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Wills of Częstochowa Jews from the Years 1834-1865 as a Picture of Their Economic and Social Activity

The first conference dedicated to the Jews of Częstochowa, which took place in our city on 22nd-23rd April 2004², provided the opportunity for the analysis of the Wills of ten Jews from the years 1809-1833. Now, the author has the possibility of returning to research those issues.

In this article, the research subject will be Jewish Wills from the years 1834-1865 – a period which was particularly essential to the development of the Jewish community in building a strong economic position, so visible at the turn of the 20th Century. It created new residential possibilities, especially for wealthy Jews mainly on I Aleja and II Aleja. As a practical consequence, it removed any impediments from acquiring homes in the so-called *Stary Rynek* (Old Market Square) and along Targowa, Nadrzeczna, Warszawska and Krakowska Streets. This process was most strongly evident in the 1830's. Later, it gradually eased off.

Decisions of the Administrative Council, dated 13th/25th October 1833, put a stop to the creation of more distant districts for the Jews. One can agree with A. Eisenbach's opinion that "the creation of these areas was not only, above all, an instrument of economic restriction, but also religious and ethnic selection and, in effect, ossified class divisions and impeded the development of cities"³. The situation was worsened by a ban placed upon the Jewish population from residing within a 21 kilometre border. It was only an act dated 5th June 1861 that gave Jews the right to be elected to municipal and district councils⁴.

Despite pressure from the authorities, written official testaments began to gradually be accepted, but not without opposition. Stronger resistance was more apparent in small towns and settlements⁵. In the case of the Jewish community, there were two other factors. The first was the anxiety that, despite the obligation of witnesses to remain silent as to the contents of the Will, a stranger, i.e. a non-Jew, would gain direct information about the state of wealth of a Jewish testator. The second issue was that, in some Wills, valuables were mentioned without actually specifying them in the text of the Will itself. It is possible

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² Materiał from the conference appeared in the book "The Jews of Częstochowa. Co-existence – Holocaust - Memory", edited by Jerzy Mizgalski with a foreword by Zygmunt Rolat. Częstochowa 2006.

³ A. Eisenbach, *Z dziejów ludności żydowskiej w Polsce w XVIII i XIX wieku*, Warszawa 1983, s. 223.

⁴ *Ibid.*, s. 223.

⁵ Zob. D. Złotkowski, *Testamenty Żydów z Częstochowy i najbliższych okolic źródłem historycznym pierwszej połowy XIX wieku*. s. 118-132. [w:] *Żydzi Częstochowianie...*

that such an inventory constituted additional material, not included in the basic contents of the Will (after all, the greater size of the wealth, the higher the stamp duties).

The social and economic position of Częstochowa residents in the 19th Century, among them the Jews, must have been strongly connected with the development of the city. In the following article, it is worth noting the wider, political context. The period following the fall of the November Uprising was notable within Wills, for example in the way currency was expressed. Beginning in the 1830's, over the first period of 8-10 years, the value of wealth was quoted in Polish złoty. Only did the first Will of Frayndl (nee Dawid) Żarecka still contain a conversion from talers into złoty. In Wills from the years 1842-1850, values were given in silver rubles, almost always converted into Polish złoty. After 1850, the value of wealth was generally given in silver rubles, only sometimes converting them into Polish złoty.

The second of the referred-to factors was the development of the city. The population of Częstochowa grew systematically, albeit slowly. It was, as follows:

1827	6,000	residents
1858	9,000	residents
1880	18,000 ⁶	residents

A sudden increase in the number of residents was seen in the years 1882-1912, namely outside the period beyond this examination. In this period, the number of permanent residents grew from 15,822 to 37,851, i.e. more than double, while the itinerant population grew from 2,824 to 51,706, namely 18-fold⁷. What was important for the Jews was that the Jewish population did not grow rapidly until the turn of the 20th Century and, at least in part, was connected with the inflow of Jews into the Congress Kingdom of Poland from Russia and Lithuania⁸.

In the following article, an analysis will be provided of fourteen Last Wills and Testaments drafted by twelve testators. The following research confirms that a Will, perceived as an historical source useful in researching the activities of inhabitants of cities and villages, provides much information. It allows for the extensive reconstruction of living conditions, in this instance, in the years 1836-1865. A Will provides a picture of the state of wealth of a particular individual. It allows us to gain information about his family, his living conditions and his position regarding religion.

⁶ J. Braun, *Częstochowa. Urbanistyka i architektura*, Warszawa 1977, s. 76.

⁷ F. Sobalski, *Przemysł częstochowski (1882-1914)*, Częstochowa 2009, s. 25.

⁸ *Ibid.*, s. 27.

The will of the following people were analysed:

1. Frayndli (nee Dawid) Żarecka (of Częstochowa).....23rd May (3rd June) 1836
2. Józef Böhm (of Krzepice)..... 31st Dec.(12th Oct.) 1838
3. Lew Kohn (of Częstochowa)7th (19th) June 1839
4. Mošek Waynreb⁹ (of Częstochowa) 5th (17th) Oct 1842
5. Mendel Chorowicz¹⁰ (of Częstochowa) (first)20th May (1st June) 1843
(second)23rd Aug (4th Sept) 1845
(third)19th (31st Aug) 1850
6. Wolf Szlezynger¹¹ (of Żarek) 25th Oct (6th Nov) 1845
7. Dawid Landau Kronenberg (of Częstochowa) 22nd Nov 1846
8. Abram Szefer Rosenwald (of Częstochowa)9th (21st) Nov 1846
9. Ezyk Peltz (of Częstochowa)..... 19th (31st) May 1853
10. Sara (nee Dawidowicz) Juchtman (of Częstochowa)7th (19th) Dec 1859
11. Aleksander Poznański (of Częstochowa) 30th May (11th June) 1861
12. Markus Kohn (of Częstochowa) 17th (23rd) Jan 1865

The Will of Frayndl (nee Dawid) Żarecka¹² was drafted on 22nd May/3rd June 1836. The author lived in the city's *Stary Rynek* (at No.9 in the Old Market Square). She was the widow of Majer¹³ Żarecki who died in 1828. This marriage, which lasted more than 38 years, produced "four children, but they all died in childhood". She estimated her wealth at "six hundred Polish złoty". It was in the hands of the merchant Gerszon Wolf Landau who lived in Częstochowa. As the basis of her wealth, she described as follows: "I also have various small items of shop stock". She still had four years to run of a lease on a shop and stable. These premises were rented from Katarzyna Bąbczyńska .

