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Artistic Features of Besamims in Eastern Galicia in the 18th – the first third of the 20th Century

The art research of specific ethnic groups that for centuries lived and created their own history and culture in Ukraine is significant for modern Ukrainian art. The study of Jewish arts and crafts in Eastern Galicia in the 18th – the first third of the 20th century is one of primary importance areas for understanding the comprehensive image of artistic processes. The monuments of Jewish art in Galicia are presented in numerous museum collections, private collections and are usually considered in the context of Jewish art in general, apart from the territory of creation, the interference availability and the creative inspirations, which determine the topicality of the study. A number of prominent scholars have addressed to the study of besamim range of problems, in particular in the context of Jewish ceremonial art in the middle and the second half of the 20th century, Heshil Golnitzki [1], Abraham Kanof [2], Stephen Kayser [3], Faina Petryakova [4], Tatyana Romanovska [5], Alexander Kantsedikas [6]¹ and others.

The use of scent for ritual purposes in different cultures around the world has a very long-standing tradition and the burning of aromatic herbs, resins and incense is of symbolic meaning. Meanwhile, mystical and therapeutic powers were attributed to the redolence, particularly in the fight against epidemics and numerous diseases. Special spice containers for fragrance, pomanders for musk and ambergris, were designed and worn fastened to clothing or placed indoors. The basic types and shapes of these objects were formed in Europe in the Middle Ages and have evolved significantly in the following historical periods, the range of their use expanded substantially.

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¹ See: Golnitzki H. Bemahzor Hayamim (religious and secular customs in Jewish ceremonial art and folklore). – Israel, Haifa: The Jewish Folklore-lovers' Circle, Haifa, 1963; Kanof A. Jewish Ceremonial Art Religious Observance. - Harry N Abrams, 1980. – 268 p.; Kayser Stephen S. Jewish ceremonial art; A guide to the appreciation of the art objects used in synagogue and home, principally from the collections of the Jewish museum of the Jewish theological seminar of America. – Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society Of America, 1959. – 189 p.; Petriakova F. The collection of Jewish Art of the Museum of Ethnography and Crafts in Lvov // Treasures of Jewish Galicia. Judaika from the Museum of Ethnography and Crafts in Lvov, Ukraine. – Tel Aviv: Beth Hatefutsoth, the Nahum Goldman Museum of the Jewish Diaspora, 1996. – 196 p. P. 75 – 99; Романовська Т. Іудаїка // Золота скарбниця України. – К.: Акцент, 1999. 208 с. С. 99 – 122.; Канцедикас О. Шедеври єврейського мистецтва. Срібло. – М.: Имидж, 382 с.

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In Judaism culture the firing of aromatic herbs is an important part of the Havdalah ceremony during Shabbat celebration. The significance of Shabbat Saturday for the Jewish people can not be overestimated. Its importance is embodied in the proverb «more than the Jewish People have kept the Shabbat, the Shabbat has kept the Jews», which throughout history helped to save the nation, its national identity in the most difficult times of persecution and harassment. Shabbat is a commemoration of Saturday that takes the key place in Judaism and is an everlasting union between God and the people of Israel. The importance to keep the sanctity of the Shabbat is repeatedly emphasized in the Torah, and is one of the Ten Commandments. Havdalah is a ceremony of separating festival day, Saturday from working days. The Havdalah traditions, prayers and blessings are determined in Berachot, the first part of the Mishnah, and thus the Talmud. Berachot is a part of the Jerusalem Talmud, finally edited in the 4th century and the Babylonian Talmud, dating to the 6th century. Havdalah literally means “separation”, the division is a benediction, proclaimed during the evening prayer at the end of Saturday. The symbolic texts declaration accompanied with the ritual actions form the basis of Havdalah ceremony. In the «Shulhan Arukh»(96) it is stated that the man who does the blessing takes a glass of wine in his right hand and a container with spices in the left and says «... having created a bunch of grapes fruit », then takes the wine in the left hand and the spices in the right and says «... having created the fragrant spices.» The God, who separated the darkness and the light, the sacred from the everyday, Saturday from the working day, the people of Israel from the other nations, is blessed in Havdalah. Within the centuries during the Havdalah ritual a number of subjects were used: a braided candle (or a candle with an braided wick), Shabbat candle holder and besamim – a special container for fragrant herbs and spices burning. Note should be taken to rather arbitrary and not regulated choice of spices, some of them were brought from Palestine, Arabia, Iran, Africa, traditionally frankincense, myrrh, cinnamon, aloe, saffron, rosemary and others were used. The Bible says that the spices were kept as treasures at court and the temple [Exodus 25.6; 1 Chronicles 9.29]. The aroma is interpreted as a symbol of spirituality, continuous communication with God, since the smell is an immaterial substance, but definitely noticeable like the presence of God – immaterial, but universal. It is the point emphasized at Havdalah prayer time. According to the folk traditions, during Sabbath Jews are given another soul that flies with Havdalah spices.

