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Tikkun Chatzot – semiotics of synagogues on the example of the synagogue in Siemiatycze

Introduction

One of the manifestations of Judaism's architecture is the aspect of gematria [1]. This peculiar feature of synagogues clearly shows that synagogue architecture is deeply rooted in Judaism. In addition to the prominent and visible features such as the decor, the layout of the plan emphasizing the ritual's character, attention should also be paid to the crucial aspect of the word, rooted in gematrical activities in the synagogue architecture¹. To present the described phenomenon in more detail, the author used the example of a synagogue in Siemiatycze.

The state and aim of research

Avierbuch made the first attempt to describe the history of the Siemiatycze synagogue in 1911. In his article: *Siemiatycka synagoga i przekazy o niej* [Siemiatycze synagogue and stories about it] [2], Avierbuch provided information about the building's history, based more on legends and stories than on architecture or documents confirming his assumptions. For example, he claimed that the synagogue was built in 1755, when Princess Anna Jabłonowska née Sapieha reigned [2, p. 563]. Józef Maroszek [3] provides information that the synagogue was erected in 1777. The author links this event with the construction of an alley through the Jewish cemetery. Mirosław Leszczak is convinced that the synagogue was

built after 1797, after the city's great fire [4, p. 23]. It seems that this is the most probable hypothesis, also included in the *Katalog zabytków sztuki w Polsce* [Catalogue of art monuments in Poland] [5, p. 71], in which the authors specify the date of the synagogue construction for the years 1797–1801. The design execution time by the synagogue author, i.e., Szymon Bogumił Zug, is set for 1777, indicated by Maroszek. The lack of information about the synagogue, which suffered from the city's great fire in 1797, may confirm this date. The records show also that the Jews resisted long before accepting the town heiress's proposition to erect a synagogue for the *kehillah*.

As a matter of fact, apart from short studies, the synagogue in Siemiatycze did not receive a monograph and full scientific and historical documentation. There has not been any complete research either, and the wall painting was hidden under another lime layer.

Of course, the object is mentioned by Eleonora Bergman and Jan Jagielski in the book: *Zachowane synagogi i domy modlitwy w Polsce: katalog* [Preserved synagogues and houses of prayer in Poland: catalogue] [6, p. 121]. However, it is no good looking for information about this synagogue in work by Maria and Kazimierz Piechotka. The synagogue was not of interest to many researchers. Therefore few works were published about it. The most information about the synagogue can be found in the city's monograph and *Katalog zabytków sztuki w Polsce* [5].

The article aims to describe the semiotic aspect of the synagogue architecture in Siemiatycze in the *Tikkun Chatzot* prayer context. So far, no one has attempted to demonstrate a direct relationship between the building's dimensions and the individual verses of the above mentioned prayer while considering the history of the building and its original architectural form.

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¹ The aspect of gematria in the architecture of Judaism is dealt with in detail in the author's doctoral thesis written under the supervision of Professor Małgorzata Chorowska. The doctoral thesis was defended in 2016 at the Faculty of Architecture of the Wrocław University of Science and Technology. A monograph was also issued on its basis [1].

Historical background

The synagogue is situated in the south-western part of the city in Zaszkolna Street, about 100 meters from the market square. Next to the synagogue, there is a Talmudic House from 1893.

The first mention of Jews in Siemiatycze comes from 1582 [4, p. 23]. They were brought by Katarzyna Tęczyńska, who was the owner of the town at that time. Initially, the commune was not very large and dependent on the commune in Tykocin. From the very beginning, the Jews began to compete in crafts with the local population. According to the agreement of the Siemiatycze *kehillah* with the Christian population which comes from May 9, 1653, [...] *it is appropriate to give overburned spirit into booze to the Siemiatycze town hall*² [3, p. 23].

The Jews in Siemiatycze worked mainly in trade. In 1667, they obtained another privilege. They wrote about it as follows: [...] *individually, we have the privilege of Her Majesty, Our Lady of the Voivode of Vilnius Kopciówna Sapieżyna, of the hetman, Grand Duchy of Lithuania, our lady and benefactor, that we are allowed to multiply all kinds of benefits, trade goods and whatever we understand for our benefit for our money, we are allowed to multiply all this*³ [3, p. 23].

