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# **An Outline History of the Koniecpol Jewish Community to the Outbreak of World War I**

## **Introduction**

Koniecpol is a small town located on the Pilica River, in the Śląsk Province. It is also the seat of the municipal-village authorities. When it came into existence, the town was administratively attached to the Sieradzkie Province. However, as a result of the Second Partition, its terrain was incorporated into South Prussia. It found itself within the Kalisz Department of the Duchy of Warsaw from 7th July 1807, the day that the Duchy came into being. Over the following years, Koniecpol became a part of the Congress Kingdom of Poland and the Kalisz Province. Later, it became a part of the Piotrkowski Governate and the Noworadomszczański District<sup>1</sup>. In Hebrew, Koniecpol was called *Sade Chadash*, which is literally translates as *Nowe Pole (New Fields)*. This name is not coincidental as, at its very beginning, in source material, Koniecpol appears as *Nowopole*.

The history of the town is an extremely rich one. It begins in Budapest, the capital of Hungary, on 29th December 1443. King Władysław III Jagiellończyk, gave Przedbor of Koniecpol the right to establish a town with Magdeburg Rights<sup>2</sup>. Over the centuries, the town belonged to different families. Its original owner was, of course, the Koniecpolski family. Others to subsequently own it for a short time were the Walewski, Lubomirski, Czapski and, later, the Potocki families. A significant event for Koniecpol came in 1559 when King Zygmunt August granted it the privilege to organise weekly fairs and market days. This was ratified in 1640 by King Władysław IV. In 1774, by a decision of King Stanisław August Poniatowski, the fairs were moved from Sundays to Thursday<sup>3</sup>. Thanks to this privilege to organise weekly fairs and market days, trading between local merchants developed which, at the same time, contributed to the development of the town. It is therefore not surprising that, over the first years of its existence, Koniecpol was a small town specialising in the trade of handicrafts, agricultural and farm products<sup>4</sup>. Jews also involved themselves in that trade, which played an important role in the town's history – a fact which is often overlooked in various historical analyses. In the works, to date, of local historians devoted to Koniecpol, one can only find very short, even concise, references to the centuries-old history of Koniecpol Jews<sup>5</sup>. No work has been produced, thus far, which discusses this topic more broadly. For this reason, it is the intention of this paper to present, on the basis of available sources, the history of the Jewish community of Koniecpol, from its beginnings until the outbreak of World War I.

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<sup>1</sup> P. Wolnicki, *Budżet miasta Koniecpola w okresie Księstwa Warszawskiego i Królestwa Polskiego*, "Zeszyty Naukowe Instytutu Administracji AJD w Częstochowie" 2015, No. 1 (11), pp. 205–206.

<sup>2</sup> T. Nowak, *Historia Koniecpola*, Koniecpol 2006, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40–41

<sup>4</sup> T. Mączyński, *Plan Koniecpola. Przeszłość i teraźniejszość* (maszynopis w zbiorach autora), Koniecpol 1991, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Local historians, such as Tadeusz Nowak, Stanisław Mączyński, Tadeusz Mączyński and others of the Friends of Koniecpol Society, all wrote about the history of the town.

## The First Jews in Koniecpol

Jews were first granted the privilege of settling in Koniecpol, by Stanisław Koniecpolski, on 14th May 1629<sup>6</sup>. He exempted the Jewish population from paying taxes for twelve years. Moreover, they were permitted to buy houses in the town, but only within a specially designated area, i.e. on ulica Lelowskiej and on ulica Bociankach, where they were also permitted to build synagogues. In addition, the rabbi, the cantor, the sexton (*shammes*) and their households were also exempted from paying taxes. The Jews were also permitted to engage in trade, being able to buy goods from villages, from Polish towns and from abroad. Similarly, they were allowed to sell goods in front of their homes, in the market square, from stalls, at the fairs and at the markets. Among other rights, they were also permitted to slaughter cattle, bake bread, weigh beer and sell alcohol, in small dishes, inside and outside the town. What is important is that Jews had no obligations with respect to the town's craft guilds and could lend money, for interest, according to the Royal Statute. What are interesting are the rules of conduct, set out in the privilege, in the instance of conflict. Should one of the Jews have been accused by another resident, a Christian, then the right to judge him would belong to a Jewish elder. In the reverse situation, it would be the town mayor who would resolve the issue. In the event of a quarrel or dispute, Jews and all the townspeople would be fined fifty coins<sup>7</sup>. It is worth stressing that the granting of such a broad privilege to the Jewish population was a desire to accelerate the development of the town – which had both good and bad aspects. On the one hand, in a significant way, it hindered integration with the Polish population, due to the Jews shutting themselves within a designated, limited, living area within which they developed their lives. On the other hand, it minimised the risk for ethnic conflicts, with the Jews cultivating their own customs and traditions within the area in which they resided.

As the result of an epidemic which hit Koniecpol in 1653, the town was significantly depopulated. The situation prompted Aleksander Koniecpolski to issue another Privilege on 5<sup>th</sup> August of that year. That document confirmed earlier relief for the inhabitants. It also issued an invitation for craftsmen to come to the town, in particular goldsmiths, carpenters, saddlers, coopers, blacksmiths, wheelwrights and others. The privilege also looked after the Jewish population. From that document, we learn that there were nine Jewish houses in Koniecpol which were exempted from public taxation<sup>8</sup>. The privileges granted influenced the

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<sup>6</sup> J. Goldberg, *Jewish privileges in the Polish commonwealth: charters of rights granted to Jewish communities in Poland–Lithuania in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries: critical edition of original Latin, Polish and German documents with English introductions and notes*, Vol. 2, Jerusalem 2001, pp. 152–154. Father Stanisław Okamfer also mentions this privilege in his work *Kościelne dzieje Parafii Koniecpol od czasów powstania do roku 1818*, Koniecpol–Poznań 1993, pp. 123–124. Okamfer says that the privilege was granted on 14<sup>th</sup> May 1620, which is not possible, since Stanisław Koniecpolski, at that time, was in the Battle of Cecora and was later held captive by the Turks. The author of this publication refers here to records held in the County Mortgage Archive in Radomsko. Koniecpol mortgage records from the years 1823–1828, which records that the mortgage on property No 15 in the town of Koniecpol No. Rep. 8, p. 22, was a Jewish Privilege settlement in the town of Koniecpol. A search of these archives proved unsuccessful. These collections are not in the State Archives in Kielce. The State Archive in Piotrków Trybunalski hold the real mortgage records of the Radomszczański District. This specific record is not there, but others are held there relating to the town of Koniecpol. It is worth stressing that S. Okamfer finished writing his work in 1955. Initially, it was a typewritten manuscript which was only published, following the author's death, by the Friends of Koniecpol Society. While working on his monograph, the author used parish records which, at the time, were still held in the Koniecpol Parish Archive prior to 1955. They were eventually transferred to the Diocesan Archive in Kielce. However, a part of the records were lost, which I confirmed when I visited the Archive Jerzy Żmudziński, who prepared Okamfer's work for printing, also recalls this. Therefore, as noted by the author in the preface, in some fragments, Okamfer's book simultaneously becomes a source, as this author of church history was the only one to be able to access many of the archives.

<sup>7</sup> J. Goldberg, op.cit., pp. 152–154.

<sup>8</sup> S. Okamfer, *Kościelne dzieje Parafii Koniecpol od czasów powstania do roku 1818*, Koniecpol–Poznań 1993, p. 67, 124.

development of the town, as it attracted wealthy Jews, as evidenced by the fact that certain Koniecpol Jews took part in the Lipsk (Leipzig) fairs. According to preserved data, two Jewish Koniecpol merchants took part in fairs in 1675 and 1679<sup>9</sup>.