There are no strict rules for performing besamims in Jewish oral and written laws. The early monuments dating as to the time of Havdalah ceremony regulation in the treatises have not been preserved until our times. Most of the artifacts date back to the 17th century and the next periods, their form and decoration often correspond to European samples. The analysis of numerous besamims (objects identified as besamims in museums and international auctions or usually belonged to Jewish families) let confidently state that sometimes for ritual spices firing Jews used spice boxes initially intended for wider use. Similar in shape, production techniques and decoration, the spices containers were used both for the Havdalah ceremony and for premises flavoring, as well as clothing for the home use among various ethnic peoples of Western and East-Central Europe, the East and Asia. The attention to common traditions in performance of aroma containers by Christians and Jews is drawn by Bezalel Narkes, in particular besamims copying architectural forms. The author provides a historical event that took place in Frankfurt am Main in 1532, when the Jew sued the Christian master, who hid a silver part while designing the spice box. However, the judge could not understand what it looks like and asked to bring the box to the court. When he saw it he exclaimed that that was Jewish tabernacle. Thus, the form of Christian and Jewish subjects is the same, but their purpose differs.²

It should be noted that in different historical periods, depending on circumstances, at the time of prohibition for Jews to do jewelry, they applied to Christian masters for orders. Thus, the synthesis of cultural traditions took place: on one hand there was a customer with clear wishes and on the other – the creative ideas and artistic talent of the master.

A number of besamims has a direct analogy with popular in Europe from the 13th century pomanders (from French d’pomme ambre – fragrant apple), special containers for spices in a form of small tracery ball, divided into segments in the middle, allowing the scent to spread around. Such pomanders were attached to costumes on chatelaines, prayer ropes, belts, at the same time these were the decorations. The besamims of such form small in size were often used for Havdalah during the travels.

The importance of firing spices during Shabbat for every Jewish family led to a significant number of besamims created in different periods in many European cities. The analysis of besamims from the collections of museums in Ukraine, worldwide and private collections let single out several basic types of containers shapes for ritual incense. The most common in Eastern Europe during the 17th– 19th centuries were besamims reproducing architectural forms, such as a tower on a high pedestal, topped with a four-sided roof, which is crowned in its term with a ball, a small flag,

² Наркис Б. Что такое еврейское искусство? //Еврейское искусство в европейском контексте. Сборник статей. Ред. Родов И., перевод с англ. Б.Хаймович. – М.: Мосты культуры, 2002. – С. 11 – 24. С. 13

etc. A separate group is represented by a small-sized geometrically shaped besamims mostly round, pear- or cone-shaped with a slightly convex top. The third group includes besamims imitating zoomorphic shapes, including forms of squirrels, bears, birds, fish and others. The fourth group is characterized by the form of plants, mostly sunflowers and oak leaves with acorns. The smallest typological group is presented by besamims shaped as cups, more common in Eastern Ukraine; of artisans authorship from Zhitomir, Odessa as well as Russia. Thus clearly distinguished are five typological groups of spice box forms: 1. Architectural. 2. Geometrical. 3. Zoomorphic. 4. Plant. 5. Combined.

Important role of besamims in the ritual celebration of Shabbat defined the degree of attention and skill with which the Galician craftsmen created these spice boxes. Traditionally, they were made of such metals as refractory material suitable for incense firing. The materials used for the boxes were mostly silver, brass and bronze. Accordingly, while decorating, the traditional techniques of artistic treatment of these metals were applied to. The majority of Eastern Galicia besamims was created using traditional techniques of metal processing. The dominant techniques of besamims decoration were stamping, filigree and casting. Besamims in a form of fish, animals and fruit were mainly created using stamping with relatively flat relief, common in Galicia in the first half of the 17th century. Preference was shown for filigree while executing besamims imitating architectural forms. Basics and some decorative elements such as small figurines of birds, squirrels and bells were performed in casting technique. Different techniques of artistic metal processing were often combined in one product. In some cases, besamims were additionally decorated with gems, semiprecious stones, enamels, etc.

As mentioned above, the role of besamims was sometimes performed by popular in the whole Europe spice boxes or they were even created by Christian masters. Therefore, these items can not be distinguished from all-European decorative arts. They are the epitome of technical and artistic development of craft organizations in Europe and particularly Ukraine as well as the individual talent of goldsmiths. It should be noted that in the 17th century Lviv, the center of Eastern Galicia, was a leading center of jewelry and at the same time masters who came from Italy, Hungary, Germany and Armenia worked together with the local Christians and Jews (in some historical periods, the Jews were forbidden to practice jewelry art). Jewish artisans were organized as analogues of craft organizations subordinate to kahal and were strictly regulated. It is worth noting that the functioning of Jewish shops often relied on the privileges and permissions granted to individual communities.³ Shader mas-

³ Капраль М. Економічні привілеї міста Львова XV – XVIII ст.: привілеї та статуті ремісничих цехів і купецьких корпорацій. Передмова с. XLV

ters – the metal smelters and traders of precious stones and kleynods, worked with the magistrate and shop goldsmiths permission. In the 18th century in Lviv a number of Jewish «national» guilds and corporations, which were often contradict to the prohibitions and restrictions, actively produced and sold their goods [9]⁴. According to Jakub Honigsman's research, a large Jewish jewelers shop was located in Lviv in the early 17th century, nearly 18 artists worked there. Jews practiced jeweller's art in Striy, Przemysl and Brody.⁵ A significant number of centers and artists contributed to rivalry, and thus led to a high level of technical and artistic execution of works.

