed the Aron Kodesh on its sides (see Fig. 22). A round window was arranged on the axis of the eastern wall, above the Torah niche, which emphasized a sacred nature of this monumental structure. The restoration of the synagogue had ended with artistic decoration. The walls of the prayer hall were covered with paintings of typical subjects encompassing symbolic animals and Hebraic inscriptions. As stressed by M. Balaban in 1924, the main hall “was once beautifully painted and still had traces of polychromy remembered” [20].

Sadok Barącz described the interior of the synagogue in the middle of the 19th century, just after the thorough reconstruction as follows: “The synagogue is built in the style of Polish Renaissance. The columns in the interior contain gilt capitals, which support the vault, while flowers at the altar amaze anyone by delicacy of their design. Being grateful to Jan III, the Jews of Zhovkva put his family coat of arms of Janina and the Polish eagles on the walls of the synagogue. On the east wall, a Hebraic inscription “Father in Heaven, open the gate of heaven to our prayers” is also seen above the Aron Kodesh. A goalpost made from a sheet metal and decorated from above by little brass lions may be found before the Aron Kodesh. The bema is framed by wrought grate. Naive motifs from the animal world are seen on the bema. It rises among the four columns located in the foreground of the synagogue. Among the other cultic subjects, a Hebrew Menorah founded of brass deserves attention, with Hebrew inscriptions of names of the people that funded

it, and the date "(5)593 (from A.D. 1833)". There is a Mizrah in the synagogue that has a rectangular shape, with the date "5600 (from A.D. 1840)", which has been sponsored by Moshe Beirish Bindel" [1]. A sculpture in the lunettes of vault was also worth noticing in the interior. The vault was decorated in its locks by the Polish eagles [1]. The bema was located on a dais in the middle of the hall, being decorated by the forged fence containing the coat of arms of the Austrian Empire, the two-headed eagle (Fig. 23).



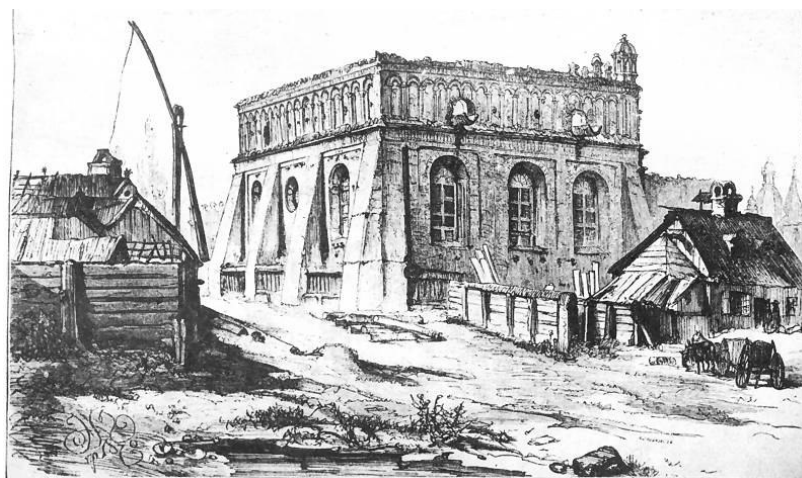
**Fig. 22.** *Aron Kodesh* of the Zhovkva synagogue: photo taken in 1927. According to: *Treasure of Jewish Galicia*.Fig.

**Fig. 23.** Forged bema with the Austrian double-headed eagle: photo taken in 1927. According to: *Treasure of Jewish Galicia*.

The architectural solutions of the exterior of the Zhovkva synagogue display the style of romanticism to no less extent. During the reconstruction in 1830s, an attic was arranged that was called as “defensive” by the researchers in the beginning of the 20th century. Its tier with the motif of a blind arcade had something in common with the Renaissance blind-arcade belt under the windows in the interior. The attic had a refined appearance and well decorated the synagogue. Today the crown, which includes volutes and small columns and is flanked by small cornerstone towers, surmounts the attic only on the front western facade; the rest of the facades have only a single tier decorated by the blind arcade (a so-called “Kraków attic”). The same was also true of the building at the end of the 19th century, as evidenced by the drawing by J. Mateiko from 1871 (see Fig. 24). Probably, the attic had such an appearance from the very beginning of its creation in 1830s. Mateyko depicted it in its demolished state, with street gutters. The crown of the attic can be seen in the drawing on the butt-end (eastern) wall of the parterre women’s prayer hall (i.e., at the southern wall). Its character echoes the attic in the front facade of the synagogue. It is obvious that the attics were built simultaneously.