This privilege freed Jews from any restrictions in trade and crafts, which resulted in conflicts with Christians. Until 1708, there was a dispute over the shoemakers' guild. Despite the repeated punishments and orders imposed on the Jewish population not to engage in unfair competition, nothing changed in this regard.

The state of significant development of the town and the Siemiatycze *kehillah* slowed down due to the cholera epidemic in 1710–1711. The people who emigrated from the city with the pestilential air's advent began to return in March 1711.

The 18th century saw a period of dynamic development of the city. The number of inhabitants, including Jews, increased, there were more craftsmen's workshops, and the town's turnover also increased. Bringing over missionaries in the 1720s resulted in a return to the foundation charter issued by King Sigismund the Old in 1542 regarding the market days. In 1728, in the ordinances concerning Jews of the Siemiatycze *kehillah*, the heir of the time, Michał Józef Sapieha, ordered the market to be moved from Sunday to Thursday, and the change was to be propagated by Jews [2, p. 23]. It was also allowed to trade in food products on Sunday, but it was forbidden to do it in public, i.e. in the town and school markets (in front of the school – the synagogue). This document shows that at that time, there was a synagogue in Siemiatycze, but it is difficult to talk about

its location and appearance. It can be said with high probability that it was a small and wooden building [4, p. 23].

In 1765, there were 1015 Jews in Siemiatycze, and in 1799 – 1656 Jews [2, p. 40]. In 1797 the western part of the city burned down. At that time, the reconstruction of the Jewish quarter began. It received a classicist layout like the *castrum Romanum*, with *cardo* and *decumanus* intersecting at right angles and the New Market Square at their intersection. The synagogue was probably built after this fire, during the reign of Princess Anna Jabłonowska née Sapieha. The construction of the synagogue was compensation for the building of Pałacowa Street in the 1770s. This street ran from the palace gate through the Jewish cemetery to the city centre. It is difficult to determine whether this was the condition for building the synagogue. However, it is known that still in the 1950s, Jewish tombstones were visible along Pałacowa Street [4, p. 54].

The synagogue was erected on an artificial hill and was higher than the old orthodox church and almost as high as the main town church [2, p. 563]. The author of the classicist synagogue was Szymon Bogumił Zug, who, after the town fire in 1758, commissioned by Princess Anna Jabłonowska née Sapieha, dealt with urban changes in Siemiatycze [2, p. 40].

In 1824, the synagogue was destroyed in a fire. However, in 1863, the synagogue did not suffer any damage during the uprising despite its proximity to the palace.

In 1878, out of 4,634 inhabitants, 3,600 were of the Jewish faith [7, p. 60]. The synagogue survived World War I without any damage. In the interwar period, Jews owned four houses of prayer in Siemiatycze.

In 1942, the Germans established a ghetto in Siemiatycze, and the synagogue was used as a warehouse for Jewish property. The most significant devastation took place in 1944 after the front had passed. The wooden interior fittings, the bimah, and decorative wooden *Aron ha-Kodesh* were destroyed. In the post-war period, the synagogue was used as warehouses and shops. At the beginning of the 1960s, the building was renovated and converted into a community centre.

It houses a performance hall, and an exhibition showing the history and culture of Siemiatycze was organized at the women's gallery.

Analysis of the synagogue architecture

The historical and urban study from 1957 stated: *Synagogue [...] Oriented. Brick. Plastered. Painted white. On a rectangular plan similar to a square. Three-aisle. Two-story. Embanked. Main entrance from the west, leading to the hallway, on both sides of which there are two similar rooms. The nave is wide, separated by two rows of square pillars, connected by full arches. Half-height side aisles are separated by galleries, supported from the west in the nave on two massive Doric stylized columns. There is one large room above the hall and western rooms, connected with galleries into one whole. Flat ceilings. The rest of the original decoration on the eastern wall with animal and floral motifs. The rest of the polychrome decoration is new. The façade without divisions, topped with a full entablature.*

² [...] *ratione dawania do przepalanej okowity gorzałki na ratusz siemiatyckiej pewnej* [original spelling in old Polish].

