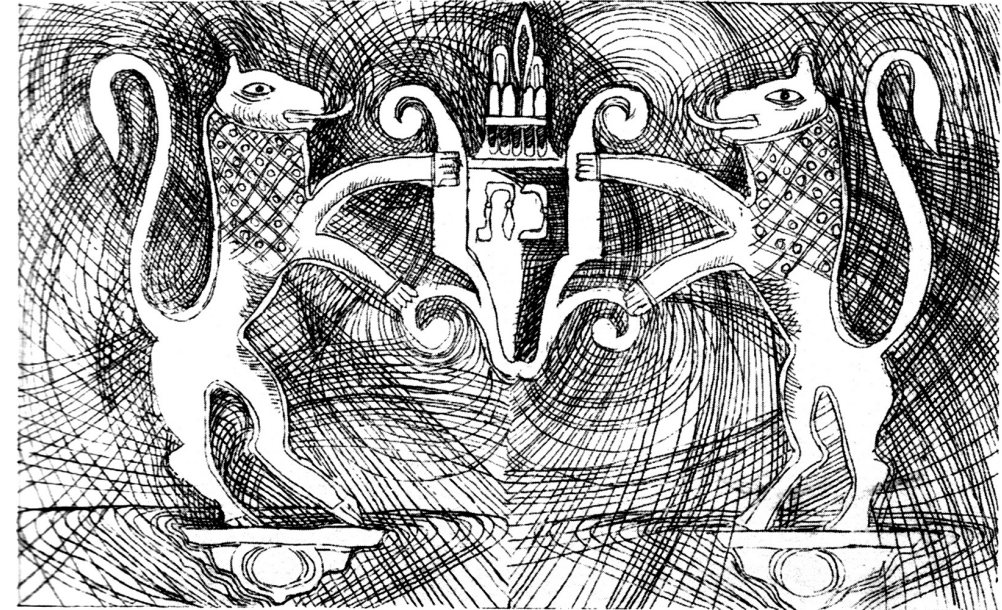


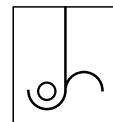
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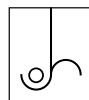


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Qolot Hadashim

New Voices in Jewish Studies

Odborný recenzovaný časopis
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Olomouc 2013



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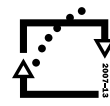
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Preface

Louise Hecht

Upon the initiative of our junior lecturer Lenka Uličná, the Kurt-and-Ursula-Schubert Center for Jewish Studies at Palacký University, Olomouc organized its first international student's workshop entitled *Central European Jewish Studies: The Student's Voice* in September 2010. The workshop pursued a double objective. On the one hand, it sought providing a forum and meeting place for Central European students from various disciplines interested in different aspects of Jewish Studies; on the other hand, it aimed at enhancing the academic performance of advanced graduate students and Ph.D. candidates by the workshop's format – presentations, followed by comments from senior scholars and discussions.

The wide range of topics submitted and the diverse academic backgrounds of students that responded to our first call for papers considerably exceeded our expectations. The sixteen enthusiastic students from five different countries and eight universities that gathered at the first workshop urged us to institutionalize the event, since they appreciated the opportunity to meet peers working on Jewish topics and thus to enlarge their professional network. Furthermore, they suggested providing an opportunity to publish selected papers in English.

The Kurt-and-Ursula-Schubert Center willingly complied with both requests. Since 2010, we hosted two additional workshops (October 2011, September 2012) with an ever-growing number of participants. The papers published in the present journal are revised and extended versions of presentations from the 2011-workshop, with the addition of Anna Załuska's paper from 2012. Papers were selected according to scholarly qualities, without restrictions regarding topic and methodology.

Despite the vast array of topics and methodological approaches expounded in these papers, there seems to be an overarching question that connects all of them, namely the tension between individual and community respectively group loyalty and individual freedom. This tension is most palpable in modern biographies, i.e. from the nineteenth century onward, when Judaism and Jewish identity have become a matter of voluntary choice.

As Ivana Procházková and Simona Malá aptly demonstrate – although through different methodological approach – in their biographies of the Czech-German-Jewish-Israeli playwright Max Zweig (1892-1992) respectively the German-English-Jewish aristocrat and philanthropist Charlotte de Rothschild (1819-1884), modern Jews had (and still have) to negotiate their individual and group identities time and again according to forced or voluntary changes in their personal circumstances.

However, a similar tension can also be traced in pre-modern times, when the ‘hyphenated Jew’ was not yet common currency. In her paper on Eliezer Eilburg, a sixteenth century physician and philosopher, Magdaléna Jánošíková expounds, how Eilburg’s (forced) perigrination put him into contact with Italian culture which inspired religious criticism at a philosophical and practical level. Similarly, Miroslav Dyrčák’s depiction of the Sabbatian preacher and ‘false Messiah’ Leibele Prossnitz (c. 1670-1730), who was repeatedly excommunicated by Moravian rabbis, exemplifies the rift between individual and communal authorities.

Examining two books of testaments that were kept by Prague Jews in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, Tomáš Krákora illustrates public control and monitoring of a seemingly personal and individual act, i.e. bequeathing one’s personal assets.

Daniel Soukup’s analysis of the old-Czech poem *Kterak Židé mučili Boží tělo* (How Jews Tortured Corpus Christi) that describes the alleged host desecration in Pulkau (Austria) in 1338 stresses the preponderance of the general – expressed in the genre of exemplum – over the specific even in an apparently accurate historiographic description. The opposite claim is made by Kerstin Mayerhofer, who strips the biblical book *Qohelet* (Ecclesiastes) of its Jewish religious context and after a rigid philological analysis compares its main message with the individualistic, post-existentialist philosophy of Albert Camus.

Anna Załuska likewise emphasizes the link between authoritative religious texts and contemporary life. Comparing the biblical book of *Ruth* with its Aramaic paraphrase (Targum), she points to the amazing fact that contemporary Israeli practice regarding conversion to Judaism privileges the religious interpretation of the Targum over the nationalistic in the Bible. Another particular trait of Israeli society is portrayed by Mariusz Kałczewiak, who explores the sensitive

balance of power between state and religion – as well as between community and individual – regarding marriage and divorce in Israel.

Physical and moral integrity of the individual vis-à-vis National Socialism and Communism in Hungary are the topics of Dávid Szél's and Kata Bohus' papers. While Szél delves into various strategies of Jewish identity three generations after the Holocaust, Bohus meticulously analyzes the policy of Hungary's Communist Party regarding Jews and Israel in the years around the Eichmann trial (1961).

For functional reasons, the papers are arranged in alphabetical order.

February 2013

Louise Hecht (Olomouc/Philadelphia)

Institutionalized Confusion. The Hungarian Communist Leadership and the ‘Jewish Question’ at the Beginning of the 1960s

Kata Bohus

The relationship between Communism, both as an ideology and as a socio-political system, and the ‘Jewish Question’ has been a much debated issue in academia. This paper brings examples from Communist Hungary in the early 1960s to shed more light on the problem. It argues that Jews were indeed discriminated against repeatedly, for instance in the areas of Jewish self-identification or the right to emigrate, but this was not due to the ideological stand of the regime, but the result of the interplay of certain historic and systemic elements, some of which were country specific.

Introduction

In 1984, the oppositional (and thus illegal) *SHALOM* peace organization issued a public appeal in a *samizdat* to the National Board of Hungarian Jews (*Magyar Izraeliták Országos Képvisellete*), the official mouthpiece of Jewish interests in socialist Hungary strictly supervised by the regime. The group’s message demanded a firm stance on Hungarian Jewry’s relationship

with the totalitarian state and its Soviet patron; with Hungarian people and [the country’s] progress; with the last hundred-hundred and fifty years of Hungarian history; with Jewish traditions; with the problem of the survival of the Jewish people; with the strategy of fighting antisemitism; with Jews living outside Hungary and with the State of Israel.¹

The message broke every important taboo the socialist systems had established in relation to the ‘Jewish Question’ not only in Hungary, but throughout the Soviet bloc. It also signified the systems’ overall failure to solve these fundamental issues that remained for the Jews of Central-

¹ *Beszélő Összes*, Vol. 1,9, (Budapest: AB-Beszélő Kiadó, 1992), p. 571.

Eastern Europe after the Holocaust. My paper will explore a few aspects as to why and how socialism failed to provide adequate answers to the demands above.

What were the policies toward the ‘Jewish Question’ in Hungary during the period under investigation? How were these formed and influenced by the working mechanism of, and unofficial interactions within the bureaucratic apparatus of the regime? How did foreign relations and the international Cold War situation play a role in these policies? My paper will attempt to answer these questions by using examples from the early 1960s.

When scholars examine the relationship between Communism and the ‘Jewish Question’, they mostly concentrate on the antisemitism of the regimes. The often-cited starting point is Karl Marx’s early essay entitled ‘On the Jewish Question’. This piece has frequently served as an example to argue for the existence of antisemitism inherent in Marxist thought.² However, most students of the subject viewed the problem as something more complex than a negative predisposition in ideology. Authors such as Robert Wistrich and Alfred D. Low³ argued that antisemitism was a direct continuation of 19th century nationalism that Communism was unable to repress. Zvi Gitelman, on the other hand, found the explanation precisely in the anti-Zionist predisposition of Leninist doctrine that was later expanded and utilized as a political tool.⁴ Other authors thought of antisemitism as a means of totalitarian control, a pragmatic policy of forced assimilation and discrimination.⁵

While these explanations are useful to some degree, they fail to account for a lot of developments in the 1960s. They can—not explain, for example, the differences between Communist states in their policies towards local Jewish Communities, the State of Israel, or the memorialization of the Holocaust. Neither do they address the fact that policies were frequently self-contradictory and puzzlingly altering within one given country and over time. Therefore in this paper, I propose a different approach to the problem. The stereotypical and largely utopian

² See for example: Emil Ludwig Fackenheim, *God’s Presence in History*, (New York: New York University Press, 1970), esp. p. 57; D.D. Runes, *A World Without Jews*, (New York: Philosophic Library, 1959); Edmund Silberner, ‘Was Marx an anti-Semite?’, in: Ezra Mendelsohn (ed.), *Essential Papers on Jews and the Left*, (New York: New York University Press, 1997), pp. 361-401.

³ Cf. Alfred D. Low, *Soviet Jewry and Soviet Policy*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); Robert Wistrich, *Antisemitism. The Longest Hatred*, (London: Methuen, 1991).

⁴ Zvi Gitelman, ‘Perestroika and Antisemitism’, in: *Foreign Affairs*, 70,2 (Spring, 1991), pp. 141-159.

⁵ Cf. William Korey, *The Soviet Cage. Antisemitism in Russia*, (New York: Viking Press, 1973); Thomas E. Sawyer, *The Jewish Minority in the Soviet Union*, (Boulder, CO.: Westview Press, 1979).

depiction of the Communist state as a dichotomized structure, constituting of an oppressed and passive society and an oppressive and self-serving political elite, has to be dismantled. Obviously, I do not argue that the system was not dictatorial, for it undeniably was; nor that criticism is not legitimate or necessary, for it absolutely is.

However, the policy-forming and executing elite (the embodiment of ‘the state’) was far from being a unified entity. On the contrary, it can be best characterized as a dynamically changing body comprising of smaller structural units (that have their own goals) and individuals, and the interactions between them. Members of the Hungarian Communist party, bureaucratic administration, official representatives of the Jewish community, unofficial representatives of Jewish causes, intellectuals, antisemites, philosemites, those completely indifferent (unaware?), diplomats and foreign politicians from around the world were all participants in this scene.

Furthermore, policies adopted with regards to the ‘Jewish Question’ were tailored to specific characteristics and situations in each Communist country. Though guidelines from Moscow existed, they were neither permanent, nor always explicit in the post-Stalinist context. The strength of legitimacy of the regime, leadership style, intra-party rivalries, the significance of popular antisemitism and anti-Jewish prejudice were all country-specific factors that influenced the formation of policies.

Because of this ongoing negotiation and incessant dynamism, the reader who expects me to draw a coherent trajectory of policies is going to be disappointed. The history I present here is a rather complicated and multifaceted structure of interrelations, conflicting and correlating interests, understandings, misunderstandings, lobbying, personal attacks and the like. I chose to present a case-study to illustrate these phenomena from the beginning of the 1960s. The following discussion is going to present a historical coincidence and its consequences for Hungary’s Jews. This historical coincidence is the parallel de-Stalinization campaign in Communist Eastern-Europe, and the capture and trial of the former high-ranking SS officer Adolf Eichmann.

“This is not a Jewish question”

Adolf Eichmann, a former Nazi Lieutenant Colonel (*SS-Obersturmbannführer*) was captured in Buenos Aires, Argentina on 11 May 1960 by Israeli secret agents. He was subsequently transported to Israel where he would stand on trial, indicted on 15 criminal charges, including crimes against humanity, crimes against the Jewish people and membership in an outlawed organization.⁶ His trial began in Jerusalem on 11 April 1961. He was pronounced guilty on 11 December and executed in the spring of 1962. Because Adolf Eichmann was the SS officer responsible for the deportation of Hungary’s Jews, the country was expected to receive particular international media attention during the trial.

The Hungarian Politburo first discussed the Eichmann case and its implications for propaganda purposes on its meeting on 28 June 1960. In his comment, First Secretary János Kádár emphasized that

it is not good to turn these wretched Fascist cases into a Jewish Question. If we come to the fore in this issue [i.e. Eichmann’s activities in WWII Hungary], then what should be decisive is that this Eichmann killed hundreds of thousands of Hungarian citizens [...] Eichmann did not only kill Jews, there were others there too. This is not a Jewish question, this is the question of Fascism and anti-Fascism.⁷

According to the rhetoric Kádár considered important to convene, the Communists led the Hungarian people’s resistance struggle against Fascism during the war, thus they were also the only political force representing ‘the People’ (especially the working class and the peasantry). This position legitimated the Communist appropriation of power following the war, and could serve as an argument for Kádár’s and his Soviet-imposed government’s ruling spot in post-1956 Hungary as well.

⁶ Open Society Archives (OSA), 300-40-1, box no. 1606. CNR Report, Munich, 29 March, 1961.

⁷ Hungarian National Archives (HNA), M-KS 288.5/ 189. Meeting of the Hungarian Politburo on June 28, 1960.

Kádár went on to emphasize that the victims of Fascism (i.e. those who had resisted it) were Hungarians (and not Hungarian Jews), thereby acquitting non-Jews from the accusation of antisemitism, indifference to Jewish suffering and cooperation with the Nazis. Emphasizing this ‘anti-Fascist unity’ during the Second World War rhymed with the regime’s attempts to rebuild the concept of ‘national unity’ in the early 1960s after years of intra-party factions throughout the 1950s which greatly contributed to the eruption of the revolution in 1956. Moreover, the pronounced anti-Fascism of the Communist regime made anybody opposing it instantly suspicious of Fascist leanings.

Kádár blamed in his speech the ‘Fascist Horthy establishment’ of the interwar period for the 600,000 Hungarian deaths during the war. By claiming that the Horthy regime was Hitler’s vassal which stood in opposition to the population’s anti-Fascism, Kádár placed the blame on a few individuals in power, and acquitted the general public’s home-bred racial chauvinism and antisemitism.⁸ Thus, the Holocaust was not conceptualized as an intrinsic event of Hungarian national history, or as something closely related to conservative nationalist ideas that had gained prominence and widespread popularity among the Hungarian public after the First World War.

Nevertheless, though the lives of Hungary’s Jews were relatively safe up until the German invasion of the country on 19 March 1944, this did not mean that they had not been subjected to vicious popular and political antisemitism. Following the defeat in the First World War and as a result of post-war settlements, the country lost about two thirds of the Hungarian Crown’s previous territory. The most important goal of the then emerging, pre-eminent conservative Christian political line came to be the revision of the 1919 Paris (Trianon) Treaties. As the territorial losses resulted in the formation of significant Hungarian national minority groups outside Hungary’s new borders, the rhetoric of various governments under Regent Miklós Horthy’s stewardship emphasized the need to preserve and positively discriminate the remaining “authentic” Christian Hungarian population within the country. In the post-1919 monoethnic

⁸ For a detailed account see: Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági, *Hullarablás. A magyar zsidók gazdasági megsemmisítése*. [Robbing the Corpses. The economic destruction of Hungarian Jews.] (Budapest: Hannah Arendt Egyesület – Jaffa Kiadó, 2005). Blinded by the possibility of easy prey as Jewish assets were confiscated starting in 1941 in Sub-Carpathia and in the rest of the country after the German invasion of 1944 (on the orders of the Sztójay government), the majority of Hungary’s population did not object to these developments. See: Gábor Kádár, *A magyarországi Vészkorszak gazdasági vetületei* [Economic aspects of the Hungarian Shoah], (Ph.D dissertation, Debreceni Egyetem, 2004), pp. 46-50. Available at: phd.okm.gov.hu/disszertaciok/ertekezesek/2004/de_2088.pdf (27 June 2011).

Hungarian state, Jews were obvious and convenient targets of exclusionist policies based on the above principles which were reinforced by the economic hardships of the period. The anti-Jewish *Numerus Clausus* law of 1920 was the first of its kind in Europe, and aimed at limiting Jewish enrolment in higher education. After Hitler came into power in Germany in 1933, the *Führer's* aspirations to revise the post-war European order met with Hungarian goals of territorial revision and led to the two country's alliance in WWII. Way before Adolf Eichmann arrived in the spring of 1944, Hungarian governments had already discriminated the country's Jewish population by a myriad of laws. The Jewish Laws passed from 1938 up until the German occupation in March, 1944 restricted many Jewish rights including the right to work, acquisition of land, free movement, and included anti-miscegenation laws as well.⁹

The Kádárist version of Communism blamed an external ideology (Fascism) for the extermination of hundreds of thousands of Hungarian citizens, the majority of whom were categorized by the state as Jews. However, that 437,000 Hungarian Jews were deported within two months between May and July, 1944 was not the success of Adolf Eichmann and his two hundred or so SS personnel alone. It was the result of the collaboration of the Hungarian government, law-enforcement bodies, and various local authorities; and the passive bystander behavior of the Hungarian population at large.

The above outlined position rhymed with the one about the 1956 revolution according to which the outbreak of the 'counter-revolution' was also linked to the infiltration of Fascist elements from the West, including émigré Hungarian Fascists from the Horthy-era and the Arrow-Cross movement.¹⁰ Thus, another aspect of continuity was established between 1944 and

⁹ The so-called "First Jewish Law" of 1938 ruled that Jews could occupy only up to twenty percent of positions in the free intellectual professions. The "Second Jewish Law", which was enacted a year later, maximized Jewish presence in intellectual occupations in six percent, forbade their employment in the legal and public administrative apparatuses, as well as in secondary school education. Jews could not be employed by theatres and in the press in positions where they could influence the organs' intellectual focus. The law restricted the number of Jews employed at companies and reinstated the Numerus Clausus in education. Jews were completely excluded from trades that were subject to state authorization. The agricultural property acquisition of Jews was made significantly harder. The "Third Jewish Law" of 1941, which already appropriated the racial definition of Jews as used by the Nazi Nuremberg Laws, forbade mixed marriages between Jews and non-Jews and also punished sexual relationships between them. Other "Jewish Laws" enacted in the following years discriminated against the 'Jewish Church', forbade the acquisition of agricultural property by Jews, forced Jewish men into labour service and restricted Jewish rights of free movement.

¹⁰ Heino Nyyssönen, *The Presence of the Past in Politics. '1956' after 1956 in Hungary*, (Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä Printing House, 1999), pp. 92-95.

1956, inasmuch as the Hungarian People were not to blame for the events in either case, a position that served to increase the acceptance of Kádár's Soviet-imposed regime in the post-1956 period.

The Eichmann trial was the beginning of the formation of a reference point for the West, in which the Holocaust came to be the representation of ultimate evil against which a new, post-war European identity could be defined. However, Communist ideology could not relate to the Nazi genocide as such. For revolutionary Marxism-Leninism, the important aspect was the ideological opposition between Fascism and Communism and thus the active struggle of the latter against the former. In this mindset, there were only two categories possible: those who embraced, and those who resisted Fascism. However, neither bystanders, nor victims fit the ideological and categorical framework.

The various above outlined links that Hungarian Communist rhetoric established between the Holocaust and the October 1956 revolution resulted in the tabooization of both events. The Kádár regime was not interested in talking about 1956 because the emerging narrative could have fundamentally challenged its power and legitimacy. But the similarities in the narrative structure of the two historical events (Fascist - anti-Fascist struggle, Hungarian national unity, outside enemy, etc.) brought about the tabooization of the Hungarian Holocaust as well, which led to an unhealthy perception of innocence and detachment on the part of the Hungarian population at large.

Personal animosities and anti-Zionism

István Szirmai was the next one to speak at the Politburo meeting discussing the Eichmann-case after Kádár and he emphasized that the trial presented a good opportunity for Communist propaganda to implicate Zionism as well. He highlighted that

there are certain things that seriously embarrass both the Israeli government and the Zionist movement. Eichmann knows about these and the Israelis do not want to make them publicly known. There is that factor. There was that ominous Kasztner-case, who

[i.e. Rezső Kasztner] got shot by the Israeli government so that he would shut his mouth...The Israeli government captured Eichmann to shut his mouth.¹¹

Contrary to Szirmai's claims, Rezső Kasztner was shot in Tel Aviv by a young, right-wing radical Zeev Eckstein, on his own account, and not on the orders of the Israeli government, of which he was a member as a spokesman for the Ministry of Transportation. Szirmai's animosity towards Kasztner might have had more to it than simple political considerations.

Both men were born into Jewish families in 1906 in Transylvania. Szirmai in the small town of Zilah (Zalău), eighty kilometers away from Kasztner's hometown Kolozsvár (Cluj). Both became politically active at an early age. Szirmai started his political activities in the local organization of the Socialist-Zionist *Hashomer Hatzair* movement, while Kasztner entered the Zionist youth group *Barissia*, whose members were training to become citizens of Eretz Israel. After the First World War, Transylvania became part of Romania and the country's interwar governments adopted increasingly authoritarian, nationalist policies with regards to Jews. Szirmai and Kasztner represented two extremes of the answers given by the Jewish community to these challenges. Szirmai joined the Romanian Communist Party in 1929, thus moved away from Zionist ideas and considered Communist internationalism the best answer to ethnic tensions. Kasztner, on the other hand, worked with the National Jewish Party in Cluj, remained a supporter of Zionism, and was increasingly convinced that Palestine was the only safe place for Jews. The beginning of the 1940s found both men in Budapest: Szirmai was living illegally as the liaison between Transylvanian Communists and the Hungarian Communist Party; Kasztner was trying to help Jewish refugees to obtain exit visas to go to Palestine. It is possible that the two became personally acquainted when Kasztner, as a member of the Jewish Rescue and Aid Committee, tried repeatedly to get financial help from Hungarian Communists, where Szirmai was a member of the party's Central Committee. However, while Szirmai spent the second half of the war in prison, Kasztner saved himself and about sixteen-hundred other Jews on the famous 'Kasztner train'. Szirmai made a political career in Communist Hungary, Kasztner in the *Mapai* (Labor) Party in Israel. The different trajectories these two lives took are representative of the very different choices Hungarian-speaking Jews made in the twentieth century, and it is possible

¹¹ HNA, M-KS, 288.5/189. Meeting of the Hungarian Politburo on June 28, 1960.

that the old controversy within the Jewish community influenced Szirmai's harsh opinions in 1960.¹² However, Szirmai's position was likely to be influenced by a personal attack that had been conducted against him a few months earlier by a hard-liner Party member, who labeled him a Zionist.

The initial years of the Kádár regime that followed the aborted uprising of 1956 were marked by strong retaliations against 'counter-revolutionaries' and rather orthodox policies in many areas. The agricultural collectivization campaign launched at the end of 1958 used some harsh methods reminiscent of the Stalinist era to force peasants into collective farms. However, the campaign was significantly toned down in early 1960 in order to assure "undisturbed production and the consolidation of the new collective farms."¹³ This was also in line with the general trend of changing policies of the regime, which would soon favor the political disengagement of the population in exchange for higher living standards and less orthodox economic policies. One visible marker of the adjustments was the ousting of Imre Dögei, Minister of Agriculture, who had been the leading instigator of the forced pace of collectivization. Surprisingly, this seemingly irrelevant issue brought up the first occasion of documented anti-Zionist language among the Party echelons, and the attack on István Szirmai.

In a closed meeting of the Central Committee on 12 February 1960, János Kádár informed the political body that Imre Dögei had stated that "revisionists and Zionists are governing the MSZMP [Hungarian Socialist Workers Party]... Moreover, he also named certain members of the Central Committee".¹⁴ According to the report that served as the basis for Kádár's statements, the members of the Central Committee the Minister had listed as Zionists were mostly, but not exclusively Jews.¹⁵ Among the 'Zionist' politicians Dögei mentioned was István Szirmai. This might have been another factor why, four months later and in connection with the Eichmann trial, Szirmai considered it so important to prove his anti-Zionist stance.

¹² Biographical details of István Szirmai from: *Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon* [Hungarian Biographical Encyclopedia]. Available at: <http://mek.niif.hu/00300/00355/html/ABC14240/15145.htm> (26 July 2011); Biographical details of Rezső Kasztner from: Anna Porter, *Kasztner's Train*, (Vancouver, Toronto: Douglas McIntyre, 2007), esp. pp. 9-50.

¹³ Bennett Kovrig, *Communism in Hungary – From Kun to Kádár*, (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1979), p. 343.

¹⁴ HNA, M-KS 288.4/30. Minutes of the meeting of the Central Committee on February 12, 1960.

¹⁵ Ibid.

It is nevertheless worthy of attention that in the Dögei affair, the meaning of the term ‘Zionist’ was not identical to ‘Jewish’. The names the Minister mentioned were the more reformist members of Kádár’s new, close entourage. This suggests that Dögei used anti-Zionist language to make sense of the intra-Party struggle between the more orthodox, old Stalinist forces and the supporters of de-Stalinization or economic reforms. Nevertheless, the inclusion of Szirmai among the group ‘Zionists’ by Dögei is worthy of attention. Szirmai had, as already explained above, abandoned Zionism before WWII. Moreover, from 1949 he acted as the Communist party’s functionary unofficially responsible for ‘Zionist affairs’ and as such, had a major role in banning Zionist organizations in Hungary. He reportedly justified the measure on the grounds that “these people [i.e. Zionists] are spreading bourgeois nationalism, they are adding to the emigration craze through their organizations, they are smuggling hard currency, ‘rescuing property’, and damaging the forint.”¹⁶ In light of this position, the most plausible explanation for Dögei’s categorization of Szirmai as a Zionist is that either the former harbored anti-Jewish feelings, or that one’s Jewish origin was still thought to be an indicator of political views among some in the highest echelons of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party. Either way, the case suggests that antisemitic feelings and patterns of political antisemitism reminiscent of the 1930s and 1940s were not absent among party members in the 1960s.

Israeli diplomatic efforts and the reaction of Hungarian bureaucracy

As soon as David Ben-Gurion announced the capture of the high-ranking SS officer in the Knesset in the spring of 1960, Israeli diplomats flung into action to pressure Hungarian authorities into cooperation with the Israeli court trying Eichmann, and allow a member of the Israeli investigation group to look for documents supporting the claims of the prosecution in the Hungarian archives.¹⁷ However, Communist authorities were not particularly responsive to these

¹⁶ András Kovács, ‘Hungarian Jewish Politics from the End of the Second World War until the Collapse of Communism’, in: Ezra Mendelsohn (ed.), *Jews and the State: Dangerous Alliances and the Perils of Privilege* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 133.

¹⁷ Israel State Archives (ISA), 93.10/1.29. Report of the Israeli Legation (Meir Sachar) to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the meeting with Hungarian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Károly Szarka, May 31, 1961. Report of the Israeli Legation Budapest (Yerachmiel R. Yaron) to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the meeting with the Director of the 6th Political Department of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs János

requests as they were not willing to deviate too far from Moscow's unfriendly position toward Israel that had become evident after the 1956 Suez Crisis and as a result of which Jewish emigration was halted and relations with the Jewish State were kept to a minimum.

At the same time, members of the Israeli diplomatic corps in Hungary experienced with frustration that the top leadership of the National Board of Hungarian Jews (*Magyar Izraeliták Országos Képviselete*) was not willing to help them with regards to the Eichmann issue either. Quite the contrary, the Israelis were stunned upon observing that the head of the organization, journalist Endre Sós wrote in such a 'hostile manner' about Israel in relation to the Eichmann trial in the Jewish community paper *Új Élet* that was harsher than any position expressed in state-run media.¹⁸ In fact, Sós' position at the top of the organization was rather weak at this time because of the financial difficulties the Jewish community was facing and because he did not have particularly good relations with the newly appointed director of the Office of Church Affairs (*Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal*), the bureaucratic body in control of religious issues. He thus wanted to secure his office by demonstrating his unrelenting support for the regime, which led to his harsh pronouncements objected to by members of the Israeli legation in Budapest.

As a result of the Israeli diplomats' general experiences with several top officials of the Hungarian Jewish community who would not discuss, and even less support issues that were crucially important for them, the Israelis changed their tactics. They increasingly favored direct contact with the Jewish community, to the great distress of several Hungarian bureaucratic organs. Endre Sós remarked in the summer of 1962 that "today we are at the point that there is no Jewish festivity in Hungary where one, or in many cases, each and every member of the Israeli Legation appears."¹⁹ In November 1963, the officials of the Office of Church Affairs also

Katona, October 2, 1960. Report of the Israeli Legation (Menachem Daniv) to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the meeting with Deputy Director of the Department of the Near-East of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs János Veres, September 16, 1960.

¹⁸ ISA, 130.23/2.880. Report of the Israeli Legation (Meir Sachar) to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the meeting with Endre Sós, December 29, 1961.

¹⁹ HNA, XIX-A-21-d, box no. 16, document no. 0020-3/1962. Letter and report of Endre Sós, President of the National Board of Hungarian Jews to József Prantner, President of the Office of Church Affairs about the activities of the Israeli Legation on June 25, 1962.

noted the “unfortunate” developments in Budapest, where there were hardly any Bar Mitzvah celebrations without the presence of at least some members of the Israeli Legation.²⁰

As Israeli attempts to establish unofficial contacts with Hungarian Jews became more frequent and out of reach for Hungarian bureaucratic control, the responsible departments of the Ministry of Interior were trying to find a remedy. In March 1965, they prepared an action plan through which they hoped to discredit Israel by emphasizing its cooperation with West-Germany. This was made possible because the Federal Republic had been presented as ‘the heir of the Nazi past’ during the propaganda of the Eichmann trial throughout the whole Eastern bloc. The officials at the Ministry of Interior thus planned to send protest letters to the Israeli Legation through their agents and to instruct rabbis to protest against these relations in their sermons. However, the plan did not quite work out the way the III/II. Department had planned. The letters sent to the Legation remained unanswered; the National Committee of Persons Persecuted by Nazism in Hungary (*Nácizmus Üldözötteinek Magyarországi Bizottsága*) refused to raise its voice, claiming that diplomatic relations between Israel and the Federal Republic were entirely domestic affairs of the Middle-Eastern state. Only a handful of rabbis agreed to condemn Israel.²¹

To make matters worse from the point of view of bureaucratic control, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs worked against the aspirations of the Ministry of Interior on several occasions. There was ongoing discord between the Passport Department of the Ministry of Interior and the highest echelons of the Foreign Ministry on the issuing of passports and emigration visas to Israel.²² In a few cases, Deputy Foreign Minister Károly Szarka, at the request of the Israeli Minister at the Budapest legation, asked for the reconsideration of certain negative decisions of emigration visas. The deputy of the Ministry of Interior, tired of the pressure, objected to this kind of intervention in written form and declared that “we are not going to deal with the long list

²⁰ HNA, XIX-J-1-k, box no. 3, 4/af. Letter of János Grnák, Deputy Department Head of the Office of Church Affairs to János Katona, Head of the 6th Regional Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on November 22, 1962.

²¹ Hungarian National Archives of State Security Organs (HNASSO), O-17169/1, agent report, March 17, 1965.

²² HNA, XIX-J-1-j (Izrael), box no. 11, item 29/e. Several documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

of rejected applications”.²³ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs retorted that “a deputy of the name Horváth at the Ministry of Interior is trying to convince those applying for exit visas to change their minds in a very impolite manner.”²⁴ For the Foreign Ministry, the main goal at this time was to persuade as many countries as possible not to support the inclusion of the ‘Hungarian Question’ on the agenda of the UN General Assembly, or at least to abstain from voting in favor of the resolution condemning the Hungarian and Soviet governments for the bloody events of October 1956. Israel was willing to abstain from voting, but in exchange wanted concessions, among others in the area of exit visas for *aliyah* (Jewish emigration) from Hungary to Israel. Though the Foreign Ministry could not change the general restrictive policies, some of its officials tried to force the Ministry of Interior to occasionally raise the number of exit permits. This situation led to the above mentioned disagreements between the two Hungarian state-organs.

At the same time, in line with the more lenient policy-line in Moscow following the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1961 which gave new impetus to the de-Stalinization campaign, a comprehensive reform of the Hungarian economy was taking shape. It was clear that in order to implement plans of modernization, the country needed financial and natural resources from outside of the Soviet bloc as well. According to the data available on Hungarian foreign trade in the early sixties, these relations with Israel were developing much more smoothly than the above outlined political ties. While at the end of the fifties trade with Israel produced rather modest numbers, by the beginning of the sixties it meant a steady profit for the Hungarian economy (see Table).

²³ HNA, XIX-J-1-j (Izrael), box no. 1, 1/c, document no. 001632/1/1957. Letter of József Tatai, Major at the Passport Department of the Ministry of Interior to Károly Szarka, Deputy Foreign Minister on May 2, 1957.

²⁴ HNA, XIX-J-1-j (Izrael), box no. 1965/60, document no. 002314/1965. Report of István Beck of the 6th Regional Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to János Péter, Minister of Foreign Affairs on November 26, 1965.

Hungary's foreign trade turnover value with Israel between 1957 and 1966
(in million Hungarian forint)²⁵

	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965
Export	15.80	9.60	5.50	17.06	34.17	39.00	64.05	75.06	84.00
Import	7.60	7.50	12.30	9.60	21.10	21.50	51.90	64.70	78.00

This positive tendency in trade relations went against the general Hungarian behavior in other fields of diplomatic relations with Israel, which was characterized by seclusion. This contradiction then caused problems in the cooperation of different Hungarian bureaucratic organs, and became the subject of battles of prestige. A report of the Foreign Ministry in 1964 warned the highest political leadership that

our foreign policy [principle] toward Israel is not always met by the practice of our foreign trade and financial establishments [...] which led to a politically undesirable level of commerce between the two countries. In the course of four years, our imports multiplied five times, and our export four times.²⁶

Even within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the standpoint was ambiguous with regards to the desirable policy line toward Israel and the Arab countries. It should be kept in mind that the Soviet Union had been drawing closer to the neutral Arab states quite noticeably ever since Stalin's death, and unquestionably since the conclusion of the Egyptian-Czechoslovak arms deal in 1955. Israel was not among the prospective partners because of her growing Western orientation. The Kremlin hoped to strengthen the USSR's position in the Middle-East by

²⁵ Sources: HNA, XIX-J-1-j (Israel), box no. 2, 4/a, unnumbered document/1966. Report of Gábor Bebók on Hungarian Israeli trade relations, January 14, 1966. XIX-J-1-k (Israel), box no. 3, 4/bf. Report on Hungarian-Israeli trade relations, anonymous, February 19, 1964.

²⁶ Ibid.

exploiting “the new, dynamic Arab nationalism and its distrust of the West.”²⁷ Consequently, the opinion of the 9th Regional Department of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry responsible for relations with the Arab countries was that policies toward Israel should in every case be subordinated to the relations with Arab states. The 6th Regional Department on the other hand, which was responsible for relations with Israel, argued that “though we need to take into account the political aspirations of Arab countries to the justifiable and necessary extent, this must not limit Hungarian sovereignty.”²⁸ The 6th Department objected the 9th Department’s repeated torpedoing of its decisions, as in the case of appointing a permanent envoy of Ministerial level in Israel, or launching direct passenger-services of the Hungarian Airlines and the Hungarian Naval Agency to Tel-Aviv. Finally, the 6th Department even suggested that the Israeli relation should be assigned to the 9th Department because of the untenable situation.

The overlapping functions and responsibilities of the different departments and organs of the bureaucratic apparatus resulted in the above detailed inconsistent policies with regards to Israel and the emigration possibilities of Hungarian Jews to the Middle-Eastern country. The desirable policy-line in the Middle-East turned into a prestige battle between the departments responsible for it at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as between high-ranking officials in that ministry and the Ministry of Interior, because their measures of success and efficiency were in discord. Even worse, the heads of the two rival departments in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs belonged to different intra-party factions, which enlarged the scope of this fight. While the head of the 6th Regional Department adhered to the reformist line, the leader of the 9th stood by more conservative policies. These intra-party rifts became increasingly pronounced as the shock-effect of the 1956 revolution waned, and as a slightly bigger range of opportunities for policy choices emerged as a result of the Soviet de-Stalinization campaign.

²⁷ John C. Campbell, ‘The Soviet Union and the United States in the Middle East’, in: *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 401 (May, 1972), pp. 126-135, (p. 127).

²⁸ HNA, XIX-J-1-j, box no. 1966/61, document not numbered. Report of the 6th Regional Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (by Gábor Bebók and András Ilyés) for the Vice-ministerial meeting, June 13, 1966.

Conclusions

This short case-study attempts to highlight the factors that influenced the policies of the Hungarian state apparatus with regards to issues that affected the Jewish community and/or Jewish individuals in the early 1960s.

The Eichmann trial presented a possibility to introduce the Holocaust into public discourse. Yet the Hungarian regime's attempts at retroactively establishing its own historical legitimacy, combined with the Cold War political framework which divided the countries concerned into two camps preaching mutually exclusive hegemonic narratives, resulted in the relativization and later, tabooization of Jewish victimhood during the Holocaust. The process of 'coming to terms with the past' was oppressed and blocked, and resulted in contradictory narratives of the Second World War that divide Hungarian public opinion up to this day.

Personal interests, as in the cases of István Szirmai and Endre Sós, also played a role in certain unnecessarily harsh stances against the Zionist movement and Israel. Furthermore, the anti-Zionist elements of Communist ideology were used and exploited by individuals to further their own personal political agendas, even those unrelated to the 'Jewish Question'. In this respect, though antisemitism was arguably present in some cases, one can not talk about an ideologically determined, universal antisemitic stance as a general character of the regime. Nevertheless, political decision-making and implementation was rather contradictory and ad-hoc when it came to Jewish issues, which indeed made the Jewish community, as well as persons of Jewish origin, exposed and vulnerable to discrimination.

Intra-party struggles and factionalization – which were the results of both the de-Stalinization campaigns initiated by Moscow, and of the Kádár regime's own need to define itself in relation to both the Stalinist and reform-Communist past leadership – led to inconsistent policies towards the State of Israel. This, combined with the tendency to follow Moscow's foreign policy line favoring Arab contacts as opposed to Israel, led to the diminishing of meaningful official relations between Hungary and the Jewish State, as well as between the diplomatic representatives of the State of Israel and the leadership of the National Board of Hungarian Jews. The latter was incapable of efficiently representing Jewish interests, while it

was impossible to truly use the similar potential of the former due to the associated risks of such contacts.

Despite the widely accepted view that a general relaxation of policies took place in the Eastern bloc during the early 1960s (often termed the 'Khrushchev Thaw'), in relation to the 'Jewish Question' in Hungary, this assertion can not be supported. Though policies in question were not unquestionably turning worse, their unpredictability made Hungary's Jews defenseless against discrimination. Jews were repeatedly discriminated against during the period under investigation, even though this was not due to a systematic antisemitic ideological line.

Was Leibele Prossnitz a Charlatan?

Miroslav Dyrčik

The paper examines the career of the Sabbatian Leibele Prossnitz through the lens of the concept of charlatan, making use of an article by Paweł Maciejko where he expounds the concept to describe the fortune of Wolf Eibeschütz. The fate of both, Leibele Prossnitz and Wolf Eibeschütz, are very similar at first glance. However, one aspect of Leibele's life, namely his epilepsy, changes matters decisively. Thus, the concept of charlatan is not suitable for an analysis of Leibele's career and indeed is completely misleading. This implies that the concept of charlatan cannot replace in general the oxymoron 'false Messiah' that is firmly established in scholarship.

Introduction

In the article 'Sabbatian Charlatans: the first Jewish cosmopolitans'¹ and in his book *The Mixed Multitude*², Paweł Maciejko utilized the concept of charlatan to analyze the career of the Sabbatian leader Wolf Eibeschütz, a son of the most prominent rabbi of the eighteenth century, Yonatan Eibeschütz. Paweł Maciejko claims that this concept is more suitable and more valuable for scientific analysis of persons like Wolf Eibeschütz than the oxymoron 'false Messiah',³ the term usually used in scholarship to describe the phenomenon. Using the definition of charlatanism as "the vice of him who strives to recommend himself, or things belonging to him, as being endowed with imaginary qualities" and claiming that charlatanism above all is widespread in times of social, cultural and scientific changes, in times where the gap between informed persons and the rest of the population is great,⁴ Paweł Maciejko points at the similarity between the career of Wolf Eibeschütz and the most famous charlatan of the eighteenth century, Giacomo Casanova.

¹ Paweł Maciejko, 'Sabbatian Charlatans: the first Jewish cosmopolitans', in: *European Review of History: Revue europeene d'histoire*, 16,6 (2010), pp. 361-378.

² Paweł Maciejko, 'The Vagaries of the Charlatans', in: *The Mixed Multitude: Jacob Frank and the Frankist Movement, 1755-1816*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), pp. 199-231.

³ Maciejko (see note 1), p. 362.

⁴ Ibid. p. 361.

Paweł Maciejko makes use of several stories from Jacob Emden's *Sefer Hitabkut* to depict the life of the young Eibeschutz; firstly, an incident in the Moravian royal town of Brno/Brünn. Jacob Emden describes Wolf Eibeschutz spending *Hanukkah* surrounded by his friends when he suddenly sights a 'miracle', a pillar of fire coming from the heavens to the earth. Wolf commands his friends to fall on their faces, because the power of destruction is great that they might be destroyed.⁵ Paweł Maciejko identifies the pillar of fire with Halley's Comet which appeared on 25 December 1758 and claims that Wolf Eibeschutz had probably learnt about the phenomenon in advance from Christian newspapers.⁶

Wolf Eibeschutz, at least according to Jacob Emden's, lived a pompous high-priced lifestyle in his later years. He behaved like a Christian nobleman and indeed strove for ennoblement, but the application was declined by Josef II.⁷ Nonetheless, he needed a great deal of money to finance his lifestyle. Therefore, Wolf Eibeschutz decided to defraud his creditors. He spread a rumor that he had mastered the science of alchemy, i.e. that he could transform copper into gold. Creditors saw an opportunity to make easy money and provided Wolf with funding. In return they received bars of copper covered with a layer of gold. When they realized the deceit they were told that the alchemical process was still incomplete and that the bars had to be kept out of the air until the gold completely materialized.⁸

This paper will examine the possibility of utilizing the concept of another eighteenth century charlatan Sabbatian usually labeled as 'false Messiah'. Scholars most frequently refer to him as Leibele Prossnitz.⁹ There are some 'strange' episodes in Leibele's life, very similar to those of Wolf Eibeschutz, that could be analyzed by the above described concept of charlatan. But as we will see, nothing is as it seems because there are also other factors which had a great influence on Leibele's life and career, namely inner conversion and epilepsy. Last but not least, what changes the whole picture are the primary sources the information is taken from; Jacob Emden is the foremost source on Sabbatian activities all around eighteenth century Europe. But moreover, he is the most prominent anti-Sabbatian of the time and his intentions are clear, to

⁵ Ibid. p. 361.

⁶ Ibid. p. 363.

⁷ Ibid. pp. 363-367.

⁸ Ibid. p. 368.

⁹ In spite of primary sources as *Bashraybung Fun Shabsai Tsvi* by Leyb ben Ozer and Jacob Emden's *Torat ha-Qenaot*. Leyb b. Ozer named him Leibele Holleshau, while Jacob Emden referred to him as Leibele Prossnitz.

disclose and chase Sabbatian heresy. While one could use Jacob Emden as a source of factual information, one has to be careful not to assume his interpretation at the same time. Contrary to the majority of scholarship this paper will be mostly based on Leyb ben Ozer and not on Jacob Emden;¹⁰ though Emden¹¹ will also be mentioned.

‘Prossnitz, Judah Leib ben Jacob Holleshau’, as Gershom Scholem entitled his entry in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*,¹² was most likely born in the Moravian town of Uherský Brod/Ungarisch Brod around 1670. He married and spent most of his life in Prostějov/Prossnitz, another Moravian town near Olomouc/Olmütz. He had an unknown number of children and originally made his living as a peddler. According to Leyb ben Ozer, Leibele underwent a spiritual awakening in the year 1702¹³ and exchanged his livelihood to teaching children *Mishnah*. He began to study kabbalistic writings and started to lead the vagrant life of an itinerant preacher. He wandered throughout Moravia between the years 1702-1706 and performed several ‘strange deeds’ in his hometown of Prostějov. These ‘strange deeds’ brought about Leibele’s excommunication from the Jewish community. In 1707 Leibele crossed the border to Silesia and visited two towns: Wrocław/Breslau and Głogów/Glogau. From both he was very quickly expelled. Even if the excommunication from Prostějov should have lasted for three years he was allowed to come back to the city and to his family shortly after his expulsion from Silesia.¹⁴

He repented and returned to teaching children. However, this ‘obedient’ life did not last long. Apparently, he returned to his former beliefs¹⁵ and gathered a group of students around him to study kabbalistic writings in hiding. A member of this group might have been a prominent rabbi of the eighteenth century, namely Yonatan Eibeschütz.¹⁶ In the wake of the emissaries

¹⁰ Jehudah Leyb ben Ozer, *Sipur ma’asey Shabtay Tsvi: Bashraybung Fun Shabsai Tsvi* (Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar, 1978), pp. 168-212.

¹¹ Jacob Emden, *Zot Torat ha-Qena’ot* (Amsterdam: Depus Juda’ bar Shiloh, 1752), ff. 34v-35r.

¹² Gershom Scholem, ‘Prossnitz, Judah Leib ben Jacob Holleshau’, in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 13 (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House), pp. 1240-1242.

¹³ Gershom Scholem claims that it was the year 1696 and that he was influenced by Tsvi Hirše ben Jerahmela Chotš (see note 11), a kabbalist and an itinerant preacher famous for his collection of kabbalistic sermons (*Shabta de-Rigla*), kabbalistic prayers and magic (see Gershom Scholem, ‘Chotsh, Tsevi Hirsh ben Jerahmeel’, *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 5 (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House), pp. 502-503.

¹⁴ For more details see Miroslav Dyrčik, *Hnutí Šabtajje Cvi na Moravě v raném novověku* (Olomouc: Palacky University, 2012) MA thesis, pp. 9-18.

¹⁵ Emden (see note 11), f. 35r.

¹⁶ Scholem (see note 12), p. 1241.

from Salonika in 1724 he again might have appeared publicly on the scene.¹⁷ It is known for sure that he was excommunicated once more, this time by the rabbis from the whole of Moravia in Mikulov/Nikolsburg. The last reference to Leibele dates from the early year 1725. He was not allowed to enter the Jewish quarter in the town of Frankfurt am Main. From then on he reportedly led the life of a vagrant and died somewhere in Hungary among Christians.¹⁸

A story very similar to that of Wolf Eibeschutz in Brno can be found about Leibele in *Bashraybung fun Shabsai Tsvi*. The incident allegedly happened between the years 1702-1706 while Leibele was wandering through Moravia.¹⁹ It can be assumed that it happened very close to the year 1702, because this event could be considered the momentum of Leibele's popularity:²⁰

And there was a man [in Nikolsburg] whose name was Rabbi Elchanan Magid, and he heard about Rabbi Leib Holleshau that he has *rabeynim* around him. So he invited him to *bes-ha-medresh* and listened to him. And he rebuked him a lot for telling people nonsense, because there is not a bit of truth in it and he became angry with him. And rabbi Leibeles went away. Promptly after his departure, Rabbi Elchanan suddenly felt bad. And there was a man whose name was Leib Magid and he ran after Leibeles Holleshau and said to him: 'Oh God! Come back with me! Rabbi Elchanan feels bad. Maybe he said some improper word to you. Please, forgive him.' So he went with him. Immediately when they entered through the door of the *bes-ha-medresh*, the soul of Elchanan Magid went out.²¹

In scientific discourse the incident could be described as follows; Elchanan Magid got angry, subsequently he suffered a heart attack and because no appropriate first aid was given to him, he finally died. But at the beginning of the eighteenth century this incident was explained in other words. The fact that Elchanan Magid died right after Leibeles's leaving led to the dissemination

¹⁷ Scholem (see note 12), p. 1241.