The imitation of architectural forms was typical for besamims in Galicia. A number of spice boxes is a tower shaped or in a form of a small house with a conical, four-sided roof or topped with a ball, small flag or animal or bird figure. The use of architectural motifs in European arts and crafts, within which the Jewish one has developed, has a long historical tradition and acquired deep symbolic meaning during the Renaissance, particularly under the influence of a number of treatises and works of leading architects such as Leon Battista Alberti and Sebastiano Serlio, who formed a series of visual perception of individual architectural volumes. The reproduction of elements of architectural details is a typical solution for most types of forms of decorative arts, including furniture, illuminating equipment and rugs borders. Architectural forms were also actively used for desktop clock casings. This may be explained by the fact that the clockworks located on towers, mainly in the city center at the end of the 13th – the first half of the 14th centuries became a symbol of freedom and independence. Clockmaking became the quintessence of applied science of that time and its impact on different types of applied art was quite significant. The value of the early clocks caused an extremely high execution and their shapes became models for a number of decorative art items, including spice boxes. The use of architectural motifs, the reproduction of tower forms in Jewish culture also has great symbolic value, the foundation of which may be found in the sacred texts of the Torah. The first thing worth paying attention to is the importance of the Temple in Jewish tradition as a symbol of the presence of God, the holy land of Israel and national unity. Thus the execution of besamims as architectural miniatures became an allusion to Jerusalem Temple, an esoteric perception of flavor as the invisible but definitely present God is a hint on the divine presence, which is a symbol of the Ark of the Covenant, located in the Temple, built by King Solomon on Jerusalem Mount Moriah. A hint on the Tower of Babel may be noticed in the appeal to the tower shape. One of the interpretations of the biblical story of punishment for excessive pride of the tower build-

⁴ Horn M. Żydowskie bractwa rzemieślnicze na ziemiach polskich, litewskich, białoruskich i ukraińskich w latach 1613–. 1850. Warszawa, 1998. S. 109 – 110.

⁵ Еврейське ремісництво у містах Руського воєводства. Я. Хонігсман// История евреев Украины и Холокост. Еврейская энциклопедия. Раздел 1. Давні часи та середньовіччя. – www.caust-ukraine.net/ru/razdel_i.htm

ers is not only misunderstanding, caused by the emergence of many languages, but the dispersion of the once united people across the earth. Following a similar set, it may be assumed that the tower became a symbol of Jewish settlement and the loss of their own land. Thus the use of architectural motifs in besamim creation can be associated with both the general trends of Western European decorative arts and the internal ethnic and religious perceptions.

The architectural type besamims predominantly imitate tower shape. The construction consists of base – an abutment, which often reproduces candlestick or chalice foundations, and containers for incense in a model of architectural forms, classically topped with a conical or four sided roof. The earliest preserved besamims from Galicia date to the beginning of 18th century and the vast majority was created in the 19th – the first third of the 20th century. One of the best early examples of tower-like besamim was made in Lviv in 1721 (exhibited at auction Kestenbaum & Company, New York in December 2012 and sold for \$ 337,000)⁶. The materials used are silver and gilt silver, the height is 38.4 cm, the basic technique is filigree and for individual fragments – casting. A delicate combination of twisted silver threads created entire tracery composition with volute like and floral ornament. The construction of besamim consists of a base, which fully reproduces the shape of candlestick base in baroque style as well as ritual and festive precious chalice. On one of the six faces of the tower there is a decorative circle in a form of a stylized clock with Roman numerals, the center dial field is designed without arrows and as a tracery plane. The body of the work reflects architectural forms, in particular it bears resemblance to the town hall towers. In the outlines of besamim one can see likeness with a tower of Bernardine church in Lviv which is closely located to the Jewish city district. The general contours of the shape reflect the principles of the Italian Renaissance architecture; however, the elements solution corresponds to Baroque tendencies. The traditions of Italian Renaissance are visible in quoting typical for the region and period coupled arch windows, soldier figures in the European Renaissance clothing and others. However, the overall decoration is made in Baroque style. The besamim technique envisages a combination of a large number of individual elements, most of which are made in the form of volute like curls, reflecting floral motifs, including trees and rosettes in the overall composition. The octahedron corners decorate the twisted columns crowned with pomander-like balls. The same tracery ball with a flag of Lviv coat of arms tops the besamim. This monument of Jewish ritual silver may be fairly considered as one of the best pieces of jewelry in Eastern Galicia first half in the 18th century.

