



# **Resplendent Synagogue: Architecture and Worship in an Eighteenth-Century Polish Community (The Tauber Institute Series for the Study of European Jewry)**

*By Thomas C. Hubka*

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## **Resplendent Synagogue: Architecture and Worship in an Eighteenth-Century Polish Community (The Tauber Institute Series for the Study of European Jewry) By Thomas C. Hubka**

Thomas C. Hubka, an architectural historian known for his work on American vernacular architecture, immersed himself in medieval and early-modern Jewish history, religion, and culture to prepare for this remarkable study of the eighteenth-century Polish synagogue in the town of Gwozdziec, now in present Ukraine. Hubka selected the Gwozdziec Synagogue - one of the finest examples of a small-town wooden synagogue from the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth - because of the completeness of its photographic and historical records. This truly resplendent synagogue exemplified a high point in Jewish architectural art and religious painting, a tradition that was later abandoned by Eastern-European Jewish communities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Because the Gwozdziec Synagogue, like so many others, was destroyed by the Nazis, this book revives a spiritual community lost to history. Graced with more than 150 historical photographs, architectural drawings, maps, diagrams, and color illustrations, Resplendent Synagogue vividly recreates the spiritual heart of a once-vibrant Jewish community. Hubka "reads" the synagogue both as a historical document and as a cultural artifact. His interpretation of its art and architecture - and its liturgy - enables him to recreate a pre-modern Jewish community seen in relation to both its internal traditions of worship and its external relations with Gentile neighbors. Hubka demonstrates that while the architectural exterior of the synagogue was largely the product of non-Jewish, regional influences, the interior design and elaborate wall-paintings signified a distinctly Jewish art form. The collaboration of Jewish and Gentile builders, craftsmen, and artists in the creation of this magnificent wooden structure attests to an eighteenth-century period of relative prosperity and community well-being for the Jews of Gwozdziec. This unique exploration of a lost religious and cultural artifact breathes new life into a forgotten but fascinating aspect of eighteenth-century Polish Jewry and is certain to elicit discussion and debate among modern readers.

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## **Editorial Review**

### Review

"Resplendent Synagogue represents the traditional wooden synagogues of eighteenth-century Polish Jewry, and delves in magnificent detail not merely into the architecture of the structure but also into the architecture of the community and the influences on the structure by the worshipers who davened there—and the influences of the structure in turn upon the worshipers by the nature of the edifice."—The Jewish Press (New York, NY)

"A pioneering work... the first detailed analysis of an East European synagogue on the background of both architectural and religious context... should appeal to a broad audience and belongs in serious collections of Jewish studies, sacred architecture and comparative studies." —Religious Studies Review

"The writing is scholarly and information is presented coherently, backed with historical documentation. A plethora of historic images, maps, intricate renderings and diagrams illustrate every aspect of the long-destroyed building, its construction and its position in the community. Where information on the Gwozdziec synagogue is lacking, such as who designed and built it, Hubka draws on the history and architecture of other synagogues in Poland so that every subject has been intelligently introduced... [Hubka] illuminates the interior of the building as seen by this person, introducing the reader not only to new surroundings but also to a different time period."—Traditional Building

"One must surely recognize the value of his work, since he has created a fundamental awareness of the social and religious functioning of these once resplendent but now lost monuments of vernacular architecture. There are very few scholars able to contribute the kind of interpretation Hubka has provided because the task requires the combination of knowledge in Jewish liturgy, history, art, architecture, and scripture as well as an ability to work in a wide range of languages... Hubka's work has wider implications for many disciplines and his contribution will not fade away as research evolves." —Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture

### Review

"Hubka's book exhibits a fine blend of scholarship, accessibility, and panache. In fact, Hubka's is the only book in the field of Jewish architecture that attempts to contextualize a building with such specificity and with such a broad sense of the way it belongs in its immediate and more extensive cultural surroundings. It is unique in using architecture to fill in details of the relatively undiscovered country of pre-Hasidic Eastern Europe. The extrapolations it invites are essential to understanding the period and place, making Hubka's thesis a force to be reckoned with." (Marc M. Epstein, Associate Professor, Religion and Jewish Studies, Vassar College)

### From the Publisher

8 1/2 x 11 trim. 168 illus.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

**Jennie Groth:**

This book untitled Resplendent Synagogue: Architecture and Worship in an Eighteenth-Century Polish Community (The Tauber Institute Series for the Study of European Jewry) to be one of several books that will best seller in this year, honestly, that is because when you read this e-book you can get a lot of benefit on it. You will easily to buy this particular book in the book shop or you can order it by means of online. The publisher on this book sells the e-book too. It makes you quickly to read this book, as you can read this book in your Smart phone. So there is no reason to you to past this reserve from your list.

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