

Jewish Wills from Częstochowa and the Vicinity as Historical Sources for a Study of the Jewish Life in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century

Dariusz Złotkowski

The significance of wills for the historical research of towns and regions has long been established. It will suffice to recall the names of such scholars in the field as Otton Hedemann¹ or Urszula Augustyniak.² Pioneering studies in the context of the seventeenth century Częstochowa were undertaken long ago by Professor Stefan Krakowski.³ The present author has recently published a survey of major scholarly postulates concerning the first half of the nineteenth century.⁴

An effort to realize these postulates involved gathering, editing, and publishing in print the wills of gentry and townspeople from Częstochowa and its vicinity in the years 1808–1833. These documents were, along with many others, produced at the law firms of three Częstochowa notaries: Jozef Leśniewski, Antoni Truszkowski, and Ignacy Budrewicz.⁵ Written wills were introduced as obligatory under the law of the Warsaw Duchy and its successor, the Polish Kingdom. Despite official pressure the practice was not easily nor promptly accepted. The resistance was more frequent in small towns.

In the present paper a scholarly discussion of a small section of the historical actuality of early nineteenth century has been attempted, concerning Jewish communities of Częstochowa and its powiat within its then boundaries. The subject of this analysis are ten wills (seven from Częstochowa, two from Przyrow, and one from Kłobuck).

They were drawn up by the following persons:

1) Mosiek Józefowicz Landau	Janów	
2) Wulf and Aronowicz	Kłobuck	
3) Granek Lewkowicz	Przyrów	
4) Lewek Izraelowicz nn Przyrowski	Przyrow	1770–1822
5) Herszlik Nayman	Częstochowa	1753–1823
6) Józef Hertz	Częstochowa	1761–1831
7) Berek Ginsberg	Częstochowa	1771–1827
8) Lewek Berman	Częstochowa	
9) Mrs. Haja Kuperman, nee Lewkowicz	Częstochowa	
10) Lewek Abramowicz	Częstochowa	1782–1832

Typical urban society of the period in question consisted of three distinctly separate social classes: the gentry, burghers, and Jews.⁶ The present study is focused on Jewish

¹ O. Hedemann, *Testamenty brasławsko-dziśnieńskie XVII–XVIII wieku jako źródło historyczne*, Wilno 1935.

² U. Augustyniak (ed), *Testamenty ewangelików reformowanych w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim*, wydała... Warszawa 1992.

³ S. Krakowski, „Mieszczanie Częstochowy w XVII wieku w świetle testamentów”, *Ziemia Częstochowska*, t. V (1965). pp. 115–125.

⁴ D. Złotkowski, „Testamenty z regionu częstochowskiego I połowy XIX wieku. Główne postulatory badawcze”, *Zeszyty Historyczne WSP w Częstochowie*, t. VII (2003), ed. by M. Antoniewicz i M. Cetwiński. pp. 247–256.

⁵ J. Dobosz, J. Jeżowski, P. Madajczyk, „Inwentarz. Kancelaria notariuszy w Częstochowie – grupa zespołów z lat 1808-1900”, Częstochowa 1980, s. 1. Typewritten, in Archiwum Państwowe w Częstochowie.

⁶ D. Złotkowski, *Miasta departamentu kaliskiego w okresie Księstwa Warszawskiego. Studium gospodarcze*, Częstochowa 2001, pp. 54–60.

wills. The ten documents cannot give a comprehensive picture of the entire urban population, but the archival material is broad enough to be considered representative.

Witnesses are another issue deserving some attention here. First, it is the number of witnesses which is at issue. There were usually four of them in the wills of townspeople, only occasionally their number dwindled to two. Whenever the testament was drawn up without a notary, e.g. during a war or an epidemic, more witnesses, even seven of them, appeared. Sometimes municipal councilors put their signatures on the document to enhance its validity. In such extreme cases, the testament was later brought up before the Civil Court of the Kalisz province.

In historical perspective a testament can be an ample source of information, as it illustrates the living conditions of town and village inhabitants. Wills provide a picture of a person's possessions, his or her family, housing, religious beliefs. Indirectly, it is also possible to derive data on the impact of actual historic events in a given area.

A History of Jewish community in Częstochowa

The earliest Jewish settlement in Stara Częstochowa could be dated back to the early seventeenth century.⁷ Most probably it was very limited and transitory. Historical sources indicate that Jewish community of Częstochowa began to assume organized forms not earlier than in the late eighteenth century.⁸ From that time Jewish settlement was expanding. The material status of Jewish population in Stara Częstochowa must have been varied, yet a group of prosperous Jews soon emerged as well. They owed their affluence to several factors.

Engaged in trade, crafts, propination (liquor production and license), and army supplies, Jews got rich in no time at all. Despite the „De non tolerandis Judaeis” law being formally still in force (Stara Częstochowa municipality could not demonstrate the document), Jews were buying ground and houses, were building breweries and “factories” to produce liquor. Nowa Częstochowa was formally and in practice without Jews. Yet, being a compact and rather hermetic group, distinguished primarily by different religion, Jews were an increasingly noticeable segment of the urban population of Stara Częstochowa.

The general process could be well illustrated by an individual career, such as of Joachim Berkowicz. In spite of the attempts to add some ideological or religious aspect to the conflict, it was essentially economic and sprang from the rivalry for propination. In the late years of the Polish Commonwealth there were three propinations in Stara Częstochowa: “by the starosty”, “by the villagers’ leader”, and municipal. The first two were owned by S. Soltyk, who leased them to Joachim Berkowicz (the tenancy was for 23 years). The municipal propination was also soon in the hands of Berkowicz.⁹

⁷ to W. Zembrzuski wrote about a Hebrew inscription on a beam with the date 1610 carved on it, at a house on Ptasia 18. W. Zembrzuski, *Przewodnik po Częstochowie*, Częstochowa 1958, p. 31.

⁸ A completely misleading information is given in *Przewodnik po Częstochowie i okolicy* (1909), p. 53, as though „Israelite community was not set up in Częstochowa before 1700 and then it included just several families, who were engaged in weaving. The community was hardly developing, a synagogue was built as late as in 1765 with only 51 families altogether.” P. Burchard provided an important piece of information on this, see: P. Burchard, *Pamiętki i zabytki kultury żydowskiej w Polsce*, Warszawa 1990, p. 131.

⁹ AGAD, Generalne Dyrektorium Departamentu Prus Południowych (GDPP), sygn. VI 377, pp. 62–67. Information on the fact in a letter of Częstochowa burghers to the Prussian administration of October 3, 1797.