⁶ Dr. Bernard Bernstein and Patricia Jay Reiner. A Rare Tower Form Spice Container // Silver Magazine. September / October 2013, P. 16 – 19.

By the same principle, however in a much more modest way, a number of besamims was performed in Galicia, including Lviv in the 18th century; most of them is a part of museum or private collections, sometimes exhibited for sale at world auctions. In particular, a silver tower-like besamim made in Lviv in the 18th century was put up for Greenstein auction, New York (lot 67)⁷. The besamim is executed in filigree and chasing. It copies baroque tower consisting of a square base with abutment typical for most candlesticks, chalices, tabernacles of the specified period; the three-tiered main part is topped with a flag with tracery rosette in the center. It is the use of filigree that allows to create elegant tracery compositions and combine individual parts in the complete unit. The main structural elements of the ornament are volute like curls and spirals that form floral motifs, mostly rosettes, stylized flowers and leaves. The burning of incense was performed in the central rectangular volume, topped with pinnacles on the corners and stylized arches in the center of each side, imitating the window. The coronal part of besamim reproduces the design of the roof and the symbolic observational ground. On the whole besamim creates a single integrated composition and meets the basic principles of Baroque.

A striking example of architecture shape besamim is Lviv article dating to the middle of the 18th century⁸. It is characterized by the integrity of the three-tier composition, topped with a ball and a flag. A characteristic feature is the bell located on the top floor with stylized window in a form of an open double arch. It should be mentioned that the bell is a typical element of Jewish ritual silver, including Torah Crowns and Rimonims. The plasticity of besamim is achieved by strict interpretation of ornament contours made by curved silver wires of different cutting; the space between them is filled with delicate filigree scrolls. The ornament is formed by floral motifs. Particular attention should be paid to the besamim base. At the corners of the flat silver quadrilateral there are four mythical creatures leaning their heads – the snakes are covered with small scales, converging to the center and bound by a tracery ball. The use of the snake motif in the besamim bases is far not a solitary instance and has a symbolic meaning.

Architectural forms are represented in silver besamim made in 1790 in Lviv⁹. The basic techniques are filigree, stamping and casting. It should be noted that in comparison with the monuments made in the first half and middle of the 18th century, this besamim is of much simpler main part composition. The approach also differs from the traditional for earlier periods interpretations of base and there is usage of twisting technique of two broad flat plates decorated with notches along with fili-

⁷ J. Greenstein & Co., Inc. Antique Jewish ritual objects and art. New York. - www.jgreenstein.com

⁸ J. Greenstein & Co., Inc. Antique Jewish ritual objects and art. New York. Lot 40. - www.jgreenstein.com

⁹ J. Greenstein & Co., Inc. Antique Jewish ritual objects and art. New York. Lot 92. - www.jgreenstein.com

gree in the form of winding thin silver wires. The walls of besamim central square are formed by twisted volute-like elements united into plant composition. Traditionally, the besamim is crowned by a small flag. Silver besamim made in Lviv near 1800 has similar forms¹⁰. The difference in the solution is seen only in the interpretation of base of three stylized silver cords decorated with horizontal stripes and intercepted above the center by a tracery ball. Having analyzed similar monuments it may be argued that they might have been manufactured in the same workshop and were of great popularity.

In some cases, besamims present folk architecture motifs. A striking example of this type is a silver besamim (of rather low standard) casted in Lviv in 1789. Its lower part is interpreted as classical baroque solid base of a candlestick or a chalice. However, the upper main part, where incenses is burnt, is designed as a traditional Ukrainian wooden belfry with imitation of wood as a building material and shingle covering of a four-sided roof. The besamim is crowned with a lion figure with stylized palm branch in its claws. The artistic solution of this besamim lays emphasis on the close artistic ties between Jewish and Christian communities, as well as significant artistic influences.

Significant changes in the besamim solution of architectural forms took place in the 19th century. The popularization of historicism style, the mechanization of production processes influenced on the transformation of general form and basic techniques of production. Popular in the previous century filigree technique was replaced by casting and stamping, decoration often applied by engraving. Forms became lower, the refusal of multi-tier is visible in the main parts. Baroque city tower were no longer a source of creative inspirations. Most besamims of this type made in the 19th century are small, on proportionally high bases with different curve profiles. The central part of cubic or cylindrical form is traditionally done with a high stylized, often conical roof topped with a flag. The body of container, where incense is burnt, has solid walls with small tracery holes, traditionally of floral ornament. A number of such besamims was in the private collection of Maksymilian Goldstein, a prominent Jewish cultural figure of Galicia of the first half of the 20th century and their photos were published in Warsaw and Krakow newspapers in 1911.¹¹

A striking example of Jewish goldsmithery of the 19th century is a besamim dated to 1806 - 1809 from a collection of Israel Museum in Jerusalem. The main stylistic trends of previous epochs and elements of folk architecture are perfectly embodied in the piece. The base, proportionally higher than the rest, consists of two parts:

¹⁰ J. Greenstein & Co., Inc. Antique Jewish ritual objects and art. New York. Lot 126. - www.jgreenstein.com

¹¹ Janusz B. Muzeum żydowskie we Lwowie. Ze zbiorów M. Goldsteina. //Świat. Pismo tygodniowe ilustrowane. - Warszawa, 23 września 1911 r.

the lower, typical for candlestick of classicism of the last quarter of the 18th century, and the upper in Rococo style. The part for incense burning is of a simple four-cornered house, covered by a four-sided roof topped with a signature and a small flag. The walls and roof are totally tracery and casted. The dominant ornamental composition is floral motifs.

In the 19th century besamims of architectural form underwent significant transformation. The traditional design is preserved – a base, a container for incense and a coronal part. Primarily the changes affected the central part, which is often cylindrical and decorated with frieze floral ornament. The only ring of architecture becomes cone-shaped roof that mimics the image of tower of Romanic and Gothic castles, popular during romanticism. Similar besamim is in the collection of History of Religion Museum in Lviv. Worthy of particular notice is the decoration of its central part, which consists of two tracery frieze compositions, interconnected by a number of small balls. At the heart of the complex decor is a volute-like shoots motif, complemented by acanthus leaves and flowers. In the detailed analysis of the individual elements one can distinguish the influence of Eastern art, particularly in the choice of colors that are not typical for the region of besamim production.

The besamim dating to 1860 was created by similar principle¹². Its central part is cylindrical, surrounded in a circle by six rectangular (slightly convex per cylinder curvature) tracery plates, in the center of which there are the small rhombs as if fastening together metal shoots twisted at the ends. Coronal portion is formed in a small bell-shaped domes installed one by one. It is worth noting that the besamim is performed according to historicism style and one can see the analogy to decorative vases and bowls of the mentioned period in its outlines.

The tradition of creating besamims, following the architectural forms, in Eastern Galicia continued until the beginning of the Second World War. Most items of this type of the early 20th century are small, relatively simple in form spice boxes. More tribute was paid to custom rather than try to realize artistic ideas in their creation. The development of art in the late 19th – the early 20th century was dictated by the emergence of a number of new styles, conceptual architects and designers developments. The architectural type besamims of traditional forms put artists in a particular framework and did not let opportunities to fully uncover the latest trends.

A considerable number of besamims created by Jewish community in Eastern Galicia represent the geometric-type articles. The most common are cylindrical, conical and round containers located on the leg-bases of different shapes. Small, round or cone-shaped besamims were often used for Havdalah ceremonies during journeys. Jews from all over the Europe were successful in trade and traveled a lot. How-

¹² J. Greenstein & Co., Inc. Antique Jewish ritual objects and art. New York. Lot 91. - www.jgreenstein.com

ever even during the journeys they strictly followed the religious rituals and guidelines that has contributed to the spread of virtually «pocket» besamims. Notable affinity with popular pomanders and spice boxes is visible in round besamims. Most of the preserved monuments dates to the 19th – the early 20th century. In the choice of metal processing techniques, the same trend as for architectural type besamims are observed. Particularly for the late 18th – the early 19th centuries, the dominant technique was filigree, while casting, stamping and engraving prevailed in the second half of the 19th century.

The close connection of Jewish masters with the leading centers of European culture contributed to the spread of Western stylistics in Jewish art. Particularly notable effects of classicism are detected in besamim dated to 1800's. The central part of the item, volume for incense firing, consists of two tracery, filigree made petals-like hemispheres, connected by a wide frieze, decorated with ornament in the form of cross-lines. The besamim is crowned with a spire topped with a ball and a flag. The article is characterized by restraint, proportionality of separate elements, clear rhythm of compositions, typical for classicism; at the same time the connection with national art traditions of previous periods is visible in the besamim base solution. On a flat circle there are three rods in the form of snakes joined at the top. Thus, the synthesis of polar traditions characteristic of many Jewish works of decorative art takes place.

The symbolic image of snake is popular for base solutions of Jewish spice boxes of Eastern Galicia in the late 18th – the 19th centuries. Especially, one of emphases is put by the jeweler on besamim base dated to the end of the 18th – the beginning of the 19th century. In its bottom part, there is a ring of shoulders, that stylistically reminds of ceremonial crowns, attached to three twisted symmetrically located snake tails. The stylized crown is topped with a flower, petals of which are formed in a continuous bent plate. The spices container reproduces classical forms of popular in Europe pomanders, made in filigree technique and crowned with a bouquet of stylized flowers.

A silver besamim created in filigree in the 1800's in a form of tracery ball topped with a flag and mounted on a cylindrical slightly narrowed down leg with a six petal flower base. Traditionally for Jewish art, floral motifs form the basis of ornamental compositions; in this case – simple six petal flowers with hearts in a form of metal beads, supplemented by volute like scrolls. Despite the relative simplicity of ornamental motifs, thanks to the harmonious combination of individual elements into a complete composition, the besamim surprises by smartness and solemnity that fully corresponded to the importance of Havdalah celebration.