A subsequent privilege for the town's resident Jews was issued by Jan Aleksander Koniecpolski on 20<sup>th</sup> March 1695<sup>10</sup>. That document is important as it eliminated the so-called "Jewish district". Jews were now able to buy and build brick homes on the market square and on any other street of their choice. That privilege also defined the tax to be paid by the Jewish population of beer, honey and wine. Jan Aleksander Koniecpolski also permitted Jews have their records included in the municipal registry, as the result of their synagogue records having been burned<sup>11</sup>.

## The Jewish Community Against the Background of Koniecpol Residents

The size of the Jewish population of Koniecpol varied over time. A large number of Jews was confirmed on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1680 during the Canonical Visitation of the Kurzelowski Archdeacon Father Mateusz Orłowski. However, just how large that number was is not specified<sup>12</sup>. In 1764, 394 Jews lived in Koniecpol, namely 110 families who lived in 70 houses, of which only one was not privately owned<sup>13</sup>. According to 1765 data, namely one year later, "the Koniecpol synagogue together with its parish", meaning the community, numbered 733 individuals out of the 4,950 Jews resident in the Province<sup>14</sup>. In the years 1793-1794, the percentage of the Jewish populace was equally high - 24.17% (228 out of the 943 town residents). Valuable statistics are quoted by Henryk Grossman. These were prepared for the area of the Duchy of Warsaw on the basis of a census. According to those numbers, in 1808, Koniecpol Jews constituted 23.7% of all the town's residents (440 out of 1,857 town residents<sup>15</sup>). In 1824, 90 Jewish families lived in the town, numbering 397 individuals<sup>16</sup>. In the town, whose territory had expanded as described earlier, the Jewish community at the time numbered 128 families, comprising 582 individuals<sup>17</sup>. In the following years, the number of Jewish residents grew gradually. In 1827, it stood at 30.2% (444 out of 1,469)<sup>18</sup>, in 1857 almost 41.4% (726 out of 1,755) and, in 1866, 43.1% of all residents (817 out of 1,893)<sup>19</sup>. In 1870, Koniecpol lost its municipal rights (which were only regained in 1927). As a result, over the next few years, it is difficult to obtain precise information as to the number of

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<sup>9</sup> I. Schiper, *Dzieje handlu żydowskiego na ziemiach polskich*, Warsaw 1937, pp. 173–174.

<sup>10</sup> S. Okamfer, op. cit., p. 71.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 69–70.

<sup>13</sup> *Koniecpol (Sade Chadasz)*, (in:) D. Dąbrowska, A. Wein (ed.), *Pinkas ha-kehilot Polin: encyklopedia shel ha-yeiszuvin ha-yechudiyim le-min hiwasdamwe ad le-ahar sho'at milchemet ha-olam he-sh niya*, Jerusalem 1976, p. 233. The edition I used was accessed here: [http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/pinkas\\_poland/po11\\_00233.html](http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/pinkas_poland/po11_00233.html) (accessed: 24/05/2017).

<sup>14</sup> J. Kleczyński, F. Kluczycki, *Liczba głów żydowskich w Koronie z taryf roku 1765*, Krakow 1898, p. 7.

<sup>15</sup> H. Grossman, *Struktura społeczna i gospodarcza Księstwa Warszawskiego na podstawie spisów ludności 1808–1810*, Warsaw 1925, p. 93.

<sup>16</sup> AGAD, CWW, Ref. 1439 (Records Concerning the Administration of Jewish Communities, Main, Vol. 1, 1821–1829).

<sup>17</sup> Apart from Koniecpol, other Jewish families also lived in Soborzyce (2 families, 10 people), Okołowice (1 family, 4 people), Baba (1 family, 5 people), Ulesa (2 families, 7 people), Rogaczówek (1 family, 5 people), Garnek (6 families, 23 people), Piaski and Wymysłow (2 families, 10 people), Kajetanowice (1 family, 5 people), Chmielarze (1 family, 4 people), Dąbek (1 family, 7 people), Milionow (1 family, 10 people), Cielętniki (1 family, 5 people), Sekursko (1 family, four people), Borzykówka (2 families, 10 people), Bugaj (1 family, 6 people), Żytno (9 families, 50 people), Mała Wieś (2 families, 10 people), Silnica (3 families, 11 people).

<sup>18</sup> F. Rodecki, *Obraz jeograficzno-statystyczny Królestwa Polskiego*, Warsaw 1830.

<sup>19</sup> F. Sulimierski, B. Chlebowski, W. Walewski, *Słownik geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego i innych krajów słowiańskich*, Vol. IV, Warsaw 1883, p. 330.

residents, as published statistics, e.g. the official 1897 census<sup>20</sup>, was only provided for cities. For example, in the 1912 Congress Kingdom of Poland Yearbook, it states that Jews comprised 8.6% of the residents of the entire Province (601 out of 7,014)<sup>21</sup>, from which we understand that this includes Koniecpol and its community. By comparison with 1921, they comprised 45.3% (1,077 out of 2,377) of the residents of Koniecpol<sup>22</sup>.

The dynamics of the population growth at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century can be observed on the basis of analysing the civil register of the Koniecpol Synagogue District<sup>23</sup>, especially those records relating to births and deaths. While this is a valuable and helpful resource, especially for genealogical research, it also provides information about the pace of the community's development. They show that, in the period 1903-1913, there were 384 births in the Koniecpol Jewish community – the most in 1913 (52) and 43 in 1903 and 1907. The fewest numbers were in 1911 (25) and 1908 (26)<sup>24</sup>. The situation was slightly different when it came to deaths, as the total number of deaths during that entire period was 194, which indicates that the birth rate was significantly higher. The greatest number of deaths noted was in 1904 (35), while the fewest occurred in 1905 and 1908 (10)<sup>25</sup>. During that period, births exceeded deaths by 190.

It is also worth noting that there were instances where Jews born in the Koniecpol district were recorded in other Synagogue Districts, e.g. in Szczekociny. Jewish marriages also appear in the Szczekociny records. According to the data contained in those registries, during the years 1808-1914, 30 Jews from Szczekociny married Jewish residents of Koniecpol<sup>26</sup>.

## The Diversity of the Koniecpol Jewish Community

Just as with every community, the Jewish community was diverse, not only according to age, but above all by occupation and by position held within the community. Amongst the Koniecpol Jews, in 1764, there were three tailors, two goldsmiths, a glazier, a bookbinder, four butchers, a men's barber, two Klezmer musicians, two clowns (artists), a teacher, two rabbis, a cantor and a synagogue employee (*shammes*). That list is by no means complete. Those not included are, for example, the group of professionals, in particular the traders, who, initially, occupied the most important positions amongst the Jews. Koniecpol was in a very beneficial location, which was conducive to the development of trade, especially with

<sup>20</sup> N.A. Trojnickij (ed.), *Pierwaja Wsieobszczaja pieriepis nasielienija Rossijskoj Impieri 1897 goda*, Vol. 56: *Pietrowskaja gubernija*, St Petersburg 1903.

<sup>21</sup> W. Grabski (ed.), *Rocznik Statystyczny Królestwa Polskiego*, Warsaw 1915, pp. 22–23. The Yearbook shows that the Catholics in the municipality of Koniecpol numbered 6,399 and the Jews 601. Protestants were not reported. As the total number, 7,014 individuals are given which, however, seems to be incorrect because, after adding all the columns in the table, we arrive at a total of 7,000. Maybe this is simply a mistake or the 14 missing individuals are those of a religion which was not included in the list. By comparison, in 1909, Koniecpol had 3,088 residents, (in:) M. Nietyksza, *Rozwój miast i aglomeracji miejsko-przemysłowych w Królestwie Polskim 1865–1914*, Warsaw 1986, p. 370.

<sup>22</sup> B. Wasiutyński, *Ludność żydowska w Polsce w wiekach XIX i XX. Studium statystyczne*, Warsaw 1930, p. 29.