The strong buttresses that strengthened the eastern and northern walls, gave the synagogue a monumental character (see Fig. 25a). Their later origin could be claimed basing on the facts that the corresponding brickwork meant no ligation with the walls, whereas the brick was made in the 19th century. On the draft cadastre from 1842 [43], the synagogue was depicted with no buttresses, though the latter were already recorded in the cadastres referred to 1854 [44] and 1872 [45]. The

architectonics of the reconstructed building was highlighted by the Lisenen characteristic of Baroque. They divided the planes of the facades of the main body into three parts.



**Fig. 24.** Zhovkva synagogue as it appears in the drawing by Jan Matejko (1871). According to: Kłosy, 1871. Vol. XII.



(a)



(b)



(c)

**Fig. 25.** Synagogue in Zhovkva after repairing and restoration works of 1955–1956. Views of the main facade (a); from northwest (b) and northeast (c): photos taken by V. Olkhomiak, 1957, Lviv.

The western body of the synagogue was crowned by a saw-tooth “attic” formed with triangular pediments of double-pitch abat-jours. During the reconstruction, the front facade was decorated with exquisite manneristic portals. The portals were decorated using bricks and modelling rather than white stone. Interestingly, this resembles the decor of Aron Kodesh in the Zhmyhorod synagogue (the Western Halychyna, now Poland). That the portals should be of later



origin is testified by a plaster with painting found under the moulded decor. In addition, unlike the other two portals, the southern one is off-axis and its decor gets as far as to the window, a deficiency that no architect could have tolerated when constructing the building. During the restoration, all the window openings in the front facade were decorated by profiled margins drawn using plaster, like in the perspective portals.

Hence, the Zhovkva synagogue has become an expressive and stylish building after the extensive reconstruction carried out in 1830s. The interpretation of the attic, with the crown present on the front facade, as such that has lost its original defensive character and assumed the features of the Kraków Renaissance [46], is an attempt of historians to indulge in wishful thinking. In fact, it was just then, in 1830s, that the main body of the synagogue was crowned by the Kraków attic and, what is more, that crown was equipped only on the western facade. The restoration changed spatial and compositional schemes of the large prayer hall, with the area of 400 m<sup>2</sup>. It was blocked by a system of counterbracing vaults supported by arch walls, with the latter resting upon the four mighty pillars of a circular cross section (the diameter of 1.70 m). The prayer hall was lit through large windows with semicircular arches (three of them on the northern and southern facades, and two windows with additional round one between them on the eastern one; the western wall contained three similar windows, though somewhat shorter. The walls were covered with characteristic paintings. After a look at the decoration of vaults peculiar of the parish Roman Catholic church, the vaults of the synagogue were decorated with a manneristic ornament. Moreover, the Tuscan columns and the pilasters were decorated with outlets and saw palmettes, which strengthened the romanticism of the building.

## 7. The fourth stage (the 20th century)

The question of restoration of the synagogue was put because of its bad condition at the beginning of the 20th century (see Fig. 26). This fact was reported in the documents stored at the Lviv Historical Archives, in particular in the correspondence between the community and the Conservation Office. The head of this administration L. Finkel supported the idea of restoration. On November 10, 1904 the Jewish community addressed a letter to Dr. Yuliush Shumlanskyi, a



**Fig. 26.** Synagogue in Zhovkva before its restoration carried out in 1908. View from the northeast.  
The source: [www.bagnowka.com](http://www.bagnowka.com)



senior head of the province in Zhovkva, requesting to allocate 1,000 Austrian crowns to restore the synagogue [47]. The required amount was promised to be granted on the condition that the conservation should be performed under the supervision of the organization called Grono Konservatorske [48]. However, the restoration works that began in 1908 were not conformed to the Grono. In spite of the historic nature of the building, the community leaders prompted to cover the walls, once revealing the traditional paintings, with a pink paint, and to decorate them with



**Fig. 27.** Synagogue in Zhovkva before the restoration carried out in 1908: photo taken in the early 20th century. Lviv Historical Museum.