The testatrix was a religious person, as she designated that money held by Gerszon Wolf Landau was to be left "with him in perpetuity, from which the interest accrued annually [will be] used for a service which must be conducted for my soul. I ask that the local synagogue caretaker ensure that such a service for my soul be conducted annually". The remainder of her wealth she left to her niece, Estera Goldfeld and her fiance, Nayman Rychter. In return, she asked that when she died, that she be "decently buried". At the conclusion, the suggestion appears that the testatrix could write, but did not sign the Will, "because, due to weakness in the hand, she was not able to sign [it]".

⁹ In this version, the surname appears as "Wajnreb".

¹⁰ In this version, the surname appears as "Horowicz".

¹¹ In this version, the surname appears as "Szlezyngier".

¹² State Archives of Częstochowa (APCz.), Not. I Budrewicz sygn. 15 (1836 rok), fol. 127.

¹³ In this version, the first name appears as "Mayer".

The Will of Józef Böhm (1780-1848)¹⁴ was drafted in Częstochowa on 31st October / 12th November 1838. Its author was "a merchant and real estate owner, living in the town of Krzepice". He married twice. His first wife was Haja Zysman, daughter of Liwer Zysman. This marriage lasted twenty five years and produced seven children. With his second wife, Gitel Rozenhal, the testator had three children. His first wife's dowry amounted to 400 talers [i.e. 2,400 Polish złoty]. With regard to his second wife, the testator took no money (apart from the trousseau), as he indicated, "since she was forced to be a mother, not only to her own children, but also to the five minor children from my first wife". Writing his Will, he confirmed a prenuptial agreement of 400 talers (a hundred of which was in valuables) because, as he clearly indicated, "she has my complete confidence, since she was and is the best mother to my children, both from this and my previous marriage". He also left her lifetime use of the home. "The residence should be comprised of one room, but without the payment of any taxes, since as I have already fully provided for my children, they will not receive anything further from my estate (...)". According to custom, he appointed his wife, Gitel Rozenhal, as the guardian of his underage children. As her guardian, he appointed his son, Jakub Böhm, who lived in Krzepice. However, as executor of the Will, he appointed his second son, Abram Böhm, who lived in Przyrowie(?). His entire estate amounted to 10,000 Polish złoty.

The Will of Lew Kohn had a special format (1781-1845)¹⁵, drafted in Częstochowa 7th/19th June 1839. Over the course of forty two years, the couple (Rykel Kohn nee Piller had already died) produced twelve children, of whom "three had died in infancy, while nine remain alive and have grown up". Inclusion within the Will of a detailed list of heirs allows for, not only the identification of the testator's children, but also his children-in-law. They are listed as follows: 1) Dobra Landau (nee Kohn), wife of Gerszon Majerowicz Landau "assisted and with the authorisation of her husband", 2) Hertz Kohn, 3) Hendla (nee Kohn) Glikson, wife of Izaak Glikson, 4) Ruchla (nee Kohn) Landau, wife of Adolf

¹⁴ APCz, Not. I Budrewicz sygn. 17 (1838 rok), fol. 231. Akta Stanu Cywilnego (ASC) Krzepice, ŻYDZI. Zgony, akt 37. "Executed in Krzepice, 2nd September 1848 at 10:00am. Orthodox Jews, Szmul Gutkind, 69, bookbinder, and Fajtel Goldbaum, 62, teacher, of Krzepice, testified that yesterday, at 10:00pm, Józef Böhm, 68, merchant of Krzepice of parents unknown, died, leaving a widow Gitel aged 40 and children from his first marriage: Jakuba 41, Laja 39, Abram 37, Markus 33, Róża 29. Ewa 25, Izaak 23, from his remarriage: Daniel 18, Liber 15, Sara 6. As a result of witnessing the demise of Józef Böhm, his estate is comprised of a house and 12 morgs of land. This document has been read and signed by myself together with the witnesses Szmul Gutkind and Fajtel Goldbaum. Retained by the civil records office [illegible surname]".

¹⁵ APCz, Not. I Budrewicz sygn. 18 (1839 rok), fol. 162. ASC Częstochowa, ŻYDZI Zgony, akt 28. "Executed in the city of Częstochowa, 22nd/4th May 1845 at 10:00am. Orthodox Jews, Abram Szachr 46 teacher, and Judek Berkowicz 37 servant listed as local resident, testified that yesterday, 3rd May at midnight, Leon Kohn, 64 merchant, local resident, died leaving a widow Zysel (nee Orbach), sons Hertz, Ezyk, Morytz, as well as daughters Dobra, Henda, Ruchla, Frayndel and Maria córki, all of full legal age and resident in Częstochowa. His estate is comprised of a storeyed brick house and chattels around this city. Following witnessing of his demise, this document was read and signed by them. Civil Records Registrar. Niech, President".

Wulf Landau, 5) Azyk¹⁶ Kohn, 6) Morytz Kohn, 7) Fraydla¹⁷ (nee Kohn) Faygenblat, wife of Izaak Faygenblat, 8) "in place of Liba (nee Kohn) Fajans, is her spouse Hertz Fajans resident in Sieradz", 9) "and finally, in place of Marianna (nee Kohn) Henszel is her spouse Walenty Dawid Henszel, residing together with his wife in Kępno, Prussia".

In dictating his Will, Lewek Kohn wished, "that the children (...) share in real estate owned by him". The Estate to be distributed was considerable. It comprised: 1) a house at 19 Market Square "at the corner of Mostowa Street, with all development contained therein", 2) a house at No.26 and 3) an inn "with all staff (...) with rights to the building standing there". In the first instance, from his real estate, the testator distributed the house at No.19 (valued at 25,927 złoty). He bequeathed it to his son, Hertz Kohn. The remaining siblings were to be paid according to a basis detailed in the Will. The beneficiary was also obliged to settle an amount due, regarding the house, "to the Congress Kingdom government".

The next house, situated at 26 Market Square in Częstochowa, was bequeathed to the Glikson and Landau families. The testator, however, guaranteed for himself the "use of income yielded from ownership of the house (...) situated at No.26, for the remaining days of his life". Beside the written details of this point of the Will, information is also provided about the intentions of the benefactors regarding this building. In the Will is this note: "If the said Glikson and Landau families desire to put a storey onto this house then, in that case, income from it will be allocated to Lewek Kohn and this cannot be challenged. They will also be permitted to repair buildings in the side courtyard or build anything to their liking, however without it being detrimental to the income as divided by the father (...)". The recipients also took upon themselves the mortgage debts.

Next, Lewek Kohn wrote his instructions with regard to "an inn in Old Częstochowa, situated at 90 and 91 Targowa Street, at which is an annexe, a stable, (...) and granaries, together with the land upon which they stand". This largest part of his estate, the "distributing father" bequeathed to : the Faygenblat family, his daughter Frajdel and her husband Izaak. The estimated value of the inn was 18,821 złoty. For its new owners, it meant that they were drawn into the complicated process of settlement with their siblings. To their cost, they also had to "transfer into their own names, as a result of this document, mortgages on the inherited inn and annexe situated at numbers 90 and 91 in Częstochowa, together with its furniture and fittings".