¹⁸ Emden (see note 11), f. 35r.

¹⁹ Dyrčik (see note 14), p. 16.

²⁰ Ibid. pp. 28-29.

²¹ Ozer (see note 10), p. 172.

of rumors. The message of the rumors was very clear. There is a man endowed with supernatural powers that could be the Messiah and could bring this world to its end and carry about redemption.

The similarity between the story of Wolf Eibeschütz in Brno and the incident in Mikulov is given by chance. Even if according to Paweł Maciejko, Wolf Eibeschütz knew about the natural phenomenon ahead of time and took advantage of it, no man of the eighteenth century could affect the trajectory of a comet and evoke its appearance at a specific time and place. It was just good luck for Wolf Eibeschütz that Halley's Comet appeared on 25 December 1758. The fortuity is even more obvious in the case of Leibele Prossnitz. Nobody could cause one's death purposely in the way as is depicted above. Therefore the concept of charlatan cannot be utilized in this specific event in Leibele's career. No one could accuse Leibele Prossnitz of having ulterior motives. Though the incident supported Leibele's fame as a master of supernatural powers and wisdom, Leibele's previous-knowledge of the event cannot be assumed.

Even in the story about Wolf Eibeschütz in Brno the utilization of the concept of charlatan might be improper. The argument of Paweł Maciejko is based on the assumption that Wolf Eibeschütz was aware of the appearance of the comet in advance. Unfortunately, Paweł Maciejko does not give any evidence of this. If Wolf did not possess any previous-knowledge of the event, there is no need to look for an explication beyond the religious interpretation. As son of a distinguished rabbi, Wolf Eibeschütz could have identified the comet with a passage in Tanakh:

And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.²²

I will now turn to the analysis of two other stories from the life of Leibele Prossnitz. Both of them seem like the deed of a charlatan at first; both were prepared in advance but the context of Leibele's inwardness will shed a different light on them. The first episode, the less 'famous' one,

²² Ex 13:21-22.

probably happened on 3 August 1706.²³ When Leibele Prossnitz was called for reading a Torah portion, he made a mistake therein. And people were grumbling, because Leibele Prossnitz had always boasted that he is greater than Ha'ARI.²⁴ And it was rumored that Ha'ARI refused to say blessing over a Torah scroll before opening it, since he reportedly possessed super-natural powers. Leibele Prossnitz tried to deceive people to convince them of his abilities:

And he had a Torah in his *bes-ha-medresh* and he went and erased and added many things within it. He said: 'I do not say blessing over this Torah scroll.' Search in the given *parashah* and you will find an error. They searched and found the error as he said. However it was his Torah and he could treat with it as he wished.²⁵

The second episode, the most famous one from Leibele's life probably occurred seven or eight months later, sometime between February and March 1707.²⁶ Leibele Prossnitz was forced to promise the members of Prostějov's Jewish community to give them a sign. The sign should be a demonstration of the *Shekhinah*, the divine presence. It took a few months to prepare a 'trick'. He divided a room into two with a curtain, one part for him and the other for the audience. He put on a robe with the *Tetragrammaton* on the chest made out of turpentine and alcohol. Then he lit the letters that should be the presentation of the *Shekhinah*. But the trick was disclosed and Leibele was excommunicated from Prostějov for the first time.

In contrast to Leibele's previously mentioned episodes that were preserved only in *Bashraybung* this one is also extant in other eighteenth century sources. Two of them belong to the Christian milieu and will therefore not be analyzed in the context of this paper. They are religious polemics written in German²⁷ and Swedish.²⁸ The third one is Jacob Emden's *Zot Torat*

²³ Ozer (see note 10), p. 179. The author mentions the Jewish year 466, which has passed, and the Torah portion 'Shoftim'. 'Parashat Shoftim' is the 48th out of 54 weekly Torah portions. It is read in synagogue at the end of Jewish year, i.e. almost the whole year already passed. It could be assumed that Leib ben Ozer refers to the year 466 rather than 467.

²⁴ Rabbi Isaac Luria Ashkenazi (1534-1572), founder of a kabbalistic movement called after him (Lurianic kabbalah). Lurianic cosmology had a huge impact on the Sabbatian movement.

²⁵ Ozer (see note 10), p. 179.

²⁶ Ibid. p. 182.

²⁷ Johann Jakob Schudt, *Judische Merckwürdigkeiten*, 4 (Frankfurt am Main: Lamm, 1714-1718), pp. 334.

²⁸ Christian Petter Löwe, *Speculum religionis judaicae: eller Beskrifning, om judarnas religion*, (Stockholm: Joh. Laur. Horrn, 1732), pp. 79-82.

ha-Qena'ot.²⁹ *Torat ha-Qena'ot* and *Bashraybung* vary in many small details. The real distinction is, however, in the person uncovering the trick. And the distinction proves a different attitude toward the Sabbatian movement; Ozer's attitude is at least neutral, Emden's is very hostile.

While in *Bashraybung* it is God himself who discloses the trick, in *Torat ha-Qena'ot* it is Rabbi Me'ir of Eisenstadt,³⁰ the famous MaHaRaMESH who served as a rabbi in Prostějov between the years 1702-1710.³¹ Initially he might have been an adherent of Leibele Prossnitz, but this incident apparently turned him into Leibele's foe. This speculation is substantiated as follows; firstly, he could have been a younger brother of the renowned itinerant Sabbatian preacher Mordekhai ben Chayim of Eisenstadt. Secondly, he was a teacher of Yonatan Eibeschutz.³² It is very likely that Me'ir of Eisenstadt was a Sabbatian in his younger years. Somehow or other Jacob Emden in claiming that Me'ir of Eisenstadt was the person revealing the trick declassifies the Sabbatian movement. Contrary to Leib ben Ozer he contests its transcendental claims and transforms it into a human invention. God is not needed to act, since a human being like Me'ir of Eisenstadt is sufficient.

Both Jacob Emden and Leib ben Ozer agree that this event from Leibele's life was a huge fraud prepared for long time. The attitude of Jacob Emden towards the Sabbatian movement and Leibele Prossnitz himself is fixed from the beginning to the end. It is very hard to recognize to what extent Leib ben Ozer intervenes in the original narration of an unknown inhabitant of Prostějov's kehilah.³³ And to what extent this unknown Jew reflects general feelings in the community. However, the attitude of *Bashraybung* changed vehemently after the following story:

²⁹ Emden (see note 11), f. 34v.

³⁰ Ibid., f. 34v.

³¹ Leopold Goldschmied, 'Geschichte der Juden in Prossnitz', in: Hugo Gold (ed.), *Die Juden und Judengemeinden Mährens in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*, (Brno: Jüdischer Buch- und Kunstverlag, 1929), pp. 491-504, (p. 501).

³² Yonatan Eibeschutz was considered as a sabbatian by Jacob Emden and his supporters. Yonatan's sabbatianism is still in question among the scholars. It is known that he was in touch with other sabbatians Leibele Prossnitz included. Cf. Joseph Prager (ed.), *Gahalei Esh 1924-1934*, (Oxford: Bodleian Library, Cat. Neubauer #2187).

³³ Ozer (see note 10), pp. 168-169.

And so he [Leibele] tied a cock to the leg of the bed for nine nights until the ninth night. And the ninth day rabbi Leibele made 930 ritual immersions as were the years of Adam ha-rishon. And with the coming of the ninth night he sat down to learn all the night. However, no man wanted to stay at his side because everyone was scared a lot. He remained alone with the cock in his room but a lot of people gathered in the opposite house and they stayed up and watch carefully whether they will see or hear something. In the middle of the night they heard a great noise and shout on the roof of the opposite house, as if the house should fall down; and fear fell upon them. And in the morning they found the cock mashed as rabbi Leibele said and there was not a drop of blood in the cock.³⁴

This may have been a sacrifice for the *sitra achra*, ‘the other [dark, evil] side’. Leibele Prossnitz thought the sacrifice was very important, because even the evil side requests its part. The most striking aspect of the whole story is that neither Leib ben Ozer nor the unknown Jew nor the Jewish community in Prostějov challenged the veracity of the event. The black cock was really mashed by some evil spirit as its sacrifice. Not even during Leibele’s public confession when he professed his tricks with the Torah scroll and the *Tetragramaton* nobody including Leibele Prossnitz doubted this ‘matter of fact’. Since that time Leibele Prossnitz was held in disgrace and was deemed as a sorcerer trifling with dangerous powers and all his deeds were considered as suspicious. So, one could claim that the concept of charlatan fits for a person like Leibele Prossnitz. Even the second aspect of charlatanism, to have ulterior motives was fulfilled.³⁵ As *Bashraybung* informs, Leibele’s living costs were covered by the Jewish community of Prostějov not long after the incident with Elchanan Magid in Mikulov.³⁶

The episode with the black cock influenced the others more than Leibele Prossnitz himself, and it changed their view about him. Now, two aspects will be expounded that may have had an impact on Leibele’s inwardness and may have changed the way he perceived events in his environmental. The first one is the fact that Leibele Prossnitz suffered from epileptic fits. As one can read in *Bashraybung*:

³⁴ Ibid. p. 178.

³⁵ For this observation I would like to thank Dr. Tamás Visi.

³⁶ Ozer (see note 10), p. 171.

And it happened in those forty days of fasting, that the *rabeynim* once came into the *bes hamedresh* to perform the morning prayer, as it was their custom to pray in the *bes hamedresh*. And Rabbi Leibl was sleeping in the same room, where they were praying. And the *rabeynim* came inside and found Rabbi Leibl sleeping on the bed. And he was wringing his hands in sleep and respiring as somebody who is exhausted. And he was crying out: ‘Come out, you impure, would you like to impurify me!?’ And they could not wake him from his sleep. And they got terrified about their lives and went out. And they stayed in front of the door until ten *rabeynim* gathered and all of them entered [again]. [Leibl] was still sleeping and had foam at his mouth. [He] wrestled and screamed: ‘Go out, you impure, you Samoel!’ And they could not wake him up.³⁷

The possibility that Leibele Prossnitz just acted out these fits could not be disregarded completely. But there is good reason to assume that he did not. The whole story about him in *Bashraybung* is accompanied by his dreams about *rabeynim*.³⁸ Initially, these dreams were taken as a message of super-natural origin and helped Leibele Prossnitz in his career.³⁹ In fact, there are no doubts about these dreams and their origin in *Bashraybung*. The increased frequency of the dreaming is an epileptic symptom. Moreover, these dreams did not cease after the revelation of Leibele’s tricks and his first excommunication from the community of Prostějov: “He is just saying that the *rabeynim* still comes to him. What can he do? He is not longing for them and does not invite them, but he can not kill them yet.”⁴⁰ That was the time when Leibele Prossnitz tried to be an obedient member of the community. He did not need to pretend anything any longer.

The second aspect that may have influenced Leibele’s inwardness is possibly connected to his epilepsy. Originally, Leibele Prossnitz led a ‘non-kosher’ way of life. As *Bashraybung* informs, Leibele was very negligent in observing religious commandments until one day:

³⁷ Ibid. p.176.

³⁸ The *rabeynim* may have been above mentioned Isaac Luria, Shabbtai Tsvi and later Josi ben Joezer as well. Isaac Luria may have been just a ghost but Shabbtai Tsvi could have been real.

³⁹ Dyrčik (see note 14), pp. 22-25.

⁴⁰ Ozer (see note 10), p. 187.

[...] a preacher came to Prostějov and he was preaching publicly and was reproaching people in words of the *Musar*. And Leibele, son of Jacob, took the words to his heart, and was doing penance, and huge fear possessed him, and he did not want to go back to the villages living among *goyim* and decided to remain in the community.⁴¹

This could have been the trigger for Leibele's epileptic fits. Epilepsy can dwell in one's body in hiding for many years. Epileptic fits can be started with some mental overload. The above depicted inner conversion of Leibele Prossnitz could have been such a mental load. No doubt that such a long term and profound process of personal transformation as one's inner conversion has a deep impact on the psychological condition of an individual. Furthermore, the conversion could have been the cause of Leibele's dreams as well. The consequence of emotional and psychological extremity is sleep deprivation as deprivation brings about dreams more often than usual and those dreams are livelier. In addition, the physical load is another aspect helping epilepsy to be exposed. *Bashraybung* is full of depictions of Leibele's ascetic practice; he may have immersed himself into the *mikveh* up to 310 times a day, he may have fasted very often etc. etc.⁴²

If the conversion was not the trigger for the epileptic fits and the lively dreams, it could be significant in another way. The itinerant preacher of *Musar* that entered the Jewish community of Prostějov might have been a Sabbatian. It is possible that it was the aforementioned Mordekhai ben Chayim of Eisenstadt, the alleged brother of Prostějov's Rabbi Me'ir of Eisenstadt who traveled throughout Bohemia, Moravia, Hungary, Germany and Poland. Leibele Prossnitz could have had these dreams before the arrival of the preacher. The dreams might have been blurred by obscure content and the words of the preacher illuminated them. The preacher could shape Leibele's dreams into a Sabbatian form; unidentified persons from Leibele's dreams were transformed into Isaac Luria and Shabbtai Tsvi. For Leibele even the epileptic fits could make much more sense from now on. He could view the fits as God's sign, the same one with which the biblical prophets were endowed.

⁴¹ Ibid. p. 169.

⁴² Ibid. p. 173.

There could be an objection that the whole story about Leibele Prossnitz was made up by either Leib ben Ozer or the unknown Jew from Prostějov. Or one could dispute that Leibele just pretended all of it to take advantage of the situation. But this seems quite unlikely. No one can assume that a Jew from the beginning of the eighteenth century mastered the knowledge about epilepsy to such an extent. Whether Leibele Prossnitz had the dreams and suffered from epileptic fits before his inner conversion or not, all the phenomena put together makes clear sense for 21st century science. It is much more likely that Leibele Prossnitz suffered from epilepsy than not.

The fact that Leibele's life was accompanied by epileptic fits is essential. It changes the perspective on the character of Leibele Prossnitz fundamentally. Ignorance of this fact turns Leibele Prossnitz into a deceitful person; a person that cheats to get some benefit; a person to which the concept of charlatan suits precisely, but the epileptic symptoms change this assumption completely. The symptom is delusion. And delusion is "a disorder of thinking based on a false presumption, of this presumption a human being makes (already logically) conclusions which might influence his behavior and acts."⁴³ Connected to the religious background of the time an image of the inner world of Leibele Prossnitz could be exposed.

Leibele's world was animated by religion. His everyday life was filled with religious symbols, meanings and rituals. Once he believed he was an individual endowed by God as the biblical prophets were, there was no way back. From that moment on, he started to see his acts in accordance with God's plan; or that God was acting through him. In this manner he understood his epileptic fits, hallucinations and dreams about *rabeynim*. Similarly he viewed his unsuccessful 'signs'. He did not view himself as a consciously acting person, but a person ruled by God. The meaning of the 'signs' was not to deceive people, but to confirm prophecy. People needed a sign to confirm prophecy. They insisted on Leibele performing a sign. He already believed in prophecy which God sent through him so the fatal failure of the revelation of the *Shekhinah* was not his fault.

Leibele was versed in kabbalistic literature. He knew very well that God is perfect and cannot fail. Because of the initial catastrophe of creation, the world and humankind are imperfect. What failed was the human factor. Leibele gave proper instructions which had to be fulfilled before the event. He said that every participant had to fast all day and all night before

⁴³ Martin Vokurka, Jan Hugo (a kol.), *Velký lékařský slovník*. (Praha: Maxdorf, 2009), p. 115.

the event and they had to immerse themselves in the *mikveh* and study proper passages from *Zohar*. If some part of the ritual fails, the whole ‘sign’ fails. And that is what happened according to Leibele. It was not God or him who failed but one of the other factors.

The fact that Leibele returned to his teachings after his excommunication could be interpreted as proof of Leibele’s conviction that he was an endowed man of God. Leibele wanted to be an ‘obedient’ member of Prostějov’s community. It seems that he lost his self-confidence for a while and was persuaded that his ideas and claims were heretical in Judaism. Nevertheless, in the course of time the social pressure on Leibele vanished and under the impression of perpetual dreams he would return to his ‘heretic deeds’. He might have gathered a group around him to study kabbalistic writings in hiding as Jacob Emden hints and might have appeared publicly on the scene again. There are many stories in Tanakh which tell about prophets who were not heard by folk. They could have served as an encouragement for Leibele’s conviction. Just as this example shows:

The word of the LORD also came unto me, saying, Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they are a rebellious house.⁴⁴

The paper has outlined that the concept of charlatan, as Paweł Maciejko suggested for the career of Wolf Eibeschutz, is improper for the case of Leibele Prossnitz. A few stories from Leibele’s life were examined. Even if they seem to resemble those about Wolf Eibeschutz at first sight, they cannot be treated and interpreted the same way. It was shown that Leibele Prossnitz suffered from epilepsy.⁴⁵ This chronic neurological disorder changes the way persons like Leibele Prossnitz should be explored by contemporary scholarly discourse. The events depicted from Leibele’s life seem to be conscious purposeful acts of a human being, but with epilepsy are switched into unconscious acts driven by delusion.

Furthermore, there is one argument why Paweł Maciejko utilizes the concept of charlatan in the case of Wolf Eibeschutz: He is not satisfied with the term ‘false Messiah’ which is

⁴⁴ Ezek 12:1-2.

⁴⁵ It is striking that Paweł Maciejko hints at the possibility that Wolf Eibeschutz suffered from epilepsy as well. Unfortunately, he does not expand on this idea.

ordinarily used among scholars to depict these persons. The reason is that the concept offers no valuable key to the understanding of such persons.⁴⁶ However, it was shown that the concept cannot be used for all persons labeled ‘false Messiah’ and indeed the concept could be very misleading. Nevertheless, it is true that scholars should avoid using the term directly, since it is taken from Jewish primary sources and as such has a specific connotation.

On the other hand, the concept of charlatan has hidden meanings as well. Without doubt there were, and still are, persons such as Giacomo Casanova who deceived others in order to reap benefits. They are genuine charlatans. However, there were, and still are, self-proclaimed prophets and Messiahs⁴⁷ performing ‘signs’ and ‘miracles’. From a scholarly perspective such persons have to be viewed as charlatans. But the scholarly world view shouldn’t be imposed on the religious one; a religious leader is not necessarily a charlatan and his adherents are not always a stupid mass. Jumping at such conclusions rather reveals presuppositions of scholarship than facts about religion and its adherents.

Additionally, a historian dealing with the Sabbatian movement has to be very careful, since most information about the movement up to the 1770s stems from the quill of Jacob Emden. And it is well known that Emden was a prominent anti-Sabbatian and to depict Sabbatians as charlatans was his daily bread. It has already been mentioned that one can take factual information from Jacob Emden, but one has to be aware of its connotation at the same time. Emden’s connotation can be accurate in some cases, as Paweł Maciejko displayed, but inaccurate in others as the paper has exposed.

⁴⁶ Maciejko (see note 1), p. 362.

⁴⁷ Or persons considered by others a prophet or Messiah, e.g. the Chabad-Lubavitch branch of *Hasidism* still regards Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the last Rebbe of the movement who deceased on 12 June 1994, as the Messiah.

Eliezer Eilburg and his Autographs
MS Oxford-Bodleian Neubauer 1969

Magdaléna Jánošíková

This article looks at one of the manuscripts copied by Elizer Eilburg, a sixteenth century Jewish thinker famous for his critical approach towards the authority of rabbis. The text introduces Eilburg's life and manuscripts identified as his autographs in order to sketch his intellectual profile. The main goal of the article is the identification of the manuscript Neubauer 1969 deposited in the Bodleian Library (Oxford) as another material bearing Eilburg's handwriting. This tiny composition contains signs of Italian censorship proving Eilburg's presence on the Italian Peninsula as his autobiographical fragment and several colophons suggest. Contrary to other identified autographs, Neubauer 1969 did not travel with Eilburg to Silesia, but stayed in Italy for a considerable time. This article accentuates the importance of codicology in the reconstruction of historic events such as the biography of an individual.

Introduction

Eliezer Eilburg refers to himself as ha-mehaber, ha-me'asef, and ha-kotev, that is to say as an author, a collector and a scribe. These attributes are the best general labels of all activities that a copyist performs. His collection of copied books does not constitute a body of extraordinary writings, but rather a typical one. Despite its small size, it is very rich in content giving us the possibility to catch a glimpse of intellectual life in Italy of the 16th century through the eyes of a member of the Ashkenazi cultural circle. Eilburg's original thought is presented in the compilation either the form of a fluent separate text, commentary or as an introduction to the works of other thinkers. Joseph Davis in his article *The Ten Questions of Eliezer Eilburg and the Problem of Jewish Unbelief in the 16th Century*¹ focuses on Eilburg's *Eser She'elot*,² a genuine

¹ Joseph Davis, 'The Ten Questions of Eliezer Eilburg and the Problem of Jewish Unbelief in the 16th Century', in: *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 91,3-4 (2001), pp. 293-336. See as well Joseph Davis, 'The Ten Questions of Eliezer Eilburg', in: *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 80 (2009), pp. 173-244.

² JTS [Jewish Theological Seminary] MS 2323.4, fol. 45 – 77.

piece of thought. Davis underlines his unique open form of concise criticism that can be compared only to Azariah dei Rossi and his *Me'or Enayim (Light of the Eyes)*. Davis rightly calls for attention, which Eliezer Eilburg deserves.

The title of *Eser She'elot* reveals that the content is made up of ten answers to stipulated questions undermining the basic principles of faith as understood by rabbinic authorities. By refuting miracles, nature of prophecy, ethics of patriarchs, revelation, creationism and other principles, Eilburg represents the modern type of critical thinker. This treatise was written, as Eilburg claims, in prison in Silesia, but addressed in the form of an open letter to three Moravian Rabbis – to R. Jacob of Kromau, R. Naftali Hirz of Sternberg, and Judah Leib of Austerlitz. The 16th century constitutes a significant epoch. Moravian Jewry steps out of darkness, a period that, due to our lack of evidence, we tend to interpret as an interim period in the life of communities that had started in 1454, the year marked with the expulsion of Jews from free royal towns.³ Although *Eser She'elot* has to be analyzed mainly through reconstruction of his philosophical arguments, it can still contribute to our knowledge about the nature of Moravian and Silesian intellectual life, which kept Eliezer outraged.⁴

This paper will not discuss *Eser She'elot* any further instead we will draw attention to the issue of primary sources. Information obtained from codicological and paleographical description of *MS Bodl. 1969* will be used to enrich the set of information provided by Eilburg's autobiographical fragment.⁵

His early life in Brunswick, the town where he was born, was interrupted by the expulsion of Jews in 1546, the very year of Luther's death.⁶ Despite the fact, that the expulsion decree was revoked, political insecurity initiated by reformation made German countries a less attractive destination. The expulsion decree was renewed soon, e.g., in 1553 by Duke Erich the

³ Ladislaus Posthumous issued three expulsion decrees in the first year of his reign: the expulsion of Jews from Brünn, Znaim and the last decree ordered expulsion from Olmütz and Mährisch-Neustadt. Expulsion of Jews from Iglau in 1426 by Margrave Albrecht V was a precedent for such decrees in Moravian Margravate. The expulsion from Ungarisch-Hradisch followed in 1514; see Michael Miller, *Rabbis and Revolution: The Jews of Moravia in the Age of Emancipation*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), pp. 16-17.

⁴ JTS MS 2324, fol. 91r, 98r-99r.

⁵ JTS MS 2324, fol. 89r – 102r: Machberet ha-Me'asef fragment in development between 1554-1570.

⁶ Ibid. fol. 89r.

Younger and in 1557 by Heinrich the Younger.⁷ This shift of Jewish populations to Bohemia and Moravia, Northern Italy and later on Poland was a well-established phenomenon. Eilburg and his wife moved to Poznan, a town described as a peaceful refuge with a long lasting Jewish settlement. Soon, forced to leave⁸ he ended up in Ancona, where he delved into medicine, philosophy, and Kabbalah. Regrettably, we cannot determine with exact dates to reconstruct his stay, but further information can be obtained from notes in some of his manuscripts.⁹ In 1553, the year the Talmud was burnt in Rome, he was back in Poland. He left Italy just before counter-reformation transformed the approach toward Jewry under Pope Julius III and Paul IV¹⁰ following a general European trend of rising central power, which in our case means an augmenting range of interference into Jewish internal affairs.

The cultural exchange between Italy and Poland certainly wasn't an exclusively Jewish phenomenon. Nichola Copernicus (1473 - 1543) and Jan Kochanowski (1530 - 1584) are just two of the most visible examples of Polish personalities who spent time in Italy and consequently returned to Poland. Matatya Delacrut,¹¹ who acquired his knowledge in mathematics and Jewish mysticism in Bologna, was back to Kracow by 1555. Here he obtained the respectful position of scribe of the growing Jewish community. Unlike Delacrut, Eilburg appeared in a quite different situation. Sitting in prison in Silesia, in the town of Olešnica (1553 - 1556), where he compiled his biography and later on in Nysa (1567), he finalized his mobile library by editing his copied books. The last event in Eilburg's life that could be attributed to an exact year is the wedding of his daughter in Lesla (Inowroclaw) in 1579.¹²

Use of an autobiographical record as a primary source has been discussed since the crises of classical studies. A man, writing his brief memories, exposed to situations that led him to imprisonment, provokes one to doubt and question Eilburg's credibility. His biography reaches

⁷ Other expulsions from Brunswick: Trove.nla.gov.au, [online], acc. 1-10-2011: <http://trove.nla.gov.au/work/27390122?q&l-decade=152&l-year=1529&c=collection>

⁸ JTS MS 2324, fol. 89r – 90v.

⁹ JTS MS 2324, fol. 5v – 10r: copied from a MS of Joseph Levi of Ferrer; 76v – 79r: copied from MS owned by Yehudah Ashkelon (Judah D'Ascoli).

¹⁰ 1554 – Julius III endorsed burning of Talmud, 1555 – burning Marranos at the stake in Ancona, the same year Paul IV issued the Bull *Cum Nimis Absurdum*, 1556 – privileges previously given to Jews of Ancona revoked, 1557- ban on Hebrew print, etc. See Kenneth Stow. 'The Papacy and the Jews: Catholic Reformation and Beyond', in: *Jewish History*, 6,1-2 (1992), pp. 257-279.

¹¹ Moritz Steinschneider, *Jewish Literature from the Eighth to the Eighteenth Century: with an introduction on Talmud and Midrash*, (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans & Roberts, 1857), p. 285.

¹² JTS MS 2324, fol. 100r.

an emotional peak in his criticism of Rabbis.¹³ Eser She'elot could have been produced about ten years later, which proves that Eilburg's personal crusade against religious authorities was still an ongoing program. For this reason it is assumed that his unorthodox view could have been a reason for keeping him in a prison due to religious unrest in Silesia¹⁴ jeopardizing Jewish kehilot. However, for lack of evidence, we must refrain from drawing such conclusions.

Eilburg's Collection of Manuscripts

Unfortunately, Eliezer Eilburg does not conduct a dialog. We have no external sources documenting his activities, no direct responses to his objections. He is in the position of story teller and we have to admit, that he remains silent about incidents that would have put him in unfavorable light. For this reason we proceed to introduce one of the oldest and shortest manuscripts that bear Eilburg's authentic handwriting. It cannot answer the question as to why Eilburg was imprisoned, but it has potential to imply Eilburg's presence in Italy that is not self-evident. Before, the presentation of other Eilburg's autographs is necessary to understand position of Bodl. MS Neub. 1969 among other preserved manuscripts.

Under the call number MS JTS 2692 we can find a medical collection called *Ma'arekhet refu'ot ha-shamayim* (System of Heavenly medicine) containing only 33 leaves. It includes notes on the treatise of Ibn Sina and a Hebrew translation of a Christian physician from the 12th century, Arnaldus of Villanova.¹⁵ The systematic shortening and commenting of these works has clear intention to create a portable guide for a physician, i.e. a popular and desired literary genre among students of medicine.

Another Eilburg autograph is MS JTS 2324. This, ten-year older compilation is made up of Kabbalistic, astrological, and grammar works. Some of them are evaluated as using sources from Italy: 5v – 10r contains pieces of *Moreh Nevukhim* (Guide of the Perplexed), and *Ma'amar*

¹³ Ibid. fol. 98r.

¹⁴ Miriam Bodian, 'Jews in a Divided Christendom', in: Ronnie Po-chia Hsia (ed.), *A Companion to the Reformation World*, (Malden: Blackwell, 2006), pp.471-485.

¹⁵ Eilburg copied an astrological work *Panim be-Mishpat*, which was introduced to the Hebrew audience in the 14th century through the translation of Shlomo Avigdor in France. After recollection of Arnald's works, a new Latin compendium was published in printed form in Lyon in 1504 and several reprints and editions followed. Moritz Steinschneider. *Die Hebraeischen Uebersetzungen des Mittelalters und die Juden als Dolmetscher*, (Berlin: Kommissionsverlag des Bibliographischen bureaus, 1893), p. 788.

‘*al Odot Derashot Hazal* (Treatise on Rabbinic Sermons) by Abraham Maimonides, and they are estimated to have been copied from a manuscript by Yosef Levi of Ferrera. Another one is *Mishnat Yosef ‘Uzi’el* (76v – 79r) copied from a manuscript owned by Yehuda Ashkelon, Eilburg’s teacher known under the name *Judah D’Ascoli*. Finally, there is another manuscript assumed to have been copied in Italy – *Mayan ha-Chochmot* (Source of Wisdom, 66v – 70v) with colophon pointing at the year 1555.¹⁶ The Colophon itself states: “This is Book of Raziel I found in the hands of Greek sages... I copied it in Anconia in Lombargia and now in I am in my galut as a captive... [25th Kislev, Monday, 1555].” Eilburg claims to be in contact with a Greek Jewish scholar referring especially to his teacher R. David Vital. To complete the list of presumed teachers I would like to mention R. Hananel Silva.¹⁷ In these piles of manuscripts we can find also Eilburg’s poems, tekhnit, a letter to his brother-in-law Mordochai, and for historians the most interesting aforementioned *Machberet ha-Me’asef* (*Notebook of the Collector*), author’s biography.

Another work already mentioned, *Ten Questions*, is a part of MS JTS 2323.¹⁸ The whole collection contains philosophical works of Abraham Ibn Ezra, ‘Abd Allāh ibn Muhammad Batalyawāsī, or Abū Naṣr Muḥammad al-Fārābī. It is a collection dated to the second half of the 1560s.¹⁹ Apparently, all mentioned manuscripts belong to the Jewish Theological Seminary, but there is one Eilburg autograph, which ended up in Oppenheim’s collection. And it does not represent a manuscript which travelled with him to Silesia as it stayed in Italy.

MS Oxford-Bodleian Neubauer 1969

This last manuscript is the tiniest of all that bear a typical acrostic made out of Eilburgs’ name.²⁰ It is written in Ashkenazi cursive script that fits his period. The dimensions of the manuscripts

¹⁶ Colophons in fol. 62r, fol. 70v.

¹⁷ MS JTS 2692 fol. 13; Totten (see note 1), p. 296.

¹⁸ MS JTS Microfilm 2323, fol. 45 -77, the whole microfilm contains 159 scans of folios.

¹⁹ There are two colophons:

(א 31) תעתקתי בידי שנת ו'ה'ק'ר'י'ב'ה' לעולה לפ"ק [1568=];

(א 104) סיימתי חבור הזה וגמרנו כלה בחדש שבט יום ד' שנת שכ"ו לפ"ק [1567=].

²⁰ The acrostic can be observed on fol. 5r, fol. 5v, (*Eliezer Abraham Eilburg*) and fol. 10r (*Eliezer Eilburg ha-Ashkenazi*). JTS MS 2324, fol. 90r, *Mahberet* includes poems with acrostics: *Eliezer* and *Eliezer ben Abraham*. In

are 138 x 199 mm and the size of the text is not fixed. It is regulated on each side of a folio by two vertical lines made by hardpoint.²¹ If compared to his other his manuscripts, this one gives the impression of not putting emphasis on the visual form. The manuscript is made of two quires that do not differ in size or form of ruling; however, there is an obvious difference in the color of ink and thickness of stylus. Quire A consists of two folios that do not constitute a whole bifolio, but miss their counter-folios. The second quire (Quire B) is made of five bifolios and it seems to be complete.

According to the *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library*²² quire A includes “anonymous commentary, possibly by copyist Eliezer Eilburg.” and Quire B includes “an extract from Tikkune Zohar xxi, on forms of poetry, an extract on Hebrew grammar, some poems of Judah ha-Levi, Ibn Gabirol, and Isaac b. Mar Saul, and some notes on Hebrew prosody”. We are lucky to have a watermarked paper in Quire B. The watermark is a type of a circle surmounted by a star. Neubauer’s catalogue informs us that it is similar to *Briquet 3086*. That would set the origin of the paper to Laibach, 1543. I would propose that *Briquet 3075* more resembles the original watermark, placing the production to Reggio Emilia, 1542.²³ This watermark moves the place of production closer to the region of Eilburg’s presence in the late forties and early fifties of the sixteenth century. However, it is needed to keep in mind that both of the watermarks were produced before the expulsion from Brunswick.

Marks of Italian Censorships

We have already encountered the fact that Quire A is incomplete. As the manuscript bears the signature of expurgators, it is appropriate to consider the lack of folios as the result of their activities. The last page, fol. 12 v., is signed by *Dominico Irosolimitano and Alessro Scipione*.

fol. 92v *Eliezer*. For examples of authors acrostics in JTS MS 2324 see fol 101v with three separate acrostics with his name. In JTS MS 2692 see fol 17v, also acrostic spelling out ‘Eliezer’.

²¹ The inner line is 22 mm away from the edge and the outer around 33 mm.

²² R. A. May (ed.), *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library – Supplement of Addenda and Corrigenda to Volume 1* (Adolf Neubauer's Catalogue), (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1994), cf. ‘1969’.

²³ Briquet 3075 in *Briquet, Les Filigranes*, vol. 1, p. 210, or [online], accessed: <http://www.ksbm.oeaw.ac.at/scripts/php/loadRepWmark.php?rep=briquet&refnr=3075&lang=fr>; Briquet 3086 in *Briquet, Les Filigranes*, vol. 1, p. 211, or [online], accessed: <http://www.ksbm.oeaw.ac.at/scripts/php/loadRepWmark.php?rep=briquet&refnr=3086&lang=fr>

For the first signature dark brown ink was used, whereas for the second it was yellow-brownish, which was typically used by censors. Both of the men also marked the year when the expurgation takes place. In this case, it was 1597, the year that a mass expurgation of books took place in Mantua.

The Mantuan committee was set up on 27 August 1595 by the Bishop. The three appointed expurgators were converts, Alessandro Scipione, who had worked in Mantua before, Dominico Irosolimitano, previously expurgating books of Ferrara and Venice, and Laurentius Fragueleus, who had disappeared from the commission by 1596 and by October 1597 a new member had joined – Fra Luigi da Bologna.²⁴ In 1618, the manuscript underwent another revision. Fol. 12r bears the name of another foreign inscription – *Giovanni Dominico Carretto, 1618*. Carretto was active as an expurgator in Venice, in 1607 – 1608.²⁵ Around the year 1616 or 1617 he reached Mantua, where he was appointed the main expurgator for one year by the General Inquisitor of the House of Gonzaga . However, this activity continued the consecutive year.

These signatures testify that Ms Bodl. 1969 was present in the Mantuan region after Eliezer Eilburg had left Italy. His biographical fragment informs us about his travel, but this is the only proof declaring that Eilburg had indeed visited this country.

Eilburg's Handwriting

I had the possibility to compare his handwriting in manuscripts JTS MS 2323, JTS MS 2324, JTS 2692 and MS Bodl. 1969.²⁶ In the case of JTS MS 2324, it is necessary to distinguish between two time layers. Although the manuscript was written in Italy, it was revisited by Eilburg in Silesia. There he added several notes, not changing the content, but rather

²⁴ William Popper. *The Censorship of Hebrew Books*, (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1899), pp. 68 and 71–76 and 131–132.

²⁵ Ibid. pp. 100–101.

²⁶ This is the arrangement of JTS manuscripts with respect to their age: MS 2692, MS 2324, MS 2323.

commenting on his contemporary conditions.²⁷ The analysis of these manuscripts brought us to these conclusions.

First of all, all the manuscripts are written by the very same man. There is no serious deviation in the handwriting. However, there is a slight evolution in his writing style, which is clearly demonstrated through the letters gimel and mem.

In MS Bodl. 1969, the letter gimel is written in two ways: either with one stroke or with two. The same is valid for MS 2692. In MS 2324 the one-stroke version is prevailing. In the later Silesian notes both variants are present. Nevertheless, the use of two-stroke gimel is more frequent. In the oldest work MS 2323; containing *Eser She'elot*, the one-stroke gimel disappears.

Another interesting development is in the case of mem. In Ms Bodl. 1969, he uses cursive as well as square mem. Although the cursive type predominates, in several cases he switches between both types without any obvious reason – even in the same sentence, in the same repeated word. This is valid also for MS 2324. However, the Silesian part completely omits the square mem. It also has to be mentioned, that this part is written in smaller letters in a space-saving manner. Such conditions do not constitute a suitable environment for writing more complicated forms of letters like the square mem. Absence of this form of letter is noticeable in the youngest among Eilburg's autographs, MS 2323. In MS 2692, the use of the square mem has the clear function to underline the word.

The last remark on his handwriting concerns the letter qof. Only in Bodl. 1969 qof can be occasionally spotted as the lower part tends to bend less radically towards the previous letter or it is made by two strokes. The occurrence of such a form of letter is rare and due to the extent of this autograph (only twelve folios), the drawing of any conclusions will be refrained.

Conclusion

²⁷ At the end of *Ma'yan ha-Hochmot* Eilburg wrote additional information, which imply that he indeed copied it in Anconia, and in 1555, the year he wrote this note, he is *his golah*, the Silesian prison as the further continuation proposes. The colophon JTS MS 2324, fol. 70v:

"העתקתיהם בנחיצה אותם בק"ק אנקונייה במדינת לומברדיה ועתה בגלותי ובשביותי כתבתי זה הספר כ"ה אב יום ב' שנת שט"ו."

The collection of Eilburg's autographs is a marvelous example of intellectual life of the 16th century, before a new Early Modern canon would have become stabilized. His personality has several attractive features. His biographical fragment shows how he wants his life to be remembered. Eser She'elot reveals to us that through the study of books from Italian libraries, even members of the Ashkenazi cultural circle could suddenly raise open doubts and criticism pointing at the very basis of religion as perceived in Ashkenaz. It would be ideal to be able to see the feedback he necessarily obtained, but all the sources are silent so far. To fill this gap, we have to carry out assessment of formal features of these manuscripts, which make Eliezer Eilburg more than pure image of his self-perception.

The paper of MS Bodl. 1969 surely comes from the Italian geographical sphere (Briquet 3075) and is definitely a product of the 16th century. It was demonstrated in description of the letters mem and gimel the tendency in evolution of his handwriting. The handwriting of Ms. Bodl. 1969 shares the most common features with Eilburg's early works, i.e. JTS MS 2692 and especially with JTS MS 2324, which had been written in Italy according to the colophon. Finally, the names of the expurgators, Dominico Irosolimitano, Alessro Scipione and Giovanni Dominico Carretto, testify that this work did not leave Italy. Eilburg is thought to have been back in Poland by 1553, and consequently spending time in Silesian prisons for several years. The first expurgation took place in 1597 the second in 1628. Eliezer Eilburg must have certainly passed away by then.

Foreign Civil Marriage in the Israeli Legal System

Mariusz Kałczewiak

The phenomenon of foreign marriages was one of the most important trends of Israeli marital law at the beginning of the 21st century. Thousands of couples contracted marriages in various countries (mainly Cyprus and in Europe), subsequently registering their marriages at the Israeli population registry. This phenomenon originates from the lack of civil marriage in Israeli law that forces citizens to search for alternatives to the Jewish orthodox marriage that they cannot or do not wish to contract. The Israeli judicial system, characterized by the principle of precedence, allows the registration of a foreign marriage, and grants it with a status equal to marriages contracted at the rabbinate. Further developments included legalization of foreign same-sex marriages, an improvement of the legal situation of common law marriages and the possibility of civil unions between Israelis 'without religion'. The introduction of the long awaited civil marriage still remains problematic.

Character of Israeli marital law

Marital law is a sphere where we can analyze the attitude of the state towards religion, as well as the interaction between them. In the majority of western countries, matters of marriage and divorce historically used to belong to the domain of the Church. However, following the development of a liberal democracy, the state included these matters in its own regulations. In the West, among the most common contemporary models, we can mention a model combining both state and religious jurisdiction over marriage and divorce (as in Poland), or the model reserving the exclusive jurisdiction of the state authorities. In Israel, however, the only available form of marriage is the religious ceremony. The society of this country, originating from the European tradition, aware of the contractual and egalitarian character of marriage in the western world, to a great extent does not want to accept the presence of religion in public life and the imposition of the 'archaic legal norms' on a modern, and to a greater extent, secular society. As

a result, the needs of many citizens are ignored and the basic freedom of shaping family life is limited.

The only form of marriage recognized in the State of Israel is the religious marriage between members of the same religious community. The marriage ceremony is performed in front of a religious body, in the case of Jews, in front of a rabbinic court. Israelis belonging to other denominations can marry at their respective tribunals, such as Christian, Muslim or Druze ones. A marriage between the members of two different religions is impossible in Israel. Marriage between Jews who belong to the Conservative or Reform Movements cannot be contracted in Israel as the rabbinical courts responsible for marriage are exclusively orthodox¹ (partners can however decide for non-recognized marriage performed by their Reform or Conservative rabbi or to contract it at an orthodox rabbinical court, subordinating to the supremacy of the orthodox community).

Marital law that allows only the endogamous marriage within one's religious community underlines an ethno-religious concept of national identity. We could understand it as a message saying that "in the Jewish state, Jews should marry in the Jewish way". Jewish marriage is the manifestation of the Jewish character of the state. This manifestation is also important for secular Israelis. Under pressure from the family, because of the common character of religious orthodox marriage and the lower costs of this ceremony, many couples decide to resign from their criticism concerning the relation between state and religion and to choose the orthodox form of marriage. Tabory and Levtzur believe that even secular Israelis quite often consider the religious marriage an important component of Israeli collective identity.²

Regulation of the matters of divorce and marriage is one of the main conflict areas between secular and religious groups within Israeli society. The secularist cannot accept the fact that the state forces them to marry in front of the religious authorities (in 2000, 60% of Israeli Jews supported the introduction of civil marriage in Israel³). The concept of separation of state and religion, that has its origins in the doctrine of liberalism,⁴ has never been implemented in the

¹ Schneor Zalman Abramov, *Perpetual Dilemma. Jewish Religion in the Jewish State*, (Cranbury: Fairleigh Dickinson, 1976), p. 196.

² Ephraim Tabory, Sharon Shalev Levtzur, *Crossing the Threshold: State, Religion, and opposition to legally-imposed religious weddings*, in: *Review of Religious Research*, 50,3 (2009), p. 272.

³ Ibid. p. 264.

⁴ Michał Pietrzak, *Demokratyczne, świeckie państwo prawne*, (Warszawa: Liber, 1999), pp. 125-127.

Israeli legal system. The situation in Israel resembles more a model of a confessional state, present for example in Greece or Norway. The fact of granting the orthodox authorities the exclusive rights concerning marriage and divorce in Israel is an example of direct correlation between state and religion, hard to reconcile with the idea of a laic state. In Israel, control over the matters of marriage belongs to the orthodox rabbis, who apply in their judgments solely according to halachic laws.

The monopoly of Orthodox Judaism could be considered as a paradox when we analyze the attitude towards religion among Jewish Israelis. Research carried out by the Israeli Democracy Institute in 2002, reveals that 44% of Israeli Jews define themselves as secular-unreligious, 5% as secular anti-religious. The ultra-orthodox and orthodox population is respectively, 5% and 12%. The others define themselves as traditionalists.⁵

The relationship between the orthodox and secular Jews is a tense one. 82% of Israelis believe that the relations between these two social groups are bad, while only 2% describe them as good. Researchers, such as Tabory and Levtzur,⁶ underline that the animosities between secular and religious Jews are not based on mutual hostility between the two groups, but rather on the critique of the secularist towards the engagement of the state in religious issues. Secular Israelis are against the privileges enjoyed exclusively by the orthodox community, such as exemption from conscription and scholarships for yeshiva students. Controversial are also regulations limiting the freedom of secular Israelis, such as the lack of public transport in many municipalities during Shabbat or limiting the artistic activities during the Jewish holidays.

Tabory and Levtzur believe that in daily life the interactions between the two groups are rather friendly. They state that secular Israelis “have learned” that religion is interfering in their daily life, and adjusted to it. They know that concerning marriage, funerals etc., they need to refer to the religious authorities, despite the fact that their life model is unreligious or anti-religious.

Despite the opposition of secular Israelis towards the imposition of Jewish religious norms, Israelis rarely rebel against this situation. According to research from 2006, the majority of Israelis married or wanted to get married at the rabbinate. 60% of them believed, however,

⁵ Cf. Shlomit Levy, Hanna Levinsohn, Elihu Katz, *A Portrait of Israeli Jewry: Beliefs, Observances, and Values Among Israeli Jews 2000*, (Jerusalem: Israel Democracy Institute and the Avi Chai Foundation, 2002).

⁶ Tabory, Levtzur (see note 2), p. 263.

that it is necessary to introduce civil marriage in Israel. Currently, around 21% of unreligious and 9% of traditional Jewish Israelis married abroad in a civil ceremony.⁷

Every year in Israel, around 26,000 couples decide to marry. Between 2000 and 2005, 32,000 couples decided to marry abroad. Consequently, we can extrapolate that around 20% of all marrying couples decided to marry abroad. According to Tabory and Levtzur, 5% of the couples marrying abroad, are couples who are allowed to marry at the rabbinate, but refuse to do so, in order to manifest their dissatisfaction with the control of the orthodox establishment over the matters of marriage in Israel.

According to estimates of the organization *Mishapacha Hadasha* that advocates the introduction of civil marriage in Israel, around 10% of all marriages recognized in Israel are mixed. In Israeli context, by mixed marriage we understand a situation when spouses are not recognized as members of the same religious community by the authorities responsible for marriage.⁸

One of the main social groups that is interested in civil marriage abroad are Soviet immigrants and their descendants. The chief rabbinate often does not recognize their Jewishness and refuses to marry them. According to estimations of Yair Sheleg from the Israel Democracy Institute, in 2006, 264,000 Jewish Israelis could not marry at the rabbinate.⁹

Among the reasons mentioned by couples who decide on the civil ceremony abroad we can differentiate with the following reasons:¹⁰

a) A wish to express individualism: the research of Tabory and Levtzur shows that persons who are explaining their decision not to marry at the rabbinate, emphasize that the religious ceremony does not offer a space for individual elements, is characterized by power relation (from the side of the rabbinate). The manifestation of Jewishness/Israeliness through religious marriage, for this group of people does not have any importance. They explain that the marriage ceremony is for

⁷ Ibid. p. 264.

⁸ '1 in 10 Marriages in Israel is Mixed', <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3362030,00.html>, (21 April 2012).

⁹ Yair Sheleg, *Not Halakhically Jewish: The Dilemma of Non-Jewish Immigrants to Israel*, (Jerusalem: Israel Democracy Institute, 2004).

¹⁰ Tabory, Levtzur (see note 2), p. 268.

them rather a form of expressing mutual commitment than a manifestation of commitment towards the state or religion.

b) The unequal position of women and men in the marriage ceremony: in the orthodox ceremony the man has the superior role, he 'takes' the woman, only he puts the wedding ring on the woman's finger, only he is symbolically breaking a wine cup. In the reform and civil ceremonies the position of men and women is equal; in the civil ceremony both man and woman are parties of a contract.

c) Criticism towards the involvement of the orthodox rabbinate in state issues: respondents who decide for the reform or conservative ceremonies (not acknowledged by the state) quite often do not oppose religion as such, but rather the influences of the orthodox on issues that belong to the public sphere/jurisdiction. Whereas the ones who decide for a civil marriage abroad express their emancipation from the religious norms and their liberal world view.

Nevertheless, the majority of Israelis decide for a Jewish orthodox marriage in Israel. Non-religious couples who decide on the religious marriage have mentioned the following reasons:¹¹

a) Common character of orthodox marriage in Israel: the couples underline that their decision to marry in this form was influenced by the fact that the orthodox marriage is commonly accepted. Many couples do not want to break the social consensus on this issue.

b) Fear of family anger: the couples interviewed by Tabory and Levtzur indicated that one of the reasons to choose the religious ceremony was the fear of family anger when they had decided for the violation of traditional social norms. Some respondents pointed out that the families who would describe themselves as secular, when it came to marriage, did insist on the religious orthodox ceremony. Cases when the family tried to force the couple to marry at the rabbinate also occurred.

c) Easier procedure: the researchers indicate that some couples characterize the orthodox ceremony in Israel as an easier form of marriage from a formal point of view: there is no need to subsequently register it; there is no need to cover travel costs.