Most of Jewish ceremonial items have constant, worked over for centuries forms, and traditional decoration options with tangible impact of Western art stylistics, in-

cluding Baroque and Rococo. The synchronism of major trends and styles distribution in European and Jewish art cannot be passed over. In particular, Baroque elements in forms and decor of Jewish studies were typical for the first third of the 20th century. However, in the late 19th century under the influence of the Haskalah (Jewish emancipation processes), affecting most areas of community life, the impact of secession art can be traced in some works¹³. A striking example is besamim dated to the late 19th century. Its form is characterized by high flexibility, linearity and overall integrity of the composition.

A number of small format besamims, intended mainly for Havdalah outside home, are referred to geometric type. In these capacities the most striking affinity is visible with European spice boxes, in particular pomanderams of different periods. It should be noted that the besamims of this subtype often have a ring for attaching to chains and chatelains. Thus, they could have been used as usual spice boxes and vice versa as traditional spice boxes adapted for Havdalah. Most pices are of round or conical shape, topped with a hemisphere on the wider side (the term pear-like is used in literature and auction catalogs applying to conical besamims). The traditional techniques were casting, stamping and engraving.

A striking example of such besamims is the one dated to the 19th century. It is 7cm long and consists of two parts: a cone-shaped base with a ring on the end and a spherical conrainer for incense firing. In its turn, the container is also formed of two parts. The lower is one-piece, decorated with stylized leaves in a circle, made in the technique of engraving. The upper part is tracery, formed by three identical segments with images of stylized palm leaves and crowned with a six petal flower. The integrity of the composition is achieved by individual parts proportion and further enhanced by the rhythm of flat hoops, interconnecting the besamim elements.

Besamim created in Galicia, dated to 1800's, is cone-shaped with a convex top¹⁴. The peculiarity of decorative solution lies in the rhythmic alternation of tracery and full fragments of the article, divided into six longitudinal segments. The tracery pieces are shaped by ornamental plant compositions and the décor on the besamim top looks like a stylized, rather primitive lion framed by tulip flowers. The rest of surfaces is entirely covered with floral ornament with the motif of swirling shoot in the heart.

A number of besamins are particularly similar to each other in form and decoration, and differs only in some details. Most of them are round, decorated with floral ornaments and practically do not differ from pomandres, common all over the Europe. The analysis of numerous preserved monuments let state that this type of besamims was popular in Galicia during the 18th - the first third of the 20th centuries. At-

¹³ J. Greenstein & Co., Inc. Antique Jewish ritual objects and art. New York. Lot 74. - www.jgreenstein.com

¹⁴ J. Greenstein & Co., Inc. Antique Jewish ritual objects and art. New York. Lot 7. - www.jgreenstein.com

tention should be paid to a number of similarities between besamims of geometrical and plant types. In some cases, these groups are typology combined into one, since often the besamim prototype forms were pomegranates, pears and apples. However, this unification is not always justifiable and leads to a generalized interpretation of the artistic features of the monuments.

For centuries, plant ornaments were dominant in Jewish art and in the forms of a large part of besamims floral motifs were reproduced. A few items belong to the so-called «pear-like» type, which may be divided into two subspecies. To the first type can be referred besamim with capacity for spices burning in a form of pears or other stylized fruit set on a foot in a shape of a plant shoots with leaves and flowers, in some cases supplemented by figures of birds, squirrels and others. The second group is represented by small besamims used during travels. However, particularly popular were besamims in the form of sunflowers or bells, oak acorns, pomegranate, orange, and poppy heads. Most of articles is characterized by naturalistic transfer of individual elements, flexibility and integrity of compositions.

A striking example of artistic sophistication is besamim created in Galicia in about 1800's¹⁵. The spice box form in small details reproduces a branch of blooming orange tree. The decoration of tracery container for incense has much in common with a number of Galician besamims of the 19th century. It is spherical, which two parts are combined by a flat hoop. The principle of the besamim decoration is conditioned by a spherical shape. The two parts are divided by cross segments, which form a closed plane with the motif of flowers and leaves in the middle. These besamims are sometimes called multi-floral, the tradition of their manufacturing existed in Galicia to the 20th century. A popular motif of Jewish applied arts ornaments is pomegranate, one of the most important Judaism symbols. Pomegranate fruit is the basis of the besamim composition dated to 1820's¹⁶. The upper part of the capacity is covered by engraved ornament in the form of a rather stylized pomegranate blossom. The same flat six-petal flower is set on a hoop serves as the basis of the article. The leg solution deserves a particular attention. A curved, decorated with leaves stem ends with a snake head in the place of attaching to the base. Similar besamims in various transformations existed in Poland and Galicia during the 19th – the early 20th centuries.