By way of the inn, the testator, "until the end of his days," ensured an annual income for himself "of one thousand six hundred złoty, paid quarterly". However, within the Will was written that, if the beneficiaries "did not regularly pay the income to the distributing father, in that case, the distributing father was permitted to not only take income from the now distributed real estate in order to satisfy his income requirements, but

¹⁶ Imię występuje też w wersji „Ajzyk”.

¹⁷ Imię występuje też w wersji „Frajdla”.

also to recoup any deficiency from the distributed assets". In concluding this extensive Will, the notary, Ignacy Budrewicz, wrote that the beneficiaries "on their part, declared, with respect to the real estate that has been given to them by their father by means of this document, together with their respective spouses, accept. with immense gratitude and respect for their father". In conclusion, the testator "prior to signing, inserted the reservation (...), that following his death, the owners of this real estate, given to them by means of this document, cannot sell it to others, but only to co-sharing siblings".

The Will of Mošek Waynreb (1799 – 1847)¹⁸ was drafted at the Anioły manor farm, near Częstochowa, on the 5th (17th) of October 1842. It is worth noting that the Testator was merely the lessee of the aforementioned manor farm. The author of the Will under discussion was married three times. His first wife was Rachla Oderfeld. With her, he had a daughter, Rozalia. As a dowry from the parents of his first wife, he ultimately took 800 złoty (120 roubles). As an enterprising merchant, he placed the money on deposit with "the Orthodox Jew Lichtman", in the name of his aforementioned daughter, Rozalia. His second wife was Estera Oderfeld, sister of his first wife. The couple, however, remained childless. The Testator's third wife was Jetta, nee Goldman. In this instance, the dowry amounted to 9,000 złoty (1,350 roubles). There were five children from this marriage: 1) Hanna 13 years old, Dyna 10 years old, 3) Ewa 7 years old, 4) a son, Szymon Herszlik and 5) Mindla "eight months of age". After nominating his heirs, the author of this last Will and Testament dictated that his children "divide his Estate into equal shares". He also indicated that his third wife, Jetta nee Goldman "also has the right to have the same share as each of the children, when the Estate is divided". He also left her the furniture, copper, tin and silver and gold crockery.

In analysing the Will, we also find important information of a business nature which introduce us to the economic conditions as existed in the immediate neighbourhood of Częstochowa at the beginning 1840's. So, we learn here that the Testator, being the Lessee of the Anioły manor farm, together with his brother-in-law Dawid Bergman, also "held" the lease on the Wyczerpy manor farm. Everything that was contained within these two leases was: "all livestock, alive or dead, as well as farms" plus "all produce found within these Leases, to be owned in common". This actual commonality, in a formal sense however, was divided with the Testator clearly writing, "since the Anioły manor farm lease is in my name, whereas the Wyczerpy manor farm is contracted in the name of my brother-

¹⁸ The name also appears in the wording: Weinreb. APCz, Not. I Budrewicz sygn. 21 (1842 rok), fol. 269. ASC Częstochowa, ŻYDZI Zgony, akt 153. "It occurred in the city of Częstochowa on the 24th August / 5th September 1847, at 4:00pm. Orthodox Jews, Abram Szacher 48 teacher Judek Berkowicz 39 servant, of Częstochowa, settled and declared that, today, in the Anioły manor farm, in this district, Mosiek Weinreb 48, widower, lessee of Anioły manor farm, died leaving six children: Róża, Hana, Dyna, Chewa, Symcha and Mendel, lived in the Anioły manor house. After confirmation of his death, this document was read and signed by them. Abram Szacher, Judek Berkowicz and Registrar W. N. Prezydent Malukiewicz(!)".

in-law, concluding in nine years, therefore, in the event of my death, my brother-in-law Dawid Bergman and my wife, Jetta nee Goldman, will jointly be responsible for the expenses and taxes (whereas in the case where the Leases will turn out worse than expected), in that case, together with my wife, they will have the power to transfer the Leases on the manor farms to someone else”.

In his Will, Mosiek Waynreb did not forget the children of his brothers. The daughter of Lewek Epszajn was left 600 złoty (90 roubles.), however his own brother, Lewek Epszajn was left 30 roubles. As guardians of his children, he appointed his wife Jetta (nee Goldman) and his brother-in-law, Dawid Bergman. The author of the Will acknowledged that he had earlier sold his home, at 91 Koza Street Częstochowa, to Herszlik Goldman for 1,000 złoty. He had already received a substantial amount of that money. The balance, 440 złoty, would be given to his heirs.

The Will of Mendel Chorowicz (1769-1857)¹⁹ was drafted in Częstochowa on 20th May/1st June 1843. A clear indicator of the new times was that the author of this Will identified himself through ”a booklet (...) issued and produced on 25th January / 6th February 1839 by the Municipal Office, its contents establishing his surname”. The notary added that the Testator is ”burdened with and deprived of sight”. The author of the Will was married twice. His first wife of forty two years was Bayla (nee Zylberberg). This marriage produced five children: 1) Manja (widow of Lerner), 2) Pesla (wife of Józef Kohn), 3) Jacheta (married name Koestenberg), 4) Mosiek Rabinowicz, 5) Gerszon Chorowicz. His second wife was Sara (nee Orbach), with whom the Testator had a daughter, Hinda Cywia²⁰ (7 years old). As legal guardian, the Testator appointed his wife Sara and, as an adviser, Ezyk Tobiasz, resident of Częstochowa.

After detailing his family, Mendel Chorowicz described his Estate. Firstly, from his father Dawid Chorowicz, he had inherited the brick house, situated at 47 Krakowska Street, Częstochowa worth 6,000 złoty (900 roubles). He also inherited from his father ”two men’s and women’s benches in the large prayerhouse” worth, according to the Testator, 1,800 złoty (270 roubles). As he himself indicated, ”I received from my father, in goods and debts, the amount of nine thousand złoty, namely, one thousand, three hundred and fifty rouble”. Derived from trade, he was able to enlarge his father’s Estate. He could because, as he wrote, “I have silverware and other silver crockery valued at two thousand

¹⁹ APCz, Not. I Budrewicz sygn. 22 (1843 rok), fol. 124. Nazwisko występuje także w brzmieniu „Horowicz”. ASC Częstochowa, Żydzi. Zgony, akt 81. ”Occuring in Częstochowa on 7th/19th December 1857, at 5:00pm. Orthodox Jew, Mendel Chorowicz 88, died surrounded by his family, survived by his wife Sara Bayla (nee Orbach) in Częstochowa and three [five (?)] grown children from his first marriage with Bayla (nee Joske) [Zylberg(?)], sons, Mošek, Gerszon and Hinda Cywa, daughter, resident in Częstochowa. After witnessing his demise, the witnesses read and signed this document. Abram Szacher, Judka Berkowicz and Registrar W. N. Homorary Council President [name illegible]”.