¹¹ Ibid. pp. 265-271.

Development of the attitude of Israeli authorities towards mixed and civil marriages

The fact that in Israel people cannot marry in a civil ceremony needs to be understood in relation to the role of the family and religion in the process of shaping and redefining Jewish religious and national communities. Researchers, such as Satlow or Triger underline that the ban on mixed marriage was a tool of separating “us”, the Jews, and “them”, all other peoples or nations. It was a community building mechanism, contributing to the development of the Jewish nation.¹² In orthodox Judaism, mixed marriage started to be forbidden around 458 B.C. Then, the criteria of belonging in Jewish community ceased to be purely religious, and adopted a new, ethno-national character.

The attitude of the new Israeli state towards mixed marriage was significantly influenced by the same approach. One of the main goals of leaders of the new state was the construction of an ethno-national community of Israeli Jews. Forbidding mixed marriages, Israeli legislators were strengthening the importance of endogamic marriage and consequently the construction of a homogenous national community.

The Israeli marital law, by the decision of secular politicians, was transmitted under the control of orthodox rabbinic courts. The main law dealing with these matters is the Rabbinical Courts Jurisdiction Law (Marriage and Divorce) from 1953, where we read that the marriage between Jews in Israel is performed at the rabbinical courts.¹³ Consequently, full jurisdiction over the matters of marriage and divorce of Jews in Israel started to be a religious problem, rather than a matter of public civil law.

As long ago as the 1950s Israelis tried to confront this archaic legislation. Some decided to marry abroad and then to register the marriage in Israel. Their attempts were rather futile. A mile stone concerning the rights of Israelis to marry in a civil ceremony was the case of *Schlesinger-Funk vs. Ministry of Interior*.¹⁴ The case was brought to court by a Jewish citizen of Israel who had married a Catholic woman from Belgium. The ceremony was performed by the

¹² Zvi Triger, ‘The Gendered Racial Formation: Foreign Men, ‘Our’ Women, and Law’, in: *Rutgers University Women's Rights Law Reporter*, 30 (2009), p. 31.

¹³ Article 1. Of this law states: “Matters of marriage and divorce of Jews in Israel, being nationals or residents of the State, shall be under exclusive jurisdiction of rabbinical courts”.

¹⁴ HCJ 143/62.

British consul on Cyprus. The couple applied later to register their marriage in the register of marriages of the Israeli Ministry of Interior. The employee refused to register their marriage, stating that mixed marriages are not valid in Israel. Analyzing this case in 1963, the Supreme Court of Israel stated, however, that the civil register has only statistical character, while the ministry official, refusing to register the mixed marriage, attempted to shape the personal status of the couple. This sentence is considered a factual recognition of civil marriages contracted abroad.

However, Israeli authorities still look on marriages contracted abroad with suspicion, especially, when one of the marrying persons is not Jewish or Israeli. Then, as reports Oded Feller from the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, the Ministry of Interior often makes difficulties concerning the legalization of the stay of the foreign partner in Israel or the regulation of the civil status of the foreign spouse. Especially problematic is the situation when a Palestinian is one side of the foreign marriage. Since 2008, the Israeli government refuses to analyze the application for the status of permanent resident, presented by Palestinian spouses of Israelis. Zvi Trigger underlines that apart from the formal difficulties concerning the registration of the foreign marriage in Israel, the couples experience also personal troubles. The officials often treat these marriages with suspicion, believing that they are aimed at circumvention of the law.

The attitude of the Israeli authorities towards mixed marriage needs to be related to the broader context of the interest of the state in limiting exogamic relationships. Marriage, according to the national-religious discourse, is not aimed at the happiness of the bride and groom, or at strengthening their relationship. Its main goal is the establishment of a Jewish family, where Jewish children will be born, becoming later loyal citizens of the State of Israel. Marriage is in Israel a mechanism of creation and preservation of an exclusively Jewish national-religious community.

Implications of the recognition of a foreign civil marriage.

Case Jane Doe vs. Regional Rabbinical Court of Tel Aviv-Yaffo

The 'gate' to the recognition of civil marriages contracted abroad, opened with the precedential case of Schlesinger-Funk, contributed to further legal developments, concerning the matters of marriage and divorce. The recognition of foreign civil marriages also resulted in the recognition of foreign marriages of same-sex couples.

The milestone case concerning homosexual couples was case *Yossi Ben Ari against the Ministry of Interior*.¹⁵ In this case five same sex Israeli couples married in Canada between 2003 and 2005, in a civil ceremony, and later applied to the population registry to change their civil status in Israeli documents. The official of the population registry informed them that the update of their civil status is impossible as same sex marriages are not recognized in the State of Israel. The couples decided to bring the case before the Supreme Court. They claimed that the decision of the registry official limits their ability to shape their own family life and discriminates against homosexual persons. During the proceedings, the ministry stated that the Israeli legal system does not recognize same sex marriage, and therefore the analogy to the case Schlesinger-Funk is unjustified. The Ministry also underlined that the issues concerning the right to marry of homosexuals should be debated in the Knesset, and not in court.

The position of homosexual couples was supported by the respected *President Emeritus* of the Israeli Supreme Court, Aharon Barak. Referring to the case Funk-Schlesinger, he underlined that the character of the activities of the population registry is purely statistical.¹⁶ The officials should take into consideration solely the marriage documents presented by the applicants, and not the specifics of Israeli legislation concerning same-sex marriage. In the final ruling, the Supreme Court stated that the official of the population registry should update the civil status of the mentioned couples, otherwise, he would be usurping the rights of the legislative.

The case of *Ben Ari vs. Ministry of Interior* led to the recognition of same sex marriages contracted abroad. The current position of homosexual couples is equal to the position of heterosexual unmarried couples, whose relationship is recognized by the state (*yeduim be-tsibur*).

¹⁵ H CJ 3045/05.

¹⁶ H CJ 3045/205, Israel Law Reports 283, 206, pp. 302-304.

An indirect result of the recognition of foreign civil marriages in Israel, is also a loss of the rabbinate's monopoly and their position of power. Recognition of other than religious forms of marriage, introduced to the Israeli legal system a possibility of manifesting the dissatisfaction with the privileges of orthodox Judaism, and leading a life without any need to subordinate to it.

The position of the rabbinate was also symbolically and practically weakened by the precedential case *Jane Doe vs. Regional Rabbinical Court of Tel Aviv Yaffa*,¹⁷ from 2003. Previously, civil marriages contracted abroad were not recognized by the rabbinate, and consequently could not be dissolved in Israel.

The case concerned two Jewish Israeli citizens who in 1987 married on Cyprus in a civil ceremony. During the following years the marital life of the spouses deteriorated and in 2001 the husband brought a divorce suit, demanding that the court alternatively confirm either that he is not married, according to Jewish law, or grant a divorce. In the sentence from the 7 April 2002 the rabbinical court of Tel Aviv declared that the couple is not married according to the Halacha, as the civil ceremony on Cyprus does meet the criteria of a Jewish marriage. The court also stated that there are no prerequisites for the dissolution of the marriage by a *get* (i.e. rabbinic divorce document). The Rabbinical Court explained as well that both the man and woman are eligible to contract new marriages.¹⁸

On 30 July 2002 the woman appealed to the Great Rabbinical Court claiming that the sentence of the Tel Aviv court was related solely to verification of their status in the religious law, and did not concern at all the question of the civil marriage they had contracted. She raised the argument that in order to dissolve the marriage the court needs to indicate the basis of its dissolution. She also claimed that the declaratory sentence is not dissolving the civil marriage contracted abroad.¹⁹

The Great Rabbinical Court, in its sentence of 5 February 2003, stated that the regional rabbinical courts in Israel are eligible to dissolve marriages either by *get* or divorce decree. The declaratory sentence stating that the couple is not married is considered to be unsatisfactory. The

¹⁷ H CJ 2232/03.

¹⁸ H CJ 2232/03, Israel Law Reports, 245, 2006, p. 248.

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 248.

Great Rabbinical Court advised the woman to turn once again to the Rabbinical Court of Tel-Aviv that is supposed to *explicitly* dissolve a civil marriage.²⁰

The Regional Rabbinical Court complied with the ruling of the Great Rabbinical Court and complemented its sentence with a decree dissolving the civil marriage. Subsequently, the woman appealed for cassation to the Supreme Court of Israel, stating that the fact that consensus of both parties is legally not required for the dissolution of marriage. She also claimed that the fact the couple was not bounded by Jewish marriage cannot be a basis of the dissolution of the civil marriage.²¹

Before considering the claim the Supreme Court of Israel referred to the Great Rabbinical Court with the following legal questions:

what law was the basis for the dissolution of the civil marriage?

what is the basis of the dissolution of marriage according to this law?

if the application of one party is satisfactory to dissolve the marriage?

In the complementary sentence the Great Rabbinical Court stated that the law that should be applied for the dissolution of civil marriage is the Jewish religious law. The halachic basis for the dissolution of these marriages the court found in the so called “Laws of Noah's Children”. The court underlined that although the Torah contains specific laws concerning the marriage and divorce of Jews, these are not exempt from the law that should be commonly applied. The Court stated that only Jews have the right to the sanctity of marriage (*kiddushin*), whereas the right to marriage (*nisu'in*) is universal. The court derived subsequently that the ones who are exempt from the laws of *kiddushin*, are not subjected to the specific Jewish divorce laws.²²

The Great Rabbinical Court stated that civil marriages of Jews are considered to be marriages according to “the Laws of Noah's Children”, which implies that also dissolution of those marriages should be conducted according to these laws. The court mentioned that earlier this form of marriage was dissolved by the factual end of conjugal life, but today, taking into account the common character of civil marriage, civil marriages should be dissolved by a

²⁰ Ibid. p. 249.

²¹ Ibid. p. 250.

²² HCJ 2232/03, *Israel Law Reports* 2006, p. 245.

divorce decree of a competent religious or state court. In Israel, according to the Rabbinical Courts Jurisdiction Law (Marriage and Divorce),²³ the jurisdiction in these matters belongs to the regional rabbinical courts.

Answering the second question of the Supreme Court, the Great Rabbinical Court stated that the halachic basis for the divorce is not valid if the marriage is not Jewish. The basis of the dissolution of this marriage should be the improbability of reconciliation between the spouses.

The Great Rabbinical Court explained that the consent of both husband and wife is not obligatory for the dissolution of civil marriage. When there is no chance of a harmonious marital life, the court dissolves the marriage if one of the spouses applies for that. The halachic basis of divorce is not taken into account.

In the final ruling the Supreme Court did not accept the cassation claim of the woman, and confirmed the validity of foreign civil marriages in the Israeli legal system. The court underlined that if the marriage involves a foreign element the rules of international private law should be applied. In the sentence the court put emphasis on the fact that the legal order should take into account the social reality of Israel when thousands of people decide to marry abroad and the basic right to independently shape one's family life.

The aforementioned case, led to a redefinition of the proceedings concerning the dissolution of these marriages in Israel. Following this sentence, the rabbinic courts, the only authority in Israel allowed to dissolve marriages, need to recognize civil marriages performed abroad, and are obliged to dissolve these marriages, when the complete disintegration of marital life occurs. The consent of both parties is not obligatory (contradictory to the dissolution of halachic marriage), and the application of one party is satisfactory.

The case of Jane Doe was a precedence that led to further disintegration of the orthodox supremacy concerning marriage in Israel. This sentence could be considered an important adjustment of the legal norms to the specifics of life in a modern Israel.

Future of Israeli marital law

²³ Art.1, Rabbinical Courts Jurisdiction Law (Marriage and Divorce) 1953, http://www.knesset.gov.il/review/data/eng/law/kns2_rabbiniccourts_eng.pdf, (10 February 2012).

It is hard to predict how Israeli marital law will develop. Concerning the high birth rates of ultraorthodox families, and emigration of secular Israelis to Europe, we could assume a further intensification of the conflict between the secular and the religious sector of society. The development of the religious education system could also influence a decrease in the role of state authorities. However, referring to the recent regulations concerning the matters of marriage in Israel, we can suspect that the phenomenon of marrying abroad would rather lose in importance. We should take into account the regulations concerning concubinage that give couples living in these relationships, rights almost equal to the rights of married couples. Among the laws that grant the partners of common law marriage the rights similar or equal to the rights of spouses we can mention:

Real Estate Taxation Law (article 62 allows the cohabitating partners to benefit from tax exemptions concerning the sale of property)

Family Courts Law (cohabitating partners are considered family members)

Among the court rulings concerning the position of common marriage partners we could point out the following:

Case of Lindorn vs. Karnit²⁴ that enabled the cohabitating spouses to benefit (similarly to married couples) from compensation from insurance companies in the case of a car accident.

Case of Ephrat vs. Population Evidence Official²⁵ that allows the cohabitating partners to change their last name to the name of the partner.

Paradoxically we can find legal regulations that give preference to common law marriages over the stately acknowledged marriage in rabbinate. For instance, the widow/widower of a soldier who died in battle is allowed to receive social benefits as long as he or she does not enter into

²⁴ C.A. 2000/97 *Lindorn v. Karnit*, 55(1) P.D. 12.

²⁵ HCJ 693/91.

another marriage. Common law partners are, however, exempt from this regulation. As a result many widows/widowers decide not to formalize their new relationships.²⁶

Analyzing the popularity of foreign civil marriages we need to observe as well the development of the *brit zugiut*, a new regulation that allows people who do not have any religion,²⁷ a civil marriage in Israel. According to estimates, in Israel there live around 300,000 people who are registered as having 'no religion'. According to this bill, if both spouses (man and woman only) do not have any religion, their civil union can be registered. These marriages are supposed to be registered at the newly created Marriage Registrar Bureau. The new law is extremely controversial: leftist and liberal circles describe as a "thin marriage bill", being a substitute for the universally available civil marriage. Criticism is also related to the fact that it is up to the Chief Rabbinate to decide who has or does not have recognized religious status. There is no formal procedure that allows leaving the Jewish religious community. A recent precedence could open a gate to the court proceeding allowing non-religious Jews to be registered as having "no religion".²⁸

This new possibility of limited civil marriage could lead to a decrease of the rate of foreign marriages. It could also be perceived as the first step towards the introduction of a commonly available civil marriage.

²⁶ Shahar Lifshitz, 'The External Rights of Cohabiting Couples in Israel', *Israel Law Review*, 37 (2003/2004), p. 16.

²⁷ A regulation from November 2010 for Persons who are not considered members of any of the recognized religious communities, such as many descendants of Soviet Jews.

²⁸ 'Writer Yoram Kaniuk to be registered as 'no religion'', Joanna Paraszczuk, *Jerusalem Post*, <http://www.jpost.com/NationalNews/Article.aspx?id=240278>, (22 April 2012).

The Books of Testaments of Prague Jews from the End of the 17th to the Middle of the 18th Century

Tomáš Krákora

The article deals with the two oldest books of testaments of Prague Jews which were composed in the Prague during the years 1681-1756 and 1740-1773 and today are located in Prague City Archives. The books do not only include just last wills but also probate and property inventories, quittances and donations. This article is made up of several parts – testaments in Jewish tradition, Jewish testamentary practice in the Czech lands based on narrative sources and the analysis of the books of testaments themselves. The main aim of the paper is to introduce Jewish last wills from various points of view including; origin, circumstances and causes of creation, typology of inscriptions, contents, language, devotional devises etc. Two appendixes (indexes of records of both books of testaments and transcription of the testament of Joseph Veitl Fanta) are attached at the end of the contribution.

Introduction

The following paper is based on the Bachelor thesis that I finished in 2010 as well as continually proceeding research. In my Bachelor's thesis called, *The Books of Testaments of Prague Jews from the End of the 17th to the Middle of the 18th Century*, I dealt with the two oldest books of testaments of Prague Jews which were composed in Prague during the years 1681-1756 and 1740-1773 and nowadays are placed in the Prague City Archives.

In this paper I focus on the basics of legal standing of last wills in Jewish tradition and on the genesis of Jewish testamentary practice in the Czech Lands. In the key part of the paper I will subsequently analyze the mentioned books with regards to origin, circumstances and causes of creation, typology of inscriptions, contents, dating, testator, language, devotional devises etc. The main aim of my article is to draw the readers and researchers attention to these sources that are not yet fully appreciated.

Testament in Jewish Tradition

Indications of testamentary practice can already be found in the Hebrew Bible, the Tanakh. The last will is there primarily to understand as to how a father could pass on the orders of the right way of life to his sons and other descendants. This passing on of such orders became part of the ritual of blessing (this can be, for instance, identified in the well known narration about Itzhak and his sons¹). Indications of testamentary practice can be repeatedly identified in various historiographic books of the Tanakh (for instance, the end of Achitofel's life²). A frequently quoted passage referring to the necessity of making last wills before one's death is the speech of Isaiah the prophet to King Hezekiah.³

Testaments in Jewish tradition are called *tzavva'ah* (צוואה). Rabbinical Judaism distinguishes

three different forms of wills, each governed by different legal rules as regards their time of coming into effect and their scope and manner of execution. These are: *mattenat* (or *zavva'at*) *bari*, i.e., a gift (literally) by a healthy person; *mattenat* (or *zavva'at*) *shekhiv me-ra*, i.e., a gift by a person critically ill; and *mezavveh mehamat mitah*, i.e., a gift in contemplation of death.⁴

In rabbinic literature the topic of testamentary practice is discussed many times. However, their analysis is not the subject of this contribution.⁵

¹ Gen 27, 27-29.

² 2 Sam 17, 23.

³ 2 Kings 20, 1 and Is 38, 1.

⁴ *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. XXI. (Detroit/Jerusalem: Macmillan and Keter Publishing House, 2007), pp. 65-67.

⁵ For further study: Joseph Rivlin, *Inheritance and Wills in Jewish Law*, Hebrew (Ramt Gan: Bar-Ilan-University Press, 1999); Menachem Elon, *Jewish Law. History, Sources, Principles I.-IV.* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1994); Levi Bodenheimer, *Das Testament unter der Benennung einer Erbschaft* (Krefeld: E. Gehrich & Comp., 1847); Moses Mendelssohn, *Ritualgesetze der Juden, betreffend Erbschaften, Vormundschaften, Testamente und Ehesachen in so weit sie das Mein und Dein angehen* (Ofen: Paul Burian, 1819).

Beginnings of Testamentary Practice in the Czech Lands Testaments and Law

Statuta Judaeorum - as one of the oldest and most important privileges issued by the Czech King Přemysl Otakar II in the second half of the 13th century - presented the legal basis of the status of Jews in the Czech Lands during the whole period of the Middle Ages.⁶ Unfortunately, when reading the document we come to the conclusion that none of the clauses deal with the problems of drawing up wills, inheritance or testamentary practice. The very first remaining written mention of patrimonial rights and the possibility of bequeathing one's possessions we find in *Majestas Carolina*. The well-known code of laws issued by Charles IV in April 1348 and cancelled in 1355 contained a chapter called *De hereditatibus Judaeorum* (the regulation defined the relationship between the heir and the ruler).⁷ Charles IV issued another privilege on 30 September 1356⁸ and his son, Wenceslaus IV, on 14 June 1393.⁹ However, both documents followed preceding directions defined in the already mentioned *Statuta Judaeorum* and did not bring any new approach. The first known instruction concerning last wills can be identified in *The Book of Privileges of the Old Town of Prague* from 1440.¹⁰ According to this regulation putting pressure on the testator was strictly prohibited. Nevertheless, the privilege issued by Ladislav Pohrobek on 17 May 1454¹¹ again just copied those by Přemysl Otakar II. The same attitude was assumed by all monarchs that ruled from the end of the 15th to the middle of the 18th century. None of them dealt with the matter of last wills of Czech Jews.

Despite the fact that rulers did not solve the testamentary practice Prague Jews did. An important illustration of testamentary practice is a letter by Prague Jews from 15 March 1601 according to which testament making in attendance of the sworn scribe and *schulklopper* is lawful.¹²

⁶ Bohumil Bondy, František Dvorský, *K historii Židů v Čechách, na Moravě a v Slezsku 906 až 1620 I.* (Prague: Bohumil Bondy, 1906), pp. 15-22.

⁷ Ibid. p. 61.

⁸ Jaromír Čelakovský (ed.), *Codex iuris municipalis regni Bohemiae I. (CIM)*, (Prague: Grégra, 1886), pp. 99-100.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 179-181.

¹⁰ Bondy, Dvorský (see note 6), vol. I., p. 110.

¹¹ CIM I. (see note 8), pp. 237-238.

¹² Bondy, Dvorský (see note 6), vol. II., pp. 740-741.

Indication of Testament Practice in other Sources

In historical sources we can identify many examples of Jewish testamentary practice. The first thematic group is the area of inheritance - in some sources there are mention of Jews and their heirs (for instance Berthold Bretholz in his edition of sources registered the note from 23 April 1378 according to which debts must be paid to the Jews and their heirs).¹³

The second thematic group is formed by bequests and contracts that represent free disposal of property (such illustrations can be for example identified among Pilsen's charters – one such note was recorded on 14 January 1410 when a Jew called Mekl passed on all his property on to his son, Zalman).¹⁴ However, such mentions are not proper testaments as will be discussed later. The first certain preserved testament is the last will of Mordechai Meisel who was one of the most famous Prague Jews ever – the document was written down on 1 March 1601.¹⁵ The permission to write it down was granted by King and Emperor Rudolf II, on 25 February 1598.¹⁶ This testament as well as the circumstances of its creation were elaborately examined by Alexander Kisch in 1893.¹⁷

The Oldest Books of Jewish Testaments placed in the Prague City Archives – General Characteristic

Two books of testaments I worked with are the oldest that are preserved in the Prague City Archives – they date back to the years 1681–1756¹⁸ and 1740-1773.¹⁹

The first of them includes 305 folios and is completely filled with writing; the second one contains 192 folios – that makes for approximately half of the book, the rest of the folios are

¹³ Berthold Bretholz, *Quellen zur Geschichte der Juden in Mähren vom XI. bis zum XV. Jahrhundert 1067-1411* (Prague: Taussig und Taussig, 1935), p. 149.

¹⁴ Josef Strnad (ed.), *Listář královského města Plzně a druhdy poddaných osad, vol. II. 1450-1526* (Pilsen: J. R. Port-a, 1905), pp. 611-612.

¹⁵ Bondy, Dvorský (see note 6), vol. II., pp. 732-737.

¹⁶ Ibid. pp. 697-700.

¹⁷ Cf. Alexander Kisch, *Das Testament Mardochai Meysels* (Frankfurt am Main: J. Kaufmann, 1893).

¹⁸ Prague City Archves (PCA), Collection of Manuscripts, Book of testaments 1681-1756, sign. 4816.

¹⁹ PCA, Collection of Manuscripts, Book of testaments 1740-1773, sign. 4817.

blank. All records are written in *kurrent*, also known as the old German script, just a few words adopted from Latin used humanistic cursive (English round hand), scribes often changed.

Both books also incorporate indexes, which are placed at the beginning. Those registers were written both in Czech and German. I would like to point out that records carried into those books are not original and authentic documents but the secondary form of confirmation and as such accomplished the whole testamentary process.

Typology of Records

In the examined books of testaments I identified various types of records that differ not just in form and content, but also in the way of production. According to these criteria I divided all the records into four categories – testaments, inventories, donations and quittances.

Testaments can be defined as a legal act of free disposal of property when the testator himself made his last will in the presence of testifiers, whereas the inventory (or the list of material possessions) was composed without the presence of a testator. The absence of the owner of the listed property can be as a result of either death or escaping from the country. In such cases the inventory was recorded by the widow or a municipal clerk. Donations firstly appear in the second book I investigated; their form is highly similar to testaments. In these cases both types of records apparently refer to the same legal act, the difference is just in the title of documents. As quittances we mark supplements, ascribing or extension of the testamentary procedure.

The frequency of the occurrence of all mentioned types of records is shown in the following chart:

Type of Record	Book of testament 1681-1756	Book of testament 1740-1773
Testament	40	11
Inventory	18	20
Donation	0	7
Quittance	34	0

Composition of Records

Testaments

In the first stage the authentic last will written in Hebrew or Judeo-German was created. In the majority of testaments we know about this initial phase from brief notes from those last wills themselves: „Das jüdische original Testament de dato den 20. Julii Anno 1722 lauthet also...“²⁰

In other cases this formulation is also extended by information about the translator from the Hebrew or Judeo-German original version of the testament:

auß dem wahren jüdischen Original, durch Joachimb Ißrael geschwornen Schreiber, und Lemmel Lichtenstatt geschwornen Schulklepper der Prager Judenschafft, ins teutsche übertragen worden.²¹

The second stage is presented by the declaration upon oath of the already mentioned testifiers, representatives of the Jewish community – scribe and *schulkopfer*. Such testimonies took place in the municipal office of the Old Town in Prague. Proof of this stage can also be identified in testaments recorded in the examined books:

Anno 1724 den 7. Monathstag Novemb. haben in der untern Kantzley der König. Alten Stadt Prag dem herkommen nach: Marcus Fanta geschwornen Schreiber, undt Wolff Sellick geschwornen Schuelklepper der Prager Judenschafft bey Ihren ob sich tragenden Aydespflichten folgendes ausgesaget...²²

The last two stages were strictly administrative processes. Each testament was primarily released in the Council of the Old Town:

²⁰ PCA, sign. 4816 (see note 18), Testament of Chayemb Auerbach from 11 August 1722, fol. 31r.

²¹ Ibid. Testament of Isak Marek Saxle from 25 April 1691, fol. 6v.

²² Ibid. Testament of Dawid Wälliss from 7 November 1724, fol. 51v.

Praevia contestatione Testium publicatum hoc Testamentum in Cons. Ant. Urbis Prag. die 25. Sept. A. 1732. Norbert Plattner Syndicus²³ and subsequently certified: „Confirmatum hoc Testamentum in Cons. Ant. Urbis Pragensis die 15. Decemb. 1732. Adalberth Bernardt Syndicus.²⁴

Inventory

As I said before, the inventory was compiled in the case of death or in desertion. If it was death the main initiator and author was the widowed wife:

Anno 1727 den 9. Junii ist von mir Lippet alß nach den verstorbenen Israel Küche Goldtschmidt hinterlassene Wittib Prager Judin, über die nach gleich gedachten Israel Küche Goldtschmidt hinterbliebene Verlaßenschafft ein Inventarium auffgerichtet worden²⁵ or some of the municipal clerks: „Anno 1743 den 31 Monaths Tag Magi ist in gegenwarth des Wohl Edl gestrengen herrn Frantz Piatl dann des auch Wohl Edl gestrenden herrn Wentzl Reisman von Risenfeldt als von einen Löb. Magistrat der König. Alten haubt Stadt Prag aus dero Raths Mittel destutirten Commisarien, die nach dem verstorbenen Simon Abracham Duschenes hinterbliebene Verlassenschafft gerichtlich inventiert und beschrieben worden wie folget.²⁶

In the case of runaway Jews, the inventory was arranged by a municipal officer according to the examined books of testaments.

Quittances

²³ PCA, sign. 4816 (see note 18), Testament of Vögele Buntzlin from 24 September 1732, fol. 107v.

²⁴ Ibid. fol. 108r.

²⁵ Ibid. Inventory of Israel Küche from 9 June 1727, fol. 68r-v.

²⁶ Ibid. Inventory of Schimon Abraham Duscheneß from 31 May 1743, fol. 222v.

The origin of quittance is directly dependent on the composition of testaments – without the existence of testaments there would not be any quittance. The quittance presents a personal confirmation of realization/non-realization of the testator's last will:

Ich Endes unterschriebener urkunde und bekenne hiemit Crafft gegenwärtiger qvittung vor jedermännig. absonderlich alda und woh zue produciren von nöthen wäre, dem nach der nunmehr abgelebte Joseph Feitl Fanta gewester Prager Judt, mir in seinen den 8. April 1733 gefertiget den 8. Juli hujus anni bey einem Löbl. Magistrat diesser König. Alten Stadt Prag publicirt und den 20. Aug. eodem anno confirmirtes Testament puncto primo fünff hundert guldens verschaffet, und solche mir an meinem Bruder Arje Fanta, alss dessen constituirten universal Erben die bezahlung zu bekommen angewiessen hat [...] sothane richtig abgestattet hat, dahero ich demselben über solchen richtigen empfang [...] qvittire.²⁷

Testator

For purposes of historical research what is most interesting and useful is additional information included in a will, mainly concerning the testator himself/herself as well as objects of the contract. Testaments, in addition to rather obvious details such as name, property background, kinship, etc., occasionally indicate not only the profession of the deviser, but some of them also include extra information about seats in the synagogues, or, for example, where the testator participated in religious ceremonies. As such, the examined testaments help us to learn more about Jews in Prague in the early modern period.

Generally, we can say that the inspected testaments document a number of different names from common and frequently occurring ones (e.g. Moyses, Isaac, Abraham, Simon, Löbl, David or, with respect to female testators, Cheye, Vögele, Güttele etc.) to some less common (see Appendix, table nos. 1 and 2).

²⁷ PCA, sign. 4816 (see note 18), Quittance of Chaye Fanta from 14 September 1733, fol. 124r-v.

Each testator in the entry is identified not just by his or her name, but also by gender. The majority of testators were represented by males; however, conclusive findings could be drawn only in case of larger samples of testaments.

	Number of testaments	Female	Male	Female %	Male %
Book of testaments 1681-1756	40	7	33	17,50%	82,50%
Book of testaments 1740-1773	11	2	9	18,20%	81,80%

Very interesting, but unfortunately not very frequent, are mention of the testators' professions. In most cases we can identify them in the core of the text, not, as we would wish, in the incipit. During my work for example a rabbi's testament,²⁸ a Levite's testament²⁹ or several testaments of cantors³⁰ appeared. Leadership of the secular administration of Prague Jewish community is represented three times in the records, by the Jewish Primate or Mayor.³¹ Another testator was a member of the Council of Elders.³²

In addition to these professions I also found in the preserved books the following references: innkeeper,³³ furrier,³⁴ goldsmith,³⁵ lawyer,³⁶ spirit-maker,³⁷ tailor,³⁸ bookbinder,³⁹ butcher,⁴⁰ pharmacist⁴¹ and barber.⁴²

²⁸ Ibid. Testament of David Oppenheim from 17 September 1739, fol. 173v.

²⁹ Ibid. Testament of Kalman Austerlitz from 8 March 1718, fol. 48r.

³⁰ PCA, sign. 4816 (see note 18), Inventory of Herschl Wiener from 6 May 1744, fol. 254r; PCA, sign. 4817 (see note 19), Inventory of Moyžiss Wolff from 1 December 1740, fol. 19r and also Inventory of Meschulem Iserles from 27 September 1740, fol. 35v.

³¹ PCA, sign. 4816 (see note 18), Inventory of Mojžiš Abeles from 16 November 1694, fol. 7r; PCA, sign. 4817 (see note 19), Inventory of Isaac Lowosycz from 10 October 1740, fol. 1r and also Inventory of Abraham Duschenes from 10 November 1758, fol. 78r.

³² PCA, sign. 4816 (see note 18), Testament of Aron Beer Wähle from 23 January 1742, fol. 213r.

³³ Ibid. Testament of Mayer Scheye Raudnitz from 7 March 1724, fol. 47v.

³⁴ Ibid. Testament of Dawid Wälliss from 7 November 1724, fol. 51v.

³⁵ Ibid. Inventory of Israel Küche from 9 June 1727, fol. 68r.

³⁶ Ibid. Quittance of Feitl Rubin from 5 June 1734, fol. 142r.

³⁷ Ibid. Testament of Chayem Tausig from 30 April 1734, fol. 153r.

³⁸ Ibid. Testament of Mayer Gunsburg from 2 November 1736, fol. 180r.

³⁹ Ibid. Quittance of Josl Herschl from 16 December 1739, fol. 196r.

Dating documents

All types of entries also include dating. Most testaments also provide information about the dates of the Hebrew original, publishing in the council of the Old Town of Prague and the subsequent confirmation of the testament by the same institution. The date is usually written in a combination of Latin and German that opens the text of the testament itself. On the other hand, dating of inventories and quittances are simpler - in most cases, dating is limited to the date of entering the text in a book and its subsequent confirmation by urban authorities. When studying the preserved material I found six places where Hebrew dating was used.⁴³

Language

In the first two books of Jewish testaments the German language dominates. All entries, whether they are testaments, inventories or quittances, are without exception written in this language. On the other hand, the majority of all 130 entries in both books contain also a title or incipit written conversely in the Czech language – however, using Czech is strictly restricted to headlines. Another language that appears in the examined books is Latin. Latin was used mainly for dating testaments and inventories by city authorities. Hebrew was not used – except for one isolated rarity

Meine Brüder bitte ich, Sie, sollen mir 11 Monath nach mein absterben bey Lehrnen undt anderen Brüderschafften, das gebeth Kadisch nachsagen und das abendt. gebeth wie auf Psalm **Lamnaceach**, vor meine Seel bethen, damit ich ruhig in meinen grab liegen

⁴⁰ Ibid. Testament of Schlomo Lasar from 27 October 1740, fol. 209v.

⁴¹ PCA, sign. 4817 (see note 19), Testament of Mischl Löbl Jeüteless from 22 November 1762, fol. 94r-v.

⁴² Ibid. Donation of Jekoff Salamon Mendl from 9 May 1770, fol. 149r.

⁴³ For example: „Daß jüdische Original Testament welches von den verstorbenen Khalman Schuester, ist aufgerichtet worden, lautet also: Heunt am Dienstag drey Tag in jüdischen Monath Thammus 486 der jüdischen kleinern Jahrzahl, das ist den 2. Julii 1726.“ PCA, sign. 4816 (see note 18), Testament of Kalman Schuester from 2 June 1726, fol. 61r.

möchte, in gleichen auf alle Jahr an den Tag meines Hinscheidens ein Licht in der Schuel anzünden.⁴⁴

– during the process of recording the last wills into the first two examined books of testaments. Hebrew was used only in original wills, as we know from some citations.

Circumstances of the Creation of Testaments

The prologue as an opening part of each testament consists of the sum of more or less fixed formulas documenting reasons or motives that led the authors to compose their last wills and the testator's legal capacity, which was regularly confirmed by a scribe and a so called *schulklöpfer* - both officials authenticated it by signing the testament.

The most common reasons foregoing the testament creation were mainly due to a bad state of health, being confined to bed,⁴⁵ old age, unawareness of the day and the hour of the arrival of death,⁴⁶ and trying to avoid subsequent disputes over inheritance or division of property if the testator had no direct descendants. Mentioned representatives of the Jewish community then validated legal competence of the will's maker by personal visits and interview. Their main task was to identify, whether the person is mentally and physically capable of such legal act - the task of the interview was to ensure that the testator was fully conscious, understood questions and responded correctly.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ PCA, sign. 4816 (see note 18), Testament of Vögele Buntzlin from 24 September 1732, fol. 107r.

⁴⁵ „Demnach etliche Jahr her bin Ich wegen meines üblen zuestandts fast allezeith bethlägerig wewesen, und gar selten ausgegangen, auch nicht als wie vorhin weder die herrschafften, weder einige Nahrung bedienen hab können (...) als dann besorge mich in meinem üblen und gefährlichen zuestandt, dass wann ich mit Todt abgehen möchte...“ Ibid. Testament of Kalman Austerlitz from 8 March 1718, fol. 48r.

⁴⁶ „Dieweilen wir Menschen das Endt unserer tügen nicht wißen, daher ist schuldig ein jeder wegen Gottes halber, und wegen wahrheit und fried, und darmit zuestillen alle zanck, sein Haus gesindl zuebefehlen.“ Ibid. Testament of Gadl Zappart from 6/7 December 1707, fol. 15r.

⁴⁷ „Die wahrheit zuesagen: am Montag zue abendts das der morgende Tag ist, dem 14. Augusti 1714 so bin ich endts unterschreibener beruffen worden zue meiner Schwester Sohn dem nunmehr verstorbenen Löbl Dawid Jeuteles, wie ich zue ihme kommen bin, seyn bey ihme gewesen: Jacob Przibram, Sellick Zinnhandler, und Löbl Roltsch Kranckenwarther, und der Löbl Jeuteles ist kranck gewesen, er hat mich empfangen, mit mir und mit obbemelten Männern geredet, mit gutten witz und lauther Verstandt, so hab ich ihm gefraget: du hast nach mich geschickt, was verlangst du meiner. So hat er mir zur antworth gegeben, ich bitte dich mein Vetter, ich habe in Gottes Händten, achtung geben auff mein Weib und meine Kinder, ich möchte vielleicht mit Todt abgehen, und habe fünff söhne kleine und grosse unverheurathete; so befehle ich wie es mit meiner Verlassenschafft soll gehalten

Bequeathing of the Testator's Property and Heirs

The core of texts of all testaments I examined dealt with property inheritance – testaments mainly enumerated all heirs and distributed the testator's property among them. Generally, I can say that Prague Jews bequeathed various types of property including parts of houses, places at *tandlmarkt*, gold and silver valuables and of course money, alongwith tools, various materials, dishes, home furnishings, fabrics, textiles, clothing as well as seats in the synagogues, which I think I found most interesting. A recurring part of the testaments and inventories was the division of passing debts on the liabilities and assets. The form of such distribution varied from joining all the debts together to detailed separation of individual obligations. The payment of passive debt had been a traditional part of settling earthly affairs and all testators put great emphasis on their rapid settlement.

The main inheritors were widows who regularly got the so called *Morgengaab* - a sum of money which they had been promised from their husbands during the wedding night - and sons and daughters received money, especially on their wedding days. Testators often also remembered other close and distant relatives or acquaintances, friends and business partners. The order of heirs did not follow any strict rules.

Property inventories

Inventories of property, both of the deceased and runaway Jews, maintained the same structure in all preserved written records. The estate was classified into groups according to various types: parcels (parts of houses, places at *tandlmarkt*, other land), gold (pieces of gold , jewelry, rings, earrings, necklaces and other gold objects), silver (any objects made of silver), active debts, passive debts, brass, tin, copper, clothing, tools, wooden household furnishings, bedclothes, books, money, and many other different and unsorted items. Inventories also enumerated the monetary value of all items in Rheinisch guilder.

werden und nicht anderst.“ PCA, sign. 4816 (see note 18), Testament of Löbl Dawid Jeuteles from 16 October 1719, fol. 89r-v.

In several inventories were found very interesting lists of names of heirs and survivors were attached that also included their age.⁴⁸ Others contained no less interesting information about various Hebrew and other books.⁴⁹ However, in most cases these inventories listed only the number of books,⁵⁰ the titles were usually not mentioned. The inventory of Samuel Aron Beer Wehl's property is unique because it also listed the names of the books he owned.⁵¹

Devotional Bequests

Each testament somehow reflected the testator's wish to secure spiritual care for his or her soul that should be provided by the survivors. It always depended on the testator, where the emphasis was placed. Some were content with general formulations, which surrendered their soul to the almighty God and asked to be buried according to (Jewish) rites.⁵²

However, according to the majority of last wills the ideal pattern of provision for both body and soul of the dead testator followed the order below:

soul was surrendered to almighty God,
the body should be buried in the ground,

⁴⁸ „Hinterbliebene Erben - Samson Sobotka 11 Jahre alt, Sarl 9, Esterle 4, Elle 1,5 Jahr alt.“ PCA, sign. 4816 (see note 18), Inventory of Levie Sobotkin from 5 June 1742, fol. 235v-236r.

⁴⁹ „Geschriebene hebraische Bücher; Liederbuch mit notten, eine frantzösische Gramatica, ein frantzösisches, lateinisch und teutsches Dictionarium.“ PCA, sign. 4817 (see note 19), Inventory of Baruch Austerlitz from 7 December 1740, fol. 17v.

⁵⁰ „An Büchern: 25 Stücke haebraische Büche.“ Ibid. Inventory of Isaac Lowosycz from 10 October 1740, fol. 11v.

⁵¹ „An häbraisch Büchern in folio: 1. Merr Salamonis (1,15 fl.), 2. grosse Versammlung (2 fl.), 3. die waage des Moyses (1,30 fl.), 4. Buch Rabbi Mordochn (2,30 fl.), 5. Scharffe disputationes, 6. österliche Nachtgebether, 7. Priester Opfer, 8. das Buch Medrasch (3 fl.), 9. Neun tractaten, 10. Buch Israel, 11. Buch Gollaetie, 12. Ora Chain, 13. Jalkut Reubelli, 14. Chomehs, 15. Abarbanel, 16. Raschpa, 17. Talmudische tractaten unter dem titl. gitten, 18. Talmudische tractaten unter titl Nida, 19. Talmudische tractaten unter dem titl Bava qamma; 20. Talmudischer tractat Erubin; 21 Talmudischer tractat unter dem titl. Peschachem (4 fl.), 22. Talmudischer tractat Gütten, 23. Prusch harbet in minori folio, 24. weisser deren Irrenden, 25. Rabbi Aaron, 26. Auslegung eines talmudischen tractats Bava qamma, 27. Sefer Chaym, 28. Melorus Hamoor, 29. Auslegung eines talmudischen tractats Bava Batra. In Quarto: 30. Pesoch ohel, 31. Megine Schloma, 32. Rabinische disputationes nicht ganz, 33. Rabinische frag und Antworth, 34. drey hir gedruckter 5. Bücher Moyses in octavo, 35. drey theyl Soar in octavo Majori, 36. Anhang der weissheit, 37. Sepfer Rasse; Ein frantzösisches Buch betitult L'Ahtree de mesire honore (6 fl.).“ Ibid. Inventory of Samuel Aron Beer Wehl from 29 April 1756, fol. 72v-74r.

⁵² „Vor allem thue ich mein Seel zu dem der da alle Seele in seinen handen hat, überantworten, undt will dass mein Körper wie gebrauchllich begraben werden solle.“ PCA, sign. 4816 (see note 18), Testament of Moyziss Wolff Porges from 31 May 1742, fol. 239v.

when transferring the body to the cemetery coins should be distributed among the poor, throughout the whole year ten scholars should pray for the testator's soul in his house, throughout the whole year olive oil should blaze on the testator's place in the synagogue, a family member should pray for the testator's soul in the cemetery and then for the whole following year a relative should say the Kaddish prayer on every anniversary day.⁵³

The testator also often determined the amount of money that should possibly cover all the costs associated with caring for his soul.

Conclusion and Possibilities of Further Research

The first two books of Jewish testaments covering the period from the late 17th to the second half of the 18th century, present an important source for the better understanding of history, fate and family structures of Prague Jews. These books are unique and previously unexploited archival material.

Unfortunately, the beginnings of testamentary practice of Prague Jews are not fully known; from familiar sources we can only guess a certain shape. Additionally, with respect to the estimated number of inhabitants of the Prague ghetto the books contain just a slender sample of material. This fact either points to the incompleteness of preserved last wills or we presume that the existing testaments reflect a certain social layer of Prague Jews, who felt the need to bequeath property according to their own wishes.

In my contribution I have tried to outline the current state of research until the year 1773. The next step will consist of a complete research of all remaining books of testaments until the

⁵³ „... nach meinem ableben befehle ich meine Seele dem allmächtigen Gott in seine gebenedeute Hände, und mein leib soll gewöhnl. Massen in die Erden bestattet werden. Nach abtragung meines Leibs aus meinem Haus soll unter die arme leuthe einen jeden zwey Kayserl. groschen ausgetheilet werden, so viel als mein Nahmen Cheyem in zahl hat, ertraget Sechs gulden [...] Durch das gantze Jahr von dato meines hinscheiden, sollen alle tag eine stundt Zehen gelehrte fromme leuthe wegen meiner Seel in meinnem Haus betten. Soll durch das gantze Jahr mein Eheweib Sarl aus ihren aigenen Mitteln auf meiner Stelle in der Zigkeiner Schuel wegen meiner Seel baum öl brenen lassen. Mein Schwager Herschl Halberstadt, alss der gedachten Maryam Ehemann, soll durch das gantze Jahr wie auch in meinen Jahr zeithen, das gebeth Cadesch genandt wegen meiner Seel nachsagen.“ PCA, sign. 4816 (see note 18), Testament of Chayem Auerbach from 11 August 1722, fol. 31v-32r.

year 1850, as well as the inventory books from the year 1773 to 1783 and books of testaments written in Hebrew and so called Judeo-German. I am also going to complement my research with an analysis of wedding contracts and other documents from the 18th century concerning the Jewish population in Prague.

Among others, a deeper analysis of the testaments of the Jewish population might help us to learn more about families and proprietorial bearings of Prague Jews, or about their postmortem rituals. As such they have become an important part of the historical research.

Appendix I

Tab. No. 1. Index of records of the Book of Testaments 1681-1756, sign. 4816.

Order	Folio	Name	Gender	Type of record	Hebrew original	Release date
1	1	Güttela Scheffteles	F	Testament		17. 3. 1681
2	2	Isak Marek Saxel	M	Testament	1. 6. 1691	25. 4. 1691
3	6	Samuel Bacharach	M	Testament		29. 11. 1731
4	7	Mojžiš Abeles	M	Inventory		16. 11. 1694
5	12	Abraham Schneider	M	Testament	Yes (without date)	27. 8. 1699
6	14	Gadel Zappart	M	Testament	2. 5. 1701	6. - 7. 12. 1707
7	21	Socher Bunt(c)zl	M	Testament	16. 5. 1702	29. 8. 1708
8	25	Abraham Elbogen	M	Testament		3. 11. 1721
9	31	Chayemb Auerbach	M	Testament	20. 6. 1722	11. 8. 1722
10	41	Herschel Halberstadt	M	Juxta		7. 5. 1723
11	42	Mayer Scheye Raudnitz	M	Testament	26. 11. 1721	7. 3. 1724
12	48	Kalman Jacob Austerlitz	M	Testament	28. 12. 1717	8. 3. 1718
13	51	Dawid Wälliss(sch)	M	Testament	5. 9. 1724	7. 11. 1724
14	59	Ischay Simche Kohlin	M	Inventory	23. 6. 1714	23. 8. 1714
15	61	Kalman Schuester	M	Testament	Yes (without date)	2. 6. 1726

16	66	Beer Simson Sazerdoth	M	Inventory		11. 3. 1726
17	68	Israel Küche Goldtschmidt	M	Inventory		9. 6. 1727
18	70	Lipmann Mayer Schulhoff	M	Inventory		12. 8. 1728
19	72	Mojžiš Mates Raudnicz	M	Inventory		25. 5. 1728
20	74	Herschl Fanta	M	Testament	20. 3. 1724	10. 4. 1724
21	85	Simon Mojžiš Jeuteles	M	Testament	6. 3. 1725	31. 6. 1726
22	89	Löbl Dawid Jaüteles	M	Testament	23. 8. 1714	16. 10. 1719
23	92	Riffka Jeüteles	F	Testament	24. 2. 1728	13. 4. 1728
24	101	Wolff Nesler	M	Testament	17. 3. 1717	16. 4. 1717
25	105	Vögele Buntzlin	M	Testament	21. 9. 1731	24. 9. 1732
26	108	Hersch Sender Satzerdot	M	Testament	11. 11. 1721	20. 2. 1722
27	110	Salomon Jonteff Bondi	M	Testament	23. 4. 1732	28. 11. 1732
28	115	Feischl Jeüteles	M	Testament	12. 8. 1729	1. 3. 1730
29	118	Salda Khue	F	Testament	2. 4. 1731	9. 5. 1731
30	120	Joseph Veitl Fanta	M	Testament		8. 4. 1733
31	124	Chaye Fanta	F	Quittance		14. 9. 1733
32	125	Administrators of New Synagogue	M	Quittance		21. 9. 1733
33	126	Feischl Mojžiš Kolin	M	Quittance		9. 9. 1733
34	127	Mendel and Chayem Elkeles	M	Juxta		22. 10. 1733
35	128	Dworel Kunelbrodt	F	Juxta		22. 10. 1733
36	129	Johann Carl Fanta	M	Juxta		22. 10. 1733
37	131	Löwl Thorsch	M	Testament		12. 1. 1733
38	136	Hindela Fanta	F	Quittance		8. 1. 1734
39	136	Beer Back	M	Quittance		29. 1. 1734
40	137	Blimele Meschores	F	Quittance		25. 2. 1734
41	138	Moyzes Koblentz and Esterle	M and F	Quittance		2. 4. 1734

42	139	Cheye, Güttele, Sarl Messores	M and F	Quittance		2. 4. 1734
43	139	Missl Löbl Jaitteles	M	Quittance		6. 4. 1734
44	140	Ten Jewish rabbis	M	Quittance		11. 4. 1734
45	142	Feitl Rubin	M	Quittance		5. 6. 1734
46	143	Mojżiss, Cheyle a Jentel Chlumnitz	M and F	Quittance		11. 8. 1734
47	144	Joseph Fanta, Chawa a Jüttel	M and F	Quittance		2. 9.1734
48	145	Joseph Sallomon Fanta	M	Quittance		14. 10. 1734
49	145	Jüttele Chlumnitz	F	Quittance		18. 8. 1734
50	146	Jan Rezek	M	Quittance		12. 9. 1734
51	147	Rachel Kimelbrodt	F	Quittance		29. 11. 1734
52	148	Dawid Fanta and Treindl Fleishhacker	M and F	Quittance		1. 12. 1734
53	149	Jewish prisoners	M	Quittance		1. 12. 1734
54	150	Schändl Back	F	Quittance		17. 12. 1734
55	151	Fegele Karpeles	F	Quittance		13. 2. 1735
56	153	Chayem Tausig	M	Testament	18. 3. 1734	30. 4. 1734
57	157	Moyses Kosteletz	M	Testament	31. 1. 1735	18. 2. 1735
58	165	Schlomo Thorss	M	Quittance		17. 6. 1735
59	166	Rösela Telczowa	F	Testament	11. 4. 1735	19. 4. 1735
60	169	Jakub Schauel Chlumnitz	M	Quittance		26. 4. 1736
61	170	Jeytl Glaser	F	Testament	5. 9. 1734	16. 4. 1736
62	173	David Oppenheim	M	Testament	26. 8. 1736	17. 9. 1736
63	176	Moyziss Bondi	M	Inventory		9. 11. 1737
64	180	Mayer Gunsburg	M	Testament	30. 4. 1736	2. 11. 1736
65	184	Jozeff Beer Back and Sarl Back	M and F	Quittance	5. 11. 1738	5. 11. 1738

66	187	Lebl Schik	M	Testament	7. 12. 1738	15. 12. 1738
67	190	Gabriel Moyses Brandys	M	Inventory		13. 5. 1739
68	196	Josl Herschl	M	Quittance		16. 12. 1739
69	197	Meyer Löbl Meyseles	M	Inventory		7. 9. 1740
70	199	Schnue Tachan	F	Inventory		3. 7. 1741
71	203	Särl Bakh	F	Quittance		14. 3. 1743
72	204	Sallomon Tornau	M	Testament	14. 2. 1743	25. 2. 1743
73	208	Salomon Tornau	M	Juxta		3. 4. 1743
74	209	Fraydla Torn	F	Juxta		14. 5. 1743
75	209	Schlomo Lasar	M	Testament	24. 10. 1740	27. 10. 1740
76	212	Aron Beer Wähli	M	Testament	18. 8. 1741	23. 1. 1742
77	216	Dewerl Singer	F	Testament	6. 5. 1742	26. 5. 1742
78	222	Schimon Abraham Duscheneß	M	Inventory		31. 5. 1743
79	224	Fauwer and Chaye Auerbach	M and F	Inventory		6. 6. 1743
80	230	Barach Luka	M	Testament	22. 8. 1737	31. 12. 1737
81	235	Levie Sobotkin	F	Inventory		5. 6. 1742
82	239	Moyziss Wolff Porges	M	Testament	9. 4. 1742	31. 5. 1742
83	243	Simon Abeless	M	Inventory		22. 10. 1743
84	245	Juda Beer Back	M	Quittance		20. 11. 1743
85	246	Wolff Tachau	M	Inventory		30. 7. 1743
86	251	Schöndl Aussterlitz	F	Inventory		9. 12. 1743
87	254	Herschl Wiener	M	Inventory		6. 5. 1744
88	257	Simson Lowositz	M	Testament		20. 6. 1745
89	257	Feitl Jerusalem	M	Testament	16. 3. 1746	30. 3. 1746
90	294	Feitl Jerusalem	M	Juxta		11. 6. 1746
91	299	Moyse Simon Jaiteles	M	Inventory		6. 3. 1747
92	303	Mendl Buntzl	M	Testament	Yes (without date)	2. 8. 1747

Tab. No. 2. Index of records of the Book of Testaments 1740-1773, sign. 4817.