The incredible flexibility and integrity of the overall composition is characteristic for besamim of plant type with a capacity for incense burning in a form of a poppy head¹⁷. The artistic features of the monument solution give reason to date it to the second half of the 19th century. On the flat oak leaf on the stem with the S-shaped

curve, a stylized circular poppy head is set. The lack of small ornaments, clear composition linearity, proportionality and harmony of individual elements are typical for Art Nouveau style.

Popular in the territory of Ukraine, in particular Zhytomyr, were besamims in a form of bush of flowers. Container for spices were set in the central, the largest flower. A number of items are in the Museum of Historical Treasures of Ukraine in Kyiv¹⁸. The besamims of plant type were in the collection of Maximilian Goldstein. The description of the series of lost scipe boxes with schematic pictures are in the notebooks of Curatorium of Trust over Jewish Art at the Jewish district in Lviv¹⁹.

A separate typological group of besamims is of zoomorphic nature. It should be noted that in various parts of Europe various animals became a source of creative inspiration. A fish-shape besamims are typical for Germany, Holland and Denmark. Most of them were made in the second half of the 19th century; a significant number of preserved specimens exhibited at numerous world auctions date to the 1920's. In Zhitomir and Odessa, the leading centers of Jewish jewelry art in Ukraine, items of birds and sheep were popular. In particular, bass besamim of a lamb under the «blooming» bush with inserts of colored glass, is stored Ukrainian Museum of Historical Treasures in Kyiv²⁰. Analogical item with a slightly modified interpretation of flowers was exhibited at Greenstein auction (there is a difference in the ascription of besamims: Kyivan is defined as Russian, but at the auction it is defined as Ukrainian. The analysis of numerous collections let claim that there are several variants of this besamim). Spice boxes in the form of birds are popular all over Poland. A number of them are in private collections and are often exhibited at international auctions. However, articles of this type were in disfavor in Galicia.

Proportionally the smallest typological group is represented by combined besamims, mostly in the form of a glass or a small rectangular box similar to the box for jewelry. In the 19th century besamims in a form of a wooden barrel were produced in Germany. It should be noted that such besamims first could have been used for entirely different purpose, and subsequently adapted for spice boxes. The analysis of numerous museum collections, private collections and auction lots does not give reason to regard such besamims as traditionally made in Galicia in 18th – the first third of the 20th century.

Thus it may be concluded that besamims constitute a significant part of Jewish arts and crafts in Galicia and were important ritual objects for each Jewish family.

¹⁵ Illustration from private collection. www.jhom.com/arts/gallery/index.html

¹⁶ J. Greenstein & Co., Inc. Antique Jewish ritual objects and art. New York. Lot 60. - www.jgreenstein.com

¹⁷ J. Greenstein & Co., Inc. Antique Jewish ritual objects and art. New York. Lot 45. - www.jgreenstein.com

¹⁸ Романовська Т. Іудаїка // Золота скарбниця України. – К.: Акцент, 1999. 208 с. С. 99 – 122.

¹⁹ Photocopies of M. Goldstein archive. *Scientific Center of Judaica and Jewish Art*. Faina Petryakova. Lviv. Theca H, table 16, description 104.

²⁰ Канцедикас О. Шедеври єврейського мистецтва. Срібло. – М.: Імідж, 382 с.; Романовська Т. Іудаїка // Золота скарбниця України. – К.: Акцент, 1999. 208 с. С. 99 – 122.

In the analysis of a great number of monuments typological groups of spice boxes forms were distinguished. Factual basis let state that the most common were besamims of architectural form of a tower actively produced in Galicia during the entire studied period. The other group consists of items of geometrical shape, such as balls, cones and cylinders; their production refers mainly on the 19th century. Similarly of great popularity in the 19th century were besamims of plant forms. Virtually there are no monuments made in Galicia, which may be attributed to zoomorphic and combined groups. All items are decorated with plant ornaments, with zoomorphic motifs inclusion, sometimes anthropomorphic images and inscriptions in Hebrew. The besamims made in Galicia in the 18th – the first third of the 20th century are exceptional monuments of arts and crafts, the embodiment of creative talent of jewelers and the quintessential of spiritual aspects of Jews in Galicia.

Figures:



1. Silver filigree spice tower, Galicia, 1721. Photos courtesy of Kestenbaum & Company, New York.



2. A silver spice container. Lviv, 18th century. J. Greenstein & Co., Inc. Antique Jewish ritual objects and art. New York. Lot 40. - www.jgreenstein.com



3. A silver spice container. Lviv, 18th century. J. Greenstein & Co., Inc. Antique Jewish ritual objects and art. New York. - www.jgreenstein.com



5. A large silver spice container. Poland or Ukraine. 19th century. J. Greenstein & Co., Inc. Antique Jewish ritual objects and art. New York. Lot 45. - www.jgreenstein.com



4. A silver Traveling Spice Container. J. Greenstein & Co., Inc. Antique Jewish ritual objects and art. New York. Lot 7. - www.jgreenstein.com