<sup>23</sup> Archiwum Państwowe w Częstochowie (later: APCz), Civil records of the Koniecpol Synagogue District – births, deaths and marriages, Ref. 8/538/0/1890, 1900, 1903–1913. This is a random enquiry. Civil records from that period are preserved in collections held at the States Archives in Łódź.

<sup>24</sup> Birth numbers were as follows: 1903 – 43 individuals, 1904 – 35, 1905 – 30, 1906 – 29, 1907 – 43, 1908 – 26, 1909 – 37, 1910 – 32, 1911 – 25, 1912 – 32 i 1913 – 52.

<sup>25</sup> Death numbers were as follows: 1903 – 22 individuals, 1904 – 35, 1905 – 10, 1906 – 22, 1907 – 15, 1908 – 10, 1909 – 17, 1910 – 20, 1911 – 17, 1912 – 14 i 1913 – 12.

<sup>26</sup> L. Frączek, *Ludność parafii szczekocińskiej 1808–1914 w świetle ksiąg metrykalnych*, a Ph.D. thesis written under the supervision of Prof. Dr. hab. Piotr Franaszek, Uniwersytet Jagielloński, Krakow 2010, p. 33, 94–95.

Kraków. It was on the road running through Krzeszowice, Olkusz and Lelow, which allowed Koniecpol to connect Krakowa with towns in the Sieradzkie Province and the western part of the Sandomierskie Province. There were also several communications links here<sup>27</sup>. It is not surprising that trade between Koniecpol and Kraków developed relatively well, especially for the Jewish merchants.

This information even appears in *Wypisach z krakowskich rejestrów celnych z lat 1593–1683*<sup>28</sup>. In those records, in 1636, Salomon Aronowicz appears. He brought two barrels of unprocessed honey from Koniecpol to Kraków<sup>29</sup>. There is also mention of Salomon, a Jew from Koniecpol, who brought seven barrels of unprocessed honey to the city and three on another occasion<sup>30</sup>. The similarity of names, here, does not guarantee that it is the same person, even though the entries refer to the same year - 1636. Another Koniecpol merchant, whose name appears in the abovementioned sources, is Mojżesz, who brought 24 or 25 sheets of paper from Kraków.

Koniecpol Jews' contacts are confirmed by accounts found in 1651 in the home of Marek Szydłowski, a Jew from Kazimierz. Amongst the various accounts which confirm the trade contacts are also documents relating to Jakub Izaakowicz of Koniecpol. From the years 1648-1660, there are 68 items noted on the topic of goods which were transported to Kraków from the towns mentioned in the Sieradzkie Province. Of those, more than 20% originate from Koniecpol. One of the Kraków merchants, who maintained trade links with Koniecpol, was Janas Chęciński who, midway through November 1655, brought four barrels of honey from Pilica to Kraków. The second most popular type of stock, sent to Kraków, was wax. Sources confirm that Koniecpol Jewish merchants were already providing honey to the Kraków market at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. An analysis of the statistic shows that exports from Kraków to Koniecpol were decidedly higher than imports. In the years 1648–1660, a total of ten transports left for Kraków (one each in February, March, May, July, two in June, November and December). In total, four transports left for Koniecpol (one each in June, September, October and December).

It was not only Jews who were involved in trade between Koniecpol and Kraków in the latter period. For example, in 1750, 30.5 barrels of honey were taken to Kraków from Koniecpol while, in 1763, Kraków sold 120 scythes to Koniecpol<sup>31</sup>. The trade contacts of Koniecpol merchants were not just limited to Kraków, as goods were also exported abroad. This is confirmed by data on the turnover of goods in the customs office of the Sandomierz Province. From that, it appears that foreign buyers would often buy pigs from Koniecpol. During one buyer's visit to Przedborz in 1764, 85 pigs from Koniecpol were sold. In 1765, another 19 were sold, while in Opatowiec in that same year, there was the sale of a further 250, during four visits<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> For example, the Koniecpol–Opoczno line ran through Kurzelow, Przedborz, Żarnow, Białaczow, through to Opoczna, where it connected with the Kraków-Warsaw line. In addition, the Koniecpol–Radomsko and Koniecpol–Piotrków lines ran through Żytno, Kobile Wielkie and Rozprzę, ending in Piotrków Trybunalski (M. Kulczykowski, M. Frančic, *Kraków jako ośrodek towarowy Małopolski Zachodniej w drugiej połowie XVIII wieku*, Warsaw 1963, p. 23).

<sup>28</sup> *Handel żydowski w Krakowie w końcu XVI i w XVII wieku. Wypisy z krakowskich rejestrów celnych z lat 1593–1683*, by J.M. Małecki, Kraków 1995, p. 106, 108, 114, 118.

<sup>29</sup> A barrel could contain loose or liquid material – from 60 to 120 gallons, equivalent to 200-400 litres.

<sup>30</sup> A “śledziowka” was the description of a barrel in which was stored herring and other salted fish.

<sup>31</sup> M. Kulczykowski, M. Frančic, op. cit., p. 53, 106.

<sup>32</sup> Z. Guldon, L. Stępkowski, *Statystyka obrotów towarowych na komorach celnych województwa sandomierskiego 1764–1766*, Kielce 1986, p. 35, 112, 121.

The Koniecpol Herszlik family had a rich merchant tradition, as attested to by 1765-1766 international trade data. In a table of Warsaw merchants who were active in international trade, "Herszlik of Koniecpol" appears three times in customs office records over the two-year period. In 1766, it appears in Kraków and in Wieruszówie, while in 1765 it appears in Międzyrzecz<sup>33</sup>. Others were also involved in trade. In 1766, goods of all sorts, worth 628 złotych, were transported to Warsaw from Koniecpol. These goods included leather, metals, tobacco, alcohol, haberdashery, clothing and chemicals<sup>34</sup>. Some of the goods, sent to Warsaw, were delivered to Jewish merchants and traders.

Jakub Herszlik was well-known and influential in Koniecpol. His influence is attested to by the fact that he gained the protection of King Stanisław August, in a dispute with his brother Moszek, following the death of their father, Herszek Izaakowicz. The verdict was handed down, in 1781, by the Radziecki Court of the Warsaw Old Town. However, Jakub Herszlik was "under pressure from the creditors of his late father and his brother Moszek". He therefore appealed to the Royal Council for help. After acquainting himself with the case files, the King gave Jakub safe-conduct, which was intended to protect him against various types of persecution on the part of his creditors for a period of six months following the end of the court proceedings<sup>35</sup>.

Based on the above information from 1764, it can be stated that, in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, craftsmen played a greater role amongst the Koniecpol Jews, as they did in the following century. During the Duchy of Warsaw period, merchants from Koniecpol also traded in salt. It is worth noting that the vast majority of traders were Jews (83%). The Kalisz Department's Licensing Prefect, Antoni Garczyński, issued the appropriate permits for these activities. Amongst those who obtained these permits were Wojciech Adamski, Mojżesz Lewi, Abraham Joachimek, Elias Dobruś, Szymon Szmul and Aron Złotnikowski<sup>36</sup>.

According to information found in documents of the Piotrków Merchants Guild, there was only one Jewish merchant active in Koniecpol on 4<sup>th</sup> March 1829 – namely Mojżesz Efraim. His name also appears on a list of auxiliary contributors in 1848 and 1851, where it is stated that he was involved in trade<sup>37</sup>. A decidedly greater number of people at that time, worked as stallholders, and not all of them were Jewish. That same source for 1829, names Koniecpol stallholders - Jan Nowicki, Leyzer Lis, Rafał Wrocławski, Jakob Rubinsztein, Jakob Lis, Joachym Glieman, Leyzer Kleinberg, Szmul Wargon, Efraim Lis, Dawid Efraim and Mortha (certainly Mordka) Złotnikowski<sup>38</sup>. The majority of those names also appear in the 1838 listing. A new name to appear amongst the stallholders is that of Berek Wargoń<sup>39</sup>. The 1848 list of Koniecpol stallholders contains the names of Herszlik Wargoń and Efrajmowicz Efrajm, Mosiek Wargoń and Liborman Mendel traded in grain. However, in 1851, Dawid

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<sup>33</sup> B. Grochulska, *Warszawa na mapie Polski Stanisławowskiej. Podstawy gospodarcze rozwoju miasta*, Warszawa 1980, p. 139.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>35</sup> M. Horn, *Regesty dokumentów i ekscerpty z metryki koronnej do historii Żydów w Polsce 1697–1795*, Vol. II: *Rządy Stanisława Augusta (1764–1795)*, Cz. 2: 1780–1794, Wrocław 1988, p. 139.