Order	Folio	Name	Gender	Type of record	Hebrew original	Release date
100	1	Isaac Simon Lowositz	M	Inventory		10. 10. 1740
101	12	Baruch Austerlitz	M	Inventory		7. 12. 1740
102	19	Moyżiss Wolff	M	Inventory		1. 12. 1740
103	24	Antschl Khoppel Frankel	M	Inventory		23. 3. 1741
104	32	Jakub Sheye Wiener	M	Inventory		14. 6. 1741
105	35	Meshulem Iserles	M	Inventory		27. 9. 1740
106	39	Feischel Simche Edeles	M	Inventory		12. 3. 1753
107	44	Lippman Beek	M	Testament	23. 9. 1751	31. 12. 1753
108	46	Wolff Moyßes Franckel	M	Inventory		13. 5. 1755
109	63	Machele Rosetberger	F	Inventory		8. 1. 1753
110	66	Samuel Aron Beer Wehl	M	Inventory		29. 4. 1756
111	74	Chaye Wälliss	F	Inventory		12. 1. 1758
112	78	Abraham Duschenes	M	Inventory		10. 11. 1758
113	84	Mendl Hunta	M	Inventory		7. 3. 1760
114	86	Effrayem Jetteles	M	Testament	4. 6. 1755	1. 7. 1755
115	89	Sslomo Dussenes	M	Testament	29. 12. 1757	3. 7. 1758
116	90	Mendl Gabriel Mehles	M	Inventory		13. 5. 1762
117	92	Chayle Meroresin	F	Inventory		13. 5. 1762
118	94	Missel Lobl Jayteless	M	Testament		22. 11. 1762
119	109	Isack Bondi	M	Testament	3. 1. 1749	24. 1. 1749
120	111	Jakob Bunzl	M	Inventory		20. 8. 1765

121	117	Abraham Mora Bunzl	M	Inventory		23. 6. 1762
122	122	Mojžiss Joseff Brandeyß	M	Donation	27. 1. 1770	3. 4. 1770
123	124	Herschl Antschl Jüppen	M	Inventory		9. 6. 1768
124	127	Michl Emrich Kumpert	M	Inventory		29. 5. 1769
125	131	Abraham Simon Fauwer	M	Inventory		21. 2. 1770
126	132	Jacob Löbl Eger	M	Testament	29. 9. 1769	22. 11. 1769
127	140	Elias Aysek Habern	M	Donation	24. 8. 1769	13. 2. 1770
128	146	Löbl Herschl Ratd	M	Testament	15. 4. 1769	7. 5. 1770
129	149	Jekoff Salomon Mendl	M	Donation	5. 4. 1770	9. 5. 1770
130	153	Jekoff Herss Grab	M	Donation	25. 5. 1772	17. 6. 1772
131	157	Nathan Wiener	M	Donation	22. 8. 1769	2. 1. 1772
132	164	Hertzl Kuhovský	M	Testament	14. 10. 1771	21. 1. 1772
133	165	Herschel Pettssotsser	M	Donation	25. 2. 1772	13. 4. 1772
134	172	Simon Jakob Neusstattels	M	Donation	14. 9. 1763	20. 4. 1773
135	177	Jacob Mißlapp Satzerdot	M	Testament	24. 12. 1771	29. 4. 1773
136	183	Elias Tusska	M	Testament	16. 5. 1773	7. 6. 1773
137	188	Cheye Beck	F	Testament	21. 3. 1763	8. 3. 1765

Appendix II

Transcription of the testament of Joseph Veitl Fanta from 8 April 1736 (PCA, sign. 4816, fol. 120v-124r)

Testament des verstorbenen Joseph Veitl Fanta der Prager Juden.
In Nahmen Gottes Amen.

Ich Joseph Veitl Fanta Prager Judt urkhunde undt bekenne hiemit vor jedermänniglich insoderheit aber da, wo es vonnöthen, daß nachdeme ich die unbeständigkeit dieses zeithlichen Lebens, bey mir betrachtet, damit nach meinen zeithlichen hintritt keine Strittigkeit entstehen möchte; Alß habe ich Gott lob! bey gutter Vernunft wegen meines zeithlichen Vermögens mein Testament undt letzten willen folgender gestalt auf gericht undt zwar:

Weilen Vermög der Rechten die Einsetzung des Erben eines jeden Testaments Fundament, undt grundt fest ist alß benenne, setze ein, und verordne ich zu meinen Rechten, wahren, undt unzweifflichen Universal Erben meinen lieben Vetter Arie Fanta Prager Juden jedoch mit diesen außdrucklichen zusatz undt beding: damit derselbe nebst der begräbnus undt andere unkosten, auch folgende Legata bevor vollkommentlich verabstatte, undt bezahle.

Dann 1. vermache undt legire ich meiner Mahmb Cheyle Fantin verehrlicher Jeitelesin funff hundert gulden sage 500 fl.

2. den alhiesigen Juden Beer Bakh (na boku: videatur qvietantia infra fol: 150) weillen er mit groser armuth undt 4 Kindern beladen, mich auch die zeith meines Lebens, sonderlich nach meines Vatters Todt aufrichtig undt unbefleckter bedienet, zusamb seinen gedachten vier Kindern ein Tausend gulden, sage 1000 fl.

Item demselben meine kleinere Lampe.

3. dem Dawid Fanta drey hundert sage 300 fl.

4. dem Herschl Kimmelbrodt zwey hundert gulden sage 200 fl.

5. des Herschl Kimmelsbrodts Schwester Rachel drey hundert gulden sage 300 fl.

6. des Schaul Chlumnitz seinen Kindern drey hundert gulden sage 300 fl. (na boku: videatur inmedietatem et ultra qvietantia infra fol: 143. pr 180 fl.)

7. des Felkeles Meschores seinem Kindern jedweden zu hundert gulden.

8. der Tochter von Löbl Fanta ein hundert gulden sage 100 fl. (na boku: videatur qvietantia infra fol: 136.)

9. dem Veitl Rubin Jurist zu seiner Disposition auch ein hundert gulden sage 100 fl.

10. der Treindl des Feindl Prager jüdischen Fleischhackers Eheweib funfftzig gulden sage 50 fl.

11. der Treindl des Moyses Hammerschlag von der böhm. Leipe seinen Eheweibe auch funfftzig gulden sage 50 fl.

12. Meinem jüdischen Praeceptor Moyses Koblentz, wie auch meiner Köchin Esterl undt meinem dienstjung Feischl Kolin, vermache jeden zu funfftzig gulden zusammen 150 fl.

13. der Armen Kinder Bruderschafft bey hiesiger Judenschafft funff hundert gulden sage 500 fl.

14. der jüdischen Krancken Bruderschafft allhier zwanzig gulden sage 20 fl.

15. Vor die jüdische gefangene in Katzl, undt auser dem Katzl ein hundert gulden, sage 100 fl.

16. aufs baumöhl zu brenung des Lichts auf meine Stelle, wo ich zu sitzen pflegen in der Schuel dreysig gulden, sage 30 fl.

17. denen 10 Rabinern oder gelehrten, die durchs gantze Jahr das gebett für mich verrichten werden, drey hundert gulden, sage 300 fl.

Das kleine sonst genante Kadisch gebett aber solle mein obbemelter Erb Arie Fanta verrichten, weither und pro:

18. Legire undt vermache ich meines Brudern Rudolph Wentzl seinem Sohn 500 fl.

19. denen von obigen Felkeles Meschores oder diener getaufften zwey Kindern jeden zu 50 fl. zusammen 100 fl.

20. dem Joseph Salomon Fanta auch ein hundert gulden, sage 100 fl.

21. denen 3 Kindern nach dem abgelebten Pinkas Fanta jedweden fünfzig gulden zusammen 150 fl.

22. der hiesigen so genanten Neuschul, welche ich frequentiret, vermache ich alles dasjenige, was ich schon zur zirde darinnen habe, als nemb. die zehen gebott mit silber und den grosen Vorhang, welchen mein verstorbener Vatter machen lassen.

Mehr derselben einen grosen Leichter, so in der Mitte meines Zimmers hangt, wie auch die Schabes Lampen übern Tisch.

Item 23. So will ich, daß zu Prawonin, also mein ersteres Eheweib zusamt 2 Kindern begraben ligt, umb den jüdischen freydhoff, eine Mauer aufgeführt, undt die Spesen 50 fl. hierzu auß meiner Verlassenschafft Massa genommen werden sollen; weither thue pro:

24. hiemit allen fleises anmerken, wie daß die Eltiste der Alhiesigen Prager Judenschafft mir zwar so weith zumuthen wollen, als ob mein verstorbener Vatter zuhanden der jüdischen gemeindt alhier 1500 fl vermachtet hatte, mich dahin persvadiren wollende, womit ich Ihnen sothane 1500 fl. zuhanden gleich gedachter gemeinde bezahlen möchte, indeme aber dieses ein unbilliges begehren, so in der wahrheith nicht gegründet; Alß er kläre mich dahin, daß ich zu abtrag dessen mich in nichten verstehen, noch meinen obig bemelten Erben hürzu einiger massen verbinden kenne.

Letzlich, undt gleich wie nun von meinem wohnhauß, undt denen hürzu gehörigen appertinentien meinem eingesetzten universal Erben zwey Theille, meiner Mamb Cheyle Fantin aber nebenst obig legirten 500 fl. den dritten Theil gewidmet haben will; also hingegen was extra diesen nach abstattung der funeralien, undt Legaten an grundstücken, und Effecten, wie solche immer Nahmen haben mägen, übrig bleiben wirdt, solches alles solle meinem lieben Vetter Arie Fanta als von mir eingesetzten universal Erben erbaigenthumblich zugehörig seyn, undt verbleiben. Wie dann auch in jenen fahl, da sich etwa mehr freündte, alß obspecificiret, von mir melden solten, bey ihme stehen wirdt, was er Ihnen geben wolle? Doch solle er zu abfertigung eines dergleichen freynden 10 bis 15 fl. zugeben schuldig seyn, undt soll niemandts wieder meinen eingesetzten Erben, oder seine Schwester unter verlust seiner Vermächtnus diesfahls was zu obmoviren befugt seyn; zu allen dessen wahren Urkunt, habe ich diesen meinen letzten willen, so mit bewilligung Eines Löbl. Magistratt der Königl. Alten Stadt Prag, seiner zeith da woh gehörig, wirdt vermerckt, undt einverleibet werden können, nicht allein Aigenhändig unterschrieben undt mit meinen Pettschafft besiegelt sondern auch die unten benannte Kay. Hf. Notarios publicos als qvalificirte zeugen, alles fleises erbetten, daß Sie sich auf einmahl nebst meiner, jedoch Ihnen, Ihren Erben undt Erbinchnen ohne Schaden, undt Nachtheill, uno eodemque actu mit unterschrieben, undt ihre Pettschafften beygedrucket haben; So geschehen Prag den 8^{ten} April: 1733.

Haebr: Untersch: L:S: Joseph Veitl Fanta Prager Judt

L:S: Johann Casp: Artzten ad hunc actum pro Testimonio requisitus et rogatus subscripsi manu propria.

L:S: Wentzl Maximilian Lochowsky ad hunc actum pro Testimonio requisitus et rogatus subscripsi manu propria.

Praevia contestatione praedictorum Testim hoc Testamentum Publicatum est in Cons: Ant: Urbis Prag: die 8. Julii A^o 1733.

Norbert Plattner Synd:

Confirmatum hoc Testamentum in Cons: Ant: Urbis Pragensis die 20. Augusti A^o 1733.

Adalbert M. I. Bernardt Syndicus

Charlotte de Rothschild (1819-1884), her Life 1819-1859
A Biographical Sketch

Simona Malá

This article deals with Charlotte de Rothschild (1819-1884), one of the most important women of the Rothschild family of the fourth generation. After a short description of her childhood, it focuses on her roles as mother of five children and diarist, who kept records about the events within her secondary family, but also depicted the British and European noble circles. Further activities, which are mentioned, are her philanthropic and educative involvement at the Jewish Free School in Bell Lane and other places, which was typical for a woman of this social stratum at this time.

Introduction

Over the following lines, we would like to turn our attention to the personality of Charlotte de Rothschild (1819 -1884), one of the most important women of the Rothschild family of the fourth generation. This article is part of a larger dissertation project on her multiple identities,¹ entitled 'Charlotte de Rothschild: Her Life Reflected in Her Diaries', which makes use of the broad base of the primary sources, which are mainly preserved in the Rothschild Archive in London.

Our research is based mainly on ego-documents, which were written by Charlotte de Rothschild herself, the most important source in this sample are more than 4,500 pages of diaries and other ego-documents,² mostly letters, which were addressed to her by other family

¹ "Identities are the meaning that individuals hold for themselves-what it means to who they are. These identities have basis in being members of the group (social identities), having certain roles (role identities), or being the unique biological entities, that they are (personal identities)" Peter J. Burke, 'Relationships between Multiple Identities', in: Peter J. Burke (ed.), *Advances in Identity Theory and Research*, (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publisher, 2003), p. 195.

² For the purposes of this article I make use of the following definition of the ego-document: "Ego-documents may (appear to) convey intimate glimpses of a person, or at least allow us to engage in some form of (admittedly only one-way) inter-subjective communication with an historical individual, providing insights into the nature of subjective experience in the way that histories focus on; for example, high economic indices or structural

members. This sample includes the correspondence with female members of the family, namely with her daughter Evelina (1839-1866), who was married to her cousin Ferdinand; also correspondence with Charlotte's second daughter, Leonora (1837-1911), who married her cousin Mayer Alphonse; letters from Charlotte's cousin, Hannah Mayer (1815-1864), who was the first in the Rothschild family to ever marry a Christian aristocrat, Henry Fitz Roy in 1839;³ correspondence with her mother Adelheid Hertz (1800-1853) and with her sister-in-law and cousin, Louise (1820-1894), who was married to her brother, Mayer Carl. Furthermore, it contains correspondence with male family members, namely with her son, Leopold (1845-1917), her brothers; Mayer Carl (1820-1886) and Wilhelm Carl (1828-1901), as well as with her father, Carl Mayer (1788-1855). Moreover, we included the Commonplace Book as a significant source of relationships between the individual and family members as an important forum and platform of communication, which is an indirect evidence of the relationships within the family. The marriage contract in the German language of Charlotte and Lionel is also a part of the primary sources, the Aramaic *ketubah* is not available.

In this short biographical sketch, we consider her life only until 1859, due to my research of her diaries, correspondence and entries in the Common Place Book. The biography is focused on particular aspects of her life. We will pay special attention to the different roles and stages of her life, thus we will emphasize this woman as a daughter, as a mother and diarist and as a philanthropist and educator. For the purposes of this biographical sketch, I will take into account the following primary sources: her diaries until 1859, which she started to write one year after she had given birth to her youngest son, Leopold, in 1845, the mutual correspondence between her and her mother, Adelheid von Rothschild (1800-1853), the correspondence with her cousin and sister-in-law Louise de Rothschild (1820-1894), with her father, Carl, and her brothers, Mayer Carl and Wilhelm Carl; additionally, the so-called Common Place Book and Charlottes's didactic works. Beyond the scope of this work goes her literary activity, since her children's

changes do not." Mary Fulbrook, Olinka Rublack, 'Relation: The Social Self and Ego-documents', in: *German History*, 28,3 (2010), pp. 263–272, (p. 265).

³ There is a chapter named "Love and Debt" in Niall Fergusson's book, *The House of Rothschild. Money's Prophet 1798-1848*, where he deals with case of Hannah Mayer in greater detail. Charlotte was one of the few members of the family who was in touch with her after her conversion to Christianity. Niall Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild. Money's Prophet 1798-1848*, (New York: Viking, 1999), pp. 337-371.

book was written after 1859, but it should be mentioned.⁴ In this sample of records, we see a variety of ego-documents, which are very important elements in order to grasp the complexity of the specific topic, which a biography undoubtedly is, as Kaspar von Greyerz explains in his article *Ego-documents: The Last Word?*:

They offer us insights into life worlds and representations, into aspects of a group-specific habitus, they offer glimpses of specific aspects of religion and systems of belief, [...] most of the documents in question offer information about personal and social networks, within the family and beyond. ‘Self-narrative’ or ‘personal narrative’ would be better notions to use.⁵

In the scholarly literature about the Rothschild family, there is an entire lack of information about the female side of the Rothschild family.⁶ Nevertheless, one should not perceive these women only as an appendix of their rich spouses, who were very important European bankers throughout many generations and played an important role in European politics. On the one hand, the women of the Rothschild family were involved in their activities in the private and semi-public sphere, on the other hand, they were and still are somehow in the shadow of their husbands, because their broad, especially philanthropic activities are seen as less important than the public activities of their husbands in the financial world.

Despite the fascinating and complex personality of Charlotte de Rothschild, which I will attempt to demonstrate in this biographical sketch, previous research has paid little attention to her life. Niall Ferguson dedicated to her one of the chapters of his book, *The House of Rothschild. Money's Prophet 1798-1848*.⁷ He used her diaries in small excerpts to illustrate the

⁴ The book was published anonymously as “*From January to December. A book for children*” (London: Longmans Green, 1873). In 1895, the book was translated and published in German under the author’s real name in the Germanized form: Freifrau Lionel von Rotschild, *Von Januar bis Dezember. Aus der 1873 erschienenen englischen Original-Ausgabe 1873* (Frankfurt am Main: K. Kauffmann, 1895). In the preface, Charlotte is called a teacher. There are translated poems by Paul Heyse in the original, which Charlotte de Rothschild did herself.

⁵ Kaspar von Greyerz, ‘Ego-documents: The Last Word?’, *German History*, 28,3 (2010), pp. 273–282, (p. 281).

⁶ There is one exception, a biography of Betty de Rothschild, a cousin of Charlotte de Rothschild, who was married to her uncle James, the founder of the Parisien bank branch, see more in Laura S. Struminger, *The life & legacy of Baroness Betty de Rothschild*, (New York, NY: Lang, 2006).

⁷ Chapter named *Charlottes Dream* (1849-1858) in Ferguson (see note 3), pp. 508-557.

financial and political activities of her husband, brothers and sons but did not analyze them deeply. A second book, where excerpts from Charlotte's diaries are used, is the book, *Charlotte and Lionel, A Rothschild Love Story*,⁸ which belongs more in the realm of popular fiction. A deep analysis of her diaries, which she wrote in her native German, is therefore still pending.

Charlotte de Rothschild as a daughter

Charlotte was born on 13 June 1819 in Frankfurt as the first child and the only daughter of Carl (Kallmann) von Rothschild and Adelheid (Adelaide), neé Hertz. Little is known about her childhood and teenage years, it can be only asserted that her father, Carl, founded a bank branch in 1821 and the family moved from her native Frankfurt to Naples. One can assume that she spent most of her childhood years in Italy. During the first three years of their marriage, the young couple lived in Frankfurt and dwelled in the palace in the Neue Mainzer Strasse. The family kept this palace in the coming years as a residence, although they lived most of the time in Italy. In Naples, the family lived in the villa Pausilippe.⁹ In addition to managing the bank in the Naples, which was considered as a branch of the main bank in Frankfurt, Carl von Rothschild held other public functions. He was consul of Sicily and consul of Parma, moreover he had also the post of royal commercial counselor to the Duke of Hesse and Financial Council.¹⁰

As a girl, Charlotte did not receive a thorough religious education, as was the case of her brothers, because it was not common at the time that women received religious education, although there were a few exceptions.¹¹ In addition, the men of the Rothschild family of this generation were trained in management and some of them studied at German universities. Instead of enjoying a religious education, for Charlotte, modern foreign and classical

⁸ Cf. Stanley Weintraub, *Charlotte and Lionel. A Rothschild Love Story*, (New York: The Free Press, 2003).

⁹ Derek Wilson, *Die Rothschild Dynastie. Eine Geschichte von Ruhm und Macht*, (Vienna: P. Zsolnay, 1990), p. 251.

¹⁰ Paul Arnsberg, *Die Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden*, Vol. 1., (Frankfurt am Main: Eduard Roether Verlag, 1994), p. 644.

¹¹ For instance the *maskilah* and poet Rachel Morpurgo (1790-1871) from Italy, who received thorough religious education and had an excellent command of Hebrew. See more in Louise Hecht, 'Das 'Phänomen' Rachel Luzzatto/Morpurgo (1790-1871): Die erste moderne Dichterin hebräischer Sprache', in: *Trumah*, 16 (2006), pp. 105-130; Cf. Shmuel Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Tova Cohen, Shmuel Feiner, *Ḳol 'almah 'Ivriyah. Kitve nashim maškilot ba-me'ah ha-tesha'-'ešreh* (Tel-Aviv: Ha-Ḳibuts ha-me'uḥad, 2006); Tova Cohen, *ha-Aḥat ahuvah yeha-aḥat šenu'ah. Ben metsi 'ut le-vidyon be-te'ure ishah be-sifrut ha-Haškalah* (Yerushalayim: Magnes Press, 2002).

languages,¹² singing and literature played a very important role in her education, as it was common for women from both Jewish and Christian society of that time, as Mordechai Eliav puts it:

Since the 17th century, wealthy Jewish families in Germany were inclined to having their daughters instructed by private teachers in secular subjects, such as German, French, literature and music [...].¹³

The same model applies for her secondary family, which will be discussed below. Thus, it can be certain that she was educated entirely by private teachers. In her nuclear family, languages generally enjoyed a high prestige. It can be concluded, that besides German, her mother tongue, which was an important means of communication of the first, second and even the third generation of the Rothschild family, English, French, Italian and Latin¹⁴ were also studied. German was the only language of communication in the Neapolitan branch of the family. Besides her mother, Adelheid, she communicated with her father in German, who wrote in “Judendeutsch”,¹⁵ and with her brothers, Mayer Carl and Wilhelm Carl, through very cultivated letters written in beautiful and correct High German in German cursive. One can assume that this branch of the family did not follow all the rules and regulations of Judaism, since in Adelheid’s family *kashruth* was not kept.¹⁶

Charlotte married in Frankfurt am Main, on 15 June 1836, according to Jewish custom, which states that the marriage takes place in bride’s birthplace. The wedding followed the usual pattern of the third generation. The women were obliged to marry Jews, who should be their close relatives and in this respect, Charlotte was no exception. She married her cousin Lionel from the London branch. In the beginning, the marriage was under the strict control of Charlotte's mother-in-law, Hannah Barent Cohen, and although the marriage had been arranged,

¹² In this case English, French, Italian and Latin.

¹³ Mordechai Eliav ,Die Mädchenerziehung im Zeitalter der Aufklärung und der Emanzipation‘, in: Julius Carlebach (ed.), *Zur Geschichte der jüdischen Frau in Deutschland*, (Berlin: Metropol, 1993), p. 98; translation S. M.

¹⁴ She must have known Latin as well, because there is a note in her diary from 1850, which says: “Ich muß mit Evelina Latein lernen” p. 99, (“I should learn Latin with Evelina”), translation S. M.

¹⁵ High German written in Hebrew characters

¹⁶ Fergusson (see note 3), p. 168.

the relationship developed into a happy marriage with five children. They dwelled at Gunnersbury Park after the wedding.

A very important daily activity of noble women during the first half of the 19th century was reading and communicating through letters. This type of communication between Charlotte and her mother was carried out in German, as already mentioned above, whereby it could be stated, that *code switching* and *code-mixing* occurred in these letters very often, as the following examples illustrate: “Innigst geliebte Charlotte, ich erhalte, *this very moment*, dein liebes Briefchen.”¹⁷ In another example, she even underlined the foreign word: “[...] daß wir wirklich ein spleen bekommen [...]”.¹⁸ An example of *code-switching* can be seen in the phrase “God! Bless you for ever (sic!) and ever! Amen!”¹⁹ or in an undated letter, “[...] à cause d'une conversation au bureau [...]”. Adelheid's speech was interspersed with many fashionable French words and Italian expressions, as in this concrete case, “[...] nicht die prima qualità [...]”.²⁰ The structure of the letters is very formal. They all have a similar structure and almost always start with the phrase “Meine innigst geliebte Charlotte”²¹ or “meine geliebte Charlotte”,²² which was the discourse of the time. A similar style can also be observed in the letters of her father and her brothers. Her mother always signed as Adelheid von Rothschild. The correspondence between Charlotte and Adelheid was relatively intensive – in the years 1836 to 1842, 60 letters were written and for the remaining nine years until Adelheid's death, another 40 letters are available. There are traces of indirect communication as well, the poems *Le Souvenir* and *Convalescence* from 1842, were dedicated to Adelheid in the Common Place Book. Both of them were accompanied by the following dedication: *Vers adressés à la Mme Adélaïde de Rothschild*.²³

¹⁷ [Dearly beloved Charlotte, I got your dear little letter, *this very moment*.] RAL 000/197/2 Adelheid, Frankfurt, 23 November 1839.

¹⁸ [„...that we really have a spleen...”] RAL 000/197/2 Adelheid, the Naples, 5 January 1841.

¹⁹ RAL 000/197/2, Adelheid, Frankfurt, 26 November 1840.

²⁰ RAL 000/197/2, Adelheid, Frankfurt, 26 January 1844.

²¹ [My dearly beloved Charlotte].

²² [My golden Charlotte].

²³ RAL 000/1063, Common Place Book, unpaginated.

Charlotte de Rothschild as a mother and diarist

It was common, throughout the generations of the family that the female members wrote diaries, which was a common cultural pastime of this period. According to Jo Catlin, in the generation of these women, keeping a diary was a common way of expressing themselves:

The vehicle of expression most favoured by women, however, was the private form of the diary or journal, which permitted intense self-analysis. In the German-speaking lands its development was decisively supported by the legacy of Protestantism and especially Pietism, which encouraged introspection.²⁴

As Charlotte noted in her diary, also Louise de Rothschild, her cousin and later sister-in-law, kept a personal diary, because in the diary from 1851, we find the following note:

Louise's diary is certainly more interesting than mine. It never contains trivial things, only thoughts about events, feelings and views, impressions and judgments produced by reading diverse and numerous works.²⁵

Louise de Rothschild was not the only women of her generation, who kept personal diaries, however, many are missing. Very famous examples are published excerpts from the travel diaries of Sir Moses Montefiore and his wife Judith, which were published posthumously.²⁶ Constance Battersee (1843-1931) published excerpts from the diaries²⁷ of her mother, Louise de Rothschild (1821-1910), neé Montefiore, who belonged to Charlotte's generation and lived in London.

²⁴ Jo Catlin, *A History of Women's Writing in Germany, Austria and Switzerland*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 82.

²⁵ RAL 000/1066/2/1 diary 1851, p. 111, ("Louisen's Tagebuch ist gewiß weit interessanter als das meinige. Alltäglickeiten kommen gewiß nie darin vor, nur Gedanken über Ereignisse und Gefühle, Empfindungen u. Ansichten, Eindrücke und Urtheile durch die Lectüren der verschiedensten, zahlreichen Werke hervorgerufen.").

²⁶ Cf. Moses Montefiore, Judith Cohen Montefiore, Louis Loewe, *Diaries of Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore. Comprising their life and work as recorded in their diaries from 1812 to 1883*, with the addresses and speeches of Sir Moses, (London: Griffith Farran Okeden & Welsh, 1890).

²⁷ Cf. Constance Battersea, *Louise de Rothschild: Extracts from her notebooks*, (London: Humphreys, 1912).

“If one writes a diary properly, everything should be included - things seen, heard, read, spoken and experienced.”²⁸ Through this short sentence, Charlotte de Rothschild guides us through her diaries; it reflects her attitude and expectations toward this genre, perhaps also expectations towards herself. About her life in an older age, we learn from her epistolary correspondence both with the members of her nuclear and secondary family. Beside this, Charlotte de Rothschild composed fourteen diaries, which she wrote between the years 1846 and 1859 in her native German, which were of an excellent standard. It should be mentioned, that at this time, there was no codified written German standard or orthography. The diaries had been written during several years and were probably intended solely for personal use and the most intimate thoughts. They have a very formal structure, each new diary starts with a German blessing; the entries are mostly undated, but are written very clearly. They generally inform us about both, the life in her secondary family, mainly about the political events, which were connected to the public activities of her husband, Lionel, as well as the most intimate private sphere, which includes the development, education, behavior and abilities of her small children.

Further, the early diaries familiarize the readers with the events in high circles of European society, mostly with the world of Christian and Jewish nobility. She started her first diary one year after the birth of her last son, Leopold. In addition to the early development and education of her daughters and sons, the relationship with her husband, social commitments, the reading of belles-lettres²⁹ and newsletters in English, German and French, it reflects the most important events of the European political scene. She focuses upon the political scene in Germany, as it was reflected in various English-speaking newspapers, mainly in the *Times*. Of special interest are her comparisons between German and English society and politics with a respect to Jews, as the following example illustrates: “[...] that the English Jews are superior to the German Jews and that the gentlemen gathered in the British Parliament have greater theoretical and historical knowledge.”³⁰

²⁸ RAL 000/1066/2/1 diary 1851-1853, p. 316; translation S. M.

²⁹ German literature especially played a significant role. She mentions reading Fanny Lewald, Heinrich Heine, Leopold Kompert and Paul Heyse, whom she translated into English in her children’s book *From January to December* (see note 4).

³⁰ RAL 000/1066/2/1 diary 1851, p. 157, “[...] daß die englischen Juden den dt. [sic] überlegen sind und daß die im britischen Parlament versammelten Herren große theoretische und historische Kenntnisse besitzen.“; translation S. M.

The reading both of belles-lettres and the European press in various modern European languages played a tremendous role in everyday life and occupied an important part of the leisure time of the Jewish nobility and upper-middle class of German-speaking Jews, as Natalie Naimark-Goldberg puts it:

Raised in families belonging to a new Jewish economic and intellectual elite that emerged, especially in Berlin, but also in other Central European cities in the last third of the eighteenth-century, these young women experienced openness to German culture and society from their early years. Their families were influenced by secularizing trends in their surroundings and led an acculturated lifestyle, [...] Reading was an activity to which these women chose to dedicate much of their considerable leisure time at their disposal as members of well-to-do families, thus adopting a central feature of the emerging bourgeois culture. Reading was not only a source of entertainment but also fulfilled a social function, it was a prerequisite and a condition for their social interaction in a modern world, the basis for cultured conversation and a recurrent theme in their correspondence.³¹

From 1848 onwards, Charlotte's diaries focused mostly on politics, specifically on the activity of Benjamin Disraeli's bill, which she perceived as "Genugtuung für die Israeliten" (satisfaction for the Israelites)³² and the political activities of her husband, Lionel Nathan, who aspired to the highest political career.³³ Beside this, many entries are dedicated to her pedagogic activities in the Jewish' Free School in Bell Lane in London.

The Commonplace Book can be regarded as a place of communication in the private sphere. Thus, the first literary attempts of her children, mainly of her daughter Evelina, are included. One possible purpose of these literary activities of the children was practicing foreign languages and cultivating their mother tongue. We can find poems written by Evelina in French,

³¹ Natalie Naimark-Goldberg, 'Reading and Modernization: The Experience of Jewish Women in Berlin around 1800', in: *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies and Gender Issues*, 58–87 (2008), p. 59.

³² RAL 000/1066/2/3 diary October 1851-December 1853, p. 201.

³³ Lionel entered the House of Commons as the first deputy of Jewish origin in 1858. See more in Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 63 and 66.

English and German, English attempts written by Nathaniel, her first son, a congratulation poem by Leonora and Leopold's first literary attempt named, *The Flower*. Special attention should also be paid to the entries by Dr. Mordechai Kalisch, who served as house-rabbi in the family.³⁴

In addition to English, which was the mother tongue of the children's father and language of everyday life, special attention was paid to the choice of German teachers in particular. Charlotte's native language played a very important role. In her house she employed German-speaking nannies and she gave German lessons to her children. She let her daughters learn Latin, which did not correspond to the German educational model for women. Latin was a dead language that was studied among other purposes for reading the classics in the original. Moreover, Latin was an important prerequisite for entering university, from which, however, women were excluded. Charlotte even wanted the girls to learn to speak Latin. One possible reason could be that Latin should have provided a basis for later learning French and Italian and better theoretical understanding of the grammatical structures. However, Natalie Naimark-Goldberg gives us another plausible explanation:

In addition to German, these Jewish women spoke, read and wrote fluently in French, then the language of culture in Europe, and culturally ambitious as they were, they devoted great efforts to acquiring literacy in yet other tongues, dead or alive. They learned Greek and Latin, English and Italian, and some of them even added Swedish and Spanish, using all of these languages to expand their reading and satisfy their cultural thirst.³⁵

The vocal and piano lessons were given by Charlotte herself and were part of the normal educational canon, as the following entry puts it:

[...] I need an excellent language teacher for the girls - that is, for Leonora - Evy will still be able to take private lessons with Mr. Narrt and the boys will certainly be able too, but

³⁴ For this piece of information, I would thank Dr. Edward Breuer from The Hebrew University, Jerusalem.
³⁵ Naimark-Goldberg (see note 31), p. 75.

the Latin language I will study with Evelina, as she might learn to write and speak properly. The girls should study singing as well.³⁶

Her children were taught in other secular subjects as well. She examined the teachers, because she wanted them to be profound and interesting personalities, as the following example illustrates:

Today, I heard Professor Nerman giving a lecture on ancient history – I found neither him nor Disraeli interesting [sic], but he does not want to give private lessons. It would be nice if I could take lessons with him. I have to hear the professor of modern history - and on Saturday, the professor of English. Then, I will have fulfilled the duty of a good mother to myself and my children and will visit the Free School and other Jewish schools next week.³⁷

Moreover, this example gives evidence of her introspections on motherly feelings and the idea of ‘a good mother’ in her social sphere.

An important feature in the diaries are Charlotte's reflections on her religious identity and co-existence with the Christian majority. Since the majority of the aristocrats she met were Christians, there are many entries about the efforts of the Christian majority to convert Jews to Christianity and conversion of Christians to Judaism, which occurred less frequently, but there is a one very interesting example:

I spoke with W. Cooper about the Christians’ costly propaganda for the conversion [of Jews] and told him that without spending a penny, and actually against our will and

³⁶ RAL 000/1066/2/2 diary 1850-1851, p. 99, “[...] ich brauche einen ausgezeichneten Sprachlehrer für die Mädchen - das heißt für Leonore - Evy kann noch, so Gott will, während zwei Jahren, bei Mr. Nartt Unterricht nehmen und die Knaben können gewiß [sic], aber die lateinische Sprache will ich mit Evelina studiren, da lernt sie vielleicht sprachgerechter schreiben und sprechen. Auch sollen die Mädchen singen studiren.“; translation S. M.

³⁷ RAL 000/1066/2/2 diary 1850-1851, p. 274, “Heute hörte ich Professor Nerman alte Geschichte vortragen – ich fand ihn noch Disraeli interessant [sic], Privat-Stunden will und kann er nicht geben. Es wäre mir lieb wenn ich bei ihm Unterricht nehmen könnte. Ich muß den Professor der neueren Geschichte hören – und Sonnabend den Professor der englischen Sprache - dann habe ich mir selbst und meinen Kindern gegenüber die Pflicht einer guten Mutter erfüllt und werde nächste Woche die Freischule, die andere Judenschule und die Kinderschule besuchen können.“; translation S. M.

desire, because our religion is opposed to Protestantism [regarding conversion of others], in the course of the last year thirty Christians converted to our faith.³⁸

Very interesting are discussions on Christianity. She often compares Judaism to the Anglican Church and Protestantism³⁹ and she warns against evolving Catholicism, although it was like Judaism the religion of an oppressed group. The position of Catholics in England was very similar to that of Jews, because they were excluded from many public rituals and public positions, in the first half of the 19th century. She adds the following note about Catholicism, which demonstrates a sharp critique on this Christian denomination: “We Jews will be hurt by every Catholic excitement”.⁴⁰

Anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism are significant and relevant topics of Charlotte de Rothschild’s later diaries. One of the strongest examples can be found in the diary of 1850, where she reported on the “prevailing Hebrew phobia” (herrschende hebrewphobia).⁴¹

Charlotte de Rothschild as a philanthropist and educator

Charlotte de Rothschild’s philanthropic involvement included a wide range of semi-public activities. Her main activity in this field was her involvement in the Jewish Free School in Bell Lane, which had already been financially supported by her mother-in-law, Hannah Barent Cohen. Charlotte influenced the school through her ideas and pedagogical impetus. She regularly visited the school and monitored the state of the students. The entries in her early diaries are often concerned about the teaching methods and the development of the children. They deal specifically with the education of young girls. Charlotte’s tasks included designing curricula and supervising important examinations, as the following examples illustrate:

³⁸ RAL 000/1066/2/2 diary 1850-1851, p. 7, “Mit W. Cooper sprach ich über die christliche kostspielige Propaganda zur Bekehrung und erzählte ihm, daß ohne einen Kreuzer auszugeben und eigentlich gegen unseren Wunsch und Willen, denn unsere Religion ist dem Protestantismus entgegengesetzt seien dreißig Christen im Laufe des vergangenen Jahres zu unserem Glauben übergegangen.”; translation S.M.

³⁹ Cf. RAL 000/1066/2/2 diary 1850-1851, p. 139.

⁴⁰ RAL 000/1066/2/2 diary 1850-1851, p. 141, (“Uns Juden muß jede katholische Aufregung schaden.”); translation S. M.

⁴¹ RAL 000/1066/2/1 diary 1851, p. 184.

[...] I went to the Free School [...], where I determined the work load of the young girls over the next two months. [...] One Sunday, after I had spoken with the Sergeant about Alfred's lessons, I went with Evy and my second son to Bell Lane, where I supervise the exams of the boys. Unfortunately, I could not stay long enough, but what I heard, was very satisfying and instructive in many ways.⁴²

She also served as a member of the so-called Ladies Committee, which made important decisions for the school. Most of the decisions regarded financial issues, but they also included curricula and employment for the girls. She maintained the vocational education of the girls. In comparison to the education of her children, who had the privilege to enjoy private education, the curricula of the Jews' Free School should be rather focused on practical and technical training, which corresponded to the traditional pattern in Jewish schools for children from the lower classes.

In 1854, Charlotte de Rothschild was appointed honorary president of the „Freifrau Adelheid Carl von Rothschild'schen Stipendien-Stiftung für Israelitische Schülerinnen,“⁴³ by her father, Carl, who had founded the foundation after Adelheid's death, while Charlotte's sisters-in-law and cousins, Hannah and Louise Mathilde, held the posts of presidents. The guideline states that:

My dear daughter, Charlotte Baroness Lionel de Rothschild, the daughter of the founder and of the noble woman, of whom the Foundation bears the name, should be appointed honorary president of foundation's administration [...].⁴⁴

⁴² RAL 000/1066/2/1 diary 1851, pp. 255-256 “[...] fuhr ich nach der Freischule[...], wo ich die Arbeit der kleinen Mädchen auf die nächsten zwei Monate festsetzte. [...] Sonntag fuhr ich nachdem ich mit dem *sergiant* über Alfred's Lectionen Abrede gehalten mit Evy und meinem zweiten Sohn nach Bell Lane um dort selbst dem Examen der Knaben beizuwohnen. Leider konnte ich nicht lange genug bleiben, was ich aber hörte war sehr befriedigend, und in mancher Hinsicht belehrend.“; translation S. M.

⁴³ Baroness Adelheid of Carl Rothschild'schen Scholarship Foundation for Jewish Students.

⁴⁴ Stiftungsbrief der „Freifrau Adelheid Carl von Rothschild'schen Stipendien-Stiftung für Israelitische Schülerinnen, 12 November 1854: “Meine liebe Tochter Freifrau Charlotte Lionel von Rothschild in London, als die Tochter des Stifters und der edeln Frau, von welcher die Stiftung den Namen trägt, soll Ehren-Präsidentin in der Stiftungs-Verwaltung seyn [...].“; translation S. M.

She visited different Jewish and other schools to get inspiration for the effective involvement in the Jewish Free School in Bell Lane. The following example illustrates not only one of these visits, but also her attitude towards Shabbat:

With Natty, who still had a cold, fulfilling my promise towards Mr. Johnson, I visited the Jewish girls' school in Dean Street. Absent-minded, as usual, I forgot that there are no lessons on Fridays, because Jewish children help their parents to prepare the house for the celebration of Shabbat at home.⁴⁵

There was a large gulf between the education of her own children, who belonged to a different social stratum and should therefore enjoy a different education, and the idea of educating children of the Jewish lower classes, which is described in the following entry.

I would not claim that they learn much, because of their large numbers [in class]. Maybe, it is not necessary to train the girls scientifically. - If they learn to knit, sew, wash and iron, clean the house and do a little tailoring, the school has done a good deed. Of course, they should be able to write a literally and read fluently. - Prior to her marriage, they help their mothers with the housework and if they themselves will have children, they won't lack an occupation at home.⁴⁶

Let us now turn to Charlotte's literary activity, which is part of the public sphere, although written anonymously. Charlotte de Rothschild composed didactically oriented books and her educational writings are connected to her work at the Jewish Free School in Bell Lane in London. In the context of her pedagogic involvement, she wrote *Addresses to Young Children*.

⁴⁵ RAL 000/1066/2/1 diary 1851 "Mit Natty, der noch immer erkältet war, besuchte ich, meinem dem Herrn Johnson gegebenes Wort zufolge, die Mädchenschule für kleine Jüdinnen in *Dean street*. Zerstreut wie gewöhnlich, vergaß ich, daß am Freitag jüdische Kinder nicht studiren, sondern ihren Eltern zu Hause helfen den Saal zur Feier des Sabbath vorzubereiten."; translation S. M.

⁴⁶ RAL 000/1066/2/2 diary 1850-1851, p. 104 „Daß sie viel lernen möchte ich bei einer so großen Anzahl nicht behaupten, vielleicht ist es für die Mädchen keine Nothwendigkeit sich sehr wissenschaftlich auszubilden. – Wenn sie stricken und nähen, waschen und glätten, das Haus säubern und etwas schneidern lernen, so hat die Schule ein gutes Werk an ihnen gethan, freilich müssen sie ein wenig schreiben und geläufig lesen lernen. – Vor ihrer Heirath helfen diese Mädchen der Mutter bei der Hausarbeit und bekommen sie selbst Kinder so fehlt es ihnen nicht an häuslichen Beschäftigungen.“; translation S. M.

*Originally delivered to The Girls of the Free School, Bell Lane.*⁴⁷ It was written under the supervision of the house-rabbi of the Rothschild family, Dr. Mordechai Kalisch, as mentioned in the preface.⁴⁸ In this book, she familiarized girls and only girls, as shall be discussed later, with four main topics: the major Jewish festivals such as Shabbat, Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah, Sukkoth, Pesach and Shavuoth.⁴⁹ The second large topic includes human qualities such as altruism, pride and the ability to forgive. The third topic is the development of technical devices of this time and music. In the preface, one can read about the intentions of the first series:

[...] that easy lessons in the form of discourses might be prepared for the use of the little children in Bell Lane, [...] The reverend gentleman was of the opinion, that neither the published sermons of English divines, nor those of continental preachers, however eloquent and admirable, were suited to the capacity of young children [...]. So it was, that during two years a simple address was written every week, and read in the Girls' School Room, in Bell Lane. Several kind friends have expressed a desire to see these discourses in print, twenty-eight have been selected, not for publication, but for distribution among the poor.⁵⁰

It is also of interest, that in 1867, the second series of the discourses was published.⁵¹ It familiarizes the readers with slightly different topics and themes, it deepens more the understanding of human vices and virtues.

Conclusions

Charlotte de Rothschild was undoubtedly a very interesting and brilliant personality. In this sketch, I have attempted to depict her as a mother, diarist, philanthropist and educator. In the first

⁴⁷ The first series was published in London. Printed by J. Wertheimer and company. Finsbury Circus 1859.

⁴⁸ *Addresses to Young Children. Originally delivered to The Girls of the Free School, Bell Lane*, (London: J. Wertheimer and company. Finsbury Circus, 1859), preface, p.v.

⁴⁹ The three last festivals appear in their anglicized form: The Feast of Tabernacles, Passover and Pentecost.

⁵⁰ *Addresses to Young Children* (see note 48), preface, p. iii-iv.

⁵¹ Cf. *Addresses to Young Children. Originally delivered to The Girls of the Free School, Bell Lane, Second Series* (London: J. Wertheimer and Company. Finsbury Circus, 1867).

part of this sketch, her younger years, the patterns of her private education, language behavior, her networks within the family and her nuclear family have been described. It can be stated that her early life didn't differ from lives of her contemporaries. Charlotte started to write personal diaries one year after the birth of her youngest son, Leopold. The diaries are a very unique source of record from both the public and private sphere of her life. In the diaries, her family life is emphasized; mainly the educational development and abilities of her five children and the political achievements of her husband, Lionel de Rothschild. A significant part of her diaries include descriptions of her own attitude towards Christians and Gentiles, whom she encountered in the European and British circles of nobility.

A very important part of her identity were public functions, which included philanthropic and educative activities in the Jewish Free School, which had been under Rothschild's patronage for many years. Her didactic books, which were designed for the female pupils of the school, she wrote under supervision of the house rabbi of the Rothschild family, Dr. Mordechai Kalisch. These books were translated into German and as a result her ideas were also spread amongst German-Jewish readers.