³ [...] *z osobna mamy przywilej Jaśnie Wielmożnej Jej Mci Pani wojewodziny wileńskiej Kopciówny Sapieżynnej, hetmanowej, Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego, pani i dobrodziejki naszej, że nam wolno wszelakie pożytki przymnażać, towarami handlować i cokolwiek byśmy rozumieli do pożytku naszego za pieniądze nasze pomnażać wolno nam to wszystko jest* [original spelling in old Polish].

ture. The eastern wall is pilastered and has pseudoportals on the aisles' axes. High, hipped roof, covered with shingles, sheet metal. The condition of the building is terrible [8, p. 35].

Detailed information about the building's original appearance can be found in the report from the 1959 inspection of the synagogue by Klemens Kaczorowski [9]. According to this documentation, the original outer wall of the house of prayer was built of fieldstone on limestone mortar. The thread of brick occurs only in the crowning cornice and at the jambs, including the window sills.

In the eastern façade, there have initially been blind window niches on the ground floor in three central axes and on the first floor in the central axis. The other openings served as windows. The niches in the outer axes on the ground floor were created due to bricking up the windows later, probably along with interior design change. The elevation played the front façade's role and was thus framed in high pilasters (Fig. 1).

In the western façade, the windows on the first floor in the outer axes were originally not bricked up, and there were no niches on the ground floor. The porte-fenêtre window has initially been situated above the main entrance on the central axis. Later modifications include punctures in the door opening on the edge north's axis and reworking the window openings on the ground floor and the upper floors.

The northern and southern elevations were initially designed as five-axis. The entrance to the women's gallery in the second axis from the west (Fig. 2) was a subsequent solution, as evidenced by the bricking of the ground floor window openings in the northern elevation before World War II [9, p. 4].

The men's hall was divided by rows of pillars on which the gallery for women was based. The pillars were connected with semicircular arcades that were initially open. The last preserved interior of the synagogue can be read from photos from the beginning of the 20th century (Fig. 3). Inside the arcades, there is an openwork *mechitza* made of vertical bars, the lower part of which is a balustrade in the form of a panel. The western gallery was supported in the centre by two stylized Doric columns, with two round pillars above them. In the columns' axis, the pillars supporting the gallery were octagonal at the bottom and turned into a square on the gallery.

There was a vast and decorative three-story *Aron ha-Kodesh*, on the eastern wall, to which stairs led by a balustrade from baluster. The cabinet for scrolls was flanked on both sides, with niches closed with a segmental arch. In the upper part of the wall, there were two windows. The synagogue had a rich painting decoration, which consisted of animal and plant motifs, plant, meanders, geometric and frame arrangements. On the eastern wall, there are small relics of wall paintings, still visible in 1958. Unfortunately, during the post-war renovation, they were covered with layers of paint. The decoration probably dates from 1912 [6, p. 121].

The interior was covered with a ceiling finished with wooden slats arranged in a checkerboard pattern. The entire composition passed or joined the wall due to the facets or very densely placed consoles.



Fig. 1. View of the synagogue in Siemiatycze from the south-east (source: [9, fig. 10])

Il. 1. Widok na synagogę w Siemiatyczach od południowego wschodu (źródło: [9, fot. 10])



Fig. 2. Synagogue in Siemiatycze. Photograph from 1925, author Jankiel Tykocki (source: the collection of Antoni Nowicki)

Il. 2. Synagoga w Siemiatyczach. Zdjęcie z 1925 r., autor Jankiel Tykocki (źródło: ze zbiorów Antoniego Nowickiego)

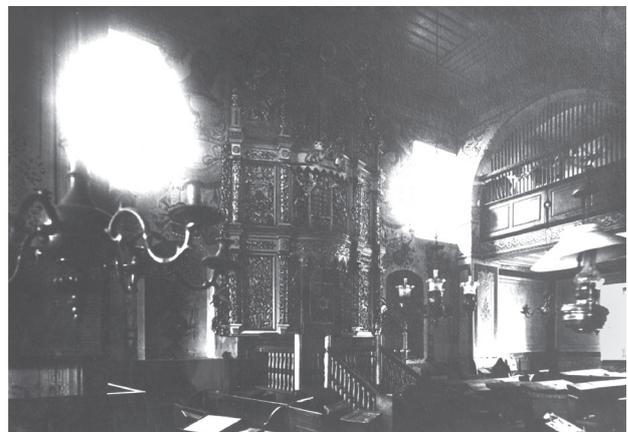


Fig. 3. The interior of the synagogue in Siemiatycze, early 20th century (source: The Center for Jewish Art, sig. 26534)

Il. 3. Wnętrze synagogi w Siemiatyczach, początek XX w. (źródło: The Center for Jewish Art, sygn. 26534)

At the turn of the 1950s and 1960s, the building underwent a renovation, which partially blurred its style features. On the first floor of the northern and southern elevations, windows were made in place of the door openings, the external stairs leading to the women's gallery were not reconstructed.

