

Salomon Maimon has a Memorial

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The 7th of September 2013 was a significant day from a point of view of the public manifestation of the history of philosophy: the reconstructed monument of the eighteenth-century Jewish philosopher Salomon Maimon [Salomon ben Jehoshua] (1753–1800) was unveiled in Koźuchów (Lower Silesia, Poland). The unveiled memorial of Maimon is the only one worldwide.

That event was significant on a number of dimensions:

First, it commemorated the person that was influential in philosophy in general: Maimon was the representative of epistemological rationalism. Secondly, it honoured a prominent representative of European philosophy. Thirdly, it memorialized an important representative of a German philosophical system: Maimon was in fact Kantian, Kant's critic, and the representative of transcendental idealism.¹ Fourthly, it celebrated a famous Jewish philosopher in Europe: Maimon was thoroughly educated in Jewish theology and theosophy and was thought to be a rabbi and a Talmudist. Fifthly, it honoured a major Polish thinker: Maimon was born in Sukoviborg, onetime a Polish town; nowadays in the Lithuanian territory. Sixthly, last but not least, it commemorated a freethinker and a critic of religion and religiosity in their non-rational manifestations.

The memorial now unveiled is one that had been reconstructed. Originally it was erected in the first half of the 19th century (most likely during the first quarter of the century) as is evident from its neoclassical style. It was constructed and now reconstructed in Koźuchów. More accurately, initially the monument was built in Podbrzezie Dolne [*German*: Nieder Siegersdorf], then in the country near Koźuchów. Maimon spent his last years in Podbrzezie Dolne: from 1796 to his death in 1800 Maimon lived in the Podbrzezean palace of count Hans Wilhelm Adolf von Kalkreuth (1766–1830), whom he had met in Berlin. Count von Kalkreuth decided, after Maimon had passed away, to honour his dear friend, his life and his stay in Podbrzezie Dolne by having the memorial on the site of the count's palatial park.

The sandstone columnar monument was destroyed after Second World War, most likely as a result of vandalism. Now it has been reconstructed and solemnly unveiled.

¹As such Maimon is the author of *Essay on Transcendental Philosophy* (London-New York 2010; in original: *Versuch über die Transcendentalphilosophie. Mit einem Anhang über die symbolische Erkenntniss und Anmerkungen von Salomon Maimon aus Litauen in Polen*, Berlin 1790). This work is probably the one that Maimon is best famous for. It is a critique of Kant's philosophy: the epistemological dualism, the category of *Dinge an sich*, the transcendental, *a priori* forms of cognition (in principle – Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*).

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On the occasion of this event, a symposium, organised by the Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Ziemi Kożuchowskiej [=The Fellowship of Friends of the Kożuchów Land], was held. The conference was titled: Wpływ wybitnych postaci na rozwój Ziemi Lubuskiej w okresie od XV do XVIII w. [=The influence of prominent persons on the development of the Lubuskie land from 15th to 18th century]. In the framework of the conference I presented the figure of Salomon Maimon commemorated by the monument and his mainly philosophical writings. I focused on the Podbrzeżian period of Maimon's life and his acquaintance with count Hans Wilhelm Adolf von Kalkreuth, what has been a *novum* in presenting Maimon in academic literature² and not only there.



On the left: Zdzisław Szukielowicz, President of the Fellowship of Friends of the Kożuchów Land

On the Right: Eleonora Bergman, Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw.

Photographer: Zbigniew Załuski.

The reconstructed memorial of Salomon Maimon

Kożuchów (Lower Silesia, Poland)

Unveiling on the 7th September 2013

² The whole paper (*Życie i twórczość Salomona Majmona z uwypatnieniem okresu kożuchowskiego* [=The Life and Writings of Salomon Maimon with the emphasis on the Podbrzeżian period]), as well as other papers presented on the symposium, were published in: *Ludzie w dziejach Kożuchowa* [=People in the History of Kożuchów], red. Tomasz Andrzejewski, Kożuchów 2013.

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