The Concept of the Absurd in the Book of Qohelet and the Philosophy of Albert Camus

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*The Book of Qohelet deals with questions and problems of human life and the search for meaning in human existence. The fictional author Qohelet makes observations on the human condition, its efforts and ultimate rewards. The bottom line of his observations - hakol hevel - forms the leitmotif of the book and works as a framework for Qohelet's reflections. The conclusions which Qohelet draws from his reflections parallel the concept of 'the absurd in the human condition' of the post-existentialist philosophy of Albert Camus, first introduced in a collection of essays entitled *The Myth of Sisyphus* in 1942. The main purpose of this paper is to outline interesting parallels between Qohelet's leitmotif and Camus' notion of absurdity which proves to have an identical Sitz im Leben.*

The Book of Qohelet – Contents and Structure

Most of the scholars, who had worked on the Book of Qohelet for the first time, thought of it as a simple collection of declarations, maxims and aphorisms without a fixed concept. In fact, the Book of Qohelet presents us with various literary genres in several chapters. These genres range from aphorisms to prosaic narratives to poetic pieces bearing a certain educational character. Even though, the definition of Kurt Galling of Qohelet as a book of aphorisms is correct. In his commentary on Ecclesiastes, as Qohelet is called in the various translations of the Tanakh, in 1969, Galling speaks of Qohelet as a book in which “the author did not plan a single book but expresses his conclusions as aphorisms each focused on a specific subject”.¹ This can be considered a true definition with regards to Qohelet's reflections on man, life and God. In 1974, Walter Zimmerli mentioned that the Book of Qohelet is more than a simple collection of sentences and aphorisms. Zimmerli recognizes that “within certain sections of the Book of

¹ Kurt Galling, 'Der Prediger', in: Kurt Galling, Ernst Würthwein (eds), *Die fünf Megilloth*, (HAT 1.18; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, ²1969), pp. 73–125, (p. 76); translation K. M.

Qohelet [...] a single question is reconsidered over and over”.² Zimmerli sees especially Qoh 1:12–2:26, in which is called ‘royal travesty’, and the following reflections as a bigger, coherent arc of thought. This compromising position that Zimmerli introduced first became widely accepted by commentators of the Book of Qohelet. Most of them see a coherent presentation within the first three chapters of the book. However, it is controversial what this coherence comprises.

All the interpretations on the structure of the Book of Qohelet show, however, that verses 1:2 and 12:8 do indeed form some sort of frame for the book. These are the verses in which Qohelet introduces his main concept and leitmotif *hakol hevel*. Qohelet’s whole argumentation on the meaning and purpose of being is embedded within the frame of vv. 1:2 and 12:8. From Qohelet’s reflections, the only conclusion of which is that everything is *hevel*, Qohelet’s primary concern can be singled out as trying to find an answer to the question how can man escape his miserable being?

In order to find out why man’s being is so miserable, a detailed analysis of the term *hevel* is needed; first of all to clarify how broad the spectrum of ideas behind this term is, and secondly, to understand Qohelet’s way of employing the term and his philosophical concept underlying it.

The Term *hbl* - Conceptual analysis and usage in the book of Qohelet

The lexeme *hbl* is common in most Semitic languages and is mostly employed in its primary meaning ‘breath, vapor, and expiration.’ *Hevel* as a noun is more common than as a denominate verb *habal*. The noun is attested in the Tanakh 73 times, whereas the verb can be found only 5 times in the Hebrew Bible. The oldest datable evidence is Isa 30:7. The evidence from Gen 4, *hevel* as the name of the second-born son of Adam and Eve, is doubtful according to Seybold.³

Hevel is only randomly applied in its primary meaning ‘breath’ or ‘vapor’. When so, the word is in most cases accompanied by the lexeme *ruah* or is determined by its context. An example for the usage according to the lexeme’s primary meaning can be found in Is 57:13,

² Walter Zimmerli, ‘Das Buch Kohelet: Traktat oder Sentenzensammlung?’, in: *Vetus Testamentum*, 24 (1974), pp. 221–230, (p. 230); translation K. M.

³ Kurt Seybold, ‘*hevel*’, *THWAT* 2, pp. 335 and 337.

Ps 62:10, Prov 13:11 and 21:6. An example from Ps 144:4 shows that the image of wind or vapor embodies a broader and more abstract understanding of the term *hevel* - “They are like a breath (*‘adam lahevel damah*); their days are like a passing shadow (*ketsel ‘over hevel*).”⁴ The idea of impermanence and nullity is combined with the image of vapor. According to this more abstract meaning, the term *hevel* can be found as a denominate verb in Jer 2:5, 2 Kin 17:15, Job 27:12 and Ps 62:11. Seybold sees a “trend for a negative rating”⁵ in the usage of the term as a metaphor in predicative form. Thus, *hevel* does no longer only mean vapor or wind but serves to qualify human experience. This includes the usage of the term in the oldest evidence, passage Isa 30:7.

According to the lexical range of meanings of nullity and impermanence, *hevel* can be found in three different semantic fields. In the first field, the term can be applied to qualify false gods and idols. Evidence can be found in Dtn 32:31, 1 Kin 16:13, 2 Kin 17:15, Ps 31:7; furthermore, it can be applied in the “idol polemic”,⁶ as in Jer 10:3. In Is 49:4 and Job 7:16; finally, the term *hevel* serves as a form of lamenting about the nullity of labor and the impermanence of human life as part of the so called “individual lament”.⁷

The usage of the term *hevel* in the Book of Qohelet is unique and the lexeme is attested in this book more often than in any other book of the Tanakh. Qohelet almost exclusively uses the term in a nominal phrase as a conclusion of his personal experience and a reflection about certain situations in life, such as striving for knowledge. Thus, the judgment *hakol hevel* becomes a leitmotif in the Book of Qohelet and is applied in reference to three specific circumstances in Qohelet’s life. First, it is an answer in the search for sense and nonsense of physical effort and forms the antithesis to Qohelet’s question *mah yitron* (“what is the profit?”). Secondly, also the striving for knowledge of the heavenly order is qualified as *hevel*. The order of the world is designed by God himself and defined by an eternal cycle that creates an objectively reasonable reality, which man can neither change nor escape. The desire to understand this heavenly order is *hevel* because man can never understand the heavenly concept of the world’s order. The

⁴ All quotes from the Hebrew Bible in their English translation are taken from the New Revised Standard Version following the King James Version from 1952.

⁵ Seybold (see note 3), p. 338.

⁶ Rainer Albertz, *‘hevel’*, *THAT* 1, p. 468.

⁷ *Ibid.*

awareness that all human experiences will end at the time of death, finally, forms the third circumstance, to which Qohelet relates his judgment *hakol hevel*.

The new JPS translation of Qohelet presents the reader with eight different possible translations for the term *hevel*. Michael Fox, who has been working on the Book of Qohelet, its philosophy and terminology for the past 25 years, strongly rejects all the offered translations in the JPS commentary, pointing to the fact that the term *hevel* is recurring throughout the whole book like a refrain and is thematically used like a specific formula.⁸ According to Fox, this implies one single meaning of the term which does not change throughout the whole book. The meaning of the term, as it is used by the fictional author Qohelet, is ‘absurd’. Fox points out that this understanding of the term would fit every passage, where *hevel* is mentioned in Qohelet. However, Fox’s remarks are based on an important ultimate principle. He makes a clear distinction between the qualities or characteristics *hevel* might have and its actual meaning. The term’s qualities include transience, injustice, inefficiency, senselessness and futility. All these qualities apply to the acts and goods Qohelet questions and ultimately condemns. The absurdity of those acts and goods is based on what is *happening* to the actor or to the profit of an action. This thesis can be best explained by turning to the text of Qohelet.

Example N°1 – Qoh 2:4; 11

2,4 I enlarged my works: I built houses for myself, I planted vineyards for myself; [...] **11** Thus, I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity and striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun.

In the above mentioned verses, Qohelet, in the disguise of King Solomon, reflects on work and labor. Already in Qoh 1:3, he is pondering on the advance and *profit* man can achieve through hard work and *labor* (*‘ml*) concluding that there is no lasting profit. Labor is, according to Qohelet, by definition absurd and profit resulting from it does not last. Material wealth can pile

⁸ Michael Fox, ‘The Meaning of Hebel for Qohelet’, in: *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 105,3 (1986), pp. 409–427.

up and may be rejoiced in, but at the end of his life, man is left with nothing. Thus it is absurd-*hevel*-to labor in this life when in the end there is nothing but death.

Example N°2 – Qoh 2:14–15

14 The wise man's eyes are in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. And yet I know that one fate befalls them both. **15** Then I said to myself, “As is the fate of the fool, it will also befall me. Why then have I been extremely wise?” So I said to myself, “This too is vanity.”

Qohelet’s eyes, not only physical work and labor is absurd but also mental effort. Man can increase his knowledge and is actually urged to do so, but knowledge cannot prevent man from dying. Death haunts the ignorant the same as the erudite and both probably won’t be remembered years after their deaths.

Example N°3 – Qoh 8:14

8,14 There is futility which is done on the earth, that is, there are righteous men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked. On the other hand, there are evil men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous. I say that this too is futility.

This verse makes it most clear that *hevel* is best translated as ‘absurd’. Absurdity is - as becomes clear later in the works of Camus - an imbalance between the desired and the actual. The desired outcome of the situation mentioned in Qoh 8:14 would be that the righteous man was rewarded for his good deeds. The wicked instead should be punished. Reality though, as Qohelet criticizes in the above mentioned verse, is often exactly the opposite. Desired and actual are in imbalance - this is irrational and absurd. Life is full of absurdities like this, as we have seen in the above quotes from the Book of Qohelet.

Example N°4 – Qoh 3:14–15

3,14 I know that everything God does will remain forever; there is nothing to add to it, and there is nothing to take from it, for God has so worked that men should fear Him. **15** That

which has been already and that which will be has already been, for God seeks what has passed by.

The verses 3:14–15 form the closure of the ‘Poem on Time’ in which Qohelet recognizes the wise primal order of the world as a cycle of ever-repeating events. Even though the term *hevel* is not mentioned in these lines, it is clear that trying to perceive this heavenly order is absurd, because God’s works are everlasting. Man cannot shake the order, whatever he does - may it be good or evil. Man’s life is predestined by God as is the world itself and man’s toils do not have any effect on it. Fox expresses this notion to the point in his work *A Time to Tear Down and a Time to Build Up*, stating: “God’s works steamroller over man’s puny efforts, and nothing substantially new can interrupt the awesome course of events that God has ordained.”⁹

Man has to submit to God’s preordination. Every time he tries to find the meaning of life he will fail. Therefore, trying itself a priori is *hevel*. The primal order of the world cannot be understood by man, he will be surprised by the cycle of lifetime events without being able to actively affect them. Even though these events follow a strict order, man will never realize it. Thus, striving for knowledge and searching for the heavenly order is *hevel*.

It has become clear that the conclusion of all of Qohelet’s reflections on human life and condition remain the same throughout the whole book-*hakol hevel*, everything is absurd. This special meaning of the term could also be applied to most of the other instances where *hevel* can be found in the Tanakh. Still, only the Book of Qohelet uses the term to describe the shattered rationality of the world. The fictional author Qohelet is clearly breaking with the traditional notion of the act-and-consequence-connection and reforms it within the framework of his personal concept of absurdity as postulated by the formula *hakol hevel*. This concept is very close to the concept of the ‘absurd in human condition’ of the French post-existentialist philosopher Albert Camus, which shall be shown in the following.

⁹ Michael Fox, *A Time to Tear Down and a Time to Build Up*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999), p. 213.

Albert Camus' *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (*The Myth of Sisyphus*)

Albert Camus' *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* is one of the most famous publications of the French post-existentialist philosopher. The collection of essays was published in 1942 in Paris and is Camus' opus magnum alongside the second larger essay collection *L'Homme révolté* (*The Rebel*). In the *Mythe*, Camus elaborates on his theories on the absurd condition of human life, a concept he first introduced in 1937 in his essay *L'Envers et l'Endroit* (*Between and Between*).

The Absurd Human Condition

Camus' *Mythe de Sisyphe* is organized into four chapters and one appendix, starting with the only philosophical problem that is crucial for the philosopher-what is the meaning and purpose of life and whether or not it is worth living?

According to Camus, many people do not find any meaning in their lives because they are deprived of their life concepts and future plans. This causes a sense of being a foreigner or stranger to your own life. Simultaneously, this feeling can be understood as the disunion between man and his life on earth which Camus describes as the feeling of absurdity. The feeling of absurdity "can strike any man in the face at any street corner,"¹⁰ and starts with the above mentioned sense of weariness of his own life. Weariness awakens consciousness of the absurd. After man has realized that his being is absurd, the feeling of being a stranger to his own life spreads even more. He recognizes the "primitive hostility of the world"¹¹ and does no longer consider himself as being part of this world. Now, man is confronted with two possibilities to solve this problem: committing suicide or attempt to restore the disunion. Most people, according to Camus, choose suicide in order to escape the alleged futility of their lives. For Camus, suicide is not an option for it cannot promise salvation the same as the absurd cannot be escaped through metaphysical attempts to escape into either ideological or religious systems of faith.

¹⁰ Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus: and other Essays; translated by Justin O'Brien*, (New York, N.Y.: Knopf, 1955), p. 9.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 11.

Striving for harmony and a just world cannot overcome the sense of emptiness either. The need for intimacy and the desire for clarity are innate human qualities. The pursuit of knowledge of the world and its order that determines the course of time however leads nowhere. Man can neither recognize world order nor can anything productive stem from this unachievable knowledge. The sense of futility may arise from this absurd condition and can thus lead to the feeling of absurdity. Absurdity is the “confrontation of this irrational and the wild longing for clarity whose call echoes in the human heart.”¹²

The Absurd Man

Once man has recognized this feeling of absurdity, he ought to explore and explain it. For Camus, the ‘absurd feeling’ is not identical with the term ‘absurd’ as advocated before by different philosophers such as Kierkegaard, Shestov, Jaspers, Heidegger and Husserl. What Camus calls ‘absurd’ is the contradiction between purposeful reasonable acting and the unattainability of an ultimate goal in life. World and its reality are stronger than man, absurdity

[...] does not spring from the mere scrutiny of a fact or an impression, but that it bursts from the comparison between a bare fact and a certain reality, between an action and the world that transcends it. The absurd is essentially a divorce.¹³

Man has to accept this divorce which ultimately exists between human pursuit for meaning and the world itself. The notion of the absurd forms Camus’ first and foremost truth. Man has to abide by this truth because he can only give his life meaning through accepting his absurd being. This meaning can be found in constant fight against absurdity. Man enjoys absolute freedom which empowers him to revolt against the absurdity of life here and now. While revolting against the absurd, man has to constantly keep in mind that the fact he is revolting against - the absurd - can never be eradicated. The core of the revolt consists in its countering the attempts to escape the absurd condition through suicide which are in any way doomed to fail, and thus restores

¹² Camus (see note 10), p. 15.

¹³ Ibid. p. 21.

life's value and purpose. This is the first conclusion Camus draws from his absurd questions. Man's freedom to revolt against the absurd is based on the awareness that death is man's only simple reality. The absurd condition - before man becomes aware of it - detains man and limits his possibilities. Man believes he can choose his own actions and set his own goals but in fact the absurd is controlling his life. Death, which is the ultimate absurdity and leveling of every action and experience, holds man captive. Only if man realizes and accepts his absurd condition he will be free at last. This is Camus' second conclusion.

Freedom while being aware of death as the only persistent reality forms a similar paradox as the concept of revolt in awareness of constant failure. Still, Camus draws a positive conclusion from it. Freedom *from* absurd delusions becomes freedom *to* seize the moment and experience ultimate joy. Being aware that death is the only reality and not hoping for a change of this situation, man is able to take his life in his own hands. He does not waste time on ideas, dreams and aspirations that lead nowhere, but lives consciously in the here and now. This conclusion forms the basis for man's deep passion for the absurd which he will experience in the end. Man will throw himself into his downright absurd existence and will call out for more in his present life because he is aware of the fact that reflections about the meaning of life will lead nowhere. Passion for the absurd, is the third paradox the inconsistency which man has to endure. This is Camus' third and last conclusion on the absurd human condition.

Sisyphus as the absurd man par excellence

As an example of a man revolting against the absurd, Camus presents his reader with Sisyphus, a well-known character in Greek mythology, who is the key figure for the whole essay. Sisyphus is condemned to repeat forever the same meaningless task of pushing a boulder up a mountain, only to see it roll down again. But Sisyphus acknowledges the futility of his task and the certainty of his fate. Thus he is freed to realize the absurdity of his situation and to reach a state of contented acceptance which allows Sisyphus to stand on top of the absurd. Accepting what the Gods considered the worst punishment of all, Sisyphus stands against their laws, becomes free and can live his self-determined life. Now, suicide - originally a logical conclusion from

Sisyphus' absurd situation - makes no sense any more because it would contravene man's task of accepting and living within the absurd.

Therefore, all the nihilistic findings, negation of meaning, value and purpose of our life do not result in a negation of life itself. The value of Sisyphus' life is not abnegated by the absurd character of his fate either. On the contrary, Sisyphus is a happy man who, by accepting his fate of absurd being, soars above it and finds reasons for valuing his absurd meaningless life in quantity, passion and freedom.

Comparison and Conclusion

Parallels

As it has been shown there are indeed certain parallels in the comprehension of the world and the life of man between Qohelet and Albert Camus. Both authors focus on the same topic - the meaning of life which is qualified by the awareness of death as the only persistent reality in the human world. Death is a ubiquitous concern in the Book of Qohelet and the basis for human futility and nullity that Qohelet sums up in his recurrent judgment of everything being *hevel*.

For Camus too, death plays an important role. Camus focuses on suicide though. Suicide is Camus' starting point for his reflections on the absurd human condition. Man who is considering his life as sense- and purposeless, sees suicide as his only choice and possibility to free himself from the dullness of life. For Camus, suicide is absurd, because man is obliged to accept his absurd being and free himself from it. Acceptance of absurdity becomes the only chance to escape life's senselessness; it empowers man to revolt against his absurd condition. Death, however, has another function for Camus. Like Qohelet, Camus sees death as the only persistent reality. He too realizes that life is ultimately heading towards death and can therefore be considered meaningless. Thus, Camus leads every human action or striving for profit *ad absurdum*.¹⁴ Simultaneously, death is one of the most important factors of Camus' concept of

¹⁴ In his construction of the concept of absurdity, Camus clings to the traditional meaning of the philosophical term 'absurd'. To lead something 'ad absurdum' means to uncover the hidden contradiction between an allegation and its underlying premises. Camus uses this principle of 'absurdity' for his reflections on the 'absurd in the human condition'.

‘absurd freedom’. Only if man is aware of his imminent death, can he free himself to revolt against his absurd condition. He is able to dig into his absurd condition with passion and does no longer waste time on hoping for a change of his condition and fate. Qohelet’s perception of death is similar to that of Camus. He too considers the awareness of death as primary, not only for his personal reflections and final judgment, but also for encouraging man to seize his life and rejoice in its beauties. Herein, Qohelet sees the only achievable and desirable profit for man.

Both authors consider death the basis for their philosophical concepts of the absurd human condition. Both develop their concepts based on personal observations and experiences in which they focus on the same aspects of life. Qohelet starts his reflections with questioning the purpose of labor (*mal*) and the strive for profit (*yitron*). Both of which can be judged as *hevel*, because every profit which can possibly stem from hard labor will not last. Thus, labor is absurd. This matter is illustrated in Camus’ story about the anti-hero Sisyphus. His labor and striving for reward is absurd, because he fails to achieve anything. Creative work too is absurd according to Camus. He believes that creative assets do not have any lasting effect or impact on the world order:

To work and create ‘for nothing’, to sculpture in clay, to know that one’s creation has no future, to see one’s work destroyed in a day while being aware that fundamentally this has no more importance than building for centuries - this is the difficult wisdom that absurd thought sanctions.¹⁵

This notion parallels Qohelet’s realization over sense and nonsense of labor as he states in verse 2:11: “Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity and striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun.” In both cases, the awareness of the ephemeral nature of the creative asset makes the process of creation absurd.

Qohelet and Camus share the same opinion on another aspect of human life. Both insist in the objective value of knowledge and the striving for it. This value is qualified by both, the irrationality of life and the imbalance between desired and actual. Qohelet draws his conclusion

¹⁵ Camus (see note 10), p. 72.

from the impossibility of man to realize the course of time and the heavenly world order God has ordained, in his reflections on time in vv. 3:1–15. The events of the world follow a certain chronological sequence, which is predetermined by God. Everything happens at its proper time but the exact moment is known to God alone. Man cannot predict the specific moment and will never be able to understand the concept underlying the primal world order. He can participate in the events but he cannot affect their chronology. Subsequently, there is only one way to endure this condition - subjection. Thriving for knowledge of the heavenly order is absurd. Both, intellectual and physical achievements as well as striving for them, is *hevel*.

Camus shares the idea that man is unable to affect the course of times and to realize its underlying principles. He even goes so far as to negate the purpose of science, because “all the knowledge on earth will give me nothing to assure me that this world is mine.”¹⁶ For Camus too, man, even though he is constantly striving for knowledge to understand the world, is unable to escape his absurd condition and fate. In the end, man has to realize that he is not immortal. Once again, death qualifies human actions and only leads to absurdity.

Both Qohelet and Camus draw the same conclusion from their observations and personal experiences. Both reject the illusion of a possible escape from death. Human being is absurd and neither worth physical nor mental toil and labor. Still, life is not senseless. The paradox purpose of life lies in the recognition and acceptance of the absurd condition. Thus, man can free himself from self-imposed constraints, goals and purposes, which in the end can only fail. To be aware of absurdity and live in the absurd condition is what Camus calls an ‘absurd passion’. For Qohelet, this passion is quite vivid, Qoh 3:12–13 states:

I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good in one's lifetime; moreover, that every man who eats and drinks sees good in all his labor - it is the gift of God.

But not only do the philosophical concepts of Qohelet and Camus parallel each other. Both texts show some stylistic similarities. In both texts, a lot of contradictions and paradox elements can be found in the observations and conclusions of the philosophers. To undermine their theses,

¹⁶ Camus (see note 10), p. 14.

both authors use various aphorisms and tautologies. Camus shows that human life is determined by the fundamental tension between the individual and its surroundings, as well as by injustice of all human action stemming from it, through a recurrent enumeration of different aspects and events in human life. For Camus, human life thus becomes absurd. This repeated assertion can be seen as a parallel to Qohelet's tautological reiteration of the phrase *hevel havalim hakol hevel*.

Another stylistic similarity can be seen in the fact that all the reflections Qohelet and Camus describe are written in first-person singular. Both authors share a quasi-lyrical 'I' which parallels the subject of the actual author. Both Qohelet and Camus draw their conclusions from their own experiences, because both have tested themselves to get a deeper insight into the absurdity of life.

Differences

There is, however, one point where Qohelet and Camus totally disagree. This is the ability to escape the absurd, which is presented in completely different ways in both works. Camus urges man to revolt and fight against the absurd. His anti-hero Sisyphus ought to be a role model for man because he accepts his torture and becomes the victor of his absurd being. Qohelet, on the other hand, mentions neither fight nor revolt. He advocates realizing the limits which life sets for man. At this point, God plays a very important role for Qohelet. According to Qohelet, man is predetermined by God and controlled in his actions.¹⁷ Man is not free to decide for himself, therefore individual freedom of man cannot be considered as the ultimate value of life for Qohelet. This is a clear contradiction to Camus' concept of 'absurd freedom', which he ascribes to Sisyphus once he realizes and accepts the absurdity of his condition. Camus' free man is able to revolt against absurdity and thereby escape the absurd condition. Qohelet, on the other hand, sticks to his idea of heavenly predetermination of man and thinks that, "to recognize and embrace life's limited possibilities accords with God's will."¹⁸ Man shall accept these limits and live his life to the utmost within them. This also means to grasp and enjoy life with all senses and sensual experiences. This is, according to Qohelet, the only ability man was gifted with by

¹⁷ Cf. Qoh 3:17–19.

¹⁸ Fox (see note 9), p. 11.

God in his restricted absurd life. Only if man agrees to this task will he become real and find the source for a happy life.

For Camus, on the contrary, there is no God. Sisyphus too has separated himself from the Gods by accepting his fate. According to Camus, God is the creator of the world order which is the basis for absurdity. Camus blames God for all the human suffering and considers Him indifferent towards man. Camus no longer accepts that God plays any significant role in man's life and finds his own special solution for the omnipresent problem of theodicy. Qohelet, on the contrary, sees God as the ultimate source for human joy and happiness. God has provided man with the ability to experience joy and pleasure and set the task of seizing life to its utmost. This is God's gift to man.¹⁹ According to Qohelet, God may control "the means of pleasure"²⁰ but "man alone chooses to experience the enjoyment."²¹

Based on the assumption that choosing a life in pleasure and conviviality can lead to happiness and joy, Qohelet's idea of escaping the absurd condition is completely different from Camus'. According to Qohelet, there is no escape from absurdity, he advocates realizing the limits which God has set for man. Man shall accept these limits and live his life to the utmost within them while Camus considers revolt the only possibility to escape absurdity. Through revolting, Sisyphus will be a happy man in the end.

Sitz im Leben

The Book of Qohelet holds a special place within the canon of the Hebrew Bible. No other book focuses on the immanent problem of death in the way Qohelet does and questions the purpose of life in the light of this threatening inalienable fact. Camus' *Mythe* too holds a distinctive place within the history of modern philosophy by clearly setting itself apart from classical existentialist ideas. The concepts of the absurd human being and possible escapes from absurdity, which are presented by Qohelet and Camus, hardly have any parallels in the time of their respective composition.²² Fox supposes that the actual life conditions of both Qohelet and Camus might

¹⁹ Cf. Qoh 3:13.

²⁰ Fox (see note 9), p. 7.

²¹ Ibid.

²² With his argumentation about the senselessness of life and the imbalance between desired and actual, Qohelet to

have been similar at the time of the composition of their works. His assumption is based on the perception of quite “similar social changes in Judea in the Hellenistic period and in Europe of the first part of the twentieth century.”²³

The basis for Qohelet’s philosophical concepts is the collapse of the act-and-consequence-connection as it can already be seen in the Book of Job. This is an important factor in distinguishing both Qohelet and Job from classical wisdom literature in Israel of the time. Crüsemann sees the collapse of the act-and-consequence-connection based on a national catastrophe of Israel.²⁴ This catastrophe had already started with the destruction of the First Temple in 587 BCE. What followed was a long term of foreign ruling over Israel and Judea, which was marked by oppression and lawlessness. Israel became part of larger national, economic and social entities, which caused massive economical breakdowns accompanied by a great strain through externally imposed taxes leading to a feeling of insecurity. Hellenistic culture and religion as well as the Greek language dominated Israel and Judea, political and social changes spread uncertainties, incomprehension and fear. This political and social condition is paralleled by Qohelet’s idea of an inscrutable order of the world:

The atmosphere of distress, confusion, and chaos induced people to react in a variety of ways, some by attempting to solidify and preserve traditions of the past, some by seeking explanations for the present, some by looking for hope in the future. Understandably, in a world where the symbolic system of the past no longer matches the realities of the present, fundamental human questions such as the meaning and nature of death are susceptible to reappraisal. This is exactly what happens in Qohelet [...]²⁵

some point follows the tradition of Job. Qohelet’s approach to solving the problem—by living his life in pleasure and joy—is completely different from the one of Job whose suffering ultimately turns out to be nothing more than a testing of his holiness. Albert Camus, on the other hand, is deeply influenced by the Russian existentialist philosopher Lev I. Shestov whose philosophy is based on a moment of great despair man finds himself in after a series of unjust experiences. Still, Camus’ conclusions differ so much from Shestov’s that it is impossible to consider their philosophical concepts paralleling each other.

²³ Fox (see note 9), p. 9.

²⁴ Frank Crüsemann, ‘Die unveränderbare Welt: Überlegungen zur ‘Krisis der Weisheit’ bei Prediger (Kohélet)’, in: Willy Schottroff, Wolfgang Stegemann (eds), *Der Gott der kleinen Leute: Sozialgeschichtliche Bibelauslegungen, Band 1: Altes Testament*, (München: Kaiser, 1979), pp. 80–104, (p. 87).

²⁵ Shannon Burkes, *Death in Qoheleth and the Egyptian Biographies of the Late Period*, (SBLDS 170; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), p. 118.

Indeed, Qohelets builds his concept of the absurd human condition onto the tension between conceptions of the past and actual events. Still, he is to be seen as an individual. Qohelet is not concerned with reporting historical events and lamenting about them. He is only concerned with his personal problems, which are independent from the current historical events. It can be assumed that the composition of the Book of Qohelet was highly influenced by the above-mentioned political, social and economical factors. Still, it is important to focus on the personal condition of the author who calls himself Qohelet.²⁶ It can be assumed, as Fox postulates that with regard to Qohelet's "obsession with death,"²⁷ the author of the Book of Qohelet was no longer a young man. Facing death, all his actions might have seemed senseless to the author, his property was no longer of use because it would not last or save him from death. One can therefore assume that in addition to the national crisis, which indeed might have played an important role in the composition of the Book of Qohelet, the author might have also faced a personal crisis that weighs even heavier on the individual. This is also the case with Camus, who was constantly battered by national and individual crises.²⁸

A comparison between the two concepts of absurd human being by Qohelet and Camus thus shows that both texts share a similar *Sitz im Leben*. Both texts reflect on the absurdity of human life but do not accuse it of anything. They focus on the same concern - showing man a possibility to find a bit of joy in a world that determines every human action but fails to reward man with the proper consequences for his actions may they be righteous or not. Living life in pleasure and restoring a purpose in the view of imminent death is what Qohelet and Camus advocate in different ways, but with the same objective.

²⁶ Cf. Qoh 1:1.

²⁷ Michael Fox, *Qohelet and his Contradictions*, JSOTSupp 71,18 (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1989), p. 294.

²⁸ Cf. Brigitte Sändig, *Albert Camus: Eine Einführung in Leben und Werk*, (Leipzig: Reclam, 1983).

Max Zweig's Concept of 'New Jewish Identity'
An Attempt to Unravel his Dysfunctional Relationship to Palestine/Israel

Ivana Procházková

Based on a case study on Max Zweig, a Moravian Jewish playwright, the presented paper aims to shed light on the transformation of the identity of German speaking Jewry from Moravia in Palestine and in the later State of Israel during and after WWII. Through analysis of selected plays it examines Zweig's ambivalent relationship to this land; the results are in general also valid for many other German speaking immigrants from Central Europe, active in the cultural sphere. As a reason for this ambivalence we can assume the tension between the emotional bond with the idealized Jewish state and bitter experiences on the level of reality, consisting first of all in the loss of the land of origin and its cultural linguistic environment and consequently in the clash with the reality of the 'Promised Land,' now the State of Israel, that barely acknowledged the works of German language authors.

Introduction

In socio-cultural terminology, identity is defined as self-inclusion (self-anchoring) of an individual or a group in a given social reality. This is a continuous virtual "process linked to a group and a specific culture" and its importance increases especially in times of sociopolitical change.¹ The identity of German-speaking Moravian Jewish authors, who found either short-term or permanent residence in Palestine in the 1930s, was the result of long-lasting developments, radically accelerated by political and historical changes that had occurred at the beginning of the twentieth century in their former homeland, namely the disintegration of the Habsburg Monarchy and the establishment of the independent Czechoslovak state.

¹ „Identitätsprozesse [...] sind immer an ein Kollektiv und an eine Kultur gebunden.“, Eva Kimminich (ed.), 'Macht und Entmachtung der Zeichen. Einführende Betrachtungen über Individuum, Gesellschaft und Kultur', in: *Welt-Körper-Sprache. Perspektiven kultureller Wahrnehmungs- und Darstellungsformen. Kulturelle Identität: Konstruktion und Krisen*, 3 (Frankfurt am Main et al.: Peter Lang, 2003), pp.VII-XXXV, (p. X).

The status of the Jews of Bohemia and Moravia in the era of the Habsburg Monarchy and after its fall was rather complicated and represents a perfect example of picking up or more precisely adopting the dominant national identity by a minority group and the role of nationalistic pressures on identity change of a minority group in general. As a consequence of the enlightened reign of Joseph II who was promoting German as the official language, the majority of Jews initially were inclined towards the German-speaking minority and its culture. The majority of trade and industry was in German hands until the first half of the nineteenth century and the knowledge of German language thus could gain access to society and higher, socially respected positions. The initial shift towards the significantly more developed German culture and the assimilation of Jews into it was, therefore, more than a logical step. According to Yegar,² German became a language of those who could enjoy emancipation.

Due to growing emancipation tendencies of the Czech national group within the slowly disintegrating monarchy, a strong tendency towards Czech-Jewish assimilation can be noticed from the second half of the 1870s; this tendency reached the status of a movement as late as the turn of the nineteenth century within the context of a higher degree of advancement and maturity of Czech society.

Full assimilation with the German and Czech ethnic group was considerably decelerated by the national conflict that was by that time reaching its climax. As a consequence, anti-Semitic tendencies were on the rise. Jews constituted a foreign element both for Czechs and Germans. Germans were accusing Jews of undermining the monarchy and for their support of the Czech national movement. Contrastingly, Czechs could not come to terms with pro-monarchist feelings of the German-speaking Jewish minority and as a consequence the old-new stereotype of Jews as Germanizers came to the fore (among others: Jews as factory owners, as bankers, as members of the bourgeoisie). In the Czech agrarian press (*Venkov*), Jews as well as Hungarians and Germans were often described as the “pampered and prioritized nations of Austria-Hungary” at the expense of the Czech nation.³ For Czechs, Jews were members of the German minority and therefore, unwanted; for the Germans, on the contrary, they were members of the Slavic nation.

² Moshe Yegar, *Československo, Sionismus, Izrael*, (Prague: Victoria Publishing, 1997), p. 5.

³ Blanka Soukupová, ‘Česká identita po vzniku Československé republiky. Antisemitismus jako faktor upevnění jsočnosti? 1918-1920’, in: *Židovská menšina v Československu ve dvacátých letech*, (Prague: Židovské muzeum v Praze, 2003), pp. 21-35, (p. 28).

Hence they found themselves in a sort of “forced interspace” between two cultural spheres.⁴ Some of them adopted this trans-cultural identity as their own, for a certain time period at least. These were above all the members of the (German) Prague literary circle, authors like Max Brod, Alfréd Fuchs and Pavel Eisner, who became so called ‘bridges,’ i.e. mediators between both cultures and who are also known for their immense contribution in the area of translation in Czech and German culture.

After the establishment of Czechoslovakia in 1918, the Czech-Jewish movement defended its fight for Czech identity by “the myth of tolerance and open-mindedness of the Czech nation”,⁵ designating “anti-Semitism as a foreign (moreover Viennese, German and therefore inimical) element of Czech identity”.⁶ Assimilation, seen as “the synthesis of majority and minority identity, an integration where the identity of the majority becomes dominant”⁷ was in reality perceived as an effort to find a stable relationship with the Czech nation, its history and art and the notion of Czechoslovakia as a homeland, i.e. the highest value worth sacrifice if needed. In terms of faith that was passed from generation to generation with a clear diversion from orthodoxy, Jewish religion was perceived as a relic promoting anti-Semitism. It became an automatically inherited part of the personality that was seldom cast aside. A Czech and Jewish identity was thus perceived as two coexisting identities. After the war, however, a generation of atheists emerged fuelled partly also by growing anti-Semitism. In the process, the notion of Jewish identity as a faith was reborn into the notion of family roots. Czech Jewish activities were looked upon with misunderstanding and from distance. The assimilation reached its peak on the linguistic and also social level.

German Jewish assimilation around 1900 was linked to earlier periods. Blanka Soukupová⁸ connects the first period with the personality of the German philosopher Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786), a pioneer of the Haskalah, the second period was influenced by the events taking place in the literary salon of Rahel Varnhagen von Ense (1771-1833). The third

⁴ Cf. introduction of Marek Nekula, Walter Koschmal (eds), *Juden zwischen Deutschen und Tschechen. Sprachliche und Kulturelle Identitäten in Böhmen 1800-1945*, (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2006), pp. VII-X.

⁵ Blanka Soukupová, ‘Češi-židé. K identitě česko-židovského hnutí. 1918-1926’, in: *Židovská menšina v Československu ve dvacátých letech*, (Prague: Židovské muzeum v Praze, 2003), pp. 51-64, (p. 53).

⁶ Ibid. p. 53.

⁷ Ibid. p. 55.

⁸ Ibid. p. 54.

period, which lasted until the fall of the monarchy, was characterized similarly to the Czech Jewish movement, i.e. by the effort of creating a synthesis between Germaness and Jewishness and the fight against orthodoxy. Among the leading personalities were, according to Soukupová, the poet Heinrich Heine (1797-1856) and the philosopher Ferdinand Lassalle (1825-1864). The situation of German-speaking Jews in postwar Czechoslovakia was twice as difficult because of the language and the connection to the monarchy and its German-Austrian cultural heritage. The end of the war was not necessarily perceived as the beginning of freedom and hence it was not embraced with enthusiasm. It was accompanied by despair after the loss of home and with anxiety regarding the future. It should be noted that home was Austria-Hungary, rather than Czechoslovakia that represented for the majority of German-speaking Jews 'galut', i.e. exile. As a consequence, Czechoslovak citizenship was accepted rather automatically and the inability to integrate into Czech society lead to the departure for centers that were closer in language and culture, such as Munich or Berlin. Max Zweig in his *Lebenserinnerungen* (Memories) stated:

The end of the war surprised me in the same way as its beginning. On 28 October 1918, the Czechoslovak Republic was established. [...] I could not enjoy this long and anxiously expected day with the feeling of unclouded happiness. Now, that I had lost the homeland I felt that once I had had one, and I bemoaned the loss. Because my birthplace was now within the territory of the new Czechoslovak Republic, I became its citizen automatically. This corresponded neither with my beliefs nor with my wishes. I knew some intelligent and likable Czechs, but I felt no sympathies for the Czech state and its citizens. I could understand their longing for independence, although the oppression by the Austrians, about which they were constantly complaining, was rather an imagined one and perfectly bearable. Now, that they had their own state, independence was not enough for them, they wanted to suppress others.⁹

⁹ "Das Kriegsende kam für mich so überraschend wie der Beginn des Krieges. Am 28. Oktober 1918 wurde die tschechoslowakische Republik gegründet. [...] Ich konnte den lang ersehnten, heißerflehten Tag, der nun endlich gekommen war, nicht mit ungemischter Freude begrüßen. Nun, da ich das Vaterland verloren hatte, fühlte ich so recht, daß ich eines besessen hatte, und ich traute um das verlorene. Da ich in einem innerhalb der neuen Tschechoslowakei gelegenen Ort geboren war, wurde ich automatisch tschechischer Staatsbürger. Das stimmte weder mit meinen Überzeugungen noch mit meinen Wünschen überein. Ich kannte einzelne intelligente und gewinnende Tschechen, aber mit den Tschechen als Nation oder als Staat fühlte ich keine Sympathie. Ich konnte es

The reluctance of Czech society to absorb the Jewish, moreover German-speaking ethnicity, but also the reluctance of German-speaking Jews to connect their expectations and future with the new Czechoslovak state, further contributed to the fact that some German-speaking Jews (and to some extent a part of their Czech-speaking fellow citizens) started to consider the Zionist idea and the establishment of a Jewish state as the only solution. The shift towards Zionist ideas in Bohemia and Moravia grew stronger as a consequence of the pre-republic injustice from both nations striving for government and of anti-Semitism during and after the war. However, it was the wave of anti-Semitism already engulfing Europe in the 1880s and especially the 1890s that significantly contributed to the origins of an organized Jewish national movement.

Initially, Zionist ideas were mainly embraced by Jewish university youth, especially after the Leopold Hilsner affair (1899-1900), which aroused great concern about the further destiny of Jews living in Bohemia and Moravia, these ideas brought hope to the members of the middle class in general. Still, the vast majority of Jewish high bourgeoisie pledged allegiance to the progressive German party and later it showed a strong inclination towards the German Social Democratic Party. Among young Bohemian and Moravian Jews Zionist ideas were spread through the influence of Vienna. Similar to local Zionist students associations, the first organizations were founded both among the German and Czech-speaking Jews in Bohemia (*Makabea* 1893, since 1896 as *The Organization of Jewish Students in Prague*, from 1900 known as *Bar Kokhba*, 1899 *Sion* club). In Moravia, the reception of Herzl's speech at the council of Basel was significantly stronger than in Bohemia, where patriotic ideas were spread to a limited extent and Zionists were a minority among Bohemian Jews until the First World War. Prague was to blame because the majority of its Jewish population adopted German nationality, grew up in the German culture of the Hapsburg monarchy and also supported its politics, which was relatively tolerant towards Jews. Czech schools were developing more slowly than German schools, where the majority of Bohemian and Moravian Jews studied. In Moravia, *Sion* clubs

verstehen, daß sie nach Selbstständigkeit begehrt, obwohl die Unterdrückung durch Österreich, über welche sie stets geklagt hatten, eher eine eingebilte und sicherlich eine sehr erträgliche gewesen war. Da sie jetzt ihren eigenen Staat gewonnen hatten, genügte die Selbstständigkeit ihnen nicht mehr; sie wollten andere unterdrücken.“, Max Zweig, 'Lebenserinnerungen', in: Eva Reichmann (ed.), *Max Zweig. Autobiographisches und verstreute Schriften aus dem Nachlaß*, 6 (Oldenburg: Igel Verlag Literatur, 2002), pp. 7-213, (p. 61).

were founded between 1894 and 1897 which was prior to the establishment of the World Zionist Organization. Moravia was closer to Jewish centers such as Galicia and Hungary, assimilation was not that advanced and most importantly there was the influence and propaganda of Herzl's disciples, who came from different Moravian cities (e.g. Berthold Feiwel, 1875-1937). As early as 1894 the Zionist association *Veritas* was founded in Brno. It was this association that gave impetus to the foundation of other subsidiary associations of the World Zionist Organization in different Moravian cities.

While early supporters of Zionism in Bohemia and Moravia perceived this movement as a reaction to the dismissive attitude of both quarrelling parties, i.e. the Czechs and the Germans,¹⁰ as a vision of their own national emancipation, *Bar Kokhba* under the leadership of Samuel Bergmann headed, similarly to *Sion* under the leadership of Feiwel, towards cultural emancipation and resurgence within the frame of an existing state organization. Rather than political emphasis, promoted by Herzl that consisted in the fastest possible establishment of the Jewish state, they emphasized Buber's spiritual meaning.¹¹ The most important figure of Cultural Zionism was, at least in the beginning, Achad Haam (i.e. Asher Ginzberg). He declared that the revival of the Jewish nation should not be primarily a reaction to anti-Semitism (as political Zionism, proclaimed by Theodor Herzl, Pinsker and Nordau), but an attempt to revive the fading Jewish identity in modern times. He supported the revival of Jewish traditions, culture, literature and the teaching of Jewish history and the Hebrew language. Unlike political Zionists, cultural Zionists did not insist on the establishment of an independent Jewish state, some form of Jewish autonomy in the Land of Israel serving as a cultural centre was also acceptable. The advocates of cultural Zionism did not anticipate Jewish mass migration to Palestine, as for example Herzl did. The assimilated Jews from Czechoslovakia maintained some longing for the 'Promised Land' as one of the basic characteristic of Diaspora thinking, however, this stemmed from an unrealistic image of a Jewish state considering the international political situation. Assimilated Czech-Jews perceived the tendency to create a renewed Jewish homeland as a selfish pattern of conduct, by

¹⁰ The wave of anti-Semitism that had swept through Bohemia between 1897 and 1900 prompted Theodor Herzl to react, he published an article called 'The Hunt in Bohemia' in which he paid attention to the national fight in the Czech Lands. In his article he warned Czech Jewry not to get mixed up in nationalist skirmishes.

¹¹ It was Martin Buber who introduced the concept of Zionism as a 'revolution of souls' to the members of Bar Kokhba. Buber delivered three speeches, called his *Three Addresses on Judaism* in Prague in January and February 1909 and in December 1910.

which the Jews “were solving only their own personal problems and were withdrawing from majority society”.¹² Victor Vohryzek, a philosopher and founder and theoretician of the Czech-Jewish movement considered Palestine as a mere ‘romantic dream.’¹³ Similarly, the tendencies for the creation of an independent Jewish state were denounced in the majority of Czech-Jewish periodicals *Rozvoj* (Progress), *Českožidovské listy* (Czech-Jewish Journal). The necessity of mass departure for the Middle East became relevant as the National Socialists took power in Germany and consequently in neighboring European states.

Max Zweig grew up under these complicated circumstances. Zweig can be regarded a typical example of an assimilated German-speaking Jew from a Moravian provincial town, who as a consequence of socio-political changes lost his home and homeland twice. It was the involuntary asylum in Palestine that accelerated his transformation from his long discarded old Jewish identity into the so called new Jewish identity, which was bound to the new Jewish state. He lived there for more than fifty years until his death.

Max Zweig was born on 22 June 1892 in the Moravian city of Prostějov into a well-to-do family of a respected lawyer. Prostějov,¹⁴ which lies approximately 18 kilometers from the Moravian cultural metropolis Olomouc, was a city with a mixture of Czech, German and Jewish culture. In Zweig’s youth Prostějov had a population of approximately 30,000 inhabitants, this figure includes between 1,500 and 2,000 German-speaking Jews and approximately 1,000 non-Jewish Germans, the largest number of inhabitants, however, claimed Czech nationality.

The Jewish community of Prostějov was among the most numerous and most important in Moravia. After all, it was not a coincidence that Prostějov was called ‘the Jerusalem of the Haná.’ Among the German-speaking inhabitants of Prostějov, just like in other Moravian cities, there were incomparably more people with academic background, e.g. factory owners and shopkeepers than among the Czech speakers. Textile factories, which formed the cornerstone of the whole industry and economics in Prostějov, were almost exclusively in the hands of Jews. Zweig’s father Gustav belonged to the generation that could enjoy all civil rights, study at

¹² Soukupová (see note 5), p. 55.

¹³ Viktor Vohryzek, ‘Falešné předpoklady našich odpůrců’, in *K židovské otázce. Vybrané úvahy a články* (Prague: Kapper, 1923), pp. 169-173.

¹⁴ Prostějov constitutes an ethnographic territory that is located in Central Moravia and is formed by the region between the cities of Zábřeh, Holešov, Vyškov and Uničov. It also partially overlaps into the region of Olomouc, Zlín and South Moravia.

universities, earn degrees and hold distinguished offices. Dr. Gustav Zweig was a respected lawyer who secured his family financially and in later life also held a respected position within the Jewish community where he like his grandfather held the office of mayor. The whole family spoke German and preferred German culture and education to Czech that was generally considered as second-rate in German-speaking circles of Jewish middle class. This fact crucially contributed to the choice of educational institutions. Max Zweig successfully finished the four-year German school in Prostějov at the Jewish community; to gain further education he had to leave for Olomouc, because there was no German *gymnasium* in Prostějov.¹⁵

For Zweig, Olomouc embodied the opposite of the grayness of uncultivated Prostějov, a thriving centre ‘of old German culture.’¹⁶ The national makeup of the population was far more complex in Olomouc than in Prostějov. Up to 1918 Olomouc seemed to be a purely German city, where the rights of Czechs were suppressed. In the 1920s the city of Olomouc had a population of approx. 40,000, of which 25,000 were of German origin, among them approx. 2,000 Jews, and 15,000 Czechs.¹⁷ The majority of German inhabitants was artificially sustained by the exclusion of suburban districts inhabited by Czechs from the city union. It was only after the establishment of Czechoslovakia when the suburban districts were united with the central districts and the German population suddenly became a one-third minority. Hence, both nationalities were substantially antagonistic.

In the religiously observant Schwarz family of Olomouc, where Max received his boarding and lodging, he first encountered Jewish religious life. The Zweig family was religiously indifferent and visited the synagogue only during the high holidays. Until his

¹⁵ “Da ich dazu bestimmt war, Jus zu studieren, mußte ich ein Gymnasium besuchen. [...] Das nächstgelegene deutsche Gymnasium befand sich in Olmütz. Ich weiß heute noch meinem Vater Dank dafür, daß er mich nicht der Qual eines Realschulstudiums aussetzte und mich lieber als halbes Kind aus dem Hause ließ, als mich in ein tschechisches Gymnasium zu schicken. So genoß ich den unschätzbaren Vorzug, in der Sprache einer alten, hochentwickelten Kultur leben und denken zu dürfen, und nicht in einer Kultur, welche Jahrhunderte lang geschlafen hatte und eben erst begann, sich neu zu bilden.“ [I was designated to study law, therefore I had to attend a gymnasium. [...] The closest German gymnasium was in Olomouc and to this day I am grateful to my father for not exposing me to the torments of a Czech high school, but rather sent me, almost in my childhood age, to Olomouc instead. This gave me the invaluable advantage of living and thinking in a language of an old and highly developed culture, instead of a culture that was asleep for centuries and only recently started to redesign itself.], Zweig (see note 9), p. 30.