Existing state

The eastern façade was made as five-axis and two-story. Pilasters in giant order introduced the order of the façade. The façade was crowned with a cornice broken in the three-axis central part. Basically, the façade was restored to its condition from the beginning of the 20th century.

The west elevation has seven axes and was topped with a cornice. The central axis retains the porte-fenêtre window on the first floor. The original window openings have not been reconstructed in the upper floor's outer axes and the lower floor's second and fifth axes.

The southern and northern elevations are five-axis with rectangular window openings. In the second axis from the west, there are subsequent door openings on the ground floor. The whole façade is closed at the top with a cornice.

Inside, the ceilings were replaced with reinforced concrete. Apart from the general layout of the interior, nothing is left of the original synagogue. The arches flowing down the pillars were filled with window frames, which were painted with oil paint. Inside, the ceilings were replaced with reinforced concrete. Apart from the general layout of the interior, nothing is left of the original synagogue. The arches flowing down the pillars were filled with window frames, which were painted with oil paint. The eastern wall was covered with a stage. All traces of the niche for scrolls disappeared, and wooden panelling was used on the pillars and walls. The damaged bima was also not reconstructed. The vestibule has been divided into offices,

while on the first floor, in the western women's section, open to the room, there is a permanent exhibition and the director's rooms. Both the interior and the exterior do not resemble the original purpose of the building.

At the end of 2019, a major overhaul of the building began, including the reconstruction of the existing internal electrical and lighting installations, levelling the floor in the hall and vestibule, lowering the door thresholds, renovation of internal doors with the restoration of the original colours, renovation of walls and pillars.

Metrological analysis

The synagogue in Siemiatycze was planned entirely using the new Warsaw measure. It means that it could not be built in 1755 [2, p. 563] because the cubit's dimensions indicate its construction after 1764.

To conduct a metrological analysis, *in situ* measurements were made. These measurements were compiled and presented (Figs. 4, 5) based on the inventory documentation being in the Provincial Heritage Monuments Protection Office resources in Białystok [10]. The *in situ* height dimension of the men's hall's interior was compared with the inventory dimension from the 1950s. It was assumed that the inventory shows the interior's proper height, based on the ceiling beam nests and remnants of decorations visible in the 1950s.

The measurements show that the building was erected on a rectangular plan with dimensions of 43 × 33 cubits (25.6 × 19.63 m). The rectangle ratio was 1: 1.3. The synagogue was six cubits and one foot (7.44 m) high to the eaves. The hall's interior is arranged on a rectangle measuring 30 cubits and one quarter by 29 cubits and one quarter (18.00 × 17.41 m). The proportion of the rectangle is 1: 1.03, so they are close to the square. The hall's height at the highest point reaches 13 cubits and one foot (8.06 m) – detailed specification of dimensions in Table 1.

Based on the values obtained during the metrological analysis, research was conducted to obtain a linguistic representation for the obtained numerical values.

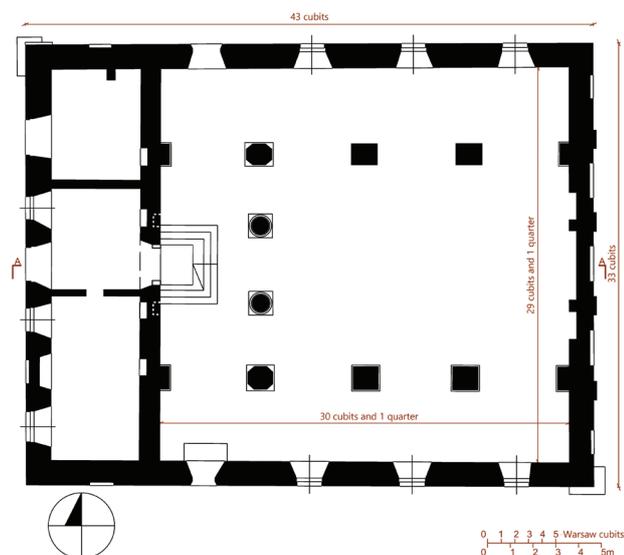


Fig. 4. Ground floor plan (elaborated by M. Michalski based on the PPKZ, Inventory of the synagogue, WUOZ archive in Białystok, [10])