²⁰ Częstochowa notary Ignacy Budrewicz alternatively spelt it ”Chindę Cywię”.

Polish złoty, namely three hundred Russian silver roubles. Secondly, the benches in the small prayerhouse, costing me six hundred Polish złoty, namely ninety silver roubles”.

It is worth noting that the Will under discussion dates from 1843 and that the Testator mentions the “large prayerhouse” once, and the next time he writes of “the small prayerhouse”. In the first instance, it cannot relate to the synagogue built in the neo-classical style in 1892, located in the then Aleksandryjska Street (currently W.Wilson Street)²¹. The matter of the “large” and “small” localities mentioned in the Will is open. It can be supposed that, already by then, there were several prayerhouses in Częstochowa.

Analysis of the Will seems to irrefutably indicate that the Testator engaged in the lending of money for profit. The list of people, who were his debtors, is a long one²². Including the wealth “inherited from the Testator’s father” as well as that “earned”, the total value was 27,800 złp (4,170 rs.). The Testator left three-quarters of his Estate to his children, “both from his first and subsequent marriage, all receiving an equal share”. One quarter he retained at his own disposal. Concerned about potential accusations with regard to the division of his property, he noted that “I gave all my children from my first marriage the best dowry within my capability and each one cost me several thousand, therefore, in order to maintain justice amongst my children, for my youngest, minor daughter, Hinda-Cywia, I have given into sure hands the sum of nine hundred silver roubles, the interest from which I reserve for myself until death, and that sum will go to her in addition to the amount of the legacy”. In his last Will, the Testator remembered his siblings. To his own sister Matla(?), widow of Aron, resident in Częstochowa, he allocated 45 rs.

Mendel Chorowicz, as a wealthy Jew and a religious man, cared about his soul and his mortal remains. He allocated 360 złoty (60 roubles) to be “divided” as charity for the poor who attended his funeral. He set aside 180 złoty (30 roubles), to be spread out over one year, for prayer services for his “soul”. He allocated the remaining amount towards his funeral expenses. He did not forget about his grave. A “marble gravestone” was to be erected worth 360 złoty (60 roubles).

²¹ B. Snoch, *Mała encyklopedia Częstochowy*, Częstochowa 2002, s. 165.

²² Among the debtors were: 1) Józef Zaremba, squire of the Libidza village, borrowed 4,000 złp (600 rs.), 2) Berek Hayman 1,800 złp (270 rs.), 3) Szaja Landau, “the Rabbi’s son”, 1,500 złp (225 rs.), 4) Natan Landau 1,000 złp (150 rs.), 5) Dawid Kohn, “now living in village of Kamionce”, 1,000 złp (150 rs.), 6) Szaja Heyman 600 złp (90 rs.), 7) Abram Emich 600 złp (90 rs.), 8) Abe (?) Brass 300 złp (45 rs.), 9) Natan Breszel 400 złp (60 rs.), 10) Mosiek Oppenheim 2,900 złp, 11) Hertz Heyman 600 złp (90 rs.), 12) Szmul Szttern (?) 600 złp (namely, 90 rs.), 13) Leybuś Freylich 90 rs., 14) Markus Szlezzynger 300 złp (45 rs.), 15) Józef Widyński 45 rs., 16) Ur. Ludwik Knopff 900 złp (135 rs.). Together, they totalled 15,948 złp (2,658 rs.).

Their current home he gave to his wife Sara (nee Orbach) for "her lifetime, including the all furniture to be found in the home". He did not forget, here, that he had already provided for his wife. Here, he had in mind the following: pearls, a gold watch and chain, a large signet-ring, gold earrings with diamonds, a few small rings, as well as gold cufflinks. The Testator also allowed for the possibility of his wife remarrying. In that instance, he designated that "the children should then divide up the real estate and furniture amongst themselves".

The second Will of Mendel Chorowicz²³ was drafted two years later, in Częstochowa on 23rd August / 4th September 1845. During that time, as he wrote, "the result of illness (...) and the crippling of wealth (...) had diminished me". This diminishing occurred in the following manner. The "smaller" bench his re-sold to Wolf Szlezzynger for 45 roubles, which he allocated for his headstone. He admitted that, apart from the home and the prayerhouse benches, he had inherited from his father "in goods and various debts", the sum of 9.000 złoty (1,305 roubles). Amongst his "earned wealth", he itemised: "nine pounds of silver of various kinds (...). Apart from that silver, I also have six small candlesticks, weighing about two pounds, used always during the Sabbath" Of those six candlesticks, he allocated four to his wife Sara (nee Orbach) and two he bequeathed to his infant daughter, Hinda-Cywa. He valued his entire Estate at 4,856 roubles.

The third Will of Mendel Chorowicz²⁴ was written in Częstochowa on 19th (31st) of July 1850 by Kajetan Grzybowski, a Justice of the Peace of the District of Częstochowa. As was written according to his instructions, "admittedly, I had a quite considerable wealth but, through critical times and due to loss of eyesight, I lost it". The subject of instructions in this Will was funds totalling 11,220 złoty (1,870 roubles) which had been lent to a few people. He also had official bonds with a nominal value of 300 złoty plus interest. The Testator also stated that "I had a quite considerable wealth from which, after all, I decently, as I should have, gave each of them nine thousand złoty". The sum of 5,400, as well as shares, he left to his daughter Hinda Cywia. Here, however, he concluded with the comment that "through God's blessing, if through Him the government bond is drawn, then the children from my first and subsequent marriage, as well as my current wife, are to divide it up equally".

In discussing the final Will, it is worth noting the following fragment of the record. He allocated to the nominated daughter "the Talmud comprising twelve books, five books of the Bible, ten books of the writings of Solomon, additional books, an example of which is one entitled Teradus (?) and another book Megen Abram (?)". He repeated, here, the division of the six silver candlesticks. His wardrobe and "light underwear" he allocated to his wife's father, Liber Orbach.

²³ APCz, Not. I Budrewicz sygn. 24 (1845 rok), fol. 269.

²⁴ APCz, Not. I Budrewicz sygn. 29 (1850 rok), fol. 169.