Political, but also economic situation changed with the decline of the Polish Commonwealth (the partitions). Prussian army entered Stara Częstochowa in 1793¹⁰. Polish garrison of the Jasna Góra fortress under the command of Major Marcin Wierzbowski marched off across the border to Kraków.¹¹ Major contributions for the army were required from the local villagers and townspeople. The purveyor, who supplied provisions to the Prussian military, was Jewish. His name was Rafał Abram.¹²

Thirteen years of Prussian rule was an important, if relatively short, period in the history of Częstochowa and its Jewish community. Efficient administration system was introduced to the advantage of further development, more orderly construction and the improvement of sanitary conditions were planned. Prussian policy did not generally tend to favor Jews, but the economic activity of the most prosperous of them got the support of the authorities.¹³ It was evident in Stara Częstochowa in particular.¹⁴

Aforementioned Joachim Berkowicz, who was doing business with the Olsztyn starost, Stanisław Sołtyk, „upon the change of government in 1795 [he] won over some people from the municipality to become a burgher.” According to this source „in the past year [1796, DZ] he built a tenement house at the plot cunningly obtained, and on the base of this property started to claim his citizenship in town and press himself on to all prerogatives, and in order to be stronger brought a large amount of Jewry into town, obtained the permit to construct a synagogue and separate from the Janów parish.”¹⁵

Does this mean the construction of a synagogue was accomplished in Stara Częstochowa in the late eighteenth century.? The question remains open. The opinion of Z. Jakubowski has to be, however, discarded, as totally unfounded.¹⁶ Important information can be deduced from two letters: of Częstochowa municipality addressed to Stanisław Sołtyk, Olsztyn starost, of May 24, 1797¹⁷, and the latter's to Karl Georg Hoym, a Prussian minister, of May 29, 1797.¹⁸

Sołtyk in his letter endorsed Częstochowa burghers in their protest against the project [!] to establish a synagogue and Jewish cemetery in Stara Częstochowa. Burghers wrote how “Jews even dare to expect a license [to build a synagogue, DZ] certainly given

¹⁰ *Korespondent Krajowy i Zagraniczny* nr 20 of March 9, 1793, pp. 384–385.

¹¹ D. Złotkowski, „Polityczna aktywność Zakonu oo paulinów w latach 1793–1794”, *Ziemia Częstochowska* t. XVII (1990), p. 51 and 65; T. Korzon, *Wewnętrzne dzieje Polski za Stanisława Augusta Poniatowskiego (1764-1794)*, Kraków-Warszawa, t. V, pp. 66, 68 and 281, t. VI, p. 68; S. Herbst, *Z dziejów wojskowych powstania kościuszkowskiego*, Warszawa 1983, pp. 81 and 131.

¹² W. Kęder, „Jasna Góra wobec przemian politycznych w Rzeczypospolitej w latach 1661–1813”, *Studia Claromontana* t. 13, 1993 [printed 1994], p. 188.

¹³ A. Wojtkowski, „Polityka rządu pruskiego wobec Żydów polskich od roku 1793 do 1806”, *Przegląd Judaistyczny* nr 1–6 (1922), part II pp. 96–107, part III pp. 182–197, part III pp. 304–321.

¹⁴ AGAD, KRSW, sygn. 643, pp. 88–89 A letter to the Min. of Internal Affairs with a list of 12 inn-keepers acc. to the past government [Prussian, DZ], dated in Warsaw January 22, 1812. The propination issue in Częstochowa has been thoroughly analyzed by D. Złotkowski, „Spór o dochody z propinacji w Starej Częstochowie w ostatnich latach Księstwa Warszawskiego”, *Studia Historyczne* R. XLI (1998), z. 4 (153), pp. 509–511.

¹⁵ AGAD, GDPP, sygn. VI 377, p. 197. A letter of Stara Częstochowa Municipality accepting Joachim Berkowicz „as a burgher” and the text of his oath of allegiance to King Friedrich Wilhelm II on October 19, 1796.

¹⁶ It was the author's opinion, no sources mentioned. He published *Częstochowscy Żydzi. Zapomniany rozdział historii miasta*, [in:] Z. Jakubowski, *Częstochowskie opowieści*, Częstochowa 1993, pp. 27–37, and repeated the same in Z. Jakubowski, *Częstochowscy Żydzi. Charakterystyka problematyki i perspektywy badań*, [in:] *Z dziejów Żydów w Częstochowie*, ed. by Z. Jakubowski, and S. Podobiński, Częstochowa 2002, pp. 11–14.

¹⁷ AGAD, GDPP, sygn. VI 377, s. 30–32. A letter of Stara Częstochowa municipality to S. Sołtyk of May 24, 1797. The German version of the letter pp. 33–39.

¹⁸ AGAD, GDPP, sygn. VI 377, pp. 21–23. A letter of S. Sołtyk to Minister K.G. Hoym, dated Dąbrowa May 29, 1797.

to them by the government. Thus we implore you, Sir, to intercede on our behalf with the government to avert this terrible calamity. We are ready, if need arises, to abandon our houses and our homesteads [...].”¹⁹

Did they succeed with this intervention? Was Soltyk’s support effective and how sincere, considering his previous (before 1795) business dealings with Joachim Berkowicz? Upon capturing Polish lands, Prussian administration usually approved such applications. Rising prosperity of Częstochowa Jews, who grew in number and had distinctly independent enterprises, perhaps along with some other, unknown factors, resulted in the conflict with their native Janow community in 1798.

Janów was a town with its own rabbi, synagogue, and cemetery. It was only rabbi’s assistant, who lived in Stara Częstochowa. It seems highly possible that the mounting conflict with the Janow community made Częstochowa Jews establish their temporary synagogue. “To this purpose N. Berman allotted a part of his house at Old Market 18. In the other part a ritual bath was set up.”²⁰ The date corresponds neatly to the fact that a Jewish cemetery was set up by the Kucelin village in 1799.²¹

Quoted above S. Rumszewicz stated that the permission to build a synagogue was granted [as late as?, DZ] in 1805.²² It seems improbable that the construction of the synagogue was completed during Prussian rule. Thus K. Redzinski can be right with his estimate of 1808 as the beginning of a Jewish community in Stara Częstochowa.²³ It is consistent with another piece of information from S. Rumszewicz about the formation of the building committee for a new synagogue in 1822.²⁴ This must have concerned the so-called Old Synagogue on Nadrzeczna street.²⁵

During the turbulent period of the Warsaw Duchy Jewish merchants acted as purveyors for the Jasna Gora fortress, for St. Barbara’s infirmary, storehouse at St. Zygmunt’s monastery (set up in November 1812), and salt store supplying all necessary raw materials and goods, even office provisions for Częstochowa municipality. Leasing was another source of income: of the town hall (to 1809), customs duties on bridges, pavements, market stalls, and finally propination.²⁶ Large scale construction works on fortifications of the Jasna Gora fortress, particularly in 1808, required extra labor and Jews fetched workers even from some distant villages of the Kalisz department. The

¹⁹ AGAD, GDPP, sygn. VI 377, p. 31. A letter of Stara Częstochowa municipality to S. Soltyk of May, 24 1798.