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 32.

¹⁷ Jaroslav Klenovský, Miroslav Papoušek, *Židovská obec v Olomouci: Historie, osobnosti, památky* (Olomouc: Židovská obec v Olomouci, 1998), p. 8.

departure for Palestine, Max Zweig was a faithful reflection of his assimilated father, who after the fall of the Ghetto walls attempted, like the majority of young intellectuals, to merge with the surrounding higher German culture. “He was indifferent towards the problems of Jews”¹⁸ and returned to Judaism only in his later age, however not to Jewish religion but to a Judaism that “only recently cultivated the sparks of nationalism”.¹⁹ He became an early Zionist and held leading positions in most Moravian Zionist organizations. Because his father was a model of moral superiority, Max Zweig labeled himself a Zionist, “even though the term did not mean much to me”.²⁰ His Jewishness he perceived as an ancient tradition, although suppressed, still firmly rooted in all generations of his family that affected the fate of European Jews as a negative determinant. During his school years he felt adherence to this tradition however only subliminally, rather by means of growing anti-Semitism among German inhabitants, whose manifestations he deemed hidden, although omnipresent and treacherous, since it was suppressed by the monarchy.

Respecting the wish of his father and following his example, Zweig enrolled in the law faculty at Vienna University, accompanied by his best friend Paul Engelmann. It was a common phenomenon among young Jewish intelligentsia from the Moravian province to be attracted to Vienna, the cultural capital of the Habsburg monarchy. The First World War forced both friends to return to Olomouc. Both harbored rather anti-militaristic sentiments and spent the war working in the civil service and organizing discussion evenings in their free time. This discussion circle hosted illustrious personalities, such as the philosopher Friedrich Pater, the caricaturist Peter Eng, the drama director Bernhard Reich and the famous philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein; the circle also adopted its guests’ name. Both Engelmann and Zweig gained their degrees after the war and Zweig moved to Berlin, the thriving cultural centre of the time. There he met his first wife, Margarete Löhr.²¹ It was thanks to the intervention of his friend Paul Ernst that the premiere of his first drama *Ragen*²² was realized in the Mannheimer National Theater in

¹⁸ Zweig (see note 9), p. 120.

¹⁹ [...] “auf dem Weg des eben erst keimenden Nationalismus.“, Ibid. p. 120.

²⁰ [...] “ohne mir unter dieser Bezeichnung viel vorzustellen.“, Ibid. p. 121.

²¹ Greta Löhr, née Bauer was born in 1893 in Munich. Before she married her first husband, Ernst Löhr, she had a close relationship with Emil Groag and was also engaged to Hans Tschirch – both, Groag and Tschirch, perished in the war. She divorced Ernst in 1926 so she could officially live with Max Zweig.

²² *Ragen*, 1923, staged 1924 in Mannheim and Koblenz, printed in 1925.

October 1924. With the rise of Nazism in Germany Zweig was forced to return with his wife to Prostějov. In the middle of 1938 he left for Tel Aviv where he was to supervise the production and translation of his drama *Marranen*²³ that was staged by the Hebrew National Theatre *Habimah*.²⁴

What was initially intended to be a journey of several weeks changed into months mainly due to delays in production at the end of December 1938. The rise of Hitler to power made it impossible for the citizens of Jewish origin to travel safely through the countries Zweig was bound to pass through on his return journey and so his stay in Palestine was extended to nine long years. In Tel Aviv, he met again with his friend Paul Engelmann.²⁵ Until Engelmann's death in 1965, thus for about 25 years, Zweig and Engelmann shared a one room apartment in Tel Aviv. Zweig moved to Jerusalem in the 1980's, together with his second wife Wilhelmine Bucherer, a professional harp player.

While Engelmann²⁶ and some other German speaking Jews from Czechoslovakia, Austria and Germany came to perceive Palestine as their new home with a new future, Zweig never identified with it and kept labeling Israel as the land of asylum. He never learned Hebrew,²⁷ lived on the little money he received for his scarcely staged plays, and was supported by his family and several sponsors, among them Max Brod and Elazar Benyoetz. A significant fact is that Palestine/Israel became the destination of his journey only by chance. As Zweig himself liked to point out, this was purely a matter of fate. In spite of the difficult situation, Zweig managed to

²³ Cf. *Die Marranen*, 1937, staged 1938 in Israel (Palestine), printed in 1938, revised in Eva Reichmann (ed.), *Max Zweig. Dramen II*, (Wien-Bern-Stuttgart: Igel Verlag Literatur und Wissenschaft, 1963).

²⁴ *Habimah* performed also in Brno in November 1937 during its European tour and a friend of Zweig arranged a meeting with the director of the company Zwi Friedland. He took the manuscript with him, had it translated into Hebrew and began arranging it for public performance. However, the translation and production of the play were dragging and the premiere took place only end of December 1938.

²⁵ Paul Engelmann decided to emigrate to Palestine after the death of his mother in 1934. He was inclined to leave as early as 1925 and succeeded to engage Ludwig Wittgenstein in the idea to a certain extent. Max Zweig followed Engelmann to Palestine four years later, while supervising the rehearsals of *Die Marannen* in *Habimah* theater, in Tel Aviv.

²⁶ The letter of recommendation received from Max Zweig ensured him a job as an interior architect in the well established studio *The Cultivated Home* run by Zweig's friend Arthur Wachsberger. Engelmann made a career as an architect in Palestine, without ceasing to write and to engage in philosophy.

²⁷ Zweig believed that a "healthy seed can only spring from a poet in his mother tongue", Zweig (see note 9), p. 186. In spite of the numerous attempts by his friend Engelmann to make Zweig learn Hebrew, Zweig never mastered this language and his German remained fossilized in the 1930's due to Zweig's isolation. Only once a year did he meet his first wife in Austria, spoke German with his friends in Israel and later with his Swiss second wife, Wilhelmine. His archaic and pathetic dialogues were one of the reasons why his plays were so often refused or a failure, when staged.

write one play almost every year in Palestine, respectively the State of Israel. During his career, he wrote a total of 22 plays, but only eight of them were actually staged in Europe, North and South America and Israel, mostly due to the efforts of Max Brod. The plays were almost exclusively tragedies with historical, political, religious, psychological and mystical themes. Some of them were dedicated to great figures of world history, e.g. Napoleon in the drama *St. Helena*,²⁸ Rasputin in the drama bearing his name and St. Francis of Assisi. Besides the novella *Die Liebe Joffreys von Periot*,²⁹ the dramas *Rasputin*³⁰ and *Franziskus*³¹ were the only works of Zweig translated into Czech. The author of the translations was Otto František Babler,³² a translator and cultural activist in Olomouc.

A significant part of Zweig's work deals with the question of the origin and the historical position of the Jewish nation. This is most obvious in the plays *Saul*³³ and *Davidia*³⁴ that were highly valued by the author himself. All works are characterized by a strict rejection of xenophobia, bureaucracy and all sorts of totalitarian regimes. Be it the National Socialist one, like in the allegory on the historical events of 1938 situated in the Spanish Civil War and called *Die Marranen* or in the more actual plays like *Die Deutsche Bartholomäusnacht*³⁵ and *Ghetto Warschau*;³⁶ be it a communist one, criticized in the play *Der Generalsekretär*³⁷ and *Medea in Prag*.³⁸ Each one of the plays was a product of a long and painful writing process and only rarely a success.

²⁸ *St. Helena*, 1931.

²⁹ It appeared on 6 January 1923 in the Sunday issue of *Tribuna*, also translated by O. F. Babler.

³⁰ *Rasputin*, 1932. The Czech translation by O.F. Babler was sent to František Stibor, director of the Olomouc State Theater in 1932. Stibor refused the script as unstageable in spite of a first positive impression. The translation of *Rasputin* by O.F. Babler is kept in the Olomouc branch of the District Archive in Opava.

³¹ *Franziskus*, 1945, realized in the frame of the *Bregenzer Festspiele* festival and in *Wiener Burgtheater*, printed in Eva Reichmann (ed.), *Max Zweig. Dramen I*, (Wien-Bern-Stuttgart: Igel Verlag Literatur und Wissenschaft, 1961). The Czech translation was also prepared by O. F. Babler and was rejected by Stibor for the same reasons as *Rasputin*.

³² Zweig corresponded extensively with O. F. Babler, whom he knew from several visits to the Olomouc Philosophy Union and from the meetings at Engelmann's; he admired and respected Babler's work. Fragments of this correspondence was preserved in O. F. Babler's estate.

³³ *Saul*, 1944, staged 1949 in Israel, 1962 in Celle, awarded in Bregenz 1957, printed in Reichmann (see note 31).

³⁴ *Davidia*, 1939, staged 1946 in Israel (Palestine), 1947 in Paris, 1948 in New York and Buenos Aires.

³⁵ *Die Deutsche Bartholomäusnacht*, 1940, printed in Reichmann (see note 23).

³⁶ *Ghetto Warschau*, 1947, staged 1949 in Finland (Helsinki and Tampere), printed in Reichmann, Zweig (see note 31).

³⁷ *Der Generalsekretär*, 1955.

³⁸ *Medea in Prag*, 1949.

With the exception of the first six,³⁹ most of his plays were written after 1938 in Palestine and later the State of Israel. In Palestine he experienced his first great success on the opening night of *Die Marranen*. The successful reception of the play on the stage of the *Habimah* Theatre Company in Tel Aviv in December 1938 was, unfortunately, for a long time his last. Despite the fact that after his arrival in Palestine he wrote a new play each year, his work found almost no response in the new Jewish state. Part of the reason was Zweig's refusal to integrate into the new Israeli society that did not live up to his expectations and became as xenophobic as Czech society after the establishment of Czechoslovakia. Palestine became the land of his exile only by chance and this fact was of vital importance. Zweig joined a group of German-speaking authors who did not immigrate to Palestine because of their ideological conviction, but because of the fact they were forced to leave their cultural homeland, i.e. Germany.

German Literature in Palestine

It may be unconventional to call Palestine, also often referred to as "the Promised Land" by Diaspora Jews, the 'Land of Exile.' Still, due to the inability to integrate both on a linguistic and cultural level, Palestine, respectively the State of Israel, became a true land of exile for many German-speaking Jews from Europe; the country that had granted them asylum but never became their second homeland. Arnold Zweig, one of the leading figures amongst German authors in Palestine, wrote the following prologue to a series of articles on Palestine in the *Pariser Tageszeitung*:

Palestine is not one of the important, world moving centers [...]. Its problems are comparatively unimportant. On the other hand, they are especially complicated, all colors and shades of our political spectrum are reflected on the spiritual map of this tiny land. It is connected to European democracy by the mandatory system, it's included in the British Empire; however, as a matter of fact it's embedded in the complex of Arab countries and by the majority and culture of the native inhabitants, it is an Arab country itself. Palestine

³⁹ The following were written still in Europe: *Ragen, Elimelech und die Jünger* (1929), *St. Helena, Rasputin, 1933* (1934, staged 1940 in Palestine/Israel), *Die Marranen*.

is shaking under the pangs inflicted upon European Jewry, it is suffering from economic crisis, it's threatened by hostile agitations of Nazism, it can be reached by the Italian air-force and navy, and last but not least, it is experiencing its very own cultural problems and conflicts within the Jewish sector [...].⁴⁰

Although some German-speaking Jews from Europe were leaving for Palestine earlier, the biggest migration wave came in the 1930s under the influence of growing Fascism in Europe. Mostly, this was the intelligentsia (doctors, lawyers, and professors), tradesmen and craftsmen. The end of the Second World War marked a turning point for those who did not believe in the idea of Zionism and who regarded their stay in Palestine as real exile. This was a signal for their return to Europe.⁴¹

Many, however, stayed in Palestine and were working more or less successfully towards the establishment of the State of Israel as their (new) home. My target group of German speaking authors was among them. Besides well established and highly esteemed personalities like Else Lasker-Schüler, Arnold Zweig, Louis Fünberg, Lea Grundig, Max Brod and Josef Kastein, there were also writers, who had already fallen into oblivion or were not even popular in Europe, such as Friedrich Sally Grosshut, Werner Kraft and Max Meir Färber, a Moravian compatriot of Zweig's.

Although some of them had already become members of Zionist organizations in their native countries, they only encountered 'living' Zionism in Palestine.⁴² The main problem

⁴⁰ "Palästina ist keines von den wichtigen, die Welt bewegenden Zentren [...] Seine Probleme sind vergleichsweise unwichtig. Andererseits aber sind sie besonders verwickelt, alle Farben und Töne unseres politischen Spektrums sind auf der geistigen Fläche dieses kleinen Landes eingetragen. Mit der Demokratie Europas durch das Mandatsystem verbunden, ins englische Empire einbezogen, de facto aber in den arabischen Landkomplex eingebettet und nach Majorität und Kultur der eingesessenen Bevölkerung selbst ein arabisches Land, vibriert Palästina dennoch unter allen Stößen, die europäischen Judenheiten versetzt werden, leidet unter der ökonomischen Krise, sieht sich von den Hetzwirkungen des Nazismus bedroht, liegt in der Reichweite der italienischen Flug- und Schifffahrt und erlebt, last not least, aus Eigenem kulturelle Probleme und Kämpfe innerhalb seines jüdischen Sektors [...].", Rudolf Hirsch, Birgid Leske et al. (eds), 'Exil in der Tschechoslowakei, in Großbritannien, Skandinavien und Palästina', in: *Kunst und Literatur im antifaschistischen Exil 1933-1945*, 5 (Leipzig: Verlag Philipp Reclam jun., 1987), p. 607.

⁴¹ Among them for example Willy Verkauf, Hermann Hakel, Martha Hoffmann or Leopold Ehrlich.

⁴² "Ich betrachtete den Zionismus als eine Art von interkontinentalem Wohltätigkeitsverein; der Gedanke kam mir nicht, daß er etwas anderes sein könnte: eine Lebenseinstellung, eine Weltanschauung, ein Glaubensbekenntnis, das eine völlige Lebensveränderung forderte, geschweige denn, daß er in meine eigene Existenz mit schicksalsbildender Wucht jemals eingreifen könnte." [I looked upon Zionism as a worldwide charitable

hindering the successful and complete integration into Israeli society became the language. German, which was also the language of Theodor Herzl's *Der Judenstaat*⁴³ was labeled in Palestine as 'the language of murderers' and as such abated in favor of the wish to revive Hebrew.⁴⁴ Yiddish, the language of most Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, encountered a similar fate. Most of the German-speaking first generation immigrants, i.e. those who came to Palestine in the 1930s and 1940s, never mastered Hebrew.⁴⁵ Language incapacity together with an intellectual orientation significantly decreased their chances of integration into the surrounding society.

The situation changed after the war; when it became clear that hundred thousands of immigrants from Germany, Austria and German-speaking districts of Czechoslovakia, but also from Holland, Hungary and Romania spoke German rather than Hebrew, the publishing of two German-language periodicals was permitted in Tel Aviv, *Blumenthals Neueste Nachrichten*, which was later published under the Hebrew title *Yedioth Chadashot*, and *Yediot Hayom*. The number of German periodicals was complemented by one paper in Haifa and the *Mitteilungsblatt* of the Union of German/Central European Immigrants.⁴⁶ These periodicals were mostly Zionist oriented and found support in the Zionist government. Some of them are still published today.

At the time when Nazi Germany attacked the USSR a wave of sympathy arose for the Soviet Union. Arnold Zweig, a leading personality of German-language writers in Palestine, took

organization. I could not imagine it being something else, like an attitude, a world view, a credo that would require a complete change in life-style; and the least I expected was that it would shatter my own existence with the power of destiny.], Zweig (see note 9), p. 121.

⁴³ Herzl is the best example of the fact that political Zionism was not necessarily linked to the Hebrew language. Herzl deemed the resurrection of Hebrew as a vernacular impossible, useless, but also risky: "Vielleicht denkt jemand, es werde eine Schwierigkeit sein, daß wir keine gemeinsame Sprache mehr haben. Wir können doch nicht Hebräisch miteinander reden. Wer von uns weiß genug Hebräisch, um in dieser Sprache ein Bahnbillett zu verlangen? Das gibt es nicht. Dennoch ist die Sache sehr einfach. Jeder behält seine Sprache, welche die liebe Heimat seiner Gedanken ist." [Perhaps some might think that difficulties will arise, because we have no common language. We cannot speak Hebrew among us. Who masters Hebrew on a sufficient level to buy a train ticket? This does not exist. Still, the matter is very simple. Everybody keeps his language that is the dear homeland of his thoughts.], Theodor Herzl, 'Der Judenstaat', in: Julius Schoeps (ed.), *Wenn ihr wollt, ist es kein Märchen. Altneuland/Der Judenstaat*, (Kronberg: Jüdischer Verlag, 1978), p. 243.

⁴⁴ Hebrew as a colloquial language was introduced by the purist of Jerusalem Eliezer Ben-Yehuda at the turn of the century. Many writers in exile saw the language problem as the most important one, which forced them to return to Europe. Among them were Martha Hofmann, Hermann Hakel or Willy Verkauf.

⁴⁵ Apart from several exceptions such as Max Brod, who later published also in Hebrew.

⁴⁶ 'Hitachdut Oley Germaniya' and later 'Hitachdut Oley Merkaz Europa'.

the initiative and with the support of the still illegal Communist party⁴⁷ founded *Liga V* (League V), an organization for the support of the Soviet Union. Zweig, together with his colleague Dr. Wolfgang Yourgrau, addressed a number of personalities inside and outside the Zionist organizations. They even succeeded in recruiting people who were not particularly in favor of the Communist party and the Soviet Union, such as Max Brod, Martin Buber and Avi-Shaul. The sympathies of most members were inspired by the newspaper *Orient*, the tribune of *Liga V*. This mouthpiece of German exile literature was conceived as an independent periodical that expressed a critical position on contemporary questions and problems on the one hand, and followed the cultural events in Palestine and abroad on the other. Its intention was to broaden the horizon of the readers in Palestine, who were thought to be cut off from the European literary and cultural world. Most of the contributions were of documentary character, mapping the situation of the exiles in Palestine, but the periodical also contained short prose (e.g. by Arnold Zweig, Louis Fürnberg, Katinka Küster, Franz Goldstein, Manfred Vogel or Sally Grosshut) and poetry (the most beautiful and most popular pieces by Else Lasker-Schüler). Also German language authors living outside of Palestine were published, e.g. Karl Kraus, Alfred Polgar and Erich Weinert. The question, if and to which extent Max Zweig was actively working for the periodical, remains unanswered and is of the crucial queries I still have to clarify.

Orient was not only a paper representative of the German-language exile, but also an independent newspaper for all those, who wanted to state their views on the current problems of their country and to fight against false patriotism and narrow-minded provincialism. In many articles, Arnold Zweig refused the new ‘ideology of anti-Germanism’ in order to differentiate between Fascists and the German nation. However, this attitude did not correspond to the ideology that was enforced by Zionist circles. The publication and printing of *Orient* came to be actively and most tragically suppressed.

The conflicts around the *Liga V* culminated on 30 May 1942 at a public lecture held by Arnold Zweig in German at the Esther Cinema in Tel Aviv. The gathering ended in a blood-soaked attack of the *Haganah*⁴⁸ and was later declared the first Jewish pogrom in Palestine on

⁴⁷ The Communist Party was illegal in Palestine until 1941. Its activity was suppressed both by the mandate offices and by Zionist organizations. In 1942 its activities were officially legalized.

⁴⁸ An illegal Jewish paramilitary organization active in Mandate Palestine in the time period from 1920-1948, aiming to protect the Jewish population in Palestine.

the pages of the *Orient*. From that moment on, Arnold Zweig and his peers increasingly stood up against anti-Germanism and politics that considered the language as the most important feature of identity. Wolfgang Yourgrau summarized the situation in his contribution *Heimat oder Asyl* (Homeland or Asylum) quite accurately by stating that most German Jews had not emigrated to Palestine but in fact had been expelled from Germany. They are rooted in their old homeland and thus see Palestine as a mere asylum. The Zionist ideology, however, declared everyone who saw themselves as an emigrant and Palestine as an asylum, a traitor of the nation and the land.⁴⁹ After the publishing house that printed the *Orient* (already the fourth in the row) was burnt down in 1943 and the newspaper stands selling the periodical received open threats, Zweig and Yourgrau decided to finish publishing the *Orient*. The last issue appeared on 7 April 1943.

The same year was marked by the emergence of a new German language paper named *Chug*, published by the *Lepac* organization. *Lepac* itself was created as an initiative of German speaking authors, who – following the example of the national committee *Freies Deutschland* in Moscow – wanted to found a similar committee in Palestine which would promulgate cultural relations between Palestine and the Soviet Union. Arnold Zweig became president of honor of this organization. The initial activities of the organization were kept secret to ensure a certain level of security. This changed after 1945, as the efforts of the Zionists focused on the foundation of the state and hope for the support of the USSR arose. *Lepac* was organizing regular German language events in all the three big cities, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa. Soon, the foundation of other associations followed, among them for example, The Literary Circle, a book club in Haifa and Tel Aviv. The Jerusalem book club played a significant role from the 1950's onward, with Louis Fürnberg and Wolfgang Ehrlich in the leading positions and a rather international focus. The book club and the periodical *Chug* were able to catch the attention of a broader audience than the *Orient* ever had.

Besides the bigger newspapers, there was a number of other monthlies and annuals in German, e.g. *Ariel*, the annual for literature, fine art and music, published by Manfred Vogel in Jerusalem with a broad spectrum of contributors such as Max Brod, Else Lasker-Schüler and Arnold Zweig. A literature anthology was published in Jerusalem by Fritz Rosenthal under the

⁴⁹ Hirsch, Leske (see note 40), p. 626.

name *Menora*. Some of the personalities associated with *Menora* were Scholem Asch, Max Brod, Josef Kastein, Else Lasker-Schüler and Arnold Zweig.

In spite of the difficulties, several German publishing houses emerged: the *Romana Verlag* in Jerusalem, the *Peter-Freund Verlag*, the *Willi-Verkauf Verlag* and the *Junge Dichtung*, in Tel Aviv the *ABC Verlag*, the *Aetan*, the *Edition Olympia* and the *Matara Verlag*.

A much more complicated issue was the establishment of a German language theater scene. Only openly anti-Nazi authors found their way to the stage and were played in Hebrew translation. One such event was the staging of the *Three Penny Opera* directed by Alfred Wolf, performed in 1933 in Tel Aviv and the performance of *Oktoberfest* in 1934 in the Teatron Ivri in Haifa, directed by Benno Fränkel. In 1936, Habimah staged *Wilhelm Tell* in Hebrew, which soon had to end due to audience protests pointing out the nationalistic character of the piece. A similar fate struck Leopold Jessner's *Der Kaufmann von Venedig* (The Merchant of Venice), as the emerging Jewish self confidence could not easily accept the Shylock image.⁵⁰ Habimah went on tour through Europe in 1937 and played in Brno in November of that year. There, the theater ensemble met the author Max Zweig. During the meeting arranged by a mutual friend Zweig presented an excerpt of his drama *Die Marranen* to the director Zwi Friedland who promised to stage the drama in Hebrew in Tel Aviv. Max Zweig traveled to Tel Aviv in 1938 to personally supervise the preparations and stayed for nine years.

Before the foundation of the State of Israel, the resistance of Zionist organizations towards German theater was quite strong and made collective cultural life of the German exiles impossible. Smaller independent groups took over the role of a greater organization and provided the German speaking public with private literary evenings and similar cultural events.⁵¹

The situation did not improve much after the State of Israel was established. The language problem in the young state continued to prevail, as did the country's need for manually skilled farmers rather than for writers.⁵² Europe, however, did not show any particular interest in

⁵⁰ More on the plays staged by Jewish directors in Palestine. Hirsch, Leske (see note 40), p. 635.

⁵¹ Cf. *Prager Presse*, 31 January 1933, quoted from Hirsch, Leske (see note 40), p. 636.

⁵² "Dieses Neuland brauchte zu seinem Aufbau junge, rüstige Menschen, erfahrene Handwerker und tüchtige Arbeiter; die geistigen Arbeiter, die es benötigte, waren jene, die für die Verbreitung, Vervollkommnung und die Alleinherrschaft des Hebräischen in dieser Gemeinschaft sorgten. Ein Dramatiker, der deutsch, also in einer verpönten Sprache schrieb, war hierzulande also nicht nur überflüssig und unnützlich, sondern mußte sogar als unwillkommen erscheinen." [The new country needed for its prosperity young and strong people, skilled craftsmen

the literature of the Jewish state. Although a definite breakthrough was reached after the Six Day War in 1967, which induced a wave of sympathy for the Jewish state and won Israeli literature a broader audience. In spite of this interest in Israel and its literature, the *Verband deutscher Schriftsteller* (German Writers Union) in Israel was founded as late as 1975, associating mostly senior male figures. Max Zweig was one of them. In 1979 an anthology of the *Verband* was published under the name *Stimmen aus Israel* (Voices from Israel)⁵³ by Meier M. Faerber; between others, it contained Zweig's *Davidia*. Ten years later, in 1989, the second volume of the anthology appeared, this time under the title *Auf dem Weg* (On the Road)⁵⁴ with an introduction by Margarita Pazi. It presented the works of the 36 living members of the *Verband* and contained *Ghetto Warschau* by Max Zweig.

Max Zweig's automatic membership in the *Verband* was the last remnant of his presence in the cultural life of Israel. Max Zweig – unlike his more famous contemporaries Arnold Zweig and Louis Fűrnberg – was neither a socialistic, nor a Zionist enthusiast.⁵⁵ The socialist ideals of the communists seemed to him quite similar to Nazi ideology, especially the ideas prevalent in 1950's Czechoslovakia,⁵⁶ to which Zweig tried unsuccessfully to return. The founding of the State of Israel was received by Zweig with very mixed emotions. The joy for the re-establishment of the old-new homeland for Jews was cooled down by the growing disappointment with increasing nationalism and aggressive territorial politics. This disillusion, continuing the preceding frustration over the rejection of his work and the inability to find an audience in Israel, prevailed in Zweig as in most of his German language contemporaries also after the Six Day War.⁵⁷ Only in a few cases this disillusionment inspired active engagement in

and able workmen. And the intellectuals that were needed had to care for the dissemination, perfection and superiority of Hebrew. A playwright using the despised German language was useless and unnecessary, he could be even perceived as unwelcomed in this country.], Zweig (see note 9), p. 122.

⁵³ Cf. Meir Faerber (ed.), *Stimmen aus Israel. Eine Anthologie deutschsprachiger Literatur in Israel*, (Gerlingen bei Stuttgart: Bleicher, 1979).

⁵⁴ Cf. Meir Faerber (ed.), *Auf dem Weg. Eine Anthologie deutschsprachiger Literatur in Israel*, (Gerlingen bei Stuttgart: Bleicher, 1989).

⁵⁵ Cf. chapter 'Nationalismus und Kommunismus', in Zweig (see note 9), pp. 137-142.

⁵⁶ In his play *Médea in Prag* (1949), Zweig strongly criticized the shameless liquidation of human rights and individuality by the communist regime.

⁵⁷ "Des nächsten, mit Recht hochbewunderten Sieges der Israeli im Sechstagekrieg konnte ich mich nicht aus voller Seele erfreuen. Er schien mir beinah zu groß zu sein. Ich hatte aus zu vielen geschichtlichen Beispielen erfahren, daß solche unerwartet glänzenden Siege nicht immer zum Heil der Völker sind. Ich war davon überzeugt, daß der Niedergang Deutschlands mit dem gewaltigen Triumph begann, den es 1870/71 über den französischen 'Erbfeind' errang [...]. Ich glaube, den Beginn des israelischen Niedergangs, den ich mir nicht verhehlen kann, auf

the public sector. Among those who succeeded were Arnold Zweig,⁵⁸ Louis Fürnberg⁵⁹ and Max Brod. The disappointment turned into a prevalent *sujet* addressed by German language authors in Israel.

Although it would be a mistake to speak about homogeneity or thematic consistence of the authors who raised their voice in *Stimmen aus Israel* in 1979, it is possible to track certain characteristics that distinguished the German language authors from their Hebrew counterparts.⁶⁰ The most poignant characteristics were the deep rooting in the German cultural space, a strong tendency towards the old European value system and no particular interest in the Arab-Jewish question.⁶¹ The intention to use ‘art as a weapon’ according to Friedrich Wolf⁶² and to express strong anti-fascist sentiments through German language works met with a wave of rejection from Zionists in Israel. The German language authors who came to Palestine and still kept their old

diese Siegestage datieren zu müssen. Die Israelis hielten sich für unbesiegbar, wurden übermütig und überheblich, glaubten, einen begründeten Anspruch auf Macht und Reichtum zu haben, und begannen, ihre Pflichten zu vernachlässigen und sich dem Wohlleben hinzugeben.“ [I could not rejoice at the rightfully admired victory of Israel in the Six Day War, whole-heartedly. It seemed almost too big. By many historical examples I had learned that such unexpected brilliant victories do not contribute to the welfare of the victorious nation. I was convinced that the fall of Germany started just after the triumphant victory over the French ‘hereditary enemy’ in 1870-71 [...]. I am also convinced that the fall of Israel started in these victorious days. The people of Israel considered themselves invincible, they became arrogant and patronizing, they assumed that they had inalienable rights to power and riches. They began neglecting their duties and indulged in an opulent life.], Zweig (see note 9), p. 145.

⁵⁸ After the publishing of *De Vriendt kehrt heim* (1932), where the author critically depicted the murder of Israel de Haan, a member of *Agudat Israel* and opponent of political Zionism, who was killed by Zionist circles, Arnold Zweig’s name was on the index of authors boycotted by Zionist organizations. Up to 1943, none of his works were allowed to appear in Hebrew. In spite of this official boycott, Zweig was not isolated, he stayed in touch with other exile centers, contributed to several political and literary periodicals and published the paper *Orient* in Palestine along with Wolfgang Yourgrau. He had close contact with the members of the illegal Communist Party and was a founding member of *Liga V*.

⁵⁹ Louis Fürnberg was a dedicated communist from his grammar school years in the Czechoslovak city of Jihlava. He was an active member of the German section of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and since 1932 a member of the agitation group *Echo von links*. With the help of his friends and comrades, he managed to escape to Palestine in 1941. He lived in Jerusalem until 1946 and was closely watched by the Zionist groups and persecuted for his communist and anti-Zionist ideas. In spite of the Zionists ban on his work, Fürnberg joined forces with A. Zweig, initiated the *Liga V* and co-edited the *Orient*. His main achievement is the foundation of the *Jerusalem Book Club*, which turned into a center for left-wing intellectuals in Palestine. Cf. Hirsch, Leske (see note 40), p. 666.

⁶⁰ E.g. the shared feelings of responsibility and guilt for those, who did not survive, the absence of hatred and frustration are leading motifs of the works written in Palestine/Israel; also the wish for a compromise as a way out of the crisis and the reflection on political and historical events in the fate of an individual. Cf. Margarita Pazi (ed.), ‘Deutschsprachige Literatur aus Israel’, in: *Spurenlese. Deutschsprachige Autoren in Israel. Eine Anthologie*, (Gerlingen: Bleicher, 1996), pp. 7-18.

⁶¹ There were several exceptions, e.g. Max Brod’s novel *Unambo* (1948), describing the origin of the Jewish-Palestinian conflict in the birth years of the State of Israel.

⁶² Cf. Friedrich Wolf, *Kunst ist Waffe! Eine Feststellung* (Berlin: Verlag Arbeitertheaterbund Deutschlands e.V., 1928).

value system were considered as being ‘assimilants’ and ‘traitors of the Jewish cause.’ The public repressions and the destructive isolation from the outside world led to an ambivalence⁶³ of feelings towards “this long-desired homeland, which didn’t let go of those, who came to fight for it with words.”⁶⁴ The disappointment of the failed integration into the society of the ‘land of the fathers’ was especially painful for emigrants coming from central Europe. In their original countries, they had experienced anti-Semitism and therefore they identified with the Zionist ideas, hoping to find a “new life in freedom in Palestine.”⁶⁵

Max Zweig reacted to this disillusion by total withdrawal from the public sphere and the reduction of his “life to a mere history of works”.⁶⁶ He argued,

It is the matter of my nature that I can’t do anything except for my creative work, even if other things promised the best of pleasures. If I let my thoughts slip away from my work, it would be all in vain.⁶⁷

He built a closed social circle of friends he kept in touch with. This circle was only rarely broadened by people, who showed interest and appreciation for the failed author’s work⁶⁸

For Zweig, Palestine was the land, which “saved him and gave him the first success”,⁶⁹ but failed to bring him the joy of further success. After Czechoslovakia and Germany, Palestine was the third country he felt spiritually connected to, but could not call home. Rooted deeply in German culture and disregarding the ambivalence, which came after WWII, Zweig took refuge in the world of his work, trying to create an ideal humanistic image and to bridge the discrepancy

⁶³ “Hier mischte und vermischte sich das Ausgetrieben- oder Vertriebenesein mit einem meist sehr persönlichen Engagement für die ‘Idee Palästina’.” [Here, expulsion or banishment were mixed and blended with a very personal engagement for the ‘idea of Palestine’.], Hirsch, Leske (see note 40), p. 645.

⁶⁴ Hirsch, Leske (see note 40), p. 646.

⁶⁵ Armin A. Wallas, ‘Max Zweigs Israel-Triptychon. Davidia-Saul-Ghetto Warschau’, in Reichmann (see note 9), pp. 171-206, (p. 179).

⁶⁶ Elazar Benyoetz, ‘Ein Bild, wie es im Buche steht. Max Zweig über Paul Engelmann’, in Reichmann (see note 9), pp. 331-344, (p. 332).

⁶⁷ “Es liegt in meiner Beschaffenheit, daß ich neben dem Werk nichts anderes tun kann, nichts, und wenn es mir auch größte Vergnügungen verspräche. Würde ich meine Gedanken von der Arbeit abwenden, sie wäre zunichte.“, Ibid. p. 338.

⁶⁸ The closest ones were Richard Pokorný, a die-hard admirer of Zweig’s plays, Paula Arnold, Bruno Steiner, a fellow Proßnitzer, Zweig’s cousin Fritz Zweig, Elazar Benyoetz and, of course, also the old friends Paul Engelmann and Arthur Wachsberger.

⁶⁹ Zweig (see note 9), p. 132.

between ideal and reality. This process brought about his contribution to the renewed “Jewish or more precisely Israeli identity”.⁷⁰ At the same time, Zweig hoped to reinforce his own shaken identity and to sustain his personal identification with the new Jewish state.

Max Zweig’s Concept of ‘New Jewish Identity’

There is a wide range of values that are important and relevant for the formation of modern Jewish identity. In modern history, one of the most important is the foundation of the State of Israel. Up to 1948, “exile is the essence of the Jewish people”.⁷¹ This old, forced submissive substance was to be replaced by a new one, a dominant one. The redefinition process, however, met many difficulties along the way. The new Jewish state constituted a pluralistic and multi-ethnic society. The national identity oscillated between glorification of the pioneers and the ambivalent stance towards Holocaust victims. The identity had its “roots in the history, but was a completely new creation”.⁷²

The establishment of the State of Israel brought – besides the culmination of nationalistic sentiments – yet another aspect, which set a boundary between Israel and the Diaspora, namely the importance of the geographical location. This phenomenon is also quite interesting with regard to Soja’s ‘spatial turn’ in culture,⁷³ social and literature studies in the 1990s. Edward van Voolen made the Jewish sacral building, the synagogue, a transparent symbol of the transformation in his essay “From Time to Place: Shaping Memory in Judaism”.⁷⁴ While the location used to be unimportant in the Diaspora, and “Jewish history and the Jewish memory is based on the liturgical calendar,”⁷⁵ it gains importance in the second half of the twentieth

⁷⁰ Wallas (see note 65), p. 174.

⁷¹ Edward Van Voolen, ‘From Time to Place: Shaping Memory in Judaism’, in: Angeli Sachs, Edward Van Voolen (eds), *Eine Zeit zum Bauen. Jüdische Identität in der zeitgenössischen Architektur*, (Munich/Berlin/London/New York: Prestel, 2004), pp. 12-20, (p. 13); Cf. especially the cabbalistic description of exile: “Exile was the essence of God Himself, and brokenness is the condition of the world.” Ibid. p. 14.

⁷² Ibid. p. 22.

⁷³ Cf. Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies - The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*, (London: Verso, 1989).

⁷⁴ Van Voolen (see note 71), pp. 12-20.

⁷⁵ Cf. Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982).

century and provides an “inspiration for architectonic creation.”⁷⁶ Van Voolen’s demonstration of the shift from time to location in architecture finds a parallel also in literature. This can be illustrated by an analysis of the use of the Holy City and the Holy Land motif. The motif of the Holy Land was only symbolically present in the Diaspora and overlapped with the idea of the rediscovered Jewish homeland. Just as Marc Saperstein addressed the issue in *The Land of Israel in Pre-Modern Jewish Thought*: “One could practically create a homeland also in exile”⁷⁷ Jerusalem, which (after the fall of the second Temple) mostly implied ‘memory’, ‘destruction’ and was the symbol of the ‘mythical origins’, turned into a real location of the newly established Jewish state and into a token of identity after 1948. The metamorphosis of the Jerusalem motif is present in the texts of several German language authors, who emigrated to Palestine and reflected the change.⁷⁸

Not so in the case of Max Zweig. The image of Jewish identity in his work does not shift from ‘time to place’, but constitutes a timeless ideal. The *realia* Zweig uses to elaborate individual components of his ideal construction of the new Jewish identity, are only sporadically overlapping with the real Palestinian environment.⁷⁹ The painful creative and existential confrontation with the *realia* of the newly founded Jewish state forced him to turn his back on the place and deal with time, more precisely with the rich Jewish heritage, where he looks for points of contact with his new Jewish identity concept. Zweig is convinced that the new Jewish society must be born out of the ashes of the old one, in order to learn from the old society's mistakes and to absorb everything valuable, which had been created. The cornerstone of

⁷⁶ Van Voolen (see note 71), p. 32.

⁷⁷ Marc Saperstein, ‘The Land of Israel in Pre-Modern Jewish Thought: A History of Two Rabbinic Statements’, in: Lawrence A. Hoffmann (ed.), *The Land of Israel: Jewish Perspectives*, (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), pp. 188-209.

⁷⁸ Probably the most powerful myth of Jerusalem as a city, where all mankind can live in peace was articulated by Else Lasker-Schüler. "Arabische Kinderlein spielen mit hebräischen Kinderlein zusammen in den Quergassen der Jaffaroad. Gute Kinder, unschuldsvolle Himmelchen, die zusammen einen großen ausmachen. Auch wir großen Menschen hier ergeben zu Schabbath einen großen Himmel, ein Jerusalem! Warum nicht alle Menschen aller Länder zusammen wenigstens eine Erde?“ [The Arabic children play together with the Hebrew children in the side-roads of Jaffa street. Good kids, little innocent heavens that together will create one great heaven. Similarly, on Shabbat we, grown-ups, create one big heaven, one Jerusalem! Why can't all people from all countries create one common world?], Werner Kraft (ed.), *Else Lasker-Schüler. Eine Einführung in ihr Werk und eine Auswahl*, (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1951), p. 532.

⁷⁹ This is the case in *Davidia* (1939) and the fragment *Die Baracke 23* (1953).

the new Jewish identity should thus be Jewish history.⁸⁰ Armin Wallas analyzes quite well the milestones of the ‘foundation myth’⁸¹ of the new Jewish state in his study on Zweig’s Israeli trilogy:⁸² Setting the base of the new kingdom of Israel in the play *Saul*, the birth of Jewish self confidence and persistence to fight for freedom in the most tragic times of the Shoah in the play *Ghetto Warschau* and last, but not least, the determination to defend the newly built Jewish state and its values with one’s life in the play *Davidia*. Each of the plays elaborates the individual components of Zweig’s relatively coherent concept of new Jewish identity: Firstly, the model of a new humanistic society, which has gone a long way from oppression to independence and self-determination and is now forced to face the discrepancy between the ideal of the pioneers and reality; secondly, the model of humanistic government, ethics and love,⁸³ which is confronted with the lust for power; and finally, the transformation of the shocking experience of the Shoah into the new values of a reborn existence.

Zweig’s concept of new Jewish identity is first of all determined by humanistic ethics as the basic and necessary element. In his trilogy, Zweig stressed new heroic figures; the leader of the fictive settlement Davidia, Jehuda Ruthenroth, appeals to his comrades in defending the new society and its values with the weapon in one’s hand and sacrificing one’s very life for the good of the new homeland. Also Simon Dannenberg, the leader of the rebellious group of students in *Ghetto Warschau*, is a symbol of the ‘heroic Jew’,⁸⁴ acting to stop the traditional circle of oppression and passivity. These ‘soldiers for a dream’,⁸⁵ the fighters for a new Jewish society,

⁸⁰ Zweig wanted to invent a new Jewish tradition. Instead of an ironic and critical approach to myths, Zweig wanted to restore the former brilliance of forgotten historical figures who created Jewish tradition. Iconic figures, such as Moses, Abraham and Jacob are left out in fear of devaluation of the play. Instead, the figure of Saul is the main focus. The author sympathized with the old outcast of a king. The cornerstone of Zweig’s mythology was laid in the drama *Elimelech und die Jünger*. Attempts to invent or reanimate ‘ancient Jewish’ figures and to enable the birth of the ‘new man’, ‘the drifting traveller’, ‘the martyr’ and ‘the Ahasver’ and to situate their salvation in Palestine were realized in the play *Ghetto Warschau*. The dream of the uprising and the liberation of Simon Dannenberg fails, when the ghetto falls. Dannenberg, the only survivor, tries to escape to Palestine and when caught by the Gestapo, he identifies himself with the ‘eternal Jew’, the ‘rambling man looking for a home’.

⁸¹ Wallas (see note 65), p. 197; Wallas regards Zweig’s drama *Die Marannen* as a certain ideological solution for the Israeli trilogy that deals with the suffering and persecution of the Jewish people in the Diaspora. In this respect it is possible to label one of Zweig’s first plays, *Elimelech und die Jünger* (1929), alluding to the Old Testament prophet Elimelech and his disciples, as a mythological basis of Zweig’s ideological system.

⁸² Ibid. p. 171.

⁸³ Ibid. p. 185.

⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 192.

⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 181.

are at the same time prophets of a new morality, endorsing reconciliation and altruism, even towards the enemy, above all other values. One of the comrades of Davidia, admits:

Edelman: We owe justice even to our enemy. If we, who are so infinitely suffering from injustice, start being unjust ourselves as soon as we grow stronger, all of the wrongs done to us would be justified, we would not deserve anything but being extinguished by a stronger enemy.⁸⁶

Since he believes that there is an intrinsic conflict between faith and religion, which he demonstrated in his essay *Religion und Konfession*,⁸⁷ Zweig portrays his Saul as the ‘founder of Humanism’, whose idea of humanity is opposed to religious fanaticism. The longing for reconciliation, for compromise even in existentially critical situations, for a ‘new humanism after Auschwitz’,⁸⁸ is projected mostly into female characters. Zweig’s ‘new woman’ is surprisingly not the fighter for the rights of Israel, but a loving female. Thus, it is not Vera, determined to fight for Davidia with a weapon in her hand, but Rahel, timidly kissing the hand of the beloved and respected Ruthenroth. Not the stubborn and rebellious Dora from *Ghetto Warschau*, calling Glycenstein to action, but the loyal Golda, supporting Dannenberg in each moment, ready to sacrifice herself to her undying love, even if the love is not reciprocated.

Golda: It is easier for us women. We always have someone we can take care of and thus we think less of ourselves.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ “**Edelman:** Wir sind auch dem Feind Gerechtigkeit schuldig. Wenn wir, die so unendlich unter der Ungerechtigkeit leiden, selber anfangen, unrecht zu sein, sowie wir nur ein wenig erstarken, so wäre alle uns angetane Ungerechtigkeit gerechtfertigt, so verdienen wir nichts Besseres, als vom Stärkeren ausgetilgt zu werden!“, Max Zweig, *Davidia. Schauspiel in drei Akte*. Manuscript, (Munich, June 1972), p. 57.

⁸⁷ Cf. Max Zweig, *Religion und Konfession* (Klagenfurt: Mnemosyne, 1991).

⁸⁸ Wallas (see note 65), p. 195.

⁸⁹ “**Golda:** Wir Frauen haben es leichter. Wir haben immer jemanden, für den wir sorgen können, und denken weniger an uns selbst.”, Max Zweig, ‘Ghetto Warschau. Schauspiel in drei Akten’, in Eva Reichmann (ed.), *Max Zweig. Die Dritte-Reich-Dramen*, (Oldenburg: Igel Verlag Literatur, 1999), pp.139-189, (p. 163).

The female characters of Zweig's other dramas, e.g. Leila in his play *Medea in Prag* or *Pia Cameron* in the play bearing the same name (1958),⁹⁰ are much more determined and active; they are ready to leave everything they value, even their ideals in the name of love.

The need for the transformation of the old Jew into a new one is also the topic of the drama fragment *Die Baracke 23*,⁹¹ which points out the difference between an ideal and reality. The fragment describes the events in an absorption camp in Israel from April to September 1949. An old Jew, a so called 'Lagermensch' is linked to the idea of the *Galuth* [exile],⁹² which he carries with him to Palestine, along with his broken heart and the victim role.

Schwarzbart: We have labored enough for Hitler! We are not that stupid to labor for Ben Gurion! Let Ben Gurion labor himself!⁹³

This mindset does not allow him to open up to the new future and step out of the hopeless circle of the past.

Herdan: They will never free themselves! All the sufferings they have gone through are their only property, which they desperately cling to. Their sufferings have become a new standard: the more you suffered, the better you are in front of yourself and others.

Markus: That was there. People had no future there. But here?

Herdan: Also here they are scared of the future and escape into the past. They are telling each other the scariest stories about their lives and with these terrible lullabies they put their children to sleep.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ *Pia Cameron*, 1958, staged 1960 in Wuppertal and 1964 in Vienna.

⁹¹ Max Zweig, 'Die Baracke 23. Schauspiel in 6 Szenen' in Reichmann (see note 9), pp. 214-255.

⁹² Ibid. p. 224.

⁹³ "**Schwarzbart:** Genug für Hitler gerobtet! Wir sind nicht so blöd, für Ben Gurion zu roboten! Soll Ben Gurion selber roboten!", Ibid. p. 222.

⁹⁴ "**Herdan:** Sie kommen nicht los. Die Leiden, die sie mitgemacht haben, sind ihr einziges Besitztum: sie klammern sich verzweifelt daran. Das Leid ist ihr neuer Wertmaßstab geworden: je mehr einer gelitten hat, desto großartiger steht er vor sich da und vor den anderen. **Markus:** So war es drüben. Dort hatten die Menschen keine Zukunft. Aber hier? **Herdan:** Auch hier ängstigen sie sich vor der Zukunft und sie flüchten zurück in die Vergangenheit. Sie erzählen einander die entsetzlichen Märchen ihres Lebens, und mit diesen grauslichen Wiegenliedern lullen sie ihre Kinder in den Schlaf.", Ibid. p. 230.

The new Jew, on the other hand, symbolized by the character of Markus Goslar and his wife Hannah, is aware of his heritage and the Holocaust experience, but he undergoes a rebirth and suppresses his feelings of injury and his longings for revenge.

Herdan: You have lived through the concentration camps and yet, you are not a 'Lagermensch'.⁹⁵

New hope can only grow out of reconciliation, forgiveness and the determination to move on and try anew.

Markus: [...] People who came before us cultivated this land. They worked hard and sacrificed themselves to prepare an asylum for us. I don't want to be unworthy of them and their idealism. I want to cooperate and contribute to this work. This is what all of us want.⁹⁶

Through the speech of the inhabitants of house no. 23, Zweig articulated, among others, the serious issue of integration of newly arrived immigrants to Palestinian or more precisely into Israeli society, consisting mainly of residents of Eastern European origin. The new country needs craftsmen and farmers more than intelligentsia and artists, his declaration can also be perceived as critical self-reflection.

Dubnow: We were haunted, chased and looted only because we are Jews. While everybody here was living well, getting rich and fat, but still they are nothing else than Jews. Now they should give us back everything that was taken from us, our property, houses, all lost pleasures of life. [...] We will get our right! And if not, we will take it anyway!⁹⁷

⁹⁵ **Herdan:** Sie sind durch die Lager gegangen – und kein Lagermensch geworden.“, Ibid. p. 224.

⁹⁶ **Markus:** [...] Die Menschen, die vor uns kamen, haben das Land erst schön gemacht. Sie haben sich gemüht und schwer geopfert und uns eine Zuflucht geschaffen. Ich möchte ihrer nicht ganz unwürdig sein. Ich möchte mitwirken, mein Scherflein beitragen. Das wollen wir ja alle -“, Ibid. p. 220.