Artistic Features of Besamims in Eastern Galicia in the 18th – the first third of the 20th Century

The paper focuses on the art of the Jewish community of Galicia from the 18th century to the first third of the 20th century in the context of the European art processes. The analysis of the artistic features of numerous synagogical and household items of the ritual purpose revealed the main trends of particular styles spread, especially baroque and historicism. Special attention is paid to the sources and the artistic inspiration of Jewish art in Galicia. The main circumstances that influenced the development of Jewish art are determined, namely the isolation of the Jewish community, the traditional ideological and semantic load of the monuments, the abidance by the halakhic rules, scriptures on the creating things for ritual and ceremonial purposes, keeping the old traditions in the choice of form, the nature of ornamentation, strict selection of decorating themes and in particular cases even the reproduction of archaic forms. While maintaining the traditional form, the ideological and semantic load for the majority of works of applied arts of the Jewish community of Galicia in the 18th century – the first third of the 20th century, the choice of a composite structure, grouping and ornamental motifs interpretation is influenced by the stylistic effects of Western art. The numerous preserved monuments indicate the openness of masters to the outside art influences, borrowing and basic elements quoting and leading Western styles tendencies as well as Ukrainian art.

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Pożegnanie z obcością. Znaki pamięci żydowskiej w najnowszym dramacie polskim

Dramat polski po 1989 roku dokonuje rewizji przeszłości, wydarzeń historycznych oraz wynikających z nich mitów. W tym kontekście szczególne miejsce zajmuje obraz Żyda. Głównym obszarem pojawienia się tego obrazu w sztukach dramatycznych jest transformacja dyskursów pamięci. Obraz Żyda we współczesnej dramaturgii został skonstruowany w oparciu o stosunek Polaków do Żydów zarówno podczas II Wojny Światowej, jak i w czasach obecnych. W dramatach, które będą przeanalizowane, Żyd nie jest pokazywany jako dobry lub zły, poważny lub śmieszny, lecz ten, który przestaje być obcym. Zmianom, które zaszły w postrzeganiu wizerunku Żyda przez kilka ostatnich lat w społeczeństwie polskim, poświęcono cały szereg badań socjologicznych, historycznych oraz antropologicznych¹.

Obcość jest jedną z tradycyjnych konotacji semantycznych Żyda. Budowana w ciągu kilku wieków tożsamość żydowska zasadza się na szeregu stereotypów i klisz mocno zakorzenionych w świadomości zbiorowej. Atrybut obcości nierozdzielnie związany z obrazem Żyda był włączany do społecznych dyskursów pod wpływem takich instytucji, jak szkoła, kościół czy media. Intelktualiści również przyczynili się do utrwalenia obecnego w świadomości zbiorowej związku obcości z obrazem Żydów. Jak twierdzi polski socjolog Aleksander Hertz: „Przekonanie, że Żydzi są czymś obcym, a przynajmniej różnym czy odmiennym, przeważało wśród tych ideologów i pisarzy, którzy od początku wieku XIX uwagę swoją poświęcali sprawie Żydów w Polsce. Były to poglądy elity intelektualnej, ludzi myślących i piszących”². O wyraźnej alienacji społecznej Żydów pisali również

¹ Zob.: H. Datner-Śpiewak, *Struktura i wyznacznik postaw antysemickich*, [w:] *Czy Polacy są antysemitami? Wyniki badania sondażowego*, pod red. I. Krzemińskiego, Warszawa 1996; H. Szlajfer, *Polacy/Żydzi zderzenie stereotypów*, Warszawa 2003; S. Łodziński, *Problemy dyskryminacji osób należących do mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych w Polsce*. „Raport” 2003, nr 219; M. Bilewicz, A. Ostolski, A. Wójcik, A. Wysocka, *Pamięć w kontekście międzyetnicznym: „trudne pytania” w kontaktach młodych Polaków i Żydów*, „Kultura i społeczeństwo” 2004, nr 3; A. Cała, *Wizerunek Żyda w polskiej kulturze ludowej*, Warszawa 2005; A. Wójcik, *Historia stosunków polsko-żydowskich w oczach antysemickich*, [w:] *Różni razem. Młodzi polscy naukowcy o Żydach*, pod red. J. Żyndul, Warszawa 2008; M. Bilewicz, A. Wójcik, *Antysemityzm na gruzach sztuki. Stosunek polskiej młodzieży do Żydów w miastach i miasteczkach południowej i wschodniej Polski*, [w:] *Etniczność, pamięć, asymilacja. Wokół problemów zachowania tożsamości mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych w Polsce*, pod red. L. Nijakowskiego, Warszawa 2009; M. Płokita, *Żydzi w opinii studentów szkół wyższych Lublina i Zamościa*, „Studia żydowskie. Almanach” 2012, R. II, nr 2, s. 235–270.

² A. Hertz, *Żydzi w kulturze polskiej*, Warszawa 1988, s. 52.