²⁰ S. Rumszewicz, „Żydzi w Częstochowie”, *Goniec Częstochowski* Sept.17, 1915, nr 227, p. 2.

²¹ *Przewodnik po Częstochowie i okolicy* (z 1909 roku) on page 54 caption: „In 1799 the present cemetery was established by the Kucellin village, before that time the dead were carried to Janow, 4 milesaway. The cemetery was expanded many times, and in 1907 it was thoroughly renovated and walled up.” Comp. J. Wójcicki, *Częstochowskie cmentarze*, [in:] *Pro memoria*, Częstochowa 1987, p. 57.

²² S. Rumszewicz, *Żydzi w Częstochowie*, p. 1–2. Beside the members of the board Mojżesz Szpiro, Majer Kohn, and Chaim Hayman the committee was elected with: Mojżesz Zytenfeld, Hirsz Imich, Lejba Witz, Eleazar Horowicz, Eleazar Hajman and Majer Szpiro.

²³ In his source study the author dates the beginning of the Jewish community in Częstochowa to 1808 (p. 129), that was during the Warsaw Duchy period. See K. Rędziński, *Początki żydowskiej gminy wyznaniowej w Częstochowie (1808–1862)*, [in:] *Z dziejów Żydów w Częstochowie*, pp. 11–14.

²⁴ S. Rumszewicz, *Żydzi w Częstochowie*, p. 2; „The synagogue on Nadrzeczna street was renovated and extended in 1872 at the cost of 25,000 rb. collected from the sale of seats”. *Przewodnik po Częstochowie i okolicy* (1909 r).

²⁵ The last synagogue to be built in 1899 was at Wilsona (in late 19th c. the street was called Aleksandryjska). It was destroyed during WWII, and the Concert Hall was constructed on the spot.

²⁶ AGAD, KRSW, sygn. 642, s. 157-158. A 1812 letter of N. Berman, A. Mayzel, M. Kohn to MSW. Juliusz Willaume also defined Łubieński as an advocate of Jews; see J. Willaume, *Fryderyk August jako książe warszawski 1807-1815*, Poznań 1939, pp. 120–121.

Warsaw Duchy regime assigned large funds to this purpose.²⁷ Due to the 1809 war all inhabitants suffered severe damage. After the fire both Christians and Jews were in dire straits.²⁸

The Napoleonic wars resulted in the increasing impoverishment of the town on the Warta. Not only the reconstruction of the destroyed town hall was postponed, but some Christians were forced to sell or let their houses to the more affluent Jews. Barely initiated research appears to confirm the supposition of Stanisław Szymanski, that in Częstochowa the first, "it seems", Jewish real property owner was Mojżesz Landau, who owned a house at the plot no. 38 as early as in 1800, followed by, in 1803, Berek Hayman²⁹, a hatter, (house no. 5), a man named Balsam (first name unknown), a gingerbread baker (house no. 99), a producer Propert, in 1811 (house no. 109), and Haskel Oderfeld³⁰, a cereal merchant in 1812 (house no. 133)³¹. It has been corroborated that, for instance, in 1810 a widow Marianna Juranczykowa let her house no. 1, "being at the Market Square", for three years to a merchant Herszlik Neyman³². According to another source, Jan Fidler, a bricklayer, declared to renovate Mojżesz Landau's house no. 27 by the Market Square.³³

The 1808 census of the Warsaw Duchy added significantly to the picture of Jewish presence and position in Częstochowa early in the nineteenth century. It showed 1,412 Christian and 495 Jewish inhabitants of Stara Częstochowa. The number of Jews amounted to 26 per cent of the entire population³⁴, whereas in other towns of the Częstochowa region the figures were: in Nowe Krzepice 49%, in Przysrów 11.3%, in Stare Krzepice 6.5%, in Kłobuck 6.4%, and in Mstów only 3.5%.

Still, the Jewish 26% accounted for much larger segment of town economy. Top Jewish entrepreneurs started to play a major role in the town's business and social life under the Prussian rule³⁵ and their significance continued. Business and social advancement of Jewish bourgeoisie in the Polish lands later in the 19th and in the early 20th c. has been investigated by scholars³⁶, but studies concerning the first half of the nineteenth century in this respect are much scarcer.³⁷

²⁷ *Protokoły Rady Stanu Księstwa Warszawskiego*, ed. by B. Pawłowski, Toruń 1962, t. I, part 2, p. 272.

²⁸ AGAD, KRSW, sygn. 641, p. 14. A letter of Wojciech Oraczewski to Prefektura Dep. Kaliskiego, dated in Stara Częstochowa August 12, 1809.

²⁹ On April 9 (21) of 1851, Abram Szacher, teacher, age 53, and Judke Berkowicz, shames, age 43, inhabitants of Częstochowa, and stated that „on the previous day” of the year 1849, at 2. pm., Berek Hayman, merchant, age 84, died, bereaving his wife Ruchla b. Ryng and 3 children: 1) Szymon, son, and daughters 2) Fraydla, living in Częstochowa and Sera in Wieruszow, all of age. ASC Częstochowa, Zgony wyznania mojżeszowego 1851, akt nr 26.

³⁰ On July 29, (August 10) 1852, Abram Szacher, educator, age 54, and Judke Berkowicz, shames age 44, residents of Częstochowa, stated that on July 28, (August 9) 1852, at 10.pm. died Chaskiel(!) Oderfeld, a widower, merchant, age 80, bereaving 5 children: 1) Herszlik, 2) Abe – sons, 3) Chana(!), 4) Maryanna and 5) Cedla – daughters, of age, residents of Częstochowa. ASC Częstochowa, Zgony wyznania mojżeszowego 1852, akt nr 64.

³¹ S. Szymański, *Do dziejów Żydów w Częstochowie...*, p. 30.

³² AP w Częstochowie (APCz), Akta notariusza Jacka Leśniewskiego, sygn. 2 (1810), „fol” 46, Kontrakt dzierżawny domu nr 1 w Rynku, 5 kwietnia 1810 roku.