⁹⁷ **Dubnow:** Wir wurden verfolgt, gehetzt und geplündert, nur weil wir Juden sind. Indessen haben die hier fein gelebt, sind reich und fett geworden, und sind auch nichts Besseres als Juden. Sie sollen uns alles zurückgeben,

Filippescu: At home, such dirty work was done by *Goyim*. A Jew worked with his head.⁹⁸

Herdan: We feel that we are redundant. For many years we have been cut off from the flow of life. And now, we are cut off again. The idle and aimless way of life in the camp killed the best of our forces. We are like standing water. Such water goes foul and becomes a breeding ground for harmful insects.⁹⁹

By structuring this complex system of general humanistic values, implying the individual components of his concept of new Jewish identity, the lonely Zweig tried to find a connection to the country that had not become his homeland during the fifty years he spent there. Yet, he never ceased to hope for its future. As a survivor, he felt obliged to articulate how reality changed the ideal, and which part of the ideal could still be realized.¹⁰⁰ Each drama is based on a rigorous study of historical, philosophical and religious sources. Zweig was studying to strengthen his own Jewish identity, his virtual homeland of sorts. The idealistic world image and the humanistic value system are also elaborated in Zweig's other plays that are not based on Jewish history. He attempted to stay away from the regional determination, be it the German-speaking Moravian or the Israeli, aiming to reach a position of a supra-regional, or even universal author. Unfortunately, this attempt was met with misunderstanding from the part of the audience and therefore resulted in failure.

was man uns geraubt hat, unsere Vermögen, unsere Wohnungen, alle verlorene Freuden des Lebens - [...] Wir werden unser Recht kriegen! Wenn nicht, werden wir uns es holen!”, Ibid. p. 223.

⁹⁸ **Filippescu:** Bei uns zu Haus haben solche Drecksarbeit die Gojim gemacht. Der Jud hat mit dem Kopf gearbeitet.”, Ibid. p. 223.

⁹⁹ **Herdan:** Wir leiden unter dem Gefühl, Überflüssige zu sein. Wir waren drüben viele Jahre von dem lebendigen Lebensstrom abgeschnitten. Wir sind es hier wieder. Das müßige, sinnlose Lagerleben ertötet unsere besten Kräfte. Wir sind wie stehendes Wasser. Solches Wasser wird faulig und wird zur Brutstätte schädlicher Insekten“, Ibid. p. 241.

¹⁰⁰ Max Zweig elaborates: “Das Problem quält mich noch heute, wenn ich die Wirklichkeit des Staates Israel mit dem Idealbild vergleiche, welches Theodor Herzl in seinen Büchern *Der Judenstaat* und *Altneuland* für das künftige Gebilde entwarf.“ [I am still haunted by this problem, when comparing the reality of the State of Israel with the ideal which was sketched for the future by Theodor Herzl in his books *Der Judenstaat* und *Altneuland*.], Zweig (see note 9), p. 290.

Forgotten old Czech Source for the Events in Pulkau in 1338¹

Daniel Soukup

*This short study analyzes an old-Czech poem *Kterak Židé mučili Boží tělo/How Jews Tortured Corpus Christi* that represents a unique and until now only scarcely used source about the alleged host desecration in Pulkau in 1338 and about the subsequent persecution of the Jewish communities in Austria and surrounding regions. The paper will first introduce the text itself, describe its codicological inscription, mention two preserved versions of the text and point out the inspirational sources and inter-textual relations of the poem. Via the genre and formal characteristic analysis of the poem the study shows that although it is a text that describes the events in Pulkau in the fullest detail it is primarily not a historiographical text but it is a text with the function of exemplum. It is a composition full of *topoi/loci communes*; therefore it is a sermonic, religiously educative and apologetic text.*

Inscription of the composition *Kterak Židé mučili Boží tělo/How Jews Tortured Corpus Christi* and its codicological context

In the collections of the National museum Library in Prague there is a manuscript with the signature V B 24 dated by F. M. Bartoš² in the second half of the 15th century, however we can certainly state it originated after 1470.³ The codex has more than 200 folios and includes 10 old-Czech texts written in diagraphic orthography by one scribe on paper. The manuscript is written in one type of the script without noticeable caligraphical ornaments. Unfortunately we know nothing about the provenience of the manuscript; the book was donated to the museum from the

¹ The paper is a shortened and amended version of the critical edition and commentary that were published in the journal *Česká literatura*: Daniel Soukup, *Kterak Židé mučili Boží tělo – edice a komentář*, *Česká literatura - časopis pro literární vědu*, 59, 5 (2011), pp. 697-712; translated by Eva Kalousová.

² František Michálek Bartoš, *Soupis rukopisů Národního musea v Praze, Svazek I*, (Praha: opera F.M. Bartoš, 1926), pp. 252-253.

³ The manuscript had to be surely written after 1470, because *Old chronicles* was concluded by this date (see f. 156v: M CCCC L XX).

library of the Knights of Neuberk, a Prague burger family nobilitated in 1760, who supported the foundation of the National Museum by donating book collections.

Besides the *Czech chronicle* of Přibík Pulkava of Radenín, school master of St. Giles in Prague, we know that from a minimum of 40 Latin, old-Czech and middle-high-German manuscripts⁴ it includes *A note from Mr Vilém Zajíc* characterized by some scholars as a sermon in verse.⁵ After this composition our text about the host desecration in Pulkau follows, and then the *Old chronicles of 1376–1470*. After the *Donation of Constantine* there is a short prosaic composition *Epistula Lentuli*. The manuscript is concluded by four texts whose author is the emperor, Charles IV: the old-Czech translation of the ruler's own biography *Vita Caroli*, morality plays (anthology from Charles' *Moralitates*) and the coronation order of the Czech kings and queens.

The composition *How Jews Tortured Corpus Christi* is located in the folios 124v to 126r. The name of the poem is written as a rubric, the rest is written in black ink, some places in the text that stress the dogmatic parts about the Eucharist are underlined in red by the scribe. Although we know the poem only from the 15th century manuscript and from its little older original, it is sure to have originated in the 14th century .

The content of the composition

The poem *How Jews Tortured Corpus Christi* places the Pulkau events two Sundays after the Easter (12 April) of 1338. Other sources claim that the profanation of the Eucharist and the anti-Jewish pogroms happened after the Easter holiday, perhaps between April 24 and 27.⁶

According to our poem the members of the Pulkau *kehilah* bought the transubstantiated host from local heretics. The Jews allegedly tortured the host during a Jewish wedding (here it is

⁴ See Marie Bláhová (ed.), *Kroniky doby Karla IV*, (Praha: Svoboda, 1987), pp. 572-580.

⁵ See Jan Lehár, *Česká středověká lyrika*, (Praha: Vyšehrad, 1999), p. 299.

⁶ See *Annales Zwetlenses*: “1338. Hoc anno pasca christianorum convenit cum pasca iudeorum, propter quod maximum exterminium factum est iudeorum. Nam post festum pasce reperta est in Pulka in domo cuiusdam iudei hostia tota cruentata, et multis miraculis approbata... Propter quod factum christiani zelo divino permoti, circa festum sancti Georii (April 24) omnes iudeos in Pulka, Retz, Znoyma, Horn, Egenburga, Neunburga, Zwetl occiderunt et conbusserunt et in pulverem redegerunt.“ Eveline Brugger, Birgit Wiedl, *Regesten zur Geschichte der Juden in Österreich im Mittelalter. Band 1: Von den Anfängen bis 1338*, (Innsbruck/Wien/Bozen: Studien Verlag, 2005), n. 434. Also see *Göttweiger Codex*: „Anno Domini MCCCXXXVIII in vigilia sancti Vitalis (April 27) inventa est sacrosancta cruentata hostia...“ Ibid. n. 436.

a classic *topos* of the anti-Jewish accusations – in the Blood Libel Tales, the murder of a Christian child always happens at Easter or during a Jewish wedding). When they started to stab the host, it was transfigured into a child, little Jesus. Moreover, the host began to bleed, which astonished and frightened the Jews. Therefore, they buried it under the doorstep of one local Jew's house to conceal the blasphemous act.

However, a lame girl called Kačka (Kate) was just passing the house and was suddenly healed – it was the first Eucharist miracle that was supposed to draw the Christian community's attention to the desecration that had happened in the Jewish quarter. Also, two Christian burgers walking to the church noticed the strange behavior of the local Jews so they removed the soil from the doorstep and saw the bloody host – one of them stayed on the spot and watched the Jewish house at a distance and the other one went to inform the priest about the miracle. At this moment a Jew called Marchard who wanted to hide the host stepped out of the house, but when he touched the host he fell down dead. Aside from our poem the name of the Jew was only preserved in the Göttweiger Codex: Marquardus.⁷ The editors of abstracts about Jewish history in Austria assume that the proper name, Marquard, is a variety of the name Merchlin (with the Hebrew variety Mordechai) and they identify him with the figure of a rich representative of the Pulkau Jewish community which they proved by using information about the sale of a field by Ekkerhard von Pillersdorf and his wife Elisabeth to the Jew Merchlin from Pulkau on 8 January 1329.⁸

In the meantime, the priest came to the spot and confirmed the authenticity of the miracle: he claimed the host was really bleeding and therefore deserved public respect. The host is carried to the church in a glorious procession where it was become the destination of many pilgrims and a place of many confirmed miracles according to the poem by the priest from near Hemburk.⁹ The poem concludes with doxology, celebration of the Eucharist and invocation of the Virgin Mary, then laconically observes that the local Jewish community was annihilated, and thus punished for the profanation of the Eucharist.

⁷ „Anno Domini MCCCXXXVIII in vigilia sancti Vitalis inventa est sacrosancta cruentata hostia iuxta valvas domus Marquardi judei in Pulka“ Ibid. n. 436.

⁸ Ibid. n. 303.

⁹ Hainburg an der Donau: the eastern-most town of Lower Austria next to the confluence of Morava and Danube.

The preservation of the composition

The verse composition *How Jews Tortured Corpus Christ* was preserved in only two inscriptions, a younger one that is introduced here for the first time ever, and an older one edited by Jan Gebauer in *Listy filologické*.¹⁰ We can find the older version called *Od Božieho těla/From Corpus Christi* in the Litoměřice manuscript of *Pulkava's chronicle* that was considered lost from 1949 to 1999.¹¹ Today the codex is located in the State regional archive in Litoměřice and is owned by the Litoměřice bishopric.

The Litoměřice manuscript contains ten compositions as the National museum manuscript does, however, the Litoměřice compositions were written by four scribes. The oldest part of the codex originated in 1466 (scribe's hand A), the youngest after 1470 (scribe's hand B, C, D). The museum manuscript is most probably a copy of the Litoměřice codex; it has the same order of the texts and differs only in some language amendments. The poem *Od Božieho těla/From Corpus Christi* was inscribed on the Litoměřice manuscript by the same scribe's hand (A) as the first two compositions – *The Pulkava's chronicle* and *Note from Mr Vilém Zajiec*. The scribe of the older part was Johann Tschaudermann from a Broumov burger family who copied the compositions for his own library and who completed his work on 7 June 1466 according to the postscript to the *Pulkava's chronicle* on the folio 124v. The poem we analyze differs from the older model only in the change of several words and in the elimination of most of the archaic aorists.¹²

Also, the Piarist, Gelasius Dobner, drew from the Litoměřice manuscript when editing the poem *From Corpus Christi* under the name *De Corpore Christi* in 1779 in the part *Tres continuatores Pulkavae* of the fourth volume of his *Monumenta Historica Bohemiae*. Dobner was a friend of the bishop, Emanuel Arnošt, the count of Valdštejn, who owned the manuscript in the second half of the 18th century. Dobner translated the composition into Latin and

¹⁰ Jan Gebauer (ed.), 'Od Božieho Těla - Klasobraní po rukopisích XX', in: *Listy filologické a paedagogické*, XI (1884), pp. 305-308.

¹¹ Bláhová (see note 4), p. 579; Lehár (see note 5), p. 298; Milada Svobodová, Několik poznámek k obsahu a osudům znovunalezeného Litoměřického rukopisu Pulkavovy kroniky, in: *Miscellanea oddělení rukopisů a starých tisků 1999-2000*, č. 16 (2000), p. 93.

¹² Svobodová (see note 11), pp. 93-117.

transformed the verses into prose. He also eliminated proper names and substituted them with common names, he connected some unclear verses into semantically clearer sentences and eliminated some unclear passages.¹³

Inspirational sources and inter-textual relations

Several historiographical, theological and diplomatic texts of mainly Austrian and Czech provenience were preserved about the host desecration that allegedly happened in the Lower Austrian town of Pulkau in 1338 during the Easter (or shortly after it) and that led to the massacre of the Jewish inhabitants in the surrounding regions.¹⁴ A unique narrative source about the events in Pulkau is also the image of *Hostienschändung* on the predella of the Holy Blood church in Pulkau. The late Gothic altar retable of high quality from 1515–1525 is the work of the Donau school and is located on the place where already in 1396 a chapel of the same *patrocinium* was built.¹⁵

All the accounts we know about the Pulkau case are prosaic, and thus the Czech poem *How Jews tortured Corpus Christi* (as well as its older version *From Corpus Christi*) is unique. Because this composition in verse is the most informative one of all the texts about the case in Pulkau we know, we cannot exclude the possibility that it had a Latin model. If this composition is original, its author had to know today's unknown legend about the profanation of the host in Pulkau or supplement the details from unknown sources or from *Hostienlegende* related to another case.

The profanation of the host in Pulkau and the first of the anti-Jewish riots with the list of the towns where they happened are briefly mentioned in *Annales Zwetlenses* that originated in the Cistercian abbey Zwettl in Lower Austria.¹⁶ The annalist dates the slaughter of the Jews in

¹³ Gelasius Dobner, 'De Corpore Christi', in: *Monumenta historica Boemiae nusquam antehac edita*, Tomus IV, (Praha: Mathias Glatz, 1779), pp. 138-139.

¹⁴ Bertold Bretholz, *Quellen zur Geschichte der Juden in Mähren vom XI. bis zum XV. Jahrhundert, 1067-1411*, (Prag: Taussig und Taussig, 1935), n. 32, p. 15.

¹⁵ Franz Höring, 'Restaurování oltáře Boží krve z roku 1520 ve filiálním kostele Boží krve v Pulkau, Dolní Rakousko', v roce 2006, in: *Světelský oltář v kontextu pozdně gotického umění střední Evropy: sborník příspěvků přednesených na mezinárodním sympoziu konaném na zámku v Mikulově 20. a 21. června 2007* (Brno: Národní památkový ústav, 2007), pp. 205-206.

¹⁶ Wilhelm Wattenbach (ed.), 'Annales Zwetlenses', in: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Tom. IX,

Pulkau, Zwettl, Retz, Klosterneuburg, Horn, Eggenburg and Znojmo in 1338 around St. George's holiday (24 April). The host desecration itself allegedly happened during the Easter holiday which that year fell on the same day as Jewish Passover (12 April).¹⁷

The list of the damaged Jewish communities is supplemented by the only Hebrew source *Martyrologium des Nürnberger Memorbuches*.¹⁸ Besides the above mentioned towns the anti-Jewish disorders occurred in Austria in Raabs, Falkenstein, Hadersdorf am Kamp, Gars, Rastendorf, Mistelbach, Weiten, Emmersdorf, Tulln, Langenlois, St. Pölten, Passau, Villach, Laa and Drosendorf. In Moravia in Valtice (Feldsberg), Hrádek u Znojma (Erdberg), Jemnice (Jamnitz), Vratěnín (Frattig), Třebíč (Trebitsch) and Moravské Budějovice (Mährisch Budweis), in Bohemia in Čáslav (Tschaslau), Libiš (Libisch), Přichovice (Prichowitz) and Jindřichův Hradec (Neuhaus).¹⁹ We can find a marginal reference to the Pulkau Eucharist desecration in a collection of sermons from a Lower-Austrian Benedictine abbey in Göttweig of which the manuscript is preserved from the 15th century.²⁰ The events are mentioned in one sentence in *Continuatio Mellicensis* from the Benedictine abbey in Melk,²¹ we also have a short record preserved in two manuscript varieties in *Continuatio Novimontensis* from the Cistercian abbey in Neuburg in Upper Styria.²²

(Hannover: Impensis Bibliopolii Avlici Hahniani, 1851), p. 683; Brugger, Wiedl (see note 6), n. 434.

¹⁷ Similar situation was with the Prague pogrom of 1389 when both Christian and Jewish holidays fell on the same date – this fact also enhanced the ritual excitement that often led to anti-Jewish riots.

¹⁸ „Böhmen und Österreich (*Bahim veOstraich*) (בהים ואושטריך): Pulkau (*Pulka*) (פולקה), Eggenburg (*Igenburk*) (איגנבורק), Retz (*Rez*) (רײצא), Znaim (*Snaim*) (זײנים), Horn (*Horn*) (הױרן), Zwettl (*Zwetel*) (צװױטל), Raabs (*Raks*) (רײקס), Erdberg (*Irpurk*) (אירפּורק), Jamnitz (*Jemnicz*) (יעמניץ), Frattig (*Fratingen*) (פּרעטינגן), Trebitsch (*Tribitz*) (טריביץ), Feldsperg (*Weldspark*) (וועלדשפּרק), Falkenstein (*Walkenstein*) (װלקנשטיין), Hadersdorf (*Hedreichstorf*) (העדרייכשטורף), Gars (*Gors*) (גױרש), Rastendorf (*Rastenwalden*) (רשטנױװעלדן), Mistelbach (*Mistelbach*) (מישטלבך), Weiten (*Witen*) (װיטן), Emmersdorf (*Imerstorf*) (אמערסטורף), Tulln (*Tuln*) (טולן), Klosterneuburg (*Nuwnburk*) (נוװנבורק), Passau (*Pasu*) (פסױא), „Lubes“ (*Lubes*) (לובש), St. Pölten (*Pulten*) (פּולטן), Budweis (*Budwis*) (בױדױש), Laa (*Laa*) (לא), Časlau (*Zastlan*) (צאשלאן), Prichowitz (*Prichavitz*) (פּריכױװיץ), Neuhaus (*Neunhusen*) (נױאָנהױזן), Drosendorf (*Drosendorf*) (דרױנדױרף), Villach (*Vilach*) (װילך).” Siegmund Salfeld (ed.), ‘Das Martyrologium des Nürnberger Memorbuches’, in: *Quellen zur Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland*, Bd. III, (Berlin: Leonhard Simion, 1898), pp. 68 and 240-241; see also <http://www.medieval-ashkenaz.org/NM01/CP1-c1-01yw.html> (3 April 2012)

¹⁹ Brugger, Wiedl (see note 6), n. 455; Birgit Wiedl, ‘Die angebliche Hostienschändung in Pulkau 1338 und ihre Rezeption in der christlichen und jüdischen Geschichtsschreibung’, in: *Medaon – Magazin für jüdisches Leben in Forschung und Bildung*, 6 (2010) p. 1.

²⁰ Brugger, Wiedl (see note 6), n. 436; Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews*, (New Haven/London: Yale University Press), p. 68.

²¹ Wilhelm Wattenbach (ed.), ‘Continuatio Mellicensis’, in: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Tom. IX, (Hannover: Impensis Bibliopolii Avlici Hahniani, 1851), p. 512; Brugger, Wiedl (see note 6), n. 448.

²² Wattenbach (see note 21), p. 671; Brugger, Wiedl (see note 6), n. 449.

Three Latin writing chroniclers bring more detailed records. The first one is Johann von Viktring (around 1270–1347), the abbot of the Cistercian abbey in Viktring in Carinthia who wrote his chronicle by order of Duke Albrecht II. Habsburg (1298–1358)²³ and Franciscan, Johann von Winterthur (1300–1348/49) brings a unique record about the host desecration in Pulkau which relativizes the alleged guilt of the Jews and is one of the precious evidence of medieval skepticism towards accusation and persecution of this marginal group. The author of the chronicle disputes the events in Pulkau and affirms that the bloody host was given to the Jews by a local cheating priest who wanted to found a Corpus Christi pilgrimage place in the town, and thus obtain the fortune of the Jewish community. However, the chronicle record probably includes two events: in Pulkau and in Korneuburg where such deception really occurred in 1305.²⁴ The third historiographical record about the anti-Jewish riots of 1338 is a chronicle of Heinrich Truchseß von Dissenhofen (1300/03–1376), the envoy of the Austrian duke at the papal court in Avignon who, however, provides only general information here.²⁵ Last but not least we know a theological tract of the Bamberg theology master and canon, Friedrich, and diplomatic material that originated in the papal chancery in Avignon.²⁶ Pope Benedict XII asks the Passau bishop Albrecht II von Sachsen-Wittenberg (d. 1342) about the case of the host desecration in Pulkau and Linz and demands their investigation and consequently informs the Austrian Duke Albrecht II of the result.²⁷

The persecution of the Jewish inhabitants in 1338 is also recorded by Czech chroniclers of Charles IV, particularly because the massacres of Jews spread over the boundaries of the Austrian duchy to the Luxemburg dominion. Church dignitary working close to the Prague chapter, František Pražský (d. 1362) narrates several Eucharist miracles that allegedly occurred in Czech lands in 1338. The author says that the host desecration occurred in Kouřim in the same year and led to persecution:

²³ Ibid. n. 450; Wiedl (see note 19), p. 3.

²⁴ Brugger, Wiedl (see note 6), n. 452; Wiedl (see note 19), p. 3; see Rubin (see note 20), pp. 57-65; Birgit Wiedl, 'The Host on the Doorstep: Perpetrators, Victims, and Bystanders in an Alleged Host Desecration in Fourteenth Century Austria', in: Albrecht Classen, Connie Scarborough (eds), *Crime and Punishment in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age*, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), pp. 299-345.

²⁵ Brugger, Wiedl (see note 6), n. 454; Wiedl (see note 19), p. 3.

²⁶ Brugger, Wiedl (see note 6), n. 456.

²⁷ Ibid. nn. 442-443; Wiedl (see note 19), p. 6.

Therefore miserable Jews were killed with fire and sword and other means in the Czech kingdom and other countries. And it is strange that from their bodies when exposed to beating and torture no blood allegedly ran out.²⁸

Immediately after this event the record about the host desecration in Pulkau follows.

Beneš Krabice from Weitmile (d. 1375) does not mention the events in Austria in the third book of his *Chronicle of the Prague church* but from František Pražský he borrows the information about the Kouřim desecration that supposedly caused the slaughter of Jews “in all regions”.²⁹ In Neplach’s brief composition of *Roman and Czech chronicle* we can read:

Anno Domini 1338. Jews in the entire Bohemia, Moravia and Austria were slaughtered together with their wives and children in cradles. It was strange that no Jew bled but all of them died without shedding blood. In many places Jews were exterminated because of the host found in Pulkau.³⁰

Jan Neplach, the abbot of the Benedictine abbey in Opatovice (1322–1371), places the events in Kouřim and Pulkau next to each other, and thus places them in an indirect connection. We have to approach the records about the Kouřim host desecration very cautiously – first the chroniclers of the Charles times automatically copied events from each other and therefore we cannot take things seriously if the information occurs in more chronicles, and we have no other records about the event. The anti-Jewish disorder in Czech lands in the late 1330s are rather related to the case in Pulkau from where they spread to the surrounding countries.

²⁸ “Unde miseri judaei in regno Boemiae et in aliis terris ferro et igne variisque modis fuerunt interempti et mirum est, quod de corporibus eorum, dum vulnerarentur aut mutilarentur, sanguis non emanavit.” Bláhová (see note 4), p. 128; Brugger, Wiedl (see note 6), n. 453; Jan Soukup, ‘Bouře proti Židům v Čechách r. 1338’, in: *Věstník Královské české společnosti nauk, třída filosoficko-historicko-jazykozpytná*, č. 4, (Praha: král. čes. společ. nauk, 1907), p. 2.

²⁹ Bláhová (see note 4), p. 203; Soukup (see note 28), p. 2.

³⁰ “AD.MCCCXXXVIII judei per totam Boemiam, Moraviam et Austriam eciam cum uxoribus et infantibus in cunabulis occiduntur, et mirabile contigit, quod de nullo judeo sanguis emanavit, sed omnes sine sanguinis effusione mortui sunt. Judei eciam propter hostiam inventam in Pulka in multis locis deleti fuerunt.” Bláhová (see note 4), p. 548; Brugger, Wiedl (see note 6), n. 451; Jan Soukup (see note 28), pp. 1-2.

Genre and thematic characteristic of the composition

The high-school teacher and regional historian, Jan Soukup, was the first one to link the composition *How Jews tortured Corpus Christi* with the events in Pulkau. He does not question the authenticity of the Kouřim affair and tries to place it chronologically supposing that the Pulkau case precedes the Eucharist profanation in Kouřim. Soukup considers the poem to be contemporary and original and characterizes it as a newspaper in verse. One cannot rule out the possibility that the poem could have had such a function, however, considering the nature of medieval literature and the verse form that usually refers to universal values I do not consider this genre categorization as accurate.

Besides the genological characteristic of the text Soukup points several details out that we do not know from any other sources (e.g. a name of the lame girl who took part in the Eucharist miracle; a detailed description of the revelation of the alleged blasphemy of the Jews; a reference to the procession with a miraculous host). All these details led Soukup to the opinion that the author of the poem could have been one of the pilgrims to Pulkau and recorded what he heard on the spot. On the basis of a Latin record about a fire in the Jewish town on 13 May 1338, which was written down in the explicit in the manuscript Bible, he then deduced that the anti-Jewish riots had also reached Prague itself.³¹ However, we have to approach Soukup's views critically and it would be useful to support them with another record, too. That would confirm the credibility of the Kouřim affair (which he dated May 9/10) or, that would verify the statement that bloody riots also struck one of the most significant medieval Jewish communities – Prague *kehilah*. Absence of any records about the pogrom in Prague in 1338 (both Latin and Hebrew) relativizes this opinion.

Jan Lehár offered a different genre categorization: he considers the poem *How Jews tortured Corpus Christi* to be a sermon in verse.³² One cannot deny that this composition is closely related to medieval preaching; however I suppose that Lehár's genological characteristic is not quite fitting. This poem is rather a Eucharist miracle story – a Corpus Christi non-dramatic miraculous tale that may have served as an exemplum and not only in sermonic literature.

³¹ Soukup (see note 28), pp. 1-8.

³² Lehár (see note 5), p. 299.

The genre and formal range of the medieval compositions about Jews and the host desecration is very mixed. In the time when our poem was written down in the manuscript, its recipients could have apprehended it in a relationship with texts that included a ‘Host Desecration Narrative’ that is a collection of many *topoi* that originated from the record of the first case of the host desecration (*De miraculo hostiae a Iudaeo Parisiis anno Domini MCCXC multis ignominiiis affectae*) that allegedly happened in Paris in 1290 and which penetrated the narrative about miraculous hosts and Jews until the early Modern Ages.³³ As an inspiration model served also texts that often correspond with stories about the desecrated hosts and depict “Holy Week Violence” that is closely related with the Easter ritualized violence and *risus paschalis*.³⁴ The composition *How Jews tortured Corpus Christi* is an example of the synthesis of these two discourses. In Central European context and in the time when it was written down in the manuscript our poem could have communicated with texts about the great Prague pogrom of 1389 (three Latin prosaic versions *Passio Iudeorum Pragensium* and one Latin in verse)³⁵ or with the depiction of the Wrocław slaughter of Jews of 1453 when both the events were allegedly provoked by the Eucharist profanity.³⁶ We should also not forget the fact that in both cases, in Pulkau in 1338 and in Prague in 1389, Christian Easter and Jewish Passover fell on the same date which increased ritualized tension of both communities that were more predisposed to mutual conflicts.

Almost at the same time when our poem was written down in the museum manuscript the scribe of *Olomouc Tales* recorded two exempla related to Jews.³⁷ The first Olomouc exemplum

³³ Rubin (see note 20), pp. 40-48.

³⁴ Eva Steinová, *Passio Iudeorum Pragensium: magisterská diplomová práce*, (Brno: Ústav klasických studií FF MU v Brně, 2010), pp. 78-86.

³⁵ See the new editions of these texts: Steinová and Rubin, pp. 135-140. See also the recent papers: Barbara Newmann, ‘The Passion of the Jews of Prague: The Pogrom of 1389 and the Lessons of a Medieval Parody’, in: *Church History*, 81,1 (2012), pp. 1-26; Eva Steinová, ‘Jews and Christ Interchanged: Discursive Strategies in the Passio Iudeorum Pragensium’, in: *Graeco-Latina Brunensia*, 17 (2012), pp. 73-86; Daniel Soukup, ‘Latinské a české verše o pražském pogromu roku 1389 - ke dvěma pozapomenutým žakovským skladbám’, in: *Česká literatura - časopis pro literární vědu*, 60,5 (2012), pp. 711-726.

³⁶ Wojciech Ketrzyński (ed.), ‘De persecutione Iudaeorum Vratislaviensium A. 1453’, in: *Monumenta Poloniae Historica = Pomniki dziejowe Polski*, Tom IV, (Lwów: Nakł. Akademii Umiejętności, 1884), pp. 1-5; Aleksander Semkowitz (ed.), ‘De expulsionem Iudaeorum’, in: *Monumenta Poloniae Historica = Pomniki dziejowe Polski*, Tom III, (Lwów: Nakł. Akademii Umiejętności, 1878), pp. 785-789; see Rubin (see note 20), pp. 119-128.

³⁷ Eduard Petřů, *Olomoucké povídky: příspěvek ke studiu vývoje staročeské zábavné prózy*, (Praha: SPN, 1957), pp. 23-26 and 35-37; Daniel Soukup, ‘Legenda o zpívajícím chlapci – Obraz Židů v Olomouckých povídkách’, in: *Vlastivědný věstník moravský LXII*, č. 1 (Brno: Muzejní a vlastivědná společnost v Brně, 2010), pp.

about a 'Host Desecration Narrative' is entitled with a Czech incipit, roughly translated as: "A very nice, strange and terrible tale about one Jew begins, who took Corpus Christi on Holy Thursday with faithful Christians and what strange God made through the Jew." The model for this story is a legend about the desecrated host at which Dvořák registers two genetic types in his index of motif abstracts: 1) legend about a host that miraculously bleeds and 2) legend about a host that is transfigured into the Child Jesus.³⁸ While the Olomouc exemplum represents the second and genetically older type, the poem *How Jews tortured Corpus Christi* is evidence of the synthesis of both types. Unlike the Olomouc exemplum that is devoted mainly to the question of unworthy communion of the Eucharist, our poem explicitly talks about the profanity of Jews and physical ill-usage of the Eucharist, and at the same time it says that the host was transfigured into a little baby.

Both compositions probably already originated in the 14th century; however, in the time when they were written down (the second half of the 15th century) they acquired a new reception dimension. Czech lands, fundamentally theologically influenced by Hussite reformation, altered the function of an edited composition: the emphasis on the Eucharistic motif and accented allusions on heretics from whom the Jews allegedly received the consecrated host, apologetically defended the Catholic faith against the Hussite one and its extreme branches denying the transubstantiation dogma. It is then obvious that the museum manuscript originated in a Catholic environment also as an anthology of texts related to Charles times and that it served its owner as an auto-identifying subject through which he defined his membership of the Roman church (we can affirm this when talking about the Litoměřice manuscript). Moreover, a new semantic range of the poem *How Jews tortured Corpus Christi* enhanced the fact that Jews were accused of collaboration with Hussites. An exemplary case that could have also had an effect at the reception of our composition is the large-scale liquidation of Austrian Jewish communities, the so-called Wiener Gezera when in 1421 the Jewish community was accused of both the Eucharist

29-46; *Obraz Židů v Olomouckých povídkách - Dvě středověká protizidovská exempla*; in: *Židé a Morava* (Kroměříž: Muzeum Kroměřížska), pp. 7-20.

³⁸ Karel Dvořák, *Soupis staročeských exempel = Index exemplorum paleobohemicorum*, (Praha: Univerzita Karlova, 1978), p. 93; see Frederic C. Tubach, *Index Exemplorum: a Handbook of Medieval Religious Tales*, (Helsinki: Academia scientiarum Fennica, 1969), n. 2689; Daniel Soukup, *Obraz Židů v Olomouckých povídkách - Dvě středověká protizidovská exempla*; in *Židé a Morava*, (Kroměříž: Muzeum Kroměřížska), pp. 8-12.

profanation and collaboration with Hussites and consequently burnt to death. Therefore, we can summarize that the composition can also be perceived as a polemic and apologetic text.

Formal characteristic

As suggested above also the form of the composition *How Jews tortured Corpus Christi* functions as an important meaning carrying component. In Czech medieval literature we can find few texts in rhyme where Jews would appear. One of them is an old-Czech exemplum *About a royal cup-bearer (Mundschenk) and a Jew* from *Aesop's Fables*, which probably originated between 1342–1346 and was preserved in the manuscript, *Collection of the Bavarian Count* from 1472. It is not a text reflecting a host profanation, but it is significant evidence of diversionary voice of medieval society to protect the Jewish community against injustice. The composition depicts a story of an acquisitive courtier who kills a Jew and is punished for this crime by the king.³⁹ The predominant function of *Aesop's Fables* leading to moral formation of the reader was didacticism accented by its verse form. In the times of a turbulent anti-Jewish atmosphere, which one can perceive as a historical constant, it is a unique evidence of deliberate protection of Jews guaranteed by the ruler.

If we omit the emotional speech of the count's valet from 1098 slashing Jewish inhabitants who were leaving the Czech principality in large numbers because of the Crusaders' disorders, composed by the St. Giles chapter dean Kosmas (d. 1125),⁴⁰ we have to mention at least two domestic Latin texts in verse that talk about the Eucharist profanation by the Jews and are topologically and formally related to our composition. The first one is a poem from the chronicle of the Zbraslav abbot, Petr Žitavský (d. 1339), who recorded after a prosaic text depicting the slaughter of Jews in Germany led by Rintfleisch in 1298 and allegedly caused by a

³⁹ Eduard Petrů (ed.), *Ezopovy bajky, Katonova Dvojverší, Rada otce synovi*, (Brno: Atlantis), pp. 123-124, 287-308; see Dvořák (see note 38), p. 95; For the Latin version see Václav Flajšhans (ed.), 'Exemplarius auctorum, liber exempla narrans a magistro Clareto de Solencia compilatus', in: *Klaret a jeho družina. Sv. II: Texty glosované, Sbíрка pramenů k poznání literárního života československého, skup. první, řada I, č. 1, sv. 2* (Praha: Česká akademie věd a umění, 1928), p. 184.

⁴⁰ Bertold Bretholz (ed.), 'Die Cronik der Böhmen des Cosmas von Prag', in: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica NS, Tomus II*, (Berlin: Wiedmannsche Buchhandlung, 1923), p. 166; Lev Brod, *První česká kronikář Kosmas o židech*, in *Židovská ročenka na rok 5730*, (Praha: Rada židovských náboženských obcí, 1969), pp. 82-83.

host excruciation in Röttingen.⁴¹ This poem is a point of the chronicle record, its moral evaluation and generalization. As Eduard Petrů proved Petr Žitavský did not insert the parts in verse into the chronicle without intention and at random but with a didactic, moral and educational intention – there is hidden in the verses what the reader should take from reading the chronicle.⁴²

A similar function can also be found in a short Latin-Czech poem that has been neglected by researchers and is related to the pogrom of 1389 with the incipit *M semel* that in fact summarizes prosaic records about this event and functions as a thanks to the verse form and also the simple and catchy exemplum about the persecution of Jews in Prague.⁴³ The existence of verse exempla in Czech literature is nothing unusual and its presence can be proved in the early modern literature. We can mention two exempla in verse that represent Baroque treatment of a narrative about host desecrations located in the catechism *Christian catechism in rhymes* compiled by a Jesuit, Bedřich Bridel.⁴⁴ The first of them narrates the Paris cause of 1290, the second has its prosaic versions in Czech literature which depicts desecration of the Eucharist that allegedly occurred in Pressburg in 1591 and where, also allegedly, Jews from Bohemia had participated.⁴⁵

Conclusions

The old-Czech poem *Kterak Židé mučili Boží tělo – How Jews tortured Corpus Christi* that originated in the 14th century and is preserved in a 15th century manuscript, represents a unique host desecration narrative that stressed and underlined the Eucharistic cult in the time of the Hussite movement. In the second half of the 15th century the poem acquired a new meaning; it primarily served as an exemplum apologetically defending the Catholic faith against the Hussite

⁴¹ Zdeněk Fiala (ed.), *Zbraslavská kronika – Chronicon Aulae Regiae*, (Praha: Svoboda, 1975), pp. 103-104; Rubin (see note 20), pp. 48-57.

⁴² See Eduard Petrů, 'Literární hodnota Zbraslavské kroniky', in: *Vzdálené hlasy: studie o starší české literatuře*, (Olomouc: Votobia, 1996), pp. 55-62.

⁴³ Josef Truhlář, 'Verše o bouři židovské v Praze r. 1389', in: *Věstník České akademie císaře Františka Josefa pro vědy, slovesnost a umění*, (Praha: Nákladem České akademie, 1900), p. 295; Steinová (see note 35), p. 11.

⁴⁴ Milan Kopecký (ed.), *Fridrich Bridel: Básnické dílo*, (Praha: Torst, 1999), pp. 377-379.

⁴⁵ Cf. Daniel Soukup, 'Ikografie uzavřené společnosti: obrazový cyklus znesvěcení hostií Židy z Hostouně', in: *Minulostí západočeského kraje*, (Plzeň: Archiv města Plzně, 2011), pp. 108-131.

heresy that in its extreme branches denied the transubstantiation dogma. Therefore, we can claim that the composition *How Jews tortured Corpus Christi* can also be perceived as a polemic and apologetic text.

If we take into account the above mentioned compositions in verse, or medieval poetry in general, we can apply similar conclusions to the poem *How Jews tortured Corpus Christi*. Although this poem describes the events in Pulkau in detail, categorizes them in time and place, and is the most informative text about this case, it is in fact not a historiographical record but rather takes on a hagiographical-sermonic, or exemplum function. Medieval poetry tends to generalize and fixate phenomena. It emphasizes the timeless, eschatological layer and thus serves as a moral example and corrective for everyday life. This function is confirmed by the doxological conclusion of our Eucharist miracle tale in rhyme, which first of all served as a historical exemplum and secondarily as a polemic with heretics.

The Individual and Cultural Ways of Jewish Identity Strategies in Hungary after the Democratic Turn in 1989

Dávid Szél

This paper I will use psychoanalytical and social psychological theories to demonstrate the different aspects of one's identity and the potential conflicts between different identity strategies. I also plan to demonstrate, that the content of Jewish identity is strongly connected to the Holocaust and to grandparents' stories and narratives about it, or the way the third generation after the Shoah interprets them. I suggest in my paper, that not only the stories themselves define the content of the identity but the narrative holes:¹ hidden or implicit emotions, unvoiced words.

Introduction

In my doctoral thesis I plan to investigate two main topics. First, I want to compare the contents of the attitudes and narratives toward Jews and Jewry of third generation Jews and non-Jews of similar age, using an open-ended questionnaire. Secondly, I plan to show that there can be large differences and huge gaps between intrapsychic and interpersonal identity strategies. People use different identity strategies depending on the situation they are in, or depending on their motivation toward others. In other words people are not the same and people don't behave or feel the same way in different situations. Some of these differences are completely inconsistent and others completely consistent with each other. That's why I plan to compare the outcomes of the interviews with the outcomes of focus group conversations of representatives of Hungarian Jewish civil organizations, groups or foundations, to investigate people's varying attitudes toward Jewish identity. The examinations need to be interdisciplinary to cover all the questions I plan to answer. While using psychoanalytic theories and concepts in my doctoral research, the results will be processed from a social psychological perspective, relying on the narrative and discursive psychological framework.

¹ Katalin Lénárd, 'Trauma, emlékezés, kultúra', in: Bernadette Péley, György Révész (eds), *Autonómia és identitás. Tanulmányok Kézdi Balázs 70. Születésnapjára*, (Pécs: Pannónia Könyvek, 2007), pp. 117-127, (p. 120).

This paper deals with three different topics. First, I will give a short historical introduction to the last 130 years of the history of Hungary and to the history of anti-Semitism in order to understand the situation of Hungarian Jewry at the end of the turn of the 19th century, and to understand the consequences of World War II. The second and longer part of the study will be about psychoanalytic theories and concepts about Jewry, Jewish identity and identity threat on one hand, and psychoanalytic ways of coping with anti-Semitism on the other. Finally, in the third part, I will shortly present my proposed research and its discursive and narrative psychological methods.

Historical introduction toward some definitions

If social psychologists or historians talk about anti-Semitism some questions need to be answered: what does anti-Semitism mean? Who are these scientists talking about? In which situations, when do scientists talk about anti-Semitism? What is the historical, social, sociological, psychological or cultural context? If we try to define anti-Semitism, we need to clarify the meaning of the word Jew and Jews or Jewry themselves and the history of anti-Semitism. Whoever wants to answer these questions, he or she won't find straight and clear answers. There is no agreement on the mentioned issues even among historians, but in order to continue with the argument, I need to have a well defined position, for which I begin with a citation of the activist Abraham H. Foxman.

[...] history has taught us that in times of great stress, of great instability, and of anxiety and unpredictability, there is one thing that is predictable - anti-Semitism. When Europe was being decimated by the Plague, Jews were blamed and Jews were killed.²

In Hungary, mainly before the regime of the Holy Roman Emperor (from 1765) and Hungarian King (1780-1790) Joseph II, it was evident who was a Jew and who was not. By using modern terms, we would say that Jews had no identity problems; for the majority it was very easy to

² Abraham H. Foxman, 'New Excuses, Old Hatred: Worldwide Anti-Semitism in the Wake of 9/11' http://www.adl.org/anti_semitism/speech.asp

categorize them, to distinguish them from the outside.³ They had their own communities, they had their own places to live, to trade, they had their own language and they had their own professions. Later, after the Edict of Tolerance was enacted – which was one of the most famous actions of the Emperor and King Josef II (and his activity called *Josephinism*) – the phenomenon of the emancipated Jew appeared, and because of that, it was no longer so evident to be Jewish. To be Jewish was a matter of choice, as Jews were motivated to assimilate in the communities around them, there was no more reason to live segregated from the majority of society. This started a process, by which traditions, language, professions and communities lost their importance. And it also sparked the question: who is Jewish? The question is indeed relevant, because assimilation did not eliminate the need for identification of the Jews, neither from inside, nor outside. But according to the – controversial – success of assimilation (see below), Jews were not visible anymore. Instead of religion, language, etc. people had to find other characteristics to identify the Jews. Not only the self-identification of Jews became questioned, but external identification as well. That was the time when ancestry came to the foreground instead of the earlier used determinants. This is underlined by Slavoj Žižek's book, *Living in the End Times*⁴ in which he wrote that the difference between these two periods is only that instead of the 'specific Jew' the 'absolute Jew' emerged. They are no longer identified by what they are like, but by their mere existence. I would say that only a little while after the time, when the specific Jew turned into the absolute one, the 'psychological Jew' appeared as well. They are, according to Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi and Philip Rieff,

those many who evinced no special need to specify themselves as Jews or to embrace any particular of visible Jewish commitment, but who have felt themselves to be somehow irreducibly Jewish nonetheless.⁵

³ Ágnes Heller, 'A „zsidókérdés” megoldhatatlansága című kötet bemutatója és vitája', in: Tibor Grüll, László Répás (eds), *A zsidóság és Európa*, (Budapest: József Attila Műhely, 2006), pp. 184-210.

⁴ Slavoj Žižek, *Living in the End Times*, (London, UK: Verso, 2010), p. 140.

⁵ Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Freud's Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable*, (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1991), p. 10.

Anti-Semites and Jews: circular reasoning

To be clear, the argument above doesn't entail that only Jews have changed. To be cynical, I could suggest that Jewry and anti-Judaism, or later anti-Semitism are walking hand in hand, because in the course of history they have become inseparable. This paper is about understanding Jewish identity and identity strategies and because of that, we need to define the meaning of Jewry. Although the concept of Jewry might be analyzed from multiple aspects and various disciplines (religious, historical, ethnical, cultural, etc. approaches), in this paper I only stress Jewish identity related to anti-Semitism. According to that, my opinion is that the all-time Jew is specified by anti-Semitism of the given era – due to social psychological theories about prejudice – and vice versa. Due to these beliefs, it is useless to define separately either the Jew, or anti-Semitism, but rather we should understand the dynamics of these phenomena. Social scientists need to define the era, its politics, culture, geographical position and other different aspects of the context.

In my opinion, during history, Jews, Jewry and their perception changed from regime to regime, and with these changes anti-Semitism had to change as well. Nevertheless, the question is not about the characteristics of anti-Semitism, but about the existence of the phenomenon. Anti-Semitism is not a given fact, but since the existence of Jewry, anti-Semitism (anti-Judaism) is there. Because of the existence of anti-Semitism, Jewry became during the last two millennia a cultural code which in the times of modern anti-Semitism is independent from Jewry and from the presence of the Jews.

With the interiorisation of the meaning of anti-Semitism, the phenomena in its existence, is very stable, but the content of the different kinds of anti-Semiteisms vary a lot. Secularization for example did not eliminate medieval anti-Judaism, but transformed it, made it secular. This logic can be easily applied for every change of era as well. We have to understand, that – citing András Kovács, “discrimination against Jews can also be found where Jews are hardly or not even present in society.”⁶ Anti-Semites don't even need Jews for their anti-Semitism – as the title of Hungarian sociologist György Csepeli's book refers to: “... and you don't even need

⁶ András Kovács, 'Az antiszemitizmus, mint társadalomtudományos probléma', in: András Kovács (ed.), *A Modern Antiszemitizmus*, (Budapest: Új Mandátum Könyvkiadó, 1999), p. 17.

Jews”⁷ –, therefore anti-Semitism has to be understood from the anti-Semite’s point of view. If we want to understand why prejudiced personalities need Jew hatred; psychoanalysis might be a theory which tries to explain anti-Semitism in this way.

Historical background

Historians talk about three different periods and by that they are implicitly talking about three different kinds of anti-Semitism and three different kinds of Jews. Paraphrasing Csepeli,⁸ the first period in the central-eastern European region is the time before the birth of Christianity, which can be called an ethnocentric period. It was a time when conflicts erupted between groups of people, between one in-group and one or more out-groups. The second one was after the formation and penetration of Christianity, ethnocentrism’s relevancy and legitimacy was relegated to the background, group conflicts transformed into religion-based anti-Semitism. Religious anti-Semitism lasted for many centuries, until a third and final period came in the late 19th century, with the beginning of the earlier mentioned actions of Joseph II, and later in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, when political anti-Semitism appeared. The same periods were identified by another sociologist, András Kovács,⁹ who used more general labels for these periods. He talks about ‘pagan anti-Judaism’, ‘Christian anti-Judaism’ and ‘modern anti-Semitism’.

Controversial success

As I suggested earlier, both the process and the effects of assimilation in 19th century Hungary were controversial. It is very important to note the differences between those processes which took place two centuries ago between the contemporary concepts of acculturation. According to the Hungarian historian Géza Komoróczy,¹⁰ the assimilation of Jews took place very quickly in

⁷ György Csepeli, ... *és nem is kell hozzá zsidó*, (Budapest: Kozmosz Könyvek, 1990), pp. 41-44.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Kovács (see note 6), pp. 9-37.

¹⁰ Cf. Géza Komoróczy, ‘Zsidó nép, zsidó nemzet, zsidó nemzetiség’, in: *Élet és Irodalom*, 50,24 (June 2006).

the eyes of Jewish leaders. They were surprised by it, because they were against full assimilation, they wanted to keep the traditions and of course the religious aspects of Judaism, and they still wanted to live in small, segregated communities, they were against full secularization. But since there were many Jews who welcomed these changes and took advantage of the process of assimilation – participation in secular life, better trading opportunities, easier rules to follow, etc. –, it led to conflicts among the Jewry. But this was a problem within Jewish society. Looking at the whole context, beyond Jews and non-Jews, Hungary had other problems to solve. Following World War I, and following the treaty of Trianon in 1920, with the fall of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, the ethnic variety of Hungary disappeared. Before that, Jews were regarded as Hungarians, because in the heterogeneous, multicultural and multinational Hungary they were needed as Hungarians. But the loss of 2/3 of the territories of Hungary implicated the loss of the country's heterogeneity, multiculturalism and its multinational nature. Jews were no longer needed as Hungarians; they became 'only' Jews.¹¹ It didn't help in the judgment of the Jews that after the peace treaty the rate of Jews in Hungary was one percent more than before.¹² It no longer mattered that a high number of the Jews were fighting in WW I, or the role they played in Hungary's economic or intellectual spheres, only their ancestry mattered. After the peace treaty, people felt injured and unjustly deprived, and thought that they needed homogeneity in the country. And with that, state supported assimilation came to an end. Jewry became a nationality against the will of the Jews.