Il. 4. Rzut przyziemia (oprac. M. Michalski na podstawie PPKZ, Inwentaryzacja synagogi, arch. WUOZ w Białymstoku, [10])

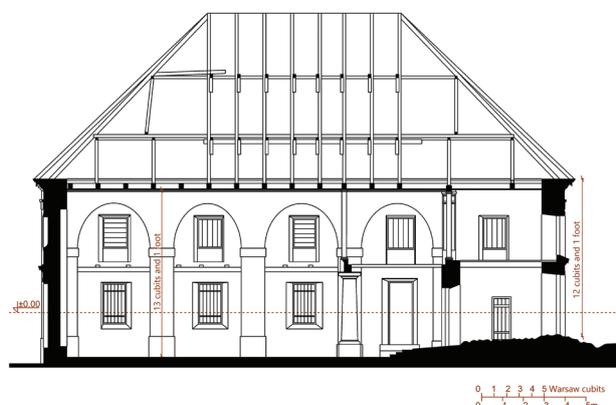


Fig. 5. Section A-A (elaborated by M. Michalski based on the PPKZ, Inventory of the synagogue, WUOZ archive in Białystok, [10])

Il. 5. Przekrój A-A (oprac. M. Michalski na podstawie PPKZ, Inwentaryzacja synagogi, arch. WUOZ w Białymstoku, [10])

Tabela 1. List of the dimensions of the synagogue in Siemiatycze together with their equivalents in old polish measures (elaborated by M. Michalski)

Table 1. Zestawienie wymiarów synagogi w Siemiatyczach wraz z odpowiednikami w miarach staropolskich (oprac. M. Michalski)

Synagogue length along the east–west axis	2560.00 cm
	43 cubits
Synagogue width along the north–south axis	1963.00 cm
	33 cubits
Height to the roof eaves	744.00 cm
	25 feet
Men’s hall interior length along the east–west axis	1800.00 cm
	121 quarters
Men’s hall interior width along north–south axis	1741.00 cm
	117 quarters
Men’s hall interior height at the highest point	806.00 cm
	27 feet

Gematrical analysis

Gematria is a particular type of letter mysticism that consists of transforming the letters of words into numbers. This method assumes that letters in a word are understood as graphic signs of numbers. This interesting relationship is uniquely embedded in the Hebrew language. According to Kabbalah, *the cosmos is the code of the name of God and the Torah* [11, p. 6]. In the Hebrew language, which is not only a cognitive element but a phenomenon of creative power, the esoteric meaning has its culmination in God’s name [12, p. 30].

Research studies in this part of the article are based on the dependence in which a particular numerical value obtained from metrological analysis should have a semantic meaning. It cannot be a random string of letters, the symbols of individual digits being searched for, giving the sum of the value sought. It must have a meaning in addition to the phonetic value. This method is complicated, mostly as one numerical value can correspond to an infinite number of semantically and phonetically correct terms. One word, i.e. a sequence of alphabetic characters, always had one and the constant value assigned to a given gematrical method.

The analysis was carried out following several gematria methods. These were assumed to be simplified concerning the *softites* (forms of consonants at the end of words). In a different form in the middle and at the end of a word, individual sounds’ numerical values have been standardized with the base form in all gematria methods. It should be emphasized that gematria methods are used not looking for the value of a word but the meaning and significance of the number.

The first method, absolute (*mispar hechrachi*), divides the alphabet’s 22 letters into three parts. The first nine letters range from 1 – *aleph* [א] to 9 – *tet* [ט]. The next nine letters correspond to the values from 10 – *yod* [י] to 90 – *tsade* [צ]. The other four letters are hundreds. It means

that the letter *qof* [ק] has the value 100, and the last letter of the alphabet *tav* [ת] is 400. In this method softit’s: *kaf* [כ], *mem* [מ], *nun* [נ], *pe* [פ], *tsadi* [צ] obtained values of 20, 40, 50, 80, 90, respectively.