³³ APCz, Repertorium notariusza J. Leśniewskiego 1809–1820, sygn. 12 (1811), „fol” 178, Kontrakt na wykonanie remontu w domu Mojżesza Landau nr 27 przy Rynku, 21 sierpnia 1811.

³⁴ H. Grossman, *Struktura społeczna i gospodarcza Księstwa Warszawskiego na podstawie spisów ludności 1808–1810*, Warszawa 1925. pp. 92–94.

³⁵ D. Złotkowski, *Miasta departamentu kaliskiego...*, pp. 60–64 and 257–262.

³⁶ *Dzieje burżuazji w Polsce. Studia i materiały*, ed. by R. Kołodziejczyk, t. I–II. Warszawa 1980; I. Ichnatowicz, *Obyczaj wielkiej burżuazji warszawskiej w XIX wieku*, Warszawa 1971; I. Ichnatowicz, *Burżuazja warszawska*, Warszawa 1972; J. Hensel, *Burżuazja warszawska drugiej połowy XIX wieku*

Jews were prevailingly engaged in all forms of trade, banking, army supplies. As I. Schipper relevantly observed, any of these kinds of economic activity involved an entire network of partners.³⁸ At any given area various economic interacting was going on between Jews and Christians. The same was true of Stara Częstochowa. The general impoverishment of townspeople resulted in the domination of Jewish economic initiatives. After 1815 Jewish claims concerning unpaid supplies for the army amounted to 51,303 zlotys.³⁹

The last siege of Jasna Góra fortress ended with its surrender on April 8, 1813, forecasting a new era.⁴⁰ In the wake of the political and military triumph of Tsar Alexander I, the Congress Kingdom of Poland was established. More and more people saw the point of Stara and Nowa Częstochowa becoming a single municipality. The turbulent years 1806–14 brought major devastations of the town surroundings.⁴¹ With the coming peace, chances for further development of Częstochowa grew. For Jews the period 1815–30 was a political setback, because of administrative attempts to restrict their freedom of settlement.⁴² Still, favorable conditions for Jewish commerce and enterprises were not changed.

A symbolic sign of the new era was a ceremony held on July 31, 1815, on Monday morning, at the parish church in Stara Częstochowa. The mayor, municipality, court, and fiscal officials, with inhabitants' representatives swore a solemn oath of allegiance to Alexander I, Tsar of Russia and King of Congress Poland.⁴³ The splendor was added to the ceremony by canon salutes, whose expense was charged to the local Jewish community.⁴⁴

Survey of Wills

The first testator, whose will the present analysis concerns, was Mosiek Jozefowicz Landau (b. c1724–(?))⁴⁵, a Janów inhabitant. Having had drawn up his last will before, “in Jewish writing, in private”, he decided nevertheless to dictate it in the presence of the notary public of Częstochowa powiat, Jozef Lesniewski. Landau lived in a house “of his own, inherited” by Market Square 2. Being about 90, „aged with the burden of years, his strength waning”, he decided to draw up a testament.

Of his “meager belongings by the Divine Providence in my possession” Landau listed a home (consisting of a major room and a small room) at no. 2, a “stable to ride in on the left to it”, and an empty piece of ground (plot) nearby. He also admitted having “a bench in the synagogue close to the Scroll and the rabbi’s”, and another for his wife in women’s section, analogically “close to the rabbi’s wife seat”.

w świetle akt notarialnych, Warszawa 1979. Ignotus, *Finansjera warszawska 1870-1925*, Warszawa 1926.

³⁷ D. Złotkowski, *Miasta departamentu kaliskiego...*, pp. 257–259.

³⁸ I. Schiper, *Dzieje handlu żydowskiego na ziemiach polskich*, Warszawa 1937, pp. 314, 329(!)–330.

³⁹ S. Szymański, *Do dziejów Żydów w Częstochowie...*, p. 36.

⁴⁰ Archiwum Jasnogórskie (AJG), Actorum Provinciae Polonae (APP), t. 15 1799–1819, p. 544, p. 322. J. Bojasiński (*Rządy tymczasowe w Królestwie Polskim maj – grudzień 1815*, Warszawa 1902, p. 10) dates the capitulation to March 23.

⁴¹ K. Bartoszewicz, *Utworzenie Królestwa Kongresowego*, Warszawa 1916. pp. 49–50.

⁴² S. Szymański, *Do dziejów Żydów w Częstochowie...*, p. 17–38.

⁴³ APCz, Magistrat m. Częstochowy (MmCz), sygn. 7, p. 1–2. Nieszkowski’s note on the requirement to take an oath.

⁴⁴ APCz, MmCz, sygn. 7. s. 3. The mayor of Stara Częstochowa requested that the local kahal should fund the canon salutes.

⁴⁵ APCz, not. J. Leśniewski (1814 rok), „fol” 73. The document indicated an approximate date of birth, but the date of death is unknown, because Janów’s registrar’s records have not survived(?).

The testament points to Landau's family, as well. It is obvious that he was married twice, although his wives remain nameless. With his first wife he had two daughters, Rachla, wife of Jakub Abramowicz, Szayndla married to an Aron, and a son Mark Landau, Przyrow based. His second marriage was with a daughter Rachla, wife of a Hayzyk. We cannot be certain, whether the list is complete, but anyway it is important.

Landau's last will is significant for the study of the problem of officially validated wills being introduced gradually and not without opposition. From the conspicuous vagueness of the testament, which is lacking any details of the inheritance and its disposal, especially everyday articles, it can be assumed that the private document must have played a supplementary role. Since not much of a fortune seems involved, it is possible that some issues were kept from the public view and premeditatedly omitted in the official testament.

Slightly atypical is the document in which Wulf Aronowicz and his wife Ryfka bequeathed their property to the Hollenders⁴⁶, residents of Klobuck, at a house by Market Square no. 120. The document was drawn up by the public notary J. Lesniewski on January 25, 1817. It was more of a contract between the testators and the Hollender couple, Elias and Leya nee Aronowicz, their housemates. The testators declared that "are elderly and too feeble with age to cope effectively with their upkeep". They made up their minds to cede their property to their daughter and her husband. In return and appreciation of this act the latter gave their parents a solemn promise to "upkeep them at home till their death, provide them lodgings and food, and by the Lord's and man's law treat with all due respect".

The property in question was probably a farm, indicating a very uncharacteristic profession for Jews. Farming was absolutely dominated by Christian inhabitants of Częstochowa, not to mention smaller towns and villages. Thus the possessions of Wulf and Ryfka Aronowicz included: „three strong cows, about thirty four quarters of potatoes, four stacks of barley, two quarters of barley sown, twenty four tin items small and big, two Shabbat candlesticks, two tables, four high stools and five small ones, two wooden beds with beddings and eiderdowns, eight pillows, two coverings, woman's and man's dresses as well as other articles, under whoever's name, money, gold, silver, copper, tin and wooden dishware.”