**Fig. 28.** Synagogue in Zhovkva after the restoration works carried out in 1908. The source: [www.bagnowka.com](http://www.bagnowka.com)

bright festoons. As characterized by M. Balaban, this looked “not unlike a bad summer theatre or a wine tavern of those days” [20]. The documents of the Conservation Office stated that the walls of the synagogue were re-painted by the Lviv theatre artist Zygmund Balk so that the remnants of polychromy originated from the first half of the 19th century, were destroyed. The attempts by the Grono to exert pressure on the community, in order to get the new “unaesthetic” paintings removed, had not crowned with success [49]. Obviously, some restoration of the facades was then also performed, as could be seen from the photos taken in different years (see Fig. 27 and Fig. 28). In particular, the attic was restored, including its coronal cornice (Fig. 29); the western synagogue’s body was emphasized by two obelisks on its sides, while the shape of the extreme (from the south) window on the front facade was changed from rectangular to semicircular.

A vestibule leading to the sanctuary was restored in 1935 [32]. The restoration works started in 1938 were concerned with the exterior. Then the facades were planned to be plastered in order to prevent their destruction [2]. However, the works planned had not been fulfilled due to lack of funds. As a consequence, the synagogue had remained not plastered while working. This is why the allegation that the synagogue was forbidden for whitewashing by the Catholic clergy, to say, so

that through its smartness it did not overshadowed Roman Catholic churches of Zhovkva, is nothing but a beautiful legend invented by Jakób Schall, which was picked up by many researchers later on.



**Fig. 29.** Synagogue in Zhovkva from the northeast: photo taken in 1920s. National Museum in Lviv.

Already in the early days of German occupation, in 1941, the Nazis tried to destroy the synagogue. After attempts to undermine it (see Fig. 30) the southern women's gallery was completely destroyed, while the western body lost its roof and the ceiling empora (only traces of the latter had remained). Three fields of vaults and columns were destroyed in the main prayer hall, together with the roof above that hall (Fig. 31).

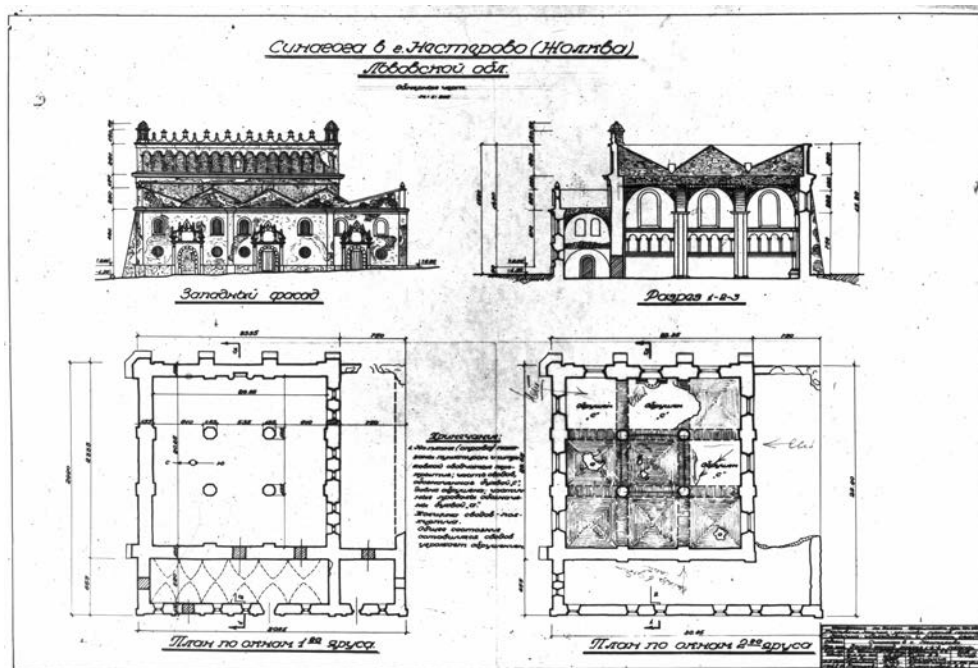


**Fig. 30.** Arson of the Zhovkva synagogue by the Nazis (1941). The source: [www.bagnowka.com](http://www.bagnowka.com)



**Fig. 31.** Synagogue in ruin. View from the southwest: photo taken in the late 1940s. According to: Collection by V. Nakopalo, Lviv.

