

SYNAGOGUE

Seal of the Jewish community of Creglingen

19th century

Creglingen City Archive

Photo: Hartwig Behr, Merxheim

As in other southern German areas, to a great extent the Jews of Creglingen and Archshofen regulated religious and social, as well as legal and economic, matters autonomously. The internal affairs of the community were carried out by the *parnas*, the head of the community. Other partly honorary tasks were assigned to staffers without their own writ of protection, such as the precentor (cantor), the school door knocker, a beadle (*shamesh*) who calls the members of the congregation to service in the synagogue by knocking at their doors, and the kosher butcher (*shochet*). A well-performing Jewish community needed a synagogue, a ritual bath, often, as in Creglingen, inside a building, as well as a cemetery. The Greek term “synagogue” literally means “assembly”. The Yiddish term is “shul“ (school), since the synagogue is not only a place for prayers but also for study and learning Torah and Talmud.

Permission of the Prussian King Frederic William (1770-1840) for the construction of the synagogue in Creglingen

September 20, 1799

Creglingen City Archive

In 1765 there already were plans for a synagogue building. The following year the Jewish community acquired a decrepit private house next to the Faulturm (literally, the digestion tower), to demolish and to build the synagogue on it. But the new construction was not completed until 1799. Because Creglingen belonged to Prussia since 1711, the community needed the permission of the Prussian king.

Plan of the architects Fiedler & Pfannkuch regarding the synagogue of Creglingen

about 1939

Creglingen City Archive

On June 20, 1800 before Shabbat, the Jewish community inaugurated the new synagogue in Creglingen. The building was located between the medieval Faulturm and the town wall where window cases are inset. On the first floor the multifunctional building hosted a Jewish school. The prayer room was on the second floor. The women's gallery on the third floor was accessible by a staircase, 90 cm wide. The mikveh was in the basement until 1896.

Offspring of “the Jew“ Simon who signed the contract for the construction of the synagogue (excerpts)

Contract for the construction of the Synagogue of Creglingen

May 24, 1799

Creglingen City Archive

The southern German country synagogues were without exception designed and built by non-Jewish architects and craftsmen. Among the signers of the contract with the Christian master builder Johann Leonhard Vorherr from Freudenbach, were several descendents of Simson. The construction and funding of the overall costs of 2360 guilders were almost a family affair.

Entry to the youth hostel in the former synagogue building

Photo: Joachim Hahn, Plochingen

Since 1932, the Jewish community ceded the Faulturm, which had been its property since 1848, to the municipality for the purpose of a youth hostel. According to a purchase contract in the amount of 980 Reichsmark from March 23, the synagogue belonged to the township of Creglingen and was used to expand the youth hostel.