The Will of Wolf Szlezzynger (1788-1845)²⁵ was written in Częstochowa, in a house named "Austeria", at 20 Targowa Street, on 25th October / 6th November 1845 at 10:00am. This time, the author of the Last Will and Testament was a merchant living in Żarki, in the Lelowski District of the Radomsk Province, who had come to Częstochowa "for medical treatment". The Testator was married to Cyrla (nee Rusin) for 33 years. They had eight living children: 1) the oldest son, Dawid Szlezzynger, 2) second son Joachim Leyb Szlezzynger, 3) daughter Szyra Laja (nee Szlezzynger), married to Fałek Orbach, 4) Estera (nee Szlezzyngier) Cejbuszyk, wife of Berek Ceyburszyk, 5) adult son Izrael Szlezzynger, 6) eighteen year old son Marek Ezrjel, 7) thirteen year old daughter Rebeka, 8) ten year old Michał Lipman Szlezzynger, the last three being minors.

After nominating his heirs, the Testator listed his assets in the following manner: he was the owner of "a massive, multi-storey, brick tenement in the city of Żarki located at number 93". He also owned "a timber house with a few dwellings, also in Żarki, at number 224". He also had "a timber house (...) in Żarki at number 205, as well as blocks of land also containing houses". He was also the owner of a few men's and women's benches "in the existing local prayerhouse". As he conceded, his assets "arose from the supply of various wines, which was my trade". As a prosperous man, he lent money to many people, as attested to by bills of exchange and bonds.

In an extensive part of his Will, he described his business activity. Among his assets, it is worth noting, he counted "various building materials in the remaining forests, purchased (by him) from various people". From a quoted excerpt, it turns out that Wolf Szlezzynger was a supplier and contractor for "level-crossing houses on the railway line from the city of Radomsko to the Prussian border". He was also the owner of a lucrative contract "freely given by the government for the supply of ground-beams for the rail route, supposedly, from Radomsko to the Prussian border". The Testator won the contract because, as he himself wrote, it was the result of "a tender to the government of, namely, 180,000". It is worth stressing here that the Testator had a strong conviction about his company's brand because he wrote, "After my death, I clearly forbid, for two years from the date of my death, all services and inventory that would expose my wealth to irreparable losses. This is to be administered by my wife and two eldest sons Dawid Schlezzynger and Joachym Szlezzynger". In a further part of his Will, he wrote, "I am transferring all contracts to them, those concluded both with the government and with other people, for the benefit of my overall Estate".

²⁵ APCz, Not. I Budrewicz sygn. 24 (1845 rok), fol. 322. ASC Częstochowa, Żydzi. Zgony, akt 90. "Częstochowa, 16th/28th November 1845, 10:00am. Orthodox Jews, Abram Szacher 46 teacher Judke Berkowicz 37 servant, residents of this city, witnessed that yesterday, at 10:00am in Częstochowa, Wolf Szlezzyngier (sic!) 57, railway entrepreneur, leaving a wife, Cyrla and eight children: sons Dawid, Lewek, Izrael and adult daughters Laja and Estera, also sons Markus, Michał and daughter Rywka – minors living in the town of Żarki, leaving no assets. After viewing and reading this document, it was signed by both [two Yiddish signatures] and by the Civil Records Registrar".

The Will of Dawid Landau Kronenberg (1800-1847)²⁶ was drafted, in Hebrew, on the 22nd November 1846. The author wrote that this was his last wish, "written properly, cautiously and diligently, of sound mind". The following Will was personally handwritten. It had certain, specific features. Still, the author wrote that "I have a pleasing wife, with whom I have five children – three daughters and two sons. I have married off two daughters, each of them costing me over ten thousand Pol[ish] zł[oty]. I have not yet given anything to the other three, being single, namely, Abraham, Rachel and Szmul. When, with the permission of their mother, they marry, I order that each of them be given ten thousand Pol[ish] zł[oty]".

He appointed his wife as his main heiress and, as he wrote, "I order that no one is permitted to disturb her or her home or jewellery or money". These valuables must have been of significant value as he wrote "my wife is to sell the silverware and pay 1,000 talers, which I owe under a mortgage to Graditzer of Bolesławiec" and, further, "any silverware and valuables, over the value of 1,000 talers, shall belong to my wife". The Testator was an enterprising and provident father since he set aside 30,000 Polish złotych "to provide for my three children". In this, he had the hope that they would respect his wishes, since he wrote that he hoped that "my children will not grumble against my orders. I have high hopes in particular that everything will be arranged justly".

He clearly specifies funds he gained from his wife. "I list the values of that which she brought:

My beloved wife's dowry tal(ers)	2,200
Cash and pearls she inherited from her mother	2,850
After the passing of her father	1,200
A string of pearls which I sold	1,000."

As was fitting for a religious Jew, he wrote in his Last Will and Testament that "every year, on the anniversary of my death, Pol(ish) zł(oty) be distributed to ten godfearing men so that they should pray for my soul. I implore that this be carried out". He added, further, "that my beloved wife, of whose honesty I am convinced, will fulfil my wishes and eternally remember me. I do not need to laboriously tell her not to let my children be discredited by people and that she be the most sincerest of mothers to our dear children". It is worth noting that, under the text, was written, "In Częstochowa, on the third

²⁶ The original Will was drafted in Hebrew. Jakub Bursztyński translated it into Polish on 17th/29th April 1847. APCz, Not. I Budrewicz sygn. 26 (1847 rok), fol. 144. ASC Częstochowa, Żydzi. Zgony, akt 32. "In Częstochowa, on 5th/17th March 1847 roku, at 10:00am. Orthodox Jews, Abram Szacher 48 teacher and Judka Berkowicz 39 servant, residents of Częstochowa, witnessed that yesterday, in Częstochowa, at 3:00am, Orthodox Jew Dawid Landau Kronenberg, 47 merchant, died, leaving a widowed wife Estera (nee Rozenberg) and five children, namely: Rojza (?) daughter married to Berek Rozenberg in Warsaw, Faygla married to Markus Kohn in Częstochowa, sons Abram and Szmul synów and i Ruchel a minor daughter. After witnessing the death, this document was read and signed by Abram Szacher, Judka Berkowicz. Civil Registrar W. N. Prezydent Malukiewicz(?)".

day of Kislev 5607, 22nd of November 1846 CE /signature of/ Dawid son of Chaim Mojżesz Landau Kronenberg²⁷.

The Will of Abram Szefer Rosenwald (1786-1849)²⁸ was drawn up in Częstochowa, in the house at number 114, on 9th/21st November 1849, by Kajetan Grzybowski – a Częstochowa District Justice of the Peace. The Testator, "his body yielding to illness, however being of sound mind, has decided to document the disposal of his assets, by making a Will". As he wrote, his assets "are comprised of residential real estate, a spice shop and a stallholding which he has held for thirty years". He valued it at 6,000 złotych, (1,000 roubles). His wife was Bayla (nee Konarski) Rosenwald. He had three daughters with her. He left his Estate in her hands. He did this in the belief that his wife would wish to continue the business "under his name" and "would be able to support the minor children until their majority, without loss to the capital".