According to documentation developed under the direction of Hovdenko [25], some works on repairing the synagogue were conducted in the times of the Soviet Union (1955–1956) (see Fig. 32). Then the brick columns destroyed earlier were repaired and the lost vaults of the prayer hall recreated (Fig. 33). Moreover, the roofs over the main and the western bodies were staged and



**Fig. 32.** Measurements of the synagogue led by G. Hovdenko and performed in 1955–1956. Taken from the Architecture Administration of the Lviv Region.

the two entrances in the front facade sealed, along with all the six windows of the shattered southern woman's prayer. Instead of the folded roof over the western synagogue structures, a protective lean-to roof was built, which covered three windows of the main prayer hall (Fig. 34).



**Fig. 33.** A column and an arch of the main prayer hall reconstructed in 1955–1956: photo taken in 2008.

The open brick walls of the synagogue were finally plastered (see Fig. 25 displaying the photos by V. Olkhomiak dated from 1957). Unfortunately, these works had affected neither the portal of the main entrance into the prayer hall, nor the Torah niche, the destruction of which is continuing in our days (see Fig. 35 and Fig. 36).

In 1963, the partially restored synagogue was included to the National Register of Architectural Monuments under the conservative number 389 [25]. Despite the resulting status, the synagogue building was continued to be used as a warehouse. Furthermore, a question of its high-end restoration had arisen. Some preliminary restoration works were made in 1970: a full-scale survey, photographic fixing, and gathering of relevant historical information (the architect Ihor Starosolsky and the art historian Sofia Bokalo). However, that was all really done [50]. In 1980, a project concerned with the restoration and





**Fig. 34.** Temporary roof over the western synagogue's body: photo taken in 2008.

adaptation of the synagogue for its use as a museum were elaborated at the Institute "Ukrzakhidproektrestavratsiya" (Lviv) [51]. This project suggested restoring the southern annex, arranging the folded roof over the main and the western bodies, and making an attic crown around the entire building. However, the project had not gone any further than becoming a piece of paperwork signed.

Beginning from the early 1990s, some efforts were being made in order to perform the required restoration after all, since the synagogue began to turn into a ruin. In 1993, the

Institute "Ukrzakhidproektrestavratsiya" in Lviv conducted anew a full-scale survey and necessary architectural measurements<sup>14</sup>. However, the restoration works again became hampered by a lack of funds. The question of restoration of the synagogue was put once more on the eve of celebrations of the 400th anniversary of the Magdeburg law in Zhovkva (2003). In 2001 archaeological excavations were carried out in the devastated southern gallery [9], while in 2007 the Institute "Ukrzakhidproektrestavratsiya" developed the working documentation necessary for restoration and reconstruction of the facades and reconstruction of the southern gallery [52] (see Fig. 37). According to the documentation, a crown with columns and volutes was suggested to be made around the entire building. Unfortunately, due to lack of adequate funds for the restoration, none concept of holistic restoration of the synagogue had yet been developed. The only real thing made was covering, in 2007, the main body of the synagogue with a sheet copper.