<sup>36</sup> D. Złotkowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 118–119.

<sup>37</sup> State Archives in Łódź (later: APŁ), Anteriora Rządu Gubernialnego Piotrkowskiego, Ref. 2513 (Government Records of the Kalisz Governate on the subject of Synagogue Supervision in the City of Koniecpol).

<sup>38</sup> State Archives in Piotrków Trybunalski (later: APPT), Merchants Guild of Piotrków, Ref. 14 (A list of names of registered merchants in the Piotrków Oblast in 1829).

<sup>39</sup> APPT, Registered Merchants in Piotrków, Ref. 15 (Records concerning merchants and stallholders in the Piotrków Oblast from 1828). The list also contains the name of merchant Mojżesz Efraim, as well as stallholders such as Rafał Wrocławski, Efraim Lis, Leyzer Kleinberg, Szmul Wargoń, Jakob Rubinsztein and Jan Nowicki.

Cukierman, Major Rubinsztajn, Efrajm and Herszlik Wargoń were listed as stallholders, while Szmul Czarnybroda was shown as a merchant<sup>40</sup>.

Members of the Jewish community were also involved in trade in later times. Among them was Jakob Kohn, born in 1887, fluent in both Polish and Yiddish. In 1915, he applied to the authorities for a permit which would allow him to trade in Polish territory which came under Austrian and Prussian rule. The application was made on 24th June. One day later, a similar request was made by trader Josek Korenberg, son of Szai, born in 1893. An application for an identity card was also made by registered merchant Izrael Icek Zarecki<sup>41</sup>.

Interesting information is provided by an analysis of synagogue contributions which were paid to cover synagogue staff salaries and which were paid by members of the Jewish community in order to cover a deficit in finances. It shows just how diverse the Jewish community was. An 1848 listing contains a total of 166 individuals who made a contribution to the Jewish community council<sup>42</sup>. Occupations of these members of the community included grain trader, horse trader, tanner, stallholder, painter, baker, merchant, miller, tailor, farmer, gravedigger, hatter, innkeeper, tinsmith, labourer, teacher and butcher. Some individuals wrote that they are beggars or that they “stay at home”. There is also a similar list from 1851 which also shows occupations. It contains 100 names, many of which lack complete information<sup>43</sup>. The problem with specific listings is that were not prepared according to a single format. So they usually contain only names and amounts. This makes it impossible to even grasp the dynamics of the internal diversity of the Jewish community of Koniecpol and of those places which were included within the synagogue supervisory body’s purview.

## The Beginnings of the Jewish Community Council

The first written mention of the functioning of a Jewish community council dates back to 1690, when Koniecpol Jews appear as an organised community with a *kehilla* and elders, a synagogue and a cemetery with a *shtiebel*<sup>44</sup>. The *Acta Congressus Generalis* map, researched by I. Halperin, also mentions the Koniecpol *kehilla*. From this, it appears that the *kehilla* found itself in the southern part of the Sieradzkie Province, at the same time belonging to the Małopolskie territory<sup>45</sup>. It cannot be ruled out that a council, such as that, existed decidedly earlier. Jews began arriving in Koniecpol after 1629, so that for almost sixty years, they must have had some form of organisation through which they would gather for prayer. According to the wording of the Privilege, the synagogue would probably have found itself in the so-called “ulica Bociankach”.

Faced with continuing Jewish settlement in Koniecpol, the Jewish Community Council was continuously active facilitating the religious needs of the local Jews. During the period under analysis, for almost the entire time, the Koniecpol *kehilla* functioned independently, with local villages and small towns within its purview. However, in South

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<sup>40</sup> APŁ, Anterior Government of the Piotrkowski Governate, Ref. It should be stress that the 1848 and 1851 data are from a list of individuals who contributed for the maintenance of the synagogue and, therefore, they are incomplete. All people mentioned lived in Koniecpol.

<sup>41</sup> APPT, Records of the Koniecpol Community Council, Ref. 18 (Koniecpolsk Community Authority re: identity cards).

<sup>42</sup> It should be noted that this list was drawn up for the entire community, not just for Koniecpol. So it needs to be analysed through the prism of the previously mentioned plan of Jewish communities.

<sup>43</sup> APŁ, Anterior Government of the Piotrkowski Governate, Ref. 2513.

<sup>44</sup> *Koniecpol (Sade Chadasz) ...*, op. cit., p. 233.

<sup>45</sup> B. Szady, *Geografia struktur religijnych i wyznaniowych w Koronie w II połowie XVIII w.*, Lublin 2010, p. 135.

Prussia Department documents, mention is made of the fact that, in 1793, it was planned to link Koniecpol to the Janów Jewish community<sup>46</sup>. Later documents, which will be discussed further in this paper, suggest that Koniecpol was an independent Jewish community. More material on this issue, but from the 19th century, has been preserved. The archives, among other things, provide interesting information on the subject of properties which belonged to the Jewish community in 1826. They comprised timber school buildings, a ritual baths, a community building and a brick synagogue<sup>47</sup>. The Jewish community building was probably the place in which Jewish Community Council meetings were held. It is also possible that it was where the rabbi lived. The fact that these properties existed is confirmed by 1854 data in which can be found information about the existence of a Jewish cemetery where local deceased Jews were buried<sup>48</sup>. That cemetery was located in what is now ulica Zachodniej 30. During World War II, it was destroyed by the Nazis and no *matzevot* were preserved.

Over time, the area covered by the community also changed. Pursuant to a decision of the Governmental Commission of Religious Affairs and Public Education dated 13th March 1827, many adjacent localities and villages were to enter into the purview of the Council. Some were not so close to Koniecpol<sup>49</sup>. According to the plan, apart from the city itself, the Jewish Community Council was to also incorporate seventy other smaller localities, villages and hamlets<sup>50</sup>. The extent of the territory covered by these places is attested to by the fact that they were located in the Śląsk, Świętokrzyskie and Łódzkie Provinces, as well as lying in the Częstochowskie, Radomszczańskie and Kieleckie Counties. An area that large does not reflect the size of the community, as the Jewish population lived largely in Koniecpol. Nevertheless, officially, the Jewish Community Council was intended to cover several dozen localities.

A valuable source which shows the manner in which, as a Jewish institution, the Jewish Community Council functioned in the town and the manner, by which its members carried out their duties, are the synagogue financial records – namely the Council’s Profit and Loss Statements, with particular reference to the line items – namely its budget for a specific period. The budgets set for the Koniecpol synagogue treasury<sup>51</sup>, over the period 1846-1863, show that the Council’s budget was around 1,200 złotych (180 rubles) annually, with slight variations. These statistics can be regarded with some doubt as to their credibility. In each of the seventeen years under consideration, the income and expenditure was fully balanced. This could have been shown as such at the behest of the authorities and would not have reflected the actual situation. As a rule, discrepancies are higher and then we are dealing with a deficit. In addition, if we investigate selected line items relating to the Council’s income and expenditure, they basically do not differ from year to year and, if there are differences, then these are only a matter of a few kopeks. Over so many years, it would have been difficult to maintain a steady level of expenditure and even more difficult to guarantee a similar level of income. Because maintaining accounts was the responsibility of every Jewish community

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<sup>46</sup> AGAD, General Directorate of South Prussia, Ref. VI-377, pp. 10–11.