The Testator was a religious Jew. He owned a bench in the local Częstochowa prayerhouse valued at 540 Polish złotych (90 roubles). Using the interest earned from an amount of 200 złotych (33 roubles), on the anniversary of the Testator's death, "a prayer service is to take place". In particular, a fact that should be stressed is that he also owned "my own Torah scroll worth four hundred P(olish) zł(otych), namely sixty silver roubles". Regarding the scroll, he stated the following. It was to go "to my wife Bayla (nee Konarski) and remain in her hands for the term of her life and later then pass into the ownership of the children, on the condition that it can never be passed into the hands of strangers".

The Will of Ezyk Peltz (1806-1853)²⁹ was drawn up in Częstochowa, in the Testator's home at 286 Garmcarska Street, on 19th/31st May 1853. The Testator had been married to Estera (nee Bergman) for 21 years without, as he noted, any prenuptial agreement". The couple had three children: 1) Gitla Minka (wife of Salomon Szejer), 2) Rochla 14 years old and 3) Berek, a son, 9 years old "counting his years". Apart from the trousseau, the Testator received a dowry of 90 roubles.

²⁷ The above translation is in complete accordance with the etx, as for words and contents, transferred by me as I testified in Częstochowie on 17th/29th April 1847. [SL] Bursztyński t. p. S. P. w Cz.

²⁸ APCz, Not. I Budrewicz sygn. 28 (1849 rok), fol. 243. ASC Częstochowa, Żydzi Zgony, akt 175. "In the city of Częstochowa on the 18th/30th November 1849 at 8:00am, Orthodox Jews Abram Szacher, 50 teacher, and Judka Berkowicz, 41 servant, residents of Częstochowa, witnessed that yesterday, at 8:00pm in Częstochow, Orthodox Jew Abram Rozenwald, 63 stallholder died leaving a widowed wife Baylę (nee Konarski) and five children: adult daughters Rajzla, Rywka, minors Chana and Liba, residents of Częstochowa. After witnessing the death, this document was read and signed. Abram Szacher, Judka Berkowicz. Civil Registrar W. N. Prezydent signature illegible".

²⁹ APCz, Not. I Budrewicz sygn. 32 (1853 rok), fol. 139. ASC Częstochowa, Żydzi Zgony, akt 32. "In the city of Częstochowa on 23rd May/4th June 1853, at 4:00pm, Orthodox Jews Abram Szacher, 55 teacher and Judka Berkowicz, 50 serbvant, residents of Częstochowa, testified that, at 10:00am, Orthodox Jew, Ezyk Peltz, 47 trader, died leaving a widowed wife Estera (nee Bergman) and four minor children: son Berek and daughters Gitla Minka and Ruchla residents of Częstochowa. After witnessing the death, this document was read and signed. [two Yiddish signatures]. Civil Registrar".

Together with his wife, he bought a house from Chodkiewicz, "in which he dictated the following Will", at a cost of 350 roubles³⁰. Furthermore, he had lent out 36 business loans totalling over 1,430 roubles³¹. It is interesting that they ranged from a few roubles to a few hundred roubles. The borrowers were not only local landowners, but also minor craftsmen, for example, local tailors. The contracting parties came, geographically; mainly from Częstochowa, but also from Szczekocin, Pajęczna, Działoszyna. Specific components of his Estate attest to the nature of his business activity. He owned: "a) a batch of herb sacks which I value at thirty silver roubles, b) hemp at fifteen roubles, c) lead to the value of eighty silver roubles, d) ninety pounds of tin, which I value at eighteen silver roubles, e) I have unprocessed honey which I value at thirty silver roubles, f) a bench at the prayerhouse valued at forty five silver roubles".

His entire Estate he valued, overall, at 2,176 roubles and 79.5 kopeks. As chattels, he listed "six pairs of silver knives, two candlesticks and six tablespoons, also a little copper and tin for domestic use by the housemaids, as well as furniture". He left that to his wife. The remainder of his Estate, the Testator divided amongst the three children "after deducting one thousand five hundred Polish złoty for a dowry for the older daughter". "In an act of special generosity", he left one quarter of his Estate to his wife Estera (nee Bergman). He also did not forget his brother and sister. To Abe Peltz, he allocated 50 złoty and to his sister Estera, 30 złoty. For his gravestone, "which must be erected", in the Żarki cemetery, he allocated 20 złoty.

The Will of Sara (nee Dawidowicz) Juchtman (1791-1862)³² was drafted in the office of a Częstochowa notary on 7th/19th December 1859. In it, the Testatrix noted that

³⁰ At the time of writing the Will, the Testator estimated it at 450 roubles.

³¹ 1) from Herszlik Reycher of Częstochowa 180 rs., 2) from Jozek Reycher of Przyrów 90 rs., 3) from Gierszon Horowicz 90 rs., 4) from Jakub Wolrauch 100 rs., 5) from Majer Frydman 225 rs., 6) from Eliaz Alter and Lewek Częstochowski 30 rs., 7) from Lewek Sorgenlos 75 rs., 8) from the widow Donaysk 28 rs. 28 kopeks, 9) from Walenty Przełożynski 71 rs. 50 kop., 10) from Jan Przełożynski 26 rs. 45 kop., 11) from Walenty Kudelski 7 rs. 50 kop., 12) from Leon Przybyłowicz 37 rs. 5 kop., 13) from Izrael Ferleger of Szczekocin 33 rs. 80 kop., 14) from Piotr Baczki(?) of Częstochowa 14 rs. 43 kop. 15) from Antoni Kudelski 7 rs. 20 kop. 16) from the widow Stalski 31 rs., 17) from Garyclela(?) 129 rs., 18) from the trader of Pajęczna 45 rs., 19) from August Kinderman 261 rs. 85 kop., 20) from Leyzer Karp tailor 15 rs. , 21) from the tailor Kerna(?) 9 rs., 22) from Szai Wolf tailor 9 rs., 23) from Kubicki potter 21 rs., 24) from the widow Wołkow(?) and her son 10 rs. 89 kop., 26) from Jan Skalski(?) 7 rs. 20 kop. 27) from Kazimierz Lipski 5 rs. 28 kop., 28) from the widow Wroński 9 rs., 29) from Antoni Trojak 6 rs. 75 kop., 30) from Tomasz Kwapicha 2 rs. 83 kop., 31) from Jacent Ciurzynski 17 rs. 91,5 kop., 32) from Jan Suchocki 3 rs. 30 kop., 33) from the son of Jan Stalski Jana 1 rs. 50 kop., 34) from Balcer Kaczorowski 8 rs. 50 kop., 35) from Salomon Częstochowski 9 rs., 36) from Izrael Eliaz of Działoszyn 15 rs., 37) bills of exchange to the value of 30 rs. 60 kop. "taken out in my name, but which do not belong to me, but are the property of Majer Częstochowski, the sum of money worked out by Świerczyńskim".