Our major case is the testament of Granek Lewkowicz⁴⁷, resident of Przyrow, at Market Square no. 97. the document was drawn up by a Częstochowa notary, Antoni Truszkowski on July 24, 1821, at 7.p.m. The document contains more detailed information on the testator's family. His first wife was Chaya nee Ankel. The marriage was with three sons and five daughters. The sons were: 1) Lewek, three years dead at the time⁴⁸, 2) Manela, 3) Joachim; and daughters: 1) Freyda, married to Lewek Herszlikowicz, 2) Gentla, married to Herszlik Joachimowicz, 3) Sara, wife of Lewek, 4) Rochla, and 5) Estera, wife of Jakub. Granek Lewkowicz remarried and his second wife was Sara (no maiden name).

Detailed inventory of the possessions indicates Lewkowicz's substantial wealth. Disposing of it Granek Lewkowicz stated that "notwithstanding the tradition with the people of Mosaic faith to let the eldest son enjoy two shares of his parents' fortune, while other sons get a share each", himself not complying with this tradition because of the previous help extended to his eldest son, Lewek.

⁴⁶ APCz, Not. J. Leśniewski (1817 rok), „fol” 19.

⁴⁷ APCz, Not. A. Truszkowski (1821 rok, sygn. 11), „fol” 175.

⁴⁸ His remaining sons were Manel, Berek, Rabe, and daughters: Frumet, married to Icek, Sara, married to Lewko, and Gitla, married to Mosiek.

Without going into details an overall survey of the possessions might be useful. Lewkowicz had two houses; at no. 98 and 97. Large gates opened onto street, while the area reached from Market Square to the pastures (the Sow river). Besides, No. 97 had a brick store with a small room behind it with a brick cellar beneath, and a barn, half of a granary, and half of a large cowshed.

So-called “movables” shed additional light on the testator’s fortune. And these included: „three copper pots and whatever gear is needed at distillery”. There were also three wrought carts, three old household equipment, as well as tin, copper, silver. The testator pointed out that clothes, bedding, books, „the scroll with its dressings” were to be sold at a private auction to cover the burial expenses. Lewkowicz left small legacies to various people, including Lelow Rabbi Mark Rozeman. They amounted to 200 zlotys. The testator lent about 1,500 zlotys in total to various parties, such as the Zarebice community. This loan was to be given back to the inheritors and split evenly among his wife Sara and the children.

Granek Lewkowicz concluded his testament with a personal remark. He wrote that “all of the above possessions, whether movable or real property, were worked for by the testator, who had not inherited any of it from his father, nor his grandfather, neither any relatives of his.” The entire property was evaluated by him at 6,000 zlotys.

Another testator from Przyrow was Lewek Izraelowicz, who had changed his name to Przyrowski (1770–1822)⁴⁹. His last will was a four pages long handwritten document, which was drawn up on November 27, 1822, by Franciszek Hałaczkiwicz, standing in for the powiat notary public. As the testator was “bedridden with illness and deaf”, his plenipotentiary Dawid Gotski “in the presence of four witnesses as below, a contract made up in private on November 5, thus confirmed in public of his own accord.”

Information on Izraelowicz’s family is scanty. He must have been married twice, since his wife Estera (nee Izraelowicz) was defined as the “current” wife. Not a word, however, was written on his first wife nor any children he might have had with her. His two children of the second marriage both “died young in Wielun.” His two brothers, Hertz in Kuznica and Wulf, and a sister, Fraydel, are mentioned.

To his fortune, as recorded in the testament, Izraelowicz came with his wife Estera. There was a sale contract on the purchase of a house, dated February 18, 1818, drawn up with the notary Jozef Lesniewski. Testator must have had another house, which had been sold (no details are available). His wife Estera received, as the document has it, “a decent share of the property.” It must have resulted from the fact that the testator (in his own words) “took some dowry for his current wife and made a fortune with it.” Therefore he bequeathed her half of a house at no. 131, demanding also that his siblings did not harm her in any way.

Furniture and other movables, as well as all forfeits and debt claims, went to his wife. Nevertheless he insisted that “from these as not much to anything she should turn 300 zlotys to bury his body, to prayers, candles, and religious rites at the local synagogue to be held.” Besides she was instructed to “pay two ducats for candles, and give three to the Rabbi for his prayers.”

⁴⁹ APCz, Not. A. Truszkowski (1822 rok, sygn. 9), „fol” 265. The testament was written down by a minor official of Częstochowa powiat administration, F. Hałaczkiwicz, probably before noon, on Nov. 11, 1822. The testator died at the age of 50, on Nov.11, 1822, the same day the testament was drawn up. He widowed Ester nee Jasek, Mrs. Izraelowicz. His address was Przyrow, no. 131. His witnesses were: Mosiek Wayszman, ”vodka merchant”, and Kopel Waysman(!), producer, age 60. They testified that the testator died on Nov.11 at 3.p.m. and the testament was made up the same day. The registrar recorded the fact at 7. pm. APCz. ASC Przyrów Zgony 1822, akt nr 125.

It is worth noting that the witnesses of this testament included local high officials. The signature of Mosiek Wayszman, the plenipotentiary, is side by side with the autographs of Przyrow mayor, Klemens Imiewski, councilors, Antoni Guzelski, Grzegorz Małogowski, and of a police servant, Franciszek Braxator, all Przyrow based.

Another significant and interesting document is the last will of Herszlik Nayman (1753-1823)⁵⁰, resident of Częstochowa. His testament was drawn up by a notary Ignacy Budrewicz on August 16, 1823. The testator used to live in Stara Częstochowa at Targowa 79. Herszlik Nayman, being „burdened with age and illness for eighteen months”, dictated his last will.

He was also married twice. His twenty-six-year-long first marriage to Nocha nee Izraelowicz was with four children: 1) Haya, Mrs. Wiernik, living in Częstochowa, 2) Mendel Nayman, living in Praszka, 3) Cyrla, Mrs. Chorowicz [Horowicz – DZ], 4) Aron Nayman; the latter two were also inhabitants of Stara Częstochowa. All of them were of age when the testament was written.

With his second wife, Roza nee Izaak, Nayman had been already living for 23 years. The marriage was with three children: 1) Ryfka Saye, known as Kevka, 19, 2) Matel Sere, known as Magdalena, 17, 3) and a son, Ezyk, 16.