The second method (*mispar siduri*) is a simplified method. It is based on assigning 22 letters of the alphabet values from 1 *aleph* [א] to 22 *tav* [ת].

The last, third method that has not been mentioned above is the reduction method (*mispar katan*). This method assumes – similarly to the *mispar hechrachi* method – that the numerical values of the first nine letters of the alphabet – from *aleph* [א] to *tet* [ט] – are numbers from 1 to 9. The next 9 letters – from *yod* [י] to *tsade* [צ] – also have a value from 1 to 9. The remaining four letters – from *qof* [ק] to *tav* [ת] – are values 1 to 4. So in the reduction method, numerical values of the letters from the *mispar hechrachi* method all zeros are reduced.

When choosing a prayer for analysis, attention should be paid to the texts that have gained importance in the liturgy since the 17th century. It was also influenced by mysticism, and from the 16th century, the Lurianic Cabala. The changes introduced under the influence of mysticism were innovative and did not change the liturgy’s general arrangement or prayers’ texts. Instead, they focused on introducing meditation, hymns, chants, and *kavanah*. Therefore, the relations between the synagogue’s dimensions in Siemiatycze and several prayers (*Shema Yisrael*, *Amidah*, *Lekhal Dodi*, *Kabbalat Shabbat*, *Yigdal*, *Shir Hakavod*) were analyzed. However, in this paper, it was decided to discuss the *Tikkun Chatzot* prayer (midnight service) topic, the service that appeared as influenced by the Kabbalistic movements in Safed. During this service, in tears, laments were said about the destruction of Jerusalem and Israel’s scattering. We find the first information about this rite in Shulchan Aruch [13, Orech Chaim 1,2–4]. It was a very impressive rite, during which, in the almost dark interior of the synagogue, usually sitting, each Jew individually recited lamentation over the destruction of the temple. *Tikkun Chatzot* is divided into two parts: *Tikkun Rachel* and *Tikkun Leah*, from the names of the two wives of Patriarch Jacob. *Tikkun Rachel* is said while sitting low on the floor or a low stool. It is then necessary to take off the shoes. The head should be sprinkled with ash and covered with a shawl in place of the tefillin. It is an act of mourning. *Tikkun Leah* is said while sitting in a chair, not on the floor. The gematrical analysis was performed based on the number value of dimensions and their conversion to feet, quarters, and inches.

An analysis of verses related to the dimensions of the synagogue in Siemiatycze is described below⁴.

*That Your way should be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations*⁵.

לְדַעַת בְּאַרְצֵי דְרַבְרָא בְּכָל גּוֹיִם יִשְׁעֵתָּהּ:
1958 = 806 59 52 244 293 504
284 = 86 32 25 46 41 54
86 = 23 14 7 10 14 18

⁴ The text of the prayer based on [14].

⁵ The *Tikkun Leah* fragment from: Ps 67,3.

*Our sanctuary and our glory, wherein our forefathers praised You is burnt with fire, and all our coveted places have become a waste!*⁶

העל אלה תתאפק יהנה תחשה ותעננו עד מאד:
2562 = 45 74 582 713 26 981 36 105
330 = 18 20 78 56 26 81 18 33
132 = 9 11 33 20 17 18 9 15

*How shall we sing the song of the Lord on foreign soil?*⁷

איך נשיר את שיר יהנה על אדמת נכר:
2343 = 270 445 100 26 510 401 560 31
300 = 45 40 28 26 51 23 65 22
75 = 9 13 10 17 6 5 11 4

*The crown of our head has fallen, woe to us, for we have sinned!*⁸

נפלה עטרת ראשנו אוי נא לנו פי תטאנו:
1659 = 74 30 86 51 17 557 679 165
300 = 38 21 32 15 17 62 69 48
120 = 29 3 14 6 8 17 22 21

*O Lord, You shall open my lips, and my mouth will recite Your praise!*⁹

אדני שפתי תפתח ופי יגיד תהלתך:
2721 = 855 27 96 888 790 65
300 = 72 27 33 69 70 29
97 = 18 9 15 24 16 11

*For [but] a short time Your holy people inherited; our adversaries trampled Your sanctuary!*¹⁰