<sup>47</sup> APL, Anterior Government of the Piotrkowski Governate, Ref. 2511, p. 190.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., Ref. 2513, p. 663.

<sup>49</sup> AGAD, CWW, Ref. 1439 (Records concerning the administration of Jewish communities. Main, Vol. 1, 1821–1829).

<sup>50</sup> The Jewish Community Council also covered the following villages: Koniecpol Stary, Magdalenki, Sekursko, Borzykowka Mała, Raczkowice, Raczkow, Nowa Wieś, Czech, Bugaj, Borzykowa Wielka z przyległościami, Grodzisko, Żytno, Mała Wieś, Pągow, Sady, Turznia, Bleszno, Budzow, Silnica Wielka, Kozie Pole, Kępa, Fryszerka, Gorgoń, Wola Życińska, Błonie, Sudzin, Łazow, Magdasz i Borki, Radoszewnica, Luborcza, Łysiny, Stanisławice, Łabędź, Borowce, Soborzyce, Okołowice, Babie, Ulesie, Rogaczówek, Smykow, Dąbrowa, Olbrachcice, Maluszyce, Święta Anna, Knieja, Rogaczow, Lipie, Garnek, Kuźnica, Piaski i Wymysłów, Kajetanowice, Chmielarze, Dąbek, Milionow, Cieletniki, Sudzin, Maluszyn, Kąty, Mosty, Pukarzow, Pierzaki, Ciężkowiczki, Sudzinek, Silniczka Mała, Polichno, Cudkow and Barycz.

<sup>51</sup> AGAD, CWW, Ref. 1586 (Records concerning the Koniecpol Jewish Council in the Warsaw Governate).

council, it can be presumed that they were written each year, as it was in a community council's interest to demonstrate how its budget could be kept at a level which would not require an additional imposition of taxation. A budget deficit, as well as a surplus, could arouse the interest of the state authorities.

An analysis of the figures confirms that the main sources of income were derived from contributions by community members (usually 733 złotych, namely 110 rubles per year<sup>52</sup>) and from religious fees, the most coming from the *mikvah*<sup>53</sup>. That ranged from close to 134 złotych (20 rubles) in 1846–1848 to almost 214 złotych (32 rubles) 1858–1863. A significant amount of income was derived from the milling of wheat for *matzah*<sup>54</sup>, the sale of *etrogim*<sup>55</sup>, Torah reading call-ups<sup>56</sup> and, to a greater or lesser extent, from circumcisions<sup>57</sup>, marriages, from the purchasing of a place in front of the Torah and the selling of wax after the Day of Atonement<sup>58</sup>. Income was also supplemented by donations placed into a collection box found inside a synagogue and by fees for synagogue seats.

As far as the Council's expenditure was concerned, the largest expense related to the maintenance of people responsible for the carrying out of certain religious functions. The largest of these was for the rabbi whose salary was at least from 200 złotych (30 rubles) to a maximum of 300 złotych (45 rubles). It also involved provided him with a residence, for which around 15 rubles was allocated (even though the 1846–1848 accounts showed no such expense). The Koniecpol Jewish Community Council also employed an assistant rabbi, but only during the years 1846–1848. After that period, no amount was provided for such a person. The situation was similar for the cantor, the Synagogue Supervisor clerk and a *pukacz*<sup>59</sup>. After the rabbi, the second highest salary, during the period under consideration, was the cashier. He received a salary of almost 67 złotych (10 ruble). During 1852–1857, a *shammes* was also employed who was paid almost 74 złotych (11 rubles). That position had existed earlier. The *shammes* of the Koniecpol Jewish Community Council, from 1815 to at least 1827, was Berek Wruk, who was at least 46-years-old at the time of drawing up the list of *shammes* employees on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1827. For carrying out his duties, he received an annual salary of 75 złotych. He only spoke Yiddish and so was no different in his activities to other Jews<sup>60</sup>. The rest of the expenditure related to the maintenance of the synagogue – namely lighting, heating (including the school fire), for the purchase of *etrogim*, books, textiles,

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<sup>52</sup> Separate list were made up of members who had made contributions together with the amount collected from each person. The list would be ratified by the Synagogue Supervisory Body, submitted for inspection and approval by the Mayor of Koniecpol and then sent to gubernatorial authorities.

<sup>53</sup> This fee was for the use of the ritual baths which were used for the purification of people and objects. The main reason was that it guaranteed pure water which should be sufficient for a person to immerse oneself. According to: Z. Borzymińska, R. Żebrowski (ed.), *Polski słownik judaistyczny*. Vol. 2, Warsaw 2003, p. 200.

<sup>54</sup> Matzah is unleavened bread, free of water and made from unleavened dough. It is baked and eaten, most often, during Pesach (Passover), which commemorates the Jews leaving Egypt. Matzah is intended to symbolise the bread baked when there was not enough time or enough ingredients for the preparation of other foods (ibid., p. 77).

<sup>55</sup> The *etrog* is a fruit used during Sukkot (the Feast of Tabernacles). It symbolises the heart. According to tradition, it is the fruit that Eve broke from a tree in paradise (ibid., Vol. 1, pp. 405–406).

<sup>56</sup> The scroll was a scroll of the Torah, written in Hebrew on parchment and wound between two rollers. Traditionally, the parchment comes from a certain part of the skin of a kosher animal, sewn together with thread made from the animal's tendons (ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 425–426).

<sup>57</sup> Voluntary contributions are associated with circumcisions which new-born sons undergo in the eighth day of life. Traditionally, the removal of the foreskin is carried out by a trained, religious person, usually a mohel. Frequently, a rabbi is present, although his presence is not a prerequisite.

<sup>58</sup> Yom Kippur was mistakenly referred to as Reconciliation Day (Oenance, Appeasement). See *Polski słownik judaistyczny*, V. 1, p. 700.

<sup>59</sup> The "Pukacz" was a Community Council employee who woke up residents to ensure that they did not sleep through the morning prayer service.

<sup>60</sup> AGAD, CWW, Ref. 1444 (Records concerning the appointment of rabbi and establishment of rabbinical schools. Main, 1823–1853).

gubernatorial gazettes, stationery and chimney-cleaning. Some income was reserved for the purchase of wheat and for taxes and other public levies, as well as to the Gubernatorial Government.

## Konieczpol Rabbis

It is a problematic task to establish the names of consecutive rabbis who served the Konieczpol Jewish community. There are only scraps of information contained within the sources. The first known Konieczpol Rabbi was Awigdor Margoliot, who lived in the town until 1724 and later moved to Chęcín. However, his commencement date in Konieczpol is unknown. The next rabbi, for a short period, was Salomon Wolf, son of Benjamin Wolf, the Rabbi of Pińczów at that time. He is interesting only to the extent that, for a time, he was a scribe for the *Sejm Czterech Ziem (Four Lands Sejm)* and was also the author of the five-volume work, devoted to the Torah, entitled *Vayakhel Shlomo* and a book entitled *Beit Shlomo*. In the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the next rabbis were Mojżesz, the son of Cwi Hirsch and Arie Lejbusz, son of Eliezer Hakohen and son-in-law of the aforementioned Rabbi Salomon Wolf<sup>61</sup>. We also know that, in 1791, Lewek Rabinowicz travelled from Wodzisław to Konieczpol, where he was to take up the position of rabbi<sup>62</sup>.

A little more information is contained in documents, dated from the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, of the Congress Kingdom of Poland's Central Religious Authorities. At that time, Konieczpol found itself in the Kalisz Department's Radomszczański District. In November 1816, the Konieczpol Rabbi was 76-year-old Lewek Kachnita, who came to the town from Wodzisław. He served in that position for twenty-four years, having been appointed in 1791 or 1792. This means that he is the same person as Lewek Rabinowicz. He was chosen by the religious elders and the Community Council and, for his service, he received an annual salary of 200 złotych.