From the text it seems that a major segment of the property bequeathed was the dowry brought by Nayman's second wife. The testator took, as he himself admitted, “in ready money three thousand zlotys, along with trousseau of all kinds and valuables.” With these funds Nayman paid for a thirty years lease of a house, which was the property of the Beszers (who had already received 2,000 zlotys), whereas 400 zlotys went to renovation works.

The testator himself pointed out benches he had at the synagogue: one in men's section, and another in women's, whose value he estimated at 420 zlotys. Domestic movables and gear were worth 600 zlotys. In total Nayman's property was calculated to 3,440 zlotys.

It was distributed in fair shares to his wife and children. Everybody got an even “segment” of 860 zlotys. Nayman hoped his wife Roza would be satisfied with her share and would remain the “sole and sovereign keeper” of her children under age. Once again the fact of “everything in his possession being obtained for her money” was underscored.

In case his life would last longer the testator provided that his wife would “support [him] decently until death”, and then “bury [him] properly with religious rite.” Last he stipulated his right to change the testament in part or whole, or to keep it unchanged.

The document was written down by the notary, signed by the testator and witnesses: surgeon Wojciech Stasiakowski, house no. 69, Piotr Fagielski, house no. 72, Maciej Pierzyński, no. 84, all on Targowa street, and by Lukasz Krzeminski, living at Krakowska 48. The testator signed in Hebrew characters.

Interesting information comes from the last will of Jozef Hertz (1761-1831)⁵¹, whose address was Częstochowa, Targowa 132. The document was drawn up by Ignacy Budrewicz, Częstochowa notary, on February 17, 1825 in Stara Częstochowa. Hertz

⁵⁰ APCz, Not. I. Budrewicz sygn. 1 (1823 rok), „fol” 188. He died at 70, on Sept. 26, 1823, at 7. pm. He lived in Stara Częstochowa, no. 70. In the registrar's books he was defined as “a godly man”. The witnesses were: his son Aron Nayman, age 35, and Lewek Sztylman, „teacher”, age 60, residents of Stara Częstochowa. APCz, ASC Częstochowa Zgony 1823.

⁵¹ APCz, Not. I. Budrewicz sygn. 3 (1825 rok), „fol” 40. The testator was killed by cholera, at 70, on Aug. 16, 1831, at 5. pm. The widow, Sara nee Berman Mrs. Hertz, did not report his demise at Częstochowa registrar's until Aug. 23, 1833. The witnesses were Lewek Sztymel teacher and Joachim Rundstein. APCz, ASC Częstochowa 1833. Zgony wyznania mojżeszowego, akt nr 41.

found it worthwhile to add the following motto: “Being well aware that any of the born must pay the debt of mortality.”

With reference to the maxim, his own life took quite a conventional course. His first marriage was to Gruna nee Ickowicz and lasted twenty years. They had five children, three sons: 1) Abram, 2) Icyk, 3) Leybus, and two daughters: 1) Hanka and 2) Estera. Having widowed, Hertz remarried, this time his bride was Sara Berman. She bore him six children, four sons: 1) Wulf, 2) Ezyk, 3) Mosiek and 4) Marek, and two daughters, who were under age at the time.

Hertz’s property consisted of a brick house in Stara Częstochowa, at Targowa 130. Its outbuildings (probably at the back) included a granary, stable, single cowshed, and a major cellar. As for his movables the testator mentioned a 500 zlotys debt claim that the Government of Polish Kingdom owed him “for running postal service, here in town of Częstochowa.” Domestic movables and various utensils were a major supplement of the property.

Testator admitted that his property was laden with debts amounting to the sum of 5,650 zlotys. These were: the dowry of his wife Sara nee Berman, wages due to the former post master Schmit, and the sum Hertz owed to Lewek Alemborg, his son-in-law, on account of a promised dowry. Except for the dowry, it seems the debts were not critical. His wife’s dowry was to be reimbursed with annuity in her half of the house. The other half was to be rented to pay the other debts.

The testament of Berek Ginsberg (1771-1827)⁵² is also of interest. Ginsberg used to live in Częstochowa by Market Square 28. The document was drawn up by Ignacy Budrewicz, Częstochowa powiat notary, on January 9, 1827. The testator, again, married twice in his life. His first marriage, to Braydla nee Mayzel lasted “about twenty five years” with six surviving children: two daughters 1) Klara, Mrs. Frayman, and 2) Miss Dobra, 22, and four sons: 1) Majer, 26, 2) Juda, 18, 3) Ezyk, 16, and 4) Mortka, 14 years old.

His second marriage to Raysla nee Piza (who was already dead at the time the testament was drawn up) was with a son, Abram, two years old. Altogether the testator had seven children. In his own words, Ginsberg owed the fortune to his first wife, whereas upon the death of his second wife he gave her dowry of 600 zlotys back to Raysla’s mother. Ultimately the property he decided to dispose of, was 5,000 zlotys worth of mortgage at Tomasz Werner’s house, where Ginsberg was dictating his testament. The rest of it were the goods at his store, which he estimated at 19,000 zlotys, including debt claims from many respectable persons.

Ginsberg admitted he owed 2,400 zlotys to the Klarenberg brothers, and 400 zlotys to Stanisław Borkowski. His two eldest children, namely Klara Mrs. Frayman, and son Majer, did not get any steady remuneration, as they had been already sufficiently dowered. Younger children received larger shares, because they had not yet profited by father’s means in any major way.

His daughter Dobra was to get 3,600 zlotys, his son Juda – 1,200, Ezyk – 2,100, Mortka 2,100. The baby son Abraam (sic!) got 2,700 zlotys after his deceased mother and from his father. It is worth noting that beside the above sums the children were additionally allowed 1,200 zlotys, which were to be put at a solid mortgage, while the profits would go to memorial prayers “held every year on the anniversary of my passing in perpetuity.” Ginsberg insisted that the “persons to conduct the aforementioned prayers

⁵² APCz, Not. I. Budrewicz sygn. 5 (1827 rok), „fol” 4. Berek Ginsberg, widower, merchant of profession, died at 56, on Jan.16, 1827 at midnight. The witnesses were: Majer Ginsberg, manufacturer of linen, age 26, and Lewek Sztymel teacher, 65. APCz, ASC Częstochowa, Zgony wyznania mojżeszowego, akt Nr 3.

are to be well educated in my religion and their number cannot be less than ten.” To supervise the distribution of money he pledged to select guardians to take care of his children’s inheritance until they would be of age.