למצער נרשו עם קדשך צרינו בוקסו מקדשך:
2434 = 464 134 356 242 110 516 430
400 = 68 44 68 55 29 57 79
121 = 14 26 23 10 11 12 25

*Hallelujah, I shall thank the Lord with all my heart with the counsel of the upright and [in] the congregation!*¹¹

הללו יה אודה יהנה בכל לבב בסוד ישראל וצדה:
931 = 85 560 72 34 52 26 16 15 71
265 = 31 74 27 16 25 26 16 15 35
121 = 22 11 18 7 7 17 16 6 17

*The strength of His works He related to His people, to give them the inheritance of the nations!*¹²

פח מעשיו הגיד לעמו לתת להם נחלת גוים:
2074 = 59 488 75 830 146 22 426 28
328 = 32 56 30 56 47 22 66 19
121 = 14 20 12 11 20 13 21 10

*God will be gracious to us and bless us; He will cause His countenance to shine with us forever!*¹³

אלהים יתננו ויברכנו יאר פניו אתנו סלה:
1413 = 95 457 146 211 294 124 86
315 = 32 43 47 31 69 52 41
117 = 14 16 20 4 24 25 14

*The works of His hands are truth and justice; all His commandments are faithful!*¹⁴

מעשי ידיו אמת ומשפט באמנים כל פקודיו:
1773 = 206 50 191 435 441 30 420
342 = 62 23 65 66 36 30 60
117 = 26 5 20 30 9 12 15

*Our heritage has been turned over to strangers, our houses to aliens!*¹⁵

נחלתנו נהפכה לזרים בתינו לנכרים:
1809 = 350 468 287 160 544
324 = 80 54 62 52 76
108 = 17 18 17 25 31

The assignment of phrases to specific dimensions of the analyzed objects is as follows:

Synagogue length **(86)**:

That Your way should be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations.

Synagogue width **(132)**:

Our sanctuary and our glory, wherein our forefathers praised You is burnt with fire, and all our coveted places have become a waste!

Synagogue high **(300)**:

How shall we sing the song of the Lord on foreign soil?

(300):

The crown of our head has fallen, woe to us, for we have sinned.

(300):

O Lord, You shall open my lips, and my mouth will recite Your praise!

Men's hall length **(121)**:

For [but] a short time Your holy people inherited; our adversaries trampled Your sanctuary.

(121):

Hallelujah, I shall thank the Lord with all my heart with the counsel of the upright and [in] the congregation.

(121):

The strength of His works He related to His people, to give them the inheritance of the nations.

Men's hall width **(117)**:

God will be gracious to us and bless us; He will cause His countenance to shine with us forever.

(117):

The works of His hands are truth and justice; all His commandments are faithful.

Men's hall high **(324)**:

Our heritage has been turned over to strangers, our houses to aliens.

⁶ The *Tikkun Rachel* fragment from: Is 64,10.

⁷ The *Tikkun Rachel* fragment from: Ps 137,4.

⁸ The *Tikkun Rachel* fragment from: La 5,16.

⁹ The *Tikkun Leah* fragment from: Ps 51,17.

¹⁰ The *Tikkun Rachel* fragment from: Is 63,18.

¹¹ The *Tikkun Leah* fragment from: Ps 111,1.

¹² The *Tikkun Leah* fragment from: Ps 111,6.

¹³ The *Tikkun Leah* fragment from: Ps 67,2.

¹⁴ The *Tikkun Leah* fragment from: Ps 111,7.

¹⁵ The *Tikkun Rachel* fragment from: La 5,2.

Concerning the analyzed fragments and their location within the synagogue, we can draw the following conclusions. Much more often in the external dimensions, we find phrases referring to exile and nostalgia for the temple and Jerusalem. Most often, terms praising God refer to interior dimensions. Based on the analyzed fragments, it can be concluded that the synagogue presents the complex history of the people of Israel, pointing to the destruction of the temple and the scattering of Jews resulting from it. Despite this tragedy, the community remains faithful, glorifying God and awaiting His blessing. It proves that the synagogue is treated specially as an object distinguished by its binary character. On the one hand, there is a sacred, liturgical-oriented interior that intentionally praises God, remembers His attributes, and remembers temples. On the other hand, the exterior reminds us that the Jew is a wanderer, has lost his temple and homeland, and is now in a foreign land.