From examining the documents, two other names appear. These are of two Jewish Community Council elders who perform functions at that time. They were Jakub Hajszyk and Szymon Łaska<sup>63</sup>. In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Izaak Lisak and, later Abraham Dawid (1852–1853) also worked for the Jewish Community Council. A salary for a rabbi was provided for in the 1842-1845 budget, which indicates that there was such a person. However, his name cannot be determined<sup>64</sup>. It is also known that, from 1824, the Assistant Rabbi in Konieczpol was 48-year-old Samuel Staal, who received an annual salary of 300 złotych. He served in that role until at least 1827, since his name appears in a listing from that year. He did not have any official government registration. He was fluent in two languages – Yiddish and Hebrew. Comments regarding him state that he “did not stand out from the others”, which means that he did not stand out from the rest of the Jewish community. He was the same as his fellow Jews, simply holding a different position<sup>65</sup>. The fact that he was listed as the “Assistant Rabbi” does not necessarily mean that he was actually the “deputy rabbi” and that the rabbi was a completely different person. In many Jewish communities, it was reported that they did not have a “rabbi”, but only a “deputy”, which was the result of taxation issues. In 1851, the duties of rabbi were taken over by Abraham Rychter, for which

<sup>61</sup> *Konieczpol (Sade Chadash) ...*, op. cit., p. 233.

<sup>62</sup> K. Follprecht, *Ludność żydowska województwa krakowskiego w czasie Sejmu Czteroletniego. Spisy z powiatów krakowskiego, ksiąskiego, lelowskiego i proszowskiego z lat 1790–1792*, Krakow 2008, p. 522.

<sup>63</sup> AGAD, CWW, Ref. 1429 (Records concerning the establishment of Synagogue Supervision and the payment of contributions to Jewish community councils. Main, 1810–1817, pp. 250–251).

<sup>64</sup> APŁ, Anterior Government of the Piotrkowski Governate, Ref. 2513.

<sup>65</sup> AGAD, CWW, Ref. 1444, pp. 48–54.

he received an annual salary of 300 złotych (45 rubles). However, he did not obtain government registration, which was probably due to the fact that he did not supply “qualifying evidence”<sup>66</sup>. The listing which contains his name is dated 30th July 1851 roku and contains no information about the exact date on which he took up his position in the community.

In the 1860’s and 1870’s, the Koniecpol Rabbi was Reuben Juda Lejb and, from 1878, that position was held by Dawid Dow Ber Taub. At the beginning of the 20th century, those duties were performed by Eliezer<sup>67</sup>. Relying on valuable sources such as *Księgi Pamiątkowe Guberni Piotrkowskiej* which include the names of the official rabbis and Jewish community council members within the Piotrkowski Governate, it is possible to state that in the years 1881-1886, the Koniecpol Rabbi was J. Kuczyński<sup>68</sup>. In 1887, there is no name listed and the post became officially vacant. In 1889, the Koniecpol Rabbi was Rabinowicz<sup>69</sup>, but he lasted in the position for barely a year as, in 1890, documents again list the position as being officially vacant<sup>70</sup>.

One element of internal differentiation amongst Koniecpol Jews was Chassidic activity. This is also true of individuals who played significant roles within the life of the Jewish community – such as Jakub Hajszyk who, in 1816, was one of the community elders together with Szymon Łaska. Other sources suggest that Hajszyk synagogue supervisory role for a long time, together with the Wargoń brothers. However, it is not clear as to how long they served together during this period<sup>71</sup>.

These same individuals, Hajszyk and the Wargoń brother, led a group which separated itself from the rest of the Jewish community and established a Chassidic “sect”. They appeared openly on Simchat Torah in 1836. They formed a “dissident congregation” and began prayer services “in the private home of orthodox Jew Herszlik Złotnik at Rynek No.15”<sup>72</sup>. Those who were part of the Chassidic sect included Herszlik Wargoń, Mosiek Jakub Wargoń, Berek Wargoń, Szlama Wargoń, Icyk Warmąd, Majer Warmąd, Dawid Borzykowski, Jakub Hajszyk, Eliasz Silbersztajn, Dawid Wezler, Icyk Rzezak and Szlama Warmąd<sup>73</sup>. As can be seen, apart from Jakub Hajszyk, the Wargoń and Warmąd families were the most numerous with the Chassidic group. The fact that some of the members of the Jewish Community Council were involved caused a conflict between the Chassidim and the Synagogue Supervisors. The latter accused them of being “dissidents”, of exposing the Community Council to a drastic drop in income, of being guilty of offending members of the Jewish Community Council with insults, slander, harassment and even libel. The charges included accusing Hajszyk and the Wargoń brothers, who performed functions within the Jewish Community Council, of mismanaging the budget, which was brought under control by the present authorities – according to their own evidence. Hajszyk and the Wargoń brothers were described as people of “a highly quarrelsome spirit”.

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> *Koniecpol (Sade Chadasz)* ..., op. cit., p. 233.

<sup>68</sup> There is a lack of data for 1885. However, continuity makes it possible to suppose that the rabbi was Kuczyński, since he held that position in 1884 and 1886.

<sup>69</sup> Unfortunately, no name appears in this source – not even the rabbi’s initials.

<sup>70</sup> *Pamiętna książka petrokowskiej gubernii na 1890 god*, Petrokov 1890, p. 120.

<sup>71</sup> M. Wodziński, *Źródła do dziejów chasydyzmu w Królestwie Polskim, 1815–1867, w zasobach polskich archiwów państwowych*, Kraków-Budapest 2011, p. 274.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 275.

<sup>73</sup> A list dated November 1837 published by M. Wodziński, op. cit., p. 277.

In this context, what is interesting is the comparison of Chassidim with traditional members of the Jewish community, in terms of the amounts of tax (to the *gmina*) that they paid. Jews, in the 19th century, were contractually divided in five or six tax categories, which can be compared to contemporary scales. The first of these included the wealthiest members of the community who, it was assumed, would cover 40% of the Jewish Community Council's expenses. None of the Koniecpol Chassidic Jews fell into this category. Sources from 1820–1837 indicate that there were four Jews who paid taxes at this level. The next group of wealthy Jews was to account for covering 30% of the budgeted expenses. Among these, there were two Chassidim and five traditional members of the community. The third level was to cover 20% of the expenses so that it comprised Jews with a middle-income. Amongst these, there were four members of the Chassidic "sect" and eleven other members of the community. Only one Chassid found himself in the fourth level of taxation. This level was intended to cover 10% of the expense budget and included twenty-eight traditional Jews. The two remaining categories covered the poorest members of the Jewish community who were exempted from paying taxes – twenty-four Jews in the fifth category and eighteen in the sixth category. It is worth noting here that there were no Chassidim in this group<sup>74</sup>. This data is correct for the selected period, a time of dispute and a split in the Jewish community of Koniecpol. However, it does indicate that the argument, that the Jewish Community Council would be exposed to financial losses because of this, is not fully justified.

The dispute was so serious that it prompted the members of the Jewish Community Council to seek help from "the local authorities", namely, the municipal authorities. However, they received no support from that quarter. The second instance where they appealed for external help was to the Piotrkowski District Commissioner. But he also took no concrete steps to resolve the dispute. As a result, on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1836, representatives of the Synagogue Supervisory Board sent a letter to the "Distinguished Kalisz Province Commission"<sup>75</sup> in which they described, in detail, the current situation and ongoing state of affairs. Their letter had an effect, as the Commission then obliged the Piotrków Circuit Commissioner, who had thus far remained indifferent to the complaints of the Jewish Community Council, to investigate when the sect had broken away from the synagogue, to examine its list of members, to determine what the effect of their existence had on the synagogue's income and in what manner they may be impeding their fellow Jews from their prayers and obligations.