Ginsberg did not forget about his brother-in-law Mojzesz Mayzl, who was at the time in a Prussian town of Dihrenfort. He was to receive a legacy of 200 zlotys, to be paid out by the guardians. The testator’s clothes were to be distributed among his relatives “in poor state of existence.”

The guardians of minor children appointed by Ginsberg were his eldest son, Majer Ginsberg, his son-in-law Icyk Frayman, and his brother-in-law Majer Mayzl Kurnik. The family council was to consist of: 1) Joachim Serner, 2) Jozef Kohn, 3) Jakub Moszyn, 4) Mojzesz Tobiasz, 5) Berek Barmach, 6) Majer Spiro. The rest of his relatives were implored to comply with his preference and trust he had in them.

It is interesting to note that the testator with much emphasis said: „I strongly demand, and want it so, that my trade as I have been doing it, is continued alike, under the supervision of the guardians and my children who are of age.” Ginsberg instructed his adult children specifically to conduct “the trade left to them in kind” honestly so that any of them could vow for their integrity and honesty.

Much briefer one was the last will of Lewek Berman⁵³, resident of Częstochowa. The original Hebrew document is dated dates back to September 2, 1831. Its Polish version, written by “the official translator [Jakub] Bursztyński”⁵⁴, was to be brought up under law before the Civil Court of the Kalisz province.⁵⁵

The text proper of the Polish version is two handwritten pages long. It gives us some idea of Berman’s family. He was married to Mendla nee Dawid, who, provided “she will not remarry, can stay at my house and live on my inheritance.” Moreover she was to receive 600 zlotys in coins, and pearls. Earrings were also added, probably golden ones. The testator entreated his heirs “not to harm her in any way.”

His late son, Aleksander, is also mentioned along with his children, being grandchildren of Berman, and a daughter, Baila with her son. Berman’s grandchildren after his son received 1,800 zlotys, whereas grandchildren after his daughter Beila got 1,200 zlotys.

Remaining legacies give an overall picture of his property. It included fields, meadows, and a barn. They were to be “for ever leased”, Lewek Berman insisted. The profit from the lease was to be spent every year on memorial prayers in his death anniversary. “Books and candlesticks, which are pawned are to be put on sale, and the rest left for the orphans.”

Lastly Arye Lewek Nachmanowicz Berman admitted his debts: 1,000 zlotys owed to Icek Freyman, and 750 zlotys for the soil. Then the last will was signed by the witnesses: Moyzesz Mayzel and Jakub Elias Rozen.

⁵³ APCz, Not. I. Budrewicz sygn. 11 (1832 rok), „fol” 38.

⁵⁴ Jakub Bursztyński (1791–1852) was a certified Hebrew translator in Częstochowa, died at 61. Jakub and his wife Bayla nee Berman were „secretaries of the synagogal board”. APCz, ASC Częstochowa Zgony wyznania mojżeszowego 1852, akt nr 123 His first (?) wife was Estera Hanna nee Horowicz, dead for eighteen month (information dated 1833). APCz, ASC Częstochowa Zgony wyznania mojżeszowego 1833, akt nr 7/48.

⁵⁵ On March 7, 1832 the President of the Civil Court for the Kalisz Province sent a letter in Hebrew to I. Budrewicz, to the effect that it was the testament of Lebel Berman Nachmanowicz, with a copy of the proceeded publication attached, to file it in the archival records and issue extracts to the parties. The letter was open, written in Hebrew, on a sheet of paper without a stamp, 18 lines long. Seven lines are added at the end being „initial of the Court of Częstochowa Powiat set on March 2, and ultimately signed by the members of this court”.

A good illustration of a rather prosperous testator⁵⁶ is Haya (Haja) nee Lewkowicz, Mr. Jozef Kuperman's [Kupferman] widow.⁵⁷ Her last will was drawn up on November 23, 1831, at the office of notary public of Częstochowa powiat, Ignacy Budrewicz. She was a Częstochowa resident and used to live at "the Biadacz austeria [inn]". The only surviving child of her thirty-six-year-long marriage was a daughter, Bayla, Mrs. Kalenion Blum. The rest of her children died early. The grandsons after that daughter were: 1) Szymon, 2) Lewek, 3) Jonas, 4) Majer, 5) Jozef, her granddaughters were: 1) Maria and 2) Faygla.

The real property of Haya consisted of, as she recounted it, a half of the inn, located in Częstochowa, "nicknamed Biadacz". It had been set up jointly by the Kupermans. The other half belonged to Bayla Blum, who had inherited it after her father. As for the movables, Haya just mentioned vaguely "various valuables, being in silver, gold, jewels, pearls, in copper, tin, domestic articles, as well as ready money with a major part of debts", meaning various people, who owed her money.

She bequeathed her entire property to her seven grandchildren in even shares, except for the eldest, crippled Szymon, who was to have it increased by 15 per cent.

The testator's wish was that her half of the inn "is never sold to any stranger". She also wanted it to be leased until her grandchildren would be of age, thereupon it should remain in the hands of a sole proprietor, who would pay off his or her siblings. She made a point of explaining why her daughter Bayla was left with current income only, while the bulk of the inheritance would go to the grandchildren. The reason for this was that her daughter "with her husband, and my son-in-law, have not been managing well and have already squandered a considerable part of their fortune, thus the part I am in possession now would be in danger of being squandered too."

Haya named executors of her will, Berek Hayman, her late husband's brother, and Jozef Zend. They were authorized to supervise the distribution of the inheritance upon Haya's death and secure it for her grandchildren. Thereupon she approved the testament in the presence of witnesses, residents of Częstochowa: Lukasz Krzeminski, Franciszek Fal, Piotr Fagielski and Jan Grzybowski. Her signature is absent, "because she claimed to be illiterate."

It is worthwhile to note that a legacy was also deducted from the income on the testator's half of the inn: "60 zlotys every year in perpetuity to a priest of Mosaic faith for him to hold a service here, in Częstochowa, every week, for my husband's soul and mine, to be paid in quarterly rates from the lease of the lodgings I am living in now."

The last will in question was dictated by a resident of Częstochowa, living at Warszawska 147, Lewek Abramowicz, nicknamed Likiernik [Liqueurman] (1782-1832)⁵⁸. It was written down on February 10, 1832, with the notary public of Częstochowa powiat, Ignacy Budrewicz. The testator „bedridden with illness” demanded his testament to be publicly acknowledged.

⁵⁶ APCz, Not. I. Budrewicz sygn. 10 (1831 rok), „fol” 126. The testator's birth nor death dates have not been found in any records at Częstochowa ASC (registrar's office). She did not remarry in the period in question, her death was not reported either. She might have died of cholera and was buried hastily without proper formalities.