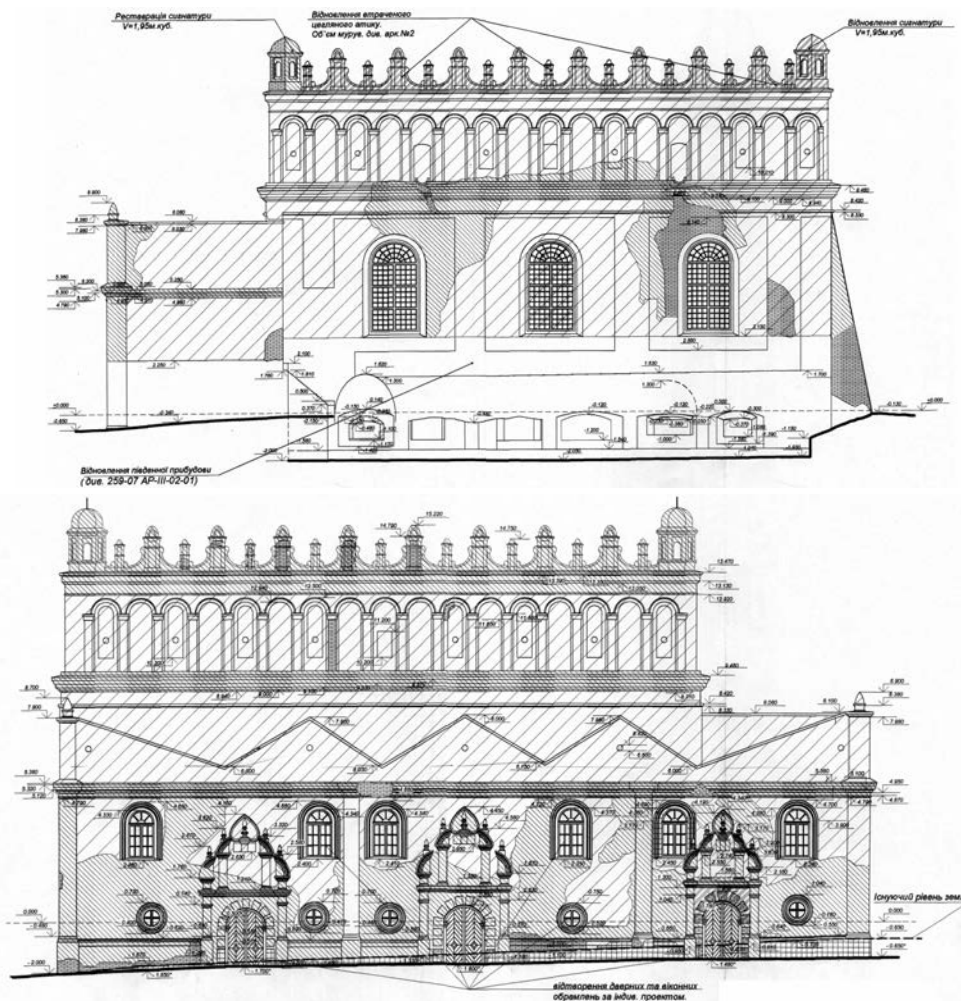


**Fig. 35.** Main entrance from the direction of the prayer hall: photo taken in 2008.



**Fig. 36.** Synagogue in Zhovkva. A preserved niche of Aron Kodesh at the axis of the eastern wall of the prayer hall: photo taken in 2008.

<sup>14</sup> The works were performed by a group of architects led by Ihor Maksymyak, The Institute "Ukrzakhidproektrestavratsiya", Lviv.



**Fig. 37.** Synagogue in Zhovkva. Western and southern facades. Restoration project (2007). Architect A. Vasylyna. Source: Archive of the Institute "Ukrzakhidproektrestavratsiya", Lviv.



**Fig. 38.** Fragment of attic above the main body: photo taken in 2008.

The Zhovkva synagogue, in its shape that reached our times, with manneristic portals and an attic, does not represent an authentic Renaissance-Baroque building, being rather a result of the thorough reconstruction of 1830s. Then the spatial and constructive structures of its prayer hall changed, and the whole building acquired pseudo-defensive features highlighted by a specific attic and powerful buttresses (see Fig. 25a and Fig. 38). However, the fact that the today's monument has not enough in common with the original construction

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does not detract from a great architectural value of the synagogue. Quite the contrary, it becomes the most interesting synagogue of defensive type, since the development of its construction shows the two designing and dimensional structures characteristic of the synagogues of Ukraine: those with a single supporting bema and with four bearers (i.e., a nine-field one). Replacement of the first constructive scheme by the second one clearly underlines superiority of the latter. Therefore, the Zhovkva synagogue offers a beautiful piece of development of architectural organization of the synagogues in the Ukrainian lands.

### Acknowledgement

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*Анотація. В статті розглядається будівельний розвиток мурованої синагоги в Жовкві – однієї з найбільших синагог у Східній Європі. В планувально-просторовому вирішенні вона демонструє дві структури, характерні для українських синагог Галичини і Волині: з бімою-опорою і дев'ятипільну. Заміна першої конструктивної схеми на другу наочно підкреслює перевагу другої, поширеної на українських землях.*