Conclusion

The synagogue in Siemiatycze is not the only building showing gematrical connections with liturgical texts. Similar relationships can be found, for example, in the synagogue in Bobowa [1, p. 269]. In this object, the phrases of *Tikkun Chatzot* are also divided into those corresponding to the inside and outside. The links between *Tikkun Chatzot* and the dimensions of the synagogue in Siemiatycze do not seem to be accidental. One can try to determine the probability of the correlation of 6 fragments with the synagogue's dimensions. The chance of hitting six numerical values that correspond to six passages of this prayer simultaneously is 1:13 172 431 272.

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Abstract

Tikkun Chatzot

– semiotics of synagogues on the example of a synagogue in Siemiatycze

The article aims to describe the semiotic aspect of synagogue architecture in the context of liturgical texts and show the direct relationship between synagogues' dimensions and the individual verses of prayers. The work's subject was a synagogue in Siemiatycze, built at the end of the 18th century. The example of prayer was *Tikkun Chatzot*, the midnight service that emerged under the influence of Kabbalistic movements in Safed. Under the influence of 17th and 18th-century mystical movements, it became part of the synagogue liturgy in Europe.

The article presents a metrological analysis of the synagogue's dimensions in Siemiatycze based on *in situ* research and the related *Tikkun Chatzot* prayer text's gematric analysis. Gematria is a special kind of mysticism of the letters and is rooted in a particular way in the Hebrew language. It consists of converting the letters of words into numbers. This method assumes that letters in a word are understood as graphic signs of numbers. During the research, methods of logical argumentation, historical and analytical, and quantitative and statistical, were used.

During the research, it was possible to indicate the relationship between the *Tikkun Chatzot* prayer fragments and the synagogue's dimensions in Siemiatycze. It applies to external and internal dimensions. We find expressions relating to exile and nostalgia for the temple and Jerusalem more often in the external dimensions, whereas in interior dimensions we encounter expressions praising God. At the same time, it was indicated that this relationship represents the linguistically binary character of the synagogue architecture rooted in the exterior–interior opposition.

Key words: synagogue, *Tikkun Chatzot*, Siemiatycze, gematria

Streszczenie

Tikkun Chacot

– semiotyka synagogi na przykładzie bożnicy w Siemiatyczach

Celem artykułu jest charakterystyka semiotycznego aspektu architektury bożniczej w kontekście tekstów liturgicznych oraz wykazanie bezpośredniej relacji między wymiarami synagog a poszczególnymi wersami modlitw. Przedmiotem prac była synagoga w Siemiatyczach powstała w końcu XVIII w. Jako przykład modlitwy wybrano *Tikkun Chacot*, nabożeństwo o północy, które pojawiło się pod wpływem ruchów kabalistycznych w Safedzie, a które dość szybko pod wpływem ruchów mistycznych XVII i XVIII w. wpisało się jako element liturgii synagogalnej w Europie.

W artykule dokonano analizy metrologicznej wymiarów synagogi w Siemiatyczach w oparciu o badania *in situ* oraz powiązanej z nią analizy gematrycznej tekstu modlitwy *Tikkun Chacot*. Gematria stanowi szczególną odmianę mistyki liter i jest zakorzeniona w szczególny sposób w języku hebrajskim. Polega na przetwarzaniu liter wyrazów w liczby. Metoda ta zakłada rozumienie liter w wyrazie jako znaków graficznych liczb. Podczas badań stosowano metody logicznej argumentacji, historyczno-analityczne oraz ilościowe i statystyczne.

W czasie badań udało się wskazać związek fragmentów modlitwy *Tikkun Chacot* z wymiarami synagogi w Siemiatyczach. Dotyczy to wymiarów zewnętrznych i wewnętrznych. Zdecydowanie częściej w wymiarach zewnętrznych odnajduje się wyrażenia odnoszące się do wygnania i nostalgii za świątynią i Jeruzalem. Najczęściej wyrażenia sławiące Boga odnoszą się do wymiarów wewnętrznych. Jednocześnie wskazano, iż związek ten przedstawia lingwistycznie binarny charakter architektury bożniczej zakorzeniony w opozycji wewnątrz–zewnętrzne.

Słowa kluczowe: synagoga, *Tikkun Chacot*, Siemiatycze, bożnica, gematria