⁵⁷ He died at 65, on July 14, 1831, at noon. The demise was reported by Salomon Blum on Aug.3, 1831 with witnesses: Jozef Salten(?) age 40, and Mojzesz Landau, 59. The record includes information on the remaining family: his daughter Bayla, Mrs. Salomon Blum, and his wife, Haya. APCz, ASC Częstochowa, ZGONY wyznania mojżeszowego, 1831 rok, akt Nr 27.

⁵⁸ APCz, Not. I. Budrewicz sygn. 11 (1832 rok), „fol” 16. He died at 50, on Feb.15, 1832, at 9.am. He bereaved a wife, Bluma nee Fryndlender (42), 7 children, and a property worth 6,000 zlotys. The witness was Abramek Waylzen, 40. APCz, ASC Częstochowa, Żydzi 1832, akt nr 3.

Likiernik was married twice. His first wife was Rozalia nee Siszener. In the document he underscored the fact that marriage to her “was without any fortune whatsoever, so as all that was left after her death were debts to be paid.” Two adult children were remaining from this marriage: Samuel and Faygla, Mrs. Winer. With his second wife, Bluma nee Frydlender⁵⁹, during 23 years of marriage Likiernik begot eight children “as of living”: 1) Dwora, Mrs. Oderfeld; 2) Hanka, 18 years old, 3) Abram, 16, 4) Selig, 10, 5) Efraim, 8, 6) Zelda, 6, 7) Laja, 4, and 8) Hendla, 3.

His entire fortune, as Lewek Abramowicz, nicknamed Likiernik, himself emphasized, was made together with his second wife. It consisted of a house in Częstochowa, at Warszawska 147. besides, the heirs of late Herszlik Balsam owed him 3,677 zlotys on account of mortgage debt. His main source of income was, however, wine trade. Likiernik estimated his assets at 10,000 zlotys.

He entrusted his children to the care of their mother, Bluma nee Frydlender. Disposing of their business and property Likiernik urged her to “manage it at her will and liking, not splitting it [...], do business as I have done so far, and divide it among the children in even shares, when my last child is of age.” Moreover, he forbade her, under threat of losing the right to manage the property, “to remarry before the youngest is dowered.” Likiernik’s son-in-law, Herszlik Oderfeld, was named the assistant custodian. Since the widow was to run the wine business, it was only logical to entrust her with the right to claim all the debts owed to Likiernik and to use the money hereupon obtained to pay in turn his own business debts.

Conclusion

The present analysis comprises ten wills from the years 1814–1832. The documents were officially drawn up at the public notary of Częstochowa. It can be assumed that Jews and Christians alike were subject to the same factors. Official wills written down by the notary were enforced by the administration, but people were slow and reluctant to accept the new regulation. It was regarded as an intrusion upon their privacy by the regime attempting to enhance its control over personal properties.

Obviously some private last wills must have been made, not recorded in the notary’s files. Wills drawn up in private were sometimes withheld from public. By law they had to be in Polish or translated by a certified translator and then verified by the Civil Court of the Kalisz province. The procedure was costly and time-consuming.

In case of four testators, namely 1) Wulf and Ryfka Aronowicz, 2) Granek Lewkowicz, 3) Lewek Berman, and 4) Haya (Haja) Mrs. Kuperman, their life dates could not established. With the remaining six the dates are complete. The youngest was a fifty-year-old Lewek Abramowicz. Lewek Izraelowicz nn Przyrowski was 52, Berek Ginsberg was 56, Herszlik Nayman and Jozef Hertz died at 70. The eldest testator was about 90 and his name was Mosiek Jozefowicz Landau from Janow. It is worth noting that of six well documented lives, five wills were drawn up in the year of testator’s death. Jozef Hertz was the only one to prepare his last will six years earlier. The group included a single female testator.

The last wills are interesting source materials for the study of a given population. Seven testators remarried (their marriages were lasted 20-25 years). In five families the number of surviving children ranged from 7 to 10. Haya Kuperman’s marriage to Jozef

⁵⁹ Bluma Likiernik nee Frydlender, on Nov. 2 (14), 1849, at 2.30 pm. Abram Szacher teacher, age 50, and Judke Berkowicz, shames, 41, residents of Częstochowa, turned up and stated that on Nov. 1 (13), 1849, at 5 pm. Bluma nee Frydlender, Mrs. Likiernik, merchant’s widow, died at 60. ASC Częstochowa, Zgony wyznania mojżeszowego 1849, akt nr 169.

continued for 36 years, with only one daughter reaching adulthood and having seven of her own children.

The division of real property and movables must have often posed problems. One testator owed an inn. In five cases an overall estimate of the property value was given. Herszlik Nayman gave the lowest estimate, 3,500 zlotys, Jozef Hertz – 5,600 zlotys, Lewek Abramowicz's assets were 10,000 zlotys, while Berek Ginsberg evaluated his property at 24,000 zlotys.

Object listed in the wills included: benches at synagogue, home furniture, Shabbat candlesticks, bedding, "woman's and man's clothes", money, books, "the scroll with its dressings", "valuables in silver, gold, jewels, pearls", tin, copper. Some testators had to divide their assets among 7–8 children and his wife.

The above Jewish testators were obviously religious people. They had benches at synagogue at men's and women's sections, they celebrated Shabbat. They asked for "prayers and religious rites at the local synagogue to be held." They gave two or three ducats to the "local rabbi for candles and his prayers". They were aware that "any of the born must pay the debt of mortality." They designated interest from investments to pay for the memorial prayers to be "held every year on the anniversary of my passing in perpetuity." A testator wrote: "persons to conduct the aforementioned prayers are to be well educated in my religion and their number cannot be less than ten."

It is important to note that the Jewish wills in the present analysis were most often signed by the testators. As for the Christian population, except for the local gentry, clergy, and teachers, only a few townspeople were literate enough to sign their last will. Some interesting details can be also found in the documents, as, for instance, that in 1821 the Lelow Rabbi was Marek Rozeman, whereas the Częstochowa Rabbi Mojzesz Mayzel died at 61 on March 13, 1839. The official (certified) Hebrew translator in Częstochowa was Jakub Bursztynski (1791–1852). In source there are references to him and his wife as "secretaries of the synagogal board". Quite a list of Jewish merchants, purveyors, suppliers, and craftsmen can be established on such basis.

The above Jewish documents will be published in print along with wills of Christian Częstochowa burghers. They will illustrate economic activity in town. Scholarly study of the first half of the nineteenth century in this respect has also been advanced.