A letter, on this matter, was issued on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1836 and representatives of the Koniecpol Jewish Community Council were informed as to what steps had been taken<sup>76</sup>. However, the matter stretched out as it took ten months to compile a list of members of the Chassidic sect (see above) and a further sixteen to complete the investigation. The delay was due to the time required for correspondence to be exchanged between all interested parties. The delay was further exacerbated due to the lack of a suitable employee who could travel to Koniecpol and conduct the investigation. Information about the case, together with a request to extend the deadline by a further month, was sent to the Gubernatorial Government Commissioner of the Piotrków District on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1837<sup>77</sup>.

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<sup>74</sup> M. Wodziński, *The Socio-Economic Profile of a Religious Movement: The Case of Hasidism*, "European History Quarterly" 2016, Vol. 46 (4), p. 678, 696.

<sup>75</sup> M. Wodziński, *Źródła do dziejów...*, op. cit., pp. 310–312. Lejzer Klainberg, Rafał Czarnybroda and Lejzer Dereś appeared on behalf of the Synagogue Supervisory Board.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 109–111.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 260.

Eventually, the Mayor of Pławno, Andrzej Kotasiński, was sent to investigate the conflict. He first met with the Mayor of Koniecpol, Gustaw Wieder, and then later with members of the Synagogue Supervisory Board. It turned out that they withdrew their accusations against the Koniecpol Chassidim. Several factors contributed to this. Firstly, almost two years had passed since the initial split. Secondly, it had proven impossible to precisely calculate the extent of synagogue losses following the split, since contributions were voluntary. Thirdly, it was not possible to prove who had initiated the written insults against their fellow-Jews, since none of them had signatures. Finally, these Chassidim had ceased their own religious practices and were, once again, participating in prayer services held in the synagogue. Thus, Lejzer Klajnberg and Rafał Czarnybroda asked the Piotrków District Commissioner's emissary to close the case and to not impose any penalties on their brethren who had, in turn, "returned"<sup>78</sup>.

The above records indicate that a fairly large group of Chassidim were active in Koniecpol. In 1836, they openly split from the rest of the Jewish community and conducted separate prayer services. Later (probably half a year) the secession was resolved. The reason was that the traditional part of the Jewish community had backed away from accusations against the Chassidic "sect", as Marcin Wodziński<sup>79</sup> points out. That situation was influenced by factors mentioned above. The date from which this group became active in the town and whether it continued to be active are questions which require further research.

## The Koniecpol Synagogue

The synagogue was a special place in the town community. For Jews, it was a house of prayer. However, to Christians it was seen as a bank, especially at the end of the 17th century. It was seen as a repository for capital from wills and for money from fraternal contributions which was paid by the city's fraternity members, from fraternities operating in the town such as, among others, the Fraternity of the Holy Name of Jesus. Over time, the financial capacity of the Jewish community began to arouse envy, especially as some creditors believed that not all interest was paid appropriately<sup>80</sup>. The right to have a synagogue stemmed from a privilege which was granted by Stanisław Koniecpolski in 1629. It is not known, however, exactly when the synagogue was built, nor its exact location. Initially, it was a timber synagogue, which left it susceptible to fire, which is confirmed by a privilege granted by Jan Aleksander Koniecpolski which mentions that, in 1695, a fire destroyed all the synagogue records<sup>81</sup>. So it can be presumed that they were kept in the synagogue or in another house of prayer in which Koniecpol Jews gathered.

More accurate information on the synagogue is found in documents from the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Information from *Wyciągu z katastru ogniowego zabudowań bużniczych Miasta Koniecpola za rok 1826*<sup>82</sup> states, about the synagogue, that it was located on what is now ulica Tadeusza Kościuszki 7. It was a brick, single-storey building, measuring 36 length, 21 width and 13 height Warsaw elbows<sup>83</sup>. It is also known that, in the years 1831–1833, the

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., pp. 304–305, 306–307, 313–314. The official closure of the matter was the sending of a letter to the Kalisz Gubernatorial Government, dated 17th May 1838 by the przez adjutant and custodian of the towns in the Piotrkowski District Commission - Ignacy Czermiński, on the findings made by the Commissioner's emissary (p. 279).

<sup>79</sup> M. Wodziński, *Źródła do dziejów...*, op. cit., p. 274.

<sup>80</sup> S. Okamfer, op. cit., p. 125.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>82</sup> APŁ, Anterior Government of the Piotrkowski Governate, Ref. 2511, p. 190.

<sup>83</sup> One "Warsaw elbow" equals 59.6 centimetres.

synagogue underwent a renovation in which the furnace was replaced and some new windows were installed. The work continued in 1839, when sixteen additional windows were installed and then, in 1842, a fence was erected surrounding the synagogue<sup>84</sup>. In 1897, as the result of a fire, the mikveh and a prayerhouse were destroyed, while the synagogue also suffered a great deal of damage, necessitating another renovation, which resulted in a change in its dimensions<sup>85</sup>. The distinction between the synagogue and a prayerhouse indicates that members of the community gathered to pray in two places. This situation was common in many communities where Jews would gather in the homes of their pious brethren and not always in the synagogue. For this reason, there were many houses of prayer. In the case of Koniecpol, it is known that such a meeting place existed, for example, during the time of Chassidic activity.

Information has been preserved about the fittings contained within the Koniecpol synagogue in 1854. From this, we know that there were 12 benches, 52 desks, one ark in the school and an ark<sup>86</sup> in the synagogue, a pulpit, a table for the sexton (*shammes*), a library comprising 51 large books and 30 smaller books, two copies of *Nauka Religii* and two books described as “Benjakier”, 25 copies of the Congress Kingdom of Poland law journal and 29 copies of the governate journal, the seal of the Synagogue Supervisory Board, 12 shabbat poles with chains and one copy of the Customs Code of Penalties and a book entitled *Środki Choleryczne*<sup>87</sup>.

## **Relations Between Koniecpol Jews z innymi mieszkańcami**

Koniecpol Jews had permanently taken root in the history of the city. They lived together with the town's other residents – Christians. But one could not fail to notice that they formed a separate community, ruled by its own laws, with a different religion and different customs<sup>88</sup>. These contacts between the Polish and Jewish populace did not always take place in a proper, non-conflicting manner. However, a complete reproduction of these facts is impossible due to a lack of sources on the subject. Because the surviving sources tell us nothing about conflicts between the Jews and the other residents, it is not possible to draw any conclusions about the relations between the two differing religions and cultures.

One example of such a conflict resulted from the recommendation delivered by Father Orłowski to the Koniecpol parish priest, during his visit in 1680. He was to tell his successor in Chrzęstów to order the Jews, who lived next to Christian homes, to keep the windows and doors in their homes closed, especially during Christian holidays, such as the Corpus Christi procession or when the priest visited the sick with the Host. Even more strident, with respect to the Jews, was the decree made, during a visit in 1761, which reminded the parish priest of the fact that the Jews should not desecrate Christian holidays by working on those days, that

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 60, 482.

<sup>85</sup> APL, Records of the Administration Department of the Piotrowski Governate Authorities, Ref. 6274.

<sup>86</sup> This was the *Aron ha-Kodesh*, in which were kept the Torah scrolls. It could have been free-standing or a niche in the wall. It was usually located by the eastern wall, which was the symbolic direction of Jerusalem. Its rich decoration may have reminded non-Jews of traditional altars, characteristic of the Roman Catholic Church. See: [www.sztetl.org.pl](http://www.sztetl.org.pl) (accessed: 24/05/2017).

<sup>87</sup> APL, Anterior Government of the Piotrkowski Governate, Ref. 2511, pp. 677–678. During World War II, the synagogue was damaged. When the War ended, the abandoned building was designated as a warehouse for the “Samopomoc Chłopska” Community Co-operative. After the co-operative was liquidated, the building was demolished. Today, the site is occupied by a bank building.