³² APCz, Not. I Budrewicz sygn. ... (1859 rok), fol. 291. Wdowa po Jakubie Juchtmanie. ASC Częstochowa, Żydzi. Zgony, akt 49. "Częstochowa, 21st June/3rd July 1862 roku, 11:00am, Orthodox Jews Abram Szacher, 61 teacher, and Leon Hayman, 57 scribe, residents of Częstochowie, attested that, yesterday in Częstochowa, at 10:00pm., the Orthodox Jew, Sara (nee Tyszman) Juchtman, 71, widow, tannery owner garbarnię utrzymująca, died leaving no family. After witnessing the death of Sara Juchtman, this document was read and signed. Abram Szacher, Leon Heyman and President of the Civil Records Registry (name illegible)".

she was married to her late husband, Jakub Juchtmann for 47 years. She had no children so, as present heirs, she acknowledged her sister's and brother's children. She appointed Aron Peltz, the son of her sister Chaya (nee Dawidowicz) Peltz, resident of Osjaków in the Wieluń district, as main beneficiary. He had the obligation to pay the inherited wealth to the Testatrix's sisters' children, and to those of her brother Herszlik Tyszman, as well as to cover all funeral expenses.

From the contents of the Will, it turns out that she ran a tannery, as, in describing her estate, she dictated, "in ready cash and in tannery stock, i.e. in skins already processed and about to be processed, as well as raw skins, I specifically value at 450 silver roubles". The Testatrix also owned a bench in the prayerhouse. Amongst her chattels, she detailed, "a gold chain and one pair of silver candlesticks, as well as minor domestic crockery and chattels" worth, in the opinion of the Testatrix, 60 roubles. However, an attached value estimated her Estate at 510 roubles.

The Will of Aleksander Poznański (1813-1861)³³ was drafted in his house in Częstochowa, on the corner of the , at No.117, on 30th May/11th June 1861. The Testator, a merchant, had suffered from "consumption for a long time". He was married to Hendla (nee Winner) for more than thirty years. The couple had four children "still alive", one son and three daughters. The eldest daughter was the wife of Napoleon Szancer and lived in Tomaszów. The other siblings were a son, Jan 22, and daughters Rozalia 18 and Paulina 17. These listed children were the sole heirs.

The Testator, as already mentioned, ran a shop together with his wife. This is attested to by the fact that the most significant part of his Estate was acknowledged as "stock on hand". According to his valuations, he was worth 43,000 złotych. It is worth noting that the Testator recommended his wife as executor of his Estate. She was to run the family business for six years, with the help of her son Jan. After that period, the Estate was to be divided amongst the remaining children in equal part. The Testator also wrote that his wife was to retain for herself, "as a reward for sharing more than thirty years of work, one thousand silver roubles, being six thousand, six hundred and sixty six Polish złoty and twenty groszy".

The Will, and in principle, Act of Transfer, of Markus Kohn³⁴ was written in Częstochowa on 17th/23rd January 1865. The parties to this document were: Markus Kohn

³³ APCz, Not. I Budrewicz sygn. ... (1861 rok), fol. 120. ASC Częstochowa, Żydzi. Zgony, akt 36. In the city of Częstochowa, 31st May/12th June 1861, at 5:00pm roku, o godzinie 5 z południa, Orthodox Jews, Abram Szacher, 60 teacher, and Judka Berkowicz, 58 servant, residents of Częstochowa, witnessed that yesterday, in Częstochowa at 2:00pm, Orthodox Jew, Aleksander Poznański, 48, trader of Guild II, died leaving a wife Hendla (nee Winner) and four children: a son Jan and daughters Franciszka, Róża and Paulina, residents of Częstochowa. After witnessing for themselves his demise, the witnesses read and signed this document. Abram Szacher, Judka Berkowicz, Civil Records Office, – President (name illegible)".

³⁴ APCz, Not. I Budrewicz sygn. 43 (1865 rok), fol. 17.

and Maurycy Kohn. They attested to the following background to the Act of Transfer. Markus Kohn, acting in his own name and in the name of the heirs of his late father Hertz Kohn, undertook the allocation of money due to them as the result of three court judgements. So, Eleonora (nee Sokołowska) firstly the wife of Benduski, and secondly the wife of Malkow and her children, i.e. Leon, Franciszek, Florian and Jędrzej Benduski from the first marriage with Adam Benduski, as a result of the verdicts of the Kalisz Civil Tribunal of 1) 20th April/2nd May 1861, 2) 12th/24th October 1861, 3) 6th/18th February 1862, they were ordered to pay Hertz Kohn a total of 507 silver roubles and 67.5 kopeks “with all interest and all effects flowing from these verdicts”. Markus Kohn transferred this amount to Maurycy Kohn as his exclusive property. It is worth noting that, accompanying the Act of Transfer were plenipotentiary powers containing essential material to Jewish genealogy.

This study contained an analysis of 14 Last Wills and Testaments drawn up by 12 Testators between 1834³⁵ and 1865. It is worth assuming here that they are not all the testaments which arise from that period. Where are the others? Perhaps they can be found amongst the documents of the two remaining Częstochowa notaries: Adam Mazurkiewicz (practising in the years 1855-1859) and Adam Makarowski (1860-1868).

The Wills quoted in this article, by Jews from Częstochowa and the surrounding area, confirm that their principal area of economic activity was trade. The following were traders: Gerszon Wolf Landau; Frayndl (nee Dawid) Żarecka, who wrote, “I also own, various small items of shop stock”. Józef Böhm was a merchant and owner of real estate in Krzepice. Mendel Chorowicz had “the sum of 9,000 złoty in stock and debts”. Abram Szefer Rosenwald wrote that his wealth “is comprised of residential real estate, a spice shop and a stall, which he had owned for thirty years”. Similarly, in the Will of Aleksander Poznański, it was stressed that the most essential part of his Estate was “shop stock which he had in the course of trade”.

A reflection of the new ways of doing business, and a demonstration of the activity of the local Jews, is the Will of Wolf Szlezzynger of Żarek written in 1845. The author was a merchant. Describing his wealth, acknowledged that he was a supplier, and probably a contractor, of “railway crossing houses of the train line from the city of Radomsko to the Prussian border”. He also held a contract “given freely by the government (...) given for the delivery of foundation beams for the railway track”. The value of the nominated claim from the government was valued at 180,000 złoty.