This paper is not about the antecedents, the history, or the consequences of WW II, though a few words need to be said about the Holocaust in Hungary in order to understand the silence during the socialist era and to understand how Hungary tried and still tries to deny its responsibility. In 56 days 437,402 Jews were deported from Hungary.¹³ This is a record in the history of deportations, which would have been impossible without the collaboration of the Hungarian government and Hungarian citizens. Tension had been piling up during the years before the deportations, and different kinds of anti-Semitism culminated in Hungarian history during those 56 days. In public discourse the people who were murdered had been regarded as Jews and not as Hungarians for a long time. The process in which Hungarian politicians accepted

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² http://www.holokauszmagyarorszagon.hu/tables/tables_2.html

¹³ http://www.holokauszmagyarorszagon.hu/index.php?section=1&type=content&chapter=4_2_3

the fact that the murdered people were Jews and Hungarians at the same time only started a few years ago. But it is still assumed that Hungary is not responsible for the Holocaust, as Hungary lost its self-determination by the German occupation.¹⁴ The era's actual controversial perception is well illustrated by the phenomena that there are more and more Miklós Horthy statues¹⁵ and squares in inaugurated Hungary. As we can see, Hungary is still struggling to come to terms with the trauma and the consequences of the Holocaust.

After WW II, anti-Semitism disappeared from the discourse in Hungary, and gave way to anti-Zionism.¹⁶ The logic itself is very easy to understand in the Cold War era: if the United States of America was on the side of Israel, then the Soviet Union and socialist Hungary had to be Arab-sympathizers, and thus anti-Zionists. After the fall of communism in Europe and the change of the regime, this ideology became empty, and anti-Semitism had to find new ways to stay alive. Just as throughout history, anti-Semitism found ways to survive in the 21st century too. What we see today is, that the word "Jew" is not even necessary to be pronounced to mobilize anti-Semitism, there are metaphors which are evident and understandable for everybody. And that's how anti-Semitism became "independent from Jews' place, roles, or weight, even from their [Jews] existence in society."¹⁷

We have to see that throughout history, there are a few common factors among the different forms of anti-Semitism. Therefore, my opinion is, that with the appearance of a new period, old habits, beliefs, superstitions and stereotypes only change, but they do not disappear. This also implicates that the tools of political or modern anti-Semitism contain a lot of tools from earlier periods as well. To sum up, we can say, that both anti-Semitism and Jewry are flexible and sensitive phenomena, if one changes, the other changes with it. Of course this should and does not mean that Jews are responsible for the existence of anti-Semitism, it is a neutral statement, saying that with the change of the attitudes of the Jews, anti-Semitism has to change as well. To understand that better, I will now refer to one of the greatest Hungarian psychoanalysts, Imre

¹⁴ As stands in the so called 'Preambulum' of the Hungarian Constitution which came into force on 1 January 2012.

¹⁵ He was the Governor of Hungary 1920-1944. His role in the Holocaust in Hungary is very controversial.

¹⁶ András Gerő, 'Az antiszemita közbeszéd Magyarországon a rendszerváltás után. Helyzetkép és megfontolások', in: András Gerő et. al. (eds), *Az antiszemita közbeszéd Magyarországon 2004-2005-ben*, (Budapest: B'nai B'rith Budapest Páholy, 2006), pp. 11-21.

¹⁷ Kovács (see note 6), p. 32.

Hermann. In his book *The Psychology of Anti-Semitism*, he wrote about a boy, who asked: “Where’s the wind when it’s not blowing? Where is anti-Semitism if it is not there at first sight? It is being prepared, we have to answer.”¹⁸

To sum up, during history, Jews, Jewry and their perception changed from regime to regime, and with these changes anti-Semitism had to change as well, but my opinion is that the question is not about the characteristics of anti-Semitism, but about the existence of the phenomenon. With the interiorization of the meaning of anti-Semitism, the question is very easy to answer: anti-Semitism in its existence is very stable, but the content of the different kinds of anti-Semitisms vary a great deal.

Causes and effects

According to András Kovács, the explanation of the continuous discrimination of the Jews lies in their continuous exclusivity and their particular isolation from society. That means that Jewry has always been an *exclusive minority* in society. Jewry was the only monotheist religion among the many polytheist religions, later Jewry rejected the ideology of Christianity. The fact of the rejection and its consequence, the excluded status have identity-building function on both sides. Enlightenment and emancipation wanted and tried to cast off these identities, but the marginalization and discrimination existing for centuries were too solid phenomena to be erased so easily. For the victims of these social changes, the only chance was to perceive the process of assimilation of the Jews, their integration into modern society as the persistence of their exclusivity, its appearance in a new form, as Jews’ takeover of power.¹⁹ At the beginning of the 21st century both anti-Semitism and Jewry exist; although the latter – as seen before – doesn’t have anything to do with the Jews (cf. cultural code). Following the above-mentioned logic, the identity-building power of exclusivity has to be alive as well, but the theory of exclusivity needs to be revised. Jews are not recognizable anymore (except for the religious ones), but because of its potential positive connotations all the Jewish stereotypes are kept alive from both sides. So looking at the idea of exclusivity critically, it seems to me that in 21st century-Hungary, it is

¹⁸ Imre Hermann, *Az antiszemitizmus lélektana*, (Budapest: Cserépfalvi Könyvkiadó és Könyvkereskedelmi Kft., 1990), p. 113-114.

¹⁹ Kovács, (see note 6) pp. 16-17.

working as a stereotype of the non-Jewish majority and as an auto-stereotype the Jews tend to apply to themselves, which can be positively mobilized by the Jewish minority.

Identity and psychoanalysis

After clarifying the historical aspects of the topic and some definitions, I shall now turn to the psychoanalytic approaches related to Jewish identity, identity strategies and anti-Semitism. In this part, I want to answer three questions using a psychoanalytic approach. Firstly, what is the connection between Jews, Judaism and anti-Semitism? Secondly, what does it mean to be Jewish? And thirdly, what does it mean to belong to a minority, to belong to an excluded community, or group of people?

Ethnic identity and ethnic personality

Following Michel Foucault, Hungarian social psychologist and psychoanalytic theoretician, Ferenc Erős says, that “the human body is a social object, a surface on which the institutional authority writes its symbols”.²⁰ Identity is a very complex phenomenon; depending on the theoretical emphasis of the researcher, we talk about individual, and/or collective and/or social aspects of identity. However, both social psychologists and psychoanalysts agree that one will only be aware of him- or herself by identifying the “other”. Furthermore, according to Freud and later to Foucault, the social context, the *collective subject*²¹ influences our individual identities. This leads to difficulties in the distinction between one’s ethnic identity and his or her ethnic personality.²²

To clarify these factors, we can say for example, that being a Jew is someone’s ethnic identity. But ethnic identity can’t stand alone on its own. From the moment one starts to talk about ethnic identity, it will inevitably – either explicitly or implicitly – be mixed with values. And as soon as it is mixed with – either positive or negative – values, we no longer talk about ethnic identity, but about ethnic personality. Going back to the above mentioned example, Jew is

²⁰ Ferenc Erős, *Az identitás labirintusai*, (Budapest: Janus/Osiris, 2001), p. 34.

²¹ Ibid. p. 42.

²² Ibid. pp. 79-81.

a category, but can one talk about Jewry neutrally? I suggest that one cannot. It is almost impossible to talk about a group of people without some generalizations. That's how stereotypes are made and that's how the 'typical Jew' is created. So if the content of ethnic identity and personality is mixed, then – as Erős writes in his book, *The Labyrinths of Identity*, identity can easily become a straitjacket. One's ethnic identity is defined by his or her Jewry, or the way he or she thinks about it. That's how his or her individual uniqueness disappears.

To go further into a psychoanalytic analysis of the situation, according to Georges Devereux, a Hungarian originated American-French ethnologist and psychoanalyst, the

tendency to stress one's ethnic [...] identity, its use as a crutch, is prima facie evidence of the impending collapse of the only valid sense of identity: one's differentness, which is replaced by the most archaic pseudo-identity possible.²³

Erős continues with Devereux's words: If

someone is nothing else but Spartan, capitalist, proletarian or Buddhist, then he or she is on the verge of being nothing, and then he or she is on the verge of not to exist at all.²⁴

The same phenomenon occurs for example in case of adolescents – as it is the main stage of personality development and so the main stage of the forming of identity²⁵ – who got halted during their search for identity. In this situation the child or young adult may use the help of prostheses²⁶ – for example clothes, different styles, music, friends –, which are only transitionally found, but he or she can believe in its eternity. By trying new prostheses over and over, they will finally find their own and stable identity. Due to the Holocaust trauma, Jews can sometimes have analogous identity issues.

Identity by definition comes from the outside, but there can be differences in the

²³ John M. Yinger, *Ethnicity*, (Albany, USA: State University of New York Press, 1994) p. 344.

²⁴ Erős (see note 20), p. 81.

²⁵ Erik H. Erikson, *A fiatal Luther és más írások*, (Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó, 1991), pp. 480-489.

²⁶ Iván Lust, 'Vágy és hatalom. A pszichoanalitikus kultúrakritika szükségességéről', in: *Thalassa*, 2-3 (1999), pp. 7-44; <http://www.mtapi.hu/thalassa/9923/tanulmny/01lust.htm#top>

formation of the phenomenon, namely on what level it was forced. To be clear, external effects are essential for identity formation, the question is about the quality, quantity and diversity of this force. Pointing again to Devereux or Lust, in our case what matters is the aspects of identity which is pushed from the outside. But no matter what content these effects have, still it is one's identity and without that the individual collapses, so despite external pressure, one holds on to his or her identity.

Jewish identity can become a 'transitional object'²⁷ – a psychoanalytic phenomenon taken from Winnicott –, which helps one cope with the surrounding world. Just like the way a little toy or puppet can help a baby feel safe even without his or her guardian, the Jew having lost his or her ethnic personality can safely explore a 'transitional space'²⁸ where everybody else is in the same situation with his or her transitional identity. This not only helps safe explorations, but processing personal or family traumas.

Identity threat

Minority groups are often threatened, or can easily feel threatened from the outside. Breakwell, a British social psychologist, examined the identity threats of minority groups. She is a follower of social psychologists Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner, whose social identity theory and the minimal group paradigm²⁹ are about how people establish discrimination between in- and out-groups under minimal conditions. In real situations, people in minority groups need to develop different strategies to overcome different negativities. Breakwell distinguishes three different levels of coping mechanisms: intrapersonal, interpersonal and intergroup processes.³⁰ Kastersztein,³¹ a Polish social psychologist thinks that different kinds of identity strategies are available on each of these levels. If one is motivated (the content of the motivation is not relevant at this stage) to stay in the group, he or she can choose from different strategies. These are 'conformity, anonymity, depersonalization and assimilation'. If he or she wants to leave the

²⁷ Donald W. Winnicott, *Játszás és valóság*, (Budapest: Animula, 1999), pp. 1-25.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ John C. Turner, 'Towards a Cognitive Redefinition of the Social Group', in: Henri Tajfel (ed.), *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 15-41.

³⁰ Erős (see note 20), p. 76.

³¹ Ibid. p. 77.

group or show his or her separatism, then the following strategies are available: ‘differentiation, becoming visible, singularization, and individualization’. It is important, that these strategies are not and should not be constant and unalterable strategies. Sure, it is not always easy to decide, whether to stay in the group or not, and it is in most of the cases not a question of decision. And of course we need to mention unconscious motivations, which have a huge influence on our behavior and on the “chosen” strategy. The final outcomes, depending on the context, are influenced by different powers from the inside and from the outside. This complexity is shown by the following example: if somebody is not representing his or her ethnic personality well enough, then following Devereux’s above mentioned opinion, I would say, that his or her ethnic identity becomes questionable as well.

Hypotheses

In this part of the paper, after the theoretical introduction, I want to clarify my presumptions which guided me to investigate the subject. My first hypothesis is that in Hungary – due to historical reasons – Jewish identity is inseparable from the Holocaust or anti-Semitism. In other words, I suggest that people can’t talk about Jewry without the Holocaust, therefore there is no discourse about Jewry without mentioning the Holocaust, also according to Bruno Bitter, the host of one of the biggest, but no longer existing Hungarian Jewish blog called *judapest.org*.³² This statement needs a slight refinement, because it can’t be valid for all kind of Jews, independently from their attitudes toward Jewry. Therefore, András Kovács identified in his research, six different groups of second generation Jews. The first group was characterized by the complete lack of traditions. In the second group, people gave up their traditions, people in the third group were following some traditions, but not strictly, the fourth group kept symbolic traditions, in the fifth group people went back to the traditions and last, but not least, in the sixth group people kept all the traditions.³³ I would say, that only people from the first group have the Holocaust as a strong identity forming factor. For all the other groups, I suggest that the Holocaust represents less and less in their identity.

³² Cf. Brúnó Bitter is cited by Gábor Miklósi, ‘Alternatív zsidó mozgalmak - Önépítkezés’, in: *Magyar Narancs*, 20,15 (2008).

³³ András Kovács, *A másik szeme*, (Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó), pp. 154-159.

Besides the above, I believe, that the attitude toward Jewry and the Holocaust is not only depending on the attitude toward tradition, but on other aspects of a wider context. For example, one can feel safe and sure about his or her Jewishness on the intrapersonal level. But as soon as he or she meets a friend who makes jokes about Jews, then he or she has to make some decisions on the interpersonal level, which – depending on the decision – will or will not affect the intrapersonal level. My hypothesis is that because of the lack of processing of the Hungarian Holocaust, even for the third generation after WW II Jewish identity is inseparable from the Shoah, or in other words, I suggest that there is still no discourse about Jewry without mentioning the Holocaust. Related to my first hypothesis, I would say, that for those who don't or just rarely keep religious traditions, the Jewish identity is based on the socialization by the Holocaust narratives told by grandparents. So for those who identify themselves as Jews, their Jewishness is realized by their socialization. But in a given case, it could happen that this is only valid on one's intrapersonal level. And here comes the contradiction. On the intergroup level, for example by the encouragement of Jewish communities and places, a happier and easier Jewish identity is proposed without mentioning any kind of trauma. A few words need to be said about these places. They are mostly located in one district of Budapest, representing an alternative Jewish reality by keeping Jewish festivities, organizing cultural and musical events without mentioning the Holocaust or religious views. So I suggest that in the interviews I plan to make, the Holocaust-generated transgenerational posttraumatic stress (a phenomenon, which says that a trauma can cause stress in other generations too, so according to it, stress spans across generations) will come to the surface on an intrapersonal level, while on interpersonal, intergroup and cultural levels, it will not. And this can lead to conflicts on all three levels and between the levels. That's why I think that the so called Jewish communities and places need to cope with a definitional gap, which exists between the proposed identity of these communities and the needs of individuals. While on the other hand – no matter how bad and ironic it may sound – individuals need the Holocaust to identify themselves. That is how a straitjacket works, it won't let one go. As long as the Holocaust remains the problem of the Jews and until it is processed by the whole country on a political and on a social level, it will remain an identity forming force and on an intrapsychic level of identity, won't and can't be a happy and easy one.

The second hypothesis is strongly connected to the first: I suggest that there is a

definitional gap between the proposed identity of Jewish communities and the needs of the individuals. The Jewish identity proposed by Jewish communities offer a happier and easier Jewish identity without the Holocaust; individuals however – according to the first hypothesis – need the Holocaust to be able to identify themselves. This gap can potentially cause problems if people can't easily and spontaneously choose between their identity strategies. I think, that people – no matter whether Jews, non-Jews or anybody else – need clear and constant strategies on different levels of their identity. But constancy on one level does not have to implicate that there is also constancy between the different levels.

In the next and final part of my paper, I want to present the methodological aspects of my research. The two presumptions I unfolded above, are best researched and answered by the use of narrative and discursive psychological methods.

Methodology

Identity is strongly connected to memory, knowledge and narratives or by using Bruner's words "life is nothing else but narrative performance".³⁴ That is why narratives can be the subject of many research projects and that's why narratives, stories, memories will be the subjects of my research as well. Ferenc Erős and Bea Ehmann conducted interviews with second generation Jews and they found the same as I want to prove among the third generation. Analyzing the interviews, they found some interesting outcomes they hadn't expected. They analyzed the interviews by cutting out the questions, so instead of questions and answers, they got monologues, in which they found that the texts, the memories, "the narratives make their own chronologies".³⁵ In these discourses time was not linear anymore, it lost its continuity, it became independent from all these. Erős and Ehmann went further, they found that the world narrated by the interviewees was dotted with gaps, or 'narrative holes'³⁶ as Kata Lénárd calls them in one of her studies. And that is the important part for me: these holes are even more informative than the

³⁴ János László, 'Narratív pszichológia', in: Emőke Bagdy et. al. (eds), *Polihistória. Köszöntők és tanulmányok Buda Béla 70. születésnapja alkalmából*, (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 2009), pp. 141-152, (p. 143).

³⁵ Ferenc Erős, Bea Ehmann, 'Az identitásfejlődés tükröződése az önéletrajzi emlékezetben', in: Zsuzsanna Bögre (ed.), *Élettörténet a társadalomtudományokban*, (Budapest: Loisir Könyvkiadó Kft, 2007), pp. 25-49, (p. 30).

³⁶ Lénárd. (see note 1).

narratives themselves. The untold, the historical interruptions can be of high priority. Of course personal affection is essential; because of this fact memory becomes attitude-like: we remember things we want to remember the way we want to remember them. According to Bartlett – says historian, Gábor Gyáni³⁷ – that’s why the past is constructed by means of remembrance. By this, he is really talking about construction and not about reconstruction. And this is very important. Since the stories told by the grandparents are constructions, their interpretations are constructions as well. But the stories and the interpretations are as good as never the same, so we can give up the search for the non-existent true story. Life is not detached, but it doesn’t even have to be. The interpreted truth is what matters and not some objective reality. We perceive the past as we wish – according to our motivations. Gyáni says³⁸ that the understanding of life is important and not its explanation. That’s why narratives can be the subjects of my research studies. One more thing has to be said about memories and narratives. They are not only individual, but selective as well. It becomes more complicated, if we look back to the storytelling and the interpretations of the stories. Both are individual, and both are selective. The stories of the grandparents have less to do with the truth, that’s clear, and so have their interpretations, but beside that, they have nothing to do with the original story either. That implicates, that grandparents can and will never know what consequences are drawn by their grandchildren. Despite the grandparents’ unconscious goal – there is no word about it so far, but every storytelling has an aim –, they can’t be sure, if their will is going to hit the spot.

To go further, and to make it even more complicated, in the narratives there are always mixed tenses. Past, present and future are mixed up, and as mentioned before, the narratives make their own chronologies, so as researchers, it really matters how we ask a question. To underline this, I cite two Hungarian memory researchers, Éva Kovács and Júlia Vajda, “we look back from the never-was-future present to the never-was-present past and forward to the never-will-be-present and to the never-will-be future.”³⁹

The differences between the above mentioned identity levels are interesting not only from

³⁷ Gábor Gyáni, 'Emlékezés és oral history', in: Zsuzsanna Bögre (ed.), *Élettörténet a társadalomtudományokban*, (Budapest: Loisir Könyvkiadó Kft, 2007), pp. 155-167, (p. 157).

³⁸ Ibid. pp. 155-167.

³⁹ Éva Kovács, Júlia Vajda, 'Elbeszélés, identitás és értelmezés', in: Zsuzsanna Bögre (ed.), *Élettörténet a társadalomtudományokban*, (Budapest: Loisir Könyvkiadó Kft, 2007), pp. 217-245, (p. 218).

psychoanalytical, but from a social psychological point of view as well. Different researchers interpret the connection between the intra- and the interpersonal identity levels differently. Bruner and Feldman for example are talking about reciprocal connections. Tajfel, on the contrary, thinks that social identity does not originate in the personal identity. Turner is of a third opinion. He says that between the two constructs there is a subgroup-whole dynamic. But all of this is only relevant if the identity is threatened either on intrapsychic, interpersonal or on intergroup level. Those narratives which are filled with traumatic elements will become elaborated by repetitions, according to Hungarian social psychologist Tibor Pólya's book, *Identity in Narration*.⁴⁰ That means, the more they are told and the more they are listened to, the more they develop and the more they lose their threatening contents. As with all narrations, one can't set aside the context: for whom, when, how and why are the stories told? With the articulation of the trauma, the narrator initiates a kind of dialogue with him or herself, this in itself can be of therapeutic nature. So in optimal cases, the repetitions make the narratives more complex, even if they lose contact with reality. Finally, and hopefully, this will lead to an optimal elaboration and leads to a less Holocaust-filled Jewish identity. So keep on telling and keep on listening.

⁴⁰ Tibor Pólya, *Identitás az elbeszélésben*, (Budapest: Új Mandátum Könyvkiadó, 2007), p. 57.

Female Proselytes in the Light of the Book of Ruth and its Targumic Interpretation

Anna Załuska

The paper describes the issue of female proselytes in the pre-normative biblical story of Ruth the Maobite, the great-grandmother of King David in the Book of Ruth and its subsequent Aramaic paraphrase, the Targum Ruth that describes the practice of the canonical conversion process. In the biblical story joining the family/nation precedes the entrance into the religious community; in the targumic paraphrase this order is reversed - firstly, Ruth is obliged to enter the religious community by observing the commandments and only then is she allowed to join the nation. The study helps reflecting about the origins and the dogmatic foundations of conversion. Moreover, the paper refers to the discussion in modern Israeli media on the status of foreigners and their enculturation with regards to the Law of Return and the halakhic attitude to converts.

Introduction

By the Law of Return passed by the Knesset on 5 July 1950 “Every Jew has the right to immigrate to Israel.”¹ In 1970, after amending the Act, the right was expanded to people, whose ancestors (parents and grandparents) or spouses are Jews. This interpretation differs from principles of the religious law (*Halakha*), which says that a Jew is a person whose mother is Jewish or who converted to Judaism. Therefore, a specific differentiation between affiliation with the nation and joining a religious community has emerged, and its consequences are held mainly by immigrants. Among others, about 300,000 persons from the former Soviet Union, who by the Law of Return were credited with the right to join the nation as full citizens, but according to *Halakha* they are not Jews and as a result, they cannot get married in the country, nor can they adopt children. While those, who chose conversion in their attempts to obtain a Jewish status,

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http://www.knesset.gov.il/laws/special/heb/chok_hashvut.htm

often had to make great sacrifices in their personal and material lives.² Discussion taking place in the media, regardless of the character (political, religious or scientific), often refers to a controversial biblical story about a foreign woman – Ruth – who became the great-grandmother of King David. That is why the aim of this paper is to show, in a synthetic way, the issue of female proselytism in the context of the biblical story of Ruth (The Book of Ruth) and its later Aramaic paraphrase (Targum Ruth), which reflects a practice of an already canonical process of conversion, transferred to the older biblical tradition.

The Book of Ruth

There is no clearly expressed conception of the conversion process in the early biblical texts. The Book of Ruth that, dated between the First Temple and the times after exile, confirms the existence of proselytism before the formalized process of conversion was implemented, when the emphasis was put mainly on joining the nation, which is connected in the second line to the duty of following the Commandments.³

The Book tells a story of a Moabite woman joining the Israeli nation; it has a chiasmic structure,⁴ which is visible on the level of both the whole story and single scenes (macro and micro units). The chiasmus comprised within the first episode stands out as a central verse (1, 16b) including the declaration of Ruth: “for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God”.

The author presents these words not just as a leading motive of the story, but they ascribe it a function of a hermeneutical key for interpretation of the story. It is a synthesis of a process, in which Ruth – a foreign woman – the Moabite, joins Naomi’s family and the community of Bethlehem, and then Judah and Israel. Although in the context of the book we cannot see a

2 Yedidia Stern, ‘From Ruth to Natasha: On the Future of Conversion in Israel’, in: <http://www.idi.org.il/sites/english/ResearchAndPrograms/Religion%20and%20State/Pages/FromRuthtoNatasha.aspx>

3 Jacob Myers, *The Linguistic and Literary Form of The Book of Ruth* (Leiden: Brill, 1955), p. 8; Robert Hubbard, *The Book of Ruth* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), p. 30; Edward Campbell, *Ruth: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1975), pp. 25-26.

4 Jerome Walsh, *Style & Structure in Biblical Hebrew Narrative* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2011), pp. 88-89; Murray Gow, *The Book of Ruth. Its structure, theme and purpose* (Leicester: Apollos, 1992), pp. 91-93.

canonical conversion process of the character,⁵ undoubtedly the biblical text presents the expected features and actions, which decided about the foreign woman's joining the community of Israel.⁶

Hesed

The term *hesed* (love, goodness, loyalty),⁷ can be seen in key episodes about Ruth at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the composition (Ruth 1,8; 2,20; 3,10) and in this way is inscribed within the chiasmic structure of the book. At the same time, it becomes an important term and an intended theme of the story. Admittedly, the performers of *hesed* within the story comprised Naomi, Ruth and Boaz as well. However, the biblical author clearly states that it is God who is its main originator – it is Him who takes care of Naomi and Ruth, and Boaz is just a tool in His hands. At the same time, the author emphasizes extraordinary courage and sacrifice in the attempts of Ruth, who reached the perfection of *hesed* twice. According to the words of Boaz, (Ruth 3, 10), her first *hesed* refers to the actions towards Naomi, i.e. abandoning the homeland and joining the nation that she did not know before. The second one relates to her attempts to fulfill the levirate law through marriage with Boaz. The author notices that the second *hesed*, which was shown by the fact that Ruth did not aspire to marry a younger man, and did not care for the material status of a candidate, is greater than the first one, where Ruth joined her mother-in-law paying the price of abandoning her own nation.

5 Campbell confirms that there is no conversion of the main character in the Book of Ruth. According to the researcher, a statement from Ruth proves loyalty and human attachment to her mother-in-law. However, Ruth realizes that YHWH is an inseparable part of Naomi's identity, and in the broader context of the society that she wants to join. Actions of *hesed* towards her mother-in-law come, however, from her decision about changing the faith to YHWH. Cf. Campbell (see note 3), p. 80.

6 Adele Berlin, similarly to Campbell, rejects the hypothesis of Ruth's conversion. She points out that a pattern of conversion did not exist in the times of Ruth. Ruth's confession is therefore a desire to join Naomi's nation, and at the same time, faith in her God. Although Berlin emphasizes that we cannot speak specifically about conversion in a biblical text, the biblical author presents no doubts that Ruth leaves her current faith taken from Moab and accepts YHWH as her only God. See: Adele Berlin, "Ruth", in: J. L. Mays (ed.), *Harper Collins Bible Commentary*, (San Francisco: Harper&Row, 2000), p. 241.

7 *Hesed*: 1) Mutual obligation among relatives, friends, between a host and a guest, a lord and a servant; 2) Loyalty; 3) Solidarity; 4) Closeness; 5) Faithfulness; 6) Kindness; 7) Goodness. Cf. Ludwig Koehler, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

Hesed can be performed only by an active person, already being a part of a society in some form (clan, tribe), who takes a risk and puts forward proposals.⁸ The example of Ruth shows an attitude full of radicalism and courage. Because of that, Boaz called her *eshet hail*, a ‘doughty woman’ (Ruth 3, 11), and at the same time, it is Ruth who encourages him to act. Despite being a foreigner, she became a pattern for Israelites – an example of action, initiative, courage, without which the perfection of *hesed* cannot be achieved.

In the story of Ruth, her husband’s death becomes the start of a new path leading to a new identity. In this critical moment, she decides to leave her nation, and her religious tradition (Ruth 3, 10). Thanks to the actions of *hesed*, which she conducted towards Naomi and Boaz, as well as thanks to the features coming from that concept, i.e. persistence, radicalism as well as disinterestedness, she was accepted not only by Boaz, but also by the whole community of Bethlehem, and finally by all of Israel. This is expressed by the integration of Ruth into the genealogy of David evoked at the end of the book. In this way, the author placed a normative meaning to the story of Ruth, for the sake of future generations.

‘Return’ as a rite of passage

The Book of Ruth shows the way, in which a foreign woman, a Moabite, despite the prohibitions from Deuteronomy of joining the Moabites (Deut 23, 4-7), entered Israel’s community and became a model for future generations. Ruth won favor of the inhabitants of Bethlehem through her *hesed actions*, i.e. charity (1.8, 3.10), her diligence and resourcefulness (2,7), through her marriage with the much older Boaz, through which she proved that she was not looking for her own happiness, but she was eager to fulfill the levirate law (4, 10) and conceive a son for Naomi (4,15), a future king of Israel (4,17). Therefore, the ‘seniors’ of Bethlehem, praising Boaz, compare Ruth to the great matriarchs like Lea and Rachel (4, 11), and earlier Boaz himself speaks of her as of a ‘doughty woman’ (3,11). But the attitude and actions of Ruth were not sufficient for community of Israel to fully accept her, as after reaching Bethlehem she is still

8 “Hesed has to do with creating circumstances in a relationship wherein change can take place. Both Naomi and Boaz need to be changed, and Ruth is the one who can do it, chooses to do it, and takes initiatives to do it.” Edward Campbell, “Naomi, Boaz and Ruth, hesed and change”, in: *Austin Seminary Bulletin*, 105 (1990), p. 74.

called a foreigner (2,10) or “Ruth the Moabite” (2,2) – as if they were also waiting for some period or rite fulfillment.⁹

Arnold van Genep distinguishes three stages of the so called ‘rite of passage’,¹⁰ which accompany every change in the social life of an individual (place of residence, social position, etc.): (1) separation, (2) marginalization, (3) aggregation. This can be applied to the biblical story of Ruth where her path towards a new identity can be understood from the perspective of a ‘rite of passage’. Ruth abandons her homeland, her nation, her current faith, and sets off on a journey to Bethlehem. She crosses a border of two identities – Moabite and Israelite. The narration shows the process of aggregation into Israel’s community. In the fourth and last chapter of the book, Ruth is perceived as a rightful Israelite, who is obliged to act according to the customary legal norms. Omission of the ethnic identification of Ruth may imply that her social status has changed – she is no longer identified with a Moabite.

Undoubtedly, the crucial importance for entering Israel’s community was her decision to accompany Naomi in her return journey from Bethlehem. Since then, Ruth also started her ‘return’, and not a journey to Israeli land. The author of the book intentionally uses the form of *hashshawah*; verb (Ruth 1, 22) from the stem ‘come back’, and not for example ‘go’ *halakhah*.

The process of this ‘return’ comprises three stages in the following chronological and geographical order: (1) Moab, (2) journey to Bethlehem, (3) Bethlehem.

Moab

In the second chapter there is a rhetorical question from Ruth to Boaz, a native inhabitant of Bethlehem and an Israelite, Ruth 2,10: “Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I *am* a stranger?”

9 Neil Glover, “Your people, my people: an exploration of ethnicity in Ruth”, in: *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 33,3 (2009), pp. 293-313.

10 Victor Turner, *The ritual process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Publishers, 1969), pp. 94-95.

In this verse, the biblical author plays with words, which can be seen in the Hebrew text: *lāhakireni* (root: n-k-r) *wə'anokhi* (n-i) *nokhriiah* (n-k-r). The repeating consonants n, k and r attract attention to the word 'foreigner', coming from the root n-k-r.¹¹

However, the example of Ruth is complex – she is not only a widow of a dead Israelite, but also a foreigner – a Moabite. We can point to three biblical fragments which depict a negative image of a Moabite, which was present in the minds of ancient Israelites: (1) Deut 23, 4-5 referring to the refusal of Moabites to provide the Israelites with bread during the Exodus on their journey to the Promised Land; (2) Num 22, 1-7, a story about Balaam, who was hired by Moabites to curse the people of Israel and (3) Gen 19, 30-38, a story referring to the incestuous conception of Moab, the first father of all Moabites. Those three stories reveal the Moabites' image in the minds of Israelites as mean, idolatrous and incestuous.

Ruth needs to free herself from this 'Moabite stereotype'. The story about Ruth attempts to systematically banish negative stereotypes of 'Moabite features' through examples of her actions. Therefore, she shows extraordinary generosity while taking care of bread for Naomi, and she goes to Boaz' field to collect the spikes that are left. She abandons her nation, land and family traditions for the nation and God of Naomi, through which she contradicts the belief of inborn idolatrousness of the Moabites. The third negative stereotype ascribed to Moabites comprises a tendency to incest. When Naomi introduces Boaz to Ruth, she gives him two names, relative and *go'el*. In this way, she emphasizes that a relationship with Boaz complies with the levirate law, and that there is no danger of breaking the law, as it happened in the story of Lot and the incestuous conception of his son Moab.¹²

Journey to Bethlehem

In the scene presenting Naomi and Ruth entering Bethlehem (Ruth 1, 22), the biblical author emphasizes that both Naomi and Ruth 'returned' to Bethlehem. "So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab".

11 Edward Greenstein, 'Reading Strategies and the Story of Ruth', in: Alice Bach (ed.), *Women in the Hebrew Bible*, (Londres: Routledge, 1999), p. 215.

12 Calum Carmichael, 'Treading' in the Book of Ruth', in: *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 92 (1980), pp. 260-261.

The Hebrew text uses a relative clause *hashshawah*, in relation to Ruth, which in literal translation means: “which returned out of the country of Moab”. The author thus emphasizes that Ruth ‘returned’ to Bethlehem, but in reality she has never been there. The reader finds out from the biblical text that only Naomi comes back to her house, like Orpah, who set off for the return journey to Moab, but not Ruth. The identical form was used in the second chapter. For the question of Boaz asking who Ruth was, the servants answered (Rt 2,6): “It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab”.

The author uses the verb *shuw*¹³ for the second time in the second chapter, Rt 2,6. Some researchers¹⁴ point out that the biblical author intentionally used this Hebrew verb, which in relation to Ruth should be interpreted in the context of her ‘return to God’ YHWH – i.e. conversion. Naomi says the characteristic words Rt 1,15a “And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods“, while Ruth made a decision to attach herself to Naomi’s God and abandon her current faith in the national God of the Moabites, Chemosh.¹⁵

Bethlehem

It is also possible that the biblical author connected the ‘return’ of Ruth to her reunion with Naomi’s family as a beginning of the process of her complete inclusion into Israel’s community. Ruth was first attached to Naomi’s and her husband Elimelech’s family when she got married to Machlon. Since then, Ruth was part of her husband’s family. In the ancient society of Israel, the smallest social unit was family, called ‘father’s home’, *bet aw*. A woman joined her husband’s family through marriage, taking his name and moving to his home.¹⁶ When Machlon dies, Ruth does no longer have to fulfill duties connected with being a part of his family. The ‘return’ of

13 *shuw* vb. turn back, return -- Qal turn back, return: 1). turn back, 2). return, come or go back, 3). return unto; Brown Francis, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English*, (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), p. 206.

14 Alicia Ostriker, ‘The Book of Ruth and The Love of the Land’, in: *Biblical Interpretation*, 10 (2002), p. 93; Frederic Bush, *Ruth, Esther* (Dallas: Word Books, 1996), p. 96.

15 Lau Peter, *Identity and ethics in the Book of Ruth: a social identity approach*, (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2011), p. 91.

16 Karel Van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel: Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life*, (Leiden: Brill, 1996), pp. 197-199.

Ruth is therefore a peculiar act of renewing the bonds with the family of the dejected, which is expressed through lifelong loyalty towards Naomi.

The law of levirate is significant in the story of Ruth, as thanks to the marriage with Boaz she was joined not only to the family, but also to the broader social structure, as the clan that she belongs to.¹⁷ While marriages inside a family were forbidden, people attempted to get married within a single clan. A community of related families aspired to maintain and defend material and spiritual goods. Boaz, as a member of the clan of Naomi's family, has a right to buy land, and what is more, he accepts to fulfill the levirate law towards Ruth. A scene at the gate seals Ruth's aggregation into the Boaz's clan, Ruth 4, 9-10. At the moment of Obed's conception, Ruth is connected with David as his great-grandmother. David – a citizen of Bethlehem – who as the first born became a monarch of the joint kingdom of Judah and Israel, legitimizes the right to integrate Ruth not only to the community of Judah's tribe, but also to the people of Israel. From this moment, Ruth is no longer perceived as a 'foreigner', because the biblical author does not mention the attribute 'Moabite woman'.

Despite fulfilling *hesed*, Ruth also needs to go through subsequent stages in the path towards Israelite identity. She abolishes the negative stereotypes ascribed to Moabites, and through the marriage with Boaz she becomes reunited with Naomi's family and clan. As a great-grandmother of David she is completely included into the community of Judah, and later of Israel. In the genealogy closing the story, she is identified with great mothers of Israel; Lea, Rachel, and Tamar.

Targum Ruth

According to Jewish tradition, the Book of Ruth is read during the Holiday of Weeks (Shavuot) for two reasons: firstly, one comprises the fact that the story about Ruth takes place during the harvest of barley, which is connected with Shavuot celebration; and secondly, because this holiday commemorates the day when Moses received the Torah, and Ruth was perceived as a proselyte *per excellence* (Tg 2,11). The Targum's text refers to the context of Shavuot as it comprises haggadic elements, which emphasize the role of the commandments in the lives of the

17 Ibid. pp. 200-201.

faithful based on the example of Ruth. However, it needs to be noted that the earliest evidence confirming this custom comes from the post-Talmudic period, from Soferim tractate 14, 16. Secondary literature suggests two proposals for dating the Targum Ruth: The first one¹⁸ assumes that the date of its creation is the post-Talmudic period, because the Aramaic text comprises legal solutions derived from Talmud and Mishnah; the second regards the text to be ancient, as it mentions the hanging of people from trees as a capital punishment, which was a custom preceding the mishnaic period.

The Targum is based on the Aramaic translation of the Hebrew biblical text with an incorporated additional paraphrase. The whole text is half the size of the original (biblical) version, but the translation in Targum is almost literal and provides answers to questions, which were not solved or interpreted formally in the Hebrew text. The leading issue in Targum Ruth is Ruth's conversion. A targumist openly presents her as a proselyte and her journey from Moab to Bethlehem as an allegory of the conversion process.

The reign of the Ptolemaic dynasty in Palestine (3rd century BCE) confronts the Jewish community with specific foreign influence. There is tension between supporters of maintaining contacts with 'foreign' nations, which was promoted by unavoidable cultural and religious influence, and the separatist groups, striving for alienation and seclusion. The Hellenic and the Roman period were times of internal tensions and separations.¹⁹ One of the problematic and discussed issues was the possibility and conditions for conversion, as well as the later place of proselytes within the Jewish community.

The term *proselyte* stems from a Greek word *proselytes*, originally meaning a newcomer, a settled foreigner. In the Greek translation of the Bible (Septuagint) it renders the Hebrew word *ger* (stranger), which referred to a foreign newcomer living among Israelites. In time, the name proselyte was used in relation to a person that converted to Judaism,²⁰ which is why initially the term *proselytism* referred solely to the phenomenon of conversion to Judaism, and the word *proselyte* was used only in reference to a person, who accepted the Jewish faith without having a

18 Ezra Melamed, "The Targum of the Book of Ruth", Hebrew, in: *Annual of Bar Ilan University*, 1 (1963), pp. 190- 194.

19 Etan Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Ruth*, (Roma: Biblical Institute Press, 1973), pp. 57-58.

20 Cf. Proselyte, Zwi Werblowsky Rafael (ed.), in: *The Oxford Dictionary of The Jewish Religion*, (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 550.

Jewish background. Simultaneously, the term *pious* (Greek φοβουμενοι τον θεον; *hebr. ir'e adonai*) was used, which referred to people, to those who accepted the faith and took part in synagogue life, but did not undergo circumcision (in the case of men) or the rite of immersion in the mikvah (in case of women). Although there is no certainty as to when we can talk about the beginnings of the formal procedure of conversion to Judaism, the most probable period we can find the first trace is the Hellenic one.

While analyzing the story of the Book of Judith,²¹ Shaye Cohen²² differentiated three main conditions for conversion to Judaism, which could be perceived as normative in the period from the 2nd century BCE to the 5th century CE. First, the practice of Jewish law; second, exclusive devotion to the god of the Jews; and third, integration into the Jewish community. The Greek version of the Book of Judith was most probably created in the second half of the 2nd century BCE, in the context of circumstances connected with the Maccabeans, to which researchers attach the beginning of the 'canonical' form of the conversion process. The before-mentioned conditions also correspond with the scheme of targumic paraphrase of the story of Ruth.

Targum Ruth presents the main character as a model of a proselyte from the very beginning. While the biblical text understands Ruth's word from the first episode "Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God" (Rt 1,16b) as a sign of loyalty towards Naomi that expressed a desire to join the nation of God and Israel, the targumist interprets them directly as a request of a candidate for conversion, to be accepted in the religious community.

Practice of the Jewish laws

The Targum places an elaborate paraphrase in the episode of Naomi's return to Bethlehem. When setting off from Moab, both daughters-in-law, who accompany Naomi, state that their

21 The Book of Judith is an historic novel, included in the Catholic and Orthodox canon of the Old Testament and rated among Deuterocanonical Books. It is perceived by the Protestant churches to be false. In the Septuagint and its translations into other languages, it is placed right after the Book of Tobias.

22 All of these have been distinguished on the basis of the Book of Judith, Jdt 14,10: "Achior, recognising all that the God of Israel had done, believed ardently in him and, accepting circumcision, was permanently incorporated into the House of Israel." Cf. Shaye Cohen, 'Crossing the boundary and becoming a Jew', in: *Harvard Theological Review*, 82 (1989).

desire to become proselytes. Orpa resigns from the continuing the journey as a result of her mother-in-law's persuasion, and as Targum adds, "has returned to her people, and to her gods" (Tg Rt 1, 15). Ruth, unlike her sister-in-law, still wants to accompany Naomi. Tg Ruth 1, 14-17 is a key part of Targum, comprising a dialogue between Naomi and Ruth including the conditions for accepting Ruth in the community. The text mentions six hundred and thirteen commandments, which the main character is obliged to follow.

But Ruth said, 'Do not urge me to leave you, to turn back and not to follow you; for I demand to be converted.' Naomi said, 'We are commanded to observe the Sabbaths and Holy Days, not to walk more than thousand cubits.' Ruth replied, 'Wherever you go, I shall go.' Naomi said, 'We are commanded not to dwell together with the nations.' Ruth replied, 'Wherever you dwell, I shall dwell'. Naomi said, 'We are commanded to observe six hundred and thirteen commandments'. Ruth replied, 'Whatever your people observes, I shall observe, as though they were my people originally.' Naomi said, 'We are commanded not to engage in idolatry.' Ruth replied, 'Your God is my God.' (Tg Rt 1,16)²³

In this context Naomi is a teacher of law (Halakha), teaching her daughter-in-law regulations of the Law. The dialogue between Naomi and Ruth during the journey to Bethlehem, extended with a haggadic-targumic interpretation, creates a kind of religious education directed to a candidate for conversion. The New Testament, the Targum as well as the Talmud, point out that pre-rabbinical and rabbinical Judaism put special emphasis on fulfilling *mitzvot*, commandments, which means that the conversion was based first of all on the candidate accepting all 613 commandments, not just on a profession of faith in the God of Israel.

In the Targum, in a so called 'scene of threshing' Boaz calls Ruth '*just*', who has power to carry the burden of the commandments. After these words, he places six seahs of barley. An important motive, confirming Ruth's proselytism, is a prophetic oracle, which she obtained on

23 Ibid. Lévine (see note 19), pp. 22-23.

the threshing floor from God.²⁴ Six seahs of grains that she receives as a gift from Boaz, means future marriage between them, which will bear offspring. The culminating point of Ruth's visions is the figure of "King Messiah", who will stop the latest "period of famine", which is mentioned in the eschatological list opening the Targum.²⁵

Exclusive devotion to the God of the Jews

One of the basic conditions of conversion comprised accepting YHWH as the only God. Following Abraham, the archetype of all proselytes, future Jewish converts are first of all expected to abandon the polytheism for the faith in the only God.²⁶ Ruth is also expected, as in the case of Abraham, to abandon her faith in national Moabite gods and accept Naomi's God (Patriarchs). The extensive targumic paraphrase of the biblical dialogue between Ruth and Naomi during their journey to Bethlehem emphasizes the role of the commandments in the process of conversion, which correspond to the personalized relation between humans and God. It should be noted that the biblical text puts emphasis on the necessity to join a family, clan, nation, as a condition necessary for conversion. And despite the fact that in the process of Ruth's conversion the central condition is following the law, foundations are created by faith in the only God. Similarly, the fact Ruth leaves Moab is unambiguously interpreted as abandoning polytheism for the God of Naomi, the return to God YHWH.

In the Targum, a personal relationship with God is made visible in fulfilling Jewish laws, and credits coming from this bring not only individual salvation, but also bring closer the salvation of humankind, as it was in the story of Ruth. Benefits for Ruth's faith and actions are expressed through the offspring that she will conceive. Ruth, the proselyte, is credited with the rank of matriarch, because a "King of Israel", David, will be conceived by her. A list of ten generations, closing the Book of Ruth, symbolizes the creation of new mankind. Similarly as

24 Christian Brady, 'The Use of Eschatological Lists within the Targumim of the Megilloth', in: *Journal for The Study of Judaism*, 40,4-5 (2009), pp. 507-508.

25 Ibid. p. 508.

26 Peder Borgen claims: "When does a person receive status as a proselyte in the Jewish community and cease to be a heathen? [...] Philo uses an ethical criterion for deciding who has the status of a proselyte within the Jewish community. This ethical conversion of the heathen also meant a sociological change from a pagan context to a Jewish one." Peder Borgen, 'The Early Church and the Hellenistic Synagogue', in: *Studia Theologica*, 37 (1983), pp. 55-78.

through Adam, Noah and Abraham, a new period in human history has come through Ruth, the proselyte.²⁷

Integration into the Jewish community

We shall not return to our people, nor to our god. Rather, we shall return with you to your people, to become proselytised. (Tg Rt 1, 10)

According to Talmud,²⁸ as a result of the conversion process, a proselyte becomes equal to an Israelite in every respect. In reality, a convert did not obtain an equal status to people who belonged to the Jewish community since birth. A proselyte's position that was not formally determined, was the reason why sometimes they were treated as persons being on the community's margin, between Jews and non-Jews.²⁹

Additionally, Targum (and rabbinical tradition) explains the way in which Ruth as a Moabite was released from the prohibition in Deuteronomy to include Moabites in the "congregation of the Lord". The main character is aware of her problematic origin, which is why she asks Boaz the following question:

Why have I found favor in your eyes, to acknowledge me, when I am of a foreign people, from the daughters of Moab, who are not permitted to enter into the congregation of the Lord. (Tg Rt 2,10b)

Boaz's response to these words is that he had a prophetic revelation saying that the prohibition of including Moabites into the congregation of the Lord refers only to men, not to women. This way Ruth is freed from the prohibition. Midrash Ruth Rabbah 2,4 explains that the record on the prohibition of including Moabites into the congregation of the Lord was created in the context of the Israeli peoples' journey through the desert, when the Moabites refused to give help and hired

27 Nachman Levine, 'Ten hungers/Six Barleys: Structure and Redemption in The Targum to Ruth', in: *Journal for The Study of Judaism*, 30 (1999), pp. 312-324.

28 Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Yebbamot, 47b.

29 Jacob Neusner, *The Encyclopaedia of Judaism*, (Leiden: Brill, 2000), p. 117.

Baalam to curse Israelites. As the Midrash says, only men of Moab could go out to meet the Israelites with bread and water, not women, because they were forbidden to approach strange men, which is why they were not included in this prohibition. “Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens.” (Rt 2,8b)

Targum interprets the words of Boaz as an attempt to encourage Ruth to join the Jewish community. He emphasizes that the motive of her arrival in Bethlehem was first of all the willingness of conversion.

Ruth’s process of integration into the Jewish community is confirmed by the announcement that great men will be conceived by her. On the threshing-floor she receives a prophetic vision, which states that

the six Righteous of the world were destined to issue forth from her, each one blessed with six blessings: David, Daniel, his three companions, and the Messiah king. (Tg Rt 3,16)

The offspring are a sign of God’s blessing, and at the same time an act sealing her complete integration into the Jewish community. To sum up, it needs to be noted that in the targumic paraphrase, Ruth firstly subordinates herself to the Law, accepts the faith in the only God, and then she is included into the community.

Summary

The comparison of conditions in the Book of Ruth and her targumic version shows the evolution in the process of conversion from the times of the Second Temple to the end of the Talmudic period. The Book of Ruth, preceding the period of normative conversion, states that a necessary condition to include a ‘stranger’ into the community (family, clan, tribe, etc.) is fulfilling *hesed* actions; joining the family-community precedes entering into the religious community, which is expressed by the verse, Rt 1,16b: “Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.” In Targum this order is reversed – at first, Ruth is included into the religious community and becomes obliged to follow the commandments and later, she is included into the nation.

The presented study can serve as a basis for further discussions on the issue of conversion in contemporary Israeli society as well as in the Jewish Diaspora. The review of source material and the presentation of the evolutionary character of conversion, together with their normalization and the beginning of canonization fills the gap in the current media discussion in Israel. The interpretation of immigrants' status having halakhic character, reflects the relatively late targumic interpretation, where a 'stranger', before he/she was included into the nation and received full rights, had first been obliged to join the religious community. The biblical tradition, on the other hand, shows that a 'stranger' first joined the family-nation, and only later accepted religious duties – loyalty to the Law.

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