<sup>88</sup> S. Okamfer, op. cit., p. 110.

they should not exploit Catholics and that they should not conduct festive processions or weddings during Advent and Lent. Parish records indicate that a fine of 6 złotych had been taken from a Jew, Szeffel Czapnik, for disrupting the Corpus Christi procession<sup>89</sup>. It is also noted that, in 1722, that a conversion from Judaism to Catholicism had taken place, as recorded in the parish deaths register<sup>90</sup>.

Nevertheless, preserved data allows us to assume that these relations were no different than those in other towns. The Roman Catholic Church and the Jewish community had to live side-by-side, which repeatedly indicated how differing their priorities were, and that the Jews were the main source of capital. This was most often obtained as a loan or pledge, but there were also instances where the Jewish community was required to pay various kinds of debts, even arising from activity in the guilds. An illustration of this could be, for example, duties imposed on Jews, in the butchers' guild, who spoke out against Father Jan Stanisław Rzewuski in 1798, that "obligations under the laws and statutes of the guild, it was required" to pay to the Church 40 złotych annually<sup>91</sup>.

Loans and pledges became a frequent cause for arguments and conflict. They also had led to a negative perception of the Jewish community. There are many examples confirming this and, importantly, they also influenced the clergy and members of aristocratic families. Members of the Koniecpolski family would often utilise the services of Jews and would entrust them with valuable items. There are numerous references to this in various sources. Back in 1449 already, goldsmith Kaspar, to secure a loan of 100 złotych, leaves a Castellan Sandomierz Koniecpolski necklace<sup>92</sup> with the Jew Salomon. Delpace, a Kraków councillor, files a lawsuit against the Jew as he claimed he was owed 3,000 złoty for silk purchased from Pinocki's shop and 1,306 złoty from Koniecpolski<sup>93</sup>.

Other records can be found in the Kraków Province Petty Offences Registers where, dated 26th August 1694, there is an entry regarding a dispute between Franciszek Wojciech Widz, a Kuczkow village leaseholder who represented Jan Aleksander Koniecpolski, and Samuel Zarnocki of Czarnocin, who was also the squire of Secemin. The main cause of the dispute was the silver vessels belonging to Koniecpolski, who gave them to Jakub Jantus Majerowicz, a Jew from Koniecpol, who in turn gave them to the Czarnocki. When Koniecpolski wanted them returned and to pay the pledge of 6,700 złotych, along with the interest, he was met with a refusal – which ignited the dispute<sup>94</sup>.

The provincial Sejm issued an order to the Jews of the Sieradzkie Province, dated 16<sup>th</sup> April 1703, which obliged the Speaker to issue ordinances to the Rabbis of Lutomir and Koniecpol to induce the Jews to, each week, donate "ten bags of stone, four hundreweight of lead". They were to be handed over to the Rospirski Castellan and used to attack a besieged

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., pp. 124–125.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>92</sup> M. Bałaban, *Dzieje Żydów w Krakowie i na Kazimierzu (1304–1868)*, Vol. 1 (1304–1655), Krakow 1912, pp. 30–31. In other documents, information appears that goldsmith Kacper admitted that he was in debt to the Jew Salomon. The debt consisted of, among other things, a necklace of the "wonderful Lord Przedbor of Koniecpol", the Sandomierz Castellan, worth 200 florens. These two pieces of information are very similar. The time of their creation is also the same. It can be assumed that they are referring to the same thing. See. B. Wyrzumska, *Żydzi w średniowiecznym Krakowie. Wypisy źródłowe z ksiąg miejskich krakowskich*, Krakow 1995, p. 99.

<sup>93</sup> M. Bałaban, op. cit., ps. 170.

<sup>94</sup> A. Kaźmierczyk, *Materiały źródłowe do dziejów Żydów w księgach grodzkich dawnego województwa krakowskiego z lat 1674–1696*, Vol. 2 (1684–1696), Krakow 2009, p. 232.

fortress<sup>95</sup>. This probably related to military operations within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the Northern War. As can be seen, there was a misconception that the Jews had large amounts of cash with which much-needed ammunition could be purchased.

More documents can definitely be found which confirm loans to Jews from the Catholic clergy, who expected a fixed rate of interest to be paid from which they would draw for their own benefit. On 6th August 1679, Father Baltazar Stanisław Małecki, Borów parish priest and clerk of Radom and Kruszy, paid 200 złotych for a pledge of the synagogue in Konięcpol. However, that sum was also not repaid, as was written about by the next Borowieński parish priest<sup>96</sup>. On the Tuesday after All Saints' Day in 1690, another item was recorded of 600 złotych for the Konięcpol synagogue, which was obtained from the Fraternity of the Holy Name of Jesus. A provision was set that 21 złotych was to be paid on the birthday of St. John the Baptist and the same amount again at Christmas. In addition, the loan was to be secured by fixed and non-fixed assets owned by the Jews<sup>97</sup>. Another example is that of Father Tomasz Sangrodzki who, on 1st July 1750, paid 3,000 złotych to the Konięcpol synagogue, from which he was to receive a commission of 100 złotych for the support of the prebendary (a senior church canon). This matter later became the focal point of a dispute as, in 1792, Father Jan Wysocki lodged a complaint against Konięcpol Jewish Community Council, which did not want to pay the commission to the prebendary, with the reminder that 3,000 złotych was owed, as well as an additional 600 złotych<sup>98</sup>. In turn, in his will dated 1782, Father Józef Madaliński wrote that the Jewish Community Council did not want to pay the interest to the prebendary which he, as the parish priest, had to pay. For this reason, the Jewish Community Council owed him 800 złotych. He also wrote that he had obtained "receipts" from the Jews for, among other things, coffee, liquor, fencing and cloth. He then paid for it all in the presence of Herszlik, Lewek, Pinkus, Józef Warszawski, Kunik, Chrapek, Dereis and Szkolnik. However, he claimed that the Jews had stolen the receipts, probably in order to receive another payment following his death<sup>99</sup>.

Analysing documents from the Synagogue Supervisory Board in Konięcpol, gathered in the Anterior Government of the Piotrkowski Governate<sup>100</sup>, it can be seen that the Konięcpol Jewish Community Council was significantly behind in payments to various groups, including Cistercian monastery in Krzepice, the local parish church, the Bernardine monastery in Święta Anna near Przysrów and to the Pauline Fathers in Jasna Góra. From the various remainders that have been preserved in archival collections, most of these were sent by the Paulines. This gave rise to various accusations against them. There were also accusations that Jews were blamed for the drunkenness of their parents, who had lost their assets, and for being bad role models for Polish children who, through their contacts with Jews, did not learn the truths of faith. Such accusations appeared, for example, in a report on the deacon visitation, which was prepared by Father Jan Gnoiński in 1800. In his opinion, the parish school did not survive, due to the community not understanding what it needed to be maintained. They chose to give their assets to a Jew who, in that way, was guilty of the fall of a Christian educational institution<sup>101</sup>.

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<sup>95</sup> A. Michałowska-Mycielska, *Sejmy i sejmiiki koronne wobec Żydów. Wybór tekstów źródłowych*, Warsaw 2006, p. 261.

<sup>96</sup> Kielce Diocesan Archive, Konięcpol Parish records, Ref. II PK-IV/4 (Records concerning the Konięcpol parish church 1801–1831).

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, Ref. II PK-VI/7 (Konięcpol church records – Konięcpol synagogue records 1798).

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, Ref. II PK-VI/2 (Records concerning the Konięcpol parish church. T. II. From 1701 to, and including, 1800).

<sup>99</sup> S. Okamfer, *op. cit.*, s. 126.

<sup>100</sup> APL, Anterior Government of the Piotrkowski Governate, Ref. 2511, pp. 22–23, 86.

<sup>101</sup> S. Okamfer, *op. cit.*, p. 119.