Even, as Franciszek Sobalski noticed, “bringing the railway (Warsaw-Vienna Railway) to Częstochowa (in 1848 – DZ) did not change the economy of the city immediately, from one year to the next. The importance of the railway and its influence on

³⁵ The first Will to be found dates back to 1836.

the development of the city of Częstochowa became clear only with the establishment of industrial factories”³⁶.

The Will of Mošek Waynreb³⁷ points to a new sphere of economic activity for the local Jews, one which until then was not present. Jews became lessees or even owners of nearby manor farms with some considerable success. The Testator was the lessee of the nearby Anioły manor farm. And that is not all, because, as he himself noted, and it is worth recalling that we are talking about the beginning of the 1840’s, together with his brother-in-law, Dawid Bergman, he “held” the office borough administrator (*wójt*) of Wyczerpy.

An example of the strong economic position of the Kohn family, already apparent for several decades prior to major capital, industrial development in the 1880’s, is the Last Will and Testament of Lewek Kohn³⁸, drafted in Częstochowa in June 1839. The Testator bequeathed his heirs: 1) his son, Hertz Kohn, received the house at No.19 Market Square, worth 25,927 złoty, 2) to the Glikson and Landau couples, he allocated the home at number 26, also in the Market Square and 3) to the daughter of Frajdl and Izaak Faygenblat, he allocated a wayside inn in Old Częstochowa, at 90 and 91 Targowa Street, valued at 18,821 złoty.

Finally, Wills can be valuable sources for social research, showing the roles of Jewish families in maintaining their ethnic identity and in building the foundation for a strong economic position. The table below provides an indication of the number of wives and children, relating to the families discussed.

³⁶ F. Sobalski, Wpływ Kolei Warszawsko-Wiedeńskiej na rozwój miasta Częstochowy do I wojny światowej. [w:] Droga Żelazna Warszawsko-Wiedeńska. 150 lat tradycji kolejnictwa w regionie częstochowskim. Pod redakcją Marcelego Antoniewicza. Częstochowa - Katowice 1998. s. 31. W. Palus, Kolej Częstochowa - Herby. [w:] Droga Żelazna Warszawsko-Wiedeńska. 150 lat tradycji kolejnictwa w regionie częstochowskim. Pod redakcją Marcelego Antoniewicza. Częstochowa-Katowice 1998, s. 61-67.

³⁷ APCz, Not. I Budrewicz sygn. 21 (1842 rok), fol. 269.

³⁸ APCz, Not. I Budrewicz sygn. 18 (1839 rok), fol. 162.

Analysis of Testators' Families

Name/Surname	Husband/Wife	Years Married	Children
Frayndla Żarecka	Mayer Żarecki	38	
Józef Böhm	1) wife Haja Zysman. 2) wife Gitla Rozentahl	25	1) 7 2) 3
Lewek Kohn	Rychla nee Pilerów	42	9
Mosiek Waynreb	1) Rachla Oderfeld 2) Estera Oderfeld 3) Jetta nee Goldman		1) 1 2) 3) 5
Mendel Chorowicz	1) Bayla nee Zylberberg 2) Sara z Orbachów	42 8	1) 5 2) 1
Wolf Szlezynger	Cyrla nee Rusin (?)	33	8
Dawid Landau Kronenberg	"dear wife" (Estera nee Rozenberg)		5
Abram Szefir Rosenwald	Bayla nee Konarski		3
Ezyk Peltz	Estera nee Bergman	21	3
Sara Juchtman	Jakub Juchtman	47	
Aleksander Poznański	Hendla nee Winner	30	4

Religion was vitally important to the family. It also strongly cemented together the Jewish community of Częstochowa and the surrounding district. In practically every Will was a request for prayer or a service for the soul of the deceased. Significant funds were allotted to this end. They cared about the gravestone. Many Jews owned valuable religious books, for example "the Talmud comprising twelve books, five books of the Bible, ten books of the writings of Solomon". The Sabbath was kept. For example, silver candlesticks, used on that occasion, were itemised in Wills. Finally, the ownership of benches in the prayerhouse proves that, although they are usually mentioned in terms of an investment, the Testator would attend prayers in the synagogue throughout his entire life. Mendel Chorowicz first mentions "the great prayerhouse" and then "the small prayerhouse". Certain sums of money were also allotted as charity for the poor.

The Wills, being the subject of analysis in this article, confirm, so to speak, the traditional occupations of Jews. Above all, it was trade conducted either in an owned or leased shop. The lending of money for profit also occupies an important place. However, new occupations began to appear, attesting to business activity in the capitalist area. The construction of the railway allowed some Jews to actively join into this undertaking, recognising an opportunity to significantly enrich themselves. Research in this area has already provided some very interesting findings.

Summary

THE WILLS OF CZĘSTOCHOWA JEWS FROM THE YEARS 1834-1865 AS A PICTURE OF THEIR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ACTIVITY

The first conference dedicated to the Jews of Częstochowa, which took place on 22nd-23rd April 2004 in our city, permitted the author of these words to submit an analysis of ten Wills from the years 1809-1833. Now, the author has the opportunity to return to issues then researched. The subject for this article will be 15 Wills drafted by 12 Testators – Jews in the years 1834-1865. This research supports the opinion that a Will can be perceived as an historical source helpful when researching the life stories of the inhabitants of the city and of the country.

The source material are the Wills of the following people: 1) Frayndl nee Dawid Żarecka (1836), 2) Józef Böhm (1838), 3) Lewek Kohn (1839), 4) Mošek Waynreb (1842), 5) Mendel Chorowicze (the first in 1843), (the second in 1845), (the third in 1850), 6) Wolf Szlezynger (1845), 7) Dawid Landau Kronenberg (1846), 8) Abram Szefer Rosenwald (1846), 9) Ezyk Peltz (1853), 10) Sara nee Dawidowicz Juchtman (1859), 11) Aleksander Poznański (1861) and 12) Markus Kohn (1865). The Wills are valuable sources for social research, indicating the role of the Jewish family in maintaining ethnic identity and in building the foundation for a strong economic position.

The Wills, which are the subject of analysis for this article, in the main, confirm the traditional Jewish occupations. Above all, it was trade conducted in owned or leased shops. The lending of money for profit also occupied an important place. However, new occupations began to appear, attesting to business activity in the capitalist area. The construction of the railway allowed some Jews to actively join into this undertaking, recognising an opportunity to significantly enrich themselves. Research in this area has already provided some very interesting findings.

